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STRAIGHT TALK

CONTROLS
CIA ~~AND~~ TRADE UNIONS

- by CHEDDI JAGAN

The response to Thomas Braden's apology of the CIA in which he said he gave money to Irving Brown, Walter and Victor Reuther, the Top Brass of ^{the} American trade union movement, was sharp.

George Meany, the head of AFL-CIO blasted Braden's story as "a damn lie..... Not one penny of CIA money has even come in to the AFL or AFL-CIO to my knowledge over the last twenty years."

One has to take this statement with a grain of salt. Remember Richard Ishmael's denial of any CIA connection with the 1963 strike when the CIA plot was exposed by the New York Times in February. Note too that according to the National Guardian, Ishmael and Meany held discussions at the Commodore Hotel in New York soon after the 1961 election when help was asked to stop the "Cubanization of strategic British Guiana".

According to Newsweek, US magazine (May 22) "Only Walter Reuther, of all the principals involved, admitted knowingly taking CIA money- and then only once, in an emergency situation, to his subsequent regret. Reuther added his won postscript - that Braden had tried recruiting brother Victor as a CIA agent and that Victor had emphatically rejected the bid. Braden denied that."

One is more likely to believe Braden in this sordid affair.

Walter Reuther has always posed as a progressive liberal. Recently, after the expose of the CIA plot, but before Braden's defense of it, Walter Reuther and three of his lieutenants resigned from the AFL-CIO. But Reuther's past is no less that of a cold warrior than

George Meany's.

Walter Reuther's influence in past - 1947 was largely behind the expulsion not only of the democratically-elected communists and militants from unions, but also of unions, such as the United Electrical, from the Congress of Industrial Organisation (CIO). The difference between Reuther and Meany is a matter of degree, the same as between Harold Wilson and George Brown.

According to Victor Riesel, witch-hunting labour journalist, (as reported by Workers World, March 17, 1967), the feud between George Meany and Walter Reuther started when Meany blocked him from getting \$2 million CIA money in 1962.

"Reuther, said Riesel, asked for \$2 million of CIA money in 1962 to finance an amalgamation of pro-Communist and anti-Communist unions in Italy. Reuther contacted Robert Kennedy, then Attorney General, who had connections with Reuther as well as the CIA. Kennedy was interested in the deal, called in Gen. Maxwell Taylor and others to confer with Reuther on it."

"Meany got wind of what was going on, went to John F. Kennedy, the President, and killed the plan on the basis that "boring from within" a Communist-led union by anti-Communists was likely to create more Communists rather than less."

This explains why I never succeeded in talking to Reuther. Someone had suggested that I should talk to him about AFL-CIO involvement and tie-up with the CIA in its activities in Guyana. Well, I said, arrange it. Nothing came through, however; Reuther was too busy, I was told.

Later I was introduced to him, rather casually in the lobby of the United Nations headquarters in New York. "I would like to have a chat with you at some time convenient to you", I said. "I would let you know later," was his reply. I heard nothing.

No doubt, I didn't get a reply because the AFL-CIO had already plotted behind the scenes to get rid of the PPP. Recall the AFL-CIO support for Burnham as was clearly pointed out by Arthur Schlesinger Jr. in his book "A Thousand Days". This is how Schlesinger put it: "Thus far our policy had been based on the assumption that Forbes Burnham was, as

the British described him an opportunist, racist and demagogue, intent only on personal power. One wondered about this, though, because the AFL-CIO people in Guyana thought well of him. It was the same AFL and CIO which engineered the split in the World Federation of Trade Union (WFTU) in 1949 and set up the CIA-backed International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). And through ICFTU and its regional organisations the Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers (ORIT) and Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL), the shipping and air-blockade was imposed on Guyana during the 80-day strike of 1963.

Elsewhere, Meany and his lieutenants did the same. In Africa, they attempted through the African-American Labor Center to sabotage the attempts of Dr. Nkrumah and others to set up the All-African Trade Union Federation, the aim of which was freedom from cold-war influences. Jay Lovestone considered Nkrumah's brand of neutralism as "aide-de-camp" of communism.

In the Latin American area, Meany's foreign relations manipulator, Jay Lovestone, renegade of the Communist Party, was the principal link in the business of espionage, infiltration and subversion abroad. According to the New York Post of February 16 "One of Lovestone's 'institutes' actively helped to train Brazilian unionists here to participate in the military coup against Goulart's Brazilian regime, . . . an alleged leftist but constitutional government . . . replaced by an oppressive tyranny of the right."

The New York Post also charged that money from the CIA had been paid regularly to AFL-CIO agents and that an inquiry would show "innumerable instances" in which AFL-CIO agents "colloberated with CIA cloak and dagger men" in various coups and undercover intrigues.

In the Dominican Republic, the late Fred A. Somerford, US Labor Attache', was the guiding light of CONATRAL which ran an advertisement in the newspapers calling on the people to put their faith not in the regime of the elected President Juan Bosch, but in the "armed forces". An obituary on Somerford, a year after Bosch's downfall said "George Meany wrote a personal letter of commendation to the deceased for his outstanding contribution to the Democratic Labour Movement of the Dominican Republic."

Farther back in 1951, George boasted about AFL achievements on the world front. "Primarily due to our effort," he said, "there has been established . . . the Force Ouvriere." In Germany it "was the AFL which broke

the Communist stranglehold on the trade unions." "Our European representative, Irving Brown, participated in cleaning the port of Marseilles of Communist control." "We have established numerous contacts with resistance movements" behind the iron curtain. "On the China mainland, we are aiding the underground democratic forces."

Neil Sheehan writing in the New York Times on February 21, 1967 in a special article headed "CIA Is Linked to Strikes That Helped Oust Jagan" said that "Operatives of the Central Intelligence Agency working under cover of an American Labour Union, helped organize strikes in British Guiana in 1962 and 1963 against Dr. Cheddi Jagan, a marxist who was Prime Minister there."

The union referred to ^{was} the State, County and Municipal Employees Union, which operated in Guyana through its ~~international affairs department,~~ ^{London based} ~~officially known as the Public Service International.~~

"The Union used agency (CIA) funds for four and a half-years from 1959 until May 1964 - to finance its overseas activities, mainly in Latin America," said Sheehan.

Other CIA links with the US trade union movement, in addition to the unions already named, were through the Retail Clerks Union (through which came to Guyana Gerald O'Keefe, one of the 50 persons named in the Security Branch report "A Research Paper on the PNC Terrorist Organization," which ^{gave the gory details of} ~~was responsible for arson, dynamiting of government buildings, etc.~~), The International Federation of Food and Drinks Workers; and the Newspaper Guild, the union of practising journalists in the United States.

The latter received \$1 million (US) of CIA money with which it helped to finance its subvertive activities in Latin America through the Inter-American Newspapermen's Association. This body was headed by the arch anti-communist, Dubois. And many Guyanese ^{journalists} unwittingly took part in conferences in Latin America sponsored by this association in the name of freedom and democracy.

The kind of freedom, which the Guild and its associates were defending, was clearly brought out in the case of their attacks against the PPP government. When the government tried to block Gene Meakin's stay in Guyana in 1964, the Reporter blamed me and the PPP for attacking the "free trade union movement" and infringing upon the "freedom of the press."

The US government, the CIA and their stooges and puppets have certainly made a farce of the word "free". They have prostituted it for their sinister purposes.

According to Sidney Lens, (The Nation, July 5, 1965) "What the US government does not do directly, because it would be flagrant meddling with the internal affairs of other nations, and what the CIA cannot do because it is suspect, the AFL-CIO does on their behalf. In ostensibly innocent relationships between unions of one country with another, the AFL-CIO throws its weight toward the making and unmaking of governments, with the purpose of instilling abroad the phobic anti-communism that has become entrenched at home. Jay Lovestone holds no public office, but it would be naive to deny that he influences national policy."

Lens then continued. The Meanyites, working in collaboration with the CIA "can claim credit since 1945:-

- 1) Helping to split the French and Italian labor movements.
- 2) Encouraging the emergence of conservative leaders in many German unions, and keeping them on the narrow cold-war path.
- 3) Involving themselves - some of them, not all - in the gathering of hard intelligence which has nothing to do with legitimate trade union work.
- 4) Subsidizing questionable elements in Marseilles and other European ports to break dock workers' boycotts of American arms shipments.
- 5) Giving support to unionists in British Guiana in an effort to depose the elected Jagan government.
- 6) Endorsing right-of-center laborites in the Dominican Republic who were dissatisfied with Juan Bosch and played a role in his ouster.
- 7) Training Brazilians who joined the generals in jettisoning the constitutional regime of Goulart.
- 8) Infiltrating American embassies with many labor attaches who share their views and put them into practice.

- 9) Defending every military intervention by the United States including, most recently, Cuba, Vietnam, the Congo and the Dominican Republic; and condemning nationalist forces, such as those in Panama, who oppose U.S. policy.
- 10) "Educating" literally tens of thousands of unionists in the Lovestone brand of anti-communism and setting them loose, with money and inspiration, against unions with left-of-center leadership."

Clearly "freedom" and "democracy" are convenient words used by the USA to spread US ideology and to cloak the deception of the people.