Huiswoud’s ambitions to re-establish and create a radical African Atlantic crashed in 1935. After a promising start in 1934, the dramatic global political changes during the next year curtailed the limited objectives for the ITUCNW and forced it to be overhauled. Previous research by van Enckevort and Turner on Huiswoud’s activities in 1935 and 1936 has focussed on his ambitions to redirect the ITUCNW’s work. Their interpretations highlight Huiswoud’s activities and place him in the middle of the Comintern’s African Atlantic orientation. Such a reading of the few available documents from this period has the desire to present his visions as part of a Pan-Africanist perspective. His October 1935 Report, which offered a thorough reorganization of the ITUCNW, are presumed to have had the intended effect. While such an interpretation is possible if one only focuses on the Atlantic perspective, a different reading must be applied if the ITUCNW and Huiswoud are – rightly – positioned as being part of the Comintern’s solar system. Thus Huiswoud certainly wrote his report and made certain suggestions, but the outcome was totally different since individuals in Moscow, rather than he, made the decisions. Huiswoud proposed that the ITUCNW should be transformed into an umbrella organization for all worker organizations, trade unions and individuals in the colonies and the metropolitan countries that are sympathetic to its programme. Such a vision had been blocked by the ECCI in 1931. However, with the Comintern’s transition to the Popular Front policy, a totally new situation gradually emerged, which resulted in the revision of the ‘Class-Against-Class’ policy. Cooperation with, and not anymore opposition to, socialist and radical bourgeois parties was to become the baseline of communist agenda. This was an agenda that projected the formation of united fronts against fascism. Huiswoud and the ITUCNW were caught in the maelstrom of ever changing propositions and guidelines, which were created in Moscow over the next two years. Nevertheless, the main challenge in Moscow was how the Popular Front tactics were

to be applied to work in Africa and in the Caribbean. What was the future role of the ITUCNW?

The gradual overhaul of the initial limited acceptance of the Popular Front-tactics was the crucial turning point for the Comintern and affected all Communist parties. Among others, the CPUSA dropped its dismissive stance towards cooperating with nationalist Negro organizations and by late 1934, the change in tactics were in operation. In France, the laboratory for the new strategy, Stalin had accepted the Popular Front policy as the new course for Western Communist parties. The new policy was finally cemented at the Comintern’s Seventh World Congress, which was held in Moscow in July-August 1935. The new policy opened the way for Communist parties to ally themselves with parties committed to a radical, anti-capitalist programme as a prelude to revolution. In practice, however, the Communists could even appeal to local nationalists in their efforts to win support of an anti-fascist block, which was the case in France, Spain and in Czechoslovakia.

The Popular Front policy also affected the RILU’s operations. Its leading members had started to pave the way for a reorientation during summer 1934 and by the end of the year negotiations in France headed towards an amalgamation of the socialist CGT and the communist CGTU. In June 1935, the CGTU signalled that it would accept a merger and about seven months later the fusion was approved. A similar process occurred in Mexico. In Spain or in the USA, on the other hand, the communist unions had less membership and a limited nationwide impact. Attempts to combine the remaining substantial dominance at the top level of the labour unions could not be achieved. Instead, in both countries (most of) the communist labour unions were abolished, one by one. In 1935, the RILU even started its own negotiations with the Social Democratic/Socialist International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) in Amsterdam, although they eventually ended in a cul-de-sac.²

At the same time as global communism was going through a thorough reorientation, the ‘Great Terror’ started to affect the operations of the Comintern Apparatus in Moscow. The initial purges within the Comintern followed the assassination of the Leningrad Party leader Sergei Kirov in December 1934 when members of the “left-wing opposition”, such as Grigory Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev, were accused for being involved in a plot and were arrested. At a show trial in

January 1935, they were forced to admit “moral complicity” and were sentenced to prison. Among those arrested and removed for office was also Georgi Safarov, the head of the ECCI Eastern Secretariat and in principle the director of the ECCI Negro Bureau. If Huiswoud new about his removal is not known as he never commented on or inquired about the affairs at the headquarters in his letters. Further changes followed at the Seventh Congress when Osip Piatnitsky lost his position as a result of expressing reservations about the new policy. Alexander Zusmanovich, the leading figure in the ECCI Negro Bureau, lost his position and was removed from office in December 1935 when it was revealed that he had co-authored the address of the South African delegate Josephine Mpama, which assumed a heretical position that a ‘popular front’ in South Africa was a step on the way to a ‘native republic’ in South Africa. Only a few months earlier had the CPSA declared that the slogan of a ‘native republic’ was ‘sectarian’ and should be dropped. Huiswoud never commented his exclusion.

The Popular Front policy of Seventh World Congress of the Comintern resulted in the subsequent dissolution of the RILU. As Tosstorff notes, the Seventh Congress did not approve a special resolution on trade union work as it was felt that such directives could have jeopardized the amalgamation negotiations in the various countries. Instead, a special meeting was called in late August 1935 to discuss the progress of the negotiations. The outcome of the meeting was twofold. While focus was put on the outcome of the negotiations on a national level, even on dissolution of the communist/revolutionary trade unions, the fate of the RILU was not touched upon although the future of its existence was no longer clear. In fact, as Tosstorff argues, the debate in August 1935 paved the way for the self-dissolution of the RILU. If the future policy of the Comintern was to focus on national Popular Front policies and the merger of the national communist trade unions with socialist ones, the RILU had become redundant.

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As long as the national negotiations dragged on, the RILU could to some extent defend its existence as a kind of cooperating and monitoring body. However, by early 1936 the ECCI, and especially Dimitrov personally, started to criticize Losovsky for persisting on old tactics and confusing the RILU with the Comintern. The final countdown started on 11 May 1936, when the ECCI nominated a troika consisting of Losovsky, Togliatti and Dimitrov to present the future guidelines of international trade union work. The idea was to establish an international committee based on the trade unions in France, Spain, Greece and Norway as well as members from the UK, the USA, Scandinavia and Latin America. The RILU was to pave way for the establishment of the new committee. At the same time it was to liquidate all units and sections of its apparatus, which were not needed in the process, such as the Cadre Department, the OMS, the Youth- and Women Section, and the Agitprop Department. The RILU Secretariat was downgraded as the Trade Union Department of the ECCI.\(^6\)

1. The never-ending reorganization of Negro work

The Seventh World Congress of the Comintern worked towards totally reorganizing the structure and composition of the apparatus in Moscow. On 2 October 1935, the ECCI approved the plan outlined by a commission under the chairmanship of Palmiro Togliatti. The Political Secretariat and the Political Commission were dissolved and were replaced by the ECCI Secretariat, consisting of nine personal secretaries and chaired by the new Secretary-General Georgi Dimitrov. The various Regional (Länder-) Secretariats were abolished; their tasks were transferred to the individual personal secretaries. The ECCI reorganization has been evaluated as part of the centralization process within the Comintern and an attempt to establish closer organizational ties to the Secretariat. One motive was to tie the representatives of the national parties to certain personal secretaries without any link in between.\(^7\)

Any reorganization of the apparatus in Moscow inevitably had an effect on the organizational setup and the international operations of the RILU front organizations,

\(^6\) Tosstorff 2004, pp. 696-700.

including the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers. The changes in 1933/34 had transferred work in the African and Caribbean colonies and countries under the ECCI Eastern Secretariat and merged it with Negro work in the United States and South Africa. As previously noted, the ECCI Negro Bureau remained a bastion of the old ‘Class-against-Class’-line but Safarov’s and Zusmanovich’s dismissals in 1935 laid the ground for a revision of its political guidelines. A further step was taken during the Seventh Congress when the African and African American delegates proposed the formation of a new anti-imperialist platform, termed the International Negro Liberation Committee. The idea was to establish a new forum based on the Popular Front principle, its objective was to include all organizations active in the campaign against the Italian aggression against Ethiopia. “No organization can be exempted, the church and school, the benevolent organisations and clubs, sport, cultural organisations must be linked together in a militant protest,” a confidential declaration stated and concluded: “Their feeling of a common bond of interest for Abyssinia, this international sympathy must be unified.”

Huiswoud, had he been present at the Congress, would perhaps raised some critical comments about the remark that “(f)or the requirements of this work, the existing Negro organisation, the “International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers” is inadequate” and would certainly have objected to the claim that “(i)t cannot satisfy the requirements of the organisation of a broad united people’s front among the Negro people.” Still, the declaration refrained from a call to abolish the ITUCNW. Nevertheless, it was underlined that the ITUCNW was much too restricted and could hardly be expected to develop into a global force: “the existing ITUCNW [cannot] carry out the present important historical task on the field of Negro work, that of linking up these struggles of the Negro people with the struggle of the colonial people and with those struggles in the metropolitan countries directed against war and fascism and toward the united people’s front.” Zusmanovich, for certain, must have objected to the idea of establishing a ‘Negro Popular Front’ platform.

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8 Confidential memorandum (in French), no author, dated 8.10.1935, RGASPI 495/155/102, fol. 77. A critical analysis of the memorandum reveals that it was most likely written by Zusmanovich. A reference to his report is made in André Marty’s letter to the ECCI Secretariat, dated 17.10.1935, RGASPI 495/155/102, fol. 51.

9 Confidential (declaration), The International Negro Liberation Committee, no date, no author, RGASPI 495/155/102, fol. 25.

10 The International Negro Liberation Committee, no date, no author, RGASPI 495/155/102, fol. 26.

11 The International Negro Liberation Committee, no date, no author, RGASPI 495/155/102, fol. 26.
On 19 August 1935, another meeting took place in Moscow. Perhaps it was the Negro Delegation although the resolutions of the meeting do not list any participants. However, those present represented the American, British, French, Belgium and Portuguese Party. Their aim was to evaluate and discuss the ITUCNW’s future work. While they welcomed Huiswoud’s positive efforts to establish links with the Caribbean and Africa, to supply literature and to support the various attempts to establish revolutionary trade union groups in the colonies, the representatives were critical about the various metropolitan parties’ shortcoming in support to Huiswoud and the ITUCNW. Their criticism was not new; Similar attacks on the American, British and French Parties about their disinterest or lukewarm attention towards Negro work had time and again been raised as were the solutions presented. First, to allocate one comrade in each party to be in charge of establishing connections with the African colonies – i.e., hitherto this had been more or less a total failure. Second, to organize connections with the toilers of the colonies for the purpose of distribution of literature. Third, establishing regular contacts in the colonies with revolutionary elements. In other words, there were radical activists in the African Atlantic but the communists had few, if any contact with them. Fourth, assisting in the selection of students from Africa and the Caribbean. At that moment, there were no students in Moscow and none were on their way. The fifth and sixth paragraph underlined the need to collect material on the economic and political conditions in the colonies as well as to write articles on the problems in the colonies and the anti-imperialist movement. The eight and last paragraph urged the parties, as so many times since 1930, to keep up regular connection with the ITUCNW. The rest of the document dealt with specific case studies. In the USA, the lack of collaboration between the ITUCNW and the CPUSA had backfired the attack against “the renegade Padmore” as well as hampered the work in the Caribbean. The CPGB, on the other hand, was to help and guide the NWA and to establish connections through the organization with Africa and the West Indies. Equally important was to activate the LAI “for systematic work in the African colonies.” In France, Negro work was to be done through the UTN while the Belgian Party was urged to establish connections with the Belgian Congo. Last, but not least, the Portuguese Party was called to appoint a comrade in charge of work in Mozambique and Angola.

The above resolution was the last statement that favoured the ITUNW. But time had changed and it ended up to be a list of wishful considerations. Colonial work, it turned out, was to undergo a thorough re-evaluation after the Seventh Congress. Contrary to the resolution’s suggestions, the activities and objectives of the ITUCNW were to be scrutinized.

The declaration of the Negro delegates, in addition with the reorganization of the ECCI Secretariats, resulted in an investigation by André Marty on the current status of work in the African Atlantic in October 1935. He asked Zusmanovich to prepare an overview of the work and connections of the ECCI Negro Bureau, which he received in early October. Zusmanovich’s report provides an interesting account of the Negro Bureau’s achievements. He listed eight tasks of the Bureau, namely to direct the CPSA and the ITUCNW, to assist organisations, revolutionary groups and individuals in different African colonies as well as in the metropolitan countries, and to send African students to the KUTV. Other obligations included the generalization of the anti-imperialist struggle and fight for national independence in the African colonies, the preparation of appeals, articles and brochures for the Black revolutionary press such as the *Negro Worker*, the *Le Cri des Nègres* and the *Umzebenzi*. Finally, he highlighted that in recent times the Bureau devoted special focus on the Abyssinian crisis. Contacts with organizations and individuals in Africa had been established in various colonies mainly through the metropolitan parties or via the ITUCNW and its journal. In Senegal a revolutionary trade union had been established with some 100 members. In addition, there even existed a small communist group of five members. In Sierra Leone there was a marine workers union with 700 members, while the Gambian Workers’ Union was said to have 500 members. An even bigger success was noted in the Gold Coast - seven trade unions with some 12,000 members claimed to be affiliated with the ITUCNW and three Party members had studied at the KUTV. In Liberia the Progressive Workers’ Association listed 1,000 members and five “sympathisers” had studied at the KUTV. In Cameroon, three party members were associated with the UTN in France. A Communist Party as well as a revolutionary trade union existed in South Africa, while six Portuguese comrades in Mozambique sympathized with the CPSA. Last, but not least, a Kenyan national-reformist organization was said to be affiliated to the ITUCNW. In Europe, on the other hand,
Negro work was conducted via the Negro Welfare Association in the UK, the *Union des travailleurs nègres* in France and the ITUCNW in the Netherlands.\textsuperscript{13}

Zusmanovich also presented his critical stance towards the idea of sidestepping or downgrading the ITUCNW and to establish a United Front Committee for Africa, i.e., the International Negro Liberation Committee, in his report. While he noted the need to form a new organization for the Abyssinian Campaign, he warned about neglecting the ITUCNW. In his mind, the organization was still valuable and should be upgraded and given the leading role in both establishing trade unions in the African colonies and to serve as their umbrella organisation.\textsuperscript{14}

André Marty did not agree with Zusmanovich’s conclusions. Instead, he considered a total reconfiguration of the Negro work to be the only effective solution, especially as the ECCI had abolished the Eastern Secretariat and transferred its tasks under the new personal Secretariats. This decision also meant that the ECCI Negro Bureau was closed. Zusmanovich was ordered to hand over all material concerning Negro work in France, Portugal and Belgium to the colonial referent at Comrade Manuilsky’s Secretariat, everything about work in the British colonies as well as in the USA to André Marty’s Secretariat as well as all material concerning work in the Netherlands to Palmiro Togliati (alias Ercoli). In addition, the *Negro Worker*, the NWA and the UTN and its journal were to be controlled by the respective metropolitan parties. The RILU was ordered to instruct Huiswoud to link up with the abovementioned Secretaries and to send them all material they needed. Contrary to Zusmanovich advice, Marty was in favour of the International Negro Liberation Committee and charged the ECCI Propaganda Committee under Clemens Gottwald to direct its anti-imperialist campaigns.\textsuperscript{15}

André Marty’s proposal worked towards the liquidation of the ITUCNW. However, a few weeks later the situation changed again with the Huiswoud’s arrival in Moscow and the delivery of his report on the ITUCNW’s activities. Whether or not he knew about Marty’s plan and Zusmanovich’s proposal is unclear but his report forcefully propagated the ITUCNW as the sole platform for the African Atlantic.

2. Envisioning a radical African Atlantic International

\textsuperscript{13} Confidential memorandum (in French), 8.10.1935, RGASPI 495/155/102, fol. 75-76.

\textsuperscript{14} Confidential memorandum (in French), 8.10.1935, RGASPI 495/155/102, fol. 77.

\textsuperscript{15} Memorandum by André Marty addressed to the Comintern Secretariat, 17.10.1935, RGASPI 495/155/102, fol. 51.
Huiswoud’s plan was simple but visionary: the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers was to be transformed into a platform for African and Caribbean labour unions – a Black International. All radical anticolonial unions, groups and individuals in the African Atlantic were to be invited to join the platform. The only conditions for affiliation were “that they accept the program of the Committee to struggle for full economic equality, for Negro rights and against imperialist oppression.” The Committee itself was to be relocated to a country where it could have a legal existence. The *Negro Worker* was to be developed into “the real mouthpiece of these organisations,” it was to have “a mass organisational and educational character” and was to enlist a broad network of corresponding members. The Committee was to develop “a cadre of activities in the metropolitan countries;” its role was to coordinate the work of the existing Negro organizations in the UK and in France and to activate its activities among Negro seamen in the European port towns. Another special task was to secure students from the colonies for training in Moscow. Last, but not least, Huiswoud underlined the need to prepare a call for a new World Conference of Negro Workers.  

Huiswoud’s proposal sparked off a vigorous attempt by the RILU Secretariat to rescue the ITUCNW and to develop the organization into a radical Black platform. In late October a confidential report called for a “radical change” and advised the transfer of its headquarter to Paris. Here the Committee was to closely cooperate with all existing organs in the town. Its immediate focus was to invite all groups, associations and individuals with whom Huiswoud had been in connection with to affiliate with the ITUCNW. It also refined and expanded Huiswoud’s list of conditions for affiliation: an active struggle for the defence of the national independence of Abyssinia, a struggle for full economic equality for the Negro masses, equal rights and conditions on the job, and to struggle against all imperialist oppression of the Negro toilers. The circulation of the Negro Worker was to be doubled, in addition to the publication of a series of organisational and subversive pamphlets. A novel idea was the proposal to establish a news service for disseminating the latest events in the trade union movement and the economic struggle of the Negro toilers. Further, ties with the RILU were to be strengthened and, not surprisingly, “elements from the colonies” were to be secured as students to the

schools in Moscow. Last, but not least, the proposal underlined the need to immediately prepare a preliminary conference for Negro workers, which was to be held in Moscow.\textsuperscript{17}

Huiswoud’s report on the ITUCNW’s activities as well as the confidential memorandum on the future of the ITUCNW were discussed at a meeting of the RILU Secretariat in early November.\textsuperscript{18} Much to the relief of Huiswoud and Zusmanovich, the meeting backed the proposal to develop the organization into a Black International and a few days later the RILU Secretariat issued a redrafted declaration. While its content regarding relocation of the ITUCNW to Paris as well as the scope and conditions of affiliation to the ITUCNW remained the same as in the earlier proposals, the declaration included several clarifications on the objectives and projected organisation of the Committee. A working committee of three, composed of the Secretary of the ITUCNW, a representative each of the UTN and the European Bureau of the RILU should be established. A manager for the Negro Worker should be secured to comply with the French laws. An additional French technical helper on full time should also be added to the office. The call about organisational affiliation was to be strengthened by issuing a special manifesto and appeal and was to be sent to “trade unions, agricultural workers’ unions, peasant committees, groups, committees and associations of workers, unemployed organisations, tenants’ leagues, mutual aid organisations, educational clubs in all countries with a Negro population.” Echoing the earlier guidelines of the ITUCNW, the declaration further stressed the need for the Committee to seek a close relationship with the Interclubs and the ISH to aid them in their work among Negro seamen.\textsuperscript{19}

Most importantly, however, was the need to organize a General Conference of Negro Workers in Paris. The plan was to secure delegates from Trinidad, British Guiana, the United States, South Africa, West Africa and East Africa as well as from the metropolitan countries to attend the conference and to participate in the (planned) RILU Central Council meeting. At the conference, the ITUNCW was to be reorganized and a new editor of the \textit{Negro Worker} was to be elected.\textsuperscript{20} However, a few weeks later a corrected version of the declaration further specified the outline of

\textsuperscript{17} Confidential. Proposals on the Work of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers, 29.10.1935, RGASPI 495/155/101, fol. 29-31.
\textsuperscript{18} Material zur Sitzung des Sekretariats am 4.11.1935, RGASPI 534/3/1055, fol. 25-32.
\textsuperscript{20} Proposal (re the future work of the N.C.), 10.11.1935, RGASPI 495/155/101, fol. 38.
the Conference. It was to be held in April 1936 and its provisional agenda was changed from the previous one:

2. The united front struggle against the exploitation, imperialist war in Abyssinia, for liberation and self-determination of Negroes.
3. The intensification of our work in the existing Negro Unions and other Negro organisations and the organisations of such where there is no trade unions and other forms of organisation for the protection and raising of the standard of life of the Negro toilers.
4. “The Negro Worker” and the publication of other literature of the Committee.
5. Re-election of the Executive Committee.21

The projected conference had much in common with the July 1930 conference in Hamburg. Five years earlier, the Hamburg Conference gave birth to the ITUCNW and now the planned Paris Conference was to establish the Black International. An intriguing question is the reference to the Executive Committee of the ITUCNW. In reality it had not existed for years. Who was to be included? Perhaps all key figures in Huiswoud’s African and Caribbean network but this remains a mere guess as no names were listed.

The author(s) of the various declarations and proposals of the RILU Secretariat is not known. At least the October Proposal was originally written in Russian, perhaps even by or with the assistance of Zusmanovich. The two versions of the November Declaration were drafted in English. This could indicate that the author was another person than he who drafted the October Proposal. It could even have been Huiswoud as he at this point still resided in Moscow. The handwritten corrections to the draft of 11 November are at least identical with Huiswoud’s handwriting.

The declaration seems to have convinced the ECCI to postpone part of the major reshufflings outlined in André Marty’s memorandum. The International Negro Liberation Committee was never launched. Instead, the ITUCNW was given a new mandate. The November Declaration served as the new guidelines for the Committee. Otto Huiswoud returned to Amsterdam from where he edited the December 1935 issue of the *Negro Worker*; closed his office; and together with his wife moved to

21 Memorandum on the reorganization of the ITUCNW, no author, no date, stamped 23.11.1935, RGASPI 534/3/1055, fol. 42. The memorandum is almost identical to the earlier declaration of the RILU Secretariat.
Paris. The French capital was once again projected to become the centre of the radical African Atlantic.

3. A redrafted manifesto and an aborted conference

The Huiswouds settled in Paris in January 1936. Otto Huiswoud had been away from the global political scene since October 1935 and much had happened since. His sojourn to Moscow occurred at a critical moment with respects to the political development in the African Atlantic. Italy had launched its attack against Ethiopia on October 3, 1935. Huiswoud had tried to stir up the international campaign for the defence of Abyssinia via the *Negro Worker*; both the October and the December issues of the journal vehemently criticized the Western countries and the League of Nations for inactivity and called for a united front against the Italian aggression. However, his call for an Abyssinian Campaign had a serious drawback. Neither the ECCI Negro Bureau nor the Comintern came out with a clear-cut appeal or resolution, which would have placed the ITUCNW in the forefront of the campaign. Instead, Huiswoud had to struggle with administrative day-to-day matters during the recommencement of his activities in Paris.

The ITUCNW remained silent for the first two months of 1936. Huiswoud was frustrated. He lacked the proper arrangements for both the technical and other necessary facilities and aid to get started. The deadlock was highly problematic, he admitted in a letter in late February, that he had been unable to get out the January issue of the *Negro Worker* and the February issue was only to be published late in the month. Even worse was the break in his communication with his contact persons in Africa and the Caribbean. For the third time he had to use all his energy in re-establishing the ITUCNW’s global network.\(^{22}\) In a letter to André Marty, he complained about the lack of contributions to the journal. The lack of proper reference material at his disposal restricted his own writing. He was therefore dependent on contributions from the outside, especially from Moscow, and suggested Marty to engage “as in the past” the comrades at the KUTV “where they have not only much more source material but also people devoting their time to these specific problems.”

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\(^{22}\) Letter from Edward to ‘Dear Comrades’ (added: Alexander), 3.2.1936, RGASPI 534/3/1103, fol. 11. A critical assessment of the letter reveals that the recipient of the letter was not Zusmanovich – Huiswoud refers to him in the letter as “our friend Zus” – but rather Losovsky.
In particular, he invited “our American friends at the ILS” to contribute articles on Negro life in the USA as he intended to publish a special issue on the topic.\(^{23}\)

Huiswoud had great hopes in the planned manifesto to the Negro workers that was to be prepared by the RILU Secretariat. He received it in February but it turned out to be a disappointment. In his mind, the text did not at all serve the purpose it had been planned for. The main question, which should have formed the basis of the document, namely the question of affiliation, was entirely left out and the rest of the text was hardly attractive at all. He thought it was too abstract and did not give any idea as to what was its concrete purpose. Therefore, he decided to redraft it in the form of an appeal of affiliation.\(^{24}\)

The main argument of the Manifesto was the formation of a united front in the struggle against the Italian aggression against Ethiopia and only as a second point raised a vague call for the organization of the workers and toilers in the African Atlantic:

> We can and must be a decisive factor in the struggle in securing and maintaining the national independence of Abyssinia and thus helping to gain our own freedom and equality. But this demands organisation and struggle.

> We must organise so that our organisational struggles not only better the conditions of our daily lives and the lives of our wives, our sisters, our sweethearts, and our children. We must organise so that our organisations are of aid to all who fight against reaction, war and fascism.\(^{25}\)

There was not a single reference to the ITUCNW or an appeal to rally behind the organisation. Instead, there was an unspecified appeal saying “let us organise the trade union movement, let us organise trade unions for struggle.” The role of the ITUCNW was pushed in the background; the Manifesto only noted that the ITUCNW “will help you” and ended with a general appeal:

> Negro workers and toilers, only two alternatives face us: either we organise and struggle for our freedom, for a better life, for equal rights, for land, for the right to organise and to protest, for the freedom of our press, or, we confront hopelessly a life of terror, of oppression and of

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\(^{23}\) Edward [Huiswoud] to ‘Dear Comrade Andre’ [Marty], 18.3.1936, RGASPI 495/14/36, fol. 6.

\(^{24}\) Letter from Edward to (Alexander) [Losovsky?], 3.2.1936, RGASPI 534/3/1103, fol. 12.

\(^{25}\) Manifesto to the Negro workers and toilers from the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers, no date, no author, RGASPI 534/3/1055, fol. 47.
exploitation. We face new wars of conquest and the redivision of our lands. We face a life of poverty, degradation, despair and early death.26

Understandably, Huiswoud regarded the Manifesto’s message as being both disappointing and superficial. It certainly could not serve his ambitions to raise the banner of the ITUCNW throughout the African Atlantic, especially as the Manifesto did not underline its historical task in the formation of a radical Black International.

Huiswoud’s own appeal put the focus on the ITUCNW and its role in the organization of the downtrodden. His version reads like a radical Pan-Africanist manifesto that was directed to “the Negro workers, employees, and intellectuals of Africa, the West Indies, Latin America, the United States and other countries.” In comparison to the various earlier manifestos and appeals directed to the Negro workers, Huiswoud’s appeal echoed the Popular front ideology by appealing to all Black populations despite their class or political difference. The campaign to defend the independence of Abyssinia was the immediate unifying cause but the original need to unify was the structural oppression and exploitation that the Black population confronted throughout the Atlantic world. Including the RILU Manifesto’s demand for organization and struggle, Huiswoud’s appeal specified the need to organize trade unions and highlighted the ambitions of the ITUCNW in this task. “Our Committee has always been in the forefront defending the interests of the Negro toilers and guiding them in their struggles,” the appeal claimed and assured that during the five years of its existence the Committee “has always responded to the call of its supporters and of the workers to aid them in their attempt to improve their condition and to fight against the forces of reaction.” Huiswoud’s appeal presented the ITUCNW as an active force, not a passive bystander. His vision was the formation of a Black International (although he never used the term):

(T)o be able to aid and serve more effectively the Negro workers in their future activities and struggles, the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers appeals to all trade unions, agricultural workers unions, peasant committees, groups, committees and associations of workers, tenants leagues, mutual aid organisations, educational clubs, etc. of Negro Workers in Africa, the West Indies, the U.S.A. and elsewhere, who are not already affiliated to the Committee, to join its ranks through affiliation. In this way it will be possible to create an International coordinating center that will be able to give real and effective support to its

26 Manifesto to the Negro workers and toilers from the ITUCNW, RGASPI 534/3/1055, fol. 47-48.
adherents in their works as well as greatly help to carry out its task of aiding in the
development of trade unions among the Negro workers everywhere and in helping to break
down the barriers which separate the Negro toilers from the workers of other races. In this
way we will be able to close our ranks in a common front against the enemy.27

A close examination of Huiswoud’s appeal reveals a certain ambivalence to who he
directed the call. Were the “Negro intellectuals” part of the workers and toilers or not?
In fact, one could argue that Huiswoud’s text reproduced an exclusionary and limited
Panafrikanist vision: it was not directed to Negro employers and the petty-bourgeois,
neither was it addressed to Negro reformist or nationalist movements and
associations. Huiswoud’s focus remained solidly on “the toiling masses”; his vision
was a Black international trade union organization. But not an all-inclusive Black
united front.

Perhaps Huiswoud was too optimistic about the anticipated effects of his
appeal. While the manifestos of the late 1920s and early 1930s had at least inspired
some African and Caribbean radicals to join the movement and laid the foundations of
the ITUCNW, his 1936 appeal resulted in a limited response. In his January 1937
report he had to admit that the appeal had fallen on deaf ears. Huiswoud provided a
realistic, but pessimistic analysis of the Appeal’s failure:

> It is quite evident that the Committee has so far not succeeded in gaining the recognition of
> the Negro toilers and that its active influence is limited to a few organizations. It is also a fact
> that the Committee is not very widely known among the masses, since, under the
> circumstances – semi-legality under which it operated – it could hardly play an effective role
> in the daily struggles of the Negro toilers.28

Huiswoud’s assessment summarized the main structural weakness of the Committee.
Contrary to all previous statements that glorified the achievements and impact of the
Committee the mobilization of the toilers in the African Atlantic under the banner of
the Red Flag had hardly begun. In fact, the possibilities for launching a radical
platform were more remote than they had been in 1930. Huiswoud realized this when
he began preparing for the planned World Negro Conference.

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28 Edward [Otto Huiswoud], Report on the Activities of the International Trade Union Committee of
Negro Workers, January 1937, RGASPI 534/3/1103, fol. 60. Hereafter: (Huiswoud,) ITUCNW Report
1936.
Time and again the idea to call for a Second World Negro Conference had been part and parcel of the ITUCNW’s objectives. The first plan had been scrapped when James Ford was ordered in 1931 not to focus on the matter. Then there was the aborted plan in late 1933 of the two renegades, Kouyaté and Padmore, to call for a World Negro Congress. Perhaps Huiswoud and the comrades got news about the project but as long as the reactionary hardliners dominated the RILU and ECCI Negro Bureau, such an idea would have sounded too much of a united front-plea. With the turn to the Popular Front-tactics, the idea was no longer impossible and Huiswoud was instructed to start the preparation for the conference.

Already in late December, Huiswoud had written to his contact persons in the United States, South Africa and in the Caribbean and outlined in detail the proposal about the conference. But nothing happened and in early February Huiswoud informed the comrades in Moscow that the date of the venue had to be deferred to the first week of July.\textsuperscript{29} A few weeks later he received a message from “our friends” in South Africa notifying him that they had selected a delegate for the conference. This time Huiswoud had to ask the South Africans to wait for new orders as the conference had been postponed. And there was still no reply from the United States…\textsuperscript{30} Even more problematic was his failure to correspond with his contact persons in West and East Africa; he could not write to them directly and he had to rely on the clandestine communication network of the ISH. He notified Moscow that this was another argument for postponing the conference:

We have had a thorough discussion with the ISH and other friends and are preparing a program for the realisation of contact with these places through diverse means in order to be able to secure real representation from these sources. But of course this will take a little longer to arrange than we had visualized when we decided on the date for the Conference.\textsuperscript{31}

Finally, he received a lengthy letter from the United States in April 1936. It was basically a six-point memorandum where the author on one hand backed Huiswoud’s idea to organize a Negro trade union conference in Paris. On the other hand, the author preferred to have a broader and more general conference that included representatives from all possible organizations, either to be organized in Paris or in

\begin{footnotes}
\item[29] Edward to ‘Dear Comrades’, 3.2.1936, RGASPI 534/3/1103, fol. 11.
\item[31] Edward to ‘Dear Comrades’, 3.2.1936, RGASPI 534/3/1103, fol. 11.
\end{footnotes}
the United States. If it was to be a general conference, it should not be called by the ITUCNW but by “the Committee of 75.” The author also proposed that a core group of organizers should be established, including William Patterson, who at that time worked at the IRH headquarters in Moscow, Huiswoud, the American author – which I believe to have been James Ford – and a certain Max Yergan. Patterson was to go to the United States, and Huiswoud or Ford, presumably, to Africa to propagate information about the conference.  

Huiswoud duly informed the comrades at the RILU Secretariat in Moscow about his problems and about the above suggestions. But Huiswoud never received any response from the Comintern headquarters. In fact, none of his letters had been answered. Already in his February letters he had requested an immediate response about his plan to postpone the conference and he repeated his plea in his communication in May 1936. What he did not know was that time and energy was running out for the RILU itself.

4. “Who and what is the ITUCNW remains for the Black colonies almost as much as a mystery as ever”

The planned Second World Negro Conference never materialized. Huiswoud was never able to put the ITUCNW in the forefront of political and labour mobilization in the African Atlantic lest to restore its position as a vanguard body in the formation of the international campaign for the defence of Abyssinia. Newly established organizations, such as the Committee for the Defence of the Ethiopian People and the Comité de Coordination des Associations des Noires et Arabes (Committee for the Coordination and Association of Blacks and Arabs) in France had evolved as the two main platforms to coordinate the Ethiopian campaign. Neither organization was under the direct control of the Comintern, although it is likely that there was an attempt to control the former one. But Huiswoud was to have no role in this grand plan. Instead a certain Herfurt in Paris was the Comintern’s man in the Ethiopian Committee. This person was none other than – Willi Münzenberg. In Moscow, the organization of the Ethiopian Campaign belonged to Togliatti’s Secretariat.

32 Letter to Huiswoud by NN, 16.4.1936, RGASPI 534/3/1103, fol. 16-17.
33 Edward to Alexander, 6.5.1936, RGASPI 534/3/1103, fol. 17a.
It is not known when the Committee for the Defence of the Ethiopian People started to operate. In December 1935, a telegram sent by Herfurt (i.e., Münzenberg’s alias at that time) informed Dimitrov, Togliatti and Gottwald that the League of Nation Commission on Ethiopia under the chair of Lord Cecil had been summoned and the Ethiopia Committee was planning to launch a protest at the meeting in Geneva in addition to prepare interpellations in the French and British Parliaments and to issue calls to the Second and Third International as well as to the International of Transport Workers. “Drahtet weitere Direktiven fuer diese Aktion” – awaiting for further directives, Münzenberg notified Moscow. Münzenberg’s telegram clearly indicates that he had an influential position in the organization and was able to influence its political manoeuvres – after consultation with Moscow. Finally, the two organizations, the Comité de Coordination and the Committee for the Defence of the Ethiopian People, held a conference in Paris in May 1936. Huiswoud attended the conference but did not play leading role.

Parallel to Huiswoud’s attempt to revitalize the Committee, the dismantlement of the RILU Apparatus continued in Moscow. In April 1936, the Executive Committee of the RILU held its last meeting while the RILU Secretariat operated until May 1936 and thereafter only on an ad hoc and limited basis. The RILU Apparatus staff in Moscow was reduced from about 155 members in late 1935 to about 50 half a year later. On June 8, the ProfTrojka of Dimitrov, Togliatti and Lozovsky started discussing the future of the various sub-committees and organizations of the RILU. Three possibilities existed: to merge them with other units, to transform them or to abolish them. A few days later a sub-committee consisting of Charles Johnson, Tom Sawyer and Comrade Randolph started to investigate the Negro work of the RILU and the future of the ITUCNW. They decided to call Huiswoud to Moscow in order to get an outline of the actual organisational contacts of the ITUCNW and to launch investigations with all those comrades in Moscow who

36 A report on the Conference Internationale des Noirs et des Arabes, 9-10 May 1936, including the various declarations and resolutions, is filed in RGASPI 495/20/830, fol. 8-16. Among the participants were James Ford and Reginald Bridgeman. The ITUCNW is curiously listed as “ITUCNW, Danemark,” indicating that its official letter box was still at Copenhagen.
37 Tosstorff 2004, pp. 701-703.
38 Janson Karl Ernestovich (1882-1938 or 1939) alias Charles Johnson.
had some insights about the Negro question. Johnson notified Dimitrov about the decision to call Huiswoud back to Moscow and asked for his approval to send him the following telegram:

Huiswoud. Come immediately prepared to report and map work in detail for each country and your committees future.

The request was approved in July 1936 and the ECCI sent a visa to Paris and Huiswoud travelled via Stockholm to Moscow where he arrived in late 1936.

In the meanwhile Tom Sawyer had finished his survey in Moscow and in mid-July presented a lengthy report, the Special Discussion Material on the Negro Question. Apart from his summary and proposals, it contained statements by Octavio Brandes on the situation in Brazil, William Patterson on the United States, Comrade Gurleigh (alias Moses Kotane) on South Africa, Comrades Pedro and Jean on Senegal and Comrade Durant on Guadeloupe. It further included short notes about the worldwide distribution of Black communities, international Negro organisation, the Negro work of the TUUL and its member unions, a short outline of the background of the ITUCNW and the 1930 Hamburg Conference and some reflections about the circulation of the *Negro Worker*. Apart from Patterson’s nine-page statement, most of the assessments were short notices. His evaluation and assessment of the ITUCNW is interesting as it was written by one of the Committee’s founding members.

Patterson’s assessment depicted the ITUCNW as a total failure both in the United States and in the African Atlantic. In the United States, it had played no role in the radicalization of the Black population as it did not orientate itself upon the American situation. Its focus had been mainly on the Caribbean and Africa but neither had it there been able to radicalize the colonial inhabitants apart from a few isolated cases. According to him, this was due to four reasons:

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40 Johnson to Dimitrov, 16.6.1936, RGASPI 534/3/1103, fol. 53.
41 Draft of telegram to Huiswoud, no date, RGASPI 534/3/1103, fol. 54.
42 Approval of request to invite Huiswoud to travel to Moscow: ”Einreiseantrag”, signed by Charles Johnson, 8.7.1936, RGASPI 495/261/6668, copy of same, but signed William L. Patterson, RGASPI 495/261/557, fol. 16; approval to issue a visa for entering the Soviet Union, dated 9.7.1936, RGASPI 495/261/557, fol. 17.
43 Van Enckevort 2000, p. 130.
44 Special Discussion Material on the Negro Question, compiled by T. Sawyer, 10.7.1936, RGASPI 534/3/1103, fol. 18-52.
First, it [i.e., the ITUCNW] assumed an extremely “narrow” trade union viewpoint. Second, its contact with the colonies was very loose, only a very minute part of its literate penetrated the African colonies, its liaison agents when there were such had little understanding of the work to be done and less of how to do it. Third, it was banned by the imperialist governments. [Fourth:] Equally important is the fact that it had no prestige or influence at the time of its creation and afterwards acquired extremely little. The people of the black colonies were never able to answer satisfactory the question: who and what is the ITUCNW?45

Patterson either had forgotten that the Committee’s mandate had been until 1935 limited to trade union work and that it had been prohibited in 1931 to be developed into a Black International. In addition, the American focus was reintroduced into the obligations of the Committee only in 1933. His critical position also downplayed the leading guidelines of the time, namely the ‘Class-Against-Class’-thesis. Thus, part of his assessment was unfair, especially when he claimed that “(a)n International Negro organization […] must have based itself upon a broad anti-imperialist national liberation front if it were to acquire either prestige or influence.” In his mind, the 1930 Hamburg Conference was a fiasco The delegates had been selected in a haphazard manner and especially the West African delegates turned out to either have little or no influence in their particular communities or sympathy for the “pure” trade union program presented to them. His conclusion was a bitter one:

The five years of the existence of the ITUCNW has not tended to broaden its extremely sectarian and narrow base. During this period it has virtually led an illegal existence. It has no individual membership and no mass organisation are affiliated to it. It consists of a few names, only one or two widely known, and these as Communists. It is allegedly a Communist trade union organisation. It is in fact no organisation. Who and what is the ITUCNW remains for the Black colonies as much as a mystery ever. It should be allowed to die a natural death. There should be no official liquidation and no noises made about it.46

Instead, an inclusive broad-based focus should become the guideline of future Negro work. At the moment neither the Communist Parties nor the Comintern paid any

45 (Patterson), The International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers, 4.7.1936, RGASPI 534/3/1103, fol. 30. The author of the report can be identified by comparing Sawyer’s list of content and the previously used page numbers of the file.
46 (Patterson), The International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers, 4.7.1936, RGASPI 534/3/1103, fol. 31.
attention to it. As a result, renegades, such as Padmore, and Negro bourgeois nationalist-reformist, such as Marcus Garvey and W.E.B. DuBois, were gaining momentum with their Pan-African movements. In his mind, James Ford’s call for an International Negro Congress was the only way forward. In the United States, the Communists should penetrate Negro organizations, such as the NAACP and the National Urban League. The work of the National Negro Congress was to be strengthened and the CPUSA should pay attention to Negro work.\(^47\)

Patterson’s negative assessment on the extremely limited impact of the ITUCNW was backed by the other statements. It was unknown in Brazil and Senegal, while in South Africa and Guadeloupe only a few individuals had heard of its existence.\(^48\)

Sawyer’s and Patterson’s proposition for the liquidation of the ITUCNW were not yet approved although it was clear that it had no future as a sub-committee of the RILU. The discussions in Moscow about the future of the RILU headed towards their conclusion. Its personnel were further decreased and by the end of the year it barely functioned. What was left of the RILU was dissolved by a decision of the ECCI Secretariat on 27 December 1937.\(^49\)

The final act of the ITUCNW opened when Huiswoud presented his 1936 Annual Report in January 1937. It basically repeated his previous assessment in 1935 - some contacts had been re-established in the African Atlantic but progress was slow. He listed several organizations with which he claimed to have regular contacts but none of them were actually affiliated with the Committee.\(^50\) Huiswoud seems to have been aware of the negative evaluation of the potentials of the Committee but countered his critics by underlining that both the long illegal conditions as well as the decision to limit its focus on guiding and directing the mobilization of the Negro toilers had hampered its activities. He was certainly aware of the fact that the

\(^{47}\) (Patterson), The International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers, 4.7.1936, RGASPI 534/3/1103, fol. 32-38.

\(^{48}\) Van Enckevort 2000, p. 129 fn 102.

\(^{49}\) Tosstorf 2004, p. 703.

\(^{50}\) The organizations listed were: The South African Railway and Harbour Workers’ Union, the Cape Town Stevedoring Workers’ Union, the National Liberation League (South Africa), the All-African Convention (South Africa), the West African Youth League, the Negro Welfare and Cultural Association in Trinidad, the British Guiana Labour Union, the Dock Workers and bakers’ Unions in Dutch Guiana, the Negro Welfare Association and the Colonial Seamen’s Association in London, the Negro Workers’ organization in Holland, and – as he noted – indirectly the Negro organizations in France. (Huiswoud,) ITUCNW Report 1936, RGASPI 534/3/1103, fol. 59.
Committee merely functioned as an organization on paper and that there was no future to continue in this way:

(F)rom the experiences of the past activities of the Committee and its failure to attract wide support from the Negro masses our conclusion can be no other than that the Committee is much too narrow in aim, purpose and scope, to serve the needs of the Negro people. They did not see in it the instrument that would effectively aid them in their struggles to improve their living conditions and to secure their rights. Besides, the specific features and character of the developing Liberation movements in the colonies precludes a trade union committee from functioning as a co-ordinating force, giving assistance, advice and leadership to the growing anti-imperialist movements.51

Huiswoud was certainly aware of the political mobilization that was going on in the African Atlantic. He listed a variety of political, civic and social organizations in Africa and the Caribbean that were active in the national liberation struggle. But so far, he and the Committee had merely been bystanders in this process. This was to be the new imperative of the Negro work: to direct all emphasis on the development and growth of national liberation movement organizations. The Committee was to be transformed into an international co-ordinating committee, a united front-platform for the national liberation movements in the African Atlantic.52

In our opinion such a co-ordinating committee is essential, if we wish to actively initiate, develop and support the Negro liberation movement in all the colonies. It may be argued that these activities should be national rather than international. This would perhaps be correct if in the colonies there was already a revolutionary movement to take the initiative and actively aid this direction. But with the exception of South Africa there is no such movement of force in any of the colonies.53

He proposed a four-step plan of action. First, a Provisional Committee composed of well-known and influential individuals from the Negro movements all over the African Atlantic was to be nominated. Second, the Provisional Committee should commence, through the medium of the Negro Worker, an intensive campaign to stimulate action in the colonies. Third, when enough liberation organizations existed, a permanent body was to be formed. Fourth, such a permanent body should carry out

51 (Huiswoud,) ITUCNW Report 1936, RGASPI 534/3/1103, fol. 60.
52 (Huiswoud,) ITUCNW Report 1936, RGASPI 534/3/1103, fol. 60-63
an active propaganda and concrete work for united front actions and unity among Negro organizations.\footnote{\textit{Huiswoud,} ITUCNW Report 1936, RGASPI 534/3/1103, fol. 63-64.}

If the Committee itself had been a barely functioning “paper organization”, its journal was its only positive achievement. Although there had been some technical problems in 1936, he was able to publish and distribute eight issues. Each issue was printed in 2,000 copies of which about 800 were sent to the USA, 200 to England, 425 to South Africa, 275 to West and East Africa, 60 to Liberia and 75 to a diverse number of locales. Its distribution to the British colonies remained problematic. Due to the various Sedition Laws, regular mail service was out of question and Huiswoud had to use the ISH communication network for its dissemination.\footnote{\textit{Huiswoud,} ITUCNW Report 1936, RGASPI 534/3/1103, fol. 64.}

Huiswoud was quite realistic in his assessment of the journal’s potential impact. He believed that it was steadily gaining influence in the African Atlantic judged, on the basis of letters he was receiving from readers. On the other hand, “it must be stated that this influence is still very far from being widespread,” he admitted. Another problem was the limited amount of articles and texts from Africans and Caribbeans. The journal, he noted, “still does not reflect in any way sufficiently the life and struggles of the Negro peoples.”\footnote{\textit{Huiswoud,} ITUCNW Report 1936, RGASPI 534/3/1103, fol. 65.} This was certainly true: most of the articles were still prepared in Moscow.

One of the basic shortcomings of the journal was the lengthy and dry theoretical articles it contained. This could only interest a few revolutionaries and intellectuals, but not the average Negro toiler. We have however, made some improvement in this direction. As the last few issues will show, most of the articles are quite short and snappy and contain a greater variety of material on current questions affecting the Negro people.\footnote{\textit{Huiswoud,} ITUCNW Report 1936, RGASPI 534/3/1103, fol. 66.}

Huiswoud was able to convince the comrades in Moscow that the ITUCNW’s liquidation and the termination of the \textit{Negro Worker} was not necessary the most practical solution. In March 1937, he was called for new discussions in Moscow and stayed in the Soviet Union until June-July 1937.\footnote{Einreiseantrag, Otto Huiswoud, approved by ECCI Secretariat 23.3.1937 and the ECCI Cadre Department 17.4.1937; Ausreiseantrag, Otto Huiswoud, approved 27/29.6.1937, RGASPI 495/261/6668, RGASPI 495/261/557, fol. 11. Huiswoud’s sojourn in Moscow in 1937 is noted by Turner (2005, p. 219) but not by van Enckevort.} Nevertheless, both Huiswoud and
the comrades in Moscow knew that the ITUCNW was a lost cause. After hearing his evaluation report, the ECCI Secretariat, consisting of Comrades Dimitrov, Florin, Gottwald, Kuusinen, Marty and Pieck, decided at its meeting on July 27, 1937, to liquidate the ITUCNW and to convert it into a “committee to assist the cultural development of the Negroes in Africa”. At the same meeting, the ISH and the IRA were dissolved.⁵⁹ The new committee, titled ‘Paris Committee in Defence of African Negroes’ was to replace the ITUCNW as the vehicle for organizing and drawing the African toilers “into the struggle for their economic demands and political rights.” It was to be established as a progressive ‘Negro movement’ with headquarters in Paris; it was envisioned as a legal body of a wide character, with contacts to the French, British, Italian and Belgian Communist parties and with representatives from both African countries and “outstanding progressive political figures in the imperialist countries.” Apart from becoming the centre for agitation and propaganda, it was – as the Hamburg Committee previously – to collect materials “to help the work of the trade unions, progressive organisations and the European labour movement in defense of Negro interests.” Last, but not lest, the Paris Committee – or at least its Communist members – was to work according to the directives of the ECCI Secretariat and under the control of the Colonial Commission of the PCF.⁶⁰

Huiswoud did not participate in the meeting where the ITUCNW was dissolved. Nevertheless, he was aware about the plans to launch a new committee when he returned to France. For some months, Huiswoud was still running the Paris office in the name of the ITUCNW but in reality the organization had seized to exist at that time. In the last issue of the Negro Worker in September-October 1937 he – or rather his alter ego Charles Woodson – declared in a statement about future activities that

… the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers had already begun to appreciate the limitations of an approach to the great issues solely along trade union lines… It has decided that since it has been invited to cooperate and ally its forces with a broad Committee now in the process of formation and with its journal, which it intends to publish, to merge its activities and that of its official organ “The Negro Worker” with this new body. Our

⁵⁹ EKKI Sekretariat, Protokoll (A) Nr. 155, 27.6.1937, RGASPI 495/18/1206, fol1. Also van Enckevort 2000, p. 132.
supporters and readers will be duly informed when the Committee has finally been constituted.\textsuperscript{61}

The new Committee never materialized. The \textit{Negro Worker} disappeared. When Earl Browder met him in Paris in January 1938, Huiswoud complained that he had not received any financial support from Moscow for several months and that his work had more or less come to a standstill. Browder therefore inquired from Dimitrov whether Huiswoud was to continue his work in Paris, if it should be discontinued or if someone else should take over? If Huiswoud was not needed in Paris, Browder stated, he should be sent back to the United States as “Com. Woodson has been many years away from America, and it would be good for his own development to return there.”\textsuperscript{62} Dimitrov’s decision was easy - the Negro Committee no longer existed and in early February it was decided to transfer him to the United States.\textsuperscript{63} The task for liquidating the “centre for Negro work” (das Zentrum der Negerarbeit), i.e., Huiswoud’s bureau, was given to Comrade Smeral who was ordered to travel to Paris and close down all operations there in late March 1938.\textsuperscript{64} Otto and Hermine Huiswoud remained in Paris until May 1938 and then returned to New York.\textsuperscript{65} Moscow’s attempt to launch a radical revolutionary movement in Africa and in the Caribbean had failed. On the other hand, the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers had helped to nurse a radical African Atlantic.

\textsuperscript{61} \textit{The Negro Worker} VII:7-8, 1937, quoted in van Enckevort 2000, p. 134.
\textsuperscript{62} Confidential memorandum to Comrade Dimitroff, signed Earl Browder, dated Moscow 19.1.1938, RGASPI 495/261/557, fol. 4.
\textsuperscript{63} Letter to Dimitrov (in Russian) re Huiswoud, handwritten decision by Dimitrov, dated 2.4.1938, RGASPI 495/261/557, fol. 1.
\textsuperscript{64} Anweisung für Gen. Smeral (”Instructions for Comrade Smeral), 30.3.1938, signed G. Dimitrov and countersigned Gottwald, RGASPI 495/73/76, fol. 75. I am grateful to Gleb Albert for locating this reference!
\textsuperscript{65} van Enckevort 2000, pp. 136, 139-140.