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THE ROOTS OF McCARThYISM
A HISTORIOGRAPHY OF AN AMERICAN PHENOMENON
1950-1954

by
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DEDICATION

To my family, present and future,
the most important gift I will ever receive.
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INTRODUCTION

I have in my hand 57 cases of individuals who would appear to be either card carrying members or certainly loyal to the Communist Party, but who nevertheless are still helping to shape our foreign policy. . .

On the night of Sunday, February 4, 1979, in an effort to prove my total obsession with the topic of Joseph R. McCarthy, I obediently dreamed about meeting the junior Senator from Wisconsin. The occasion was the Senator's visit to my hometown of Great Falls, Montana. Whether he actually ever did visit that wind capital of this country is unknown to me, yet I saw him. The fact that dreams are usually reserved for the portrayal of fantasy and nonsense did not alter the authenticity of the portrait of McCarthy to which I was treated. In fact, while aspects of the sequence were fantastic in nature, this only served to lend accuracy to the show; McCarthy's life and methods were, among other things, bizarre, so that any dream about the man would have to be equally bizarre. Speaking, appropriately, from the steps of the bishop's house, McCarthy conducted his crusade with veracity as his unwilling companion. His creed was clear: the United States was being sabotaged on all levels by Communists. When McCarthy was finished speaking, only the bishop remained above suspicion.

The purpose of this account is to relate not only a coincidence, but also some insights which must preface any attempt at grasping what Joseph McCarthy was all about. As I poured over the pages of his life, I became obsessed with the man, hence the innumerable McCarthy anecdotes with which I have bored my friends. The point is that Joe, too, became obsessed with a topic, and most reliable scholarship suggests that he was
as new to his subject in 1950 as I was to mine. In both cases, the two principals came together quite by accident. However, any comparison must stop here. For while my research has allowed me to write about the man, and perhaps understand him to some degree, McCarthy's research, and lack thereof, led to broken dreams, lost jobs, and ruined lives. My dream was a pleasant experience. Joseph McCarthy's four year rampage, widely chronicled as a "reign of terror," was a nightmare, at least for his victims.

Joseph Raymond McCarthy inspired, during his four year odyssey, an impressive volume of headlines. Whether out of intellectual curiosity, a need for revenge, or simple morbid fascination, various contemporary writers have puzzled over Joe with volumes of posthumous script. The interpretations of the McCarthy era range, to coin a phrase, from the sublime to the ridiculous. Several of the explanations stand above the rest. In fact, the more plausible arguments wisely synthesize the more restrictive texts into more believable wholes. It would be foolish, for instance, to blame the rise and maintenance of McCarthyism on a lethargic, or intimidated, press. However, the attitudes and cowardice of the press, when coupled with McCarthy's amazing flair for exploiting that printed medium, weave a reasonable theme. Essentially, the truth—that ever-elusive and controversially abstract alignment of facts—must be found somewhere among a mass of several sub-truths. This is especially true when dealing with the complexities of McCarthyism, the roots of which merit an explanation which transcends simplicity. It was from this framework that I, too, ventured for the truth.

My interest in the circus that was the 1950's, and more specifically, my interest in McCarthyism, arises from a need to reconcile my image of the decade—hula-hoops, U.F.O.'s and Buddy Holly with the grim realities of
rampant mistrust and blacklists. How, I wondered, had the decade of my birth absorbed the seemingly incompatible elements of Eisenhower and McCarthy, of atomic proliferation and droodles, and also, why the prominence of these elements? Though I was enamored with the thought of an honor's thesis on droodles, those contrived sketches underscored by clever captions, the idea of a single individual so dominating a supposedly independent-minded people fascinated me. My research literally transformed my fascination to fright, and I became overwhelmed by the story. I soon realized that I was doing more than writing a paper, that I was scanning those dark days for clues as to how we could avoid a reoccurrence. Understanding the origins of a problem is the mandatory insurance against having to again confront that problem. I was passing from the realm of intellectual calisthenics into the world of useful history. I was discovering the truth. Of course, the more controversial the subject, the more elusive the truth. Yet I am satisfied with the conglomeration of theories as assembled. This is the end of the process. The painful beginning, the struggle to uncover the relevant and not be smothered by the irrelevant, was not as enjoyable. Seeking a reasonable interpretation of the basis for McCarthyism, I centered my inquiry around three major themes. Each is comprehensive in and of itself, and each is widely held. Sub-themes, where necessary, are incorporated. However, as with anything associated with the Senator, the divergence between the various arguments is rather wide. The difficulty in taking that compulsory "step back" from one's subject, a cardinal rule of historical writing, is compounded when the issue is laden with emotion. Thus one must be extremely careful and selective when attempting to lend perspective to this misunderstood man and to the movement which bears his name.
First, I examined McCarthyism in the contextual light of political phenomenon. Essentially, this theory attributes the domestic climate of McCarthyism to political forces which ingrained, and drew on, our fears. It includes ideological struggles between the left and right, partisan politics, and basic political opportunism. Pre-McCarthy psychic factors, including the national state of mind, tend to be excluded from this analysis. This interpretation reduces the role of the Senator to a bit part. Political elites and intellectuals play the lead. While a casual glance at the era might delineate McCarthy as the center of a unified effort, this political theory suggests that the movement had many aims, several of which were unknown to Joe. He neither orchestrated nor understood the events; but caught up in them, he served them well.

My next section explores the possibility that McCarthy created the madness by exercising his demagogic talents to the fullest. Given this theme it is obvious that the "credit" for the national mood belonged primarily to Joe. To bolster the demagogic argument, a treatment of McCarthy's infamous tactics will be included as a case in point. The discussion indicates that the Senator was clearly a master tactician, regardless of which theory is accepted. However, so extensive were Joe's manipulative abilities that labeling him a true demagogue was quite easy. Each move he made was quickly construed to be a calculated decision. His manner apparently contrived, Joe appeared as the classic puppeteer, with America dangling under the force of his will. He implanted fears and extracted them, all in the name of elevating his own importance.

Chapter four deals with the interpretation that McCarthyism was a logical extension of pent-up middle class frustration, "the revenge of noses that for twenty years of fancy parties were pressed against the
outside window pane. This is best classified as a "pluralist/status anxiety" school of thought. Within this context the citizens of the U.S. were seen to possess latent anxieties as the result of changes in their status. The fears thus being ingrained, the enormous manifestation of those popular fears—McCarthyism—was due to the tremendous need for persons to release them. Joe, according to this theory, proved quite adept at extraction. This, I will hint, had something to do with McCarthy's identification with that frustrated middle class, and his ability to use that understanding to his advantage.

Preceding the three chapters embracing the above theories is a description of the hysterical tenor of the era. This is my constant, a frame of reference from which to precede. Assuming that my portrayal of this mood is accurate, we can proceed as follows: Americans did exhibit hysteria, but what were its roots and why was it so emphatically released? Chapters two through four should offer some concrete explanations to these queries.

I realize that these questions are not new to the field of scholarship. However, my thesis will revolve around the proportions in which I think each theory is correct. In proper dosages, the theories are not contradictory, but in fact are complimentary. I hope to prove that each of the three factors explained herein were essential to the hysteria, as Joseph R. McCarthy rose to fame on the panacea of anti-Communism.
CHAPTER I

AMERICAN HYSTERIA OF THE EARLY 1950's

A discussion of "what Joe was, and why" will be handled in the next chapters. But some discourse on what he caused should be offered here. Naturally, he caused many things, but among his most important "contributions" was the socially damaging phenomenon of hysteria.

Websters defines hysteria as "psychoneurosis marked by emotional excitability... unmanageable fear."¹ It is, of course, quite an ambitious undertaking to ascribe such a dramatic trend in the national character to the efforts of one man. Consequently, it is necessary to point out events, both national and international, which helped bring about this condition. Thus, pointing to both the Senator and to events, I hope to demonstrate how the early 1950's was one of the most confusing, illogical, and for many--fearful--eras in American history.

"In normal times," contends Herbert Block, "McCarthy's charges might have been greeted by some such old-fashioned American expression as 'put up or shut up'."² But these were not normal times, and for nearly five years, McCarthy refused to shut up, and was not strongly compelled to do so. Let us first examine the atmosphere which permeated our nation in the post-war years.

Post-war Americans were largely a cocky lot. We entered the war late, and for all practical purposes, had made the difference between victory and defeat. With resourcefulness and determination we defeated the enemy, mostly with our industrial might. By the end of the war, our economic machine was producing at an unprecedented rate. Since Americans have traditionally seen periods of prosperity as good times, times were indeed good after the war. The Soviet Union suffered devastating casualties in the
war, and much of Europe was literally leveled by the conflict. Though partially by default, we emerged from the war as the absolute power on the face of the earth. And we had the "bomb."

Frightening as the atomic bomb was, the prevailing mood among Americans was that, used as a peaceful deterrent, this devastating weapon would ensure our worldwide supremacy. While we were suspicious of the Soviet Union, we remained confident that our leaders could arrest any threats from our past ally.

The Alger Hiss episode, however, shattered our confidence. Hiss was accused of being a Communist Party member from 1934 to 1938 by Whittaker Chambers, himself a former Communist. The furor was compounded by the fact that Hiss had been employed by the State Department during those years, and Chambers claimed to have evidence that Hiss passed secrets to the Communists. The affair took many turns, and among the most interesting were the discovery of secret documents inside of a pumpkin, and the emergence to prominence of Representative Richard M. Nixon. Scarcely as interesting, but much more important, was a dramatic plunge in the public's confidence in our invincibility. Suddenly our cocksureness had given way to widespread doubt, though not yet hysteria, about our ability to remain on top. The controversy associated with the Hiss verdict as to whether or not he was guilty only added to an atmosphere of confusion and suspicion. The case should have been a minor one, since Hiss was a relatively unimportant official in the State Department and the secrets he was said to have passed along were equally unimportant. Yet the incident seemed to substantiate a growing suspicion that our freedom was threatened by the Communist menace. In sum, as Fred Cook contends, "the Alger Hiss case... perhaps more than any other single domestic event, made McCarthy possible."
Our confidence was shaken, and our national psyche was dealt several other blows as we entered the 1950's. With Newsweek magazine asking, "Will this be the last Christmas with peace on earth?", Lately Thomas detected an era which "was not a time of national confidence; things had gone wrong, and Americans were trying to understand why.” Considering the events in Asia, the new Communist regime in China and our traditional lack of understanding about the continent, our uncertainties were not surprising. Owen Lattimore, Asian specialist and McCarthy enemy, attributed the growing hysteria to a "spreading sense of uneasiness and fear" regarding unknown and mysterious Asia.” To an American public "trying to understand why," such changes were hard to accept. Asia was not really our concern, but Communism was; a Communist was a Communist, no matter what flag he lived under. "Let us stop deluding ourselves," wrote a concerned American, "war with Russia is inevitable.” Instead, events led us to fight Communism in Korea.

The Hiss case and the war in Korea made the anti-Communist crusade a struggle on two fronts. But while the latter was fought thousands of miles away, the former presented itself in the lives of every American, from New York City to Helena, Montana. Speaking at the Colonial club in Montana's capital city, a wary citizen declared "as soon as somebody belongs to the Communist party he is against the government. Why give him a chance to destroy it?" How quickly had "two chickens in every pot" degenerated into "a Communist under every bed!" On a "positive" note, contractors were enjoying an unexpected influx of new orders, as the bomb shelter became a part of the American culture.
In Washington, D.C. Life magazine reported in October, 1950, that "the Capitol had become a veritable cave of winds where thundering charges hurtled back and forth and cries of 'liar' shrilled through marble rooms..." Time reported that Senator McCarthy was sitting in his office "wearing an air of conspiratorial secrecy. He tapped a pencil on his desk and kept the tap water running to foil, said he, any hidden microphones." And Senator Tydings unwillingly lent to the craziness when he announced that plans were being studied concerning the need to set up a second capital in case of enemy attack. While there is nothing ludicrous about studying such a plan, its page one coverage led many to believe that the plan might soon need to be implemented. In Burma, the American ambassador was informed that the books on sanitary plumbing he had requisitioned were being held up for "State Department clearance." Truth was indeed becoming stranger than fiction.

By late 1950, Gallup polls showed that 84 per cent of those questioned knew about McCarthy's allegations; at the same time, J. Edgar Hoover was giving testimony before the Senate, insisting that the strength of the Communist Party in this country was bolstered by "a potential fifth column of 540,000 people." Everyone felt the pressure, including artists. While some, such as Ernest Hemingway and Norman Mailer, openly opposed McCarthy, Hollywood's record of defiance was pitiful. In 1947, the House UnAmerican Activities Committee (HUAC) investigations were focused on the filmmaking industry, and the "Hollywood Ten" incident resulted. Refusing to testify at all before the committee, the Ten were jailed for contempt of Congress. After this episode, the screen capital actually aided the McCarthy cause,
helping him to strengthen his hold on America. Anyone given to watching late night movies might well run across "My Son John," the epitome of Hollywood's surrender to Joe. Briefly, the story is of a young man (John) who leaves his devout Irish-Catholic family for a government job in Washington. When his mother suspects that her son is a Communist, she forces him to swear on her bible that he is not. "But, of course, as the audience is reminded, nothing is sacred to 'Commies' once they become puppets of their mistaken ideals, and John continues lying" until he is gunned down at that shrine of honesty, the Lincoln Memorial. 16

Morality has a profound effect on people's emotions, and anti-Communist films portrayed not merely a struggle between opposing ideologies, but took on a moral complexion, becoming an endeavor pitting good against evil. Those who doubted Hollywood's analysis of the true nature of the battle needed only listen to the politicians; as President Harry S. Truman decreed at Gonzaga University, Soviet Communism was "a modern tyranny led by a small group who have abandoned their faith in God." 17

When the artists, the press, or the political officials were not compounding the hysteria, some of our other citizen groups, acting in the name of patriotism, were. On May Day in 1950, a group of masked American Legionnaires in a small Wisconsin community staged a mock take-over of the town. Thomas describes the madness:

...posing as Communists, Russian-style, they routed the mayor and police chief out of their beds before dawn, set up roadblocks with barbed-wire defenses... and herded objectors into hastily erected 'concentration camps' near 'Red Square'... The mayor, still in slippers and bathrobe, standing with a pistol at his back, announced the town's complete surrender to the 'United Soviet States of America,' saying 'God must have willed it this way, and maybe it's for the best.' At the same hour... in the stores, men's suits were marked up to $242, and coffee to $4.14
a pound. Lunch rooms by command served nothing but black bread and potato soup. At the end of the day everybody unmasked at a grand patriotic rally in the town square; but such was the shock of this freakish demonstration enacted with spine-chilling realism that the mayor suffered a real heart attack that evening.\(^\text{18}\)

As the above incident illustrates, patriotic organizations did much towards increasing the hysteria. Another cloak-and-dagger affair, the Norwalk Incident, also aroused considerable concern. As a part of a membership drive, members of the Norwalk, Connecticut chapter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars undertook some spy hunting. Anyone exhibiting "Communist-like" behavior was noted on a list; the information, if deemed conclusive, was passed along to the F.B.I. Despite the indignant cries of outraged citizens, who demanded an end to the "witch hunt," Senator McCarthy calmly labeled the program "excellent." A new couple in Norwalk, bothered by anonymous, obscene phone calls, awoke one morning to find a sign on their lawn reading "This House for Sale."\(^\text{19}\) In Montana, the December 4, 1954 Independent Record reported that an F.B.I. agent, speaking in Helena, commended the American Legion for "aid in the roundup of subversives in the U.S."\(^\text{20}\) There were no heart attacks.

This was an era when loyalty boards took on a whole new meaning. The purpose of these vigilante committees was as much to save embarrassment as to detect potential Communists among the ranks of the employees. Senator Arthur Watkins of Utah recalls that government agencies "removed numbers of employees for no reason except the possibility that their presence on the payroll could attract an investigation."\(^\text{21}\) Another author exposed the mentality of the questioners when he reported that "Were you a regular purchaser of the New York Times?" was a sample question used by board examiners.\(^\text{22}\) Even industries not covered by loyalty boards
were "kept clean" thanks to various private blacklists which were traded among employers. The classic example involves radio actress Madeline Lee, who made her living by gurgling like a baby on the air. In 1953, she was blacklisted after being accused of Communist-front activities, and the radio jobs disappeared. Another young lady lost her job because she resembled Miss Lee, a second because she also made a living making baby sounds. A third actress could not find work because, unfortunately, her name also happened to be Madeline Lee. Through all of this chaos, McCarthy's influence and popularity grew. A soybean sacker in Wisconsin filed for a political office, did no campaigning, and yet was elected by a landslide! His name was Joe McCarthy. Having the same name as the famous Senator certainly did not hurt one's employment opportunities.

Senator Watkins, recalling the sentiments of the early 50's, wrote: "Many people sensed danger in Communism, and in their inability to discriminate they lashed out wildly at anything and everyone they could not understand." It was a period of intolerance, close-mindedness, and suspicion bordering of paranoia. On July 4, 1951, a Madison, Wisconsin reporter stood on a street corner with petition drafted entirely from passages of the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. No one "lashed out wildly" at him, but as for his subversive petition, only one person in 112 would sign it.

The extreme levels of hysteria as reported above were probably excessive in light of any real threat facing America in the early 1950's. Yet our fears were not totally without justification. One could think rationally and still see Joseph Stalin as a madman, determined to crush our way of life. Millions of people had just come under the rule of the Communists in China as the Nationalists were routed from the Asian mainland.
And largely because of the radicalism which erupted during the Depression, many Americans actually had been involved in Communist activities, if only casually. There was a threat of sorts, yet it is questionable whether or that threat was sufficient to justify hysteria, which is an extreme response to fear. The result of this hysteria, however, was that those who supported McCarthy tended to attribute any negative occurrence to the Communist problem. Conversely, those who opposed Joe blamed most every problem on McCarthyism. The widely noted epitome of such overreaction to McCarthyism was a newstory prompted by Rabbi Lewis Newman. The rabbi, noting the increase in the number of raids by male college students on the women's dorms, insisted that "McCarthyism" was the culprit for such foolishness. Opinions were being repressed, he felt, and the result was a growing need to vent one’s bottled-up emotions. The rabbi failed to realize that such activities had taken place on campuses well before McCarthyism was a reality. The story, however, received wide news coverage, and as long as the ramifications of McCarthyism were debated, the issue of Communism remained foremost in the national mind.

Major magazines and newspapers led to our growing preoccupation with the Communist menace by creating separate sections in their columns for nothing but Communist-related news. Thus the press only served to magnify the issue. If anyone could have enlightened the cowering American public, if anyone could have countered the hysteria, it most certainly could have been academia. This is not to say the country's educated did nothing to diminish the tides of McCarthyism. Yet, in an indictment which must be shared by the press, they clearly did not do enough. Among the ranks of the educational elite the predominating mood "was one of spiritless acquiescence to authority..." One liberal
educator admitted that he limited his political activity to voting. This underscores a very harmful consequence of the hysteria—that is, those who had the most to give often remained quite timid. Said one educator, "this experience has compelled me to be cautious in everything so that I am not as effective as I should be in promoting a better world." 29

Those in the educational field were not the only leaders who were stymied by the wrath of "Tail-Gunner Joe." In perhaps the Senator's most famous speech, war hero General George C. Marshall was implicated in a masterful conspiracy. "Why," asked McCarthy, "was Marshall so determined to follow Stalin and oppose Churchill?" 30 Amidst all of the frenzy, somewhere between the charges and the countercharges, Bishop Bernard J. Sheil asked the relevant question: "Are we any safer because General George C. Marshall was branded a traitor? No," he continued firmly, "we are not, but we are a little less honorable." 31

This extensive portrayal of the hysterical mood in America was generated for two reasons. First, it hopefully gives the reader an idea of the atmosphere of confusion and fear from which McCarthy emerged. My second purpose was to promote the theme that the rise of this man can be greatly attributed to the accidental factor of timing. In other words, had McCarthy made his Wheeling speech four years earlier, or later, his legacy most definitely would have been far less contemptible. Given the innocuous nature of his congressional activities, aside from the Communist issue, it is likely that we would only find his name in an old copy of the Congressional Directory. But as history often does, the early 1950's allowed a meshing of a man, an issue, and a situation. The result was McCarthyism.
CHAPTER II

MCCARTHYISM AS A POLITICAL PHENOMENON

Joe McCarthy bought Communism in much the same way as other people purchase a new automobile. The salesman showed him the model, he looked at it with interest, examined it more closely, kicked at the tires, sat at the wheel, squiggled in the seat, asked some questions, and bought it. It was just as cold as that.1

In chapter one, I described an America which was nervous, resentful, and seemingly devoid of reason. It would obviously be counterproductive to now refute those earlier contentions. Nonetheless, it is necessary that I offer a slightly different picture, different because it is subject to perceptions other than the ones upon which I drew. In 1953, Time contributing editor Alvin Josephy traveled the backroads of Mid-America to discover "the real news of the nation's political future..." He detected a mood which he labeled "progressive conservatism." Greatly impressed by the beautiful schools in our area, he noted an especially fine one in "a suburb of Billings, Montana." He found Montana to be "surprisingly internationalist..." with an awareness of our world position and responsibilities." Further, he wrote, "in every state except... Wisconsin, I got the impression that McCarthy isn't much of an issue, but that any candidate who tries to make him an issue may get hurt [just ask former Senators Benton and Tydings]. The premise is accepted that the Federal Government... is full of Reds." Pointing out that in this area of the country few people can readily identify themselves as intellectuals, or others whom McCarthy has gone after, he nonetheless felt that "opinions about McCarthy are not strong one way or the other." His
conclusion, though not mentioning McCarthy, rang with implications about the obvious impression the Senator was having on this nation: "But it is neither trite nor banal, I believe, to say that in its chief asset, its people, the U.S. today appeared to be a very strong and stable land, far stronger and more stable than a reading of reports from Washington and the daily headlines would indicate."²

It is immediately necessary to point out that Time, in fact the entire Luce empire, was engaged in a battle with Senator McCarthy (Joe became so upset by the barrages against him in Time that he sent a letter to each of the magazine's advertisers, complaining about his being hampered in his anti-Communist efforts). Thus, while that magazine moved away from strict journalistic objectivity when writing about Joe, the publication also made every effort to downplay his influence in the country.

Yet there are several relevant themes running through the article. According to Josephy, McCarthy spoke 'for no group in particular, and the struggle in Washington was primarily political in nature. And in Mid-America, they had more important things to worry about, like building good schools, or the price of wheat... This nonchalance about the man embodies the "political" view of McCarthyism, which has been advanced by several contemporary writers.³ The premise that McCarthyism is more attributable to political factors than to the Senator's personality is not a new one. Currently, however, there exists a group of writers, working under the idea of revisionist history, who promote the political theme almost exclusively. While this argument does reflect admirable determination, it seems to fall short of reality. A good portion of it, however, does merit discussion.
In using this perspective, I not only seek to explain how the groundwork for McCarthyism was laid, but hope to point how the movement was sustained, all in the name of politics. Consequently, it is necessary to examine the behavior of both political parties; this behavior must be analyzed prior to, during, and after the McCarthy episode. It is vital to understand that while most of this political manipulation served the McCarthy cause, a great deal of it was attributable to factions which actually opposed the Senator.

When embracing this political supposition we will assume that Joseph McCarthy himself was rather unimportant, that he was not the architect of the post-war, early 1950's politics, but a product of them. McCarthyism reigned not because of the charism of the man, nor as the result of natural forces. It was instead a direct spinoff of the activities of political institutions determined to heighten those fears. McCarthyism, simply, was "conventional politics rooted in the actions and inactions of conservative and liberal elites." After reflecting on the writings of the political theorists, I felt that several subthemes were discernible. Among these are McCarthyism as a result of interest group activism, as a by-product of political maneuvering between the Executive and Legislative branches, and as a struggle between the two major parties, including the conservative and liberal strains within them. McCarthyism may also be considered a result of the Truman Administration's attempt to sell the Marshall Plan, and finally, as a political phenomenon which grew out of the efforts of opportunistic politicians.

Relying somewhat on a framework developed by writers Athan Theoharis
and Robert Griffith, I will first dissect the role on interest groups in the proliferation of McCarthyism. The volume edited by these men examines such diverse groups as organized labor, the Chamber of Commerce, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the Catholic Church. I found other promulgators of McCarthyism among the ranks of the Elks, the American Legion, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Each of the groups promoted the cause with some sort of political activity.

In an article entitled "American Business and the Origins of McCarthyism," Peter Irons analyzes the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. This business-oriented group sought, on behalf of its clientele, the most sacred of conditions: stability. They viewed anti-Soviet policy and some sort of assurances against labor group radicalism as the basic tenets of stability. As in the "Red Scare" of 1919-1920, businessmen had a strong influence on the Cold War era; business elites, especially Texas oilmen, supported Joe disproportionately.

The Chamber published and distributed 200,000 copies of its report, "Communist Infiltration in the United States." Every Catholic bishop and thousands of Protestant clergy were sent a copy. This clear use of political methods, occurring simultaneously with McCarthy's election to the Senate, produce the desired effect. Shortly thereafter, President Harry S. Truman created, by Executive order, the Federal Employee Loyalty Program. Essentially, the Chamber's major contribution to the growing political awareness of the subversive issue was a shedding of light on the linkages between foreign and domestic policies, by pointing out the danger of Communist infiltration into the labor unions. The implications for McCarthy, and McCarthyism, are clear. The Chamber of Commerce, an influential force
in communities across America, had helped to underscore the Communist issue, using political means for personal ends, while equating anti-Communism with a support for business. This illustrates an important point with respect to the rise of McCarthyism. While the parties and methods involved in the push for American hegemony varied, the identity of the scapegoat—Communists—seldom did. As we know, the more clear-cut the issue, the better McCarthy was at exploiting it.

Just as the Chamber offers a glimpse of political methodology towards the promotion of a cause, an ideological amalgam, the conservatives, also fanned the fires of paranoia. The analysis here is based on a synthesis of Theoharis and Ronald Lora's interpretations of McCarthyism, which begin from the Rogin insistence that this phenomenon was "the product of routine conservative politics." 6

A constant theme of American political history has been the struggle between the Executive and Legislative branches of government. The late 1940's and early 50's offer no exception to this tendency. In fact, the Second World War only served to heighten the tenor of the battle, and to increase its stakes. Consider McCarthy as a freshman Senator caught up in the groundswell of this often bitter debate, wherein the Congressional conservatives carried a growing resentment of the Executive's success in dominating the foreign policy reigns. They saw the anti-Communist question as an ideal avenue towards regaining, or at least sharing them. By exposing Executive laxity and ineptitude on the subversion issue, opportunistic solons hoped to convince the American public that foreign policy initiatives were better handled by the Legislative branch. Given the nature of American
politics, the party which is out of power, as were the Republicans in 1950, is able to clamor for accountability. They can offer the solution "if only we were in power." Hypothetical arguments are the easiest kind to present, and they afford a perfect opportunity for untempered charges. Once the Republicans took control in 1952 the "if" was gone, and a majority of the conservative Republicans, unwilling to clash with the popular Eisenhower, had to tone down their bellicosity. Since the President opposed Executive interference into the legislative domain, the struggle between McCarthy and Eisenhower was not as acute as it could have been, though it was to reach a high pitch by late 1954. McCarthy, always the fighter, was ineffectual when the opposition did not match his determination. He continued to fight, his support relegated to lip service by conservatives now seeing the need to embrace Ike. As advantageous as it would have been, McCarthy's fellow conservatives realized the hopelessness of trying to reconcile Joe's abrasiveness with the conciliatory Eisenhower manner. Rather than swim up stream, they decided, for all practical purposes, to dump Joe.

But naturally this disposal of McCarthy did not occur immediately. For nearly five years, Joe was the star of the conservatives, and while this group had motives which differed from those of their most obnoxious member, they understood his usefulness. Let us consider another theory which compliments the Executive-Legislative struggle idea, and examine what I will call the "conservative vision" for the 1950's.

Operating from the context that McCarthyism was largely a political phenomenon, we will consider Ronald Lora's thesis that the movement was as much a reaction against the New and Fair Deals as it was
against Communism. This is palatable, since many conservatives saw the former as infiltrated by the perpetrators of the latter. Lora characterized the conservative aims of those days as efforts to regulate and control man's behavior, to endear him to the principles of order and duty, obedience and conformity--this an obvious attempt to maintain the status-quo. Ideological warfare was inevitable, for the liberals of the era believed in the right to express rival and dissenting opinions, provided that they were not dangerous. The view from the right assumed man's wickedness and weakness; therefore, given these deficiencies, any dissent was dangerous. Conservatives of the era consequently saw the need for political means to assure that all men were reminded of their conformist responsibilities.

William F. Buckley and L. Brent Bozell, two conservative intellectuals, defended McCarthy by insisting that coercion (particularly governmental) was necessary to suppress dissent. Since Americans already seemed to value the anti-Communist issue, it seemed logical for conservatives to utilize this issue more fully. This interpretation is laced, like several others, with the assessment that McCarthy was the handmaiden for a variety of groups. His newly acquired prominence gave Joe a national platform from which to speak out, and groups not unsympathetic to his cause were shrewd enough to understand his usefulness.

McCarthy protege Roy Cohn, in his book McCarthy, dealt briefly with the possibility of Joe's being embraced, for political purposes, by conservative forces in the heat of an ideological conflict. Though Cohn rejected this idea, he provided a rather provocative statement by Professor Willmore Kendall, who insisted that McCarthy "was the spokesman for
a large group that would enforce a public orthodoxy—set up a code of officially accepted beliefs in the country, expunging ideas that they believed immoral or which threatened our society's survival." This statement indicates that the conservative thesis was widely held.

The conservative elite school of thought generated a persuasive, though not uncontroversial, line of reasoning with regard to McCarthy's obsession with employee loyalty. This was an extension of the conformist premise. The logic begins with the pretext that a government job is a privilege and not a right; one can thus discern that only the "cream of the crop" and those whose loyalty is without question should be considered for government positions. Given such restrictions, the logical tenor of loyalty board hearings was that the presumption of innocence did not necessarily apply. That cornerstone of American jurisprudence was fine for civil proceedings, but was dangerously inadequate when considering individuals for sensitive government posts. As Buckley and Bozell pointed out, the decisiveness of modern weaponry allows one individual the ability to "shift the world balance of power" in a single stroke. Given this awesome reality, we could no longer champion the rights of individuals to the extent that "ten guilty men had better go free than one innocent man be punished." Clearly, the possible ramifications of a single security leak seemed to justify the possible violation of civil liberties, for these cherished rights were deemed of little value in the event of atomic annihilation. The threat of holocaust was a popular fear; an eternal argument will continue as to whether or not these fears were reasonable insecurities or political ploy. Robert Goldson goes much farther than I would, insisting that Americans rights and ideals "were
sacrificed on the altar of political madness. 11 Madness, if seen as widespread fear, but was it merely politics?

To summarize the above idea of the "conservative vision," the Lora assessment is useful. Freedom in America, according to the conservatives, entailed the "freedom to agree";12 the battle against international Communism could not be won without a unified, single focused effort. Coexistence with Communism necessitated compromise, and when the struggle reached a moral pitch, compromise was equated with sin.

Whether McCarthy actually was enlisted as its progenitor or not, the conservative strategy had bittersweet ramifications. By tuning the struggle to a moral pitch, the conservative ideal was necessarily perverted. Government inspired conformity meant violation of the traditional abhorrence with interference into the lives of men, and the establishment of a "warfare state" demanded that most undesirable practice: government deficit spending. Further, by tempering foreign aid budgets with the meat ax of conservative credo, this nation lost its chance to substantially alleviate the poverty and oppression of Europe upon which Communism readily feeds.13 Instead of offering larger amounts of economic aid to allay these problems, conservative policy dispensed an item of far less impact: moral directives.

Finally, as long as the conservatives could reconcile Eisenhower's moderation and their own lack of moderation, their logical spokesman was Joseph McCarthy. It mattered little if their aims transcended McCarthy's in sophistication, for the marriage was advantageous as long as Joe retained his anti-Communism forum and his uncanny talents in the area of media control. Once the Wisconsin Senator was discredited by circumstances ranging from the infamous Army-McCarthy hearings to his irreconcilable schism
with Ike, his censure by the Senate, and his relegation to the back pages of newspaper copy, he was no longer an asset. Though many conservative Republicans voted against Joe's censure, their support was more symbolic than substantive. For after the censure, Joe was the "forgotten man," an excellent subject for the Montana Standard's "Where Are They Now?" column.

The Freeland thesis, portraying McCarthyism as an outgrowth of the Truman Administration's selling of the Marshall Plan, is more coherently discussed when combined with the highly accepted belief that the phenomenon grew out of political party war games. Not only did Truman desire to gain approval for his European recovery program, but he was forced to discredit the Republicans lest the public look to that party for the answers to the Communist and European problems. And he was surely fighting for his political life.

My treatment of the Freeland thesis incorporates his basic ideas with my interpretation of them. My views are governed by my understanding of the era and are aided by considerable exposure to the different theories of the times. Freeland's curiosity arose out of his inability to understand why a nation enjoying unmatched economic and military power had become so preoccupied with even the slightest gain in Communist influence. He concurred with the assessment that the curtailment of Communism in the United States resembled the annihilation of a fly with a meat cleaver. Unwilling to dismiss any "status-anxiety" argument, Freeland felt that such scholarship ignored the policies which gave rise to the climate upon which McCarthy fed. He concluded that these fears could have been neutralized, and hoped that in the future they would be.
This "Cold War consensus," the aggregate description of the post-war and political patterns of belief, was seen as the direct result of "a deliberate and highly organized effort by the Truman Administration in 1947-48 to mobilize support for... the Marshall Plan." In other words, Truman found it necessary to implement a "loyalty board mentality" in order to convince this nation of the need for an extensive program of foreign aid. As other writers have attested, Communism fed on the fears and insecurities of a downtrodden people. Economic aid, Truman felt, would lessen these insecurities and establish America as the economic and political force in Europe.

Truman read the domestic mood in 1947-48 as moving back into our previous isolationism. The Republican party gained control of both houses of Congress in 1946, and the traditional Republican opposition to the large budgets required by any European aid package threatened the acceptance of any such plan. After World War Two, as after World War One, an American president sought a dominant position in world affairs for this country, consistent with the level of prestige gained by us as a result of those wars. Advocates of the Freeland thesis insist that political leaders successfully transformed anti-interventionist sentiment into widespread acceptance of such a plan. Anthony Eden, Prime Minister of Britain, felt that American leaders, exercising strong statesmanship and political courage, "wrought a revolutionary change in their country's traditional policies." But how was this done?

It is apparent that through the use of propaganda and police activities in 1947-48 the Democratic Party was quite successful in altering American attitudes regarding our role as a molder of the post-war
world. The rhetoric of the Truman Doctrine served to reduce the struggle to one of totalitarianism versus freedom, and was designed to convince the public that only the most extreme elements could possibly advocate policies contrary to Truman's. Freeland listed the propaganda techniques, and I will summarize. While the Justice Department led a great patriotic campaign built around the Freedom Train, Truman hailed and aided the newsworthy investigations of the House UnAmerican Activities Committee. Administration officials toured the country, assailing Soviet interventionism as the cause of continuing European economic woes, while the Federal Employees Loyalty Program coincided with a drive to deport subversive aliens. When the author listed this final point, it occurred to me that, in times of uncertainty, aliens have consistently borne a great share of the blame. Usually, however, American fears and insecurities had culminated in the anti-alien sentiments. In this case, the solution, deportation, predated the widespread agitation to do so, yet the ploy was effective nonetheless. Police activities constituted an even greater affront to liberties. Activist aliens were arrested and held without bail, newsmen covering military affairs were subject to loyalty investigations, and news media personnel critical to the Truman Administration were denied passports.

It appears that Truman's campaign failed in two major ways, even though the "Red Scare" he helped to create apparently led to an acceptance, at the initial phases, of his foreign aid package. First, as Freeland argues, the plan ultimately failed since the true objectives of the program—that is, economic considerations—received less attention than the mounting domestic hysteria. Second, it appears that the most damaging legacy of this purported scheme was the politically "loaded" issue of which party was tougher on Communism. What emerged was not only an issue that was
steeped in negativism, but which was easy prey to theft by McCarthy and his Republican pirates.

Despite the usefulness of the anti-Communist issue to the Administration in 1947-48, it was by no means clear that in sponsoring such tactics the President was not storing up ills that would affect his political future.\textsuperscript{17}

To the extent that I accept the Freelans hypothesis, I would conclude that the Democrats blundered when they over-extended the American consciousness with reference to the Communist threat. By establishing themselves as the party best qualified to combat this menace, the Democrats become susceptible to some serious reversals. The subsequent Hiss conviction, the China demise, and the Korean War all played into the hands of Republican conservatives. Riding the wave of McCarthy's popularity, the Republicans used these issues to point out the Democratic Party's failures. By 1950, the anti-Communist issue was becoming politically embarrassing. Truman in his rhetoric was made to look as if he were merely accepting the Republican premise that subversion was indeed a problem. He was no longer the leader of the anti-Communist forces, but instead was relegated to doorman—barring the door after the thieves had already entered.

The Truman Administration was also outflanked by the Republican controlled HUAC, which sought to generate some legislation which could solidify that party as the champion of anti-Communism. Just as Hubert Humphrey was tainted in his 1968 election attempt by Lyndon Johnson's war, Truman was forced to defend Roosevelt's New Deal against charges of Communist infiltration. Attempting to diffuse the issue, Truman reversed his pattern of cooperation and ordered Executive agencies to refuse HUAC subpoenas. Campaigning for re-election, the President made his
ill-conceived remark that the issue was a "Red-herring," that Communist infiltration was no real danger. This assertion was obviously politically motivated, as were the hearings being conducted by HUAC. These hearings, which allowed Whittaker Chambers the opportunity to expose Hiss, and vaulted Richard M. Nixon into national prominence, were in part convened to increase Thomas Dewey's apparent edge over Truman in the 1948 Presidential race. Unfortunately for Dewey, his admirable moderation on the embarrassing issue led many voters, including an unusually large bloc of Catholics, to support Truman, because they admired the President's anti-Communism. 18

All of this, of course, was taking place in 1948, and the Wheeling speech was two years distant. Yet these scholars of the period have contended that the movement later called McCarthyism was in full force several years before Joe emerged onto the national scene. This is the back-bone of their argument, which sees a virtual divorce between the man and the "ism." For if the hysteria of McCarthyism was largely the result of political rivalry, Joe's major contribution, beyond his boisterous manner and remarkable energy, was the name he lent to the phenomenon. This interpretation has merit; however, it seems to minimize the talents of the man, which, far surpassing the realm of politics, were many. It also tends to overrate the naked force of politics. On the other hand, without the presence of some deeply ingrained insecurities prior to their programs, it is highly doubtful that either the conservatives or Truman could have elicited the profound response that occurred in the early 1950's. Before discussing our other two models, let me conclude this present treatment by portraying McCarthyism as simple and shrewd political opportunism on an individual level.
"When," asked a young lady at a 1950 cocktail party, "did you discover Communism?" Replied Joseph R. McCarthy, "Two and a half months ago." This widely quoted exchange, besides displaying the Senator's brashness, lends credence to the interpretation of McCarthyism as the result of political hucksterism. Whereas all previous treatments suggest a highly organized, issue-focused approach, this final political interpretation simply views McCarthyism as the wake left behind by a juggernaut of individuals seeking to enhance their political stature. Such ambition can hardly be attributed to McCarthy alone. After the Republicans witnessed Dewey's stunning defeat as a result of moderation, it became apparent that a hard line towards Communism would garner votes. The Cold War era was by no means unique in its disregard for truth in the name of votes, yet the period was unparalleled in its exploitation of a single issue. The frequency of investigations inspired by the Communist issue is one gauge by which the political element of McCarthyism can be measured. The statistics on Communist related Congressional investigations are staggering: there were twenty-two during the 80th Congress (1947-1949), twenty-four during the 81st Congress, thirty-four during the 82nd, and an all-time high of fifty-one during the 83rd Congress from 1953 to 1955. The Communist question also played a major part in several Senate races at the turn of the decade, including such primary free-for-all's as the George Smathers-Claude Pepper race (Florida), the Willis Smith-Frank Graham contest (North Carolina), the Helen Gahagan Douglas-E. Manchester Boddy bout (California), and the general election foray pitting Democratic nominee Douglas against Richard M. Nixon. That race reached a low point when Nixon supporters distributed Mrs. Douglas's voting record, cleverly printed on pink paper. Douglas adopted the unusual practice of standing in the street (as would later be the reaction to McCarthy's blathering), she neglected to
Douglas adopted the worst possible strategy to counter the attack; she neglected to refute Nixon's implications, while attempting to point out their candidates' supremacy at fighting Communism. Nixon was just another ambitious politician with an elastic conscience, and it is questionable how concerned he and those sharing his methods were with anti-Communism. Some rising political stars were incensed by this growing disregard for fair play. Hubert H. Humphrey assailed the practice of ruining reputations in the name of politics, and declared that if this was the game called politics, he was getting out! In California Mrs. Douglas was indeed getting out, though not voluntarily. In a statement which had the overtones of a premature concession, she lamented: "McCarthyism has come to California." Roy Cohn would attest that while McCarthy's number one reason for adopting anti-Communism was his patriotism, his second rationale involved a realization of the enormous political advantages of the issue. So Nixon and McCarthy shared a similar propellant to the top. Is it reasonable to correlate the quality of the issue to which men owe their prominence, with a retrospective assessment of the quality of their political lives? The subtle lessons of history should be lost on no one!
CHAPTER III

JOSEPH MCCARTHY: DEMAGOGIC TACTICIAN

The late Joseph R. McCarthy, a United States Senator from Wisconsin was in many ways the most gifted demagogue ever bred on these shores. No bolder seditionist ever moved among us—nor any politician with a surer, swifter access to the dark places of the American mind. 1

The following definition appears in Webster's: "Demagogue: n., a leader who makes use of popular prejudices and false claims in order to gain power." 2 Though they tended to minimize the degree, writers of the just completed political interpretation of McCarthyism accepted, out of necessity, the premise that Joe was something of a demagogue. While it is clear that those utilizing a political framework continually emphasize the relative unimportance of the Senator, they must have realized the shortcomings of any theory which fails to acknowledge his talents. The "status-anxiety" school has also exercised scholastic wisdom by recognizing Joe's manipulative abilities as a constant, an assumption that could not be realistically dropped. A separate group of writers, led by Richard Rovere, have assigned top billing to the theory that McCarthyism was largely the result of the Senator's charismatic appeal. 3 Aided by journalist Fred J. Cook and several other writers who vary in their acceptance of this thesis, the Rovere school portrays McCarthy as a man who was extremely talented in the arts of persuasion and deceit. These talents are best illustrated by a thorough dissection of several of McCarthy's tactics, since tactics are the tools of the demagogue. Therefore, this chapter will explore a series of the Senator's methods. Each of these will lend credence to the thesis that McCarthy, by virtue of his unique abilities, was an extremely clever manipulator of American opinion. Not only was Joe adept at exploiting
popular fears, it will be argued, but he also managed to fabricate and then implant fear into the minds of millions of Americans.

The demagogic model calls for the individual to be a leader. McCarthy, as Senator from Wisconsin, was definitely in a leadership position, and had a national platform from which to air his views. The United States Senate, the most exclusive club in the nation, offered the perfect setting for Joe to polish his skills. Folkways and norms have also established the Senate as the nation's most deliberative body, and have made criticisms of colleagues taboo. The "gentleman" is never a liar, he is only "grossly misinformed," yet on several occasions it should have occurred to the other Senators that Joe was both. However, Joe's fellow Senators were hesitant to stand up to their abrasive member from Wisconsin, for the consequences were often quite unpleasant. Consider the following running dialogue which resulted when Senator Stuart Symington tangled with his boisterous colleague:

McCarthy: I am glad we are on television. I think the millions of people can see how low a man can sink. I repeat, I think they can see how low an alleged man can sink.

Symington: Can I proceed without interruption?

McCarthy: Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Mundt: A point of order?

McCarthy: Yes, a point of order...

Chairman Mundt: The Chair believes that it is not a point of order.

McCarthy: I think this is a matter of personal privilege.

This exchange illustrates how others acquiesced to Joe's tenacity. Ultimately, while Joe's stock would dip in the eyes of the public, Symington would suffer an even greater setback. A strong contender for the 1956 Presidential nomination, it was clear that confrontations like the one reported above
had such an impact on the twenty million people that watched the Army-McCarthy hearings that "Symington's Presidential boom had been sunk without a trace by buccanneer Joe." Until 1954, a battle with McCarthy almost always left his opposition in a worsened condition, whether mentally or politically.

In assessing Joe's demagogic prowess, it is necessary to point out that he was a model of insensitivity, a man who apparently felt little emotion whether administering blows or absorbing them. Thus McCarthy's enemies were constantly kept off balance by Joe's ambivalence. McCarthy's "Jekyll and Hyde" proclivity was so puzzling that "Explaining Joe" became a Washington pastime, and most of the explanations differed. While the explanations for Joe's behavior were often quite different, the stories arising from encounters with him were quite similar. Senatorial colleague Herbert Lehman once recalled, "You couldn't insult him. I would assail him in the most scathing terms, and after the debate he would come up grinning, throw his arms around my shoulders, and inquire, 'How are you, Herb?'" McCarthy was equally oblivious to the consequences of his attacks. He expected no hard feelings in his victims and was clearly baffled when some were displayed. Secretary of State Dean Acheson, who served under President Truman, was a frequent recipient of McCarthy's barrages. Finding himself in an elevator one day with his constant accuser, Acheson refused a McCarthy handshake which was offered with a pleasant "How are you, Dean?" McCarthy, unable to understand how a man "could take umbrage over a political roughhouse, to the extent of refusing a civil greeting," later asked friends sincerely, "what's the matter with the man?"
The successful demagogue must keep his opponents off balance. This is best accomplished by always acting in an unpredictable manner, and by affecting behavior which appears contradictory. This, to some extent, might explain why McCarthy, though "airing himself as a ladykiller... deliberately cultivated the role in which he had been cast—uncouth hero—He burped and patted his belly in public... encouraged a dark stubble of beard." This was indeed curious behavior for a man hoping to impress the opposite sex. It also hardly fit a man obviously proud of his meteoric rise to prominence, and presented another apparent contradiction. Richard Rovere, however, had another interpretation in his controversial book, Senator Joe McCarthy. The Wisconsin Senator cultivated this unflattering image because "he seemed to understand, as no other politician of his stature ever has, the perverse appeal of the bum, the mucker, the Dead End Kid..." Nonetheless, by accident or by design, Tail-Gunner Joe, the Marine hero, was hardly a model of consistency. Joseph McCarthy could not be classified, and no one resorted to the endless political cliches when trying to explain his behavior. From 1950 to 1954, the greatest asset of any reporter covering McCarthy was a vivid imagination. Just when the press corps thought they had all of the answers, when they finally felt able to classify and explain his latest behavior, McCarthy would dumbfound them with one of his chameleonic shifts. It made life around Washington, among other things, quite interesting.

Not everything surrounding McCarthy was a mystery. His tactics plainly exposed his desire to win regardless of the consequences. Given Joe's "win at any cost" philosophy, it stands to reason that any
confrontation with the man was unrewarding. In opposing the Senator you could lose or tie, but you could never win, for personal victory necessitated Joe's retreat, and this maneuver was foreign to him. In a contest of wills, the insensitive carry a stacked deck into the foray, and the reckless demagogue, because he realizes that he will seldom be held accountable, can deliver blows with a minimal fear of retribution. Senator McCarthy could dub Dean Acheson "the Red Dean of Fashion" without hesitation, for Joe understood that anyone thus tainted would lose credibility with the public. Without the public's confidence a political leader could expect an immediate loss in effectiveness. On the other hand, a demagogue can bolster his own level of public support by employing tactics which make his opponents appear weak and indecisive. A confrontation with Joe depleted the self esteem of many individuals. One confrontation led to one of McCarthy's most remembered—and to many, reprehensible—lectures, that being the tongue lashing he gave to General Ralph Zwicker. This much decorated soldier was called before the McCarthy committee to answer questions relating to the promotion of a certain Army dentist, Irving Peress. Peress had the misfortune of being suspected of Communist sympathies by the Senator. It required an extremely pursuasive presentation to convince the public that an Army dentist could place our national security in peril, yet McCarthy managed to convert the Peress case into a national furor. He pulled off a brilliant coup by transforming a minor incident, the promotion of a single soldier, into a public debate concerning the safety of the nation. McCarthy understood and exploited a concern which permeated all levels of society: the fitness and integrity of the military. And he elevated his own stature
at the same time, endearing himself to millions as the sentinel protecting the nation against the Communists. Also, however, his recklessness throughout the affair offered some early insight into the man who was beginning to enjoy his newly acquired popularity. McCarthy's overzealousness, as he moved in for the kill, often led to humiliation being heaped on his victims. After Zwicker, in the course of testimony, stated that he did not feel that Peress should be dishonorably discharged, McCarthy delivered this reprimand:

Then, general, you should be removed from any command. Any man who has been given the honor of being promoted to general and who says, I will protect another general who protected Communists is not fit to wear that uniform, general. I think it is a tremendous disgrace to have this sort of thing given to the public.11

There were hundreds of other cases where McCarthy humiliated those who dared to oppose him; the above example is important since it led to one of the suggested counts for his eventual condemnation by his colleagues. Other memorable utterances abound: of Senator Robert Hendrickson, a New Jersey Republican and foe, McCarthy said, "He is a living miracle, born without brains or guts."12 Another Senator, Republican Ralph Flanders of Vermont, was labeled by Joe as "senile." Unfinished, McCarthy offered a solution to the problems Flanders gave him: "I think they should get a man with a net and take him to a good quiet place."13

The dialogue I listed earlier, taken from the 1954 Army-McCarthy hearings, presents a useful juxtaposition of a number of Senator McCarthy's famous, or infamous, tactics. Consider his penchant for creating confusion. In parliamentary procedure, a request for a "point of order" has a rather specific purpose. McCarthy so perverted that purpose, by
excessively utilizing the privilege, that "point of order" took on a whole new context. The United Press International, in a published lexicon giving the "true meanings" of McCarthy's over-used phrases, reported that "point of order" really meant "it's my turn to contribute to the disorder here." The spoof went on to list the retort "Mr. Chairman" as actually meaning "turn those cameras this way, boys," in reference to Joe's prowess for remaining at the center of attention throughout the exhaustive hearings.¹⁴ So frequent were his interruptions that teachers reported hearing school children recite "point of order," in a graveled voice, during the course of their play. Such was the impact of a demagogue, so adept at creating an aura of importance around himself that even the youngest Americans were not immune to his influence. 

Ironically, McCarthy did hope to make an impact on our schools, though he did not aspire to mockery in the school yard. He shrewdly advanced the theme that our educational system was a prime target for Communist infiltration. In *McCarthyism: A Fight for America*, Joe wrote:

> Countless times I have heard parents throughout the country complain that their sons and daughters were sent to college as good Americans and returned four years later as wild-eyed radicals. The educational system cannot be cleansed of Communist infiltration by legislation. It can only be scrubbed and flushed if the mothers and fathers, and the sons and the daughters, of this nation individually decide to do this job. This can be your greatest contribution to America... We cannot win the fight against Communism if Communist-minded professors are teaching your children. We cannot lose the fight against Communism if loyal Americans are teaching your children.

This plea accomplished many things. First, McCarthy set the boundaries of the struggle along wide parameters, into areas which affected everyone. Next, he challenged the average American to join him in a fight for survival. Finally, he hinted at a conspiracy aimed at something which
most American adults most cherish: their children. His plea for help in saving young minds from misguidance was apparently heeded. In Wheeling, West Virginia, a policeman discovered that penny-candy machines dispensed miniature geography lessons bearing a hammer and sickle and the notation: "U.S.S.R. Population 211,000,000. Capital, Moscow. Largest country in the world." Wheeling's City Manager insisted that "this is a terrible thing to expose our children to." The threat was confronted head on, as officials made certain that no more of the lessons found their way into the hands of children.  

All of the above are much more than entertaining anecdotes. They represent the gross disregard with which McCarthy treated two important traditions, senatorial courtesy and immunity. In 1856, Congressman Preston Brooks attacked Senator Charles Sumner with his cane, a manifestation of the widening chasm between the North and South. From 1950 to 1954, Senator Joe McCarthy attacked senators and citizens alike, wielding the cane of moral indignation; this was a manifestation of the widening chasm between truth and innuendo. Assuming that Joe was more interested in self-aggrandize-ment than in Communism, we are faced with a McCarthy-contrived dilemma best epitomized by the pretext "Salus populi suprema est lex" (the public welfare is the highest law). McCarthy, seen as a demagogue, was not enamored with this premise, but his opportunism made him aware of the advantages of appearing to be. Following logically, I believe, from that point, we can extend that mentality to the following statement: the contrived ends (public welfare, freedom from Communism) justify the means (McCarthy's tactics). Thus McCarthy had to exaggerate the threat to the public good in order to expand the limits to which the public would
accept his tactics. In other words, Joe knew that his tactics were controversial, and he knew he had to justify them. Professor Kenneth Colgrove best summed up what I call the purported "McCarthy mentality" when he insisted:

There may be severe hardships upon citizens who may be named as proper objects of investigation by members of Congress, particularly in case the accused persons are innocent of the accusation. On the other hand, if the actions of the accused have given justifiable grounds for suspicion of subversive activities, there is no good reason why, in the name of the people, such persons should not be brought under legislative investigation.  

Of late we have heard much about the so-called "Watergate mentality." An individual in the Nixon Administration, when asked if he would do anything if ordered by the President, including murder another human being, answered with an unequivocal "yes." The justification for the deed, he felt, lay in the fact that it was ordered by none other than the President of the United States. McCarthy's justification, his means to excuse his tactics, was twofold. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, an occasional McCarthy ally, summarized a part of the McCarthy rationale when he wrote, "I not only feel that there should be no Communists in the State Department, but that there should be nobody in the State Department who is not affirmatively enthusiastically loyal to the United States and what it stands for." Thus a fundamental tenet of McCarthyism emerged, which resulted in the persecution of not only Communists, but those possibly sympathetic to Communists. However, overzealousness soon led to intolerance towards individuals who merely associated with Communists, and civil servants who were even suspected of any flirtation with Communism were dismissed. Ultimately, McCarthyism became not only a backlash against Communist ideals, but a means to attack nonconformity in general. The second
premise of the McCarthy camp was well put by a Miles City doctor in a letter to *Newsweek* magazine. Insisting that McCarthy was on the right track, he wrote, "maybe he did blunder into it, and maybe he is a little tactless, but then in dealing with Commies you have to blunder and be tactless to get them. . ." In other words, in order to root apparent Communists out of our government, you had to play dirtier than they did.

Playing dirty was never a problem for Joseph Raymond McCarthy. And while he would contend until his death that his tactics were necessary, he would never claim they were virtuous. He liked to boast about a friend back home, Indian Charlie, who advised him, whenever troubled by an adversary, to go directly for the individual's groin. His quips, his mannerisms, his disheveled appearance, all afford him another description: more than any other public figure, he was crudity personified.

I have defined the "McCarthy mentality," and hinted at why Joe was so able to exercise it. But a much more extensive endeavor into his tactics is necessary if one is ever to understand the man, much less determine if he was a demagogue. In the remaining pages of this chapter, I will relay some of McCarthy's more prominent tactics, which generally support the view that McCarthyism was the by-product of demagoguery. This does not mean I have totally accepted this argument, since several factors beyond Joe's manipulative abilities were most certainly contributors to the hysteria. Further, while I concede that he appeared, on the outside, to be a demagogue, it is apparent that he lacked some essential ingredients of the true demagogue, including calculated wisdom. Finally, the extent to which I accept this interpretation will be considered in chapter five. The present chapter is an attempt to magnify one aspect of the man's behavior with the hope that this this might support my other hypotheses.
Senator Arthur Watkins, the chairman of the committee which recommended the censure of McCarthy, concurs with the view that his colleagues' tactics go a long way towards explaining the Senator. He wrote, "McCarthy's tactics were not devices turned up or contrived in the heyday of his Senate career, but were products of his entire background and a revelation of his personal character." Senator Watkins was probably unaware of the accuracy of his statement. Joe's background does indeed indicate a maturing dexterity in the field of deception, which is an essential element of demagoguery. His first successful endeavor into politics set the tone for a career of calculated trickery. He was elected circuit court judge in 1939, when he made age the issue of the campaign, conveniently tacking enough years onto his incumbent opponent's age to guarantee the judge's senility. During his years on the bench, McCarthy was noted for his hard work and "quickie" divorces. The latter was a good illustration of his ability to cut red tape in an effort to make extra-speedy, and sometimes extra-legal, decisions. In 1942, overcome by the patriotism which was one of his trademarks, Joe enlisted into the Marines. Though he would later make the humble claim that he enlisted as a "buck-private" he was, in fact, a first lieutenant after only two days.

It was at this point that his widely disputed military career began. Some of the controversial aspects bear repeating, for they shed much light onto the emerging man. According to McCarthy, he flew well over thirty combat missions, serving as a rear-gunner (hence his nickname, Tail-Gunner Joe). He also claimed that he suffered a leg injury during one of those missions, and would later boast that he "carried ten pounds of schrapnel in the leg." However, some wary individuals did their own research and discovered that the leg injury was actually a bone-break, suffered during
some rough-housing in the course of an equator crossing party. As for the combat missions, it was discovered that several of them were flown merely to assuage Joe's itchy trigger finger, with the primary target being coconut trees.23

Despite his promise to enlist for the duration, McCarthy resigned his commission to pursue something he liked even better than shredding trees, that being politics. To everyone's amazement, except Joe's, of course, he defeated an overconfident Bob LaFollette, Jr. in a race for the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate. While the demagogue is adept at exploiting popular fears, he is also able to employ symbols with which the public can identify. Consequently, Joe made sure the public was aware that he had spent the past four years defending the nation, and even used his nickname "Tail-Gunner Joe" on posters to make sure the voters remembered that he was a veteran. After disposing of LaFollette, Joe went on to win the general election easily. Two points of remarkable irony appear: years later, polls would rate Young Bob as one of the Senate's finest, while Joe was to finish among the worst. Even more devastating is the fact that in 1953, at a time when McCarthy's life was threatened by fanatic opponents, Robert LaFollette shot himself. While it could never be proven that this sorry episode was the result of a McCarthy beating, at least two other suicides were known to be directly related to McCarthy inspired abuse.

When Senator-elect Joe McCarthy arrived in Washington, D.C. in 1947, he stepped off the train and promptly called a press conference. He had little of importance to say. It was an omen of things to come.

Among the many things to come were Joe's infamous tactics, which were not completely unleashed until 1950, after McCarthy spent four
undistinguished years as a Senator. Once Joe was in the limelight, he
operated from a perspective that Communists, and everyone else that did
not meet with his approval, should be subjected to any possible tactics.
The Senator soon mastered a variety of them. Among the most curious
and self evident is what I call the "projection technique."

Staying safely aloof from the field of psychoanalysis, I can
nonetheless discern an interesting phenomenon associated with McCarthy.
Richard Rovere noticed it too: "I know of no sinner so quick to attribute
his own sins to others." When Edward R. Murrow spliced tapes together
into a "See It Now" program which exposed McCarthy's methods with dev-
astating accuracy, the Wisconsinite accused him of relaying "half-truths."
In his famous speech deriding General George C. Marshall, McCarthy drew
on his negligible command of Shakespeare, charging that the general
waded in blood for which he was personally responsible. Did not the
Senator detect a smattering of blood on his own hands? Further, when
a director of our overseas information service harshly criticized a
McCarthy appointee, the solon, with his congenital insensitivity to
his own critics, accused him of "character assassination." When Rep-
resentative Hugh Scott called McCarthy a "fud" (a word which Joe would
have enjoyed using, since the dictionary definition is "buttox"), the
Wisconsin senator lamented, "all you have to do is call McCarthy a name
and you get your name in print." Such headline hunting, of course,
was a McCarthy trademark.

Another McCarthy propensity was his need to constantly simplify
an issue, regardless of its complexities. He seemed incapable of seeing
anything in terms other than of black and white. This obvious lack of
sagacity, however, was seldom his undoing. So successful were his bullying skills that even the most perceptive witness soon began to see things in Joe's simplistic terms, perhaps out of utter necessity. When Attorney General Herbert Brownell admitted that Red subversion was a problem, but insisted that other issues—high taxes, the draft, internal unrest, and educational erosion—were equally important, McCarthy opposed him in a way which would make any problem-solver drool. No, said Joe, all of these problems stem directly from the Communist infiltration issue. "Decency" became the battle cry of Joe and his believers; before long, and most probably without any discussion, the Red Raiders had reduced the anti-Communist struggle to a fight between decency and indecency. And McCarthy, unable to fathom the continuous attacks on his "boy wonder," Roy Cohn, offered the obvious explanation: anti-semitism. Thus despite the popular realization that in a growing nation the problems could get only more numerous and complex, Joe was always able to offer a most simple explanation.

As fascinating as I found the two previous tactics, the techniques of the "Big Lie" and the "Multiple Untruth" permeated most all of the discussions of the McCarthy method. I have concluded, then, that they were undoubtedly the backbone of the McCarthy package. It is at this point that the role of the media is incorporated into my analysis. Since we are such a vast nation, the growth of any movement depends on the press, radio, and television. The "Big Lie" concept was not a new one, having been popularized by Adolph Hitler years earlier, yet by using the media artfully, McCarthy perfected the process.
Richard Rovere, writing for the *New Yorker*, simply underscored McCarthy's use of the technique and re-named it the "multiple untruth." Its basic components were these: "a long series of loosely related untruths, or a single untruth with several facets... composed of so many parts that anyone wishing to set the record straight will discover that it is utterly impossible..." He further contended that even those few, facts which might be proven false could be repeated several times, so that no one would remember which statements were disproven and which ones were not.30

The essential formula combined this "multiple untruth" concept with McCarthy's knack for creating confusion, and completed the recipe by adding the media. The press, in particular, must shoulder a great deal of the blame at this juncture. First, the press failed to keep the citizenry adequately appraised of the McCarthy saga. This is not to say that Joes' escapades were not chronicled. In fact, a single issue of the *New Republic* mentioned McCarthy or McCarthyism no less than forty times, in four separate articles.31 However, events were not linked together, and enough lies were not exposed. Second, this failure illustrates to some degree a potential flaw in the free press, a problem explained by David Halberstam. When a high government official says something, it is news, and the reporter's job is to record it without comment. Unfortunately, while it may be news, it might not be true. McCarthy stormed around the country, making reckless accusations, "the emptiness of the charge never catching up with him, the American press exploited in its false sense of objectivity."32

Consider this desire for objectivity, when coupled with an
unfortunate economic necessity of having to sensationalize the news to increase circulation. Take the following example: Jones, in the course of an exchange with reporters, is asked if he beats his wife. Having never done this he answers, without hesitation, in the negative. The next day, the quasi-objective headline might read: "Jones denies beating his wife." Even given this disclaimer, as time passes and Jones' name comes up, all but the most thorough and interested people might reply "oh, Jones, the one who used to beat his wife!"

This example is as simplistic as it is silly, yet the McCarthy era proved that such reprehensible tactics could work. The Senator was frequently quoted as saying that "this individual does not appear to be a Communist, he doesn't seem to have paid dues to any Communist organization. . ." This was the McCarthy "smear" in practice, wherein the victim was not impaled on a sword of Communism, just sufficiently glanced so as to arouse suspicion. As Herbert Block observed: "when we publish in headlines that Senator McCarthy has spewed out wild charges of treason or espionage. . . we do the Senator's dirty work for him and inflict on his victims an irreparable injury." Block, the syndicated political cartoonist, is believed to be the first person to use the expression "McCarthyism." Continuing his comments on the Senators' methods, he felt that "with smear stories, the danger is greatest. Denials seldom catch up with accusations and usually serve only to tighten the tie-up of the victim's name with the charge made against him."

Even in light of this apparent flaw in the American press, we need only consider the alternatives. If the press were to shoulder the
responsibility of telling us what was true and what was not true, we would be even more bombarded with bias than we are now. As Rovere and others contended, Americans are ruled by facts. It may not have been a fact that General Marshall was a traitor, but it was a fact that McCarthy said he was; the latter—the facts—are what a free press is designed to report. The responsibility, at least in the mind of the press, lay with the influential. Had our leaders matched McCarthy's accusations with well-conceived denials, those denials would have been fact, and would have been reported. However, as a great number of leaders realized, including such notables as Senators John F. Kennedy and Stuart Symington, standing up to McCarthy was far more risky for one's career than appeasing him.

As impressed as our citizens are with facts, we are equally susceptible to manipulation by symbols. Joseph McCarthy was a master of symbolism. President Jimmy Carter wears a simple sweater, Franklin Roosevelt sat at fireside, and Joe rolled up his sleeves. He not only wanted to be "one of the common people," but saw in this the obvious advantages. The use of symbols to garner support did not begin nor end with Joe, but the extent to which he utilized them was remarkable.

Richard Rovere related a story about his first meeting with the Senator before McCarthy's days of fame. The reporter was questioning the solon about an alleged scandal during the war. McCarthy, ever willing to help the press, cordially invited Rovere into his office. Immediately, Joe bombarded him with dossiers, letters and various other "official" looking papers. Rovere remembers that the documents themselves gave him little information about the subject, yet he recalls being quite impressed by the volume of papers and the bulging briefcase from which
Little did he realize that he had been taken in by the bearer of documents that actually proved nothing. Rovere was a victim of McCarthy's true understanding of the American preoccupation with written "proof." The Senator knew of several symbols other than reams of paper and overloaded briefcases. Patriotism was one of his pet symbols, hence the frequent assessment "you can attack Joe's method but not his Americanism." Not even motherhood was too sacred. "In dealing with the lives of countless sons of American mothers... we should be using... good common horse sense." He clearly realized that while defense policies might endanger young men, they were even worse when they endangered a mother's boy.

The use of the colloquial term "horse sense" illustrates perfectly McCarthy's use of "straight" talk. He would never use a twenty-dollar word when a twenty-cent word would suffice. This can certainly be attributed to more than just an underdeveloped vocabulary. Even though this common talk often included patently vulgar words, it continually served to endear him to a class of Americans who mistrusted "those sweet talking politicians." Lest anyone find it difficult to accept the premise that Americans actually admired a man for his occasional jaunts into the gutter, it must be remembered that this was also the era of Harry S. Truman, himself no mincer of words. Communists and intellectuals talked fancy; Americans, fighters by nature, pioneers in spirit, did not.

Psychiatrists have an interesting game called "word association" which requires the patient, after hearing a word, to utter the first word that comes into his head. Should the name McCarthy be given as a
tossup, chances are quite good that the most common response other than "Communism" might be "fighter." It is no accident that McCarthy assumed this rugged image. He was even a boxing coach at one time. It was also no accident that he made sure everyone was aware of this image, since it added to his fame. "We Americans love a slugger like Senator McCarthy," wrote an enthusiastic supporter. Joe had to be a slugger, for were he anything else he could not have repeated his charges with an energy which befuddled his enemies. As with most fighters, McCarthy was stimulated rather than worn down by incessant blows, at least until his rapid demise. And remarkably, the more reckless he was, the better his results. According to Emmet John Hughes, "often when he caused the most spectacular hurt or harm, he merely closed his eyes and blindly swung." Blind swinging was the only way he knew to counterattack; he was never taught to clench. To Joe, life was one big combat mission. When, in 1954, the Senator was subject to vehement attack by the Eisenhower Administration, he lamented that they were "shooting" at him. His response was predictable: he apologized to the American people for supporting Ike in 1952. A writing on his office wall best summarized the McCarthy image as a fighter: "Oh God, don't let me weaken. Help me continue on. When I go down, let me go down like an oak tree felled by a woodsman's ax." But McCarthy had many other tactics which helped to postpone that fall, though they ultimately served to increase its severity. Certainly his ability to woo some elements of the press helped lengthen his reign. He would drop newsworthy bombshells when the reporters were suffering from an obviously slow news day. If he could not make headlines exposing items currently embarrassing to his opponents, he would treat the
reporters to some scandalous, and completely irrelevant, glimpse into the past. Once, when Senator Lehman was deriding Joe for his wild accusations, the Wisconsinite conveniently produced a letter from Lehman to Alger Hiss, wherein Lehman expressed his confidence in the latter's loyalty. Hiss helped the McCarthy cause in a variety of ways. His first name proved especially useful. In a famous McCarthy slip of the tongue (and I use that expression with great caution), the Senator smeared Democrat Adlai on nationwide television. With a cunning grin, McCarthy spoke of "Alger... I mean Ad-lie." He had a good deal of fun with people's names, referring unaffectionately to journalistic enemies Joseph and Stewart Alsop as the "All-Slpps." Whether inflaming or delighting the press, Joe always managed to make news. When Joe was not laboring to make the media personell's jobs easier, he thoughtfully made sure that they were well supplied with that wonderful Wisconsin cheese.

The standard definition of demand-pull inflation is "too many dollars chasing too few goods." McCarthy, the master tactician and manipulator of the press, was responsible for what I would call demand-pull McCarthyism." This new phenomenon meant, simply, "too many headlines chasing too few facts." Then why was he not stopped? The influential press lacked tenacity. Further, they answered his charges in the worst possible way. If Joe accused a writer or editorial board of coddling Communists, they should have merely denounced the charge as being grossly inaccurate. Instead, they fought fire with sanctimonious fire, counter-charging that they were tougher on Communism than was Joe. In a bloody exchange, McCarthy was destined to triumph more often than not. Eisenhower,
seen by many as the logical leader of the anti-McCarthy forces, insisted continually that he refused to resort to the Senator's gutter warfare. The situation resembled that of Europe during the early 1800's. Great Britain boasted a navy capable of destroying any fleet in the world, while Napolean had constructed an army with devastating powers of destruction. The problem, of course, is legendary, for the two super powers did not share a common arena in which to do battle. Eisenhower was dignified, cool-headed, and a gentleman in all respects, while Joe was none of these. Ike continually refused "to climb into the gutter with that guy, to deal in personalities." The President avoided the fight, for nearly two years, by staying out of the bully's neighborhood. With McCarthy's condemnation by the Senate in December, 1954, the President was the ultimate winner.

"It is a time when standards of fair play should be ignored. . . Abuse of uncooperative witnesses should be intensified and prolonged. . . this is not a time for niceties." As long as large numbers of Americans agreed with the above opinion of Dr. Francis Gannon, the McCarthy episode was rooted in fertile ground. Given the charisma of their leader, the vast numbers of Americans opposed to radicalism under any guise represented a mass of people which could not be peacefully quelled. The verdict could only be "unconditional surrender" by one of the sides. As leader of a diverse coalition of citizens, McCarthy, the self-interested demagogue, had to be too many things to too many people. Joe had so overplayed his hand that regardless of which side triumphed, the vanquished were destined for humiliation; by 1954, a peaceful solution was impossible.

The denouement occurred when McCarthy was confronted by Joseph Welch, Army counsel during the Army-McCarthy hearings. McCarthy had just
broken a promise and had directed an ill-conceived, verbal cheap shot at Welch's young assistant. As I studied a film of the encounter, the McCarthy proclivity for playing to the television cameras, a tendency about which I read much, was readily apparent. As the Senator disclosed to the incredulous public that the young man had flirted with Communism, he sported a fabricated look of despair, presumably because of the unpleasant nature of the task which was his "duty" to perform. He was careful to glance upward so that his public might somehow be mesmerized before their television sets. Instead it was McCarthy who was manipulated, as Welch delivered his dramatic condemnation. Michael Straight quotes:

"Until this moment, Senator, I think I never really gauged your cruelty or your recklessness... If it were in my power to forgive you for your reckless cruelty I would do so. I like to think that I am a gently man, your forgiveness will have to come from someone other than me."42

For the first time in nearly five years, McCarthy was temporarily at a loss for words. As usual, the demagogue had sown the seeds of his own destruction, for the forgiveness alluded to by Welch was not to be found. The incorruptible eye of the television camera had exposed Joe for what he really was, and the twenty million viewers were appalled by what they saw. Joe tried to soften the blow somewhat, seeking some sort of excuse for his tactics. Facing censure by his colleagues who finally mustered enough courage to oppose him, Joe offered this understatement of the decade: "I admit that at times I have been extremely blunt in expressing my opinions. I do not claim to be a master of words."42
CHAPTER IV

THE PLURALIST INTERPRETATION

Man is a product of heredity, of his times, and of his environment. He may strive to free himself from these factors. Yet history's most successful individuals have been those who have utilized those factors to their unique advantage. An impressive pedigree, a childhood within relatively comfortable times, or inherited wealth are all enviable possibilities, and indeed many of our most famous human beings have enjoyed these privileges. However, some of our more memorable souls saw a much different world. Joseph McCarthy enjoyed none of the earlier mentioned niceties; the closest he came in his early years to big business and wealth was his moderately successful chicken farm. But Joe was not destined to tend fowl, for he clearly understood the limitations of his birth, and converted that understanding into a concerted and realistic effort to emerge from the heap.

Joseph McCarthy's story is not a classic tale of the poor boy who worked his way to the top. It is, however, the story of a man who abhorred waste—wasted time, wasted potential, wasted interpretations. Joseph McCarthy's life, a maximization of personal potential in the mold of the Dale Carnegie school, presents a paradox. For while he was committed to the utilization of resources to the fullest, he was also to become responsible for the greatest loss of human potential since the death of Benjamin Franklin.

This chapter endeavors to advance the notion that McCarthyism resulted largely from the disappointments and resentments of a social segment which also sought to maximize its potential. Some Americans enjoyed enormous success, but wanted more. Others never did fulfill
their dreams, and wanted a scapegoat. Some of these people had relocated in different areas of this country, while others had immigrated to here from abroad, yet all were products of their birth, and their time. Joseph McCarthy was no exception.

Details of McCarthy's life are sketchy, and until his personal papers are released from Marquette University, we must rely on the tenacious research of Jack Anderson and Ronald May. Born on November 14, 1908, on a 142-acre farm in the "Irish Settlement" region of northern Wisconsin, and narrowly missing out on the "log cabin" birth advantage so cherished by generations of politicians, Joe was the fifth child of Joseph and Bridget McCarthy. The area, according to Anderson and May, was best characterized as "barren of rich ideas, semi-isolated... an intellectual vacuum" dominated almost exclusively by "families [which] were clannish, closemouthed, suspicious, thrifty--but above all else, good Catholics."¹

The preceding information on Joe McCarthy is as revealing as it is brief. Authors Anderson and May offered a description of the McCarthy setting which closely parallels a portrait of the kinds of people which would later deify Joe. The literary talents of those two writers is not the sole reason for this likeness. Joseph McCarthy enjoyed disproportinate support from Catholic farmers and suspicious people because he understood them; the extent to which he was able to relate to and exploit the anxieties of these groups lends some credence to a modified demagogue model. While I will never concede the creation of widespread irrational fear solely to McCarthy, it is obvious that as
an unmasker of this fear McCarthy was incomparable.

But the demagogue model has already been covered, and the vital issue, what constituted the foundation for McCarthyism, remains. The "status-anxiety" school of inquiry, including Seymour Lipset, Earl Raab, Richard Hofstadter, Talcot Parsons, Peter Viereck and others, has generated a comprehensive theory. Having already introduced the idea of a dissatisfied group seeking outlets, I will now proceed to add specificity to the argument.

The basic premise of this chapter will be that there were latent anxieties within American society before Joe's emergence, and that those anxieties mounted considerably during this "nightmare era." However, the majority of these fears are attributed to the attitudes of the populace, and Joe's prowess for implanting anxiety is downplayed. Conversely, the demagogue and political theories attribute the strong emotions to factors apart from the individuals. It is my intention to advance this "status-anxiety" theory as the most credible one.

David Halberstam, in his critique on the Kennedy years, The Best and the Brightest, was quite clear as to which theory received his vote: "Communism was a false issue; the real issues were post-war fear and uncertainty." This begs the inevitable question: why the fear and uncertainty? Several of my sources had theories, and though similar, each deserves separate consideration.

Talcott Parsons, Professor of Sociology at Harvard University, advanced a convincing premise with respect to post-war America and the rise of McCarthyism. Arguing that the late 1940's and early '50's were a time for international responsibility and domestic reform, Parsons concerted that the strain caused by these two unsettling
factors were "superimposed" on each other. He finds the heart of the
issue when he relates: "It is a generalization well established in the
social sciences that neither individuals nor societies can undergo
major structural changes without the likelihood of producing a
considerable element or 'irrational' behavior." 3 These required
structural changes were many, including a dramatic shifting of focus
from a domestic to an international scope. World War Two taught us what
the First World War should have—that it was now impossible to isolate
this nation from the problems of Europe and Asia. Thus Americans could
no longer think in strictly domestic terms. The conditions of our current
world underscore this problem. As our nation becomes ever-dependant
on foreign oil, the problems of the Arab world become our problems,
and for reasons not confined to economics. A growing number of us are
beginning to accept this reality, yet Americans of the 1950's were tired
of accepting any but the most pleasant realities. Four years of intense
mobilization gave way to five years of relative peace, yet by 1950
we were again at war, and the basic justification for the Korean conflict
was our newly acquired policing responsibilities. Thus, not only would
there have been the natural "irrational" behavior, the by-product of
change, but Americans immediately perceived the implications of that
change in the context of Korea.

With respect to Korea, it was obvious that we were fighting
against Communism. Just as Pearl Harbor and war with Japan led to the
rounding up and detention of domestic Japanese, the anti-Communist
struggle in Korea infiltrated the home front. Parsons has continually
detected a strong, aggressive reaction against the elements which are
ascertained as the sources of strain and difficulty, and this movement, when embraced by a politically shrewd individual, can only become more aggressive. Joseph McCarthy was that individual, and this pluralist school insists that the movement to which he lent his name was in full force when the Senator adopted it.

A further accounting of this view is summarized by the disclosure of potential conflicts. These conflicts, the eventual source of American anxiety, are derived from clashes between the demands imposed by our new responsibilities and those elements of our social structure most resistant to change. Consider the general tendency of older people to advocate conservatism on foreign matters, to largely oppose interventionism, and couple this with that same group's disproportionate support for McCarthy. It is evident that Joe was the champion of several diverse groups, by merely opposing the prospect of change.

To summarize this first tenet of pluralist theory, it should be noted that McCarthyism was an overwhelmingly negative movement. Parsons assessed the movement as one in which "getting rid" of undesirable influences held precedence over the more important question concerning what positive steps could be taken. Joe was a perfect leader for such negativism, for he knew well how to disrupt and destroy, but little about remolding or creating. His answers tended to be oversimplified, and as our national confidence waned, the identification of a catch-all scapegoat, Communism, gave doubting Americans a needed shot of adrenaline.

The preceding discussion, incorporating such elements as Korea and foreign policy, is a relatively easy one to fathom Communism was seen as the root of American problems and many foreigners were Communist.

A far more difficult argument arises when the Lipset and Hofstadter
forces combine to present another contention. Whereas the blame for our problems was, under Parson's view, directed at realistic promoters of Communism (such as foreigners), a new technique afforded the dissatisfied individual the ability to lash out wildly at anything he did not understand or agree with. For example, Daniel Bell pointed out that Irish and German ethnics living in McCarthy's Midwest felt innadaquate in their Americanism. While it is obvious that purging the government of a few Soviet sympathizers would not make a German more of an American, the vehement insistence by the German subculture that Communist be banished could definitely aid their quest to identify as Americans. After all, what true-blue American was not against Communism? This example illustrates the use of the anti-subversion issue as a patriotic cloak.

An even more curious behavior among Americans throughout history has been our propensity for blaming our national ills on the intellectuals. As recently as 1969, Vice-President Spiro Agnew was attributing our increasingly pitiful dilemma in Vietnam to the Eastern, liberal intellectuals. This attack caused more than one observer to recall the days of Joseph McCarthy. The Senator blasted the intellectualu at the outset, incorporating their indictment into the text of his Wheeling speech. It was not the less fortunate who were betraying this nation, said Joe, but the individuals with the finest homes, jobs and educations. The worst offenders were those State Department employees "born with silver spoons in their mouth." It is very probable that Joe not only anticipated the political mileage which would accompany this attack, but that he, too, resented the intellectuals. Joe, though a fine student, felt inhibited by the intellects which populated our nation's capital. To this day, many scholars attribute the basis for Joe's attacks on Owen Lattimore to the
professor's intellectualism rather than to his alleged Communism. Further, besides opposing attacks on intellectuals form a purely logical standpoint, I can't help but feel that anti-intellectualism is dangerous. When the nation is in it's greatest time of need, shouldn't every segment of society, including the intellectuals, be mobilized?

Throughout this paper I have used the terms "pluralist" and "status anxiety" interchangeably as a way of referring to this present argument. The pluralist view of McCarthyism classifies that phenomenon as a mass-based movement of individuals who, in light of their diverse concerns, were encourage to resort to the interest group politics which are the basis of pluralism. On the other hand, status anxiety theorists, including Richard Hofstadter and Seymour Lipset, have attributed the furor that was McCarthyism to very specific origins, those being primarily post-war concerns about economic status and personal prestige. It is with this very specific them that we will now deal.

Life magazine found itself seeking, in late 1952, an explanation for the disturbing mood that was then engulfing the nation. Citing the excesses of the Wisconsin Senator, the weekly publication emphasized the necessity of confronting McCarthyism on an individual level. Equating Bryanism, an earlier attempt at the "wholesale vilification of business;" and McCarthyism, the editors of Life warned that such movements might cause class warfare from which recovery would be difficult. McCarthyism, they contended, must be addressed by every citizen of this nation; anyone ignoring the presence of this menace was in fact guilty of the same retreat from the truth that the Senator was.

This pep talk illustrated the Life premise that McCarthyism
was some sort of grass roots reaction. Any problem arising from individual sentiments needed to be fought on that same level. But the reasons for the widespread fears of our citizens is the essential point of understanding. Hofstadter first documents the two primary processes which lead to the types of anxiety upon which McCarthyism was said to rely. First was "interest politics," a source of tension evident during times of economic emergency. The Depression had been a major catalyst for a generation of interest politics, and also for the tensions associated with depravity. On the other hand, when "times are good" Americans transfer their enormous energy from material centered activism to the realm of status aspirations, and the process of status politics. Status is a curious intangible which is derived from several factors, yet in our American society it tends to be assigned on the basis of economic might.

Post-war America is best characterized as time of "new wealth and new insecurities." Some statistics which indicate this new affluence are useful: national income had tripled since the late thirties, average purchasing power rose by 25 percent, and the lowest fifth of the economic pyramid had an increase in average real income of 70 per cent. Given this cheerful economic picture, one might expect an equally content air throughout the domestic scene. However, the level of tension was growing in direct proportion to the paycheck. According to Edward Shils

The increase prosperity, elevating people into new standards of living and into the perception of new possibilities, also led some of them to become more anxious about the future, to be troubled about a depression and the precariousness of their possessions. The novelty of their new style of life made them more sensitive to the impingement of remote events; it made them more sensitive to questions of status; it increased their ideological receptivity.
Characteristically, the more man acquires, even going well beyond his needs, the more possessive he becomes about those acquisitions. Thus an American society experiencing an extraordinary period of economic growth was easy prey for an issue-starved Senator. If that Senator could identify with the insecurities of maintaining newly acquired wealth and prestige, the chances of his being embraced as a spokesman for and protector of this emerging social strata were quite good. Here, again, the demagogic traits of McCarthy compliment an alternative theory. While the status-anxiety premise consigns the proliferation of this irrational fear to forces having little to do with Joseph McCarthy, the theory allows that the Senator met the remaining need, the existence of a fugurehead. Joe did not paly this role in the traditional sense, acting on behalf ofthe group in an organized, concerted fashion. Yet through his shotgun approach he managed to touch enough sensitive nerves to the extent that the growing insecurities became the foremost public concern. Unfortunately, since these concerns were embodied and vented by the irrational catch-all of anti-Communism, the true sources of these problems, quite different than the imagined ones, were never adequately addressed.

Hofstadter offers a four-installment rationalization for behavior which he claims constituted an unrealistic response to realities. These realities did offer some cause for concern, but not as rampant a concern as was manifested by McCartyism. One source of concern has its origins in American history, which is replete with stories of upward mobility, wherein nearly everyone has a chance to advance. This was partially true,
mostly due to the vast resources and settlement patterns of this nation. However, this almost automatic opportunity for status improvement is no longer present, as this world becomes more complex and competitive. The end result has been a growing tendency to make status improvement an obsession, and this may in part explain the unsettling 1950's, since upward mobility could no longer be taken for granted.

The development of mass communications made the events of the political world more accessible to the average citizen. The 1950's ushered in the television era, and this new media form figuratively shrunk the vast expanse of this nation. Viewers were shown a split scene picture which included, at the same instant shots of the West and East coasts. The message was clear: New horizons were now attainable for millions of Americans, including the ability to more fully participate in the political process. This process had become an area into which personal feelings could be projected.

A third source of tension resulted from the multitude of changes inspired by the liberal elements which had remained in power for such a long period. Several of the reforms only served to widen the class of people who felt powerless before their government. Having once had influence, the bitterness associated with losing it resulted in the need to blame someone. Not surprisingly, the result was a growing resentment toward intellectuals and experts by this emerging class of individuals whose influence was waning.

Finally, a great deal of tension owed to the unrelenting feeling that a crisis was at hand. After World War I, America quickly retreated back into its isolationism, and the excessive frivolity that was the
Roaring Twenties ensued. After the second great war such a dramatic reaction was impossible, for the prominence which was thrust upon us disallowed any such retreat from world affairs. It is apparent that many Americans grew to accept the responsibilities which accompanied our new role. However, having accepted the premise that the future of the world lie in the strength of America, many individuals pointed to the subversion issue, and labeled it a perfect example of our failure to adequately meet our ominous challenges.12

While there are surely many others, the above four conditions seem to summarize the sources of tension in post-war America. At this juncture, a brief listing of the various groups within which these anxieties were most evident is offered. Seymour Lipset and Earl Raab, in their study of McCarthyism as a right-wing extremist movement, insisted that quantitative analysis of the McCarthy social base indicated that it included a disproportionate number of "Catholics, New Englanders, Republicans, the less educated, the lower class, manual workers, farmers, older people, and the Irish."13 It is important to note the variety of people which the McCarthy following included. When coupled with the support Joe enjoyed from a large group of Texas oilmen, it becomes apparent that McCarthyism was not merely the crude outgrowth of the traditional activities of professional "hate-mongers." It was, rather, the combined expression of concerns, echoing from a group made up of different people for different reasons. There existed more frustration than plan, more fear than rational solutions.

A final assessment of the pluralist theory of McCarthyism should address the problem of whether or not the Senator fed upon the needs of
his following, or if that following used Joe as an unsuspecting spokesman. Consider first the contention by Lawrence S. Wittner that McCarthy was "the servant and then the victim of forces beyond his control of understanding." 14 This suggests that Joe stumbled onto the Communist issue, and was soon embraced by a variety of groups who cared little about Communism and even less about McCarthy. They saw, however, the expediency of adopting the popular sentiments of anti-Communism, and this necessitated a loose alliance with the champion of the movement. This is a distinct possibility, for the pluralist view expouses the theme that unrelated interest groups align in the political arena, with goals ranging from the irrational to the programmatic. Perhaps McCarthy become a spokesman for factions lacking his nationwide forum, and certainly his brashness. A Catholic pastor, reacting to Representative Chavez's blast that McCarthy used the Roman Catholic Church as a "cloak," wrote "I'd be more apt to say that certain elements in the Roman Catholic Church are using McCarthy and others like him, for their purposes. . . through the fight against anti-Communism." 15

Conversely, there exists the belief that McCarthy was a parasite who abused the discernable fears and needs of various groups with absolute indifference. This view, though not contrary to the precepts of pluralism (wherein groups align momentarily through a variety of forces, leadership not excluded), most definitely requires the addition of another factor. Demagogic prowess seems to complete the package. Thus McCarthy may have exploited the unique concerns of a variety of groups, yet this is more a tribute to his talents than to any unique pluralist condition,
CONCLUSION: A SYNTHESIS

Few theories are without fault, and those presented in the previous three chapters cannot be included among the ranks of the flawless. Primarily, this is due to my assessment that each interpretation has a great deal of merit, though when taken in totality, each is too restrictive. Thus, it is my intention to refute certain segments of each theme, while leaving certain relevant portions intact. The final process will be a general synthesis of these interpretations into an acceptable whole which might be offered as an explanation for the dramatic phenomenon of McCarthyism.

In chapter two, McCarthyism was treated as a by-product of the traditional struggles between various political elites. One premise within this theory was that the foundation for full scale McCarthyism was evident as early as 1948. Most nonconformity was viewed, by that time, with considerable intolerance. However, the suppression inspired by McCarthyism was not witnessed on a grand scale until the Senator's rise in February, 1950. It seems too easy to insist that the phenomenon of McCarthyism would have characterized the American scene even if the Wisconsin Senator had never made his Wheeling speech, or risen to fame. This takes too much of the flavor of the phenomenon away from McCarthy and ascribes it to some other stimulus, presumable political in nature. How can innuendo, guilt by association, and the smear be construed as the logical extension of Cold War politics without the audacity of a McCarthy? Consider the 1919-1920 Red Scare, which provided its share of abuses of the civil liberties of the nation. Why did no national figure embody the hysteria of those days? Clearly, McCarthyism reached its excessive peaks not because of extraordinary political circumstances, but because of the complex personality of Joseph McCarthy. It is quite hard to imagine that the forces which restrained full scale McCarthyism...
just coincidentally gave way at the same time as the Wheeling speech. The political theory adherents insist on divorcing McCarthy from the movement he embodied, yet are unable to adequately explain the dormancy of this hysteria for at least two years. Clearly, it was more McCarthy talent than coincidence that made McCarthy's Wheeling speech the catalyst for the four-year rampage of repression. Consider the possibility of another national politician exploiting the obviously latent fear of Communism. A glance at the Congressional roll in the 1940's reveals scores of solons with anti-Red credentials which far exceeded those exhibited by Joe to that time. The following portrait of Nevada Senator Pat McCarran is interesting:

He ran his committee autocratically, and his influence in the Senate was legendary; he had been known to silence an objector in the middle of a speech by merely stepping in front of him and looking the man in the eye. McCarran hated Communists and fellow travelers as did McCarthy, and was more thorough in 'rooting them out'.

McCarean, chairman of the Senate subcommittee on Internal Security, had tremendous prestige, influence, and a platform from which to air his views. On each of these counts he far surpassed McCarthy. In an atmosphere which the political theorists viewed as perfectly conducive to political exploitation, most any Senator rivaling McCarran's position should have been able to champion the anti-Communism issue. However, an inconspicuous Senator from Wisconsin achieved national prominence with undocumented allegations delivered to a women's club. This speech converted mounting, though quite subtle, anxiety into national hysteria. Robert Griffith insists that had the Wheeling incident not taken place, Joseph Raymond McCarthy might never have escaped obscurity, yet the movement would still
have characterized the American scene. This idea suggests that political struggles made McCarthyism inevitable, yet fails to recognize that it was Joes' talents, and not inevitability, which lit the hysteria fuse.

The political theorists also point out that from 1947 to 1955, one-hundred and thirty one Congressional investigations were held which dealt directly with Communism. This, they contend, clearly establishes the political complexion of McCarthyism, for only political maneuvering could account for such excesses. This view seems to ignore an obvious question: why were McCarthy's investigations raising such a furor, while the endeavors of others into the Communist issue were consigned to relative obscurity? McCarthy's political stature was rather insignificant. He was never, for instance, included in the Republican strategy braintrust. Yet, while Joe lacked the clout to benefit greatly from any political bandwagon, he possessed the skill to exploit the political concerns of his fellow countrymen. Indeed, it was not the existence of opportunities created by political in-fighting which propelled Joe to prominence. Instead, it was his knack for sensationalizing issues from the vast array of popular topics.

The political explanation for McCarthyism appears especially flawed in its over-emphasis of the appeal of a purely political movement. Political programs have aroused a great deal of excitement over the years, yet McCarthyism contained emotions far more intense than excitement. Even after McCarthy's condemnation by the Senate, a huge throng of supporters gathered to sing, "nobody loves McCarthy but the pee-pul." This strongly suggests that the appeal of McCarthyism resulted not from political roots but from personal ones, roots such as the anxiety that had been embedded in the minds of millions of Americans. A fallen politician
seldom enjoys such adulation when his political program collapses, but a martyred spokesman, who has apparently been wrongfully punished for fighting in the name of a holy cause, is quite likely to arouse the sympathy of many.

Conventional wisdom usually calls for the adoption of tactics, when trying to halt an advance, which are similar to the item which is to be stopped. In a more elemental sense, it is best to fight with fire, and politics with politics. Thus if McCarthyism was a political phenomenon, why were not strictly political measures sufficient to halt the movement? The prevailing mood after the 1952 election of Eisenhower was that once a Republican was in the White House, the impact of the prophet from Wisconsin would be diminished. Certainly everyone realized that McCarthyism would only be advantageous on a short-term basis, while eventually its spokesman must be silenced, or at least be encouraged to aid Republican causes at the expense of his own. Did, however, purely political manipulation squelch McCarthyism? Clearly it did not. Senator Charles Potter related that he was almost a daily visitor to the White House during those days dominated by the Army-McCarthy hearings. Eisenhower sought a firsthand account of the hearings, presumably to enable him to formulate strategy to deal with the errant Senator McCarthy. Despite concerted efforts to coerce or at least appease Joe, the Republican leaders would ultimately have little to do with the demise of their greatest political liability. It was McCarthy's four-year rampage of excesses, capped by his exposure by television during the hearings, which destroyed the Senator. Political gamesmanship, a force in the rise of McCarthyism, also played a role in its demise.
This, however, does not tell the entire story.

The pluralist theory of McCarthyism is an impressive argument which has been advanced by some distinguished scholars. Yet as sound as this supposition appears to be, it contains several weaknesses. For example, let us examine Parson's pretext that irrational behavior is a common by-product of a society beset by structural changes. Consider America of the late 1800's. This was a time of unparalleled economic growth, a boom era far surpassing the 1950's when measured in relative economic terms. It was a time when huge fortunes were acquired and lost overnight, when a Scottish immigrant named Andrew Carnegie accumulated wealth which defied comprehension. Thus this period surpassed the 1950's as a time of rapid change, and the levels of anxiety associated with newly acquired wealth were staggering. Added to the picture are two elements which parallel the situation of the 1950's—a brief war fought on foreign soil and the existence of many opportunistic, and corrupt, leaders.

The 1890's, then, seem a perfect model for the Parsonian thesis, yet the purportedly inevitable result, widespread irrationality, was never to reach the excesses of McCarthyism. Given the rapid changes which have characterized American history, it can be argued that most any era might have been ripe for rampant hysteria. Robert Griffith contends that intolerance of radicalism, and thus Communism, has tended to be a constant trait of the American political culture.5

Did McCarthyism truly epitomize the desire for some sort of "direct democracy?"6 Popular movements, such as McCarthyism, tend to materialize at the local level. If a trend develops wherein a movement surfaces in many areas, the base for a nationwide occurrence may exist. However, it is obvious that the climate of McCarthyism originated at the national
level, and it was only after the emergence of Joseph McCarthy that the hysteria was widely evident at a local level. Thus the pluralist notion of McCarthyism fails to adequately reconcile the contradiction of calling the movement a popular one, which nonetheless remains dormant until aroused by demagogic or political activity.

The demagogic interpretation of McCarthyism is also a formidable argument. However, to imagine Joseph McCarthy as the grand architect of the hysteria in the 1950's presents a picture inconsistent with the man and his considerable shortcomings. He was, for instance, a shoddy planner, hardly an advantageous trait for anyone given to capturing the anxieties of a nation. Ultimately, it is the post-censure period which offers the best possible critique for any argument which credits the excesses of McCarthyism primarily to the demagogic talents of the Senator. McCarthy in his dramatic plunge from prominence offers tremendous insight into the sources of his ascent, and makes some sort of theory synthesis possible.

The demagogic theory in its extreme form is refuted when one ponders the question: "why did censure bring demise, since it stripped McCarthy of none of his demagogic traits?" Joe still had his talents and his seniority, and a capable demagogic could continue on with those alone. But McCarthy's final three years as a Senator were totally devoid of the triumphs which were frequent during his prime. Obviously, Joe's social and the political bases were gone, and the importance of each is uncontestable.

The long-awaited synthesis is relatively simple. Post-war America was indeed quite ripe with anxiety. Not only was this nation thrust into the leadership role almost overnight, but Americans realized
even amidst an economic boom that the war had created problems unparalleled in history. The previous levels of severity, of warfare, of economic plight and of ideological intolerance, had reached new limits. Staying on top, whether in one's community or in the world, was more challenging than ever.

Thus concern was widespread in post-war America; the limits for concern were increased, and so was the number of things to worry about. Unfortunately, instead of helping to minimize these worries, our political leaders expended their energies trying to outflank their opponents. From HUAC to the climactic day of the Army-McCarthy hearings, political opportunism was substituted for true leadership. The general public, given its insecurities, was in no position to lead itself.

Joseph R. McCarthy entered national politics at a most advantageous time. He might have sensed the lack of national confidence; he most definitely sensed his charismatic appeal. Gladstone once accused Benjamin Disraeli of being "inebriated by his own verbosity," and this indictment probably fits Joe, too. His demagogic proclivities, whetted by success and fed by political and social realities, made his emergence inevitable. All of these, conversely, would also be his downfall.
EPILOGUE

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. It was a
time of economic prosperity, it was a time of intellectual suppression.
It was a time when the public orthodoxy sought by some was answered by
bursts of zealously unorthodox behavior, as Americans donned cooskin caps,
spun 30 million Hula-Hoops, and crammed record numbers of bodies into
phonebooths and Volkswagons.¹

Even when given Joseph R. McCarthy's apparent crimes against soc-

iety, the public's perception of the Senator was not, and is not, unan-
imous in its negativism. In 1954, Time magazine was beset with citizens'
demands to name McCarthy that publication's Man-of-the-Year.² Similarly,
when networks recently aired portions of the Army-McCarthy hearings, they
received considerable feedback, much of which bore the theme "where is
Joe McCarthy when we need him?"

Since Joseph McCarthy died exactly fifty days after my birth, my
assessment of the man is based partially on the opinions that I have sol-
licited from those who remember those days. The only pattern which per-
meates most all of the opinions is that of general misinformation. This
is somewhat surprising, considering the impact that Joseph McCarthy had
upon this nation. Parallel this with the misconceptions undoubtedly
held concerning the Watergate Affair, and one sees that an uninformed
public is a tremendous boon to the McCarthy's of the world. Surely the
roots of both McCarthyism and Watergate lie partially among the realm of
things which cannot be effectively addressed. However, as Edward R.
Murrow insisted as he challenged a lethargic nation to confront McCarthy,
"the fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves."²

It has been nearly twenty-two years since the death of Joseph McCarthy, which made page one in the Independent Record. Ironically, that same front page reported that two state employees were fired for unfurling, during a Helena parade two days earlier, a flag bearing the hammer and sickle insignia.³ It has been nearly twelve hundred weeks since the chairman's gavel permanently silenced the Army-McCarthy farce. At the time of the hearings, sirloin steak sold for 65 cents per pound, and crab for 59 cents. Prices have changed dramatically, but have attitudes, the real sustainer of McCarthyism? Fred Cook fears that they have not, citing the attacks in 1969 by Vice-President Spiro Agnew, and the sheepish response to his creed—a creed equating dissent with UnAmericanism. Agnew had apparently revived a latent strain of McCarthyism, as his rhetoric, which resembled McCarthy's, inspired such assessments as "Joe McCarthy! He was the one—the only good one we've ever had!"⁴ Lest anyone imagine that popular intolerance of Communism died with McCarthy, they need only consider the 1976 Presidential primaries. Ronald Reagan captured an impressive vote total, including the entire Texas delegation, by doing little more than attack President Gerald Ford for being "soft on Communism."

I recently attended a seminar on creative writing, and performed an activity wherein each participant wrote his own obituary. Had Joe McCarthy performed a similar task, he might well have speculated on the legacy of his five year reign. The jury may still be partially in need of further deliberation, as world events continue to pit this nation against the force of Communism. On the wall of Senator McCarthy’s office hung a
motto which is credited to none other than that symbol of truth, Abraham Lincoln. It offers a haunting message which, if superimposed over the theme of McCarthyism, requires a painful value judgement for millions of Americans to this day:

If I were to read, much less answer, all the attacks made on me, this shop might as well be closed for any other business.

I do the very best I know how--the very best I can, and I mean to keep doing so until the end.

If the end brings me out all right, what is said against me won't amount to anything. If the end brings me out wrong, then ten angels swearing I was right would make no difference.
FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION


CHAPTER I


3 After a first inconclusive trial, Hiss was eventually found guilty of perjury after a second trial.


7 Ibid., p. 147.


11 Time, 3 April 1950, p. 17.

12 Independent Record (Helena), 20 February 1950, p. 1.


14 Ibid., p. 183.


17. Ibid., p. 258.


19. Ibid., p. 402.


23. Ibid., p. 144.

24. Thomas, When Even Angels Wept, p. 211.


29. Ibid.; p. 18.


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3. The primary contributors to this interpretation are Michael Paul Rogin, Richard Freeland, Athan Theoharis, and Robert Griffith.


8. Ibid., p. 65.


13. Ibid., p. 70.


15. Ibid., p. 7.


17. Ibid., p. 307.


22. Ibid., p. 206.

CHAPTER III

1. Rovere, Senator Joe McCarthy, p. 3.

2. Webster's, p. 301.


Thomas, When Even Angels Wept, p. 577.

Ibid., p. 236.

Ibid.

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Thomas, When Even Angels Wept, p. 427.

Cook, The Nightmare Decade, p. 76.

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Thomas, When Even Angels Wept, p. 590.


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Ibid., p. 9.


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Thomas, When Even Angels Wept, p. 337.

Time, 7 September 1953, p. 21.

Thomas, When Even Angels Wept, p. 382.

Time, 27 July 1953, p. 18.
34. Rovere, Senator Joe McCarthy, pp. 113-118.
42. Time, 13 December 1954, p. 12.

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4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 191.
"Recalling All Liberals to the Real Fight," Life, 8 September 1952, p. 34.


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Griffith and Theoharis, The Specter, pp. 16-17.

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C) Government Documents


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