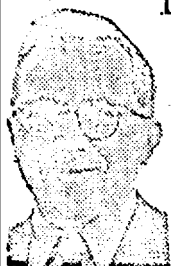


# Labor and the CIA

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By John Herling



**B** AL HARBOUR, Fla., Feb. 24 — An unwelcome item on the unofficial agenda of the AFL-CIO Executive Council this week is the question of alleged relations between the AFL-CIO and the Central Intelligence Agency. Secretary of Labor Wirtz and AFL-CIO President Meany were asked about the matter, and both refused to talk about it directly on grounds of lack of information.

But Mr. Wirtz enthusiastically stressed American labor's important role in the subtle diplomacy of identifying with the needs and aspirations of the developing countries. All such relations that he knew about, however, he stressed were open and aboveboard.

For his part, Mr. Meany denied absolutely that the AFL-CIO ever received overtures from the CIA, and further said he would be opposed to having trade unions receive money from the CIA.

Here is the way Messers Wirtz and Meany handled the sticky problem which now has exploded upon the country.

Q. "Can you discuss the matter of government participation or co-operation with the activities of American trade unions abroad?"

SECRETARY WIRTZ: "There has been very extensive co-operation between the Federal Government as a whole and the labor movement as far as foreign relationships are concerned. I feel very strongly that the American labor union and its leaders probably represent the largest potential for diplomacy that we have. It is much easier for a newly developed country to identify with the history of the American labor movement than I think with any other element in the American experience and perhaps in the world experience. The American labor movement is a success story in gaining within a society, a national society, what most newly

developed countries are looking forward to in a world society. The ambassadors in overalls, from the American labor movement, I think, are probably among our most effective diplomats. And therefore, in connection with the programs we have worked out with Latin America as part of the Alliance for Progress, the programs that are being developed in Africa, involving both government and private participation and the relationships between the private labor organizations around the world and the foreign policies of these nations, I find a close working relationship, and one which is all to the public good."

Q. "In your reference to labor's international affairs, you referred to activities that are clearly know, well-known, and there is nothing furtive about them. Is that no so?"

SECRETARY WIRTZ: "Yes, it is. My answer is limited entirely to that and I will speak nothing but the view of every single person in this country that we just don't like anything furtive, any of us..."

Q. "Mr. Meany, last week it was revealed that the CIA had indirectly financed international activities of the American Newspaper Guild. Now, do you support the CIA's involvement in this area, and are you aware—"

MEANY: "I know nothing about it, and I will not comment until I know something about it."

Q. "Has the AFL-CIO received any CIA money—"

MEANY: "Absolutely not!"

Q. "Have you, or to your knowledge, has anybody else, in official capacity in the AFL-CIO ever received any overtures from the CIA?"

MEANY: "No. None whatsoever."

Q. "Are you opposed to receiving such money from the CIA?"

MEANY: "Yes, I would be opposed to it."

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