

Transnationalism Meets Empire: The AFL-CIO, Development, and the Private Origins of Kennedy's Latin American Labor Program*

In 2010, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced her goal of “transforming both State and USAID,” the U.S. Agency for International Development, in order to “build up our civilian power.” Declaring that “non-state actors . . . are playing an ever-greater role in international affairs,” Secretary Clinton was keen to “leverage civilian power by connecting businesses, philanthropists, and citizens’ groups . . . to perform tasks that governments alone cannot.” According to Secretary Clinton, these “forward-deployed” transnational activists would “advance America’s interests and help make a world in which more people in more places can live in freedom.”¹

Minus the martial rhetoric, President John Kennedy offered a similar rationale nearly fifty years earlier for his administration’s expanding partnership with transnational labor activists. Secretly directing his administration to “plan and execute an imaginative, energetic, and progressive labor program for Latin America, designed to win increasing support for United States foreign policy objectives,” President Kennedy called for channeling millions of USAID dollars “through appropriate private groups” such as the international wing of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). Weighing in with support for Kennedy’s initiative, Assistant Labor Secretary George Weaver revealed another benefit of working with nonstate actors: “it

*This article is dedicated to the memories of Marilyn Young and Michael Nash. I would like thank them both, in addition to Joaquín Chávez, Kellyn Wagner, Joel Wolfe, Elizabeth McKillen, Leon Fink, and Kimberly Phillips-Fein for providing helpful suggestions on earlier drafts, which were presented at an NYU Tamiment Seminar, at the Conference on Latin American History, and at a conference on “Labor and Empire” at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Financial support was provided by a Postdoctoral Fellowship from NYU’s Tamiment Library and by a Junior Faculty Grant from Embry-Riddle University.

1. State Department, “Leading Through Civilian Power,” accessed November 27, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/s/dmr/qddr/2010/index.htm>, cover letter, 1, and 8; and Hillary Clinton, “Leading Through Civilian Power,” *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2010. The latter is cited in Giles Scott-Smith, “Introduction: Private Diplomacy, Making the Citizen Visible,” *New Global Studies* 8 (2014): 2.

gives the Government an instrument for action which minimizes the ‘intervention’ aspect.”²

Thanks to an ongoing transnational turn in historical scholarship, the activity of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) is increasingly considered to be a central aspect of international affairs. According to Giles Scott-Smith, “By dislocating the state as the prime adjudicator of diplomatic legitimacy,” transnational history “challenges the standard periodization of diplomatic activity as sketched out according to the sequence of high politics.” At its richest, transnationalism builds on the well-established cultural turn, which, according to Akira Iriye, “raises the fundamental question of the relationship between a country’s cultural system and its behavior in the international system.” Iriye has long pushed U.S. diplomatic historians to give greater attention to the “culture-power relationship,” including “private initiatives” that shape official foreign policies.³

Admittedly, the reception of the transnational turn among international and diplomatic historians has been mixed. Most are willing to admit, in the words of Bradley Simpson, that “transnational advocacy networks . . . [can] influence the behavior of states and international institutions,” and that they even “sometimes succeed in achieving their goals.” But Cold War transnational literature is currently dominated by a particular subset of historians: scholars of human rights and the “dramatic growth of NGO activism in the 1970s.” According to Simpson, this work has “vividly illustrated the power of human rights norms and the non-state forces promoting them to reshape U.S. foreign policy,” and indeed the very trajectory and collapse of the Cold War.⁴ Sarah Snyder, herself a pioneer of transnational perspectives in the human rights realm, concedes that they “have not gained mainstream acceptance” by international historians working on other issues. Seeking to build bridges to her state-centered colleagues, Snyder rejects that transnationalism is a “separate field of historical inquiry,” but rather an “approach or methodology that enables international historians to study new actors,” namely cross-border nonstate activists who become “instruments of influence” in particular times and spaces.⁵

Paul Kramer speaks for skeptics of transnational scholarship when he worries that it gives short shrift to the vast power of the nation-state, and that it “often unconsciously partakes in a language of post-sovereignty . . . that closely resembles social-scientific, journalistic, and corporate narratives of capitalist globalization since the

2. Kennedy Memorandum, September 14, 1961, folder “Appropriations ILAB,” box 1, Records of Leo Werts; and Weaver to Goldberg, August 28, 1962, folder “A American R, 1962,” box 118, Records of Arthur Goldberg, Record Group 174 (hereafter RG174), National Archives (hereafter USNA), College Park, MD.

3. Scott-Smith, “Private Diplomacy,” 3; and Akira Iriye, “Culture and Power: International Relations as Intercultural Relations,” *Diplomatic History* 3 (1979): 116–18.

4. Brad Simpson, “Bringing the Non-State Back In: Human Rights and Terrorism since 1945,” in *America in the World: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations since 1941*, ed. Frank Costigliola and Michael J. Hogan (Cambridge, 2013), 265, 269.

5. Sarah Snyder, “Bringing the Transnational In: Writing Human Rights into the International History of the Cold War,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 23 (2013): 100–2, 112.

early 1990s.” To avoid what he calls the “trap” of post-sovereignty while still “facilitating new approaches to temporality and spatiality in history,” Kramer calls on scholars to “purposefully engage in dialogue with other societies’ globalizing historiographies, which have often involved imperial turns.” The concept of empire was, however, “almost entirely absent from the manifestos calling for a new transnational U.S. history,” leading Kramer to quip that “perhaps, unlike everybody else, U.S. historians could venture outward from the nation-based historiography without ‘empire.’”⁶

Drawing on the archives of the AFL-CIO and its affiliates, as well as records from the Rockefeller family and documentation from the U.S. Department of Labor, this article uncovers the private origins of the massive overseas labor program launched by the Kennedy administration in 1962. In the process, it grapples with the intersection between private agency and official structure, a crossroads where the transnational flows of labor activism met the imperial practice of state power. Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, in their search for the antecedents for human rights activists’ influence on U.S. foreign policy in the 1970s, cite earlier “religious and political traditions including missionary outreach, the solidarity traditions of labor and the left, and liberal internationalism.”⁷ Kennedy’s labor program combined all three of these impulses in the ground-level activities of the AFL-CIO in Latin America, resulting in a complex transnational and imperial history that becomes visible only through the archives of nonstate actors, in this case the private diplomats of the U.S. labor movement.

THE NONSTATE ORIGINS OF U.S. LABOR PROGRAMS IN LATIN AMERICA

If the transnational turn has had a positive influence on the history of human rights, these approaches are having an equally salutatory effect on the smaller body of labor historiography. Once depicted as a mere offshoot of imperial state power, the private agency of transnational labor activists now occupies its own scholarly space.⁸ This is even the case with regard to the thorny issue of labor’s overseas relationships with the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Drawing on AFL records, Anthony Carew writes that the federation’s partnership with U.S. intelligence was “not a smooth one and far from the commonplace caricature of a labor

6. Paul Kramer, “Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World,” *American Historical Review* 116 (2011): 1352–53, 1359–60.

7. Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY, 1998), 15.

8. Weldon C. Matthews, “The Kennedy Administration, the International Federation of Petroleum Workers, and Iraqi Labor under the Ba’th Regime,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 17 (2015): 97–128; Patrick Iber, “Who Will Impose Democracy? Sacha Volman and the Contradictions of CIA Support for the Anticommunist Left in Latin America,” *Diplomatic History* 37 (2013): 995–1028; and contributions by Alessandro Brogi, Larissa Rosa Corrêa, and Dustin Walcher, in *American Labor’s Global Ambassadors: The International History of the AFL-CIO during the Cold War*, ed. Van Goethem et al. (New York, 2013).

movement in the pocket of the CIA.” Hugh Wilford adds that “the CIA might have tried to call the tune . . . but the piper did not always play it, nor did the audience dance to it.” Both Carew and Wilford were responding to imperial perspectives highlighting state control, an approach represented most recently by Francis Stonor Saunders, who asked rhetorically if the CIA’s cultural and labor programs were “producing, rather than freedom, a kind of ur-freedom, where people think they are acting freely when in fact they are bound to forces over which they have no control.”⁹ At the other end of the spectrum, some of the new transnational labor literature is too dismissive of the capacity of state power to influence nonstate priorities, even if its methodological richness serves as a useful model for international historians seeking to move beyond the state toward multilayered accounts of foreign relations in their many forms.¹⁰

One of the earliest intersections between transnational labor activism and the imperial state occurred as far back as 1917, when AFL “agents of conservatism” led by Federation President Samuel Gompers accepted secret U.S. government subsidies to create anti-leftist international branches such as the American Alliance for Labor and Democracy (AALD) and the Pan-American Federation of Labor (PAFL). Governed by tripartite corporatist boards, these organizations interpreted “democracy” as necessarily nonsocialist, thus opposing any hint of class struggle, and they lent unwavering support to U.S. liberal internationalism. According to labor historian Jennifer Luff, “antiradicalism was bred into the bones of the AFL,” making foreign policy crises like World War I and concurrent revolutions in Russia and Mexico ideal opportunities for the federation to flex its organizational muscle in cooperation with the Democratic administration of President Woodrow Wilson.¹¹ These central tenets of the AFL’s cultural identity—tripartite corporatism, cross-class collaboration, and a narrowly defined “pure-and-simple” trade unionism—would continue to define the federation’s approach to transnational

9. Anthony Carew, “The American Labor Movement in Fizzland: The Free Trade Union Committee and the CIA,” *Labor History* 39 (1998): 25; Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America* (Cambridge, MA, 2008), 10, 51–69; and Francis Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*, 2nd ed. (New York, 2013), 4, 56–61. See also Robert Anthony Waters Jr. and Gordon Oliver Daniels, “‘When you’re handed money on a platter, it’s very hard to say, ‘Where are you getting this?’”: The AFL-CIO, the CIA, and British Guiana,” *Revue belge de philologie et histoire* 84 (2006): 1075–99; Stephen G. Rabe, *U.S. Intervention in British Guiana: A Cold War Story* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2005); Gary K. Busch, *The Political Role of International Trade Unions* (New York, 1983); Winslow Peck (Perry Fellwock), “Clandestine Enforcement of U.S. Foreign Labor Policy,” *Counter-Spy* 2 (Fall 1974): 26–48; Ronald Radosh, *American Labor and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York, 1969), whose chapter 13 was translated without proper attribution by Pablo Pozzi in “El Sindicalismo Norteamericano en América Latina y en la Argentina: El AIFLD entre 1961 y 1976,” *Revista Herramienta* 10 (1999); and Sidney Lens, “American Labor Abroad: Lovestone Diplomacy,” *The Nation* 201 (July 5, 1965): 10–16, 27–28.

10. See Geert Van Goethem and Robert Waters Jr., “Introduction,” in *American Labor’s Global Ambassadors*, 1–8; Magaly Rodríguez García, *Liberal Workers of the World Unite? The ICFU and the Defense of Labour Liberalism in Europe and Latin America (1949–1969)* (Oxford, 2010).

11. Jennifer Luff, *Commonsense Anticommunism: Labor and Civil Rights between the World Wars* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2012), 4, 49, 58, 114, 220–22. Regarding PAFL, see Sinclair Snow, *The Pan-American Federation of Labor* (Durham, NC, 1964), especially 44–46.

labor activism and its varying relationships with U.S. foreign policy throughout the remainder of the twentieth century.

With the outbreak of World War II, labor transnationalists once again joined forces with the state, prompting the creation of a Labor Branch within the U.S. Army Office of Strategic Services (OSS), precursor to the postwar CIA. According to historian Richard Smith, the labor intelligence branch was the “brainchild of OSS Colonel Heber Blankenhorn,” former staffer to pro-labor New York Senator Robert Wagner. To lead the branch, Blankenhorn tapped Arthur Goldberg, a young Chicago labor attorney, whom President Kennedy would later appoint as labor secretary and to the Supreme Court. Goldberg was a close ally of David Dubinsky’s New York-based International Ladies’ Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), whose chief organizer Jay Lovestone had been running domestic anticommunist operations since he was bitterly removed from his position as first secretary of the U.S. Communist Party in 1929. An antiradical leftist union with heavy Jewish and Italian membership on the Lower East Side, Dubinsky’s ILGWU lent the OSS two of its most effective organizers, anticommunist Socialist émigrés Luigi Antonini and Serafino Romualdi.¹²

From the start of their official intelligence work, transnational U.S. labor activists made their independent streak known. Unwilling to hem loyally to the Army’s policy of allying with all antifascist forces in Europe, Goldberg’s ILGWU men made every effort, in Romualdi’s words, to “strengthen the Socialist forces at the expense of the Communists.” According to one historian, Romualdi went so far as to take advantage of his position in Army OSS to act “as a kind of unofficial representative of the ILGWU in Italy.” Goldberg himself betrayed sympathy for the freelancing policies of his ILGWU friends, quietly channeling OSS Labor Branch money to a faction of anticommunist Socialists within the French *Confédération générale du travail* (CGT; General Confederation of Labor).¹³

Meanwhile in New York, ILGWU President Dubinsky put the repentant former Communist boss Lovestone in charge of his union’s entire foreign policy apparatus, a position from which Lovestone created the Free Trade Union Committee (FTUC) in 1944, whose anticommunist activism in support of Socialists in postwar Italy and France eventually received extensive funding from the CIA. For his part, Goldberg went on to become chief counsel to the CIO, during which time he became known as a “militant anti-Communist” who

12. Richard Harris Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America’s First Central Intelligence Agency* (Berkeley, CA, 1972), 12, 182. See also David L. Stebenne, *Arthur J. Goldberg: New Deal Liberal* (Oxford, 1996), 30–44; Ronald Filippelli, *American Labor and Postwar Italy, 1943–1953: A Study of Cold War Politics* (Stanford, CA, 1989); Robert D. Parmet, *The Master of Seventh Avenue: David Dubinsky and the American Labor Movement* (New York, 2005), 154–68, 203–4, 224, 233; and Ted Morgan, *A Covert Life: Jay Lovestone, Communist, Anti-communist, and Spymaster* (New York, 1999), 130–33, 137–47.

13. Serafino Romualdi, *Presidents and Peons: Recollections of a Labor Ambassador in Latin America* (New York, 1967), 21–22; Filippelli, *American Labor*, 39; Stebenne, *Arthur J. Goldberg*, 39.

spearheaded the purge of leftists from the organization before managing its legal merger with the more conservative AFL in 1955.¹⁴

It was also during World War II that labor was launching its own version of the Cold War in Latin America, one that predated the official bipolar conflict by several years. Serafino Romualdi, prior to taking up his OSS position in Italy, had worked as director of labor operations for Nelson Rockefeller's State Department Office for the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs.¹⁵ Just before leaving for the European theater in 1943, Romualdi wrote to his superiors at the AFL, recommending "concrete steps" to facilitate a "permanent relationship with individuals and units of Latin-American [*sic*] labor." According to Romualdi, there was growing support among noncommunist workers in Latin America for the creation of an inter-American labor organization that would rival the leftist-dominated *Confederación de Trabajadores de América Latina* (CTAL; Confederation of Latin American Workers). By establishing a permanent Latin America desk at the AFL, Romualdi believed that U.S. labor activists could "lay the groundwork for the eventual organization of an Inter-American labor body, democratically controlled and composed of free, independent, bona fide unions."¹⁶ With the support of Dubinsky, in 1945 Romualdi was granted his request to establish a Latin American operation under Lovestone's FTUC. Housed at ILGWU headquarters in New York City, the global-minded FTUC operation brought together three anticommunist leftists who had all cut their teeth under Dubinsky's tutelage since the 1930s: Lovestone, Romualdi, and Irving Brown, yet another former OSS labor spy who took charge of the committee's CIA-financed anticommunist organizing in Europe.¹⁷

As head of Lovestone's Latin America desk, Romualdi wasted little time in courting state support for labor activism south of the border, securing State Department approval in 1946 for a goodwill AFL trip to Latin America. Working closely with U.S. embassies, Romualdi sought, in the words of historian Jon Kofas, "to ascertain the degree of support as well as opposition to the existing regional confederation," the left-leaning CTAL, and to "test the Latin labor scene for the possibility of forming a pro-U.S. continental labor organization."¹⁸ Romualdi's activism culminated in the formation of a hemisphere-wide anticommunist labor federation, the *Organización Regional Inter-Americana de Trabajadores*

14. Quote from "Commie Ouster," *The Evening Independent* (St. Petersburg, FL), November 30, 1949, 24. See also Stebenne, *Arthur J. Goldberg*, 10–11, 16–19, 73–74, 79–81, 110–25; Alessandro Brogi, "The AFL and CIO between 'Crusade' and Pluralism in Italy, 1944–1963," in *American Labor's Global Ambassadors*, 62; Smith, *OSS*, 182; Peck, *Clandestine Enforcement*, 31–33, 40; and Robert H. Ziegler, *The CIO: 1935–1955* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1995). Regarding the CIA, see Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer*, 51–69.

15. Romualdi, *Presidents and Peons*, 17.

16. Romualdi to AFL, December 18, 1943, folder 1, box 9, Romualdi Papers, Kheel Center (hereafter KC), Cornell University.

17. Romualdi, *Presidents and Peons*, 7–8; Morgan, *A Covert Life*, 114, 131; and Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer*, 51–69.

18. Jon Kofas, *The Struggle for Legitimacy: Latin American Labor and the United States, 1930–1960* (Tempe, AZ, 1992), 290, 299.

(ORIT; Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers). “One of the earliest efforts of Cord Meyer’s [CIA] International Organizations Division,” according to former Agency officers, ORIT affiliated in 1951 with the Brussels-based International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), created with the support of Lovestone’s committee in 1949 to compete globally with the Soviet-backed World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) in Prague.¹⁹

Overseas AFL activism thus received strong backing from U.S. intelligence and the State Department during the Democratic administration of Harry Truman (1945–1953), but Romualdi became increasingly concerned over the dearth of similar coordination under the subsequent Republican presidency of Dwight Eisenhower (1953–1961). According to Romualdi, the cooler relationship between pro-business Eisenhower officials and transnational labor activists had resulted in a “lack of concern on the part of our government” regarding communist labor activity in Latin America.²⁰ Aiming to mitigate this deficiency, in 1956 Romualdi allocated AFL-CIO resources (and gained the State Department’s imprimatur) for a three-week regional tour headed by AFL-CIO President George Meany. According to Meany, this trip was “strictly good-will,” but his martial rhetoric betrayed a more aggressive political mission. He had accompanied Romualdi to the region in order to “strengthen the world-wide front of free labor” and to “reinforce our joint efforts in defense of the free way of life.” In ideological terms, the trip sought to spread AFL ideologies of tripartite corporatism and cross-class collaboration. “A new and respected status for labor” was possible, Meany declared, as he witnessed Latin American workers who “breached for the first time the alleged ‘citadels of capitalism’—as United States embassies are called . . . [and] broke bread with diplomats, government officials, businessmen, prelates of the Church, Army and Navy officers, and intellectuals.” Upon his return, Meany pressured the State Department to work more closely with labor activists, recommending an “intensification of the Latin American trade union exchange program and the appointment of full-time labor attachés in all countries of Latin America,” officers who would be jointly assigned by the State Department and Lovestone’s FTUC.²¹

Aside from the reduction in labor-government coordination during the Eisenhower administration, Romualdi also recognized that the AFL-CIO’s Latin American activism was being hamstrung by several developments internal to the field of labor. Fierce debates were paralyzing ORIT, particularly regarding its equivocal

19. Joseph Burkholder Smith, *Portrait of a Cold Warrior* (New York, 1976), 351, 409; and Philip Agee, *Inside the Company: A CIA Diary* (New York, 1975), 533. Regarding ORIT, see Magaly Rodríguez García, “The AFL-CIO and ORIT in Latin America’s Andean Region from the 1950s to the 1960s,” in *American Labor’s Global Ambassadors*.

20. Romualdi Memorandum, March 23, 1955, folder 2, box 9, Romualdi Papers, KC. Regarding Soviet labor policy in Latin America, see footnote 31, below.

21. AFL-CIO, Report of the Inter-American Representative, October 25, 1956, folder 55/24, RG10-003, International Affairs – Lovestone; and Meany, “Draft Article for *The New Leader*,” [late 1956], folder 55/11, RG1-027, George Meany Memorial AFL-CIO Archive (hereafter GMMMA), College Park, MD.

policy toward Cuba's Fulgencio Batista and persistent accusations that the organization's elections were being commandeered by U.S. member unions. Together, these controversies left ORIT with weak or nonexistent affiliates in a number of countries. As late as 1958, "large segments of the [Latin American] population—even among trade-unionists—knew nothing about the ORIT's existence."²²

Faced with these obstacles, Romualdi once again turned to his friends in Washington. Writing in early 1958 to State Department Labor Advisor Ben Stephansky, a fellow anticommunist leftist émigré from the Old World, Romualdi suggested the formation of a joint Latin America committee, "representing labor, management, and government." Based on traditional AFL-style tripartite corporatism, Romualdi's proposed organization would lobby overseas U.S. businesses regarding "the goals of ORIT . . . and the necessity of organizing free trade unions."²³ Stephansky was a sympathetic labor economist, who would soon be appointed by President Kennedy as ambassador to Bolivia, but he also recognized that the current Republican administration harbored little enthusiasm for using government resources to organize labor unions in Latin America, or anywhere else for that matter. Rather than risk alienating U.S. business interests and being "justly accused of intervening improperly in [Latin America's] internal affairs," Stephansky recommended that the AFL-CIO concentrate its efforts on Latin American workers themselves. Drawing on the emerging discourse of modernization theory and its linkage of underdevelopment with immaturity, Stephansky broached the idea of launching a private program, "designed to train younger labor leaders . . . [and] organize workers' seminars" so as to "advance maturity in industrial relations, to the end that a firm basis for harmonious labor-management relations can be achieved."²⁴

In rearticulating transnational labor activism through the increasingly vogue theories of economic and social development, Stephansky implicitly endorsed a nascent effort underway by the Communication Workers of America (CWA), whose newfound transnational activism spelled a generational shift within the U.S. labor movement. While Romualdi's operations under Lovestone's International Affairs Department (what the FTUC became in 1957) reflected the cosmopolitan, secular anticommunism of Dubinsky's leftist ILGWU, a younger and brasher cadre of CWA Catholics were poised to take the lead in spreading labor's brand of modernization theory in Latin America. Spearheading this effort was CWA President Joseph Beirne, a first generation Irish-American who had become a fresh convert to developmentalism during an aerial tour of South America in 1957. Gazing down on the "inhospitable Andean

22. See letters between Romualdi and ORIT General Secretary Monge, 1955–1958, folder 11, box 10, Romualdi Papers, KC. Quote from Rodríguez García, "Free Trade-Unionism in Latin America: 'Bread-and-Butter' or Political Unionism?," *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* 18 (2004): 123.

23. Romualdi to Stephansky, March 6, 1958, folder 5, box 9, Romualdi Papers, KC.

24. Stephansky to Romualdi, April 15, 1958, folder 5, box 9, Romualdi Papers, KC. For more on Stephansky, see chapters 1–3 of Thomas C. Field Jr., *From Development to Dictatorship: Bolivia and the Alliance for Progress in the Kennedy Era* (Ithaca, NY, 2014).

masses below,” Beirne recalled that he “suddenly realized that this would never be cleared up . . . unless it could be put into the minds of these people to change their outlook; their view of the world . . . In one word, that meant education.”²⁵

Upon his return, Beirne vowed to launch a CWA training program for Latin American labor leaders, an effort for which he would rely on the organizing prowess of fellow Irish Catholic, William C. Doherty Jr., Latin America desk chief for the CWA’s Geneva-based International Trade Secretariat: the Postal, Telegraph, and Telephone International (PTTI). In April 1958, Beirne arranged to have Doherty tour the region with Romualdi’s deputy at the AFL-CIO, Andrew McLellan, with the goal of selecting a cadre of anticommunist labor leaders who would undergo on-site training at a new PTTI school in Washington, DC.²⁶ In a memorandum to CWA member unions, Beirne praised Doherty for approaching his activism with skill, “combing South American countries giving aid and assistance combating Communist infiltration in the unions.”²⁷

In a series of similar circulars to CWA affiliates throughout 1958, Beirne declared that “the situation in South America is critical,” a frightful state of affairs that “should be of vital concern to each member of CWA.” Pledging to “give wholehearted assistance” to Latin American trade unionists who were “carrying on the fight against Communist infiltration,” Beirne warned that, should the CWA effort fail, “billions of dollars as well as the time and effort used to fight Communism throughout the world will be dissipated by the emergence of a Communist base in our own hemisphere within 10 years.”²⁸ Following up this rather prescient prediction two days later with a speech at Georgetown University, Beirne fretted that the Soviet Union was “inviting between 700 and 1000 secondary leaders of the Latin American labor movement to Moscow, where for one year they are trained in the art of carrying out the Communist objective.” Echoing his AFL-CIO colleague Romualdi’s concern that the Eisenhower administration was “taking the Latin American for granted, believing that he will always be our friend,” Beirne warned that the “reservoir of good will will gradually dry up” without greater official support in U.S. labor’s intensifying battle against leftism in Latin America.²⁹

In a clear manifestation of transnational labor activism, Beirne and Doherty cut the ribbon on the “PTTI Trade Union Training Institute,” based at CWA

25. “The American Institute for Free Labor Development,” reprinted from *The Grace Log*, Spring 1963, folder 540, box 80, series 3, Rockefeller Brothers Fund (hereafter RBF), Rockefeller Archives Center (hereafter RAC), Sleepy Hollow, NY.

26. McLellan to Bury, June 1, 1958, folder 8, box 10A, Romualdi Papers, KC.

27. Beirne to CWA unions, August 14, 1958, folder “Latin American Affairs, 1958,” box 328, Communication Workers of American (hereafter CWA), Tamiment Library (hereafter TL), New York University.

28. Beirne to CWA unions, August 13, 1958 and November 7, 1958, folder “Latin American Affairs, 1958,” box 328, CWA, TL.

29. Beirne, “Address to the Georgetown University Forum,” folder “Latin American Affairs, 1958,” box 328, CWA, TL. Regarding paltry Soviet subsidies to Latin American labor, see Lora Soroka, ed., *Communist Party of the Soviet Union: Fond 89, Archives of the Communist Party and Soviet State* (Stanford, CA, 2001), 243–53, 336–38, 364–71.

headquarters in Washington, in mid-1959. The school's pedagogical format, which would be adopted and expanded two years later by the AFL-CIO, involved flying pre-selected Latin American labor leaders to Washington for three months of technocratic courses on AFL-style corporatism, including concepts such as cross-class collaboration and collective bargaining. At the end of the seminar, graduates returned to their home countries on nine-month CWA stipends to engage in full-time labor organizing. The first class graduated sixteen labor leaders from eleven countries. Bill Doherty spent the entire three months with the students, and Beirne dropped by for a graduation barbeque.³⁰

Despite the fact that the Eisenhower administration had little interest in joining CWA's overseas labor organizing drive, top U.S. officials were beginning to foreshadow the coming deluge of state backing for AFL-CIO transnationalism. Echoing Beirne's rearticulation of foreign labor organizing through the emerging theories of Third World modernization, Assistant Labor Secretary George Cabot Lodge published a *Foreign Affairs* article in July 1959 entitled "Labor's Role in Newly Developing Countries." Warning that the political orientation of Third World workers was far from settled, Lodge argued that labor unions would henceforth play a central role in the political direction taken by countries undergoing social and economic modernization. "International Communism," he wrote, was seeking to use trade unions "as instruments for the seizure of political power," meaning that "the day has long since gone when relations with other countries can be effectively carried in solely in the traditional 'diplomatic' way at the usual 'diplomatic' level."³¹ Lodge's call for deploying nonstate actors in an effort to shape Third World politics built on an ongoing shift that was taking place in the International Labor Organization (ILO), where he had just been elected governing chairman under Director General David Morse. According to historian Daniel Maul, the ILO had become essentially "an international development agency" under Morse's long directorship (1948–1970), during which time the organization linked transnational labor activism with modernization theory "as a means of enabling the ILO, on the side of the West, to play an important role in the global fight against communism."³²

These powerful voices notwithstanding, CWA's emergence on the front lines of labor anticommunism in Latin America in the late 1950s was an initiative of the private activism of the union and its leadership. Putting aside that fact that many International Trade Secretariats received occasional subsidies from the CIA, the creation of PTTI's Washington institute took place with little or no operational support from the Eisenhower administration.³³ Instead,

30. CWA, "A Confidential Report to the Sponsors. . .," June 1959; and PTTI Memorandum, [late 1958], folder "Latin American Affairs, 1958," box 328, CWA, TL.

31. Lodge, "Labor's Role in Newly Developing Countries," *Foreign Affairs* 37 (1959).

32. Daniel Maul, "'Help Them Move the ILO Way': The International Labor Organization and Modernization Discourse in the Era of Decolonization and the Cold War," *Diplomatic History* 33 (2009): 390.

33. See Rabe, *U.S. Intervention*, 85, 93, 112; Waters and Daniels, "'When you're handed money on a platter,'" and Agee, *Inside the Company*, 534, 542.

it was built on a long tradition of transnational activism within the U.S. labor movement, and it melded a Catholic sense of anticommunist zeal with traditional AFL-CIO ideologies of cross-class collaboration and pro-capitalist liberal internationalism. Such an activist global approach could make the CWA a valuable tool for U.S. officials wishing to enlist nonstate actors in Latin America's Cold War, but it would take more than a change at the White House for U.S. labor leaders to gain the full attention of their counterparts in Washington. In the meantime, the AFL-CIO waged its own private battle against the Latin American left, never giving up on its well-worn tripartite preference for governmental and business support.

ANTICOMMUNIST DEVELOPMENT AND THE FOUNDING OF AIFLD

When Paul Kramer called for greater scholarly dialogue between the transnational and the imperial, he correctly noted that the two approaches "went off on virtually non-intersecting paths" in the 1990s, and that "an earlier dialectic between structure and agency and had become coupled to and defining of a division between imperial and transnational histories." This resulted in transnational histories that "sometimes conveyed a breathless sense of freedom," while traditional imperial history was increasingly disparaged as having "produced grim accounts of domination." At its worst, "the former scholarship was all active verbs," with the latter having been "governed by the empire of the passive voice."³⁴ When it comes to explaining the history of U.S. overseas labor policy, nonstate actors surely deserve their share of active verbs, but the imperial state remained at the forefront of their minds.

In the late 1950s, transnational U.S. labor activists such as CWA President Joseph Beirne had demonstrated a desire to shape U.S. foreign policy and the future of Latin American labor. Failing to obtain the firm backing of the state, the CWA upstarts nonetheless attracted significant interest from their brothers in the AFL-CIO. Well-seasoned in the "free trade union" struggle, veteran transnational labor organizers like Serafino Romualdi and his boss Jay Lovestone sought to buttress CWA activism with the bureaucratic power of the AFL-CIO, bringing to bear on Beirne's education program the federation's traditional preference for tripartite corporatism. This effort would require support for Latin American labor organizing from both business and the government, neither of which was initially forthcoming.

At David Dubinsky's ILGWU headquarters in New York City, AFL-CIO International Affairs Department officials Romualdi and Lovestone were quick to recognize the potential of the PTTI labor leader training institute, launched by Beirne's CWA in 1959. Within a year, they convinced the AFL-CIO to adopt Beirne's relatively modest project, expanding it into an "extensive program . . . to strengthen the free labor movement in Latin America." On September 16, 1960,

34. Kramer, "Power and Connection," 1380.

the AFL-CIO allocated \$20,000 to the University of Chicago, where sociologist John McCollum was tasked with designing the framework for a hemisphere-wide network of training centers that would have an annual budget of \$1 million to be provided by “foundations, government agencies, etc.”³⁵ As Lovestone put it early the following year, “revolutionary change . . . is necessary in the AFL-CIO’s work in Latin America . . . We have got to do much and we have got to do much better.” Clearly at home with the brash style of Beirne’s CWA, Lovestone wrote privately that “we must drop this nonsense of saying anti-Communism is negative” and join the struggle against the “superior, continuous subversion” of communist labor agents in Latin America.³⁶

Fortunately for Lovestone and his colleagues at the AFL-CIO, the newly-inaugurated U.S. president was more sympathetic to labor than his predecessor. Fresh off his announcement of the Alliance for Progress development program for Latin America, President Kennedy issued a secret memorandum on May 3, 1961, asking his cabinet “what greater role the American labor movement can play toward making a Western Hemisphere united labor front” against communism. According to Kennedy, it was important to find out “what the American labor movement is now doing, could and should do.”³⁷ This directive was principally an initiative of Arthur Goldberg, chief counsel to the AFL-CIO and former head of the OSS Labor Branch, whom Kennedy had recently appointed to lead the Labor Department. Having begun his career as a CIO attorney in the Catholic labor bastion of Chicago, Goldberg boasted allies across the secular and religious wings of AFL-CIO transnationalism, including both Dubinsky’s ILGWU and Beirne’s CWA. In only his second week on the job, Goldberg solicited U.S. government support for his former AFL-CIO colleagues, arguing to Secretary of State Dean Rusk that nonstate overseas labor organizing would serve “the fulfillment of U.S. foreign policy objectives.” Secretary Rusk agreed that the government had “given too little attention to labor” under the previous administration, and he vowed to “correct these deficiencies in the months ahead.”³⁸

Having been given the president’s imprimatur in May, Secretary Goldberg rushed to make labor technicians available for foreign operations run by other government agencies, including the State and Defense Departments, USAID, the

35. AFL-CIO, “A Proposal for a Comprehensive Program,” August 16, 1960, folder 55/12, RG1-027, GMMA; and University of Chicago, “The American Institute for Free Labor Development,” September 1961, folder 540, box 80, series 3, RBF, RAC.

36. Lovestone to J. M. Aguirre, April 17, May 2, and May 10, 1961, folder 47/5, RG18-003, GMMA. Regarding Soviet labor policy in Latin America, see footnote 31, above.

37. Kennedy Memorandum, May 3, 1961, folder “Latin American Labor,” box 46, Goldberg Records, RG174, USNA.

38. Goldberg to Rusk, February 4, 1961; and Rusk to Goldberg, March 8, 1961, folder “IL-2 Country Programs,” box 57, Goldberg Records, RG174, USNA.

United States Information Agency (USIA), and the CIA.³⁹ After only a month in the field, one of Goldberg's USIA officers reported back that it was "high time" for the United States to "take the offensive here in Latin America," particularly on the labor front where "the Communists, active as usual and superbly organized, dominate." The report made the rounds in Washington, and in a cover note from White House aide Arthur Schlesinger to his colleague, Richard Goodwin, Schlesinger asked "Can't we do something to awaken the AFL-CIO to the situation?" Explicitly referencing CIA-financed labor operations carried out by Lovestone's FTUC in postwar Italy and France, Schlesinger wrote, "We really need in Latin America someone who could do the job that Irving Brown and [the CIO's] Victor Reuther did in Europe in the early days of the Marshall Plan."⁴⁰

Unlike Schlesinger, Labor Secretary Goldberg was well aware of ongoing AFL-CIO activism, especially Beirne's CWA, which he judged in a letter to ILGWU President Dubinsky to be "among the most effective of the organizations currently operating south of the border."⁴¹ With the CWA program in mind, Secretary Goldberg invited White House aide Goodwin to join an interagency committee that would channel Alliance for Progress funds in order to "implement the Latin American program" alluded to in Kennedy's May directive.⁴²

Hoping that Goldberg would continue to mobilize the Kennedy administration behind their overseas programs, AFL-CIO leaders moved ahead to expand the CWA institute into a continental network of training centers. On May 12, 1961, AFL-CIO President George Meany convened a "Policy Design Committee," along with Inter-American chief Romualdi and University of Chicago Professor McCollum. True to the federation's ideology of cross-class collaboration, businessman Peter Grace was invited to attend, as was Berent Friele, international envoy for the Rockefeller family. The businessmen wasted no time before advocating for government involvement to convert the new institute into a well-funded and truly tripartite organization. According to Grace, who had a history of collaboration with the CIA, "this proposal is so important . . . why can't we . . . get the government behind it? . . . We have to settle for more than just foundations." Professor McCollum explained that he preferred a program that was "not dominated by the government," but he reluctantly expressed an openness to "arranging for government funds" as long as there would be "no embarrassment in Latin America." Rockefeller envoy Friele interjected that "we have a real emergency" in Latin America, and that "we must do something quickly." According to Friele, "We must think in terms of a 'crash' program and a long-term program," both of

39. Labor Department, "Five Year Outlook," May 1961, folder "Appropriations ILAB," box 1, Werts Records, RG174, USNA.

40. Schlesinger to Goodwin, June 8, 1961, folder IL-2 Country Programs June 1961, box 57, Goldberg Records, RG174, USNA.

41. Goldberg to Dubinsky, June 12, 1961, folder Dja-Dol, box 5, Goldberg Records, RG174, USNA.

42. Weaver to Goldberg, July 26, 1961, folder "Latin American Labor," box 46, Goldberg Records, RG174, USNA.



Figure 1: Essentially a private, transnational endeavor spearheaded by Doherty and CWA President Joseph Beirne, the PTTT's labor leader training program for Latin America adhered to a technocratic form of traditional AFL-style business unionism, rebranded as anticommunist "free trade unionism" during the Cold War era. Here the first class meets in mid-1959 at Front Royal, Virginia, to hear instructor James Carpenter spread the anti-socialist gospel of collective bargaining, modernization theory, and other ostensibly apolitical forms of U.S. labor cross-class collaboration. (Source: folder 13, box 2, subseries IG, photos.086, CWA, TL).

which would "need government money." Conceding that "we cannot let this project be government-dominated," Friele recommended "setting up a foundation with a charter to which the government, private agencies, and foundations, can contribute," a legal maneuver that "would make it possible to use government funds without any taint."⁴³

The question of government participation was hardly settled when Professor McCollum presented his formal proposal to the AFL-CIO policy committee in September. Despite having been charged with finding a way to maximize government and business support, McCollum's proposal barely made a mention of state or corporate funding. Also gone were the AFL-CIO's trademark anticommunist screeds, its lyrical defenses of free enterprise, and its commitment to cross-class collaboration. In their place was a call for Latin America's "rapid industrial development," a phrase that was summarily purged by AFL-CIO leadership in

43. AFL-CIO Meeting Minutes, May 12, 1961, folder 16/16, RG18-007, GMMA. Regarding Grace, see Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer*, 187-95.

subsequent drafts. In fact, the only significant aspect of McCollum's proposal that made it through Meany's policy committee was the new organization's title: "The American Institute for Free Labor Development" (AIFLD).⁴⁴

Watching intently from the wings, Goldberg's Labor Department worried that there was "little agreement on the details of the [AIFLD] plan." Worse yet, the department's New York City summit of around twenty AFL-CIO affiliates with ongoing Latin American operations splintered into disagreement in early October. The smaller labor outfits opposed the AFL-CIO's attempts to consolidate U.S. labor activities under the high-level AIFLD, and the meeting ended in disarray. The Labor Department complained that "the lack of agreement revealed in New York will unfortunately make our task more difficult," since "no coordination of Latin American activities . . . is at present feasible."⁴⁵

With the Kennedy administration concerned about the new institute's viability as a united U.S. labor project, AFL-CIO leadership turned its attention to the corporations. On October 3, 1961, AFL-CIO President Meany visited New York City's prestigious Links Club as a guest of AIFLD booster Peter Grace. According to a report filed by Rockefeller envoy Friele, who was also present, Meany boasted to the businessmen of his "experiences after the last war combatting Communist infiltration of the European labor unions." Announcing that the AFL-CIO was preparing to replicate these efforts in Latin America, Meany described AIFLD as "a program . . . to educate labor leaders and the public in these countries about the value of free labor." Meany described the situation in Latin America as "extremely serious," and he vowed that the AFL-CIO was planning to "contribute substantial amounts to the Institute in the belief that the free enterprise system in the Western Hemisphere is at stake." Despite some grumblings from the audience about labor's traditional identification with the "dangers" of "agrarian reform" and its tendency to "socialize industry and confiscate private property," a few corporate leaders warmed to AFL-CIO activism in Latin America. Of those present, several went on to contribute to the institute, including Grace himself, who became AIFLD's board chairman with the largest corporate donation of \$18,000, and Juan Trippe of Pan-American Airways, who was named an Institute trustee after donating \$10,000. Within a year, smaller amounts were given by Links Club members at Johnson & Johnson, Kennecott Copper, Gillette, Standard Oil, Anaconda Mining, Pfizer, International Telephone & Telegraph, Merck, General Foods, and Socony Mobile.⁴⁶

44. McCollum to Meany, August 29, 1961, folder 56/27, RG1-038, GMMA. See also University of Chicago, "The American Institute for Free Labor Development," September 1961, folder 540, box 80, series 3, RBF, RAC. For post-McCollum edits, see Romualdi to AIFLD board, May 11, 1962, folder 57/1, RG1-038, GMMA; and AIFLD, "Aims, Objectives, and Program," May 1962, folder 540, box 80, series 3, RBF, RAC.

45. U.S. Labor Department, "Conference of AFL-CIO Unions," October 9, 1961; and Bazan to Weaver, October 12, 1961, folder "Appropriations ILAB," box 1, Werts Records, RG174, USNA.

46. Friele to Rockefeller, October 8, 1961, folder 985, box 103, series L, RG 4, Nelson A. Rockefeller Papers, RAC. For a list of donors, see AIFLD, "Contributions," attached to Jefferson to Scrivner, July 13, 1965, folder 540, box 80, series 3, RBF, RAC.

While this token business support satisfied the AFL-CIO's yearning for tripartitism, it would hardly keep the new institute afloat. As proposed, AIFLD carried an annual price tag of \$1 million, and within a few years its annual budget would surpass \$6 million. At the inaugural meeting of AIFLD's board of trustees on October 11, George Meany leaned heavily on Professor McCollum to put aside his resistance to government support and, meanwhile, to make additional efforts to secure financing from "major U.S. companies operating in Latin America." McCollum's disappointing response was to ask for additional time and another \$28,000 from the coffers of the U.S. labor movement.⁴⁷

Local AFL-CIO affiliates began to grow restless, and Michigan branch president August Scholle complained to his friend Secretary Goldberg about the Kennedy administration's "pathetically tragic" reluctance to join the AIFLD effort. Characterizing this as "an obvious lack of understanding on the part of the people responsible for our international affairs," Scholle reminded Goldberg that "a free trade union movement is essential in preventing the Communist Party from establishing a strong beachhead" in the trade unions of Latin America.⁴⁸

At AIFLD's November 20 council meeting, George Meany did his best to assuage concerns that "the Institute is running behind schedule." Referring to ongoing conversations with cabinet-level officials in the Kennedy administration, Meany assured fellow AFL-CIO activists that he was "moving the proposal through the Government as quickly as possible and that some definite word should be available shortly."⁴⁹ Meany was right. After over a year of lobbying, AFL-CIO transnationalists were on the verge of obtaining state backing for their organizational efforts in Latin America. In the process, former AFL-CIO attorney Arthur Goldberg would convert his Labor Department into a new player in U.S. foreign policy.

TRANSNATIONALISM, EMPIRE, AND KENNEDY'S "IMAGINATIVE LABOR PROGRAM"

If the history of U.S. labor operations in Latin America cannot be written without taking account of transnational AFL-CIO activism, nor can it ignore imperial structures of state power. As historian Akira Iriye writes, the preferred U.S. ideological vehicle for overseas cultural expansion has long been Wilsonian internationalism, which he defines as "a conscious attempt to redefine United States foreign policy to restructure international order in close connection with domestic order," including "corporatist arrangements" that provide for "effective cooperation at home among government, business, labor, agriculture, and professional groups."⁵⁰ Megan Black has demonstrated how postwar Point Four corporatist

47. AIFLD, Meeting Minutes, October 11, 1961, folder 57/1, RG1-038, GMMA.

48. Michigan AFL-CIO to Goldberg, October 17, 1961, folder "Latin American Labor," box 46, Goldberg Records, RG174, USNA.

49. AIFLD Minutes, November 20, 1961, folder 57/1, RG1-038, GMMA.

50. Iriye, "Culture and Power," 122.

development programs provided a platform for the overseas expansion of U.S. Interior Department raw material policies and cultural discourses linking underdeveloped Native American lands with untapped raw materials in the Third World.⁵¹ With the 1961 inauguration of President Kennedy, a similar dynamic emerged in the development-minded dialectic between the state and the AFL-CIO, with the Labor Department playing a newfound role as a vehicle for the globalization of U.S. labor corporatist ideologies and practices.

As AFL-CIO President Meany's comments in late 1961 suggested, a new partnership between labor and the government was in the works. On September 14, President Kennedy issued a second secret labor directive, authorizing his cabinet to "plan and execute an imaginative, energetic, and progressive labor program for Latin America designed to win increasing support for United States foreign policy objectives." Addressed to the Secretaries of State and Labor, and to the Directors of USIA, USAID, and the CIA, Kennedy's memorandum aimed to "strengthen labor programs and institutions," bringing them into line with the "sound development plans" required for each country receiving funds under the new Alliance for Progress. Specifically, Kennedy's labor program called for coordinating "through appropriate private groups," such as the AFL-CIO, with the ultimate goal of "energizing and increasing the effectiveness of free democratic trade unions . . . [and] combatting the activities of Communist-controlled or dominated labor organizations."⁵² The memorandum bore the indelible mark of Labor Secretary Goldberg, whom Kennedy subsequently appointed to a "special committee to study psychological and political warfare." Goldberg's old ILGWU friend Jay Lovestone congratulated the former spymaster on his department's expanded foreign responsibilities, offering to provide Goldberg with a portfolio of orientation materials bringing him up to speed with the state of psychological labor operations since World War II.⁵³

Having received President Kennedy's green light, Secretary Goldberg spearheaded the formation of an interagency labor committee to "insure effective and timely communication" between the Departments of Labor and State, and with USIA, USAID, and the CIA.⁵⁴ In early December, Goldberg reached out to AFL-CIO leadership, including Meany, Romauldi, Beirne, and Dubinsky, announcing that President Kennedy had finally agreed to "develop . . . [a] labor program for Latin America . . . as a matter of urgency." Goldberg further revealed that Kennedy intended the Labor Department to coordinate the operation with all government agencies, "including . . . the Central Intelligence

51. Megan Black, "Interior's Exterior: The State, Mining Companies, and Resource Ideologies in the Point Four Program," *Diplomatic History* 40 (2016): 83–84, 95, 110.

52. Kennedy Memorandum, September 14, 1961, folder "Appropriations ILAB," box 1, Werts Records, RG174, USNA.

53. Lovestone to Goldberg, October 10, 1961, folder "Lj-Lo 1961," box 9, Goldberg Records, RG174, USNA.

54. Rusk to Goldberg; and Rusk to Kennedy, November 17, 1961, folder "Latin American Labor," box 46, Goldberg Records, RG174, USNA.

Agency,” and he invited AFL-CIO leaders to begin attending planning meetings with the directors of USAID and the CIA. Goldberg noted that the AFL-CIO had “long advocated and strongly supported” the development goals of Kennedy’s Alliance for Progress, and he flattered his former colleagues with his view that it was “essential, now more than ever, that the Government receive the benefit of the advice and cooperation of the American labor movement.”⁵⁵

If transnational approaches reveal that “the symbolic boundaries between the national and the international, between the governmental and the non-governmental . . . are actually constructs rather than facts,” the porousness of these categories becomes manifest in the emerging partnership between U.S. labor and the Kennedy administration.⁵⁶ When Secretary Goldberg offered the cooperation of the U.S. government and the CIA, he did so as a fellow veteran of three decades of state-supported private labor activism. Goldberg had been Romualdi’s World War II spymaster, and both were long-time allies of Dubinsky and Lovestone’s CIA-backed FTUC. Even CIA Director John McCone drew on private contacts to navigate the agency’s newest relationship with the AFL-CIO. He shared a membership in both the Links Club and the conservative Catholic Knights of Malta with AIFLD Chairman Peter Grace, a businessman who had long served as a liaison for CIA-financed religious missions in Latin America.⁵⁷

The only black sheep in the room was progressive Professor McCollum, author of the original AIFLD proposal and the institute’s executive director since its October 1961 launch. Early in January 1962, however, McCollum abruptly submitted his resignation, citing Meany’s view that “I was initiating action without proper clearance, attempting to set policy, and was thinking too small in regard to the envisioned program.”⁵⁸ Looking into the matter, AIFLD donors in the Rockefeller family discovered that McCollum “did not resign, but got fired—‘out and out fired’—by George Meany.” According to the Rockefellers’ source, McCollum was “too honest a man to go along with ideas with which he did not agree,” and this included serving the “political purposes” of the AFL-CIO and “being a lieutenant for Meany.”⁵⁹

Having disposed of the woolly professor, Meany appointed AFL-CIO veteran Romualdi as the AIFLD’s new executive director. The transition came just in time. Six weeks later, Romualdi’s former OSS boss Goldberg invited the entire AFL-CIO leadership to his office for a confidential meeting with USAID Administrator Fowler Hamilton and CIA Director John McCone. Prior to the rendezvous, Secretary Goldberg requested that all attendees obtain security clearance since

55. Goldberg to Meany et al., December 4, 1961, folder “Labor Advisory Committee,” box 49, Goldberg Records, RG174, USNA.

56. Nicolas Guilhot, quoted in Scott-Smith, “Introduction: Private Diplomacy,” 6.

57. Regarding McCone and Grace, see Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer*, 187–95.

58. McCollum to AIFLD, January 8, 1962, folder 57/1, RG1-038, GMMA.

59. Hyde Memoranda, January 30 and April 6, 1962, folder 540, box 80, series 3, RBF, RAC.



Figure 2: After two years of operating with little support from the state, U.S. transnational labor activists finally had a friend in the White House with John F. Kennedy's inauguration in January 1961. Here in the Rose Garden on August 31, 1962, Kennedy fawns over a nonplussed CWA President Joseph Beirne (left), whose Latin American labor leader training programs had just been made the model for a massive network of USAID-funded AFL-CIO centers throughout Latin America. (Source: folder 16, box 1, subseries ID, photos.086, CWA, TL).

“it will be desirable . . . to deal with classified subject matter,” including “important recommendations concerning activities in which the labor movement . . . can engage in support of the Alliance for Progress.”⁶⁰

On March 12, 1962, Meany led his men to Goldberg's Labor Department office for the first meeting of the “Labor Advisory Committee on the Alliance

60. Goldberg to Dubinsky, February 28, 1962; Goldberg to Beirne et al., March 2, 1962; Goldberg to Rusk et al., March 2, 1962; and Labor Department Memorandum, March 8, 1962, folder “Labor Advisory Committee,” box 163, Goldberg Records, RG174, USNA. See also Goldberg to McCone, March 2, 1962, folder “Central Intelligence Agency,” box 133, Goldberg Records, RG174, USNA.

for Progress.” Aside from Romualdi, the institute was represented by the CWA activists who had spearheaded U.S. labor programs in Latin America in the late 1950s: Joseph Beirne and Bill Doherty, recently appointed AIFLD Secretary-Treasurer and Social Projects Director, respectively. As the labor leaders settled in for their long-awaited summit with top U.S. development and intelligence officials, they expressed an eagerness “to be used by the Alliance for Progress . . . for the planning, processing, and eventual execution of projects.” Goldberg opened with good news. President Kennedy had approved two immediate subsidies to support the newly-minted AIFLD: \$100,000 would come from presidential “emergency funds,” and an additional \$250,000 had been made available through USAID for use “as institute projects develop.” Meany responded that the federation would provide its own \$100,000 startup grant, and that AIFLD would continue to solicit donations from corporations and charities.⁶¹ The largest private-public overseas labor program in U.S. history had just begun.

It was a time of jubilation for AFL-CIO activists like CWA President Beirne, who had pioneered the labor effort in Latin America during the lean, pro-business years of the Eisenhower White House. As AIFLD Secretary-Treasurer, Beirne wrote to USAID Administrator Hamilton a month after receiving the first government subsidies, explaining his view that, “because of the private and non-governmental character of the Institute, programs can be developed which as a result of diplomatic and political conditions may not be undertaken directly by the U.S. government.” Vowing that the AFL-CIO’s private interests paralleled those of the state, Beirne assured Hamilton that AIFLD would “deny assistance to communist dominated institutions and will support only those organizations committed to the democratic concept.” According to Beirne, as state largesse flowed into these private labor activities over the coming months, “the communist influence in the Latin American labor movement will have been dealt a death blow.”⁶²

With the ascendance of CWA Irish-Americans like Beirne and his deputy Bill Doherty, the torch had been passed to a new generation of U.S. labor transnationalists working in Latin America. More at home with Catholic anticommunist developmentalism than their secular colleagues in Dubinsky’s ILGWU, who had

61. The meeting minutes were filed in a folder entitled “CONFIDENTIAL – Miscellaneous,” which none of the USNA archivists could locate. Here I cite documents created shortly afterward. Quote from AIFLD Executive Council, April 4, 1962, folder 57/1, RG1-038, GMMA; U.S. government memorandum to Beirne, [1962], folder “AIFLD – Financial,” box 319, CWA, TL; Beirne to Hamilton, April 26, 1962, folder “Labor Advisory Committee,” box 163, Goldberg Records, RG174, USNA; AIFLD, Statement of Income, December 31, 1962, folder “AIFLD – Financial Statement,” box 319, CWA, TL. See also Welch, “Labor Internationalism,” 82–83.

62. Beirne to Hamilton, April 26, 1962, folder “Labor Advisory Committee,” box 163, Goldberg Records, RG174, USNA.



Figure 3: The key catalyst in mobilizing millions of government dollars behind AFL-CIO anti-communist organizing in Latin America was President Kennedy's Labor Secretary, Arthur Goldberg (center). A powerful union attorney and former World War II labor spymaster, Secretary Goldberg judged Beirne's CWA to be "among the most effective of the organizations currently operating south of the border." Here he meets with CWA and PTI leaders in mid-1962 to discuss Kennedy's confidential plan to radically expand their modest program throughout the region. Surrounding Goldberg, from left to right: CWA Vice President Hackney, NALC President Bill Doherty Sr., CWA President Beirne, and PTI Latin American director Bill Doherty Jr. (Source: folder 19, box 1, subseries ID, photos.086, CWA, TL).

taken the lead in postwar Europe, Beirne and Doherty spoke the Kennedy-era imperial language of Third World modernization. In a 1963 speech to the Catholic Association for International Peace, Beirne warned of "danger hanging over our heads" due to the fact that "the United States is losing to the Communists in Latin America." Chalking this up to the fact that "poverty, deprivation, disease, sickness are all around," Beirne complained that the Communists "just say, simply, 'We are going to give you bread . . . You deserve it,'" and he called on fellow Catholics to acknowledge their "obligation to sacrifice, to help."⁶³

⁶³ Beirne Speech, September 26, 1963, folder "JAB (Speeches)," 1962–1963, box 71, CWA, TL. Regarding ILGWU's secular socialism, see Parmet, *Master of Seventh Avenue*.

Beirne's version of modernization theory was not as sophisticated as the Cold War intellectuals who made it famous, but it was just as patronizing.⁶⁴ According to the CWA president, "the people of Latin America, even the little Indian boy on the side of the Andes outside Cuzco, Peru, he likes us, he knows that we are an American by just looking at us. He can say, 'Americano.' This works in our favor. We have the people with us." Concluding his lowbrow speech by attacking communism as a negation of "the freedom that is buried away in the soul of all of us by Almighty God," Beirne praised a "small band of businessmen" who were joining labor in the fight against communism "at the grassroots level" through the AIFLD.⁶⁵

A similarly zealous tone was struck by Beirne's deputy, Bill Doherty, whose path to AIFLD's directorship was paved two years later when Meany pushed Romualdi into early retirement. A devout, daily communicant and former seminarian who Papal biographer George Weigel called "one of the great Catholic laymen of twentieth-century America," Doherty was at ease with Kennedy-era modernization rhetoric. As he told the influential National Conference on Economic and Social Development in July 1962, Kennedy's "Alliance for Progress is one revolution that must succeed . . . The revolution is real; it is tangible; it can be felt; it can be understood; it is both popular and necessary and, above all . . . it cannot be turned back." Estimating that "the communists and the reactionary dynasties know full well that their cynical chess-game of dealing in human degradation is now being challenged by the Alliance for Progress," Doherty declared that the AFL-CIO had launched a full-scale effort, the AIFLD, "to get the Alliance to move forward."⁶⁶

Beirne and Doherty's development language was also reflected in official AFL-CIO literature and policies, leading AIFLD to represent a nonstate manifestation of the projection of U.S. modernity. "The seeds of unrest have been sown deep in Latin America," one 1962 AIFLD pamphlet began, adding lyrically: "There is a curious but understandable contempt for the status quo among the workers . . . The South American continent is poised on the threshold of rapid change." According to AIFLD, "Whether this change takes the form of violent revolution or peaceful evolution depends on the success of the Alliance for Progress."

64. Regarding modernization theory, see Field, *From Development to Dictatorship*; Bradley R. Simpson, *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and U.S.-Indonesian Relations, 1960-1968* (Stanford, CA, 2008); David Milne, *America's Rasputin: Walt Rostow and the Vietnam War* (New York, 2008); Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore, MD, 2004); and Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and 'Nation Building' in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2000).

65. Beirne speech, September 26, 1963, folder "JAB (Speeches)," 1962-1963, box 71, CWA, TL.

66. George Weigel, "Remembering Bill Doherty," *First Things*, November 16, 2011; and Doherty speech, July 19, 1962, folder 57/2, RG1-038, GMMA. Regarding Romualdi's discomfort with Doherty's larger budget and salary, see Romualdi to Schnitzler, October 7, 1964, folder 57/9, RG1-038, GMMA; and Romualdi to Beirne, April 23, 1965, folder 11A, box 9, Romualdi Papers, KC.

Motivated by “20th Century concepts of economic, social, and political development,” AIFLD was “endeavoring to bring the benefits of the Alliance for Progress to the workers of Latin America.”⁶⁷ Even Kennedy’s growing cadre of Peace Corps Volunteers would be enlisted in labor’s modernization crusade, staffing AIFLD adjunct courses to “teach trade unionists hygiene and cleanliness of home.”⁶⁸

While CWA activists Beirne and Doherty melded Catholic anticommunism with imperial notions of Third World development, Meany and Romualdi would ensure that the new institute maintained a traditional AFL-style commitment to tripartite corporatism. Romualdi opened AIFLD’s first class in Washington with a speech defending tripartitism, which he described as the belief that labor should “deal with the government as well as with the employer . . . offering to both of them its own contribution toward making social and economic progress feasible.” Internal documents defined AIFLD’s mission as in keeping with a long history of U.S. labor activism, “based not on the concept of class struggle, but on the constructive role labor can play with other segments of society.” According to a 1963 AIFLD brochure, cross-class corporatism was “the most fundamental credo of the Institute,” for economic progress was only possible with “labor and management pulling together, like oxen in a harness.”⁶⁹

If AIFLD’s version of tripartite corporatism was a three-legged stool requiring cooperation from both government and business, it was a particularly lopsided one. Four months after receiving the first of millions of dollars in state subsidies, it was becoming clear to George Meany that AIFLD had “not found the favorable response expected” from private sources and that the institute would “have to depend, to a greater extent than anticipated, on U.S. government contracts.”⁷⁰ Precious few corporations were convinced by a letter-writing campaign by AIFLD Chairman Peter Grace, who declared to 175 fellow CEOs in June 1963 that the AFL-CIO “recognizes the capitalistic and free enterprise system,” and that its labor organizing campaigns “had already penetrated deep within the Latin American labor movement with a democratic, anti-Communist message.” Nor did many businessmen agree with Juan Trippe, the imperious Pan-American Airways chief, that AIFLD would “make a great contribution to the free enterprise system in Latin America” as “an effective tool in the fight against communism and

67. AIFLD, “The Workers of America,” [1962], folder “Printed Documents – AIFLD,” box 319, CWA, TL.

68. AFL-CIO minutes, August 12–15, 1963, 9–10, folder “Meeting Minutes, Executive Council,” RG4-006, GMMA.

69. Romualdi remarks, June 19, 1962, folder 57/3, RG1-038, GMMA; AIFLD, “Aims, Objectives, and Programs,” February 1963, folder “Printed Documents – AIFLD,” box 318, CWA, TL; and AIFLD, “Buttressing Democracy in the Americas,” [1963], folder 540, box 80, series 3, RBF, RAC.

70. Latin American Labor Committee, “Mousetraps and Organizational Questions,” [July 1962], folder “Labor Advisory Committee,” box 163, Goldberg Records, RG174, USNA.

even socialism.”⁷¹ The more common private response was “no great enthusiasm,” in the words of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, which donated \$20,000 thanks only to a personal connection to Romualdi, who had directed State Department labor programs for Nelson Rockefeller during World War II.⁷² The quintessential Cold War foundations—Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller—rebuffed AIFLD’s requests, and even charities that fronted for the CIA took a pass, preferring to channel their non-emergency funds toward higher-brow cultural programs.⁷³

Unfazed, Meany continued his scramble to build up the third leg of U.S. labor’s commitment to tripartite corporatism. In December 1962, he expressed hope to AIFLD trustee Henry Woodbridge of the True Temper Corporation that, “in the long run . . . when the aims and objectives of the Institute are fully understood . . . it will be thoroughly backed by American business.” Reiterating that the AFL-CIO “firmly believes in the American system of free enterprise . . . the best system in the world,” Meany encouraged Woodbridge to impress upon his corporate brethren that AIFLD “was created to fight Communism in Latin America at perhaps the most vulnerable point, namely among the workers.” Business participation was of “utmost importance,” Meany proclaimed, since it would “improve the ‘picture’ of American Free Enterprise in Latin America,” and even “help to encourage American private investment.”⁷⁴ To “help in this endeavor,” Meany appointed Republican banker Chase Mellen Jr. as AIFLD’s financial secretary, and he also hired Madison Avenue publicist Norman Wolfson, known later for his work on behalf of Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza. Unfortunately for Meany, neither New York City heavy-weight could convince more than a handful of U.S. businessmen that AIFLD’s “program to combat Communism and other corrupt political elements” would succeed in creating out of Latin America “a morally and economically sound neighbor.”⁷⁵

71. Grace letter, June 11, 1963, folder 57/6; and Trippe to Meany, October 31, 1963, folder 57/7, RG1-038, GMMA. Regarding Trippe’s “aerial empire,” see Jenifer Van Vleck, *Empire of the Air: Aviation and the American Ascendancy* (Cambridge, MA, 2013), 124.

72. Creel to Laurence Rockefeller, June 21, 1962; and Creel to Grace, July 31, 1962, folder 540, box 80, series 3, RBF, RAC.

73. AIFLD requested funds from two CIA front charities: Farfield declined, and there is no record that Kaplan responded. Latin American Labor Committee, “Mousetraps and Organizational Questions,” [July 1962], folder “Labor Advisory Committee,” box 163, Goldberg Records, RG174, USNA; AIFLD, “Corporate and Foundation Donations,” attached to Jefferson to Scrivner, May 12, 1964, folder 540, box 80, series 3, RBF, RAC. See also Romualdi to Beirne, July 17, 1962; and AIFLD, “Statement of Income,” December 31, 1962, folder “AIFLD – Financial Statement,” box 319, CWA, TL. Regarding U.S. foundations, see Patrick Iber, *Neither Peace nor Freedom: The Cultural Cold War in Latin America* (Cambridge, MA, 2015); and Mariano Ben Plotkin, “U.S. Foundations, Cultural Imperialism, and Transnational Misunderstandings,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 47 (2015): 65–92.

74. Meeting Minutes, December 27, 1962, folder 57/5, RG1-038, GMMA.

75. Meeting Minutes, December 13, 1963, folder 57/5, RG1-038, GMMA; Norman Wolfson, “American Institute for Free Labor Development: A Public Relations Memorandum,” February 1963, folder 57/4, folder 57/5, RG1-038, GMMA; and Wolfson, “Selling Somoza: The Lost Cause of a PR Man,” *The National Review*, July 20, 1979, 907–9.

The lack of private cooperation posed an ideological problem for U.S. labor corporatists, but it would hardly make a dent in AIFLD's financial health. Thanks to AFL-CIO allies like Labor Secretary Goldberg, the state was exceedingly generous in its relationship with AIFLD's overseas organizing. Recognizing the "urgency for immediate assistance," the Kennedy administration covered half of the institute's first year budget of \$1 million, with presidential emergency funds meeting the full expense of AIFLD's inaugural class of twenty-four English-speaking Caribbean labor leaders in mid-1962, all of whom returned to their home countries on nine-month institute stipends.⁷⁶ By placing an "emphasis on the 'multiplier effect'" through a rapidly-expanding network of local training centers, AIFLD programs reached 40,000 Latin American workers by 1965, at which point USAID was covering 92% of the institute's annual expenses of \$6 million.⁷⁷

Transnational actors are often depicted as thriving on fluidity and autonomy, but state bureaucracies tend to prefer legibility and structure. Within a few months of adopting the AFL-CIO's Latin American program, the Kennedy administration sought "to concentrate its working relationship with the U.S. labor movement through the AIFLD to the maximum degree possible." USAID and the CIA wound down their cornucopia of minor labor programs in Mexico City and San Juan, and Meany's Labor Advisory Committee was crowned the U.S. government's sole "recognizable channel of communication with the American labor movement."⁷⁸

The U.S. government's preference for centralization benefited AFL-CIO leadership, even if the issue of oversight would produce friendly disagreements in the relationship for decades to come. AIFLD's initial USAID contract required only that the U.S. labor movement "keep AID currently informed" of its overseas activities, but the White House Special Group on Counterinsurgency recognized that more effective "monitoring of its operations . . . [was] clearly desirable." The Special Group had been tasked by Kennedy with coordinating covert labor programs, but it expressed some frustration in 1964 that "the far-flung and semi-autonomous character of the Institute's various activities in the field make close monitoring difficult if not impossible." On the other hand, the Special Group conceded that when seeking to direct the institute's priorities, "care must be

76. Moscoso to Inter-Agency Labor Committee, May 11, 1962, folder "Labor Advisory Committee," box 163, Goldberg Records, RG174, USNA; AIFLD, "Summary of Operations, March 25–August 31, 1962;" and Romualdi to Meany, September 7, 1962, folder 57/2, RG1-038, GMMA.

77. See AIFLD, "Progress Report," [1965], folder "Printed Documents – AIFLD," box 319, CWA, TL; *The AIFLD Report*, June 1965, folder 1, box 10, collection 5459, Romualdi Papers, KC; AIFLD, "Statement of Revenue and Expenses," attached to Jefferson to Scrivner, July 13, 1965; and Creel to Rockefeller, July 14, 1965, folder 540, box 80, series 3, RBF, RAC.

78. Memorandum for the Latin American Labor Committee, July 9, 1962; "AID Labor Program," July 9, 1962; and Goldberg to Beirne, May 7, 1962, folder "Labor Advisory Committee," box 163, Goldberg Records, RG174, USNA. Regarding the afterlives of the CIA's Mexico City personnel, see Iber, "Who Will Impose Democracy;" Meeting Minutes, July 3, 1963, folder 57/6, RG1-038, GMMA; AIFLD Board Minutes, March 24, 1964, folder 57/8, RG1-038, GMMA; and Agee, *Inside the Company*, 258, 313, 413, 534.

exercised to avoid overt official monitoring which would detract from AIFLD's vital appearance of autonomy."⁷⁹ As a top USIA official put it, "AIFLD contracts should be discretely directed . . . rather than auditing its current activities (which the AIFLD and the AFL-CIO would deeply resent, and which would be of little value anyway)." There were also policy differences on the ground, with the AFL-CIO throwing up some resistance to state-sponsored political labor operations in support of pro-U.S. parties such as the Christian Democrats in Chile or revolutionary nationalists in Peru, Bolivia, and Venezuela.⁸⁰

These minor "shortcomings" in the "new and expanding relationship" between transnational activists and state power were family quarrels, however, in what the State Department referred to as an "instrumentality" that was "basically sound, successful, and . . . in fact, indispensable in the execution of foreign policy labor operations."⁸¹ The relationship was so mutually beneficial that both partners agreed in late 1963 that "we should concentrate next on Africa," and George Meany informed the Labor Department that the AFL-CIO's Advisory Committee would expand its purview "from a regional to a world-wide concept."⁸² By the end of the decade, the U.S. labor movement had launched AIFLD-style operations in both Africa and Asia, by which point labor's USAID contracts were being permitted to "circumvent the normal time-consuming government approval procedure." This was a highly unusual situation in which nonstate labor activists were "given the power to approve and operate projects without the necessity" of running each one by USAID bureaucrats.⁸³

The government's generosity, and the broad leeway it granted AFL-CIO activists in the field, poses a dilemma for those who claim that AIFLD was little more than a covert front for the official foreign policy. In an empirically reliable account, CIA defector Agee describes the entirety of AFL-CIO leadership as having been involved with the agency: George Meany permitted the federation to be "used by

79. USAID-AIFLD Contract, folder "Labor Advisory Committee," box 163, Goldberg Records, RG174, USNA; and Memorandum to the Special Group, "Progress Report," [1964], box 5, "Records of the Special Group (CI), 1962-1966," Lot 68D451, Record Group 59 (RG59), USNA. For more on the Special Group's role in labor operations, see Jeffrey H. Michaels, "Managing Global Counterinsurgency: The Special Group (CI) 1962-1966," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 35 (2012): 33-61.

80. Gausmann to Kitchin, September 24, 1964, folder "C.I. - Latin America - Labor," box 10, Records Relating to Counterinsurgency Matters, Record Group 306, USNA.

81. "Progress Report on Free Labor Development," December 16, 1964, folder "LAB LA," box 1308, RG59, USNA.

82. Meany to Wirtz, November 1, 1963; and Weaver to Wirtz, December 8, 1963, folder "Labor Advisory Committee," Records of Willard Wirtz, RG174, USNA.

83. Lovestone to Meany, November 4, 1965, folder 16/16, RG18-007, GMMA. Regarding the Asian American Free Labor Institute, headed by former ORIT official Morris Paladino, see Edmund F. Wehrle, *Between a River and a Mountain: The AFL-CIO and the Vietnam War* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2005). For the African American Labor Center, directed by AFL veteran Irving Brown, see Yvette Richards, *Maida Springer: Pan Africanist and International Labor Leader* (Pittsburgh, PA, 2004). Both Paladino and Brown coordinated their activities with the CIA. See Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer*, 51-69; and Agee, *Inside the Company*, 524, 540.

the CIA,” CWA President Beirne was an “important collaborator in CIA labour operations,” and AIFLD’s first two executive directors, Romualdi and Doherty, both served as “CIA agents.”⁸⁴ Another CIA officer who worked in Latin America in the 1960s echoed Agee’s claims in interviews with me, confirming that Romualdi and Doherty were “very close to people in the agency,” and that “you might even say that Doherty was a semi-agent.”⁸⁵ Meany went to the grave, however, insisting that “under no circumstances have we ever received or solicited any money from the CIA,” and Doherty never varied from his line that “our books are now and always have been open to the public. Our funds, our government funds, are appropriated by the Congress.”⁸⁶

Yet money was never the issue. At \$4 billion in 1965, the USAID budget was eight times larger than the CIA’s, and the AFL-CIO’s articulation of labor organizing under the rubric of Third World modernization ensured that development dollars were in easy supply.⁸⁷ From the imperial perspective of the state, the CIA’s role in this episode is best described as an enthusiastic participant. The agency was represented at key meetings with Meany’s Latin American Labor Committee, and it had a seat on the White House Special Group on Counterinsurgency, which oversaw crisis labor operations in which AIFLD was called upon to take part. A transnational perspective therefore casts a shade of doubt on Agee’s absolutist description of AIFLD as a “CIA-controlled labour centre financed through AID.”⁸⁸

The U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee looked into precisely this issue in 1967, responding to press accusations that overseas labor organizing had been hijacked by the CIA. Far from finding that AIFLD was under the thumb of the state, the report concluded that the institute had been given “an unusual amount of flexibility,” with USAID apparently unwilling to treat the AFL-CIO as “just another contractor.” The report complained that the government was effectively “contracting out” its foreign policy to nonstate actors in the U.S. labor movement, whose dogmatic anticommunism was becoming a foreign policy liability.

84. Agee, *Inside the Company*, 519, 523, 527, 537, 544. The CIA itself weighed in on Agee’s veracity in a book review describing his account as “specific knowledge of CIA’s Latin American operations and insight into CIA *modus operandi*.” The Agency expressed “no great quarrel with his reporting of events” and considered the book to be a “severe body blow.” See “Book Review of *Inside the Company: A CIA Diary* by Philip Agee,” in *Studies in Intelligence* 19 (1975): 35–38.

85. Interview by the author with Larry Sternfield, January 3, 2012.

86. Meany interview, 1967; and Doherty interview, late 1970s, in *On Company Business, Part II*, director Allan Francovich (Isla Negra, Blanca Films, 1980).

87. CIA, “Cost Reduction Program,” September 1, 1965, accessed December 3, 2015, available at fas.org/sgp/foia/1947/ciao50405att.pdf; and USAID, *US Overseas Loans and Grants* (“Greenbook”), accessed December 3, 2015, available at <https://explorer.usaid.gov/reports-greenbook.html>.

88. Memorandum to the Special Group, “Progress Report,” [1964], box 5, “Records of the Special Group, 1962–1966,” lot 68D451, RG59, USNA; Memorandum to the Special Group, March 10, 1964, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964–1968*, vol. XXXI, South America and Central America; Mexico, ed. David C. Geyer and David H. Herschler (Washington, DC, 2004), doc 148; and Agee, *Inside the Company*, 519.

Condemning AIFLD's reduction of "democracy" to "anticommunism" and its "subversive activities and divisionist training," the U.S. Senate report called for bringing all USAID-financed labor programs "under the firm control of the Department of State."⁸⁹

The truth is that the AFL-CIO's overseas operations were neither as free-wheeling as the U.S. Senate report claimed, nor as tightly controlled as Agee believed. They originated from a genuine intersection of transnational labor activism and the imperial state. By combining these two analytical approaches, this article demonstrates the importance of viewing nonstate agency in a constant dialectical relationship with state power. President Kennedy's decision to finance private overseas labor organizing arose from a recognition of the utility of what Secretary of State Clinton characterized in 2010 as "forward-deployed civilian power."⁹⁰ More importantly from the perspective of the state, transnational actors are most effective when chosen wisely and funded generously. As AIFLD's businessman chairman Peter Grace described to a gathering of Houston CEOs in 1965, the AFL-CIO had, on its own, "developed a most effective system of education and indoctrination," doing its transnational best to "end the class struggle . . . [by] routing out the Communists from positions of control."⁹¹ All that the imperial state had to do was write the checks and get out of the way.

In a 2008 volume of *American Quarterly*, a trio of Latin Americanists conceded that "transnationalism is a much abused word" that can mean anything from "free trade agreements" to "anticolonial Marxism." They note that the term is particularly marred in Latin America by its association with "(primarily U.S.-based) rapacious corporate dominance and its associated knowledge system," and they conclude with a hint of resignation that "one can say a great many contradictory things about what is wrong with transnationalism and they will all be true about someone's transnationalism."⁹²

This article helps to resolve the dilemma by moving beyond transnational theory to transnational methodology, thus locating a historical moment in which the ideologies and practices of nonstate actors found favor within the structures of the imperial state. These findings thus support Vanessa Ogle's conclusions regarding the turn-of-the-century transnational time management movement. According to Ogle, nation-states have taken such a keen interest in transnational actors since the latter "traded precisely in the kind of information governments yearned for." Only states are able to "muster the resources . . . to harness the forces

89. U.S. Senate, *Survey of the Alliance for Progress Labor Policies and Programs, July 15, 1968*, (Washington, DC, 1968), 7, 20, 37, 43, 77.

90. State Department, "Leading Through Civilian Power," 1.

91. Grace, "A Consensus in Action," September 16, 1965, folder "Printed Documents – AIFLD," box 319, CWA, TL.

92. Laura Briggs, Gladys McCormick, and J. T. Way, "Transnationalism: A Category of Analysis," *American Quarterly* 60 (2008): 625–28.

of globalization,” she argues, adding that transnational history should not shy away from studying the ways in which the nonstate “circulation of knowledge and practices was deployed seamlessly to invigorate the process of state- and nation-building,” and, I would rush to add, empire building.⁹³

Despite (or perhaps because of) these tensions between transnational and the imperial, some of the most innovative and self-consciously transnational literature is currently being published by historians of U.S. relations with Latin America. This includes Patrick William Kelly’s forthcoming book on cross-border human rights activists during the long 1970s, Margaret Power’s new article on transnational networks of rightwing women during the same period, Laurence Francis Tourek’s recent account of California evangelicals’ gospel outreach in Ríos Montt’s Guatemala, and new cultural studies of Cold War philanthropic foundations by Patrick Iber and Mariano Ben Plotkin.⁹⁴ In all of these accounts, the agency of nonstate actors remains in a constant dialectic with imperial power, exposing the many intersections between the flows of transnationalism and the structure of the state.

By employing a joint transnational and imperial approach to challenge the conventional periodization of U.S. Cold War labor programs, this article also points specifically toward future scholarship on the overseas activities of the AFL-CIO. Due to the fact that the U.S. government foreswore keeping close tabs on its USAID labor contractors in the field, the remaining story will have to be told, as here, through mostly nonstate archives. More work is also needed to reconstruct the details of U.S. labor activism on the ground, a history that will require extensive local sources documenting both collaboration and resistance.⁹⁵ Above all, scholars should avoid the analytical extremes of both transnational fluidity and imperial control. Transnational activists may not often tool around the

93. Vanessa Ogle, *The Global Transformation of Time: 1870–1950* (Cambridge, MA, 2015), 208–9.

94. Patrick William Kelly, *Sovereign Emergencies: Latin America and the Making of Global Human Rights Politics* (Cambridge, forthcoming); Margaret Power, “Who but a Woman? The Transnational Diffusion of Anti-Communism Among Conservative Women in Brazil, Chile, and the United States during the Cold War,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 47 (2015): 93–119; Lauren Francis Tourek, “To Support a ‘Brother in Christ’: Evangelical Groups and U.S.-Guatemalan Relations during the Ríos Montt Regime,” *Diplomatic History* 39 (2015): 689–719; Iber, *Neither Peace nor Freedom*; and Plotkin, “U.S. Foundations, Cultural Imperialism, and Transnational Misunderstandings.”

95. Regarding British Guiana, see Rabe, *U.S. Intervention in British Guiana*; Waters and Daniels, “‘When you’re handed money on a platter;” and Robert Waters and Gordon Daniels, “The World’s Longest General Strike: The AFL-CIO, the CIA, and British Guiana,” *Diplomatic History* 29 (2005): 279–307. For Brazil, see Renato Colistete, “Trade Unions and the ICFTU in the Age of Developmentalism in Brazil, 1953–1962,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 92 (2002): 669–701; Cliff Welch, “Labor Internationalism: US Involvement in Brazilian Unions: 1945–1965,” *Latin American Research Review* 30 (1996): 61–90; and Corrêa, “Democracy and Freedom,” in *American Labor’s Global Ambassadors*, 177–200. Regarding Chile and the Andes, see Angela Vergara, “Chilean Workers and the U.S. Labor Movement;” and Rodríguez García, “The AFL-CIO and ORIT,” both in *American Labor’s Global Ambassadors*, 137–64, 201–16. For Iraq, see Matthews, “The Kennedy Administration.”

world on aircraft carriers, as three AFL-CIO organizers did aboard the U.S.S. *Shangri-La* in 1960, but neither do nonstate actors operate in a strategic vacuum.⁹⁶ Striking a balance that takes into account both private agency and the staggering resources wielded by the government, future scholarship should consider the myriad of ways in which domestic U.S. ideologies and practices are, for better or worse, projected across the globe.

96. George Richardson, "Report on Conferences with South American Labor Leaders," March 16 to May 2, 1960, folder 55/12, RG1-027, GMMA.