

# Remembering Joseph McCarthy

As a frequent guest on radio and television programs, I have often been asked to comment on the career of former Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy. In response I have always requested those raising the subject to offer an opinion about the senator before I gave mine. In nearly every case, I have been informed that McCarthy was an irresponsible demagogue who recklessly charged innocent people with subversion or worse, and who ruined the lives of many decent Americans.

When I am faced with accusations against Senator McCarthy, I simply ask the accuser to name some of the individuals the Senator supposedly harmed unjustly. During scores of instances stretching back over more than 20 years, the only response I have ever received (the usual response has been dead silence) has been something about Hollywood screen writers. My response, then, is that each of the famous "Hollywood Ten" was found to have had numerous ties to Communist activity, but that these findings were issued by the House Committee on Un-American Activities, not by Senator Joseph McCarthy. Because those revelations came from a House Committee and Joseph McCarthy was a senator, there is no possibility that he could have been involved.

The truth of the matter is that Joseph McCarthy was never guilty of that which the popular historical account accuses him. As M. Stanton Evans wrote in *Human Events* for May 16, 1987:

The hardest thing to find in the historical record is the case of someone whom McCarthy claimed on the factual record to be a Communist or security risk, who turned out on subsequent information not to be one.

## Truth the Opposite

Senator McCarthy's first public charges about security risks in the State Department were delivered February 9, 1950 during a speech in Wheeling, West Virginia. The previous fall, three men had shown up at his office with a 100-page report detailing dramatic Commu-

nist penetration into the Department. Studiously avoiding public identification of any of the questionable individuals whose subversive records he now possessed, McCarthy focused on the number of cases involving security problems (and later referred to them by case number). Returning to Washington, however, he immediately faced a barrage of demands from Democratic colleagues that he "name the names." Completely contrary to the image created about this much-maligned man, he refused to do so until such time as each was confronted and had a chance to defend himself.

In one heated exchange, Democratic Majority Leader Scott Lucas of Illinois told his fellow senators, "I want him to name those Communists...." In response McCarthy said, "[I]f I were to give all the names involved, it might leave a wrong impression. If we should label one man a Communist, when he is not a Communist, I think it would be too bad."

The Senate promptly convened a special panel under the chairmanship of Senator Millard Tydings to investigate McCarthy's charges. However, the committee made no investigation of the State Department but degenerated into a circus of interruptions and heckling di-

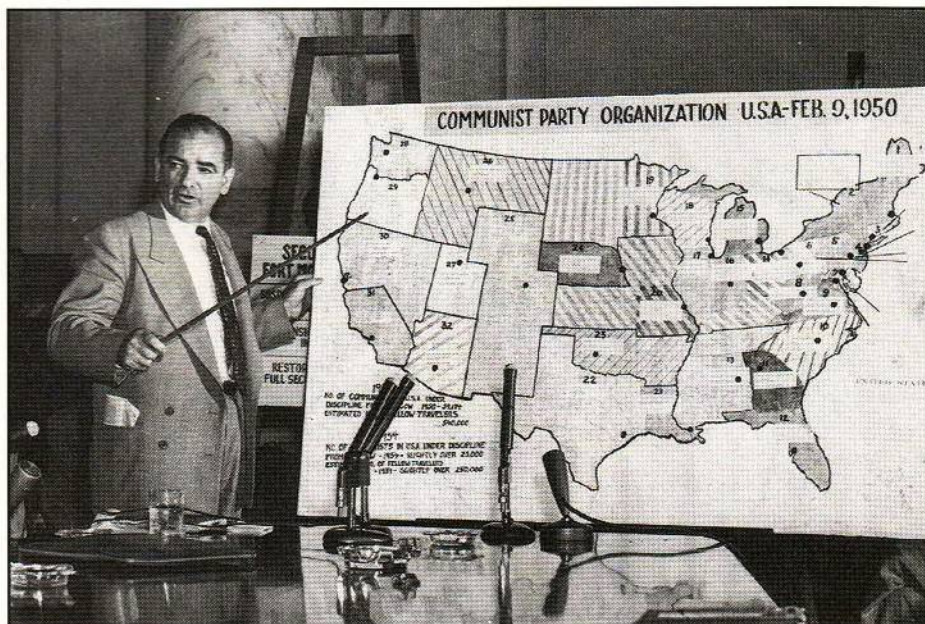
rected at McCarthy. All names submitted by McCarthy to the Tydings Committee were cleared.

But it was McCarthy who was proved right. One of the celebrated cases brought to attention by McCarthy involved State Department official Owen Lattimore. Cleared by the Tydings Committee in 1950, he was later investigated by the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, which declared in 1952 that "Owen Lattimore was, from some time beginning in the 1930s, a conscious articulate instrument of the Soviet conspiracy." Similar findings from other government agencies about John Stewart Service, Philip Jessup, and other individuals completely corroborated Senator McCarthy's allegations.

## Worthwhile Efforts

After the Republicans won control of the Senate in the 1952 elections, McCarthy fell heir to the chairmanship of the Permanent Investigations Subcommittee. No longer required to rely on public speeches to warn the American people about Communist subversion, he began conducting public hearings about disloyalty and incompetence in government.

The record of this committee shows that it held 169 public and closed hear-



McCarthy: Targeted for destruction because of aggressive anti-Communism.

ings and interrogated more than 500 witnesses. McCarthy's worthwhile efforts bared extensive waste and mismanagement in the Voice of America organization, exposed sufficient Communist penetration of the Government Printing Office to have 77 persons removed from this sensitive government office, demonstrated Communist penetration of key defense plants, and revealed Communist espionage activities at the top-secret radar facilities located at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey.

It was while he was investigating the Communist presence at Fort Monmouth that Senator McCarthy shifted his primary focus from Communists in government to those who were shielding Communists in government. The committee's investigations had demonstrated that Communists were actively working within the Fort Monmouth complex. One Communist, an Army dentist named Irving Peress, had been promoted to the rank of major even after his Communist affiliations had been exposed.

McCarthy naturally wanted to know who authorized such a ludicrous promotion. When he revealed his intention to subpoena members of the Army Loyalty and Screening Board, high officials of the Eisenhower Administration met in Washington to devise a plan to stop McCarthy. That meeting was held on January 21, 1954 in the office of Attorney General Herbert Brownell. Those present included U.S. Ambassador to the UN Henry Cabot Lodge, Deputy Attorney General William Rogers, White House Chief of Staff Sherman Adams, and Army Counsel John Adams.

It was John Adams who had matter-of-factly mentioned the January meeting while being questioned about lax security at Fort Monmouth. But when pressed for details about what had transpired, he claimed that he was unable to supply any further information because of instructions from superiors. Support for Adams' refusal to cooperate then came from President Eisenhower who, on May 17, 1954, issued an Executive Order forbidding employees of the Defense Department from testifying about any matter whatsoever. Eisenhower dressed up his outrageous decree in a wealth of constitutional verbiage, but, ponderous wording aside, it amounted to as devastating an attack on the constitutional doctrine of checks and bal-

ances as had ever been issued by anyone in government service.

The Eisenhower order swept a great deal of information under a rug, and stopped McCarthy from pursuing those who were shielding Communists when he knew that these individuals actually posed an even greater threat to America than most of the actual Communists. Immediately, stopping McCarthy completely became a prime endeavor for some members of the Senate.

### **Condemned By Peers**

On July 30, 1954, Vermont Senator Ralph Flanders introduced a resolution formally accusing McCarthy of conduct unbecoming a member of the Senate. Flanders' measure grew to include 46 separate charges. Utah Senator Arthur Watkins was assigned by the Senate to chair another panel to investigate McCarthy, the fifth such investigation targeting the senator.

After two months of hearings, the Watkins committee recommended that McCarthy be censured on only two of the original 46 counts, the other charges being shown to lack any substance. But the final two charges were completely baseless as well. They were: 1) the senator had "failed to cooperate" in 1952 with a Senate Committee investigating him; and 2) the senator had "tended to bring the Senate into dishonor and disrepute" and had impaired the "dignity" of the Senate by characterizing one of the investigatory bodies looking into his activity as the "unwitting handmaiden" of the Communist Party.

The first charge stemmed from McCarthy's failure to respond to the "invitation" of the 1952 committee headed by Wyoming Senator Gillette to appear before it. Never in Senate history had any member ever been disciplined in the slightest for declining an "invitation" to appear before any of its bodies. But even worse, McCarthy was invited to appear via a telegram sent to his Wisconsin office. Dates suggested for the appearance were November 22nd, 24th, or 25th. At the time the telegram was sent, McCarthy was in northern Wisconsin hunting deer and the committee knew it.

The second charge saw men with far greater offenses against the "dignity" of the Senate hurling accusations and invective against McCarthy. Author James J. Drummey reported in *THE NEW AMERI-*

*CAN* for May 11, 1987 that during the various moves to stymie McCarthy and disparage his work, a variety of senators "had accused McCarthy of lying under oath, accepting influence money, engaging in election fraud, making libelous and false statements, practicing blackmail, doing the work of the Communists for them," and other unsavory activities. None of these were accurate and, therefore, each was worthy of condemnation by the full Senate.

Nevertheless, on December 2, 1954 the Senate voted 67 to 22 to "condemn" McCarthy on the two counts.

Former Communist Party leader Louis Budenz, who witnessed Communism's evil from inside the movement, said that the condemnation of McCarthy opened the door "to intimidate any person of consequence who moves against the conspiracy." McCarthy was made their target, said Budenz, "because they wanted to make him a symbol to remind political leaders in America not to harm the conspiracy or its world conquest designs."

The essential point here is that McCarthy was made such a symbol, not by the Communists with whom Budenz had long associated and was now condemning, but by 67 of his own Senate colleagues. None of those 67 had ever been accused of being a Communist by anyone. Obviously, the conspiracy against America involves much more than just the Communist Party.

Joseph McCarthy died on May 2, 1957. At a special memorial service in the Senate on August 14, 1957, Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson, who had voted to condemn McCarthy, stated: "There was a quality about the man which compelled respect, and even liking, from his strongest adversaries. [He] had strength ... had great courage ... had daring ... [and] had a rare quality which enabled him to touch the minds and hearts of millions of his fellow men."

If we can ignore for a moment that it was Lyndon Johnson who said this, we can see many of the reasons why McCarthy had to be destroyed. He had the capability of leading the American people on a crusade against a vile conspiracy. His leadership was desperately needed at the time. Of McCarthy it can justly be stated, "For once in the U.S. Senate there was a real man. May God help us to find more!" ■

— JOHN F. McMANUS