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Masterarbeit zum Thema:

**The emergence of the ‘Bandung spirit’
– A critical analysis of the concept of Afro-Asian solidarity**

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“Let a new Asia and a new Africa be born!”¹

¹ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung*, Djakarta 1955, p. 18.

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1. Introduction

In the history of the world it frequently happened that great ideas are held by more than one mind at a given period. It appears that this has been the case with the idea of cooperation between the Asian and African countries, which in the period after the end of the second world war became vocal.²

It so happened that in April 1955, at the height of Cold War tensions, a gathering of incredible magnitude took place, where “every religion under the sun, almost every race on earth, every shade of political opinion, and one and a half billion people from 12,606,938 square miles of the earth’s surface were represented [...]”³ This so-called Asian-African Conference convened 29 countries from Southeast Asia, the Middle East, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa⁴ in Bandung, Indonesia – all of which had been for centuries deprived of the power to negotiate their own political, economic and cultural affairs. As free and independent states, they could for the first time grant themselves the opportunity to meet in their own terrain, openly exchange views and discuss future means of cooperation. Emergent of this conference unprecedented in history was an incredible form of cohesion and solidarity that has since been termed the ‘Bandung spirit’. It is hereby that I open this thesis under the following heading: *The emergence of the ‘Bandung spirit’ – A critical analysis of the concept of Afro-Asian solidarity*.

In this work I am precisely concerned with two questions of analysis: Firstly, was the concept of Afro-Asian solidarity simply promoted for the arena of global politics in the aftermath of Bandung? And in this process quickly transformed into the myth that came to be known as the ‘Bandung spirit’? Or can it actually be read out of the historical sources, as an aspiration that the participants shared at a certain time in history? Secondly, on which grounds does the argumentation for this concept rest? How do the political figures that shaped it, construct the idea of a new spirit that encompasses all the former colonized subjects of Africa and Asia? Was it simply a “revolt...against the white”, as Eleanor Roosevelt claimed?⁵ This assertion mirrors what many contemporaries of the time saw in Bandung: a fusion of formerly oppressed people against their old colonial masters, a revolt against the

² The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung*, Djakarta 1955, p. 11.

³ Wright, Richard: *The Color Curtain. A Report on the Bandung Conference*. By Richard Wright, Cleveland 1956, p. 135.

⁴ I will hence refer to sub-Saharan African with the abbreviation SSA.

⁵ Exclamation by John Humphrey, Director of the Human Rights Division, 7 and 24 November, 1950, in: Burke, Roland: *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights*, (Pennsylvania studies in human rights), Philadelphia 2013, p. 1.

West,⁶ ready to strike back so to say. In search for an answer to this question, I resort to Humphrey by declaring: “It is more than that.”⁷ I argue that the notion of Afro-Asian solidarity rests on much more than simply painting the devil on the wall, but manifests itself in the search for common grounds, the display of agency and self-determination of the global South. Or in the words of one Bandung delegate: ““This Conference represented an effort by these countries to regain their personality and international dignity and was an assertion of their personality vis-à-vis the West.””⁸

By all means, it needs to be clarified what kind of analysis I provide in this work: My object of analysis is an international conference, a “prosaic, yet requisite, feature of modern diplomacy.”⁹ According to Christopher Lee, it is both a “practice and a form” that emerged alongside with, or in some way as an effect, of the birth of the nation-state, blossoming in particular in the post-war era.¹⁰ While diplomatic gatherings had taken place as much beforehand, it is the institutionalization of the international conference that was a novelty.¹¹ My analysis, however, will be narrowed down to the concept of Afro-Asian solidarity as a prominent theme at the Conference¹² – from a Middle East & North African (MENA) and sub-Saharan African (SSA) perspective. While not thoroughly corresponding to a conceptual analysis,¹³ I will yet move along its guidelines according to the definition of a concept as an “abstract idea” that can be deconstructed and analyzed.¹⁴

⁶ I would like to annotate at this point that I will capitalize the following terms in this work: West, Western, White, as well as its ‘counterpart’ East, Eastern, Southern. This is in order to highlight that these ascriptions are men made constructions and do not reflect the natural reality of things. Eastern and Southern will be used interchangeably, since I refer to a vast region comprising the African and the Asian continent. According to Western descriptions these are termed sometimes Eastern, sometimes Southern. I have thus often resorted to ‘the global South’.

⁷ Burke: *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights*, p. 1.

⁸ Kahin, George McTurnan: *The Asian-African Conference. Bandung, Indonesia, April 1955*, Port Washington / NY i.a. 1972, p. 38.

⁹ Lee, Christopher J.: *The Rise of Third World Diplomacy. Success and Its Meanings at the 1955 Asian-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia. Success and Its Meanings at the 1955 Asian-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia*, in: Oxford Scholarship Online (2015), p. 1–39, here p. 5.

¹⁰ The Second World War is meant at this point.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 5.

¹² I will from this point on capitalize Conference in order to emphasize that I refer to the specific Asian-African Conference of 1955.

¹³ According to Horvath, “conceptual analysis is one of the main traditional methods of philosophy, arguably dating back to Plato’s early dialogues. The basic idea is that questions like ‘What is knowledge?’, ‘What is justice?’, or ‘What is truth?’ can be answered solely on the basis of one’s grasp of the relevant concepts.” Horvath, Joachim (ed.): *Conceptual Analysis*, in: PhilPapers (<https://philpapers.org/browse/conceptual-analysis>, 17.12.2018).

¹⁴ In the realm of philosophy a concept is referred to as “an idea or mental image which corresponds to some distinct entity or class of entities, or to its essential features, or determines the application of a term (especially a predicate), and thus plays a part in the use of reason or language.” n.a.: *Definition of Concept in English. Concept*, in: English Oxford Living Dictionaries (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/concept>, 17.12.2018).

To this end, I deem it necessary to provide the structure of this thesis. I will open with a brief overview of the historical context: This includes firstly a description of the political climate and dynamics of the 1950s and secondly a sketch of African/Asian movements that have evolved prior to Bandung and had a considerable impact on its forthcoming and outlook. Among those, I will present the definitions and goals of Pan-Arabism, Pan-Africanism, internationalism and global anti-imperialism, as well as the Afro-Asian group within the United Nations.¹⁵ Subsequent on the historical background, I will outline the proceedings of the preparatory meetings and the Asian-African Conference itself with the driving actors who shaped its coming into existence. This will be followed by a critical view and further information on the historical sources I have worked with.

I will introduce my analysis of the concept of Afro-Asian solidarity with the political outlook of Bandung. The most obvious point of commonality for the concerned states is their shared historical experience of imperialism and colonialism – in short their relationship to the West. I attempt to pursue the question, if and in what way, an anti-imperialist stance is expressed in the historical material and which weight this takes in in the greater concept. In this frame, the Palestinian question will serve as a primary example for the neo-colonial policies criticized and dealt with frequently at the Conference. Concluding this chapter will stand the question, if Bandung in actuality creates a foe image centered around the Western White self and how this is depicted. This leads to an ambivalence of the West's role, which is revealed in positive trends and achievements of the West highlighted in the speeches. Among these, I will focus on the Western notion of (under)development and modernization that appears very much endorsed by the Afro-Asian politicians of the time. Consequent on this, I pose the question, how its institutions – most prominently the UN – are viewed and evaluated at Bandung. Are they conceived to be representative for actually universal values or to solely act for a Western world view? This first chapter of my analysis concludes with a subitem that I denote 'the last call to the West', meaning the manner in which politicians directed their words at the Western world, what they expected and hoped for in these addresses. I will continue with Bandung's cultural outlook: The second common denominator I will deal with is race/racialism and religion. How does the affiliation to a certain race and subsequent experience of racial discrimination provide a common ground for the Asian-African people at hand? Which role does the adherence and upholding of religious values play at Bandung? In what way is it put in context with their Western counterpart?

¹⁵ I will hence refer to the United Nations by the common abbreviation UN.

Based on this search for common grounds, I will have a look at the phenomenon of birth or nascence of a ‘third force’: the reinvigoration and awakening of the Afro-Asian countries towards a new self-assurance. Belonging to this is the recovery and assertion of a new self-determination and agency of the global South that is part and parcel of the functionality of Afro-Asian unity. In which way is this seen to be manifested at the Conference? Concomitant with this is the focus on South-South cooperation as the only means to really act out the principle of self-reliance and solidarity among each other. I will analyze hereto which aspirations lie behind it, which domains of collaboration are concerned and how the participants envision this cooperation. The most prominent expression of Afro-Asian solidarity is then the emergence of a new entity comprised in the term Third World.¹⁶ How do the Bandung participants construct this notion of a third force in politics – different from the Western or Eastern superpowers? Is this body framed in positive or negative terms? Can this new alternative way in global politics be equaled with a political bloc similar to the ones existent in the Cold War dynamics?

Finalizing my analysis will be a critical claim, in which I attempt to deconstruct the myth of Afro-Asian solidarity along the following lines: How did the actual power structures and hierarchies look like within the Conference? How justified is the terming of an Afro and Asian element with regard to these structures? This also includes a look at the weight Pan-Arabic and Pan-African content took in the addresses and reports on the Conference, considering the question, if these regional loyalties were not in fact stronger than the adherence to the greater Afro-Asian solidarity promoted at Bandung. And what is then the function of the ‘Bandung spirit’ – on a factual and a symbolical level? Ultimately, I will illustrate briefly the events and developments in the aftermath of Bandung, trying to evaluate the success or failure of the concept of Afro-Asian solidarity.

To this end, my analysis draws on the corpus of historical sources available on the Asian-African Conference of 1955, which consist of the opening and closing addresses by the present MENA and SSA delegations, together with a range of first-hand accounts by independent journalists. The latter will feature most prominently Richard Wright’s account *The Color Curtain*, other reports by Homer Alexander Jack,¹⁷ Colin Legum¹⁸ and George

¹⁶ The terms First and Third World are capitalized, in order to emphasize their constructional character and to draw notice to the fact that they emerged from a Eurocentric perspective, which puts the European/North American region as the First world.

¹⁷ Jack, Homer Alexander: *Bandung. An On-the-Spot Description of the Asian-African Conference, Bandung, Indonesia April, 1955*, Chicago 1955.

¹⁸ Legum, Colin: *Bandung, Cairo and Accra. A Report on the First Conference of Independent African States*, Tylers Green i.a. 1958.

McTurnan Kahin will fade into the background. In my analysis I will occasionally draw up other secondary literature, but focus on the named primary works. However, in the historical framework and descriptive phase I have naturally used works of other origins. Among the literature that was most informative, I would like to highlight the corpus of scholar Christopher Lee, most notably *Making a World After Empire*.¹⁹ This collection of essays is an exploration of the afterlives of the Afro-Asian Conference. The authors pursue the question, how Bandung's ideas on decolonization processes, modernization and Southern cooperation have influenced the respective developments in African and Middle Eastern states. Of similar outlook is Todd Shepard's anthology of primary sources *Voices of Decolonization*²⁰ dwelling the decolonization theme from different perspectives. Another work I frequently took up is David Kimche's *The Afro-Asian Movement*²¹: Kimche traces the ideology and foreign policy aspired by the new emerging Third World, with a focus on post-Bandung developments of the Afro-Asian idea. I therefore incorporated his thoughts in particular in my own evaluation of the success or failure of the Afro-Asian solidarity concept, but as much in my presentation of influential regional movements prior to the Conference. Of equal importance I consider Nick Bisley's *Special Issue: Beyond Bandung*,²² an anthology of essays on the Asian-African Conference and its legacy for international order. This work operates in the framework of International Relations and could thereby provide me with the necessary political perspective on the Conference. I especially used this work with regard to Bandung's notion of (under)development, the aspect of race and the emergence of Third World solidarity.

Evidently, the state of research on the Asian-African Conference of 1955 is quite ample and I did not lack informative literature on the topic. In most official sources and reports, however, much emphasis is put on the Southeast Asian (sponsoring) countries as well as the role of China within the Conference and their positioning in the Cold War arena. It is therefore that I have decided to choose a different approach, that will make those countries in the backseat come to the fore: the participating Arabic and African countries or the MENA and sub-Saharan region. In addition, while the Afro-Asian idea has been apparently

¹⁹ Lee, Christopher J. (ed.): *Making a World After Empire: the Bandung Moment and its Political Afterlives*, Athens 2010.

²⁰ Shepard, Todd: *Voices of Decolonization. A Brief History with Documents*, (The Bedford series in history and culture), Boston 2015.

²¹ Kimche, David: *The Afro-Asian Movement. Ideology and Foreign Policy of the Third World*, (The Shiolah Centre for Middle Eastern and African Studies Monograph series), Jerusalem 1973.

²² Bisley, Nick (ed.): *Special Issue: Beyond Bandung. The 1955 Asian-African Conference and its Legacies for International Order*, Abingdon 2016.

promoted and turned into a myth since Bandung, it appears no one has actually had a profound look at the historical sources in the way I have done in this work – in providing an analysis of the argumentation and the way the concept came to be constructed.

2. Historical context

2.1. The political climate and dynamics of the 1950s

The “‘end of empires’, ‘the transfer of power’, ‘the victories of liberation’”²³ – this is only to name a few of the terms that scholars have attributed to a historical period, where European empires slowly broke apart, and with them their colonies and dominions. Between the years 1945 and 1965, more than fifty proclamations of independence were issued around the globe – “from Jakarta, Indonesia, to Accra, Ghana, and Kingston, Jamaica.”²⁴ This work is situated right in the midst of this current, with the Afro-Asian Conference of 1955. Since both the Conference’s emergence, as well as its content, owes greatly to the tides of decolonization, anti-imperialism and Cold War dialectic, it is absolutely necessary to sketch out briefly what these political currents looked like. The political climate and conditions of the 1950s were highly influential for the possibilities and realm of action for the former colonies. At Bandung itself, they shaped the discourse and speeches, which thereby need to be analyzed in light of these political dynamics.

The greatest upheaval for the post-Second World War (WW II) era – in what regards the states of the Southern hemisphere – can be considered the process of decolonization. It is therefore necessary to provide a definition of how the term will be applied in this work. In a narrower sense it describes “‘to release from being a colony, to grant independence’”²⁵, marking the end of a period of foreign domination, towards an independent economy, political life and society. Proclamations of national independence, however, did not come forward overnight, but must be seen as the outcome of “‘wide-ranging developments’”²⁶ on a local, as much as on a global level. These transitions of political power did not pass off smoothly in the most cases, accompanied by tides of violent defense through the colonial powers and the colonized subjects.

²³ Shepard: *Voices of Decolonization*, p. 2.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 1.

²⁵ As Rothermund accurately remarks, it also gives the “metropolitan government” all the credit for the process and does not truly include the agency of the colonized people themselves. Rothermund, Dietmar: *The Routledge Companion to Decolonization*, (Routledge companions to history), London 2006, p. 1.

²⁶ Shepard: *Voices of Decolonization*, p. 1.

First notice of the term decolonization can be traced back to a tract of 1836, an article on the *Decolonization of Algiers* by the French journalist Henri Fonfrède,²⁷ in which he appealed to his French homeland to cease the “six-year occupation of territory in North Africa.”²⁸ Whereas it came to be used further in the anticolonial rhetoric of the 1850s, it soon disappeared from the public realm. It was not until the post-war period that American and European scholars took it up again to describe the political shifts they observed in the colonies²⁹ – yet it found more diffusion in French language circles. Today many scholars will apply the term to “the end of European states’ formal colonial empires.”³⁰ However, while the time period until 1969 certainly saw many countries rising to political independence, some would also consider the year 1997 with the UK’s abandoning of Hong Kong to China as the final mark. This is only to define the “era of decolonization”.³¹ Against this, Shepard also refers to the “‘promise of decolonization’”, meaning an ongoing discourse on “unfair, unjust, and racist conditions”.³² I denote this ‘process of decolonization’ as a still ongoing phenomenon, a daily practice even, marked by the struggle to overcome prevailing neo-colonial structures of economic and political life. Lee adds to this an empirical standpoint, in which decolonization poses itself as the “moment of political independence”, but at the same time refers to a “long-standing process with deep roots”, since acts of resistance, of ‘decolonizing the society’ had been part of an ongoing struggle since the moment of colonial inception. Continents and states were colonized and similarly decolonized in different time periods, so that African, Latin- or North American precolonial, colonial and postcolonial periods differ greatly in time frame. A transnational or even transcontinental analysis is thereby hardly possible. It is further complicated by the rise of former colonies into imperialist actors themselves, such as the United States or China or classical settler colonies like South Africa.³³

²⁷ Fonfrède, Henri: *The Decolonization of Algier*, n.p. 1836, in: Shepard: *Voices of Decolonization*, p. 8 (The original article could not be traced).

²⁸ Shepard: *Voices of Decolonization*, p. 8.

²⁹ Among these scholars, Moritz Julius Bonn must be named, because he introduced the term in the 1930s in an article on imperialism in the *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*. He further elaborated on this concept in a later work, where he used the word decolonization synonymous with “counter-colonization”. Bonn, M. J.: *The Crumbling of Empire. The Disintegration of World Economy* (Routledge Library Editions), Milton 2017.

³⁰ This is also done to differentiate it from terms like national liberation or transfer of power, which implies a certain biased perspective on these events. Shepard: *Voices of Decolonization*, p. 9.

³¹ *Ibid*, p. 10.

³² *Ibid*, p. 12.

³³ Lee: *Making a World After Empire*, p. 5–7.

These new dynamics, in which old empires broke apart and new ones emerged as global players,³⁴ reflect the greater state of change of the post-war period. Lee points to the fact that not only the Western powers were in upheaval after the great war, but the “global political order” was on the move.³⁵ Phillips describes this as the “fluidity” of the international system: He points to the contradiction of a world marked by emerging sovereign nation states, that at the same time sees a “decaying but still salient world of empires”.³⁶ Thus, the Western powers just like its dominions felt decolonization through the loss of resources and manpower, as much as in their institutions, most profoundly in the expansion of the UN. This meant that its membership suddenly exploded with new states whom participation was granted.³⁷ This is important to keep in mind, when considering the UN as a pivotal but just recently emerging player in world politics. Its “key architects” were certainly not interested in a universal claim of political ideals, such as the right to self-determination, but rather held on to a political realm that would continue to be shaped by European empires.³⁸ Many former colonial powers thus opted for the strategy of modernizing or refashioning their “imperial structures”,³⁹ even though these strategies varied greatly. The French for example certainly proved more tenacious in letting go of their dominions – regarding them as an “integral part of their state”,⁴⁰ while it was way easier for colonies like the Gold Coast to lose its shackles from the British Empire.⁴¹

From the vantage point of the 1955 Asian-African political leaders, it was upon them to actively make use of this political void for their own agenda, “lest their countries fall once more under the influence of external powers.”⁴² In their perspective, we look at a promising, a hopeful time period, where century long imperial structures fell apart and were in sight to be replaced by values of equality and freedom for non-Western people. From today’s point of view this perspective might have been a bit too optimistic, as imperial structures were rather refashioned into a neo-colonial model. It is nonetheless of great significance to

³⁴ Among these are in particular the United States and the Soviet Union.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³⁶ Phillips, Andrew: *Introduction*, in: Bisley, Nick (ed.): Special Issue: Beyond Bandung. The 1955 Asian-African Conference and its Legacies for International Order (Australian journal of international affairs, 1035-771870 (4)), Abingdon 2016, p. 329–340, here p. 332.

³⁷ Lee: *Making a World After Empire*, p. 5.

³⁸ Mazower, Mark: *No Enchanted Palace. The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations*, (Lawrence Stone lectures), Princeton/Oxford 2009, p. 30.

³⁹ Phillips: *Introduction*, p. 333.

⁴⁰ Rothermund: *The Routledge Companion to Decolonization*, p. 129.

⁴¹ The constitutions of the British dominions were paid out rather individually, nor was there a “uniform labour code” or representation in parliament. They opted for a transferal of power “into suitable African hands”. Phillips: *Introduction*, p. 333. Rothermund: *The Routledge Companion to Decolonization*, p. 129.

⁴² Lee: *The Rise of Third World Diplomacy*, p. 2.

understand the political thinking of the time in order to grasp the atmosphere of an event, such as the Bandung Conference.

Of similar importance and influence is the context of cold war politics and rhetoric, which cannot be detached from the movement of decolonization. I will define hereby the Cold War as a state of conflicting ideologies between the United States and the Soviet Union, that put the global political arena on the verge of a “nuclear devastation”.⁴³ In what concerns American policies towards decolonization, the Cold War dialectic created a definite shift. While the US had presented themselves as an ardent supporter of decolonization, it then “became obsessed with checking the advance of Communism, which it now perceived in a global perspective”.⁴⁴ This resulted in a conflicting strategy: While decolonizing processes were spurred in order to reduce the target for communist influences, their military influence was upheld and broadened in the form of globally spread military bases. The Soviet Union similarly employed techniques of assistance to newly decolonized states, attempting to convince them of their “non-imperialist economic and political ideology”, at best to join the bloc formation.⁴⁵ With respect to those countries formerly under colonial rule, these currents inevitably resulted in an alignment or at least affiliation to the Western or communist Soviet bloc. Treaties were signed for instance between Vietnam and the Soviet Union,⁴⁶ and Cambodia and Laos similarly established close ties with the latter. On the other side a defense pact was enacted between the Philippines, Thailand and Pakistan with the US in the form of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). Others affiliated with the Western bloc were the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).⁴⁷ This is not to forget Western pressure of influence or affiliated countries in the run-up to the Conference.⁴⁸

So while the countries gathered at Bandung pursued and promoted a sense of neutrality (and some in fact merged into the Non-Aligned Movement later on), it is important to keep in mind that neither one of them was immune from being pulled into the political dynamic of the Cold War. To phrase it in Chakrabarty’s words: “The leaders who got together

⁴³ Shepard: *Voices of Decolonization*, p. 12.

⁴⁴ Rothermund: *The Routledge Companion to Decolonization*, p. 43.

⁴⁵ Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, United States Department of State: *Decolonization of Asia and Africa, 1945–1960* (<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/asia-and-africa>, 17.12.2018).

⁴⁶ This refers to the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed between Vietnam and the Soviet Union on 3 November, 1978.

⁴⁷ Out of the fourteen member states registered in 1955, only Turkey was a participant at the Asian-African Conference 1955.

⁴⁸ Chakrabarty, Dipesh: *The Legacies of Bandung. Decolonization and the Politics of Culture*, in: Lee, Christopher J. (ed.): *Making a World After Empire: the Bandung Moment and its Political Afterlives* ([Research in international studies / Global and comparative studies series] Research in international studies), Athens 2010, p. 45–68, here p. 48; Kimche: *The Afro-Asian Movement*, p. 64.

at Bandung thus came from a divided world.”⁴⁹ It is important to annotate as well that most of the Middle Eastern countries demonstrated a form of indifference to the dominant ideologies of global politics: the Arab states found “both communism and Western-style democracy ... ill suited and alien” and could not truly identify with either one of them. Their attitude was thus guided by much more “pragmatic factors”, such as economic aid.⁵⁰ The “general trend”, aside from those countries directly linked to one ideology or world bloc, was that of a form of “non-adherence to power blocs”⁵¹ even before the ideas of the Bandung Conference came forth.

2.2. Influential movements and organizations for the emergence and outlook of the Bandung Conference – focus on MENA and SSA

Political leaders of the greater Afro-Asian region may have been divided, but this does not mean that other forms of regional cooperation and feelings of shared cultural heritage had not come forward alongside the Afro-Asian concept. These feelings of “a new awakening among the coloured peoples” gave rise to new ideas and merged into “national movements”. This happened way before the idea of a Conference came up through the ideals promoted in Pan-Africanism and Pan-Arabism at the turn of the twentieth century.⁵²

Prior to the WW II, these emergent movements held a rather isolated position: The colonial powers were anxious to keep “their colonies in watertight compartments” so that road or communication networks would be possible only through their respective mother country. As a result, cooperation between different manifestations of nationalism was quite limited in scope and molded around the “conditions prevailing in the particular area in which it formed”. There existed great diversity in character and in the attitude of the respective colonial power. However, the formative qualities of the intellectual hubs of African/Asian elites in the metropolis should similarly not be underestimated. Paris and London granted the opportunity to meet and debate questions of (anti-colonial) emancipation and in this way had considerable influence on the political outlook of the national movements.⁵³

As indicated in the previous chapter, the (post-)war period then brought about a grand wave of anti-colonial resistance, decolonization strategies and forms of agency. Along with it, it witnessed a proliferation and uplift of Pan-African and Pan-Arab ideas. Kimche thus

⁴⁹ Chakrabarty: *The Legacies of Bandung*, p. 49.

⁵⁰ Kimche: *The Afro-Asian Movement*, p. 23.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 24.

⁵² Whole paragraph: *Ibid*, p. 1.

⁵³ Whole Paragraph: *Ibid*, p. 2f.

reckons them to form an ideological base for the concept of Afro-Asian solidarity promoted at Bandung. It is therefore that I deem it necessary to provide a definition of these movements and the correspondent organizations, as well as to briefly outline their forms of cooperation that had been in existence prior to the Bandung Conference.

2.2.1. Pan-Arabism

Pan-Arabism came to be a prominent movement for the MENA region and influenced the attitude of the Bandung participants, in particular due to Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser's leading role in it. I will hereto take on the definition by Encyclopaedia Britannica as a "nationalist notion of cultural and political unity among Arab countries." Other terms in use are 'Pan-Arab nationalism' or 'transnational Arab nationalism'.

Its emergence can be traced back to the late nineteenth/beginning of the twentieth century, when the Arab or Middle Eastern world experienced a literary and cultural renaissance. This was followed by a period of Arab emancipation from the Ottoman Empire (1918) and subsequent independence from the colonial powers, too. An important step in the evolution into a regional movement was the founding of the Ba'ath party, which became the ruling party in Iraq and Syria and soon formed branches in the neighboring countries. In terms of leadership, Nasser served as the "most charismatic and effective proponent" for the Pan-Arab movement, while political figures like Syria's Ḥāfiẓ al-Assad, Libya's Muammar al-Qaddafi and Iraq's Ṣaddām Ḥussein pursued his footsteps later on.⁵⁴

A form of institutionalization developed through the Arab League (or League of Arab states) in May 1945 with the aim to 'coordinate collaboration between them [Arab states], to safeguard their independence and sovereignty, and to consider in a general way the affairs and interests of the Arab countries'.⁵⁵ Its charter was established in the Cairo headquarter and set down a meeting every two years. The "concept of an integrated Arab polity based on shared culture and historical experience, which is at the heart of the Arab League's charter" speaks of the organization's Pan-Arab ideals. Nevertheless, since it constitutes a rather "loose confederation" of 22 Arab states, it has long been in question for its disunity and inefficiency in governance.⁵⁶ In general, Pan-Arabism as a political concept and movement

⁵⁴ Whole paragraph: Encyclopaedia Britannica: *Pan-Arabism. Ideology. Ideology*, in: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. 2018 (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pan-Arabism>, 07.11.2018).

⁵⁵ The Arab League: *Pact of the League of Arab States*, in: Lillian Goldman Law Library 1945 (http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/arableag.asp, 12.11.2018).

⁵⁶ Masters, Jonathan [i.a.]: *The Arab League*, in: Council on Foreign Relations 2014 (<https://www.cfr.org/background/arab-league>, 07.11.2018).

is seen to have been retreating with the Six-Day-War in 1967, as the legitimacy and power of Pan-Arab policies became questionable.⁵⁷

2.2.2. Pan-Africanism

Pan-Africanism can be seen as the dominant ideology for the SSA states at the Asian-African Conference. I draw on the definition of Encyclopaedia Britannica once again as “the idea that peoples of African descent have common interests and should be unified.” In the form of a “political or cultural movement”, it has been manifested in the vision of a “unified African nation where all people of the African diaspora can live”.⁵⁸

Scholars date the Pan-African movement back to its ideological father W.E.B. Du Bois of the early twentieth century, consequently followed by Jamaican-born Marcus Garvey, who pushed the idea of return for people of African descent to their homeland. In the inter-war years C.L.R. James and George Padmore from Trinidad rose to prominence within the movement, not to forget the influential West African thinkers Léopold Sédar Senghor and Aimé Césaire. In the 1960s and 70s manifestations of Pan-African thought reemerged through the black power movement.

The Pan-African body grew with a first Pan-African Congress in 1900, organized by the Trinidadian Henry Sylvester Williams. Among the many prominent black nationalists from Africa, the West Indies and Great Britain, was also Du Bois as part of the U.S. delegation.⁵⁹ It was not until nineteen years later that another formal congress was held in Paris, with smaller conferences following in 1921, 1923 and 1927. After a long period almost void of activity, they gathered again in the year 1945 in Manchester, British Empire.⁶⁰ WW II had a “revolutionary impact on colonialism”, because it eventually weakened its system and led to a change in attitude of colonizer and colonized subjects alike. “The results of the war finally exploded the myth of white superiority and unleashed among non-Europeans the ideas of freedom and equality”, which eventually turned from the intellectual elites to the great masses.⁶¹ Sithole referred to this development as an awakening of the African people that revealed the abyss of European Western civilization.⁶² It was then in the post-war years that African people felt a severe political, economic and social instability induced through

⁵⁷ Ajami, Fouad: *The End of Pan-Arabism*, in: *Foreign Affairs* 55, p. 355–373, here p. 357.

⁵⁸ Kuryla, Peter: *Pan-Africanism*, in: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. 2018 (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pan-Africanism>, 07.11.2018).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, n.p.

⁶⁰ Kimche: *The Afro-Asian Movement*, p. 7.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶² Sithole, Ndabaningi: *African Nationalism*, Cape Town 1959, p. 23.

changing society structures, returning ex-servicemen, urbanization, unemployment and great poverty. With these conditions at their backs, the Pan-African leaders went to insist on “full equality” and “self-government” for the African states.⁶³ In the time of Bandung, Kwame Nkrumah as well as Nasser alike can be seen as the leading figures, who were also influential in the forthcoming of the Organization for African Unity (OAU) in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia, in 1963⁶⁴ that subsequently transformed into the African Union (AU) in 2002.⁶⁵

2.2.3. Internationalism and global anti-imperialism

Internationalism can be seen as a trend of global Western politics that aims to transcend the nation state through global or transnational cooperation. Pan-Arabism/Pan-Africanism, as well as the concept of Afro-Asian solidarity emerged as a different type of internationalism that is not bound to a Western ideology.⁶⁶ It is not based on a common ideology or shared historical experience of WW II, but rather on cultural-religious commonalities and an anti-imperial or anti-colonial mindset.

In this tradition the Anti-Imperialist League must be named, which later turned into the Association of Oppressed Peoples, famous for the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities in Brussels in February 1927. It is of significance in the sense that it gave the leaders of the Afro-Asian world the chance to establish a direct contact for the first time, among them some of the politicians who attended the Bandung Conference almost thirty years later.⁶⁷ While the topics and tone of the congress were similar – the need for Afro-Asian solidarity and search for a common ground – it was no gathering of free people. It could only happen “under a European aegis” and consequently take place only in Western Europe.⁶⁸ It is yet to

⁶³ Kimche: *The Afro-Asian Movement*, p. 9f.

⁶⁴ South African History Online: *Organisation of African Unity (OAU)*, in: South African History Online. 2011 (<https://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/organisation-african-unity-oau>, 12.12.2018).

⁶⁵ The Rastafari movement is seen to have its origin in the Pan-African ideals, in particular those of Marcus Garvey. With respect to his declaration *Look to Africa for the crowning of a Black king*, its followers praised the Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie as the unifier of the African Diaspora. Campbell, Horace: *Rastafari as Pan Africanism in the Caribbean and Africa*, in: African Journal of Political Economy/Revue Africaine d' Economie Politique 2 (1988) 1, p. 75–88.

⁶⁶ Aghazarian, Armen: *'We the Peoples of Asia and Africa'. The Bandung Conference and the Southernisation of the United Nations, 1955 – 1970*, Sydney 2012, p. 23,27.

⁶⁷ Among these, the Indian political leader Nehru must be named. Others included the Senegalese intellectual Leopold Senghor, who was formative especially with the ‘négritude’ movement, as well as Asian politicians like Ho Chi Minh, Madame Sun Yat-Sen or Muhammad Hatta. Kimche: *The Afro-Asian Movement*, p. 4.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 4f.

emphasize that an anti-colonial doctrine and the need for (Afro-)Asian solidarity had been raised way before the idea of an actual conference came about.⁶⁹

2.2.4. The Afro-Asian Group in the UN

While there had been “informal gatherings” and unofficial communication at the UN between Asian politicians, a change occurred with its institutionalization through the establishment of the UN’s Arabo-Asian group in 1950.⁷⁰ When further Ethiopia and Egypt came to be included in the group, it evolved into the Afro-Asian group. However, it was not until the end of the 1950s that it was formally known and recognized by this name. The first meetings presented twelve Asian and Arab members (out of twenty that were officially presented at the UN).⁷¹ Kimche, however, sees its factual power rather limited and describes it as “fictional”, since the “Afro-Asian consensus”⁷² was rather low with regard to most topics discussed in the group, such as human rights, economic development or socialism. Together with a chasm between India’s appeal to leadership and the Arab states, the group soon disintegrated and by the mid-1950s had become more and more redundant.⁷³ Delegates continued to meet and the African element became stronger, in comparison to the initial years, where it was a rather Arabo-Muslim body.⁷⁴ But its sheer number of members and diversity in outlook made the group’s functionality increasingly limited so that it became rather ineffective and futile.⁷⁵

3. The Asian-African Conference: involved actors and proceeding

3.1. The preparatory phase: the Colombo and Bogor Conferences

The idea to launch a conference to gather the Asian and African nations actually emerged at the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi in 1947 and can be traced back in particular to Indonesian prime minister Ali Sastroamidjojo. During the subsequent two meetings the

⁶⁹ Mackie, Jamie: *The Bandung Conference and Afro-Asian Solidarity. Indonesian Aspects*, in: Finnane, Antonia/McDougall, Derek (eds.): Bandung 1955. Little Histories (Monash papers on Southeast Asia 69), Clayton, Vic. 2010, p. 9–26, here p. 10.

⁷⁰ Kimche: *The Afro-Asian Movement*, p. 35.

⁷¹ Among these were Burma, Egypt, Afghanistan, Indonesia, India, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Pakistan, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. In 1953 Liberia and Ethiopia joined the group - by 1956 it counted already 28 members and formed the “largest single regional bloc.” In 1961 there were 53 members included in the group. Ibid, p. 36f., 91.

⁷² Ibid, p. 37f.

⁷³ Ibid, p. 39.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 91f.

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 93f.

event was organized and prepared: The first took place in Colombo, Ceylon,⁷⁶ in April 1954, against the backdrop of the Cold War conflicts in South East Asia.⁷⁷ Sastroamidjojo made a proposal to the other four powers involved in the preparations – the so-called Colombo Powers India, Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon and Indonesia – that saw to invite only the Afro-Asian group of the UN. However, at the second meeting in Bogor, Indonesia, in December of the same year more definite plans were laid down concerning the topics to discuss and the prospective membership of the Conference.⁷⁸ Though they declared not to be guided by a “desire for exclusiveness in respect of the membership of the Conference”,⁷⁹ the organizers nevertheless chose selectively whom to invite. Invitations were thus sent out to the countries of the Afro-Asian group,⁸⁰ plus Cambodia, Japan, Jordan, Libya, North Vietnam, Nepal, South Vietnam and the “partially independent states of Gold Coast, Sudan and Central African Federation”.⁸¹ Here Indonesia also stepped forward and proposed its services as host of the Conference with Bandung⁸² as its location.⁸³ The “choice of a metropole outside the West” was primarily of symbolic importance, since it highlighted the new autonomy of the post-colonial countries.⁸⁴

The resulting “Joint Communiqué of the Bogor Conference” summed up the four purposes for the Asian-African Conference in the following way:

to promote goodwill and co-operation between the nations of Asia and Africa, to explore and advance their mutual as well as common interests and to establish and further friendliness and neighbourly relations; to consider social, economic and cultural problems and relations of the countries represented; to consider problems of special interest to Asia and African peoples, e.g. problems affecting national sovereignty and of racialism and colonialism; to view the position of Asia and Africa

⁷⁶ Legum: *Bandung, Cairo and Accra*, p. 4.

⁷⁷ The crisis in Vietnam between the French and the Vietminh, as well as the Korean war are the most exacerbating conflicts. Mackie: *The Bandung Conference and Afro-Asian Solidarity*, p. 12.; Lee: *Making a World After Empire*, p. 10.

⁷⁸ Mackie: *The Bandung Conference and Afro-Asian Solidarity*, p. 12–15.

⁷⁹ Legum: *Bandung, Cairo and Accra*, p. 4.

⁸⁰ At this time it counted the following members: Afghanistan, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Thailand, Turkey and Yemen. Countries like Israel, North and South Korea, Formosa, Australia, New Zealand, Russia, the Union of South Africa were cancelled from the list due to political reasons. Jack: *Bandung*, p. 2. Lee: *Making a World After Empire*, p. 11.

⁸¹ CAF was the only country that denied the invitation in the end. Kahin: *The Asian-African Conference*, p. 3.

⁸² Bandung had been a resort city in the mountains of Indonesia and at the time of the Conference counted roughly a million inhabitants. In the period of four months the formerly sleepy city was transformed into an efficient headquarter for an international conference – hotels built and refashioned, infrastructure and communication erected, even special European and Indonesian food imported. Jack: *Bandung*, p. 4f.

⁸³ Legum: *Bandung, Cairo and Accra*, p. 4.

⁸⁴ Lee: *Making a World After Empire*, p. 12.

and their peoples in the world of today and the contribution they can make to the promotion of world peace and co-operation.⁸⁵

3.2. The Asian-African Conference in Bandung 1955

It was from April 18-24, 1955, that an overall 29 countries assembled in the city of Bandung to address issues common to the continents of Asia and Africa. It was the “largest of its kind up to that point, ostensibly representing 1,4 billion people, or almost two-thirds of the world’s population at the time”.⁸⁶ It was sponsored by the five Colombo Powers and its participants included the following countries: “Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, Gold Coast, India, Indonesia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Iran, Japan, Jordan, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, People's Republic of China, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, North Vietnam, South Vietnam and Yemen”.⁸⁷ While most of these countries had by then achieved independence, some were still struggling to cast off colonial fetters.⁸⁸ All in all, Bandung counted more than 2,000 attendees to the Conference – from the delegates of 29 nations, journalists and observers.⁸⁹ Some of the delegations consisted of over thirty members,⁹⁰ while others like the Gold Coast held only three delegates.⁹¹ Among the most prominent and influential political figures were for instance Egypt’s Gamal Abdel Nasser,⁹² India’s Jawaharlal Nehru, Indonesia’s Ali Sastroamidjojo, Pakistan’s Mohammed

⁸⁵ The Asian-African Conference: *Joint Communiqué of the Bogor Conference. December 29, 1954*, in: Agency for Research and Development, The Department of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Collected Documents of the Asian-African Conference. April 18-24, 1955, Djakarta 1955*, p. 193–195, here p. 193.

⁸⁶ Lee: *The Rise of Third World Diplomacy*, p. 2.

⁸⁷ Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe (CVCE): *The Participants at the Bandung Conference. (18 to 24 April 1955)* (http://www.cvce.eu/obj/the_participants_at_the_bandung_conference_18_to_24_ap,01.03.2017).

⁸⁸ Lee: *The Rise of Third World Diplomacy*, p. 2.

⁸⁹ Jack: *Bandung*, p. 6.

⁹⁰ Japan for example counted 34 delegates.

⁹¹ It is interesting to note that The Gold Coast’s leader Kwame Nkrumah for example never attended the Conference, as he was impeded by the British from doing so. In its aftermath, however, a myth evolved around his appearance at Bandung, which does not have any foundation. *Ibid*, p. 7.; Wood, Sally Percival: *Retrieving the Bandung Conference ... Moment by Moment*, in: *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 43 (2012) 3, p. 523–530, here p. 524.

⁹² At the time of the Bandung Conference, Nasser had already come forward as the Egyptian’s new leader, and above that had been influential in forming ideas about Afro-Asian unity. His efforts were mainly directed at “expelling the British and the Israelis from the Middle East and ‘restoring’ the unity of the Nile Valley under Egyptian leadership“. However, he came to attend the Conference only later, after his ambitions with regard to a Pan-Arab defense pact proved futile, so it was Bandung which made him turn his efforts towards SSA.

Brennan, James R.: *Radio Cairo and the Decolonization of East Africa, 1953-64*, in: Lee, Christopher J. (ed.): *Making a World After Empire. The Bandung Moment and its Political Afterlives* ([Research in international studies / Global and comparative studies series] Research in international studies), Athens 2010, p. 173–195, here p. 174.

Ali, Ceylon's Sir John Kotelawala, China's Chou En-Lai, the Philippine's Carlos Romulo and Burma's U Nu.⁹³

As indicated before, there were great differences in political orientation, which required positioning within the circumstances of the Cold War. As such, Kimche prompts that some of the pro-Western nations⁹⁴ had been “urged by the United States to attend the Bandung conference”⁹⁵ in order to provide a Western outpost and prevent a further spread of communist influence. Their efforts were similarly directed at defending the Western interests against a prospective “neutralist bloc” that appeared equally threatening to the US. Suffice it to say that there was a certain tug of war even before the Conference due to the countries' affiliation to an ‘aligned or non-aligned bloc’.⁹⁶ The most influential or prominent figures in this scheme were certainly India's Nehru as the “conceptualist of non-alignment” and En-Lai of China as the defender of the communist bloc.⁹⁷ Neither did these politicians share a definite view of international politics or definition of what imperialism and decolonization meant. Though they shared a general experience of colonial past, this does not mean that they had much in common beyond that or that they felt a sense of community or personal liking.⁹⁸

The Communiqué issued at Bogor, as well as the terms of invitation, allowed for the Conference to set its own agenda and procedure, it should be open to discussion and determined in a joint decision. Kahin adds hereto: “Prime Minister Nehru was anxious to avoid the formalities of United Nations procedure and hoped that the Conference would approximate the informal, relatively unstructured procedure of the meetings of the Commonwealth prime ministers.” To further emphasize this aspect, the principle of unanimous agreement and no votes was introduced – “however, the Conference was free to discuss any matter even if unanimity could not later be reached.”⁹⁹

The Asian-African Conference was officially opened by the address of Indonesian president Ahmad Sukarno and the premier Ali Sastroamidjojo. It was hence followed by a range of opening speeches, of whose speakers some also availed themselves of the opportunity to speak up again at the end of the Conference.¹⁰⁰ Its official language was English –

⁹³ Jack: *Bandung*, p. 7–9.

⁹⁴ These constitute mainly the members of the NATO and the SEATO – Turkey, Thailand, Pakistan and the Philippines.

⁹⁵ Kimche: *The Afro-Asian Movement*, p. 64.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 4f.

⁹⁷ Mackie: *The Bandung Conference and Afro-Asian Solidarity*, p. 12.

⁹⁸ Chakrabarty: *The Legacies of Bandung*, p. 48.

⁹⁹ Kahin: *The Asian-African Conference*, p. 9.

¹⁰⁰ Kimche: *The Afro-Asian Movement*, p. 67.

“a by-product of British colonialism in Asia and Africa”¹⁰¹ as Jack phrases it. During the plenary sessions there were simultaneous translations to French and other languages could be requested as well.

To provide a structure, the Conference was divided into three subcommittees: the political, economic and cultural. This was reflected in the *Final Communiqué*, too, which is structured in the same way.¹⁰² In the end, the Conference’s agenda was agreed to consist of five distinct headings: “economic cooperation, cultural cooperation, human rights and self-determination, problems of dependent peoples, and world peace and cooperation.”¹⁰³ The political committee, however, quickly became “the principal center of activity”, where the most conflict-laden topics were debated in a long series of closed sessions. Those included among others: the Palestine issue, the West Irian conflict, the decolonization process of the North African countries¹⁰⁴ like Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria and the challenges of ‘Soviet colonialism’.¹⁰⁵ The latter became one of the biggest issues at Bandung, as the harsh condemnation of communism in any form by the pro-Western faction led to a considerable debate on the manifestations of colonialism with China and its supporters.¹⁰⁶ In the end, the *Final Communiqué* could yet be adopted unanimously by all participants.

4. A critical view on the historical sources

Before opening my analysis, I would like to provide a brief critical view on the historical sources I have worked with in this thesis. They consist of mainly two corpuses: Firstly, the opening and closing speeches of delegations uttered during the Afro-Asian Conference, and secondly the official accounts of different journalists attending the Conference, in particular Richard Wright’s *The Color Curtain*. Since I have included only the speeches held by the delegations of African and Arabic delegations, I am aware that I provide an analysis of limited means. Nevertheless, I deem this focus necessary in order to stay in the realms of my Middle Eastern studies, and above that to simply narrow it down. Even so, I have incorporated Indonesian president Sukarno’s speech, due to his role as the host of the Conference. In his inauguration speech on April 18, 1955,¹⁰⁷ he stamps the general tone and outlook of

¹⁰¹ Jack: *Bandung*, p. 6.

¹⁰² Kahin: *The Asian-African Conference*, p. 10.

¹⁰³ Jack: *Bandung*, p. 14f.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p. 14f.

¹⁰⁵ Kahin: *The Asian-African Conference*, p. 16–18.

¹⁰⁶ Kimche: *The Afro-Asian Movement*, p. 66.

¹⁰⁷ Sukarno, Achmed: *Speech by President Sukarno of Indonesia at the Opening of the Conference*, in: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung*, Djakarta 1955.

Bandung and can therefore not be left out in my opinion. Irrespective of the selection process, all of them are to be found in *Asia-Africa speaks from Bandung*,¹⁰⁸ a collection published by the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Chairman Abdulgani presents it in the foreword as the “complete and verbatim record of the public and open parts of the Asian African Conference”,¹⁰⁹ which serves me to emphasize that I have not been granted access to material gathered in the closing sessions or private conversations of Bandung. It is therefore the official face of it and thereby holds certain political intentions and presentations that the respective delegations aimed to achieve. Occasionally, the editors have hereby annotated that a speech was not given verbally, but just circulated in written form. In other cases, a speech was taken from a tape recording during the sessions.

With regard to my second type of historical source – the reports on Bandung I have included in my analysis – it is important to draw notice to the role of the observer that all the journalists held. Among them I used Richard Wright, Kahin, Legum and Jack. Since I have only occasionally drawn up the latter three, I will not elaborate further on these authors. Wright is of primary importance, as *The Color Curtain* has risen to a classic work on the Afro-Asian Conference. Wright, born 1908 in Roxie, Mississippi¹¹⁰ – the heartland of the slave-owning society – is a Black American of African descent. While professing as a writer and journalist, his motivation to attend the Conference are much more personally grounded. To this end, he states: “I felt that I had to go to that meeting; I felt that I could understand it. I represented no government, but I wanted to go anyhow..”¹¹¹ This urge of feeling owes very much to his particular background, which he is in fact quite aware of:

I’m an American Negro; as such, I’ve had a burden of race consciousness. So have these people. I worked in my youth as a common laborer, and I’ve a class consciousness. So have these people. I grew up in the Methodist and the Seventh day Adventist churches and I saw and observed religion in my childhood; and these people are religious. I was a member of the Communist Party for twelve years and I know something of the politics and psychology of rebellion. These people have had as their daily existence such politics. These emotions are my instruments. They are emotions, but I’m conscious of them as emotions. I want to use these emotions to try to find out what these people think and feel and why.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung*, Djakarta 1955.

¹⁰⁹ Abdulgani, Roeslan: *Foreword*, in: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung*, Djakarta 1955, p. 5–6, here p. 5.

¹¹⁰ Richard Wright died in 1960 in Paris.

¹¹¹ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 14.

¹¹² *Ibid*, p. 15.

Suffice it to say that he brings his own racial background and hitherto experience of discrimination into the arena of the Conference, so that his account of the Bandung visibly lays the focus on issues of racialism and religion, while including less the political aspect. He cannot be taken as a neutral observer, but on the other hand also somebody who might have been able to fathom the meaning of Bandung in a much better way than most Western reporters.¹¹³ He elaborates on this in the following way:

In my questioning of Asians I had had one tangible fact in my favor, a factor that no white Westerner could claim. I was ‘colored’ and every Asian I had spoken to had known what being ‘colored’ meant. Hence, I had been able to hear Asians express themselves without reserve, they had felt no need to save face before me....¹¹⁴

It is thereby that his background provided him with a better means of access to the participants and politicians of the Bandung Conference and proves to be a valuable account,¹¹⁵ even though it needs to be kept in mind that his account represents only one single perspective. *The Color Curtain* is often denoted as a travelogue as well, since Wright in fact spend a considerable three weeks in Indonesia prior to the Conference, in order to get a sound picture of the political outlook. During these weeks he met and interviewed attendees of the Bandung Conference, as well as Indonesian politicians. In addition, he was introduced to a circle of contemporary Indonesian intellectuals that came to form the “universalist humanist outlook”, which provided him with a great many insights into the Indonesian society and historical state of mind. These interactions, however, can be perceived as somehow orchestrated, because Wright’s travel to Bandung came to be funded through the US Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), which arranged for him to be picked up and be introduced by Mochtar Lubis as part of this literary circle.¹¹⁶ I do not aim to diminish the value of these interactions for Wright’s travel, it is just to annotate a critical note that the outcome might have been more influenced by political forces than what is visible to the reader.

¹¹³ The literary circle most influential to him was the so-called *Konfrontasi*, a group of writers, artists and intellectuals who aimed to build a modern Indonesian nation by interacting with the “world at large”. Thus, they “welcomed the presence of foreigners and foreign ideas in their midst.” Wright’s experiences are also detailed in the Indonesian Notebook and could be an interesting object of analysis in what regards the influence for *The Color Curtain*. Foulcher, Keith: *Bringing the World Back Home. Cultural Traffic Konfrontasi, 1954-1960*, in: Lindsay, Jennifer / Liem, H. T. Maya (eds.): *Heirs to World Culture. Being Indonesian 1950-1965*, Leiden 2012, p. 31–56, here p. 40.; Roberts, Brian Russell / Foulcher, Keith: *Indonesian notebook. A Sourcebook on Richard Wright and the Bandung Conference*, Durham / London 2016.

¹¹⁴ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 15.

¹¹⁵ One interlocutor of Wright explained to him his frustration about the way Western journalists used to present Indonesians and their country, stained by heavy orientализing and exoticizing. By contrast, Wright’s own background and much more intercultural approach certainly worked much better and aimed for a more realistic depiction of Indonesians. Roberts et al.: *Indonesian Notebook*, p. 8.

¹¹⁶ While the CCF presented itself as “independent organization dedicated to peace and intellectual freedom in opposition to Soviet-style totalitarianism”, Wright suspected at the time they were unofficially supported by the State Department – it was actually backed by the C.I.A. Ibid, p. 16f.

5. Political outlook: Bandung beyond East or West – the West between foe image and role model

5.1. The anti-imperialist stance and critique of the West

When the young journalist Richard Wright first arrived at Bandung, he asked himself a question of primary importance: “And what had these nations in common? Nothing, it seemed to me, but what their past relationship to the Western world had made them feel. This meeting of the rejected was in itself a kind of judgement upon the Western world!”¹¹⁷

A closer look at the historical material provides a bit broader perspective than that, but this does not mean that Wright’s statement lacks truth: the most obvious common denominator for these Asian and African countries was first and foremost their ties to the West. This can be seen as the first phase of argument for Afro-Asianism and part of the search for common grounds. By all means, this relationship is one stained by negative feelings through the historical experience of colonialism and imperialism, bringing forth the colonial mindset of superiority on one side and a complex of inferiority with a loss of agency on the other side. It is only a natural result that the Conference’s political outlook holds an anti-imperialist and anti-colonial stance shared by all participants. Having said this, I argue that Bandung is much more than a denigration of the Western world and its institutions. On the contrary, a positivist approach towards its concepts is equally visible in the sources, which takes the form of an adoration and adoption of the West’s language and political ideas. It is this balancing act I try to present and to dismantle in this chapter – to put it polemically: the West between a foe image and a role model?

5.1.1. Shared historical experience of Western (neo-)colonial mindset and practices

To start off my analysis, I deem it necessary to provide the most obvious common denominator for the Bandung participants and their point of reference with the Western powers: the historical experience of (neo-)colonial and imperial policies. How do the speakers refer to these policies and which weight is it accorded within their addresses?

It is hereby important to make notice of the fact that, though the Conference as an entity opposed imperialism in any form, it did not follow any “operative definition of the

¹¹⁷ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 12.

term”. This owes probably to the various forms of colonialism the countries had experienced, as well as to their varying attitude to what imperialism is composed of.¹¹⁸

President Sukarno’s inauguration speech for the Asian-African Conference gives insight into the general spirit of the Southern world towards the West. His words are particularly known for coining a strong metaphor, the so-called “Life-line of Imperialism.”¹¹⁹ He further elaborates on this concept:

This line runs from the Straits of Gibraltar, through the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, the South China Sea and the Sea of Japan. For most of that enormous distance, the territories on both sides of this lifeline were colonies, the peoples were unfree, their futures mortgaged to an alien system. Along that life-line, that main artery of imperialism, there was pumped the life-blood of colonialism.¹²⁰

He therein introduces a geographical demarcation line between two opposing systems that are nevertheless bound to each other through a mutual form of dependency – albeit the Western (colonial) world hold the power to dictate the rules of interaction. He highlights these conditions of dependency and bondage with the inability to travel freely and convene on their own soil for political decisions. “Only a few decades ago it was frequently necessary to travel to other countries and even other continents before the spokesmen of our peoples could confer.”¹²¹ By example he draws up the limitations for the League against Imperialism, a “meeting place thousands of miles away, amidst foreign people, in a foreign country, in a foreign continent. It was not assembled there by choice, but by necessity.”¹²² The League is a skilled example, because it underlines the contrast between the content – a league against imperialism – and the absolutely imperial conditions and structures surrounding it. Sukarno continues by contrasting this description with the current situation:

It is a new departure in the history of the world that leaders of Asian and African peoples can meet together in their own countries to discuss and deliberate upon matters of common concern. [...] – We are again masters in our own house. We do not need to go to other continents to confer.¹²³

The great majority of Middle Eastern delegations pick up this anti-imperialist line of argument: Nasser points to a “striking similarity between the conditions prevailing” in the countries gathered here at Bandung, which he sees in the “long period of foreign influence,

¹¹⁸ Some of the Bandung participants conceived for example Soviet expansion in Eastern Europe as a definite form of colonialism, while others could not equal it with the Western imperialism experienced for centuries. Chakrabarty: *The Legacies of Bandung*, p. 50.

¹¹⁹ Sukarno: *Speech by President Sukarno of Indonesia at the Opening of the Conference*, p. 2.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

political as well as economic.”¹²⁴ He establishes the common denominator for these nations first and foremost in their equal experience of imperialism and foreign domination. The strongest judgement on imperialism emanates from Jordan in its reference to the “loathsome yoke of imperialism and colonialism”, a “reign of terror” that is still prevailing in some parts of the world. Its speech introduces the concept of human rights, regarding them as “brutally denied” in imperial or colonial politics.¹²⁵ While the UN had officially acknowledged the significance of human rights, the Yemeni view draws notice to the fact that they have certainly not become a political reality, due to the still numerous outposts of colonization. The greatest burden now carry the Asian and African nations, of whom many still belong to real colonial governments.¹²⁶ A historical experience of plight and suffering proves to be a connective element between the present states: “We disagreed, we dissented, but finally we fell on our hardships in the past; we fell upon our distress in the past; we fell upon our memories of jails and concentration camps.”¹²⁷ This closing remark by the Syrian group acknowledges the existing differences in opinion and political approach, but also emphasizes that in the end their shared feelings and experiences reconnect them. It serves, according to Nasser, “as a unifying force”.¹²⁸ Whereas insecurity, aggression and political problems are all ascribed to imperial politics, Syria also rings a hopeful note in its call to finally eradicate the last remnants of imperialism – only then will the countries of the global South witness political interactions that are based on equal power relation. “To achieve peace all pockets of imperialism should be washed away, all evils of discrimination should be swept away. When all debris of imperialism is removed, then, and only then, we can inaugurate an era of everlasting peace and prosperity.”¹²⁹ Altogether, the MENA perspective is characterized by a strong anti-imperialist stance as almost all of the Middle Eastern countries find quite clear words in their condemnation of imperialism.

Within the realm of African states, only the Ethiopian delegation makes reference to the aspect of imperialism. Interestingly enough, its address follows the same line of argument as put forward by the ‘Arabic’ group, in constructing the story of suffering. “It is still in the

¹²⁴ Delegation of Egypt: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Egypt*, in: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung*, Djakarta 1955, p. 67–71, here p. 67.

¹²⁵ Delegation of Jordan: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Jordan*, in: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung*, Djakarta 1955, p. 90–92, here p. 92.

¹²⁶ Delegation of Yemen: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Yemen*, in: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung*, Djakarta 1955, p. 152–154, here p. 153.

¹²⁷ Delegation of Syria: *Closing Speech by the Delegation of Syria*, in: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung*, Djakarta 1955, p. 206–207, here p. 206.

¹²⁸ Delegation of Egypt: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Egypt*, p. 67.

¹²⁹ Delegation of Syria: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Syria*, in: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung*, Djakarta 1955, p. 125–128, here p. 127.

same region that are to be found today, ninety-seven percent of the colonial peoples and territories. We have all suffered from colonialist ambitions”¹³⁰ – it observes.

Aside from the discourse visible in the speeches, it is of interest to have a look at its factual outcome in the *Final Communiqué*. At first glance, the document’s phrasing appears surprisingly void of resentment towards the West, incredibly diplomatic and carefully formulated. As such, it reads for example: “Unfortunately contacts among Asian and African countries were interrupted during the past centuries.” However, it seems to grow in strength from line to line and introduces a mild form of criticism: “The existence of colonialism in many parts of Asia and Africa, in whatever form it may be, not only prevents cultural cooperation but also suppresses the national cultures of the people.” It continues to denounce colonialism as the “denial of fundamental rights”, which concerns in particular the free exertion of culture and education. The *Communiqué* argues thereby less with the bigger political scheme, but with a more personal note on “the development of their personality”¹³¹ and hindrance of cultural exchange for Asian and African people. This is an entirely new argument, not raised by any of the opening or closing speeches during the Conference. It is at the end of the document that the wording transforms into a clear condemnation of colonialism as an evil “arising from the subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation”, which causes the respective people to become dependent subjects.¹³² Representative of the debates and discussions at the Conference, the *Communiqué*’s eventual open anti-imperialist position marks a significant commonality for the Bandung attendees.

5.1.2. The Palestinian question as an example of (neo-)imperial politics

“We are often told ‘Colonialism is dead’” – Sukarno remarks and appeals to his audience: “Let us not be deceived or even soothed by that. I say to you, colonialism is not yet dead. How can we say it is dead, so long as vast areas of Asia and Africa are unfree.” He accurately warns his audience to falsely believe that proclamations of independence and the current spirit of awakening meant an immediate state of wholehearted independence. To this end, he draws attention to what he terms colonialism in its “modern dress” that is no longer the “classic form” his people in Indonesia and other parts of the world had formerly experienced. This form of imperialism comes under the disguise of a neo-colonial outlook through other

¹³⁰ Delegation of Ethiopia: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Ethiopia*, in: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung*, Djakarta 1955, p. 72–75, here p. 72.

¹³¹ Whole paragraph: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia: *Final Communiqué of the Asian-African Conference*, Djakarta April 24, 1955, p. 4.

¹³² *Ibid*, p. 6.

forms of control: economic, intellectual or indirect influence through a small community within a nation that comes to dominate the majority society.¹³³ From a current standpoint, these observations are highly skillful, since as a politician of the 1950s he could not be sure how decolonization processes would develop, and if their countries would in fact release themselves from Western control. It can be taken as an anticipation of the neo-colonial power structures that came to dominate the global political and economic arena in the aftermath of the Conference. Nasser calls it “the game of power politics in which the small nations can be used as tools.” This “must be stopped if the existing international tension is to come to an end.” In pursuing their own “selfish interests”, the weaker nations are increasingly edged into isolation, and their collective strength and unity diminished. He directs a warning at his audience not to “fall under the grip of foreign domination”¹³⁴ in this way. On the other hand, one can read an opportunity in it, too, the possibility to strengthen the ties among them and seek force in unity.

Among these new forms of colonialism, one common thread is the danger of communism. Iraqi foreign minister Jamali finds strong words on this: “Under the old form of colonialism, there is some chance of one hearing the cries of pain of the subjugated peoples. Under communist domination, however, no such cries are permitted to be heard.”¹³⁵ Communism is seen to endanger the countries’ newly won independence and freedom, it is metaphorically a “jump from the pan into the fire”,¹³⁶ so presented as even deadlier than the old one.¹³⁷ Jamali carries on to point out another force of evil, which he sees in the Zionist enterprise. This brings me to an important aspect discussed in the Conference: the issue of Palestinian plight due to neo-imperial policies and a primary example for the neo-colonial agenda. It is noteworthy that literally all the Middle Eastern countries, as well as the North African states, make reference to this topic already in their opening addresses,¹³⁸ while in

¹³³ Sukarno: *Speech by President Sukarno of Indonesia at the Opening of the Conference*, p. 3.

¹³⁴ Whole paragraph: Delegation of Egypt: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Egypt*, p. 70.

¹³⁵ Delegation of Iraq: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Iraq*, in: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung*, Djakarta 1955, p. 82–86, here p. 85.

¹³⁶ Other character ascriptions include: “one-sided realistic religion”, “subversive religion”, “anti-God religion” or a “new form of colonialism, much deadlier than the old one”. Ibid, p. 83.

¹³⁷ Though the vision and danger of communism is one of the hottest debates during the Conference, I will refrain from going into more detail in this issue, as it is not so much of interest to this thesis.

¹³⁸ The opportunity to bring the Palestinian question forward might for some states (like Jordan) have been the primary motivation to attend the Conference. It is also therefore that Kahin refers to a “consistent courting of the Arab states” through China. At first sight this appears surprising, but a close look at the weight the Palestine issue took in the Conference reveals that it was inevitable for China to endorse this agenda, if it wanted to appeal to the Arab states. Kahin: *The Asian-African Conference*, p. 16.

some cases it takes up a big part of their agenda.¹³⁹ Jordan presents hereby the most extreme case, because the Palestinian question occupies half of the speech with a whole paragraph dedicated simply to the dangers of the Israeli state.¹⁴⁰ The main argument of the Middle Eastern attitude can be drawn from Iraq's statement of Zionism as "the last chapter in the book of old colonialism" or "the worst offspring of imperialism".¹⁴¹ The Ethiopian delegation poses carefully that it belongs to one of "those territories subjected to the trusteeship regime", but in this sense qualifies as an outpost of colonialism.¹⁴² He smartly reveals the hypocrisies in the legal instrument of the Western powers, that simply give the colonial enterprise a new term and look, but the structures remain the same. In this light, Nasser picks up the UN's responsibility to question and reshape their own power structures and alludes to the failure of the UN Charter to properly address the events in Palestine. Thereupon, he calls on the international community to finally take a considerable stance towards this issue.¹⁴³

While the Palestine/Israel question is elaborated on as an individual political situation in itself, it further serves to emphasize the greater scheme of (neo-)colonialism and its legitimization. The Yemeni delegation hereto raises these questions:

Are they entitled to take away a part of a country which is thousand miles away from their country with which they have no political, historical and juridical relations? [...] What is their right to alter the map of the world create a new nation, a new religion which is certainly only temporal? What religion and what law give them the right to drive a nation away from their country with fire and iron, and throw them into the desert, naked, hungry and sick?¹⁴⁴

His words fundamentally question the whole ground for the colonial enterprise, its legal or human justification and express an utter inability to understand its ends. In a narrower sense, the Zionist agenda serves to highlight the alienness of a foreign government: The Syrian delegation denies the Israeli state to belong to the Afro-Asian continent or culture, but rather considers it a "pocket left behind the line of imperialism in its desperate retreat. Placed at one of the main gates of Asia, at the cross-roads of the three continents, Israel is an advanced

¹³⁹ Another important outpost of imperialism is seen in the "French yoke" of North African countries like Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. The plight of their anticolonial struggle is referred to by many North African and Middle Eastern countries at the Conference. Aside from this, South African Apartheid and the question of racialism towards Pakistani and Indian citizen takes in another great part. I have however, left out an analysis of these questions due to the scope of this work. Delegation of Iraq: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Iraq*, p. 84.; Delegation of Syria: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Syria*, p. 127.

¹⁴⁰ It is stated for example: "The nation of Israel is a new form of aggression on Asian soil". Delegation of Jordan: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Jordan*, p. 91.

¹⁴¹ Delegation of Iraq: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Iraq*, p. 84.

¹⁴² Delegation of Ethiopia: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Ethiopia*, p. 72.

¹⁴³ Delegation of Egypt: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Egypt*, p. 68f.

¹⁴⁴ Delegation of Yemen: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Yemen*, p. 153.

outpost of imperialism.”¹⁴⁵ This attitude is shared by the Jordanian group, denoting Zionists as “alien people imposed on the country” with a “western imperial agenda”.¹⁴⁶ They present the creation of the Israeli state as an usurpation of Arab land through “World Jewry and certain Great Powers” – this is admittedly a quite diplomatic phrasing for the British Empire’s support for the Zionist agenda.¹⁴⁷ Both the Syrian and the Jordanian view present the Palestine question as an Asian-African issue, in that its whole existence endangers “the liberty of the peoples of Asia and Africa”.¹⁴⁸ Jordanian foreign minister Salah uses the platform of the Conference to not only draw attention to the Palestinian plight, but to actively appeal to the “Afro-Asiatic Nations and States [...] to see that justice is done and seek a rightful and just solution for our case”.¹⁴⁹ The plight of Palestine is thus taken up as a primary example for the implications of (neo-)colonial politics and serves to underline Bandung’s denigration of these policies and their common stand in this matter.

5.1.3. The West as a common foe image at Bandung?

“But is not this Asian-African Conference merely racism in reverse?” a young white American asked me; he was obviously worried. ‘I think that the Asians and Africans are trying to gang up on the Western world,’” a young journalist tells Wright.¹⁵⁰ In his famous report on the Conference *The Color Curtain*, he comes to adopt this opinion:

What was happening? As they came to know one another better, their fear and distrust evaporated. Living for centuries under Western rule, they had become filled with a deep sense of how greatly they differed from one another. But now, face to face, their ideological defenses dropped. Negative unity, bred by a feeling that they had to stand together against a rapacious West, turned into something that hinted of the positive. They began to sense their combined strength; they began to taste blood [...] They could now feel that their white enemy was far, far away¹⁵¹

Wright presents this unity almost in a conspiratorial way, introduces the idea of revenge on the West and connects it explicitly with the White person as their enemy.

But does a look at the sources really reveal such a negative attitude towards the West? Do politicians construct a foe image around the Western White world that could qualify as racializing it?

¹⁴⁵ Delegation of Syria: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Syria*, p. 127.

¹⁴⁶ Delegation of Jordan: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Jordan*, p. 91.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

¹⁴⁸ Delegation of Syria: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Syria*, p. 127.

¹⁴⁹ Delegation of Jordan: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Jordan*, p. 91.

¹⁵⁰ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 16.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

Sukarno's opening address puts his people down as the "voiceless ones in the world", "the unregarded", living in poverty and humiliation, and whose decisions were dictated by others. The people in power to set the rules on the other hand had paramount interests that were put first, who did not care to hear their voice. However, while he asserts the colonized countries are united "by a common detestation of colonialism in whatever form it appears" as well as the "detestation of racialism",¹⁵² he is careful to refer only to the politics and its manifestations. He does not construct a generalized essentialized image of the Westerner with a colonial and racist mindset. As president of the Conference, his stance certainly owes very much to the need for a high degree of diplomacy in his position.

Other delegations, however, are more straightforward, when it comes to allocate guilt for the present conditions.¹⁵³ As such, Yemen sees "people other than us"¹⁵⁴ responsible for the current problems. These have been induced by the experience of colonialism and suffering, so that all of the present states now face the same conflicts. It is therefore that it is only "a natural and legitimate interest" to denounce colonialism and racialism and instead cry for "world peace and happiness".¹⁵⁵ Yet all of the speeches hold the tendency to present their case in a highly diplomatic way, often twisting it into a positive message somehow. The Sudanese delegation for instance makes an effort to stress that their aspiration for democratic and "collective action and sincere co-operation" are not because of "ill-feeling towards any particular country".¹⁵⁶

Taken altogether, their words mark a high degree of determination and resistance: "They are too freshly free from foreign control to be willing to accept its re-establishment in any shape [...]. They refuse to be bullied by their old Colonial masters; and they refuse to be dictated to by new masters"¹⁵⁷ as Legum observed. His words emphasize my own findings in the sources: Though they strongly condemn colonialism in all manifestations and demonstrate an absolute unwillingness to be repulled into it, there is no detestation voiced of the West itself. In fact, the colonizer or the Westerner as a figure do never appear, it is only the system they produced that the countries criticize. Wright's observation of 'tasting blood

¹⁵² Whole paragraph: Sukarno: *Speech by President Sukarno of Indonesia at the Opening of the Conference*, p. 3.

¹⁵³ Cold war, political climate, nuclear tension, poverty and underdevelopment

¹⁵⁴ Delegation of Yemen: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Yemen*, p. 152.

¹⁵⁵ Delegation of the Gold Coast: *Opening Address by the Delegation of the Gold Coast*, in: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung*, Djakarta 1955, p. 76–77, here p. 76.

¹⁵⁶ Delegation of Sudan: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Sudan*, in: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung*, Djakarta 1955, p. 121–124, here p. 122.

¹⁵⁷ Legum: *Bandung, Cairo and Accra*, p. 3.

against the White enemy' is thus way too sensational and, though political thought of the global South might have been like that, neither of the delegations voiced this opinion in the open platform. As a Black American, I deduce Wright might have been more influenced by his own background and experience of discrimination and racialism than he was aware of. It certainly slipped into his narrative and thereby presents a West-East antagonism that I cannot read entirely out of the speeches. It is, however, left to question, how diplomacy with the West plays a role here – even though it was not even present. It alludes to the power of the West as an opposing player to influence the strategies of Bandung's political figures. Even so, Wright does have a point in his image of “negative unity”, which in the end turns into something positive.¹⁵⁸ It is the shared denigration of the West's policies that serve as the “principal factor linking together the widely diverse Muslim, Christian and Hindu States of Africa, Asia and the Middle East.”¹⁵⁹ It can thus be summed up that colonialism/imperialism and its practices present a powerful foe image for the Asian-African politicians and in this way are a connective element and unifier at Bandung – yet not the Western world and the White person persé.

5.2. Ambivalent role: the adoption of Western political concepts

In spite of Bandung's anti-imperial face, there is also an undercurrent of orientation towards the West that should not be missed. Its colonial practice is condemned, but this does not mean that the ‘achievements of Western civilization’ are not aspired to and pursued by the political elite of the East. Among these endorsed at Bandung are economic development, technological progress and Western political thought and language. In this chapter, I thus aim to trace the other side of the coin so to say: Which concepts promoted in Afro-Asian solidarity are lent by the West? How do they make use of them for their own ends? Do the participants present a united front in their attitude and relationship towards the West? The words of the Lebanese ambassador Malik serve as a good example to highlight these questions:

The geographical position of Lebanon puts it at the intersection of the main roads of the world. On the other hand, the requirements of its trade, the emigration of its sons, and its cultural needs put it in constant contact with the most diverse peoples. It has been often repeated that Lebanon, as it stands, is one of the links between the Orient

¹⁵⁸ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 175.

¹⁵⁹ Legum: *Bandung, Cairo and Accra*, p. 3.

and the Occident. Its dearest wish is to remain a loyal and devoted partner of the Organization to which it has adhered.”¹⁶⁰

At this point, it does not become clear which particular organization he refers to, but I assume the UN is meant hereby. Lebanon owes to its historical and strategic position a stance in world politics, which is between the Eastern and the Western world and underlines the struggle to balance this. Attending the Bandung Conference expresses the wish to connect with the other ‘underdogs’, the less fortunate in history, and its affiliation to the Middle Eastern region and culture. On the other hand, it cannot afford to lose its stand with the West and the political and economic advantages embedded in it. It is a form of patronage and influence through the Western political approach that is, though maybe unconsciously, accepted and adopted by the Bandung participants.

5.2.1. Developmentalist approach – the Western powers as a role model and guideline for (under)development

The most visible feature of this Western orientation is the expression of support for a notion of (under)development¹⁶¹ that clearly bears a Western imprint. Nasser for example points to “such problems as economic development, social and political reconstruction”¹⁶² in his country and how the “vast majority of humanity [...] is still living in poverty in the economically under-developed areas of the world.”¹⁶³ This is indicatory for how Bandung took up the challenge of (economic) development, including the wording. According to Weber, the ‘Bandung spirit’ is thus not only a cultural idea of commonality, but a “political project”¹⁶⁴ derived from the West. This project reflects the “liberal thinking on North-South relations” that emerged in the era from 1945 until the mid-1960s: The idea of free trade between the

¹⁶⁰ Delegation of Lebanon: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Lebanon*, in: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung*, Djakarta 1955, p. 96–98, here p. 97.

¹⁶¹ I will hereto draw on the definition of these terms according to Wesseling: He denotes development as a process, in fact one without end, so that developed countries as places “where it is being carried forward”. Development is a relative concept he argues, since there are no truly developed states, but you can only measure the degree of development. Underdevelopment is then regarded as a “situation, a state in which this process is absent.” He stresses this to be non-intrinsic, but the “result of a historical process.” Blussé, Léonard/Wesseling, H.L and Winius, G.D. (eds.): *History and Underdevelopment. Essays on Underdevelopment and European Expansion in Asia and Africa*, Leiden/Paris 1980, p. 2.

¹⁶² Delegation of Egypt: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Egypt*, p. 67.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 69.

¹⁶⁴ Weber, Heloise / Winanti, Poppy: *The 'Bandung Spirit' and Solidarist Internationalism*, in: Bisley, Nick (ed.): *Special Issue: Beyond Bandung. The 1955 Asian-African Conference and its Legacies for International Order* (Australian journal of international affairs, 1035-771870 (4)), Abingdon 2016, p. 391–425, here p. 395.

continents and the “optimum international division of labour” were to result in a globally visible development for all countries.¹⁶⁵

The *Final Communiqué* has adopted this line of thought and presents “the assistance being received by certain participating countries from outside the region, through international or under bilateral arrangements” as a “valuable contribution to the implementation of their development programmes”.¹⁶⁶ Development herein clearly implies help from outside – the former colonial powers – and cannot be undertaken by itself. A dependency is created therein, concurrent to the wish of self-determination. The countries are dependent on adopting the concept of development itself, and above that the factual (and financial) assistance to perform it.

Wright introduces hereto the metaphor of the engineer, asking: “Who can build a project out of eighty million human lives, a project that can nourish them, sustain them, and yet have their voluntary loyalty?”¹⁶⁷ This became one of the most influential figures of “postcolonial developmentalist imagination.”¹⁶⁸ He takes Indonesia as an example, which has since fought for independence, yet does not have a clue how to build a nation and an independent economy based on this. It is therefore that they resort to the West again. These aspirations manifest itself in the spirit of ‘catching-up’ to the First world, to make up for the centuries of heteronomy and their current state of ‘underdevelopment’. Statement such as Nehru’s, “what Europe did in a hundred or a hundred and fifty years, we must do in ten or fifteen years” are emblematic for this attitude. With this, the colonial power’s logic for their imperial projects – in the name of development¹⁶⁹ – is accepted, even taken up as a guideline.¹⁷⁰ Wright calls it a “strange and new religion [...] in the hearts of these new Asian and African nationals”, which worships modernity of the Western form. It is a fear not to catch up fast enough and, in this way to be “swallowed up again in what they feel to be slavery”.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁵ van Dam, Ferdinand: *North-South Relations Reconsidered*, in: Blussé, Léonard / Wesseling, H.L and Win-ius, G.D. (eds.): *History and Underdevelopment. Essays on Underdevelopment and European Expansion in Asia and Africa*, Leiden/Paris 1980, p. 9–20, here p. 9.

¹⁶⁶ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia: *Final Communiqué*, p. 2.

¹⁶⁷ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 132.

¹⁶⁸ Chakrabarty: *The Legacies of Bandung*, p. 53.

¹⁶⁹ This drive of less developed countries “to bring about change” can be seen as a positive aspiration as well. Yet it must be kept in mind that the Western involvement has not seldom – in particular in their colonial zeal – come “hand in hand with economic exploitation; with the assignment of development experts, the importing of cheap raw materials; with preferential tariffs. Protectionist trade policies; with aid grants, the creation of indebtedness through commercial credits and investments.” Van Dam sees the belief in continuous development as an inherently Western thinking, which has, however, derived in various interpretations in the regions outside of Western Europe. van Dam: *North-South Relations Reconsidered*, p. 12.

¹⁷⁰ Weber et al.: *The 'Bandung Spirit' and Solidarist Internationalism*, p. 395. Chakrabarty: *The Legacies of Bandung*, p. 53.

¹⁷¹ Whole paragraph: Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 173.

Wright does not doubt the East's ability to do so, but he poses the question of the right time frame: Even with the assistance of a "giant Marshall-Plan for the East"¹⁷² – will there be enough time to close this gap in technical and economic development? If progress is not made fast enough, the colonial structures will simply be altered, acquiring a neo-colonial face.¹⁷³ The discourse at Bandung adopts the Western approach, in which development is conceived as the result of economic growth and modernization (according to their standards).¹⁷⁴ Wright accurately points out, how "all progress and social change are measured in terms of the degree to which Asian and African countries resemble Western countries."¹⁷⁵ While totally understandable due to a lack of real economic alternatives and role models of the global South, this discourse undermines the project of wholesome decolonization.¹⁷⁶

In fact, the struggle for decolonization even supports the Western political project: While decolonizing meant independence from the colonial power, at the same time "symbolic power of nationalism" was strengthened. In this national project, the struggle to develop the country becomes a national one as well,¹⁷⁷ a concept that in fact gives priority to these Western ideas of development.¹⁷⁸ To this end, the principle of "'self-determination through nation-building'"¹⁷⁹ becomes an integral part and reinforces the Westphalian system

¹⁷² Wright most probably refers to a series of development programs that had sprung up since 1949 and were based on the model of the Marshall-Plan. Assistance mainly derived from the United States, which published its first act about foreign aid in 1950. These programs came in the form of expertise and sometimes capital, but were laid out temporarily. While some certainly aimed to further the self-determination of Southern countries, they were equally instrumental for an American "expansionist policy" and to contain Soviet influence in Third World countries. van Dam: *North-South Relations Reconsidered*, p. 16.

¹⁷³ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 214f.

¹⁷⁴ The concept of modernization is seen "in terms of institutional reform, education, industrialization and infrastructure development." Weber et al.: *The 'Bandung Spirit' and Solidarist Internationalism*, p. 398.

¹⁷⁵ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 191.

Jack and Wright both comment: "Curiously, the official language of the Conference was English – a by-product of British colonialism in Asia and Africa." In this way, "it was on everybody's tongue [...]". Though certainly decided due to practical reasons, the choice of language – the language of the colonizer – undermines the anticolonial agenda. Jack thereto argues: "The western world was at Bandung in a way that could not be denied." On the other hand, Wright also puts forward: "The strident moral strictures against the Western world preached at Bandung were uttered in the language of the cultures that the delegates were denouncing!" He draws notice to how the language was similarly thwarted and used in a way that expresses agency and self-determination. Jack: *Bandung*, p. 6.; Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 199.

¹⁷⁶ Wright sees the basis for this discourse that in a strong inferiority complex of the Asian-African countries. This is heightened, once people decide to bring about change according to traditional habits and become more aware of race in this way. Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 191f.

¹⁷⁷ Nationalism cannot be seen only as an assertion of national identity at home, but also the presence of an independent role in global politics. Rothermund: *The Routledge Companion to Decolonization*, p. 46.

¹⁷⁸ Weber et al.: *The 'Bandung Spirit' and Solidarist Internationalism*, p. 398.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p. 393.

of the sovereign independent state.¹⁸⁰ Wright refers to Nkrumahism¹⁸¹ as the most straightforward form of black nationalism at the time. He comments: “strong, emotional, unorthodox nationalism had held the British at bay.” The same occurred in Kenya, where they were forced to “to fight a jungle war.” Nationalism has thus been adopted by those “tribal societies”, where there was yet no trace of industrialization, and interpreted for their own ends.¹⁸² Nasser also observes this tide of awakening that has produced movements of nationalism all over the global South. He presents it as a “natural urge” that still needs to be satisfied for many “remaining areas of the world.” One has to keep in mind that the nation state is a European political concept formed in the 20th century due to specific political conditions. To see it as a natural urge is a rather questionable statement from my perspective. Even so, he is quite aware of the problems inherent in the national ideology, when thwarted in the wrong way. Speaking from his own experience, he advises his comrades to deal with it “wisely and realistically”, so that people can benefit from nationalism in the realization of goals formed on their own.¹⁸³ However, one can state that the political outlook of Bandung endorses the concept of the nation state, celebrates the idea of independence and thereby displays a quite positivist approach towards these Western concepts.

This certainly does not mean that Bandung does not display any critical attitude in this regard. As can be shown with the Ethiopian stance, it is often delivered in a cynical manner:

It is clear that we cannot maintain our political independence if we do not succeed in safeguarding our economic independence. However, I believe that the Asian-African countries often assume to pessimistic an attitude as regards their capacity for economic development, and that other states rather too easily apply to them the designation of ‘underdeveloped countries’.¹⁸⁴

He questions the superiority and power of definition the Western powers take on, but equally the Southern states that accept and adopt too easily these categories of developed and

¹⁸⁰ In this national project the significance of the national constitution plays into it, too. Whereas it should reflect the country’s perspective on the citizens’ rights and duties, the majority of the former colonies display an imitation of Western constitutions, mostly modelled after their former mother country. This in effect undermines the national project of true independence and presents it on neo-colonial ground. Go, Julian: *Modeling States and Sovereignty. Postcolonial Constitutions in Asia and Africa*, in: Lee, Christopher J. (ed.): *Making a World After Empire: the Bandung Moment and its Political Afterlives* ([Research in international studies/Global and comparative studies series] Research in international studies), Athens 2010, p. 107–139, here p. 107f. Nesadurai, Helen E.S.: *Bandung and the Political Economy of North-South Relations. Sowing the Seeds for Re-visioning International Society*, in: Tan, See Seng (ed.): *Bandung Revisited. The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference for International Order*, Singapore 2008, p. 68–101, here p. 74.

¹⁸¹ Nkrumahism refers to the form of nationalism endorsed and promoted by Kwame Nkrumah, the leader of the Gold Coast.

¹⁸² Whole paragraph: Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 163.

¹⁸³ Delegation of Egypt: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Egypt*, p. 70.

¹⁸⁴ Delegation of Ethiopia: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Ethiopia*, p. 73.

underdeveloped. It is a reasonable and well formulated criticism in my opinion, yet it also has to be kept in mind that Ethiopia belongs to one of the few African countries, which was never wholly colonized. It is therefore not as directly concerned as states like the Gold Coast. In addition, at the time of Bandung the country was in fact “going through a period of economic and commercial development, far greater than that of the colonial countries which surround her.” Its statement that “political independence furthers economic independence”¹⁸⁵ is thus formulated from a superior position, too. Though Ethiopia can certainly serve as a role model in casting off the neocolonial structures, it is not to forget that it can afford to argue and criticize in this way due to its advantaged position.

By all means, Ethiopia represents the faction of economists that sought a different, alternative approach to the ‘problem of underdevelopment’. More “socially just welfare-oriented policies”¹⁸⁶ and to sideline the conventional approach was an aim that many groups aspired to. Weber thus supports the view that Bandung also challenged the “dominant explanations of ‘underdevelopment’ and the liberal political project associated with modernization theory”.¹⁸⁷ While the concept promoted at Bandung entailed economic development, the position was also defended that “cultural diversity” was to be upheld and cherished in this process. It is so to say, the adoption of a Western concept to a certain degree, but its interpretation varies – development, but on their own terms. In this respect, Gerits elaborates on “an alternative to Western-led development” discussed at Bandung:

It was most eloquently described in an article entitled “The Brown Man’s Burden” that was reprinted in the *Asian-African Conference Bulletin*. By inverting the relationship envisioned in the ‘White Man’s Burden’, the author laid out the implicit but pervasive developmental aspirations of the Bandung delegates. Asia had to do what the West had refused: invest in ‘underdeveloped economies’, pass on experience and help Africans solve their ‘problems in administration’. The colonial promises of ‘partnership’ had proven to be false, while the ‘progressive realisation of self-government’ had only been used to ‘soften the reality of exploitation’.¹⁸⁸

Asia as the new donor of assistance became a notion supported by many of the participants, most notably Kotelawala, emphasizing that “those who had won their independence had a ‘solemn duty’ to offer knowledge and expertise”.¹⁸⁹ Another path was seen in the Soviet way, which similarly presented a (role) model for development, but was way more universal in its approach and application of this model. While “Western academic personnel” was still

¹⁸⁵ Whole paragraph: Ibid, p. 73.

¹⁸⁶ Weber et al.: *The 'Bandung Spirit' and Solidarist Internationalism*, p. 398.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 393.

¹⁸⁸ Gerits, Frank: *Bandung as the Call for a Better Development Project. US, British, French and Gold Coast Perceptions of the Afro-Asian Conference (1955)*, in: *Cold War History* 16 (2016) 3, p. 1–18, here p. 7.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 7.

debating whether the Africans have the capacity for self-government, the Soviets did not display this kind of “psychological prejudice” – “and the delegates at Bandung felt that profound difference in approach.”¹⁹⁰ It is yet left to question, if a truly “different political project”¹⁹¹ could have been chosen, that would have unified both decolonization and development. The political conditions at the time were certainly not numerous, so it is difficult to answer this question.

5.2.2. The Bandung perspective on the West’s institutions

As I have demonstrated in the last chapter, the Western political thought has not only been accepted as valid and useful, but also taken up as a role model. This brings me to another aspect that is its manifestation in the form of institutions. While several organizations and institutions are debated during the Conference, the UN deserves a closer look. It is the biggest point of reference for the present states and serves as the embodiment of the international, though in fact primary Western, community. Is it acknowledged and portrayed in a positive or negative light in its function?

The *Final Communiqué* can shed light on this question: It ascribes validity to the UN and associated institutions (of Western origin), such as the United Nations Fund for Economic Development, the International Finance Corporation or the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.¹⁹² The authors of the document further point to the need for nuclear energy – provided by the International Atomic Energy Agency, in which they demand an “adequate representation of the Asian-African countries on the executive authority of the Agency.” These institutions are not only endorsed, but an expansion and “fuller use should be made of the existing international organisations”.¹⁹³ It is therefore that Bandung strives for an active participation in them, which encompasses also membership for the so far uncommitted countries. These statements solely refer to the international institutions in the realm of economy, and furthermore support my findings that the Western approach to economic development is backed at Bandung. It is, nonetheless surprising, if one thinks about the fact that an anti-imperial Conference like Bandung adopts uncritically the corpus of neo-liberal and neo-colonial institutions.

¹⁹⁰ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 163.

¹⁹¹ Weber et al.: *The 'Bandung Spirit' and Solidarist Internationalism*, p. 395.

¹⁹² The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia: *Final Communiqué*, p. 3.

¹⁹³ Whole paragraph: *Ibid*, p. 4.

The *Communiqué* argues the same way with the significance of the UN: it should admit further eligible members of the Afro-Asian region in the Security Council¹⁹⁴ in order to ensure an “equitable geographical distribution” of representation.¹⁹⁵ Among these qualified according to the UN Charter, the document considers the following states: Cambodia, Ceylon, Japan, Jordan, Libya, Nepal and (a unified) Vietnam. With regard to the UN Charter, the *Communiqué* declares its “full support of the fundamental principles of Human Rights”, as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)¹⁹⁶ as a “common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations”.¹⁹⁷ In addition, it highlights the “principle of self-determination” as an integral part of the Charter.¹⁹⁸ At first glance, this might seem as a mindless adoption of the UN and its principles as a role model for international peaceful interaction. But by a closer look, the politicians have also thwarted its content and function for their own ends, which is a very smart diplomatic move. Not only do they make use of UN diplomatic language in their phrasing, they also recognize and take the proclaimed rights and principles that are beneficial to them, applying them to their own case. Among these are the principle of human rights and self-determination as very powerful political tools to adopt.

The results in the *Communiqué* are further reflective of the debate and addresses preliminary made at the Conference. A common thread herein is the stress on peaceful solutions for the anti-colonial struggle – and this can only be found in the “UNO-relationship”. It is thus maintained: “For the attainment of our present ideal we must stick to the UNO-principles and follow the democratic principle honestly and in all aspects...”¹⁹⁹ To this end, Iraq’s Jamali calls himself a “devout upholders of its aims and principles”²⁰⁰ and Nasser declares openly his “unshaken faith in the new international order which was inaugurated in the Charter of the United Nations.” Only a “sincere and continuous support for the world organization” can be an “effective instrument in the maintenance of international peace and security

¹⁹⁴ This regards “the distribution of the non-permanent seats [...]. The Asian-African countries which, under the arrangement arrived at in London in 1946, are precluded from being elected, should be enabled to serve on the Security Council, so that they might make a more effective contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.” Ibid, p. 7.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 7.

¹⁹⁶ The *Communiqué*’s endorsement of human rights as set in the UDHR, was preceded by a strong debate on whether to adopt it or create an own “catalogue of freedom”. Two different positions to what human rights consist of clashed hereby: one was the stress on economic and social rights, as brought forward by the Communist bloc (China and North Vietnam), the other lay on civil/personal and political rights as a warrant for human rights. Lebanese ambassador Malik was the strongest supporter of the latter point, which was ultimately entailed in the UDHR and in the *Communiqué*. Burke, Roland: “*The Compelling Dialogue of Freedom*”. *Human Rights at the Bandung Conference*, in: *Human Rights Quarterly* 28 (2006) 4, p. 947–965, here p. 954.

¹⁹⁷ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia: *Final Communiqué*, p. 5.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 6.

¹⁹⁹ Delegation of Yemen: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Yemen*, p. 153.

²⁰⁰ Delegation of Iraq: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Iraq*, p. 82.

and the promotion of the world prosperity”.²⁰¹ And not only should its inherent principles be adhered to, the UN should be strengthened, in order to be able to live up to its full potential, the realization of these “noble ideals”.²⁰² Bandung itself as a gathering of newly independent nations should work to strengthen the purposes of the UN.²⁰³ This notion of the Conference to serve the UN appears somehow contrary to the idea of Southern cooperation, since it sees itself in the responsibility to dissect from the West’s political processes and power of decision-making. In contrast to what I was expecting, there is not much of a revolutionary spirit to be read in the sources, and lacks a critical voice to the UN’s legitimacy as representative of an ‘international community’. From my perspective, it still is a key institution of Western powers, erected along its moral guidelines. Burke thereto sums it up quite accurately: “The endorsement of the principles of the UN human rights regime provides another important example of Bandung’s order-affirming aspect, as does its parallel commitment to the ‘development project’, conceived in conventional nation-state terms.”²⁰⁴

However, this does mean that there are no critical voices to be heard at Bandung: The Syrian delegation presents the impact of the UN as rather futile, with no actual power to face racialism and violations of human rights – a “debating society” it comments cynically.²⁰⁵ It is joined by Jamali who remarks the organization celebrated “many good achievements”, yet “has not been strong enough to put into practice its ideals and to implement its many resolutions.”²⁰⁶ An even more straightforward critique is heard by Nasser, who identifies a crisis the UN passes through currently, because its followers have lost faith in its practicality and integrity. He further declares:

The Charter lay certain obligations on the administrating powers. Among these is the obligation to develop in those territories self-government, to take due account of the political aspirations of its peoples and to assist them in the progressive development of their political institutions. However, the colonial powers have always obstructed any effective supervision of their administration of the non-self-governing territories. We have struggled and we shall continue to struggle for the strict application of the obligations placed upon the colonial powers by the Charter.²⁰⁷

His view certainly owes to a support for the Western (colonially inspired) development project that I have illustrated in the previous chapter. It is, however, an interesting approach he chooses by actively calling for its realization as a debt to the global South. He lays bare the

²⁰¹ Delegation of Egypt: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Egypt*, p. 67.

²⁰² Delegation of Yemen: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Yemen*, p. 154.

²⁰³ Delegation of Iraq: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Iraq*, p. 82.

²⁰⁴ Phillips: *Introduction*, p. 335.

²⁰⁵ Delegation of Syria: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Syria*, p. 127.

²⁰⁶ Delegation of Iraq: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Iraq*, p. 83.

²⁰⁷ Delegation of Egypt: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Egypt*, p. 67f.

hypocrisies in these Western promises that have set universally applicable guidelines, but fail to live up to them themselves. It is thus upon the Bandung participants, he appeals, to take up this responsibility in their place and restore the people's faith in a workable international cooperation and spirit of community.²⁰⁸

To sum it up, the Bandung perspective on the Western institutions and in particular the UN, is mainly in favor of its principles and the applicability, some of the opinions demonstrate a quite uncritical stance towards the UN's function in the power relations of global politics. Yet there is also a great deal of interpretive room for the politicians – most notably in the *Final Communiqué* and Nasser's positioning. They actively use the proclaimed principles for their own end, and in this way use the UN concepts as a political tool to beat the West with its own weapons. In that way, Wright was not even so in the wrong, they do gang up on the West, but in a quite smart and diplomatic manner.

5.2.3. The last call to the West?

It is the relationship between the Western colonial powers and the global South that has rendered the Bandung delegates representing a lot of “angry and willful”²⁰⁹ millions at their back. In this way, Bandung serves as a sign of protest against the power relations and political monopoly of the Western powers. It is a statement against the Western failure to consult with the Asian-African governments and sufficiently draw them in in decisions of primary importance for them. “It was an assertion of their conviction that they have the right to take a greater and more active part in such matters”²¹⁰ comments Kahin. Among these are for instance the claim of representation and equal participation in the UN Security Council and similar bodies. The power structures in these institutions and processes of international decision-making should be broken up, and with this challenge the “prevailing approaches to world order”.²¹¹ Phillips denotes the Conference itself, the gathering of anti-imperial forces, as a challenge of the “global order still infused with racist hierarchy and imperialism”.²¹² It therein played a significant role in “corroding the legitimacy of colonialism” and in creating a new vision of world politics.²¹³ This protest spirit becomes similarly manifested in the

²⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 68.

²⁰⁹ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 209.

²¹⁰ Kahin: *The Asian-African Conference*, p. 4.

²¹¹ Nesadurai: *Bandung and the Political Economy of North-South Relations*, p. 75.

²¹² Phillips: *Introduction*, p. 329.

²¹³ Ibid, p. 334.

unstructured procedure of the Conference and the lack of formal voting procedures.²¹⁴ It is a subversion of Western political structures and methods.

As Wright points out, these deliberations, demands and visions at Bandung were self-evidently “addressed to the people and the statesmen of the Western powers”,²¹⁵ since it is their claim of moral, cultural and political superiority that is questioned here. To that effect, the *Final Communiqué* declares “(c) [...] its support of the cause of freedom and independence for all such peoples, and (d) in calling upon the powers concerned to grant freedom and independence to such peoples.”²¹⁶ In here, the emphasis most probably lays on the French authorities, because it specifically addresses the conflicts in North Africa, yet questions of British concern, like Palestine or the Gulf of Aden are also dealt with. In a more indirect way, it recalls “the right of self-determination”, which should “be enjoyed by all peoples, and freedom and independence must be granted, with the least possible delay, to those who are still dependent peoples.”²¹⁷ Hereby Bandung presents a smart move again, in drawing up the validity of the UN Charter, mirroring the West its own fallacies to realize its principles. It further states: “Indeed, all nations should have the right freely to choose their own political and economic systems and their own way of life, in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.”²¹⁸ The Jordanian delegation similarly declares it

most regrettable indeed that principles of human rights so widely publicized by the United Nations and its various agencies have been the monopoly of the great powers only, while smaller nations had to face an endless period of struggle and endurance.²¹⁹

The *Communiqué* also draws notice to the interdependence or balancing act between freedom and peace. The Asian-African countries are positioned within the anti-colonial struggle and a dependent position with regard to international security, which induces many to resort to ideological pacts like SEATO. This idea is also indirectly expressed in the call for “abstention from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of another country”.²²⁰ They do not only call for a self-determined policy, in which they do not have to answer to a foreign power, but also for an abstention of ideological orientation. This foreshadows the idea of non-alignment, with its wish not to be pulled into the Cold War dialectic.

²¹⁴ Kahin: *The Asian-African Conference*, p. 9f.

²¹⁵ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 201.

²¹⁶ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia: *Final Communiqué*, p. 6.

²¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 8.

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 8.

²¹⁹ Delegation of Jordan: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Jordan*, p. 90.

²²⁰ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia: *Final Communiqué*, p. 9.

While the *Communiqué* was clearly addressed to the West, Wright also underscores his “belief that the delegates at Bandung, for the most part, though bitter, looked and hoped to the West...”²²¹ As I have indicated before in this chapter, this positive outlook towards the West invalidates the American fear of resentment and conspiracy towards the West. In some cases, the opposite feeling is expressed, such as the Syrian delegation’s peaceful political approach, “free from prejudice and vengeance”.²²² By the same token, the delegation of the Gold Coast underlines the “statesmanship and cordiality” felt in discussions with the United Kingdom, rendering the moment of “full sovereignty and independence” quite imminent.²²³ Jack observes this in the same manner, stressing the “colored people of the world need not be as racist as their fellow whites”.²²⁴ Bandung was not, as Sastroamidjojo said after Bogor, an “international solidarity of the ‘non-white races’ against the ‘white races’”,²²⁵ but rather an appeal to the moral conscience of the West – putting their plight onto the “moral doorsteps” of the West.²²⁶ The global South demands to “play again a role in human affairs”,²²⁷ to participate and be heard as distinct cultural entities. The Bandung delegates thus claim Western responsibility for the masses of now freed people, but who lack education, political structures and control.²²⁸ To conclude with Wright’s words: “IN SUM, BANDUNG WAS THE LAST CALL OF WESTERNIZED ASIANS TO THE MORAL CONSCIENCE OF THE WEST!”²²⁹

6. Cultural outlook: race and religion as common denominators

“This is the first intercontinental conference of coloured peoples in the history of mankind!”²³⁰ – president Sukarno exclaims. His words are somehow indicative for a discourse at Bandung that appears racialized, in the sense that race as a connective element for the delegates is stressed and subsequent on this, racialism is collectively deplored. In this chapter, I will try to dismantle how race and religion are constructed as a common ground and serve as important reference points for Afro-Asian unity.

²²¹ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 201.

²²² Delegation of Syria: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Syria*, p. 125.

²²³ Delegation of the Gold Coast: *Opening Address by the Delegation of the Gold Coast*, p. 76f.

²²⁴ Jack: *Bandung*, p. 36.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

²²⁶ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 209.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

²³⁰ Sukarno: *Speech by President Sukarno of Indonesia at the Opening of the Conference*, p. 1.

Wright notes that “racial feeling manifested itself at Bandung in a thousand subtle forms”:²³¹ Not only did the political debates of the Conference provide a strong “racial content”, but the participants exhibited “race feeling” in many forms.²³² This was revealed to him in particular in the Indonesian society, even among Indonesian intellectuals, where he is astonished to ascertain a lack of contact with European or American people.²³³ Even though its citizens have been granted freedom, he reckons the racial feelings of the colonial period have “lasted too long. It has become a way of life.” It is this racial divide – these “mighty currents” the West has set in motion – which he denotes the ‘color curtain’, a chasm you cannot just overcome or penetrate easily, even if White men were willing to do so.²³⁴ To that effect, Sukarno establishes a historical continuum of racial struggle, which connects the people to their forefathers:

For me, this hall is filled not only by the leaders of the nations of Asia and Africa; it also contains within its walls the undying, the indomitable, the invincible spirit of those who went before us. Their struggle and sacrifice paved the way for this meeting of the highest representatives of independent and sovereign nations from two of the biggest continents of the globe.²³⁵

In *The Color Curtain* Wright describes a situation, which gives insight into the connection of race and the feeling of inferiority:

In an intimate interview with one of the best-known Indonesian novelists I asked him point-blank: ‘Do you consider yourself as being colored’ ‘yes.’ ‘Why?’ ‘Because I feel inferior. I can’t help it. It is hard to be in contact with the white Western world and not feel like that. Our people are backward; there is no doubt of it. The white Western world is ahead of us. What we see of the white West is advanced; what we see of Asia is backward. So you can’t help feeling inferior. And that is why I feel that I’m colored.’²³⁶

The Western state of progress and its racialization of the East instills an inferiority complex in the people, which in effect becomes intrinsically connected to color and heightens the awareness of race. The concepts race and development reinforce each other in this way. The Bandung Conference consequently had a “profound influence upon the color-conscious millions in all the countries of the earth”.²³⁷ Wright places this on the symbolic level. He cites the case of a black American who came to Bandung as a “‘call of race’”, in the hope a

²³¹ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 175.

²³² Ibid, p. 179.

²³³ He certainly draws very much on his own experiences in Indonesia and interactions with Southern citizens and less on Bandung as a political conference. His observations are thus blurring the lines between the political event itself and his own personal encounters during his travels. Ibid, p. 189.

²³⁴ Ibid, p. 194.

²³⁵ Sukarno: *Speech by President Sukarno of Indonesia at the Opening of the Conference*, p. 1.

²³⁶ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 190.

²³⁷ Ibid, p. 176.

conference of this kind would spawn a new dealing with these racial issues. The American Congressman Powell presents a similar case by using the Conference as a platform to address the ‘negro problem’ in the US. Wright assumes that “in less schooled and more naïve hearts”, it had caused an even more profound stir that such a conference was taking place. One can deduce from his words that Bandung came to embody not so much a political issue for spectators, but a racial, personal issue, which equally attracted people outside the political sphere. If the racial divide and discriminatory practices encompassed in it were to continue, Wright argues, the result would be an emergent racism among the Southern people.²³⁸ While this is not in fact visible at Bandung, a strong condemnation of racialism in its historical and present form is revealed nevertheless. In this respect, the *Communiqué* states: “The Asian-African Conference deplored the policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination which form the basis of government and human relations in large regions of Africa and in other parts of the world [...]”.²³⁹ While the colonialist system is not mentioned directly, it is clear that those practices are part of the former colonial governments.

More specific is an additional document called the *Basic Paper on Racial Discrimination*, whose mere existence tells a lot about the significance the Bandung delegates accord to this issue. The document defines racial discrimination as a “gross violation of human rights”, a “denial of the fundamental values of civilisation”, a “disregard for the dignity of man” and a “source of race and group conflicts”. These “racial doctrines” that enforce it are strongly rejected and the document expresses support for the fight against the imperial politics, which legitimize racial segregation. These “legislation(s) and practice(s) of places of inferiority” in political, economic and social domains of society have induced feelings of inferiority in the population. The *Basic Paper* is quite straightforward in that it denotes the progress made so far in the removal of these practices as meagre and calls for an acceleration of this process. The delegations’ goal is formulated to ensure legislation and social efforts that will eradicate racialism in all its manifestations. They do, however, appeal to their audience not to resort to violent means in their struggle to wipe out these last traces of the colonial system. “The people of Asia and Africa should not be led into adoption of either the methods or the basis of the very evil that they are determined to eradicate”.²⁴⁰ While this statement is quite open in its interpretation, I read it as a warning not to be deceived by

²³⁸ Whole paragraph: Ibid, p. 178f.

²³⁹ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia: *Final Communiqué*, p. 6.

²⁴⁰ The Asian-African Conference: *Basic Paper on Racial Discrimination*, in: Agency for Research and Development, The Department of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Collected Documents of the Asian-African Conference*, April 18-24, 1955, Djakarta 1955, p. 145–146, here p. 145.

Western human rights values and the great achievements. They should instead find their own strength and (peaceful) means to get rid of racial divides within the society and in a global context. At Bandung, Wright also observes an interesting aspect that is, how race and religion become intertwined. Through the imposition of Christian traditions and the shaming of native, traditional religious practices, religion slowly became connected with the feeling of racial inferiority that the Western powers made the people feel.²⁴¹ To that effect, “a racial and religious system of identification” manifested “itself in an emotional nationalism which was now leaping state boundaries and melting and merging, one into the other.” Wright sees a certain “deep and organic relation” between religion and race that he calls “*two of the most powerful and irrational forces in human nature*”.²⁴²

The second important denominator for the Bandung delegates is thus based on religious and spiritual life. The *Communiqué* establishes a common ground thereto and draws a line to its ancestors:

Asia and Africa have been the cradle of great religions and civilisations which have enriched other cultures and civilisations while themselves being enriched in the process. In this way, the cultures of Asia and Africa are based on spiritual and universal foundations.²⁴³

Sukarno calls the two continents the “birthplaces of religion”, where a great variety of denominations have come forth. It is therefore that religion plays such a significant role in the societies of the East.²⁴⁴ Wright calls it no “accident that most of the delegates were deeply religious men representing governments and vast populations steeped in mystic visions of life.”²⁴⁵ He observes a “solid presence of Christian influence”,²⁴⁶ such as two members of the Indonesian group and the Liberian delegates, which were belonged to the Y.M.C.A.²⁴⁷ In addition, the Ethiopian and Lebanese group were wholly Christian, the Philippines Roman Catholic. The remaining delegation represented a whole spectrum of religious denominations, from Hindus, Buddhists, Moslem and other confessions.²⁴⁸

²⁴¹ Those converted to Christianity, however, also adopted a defiant religious outlook, in hope for the “freedom and social justice” the West had promised them. Wright, *The Color Curtain*, p. 140.

²⁴² Whole paragraph: Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 139f. (annotation: Wright has put the last quotation in italic letters).

²⁴³ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia: *Final Communiqué*, p. 4.

²⁴⁴ Sukarno: *Speech by President Sukarno of Indonesia at the Opening of the Conference*, p. 6.

²⁴⁵ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 140.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 167.

²⁴⁷ The Y.M.C.A. means the Young Men's Christian Association: It was a worldwide Christian organization founded by Sir George Williams in London 1844.

²⁴⁸ Wright elaborates in *The Color Curtain* on the “relationship between Communism and Christianity at Bandung”: “In the West one is inclined to feel that the two doctrines of life, Christianity and Communism, are opposed, but, at bottom, they are not as opposed as one would think. There are deep underground, emotional connections. Seen through Asian eyes, the two philosophes share much of the same assumptions of hope [...]”

This religious variety and emphasis on spirituality becomes visible in the speeches and reports of the Conference, where reference to god and religious life is frequently made. Among these are for example the Syrian speech, where the speaker ends with an “Amen”²⁴⁹ or Jamali’s opening and closing addresses that both finalize in a verse from the Qu’ran²⁵⁰ – “Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change from within themselves”.²⁵¹ The Yemeni delegation equally looks to Allah for “guidance for the sake of the happiness of the peoples and of our fatherland”²⁵² and Liberia stresses its gratitude to God for enabling this assembly of people with bright thoughts “emanating from the great and leading statesmen of the East”.²⁵³ Reference and praise to God do not appear limited to one religious perspective, but are practiced by politicians from different religious backgrounds and it seems each one is granted this space. These statements reveal how strong the religious component of the Conference is and how well it played into its tone and discourse. Bandung is thus not only a political gathering, but also a meeting of highly religious, spiritual leaders of the East.

The religious component is also a point, which is seen to differentiate the global South from the North, in that it possesses “moral and spiritual values” instead of concentrating on accumulating material wealth. The Liberian delegation appeals to its audience to keep investing in these values and not to be led away by material things that are short-lasting.²⁵⁴ Malik stresses his belief that only “through safe-guarding faith in the spiritual destinies of men that we would ameliorate their fate, and it is by encouraging such policy that this Assembly would have accomplished its mission”.²⁵⁵ It is by investing in the spiritual path that this gathering will accomplish its goal, in a way that leads towards a policy of justice and democratic freedom. The gathering itself is in some way presented to accomplish this mission. However, Jamali calls for a balance between material and spiritual well-being, “so that

While the sharp ideological lines and distinctions frequently drawn by Westerners are blurred in Asia. It is not uncommon for a Japanese to say that he is at once a Buddhist, a Confucianist, and a Christian....” He thereby sees a defiant challenge of the old Christian White masters in the turn to communism. The political conception of Bandung blurs the political and religious lines existent in Western thought. It might therefore be easier for the delegates to find a mutual approach to politics, in spite of their differences. Ibid, p. 167f.

²⁴⁹ Delegation of Syria: *Closing Speech by the Delegation of Syria*, p. 207.

²⁵⁰ Delegation of Iraq: *Closing Speech by the Delegation of Iraq*, in: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung*, Djakarta 1955, p. 193–194, here p. 194.

²⁵¹ Delegation of Iraq: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Iraq*, p. 85.

²⁵² Delegation of Yemen: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Yemen*, p. 154.

²⁵³ Delegation of Liberia: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Liberia*, in: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung*, Djakarta 1955, p. 99–101, here p. 99.

²⁵⁴ Delegation of Liberia: *Closing Speech by the Delegation of Liberia*, in: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung*, Djakarta 1955, p. 198.

²⁵⁵ Delegation of Lebanon: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Lebanon*, p. 97.

human life could be rich and dignified” and that man should not turn into a monstrous machine, on the one hand, nor into a spiritual being ridden with poverty and disease, on the other.” His goal is a “well-balanced civilization for all mankind shall develop, whereby the fruits of the thinking of both orient and occident shall integrate and that we shall have a human civilization well integrated and harmonious in its composing elements”.²⁵⁶ He stresses the importance of spiritual and cultural heritage for the civilizations of the East. This stands in contrast to the fast efficiency and practicality of “advanced Europe”. This balanced lifestyle between spirituality and reason also aims to be above the categories East and West, which should be dissolved.²⁵⁷ The approach to politics presented at Bandung is certainly quite different from what we see at political discourse in the global North, much more focused on the personal social well-being and less on political profit-thinking. Sukarno sums up the essence of this chapter quite accurately, which regards the common denominators for the Afro-Asian states at Bandung. These he finds in the experience of colonialism, the importance of religion and the “common cultural roots”.²⁵⁸

Based on this, the discourse at Bandung reveals, how the idea of unity and solidarity between the participants is constructed and the so-called ‘Bandung spirit’ created from it. This is often implied in the way the fellow delegates are addressed. Sukarno for example uses the image of a family (“Sisters and Brothers”²⁵⁹) or neighbors for his audience, which evokes a feeling of closeness and mutual interest. Nasser picks up this line of thought, stating it is no surprise they “should feel close together”, which in effect renders possible international justice and world peace.²⁶⁰ The notion of unification through brotherhood appears thereby in many of the speeches, in the form of “Human Brotherhood”,²⁶¹ “national brotherhood”,²⁶² “human brethren” or aiming to “restore the faith in real brotherhood and justice”.²⁶³ This form of kinship is expressed furthermore in the support and empathy for the shared anti-colonial struggle of countries not yet free: “We salute the participation in this Conference of the new and independent Libya, as well as of our friends from the Sudan and the Gold Coast who, we sincerely hope, can shortly achieve their most profound aspirations

²⁵⁶ Whole paragraph: Delegation of Iraq: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Iraq*, p. 83.

²⁵⁷ Wright finds the solution in rationalist thought that is independent of the East-West division. Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 218f.

²⁵⁸ Sukarno: *Speech by President Sukarno of Indonesia at the Opening of the Conference*, p. 7f.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 2.

²⁶⁰ Delegation of Egypt: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Egypt*, p. 67.

²⁶¹ Delegation of Lebanon: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Lebanon*, p. 96.

²⁶² Delegation of Ethiopia: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Ethiopia*, p. 73.

²⁶³ Delegation of Sudan: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Sudan*, p. 123f.

and freely choose their destinies.”²⁶⁴ These independent countries are presented as a source of “inspiration and guidance”,²⁶⁵ invoking a feeling of fellowship and new identification as Wright assumes.²⁶⁶ There is an “idea of liberty and equality for all” – no matter the particular race, religion or language – that functions as a unifier.²⁶⁷ At Bandung itself, Iraqi’s Jamali notes “two outstanding qualities” that “characterized the spirit of the Bandung Conference”, which are for once a remarkably cordial atmosphere and secondly a high degree of frankness and clarity, in which opinions were expressed.²⁶⁸ In this wording, I assume he became influential in coining the term ‘Bandung spirit’ as well. A form of Afro-Asian unity is established here and the concept of solidarity emerges therefrom.

However, there is an undercurrent of disunion²⁶⁹ considered as well. Sukarno states: “Yes, we have so much in common. And yet we know so little of each other.”²⁷⁰ The delegates appear to be quite aware of their differences in cultural-religious background and political outlook.

Yes, there is diversity among us. Who denies it? Small and great nations are represented here, with people professing almost every religion under the sun, - Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Shintoism, and others. Almost every political faith we encounter here - Democracy, Monarchism, Theocracy, with innumerable variants. And practically every economic doctrine has its representative in this hall - Marhaenism, Socialism, Capitalism, Communism, in all their manifold variations and combinations.²⁷¹

These differences in nation, social, religious and cultural background, color of skin and political beliefs are first of acknowledged and celebrated. Even more than that, Sukarno ascribes them no significance for their current agenda, since: “Mankind is united or divided by considerations other than these. Conflict comes not from variety of skins, nor from variety of religion, but from variety of desires.”²⁷² It is in fact, not so much the similarity between the races, religions and languages gathered there that creates brotherhood, but the diversity of them.²⁷³ This attitude celebrates the plurality of living forms and anticipates the

²⁶⁴ Delegation of Ethiopia: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Ethiopia*, p. 73.

²⁶⁵ Delegation of the Gold Coast: *Opening Address by the Delegation of the Gold Coast*, p. 76.

²⁶⁶ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 147.

²⁶⁷ Delegation of Ethiopia: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Ethiopia*, p. 73.

²⁶⁸ Delegation of Iraq: *Closing Speech by the Delegation of Iraq*, p. 193.

²⁶⁹ The Lebanon faction similarly acknowledges these challenges and adds further possible “seeds for discord and division”, which it sees in “fanaticism, chauvinism”, “overpushed nationalism” and “hatred of foreigners”. Delegation of Lebanon: *Closing Speech by the Delegation of Lebanon*, in: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung*, Djakarta 1955, p. 196–197, here p. 196. Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 218.

²⁷⁰ Sukarno: *Speech by President Sukarno of Indonesia at the Opening of the Conference*, p. 7.

²⁷¹ *Ibid*, p. 6.

²⁷² *Ibid*, p. 3.

²⁷³ Delegation of Ethiopia: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Ethiopia*, p. 73f.

multiculturality of today's societies. It is reflected in an image raised by the Syria's group: "The Conference is the world in miniature". They also underline, how remarkable it is that the great varieties and conflicting views do not hinder a fruitful exchange and the emergence of a resolution passed unanimously.²⁷⁴ The decisions taken at Bandung reveal a great deal of "solidarity and harmony"²⁷⁵ between the participants. As Nasser points out, Bandung is not considered an end, but the beginning of a long-term co-operation. In addition, it served as a clarification of the political and ideological relationship of the participants towards each other, as much as towards the outside powers.²⁷⁶ On the whole, the positive outcome is seen not so much in the factual results like the *Communiqué*, but the aspect of gathering, of coming together to share ideas and exchange views, which create the ability to unite for a common goal.²⁷⁷ This ability is found in the ideal of unity in diversity: racial and religious diversity is cherished and fostered and in this way, does not weaken, but strengthen the idea of Asian-African solidarity that is very much expressed by the Bandung participants. To conclude with Wright's vivid description of rapprochement that comes to pierce through *The Color Curtain*:

As I watched the dark-faced delegates work at the conference, I saw a strange thing happen. Before Bandung, most of these men had been strangers, and on the first day they were constrained with one another, bristling with charge and countercharge against America and/or Russia. But, as the days passed, they slowly cooled off, and another and different mood set in. What was happening? As they came to know one another better, their fear and distrust evaporated. Living for centuries under Western rule, they had become filled with a deep sense of how greatly they differed from one another. But now, face to face, their ideological defenses dropped. [...] day after day dun-colored Trotskyites consorted with dark Moslems, yellow Indo-Chinese hobnobbed with brown Indonesians, black Africans mingled with swarthy Arabs, tan Burmese associated with dark brown Hindus, dusty nationalists palled around with yellow Communists, and Socialists talked to Buddhists.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁴ Whole paragraph: Delegation of Syria: *Closing Speech by the Delegation of Syria*, p. 206.

²⁷⁵ Delegation of Egypt: *Closing Speech by the Delegation of Egypt*, in: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung*, Djakarta 1955, p. 182.

²⁷⁶ Bandung especially served to clarify the relation to China and managed to relax the political situation in this regard. Kahin: *The Asian-African Conference*, p. 1.

²⁷⁷ Nehru was probably the most influential in coining the idea of cohesion between Asia and Africa: "He knew that no Asian or African nation, though independent, was really free as long as it was backward and economically dependent. Then there was the fear that another war would result in the subordination of Asians and Africans again to Western rule.... Nehru sought to solve this question by forging a situation that would be a blend partly of power and partly of morality: the unity of Asia and Africa. What this vats combination lacked in terms of technical and military strength would be made up for in terms of numbers, that is, the boy of mankind." Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 166.; See also: Delegation of Lebanon: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Lebanon*, p. 96.

²⁷⁸ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 175.

7. The nascent Third Force

Based on the recognition of many common denominators that span the East-West division, I argue in this chapter that Bandung served as a platform to assert a self-reliance and potency the countries were deprived of in colonial times. Through this reinvigoration of agency, the global South takes hold of its economic, political and cultural life by means of promoting Afro-Asian cooperation in all these domains. This presents an alternative to the dependence model associated with the East-West relationship and enables the continents to take a different path from the Cold War bloc formations. Bandung has often been declared the birthplace of the non-alignment movement, but first of all this was preceded by the birth of a concept priorly unknown: the Third World.

7.1. The expression of Southern agency and emancipation

The idea of the Asian-African Conference was first and foremost to congregate influential political figures of the East as heads of independent states, putting “their forces and their resources for the service of their common good and to solve the problems which preoccupy them”.²⁷⁹ This notion serves as a strong indicator of Southern agency and self-reliance manifested at Bandung. This agency I consider a primary basis for the realization of unity and solidarity between the nations. Among the voices to express this independent spirit was the Syrian group, which came forward as one the most outspoken:

In the battle for peace, first and foremost, we much have faith in our capacity and our potentiality. We are not negligible. It is true we are under-developed in the military and in the economic fields. It is equally true that we do not possess nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. But still our contribution can be great and decisive. With our contributed will, we can veto a catastrophic war or bring it down to minimum. Without us a world war cannot be waged. We command the greatest of manpower, of raw material, of war fuel, of military bases and of strategic positions. We are a great asset to arrest war and establish peace.²⁸⁰

He calls upon the audience to realize the countries’ full potential, which lies most notably in the assertion of a political voice and participation in the course of world politics. Notice is also drawn to the fact that the First World is equally dependent on resources, manpower and outposts situated in the former colonies. From a 21st century perspective, his words are just as true as in the year 1955: In the frame of today’s neo-colonial structures, resources are still almost exclusively taken from the global South, while the manufacturing and processing happens in Europe or other ‘industrialized states’.

²⁷⁹ Delegation of Lebanon: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Lebanon*, p. 96.

²⁸⁰ Delegation of Syria: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Syria*, p. 125.

This expression of Southern power is manifested similarly in Sukarno's words, who ascribes the South a different form of agency that is not revealed through military or economic power, but through an emphasis on moral values. He calls to "inject the voice of reason into world affairs", which necessitates a mobilization of the moral, spiritual and political strength of the Asian and African continents. This thought reflects my findings in the previous chapter, that emphasis is laid on spiritual guidance as a common way of life and political strategy. Sukarno believes that this "**Moral Violence of Nations**" will lead people in a peaceful direction.²⁸¹ For this new way of politics, a stronger emphasis on diplomacy is urgently needed. He is aware that the nations concerned do not possess the political resources to resort to power politics, so they need to find another way that puts their strength to advantage.²⁸² He finds this principle in the "live and let live" politics applied "most completely within our own Asian and African frontiers". This, however, does not refer to the 'laissez faire' politics of Western liberalism, but rather to a mutually practiced tolerance and acknowledgement of the diversity of faith, religion and political views. If this principle were to become a basis for relations between the neighboring countries, it can then be extended to "others more distant",²⁸³ which refers to the Western or Eastern powers outside of the Conference's realm. Sukarno's ideas of a new Southern agency reflect other thinkers of inspiration for the Third world like Frantz Fanon. With the final realization and branding of the European colonial project as a failure, people were left not with development and great economic achievements, but an inferiority complex that hindered these forthcoming. He called on the Third World to resolve themselves "'the problems to which Europe' had 'not been able to find the answers'", taking their fate in their own hands and finding their own solutions.²⁸⁴ As put forth in Fanon's work and at Bandung, agency means:

something quite different from the sense employed by the Europeans under their 'standard of civilisation' formula – which in essence was based on an ability to play the game of power politics. The agency at display at Bandung was a normative agency – i.e. an ability to interpret, localize, formulate and strengthen the rules of international order to advance freedom, peace and order.²⁸⁵

²⁸¹ Sukarno: *Speech by President Sukarno of Indonesia at the Opening of the Conference*, p. 4 (annotation: the last quotation is put in bold letters in the original text).

²⁸² See also: Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 135.

²⁸³ Whole paragraph: Sukarno: *Speech by President Sukarno of Indonesia at the Opening of the Conference*, p. 6.

²⁸⁴ Gerits: *Bandung as the Call for a Better Development Project*, p. 4.

²⁸⁵ Acharya, Amitav: *Studying the Bandung Conference from a Global IR Perspective*, in: Bisley, Nick (ed.): *Special Issue: Beyond Bandung. The 1955 Asian-African Conference and its Legacies for International Order* (Australian journal of international affairs, 1035-771870 (4)), Abingdon 2016, p. 342-355, here p. 354.

At Bandung, the “achievement of a system of morality in the world” is set as a goal and guideline for Southern politics and thereby a criterium to earn the people’s sympathy and loyalty. This diversion from the materialist terms is in effect a re-centering to essentially Eastern values. Legum observes thereto that Bandung elegantly bridged ideas from a Western context, such as the idea of modernization through development and economic progress, with values from the East like spiritual guidance.²⁸⁶

This idea of agency also finds expression in the vision of an independent and “constructive role” for smaller nations in international politics, which according to Nasser is of importance for the purpose of easing international tensions. It is solely in the condition of independence that the economically weaker states can provide a solution or at least contribution to this end, as well as forging a healthy relation to the West.²⁸⁷ The Syrian delegation equally supports the idea to strengthen the political realm of smaller nations. It speaks up for “equal sovereignty” for all states – independently of their economic or political might. “Our right is not measured by our might”²⁸⁸ it puts forward, criticizing the Western (colonial) monopoly to universally promoted concepts like national sovereignty and human rights.²⁸⁹ To this end, the establishment of proper Asian and African institutions is of primary importance. The *Communiqué* demands the erection of national and regional banks as well as insurance companies. It lays emphasis on regional self-sufficiency, with particular stress on the oil resources of the North African and Arabic regions.²⁹⁰

With regard to the Western powers’ reaction to Bandung, Acharya speaks of “a thrilling story of Western paranoia, conspiracy, sabotage and ultimate frustration”. Considering the Western apprehension of this Conference as a motor for anti-colonial or communist sentiments, one might see a strengthening of Southern agency that the West fears. Otherwise it would not have been as anxious about the outcome of this unprecedented Conference. The other side of the coin, however, reveals a strong influence on the participants at Bandung, whom the Western powers offered guidance and advice beforehand. The British Empire for instance tried to discourage his dominions the Gold Coast and the Central African Federation from attending the Conference. Another means was to manipulate it through “friendly governments in attendance” like Turkey, the Philippines and Pakistan (bound through

²⁸⁶ Legum: *Bandung, Cairo and Accra*, p. 5.

²⁸⁷ Delegation of Egypt: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Egypt*, p. 70f.

²⁸⁸ Delegation of Syria: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Syria*, p. 125.

²⁸⁹ Delegation of Egypt: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Egypt*, p. 67.

²⁹⁰ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia: *Final Communiqué*, p. 3.

SEATO).²⁹¹ This aspect certainly invalidates my claim on a Southern expression of self-determined politics to a degree.

In spite of this throw-in, the discourse at the Asian-African Conference generally manifests a great deal of self-reliance, the claim to an own position in world politics, and thus reveals a strong assertion of agency by the global South. It also adds to the countries' "prestige and moral value among other nations of the world" as one Sudanese delegate phrased it.²⁹²

7.2. Towards South-South cooperation

"What we require is cooperation, coordination and action" – proclaims a member of the Syrian delegation – "ready to take unified action in order to build a free world".²⁹³ This statement tells a lot on the importance that Bandung ascribed to the role of cooperation between the Asian-African countries at hand. It is necessary to remind oneself that this notion is certainly not a novelty, as I have demonstrated in the beginning of this work with the different movements that shaped an Afro-Asian awakening. Jamali demonstrates this by presenting a continuity of cooperation and solidarity with the example of the Afro-Asian group in the UN.²⁹⁴ The spirit of Bandung calls for an expansion of these existing structures of cooperation. A further basis was laid with the assertion of a new self-reliance and agency of the global South – the idea of South-South cooperation can be considered as acting it out or putting it into practice.

Nasser declares this collaboration a prominent feature of Egypt's foreign policy and assigns it a significant role in easing international Cold War tensions.²⁹⁵ This appears a recurring element at Bandung: Afro-Asian cooperation as a means to achieve mutual understanding and to ease the Cold War conflict. Ethiopia for example invokes a proliferation of collaborative efforts "among the groups of states which today are divided into opposing camps".²⁹⁶ At this point it is uncertain though, whether he directs himself at the primary actors of the Cold War or the smaller Afro-Asian states pulled into the bloc division. For a successful cooperation, Jordan reminds his audience, it is first of all necessary to understand

²⁹¹ Acharya: *Studying the Bandung Conference from a Global IR Perspective*, p. 345f.

²⁹² Delegation of Sudan: *Closing Speech by the Delegation of Sudan*, in: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (ed.): *Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung*, Djakarta 1955, p. 204–205, here p. 204.

²⁹³ Delegation of Syria: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Syria*, p. 127.

²⁹⁴ Delegation of Iraq: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Iraq*, p. 82.

²⁹⁵ Delegation of Egypt: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Egypt*, p. 68.

²⁹⁶ Delegation of Ethiopia: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Ethiopia*, p. 72.

their mutual political, economic and cultural problems. Only then can they enjoy the full right to independence as freed states and be able to find just solutions for the problems of (neo-)colonialism.²⁹⁷ With that said, the delegation acknowledges the participants' diversity and how much of a challenge this poses for a fruitful cooperation. There is no idealization of the 'Bandung spirit' at hand, since it is quite aware that South-South cooperation will only be possible, if the concerned parties are willing to fathom their respective problems and support each other.

The Sudanese group lays particular stress on problems of economic nature inflicted upon many of the Bandung members like shortages in capital, technicians and other resources. An "exchange of information" in this field would thus prove a valuable improvement. In addition, financial assistance, expertise and training – or simply "constructive ideas" – are more than welcomed and seen to lead to "effective results".²⁹⁸ This cooperation can be considered not only a means to further the countries' economies, but part of the struggle for independence and agency of the global South. The delegation cautions its fellow campaigners to take in foreign assistance that in the end comes with political conditions and thereby endangers the countries' sovereignty. The only means to escape this deadlock is to build a functioning and honest network between the Southern countries themselves, which it envisions to set an example for the international community.²⁹⁹ In this sense, Bandung's importance lies primarily in the opportunity "to build networks among countries in Asia and Africa along political, economic, and sociocultural lines". The venue to meet and exchange views – without the influence of any Western or Soviet power – becomes a political issue.³⁰⁰

These thoughts and debates are hence picked up in the *Communiqué*: "The Asian-African Conference considered problems of common interest and concern to countries of Asia and Africa and discussed ways and means by which their people could achieve fuller economic, cultural and political co-operation." The document is concerned first of all with the domain of economic cooperation, whose promotion is declared the most urgent and vital. It is interesting to note that, although economic collaboration between the Asian-African states is prioritized, the *Communiqué* also stresses the "need for cooperation with countries outside the region, including the investment of foreign capital".³⁰¹ This desire and need for foreign assistance surprises, considering the assertion of Southern agency and the call for

²⁹⁷ Delegation of Jordan: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Jordan*, p. 90.

²⁹⁸ Delegation of Sudan: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Sudan*, p. 122.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 123.

³⁰⁰ Lee: *The Rise of Third World Diplomacy*, p. 16.

³⁰¹ Whole paragraph: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia: *Final Communiqué*, p. 2.

detachment from the Western economic grip.³⁰² It reveals an ongoing dependent status that undermines the prior proposals and demands of the *Communiqué*. Wright refers to this obstacle as the so-called “Yellow Peril”, a term in fact raised by Jack London. The peril is not so much of a racial nature, but an economic one: While the raw material and resources are all existent in Asia and Africa, the hegemonic economic structures of global politics render its processing and profiting in Europe.

When the day comes that Asians and African raw materials are processed in Asia and Africa by labor whose needs are not as inflated as those of Western laborers, the supremacy of the Western world, economic, cultural, and political, will have been broken once and for all on this earth and a de-Occidentalization of mankind will have definitely set it.³⁰³

The second issue raised in the *Communiqué* is the need for technical assistance between the Southern countries. This should occur by means of:

experts, trainees, pilot projects and equipment for demonstration purposes; exchange of know-how and establishment of national, and where possible, regional training and research institutes for imparting technical knowledge and skills in co-operation with the existing international agencies.³⁰⁴

Thirdly, the document refers to the field of education: It pursues the provision of assistance and traineeships (and other “educational opportunities”) between the two continents and the individual countries. The focus is laid hereby not only on continental or regional cooperation, but a local element is introduced as well. The fourth point of aspiration is an active cooperation in the cultural realm, for which it sets the following goals: “(I) the acquisition of knowledge of each other’s country; (II) mutual cultural exchange, and (III) exchange of information.”³⁰⁵ According to the Sudanese view, these collaborations should serve to “create a breathing sphere” for the countries’ cultural energy, and can enrich humanity with a fruitful exchange. The delegate argues to look back at pre-colonial times, when the Asian and African continents were birthplaces and great motors for religious, scientific and philosophical developments. A lively exchange of scholars and students for information and research will greatly benefit all of the involved parties. Sudan herein proposes to be a “medium for intellectual traffic” due to its geographical position in between Asia, the Mediterranean region and SSA.³⁰⁶

³⁰² It should also be taken into account that the 1950s were a time of “great optimism” for the Western and the post-colonial regions, who conceived the idea of financial assistance and resources for the countries’ development programs as utterly positive. This has been elaborated further in the subchapter on the developmental approach. Nesadurai: *Bandung and the Political Economy of North-South Relations*, p. 72.

³⁰³ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 203.

³⁰⁴ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia: *Final Communiqué*, p. 2.

³⁰⁵ Whole paragraph: *Ibid*, p. 5.

³⁰⁶ Delegation of Sudan: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Sudan*, p. 123.

Kahin legitimately draws notice to the fact that Bandung admirably pledged to support cultural collaboration of artists, writers, university members and educative material, yet “seven months after the Conference had ended only the most modest beginnings had been made.”³⁰⁷ Phillips, however, sees the emphasis on South-South cooperation as a powerful means to strengthen Bandung’s function of “order-building”. The divergence from the West and recollection of ‘home-made’ collaboration questions the current international political and economic order and calls for a new organization of world politics. These ideas “prefigured the Group of 77”³⁰⁸ (created in 1964) and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM, 1961), as well as strengthened South-South cooperation and organizations like the Development Assistance Committee (DAC, 1960). These movements and institutions manifest a new self-confidence and created relations among the Southern countries that build on a common narrative and interests.³⁰⁹ The Bandung members “hoped to also inspire a new international order grounded in more ‘horizontal’ forms of Afro-Asian cooperation, rather than the ‘vertical’ patron-client ties that had previously linked an Afro-Asian periphery to the Western core.”³¹⁰ Phillips considers this spirit an “undeniably utopian, order-transforming undercurrent”, which legitimately appears a bit naive from today’s perspective, but reflects the post-war positive outlook and spirit of optimism for the global South.

7.3. The emergence of a Third World entity or Third Worldism

In his opening address president Sukarno introduces the concept of Afro-Asian solidarity, seeing the Bogor Conference as a clear sign “that the road ahead was clear” for it – Bandung is presented as the realization of this new unity.³¹¹ In this sense, he is influential in coining the idea of a new era and fresh start, which mark a transition from a powerless passive state to an active self-determined one. He proclaims hereto:

The last few years have seen enormous changes. Nations, States, have awoken from a sleep of centuries. The passive peoples have gone, the outward tranquility has made place for struggle and activity. Irresistible forces have swept the two continents. The mental, spiritual and political face of the whole world has been changed, and the process is still not complete. There are new conditions, new concepts, new problems,

³⁰⁷ Kahin: *The Asian-African Conference*, p. 34.

³⁰⁸ Phillips: *Introduction*, p. 335.

³⁰⁹ This is my own translation from the following article: Delgado Caicedo, Jerónimo / Sáenz Peñas, Andrés: *Un recuerdo incierto. Bandung ante la nueva arquitectura de la Cooperación Sur-Sur en África*, in: *Humania del Sur. Revista de Estudios Latinoamericanos, Africanos y Asiáticos*. 10 (2015) 19, p. 69–89, here p. 75f.

³¹⁰ Phillips: *Introduction*, p. 336.

³¹¹ Sukarno: *Speech by President Sukarno of Indonesia at the Opening of the Conference*, p. 1.

new ideals abroad in the world. Hurricanes of national awakening and reawakening have swept over the land, shaking it, changing it, changing it for the better.³¹²

The notion of awakening and the dawn of a new world is a symbolism frequently used throughout the Asian-African Conference, which also recalls a religious connotation of Bandung's narrative. As such, the Liberian delegation refers to the "beginning of a New Era, of a new awakening on the part of the Peoples of these two great continents to their momentous responsibilities to mankind everywhere". This "dynamic concept" is seen to bring about a new era of peace, equal conditions and justice for all parts of the human family.³¹³ "Here is an assembly of the ancient world at the dawn of awakening" announces Syria, invoking the image of rebirth with "the death of old Empires".³¹⁴ Sukarno considers this tide of awakening induced through the initiative of the "five Prime Ministers", who brought a "**fresh approach**"³¹⁵ to the problems of colonialism and imperialism. Following this, the pursue of the Conference is not guided by the search for advantages or promises hidden in the scheme of power-politics, but the sole interest to ensure "continuing peace and stability" with their struggle.³¹⁶ Bandung thus understands itself to be situated in a key period, when people should make use of this timeframe and actively take their faith in their own hands. "It is high time, gentlemen," states the Jordanian delegate, "that our problems in Asia and Africa are settled in accordance with the principles of rights and justice, a settlement based on moral values of humanity and not on egoism and power politics".³¹⁷ He calls for a different direction in world politics (and economy) that is true to its own proclaimed values.

The discourse at Bandung contrasts the values promoted by the colonial powers with the mentality ascribed to the Asian-African countries, and in this way presents the latter in a positive light. It renders the two continents unified by a common mindset. As such, the Yemeni view presents the Asian-African mindset as the "human view", an "oriental viewpoint which is part and parcel" of their outlook and mentality. This is interesting due to the adoption of the Orient as a concept engendered by Western scholars of the 19th century. Furthermore, it frames the Asian-African perspective in positivist terms towards a superior, more humane one. Even more so, Yemen sees the origin of the "noble ideals" (most probably referring to human rights) in the Asian-African societies, which then have "toured through the world" and "become a principle or law between the peoples and in their human

³¹² Ibid, p. 2.

³¹³ Republic of Liberia: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Liberia*, p. 99.

³¹⁴ Delegation of Syria: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Syria*, p. 125.

³¹⁵ Annotation: This quotation is put in bold letters in the original text.

³¹⁶ Sukarno: *Speech by President Sukarno of Indonesia at the Opening of the Conference*, p. 5.

³¹⁷ Delegation of Jordan: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Jordan*, p. 90.

relations”.³¹⁸ He further ascribes the Asian-African populations a “high oral and a noble character”, presenting them as the true guardians of moral values, who are able to restore peace in this process. This is a subversion of the Western claim to the human rights regime and its forthcoming manifestations like the UN or the UDHR. Albeit the validity of this statement can be questioned, it is certainly effective in unveiling the hypocrisies of the Western values. Turning away from the Western hegemony and monopoly on these values, he presents an alternative way in politics. It hands over the reins to the underdogs of human history who might be able to find different solutions to the conflicts initially produced by the superpowers. It is proclaimed:

Here is an assembly that stands on its own feet, inspired by its own spirit and led by its own mind. Here is an assembly that meets, not to establish a balance of powers, not to divide spoils and not to draw new maps for homelands or people. We come to bury the evil, not to praise them.³¹⁹

These words uttered by the Syrian delegation praise the discovery of mental freedom and promotes an alternative, more humane approach to politics. The politicians at Bandung thereupon construct an alternative to the bloc formation enacted by the Western/Eastern powers. In opposition to the mentality or mindset of the First World, they create the concept of the Third World. Based on the realization of the right time and the spirit of awakening, the awareness of an own Asian-African entity comes forward. Thereupon Syria conceives the Conference as “the rising of Asia and Africa to a modern power and to material strength”. This power does neither draw its strength from aggression or war, nor from imperial or colonial practices. Even more so, it will be used to destroy these and instead establish a “world dominated with universal freedom.”³²⁰ While this is an undeniably utopian image, it elegantly contrasts the two ‘worlds’ and connects this new Third entity with noble, moral values. It is thus remarkable (and surprising) that the Third World is framed in absolutely positive terms, considering how negative it is connotated nowadays, associated with rampant poverty and a lack of human rights. Legum, who attended and reported on the Bandung Conference, pins this new movement down as “the nascent Third Force”, which I find quite fitting for the discourse at Bandung. It describes not so much the new power itself, but the relationship and attitude of these new states towards the old powers:

They refuse to be bullied by their old Colonial masters; and they refuse to be dictated to by new masters. They refuse to be taken for granted, and they refuse to be bribed by economic aid. When ignored they are angry, and when left alone they as for

³¹⁸ Whole paragraph: Delegation of Yemen: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Yemen*, p. 152.

³¹⁹ Delegation of Syria: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Syria*, p. 125.

³²⁰ Delegation of Syria: *Closing Speech by the Delegation of Syria*, p. 206.

attention. They demand respect, and are adolescently-conscious of their dignity. In other words, they behave very much like a spirited young woman with her lover. They can be wooed and won: but they will not allow themselves to be shot-gunned into marriage, or to be bartered for a dowry. These are the simple human elements that underlie the political attempts to create a Third Force.³²¹

Jack adds that he expects Bandung to eventually rearrange this relationship to the outside powers. The US will be forced to acknowledge the seriousness of Asian demands for development and self-determination, maybe even revise their attitude.³²² Though I agree with the standpoint that Bandung clarified this relationship, I argue that it was way more influential in shaping the relationship between the participant countries themselves. Burke points to the act of gathering, of discussing common problems and agreeing on an approach to international relations. The act itself therein produces a feeling of unity and fosters the construction of a proper Asian-African entity – he thus perceives the Conference as the “foundational moment of the Third World”.³²³ The Third World, however, cannot be simply a geographical spot on the map, but a political project or imaginary able to unite people on similar racial or cultural grounds.³²⁴ The scholar Bier even conceives Bandung as an “attempt to forge a common ideology among anticolonial nations”,³²⁵ which in effect undermines the Conference’s claim to build a unity beyond the ideologies of the bloc system. This interpretation was certainly not intended by French economist Alfred Sauvy, whose essay from 1952 introduced the term ‘Tiers Monde’ or Third World in international dialogue.³²⁶ Sauvy did not refer to the evolution of a Third World in opposition to a First or Second World, but rather “the Other World complementary and opposite to the two hegemonic power blocs”, which Schmidt pledges to be the better term. He designates with it the viewpoint of the colonized world and not the industrialized one, relating to the relationship between these two

³²¹ Legum: *Bandung, Cairo and Accra*, p. 3.

³²² Jack: *Bandung*, p. 35.

³²³ Burke, Roland: “*The Compelling Dialogue of Freedom*”. *Human Rights at the Bandung Conference*, in: *Human Rights Quarterly* 28 (2006) 4, p. 947–965, here p. 948.

³²⁴ If one aims to see a form of political project in Third Worldism, the OAU pops up as the primary example of this interpretation and as a “prototype for the Third World project as a whole”. This view was distinctly pursued through Algerian forces, most prominently by president Ben Bella. While working towards African unity, they also saw Algeria in a bigger context as possessing a key role in promoting the progress of the Third World. Byrne, Jeffrey James: *Mecca of Revolution. Algeria, Decolonization, and the Third World Order*, (Oxford studies in international history), 2016, p. 201.

³²⁵ Bier, Laura: *Feminism, Solidarity, and Identity in the Age of Bandung. Third World Women in the Egyptian Women's Press*, in: Lee, Christopher J. (ed.): *Making a World After Empire: the Bandung Moment and its Political Afterlives* ([Research in international studies / Global and comparative studies series] Research in international studies), Athens 2010, p. 143–172, here p. 144f.

³²⁶ Sauvy, Alfred: *Trois mondes, une planète*, in: *L'Observateur*, August 14 (1952).

players.³²⁷ He underlines that this is solely about “imagined concepts” and not a reflection of actually existing worlds. It is based on the perception each one of them has about the “Other World” and its respective representation. This is of particular importance, since, despite the contact on the economic and political level, the real “human contact” between people of these two realms were in fact marginal.³²⁸ Aside from Sauvy, there were other writings to express this Third World dialectic, which made the concept a source of inspiration during the 1960s. Yet it never became a “formalized ideology”, whereby most scholars refer to it as a *mentalité* or trend.³²⁹ To sum up, the Third World is certainly a quite “slippery concept” and cannot be clearly denoted as a geographical space, a political project or an economic category.³³⁰

In the first part of this work I have briefly illustrated the influence of internationalism. Weber picks up this line of thought, and coins the term Third Worldism as a “key legacy of Bandung”. He introduces its goals in the following way:

to convey (a) the commitment to a collective project based on solidarity against colonialism and imperialism with the aim of also mitigating against its legacies, especially for development, and (b) the ‘internationalist’ aspect, which comprises the relative openness to certain tenets of socialism, as well as the acceptance of the ‘international’ framing of world politics, despite the complicated colonial underpinnings of the latter. Solidarist internationalism in this reading comprise the normative principles that underlined the political project of Third Worldism.³³¹

He sees Third World solidarism as a political project based on the recognition of shared values and experiences. It is similarly revealed in the cooperative aspirations laid down in the *Final Communiqué* and speeches. These include for instance the collective approach to price control for essential goods or “managing resource extraction and revenue”. Weber argues that solidarist internationalism is essentially a political project that aspires to challenge the “liberal internationalist order and continuing practices of ‘neo-colonialism’”. The decision not to align with the liberal order later finds expression in the G-77 project which advocated “‘bloc-freedom’”.³³² Another establishment was the forthcoming of a UN Third Committee, which dealt with human rights issues from a Third World perspective. Criticism

³²⁷ This is my own translation from the following article: Schmidt, Axel: *La Conferencia de Bandung y la dialéctica de la toma de conciencia del Otro Mundo*, in: *Humania del Sur. Revista de Estudios Latinoamericanos, Africanos y Asiáticos*. 10 (2015) 19, p. 57–68, here p. 59.

³²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 60.

³²⁹ Other writers of influence for the emergence of a Third World perspective were for example: Lenin, Mohandas Ghandi, Mao Zedong, or Michael Collins. Later inspirations included India’s Nehru, Ghana’s Nkrumah, Ernesto “Che” Guevara and of course Frantz Fanon. Byrne: *Mecca of Revolution*, p. 5.

³³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 5.

³³¹ Weber et al.: *The 'Bandung Spirit' and Solidarist Internationalism*, p. 393.

³³² Whole paragraph: *Ibid*, p. 397.

of the Western powers was very much granted and practiced and the states “could vote as they pleased”.³³³ The importance this committee is ascribed to is reflected in the performance of very high influential political figures from the Asian-African countries, whereas the West usually sent personnel not too significant in politics.³³⁴ Delgado Caicedo considers that Bandung held an important position in the assertion of a positive Third World entity, but even more in the institutional organization around this concept.³³⁵ It is therefore that the project comprises a central position within the ‘Bandung spirit’. It functions to strengthen the concept of solidarity between the Asian-African nations by shaping them into an own entity different from the First World.

This emphasis on Third World solidarity, is highlighted in the face of the current conflict in international politics, most notably by the looming nuclear threat. The Bandung discourse frequently picks up the image of danger through a technological progress out of control, which is seen to instill a yearning for morality and safety in the people.³³⁶ Against this backdrop, the construction of a new Third World entity poses the following question: Can Bandung be considered the birthplace for the formation of a new bloc in global politics? Jack ruminates on this in the following way:

First, Bandung created a new bloc, a third cam, which encompasses two continents and almost two-thirds of mankind. This is not a smooth-working machine, and it may never be. Despite overwhelming diversity of every kind, a unity has been patiently constructed which is breath-taking in its potential. This unity made possible the adoption of unanimous statements on a number of controversial issues.³³⁷

Having said this, he does not refer to a third bloc as a political entity, which would be unified by an official pact or ideology comparable to the Cold War dialectic. It could rather be interpreted as a cultural or racial entity with a shared catalogue of moral values. In fact, for the most part Bandung avoids any explicit political orientation towards West or East. Wright brings forward hereto:

Ideology was not needed to define their relation...I got the notion that ideologies were the instruments that these men had grown used to wielding in their struggles with Western white men and that now, being together and among themselves, they no longer felt the need for them.³³⁸

³³³ Burke, Roland: *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights*, (Pennsylvania studies in human rights), Philadelphia 2013, p. 6.

³³⁴ Ibid, p. 9.

³³⁵ Delgado Caicedo et al.: *Un recuerdo incierto*, p. 70.

³³⁶ This line of thought is picked up in a number of speeches – i.a. the following: Delegation of Syria: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Syria*, p. 126.; Sukarno: *Speech by President Sukarno of Indonesia at the Opening of the Conference*, p. 2, 4.

³³⁷ Jack: *Bandung*, p. 34.

³³⁸ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 176.

With regard to communism for example, the *Communiqué* reflects the fierce debate outside of the public speeches. As a result, its wording eludes any kind of Cold War rhetoric through a generalized condemnation of “colonialism in all its manifestations”.³³⁹ Nevertheless, the document acknowledges the existence of strong “international tension” in the current political climate and warns of another outbreak of war.³⁴⁰ Sukarno admonishes his audience that in this case, all of the region’s “newly-recovered independence”³⁴¹ will be lost, so that it will be more effective to choose a different path.

Disarmament and production or experimentation with nuclear weapons is thus presented as an imperative and duty equally to the Afro-Asian countries. It calls for the following: “(a) Abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defense to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers. (b) Abstention by any country from exerting pressures on other countries”.³⁴² The Bogor Communiqué preceded this thought, stating “they had also borne in mind the principle that the form of government and the way of life of any one country should in no way be subject to interference by another”.³⁴³ This is not to condemn the political system of the respective other player, but mainly to remind the participant countries of the importance to get acquainted with each other, to understand and accept their mutual conflicts and points of view.

By all means, this dialectic can be seen to inspire the idea of non-alignment, and the speeches expose the first traces of this future institutional movement. This said, the Liberian group refers to a “healthy atmosphere of objectivity and common understanding”³⁴⁴ as an aspired principle in international political interaction. Jamali similarly calls for an “ideological disarmament” of the world. This can only be achieved through a “moral rearmament” on the one hand and a “physical disarmament” on the other hand. In this, men have to strive for a mutual approach without resentment or hatred towards people of different national or racial origin.³⁴⁵ Ethiopia yet makes allusion to “collective security” and “regional pacts”, which have “led to opposing blocs”,³⁴⁶ and believes in affording “security of collective action to all peoples”. Cooperative efforts are in demand in order to avoid the bloc system – if this is envisioned as an institutional movement at this point is left open. Kahin observes a

³³⁹ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia: *Final Communiqué*, p. 6.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 7.

³⁴¹ Sukarno: *Speech by President Sukarno of Indonesia at the Opening of the Conference*, p. 2.

³⁴² The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia: *Final Communiqué*, p. 8f.

³⁴³ The Asian-African Conference: *Joint Communiqué of the Bogor Conference*, p. 194.

³⁴⁴ Delegation of Liberia: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Liberia*, p. 99.

³⁴⁵ Delegation of Iraq: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Iraq*, p. 85.

³⁴⁶ Delegation of Ethiopia: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Ethiopia*, p. 75.

strong tendency to promote and consolidate peace and cooperation by closing the gap between the two power blocs. He refers to U Nu, who stresses the importance of the “Five Principles of Co-Existence” that can strengthen or compensate the UN.³⁴⁷ This is also what Legum denotes as the “real achievement of Bandung”: establishing a platform for exchange beyond these two official power blocs and creating a unity thereupon.³⁴⁸ It can be conceived as what Nasser later stamped “positive neutrality”.³⁴⁹

While many observers in fact described the formation of “a new bloc, a third camp”³⁵⁰, the organizers of the Conference make clear that they explicitly do not possess any desire to “build themselves into a regional bloc”.³⁵¹ While an alternative third way in politics is pursued, this does not mean to form a real political bloc. Syria supports this argument: “With this in mind, we need not belong to blocs, alliances and the like. We become members of an international family tied with the bonds of the co-existence based on sovereignty and equality”.³⁵² It uses the metaphor of a family, presenting a strong connection above the political relation and gives way to a spirit of non-alignment, even though no bloc formation.³⁵³ Acharya poses that Bandung only lay the foundations for the official NAM. It certainly also “inspired Nasser’s pan-Arabism and Nkrumah’s pan-African movement, the latter having a pronounced anti-colonial function, since Africa had lagged behind Asia on that score”.³⁵⁴ She tosses another argument into this debate: the “polarization of Asia between pro-Western, communist and non-aligned countries.” While the latter was not a bloc itself comparable to the others, this positioning is seen to accentuate the divisions even further. This she considers a “key negative legacy”.³⁵⁵ While Bandung in my opinion cannot be conceived as forming a bloc identity, I agree with Matthies in that it “anticipated important developments in international relations”. Among these are decolonization and the emergence of a new identity and entity comprised in the term Third World.³⁵⁶ The emergence of this

³⁴⁷ Kahin: *The Asian-African Conference*, p. 21.

³⁴⁸ Legum: *Bandung, Cairo and Accra*, p. 5.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 6.

³⁵⁰ Jack: *Bandung*, p. 34.

³⁵¹ The Asian-African Conference: *Joint Communiqué of the Bogor Conference*, p. 194.

³⁵² Delegation of Syria: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Syria*, p. 126.

³⁵³ In addition, Iraqi’s Jamali raised the question, if India’s Nehru was willing to lead a bloc under the guidance of the Indian nation. Kahin describes this in his report, but it does not appear totally clear how the reaction looked like or why it was rejected in the end. He describes that Nehru felt they were not ready to actually assist each other. He draws notice to the events in Indochina, underlining the importance of non-alignment and co-existence as the better option. A bloc of a third kind would probably have put the involved smaller nations in danger as well. Kahin: *The Asian-African Conference*, p. 24, 30.

³⁵⁴ Acharya: *Studying the Bandung Conference from a Global IR Perspective*, p. 354.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 351.

³⁵⁶ Matthies, Volker: *The “Spirit of Bandung” 1955–1985. Thirty Years Since the Bandung Conference*, in: *Intereconomics* 20 (1985) 5, p. 207–210, here p. 207.

new entity at Bandung, “the foundational moment of the Third World”, was however not concomitant with Third World unity. Though envisioned and promoted by its most ardent supporters (Sukarno and Nehru), this vast region comprised in the concept was of a diversity and contradictions unfathomable and should be kept in mind. The concept certainly furthered and strengthened the validity of Afro-Asian solidarity, but it does not mean that it turned into a political reality.

8. Critical claim: ‘Bandung spirit’ or regional loyalties?

This last chapter of my analysis aims for a critical claim on the idea of Afro-Asian solidarity promoted at Bandung. I will therein raise the following questions: In what way does Bandung actually represent an Asian as well as an African identity? How strong are other forms of loyalties that are regionally shaped or in the bigger scope reflect Pan-African or Pan-Arab identities? Does the notion of the ‘Bandung spirit’ represent a realistic image of the events and structures of the historical Conference or did it become entangled in myth in its aftermath?

The first important aspect herein is the realm of influence and power hierarchy between the participating countries: While Bandung was termed the Asian-African Conference, there is firstly a strong Asian hegemony revealed, and secondly, an African voice that was in fact Arab. The only participating African countries were the Gold Coast, which had not yet gained independence and could only act as an observer, Liberia whose voice is almost mute, and Ethiopia, the only state with a relatively active part.³⁵⁷ The other African countries were in fact North African with a strong Arab outlook. Wright asserts bluntly that neither of these states “had any real notions; indeed, it was rapidly becoming evident that Negro Africa was the weakest part of the conference”.³⁵⁸ Jack considers them hence as “junior partners” in the movement,³⁵⁹ so the Afro-Asian dubbing is in fact a misnomer.³⁶⁰ Considering the African struggle to shake off the last vestiges of colonialism, a lack of participation and positioning at the Conference is by all means understandable. It is, however, left to question, if the definition as an Asian-African Conference is justifiable and reasonable. One effect of

³⁵⁷ Legum on the other hand was of the opinion the delegation had not contributed much in the gathering. Legum: *Bandung, Cairo and Accra*, p. 5.

³⁵⁸ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 128.

³⁵⁹ Jack: *Bandung*, p. 12.

³⁶⁰ See: Kimche: *The Afro-Asian Movement*, p. 72.

this Arab-Asian surface was certainly that the policies of the Arab League could be settled almost without opposition, in particular the rulings on the Palestinian question.³⁶¹

Another point of issue are the Conference's guidelines whom to invite or exclude. As I have demonstrated beforehand, Bandung endorsed the concept of the nation state, so the Colombo powers marked the status of independence as a precondition to be granted participation. As a result, interested states, which did not enjoy this right or pursued a different political system, were ruled out. In this way, some of the North African countries like Tunisia or Morocco, as well as South Africa's African National Congress were granted only an unofficial observer status. Contrary to the pursue of Afro-Asian solidarity, the endorsement of the nation state stands in opposition to the universalist, transnationalist movements that had emerged beforehand, like Pan-Africanism or internationalism. To embrace this concept effectively affirmed and legitimized the international order of the post-war period³⁶². Adding to that, Hongoh sees a "hierarchical representation" in this emphasis on the nation state, as it put the freed states in a superior position within the anticolonial movement. This hierarchical outlook becomes visible, too, in the patronizing view expressed by the North African/Southeast Asian states towards the sub-Saharan Africans. Nehru for instance understands their relation as "sister continents" and "counselled Asia 'to help Africa to the best of her abilities'". Nasser picks up this argument towards an Egyptian duty to spread "enlightenment and civilization to the remotest depth of the jungle".³⁶³ This perspective adopts the patronizing attitude of the former colonial powers, and makes use of the same legitimization for its development projects. An Asian hierarchy is involved that takes away the legitimacy of the Afro-Asian project.

Another critical aspect is the influence and adherence to regional movements of solidarity, in particular Pan-Africanism and Pan-Arabism for the regions I am concerned with. These movements put their regional conflicts in a bigger African or Arab context, imagining a "politics of emancipation and transformation of the international order beyond the limitations of race, nation, culture or historical experience." Hongoh speaks hereto about a "detritorialization" of the political, cultural and economic identity.³⁶⁴ The concept of the 'Bandung spirit' thus necessitates and builds on the evolvement of Pan-African and Pan-Arab

³⁶¹ Legum: *Bandung, Cairo and Accra*, p. 5.

³⁶² Hongoh, Joseph: *The Asian-African Conference (Bandung) and Pan-Africanism. The Challenge of Reconciling Continental Solidarity with National Sovereignty*, in: Bisley, Nick (ed.): *Special Issue: Beyond Bandung. The 1955 Asian-African Conference and its Legacies for International Order* (Australian journal of international affairs, 1035-771870 (4)), Abingdon 2016, p. 374–389, here p. 382.

³⁶³ Whole paragraph: *Ibid*, p. 382.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 381.

movements. It is, however, left to question how much these regional aspirations were prioritized by its advocates.

While the Gold Coast delegation expresses desire to pursue nationhood, it puts this fight in the wider context of the millions in Africa who look up to it as measurement and prove of the anticolonial struggle. The African continent, it stresses, is possessed by “a new spirit” of activity, “shaking itself like a giant from sleep, fresh with the strength that follows rest”.³⁶⁵ These words point to the interconnectedness of anticolonial efforts in Africa, bound by the Pan-African idea of a united African continent. It is also important to keep in mind that the Gold Coast was led by Kwame Nkrumah at the time, whose ideas about the neo-colonial structures of world economy and politics very much influenced Bandung, even though he was not permitted to attend the Asian-African Conference himself.³⁶⁶ Nevertheless, he quickly turned into a beacon light for the African anti-imperial fight and Pan-African spirit. The latter is also expressed in the tendency to speak for the African continent and less for an individual country. As such, the Liberian group does hardly make reference to Liberia itself as a sovereign state, but speaks with an African voice:

We thank great statesman of India, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, for his very sympathetic references to the continent of Africa and the African people. We appreciate and we realize that there is a deep feeling of humanity in that continent towards the peoples of Africa. We harbor no ill-feelings. We have wronged no one. Africa has the feeling that she has wronged no continent or no people. Whether she has been wronged is the question to be answered. A little searching of conscience will show that Africa has been wronged.³⁶⁷

Africa is in itself presented as a personality, whose attitude can speak for the whole continent. There is first of all a strong solidarity feeling with the African continent underlined, and only secondly with Asia. This approach is very much in line with the Pan-African idea, which has since its inception aimed at a disintegration of geographical boundaries. It has drawn from a tradition of thinkers who have claimed representation and validity of speech for African nations other than their own. Du Bois for instance underlined the “kinship heritage” between the “children of Africa, Asia and the South seas”. Other examples are the Sierra Leon born bishop James Johnson who came to represent Nigeria or a Haitian delegate of the first Pan-African Congress representing Ghana and Ethiopia.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁵ Delegation of the Gold Coast: *Opening Address by the Delegation of the Gold Coast*, p. 76f.

³⁶⁶ See : Nkrumah, Kwame: *Afrika muss eins werden*, Leipzig 1965.

³⁶⁷ Delegation of Liberia: *Closing Speech by the Delegation of Liberia*, p. 198.

³⁶⁸ Whole paragraph: Hongoh: *The Asian-African Conference (Bandung) and Pan-Africanism*, p. 381.

The Pan-Arabic spirit can be considered even more vocal – the great Middle Eastern participation naturally anticipates this. Though Egypt’s stance at Bandung does not reveal explicit Pan-Arabic content, Nasser rose to equal significance for the Pan-Arabic movement as Nkrumah for Pan-Africanism, particularly in the aftermath of the Conference. Bandung can be seen to be Nasser’s first “major appearance on the international stage” and he found fellow campaigners in his anti-Western inclination. He quickly emerged as the regional leader for the Pan-Arabic notion, denoting Egypt as African in origin but on the bridge to the Middle East.³⁶⁹ Jordan adds hereto further Pan-Arabic content:

Fortunately, it does not stand alone today, and were it not for outside pressure and interference, it would now form an integral part of the Arab world whose people are bound together by ties of race, culture, language, traditions and civilisations. Notwithstanding the artificial boundaries which separate us, however, we consider ourselves an inseparable part of the Arab world, now and forever.³⁷⁰

There is a clear affiliation to the Arab world as a cultural and racial entity above the borders drawn on the map by Western colonial masters. If it was not for the experienced “outside pressure”, the Pan-Arabic empire would have been a political reality by then. He underlines the strong connection and solidarity between the Middle Eastern countries, which is equally true for the North African states, whom he considers his “brethren”. This is not only an expression of sympathy for their suffering in the imperial oppression, but perceived as a shared burden. It is thereupon an obligation for the Arab countries to contribute to their “salvation”.³⁷¹ The Palestinian issue constitutes another example for these “regional problems”, which “interest more particularly a group of states” – meaning the Middle Eastern and North African countries.³⁷² This statement brought forward by the Lebanese group appears emblematic for the MENA view, which accords the biggest priority to solving these regional conflicts at the Conference. With this, not the broader Asian-African picture is put in the foreground, but regional and cultural loyalty – “without doubt the aim of this congress”.³⁷³ This becomes visible, too, in the weight these issues take in the MENA speeches in general, as I have demonstrated with the Palestinian question.³⁷⁴ It is from my perspective a degree of regionalism or regional loyalties that surpasses the concept of Afro-Asian solidarity.

³⁶⁹ Brennan: *Radio Cairo and the Decolonization of East Africa, 1953-64*, p. 174f.

³⁷⁰ Delegation of Jordan: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Jordan*, p. 91.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 91f.

³⁷² Delegation of Lebanon: *Opening Address by the Delegation of Lebanon*, p. 97.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

³⁷⁴ See chapter 5.1.2.

A further aspect that should be considered is the respective motivations for the governments to participate in the Asian-African Conference. Taking into account the political climate of the Cold War and the subsequent security situation for the Asian-African states, it was first of all the implications and dealings with this issue that necessitated a debate for the concerned countries. The political conditions constitute a reason and motivation for an assembly of this kind. Within this broader picture the particular role of China and its relation to the Third World states is significant.³⁷⁵ Kahin draws notice to the fact that the primary motivation for the five sponsoring countries was a sign of protest against the West and a call to sufficiently “consult with them”. The Conference could in this way be conceived as an attempt to clarify the relationship to the Western and Eastern superpowers. In addition, he refers to the atomic threat that increasingly affected their countries, in particular the relation between China and the US. Bandung could thus function to “lay a firmer foundation for China’s peaceful relation with the rest of the world” and towards their concerned states.³⁷⁶ The “avoidance of war”, the widening of Chinese diplomatic stance and containment of Chinese and Vietnamese military activity are declared the primary goals.³⁷⁷ Egypt’s Nasser had actually to be persuaded by Nehru in person to participate in the Conference and only agreed once the list of membership³⁷⁸ was acceptable to him and the agenda³⁷⁹ in line with his wishes. Other Arab nations like Lebanon and Iraq specifically attended the Conference in order to “make common cause against the Communists and against the neutralists led by Nehru”. They were followed by support of Sudan and Libya.³⁸⁰ All these are purely political and practical goals and have not much to do with the idea of Afro-Asian solidarity or its realization. Actually, they rather tell a story of Cold War division and bloc affiliation than unity, so on the political level not much of Afro-Asian cohesion is tangible.³⁸¹ While I do not mean to denounce the significance of this idea for the Asian-African Conference, I argue that these political issues were initially the more important aspiration, with the spirit of solidarity actually taking the backseat.

It might be insightful to draw up an observation by Legum, with regard to the question, how the ‘Bandung spirit’ came to be polished. He notices the “desire for unity” at

³⁷⁵ Kahin: *The Asian-African Conference*, p. 3-5.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4f.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³⁷⁸ He emphasized in particular that he would not attend the Conference, if Israel was granted an invitation. Kimche: *The Afro-Asian Movement*, p. 61.

³⁷⁹ According to Nasser’s view, the agenda should comprise the Palestine issue, the North African countries’ colonial plight, racial discrimination and means to control arms and atomic energy. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 63f.

³⁸¹ See: *Ibid.*, p. 73.

Bandung, which made the participants submerge any conflicts of interest, “anything that tended to divide”. Thereupon, suggesting differences in political approach could quickly make you declared an enemy of the Afro-Asian idea.³⁸² This reveals a strong desire for harmony and unity at the Conference, on the verge of euphemism. In fact, differences in political or cultural outlook were not deniable, and also partly endorsed at Bandung, but I side with Legum in this heightened desire to represent Asian-African cohesion to the outside. Even more so, he considers the Bandung Declaration a site of holiness and worship, up to the point of constituting a “political New Testament of the Afro-Asian bloc”. The Charter of the UN would thereby comprise the Old Testament.³⁸³ This might owe a lot to the general “optimistic atmosphere” of the “post-colonial moment” as Burke describes it. There was an enthusiasm for human rights that encompassed anything else, even though the reality and practice of it in the respective countries was very much different.³⁸⁴ This tells a lot on how optimistic, even positivistic and euphemistically these issues were approached and promoted at the Conference.

Concerning the factual results of the Asian-African Conference, I pose the question how these are evaluated by its participants and observers. Bandung was symbolically laden with meaning, to be read into it “before, during and especially after the Conference.” While the majority of people agreed on its historically unique dimension, the interpretations of specific points of interest varied greatly. Jack points out four ways in which the Conference failed his expectations. Firstly, no permanent secretariat or institution emerged from the Conference to implement the proposals of the *Communiqué* and secondly, he decries the lack of a truly new direction or ideas for peacemaking. Thirdly, he criticizes the minor role of the African countries within the Conference and fourthly, the lack of real unity between the cultural regions, also referring to the later occurring split in the Arab League.³⁸⁵ Instead, the commercial relations between Asian and African states remained considerably low in the following decade. Many states continued to orient themselves towards Western or Eastern superpowers and move along the lines of “Cold War geopolitics”. Phillips therefore does not see that the Afro-Asian solidarity was actually realized or practiced in world politics.³⁸⁶ However, this certainly owes to the generality of terms brought forward in the *Communiqué*, because many of its points concerned very abstract matters which were “difficult to relate to

³⁸² Legum: *Bandung, Cairo and Accra*, p. 5.

³⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 5.

³⁸⁴ Burke: *"The Compelling Dialogue of Freedom"*, p. 951f.

³⁸⁵ Jack: *Bandung*, p. 32.

³⁸⁶ Phillips: *Introduction*, p. 330.

feasible actions” as Kahin deliberates.³⁸⁷ He also brings up that the achievements of the political Committee were felt by the delegates to be more valued than those of the cultural or economic groups.³⁸⁸ While the agreements in the political realm were of importance to find a good reaction and strategy within the Cold War dynamics, it could have been an opportunity to actively pursue economic and cultural cooperation – not only in theory, but to live it out to ensure actual agency.

Yet there is another side of the coin that deserves a closer look and might be of equal importance in the end – Bandung’s symbolic meaning. Legum sees its significance in constituting a “new type of international conference: a conference of people versus bombs”.³⁸⁹ Or as Gerits terms it: a fight “on the battlefield of ideas”.³⁹⁰ This narrative situates Bandung’s potency in a positioning within world politics, in representing a great many people that had not been heard for centuries – a wake-up call one could say. Wright refers hereto to the aspect of reorganization of humankind and more specifically their own societies after a long period of foreign dominance. This he considers to happen above the divisions of “Left and Right politics”, since the leading political figures are not interested in seizing power in one direction or the other. It is rather the question of how to act upon this newly gained freedom and power, it is a matter of structuring.³⁹¹ This also serves to clarify the relationship to the West or other superpowers like China or the Soviet Union.³⁹² Bandung thus tries to present an alternative to the Western led global order. One of it is certainly the recalling of non-violent resistance to the colonial politics and the reminiscence of moral values as foundation for the anti-imperial struggle. While communism certainly also presented an alternative to the Western approach to development, Bandung appears stronger influenced by the idea of non-alignment, the so called “ideological disarmament” raised by Jamali.³⁹³

Matthies refers to the act of gathering itself, of “young and newly independent countries from Asia and Africa”, which can serve to symbolize “the idea of Afro-Asian solidarity and unity”.³⁹⁴ While this certainly functioned as a sign of protest against Western monopoly on freedom of assembly and exchange, I side with Kahin in that the greater importance lay in its “educational function”. It concerns the possibility for the delegates to finally meet and

³⁸⁷ Kahin: *The Asian-African Conference*, p. 1.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 33.

³⁸⁹ Legum: *Bandung, Cairo and Accra*, p. 5.

³⁹⁰ Gerits: *Bandung as the Call for a Better Development Project*, p. 5.

³⁹¹ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 207.

³⁹² Jack: *Bandung*, p. 34–36.

³⁹³ Gerits: *Bandung as the Call for a Better Development Project*, p. 6.

³⁹⁴ Matthies: *The “Spirit of Bandung” 1955–1985*, p. 207.

fathom a “more realistic understanding of one another’s point of view”.³⁹⁵ This first-hand experience and practical contact established by the Conference, enabled the delegates to find out and acknowledge their differences, but at the same time the great many common denominators between their states. Shared experiences of colonialism, but also a common ground on racial, religious and cultural factors provided the realization that there were many “important issues cutting across Cold-War lines upon which Asia and much of Africa can unite.”³⁹⁶

Even factually, one should not forget the high degree of (unanimous) agreement reached in the terms of the *Communiqué* in political, economic and cultural issues.³⁹⁷ Kahin considers it also “worth noting that the Conference as a whole strongly endorsed the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights” and unitedly condemned the politics of racial segregation. General agreement was also reached on the issues concerning the Cold War conflict, most notably the goal of disarmament which both the Western and the Soviet aligned groups supported. In general, Bandung gave them the opportunity to clarify their common ground for “international orientation”.³⁹⁸ Kahin underlines the factual results on specific issues, too, such as the racial conflicts in South Africa or the North African countries. A united stance could in this way lead to a stronger stand within the UN on these issues.³⁹⁹

In sum, the structures and strong adherence to regional movements and aspirations in effect undermined the greater project of Afro-Asianism, but did not invalidate it. It was nevertheless upheld as an ideal that strengthened the unity of a very diverse people. Bandung can be said to look for alternatives of the current global order and the most potent idea is found in Afro-Asian solidarity and unity. While its actual existence or realization into a political entity can be questioned, I argue that it functions as a source of strength and a powerful tool to face the gap in development and industrialization towards the West.⁴⁰⁰ Recalling a newly found agency of the global South and by strengthening the cultural, political and economic ties between its members, Bandung weakens the legitimization and practice of Western superior position in world politics. The ‘Bandung spirit’ is in this sense a boost of confidence and means to foster self-esteem for the two continents and their people, having

³⁹⁵ Kahin: *The Asian-African Conference*, p. 35.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 32.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 32f.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 1.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 33.

⁴⁰⁰ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 220.

suffered from an inferiority complex for too long.⁴⁰¹ When looking at it from this perspective, it does no longer matter if it is an authentic representation of Afro-Asian relations, as Third World solidarity is very effective in creating a unity and strength for the countries. Kimche calls it a “power factor” for the respective countries that enabled them a “sense of ‘belonging’ and of ‘solidarity’”.⁴⁰² So even though Afro-Asian solidarity did not evolve into a political reality, it was certainly felt by its participants and was highly charged with meaning:

the colour difference, the solidarity of the underdog, the assertion of the colonized, the banding together of the poor and destitute, the freeing from the psychological chains of inferiority, the aggravation of having others decide one’s own future, the craving for a new solidarity of equals.⁴⁰³

This is also not to underestimate the sheer amount of research and reference still ongoing to the Asian-African Conference within Asian-African relations,⁴⁰⁴ not to forget the commemoration of Bandung in April 1985⁴⁰⁵ and reassembly of participants in the year 2005. This is just to remind of the importance African and Asian politicians laid on the Conference and still do. These gatherings and commemorations report not so much on the historical Asian-African Conference itself, but of the way Bandung turned into a myth. It was idealized and euphemized by its contemporaries as well as today’s Asian and African politicians.⁴⁰⁶ The perennial reinvention in meaning and interpretation of Afro-Asian solidarity reveals an importance and source of inspiration the concept can still offer for politics and societies nowadays.

9. Outlook: The legacy of Bandung

“What are the chances of the Asian-African nations implementing the contents of that communiqué? Frankly, I think that they are pretty good”⁴⁰⁷ – Wright asserts boldly. But at the same time, he admits not to believe that its implementation will provide a solution for the problems plaguing the Asian and African continent. Based on Wright’s rumination, I will

⁴⁰¹ Wood: *Retrieving the Bandung Conference ... Moment by Moment*, p. 526.

⁴⁰² Kimche: *The Afro-Asian Movement*, p. 80.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 80f.

⁴⁰⁴ Lee, Christopher J.: ‘*Bandung and Beyond*’. *Rethinking Afro-Asian Connections During the Twentieth Century (Conference Report)*, in: *African Affairs* (2005) 104, p. 683–684, here p. 683.

⁴⁰⁵ Matthies: *The “Spirit of Bandung” 1955–1985*, p. 207.

⁴⁰⁶ Burke, Roland: *Afro-Asian Alignment. Charles Malik and the Cold War at Bandung*, in: Finnane, Antonia/McDougall, Derek (eds.): *Bandung 1955*. *Little Histories (Monash papers on Southeast Asia 69)*, Clayton, Vic. 2010, p. 27–41, here p. 27.

⁴⁰⁷ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 205.

trace what happened to the 'Bandung spirit' and its concept of Afro-Asian solidarity. Did it prove a lasting concept and turn into a political reality?

At Bandung itself, enthusiasm for the idea was omnipresent and is visible in the degree of support expressed for a second Asian-African Conference. While some felt it to be premature, Kahin observed "there was no doubt that a majority of them favored this idea."⁴⁰⁸ The recommendation to meet again "at the proper time and place" is perceived to be of utmost importance. As such, Syria declares:

We simply declare to the world that we are not at an end: we declare to the world that we are only at the beginning; we declare to the world that we continue to meet, we continue to assemble, we continue to deliberate, we continue to pool our combined will and efforts and resources, until we see every degree of colonialism and imperialism washed and destroyed down for ever and ever.⁴⁰⁹

This declaration, however, appears a quite general pledge against (neo-)colonialism, an appeal to combine their efforts to uphold a self-determined policy and strengthen the ties between each other. It does not bespeak so much a specific plan or arrangement for a prospective conference.⁴¹⁰ For this end, the 22 participants eventually agreed in the Djakarta Preparatory Meeting on its future location in an African country on March 10, 1965. It was expected to be attended by twice the membership of the first conference. These deliberations reflect the optimism and enthusiasm of its supporters, as well as an increased incorporation of the African element in a future assembly.⁴¹¹ Contrary to this spirit, Rye points to the fact that the meeting already laid the foundation for considerable differences among the participants, which had aggravated since 1955. Among these conflicts of interest was the question, whether to invite the Soviet Union and Malaysia, on which the attitudes of the former sponsoring countries differed greatly and harbored conflict.⁴¹² Most notably was the rift in Sino-Soviet relations, which led to an "incessive wrangling from 1961 to 1965 about who should or should not be admitted to any second Asian-African meeting". These developments and conflicts between the organizing parties culminated in an "utter disaster" of Algier's second conference in 1965. Russian-Indian attempts to postpone the conference to a later date, the "last-minute overthrow of Algerian president Ben Bella" and a bomb threat eventually provided the justification to set a later date. Yet by then, drastic international and domestic developments in China and Indonesia led to increasing tensions and an almost empty

⁴⁰⁸ Kahin: *The Asian-African Conference*, p. 34.

⁴⁰⁹ Delegation of Syria: *Closing Speech by the Delegation of Syria*, p. 207.

⁴¹⁰ Mackie: *The Bandung Conference and Afro-Asian Solidarity*, p. 21.

⁴¹¹ Rye, A.S.: *Second Asian-African Conference Final Communiqué for the Preparatory Meeting of Ministers. Introduction*, in: *Asian Studies*, p. 131–137, here p. 131.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, p. 131f.

conference hall.⁴¹³ In the end it “failed to materialize”⁴¹⁴ and was not taken up again in the same form.

However, the idea of a Third World entity emergent of the Bandung Conference managed to take forms through other movements and institutions. One of them was the forthcoming of the Afro-Asian People’s Solidarity Organization (AAPSO) that organized several gatherings under “Nasser’s patronage”. It was launched in Cairo in 1958 and continued until the year 1965.⁴¹⁵ The first assembly was no longer completely in line with the principle of non-alignment, but slightly oriented towards the communist bloc due to the invitation of both Russia and China. Even so, spokesman Anwar al-Sadat pursued a rather neutralist policy, attacking both Western and Soviet imperialism. There is thus no prove for an actual communist affiliation at the Cairo Conference, but rather owes to the Western press’ presentation of African defecting to the communist enemy.⁴¹⁶ Faced with the strong “Sino-Soviet split”,⁴¹⁷ it was difficult to actively promote and live out Afro-Asian unity. Yet it was still influential in challenging contemporary neo-colonial regimes and movements: The fight against the South African apartheid regime, the Vietnam war, support of the anticolonial fight in Guinea Bissau or the African American civil rights movement are listed as achievements by the AAPSO.⁴¹⁸ It also served to carve out further independent space for political figures like Nasser and Nkrumah as strong defenders of Pan-Arabic and Pan-African thinking. The latter certainly gained strength in the following years, most notably with the Accra Conference in 1958.⁴¹⁹ These regional movements further institutionalized in the form of the OAU or the Arab League, as well as the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) emergent in September 1969.⁴²⁰

With regard to the institutionalization of the greater concept of Afro-Asian unity, another important movement came forward with the Group of 77 (or G77) in 1964. It directed its interest at the economic issues dealt with by the UN. Thereby, it carved out more

⁴¹³ Mackie: *The Bandung Conference and Afro-Asian Solidarity*, p. 23f.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21. Lee: *Making a World After Empire*, p. 17.

⁴¹⁶ Legum: *Bandung, Cairo and Accra*, 6f.

⁴¹⁷ Mackie: *The Bandung Conference and Afro-Asian Solidarity*, p. 22.

⁴¹⁸ Lee, Christopher J.: *Tricontinentalism in Question. The Cold War Politics of Alex la Guma and the African National Congress*, in: Lee, Christopher J. (ed.): *Making a World After Empire: the Bandung Moment and its Political Afterlives* ([Research in international studies / Global and comparative studies series] Research in international studies), Athens 2010, p. 266–286, here p. 266.

⁴¹⁹ Legum: *Bandung, Cairo and Accra*, p. 11–14.

⁴²⁰ McDougall, Derek: *Bandung as Politics*, in: Finnane, Antonia / McDougall, Derek (eds.): *Bandung 1955. Little Histories* (Monash papers on Southeast Asia 69), Clayton, Vic. 2010, p. 131–139, here p. 137.

space for the new Third World countries and precipitated a weakening in the power relationship of the UN.⁴²¹

Another concomitant outcome is the increasing connection and association of Bandung with the non-alignment movement (NAM). Non-commitment came to be expressed by a variety of movements and conferences in the Third World, such as the mentioned Accra Conference in 1958 or the Casablanca Conference in 1961. Even the OAU incorporated the principle of non-alignment in its charter, which shows the degree to which African nations endorsed this concept.⁴²² Contrary to the efforts of a second Asian-African Conference, the “NAM ultimately superseded the Asian-African Conference – drawing upon it symbolically, but marking a different configuration of nation-states that would meet routinely in the decades ahead”. Even though the NAM cannot be seen to comprise the whole body of Bandung participants, the Conference had been an initiative point for the movement by providing the “building of social and political capital through intercontinental networking”.⁴²³ This strategy was expanded in the NAM through the incorporation of actors outside of the Asian and African realm, notably in the leadership of Nasser and Tito. It managed to hold several summits in the early 1960s and in subsequent years.⁴²⁴ The NAM therein managed to bring the formerly wooly Third World perspective to a “political ideology” of the Afro-Asian camp.⁴²⁵ Weber sees an even “more radical challenge [...] of the political project of Third Worldism” in the forthcoming of the “newly industrializing countries or economics (NICs or NIE)”, proposed by the UN General Assembly in 1974. Among these states were for example South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan or in later years India and China.⁴²⁶ It shed light on the impossible economic pursuit of these countries to achieve Western standards of development – considering the current economic order and its division of labor. Weber denotes it as a more “politically progressive Third Worldism”, which still adhered to the idea of solidarity between the Asian-African countries.⁴²⁷ However, the NAM and the NIE experienced a similar faith like the second Asian-African Conference, it proved to be a great but “one-time diplomatic moment” and not a lasting routine.⁴²⁸ Their failure can be considered

⁴²¹ Matthies: *The “Spirit of Bandung” 1955–1985*, p. 209. McDougall: *Bandung as Politics*, p. 137.

⁴²² Kimche: *The Afro-Asian Movement*, p. 89f.

⁴²³ Lee: *The Rise of Third World Diplomacy*, p. 24.

⁴²⁴ Most notably is the Belgrade Conference in 1961 led by Yugoslavia’s Josip Tito. The second conference took place in 1964 in Cairo and had a growth in membership of 47 states, which attributed greatly to the wave of newly decolonized states in sub-Saharan Africa. Mackie: *The Bandung Conference and Afro-Asian Solidarity*, p. 21f.; Lee: *Making a World After Empire*, p. 17.

⁴²⁵ Kimche: *The Afro-Asian Movement*, p. 91.

⁴²⁶ McDougall: *Bandung as Politics*, p. 137.

⁴²⁷ Weber et al.: *The ‘Bandung Spirit’ and Solidarist Internationalism*, p. 399.

⁴²⁸ Lee: *The Rise of Third World Diplomacy*, p. 24.

symptomatic for the demise of the greater concept of Afro-Asian solidarity. Reasons for this are various and cannot be ascribed to one aspect.

It certainly owed to a lack of economic and political resources that were needed to bring forth a durable network between the Third World figures. The rising economic problems within their respective countries also led politicians to concentrate on domestic development and affluence.⁴²⁹ For the most part, the political and economic conditions were so diverse that it proved difficult to find a ground on which to cooperate efficiently.⁴³⁰ This regarding, a range of interstate conflicts emerged post-Bandung that breached the ‘Bandung spirit’ and in effect made the involved states affiliate further to one bloc or the other.⁴³¹ Even though the countries were ardent supporters of the alternative world vision promoted at Bandung, political reality quickly made them reorient towards “pre-existing connections with former European colonial powers” or the new superpowers US and the Soviet Union. These connections proved more appealing at first sight.⁴³² One factor might have been, too, that its strongest advocates like Nehru and Sukarno disappeared from the political realm and with them its leading figures.⁴³³

However, the biggest obstacle for the endurance of the Afro-Asian idea was in my opinion the lack of “lasting structures for cooperation and communication among the newly formed countries”.⁴³⁴ The only real criteria to participate in the Afro-Asian project were, according to Matthies, “geographical location in the Afro-Asian region and political independence”. In the end, this did not provide a real structure or organization for a Third World movement.⁴³⁵ Wright connects this aspect of organization with the billions of people standing at the back of the Bandung Conference, the ones that the political figures were bound to represent. He poses the following question: Will there be enough time to keep up with the dynamics of these people? This is not to refer to the Western concept of ‘catching up’ in terms of industrial or economic development. It refers to the mental and emotional development of people who have for centuries lived in deprivation of agency, self-determined forms of education and practice of customs and traditions. “Kept too long in ignorance and

⁴²⁹ Ibid, p. 26f.

⁴³⁰ Matthies: *The “Spirit of Bandung” 1955–1985*, p. 207.

⁴³¹ Among these are for instance the border conflicts between India and China, most notably in October–November 1962, as well as conflicts between India and Pakistan in September 1965. Ibid, p. 210. Mackie: *The Bandung Conference and Afro-Asian Solidarity*, p. 22.

⁴³² Lee: *The Rise of Third World Diplomacy*, p. 26f.

⁴³³ Nehru died in the year 1964 and Sukarno became ousted in 1965–66. Mackie: *The Bandung Conference and Afro-Asian Solidarity*, p. 21.

⁴³⁴ Matthies: *The “Spirit of Bandung” 1955–1985*, p. 207.

⁴³⁵ Ibid, p. 207.

superstition and darkness”, their guiding figures were at a loss how to organize this great force of newly freed people. Wright considers Bandung’s primary goal thereby to find ways of organizing men, even the human race on a bigger scale.⁴³⁶ While expressed in an exaggerated way, which somehow overestimates the meaning of Bandung, I see it as important to include this aspect of unpreparedness and ignorance on the emotional level. Bandung cannot and does not want to be seen as a purely political project, whose challenges lies solely in the economic and political realm. I argue that the mental and emotional unpreparedness of politicians and people were of equal significance for the failure of the ‘Bandung spirit’.

10. Conclusion

In this work I have attempted a critical analysis of the argumentation for the Afro-Asian solidarity concept promoted at the Bandung Conference 1955 – also dubbed the ‘Bandung spirit’. This was undertaken by means of applying a close look at the opening and closing addresses of the participating delegations, together with reports on the Conference by reporters standing on the sidelines. I have focused hereby solely on the speeches by the Middle Eastern, North African and sub-Saharan groups.⁴³⁷

The historical material revealed that Afro-Asian solidarity was an idea and ideal that the Bandung participants looked up to and actively promoted. This unity was carefully constructed in addresses and reports at the Conference itself and in the aftermath of Bandung. It appears to have been supported, felt or at least believed by the participants. The ‘Bandung spirit’ was brought to light first of all by uncovering a common ground for the present Asian and African nations. The most obvious common denominator for these countries is their ties to the former colonial powers – their relationship to the West. This cannot be pinned down simply to a chorus of disapproval or the construction of a foe image comprised in the West

⁴³⁶ Wright: *The Color Curtain*, p. 206–208.

⁴³⁷ My analysis of the concept of Afro-Asian solidarity and the way it functioned naturally leaves out many aspects that would need further inspection. Among the questions that could be further elaborated are for example the evaluation of Bandung from outside powers or journalists, most prominently Western powers or the Soviet Union. What did Bandung mean to these former colonial powers? Was it an important element in the shaping of the current world order or simply a watershed in history? Jack for instance includes the US reaction to the Conference. Another approach would be from the perspective of one particular country and the Conference’s implications for it. There is some literature on Indonesian approaches and the other Southeast Asian sponsoring countries, but the MENA and SSA perspective lacks severely. Another aspect I have not incorporated very much is the conditions of the Cold War and Bandung’s dealing with the Soviet and Chinese role. Kahin elaborates on the challenge of Soviet colonialism and describes the discourse at Bandung on this matter. This issue nevertheless deserves further analysis of the historical sources. It has, however, been dealt with more extensively in secondary literature. Unfortunately, I did not have access to the closing sessions, so that a great deal of sources and background information was lost to me. Kahin: *The Asian-African Conference*, p. 18-20, 30f.; Jack: *Bandung*, p. 3f.

or the White person. Contrary to the assertions of many contemporaries, I argue that Bandung's perspective on the West can be situated between conflicting priorities: It constitutes the embodiment of a deplored (neo-)colonial mindset and practice, but at the same time a role model. All of the speeches express strong condemnation of imperialism and colonialism in all its manifestations,⁴³⁸ which serves as a principal linking factor and unifier for the countries. This is prominently exemplified with the implications of neo-colonial policies in the Palestinian case. Hereby in particular the MENA countries demonstrate a very united stand and render the Palestinian plight a significant question to deal with at Bandung. It is important to underline that no actual foe image of the White Western self is constructed, which invalidates Richard Wright's claim to racism in reverse at Bandung.

Much more ambiguous is the perspective on the West's political concepts, its language and institutions, which harbors a strong undercurrent of affirmation and admiration. Its achievements are looked up to, taken as a role model and partially adopted. The strongest component herein is the notion of development in terms of modernization through economic and technological progress. The solution for the so-called underdevelopment of their countries is accordingly to be found in Western led assistance programs. In my opinion, this demonstrates a rather uncritical approach to these Western concepts and in effect invalidates Bandung's clamor for a truly independent, self-determined policy. This is, however, not to leave out the critical voices heard at Bandung that point to the Western power of definition with regard to these concepts and argue for an interpretation according to their own standards. This should serve to uphold the East's cultural diversity and avoid turning into a Western puppet.

With regard to the Western institutions, the UN is frequently taken up as a primary example for a political outlook presented as universal, but at bottom is of Western origin. In general, it can be ascertained that Bandung endorses the UN as a valid and legitimate institution, including the principles and applicability of the human rights regime. While the wholehearted adoption of Western diplomatic language and concept appears uncritical at first sight, there is also a great deal of agency displayed by actively interpreting them for their own ends. The politicians adopt only those concepts of use to them like the ideals of self-determination and human rights. In this way, they mirror the West its own hypocrisies, which declares them universal, but effectively does not grant them their former colonized subjects. Bandung thus challenges the West's monopoly on these values and thereby the

⁴³⁸ See: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia: *Final Communiqué*.

global political order. The Conference can be conceived as a last call to the West, especially the *Final Communiqué* is clearly addressed in this direction. To that effect, Bandung serves as a powerful sign of protest expressed through various means, but at the same time the delegates demonstrate hope and a conciliatory attitude towards the old colonial powers. In a calm and diplomatic manner, they appeal to the moral conscience of the West, to aid their pursuit of independence and self-reliance. By and large, the Western colonial/imperial practices are strongly condemned, but its achievement – its political and economic concepts and its manifested institutions – are cherished. To a certain degree they are taken as a model and adopted, but also thwarted and reinterpreted.

Based on this collective clarification of the relationship to the West, I have argued for another prominent denominator that can be found in race and religion. The discourse at Bandung appears very much racialized, in the sense that race and in particular the shared experience of racial discriminatory practices provides a connective element. The Conference demonstrates a united stance in its collective denigration of these practices of racialism. Above that, there is a strong religious component revealed, which manifests itself in frequent references to God and the importance of spiritual guidance – irrespective of the religious denomination. The validity and adherence to spiritual values is contrasted with the West's material culture. The Southern powers are ascribed a morality the Western world is deprived of, which can function as a powerful tool to create a lasting peaceful world order. These denominators based on religious and racial affiliation are brought forward independent of the delegations' immense differences in culture and religion. Bandung manages not only to acknowledge these, but to draw strength from it, arguing for the notion of unity in diversity as an important part of the greater Afro-Asian solidarity.

Resting upon these common grounds is the nascence of a new third force in world politics that evolves as an important trope in the speeches. The politicians invoke a sense of awakening and new beginning for the global South, which culminates in a reinvigoration of self-reliance and agency they were too long deprived of. They assert their own right to self-determined politics, economy and cultural life and appeal to their own strength. In order to factually realize this newly found potency, South-South cooperation becomes a primary agent. Cohesion between the Asian-African states cannot be acted out, if they give into the Western dictated economic structures and instead resort to economic, cultural and political collaboration among themselves. Among these are to be named the exchange of economic resources, of intellectual property, as well as cultural exchange. This form of cooperation in

effect presents an alternative to the Western led development programs and their underlying hegemony.

Emergent from this discourse is the birth of a new entity comprised in the term Third World. This has less to do with today's pejorative use of the term – on the contrary, its nascence was framed in absolutely positive terms. The Third World and the subsequent idea of Third World solidarity contains in itself the moral values and character of the global South, which stands in opposition to the First (Western) world stained by material greed and hypocrisies. This serves not only to highlight the positivist differentiation between these worlds, but to challenge the dominant conception of the global order and for an alternative vision. While there are occasional cries for the formation of an actual bloc identity based on this new vision, the majoritarian opinion can be deduced to reject this. It is no wonder that the NAM and the G77 are considered a brainchild of Bandung, as it presents strong indicators for this notion. Altogether, the Third World entity or Third Worldism can be considered less of an actually existing geographical or political entity and it refrains from forming into a bloc. It is rather a mental map based along racial, cultural, religious and social lines the people have agreed upon.

In the last chapter I have attempted a critical claim towards the concept of Afro-Asian solidarity promoted at Bandung. I have hereby revealed that the power structures of the Conference lay very much with the Southeast Asian countries. This hegemony owes to the weight the five sponsoring countries took in the organization and decision-making of the Conference. They also display a patronizing attitude towards the African states similar to the approach of former colonial powers. The second aspect concerns the African element at Bandung that was barely existent within the Afro-Asian concept. There were only three states at all to participate from the sub-Saharan realm and the other African states were North African with a clearly Arab outlook. This somehow takes away the legitimacy of the Afro-Asian idea. In addition, I have had a look at the weight regional loyalties take in the speeches. Strong influence and affiliation to Pan-African and Pan-Arab movements is expressed and motivation to participate at Bandung certainly owes to the aim to promote and further these to a degree. This is also to take into account the more practical political motivations with respect to the Cold War dynamics and the need to affiliate to one bloc or the other. Bandung could not avoid the ideological divisions and was not seldom divided in opinion. I have therefore argued that these political motivations and regional loyalties in fact surpassed the spirit of Afro-Asian cohesion.

In terms of the Conference's legacy, I have provided a brief sketch of the events and movement that emerged from the 'Bandung spirit'. Of importance are hereby the G77 and the NAM that institutionalized the Third World dialectic and Southern agency. However, these movements were short-lasting and did not manage to uphold the South-South cooperation envisioned in the *Communiqué*, let alone a real transformation of the current economic and political world order. In terms of Bandung's factual goals, it can thus be considered a failed attempt to realize the Afro-Asian solidarity – it did not reflect a political reality or turn into one. If one aims to measure the success or realization of the 'Bandung spirit' in terms of the *Communiqué*'s goals, I would argue it has failed or did not come into existence. Yet I am also of the opinion that Bandung's primary importance – historically and ideologically – lies in its symbolic meaning: It is the aspect of convening all these newly independent people and their representative nations, the exchange of views on political, economic and social issues of concern to all these states – “to agree and disagree”⁴³⁹ – that made it meaningful. All of the participants and most notably the four key figures Zhou, Nehru, Nasser and Sukarno, agreed that it was “one of the key moments of the 20th century”.⁴⁴⁰ It enabled a clarification of the relationship to the (neo-)colonial powers and the reinvigoration of a common ground on racial, religious and cultural terms. Perhaps, as Kimche brings forward, there was no real political solidarity at hand, but a “sense of racial solidarity”,⁴⁴¹ the recalling of a shared (historical) experience and mental outlook. In this sense, the Conference might be only a watershed in Western historiography, but for the global South it served as a moment of awakening and agency they were for a long time deprived of. It therefore presented a new source of inspiration, empowerment and self-confidence for the countries. While arguing that Afro-Asianism or Third Worldism did not come into existence as a political reality, it was and nowadays still is an ideal looked up to and aspired by many political figures of the Southern world. It serves to question existing power structures and provides a feeling of unity and cohesion for the underdogs of the current world order.

⁴³⁹ Burke: *Afro-Asian Alignment*, p. 41.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 41.

⁴⁴¹ Kimche: *The Afro-Asian Movement*, p. 75.

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Eigenständigkeitserklärung

Hiermit versichere ich,

Name: Sopart

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dass ich die Masterarbeit mit dem Titel

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selbstständig verfasst habe. Es wurden keine anderen als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt. Zitate wurden als solche kenntlich gemacht.

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