Setting the McCarthy Record Straight

by Phyllis Schlafly January 30, 2008

Printer Friendly version

Google Ads are provided by Google and are not selected or endorsed by Eagle Forum

Ronald Reagan was dismissed by the intelligentsia as just an actor who read speeches written by others until history professor Kiron Skinner discovered a box of Reagan's original radio scripts written in his own hand on ruled yellow paper from 1975 to 1979.

Since he had no staff to research and write for him in those years, the scripts prove that Reagan was a one-man think-tank, well versed in political philosophy and history, fully capable of writing his own speeches.

Professor Skinner's discovery, and the subsequent publication of many of Reagan's more than a thousand hand-written radio commentaries, changed the way history now respects Reagan. Scholar M. Stanton Evans has performed a similar transformation for the most reviled American in modern history, Senator Joseph McCarthy.

Evans' monumental 663-page work, "Blacklisted by History: The Untold Story of Senator Joe McCarthy and His Fight Against America's Enemies," is the result of six years of reading primary sources. Evans proves that almost everything about McCarthy in current history books is a lie and will have to be revised.

It's an interesting sidelight that one of Reagan's old radio commentaries referred to Evans as "a very fine journalist." He is, indeed, but this book shows that he also is a Sherlock Holmes-type detective who chased every clue to find the truth and to write accurate history in elegant prose.

Evans' vindication of McCarthy was made possible by recently released files, such as the Venona papers (the secret messages between Moscow and its U.S. agents decrypted by our government), data from Soviet archives, and executive-session transcripts of Senate committees that were finally opened after a 50-year ban. Evans' book is copiously documented and reproduces some critical pages from never-before-released files.

In the early 1950s, Joe McCarthy was one of the most popular men in America. Average Americans recognized him as Horatio at the Bridge battling against our nation's sworn enemies, the Soviet Communists.

McCarthy understood, long before Ronald Reagan, that the Soviet Union was an evil empire, one of whose strategies was to infiltrate agents into our government in order to guide our policy to favor Communist goals. In fact, our government was much more infested with Soviet agents than McCarthy imagined.

It's now well known that Communist agents embedded in high-ranking positions included White House confidant Lauchlin Currie, State Department official Alger Hiss, and Treasury Department official Harry Dexter White. Evans quotes FBI files identifying atom bomb scientist J. Robert Oppenheimer as a secret Communist as early as 1942.

Taking on the anti-Communist mission locked McCarthy in mortal combat against powerful forces: two U.S. presidents, the vast federal bureaucracy, malicious adversaries in Congress, leftwing lobby groups, and the leftwing media who made him their daily target.

McCarthy was concerned only with Communist security risks who influenced U.S. policies. He never targeted Communists in Hollywood or academia.

One of McCarthy's early investigations exposed the gang of Communist agents embedded in our government whose mission it was to change U.S. policy to abandon our wartime ally Chiang Kai-shek and turn China over to the Communists. Owen Lattimore was the point man for articulating the Communist line, and the magazine Amerasia was the communications outlet for an interlocking network of Soviet agents.

Evans describes how McCarthy deserves the credit for exposing the Amerasia scandal. Evans publishes for the first time McCarthy's lists of security risks employed by the State Department, proving that his charges were amply supported by FBI files.

Recent unrelated political controversies have shown that the cover-up is often worse than the crime, and the cover-up was McCarthy's prime target. He fought the federal bureaucrats who tolerated and even encouraged the widespread infiltration of our government by Communists whose first loyalty was to Russia.

The Truman Administration and the Democrats in Congress engaged in a massive cover-up, circling the wagons with their media friends. Their game plan was to deny the problem, evade political responsibility for tolerating security risks in government, and kill the messenger.

Evans' book proves that there was not a single innocent victim of McCarthy's investigations. The Senate committee transcripts prove that he was patient with witnesses, and never allowed anyone to be named a Communist or subversive unless he was given the chance to respond directly.

Joe McCarthy himself is probably the most investigated man in American history, far more investigated than the Communist agents. Much of his energy had to be spent in defending himself against vindictive investigations initiated by the Democrats.

McCarthy's career came to an end after he was censured by the Senate, but 45 out of the 46 charges had to be dismissed as baseless. He was censured only for failing to pay proper deference to the committees that were maliciously bent on destroying him.

Everyone who henceforth writes about Joe McCarthy will have to check his facts with Evans' documented discoveries.