

Reds' Visas Blocked by AFL-CIO

Soviet Labor Group Exchange Thwarted By State Dept. Aide

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The AFL-CIO, working through the State Department, has kept a Soviet labor group from coming to the United States on an exchange set up by a private American organization.

This is the most recent instance of an AFL-CIO block being placed across one of the "bridges" President Johnson says he would like to build to Communist countries.

It also helped determine United Auto Workers President Walter P. Reuther, earlier this week, to level an unprecedented public challenge to George Meany, head of the 13-million-member, politically powerful labor federation.

Objects to Boycott

Reuther specifically objected to the AFL-CIO boycott of an International Labor Organization conference in Geneva, after a Pole was elected its first Communist president last week.

Meany held public silence yesterday on Reuther's challenge.

Nor would Meany comment on Geneva press reports that the AFL-CIO was contemplating a break with the ILO, a special United Nations agency. The labor delegation is expected to leave Geneva today.

Visas Denied

The thwarted labor exchange was worked out by a private New York based group, the Citizen Exchange Corps, headed by adman Stephen D. James. Eight Russians were to arrive June 6. On June 2, James said, he learned their visa applications had been denied.

High Department sources made clear that AFL-CIO pressure was responsible for the denial. The Department's
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stated reason for the rejection mirrored the AFL-CIO stand: that the Soviet group included some union officials; that although they sought individual tourist visas, they were in fact a union delegation; and that admitting them would equate Soviet and American unions and lend unjustified status to the Russians.

Angry UAW officials, who had informally arranged the Russians' Washington and Detroit programs, are now lobbying for their visas in Upper Washington echelons.

Other Grievances

The UAW, the single big detente-minded union actively bucking the cold-war policies of the AFL-CIO, has other grievances:

- The Federation throttled a proposal by the American Ambassador to Poland, John A. Gronouski, to send some Polish-speaking unionists from his home state of Wisconsin to Poland.

- It warned locals to avoid a visiting Yugoslav union official last year and reportedly blocked a contemplated appearance by the man at Amer-

ican University. Said to be the only Communist union leader to get an American visa since the war, the Yugoslav was received informally by the UAW.

- The AFL-CIO has stifled internal State Department efforts to funnel some of the American Government's foreign labor activities through separate American unions, instead of continuing to funnel them all through the AFL-CIO.

Sitting there as Meany's director of international affairs is Jay Lovestone, an ardent anti-Communist accused recently by his UAW counterpart and long-lasting foe, Victor Reuther, of being "involved" with the Central Intelligence Agency.

Nominated by Meany

Sitting at the State Department end of the labor-government conduit is George P. Delaney, Special Assistant to the Secretary and Coordinator of International Labor Affairs. Nominated by Meany for his job, Delaney formerly was an AFL-CIO international representative.

Delaney is one of two U.S. Government delegates to the Geneva ILO conference. Labor and business put up their own delegates. The U.S. pays the way for them all.

A State Department spokesman was asked yesterday whether Delaney was backing the AFL-CIO conference boycott or the U.S. Government position, which is to accept the tripartite delegation but to be against the boycott. The spokesman said "nobody knows" Delaney's position but it was "assumed" he supported the Government.

It is through Delaney that the AFL-CIO recommends candidates for the 80-odd labor attache posts in U.S. Embassies. Union sources say the attaches are generally union men dependent not on State but on the AFL-CIO for their careers.

That is why, informed critics say, the attaches tend to show the AFL-CIO distaste for unions it considers Communist or Communist-tainted, and why more Embassy overtures are not made to the democratic left abroad.