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Editorial Book Review

Joe McCarthy's Tarnished Heyday

SENATOR JOE McCARTHY. By Richard H. Rovere. Harcourt, Brace. 280 pp. $3.95.

In Mr. Rovere's new study of the late Sen. Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin, it is plain how quickly American politics buries its dead and goes on.

From 1950-54, the controversial senator, portrayed here with wit, subtlety, and no little charity, was hailed as a new messiah of patriotism by a large number of Americans and as an odious new Grand Inquisitor by a sizeable opposition.

In his short spurt of eminence, Sen. McCarthy dashed through the temple, knocking down images of every sort. The U. S. State Department harbored (you take your choice of numbers; he changed them often) many Communists. Gen. Marshall, once secretary of state, was "a front man for traitors," and "part of a conspiracy so dark as to stagger the imagination." The universities bred Reds by the dozens, although McCarthy was kind enough to say of Nathan Pusey, when he became president of Harvard, "I don't think Mr. Pusey is or ever was a Communist." Sen. McCarthy insulted his fellow senators, he libeled university professors from the immunity of the Senate. He whopped Secretary of State Dean Acheson on the back in a Senate elevator and wondered why Acheson blushed and why his moustache bristled. He threatened to subpoena a former President of the United States to appear before his subcommittee. He charged the Protestant clergy of America with being a breeding ground for communism, and he moved on from there to attack the U. S. Army and finally the President of the United States himself. ("Twenty-one years of treason.")

* * *

This was Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy, born to a poor and crowded Irish home in Wisconsin, surrounded by scandal as a member of the bench in that state, an intelligence officer who later posed as having been a "tail-gunner" during World War II, elected to the Senate in 1946. (His first words when he stepped off the train in Washington were, "Hell, it's raining.") After some shady dealings with the real estate lobby, after an attempt to gain publicity by taking up for "mistreated" Nazi soldiers involved in the Malmedy Massacre, Sen. McCarthy was desperately in need, by January of 1950, of a dramatic issue to secure him re-election in 1952.

On Jan. 7, 1950, at a dinner at the Colony Restaurant in Washington, the regent of Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service suggested "communism."

"That's it," McCarthy exclaimed. "The government is full of Communists. We can hammer away at them." He had the issue that was to make him the Torquemada of America in the early Fifties.

As lively as were the passions Sen. McCarthy stirred in his prime, Mr. Rovere, Washington correspondent for The New Yorker, gives the effect in this book of a Hamlet musing on the skull of Yorick. There is something distant and foreign about the atmosphere of the McCarthy Era; it is almost a valley of dry bones. It is hard to believe that McCarthy did what he did; it is equally hard to believe that the American people allowed all this to happen as they did.

* * *

Essentially, Mr. Rovere's book, as its title implies, ignores the era for the man and the mirror for the image it reflects. If Mr. Rovere is right about Sen. McCarthy — and his evidence is well arrayed — the exploits of this man become all the more surprising. For our sophisticated conductor on this tour of the valley of dry bones portrays, in Sen. Joseph McCarthy, a nihilist, a Rebel without a Cause, a seditionist who led "a flight from reality," and a cynic possessed of a bland ignorance of the wreckage he caused in quite a few public lives and in quite a few parts of the American government. By his own admission, Sen. McCarthy "discovered" communism some two weeks before his famous speech at Wheeling, West Virginia, when he labeled the State Department as a Red haven. After his censure by the Senate in 1954, he lost interest in the Great Inquisition entirely, and concentrated his attention on soybean speculation (an old interest) and alcohol, until he died.

Mr. Rovere makes the senator live, certainly he makes the dry bones of the early Fifties get up and clink around a little. But the shouts of Sen. McCarthy's idolators and the bright firebrands of his enemies are all but gone. Shocking as it may be, the effect is often one of comedy.

Comedy, in the last resort, is the art of showing how people can make fools of themselves. The talent of provoking people to make fools of themselves was a talent Sen. McCarthy possessed fully. It would be an episode fit for the pen of an Aristophanes — how the United States, basking in post-war grandeur and responsibility, if in some confusion, agreed to hand over the power of political censorship to a clever, but cynical and shallow, "prefect of morals."

Many senators, many journalists, many clergymen, many of the public at large considered him a liar, a cynic, a humbug, a charlatan from the start. Many of them said so outright, including Mr. Rovere in the pages of the New Yorker. Others, like Sen. Robert A. Taft and Vice President Nixon, saw in this buffoon an effective knight with which the Democrats



Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy

might be unhorsed. Many "didn't like his methods" but considered his mission an honorable and essential one — and if the messiah were a bit shabby, well, he was the only messiah we had.

As Sen. McCarthy's lone, nihilistic fight took its course against America's "establishment" all but a few adversaries accepted the terms of the fantasy.

What did so many Americans accept? We accepted it as gospel that the essence of the Communist threat — which was admittedly real at home as well as abroad — was something like a cloak and dagger conspiracy. Wearing the cloaks, flashing the daggers, however, there were no foreign spies or saboteurs. There were "traitors" in places where one would least expect them — in places of privilege, education, taste, and political responsibility. (In this sense, as Rovere points out, McCarthy was himself one of the greatest non-conformists America has produced; he attacked every institution that to most of us stands above reproach.)

* * *

The threat of communism, as McCarthy implied that night in Wheeling when he opened his crusade, came mainly from "people born with silver spoons in their mouths." It was a simplistic conspiracy, too, the kind that children and indifferent adults could rally to root out — with his help and perhaps the help of J. Edgar Hoover.

If we accepted McCarthy's definition of the "Communist threat," many Americans also accepted his implicit canons of good "Americanism" or "patriotism." When attacked, Mr. Rovere writes, "what many did was to supply wholly gratuitous information intended, apparently, to show McCarthy that they were men in possession of exactly the kind of virtues he should admire. . . Many felt impelled to show that they were dues-paying Redmen or Epworth Leaguers or Lions."

Even Secretary of State Acheson joined the chorus. "There is no need for anyone to be defensive about the Department of State," he told the American Society of Newspaper Editors. "It was a splendid body of men, including such figures as George McGhee, of Texas, a former oil man . . . Willard Thorp, a former partner of Dun & Bradstreet . . . Paul Nitze of Massachusetts, a former partner of Dillon, Read."

Mr. Rovere's wry comment on this fatuous practice is among the best passages in his book: "Not only was the defense humiliating to those who employed it, but it raised the delicate question of what the large sections of the population who had never been Eagle Scouts and might have been in the bad graces of Dun & Bradstreet would do if attacked by McCarthy."

* * *

The tragicomic dishonor that McCarthy evoked from America ended quite abruptly in 1954, when the Senate censured him. "No bolder seditionist ever moved among us," Mr. Rovere writes; but suddenly he was fallen. If the smears McCarthy recklessly encouraged have faded, with much of his other tomfoolery, surely there is some of his powerful legacy in every attempt to retreat from responsibility, to conceive that responsibility in infantile terms, or to belittle the patriotism of government, from the Supreme Court to the U. S. Information Agency.

A comparative sobriety has returned to America; but we are not yet quite grown up.

From The New York Herald Tribune

THE SOVIET PRESS HAS ITS DAY

Recently the Soviet Union celebrated Freedom of the Press Day, with cartoons and editorials on the subject in all of its newspapers.

According to the Soviet view, only the Communist press is truly free (free, perhaps, of any obligation to such occasionally inhibiting considerations as truth).

And an editorial in Pravda expressed "sympathy for exploited colleagues in capitalist countries."

Thank you, Pravda—and our sympathies to you. It must have been a difficult day.

People's Platform

'Give Paul Butler To The Republican Party'

Gaffney, S. C.

Editors, The News:

Your editorial of July 8 ("Democrats Should Fire Paul Butler") hit the proverbial nail right on its battered head.

For too long now, Blowhard Butler has been spouting off and doing his best to disintegrate the Democratic Party. Puffing Paul seems to be working under the delusion that he and he alone is lord and master of the party and the only one capable of choosing the next Democratic presidential candidate. Trouble is, he wants to select the candidate on regional grounds rather than on leadership qualities — a dangerous notion at best.

As Sen. Thomas Dodd (D-Conn) stated in a letter to Butler, ". . . it is the man who is important, and not the place where he lives."

Evidently, however, Butler doesn't think as clearly as Sen. Dodd. That became obvious when Butler stuffed both feet in his mouth and announced that no Democrat from the South or the Southwest should or could be nominated for president. His motivation for saying that is apparent when you remember that he and Lyndon Johnson aren't exactly bosom buddies. Nomination and election of the Texan would mean no political plum for Puffing Paul.

I'll second your motion, Mr. Editor, that Butler be fired—or, better still, give him to the Republican Party. That way, the Democrats couldn't possibly lose in 1960.

—CHARLES L. MORRIS



Three Views Of National Democratic Chairman Paul M. Butler

He Heads 'Party Of Repudiation'

Charlotte

Editors, The News:

The recent attacks by the Democratic national chairman on the party's own congressional leaders are merely surface signs of the deep internal chasm of irreparable splits which wreck the Democratic Party.

The potshots at each other by Democrats are a sign that the overt stage has been reached in some of the intra-party ambushes arranged by rival groups of Democrats seeking control of their party's 1960 convention and presidential nomination. As 1960 draws closer, such active Democrat plots will increase both in number and boldness. We haven't seen anything yet.

Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson, for example, has limited himself so far to using the Senate as a personal publicity forum while lending covert support to the "Stop Kennedy" movement (LBJ now means "Let's Block Jack"). When Johnson opens up his own campaign drive for actual convention votes, the feathers will really fly.

This shattering discord among Democrats is nothing new. Their party could really be called the Party of Repudiation. Over the years, hardly a Democratic faction or a leading Democratic personality remains which has not repudiated other factions and other personalities, and has been repudiated in turn.

The following check list of some of the open wounds among Democrats is by no means complete. But, it does demonstrate that about the only things Democrats haven't repudiated are nepotism and other payroll plunders:

Paul Butler and the northern Democrats, of course, have repudiated the southern Democrats.

Southern Democrats, including such as Sens. Smathers, Robertson, Sparkman and Holland, Texas Gov. Daniel, Arkansas Gov. Faubus and other Dixie party leaders, have repudiated Butler, with Harry Truman almost joining them on occasion.

Democratic Party leaders in Alabama, Georgia, Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi already had made advance technical arrangements to repudiate the 1960 Democratic nominee — and at least six other states are working on it.

The congressional leadership of Lyndon Johnson and Sam Rayburn has repudiated the legislative programs of the Democratic National Committee, the Democratic Advisory Council, the Americans for Democratic Action.

The legislative programs of the congressional leadership have been repudiated by DNC, DAC, ADA, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and others.

The Senate leadership of Lyndon Johnson has been repudiated by Sens. Proxmire, McNamara, Douglas, Clark and others.

Sen. Morse has repudiated everybody.

Mrs. Roosevelt has repudiated Sen. Jack Kennedy.

The Young Democrats of Texas have repudiated Lyndon Johnson.

Sen. McClellan, who should know, has repudiated Kennedy's labor bill.

—JOE MATSEN

Opinions On Butler And South Praised

Concord

Editors, The News:

For some time I have been planning to write you about the editorial page of The News and express my appreciation for the many fine editorials that have appeared lately.

As you know, I have been a reader of The News for some time and wherever I live in North Carolina I have The News mailed to me.

You and your associates are to be commended for the editorial recently, "Dixie Was Not On Trial At Tallahassee." Also the editorial, "The Democrats Should Fire Paul Butler." I think that both of these were very timely and no doubt were well received by the readers of The News. I hope that the one on Mr. Butler will get something going for us to have a NEW Democratic national chairman.

—H. E. STONE

Protestant Views 'Misrepresented'

Charlotte

Editors, The News:

The Shreveport Times warns its readers that recent publicity to the effect that 39 million Protestants have given President Eisenhower the go sign on admitting Red China to the United Nations is in fact a falsehood.

Such an issue has not even been presented, much less voted on by any such number of Protestants. A so-called study group appointed by the left-wing National Council of Churches, made up of only a few thousand members, most of them inactive, is responsible for this report, first publicized by the New York Communist Worker and later reported in quite a few liberal publications. This 39 million, squeezed down to size, is actually only a handful of the real Protestants of America.

The National Council is thus misrepresenting Protestantism in the United States and it is most reprehensible. Certain well-known minority groups of radicals and left-wingers in various Protestant organizations are doing some deliberate lying and calling it propaganda. Not 15 per cent of Protestant Christians believe that Red China should be given a seat in the United Nations. It would be just plain stupid for any free nation to be linked up with any barbarian country such as Red China or any other Russian-controlled nation . . .

—PARKS A. YANDLE

A Thing Called 'Pundonor' Bars Liz From Palamos

By ROBERT C. RUARK

PALAMOS, SPAIN

I have been in and out of these parts for so long that once in a while I keep forgetting that Spaniards are Spaniards. What I mean is that I know Llagostera from Llavaneras, Malgrat from Caldetas, and I don't have to think about it. They're just towns I pass through.

So I had forgotten, again, a thing the Spaniards call "pundonor" or personal pride, with which all Spaniards are enormously endowed. Up to now I have not met an impolite Spaniard. Neither have I met one who would grovel, whether he is rich or poor. Pride is what the Spaniard wears as a badge.

LESSON IN MANNERS

I had a little instruction in manners the other day from the kitchen, which is reigned by a pretty woman named Cristina, Cristina's niece, Carmen, runs the rest of the house. Ysabel, a kind of cousin, fills in the corners.

It so happens that Sam Spiegel, a movie producer, is charging up and down the Costa Brava in an enormous yacht, looking for a place to house Elizabeth Taylor and her director, since Sam is shooting a sequence in a little bay called Aigua Blava, nearby. His production manager stopped by and asked me to help him find a house for two weeks in August, the impossible month on this particular coast.

A FEAL FINE IDEA

I started to say "impossible," and then I thought: I've got to be in New York on the first of August, and Mama really ought to go to England, and so why don't I rent the movie moguls my modest hutch, and charge them like five thousand bucks a week for two weeks? Mama and I thought this was a real fine idea.

I took the idea back to the kitchen. Cristina clouded up and rained all over it.

"No!" said Cristina. "I will not have that woman in our house!"

"Why?" sezzi, a little stunned.

"Married too much," Cristina replied. "Anyhow I don't like picture people. They get up too early and sit up too late."

"But Auntie." I pleaded, "think of the money we could make. Think of the tips you could get. Think, maybe even Carmen could be a movie star if she meets the right people. Maybe even play in this picture."

Now it was Carmen who piped up.

"No," she said. "You don't need the money and I don't need the tips. Also I don't want to be a movie star. We put a movie company in here and our house would be a house of crazies. All picture people are loco."

"No," said Ysabel, bending over the washtub. "Ciaro que no!"

"It's only for two weeks," I said. "Just two weeks."

"It doesn't value the pain," said Cristina.

NOT FOR HIRE

"We will do anything you say if you say it, Senor," Carmen said. "And we will do anything for any friend of yours, and gladly. But we are NOT for rent." Carmen walked off like a bullfighter, and you could hear the bugles blow.

"No," Cristina said. "We are not to be hired. We work for you in our house. We do not work for the man of the yacht or for la Senorita of the many marriages."

"No," said Ysabel, diving back into the wash. "I wash only the shirts of the Senor. And of course, the shirts of the friends of the Senor."

THE PESETA TREE

"If the house needs money," Cristina said. "We have some money. Or, if the Senor would spend a little more time pruning the peseta tree. . .?" (The peseta tree is what Christina calls the typewriter.)

"Are we having plot trouble again?" Carmen asked from a back room. "I thought when the Pruebas (galley proofs) came, we had finish our new book. Also," she said thoughtfully, "I would not get up that early every day for the picture shooting if I was queen of the world of the cinema."

LOGISTICAL PROBLEM

So you can see how I will never be able to boast that Elizabeth Taylor graced my poor fishing cottage on the Costa Brava. The kitchen is up on its pundonor again, which is to say hind legs. Mr. Spiegel was able to do "African Queen" and "Bridge on the River Quai," but he has a logistical problem in Cristina, Carmen and Ysabel that the most talented production manager will never be able to solve. I guess everybody will just have to live on Sam's big boat.

'Listen – Stereophonic Sound'



Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

Dixie Watches Virginia Senate Race

WASHINGTON

It isn't often that election of a state senator attracts much attention. However, the glamor-packed battle for senator from Alexandria, Va., onetime district of George Washington, is being watched all over the South.

Much At Stake

For on its outcome will depend whether Virginia continues moderate integration or bans public schools. It will also partly decide the future of Virginia's potent Byrd machine. Finally, the romance and red roses of the First Families of Virginia are tied up in the personalities of the two candidates.

Fighting for the Byrd machine and the probable end of the public school system is Marshall J. Beverly, cousin of Harry Byrd, and great-great-grandson of John Marshall.

Aristocratic Ancestors

Fighting against the machine is Sen. Armistead L. Boothe, descendant of Confederate (hat-on-sword at Gettysburg) Armistead; also the son of a man who served for 50 years on the Virginia Democratic Executive Committee.

Battling on each side are such old Virginians as Fitzhugh Lee Opie, a member of the famous Lee family and collateral descent of George Washington, who's behind Beverly; and behind Boothe, Mary Walton Livingston, whose great-grandfather was one of the historic statesmen of the Old Dominion; and the Charles Ravenels, than whom there is no whomer in the aristocratic city of Alexandria. Boothe's wife is a Ravenel daughter.

Thus Old Virginia fights Old Virginia over the issue of whether to put a handful of Negro children into half a dozen schools—or close the schools. Boothe, though a segregationist, says the schools should be kept open under the Almond plan.

Not only is Old Virginia fighting Old Virginia as though crude invaders from Boston or Philadelphia were upon them, but they are doing it with invective seldom heard among Virginia gentlemen. Boothe, a Rhodes scholar and one of Virginia's outstanding legislators, broke with the Byrd machine. Thereupon it picked a Byrd relative to try to oust him from the Senate.

Beverly, strictly a know-nothing, got off a remark in a debate with Boothe the other night that there were about 400 members in the Virginia Legislature. There are 100 representatives and 40 senators.

If Boothe is defeated, the narrow vote in the Virginia Legislature could result in defeating Gov. Almond's school plan. If he is re-elected, all the South will be watching.

Reuther Flirts

Walter Reuther has tipped off members of his auto workers that he is not serious about backing Sen. Kennedy of Massachusetts, despite their flirtation. Reuther still favors Adlai Stevenson for president. But if Stevenson is knocked out of the Democratic finals, he will throw the support of his powerful Auto Workers Union behind Sen. Humphrey of Minnesota.