

Eleanor Roosevelt, Draft of "My Day" column with handwritten revisions, August 28, 1952. In this draft for her newspaper column, written at the height of the McCarthy era, ER condemns the 'slurs and accusations' made by the Senator. 'I despise the control that they [the Soviet Union] insist on holding over men's minds,' she writes, 'but that is why I despise what Senator McCarthy has done, for he would use the same methods of fear to control all thought...'

I have a rather interesting letter from a lady today which I would like to answer in my column, since she gave me her name and address it is a genuine letter and I think deserves an answer. She says "In view of your past record of sponsoring organization with communistic leanings, some who even booed your late husband, I can not conceive of your making a speech against a red blooded American like Sen. McCarthy. He has earnestly tried to free our government of them. What have you done in that line?"

I would like to point out that the only organization I ever sponsored which had any degree of communist control was the American Youth Congress in the early 30's. There was a very good reason for working with those young people, the bulk of the membership was not then and was never communist. A small group among them were communists then and perhaps may have remained so, that I do not know. I would like to remind people in general and especially my correspondent that that was a particularly difficult period for young people. They were coming out of college in great numbers and finding no jobs. In other words democracy was failing them and ~~in~~ many of the most intelligent were looking around to see if there was anything which could meet their needs better than democracy. Sooner or later many of those found ^{out} how intolerable communist control was and became better citizens of our democracy than they had ever been before. They did not inform against their former colleagues, they simply gave up communism and went to work as citizens of ^{our} democracy and they were more valuable because they knew what was wrong with communism and what they cherished in ^{the} democratic form of government. ^{They understood} ^{democratic way of life}

That was a time, however, when young people needed friends

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even if they booed the President. That was rude and ill mannered but under it lay desperate unhappiness and frustration.

It was fortunate that it could be known and understood in the White House. # My devotion to my country and to democracy is quite as great as that of Sen McCarthy. I do not like his methods nor the results of his methods of work and I would like to say to my correspondent that I think those of us who worked with young people in the world of the 30's did more to save many of them from becoming communists than Sen. McCarthy has done for his fellow citizens ^{with} all his slurs and accusations. I know the danger of communism, I know it perhaps better than many other American citizens because for nearly five months of every year for the last ~~five~~ ^{last} years I have sat in meetings with the communist representatives of the USSR. I despise the control that they insist on ^{today} over men's minds but that is why I despise what Sen. McCarthy has done for he would use the same methods of fear to control all thought that ~~was~~ ^{is} not according to his own pattern in our free country. I will give you the rest of this letter and the answer in the future.