



## McCarthy's "Witches"

"I was a representative of the Young Communist League and the Communist party of the United States [at] the meetings of the executive committee of the Communist International, Young Communist International, Moscow," pronounced Paul Crouch during his September 15, 1953 testimony before a closed session of Senator Joseph McCarthy's (R-Wis.) investigative subcommittee. Crouch's testimony, contained in the 4,232 pages of recently unsealed transcripts, offered details of a resumé the witness had compiled during 17 years of diligent service to the Soviet Union.

"I was a student and lecturer at the Frunze Military Academy and an honorary officer of the Red Army," continued Crouch. "I was the head of the Communist party's National Department for Infiltration of the Armed Forces in the United States, national editorial director of the Young Communist League, member of the editorial staff of the *Daily Worker*, district organizer for the Communist party in Virginia, New York and South Carolina, Tennessee and Utah, member of the district bureau of the Communist party in the Alabama district and the California district, Alameda County organizer, 1941."

Predictably, Crouch's detailed account of his Communist activities received no attention in media accounts of the recently unsealed transcripts. Nor were media outlets willing to report Crouch's testimony regarding nuclear scientist J. Robert Oppenheimer, one of the key figures in the U.S. government's top-secret Manhattan (atomic bomb) Project. Asked by Senator McCarthy, "Is there any doubt in your mind that Oppenheimer was a member of the Communist party?" Crouch replied: "No, sir, none whatever. I met him in a closed meeting of the Communist party in a house which was subsequently found to have been his residence at the time...."

Three years prior to his testimony before McCarthy's subcommittee, Crouch and his wife (who had also been a member of the Communist Party) had similarly testified regarding Oppenheimer before the California Legislature's Committee on Un-American Activities. But any further inquiry about Oppenheimer's activities was stymied when the scientist received a prominent endorsement from a popular young Golden State congressman with impressive anti-Communist credentials: Richard M. Nixon.

In his testimony at McCarthy's closed-door hearings, Crouch described another occasion when powerful figures in the U.S. government came to Oppenheimer's aid. During Oppenheimer's perjury trial, two Justice Department attorneys forbade Crouch to testify that he and his wife had attended Communist Party meetings at Oppenheimer's home. As a result, Crouch related, the jury "found him not guilty due to lack of sufficient identifying witnesses who had been in closed meetings with him, that is, witnesses who could testify to that effect."

On November 7, 1953, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover received a letter from William L. Borden, former executive director of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, containing a litany of detailed allegations leading to Borden's "exhaustively considered opinion, based upon years of study, of the available classified evidence, that more probably than not J. Robert Oppenheimer is an agent of the Soviet Union." Oppenheimer was stripped of his security clearance, thereby becoming a "martyr" to the scourge of "McCarthyism." But like others given that exalted title, Oppenheimer was guilty as charged.

In 1994, Pavel Sudoplatov, former head of the KGB's Administration for Special Tasks, published his memoirs: *Special Tasks: The Memoirs of an Unwanted Witness*. In that position, Sudoplatov stated, he was "responsible for sabotage, kidnapping, and assassination of our enemies beyond the country's borders." In *Special Tasks*, Sudoplatov disclosed that he had headed "the Soviet espionage effort to



Written by [William Norman Grigg](#) on June 16, 2003

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obtain the secrets of the atomic bomb from America and Great Britain. I set up a network of illegals who convinced Robert Oppenheimer, Enrico Fermi, Leo Szilard ... and other scientists in America and Great Britain to share atomic secrets with us." Further confirmation of Oppenheimer's role as a Soviet spy was provided with the release of the "Venona" transcripts in 1995.

### **Rogues' Gallery**

Senator McCarthy first became aware of extensive Communist penetration of the State Department in 1949, when three men brought to his office a detailed FBI report on the problem. The report had been made available to the State Department in 1947. However, the State Department, under Secretary George C. Marshall, ignored the evidence and actually accelerated efforts to dismantle its security staff. A secret memo sent to Marshall by a Senate Appropriations subcommittee protested what it described as "a condition that developed and still flourishes in the State Department under the administration of [State Department official] Dean Acheson. It is evident that there is a deliberate, calculated program being carried out not only to protect Communist personnel in high places but to reduce security and intelligence protection to a nullity. On file in the department is a copy of a preliminary report of the FBI on Soviet espionage activities in the United States which involves a large number of State Department employees, some in high official positions."

Many of these figures had been brought into the State Department when it was merged in 1945 with several wartime agencies riddled with Communists and Communist-front members. Assurances from President Harry S. Truman that efforts would be taken to cull Communists from sensitive positions proved empty.

In 1949, Acheson — who had been a paid attorney for the Soviet Union prior to FDR's decision to grant the regime diplomatic recognition in 1933 — became secretary of state. In that position he continued his efforts to protect Communists and Soviet agents, most notoriously his good friend, the arch-traitor Alger Hiss.

A year later, in his February 9 speech before a group of Republican Women in Wheeling, West Virginia, Senator McCarthy made public his knowledge of Communist infiltration of the State Department. He subsequently discussed in public the names of nine of these people, including Owen Lattimore, John Stewart Service, and Philip C. Jessup. A Senate committee created by Democrat Senator Millard Tydings, supposedly to investigate McCarthy's charges, became instead an effort to vilify and demonize McCarthy. After 31 days of hearings, the Tydings subcommittee labeled McCarthy's accusations a "fraud" and a "hoax" and gave a blanket clearance to the State Department. But the facts were on McCarthy's side.

The high-profile cases cited by McCarthy — Lattimore, Service, and Jessup — all ended with the senator's charges being validated. The Senate Internal Security Subcommittee later investigated Lattimore, declaring in 1952 that "Owen Lattimore was, from some time beginning in the 1930s, a conscious articulate instrument of the Soviet conspiracy." John Stewart Service, after being cleared by the State Department's Loyalty and Security Board six times, was finally ousted from the department in December 1951 after the Civil Service Loyalty Review Board found that there was "reasonable doubt" as to his loyalty. In Jessup's case, the uncontested record showed that he had belonged to at least five Communist fronts, had close ties to many Communists, and was an influential member of the Institute for Pacific Relations, which the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee would describe two years later as "a vehicle used by Communists to orientate [sic] American Far Eastern policy toward Communist objectives."



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Of the 110 names McCarthy gave to the Tydings subcommittee, 62 were at the time employed by the State Department. Though the subcommittee cleared them all, within one year a State Department Loyalty Board instigated proceedings against 49 of the 62, and by the end of 1954, 81 of those on McCarthy's list had either resigned from their government posts or been dismissed.



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