

The George Padmore Collection: 1933-1945, Princeton University Library

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Description

The collection consists of original correspondence, essays, and articles of George Padmore, from the period following his "expulsion" or resignation from the Communist Party up until the end of World War II. The correspondence is chiefly between Padmore and Henry Lee Moon, editor of the New York newspaper the *New Amsterdam*. During this period, Padmore began a heated public exchange with the Communist Party, as they both were sending dueling letters to Moon, and to other newspapers for publication. Included is an essay, signed and annotated by Padmore for the *Amsterdam News* dated February 3, 1934, related to his expulsion from the Party. There are several autograph and typed letters to Moon. In a letter dated July 9, 1934, Padmore writes about his dispute with the Communist Party, and in another dated April 1945 he asks Moon to promote the idea of a Pan African Congress in his newspaper. Bearing the same above date, is an "Open letter to Earl Browder, Secretary of the American Communist Party," justifying Padmore's break with the Party. The editorial titled "Padmore Replies to Harry Heywood's Slanders" is also included. To be found is a letter from Moon to W. E. B. Du Bois, asking him to participate in the Fifth Pan African Congress.

Also included is an autograph letter signed from Mrs. Moon to her husband, sent from Berlin on May 11, 1933, regarding the state of black and white race relations in Nazi Germany. There are several letters and press releases, mostly sent to Moon, defending the Communist Party for expelling Padmore. There is a letter and an article from Cyril Briggs, the African-American writer and communist political activist, to Moon and the *Amsterdam News*, justifying the Communist Party's decision to expel Padmore, and a copy of an unsigned article "James Ford answers Padmore's Charges."

George Padmore Collection engages the dates of 1933-1945, and is 20 linear feet (1 half-size archival box), stored at the Firestone Library at Princeton University. The collection is open for research use. However, some material is extremely fragile, and is not to be removed from the Mylar folders. Single photocopies may be made for research purposes. No further photoduplication of copies of material in the collection can be made when Princeton University Library does not own the original.

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Collection Creator Biography



George Padmore, born Malcolm Ivan Meredith Nurse in Trinidad, worked there as a reporter before moving to the United States in 1924. In 1927 he changed his name, and by then he was working among African Americans in Harlem, editing the newspaper *Negro Champion*. Padmore joined the American Communist Party's American Negro Labour Congress, while contributing articles to the left-wing newspaper the *Daily Worker*. His talents as an organizer and writer led to his appointment as head of the Communist International's "Negro Bureau". From 1929 to 1933 he was a leading agitator for colonial revolution, travelling widely and residing for periods in Moscow, Hamburg, Vienna, London and Paris, as well as editing and writing for the *Negro Worker*. However, when the rise of Hitler's Nazis in Germany led the Soviet Union to join the League of Nations and seek new diplomatic and military ties with Britain and France, anti-colonialism was no longer the central issue it

once was for the Communist International. Disillusioned, Padmore resigned from his positions and faced vicious Stalinist slander and verbal attacks, and in 1935 he left Russia and returned to England. In 1937, he formed the International African Service Bureau, later the Pan-African Federation and in 1945, together with Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, he was central in organizing the Fifth Pan African Congress held in Manchester, England in October, which was attended by many scholars, intellectuals and political activists (including Jomo Kenyatta, W. E. B. Du Bois, Hastings Banda, Dudley Thompson, Obafemi Awolowo, Jaja Wachuku, and 90 delegates: 26 from Africa, 33 from the West Indies, and 35 from various British organizations) who would later go on to become influential leaders in various African independence movements, and the civil rights movement in the U.S.