



Revista Direito e Práxis

ISSN: 2179-8966

Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro

Adi, Hakim; Soares, Mario
Pan-Africanism and Internationalism in 1945: "Labour cannot
emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded"
Revista Direito e Práxis, vol. 13, no. 2, 2022, pp. 830-860
Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/2179-8966/2020/49493i>

Available in: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=350971504007>

- How to cite
- Complete issue
- More information about this article
- Journal's webpage in redalyc.org

UABM [redalyc.org](https://www.redalyc.org)

Scientific Information System Redalyc

Network of Scientific Journals from Latin America and the Caribbean, Spain and
Portugal

Project academic non-profit, developed under the open access initiative



Pan-Africanism and Internationalism in 1945: “Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded”.

Pan-Africanismo & Internacionalismo em 1945: “O trabalhador de pele branca não pode emancipar-se onde o trabalhador de pele negra é marcado com ferro em brasa”.

Hakim Adi¹

¹ Universidade de Chichester, Chichester, West Sussex, Reino Unido. E-mail: H.Adi@chi.ac.uk ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4778-9320>.

Mario Soares Neto²

² Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador, Bahia, Brasil. E-mail: mariosoaresneto@protonmail.com ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3340-9497>.

Artigo recebido em 24/03/2020 e aceito em 21/11/2020.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.



Abstract

This article aims to analyze the relationship between Pan-Africanism and Internationalism, in order to outline the important role played by Pan-African work in 1945, particularly at the founding conferences of the organization World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), as well as in other events and in preparations for the Pan African Congress in Manchester. High point of the Pan-African movement, this Congress formulated a unitary policy of anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist and anti-racist struggle. Pan-African labor representatives argued that “Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded”.

Keywords: Pan-Africanism; Internationalism; Africa; Diaspora.

Resumo

O presente artigo pretende analisar a relação entre Pan-Africanismo e Internacionalismo, visando delinear o importante papel desempenhado pelo trabalho Pan-Africano em 1945, particularmente nas conferências fundadoras da organização *World Federation of Trade Unions* (WFTU) [Federação Sindical Mundial], bem como em outros eventos e nos preparativos para o Congresso Pan-Africano de Manchester. Ponto ápice do movimento Pan-Africano este Congresso formulou uma política unitária de luta anti-imperialista, anti-colonialista e antirracista. Os representantes do trabalho Pan-Africano argumentaram que “o trabalhador de pele branca não pode emancipar-se onde o trabalhador de pele negra é marcado com ferro em brasa”.

Palavras-Chave: Pan-Africanismo; Internacionalismo; África; Diáspora.



1. Introduction

The 5th Pan-African Congress held in Britain in October 1945 has been seen as representing the zenith of the Pan-African movement and the most significant of all the Pan-African congresses since the historic Pan-African Conference convened by Henry Sylvester Williams in London in 1900 (LANGLEY, 1973, p. 355). It has been widely acknowledged that the proceedings of this Congress gave rise to a new type of anti-imperialist and internationalist Pan-Africanism. The post-war Manchester Pan-Africanist ideology attempted to base itself on the interests of the masses of the people in the colonies and saw the workers and farmers as the main force in the anti-colonial struggle. Many of the delegates at the Manchester Congress were themselves representatives of labour and union organisations.

The concerns of Pan-African labour were not only heard in Manchester in 1945. Throughout that year the representatives of African and Caribbean workers were voicing their concerns on the international stage for perhaps the first time since the founding of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers in the 1930s. 1945 also saw the founding conferences of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), the first truly international trade union centre. Representatives of African and Caribbean workers played a significant role in its founding and it was after their attendance at the London World Trade Union Conference in February 1945, that several of the leading of the African and Caribbean trade union representatives called for the convening of the 5th Pan-African Congress.

This paper aims to outline the important role played by Pan-African labour in 1945, particularly at the founding conferences of the WFTU, as well as in other events, and in the preparations for the Manchester Pan African Congress. The representatives of Pan-African labour argued that “Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded” (MARX; ENGELS, 2010, p. 305).¹ But at the same time it is clear that they saw the unity and advances made by workers and oppressed people throughout the colonies and internationally as just as crucial to colonial liberation as the struggles of the working masses in Africa and the Caribbean. If the interests of the

¹ In English, the phrase in which Karl Marx referred to the labor movement in the USA can be found in the chapter The Working Day, as follows: “In the United States of North America, every independent movement of the workers was paralysed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded”.



masses of the people in the colonies were to advance, they argued, the labour movements would have to develop a political character in opposition to the notion of 'responsible trade unionism' advocated by the British government and Trade Union Congress. The founding of an international trade union centre, that would support the anti-colonial demands of African and Caribbean people, was therefore seen as vital, a struggle in which the representatives of Pan-African labour had to play a leading role.

The previous four Pan-African Congresses had been largely organised by the African-American writer and activist W.E. B. Du Bois. In 1945, although he attended the Manchester Congress as the delegate of the NAACP, Du Bois played only a minor role in the preparations. The Congress was organised and dominated by British-based organisations and activists and representatives of labour from Britain's colonial empire. It is significant that the opening session of the Congress focused on "The Colour Problem in Britain" (ESEDEBE, 1980, pp. 18-35; ADI; SHERWOOD, 1995).² During the 1930s and 1940s Britain became a centre of Pan-African activity, as might be expected, since many of those in the diaspora were subjects of the British Empire, and for economic and political reasons gravitated towards its centre (ADI, 2020, pp. 697-716).

A number of organisations had been formed not only to fight against the effects of racism in Britain but also to campaign against colonial rule and for self-government in the colonies. The most important of these were the West African Students' Union (WASU) formed in London in 1925, the League of Coloured Peoples (LCP) formed in 1931, and the International African Service Bureau (IASB) formed in London by George Padmore in 1937. All of these organisations maintained links throughout Britain's African and Caribbean colonies and as a consequence London became an important base for a common struggle against British imperialism.

The influence of individuals such as Padmore, Wallace-Johnson, Arnold Ward and Desmond Buckle meant that increasingly it was the ideology of Marxism which influenced this British-based anti-colonial and anti-imperialist movement. The movement was also influenced not only by the ideologies of organisations such as the League Against Imperialism and Communist Party in Britain, but also by many of the reported developments in the Soviet Union and that country's well known opposition to colonialism (PADMORE, 1946).

² Du Bois had organised the first Pan-African Congress in Paris in 1919. The term "Pan-African Conference" was first used to describe a mainly African American gathering held in Chicago in 1893.



In 1944, following the initiative of the IASB, representatives of various African and British-based organisations gathered in Manchester to form “a Pan-African united front movement”, to be known as the Pan-African Federation (PAF). Indeed most of the British-based organisations of African and Caribbean peoples were included, with the notable exceptions of the WASU and the LCP. Even so this was the first time that so many organisations had joined together in a united front. Perhaps even more significant was the fact that the PAF also included representatives from three African organisations: the Kikuyu Central Association (Kenya), represented by Jomo Kenyatta; the African Youth League (Sierra Leone section), represented by Isaac Wallace-Johnson; and the Friends of African Freedom Society (Gold Coast). Here in embryo was the organisational basis for the Manchester Pan-African Congress. Even though the WASU and the LCP were not formally a part of the new Federation they often allied with it on matters of general concern. During the latter stages of the war all these organisations were concerned to formulate policies for the post-war world, which could place Africa and the diaspora at the centre of world affairs, and which might enhance the struggle against racial discrimination, and for economic development and self-government. In particular they were concerned to make sure that Article III of the Atlantic Charter, which referred to the right to self-determination, applied to all countries including the colonies.³

As the war came to a close, W.E.B. Du Bois had begun to investigate the possibility of holding a Pan-African congress either in London or in Africa itself. However, the initiative for holding such a congress was soon taken up by the PAF in Britain, who saw the possibilities of consulting colonial labour representatives following the World Trade Union Conference held in London in February 1945.⁴

2. The World Trade Union Conference and Pan-African Labour

³ During the war the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, had provoked furious protests when he claimed that the right of self-determination did not apply to the colonial countries.

⁴ It is interesting to note that in this period (1930-1940), Pan-Africanism had a strong influence on several other realities, in countries such as Brazil, for example, forming a true Latin American connection. The “Frente Negra Brasileira” founded in 1931, and its publication “A Voz da Raça”, were central to this process until its subsequent banishment by the Vargas dictatorship in 1937. The “Frente Negra Socialista” and the “União Negra Brasileira” played an important role, as well as the “Congresso Juvenil Afro-Campinense” (1938), the “Teatro Experimental do Negro” (1944), the “Associação dos Negros Brasileiros” and the “Afro Comitê Democrático Brasileiro” (1945). On the other hand, two “Convenções Nacionais do Negro” were held in 1945 and 1946, the “Confederação Nacional dos Negros” was convened in 1949 and in 1950 the “I Congresso Nacional do Negro Brasileiro” and the “Conselho Nacional de Mulheres Negras” were held.



The World Trade Union Conference was an extremely significant event in the history of the international labour movement. It was the first time that all the major trade union and labour organisations and centres, including the trade unions of the Soviet Union, had come together in an attempt to form an international workers' organisation and to try to influence international politics. Trade union organisations from all continents hoped for representation on the bodies of the United Nations, including the Security Council, and wished to have their say on how the war would be terminated and how the post-war world would be constructed (WALLACE, 1945).

From the Pan-African perspective, even more important was the fact that the emerging labour movements in West Africa, the Caribbean and South America were represented. There were also delegates from what was then Northern Rhodesia, from South Africa, India, Palestine and elsewhere.⁵ All four of Britain's West African colonies sent delegates. Nigeria was represented by T.A. Bankole, President of the recently formed Nigerian Trade Union Congress, and by M.A. Tokunboh. The Sierra Leone Trade Union Congress was represented by the nationalist leader Isaac Wallace-Johnson, who had only recently been released from five and a half years imprisonment and exile, occasioned by his anti-imperialist political activities (SPITZER; DENZER, 1973, pp. 413-52). The delegate from the Gold Coast was J.S. Annan of the Railway Civil Servants and Technical Workers Union, while the Gambia Labour Union was represented by the veteran labour organiser E.F. Small and by I. Garba Jahumpa.

In addition to the West African delegates, British Guiana in South America and Jamaica in the Caribbean also sent delegates. British Guiana was represented by a pioneer of trade unionism, Hubert Critchlow, President of the British Guiana Trades Union Council, who had been the secretary of his country's first trade union formed in 1919. The Jamaican delegate was Ken Hill, Vice-Chairman of the Trades Union Council of

⁵ Bryan Goodwin, a member of Northern Rhodesia's Legislative Council, represented the Northern Rhodesia Mineworkers' Union, and six delegates represented three centres from South Africa: the South African Trades and Labour Council, the Cape Federation of Labour Unions and the Western Province Council of Trade Unions. The delegates from these two countries represented unions whose members were of European origin. This reflected the segregation and de facto apartheid that existed in trade unions affairs in these countries. However, it should be pointed out that the Northern Rhodesia Mineworkers' Union had also suffered from severe repression. In 1942 F.S. Maybank, the union's general secretary and one of his colleagues had been first detained and then deported to Britain for trade union activities, and were only permitted to return to the colony in 1945. The representatives of the so-called non-European trade unions of South Africa were prevented for attending the conference by the actions of the South African government which refused to grant them the necessary travel permits.



Jamaica, who had also been imprisoned by the British government for his political activities.

3. The Colonial Labour Movements

The labour movements in Britain's colonies had been severely repressed before World War II. Some trade union activity had been tolerated before the war, and especially after 1930, but even the most elementary rights of workers were often ignored and the use of forced labour continued in some African colonies until the 1960s (DAVIES, 1966, p. 35). The Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 was itself partly a response to the labour unrest that had broken out in a number of colonies, particularly in the Caribbean during the late 1930s (BOLLARD, 1995). The Act made it clear that no colony could receive aid under its provisions, unless it had in force legislation protecting the rights of trade unions. This legislation led to more official toleration of trade unions and encouraged the growth of organised labour (COOPER, 1996, pp. 65-73).

But workers in Africa and the Caribbean had not waited for legislation to permit them to function. There had been strikes in West Africa as early as 1874, while the labour rebellions in the Caribbean in the late 1930s forced the British government to appoint two Royal Commissions to investigate labour conditions throughout this region. In Nigeria, for example, the first trade union, the Southern Nigeria Civil Service Union, had been formed in 1912, while Jamaica's first union, the Carpenters', Bricklayers' and Painters' Union or Artisans' Union appeared even earlier in 1898 (ANANABA, 1969, p. 10; HARROD, 1972, p. 172; HART in: CROSS; HEUMAN, 1988, pp. 43-79; CRISP, 1984). During the war years there was a rapid growth in the trade union movement in British West Africa and in parts of the Caribbean. In 1943 the Nigerian Trade Union Congress was formed with a membership of over 30 unions representing over 200,000 workers. Within a year over twice that many workers belonged to unions affiliated to the Congress, and by 1945 it had some 500,000 individual members belonging to 56 affiliated unions. In Jamaica the first attempts to form a trade union centre began during the strikes of 1938 and by 1945 two rival centres had emerged. Meanwhile the British Guiana Trade Union Council celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1945 (PADMORE, 1945a; CHASE, 1964).



The delegates from Africa and the Caribbean thus represented not just substantial numbers of workers but also great traditions of struggle and sacrifice. Trade union activity in the colonies had, for obvious reasons, assumed a political and anti-colonial character. Many of the trade unions or union centres and the leading trade unionists, such as Wallace-Johnson in Sierra Leone and Ken Hill in Jamaica, were closely linked to political parties and the growing independence movements. Hubert Critchlow, for example, was actually a member of the Governor of British Guiana's Executive Council, the country's colonial government.

The British Trade Union Congress had played a leading role in convening the World Trade Union Conference but it was generally opposed to trade unionism in the colonies that considered its activities to be an integral part of the struggle for independence and self-determination (DAVIES, 1964, p. 23). In 1942, as a consequence of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, the TUC joined with employer's representatives in the Colonial Labour Advisory Committee, established by the Colonial Office to solve what were seen as "labour problems" in the colonies. In the same year the first British trade unionists were appointed as Labour Advisers in the colonial Labour Departments. These had been established in the late 1930s, to assist in the growth of "responsible" trade unions in the colonies (WEILER, 1984, pp. 367-392). The aim of the British TUC and Colonial Office to foster "responsible trade unionism" in the colonies was only partly successful and it was hoped that attendance at the London conference by colonial trade unionists would itself have "a really educative effect". In West Africa and the Caribbean trade unionism remained closely linked to political and anti-colonial demands, despite government repression and the imprisonment of radical union leaders, such as Wallace-Johnson and Ken Hill, during the war. Throughout the war years and partly because of wartime conditions, many colonial trade unions became more organised, more liable to engage in what were seen as political actions, and often less likely to listen to the advice of the TUC. Indeed prior to the London World Trade Union conference Sir Walter Citrine, the TUC's general-secretary, was warned that the unions in Sierra Leone were "hardly anything more than a means of political agitation in favour of West African independence and similar extremist ideas" (*H.B. Kemmis to W. Citrine*, January 12, 1944, Modern Records Centre, Warwick University (MRC) Mss. 292. 910. 1/5).



For the first time in history at the World Trade Union Conference, the workers of Africa and the Caribbean had representatives at an important international forum and signalled their concerns even before the opening of the conference. The trade unions from British Guiana, for example, had proposed a number of items for inclusion on the conference agenda including: equal treatment for all Allied soldiers; that governments which legalised racial discrimination should be disbarred from participation in the peace conference; that the colonies should have direct representation in Parliament; that public utilities in the colonies should be nationalised; and that the West Indian colonies and British Guiana should be industrialised. The delegate from the Gold Coast proposed three agenda items demanding housing, mass education and medical facilities. While the delegates from Nigeria and Northern Rhodesia proposed discussion on their demand for an amalgamation of Southern and Northern Rhodesia. These were legitimate concerns, which suggested that in these colonies there was a very definite idea of the role of trade unions, which differed from that held by the British TUC (*“Registration Documents”*, MRC Mss. 292 910. 11/1; *International Committee (TUC) minutes*, January 16, 1945, Mss. 901. 1/6, *Ibidem*).

It became clear from their speeches, that the African and Caribbean delegates had high expectations and the same clear perspectives that were later to form the political basis of the Fifth Pan-African Congress. Indeed they recognised the need for regional, colonial and international unity, and played their part in trying to bring it about. The West African delegates issued a statement declaring that the time was ripe for the formation of a West African trade union federation. Similar plans were being made in the Caribbean. A British Guiana and West Indies Labour Conference had actually been held in British Guiana as early as 1926. A second conference was held in 1938 and a third in 1944, while the founding of the Caribbean Labour Congress took place in Barbados in 1945 (HARROD, 1972, pp. 235-8).

The colonial delegates also showed that they were not content to let the proceedings of the World Trade Union Conference be dominated by those from the leading allied countries. Those from the Caribbean and West Africa, as well as those from other colonies worked together at the Conference and, as was reported at the time, “presented a united front on all matters affecting Colonial interests”. During the opening sessions the Jamaican delegate Ken Hill and others demanded that those



representing “subject nations” should also give their views on the subject of the post-war peace settlement. Hill in particular insisted that it was unthinkable that the conference should set out its views on this issue “without taking into consideration colonial questions, which, we submit, are the root causes of war” (*Report of the World Trade Union Conference*, 1945, p. 93; *League of Coloured Peoples’ (LCP) Newsletter*, March 1945, 11/66, p. 127). Hill, whose speech was described in the Jamaican press as falling “like a high explosive bomb into the conference chamber”, even suggested that as part of any peace settlement the colonial powers should pledge to grant their colonies the rights of self-determination, and that time limits might be established to speed up the process. In short he demanded not only that the Conference “put forward some declaration expressing progressive views on the colonial question”, but also that steps were taken “to use the influence of the international working class movement to put an end to and see discontinued the system of imperialist domination, whatever form it may take” (Ibidem, pp. 102-3; *The Masses*, March 3, 1945, p. 1, IN: POST, 1981, vol. 2, p. 513).

The main purpose of the conference, the founding of a world trade union federation, was enthusiastically supported by the colonial delegates, who saw such an organisation as a major ally in their struggle against colonialism. Joe Annan from the Gold Coast and the Nigerian delegate T. A. Bankole both urged the immediate creation of such a world body and showed little sympathy for the views of Citrine, who urged that the utmost caution should be exercised in the creation of a new trade union international. In answer to the proposals of Citrine and the TUC, Bankole advanced proposals from the colonial delegates, which included several significant tasks for the new organisation:

- a) to encourage the growth of the Trade Union Movement in all lands by preventing such discrimination against associations of indigenous workers as has hitherto been the case in such countries as South Africa, Northern Rhodesia and the USA with particular reference to the A.F.L.;
- b) to ensure that all workers, particularly those of dependent areas, are employed under conditions favouring general prosperity;
- c) to give reasonable backing to the aspirations of Colonial workers to internal self-government in their respective countries (*Report of the World Trade Union Conference*, 1945, p. 130).



In the session on post-war reconstruction Wallace-Johnson, on behalf of all the colonial delegates, proposed a “Charter of Labour for the Colonies” and called on the conference to support the following demands:

1. The abolition of the colour bar and all racial discrimination in public and private employment.
2. The abolition of forced labour, child labour, and all forms of slavery, open or disguised, abolition of flogging and other forms of punishment for breach of labour contract as well as penal sanctions for breach of labour contract.
3. Abolition of all pass law legislation and the establishment of the right of free assembly, free speech, free press, free movement.
4. Equal pay for equal work, irrespective of race, colour, creed or sex.
5. Abolition of racial restrictions against the admittance of African and other coloured workers into existing white trade unions (South Africa, Rhodesia, etc.) Wherever such restrictions continue to operate, Africans and other coloured workers should have the right to create separate and free trade unions.
6. Trade union and social legislation existing in the Colonies should be brought into line with that existing in the metropolis, or conversely, the same trade union and social legislative principles operating in the metropolitan countries should be made applicable to the Colonial territories (PADMORE, 1945a, p. 4).

Wallace-Johnson asked for conference support for these demands “as an elementary gesture of solidarity with the oppressed and exploited millions of industrial and agricultural workers in the Colonies in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, the Pacific Islands, British Guiana, Mauritius and Ceylon”. The demand that social legislation which operated in the metropolitan countries should also be implemented in the colonies was subsequently adopted as WFTU policy but opposed by the British TUC. Wallace-Johnson also called on the conference to support the principle of self-determination for the colonial peoples, arguing that “Justice, like peace is indivisible and the world today cannot remain half free and half slave”. He explained that “one of the main causes of war is the conflict over colonies” and therefore argued that self-determination for the colonies would remove such conflict and secure world peace (Ibidem).

As well as this “Charter of Labour” the delegates from Africa and the Caribbean also raised a number of other significant issues and demanded: that the war-time contributions of the colonies should be recognised and that Article III of the Atlantic Charter, relating to self-determination, should be universally applied; that imperialism, as well as fascism, should be condemned and eradicated, as it was the basis of international inequality and the rivalry that led to wars; that British and international



labour organisations must support the colonial trade unions. There were also demands from these delegates for economic and social reforms in the colonies. Clearly they recognised that the international trade union movement was an important ally in the anti-colonial struggle and there was therefore strong support from them for trade union representation at the founding conference of the UN in San Francisco, and within the UN Security Council. There is no doubt that the African and Caribbean delegates used the occasion to voice their demands for self-government. T.A. Bankole and Wallace-Johnson asked the conference to demand that the colonial powers set a definite time limit for the ending of colonial rule. This proposal was defeated, but the conference did support the universal application of Article III of the Atlantic Charter and called for an end to the colonial system. Not surprisingly, the representatives of Pan-African labour strongly supported demands for the founding of a World Federation of Trade Unions (*League of Coloured Peoples' (LCP) Newsletter*, March 1945, 11/66, pp. 8-23, 27, 36).

Some colonial delegates used the occasion to specifically attack what was referred to as “the rottenness of the imperialist system upheld by Whitehall”. Wallace-Johnson called on the conference “to be prepared to fight against British and other colonial Imperialism which to us in the colonies is even worse than Fascism”. Others such as Joe Annan spoke to the conference on the specific needs of the labour movement in individual colonies. For the Gold Coast he demanded: the immediate setting up of a wages board; establishing an international board of trade which would “regulate, control and distribute the natural resources of the world”; a representative of organised labour on the legislative council and a social insurance scheme for workers. He concluded by speaking of the “need to do away with all vested interests in the colonies” (*Report of the World Trade Union Conference*, 1945, p. 169).

The representatives of Pan-African labour, and particularly Wallace-Johnson, made sure that their views were heard throughout the conference. Their interventions received extensive press coverage, especially in the colonies, but also in African-American publications such as the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the *Chicago Defender* and in the *Associated Negro Press*. The colonial delegates also received coverage in the national press in the United States, in papers such as the *New York Times*, which amongst other things reported Ken Hill’s demand that the imperialist powers should pledge to grant the colonies self-determination (*Chicago Defender (CD)*, April 14, 1945; *Associated Negro*



Press, February 24, 1945).⁶ The colonial delegates and the World Trade Union Conference thus made a considerable impact throughout the world. Wallace-Johnson's contribution was well covered by the anti-colonial press in Britain, in publications such as the *Daily Worker* and *Glasgow Forward*. The Independent Labour Party's *New Leader* referred to his speech as the most memorable of the conference, in which he showed "a political vision, a comprehension of human destiny and an intellectual calibre which made him rise above the conference and compel attention by sheer force of intellect" (*New Leader*, February 24, 1945, p. 4).⁷ Wallace-Johnson's prominence subsequently led to his election to the Conference Continuation Committee, the body responsible for preparing the Paris congress of the WFTU. There was also enthusiastic support for the stands taken by the colonial delegates in the West African and Caribbean press. Azikiwe's *West African Pilot* carried a number of reports as did the Jamaica's *Public Opinion*. Even the report of the conference in the *Christian Science Monitor* highlighted the contribution made by Wallace-Johnson and concluded that his demands "were completely in line with the aspirations of the whole conference" (*Christian Science Monitor*, February 16, 1945 p. 6).⁸ Most of the press reports commented on the anti-imperialist character of the colonial delegates' speeches, while some also drew attention to the fact that the plans of the TUC and the Colonial Office had been upset. George Padmore, who wrote a number of reports on the conference for different publications concluded:

When Sir Walter Citrine extended invitations to the infant Trade Unions of the British Colonial Territories to send their representatives to London, he was innocently unaware of the militancy of the colonial peoples on the questions of the hour, especially those affecting their freedom and progress (PADMORE, 1945b, p. 2).

4. Africa in the Post-War World

⁶ Regarding the *Chicago Defender* (CD), see for example the article entitled: "British Imperial Rule Defied by African Unions at World Parley". In *Associated Negro Press* (ANP), see Rudolph Dubar's articles: "Negroes Make History at World Trade Union Congress: They Fight Imperialism"; "Nigerian Delegate Makes Brilliant Speech at World Trade Union Conference"; and "African Trade Unionist Tells World Labor Meet Needs of Colonial Workers".

⁷ See the article "World Cannot Remain Half-Slave, Half-Free".

⁸ See the article "Socialist World Called Aim of Trade Unionists in London".



The African and Caribbean delegates did not confine their activities to the founding conferences of the WFTU. They were also instrumental in the preparations for the Fifth Pan-African Congress, which was principally organised by Padmore and the British-based Pan-African Federation (PAF). In February 1945 the PAF invited all the Caribbean and African trade union delegates to a meeting in Manchester at which it was agreed to hold a Pan-African Congress in Britain. The Congress was originally scheduled to convene in Paris in September 1945, in order to facilitate the attendance of the colonial trade union delegates following a second World Trade Union Conference, which was to take place in Paris in the autumn. It was also hoped that the Pan-African delegates could win the support of the international labour movement for their own post-war demands. Wallace-Johnson was a member of the provisional organising committee for the Congress, which had the task of producing a manifesto which would be issued as a “call to action” and for presentation at the forthcoming United Nations conference in San Francisco (*Chicago Defender* (CD), March 3, 1945; March 17, 1945, p 18).⁹

The *Manifesto on Africa in the Post-War World* was subsequently endorsed by Annan, Bankole, Wallace- Johnson, Garba Jahumpa and Critchlow on behalf of their respective trade unions. It stressed the need for a new world economic order and that “the rapid economic development, industrialisation and the advancement of the social standards of Africa must form an integral part of any plan to build world prosperity”. Any new world forum, they demanded, must take account of 160 million Africans, many of whom had fought, contributed and in some cases given their lives in World War II. The *Manifesto* called for the UN to continue the struggle against racism and fascism, and for the Allies to “remove from their own territories those theories and practices for the destruction of which Africans have died on many battlefields” (*League of Coloured Peoples’ (LCP) Newsletter*, April 1945, 12/67, pp. 9-12; *West African Pilot (WAP)*, April 30, 1945).¹⁰ The draft manifesto therefore set out a number of demands:

1. That the UN should adopt policies and machinery “to secure the uniform and rapid development of the economic, social and cultural life of African peoples”.

⁹ We refer to the article “Pan-African Conference Set Paris in Fall” by Henry Lee Moon and the article “Call for Pan-African Parley in PARIS Drafted by British Colonial Leaders” by George Padmore. The organising committee planned to send the manifesto to the NAACP in the US, and representatives of African and Caribbean organisations. They also intended to invite observers to the Congress from Arab countries as well as from China and India.

¹⁰ The article published on WAP entitled “Pan-African Confab” is authored by George Padmore.



2. That there should be the maximum participation of Africans at all levels of administration. That "the present inferior political, economic and social status of the African peoples militates against the achievement of harmonious co-operation among the peoples of the world". International co-operation demands the abolition of every kind of discrimination: on account of colour, race and creed wherever such discrimination exists.
3. That "the present system of exploitation by which the bulk of the wealth of Africa goes to enrich foreign monopoly firms and individuals must be replaced by systematic planning and development whereby in the first place the Africans themselves shall be the principal beneficiaries of the wealth produced, then an equal opportunity shall be afforded all nations in the exchange of products".
4. That simultaneously with economic development steps should be taken to associate Africans with the management of their own affairs with a view towards the achievement of full self-government within a definite time limit.
5. That poverty, disease, squalor and illiteracy in Africa should be eliminated. That "it is possible to eradicate mass illiteracy within a short space of time is proved by the experience of Soviet Central Asia".
6. That former Italian colonies in Africa should receive the same treatment as other colonies and have the right to self-government (*West African Pilot*, April 30, 1945).¹¹

During their stay in Britain, the African and Caribbean trade union delegates took the opportunity to raise the demand for political reforms and self-government in the colonies, which they saw as an important part of their trade union responsibilities. Following the organisational meeting, some of the delegates including Ken Hill, Hubert Critchlow and Wallace-Johnson addressed a PAF organised public meeting in Manchester attended by around 300 people, "the largest Negro mass meeting in Manchester's history", according to one press report.¹² This meeting, which included amongst its audience colonial and African-American servicemen based in Britain and war workers from Africa and the Caribbean, was also addressed by other speakers including Learie Constantine and Kenyatta, Ras Makonnen, Peter Milliard and Padmore.¹³

¹¹ The draft subsequently became "Manifesto on Africa in the Post-War World for Presentation to the United Nations Conference, San Francisco, April 1945". According to Padmore, it had originally been "prepared" by Desmond Buckle, a member of the LCP and the British Communist Party (APTHEKER, 1976, vol. 2, p. 63). The Manifesto was supported by the PAF, LCP, WASU and by Kenyatta on behalf of the Kikuyu Central Association (Kenya), and by several others supporters.

¹² Henry Lee Moon. See note 11.

¹³ See previous note. The meeting was also addressed by Henry Lee Moon, of *The Chicago Defender*, and Chester Grey of the American Red Cross Club. Learie Constantine the future Baron Constantine of Maraval and Nelson, what as this time working as a welfare officer for the Colonial Office. It was from a report of this meeting in the *Chicago Defender* that Du Bois first heard of the preparations for the Pan-African Congress. Padmore explained that both the Manifesto and the plans for a PAC had arisen solely as a result of the presence in Britain of the colonial delegates to the WFTU conference. He emphasised the importance of the composition of the trade union delegations and the fact that they were, "primarily concerned with the workers and peasants, who must be the driving force behind any movement which we middle class intellectuals may establish". "Today", Padmore stressed, "the African masses, the common people, are



While they were in Britain the colonial labour representatives also held talks with several other organisations including the Fabian Colonial Bureau and representatives of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Some of the delegates had meetings with the British Communist Party and T.A. Bankole wrote an article on the Nigerian workers' movement for *Inside The Empire* published by that party's Colonial Information Bureau. Wallace-Johnson wrote a number of articles for the ILP's *The New Leader*, popularising the positions taken by the delegates at the World Trade Union Conference. The BBC even permitted Ken Hill to broadcast details of the Conference statement, "A Call to all the Peoples" to the Caribbean (*Public Opinion* [Jamaica], February 26, 1945, p. 1; *New Leader*, February 24, 1945, p. 4, *New Leader*, March 3, 1945, p.7; *Inside The Empire*, 4/1, April 1945, pp. 12-17).¹⁴ This Call declared that it was necessary:

"to bring to an end the system of Colonies, Dependencies and subject countries as spheres of economic exploitation, and to facilitate immediately the development of free Trade Unions in these countries; thereby laying the foundations upon which, in accordance with Article III of the Atlantic Charter, non-self-governing communities and nations can attain the status of free nations and be enabled to govern themselves and develop their own institutions of free citizenship" (*Report of the World Trade Union Conference*, 6-17 February, 1945).

It is clear that the Call had an important influence on the labour movements in the colonies. For example, Ken Hill reported that as a result of his broadcast "a greater hope has been stimulated in the working people of Jamaica" who eagerly awaited the formation of the WFTU, which they expected to "take a practical interest in their Movement as well as the Movements of all colonial peoples" (*Report of the World Trade Union Conference-Congress*, September 25 – October 8, 1945, p. 200). The PAF also considered that the speeches and reports of the colonial delegates at the World Trade Union Conference should be made available to British workers, in order to "help the British working class better to appreciate some of the problems which confront the Colonial workers". For this purpose the PAF published *The Voice of Coloured Labour* in July 1945. George Padmore explained that:

awake and are not blindly looking to doctors and lawyers to tell them what to do" (APTHEKER, 1976, vol. 2, pp. 63-65). Cf. Padmore's version of events in PADMORE, 1956, pp. 154-156.

¹⁴ In *Inside The Empire*, we refer to the article "The Nigerian Workers' Movement" by T.A. Bankole.



The British working class have the great responsibility of making every effort to retrieve their country's honour, for the ruling class of their nation have done everything by their ruthless exploitation and oppression of the defenceless coloured workers of the Colonial empire to engender hostility between the subject peoples and those of the metropolis. This hostility can only be overcome if the British workers demonstrate in deeds and not merely in words their sympathy with the colonial workers. It is in their enlightened self-interest to do so, for as one of the speakers reminded the [World Trade Union] Conference, "Labour in the white skin cannot free itself while Labour in the black skin is enslaved". Once this truism is accepted, then the desired bond between workers everywhere, regardless of colour or creed, will find expression in unity of action and purpose (PADMORE, 1945a, p. 5).

5. The Subject Peoples Conference

In June 1945, the growing Pan-African and anti-imperialist unity was further strengthened by an All Colonial Peoples' Conference (or Subject Peoples' Conference) held in London. It was organised by the PAF, WASU, the Federation of Indian Associations in Britain, the Ceylon Students' Association and the Burma Association, who jointly comprised what was referred to as a "Provisional Committee of United Colonial Peoples' Federation". The conference was attended by forty delegates and twenty-five observers, and included delegates "from the colonial labour parties and trade unions". The conference also included delegates from British trade unions and socialist organisations. It was viewed by Padmore as "historic", the first conference of its kind and as preparations for "a sort of Colonial International" (*The Statesman* (Calcutta), June 12, 1945, p. 1; *Pittsburg Courier*, June 30, 1945; *Public Opinion* (Jamaica), June 25, 1945; ABRAHAM in: PADMORE, 1963, p. 13).¹⁵

The Conference was clearly organised in response to the meetings of the UN in San Francisco, as well as in order to influence public opinion and put pressure on the Government in Britain. George Padmore opened the conference, but representatives from different parts of the British empire took turns in presiding over its sessions and each colony was accorded equal status. In its form and some of its content the conference proved to be something of a dress rehearsal for the Manchester Pan-African

¹⁵ The conference also called for democratic rights for the "Negro minority in America". Padmore's articles, entitled: "Subject Peoples Form International Movement" and "Subject Peoples' Conference in London Plan Formation of "Colonial International", were published, respectively, in *Pittsburg Courier* and *Public Opinion*. P. Abrahams' article is entitled "The Congress in Perspective" and appears in Padmore's "Colonial and Colored Unity".



Congress. Many of the participants agreed that their struggles were “fundamentally the same” and that they needed to work more closely together. This historic conference, ten years before Bandung, gave further impetus not just to the idea of Pan-African unity, but also to African and Asian solidarity and the need for a broad anti-colonial and anti-imperialist front in the struggle for national liberation and social emancipation.¹⁶

6. Pan-African Labour in Paris

The inaugural congress of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) was held in Paris from 25 September to 8 October 1945. The delegates from Africa and the Caribbean once again played a significant role. Amongst the 273 delegates at the Congress there were also representatives from Egypt, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. The French delegation included Charles Assale an African from French Cameroons. A delegate from the Belgian Congo was expected but unable to attend. The delegate from the Transvaal was prevented from attending by the actions of the South African government, but the Transvaal Council of Non-European Trade Unions was represented in Paris by Desmond Buckle, its representative in Europe, who lived in Britain and was a member of the British Communist Party, but who originated from the Gold Coast.¹⁷

Hill, Wallace-Johnson, Small and Annan who had attended the London conference were joined by Soyemi Coker from the Nigerian TUC, J.T. Rojas and R.A. Gittens from the Trinidad and Tobago Trades Union Council, and H.J. Hubbard and D.M. Harper from British Guiana. All, except Hubbard and Small, were subsequently delegates at the Manchester Pan-African Congress. The Northern Rhodesia Mineworker's Union was once again represented by B. Goodwin. Soyemi Coker replaced T.A. Bankole who had been forced to quit as president of the Nigerian TUC following his weak leadership during the general strike in Nigeria during the summer of 1945. The general strike had greatly enhanced the influence of the Nigerian trade unions, but had been opposed by the British TUC, which had recommended a return to work and a negotiated settlement

¹⁶ For further details see “Background to the 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress” (ADI; SHERWOOD, 1995). Further evidence of growing anti-imperialist unity was apparent in the wide-scale support in Britain for the Nigerian General Strike which began in June 1945.

¹⁷ The hostile American Federation of Labor (AFL) refused to participate in the founding of the WFTU, but sent the African American Charles Collins as one of its observers to the Paris conference.



(OYEMAKINDE, 1975, pp. 637-710; *Citrine to Colonial Secretary*, 8 August 1945, MRC, TUC 966. 3/1).

Once again these delegates stressed the need for the WFTU to rapidly organise itself and wage a struggle against “exploiting Imperialism in the Colonies and dependent territories”, and to assist the growth of trade unions in the colonies, as part of the struggle to bring colonialism to an end. As before they found themselves in the middle of all the controversies that were later to contribute to split in the WFTU. In particular many of the colonial delegates found themselves at odds with Sir Walter Citrine and other members of the British TUC delegation, who it was felt, were attempting to postpone the creation of the WFTU, and who wished to make sure that it did not become involved in politics. The colonial delegates on the other hand supported the view, held by many others, that the WFTU should immediately be formed, not least because they expected a “political trade unionism” that would struggle against “exploiting Imperialism in the Colonies and dependent territories”, assist the growth of trade unions in the colonies, and to take a leading part of the struggle to bring colonialism to an end. Soyemi Coker, the delegate of the Nigerian TUC, summed up the sentiments of the colonial delegates, and in a clear reference to Citrine’s comments he argued: “I am quite certain that no one from countries which are under the domination of foreign Powers would contribute to any suggestion to delay for a moment the constitution of this World Federation” (*Report of the World Trade Union Conference-Congress*, 1945, p. 52). Rojas, the delegate from Trinidad, speaking on behalf of “nineteen colonies in the British West Indies”, took the opportunity to denounce “the exploitation of British imperialism and British capitalism” in the Caribbean. He complained that Citrine had “thrown a wet blanket on the establishment of this international congress”, and declared:

We are colonial peoples in the West Indies, and our salvation and our hope is in the establishment of a World Trades Union Congress that will give us some measure of protection...The British TUC has never opened its arms to affiliation by the various Trade Unions of the British colonies; therefore we must look forward to affiliation to and protection by some other body. We are very hopeful, and we are looking forward to this World Trade Union Congress giving us that protection (Ibidem, p. 67).

Once again the colonial delegates argued that the WFTU must take a stand against imperialism as well as fascism. Ken Hill and Joe Annan reminded the congress of the “indivisible nature of labour”, that “Labour in the white skin cannot have any



progress whilst Labour in the coloured skin is enslaved in the colonial territories". E.F.

Small explained:

Unless and until the Colonial question is solved, fascism will never be eradicated from the face of the earth, and there will never be a new world order for the common man. You will never end war, you will never have enduring peace, you will never obtain economic security for the workers of the world, while one thousand million of your fellow country-men and women are exploited as dependent and subject peoples and denied their social, economic, industrial and political freedom (Ibidem, p. 172).¹⁸

Small went on to explain why in his view there was what he referred to as "this strong colonial and coloured representation" at the conference. This he said was partly based on the hopes raised by the fact that the London Conference had already resolved not only to end colonialism, but also "every form of political, economic or social discrimination based on race, creed, colour or sex" (*Report of the World Trade Union Conference-Congress*, p. 171).

The whole truth of the matter is that the coloured world looks today to this Paris Conference to rid mankind of the fascist past. The truth is that the "Yellow Peril" and the clash of colour are still live issues of this class struggle against imperialism and fascism they are a grave menace to peace and freedom. World Labour cannot ignore the crucial fact that the Colonial question, in its social, economic and industrial aspects, equally affects more than one thousand million Negro and coloured peoples in Africa, in the West Indies, India, the US and Latin America, and in the Far and Middle East (Ibidem, p. 172).

As one newspaper report explained, the African and Caribbean delegates saw "in a strongly organised labor movement, the only kind of strength which can be used to cut the chains which bind them politically" (*Pittsburgh Courier*, October 6, 1945; *West African Pilot*, October 12, 1945).¹⁹ It was for this reason that Small and other delegates from the colonies such as Rupert Gittens from Trinidad, called on the new federation to investigate conditions in the colonies and to establish a colonial department, measures subsequently adopted by the Executive of the WFTU, despite the "reservations" of the British TUC (*World Trade Union Conference-Congress*, p. 128), while Wallace Johnson and others argued that if the decisions of the congress were to be implemented in

¹⁸ See "Africans Protest Hillman's Anti-Negro Move In Paris", CD, October 6, 1945, p. 1 and "CIO Leader Answers Betrayal Charges", *Pittsburgh Courier*, October 7, 1945.

¹⁹ Regarding PC we refer to the article "Negro Labor Leaders Face Odds at World Meet". In turn, the article in WAP, signed by George Padmore, is entitled: "Open Conflict Develops Between Colonial Delegates and British Representatives".



British colonies “some step must be taken to curb the menace of British and other imperialism” (Ibidem, p. 184). The British TUC’s ideas concerning non-political trade unionism were clearly not shared by the delegates from Britain’s colonies.

Once again the Paris conference/congress and the contributions from the colonial delegates were widely reported in the press. The press in the United States and Britain commented at length on the contributions of the colonial delegates, such as John Rojas, and their opposition to the views of Citrine and the British TUC (*Pittsburgh Courier*, 6 October 1945; *New Leader*, 13 October 1945).²⁰ Newspapers in the colonies also reported at length on what was seen as a defeat for the views of Citrine and the British TUC. George Padmore’s reports of the Paris conference appeared throughout the colonial press and highlighted “the open conflict which developed between the coloured colonial delegates and the British representatives headed by Sir Walter Citrine”. As a consequence, Padmore felt justified in jubilantly announcing the “passing of the British Trade Union Movement as the dominant Labour power in international councils” (*Public Opinion*, October 11, 1945; *The Masses*, October 13, 1945).²¹

The Pan-African delegates were therefore able to use the occasion to voice the economic and social, as well as the political demands of people in the colonies. H.J. Hubbard, for example, was critical of those who put their national interests above those of the world trade union movement. Amongst other things he stated: “We, the Colonial Peoples, number very many millions, and we cannot afford the luxury of nationalism. We have no place in the Family of Nations. We have a place only in the brotherhood of the working class” (*World Trade Union Conference-Congress*, 1945, p. 134). Many of the proposals made by the African and Caribbean delegates, for example the right of independence for the colonies, were later incorporated in the final resolutions adopted at the Congress, although the demands for a special colonial department and more representation for Africa in various WFTU bodies were initially turned down (Ibidem, p. 276; *New Leader*, October 13, 1945, p. 4; *Chicago Defender*, October 20, 1945, p. 1).²²

²⁰ Regarding PC we refer to the article “West Indian Delegate Scores British Imperialism”. The article in NL is entitled “What Colonial Workers Demanded at World TUC”.

²¹ Respectively, “‘Less Talk more Action Now’ Ken Hill Tells Citrine” and “Ken Hill Warns Citrine”.

²² We refer to the “Resolutions of the Standing Orders Committee of the WFTU”. Both Ken Hill and Wallace-Johnson were elected as substitute members of the Executive Committee of the WFTU at the Congress. Regarding NL see: “What Colonial Workers Demanded at World TUC”. In CD see “Paris Delegates of WFTU Back Labour Equality”.



A few days after the WFTU Congress, on 10 October 1945, a second Subject Peoples Conference was held in London, convened by the “Co-ordinating Committee of the Subject Peoples Conference”, presumably the committee established following the June conference. The main focus of the conference was the struggle for liberation in Indo-China, India, Malaya and other areas of Asia. However, the importance of Afro-Asian unity, as demonstrated by support from Asia and Asian organisations during the Nigerian General Strike, was stressed throughout the proceedings. “This unity among the coloured races the vast majority of whom are workers and peasants” it was emphasised by Wallace-Johnson, “may yet lay the foundation for the wider unity among all workers and exploited and oppressed”. He joined the other delegates in condemning the new Labour Government for its attitude towards the colonies, while Peter Abrahams of the PAF again advocated establishing a “colonial federation” to campaign for the liberation of all colonial peoples. Once again, this conference gives some indication of the concerns of the time and the growing unity between Britain's colonial subjects. The Manchester Pan-African Congress was itself influenced by this spirit of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist unity (*Public Opinion*, October 29, 1945, p. 2; *The Statesman* [Calcutta], October 12, 1945, p. 9).²³

The Manchester Pan-African Congress, which was held a few days after the second Subject Peoples' Conference, was held as a result of the initiative of George Padmore, the PAF and the colonial trade union delegates. It was the formation of the WFTU and the London and Paris conferences, which enabled Pan-African labour to be at the heart of the new Pan-Africanism; but this was also due to the political strength of the African and Caribbean labour movements, which had been vividly demonstrated during the Nigerian General Strike.

The representatives of Pan-African labour played a leading role in convening the Manchester Congress and in determining the character of its deliberations. In addition to the delegates from Paris many of the other participants represented workers and farmers organisations as had always been intended. Of the 53 organisations officially listed, 21 were workers and farmers organisations or labour parties from Africa or the

²³ Regarding PO we refer to the article: “British Colonials Rally to Nations in East Indies”. In TS we refer to the article “Subject Peoples' Conference”, both by G. Padmore. The conference passed two resolutions: one condemned the use of British and Indian troops in suppressing the Annamites Peoples' Freedom Movement, the other conveyed thanks to the dockers of Sydney, Australia, who refused to load Dutch troops and munitions ships which were being sent to suppress Sukarno's government in Indonesia.



Caribbean, including trade unions and other organisations from all four of Britain's West African colonies and from Kenya as well as from Antigua, Barbados, Bermuda, British Guiana, British Honduras, Grenada, Jamaica, St Kitts, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago.

The Manchester Pan-African Congress was held at a time when colonialism was already under severe attack. The old colonial powers, such as Britain and France had been severely weakened by the war, and two superpowers were emerging which for different reasons were opposed to colonialism. Even more importantly colonialism was under attack from the masses of the people in the colonies themselves. The Manchester Congress was able to give a voice to the masses of the people in Britain's colonies, and articulate many of the demands being made throughout Africa and the Caribbean. As Padmore expressed it: "At Manchester, we knew that we were speaking for all Africa, expressing the deepest desires and determination of a mighty continent to be wholly free" (PADMORE, 1963, p. iv; ADI; SHERWOOD, 1995). But the voice of the masses of the peoples of the colonies was also heard in the founding meetings of the WFTU, which provided their trade union representatives with the public forum and the political contacts which were least likely to encourage "responsible" trade unionism in the colonies. A prominent feature of these conferences, and one that was widely reported, was the united stand taken by the colonial representatives, especially those from Africa and the Caribbean, against the views and policies of the British TUC. The British Labour Attache in Paris, for example, reported that the colonial representatives "clearly hope to drag the new Federation into their struggles for independence" (*Report of W.E. Davies*, October 20, 1945, Public Records Office (PRO) LAB 13/596), and there was a general fear in British government circles that the WFTU was an instrument "to extract concessions from the colonial powers by blackmailing them with the advocacy of emancipation for backward peoples" (*Sir A. Kerr memo*, November 26, 1945, PRO FO 371/47935/N4142).

"Responsible trade unionism" as desired by the Colonial Office and the TUC appeared to have received a major setback. The colonial delegates had taken the lead in arguing that the WFTU should take an active stand against racism, colonialism and imperialism and they had gained the support they wanted. As a consequence the WFTU did subsequently establish a colonial department, once again despite the British TUC's opposition (WEILER, 1984, p. 79); it vigorously agitated against racial discrimination in the UN Economic and Security Council (PRO CO 859/185/5); intervened in trade union



matters in the colonies and, in 1947 organised the Dakar Conference of African trade unions, the first Pan-African gathering during be held in the African continent (*WFTU Executive Bureau Minutes*, June 1947, MRC TUC 918.21; COOPER, 1996, p. 223).

During the immediate post-war period therefore, the TUC and the Colonial Office continued to work closely together in order to combat the effectiveness of trade unions in the African and Caribbean colonies and undermine the activities of the WFTU. After the split in the WFTU had been engineered by the TUC and the trade union centres of the United States and Holland in 1949, the Colonial Office and the TUC jointly attempted to create divisions within the colonial trade union movements and wean them away from the “Communist dominated” WFTU (*H.G. Gee to C.A. Grossmith*, December 23, 1948, PRO CO 859/147/3). Amongst other things the TUC continued to encourage colonial trade unionists to undergo training at Ruskin College in Oxford, and scholarships were provided for this purpose. R.A. Gittens was one of the first to receive such a scholarship following the WFTU conference in Paris. Some colonial trade unionists hoped that as a result of training at Ruskin their members might subsequently be appointed Labour Officers in the colonies, but the intention of the TUC and Colonial Office remained that of developing “responsible” trade union leadership. The TUC and the Colonial Office also did their best to monitor and control the activities of the more outspoken colonial trade unions leaders such as Wallace-Johnson and Ken Hill, who were both substitute members of the executive committee of WFTU. The TUC, with the aid of the Labour Officer in Sierra Leone, also waged a long but largely unsuccessful campaign to discredit Wallace-Johnson and limit his influence in the Sierra Leone TUC (*“Report to the International Committee of the TUC”*, April 20, 1948, MRC TUC. 918/1).

7. Conclusion

Perhaps because of the activities of the TUC and Colonial Office, many of the trade unions in the colonies initially remained loyal to the WFTU and critical of the actions of the TUC. In 1949, for example, at the time of the split in the WFTU, Colonial Office officials were provided with a report on the Trinidad and Tobago TUC’s attitude towards the British TUC, and its intention to remain loyal to the WFTU. It was clear that since



1945 the workers of Trinidad and Tobago had been able to compare the policies of the WFTU and the TUC. Whereas the WFTU had done much to 'expose oppression and exploitation of the workers everywhere', condemned conditions in the colonies, and given representatives of colonial trade unions equal status with those from metropolitan countries, the British TUC had not even granted affiliation to colonial trade unions. "What the British TUC has failed to grant colonial unions the WFTU has permitted them", was the opinion offered in *Vanguard*, the official organ of the Trinidad and Tobago TUC (*Vanguard*, 29 January 1949, in PRO CO 859/147/5 pt. 3).

The founding of the WFTU presented a clear challenge to the policies of the British TUC and the Colonial Office and their encouragement of 'responsible trade unionism' in the colonies. Far from being 'positively influenced' by attending the founding conferences of the WFTU, as the Colonial Office and its allies hoped, trade unions in many colonies viewed the WFTU in the immediate post-war period as their main ally in the struggle for political trade unionism and colonial independence. Their representatives had made the conferences the occasion for open oppositions to TUC and Colonial Office policy. WFTU support for labour organisations in the colonies was gained largely as a result of the united stand demands made by the colonial delegates themselves at the London and Paris conferences in 1945.

The Manchester Pan-African Congress has been credited for transforming Pan-Africanism from a general protest movement of peoples of African descent into an instrument of African nationalist movements fighting against colonial rule. The delegates at the Manchester PAC declared their belief "in the right of all peoples to govern themselves", free from foreign economic and political control. They also declared that people "must fight for these ends by all means at their disposal", and based on their experience identified "the organisation of the masses" as the only road to "effective action". "Colonial workers" they declared, "must be in the forefront of the battle against Imperialism" (*Declaration to the Colonial Workers, Farmers and Intellectuals*. In: ADI; SHERWOOD, 1995, p. 56).

8. Primary Sources



Associated Negro Press, February 24, 1945.

Chicago Defender (CD), April 14, 1945.

Chicago Defender (CD), March 17, 1945.

Chicago Defender (CD), March 3, 1945.

Chicago Defender (CD), October 6, 1945.

Chicago Defender, October 20, 1945.

Christian Science Monitor, February 16, 1945.

Citrine to Colonial Secretary, 8 August 1945, MRC, TUC 966. 3/1.

H.B. Kemmis to W. Citrine, January 12, 1944, Modern Records Centre, Warwick University (MRC) Mss. 292. 910. 1/5.

H.G. Gee to C.A. Grossmith, December 23, 1948, PRO CO 859/147/3.

Inside The Empire, 4/1, April 1945.

International Committee (TUC) minutes, January 16, 1945, Modern Records Centre, Warwick University (MRC) Mss. 901. 1/6.

League of Coloured Peoples' (LCP) Newsletter, April 1945, 12/67.

League of Coloured Peoples' (LCP) Newsletter, March 1945, 11/66.

Manifesto on Africa in the Post-War World for Presentation to the United Nations Conference, San Francisco, April 1945.



New Leader, February 24, 1945.

New Leader, March 3, 1945.

New Leader, October 13, 1945.

Pittsburg Courier, June 30, 1945.

Pittsburgh Courier, October 6, 1945.

Pittsburgh Courier, October 7, 1945.

Public Opinion (Jamaica), June 25, 1945.

Public Opinion [Jamaica], February 26, 1945.

Public Opinion, October 11, 1945.

Public Opinion, October 29, 1945.

Public Records Office (PRO) CO 859/185/5.

Registration Documents, Modern Records Centre, Warwick University (MRC) Mss. 292 910. 11/1.

Report of the World Trade Union Conference, 6-17 February, 1945.

Report of the World Trade Union Conference-Congress, September 25 – October 8, 1945.

Report of W.E. Davies, October 20, 1945, Public Records Office (PRO) LAB 13/596.



Report to the International Committee of the TUC, April 20, 1948, MRC TUC. 918/1.

Sir A. Kerr memo, November 26, 1945, Public Records Office (PRO) FO 371/47935/N4142.

The Masses, October 13, 1945.

The Statesman (Calcutta), June 12, 1945.

The Statesman [Calcutta], October 12, 1945.

Vanguard, 29 January 1949. IN: PRO CO 859/147/5 pt. 3.

West African Pilot (WAP), April 30, 1945.

West African Pilot (WAP), October 12, 1945.

WFTU Executive Bureau Minutes, June 1947, MRC TUC 918.21.

9. Bibliography

ABRAHAMS, Peter. The Congress in Perspective. IN: PADMORE, G (Ed.). *History of the Pan-African Congress: Colonial and Coloured Unity – A Programme of Action*. London: Hammersmith Bookshop, 1963.

ADI, Hakim. *A Diáspora Africana, 'Desenvolvimento' & Moderna Teoria Política Africana*. Tradução: Mario Soares Neto. Rev. Direito Práx., Rio de Janeiro, Vol. 11, N.01, 2020 p. 697-716.

ADI, Hakim; SHERWOOD, Marika. *The 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress Revisited*. London, New Bacon Books, 1995.

ANANABA, Wogu. *The Trade Union Movement in Nigeria*. Benin City: Ethiope, 1969.

APTHEKER, H. (Ed.). *The Correspondence of W. E. B. Du Bois* [vol.2]. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts, 1976.



BANKOLE, T. A. "The Nigerian Workers' Movement". *Inside The Empire*, 4/1, Abril de 1945.

BOLLARD, O. N. *On The March – Labour Rebellions in the British Caribbean 1934-39*. Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers; London: James Currey Publishers, 1995.

CHASE, Ashton. *A History of Trade Unionism in Guyana 1900-6*. Ruimveldt, Demerara, Guyana, New Guyana Co., 1964.

COOPER, F. *Decolonization and African Society: The Labour Question in British and French Africa*. Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

CRISP, Jeff. *The Story of an African Working Class: Ghanaian Miners' Struggles 1870-1980*. London, Zed Press, 1984.

DAVIES, D. I. "The Politics of the TUC's Colonial Policy". *Political Quarterly*, (35), 1964.

DAVIES, D. I. *African Trade Unions*. Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1966.

ESEDEBE, P. O. "The Growth of the Pan-African Movement, 1893-1927". *Tarikh*, 6/3, 1980.

HARROD, J. *Trade Union Foreign Policy – A Study of British and American Trade Union Activities in Jamaica*. New York, Doubleday and Co., 1972.

HART, R. "Origin and Development of the Working Class in the English-speaking Caribbean Area 1897-1937". IN: CROSS, M.; HEUMAN, G. *Labour in the Caribbean*. London, Macmillan, 1988.

LANGLEY, J. Ayodele. *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa 1900-45: A Study in Ideology and Social Classes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973.

MARX, Karl. *O Capital: Crítica da Economia Política*. (O Processo de Produção do Capital). Volume I. Livro Primeiro. Tomo I. São Paulo: Nova Cultural, 1988.



MARX, Karl; ENGELS, Friedrich. *Collected Works. Volume 35. Karl Marx – Capital Volume I*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2010.

OYEMAKINDE, W. “The Nigerian General Strike of 1945”. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 7 (1975).

PADMORE, G (Ed.). *History of the Pan-African Congress: Colonial and Coloured Unity – A Programme of Action*. London: Hammersmith Bookshop, 1963.

PADMORE, G. (Ed.). “Colonial and Coloured Unity”. IN: ADI, Hakim; SHERWOOD, Marika. *The 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress Revisited*. London: New Beacon Books, 1995.

PADMORE, G. (Ed.). *The Voice of Coloured Labour*. London, Pan-African Federation, 1945a.

PADMORE, G. “British Colonials Rally to Nations in East Indies”. *Public Opinion*, October 29, 1945.

PADMORE, G. “Open Conflict Develops Between Colonial Delegates and British Representatives”. *West African Pilot*, October 12, 1945.

PADMORE, G. “Pan-African Confab”. *West African Pilot*, April 30, 1945.

PADMORE, G. “Subject Peoples' Conference”. *The Statesman* (Calcutta), October 12, 1945.

PADMORE, G. “Subject Peoples” Conference in London Plan Formation of “Colonial International”. *Public Opinion* (Jamaica), June 25, 1945.

PADMORE, G. “The Voice of Africa - Challenge at World TUC”. *Forward* (Glasgow), April 14, 1945b.



PADMORE, G. *How Russia Transformed Her Colonial Empire – A Challenge to the Imperialist Powers*. London, Dennis Dobson Limited, 1946.

PADMORE, G. *Pan-Africanism or Communism?: The Coming Struggle for Africa*. New York: Roy Publishers, 1955.

PADMORE, G. Subject Peoples Form International Movement. *Pittsburg Courier*, June 30, 1945.

POST, K. *Strike the Iron: A Colony at War – Jamaica 1939-1945, 2 vols*. The Hague: Institute of Social Studies, 1981.

SPITZER, L; DENZER, L. R. "I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson and the West African Youth League". *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 7/3 (1973).

WALLACE, Betty, *World Labour Comes of Age*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1945.

WEILER, P. "Forming Responsible Trade Unions: The Colonial Office, Colonial Labour and the Trade Union Congress". *Radical History Review*, 28-30, 1984.

About the authors

Hakim Adi

PhD in History from SOAS University of London. Professor of History of Africa and the African Diaspora, at the University of Chichester - United Kingdom. He is a founding member of the Association for Black and Asian Studies in London. Author of numerous works, among which: "West Africans in Great Britain 1900-1960: Nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Communism (1998)", "Pan-African History: Political Figures of Africa and the Diaspora since 1787 (2003)"; "Pan-Africanism and Communism: The Communist International, Africa and the Diaspora, 1919-1939 (2013)", "Pan-Africanism: a history (2018)", and others. E-mail: h.adi@chi.ac.uk

Mario Soares Neto

Lawyer, Professor and Researcher. Master in Law from the Postgraduate Program in Law at the Federal University of Bahia - PPGD / UFBA. He coordinated the Faculty of Law UFBA Extension Course: Marxism and Pan-Africanism (2018; 2019) and the Faculty of Law University of São Paulo Extension Course: Marxism and Racial Question (2021). He is currently preparing to enter the Doctorate. He is also a student of the economics course at the Faculty of Economic Sciences at UFBA. He is a translator and prefacer of the work Pan-Africanism: A History (which will be released soon in Brazil). E-mail: mariosoaresneto@protonmail.com

The authors contributed equally to the writing of the article.