

Lovestone's Departure

The retirement of Jay Lovestone, the grey eminence of AFL-CIO's foreign relations, marks the end of an era for the U.S. labor movement. It will not go unnoticed in the world intelligence community.

Except for George Meany, whose intimate adviser he was for years in the field of foreign policy, Mr. Lovestone has done more than any individual in the AFL-CIO to shape official labor attitudes in the international field.

Just how Lovestone operated at one stage on the international field has been described by columnist Thomas W. Braden, once a top-flight assistant to Allen Dulles, director of the Central Intelligence Agency. With funds provided by the CIA, Lovestone and his assistant, Irving Brown, were able to beef up their support of Europe's non-Communist trade unions in the 1950's. They were thus able to resist the aggressive and highly successful Soviet-subsidized unions in France and Italy. But, wrote Mr. Braden some time ago, "though Lovestone wanted our money, he didn't want to tell us precisely how he spent it. We knew he was laying out nearly two million dollars a year. In his view, what more did we want to know?" When Braden appealed to an unidentified top, responsible labor leader, he was told, "Lovestone and his bunch do a good job."

Now past 75, Lovestone began his political career as an activist in the Communist movement in the United States. After a few years, he maneuvered his way into the leadership of the American Communist Party. In 1929 he broke with the official Communist Party. He had been evicted from his U.S. office by the Communist International. For about a decade after that he led the Communist Party (Opposition), also known as the CPO.

With this leverage, he hoped to recapture his once-eminent position in the Communist movement. He sought unsuccessfully to develop a trade union following to provide political muscle. At one time, he planned to play a significant role in the then newly created United Auto Workers in the late 1930's, setting his cap for groups which included the brothers, Walter, Roy and Victor Reuther. He failed dismally in this attempt at political seduction. He never forgave Reuther for giving him the back of his hand. Lovestone became Walter Reuther's implacable enemy, hinting darkly that he was in cahoots with the Communists and fellow-travelers.

After scrapping the debilitated CPO, the embittered Lovestone for a while wandered unattached. Through the intercession of a political ally in the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, he was given a desk by David Dubinsky, president of the ILGWU, to keep track of events on the international field.

But, no file clerk was he. Mr. Lovestone soon became a source of ready information on personalities and shenanigans in the Communist world. He gradually won the confidence of Mat-

Mr. Herling writes frequently on labor topics for these pages.

thew Woll, then the chairman of the AFL International Affairs Committee, and not long after, that of George Meany, who was then on his way to the presidency of the American Federation of Labor.

A little later, a considerable section of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), as well as the AFL unions, came together with the British and German trade unions to establish the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). Not long after the creation of the ICFTU, Lovestone began to build his influence in the AFL by issuing warnings of impending disaster against ICFTU leadership and many of the Socialist-oriented trade unionists in Europe. A former Communist, Mr. Lovestone retained his hostility against the Socialists and leap-frogged in Europe as well as in the U.S. over to the more conservative groups. He was decorated by Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. He soon became known as George Meany's mouthpiece in internal struggles inside the ICFTU.

Meany did not come to his suspicions of those he regarded as Communists because of Lovestone. But Lovestone provided the untiring zest for plot and counter-plot. With the merger of the AFL and the CIO and the increasing disagreement inside the AFL-CIO between Meany and Walter Reuther, Lovestone happily helped stoke the fires of hostility between the men on domestic and foreign issues. So far as Lovestone was concerned, anything that diminished Reuther enhanced his position as a Meany loyalist.

In the meantime, Lovestone had become the right-wing guru for trade union leaders. He wrote their speeches, fed them ideas, and developed a respectful constituency.

But now, Lovestone's career as the court intellectual for the AFL-CIO is officially over. He leaves behind him his old colleague, Irving Brown, stationed by the AFL-CIO in Europe, who from time to time has proved himself more adjustable to changing realities than his one-time mentor.

Lovestone's place as director of the AFL-CIO International Affairs Department will now be assumed by Ernest S. Lee, now assistant director. Lee is a former major in the Marines, decorated for bravery in Korea. He has developed a consuming interest in international labor matters, encouraged by his wife, the former Eileen Meany, and his father-in-law. Lee is also a graduate of Georgetown School of Foreign Service. His background, vastly different from Lovestone's, leaves him without ideological hangs-up. His is unhampered by the psychological subtleties of an intricate past, and unburdened by excessive response to the problems besetting foreign labor movements. He is an amiable "fortress-America" man.