PLACING EMPHASIS on the "labour lieutenants of the capitalist class, channels of reformism and chauvinism", Lenin wrote at considerable length about the relations between the labour movement and imperialism. In this work, a brilliant young "new left" historian takes up the problem of the continuous support given by the leaders of organised labour to US imperialism in this century. Radosh traces the position of US labour leaders on the 1898 war with Spain, the First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution, down through recent events such as the Cuban Revolution, the US invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965, and the Vietnam War.

For the general reader, the book's greatest appeal will almost certainly lie in the chapters devoted to US labour as the cold war ally of the CIA and the State Department. The author extensively discusses the shadowy figure of the fanatical anti-communist Jay Lovestone, who for many years has headed the secretive Department of International Affairs of the American Confederation of Labor — Congress for Industrial Organisations (AFL-CIO).

The record of this Department includes actions such as helping to split the French and Italian union movements in the immediate postwar period, using strike-breakers and hired thugs to assure the unloading of US arms in Marseilles and other European ports in 1949-50, promoting a general strike in British Guiana in 1963 in an effort to depose Dr. Cheddi Jagan's elected government, training Brazilian unions to help right-wing army generals to overthrow the elected government of Joao Goulart in 1964, gathering hard intelligence, and educating thousands of foreign unionists in its own uncompromising brand of anti-communism and setting them loose with money and other forms of assistance to fight native unions with left-of-centre leadership. At all times, it has given unqualified support to the arms race and fervently approved of the counter-revolutionary actions of the Pentagon and the CIA in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, the Congo and Vietnam.

Close to Lovestone was a small coterie of associates, including his chief European envoy Irving Brown, who were equally committed to saving the world labour movement from communism. Assigned to assist Brown in the immediate postwar years was a man not specifically referred to in Radosh's work but who is of interest to readers concerned about US penetration of the Australian labour movement — Harry Goldberg.

Goldberg's first task after the Second World War was to assist Brown to split the Italian trade union movement by making common cause with Roman Catholics whom they succeeded in prodding out of the General Confederation of Labor while providing the general wherewithal for the unsavoury operation. It is interesting to recall that this was a time when the Italian Communists were incredibly moderate, participating in non-socialist governments and avidly working to increase production. It should also be noted that until recently US social scientists who worked on the Italian trade union movement somehow never managed to get around to discussing the AFL-CIO's intervention in the internal affairs of Italy.
Goldberg's next assignment was Indonesia. Berger has stated that a "great deal of money" from AFL and US government sources was pumped into this mission. Although Goldberg managed to find time to write a booklet on Indonesian trade unionism he failed completely to build up a local replica of the AFL and by the middle-fifties the fanatical local anti-communist unions were extremely weak. In 1958 there occurred the abortive Outer Islands Rebellion supported by the CIA and led by former Cabinet Minister Sumitro who fled to Singapore where he became a business consultant. David Ransom has observed: "Powerful Americans like Harry Goldberg, a lieutenant of labor boss and CIA coordinator Jay Lovestone, kept in close contact and saw that Sumitro's messages got through to his Indonesian friends." Not unexpectedly, Goldberg was deported from Indonesia and "confined to the home office to write reports," although he triumphantly revisited Indonesia after the army coup.

Goldberg also turned his attention to Australia. His first visit was a controversial tour in 1960, after which he wrote a confidential report that was subsequently "liberated" and published in the Australian underground press in 1969. This remarkable document was interesting not so much for its crude anti-communism or for the author's inimitable arrogance but because it contained a number of fascinating evaluations of local political personalities. The goodies were the "brilliant, forceful" B. A. Santamaria, Dr. Knopfelmacher who was "doing good work . . . lighting comie influence" and the late Sir Wilfrid Kent Hughes, "a good guy" who briefed Goldberg on "the opportunism and lack of principle" in the Liberal Party vis-a-vis Chinese communism. Predictably the baddies were Albert McNolty and Jack Tripovich of the Victorian ALP ("two real vermin"), Jim Kenny of the NSW Labor Council ("a perfect specimen of lack of principle and complete gutlessness"), and Bill Evans of the ACTU ("abysmal ignorance of morals and principles"). Goldberg was not at all impressed with the Commonwealth Department of Labour. In fact, he described its then permanent secretary, Sir Harry Bland, as a "bully boy". And as for the then Minister of Labour, Mr. William McMahon, he was simply "a nincompoop".

The report also cast a searching light on overall US strategy toward Australia and strongly suggested that outside interference had not diminished in the intervening period. A prominent member of the Australian Association for Cultural Freedom, Professor Henry Mayer of the Department of Government at the University of Sydney, believes that this "most revealing" document is genuine.

Goldberg paid a shorter call in 1966. The scatterbrained wife of the former US Ambassador to Australia has recorded that at the US Embassy in Canberra he "thrilled dinner guests with an impromptu concert of classical numbers on the Residence concert grand." In June 1969 Goldberg returned once again. Unlike the first well-publicised tour, one of his few public engagements during this visit was to address a meeting in Sydney sponsored by the Australian Association for Cultural Freedom where his attentive listeners included old friends from the right wing of the ALP such as L. Short of the Ironworkers' Association and J. Riordan of the Clerks' Union. One reason for the lack of publicity accompanying this trip was the disclosure two years previously that the CIA had financed the major part of the operations of the AFL-CIO's Department of International Affairs.