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David Lawrence

Mrs. Roosevelt and Dies Differ

President's Widow and Ex-Red Prober Exchange Letters Disputing Communism Issues of 12 Years Ago

A sharp exchange of letters and statements relative to congressional investigation of Communist activities in the Government 12 years ago has developed between Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt and Representative Martin Dies of Texas, Democrat, who was chairman of the House Committee on Un-American Activities from 1938 to 1945.

Mr. Dies, in a copyrighted interview in U. S. News & World Report a fortnight ago, charged that the Roosevelt administration fought his investigation of Communists and even tried to persecute him personally. He said the late President Roosevelt tried to get him to call off his investigations because Mr. Roosevelt told him it would hurt the Democratic Party by alienating "liberal" groups.

Consequently, Mrs. Roosevelt wrote Mr. Dies under the date of August 17, 1954:

I am quite sure that my husband never said, 'It would be bad for the Democratic Party to alienate elements friendly to communism'."

Mr. Dies replied in a letter to Mrs. Roosevelt dated August 19:

"I reported my conversation with President Roosevelt during his lifetime, and what I stated in my interview is merely a repetition of what I have been saying for many years. A more detailed account of what I told the President and what he told me may be found in the speech which Congressman Fields inserted (September 22, 1940) in the Congressional Record."

To this Mrs. Roosevelt, on August 23, 1954, answered:

"My husband is dead, and I can't speak for him, but I can easily see how he might, in the light of the day in which you were speaking, have said what you say he said, without meaning what you now imply he meant.

"It is true there was no hysteria in those days and he may have felt there were a great many liberals who were in sympathy with certain Communist doctrines that he and many others might not have wanted to antagonize. My husband knew what the trends were and the differences between what was developing in the Communist Party then and some of the writings and tenets of the Communist Party in the past.

"You seem to forget the change brought about under Lenin and Stalin and the change in attitude that has occurred here in consequence."

To this Representative Dies replied in a statement today as follows: "I regard the last letter of Mrs. Roosevelt as a historic document. It shows the thinking and attitude of the Roosevelts with reference to Communists and Russia. It was this attitude that was responsible for the tragic blunders at the Yalta and Potsdam conferences which brought about the emergence of Russia from a third-rate power to the status of a world menace. I think Mrs. Roosevelt's letter needs no reply since it speaks for itself."

also to his earlier statement, namely that he had submitted in 1941 to the Roosevelt administration a list of about 2,000 Communists on the Federal payroll, including Alger Hiss, Harry Dexter White, Harold Glasser and others, and asked that they be discharged but that the 2,000 remained for "a little more than a decade before they finally were discharged."

In another phase of the Roosevelt-Dies controversy, the Texas Congressman, in his magazine interview, said Mrs. Roosevelt had intervened with him to get a "clean bill of health" from the committee for Joseph Lash of the American Youth Congress, though he said she told him that Mr. Lash had admitted to her having been a Communist. Mrs. Roosevelt, noting the quotation in one of these dispatches, said in her August 17 letter to Mr. Dies:

"I never admitted to you, because I could not have, since Mr. Joseph Lash never admitted to me that he had been a Communist. I knew that in the youth organizations he had been close to many Communists and he had helped me greatly to learn about Communist lines of thought, and I might have told you, but Mr. Lash was never a member of the Communist Party."

Mrs. Roosevelt also declared that, so far as she knew, no White House influence—as Mr.

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