

Nixon Spy Reported Meany Overture

By Jack Anderson

Secret spy reports telling of AFL-CIO President George Meany's testiness toward the Democratic presidential contenders, persuaded President Nixon to court the old labor curmudgeon during the 1972 campaign.

White House sources tell us H. R. Haldeman, then the President's chief of staff, opposed any rapprochement with labor. The spy reports, however, quoted caustic outbursts from Meany against leading Democrats and pleaded that the old warhorse could be won over with a presidential pat on the head.

This finally convinced Mr. Nixon to carry on a flirtation with Meany for the duration of the campaign. The stormy courtship, however, was based on espionage information which Meany now disputes.

The Nixon spy, Seymour Freidin, reported to the White House that he spoke to Meany off-the-record on at least three occasions, once over a gin rummy game. But when we made Freidin's reports available to the AFL-CIO boss, he sent back word: "This is absolute nonsense. I never saw Freidin in my life. I never talked with him. I've never been interviewed by him."

Freidin's reports from inside the AFL-CIO began on April 13, 1971. He quoted AFL-CIO adviser Jay Lovestone as telling him at an off-the-record lunch

that Meany had "chewed out" Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey (D-Minn.) over his opposition to the supersonic transport plane "as if he were a kindergarten brat. The old man told Hubert... that he couldn't get a nickel from the AFL-CIO if he (Meany) could manage it."

On Sept. 7, 1971, Freidin sent another report to the White House telling how Meany had disparaged the Democrats. "George Meany was in crusty, acidulous form when I met him for 40 minutes over the Labor Day weekend," reported Freidin. "This meeting was off the record."

When Humphrey's name came up, according to Freidin, Meany snorted: "He is so screwed up that he even tries to make out that he's 35 years old. That silly b— even has his hair dyed at least once a week. It shines with a red tinge... He's going no place."

Meany reportedly referred to Sen. Edmund S. Muskie (D-Maine), then leading the presidential polls, contemptuously as "Shmuskie." Freidin quoted Lovestone as explaining the Muskie was "a bad Polish joke."

In those pre-primary days, Meany reportedly dismissed Sen. George McGovern (D-S.D.) with a short and a prophetic crack: "He's the kind of guy who would make us Republicans or we wouldn't vote at all or support anyone."

But the following July, over a gin rummy hand at the Demo-

cratic convention, Meany supposedly told Freidin caustically: ("McGovern) is unprincipled; he's a creep. I wouldn't trust him even if he stayed in my sight."

Freidin's reports strongly suggest that the President should butter up Meany personally. The crusty labor lord suffered from a "bruised ego," wrote Freidin. "Meany wants to bargain with or talk directly to the President. This came through loud and clear at least half a dozen times in our conversation."

Freidin quoted Meany as grumping: "How the hell do you cooperate (with the White House) if you can't talk to the team manager, only to his assistant coaches?"

Freidin urged on Jan. 11, 1972, that Meany wanted "to somehow patch things up with the President and at the same time, save face... He said of the box of cigars the President sent him as a Christmas gift: 'It was very thoughtful. I wish that he'd also had the time to call and say hello.'

In other words, it seems Meany would dearly love to have a call from the President inquiring into his health."

Eventually the call came.

Camera Conscious—President Nixon's classy armored limousine costs the taxpayers \$12,000 a year in rental fees, but the President seldom uses it. Insiders say it's because the bulletproof glass in the 1972

Lincoln distorts camera shots of him. Nixon, who already has enough image problems as a result of Watergate, therefore, uses the 1968 custom-designed limousine. This costs \$5,000 a year from its owners, the Ford Motor Co. The White House says that Mr. Nixon uses the older car, not because the new car distorts his image, but because he prefers the older limousine.