

Use of Marines Irked Lovestone

By Dan Kurzman

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When United States Marines stormed ashore in Santo Domingo during the Dominican Republic revolution last April, Jay Lovestone, who runs the AFL-CIO's private foreign policy, was displeased.

It was a mistake to send Marines in, he felt. For Marines have a bad reputation in Latin America for their past invasions of Latin territories. The United States should have sent in soldiers exclusively.

Extent of Dissatisfaction

This was the extent of Lovestone's dissatisfaction with the U.S. military operation. In fact, the Inter-American Labor Bulletin, edited by his chief agent in Latin America, Andrew C. McLellan, went further than the U.S. Government in praising the forces that opposed the return to the Dominican Republic of exiled constitutional President Juan Bosch.

McLellan described rightist Gen. Elias Wessin y Wessin, who led the anti-Boschists as "incorruptible" and reported that Wessin had overthrown Bosch in 1963 "when it became obvious that the Bosch administration was unable to control the lawlessness which had enveloped the nation."

Lovestone, who once headed the American Communist Party, now represents a powerful if anonymous influence on U.S. foreign policy. His views on how to deal with dictatorships are therefore worth noting.

Lovestone's attitude toward rightist military and other regimes is shaped largely by one factor: Will the regime permit the existence of independent unions that presumably would take advice from the AFL-CIO?

Lovestone feels that a distinction must be made between "totalitarian" and "military" dictatorships. The AFL-CIO will oppose any "totalitarian" dictatorship, that is, one that controls labor completely as in Spain, Haiti, and Paraguay.

But it will deal with a "mil-

itary" dictatorship which permits unions a large degree of independence, apparently regardless of other forms of suppression in the country. Thus, in Latin America, the AFL-CIO is entrenched in Brazil, Guatemala, Honduras, and other countries despite dictatorial rule. In general, this policy has coincided with that of the Johnson Administration.

It is a policy that has often created great strains within Latin America's free labor movement in view of the reluctance of many unions to deal with unconstitutional regimes or with labor leaders subservient to them.

Lovestone has tried to ease the strains by working through an Inter-American Regional Labor Organization (ORIT), which is the Latin branch of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

Responsive to Direction

ORIT, which Lovestone and McLellan control with promises of economic support, has been responsive to AFL-CIO direction. This is a welcome relief to Lovestone after the independence tantrums of the ICFTU.

ORIT teaches Latin labor leaders the essentials of democratic unionism, stressing labor's role in the Alliance for Progress. ORIT-trained labor leaders have taken over unions in Honduras, Uruguay and El Salvador that had been dominated by Communists, and reduced Communist influence in others.

In British Guiana, when former Prime Minister Cheddi Jagan, an extreme leftist, called a sugar workers' strike in 1964 in an effort to replace a democratic ORIT union with one that he controlled as the sole union bargaining agent, the AFL-CIO sent in teams of advisers and tons of money to help crush the strike and hattle Jagan's goon squads.

Its efforts prevented the extremist Prime Minister from

imposing a stranglehold on the largely sugar-supported economy.

But despite such triumphs, ORIT is severely criticized in both American and Latin labor circles, and even in the privacy of some Administration offices. Fundamentally, criticism centers around what is regarded as Lovestone's tendency to confine AFL-CIO activities to the establishment of a narrow American-style unionism that can promote only the mild social changes derivable from collective bargaining.

This is hardly adequate social medicine, it is argued, in a region largely dominated by oligarchs and militarists whose feudal power has no counterpart in modern American capitalism and can only be broken by a complete restructuring of society.

Unholy Alliance

The main source of this medicine, the critics say, is an unreasonable fear that communism might emerge from deep reform. It is the kind of medicine, they say, that has led to the unholy alliances with military dictators.

The Dominican situation is most often mentioned as a case in point. It is pointed out that the AFL-CIO-guided CONATRAL was the only large Dominican labor force that did not protest Bosch's ouster and replacement by a de facto regime in 1963, and the only one also to disapprove of his return in 1965.

McLellan explains that, aside from Bosch's relaxed attitude toward communism, this anti-Bosch stance lies in the fact that some people in the Bosch party—not Bosch himself—had wanted to place CONATRAL under the party's control. But Bosch denies this.

In any event, party control of labor unions is common practice in Venezuela, Peru, Chile and other Latin countries with democratic governments.

As for Bosch's alleged "softness" on communism, ORIT's critics add, he had fought the Reds in the labor movement, while McLellan, it is pointed

ORIT had given AFL-CIO financial support to a Communist Dominican union before Bosch came to power.

In Cuba, during the regime of Fulgencia Batista, the AFL-CIO backed the Cuban Confederation of Labor (CTC), whose leaders closely cooperated with Batista.

In March, 1958, under such pressure from ORIT's Latin unions, Lovestone sent Serafino Romualdi, then the AFL-CIO representative to ORIT, to Havana on a secret mission.

Romualdi proposed to CTC Secretary General Eusebio Mujal that he contact Fidel Castro and offer to throw the CTC's support to him if he promised to let it keep its freedom, and presumably its leaders. Castro refused to agree to any conditions, and the proposal fell through.

When Castro overthrew Batista, the old CTC leaders fled and new democratic, anti-Batista unionists took over the union and would have nothing to do with Romualdi and ORIT until it was too late; communism swallowed them up.

Some observers say that if the AFL-CIO had not backed a "Batista" union, the new leaders would have dealt with ORIT and, with its support, might have been able to have upset Castro's communization plans.

Today, Mujal and other top leaders of the "Batista" union, who are suspected of having CIA connections, are working for organizations supported by ORIT.

Lovestone's cooperation with U.S. policy in Latin America became particularly conspicuous after Thomas C. Mann took over as Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs at the start of the Johnson Administration.

Although since promoted to Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, Mann still is dominant in Latin-American policymaking.

Mann is a close personal friend of McLellan. Mann comes from Laredo, Tex., while McLellan, born in Scotland, moved to a nearby town in his youth, working as a druggist and livestock inspector. The two men coordinated their activities in El Salvador in the mid-1950s when Mann served as Ambassador there

and McLellan represented ORIT in Central America.

Both saw a solution to Latin-American problems through what they like to call "pragmatic" policies, particularly where dealings with dictatorships were concerned. McLellan's pragmatism, however, was most dramatically displayed in 1962, before Bosch came to power in the Dominican Republic, when he set loose brawny stevedores armed with steel hooks to clear downtown Santo Domingo of leftists riding bicycle chains.

One of Mann's first actions when he took over as Assistant



ANDREW McLELLAN
... Latin American agent

Secretary was to ask McLellan and Lovestone to speak to his staff. Lovestone delivered a speech on world communism, criticizing the thesis of State's Planning Council Policy Chairman Walt Rostow that there are substantial differences between the Soviet Union and Communist China.

Through the Administration, Lovestone's influence has even reached into the OAS. Late in 1964, when OAS officials presented a program for the training of Latin-American workers in development planning to a finance committee, a U.S. representative suggested that they get in touch with McLellan for discussions.

They reluctantly agreed, though refusing McLellan's suggestion that they consult with him regularly on the project. They felt that an international organization shouldn't have to consult with a private group.

Aside from the AFL-CIO funds made available to member unions, ORIT, which embraces 6 million of some 15 million organized Latin workers, owes its survival not to its popularity but to the lack of attractive competition. Castro has so far been unable to set up an important labor organization, though he is trying.

The group with the biggest potential appears to be the anti-Communist but anti-American Latin American Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (CLASC). This group has bitterly castigated ORIT as a tool of "American imperialism," even while seeking to participate in the Alliance for Progress. McLellan has suggested in turn that CLASC is Communist-dominated.

"If CLASC gets more moderate leadership and develops more constructive policies, it could very well sweep the continent," one U.S. labor authority said. "It reflects the nationalism and the fear of American-style free enterprise that many Latin Americans feel as the result of past U.S. exploitation. In short, it is a Latin-dominated and not a U.S.-dominated organization."

This is the core of the challenge facing Jay Lovestone in Latin America today.

NEXT: Lovestone's Foreign Aid Program.