

Meany Hits Government Under Nixon

By Jules Witcover

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MIAMI BEACH, Oct. 13 — President George Meany opened the biennial AFL-CIO convention today with a broadside charge that "never in history has a great nation been governed so corruptly" as the United States under President Nixon.

In a keynote address, the 79-year-old Meany blasted the President and his administration for economic and moral failure at home and abroad, and pledged the AFL-CIO to political action next year to elect a veto-proof Democratic Congress.

"We need a Congress that has the numbers and the will to override every veto the President can throw at us, to liberate every dollar he impounds," Meany told the 868 delegates representing 106 national and international unions and other labor affiliates.

This was the first time that neither the President of the United States nor his Secretary of Labor was invited to speak to the AFL-CIO convention, and Meany's harsh words underlined the low point to which relations between the White House and the federation have sunk.

In a biting reference to the latest administration embarrassment — the resignation of former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew — Meany said:

"The wordy strongman of law and order — the nemesis of permissiveness — stands before the nation as a convicted felon, a tax dodger."

Meany recited a long litany of administration scandals over the last year and said the people have decided "that this administration has cast a dark shadow of shame over the spirit of America. After five years of Richard Nixon." He said "this great and on-proud nation stands before the world with its head bowed — disgraced, not only by its enemies abroad, but by its leaders at home.

"In the final analysis," Meany said, "let us keep in mind that the Watergate and the cover-up itself was paid for by the great corporations

of America — the members of the National Association of Manufacturers and the Chamber of Commerce.

"In other words, to put it quite simply, it is anything for a buck. Not a buck for the working man, but a buck for the bankers, a buck for the corporations, a buck for the fatcats. A buck for the people who gave \$60 million to the Nixon campaign."

A pattern of greed running through the administration's conduct, the AFL-CIO president said, has kept unemployment and food prices high.

"We say to the President: 'take the shackles off wages — the only part of the economy stringently controlled for more than two years. Let us seek then at the bargaining table the wages we need to put milk, bread, potatoes and meat on the family table, to clothe our children and shelter our families.'"

(Later, the convention approved a resolution calling for "the early phase-out of the administration's misnamed stabilization program" as preferable to one "which is inequitable and ineffective.")