Kweku Bankole Awoonor Renner, Anglophone West African intellectuals and the Comintern connection: a tentative outline – Part 2

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I. Background

Bankole Awoonor Renner’s return to West Africa in 1928 occurred at a time when the Comintern had started to reorganize its anti-colonial and anti-imperialistic activities. At the Sixth Comintern Congress in 1928, the Finnish delegate Otto Ville Kuusinen (1881-1964) presented his ‘Theses on the Revolutionary Movement in Colonial and Semi-Colonial Countries’ which urged the need to give active support to anti-colonial movements all around the world and were adopted as the Comintern’s official policy. Especially in the case of the so-called ‘Negro Question’, the late 1920s can be considered as a turning point for Comintern activities. Two commissions were crucial in this question, namely the Negro Bureau (or Negro Commission) attached to the Eastern Secretariat of the ECCI, established in 1925 (and re-established in 1928), and the International Bureau of Negro Workers of the RILU, established in 1928 and headed by the Black American communist James W. Ford (1893-1957). Many of the following years were used in Moscow to discuss and outline the competences of these commissions.

1 Kuusinen was one of the central members of the Comintern apparatus. He was a member of the ECCI and its Presidium. In addition, he headed various sections and secretariats, including those of Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, and the colonial countries. He also drafted the ‘Black Belt nation’ thesis as a solution to the ‘Negro problem’, i.e., the idea that the solution to the race question in the USA was the establishment of an independent Afro-American (Black) republic. See further Branko Lazitch in collaboration with Milorad M. Drachkovitch, Biographical Dictionary of the Comintern, New, Revised, and Expanded Edition, Stanford, Cal.: The Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University 1986, 244-245.

2 Outlined and discussed in Wilson 1974.

3 RGASPI 495/155/30, 1-3: Decisions of the Negro Commission (Set up by the Secretariat), January 16, 1925. It seems as if the 1925 Negro Commission, which mainly concentrated its efforts on the situation in the USA. Although there were plans to summon a World Negro Congress, not much was achieved. The ‘Negro Question’ will be dealt with by Marjomaa in a forthcoming CoWoPa working paper. The malfunctioning of the Negro Commission and the resolutions of the VI. Congress of the Comintern in 1928 on stimulating revolutionary activity in Africa resulted in the organization of the Negro Bureau attached to the Eastern Secretariat of the ECCI in November 1928 (RGASPI 495/154/54, 6-7: internal correspondence (For the Political Secretariat, 22.XI.28).

4 RGASPI 495/155/53, 1: On the RILU International Bureau of Negro Workers (1928).
Existing avenues and networks, such as the LAI or the British Communist Party, were criticized for not focussing on Africa and for not supporting anti-colonial and anti-imperialistic activities in Africa. As a result, it is likely that by 1929 the International Bureau of Negro Workers of the RILU, now renamed International Trade Union Committee – Negro Workers (ITUCNW), was to become the focal point of the African orientation of the Comintern network.

At first, the focus of the Comintern as well as the RILU was on two central issues, namely to organize a conference and to enlist African students in the KUTV and the Lenin school. In fact, the idea to call for an African/Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean conference was not new. However, the previous plans for a ‘Negro Conference’ had more or less disappeared by 1925 and by 1926 the Comintern’s interest for African issues had reached its nadir. Only Lovett Fort-Whiteman, leading member of the American Negro Labor Congress (ANCL), still tried to call on the Comintern apparatus to focus on Sub-Saharan Africa. For example, in April 1926 he had sent a letter to Moscow where he noted the potential for future activities in West Africa, notifying the agricultural basis of the societies. This should, according to him, pose no problem as there was a good opportunity to organize the peasants and bring them into the orbit of the Comintern. To strengthen his point, he referred to a letter from a ‘worker’ in Lagos, Nigeria, who wished to organize the peasants in South-Western Nigeria. At least the ANCL, he claimed, had been able to establish links with some organizations in West and South Africa (but did not mention which one), and hoped that the Council of the Peasant’s International (i.e., the Krestintern) would start a program of action embracing America, West and South Africa.

However, Fort-Whiteman’s hopes to engage the Krestintern did not materialize. Neither, it seems, was there any further news from the Nigerian contact. For the next two years or so, there was little activities in Moscow on the African question. Instead, as has been the case.

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5 RGASPI 495/155/70, 59: A memorandum addressed as VL/3 dated 21.11.29, "Work of the CPGB in the Negro Colonies" (copy, possible author J.W. Ford); RGASPI 495/155/70, 74-76: Copy of speech, delivered by J.W. Ford at the meeting of the Executive Committee of the LAI in Cologne, 16.1.1929.

6 This matter will be dealt with and analyzed in detail in another forthcoming CoWoPa working paper.

7 Marjomaa CoWoPa forthcoming.

8 RGASPI 495/155/37, fol 1-2: American Negro Labor Congress (April 1926), letter by James Jackson (= Lovett Fort-Whiteman) to Acting General Secretary Dombal, International Farmers Council, Moscow, 16.4.1926.
been discussed in part one, the African connection was for a while transferred to Berlin and the League Against Imperialism and its predecessor. But as the connections between Berlin and African anti-colonial activists proved difficult to establish, a re-evaluation of the situation followed in 1929.

James W. Ford became the leading architect for the revitalization of future activities in Africa by different sections of the Comintern apparatus. In fact, due to his engagement, strategic planning for communist actions in Africa was to be transferred to the RILU and the International Bureau of Negro Workers, which he was to head from its start in 1928. After the Sixth Congress he was also seated in the Comintern’s Negro commission. As a consequence, for the next two years Ford became a key person in the Comintern apparatus dealings with matters relating to Africa – despite the fact that he himself had no direct contacts with Africa. However, as has been previously shown, there existed at least one, more or less, active link to an African trade union – the Sierra Leone Railway Workers’ Union and its president E.A. Richards. Although no correspondence between Richards and Ford has so far been found in the Comintern Archive, Ford knew about the existence of the Sierra Leonian and their trade union activities. Curiously, neither has any correspondence between Ford (or any other in Moscow) and African radicals – such as Bankole Awoonor Renner – (yet?) been located in the Comintern archives. However, as will be argued below, this did not mean that Ford, or someone else at the International Bureau of Negro Workers, was unable (indirectly, presumably) to get in touch with Africans.

While running the International Bureau of Negro Workers, Ford wrote several memoranda on the political and economic conditions in Africa. One such memo was – presumably – presented to the ECCI in June 1929. Apart from presenting an outline of

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9 However, the Negro Bureau had by 1929 access to several African newspapers and periodicals, such as *The South African Worker*, *The Workers’ Herald* (South Africa), *Uganda News*, *The Gold Coast Nation*, *Lagos Records*, A.P.O. (Official Organ of African People’s Organisation, South Africa), as well as some journals which focused on Africa and were published in Europe, such as *African World*, *West Africa* and *L’Afrique Française*. In addition, the Negro Bureau received all communist newspapers and magazines as well as several Afro-American ones. RGASPI 495/155/74, fol 1-3, Negro Bureau. List of periodicals required by the Negro Bureau 24.1.1929.

10 RGASPI 495/155/78, Material concerning the Negro question, 1929, fol. 12-13: Memorandum by Ford (Profintern) addressed as RW/8.:29. “Significant and outstanding facts about British West Africa and Liberia” (no date, a copy). This is a copy (part) of the memorandum filed in RGASPI 495/64/166, fol. 37-45, dated 4.6.29.
the economic progress in the British West African colonies, and pointing to the labour shortage in and the labour migration to the mines and plantations (i.e., identifying the migrant labourers as potential targets for political activities), the main focus of the paper was on political conditions in British West Africa and Liberia. Rather pessimistically, Ford commented the capabilities and potentials of the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA). In his view, there was little to support the belief that the NCBWA would ever emerge as an important vehicle for anti-colonial agitation:

[The NCBWA] attempts to express the desire of the natives of West Africa for self-government and has branches in Sierra Leone, Nigeria and the Gold Coast, but the opposition of the British has prevented the National Congress from gaining outward mass influence amongst the West Africans.\(^{11}\)

Ford’s conclusion for the prospects of anti-imperialist and communist agitation in British West Africa was a negative one. He could find no traces of any communist influence in West Africa, neither were there any labour union activities.\(^ {12}\) Clearly, as already mentioned in part one (page 44), his conclusion that the Sierra Leone Railway Workers’ Union had disappeared proved wrong. However, the 1929 June Memorandum indicates that the contacts between the RILU and the Sierra Leoneans had broken down.

Ford’s statement about the political and economic situation in West Africa was almost identical to that of Awoonor Renner in 1927. Both regarded the NCBWA not to be a useful partner, but whereas Awoonor Renner argued that one should, for the time being, cooperate with the nationalistic West African middle-class, Ford did not mention such a possibility. Instead, his focus was on the potential of the African labour class which he believed to exist – in fact, both he and Awoonor Renner quoted similar figures for the number of West African labour force employed in the railroads and mines, namely approximately 17,000.\(^ {13}\)

However, the crucial question in Moscow was who to contact in West Africa and on whom one could rely? The problem was that nothing was heard from Moscow’s two point-men in West Africa, Awoonor Renner and Richards. Awoonor Renner had been

\(^{11}\) RGASPI 495/155/78, "Significant and outstanding facts about British West Africa and Liberia", fol. 13.
\(^{12}\) RGASPI 495/155/78, "Significant and outstanding facts about British West Africa and Liberia", fol. 13.
\(^{13}\) Amount given for total number of African labourers in West Africa in Ford’s memo; Awoonor Renner mentions approx. 13,000 African labourers in the Gold Coast.
sent to West Africa with the special purpose to establish communist cells, whereas Richards was heading the only – known – African trade union in West Africa. Neither proved the connections of the French or British communist parties with Africans to be more promising. Ford soon realized that neither the French nor the British Communist Party had any contacts with sub-Saharan Africa. The inactivity of these parties in the African question was time and again fiercely criticized by Ford: at the meeting of the Executive of the LAI in Cologne in January 1929 and, again, at the Second LAI Conference in Frankfurt in July 1929 (see Part 1). At this time, by the latest, Ford seemed to have reached the conclusion that his bureau was to be the focal point of the African network.

II. Hamburg and the Padmore Connection (1930-1933)

As noted in part one, George Padmore was to become the key person in the Comintern’s African network. He had participated at the 1929 Frankfurt Congress together with Ford, where they held a special session for the African and Afro-American delegates whereby a provisional committee for the ITUCNW was elected. This meeting was to be the starting point for the preparations of the First Congress of Negro Workers, which eventually was held in Hamburg 7 – 9 July 1930. Padmore, who after the Frankfurt Conference had returned to the USA, was taken to Moscow by William Z. Foster, the then president of the CPUSA, where he first served as an American specialist and thereafter, in 1930, as head of the RILU’s Negro Bureau as well as a lecturer at the KUTV. Sometimes in early 1930 Padmore was moved to Vienna.

Ford’s and Padmore’s plan had been to organize an international conference for Negro workers. Both Ford and Padmore certainly had existing links to Afro-American workers’ unions, but their contacts with Africans must have been rather weak. The only existing connections were with Richards and the Sierra Leone Railway Workers’ Union

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14 The provisional committee included, among others, Ford, Padmore and Kenyatta. See further Hamburg Report (Hamburg 1930).
15 William Z. Foster (1881-1961), member of the CPUSA since 1921. Also member of the Central Council of the Profintern (1922), member of the ECCI (1924, 1928) and the Presidium of the Comintern (1924 alternate member, 1928, 1931 full member). At the American presidential elections of 1924, 1928 and 1932 he was the communist candidate. See further Lazitch and Drachkovitch 1986, 122.
(through the RILU), with Garan Kouyaté and the LDRN (presumably through the LAI) and with Kenyatta. However, in a report to the Eastern Secretariat, dated 6 February 1930, a promising development was registered for West Africa and the suggestion was made to send two comrades to the region. However, a close look on the situation in West Africa revealed that any activities were to be limited to the Gambia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria:

Two comrades. In these colonies industries are comparatively highly developed. However, only in Gambia and Sierra Leone does there exist any independent native workers' organisations. There also exist (sic) a nationalist organisation embracing this whole group of colonies (West African Congress). But this is of a (unreadable word) reformist character its membership composed largely of chiefs, merchants, and intellectuals, and it has no mass basis. Several big strikes have occurred in Sierra Leone, the largest of which took place in 1919 and assumed a high political character. We have connections however only in Gambia, where the Minority Movement gave certain support mostly of a propaganda character in organising a trade union. The attempt on the part of the British Government to suppress this union recently led to a big strike. Nigeria was recently the scene of a great revolt. Our centres should be in Bathurst (Gambia) and Freetown (Sierra Leone).  

Whereas the information about activities in Sierra Leone is not surprising, the references to the Gambia and Nigeria are interesting, but not surprising.

First, the situation in the Gambia where E.F. Small had organized in 1929 a successful strike and organized the first trade union in the colony, the Bathurst Trade Union. This strike had been noted by Ford in his speech at the Frankfurt Conference. In fact, as Perfect claims, Small’s activities in 1929 had been supported by a left-wing organization in London, the Labour Research Department (LRD). Incidentally, Reginald Bridgeman, who was the secretary of the British section of the LAI, was also on

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17 RGASPI 495/155/87, fol. 43-50, report addressed as VL and dated 6.2.30 (no author). Send "for the political secretariat (Approved by the Eastern Secretariat) 
"Proposals in regard to sending instructors to the Negro colonies and for the establishment of a course for training of such instructors" (copy), this ref to fol. 43. Similar information (but shorter version) in RGASPI 495/155/86, fol 3-5, A confidential report for the Political Commission addressed as K/Dict./H. 5372/3 and dated 20.5.30 "Proposals in regard to sending instructors to the Negro colonies and for the establishment of a course for the training of such instructors in Moscow" (copy, no author).

18 The Labour Research Department was founded in 1912 as a research organization linked to the British Labour Party. However, by 1924 its membership consisted primarily of British communists.
the LRD’s executive. Not surprisingly, British Intelligence had become rather nervous about Small’s activities by early 1930 and was suspicious about his contacts with Bridgeman. Wilson even suggests that Padmore established direct contacts with Small while he visited (incognito?) the Gambia during Spring 1930. However, Hooker, on the other hand, is very vague and uncertain about Padmore’s movements at this time and almost nothing is known about his trip to West Africa (and perhaps even to the Congo and South Africa).

The unruly situation in Nigeria, too, seemed promising from Moscow’s perspective. Between December 1929 and January 1930 riots shattered the Igbo town of Aba and other districts in south-eastern Nigeria, where about 25,000 women protested against British tax reforms. The British authorities had to send in troops to restore order, killing about 50 women in their actions. Further, another report written in 1930 highlighted an increased critique against colonial rule in Nigeria as well as the Gold Coast:

There is much dissatisfaction with this thinly veiled imperialism which uses the chiefs to serve it. Indirect rule is said to be based on self-determination. Resistance to the breaking down of native institutions, to suppression of self government, to continued alienation of land + drain on wealth of country to firmer domination by whites has taken form of trade union organization in Gambia, Co-operative Ass’n on Gold Coast, Nigerian Democratic Party and the Aborigines Rights Protective Society.

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19 Perfect 2005 (http://listserv.icors.org/SCRIPTS/WA-ICORS.EXE?A2=ind0506&L=gambia-I&D=0&F=P&H=1&O=D&P=10825 [20.11.2006]). Perfect suggests that Small was not aware of the fact that the LRD had moved to the left. However, if Small lived in London during the mid-1920s, it is likely that he had already been in contact with the organization and could have had some knowledge about the communist influence in the LRD.

20 TNA CO 323/1113/15, League Against Imperialism (destroyed documents): minutes, letter to Bridgeman from the Managing editor of the “Gambian Outlook” (February 1930); report (April 1930).


22 Hooker 1967, 16.


24 RGASPI 534/3/546, fol 92-97 (handwritten, original) Culture of West Africa (add: 11432 [???]5[???]) [ca 1930]. This report is filed among the RILU-files (fond 534), indicating that the author was perhaps tied to this apparatus. As English spelling used in the report is American English, I suggest that the author was Ford as Padmore used UK English.

25 RGASPI 534/3/546, Culture of West Africa, fol. 93-94.
Not surprisingly, therefore, the ECCI was presented with a proposal of immediately sending agitators to Africa to make use of the situation in July 1930.26

(T)he necessity of immediately sending instructions to the Negro colonies, concentrating first of all upon those colonies where there exist (sic) independent labour movements, revolutionary organisations, or in which big revolts have taken place recently [...].27

In fact, the May 1930 proposal was an outline for future strategic work in Africa. One ‘comrade’ each was to be sent to South Africa, East Africa (planned to be stationed in Nairobi), French West Africa (centre to be Dakar), the Sudan as well as French and Belgian Congo (centre to be French Congo “which has been the centre of a number of large revolts in the past ten years”). British West Africa, too, was to be covered: two ‘comrades’ should be sent to Bathurst (Banjul) and Lagos. According to the plan, the instructors to be sent were to be secured from the British, French, American and Belgian parties but also to be drawn from African students in Moscow. In Africa, one of their main objectives was the selection of students for training in Moscow.28

The crux of the matter was, however, that there either were no African students in Moscow in spring 1930 or that those few Africans who were there were considered unsuitable for the task.29 Neither was there anyone ready in the above mentioned parties

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26 RGASPI 495/155/86 Material from ICCI concerning work among Negroes in various countries, 1930, fol. 3-5: confidential report for the Political Commission addressed as K/Dict./H. 5372/3 and dated 20.5.30 “Proposals in regard to sending instructors to the Negro colonies and for the establishment of a course for the training of such instructors in Moscow” (a copy, no author).
27 RGASPI 495/155/86, “Proposals in regard to sending instructors to the Negro colonies and for the establishment of a course for the training of such instructors in Moscow”, fol. 3.
28 RGASPI 495/155/86, “Proposals in regard to sending instructors to the Negro colonies and for the establishment of a course for the training of such instructors in Moscow”, fol. 3-4.
29 A confidential report presented to the ECCI in January 1930 raised the problems of ‘Negro’ students at the KUTV: the students sent to study in Moscow had a weak (ideological) background and the training and education process in Moscow was problematic, too (RGASPI 495/155/87, fol. 3-4. A confidential report addressed as K/Dict. 233/10, dated 7.1.1930 (no author) ‘On the question of Negro students’. According to Padmore, there were more than a dozen of Africans at the KUTV – although he does not indicate which period he is referring to (George Padmore, Pan-Africanism or Communism? The Coming Struggle for Africa, London: Dennis Dobson 1956, 318). Neither McClellan’s nor Filatov’s studies list any Africans at the KUTV for 1930 (Woodford McClellan, “Africans and Black Americans in the Comintern Schools, 1925-1934,” International Journal of African Historical Studies 26:2, 1993, 371-390; Irina Filatova, “Indoctrination or Scholarship? Education of Africans at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in the Soviet Union, 1923-1937,” Paedagogica historiae XXXV:1, 1999, 41-66). As will be argued below, a new group of African students were enlisted in the KUTV only in 1931.
who immediately could be sent to work in Africa. Therefore, a course for the training of instructors was to be organized in Moscow. The outline of the course read as follows:

1) A permanent course should be organised in Moscow under the Lenin School for the training of instructors for the Negro colonies.
2) The students for this course should include both white and Negro comrades to be selected from among the contingents for both KUTVA and the Lenin School.
3) In this connection we propose that Communist Parties of the metropolitan countries having Negro populations, Great Britain, France, Belgium and the American countries with large Negro populations, United States, Brazil, Panama, Cuba, etc.; should be instructed at once to send Negro students both to KUTVA and the Lenin School.
   a) The Lenin School: the Negro comrades be included in all contingents from these respective countries.
   b) KUTVA, that the following (5) numbers be sent by the respective Parties; Great Britain - 10, France - 15, Belgium - 5, United States - 30, Brazil - 5, Panama - 2, Cuba - 3, total - 70.

Despite the grandiose scheme, the ambition to train a large amount of instructors to be sent to Africa was never fulfilled. Only a limited number of Africans were to come to study in Moscow during the following years. However, as will be argued below, most of the Africans who came to Moscow between 1931 and 1933 were in one way or another tied to George Padmore. Thus, although the ECCI remained informed about activities and strategic plans for actions in Africa, the establishment of a network with Africans was to become the objective of the Negro Bureau of the RILU.

In February 1930 the Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers of the RILU had drafted a resolution commenting upon the need to focus on the ‘black colonial world’. The member organizations of the RILU were asked to mobilize the ‘black workers’ in their representative countries, to assist in the circulation of the journal of the ITUCNW, *The Negro Worker*, and to make contacts with existing ‘Negro’ trade unions in sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean and in the USA. The emphasis was on action: “Where no such organisations exists, steps should be taken to create workers’ and agricultural unions,” the resolution underlined. Cooperation with existing African middle-class

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30 RGASPI 495/155/86, "Proposals in regard to sending instructors to the Negro colonies and for the establishment of a course for the training of such instructors in Moscow", fol. 4-5.
31 RGASPI 534/3/546, fol 14-18, Resolution on the Recent Revolutionary Situation Among Negro Toilers (copy, typewritten, 15.II.30., no author). The author was either Ford or Padmore.
organizations, such as the NCBWA or others, or with the African intellectuals was ruled out – this was definitively a more radical stance than what earlier memoranda or reports had envisaged:

Only the broad toiling masses of Negroes can supply the power which is necessary for militant struggle. The Negro intellectuals as a whole must not be depended upon. The few sincere ones support the struggle must be willing to subordinate themselves to the will of the revolutionary proletariat, carrying out its militant tactics and revolutionary programme. A ruthless struggle must be conducted against all shades of reformism, in order to guarantee a correct line of action.  

The Resolution underlined the importance of action. Notifying the recent unrests in Nigeria as well as in other parts of Africa, the emphasis on engagement should not only be on the workers but most importantly on women and the youth:

Special attention must be given to the work among women and youth (Nigeria over 20,000 women demonstrated against British Imperialism during the recent uprising in that colony). Special attention must also be given to the agricultural workers.

The main immediate task of the Negro Bureau as well as the member organizations of the RILU was the organization of a conference of ‘Negro’ workers in summer 1930 as well as to send delegations of African, Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean workers to the Fifth Congress of the RILU which was to be held later that year in Moscow.

Ford’s original plan had been to organize the ‘Negro’ conference in London, but due to the negative response of the British authorities, the venue had to be transferred on a short notice to Hamburg. Once the African delegates had come to Germany, they would first attend the ‘Negro’ conference and thereafter be taken to Moscow to attend the RILU Congress. It seems as if the practical details for organizing the Hamburg

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32 RGASPI 534/3/546, Resolution on the Resent Revolutionary Situation Among Negro Toilers, fol. 18. In fact, this whole section is crossed over and does not seem to have been included in the final version of the resolution!

33 Noting “widespread revolts have swept over French Equatorial Africa, Belgian Congo, British East Africa (General strike in Kenya) Madagascar, Nigeria, Gambia and Basutoland.”

34 RGASPI 534/3/546, Resolution on the Resent Revolutionary Situation Among Negro Toilers, fol. 16.

35 TNA CO 323/1096/10 1st International Trade Union Conference of Negro Workers, London.
conference as well as the transfer of the African delegation were to be handled by Padmore. Early in April 1930, Padmore was able to confirm that he had established contacts with several Africans and that at least five of them would come to Europe:

It is necessary for you to send to the V Congress one delegate from each of the following: (1) Gambia, (2) Sierra Leone, (3) Liberia, (4) Gold Coast, (5) Nigeria. You must provide them with the necessary means to enable them to reach Hamburg by boat, 3rd class (improved), or, should there not be any third class, then 2nd. Upon the arrival of the delegates to Hamburg they must register at our Point, the address of which you will get in Berlin. The delegates must present a certificate identifying their person. It is desirable that the documents should be signed by you or by a local comrade who is personally known to you.  

What individuals had Padmore been able to get in touch with and to invite to attend the Hamburg Conference? The Gambia-connection is evident: it was Small, perhaps via Bridgeman’s contacts or even via a direct contact with Padmore. According to records of the British officials in West Africa, Padmore had visited Bathurst in April 1930 on a mission to (West?) Africa. Others have suggested that The Gambia was not Padmore’s only stop during his mission, but there are no sources to substantiate these claims. In fact, Padmore, under his former name Nurse, even published an account of his visit in Small’s newspaper, The Gambia Outlook:

[…] (A)bout a week ago I arrived in Bathurst on a visit through British West African colonies for the purpose of gathering certain facts and information in order to complete a book which I am writing on Imperialism in Africa. It was only after some difficulty and the guarantee of £60 cash deposit that I was permitted to land, and even at that my stay was limited to a week by your immigration authorities. […]  

Padmore then went to the French consulate to apply for a visa for Senegal, handed over his passport which, among others, bore a Russian Visa. Later, he was requested to pay a visit to the Commissioner of Police, who interrogated him as he was informed that

36 RGASPI 534/3/546, fol 46, Note by George Padmore, typewritten + handwritten signature, dated 2/IV 30 (=2 April 1930).
Padmore/Nurse had been in Russia and was believed to be a communist. Padmore did not state in his article, whether or not he gave a positive answer to the Commissioner’s question.

The link with Sierra Leone is obvious, too: it was Richards with whom – presumably – Padmore was able to get in touch. Both Small and Richards were to travel to Hamburg. However, the three other connections are all but clear. Padmore seems to have had some connections with Liberia already during his years in the USA (and later on, while he was running the ITUCNW bureau in Hamburg, he was corresponding with several Liberians). Despite his hopes that someone would come from Liberia, no Liberian eventually attended the Hamburg Conference. The Gold Coast and Nigerian connections are even more puzzling.

The Nigerian delegate who attended the Hamburg Conference was Frank Macaulay (1891-1931). He was the son of Herbert Macaulay (1864-1945), at this time the leading African politician in Nigeria. Herbert Macaulay had established himself as the spokesman of the opposition to British colonial rule in Lagos and Nigeria. He belonged to the founders of the NCBWA. In 1923 he had organized the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) which sought self-government for Lagos, the introduction of institutions of higher education into Nigeria, compulsory primary school education, the Africanization of the civil service, and nondiscrimination in the development of private economic enterprise. Since 1925 Macaulay was also the editor of the party’s newspaper, The Lagos Daily News. His son, Frank Macaulay, was also politically active being a member of the NNDP and working as a journalist for the Lagos Daily News. But who invited Frank Macaulay to attend the Hamburg Conference?

Part of the answer is given in a letter sent by Padmore to I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson, dated 16 November 1931. (At this point Padmore did not yet know Wallace-Johnson, as is evident from the letter – in fact, it was Padmore’s first contact with Wallace-Johnson. See further Part 1.) In the letter, Padmore recalls Frank Macaulay’s positive appearance at the conference:

40 RGASPI 534/1/178 Delegates to the Fifth RILU Congress 1930 (Questionnaire), fol 130: Frank Macaulay.
[---] We had hoped to get a workers’ delegate from Nigeria, but to our surprise and great disappointment, we discovered that Nigeria, although the biggest British colony in Africa, and second only to India in size and importance, did not have an organized labour movement, while in the smaller sister colonies of Sierra Leone, Gambia and the Gold Coast, labour unions have long been in existence. […]

The delegate from Nigeria at our conference, although sent by a political organization – the Nigerian Democratic Party – nevertheless spoke in the name of the workers of Lagos and of the oppressed masses of Nigeria. His account of the low wages, terrible conditions and widespread illiteracy in which British imperialism keeps the native masses in order to better oppress them, made quite a great impression on the conference, especially the American Negro delegates who for the first time heard how their black brothers are pushed down under the iron heel of white imperialism.

The conference elected the Nigerian representative to the executive Committee of I.T.U.N.W. and pledged to give the fullest support to the Nigerian workers in helping them to organize and build up a strong Labour Movement.[---]

It is not known whether Padmore or Ford actually had contacted the NNDP and sent an invitation to them or if the NNDP had heard the news about the planned conference and had decided on their own to send a representative. Or was there perhaps a third party involved in establishing the contact between the Nigerians and the ITUCNW?

My hypothesis of a third party is based on circumstantial evidence. According to a report written after the Hamburg Conference, the Negro Bureau, i.e. Padmore or Ford, were only able to use outside contacts and that meetings were held in Nigeria but no campaigns could be organized. Perhaps Padmore even visited Nigeria during his mysterious trip to Africa in April 1930? My suggestion is that one could also look into another direction. The clue is the Gold Coast-link: who was involved in sending a delegation from the Gold Coast to Hamburg. The two participants from the Gold Coast at the conference were T.S. Morton, who represented the Gold Coast Driver and Mechanics Union, and J.A. Akrong, representing the Gold Coast Carpenters’ Association. However, no correspondence has so far been found in the Comintern Archives which could shed some light on who contacted these two men. My suggestion is that neither Padmore nor Ford were ever in direct contact with them, but used a middlemen. This person had to be

41 RGASPI 534/6/23, fol 51-53, letter from Padmore to Wallace-Johnson, 16.11.1931, this ref to fol. 52.
42 RGASPI 495/155/87, fol 243-251, A report addressed as K/Copying 7603/10, dated 29.7.30 (no author), ‘The international conference of Negro workers’, this ref to fol. 244-245.
a trusted ‘comrade’ and the only person with such a status was Bankole Awoonor Renner. Awoonor-Renner’s links to Padmore are unclear at this stage. Compared to Richards, he was not a trade unionist but a journalist. In fact, so was Padmore. As noted above, no trade union activities in and no direct links to the Gold Coast had been listed in the 1930 February Report (see above) to the Eastern Secretariat. Exit Awoonor Renner? Or should one consider Awoonor Renner to be Padmore’s connection in the Gold Coast? Was his main task at this time to get into contact with leading political activists in the Gold Coast and to inform them about Padmore and the ITUCNW?

The picture gets further complicated if one considers Awoonor Renner’s whereabouts around 1929-1930. At this time, it seems, he was living in Sekondi. So was Wallace-Johnson, as Spitzer and Denzer claim. Is it possible that Awoonor Renner and Wallace-Johnson established contacts at that time? (Several years later, in 1934, the two were to found the West African Youth League. See Part 3.) Wallace-Johnson is said to have left the Gold Coast in 1930 and went to Lagos – unfortunately, the date for his departure and arrival are not known. However, if one considers the fact that he arrived in Lagos perhaps in May 1930, this would give him time enough to get in contact with the Macaulays. Thus, the ‘third party’-hypothesis goes as follows: Awoonor Renner was contacted by someone, either from the ITUCNW or from the Comintern, to get in touch with potential groups and parties who could have an interest to send a delegation to London/Hamburg. Awoonor Renner is the perfect person for such a task: through his family network he can make use of a variation of contacts both in the Gold Coast and the rest of British West Africa, including Nigeria. His own political engagement in the Gold Coast resulted in the link to the two trade unions in the Gold Coast, whereas he engaged Wallace-Johnson to be his envoy to establish the link to the Nigerians.

However, the suggested early link between Awoonor Renner and Wallace-Johnson in 1929 must be doubted when one reads Wallace-Johnson’s letter to Padmore, dated 7 January 1932. In the letter Wallace-Johnson informs Padmore that he had left Sierra Leone after the 1926 strike and gone to South Africa. In 1930 he arrived in the

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Gold Coast, where he stayed until early 1931, arriving in Nigeria in March 1931. If this was the case, then the above speculations have to be dismissed: Wallace-Johnson was not in Nigeria in 1930 and consequently could not have met Macaulay then. However, there also exists a curious unsigned article published in *The Negro Worker* in December 1931. This article was written sometimes early in 1930 and, as will be argued below, was most probably written by Wallace-Johnson. In the article, the author introduces himself as a Sierra Leonean who had visited East Africa as a member of the Sierra Leone Carrier Corps in 1916 – precisely what Wallace-Johnson had done. As Wallace-Johnson, the author had left Sierra Leone in 1927, making several visits to South Africa in the following two years. The author had spent a year in the Gold Coast in 1930, but, as he wrote, “circumstances, however, caused me to migrate to Nigeria in the early part of this year.” Most curiously, however, the author added: “Previously several visits to Lagos and other ports.”

If the author was Wallace-Johnson, which I believe as the outline of the author’s life-story is more or less identical with Spitzer and Denzer’s ‘official’ biography of Wallace-Johnson’s early years, one reading of the account in *The Negro Worker* is that Wallace-Johnson could have visited Nigeria in 1930. Perhaps Wallace-Johnson did not bother to give all details to Padmore in his January 1932 letter? Perhaps Wallace-Johnson after all was travelling in 1930 as Awoonor Renner’s envoy?

The ‘Negro Toilers Conference’ was the brainchild of Ford, and he and Padmore were the key organizers of the venue. However, without Comintern-backing, the conference would never have been organized. High-level cooperation with existing networks, especially the League Against Imperialism (LAI) and its secretariat in Berlin, was required by the ECCI and the Western European Bureau’s representative Neptun was given the task of surveillance.

Despite all the hardships and several drawbacks, Ford and Padmore were able to gather a rather impressive representation to Hamburg in July 1930. In total, seventeen delegates and three ‘fraternal’ delegates attended the conference. The majority of the

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44 RGASPI 534/7/74, fol. 31-34, letter from Wallace-Johnson to Padmore, dated 7th January 1932.
46 The person behind this alias is not yet known.
Black delegates came from the USA and the British Caribbean. The African delegates were the aforementioned E.F. Small, E.A. Richards, Frank Macaulay, T.S. Morton and J.A. Akrong. Other participants were Albert Green from South Africa, Kenyatta and Joseph Bilé who represented the Berlin Section of the LDRN. (Garan Kouyaté, the leader of the LDRN, had planned to come but was inhibited to attend the conference.) Also present were the LAI, who was represented by its Secretary V. Chattopadhyaya as well as Willi Budich, the representative of the International Red Aid (MOPR). The WEB representative, however, was not able to attend, which was to cause some critique against the organizers.49

Padmore and Ford presented the Hamburg Conference as a successful event and the beginning of a new era. Euphorically, the published report of the conference claimed that the delegates represented 20,000 workers, 7 countries, 11 different trade unions, 2 national trade union centres, one national political party and 2 non-trade union organizations.50 The biggest African organization which was represented was the Federation of Non-European Trade Unions in South Africa (5,000 members) and the Gambia Labour Union which claimed a membership of 1,000 workers and 2,500 peasants. Macaulay’s Nigerian National Democratic Party, the national political party referred to in the report, boasted with some 5,000 members.51

Chattopadhyaya regarded the conference as an important event, writing a very positive article about it in the Daily Worker.52 Budich and the WEB, on the other hand, were highly critical about the outcome of the conference.53 In a report to the ECCI, presumably by Ford or Padmore, the shortcomings of the conference were also addressed.

48 Spitzer and Denzer 1973, 419. See further A Report of Proceedings and Decisions of the First International Conference of Negro Workers, Hamburg: International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers 1930, 40. There was also an – unidentified – representative of the International Seamen’s Club, another front organization of the Comintern. Budich name is not mentioned in the official report. Archival sources in Moscow, however, clearly indicates that it was Budich who was the IRA representative.

49 RGASPI 495/155/83, fol. 98, Protocol of the WEB Nr. 150 (extract), 7.7.30.


While all the American organizations were identified as ‘revolutionary’, none of the African ones were. Although the South African organization was portrayed as ‘revolutionary’, it was only in an ‘embryonic stage’ of organizational development. Even less promising were the participating West African organizations:

The organisations of West Africa were very weak in organisational structure as well as backward in revolutionary class-consciousness. In Nigeria the workers have little conception of the function of a trade union organisation. The Gold Coast organisations although trade union organisations have little understanding of the full meaning of a trade union. The Gambia and Sierra Leone organisations were the only two that had a semblance of trade union organisational understanding, both having conducted serious strike struggles.⁵⁴

However, if African participation proved problematic, so, too, was the Comintern connection. Little help had been received from Moscow and especially Padmore was left alone with solving the practical details.⁵⁵ In another detailed report to the ECCI, Ford was extremely critical about the lack of support he and Padmore had received not only from the British, French and German communist parties but also from the WEB and the other Comintern organizations, ended up in criticizing the Comintern apparatus for the shortcomings of the conference:

[---] 7. All of these organisations acted in a bureaucratic manner -- no definite instructions, no work. The Western European Bureaux of the Comintern and Profintern made no effort to find out about the Conference and to assist the comrades in Berlin. These comrades were so bureaucratic that they would not help the delegates who arrived in Berlin. Some of them arrived without means for food and practically had to be fed. Some of the African delegates became so desperate that they threatened to go to the police for food and assistance. The attitude of some of the comrades can be judged by the statement of a responsible comrade in a report refering to the conference as the ”Negro Drama”.

8. The European R.I.L.U. Secretariat and the revolutionary movement of Germany gave very little attention to publicity and failed to see the political significance of the Conference.

⁵⁴ RGASPI 495/155/87, fol 243-251, A report addressed as K/Copying 7603/10, dated 29.7.30 (no author), ‘The international conference of Negro workers’, this ref to fol. 249.
⁵⁵ RGASPI 495/155/87, fol 243-251, A report addressed as K/Copying 7603/10, dated 29.7.30 (no author), ‘The international conference of Negro workers’, this ref to fol. 250.
9. All of this shows on the part of the CPs, the unions and the sympatetic \[sic\] organisations, under-estimation of Negro work, Right tendencies and opportunism in practice.

10. Besides these factors and shortcomings the Conference was handicapped by a number of difficulties; the refusal of visas, lack of civil rights, the arrest of a delegate from Panama, the losing (sic) of delegates from South Africa, by what methods we do not yet know, the banning of the conference by the British “Labour” Government, the Jim Crow practices of steamships resulting in late arrival of American delegation; the backwardness and the isolation of the Negro organisations from the International Labour Movement.

11. The Eastern Department and the Negro Bureau of the E.C.C.I. did nothing to popularise the conference and did not sufficiently activise [sic] the CPs. The Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. likewise did not follow up its instructions and activise [sic] the Parties.

12. All of this resulted in the conference itself being conducted poorly and unsatisfactory representation. \[---\]56

Despite the critique and the shortcomings of the conference, the ITUCNW was to build up his African network during the next three years. Macaulay, Richards and Small were elected to the Presidium of the ITUCNW together with Ford and M. De Leon from Jamaica; Macaulay and Small were also nominated to the new Executive Committee.57 As Ford returned to the USA during the autumn of 1930,58 responsibilities fell solely on Padmore, officially as the Secretary of the ITUCNW, to keep in touch with the Africans. Until the Nazi take-over in Germany in January 1933, his office in Hamburg was the centre of his network. The office was located at 8 Rothesoodstrasse, the same building as the Hamburg headquarters of the KPD (Kommunistische Partei Deutschland, German Communist Party). The office of the International Seamen’s Club was in the same building.59 From his Hamburg office Padmore was able to get in touch with African seamen, who could serve as his messengers and take letters and printed matter from him to Africa, American and European communist and radical organizations – linking up with

56 RGASPI 495/155/87, fol. 290-296, A report by Ford addressed as EK/Copying. 7938/12 dated 14.8.30 “The first international conference of Negro workers and future tasks” (copy), this ref to fol. 292-293.

57 The members of the Executive Committee were: James W. Ford, I. Hawkins, Helen McCain and George Padmore from the USA, Garan Kouyaté, Frank Macaulay, Albert Nzulu and E.F. Small from Africa and E. Reid from Jamaica. See further A Report of Proceedings and Decisions of the First International Conference of Negro Workers, 1930, 3, 40.

58 Lazitch & Drachkovich 1986, 121.

59 Rolf Italiander, Schwarze Haut im roten Griff, Wien: Ergon-Verlag 1962, 56, 58. The building does not anymore exist, it was destroyed in the 1944 bomb raid against Hamburg.
the existing network of both the Comintern and the LAI – and the Comintern and RILU apparatus in Moscow.

One of Padmore’s first tasks was to send an African delegation to participate at the Fifth Congress of the RILU in Moscow, which was to commence shortly after the Hamburg Conference. Bilé, Macaulay and Smith went together with Padmore to Moscow, the others – it seems – returned to West Africa. (At least Richards name is not found among the participants of the RILU Congress although his trade union was a member of the RILU and thus his participation would have been a logical one.) In Moscow, the Africans each were to present an analysis of the political situation of their country of origin –Macaulay on Nigeria and Small on Gambia (see below).

The two West Africans, Macaulay and Small, as well as Garan Kouyaté, returned to Berlin in October 1930 where they had several meetings in the Secretariat of the League Against Imperialism. Bohumir Smeral (1880-1941), at that time one of the Secretaries of the LAI, was rather positive about the opportunities to engage Macaulay and Small in future political work, at least in establishing contacts with potential students and allies in their countries. In the same vein, however, he was cautious about the immediate progress to be made:

Our general impression is that both of them can be used, at least we shall try to establish connections with through them and subsequently with other elements in the country. But we must wait and see how far they will be active at home and what resistance they will have to overcome.

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60 Garan Kouyaté also participated in the RILU Congress, but arrived after the African delegation from Hamburg. However, the exact amount of Africans participating at the RILU Congress in Moscow in August 1930 is unclear. Wilson (1974), referring to French reports, mentions on page 185 that several Africans of the LDRN and more than a dozen Conference delegates [if so, this must have included the Afro-Americans who attended the Hamburg Conference] went to Moscow, but on page 199 that up to 25 Africans participated in the RILU Congress. However, according to an article published in The Negro Worker, there were 17 ‘Negro’ delegates from Africa, USA, West Indies and South America. “What is the Red International of Labour Unions?,” The Negro Worker, 1: 4-5, April-May 1931, filed in RGASPI 532/4/94.

61 It is not clear, whether Padmore had returned with the West Africans to Berlin or if he remained in Moscow.

62 RGASPI 495/155/90, fol. 78-81, Smeral: Confidential report re discussions with Macaulay and Small, 3.11.1930. According to the report, the meetings were held on the 14th, 15th and 16th October of 1930. On of the meetings were in Willi Münzenberg’s private home.

63 RGASPI 495/155/90, Confidential report re discussions with Macaulay and Small, 3.11.1930, fol. 78.
A programme of action for West Africa, titled “The Anti-Imperialist Struggle of the West African People,” was discussed. (It was thereafter sent to the ECCI for approval.)

Smeral was at this point not yet definite about the actual nature of the programme. Was it to be regarded as an advice, a basis for activity or, as he suggested in his report to the ECCI, should it be published as an open letter either directed to Gambia and Nigeria or to the whole of West Africa or even all of Africa? However, when it came to sign the programme, the Africans hesitated:

They [i.e., Macaulay and Small, HW] expressed their consent but when asked to sign it became obvious that they hesitated. We did not wish to urge them. They promised to act at home in accordance with our suggestions and advice but would not sign any statement.

Why were the West Africans not willing to sign the programme? Was there something in it which they felt disturbing? Perhaps they could not agree with the proposed role of the LAI as it was outlined:

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5. In view of the deliberately maintained isolation of each colony, of the employment by imperialism of the people of one colony against that of another, and of the united front of the Imperialist Powers against the subject races, it is absolutely necessary, for the successful overthrow of imperialist exploitation, to establish a united front of the masses in all the colonies of West Africa, with the ultimate object of establishing a strong West African Federation of independent Negro States.

6. This struggle for independence of the West African people must be politically and organisationally coordinated with the struggle of the various oppressed peoples of the world that are suffering under imperialist domination, and with the international working class.

7. In order to conduct the struggle for national independence of each West African colony, all those classes in each colony that are the victims of imperialist exploitation and oppression must be organised for the struggle and drawn into a common anti-imperialist political organisation – the League Against Imperialism.

8. The task of the League Against Imperialism in each colony will be not only to expose to the masses the real nature and the terrible results of the whole system of...

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64 The resolution is filed in RGASPI 495/64/166, fol. 76-78, Confidential. The Anti-Imperialist Struggle of the West African People.

65 RGASPI 495/155/90, Confidential report re discussions with Macaulay and Small, 3.11.1930, fol. 78.
imperialist plunder and oppression in its various forms and aspects, but also to formulate the political and economic aims of the oppressed masses and to take all possible organisational steps for conducting the struggle for the attainment of the immediate as well as the ultimate demands.  

Or was it the argument about the envisioned independence struggle, a suggestion which at least Small and Macaulay perhaps felt a bit unrealistic or even – at the moment – undesirable?

Macaulay, at least, immediately started to propagate among fellow Nigerians about the possibility of studying in Moscow. Already in London, on his way to Nigeria, Macaulay sent Smeral a note, informing him about his activities:

We have just received a letter from Macaulay from London dealing with the travelling expenses of the Nigerian students. Macaulay says he received information from Nigeria that the students are ready to leave as soon as he returns. He will leave London this week [i.e., early November 1930, HW] for Nigeria. He estimates that the trip of a student from Nigeria via Liverpool to Berlin will cost £60. He expects that as soon as he sends a telegram upon his return to Nigeria we shall send him £300 for five students.

Funding the Africans, however, was problematic. The LAI was desperately short of funds at the time and depended on Comintern assistance. Smeral complained about the Africans he had met, including Kouyaté, that they regarded the LAI as a money-lending machine with unlimited resources. Not surprisingly, the LAI-link proved problematic.

The support from the LAI to Padmore and the Africans was at best erratic. But as long as Padmore was part of the Comintern apparatus, he was to remain in contact with the LAI and other organizations, including the International Red Aid. In November 1931, he had a meeting where his and Willi Budich’s, the over-critical IRA-representative at the 1930 Hamburg Conference, relations were normalized.

Sometimes

66 RGASPI 495/64/166, Confidential. The Anti-Imperialist Struggle of the West African People, fol. 76.
67 RGASPI 495/155/90, Confidential report re discussions with Macaulay and Small, 3.11.1930, fol. 79.
68 RGASPI 534/3/614, fol. 74, Vertraulich 37. Ek.Nr.i57. 2 Ex.Sekr. 1.X.31 (copy, typewritten). This is a note by Padmore where he stressed the need of collaboration between the LAI, the International Red Aid and the ITUCNW.
69 RGASPI 539/2/425, fol 1, original letter from NN to ‘Hertha’, dated Berlin 1.11.1931. ‘Hertha’ was the alias of Elena Stasova (1873-1966), who was the president of the MOPR (International Red Aid) from 1927 to 1938.
at this point, plans were even outlined by the ECCI’s Negro Commission to organize a conference in West Africa, but this aspiration was never realized.\textsuperscript{70}

Padmore’s main activity during the years in Hamburg was his engagement in linking up with African activists, especially in British West Africa, in Liberia and in South Africa\textsuperscript{71}. The first contact with Africans was usually established through the journal of the ITUCNW, \textit{The Negro Worker}, where Padmore had replaced Ford as editor-in-chief in 1931.\textsuperscript{72} The original idea was to smuggle the journal to the African colonies by making use of African seamen and sailors as the colonial authorities had banned the distribution of the journal. However, despite the ban, the journal reached its destinations most of the time. The initial contact was thus established. Thereafter Africans, who had read the journal, contacted Padmore for further information of how to express their gratitude, sometimes even sending their own texts to be published.\textsuperscript{73}

Despite some success in enlarging the network, Padmore and the ITUCNW had also experienced some serious drawbacks. For reasons to be discussed below, the connections to the key existing collaborators – Richards, Macaulay and Small – were defunct by early 1932, as Padmore lamented in a letter to J. Galba-Bright\textsuperscript{74} in Nigeria:

\textsuperscript{70} RGASPI 495/64/166, fol. 81, Confidential (“top secret”) plans for work in West Africa (in Russian), undated. According to the proposal, the conference was to be organized at the end of 1933 and should summon opposition movements of the Gold Coast, the Cameroons, the Gambia, Nigeria and Liberia.

\textsuperscript{71} RGASPI 534/3/546, fol 102fp-108bp, Report of [the] International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers (copy, typewritten, no date/author). The report was written sometimes in late 1931 as it contains a reference to a strike in the Gold Coast in October 1931.

\textsuperscript{72} The December 1931 number of \textit{The Negro Worker} listed George Padmore as editor-in-chief as well as the following persons as contributing editors: J.W. Ford, Cyril Briggs and D.B. Amis from the USA, O.E. Huiswood from the RILU, C. Alexander from the West Indies, E. Forster Jones and E.F. Small from West Africa, G. Kouyaté from French West Africa, A. Nzula and P.G. Moloinjane from South Africa and Mansey from Congo. The August 1931 number listed Ford as editor-in-chief. RGASPI 532/4/94, The Negro Worker. In 1933, the editors of \textit{The Negro Worker} were: G. Padmore (editor-in-chief), Cyril Briggs, J. W. Ford (USA); O. E. Huiswood, Mansey; A. Ward (London); C. Alexander (West Indies), H. Crichlow (British Guiana) [sic]; W. Daniel (West Africa); M. Nelson (Liberia); A. Nzula, E. T. Mofutsanyana (South Africa); J. Kenyatta (East Africa). RGASPI, 495/154/512, fol.110, Title page of the Negro Worker, 8-9, Aug.-Sep. 1933.

\textsuperscript{73} This is evident from the correspondence between West Africans and Padmore as filed in RGASPI 534/7/74.

\textsuperscript{74} J. Galba-Bright worked for Bunting’s Advertising Service in Lagos in 1932. He had been contacted by Padmore in January 1932. Galba-Bright knew Frank Macaulay – while Macaulay had been the editor of the \textit{Lagos Daily News}, Galba-Bright was the manager of the Nigerian Press Ltd and the \textit{Nigerian Daily Telegraph}. Galba-Bright also knew E.F. Small, whom he had met in Sierra Leone. See further RGASPI 534/7/74, fol. 47-48, letter from J. Galba-Bright to Padmore, dated 6.2.1932.
[---] We have been in connection with your friend, comrade Jones. But of [...] he has disappeared from the scene. Perhaps he will turn up again. He will alwa[ys] be welcome. There is an old saying which runs, “once burnt, always shy.” We hav[e] had enough experience with West Africans. We have had Macaulay, we have had [Rich]ards in Sierra Leone, Small and others on our hands. What we have spent upon [...] people would have built up the biggest mass movement in West Africa that wou[...] demand respect from the government, - but again they lacked what you talk abo[ut] in your letter, namely, the spirit of sacrifice. Therefore you will excuse us[…] if we are forced to be distrustful of newcomers. Nevertheless our interest r[e]mains and will always remain ready to give our utmost for the advancement o[f] the toiling masses of Africa. We know that one swallow does not make a summer neither does a Macaulay mean 20 million inhabitants of Nigeria.[---]

On the other hand, Padmore had by this time establish contact with a promising young Sierra Leonean in Nigeria: I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson. Eventually, Wallace-Johnson was to travel to Moscow and study there in 1932-33, as were Joseph Bilé, Johnstone (Jomo) Kenyatta and others. Proof of their stay at the KUTV is found in their public critique about the derogatory portrayal of Africans and Afro-Americans in the Soviet Union, resulting in a petition, “Resolution in Connection with Derogatory Portrayal of Negroes

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75 E. Foster Jones was a seaman from Freetown who had published an article on Sierra Leone, “Situation of native Workers in Sierra Leone,” in the Negro Worker, Vol 1, No. 4-5, 1931. He was also listed as an contributing editor of the Negro Worker in December 1931.

76 RGASPI 534/6/23, fol 71, letter from Padmore to J. Galba-Bright, Lagos, Nigeria, 3.4.32.

77 In May 1932 Padmore contacted the Berlin headquarters of the LAI and sent them a list of African students whom he proposed to be sent to Moscow. The list included the following Africans: Johnstone Kenyatta and Parmenas S. Mockerie from Kenya; Brown, a 22-years old person from the Gold Coast, two students from Nigeria, whom had been selected by the local trade union as well as two persons from Haiti. See RGASPI 542/1/55, fol 26, Vorschläge über Neger-Studenten (Padmore), letter received 15.5.1932.

78 Bilé, it seems, was already in Moscow in March 1932. In a letter to “Hans” (perhaps Hans Thorgerson?), one “Frida” (presumably one of George Padmore’s aliases) sent the following greetings: “[…] Do you get the “Negro Worker”? We generally send 4 copies, one for yourself, one for Bilé, one for the office, and one in exchange for the review. – When you see Bilé tell him he must write me.” Filed in RGASPI 534/6/23, fol 65, letter (copy) from “Frida” to “Hans”, dated 7.3.32.

79 Kenyatta started at the KUTV in September 1932. See RGASPI 495/198/1211, Johnstone Kenyatta – personal file, fol 1, KUTV description (1932-33).

80 Bile (Josef Bills [= Bilé], alias Morris) and Kenyatta (Johnstone Kenyatta, alias Joken) are included in a list of students at the KUTV in November 1932, see RGASPI 532/1/439, fol 9, List of students in group 9 section A (Negro section), 20.11.1932. Other Africans among the listed ‘Negro’ students were Thomas Odabor (“Sone”) from Nigeria, Pier Kalmek (“Robert”), identified by McClellan as being from one of the French African colonies, Nathan Varne Gray (“Smith”) from the Gold Coast and Samuel Freeman (“Charlie Lafayette”) from Liberia as well as “Greenwood” (Edwin Mofutsanyana), “Hilton” (Nikin Sobia), “Nelson” (Holle Selle Tamba), “Raymond”, “Henry” and “Roze” (Zou Mangone). See further McCellan 1993, 380, 380 fn. 37, 385. Further, there was Samuel Padmore (“Hamilton”), a sailor from Trinidad - not the Gold Coast as McClellan (1993, 385) states - who had served as one of Geoge Padmore’s middlemen and had been introduced to the comrades in Moscow by him in August 1932, see Samuel Padmore’s personal file, RGASPI 495/279/71 Samuel Padmore – Personal File.
in the Cultural Institutions of the Soviet Union,” which was sent to the ECCI. Among the signatures were ‘James Joken’, i.e., Kenyatta, ‘Wallace Daniels’, i.e., Wallace-Johnson, and ‘Morris’, i.e., Joseph Bilé.\textsuperscript{81}

However, all of Padmore’s efforts and aspirations came to a sudden end with the Nazi takeover in Germany in January 1933. The Hamburg office was raided and closed; Padmore was jailed and finally deported from Germany\textsuperscript{82}. The ITUCNW went underground. For a while The Negro Worker was published in Copenhagen, where the ITUCNW tried to establish a new basis, but had to be (temporarily) moved to Brussels when the Danish authorities prohibited their activities in August 1934.\textsuperscript{83} Padmore, on the other hand, had fled to Paris where he tried to resume work.\textsuperscript{84} All in vain. Global political constellations had changed not least for the Soviet Union which saw its former – official – partner, Weimar Germany, taking an opposite stance towards it. As a consequence, the Kremlin tried to establish links with Great Britain and France, the two colonial powers which hitherto had been denounced by the Comintern as the arch exploiters of the oppressed colonial masses. Anticolonial policies and anti-imperialist agitation were to be softened. Those comrades who protested against the shift in priorities in 1933-1934, such as Garan Kouyaté, were expelled from the Comintern and denounced as ‘provocateurs’. As Padmore, who was at that time living in Kouyaté’s apartment, did not renounce his friendship with Kouyaté, he was expelled by the ECCI from the Communist Party in February 1934.\textsuperscript{85}

Padmore became a persona non grata and was portrayed as ‘agent provocateur’ in communist circles. Those Africans, such as Joseph Bilé, with whom he still was in contact, were branded as traitors and ‘Trotskyites’:

\textsuperscript{81} McClellan 1993, 389-390.
\textsuperscript{82} Italiaander 1962, 64.
\textsuperscript{83} Hooker 1967, 32; Wilson 1974, 256.
\textsuperscript{85} RGASPI 495/261/4718, George Padmore – Personal file, fol. 3, Statement of the International Control Commission [typewritten copy, dated 20.3.34.]; Hooker 1967, 33. However, as Hoover already noted, the official expulsion of Padmore from the Comintern and the CPUSA followed after Padmore had handed in his resignation form the CI and the Party as a protest of the change in Soviet foreign policy. This was already in August 1933, the official expulsion and subsequent attack against Padmore took place in early 1934. The close collaboration between Kouyaté and Padmore is also discussed in Edwards 2003, 245-247, 251, 259, 261-265, 267-268, 274-276.
Regarding Morris... he is an agent of Padmore. Our French comrades, particularly “La Cri de Negre”, should be warned not to have anything to do with him. […]  

Former comrades, such as William L. Patterson of the CPUSA and one of the organizers of the 1930 Hamburg Conference, turned against him – at least officially. Padmore, in his turn, charged all leading Afro-Americans in the CPUSA, such as Ford, Patterson, Harry Haywood and Otto Huiswood, as being ‘Uncle Toms’ in an open letter to Earl Browder.

However, although Padmore’s dramatic exit marked the end of the visual links between the Comintern apparatus and West Africa, not all connections were cut off. In the following sections, the various links with British West Africa are studied. In some countries, such as the Gambia, there never existed any close links. In others, such as Nigeria, the connections were highly yielded to become promising – at least for a while. Sierra Leone proved problematic, but the Gold Coast very promising. Eventually, what was to evolve was a new network – one that linked I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson, Bankole Awoonor Renner and George Padmore (see Part 3).

II.1. The Gambia-link

Both from Padmore’s and from Moscow’s perspective, Eduard Francis Small and his Gambia Labour Union must in 1930 have been the most interesting new connection. As earlier noted, Small had organized the 1929 strike in Bathurst and showed some radical tendencies. At least in February 1930 he had been in contact with Reginald Bridgeman,

86 RGASPI 495/155/102, fol 2-3, letter by NN to ‘Otto’. The author of the letter is identified in Part 3 as A.Z. Zusmanovitch, whereas ‘Otto’ is Otto Huiswood, who was at that time the Secretary of the ITUCNW.
88 RGASPI 495/155/102, fol. 123-125, ECCI/Material on the Negro Question: Open letter by Padmore to Earl Browder; fol. 129-130, original reply (?). Earl Browder (1891-1973) was at this time the Secretary of the CPUSA.
89 This is the name given by Small in Moscow. However, in other sources the same union is referred to as Bathurst Trade Union (BTU).
the Secretary of the British Section of the LAI.  

90 His political credentials were somewhat dubious. Apart from being a trade union leader, he presented himself in Moscow as an active member of the National Congress of British West Africa. When asked about whether or not he had been imprisoned due to his political activities, he gave a negative answer: “No repressions or persecutions because of revolutionary activities.”

Small presented his report on the economic and political conditions in the Gambia at the RILU Congress in August 1930. Although the filed copy of the report has no author, it is most likely that Small was the author of the report as it revealed a profound knowledge not only of the conditions in Gambia but also gave inside information about labour union activities.

Small started his report by commenting upon the activities of the NCBWA. While he praised the organization for its programme of legislative, municipal, administrative, judicial and other reforms in the British West African colonies, he concluded that the NCBWA was not a mass movement:

But while the Congress holds its mandate from the toiling masses it presents nothing like a trade union programme of action for the oppressed workers and peasants of British West Africa.

Instead, the only existing mass movement was the Gambia Labour Union (GLU) which had been formed during the 1929 strike. Previously, there existed the Shipwrights Union, an organization which Small describes as “the nearest approach to a trade union”, which was founded in 1889. Small described the beginning of the 1929 strike as an unorganized struggle which had been started by the Shipwrights Union. Only when the GLU was formed, the strike became better organized. At this point the Union listed some 1,000 shipwrights, carpenters, masons, builders and engineers in addition to the sailors.
Initially, the strike was a reaction to the European merchants and employers attempt to reduce wages by 50 percent. In addition, underemployment was becoming a problem:

Not only were the workers doing more work for lean pay, but a large proportion of them were unemployed; while the period of the trade season in which the rest could be employed had been curtailed with the sanction of official regulation from 8 to 9 months, October to June, to not more than 5 – December to April. Actually the season now lasts barely 3 months.\(^95\)

The demands of the GLU – a rise in wages and the right for the employers to organise themselves – were immediately rejected by the Bathurst Chamber of Commerce, the official organ of the employers. The result was a general strike, which lasted for twenty days (the sailors’ strike lasted 50). Small’s analysis of the background and impact of the strike reveals his previous engagement with the left-wing Labour Research Department (LRD):

The unions’ ultimate victory afforded full proof of the claims of the revolutionary movement on the workers of the world. The struggle of the Gambia Labour Union was, in fact, from the start of a revolutionary character. There was the clearest indication that British imperialism has reached the stage when the State machine is by no means the benevolent protector of the worker and the poor peasants, as it pretends to be. The role of the Government was directed rather in the interest of the capitalists. They were not prepared to conduct an arbitration at the instance of the Union even before the strike, but were ready to do so by request of the Chamber of Commerce during the strike. The Union naturally expressed its lack of faith in the employers’ belated proposal.\(^96\)

In fact, Small underlined the importance of the existence of an international network for the positive outcome of the strike and the formation of the GLU. Support, he declared, had been received from abroad: the GLU became immediately affiliated with the LRD and was brought into line with the LAI. There was even a workers’ boycott in Britain of the firms which were engaged in Gambia.\(^97\)

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\(^{95}\) RGASPI 495/64/165, Report on the economic situation in the Gambia 1930, fol. 3.

\(^{96}\) RGASPI 495/64/165, Report on the economic situation in the Gambia 1930, fol. 3.

\(^{97}\) RGASPI 495/64/165, Report on the economic situation in the Gambia 1930, fol. 4.
As a result of this successful issue new sections of workers, such as pilots, clerical and port workers, joined the Union after the strike and better conditions have been obtained for most of them, Small continued. Even part of the peasantry has become politically active and 4,000 of them were organized as a section of the GLU and more were in line to join: “No less than 15,000 more have expressed a desire to enrol, they were being registered at the time I left home [= E.F. Small, HW].” According to Small, these represent about 50% of the local peasants, including the female peasants. The workers of the Union total about 2,000, no less than 80% of the Gambian workers.98

Each trade formed a branch or section of the Union, and elected its own committee to deal with its own affairs. The Trade or Branch Committee elected their representatives to the Executive Committee of the Union, of which Small was the chairman. In similar ways did the peasants form District Branches in the 36 Districts of the Gambia Protectorate. These branches elected delegates to take part in the work of the Executive Committee.99

According to Small, the tasks of the GLU were twofold: to improve the living-conditions of the workers and, most importantly, to focus on the conditions of the farmers. Small’s outline represents typical trade union demands. As the 8 hour days was general in Gambia, the GLU demanding the 42 hour week for all workers in addition to regular holidays, a decent living wage as well as sickness and unemployment insurance. More special were its demands for the farmers: demanding a repeal of the law of compulsory sale, protesting against the poll tax and to call for a focus on rice plantation and the introduction of modern agricultural methods.100 Great emphasis was to be put on the formation of farmers’ cooperatives – and to vitalize the export of farm products to the Soviet Union:

Accordingly the peasants mobilised 2,000 tons of groundnuts last February for direct cooperative marketing. A mission was dispatched at the instance of the G.L.U. to ascertain what could be done for the relief of the farmers through the cooperatives [sic] in England, France, Germany and Holland, but preferably through Centrosjus [sic]. Part of the expenses were even defrayed from the Union’s funds. Everywhere the cooperatives took a plain capitalist view of the matter, and were

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98 RGASPI 495/64/165, Report on the economic situation in the Gambia 1930, fol. 3.
100 RGASPI 495/64/165, Report on the economic situation in the Gambia 1930, fol. 4.
directly influenced by the capitalist trusts. Centrosojus\footnote{The Russian Co-operative Society. /Zentralverband der Konsumgenossenschaften} alone showed real sympathy with the poor peasants.\footnote{RGASPI 495/64/165, Report on the economic situation in the Gambia 1930, fol. 5.}

However, the appeal to the Soviets had so far resulted in only meagre results. But Small was still positive about future cooperation and send an appeal to the RILU Congress:

But they [the Centrosojus, HW] pointed out that as there was no demand for oil seeds in the Soviet Union they were unable to suggest any arrangements for the exchange of commodities between the workers of the Union and their poor peasant comrades in the Gambia. It is proposed that inquiries should be made as to the possibility of some mutually beneficial arrangements whereby the peasants could have their groundnuts crushed by oil mills of the Soviet Union and sold to better advantage, rather than filling the coffers of exploiting capitalists. It is also highly necessary for the same reason to investigate what arrangement can be made for an exchange of other commodities. After all the ultimate goal of the trade union movement, is to vest the workers with the necessary power to control the means of production, whereby alone they can live a higher social and political life. It is therefore hoped that special consideration will be given by this Congress to these problems of the G.L.U., and more generally to organising wherever possible, as in Gambia, revolutionary cooperatives among workers and peasants.\footnote{RGASPI 534/3/546, fol 102fp-108bp, Report of International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers (copy, typewritten, no date/author). A critical analysis of the text reveals that the report must have been written after October 1931 – the last date mentioned in the text (strike of marine workers in the Gold}

Small concluded his report by highlighting the importance of press propaganda, and pointed to the existence of a reliable channel, \textit{The Gambia Outlook}, of which he was the editor.

Small returned to The Gambia after his sojourn to Hamburg and Moscow. He remained attached to the ITUCNW for some years via his position as associate editor of the union’s journal, \textit{The Negro Worker}. His direct engagement with the ITUCNW must have been meagre – the Executive Committee never met again. But exactly how close his contact with Padmore was is not known – so far I have not found any traces of their correspondence in the Comintern Archives. At least in 1931 Padmore still regarded the Gambia-connection to be active: the GLU was listed among West African trade unions, having a membership of 1,000 industrial workers and about 3,000 ‘semi-proletariats’.\footnote{RGASPI 534/3/546, fol 102fp-108bp, Report of International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers (copy, typewritten, no date/author). A critical analysis of the text reveals that the report must have been written after October 1931 – the last date mentioned in the text (strike of marine workers in the Gold}
After 1931, there are no further notes about the GLU and Small or any clues to a possible direct connection between Small and Padmore. What had happened? Did Small and GLU, which in 1929 and 1930 were portrayed as extremely interesting and promising connections, eventually turn out to be dead ends?

As noted earlier, Padmore regarded the Small-connection to be lost by 1932. Following David Perfect biographical notes on Small, this comes as no surprise. Small’s link with the left-wing radical world had initially been through the London-based Labour Research Department (LRD), which had assisted the 1929 strike in Gambia. The strike of the Bathurst Trade Union in 1929 had been a successful one, but subsequent measures of the colonial authorities, most notably the so-called Passfield ‘Memorandum’ of 1930, had calmed the situation down. Named after the Colonial Secretary, Lord Passfield (Sidney Webb), the despatch had urged colonial governments to grant legal status to trade unions. In Gambia, the BTU was soon split into two factions, one under Small, the other under the leadership of a Wolof shipwright, J.L. N’Jie. Both parties accused each other of misappropriating funds. Eventually, the trade union was split in 1933 when N’Jie registered the BTU, and having failed to regain control of the union, Small formed a rival union in 1935, the Gambia Labour Union. The situation was further complicated by an attempt by Governor H.R. Palmer planned codification of Gambian laws. By the summer of 1932, Bathurst was divided into two political camps. One was the conservative faction, called the ‘Gambia Representative Committee’, under S.J. (later Sir Samuel) Forster, senior unofficial member of the Legislative Council. The opposition was initiated by the Bathurst Ratepayers’ Association (BRA), formed in May 1932 and controlled by Small. Earlier in 1931, Small had founded the ‘Committee of Citizens’, the embryo of the BRA.  

Although Small had gained a reputation of an ardent critic of colonial mismanagement, he was never a left-wing radical – despite the accusations of the Coast in 1931). The report was most probably written by Padmore (“we have established contact with some of these unions…”).

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colonial government of him being a communist during the early 1930s. Small’s reputation as a communist was based on his links with the LRD, the LAI (British section) and the ITUCNW. However, as Perfect underlines, Small himself never claimed to be a communist. Whereas connections to radical organizations were needed when there was no other assistance to be forthcoming, he never applied for membership for his trade union to the RILU or any other radical organization. In fact, it seems as if he was already assuming different positions when he was in Moscow: here, he referred to himself as a representative of the Gambia Labour Union – the name was to stick in subsequent reports by the Comintern and ITUCNW – not the Bathurst Trade Union. Was this on purpose? Did he choose the term ‘labour’ instead of ‘trade’ as it sounded more radical? Perfect’s conclusion seems to be a valid one: Small was interested in getting practical benefits out of his external contacts rather than being based on ideological grounds. When there was no support forthcoming – as he must already have realized in Moscow in 1930 – he severed his ties with the communists. The only connection which remained was that with The Negro Worker, but this, too, he seemed to have cut off by 1932. Eventually, Small was never Moscow’s or Padmore’s man.

II.2. The Nigeria-option: a promising start and disappointing end

Padmore’s connections with Nigerians proved to be more fruitful. Frank Macaulay (1891-1931) had attended both the 1930 Hamburg Conference and the Fifth Congress of the RILU as a representative of the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP). Although the party was regarded as a nationalistic platform, i.e., not a radical mass movement, Macaulay must have made some impression on his hosts in Moscow, especially as he claimed that the membership of his organization was “90 percent of the total masses.”

In Moscow, Macaulay gave a presentation about the political and economic conditions in Nigeria. Most of the four-page report was a mere outline of the colonial

107 RGASPI 534/1/178, fol 103, (Questionnaire) Frank Macaulay, 16.7.1930.
108 Both Small’s and Macaulay’s speeches were written down while they were on their return trip in Berlin and sent to the ECCI (RGASPI 495/155/90, Confidential report re discussions with Macaulay and Small,
administration and discussed agricultural, forestry and minerals as well as the impact of the trade depression on labour and employment. From a RILU-perspective, there was nothing astonishing to be learnt from it, neither did Macaulay reveal any deeper knowledge of trade union or other political activities. On the other hand, as stressed by Macaulay, little else could be expected:

There are no trade unions at present properly organised but there exists three or four political parties, the Union of Young Nigerians, the Peoples’ Union, Reform Club, the Berbers’ Union, the Gold and Silversmiths’ Union, the Farmers’ Association and the Nigerian National Democratic Party, whose official organ, “The Lagos Daily News”, I have the privilege to be the Editor [i.e., F. Macaulay].

However, speaking about the Nigerian National Democratic party, Macaulay did make a point its attempt to rally the masses in the elections (although he never stated what he meant by the term ‘masses’):

(S)ince its inauguration sometime in 1923, it has always enjoyed the confidence of the masses throughout Nigeria, and about 90% of the Electorate of the municipal area of Lagos (the Capital) with the result that at every election it ha[s] always swept the polls by an overwhelming majority. Its meetings are held under the full glare of public and official scrutiny; for according to the existing local law, no one can convene a public meeting or demonstration with impunity without first obtaining a permit or licence from the police, and at every meeting there has always been present police and detectives to watch the movement.

On the other hand, the party had demonstrated its critical, anti-colonial position by being constantly harassed by the colonial authorities:

The Democratic Party in its struggles against the government for the liberty [sic] and protection of native rights and interests, has not found its path lined with a bed of roses, nor in its political overtures was it ever accorded a smooth sailing. Many of its leaders have been persecuted and prosecuted by being mulcted with heavy fines, terms of imprisonment and even deportation.
At least at this point, Macaulay still seemed to have been convinced that the party of his father could emerge as the rallying point for a future anti-colonial movement. But contrary to Small, Macaulay had not come to Hamburg and Moscow to seek financial assistance but – perhaps – to find potential allies. Whether or not he had been influenced by Padmore and other radicals, his visit to Moscow had been an eye-opener. Seemingly impressed with what he had experienced in the Soviet Union, Macaulay ended his speech with the following conclusion and appeal:

I [= Frank Macaulay, HW] should like, in conclusion, to make an appeal for help for a wide and extensive propaganda of the Soviet Union in these parts of the British Empire so as to bring home to the natives the real truth of the workings of the U.S.S.R. and not the wholesale distorted, envying and malicious news usually circulated through the Imperialists’ or Capitalists’ Press. It is an arduous task of self-sacrifice but it will not be an energy or time wasted because the natives are still groping in the dark and it is only an outside help that will show the light.

I am now in Russia after encountering so many obstacles on the way; but I am glad that on my return to Africa, especially Nigeria, I will be able to say, “I have been”, “I have seen” and “all is well.” And this is the only way of “nailing” to the counter as bad coins, the many anti-Soviet lies and misrepresentations which are constantly being spread abroad through the Capitalists’ and Imperialists’ agents.\footnote{112 RGA\-SPI 495/64/168, Nigeria, fol. 9.}

Frank Macaulay’s turn into a ‘fellow traveller’ lasted for the rest of his life. Already on his way home, he had started to make preparations to send someone from Nigeria to study in Moscow,\footnote{113 RGA\-SPI 495/135/90, Confidential report re discussions with Macaulay and Small, 3.11.1930, fol. 79.} and back in Nigeria he seemed to have cut his ties with the NNDP. Instead, he put all his energy in the organization of the first Nigerian trade union, the African Workers’ Union of Nigeria (also known as Nigerian Workers’ Union, NWU), which he established in June 1931.\footnote{114 The African Workers’ Union of Nigeria, as stated in their letter-head.}

However, it is possible that Macaulay established close contacts with the LAI already on his way to Moscow in July 1930. On the 22\textsuperscript{nd} of July 1930, the \textit{Nigerian Daily}...
Telegraph\textsuperscript{115} informed its readers that the newspaper had opened a “fresh source of news” – the newspaper was to make use of the services of the press service of the International Secretariat of the League Against Imperialism. In fact, the Nigerian newspaper was using the news service ‘Anko’, i.e., the International Press Correspondence or Inprekorr (Internationale Pressekorrespondenz), which had its headquarters in Berlin and was one of the Comintern affiliations.\textsuperscript{116} Already in June 1930, the Nigerian Daily Telegraph had published two telegrams from the Anko – seemingly without any connection to Macaulay’s visit to Germany.\textsuperscript{117} The July note in the newspaper corresponded with Macaulay’s stay in Berlin. Was he the connection between the LAI and the Nigerian Daily Telegraph? British Intelligence was alarmed, notified the danger of Communist infiltration, discussed the possibility to warn the editor of the newspaper about the background of Anko and asked him to refrain from publishing further telegrams. However, the crux of the problem was that Nigerian Law did not permit any actions, the Colonial Office lamented.\textsuperscript{118} Be as it way, the warning seemed to have had its effect and no further disturbing news was received from the Nigerian press.

Whether or not Macaulay’s activities in Nigeria in 1931 were the outcome of an explicit plan outlined and encouraged in Moscow or Berlin is not known. However, there exists an (undated) memorandum filed among the papers of the ECCI which presented a strategic plan for action of the RILU in British West Africa, including Nigeria. A handwritten note to the memo states 1930 and perhaps the memo was produced during the RILU Congress, or was the outcome of the meetings of the West Africans in Berlin in October 1930. Referring to Macaulay as a “partisan of the RILU”, the task in Nigeria was:

To start a campaign to organize the workers, artisans and poor peasants on the basis of the following immediate demands: a) 8 hour day for all wage workers, b) equal wages and equal pay, c) abolition of all forced labour slavery, d) a minimum wage of [not stated, HW], e) double pay for overtime, f) freedom of

\begin{flushleft}
115 Perhaps I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson was already at this point the acting editor of the Nigerian Daily Telegraph? (Coleman 1971, 208.) In February 1932, another well-known radical intellectual, Duse Mohammed (1966-1945) took over as managing editor of the newspaper.


117 TNA CO 583/174/1 Subversive propaganda, Nigerian Daily Telegraph 25.6.1930 (The Present Situation in India), 28.6.1930 (On the Imperialist Side; Peasants becoming Class Conscious).

118 TNA CO 583/174/1 Subversive propaganda, Minutes 6.10.1930 and 1.11.1930.
\end{flushleft}
organisation, press, assemblies, g) right to strike, h) abolition of all poll and hat [sic] taxes, i) annulment of all leases or mortgages of land to Europeans to the communities they formal belonged, k) no land to be sold, leased or mortgaged but given to all who are willing to work on it, J) return of all so called crown land and of land held now by Europeans to the communities they formerly belonged, L) former slaves to take the same right to land as all other members of the community, m) natives to have a right to occupy any position in trade, industry and administration, n) election on the basis of universal suffrage of all administrative and juridical [sic] officials, o) the election of tribe, city and province councils which are to be the highest authority in the respective election districts, p) abolition of all missionary schools and the establishment of a system of universal free education in native languages, q) free medical help and organisation of maternity homes.\textsuperscript{119}

However, it seems as if contacts between Padmore and Macaulay were erratic, if they existed at all after 1930. So far, no further correspondence between them has been located in the Comintern Archives. Padmore even indicated in a letter to Wallace-Johnson that there had been no news about Macaulay’s activities in Nigeria. It was only after an announcement in the \textit{Nigerian Daily Telegraph} about the African Worker’s Union of Nigeria that Padmore had realized that something was going on in Nigeria.\textsuperscript{120}

The information about the establishment of an African trade union in Nigeria must have come as a surprise to Padmore. News from Nigeria had been depressing in 1931. The descriptions of the political conditions in the colony were pathetic at best. A highly critical, unsigned article was published in the December 1931 issue of \textit{The Negro Worker}:

\begin{quote}
(The) conditions of the working class (in Nigeria) are deplorable; two main forces in charge: the colonial government (creating laws to hinder the scope of development of the Africans) and the capitalists (exploiting the Africans by means of the opportunities given by these laws). The laws of the country are based on a Criminal Code which makes the smallest offence a felony and as a result the country can boast with the largest roll of Criminals, and this roll is being augmented day after day. There are over a hundred of practicing barristers here – the majority of whose positions are no better than the ordinary worker, for the
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{119} RGASPI 495/64/166, fol. 74-75, British West Africa (copy, typewritten; handwritten add: 1930 RT.32/p).
\textsuperscript{120} RGASPI 534/6/23, letter from Padmore to Wallace-Johnson, 16.11.1931, fol. 51. The break in communication between Padmore and Macaulay could explain why there is no reference to trade union activities in Nigeria in the 1931 report of the activities of the ITUCNW (RGASPI 534/3/546, fol 102-108).
The simple reason that the Code prohibits their going to certain extent in their practice.\textsuperscript{121}

The author of the article was I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson, as already has been suggested\textsuperscript{122}. The article was probably written during the middle of 1931\textsuperscript{123}. There are no references to either Macaulay or his attempt to establish a trade union, perhaps indicating that Wallace-Johnson was not yet associated with Frank Macaulay at this point.

Nevertheless, for reasons not (yet) known, Wallace-Johnson and Frank Macaulay joined forces sometimes during the latter half of 1931. It is also unclear whether Macaulay’s trade union already existed at that point or if Wallace-Johnson assisted Macaulay right from the start of the union. Whatever the case, when Padmore made his – probably – first contact with the Nigerians in November 1931, Wallace-Johnson was already Secretary-General of the African Workers’ Union of Nigeria.

As noted earlier, Wallace-Johnson was not a Nigerian. Born in 1895 in Sierra Leone, he enlisted in the British Carrier Corps in 1914 and participated in the campaigns in the Cameroons, East Africa and the Middle East. Demobilized in 1920, he returned home but was unable to find a niche for himself, moving from one job to another. During the mid-1920s he was working in various capacities for the Freetown Municipal Council, but was fired from the Council in April 1926 and thereafter left the country to seek opportunities elsewhere.\textsuperscript{124}

However, his activities during this year and the following up to 1931 are unclear. The general outline of his sojourns during this period, as presented by Spitzer and Denzer, states that he obtained sea-going employment, visiting various ports and harbours in the Atlantic.\textsuperscript{125} At what point and under what circumstances he came in contact with the Communist Party or the Comintern is not known, although some indications suggest that it could have been as early as sometimes during 1927-29. As I have previously suggested, Wallace-Johnson could have met Bankole Awoonor Renner

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{122} Also suggested in Wilson 1974, 362 fn. 199.
\textsuperscript{123} Coleman (1958, 208) claims that Wallace-Johnson served at this point as acting editor of the \textit{Nigerian Daily Telegraph}.
\textsuperscript{124} Spitzer and Denzer 1973, 414-417.
\textsuperscript{125} Spitzer and Denzer 1973, 418.
\end{footnotes}
when he lived in the Gold Coast in 1929-1930. Sometimes early in 1931, perhaps in March, Wallace-Johnson had settled in Lagos. Further, contrary to the claim of previous research on Wallace-Johnson’s activities, he did not participate in any of the congresses in 1930 (Hamburg and Moscow), neither had he studied in Moscow. His stay at the KUTV occurred between the latter part of 1932 and the early months of 1933. Thus, when Padmore contacted Wallace-Johnson in November 1931, the latter was not yet part of the Comintern-network – or perhaps only serving as Awoonor Renner’s middleman.

However, Wallace-Johnson’s position totally changed with the unexpected death of Frank Macaulay in October 1931. The situation was problematic, not least for the Nigerian union, Padmore noted in his letter of condolence to Herbert Macaulay. Frank Macaulay’s premature departure meant that West Africa had lost one of its most promising potential ‘revolutionary’. His appearances at the Hamburg Conference and Moscow Congress had made a deep impression on Padmore:

> At both congresses, comrade Macaulay, by his honest devotion to the interests of the toiling masses of Africa, won the admiration of the delegates […]. In return, comrade Macaulay assured us, that on his arrival in Nigeria he would devote his energy to help the working class organize, as a step towards their liberation from the terrible capitalist exploitation imposed upon them by the British imperialists. [...] (T)he message which Frank Macaulay brought back to his people on his return from Europe will serve as an inspiration to the broad toiling masses of Nigeria and inspire them with that self-confidence which alone can enable them to assume the historic mission which only the working class can fulfil, namely – the overthrow of Imperialism. \(^{126}\)

The crisis in the Nigerian union was solved when Wallace-Johnson took over as president and trade union activities resumed. When Padmore first contacted Wallace-Johnson, the latter was already in charge of the union. As noted above, Padmore made the first move in establishing contacts. In his first letter of 16 November 1931, he welcome the formation of the African Workers’ Union of Nigeria,\(^ {127}\) in a second dated 20 November 1931, he urged Wallace-Johnson to maintain close connections with him and advised him on how to proceed in the future: “You should send the name of some private address where we could mail letters to,” warning him about the danger for the connection to be

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\(^{126}\) RGASPI 534/6/23, fol. 60, letter from Padmore to Herbert Macaulay, 13.1.1932.

\(^{127}\) RGASPI 534/6/23, fol. 51-53, letter from Padmore to Wallace-Johnson, 16.11.1931.
exposed to the colonial authorities: “For as soon as the government knows about your connection with the outside world they will try to oppress the movement by confiscating all of your correspondence.” Further, he notified Wallace-Johnson that the twelve copies of pamphlets\textsuperscript{128} he had sent to him were to be sold and the money received should be transferred back to him either by a reliable person or through the post in the form of stamps.\textsuperscript{129}

Padmore’s and Wallace-Johnson’s correspondence mainly concentrated on four themes: the prospects of labour union work in Nigeria, the oppressive nature of the colonial state, the relationship with the Nigerian National Democratic Party and the task of sending someone to study in Europe.

In his first letter, Wallace-Johnson admitted that although the sudden death of Macaulay in October 1931 had been a severe blow to the union, the union had started to make plans for the future, including the establishment of its own journal. For Padmore’s information, he included in his letter a copy of the rules and regulations of the union. (These rules have not yet been located, perhaps they were never sent to Moscow.)\textsuperscript{130}

In his next letter,\textsuperscript{131} Wallace-Johnson was more critical about the conditions to work in Nigeria: “We have got a hard and up-hill task but we must try to conquer it whatever the obstacles may be that lies in our way […].” One problem was to engage the right people in union work, the other was to disseminate Padmore’s journal which had been one of his tasks. The Nigerian authorities had banned the circulation of \textit{The Negro Worker}, and even the possession of a copy of the journal could lead to imprisonment and deportation. Therefore, Wallace-Johnson warned Padmore to not expect too much success with the sale, but promised to do his utmost to get at least some union members to subscribe to the journal.\textsuperscript{132}

Interestingly, the dissemination of \textit{The Negro Worker} in Nigeria was not only touched upon by Wallace-Johnson but also other Nigerians who were in contact with Padmore during the same period. Early in February 1932, Padmore was to receive several letters from Nigerians, all contemplation about either selling the journal in the colony or

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\textsuperscript{128} These were the ‘Pamphlet against the coming war’ and the report of the 1930 Hamburg Conference.
\textsuperscript{129} RGASPI 534/6/23, fol. 54, letter from Padmore to Wallace-Johnson, 20.11.1931.
\textsuperscript{130} RGASPI 534/7/74, fol. 29, (original) letter from Wallace-Johnson (signed) to Padmore, 17.12.1931.
\textsuperscript{131} RGASPI 534/7/74, fol. 31-34, (original) letter from Wallace-Johnson (signed) to Padmore, 7.1.1932.
\textsuperscript{132} RGASPI 534/7/74, (original) letter from Wallace-Johnson (signed) to Padmore, 7.1.1932, fol. 33.
\end{flushleft}
subscribing to it. The first was an inquiry of one D.R. Bowlay-Williams, addressing himself as Manager and Proprietor of ‘The Peoples Intelligence Bureau & General Agency’. Reading his inquiry, Padmore could not have regarded him as a serious contact. Bowlay-Williams turned out to be more of a local business than a potential ‘fellow traveller’, his intention was to make a good bargain through the sale of the journal:

(I have) no objection in carrying on the Agency of the paper (Negro Worker) in Nigeria which you have requested me to undertake. It is important, however, to have an Absolute Agency, that is to say that all sales and distributions of the Negro Worker in this Dependency should be done by and through my Agency. I should then be better able to organise propaganda work and swell the sales within a short time. […]

He claimed to have made some investigations with the colonial authorities and found out that there was no ban on the importation of the journal into Nigeria:

Kindly send me 24 copies of each issue – commencing from January 1932 – to see how it takes with the populace. If it fires the people I should be able to increase the supply to between 200 and 500 copies monthly within a very short time.133

However, after some further inquiries Bowlay-Williams came to realize that there was a ban on the journal. He therefore cancelled his order and cut his connections with Padmore: “(I)t will not be advisable therefore to send me any supplies of same and I shall be glad if you will consider my order in that letter as cancelled.”134

The two other letters from Nigeria were more promising. One J. Galba-Bright informed Padmore that he had received copies of the journal through E. Foster Jones (Padmore’s Sierra Leonean middleman, see below) but warned him of the difficulties to circulate the journal in the country. Although he put himself at Padmore’s disposal and promised to help distributing the journal, there was a pessimistic undertone in his letter:

It is indeed very hard to do anything for the Race out here. A good many of us have tried and are still trying, but on this side one is exposed to incassistration [sic]

133 RGASPI 534/7/74, fol 44-45, (original) letter from D.R. Bowlay-Williams to Padmore, 5.2.1932
134 RGASPI 534/7/74, fol 49-50, (original) letter from D.R. Bowlay-Williams to Padmore, 7.2.1932.
for no just cause and he ultimately loses his character for life amongst his own people for whom he fought.  

Similar information about the difficulties to distribute the journal was also given by R.A. Macarthy (Senior), who presented himself as Secretary of the Ibadan Agricultural Society. Macarthy, however, stated that he was inclined to make contributions to the journal.

Another issue which Wallace-Johnson and Padmore discussed in their correspondence was the affiliation of the AWUN. Padmore seemed at an early stage to have contacted the International Seamen’s Club in London – another Comintern front organization – and asked them to get in touch with the Nigerians. Early in 1932, Wallace-Johnson was approached by its secretary, J. Headley, who suggested the affiliation of the AWUN with the International Seamen’s Club. The subject was discussed by the Management Committee of the AWUN in January 1932, and decision was made to send a positive reply to the invitation. However, before a formal application was to be sent to London, Wallace-Johnson inquired to Headley for further information about his organization and the implications of an affiliate membership. In fact, Wallace-Johnson was not too sure about whether or not the AWUN could enlist many African seamen in Nigeria as Lagos was not the right environment for such activities:

(R)ight here in Lagos there is hardly any possibility of getting seamen to join the Union as this is not a port wherein ships recruit or discharge men as may be found in Sierra Leone […]  

Padmore was informed by the London office about the planned affiliation of the AWUN to the International Seamen’s Club, but did not make any suggestions to Wallace-Johnson.

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135 RGASPI 534/7/74, fol 47-48, (original) letter from J. Galba-Bright to Padmore, 6.2.1932.
136 RGASPI 534/7/74, fol 51, (original) letter from R.A. Macarthy to Padmore, 6.2.1932
137 Most probably the Seamen’s and Harbour Workers’ International (Internationale der Seeleute und Hafenarbeiter ISH).
138 I have not yet located this correspondence, but the existence of it is indicated in the letters of Wallace-Johnson and Padmore.
139 RGASPI 534/7/74, fol 35, (copy) letter from Wallace-Johnson to J. Headley Esq, Secretary of the International Seamen’s Club, London, dated 8.1.1932. It is likely that this letter is a copy who was sent to Padmore from London.
Neither did Wallace-Johnson hear much from them anymore, as he informed Padmore in a subsequent letter:

Re the Seamen’s Minority Movement, I do not remember having received any communication from them, since I wrote them through the instruction of Comrade Foster Jones […]

Interestingly, Comrade Foster Jones, the Sierra Leonean seaman who was Padmore’s middleman, again features in the correspondence. However, the silence of the Seamen’s Club could be explained by Padmore (or someone else) having decided upon a different approach with the Nigerians. Instead of linking the Nigerians with the London organization, the AWUN was to be directly connected with the Hamburg office and the ITUCNW. Such a proposition was made by Padmore in his March-letter to Wallace-Johnson. In the letter, he informed his Nigerian counterpart that the Executive Committee of the ITUCNW had decided to offer full assistance to the AWUN and encouraged it to establish “ties of international solidarity” between the militant labour movements of Europe, America and Africa. He underlined the positive effects for the AWUN to be affiliated with the ITUCNW:

Once this official connection has been established to give you advise and assistance in the ways and means of building up your movement. + to bring your union into close connection with the militant trade union and labour movement in England, so that you will have friends and supporters in the home country to stand back of you.

Furthermore, Padmore gave Wallace-Johnson the advice to learn as much about union work as possible, especially by the recent experiences of global labour union activities:

As a young movement you must learn from the experiences and mistakes not only of the labour movement in such countries as England and France, Germany and

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140 “Our comrades in London, connected with the seamen’s Minority Movement, have informed us that they wrote you on some of these questions some time ago.” RGASPI 534/6/23, fol 66-66bp, letter from Padmore to Wallace-Johnson, 7.3.32.
141 RGASPI 534/7/74, fol 54-59, (original, handwritten) letter from Wallace-Johnson (signed) to Padmore, 7.4.1932, this ref. to fol. 58.
142 RGASPI 534/6/23, fol 66-66bp, letter from Padmore to Wallace-Johnson 7.3.32.
Wallace-Johnson responded positively to Padmore’s invitation in his next letter but stated that the task of organizing a union in Nigeria proved much more difficult than he had expected:

As you might have been able to realise, the task before us in Nigeria is no small one and the greatest difficulty that one has to confront here is that of bringing about a united movement wherein individualism and partisanship reign supreme.  

Writing in April 1932, Wallace-Johnson had to admit that not much progress had been made. Not least the harassment by the colonial authorities had had a negative effect and many members had left the union:

The progress of the African Workers’ Union of Nigeria, I am directed to say is at present dragging on in a camelionic [sic] speed. But for a limited few ones, the whole organisation would have, by this time, come to a stand-still as the majority of the members have been scared away. We can hardly hold any public meeting without having a representative of the Police therein & listen deliberations and most of the members are therefore not only afraid to express their opinions […]  

While ‘Police terrorism’ scared away some members, others were afraid to join as they were afraid of losing their job. The situation was further complicated by the depression in trade and the actions of the employers, who branded union members or forbade the African workers in supporting the union. The plans of launching a union journal was also hindered, not so much due to government tactics but due to the shortcomings of the members of the union:

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143 RGASPI 534/6/23, fol 66-66bp, letter from Padmore to Wallace-Johnson 7.3.32.
144 RGASPI 534/7/74, (original, handwritten) letter from Wallace-Johnson (signed) to Padmore, 7.4.1932, fol 55.
145 RGASPI 534/7/74, (original, handwritten) letter from Wallace-Johnson (signed) to Padmore, 7.4.1932, fol 55.
[..] our effort to launch out our own literature have so far been held in abeyance owing to the timidity of those of the members whose duty it was to execute the necessary bond with the Government. Out of the three requested by the Union to execute this duty I was the only one who was prepared to sign the Bond. 146

Therefore, when Padmore proposed the affiliation of the AWUN to the ITUCNW, Wallace-Johnson heartily welcomed the invitation and hoped for assistance from Padmore to activate his union:

(0)nce an official connection with your Union has been established the work here would be made more simplified and the members of the working class would feel more braced up and place better confidence in the organization. 147

However, not only were the colonial authorities against the activities of the union. Even worse was the lack of assistance of the progressive elite and its party, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP). Wallace-Johnson’s evaluation of the NNDP was highly critical. In his second letter he declared that “on close examination [the NNDP] is found to be inimical to the interest of the development of the Colony and the mass of the working class.” In his view, albeit the NNDP claimed for itself to work for the emancipation of the Africans and the development of the conditions of the working class, Wallace-Johnson stated that this was not the case: the party was not a mass movement but only made up of a few educated Africans whose aim was – in his view – to “exploit on the peasant class and the greatest majority of illiterates.” In sum, his experience was that the party echoed the voice of the elite and defended the position of the elite. Last, but not least, it was soft in its critique of the colonial authorities:

This party also is invariably responsible for all the ills and errors committed within the Colony. It is always too premature in lauding European Officials for little deeds of what may be nothing short of the administration of their official duties in the right way. They are prepared to heap up songs of praises upon that one as they have done with and to the present head of Administration and should that individual take another turn after a short while as the Colony is now

146 RGASPI 534/7/74, (original, handwritten) letter from Wallace-Johnson (signed) to Padmore, 7.4.1932, fol 56.
147 RGASPI 534/7/74, (original, handwritten) letter from Wallace-Johnson (signed) to Padmore, 7.4.1932, fol 58.
experiencing with the present administration, this party would start to combat mostly in the wrong way.  

The main problem with the NNDP was its negative stance towards the African Workers’ Union of Nigeria. Wallace-Johnson criticized the party for attacking the union in its newspaper and painting the foundation of the union in an extremely negative way:

When the African Workers Union of Nigeria was established, in June last year, several destructive articles were published in one of the organs of this party “The Daily Herald” making all kinds of false representations and acclling [sic] us all kinds of names and making suggestions to the Government to rule us out and with the pioneer criminally.  

In Wallace-Johnson’s mind, the leaders of the NNDP were afraid of competition by the union. The root cause, he argued, was that the NNDP feared that the union could open the eyes of the illiterates and they would lose their position among the masses:

These publications were all traced down to the leading members of the Party and the cause for such action is just because they realise the fact that the Union was not for exploitation but for the development of the conditions of the people.

In his April-letter, he was even more outspoken about the negative role of the NNDP:

Another great opponent we have to combat with is the Democratic Party whose policy is to divide and exploit the mass and seeing that the Workers’ Union policy is to bring the mass together in a common bond of unity in order to solve the problem of a better living, this Party has constituted itself a formidable foe to the Union […]  

Padmore totally agreed in Wallace-Johnson’s outcry. Already in his reply from March 1932, he declared:

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148 RGASPI 534/7/74, (original) letter from Wallace-Johnson (signed) to Padmore, 7.1.1932, fol. 33.
149 RGASPI 534/7/74, (original) letter from Wallace-Johnson (signed) to Padmore, 7.1.1932, fol. 33.
150 RGASPI 534/7/74, (original) letter from Wallace-Johnson (signed) to Padmore, 7.1.1932, fol. 33.
151 RGASPI 534/7/74, (original, handwritten) letter from Wallace-Johnson (signed) to Padmore, 7.4.1932, fol 55.
The policy of the Nigerian ruling class and the capitalists is, to prevent the African workers from having any connections with the workers in the civilised countries. Their policy is to keep you bottled up, as it were, in Nigeria, so that when they are ready to smash up your union and to throw the leaders and workers in jail, you will have no friends in Europe and America to raise a word of protest.152

Padmore’s advice to Wallace-Johnson was to focus on the masses. Such an engagement, he claimed, would reveal the true face of the elite and underline the determination of the union. Contrary to the vague Panafricanist or nationalist calls of the NNDP or the NCBWA or other movements who highlighted racial or tribal issues, focus should be on class consciousness:

You must know no distinction between races and tribes. The only distinction which we know is between workers and capitalists, the rich and the poor, the exploiters and the exploited. Our task is to unite all of the oppressed against the oppressors, and in order to do this, our slogan must be: ‘Workers of Africa, unite!’"153

Another central theme in Padmore’s and Wallace-Johnson’s correspondence was the issue of sending Africans to study in Europe. Already in his second letter Wallace-Johnson discussed the possibility of him going to Europe and to discuss matters with Padmore in private.154 Padmore referred to the question in his letter from March 1932. In it he proposed to Wallace-Johnson that he was willing to assist the AWUN to send a few young “active and intelligent” workers to study in Europe – “in one of our labour schools,” as he wrote, without mentioning that he most certainly was thinking of the educational institutions in Moscow such as the KUTV. Padmore stressed to Wallace-Johnson the importance for educating union members:

No more so than good wishes will help one to fly an airship across the Atlantic. To do so one has to learn how to fly first and to manage the airship. In the same way, to build up a real trade union movement which will fight for shorter hours, higher wages, better housing conditions, relief for the unemployed and other

152 RGASPI 534/6/23, fol 66-66bp, letter from Padmore to Wallace-Johnson 7.3.32.
153 RGASPI 534/6/23, fol 66-66bp, letter from Padmore to Wallace-Johnson 7.3.32.
154 “It is unfortunate that my present position cannot make me proceed to Europe as the struggle we have requires face to face talk.” RGASPI 534/7/74, letter from Wallace-Johnson to Padmore, 7.1.1932, fol. 34.
demands of the working class, - you must have educated leaders and functionaries, who have studied the science of the trade union movement, etc. [...] Our Committee is quite prepared to help your union in this respect.\textsuperscript{155}

Not surprisingly, Wallace-Johnson’s reply was a positive one to Padmore’s invitation and they agreed that such a procedure would be of great benefit to the Nigerian union. In his view, the opportunity for someone to spend some time at a Labour School in Europe could even have the positive effect of attracting more members to the union.\textsuperscript{156} Perhaps he was even referring to himself when he answered:

I am to add that as far as men are concerned, my Committee guarantees that whoever they may place at your disposal would be one who is borne with the true spirit of patriotism and the right perspective and who would be prepared to sacrifice his very self to pull the programme through successfully, and you can therefore rest assured with confidence of being supplied with the best.\textsuperscript{157}

Whoever made the decision and on what grounds – it was Wallace-Johnson who eventually was sent to study in Europe. So far I have not found any further correspondence between Wallace-Johnson and Padmore in the Comintern Archive that could shed some further light on this question. Be as it may, Wallace-Johnson went to Moscow sometimes in mid-1932. If Padmore played any role in his enrolment in the KUTV is not known, but it seems likely.\textsuperscript{158} In Moscow, if not earlier, Wallace-Johnson started to use the alias Walter Daniels – in his earlier correspondence he still signed the letters in his own name.

According to Spitzer and Denzer, Wallace-Johnson is supposed to have attended the ‘International Labor and Defence Congress’ in Moscow and remained there for as long as eighteen months.\textsuperscript{159} However, this claim is problematic. What was this obscure congress all about? Was it a congress organized by the International Labor Defense (ILD), the legal defence mass organization headed by the WPA (Workers Party of
America, the forerunner of the CPUSA)? Following Rohdie, Padmore had corresponded with Kobina Sekyi, Awoonor Renner’s godfather and famous Gold Coast lawyer, in August 1932 while the latter was in London, about the ILD. Padmore presented the ILD as a Berlin [!] organization whose aim was “to provide legal aid and defence for all people who are being unjustly persecuted by the capitalists and imperialists.” Interestingly, there is a reference to a Labour Defence Conference which was to be held in November 1932 – presumably in Berlin (or Moscow?), although not stated – in the correspondence from Padmore to Sekyi. Perhaps the abovementioned congress in Moscow was the same as the ILD conference referred to by Padmore?

Whatever the case, Wallace-Johnson did not stay in Moscow for eighteen months. Travelling via England, where he stayed for one week, he was back in Nigeria in the beginning of March 1933. On his return, he was to realize that the conditions for political work in Nigeria had become constrained although, as he noted in a letter (which he signed Daniels), news about the changed political situation had reached him on his way back:

At last I have arrived home but have got to face now graver difficulties than before. It was good I had expected to meet these difficulties otherwise I would not be able to stem the tide of things.

On my arrival I met a lot of political embryos (?). Several obstacles have been placed on my way both personally and as Secretary for the Union here. The Union itself has been declared illegal and permission to hold meetings withdrawn. Personally, I am regarded as a suspect and since there have been published certain statements that some Englishmen have been arrested at Moscow the hostilities (?) have been intensified against me and all my movements keenly watched by the political watchdogs. Since I arrived here on the 5th instant, I have been called up twice by the authorities who have demanded information from me as to what I am doing and what is my mission. I expect at any moment to be asked to leave the country or to be arrested on some bogus charges. Still, I am not perturbed (?)

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160 The ILD had been founded in 1925 and had close links to the International Red Aid and the Workers’ International Relief (WIR, i.e., Internationale Arbeiterhilfe). See “International Labor Defense (1925-1946),” [http://www.marxisthistory.org/subject/usa/eam/ild.html](http://www.marxisthistory.org/subject/usa/eam/ild.html) (5.2.2007).


162 RGASPI 495/154/512, fol 83, handwritten letter by I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson dated 17th Mar. 1933 and send from 10 Victoria Street Lagos - Nigeria, British West Africa (c/o P.O. Box 199). The recipient is unknown but must have been someone in Moscow as is indicated in the last paragraphs in the letter:

Kindly convey my good wishes to all the comrades at the Komintern and the Kutw and of course to your wife and daughter not forgetting your esteemed self. Please let me hear from you as early
Wallace-Johnson had left England sometimes in mid-January,¹⁶³ thus he was not aware of the Nazi crack-down on the ITUCNW and the imprisonment of Padmore. On the contrary, he expected to start working according to plans which – obviously – had been discussed in Moscow and while he was in England: “I spent a week in England during which I was able to do some work there towards the achievement of our plans.” It is certain that part of his mission was to enlist new African students to go to Moscow and that Padmore was to act as his middleman:

Re the securing of student, we have secured four students at present and I have by this mail written to comrade Padmore about them. They have started to arrange for their passports. as (sic) soon as arrangements could be completed for them to go over, you will please (p. 83 back) see that I am advised if it is possible to despatch them in summer (sic) this year before the situation becomes graver, I think it would be good.¹⁶⁴

The second part of the plan was to focus on rooting the labour union. Although not much existed of the African Workers’ Union of Nigeria at the time of Wallace-Johnson’s return, he was confident about future work – despite constrains put by the colonial authorities:

Re the Union we are still determined to carry through. We are now re-organising in another form and I presume there is success ahead of us.¹⁶⁵

If Wallace-Johnson had any success in Nigeria is not known. According to Asante, he joined the editorial staff of the *Nigerian Daily Times* and also acted as Secretary to an obscure association, the Koffey African Universal Church Society in Lagos.¹⁶⁶ His direct

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¹⁶⁶ Asante 1971, 50. I have not yet been able to establish the exact period for Wallace-Johnson’s editorship of the Nigerian Daily Times. Reading Coleman (1971, 208), one gets the impression that Wallace-Johnson was editing the newspaper already in 1930 or 1931, i.e., before he left Nigeria.
contacts with the Comintern apparatus were weak, if existing at all, for the rest of the year. The connection to Hamburg and Padmore had seized to exist, but it seems that he had been able to establish other links. However, these links were not towards Europe or Moscow anymore but were regional West African one. Two of these contacts in the Gold Coast were to be especially important for him: Bankole Awoonor Renner and Benjamin Wuta-Ofei. Awoonor Renner visited Lagos – for the first time, according to himself – in April 1933 and commemorated this visit in his poem “This beautiful island”:

Your Marina deceives, but not your heart
This beautiful Island Lagos one sees from apart.\(^{167}\)

It is likely that Awoonor Renner met Wallace-Johnson during this visit. Perhaps it was via the connection to Awoonor Renner that Wallace-Johnson got in touch with Wuta-Ofei – the latter belonged to Awoonor Renner’s circle in the Gold Coast. Anticipating further troubles with the colonial authorities in Nigeria, Wallace-Johnson had written to Wuta-Ofei and asked for assistance, and in reply Wuta-Ofei suggested that he come to the Gold Coast.\(^{168}\)

Wallace-Johnson never managed to reorganize trade union activities in Lagos. In August 1933 the Nigerian authorities made their final move, raided his office and subsequently deported him for his political activities. Making use of his contacts in the Gold Coast, he settled there instead.\(^{169}\)

II.3. The problematic Sierra Leone-connection

More or less stable contacts between Sierra Leone and the Comintern apparatus had existed since 1927. Although the connections with the Ernest Alfonso Richards, the President of the Sierra Leone Railway Workers’ Union, had been sporadic, he had for several years been the ‘man-on-the-spot’ of the RILU. Perhaps it was due to his long-
standing relationship with Moscow that he was promoted into the Presidium of the ITUCNW? Another explanation could be that he was regarded as the only ‘real’ union leader – Small and Macaulay, who also had been elected to the Presidium, were in fact political activists.

Richards made his last (known) appearance in Hamburg in July 1930. No further correspondence of Richards has as yet been located in Moscow, although a report indicated that contact between Sierra Leone and the Hamburg office did exist:

The Railroad Union sent a representative to the International Negro Conference in July 1930. Since then, the Hamburg Committee has been in close communication with the Union, which is making every effort to reorganise on a broader industrial basis and to recruit new membership.170

This report poses some challenging question, not least on authorship. The report itself resembles that of the reports by Small on the Gambia and Macaulay’s on Nigeria. Was Richards the author? The content of the report outlined the political, economic and labour conditions of Sierra Leone, suggesting someone who was very familiar with the local situation:

[---] Skilled workers receive on the average between 2/- to 3/- a day while unskilled workers get from 10d to 24d a day. As a general rule women and children receive less wage than the men. The average working day is between 10 and 12 hours. Skilled workers, especially on the railroads and other forms of public work toll about 10 hours a day, while unskilled labourers work for unlimited time. Forced labour is also used by the government in the construction of roads and other public undertakings in the Protectorate.171

Next, the author presented an analysis of the strike movement in Sierra Leone, commenting upon both the 1919 and 1926 railroad strikes. With regard to the 1926 strike, the report noted that it had been brutally crushed by the colonial government: “Since then the Railroad Union has suffered a number of similar defeats and has declined in membership.” Consequently, not much labour union activity existed around 1930 in the

170 RGASPI 534/3/614, fol 150-153, Information on Sierre [sic] Leone (copy, typewritten, no author, no date), this ref to fol. 153.
171 RGASPI 534/3/614, fol 150-153, Information on Sierre [sic] Leone (copy, typewritten, no author, no date), this ref to fol. 152.
country, the majority of the workforce being unorganized. The only ‘mass organization’ that still existed was the Railway Worker’s Union, but its membership had declined to 600 “at present.” However, the author – Richards? – was not pessimistic about the future:

The Union is also desirous of carrying on organisational activities among other sections of the working class, with the object of building up a revolutionary trade union center in Sierra Leone. Efforts will also be made to conduct organisational work among the peasantry in order to build up peasants’ leagues.172

The only Sierra Leonean present in Europe – either in Berlin or in Moscow – about the time of the 1930 Hamburg Conference was Richards. Thus, it could be possible that he wrote (or dictated the report to someone) while he was in Germany. Or did he even make it to Moscow and participated at the RILU Congress? A closer reading of the last sentences of the Sierra Leone report also points towards the fact that the author had been inspired by the late activities in the Gambia. When E.F. Small visited Hamburg, his engagement in organizing both the workers and the agricultural labourers must have been deemed as a model for action in other African countries.

 Whoever was the author of the report on Sierra Leone, the information on 600 union members was to be reproduced in subsequent reports of the ITUCNW during the following years.173 However, despite such official recognition, Padmore had for one reason or another lost direct contact with Richards after 1930. For a while, it seems, did Foster Jones (Comrade Jones), a seaman from Freetown, take the role as Padmore’s link to Sierra Leone. In 1931, Jones published an article in The Negro Worker, where he painted a rather grim picture of the working conditions in Sierra Leone.174

In the same 1931 issue of The Negro Worker, the readers were informed that the Sierra Leone trade union was still weak. Such information – and apparently the lack of direct news from the Railway union – made Padmore, or even someone in Moscow, to

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172 RGASPI 534/3/614, fol 150-153, Information on Sierre [sic] Leone (copy, typewritten, no author, no date), this ref to fol. 152.
173 E.g., RGASPI 534/3/546, fol 102-108, Report of (the) International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers (ca. 1931): “Sierra Leone: The Railroadmen’s Union formerly about 1000 members has about 600 at present.”
174 “Situation of Native Workers in Sierra Leone,” The Negro Worker Vol 1, Nr 4-5, 1931, filed in RGASPI 532/4/94.
issue an open letter to the workers of Sierra Leone,\footnote{RGASPI 495/64/166, fol 54-73, An Open Letter to the Workers of Sierra Leone (dated 13/V-31); same as RGASPI 534/3/615, fol. 22-30 (Lettre aux travailleurs de Sierra Leone), fol. 31-34 (An Open Letter to the Workers of Freetown, to the toiling masses of Sierra Leone, dated 1/VII-31), and RGASPI 534/3/615, fol. 154ff (English version). Only the French version is signed Padmore.} which was published in the August 1931 issue of The Negro Worker. Most probably the Open Letter was drawn up in Moscow, perhaps with the assistance of Padmore or someone. The earliest version of such a letter seems to have been drafted already in 1930, although it is not known whether this version ever was published. There is reason to believe that it was not sent to Sierra Leone but Moscow.\footnote{This letter is filed in RGASPI 534/6/23, fol. 2-8, An Open letter to the workers of Freetown [and] to the toiling masses of Sierra Leone (1930).} Similar Open Letters were subsequently drafted and published calling on the toilers in the Gold Coast and in Kenya (see below). Officially, they were all signed by the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers.

The Open Letter to Sierra Leone was at least brought to the notice of the ECCI as one version of the report, perhaps even one of the first, is filed among the ECCI-papers (fond 495). It had two target groups, one specific and one general. The letter was addressed in particular to the members of the Sierra Leone Railwaymen’s Union and to the ‘toiling masses’, workers and peasants, of Sierra Leone in general. Starting with introducing the ITUCNW, notifying that the Sierra Leone Railwaymen’s Union had a representative in the organization, the first part of the letter discussed the world economic crisis and its effect in African, particularly in Sierra Leone. The next part raised the question of the impoverishment of the African working masses and the effects of imperialism. The last part of the letter focussed on actions and union activities as the solution to the crisis of the African working class. The answer in the letter to the question: “What must be done?” was: “Organise and Fight!”\footnote{RGASPI 495/64/166, An Open Letter to the Workers of Sierra Leone (dated 13/V-31), fol. 68.}

The Open Letter was highly critical about the activities of the Railway Worker’s Union: despite organizing the two strikes, little more had been achieved and union work was rather ineffective:

Although the union led thousands of workers in strike for better conditions in 1919 and 1926 we find it in a weak condition today. Why is [69] this so? Simply because the leaders of the union have failed to carrying on day to day activities and thereby drawing the workers into struggle for their immediate demands.
Because of the inactivity of the union, membership has fallen off during recent years. It was suggested that the union should focus on the conditions of the workers. The activities of the union should concentrate on issues which were in concern of the individual worker: freedom to organize and strike, equal pay for equal work regardless of race, sex or age as well as eight hour working day:

Only by doing something to help the workers better their conditions will the union be ever able to regain its former membership. Therefore, the first thing to do is to immediately begin a campaign to recruit members. For example, there are hundreds of mechanic blacksmiths and fitters in the repair shops in Freetown, engine-drivers, firemen, lines-men, breakmen [sic], freightmen [sic], porters and day labourers in the good sheds as well as telegraphists [sic] and clerks, who are still unorganised. All of these workers must be drawn into the Union on the basis of the immediate everyday demands which should be linked up with their general class demands.

In addition, the Railway Worker’s union was given the special duty in offering assistance with the formation of other labour unions and in organizing the peasants. Although not stated, the Railway Worker’s Union was envisaged as a kind of a spear-head organization in Sierra Leone, perhaps to form in future the core of a ‘Sierra Leone Labour Union’ similar to the Gambian case which unified under one umbrella-organization both labour and peasant unions – under the surveillance of the ITUCNW, i.e., RILU.

(T)he railroad men’s union… should show the dock and marine workers how to proceed with the formation of a union. This union, like the Railwaymen’s Union must be organised on the basis of one industrial union.[…] (T)he carpenters, the blacksmiths, the painters and other constructional workers must also take immediate steps to form a union of building trade workers.

The immediate task, however, was to focus on the unemployed and to start the agitation for state relief for the unemployed and their families:

178 RGASPI 495/64/166, An Open Letter to the Workers of Sierra Leone (dated 13/V-31), fol. 68-69.
179 RGASPI 495/64/166, An Open Letter to the Workers of Sierra Leone (dated 13/V-31), fol. 69.
180 RGASPI 495/64/166, An Open Letter to the Workers of Sierra Leone (dated 13/V-31), fol. 70.
The executive committee of the Railwaymen’s Union should call a meeting of all the unemployed at some suitable place such as the Wilberforce Memorial Hall. This meeting should be well advertised beforehand. The Union should undertake the printing of the leaflets announcing the meeting which should be distributed as widely as possible... No money should be charged for attending the meeting. Instead, a collection can be raised to defray the expense of printing the leaflets.\textsuperscript{181}

However, the advices and orders given by the ITUCNW did not have any effects. Union work in Sierra Leone was highly constrained by the activities of the colonial authorities. Padmore himself had only indirect contact with Richards; the last reference of their correspondence is from March 1932.\textsuperscript{182}

However, as earlier noted, by April 1932 Padmore was rather pessimistic about the Sierra Leone-connection which seemed to have more or less disappeared. Apart from having lost his connections with Richards, the contact with Foster Jones proved problematic, too. In November 1931, Padmore had received a letter from one Joc Bo Kami, who informed Padmore about an uprising in the Cambia district in Sierra Leone and in critical tones summarized Jones activities there.\textsuperscript{183} Jones had visited the district, distributed pamphlets and held discussions with the people in the district where they addressed the poor conditions and the exploitation of the working class. However, Jones position was problematic – he was not a stranger in the region but had visited it previously. Thus, at first the local people were suspicious about Jones intentions:

\begin{quote}
(Is this not the same man that came many years past and collected a lot of money from us telling us we shall soon have [sic] our own Flag and ships?
\end{quote}

This statement can be read as Jones previously being a supporter, if not emissary, of Marcus Garvey and the UNIA. Joc Bo Kami, too, gave such a hint. However, conditions in Cambia district were by 1931 at a nadir – “here we are with poor wages and a lot of unemployment,” Kami informed – and the local people, it seems, were desperate. What was needed, it was argued, was a leader: “These people well know they can rise against

\textsuperscript{181} RGASPI 495/64/166, An Open Letter to the Workers of Sierra Leone (dated 13/V-31), fol. 71.
\textsuperscript{182} Reference in a letter by Padmore to one E. Jos. Gabbidon, dated 1.3.1932: “P.S. We are enclosing a letter to Mr. Richards. Will you please be good enough to give it to him or post it for him.” This letter is filed in RGASPI 534/6/23, fol. 64.
\textsuperscript{183} RGASPI 534/7/74, fol. 22-23, letter from Joc Bo Kami to Padmore, dated October 1931.
these things, but as we all know they are looking forward to us for leadership.\textsuperscript{184} It was hoped that Jones could take the role of a leader, but he did not take full responsibility:

Mr. Jones who we know and can lay hands on, simply comes on a ship and gives us books and papers and in a meeting tell all everything, next minute he is gone. Here we are again left to ourselves to struggle with government on what we do not understand.\textsuperscript{185}

In retrospect, it seems that Jones never saw himself as a leader, only as a messenger. Being a seaman, his opportunities to stay ashore were limited if he did not want to arise the suspicions of the colonial authorities. Neither did he have any capabilities to lead a strike, lest a rebellion. Instead, it is evident from the letter that Jones regarded himself only as a middleman of the ITUCNW, and by disseminating subversive literature and informing local people about the existence of the Hamburg office, it seems as he felt to have done his duty as a ‘fellow traveller’. But the Cambia people, especially Joc Bo Kami, were not satisfied with mere information about their rights and a lip-service of support to their struggle. They demanded concrete actions to support their call for better wages and lower transport costs to get their produce to the market in Freetown. Sometimes in October 1931, an association, called the Sierra Leone Workers Association, was formed and a public meeting was held – resulting, among others, in the aforementioned letter to Padmore.

Although the formation of the Sierra Leone Workers Association was not fathered by Comrade Jones, there was a clear link to him and the ITUCNW. Spurred by the pamphlets, the Association decided through Joc Bo Kami to contact Padmore and ask him for further assistance in their agitations. However, it seems as if the position of Jones was not really understood by Kami and the others: they believed him to held an influential position in the organization:

The only thing I am proposing now is that Mr. Jones ask the International Trade Union of the Negro Workers to finance the start of this movement and that they should have Mr. Jones himself about us, then we can have confidence and again

\textsuperscript{184} RGASPI 534/7/74, letter from Joc Bo Kami to Padmore, October 1931, fol. 22.

\textsuperscript{185} RGASPI 534/7/74, letter from Joc Bo Kami to Padmore, October 1931, fol. 22.
we cannot pay any more than 3 d a week the very highest under present. In fact we want a cheaper rate.\textsuperscript{186}

Whereas the first part of the paragraph referred to above deals with the proposed assistance to the Association, the meaning of the latter part is more unclear. Does Kami refer to the sum to be paid by the Association as membership fee to the ITUCNW (or to the payment of the publications of the ITUCNW)? Or is he complaining about the high transportation costs for local produce? Kami further suggested to Padmore that the ITUCNW should concentrate more efforts on Sierra Leone – seemingly unaware about the fact that this had been the intention of the RILU since many years. Writing from a peripheral district, Kami believed that the social and economic conditions in the colony were more or less unknown in the rest of the world, and underlined to Padmore the opportunities to organize the working class:

Mr. Jones should be able to tell these officers of the International Trade Union of Negro Workers that we have in Sierra Leone being the most important Port [sic] for shipping in Africa, at least about 9.000 seafarers including fishermen all over the colony and Canoe boys, then we have the peasants in the Northern, Southern and Central provinces which would estimate at least 50.000, then the toilers of the Rura district 20.000, Bonthé Shubro, Monroe Salija and Sulima about 20.000.\textsuperscript{187}

Kami was confident with future success and at the same time outright to Padmore in that the conditions for fruitful activities, even a ‘revolution’, he conjectured, were depending on financial assistance as well as support from other unions and (revolutionary) movements:

(S)hould the International Trade Union of Negro Workers[…] ask the support of other movements (white class) finance the start of this movement with say two and a half hundred Pounds, in a few months they could not only have realised their outlay but will be astonished in their success and it is only here we want a good start. The instinct will work up the other colonies, then with Mr. Jones and us, as leaders, we can succeed in creating any violent revolution required for better conditions.\textsuperscript{188}

\textsuperscript{186} RGASPI 534/7/74, letter from Joc Bo Kami to Padmore, October 1931, fol. 22.
\textsuperscript{187} RGASPI 534/7/74, letter from Joc Bo Kami to Padmore, October 1931, fol. 22.
\textsuperscript{188} RGASPI 534/7/74, letter from Joc Bo Kami to Padmore, October 1931, fol. 22.
A closer look on Kami’s reference to a ‘violent revolution’ indicates that his and the communists meaning of the word were different. Whereas Kami used the word more as a metaphor, hardline communists would regard this as a typical ‘bourgeoisie’ misapprehension. The rest of Kami’s letter seemed to confirm such suspicions. What Kami and the Sierra Leoneans had in mind was not the ultimate overthrow of the colonial system (i.e., anti-imperialism or anti-colonialism) but only the improvement of their living conditions:

(T)he unemployment question can have with us to rally them [i.e., the unemployed would rally behind the Association and its demands for better living conditions, HW] and compelled government to do something for them, the general public will support us as long as they see our start is independent and they know of our foreign supporters.\(^{189}\)

Padmore never took much concrete actions to assist the Association – at least there exists no further references in the Moscow Archives. An explanation to the paucity of Padmore’s activity could be the changing situation in Sierra Leone itself. Although there was an uprising in the Cambia District in 1931, the colonial authorities were soon able to crush the rebellion and to restore order. It seems as if the Association itself was a dayfly – neither Padmore nor anyone else at the ITUCNW received any further notes from the organization.

II.4. The Gold Coast link

Comintern connections with the Gold Coast dated back to 1926/1927, as has been noted in Part 1. The first contacts were made through the forerunner of the LAI, the League Against Colonial Oppression (LACO). The aim had been to invite leading nationalist intellectuals, such as Casely Hayford and Kobina Sekyi, to participate at the two conferences in Brussels in 1927. However, these contacts did not result in much. Neither had Bankole Awoonor Renner’s return to the Gold Coast in 1929 sparked off any notable subversive activities in that colony. On the contrary, it seems that Awoonor Renner for

\(^{189}\) RGASPI 534/7/74, letter from Joc Bo Kami to Padmore, October 1931, fol. 23.
the next years tried to build up links and cooperate with the Gold Coast middle-class intelligentsia.

Awoonor Renner’s platforms were the *Gold Coast Leader*, where he worked as the editor of the newspaper until 1932, and the African Academy of Arts and Science which he had founded in 1931. It is likely that he made contacts with J.B Danquah during this period or even earlier, as claimed in part one. The African Academy was perhaps founded after Danquah’s Gold Coast Youth Conference in 1930 (if Awoonor Renner’s society was founded in 1931 as claimed by Danquah) and perhaps inspired by the meeting? (Or, as I suggested in Part One, Awoonor Renner’s society could have been among the participants in the 1930 Conference if it existed at that time.) Nevertheless, the contact with Danquah was important for Awoonor Renner who served for about a year or so as editor of Danquah’s *Times of West Africa* in about 1933. Further, the 1930 Conference seemed to have been an attempt to reconcile the chiefs and the intelligentsia, including, it seems, Casely Hayford, Nana Ofori Atta and even Kobina Sekyi. It is likely, therefore, that Awoonor Renner had by 1932-1933 been able to establish connections with leading members of the Western-educated elite in the Gold Coast.

Gold Coast politics during the early 1930s were overshadowed by two events: the 1930 cocoa hold-up and the agitation against three Bills to be passed by the Legislative Council. The 1930-1931 cocoa hold-up was an attempt by cocoa farmers and brokers to sell cocoa beans at depressed prices and to protest against produce-buying cartels by European firms. The Gold Coast economy – as all other West African colonial economies – was hard hit by the World Depression and the world slump that started in 1929. Barter and income terms of export producers underwent a rapid and serious deterioration, resulting in a number of protest movements, including the cocoa hold-ups of 1930-1931 and 1937. One attempt by African producers and cocoa entrepreneurs to bypass the

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190 Danquah 1943, 11. According to British colonial files, the African Academy was founded in 1930 (TNA KV2/1849 Awoonor Renner personal file I.
191 The *Times of West Africa* had been founded in 1931.
193 The proposals were the Government’s tax income proposal, the waterworks ordinance and the Criminal Code (Amendment) Ordinance No. 21 of 1934. All of them caused widespread opposition and were much debated during the early 1930s. See further Part 3.
European firms was to organize cooperatives that aimed to control marketing and to raise producer prices. The most influential of these cooperatives was the Gold Coast Farmers Association (GCFA), which had been founded by John Ayew in 1919. As noted in part one, the GCFA had close links with the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS) and both organizations had unsuccessfully been approached by the LAI in 1926-1927. Ayew, together with Alfred J. Ocansey, who was one of the leading African businessmen in Accra,\(^{195}\) were the organizers of the 1930-1931 cocoa hold-up.\(^{196}\) Such activities were gladly welcomed by the anti-colonial groups in Europe, including the ITUCNW.\(^{197}\)

The contacts between the ITUCNW, i.e., Padmore, and the Gold Coast were at the best informal. Nothing was ever heard of the two Gold Coast labour unions who attended the 1930 Hamburg Conference. Whereas trade union agitation proved more or less impossible to establish by the ITUCNW or even the RILU in the Gold Coast, Padmore was able to establish some contacts with individual activists. All of his contacts seemed to have been established in the same way. Through legal or illegal ways, the ITUCNW journal \textit{The Negro Worker} was distributed in the Gold Coast and found a readership. Several individuals contacted Padmore after they had read articles condemning the colonial exploitation in Africa.

Some of the correspondence between the Gold Coast and Padmore has been located in Moscow. Among those whom I have not been able to identify was one K.A. Obuobi in Krabo, whom Padmore sent a reply in November 1931. In his despatch Padmore enclosed two copies of the report of the 1930 conference and six copies the pamphlet ‘The Negro Worker and the Imperialist War’ which he hoped Obuobi would distribute.\(^{198}\) Further, there was Ayikai Okai, who was a schoolboy at the Wesleyan School in James Town, Accra.\(^{199}\) Padmore was to be engaged in a rather lengthy correspondence with his “young friend.” Although Ayikai Okai’s letters to Padmore have not yet been found, the

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\(^{198}\) RGASPI 534/6/23, fol 55, Padmore to K.A. Obuobi, 25.11.1931. Obuobi’s letter to Padmore, dated 21.10.1931, has not yet been located.

\(^{199}\) RGASPI 534/6/23, fol 68, Padmore to Ayikai Okai, 23.3.1932 and fol. 80, Padmore to Ayikai Okai, 16.6.1932.
contents of the correspondence can be reconstructed via Padmore’s letters. Ayikai Okai must have written his first letter to Padmore sometimes in January or February 1932, sending a request to join the ITUCNW. Padmore was delighted: “We are very glad to receive an application from you that shows that you are interested in the program and aims of our Committee,” he answered him, but in the same vein asked for further details about him:

You should let us know whether you are still in school and what are your plans for the future. Do you have any friends or relatives among the workers? If so you should send us their names and addresses so that we can send them also magazines. […] You must also write and let us know all about yourself so that we may know in what way we can help you. Believe us to be your good friend.200

Ayikai Okai had either got hold of a copy of the 1930 Conference Report or, which is more likely, an issue of The Negro Worker. The political aims of the ITUCNW were listed on the back cover of each issue of the journal.201

The young Gold Coast boy must have appreciated Padmore’s trust in him as he immediately collected a list of addresses and sent them to Hamburg. Padmore was very pleased and asked for more names and addresses and gave him further instructions: “Enclosed you will find a form but you should write in pencil, as the ink blots.” He also encouraged the boy to study hard and to finish school, despite the hard conditions the Gold Coast – and seemingly also the boys family – were facing. When he had finished school, Padmore promised him that he was to be engaged in union work:

By the time you have finished with your school we shall try to help you to study the workers movement so that you may become a leader of the poor people and help them to organise so that they will get better wages, they would not have to work so hard and pay such high taxes, while their children would get better education, food, and a happier life.202

What Padmore did not tell the boy was that this meant a lengthy sojourn at the KUTV or the Lenin Institute in Moscow. Padmore ended his letter by summarizing the aims and the

200 RGASPI 534/6/23, fol 68, Padmore to Ayikai Okai, 23.3.1932.
201 See DACCO.
202 RGASPI 534/6/23, fol 80, Padmore to Ayikai Okai, 16.6.1932. Ayikai Okai’s letter to Padmore was dated 20.4.1932.
activities of the ITUCNW, including the boy’s immediate task and his future position in the web:

You see, my young friend, our Committee is for the working class, - not for the rich. We are trying to help the poor people, but in order to do this we have to first educate them about their own needs ad [sic] how to struggle against the European imperialists who have come to their country, and with the native traitors are oppressing the people, we publish our magazine and other reading material for them that will explain these things. So when you help us to get more and more people to read, our little books you are doing a great service to the workers of your country, even though you are still a schoolboy. 203

This letter was one of Padmore’s most open to anyone in Africa, one where clearly explained and stressed the need of agitation and propaganda. In fact, the above quotation comprises the actual work of the ITUCNW and its agenda: enlightening the workers about the plight was eventually to lead to concrete action, namely the formation of unions and collective agitation. Unfortunately, no further correspondence between Padmore and the boy has been found.

One political activist who established contacts with Padmore was Kobina Sekyi. He had arrived in London in June 1932 and stayed there for the rest of the year. His business in London was twofold. On behalf of the ARPS and the Gold Coast Farmers’ Association, his task was to get in touch with British, French and American financiers, the ultimate goal being to form a cocoa-buying group. Sekyi’s other business was the Privy Council appeal case between his client, the Ohene of Asamangkese, and Nana Ofori Atta, Paramount Chief of Akim Abuakwa. 204

It is unclear when Sekyi first learnt about Padmore and his journal, *The Negro Worker*. According to Rohdie, Sekyi made his first contact with Padmore in March 1932

203 RGASPI 534/6/23, fol 80, Padmore to Ayikai Okai, 16.6.1932.
204 In 1932, the case was already ten years old and had emerged into a political issue involving both the chiefs, the ARPS and the Gold Coast Government. The background of the affair was that Akim Abuakwa claimed paramountcy over Asamangkese. Although the local ruler, the Ohene, was willing to accept political subordination, he was unwilling to pay the price of his subordination, namely a one-third interest on all land concessions. On the other hand, Akim Abuakwa’s claim was supported by the Gold Coast Government, whereas Nana Ofori Atta had won the Governor’s favour by sponsoring the Native Administration Ordinance in 1927. Following the 1927 Ordinance, the Provincial Council system was introduced in the Gold Coast Colony. The ARPS, too, had rejected the 1927 Ordinance as it feared exclusion from the Provincial Councils and, ultimately, from the Legislative Council. See further Samuel Rohdie, “The Gold Coast Aborigines Abroad,” *Journal of African History* 6:3, 1965, 390-391.
when he still was at home in the Gold Coast, asking Padmore for a copy of The Negro Worker. Their correspondence continued over the next months. Sekyi asked Padmore to send more copies of the journal to the Gold Coast as there were others who were interested in the journal, as he claimed. Padmore, whom Sekyi had told that he was about to arrive in London soon, urged Sekyi to contact Arnold Ward, Secretary of the London Negro Welfare Association, and Reginald Bridgeman of the British Section of the LAI. Both men, Padmore assured, would assist Sekyi in his “fight against imperialism.”

Padmore also asked Sekyi to help in a scheme to send African workers from the Gold Coast to study in Europe. As previously has been noted, the idea to invite Africans to study in Europe or, which was the actual plan, in Moscow at the KUTV (University of the Toilers of the East), was not Padmore’s but was a well-established policy of the Comintern at this time. However, as Rohdie notes, Sekyi misunderstood Padmore’s invitation and asked him whether he could help his brother to study engineering in Germany!

Interestingly, this was the second time when Sekyi and others from the Gold Coast misapprehended the intentions of the communists. Padmore, again, was evasive and replied that the conditions in Germany were at the time unsuitable for study.

Another politically active person who was in contact with Padmore was R. Benjamin Wuta-Ofei, editor of the Gold Coast Spectator. This newspaper was owned by Alfred J. Ocansey, who founded the paper in 1927. Its first editor was R.W. Dupigny, followed by Wuta-Ofei. At first published on an irregular basis, it emerged as a very powerful organ during the 1930s. Wuta-Ofei was a friend of Kobina Sekyi and, according to Rohdie, it was Sekyi who had told Wuta-Ofei about Padmore, presumably before he left for London in 1932. Rohdie also claims that Wuta-Ofei was another possible candidate for study abroad.

However, investigations in the Comintern Archive in Moscow reveal that Wuta-Ofei had been in contact with Padmore before 1932. In total, four letters from Wuta-Ofei to Padmore have been found in Moscow, all dating before Sekyi’s correspondence with

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206 Rohdie 1965, 393.
208 Rohdie 1965, 393.
Padmore. In the first letter, dated 7 October 1931, Wuta-Ofei inquired from Padmore the possibility to get a printing press:

A few friends have approached me to write to you to enquire whether you can get them a complete printing press for a fairly large size newspaper, to be published solely in the interest of the Negro Workers. No doubt you are aware of the fact that any propaganda which will be effective in raising the living standard of the workers, in Africa, must be carried out in the country. Information will then be first hand, + local conditions can be tackled on the spot with great conviction. Please consider this carefully.

What arrangements you can effect there for us, to get the complete equipment, including one lino-type, or payment of a deposit, the balance to be paid by monthly instalments. Secondhand machines, I am sure, will suit, + will last provided it is carefully operated.

In reply, kindly ask the firm to send me a catalogue, to the under-given address.209

Wuta-Ofei must have been aware of the fact that contacts with Padmore could be viewed with suspicion by the British colonial authorities. Not surprisingly, therefore, he asked Padmore not to address any letters to himself using the title ‘editor’ nor sending them directly to him, and suggested that letters should be securely sealed. Padmore’s reply to Wuta-Ofei’s request is not known, but he seems to have sent him a letter, perhaps promising Wuta-Ofei to do his best. It is also evident from the existing correspondence that Padmore’s reply was a lengthy and substantial one as at least part of it was printed by Wuta-Ofei in the Gold Coast Spectator210. It seems also that Padmore had approached Wuta-Ofei on organizational issues, as is evident from Wuta-Ofei’s next letter to Padmore, dated 29.12.1931:

You suggest that you may place all the affairs of the Committee in my hands. Well, you shall have no cause for complaint or regret. Only, all letters must be securely sealed + addressed to my name, co Box 217, Accra.

I know that sometimes ago you had delegates from this colony. In fact on their return, one of them came to see me in my office, +something (I cannot clearly recollect what) was published for them. But they are persons without “guts” for the simple reason that they are not educated. In this fight, “push” alone is not

209 RGASPI 535/7/74, 20fp + 20bp: Wuta-Ofei to Padmore, letter dated 7.10.1931.
210 RGASPI 535/7/74, 30fp + 30bp: Wuta-Ofei to Padmore, handwritten letter dated 29.12.1931. Padmore’s text was printed in the Gold Coast Spectator issue of the 24th of December 1931.
sufficient, you must know something of the whiteman + his ways so as to beat him at his own game. This is only possible through education. Am I wrong?²¹¹

However, as far as Padmore’s part of the correspondence is (still) missing, one can only speculate about what ‘Committee’ Wuta-Ofei was referring to. Was it the ITUCNW? Did Padmore suggest to Wuta-Ofei to establish a branch of the ITUCNW in the Gold Coast? Although Wuta-Ofei indicated that he would be the right person for Padmore’s cause, it is evident from the rest of his letter that his main object was – still – the issue of the printing press:

The first step must be the press which will (a) get the masses together + (b) make their voices heard by the world. At the start it will be impossible to get capital out here owing to the strickler [?] + often swindles hence my appeal to you. Besides, the press must be independent so that it might be free in its criticism. Local capital, which must be subscribed [?] by several persons, will only be a hindrance. Naturally there will be many weak-kneed among the management, + the result will be constant blue-pencilling of perfe[...] safe although very strong + candid criticism. This is my trouble + worry at this moment.

I remember that sometimes ago, I approached Mr Garvey with this suggestion. He took it up warmly, but suddenly no replies came to my letter. I am sure you will appreciate the urgent nature of the case + write to me early.²¹²

Padmore’s reaction seems to have been cautious. It seems that Padmore and Wuta-Ofei corresponded during the next month, but these letters are missing in Moscow. The next letter that is available is from Wuta-Ofei to Padmore, dated 28.5.1932. The main issue is the unresolved question of the printing press, not a word about the ‘Committee’ or any other political matters. In an earlier correspondence²¹³, Padmore had indicated to Wuta-Ofei that he would use his contacts in England and Russia to address the printing press issue. However, Wuta-Ofei was getting somewhat anxious about Padmore’s incapability of providing him with a clear answer:

The press, as I have on many occasions explained to you, will be worked solely in the interest of the labouring classes (or class in this country). I hope, therefore,

²¹¹ RGASPI 535/7/74, 30fp + 30bp: Wuta-Ofei to Padmore, handwritten letter dated 29.12.1931.
²¹² RGASPI 535/7/74, 30fp + 30bp: Wuta-Ofei to Padmore, handwritten letter dated 29.12.1931.
²¹³ This correspondence is missing in the 535/7/74 files.
that you will do your best over there to further the arrangement on your side in my behalf. What about asking your friends over in London to take this matter up. Possibly they can fix up something better.\textsuperscript{214}

The outcome of Wuta-Ofei’s and Padmore’s correspondence is not known as no further letters have so far been located in Moscow. However, it seems that by this time the idea of inviting Wuta-Ofei to study in Europe (Moscow) was raised. It is not clear when Kobina Sekyi raised the issue, but according to Rohdie, Padmore in a reply letter to Kobina Sekyi, dated 9 July 1932, he judged Wuta-Ofei to be a very interested and progressive man. It is also clear that Sekyi must have approached Wuta-Ofei himself about the matter, although the correspondence is missing. In fact, Wuta-Ofei had sent a letter to Kobina Sekyi, dated 9 July 1932, requesting a recommendation and pointing out that a man of his talents should not be considered to write on a small African newspaper. He urged Sekyi to discuss with Padmore about the practical details for his planned training: who would pay for it and what prospects of employment where there after the training?\textsuperscript{215}

However, for some reason Padmore never considered Wuta-Ofei to be a candidate for training in Europe/Moscow.\textsuperscript{216} Combining the Moscow letters with Rohdie’s speculations about why Wuta-Ofei’s name was dropped by Padmore, one could argue that Padmore must have regarded him to be a similar petty bourgeoisie activist as was the group behind the West African Farmers’ Union. Another possibility for Padmore’s negative decision is that he might have regarded Wuta-Ofei to be a more valuable man ‘on the spot’, someone who already had an established network which could be used for Comintern/ITUCNW purposes.

Eventually, Padmore’s attempts to enlist Kobina Sekyi in his network also failed. In August 1932 he made yet another attempt to get Sekyi’s active participation. This time he urged Sekyi to get into contact with the International Labour Defence and participate at their congress in Berlin.\textsuperscript{217} Although Padmore’s move can be interpreted as an attempt

\textsuperscript{214} RGASPI 535/7/74, 62fp + 62bp: Wuta-Ofei to Padmore, handwritten letter dated 28.5.1932.
\textsuperscript{215} Rohdie 1965, 393.
\textsuperscript{216} Rohdie 1965, 394.
\textsuperscript{217} Rohdie 1965, 396.
to link Sekyi with the Münzenberg network, the outcome was nil: Sekyi did not go to
Berlin. No further correspondence has been found by Rohdie after this point.

Bankole Awoonor Renner’s position as a possible link between Padmore and the
Gold Coast radical elite (in Sekyi’s case “radical conservative“\textsuperscript{218}) is unclear. Although I
have earlier proposed that he could have served as a, if not the crucial link between
Moscow and West Africa, there is little factual proof for such an assumption. However,
circumstantial evidence points towards the fact that Awoonor Renner by 1932 knew all
key activists. Kobina Sekyi was his godfather, Danquah perhaps his mentor? His link to
Wuta-Ofei is intriguing – most probably they got to know each other through their
profession as journalists. Via Wuta-Ofei, most probably, Awoonor Renner must have
known Alfred J. Ocansey, the proprietor of the \textit{Gold Coast Spectator}. Last, but not least,
although it was Wuta-Ofei who invited I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson to move to the Gold
Coast in 1933, there is reason to believe that it was in fact Awoonor Renner who made
the suggestion. Be as it may, as will be outlined in Part 3, the interaction between the
Gold Coast radicals was to remain intensive during the rest of the 1930s.

However, the aborted attempts to enlist some of the Gold Coast intelligentsia did
not seemed to have disappointed Padmore too much. More problematic was the Nazi
takeover in January 1933 and the closure of the Hamburg office. Padmore spent some
time in jail in Germany and was thereafter expelled from Germany. But despite these
setbacks, the ITUCNW tried to reorganize its activities as Padmore still was in possession
of his global contacts, or at least part of them. This, at least, is the impression one gets in
analysing the last remaining document of the ITUCNW and the Gold Coast, namely an
‘Open Letter’ to the workers of Accra and the toilers of the Gold Coast.\textsuperscript{219} The document
raised many challenging question, not least about dating and authorship. The six-page
long typewritten declaration is signed by the International Trade Union Comittee [sic] of
Negro Workers. But where was it written and by whom? The declaration is dated 1
September 1933. In August 1933 Padmore had sent in his resignation from the Comintern

\textsuperscript{218} J. Ayo Langley, ”Modernization and its Malcontents: Kobina Sekyi of Ghana and the Re-statement of
ref. to p. 1.

\textsuperscript{219} RGASPI 534/6/23, fol. 135-140, ”To the Workers of Acra! To the Toilers of the Gold Coast.”
and the CPUSA in protest to the proposed liquidation of the ITUCNW. Therefore, it is not likely that Padmore was the author of the declaration. On the other hand, who else in the ITUCNW or the RILU was in possession of detailed knowledge about the Gold Coast as presented in the declaration but Padmore? Reference is given in the Declaration to the 21 January 1933-issue of the *Gold Coast Spectator* in addition to a lengthy description of the crises in the cocoa industry and the plight of the cocoa farmers and other workers in the colony due to the drop of the cocoa price and the huge slump in the export of the crop. Blame is put on ‘British imperialism’ for the misery:

Thousands and hundreds of thousands of small peasant producers of cocoa have been and are being reduced to utter ruin. The workers on the railways, harbours and in transport who handled the huge cocoa crop as a consequence of the diminishing trade, find themselves suffering of wage-cuts, longer and intenser [sic] hours, unemployment and starvation. The mining companies are not only reducing wages but are dismissing whole batches of workers. Whereas in former periods the cry of the employers and Government was about a “shortage of labour” now there is a glut on the labour market, and the employers and the Government are taking advantage of this circumstance to drive down the living conditions and wages of the workers. There is such vast poverty in the whole country that the majority of the people is compelled to starve or wander begging to find something to support life.

This paragraph echoes Padmore’s earlier texts. Is it possible that he outlined the Declaration before his resignation? My assumption is that he was the original author of the text, which was sent to the RILU or its Negro Bureau in Moscow for comments and approval.

The author, Padmore or not, was highly critical about the activities of the chiefs and the ‘educated classes’ for having become the agents of the British colonial authorities and to have diverted the attention of the masses from the struggle against their exploitation. The disappointment about the actions of the intelligentsia, especially the ARPS, is evident and was criticized. Further, the inactivity of the Gold Coast unions is lamented. A call for collective action was made, to get organized and to struggle for ones right, but nothing had been done:

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220 RGASPI 495/155/102, (copy) letter from Padmore to Earl Browder, no date, fol. 123.
221 RGASPI 534/6/23,”To the Workers of Acra! To the Toilers of the Gold Coast,” fol. 135.
This is the only way that the workers in every country must push forward along by the organization of their own untied power which is capable of overcoming all obstacles and creating their own militant organization to lead the struggle against their exploiters. In this respect we have some pertinent question to the Gold Coast Drivers’ and Mechanics’ Union and also the Carpenters’ Union. These two Unions had delegates at the First International Conference of Negro Workers, held in Hamburg, Germany, in July 1930, and know of our programme of struggle which was drawn up at this Conference. In view of this fact, we are surprised that these unions and their leaders are remaining passive in the face of the most unparalleled [sic] attacks in the history of the Gold Coast on all sections of the workers.222

These two unions are warned that inactivity will lead to collapse and that the workers’ struggle is lead into the wrong channels. Instead, the two unions were urged to immediately reorganize themselves to become the spearheads of the struggle in the Gold Coast. What follows was a twelve-point list of demands similar to that in the ‘Open letter’ to the Sierra Leone Railway Workers Union, including the demand of “independence of the Gold Coast from British oppression and domination.”223 Was it a first call for national independence?

Further, a call was made to build up a miners’ union in the Gold Coast. Outlining the inhuman working conditions in the mines as well as the ‘starvation payment’ they receive, the Declaration urged the need for collective action:

(T)he weakness of the miners in the Gold Coast is that they are not organized. They have no trade unions of their own, in every pit and mine there should be trade union groups of miners which will be unified into miners trade unions, to lead the struggle of the miners against slave conditions. Therefore the immediate task that faces the miners is that of organizing their own trade union.224

In addition to the miners, the railroad and harbour workers were also called to action and to form unions: “Humble petitions and deputations to the Administration will never bring

222 RGASPI 534/6/23,”To the Workers of Acra! To the Toilers of the Gold Coast,” fol. 136.
223 RGASPI 534/6/23,”To the Workers of Acra! To the Toilers of the Gold Coast,” fol. 136-137.
224 RGASPI 534/6/23,”To the Workers of Acra! To the Toilers of the Gold Coast,” fol. 137.
you any improvement in your conditions. Only by your organized might and power can you compel the employers and Government to listen to you.”

Special emphasize was also to be put on the conditions of the unemployed. The Government was criticized for doing nothing to support them and to bring them relief. This, it was claimed, was to become a central task of the Drivers’ and Mechanics’ Union and the Carpenters’ Union: to call for a meeting in Accra and to elect a Committee of Action. The task of the Committee was to discuss the following ‘list of demands’:

1. Regular financial relief for the unemployed and their families by the Government. The fund for relief to be provided by a special tax on the enterprises of the natives and especially European capitalists, and by substantial cuts in the high salaries and total withdrawal of special allowances and privileges of the huge European bureaucracy in the civil service.
2. No rent to be paid by the unemployed.
3. Free food, clothing and medical aid for the children of the unemployed.
4. The right to organize and demonstrate.

Last, but not least, similar to the Sierra Leone ‘Open letter’ a call was made to engage the peasants in the ‘struggle’. The Declaration listed the demand of free land, non-payment of taxes and tribal dues, the abolition of forced labour and the cancellation of debts as constitution the core issues of a program of action. The last, fifth, demand was: “Against British imperialism, for national independence.”

The Declaration ended with a lengthy attack on the ARPS and “other traitors of the working class:”

Out of their own mouths the Aborigines’ Rights Protection Society proclaim themselves agents of British imperialism and simultaneously have the audacity to claim that they protect the rights of the Gold Coast people. The workers and peasants will not be deceived, by these double dealers. The working class movement in all countries is faced with the problem of these wolves in sheeps’ [sic] clothing. Don’t listen to them, on the contrary, a relentless struggle must be waged against them, as the main support of your enslavers.

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225 RGASPI 534/6/23,”To the Workers of Acra! To the Toilers of the Gold Coast,” fol. 137-138.
226 RGASPI 534/6/23,”To the Workers of Acra! To the Toilers of the Gold Coast,” fol. 138.
227 RGASPI 534/6/23,”To the Workers of Acra! To the Toilers of the Gold Coast,” fol. 139.
228 RGASPI 534/6/23,”To the Workers of Acra! To the Toilers of the Gold Coast,” fol. 139.
The attack against the ARPS reveals a change in attitude on behalf of the ITUCNW. If the earlier plan had been to collaborate with them and engage them in a mutual cause, the Declaration marked a break in this policy. Interestingly, the negative tone in the Declaration and the condemnation of the ARPS as being tools of British imperialism follows Padmore’s own hardened line in these issues. This gives room to believe that Padmore was the author of the Declaration which marked a kind of new, highly critical approach in the anti-colonial agitation and the actions against British imperialism.

Was it due to the outspoken vehement anti-imperialist tones in the Declaration that Moscow decided to correct Padmore? His resignation from the Comintern, as he declared to Earl Browder, had been provoked by the change in attitude in Moscow towards the colonial question:

As you know, the Communist International liquidated the Negro Trade Union Committee, of which I was secretary, in August 1933, without giving me one word of explanation, simply in order not to offend the British Foreign Office which has been bringing pressure to bear on Soviet diplomacy because of the tremendous indignation which our work has aroused among the Negro masses in Africa, the West Indies and other colonies, against British imperialism. As a protest against this base betrayal of my people I gave my resignation to the Party as the only honourable and decent thing a self respecting man could do.229

A final question remains to be answered: Was the Declaration ever sent to the Gold Coast? This, too, is an intriguing question with no definite answer. If the Declaration was discussed in Moscow in September 1933 and regarded not to be in line with the new direction of Soviet foreign policy, then it is likely that it was buried in the archives. However, although officially the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist jargon was downplayed, this was not meant to be a total reorientation of the work of the Comintern.230 Thus, is it possible that the Declaration after all was sent to the Gold Coast? As will be discussed in Part 3, there are some reason to believe so. If this was the case, then Padmore’s exit and the end of the Hamburg office did not mean the end of contacts with the Gold Coast.

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229 RGASPI 495/155/102, (copy) letter from Padmore to Earl Browder (no date), fol. 123. The letter had (presumably) originally been published as “An Open Letter to Earl Browder,” The Crisis XXXXII (October 1935), 302. See further Wilson 1974, 261.
230 Wilson 1974, Chapter X.