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Pan-Africanism and International Communism Between the Wars. Agents of Change and Contradiction (1919 - 1939)

In this paper I want to discuss the character of the conflicted relationship between interwar Pan-Africanism and international communism, and how these two political and cultural interpretations of the world interacted and overlapped each other between the wars. But also, how they differed from each other in its promotion of radical change. Two general questions are at the center of attention here:

- What was the relation between these two visions of change, and how was it enacted in theory and practice?
- Was race and class the defining factor that determined the conflicted relationship between Pan-Africanism and communism?

I will demonstrate how and why communism and Pan-Africanism confronted each other in their interpretation of racial liberation through uses of race and class, and how these two strands can be perceived as “agents of change and contradiction”. When I talk of ‘agents’, I am in the first place referring to actors that questioned the world order between the wars, in particular the structures created after the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919 and the so-called “Wilsonian moment”, and how the systems of colonialism and imperialism merely continued in the shape of “mandate states”.

The paper/presentation will give examples of Jim Crowism in the international communist movement as political practice against racism. But also, what is worth noting is the existence of racism within the movement, and how this polarized the agents of change in relation to the internationalist message of socialism and communism.

The primary focus is to further the discussion on the punitive relation between Pan-Africanism and communism, not other Pan-African ideas such as Marcus Garvey’s “Back to Africa” movement, or the Francophone culturalism of Négritude.

I think it is relevant to note that international communism was perceived as an attitude and method for the individuals involved in and working for the Communist International – the ‘world party’ of international communism. It is therefore relevant to interpret interwar communism from its international and transnational perspective.

Finally, international organizations are an important part, and it seems as if we take them for granted. This form of organizations had, and still have the power to introduce ideas and movements that questions national borders and territorial boundaries, and that there exists a world capable of cutting across national frontiers, and create networks of shared interests and concerns.¹ By interpreting international

¹ See Akira Iriye’s *Global Community* (2002) definition of international organizations.

organizations as “agents of change”, I address how Pan-Africanism and international communism were transnational in character between the wars, and that each and everyone of these organizations represents transnational histories in the history of twentieth century resistance movements, which, in some respect is connected to the Black Atlantic as a space of resistance.

Let us shift attention to Hamburg on 7-9 July 1930, and focus on the establishment of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers’.

The International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers (1930-37)

The Secretariat of the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU; Profintern) completed in Moscow on 24 January 1931, the confidential “Resolution of the Organisation and Functions of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers”. The resolution provides us with a short historical outline and purpose of the radical black labour organization the *International Trade Union Committee of the Negro Workers’* (ITUCNW).

Its formal establishment took place at a small and secretive conference. The event gathered twenty individuals, for example:

- eight black delegates from the USA,
- one British Caribbean,
- The Indian nationalist revolutionary and communist Virendranath Chattophadyaya as representative of the communist biased sympathizing organization the *League against Imperialism and for National Independence*,
- Joseph Bilé of Cameroonian descent as delegate of the French based radical communist organization the *League in Defense of the Negro Race* (LDNR),
- and the German communist Willi Budich was delegate of the German section of the communist mass organization the *International Red Aid* (in Great Britain and the USA: International Labor Defense).

The ITUCNW was established on the premises of acting as a “organ of the RILU”, but would “outwardly reserving its organizational independence in its dealing with the broad masses of Negro toilers”.

The aim was to establish contacts outside of the communist movement, yet at the same time, maintain relations with the international communist movement and its main beneficiary, the *Communist International* (Third International, Comintern; 1919 – 1943).

The militancy of the ITUCNW aspired to fulfill “the principal tasks” of popularizing among the Negro workers and toiling peasant masses the view that the RILU was “the only real International for every class conscious and militant labour organization”.

Yet the resolution exposed the inherent contradictions of the organization, designed completely after the Comintern policy of “class against class”, but in what way? For example, the ITUCNW promised to support the struggle “against lynching, Jim-Crowism, ... and all other forms of racial oppression”, though stating at the same time,

the ITUCNW was never intended to be a “Black International” conducted “on racial lines”, rather, the committee was exclusively “based on the class struggle”.²

While the race question is central in Pan-Africanist thought, for example, Willam Edward Burghardt (W.E.B.) Du Bois broad observation that “the history of the world is the history, not of individuals, but of groups, not of nations, but of races”, the ITUCNW wanted something else.

The radicalism of the ITUCNW had been preceded by extensive discussions in the Profintern and the Communist International, which, in the end, aimed at exposing the organization as an agent of change. The Hamburg 1930 conference also marked the beginning of the radical African-Atlantic network, however, there had been a history of relations between international communism and Pan-Africanism prior to the establishment of the ITUCNW in 1930.

The Communist International and the ‘Negro Question’

The Communist International was established in March 1919 on the direct instructions of Lenin. The Comintern quickly adopted the organizational practices of the Bolshevik regime after its coup in revolutionary Russia in October 1917. What I am here thinking of essentially the principle of democratic centralism, a pivotal organizational aspect that explains and enhances the understanding of the hierarchy of relations that existed within the international communist movement between the wars.

The colonial question was a vexed issue for the Comintern. As I address the issue of the Afro-American liberation struggle in the context of international communism as the “Negro question”, it is simply for the reason that it was addressed in such terms by the involved actors. A typical example of this was the official establishment of the ECCI (Executive Committee of the Communist International) Negro Bureau in 1928.³

The establishment of the Comintern focused primarily on introducing itself as a radical representative in juxtaposition to the European socialist movement and its ambiguous entanglement in supporting the Great War. Further, the Comintern’s attitude on anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism is connected to the “Negro question”, which, in the first years of the 1920s, was distinctly shaped along Lenin’s opinion that the colonial question should be grounded in alliances between communists and “national bourgeoisie elements”. However at this stage focus was not on Africa, but rather, Asia, India, and the USA, yet the Comintern seemed convinced the starting point for dealing with the “the Negro question” and the race question aroused from the convoluted relationship of capitalism and imperialism.⁴

² Russian State Archive for Political and Social History (RGASPI, Moscow) 495/155/96, 10-13, (Confidential) Resolution of the Organisation and Functions of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers’, RILU Secretariat, Moscow, 24/1-1931. The document has been filed in the collection of the Executive Committee of the Comintern of the Negro Bureau, however, its proper filing destination should be (and is) the files of the Profintern Negro Bureau (fond 534).

³ When it comes to the colonial question, the Comintern was confronted with the challenge of finding suitable strategies that could establish relations with representatives of the national liberation struggle.

⁴ In 1920, at the Second International Comintern Congress, the first step was taken by the Comintern to include the “Negro Question” on its agenda. By connecting the situation of the African-Americans with the broader theme of “oppression within the capitalist countries”, this confirmed the convoluted relation of

In 1922, the Fourth international Comintern congress in Moscow was attended by “two Negro delegates”, one being the Caribbean author and Afro-American radical Claude McKay. After the congress, the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) completed and assessed its “Draft Manifesto on the Negro Question”, only to conclude in cursory terms that the colonial and semi-colonial countries were “hotbeds of growing revolutionary upsurge against imperialist power”.

Yet the resolution succeeded in explicitly declaring some far-reaching ambitions, for example, the Comintern wanted to link together the “Negroes of America and Africa” as it stated, “you are not alone in your struggle for emancipation”. Further, the Comintern promised to openly oppose “the lynching’s and burnings and the most inhuman torturing of Negroes” while acting in “solidarity with the struggle for Negro emancipation”. To achieve the above, the ECCI wanted to organize and convene for a “World Negro Congress” on 1 May 1924. Yet this proved to be a daunting challenge. Was there another road that could be taken? By reviewing how the “Negro question” was approached and developed in the international communist movement between the wars, it seems rather that the Comintern resolved to infuse the Negro question in different forums and congresses, and for particular agents to function and act as brokers of a radicalized Pan-African agenda.⁵

It was not until 1928, in connection with the radical policy turn of the Comintern at its Sixth International congress and the introduction of “class against class” that the Comintern decided in trying to mobilize its work with the Negro question by establishing the Negro Bureau.

What need to be discerned is the radical alternatives and their promotion of a combined agenda that fused Pan-Africanist ideas with communist practices in the 1920s. I am here thinking of the “agents of change”, represented foremost by organizations and individuals.

Agents of Change I: International Organizations

International organizations that fall within the scope of acting as agents of Pan-Africanism and/or international communism between the wars were numerous in their ambition to advance discussions on how to change the world after the Great War. We have prolific examples such as:

W. E. B. Du Bois National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), founded in 1909 and still active must be seen as the most prolific developer and defender of Pan-Africanism as a political project.

capitalism and imperialism, and its conflicted relationship to race as a constituent factor in the liberation struggle. Yet this was mere rhetoric’s, and should be seen only as a first step by the Comintern in approaching colonial oppression as a political project, and the character of the national liberation struggle outside of the Comintern.

⁵ At this early stage, it is obvious that there existed contradictions on how to approach the question of race and class. For example, the Comintern stated that the principle of struggle and solidarity should not focus on race in order to portray the “whole Negro race as an oppressed Colonial Nation”. (RGASPI 495/155/4, 16-26, year: 1922).

Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), established in 1914, was also a successful undertaking from the beginning, earning a reputation across borders after the 1920 "Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples' of the World". However, the NAACP was highly suspicious and critical of the UNIA, classifying Garvey and the UNIA as "imperialistic and dangerous" [WEB DuBois papers].

The sympathizing organization the *League Against Imperialism and for National Independence* is the third example. Established in Brussels on 10-14 February 1927, at the "First International Congress Against Imperialism and Colonialism, the League against Imperialism provided with, at least in its initial phase, with a forum and chance for delegates and representatives of various Pan-African and Afro-American organizations to meet and discuss.

Yet the *League against Imperialism* was notably a communist project, sanctioned and initiated on the direct instructions of the Communist International in 1926. Moreover, the Brussels Congress served the twofold purpose of organizing, as noted by the principal leader behind the preparations in Berlin, the German communist and General Secretary of the mass organization the *Workers' International Relief* Willi Münzenberg (1889 – 1940):

- to organize a massive demonstration against imperialism and colonialism
- to find recruits for communism

Other examples were the American based, and under communist influence, the *African Blood Brotherhood*, established by Cyril Briggs in 1919, and the radical offshoot of the French based *Committee in Defense of the Negro Race* (CDRN) the *League in Defense of the Negro Race* (LDNR), established by the Senegalese Lamine Senghor and the French Sudanese (now Mali) Garan Tiemoko Kouyaté in 1927. The LDNR was financially supported by the French Communist Party, based in Paris, however, the transnational character of the LDNR aimed at facilitating contacts across Europe and the USA, to Moscow in the Soviet Union, and ultimately, trying to establish contacts back to Africa. Further, the LDNR had an active center in Berlin, sharing the offices of the League against Imperialism.

The *International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers'* can therefore, and should be interpreted as a logical step towards radicalizing the Afro-American movement in Europe, and moreover, function as an educational hub for radical "Negro workers" in Europe.⁶ The question is whether they succeeded in this ambition.

Agents of Change II: Individuals

Let us therefore move on to the individuals, the agents and brokers of Pan-Africanism and international communism. Active in preparing the ITUCNW's establishment in 1929-30 were the American trade unionist and communist James W. Ford, the Trinidadian born George Padmore (real name: Malcolm Meredith Nurse), and the

⁶ The ITUCNW compiled lists of preferred books for study, for example, Padmore's own 'The Life and Struggles of Negro workers', the British communist and expert on India Rajani Palme Dutt's 'Free the Colonies', or Vjlateslav Molotov's 'The Developing Crisis of World Capitalism'.

American communist William Lorenzo Patterson (pseudonym: 'Wilson').⁷ The three of them covered Europe and the USA in their journeys to prepare the founding conference of the ITUCNW. Ford traveled to the USA, Padmore to Great Britain, and Patterson to France.

These individuals hold a key role in the narrative that tells the history of how Pan-Africanist ideas were connected and interlocked with the international communist movement. I am here thinking of:

Moments of Overlapping Pan-Africanism and International Communism

By linking together these agents of change and contradiction, I would like to address the following moments where Pan-African leaders and organizations shared forums and experiences with agents of the international communist movement. These moments disclose particular features of this somewhat dichotomous relationship in which the history of Pan-Africanism and international communism contains several layers that are interconnected, overlapping, and in character, were enacted in transnational contexts.⁸

William Pickens European Journey in January 1927:

- Let me first address the visit to Europe in January 1927 by the member of the NAACP William Pickens. On 13 January, Pickens delivered the lecture "On the Negro Problem in North America" at a political rally organized by the forerunner of the League Against Imperialism, the *League against Colonial Oppression*. In January, Pickens visited and delivered this lecture in Dresden, Brussels and Paris before his visit to Berlin, and afterwards, he travelled to London. However, Pickens was also involved in preparing and paving the way for the "First International Congress against Imperialism and Colonialism", scheduled to convene in Brussels. Yet, and despite Pickens participation was eagerly anticipated by the organizers, he was unable to attend the congress. Though he later informed W. E. B. Du Bois that he experienced the European journey as creative and successful, experiencing how he had managed to meet likeminded people regardless of color, race or political attitude.⁹

League Against Imperialism, Brussels, and the "Negro Commission"

- Brussels 10-14 February 1927: "First International Congress Against Colonialism and Imperialism", establishment of the sympathizing anti-imperial organization

⁷ As I have already talked about, the ITUCNW's aimed at, according to what is written in the pamphlet "What is the ITUCNW? Appeal to the Black Workers of the World": The ITUCNW appeals to you for your support and aid in the work which it has undertaken to organize the Negro workers into militant trade unions and link them up in ties of solidarity with the international revolutionary working class trade union movement – the Red International of Labour Unions. [RGASPI 534/3/669, 251-256]

⁸ Research based on archival research in Moscow, Berlin, London, and Amsterdam.

⁹ W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312), Letter from William Pickens to NAACP Board of Directors, 6/10-1927; Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv, Lichterfelde, Berlin (SAPMO BA-ZPA) R 1507/115, Liga gegen koloniale Unterdrückung und Antikolonialer Kongress in Brüssel, 28/3-1927; Petersson 2013, pp.124-25. Pickens travelled to Europe in the summer of 1929, where he, for example, attended the second LgI congress in Frankfurt am Main (21-27 July); see further in Petersson (2013).

the *League against Imperialism and for National Independence* (1927 – 1937), the session and resolution of the “Negro Commission” [174 delegates present]

- This resolution was, however, a replica of another resolution which had been adopted by the UNIA at the “Fifth Annual Convention of the Negro Peoples of the World” at Liberty Hall, New York, on August 1, 1926. For Gumedé, the Brussels episode was a “satisfying” experience, which implied the beginning of a “new era for the oppressed peoples”.

“Second International Congress Against Imperialism and Colonialism”, Frankfurt am Main 21-27 July 1929: Race versus Class

- Frankfurt am Main, 21-27 July 1929: “Second International Congress Against Colonialism and Imperialism”, John W. Ford and the “Modern History of the Negro” and “tendencies hostile to the Negro liberation movement”: Class versus Race, the debate with William Pickens, preparations for the coming International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers’, William Patterson (‘Wilson’).
- The “Second International Congress Against Imperialism and Colonialism” was first scheduled to convene in Paris, yet the League Against Imperialism was forced to shift location to Frankfurt am Main. Where the Brussels Congress had been an event characterized by euphoria and collective joy, the Frankfurt Congress turned into a political battle between the communists and non-communist delegates.
- The “Negro Question” was one of the most infected topics at the congress. James W. Ford, part of the delegation from the Soviet Union (“USSR”), acted as a delegate of the Profintern “Negro Committee” [ITUCNW], which, at this moment should be perceived as the embryo of the ITUCNW. Ford was also the informal leader of a “Negro delegation with 10 members representing 13 organizations”. At the other end was William Pickens, who openly questioned Ford about his ties to the Comintern during the congress, and demanded an honest explanation for why he had been staying in Moscow for a longer period.¹⁰ Ford avoided to answer the Pickens question according to one observant at the congress.¹¹ What was the controversy about?

In Ford’s speech on the “Modern History of the Negro”, focused primarily on outlining the “tendencies hostile to the Negro liberation movement”. According to Ford, the failure of Pan-Africanism was its focus on race rather than on class. Ford accused Pickens of

¹⁰ RGASPI 542/1/92, 17-32, “Complete” [list of attendance], Frankfurt am Main, July 1929; IISG Labour and Socialist International Collection, 3050/64-64b, Letter from Braatoy, Berlin, to Adler, Zürich, 13/8-1929.

¹¹ Ford recognised his supervision of the Profintern “Negro Bureau” at the congress in his “Autobiography”, RGASPI 495/261/6747, 6, Autobiography by Ford, April 1932; RGASPI 495/155/77, 184-186, Report on the Negro Question of the League against Imperialism Congress, Moscow, 3/10-1929. The members of the Negro delegation were [in brackets: affiliation and nationality/race]: Ford (the ITUCNW; USA/Negro), Pickens (the NAACP, the *John Brown Memorial Association*; USA/Negro), Henry Rosemond (the *Haitian Patriotic Union*, the *Furriers’ Union* in New York; USA/Negro), Garan Kouyaté (the LDRN; France/West Africa/Negro), Johnstone Kenyatta (the *Kikuyu Central Association*; Kenya East Africa/Negro), Josef de Keersmaecker (the KIM, the Colonial Commission of the *Communist Party of Belgium*; Belgium/White), Andrews (the *South African Trade Union Congress*; South Africa/White) and Ali (the CGTU; Algeria/Paris/White).

representing the “hostile elements of reformism and Garveyism”, something which betrayed the Afro-American liberation struggle and the fulfillment of the communist biased Black Belt theory in the American south. The Afro-American movement had to “cleanse its ranks” and shift attention from “race to class”. Ford was not concerned about the Black liberation movement from its “native disposition” or “racial dimension”, rather, the question of “emancipating the Negro” focused on social aspects and class struggle.

Ford’s statement exposed the inherent contradiction in the joint endeavor of Pan-Africanism and international communism. The mere thing Pickens could do, and was able to do at Frankfurt while trying to combat the heavy criticism coming from Ford and William Patterson, who officially acted as delegate of the American Negro Labor Congress, was to question why Ford felt it as necessary to make the distinction between class and race. According to Pickens, statistics indicated the difference in the economic and social progression of the Negro race in comparison to the ruling elite in the imperialist nations; hence, the Negro movement was essentially a question of race, not of class.¹² After the congress, Pickens was given a formal note of expulsion from his position as member of the League against Imperialism Executive Committee, a document written by William Patterson, and approved of by the Comintern in October 1929.¹³

The Frankfurt Congress served, however, a higher purpose for Ford and Patterson, to discuss the continued work of convening the founding conference of the ITUCNW in 1930.

Agents of Change and Contradiction: ITUCNW

- Hamburg 7-9 July 1930: founding conference of the ITUCNW
- International Labour Organization conference on forced labour in Geneva – John W. Ford’s tour de force as LAI representative, June 1931

Pan-Africanism and International Communism: A-I-Z Sondernummer 1931

¹² Prior to the congress, Münzenberg described Ford as a “young and active politician, in charge of organising and leading North American Negro organisations”, see Willi Münzenberg, “Die Negerfrage auf dem Antiimperialistischer Weltkongress”, *Inprecorr*, Nr. 60, 1929, pp.1442-1444. According to Ford’s speech, “the modern history of the Negro” was divided into three specific categories: the “Negro trade” and the historical traits of the slave trade, the plantation industry in the USA, and the necessity to radicalise the Negro workers.

¹³ In the document, Patterson stated the following: We do not feel that Mr. Pickens can draw a clear picture of the uncompromising position of the League, towards the international bandits who have raped and ravished Africa and degraded and dehumanised the Negro masses everywhere; RGASPI 495/18/664, 1-3, (Secret) Draft letter to the LAI by comrade Wilson (W. Patterson), Moscow, 25/3-1929. According to the Comintern, there was no place for a person such as Pickens in the League Against Imperialism, an individual who aided “the forces of imperialism”, RGASPI 495/155/77, 184-186, Report on the Negro Question of the League against Imperialism Congress, Moscow, 3/10-1929; RGASPI 495/18/664, 108-112, (Confidential) Draft letter to Communist Fraction of LAI, unknown author, endorsed by ECCI Secretariat, Moscow, 9/10-1929. The last part of this statement reads as follows: “Shades of Banquos’ ghost. Enough! We welcome the announcement frank and open as it is. One more betrayer of the masses has proclaimed himself. The membership role of the League can know his name no longer. Farewell ‘friend’ Pickens”.

- Willi Münzenberg and *Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung* (A-I-Z): 'Sondernummer: Leben und Kampf der Schwarzen Rasse' (1931)

The Abyssinia campaign(s) 1935-36

What do we make out of all of this then? Was the coming of the Second World War in 1939 the endgame of the convoluted relationship between Pan-Africanism and international communism, or was it a new beginning?

Endgame or a New Beginning? 5th Pan-African Congress, Manchester, 1945

Leading figures that appeared and participated actively in the 5th Pan-African Congress, organized by the NAACP, had lived through the horrors of the Second World War, but also, continued the work of advancing Pan-African ideas and the struggle for liberation, outlined along transnational connections and exchange of ideas. Yet, what I am most thinking of here is the historical connections and experiences that some of the actors had had with the conflicted relation to the international communist movement in Europe between the wars. I am here thinking of Padmore, the leader of the Kenyan nationalist association *Kikuyu* Jomo Kenyatta, and I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson. These were persons who had begun to appear as leading figures in the decolonization process after the ending of the Second World War.

Concluding Remarks:

Broad and vast themes such as Pan-Africanism and international communism, and the heritages and impact left in history, are vast to assess.

Yet while it may be suggested that the colonial struggle began in the colonies, however, I would like to stress the importance of acknowledging how the anti-colonial struggle, with all its movements and actors, was greatly influenced through journeys to the European continent between the wars. More, the colonial struggle became politically conscious outside of the colonies in places and spaces in Europe, a spatial and temporal setting that provided with opportunities to create movements of ideas and patterns, as well as create informal and formal networks through meetings and conferences. Hence, colonial metropolises in Europe functioned as contact zones for anti-colonial activists that traveled to the continent between the wars.

The ITUCNW was dissolved in 1937. The decision was taken at a meeting in Moscow at Comintern headquarters on 27 July 1937. Not one single individual who had been involved in preparing or working for the ITUCNW was part of the decision, instead, the organization was dissolved after the Comintern chairman Georgi Dimitrov, the German communists Wilhelm Florin and Wilhelm Pieck, the Czechoslovakian communist Clemens Gottwald, the Finnish communist Otto W. Kuusinen, and the French communist André Marty had deliberated on the question. The Comintern recommended, in order to avoid liquidating established networks and patterns of the ITUCNW, to convert it into "a committee to assist the cultural development of the Negroes in Africa",

entitled the 'Paris Committee in Defence of African Negroes'.¹⁴ The committee never materialized, and the ITUCNW's operations were slowly dissolved in Paris on the direct instructions of the Comintern in 1938.

At this stage, however, a majority of the people that had been involved in the founding Hamburg conference in 1930 had either left or was considered as *persona non grata* by the Comintern. The most prolific case was George Padmore, who lived in London and had gravitated towards a socialist approach in his perception of Pan-Africanist ideas and ideals, and had established the "International African Service Bureau in 1937, which aimed at connecting African liberation activists into a unified movement.

Patterns and Historical Legacy of Communism in Pan-Africanism

So can we distinguish any patterns and historical legacy of communism in Pan-Africanism after 1939 and beyond the Second World War? I have chosen to end this presentation by observing how the historical connection of Pan-Africanism and international communism in the postwar period is a process of what I interpret as normalization of radicalism. By this I mean that what was once seen as radical becomes normal, and, what once was introduced in a communist context was transferred and transformed in an Pan-African context, for example, the radicalized demand to achieve total national independence in the decolonization process, which the international communist movement had emphasized at an early stage, or the methods used to organize political campaigns and meetings, and the production of political material (resolutions and pamphlets). Above all, the above was concretized at numerous congresses and conferences in Europe, Asia and Africa in the postwar years, for example the Fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester 1945, the Puteaux congress against imperialism in 1948, and especially, the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955.

However, the challenge is to address and assess this history from an unbiased perspective, bearing in mind the postcolonial impact and influence on the historiography of Pan-Africanism and international communism, and, the mere observation that history and the uses of history often turns into politics. My ambition with this paper and presentation has been to mediate the transnational histories Pan-Africanism and international communism between the wars.

Thank you!

¹⁴ Primary functions were to function as a center to collect material that would assist the "work of the trade unions, progressive organisations and the European labour movement in defense of Negro interests".