I say this positively: the morale of the New Negro cannot be broken. . . . The morale of the Negro American soldier in France, the morale of the Negro West Indian soldier in France, the morale of the Negro African soldier in France was unbroken and the morale of the soldiers of the bloody war of 1914 to 1918 is the morale of Negroes throughout the world.

—Marcus Garvey, January 15, 1922

7

SOLDIERS TO "NEW NEGROES"

African American Veterans and Postwar Racial Militancy

The Chicago riot left Harry Haywood traumatized. His experiences in France, compounded by the violence he encountered upon his return home, caused the former soldier, in his words, to feel "totally disillusioned about being able to find any solution to the racial problem through the help of the government" and convinced that he "could never again adjust to the situation of Black inequality." He had learned valuable lessons in the army about the meaning of democracy, citizenship, manhood, and freedom, making the disconnection between his pre- and postwar life all the more profound. Haywood grappled with the uncertainties of his racial and political identity and struggled to readjust to civilian life in Chicago. Unable to passively submit to white authority, he bounced from job to job. His personal life suffered as well. He married a strong-willed woman in early 1920, only to have the relationship crumble in the span of a few months. White supremacy, Haywood would introspectively recall, had exacted a heavy toll, leading him to realize, "I had to commit myself to struggle against whatever it was that made racism possible."[1] He began to read voraciously—Charles Darwin, H. L. Mencken, Franz Boas, Marx, Engels—hungry to understand the source of his disillusionment, as well as to find a solution. A job with the post office offered an opportunity not only to achieve financial stability but to converse and bond with other black postal employees, many of whom had also served with the Eighth Illinois in the war. He joined a study group comprised of fellow "aspirant intellectuals," where they read about and discussed various dimensions of the "race problem." They considered naming the club the "New Negro Forum." Before disbanding, the meetings further sharpened Haywood's

intellect and desire to organize for racial and economic equality. By 1922, after some three years of discussing and studying the politics and economics of race, Haywood considered himself prepared to take the next step in his journey to combating white supremacy. He approached his brother and fellow veteran Otto Hall, and expressed his desire to join the Communist Party, in which Otto was already a member. "In the years since I had mustered out of the Army," Haywood reflected, "I had come from being a disgruntled Black ex-soldier to being a self-conscious revolutionary looking for an organization with which to make revolution."[2]

After this period of intellectual self-discovery, Haywood joined the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB). The ABB was a secret paramilitary organization founded by Cyril Briggs, a native of the Caribbean island of Nevis and editor of the *Crusader*, committed to the defense of the race, the liberation of Africa, and the dismantling of global capitalism. Fusing revolutionary Marxism, black nationalism, and diasporic race consciousness, the ABB reflected the militancy of postwar African American political culture. Based primarily in New York and Chicago, the ABB appealed to radicalized black intellectuals, industrial laborers, and tradesmen. Along with an assortment of dynamic black radicals such as Briggs, Richard Moore, and Edward Doty, Haywood joined other former soldiers who also saw the organization as an attractive political alternative.[3] "I have noted your call for enlistments in the African Blood Brotherhood for the redemption of our fatherland, and hereby rush to enlist," an anonymous veteran wrote to the *Crusader* in December 1919. "Please enroll me and send me any information you care to on the subject," he continued. "I am ready for any call, to the limit or beyond. I fought in the world war for 'democracy' and I am willing to do anything you say for the liberation of my people."[4] Like this veteran, Haywood was drawn to the unabashed militarism of the ABB, its diasporic politics, and appropriation of Wilsonian self-determination. He participated in the ABB for roughly six months before achieving his goal of joining the Communist Party.[5]

The ABB represented just one of several organizations that made up the New Negro movement.[6] The New Negro movement, rooted in the political consciousness and collective racial identity of black people in communities throughout the United States and the African diaspora more broadly, emerged from the domestic and global upheavals of the First World War and its aftermath. While the "New Negro," as a term, was not necessarily new, the vast social, political, and demographic transformations brought about by the war made the New Negro of the war and postwar periods distinct from previous historical epochs.[7] Various factors gave rise to the New Negro: black migration, interna-

tional revolutionary movements, most notably in Russia and Ireland, the growth of a radical black press, the emergence of a host of new racially militant political organizations, and most significantly a spirit of defiance stemming from the disillusioning experience of black support for and military participation in the war. Combined, these factors inspired an ideologically and geographically diverse political and cultural movement characterized by racial self-organization, international and diasporic consciousness, social identification with the black masses, and a commitment to self-defense against white racial violence. The New Negro rejected the conservative and politically accommodating tactics of the "Old Negro," a characterization of individual leaders and methods of civil rights protest deemed outdated in the context of the postwar period. While in part generational, the men and women who constituted the New Negro movement were the product of a particular historical moment and the social, political, and economic forces that defined it.[8]

Little systematic attention has been paid to the role of African American veterans of the First World War in the history of the New Negro movement. The black veteran, emerging from the crucible of war with renewed self-determination to enact systemic change, signified the development of a spirit of racial militancy that characterized the New Negro. African American veterans embodied a "reconstructed" Negro, radicalized at the levels of racial, gender, and political consciousness by the combination of the war and the ferocity of white supremacy. This symbolic black veteran served a functional purpose for African American journalists and political leaders. Former soldiers represented a renewed vision of black manhood and, most potently, a renewed commitment by black people to translate their war experiences into the achievement of full democracy and equal rights.[9]

The New Negro as African American veteran, however, encompassed more than just a metaphor and rhetorical figure. Many former servicemen, in ways large and small, self-consciously challenged white supremacy after the war and personified the New Negro. Obviously not every African American soldier returned from the war a politically transformed racial militant ready to wage revolution. Most black veterans simply sought to readjust to postwar life as best they could. Others turned to more traditional, even conservative, options of political participation to bring about racial change. But for countless African American soldiers, the contradictions between the promise of democracy and the pain of racial discrimination, of being welcomed as heroes while at the same time facing the threat of racial violence, made accepting a status quo where black people remained second-class citizens a difficult task. Whether defying Jim Crow segregation on public transportation, refusing to move off the sidewalk, proudly

wearing one's uniform, or simply being a little less accommodating to everyday racial indignities, many African American servicemen exhibited a newfound intolerance for white supremacy. Conflict in the South and the major urban race riots of the postwar era reflected the conscious determination of many black veterans, emboldened and politicized by their army experience, to resist continued subjugation. These everyday acts of New Negro militancy constitute an important dimension of the history of wartime black social and political activism.[10] Disillusioned black veterans expressed their frustrations in multiple ways, from correspondence with African American newspapers to physically resisting white aggression or leaving the United States altogether. Their actions frequently inspired other African Americans and informed the tenor of the New Negro movement.

African American veterans also organized. Like their counterparts following the Civil War, World War II, and Vietnam, many ex-soldiers of the First World War served as both leaders and foot soldiers in a diverse range of social and political groups that worked for systemic change. Three New Negro groups in particular stand out for their relationship with black veterans: the League for Democracy (LFD), an organization created by and specifically for African American veterans; the *Messenger*, the socialist magazine edited by A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen; and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), founded and led by the indomitable Marcus Garvey. While political engagement by black veterans was by no means limited to the *Messenger*, the LFD, and the UNIA, they offer clear examples of the ways in which many former soldiers consciously attempted to organize themselves, and, at the same time, how certain postwar groups openly welcomed ex-servicemen into their ranks. African Americans in the wake of the war, and in the face of heightened racial hostility, determined to fight for their rights as citizens and human beings. Black veterans formed an important part of this struggle.

ON FEBRUARY 27, 1920, one year after his discharge from the army, Willis Brown Godwin reflected on his war experience. As a high school student from Smithville, Virginia, Godwin eagerly entered the army. Originally assigned to a depot brigade, Godwin made the most of his training camp experience; he improved physically and mentally and received a promotion to sergeant. After arriving in France he was transferred to Company K of the 370th Infantry Regiment and engaged in fierce combat at St. Michel, Soissons, and in the Argonne. Despite his achievements, something happened to Godwin while overseas. Perhaps like fellow 370th comrade Harry Haywood, the racism he experienced and the clear dichotomy between racial attitudes in the United States and those in

France weighed heavy on his mind. While he did not point to one singular event or moment, Godwin stated that he came away from his experience with a realization of the "task which was here for me in America." With a critical awareness of the personal and collective meanings of American democracy, he returned home to Virginia and became an instructor in agriculture at the Hampton Institute. "After the fighting, and my return to this country U.S.," he reflected, "it made me wonder why can't all men be treated equally. What did we fight for? Democracy. Are we living it?"[11]

Other black veterans like Godwin asked similar questions and likewise searched for answers. Despite returning to the United States bemedaled and exalted, they struggled to reconcile their initial expectations of military service with the harsh realities of their war and immediate postwar experiences.[12] "I feel that I was faithful to my duty and was ready to give all for Democracy," recalled Judge Goodwin, a farmer from Dinwiddie County, Virginia, who served in a veterinary corps. "As a Negro I feel that at least I might have full citizenship rights."[13] The failure of such a basic expectation to occur caused many former soldiers to interpret their service as a breach on the part of the U.S. government, and the military specifically, to fulfill its obligation of upholding the tenets of democracy, both individually and for the race as a whole. Many returned soldiers drew a stark contrast between overseas and home, between the perceived racial egalitarianism of France and the domestic racism of the United States.[14] As a result of his experience, Milton Hughes, a Howard University student who toiled in a stevedore battalion for the duration of the war, came away with "a very poor opinion of existing conditions and the means to check such as a colored citizen of this Republic when I compare this country and her ideals with France."[15] Having performed their civic duty, African American soldiers came home to a nation where they were seen and treated as second-class citizens, a harsh confirmation that their investment in democracy, an investment that inspired so many soldiers during the war, proved decidedly one-sided.

Many African American veterans refused to silently accept any continued denial of their democratic rights and sought out ways to express their disillusionment.[16] In doing so, they frequently invoked "democracy" as a rhetorical device in order to stress its literal absence from their lives. Floyd Bishop, a veteran from Norfolk, Virginia, with a fourth-grade education, poignantly reflected on the status of the race two months after his discharge in August 1919: "Before the war I was passive as the treatment of the common people colored, in particular, but since the war I am constantly reminded that my people (colored) are not getting any of the things that I served in the war to help bring about—democracy."[17]

The black press, which in many ways became the voice of the New Negro,

provided an outlet for African American veterans to express their individual and collective frustrations.[18] Disgruntled and radicalized veterans jolted readers with accounts of their wartime experiences. "I regret to say that I have come home from France with a feeling of intense bitterness towards white men," Lieutenant James H. N. Waring, formerly of the 367th Infantry, angrily told the *Baltimore Afro-American* in March 1919. "Perhaps the superior white officers in our Division were not representative white men," Waring continued, "but I am here to tell you that they were the scum of the earth."[19] Former servicemen flooded *Crisis* editor W. E. B. Du Bois with letters detailing their encounters with racial discrimination. A black soldier stationed at Camp Sherman, Ohio, wrote to Du Bois immediately following the armistice, "Me being one of the soldiers of the United States, drafted for the United States Army, to fight for worlds democracy, I think it my duty to ask my people of the United States to appeal to the said government for Democracy of our and my own people." He rhetorically questioned, "Now why cant we have a fair trial, why cant we have law and order at home in other word why cant we have democracy in the United States and under the flag of which I fight."[20] Returned black soldiers also expressed a commitment to ensuring that their military service was not in vain. A letter penned by an African American veteran in the wake of the July 1919 Washington riot and published by the *Washington Bee* captured this attitude: "During the war the Negro put every grievance behind him and dedicated himself whole-heartedly to the common task. . . . Behold him and admire him for that—but mistake not! There is a new thought in the younger minds and, to be plain blunt, perhaps brutally frank, it approximates this":

> We have labored in sweat and tears—we have pleaded and hoped in vain—we have been loyal in every crisis and died in wars without a winking. . . . We are done forever with blind devotion to a mere geographical idea. . . . Henceforth our Loyalty is for sale—and the price thereof is Justice—no compromise—but Justice absolute and complete, without reservation and without restriction.[21]

In the spring of 1919, a new periodical, the *Veteran*, burst onto the scene. Published and edited by William Y. Bell, it boasted of being the "First and Only Colored Soldier's Paper Published in America" and the "Official Organ of the National Colored Soldiers and Citizens Council."[22] Bell offered former soldiers five to ten dollars a day to serve as agents for the *Veteran* and help circulate the paper in their home towns.[23] It is unknown how many ex-servicemen took the *Veteran* up on its offer. Extant copies do not reflect a focus on issues specific to African American veterans, although Mack C. Nance, a sergeant in the

Regular Army, authored a recurring section titled "Travelogues of a Fighting Man."[24] The paper's masthead, however, explicitly appropriated the imagery of the militant former soldier, and many of its articles carried an overtly radical tone. In a June 28, 1919, editorial titled "The Remedy for Mob Violence," William Bell asserted, "The Southern mob fears the fighting Colored American. Southern industries and capital fear the running Colored American. Pleas and protests are ineffective, wornout instruments. A general exodus of our oppressed brothers from the South, next to direct action against the mob, is our most potent weapon."[25] Federal authorities saw the *Veteran* as a paper of particular concern. "The paper is bad," remarked postal agent Robert Bowen. Radical black papers had become "especially active since the return of the troops from France," and the *Veteran* was especially problematic.[26] Bowen flagged an August 6 editorial in the *Veteran* as "an encouragement of retaliatory violence if not provocatory violence" and "worth notice as expressive of the undue feeling of triumph the negro is experiencing over the fact that he is fighting back."[27]

For a handful of black soldiers, their disillusionment with American democracy cut so deep that they decided to remain in France following the armistice. Ex-servicemen formed the core of France's postwar black expatriate community centered in the Montmartre section of Paris. French racial egalitarianism, as they experienced it, provided African American veterans with a welcome respite from the racism of the United States. Veterans enjoyed a liberating measure of social freedom and prestige because of their status, in the eyes of the French, as civilized and modernized black people. While only a small fraction of the total number of black soldiers who served in France—their presence most likely numbered less than two dozen—African American servicemen-turned-expatriates held an important symbolic value within a transatlantic dialogue on the meanings of race, nation, and empire.[28] They embodied the idea of France as the singular Western imperialist nation devoid of racial discrimination and open to people of all nationalities, an idea promulgated by the black press to highlight American racism and further promoted by the French government to legitimize colonial rule in Africa and Asia.[29]

Veteran Albert Curtis captured these sentiments in a July 1922 letter to the *Chicago Defender*. Writing from Bordeaux, Curtis, who used to sell copies of the *Defender* in his youth, reassured the newspaper's staff that "I am still alive and in good health." Curtis had "served a few years with the Tenth U.S. cavalry, also a few years with the medical department of the U.S. army as first-class sergeant," and, as he wrote, "did my bit in France." He had spent time in London after the war but now had returned to the nation of *liberté*, *egalité*, and *fraternité*. "I have some money I have worked hard to save and now I am going to enjoy

it in a country that knows no color line, and that is France." He was not alone. "There are seven Colored boys here from the United States including myself," Curtis stated, "and we are here to stay." He painted a romantic picture of French economic opportunity and racial egalitarianism, replete with sexual imagery. "There is plenty of work in France, but you must speak French excellently to get it. It is nice here. Every Colored man you meet is married to a French woman."[30]

In addition to social freedom, France and other European countries offered black veteran expatriates specific material benefits as well. Leon Brooks, a former soldier of the 303rd Stevedore Regiment, remained in France to work as a salesman for the Avenard Wine Company.[31] Ex-soldiers also took advantage of educational opportunities. Thirteen black veterans enrolled in French universities following the war, seven of whom attended branches of the University of Paris. One of these men was William Stuart Nelson, born appropriately enough in Paris, Kentucky. Nelson graduated from the Des Moines officers' training camp and served as a first lieutenant in the 317th Engineers of the Ninety-second Division.[32] After earning his bachelor's degree from Howard University in 1920, he returned to France and from 1921 to 1922 studied at the Sorbonne. He later attended the University of Berlin and the University of Marburg in Germany. Nelson added to his remarkable pedigree after returning to the United States, earning a bachelor of divinity from Yale in 1924 and, one year later, receiving an appointment as professor of religion at Howard University.[33]

After introducing France to jazz during the war, African American musicians remained in high demand. Harlem came to Paris in the aftermath of the war, and former servicemen functioned as conduits for the global spread of black music. The French fetish for jazz, ignited by the Harlem 369th "Hellfighters" and other African American regimental bands during the war, grew in response to a war-torn population drawn to black culture and racial primitivism. Opal Cooper, a member of the 807th Pioneer Infantry band, returned to France and became one of the most popular African American musicians in Paris, creating a group called the "Red Devils," which counted another former soldier, Sammy Richardson, as one of its members.[34] Eugene Bullard, in addition to being a respected prizefighter, decorated French Foreign Legion veteran, and internationally famed fighter-pilot, moonlighted as a jazz drummer, albeit not a very good one, following the war. In 1924 he opened Le Grand Duc, which became one of the most popular clubs in Montmartre, frequented by luminaries such as Josephine Baker, Louis Armstrong, and F. Scott Fitzgerald.[35] For Bullard and other African American servicemen-turned-expatriates, France offered an ap-

pealing combination of economic opportunity, cultural freedom, and liberation from American racism.

"My experience in the army left me so bitter against white Americans that I remained an expatriate in Europe," Rayford Logan reflected long after the war.[36] Psychologically wounded from his battles with racial discrimination, Logan could not bear the thought of returning to the United States, where even greater oppression awaited him. He therefore applied for an official discharge in France, which he received on August 21, 1919.[37] The army denied Logan's request to study at a French university, so he instead took advantage of rampant postwar inflation and bounced throughout Europe making a precarious living as a currency speculator. During his travels and encounters with people of various religions, cultures, and nationalities, he increasingly began to view the complexities of race and American white supremacy in a broader international context.

This made Pan-Africanism a particularly attractive ideology. Logan did not attend the seminal 1919 gathering but was at the heart of the even more significant 1921 Pan-African Congress. The former officer had remained in contact with his M Street High School French teacher, Jessie Fauset, who served as literary editor of the *Crisis*. W. E. B. Du Bois had left for Paris to make arrangements for the Congress, Fauset informed her onetime student in early August of 1921, and, considering his poor French, Du Bois needed Logan's assistance. Looking for a man with "a noble head," according to Fauset's description, Logan waited patiently at the Gare Saint-Lazare until Du Bois unexpectedly emerged from the third-class train. Years later, a still star-struck Logan recalled his "surprise and delight when I saw him, walking nonchalantly down the platform."[38]

If not for Rayford Logan and fellow veteran William Stuart Nelson, the Pan-African Congress might not have taken place. Du Bois, with trademark conceit, took charge of organizing the congress and selecting the locations—London, Brussels, and Paris—for its three sessions. The Senegalese deputy and Pan-African Congress president Blaise Diagne, however, had growing concerns. Differences of opinion between Du Bois and Diagne, muted during the 1919 congress, exploded to the surface in 1921. Du Bois wanted to push for a more aggressive condemnation of European colonialism, while Diagne, invested in the project of African colonial citizenship, vigorously resisted. Diagne also feared that Du Bois's increasingly radical agenda would tar the congress with the specter of Bolshevism. To make matters worse, the challenges of translation interceded, as Du Bois could neither speak nor understand French, and Diagne had little grasp of the English language.[39] In stepped Logan and William Stuart Nelson, who at the time was studying at the Sorbonne and had become

Logan's good friend. With the congress hanging in the balance, "Stuart urged me to seek an accommodation between Du Bois and Diagne," Logan remembered. Only days before the August 28 opening of the London proceedings, he played the role of both translator and mediator at a tension-filled meeting between the two Pan-African leaders. "By translating only part of their acerbic remarks to each other, I obtained agreement on what Diagne called 'une formule transactionnelle.'" The temporary compromise allowed the Congress to proceed, but Diagne would resign from the movement after chairing the Brussels and Paris sessions.[40] Logan served as secretary and translator for the entire Congress, which William Stuart Nelson and another veteran, former 369th Infantry Regiment captain Napoleon Bonaparte Marshall, also attended.[41] Logan was instrumental in organizing the 1923 Pan-African Congress, held in Lisbon and London. But lingering tensions between the African American and black Francophone participants, Du Bois's heavy-handed leadership, and a lack of financial support caused Logan to become increasingly disillusioned with the movement and its potential for success.[42]

Rayford Logan's immersion into Pan-African politics spoke to the larger diasporic scope of the New Negro. The forces of war and revolution unleashed dramatic social, political, and economic tensions throughout the black world.[43] The wartime demands of military service and labor facilitated the dispersal of millions of peoples of African descent from their homelands to other regions of the diaspora during the conflict. For these populations, the imperial obligation of sacrifice on behalf of the nation led to a heightened political consciousness and expectation for increased citizenship and economic rights. The European powers, in response to such aspirations, feared a weakening of their legitimacy. In the European metropoles, white workers viewed African, Caribbean, and Asian laborers and discharged soldiers as a source of competition for scarce jobs and social resources, while, in the colonies, subject peoples tested the boundaries of imperial authority with acts of resistance, both small and large.[44] Whereas white people sought to stabilize a racial and social order seemingly turned upside down, men and women of color approached the postwar moment swelled with aspirations for fundamental change.[45]

Veterans of African descent, disillusioned yet emboldened by their war experiences, often became active participants in postwar radical movements. Soldiers of the British West Indies Regiment (BWIR) responded aggressively to their travails with British racism.[46] In the wake of a four-day mutiny at Taranto, Italy, in December 1918, sixty noncommissioned officers of the BWIR secretly met to plan the formation of the "Caribbean League," envisioned as a vehicle for the promotion of Pan-Caribbean political unity and black self-determination.

Although the "Caribbean League" never materialized as a formal organization, the men and ideas behind its conception bore direct correlation to the wave of working-class labor activism that swept the Caribbean following the war. In Paris and other French cities like Marseilles, peoples of African descent, including many ex-soldiers, established vibrant communities of social, cultural, and political exchange.[47] The Communist Party in France attracted a handful of West African veterans, most notably a former *tirailleur* named Lamine Senghor. Senghor became increasingly active in metropole politics and joined the French Communist Party in 1924, an experience that profoundly shaped his future radical activities. A committed Marxist despite leaving the party in 1926, he founded the Comité de Défense de la Race Nègre along with a short-lived newspaper, *La Voix des Nègres*.[48] The war and the sacrifices of *tirailleurs* like himself remained a crucial frame of reference as Senghor stridently advocated for the liberation of "le race nègre" from imperial domination. In the March 1927 issue of *La Voix des Nègres*, Senghor poignantly surmised, "When one needs us to make us kill or make us work, we are of the French; but when it is a question of giving us rights, we are not any more of the French, we are negroes."[49] While small in number, those veterans of African descent whose war experience propelled them into radical politics constituted an important part of a global New Negro movement.[50]

In the United States, many African American veterans also organized themselves. Ideological diversity characterized the New Negro movement. Socialists, communists, nationalists, integrationists, and combinations of each all aggressively vied for the attention of the black masses, and quite often the specific notice of former servicemen. African American veterans reflected this philosophical breadth, and thus had their choice of organizations to support and lend their time, effort, and voices to. A broad range of radical groups allowed former soldiers to make sense of their war service and come to terms with the meaning of their experience, in all of its contradictions. At the same time, black veterans channeled their race, gender, political, and diasporic consciousness into the broader struggles for systemic change the New Negro movement represented.

"INVESTIGATION BY THIS SECTION has disclosed among American negro troops in France the probable existence of a secret organization." A flurry of questions must have raced through the mind of acting Military Intelligence Division (MID) director John M. Dunn upon reading this disconcerting opening sentence of a classified February 18, 1919, memo. What was this "secret organization"? Where did it come from? Who was responsible for its creation? What were its intentions?

Dunn had good reason to be concerned. In Le Mans, France, while awaiting demobilization, black officers of the Ninety-second Division clandestinely held a series of meetings. Most of the officers served in the 367th Infantry Regiment. They met away from the scornful eyes of their white superiors, gathering to reflect upon their experiences and determine a postwar course of action to ensure that their service was not in vain. Enraged and humiliated by their treatment at the hands of the division's white officers, they specifically discussed the creation of an organization for African American veterans to combat racial discrimination, both within and outside of the military. Here was the worst fear of American intelligence officials come true: idle black servicemen fomenting political radicalism and inspiring domestic racial unrest. In a follow-up report, military intelligence suspected the insurgent black officers of corresponding with individuals in the United States in violation of censorship regulations. Several had allegedly married French women, and intelligence officials speculated that they functioned as carriers to communicate with the United States through the French post office. The report concluded with an ominous summation of the organization's professed goals: the "protection of Negro interests, collective combating of a white effort, especially in the South, to reestablish white ascendancy, the securing of equal intellectual and economic opportunity for Negroes and the maintenance of the social equality between the races as established in France."[51]

The meetings convened by the Ninety-second Division officers were not isolated events. A January military intelligence report stated that "officers of the 370 Infantry (all colored) are interested in the formation of a secret organization or society among all colored troops in the A.E.F. whose object is the promotion of social equality between colored and white after demobilization."[52] MID agents also suspected black soldiers of the Ninety-third Division's 371st Infantry Regiment of working to form a secret postwar group of their own named the "Soldier's Association for a Fight for True Democracy." An informant relayed that, "having fought and won the cause overseas," the men of the regiment were committed to achieving their rights as equal citizens, even "if it costs another battle."[53] Acting MID director Dunn hoped that the organization would "fall to pieces and nothing much will come of it" once the men returned to their homes.[54] His assumption proved correct. But it could not soothe the harsh truth of the anger many black soldiers felt and their determination to act.

The organization conceived by the rebellious group of Ninety-second Division officers in Le Mans did materialize. At a March 1919 mass meeting at Harlem's Palace Casino, the League for Democracy made its public debut. The audience most likely consisted of returned soldiers from the New York–based

369th and 367th Infantry Regiments, as well as other black Harlemites curious to learn what this new organization, with its arousing name, had to offer. "Lest We Forget," the LFD's promotional brochure began. The phrase captured the spirit of the LFD and its intention to use the fresh memory of the war as a catalyst for black veteran political activism. The stakes were high, and the costs of forgetting the lessons of the war—the pain, the triumph, the sacrifice, the insult, the brotherhood—even greater. Introducing itself to the black masses, the LFD did not mince words in stating why the organization had been established and its motivations:

> Lest we forget that the Democracy for which our men fought and died to have conferred upon Serbian, Belgian, Armenian and Slav is denied us in our own Republic; lest we forget to strike our enemies the death blow while we have them weakened and on the defensive; . . . lest we forget the vile, insidious propaganda directed against us in France during stress of battle; . . . lest we forget our intense sufferings under appointed, exploiting leadership in the past; lest we forget vows and oaths made and taken to right our wrongs without fear and without compromise after the war; lest we forget lessons in organization learned on the Western front; *lest we forget that the individual cannot win against the system*; lest we forget that only thoroughly coordinated, organized effort can obtain what we merit, deserve and desire; lest we forget our irrecompensatable debt and sacred obligations to our dead upon the battlefields of France, that their supreme sacrifices will not be nullified by our forgetfulness—we have formed the League for Democracy.[55]

The founders of the LFD adopted an unabashedly grandiose vision. They described their group as "the most gigantic scheme of organization ever attempted by the race" and projected that it "can and should become the predominant race organization in the Republic." Most pressing, the LFD committed to combating institutionalized racism within the military and protecting the legacy of black soldiers' historical contributions. The organization also adopted broader objectives, such as eliminating black disfranchisement in the South and fighting Jim Crow. To that end, the LFD boasted, "It will have a local Camp in every town in the United States containing 1,000 or more Colored inhabitants. It will be able to reach directly and personally, within 48 hours, over one million Colored people the first year of its organization, for any concerted movement or propaganda it desires to create." Cognizant of other African American organizations with similar agendas, the LFD pledged to cooperate with the NAACP and the National Negro Business League in order to avoid a duplication of efforts. But as an organization "of soldiers, for soldiers, by soldiers," the LFD was singularly unique in

its direct appeal to African American veterans' sense of wartime camaraderie and pride in their service. The LFD's founders saw their group as a vehicle for black veterans to fight for their dreams of a racially just society, to continue the fight for democracy. As the LFD's promotional brochure stated, "Suppose again, again and again you will appreciate as never before, the staggering, immense, wonderful, magic powers of organization and group action, the tremendous potential possibilities and probabilities of the League for Democracy."[56]

The national leadership of the LFD drew from some of the finest African American officers of the war. It was not a coincidence that disillusioned former officers, particularly those from the Ninety-second Division, took the initiative to establish the LFD, considering their accomplished background, race consciousness, and the stark disjuncture between their military status and actual treatment during the war.[57] Harlem attorney and former Ninety-second Division officer Aiken Augustus Pope served as president. A Georgia native, Pope attended college at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania and Yale University, where he excelled.[58] After graduating from Yale in 1915, he moved to Boston and enrolled in Harvard Law School, receiving his degree in 1918.[59] During his college and law school years, Pope became a pioneering member of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, reactivating along with eleven other brothers the Yale Zeta chapter in March 1913 and founding the Boston Sigma chapter in November 1915. Louis T. Wright, one of the nation's leading African American physicians, held the position of junior vice president. The son of former slaves, Wright graduated valedictorian from Clark Atlanta University and then went on to Harvard University Medical School. He earned his medical degree in 1915, finishing fourth in his class. When the United States entered the war, Wright left his practice in Atlanta to enlist in the Medical Corps training camp at Fort Des Moines and received his commission on June 27, 1917. He sailed for France as a first lieutenant in the 367th Infantry Regiment. During his service overseas, Wright rose to the rank of captain and became the top officer in the Ninety-second Division's surgical wards. He gained a reputation as one of the best physicians in the entire American Expeditionary Force, saved numerous lives, and perfected a procedure to lessen the effects of smallpox. He returned to the United States with a purple heart for injuries incurred during a gas attack. Despite his prodigious rise, Wright always maintained a strong commitment to racial justice. While at Harvard, he challenged a medical school policy restricting the access of black students to white patients and temporarily interrupted his studies to participate in NAACP protests against *Birth of a Nation*. Further inspired by his war experiences, Wright continued his activism with the LFD.[60]

"Lieutenant McKaine of the 'Buffaloes.'" Portrait painting of Osceola McKaine by Orlando Rouland. Courtesy of Hampton University Archives.

The real driving force behind the LFD was Osceola McKaine. McKaine arrived in France confident that the war would lead to a better day for African Americans. But by the time of the armistice, McKaine's battles with racial discrimination as an officer in the Ninety-second Division had soured him toward the conflict's democratizing potential. A seasoned and disciplined soldier from his time in the Regular Army, he maintained his composure until the war's end, when he played perhaps the central role in the secret meetings held in Le Mans, France. Determined to vindicate his honor and that of other black servicemen, McKaine settled in Harlem following demobilization and immediately got to work establishing the LFD. McKaine held the position of field secretary, the group's only paid officer. He established a newspaper, the *New York Commoner*, which debuted on June 28, 1919, and functioned as the official organ of the

LFD.[61] From his Harlem office on the corner of Seventh Avenue and 135th Street, McKaine vigorously promoted the fledgling organization and made a name for himself among the chorus of New Negro voices.[62]

With McKaine manning the helm, the LFD attracted attention and support among both veterans and nonveterans, in Harlem and beyond. At an April meeting held at the Harlem Palace Casino, presided over by former 367th Infantry officer Ambrose B. Nutt, McKaine energized an "enthusiastic capacity audience" with a "masterly address," resulting in the organization adding three hundred new members to its roster. Participation in the LFD quickly grew, and "camps" sprouted in cities across the country. This caught the attention of federal investigators. Walter Loving reported the formation of branches in at least eleven cities, which included Washington, D.C., Boston, Brooklyn, Patterson, Newark, Providence, Philadelphia, Chicago, Atlanta, St. Louis, and Tallahassee.[63]

Lester Granger was one of several dynamic former officers and enlisted men who led the local LFD camps. It took more than four months after the armistice for Granger to leave France. "At Brest, we were waiting there for two months for a vessel. We shot craps all day. Literally—all day," he recalled. In the spring of 1919, Granger arrived back in the United States, having gambled away all of his money, but nevertheless energized to translate his war service into meaningful racial progress. He began working for the Newark, New Jersey, Urban League, which his father had helped to found, assisting African American veterans find employment. At the same time, the LFD caught his attention and he took charge of the Newark camp.[64]

Former 367th Infantry Regiment lieutenant James H. N. Waring, a prominent Baltimore physician and school principal before the war, headed the influential Washington, D.C., branch. He came to the LFD with organizational experience. In the wake of the 1906 Atlanta riot, Waring and other "representative colored men" in Baltimore established the Colored Law and Order League. The goal of the racial and civic uplift group was "to improve the moral, economic and home conditions among the colored people, and to do whatever would promote good citizenship" by reducing the number of saloons, gambling dens, and houses of prostitution in the predominantly black Druid Hill Avenue district.[65] This commitment to racial progress, combined with an infuriating stint in the Ninety-second Division, informed Waring's service with the LFD.

With camps being established throughout the country, membership growing, and McKaine becoming an increasingly popular figure in Harlem's black radical community, federal investigators focused their attention on the LFD. "Next in importance to the Socialist movement among Negroes is the League for Democracy," Walter Loving began in his August 1919 final report on "Negro

Subversion." "Under ordinary circumstances this organization would have no more significance than any other organization of war veterans," Loving informed his MID superiors. Political conditions and the racial climate of postwar America, however, were far from ordinary. Loving identified the "insidious propaganda carried on in France against Negro troops by white Americans, with its resultant bitter feeling," as the raison d'être of the League for Democracy and its rapid growth. The combination of racist military policy and the actions of white officers had created "a veritable hornets nest of radicals," with Osceola McKaine at the forefront, whom Loving described as, "an able, aggressive young radical" who had "associated with him in his work the highest type of officers and enlisted men who served in the army during the war." Loving learned in conversation with leaders of the LFD that the organization welcomed political alliances with other radical movements, and for this reason he believed "the activities of the League for Democracy will merit the closest scrutiny on the part of the Government."[66] Loving's panicked assessment stemmed not so much from what the LFD, still in its infancy, had accomplished but from its tremendous potential.

The first major campaign the LFD launched, an effort to have Ninety-second Division chief of staff Colonel Allen Greer charged with treason, elicited particular concern. African American officers already despised Greer for his duplicity in the issuance of Bulletin No. 35 and encouraging the wholesale persecution of commissioned black servicemen in France. But with his slanderous letter to Tennessee senator Kenneth McKellar, Greer had gone too far. McKaine and the LFD caught wind of the letter, possibly from war correspondent Ralph Tyler, prior to its publication by W. E. B. Du Bois in the May 1919 issue of the *Crisis*. The young organization now had a clear issue to mobilize its black veteran constituency and attract new support.

Through the black press and several well-attended rallies in New York and Washington, D.C., the LFD pressured the Wilson administration to act. At a Harlem meeting on May 18, 1919, before a large and energetic crowd, McKaine assailed Greer, declaring that he had "stigmatized and insulted our race with more studied villainy than even that peerless Bourbon secessionist, Thomas Dixon did in his traitorous 'Birth of a Nation.' These two documents are in the same class as regards disloyalty to their country and insidious anti-Negro propaganda." The former officer added, "Will black men and women who have given their blood and dollars to make the United States safe for white democrats let this vile insult to the race go unchallenged; or will they rise as one man in their righteous anger and deluge the War Department with petitions to have this scoundrel and liar court martialed?" The crowd of supporters frequently interrupted McKaine with applause and shouts of "Down with Greer!"[67] In an open

letter to the secretary of war, the LFD publicized its charges against Greer, demanding that the War Department court-martial the Ninety-second Division colonel on charges of "conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline; for attempting to influence legislation; and for aiding the enemy." They made explicit that Greer had "grossly humiliated and insulted" the entire race, making him unfit "to be a citizen of the Republic," and that the War Department itself was on trial. After the letter appeared in several African American newspapers, the War Department took notice and felt compelled to respond. On June 10, 1919, McKaine, along with eight other former officers and black civic leaders, met with Secretary of War Newton Baker in Washington, D.C., to voice their protests against Greer and demand punishment. Baker assured the men that their charges would be taken seriously.[68] Additionally, a delegation from the LFD gained an audience with the Senate and House Committees on Military Affairs on June 16.[69]

While the War Department stalled in taking any definitive action concerning the Greer matter, McKaine and the LFD continued to motivate black veterans and the broader African American public to collective action. The LFD held a successful meeting in June 1919 in Washington, D.C., where its branch membership reportedly consisted of more than three hundred men. Linking the national goals of the organization to the local struggles of black Washingtonians to combat racism, branch president James H. N. Waring assured the crowd, "The League is in this fight and intends to see it through," adding that the organization had "declared war on discrimination in the district." Prominent Washington, D.C., journalist and LFD supporter J. Finley Wilson encouraged black people to become members of the rapidly growing organization, telling the audience, "After the colored people have given their dollars so freely and have subscribed to every Liberty Loan to make the world safe for democracy, a democracy in which colored men have not shared, we would commit a crime against all the ages not to over subscribe the League for Democracy which seeks to make democracy safe for Negroes." But the star of the meeting was its principal speaker, Osceola McKaine, who inspired the crowd to aggressively resist discrimination and racial violence. "No Negroes any where in the United States should ever let white mobs take a black man to lynch him without using all the force possible to prevent it," McKaine exhorted. "The only thing with which to meet force is force." The location and timing of this meeting had particular significance considering the bloody Washington riot occurred just weeks later. McKaine and the LFD emboldened the city's black population, and black veterans in particular, to defend themselves and their community in the face of white violence.[70] The following month, McKaine, speaking on the behalf of the organiza-

tion, confronted Robert Russa Moton at a July 1919 New York Tuskegee Institute banquet. He accused the Tuskegee principal of disrespecting African American soldiers with his mollifying speeches in France and proclaimed that the "new element of the Race" would now elect its own representatives.[71]

Despite its quick ascendance to the forefront of national racial protest and the confidence of its leaders, the LFD diminished in significance by early 1920. As the heated memories of the war cooled, emotions settled, and the esprit de corps between veterans affiliated with the LFD gradually dissipated, the group's cohesiveness suffered. The LFD also had to compete with a host of other New Negro organizations, as well as more established groups such as the NAACP, that had similar goals. Indeed, former soldiers, especially in the South, contributed to the tremendous postwar growth of the NAACP, which saw its branch membership skyrocket from 9,200 in 1918 to 62,200 in 1919.[72] Additionally, the federal government identified the organization as a key target in its campaign to suppress black radicalism and actively sought ways to undermine its effectiveness.

This included fanning the flames of rivalry between the LFD and another black veteran organization, the more conservative Grand Army of Americans (GAA). It reflected the ideological diversity of African American veterans, and the New Negro movement more broadly. A collection of black officers established the GAA in Washington, D.C., in March 1919 with the goal of "looking after the welfare of the soldiers and sailors who have fought for Uncle Sam in any war." The GAA adopted a much less overtly political agenda and expressed its willingness to cooperate with white veteran organizations.[73] This placed it at odds with the much more radical LFD. Samuel F. Sewall, a former captain in the 368th Infantry Regiment and lead organizer of the GAA, prepared to approach Osceola McKaine and discuss the possibility of combining their two organizations, a suggestion first broached by James Weldon Johnson in a *New York Age* editorial. He decided otherwise after attending a raucous June 15 LFD meeting in Washington, D.C., and instead shared his concerns with the Department of Justice. "Capt. Sewall states that Lt. McKaine advocates meeting force with force, which is, in his opinion, unwise doctrine for the negroes at this time," a government agent reported following a conversation with the former officer. Sewall encouraged federal authorities to investigate the LFD for possible violation of army regulations and promised to provide the names of any African American veterans affiliated with the organization.[74]

More than any other factor, overambition led to the premature demise of the LFD. Militancy and optimism could not overcome the fact that the vision of the LFD was too broad in scope and lacked clarity. James Weldon Johnson offered a

prophetic observation in the May 1919 issue of the *New York Age*, where he wrote that "the program of the League for Democracy is too comprehensive, it takes in too much," and suggested that the organization "concentrate all its strength and energy upon those particular objects which by the nature of its being it is best fitted to accomplish." The LFD's sole attempt to do just this, its campaign to charge Greer with treason, made little headway and gradually demoralized the membership. Furthermore, this single issue lacked the resonance to attract and maintain a stable membership base outside of a core of intensely politicized former officers like McKaine. With the LFD faltering, the *Commoner* quickly followed, ceasing production by 1922. While exemplifying the spirit and ideals of the New Negro, the fortitude of the LFD and its leaders surpassed what the group could realistically accomplish.[75]

With a meteoric rise and a similarly rapid descent, the LFD nevertheless stood as the most militant organization of its time created specifically by and for African American veterans. At the local level, the group brought returned black soldiers together, allowing them to take pride in their service and direct their frustrations. Former officers and servicemen found in the LFD an organization that restored their manhood and valued their leadership. While the national campaign against Greer may have failed, it nevertheless put the War Department on notice that African American veterans would not remain silent as racist officers degraded their legacy. In its brief moment on the national stage, the LFD represented the determination of African American servicemen to use their war experience as an opportunity to combat institutionalized racism and inspire militant political resistance among African Americans more broadly.

COMPLEMENTING GROUPS SUCH AS the League for Democracy, a host of black newspapers, journals, and periodicals contributed to Harlem's teeming radical energy and the larger postwar milieu of racial militancy. Most paled in comparison to the *Messenger*. The journal, founded and edited by A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen, distinguished itself as the nation's leading radical African American newspaper and self-proclaimed voice of the New Negro in the years following the war. The *Messenger*, however, represented more than just a journal. It functioned as the heart of Harlem's socialist community and brought together a vibrant collection of black radical intellectuals. Randolph and Owen became active Socialist Party members in late 1916, spreading their call for antiracist working-class solidarity on the street corners of Harlem. The Independent Political Council established by Randolph and Owen to advance the interests of the Socialist Party boasted of having four hundred black members. The small, cluttered office of the *Messenger*, located on 132nd Street and Lenox

Avenue, functioned as a space for social interaction, political organizing, and critical intellectual exchange, where Randolph, Owen, and individuals such as Wilfred A. Domingo, Wallace Thurman, and George Frazier Miller would converse well into the night. The magazine itself served as a platform for this cadre of leftist black intellectuals to promote a radical vision of interracial democracy and working-class unity.[76]

The influence of the *Messenger* spread well beyond Harlem's black socialist circle. The end of the war intensified the *Messenger's* radicalism and its popularization of the New Negro. Randolph and Owen welcomed the arrival of "New Crowd Negroes" who, unlike preceding generations of black leadership, pledged to wage an uncompromising battle against racial discrimination and working-class exploitation. Dismissing the efforts of "Old Crowd Negroes" such as Emmett Scott, W. E. B. Du Bois, Kelly Miller, and Robert R. Moton during the war, Randolph wrote, "The New Crowd is uncompromising. Its tactics are not defensive but offensive. It would not send notes after a Negro is lynched. It would not appeal to white leaders. It would appeal to the plain working people everywhere. The New Crowd sees that the war came, that the Negro fought, bled and died; that the war has ended, and he is not yet free."[77] Inflammatory rhetoric of this sort earned the *Messenger* a prominent place in the postwar "Red Scare," both domestically and internationally. French military intelligence, monitoring "bolshevism among the Negroes," kept a close eye on the *Messenger*, while A. Mitchell Palmer, the crusading U.S. attorney general, labeled the radical magazine "the most able and the most dangerous of all the Negro publications."[78]

Victor Daly received his army discharge in April 1919. He had served with honor as an officer in the 367th Infantry, receiving the French Croix de Guerre. However, the racism that infected the Ninety-second Division had a profound effect on the once unassuming Cornell University student, who emerged from the war with his racial and political consciousness significantly hardened. He more than likely took part or was at least privy to the secret meetings held by Osceola McKaine and other fellow officers of his regiment. Apparently having little desire to return to the tranquil yet politically languid environs of Ithaca, New York, following his release from service, Daly settled in Harlem. In need of an outlet for his swelling radicalism, as well as a job, he began work as the *Messenger's* business manager, a crucial position at the always financially strapped newspaper.[79]

During his time with the *Messenger* Daly's political assertiveness swelled. A glimpse of his growing radicalism appeared in the October 1919 issue, where he responded to a letter written by a self-described descendant of "black abolition-

Portrait of Victor Daly. Victor R. Daly Papers, #37-5-3157. Courtesy of the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.

ists" who accused the *Messenger* of being "the worst enemies of the Negro race" by promoting racial hatred, "bolshevism," and social unrest. Daly, answering in lieu of Randolph and Owen, who were "thoroughly in accord with the entire tenor and substance" of his reply, lashed back. He invoked his military service and decorated veteran status, stating that he wrote not solely on the behalf of the *Messenger* but "as one who served as a 1st Lieutenant in the army for nearly two years and winner of the 'Croix de Guerre' in France." He dismissed the writer's accusations, asserting that while the socialist magazine in fact promoted working-class racial cooperation and opposed armed conflict, it unapologetically did "advocate armed resistance."[80]

More explicitly, Daly linked his identity as a veteran with the radical left and the politics of the *Messenger*. Daly displayed his socialist inclinations, emphasizing the "need for peace between the black and white workingmen in America." Directly addressing the author of the letter, Daly wrote, "You have used the term 'Bolshevism' and 'Bolshevist' several times in your letter. So many and varied meanings have been put upon these words by the prostitute press that I am at

a loss to know your interpretation of them; but if you interpret them to apply to the above outlined purpose of the *Messenger*, then classify me, too, a former United States Army Officer, as a Bolshevist." This striking statement, from a young man who before the war expressed no discontent with his life as a Cornell University student and thoroughly embodied the bourgeois social traits of Ithaca's black middle class, reflected how military service informed Daly's radicalism. The *Messenger* provided him with the platform to channel and articulate it.[81]

Veteran William N. Colson became a key contributor to the *Messenger* and one of the most radical voices of the New Negro movement. Described by the magazine's editors as "an especially critical thinker, courageous, and possessed of a rare and pleasing literary style," Colson graduated from Virginia Union University along with Chandler Owen. Politically active before the war, he also served as executive director of the Richmond, Virginia, Urban League. Colson earned a commission at Des Moines, where he befriended Victor Daly, and served as a second lieutenant in the 367th Infantry in France.[82] Although enrolling in Columbia University Law School upon returning to the United States on March 15, 1919, he remained anxious to expose the racist treatment he and his fellow soldiers and officers of the Ninety-second Division faced while overseas.[83] Colson's college friend Chandler Owen presented him with the opportunity to do just this, and he joined the staff of the *Messenger* as a contributing editor.[84]

Colson published several articles in the radical newspaper following his military service, most focusing on the experience of black soldiers during the war. Less than four months after his return to the United States, Colson's first article appeared in the July 1919 issue of the *Messenger* under the title "Propaganda and the Negro Soldier." In it he declared black soldiers "were fighting for France and for their race rather than for a flag which had no meaning." Colson's anger and disillusionment with American democracy virtually leapt from the page. Colson aired a similar theme in subsequent articles that appeared regularly throughout late 1919 and early 1920. Essays such as "An Analysis of Negro Patriotism," "The Failure of the Ninety-Second Division," coauthored with fellow Des Moines officer and LFD affiliate Ambrose B. Nutt, and "The Social Experience of the Negro Soldier Abroad" revealed to readers in vivid detail what black soldiers encountered and endured overseas. Colson's experiences and status as a veteran of the war gave him the firsthand knowledge and credibility to make such claims, ensuring that the reading public took his devastating articles seriously.

At the state and federal levels, investigators flagged Colson as a person of

potential danger. "May I call your attention to an article by one William N. Colson," postal investigator Robert Bowen wrote to MID chief Marlborough Churchill after reading "Propaganda and the Negro Soldier." He suspected Churchill had already seen Colson's piece but felt that "it is too vicious for it to be wise to take any chance that those in authority may not have noticed it."[85] The following month Bowen again wrote to Churchill, this time regarding Colson's "offensive" and "disquieting" article "An Analysis of Negro Patriotism."[86] "The Messenger goes from bad to worse," Bowen lamented, "and I hope there is some power that will finally send it to the very worst and have done with it."[87] Colson's activities also came under the watchful eye of local New York agents, who reported their findings to the Joint Legislative Committee to Investigate Seditious Activities chaired by state senator Clayton R. Lusk. Colson spoke at a "Red-Hot Mass Meeting" on June 13, 1919, at the Rush AME Zion Church along with A. Philip Randolph, Chandler Owen, W. A. Domingo, and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Colson's brief but poignant remarks, according to a special agent in the audience, "were mainly a protest against the outrageous attempt by Burleson to suppress the mailing of the 'Messenger.'"[88] Colson's radical political activism complemented his piercing articles.

"The Immediate Function of the Negro Veteran," Colson's most forceful essay, appeared in the December 1919 issue of the *Messenger*. In the article, he asserted that returning black soldiers had a distinctive role to play in the postwar reconstruction of the United States, writing, "The returned Negro veteran, by virtue of his service and experience, has a certain special function which he cannot afford to fail to press to the limit." For Colson, this entailed African American veterans accepting their manly responsibility to actively confront and resist racial prejudice and violence, with force if necessary. "The returned soldier," he continued, "by reason of his military training, can do more to stop lynch-law and discrimination in the United States than many Americans want to see. He is accomplishing it by a resolute demonstration of self-defense and a growing desire to lose his life in a good cause." Along with fighting racial discrimination, black veterans, in Colson's view, had begun to ally themselves with the labor movement, a reflection of his socialist vision more so than a quantifiable reality. Colson proclaimed that African American soldiers returned from France possessing a new self-confidence and appreciation of "social values":

> It is, therefore, the function of the returned soldiers with their new appreciation of social values, straightway to appropriate the desire to either revolutionize or destroy every evil American institution which retards their progress. They must first of all continue their campaign of discontent and

dissatisfaction. Let them neither smile nor sleep until they have burned into the soul of every Negro in the United States an unquenchable desire to tear down every barrier which stops their onward march.

Most potently, Colson encouraged black veterans to actively fight back against discrimination and racial abuse, arguing that "each black soldier, as he travels on jim-crow cars, if he has the desire, can act his disapproval. When he is insulted, he can perform a counter-action. When he is exploited economically, he can strike. . . . With Negro veterans fighting back, and stirring up merited discontent and dissatisfaction on every hand, the attitude of the Bourbon South is bound to become less degenerate." Colson concluded by declaring, "The function of the Negro soldier, who is mentally free, is to act as an imperishable leaven on the mass of those who are still in mental bondage."[89]

Colson's article captured the symbolic relationship between African American veterans, New Negro masculinity, and the broader development of a radicalized postwar political environment. He envisioned black veterans serving as the vanguard of a systemic transformation of American society, with himself as prototype. Military service prepared African American soldiers to serve as the logical leaders of the race following the war. The racism of the U.S. Army and the reprieve of French democracy combined to imbue African American soldiers with a distinctive social and political consciousness. As Colson articulated, African American veterans had no choice but to act upon their wartime experience and share their knowledge with the race. Colson, a veteran himself, constructed a symbolic image of the returned black soldier as the personification of the New Negro.

Compared to Victor Daly and William Colson, George Schuyler traveled a more circuitous route to the *Messenger*, but one similarly informed by the disillusionment of service in the American wartime army. After completing his sentence for desertion at the Governor's Island military prison, Schuyler attempted to restart his life in New York City. Schuyler had little success, floating between various jobs until he eventually went back home to Syracuse in 1921. There he joined the Socialist Party, reflecting that "it was exhilarating, and just the type of stimulation I had been hungering for."[90] He returned to New York City in 1922 and became active in various political and intellectual circles, including the Friends of Negro Freedom, an organization founded by A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen in March 1920 to challenge the perceived complacency of conservative civil rights organizations like the NAACP and, later, the racialism of Marcus Garvey. Schuyler befriended the *Messenger* editors, and in early 1923 they offered him a position as office manager for the magazine.[91] He

was fascinated with the "idea of being associated with an important publication."[92] By this time he was the only veteran on staff; Victor Daly had departed in 1920 following a dispute over his wages, and Colson unexpectedly passed away in 1922.[93]

During his employment with the magazine, Schuyler effectively ran the *Messenger*, describing it as "a good place for a tireless, versatile young fellow to get plenty of activity and exercise."[94] Applying the discipline learned in the military to his position as office manager, Schuyler increased the *Messenger*'s efficiency and made a name for himself in Harlem Renaissance political and literary circles. Beginning in September 1923, Schuyler contributed a monthly column entitled "Darts and Shafts: A Page of Calumny and Satire," which introduced readers to his iconoclastic and often deliberately inflammatory style of writing. In 1926 he became managing editor, a position he held until the *Messenger* folded in July 1928.[95] Schuyler's brilliant use of satire was undoubtedly informed by his time in the wartime army, itself an ultimately satirical experience. As an experienced soldier and commissioned officer who unglamorously spent the final months of the war imprisoned, Schuyler embodied the farcical, tragic-comic nature of race relations and American democracy. Perhaps not surprisingly, Schuyler, unlike Victor Daly and William Colson, made no mention of his military service in his writings for the *Messenger*. His imprisonment was surely both personally embarrassing and enraging. While he went to great lengths to bury this aspect of his past, it nevertheless shaped his sardonically critical view of American race relations and prolific career as an author and journalist.[96]

The *Messenger* owed its reputation as one of the most radical magazines of the New Negro movement to the participatory and symbolic influence of African American veterans. It served as an outlet for Victor Daly, William Colson, and George Schuyler to express their postwar discontent. The magazine's socialist critique of American democracy and the war itself presented these former officers with an attractive political ideology, one that allowed them to both make sense of their war experience and challenge the debilitating influence of racism on interracial working-class solidarity. The *Messenger* provided the camaraderie, organization, and critical intellectual engagement this small group of veterans clearly sought out and relished.

WHILE IN BALTIMORE ON A late February evening in 1919, Marcus Garvey sensed an opportune moment to promote his fledgling, yet rapidly growing organization, the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Black troops had begun to return in mass from France. Homecoming parades and welcoming celebrations joyously erupted in cities throughout the country. A spirit of intense

racial pride filled the streets of black America, coupled with a burning desire for true democracy in the wake of the war. African Americans, and former soldiers in particular, listened intently to the diverse assortment of street-corner soapbox orators and speakers on the lecture circuit, searching for answers as to what the war truly meant and seeking direction for how best to realize the transformative potential of black military service. Garvey, a thirty-two-year-old immigrant from Jamaica and aspiring race leader, was acutely attuned to this mood of political restlessness. He had come to Baltimore to build support for the city's UNIA chapter, giving a series of speeches at local churches. On this particular night, he spoke not only to Baltimore's African American community but to the concerns of black people throughout the country, invoking the recent participation of peoples of African descent in the war to motivate them to collective action. "We Negroes have fought and died enough for white people," the UNIA leader implored his audience. "From 1914 to 1918 two million Negroes fought in Europe for a thing foreign to themselves—Democracy." The time of waiting patiently for a white supremacist government to grant African Americans their full democratic rights had passed with the end of the war and the return of black soldiers to the United States. Black people, as Garvey proclaimed, had a new calling: "Now they must fight for themselves."[97]

In a remarkably short time, the UNIA became the most dominant mass organization of peoples of African descent in the early twentieth century. Just as the evolution of the New Negro movement is inextricably connected with the extraordinary rise of the UNIA, the history of the organization itself cannot be divorced from the experiences and symbolic resonance of African American veterans. Garvey consciously invoked the recent historical memory of black military service as a strategy to popularize the UNIA and promote his vision of a diasporic black empire. At the same time, the nationalist and Pan-Africanist ideologies of the UNIA, with its concomitant militarism, attracted many disillusioned African American veterans to its ranks. Former soldiers, as both leaders and members, played a key role in the UNIA's expansion. As the UNIA made its presence felt throughout postwar America and beyond, black veterans, physically and symbolically, figured prominently in the organization's membership, ideology, and performance.

Having experienced firsthand the inconsistencies of British democracy and colonialism in Jamaica, Marcus Garvey founded the UNIA on August 1, 1914, in his hometown of Kingston. Influenced by the self-help racial philosophy of Booker T. Washington, Garvey set out in early 1916 to visit the Tuskegee Institute and give a series of lectures in the South. He instead spent over a year traveling throughout the United States and meeting prominent African American race

leaders such as Ida B. Wells-Barnett and Hubert Harrison, arguably the most important early figure of the New Negro movement.[98] Realizing the tremendous organizing potential of African Americans, Garvey settled in Harlem, and by early 1918 New York had replaced Kingston as headquarters of the UNIA. Joining Harlem's numerous soapbox orators, Garvey quickly began to make a name for himself in advocating for black racial pride, self-determination, and African liberation.[99]

The First World War had a significant impact on Marcus Garvey and the development of the UNIA. Garvey boasted that, at its height, the UNIA had a worldwide membership of some four million supporters, with two million in the United States alone. Although headquartered in New York, the majority of the UNIA's American branches were located in the South and catered to the local struggles of rural working-class black people.[100] While Garvey undoubtedly inflated the true size of the UNIA, the phenomenal growth of the organization was directly linked to the effect of the war in politicizing peoples of African descent and heightening their racial consciousness.[101] Moreover, the hypernationalism of the war and its imperialist underpinnings shaped both the structure and the racial philosophy of the UNIA. As the war destructively demonstrated, race, nation, empire, and militarism formed an inextricable nexus in the development of the modern world. Garvey reinterpreted these connections and, in the context of postwar nationalist and racialist thought, developed a broad organizational ideology, which he later termed "African fundamentalism," that stressed the primacy of black racial distinctiveness, historical achievement, economic uplift, and collective diasporic self-determination. While in significant ways a product of Western imperialism—Garvey's vision of the UNIA functioning as the nation-state of a black empire extending throughout the African diaspora was informed by the British Empire—the UNIA forcefully challenged the moral, ideological, and historical legitimacy of European and American global hegemony. Garvey accomplished this by using the history of the war and its ideological impulses to instill in peoples of African descent a renewed sense of pride in their racial heritage and collective ability to determine their own social, political, and economic destiny.[102] Indeed, the political mood and social conditions of the African diaspora and black America were ripe for Marcus Garvey's arrival.

Garvey had a particularly strong reverence for black soldiers. Although he opposed the war, Garvey deeply admired the heroism, manliness, and militancy of black servicemen. He was one of several thousand cheering spectators lining the streets of Harlem to catch a glimpse of the 369th making its triumphant homecoming on February 17, 1919. The spectacle of the marching soldiers,

powerful embodiments of manhood and racial pride, and the adoration they received moved Garvey to tears.[103] He never forgot this moment.

Shortly after the end of the war, Garvey began to regularly invoke the fresh historical memory of soldiers of African descent and their military service to both popularize the UNIA and signal the arrival of a new worldwide conflict between whites and peoples of African descent. White supremacists, ranging from Lothrop Stoddard to the Ku Klux Klan, warned of an impending global clash between the white and darker races stemming from the social and political unrest of the war. In his speeches and writings, Garvey brilliantly rearticulated their rhetoric and, using the recent history of soldiers of African descent in the war, argued that in any future race war, black people would emerge victorious.[104] Because black soldiers throughout the diaspora had not fought for themselves and their race, the full military potential of people of African descent remained unrealized. This fact, according to Garvey, made black people destined to emerge triumphant in an impending racial conflict. "They talk about the New York 15th; that was only an experiment in warfare," Garvey exhorted to a cheering crowd in July 1921. "They talk about the Illinois Eighth; that was only a pastime for the boys. They talk about the prowess of the West Indian regiments; those fellows were only having a picnic; it was a gala day. No man has ever yet seen the Negro fighting at his best, because the Negro has never yet fought for himself." With this the audience burst into loud and prolonged applause.[105]

It would take new men, New Negroes, to fight and win this looming race war. Garvey envisioned the UNIA as the New Negro's army, and black veterans its most important combatants. Garvey therefore explicitly linked the symbol of the New Negro to black servicemen. As peoples of African descent recommitted themselves to self-defense against white racial violence, black soldiers represented the New Negro's willingness to fight back. Garvey said as much in a January 13, 1922, speech, asserting, "The new Negro likes a good fight—a fight like the fight of Needham Roberts—two taking twenty—and I want to say to them and to the white world that if they trifle with this Universal Negro Improvement Association they are going to get what they are looking for."[106] Heroes Needham Roberts and Henry Johnson of the 369th Infantry served as historical racial heroes and individual symbols of the potential ability of black people to combat and defeat white racial aggression. Moreover, Garvey linked African American soldiers and the New Negro to the diasporic dimensions of black military service and a global struggle for democracy. "I say this positively: the morale of the New Negro cannot be broken," Garvey declared before a cheering audience in a January 15, 1922, address recounted by the *Negro World*. "The morale of the

Negro American soldier in France, the morale of the Negro West Indian soldier in France, the morale of the Negro African soldier in France was unbroken and the morale of the soldiers of the bloody war of 1914 to 1918 is the morale of Negroes throughout the world."[107] For Garvey, black soldiers in the United States and throughout the diaspora represented the New Negro in both body and spirit.

The importance of black veterans to the UNIA went beyond symbolism, as Garvey actively solicited their participation and leadership. Constructions of the New Negro largely centered on the question of racial leadership, and Garvey, who consciously distinguished himself from preceding generations of black leadership, idolized black soldiers for their military skills, cosmopolitanism, and diasporic sensibilities.[108] "We are not depending on the statesmanship of fellows like Du Bois to lead this race of ours," exclaimed Garvey in his opening address of the August 1921 International Convention of Negroes of the World, "but we are depending on the statesmanship of fellows like the New York Fifteenth, the West Indian regiments and the Eighth Illinois, who fought their way in France."[109] He looked upon African American veterans as future leaders of the race, embodying a new generation of black manhood, militancy, and mastery that had the ability to directly challenge Western dominance, as well as an earlier generation of ineffective "Old Negro" leadership.

Marcus Garvey's admiration of black soldiers, combined with the pageantry, structure, and broader racial philosophy of the UNIA, apparently made the organization extremely attractive to many African American veterans. Black veterans from various backgrounds joined the UNIA in significant numbers. The allure of the organization proved strongest for returned servicemen disillusioned by their war experience. The black nationalism of the UNIA, rooted in a positive vision of history, culture, and destiny, provided a welcome alternative to the hypocrisy of American nationalism, which proved to be morally and materially bankrupt as experienced by many black soldiers.[110] Vilified by their white officers and the broader American military establishment, black veterans instead found praise in the UNIA and Garvey's rhetoric.

This praise carried an overt gender dimension. The qualities of the New Negro that the UNIA modeled itself after—militancy, physical strength, leadership, aggressive resistance to racial violence—were distinctly masculine traits in the context of early twentieth-century gender conventions. For Garvey, black soldiers, as representations of an ideal black manhood, served as perfect representatives of both the New Negro and the UNIA.[111] In a letter appearing in the *Negro World*, Garvey proclaimed, "The new Negro is no coward. He is a man, and if he can die in France or Flanders for white men, he can die anywhere

else, even behind prison bars, fighting for the cause of the race that needs assistance."[112] Having fought and defeated Europeans on the battlefield, African American troops embodied the racial and masculine superiority of black men over white men. Black soldiers and their war experience thus allowed Garvey to skillfully both undermine and appropriate pseudoscientific constructions of black manhood and simultaneously elevate the place of black men on the ladder of human evolution. "Do you still believe in the Darwin theory that [the black] man is a monkey or the missing link between the ape and man?" declared Garvey in a March 1921 speech. "If you think it is, that theory has been exploded in the world war. It was you, the supermen, that brought back victory at the Marne!"[113] Participation in the UNIA therefore provided black veterans with the opportunity to reclaim their manhood and openly express their race consciousness, opportunities they often lacked during the war.

Several African American veterans who joined the UNIA came from impressive backgrounds and held crucial leadership positions. Clarence Benjamin Curley became involved in the UNIA through the Black Star Line (BSL), the main entrepreneurial component of the organization's goal of black economic self-sufficiency and a symbol imperial strength. A graduate of Howard University, Curley successfully graduated from the Des Moines officers' training camp and fought in France with the 368th Infantry.[114] While earning an MBA at New York University after the war, he served on the board of directors for the BSL, holding the key positions of general accountant and secretary.[115] William Clarence Matthews, a former Negro League baseball star, Harvard University alum, and prominent Boston-area attorney, served as an important member of the city's UNIA chapter. His leadership contributed to membership in the Boston division increasing from seven individuals in November 1919 to a robust thirteen hundred by May 1920. He was subsequently elevated to the position of assistant counselor general.[116] J. Austin Norris, a former officer who served alongside Charles Hamilton Houston in France, volunteered his time for the UNIA upon returning to the United States. Norris practiced law in Philadelphia, having graduated from Yale University Law School, and, along with representing the city's UNIA division, served as an elected member of the organization's 1922 League of Nations delegation.[117] Similar to the LFD, some of the most distinguished African American veterans of the war found an ideological home in the UNIA and provided Marcus Garvey with stellar examples of racial progress.

Many former soldiers of the British West Indies Regiment joined the UNIA and became prominent members. Men and women from the various isles of the West Indies provided the core of the UNIA's membership base, both in the Caribbean and, following the establishment of the organization's New York

headquarters, in the United States. Almost forty-five thousand individuals migrated to the United States from the Caribbean between 1913 and 1919, settling in major cities across the eastern seaboard and fundamentally reshaping the social, political, and cultural demographics of black America in the process.[118] After founding the UNIA in his home of Jamaica, Garvey forged relationships with a number of men throughout the Caribbean who subsequently entered the British military under the aegis of the BWIR. As the UNIA's influence in the Caribbean grew during the war years, British military intelligence officials expressed deep concern with Garvey's correspondence with black soldiers in the BWIR who promoted the organization and contributed to its expanding membership.[119] Veterans of the BWIR played a key role in the rapid growth of the UNIA following the armistice. Service in the British military radicalized many West Indian troops, who experienced discrimination at the hands of their white superiors that parallel what African American soldiers endured in the AEF. Having initially supported the war effort and willingly offered their service on the behalf of the British motherland, soldiers of the BWIR were rewarded with a torrent of racial discrimination and psychological abuse that left them both embittered and motivated to organize for collective self-determination.[120]

West Indian veterans, many of whom migrated to the United States after the war, occupied a wide variety of key leadership positions within the UNIA.[121] Like their African American counterparts, these men were attracted to the Pan-African racial philosophy of the organization, its unabashed militancy, Garvey's valorization of their service, and the opportunity to utilize their skills developed in the war for the cause of collective racial progress. Hugh Mulzac, a native of Union Island in the Grenadines, British West Indies, served as a deck officer on various British and American vessels during the First World War and later became the chief officer of the Black Star Line's *Yarmouth*.[122] The musical director of the UNIA, Arnold Ford, transferred his experiences as a member of the musical corps of the British Royal Navy during the war to shaping the cultural performance and pageantry of the Garvey movement. Born on the island of Barbados, Ford composed several hymns for the UNIA, the most notable being the "Universal Ethiopian Anthem," which members throughout the diaspora sang at the opening of all organizational meetings and gatherings. Another native of Barbados, Rupert Jemmott, served with the British army in Canada during the war and joined the UNIA in Harlem in 1920. His talents as an engineer, first developed while in the army and later refined as a student, led the UNIA to select him as building engineer for the organization's work in Liberia.[123] Samuel Haynes, a veteran of the BWIR from Honduras, emerged from the war and his battles with imperial racism hungry for racial justice. British Honduras, especially its capi-

tal of Belize, was a hotbed of radical working-class protest following the return of black servicemen to the colony, as evidenced by a wave of strikes and riots in 1919. The UNIA fed off of this energy, and Haynes became general secretary of the UNIA's British Honduras chapter. He so impressed Marcus Garvey that in 1921 the UNIA leader recruited Haynes to the United States, where he lent his leadership and passion to the development of chapters in several cities throughout the country.[124]

The Universal African Legions, the paramilitary wing of the UNIA, functioned as the primary avenue for black veterans to join the organization and make use of their military training. Garvey based the structure, organization, and drill regulations of the African Legions, a potent symbol of both racial power and national progress, in large part on the U.S. Army.[125] This made the participation of African American veterans, already familiar with the rules and conventions of military life, extremely valued. Many former soldiers, although disillusioned with the U.S. Army, appreciated the discipline and male camaraderie of military life. Because the army denied African American soldiers the opportunity to reenlist following demobilization, the African Legions allowed black veterans to remain associated with a military structure and its personal benefits. However, unlike in the wartime American army, veterans in the African Legions had the chance to openly express their racial consciousness and use their service to challenge the tenets of white supremacy. With Garvey viewing them as valuable leaders of the movement's paramilitary wing, black veterans again signed up for duty, this time in the name of the race.

The expertise of returned servicemen proved a valuable asset to the development and training of the African Legions. Harry Haywood, who contemplated joining the UNIA, stated in his autobiography, "A key role in the movement [UNIA] was also played by deeply disillusioned Black veterans. . . . Veterans were involved in the setting up of the skeleton army for the future African state, and in such paramilitary organizations as the Universal African Legion."[126] Haywood's observation carries added weight considering his brother, Otto Hall, joined the African Legions in Chicago before becoming involved in the Communist Party through the African Blood Brotherhood.[127] Garvey himself glorified the presence of former soldiers in his army of black liberation. In February 1921, informing a New York crowd of his most recent trip to Chicago where he spoke at the Eighth Illinois armory, Garvey said, "I believed that the Chicago African Legions include half of the famous Eighth Illinois boys . . . and besides that big battalion of African Legions, we have the finest display of Black Cross Nurses I ever saw. The Legions and Black Cross Nurses were ready for action."[128] While Garvey surely exaggerated their presence, as he was prone to do with the

size of the UNIA in general, former soldiers of the Chicago Eighth Illinois likely joined the city's African Legions post in significant numbers. On a national level, the military experience of black servicemen catapulted them to positions of leadership in the legions. Emmett L. Gaines, a veteran of the Twenty-fourth Infantry before serving in the AEF during World War I, held the key position of minister of the African Legions. Along with commanding the legions, the widely popular Gaines frequently traveled the country and inspired grass-roots support for the UNIA, particularly in the South.[129]

Thomas W. Harvey's war experience helped catapult the former soldier to prominence within the UNIA. Upon the encouragement of a friend, Harvey joined the UNIA's Philadelphia division in 1920, approximately a year after his discharge from the military. While admittedly knowing little of the UNIA, his commitment to the organization deepened after attending a meeting at which Garvey himself spoke. The rally was "packed to rafters, people all in uniforms, parading up and down like they were somebody," recalled Harvey, captivated by Garvey's commanding presence and the spectacle of the African Legions. This moment marked what would become a lifelong commitment to the Garvey movement. He joined the Philadelphia African Legions and, in his words, "was made a lieutenant because of my previous army service," a position he held until 1930. One of Garvey's closest confidants, he continued to rise through the ranks of the UNIA, becoming president of the influential Philadelphia division in 1933, commissioner of the State of New York, and eventually president-general of the entire organization in 1950.[130] Emblematic of many former soldiers who were attracted to the UNIA, Harvey's marked achievements demonstrate the valued presence and leadership capabilities of African American war veterans to the development of the African Legions and the success of the organization more broadly.

A number of veterans who became legionaries had Caribbean backgrounds. St. Lucia native Wilfred Bazil, formerly of the Fifteenth New York National Guard and a commissioned officer in the Ninety-second Division, led the Brooklyn Division African Legions after the war.[131] James B. Nimmo, born in the Bahamas, migrated to Miami at the age of sixteen with the intent to join the U.S. Army after the British military denied him the opportunity because of his race. Drafted into the army, he found his American war experience in France failed to meet expectations, leaving him embittered. The UNIA appealed to Nimmo's Pan-African sensibilities, and, after joining the organization's robust Miami division, he was placed in charge of the local African Legions and its approximately 150 to 200 uniformed men. Nimmo's military background elevated

him to the position of colonel in the Miami African Legions, and by 1923 he served as division vice president.[132]

The African Legions figured prominently in the pageantry of the UNIA, which allowed black veterans to exhibit themselves as prototypes of New Negro manhood and black nationalist militancy. The dramatic and impeccably choreographed UNIA parades, famously photographed by James VanDerZee, characterized the organization and paralleled those held for black soldiers during and after the war, in both appearance and meaning, as political assertions of African American civic nationalism and racial pride. In the case of the UNIA's events, black nationalism supplanted civic nationalism in significance for participants and spectators alike. Attracting huge crowds, the pageants prominently featured the African Legions, crisply uniformed and fiercely disciplined, marching in the military formations characteristic of the U.S. Army. The mass gatherings also included the UNIA's Black Cross Nurses, who Garvey modeled after wartime Red Cross nurses and complemented the soldiers of the African Legions as embodiments of feminine militancy. The UNIA's pageants, as part of a historical tradition of ritual and performance within the contested space of American public culture, constituted powerful assertions of nationhood and racial sovereignty.[133] Within this space, black veterans asserted their role as ambassadors of the New Negro.

On August 1, 1920, Harlem came to a standstill by the grand-opening parade of the International Convention of Negroes of the World. "Not a cloud flecked the sky," as thousands of fascinated onlookers lined the sidewalks of Lenox Avenue from 125th Street to 145th Street to witness Garvey, members of the high command, and representatives from UNIA branches throughout the diaspora on display. The Philadelphia African Legions, "marching nearly 200 strong," stood at the head of the procession, which began promptly at 2:00 P.M. They were followed by the "beautiful women" of the Philadelphia and New York Black Cross Nurses who, "clad in their white costumes, with their flowing white caps and their black crosses," "made a truly inspiring spectacle." Although musical bands from various UNIA branches marched in the parade, they were all upstaged by the New York Fifteenth Infantry ensemble, a regular feature at local UNIA events. Its appearance caused the crowd to go "wild with applause as the Fifteenth Band swung along up Lenox avenue and down Seventh avenue, playing marches, interspersed with popular, jazzy music." The historical and symbolic meaning of the band's presence was enhanced by UNIA members carrying dozens of banners, several of which explicitly invoked the recent memory of black military service in the war. Signs reading "The Negro Fought in Europe;

He Can Fight in Africa," "The Negro Is the Greatest Fighter," and "What of the New African Army?" were proudly thrust into the air. The "thrilling, spectacular scene" lasted for three hours and "was carried out without a hitch." It caused Garvey's popularity to soar and, in the process, added "one more chapter to the history of the New Negro in his strivings for self-determination and freedom."[134]

While many African American veterans embraced Garvey and the UNIA, some viewed him as a detriment to racial progress. James Wormley Jones was a dedicated soldier and loyal American. Unlike other black officers in the 368th Infantry Regiment, the captain had escaped persecution in the aftermath of the Meuse-Argonne offensive. Army officials trusted Jones enough to appoint him as a member of the efficiency board looking into the conduct of his fellow servicemen in the Ninety-second Division. He wanted to remain in the army as a military instructor, but the War Department denied his request. Following his discharge, Jones resumed his employment as a detective with the Washington, D.C., police force.[135]

Working undercover to monitor rising African American militancy in Washington, D.C., Jones played the role of the radical, gun-toting, disgruntled black veteran with convincing flair. On March 14, 1919, Jones and another returned soldier, Lieutenant Charles Shaw, spoke to a crowd at the colored YMCA. MID agent Walter Loving sat in the audience, and, unaware that Jones was a police detective, took careful notes of his words. According to Loving, Jones told the audience:

> I am not a public speaker but a soldier and a fighter. I went to France to fight the Hun and I accomplished that object. To prove that I did, I brought back a German machine gun which I captured single handed; that gun I have now at my home with plenty of ammunition. I also have an Austrian high powered rifle and the best automatic revolver made. After fighting and suffering for democracy abroad, we are told to return to our homes and be calm and unassuming. I am not going around with a chip on my shoulder, but when I am insulted and my rights are denied me, I am here to tell you that I am ready to declare war any minute.[136]

Jones delivered a stellar performance, but he had larger career aspirations. On November 19, 1919, he applied for a position in the Department of Justice and the following month was hired as an agent to monitor black radical activity.[137]

Known by his code number "800," Jones quickly became the government's most prized informant. Using the legitimacy of his veteran status, Jones successfully infiltrated the UNIA. While committed to racial equality, Jones viewed

Garvey, as did many other African Americans of a variety of political persuasions, as a charlatan who posed a distinct threat to future progress. Garvey, however, saw the former officer as a valuable addition to the UNIA. As a result, Jones's stature within the organization grew rapidly. He earned Garvey's personal confidence, became a featured speaker at UNIA meetings, and by June 1920 served as the adjutant general of the African Legions. He assumed a host of duties, which included personally training two hundred members of the Newport News, Virginia, division on the drill regulations of the U.S. Army. Jones did this while supplying the federal government with information about the UNIA in order to build a case against the organization's leader, as well as fomenting tensions between the UNIA and the ABB, which he also infiltrated by virtue of his military background.[138] Jones saw himself as performing a valuable service for the race. Praised as an exceptional officer after the war, he maintained a faith in American democracy, and the federal government specifically, that many veterans did not. He thus approached his position as an opportunity to further demonstrate the patriotic loyalty of African Americans by working to rid the nation of Garvey and his organization, which, in his estimation, only bred increased racial hatred.

As Jones's activities attest, Garvey faced tremendous obstacles in realizing his ultimate goals of racial unity, political autonomy, and economic independence for peoples of African descent throughout the diaspora. The federal government exhaustively investigated Garvey and the UNIA from its inception. Garvey compounded his problems with financial mismanagement of the Black Star Line, failing to control internal organizational conflicts, and engaging in a seemingly endless array of vitriolic feuds with prominent black leaders. W. E. B. Du Bois, lambasted Garvey in the pages of the *Crisis*, disparaging him as "a little, fat, black man, ugly . . . with a big head" and branding him in a 1924 editorial as a "lunatic or a traitor." Garvey shot back, characterizing Du Bois as a "misleader" and a "monstrosity" because of his mixed-race heritage. Cyril Briggs of the *Crusader* and the ABB filed a libel suit after Garvey accused him of being a white man in the pages of the *Negro World* and won a public apology. A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen, the class-conscious editors of the *Messenger*, railed against Garvey's racialism and spearheaded the "Garvey Must Go" campaign, even going so far as to work with the Justice Department to have him deported.

The federal government took its first step in silencing Garvey by charging him with mail fraud in 1922. On June 21, 1923, he received a five-year jail sentence and served three months in New York's Tombs Prison before being granted bail. Imprisoned again in 1925 and sent to the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary, Garvey was forced to confront the prospect of deportation following a recommendation by the Immigration and Naturalization Service that he be re-

moved from the country. President Calvin Coolidge commuted Garvey's prison sentence, but it did not change his ultimate fate. On a rain-soaked December 2, 1927, day in New Orleans, Garvey stood on the deck of the SS *Saramacca* and bid an emotional farewell to the United States and the hundreds of followers clamoring for one last glimpse of their deposed hero. The UNIA never recovered from Garvey's deportation, and, combined with other setbacks, it ceased to be the dominant force it once was. Garvey lived out the majority of his remaining years in London, where he died on June 10, 1940. Devoted black veterans surely mourned his passing and the fracturing of the UNIA. But they could take comfort in the fact that the remarkable growth and success of the organization owed much to their participation and legacy in the war.[139]

THE INTENSE BURST OF black militancy and radical activity immediately following the First World War constitutes a unique chapter in African American history. The New Negro movement did not simply represent a fleeting moment in the larger context of black struggles for racial justice, nor did the culturalism of the Harlem Renaissance overshadow its radical political dimensions. Similarly, the activism and political consciousness of many veterans did not disappear during the interwar years and beyond. Some effectively fused politics and art; many continued to play an active role in various organizations that remained viable beyond the 1920s; others used their immediate postwar experiences as motivation to improve the material quality of their lives by acquiring an advanced education, starting a business, or merely maintaining steady employment. Undeniably, however, veterans who participated in the New Negro movement developed a strong racial consciousness and heightened appreciation for the potential of both individual acts of resistance and collective organization to challenge white supremacy and hold the nation accountable for its civic obligations to black people. African American veterans laid a crucial foundation for future generations of freedom fighters with their participation in the New Negro movement, a foundation reflective of their desire for true democracy.