

After Year Zero

The New World Order After 1945

During the World War Two, the Allies won the loyalty of the colonial population through the promise to accord them the right to self-determination, a promise already made during the First World War, and subsequently broken. Despite the United Nations and ideologically mobilized talk of the Free World, even after 1945, this promise could only be redeemed through violence. The liberation movements drew on a history of ideas, at the center of which stood the possibility of the actual realization of the universalist promise of modernity. While the Kongresshalle (Congress Hall) was being built in Berlin as a symbol of the liberal humanism of the capitalist West, representatives from twenty-nine states as well as liberation movements met in the Indonesian city of Bandung in 1955 for the first Afro-Asian Conference. Belittled by the West both then and today, the conference became the decisive politico-symbolic event of decolonization, which even back then represented the majority of mankind on earth. Bandung was the attempt to break through the colonial framework conditions of modernity and their implicit barbarism. The conference gave shape to a vision of a pluralist, anti-colonial, and non-racist modernity, which, against the background of the World War Two, the New World Order, and the nuclear threat, postulated a universalism without alternative.

Conferences 1900 – 2002

1900 LONDON, PAN-AFRICAN CONFERENCE

The conference was organized by Trinidadian Henry Sylvester Williams who was living in London. Some thirty delegates attended, mainly from England and the West Indies, some Afro-Americans, but no one from the French-speaking colonies. Among those in attendance were W.E.B. Du Bois, the Abyssinian Benito Sylvain, and F.S.R. Johnson of Liberia.

1911 LONDON, FIRST UNIVERSAL RACES CONGRESS

The Universal Races Congress, held in London over three days in June 1911 was organized by Gustav Spiller and Felix Adler of the Ethical Culture Movement.

Anthropologists, sociologists, politicians, lawyers, and students all gathered. The congress led Dusé Mohamed Ali, an Egyptian author, to establish *The African Times and Orient Review* (1912 – 1920). It is also claimed by some that the congress was the stimulus to the foundation of the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa in 1912. Among the intellectuals, writers, and activists in attendance were Syed Ameer Ali, Thomas W. Arnold, Annie Besant, Mancherjee Merwanjee Bhowanagree, W.E.B. Du Bois, G.K. Gokhale, J.A. Hobson, Margaret Noble, Brajendranath Seal, Georg Simmel, and Mahatma Gandhi.

1919 PARIS, FIRST PAN-AFRICAN CONGRESS

The Pan-African Congress was held in Paris from February 19 to 22, 1919 to coincide with the Paris Peace Conference that followed the end of the First World War. Africans and activists of African descent aimed to influence the political agenda of the Paris Peace Conference since it would determine the political and economic future of all African and Caribbean colonies, as well as peoples of African descent in the Americas. There were at least fifty-seven delegates representing fifteen countries and colonies, including Haiti, Liberia, the British West Indies, the West African colonies, and the United States. At least nineteen of the delegates were from Africa. Although it is often referred to as the First Pan-African Congress, actually, it was modeled on the Pan-African Conference convened in 1900 by Henry Sylvester Williams, where W. E. B. Du Bois was one of the delegates.

1921 LONDON, BRUSSELS, AND PARIS, SECOND PAN-AFRICAN CONGRESS

The second Pan-African Congress was held in several sessions during August and September 1921 in three colonial centers, London, Brussels, and Paris. There were 113 delegates, double the number that attended the 1919 conference. News reports estimated that 1,000 people attended and, like the first congress, participants were not exclusively African; European participation in Belgium was greater than African attendance. Colonial officials, academics, and student groups also attended. Black organizations from three continents were represented: the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) of the United States, the African Progress

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Union (APU) from London, the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA) from the Gold Coast, and the Liga Africana of Portugal.

1923 LONDON AND LISBON, THIRD PAN-AFRICAN CONGRESS

The third meeting of the congress in Lisbon was more successful. Eleven countries were represented there, and especially Portuguese Africa. The Liga Africana was in charge.

“The great association of Portuguese Negroes with headquarters at Lisbon which is called the Liga Africana is an actual federation of all the indigenous associations scattered throughout the five provinces of Portuguese Africa and representing several million individuals. (...) This Liga Africana which functions at Lisbon in the very heart of Portugal, so to speak, has a commission from all the other native organizations and knows how to express to the Government in no ambiguous terms but in a highly dignified manner all that should be said to avoid injustice or to bring about the repeal of harsh laws. That is why the Liga Africana of Lisbon is the director of the Portuguese African movement; but not only in the good sense of the word, but without making any appeal to violence and without leaving constitutional limits.” W. E. B. Du Bois, “The Pan-African Movement”, in *Colonial and Coloured Unity. A Programme of Action*. History of the Pan-African Congress, ed. George Padmore (London: Hammersmith Bookshop Ltd, 1963 [1947]), 22.

1926 NAGASAKI, CONFERENCE OF ASIAN PEOPLES

The conference was organized by the Pan-Asiatic Society. There were approximately 100 attendees and addresses were given by the King of Afghanistan, the President of Turkey, the Shah of Persia, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru of India, among others.

1927 SHANGHAI, CONFERENCE OF ASIAN PEOPLES

Pan-Asianism had a very specific dynamic. As early as 1860, Japan had aimed to unite a series of countries in Asia to ward off European imperialism under the slogan “Asia for the Asians.” Japan had won the Russo-Japanese War in 1906 and was regarded as the one country in Asia that had managed to protect its autonomy. It was also Japan that had proposed an anti-discrimination law at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference for which the Jamaican Pan-Africanist Marcus Garvey had praised Japan as an ally. In the creation of a “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere”, Japan saw India and China as its main partner allies. India was the large colony of the British, and the Chinese were suffering from the British opium trade which led to opium wars in the nineteenth century.

Chinese leader Sun Yat-sen delivered a speech on Greater Asianism in Japan in 1924 in which he condemned the treatment of Asia by the West. In this collaboration the first Conference of Asian Peoples was organized in Nagasaki in 1926 and a second Conference of Asian Peoples took place in Shanghai in 1927. But the Japanese Pan-Asianism soon turned out to be inspired by Japanese imperialism, as Japan imagined the larger Asian zone to be led by the Japanese emperor. These ambitions became most apparent when Japan attacked China in 1937 in the violent Sino-Japanese War that would become part of the Second World War. As Japan lost credibility, the idea of Pan-Asianism died with it.

1927 NEW YORK, FOURTH PAN-AFRICAN CONGRESS IN HARLEM

Delegates from America and ten foreign countries were present, but direct African participation lagged behind other countries. America participated with 208 delegates from twenty-two American states; Africa was represented by delegates from the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Nigeria. Chief Amoah III of the Gold Coast spoke; the American anthropologist Melville Jean Herskovits, then of Columbia University, and the author John Vandercook were on the program.

The Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) movement in the United States declined for at least three reasons, among which a primary reason was its finances. Without adequate funding, PAC activists could not lobby for its issues, recruit new membership, fund meetings, or publish its material. Inadequate resources were mainly divided between two ideologically opposed diaspora groups: those of the Du Boisian PAC movement and those who supported Garveyism and the international agenda of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), a Black Nationalist organization. The momentum of the PAC movement did not return until 1945 when the pan-Africanist journalist George Padmore, and activists Kwame Nkrumah and Ras Makonnen, along with other individuals, convened the Fifth Pan-African Congress in London.

1927 BRUSSELS, INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS AGAINST COLONIAL OPPRESSION AND IMPERIALISM

The League against Imperialism was founded in Egmont Palace in Brussels, Belgium, on February 10, 1927, in the presence of 175 delegates, 107 of whom came from thirty-seven countries under colonial rule. Delegates attended from the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa, the Intercolonial Union, and the Human Rights League, among other organizations. Individuals included notable politicians, political activists, intellectu-

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als, and writers, such as Messali Hadj, Henri Barbusse, Gabrielle Duchêne, Albert Einstein, Jawaharlal Nahru, Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, Fenner Brockway, Arthur MacManus, Victor Basch, and Lamine Senghor. In Berlin the communist Reichstag deputy and publisher Willi Münzenberg founded the League against Colonial Oppression in 1926.

1930 HAMBURG, FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF NEGRO WORKERS

Present at the Hamburg conference were seventeen delegates representing six African-American organizations along with representatives from British Guiana, Trinidad, Jamaica, several West African countries, and South Africa. Also present was Johnstone (Jomo) Kenyatta who later became president of independent Kenya. The conference was organized by George Padmore.

1945 MANCHESTER, FIFTH PAN-AFRICAN CONGRESS

The congress of October 15 – 20, 1945 was held at Chorlton-upon-Medlock Town Hall, where eighty-seven delegates attended, representing fifty organizations. The topics debated included "The Colour Problem in Britain", "Oppression in South Africa", and "The Problems in the Caribbean". Notable delegates were George Padmore, Kwame Nkrumah, and Jomo Kenyatta among others. A number of black activists living in Manchester at the time were also in attendance, these included Len Johnson, the former boxer and member of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), Dr Pater Milliard from Guyana who had formed the Negro Association, Ras Makonnen of the International African Service Bureau (IASB) that C. L. R. James had established in 1937, and James Taylor, who ran the Negro Welfare Centre.

1947 NEW DELHI, ASIAN RELATIONS CONFERENCE

In 1947, after India's independence, Nehru would become a leading figure in Pan-Asianism, though he had the desire to embed this in a larger collaboration of suppressed people. He had attended the 1927 Brussels Conference of the League Against Imperialism, which had united people from several parts of the world as well as a large Chinese delegation. In 1947 Nehru organized the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi, followed by a second Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi in 1949 dedicated to the independence of Indonesia.

1949 BOGOR CONFERENCE

At this second conference it was decided that the activities of the new Asian nations would be coordinated within the United Nations, which was seen as the new platform for the suppressed nations. In 1954 China and India signed the Panchsheel Agreement;

also known as the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence by the Chinese. These principles would become the basis for the Bandung Principles, which also incorporated the principles of the United Nations Charter.

1955 BANDUNG CONFERENCE / ASIAN-AFRICAN CONFERENCE OR AFRO-ASIAN CONFERENCE

Leaders of twenty-nine African and Asian nations gathered together to consider how they could help one another in achieving social and economic well-being for their large and impoverished populations. Among others the participants included Chaudhry Muhammad Ali (Pakistan), Khalid al-Azm (Syria), Ahmed Ben Bella (Algeria), Kojo Botsio (Ghana), Hugh S. Cumming, Jr. (United States), Momolu Dukuly (Liberia), Indira Gandhi (India), Hassan ibn Yahya (Yemen), Ho Chi Minh (Democratic Republic of Vietnam), Haj Amin al-Husseini (Palestine), John Kotelawala (Ceylon), Makarios III (Cyprus), Charles Malik (Lebanon), V. K. Krishna Menon (India), Muhammad Fadhel al-Jamali (Iraq), Gamal Abdel Nasser (Egypt), Mohammad Natsir (Indonesia), Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Ethel L. Payne (United States), Abdul Rahman Pazhwak (Afghanistan), Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. (America), Carlos P. Romulo (Philippines), Carl Rowan (United States), Ali Sabri (Egypt), Ali Sastroamidjojo (Indonesia), Ahmad Shukeiri (Palestine), Norodom Sihanouk (Cambodia), Sukarno (Indonesia), Josip Broz Tito (Yugoslavia), Wan Waithayakon (Thailand), Richard Wright (United States), Zhou Enlai (People's Republic of China), and Fatin Rüstü Zorlu (Turkey).

1956 PARIS, PREMIER CONGRES INTERNATIONAL DES ECRIVAINS ET ARTISTES NOIRS

The First Congress of Black Writers and Artists was organized by the Pan-African quarterly cultural, political, and literary review *Présence Africaine* and its editor Alioune Diop. Among the many notable intellectuals, writers, and activists present were Amadou Hampaté Bâ (Mali). Léopold Sédar Senghor and Cheikh Anta Diop (Senegal), Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon (Martinique), Marcus James (Jamaica), Richard Wright (United States), Jean Price-Mars (Haiti), Jacques Rabemananjara (Madagascar), and Paul Hazoumé (Dahomey).

1957 AFRO-ASIAN PEOPLE'S SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE IN CAIRO

1958 ACCRA, FIRST AII-AFRICAN PEOPLES' CONFERENCE (AAPC)

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1959 ROME, DEUXIÈME CONGRES INTERNATIONAL DES ECRIVAINS ET ARTISTES NOIRS

The Second Congress of Black Writers and Artists was also organized by Alioune Diop, founder of the publishing house *Présence Africaine* and editor of the cultural quarterly by the same name. Beside participants in attendance at the first congress and along with other notable delegates, Ahmed Sékou Touré, the first president of independent Guinea, spoke at the conference. It was at the Rome congress that Alioune Diop first proposed the World Festival of Negro Arts, which was finally realized in 1966 in Dakar, initiated by Senegal's first president, Léopold Sédar Senghor.

1960 TUNIS, SECOND ALL-AFRICAN PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE (AAPC)

The second conference was held in Tunis in January. Some 180 delegates from around thirty African countries, including the Portuguese territories and the Union of South Africa, attended. There were also over forty observers from China, Greece, India, the United Kingdom, the United States, West Germany, and Yugoslavia.

1961 CASABLANCA CONFERENCE

The conference brought together Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Mwalimu Julius Nyerere (Tanzania), Gamal Abdel Nasser (Egypt), Ahmad Sékou Touré (Guinea), Modibo Keita (Mali), Ferhat Abbas (Algeria), and other leaders of newly independent African states and national liberation movements, to discuss the future of Africa. The "Casablanca Group," as they were known, formed the progressive camp. The Casablanca Conference, hosted by King Mohammed V of Morocco, was an important milestone in the process that led to the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963.

1961 CAIRO, THIRD ALL-AFRICAN PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE (AAPC)

Approximately 207 delegates representing fifty-eight political and trade union groups from thirty countries, together with a number of observers, attended the third All-African People's Conference in Cairo.

1961 BELGRADE CONFERENCE

The conference was attended by representatives of twenty-five states: Afghanistan, Algeria, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, the Congo (Leopoldville), Cuba, Cyprus, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Lebanon, Mali, Morocco, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen, and Yugoslavia, Bolivia, Brazil, and Ecuador sent observers.

1961 CAIRO, FIRST AFRO-ASIAN WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

1963 ADDIS ABABA, FOUNDING OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR AFRICAN UNITY (OAU)

Following its founding in 1963, the Organization for African Unity (OAU) held an annual summit, convened in different African metropolises. The last was held in 2001 in Lusaka, Zambia. At this time the OAU had fifty-three member states. A year later, in 2002, the African Union (AU) was brought to life. In accordance with the will of the signatory states, the AU replaced the OAU and was afforded greater powers. The founding of the new African Union was initiated by the Revolutionary Leader of Libya, Muammar al-Gaddafi. The founding treaty was oriented, above all, on the model of the European Union.

1964 CAIRO CONFERENCE

The OAU resolved to accept the borders drawn up within Africa at the Berlin Conference (1884 – 1885), overruling Kwame Nkrumah's objection which called for a "Union of the United States of Africa" as a means to overcome the colonial heritage and transform the fragmentary system of national states.

1965 ALGIERS, AFRO-ASIAN CONFERENCE

The conference, held in Algiers, was attended by representatives from sixty-three African and Asian governments, as well as nineteen national liberation movements. The meeting was opened by Algerian President Ahmed Ben Bella. Cuba was invited as an observer to the conference, and the Argentinian guerrilla fighter Che Guevara served on the presiding committee.

1966 TRICONTINENTAL CONFERENCE HAVANNA

1966 DAKAR, FIRST WORLD FESTIVAL OF NEGRO ARTS

The first festival of black arts took place during April 1 – 24, 1966 in Dakar, Senegal, demonstrating the cultural ties between African nations and the rest of the world and celebrating the impact of black arts on world culture. The festival involved the participation of forty-five African, European, West Indian, and North and South African countries. Conceived by Senegalese President Léopold Sédar Senghor, the festival highlighted black literature, music, theater, visual arts, film, and dance.

1969 ALGIERS, FIRST PAN-AFRICAN FESTIVAL

The festival took place in Algiers in July 1969 and was arranged by the Organization of African Unity (OAU). For most of the personalities who appeared in the Pan-African Festival of Algiers it was necessary to go

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beyond the model of Négritude proposed by Senghor and create a new link between culture and national and continental liberation.

1977 LAGOS, SECOND WORLD BLACK AND AFRICAN FESTIVAL OF ARTS AND CULTURE, FESTAC, 77

FESTAC, 77 was a huge art and cultural assembly of Africans and African Americans that was held over a month, between January 15 and February 12, 1977, in Nigeria. Its conception can be traced to the 1966 First World Festival of Negro Arts, Dakar. With over 17,000 participants from over fifty countries, it is still the largest cultural event ever to be held on the African continent.

1980 THE LAGOS PLAN OF ACTION

"The Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa, 1980 – 2000" was an OAU-backed plan to increase Africa's self-sufficiency. It was drafted in Lagos, Nigeria in April 1980, during a conference which included a number of African leaders.

1991 THE ABUJA TREATY

The OAU braised the trail in the area of economic change with the adoption of the Abuja Treaty in 1991. The treaty, designed to establish an African Economic Community (AEC), is aimed at integrating economic activity, primarily trade, between different zones and states in Africa.

2001 LAUNCHING OF THE NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT (NEPAD)

2002 FOUNDING OF THE AFRICAN UNION (AU)

The African Union (AU) was established on May 26, 2001 in Addis Ababa, and launched on July 9, 2002 in South Africa, to replace the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

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