

SLAYING IS ONLY LATEST CRIME TO TOUCH TEAMSTERS' UNION

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The teamsters' union, characterized for decades by corruption and criminal activity, has been touched by violence again with the murder Thursday of Allen M. Dorfman, a long-time consultant to its Central States Pension Fund.

Leaders of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters deny their union is corrupt. They say the Government has singled it out for attacks, including the highly publicized investigations in the 1950's by the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field.

Last spring, Roy L. Williams, president of the nation's largest industrial union, which claims a membership of 1.7 million, looked out the window of his Washington office at the Capitol across the street and said: "Every time those senators or Congressmen find themselves with nothing to do, they look over here and say, 'We haven't done anything with the teamsters lately, let's harass the teamsters.'"

Seven months after Mr. Williams's remarks he was found guilty of Federal conspiracy charges, the third of the last four presidents of the union to be convicted of criminal activity. Thousands Are Honest

Despite the fact that the union has hundreds of thousands of honest, hard-working members and officers, an unsavory image stalks the teamsters.

H.W. Benson, executive director of the New-York based Association for Union Democracy, said the union must be regarded as corrupt to a major degree.

"This doesn't mean they don't have a lot of good locals," Mr. Benson said. But he added, "Hoffa is murdered. Dorfman is murdered. Provenzano is in jail for murder."

He was referring to James R. Hoffa, the former teamster president who disappeared in July 1975, and is generally presumed to have been murdered; Mr. Dorfman, who, like his stepfather, Paul (Red) Dorfman, was a close associate of Mr. Hoffa, and Anthony Provenzano, former president of a New Jersey teamsters local, who is serving a 20-year prison term after being convicted of racketeering and murder. 'How Many Did He Drive Out?'

Mr. Benson recalled that in the 1960's young radicals had a "begrudging respect for Hoffa as a tough guy, a guy who had faced up to the bosses." But he asked, "But how many guys who were 10 times more admirable than Hoffa did he drive out of the labor movement?"

The union's multibillion-dollar Central States Pension Fund, one of the nation's largest private pension plans, has long been a target of Federal investigators. The fund, which

provides benefits for some 83,400 retired workers, has 400,000 active participants in 300 teamster locals in 33 states from the Eastern seaboard to the Rocky Mountains.

Mr. Williams became a trustee of the fund in 1955, which gave him immense power in the union. The Labor Department gained special power over the fund in 1977, forcing the resignation of the trustees, including Mr. Williams, and, ultimately, Federal controls over the fund. The Labor Department accused fund officials of "gross mismanagement."

The Government said in 1978 that \$425 million was disbursed from the fund in "questionable" loans, much of this to companies controlling gambling casinos in Las Vegas, Nev. Beginning after World War II, teamster money, including money from pension funds, was in large part responsible for the construction of casinos in Las Vegas.

Criminal Convictions

Both Mr. Hoffa and his predecessor, Dave Beck, served prison terms. Numerous local and regional teamster officers have been convicted of crimes, including John A. Cody, long one of the most influential labor leaders in the New York metropolitan area, who was sentenced to five years in prison last December for labor racketeering and tax evasion.

On Dec. 15, Mr. Williams, Mr. Dorfman and three other men were convicted on charges of conspiring to bribe Howard W. Cannon, then a United States Senator from Nevada, to delay or defeat trucking deregulation measures.

The union's extensive legal difficulties led to its expulsion in 1957 from the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations. This occurred even though the union was financially important to the federation, paying about 10 percent of the organization's per capita tax. The vote, with union leaders casting votes representing their memberships, was 10.5 million members to 2.3 million.

Not long before his death, George Meany, who as A.F.L.-C.I.O. president guided the expulsion of the union, told a biographer, Archie Robinson: "Hoffa had a gangster mentality. He was not a trade unionist in my book. It was a way of life with him. He loved power. He loved to push people around."

Steven Brill, the author of "The Teamsters," a study of the union and of its leaders, said the union was "corrupt at its core" and had been since Mr. Hoffa, with the assistance, he said, of organized crime members, took over control of the union.

Mr. Brill said yesterday that the death of Mr. Dorfman was more significant to the union than a change of presidents because, in his view, the last three presidents, Mr. Williams, Frank E. Fitzsimmons and Mr. Hoffa, "have reported to Allen Dorfman."

He said that in 1978 he interviewed Mr. Dorfman for two and a half hours, and in that time, Mr. Dorfman took four telephone calls from Mr. Fitzsimmons, then the president, and made four other calls to union leaders.

"He was really the center" of the union, Mr. Brill said.

Illustrations: photo of Lynn and James Dorfman

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