

George Morris

World of Labor

Lovestone's Role Bared

AT LONG last, the Central Intelligence Agency's use of the AFL-CIO's International Affairs Department and its head, Jay Lovestone, as a front for its activities throughout the world has been exposed by a member of that department.

The statement of Victor Reuther, proving the charge and calling for a public inquiry of the CIA's use of various groups, including colleges, unions and all types of foundations as coverups, was made on May 22 in an interview that received wide publicity. Detroit's Free Press spread the story under its main front page headline.

Victor Reuther, brother of Walter and both his assistant and head of the United Auto Workers international affairs department, is also a member of the AFL-CIO's department on international affairs, of which Lovestone is director. So he surely knows what he is talking about when he says "the tragedy of the AFL-CIO activities in the field of foreign affairs is that they are a vest-pocket operation run by Jay Lovestone."

Also, when he said that as long as "Meany has such personal confidence in Lovestone, I see no changes in the Federation's foreign policy." Reuther noted that the operations under Lovestone and Meany in this field are even kept secret from the members of the AFL-CIO executive council.

Promising a fuller exposure "when a more appropriate time will come," Victor Reuther gave newsmen "the most recent example of CIA activities" with the exposure of eight individuals who used the credentials of the International Food and Drink Workers Federation, operating out of its Panama Office. These eight did their dirty work in the name of a legitimate labor organization.

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INVOLVED in Reuther's charge is also the American Institute For Free Labor Development (AIFLD), of which we have written frequently, that is operating a "school" in Washington allegedly for training "labor leaders" for Latin America. AIFLD is chaired jointly by George Meany and Peter Grace, the financial magnate and one of the chief investors in Latin America, with Lovestone's men (apparently CIA men) providing the operational staff.

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Now that it is the trend to swear, "I am not and never have been" connected with the CIA, the dirt is coming out. Victor Reuther could have made his exposure a decade or more back. Has not the dumping of Lovestone been one of the conditions the CIO insisted upon when merger terms were agreed to with Meany in 1955? Meany simply didn't keep his promise.

We need hardly remind readers of this column of the numerous times since the CIA's birth in 1947, and for years prior, that we called attention to Lovestone's role. But as far back as May 20, 1955, under a headline in the Detroit Free Press, a paper Reuther reads, Edwin Leahy, its Washington columnist, ran a story of Lovestone's operations as "the CIA man in labor" and close collaborator of Allen Dulles, then head of the CIA. Numerous reports have been published of the way labor credentials and the AFL-CIO have been used as a cover for CIA. (They have been summarized in my book "American Labor — Which Way?" published in May, 1961).

Even the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has become embarrassed by the AFL-CIO's (hence the CIA's) influence over its affairs. From year to year tension between the ICFTU and the AFL-CIO's leaders has sharpened.

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IN ANY CASE, Reuther's belated exposure is certainly welcome. It should contribute to enlightenment in the debate over Vietnam and foreign affairs now beginning to develop in the unions, among them the auto union. But hardly enlightening is Victor Reuther's assertion, as quoted in the Washington Post, that "Lovestone seems to have brought into the labor movement the working habits and undercover techniques which he learned when he was in the highest echelons of the Communist Party." And Reuther added "I guess it is awfully hard to break these habits."

Lovestone was expelled from the Communist Party in 1929 — 37 years ago. He was expelled for both factionalism and views that basically foreshadowed the course he follows today. For Reuther to charge Lovestone with "Communist habits" today, 37 years later, is on a par with the kind of talk by Joe McCarthy or his heirs. Our land is lousy with creatures who infiltrated Communist, trade union and other organizations of workers as spies, provocateurs, frame-up tools and disrupters.

Are those "habits" to be charged to the organizations they seek to destroy? Vic knows of course, that such reasoning makes no sense. But like many others, he has acquired the "habit" of always saying something to make sure no one suspects you "are now or ever have been" somewhere on the Left.

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