



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on June 23, 2019

## NRA's Official Magazine Smears Joseph McCarthy

The continued use of the term “McCarthyism” as a way to tar one’s political opponents, more than 60 years after the death of Senator Joseph McCarthy, is to be expected by the Left. What is troubling is that many on the Right also make use of the term to score points against progressives in and out of government.

McCarthyism is even defined in Webster’s Dictionary as “the use of indiscriminate, often unfounded, accusations, sensationalism, inquisitional investigative methods, etc. as in the suppression of political opponents portrayed as subversive.”



Whoever uses the term, and however it is used, it is at best done out of ignorance, and at worst, by someone who is knowingly perpetrating a falsehood, because rather than being a person who made wild accusations “without proper regard for evidence,” McCarthy was a patriot — a man who wanted to save his country from the totalitarian menace of communism.

In the July 2019 edition of *America’s First Freedom*, published by the National Rifle Association, an article, “NRA Sues Los Angeles City Council for Blacklisting Contractors with NRA Ties,” appears, in which the NRA is only the latest example of the smearing of McCarthy by a conservative-leaning organization.

The L.A. City Council approved an ordinance in February to require any company seeking a city contract to disclose any financial ties with the NRA or any of its subsidiaries. Council member Mitch O’Farrell even said, “NRA Peddles in gun violence and extremism,” even charging it with being a white supremacist organization.

The NRA filed a lawsuit against L.A. on April 24. In the suit, the NRA accused the city of violating the First Amendment and attempting to silence the NRA by discriminating against supporters of the NRA. On the face of it, it seems that the NRA has a very legitimate complaint.

However, in reporting the incident, *America’s First Freedom* wrote, “As NRA-ILA has noted, the city’s ordinance is nothing short of modern-day McCarthyism and is a concern for everyone who values their rights to free speech and association.” Chuck Michel, president of the California Rifle and Pistol Association is then quoted as accusing the city of putting NRA supporters on a ‘blacklist’ with the city.

Apparently, the author of this short article in *America’s First Freedom* is associating Senator McCarthy with the Hollywood Blacklist, in which writers, actors, and directors who were members of the U.S. Communist Party were denied employment in the movie industry.

If anyone is guilty of using “indiscriminate, often unfounded, accusations” here, it the NRA magazine, not McCarthy.



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The truth of the matter is, the Hollywood Blacklist was constructed by executives in the American motion picture industry, not McCarthy. Additionally, the Hollywood Blacklist was created a few years before Joe McCarthy burst onto the national scene with his Lincoln Day 1950 dinner speech to the Ohio County, West Virginia Republican Women — a speech in which McCarthy said there were spies for the Soviet Union, working inside the U.S. government in sensitive positions.

All of which was quite true, as has been heavily documented in the years since.

While *America's First Freedom* did not say so, this smear of McCarthy is usually stated along these lines: "McCarthy, while chairing the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HCUA), created the Hollywood Blacklist to keep many actors, directors, and screenwriters from working in Hollywood, just because of their political views."

The truth is that McCarthy was never even a member of the HCUA, as he was not even a member of the House of Representatives — he was a senator. McCarthy's focus was not on communists so much as communists and Soviet spies working inside the U.S. government in sensitive positions. One would think that wanting to purge such traitors working for a hostile foreign power would be commended, not criticized. Unless one thinks that one has a right to a U.S. government job, while spying on the U.S. government for a totalitarian regime ruled by one of history's greatest tyrants — Joseph Stalin — this seems to be a rather patriotic crusade that McCarthy was involved in.

Certainly, the NRA is right to be indignant about what the ultra-liberal L.A. city council has tried to do, but they are very wrong to besmirch the memory of a great patriot — Joseph McCarthy — to make their case.

*Photo of Sen. Joseph McCarthy: AP Images*

*Steve Byas is a college history instructor. His book, [History's Greatest Libels](#), includes a chapter defending Joe McCarthy. Other historical persons defended include Thomas Jefferson, Marie Antoinette, and Clarence Thomas. He may be contacted at [byassteve@yahoo.com](mailto:byassteve@yahoo.com).*

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