

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY CENTRAL DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE

PRESS RELEASE

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STOVER QUESTIONS TEAGUE'S STAND ON BIRCH SOCIETY

Formal Inquiry Sent

SANTA MARIA, November 15: Carl F. Stover, Chairman of the Democratic Party's "Operation Support" in Santa Barbara County, tonight charged Republican Congressman Charles Teague with "vagueness and ambiguity" in his stand on the John Birch Society.

"Teague's statement on the Society last April leaves in doubt the degree to which he will support or accept support from them," Stover said in an address to the Santa Maria Democratic Club.

"On so serious a public issue as John Birch, Teague has an obligation to make his position clear. As a responsible opposition, the Democratic Party is encouraging him to do so.

"In the forthcoming election, the Democratic Party has no intention of engaging in a campaign of guilt by association," Stover declared. "At the same time, we cannot ignore the significance of the fact that Teague literature is being distributed along with Society materials and that his statements on John Birch have been very weak. It is time for him to face the issue honestly."

Stover made public the following letter which was delivered to Congressman Teague earlier in the day.

"The Honorable Charles M. Teague
179 Ojai Avenue
Ojai, California

Dear Mr. Teague:

I am writing you officially as Chairman of the Democratic Party's "Operation Support" in Santa Barbara County to seek a clarification of your position on the John Birch Society.

As you know, the activities and statements of the John Birch Society and its leaders have assumed great public importance. Robert Welch's vilification of such outstanding Americans as Dwight D. Eisenhower, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Earl Warren has gravely concerned patriotic and responsible citizens. The distortions of truth and misinformation contained in the Society's publications serve to undermine reasonable political discussion. Both the words and the deeds of the Society leave serious doubt about its devotion to democracy and human freedom.

Deeply impressed by the dangers inherent in the Society's program, distinguished leaders in your District and across the Nation have spoken forcefully in opposition to it. Thomas M. Storke, editor and publisher of the Santa Barbara News-Press, was first to condemn vigorously the Society's principle that "to fight Communism at home, we must throw democratic principles and methods into the ashcan and adopt the techniques of the Communists themselves." He has been joined by many others, including both the Governor and Attorney General of the State of California and such leaders of your own Party as the senior Senator from California and the recently defeated candidate for President of the United States.

By comparison with the statements of these men, your views on the Birch Society, expressed formally last April, seem vague and vacillating. You said you found the Society's anti-Communist objectives "commendable." You said you were not sure whether Mr. Welch had stated that three former Presidents of the United States and others "are or were Communists, or Communist sympathizers," or whether the Society was run along "dictatorial lines." You said that the Society's secrecy "doesn't shock me."

While you clearly stated that you were not a member of the Birch Society, you left in doubt the degree to which you would support and accept support from it. Because of the seriousness of this issue, it is impossible to rest easy with such an ambiguous stand.

When you issued your statement last April, you said there had not been time to study the matter fully. As a responsible legislator,

you have undoubtedly done so in the last six months. It should now be possible for you to let the people know where you stand. Speaking for the opposition Party in this District, I am requesting that you do so.

Sincerely yours,

s/Carl F. Stover"

A native Californian, Carl Stover resides in Santa Barbara, where he serves as Assistant to the Chairman of the Board of Editors, Encyclopaedia Britannica. Formerly, he has served with the Brookings Institution--a non profit research and educational institution in Washington, D.C.--the Office of the United States Secretary of Agriculture, and as faculty member at Stanford University.