

Labor's Cold Warriors: The American Federation of Labor and "Free Trade Unionism" in Cold War Japan

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During the 1950s, the American Federation of Labor (AFL) led a global covert attempt to suppress left-led labor movements in Western Europe, the Mediterranean, West Africa, Central and South America, and East Asia. American union leaders argued that to survive the Cold War, they had to demonstrate to the United States government that organized labor was not part-and-parcel with Soviet communism. The AFL's global mission was placed in care of Jay Lovestone, a founding member of the American Communist Party in 1921 and survivor of decades of splits and internecine battles over allegiance to one faction or another in Soviet politics before turning anti-Communist and developing a secret relation with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) after World War II. Lovestone's idea was that the AFL could prove its loyalty by helping to root out Communists from what he perceived to be a global labor movement dominated by the Soviet Union. He was the CIA's favorite Communist turned anti-Communist.¹

The AFL's International Affairs Division (IAD), headed by Lovestone, was ostensibly founded to support the formation of free trade union movements in recently "democratized" countries the CIA believed to have been infiltrated by Communist agitators. In practice, the IAD, with assistance from the United States Information Agency and the National Endowment for Democracy, supported labor organizations that were most receptive to pro-American "business unionism." In many countries where the IAD had operations, especially in Latin America, "business unionism" quickly became tantamount to no unionism at all. AFL-IAD covert operations were complicit in crippling nascent labor

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1. Recent works on Jay Lovestone and the AFL-IAD include: Ronald Radosh, *American Labor and United States Foreign Policy* (New York, 1969); Tim Shorrock, "Labor's Cold War," *The Nation*, 19 May 2003; Quenby Olmsted Hughes, "In the Interest of Democracy: The Rise and Fall of the Early Cold War Alliance between the American Federation of Labor and the Central Intelligence Agency" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2003); Ted Morgan, *A Covert Life: Jay Lovestone, Communist, Anti-Communist, and Spymaster* (New York, 1999); and Anthony Carew, "The American Federation of Labor in Fizzland: The Free Trade Union Committee and the CIA," *Labor History*, 39 (1998).

movements in France, Greece, Italy, and Latin America. The effort also cost the AFL dearly: according to one source, more than 20 percent of the AFL annual budget was spent on anti-Communist campaigns worldwide.²

Lovestone's agent in Tokyo was anti-Communist labor activist Richard L. G. Deverall, whose mission was to destabilize the leadership of the General Council of Trade Unions (*Nihon Rōdō Kumiai Sōhyōgikai*, or Sōhyō) by fomenting anti-Communist "democratization movements" within the federation and its member unions. While the CIA for a short while found use for Lovestone's "Asia Representative" in Japan, the masters of "Fizzland" (as Lovestone disparagingly referred to the CIA) had far greater success working with private industry associations and right-wing political parties to suppress those militant worker organizations that the AFL seemed unable to influence. During the 1950s and 1960s, the AFL-IAD consistently conflated worker militancy with Communist agitation led from the Soviet Union and focused on stamping out political agitators. However, by doing so, it played into the hands of conservative elites by crippling organizations capable of representing the economic and political interests of workers' movements in countries where protecting business interests was considered to be the only role of the state.

By interweaving a close reading of AFL Japanese-language propaganda with analysis of official memoranda and private correspondence, this essay argues that the AFL's anti-Communist campaign in Japan was both ill conceived and poorly executed. More significant, the effort completely failed to gain influence within the Japanese labor movement; American strategy shifted to influencing corporate managers whose interests had far more in common with the U.S. government than with the American Federation of Labor. The poor conceptualization and ragged execution of the AFL's anti-Communist labor propaganda campaign demonstrates that while U.S. Cold War strategy initially proclaimed itself pro-labor and anti-Communist, it was in the end more congruent with the positions of big business and right-wing politicians in Japan. The failure of the AFL's mission in Japan underscores the irreconcilability of the interests of American foreign policy with those of organized labor in either country.

The IAD's mission in Japan was unique because it was run by personnel who had served in similar roles during the Allied Occupation of Japan (1945–52). Indeed, the establishment of an AFL office seemed a natural

2. Beth Sims, *National Endowment for Democracy (NED): A Foreign Policy Branch Gone Awry* (Albuquerque, N.M., 1990).

extension of the original social-engineering mission of the Occupation and an obvious way for the AFL to expand its role in Japan. The idea was suggested by Lovestone's aide, Irving Brown, and by the summer of 1949, Lovestone had recruited Catholic trade union activist Richard L. G. Deverall to be the AFL-IAD's "Representative in Asia."

A volatile personality with a quick temper, Deverall was well known among labor officials with the Allied Occupation government for "Red-baiting" fellow labor activists. Indeed, Deverall had made many personal enemies during his two and a half years as a labor officer in the military government of Occupied Japan.³ Deverall became the AFL's Asia representative from both his service as a labor official for the Allied Occupation of Japan and his tenure as head of the Education Division of the United Auto Workers (UAW). Deverall did not rise from the ranks of union members, but came to the labor movement by way of his connection to Catholic social activists Dorothy Day and Fr. Charles Coughlin, and his brief service with the Detroit Association of Catholic Trade Unionists (ACTU).⁴ It seems likely that Deverall's enthusiastic support of the UAW⁵ when he was with the Detroit ACTU helped him win a job as the UAW's national Director of Education in 1940.

Deverall's UAW responsibilities included the development of leaflets, pamphlets, books, magazines, conferences, summer schools, educational films, and filmstrips. Deverall was notorious for charging political opponents with being Communist ("Red-baiting"), and his own account of the period indicates that he often found himself embroiled in ideologi-

3. A number of labor activists within the AFL, who had been in Japan during the Occupation, were critical of Lovestone's selection of Deverall. The harshest attacks seem to have hardened Lovestone's faith in Deverall's loyalty to the anti-Communist cause. The AFL at the time was locked in ideological fratricide with the Congress of Industrial Organizations. The two labor federations would merge in 1956. Morgan, 295–300.

4. Deverall's particular brand of Catholic trade unionism was unique: Dorothy Day held perhaps the greatest influence upon his intellectual critique of modern capitalism. Day and Deverall were occasional correspondents, and Deverall even had attended her salon in Brooklyn while he was a student at Columbia. He credited her influence for persuading him that Catholic anti-capitalism was a preferable alternative to socialism, which he also credited for his decision to transfer to Villanova College. At Villanova, Deverall co-founded, with Fr. Charles Coughlin, the magazine *The Christian Front* (later renamed *Christian Social Action*), a radical monthly that published a blend of articles on topics ranging from Catholic mysticism to Christian social activism. From personal communications with Steve Rosswurm, Lake Forest College, January 1996; and the Richard Deverall Papers held by the Archives of the Catholic University of America (ACUA), Washington, D.C.

5. The UAW was not an affiliate of the AFL, but was a founding member of the AFL's arch-rival, the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). See Nelson Lichtenstein, *Labor's War at Home: The CIO in World War II* (Cambridge, UK, 1982); and Steven Rosswurm, *The CIO's Left-Led Unions* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1992).

cal and interpersonal conflicts with the rest of the UAW staff. In the summer of 1942, the Executive Board of the UAW fired Deverall, along with the entire staff of the Labor Education Department, an event that Deverall characterized in his sixteen-page exposé to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as “a Communist coup in the UAW.”⁶

When he was sacked by the UAW, Deverall moved to Washington, D.C., to take a position as a labor analyst for the Office of War Information (OWI). However, he was not happy at the OWI either, where he was “disgusted by the reactionary role he was forced to play.” As special advisor to Interior Secretary Harold Ickes, Deverall recalled how he was forced to stand by and watch while Ickes callously broke a high-profile mine workers’ strike in 1943. Deverall subsequently quit the OWI and enlisted in the Army. Ironically, his OWI experience got him assigned to Washington as a non-commissioned Army-labor liaison until 1944.⁷

Deverall appears to have won Lovestone’s approval by informing the FBI that Communists were running the UAW. Upon the recommendation of Irving Brown, and after what his commanding officer described as his “own repeated requests,” Deverall was transferred to Japan to become the local labor officer (Military Government Labor Officer, or MGLO) for the Military Government Team of rural Miyagi Prefecture, about 300 kilometers northeast of Tokyo. As a field officer stationed in rural Japan, Deverall demonstrated a remarkable ability to gather, process, and report reams of material about local working and organizing conditions that proved useful to his superiors in Tokyo charged with transforming Japan into a democratic ally of the United States.⁸

In the first two and a half years of the Occupation of Japan, Allied officials commenced a wide array of social, economic, and political reforms intended to create a postwar Japanese society that never again could raise arms against the United States or its allies. Occupation planners believed that both land redistribution in the countryside and labor unionization in the cities were essential to the democratization of Japan.

6. Deverall, “Japan: History of Labor Officer in the Occupation Army during the period 26 Nov 1945 until 29 Mar 1946,” RG 8-37; “Japan II: History of a Labor Liaison Officer in the Occupation Army during the period 1 Apr 1946 until 15 June 1946,” RG 8-38; “Life in Japan, v. 4,” RG 8-17; “Life in Japan, v. 5,” RG 8-16; “Notes on Japan, v. 7,” RG 8-33. All in Deverall Papers, ACUA.

7. “An inventory of the Richard L. G. Deverall Papers at The American Catholic History Research Center and University Archives,” Available at <<http://libraries.cua.edu/achrcua/deverall.html>> (accessed 8 May 2007).

8. ACUA holds more than 400 pages of correspondence from Deverall’s first eighteen months in Japan. “Japan: History of Labor Officer in the Occupation Army during the period 26 Nov 1945 until 29 Mar 1946” and “Japan II: History of a Labor Liaison Officer in the Occupation Army during the period 1 Apr 1946 until 15 June 1946,” RG 8-37 and RG 8-38, Deverall Papers, ACUA.

Indeed, land reform created a strong base of politically conservative “yeoman farmers” in rural Japan. Japan’s labor movement, however, grew strongest and fastest within militant unions that had strong ties to the Communist and Socialist Parties.

In late 1945, the U.S. government sent dozens of American labor experts to Tokyo and handed them the task of planning, advising, and regulating the rapid legislation of union rights based loosely on the Wagner Act of 1935. Despite their fratricidal animosities back home, the International Affairs Departments of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) saw common cause in the mission to re-engineer Japan, and each recommended representatives to work with the Allied military government.⁹ These American labor activists-turned-Military Government officials collaborated with union leaders and Japanese bureaucrats (many of whom had been recruited from what had been Japan’s wartime government) to write and implement labor policy in the spirit of a “New Deal” for Japan.¹⁰

The primary directive from Washington was to build a “bread-and-butter” union movement. The Labor Division wrote policies and promoted programs that encouraged unionization around an agenda for improved wages and working conditions. To these ends, the Labor Division also launched a propaganda campaign to guide Japanese workers toward an American-style “business friendly” union movement.¹¹

9. Killen to Burke, 6 May 1947, IBPSPMW Papers cited by Howard B. Schonberger, *Aftermath of War: Americans and the Remaking of Japan, 1945–1952* (Kent, Ohio, 1989), 111–33.

10. Eiji Takemae, Robert Ricketts, and Sebastian Swann, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and Its Legacy* (New York, 2002), 175–78, 311–13; John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York, 1999), 245–46; Theodore Cohen, *Remaking Japan: The American Occupation as New Deal* (New York, 1987), 100, 214–15, 231–39; Richard L. G. Deverall, *Red Star over Japan* (Calcutta, 1952), 221–23; and Joe B. Moore, *Japanese Workers and the Struggle for Power, 1945–1947* (Madison, Wisc., 1983).

11. In 1947, General Douglas MacArthur directed the Japanese legislature (National Diet) to adopt a legal framework that protected the right to organize, strike, and engage in collective bargaining. The 1947 Trade Union Law also established a tripartite apparatus, known as the Central Labor Relations Board (CLRB), which was comprised of government, business, and labor representatives who would arbitrate labor disputes in the event that management and labor could not settle their own. A second piece of legislation, the 1947 Labor Standards Law, established minimum standards for work hours, job safety, and worker’s compensation. The bulk of the latter piece of legislation was written in advance of the American occupation by Teramoto Kosaku, a wartime bureaucrat for the Thought Police (*tokkō keisatsu*) who believed that the defeat of the ultra-right and pending Allied Occupation offered the ideal opportunity to initiate social reforms previously unthinkable. See Dower, 245–46; SWNCC Policy Paper, “Treatment of Japanese Worker’s Organizations,” cited by Moore, 63–64; and also discussed by Cohen, 100.

As a labor field officer for the local office of the Allied Occupation government, Deverall exhibited an exhaustive organizing methodology, used first in Miyagi and later in Nara Prefectures, to cultivate local contacts with whom he met regularly to discuss labor conditions in the region. In the company of his interpreter, Deverall took weekly jaunts during which he and his interpreter interviewed dozens of Japanese union officials. But his distrust for government bureaucrats also drove him to check up on how the local Military Government Team was treating local workers.

Although Deverall lived and worked in Japan off and on for nearly ten years, he never acquired more than a basic command of the Japanese language. Instead, Deverall relied on the interpretative services of his longtime friend Nishio Kaneharu (a.k.a. Harry Nishio). They first met when Nishio was assigned to be an interpreter for the Labor Division in early 1946, and Deverall asked for Nishio to be his personal interpreter whenever he visited with Japanese labor leaders.¹² Deverall and Nishio were inseparable. Deverall hired Nishio to accompany him on all his visits with union representatives, handle all his Japanese-language correspondence, and translate the most important publications into Japanese. Nishio, as with many cross-national relationships, was Deverall's chosen window of access to the Japanese language and culture. Their relationship was quite close, and there were accusations that they were romantically involved. Whatever the case, their collaboration was such that Nishio's translation work bordered on authorship, especially when their writing turned toward the more complex political and cultural issues at play in Japan during the period.¹³

In late 1946, Deverall was rewarded for his hard work with a transfer to General Headquarters (GHQ) in Tokyo, where he was made field liaison for the Labor Education Branch by the chief of the Labor Division, James Killen. Deverall's qualifications for the job were unique in that he was the only GHQ-level labor officer with extensive field experience outside Tokyo. Killen, however, likely had chosen him for the job because of Deverall's strong anti-Communist credentials, and he consequently encouraged Deverall to be his special agent to investigate Communist activities across Japan.

As field liaison, Deverall continued his habit of meticulous research, and within a few months he had visited and reported back on suspected Communist insurgencies in dozens of local labor unions on all four

12. By late 1946, Nishio and Deverall had become close friends. When Deverall left Japan for India in 1948, he maintained a correspondence with Nishio, and upon his return in 1951, he hired Nishio as his second-in-command at the Tokyo office. Deverall, "Correspondence," RG 8-57 to RG 8-70, Deverall Papers, ACUA.

13. Several rumors circulated about Deverall's sexuality. "*Rōdō Pashifiku*" (Pacific Labor), RG 8-96, *ibid.*, discussion with Takemae Eiji, 1998–99, and from personal communications with Steve Rosswurm, January 1996.

major islands.¹⁴ His interviews with Japanese officials were highly social occasions during which Deverall, through his interpreter Nishio, engaged local government and union officials in long-winded discussions of the role labor unions could play in Japan's postwar democracy. Despite Deverall's engaging and detailed reports in which he lists having met with dozens of high- and low-placed union officials, very few of his Japanese contemporaries ever recorded having met with him. Some, such as Ōta Kaoru (who in the 1950s would emerge to lead the largest labor federation in Japan, Sōhyō), thought Deverall's attempts to promote labor unions in Japan were a poorly disguised extension of the growing anti-Communist policies of the Occupation government.

Nevertheless, Deverall's reports also express his increasing discomfort with the local Military Government Teams that he believed were unable to deal fairly with Japanese unions. Deverall reported to his superiors in Tokyo that the local MGLOs displayed a cavalier attitude toward labor law, and an openly hostile attitude toward labor unions. Indeed, he claimed that on several instances, MGLOs had used local police and underworld thugs (*yakuza*) to conscript local workers into a kind of *corvé* for menial labor on American military bases.¹⁵

Perhaps as a reward for his exhaustive investigation into rural labor conditions, or perhaps to quell increasing complaints from local MGLOs with whom Deverall often came into conflict, Deverall was reassigned and given the task of developing labor education programs for small unions in remote prefectures.¹⁶ During his first few months, Deverall wrote more than a dozen publications detailing the role played by labor unions in a democratic society.¹⁷ One booklet, translated into Japanese by staff translator Shibata Michio, explained that the "political independence of the union local was a central component of the national democratic machinery of postwar Japan." Through Shibata, Deverall warned Japanese workers that "any union that allowed Communists to dominate the agenda of a free trade union movement threatened the very safety of democracy in Japan."¹⁸

14. Deverall, "Japan: History of Labor Officer in the Occupation Army during the period 26 Nov 1945 until 29 Mar 1946," RG 8-37; and "Japan II: History of a Labor Liaison Officer in the Occupation Army during the period 1 Apr 1946 until 15 June 1946," Deverall Papers, ACUA.

15. "Japan II: History of a Labor Liaison Officer in the Occupation Army during the period 1 Apr 1946 until 15 June 1946," RG 8-38; "Life in Japan, v. 4," RG 8-17; "Life in Japan, v. 5," RG 8-16; "Notes on Japan, v. 7," RG 8-33, *ibid*.

16. Deverall, "Request for Relief from Active Duty," 15 Apr. 1946 (hand paginated), 291-92, RG 8-38, *ibid*.

17. Deverall, "Labor Division Manual, Part I," General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Economic and Scientific Section, Tokyo, Japan, 1949, RG 8-"Labor Division Manual," *ibid*.

18. Shibata Michio, Richard Deverall ghost, "*Kenzen naru rōdō kyōyaku yori sangyō*

In these early labor education materials, Deverall sought to develop materials that would persuade the average Japanese worker to end Communist influence in their unions. Deverall did not limit himself to the printed word. Indeed, by late 1946, he also was hosting a weekly radio show on democracy and trade unionism. While no transcripts survive, Deverall compiled for his translator lengthy summaries of his talks in advance of each broadcast. He discussed all manner of union operations, from the functions of administrative bureaucracy to the purpose and means of providing workers' education programs.¹⁹

Rife with assumptions about Japan and the Japanese, Deverall reasoned to his broadcast audience that "it would seem that the Japanese will not have a strong and democratic *rōdō kumiai* (*sic*, meaning labor union) unless they have strong and well-educated members. . . . You must know the Trade Union Law, you must know your *rōdō kumiai* (*sic*) constitution, and you must know your contract." He continued:

All of this is sensible and logical. It is also important in order to preserve and extend democracy. Even a democratic trade union can become undemocratic . . . or even anti-democratic. As long as a trade union is run by the membership on a democratic basis, it is a free trade union. But if the membership sits back and lets one or two persons run the union to their own liking—then the union members have killed democracy, and their trade union has become bureaucratic and useful only to the top man. When that happens, trade unionism is dead.²⁰

Deverall offered advice to his assumed constituency, concluding with the suggestion that the "basic principle is that your local union will only be democratic if you yourselves run it. . . . You want your local unions to do as much as they can for themselves *by themselves*" (emphasis in original). Deverall had not yet begun the *ad hominem* attacks he had been famous for at the UAW, but he did warn against Japanese unions dominated by national union leaders, who by 1946 primarily were affiliated with the Socialist and Communist parties.²¹

Pamphlets and radio show were not the only outreach programs run by the Labor Education Department. Deverall and his staff also traveled throughout Japan conducting "labor schools" where local union members were taught the "American method" of labor organizing. Their presentations were theatrical, and often resorted to vaudevillian antics as labor liaisons tried to explain, through their interpreters, "the funda-

minshushugi no kensetsu" (The construction of industrial democracy through sound labor contracts) (Tokyo, 1948.6), with marginalia by Deverall, RG 8-129, Deverall Papers, ACUA.

19. Deverall, "Labor Education Bulletins for the Japanese Trade Unions," 7 Aug. 1946, 21, RG 8-36, Deverall Papers, ACUA.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*, 22.

mentals of democratic trade unionism." Deverall recalled that he and his assistant would:

. . . take off our shoes, do hand stands, come on the stage swinging baseball bats to symbolize the Bolshevik Youth Action Corps, and in general developed a rather riotous lecture meeting that included our singing of ex-militarist Communist songs and the staging of mock fights on the platform to dramatize the [Communist] conception of "collective bargaining techniques."²²

To drive his lesson home, Deverall, a devout Catholic who seldom missed an opportunity to equate democracy with the "god-given right to unionize," even appropriated Buddhist icons—one-time lecturing to his audience while he sat "cross-legged on the table like a Buddha bronze." He believed his labor education campaign was a terrific show, and "thought we should have charged admission when they so obviously enjoyed the play."²³

While Deverall reported having met with dozens of Japanese labor activists across the country, naming the occasional local union or government labor official in his reports, he rarely shows up in the memoirs of Japan's leading labor activists. Whatever influence Deverall claimed to be having from his personal connections appears to be, at best, very much in the background of Japan's postwar labor movement. Nevertheless, Deverall was undaunted in his self-styled Herculean effort to remake Japan's labor movement.

Deverall seemed to relish his service in Japan, but his tenure as a military government officer was cut short when Labor Division Chief James Killen, with whom Deverall had had a complex relationship, suddenly resigned his post in protest of a major shift in Occupation policy toward organized labor. In the summer of 1948, GHQ launched a radical shift in policy for Occupied Japan known as the "Reverse Course." Killen's (and Deverall's) doubts about GHQ's commitment to protecting workers' rights were confirmed for him when General Douglas MacArthur revoked the right to strike for public sector workers. In the furor that followed, Deverall resigned from the Labor Division and publicly accused GHQ of treating the whole of organized labor as part-and-parcel of Soviet communism. In an odd twist of events, Deverall was invited to speak at the Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor, where he declared the alliance between the AFL and the Occupation Government of Japan a complete failure.²⁴

22. Deverall, *Red Star*, 222–23.

23. *Ibid.*

24. They even managed to persuade the AFL to pass a resolution at its 1948 national convention calling for MacArthur to rescind his "reactionary revision of the labor law in Japan." *Ibid.*

In 1949, Deverall accepted an offer from Jay Lovestone to become the AFLs representative in Asia. Lovestone presumably thought that Deverall's strong anti-Communist credentials and field experience in Japan would be interchangeably applicable to other Asian contexts. Deverall returned to Asia, where, working from a small room in Karachi, he quickly validated himself as an apt member of Lovestone's global anti-Communist team by locating informants and reporting on conditions within whichever local labor movement he investigated.²⁵ In his weekly reports to Lovestone, Deverall claimed to have distributed thousands of copies of translated AFL pamphlets during meetings with labor leaders in Hong Kong, Macao, Pakistan, India, and even, with the help of CIA agent William J. "Wild Bill" Donovan, French Indochina.²⁶ But, Deverall continued to be denied reentry to Japan. He blamed leftist sympathizers in the Labor Division for his being barred, but in all likelihood, MacArthur's general staff denied his visa because they still were furious about Deverall's public condemnation of GHQ at the 1948 AFL convention.

The Cold War in Japan continued to build. While the left-led labor movement in Japan was not intrinsically anti-American, the Allied Occupation government was proving increasingly hostile toward Japanese labor. By the summer of 1948, American officials perceived the labor movement as a Communist insurgency in Occupied Japan.²⁷ The ironic consequence of this shift in Occupation policy for organized labor is that GHQ's anti-Communist machinations led to the rise to power of left-socialist labor leaders who, by the mid-1950s, were calling for the eviction of U.S. military forces from Japan.

The General Council of Trade Unions (*Nihon Rōdō Kumiai Sōhyōgikai*, or Sōhyō) was organized formally in March 1950 under the leadership of Takano Minoru, a left-socialist with close ties to the Japan Communist Party. In an ironic twist, Takano had convinced the five largest left-led unions to underwrite the founding of an ostensibly anti-Communist federation. American officials in Tokyo and Washington were appalled by Takano's apparent hijacking of the anti-Communist initiative, and the outbreak of war on the Korean peninsula in June 1950 provided impetus for MacArthur to ban the Communist party and order GHQ to renew crackdowns on leftist labor activists.²⁸

25. Deverall, "Correspondence," RG 8-57 to RG 8-70, Deverall Papers, ACUA.

26. Ibid.

27. For more on this, see Moore, *Japanese Workers*.

28. Lonny E. Carlile, *Divisions of Labor: Globality, Ideology, and War in the Shaping of the Japanese Labor Movement* (Honolulu, 2005); and Yagisawa, *Tōkyō Chihō Rōdō Kumiai Hyōgikai, Sengo Tokyo rōdō undō shi* (History of labor in postwar Tokyo) (Tokyo, 1980), 355–57.

Takano advised Sōhyō member unions, already weakened by a drastically revised Labor Law in 1949,²⁹ to weather the renewed anti-Communist storm by avoiding direct political confrontation with the Occupation government. In part because the war in Korea preoccupied MacArthur (who commanded the war from his office in Tokyo), the U.S. embassy began to take on many of the advisory roles previously filled by Allied personnel, underscoring the American dominance of what ostensibly was an Allied Occupation.

In late 1950, the U.S. embassy began to pressure Lovestone to stop insisting that Deverall be allowed back to Japan and to appoint independent labor consultant Edgar McVoy, a personal enemy of Deverall's who had served with him in the Labor Division, as the AFL's representative in Japan. The suggestion made sense since McVoy had good labor credentials and was already in Japan, but Lovestone distrusted McVoy's "cozy" relationship with the embassy and vociferously opposed the idea. It was not until mid-1951 that the embassy gave in and Lovestone finally was able to arrange for Deverall to return to Japan and open a Tokyo Branch Office of the AFL cover organization, the Free Trade Union Committee (FTUC).³⁰ The sudden change was precipitated by the sense that the American position in Japan was beginning to unravel. President Harry S. Truman's dismissal of MacArthur and his decision to end the Allied Occupation by the end of 1952 had encouraged Takano to renew publication of propaganda criticizing American imperialist ambitions in East Asia. Fearing that Sōhyō yet might become the conveyor belt for a socialist victory in the National Diet, the embassy stopped advocating for McVoy, and GHQ issued Deverall his reentry visa.

In the summer of 1951, Deverall moved from Karachi to Tokyo and set about reestablishing relations with labor activists with whom he had contact during his time with the Occupation. Happy to be working once again with his translator and companion Harry Nishio, Deverall's first mission as FTUC representative in Japan was to encourage Japanese unions to join the anti-Communist International Confederation of Free Trade Unions instead of what the AFL alleged to be a Soviet dominated World Federation of Trade Unions.

At first glance, he appeared surprisingly successful. Indeed, his personal itinerary was full of meetings to discuss the state of labor in Japan

29. The 1949 revision to the Trade Union Law was written specifically to quell labor unrest in Japan.

30. Funding seems to have been an issue, and Deverall's correspondence with Lovestone is peppered with repeated requests for more money to publish the landslide of labor serials and pamphlets that Deverall produced. Lovestone always wired the money, but repeatedly urged fiscal restraint. Deverall was no spendthrift; he ran the FTUC from the transient boarding rooms of the Tokyo YMCA. The money paid for the printing of FTUC propaganda.

with leaders of locals of the steel, textile, automobile, and chemical workers' unions. According to his reports to Lovestone, Deverall was able to meet with union leaders and rank-and-file activists and discuss topics ranging from the leftist domination of Sōhyō to the possibility of establishing yet another anti-Communist national federation.³¹ Oddly, very few of Japan's postwar labor leaders so much as mention Deverall in their memoirs. When they do, Deverall is identified as an anti-labor agitator in the employ of the U.S. government. Privately, many labor activists of the era assert that Deverall had no influence on the course of the labor movement.³² Through personal ties and a torrent of anti-Communist pamphlets, newsletters, and books, Deverall saw himself as undertaking to undermine Sōhyō's leftist leaders.³³

The AFL's official policy was that the first and only order of business for a union was to represent workers in the process of collective bargaining with their employer. According to Deverall's propaganda, AFL-styled unions in Japan would be concerned solely with economic issues and should not dabble in political struggles of any kind—such was fine for a political party but not the proper role of a union.

IAD offices worldwide advocated against "industrial unions" which organized along the lines of a multi-trade, multi-company, class-based union. Instead, the AFL actively promoted the more conservatively styled "trade union," which organized around a particular skill or trade and generally disavowed the existence of political issues on which the union legitimately could act by limiting the union's role to those considered strictly job-related. Politics, Lovestone's agents contended without irony, was best left to political parties.³⁴

Coalition-building among union leaders and the dissemination of targeted propaganda had been the key to Deverall's success with the ACTU in Detroit. Once finally back in Tokyo, he set about constructing a space where the average working man "could receive training in the art of parliamentary procedure and instruction in the various processes of

31. Edgar to Delaney, 29 Nov. 1949, AFL-IAD, Country Files, RG-18-001, box 27, folder 7, GMMA.

32. Takemae Eiji, interview with author, Tokyo University of Economics, Kokubunji, Japan, 1 Mar. 1998.

33. Deverall, "Correspondence," RG 8-57 to RG 8-70, Deverall Papers, ACUA. Some of Deverall's English-language publications during the period include: *Red Star over Japan* (Calcutta, 1952); *Asia and the Democratic Revolution* (Tokyo, 1952); *The Great Seduction: Red China's Drive to Bring Free Japan Behind the Iron Curtain* (Tokyo, 1953); *People's China: Sweat-shop Arsenal!* 2d ed., rev. and enl. ed. (Tokyo, 1954); and *Red China's Dirty Drug War: The Story of the Opium, Heroin, Morphine and Philopon traffic*, 3rd ed. (Tokyo, 1955).

34. Beth Sims, *Workers of the World Undermined: American Labor's Role in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Boston, 1992).

trade unionism: organizing strikes, collective bargaining, contract procedures, public speaking, union education and the like." Deverall maintained that it was commonplace in Japan for "Communists and their trained hatchet-men [to] move into situations with ease" and "prod the union membership into supporting positions they did not comprehend." As a result, Deverall asserted that the FTUC was to be a place the average working man could learn to not "be a puppet in their hands."³⁵ Building trade unionism in Japan, according to Deverall, meant in part teaching basic mechanisms of an AFL-styled organization—dues collection, contract negotiation, composition of the union bureaucracy, and organizing techniques. Indeed, this aspect of his job did not just closely parallel some of the work he did at the Labor Division; it borrowed directly from it.³⁶

When Deverall returned to Japan in late 1951, he rehired Nishio to help him launch the semi-monthly Japanese-language labor magazine *Rōdō Pashifiku* (Pacific Labor). From the start, Deverall used the magazine to attack Sōhyō's apparently anti-American agenda.

In the early 1950s, national labor leader Takano Minoru advocated Japan's exit from the alliance with the United States to join the growing Non-Aligned Nations movement. Deverall and Lovestone believed that the non-aligned movement was a ploy by the Cominform and a key threat to American interests in Asia. In the federation's weekly newspaper *Sōhyō Shimbun* (Sōhyō News), Minoru, now secretary general of Sōhyō, asserted in 1952 that the Korean conflict and the continued American military presence were evidence of an encroaching American hegemony in Japan.

In a series of op-ed pieces in 1953, Takano appears to have incurred Deverall's ire by encouraging the Japanese ethnic nation (*minzoku*) to resist American imperialism in East Asia by forcing the United States to decamp and leave its sizable military bases in Japan. The word *minzoku*, often translated as "nation," a nation based on "the people" in an ethnic sense, has a deeply troubled history. Kevin Doak argues that although the wartime state, in the late 1930s and early 1940s, was able to interweave popular conceptions of the *minzoku* into the political fabric of its imperial and colonial projects, "the 1950s were the formative period in the rehabilitation of ethnic nationalism among leftist critics of the Japanese state." Doak argues that the anti-Communist backlash that followed in the wake of the North Korean invasion of the South encouraged many leftists to revisit ethnic nationalism, but this time "ethnic nationalism

35. Richard Deverall, "The Way it Was: 7," *Social Order*, January 1962, 37.

36. Many of the essays on the mechanics of unionism published by the FTUC in Japan were reprints of essays Deverall wrote for the Labor Division while chief of the Labor Education Branch.

was seen as an effective tool for criticizing, simultaneously, the capitalist postwar Japanese state and the cultural colonialism of U.S. imperialism."³⁷

In the wake of the wartime state's use of a rhetoric which assimilated the colonial peoples of Asia into one ethnic identity, "Asian," some leftists advocated an ethnic-national, anti-imperialist discourse, believing it to be a viable alternative to the bourgeois democracy made compulsory by the American occupier and its collaborators. A significant minority of Japan's postwar Marxists cited anti-colonial movements in India and China as evidence that a true Asian modernity lay in an ethnic nation—differentiated from state, capital, and empire—united in resistance to the emergent American imperial hegemony. It was an audacious claim by citizens of a nation deposed only recently as an imperial and colonial aggressor. Nevertheless, the legacy of wartime rhetoric on ethnic commonality (which underpinned forced assimilations in Taiwan and Korea in the early twentieth century) may have combined with the narrowing of ethnic identification that accompanied the American postwar bifurcation of Japan and Korea to provide fertile soil for the belief that the West was the true hegemonic threat.³⁸

In the March 1953 issue of *Rōdō Pashifiku*, Deverall responded to Takano's appeal with the assertion that the real threat to Japan came from Soviet control of the Japanese political left. Deverall appears to have been attempting to engage directly the lively postwar debate on whether the Japanese people were victims of American imperialism when he asserted that the independence of the "Japanese people" (translated by Nishio as *kokumin minzoku*) was threatened by the left's slavish adherence to Soviet ideology. He asserted that "in the democratic world, the independence of political and ethnic nation must be respected," and ended on the high note that "we [the Japanese people] must oppose cultural imperialism!"³⁹

Deverall charged that leftist claims on the ethnic nation threatened to destroy the "political nation" by enslaving the Japanese people (the "ethnic nation") to the whims of the Soviet Union. He argued that leadership

37. Ibid.

38. Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Reinventing Japan: Time Space Nation* (Armonk, N.Y., 1998), 87; Curtis Anderson Gayle, *Marxist History and Postwar Japanese Nationalism* (London, 2003); and Victor Koschmann, "Marxist History and Postwar Japanese Nationalism (review)," *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 31 (2005), 486–90.

39. Although difficult to discern, Deverall appears to be attempting to resolve the problem of separate ethnic and political nations by asserting that the liberal constitutional state and the people's ethnic nation are a single entity. Deverall appears unfazed by the fascist implications of his assertion. Richard Deverall, "Minzoku dokuritsu wo mamoran!" (Defend the independence of the ethnic nation!), *Rōdō Pashifiku*, March 1953, inside front cover, RG 8-96, Deverall Papers, ACUA.

from the "Soviet-dominated left threatened both economic gains made by a new 'liberalized' system of labor-management relations and, more significantly, threatened the independence of the ethnic-national essence of Japan [*minzoku no jisshitsu*]."

In a persuasive section on Soviet militarist expansion, Deverall offered the example of Stalin's subjugation of Czechoslovakia to illustrate what would happen to Japan if it turned Communist. Wrote Deverall, "of all the ethnically constituted political nations [*kokumin minzokuteki*], the Japanese must defend their cultural independence and resist Japan's destruction by cultural imperialism." In a rhetorical shift which seems forced and unpersuasive, Deverall then offered Hitler's war of extermination against European Jewry as another example of what might happen to Japan. Deverall asserted that Stalin threatened the Japanese ethnic nation with an experience similar to the European Holocaust. "Ten years ago," wrote Deverall, "millions of Jews were exterminated within Hitler's concentration camps." He implored Japan's labor movement to join the AFL in its condemnation of the "ongoing genocide [*minzoku shikō*]" being perpetrated by Stalin throughout Eastern Europe:

Recently, in communist controlled Czechoslovakia, there is an emerging record of a new Terror Movement. The Communist Party is exterminating the remaining Jews confined behind the Iron Curtain. Even though only a hint of the anti-semitic movement inside the Communist sphere is readily apparent, it is impossible to see the distinction between a Communist and a Fascist. Soviet Imperialism threatens us all!⁴⁰

Deverall's assertion that totalitarianism ran rampant in both Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany is significant indeed. Even more so, he uses the argument to call on all Japanese to rally and protect the "independence of the *minzoku*" from an emergent Soviet hegemony.⁴¹

Deverall reported that the AFL recently had passed a resolution in opposition to this "Soviet strategy of genocide" and called on all organized labor to "protect the sanctity of national culture, and respect the right to life for all human beings." "From our hearts," extolled Deverall, "we cry out against the crime of racial mass murder!" He continued:

The AFL appeals to all workers of the world to oppose this new mass murder of Jews. Jews, like the Japanese, the Americans, and for that matter Egyptians, possess the right to exist. The AFL Central Committee and the Free World demand that the Soviet Communist Republic end this treatment of its domestic Jewry without delay. We must arrest the mass murder of Jews!⁴²

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

By linking the plenary resolution of the AFL calling on all workers to resist the extermination of Jewish culture under Stalin, Deverall appears to be asserting that the AFL's position in Japan was anti-imperialist. Deverall's deployment of the Holocaust is sincere and might have played well in some American union halls. However, the destruction of European Jewry likely was too far removed from the daily consciousness of most Japanese. Indeed, Deverall might have been better off drawing from Japan's own recent history as a perpetrator of war crimes in East Asia, which among leftist labor activists would have provided an easily identifiable context to decry totalitarianism. For reasons known only to Deverall, and perhaps his translator Nishio, none of the AFL's Japanese-language propaganda touched on Japan's recent foray into imperialist expansionism, even as it never stopped trying to portray the AFL as an anti-imperialist organization in East Asia.⁴³

Perhaps because of his erratic personality, or perhaps because of the odd propaganda he produced, Japanese labor leaders thought Deverall a joke; many considered him little more than a puppet of the CIA.⁴⁴ Even Lovestone heard rumors of the inefficacy of Deverall's mission and, in 1954, he specifically asked Deverall to account for reports that Sōhyō member unions were throwing FTUC publications into the trash—in the bundles in which they had been delivered. Of course, Deverall denied the reports and continued to publish his monthly magazines, pamphlets, booklets, and flyers, but by the middle of 1954, Lovestone had heard enough and ordered the Tokyo office closed; Deverall was reassigned to Western Europe.⁴⁵

In part, the FTUC mission in Japan failed because of Deverall's volatile personality and unpersuasive propaganda, but also because the U.S. foreign policy mission in Japan was more successful when pursued through other avenues. By the mid-1950s, the U.S. State Department and the CIA were becoming involved more directly in Japanese politics, and

43. Deverall, "Heiwa e no michi" (Road toward peace), *ibid.*, December 1952; *idem*, "The God-Given Right to Strike," *ibid.*, January 1953; *idem*, "Anti-Colonialism: An Editorial Statement from the AFL," *ibid.*, February 1953; *idem*, "Let Asian Fight Asian," *ibid.*, May 1953; and *idem*, "Liberated Workers of Red China," *ibid.*, June 1953. All in RG 8-96, Deverall Papers, ACUA.

44. Takano Minoru, Ōta Kaoru, and Iwai Akira recorded no direct interest in what Deverall said or wrote in *Rōdō Pashifiku* or any other propaganda organ. Sōhyō's own International Affairs Department tracked Deverall much as he tracked them, and occasionally filed complaints against him with the U.S. embassy. Takano Minoru, *Takano Minoru chosakushō* (The complete writings of Takano Minoru) (Tokyo, 1976); Mizuno Aki, *Ōta Kaoru to sono jidai: "Sōhyō" rōdō undō no eikō to haitai* (The era of Ōta Kaoru: Sōhyō in glory and defeat) (Tokyo, 2002); and Takemae Eiji, interview with author, Tokyo University of Economics, 24 Mar. 1998.

45. Lovestone to Deverall, 2 Feb. 1954, RG 8-60, Deverall Papers, ACUA; and Morgan, 305–6.

the CIA's embassy liaison had far greater success working with the warring factions of what was to become the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) than the State Department's labor attaché did working with Deverall.⁴⁶ Ambassador Douglas MacArthur II later explained that "if Japan went Communist, it was difficult to see how the rest of Asia would not follow suit." That the CIA had money for the emerging party was well known "at the highest levels of the Japanese government." Indeed, according to MacArthur II, by the late 1950s, even Finance Minister Sato Eisaku comfortably asked the embassy for funds to help the LDP engineer the popular vote. Direct covert operations in Japan, unlike those in Indochina and Cuba, indeed were successful at bolstering a regime deeply interested in concealing America's deep involvement in their internal affairs.⁴⁷

However, the Japan Productivity Center (JPC) was probably the most successful U.S.-funded means of curbing militant labor unions in Japan. The JPC was founded with the explicit mission of promoting management strategies for improved worker productivity and smooth labor-management relations. While ostensibly a Japanese initiative, the founding of the JPC was funded in part by the State Department and the United States Information Agency. Despite its close ties to the United States, the JPC was a highly successful platform for promoting productivity management among corporate managers and government bureaucrats, and by the mid-1960s, even Japanese labor leaders worked in conformity with informal Labor Ministry guidelines written by "productivity minded" bureaucrats.

The AFL had sent American labor activists to Occupied Japan in order to keep Japanese low-wage workers from undercutting American industrial production and stealing American jobs back home. Even after the AFL's public break with the Occupation government in 1948, Lovestone was convinced that the AFL still needed to be in the field, and remained adamant about sending Deverall back to Japan. The collaboration between the U.S. military and the American labor movement was troubled from the start, and when push came to shove, even Deverall felt he no longer could work with an American military that was antithetical to the basic principles of organized labor.

Deverall's tenure in Occupied Japan was outwardly successful. Much of the propaganda Deverall produced during this period contained good practical advice on the mechanics of running a union, but his narrowly focused and self-defeating anti-Communist line never allowed him to

46. Deverall had a stormy relationship with the labor attachés stationed at the embassy, and his well-publicized conflicts with the embassy also contributed to the failure of the FTUC mission in Japan. Morgan, 295–306.

47. Tim Weiner, Stephen Engelberg, and James Sterngold, "CIA Supported Conservatives in Japan During Cold War, Ex-Agents Say," *New York Times*, 9 Oct. 1994.

influence more than a small handful of admirers. Without the obvious threat of force that came with the backing of the U.S. military, an organization with which he himself had had considerable difficulties, Deverall achieved only marginal influence within a labor movement with which he had imagined himself intimately involved for nearly a decade.

Deverall was little more than a minor irritation to the leaders of Japan's socialist labor unions, who felt increasing uneasy about being "Ground Zero" of the burgeoning Cold War. In the end, even Deverall's strongest advocate, Jay Lovestone, lost faith and ordered Deverall to close up shop in Tokyo.