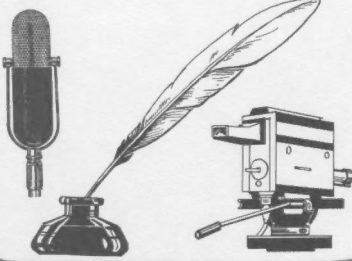


The original documents are located in Box D7, folder “Ford Press Releases - Extremism, 1966” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

APRIL 1, 1966

STATEMENT BY HOUSE MINORITY LEADER GERALD R. FORD, R-MICHIGAN

I am shocked and outraged by the charge reportedly made last night by a John Birch Society official in Arkansas that President Johnson was under Communist influence in civil rights matters.

The President and I have had our political differences, as you well know. But if anybody says Lyndon B. Johnson was under Communist influence on this issue, they will have to say the same of all of us who have championed human decency and equal justice in this country.

The author of these remarks in Arkansas, according to the UPI, also smeared the late President Kennedy with the same foul brush just as another John Birch official has smeared former President Eisenhower.

I believe in a good hard political fight and intend to make one this year for a Republican Congress that will keep a close eye on President Johnson for the rest of his term. But I think partisanship should stop far short of the cesspool.

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THE FOLLOWING EXCHANGE OF CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICHIGAN, AND MR. J. EDWARD MARTIN OF LOS ANGELES WAS RELEASED TO THE PRESS AT 11 A.M. ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1966:

C O P Y

September 27, 1966

Hon. Gerald R. Ford
House Office Building
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Ford:

Your investigator, Mr. John Buckley, has spent a number of hours with me ascertaining the basic facts surrounding a political contribution made by Mr. and Mrs. J. Edward Martin in the amount of \$6,000. You will recall that this incident came to national attention by virtue of our being members of the John Birch Society and my being a member of the Los Angeles County Republican Central Committee, together with the fact that the architectural-engineering firm of which I am a partner is a design contractor to the Veterans Administration.

I had requested from the Executive Secretary of the President's Club that the names of Mrs. Martin and me be stricken from their rolls, since our contribution was made to the Democratic National Committee and not to the President's Club. A Democratic Congressman from Southern California, Mr. Cameron, demanded that the money be returned. They have returned the \$6,000 to Mr. and Mrs. Martin. So much for background.

You have demanded legislation establishing a Congressional investigating committee chaired by a prominent member of the Minority Party and with a majority representation by that Minority Party. You have asked that that committee be adequately staffed and financed to do a thorough, comprehensive job of policing the actions of the Executive Department and the members of the Senate and House. The political facts are well known to you--how economic coercion can be exercised by political parties. You know full well the essential need for the legislation you have proposed. We congratulate you for your understanding and your zeal. The action you propose is clearly affirmative and has the capability of correcting a serious deficiency in our governmental system. I believe it to be essential if Republicans are to survive in the jungle of political influence.

One of your contemporaries in Congress chose a different approach. He chose to deprecate the individual Republican who contributed to the Democratic National Committee, rather than attacking the Democratic National Committee itself. It is analagous to criticizing the victim of a holdup for yielding his few dollars to the bandit. His type of leadership will only perpetuate the system of political shakedowns that exists.

Mrs. Martin and I would like to make a political contribution of \$1,000 to the Republican National Committee through you, with the express provision that you recognize in receipt of the contribution that:

1. We are Republicans who believe the nation needs the above legislation.
2. We are members of the John Birch Society, which we believe encourages its membership to be active in the political party of their choice, which believes

(MORE)

C O P Y

that there is an abundance of corruption in government, and which believes that the individual citizen must be responsible and must pursue his conviction regardless of the consequence.

I hope you find the contribution acceptable to the Republican National Committee under these terms and that you will have the judgment to objectively investigate the John Birch Society before you disclaim it any further, and that, should you believe you have cause to make some derogatory observations, you will be specific in the area of your charges.

Conservatives use the John Birch Society as a rallying point, and when other Republicans attack the Birch Society and tell us we should not belong to it, we have no other rallying point. Certainly a party under the leadership of Nelson Rockefeller or George Romney or some of the other liberal Republicans could not be such a rallying point. We are members of the JBS because we know of no other group to join that is bi-partisan and pro-American, which believes in a nation of responsible citizens, and which believes that this is a Christian nation and not the agnostic nation that the Supreme Court would create by misinterpretation of the Constitution.

Very truly yours,

(Signed)

Mr. and Mrs. J. Edward Martin
by J. Edward Martin

JEM:mm

Enclosure

REPLY TO ABOVE LETTER

C O P Y

September 29, 1966

Mr. J. Edward Martin
1127 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90017

Dear Mr. Martin:

I am returning herewith your check for \$1,000 enclosed with your letter of September 27.

I cannot accept this contribution, or any contribution, which is accompanied by terms or conditions other than the general understanding that it will be used to promote Republican principles and elect Republican candidates.

With or without any contribution, I and my Republican colleagues in the House of Representatives will continue our efforts to enact a fair and comprehensive election reform law that will put a stop to what you describe as "the system of political shakedowns that exists" and of which you represent yourself as a victim.

I must add that I cannot accept your criticism of my Governor, George Romney, Gov. Rockefeller of New York, or the unidentified Congressional contemporary to whom you allude, although you are entitled to your views like any other American.

Sincerely,

(Signed)

Gerald R. Ford, M.C.
GRF:hlr
Enclosure

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