American Labor's Global Ambassadors: The International History of the AFL-CIO during the Cold War

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Following World War II, the AFL-CIO pursued an ambitious international agenda. To its leaders, the imperatives of saving Western Europe from Stalinism, rolling back Soviet gains in Eastern Europe, containing Communism around the world, throwing off the shackles of colonialism, and overcoming "uneven development" justified extraordinary measures. They sought to protect international labor while fostering American-style "business unionism," which used collective bargaining and strikes to capture a greater share of the capitalist system's economic pie. At the same time, they believed that thwarting Communist designs on local organizations was a prerequisite to cultivating free labor movements and creating prosperity for the world's workers - and battling Communism often meant working in conjunction with the US government, including even the Central Intelligence Agency. This sweeping state-of-the-field collection brings together contributions from leading diplomatic, labor, and transnational historians to explore and assess the AFL-CIO's successes, challenges, and inevitable compromises as it pursued these varied initiatives during the Cold War era.

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