



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on March 29, 2019

## Kevin McCarthy Smears Joe McCarthy While Denouncing Adam Schiff

Every Republican member of the House Intelligence Committee called upon Chairman Adam Schiff to resign Thursday, in the wake of the conclusion of Special Counsel Robert Mueller's report that there was no collusion between anyone in the Trump for President campaign and the Russian government. House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), shown, attempted to add his own denunciation of Schiff by referring to him as "a modern-day Joe McCarthy."



Schiff has certainly been extremely loose with serious accusations against President Trump, insisting he had "ample evidence" that Trump did collude with the Russians. "There is already, in my view, ample evidence in the public domain on the issue of collusion if you're willing to see it," Schiff, a California Democrat, told reporters gathered recently at a breakfast hosted by the *Christian Science Monitor*. Schiff continued to accuse the president of disloyalty to America, even after Mueller's conclusion that there was no such collusion, insisting, "Undoubtably there is collusion."

House Republicans on the Intelligence Committee told Schiff in a letter, "Your willingness to continue to promote a demonstrably false narrative is alarming. The findings of the Special Counsel conclusively refute your past and present assertions and have exposed you having abused your position to knowingly promote false information, having damaged the integrity of this Committee, and undermined faith in U.S. government institutions."

McCarthy later denounced Schiff, as well. "Before this investigation even began, he said he had proof and evidence. Now I'm not related to Joe McCarthy, but Adam Schiff is a modern-day Joe McCarthy, somebody who claims something and never has delivered."

It could be argued that Kevin McCarthy's comparison of Adam Schiff to the late Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-Wis.) is an overreach, and it is certainly a smear — to the legacy of Joe McCarthy.

This continued use of the term "McCarthyism" as a way to tar one's political opponent more than 60 years after the passing of Joseph Raymond McCarthy has descended into even deeper levels of absurdity. The term is now used as a weapon not only by the political Left, but also by far too many on the political Right, such as Kevin McCarthy and Fox News host Sean Hannity. Even President Donald Trump, who once employed a McCarthy aide, Roy Cohn, as his personal lawyer, has resorted to using the term "McCarthyism," in defending himself from the wild charges of demagogues such as Schiff.

Trump, like Kevin McCarthy and Sean Hannity, should know better.

Rather than being a person who made wild accusations "without proper regard for evidence," McCarthy was a patriot — a man who wanted only to protect our country from a totalitarian menace.

We should not be surprised when those on the Left stoop to besmirching the reputation of a patriot such



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as McCarthy, in order to advance their progressive agenda. But sadly, this term — McCarthyism — has been used for so long, and with so little opposition, that it is not surprising to see those on the Right side of the political spectrum appropriate the term for their own purposes.

Writing in *Human Events*, the late M. Stanton Evans, author of the definitive book on McCarthy, *Blacklisted by History*, responded to the use of the term by conservatives. “How ironic, then, to have conservative spokesmen at talk radio shows, the blogosphere or Fox News robotically utter liberal falsehoods about McCarthy.” Evans lamented that it “was painfully clear that the talkers knew nothing of McCarthy, but were simply reciting in half-remembered phrases the standard liberal line about him.”

The hard truth is that McCarthy did not smear hundreds of “innocent” people, unless one considers devotees of a cause that was totalitarian and was responsible for millions of deaths of innocent people. “If anything,” wrote historian Larry Schweikert in *A Patriot’s History of the United States*, “McCarthy’s investigations *underestimated* the number of active Soviet agents in the country.”

McCarthy’s goals were always much narrower than has generally been asserted. His efforts were concentrated on getting communists — who were members of an organization that was loyal to a hostile foreign power — out of sensitive positions inside the U.S. government. Unless one takes the position that a person somehow has a right to a government job while simultaneously spying for a hostile foreign power, this actually is quite commendable.

One of the more ridiculous falsehoods still repeated about McCarthy is the charge that, in his position as chairman of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, he created the Hollywood Blacklist in which certain actors, directors, producers, and writers lost their jobs in the movies, or could not find work, owing to a blacklist that named them as communists.

First of all, since McCarthy was a senator, it should be obvious to any person of average intelligence that he was not going to be a member of a committee of the House of Representatives, much less chair that committee. Furthermore, McCarthy had little to say about communist subversion before 1950, and the Hollywood Blacklist was already in existence.

Perhaps the most serious lie told about Joe McCarthy is that he terrorized the country, with innocent Americans quaking in fear that they would be “next” to spend time in prison, falsely accused of being a communist. Writing in *The Web of Subversion*, James Burnham reviewed the statistics of the so-called terror of the McCarthy Era, and found the number of persons killed was zero; the number of persons wounded or injured was zero; and the number of persons arrested without a warrant was zero.

All during McCarthy’s efforts to get communists out of sensitive positions inside the U.S. government, the Communist Party continued to function legally, publicly recruiting new members, publishing newspapers, books, and journals in the millions of copies.

The McCarthy who should offer an apology is *Kevin McCarthy* — to *Joseph McCarthy* — for unfairly tarnishing his good name by comparing him to a person who has truly made unsubstantiated charges: Adam Schiff.

Photo of Kevin McCarthy: [house.gov](http://house.gov)

*Steve Byas is the author of History’s Greatest Libels, which includes a chapter on the libels against Joe McCarthy. Other chapters include defenses against attacks upon such persons as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Warren Harding, and Christopher Columbus.*



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