

U.S. Plot Against Trade Unions

By
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THE last few months have witnessed intensified activities by the most reactionary circles in the United States to maintain or establish control over independent states and to oust older imperialist rivals. There have been military coups in the Dominica Republic, Honduras, Iraq and South Vietnam—and a plot to overthrow the government of independent Cambodia.

These are the more blatant, violent and frantic measures taken by American imperialism. But alongside them, all the time, there goes the insidious and less recognised forms of neo-colonialism behind which Wall Street monopolies are working night and day to maintain and extend their dominion.

A major form of these new tactics is that of attempting to make use of the trade union movements in developing countries in order to reduce them to being tame appendages of the monopolies, co-operating with reactionary governments to restrict the demands of the workers, to paralyse their struggles and their will to resist, and, in every way possible, make it easier for the big employers to make record profits on the basis of low wages, poor conditions and intensification of labour. In this way it is hoped that the workers in these countries will be prevented from playing their necessary role in the national liberation movement, and thus the American imperialists will find it easier to keep these countries under their thumb.

There have been several books in the recent period, written by American publicists and political figures, openly explaining the aims and tactics of U. S. neo-colonialism. There has now appeared a new book which concentrates on a particular field, that of the trade unions in the developing countries.

THE "SPEARHEADS OF DEMOCRACY"

The book is called *Spearheads of Democracy—Labour in the Developing Countries*, and is written by George C. Lodge, son of the millionaire Henry Cabot Lodge, who took up his new post as U.S. Ambassador to South Vietnam on the eve of the coup against Diem. George Lodge has also had a political career, having served in both the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations, specialising in labour questions.

The book itself is sponsored by the council on Foreign Relations, a semi-official body, whose chairman is John J. McCloy, of the U.S. Defence Department, whose vice-president is David Rockefeller and whose board includes Allen W. Dulles of Central Intelligence Agency fame. In other words, a tie-up of a big business, the military and espionage.

Mr. Lodge is astute enough to understand the importance of the working class in the newly developing countries. In fact his whole thesis is based on this fact and on the recognition that "trade unions have come to be of central and critical importance in the world struggle today". He is also aware of the fact that "The obscure trade unionist of today may well be the president or prime minister of tomorrow. In many countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America trade unions are almost the only organised force in direct contact with the people and they are frequently among the most important influences on the people."

But Mr. Lodge is not interested in how the trade unions can help the workers make an effective stand against the big U.S. and other foreign monopolies who are battering on the peoples and resources of the newly developing countries. On the contrary, he is concerned with the pro-

duction of the cold war and with the possibilities of the various U.S. agencies utilising the trade unions in Africa, Asia and Latin America in order to carry forward U.S. foreign policy. This he does not even bother to conceal.

TOTAL WAR

"We are involved in a total war... This book is a plea to government, management and labour to perceive more precisely than they have the importance of organisations of workers in the developing world to the fulfilment of U.S. foreign policy..." And again, "our foreign policy cannot be successful unless it specifically includes and gives high priority to the activities of worker organisations in these vast areas."

The whole book is interlarded with such pronouncements, so that the reader is left in no doubt as to the author's intentions. He quite unashamedly, too, advises American business firms to co-operate with trade unions in the developing countries because of the "usefulness" of those organisations to "the company". In fact, he argues that by building up good relations with the trade unions, an American company operating overseas would be better able to "save its neck".

Having clearly set down his intentions, the author then goes on to explain, in considerable detail, his tactics. Again and again he emphasises the advantages to the American State Department of working indirectly through other bodies, of hiding its real face which would too easily be recognised for what it is.

He tries to explain the failure of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) to help forward U.S. foreign policy in the developing countries by reference to its "meager resources" for such work. "How much, after all", he asks, "can be done around the world with a few million dollars a year?" Historically, of course, the efforts of the ICFTU on behalf of international and especially American imperialism have failed, but the expenditure of a "few million dollars a year" (in fact, considerably more than a few million) has wrought considerable damage to the trade unions of Africa, Asia and Latin America, causing constant divisions in their ranks.

ICFTU—AN AGENT OF U.S. IMPERIALISM

The workers in these countries, however, are now more aware as to the nature of the ICFTU and less reluctant to allow their trade unions to be connected with this body. This is particularly so in Africa where in country after country the trade union centres have disaffiliated from the ICFTU and have condemned it as an agent of U.S. imperialism and weapon of neo-colonialism.

Any attempt in Africa to try to prevent the emergence of an independent African federation of trade unions would admit, Mr. Lodge, "not only fail to

get support but would tend to sustain the Communist contention that the ICFTU is a Trojan horse for Western "imperialism".

For these reasons, Mr. Lodge advises that the pushing of U.S. policy in developing countries could be better done now by other bodies rather than by the somewhat discredited ICFTU.

In this regard he thinks that much can be done by the AFL-CIO, although here again he confesses that "in many key areas it has been losing ground" very often because "it has unfortunately identified itself with the wrong people."

Not that the AFL-CIO has been parsimonious in spending money for its overseas activities on behalf of the U.S. State Department. Thus, writes Mr. Lodge, in 1954 alone the CIO spent more than 500,000 dollars on equipment for these purposes, in addition to other funds spent for overseas propaganda activities etc. Further, during 1960 and 1961, we are told "the AFL-CIO spent about a million and a half dollars for international activities, roughly 8 per cent of the federation's income." Over \$50,000 dollars went to Kenya.

Individual American unions have spent further sums for these purposes. Thus the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union "has spent well over \$1 million in the last three years" in Asia, Latin America and Europe, while the United Automobile Workers executive board voted to spend \$1.5 million, especially through the International Metalworkers' Federation (i.e. the metal International Trade Secretariat, linked with the I.C.F.T.U.).

AFL-CIO EXPOSED

But the AFL-CIO, like the ICFTU, also stands exposed before the workers of Africa, Asia and Latin America. For this reason Mr. Lodge proposes that the American trade unions, to accomplish their "international objectives" should "undertake certain new kinds of work... and expand and reorganise its international staff." Emphasising that "there must be recognition, at the highest levels of American labour", he then comes to one of the main ideas in this book. This is the tactic of channelling most of the funds and activities for influencing and corrupting trade unions in developing countries via the International Trade Secretariats (ITS) which are connected with the ICFTU although they officially retain a form of autonomy.

With an almost naive brazenness (only to be explained by Mr. Lodge's knowledge that few workers in Asia, Africa or Latin America will ever read his book) Mr. Lodge explains:

"In general, American unions should be encouraged to increase their participation with the Trade Secretariats... Given the suspicions which inevitably surround an American operating alone in some neutralist countries, given the reluctance of many good non-Communist worker leaders to accept help directly from the United States, given the risks of alienating our friends and allies in Europe, Great Britain,

and elsewhere by 'going it alone' in areas where they might feel a certain pride or right of jurisdiction, it might be better to work together through a Secretariat, in which American interests are protected..."

Having thus laid down his general tactical line—"all organising activity and all direct assistance... should be channelled through International Trade Secretariats", Mr. Lodge then explains how each arm of attack can fit in with this plan.

The ICFTU, he says should continue to collect its 'International Solidarity Fund' and then distribute these funds to the Trade Secretariats.

There should be co-operation with the AFL-CIO so that this body "would be able to act decisively and quickly... through its affiliates in the Trade Secretariats."

AN APPEAL

A special role is also found for American businesses operating overseas. Appealing to American businessmen to "put new emphasis on its good conduct abroad", Mr. Lodge emphasises, in answer to those who may cry: "What about profits for the stockholders?" that there is really no choice. If the U.S. monopolies operating overseas do not help to establish 'free, anti-communist' trade unions, if the whole aim of building up these class-collaborating trade unions fails, then, "of course, there will be no profits." So there we have it—the aim of this 'new' policy is to safeguard the profits of U.S. monopolies.

Further, stresses Mr. Lodge, this new course of action does not only offer "the chances of making the company's investment far more secure." But, "what is more important, the interests of the United States and the free

world would be immeasurably advanced."

The U.S. Government is also allocated its specific tasks in this all-embracing strategy advocated by Mr. Lodge for, as he explains so blandly, "there is an intimate link between foreign policy and the operations of U.S. companies abroad."

The author considers that the 13 million dollars a year officially spent by the U.S. administration on 'international labour affairs' is insufficient and calls for a big expansion of government activity on this front. He is anxious that the U.S. Government present itself in a new light to the newly-developing countries, and he even has the audacity to suggest that "We should... clarify for ourselves and others the economic system of the United States, explaining forthrightly that it is not a (capitalist) system, as capitalism is generally known and described, but is in fact nearer to what most of the developing people in the world mean by socialism". A strange form of socialism which is in favour of "making the company's investment more secure".

Mr. Lodge advocates that use be made of the Agency for International Development (AID) funds rather than working directly via the Government. He explains, with almost touching frankness:

"... many unions could not afford politically to accept aid from the U.S. government. It would make them appear to be agents of the United States which in neutral areas is sometimes inadvisable... There is, therefore, a good deal to be said for extending aid to foreign unions through the American labour movement and the International Trade Secretariats."

Mr. Lodge then explains the various ways in which

this might be done, with funds from the AID going from the U.S. to a particular government in Latin America, for example, and, at the same time the ITS suggesting to its affiliated union in that particular country that they should apply to their own government which will then simply pass on the AID funds!

"A similar route" he suggests "could be followed with the Inter-American Development Bank". He also advocates various other combinations for channelling funds to American sponsored trade unions in developing countries, utilising the U.S. unions, the International Trade Secretariats, the Agency for International Development, and even the International Labour Organisation.

LODGE'S TRICKS

But these are not quite all the tricks that Mr. Lodge has up his sleeve. "Not all aid need be American" he explains. "Israel comes to mind immediately... His- traidut leaders and technicians are acceptable in many quarters where an American would not be." He also reveals that in 1960 the AFL-CIO gave 180,000 dollars for the establishment of the Afro-Asian Institute for Labour Studies in Israel. So trade union "aid" from Israel is, after all, simply another disguised form of channelling U.S. funds to American sponsored unions in the developing countries.

Mr. Lodge is also anxious that more use should be made of labour attaches—"we should have a labour attaché in every country of the world"—and very keen that suitable candidates be recruited "from the American labour movement to serve in the Foreign Service as labour attaches."

If anyone has had any doubts before about the role being played by the American right-wing Labour leaders towards the trade unions in the developing countries,

these doubts should now be laid at rest, for Mr. Lodge has made it quite clear. As he himself says, the American Government, "American management and labour abroad" are nothing other than "three arms of our foreign relations".

These three arms are still actively at work, disrupting trade unions on the basis of "anti-communism", buying up corrupt trade union officials, and trying to turn the trade unions in Asia, Africa and Latin America into simple tools of U.S. foreign policy.

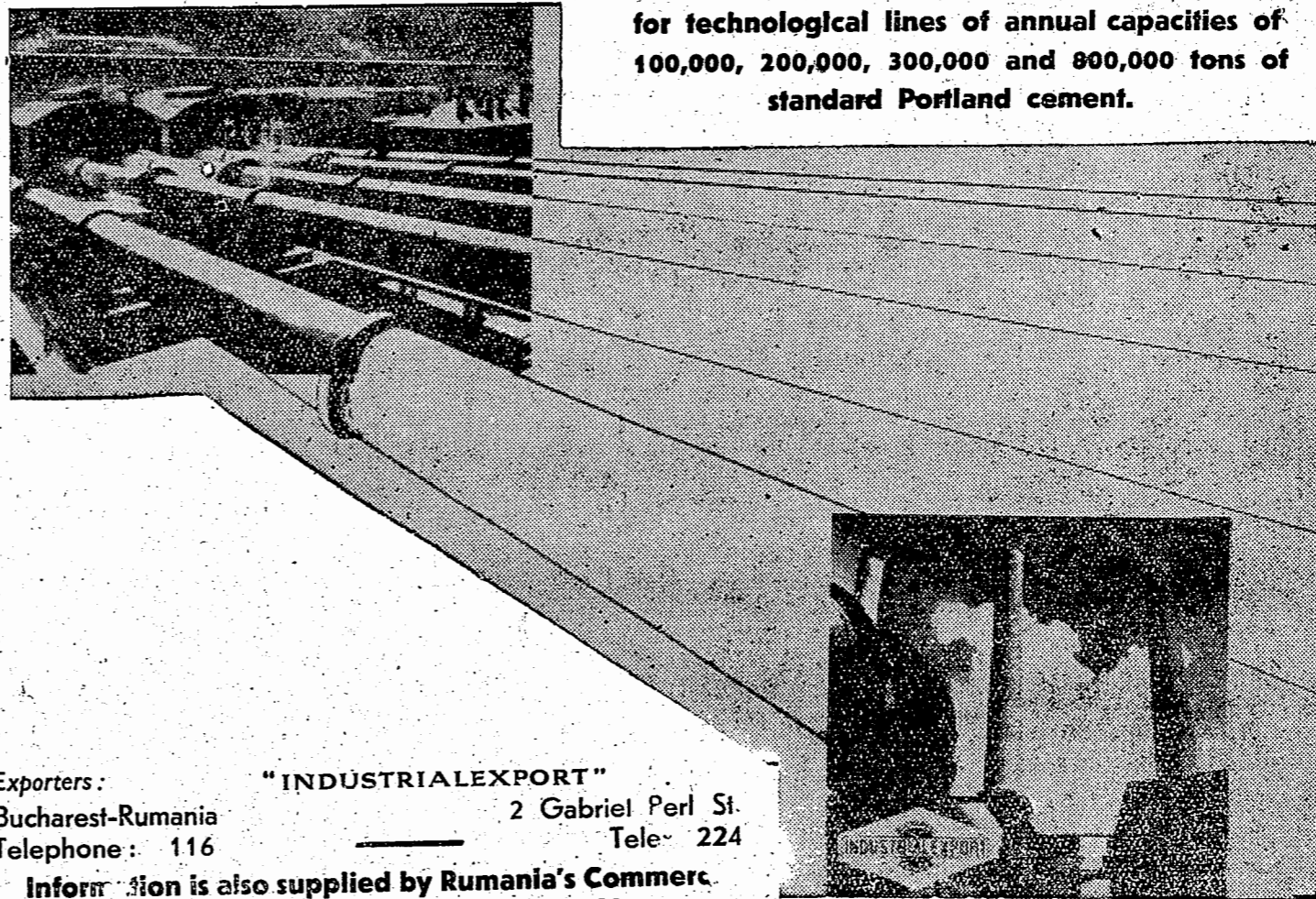
The dangers of this menace have recently been seen in British Guiana, where American-backed trade union leaders have worked openly with U.S. and local reaction in an attempt to overthrow the left-wing Progressive People's Party Government led by Dr. Cheddi Jagan. It is not without significance that one of the main forms, through which finance has been channelled to these right-wing leaders in British Guiana has been the International Trade Secretariats so favoured by Mr. Lodge.

In writing his book, Mr. Lodge shows complete contempt for the workers in whom he is apparently so interested. He treats them as pawns in his cold war game, and it never seems to cross his mind that the workers may have other views, let alone, that they may get to know of the contents of his book and strongly resent this open admission of U.S. interference in overseas trade union organisations.

This book is one more warning that behind its mask of "anti-colonialism", U.S. imperialism is utilising every trick in the neo-colonialist pack in order to penetrate the developing countries and bring them under American domination.

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