

## Scanning the World Press

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THE AFL-CIO Department for International Affairs puts out a monthly bulletin, *Free Trade Union News*. One of its issues contains an article about the American Institute for Free Labour Development (AIFLD) by its director, William C. Doherty. And Mr. Doherty has many glowing things to say about his institute. Its purpose, we are told, is to "strengthen democratic trade unionism in Latin America" and improve the living standards of the Latin-American workers.

The institute was founded more than four years ago, and its activities in Latin America are similar to those of the Afro-American trade union centre. The purpose of both is to boost United States policy.

It is not surprising, therefore, that from the very start AIFLD has been financed not only by the AFL-CIO, but also by the U. S. Agency for International Development, a government organization, and by American Big Business. Contributors to the institute's funds, Doherty says, include more than 60 U.S. business firms.

The names of big businessmen who make annual contributions to AIFLD and sit on its Board of Trustees have appeared in the press. Among them are millionaire Peter Grace, who has wide interests in industry, banking and railways in the U.S. and Latin America, and Charles Brinckerhoff, a director of the huge Anaconda copper concern.

Writes Doherty: "There are many advantages to business involvement in AIFLD. It serves as a good example to Latin-American trade unions of responsibility rather than implacable hostility among opposed economic interest groups. . . . Business support for AIFLD also shows Latin-American workers that not all U.S. businessmen have horns. Distrust of the U.S. in general, caused by hostility to U.S. firms, hurts U.S. labour as well as business, and

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labour thus has a stake in dispelling the 'Yankee imperialist' image."

So it isn't a matter of "strengthening democratic trade unionism" in Latin America, but of turning Latin-American unions into pliant tools of the North American monopolies. And to do that, AIFLD maintains agencies, all of them closely linked with U. S. embassies, in many parts of Latin America. It also runs a network of schools to train agents for work in the Latin-American labour movement.

In the first four years of its existence, Doherty writes, 40,000 participated in one or more phases of AIFLD's education programme, and almost 4,000 graduated long-term courses. Nearly all of the graduates are now active in Latin-American unions, and many have managed to secure leading posts.

With this army at its command, AIFLD has been waging a secret and open war against militant labour organizations, in some countries also against progressive governments. British Guiana has been one of its targets. The trade union centre led by Richard Ishmael received a weekly handout of \$30,000 from the AFL-CIO treasury. Men brought in by the U.S. intrigued against Dr. Jagan's government, instigated strikes and clashes between workers and were instrumental in forcing Dr. Jagan's resignation.

AIFLD men are active also in Brazil. Graduates of its training school were able to capture the leadership of the trade unions immediately after the overthrow of the Goulart government.

The institute and its local operatives exploit the difficult living conditions in Latin America. Doherty says AIFLD has allocated large sums for housing development in Mexico, Honduras, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay and several more

countries. This has been given wide publicity as an example of disinterested assistance to the working people. Actually, however, the housing loans are granted at high interest rates and carry political stipulations. A Uruguay paper, *Marcha*, published the text of an AIFLD document pertaining to its housing programme: "AIFLD retains the right to veto applications for housing on political or trade union grounds."

In fact, Doherty himself makes no great secret of the purpose behind these "social programmes." They are meant, he says, to strengthen trade unions led by AIFLD-trained men and "increase union membership and strengthen loyalty to the unions."

These attempts to "tame" the Latin-American unions are meeting with mounting resistance from the workers. One evidence of that is the recent decision of the National Labour Convention of Uruguay to close down the AIFLD school. The decision was taken after Doherty's men perpetrated a number of terrorist acts against progressive unions and after armed attacks on textile workers.

Latterly the American press has drawn attention to the close link between the AFL-CIO Department of International Affairs and the Central Intelligence Agency. Things reached a stage when some prominent union leaders, notably Walter Reuther, Joseph Curran and Jacob Potofsky, refused to approve AIFLD activities at the August meeting of the AFL-CIO Executive Council.

But most Council members, and of course George Meany, stood up for this branch of the CIA camouflaged as a "democratic institution," with the result that AIFLD continues its subversive work in the Latin-American labour movement.