

regard has been highly beneficial to Harlem—and to America at large. Essays focusing on the contributions of Caribbean Americans to Harlem and the United States would not have called attention to Huiswoud's and McKa's "gifts" to the Third International. Domingo and his colleagues recognized, however, the significance of the 1922 Moscow congress in placing the plight of all peoples of African descent on the international agenda. Wayne F. Cooper has noted that "the official stance of the Comintern regarding blacks in 1922 was influenced by West Indians, who were simultaneously much more nationalistic, class conscious, and international-minded than were American-born blacks."⁸⁴

When the first version of Domingo's article was issued in March 1925, three of the four veteran radicals were positioned to wage their campaign against racism and colonialism on many fronts as functionaries of organizations allied with the Workers Party, such as the ANLC. Hermie was also now positioned to join the group. She had graduated from high school in 1924 and through Huiswoud had become friendly with his close comrades and exposed to radical politics along with the gifts of writers and artists in Harlem. When Huiswoud went to Chicago to help launch the ANLC he asked her to wait for him. And she did.

5. The Radicals and the Renaissance

As Hermie Dumont approached her twentieth birthday in 1925 she was beginning to appreciate that she was in the midst of a vibrant, eclectic, creative community. Bold print on the cover of the March 1925 *Survey Graphic* magazine declared "Harlem—Mecca of the New Negro" and included interesting short stories and other writings by people she had met or recognized from meetings, newspaper articles, or just walking down the street. A page of poems by Langston Hughes and the article by Otto's friend W. A. Domingo caught her attention. An avid reader, she spent much time in the 135th Street Public Library and had already read works by other writers who had made their way to Harlem and were represented in the magazine. Her favorite book, however, was not by an African American; it was special because it was her first gift from Otto. *The Gadfly* was by a British author, Ethel Lilian Voynich, whose pen name was E. L. Voynich. Initially published in 1897, the story was set in Italy in the 1830s but was considered a reflection of revolutionary activity that might counter oppression in any nation. It was well received generally but grasped by Russians in both pre- and post-revolutionary periods as a classic. No doubt the self-sacrificing search for truth and justice as well as the anticlerical position of the protagonist also appealed to radicals in the United States.

Hermie's focus was on her future. The most critical moment arrived within a year, when Otto Huiswoud proposed marriage. His relationship with Anna Leve had ended in September 1924 and his affection for Hermie was deepening. He was keenly aware of the difference in their ages, thirty-two and twenty, as well as the fact that she had not considered their relationship a romantic one. When faced with having to go to Chicago in 1925 for several

months he decided he must express his interest. He asked simply if she would wait for him. She accepted his question as the proposal it was meant to be, and plans were made for their marriage on his return. On September 30, 1941, they were married by the deputy city clerk in the Bronx, and a small wedding party gathered at her home. Richard B. Moore gave the toast, and the couple was off to a life unique in the annals of the Left. Her consent two years later to the invitation extended by Moore to join the Communist Party helped establish a union that could succeed only if there were mutual interests in communism in addition to affection for each other. Maturity had always been a characteristic of Hermie, and she regarded marriage and joining the Party as appropriate and well-considered decisions. She was not concerned about the difference in the ages between herself and Otto, nor about his potential as a breadwinner. She has pointed out that even though Otto was twelve years older, she "had no idea of age. People were nice or not nice. They were young or not so old." Her explanation of her increase in affection for Otto was a typical Hermie response: "If you get exposed to the sun you get sunburned." She had also become convinced that socialism was the answer to the social and economic problems facing the poor. Her exposure to political ideas began with her mother's interest in politics in Guyana, grew with her interest in social problems in high school, and was greatly expanded as Otto helped her understand political action. The true meaning of the life of a revolutionary was yet to dawn on her, but she felt ready to help Otto, the "kinsman," and the Party to "meet the common foe."

Hermie was certainly not alone in her optimism and intent on looking forward. Despite the discriminatory barriers evident in New York there was no turning back for the thousands who had migrated to Harlem from the rural lands of the Caribbean or for the even greater mass of people who had been thrown off the vestiges of slavery in the South to seek a new life in the North. She shared with the people of Harlem the sense of change that was occurring within them as well as in the few blocks gaining the approbation of "Mecca of the New Negro." The metamorphosis of Harlem from a few apartment houses on 134th Street to a mecca represented a keen transition for its inhabitants from southern sharecropping and small-town life to being part of an ambitious, bustling, burgeoning community in the throes of building organizations, establishing businesses, erecting edifices of worship, writing poems and stories, creating paintings and sculptures, printing newspapers and journals, choreographing dances, staging theatrical productions, and sending forth the mighty sound of blues, jazz, and joy. Harlem became the venue for a remarkable confluence of diverse peoples from the English, French, Spanish, and Dutch cultures of the Caribbean as well as from the southern and northern

United States.² It was the crossroads where ideas were exchanged, experiences reevaluated, the status quo questioned, mores altered, identity strengthened, relationships adjusted, and creativity released. Unlike former New York City neighborhoods relegated to African American residents, Harlem emerged as a dynamic community of hope, inspiration, improvisation, and innovation. Rev. E. Ethelred Brown's humble church in the basement of a brownstone house was in keeping with the spirit of the times; it was no match, however, for the masterful architectural towers that housed large congregations. St. Mark's Methodist Episcopal Church (now St. Mark's Methodist Church), for example, which had worked its way uptown from a rented hall on Broadway and 37th Street in 1871 to 48th and then 53rd Street, constructed a prominent building on an entire block between 137th and 138th Streets on Edgecombe Avenue that provided a gymnasium and other facilities for community activities in addition to its large auditorium for worship. The building asserted Harlem's own lofty aspirations by using a neo-Gothic design in direct view of the Gothic-styled College of the City of New York prominently located on the hill overlooking Harlem.

Music played a significant role during the Renaissance. Harlem was most noted downtown for its contribution to the jazz scene, and acclaim was widespread for the great jazz musicians who played for white as well as African American audiences. But not as much was revealed about composers of classical works and arrangers of scores for dramatic works or the lyricists who provided Tin Pan Alley with words for popular songs. While Perry Bradford, James P. Johnson, Clarence Williams, and William Grant Still lived with their families in the new suburban community known as Merrick Park in Jamaica, Queens, they identified with Harlem and pursued their careers in both uptown and downtown Manhattan. Still, for example, worked with William Christopher Handy in Handy's publishing office, played jazz with Handy's and Deacon Johnson's orchestras, served as musical director at the African American-owned Black Swan Phonograph Company, and played the oboe in the orchestra of *Shuffle Along* in 1921.³ Later acclaimed by Leopold Stokowski as "one of our greatest American composers,"⁴ Still, who had been a student at Wilberforce University, incorporated African and African American themes in his symphonies, ballets, operas, choral works in much the same way as writers drew upon indigenous themes and experiences. He stated that he wanted "to employ an idiom that was unmistakably Negroid because I wished to do my part in demonstrating to the world that the American Negro is capable of making a valuable contribution in the field of symphonic music, and I wanted to write a Negroid idiom, music that would help build more harmonious race relations."⁵ Lyricists like Andreamenentania Paul

Razafinkeriefu (a.k.a. Andy Razaf), a regular contributor to Briggs's *Crusader*, planted audacious ideas in songs such as "What Did I Do to Be So Black and Blue?"⁶ Briggs devoted a regular column to performers of classical and religious music and carried advertisements of African American music companies. The musicians' works often employed themes they considered "African" that exemplified the innovative and race-oriented spirit of the Harlem Renaissance and inspired others engaged in creative pursuits. Thus community building in a new, attractive area added a fresh, pioneering, constructive cultural dimension that went beyond achieving satisfaction with improved housing for families and worship. The souls of Harlem folk were enriched by the outpouring of the arts and the expressions of protest that became an integral part of the territory.

New York was not the only northern city to receive a massive influx of African American residents. Why did it exert such a magnetic force? Why was the milieu in Harlem so unique and become the focus of a special issue in *Survey Graphic*? The readership of the *Crisis*, the *Crusader*, the *Messenger*, the *Negro World*, and *Opportunity*, all published in New York but circulated across the country and some foreign nations, was a testament to the literacy of the community commanded. Publications by African Americans in New York were directed toward a highly literate population. While the major motivation for mass migration to Harlem was economic, education, which had been systematically denied or limited in the South, was highly regarded and actively sought as an essential step to freedom from oppression. New York provided excellent schools. Children were required by law to attend elementary school and encouraged to complete high school, night schools were available for adults, and a free college education could be obtained in municipal colleges.

New York was not only a center of education; it was a center for publishing many types of books and newspapers in several languages, producing sheet music and piano player rolls, recording music, and broadcasting into homes via radio. It was a center for theatrical productions. Public libraries were open to everyone throughout the city. Bibliophiles like Arthur A. Schomburg, Herbert H. Harrison, and Richard B. Moore could dig through used bookstores and stalls downtown to expand their collections and thereby their knowledge of the history of Africans and peoples of African descent. Harlem also had a bookstore: George Young's Mecca of Literature Pertaining to Colored People. Harrison's constant admonition to "Read, Read, Read" could be fulfilled easily. Writing was also encouraged. Magazines and newspapers in Harlem, including the *Messenger* and the *Crusader*, sought poems and short stories and printed many of the first literary pieces submitted by young writers. Langston Hughes's first poems were published in the *Brownies' Book* and *Crisis* and his

first short stories in the *Messenger*.⁷ Arna Bontemps has exclaimed, "When acceptances from Harpers; Harcourt, Brace; Viking; Boni & Liveright; Knopf; and other front line publishers began coming through in quick succession, the excitement among those of us who were writing was almost unbearable."⁸ As budding writers learned about Harlem they joined Harlem's growing literary vanguard and contributed to journals, magazines, newspapers, and books published in New York.

The New York literary scene presented an environment in which seedlings planted in the African American community during the second decade could blossom. In 1915 Du Bois had written in *The Negro* that "within their own souls they [African Americans] have arisen from apathy and timid complaint to open protest and more and more manly self-assertion. Where nine-tenths of them could not read or write in 1860, today over two-thirds can; they have 300 papers and periodicals, and their voice and expression are compelling attention." He went on to point out that "already in poetry, literature, music, and painting the work of Americans of Negro descent has gained notable recognition . . . They are today girding themselves to fight in the van of progress, not simply for their own right as men, but for . . . the emancipation of women, universal peace, democratic government, the socialization of wealth, and human brotherhood."⁹ Although Du Bois's observations were not centered on developments in New York, they do point to the growing literacy and interest in literary works that made the Harlem Renaissance possible. Most of the young African American writers and musicians came from small cities to the cosmopolitan city that represented the hub of the literary and music world. The significance of the era is not simply that African Americans demonstrated that they could master literary and musical forms but that they were able to pierce and open up the publishing curtain. It should be noted that a breakthrough occurred during this period because a few relatively new publishers like Alfred Knopf in New York and Charles Kellogg in Chicago were receptive to manuscripts by African Americans. The thoughts, feelings, attitudes, interests, and living conditions of African Americans would no longer be confined to their immediate communities as men and women were determined to overcome what Ralph Ellison's protagonist in *Invisible Man* referred to as the sense of "being outside of history."¹⁰ Publication downtown meant that the essential humanity of African Americans was now revealed, the sense of manhood asserted, and the cancer in the body of American civilization exposed to the world.

The careful nurturing of young writers on the part of leaders of the NAACP and the Urban League and the collaboration between uptown and downtown led to the collection of works by African Americans in the periodical *Survey*

Graphic and subsequently in the book *The New Negro*. In addition to ongoing encouragement and printing of young writers' works in the journals, those two organizations, influential individuals assisted writers in a variety of ways, including establishing contests and arranging contact with potential patrons or publishers. Charles S. Johnson, editor of *Opportunity*, and Jessie Fauset, literary editor of *Crisis*, were foremost in this role. Langston Hughes labeled as "midwife."¹¹ In November 1924 Johnson organized a dinner intended to introduce uptown writers to downtown editors and publishers. Paul Kellogg, editor of *Survey Graphic*, was impressed by the young artists and writers as well as by the master of ceremonies, Alain Locke, an assistant professor of philosophy at Howard University in Washington, D.C. Kellogg was inspired to devote the 1925 special issue of the magazine to Harlem in a manner similar to special issues devoted to the "New Ireland" in 1921, "New Russia" in 1923, and "the newly awakened Mexico" in 1924. He invited Locke to be a collaborator in the selection and preparation of manuscripts.¹² Locke then edited a book-length expanded version, *The New Negro: An Interpretation*, which was published later that year by Albert and Charles Boni. The title "New Negro" was far from new; *The New Negro* by William Pickens, with the first chapter entitled "The Renaissance of the Negro Race," had appeared in 1919, and Hubert Harrison had edited a short-lived monthly magazine, the *New Negro*, in 1919. Even though Locke was not from New York, he caught the sense of rising assertiveness and expectations that had accompanied the New Negro movement in Harlem for ten years.

Both collections edited by Locke were acclaimed for documenting Harlem "as the sign and center of the renaissance of a people."¹³ In order to accurately portray the New Negro free of the mask of the minstrel, Locke's selections needed to reveal assertiveness, self-respect, race consciousness, defiance, and expressions of protest. Locke recognized the race consciousness evident in "the present tone and temper of the Negro press, or by the shift in popular support from the officially recognized and orthodox spokesmen to those of the independent, popular, and often radical type who are unmistakable symptoms of a new order."¹⁴ He was careful and cautious, however, to weigh the balance of his selections in favor of aesthetics over "revolutionary oratory" and "political flummery"; "self-direction" over "charity"; "buoyancy from within" over pressure of "conditions from without"; a "spiritual emancipation" over "the Negro problem." He warned that "this is indeed a critical stage of race relationships because of the likelihood, if the new temper is not understood, of engendering sharp group antagonism and a second crop of more calculated prejudice."¹⁵ His attempt to retain a subtle touch was revealed when he altered the title and thereby the intent of Claude McKay's poem "The White

House" to "White Houses." Selections by McKay, W. A. Domingo, and J. A. Rogers were included in both the magazine and the book along with those by other outstanding writers of the period who revealed the conditions and thinking within African American life. But there was no place for the Harlem sage and early proponent of the New Negro, Hubert H. Harrison.

Locke's fear of contaminating art with propaganda fueled the debate on the relationship between the two and between beauty and truth. The fact that white American society set the standard and in Du Bois's view demanded "from its artists, literary and pictorial, racial prejudice which deliberately distorts Truth and Justice as far as colored races are concerned" led him to the conclusion that all art was propaganda.¹⁶ Du Bois's review of *The New Negro* presented his keen observations on the book and some of the history of the shift in the traditional attitude toward dealing with the "Negro Problem." It also served to restate his position that "with one point alone do I differ with the Editor. Mr. Locke has newly been seized with the idea that Beauty rather than Propaganda should be the object of Negro literature and art. His book proves the falseness of this thesis . . . yet, if Mr. Locke's thesis is insisted on too much it is going to turn the Negro renaissance into decadence. It is the fight for Life and Liberty that is giving birth to Negro literature and art today and when, turning from this fight or ignoring it, the young Negro tries to do pretty things or things that catch the passing fancy of the really unimportant critics and publishers about him, he will find that he has killed the soul of Beauty in his Art."¹⁷

Huiswoud, Briggs, and Moore welcomed the two collections with the focus on the New Negro, artistic and literary ties to Africa, contributions of Caribbean Americans, attention to the "Negro digging up his past," a bibliography by and about African Americans, and particularly the recognition of the African American's "new internationalism." The essay by W. E. B. Du Bois at the end of the book, "The Negro Mind Reaches Out," which had been substituted for his short story in the magazine, raised the question regarding his prophesy in 1899 that "the problem of the twentieth century was the problem of the color line." His review of the colonial hegemony by Portugal, Belgium, France, and England over Africa and the Caribbean, including their control over labor and certain African leaders who had been Europeanized, brought him to the same conclusion one-quarter of a century later. The three Caribbean crusaders could appreciate Du Bois's analysis of imperialism and especially his reference to the Caribbean: "Since the war not only has West Africa thus spoken but the colored West Indies have complained. They want Home Rule and they are demanding it. They asked after the war: Why was it that no black man sat in the Imperial conference? Why is it that one of the

oldest parts of the empire lingers in political serfdom to England and in trial bondage to America? Why is there not a great British West Indian generation, stretching from Bermuda to Honduras and Guiana, and ranking the free dominions? The answer was clear and concise—Color.”¹⁸

The trio of radicals had been intimately associated with the New Negro movement in Harlem for a decade and were keenly aware that it was motivated and driven by economic and social conditions. In 1918 Briggs had seen the economic and political tie to literary expressions when he dedicated his *Crusader* to the solution of the “Negro Problem” and a renaissance of Negro power and culture throughout the world. He and his colleagues did not expect to find in Locke, however, references to the economic underpinnings of the Harlem Renaissance or the polemical models that had produced the transformation characterized by Locke as “from medieval America to modern.”¹⁹ They could be encouraged, however, by Du Bois’s notion that by American Negroes, the Negroes of the world are reaching out hand toward each other to know, to sympathize, to inquire . . . We face, then, in the modern black American, the black West Indian, the black Frenchman, the black Spaniard and the black African a man gaining in knowledge and power and in the definite aim to end color slavery and give black folk a knowledge of modern culture.”²⁰ They related to the aesthetic side of the movement but saw their role as internationalists who helped widen the debate, engage centers of action from Harlem to Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States and as realists who must confront the daily economic problems in the United States that poetry and art could not solve. They were convinced that the scales of justice would not respond quickly to acceptance of African people on the basis of demonstrated mastery of the arts. Their philosophy demanded agitation on all fronts.

While the extreme Left position represented by Huiswoud, Briggs, and Moore never gained a wide following, it broadened the spectrum of political activism among African Americans and influenced the direction of both the Harlem Renaissance and communism in the United States and abroad. Emanuel and Gross have maintained that “certain political spokesmen of the 1920s expressed the discontent and bitterness of the average Negro and proved to be still another contributing social force in the development of a new Negro literature.” The confluence of forces “provided the proper social conditions for a literature of protest, of chauvinism, and of spontaneous expression.”²¹ Even Locke admitted that “the thinking Negro has shifted toward the Left with the world-trend, and there is an increasing group who affiliate with radical and liberal movements.”²² The New Negro movement in Harlem predated the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and proceeded on a parallel course

with the development of the Communist Party in the United States. While firm lines were drawn by 1925 between adherents of four political parties in Harlem, many new residents, particularly young writers (like their white counterparts), were open to examining and incorporating ideas of the Left and engaged in a mutual exchange with African American and white Marxists. Edmund Gaither and Arnold Rampersad have suggested, “Perhaps the most dramatic change wrought by the Harlem Renaissance was the sense that black artists gained by being part of a group linked by ethnic pride, political activism and a shared cultural lineage.”²³ This appraisal not only acknowledges the influence of political activists but describes the forces that bonded African American radicals and linked them to the Harlem Renaissance.

In a rare study William Maxwell has called attention to the relationship between the New Negro and what he characterizes as the “Old Left.” He commented on modern African American literature’s debt to communism and communism’s debt to modern African American literature: “The Old Left, normally sketched as a dire scene of white connivance and black self-cancellation, in truth promoted a spectrum of exchanges between black and white authors, genres, theories, and cultural institutions. Red interracialisms of word and deed . . . opened two-way channels between radical Harlem and Soviet Moscow, between the New Negro renaissance and proletarian literature.” He proposed that communism’s “rare sustenance for African-American initiative and cross-racial adventure was an urgent reason why scores of literary ‘New Negroes’ became ‘Old Leftists.’” He cited “a gallery of black literary intellectuals” who were affiliated in some way with communism during the 1920s and 1930s and maintained talk in Harlem salons of “Communist drives against lynch law, ‘white chauvinism,’ and . . . imperial enemies of black freedom.” He confirmed that the “New Negro’s entrance onto the Old Left . . . was early, voluntary, and key to the formative modern instant in African American intellectual life” and that “Working-class Harlem internationalists impressed by both the Russian Revolution and a local pro-Soviet Left forged links between African-American writing and the Old Left while angling to jump-start Harlem’s rebirth.”²⁴ His last chapter referred to Winston James’s statement crediting the actions of Briggs, Huiswoud, McKay, and Moore as evidence that “Caribbeans were among the most outspoken members of the Communist party, including on racism and on the ‘Negro Question.’” Maxwell then concluded, “Let the record show that these vocal, adopted Harlemites, products of a special black diaspora linking the West Indies, uptown New York, and Soviet Moscow, also helped to initiate a practice of African-American literature as outspoken as any.”²⁵

Huiswoud, Moore, Domingo, and Briggs certainly qualified as “working-

class Harlem internationalists." It is important to remember that when they arrived in New York between 1905 and 1912 there was no *Messenger*, *Crusader*, or *Negro World*, no Russian Revolution, no Black Mecca, no Harlem Renaissance. The publication of *The New Negro* helped establish a critical discourse associated with the Renaissance, but in 1925 participants were not concerned with defining or positioning the Renaissance in time. Almost a century later the debate continues as to whether the Renaissance should be confined to a period roughly between 1920 and 1935 or considered one of the peaks of a florescence within a continuum of the African American experience. From the vantage point of the 1960s Moore judged that the "literary movement was no Minerva sprung full-fledged from the head of Jove, for while its immediate inspiration lay in the surrounding social conditions, its roots, too, went back through earlier Afro-American writers to the bards of ancient Africa. Nevertheless, he recognized the historic impulse of the Renaissance and credited the radical publications and the activities associated with them as having given "rise to a cultural and social climate which caused Harlem to be known as 'The Mecca of the New Negro.'" He explained, "The movement which soon followed were nurtured in this cultural climate and militant temper which had been developed by the Harlem radicals and socialists."²⁷ The New Negro spirit and image Moore and his colleagues helped foster was in direct contrast to the nadir of the 1890s; Harlem's new-found voice and militancy of the teens, twenties, and thirties continued well beyond the decelerating force of the Great Depression. What mattered to the Harlem radicals at the time was the relief that could be found from racism that had existed from the founding of the country. Huiswoud, Briggs, and Moore focused on politics, and the mid-twenties marked a new phase in their commitment to Marxism. The American Negro Labor Congress promised to be a broader national organization than the African Blood Brotherhood: an opportunity to help organize a funded new radical organization committed to addressing the plight of African American workers. The circumscribed Brotherhood faded from the scene.

Huiswoud and Moore were sent to Chicago by the Workers Party to help prepare for the launching of the ANLC scheduled for October 25, 1925. The organization was characterized in promotional material as "not seeking to displace any other organization . . . is not a trade union, but seeks to strengthen all legitimate trade unions by bringing our working people into them and to win our equal rights within them."²⁸ Reports on attendance claimed an average attendance of six hundred per night but there were only thirty-nine registered delegates. The largest number of delegates were from Chicago; others were from Alabama, California, Kansas, Louisiana, New York, Ohio,

Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. Aside from the ABB, the Negro Women's Household League, and a few other obscure organizations, the delegates represented labor organizations such as the Improved Janitors Union Local 66, Hod Carriers and Building Laborers Local 142, Freight and Express Handlers Local 1773, United Mine Workers Local 2012, and Amalgamated Clothing Workers Local 39.

Evidently Lovett Fort-Whiteman, national organizer of the congress, was either unaware of or disagreed with the strategy Huiswoud and Moore had insisted upon regarding the image of the organization. The program, publicity, and inclusion of white party members in the audience revealed ties to the communists and it was known that Fort-Whiteman had participated in the Sanhedrin conference as a delegate of the Workers Party. It is not that Fort-Whiteman was unaware of the concerns of the African American people. In an article, "The Negro in America," in the February 1925 issue of the *Communist International* he had complained that "the slow growth of Marxism among negroes had been wholly due to the inability both of the social democrats and the Communists to approach the negro on his own mental grounds, and to interpret his peculiar social situation in terms of the class struggle . . . The negro . . . wants to know how it [communism] can improve his social status, what bearing does it have on the common practice of lynching, political disfranchisement, segregation, industrial discrimination, etc." Yet he was so imbued with Russian culture that instead of arranging for entertainment by contributors to the Harlem Renaissance he included a one-act Pushkin play in Russian and a Russian ballet on the program. That too backfired; when the white dancers arrived and saw the audience they refused to dance.²⁹

Fort-Whiteman continued as the national organizer, but John J. Ballam of the Central Executive Committee of the Workers Party was in charge of the organizational work for the ANLC. In his preliminary report on January 1, 1926, Ballam admitted that he was "not quite clear as to just what is expected nor exactly what my duties and relations to the ANLC are" and assumed that he was to assure a sound financial basis, establish the *Negro Champion*, utilize forces among the Negro comrades for propaganda and organization, and establish functioning local councils. Among his nine proposals were the "correction of attitude of indifference on part of Party rank and file and lower functionaries" through frequent articles on the Negro question by Fort-Whiteman, William Dunne, and Robert Minor, and continuation of the Party subsidy. His most revealing comments were regarding the contradiction in the ANLC constitution that claimed it was not a "rival organization" and pledged itself to create labor organizations, yet sought individual members

and projected the formation of local councils. Ballam considered that organization "was born with the disease of dual-union-itis" and would suffer with the charge of "dual-unionism" if it attempted to organize the unorganized and unskilled Negro workers in the basic industries; it would also face the hostility and opposition of all Negro petty-bourgeois and religious organizations if it attempted to organize Negro workers and farmers on a class basis. He favored "organizing the Negro workers and farmers for the protection as a Race" and making "a united front with all Negro organizations against Jim-Crowism; Segregation; peonage; black-beltism and all Race discriminations at all times."³⁰ Evidently the concept of a united front organization dominated. Promotional material for Fort-Whiteman's tour of major northeast cities stressed that the ANLC aimed "to create a United Front of All existing Negro Organizations for the purpose of Uniting all forces in a common battle against Race Discrimination and for the right of Negroes to enter the Labor Unions and for the Unity of Negro and White workers in the defense of their common interests."³¹

The ANLC limped along under a barrage of severe criticism from the African American press and organizations. Fort-Whiteman, remembering his flamboyant appearance in a Russian *rebochka* [long belted tunic], black boots, and fur hat, longed to be in the USSR. While he was in Moscow for the Fifth Congress he appealed to the Secretariat to extend time to permit research and writing a book on "Soviet Russia and the Negro Races." In July 1924, during his stay as a guest at the summer colony of KUTV, he had also sought the assistance of W. E. B. Du Bois. His letter to Du Bois extolled the elimination of racial problems under the Soviet system and reported that he was conducting a study of social conditions in Russia. On June 3, 1926, he proposed to the Party that he be sent back to Moscow. He listed eleven objectives as the rationale. He included: "To make plans for extending the Congress work among the Negro agricultural workers and small farmers. To establish closer contact with the Krestintern. To make arrangements for negro students to be sent to the Agrarian Institute for short courses. To insist on the establishing of an African and Negro Bureau in the Comintern . . . To get further material . . . for my yet unfinished book, titled 'Bolshevik Policy and Racial Problems.' To insist before the Comintern for the publication of a quarterly magazine for colonial peoples . . . To insist with the matter of a commercial treaty between the Soviet Union and the Negro Republic of Liberia." He was advised by Charles Ruthenberg, general secretary of the Party, that the Political Committee decided he was not to go to Moscow and recommended that he submit his proposal to the Eastern Department of the Comintern.³² The party fraction in the ANLC began

question Fort-Whiteman's leadership, and many discussions on the weaknesses and improvement of the organization were held. On May 23, 1926, the ANLC was reorganized.

Lack of sufficient cadre to implement plans was a constant complaint. A request from William Weinstone to the Party for a Negro comrade to conduct work in a New York District was met with the response from CEC Negro Director Ballam: "You should find and develop a Negro comrade there to carry out this essential work . . . the solution is not for us to create a substitute for them in Chicago (it would take twenty years before one could be produced and he most likely would be mulatto). You should . . . force discipline thru your own agencies."³⁴ Weinstone persisted that an African American organizer was needed in New York because the Negro organizations were located in the city. He recommended on September 29, 1926, that Moore be assigned as a part-time organizer for the ANLC and that District 2 in New York would guarantee the balance of his wages in order to build up Negro work.³⁵ He mentioned Moore's role in the fight on behalf of Negro operators for the right to work in motion picture houses in Harlem but did not refer to the fact that Moore had lost his job due to absence during the time he devoted to the organization of the ANLC in Chicago. Moore assumed work as a functionary assigned to organize African Americans in New York City.

The ANLC, still based in Chicago, continued to experience problems. Roscoe Dungee, who was serving as acting secretary and editor of the *Negro Champion*, disappeared and James W. Ford, who had joined the Party in 1926, was brought in to cover the office. In preparation for a meeting of the national executive committee of the organization to be held on May 22, 1927, a year after the reorganization, a document on "Directions" was prepared for the Party fraction. Criticism stressed that the operation was on "too narrow a basis" with "Communist Party direction pressed too much to the forefront." Considerable blame was placed on Fort-Whiteman's "leftist sectarian policies and incompetent direction," which were considered largely responsible for the severe isolation from the wide non-Party masses. The Party fraction also expressed criticism of certain attitudes and actions of the Party Central Committee and considered that the CEC and its representative, Robert Minor, had failed to take note of and correct the policies and practice of Fort-Whiteman and his administration. Recommendations included accepting the resignation of Fort-Whiteman as general secretary, electing Moore as general secretary-organizer, increasing the staff, moving the headquarters to New York, and constituting a council of directors.³⁶ Considering that the major criticism was the failure to address burning issues such as lynchings, residential segregation and discriminations, the plight of southern Negro farmers, the recommendation

to include special campaigns against the imperialist attack on China and the raid on the Soviet Trading Corporation in London seemed somewhat misguided. During a session of the general executive board of the ANLC, held from May 23 to May 26, Moore was elected to the head post. The office was moved to New York City when the Workers (Communist) Party headquarters were relocated there in 1927.

The ANLC was considered a national "auxiliary organization" of the Party. There were also local auxiliary organizations that attempted to address problems at a local level. In January 1928 Moore spearheaded the formation of the Harlem Tenants League. Hermie served as secretary and later described one of their street rallies held on May Day:

Up till then, May 1st was tabu, but I went to the Police Precinct . . . with knocking knees to make the request of the Precinct head, who thought me a mere schoolgirl. We got the permit and when we gathered in front of our headquarters for the parade, I heard my name called. I was escorted to the Chief, who stepped out of his car, shook my hand and said he would lead off the parade! Which he did, turning us over to the Chief of the next Precinct waiting at Lenox & 135th . . . We had a big league and did a lot of good work.³⁷

Subsequent activities of the League failed to elicit such cooperation by the police. They were more likely to be combatants when an eviction of a resident from an apartment took place and the League organized teams to carry the possessions that had been placed on the street back into the apartment. Members including Briggs, Domingo, Grace Campbell, A. Elizabeth Hendrickson, Cecil Hope, Otto Huiswoud, George Padmore, and Edward W. led rent strikes, protested against evictions and rent gouging, and lobbied for housing codes to improve conditions such as inadequate heat that were the responsibility of landlords.³⁸

The Negro Workers Relief Committee, originally the Negro Committee for Miners Relief, was another auxiliary organization that was developed to solve a particular problem: to assist workers who lost their jobs during the miners' strike in Pennsylvania and workers who were victims of hurricanes in Florida and floods in Mississippi. The list of members of the executive committee was quite impressive, including William Pickens and W. E. B. Du Bois of the NAACP; prominent ministers of two large Harlem churches, Rev. William Lloyd Imes and Rev. J. W. Robinson; and communists Grace P. Campbell, chairman, Williana Burroughs, Briggs, Moore, Edward Doty, A. Elizabeth Hendrickson, Oliver J. Golden, and Henry Rosemond.

The portion of the population that the Party aimed to organize was "the masses"—a core concept in the communist lexicon. But was the ANLC, an

organization committed to trade union activity, the most effective means to reach the African American masses? The civil rights battlefield was not exactly empty of battalions engaged in combating discrimination and colonialization. By 1920 the NAACP had already established its popular *Crisis* magazine, with a paid circulation of 94,000, a press service that released news to white and African American papers, 310 branches, 150 of which were in the South, and a membership that reached 88,000 by the end of the decade.³⁹ The UNIA, with its widely distributed *Negro World* and members in over one thousand branches in forty-two countries,⁴⁰ along with Randolph's efforts to organize the Pullman Porters were also ongoing mobilization efforts with which the Communists had to reckon. Efforts by the ANLC to coordinate and influence other organizations had only limited success. The congress did not have a clear strategy because the Party vacillated in its position toward non-communist organizations, constantly shifting between building united fronts with other organizations and attacking them as enemies. African American communists had to cope with the dichotomy between the desire to influence liberal organizations from the inside and the assumed danger of association with "bourgeois" elements. It was not just capitalists the Party identified as its main target: they attacked socialists, social democrats, "petty-bourgeois intellectuals," nationalists, churchmen, and others, many of whom in the African American community shared some of the goals of the Party. African Americans were far more responsive to programs that attacked lynching and Jim Crow apartheid than tirades against the Fords and Rockefellers, and many resented attacks on Du Bois and Garvey.

Little ground could be gained by such a slim force attempting to develop a labor organization like the ANLC with branches throughout the nation while participating in Party activities that included recruitment of members for the Party. Despite the paucity of organizers, the Party considered attempts to influence noncommunist organizations an important part of Negro work. The UNIA, whose membership was considered to be "the masses," had local, national, and international units that could not be ignored. Early efforts to influence the UNIA by members of the ABB and the Party had not been successful, but the size of the UNIA and its misadventure with the Ku Klux Klan posed a challenge. A delegate of the Workers Party, Mrs. Olivia Whiteman, addressed the Fourth Annual International Convention of the UNIA, and National Chairman William Foster and Executive Secretary Charles Ruthenberg sent a long letter, dated August 14, 1924, urging the convention to reconsider a resolution that had been passed regarding the Ku Klux Klan.⁴¹ Advice that the Klan was no friend of African Americans was not welcomed, and attacking Garvey seemed to be the only strategy available to the Party until

factionalism within Garvey's movement presented an opportunity to allies. The competition for power in the UNIA became apparent when Garvey was taken into custody on February 5, 1925, following his conviction for fraud and sent to the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary. The Fifth Convention of the UNIA was scheduled to be held in Detroit in March 1926. ANLC representatives in Chicago made contact with UNIA leaders in Detroit, and Robert Minor and Fort-Whiteman spoke at one of the sessions. An article by Robert Minor in the *Daily Worker* attacking the UNIA colonization scheme, however, created considerable tension and undercut the relationship they were trying to establish in what was considered a Garvey stronghold.⁴² Subsequently, the UNIA leadership in New York declared the Detroit meeting illegal and convened the convention in New York in August.

The August 12, 1926, report on Negro work submitted to the CEC indicated that Party leaders had discussed the split in UNIA leadership and decided to take an active role in the Fifth Annual Convention of the Negro Peoples of the World, held under the auspices of the UNIA in New York. The faction led by George O. Marke, supreme deputy next in command to Garvey, and George A. Weston, a leader of the New York division, was considered a "sympathetic relationship" with ANLC delegates to the UNIA Convention (i.e., Fort-Whiteman, Moore, and Lionel Francis of Pittsburgh, a former member of the UNIA). The general policy of the Party was "to come to an understanding with the left wing of the UNIA for common work with the ultimate objective of forming one united front organization for the fight of the Negroes of this country." They set out "to clarify the Congress [convention] ideologically and get it into the orientation of the ANLC" and decided upon a series of resolutions to be introduced at the UNIA convention. The report indicated that "as a result of the discussion of the social and political status of the negro by Moore and Whiteman, they were elected on a convention committee of five to draw up a resolution."⁴³ The lengthy resolution that was adopted was entitled "The Social and Political Status of the Negro Peoples of the World; Means for its Improvement" and had sections describing conditions in Africa, the United States, Haiti, Caribbean islands, and colonies and Latin America and listed general remedial actions not likely to evoke a contested debate. Clearly bearing the touch of Richard B. Moore, it included a resolution that "delegates be sent by all the Negro Peoples to the Conference called by the League against Colonial Suppression to be held next November in Brussels."⁴⁴

Charles E. Ruthenberg, secretary-general of the Workers Party and member of the ECCI Presidium even entertained fantasies about collaborating with the UNIA on demands for the enforcement of the Thirteenth, Four-

teenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, a campaign to organize a Tenant's League throughout the South, and a campaign to secure the freedom of Negro soldiers imprisoned in Texas as a result of race riots there.⁴⁵ The only known accomplishments were the passage of the resolution and a plan for Weston to attend the Brussels Congress. The Weston faction was embroiled in court cases involving UNIA property and lost their right to erect a new building on UNIA property. That battle probably diminished Weston's opportunity to go to Brussels.

Some of Garvey's adversaries thought they had heard the last of him after his deportation from the United States to Jamaica in 1927. While the UNIA continued to function in Harlem despite considerable factionalism that resulted in court cases, Garvey searched for another platform. In March 1929 he launched a new weekly newspaper, the *Blackman*, and in August formed another UNIA in Jamaica with a "mammoth parade" and a month-long convention. The Harlem radicals were still attentive to Garvey's popularity in the Caribbean as well as Harlem, and Huiswoud was sent to the UNIA convention as a representative of the ANLC. According to an interview conducted by the *Daily Worker* upon Huiswoud's return, he declared that practical problems confronting Negro workers had not been discussed. Instead, Garvey had expounded a new theory of African or "Race Imperialism" in which he said, "the UNIA is going through the course of establishing an empire—racial imperialism." Huiswoud reported, "As a delegate from the American Negro Labor Congress . . . I challenged his theme, his business schemes, and his sincerity. Exposing the fraud and pointing out the futility of his program, I outlined the program of the A.N.L.C. After my speech, he challenged me to a debate."⁴⁶ The debate, "The Negro Problem Can Only be Solved by International Labour Co-operation between White and Black Labour," with Huiswoud arguing the affirmative and Garvey the negative, was held on August 13 and was reportedly attended by about three thousand people. Robert Hill has indicated that "Garvey said he agreed to debate Huiswoud in order to 'destroy the effects' Huiswoud's remarks 'may have created in the minds of the other delegates.'"⁴⁷ Hermie recalled that "finding that Otto's arguments were beginning to convince his listeners, Garvey stopped the debate, demanded from the audience a standing vote in his favor which he received. When the meeting was dismissed, a few persons awaited Otto . . . declaring that they agreed with Otto 100% but dared not show it in Garvey's presence. They said they were trade unionists and needed guidance." They asked if Otto could help them form a strong trade union movement and he offered to return the next year if they would invite him officially. The next year he returned and held organizing meetings in Kingston and various parts of the country.⁴⁸

Developing communist-supported organizations and affiliating with communist organizations were just two of the various strategies the Party used to extend the communist message. The African American cadre was tireless in disseminating its propaganda on street corners and halls, not only in Harlem but in as many large urban areas as they could command. For example, Huiswoud, Moore, and Otto Hall went on speaking tours to cities primarily in the Northeast such as Boston, Rochester, Buffalo, Cleveland, Toledo, Youngstown, Detroit, Chicago, Chester, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Wilmington, Washington, D.C., and Wheeling. John Owens and his family were scheduled to cover western states in his "flivver" and train in 1926, speaking in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Spokane, Butte, Denver, Pueblo, Kansas City, St. Louis, and Chicago.⁴⁹ As one of the main African American organizers for the Party, Huiswoud was frequently on the road, thumbing a ride from city to city. Contrary to some reports, he only visited Buffalo. According to Hermie, he was never there on a regular basis. Attempts were made to arrange a two-week tour for Hubert Harrison to ten cities in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. The request from John Ballam on behalf of the National Committee of the CEC for \$180 to cover expenses in April 1926 indicated "Comrade Harrison would be invaluable in stimulating interest and increasing the organization for the American Negro Labor Congress. He is, however, not a trained or disciplined Communist and will require special consideration from us."⁵⁰ Any design to draw Harrison closer to the congress was dashed the following year when he died suddenly at the age of forty-five following an appendectomy. He had been scheduled to speak in Harlem the following week on "Soviet Russia and the Darker Races." Harlem mourned the loss of "one of its ablest, most brilliant and best-known figures,"⁵¹ and African American socialists mourned the loss of their mentor.

Particularly during U.S. election campaigns they tried to raise speaking engagements to the level of Harrisonian persuasion. The Party ran candidates for political office in order to present the communist message even though they did not expect to win, and they included African American candidates on local, state, and national tickets. Nominations in the Harlem area, for example, included Grace Campbell for the U.S. Congress, Moore for the offices of congressman, New York State attorney general, state assemblyman and chief judge of the court of Appeals; William Burroughs for New York State lieutenant governor and New York City alderman and comptroller; Forster Whiteman for state comptroller, Edward Welsh for state assemblyman, and Otto Hall for New York City comptroller. James Ford was nominated in 1932, 1936, and 1940 for the high office of vice-president of the United States. Huiswoud

woud was not a citizen, yet he was nominated as a candidate for the state assembly at the Workers Party Convention in 1922 and shared with Grace Campbell the distinction of being the first African Americans to run for office on the Communist Party ticket.

Pamphlets, flyers, press releases, and articles in newspapers and journals were published and distributed extensively in all types of campaigns. The *Negro Champion* was created as the organ of the ANLC in 1925; ten thousand copies were printed, but the distribution and collection of payments was poor. Leaders of the ANLC had difficulty publishing the newspaper on a regular basis. According to Briggs, who served as editor, he took a leave of absence in 1927 to work for a "capitalist firm" in Trinidad.⁵² In January 1929 Moore reported that because of lack of funds and time the *Champion* was not published from August 20, 1927 until May 1928, when George Padmore was secured to assist with the July and September issues and finally the return of Briggs was secured: "Since September 8th, the first issue brought out under his editorship, the *Champion* has been appearing with some degree of regularity." Moore stressed that "the carrying of historical articles which was begun must be continued again and measures must be taken at once to improve its distribution."⁵³ The *Negro Champion* was directed to an African American audience; articles in the *Daily Worker* and other communist publications increased the exposure of white comrades to problems and party activities in the African American community. Current news about African Americans was presented as an integral part of the Party policy and program. Huiswoud's cogent article, "The Negro and the Trade Unions," in the December 1928 issue of the *Communist*, for example, traced the historic involvement of African Americans in the labor movement, presented data on membership in various unions, reviewed the types of exclusion practiced against African American workers, and pressed for the organization of Negro workers in unions. He described the CEC's resolution in May 1928 on the role of the Party and the plan of the Red International of Labor Unions (RILU), or Profintern, for an International Negro Trade-Union Committee. He did not fail to mention, "The T.U.E.L. has too long neglected this important phase of its work."⁵⁴ In contrast to this article Huiswoud, Briggs, and others frequently did forgo the creative expression prevalent during the Renaissance and fell into the jargon so typical of Party journalism. Their writings were still strident and informative but no longer had the appeal of the *Crusader*.

Following the collapse of the *Crusader* in February 1922, Briggs had developed the *Crusader News Service* with the assistance of Domingo. The press service released news every week to about a hundred domestic and foreign newspapers with ties to the African Diaspora. It was an indirect but expand-

ed and effective means of communicating with African American communities. Briggs considered "a powerful Negro Press as a first requisite of effective race defence" and had visions of his service conducting investigation and research, including translations of articles dealing with the Negro appearing in the European press and in foreign-language American newspapers and presenting firsthand reports on important events and legislation affecting the Negro. His appeal to the Party for a part-time stenographer early 1923, at the time he was involved with preparation for the Sanhedrin, had been met with recommendations to secure voluntary assistance, and a request to The American Fund for Public Service in February 1924 for a grant was denied.⁵⁵ Robert Hill has indicated that the service lasted about two years.⁵⁶ Later in the decade, at the first meeting of the Party's Reorganizing National Negro Committee on August 14, 1928, mention was made that a news service was to be revived under the title of the "Crusader."⁵⁷ Moon's motion at the August 17 meeting of the subcommittee on Negro work of the CEC clarified the way in which the service was reinstituted. He proposed "that a news service be started immediately and that we utilize the name Crusader News Service which has had a considerable prestige, which might be advantageous for us."⁵⁸ This time Briggs did get assistance; Hermie joined the staff. In fact, she became the staff for two years. He prepared the news stories, and she typed and mimeographed the news bulletin and took care of the mailing. She considered the service effective because it went to approximately two hundred African American editors who did not have resources. "The South lapped it up."⁵⁹

There were few Huiswouds and Fort-Whitemans committed and prepared to operate as functionaries in the Party; both of them had been trained at the Rand School. Intense training to develop additional cadre was urged. During the organizational period of the ANLC the number of active African American members in the Party increased, and Fort-Whiteman and others recruited African Americans for training in the USSR. The Comintern responded to requests for training opportunities made by American representatives to the Fifth Congress, and as early as September 26, 1924, the Eastern Department notified the Party that \$1,280 had been sent for the sole purpose of sending ten students to the Eastern University for two to three years. The guidelines included that the students should be in good health and free from infectious diseases, particularly venereal disease; should be "workmen from the bench"; should be class conscious and actively participating in the revolutionary movement; and should be literate and expecting to conform to the strict discipline of the University. They were not required to be members of the Party but that was preferable.⁶⁰

One of the first to register at the University of the Toilers of the East (KUTV) in November 1925 was Bankole Awoonor-Renner [a.k.a. Kweku Bankole], an Ashanti from the Gold Coast. He was in the United States as a student to attend Tuskegee Institute and Carnegie Institute of Technology and had become involved with the Youth Communist League (YCL) in Pittsburgh.⁶¹ Other members of the group of students were Oliver John Golden [a.k.a. John Golden], Aubrey Bailey [a.k.a. Harold Williams and Dessalines], Roy Mahoney [a.k.a. Jim Farmer] and Otto Hall [a.k.a. Carl or John Jones]. Hall was endorsed to proceed to Russia by a joint meeting of the ANLC and the Polcom of the CEC on February 5, 1926,⁶² and was joined by his younger brother, Haywood Hall [a.k.a. Harry Haywood] in the spring of 1926. The two places recommended for women were not filled at that time, so it does not appear that ten students were sent in the first group. It has been estimated that between sixty and ninety African Americans attended the KUTV and Lenin School from 1925 to 1938, including Howell V. Phillips, William Patterson [a.k.a. William Wilson], Marie Houston, Herbert Newton, and Maude White.⁶³ By the end of the decade Golden, Hall, Haywood, Patterson, White, and Williams had returned and were playing active leadership roles in the Party. Mark Solomon has pointed out that while the students experienced culture shock and studied under adverse physical conditions, "they were caught in a swirl of internationalism that . . . gave them a global frame of reference, built their self-confidence, and encouraged them to create and control their own agendas."⁶⁴

Maude White is an example of a party member who gained self-confidence at the KUTV. According to Hermie she was not really ready for the rigors of the school: she was timid, fearful, and unsure of what to expect. In addition to the intense cold and the demanding program she was bullied by one of her African American roommates. When she returned to New York three years later she was aggressive and fully prepared to organize in the trade union movement. Among her many assignments was her first, in 1930, as an organizer for the Needle Trades Workers' Industrial Union in New York. She was particularly effective in helping to improve conditions for women workers as well as waging a fight against racial discrimination within the union and the Party.⁶⁵

Oliver John Golden, on the other hand, who was prepared to work on agrarian programs following his return from Moscow, was not afforded an opportunity to develop a program in the South. In the fall of 1927 Golden, who had studied at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama prior to attending the KUTV, presented a plan to the CEC of the Party. He reminded them that the ANLC program provided for organizational work among poor Negro farmers and agricultural workers who were historically the ally of the pro-

letariat and that the leadership of the party recognized the importance of agrarian work but little was being done. He explained that "after Comrade Bandiere [of the Krestintern] was informed that I was a peasant and had studied scientific agriculture, he insisted that I work in the Krestintern in order to further my studies . . . Comrade Bandiere was very much disappointed when he was told that I had to return to America at once. He immediately undertook to give me a series of instructions on how to organize an agrarian movement." Golden proposed collecting data on the rural population—their demands, extent of organization, resources such as the NAACP, Tuskegee, Hampton, local organizations, and governmental agencies—and developing an agrarian movement as a phase of ANLC work in Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Kentucky. He proposed that he be placed in charge of the work.⁶⁶ Golden would have been aware that Negro land-grant agricultural and technical colleges supported by the federal government had spawned a network of African American agriculture specialists that might have been tapped. The Party rejected the plan and Golden continued to work with Moore, Huiswoud, Briggs, and others in New York. Moore lamented later that funds were not available as the proposal had been abandoned.⁶⁷ Huiswoud was more accusatory; he charged that despite Golden's training in Moscow the Party had assigned him to work in a Party cafeteria on Union Square.⁶⁸ Golden was to develop another plan, however, that benefited the USSR instead of African American farmers in the South.

William Patterson considered the education offered by the USSR to thousands of students from colonial countries "a priceless gift" and described his contact with students who later became leaders in their homelands. In answer to the question why the Soviet Union would establish a school for foreign students when they could hardly provide for their own, he stated that the "imperialists had refined the techniques of miseducation to a fine art and trained a limited number of their victims in simple clerical work. African American, African, Indian, and East Asian colonial youth had the slightest chance of education beyond the earliest grades, and to the USSR educating these youth "represented the acceptance of responsibility to mankind to international working-class solidarity—the essence of their philosophy." While many observers would argue that the USSR's intent was indoctrination of the students, it should not be overlooked that the schools played a significant role in shaping resistance to colonialism. Woodford McClellan had concluded, "For all their own shortcomings, and despite the perverse agenda of the regime which controlled them, those schools played a general positive role in the growing world wide assault on racism and colonialism."

International exposure and informal education occurred at conferences, or congresses, as the Soviets preferred to call them, in addition to attending special schools in the USSR. Moore's opportunity to press forward the African American agenda came as a representative of the ANLC to the International Congress Against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism in Brussels, February 10–15, 1927. Willi (Wilhelm) Münzenberg of Germany has been credited with proposing a "colonial conference" in August 1926 in keeping with the view that it was in the interest of the proletarian revolution to assist oppressed nations in their fight for liberation. He borrowed the title "League for the Struggle Against Imperialism" from an organization that Chinese students in Moscow had founded in 1924 and announced in Germany the formation of a league against colonial terror and oppression. Invitations were not sent to the Comintern or communist parties, and communists representing other organizations were instructed to keep a low profile to encourage broad participation. Declarations of support were received from China, India, Egypt, the Sudan, South Africa, and other African countries, and the congress attracted 174 organizations from thirty-seven countries, as well as such well-known figures as Henri Barbusse of France, Albert Einstein of Germany, Jawaharlal Nehru of India, and Madame Sun Yat-sen of China. Huiswoud's mentors, Katayama and Rutgers, were also present.⁷¹

Manuel Gomez (Charles Phillips) was assigned to head the Anti-Imperialist Department of the U.S. Party, which reportedly had similar counterparts in all parties in major capitalist countries. He had operated under other names in the Mexican Communist Party for five years following his resistance to military draft into the American army during World War I and returned to the United States as Manuel Gomez in 1922. According to Gomez the Anti-Imperialist Department and subsequent International Congress and League sought to implement "the Leninist program of uniting all revolutionary working class movements in the home countries of imperialism with the National Liberation struggles in the oppressed colonial and semicolonial countries."⁷² The theses formulated and introduced by Lenin at the Second Congress of the Comintern attended by Gomez had directed communist parties to aid revolutionary movements among the dependent, underprivileged nations and colonies and included reference to the "American Blacks." His claim is therefore not surprising that at one time it was expected the Anti-Imperialist Department would assume responsibility for the struggle against the oppression of Negroes. Eventually it was decided that the issue must be addressed by the entire Party organization. It was recommended that Moore should be a delegate to the congress "with a view to developing him as secretary of the ANLC, after his return."⁷³ In 1927 Moore and his colleagues were ecstatic to have

another international platform to call attention to the plight of African Americans, African Caribbeans, and colonized peoples in Africa and to press for equality and freedom. Fort-Whiteman notified Ruthenberg that William Pickens, field-secretary of the NAACP, George Weston, president of the UNIA, and Hubert H. Harrison had agreed to attend the congress.⁷⁴

Gomez has indicated that the delegation he headed included, in addition to Moore, Roger Baldwin, who represented the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Urban League, Chi Ch'ao-ting, a Chinese student, and Scott Nearing.⁷⁵ George Weston of the UNIA decided not to go, and even though Moore is listed only as a representative of the ANLC in the official list of delegates his name appeared in some records as representing both the ANLC and the UNIA. A disclaimer was issued in the *Negro World* that Moore had not been empowered to appear as a UNIA representative, but historic accounts have continued to link him to the UNIA because of the dual listing. William Pickens of the NAACP was listed as a delegate and a member of the executive committee of the congress but did not reach Brussels. On November 30, 1926, he wrote Fort-Whiteman from England, "Sorry you folks did not act promptly and unfailingly as I did—I did all I planned and more."⁷⁶ A second letter in December indicating that he still had not received instructions to proceed to Brussels helps explain why he missed the congress. Moore served as *rappporteur* of the committee on the Negro question, with Lamine Senghor of Senegal (representing the Comité de Défense de la Race Nègre) as chairman, Marcel Bloncourt of the French Antilles (Union Intercoloniale), Carlos Deambrosio Martins of Haiti (Unione Patriotica), Josiah Tshangana Gumede of South Africa (the African National Congress) and James La Guma (South African Non-European Trade Union Federation).

Like Huiswoud at the Fourth Congress of the Comintern in 1922, Moore was prepared to help structure a resolution. Senghor, Bloncourt, Martins, and Gumede made statements stressing the oppressive conditions in their areas and Moore presented the introduction and "The Common Resolution on the Negro Question." It demanded complete political and economic independence for Haiti, Cuba, Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands and self-government for other Caribbean colonies, and also pressed for confederation of the British West Indies. The resolution set forth ten goals to achieve the emancipation of the Negro peoples of the world, including "complete freedom of the peoples of Africa and of African origin" and five measures to accomplish various freedoms and rights: the organization and coordination of Negro liberation movements; prosecution of the fight against imperialist ideologies of chauvinism, fascism, kukluxism, and race prejudice; admission of workers of all races into all unions; and unity with other sup-

pressed peoples and classes for the fight against imperialism.⁷⁷ Several delegates, Gumede among them, went to Moscow from Brussels, but Moore visited his friend McKay in the south of France. McKay was experiencing financial problems, and Moore gave him what money he could spare. McKay gave Moore, however, a priceless gift, the poem "Pushkin," which he had written in Moscow (see poem placed at beginning of book).

When Moore returned to New York he engaged in an active campaign to promote the League against Imperialism and for National Independence (LAI) established by the congress. Not all observers of the League shared Moore's enthusiasm for the impact of the congress and organization that was formed. Gomez, who assumed the name Charles Shipman after leaving the Party, commented in his autobiography that he could not "say the congress accomplished anything."⁷⁸ Imanuel Geiss, however, in his study *The Pan-African Movement*, concluded that the congress and League "should neither be dismissed as a communist front organization nor inflated into part of a worldwide communist conspiracy." He recognized that "Münzenberg and the Comintern, with their keen sense of the forces of change at work in world history, had hit upon a theme pregnant with future possibilities at a time when European colonialism was still almost unchallenged . . . The Brussels congress served first and foremost to exchange information about conditions in various parts of the globe and to establish personal contacts."⁷⁹ Many diverse individuals and groups around the world could rally around the issue of imperialism. The 1927 congress—a peoples' league of nationalities—set the framework to counteract the League of Nations' acceptance of colonialism. Relationships and networks were initiated in Brussels that extended well beyond 1927 and helped challenge the power of imperialist nations.

Huiswoud and Moore were pleased when the Fourth Pan-African Congress was scheduled to be held in their own bailiwick in 1927, and they attended as delegates of the ANLC. Previous congresses had been held in Paris in 1919, London, Brussels and Paris in 1921, and in London and Lisbon in 1923. W. E. B. Du Bois had hoped to convene the fourth assembly in several Caribbean islands, but it was finally held from August 21 to 24 at Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, with 208 delegates from eleven countries in attendance. Although William Pickens had not made it to Brussels, he gave a lengthy report on the International Congress Against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism. He tried to extend an opportunity for Moore to be included in the committee to give a special report on the Brussels Conference and for Huiswoud to be added to the resolution committee, but chairman Du Bois did not seem receptive to their inclusion and statements. Unionization of African American workers was a hotly debated issue, and Moore criticized

the congress for not delving sufficiently into the African American worker problems. The congress ended, however, with a statement urging "white workers of the world to realize that no program of labor uplift can be successfully carried through in Europe or America so long as colored labor is exploited and enslaved and deprived of all political power."⁸⁰

There were also Party members who not only attended international conferences but contributed directly to the work of the Comintern or to the development of the USSR. The most notable in addition to Huiswoud and Fort-Whiteman were Williana Burroughs (a.k.a. Mary Adams), James V. Ford, Oliver John Golden, Malcolm Nurse (a.k.a. George Padmore), Robert Robinson, and Homer Smith (a.k.a. Chatwood Hall).⁸¹ Probably the least known of these was Williana Jones Burroughs (1882–1945), who played a key role on Soviet radio during World War II. Burroughs lived most of her life in New York City, was a graduate of Hunter College, began teaching in 1907, and was employed as an elementary school teacher by the board of education from 1917 to 1933. She and a fellow union representative, Isadore Begun, attempted to defend another teacher named Blumberg at a meeting of the board. When Burroughs and Begun insisted on speaking without the board's acknowledgment of their presence, they were accused of creating disorder and dismissed for "conduct unbecoming a teacher." She and her husband, Charles Burroughs, a post office employee who had been a student of Du Bois when he taught at Wilberforce University, lived with their four children in Jamaica, New York. She taught at P. S. 48 in Queens and was active in the Merrick Park community as well as in Teachers' Union Local 555.⁸² When she learned about the ANLC she became active in Harlem. She stated, "I wanted to get closer to the real struggle, closer to the basic organization of the working class in which I belong. I joined the Communist party."⁸³ From 1926 on she was involved with Huiswoud, Moore, and others in party meetings and campaigns, wrote for the *Daily Worker*, and was a contributing editor of the *Liberator* (Harlem) as Mary Adams. In the early thirties she served on the national council of the League of Struggle For Negro Rights as director of activities among women. She was also a party candidate as Williana Burroughs for the offices of alderman and comptroller of New York City and ran for the office of lieutenant governor on the New York State ticket the same year that Moore ran for chief judge of the court of appeals.⁸⁴ She always ran ahead of her ticket.

At the time Burroughs became active in the ANLC she was also involved as secretary of the Institute for Social Study, along with Moore as director. Among the council members were Hubert Harrison and Grace Campbell. The Institute did not seem to be affiliated with the Party even though some of the

officers and council members were Party members. It was another avenue for educating the Harlem community on social problems—exploring the causes of oppression, world problems related to race, and "the means whereby complete social emancipation may be achieved."⁸⁵ Harrison was one of the featured lecturers. Along with his admonition to read he continually warned students that "before the Negroes of the western world can play any effective part they must first acquaint themselves with what is taking place in the larger world where millions are in motion."⁸⁶ This emphasis on international consciousness had been taken to heart by Burroughs as well as Moore and Huiswoud.

Burroughs attended the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern in the summer of 1928, and her two younger sons, nine-year-old Charles and six-year-old Neal, accompanied her.⁸⁷ The children attended a Pioneer camp during the summer. The Soviet commissar of education, Anatoli Lunacharsky, encouraged her to enroll the children in school in the USSR which she did. She returned home and visited them from time to time. She attended the congress of the League against Imperialism in Frankfurt, Germany, in July 1929 and worked for the English-language *Moscow News* in 1930. On September 8, 1930, she addressed the American Commission but did not mention Huiswoud as Browder and Haywood did. She stressed Party support for the social insurance bill in the U.S. Congress that would benefit workers who lost their jobs, the significance of women's work, training on the conduct of strikes, and mistakes the Party made in assignments. She sought a shift to a positive attitude in the choice and development of cadres and cautioned against assigning many jobs to one person, thereby making it impossible to conduct work satisfactorily.⁸⁸ In 1931 she returned to New York.

In 1937 Burroughs moved to Moscow, and in 1939 the Party representative to the ECCI sent a letter to the Cadre Department of the ECCI recommending Burroughs for the post as editor for the Soviet All-Union Radio Committee. In the spring of 1940 she requested permission to return to the United States with her sons but was asked not to leave because the number of American comrades in Moscow was so low. In September 1942 she requested an audience with Georgi Dimitrov, general secretary of the Comintern, to discuss questions connected with her work and personal concerns, stating that she had served in the VRK (the Soviet radio agency) as an announcer and editor for over five years. While her letter did not state health as a concern it was known that she "suffered from impaired health."⁸⁹ During World War II it was her voice that carried the English-language broadcasts on Soviet short wave radio. Because it was necessary for her to remain behind the front lines, she moved out of Moscow with the government when it retreat-

ed to Kuibyshev for safety. In 1945 she finally returned to New York in poor health with her son Neal. Since her husband had died in 1941 and their home in Jamaica, Queens, was sold, they lived with Hermie in Manhattan, where Burroughs died three months later, on Christmas Eve, 1945.⁹⁰ She was proud of the citation and thanks she received from the Committee on Radio and Radio Broadcasting Council of People's Commissars of the USSR for her "devoted work broadcasting on the Soviet radio, and in connection with the ninth year of her work in the All-Union Radio Committee."⁹¹

George Padmore (1902?–1959), whose birth name was Malcolm Iva Meredith Nurse, also entered the international arena as a result of his association with the ANLC about a year later than Burroughs. A bright, handsome student at Howard University, he had arrived in New York on December 9, 1927, from Trinidad in order to study at Fisk University. In 1927 he enrolled at New York University, failed to attend classes, and then enrolled at the Law School of Howard University. He was well known and outspoken on the campus but did not confine his activities to Washington, D.C. One of his professors stated that he had "much more drive than most American Negroes" because he was a product of the "British system which did not completely silence their grievances at home."⁹² He joined the Party in 1927⁹³ and traveled between Washington, D.C. and New York, where he assumed the pseudonym George Padmore. According to Hermie he was considered "an exciting addition" to their circle. He consulted her when he was trying to select a suitable pseudonym. She suggested "Padmore" after a Liberian minister and he responded, "By George you've got it!"—at which point she added "George" to "Padmore." He liked the combination and it became his name for life.⁹⁴ He worked with Moore in the ANLC and Harlem Tenants League; edited and wrote articles, and edited the July and September 1928 issues of the *Negro Champion* while Briggs was away; participated in discussions of the Negro Commission as a visitor; served on national committees on Negro work during 1928 and 1929; campaigned on behalf of Party candidate William Z. Foster; and was sent to the Second Congress of the League against Imperialism in Frankfurt, Germany in July 1929. The record shows that he received \$65 and Huiswoud \$120 for wages for the period June 1 to June 25, 1928, from the national office of the Party, which means he was considered a functionary.⁹⁵ Interestingly, when James Ford wrote from Moscow regarding the establishment of the *Negro Worker* by the Profintern, Moore made a motion at a meeting of the National Sub-Committee on Negro Work of the CEC in August 1928 that Padmore be assigned to send news articles to the bulletin.⁹⁶ Later, Padmore was to have a career in Moscow as editor of the *Negro Worker*.

Despite the barrage of radical speeches and literature the communist mes-

sage was not always well received in African American communities. Nonetheless, parts of the message found a sympathetic response among residents and fueled debates in the press and meeting places well beyond Party venues, especially among young writers and artists who were also searching for meaning in the American and African Diaspora experience. In explaining the African American's expanding interest in foreign affairs, Ira Reid credited, among other factors, "writers for the Socialist and Communist parties in various journals" with having "promoted interest in the problems of Negro peoples throughout the world."⁹⁷ The expressions of African American communists were part of life in Harlem during the Harlem Renaissance, and they were reflected in the art that began to reveal more clearly the lives of African Americans.

In his analysis of the failure of communists to gain and retain large numbers of members, Henry Lee Moon catalogued a series of inroads that they were successful in making. He described their untiring efforts: "Communists have devoted more attention and energy to work among colored citizens than any other non-Negro group seeking basic reform since the heyday of the Garrisonian Abolitionists. No other political party, no branch of the Christian church, no labor organization, no other reform or revolutionary movement has devoted as great a share of its resources to gaining adherents and spreading its influence among Negroes as has the Communist party." He went on to point out that their influence could not be measured in terms of membership, and that many Negro intellectuals and writers had been influenced by communist philosophy. "Communist activity has been an important factor in sharpening the Negro's fight for equal rights and in fostering his recognition in the labor movement, in the arts, and in the civic affairs of the community. Through their international connections the Communists have widely publicized the plight of the Negro in democratic America, to the painful embarrassment of American travelers in Europe, Asia, and Latin America." Moon's thesis was that African Americans did not consider communism the enemy; they knew "the *real* [his emphasis] enemy" as the "fiendish face of reaction. The face of death—death to the spirit as well as to the body . . . Offering no quarter, the Communists put the South on the defensive in the eyes of the whole civilized world. They stirred the imagination of Negroes and inspired the hope of ultimate justice. In churches, in conventions, in union halls, in street-corner meetings, Negroes were clamorous in expressing approval of this campaign." Moon also presented a strong case for the reasons communists encountered difficulties building membership among Negroes, including "the alien character of the movement, its domination from abroad by persons ignorant of the varied facets of race relations

in this country, [and] the lack of understanding by its American agents of the true nature of the Negro problem in America," but he was willing to acknowledge that the communists had "performed a vital function as an irritant to the American conscience."⁹⁸

Huiswoud knew Moon as one of the four disgruntled members of the twenty-two African Americans who went to the USSR in 1932 to appear in a movie. When the movie project was abandoned, the four had "accused the Soviet Union of betraying black people of the world" and returned home with negative press reports.⁹⁹ He could not have imagined that Moon, the head of public relations of the NAACP, would have presented a critique that credited the Party with an impact on the broader community. But, as Moon said in hindsight, "it is a matter of record that the Communists have generally fought for full recognition of Negro rights."¹⁰⁰ What is not usually acknowledged is the role of African American members in shaping and implementing Party campaigns and the connection between their activities and the Harlem Renaissance. In examining the communists' promotion of African American culture Mark Solomon has taken the position that "at times black culture was promoted by the left with a mechanical imposition of self-defined proletarian standards (thereby weakening the organic character of black art). But the Communists and their allies worked to advance African American culture shorn of the intrusive, racist influence of the dominant commercial cultural market . . . The convergence of the Marxist sensibility with black literature, painting, and drama opened the door to exploration of neglected and suppressed experiences of black militancy and resistance."¹⁰¹ In the twenties it was difficult for Huiswoud and his colleagues to discern the significant role of radical politics in the Renaissance. In their efforts to engineer liberation from the vantage point of the socialist movement their focus was on adding their defiant voices to the many expressions emerging from Harlem at the time. While the communists abetted the shift toward militancy and an international perspective during the Harlem Renaissance, resistance to the status quo, whether in art or politics, emanated from within the African American community. That is what gave the period its force, passion, and authenticity.

As Huiswoud moved into the next decade he had one last tour to take as field organizer of the ANLC. The trade union leaders who had spoken to him in Jamaica followed through with a written invitation, and he was able to fulfill his promise to return early in 1930. Assistance in Jamaica was incorporated into a plan for Huiswoud to solicit participation of Caribbean workers in an international congress of Negro workers sponsored by the Profintern that was projected for July 1930 in Hamburg, Germany. He and Hermie

embarked on an extensive tour of the Caribbean. In Jamaica Huiswoud reported success in holding mass meetings and organizing committees comprising thirteen occupations that were to be coordinated by the Jamaica Trades and Labor Union.¹⁰² In addition to Jamaica they visited Haiti, Cuba, Columbia, Curaçao, Venezuela, Trinidad, British and Dutch Guiana, and Barbados.¹⁰³ The mass meeting at which Huiswoud was to have spoken in Trinidad was banned by the police, and he was ordered to leave the country. He was told by a police inspector, "We won't have any of you damn foreign agitators come in here to make trouble among our workers."¹⁰⁴ The trip was not a tourist's escape to sunny beaches; it was a small step toward a long-held vision of addressing the plight of the peoples of the Caribbean.

The tour was Hermie's first visit to the Caribbean since leaving British Guiana at the age of fourteen. The pleasant images of the tropics she considered home that she had carried with her for ten years were now tarnished by the stark poverty she noted in island after island and in the cities of northern South America. She expressed her dismay in articles she sent to Briggs as editor of the *Liberator*, which had replaced the *Negro Champion*. The article on Haiti was not designed to focus on women, yet her observations clearly indicated her interest in the role of women in protest movements. She described demonstrations in Port-au-Prince demanding the withdrawal of American troops when the Hoover Commission arrived: "Two demonstrations have been held here since the Commission arrived, and because of the vast numbers involved neither was broken up . . . A second demonstration was held on Sunday, March 2, in front of the hotel where the Commission is basking itself. This demonstration was composed wholly of Haitian women. Following the demonstration these women went to the chapel to pray for deliverance." Later in the article she described a mass protest meeting called by the Young Women Nationalist Organization that "brought out over 15,000 people, with house tops and trees crowded with spectators . . . Women were very numerous in the gathering."¹⁰⁵ Not only had Hermie joined the journalists of the Harlem Renaissance in painting a picture of the miserable conditions and protests by peoples of African descent, she had joined the protest movement. Unlike the wives of Briggs and Moore who were no longer with their husbands because they had not shared their spouse's passion for changing society, by 1930 Hermie had matured politically and was prepared to fully help Otto Huiswoud in his life's work.