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“When we dance it is not a mere diversion or social accomplishment”:
Communist dance and jazz circa 1930.

In this paper, I address Edith Segal and Allison Burroughs’ performance of the dance ‘Black and White’ at the Second Annual Inter-Racial Dance at the Rockland Palace in Harlem on Saturday March 22nd 1930. Organised by the Harlem section of the Communist Party USA, Duke Ellington’s orchestra also played this event. In this talk, I explore the organic qualities invoked in Segal and Burroughs’ dance in relation to Ellington’s pronouncement that “I am not playing jazz. I am trying to play the natural feelings of a people.” How can we consider the relationship between feeling, organicism and intimacy here? How do these qualities serve to illuminate the communist experience in the US as productive of a total, indeed *ingrown* world, as described by Vivian Gornick, and how does this open onto problems of scale?