



Figure 1. Helen Tamiris in *Crucifixion*, from *Negro Spirituals*. Photograph courtesy of Jerome Robbins Dance Division, the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.



Figure 2. Helen Tamiris in *Joshua Fit de Battle ob Jericho*, from *Negro Spirituals*. Photograph from Helen Tamiris Collection, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations. Photograph by Bouchard; copyright by Diane Bouchard; reprinted with permission.

one by one stepped out of the line formation, "raising an arm as if demanding food," to quote Pauline Tish, one of the dancers in the original production.¹⁵⁷ The third episode, "Railroad," opened with a striking lighting effect of locomotive headlights seeming to approach over a hill and recede. Then out of the darkness a small group of white female dancers became visible, as the black choir sang:

Workin' on de railroad, fifty cents a day.
De boss at de comp'ny sto' sign all I makes away.
Mammy polly write, "Please sen' some money, son."
But I ain't got no ready made money . . .
my Goddama black soul I can't send her none . . .
Help to build dat railroad, can't afford no ridin' tag.
Money talks but my bits ain't bits enough to wag.
Walkin' 'long side de track, hungry, wantin' to eat.
Dog dead tired, Shoes wore out . . .
Lawd, burnin' blisters on my feet.¹⁵⁸

As the lyrics ended, the stage blacked out and the dancers disappeared.



Figure 13. "Scottsboro" from Helen Tamiris's *How Long Brethren?* Photograph from Library of Congress, Music Division, Federal Theatre Project Collection.