

November 5, 1943

Truman K. Gibson, Jr.
Civilian Aide to the Secretary of War
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Gibson:

And I fight—for Democracy?

Upon reading the title of this article the average reader would assume that I am a member of the armed forces in the U.S.A. In your assumption, reader, you are definitely correct. I was selected by the President and citizens, to fight for a "non-existing Democracy." I am one soldier who waited to be drafted. I didn't volunteer out. I am learning to fight to protect whatever cause for which the Allies are fighting. I am forced to learn to be ready to kill or be killed—for "Democracy." When fighting time arrives I will fight for ___?

I learned early in life that for the Negro there is no Democracy. Of course I know the principles set forth in the Amendments and the Bill of Rights. I learned that I knew nothing of the operation of a true democratic form of government. I found that a Negro in civilian life has [a] very tough time with segregation in public places and discrimination in industry. I knew this and I thought that white people would react differently toward a colored soldier.

I had heard and read of the cruel treatment given colored soldiers and somehow, even among existing conditions of civilian life, I couldn't understand how white people could be so down on one who wears the uniform of the fighting forces of their country. From civilian life I was drafted and now I prepare to fight for—The continuation of discriminatory practices against me and my people.

I have long known that the fighting forces are composed of two divisions. Namely, a white division composed of Germans, Jews, Italians, Dutch and all white people of the remaining countries (The question is: Are they loyal?). A Negro division composed of American Negroes and all dark skin people. The American Negro has fought in every war since the Revolutionary War. There can be no question as to his loyalty. He is put into a division composed of the members of his race not because of his educational qualities, his fighting abilities or his inability to live with others, but he's put into a separate division because of the color of his skin.

This is serious since the Negroes are trained to a large extent in Southern States whose white civilians are more drastic in showing their dislike than in Northern white people.

* "A Loyal Negro Soldier" to Truman K. Gibson, Jr., 5 November 1943, Civilian Aide to the Secretary of War Subject File, 1940-1947, Record Group 107, National Archives, Washington, D.C.