

Name: Rachel Leow

Article title: Asian Lessons in the Cold War Classroom: Trade Union Networks and the Multidirectional Pedagogies of the Cold War in Asia

Author information: Acknowledgments: I am grateful to the Afro-Asian Networks Research Collective and the contributors to this special issue for the invaluable environment they have provided for intellectual collaboration, critical feedback, mutual support and encouragement over the last three years. I would also like to thank Gareth Curless for his thoughts on this project at an early stage, as well as Itty Abraham and John Slight for their close reading and commentary on drafts, which have greatly improved the piece. All remaining errors are my own. Address correspondence to: Rachel Leow, Faculty of History, Cambridge University, West Road, Cambridge CB3 9EF. Email : rl341@cam.ac.uk

Abstract: This paper invites us to move beyond an elite, “pedagogical” view of Third World diplomatic non-alignment, by examining trade unions as sites of “subaltern internationalism” in the early Cold War. Trade unions were targets of both communist and anti-communist pedagogical programs, spearheaded principally by the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) and the rival International Confederation of Trade Unions (ICTU), both of which competed to teach Asians how to be good trade unionists. But despite their ideological designs, I argue that these internationalist structures of the “Cold War classroom” facilitated, instead, unexpected encounters and fraternal connections that were experienced, and are best seen, at the level of the personal. After offering an overview of these Cold War macrostructures, the paper moves to the microhistorical scale to highlight one such set of personal networks that coalesced around a single “trade union expert”. George L-P Weaver was an African-American trade unionist whose *pedagogical* work took him to Okinawa and Singapore in the 1950s, but whose *dialogical* encounters with Asian trade unionists had

transformative effects on his ideological convictions afterward, challenging, in particular, his views on the role of the People's Republic of China in the Cold War, and of the 'communism' of Chinese overseas communities in Singapore. In all, this paper suggests that trade unions offer us a rich site in which to recover individual dynamics that challenge and complicate, from below, the binary logics of the Cold War in Asia.

Text of article:

So many histories of the Cold War in the Third World begin with those magical dates in a magical place: 18-24 May, 1955, Bandung. Hailed as a new force in world affairs, the Afro-Asian Conference that took place in the hills of Bandung, attended by a passionate if motley assemblage of Asian and African world leaders representing close to 30 nations, has assumed mythic dimensions.¹ Bandung heralded a new politics of non-alignment that had been ignored in standard, Euro-American narratives of the Cold War: an origin story for the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1961. In it was a whole fantasy of Third World agency formed out of easy metonymy: Bandung the place, Bandung the spirit—Bandung the moment, Bandung the history. Anti-colonialism and transnational solidarity were all theatrical parts: Bandung was the diplomatic debut of newly decolonized peoples on a bipolar world stage, full of agency and vigour.²

And yet for all its praise of Third World "people's" solidarity in the face of superpower conflict, Bandung is, in many ways, much less a "people's" affair, and much more an elite story, than the rhetoric of Bandung has tended to suggest. The dominance of elite discourse in histories of the non-aligned Third World has been analyzed by Dipesh Chakrabarty as a "pedagogical style of politics", in which overwhelmingly male Third World leaders, in their uncritical acceptance of the basic principles of development and modernization modelled on Western achievement, ended up re-enacting old, even imperialist, civilizational hierarchies: between leaders and the masses, between elites and non-elites, between developed and developing nations in the global order of nations; in short, between those who taught and

those who learned.³ In these re-enacted, Cold War hierarchies, the West would teach the Third World, and Third World leaders would teach their people.⁴ Prasenjit Duara has thus characterised the Cold War not as a superpower conflict as such, but as part of a longer-term reconfiguration of imperialism: from the raw, inevitable conquest of inferior peoples by superior nations, to a subtler pedagogy, to the imposition of “designs for enlightenment” on emergent nations, backed by military force.⁵

To displace Bandung from its centrality as origin myth, and to turn our eyes away from its largely male leader pedagogues, this article seeks to uncover other lessons of the Cold War classroom. It suggests that Bandung represented only one kind of internationalism, and though influential, was in many ways the most fragile, seeking as it did to forge geopolitical solidarities and reject diplomatic alignment in what was fundamentally a geopolitically hegemonic, aligned world. It seeks, instead, to recover other kinds of internationalisms beyond and beneath Bandung that were, to return to Chakrabarty’s distinction, more *dialogical* than pedagogical, more committed to mutual understanding of the multiple possible models for growth, solidarity and intellectual positioning which one might adopt and accept in a Cold War world. To do so, it considers a different international space: that of labour and trade union networks. Trade unions are of particular utility in this analysis, since as international institutions plugged into grassroots struggle, their protagonists were emblematic of the mutually constitutive relationship between the local, the national and the international that obtained throughout the early years of the Cold War.⁶ In this focus on trade union networks during the 1950s in Asia (a period simultaneous with, and often eclipsed by, Bandung) I want instead to turn our attention to this dialogical element, enacted at the level of personal relations, and of what I am thinking of as the “subaltern international”.⁷

This article offers two interrelated contributions. Firstly, it highlights the potential of studying Cold War international organization rivalry, represented in this article by the conflict between the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), in shaping a suite of developments in

decolonizing Asia that are poorly captured by the notion of “communist” or “anti-communist” struggle. The battles over the loyalties, shape and intellectual underpinnings of trade unionism in postwar Asia, this article suggests, helps incorporate anti- or non-communist Asia into a more nuanced account of how Cold War and decolonization played out on the ground. This is an emergent theme in a literature which has tended to focus on communism to the exclusion of recognizing the multiple and often contradictory ways in which groups labelled as “communist” participated in, and were preoccupied by, a range of agendas other than that of the Cold War, superpower rivalry, and its shadow cognate, “non-alignment”.⁸ It is clear that, as Jennifer Luff points out, trade unions were key sites of *both* communist organization as well as robust anti-communism, and sites of close and often highly personal contestation between the two.⁹ This emergent literature enables us to recognize the limitations of Cold War paradigms for understanding developments in Asia, as well as its relationship to decolonisation, especially in countries like Singapore and Malaya, where trade union developments unfolded and interacted on both sides of the Cold War coin.¹⁰

Secondly and relatedly, it argues that the encounters and connections enabled by these international networks were enacted most frequently (and are thus best seen) at the level of the personal. In international trade unionism, we discover a world of encounters that do not fit well into geopolitical conceptions of non-alignment nor of the ideological labels of the Cold War. These “subaltern internationalisms”—fostered by the numerous transnational encounters of ordinary men and women—were undoubtedly shaped by the kinds of geopolitical rivalries that characterized the Cold War, but were ideationally, personally and fraternally generative in a way that the project of Bandung was probably doomed never to be.¹¹ I argue that this “subalternizing” of the Cold War in Asia is desperately needed in a literature that, for all its recognition now of the dynamics of Third World non-alignment, remains saturated with Nehrus, Nassers, Sukarnos and Zhou Enlais.¹²

It is impossible to deny the pedagogical realities of the Cold War, which is to say that

superpower rivalry did undoubtedly set limits on the range of actions and choices ordinary Asians were able to pursue, particularly when it came to trade unionism.¹³ I sketch some of this out in the first section of this article, which offers a brief overview of the proliferation of internationalist trade union pedagogies in the postwar period, all of which sought variously to teach Asians how to be “good” trade unionists in a Cold War world. I suggest however, that it was precisely the proliferation of pedagogies in the “Cold War classroom” which helped to create space for dialogue and importantly the networks of international sociability that sustained them, beneath and beyond structures of alignment and non-alignment. In order to demonstrate this, I move to the microhistorical scale, to highlight one set of personal networks that coalesced around a single “trade union expert”. George L-P Weaver was a classic Cold War pedagogue and technocrat: an African-American US labour expert sent to advise on the situation of trade unions in Okinawa and Singapore.¹⁴ But over his years of service in Asia, he built up layers of fraternal networks and sustained them over a decade of personal, international correspondence. These relationships had, I argue, two key effects that were quite separate to Weaver’s original, Cold War pedagogical agenda. One was to provide Asian trade unionists with a conduit they could activate in order to lobby for personal interests. A second was, ironically, itself pedagogical. Weaver’s friendships helped to modify and nuance the black-and-white Cold War mentalities he brought to Asia with him, precipitating a personal, ideological shift that had significant impact on his professional trajectories and convictions afterward. Together, these suggest a route towards a different and perhaps more genuinely “people’s” history of the Cold War in Asia, one cognizant of multidirectional flows of influence and connection, as well as the ways in which ordinary men and women may have been limited, but also enabled and transformed, by the many internationalisms that structured the Cold War world.

The Cold War Classroom

There had already emerged in the interwar years a concern among colonial officials and

observers over the radical potential of trade unions. Throughout the British empire, nascent labour movements had begun to emerge in the 1920s alongside a push for colonial development, and successive labour governments had made attempts to urge colonial governments to be responsive to working-class movements in order to forestall possibility of revolutionary unrest. These militant, populist movements often teetered on the threatening edge of outright anti-colonialism. Thus colonial concerns over trade union unrest spurred early initiatives in trade union pedagogy. From the 1930s, with the passing of the Passfield Circular, the British Colonial Office began to urge legalisation of trade unions, with the intention of giving “supervision and guidance” to trade unions along constitutional lines, and avoiding their diversion into “improper and mischievous ends”.¹⁵ Eventually, the Colonial Labour Advisory Committee (CLAC) was created in 1942, a carefully selected commission which integrated British TUC and the colonial office. Their approach was predominantly one of seeking to teach labour leaders how to undertake “responsible trade unionism”, by which was meant the use of collective bargaining, a more “level-headed” form of trade union activity, rather than strike action.¹⁶

The predominantly colonial engagement with Asian and African trade unionism expanded in the postwar years with the formation of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) in 1945, under the auspices of the British TUC but with the participation of both the US and USSR, as well as a wide network of affiliated unions from Asia, Africa and Latin America. As is well known, this body split into the ICFTU and the WFTU in December 1949, primarily over divergent views of communism.¹⁷ But it was also divided over a tension present from the very first congress in Paris, October 1945: the question of national independence in the colonial world. Shripad Amrit Dange, an Indian textile worker unionist who would later become vice-President of the WFTU, welcomed the occasion in terms that moved easily between the national and international, and certainly made British trade unions nervous. “For our working class,” he declared, “the simple thing is national independence and for that our people join the international trade union movement.” Walter Citrine replied

quickly that the WFTU was not “the medium whereby this is to be done. If once we get into the maze of politics...this International will perish.”¹⁸ As the Cold War took shape, the withdrawal of anti-communist unions left the WFTU mostly dominated by the Soviet Union, and the ICFTU’s British antipathy to mixing trade unionism and politics was strongly maintained in their pedagogical initiatives in Asia.

In the wake of the split, Asia rapidly became a key strategic arena for both the WFTU and the ICFTU. When the WFTU turned its energies to trade union pedagogy, it promoted Asian trade unionism by connecting worker exploitation to vociferous charges of colonial oppression. The task of executing this in Asia was devolved to China. A secret meeting between Stalin and Liu Shaoqi in Moscow in August 1949 produced an agreement that the oversight of the so-called “Eastern Revolution” would be undertaken by China.¹⁹ Subsequently, an Asian-Australian Trade Union Conference, hashed out in meetings throughout the first half of 1949 in Moscow and later at the second WFTU conference in Milan, was convened in Beijing from 16-22 November 1949 under the auspices of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU).²⁰ Significantly, it was the new PRC’s very first international conference, with a specific mandate to assess the strength of Asian trade union movements and to discuss how best to aid the working-classes in capitalist, colonial and semi-colonial countries across Asia and Australia.²¹ The AATUC attracted delegates from the USSR, Mongolia, North and South Korea, India, Vietnam, Burma, Malaya, Thailand, Ceylon, Indonesia, Philippines, Australia, New Guinea and Japan. Plans were formulated to develop trade unions in Asia through a regional office, the Asia-Australasian Liaison Bureau, staffed with representatives from the USSR, India, Indonesia, Korea and Japan.²² Thereafter, throughout the early years of the PRC, China’s commitment to trade union education escalated. By 1951 the ACFTU had set up a training school for trade unionists, and by 1953 had trained 111,000 cadres.²³ But as the above suggests, Chinese trade union training, though focused on the domestic situation in the early years of the PRC, was also rhetorically entwined with international work. As Vice-President of the ACFTU Liu Ningyi emphasised,

China's trade unions had "a special responsibility to the international labour movement" and it dedicated cadres and resources to establishing organisational contacts with Asian trade unions.²⁴ By 1956, the CCP claimed over 5,400 individual visits by Chinese communist delegates to 49 countries, and over 5,200 delegates from 75 countries visiting China since the establishment of the PRC.²⁵

Meanwhile, the now Soviet-dominated WFTU also increased its international pedagogical activities. It set up an international solidarity fund in March 1950, and discussion of matters concerning national liberation and the trade union movement dominated WFTU General Council discussions in November 1951. The first trade union training school was set up in Budapest in July 1953, and attracted large numbers of Asian students in its inaugural cohort.²⁶ By the time of the Fourth WFTU Congress in Leipzig in 1957, the WFTU was strongly affirming the important role played by trade unions in underdeveloped Asian countries, and the importance of providing adequate training to meet these needs.²⁷ From the late 1950s, the WFTU ramped up courses for Asian and African trade union officials in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: for example, trade union courses were held in Bucharest (24 Feb-16 March 1958), Budapest (31 Aug-26 Sept 1959), Tashkent, 9-30 April 1961, and more. The WFTU also began to open trade union training schools directed at Africans: the first training center specifically for African trade unionists was opened in Budapest in September 1959, followed rapidly by one in Brazzaville for students from equatorial Africa, and a Labour College in connection with UGTAN (Union Générale des Travailleurs d'Afrique Noire), as well as with other East German trade unions, in Conakry, Guinea.²⁸ By the early 1960s, the synergies between China and the USSR had turned from cooperation to competition, and nowhere did these new rivalries have more potent an impact than in Asia and Africa, where the Sino-Soviet split brought a significantly new dynamic to the global Cold War, and to the WFTU.²⁹ Thus there was an escalation in direct Soviet international programs that were increasingly and consciously oriented to students from Africa and Asia. In 1961 the Soviet Union's AUCCTU (All Union Central Council of Trade Unions)

established a Higher School of the Trade Union Movement in Moscow, which began running a separate international program, which trained some 3,300 unionists from Africa, Asia and Latin America in labour economics and other matters concerning the theory and practice of trade unionism.³⁰ The Chinese CCP responded to these initiatives by ramping up their ideological disseminations to Asia and, especially, Africa, and began to use the platform of the WFTU to highlight their differences with the Soviet Union.³¹ But in truth these tensions appeared to have been already present even in the first Budapest training school, whose syllabus was heavily and pointedly weighted towards Soviet rather than Maoist Chinese theoretical texts, intended by Moscow, as intelligence officer D. J. Scherr surmised, “to act partly as a counter-weight to Chinese influence”.³²

To counter the pedagogical challenges from these avowed “schools of communism”, the ICFTU sought to create “schools for democracy”.³³ Not long after the WFTU split in 1949, the ICFTU mobilised quickly and assembled a delegation to Asia to gather information and strategize.³⁴ In 1950 it put over 50% of its operating budget for regional activities into Asia — £56,000 out of £99,000 — while only £7000 was allocated to the Middle East, and £5000 each to Europe and Latin America. With this funding the Asian Regional Organization (ARO) was established on 4 February 1951 in Singapore, with an Indian trade unionist — the ex-General Secretary of the Indian Maritime Union — Dhyhan Mungat, serving as its Director.³⁵ Following the establishment of this office, the Malayan Trades Union Council (MTUC) became the first labour institution in the region to affiliate with the ICFTU, followed several months later, in September, by the new Singapore Trades Union Council (STUC).³⁶ It was through this entity, cash and effort flowed into the task of trade union pedagogy. Of the Asia budget, just over 20%, or £12,000, was allotted for the operation of a trade union college, along with £20,000 from other sources.³⁷ Three years after the breakup of the WFTU, the Asian Trade Union College (ATUC) was established in Calcutta, designed to be a residential labour college. A Director of Education was appointed—another veteran Indian trade unionist by the name of V. S. Mathur—and by February 1952 the total amount

earmarked for the ATUC scheme was in the region of £100,000.

The ATUC was by no means the ICFTU's only pedagogical initiative. The ICFTU also established other regional labour training schemes. In January 1951, the ICFTU's Latin American counterpart of the ARO, the Inter-American Organization (ORIT), established an educational programme for Latin American trade unionists at the Labour Relations Institute of University of Puerto Rico.³⁸ From 1953, the ICFTU also began to run training courses in West Africa, and by 1958, buoyed by the perceived successes of the ATUC, an African counterpart to the ATUC was set up in Kampala, Uganda.³⁹ Existing colleges were also co-opted into trade union pedagogy. Between 1952 and 1959, with ICFTU help, the University College of Ibadan and its centre for Extra-Mural Studies began to run residential courses on trade unions and industrial relations.⁴⁰ Yet Asia remained the area of paramount importance. The ICFTU's original intention had been to set up two Colleges: one in India and one in Singapore. A combination of resource inadequacy and in-fighting delayed the materialisation of the Singapore college, but a measure of how important Asia was to the ICFTU can be seen in its rather territorial reaction to the creation of the Philippine Labour Education College in 1954 with American money channeled through the National Economic Council (NEC) and the International Cooperation Administration (ICA).⁴¹ ICFTU officials appeared to accept with equanimity the use of American money to develop labour education institutions in the West Indies: for example, the Trade Union Education Institute established in the 1960s with USAID (the descendant of the ICA) as part of the University of the West Indies and one of several such permanent colleges.⁴² But they appeared to view Asia more territorially, writing worried and vocal letters to the Manila group about the new regional competitor, and demanding that they clarify the extent to which the Philippines college would interfere and compete with the ICFTU's activities in Calcutta.⁴³

The ATUC certainly played an important role in facilitating regular regional contacts between Asian trade unionists, but its legacy is more mixed than the very few available studies (often by players with skin in the game) might suggest.⁴⁴ The College ran six types of

courses: international courses in English (12 weeks), Indian courses taught in Hindi, Urdu, Bengali and English (4 weeks), Short Trade Union Courses taught in local languages across Asia (1-2 weeks), International Seminars, National Seminars, and Weekend and Evening Courses.⁴⁵ Each cohort had about 20-30 students, most of whom were male between the ages of 20-45, and often active members of the trade union movements in their home countries.⁴⁶ By 1963, 21 international courses for 562 Asian students had been held at the college in Calcutta, and 65 shorter courses organised in countries with affiliated trade unions, many in Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore.⁴⁷ Students were drawn from “free” trade unions all over Asia, with the overwhelming majority from India and Pakistan, and others from Hong Kong, Ceylon, Japan, Malaya, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines. They had access to a trade union library, and went on visits to local workers’ education centres, selected industrial sites and local trade union offices. They would also live together for the duration of the course, a feature of the colleges breathlessly extolled by its Director-General, V. S. Mathur, as “of far greater importance than is usually appreciated...Living together breaks down all narrow national prejudices and prepossessions and gives rise to a more cosmopolitan outlook.”⁴⁸

A more dyspeptic, and probably realistic, assessment was given by K. Werner Lauermaun, originally from the German section of the British Foreign Office, and dispatched by the ICFTU as an advisor to the college. The intentions of the college to instil “the spirit of solidarity and trade union brotherhood” was commendable, he said, but impractical given the profound differences participants brought to the table. “International consciousness arises not out of “being nice to each other” but rather a realistic appreciation of the oneness of a cause,” he wrote. In fact tensions among student participants appeared to him to increase rather than decrease after three months of communal living. Small rifts opened between Muslims and Hindus, Malayan Indians and Indians from India, the HMS and INTUC, and, largely owing to language difficulties, between Japanese students and everyone else. Sharing food was, it seemed, an ongoing difficulty.⁴⁹ And the unevenness in capability made it difficult, in

Lauermann's view, to arrive at a truly unified notion of a shared cause. The single ATUC course was not sufficiently capable of tailoring to the differences in ability between what Lauermann distinguished as the "advanced" trade unionists of Japan, Malaya, Hong Kong and the Philippines, versus the less advanced ones from India, Pakista, Ceylon, Burma, Indonesia and Thailand -- the latter of whom, he said, had a weaker grasp of what he called "organization and administrative technique".⁵⁰

Even more damning attacks came from quarters closer to home. Local communist weeklies in Bombay castigated the ATUC students as "representatives of the Chiangs, Bao-Dais and Templars who after thorough training in the art of black-legging will be planted as paid officials of company unions."⁵¹ They also denigrated the luxurious and lavishly furnished offices of the ATUC: its bespoke two-storied library and administrative buildings, separate lecture halls and four-storied hostels in a city in which "democratic organizations and private families find it almost impossible to get even a modest two-roomed flat in overcrowded Calcutta".⁵² Yet the energies which the ICFTU continued to pour doggedly into their training programs, despite all this antagonism, is a signal of how central the field of Asian trade unionism was to them, at least in the 1950s. It was in Asia that these training programs were pioneered and first worked out in detail, and this pilot project was deemed successful enough that the ATUC became a direct model for its African counterpart, established in Kampala in February 1959, and funded principally through the ICFTU's International Solidarity Fund.⁵³

What is important for our purposes is what they taught; and in this, the ideological conflicts which generated the impetus for these labour colleges, perhaps surprisingly, do not seem to have had more than a modest effect on the training syllabi. In the early incarnations of the course, the ATUC syllabus was designed to meet the "principal handicaps confronting the free trade union movement" as identified by the ICFTU scoping mission in 1950, which were, namely, matters of organisation and logistics: the need to tighten up internal structures of the unions, especially the rationalisation of dues-paying structures; the need for trade

union leadership and the high levels of illiteracy; the character of labour legislation.⁵⁴ Students would take courses together on a range of topics on primarily technocratic, “level-headed”, topics, and with few variations, these broadly encompassed: methods of collective bargaining, techniques of trade union organization and administration, labour legislation both international and domestic, labour economics, and trade union history.⁵⁵ Subjects pertaining to organization and administration took up the bulk of the College syllabus, designed to think through techniques of enrolment, running and preparing for meetings, selecting and nominating officers, collecting dues and so forth.⁵⁶ Little specifically has been done on the matter and there is much room for further investigation, but the principal ideological differences between colleges with different Cold War donors appeared to be enacted as a matter of emphasis.⁵⁷ For example, in WFTU courses, African trade unionists were lectured sternly on the development and experience of Eastern European socialist republics and the development of trade union action and solidarity in the fight against colonialism, while in ICFTU courses, rhetoric about the importance of freedom and the divorce of trade unions from politics dominated.⁵⁸ But in either case, by the 1960s it seems that many these international training centres had settled into recognizable and predictable patterns of pedagogy, which conceptualized trade unionism as a fundamentally *practical*, technocratic and administrative endeavour, seeking to teach what Lauermann referred to as “the ABCs of trade union organization”.⁵⁹ As a contemporary observer reflected with regard to the early 1960s:

Whether a young trade unionist attends the ILO's International Institute for Labour Studies in Geneva, the ICFTU's Labour College in Kampala, the AFL-CIO sponsored Institute of Free Labor Development in Washington, or Histadrut's Afro-Asian Institute, the labour college at Conakry which is supported by various communist donors, or the WFTU training centre in Budapest, elements of the curriculum will be very similar. Regardless of one's ideological preferences, only limited variations are possible in efforts

to impart knowledge about *such practical matters as trade union administration*.⁶⁰

Secondly, beyond the pedagogical competition between the WFTU and the ICFTU, both offered forms of networks that enabled transnational mobility, connection and communication on a greater scale than perhaps ever in the past. It is beyond the scope of a single article to do justice to the intricate connections enabled by these networks. Recent work on the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) shows the extent to which WFTU-sponsored networks underwrote a much broader range of connectivities than we have previously appreciated; this article and others in this special issue suggest the extent to which the ICFTU and its networks -- in the case of this article, trade union schools and their pedagogies of trade unionism -- might also have had such effects.⁶¹ It was in this context, driven by pedagogical concerns, that the ICFTU, in 1956, saw fit to dispatch one of its avatars of trade unionism to Asia: a technocrat by the name of George L-P Weaver, to whose fraternal and personal networks this article now turns.

Cold Warrior and pedagogue: The missionary travels of George L-P Weaver

George Weaver was an AFL-CIO trade unionist, a long-time railway and airlines unionist, a civil rights activist, and one of a number of black labour officials who were being sent to Asia and Africa on behalf of the US government. The US government had, as labour official Robert Browne put it, "become aware of the Negro's direct usefulness in international relations".⁶² Consequently, one finds not only black radical activists, outlined in Judy Wu's work, but also black labour officials, serving Singapore, Cambodia, Burma, the Philippines, Tokyo and Okinawa. After the Second World War, Weaver, who was at that point serving as special assistant to democratic Senator Stuart Symington, had built up a solid and admirable reputation: as Jay Krane put it, "one of the outstanding Negro trade unionists in the United States and...has been a leading figure in the fight against discrimination and segregation."⁶³ In part due to this reputation, he was commissioned by the ICFTU to serve

several stints in Singapore and Okinawa in the 1950s before returning to the American trade union scene. He has been little studied, and where his presence is noted, it is as an avatar of US intervention in advancing the cause of free labour in Asia.⁶⁴ I want, in the remainder of this article, to explore both the pedagogical and dialogical sides of Weaver's movements in Asia, and to highlight some of the ways in which, in the Cold War classroom, the former could, and did, enable the latter.

Weaver's Okinawan mission was briefer, and in some ways more frustrating and less long-lasting, than his Singaporean mission. He had been personally nominated for this mission by George Meany, the President of the recently-merged AFL-CIO, in part due his strong reputation as a trade unionist, but also because he was already working in the region, having been invited to Singapore to advise the local labour scene in September 1955. The Okinawa expedition was commissioned after the Fourth World Congress of the ICFTU, held in Vienna in May 1955, which had considered a report alleging the ongoing violation of the basic human rights of workers in the Ryukyu islands over exploitative wages and the forcible expropriation of land by the US military.⁶⁵ Thus Weaver was seconded to Okinawa for two weeks in May 1956 as the Chair of the ICFTU fact-finding mission ordered in Vienna to investigate local labour laws and conditions under US military occupation.⁶⁶ His report in 1956, in the final analysis, emphasised the technocratic inadequacies of the labour situation in Okinawa. The laws and ordinances were "complex, contradictory, burdensome, and far too involved for an infant labour movement, devoid of industrial experience, to understand." There was, he wrote, "a general lack of basic knowledge of the function of trade unions" among Okinawans, and even "the objectives of free trade unionism were not understood." The remedy was, as always, trade union education. Weaver was a strong proponent of the work being done by the ICFTU Asian Trade Union College, discussed earlier, and believed this to be the key to advancing free labour. He and his team finally recommended that a US commission be appointed to review existing labour laws, that the ICFTU assign an "experienced trade unionist" to provide expertise to the developing trade union movement,

and that the ATUC should organise short term courses in Okinawa “as this kind of programme is needed in Okinawa more than anywhere else.”⁶⁷

These statements confirm him as a classic Cold War pedagogue. Its underlying convictions also drove his Singapore mission. Weaver was invited to serve as an advisor to the Singaporean labour scene at a time when anti-colonial labour activism, anti-communist paranoia and the birth pangs of independence were at unprecedented height.⁶⁸ Reading his reports, it is clear that he shared with British advisors as well as the Chief Minister of Singapore Lim Yew Hock a view of the Singapore labour movement as an immature, restive and chaotic one, in need of a firm, disciplinary hand.⁶⁹ It is worth noting, too, that Weaver was a Cold Warrior in another conventional way. His previous experience of Singapore, in 1951 as part of a Reconstruction Finance Corporation mission to negotiate tin agreements for the US government in Britain, Belgium, Bolivia, Indonesia and Thailand, had predisposed him to a particular conception of labour in Singapore as a predominantly Chinese problem. Since the early 50s, after the establishment of Mao’s China, the US, PRC and ROC had vied over the loyalties of overseas Chinese communities.⁷⁰ Indeed the US, as early as 1946, already noted that the overseas Chinese were “represented a substantial economic asset to China”, “an important tool that China might use in extending its economic and political influence in Southeast Asia”, and most baldly, “fifth column spearheads for expansion.”⁷¹ These were assessments which Weaver brought with him to Singapore. In 1954, before his move to Asia, Weaver gave a speech which in the main reproduced the standard Cold War discourse on the matter, and reiterated its key sentiments, namely that the 12 million or so Chinese distributed roughly across Southeast Asia, “industrious, aloof and wealthy”, looked invariably to the Chinese government for protection. “For the time being this large potential fifth column is neutralised by our recognition of Formosa and refusal to recognise Red China,” he declared. “However, if Formosa were abandoned, it is not inconceivable that this group could become a powerful instrument for red China’s penetration of this area.”⁷²

Subsequently, when Weaver arrived in Singapore in September 1955, he found himself in

the thick of tumultuous social change that appeared to confirm his views of both the immaturity of the Singapore labour scene, as well as the hand of communist China at work in South-east Asia. Since the labour front government had taken power in May that year, Singapore had seen a wave of political crises and industrial unrest. Over the next few months, Weaver would witness firsthand the eruption of the Chinese Middle School riots in September 1956 and the subsequent severe crackdown by the Lim Yew Hock regime, the latter of which undoubtedly helped convince the British that Singapore was “ready” and “responsible” enough to negotiate independence.⁷³ In his 1955 report on the Singaporean labour scene, Weaver asserted, in a raw show of paternalism that fully embodied his Cold War pedagogical mentality, that “there are about 10,000 Chinese students apparently completely beyond the control of either parents, schools, or the government...[who] have accepted communist doctrine, camouflaged as Chinese Nationalism” in Singapore.⁷⁴ His first report on the Singapore Trade Unions Congress continued this Cold War thinking. In making a case for the immediate and urgent strengthening of the Singapore ICFTU office, he wrote to the US State department in October 1955, expressing his conviction that “in order to save Singapore from domination by the PAP...*which in reality means a further extension of Peiping’s power*...the non-communist labour unions must be rapidly built up and strengthened.”⁷⁵

Weaver launched himself into the work, seeking to develop the STUC along “sound democratic lines”, as a bulwark against the radical Chinese-dominated Middle Road unions. His approach to this was classically pedagogical: efficiency, rationalization, secularization, and technocratic training. Already in his 1955 report, he had diagnosed the weakness of the STUC as its administrative inefficiency. The STUC “had no paid officers and no equipment, not even a typewriter, filing cabinet or any of the paraphernalia usually associated with the operation of a labour office.”⁷⁶ For this illness, he prescribed the remedy of American aid. \$5000 was obtained from the CIO, and was spent on increasing the STUC’s operational efficiency in the form of two part-time clerks, a full-time organizing secretary by the name of

K. C. Thomas, as well as the usual accoutrements of a good trade union: solid office equipment and furniture, a typewriter, and a telephone.⁷⁷ But there were deeper and wider problems in his mind. Weaver associated the deficiencies of Singapore labour movement with those of its government, neither of which had been, in his view, capable of assembling even “the most elementary statistics....no acceptable figures on the number of employees in industry, the number of unemployed, the number of unions operating in the colonies, the wages paid....other elementary statistics relating to labour and industry.” There was not even agreement, he complained, on how many strikes there had been since May, when the labour front had taken power -- the Minister of Labour reported a figure of 230 to the Legislative Assembly, but the colonial advisers to the Minister of Labour had a figure of 150-160 instead.⁷⁸ For this illness, presumably, one could only prescribe the continuing oversight of decolonization, and continuing tutelage in the sciences of proper, rational government.

It is worth noting, too, that the enlightened pedagogy of trade unionism was envisioned not only to occupy a clean, sterile place beyond party politics, but should also not be sullied with such dangerous and backward things as religion and race. During Weaver’s 1955 visit, he worked with Thomas Bavin to try to squash a nascent training center for trade unionism being set up by Singaporean Catholics, which was to be funded not by the ICFTU or the CIO, but by the Committee for Free Asia and a government grant. The reason given was to work against the religious balkanization of the trade union movement, to prevent it from becoming “a tool in the hands of the Rabbi Islamic Anti-Indian and Anti-Trade Union elements”.⁷⁹ Aside from the usual concerns about territory, the tone of liberal, secular modernity that runs through such assessments is clear. Thankfully, Bavin concluded, he and Weaver were able to “impress certain influential contacts in the Alliance Government” of the “dangers” of a Catholic trade union movement, and as of November 1956, “three responsible Ministers” intervened to oppose it.⁸⁰ Yet at the same time, Weaver’s long-standing activism in black civil rights prior to his travels in Asia had also disposed him to a clearer and more sympathetic understanding of the racial nature of anti-colonial grievance. He understood that

beneath the drive for self-government was “a searing anti-white sentiment” that was “particularly strong in a large proportion of Chinese-educated... Add to this a wage structure inexcusably low, poor working conditions, an inadequate labour policy, and an inexperienced government, and you have all the ingredients for the present chaos...”⁸¹ Nonetheless, he could not yet divorce this clearly from his strong convictions against communism. Weaver was present at the opening of the National Union of Plantation Workers building in Kuala Lumpur on 30 August 1957, the day before Malaya’s official day of independence from British rule. He wrote an article from his experience, enthusing that Malaya had been developed from a communist-riddled warzone into an exemplary site of free labour. “Ignorance has to be erased and replaced by enlightenment”; only thus could Malaya “democratically create order from the turmoil of guerrilla warfare.”⁸²

Weaver continued his work in Singapore through 1957, the year in which independence negotiations began, until October, when he left permanently for the US. He developed, over his time in Asia, close relations with many trade unionists. In part this was a feature of his character: warm, gracious and working for a cause he believed in, he appeared to his interlocutors as eminently sympathetic; he seemed to have time in his correspondence for everybody. Singapore appeared to have a special place in his heart, and much of this was cultivated through ICFTU contacts. He became extremely close with the leaders of the Malayan Trade Unions Congress (MTUC) and National Union of Plantation Workers (NUPW), P. P. Narayanan and S. P. S. Nathan, both of whom became not only sources of advice and wisdom for Weaver, but also of luxury Indian fabrics for his wife Mary. He cultivated a genial relationship with the ICFTU secretary in Singapore, Nellie Hoang, one of the few active female trade unionists with whom he maintained a constant correspondence, and who appears to have almost single-handedly maintained the Singapore ICFTU office in the late 1950s. “There is something about Singapore,” he wrote to Nellie Hoang after he left, “particularly the people like you that causes we Westerners to never be the same after visiting there. I find myself at times very lonely for Singapore and wishing I was back.”⁸³ Not all of

his connections were with ICFTU affiliates, however; there are many instances in which he took a mediatory role in his correspondence between unionists who steered clear of the ICFTU, such as Seet Leong Seng of the Qantas Union, and his ICFTU correspondents in Brussels. He was also the recipient, along with Tom Bavin, of respect and many accolades for his work settling a dispute between employers and employees of the Canadian-owned Ford motor assembly plant, the relatively successful outcome of which served to increase his reputation substantially among Singaporean colleagues.⁸⁴

In his correspondence with friends and colleagues, Weaver gave many reasons for his departure back to the US trade union scene, but it appears to have been a decision he agonised over for most of 1957, before making a final decision. As the ICFTU brought its ambitions more in line with capacity, it began to shift its focus, especially after 1958, from international to courses that catered more to particular local situations and languages, and oriented its policy specifically towards “fielding Asians in Asia”.⁸⁵ This was an approach which Weaver had strongly endorsed through his time in Asia, and may have been one of the reasons for his eventual departure -- out of a belief that there could, in the end, only be so much that foreigners could do.⁸⁶ He was probably also tired of travel; in late 1957, knowing already that he would be leaving Singapore for good, he wrote with palpable longing to his wife Mary on their anniversary: “This is the last September that we will be separated...Each year I need you more and you are more dear to me.”⁸⁷ But it also seems likely that among his reasons for doing so were the escalating tensions in Singapore between international and local activists of labour. Despite the goodwill among many, he suffered from an unavoidable suspicion in Singapore circles that he was illicitly channelling American money into Singapore trade union scene. He of course strenuously denied this, and historical assessments suggest it is highly unlikely that he was actually doing so,⁸⁸ but a scandal surrounding the injection of over half a million dollars into a trade unionist’s personal bank account fanned the flames of doubt.⁸⁹ Weaver, among others, saw clearly the writing on the wall for the ICFTU.⁹⁰ Tensions reached a head at a May Day rally in 1960, in which Sidney Woodhull, a

prominent radical trade unionist, announced the final termination of the Singapore Trade Union Congress's affiliation with the ICFTU.⁹¹ By that point, George Weaver had long departed Singapore. However, his fraternal networks remained and continued to refine and nuance his anti-communism and attitudes to the Cold War in Asia, as the next section shows.

The fraternal re-education of a Cold Warrior

Shortly after his return to the US, Weaver resigned from the AFL-CIO to become assistant to the President of the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (IUE), James Carey, with whom he had a strong and mutually respectful personal relationship. At the IUE, he took up a post as Director of Political Action in March 1958, committing himself to helping mobilise American labour to support the Democratic run for the presidency, and he also engaged once more, as he had his whole life, with the question of civil rights in America. But he also committed himself to his organisation's foreign policy, drawing on nearly a decade of work in Asia. Weaver's international expertise came at a critical time. That summer proved to be a tumultuous one for global Cold War politics. In July 1958 Eisenhower sent the US Marines to Lebanon to rescue the pro-Western Chamoun regime from its purported communist challengers; the following month, Maoist China began shelling the island of Jinmen (Quemoy) and again, Eisenhower sent US carriers and naval units to assist the ROC and help protect its supply lines, in accordance with its obligations under a 1954 American-Taiwan treaty. "The bankruptcy of our foreign policy in the Middle East is apparent to the rankest amateur," Weaver wrote animatedly to his colleague Thomas Posey, another black US labour official stationed in Rangoon, with whom he had made contact while in Singapore.⁹² And in his mind the questions of China and the Middle East were tightly interwoven: although the emergency special session convened by the UN focused on the question of Lebanon and the withdrawal of troops from the Middle East, "the role of Communist China will be the lengthening shadow in the wings for many of the delegates".⁹³

Weaver's actions in this crucial year, in 1958 after he left Singapore, shed light on the effects of Asian trade union networks in the Cold War, and provoke us to reconsider what lessons were being taught and learned in the Cold War classroom. On the one hand, his time in Singapore throughout the 1950s in Singapore from within trade union circles had chipped away at his Cold War ideological orthodoxy. In his fraternal correspondence with various Asian trade unionists throughout the 1950s, I suggest, it is possible to discern a growing cognisance of the complexity of so-called "communism" in Asia, and his ideological position on the Cold War appears to shift most markedly in 1956-58 after his periods of extended service in Okinawa and Singapore. On the other hand, Weaver's fraternal networks after he left Singapore were also galvanised by his Asian interlocutors, who drew on them to advance their interests against the hegemonic bipolarities of the Cold War.⁹⁴

In March 1958, Loke Wan Tho, the Head of Cathay pictures in Singapore, wrote to Weaver, asking for his help with a matter concerning Han Suyin, the famed Eurasian Chinese writer from Malaya, who was at the time, as Loke wrote, "one of the most powerful pens in Asia." He explained that Paramount Pictures had recently bought the film rights to Han Suyin's new book, and invited Han Suyin to visit Hollywood, a trip she was in the midst of planning, and for which she had submitted a US visa application. At almost the same time, her father, who lived in Beijing, had died with tragic suddenness, necessitating a simultaneous application for a Chinese visa. As she explained in a letter to her close friend Gerald Glaskin, while stranded in Hong Kong:

What happened was that my father died -- very suddenly, in about 10 seconds, in complete good health -- at the same time...Paramount invited me to Hollywood. I had already filed an application for a U.S. visa, but it has not come through yet, as I suppose there is a bit of head scratching over my controversial case in the State department... arriving here I had to cope with arranging for travel to Peking and filed an application for a Chinese visa, but it is delayed longer than usual, possibly owing to my Paramount

popularity... Honestly, talk of being between two stools, it never struck me before how tricky it is to belong to two worlds at once.⁹⁵

Loke Wan Tho was writing to George Weaver to intercede in Washington on her behalf. “I do not believe,” he wrote stolidly to Weaver, “that she is a communist, and her opinions, though they are left-wing, are no more left-wing than the opinions of Aneurhan [sic] Bevan.”⁹⁶ However, her visa had been refused. “I know what sympathy and understanding you have for Asians,” Loke wrote, “and if you think I am right to believe that the only way to win friends in this part of the world is not to pursue an inelastic policy, then I hope you will find it possible to take [this] up in Washington.”⁹⁷ Weaver responded immediately, registering “a stiff complaint” with the State Department, as well as writing back to Loke to request a copy of Han’s latest book, *The Mountain is Young*. In his letter to the Deputy Attorney-General of the US State Department of Justice, Lawrence Walsh, Weaver wrote explaining Han Suyin’s circumstances, directly lifting Loke’s description of her as “one of the most powerful pens in Asia”, and explaining that, having met her numerous times in 1955-57, he was of the opinion that though she “has always been a burr under the blanket of British officialdom, and has also from time to time gotten under the skin of American officials...she is not a communist, and it would be a grave mistake [to deny her a visa]...if this decision is allowed to stand it will cause irreparable harm to our relations in Southeast Asia and will haunt us for a long time to come.”⁹⁸ A month later, her visa was approved.

In the aftermath of this incident, Weaver’s views on the overseas Chinese continued to develop and shift course. In August 1958, just as Eisenhower was sending the Marines to Jinmen, Weaver sent long letters to a handful of his Asian correspondents, among them P. P. Narayanan of the MTUC, Loke Wan Tho of Cathay Cinemas in Singapore and G. Kandasamy of the ICFTU and STUC, asking them in tones of greatest respect what their opinion was on the recent hardening of US policy on China, and in particular on the question of Chinese recognition at the UN. Weaver himself set out his own strong reservations about

this policy, and in a marked shift from his earlier position, explained that he was “especially doubtful of the thesis that there is compelling danger of the “Overseas Chinese” communities in the newly independent countries of South East Asia becoming more effective instruments of Communist subversion if we extend diplomatic representation to Communist China.” This view, he explained, did not gel with what he saw in his many visits to Asia.⁹⁹ The replies he received confirmed his new thinking. Narayanan gave his thoughts some time later. The overseas Chinese, he said, did not look at China as a communist power, but as a regime that has simply been able to “pull up China... There are still lots of Chinese and others who are opposed to communism and who still are prepared to recognise this rebirth of China as a powerful nation as a historical event. This is a thing which America and certain sections of American public opinion do not understand.”¹⁰⁰ Loke Wan Tho also gave his view. “America is backing the wrong horse in the Formosa government,” he said, “which has no earthly hope of getting back to the mainland without the help of US arms.”¹⁰¹

Weaver took these views on board, and we can discern them in his contributions to the local policy of his own trade union. Weaver appears to have been more or less singlehandedly responsible for the articulation of a strong oppositional agenda on behalf of the IUE that would elevate him into the ranks of the Kennedy administration. Not long after his canvassing of opinions from his trade union friends in Singapore, Weaver submitted three policy statements to the Eighth Constitutional Convention of the IUE in Philadelphia, held in late September 1958: one on Civil Rights, reflecting his long-standing activism on this matter; a second on Political Action, reflecting the mandate of his new position at the IUE; and a third on Foreign Policy, reflecting his new suite of interests and expertise accrued over the course of the 1950s. He wrote back to many of his Asian interlocutors afterward, sending them copies of these statements with some pride, and gives special mention to the statement on Foreign Policy, which, he said, “represents the most critical statement adopted by any American trade union”, but was well-received and adopted after much discussion.¹⁰² The foreign policy statement was indeed vigorously critical. “Our China policy,” he wrote, “has

caused us to drift into a position where an aged, bitter and frustrated dictator, isolated on a small Pacific island, can make us go to war with Red China -- and perhaps bring on a third world war... This is swashbuckling and saber-rattling of awesome proportions.... We must, without delay, disengage ourselves from direct involvement in the struggle over Quemoy and Matsu. It is fantastically absurd and unconscionably reckless to claim, as President Eisenhower has claimed, that the defense of the free world is tied up with the defense of these tiny islands. Negative containment of Communism should not be the sum total of, and justification for, a foreign policy.”¹⁰³ Strong words, indeed - and in sentiment, quite far removed from his earlier hawkishness on the question of “Red China” and the overseas Chinese.

By 1960, and by the time of Kennedy’s victory in Washington, Weaver had departed substantially from the monochromatic excesses of his earlier Cold Warrior mentality. Speaking of Kennedy’s victory to his old friend S. P. Nathan of the NUPW, he wrote: “We supported him more vigorously, in every way, than we have any recent Presidential candidate,” and that his election would augur a shift in emphasis from “anti-communism as a policy [to] more positive approaches to building democratic countries.”¹⁰⁴ In order to make this happen, Weaver resigned from the IUE, and made the transition back into politics.¹⁰⁵ In January 1961, Weaver accepted a role in the new Kennedy administration as Assistant Secretary of Labour, which would become the first administration to make any attempt to take non-alignment seriously, rather than as fodder for accusations of immorality, and to try to bring Asians and Africans into closer relations with the United States.¹⁰⁶

How far Weaver’s personal and affective bonds were sustained into the 1960s during his work in the Kennedy administration and the Labour Department remains beyond the scope of this article. Certainly he continued to maintain a cordial, even affectionate relationship with Singapore and Malaya, and in 1963 accepted the award of the Panglima Mangku Negara (Order of the Defender of the Realm) in the new Federation of Malaysia -- as far as I can ascertain, Weaver was its first non-Asian, and American, recipient.¹⁰⁷ This level of intimacy

was not sustained with his Okinawan contacts, with whom he spent far less time, and by his own account, in work which was more alien and frustrating to him: “The great differences in language and approach is making this job difficult, time consuming, and tedious,” he had complained to Jay Krane. “Our backgrounds and points of reference are so dissimilar, that considerable discussion is required to resolve simple points.”¹⁰⁸ After his departure from Asia, he preferred instead to keep up with developments in Okinawa via his correspondence with another African-American US labour official stationed there by the ICFTU from September 1959 onward, Howard Robinson.¹⁰⁹ These suggest, among other things, the limits to fraternal networks imposed, potentially, by language and cultural affinity. Yet the personal and the fraternal seemed in many ways to matter more in the world of internationalist connection than the shadowy, formless presence of organizations like the ICFTU, though the ICFTU, like the WFTU also provided a critical infrastructure for these connections.¹¹⁰ As Seet Leong Seng wrote succinctly to Weaver, “I have always had every confidence in you...and still do, but I never had any in ICFTU and I suppose their lack of confidence in us is probably reciprocal.”¹¹¹ Here I have merely sought to lay out an example of the ways in which such networks and connections, forged within a distinctly pedagogical Cold War context, nonetheless was capable of sustaining dialogical interactions that gave rise to alternative agendas, even ideological transformations, within the Cold War classroom.

Conclusion

This article has sought to cast light into the corners of the Cold War classroom, showing how and where macroscopic geopolitical trends fused with microhistory: with personal politics and individual ideological transformation. It is a conviction of this article, as well as others in this special issue, that the dynamics of the Cold War in Asia and Africa can only be fully understood at these more subaltern levels of internationalism.¹¹² The microhistorical view of the Cold War reveals a landscape of agency: of opportunity, vectors of solidarity and self-assertion in the Cold War classroom. The individuals who moved within them were

enmeshed in networks that were a product of the ideologically competitive Cold War world, but often enabled them to make unexpected connections and pursue divergent agendas that are poorly served by the ideological labels of the Cold War, above all “communist”, “anti-communist”, and “non-aligned”. In short, the cross-fertilizations enabled by pedagogical frameworks of the Cold War that sought to bring trade unionists into ideological line, paradoxically generated opportunities for genuine, and subaltern, engagements with difference.

Though it has not been properly studied, and there is still much to do yet, I have suggested in this article that networks of trade unionism in Asia flourished at more subterranean levels of internationalism than we tend to pay attention to behind the mythic and limited geopolitics of Bandung. Bandung’s elite internationalism was an energizing ideal, but gave way quickly to an exclusionist politics and the thorny antagonisms of the 1960s and 70s; by the 1980s, it was in “precipitous decline”.¹¹³ But these trade union connections suggest possibilities for exploring less idealized, and perhaps more enduring, forms of engagement: not only between and among Asians, but also between Asians and western activists in ways different to Wu’s notion of “radical orientalism”, which necessarily entailed a certain amount of fantasy.¹¹⁴ Far from speaking of networks in the abstract, we need to examine more closely the specific ways in which connection and encounter actually functioned on the ground, in order that we can begin to recover submerged pockets of affective and personal politics that complicate the binary logics of the Cold War.¹¹⁵ For it is in these subaltern internationalisms that we might glimpse the multifaceted nature of thought, deed and action in a bipolar world: one in which Asia, often regarded as a passive sideshow and a failed theatre of Cold War conflict, might instead appear as site of dialogue and transformative ideological change.

1 The literature on Bandung has seen an efflorescence in recent years: see Christopher Lee, ed. *Making a World After Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010); Antonia Finnane, and Derek McDougall, eds. *Bandung 1955: Little Histories* (Caulfield Vic.: Monash University Press, 2010); See Seng Tan, and Amitav Acharya, eds. *Bandung Revisited: The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African*

Conference for International Order (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008); James Mackie, *Bandung 1955: Non-Alignment and Afro-Asian Solidarity* (Singapore: Didier Millet, 2005); Matthew Jones, "A "Segregated" Asia?: Race, the Bandung Conference, and Pan-Asianist Fears in American Thought and Policy, 1954-1955," *Diplomatic History* 29, no. 5 (2005): 841-68.

2 Naoko Shimazu, "Diplomacy as Theatre: Staging the Bandung Conference of 1955," *Modern Asian Studies* 48, no. 1 (2014): 225-52. On Bandung as a turning point in a "people's history" of the Third World, see Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York: New Press, 2007).

3 On the dominant maleness of Third World leaders, see Philip Holden, *Autobiography and decolonization: Modernity, masculinity, and the nation-state* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008).

4 Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Legacies of Bandung: Decolonisation and the Politics of Culture," *Economic and Political Weekly* 40, no. 46 (2005): 4812-18.

5 Prasenjit Duara, "The Cold War as a Historical Period: An Interpretive Essay," *Journal of Global History* 6, no. 3 (2011), 90.

6 For a good example of this relationship see Jennifer Lindsay, and Maya H. T. Liem, eds. *Heirs to World Culture: Being Indonesian 1950-1965* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2012).

7 I use the word "subaltern" advisedly, less as a reference to the "subaltern studies" school, and gesturing more to what V. K. Gidwani referred to as "practices of thinking, border crossing and connecting that are transgressive of the established order"—which, in the context of an established, Bandung-dominated order of the Third World, opens up for me the possibility of dialogue beyond pedagogy. See V. K. Gidwani, "Subaltern cosmopolitanism as politics," *Antipode*, vol. 38, no. 1 (2006):7-21, and Minhao Zeng, "Subaltern cosmopolitanism: concept and approaches", *The Sociological Review*, vol. 62 (2014):137-68. I am grateful to Itty Abraham for pushing me to articulate this more clearly, and for the references. An earlier article offers an elaboration of another subaltern internationalist space: the attendance by numerous ordinary men and women, many of whom were Asian trade unionists, of a widely overlooked peace conference; see Rachel Leow, "A missing peace: The Asia-Pacific Peace Conference, Beijing 1952, and the emotional making of Third World Internationalism", *Journal of World History*, forthcoming.

8 For a recent example of anti-communism and decolonisation with regard to South Korea, see Charles Kraus, "'The Danger is Two-Fold': Decolonisation and Cold War in Anti-Communist Asia, 1955–7," *The International History Review* 39, no. 2 (2016): 256-73. For the liberal alternative and the anti-communist undercurrents in Bandung, see Lisandro Claudio, *Liberalism and the Postcolony: Thinking the State in 20th-Century Philippines* (Kyoto: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, 2017).

9 Jennifer Luff, "Labor Anticommunism in the United States of America and the United Kingdom, 1920–49," *Journal of Contemporary History* 53, no. 1 (2017).

10 On attempts to reconcile decolonisation and the Cold War and to weight their relative importance, see Christopher Goscha, and Christian F. Ostermann, eds. *Connecting Histories: Decolonization and the Cold War in Southeast Asia, 1945-1962* (Washington D.C: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2009). On Singapore, see recently Gareth Curless, "'The People Need Civil Liberties': Trade Unions and Contested Decolonisation in Singapore," *Labor History* 57, no. 1 (2016): 53-70.

11 For a suggestive heuristic framework for different kinds of internationalism, see Emma Rothschild, "Two Concepts of Internationalism", paper presented at the Political Thought and Intellectual History Research Seminar, Cambridge University, 19 January 2015.

12 Among a growing number of important exceptions are Lee, *Making a World After Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives*; Finnane, and McDougall, *Bandung 1955: Little Histories*.

13 For an example of possibilities and limits in the case of Singapore, see Yee Fong Leong, "The Impact of the Cold War on the Development of Trade Unionism in Malaya (1948-1957)," *Journal of Southeast Asian studies* 23, no. 1 (1992); Nicholas White, "The Limits of Late-Colonial Intervention: Labour Policy and the Development of Trade Unions in 1950s Malaya," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 36, no. 106 (2008): 429-49.

14 For an excellent study of the movement of black US "radicals" to Asia in the later and more turbulent period of the 1960s, and its comparable emphasis on personal transformation through political dialogue and engagement with non-state actors, see Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, *Radicals on the Road: Internationalism, Orientalism, and Feminism During the Vietnam Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013). There is burgeoning interest in black radical internationalism in Asia; see for example Robeson Frazier, *The East is Black: Cold War China in the Black Radical Imagination* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015). For some suggestive but somewhat over-theoretical work on black radicals in Japan and Okinawa, see Yuichiro Onishi, *Transpacific Antiracism: Afro-Asian Solidarity in Twentieth-Century Black America, Japan and Okinawa* (New York: NYU Press, 2016). Our focus in this special issue is concerned with trade unionists, rather than radical activists, and Weaver was not a "radical orientalist" in the sense that Wu outlines in her book.

15 On the significance of the Passfield Circular, see Peter Weiler, "Forming Responsible Trade Unions: The Colonial Office, Colonial Labor, and the Trades Union Congress," *Radical History Review* 28-30 (1984), 369-70.

16 Weiler, "Responsible Trade Unions," 379-80.

17 Anthony Carew, "Conflict Within the ICFTU: Anti-Communism and Anti-Colonialism in the 1950s,"

International review of social history 41, no. 2 (1996): 147. Carew is the principal expert on the ICFTU; to my knowledge there is no corresponding counterpart for the WFTU. I thank Gareth Curless for his views on this matter.

18 World Federation of Trade Unions, “History of the WFTU,” <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/26/041.html> (accessed 5 January, 2017).

19 For a record of this trip, see Shi Zhe, “With Mao and Stalin: The Reminiscences of Mao’s Interpreter. Part II: Liu Shaoqi in Moscow,” *Chinese Historians* 6 (1993): 67-90. See also Chen Jian Bandung discourse

20 See Liu Ningyi, “Guanyu Zhaokai Ya Ao Gonghui Huiyi [On the Convening of the Asia-Australia Trade Union Conference],” in *Lishi Huiyi [Recollections From History]* (Beijing: Renmin ribao chubanshe, 1996).

21 As laid out by Liu Shaoqi, “Greet the Successful Asian and Australian Trade Union Delegates” Meeting”, 23 November 1949, in *Zhongguo gongren yundong de jingyan jiaoxun he renwu* (Peking: Workers’ Press, 1949), pp. 13-20.

22 “Resolution on the Creation of the WFTU Liaison Bureau in Asia” and “Trade Union Conference of the Asian and Australian Countries, December 1949: Manifesto”, in *Report of Activity of the World Federation of Trade Unions, May 1949-August 1953, presented to the 3rd World Trade Union Congress, Vienna, October 10-21, 1953* (Vienna: WFTU, 1953).

23 *Zhongguo gong hui quan guo dai biao da hui, The Seventh All-China Congress of Trade Unions*, [1st ed.]. ed. (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1953), 74.

24 Liu Ningyi, “You Guan Gonghui Guoji Gongzuo De Ji Ge Wenti [A Few Matters Concerning International Trade Union Work],” in *Lishi Huiyi [Recollections From History]* (Beijing: Renmin ribao chubanshe, 1996).

25 “Communist China’s ‘People’s Diplomacy’, January 1955 through June 1956”, CIA Intelligence Report no. 7422.1, CIA FOIA Electronic Reading Room, CIA-RDP78-00915R000700060004-4, accessed 22 January 2017.

26 The international solidarity fund discussed in *Report on the Activities of the World Federation of Trade Unions, May 1949-August 1953, presented to the 3rd World Trade Union Congress, Vienna, Oct 10-21, 1953*, p.

49. For information on the first Budapest WFTU training school see D. J. Scherr, “WFTU Training Courses”, March 1955, PR 161/23/G, TNA FO 1110/755.

27 See e.g. S. A. Dange’s 51-page report to the Fourth Congress, “Trade Union Tasks in the Fight Against Colonialism: Report to the Fourth World Trade Union Congress”, 4-15 October 1957 (Leipzig: WFTU, 1957).

28 Report on the Activities of the World Federation of Trade Unions, November 1957-June 1961, presented to the 5th World Trade Union Congress, Moscow 4-16 December 1961, p. 108. See also Robert Bass, and

Elizabeth Bass, "Eastern Europe," in *Africa and the Communist World*, ed. Zbigniew Brzezinski (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963), 107.

29 For an excellent recent study, see Jeremy Friedman, *Shadow Cold War: The Sino-Soviet Split and the Third World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

30 J. Svetlicnij, "At Moscow, a University for Trade Unions from All over the World," *World Trade Union Movement*, 1976, No. 10, pp. 30-31.

31 Friedman, *Shadow Cold War*. pp. 44-52.

32 See Appendices A and B on the WFTU's Budapest training courses in PR 161/23/G, TNA FO 1110/755.

33 This language is used routinely in the ICFTU sources.

34 Report on the Asian Regional Conference, Karachi, 1951, ICFTU 1236.

35 Dhyam Mungat, 28 February 1951, ICFTU 1236.

36 Yeo Kim Wah, *Political Development in Singapore, 1945-55* (Singapore: NUS Press, 1973), 232.

37 ICFTU Executive Board Meeting, Brussels, 26-30 November 1961, extracts, in TNA FO 371/101279.

38 Hans Gottfurcht, "Notes for a Lecture on the History of International Trade Unionism", n.d. but c. 1953, ICFTU 3257.

39 "The College on the Equator: The Story of the ICFTU Educational Activities in Africa", 7 July 1961, ICFTU 1188. I am grateful to Gez McCann for making the Africa files available to me, and for bringing the Kampala college to my attention during our collaborative archival visit in January 2016.

40 Hakeem Ibikunle Tijani, *Union Education in Nigeria: Labor, Empire, and Decolonization Since 1945* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 69-70.

41 A brief overview at Jorge V. Sibal, "A Century of the Philippine Labor Movement," *Illawarra Unity* 4, no. 1 (2004): 29-41.

42 An overview of Caribbean labour colleges at Danny Roberts, and Lauren Marsh, "Labor Education in the Caribbean: A Critical Evaluation of Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 90 (2016): 186-95.

43 See correspondence between Hans Gottfurcht, Jay Oldenbroek, G. Mapara and José Hernandez, April-July 1959, ICFTU 3771.

44 See e.g. V. S. Mathur, *Asian Trade Union College: The Story of an International Experiment in Free Trade Union Education 1952-1954* (Calcutta: ICFTU Asian Trade Union College, 1955). Mathur was the director of the college. For another somewhat partisan appraisal, see Arnold Zack, *Labor Training in Developing Countries: A Challenge in Responsible Democracy* (New York: Praeger, 1964).

-
- 45 Zack, *Labor Training in Developing Countries: A Challenge in Responsible Democracy*, 125-26.
- 46 See annual reports on ATUC courses in ICFTU files, e.g. ICFTU 3257.
- 47 Zack, *Labor Training in Developing Countries: A Challenge in Responsible Democracy*, 33-34.
- 48 V. S. Mathur, "Report on the First Course", 5 November 1952-31 January 1953", ICFTU 3257
- 49 As outlined in Laueremann's report; but an ongoing problem. See, for example, the daily report by M. Halawany Hakim, an Indonesian student attending an ICFTU ATUC course in Calcutta, 22 August - 12 November 1960, ICFTU 3260, e.g. "the foods [sic] here is no [sic] comfortable for us, which always....always...cooking CARIE [curry], therefore, we always get stomach trouble."
- 50 Letter from Werner Laueremann to Jay Oldenbroek, May 1953, summarised in Report on the Second Course, 15 Feb - 10 May 1953, ICFTU 3257.
- 51 "Plot to Disrupt Labour Unity", *Blitz*, 6 November 1952, in ICFTU 3240.
- 52 Sunil Muni, "ICFTU Training Center in Calcutta: A College to Inculcate Imperialist Ideology", 23 November 1952, ICFTU 3240.
- 53 "The College on the Equator", ICFTU 1188.
- 54 Proceedings from the ICFTU Asian Regional Conference, 28-31 May, 1951, Karachi, ICFTU 1236.
- 55 "Text of Speech of V. S. Mathur while presenting the report of the college on the Occasion of the Closing of the Sixth Course on 16 October 1954", ICFTU 3142. See also the collected appendices comparing the trade union colleges of Puerto Rico, Calcutta, Philippines, Kampala, Israel, the US and Geneva, in Zack, *Labor Training in Developing Countries: A Challenge in Responsible Democracy*.
- 56 V. S. Mathur, "Draft Report on the Working of the ICFTU Asian Trade Union College, Calcutta," 21 June 1956, ICFTU 3258.
- 57 For ideological emphases in the historical components of WFTU training programs, see for example CIA Report, "Trends in Moscow's Training of Foreign Communists", 1 August 1957, CIA FOIA Electronic Reading Room, CIA-RDP78-00915R000600170045-8, accessed 21 January 2017.
- 58 See e.g. Bass, and Bass, "Eastern Europe," 106-07.
- 59 Letter from Werner Laueremann to Jay Oldenbroek, May 1953, summarised in Report on the Second Course, 15 Feb - 10 May 1953, ICFTU 3257.
- 60 Harold K. Jacobson, "Ventures in Polity Shaping: External Assistance to Labor Movements in Developing Countries," in *The Politics of International Organisations*, ed. R. W. Cox (Washington: Praeger, 1970), 202. Emphasis mine.
- 61 Jadwiga Mooney, "Fighting Fascism and Forging New Political Activism: The Women's International

Democratic Federation (WIDF) in the Cold War,” in *De-Centering Cold War History: Local and Global Change*, ed. Jadwiga Mooney, and Fabio Lanza (London: Routledge, 2013); Francisca de Haan, “Continuing Cold War Paradigms in Western Historiography of Transnational Women’s Organisations: The Case of the Women’s International Democratic Federation (WIDF),” *Women’s History Review* 19:4 (2010): 547-73;

Katharine McGregor, “Indonesian Women, the Women’s International Democratic Federation and the Struggle for “Women’s Rights”, 1946-1965,” *Indonesia and the Malay World* 40, no. 117 (2012): 193-208.

62 Robert Browne, quoted in Wu, *Radicals on the Road: Internationalism, Orientalism, and Feminism During the Vietnam Era*, 44. Little has been done on African-American labour officials in the Cold War, but for a recent edited volume, see Robert Waters, and Geert Van Goethem, eds. *American Labor’s Global Ambassadors: The International History of the Afl-Cio During the Cold War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). The pre-Cold War background to the role of African-Americans in US foreign policy is provided in Penny Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

63 Letter from Jay Krane to Dhyhan Mungat, 29 August 1955, ICFTU 3772.

64 Joey Long, “Mixed Up in Power Politics and the Cold War: The Americans, the Icftu and Singapore’s Labour Movement, 1955-1960,” *Journal of Southeast Asian studies Journal of Southeast Asian studies* (2009).

65 The ICFTU had enjoyed a strong influence on labour unions in mainland Japan after the US occupation, and seems to have quite successfully excluded the Communist Party’s influence in the labour movement, but its work remained controversial, especially in Okinawa. There, those who promoted ICFTU membership were criticized for siphoning energies away from genuinely autonomous class struggle. For a general history of the Okinawan labour movement, Miyume Tanji, *Myth, Protest and Struggle in Okinawa* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

66 George Weaver, “Report of Delegation to Okinawa,” 13 June 1956, Box 10, Folder 11, GWP.

67 Weaver, “Report of Delegation to Okinawa”.

68 CIA report on Singapore labour; *Annual Report of the Labour Department, Singapore* 1955 reports a marked escalation in trade union activity for the year. For comprehensive study see Leong Yee Fong, *labour and trade unionism in colonial Malaya: a study of the socio-economic and political bases of the malayan labour movement 1930-57* (Penang: USM, 1999).

69 Unsurprisingly the future Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, and pedagogue extraordinaire, also shared this view, commenting to Thomas Bavin in November 1956 that he would not work with the STUC due to its “dearth of brains”. Lee Kuan Yew comment to Thomas Bavin Report November 1956, ICFTU 3772.

70 Meredith Oyen, “Communism, Containment and the Chinese Overseas,” in *The Cold War in Asia: The Battle*

for Hearts and Minds, ed. Yangwen Zheng, Michael Szonyi, and Hong Liu (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

71 Central Intelligence Group, Chinese Minorities in Southeast Asia, 2 December 1946, ORE-7, CIA FOIA reading room.

72 Weaver, untitled speech, 7 April 1954, Box 10, Folder 1, Weaver Papers.

73 For contemporary characterizations of Lim Yew Hock as a “stooge” and a good sense of the political turbulence of this era for the Singaporean labour scene, see Kah Seng Loh, et al., *The University Socialist Club and the Contest for Malaya: Tangled Strands of Modernity* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2013), ch. 4. See also Curless, ““The People Need Civil Liberties”: Trade Unions and Contested Decolonisation in Singapore.”

74 George Weaver, Report on the Singapore Labour movement, ICFTU 3772

75 George Weaver, Report on the Singapore Trade Unions Congress, 19 July 1956, copy in Box 3, Folder 26, GWP. Emphases mine.

76 George Weaver, “Report on the Singapore Labour Movement”, ICFTU 3772.

77 Thomas Bavin, “Report on the Singapore/Federation Situation”, 29 November 1956, ICFTU 3772; for the rapid disappointment of the outcomes from this \$5000, see Long, “Mixed Up in Power Politics.”

78 George Weaver, “Report on the Singapore Labour Movement”, ICFTU 3772.

79 Bavin, “Report”.

80 Bavin, “Report”.

81 Weaver, “Report”.

82 George Weaver, untitled article draft, 1957, Box 7, Folder 2, GWP.

83 Letter from Weaver to Nellie Hoang, 21 October 1958, GWP Box 4 Folder 6.

84 For details of this see Long, “Mixed Up in Power Politics,” 339-43.

85 As described in Proceedings of the ICFTU-ARO Fourth Asian Regional Conference, Kuala Lumpur, 1958; see also proceedings of the first Regional Far Eastern Seminar in Chinese Language, Taipei, August 1963, ICFTU 3337.

86 See, for example, Jay Krane’s comments to George Weaver on Weaver’s recommendation of G. Kandasamy as Asian representative in the Singapore office, 13 May 1958, Box 10, Folder 13, GWP.

87 Telegram from George Weaver to Mary Weaver, 6 September 1957, Box 6, Folder 17, GWP.

88 Joey Long, “The Chew Swee Kee Affair Revisited: Querying the American Involvement in Singapore,” *South East Asia research* 10, no. 2 (2002): 217-39.

89 Letter from Joe Soares to Omar Becu and Jay Oldenbroek, 30 June 1959, ICFTU 3634 on the Chew affair; also letter from George Weaver to Thomas Bavin, 22 April 1959, Box 3, Folder 21, GWP; letter from George

Weaver to Seet Leong Seng, 21 April 1959, Box 4, Folder 6.

90 See exchanges between Tom Bavin and George Weaver, January to March 1958, Box 3 Folder 21, GWP.

91 Speech by Sydney Woodhull on behalf of the Singapore Trade Union Congress (STUC), 1 May 1960, ICFTU 1242.

92 Weaver to Posey, 28 July 1958, Box 3, Folder 14, Weaver Papers.

93 Letter from Weaver to Loke, 18 August 1958, Box 3, Folder 31, Weaver Papers.

94 For studies similarly emphasizing the agency of workers, trade unionists and activists in the global South, see the recent special issue "Trade Unions in the Global South," *Labour History*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (2016).

95 Letter from Han Suyin to Gerald Glaskin, c/o Francis Pan, 25 March 1958, in Glaskin, *A many splendoured woman: A memoir of Han Suyin* (Singapore: Graham Brash, 1995), p. 66.

96 Aneurin Bevan (1897-1960), union-sponsored minister in Clement Attlee's parliament, and a prominent member of the British Labour Party.

97 Letter from Loke Wan Tho to George Weaver, 21 March 1958, Box 3, Folder 31, GWP.

98 Letter to Lawrence Walsh, 2 September 1958, Box 3, Folder 31, GWP.

99 Letters to Narayanan, Loke Wan Tho, G. Kandasamy, each dated 18 August 1958, in, respectively, Box 3, Folder 28; Box 3, Folder 31; Box 4, Folder 2, GWP.

100 Letter from P. P. Narayanan to George Weaver, 19 January 1959, Box 3 Folder 29, GWP.

101 Letter from Loke Wan Tho to George Weaver, 22 September 1958, Box 3 Folder 31, GWP.

102 Letter from Weaver to Thomas Bavin, 10 October 1958, Box 3, Folder 21, GWP.

103 IUE-AFL-CIO Eighth Constitutional Convention, "Policies", 22-26 September 1958, in Box 21, Folder 1, IUE Convention Files, International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, President's Office, Records: James B. Carey (ca. 1938-1965), Rutgers University Special Collections. I am grateful to Albert King, Curator of Manuscripts at Rutgers Special Collections, for locating and providing me with a copy of these proceedings.

104 Letter from George Weaver to S. P. Nathan, 30 November 1960, Box 3, Folder 28, GWP.

105 See "Statement of George L-P Weaver Before the Senate Committee of Labor and Public Welfare," n.d. 1961, Box 7, Folder 32, GWP.

106 On the shift during Kennedy's administration away from the "neutralism is immoral" line peddled by John Foster Dulles in the 1950s, see Finnane, and McDougall, *Bandung 1955: Little Histories*, 18-21.

107 See collected materials in Box 7, Folder 1, GWP.

108 George Weaver to Jay Krane, 30 May 1956, Box 4, Folder 3, GWP.

109 His warm correspondence with Robinson, whom Weaver affectionately calls “Howie”, in Box 4, Folder 15, GWP.

110 For an example of fraternal connections enabled by the WFTU, and the Cold War complications this entailed, see Heather Goodall, “Uneasy Comrades: Tuk Subianto, Elliot V. Elliott and the Cold War,” *Indonesia and the Malay World* 40, no. 117 (2012): 209-30.

111 Letter from Seet Leong Seng to George Weaver, 15 February 1958, Box 4, Folder 6, GWP, emphasis in the source.

112 Afro-Asian Networks Research Collective, “Manifesto: Networks of Decolonization in Asia and Africa”, *Radical History Review* 131 (2018), 176-182.

113 Mark Berger, “After the Third World? History, destiny and the fate of Third Worldism,” *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 25, no. 1 (2004): 10.

114 Wu, *Radicals on the Road*.

115 For an inspiring example in this vein, see Goodall, “Uneasy Comrades.”