

Soghoian Was on Nixon 'Team' in 1968

By Jack Anderson

A mysterious fortune hunter arrested by federal agents for carrying a snooping device and working as an illegal foreign agent for Zambia served as an "electronics expert" on the 1968 Nixon campaign team.

He is Marshall Soghoian, who handled secret electronic chores at the Willard Hotel headquarters of the 1968 "United Citizens for Nixon-Agnew" in Washington.

For about four years, Soghoian has annually purchased some \$1 million worth of electronic and technical equipment from American businessmen for use in Zambia. He failed, however, to register as a foreign agent.

When he was arrested in Washington a few days ago, he was carrying a small transmitter designed to fit into a wall socket. An unusually high bond of \$250,000 was set, on grounds that Soghoian had "access to virtually unlimited amounts of cash."

Sources who worked for the 1968 Nixon campaign have told us that Soghoian joined the team as a "security man" who specialized in electronics.

We have been unable to establish that Soghoian was involved in any electronic surveillance of Nixon opponents. However, one high-level source in the '68 campaign told us that Soghoian "at one point talked

about putting a telescope on the roof of the Willard to peer into (Hubert) Humphrey's headquarters." The same source said that Soghoian was paid \$1500 to \$1600 a month for his expertise.

This account was disputed by Michael Gill, the 1968 assistant national chairman of "United Citizens" and a member of the D.C. Republican Committee. Gill, a Washington public relations man and nephew of Mrs. Dwight D. Eisenhower, told my associate Joseph Spear he was "absolutely sure" Soghoian was not a salaried campaign worker.

He met Soghoian at the 1968 Republican convention, Gill said, and the man later came around and "volunteered" his services. Soghoian, said Gill, was coordinator of a conference phone call between candidate Nixon and the 50 state chairmen of "United Citizens." Soghoian later acted as the "technical director" of Nixon's "United Citizens" inaugural gala.

Still later, Gill came to know Soghoian even better. Gill arranged with the Zambian government to help build an "internal communications system," and he hired Soghoian to help him. "He stole the contract from me," Gill lamented. This was the project Soghoian was working on, apparently, when he was busted by the FBI.

Footnote: Soghoian's bond

was later reduced to \$100,000. After posting it, he was released in the custody of an uncle. We attempted to reach Soghoian for his comment, but he failed to return our calls.

2 Million Wreck—Congress has spent close to \$2 million to buy and renovate a Capitol Hill hotel for use as an office building, even though it may soon fall victim to the wrecking ball.

The former Congressional Hotel, located across the street from two House office buildings, was originally bought by the government over a decade ago at a cost of more than \$1.5 million.

Last year Congress stopped leasing and took over the operation itself.

In recent months, the lawmakers have spent more than \$250,000 to construct offices in the dilapidated building. Even with the improvements, however, the aging floors can support nothing heavier than a two-drawer file cabinet.

As it now stands, the Congressional is occupied by an amalgam of government and nongovernment tenants. Twenty Congressmen reside in apartments on the eighth floor. Six floors below them are the offices of three lobbying groups—the American Trucking Association, the American Railroad Association, and the Emergency Committee for Full Funding of Education programs. These special interest

groups kick in a total of \$36,500 to Congress for rent.

Despite all the expense, the building may soon be destroyed. The new "annex" is a "temporary" arrangement, Philip Roof, chief assistant to the Capitol Architect, conceded to us. "We are hopeful," he added, "that we can tear it down in the not too distant future."

Let There Be Light—The Department of Transportation is snubbing a demand by the Auto Safety Center to take action against Yamaha motorcycles.

Yamaha's "Enduro" bikes have lights that function only when the motor runs. If a bike stalls at night, the lights go off and it becomes a sitting duck for an oncoming car. There are thousands of the trim, but tricky road-or-trail bikes on the highways.

The Center, founded by Ralph Nader, learned of the Yamaha hazard from Carroll Hupp, of Akron, Ohio, whose son suffered permanent injury in a nighttime motorcycle accident. Though the Auto Safety Center demanded immediate action to ban or modify the "Enduros," the Department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration told the Center no such drastic action was needed. Yamaha International advised us the bikes are made with magnetos instead of batteries "to save on weight."

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