

Meany Assails Nixon in Speech Opening A.F.L.-C.I.O. Session

By PHILIP SHABECOFF
Special to The New York Times

BAL HARBOUR, Fla., Oct. 18 —George Meany, organized labor's top spokesman, said today that the people of the United States had reached the verdict that President Nixon was responsible for the "dark shadow of shame over the spirit of America."

"After five years of Richard Nixon," said Mr. Meany, president of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., "this great and once-proud nation stands before the world with its head bowed—disgraced—not by its enemies abroad but by its leaders at home."

In a scathing opening address to the biennial convention of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, Mr. Meany said that courts of law would determine whether President Nixon was guilty of illegal acts, including the criminal abuse of Presidential power. But he pointed out that Mr. Nixon had said that "the man at the top must bear the responsibility."

"Guilt is for the courts to decide, but responsibility is for the people to decide and, I think, the people have reached a verdict," he told applauding labor delegates in the ballroom of the Americana Hotel here.

"Today, knowing what we know, we can say that this torn and tattered Administra-

tion has lost the moral authority to lead either at home or abroad," Mr. Meany continued.

Mr. Nixon's Administration, the labor leader asserted, has "sounded a trumpet of retreat and withdrawal—retreat from decency at home and withdrawal from principle everywhere else."

"Never in history has a great nation been governed so corruptly," Mr. Meany declared.

Mr. Meany did not call today for any specific action against the President. However, federation sources said that a resolution on the Watergate scandal, to be voted on later during the convention, would call for the impeachment of Mr. Nixon under certain circumstances such as a refusal to hand over tapes of conversations in the White House relating to Watergate if ordered to do so by the Supreme Court.

The labor leader said that there was a single pattern running through the Administration's economic programs, its foreign policies and "the White House scandals and corruptions." That pattern, he said, is "greed—it is the almighty dollar."

Administration policies have been geared, Mr. Meany said, to "making a fast buck" for the big corporations, the banks and other "fat cats" at the expense of the American working man and the American housewife.

He insisted that the wheat sales to the Soviet Union, which resulted in higher meat prices to consumers; the "laundered" Watergate money, the cash dropped off to unknown persons by President Nixon's personal lawyer, and the acceptance of \$100,000 in cash for Mr. Nixon by a "shadowy personal friend [a reference to C. G. Rebozo] from a shadowy mysterious character [a reference to Howard R. Hughes]

were all part of the same "pattern of greed."

Paid for by Corporations

"Let us keep in mind," Mr. Meany added, "that the Watergate and the cover-up was paid for by the great corporations of America—the members of the National Association of Manufacturers and the Chamber of Commerce, who seem more than willing to pay out some of their exorbitant profits in order to place their hirelings in strategic spots in a friendly government."

Mr. Meany assailed the Nixon Administration's economic policies, saying that because of them American workers "are going backwards." He called for the end of economic con-

trols, which he said favored only banks and corporations. He demanded that the President "take the shackles off wages—the only part of the economy stringently controlled for more than two years."

"Let us then seek at the bargaining table the wages we need to put milk, bread, potatoes and meat on the family table," he said.

Mr. Meany also assailed President Nixon's policy of détente, which, he told his laughing audience, "is a French word in case you didn't know; it means relaxation."

What it has led to, he said, "is relaxation like in the Middle East; Russian-made tanks relaxing on the Golan Heights; Russian shells relaxing in Israeli kibbutzim."

He also urged Americans not to turn their backs on what he called the oppressed Russian intellectuals such as Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn and Andrei D. Sakharov.

Meanwhile, union sources reported that the A.F.L.-C.I.O. was about to drop its long opposition to the equal rights amendment. A resolution drafted by the Newspaper Guild calling on the federation to support the amendment, which is designed to end discrimination on the basis of sex, will be presented to the convention and is expected to be passed with little difficulty.

Historically the federation has opposed this type of amendment on the ground that it would disrupt state and local laws passed over the last hundred years to protect women from economic exploitation by

employers.

However unions with large numbers of women members, including the International Ladies Garment Workers, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the Communication Workers, now have reportedly dropped opposition to the amendment, conceding that it would not compromise the state and local laws. The amendment has been passed by Congress and must now be ratified by the states.

James R. Schlesinger, the Secretary of Defense, warned in a speech to the convention that the "continuous contraction" of the nation's defense budget was a cause for serious concern and a threat to the policy of détente with the Communist powers.