



Written by on January 1, 2010

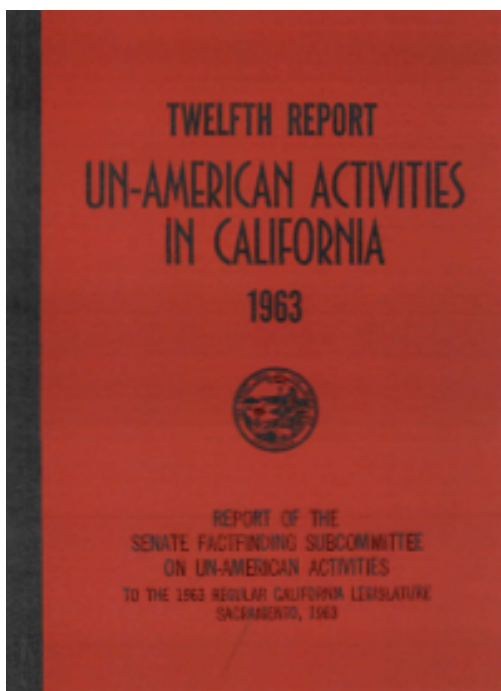
Maddow Displays Dishonesty; Ignores Official Report About JBS

Having evidently been stung by the many facts we presented on December 28 to counter Rachel Maddow's distortions and untruths about The John Birch Society, the MSNBC commentator struck again on her December 30 show. Because she ignored an "official" report exonerating JBS of various charges laid against the organization and its Founder, and relied instead on admitted "personal observations" in another report, she and her researchers displayed a rather slippery form of dishonesty. Here's what needs to be said.



In 1961, California Governor Pat Brown asked his Attorney General, Stanley Mosk, to investigate JBS and report to him about the organization and its activities in the Golden State. Mosk and his staff did as requested and the Attorney General, who placed his name on the resulting 14-page document, declared that it contained only his "personal observations." He added in his letter transmitting the document that it was merely "an expression of my opinion." In other words, nothing in it should be considered the official view of any California government leader.

To be sure, this 1961 report signed by Attorney General Mosk contained numerous denunciations about and disagreements with The John Birch Society. The Society never expected everyone to applaud what it was doing and saying. All that was ever asked is that there be honesty. This 1961 report signed by Mr. Mosk is what Maddow turned to for ammunition in her latest barrage against JBS.



However, two years later, another document issued by a California



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government body was not any collection of “personal observations.” It was, rather, a very official 62-page report published by an officially-constituted body of the California State Senate led by Democrat Hugh Burns.

State Senator Burns noted at the start of his comprehensive study that his two-year-long investigation had “been requested by the Society.” Senate committee staff members and hired investigators availed themselves of access to JBS officials, publications, and records. No stone was left unturned. And here is how this exhaustive “official” 1963 report closed: “Our investigation and study was requested by the Society, which had been publicly charged with being a secret, fascist, subversive un-American, anti-Semitic organization. We have not found any of these accusations to be supported by the evidence.”

If one is going to rely on the mere “personal observations” in one report and completely ignore the “official” conclusions in another, one has engaged in a disreputable and dishonest practice.

So favorable to the Society’s views, though not completely so, was the 1963 report that the Society sought and received permission from the California authorities to reprint it in its entirety. Copies by the thousands were distributed throughout the nation. Officially, The John Birch Society was given fair treatment and exonerated of the many nasty accusation aimed its way. Unofficially, the Society was roundly criticized, even ridiculed. Maddow’s choice of which report to rely upon says a great deal about her.

In her December 30 program, Maddow also mentioned the work of the editorialist from a 1962 Santa Barbara newspaper whose work excoriating The John Birch Society won for him a Pulitzer Prize. One of the charges Thomas Storke laid at the door of JBS claimed that its members had engaged in the odious practice of making “anonymous” telephone calls that made accusations about local political officials and Mr. Storke himself. But, according to Mr. Storke, these calls were “anonymous.”

If anonymous, how could he or anyone attribute them to Society members? That such a practice was never honestly attributed to JBS is fact.

As for the Pulitzer Prize, the members of the committee awarding their honor to Mr. Storke indicted themselves by choosing their honoree just as earlier Pulitzer officials had harmed themselves with their award to *New York Times* reporter Walter Duranty in the 1930s.

Duranty had filed several reports from the Soviet Union claiming that famine was non-existent in the area he was visiting. The complete opposite was true and millions perished at the hands of Soviet leaders who deliberately created the horror. Recent reviews of this matter by Pulitzer officials have led to the possibility that Duranty’s award will be revoked.

No one at JBS is suggesting that the award to Mr. Storke should be revoked, only that what he wrote ought to be more carefully scrutinized. We do wish to make known our view that there is no note of infallibility about a Pulitzer Prize or about any of its recipients.

For over 50 years, The John Birch Society has received venom, distortion of its positions, and downright dishonesty. No one in JBS has ever claimed that the organization’s spokespersons and published positions are completely undeserving of criticism.

However, most of the barbs tossed at our organization are easily shown to be baseless, Rachel Maddow’s latest contributions certainly included. She has added her name to the list of those who deal dishonestly with The John Birch Society.

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