

Appendix F

The George Marshall Episode

SENATOR McCARTHY delivered a 60,000 word speech on the floor of the Senate, on June 14, 1951, examining the career of General George Marshall and concluding, on the basis of the evidence he presented, that Marshall is "steeped in falsehood," and that he has "recourse to the lie whenever it suits his convenience." McCarthy concluded his survey of Marshall's career by asking,

How can we account for our present situation unless we believe that men high in this Government are concealing to deliver us to disaster? This must be the product of a great conspiracy, a conspiracy on a scale so immense as to dwarf any previous such venture in the history of man. A conspiracy of infamy so black that, when it is finally exposed, its principals shall be forever deserving of the maledictions of all honest men. . . . What can be made of this unbroken series of decisions and acts contributing to the strategy of defeat? They cannot be attributed to incompetence. If Marshall were merely stupid, the laws of probability would dictate that part of his decisions would serve his country's interest.

McCarthy has said that he did not call Marshall a traitor. Strictly speaking, he is correct. And, in fact, a year after making his speech, McCarthy wrote "If [Marshall] . . . made mistakes, that is no disgrace. Only those who do nothing make no mistakes. To prove that Marshall made mistakes does not indict Marshall of being either incompetent or of following the Communist cause"; and to the direct question, "Did you accuse Marshall of being a traitor," McCarthy answered, "No."^{*}

It is, however, unreasonable to conclude, on the basis of the paragraphs quoted above, that McCarthy was charging Marshall with anything less than pro-Communism. In doing so, McCarthy aroused more resentment than with any other single act in his stormy career—save, possibly, his attack on Philip Jessup.

Marshall was not a typical "McCarthy case." McCarthy did not

* *McCarthyism, op.cit.*, pp. 68-69.

impugn Marshall's loyalty on the ground that he had belonged to a number of Communist fronts; or that he had been seen at clandestine meetings of the Party; or that he had filched secret documents and turned them over to members of a Soviet spy ring. Rather, McCarthy impugned Marshall's loyalty on the grounds that, over a period of years, his policy decisions advanced the Communist cause and retarded our own. He reconstructed Marshall's public record after delving laboriously into the memoirs of Leahy, Churchill, Mark Clark, Sherwood, Stimson, Byrnes, Stettinius, Welles, Hull, Arnold, Deane, Chennault, and Daniels—almost all of them highly vocal *admirers* of General Marshall. McCarthy moved from *their* reconstruction of wartime strategy and wartime and postwar diplomacy to an analysis of Marshall's role in shaping allied policy. He concluded that, on those issues in which the interests of the western powers and those of Russia conflicted, Marshall consistently sided with the policy urged by Russia. McCarthy therefore inferred that Marshall was pro-Communist.

On McCarthy's showing, the crucial matters in Marshall's record were:

- (1) his inordinate anxiety to launch a second front at a time when we were manifestly unprepared to do so;
- (2) his insistence that the Russians be allowed to reach eastern Europe ahead of the Allies;
- (3) his insistence that we appease Russia at Teheran and Yalta in order to woo her help in the Far East;
- (4) his siding with Stalin at Teheran on the strategy of the war;
- (5) his directives to his subordinates that the Russians be indulged in their refusal to make available to us statistics on their "forces, their weapons, and their plans";
- (6) his allowing the Communists first access to Berlin and Prague, and his failure to provide for a western corridor to Berlin;
- (7) his insistence at Yalta that we make territorial and other concessions to Stalin;
- (8) his role in formulating our anti-Chiang Far Eastern policy;
- (9) his personal impact on that policy while in China;
- (10) his pressure on Truman to extend further lend-lease aid to Russia;
- (11) his suppression of the Wedemeyer report which warned against our China policy;
- (12) his proposal that we withhold military aid from Nationalist China;

- (13) his "sabotage" of the military-aid program with which we finally went to China's assistance;
- (14) his fixing of the thirty-eighth parallel as a dividing line between free and Communist Korea;
- (15) his refusal to prosecute vigorously the war against the North Koreans;
- (16) his advocacy of a European security pact which excludes Western Germany, Spain, Greece or Turkey;
- (17) his backing of American demobilization.

The evidence that Marshall made common cause with the Russians on these vital issues is, as McCarthy claimed, indeed overwhelming; but it does not, as McCarthy claimed it did, add up to party-lining of the sort that raises reasonable doubts as to loyalty. Almost all Marshall's decisions were backed by other military men and other diplomats whose attitude toward the Soviet Union (however appalling it may seem, especially in retrospect) cannot be described as treasonable. Every one of Marshall's actions is explainable in terms of the deeply imbedded premises that were being acted upon by many non-Communists of the day: (a) the Germans must at all costs be diverted from their attacks on Soviet Russia, whose capitulation would prolong the war indefinitely; (b) Soviet Russia must at all costs be placated lest she make a separate peace; (c) the best means of assuring peaceful postwar international relations is to indulge Soviet Russia in all or, at any rate, most of her territorial ambitions; (d) Soviet Russia's entry into the Pacific War is indispensable to a quick victory over Japan; (e) peace in China can result only from American pressure on Chiang to "broaden the base" of his government to include the Chinese Communists.

Marshall, then, is obviously not in the same class with a John Service, or a John Vincent, whose duties and qualifications called for expert reporting and shrewd interpretation of facts on which policy-makers like Marshall were to rely.

The most—and perhaps the least—that can be said of Marshall is that the premises he acted upon, the decisions he made and clung to so stubbornly, and, finally, his short-sightedness, probably merit him the title of America's most disastrous general. And if McCarthy had excised two paragraphs from it, his 200-page speech would have added up to some such statement as that—and a very impressive statement to boot.

McCarthy's conclusions about Marshall differed from the con-

clusions which he normally draws concerning his targets in that they were based on a dangerous and unusual brand of reasoning which, followed to its logical conclusions, would also brand Roosevelt and Truman as disloyal. In assessing a man's primary loyalties, we cannot base our deductions on the effects of that man's behavior. Thus, while the impact of Marshall's career did, beyond any doubt, decisively aid the Communist cause, one has no grounds, given all the evidence, for concluding that Marshall wished it to do so. As we have pointed out, every one of Marshall's decisions between 1942 and 1946 is explainable in terms not necessarily pro-Communist. It is true that put together they become progressively more disturbing as a pro-Soviet pattern emerges. But only the observer who postulates rationality as the generator of every human decision, who overlooks the element of irrationality in human action, sees purpose lurking behind every pattern. In studying the record of George Marshall, McCarthy failed to take into account man's irrationality; he forgot that more often than not men stumble into patterns.* He also missed the main point: a balanced and rational observer would not fix attention on the question whether Marshall intended to aid the Soviet Union; his concern would be whether he had helped Communism consistently, and if so, whether, given his demonstrated ignorance or incompetence, it makes sense for an anti-Communist society to retain such a man as its master global strategist.

McCarthy's critics have insisted that his method is not only bad in itself, but entails disastrous consequences for those on whom it is visited, e.g., in terms of wrecked reputations, social and economic ostracism, etc. It is therefore in point to ask whether Marshall has been damaged by McCarthy's assault.

Marshall's loyalty is not doubted in any reasonable quarter. On the other hand, Marshall no longer rides as high as he once did in the esteem of his countrymen. This is in part because of McCar-

* It is interesting that two famous societies, one imaginary, one real, adopted this approach in this area. In exercising their prerogative of *ostracism*, the question that interested the ancient Greeks was not so much whether a leader had intended to damage Athens, but whether, in their opinion, he had damaged it or threatened to do so; in which case he was exiled for ten years. In his *Thoughts on the Government of Poland*, Rousseau proposed that the Polish Parliament meet upon the death of the king to determine whether or not, while ruling, he had satisfactorily served the nation. If the king lost out in this post-mortem, his memory was to be publicly disgraced and his family's goods confiscated.

thy's exposure, but mostly because of America's growing disillusionment with the shape of the new world, its wartime leaders, among them Marshall, forged for it. To the extent that McCarthy, through his careful analysis of Marshall's record, has contributed to cutting Marshall down to size, he has performed a valuable service. For McCarthy is quite right in saying that "if the history of [the past ten years] . . . is to be understood, Marshall's record must be understood."

As regards his imputation of treasonable motives to Marshall, McCarthy deserves to be criticized, even if Marshall's general reputation for loyalty did not suffer. McCarthy's judgment here was bad. It is in a class with Winston Churchill's estimate of Stalin ("Personally I cannot feel anything but the most lively admiration for this truly great man, the father of his country. . . .").* Neither estimate is typical of the judgment of either man.

* The argument that Churchill should be forgiven because, obviously, he did not really believe what he said about Stalin, whereas McCarthy must be condemned because he probably *did* believe what he implied about Marshall, rests on an interesting code of morality.

Notes

CHAPTER II

1. *Congressional Record*, July 18, 1946, pp. 9389-90.

CHAPTER III

1. *Hearings on Communist Espionage in the United States*, House Committee on Un-American Activities, August 30, 1948, pp. 1291-1300.
2. *Report*, p. 14.

CHAPTER IV

1. Jack Anderson and Ronald May, *McCarthy: The Man, The Senator, The "Ism"* (Boston: Beacon, 1952).
2. *Senate Appropriations for 1953*, p. 427.
3. "Loyalty and Security Principles and Procedures Relating to Employees of the State Department," VCI, June 8, 1948.
4. *Congressional Record—Senate*, July 24, 1950, p. 10968.
5. *The McCarthy Record*, The Independent Citizens' Committee on McCarthy's Record (Milwaukee, 1952), p. 81.
6. *Senate Appropriations for 1953*, pp. 376-77.
7. "Memorandum to All Employees," June 8, 1948; and subsequent "Regulations and Procedures," Section 390, Loyalty and Security of Employees.
8. *Senate Appropriations for 1953*, p. 382.
9. *Appropriations Committee, U.S. Senate, for [fiscal] 1951*, p. 601.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 610, 611.
11. *House of Representatives, Committee on the Judiciary, Special Subcommittee to Investigate the Department of Justice* (transcript), Mar. 23, 1953, Vol. 27, pp. 4295-97.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 4322.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 4336.
14. *Ibid.*, Vol. 28, p. 4362.
15. *Report*, p. 12.

CHAPTER V

1. "Report of Preliminary Investigation of Senator William Benton's Charges against Senator Joseph R. McCarthy Relating to Senate Resolution 187, United States Senate, Committee on Rules and Administration, Subcommittee on Privileges and Elections, January, 1952."
2. *Tydings Committee Report*, p. 149. Hereinafter referred to as *Tydings Report*.