

Rabbi Says Nixon Views Ehrlichman Case as Unjust

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SAN CLEMENTE, Calif., July 16 — President Nixon believes that the conviction of his former aide, John D. Ehrlichman, was "a blot on justice" and that it would be

"extremely difficult" for any Watergate figure to get a fair trial in Washington, according to a leader of the President's grass-root supporters, Rabbi Baruch M. Korff.

Rabbi Korff, president of the National Citizens Committee for Fairness to the Presidency, met with Mr. Nixon this morning at the President's estate here. Rabbi Korff presented the President with a copy of his new book called, "The Personal Nixon: Staying on the Summit."

The book contains a long interview with the President recorded by Rabbi Korff on May 13, as well as a series of written answers given by Mr. Nixon to Rabbi Korff's written questions.

'Savagery' Charged

The interviews provide few new facts but do offer a rare glimpse of Mr. Nixon's personal reactions toward the Watergate affair and impeachment proceedings.

In his interview with Rabbi Korff on May 13, President Nixon said:

"I would have to argue very strongly that the individuals who have been hauled publicly before committees and who also, in addition, have been slandered on television night after night through source

Continued on Page 18, Column 5

Continued From Page 1, Col. 6

stories and the rest, have had their chance for a fair trial destroyed."

Although he did not specifically include himself among these "individuals," Mr. Nixon indicated throughout the interview that he felt he had been unjustly treated from the beginning of the Watergate scandal.

He told Rabbi Korff that he had to stand up under "savagery—well, we call it savagery, we will call it viciousness, sometimes libelous, so forth, of critics, et cetera et cetera, et cetera."

Today Rabbi Korff said that he had said to the President that the conviction of Mr. Ehrlichman—who was found guilty last week of conspiracy and perjury in the Ellsberg break-in case—was "a blot on justice." Rabbi Korff indicated at a news conference that the President agreed his assessment.

'The Thinnest Scandal'

President Nixon indicated in the May 13 interview that he regarded the Watergate affair as less serious and important historically than the Teapot Dome scandal of the nineteen-twenties.

He said that history would probably assess Watergate as a scandal, but he added that it would be regarded as "the broadest but the thinnest scandal in American history, because what was it about?"

He then went on to say that those accused in the Watergate scandal—John N. Mitchell, H. R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman, Charles W. Colson, Maurice W. Stans—"all of them served in this Administration with great dedication."

He said that none of those

men had received anything" in the way of financial reward for their service.

"Now, of course, I do not mean that crime can only be measured in terms of whether or not you were paid something. But when they say this is like Teapot Dome, that is comparing apples with oranges, and, shall we say, rather poor oranges too."

'I Will Survive It'

Mr. Nixon said that one of the reasons that the Watergate affair has been written about so heavily in the press was that "I am not the press's favorite pin-up boy."

"If it hadn't been for Watergate," he said, "there would probably have been something else. So, now they have this. But I will survive it and I just hope they will survive it with, shall we say, as much serenity as I have."

A bit later in the interview, Mr. Nixon said that "If I were a liberal, Watergate would be a blip." The attacks on him by the news media, he was saying, are "an ideological thing."

Members of Congress, the President said, are less ideological, although "some are partisan."

"I think when a Congressman and Senator gets right down to the tough call, he is going to think a long time before he wants to impeach a President, unless he finds wrongdoing," Mr. Nixon said.

Mr. Nixon told Rabbi Korff that he respected the special Watergate prosecutor, Leon Jaworski, "very much" but that there had been "an abusive process" by some of the staff investigators.

"If these activities, the kind of tactics that have been used, the harassment of secretaries and stenographers and people

who can't afford lawyers and so fourth, hours and hours of drilling and questioning and threatening and all the rest, if these tactics had been used in the day of Joe McCarthy, he would have been ridden out of town on a rail."

Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, Republican of Wisconsin, was condemned by the Senate in 1954 for contempt of a senate committee investigating his finances. Mr. Nixon, then Vice President, was regarded as an ally of Senator McCarthy, who rose to prominence through his investigations of Communism in the United States.

Among the other things said by President in the oral and written interviews with Rabbi Korff were the following:

¶He has considered resigning if the House Judiciary Committee recommends articles of impeachment, but has "totally rejected" such a course of action. "I have decided to go the distance to defend this office, and to defend myself against charges of which I am wholly innocent."

¶The "pendulum" of power has swung too far in favor of "big media" and against the rights of individuals, particularly public officials. "If one good thing could come out of Watergate—and some good comes out of every adversity—it would be a greater sense of responsibility on the part of the press, on the part of investigators and the rest, for the rights of individuals."

¶The argument that members of the House Judiciary Committee who have already committed themselves publicly for impeachment ought to disqualify themselves from voting "has merit." But the constituents of these Congressmen can

judge for themselves at the ballot box.

¶His appointments of Walter H. Annenberg as Ambassador to Britain and of Henry Kissinger as Secretary of State, among other things, are proof that allegations of anti-Semitism, stemming from reports of racial slurs in his tape recorded White House conversations, are false.

¶He didn't mind having his tax returns "gone over with a fine tooth comb" and will pay the "extra money." "I have never cared much about money" he said, noting by way of proof that although he had been out of office for eight years and practicing law ("being a fairly accomplished lawyer") he "still only entered here with a net worth of less than \$600,000."