

University of Windsor

Scholarship at UWindor

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Theses, Dissertations, and Major Papers

1984

Senator Joseph R. McCarthy and the American conservative tradition.

Gerald William James Nicholls
University of Windsor

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/etd>

Recommended Citation

Nicholls, Gerald William James, "Senator Joseph R. McCarthy and the American conservative tradition." (1984). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 3427.
<https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/etd/3427>

This online database contains the full-text of PhD dissertations and Masters' theses of University of Windsor students from 1954 forward. These documents are made available for personal study and research purposes only, in accordance with the Canadian Copyright Act and the Creative Commons license—CC BY-NC-ND (Attribution, Non-Commercial, No Derivative Works). Under this license, works must always be attributed to the copyright holder (original author), cannot be used for any commercial purposes, and may not be altered. Any other use would require the permission of the copyright holder. Students may inquire about withdrawing their dissertation and/or thesis from this database. For additional inquiries, please contact the repository administrator via email (scholarship@uwindsor.ca) or by telephone at 519-253-3000ext. 3208.



National Library
of Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Canadian Theses Service Services des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada.
K1A 0N4

CANADIAN THESES

THÈSES CANADIENNES

NOTICE

The quality of this microfiche is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Previously copyrighted materials (journal articles, published tests, etc.) are not filmed.

Reproduction in full or in part of this film is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30.

**THIS DISSERTATION
HAS BEEN MICROFILMED
EXACTLY AS RECEIVED**

AVIS

La qualité de cette microfiche dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

Les documents qui font déjà l'objet d'un droit d'auteur (articles de revue, examens publiés, etc.) ne sont pas microfilmés.

La reproduction, même partielle, de ce microfilm est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30.

**LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE
NOUS L'AVONS REÇUE**

SENATOR JOSEPH R. McCARTHY AND THE AMERICAN
CONSERVATIVE TRADITION

by

Gerald William James Nicholls

A Thesis
submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Department of
History in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

© 1983



Permission has been granted to the National Library of Canada to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film.

The author (copyright owner) has reserved other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her written permission.

L'autorisation a été accordée à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de microfilmer cette thèse et de prêter ou de vendre des exemplaires du film.

L'auteur (titulaire du droit d'auteur) se réserve les autres droits de publication; ni la thèse ni de longs extraits de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation écrite.

ISBN 0-315-29275-X

(c)

Gerald William James Nicholls
All Rights Reserved


1983

707967

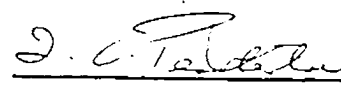
APPROVED BY



W. O. Soderlund



Udo Sautter



I. C. Pemberton

ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to show that Senator Joseph McCarthy's anti-Communist crusade was a legitimate conservative response to the political situation of the 1950s. The phenomenon known as 'McCarthyism' in other words was a continuation of the American conservative tradition.

The thesis begins with a definition of American conservatism. This is followed by an examination of American political thought from the American Revolution until approximately 1950. The study emphasizes the evolution of conservative philosophy from the days of the Federalists to the emergence of modern conservatism. Special attention is given to those ideas and values which make up the American conservative tradition.

After American conservatism has been described and put into historical perspective, the paper turns to Joe McCarthy. First, it gives an unbiased account of McCarthy's political career from his election to the Senate until his death in 1957. This objective portrait of McCarthy presents both his virtues and faults.

Finally the thesis shows that McCarthy was a conservative and that his anti-communism was based on conservative principles. Thus, contrary to popular perception, McCarthy was not a heartless, power hungry monster but a conservative concerned about the threat of domestic communist subversion.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION iv

CHAPTER

I. CONSERVATISM, DEFINED 1.

II. AMERICAN CONSERVATISM, 1787 to 1860 . . .8.

III. AMERICAN CONSERVATISM, 1865 to 1950 . . .43.

IV. JOSEPH R. McCARTHY A BIOGRAPHY 77.

V. McCARTHYISM AND THE AMERICAN RIGHT . . .120.

CONCLUSION163

Introduction

Ideally history should be an objective science in that historians should endeavour to examine facts without prejudice or emotion and thereby arrive at fair and unbiased conclusions. Unfortunately, this ideal is rarely if ever truly achieved. Depending on the biases of their authors, historical treatises omit important facts or give undue prominence to poorly researched or irrelevant material if such selectivity will reinforce their preconceived beliefs.

One example of this phenomenon may be seen in the traditional attitude toward Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, the famed anti-Communist. Few historians have ever expressed sympathy for McCarthy. Indeed, not a single college textbook from a major publisher is even neutral toward him.¹

Studies on his life bear such titles as Politics of Fear, The Nightmare Decade and Hate that Haunts America.

In books such as these McCarthy is consistently and inevitably portrayed as the essence of evil. At the same time historians, as a matter of course, will praise the enemies of McCarthy as defenders of decency and civility. The problem is that such studies have generally been written not by disinterested scholars eager to uncover the truth, but by liberals interested in discrediting the name of Joe McCarthy. Thus, they are highly subjective and are often based on poor research and half-truths.

One recent and notable exception to this trend, however

is Thomas Reeves' excellent biography, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy. In this extensive and well-researched account of McCarthy's life, Reeves tries to be neutral and dispassionate and the result is a fair and unbiased portrayal of the Wisconsin Senator. This documented study also succeeds in smashing several popular McCarthy myths which have been perpetuated as fact in all other biographies. Yet, while this book is certainly a step in the right direction, it could be argued that it does not go far enough, for neither Joe McCarthy nor his ideals can be truly understood or appreciated unless his principles are thoroughly examined.

To understand Joe McCarthy's principles, it is necessary to put him into historical perspective. In this way it will be possible to see that McCarthyism was in line with a stream of conservative thought that can be traced back to the earliest days of the American Republic. The purpose of this thesis therefore is to prove that McCarthy was indeed part of the American conservative tradition.

NOTES

¹Thomas Reeves, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy
(New York, 1982), 674.

CHAPTER I

CONSERVATISM DEFINED

In order to understand the mind of Senator Joseph McCarthy, it is necessary to first examine the conservative philosophy which motivated him. Such a project entails both defining conservatism as a political philosophy and tracing its evolution throughout American history. This process will serve not only to help to explain McCarthy's beliefs but it will also put him in proper historical perspective.

It is also necessary that modern American conservatism be defined, since the word conservative can have a wide variety of meanings and uses. Practically everyone or anything can be described as a conservative, as people are said to dress conservatively, to make conservative financial statements or to play games conservatively. In general, anyone who is old-fashioned, cautious or prudent is considered to be conservative. Furthermore, the word conservative can also be confusing in a strictly political context as its meaning can vary depending on the country or the historical period.

Since conservatism does not have any fixed meaning,

many have urged, that it be abandoned when describing political movements. However, since this is not about to happen and since those who are called conservatives do not reject the label, the word can be accepted for the purpose of this thesis.

In defining conservatism though, it must be remembered that it does not represent a single doctrine. Rather, "considerable variations occur in the substance and intensity of the attitudes, beliefs and values held by individuals within the conservative spectrum."¹ However, while there is no specific doctrine, there is definitely a pattern of ideas or beliefs which conservatives support. Essentially, this ideology stresses: individualism, states rights, laissez-faire, Christianity and opposition to communism. To put it more succinctly, conservatives simply believe in freedom.

This love of freedom is reflected in every aspect of the conservative ideology. Individualism to a conservative, for instance, means having the freedom to make one's own choices without interference from outside sources. Barry Goldwater in his much-admired book, The Conscience of a Conservative,² which outlines conservative philosophy, wrote that "every man for his individual good, and for the good of his society is responsible for his own development. The choices that govern his life are choices that he must make; they cannot be made by any other human being or by a

collectivity of human beings."³ Conservatives feel a man who is free to make his own way in the world is industrious, dignified and self-reliant. Consequently, they are opposed to government programs which alleviate man's wants and improve his security, since they would take away his freedom of initiative, and make him dependent on the state for his needs.

Instead of collectivist or welfare economies which exist at the expense of individual freedom, conservatives would prefer a laissez-faire or capitalist economy which would stress economic liberty. Governments would not interfere in private market decisions or force citizens to conform to the state's economic goals. Rather, people would be allowed voluntarily to co-operate without coercion or central direction in ways that suited them best. The importance that conservatives attach to economic freedom cannot be stressed enough. In the first place, they believe that in order for an economy to be efficient and productive, it has to experience economic liberty. Secondly, and far more importantly, they argue that without economic freedom there can be no political freedom. In the words of one conservative writer: "every limitation of economic liberty, every state intervention and every single act of planning and directing contains some constraint. It is this constraint which together with compulsory state taxation that takes away from us bit by bit that genuine freedom which is

dear to us all."⁴ Economist Milton Friedman said much the same thing when he wrote, "economic freedom is an essential requisite for political freedom...The combination of economic and political power in the same hands is a sure recipe for tyranny."⁵

Obviously, conservatives see a strong, centralized, all-powerful government which is necessary for a welfare or planned economy, as a serious threat to freedom. They feel the concentration of power in the central government would inevitably be a corrupting influence leading to tyranny.

Once again Goldwater explains this view when he wrote:

"this is because of the corrupting influence of power, the natural tendency of men who possess some power to take unto themselves more power. The tendency leads eventually to the acquisition of all power."⁶ Consequently, the only way

to guarantee the people's freedom is to spread the government's power as much as possible and to limit the power it retains with constitutional checks and balances. As

Friedman put it, "the preservation of freedom requires the elimination of such concentrations of power to the fullest extent and the dispersal and distribution of whatever power cannot be eliminated--a system of checks and balances."⁷

In practice, that means more power to state and local governments as well as strictly enforcing the constitutional limits imposed on the central government.

It should also be noted that conservatism is closely

linked with religion, especially Christianity, and that much of its philosophy can be justified on religious grounds. Conservatives oppose all powerful paternalistic governments for example, because they are in effect rivals of God. Also, the belief in individual freedom and economic liberty is based on the idea that the purpose of life is for everyone to prove himself before God. "To the conservative there is no inner conflict between his recognition and utter dependence on God--whatever he may call him--and his passion for freedom. The two are synonymous in practice. Freedom is what God gives man so he may prove himself."⁸

Another characteristic of the conservative government is its unshaken opposition to communism wherever it appears. It can be said, in fact, that the conservatives' hatred of communism is only matched by their love of freedom. This attitude is certainly justified when one considers the fact that communist governments are invariably tyrannical, brutal and oppressive. Yet conservatives do not detest communism simply because it is cruel and despotic, but because it is an ideology which stands for the complete and utter suppression of all the freedoms which conservatives hold so dear. The communist philosophy, with its total contempt for individualism, economic liberty and religion is certainly the anathema of the conservative movement.

Naturally, conservatives are greatly alarmed by the spread of communism around the world and by the growing

strength of the Soviet Union, a country which they see as being dedicated to destroying the United States and conquering the world. Goldwater wrote:

we are confronted by a revolutionary world movement that possesses not only the will to dominate absolutely every square mile of the globe, but increasingly the capacity to do so; a military power that rivals our own, political warfare and propaganda skills that are superior to ours, an international fifth column that operates conspiratorially in the heart of our defences, an ideology that imbues its adherents with a sense of historical mission and all these resources controlled by a ruthless depotism that brooks no deviation from the revolutionary course.

Therefore, conservatives reject any appeasement of communism and call for a firm resistance to its advance coupled with a vigorous counterattack against it all over the world.

Conservatives do not seek peaceful co-existence with communism, which given the nature of its ideology, can never exist anyway, but call instead for complete and total victory over it, for only when communism is destroyed, can the freedom of the world be preserved. As a result, they feel that America's foreign policy should be geared to defeating communism.

In summing up the conservative ideology, it can be said that conservatives cherish freedom and that they reject any philosophy which calls for the equality of material condition, since equality can only exist at the expense of freedom. Thus, in opposing strong government, egalitarian-inspired legislation and foreign Marxist enemies,

conservatives are trying to ensure a system of freedom for the individual. Conservative philosophy takes into account that society is made up of individuals, each with God-given talents and therefore, instead of penalizing those with drive and ambition, conservatives feel they should be given the freedom to reach their potential. At the same time, conservatives feel that imposed equality will destroy freedom; both economic and political, for the force that is used to redistribute the wealth will also end up being used by rulers for their own private ambitions. In essence then, conservatism places individual freedom ahead of egalitarianism.

NOTES

¹ M. M. Goldsmith, Michael Hawkins, "The New American Conservatism", Political Studies, XX/1 (March 1972), 67.

² Barry Goldwater, The Conscience of a Conservative, (New York, 1960).

³ Ibid., 12.

⁴ Wilhelm Ropke, "Education in Economic Liberty", in Frank S. Meyer, ed., What is Conservatism? (New York, 1964), 80.

⁵ Milton Friedman, Free to Choose, (New York, 1979), 9.

⁶ Goldwater, Conscience of a Conservative, 17.

⁷ Milton Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom, (Chicago, 1962), 15.

⁸ Paul A. Sexson and Stephen B. Miles Jr., The Challenge of Conservatism, Its Role in the Coming Head-on-Collision, (New York, 1964), 15.

⁹ Goldwater, Conscience of a Conservative, 89.

CHAPTER II

AMERICAN CONSERVATISM, 1787 to 1860

This chapter and the next will attempt to outline the evolution of conservatism in American history in order to reveal the roots of modern conservatism and to show how Joe McCarthy is part of the American conservative tradition.

It would be misleading to suggest that the development of conservatism could be traced along a continuous path back to the colonial period, as there has been no steady gradual evolution of the conservative philosophy. Rather, certain conservative principles, like the love of freedom over equality, have remained constant throughout American history. What has changed over time, however, is the way in which men think freedom can be best preserved. Therefore, in order to study the development of conservatism, it is necessary to analyze those groups in American history which have in their own way tried to put freedom ahead of equality. These chapters will also try to indicate how each movement contributed to the development of modern American conservatism.

In the interest of space, this historical survey of the forerunners of American conservatism will limit itself

to examining those movements which emerged after the American Revolution. However, since some of the ideas of the early Republic's conservatives were carried over from the colonial era, it is necessary to look briefly at the pre-revolutionary conservative movements.

The first conservative movement in American history was the Puritan oligarchy of early Massachusetts and Connecticut which believed in the depravity of all men and in the political incompetence of most. This led to a call for government led by an ethical aristocracy which had a stake in the religious and economic order. Their political philosophy also called for reverence for the established order and opposition to change.

In the second half of the colonial period American right wing thought developed into what Clinton Rossiter has labelled conservative Whiggery.¹

Essentially the conservative Whig philosophy held that a certain class of men, namely the rich and wise, were fit to rule the state. Basic to their thinking was the idea that men were not equal and that no government could rule successfully unless that fact was accepted. They believed that:

Inequality, not equality, is the order of nature. Man differs from man in everything that can be supposed to lead to supremacy and subjection. It was the purpose of the Creator that man should be a social creature; but without government there can be no society--nor without some relative inferiority can there be any government.

Thus, the conservative Whigs favoured a hierarchical ruling system in which the well born would run society for the good of all.

The American Revolution divided this colonial conservative movement, as a substantial number of Whigs refused to take up arms against England and joined the ranks of the Loyalists. It should be pointed out that most Loyalist Whigs like Revolutionary Whigs opposed the Stamp Act and disbelieved in the theory of virtual representation.³ One main difference between the two conservative groups was that many Loyalist Whigs were dependent on British support to maintain their position in American society. For instance many were officeholders and overseas merchants who relied on contracts with the British government for their livelihood.⁴ Other Whigs became Loyalists because they did not wish to be part of a violent rebellion against England. "They could protest and petition but they could not take up arms."⁵ Still other Whigs opposed the Revolution because they believed a separation from Britain would only lead to political chaos.⁶ The rest of the oligarchical Whigs, however, believed that America's liberty could only be saved if the colonies broke away from England, even if that meant the use of force.⁷

After the war, many of the Loyalist Whigs emigrated to Britain or to colonies still loyal to the crown, but most stayed in the United States. Thus, conservatism was alive

and well in the immediate years of post-Revolutionary America.

The United States at that time, however, was experiencing a profound political change which threatened to undermine the conservative ideology. Since before the Revolution Americans were beginning to prefer democratic government to the rule by elites. This ideological shift occurred because the colonists were convinced that undemocratic governments like the ones experienced before 1776 abused their power and destroyed liberty. The obvious solution, therefore, was to make governments more democratic, since the people would never take liberty away from themselves. The goal of the revolutionaries, therefore, was not only the end of British tyranny but the establishment of democratic institutions so that tyranny would never again emerge in America. 8

The ideal democratic government, according to the revolutionaries, was one that was based on direct democracy, for as long as the people controlled the government, liberty was secure. Therefore, when the colonists drafted their state constitutions at the outbreak of the war, they tried to make them as representative of the people as possible. For instance, the governors of each state were subject to impeachment and annual elections to protect the people from any potential tyrant; this despite the fact that the revolutionary constitutions reduced the powers of the governor considerably in the name of democracy. The powers which formerly belonged to the governors were transferred to the

state legislatures which were to be the real powers in each state, since they were truly representative of the people. Moreover, in order to make sure that the legislatures were representative, a number of reforms were passed ensuring equal electoral districts, annual elections, broadened suffrage and the right of constituents to instruct their representatives on how to vote. Obviously, the will of the people was to be sovereign.

The revolutionaries also thought it would be wise to establish a central government to co-ordinate the war against Britain and to regulate trade and national defences after independence had been won. Therefore, the Continental Congress drafted a constitution for the first United States government, called the Articles of Confederation.

According to the Articles, each state would send delegates to a Congress, which would have the power to manage foreign affairs, declare war, make treaties, raise armies and coin money. However, Americans were very distrustful of any kind of distant central government, since they believed that government had to be kept close to the people so that it could be watched and prevented from destroying their liberty. It was felt "the farther government is removed from the local unit the more danger of tyranny exists."⁹

Consequently, in order to make sure that the central government could not threaten liberty, it was purposely made weak with no chief executive or national judiciary. In

addition, the United States government had no right to collect taxes or to control foreign commerce, and while it could pass laws, it had no way of forcing the states to comply. In effect, the United States of America was a confederation of sovereign states. "The central government was but an agent of the states which sent delegates to it and while it maintained a secretariat so to speak, to handle foreign affairs, it did not bear directly on the people."¹⁰

Soon after the United States won its independence many Americans became dissatisfied with the revolutionary democratic philosophy which dominated the new republic. In the first place, they felt the central government was too weak to govern the country effectively, since it could not protect American interests against foreign nations and it could not promote economic development within the country. Secondly, there was a growing feeling that democratic legislatures could be just as tyrannical and dangerous to liberty as the former royal governors had been.¹¹

For example, many were alarmed at the way democratic legislatures were violating individual rights of property through excessive printing of paper money and through their acts to aid those in debt. There were those who even feared that the legislatures would one day distribute private property equally among the masses in the name of democratic equality.

The growing dissatisfaction among merchants,

manufacturers and large property holders with the existing political and economic conditions led to a call for a new national government that would be strong enough to defend American interests abroad, impose economic unity and, even more importantly, to curb the abuses of state legislatures at home. "Gentry up and down the continent momentarily submerged their sectional and economic differences in the face of what seemed to them a threat to individual liberty from majoritarian tyranny within the states."¹²

Thus, in 1787, delegates representing the people of property met in Philadelphia to draft a new constitution that would safeguard freedom from the tyranny of democracy. The constitution drafted by that convention marked a radical departure from the revolutionary democratic philosophy which had dominated America in the 1770's and early 1780's. The revolutionary concepts of a weak central government and direct democracy were nowhere to be found in their document. On the contrary, it called for a strong central government with a powerful president and was designed primarily to check democracy. The anti-democratic nature of the document is evident in many of its provisions. Amendments could be made only slowly and with great difficulty, while the number of eligible voters was restricted by property qualifications. Moreover, the main bodies of the central government, the Senate, the Presidency and the Federal judiciary were not to be chosen directly, with the

first two being elected indirectly and the justices being appointed. The only democratic body created by the constitution, the House of Representatives, could have its bills disallowed or amended by the Senate or vetoed by the President.

However, the framers of this new constitution, sharing the revolutionaries' fear of power being accumulated in a single authority, did not want to substitute the tyranny of the majority with the tyranny of an all-powerful central government. Therefore, the constitution was also designed to restrain the Federal government's power. The government's authority, for instance, was strictly limited to specific regulated powers as specified in the constitution with those powers not given to the Federal government reserved for the states. Furthermore, the powers that the Federal government did have were divided between the legislature, the executive and the judiciary which were to be kept separate. Nevertheless, the constitution drafted in Philadelphia violated many revolutionary beliefs about democracy and government, making its ratification a difficult undertaking.

The debate over the new constitution's ratification took place in the fall and winter of 1787 -88, with those supporting the constitution calling themselves Federalists while those who opposed it were called Anti-federalists.

The constitution of 1787 marks the starting point of

conservatism in republican America in that it was written to safeguard freedom from both the tyranny of the majority and the tyranny of government. Therefore, any historical study of conservative groups in republican America must begin by examining that movement in America that emerged to support the constitution's ratification, namely the Federalists.

By and large the Federalists, whose ranks included such prominent early Americans as George Washington, John Adams and Alexander Hamilton, were very distrustful of democracy. Like the Whigs of the colonial period the Federalists felt that men were not equal and that some men, namely themselves, were superior intellectually and therefore better suited to govern a country than the small farmers and mechanics that made up the democratic revolutionary governments. In effect, they felt a natural aristocracy based on property, education and family status should rule the country. The Federalists were not reactionaries; "most of them were sincerely devoted to the idea of republican government, to government that was neither rashly democratic nor hopelessly undemocratic."¹³ For instance, they rejected the idea of a hereditary aristocracy, opting instead for what they called a natural aristocracy, made up of educated wealthy gentlemen. Moreover, unlike the Whigs who had complete faith in the sense of ethical responsibility of the ruling class, the Federalists felt even their natural

aristocracy should have constitutional restrictions placed on its power. Like the Puritans of early America, the Federalists believed that man was an imperfect creature that could be corrupted quite easily and nothing corrupts man as much as power. As John Adams put it, "absolute power intoxicates, able despots, monarchs, aristocrats and democrats."¹⁴

It is true, however, that as has been noted earlier, the Federalists believed that the republic should be governed by the elite of American society and not by popularly-elected assemblies which they equated with uneducated mobs. Yet, it must be remembered that their call for an elitist government was motivated by their love of freedom as they felt a democratic society would inevitably result in the wealthy and tolerated minority being deprived of its freedoms by the less well endowed majority. That, after all, had been their experience with the democratic state legislatures of the revolutionary period. Therefore, to safeguard freedom it was necessary for the educated, wealthy minority to have a check on the restless majority. As Peter Viereck wrote, "it does our Federalist founders an injustice and misses the spirit of their age if their love of elitist inequality is treated separately from their love of liberty."¹⁵ Moreover, like the conservatives they were, the Federalists valued freedom over equality. James Madison for instance, in defending the constitution he

helped to create, wrote that the primary task of government is to protect liberty, ie. the "different and unequal facilities of acquiring property from which the different degrees and kinds of property immediately results."¹⁵ Another Federalist, Alexander Hamilton, argued that inequality of property was inevitable as long as freedom lasted.¹⁷

The constitution was ratified by the minimum number of nine states in the summer of 1788 though, in return for Anti-federalist support, the Federalists had to agree to amend the document so that it would guarantee certain rights. Thus in 1791, ten amendments, which became known as the Bill of Rights, were attached to the constitution, making it acceptable to the vast majority of Americans.

The Federalists did not disappear with the ratification of the constitution, but rather they became a powerful political movement which represented the commercial and manufacturing interests of the New England states. It was, in fact, the Federalists who dominated the first government set up under the newly-ratified constitution as George Washington was elected President while John Adams and Alexander Hamilton became Vice-President and Secretary of the Treasury respectively. Thus, Federalism was triumphant, at least, initially.

It would be a mistake to assume however that Federalism was undivided in its political philosophy for there were in fact two distinct factions within the party,

one led by John Adams and the other by Alexander Hamilton. It is necessary to understand the attitudes of both factions since each contributed something to the conservative tradition of the United States.

The political thought of Alexander Hamilton was derived from his desire to make the United States an economic and military world power, so that it could preserve its liberty from both external and internal enemies. Since he realized that the United States would never become powerful unless it had a strong national government, he devoted his energies to creating "a vigorous, respected and predominant central government."¹⁸

During the constitutional convention of 1787, Hamilton had pressed for a constitution which would create a central government far more powerful than even his Federalist colleagues could accept. He proposed, for instance, that the Senate be appointed for life and that the President be granted almost monarchical powers, including an absolute veto. Finally, he wanted to weaken state governments, which he saw as potentially subversive by giving the national government the power to appoint state governors and to veto any state law which violated the constitution.¹⁹

He was disappointed when the convention rejected his proposals, but he did not give up his hope of creating a government more powerful than the one agreed upon in Philadelphia. He decided to make the republican government

conform to his ideals by breathing "into its forms and policies much of the spirit and substance of the principles he had propounded earlier in Philadelphia."²⁰ By holding the important and powerful position of Secretary of the Treasury in Washington's cabinet, Hamilton was, in fact, able to dominate the Federalist program which he molded to suit his purposes.

His first step toward creating a strong and stable government was to obtain the allegiance of the rich and well born for the new Federal constitution, since it could acquire power only with their support. Yet he understood that he could not win their loyalty by appealing solely to their patriotism. Rather, he appealed to what he considered to be the fundamental force in human behaviour, namely self-interest.²¹ In effect, he wanted to forge an alliance between business and government with the national government acting to further protect the interests of merchants and manufacturers. This, he hoped would give the rich a stake in the new national government, thereby winning their allegiance since it would be to their advantage to preserve an institution which protected their activities.

Hamilton's economic program, therefore, was decidedly pro-business, emphasizing economic growth. His plan, most of which was passed by Congress, called for the creation of a national bank that would issue notes, put money into circulation and provide improved facilities for government

borrowing thereby easing taxes. He also gave investors a secure stake in the country by having the national government fund the revolutionary war debt, thereby creating a system of investment for American moneyed groups. Finally, in order to encourage industry, he proposed that the United States adopt protective tariffs and offer bounties as rewards for the development of new manufacturing techniques.

Many claimed that this economic plan was illegal, since the constitution did not specifically grant Congress the power to set up institutions like the national bank or to assume a national debt. Yet Hamilton based his program on a broad construction of the constitution, claiming that his proposals were proper because the congressional powers needed to implement them were implicit in the constitution.

It would seem that Hamilton achieved three things with his economic program. First, he managed to extend the economic powers of Congress into areas of trade, finance and credit, thereby strengthening the national government. Secondly he strengthened the United States economically, and lastly, and most importantly for him, he won the loyalty of the wealthy.

Once the rich were supporting the government, the rest of the population could be coerced into allegiance as Hamilton was definitely not afraid to use military force to suppress domestic dissent. In 1794, for example, he raised an army of 15,000 men to put down a rebellion of

Pennsylvania farmers who were protesting a tax on whiskey.

"Well versed in the teaching of Machiavelli, he could conclude that a government must not allow itself to be despised and that it is much safer to be feared than loved."²²

Once he was positive the people would support a strong central government, the rich out of self-interest and the rest out of fear, he set out to create one. To do this, he sought to enhance the powers of the President. In 1793, for example, he persuaded President Washington to declare a proclamation of neutrality, which meant that the United States would not take sides in the conflict then raging between revolutionary France and the rest of Europe. This resulted in a serious controversy, as many claimed the President had no constitutional authority to issue such a proclamation. But Hamilton, once again using a broad interpretation of the constitution, argued that since the Presidency was constitutionally the medium of communication with other nations and the interpreter of national treaties, it could be implied that the President alone could declare neutrality. In fact, in defending the proclamation, Hamilton contended that the President's specific delegated constitutional powers were only a partial listing of his full authority. According to Hamilton, the constitution gave to the President all the powers which were not otherwise denied to him; "The general doctrine of our constitution then is that executive power of the nation is vested in the

President; subject only to the exceptions and qualifications which are expressed in the instrument."²³

It must be remembered that Hamilton's desire to create a strong central government was based on his belief that such a government would be necessary if the United States was ever to become a military power. Everything he did was designed to make the United States stronger, so that it could resist foreign invasions and preserve tranquility at home.

Unfortunately, Hamilton's view of a strong central government and his glorification of a commercial aristocracy have made him unpopular with modern intellectual conservatives. "When they deal with him at all it is only to dismiss him as a pseudo-conservative or an economic conservative seeking to defend vested interests, a materialist and an economic determinist and therefore outside the authentic conservative tradition."²⁴ Yet, Hamilton was part of the conservative tradition because he was one of the first to realize that the only way the United States could preserve its freedom from external threats was to be strong militarily.

The other faction within the Federalist party was led by John Adams, a man, unlike Hamilton, who is much admired by conservative intellectuals. Clinton Rossiter wrote, "here in John Adams of Quincy was the model of the American conservative."²⁵ Russell Kirk wrote of Adams, "his learning

and his courage made him great, and he became the founder of true conservatism in America."²⁵ This admiration stems from the fact that Adams believed that liberty could be preserved without establishing an invincible national authority. Instead of having governmental power centralized in the hands of a rich minority, which he felt would destroy liberty as surely as democracy, he favoured a balanced government which meant that excessive power was prevented from passing into the hands of any one group. The only way freedom could be protected was to make sure power was balanced between the rich minority and the less well-off majority so that neither side could tyrannize the other. The main task of government, as Adams saw it, was to make sure that the balance of power was maintained between the two sides. In fact, when Adams became President in 1797, he felt that the natural aristocracy was becoming too powerful so, much to Hamilton's anger, he tried to restore the balance by attempting to check the power of the wealthy. That action was consistent with his political philosophy, since he felt the President should be a "disinterested executive who would mediate differences above the haul and pull of partnership and act for the good of the country."²⁷ This, of course, contrasted with Hamilton's belief that the United States should have a strong, all-powerful President.

Adams' belief in political balance was also reflected in his desire to preserve state governments, since they

would serve as a balance to the power of the Federal authority. Unlike Hamilton, who would have preferred a unitary government, Adams "believed in the federal principle as the best possible government for America."²⁸

Hamilton and Adams also had differences concerning the purpose and nature of the constitution. Hamilton saw the constitution as an "organism capable of growth in the application of its general principles,"²⁹ whereas Adams saw it as a mechanical device designed solely to balance various interests. He saw it as an "elaborate and intricate network of constitutional balances which would like the Newtonian universe, insure equilibrium under a government of laws and in a mechanical counterposing of powers provide an alternative not only to majority rule, but to the rule of minorities as well."³⁰

Adams also differed with Hamilton on other matters besides the question of which form of government was best. For instance, Adams was certainly not pleased with Hamilton's economic program which was designed to industrialize America. For one thing, Adams felt that ideally America should be kept agricultural, "he like Jefferson, found his ideal citizen in the sturdy independent yeoman; his model polity like Jefferson's was a popular representable government of small property owners...Here was no lover of government by plutocracy, no dreamer of an America filled with factories and hard packed cities."³¹ He also disapproved

of Hamilton's banking policy, arguing that "every dollar of a bank bill that is issued beyond the quantity of gold and silver, in the vaults represents nothing and is, therefore, a cheat upon somebody."³¹

As noted earlier, John Adams is seen as the founder of American conservatism and that is because he, better than anyone else at the time, argued that freedom could only be preserved if governmental power was restricted and checked, an idea that is central to conservative philosophy.

There were great philosophical differences between John Adams and Alexander Hamilton which caused them to become bitter enemies. They were participants in "a remarkable pattern of cross-purposes, active distrust and eventual hatred that was sustained by Adams until his final day in this earthly republic."³² Yet, despite their difference, they had certain things in common in that they both distrusted democracy and felt men were naturally unequal. More importantly though, they were both in their own way devoted to the cause of freedom, making them important contributors to the American conservative tradition.

Despite Adams' popularity with modern intellectuals it was Hamilton who dominated the Federalist party and the initial United States governments, a fact which is evident when the programs of the first American administrations are examined. For instance, Congress established a tariff to protect manufacturers and enacted excise taxes which were

collected by force of arms if necessary. Moreover, Hamilton's central bank was created and the Federal government did assume the state debts. Finally, during the Federalist administrations the United States did try to create a strong military establishment.

Returning now to the Federalist party as a whole and summing up its general philosophy, it can be said that it was pessimistic of human nature and opposed to democracy, favouring instead, the rule of a natural aristocracy. It also believed that only a strong though restricted national government could preserve freedom in America.

In establishing their strong, central government with its semi-aristocratic implications, the Federalists triumphed over those Americans who still cherished the democratic ideals of the revolutionary period. Yet, those democrats did not disappear from the political scene. On the contrary, under the leadership of Thomas Jefferson, they forged a new political party in 1792 which was dedicated to decentralization and democracy. The Republicans, as they called themselves, were "anxious to abolish entail, primogeniture, church establishments, and all the vestiges of aristocracy and to oppose centralization, strong government, state debt and the military."³⁴ The Federalists, with their large army, taxes and strong President were, in Republican eyes, trying to transform America into a British-style monarchy. The Republicans were determined to restore

to America the democratic principles of the Revolution which the Federalists had subverted. Another goal of the Republicans was to make the United States an agricultural egalitarian society in which there would be no extremes of wealth. "They proposed that the greatness of America lay in its dedicating itself to the pursuit of equality as the most adequate basis for the development of individual capacities of mind and character and as the only framework in which diversity of natural endowments could find both expression and recognition."³⁵

It is little wonder, that the Republicans found the Hamiltonian economic program repellent with its emphasis on commerce and industry. "What these men objected to, in short, was an official alliance between government and a particular creed of inequality; the effect of which would be to put those inequalities beyond the reach of public examination."³⁶ According to the Republican philosophy, government should endeavour to create a condition of equality through the equal distribution of property. Jefferson was convinced "that the power of the state must be used to eliminate at least the more extreme inequalities in property for the social good."³⁷ He also wrote "that an equal distribution of property is impractical but the consequence of this enormous inequality is producing so much misery to the bulk of mankind, legislators cannot invent too many devices for subdividing property."³⁸

Obviously, the political philosophy of the Republicans was almost diametrically opposite to the Federalist ideology. The Federalists, feeling that equality and freedom could not co-exist, sought to emphasize the latter over the former, while the Republicans sought to establish an egalitarian America. Furthermore, the Federalists were pessimistic of men and, therefore, fearful of democracy while the Republicans had faith in man's rationality and were critical of any government that fell short of majority rule. Consequently, these two political rivals contested for control of the new republic's destiny.

Initially, the Federalists were the more successful of the two parties as they dominated the American federal government in the 1790's. However, that domination came to an abrupt end in 1800 when Thomas Jefferson was elected President of the United States. That 1800 election is an important milestone in American political history because it marked the beginning of the end of the Federalist party which after that year would never again win control of the country. The party's demise was gradual but steady; by 1816 it could no longer be considered even a national party, as its last bastions of support were found only in some New England states, and by the 1820's the party had disappeared altogether, never to re-emerge again. So ended the first conservative movement in the United States. But what accounted for the failure of the Federalists after 1800?

Did Americans simply reject the party's basic conservative philosophy or were other factors responsible for its decline and fall?

Any study of the Federalist decline quickly reveals the fact that there were many reasons for the party's collapse and that the Federalists brought most of their problems upon themselves. They suffered a great deal politically, for example, because of the Alien and Sedition Acts which were passed in 1798 by the Federalist-controlled Congress to deal with the supposed threat of French Jacobinism. The Acts, which proved to be extremely unpopular, suppressed both the freedom of speech and of the press and resulted in many pro-French Republicans being sent to jail for simply criticizing the government. In this case the Federalists strongly over-reacted to pro-French sympathy in America and enacted hysterical laws which provided the Republicans with excellent campaign material in the 1800 election.

Another fatal weakness of the Federalist party was the already mentioned rivalry between its two most prominent and powerful members, John Adams and Alexander Hamilton. "The feud between Hamilton and Adams was in every way worse than the cut-throat rivalry which existed between the Republican and Federalist chiefs."³⁴ Their conflict came to a head in 1800 when Adams, who was then President, made peace with France averting a war which Hamilton desperately wanted. Angered by that peaceful resolution and by the

fact that Adams had also dismissed two of his supporters from the cabinet, Hamilton struck back by publishing a pamphlet two months before the 1800 election which was sharply critical of the President. In getting his revenge Hamilton inflicted "cruel punishment on Adams and thereby destroyed the Federalist party and his own political leadership."⁴⁰

Moreover, for men who considered themselves to be natural rulers, the Federalists were inept when it came to political organization, a fault which certainly contributed to their decline. "From the lack of systematic proselyting to badly defined lines of command, and on to the inclinations of Federalist leaders to be prima donnas and indulge in raucous public quarrels with their comrades, the record is one of almost uniformly bad management."⁴¹ The Federalist party lacked discipline and organizers, resulting in little political control. The Republicans, meanwhile, through party platforms and caucuses, maintained unity and discipline within their organization which aided them greatly in political campaigns.

The Republicans had another great advantage over the Federalists when it came to electioneering techniques. For the most part, Federalists looked upon political campaigning as a degrading practice and therefore avoided it, believing that the people would vote for the best men regardless of promises or favours, a strange attitude perhaps

given their lack of faith in human nature. Given the fact that they had written the constitution, established a strong national economic policy and founded a military force, they believed that they were obviously the best men. The Republicans, on the other hand, used various electioneering techniques in their bid for power. Expending vast amounts of money they held mass rallies and political barbeques, supplying potential voters with free food and drink. They published posters and pamphlets, visited people in their homes and provided hand-written ballots for voters. In the end it paid off as the "victory of the Republicans was due at least in part, to the care with which they systematized, extended, intensified and popularized electioneering techniques."⁴²

Another problem that plagued the Federalists was their lack of politically effective leadership. By 1804, John Adams was retired while George Washington and Alexander Hamilton were dead, leaving the party with leaders of lesser stature and competence. Moreover, the party seemed unable to select a new leader who could attract a national following or put forward relevant policies.

The glittering speech or the ornamented pamphlet were too often regarded as adequate credentials for positions among party leaders... Good family connections seemed to count for more than hard work in local constituencies. In short, the standards for leadership, like so many aspects of the Federalist party, were attuned to a style of political conduct that was increasingly ineffective in a changing society.⁴³

The most serious problem facing the Federalists, though, was their anti-democratic attitude, which was out of place in a country that cherished the concept of majority rule. This problem intensified when the democratic principles of the revolutionary period were revived by the Republican regimes, making democracy almost a national religion in the United States. Almost all aspects of American political life were affected by the onslaught of democracy.

The drive of the plain people and their able leaders to democratize the limited republic of the fathers was aimed at concrete goals: removal of property restrictions for voting and officeholding; popular elections of the executive; popular elections to short terms of the judiciary; devices like the convention for popular control of parties; popular election of state constitutional conventions and ratification of their results; and the spoils system.⁴⁴

An anti-democratic political party could not hope to succeed in what was fast becoming a democratic country. "There was little place for a hard-bitten, plain-spoken Federalist in a land where farms, factories, railroads, and states were sprouting all over the map, and where the new voters all of them real or potential capitalist were proving themselves to be something other than European canaille."⁴⁴

Despite all of these problems, the War of 1812 gave the Federalists an opportunity to recover some of their lost strength, as American military defeats and an increasing public debt caused many Americans to turn away from the

Republicans, who had launched the war, in favour of the Federalists, who had opposed the conflict from the beginning. Impressive electoral victories in the fall elections of 1814 encouraged the Federalists to continue with their anti-war policy which culminated in late 1814 with the Hartford convention which was a meeting of Federalists called to discuss Republican policies. The convention ended up drafting a petition which among other things criticized the war with Britain. The Federalists had hoped that the petition would keep alive the momentum they seemed to be gathering after the 1814 elections but, unfortunately, it had just the opposite effect. First of all, the Republicans were able to persuade many Americans that the petition was nothing less than treason, then just to make matters worse came the almost simultaneous news of General Jackson's crushing victory over the British at New Orleans and of the signing of the Treaty of Ghent which ended the war. These events effectively snuffed out the short-lived Federalist comeback because, thanks to Jackson's military victory, Americans could now look upon the war with a sense of pride which meant that the Federalists, who had of course opposed the now popular war, were seen as pro-British obstructionists. Now that the war was over the Hartford convention did seem to be, as the Republicans had charged, treasonous. The Federalists became stigmatized as a party of traitors, a label they were never able to shake off. So the War of

1812, which at first seemed to be the party's saviour, turned out instead to accelerate its downfall.

After the war the Federalist slide into oblivion continued as the Republicans, who still feared a Federalist revival, began a concerted campaign to exclude from public office anyone connected with the Federalist party. This policy which effectively purged the Federalists from all levels of government was to continue until the Jacksonian era.

It should now be clear that it was poor politics on the part of the Federalists and not their conservatism which led to the party's extinction. No party, no matter what its ideology, can hope to succeed without unity, organization and leadership, characteristics which the Federalist party sadly lacked. Then, of course, the Federalists were just plain unlucky, for had Jackson not defeated the British in 1815, the Federalists might very well have regained their strength by capitalizing on the anti-war feeling prevalent in certain sections of the country. Finally, and perhaps most seriously, the Federalists were either unable or unwilling to adapt their conservative principles to suit a more democratic age.

Yet, despite their ultimate failure, the Federalists represent an extremely important part of the American conservative tradition because through their role in effecting the constitution, they institutionalized within American

politics significant conservative principles.

The disintegration of Federalism left the Republicans as the only national political party in the United States. But the advent of single party rule did not mean that political conflicts in the United States were over, for within the Republican party there were distinct and opposing factions. One faction, which dominated the party immediately after the War of 1812, adopted many of the Federalist programs. It was President Madison, a Republican, for instance who in 1815 supported such things as an adequate military force in peace time, a national bank, a protective tariff and internal improvements. "Most of Madison's proposals of course, were good Federalist doctrine for which the originators had been relentlessly attacked in recent years."⁴⁶ The Republicans who adhered to this neo-Federalist program became known as National Republicans.

The other faction within the party still embraced the Republican ideals of egalitarianism, agrarianism and decentralized weak government, and they looked upon the National Republicans as Federalists who were betraying the Republican cause. The people who made up this faction became known as Democrats.

A National Republican managed to win the Presidential election of 1824, but in 1826 the Democrats captured Congress and in 1828 Andrew Jackson, a Democrat, was elected President. Once in power the Democrats sought to keep

America and egalitarian agrarian society by abolishing the central bank, adopting a laissez-faire economic policy and passing democratic reforms. The National Republicans who were, of course, opposed to the Democratic policies combined with other anti-Democratic factions in Congress and formed the Whig party, so named because they felt they were opposing the tyranny of Andrew Jackson just as the English Whigs had opposed George III's tyranny in the eighteenth century.

In opposing the egalitarian policies of Andrew Jackson and the Democrats, the Whigs became the new champions of conservatism in the United States. It should be made clear, however, that Whiggery was not Federalism under a new name as the Democrats were prone to charge but rather a continuation of the nationalistic wing of the old Republican party.⁴⁷

It is true that the Whig party contained many ex-Federalists, but the same can be said of the Democratic party, for after 1824 Federalists began to support any candidate who would reward their loyalty with government jobs. Any study of Whig political philosophy clearly shows that the party was not a continuation of Federalism. For instance, the Federalists were proponents of a strong President with broad powers while the Whigs favoured a weak executive who deferred to the wishes of Congress. In addition, the Federalists feared democracy while the Whigs, though they had reservations about the wisdom of the common man, accepted

universal manhood suffrage. In terms of election strategy, the Whigs always made a determined effort to win mass support for their candidates.

They had perfected a 'hurrah' type of campaign, characterized by mass celebrations, by picturesque symbols--such as the log cabin and the barrel of cider--which would emphasize their nominees' humble origins and democratic tastes, by attractive stereotypes of the candidate; and by keeping the candidate himself under wraps, lest he displays his incompetence or make some tactless revelation of truth.

Finally, the Federalist party was essentially sectional in nature, as practically all its support came from the New England states. However, "there were Whigs in all occupational groups, economic classes, social strata, geographic regions and religious denomination."⁴⁹ The Whigs' support, in effect, came from all parts of the country.

Despite these differences though, the Whigs are, like the Federalists, part of the conservative tradition, a fact which becomes evident when the rest of their philosophy is examined. The Whigs, for instance, refused to accept the concept of class struggle, preferring to believe that there was a natural social harmony of interests between farmers and businessmen and between labour and management. They took, therefore, the basically conservative position that strikes and unions were unnecessary and disrupted society. According to Whig philosophy a worker's goal of higher wages could be met effectively through hard work

and through support of the Whig party. At the same time, though, it should be noted that the Whigs rejected individualism, preferring instead a society that was based on the organic unity of the community.

The Whigs' financial and economic policies also reflect a conservative dislike of egalitarianism. Whigs spoke out against what was "too strong a tendency to reduce all the common elements of society to a common level."⁵⁰ For example, the Whigs favoured re-establishing the national bank, which the Democrats had abolished since they felt it would only encourage inequality of wealth, but which the Whigs saw as a necessary institution both to increase and to regulate American currency. A national bank would also provide ample credit which would encourage industrial expansion in the East and agriculture in the South. The Whigs also, unlike the Democrats, were not opposed to large corporations which were beginning to appear at that time. They realized that the growth of corporations would increase the nation's health and welfare by accumulating badly-needed capital which could be invested in canals and railways and lead to further development.

Furthermore, the Whigs believed that the government should intervene in the economy to help industry as they were strong proponents of technological progress and industrial capitalism. The Democrats, on the other hand, did not want to promote economic progress which they felt only

resulted in urban squalor and inequality, so they favoured a laissez-faire economic policy which they hoped would discourage capitalism and encourage agriculture. "In the ideological universe of Jacksonian America laissez-faire and capitalist growth were thought to be antagonistic."⁵¹ The Whigs were less concerned than the Democrats with maintaining an equality of condition; rather they "saw as of paramount importance a national economic growth that would raise the general level of prosperity and thus develop the opportunities and promote the happiness of the individual members of society."⁵² Therefore, they included in their platform the American System of the famous Whig, Henry Clay, which called for government aid in building roads and canals and for high tariffs to stimulate American industry.

Like the Federalists before them, the Whigs also believed that the government existed to protect private property and that if the freedom to hold property was curtailed other freedoms would be threatened. As Daniel Webster, one of the most prominent Whigs, declared: "a republican form of government rests not more on political constitutions than on those laws which regulate the descent and transmission of property. We have no experience that teaches us that any other rights are safe where property is not safe."⁵³

The party's conservatism was certainly not a handicap in its competition with egalitarian Democrats, as the

Whigs were fairly successful politically. In fact, they were very competitive in congressional, state and local elections, for in terms of actual strength the Whigs and the Democrats were almost equal, with only a few percentage points separating winners from losers at the polls.⁵⁴

They were less successful in Presidential politics, however, as only two Whigs were ever elected President and they both died shortly after taking office.

Yet, despite its overall strength, the Whig party was ultimately a failure, and by 1860 it had ceased to be a political force. The Whig downfall was not due to its conservative philosophy but to factors over which it had no control. First in 1852, both Henry Clay and Daniel Webster died, depriving the Whigs of two of their most eloquent and intelligent spokesmen. Then there was the massive Irish immigration of the middle 1840's which damaged the Whigs in the North, since the great majority of Irishmen became Democratic supporters. But, by far the most important factor which destroyed the Whig party was the slavery issue which emerged after the United States acquired vast amounts of territory from Mexico in a war which the Whigs had opposed. Pro-slavery people argued that these new territories should be open to slavery while anti-slavery forces opposed any expansion of the institution. It was this issue which split the party as Southern Whigs who supported slavery began to defect to the Democratic party which they

felt was more receptive to their interests. Unfortunately, for the Whigs, there were also numerous defections in the northern wing of the party as both anti-slavery and nativist Whigs felt their causes could best be served outside the party in an alliance with anti-slavery and anti-immigrant northern Democrats. Both these groups felt that the vast influx of Irish immigrants into the North made any Whig political success highly unlikely, for as mentioned earlier the Irish inevitably became Democrats, so in the interests of furthering their respective causes, the anti-slavers and nativists hastily deserted a sinking ship.⁵⁵

In the 1852 Presidential election the decimated Whig party was totally crushed as the Democratic candidate won all but four states. In the 1856 Presidential election the Whigs were so weak they had to form an alliance with the racist and nativist party, a strategy that did little to improve their situation. The Whig decline continued until the party vanished into oblivion, just as the Federalists had done earlier.

Despite its failure the Whig party played an important role in the history of American conservatism in that it proved that a party could embrace conservative principles and still succeed in a democratic country. It showed that conservatism did indeed have popular appeal and was defeated ultimately very largely by circumstances over which it had little control.

NOTES

¹Clinton Rossiter, Conservatism in America: The Thankless Persuasion, (New York, 1962), 100.

²Thornton Anderson, Jacobson's Development of American Political Thought, (New York, 1961), 138.

³A.J. Beitzinger, A History of American Political Thought, (New York, 1972), 167.

⁴Leonard Labaree, Conservatism in Early American History, (London, 1948), 147.

⁵Rossiter, Conservatism in America, 101.

⁶Anderson, Development of American Political Thought, 137.

⁷Rossiter, Conservatism in America, 102.

⁸Bernard Bailyn et al., The Great Republic, (Lexington, 1977), 320.

⁹Anderson, Development of American Political Thought, 153.

¹⁰Alan Penleton Grimes, American Political Thought, (New York, 1962), 114.

¹¹Bailyn, The Great Republic, 325.

¹²Ibid., 329.

¹³Rossiter, Conservatism in America, 104.

¹⁴Peter Viereck, Conservatism: From John Adams to Churchill, (Princeton, 1956), 92.

¹⁵Ibid., 90.

¹⁶James Madison, "The Federalist No. Ten," in Jacob Cooke, ed., The Federalist (Middletown, 1961), 58.

- 17 Anderson, Development of American Political Thought, 175.
- 18 Beitzinger, A History of American Political Thought, 248.
- 19 Ibid., 249.
- 20 Ibid., 247.
- 21 Grimes, American Political Thought, 132.
- 22 Beitzinger, A History of American Political Thought, 250.
- 23 Grimes, American Political Thought, 132.
- 24 John Livingston, "Alexander Hamilton and the American Tradition", Midwest Journal of Political Science, 1/3 (November 1957), 210.
- 25 Rossiter, Conservatism in America, 115.
- 26 Russell Kirk, The Conservative Mind, (London, 1954), 70.
- 27 Beitzinger, A History of American Political Thought, 259.
- 28 Kirk, Conservative Mind, 102.
- 29 Beitzinger, A History of American Political Thought, 250.
- 30 Livingston, "Alexander Hamilton and the American Tradition", Midwest Journal of Political Science, 211.
- 31 Rossiter, Conservatism in America, 114.
- 32 Bailyn, The Great Republic, 347.
- 33 Adrienne Koch, "Hamilton, Adams and the Pursuit of Power", Review of Politics, VI/1 (January 1954), 66.

- 34 Kirk, The Conservative Mind, 71.
- 35 Livingston, "Alexander Hamilton and the American Tradition", Midwest Journal of Political Science, 222.
- 36 Ibid., 221.
- 37 Charles Wiltse, "Jeffersonian Democracy: A Dual Tradition", The American Political Science Review, XXVIII/5 (October 1934), 843.
- 38 Ibid., 843.
- 39 Koch, "Hamilton, Adams and the Pursuit of Power", Review of Politics, 55.
- 40 Ibid., 56.
- 41 Shaw Livermore, The Twilight of Federalism, The Disintegration of the Federalist Party 1815-1830, (Princeton, 1962), 8.
- 42 David Hackett Fischer, The Revolution of American Conservatism The Federalist Party in the Era of Jeffersonian Democracy, (New York, 1965), 95.
- 43 Livermore, The Twilight of Federalism, 29.
- 44 Rossiter, Conservatism in America, 117.
- 45 Ibid., 119.
- 46 Livermore, The Twilight of Federalism, 15.
- 47 Daniel Walker Howe, The Political Culture of the American Whigs, (Chicago, 1979), 90.
- 48 David Potter, The Impending Crisis, 1849-1861, (New York, 1976), 434.
- 49 Howe, The Political Culture of the American Whigs, 13.
- 50 John Ashworth, "The Jacksonian as Leveller," Journal of American Studies, XIV, (December 1980), 408.

51 Ibid., 412.

52 Glyndon Van Deusen, "Some Aspects of Whig Thought and Theory in the Jacksonian Period", American Historical Review, LXIII (January 1958), 321.

53 Howe, The Political Culture of the American Whigs, 217.

54 Ibid., 12.

55 Potter, The Impending Crisis, 247.

CHAPTER III

AMERICAN CONSERVATISM, 1865 to 1950

The Civil War marks an important turning point in American history, for gradually America was transformed by the onslaught of industrialization from a nation of farmers into a nation of workers. But the Civil War is also an important landmark in the history of conservatism, for after the war laissez-faire conservatism, which stressed individualism and economic laissez-faire, was born. Like Federalism and Whiggery this new philosophy emphasized freedom, but sought that goal in a different way. In addition, it was far more successful than its two predecessors because it "rose to prominence between 1865 and 1885, to ascendancy between 1885 and 1920, to domination to virtual identification with the 'American Way' - in the 1920's."¹

The disciples of laissez-faire adopted the ideas of Adam Smith and David Ricardo and applied them to the American situation. They defined freedom as the liberty of contracts and as the liberty to acquire and to dispose of wealth. Moreover, they believed that freedom could exist only if the government did not interfere with

restrictive laws in man's activities. These conservatives "accepted the view that liberty starts where coercive law leaves off; and therefore they sought to keep the functions of the government to a minimum."²

As was the case with all American conservative movements, the followers of laissez-faire elevated freedom above equality. As one supporter declared: "Justice demands inequality as a condition of liberty and as a means of rewarding each according to his merits and deserts."³ Like the Federalists they believed that men were naturally unequal when it came to abilities and talents and that it was the competition that resulted from that inequality which caused progress. Therefore, any attempt to impose equality by holding back the talented would halt progress and reduce the freedom of those with ability. The only equality important to them was the equality of opportunity, as it gave "each man an equal chance to prove the extent of his inequality."⁴

Opposed to all artificial, legal and class distinctions since they negated the equality of opportunity, laissez-faire conservatives were originally strong supporters of democracy. Ultimately, however, their opinion changed as the masses began to demand continually that the government increase its activities. They sought, therefore, in the name of freedom to put restrictions on the powers of legislatures and to prevent the democratization of the

Constitution which they came to look upon as a Holy Writ, since it limited the powers of the central government.⁵ Like the Whigs the laissez-faire conservatives also preferred a weak President who executed the will of Congress.

There was nothing new in most of these ideas as either the Whigs or the Federalists had supported similar policies in the past. What distinguished the laissez-faire conservatives from their predecessors, however, was a belief in economic liberty. In effect, the laissez-faire conservatives abandoned the long-held conservative belief that the government should play an active role in the economy. Instead, they advocated what had once been the policy of anti-conservatives, namely, economic-laissez-faire, which meant that the government should not interfere with private economic activity. It was felt that if individuals were allowed to pursue their own economic self-interests without restrictions, they would maximize both their own and society's well-being as if they were guided by an invisible hand. Since it was felt that economic freedom would promote the greatest good for the greatest number, there was no ethical reason for the government to interfere with the system. Laissez-faire conservatives then, in theory, opposed tariff raising, anti-trust legislation, unions and agrarian reforms. They supported hard money and the sanctity of private property.⁶ Their economic philosophy was based on the idea that government

was basically inefficient and undemocratic because,

anything it could do the private enterprise of acquisitive men could do twice as cheap and ten times as fast; . . . undemocratic because it seemed always bent on interfering with liberty, property and equality of opportunity. The idea that government could do anyone much good was considered ridiculous and heretical. The idea that it could do a great deal of harm was considered the beginning of political wisdom.

The laissez-faire conservatives did feel that some government was necessary to make sure that contracts were enforced and that private property was protected.

In terms of politics laissez-faire conservatism was most closely associated with the new Republican party which had been formed in 1854. However, the Democratic party was also more or less dedicated to the principles of laissez-faire. In fact, one of the most popular Presidents among laissez-faire conservatives was Grover Cleveland, a Democrat who held office from 1885 to 1889 and from 1893 to 1897. Cleveland was firmly opposed to government intervention in the economy, as evidenced by his dislike of both protective tariffs and bounties and was a strong defender of private property which became obvious when he sent federal troops to break the Pullman strike in 1894. Thus both political parties can be said to have supported the conservative philosophy of economic liberty. Still, it must be remembered that "the parties of the period after

the post-Civil War were based on patronage, not principle, and they divided over spoils not issues."⁸ Therefore, the men who were most clearly associated with laissez-faire, conservatism and who helped to propagate it were not politicians but rather college professors, editors and authors.⁹

The laissez-faire philosophy, according to its proponents, was the only economic theory fit for a free society. Not only did it maximize freedom but it also increased the productivity of American industry. Yet, not all Americans were convinced that laissez-faire was the ideal theory conservatives made it out to be. There were many who were distressed, for instance, by the fact that some Americans were becoming incredibly wealthy while others were mired in abject poverty. Furthermore, many felt that laissez-faire worked to the disadvantage of farmers and workers and helped only the businessmen and industrialists. It was the goal, therefore, of movements like the Grangers, Populists, Progressives, Socialists and labor unions to remedy these inequalities through government action. Among other things, they called for the nationalization of some industries, a system of income tax to redistribute wealth, and government regulation to protect workers and farmers from the excesses of industrialism.

Needless to say, conservatives resisted these movements since many of these ideas, if enacted, would mean restricting

some rights of property. They saw income tax for example, as outright theft and saw any attempt to regulate industry as unwarranted government interference with private possessions.¹⁰ Therefore, in an attempt to justify laissez-faire economics, conservatives adopted a philosophy known as Social Darwinism.

Social Darwinism was a theory developed by an Englishman named Herbert Spencer which tried to justify laissez-faire on scientific grounds. Spencer simply applied Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection to social development by arguing that humans like other animals were subject to the law of nature which dictated that in the struggle for survival only the fit should remain. This was not cruel but necessary if the species was to improve. In the case of man the elimination of the weak in each generation was creating a freer individual. Spencer contended, therefore, that social legislation designed to protect the weak upset the law of nature and set back social progress. "It resulted in the survival of the unfit and the weighting down of society with dead timber. Government action subordinated the individual to the state and destroyed his true freedom."¹¹ On the other hand, laissez-faire economics seemed to conform with the law of nature, since it guaranteed that the intelligent and talented would be successful while the lazy, ignorant, and incapable would fail. "The rich man, who had not only

survived but had drastically improved his position in society, was best entitled to sire a new generation." ¹²

This, then, was the philosophy that American conservatives embraced to vindicate laissez-faire. "To a generation singularly engrossed in the competitive pursuit of industrial wealth it gave cosmic sanction to free competition." ¹³ The leading exponent of Social Darwinism in America was a college professor named William Graham Sumner. Like Spencer, Sumner tried to join evolution to laissez-faire economics in his fight against social legislation. Laissez-faire economics, he argued, was a system that ensured that each man would be free to compete for survival without the state favouring anyone with special privileges. According to nature's plan the weak would lose out and the race would, therefore, improve. As he put it,

The millionaires are a product of natural selection, acting on the whole body of men, to pick out those who can meet the requirements of certain work to be done . . . They get high wages and live in luxury, but the bargain is a good one for society. ¹⁴

Sumner based his philosophy on the idea that every man should have the freedom to go as far as his intelligence and drive can take him.

In the late nineteenth century Sumner became one of the most outspoken proponents of laissez-faire, as he vigorously spoke out against any kind of social legislation

which he felt resulted out of a selfish desire of some people to get something for which others must pay. Government interference on behalf of the poor, he argued, curtailed man's economic freedom and upset nature's plan. Moreover, it was basically unfair in that it helped the unfit at the expense of those who were successful. Life was meant to be a struggle to ensure the survival of the fittest, and therefore, the rich owed nothing to the poor and ought not to be taxed for their benefit. He felt that any "scheme for coddling and helping wage-earners, for making the rich pay for whatever the poor wanted is immoral to the very last degree and opposed to the simplest common sense."¹⁵

Any political interference, he felt, would only lead to the degeneration of society. In 1883 he wrote, "society needs first of all to be freed from these meddlers-that is to be let alone. Here we are then, once more back at the old doctrine-laissez-faire. Let us translate it into blunt English, and it will read, mind your own business. It is nothing but the doctrine of liberty. Let every man be happy in his own way."¹⁶

Despite his rigid belief in individualism, Sumner realized that some problems could only be solved by collective action. Yet, that did not mean he supported government action for solving some problems, for on the contrary, he felt that individuals should protect their interests by forming non-governmental organizations. For

instance, he supported the formation of labor unions which he saw as an alternative to state socialism and as an instrument for achieving economic justice for the working man.

The safety of workmen from machinery, the ventilation and sanitary arrangements required by factories, the special precautions of certain processes, the hours of labor of women and children, the schooling of children, the limits of age for employed children, Sunday work, hours of labor, these and other like matters ought to be controlled by the men themselves through their organizations.

It should be pointed out that many of the businessmen who endorsed laissez-faire were in fact inconsistent in their support, as many of them actually approved of government action if it helped their industries in some way. Sumner was very consistent in his beliefs, however in that he condemned the rich who used government for their own selfish purposes. In fact, he "ran athwart the desires of most of his contemporary industrialists by condemning Hamiltonian mercantilism and any form of state interference via protective tariff, subventions or monetary policies favourable to the rich as energetically as he did socialism and egalitarianism."¹⁸ It was not the millionaire industrialist whom Sumner admired, but rather the middle class man who worked hard and who did not look for handouts.

Another important champion of laissez-faire was the wealthy industrialist, Andrew Carnegie. Arriving in

America as a poor young immigrant, Carnegie went on to become one of the richest men in the world and thus was a living symbol of what laissez-faire was all about. Unlike most other wealthy industrialists, Carnegie wrote books and gave speeches glorifying the system which had permitted him to go from poverty to wealth. Like Sumner and Spencer he was a firm believer in Social Darwinism. He once wrote,

We accept and welcome, therefore, as conditions to which we must accommodate ourselves, great inequality of environment, the concentration of business, industrial and commercial, in the hands of a few, and the law of competition between these, as being not only beneficial, but essential for the future progress of the race.

He was also of course opposed to any kind of social legislation. He felt that,

the socialist or anarchist who seeks to overturn the present conditions is to be regarded as attacking the foundation upon which civilization itself rests, for civilization took its start from the day that the capable industrious workmen said to his incompetent and lazy fellow 'if thou dost not sow thou shalt not reap' and thus ended primitive communism by separating the drones from the bees.

Carnegie was also of the opinion that the rich had a duty to use their wealth for the good of society.

This then is held to be the duty of the man of wealth . . . to provide moderately for the legitimate wants of those dependent upon him; and after doing so to consider all surplus revenues which come to him simply as a trust fund which he is called upon to administer

and strictly bound as a matter of duty to administer in the manner which in his judgment is best calculated to produce the most beneficial results to the community.

Carnegie certainly practiced what he preached, for he distributed vast amounts of money to support various philanthropic causes, including the construction of universities and libraries all across the country.

There also emerged in late nineteenth century America a religious justification for laissez-faire which was known as the Gospel of Wealth. According to this view it was the duty of every man to acquire wealth so that he could help the poor. Moreover, it was maintained that wealth was a sign of man's virtue and morality and that any attempt to restrict a man's ability to acquire riches was going against God's will. One Baptist minister declared it was the duty of every Christian to get rich since money printed bibles, built churches and paid preachers. He also felt that it was a mistake to equate piety with poverty. "Let us remember" he declared "there is not a poor person in the United States who was not made poor by his own shortcomings or by the shortcomings of someone else."²²

It should be pointed out that the philosophy supported by Sumner, Carnegie and the Gospel of Wealth theology was not just adhered to by the elites of American society. In fact, a broad mass of Americans supported the policy of laissez-faire. "The belief that it was through individualism

and competitive free enterprise that America was built, and that the man of means can responsibly determine how he will dispose of his gains, was a widely held popular tenet which has broad currency even in our day."²³

Despite the best efforts of laissez-faire conservatives, many reforms designed to curtail business and help the poor were enacted between 1896 and 1918, a time period which saw the rise of the Progressive movement which was determined to bring about social justice through government action. Many of these important reforms were associated with Theodore Roosevelt who was President from 1901 to 1909. Among other things he managed to break up some of the larger trusts, increased the government's power to regulate business and issued a series of Executive Acts designed to conserve natural resources. Yet, despite these actions, it should be remembered that Roosevelt was a conservative, though his brand of conservatism more closely resembles that of Alexander Hamilton rather than Andrew Carnegie. Like Hamilton, Roosevelt glorified military power and felt the United States needed a strong active President and a federal government that would intervene in the economy for the good of the country. Furthermore, Roosevelt despised both the materialism of laissez-faire and the egalitarianism of socialism, preferring instead the virtues and values of militarism. Therefore, his reforms were actually designed to check both philosophies.

He also believed that the business community's strict adherence to laissez-faire was suicidal, since it created an environment in which the hated socialists could thrive. As he once declared,

- The dull, purblind folly of the very rich men; their greed and arrogance . . . and the corruption in business and politics, have tended to produce a very unhealthy condition of excitement and irritation in the popular mind, which shows itself in the great increase in socialistic propaganda.²⁴

Thus by introducing his own reforms, Roosevelt hoped to undercut the socialistic movements and thereby save the businessmen in spite of themselves. For example, in 1902 during a miners' strike, he worked out a compromise between the workers and the operators which called for the latter to make some concessions. Roosevelt's motivation in producing this agreement was, as he said, "to save the great coal operators and all the class of big propertied men, of which they were members from the dreadful punishment which their own folly would have brought on them if I had not acted."²⁵ Likewise, when Roosevelt's support of a bill regulating railway rate control earned him the protests of laissez-faire conservatives, he declared, "I think they are very shortsighted not to understand that to beat it means to increase the danger of the movement for government ownership of railroads."²⁶

Finally, his reforms were intended to keep the

corporations from becoming too strong since there was the danger that they would become rivals of the federal government itself. "Bigness in business filled him with foreboding because it presaged a day when the United States might be held in thrall by those materialistic interests he had always held in contempt, a 'vulgar tyranny of mere wealth'"²⁷ He wanted to make sure the morals of business never became the morals of the state. In order to check the power of big business, Roosevelt used anti-trust legislation as well as enforcing current regulations against monopoly.

Another President who dismissed the laissez-faire philosophy was Woodrow Wilson, who held office from 1913 to 1921. Wilson believed that the federal government had a duty to equalize competition between industry and agriculture and between labor and capital by aiding the weaker side. It is ironic that as a young man Wilson was a dedicated supporter of laissez-faire, who believed that Grover Cleveland was one of the best Presidents the United States ever had.²⁸ Gradually though, he abandoned his dedication to laissez-faire and by the time he was elected President he was willing to use the powers of the state to correct what he felt were the problems afflicting the country.

Of all the problems facing America, Wilson was most concerned about the growth of trust or monopolies which he felt were able to compete unfairly with smaller businesses, thereby threatening competitive freedom. Yet,

he was careful to distinguish between trusts which he considered to be wrong and big businesses which he supported. He could support big business while opposing trusts because as he put it, "a trust is an arrangement to get rid of competition and a big business is a business that has survived competition, by conquering in the field of intelligence and economy."²⁹ It was the trusts, which set up artificial barriers to free competition, that Wilson was determined to eliminate with the help of state power.

His battle with monopolies began in 1914 with the passage by Congress of the Clayton anti-trust bill which was meant to clarify the Sherman anti-trust act of 1890. Then, in that same year, Wilson managed to get Congress to pass the Federal Trade Commission bill which outlawed unfair trade practices and created a Federal Trade Commission which was to regulate competition.

Wilson was also concerned that the economic system of laissez-faire and the resultant rise of big business had caused people to lose their sense of responsibility towards others. "The truth", Wilson once remarked, "is we are all caught in a great economic system which is heartless."³⁰ He believed, therefore, that the federal government had a duty to put controls and restrictions on the "heartless" economic system because human rights were being ignored by impersonal large scale industries. Thus, Wilson introduced bills to Congress which set eight hour

work days for railway workers, regulated child labor and established a compensation law for civil service workers. All these bills were passed, but the one concerning child labor was later declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

Wilson's policy of positive government was known as the New Freedom and it was designed to "arrest the exploitation of the community, the concentration of wealth and the growing control of politics by insiders, and to restore as far as possible competitive opportunities in business."³¹

It must be remembered that, despite the growth of government interference during the Progressive era, the United States, as a whole, still adhered to and preserved for the most part the ideals of laissez-faire conservatism. Indeed, Wilson's New Freedom was forgotten during America's participation in World War One and the whole Progressive movement was dead by 1920. During the 1920's laissez-faire conservatism reasserted its control over American federal politics with the election to the Presidency of conservatives like Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover. It can be said, in fact, that during the decade of the 1920's laissez-faire conservatism was never more prestigious or reputable.³²

Unfortunately, its glory was shortlived, for in 1929, the United States was hit by the Great Depression which not only crippled the American economy but also killed laissez-faire conservatism.

What caused the Depression is still a matter of controversy. Some argue that American capitalism had simply exhausted itself, while others blame the Depression on monopolies which they claim brought about the collapse with price fixing, underconsumption and unfairly distributed incomes. Still others blame the international system of the late 1920's by arguing that the natural self-regulating process of capitalism failed because Europe was unnaturally weak due to World War One. But while the causes of the Great Depression remain in doubt, there is no doubt as to the effects it had on the United States economy. By 1932 the gross national product of the United States had declined from \$104,000,000 to \$58,000,000. "Factory employment declined by one-third, and the number of unemployed shot up from 400,000 to nearly twelve million. The production of durable manufactures fell by more than 70 per cent between June 1929 and June 1932 and even output of nondurable manufactures decreased by one-third."³³

As a result of this economic mess, laissez-faire conservatives were put on the defensive, for in the popular mind their economic philosophy was directly responsible for the suffering which America was experiencing. In addition, the American people desperately wanted some kind of positive action from the federal government, both to find a way out of the economic slump and to aid those ruined by the Depression. Yet, laissez-faire with its emphasis

on individualism and non-government interference could offer only the promise that the Depression would run its course and that prosperity would soon return. Not surprisingly then, the philosophy which had guided the United States since the Civil War was suddenly discredited and abandoned. It was stigmatized as an ineffective and cruel ideology which had led America to economic disaster.

Disillusioned by the seeming failure of laissez-faire, Americans turned to a new and radically different political philosophy which promised to usher in an era of prosperity. That philosophy which was to transform American society was liberalism.

In abandoning laissez-faire in favour of liberalism, the American people initiated a revolution which would dramatically alter the role played by the United States government. The rise to power of liberals in 1933 can be classified as a revolution, since the philosophy of liberalism represented a significant departure from laissez-faire. The differences between the two philosophies is quickly made apparent when liberalism is examined and defined.

One definition of liberalism was put forward by Willaim Gerber who wrote,

Liberalism is the belief that individuals and institutions, including governments, should so act-or refrain from acting-as to liberate as many individuals as possible from as many shackles

as possible without overturning basic social machinery. "Shackles" here means circumstances which prevent an individual from fulfilling his constructive potentialities. "Constructive potentialities" are those possibilities, talents, aspirations, aims, desires and hopes of any one individual the fulfillment of which will not impede and may enhance like fulfillment on the part of others.

In simpler terms it can be said that liberals believe the government should be used as an instrument to improve the human condition. Their ideology, which is similar to the democratic socialism of Europe, is based upon a distrust of individual freedom and voluntary arrangements. The liberal "believes that patterns of human behaviour under such arrangements are usually, wrong, harmful, stupid and malicious and that they should be prevented by the constant and pervasive attention of the government."³⁵ Moreover, liberals believe that the needs of certain groups are more important than an individual's freedom of choice. Thus, they often rationalize restrictions of freedom by saying it will help "minorities", "labor" or the "poor".

There is little which liberals feel government cannot solve. They advocate governmental solutions to everything from pollution and racism to housing shortages. Of course, liberals also feel that the government can solve economic problems through new regulations, controls, subsidies and various other forms of government interference. The fact that these measures reduce individual economic liberty means little to them since they have little

faith in an economy that is based on the decisions and work of free people who work individually and in voluntary cooperation. That kind of economy, liberals contend, should be regarded as unfair and unnecessary. Therefore, they favour a planned economy directed by the central government. This was made clear by the liberal organization, Americans for Democratic Action, when it declared, "the blind forces of the market place cannot be depended upon either to achieve full employment and vigorous economic growth or to divert economic resources in accordance with national priorities. For these purposes we need democratic national planning to evaluate our resources and needs and to develop an order of priorities for the applications of resources to our needs."³⁶

Of course, that kind of planning would require a centralized and very powerful government. As a result, liberals favour big government, preferably one free of the limiting restrictions of the American constitution.

Liberalism is antagonistic not only to laissez-faire conservatism, which it replaced as the dominant philosophy in America, but also to values which have been part of the American conservative tradition since the days of the Federalists. Values such as freedom over equality, constitutionally limited government, and the sanctity of private property are downgraded by liberals.

It will now be necessary to outline briefly the policies

which liberal administrations endorsed between 1932 and 1950. They led to the rise of modern American conservatism.

The ascent of liberalism began in the mid to late 1920's when the Democratic party, which by that time was in a state of disrepair, began to adopt and preach some of its ideals. Then in 1932, liberalism was catapulted into power when the Democratic party took control of the national government. That Democratic-liberal triumph in 1932 was led by the party's candidate for President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, a distant cousin of Theodore Roosevelt. During the election campaign Roosevelt declared that he would try to solve the depression with cooperative action. He did not specifically say what kind of action he would take but he did promise to stabilize prices, reduce unemployment and introduce public work and relief programs. Moreover, he promised that the government would assume a far greater role in the management of the nation's welfare. A charismatic leader, Roosevelt managed to instill a feeling of confidence and optimism within the American people and was able to convince them that liberalism was the answer to the economic crisis which was causing such widespread suffering. As a result, he easily defeated conservative Herbert Hoover and became America's first liberal President.

Once in power Roosevelt initiated the liberal revolution with a program called the New Deal designed to restore both prosperity and aid the poor. It should be pointed

out here that the New Deal was not a well thought out philosophy of reform, nor was it guided by any economic philosophy. Rather, "it was a series of improvisations many adopted very suddenly, many contradictorily. Such unity as it had was in political strategy, not economics."³⁷ The truth is that Roosevelt was willing to try any policy which in his opinion might help the economy. It should also be noted that there were actually two versions of the New Deal, one running from 1933 to 1935 and the other from 1935 to approximately 1939.

The most important feature of the first New Deal, which was designed primarily to spur economic recovery, was the National Recovery Administration or the NRA which was created by Congress in 1933. Under the NRA businesses were allowed to establish price agreements and production quotas while workers were guaranteed minimum wages, maximum hours and the right to bargain collectively. Roosevelt hoped that this system of high prices and low production would initiate an economic recovery. Other features of the first New Deal were the use of inflationary monetary policy to aid debtors and the creation of relief agencies to help the unemployed.

At this point it should be obvious that the first New Deal was not that radical. "Although he (Roosevelt) had adopted many novel, perhaps risky expedients, he had avoided vital disturbances to the vested interests. For example,

he had passed by an easy chance to solve the bank crisis by nationalization and instead followed a policy orthodox enough to win Hoover's approval."³⁸ Moreover, his basic policies for industry and agriculture had been designed after models supplied by great vested interest groups.

By 1935, though, a series of developments caused Roosevelt to move further to the left. First, labor leaders, whose support Roosevelt needed, were becoming disenchanted with the NRA which they felt benefited business at the expense of labor. There was also the political threat posed by Huey Long, a demagogue whose radical "share the wealth" movement was attracting many liberals who felt Roosevelt's reforms were inadequate. Finally, the Supreme Court ruled that sections of the NRA, which was the heart of the New Deal, were unconstitutional and had to be scrapped. Thus, Roosevelt was faced with the bleak prospect of seeking re-election in 1936 without an economic program and with the possibility that his supporters might defect. As a result, he launched a second New Deal in 1935, which was to be to the left of the 1933 version, in the hope that he could secure the loyalty of American liberals.

This second New Deal saw the introduction of the Social Security Act which set up a social insurance system that included old age pensions and unemployment compensation financed by taxes on wages and payrolls. The act also provided matching grants to states to help them aid the

poor, the blind, crippled children and various public health programs.

Another aspect of the second New Deal was the Revenue Act which set up a tax on excess profits and increased taxes on large personal incomes to the highest they had ever been. This was part of Roosevelt's plan to make taxation a tool of social policy. He declared that "our revenue laws have operated in many ways to the unfair advantage of the few, and they have done little to prevent an unjust concentration of wealth and economic power."³⁹ The New Deal was to remedy that situation.

The 1935 version of the New Deal also included the Wagner Labor-disputes bill which guaranteed the rights of labor by giving workers the right to bargain collectively and forbidding employers from interfering in union activities.

After the Second World War, President Harry Truman, another liberal-Democrat, sought to expand the welfare state initiated by the New Deal with a program called the Fair Deal. Among other things, the Fair Deal tried to extend federal aid to education and called for the establishment of a national program of health insurance.

These then were the programs of the liberal administrations in the United States from 1932 to 1950. It should also be noted that liberalism's supremacy was not limited to the Democratic party, for during that twenty-year period

liberals took over American academic institutions and the organs of mass communication.⁴⁰ Even the Republican party, which had always been associated with laissez-faire conservatism, was slowly being penetrated. The Eastern wing of the party, for instance, gradually came to approve of the New Deal. The supremacy of liberal philosophy in the 1930's and 1940's was obvious and seemingly unshakable. Yet, a movement emerged in the United States which challenged the assumptions of liberalism and resisted its steady drive toward the creation of a welfare state. That movement was modern conservatism.

These modern conservatives, like their laissez-faire predecessors, were firm believers in individualism and in small government. Yet, it should be made clear that they were not resurrected laissez-faire conservatives; but rather a new breed. For instance, while both groups valued individual freedom, each had a different interpretation as to exactly what freedom meant. To the laissez-faire conservative, freedom was the only thing in the world that was truly moral since it satisfied man's material needs. He rejected all other morals or virtues since it was felt they would have to be imposed by an outside political authority which would in turn mean the reduction of freedom. In his ideal society, freedom would exist at the expense of virtues. Modern conservatives reject the notion that freedom in itself is moral, believing instead that it is

morally neutral. In addition, they believe that there are certain objective morals and values which are derived from Western tradition and divine law that show men what is right and what is wrong. These morals, moreover, are extremely important since their decline promotes statism and thereby reduces freedom. "Men without values are more than willing to trade their freedom for material benefits. That the loss of moral constraint invites the rule of power is surely one of the best established facts of twentieth century history."⁴¹ Conservatives value freedom because it permits man to be moral. It allows man, in other words, to choose between good and evil. "Freedom is thus the political context of moral decision; it is the modality within which the human mind can search out moral absolutes."⁴² Conservatives believe in freedom not as an end in itself, but because it allows men to make their own moral choices.

Moreover, while conservatives feel that freedom is morally neutral, they also believe that the alternatives to freedom, state coercion for instance, are definitely immoral since they involve the arbitrary exercise of power over men by other men. Thus they prefer freedom since it permits morality, though it does not guarantee it, and reject coercion, since it guarantees immorality.

Furthermore, while these two brands of conservatism agree that government should be limited, each has different reasons to support their contention. The laissez-faire

conservatives believed that men were basically good and that the better one was the more material wealth one would acquire. Therefore, the government should leave people alone and allow them to use their natural goodness as they see fit. Modern conservatives, though, like the Federalists, believe that men are basically bad and easily corrupted. Therefore, any all-powerful central government, since it is made up of imperfect men, will inevitably become tyrannical. Governments thus should have restrictions placed upon them to ensure political liberty. Naturally, conservatives greatly admire and wish to preserve the constitution of 1787, since they feel it provides a government strong enough to administer effectively the country, yet one that is restrained through checks and balances to prevent the concentration of too much power.

Another difference between laissez-faire conservatism and modern conservatism is that the latter is more devoted to the economic principles of Adam Smith. For it is a fact that many laissez-faire conservative businessmen welcomed government interference in the form of subsidies and protective tariffs, thereby violating the principle of economic laissez-faire theory. Modern conservatives, by contrast, generally favour a policy of free trade and reject the idea that government should aid industries. Also, as has already been noted, laissez-faire conservatives resisted the anti-trust acts of the early 1900's, but

modern conservatives support them since they fear big corporations as much as big government. As conservative Barry Goldwater wrote, "large corporations by gaining monopoly control over entire industries had nullified the laws of competition that are conducive to freedom . . . the enemy of freedom is unrestrained power and the champions of freedom will fight against the concentration of power wherever they find it."⁴³

Thus, the decade of the 1930's saw the emergence of a new and distinct conservative movement. However, it is somewhat misleading to label modern conservatism as new, since it actually represents a merging of the philosophies which make up the historical conservative tradition. For example, the modern conservative's lack of faith in man's nature and his desire for limited government are inherited from Federalist ideology. His belief in economic progress comes from the Whigs and from the laissez-faire conservative comes his dedication to individualism and economic liberty. In essence, then, it can be said that modern conservatives represent an eclectic reflection of their philosophical past.

It is little wonder that conservatives vigorously opposed the New Deal, since it dismissed the values of the conservative tradition. Conservatives were alarmed, for example, by the growing power of the federal government which under the New Deal was performing services which it

had, according to conservatives, no constitutional authority to provide. Equally as disturbing was the way President Roosevelt exceeded the constitutional boundaries imposed upon him, making the Presidency a far more powerful office than the conservatives, who favoured a weak executive, thought it should be.

The foundation of their concern, however, was their perception that the ultimate goal of the New Deal was to replace individualism with its antithesis, namely socialism, by slowly establishing a welfare state. One conservative described the danger this way: "we can see now and understand clearly the overall program of the socialist revolutionaries to make a socialist America without making any lawful change in our great charter of freedom, the constitution of the United States."⁴⁴ While this may be an extreme view, it does reflect the basic conservative fear of creeping socialism.

Thus conservatives dedicated themselves to the task of opposing the spread of federal power and repealing welfare programs. Before 1937, though, conservatives were unable to offer any real resistance to Roosevelt and the New Deal since they were both tremendously popular throughout the country. In fact, most politicians who tried to oppose the liberal programs found themselves swept away in the national elections of 1934 and 1936. As a result, many conservatives in Congress were reluctant to take on

Roosevelt since it would certainly mean losing their seats. As one Congressman put it, "there can be no doubt that at the moment the President has an extraordinary support throughout the country and is able to do with Congress as he wills. I suppose prudence dictates that one should not attempt to swim against the tide."⁴⁵

Yet, even in those days of complete liberal supremacy, there was some conservative opposition to the New Deal. Congressmen elected from staunchly conservative districts refused to support Roosevelt even at the height of his popularity, while grant publishers like William Randolph Hearst and Robert McCormick attacked the New Deal through their newspapers, magazines and radio stations. Also, the American Liberty League was established in the early 1930's to spread anti-New Deal propaganda and to expound the virtues of free market capitalism.⁴⁶

In 1937, however, the conservatives were able to launch a major counter-offensive against liberalism as several events occurred in that year which eroded Roosevelt's popularity with the people and the conservative wing of his own party. First, Roosevelt decided to reform the Supreme Court which had struck down much of his New Deal legislation. His reform called for an additional Justice for every Supreme Court Justice over seventy-five years of age up to a number of six. This attempt by Roosevelt to pack the Supreme Court was opposed not only by conservatives

but by a majority of the American people. As a result, conservatives were able to criticize openly Roosevelt in political safety. The conservative cause was also strengthened by a series of militant trade union strikes which hit America in 1937. "Middle class Americans, many of them Roosevelt supporters were clearly alarmed by these strikes and according to the Gallup poll, two-thirds of the public favoured legislation and the use of force against them."⁴⁷ But Roosevelt would take no action against the strikers, causing many to switch their support to conservatives who had long opposed the growing power of labor unions under the New Deal. Finally, the United States suffered an economic slowdown or recession in 1937 which could not be blamed on the laissez-faire policies of Hoover. The Roosevelt Recession, as it was called seemed to demonstrate to many Americans that liberalism could not end the Depression as it had promised in 1932.

All these events—the Supreme Court plan, the militant strikes and the recession—hurt Roosevelt's popularity and gave confidence to conservatives in Congress who now felt they could openly challenge the New Deal. In the summer of 1937, a group of conservative Democrats broke with their leader and forged a right wing bloc with conservative Republicans to assail the New Deal. The creation of this coalition was one of the most significant developments of recent American political history, for now conservatives

were strong enough to block the passage of any further reform legislation.⁴⁸ In fact, "the President's achievements in 1939 were negligible; the domestic New Deal for all intents and purposes made no more striking gains."⁴⁹ Thus in 1939 Roosevelt officially ended the New Deal saying, "we have now passed the period of internal conflict in the launching of our program of social reforms. Our full energies may now be released to invigorate the processes of recovery in order to preserve our reforms."⁵⁰

The failure of liberalism not only emboldened conservative Congressmen, it also made conservatism in general more popular. This was made clear in the 1938 election when Roosevelt, who was unbeatable in the early thirties, unsuccessfully tried to purge conservative Congressmen from his own party. "He ended by stiffening conservative Democratic resistance, and, as the elections would indicate by further eroding his magic at the polls in November."⁵¹ That election, in fact, saw the Republicans gain eighty seats in the House and eight in the Senate. Thus by the late 1930's the conservatives in Congress were strong enough to begin an all-out offensive against the New Deal. Unfortunately, the Second World War put domestic politics on hold and boosted the sagging popularity of Roosevelt, denying the conservatives an opportunity to make gains. After the war the conservative resurgence continued. By 1946, the free enterprise system, which was now providing

full employment, was once more legitimate. At the same time, left wing ideas were being stigmatized as Communistic and therefore un-American. Moreover, many Americans were by this time growing tired of reforms, and sought stability. All of these factors undermined liberalism and reinforced the political dominance of conservatism.⁵²

So great was the shift to the right that in the 1946 Congressional election the Republicans managed to capture both the Senate and the House of Representatives. For the first time since 1930 the Republicans controlled Congress. Thus, conservatives were now in a position to reverse the socialistic trend of liberalism.

Ironically, however, domestic socialism was not the chief concern of conservatives in the postwar years. Their attention was now focused on a new and more dangerous menace, Soviet Communism. Thus, militant anti-Communism became an important tenet of American conservatism.⁵³

This was the state of conservatism when Joe McCarthy entered the national scene in 1950. Was he part of this conservative movement or did he just adopt the conservative issue of anti-Communism for his own selfish ends? Did his anti-Communist crusade stem from his belief in conservative ideology or did it spring from other, more nefarious motives? These are the questions which must be answered before Joe McCarthy can be understood.

NOTES

¹ Clinton Rossiter, Conservatism in America, The Thankless Persuasion, (New York, 1962), 131.

² Alan Pendleton Grimes, American Political Thought, (New York, 1962), 293.

³ Rossiter, Conservatism in America, 134.

⁴ Grimes, American Political Thought, 291.

⁵ Rossiter, Conservatism in America, 140.

⁶ Grimes, American Political Thought, 302.

⁷ Rossiter, Conservatism in America, 138.

⁸ Richard Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition And The Men Who Made It, (New York, 1949), 167.

⁹ Grimes, American Political Thought, 292.

¹⁰ Rossiter, Conservatism in America, 136.

¹¹ Thornton Anderson, Jacobson's Development of American Thought, (New York, 1961), 450.

¹² Grimes, American Political Thought, 305.

¹³ Rossiter, Conservatism in America, 151.

¹⁴ Peter Viereck, Conservatism: From John Adams to Churchill, (Princeton, 1956), 99.

¹⁵ Anderson, Development of American Political Thought, 452.

¹⁶ Ibid., 453.

¹⁷ Ibid., 453.

- 18 A.J. Beitzinger, A History of American Political Thought, (New York, 1972), 407.
- 19 Grimes, American Political Thought, 307.
- 20 Ibid., 307.
- 21 Beitzinger, A History of American Political Thought, 412.
- 22 Ibid., 411.
- 23 Ibid., 407.
- 24 Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition, 220.
- 25 Ibid., 220.
- 26 Ibid., 221.
- 27 Ibid., 222.
- 28 Ibid., 239.
- 29 Bernard Bailyn et al, The Great Republic, (Lexington, 1977), 974.
- 30 Grimes, American Political Thought, 392.
- 31 Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition, 255.
- 32 Rossiter, Conservatism in America, 131.
- 33 Mario Einaudi, The Roosevelt Revolution, (New York, 1954) 50.
- 34 William Gerber, America Liberalism: Laudable End, Controversial Means, (Boston, 1975) III.
- 35 M. Stanton Evans, Clearly and Present Dangers: A Conservative View of America's Government, (New York, 1975), 34.

- 36 Ibid., 40.
- 37 Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition, 327.
- 38 Ibid., 331.
- 39 Robert Morris et al, America, A History of the People (Chicago, 1971), 583
- 40 Frank Meyer, "Conservatism", in Robert A. Goldwin, ed., Left, Right and Center: Essays on Liberalism and Conservatism... in the United States (Chicago, 1965), 32
- 41 M. Stanton Evans, "A Conservative Case for Freedom", in Frank S. Meyer, ed., What is Conservatism? (New York, 1964), 71.
- 42 Ibid., 72
- 43 Barry Goldwater, The Conscience of a Conservative, (New York, 1960), 59.
- 44 John Flynn, The Decline of the American Republic, (New York, 1955), 93.
- 45 James Patterson, "A Conservative Coalition Forms in Congress, 1933-1939", The Journal of American History, LII/4 (March 1966), 764.
- 46 Michael Miles, The Odyssey of the American Right (New York, 1980), 35.
- 47 Patterson, "A Conservative Coalition Forms in Congress", The Journal of American History, LII/ 4 (March 1966) 764.
- 48 Ibid., 763.
- 49 Ibid., 765.
- 50 Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition, 338.
- 51 Patterson, "A Conservative Coalition Forms in Congress":

The Journal of American History, 771.

⁵² Seymour Lipset and Earl Raab, The Politics of Unreason: Right-Wing Extremism in America, 1790-1977 (Chicago, 1978), 215.

⁵³ M. Goldsmith, "The New American Conservatism", Political Studies, XX (March 1972), 365.

CHAPTER IV

JOSEPH R. McCARTHY: A BIOGRAPHY

Before a study can be made on how Joseph McCarthy's actions were influenced by conservative ideology, it will first be necessary to examine his life. Thus, this chapter will give a biographical sketch of Joe McCarthy from his childhood to his death, emphasizing of course his anti-Communist activities.

Joseph Raymond McCarthy was born on November 14, 1908 on a small farm in northeastern Wisconsin. His parents, Timothy and Bridget McCarthy, were hardworking, devout Roman Catholics of Irish descent who raised their children in an austere, no-nonsense household. As with so many other aspects of his life, McCarthy's childhood has been distorted by liberal historians in an effort to discredit him. Whenever historians describe McCarthy the boy for instance, they inevitably portray him as an ugly and insecure wimp. One historian says he was "an insecure child who shunned strangers and clung fearfully to his mother..."¹ Yet, the truth is the exact opposite. Thomas Reeves in his most recent biography describes young Joe as a good looking, likable boy: "Joe as an almost totally extroverted boy,

loud, fun loving, constantly in the thick of things and extremely popular."² He was also a strong and aggressive boy who would never back down from a fight no matter who his opponent might be. He feared no one. Moreover, Joe was an intelligent youngster who did so well in school that he was allowed to skip grade seven. All in all, Joe McCarthy seems to have been a confident and bright lad, a far cry from the cowardly milk-sop depicted by some historians.

Despite his scholastic success, McCarthy decided to drop out of school at the age of fourteen to become a chicken farmer. He was simply not interested in school.³ Using some money he had earned from a part-time job, Joe rented an acre of land from his father and bought a flock of fifty chickens. In two years he owned ten thousand chickens, a new chicken house and a truck. Unfortunately, McCarthy contacted influenza, and while he was recovering, his business was looked after by local boys who proved to be careless. Disease and cold soon wiped out the entire flock, destroying McCarthy's dream of creating a poultry empire.⁴

Instead of starting all over again, he quit the poultry business and moved to the town of Manawa, which was thirty miles from his family farm. He quickly got a job as a manager of a chain-store branch, which he soon had operating at a profit. About a year later, he decided to complete his education. Thus, at the age of twenty, he enrolled in a local high school. A dedicated and hardworking student

McCarthy managed to complete four years of high school in just nine months.⁵

In 1930, he entered the Jesuit-operated Marquette University in Milwaukee to study engineering. For two years he did school work during the day and earned a living by night, doing everything from dishwashing to construction gang work. For recreation he joined the school boxing team, since he had always enjoyed that sport. It was soon clear, though, that he was more a slugger than a boxer. A friend described his style: "impatient of technique, his style was to come out charging at the bell and stay on the offensive, no matter how powerful his opponent until he won or dropped. When he encountered an experienced boxer he would take a severe beating. Once Joe was so bruised and bloodied in a fight that his opponent wanted to stop. But McCarthy cried "Come on! Come on! grinning as though he relished it all."⁶ Later on, McCarthy would exhibit similar traits in his approach to politics.

In 1932, McCarthy decided to switch to law, which he felt would be more exciting than the dreary engineering courses he was taking. Once in law school, he joined the debating team and became a competent public speaker. His arguments were not well prepared, however, and he always talked off the top of his head. Moreover, as Reeves wrote, "when he got into an argument over a matter that concerned him, he could become extremely angry and would charge an

opponent verbally, becoming intense and abusive. Then, very quickly, he would forget the entire encounter and commence buying cokes and slapping people on the backs and swapping jokes."⁷ This quick temper would also be exhibited later on in his political career.

McCarthy graduated from law school in 1935 and was soon practicing law in the small Wisconsin town of Shawano. Before long, though, he became interested in politics and decided to embark on a political career. At this stage in his life he still had not developed any political philosophy, so party labels meant little to him.⁸ As a result, he became a Democrat for the simple reason that both his parents were staunch Democrats. In 1936, he was elected President of his district's Young Democrats Club, and later that year he ran for district attorney on the Democratic ticket. He did not win but he did much better than anyone expected, coming in second, ahead of the Republican candidate, as the election was won by a Progressive.

McCarthy then switched to the Republican party in order to improve his political future. In 1938, McCarthy decided to run for the position of circuit judge. No one expected him to win, as his opponent was a well-respected jurist with thirty years experience who had a large and devoted following. But Joe ran an aggressive campaign that stressed the age of his opponent. "Back and forth across the three-county area he drove in a battered white automobile,

sometimes making speeches but more often talking to the people. He supplemented these personal contacts with an extensive mailing campaign, first letters explaining his candidacy and then just before the election a deluge of postcards."⁹ In the end his tactics paid off, as he surprised everyone by winning by four thousand votes, to become the youngest judge in the state's history.

McCarthy's record as judge was, on the whole, very good. He managed, for instance, to dispose of a backlog of almost 250 cases which he had inherited from his predecessor by keeping the court in session past midnight for weeks. He was also very popular with local lawyers and earned a reputation as a fair and tough jurist.¹⁰

In 1942, McCarthy joined the United States Marine Corps, despite the fact that his office exempted him from military service. In the summer of 1943, he joined the American forces in the Pacific where he served as an intelligence officer, though he was also a volunteer gunner on a number of combat missions. Overall, he compiled an excellent war record. One of his commanding officers said of McCarthy:

This officer has shown marked qualities of leadership, co-operative spirit and loyalty. His initiative, good judgement, determination, and diligence have made him an unusually useful member of the section in which he was assigned, and his unfailing good nature and ready wit made him well liked and respected by his associates.¹¹ This officer should be classified as 'excellent'.

McCarthy would later exaggerate his war record but this does not detract from the fact that he served his country well and with distinction.

In 1944, he decided to run for the United States Senate. After managing to get a thirty-day leave, he returned to Wisconsin and campaigned against the Republican incumbent Alexander Wiley. He lost the primary but got a respectable vote and, more importantly, a state-wide reputation. In February, 1945, he resigned from active duty and returned home to continue his office as judge. Then, a year later, he announced that he was going to run in the Republican Senatorial primary against Robert La Follette, one of Wisconsin's most powerful political figures. Few gave McCarthy much chance of winning, as La Follette, who had held his Senate seat since 1925, had an impressive legislative record and a respected name. His father, the legendary Robert Sr., was one of the founders of the Progressive movement and had been elected both Governor and Senator. Thus, Robert Jr.'s nomination as the Republican candidate seem assured.

Yet, McCarthy had certain assets which made him a formidable candidate. McCarthy had by this time adopted a right-wing political philosophy. This will be expanded on in the next chapter. This gave him the backing of conservative Republicans who rejected La Follette on the grounds that he had been a staunch supporter of the New

Deal.¹² A second asset was his own drive and aggressiveness. He led an incredibly energetic campaign which included saturation mailing, door-to-door canvassing and simply meeting and greeting as many people as he could all across the state. La Follette, meanwhile, confident of victory, did not even bother to campaign and only returned to Wisconsin a week before the election. His confidence was seemingly justified, for as the campaign came to a close, most political analysts believed that he would have no trouble in turning away McCarthy's challenge. Yet, McCarthy did win the nomination by 5,400 votes, completing one of the greatest upsets in the country.

Many factors contributed to McCarthy's stunning victory, not the least of which was his own vigorous and well-financed campaign. Moreover, La Follette was damaged politically by his isolationism and by the failure of organized labor to support his candidacy. There was also a feeling among Wisconsin voters that La Follette had lost touch with the people and that he was spending too much time trying to solve national and international problems instead of concerning himself with the state's needs. By contrast, McCarthy succeeded in reaching the people "and made them feel they would have a representative in Washington instead of a 'great name' that had become faceless."¹³

After receiving the Republican nomination, McCarthy went on easily to win the general election, defeating a

liberal Democrat. Thus, he became a member of the United States Senate. From the very beginning, though, he was something of an outsider. "He was younger than the average Senator and of genuinely humble social origins, a rarity in the millionaire's club."¹⁴ Yet, he was confident, energetic, and determined to make himself a major political figure in Washington."¹⁵

The first real issue which concerned McCarthy was the question of government controls on the production and sale of sugar. He argued that rationing was no longer needed and that if it was not lifted, rural housewives and certain industries would suffer, since they would be unable to preserve their fruits and vegetables. The Administration rejected his call, claiming that there was not enough sugar available to meet the public's demand. McCarthy refused to believe that and defiantly introduced an amendment which called for ending sugar rationing five months ahead of schedule. It passed, and as it turned out, his action was soon justified as a large sugar surplus appeared.¹⁶

This episode foreshadowed the kind of tactics McCarthy would employ as a Senator. "During the debate, McCarthy was by turn rude and provocative. He would refuse to yield the floor for unfriendly questions, or would turn upon an interrogator with some personal charge or accusation. In a matter of minutes he turned a staid and dignified Senate debate into an angry brawl."¹⁷

Another issue which interested McCarthy was the public housing question. When World War II ended the United States was faced with a massive housing shortage. Veterans, upon returning home, were unable to purchase homes and were often forced to share dwellings with one or more other families. McCarthy was moved by the plight of homeless veterans and, although he opposed public housing in principle, he realized that something had to be done. Therefore, he saw to it that he was appointed to a joint Housing Committee which was to study the problem. While serving on this committee McCarthy introduced a bill which would require the government to pay half the cost of specially built houses to be used by totally disabled veterans. Unfortunately, though, while it passed the committee, it was voted down in the Senate. Undaunted, he continued to speak on the housing needs of totally disabled veterans for an entire year. "There was no appreciable political gain to be had in this persistent effort. Later, McCarthy biographers, eager to portray the Senator as the consummate cynic, chose to ignore it."¹⁸

McCarthy became so concerned about the housing problem that he dropped all his other committee work and dedicated himself to the issue, becoming something of an expert on the subject. After studying the problem, he concluded that while public housing was not the answer, the government did have a role to play in solving the crisis. In

a bill he introduced in 1948, McCarthy proposed tax exemptions and ample depreciation allowances to encourage low rental housing. The bill also called for federal assistance to cities for slum clearance and an extension of mortgage insurance. Unfortunately, the Housing Committee chose to endorse a rival bill which included a call for public housing. Overall, McCarthy's work on the Housing Committee was dignified and he won praise from observers. But "on several occasions during the hearings McCarthy got into nasty quarrels with witnesses at times exhibiting a hot temper and a flagrant disregard for established committee procedure and even common courtesy."¹⁹

After the 1948 election, McCarthy became involved with a very controversial Senate investigation which became known as the Malmedy Massacre investigation. The Senate was looking into alleged war crimes committed by American troops during World War II. The investigation was set up after certain pacifist and civil liberty groups claimed that American soldiers had extracted, through torture, confessions from SS officers accused of slaughtering eighty American prisoners of war. After studying the pertinent documents McCarthy became convinced that American soldiers had indeed been guilty of war crimes. As a result, he dedicated himself to uncovering the truth so that America's integrity and image could be preserved. Indeed, his "concern quickly rose above his own political considerations and assumed

characteristics of a personal crusade against the forces of evil."²⁰

He got permission to sit on the sub-committee looking into the case and was allowed to cross-examine witnesses. Before long he was dominating the hearings as he "virtually took over the investigation, castigating witnesses, storming through the hearings room, impugning the motives of the committee and its counsel, Marine Colonel Joseph Chambers, a Congressional Medal of Honor winner."²¹ It soon became clear during the investigation that the American soldiers were innocent of any wrong doing. As a result, the committee issued a report clearing the army. McCarthy, who was never one to admit an error, stubbornly stuck to his belief that the army had committed an injustice. To his mind the committee's report was simply a whitewash of the military.

The Malmedy investigation had done little to enhance McCarthy's political career which, by 1949, needed all the help it could get. For, although he had worked hard in the Senate, he still had not established a solid legislative record which would appeal to his constituents in Wisconsin. His work on the housing issue, for instance, had been largely ignored by Wisconsin newspapers. To make matters worse, he was censured by the State Supreme Court for holding a federal office while still being a judge, thereby violating the state constitution. Thus, McCarthy needed an issue

to boost his sagging reputation at home.

Sometime in late 1949 or early 1950 he decided to emphasize the problem of communist subversion in government. The communist-in-government issue was politically profitable and popular among Republicans at that time so it was not surprising that McCarthy would want to get in on the act. Moreover, his interest in the problem of Red subversion had been growing steadily during the late forties when it appeared that the United States government had been infiltrated by communists.²² He had no way to know that his decision to take on communism would assure him a place in American history.

His struggle against communism, which was to dominate the rest of his life, began in Wheeling, West Virginia, on February 9, 1950 when he told the Ohio County Women's Republican Club of Wheeling that there were card-carrying communists working in the State Department. There is a controversy over exactly how many communists McCarthy claimed were in the State Department. Some say he used the figure 205, while McCarthy and others claim the number used was 57. The available evidence tends to support McCarthy's contention.²³ The Associated Press wrote a short story on the speech and sent it over the teletypes. On February 10, eighteen newspapers carried the story and on February 11, ten more picked it up. Only three newspapers gave it front page coverage and two of those were small papers that

always put national news on page one.²⁴ Obviously, news editors did not feel a speech about communist subversion, delivered by an obscure Senator, was particularly newsworthy.

On February 10, McCarthy arrived in Salt Lake City and repeated his charge that there were 57 communists in the State Department. The next day he sent a telegram to President Truman asking him to furnish Congress with the names of all State Department employees who were considered bad security risks. Before long, McCarthy's remarks earned him the full wrath of the Truman Administration. On February 13, Deputy Under Secretary of State John Reurifoy denied McCarthy's charges and challenged him to identify the 57 communists. Three days later President Truman declared that McCarthy's accusations were false, while Senator Scott Lucas, the Democratic majority leader, deplored what he called McCarthy's shameful slur on the State Department. It should be pointed out that McCarthy had not been the only Republican to speak out against communist subversion on the date of February 9, which happened to be Lincoln Day. Indeed, several Republicans, including some prominent ones, had made similar Lincoln Day speeches. But the Administration decided to single out McCarthy as their target because his speech was unique, in that it included a seemingly vulnerable reference to a number of loyalty risks in the government.²⁵

Thus, the Administration turned the heat on McCarthy, daring him to name the Communist spies he had declared were in the State Department. It was their hope, of course, that he would admit that he had no names and thus provide a victory for the Democrats over the right wing Republicans. McCarthy, however, was not one to back down from a fight.

Instead, he met the Democratic challenge head on, when on February 20, he took the Senate floor and documented an expanded list of some 80 charges. He did not name names, referring to the cases only as numbers. In the speech he declared "I shall not attempt to present a detailed case on each one, a case which would convince a jury. All I am doing is to develop sufficient evidence so that anyone who reads the record will have a good idea of the number of communists in the State Department."²⁶ He also admitted that the evidence he was using was not particularly fresh. "This information is nothing new", he stated, "It has been there a long time. If the Senator or anyone else who is interested had expended sufficient effort he could have brought this to the attention of the Senate."²⁷ His evidence, in fact, came from the "Lee List" which had been prepared in 1947 by Robert E. Lee, an investigator for the House Appropriation Committee. McCarthy contended that the fact that this information was old made his charges all the more serious. Why were loyalty risks still working for the State Department? For some reason, he misled the

Senate as to where his information came from. Instead of admitting his use of the Lee List, he claimed "that he had pierced the iron curtain of State Department secrecy and with the aid of some good loyal Americans in the State Department had compiled an alarming picture of espionage and treason."²⁸ It was a mistake to mislead the Senate and it would come back to haunt him later.

At any rate, though he did not name names, he went through his list, case by case, in a six-hour speech that was continually interrupted by Democrats intent on harassing him. In some cases, he exaggerated the material he had, calling a fellow traveller a communist for instance, or labelling an alleged pro-communist a proven pro-communist. "In most cases, however, McCarthy's exaggerations were neither detailed nor emphatic enough to shove a given case into a higher security category."²⁹ When the speech was over, both parties were eager for an investigation of his charges. The Republicans hoped, of course, that the investigation would reveal information embarrassing the Democratic Administration. The Democrats, on the other hand, still believed that McCarthy was extremely vulnerable, and they "were now more confident than ever that they could swiftly crush McCarthy's allegations and taunt the G.O.P. with their success until the polls opened."³⁰

To assure their victory, the Democrats sought to prevent McCarthy from hiding behind nameless cases by letting

it be known that they expected him to name names before any investigating committee. McCarthy calmly agreed. Thus on February 21, the Senate passed the following resolution:

The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, or any duly authorized sub-committee thereof, is authorized and directed to conduct a full and complete investigation as to whether persons who are disloyal to the United States, or have been, employed by the Department of State.³¹

The committee looking into the investigation was chaired by Millard Tydings from Maryland.

The hearings opened on March 8, and McCarthy was ready for action. He now had a list of 110 names to present to the committee for its investigation. It should be pointed out that these names were not just a duplication of the old Lee List, but rather represented a slate of charges based on evidence McCarthy had received from veteran anti-communists who wished to aid him in his struggle. In fact, there were 37 names on McCarthy's list who did not appear on the Lee List.³² Unfortunately, the Tydings Committee was not really interested in investigating subversion in government. Their main goal was to discredit McCarthy and vindicate the State Department. This fact became obvious from the first day of the hearings when the Democrats greeted McCarthy with scornful contempt. Before he could even begin his presentation, he was harassed with repeated demands to answer certain questions immediately. The Democrats' tactics prompted one Senator to remark: "a perfectly

extraordinary procedure. I have never seen anything like it, and I have been here since 1937...I do not understand what kind of game is being played here."³³

Finally, McCarthy was allowed to present his cases, but even then the harassment continued as the Democrats interrupted him continually. By March 14, McCarthy had succeeded in naming nine people whom he felt were possible security risks and who, therefore, should be investigated. They were Esther Brunauer, a State Department official, Stephen Brunauer from the Navy bureau, Dorothy Kenyon, a delegate to UNESCO, Haldore Hanson, an official of the Point Four Program, Gustavo Duran, an employee of the United Nations, Harlow Shapely and Frederick Schuman, who were both university professors, John Service, another State Department official, Philip Jessup, the ambassador-at-large and Owen Lattimore, the Director of the Page School of Diplomacy.³⁴ Unfortunately, little else was accomplished, as the committee was, of course, more interested in discrediting McCarthy than in conducting a serious investigation of the State Department.

The hearings, not surprisingly, were a travesty. Committee members pampered any witness, including known communists, who discredited McCarthy's evidence and insulted and smeared anyone whose testimony supported McCarthy.³⁵ Furthermore, McCarthy, for some reason, was not allowed to cross-examine any witness who attended the hearings. • What

was worst of all, though, was the way the committee cleared all those accused by McCarthy without even an investigation. They either took the word of the accused or of the State Department, the agency they were supposedly investigating, as proof that the charges were not justified. Thus, on July 18, a Report was filed by the committee which not surprisingly gave the State Department a clean bill of health. Moreover, it also accused McCarthy of perpetrating a "fraud and a hoax" and labelled his charges as "perhaps the most nefarious campaign of halftruths in the history of the Republic." It is interesting to note, that while the committee considered McCarthy's charges a hoax, officials at the State Department did not. In fact, the agency re-examined the loyalty of 62 State Department employees named by McCarthy and within three years of the Tydings Committee Report, eighteen of them were labelled security risks and fired.³⁶ Yet, these were the same people who were cleared by the Tydings Committee. Clearly, in their attempt to attack McCarthy, the Committee had not done the most thorough job.

At any rate, the two Republican members on the committee refused to sign the report, dismissing the investigation as completely inaccurate and insulting to McCarthy.³⁷ Even moderate Republicans who opposed McCarthy's methods felt the report was designed first, to get McCarthy, and secondly, to whitewash the State Department. Thus the

Republican party condemned the Report.

It would seem that the Tydings investigation accomplished very little. McCarthy, for example, failed to expose a single "card-carrying communist" in the State Department, though he did name loyalty risks. The committee for its part, as already noted, failed to investigate the security of the State Department. Yet, the Tydings investigation was extremely important because it made McCarthy a national celebrity. "The investigation established McCarthy in the eyes of a few articulate and millions of inarticulate, anti-communists as the standard-bearer in the fight to expose communist infiltration of the Federal government."³⁸ On the other hand, the investigation earned McCarthy the eternal hatred of American liberals who were blatant anti-anti-communists.

Enraged by the fact that Tydings had failed in his task to crush McCarthy, the liberal establishment became obsessed with the desire to destroy him themselves. "Their own formidable propaganda facilities had focused the nation's attention on this one gladiator that all might be edified by his forthcoming humiliation; it was unthinkable now to turn out the lights and refund the tickets without a show."³⁹ Thus, the liberal assault on McCarthy began. The liberal media portrayed him as a "ruthless, reckless, mindless fiend who had yet to utter his first honest statement."⁴⁰ Not satisfied with simple name-calling, some liberal

newspapers began digging into McCarthy's past and printed countless half-truths and distorted stories concerning his record as both judge and Senator. For instance, they printed that McCarthy called for sugar de-control at the bidding of the Pepsi-Cola company, and that he opposed public housing because he was a tool of the real estate lobby. In addition, it was claimed that he took part in the Malmedy investigations to please his pro-Nazi backers in Wisconsin. The fact that these smears were completely untrue seemed to mean little to the liberals. Yet, ironically, it was the liberals who, during the Tydings hearings, self-righteously denounced McCarthy as a man who smeared innocent people; or who made irresponsible and reckless accusations! In fact, they even coined the word "McCarthyism" to describe his techniques--techniques they themselves would use in their campaign to discredit him. In short, the "intellectual elite within which liberals predominate a) refused to try and understand McCarthy or the phenomenon of McCarthism and b) acted brutally toward him and increasingly toward it."⁴¹

Despite this vast liberal campaign to smear him, McCarthy continued to warn Americans about the dangers of communist subversion in high places. It should be pointed out that this issue was no longer a device to garner votes as far as McCarthy was concerned. He was now seized by "an intense almost fanatical interest in the Reds who

lurked in government. This obsession often wearied his staff, bored old friends and astonished several Senate colleagues. It was ironic that while critics railed at McCarthy for being wholly cynical, immoral and even amoral those closest to him knew that he had become a zealot."⁴² For the rest of his life he would devote almost all his energy to anti-communism.

In the 1950 congressional election he travelled all across the country, giving speeches of support for anti-communist candidates and denouncing the internal security record of the Truman Administration. Eager for revenge, he campaigned especially hard in Maryland for the Republican candidate who opposed Milliard Tydings. When the election was over, the Republicans gained five seats in the Senate and 28 in the House. In addition, many of those newly-elected Congressmen were conservatives, which enhanced the power of the right in the American legislature. McCarthy's own power was also enhanced by the election, as most people gave him credit for the defeat of many prominent Democrats, including Tydings. This analysis has since been disputed, and most historians now believe that McCarthy's part in the 1950 election was overrated. Richard Fried, for instance, points out that while many McCarthyites won election, so too did many liberal opponents of McCarthy. He also points out that the Republican victory was not as great as the one scored in the 1946 election.⁴³ But, at the time,

people attributed to McCarthy the power to defeat his enemies at the polls by labelling them as soft on communism. This increased his prestige and power and made him somebody to be taken very seriously.

As already noted, McCarthy by late 1950 had become one of the leading spokesman for the conservative wing of his party. He used this new-found influence to advance the cause of anti-communism by publicly attacking anyone who, in his opinion, was aiding the Soviet Union. During the Korean War, he regularly lashed out at both Harry Truman and Dean Acheson, the Secretary of State. "He called the President a s.o.b. and declared that the decision to dismiss MacArthur was a communist victory won with the aid of bourbon and benedictine."⁴⁴ He also repeatedly called for the resignation or dismissal of the Secretary of State, whom he called the "Red Dean of Fashion". He led campaigns to deny Senate confirmation to Anna Rosenberg, who was nominated to serve as an aid to the Secretary of Defence and to Philip Jessup, who was nominated to be a delegate to the United Nations General Assembly, on the grounds that they were possible security risks. His most controversial attack came on June 14, 1951, when he assailed George C. Marshall, the Secretary of War. In a 60,000 word speech, McCarthy blasted Marshall's role in American foreign policy since the 1940's and went so far as to suggest that there was some kind of traitor. This attack caused quite a stir,

as Marshall was a popular public figure. "As wartime leaders, Eisenhower and MacArthur were greater popular heroes. But it is doubtful if any American of his generation had built throughout his career as good an image as a man than George Catlett Marshall."⁴⁵ These kinds of attacks kept McCarthy in the spotlight and also brought liberalism to a boil.

One myth that has emerged is that while McCarthy was making these charges, no one dared to oppose him. In fact, many believe that the United States experienced a Reign of Terror during which McCarthy frightened millions of citizens into silence. One liberal declared that "such was the reign of terror that it required an act of physical courage to contribute money to Harvard."⁴⁶ Yet, no such Reign of Terror existed, for "on the contrary, McCarthy's entire career consisted of little more than attacking, being attacked and counterattacking."⁴⁷ The liberal media, for instance, continued to hammer away at McCarthy, employing emotionalism, distortion, smear tactics and guilt by association. Newspapers in Wisconsin labelled him a fascist, a Nazi and even a Communist.⁴⁸ The liberal columnist, Drew Pearson, did his best to convince everyone that McCarthy was an anti-semite, while cartoonist Herblock drew him as an ape.⁴⁹ One of the worst attacks came in September of 1951, when the liberal New York Post published a seventeen part series titled "The One-Man Mob of Joe McCarthy."

"The series was a highly emotional but remarkably thorough compilation of everything unsavory that had been dug up about McCarthy in the past."⁵⁰ The articles smeared McCarthy by distorting his part in the housing issue and the Malmedy hearings. They also called his supporters fascists and implied that he was a homosexual. Liberal politicians also began to step up their campaign to discredit McCarthy. In 1951, President Truman and members of his Administration launched strong attacks against him. These attacks were so strong that 25 Republican Senators denounced them as smear tactics.⁵¹ Obviously, it was not dangerous to attack McCarthy.

McCarthy also suffered attacks from within the Senate. For instance, after his defeat in 1950, Millard Tydings filed a complaint with the Subcommittee on Privileges and Elections, claiming that McCarthy had used libelous and unlawful tactics in the election campaign. The committee's investigation led to unfavourable publicity for McCarthy and resulted in a report critical of his actions in the Maryland Senatorial race.⁵² Another attack came from Senator William Benton, a liberal Democrat, who in the summer of 1951 brought forward a resolution calling for McCarthy's expulsion from the Senate.⁵³ Benton presented ten cases which supported his view that McCarthy was not fit to be a Senator. These cases, among other things, recounted McCarthy's activities in the sugar, housing and Malmedy

issues and brought up his part in the Tydings hearings. Most importantly, they claimed that he had cheated on his taxes and had accepted bribes from various lobby groups.⁵⁴ Eventually, the resolution resulted in the formation of the Hennings Committee which was to investigate the charges brought forward by Benton. Unfortunately, for liberals everywhere, the committee was unable to find any specific evidence linking McCarthy to any illegal activities. The Report did suggest possible violation of tax laws and corrupt practices such as taking bribes, though they could not prove these allegations. Any objective observer would have quickly seen the Report for what it was, a smear job. In fact, "this hurried and unfair report should have been quickly dismissed by the nation's liberals and intellectual community for it contained features often associated with extremist literature and condemned as McCarthyism. But... many otherwise reasonable people welcomed the Hennings Report with fanfare and applause."⁵⁵ The Report did not lead to McCarthy's expulsion.

McCarthy, for his part, responded to these attacks with smears of his own, often impugning the loyalty of his critics. For instance, he called the anti-McCarthy columnist Drew Pearson a "Moscow-directed character assassin" and the "sugar-coated voice of Russia." For the most part, though, he reserved these kinds of attacks not for individuals, but for newspapers. He would often question the

loyalty of liberal newspapers that criticized him. He often called the Washington Post or the Milwaukee Journal pro-communist or at least opposed to anyone who was against communism. Other papers on his disloyal list were the New York Times, Christian Science Monitor, Louisville Courier-Journal, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, New York Herald Tribune, Baltimore Sun, Capital Times and New York Post as well as Time magazine.⁵⁶ McCarthy's philosophy seemed to be that anyone who opposed him was not anti-communist and therefore suspect.

The year 1952 was an important election year in the United States, both because it was a Presidential election year and because Joe McCarthy was up for re-election. The Republican party nominated war hero Dwight D. Eisenhower for President and Richard Nixon for Vice-President. McCarthy, who had supported General Douglas MacArthur's nomination, was not that pleased with his party's choice.⁵⁷ Eisenhower, for his part, did not like McCarthy or his tactics and was particularly irritated by his attack on George Marshall.⁵⁸ Yet, in the name of party unity, McCarthy campaigned hard for Eisenhower while the General remained silent about McCarthy's tactics. As in the 1950 election, McCarthy campaigned for conservative Republican candidates all across the country. But his main contribution to the Republican cause came in October, when in a nationally televised broadcast, he tried to link Adlai Stevenson, the liberal Democratic candidate

for President, with Alger Hiss. At one point in the speech, he called Stevenson "Alger...I mean Adlai." For their part the Democrats tried to make McCarthy and McCarthyism an issue in the campaign. Stevenson, for instance, blamed McCarthy for "the paralysis of initiative, the discouragement and intimidation that followed in its wake which inhibits the bold imaginative thoughts and discussions that is the anvil of policy."⁵⁹ Other Democrats, in less eloquent phrases, branded McCarthy as a Fascist and warned that if the Republicans were elected, a wave of smear and fear would sweep the country. As Harry Truman put it, "you cannot trust your human rights to a party that's winning on the coattails of Joe McCarthy."⁶⁰ Naturally, the liberal community did everything in its power to see that McCarthy was defeated at the polls. The strongest blast against him came with the publication of the book, McCarthy: The Man, the Senator, the Ism, by Jack Anderson and Ronald May. This muckracking biography contained every charge ever made against McCarthy, and every chapter contained factual errors, slanted interpretations, partisan conclusions and even occasional fiction."⁶¹ Yet, the book was greeted enthusiastically by liberals and was given favourable reviews in many journals. Moreover, prominent liberals blitzed Wisconsin, imploring the voters there to dump McCarthy.

When the campaign was finally over, the Republican party rolled to an impressive victory, as they captured the

White House and both Houses of Congress. McCarthy was easily re-elected, though he received fewer votes in this election than he had in the 1946 race. In fact, he received fewer votes than any other Republican candidate in Wisconsin. On the national scene many of the conservative candidates McCarthy supported were not elected, and historians now believe that the ones that did win owed their victories more to Eisenhower than to McCarthy.⁶² Thus he may have had little influence in the election results of 1952. One reason for this is that his sole issue was communist subversion, and that was a subject that did not really concern most Americans. In fact, pollsters reported that most Americans were more concerned about the Korean War, government corruption and with Adlai Stevenson's divorce than with domestic communism.⁶³ Nevertheless, he was re-elected to a six-year term, and now his party was in power.

In the newly-elected Senate, McCarthy became chairman of the Committee on Government Operations and its Subcommittee on Investigations. This sub-committee was empowered by Congress to look into anything connected with the operation of the government at all levels. "This might be stretched to authorization to investigate every person, group, school, institution, industry, business, or activity whatsoever which directly or indirectly touched the government or benefited from federal funds, whether by grant, subsidy,

payment, tax exemption or otherwise."⁶⁴ Armed with this authority, McCarthy promised to undertake extensive anti-communist probes and to investigate and expose communists in the educational system. To help him in his investigations, he hired twenty-five-year-old Roy Cohn as chief counsel for the committee. Cohn, despite his age, was an experienced investigator and a staunch anti-communist.

McCarthy's first target was the Voice of America, which was the radio propaganda arm of the State Department's International Information Administration.⁶⁵ This was soon followed by a probe of the State Department's overseas libraries, which were also intended to function as propaganda devices. The latter investigation was successful in that it resulted in the removal of many pro-Soviet or pro-Communist books from the libraries.⁶⁶ McCarthy's committee also launched a successful investigation of the Government Printing Office which printed top-secret documents. In fact, in August of 1953, the committee turned up "an employee of the Government Printing Office, who had access to classified information and who pleaded the protection of the Fifth Amendment in the face of charges of communist affiliation."⁶⁷ Obviously, then, McCarthy used his power as a Congressional investigator to weed out communist subversives within the government.

McCarthy was also concerned about the dangers of external communism. It was this concern, for example, which led

him to persuade several Greek shipping magnates to halt all trade with Communist China. This action caused him to be criticized for overstepping his boundaries, but the Secretary of State conceded that McCarthy had acted in the national interest.⁶⁸ McCarthy would also oppose the Republican President if he felt the Executive was in some way aiding the United States' communist enemies. For instance, he opposed the appointment of Charles Bohlen as ambassador to the Soviet Union and the nomination of James Cononant as High Commissioner of Germany. He did not approve of Bohlen because he was a defender of the Yalta agreement, and he had reservations about Cononant because, among other things, McCarthy felt he did not understand the dangers of communism.⁶⁹ McCarthy also criticized the Administration for not pressuring America's allies to stop their trade with Red China. These actions did little to endear McCarthy to the President who, as already noted, did not particularly like him in the first place. But Eisenhower did not wish to confront McCarthy, since he feared that such an action would only succeed in splitting the Republican party.

This apparent complicity on the part of Eisenhower enraged American liberals who had hoped that a popular, moderate, Republican President could successfully stop McCarthy. By this time, their desire to destroy him politically had become a mania. Liberal intellectuals spent

countless hours debating methods and priorities in the fight against this one man. As Senator Hubert Humphrey put it, "McCarthy's real threat to American democracy... is the fact that he has immobilized the liberal movement. Liberals don't talk about anything else any more."⁷⁰ As part of their effort to get McCarthy, the liberals established the so-called Clearing House, an agency which collected and channeled anti-McCarthy information to any opponent of McCarthy who asked for it. Up until that time though, they had been unable to collect enough ammunition to shoot him down.

In the meantime, McCarthy decided to investigate subversion among civilian scientists employed by the Army Signal Corps Engineering Laboratories in Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. McCarthy, with his inclination for the dramatic, claimed that this investigation had "all the earmarks of extremely dangerous espionage."⁷¹ He also claimed that Julius Rosenberg, the convicted atomic spy, might have created a spy ring there that was still in operation. In fact, he did not uncover a single spy in the installation, but he did find a lax security system. Several witnesses who appeared before his committee spoke of the sloppy handling of classified documents.⁷²

In November of 1953, McCarthy turned his attention to the possibility of communist subversion within defence plants. He became angered when witnesses appearing before

his subcommittee during this investigation pleaded the Fifth Amendment when asked about their communist affiliations. At one point during the hearings he declared: "I wish there were some way to make these conspirators testify, because the Fifth Amendment was for the purpose of protecting the individual not for the purpose of protecting a conspiracy against this nation."⁷³ He concluded his probe by demanding that all Fifth Amendment communists, as he called them, who were working in defence plants be fired and that the government withdraw or cancel all defence contracts with companies that continued to employ them.⁷⁴

In February 1954, McCarthy once again opened an investigation on the army. This time he discovered that a dentist, Irving Peress, had been inducted into the army, excused from overseas assignment and promoted to Major, despite the fact that he had invoked the Fifth Amendment on his application under the Doctors Draft Act. In fact, the army had realized its error and an order was given to discharge Peress within 90 days.⁷⁵ In the meantime, though, McCarthy called Peress before his committee, and the dentist refused to answer questions about his political beliefs. This led McCarthy to call for his court martial, but the army, at Major Peress' request, gave him a hasty and honourable discharge instead. This enraged McCarthy, who now felt the army was trying to cover up a scandal. Therefore,

he became determined to discover just who had promoted Peress.

On February 18, General Ralph Zwicker, the commander of the base where Peress was stationed, was called before the committee. Zwicker was an unfriendly witness who, on advice from his lawyer, refused to give McCarthy the names of all officers who were involved in Peress' promotion and discharge. These tactics angered McCarthy and he insulted Zwicker saying that he did not have "the brains of a five year old" and that he was "not fit to wear that uniform." McCarthy's reputation was tarnished by his abusive treatment of Zwicker. Naturally, liberals all across the country deplored his behaviour but, more importantly, even some conservatives were angered by his conduct. The conservative Chicago Tribune, for instance, wrote, "We do not believe Senator McCarthy's behaviour toward General Zwicker was justified and we expect it has injured his cause of driving the disloyal from government service."⁷⁸ The attack on Zwicker had clearly weakened McCarthy's reputation.

Many in Washington at that time believed that McCarthy's treatment of Zwicker had incensed President Eisenhower.⁷⁹ Thus, when he called a press conference on March 3, it was assumed by many, that he intended strongly to condemn McCarthy's conduct. However, to the disappointment of many liberals, Eisenhower's statement at the press

conference was simply a mild defence of the army which did not even mention McCarthy by name. Without even knowing what the President had said, McCarthy replied to Eisenhower's statement with a televised speech. Unfortunately, since McCarthy had expected Eisenhower to denounce him, his reply took the form of a rebuke of the President and his policies. He stated that "apparently the President and I now agree on the necessity of getting rid of communists. We apparently disagree only on how we should handle those who protect communists."⁸⁰ This violent reaction to Eisenhower's mild statement further hurt McCarthy's reputation and turned some conservatives against him. H. Kaltenborn, a long-time McCarthy supporter and an influential news commentator, turned against the senator saying, "he has become completely egotistic, arrogant, arbitrary, narrow minded, reckless and irresponsible. Power has corrupted him."⁸¹ At the same time his approval ratings in the polls were falling. Clearly by March 1954, McCarthy thanks to his own temper, was in trouble.

Sensing that McCarthy was now vulnerable, his opponents began to attack. On March 8, Vice-President Nixon, in a speech designed to be a slap at McCarthy, criticized those who used "reckless talk and questionable methods."⁸² On the very next day, Senator Ralph Flanders, a moderate Republican, delivered a blistering attack on McCarthy from the Senate floor.⁸³ In an important gesture,

Eisenhower praised the speech. Then on the very same day, Edward R. Murrow, a liberal newsman, presented on his television program, "See It Now" a documentary which put McCarthy in a bad light. The program was a smear job. As one historian wrote:

In the process of putting together film clips to show the Senator in the worst possible light, Murrow seems to have fallen into some of the same techniques used by the man he was exposing. Senator McCarthy's speeches were taken out of context, and certain sequences seem to have been included more because of the expression on the Senator's face or the tone of his voice... rather than the substance of what he had to say. Other sequences... seemed to have been included primarily to embarrass McCarthy.

However, the program served its purpose in that it helped to turn public opinion against McCarthy. In fact, the entire anti-McCarthy offensive seemed to be succeeding, as his standings in the polls continued to fall.

Then, on March 11, the army launched its own anti-McCarthy offensive when it charged that Roy Cohn tried to use his position to get favourable treatment for David Schine, a member of McCarthy's staff who had been drafted into the army. McCarthy denied the charge and claimed that the army was trying to force him to drop his investigation by using Schine as a hostage. It was decided that the Investigations Subcommittee, without McCarthy or Cohn of course, would examine the charges made by both sides. The hearings, which were to be televised, dragged

on for over two months and when they were finished, no legal verdict resulted. The Republicans on the committee issued a report ~~harsher~~ on the army than on McCarthy and Cohn, while the Democrats offered a report more critical of McCarthy than of the army. Yet, the importance of the Army-McCarthy hearings was not over which side was right. The charges, after all, were trivial. In reality the hearings were, as Roy Cohn has written, "less a search for truth than a gigantic personality play."⁸⁵ Each side was trying to win popular approval for their cause. In addition, liberals had a "widespread hope that the hearings would arouse the public to...a mass rejection of Senator McCarthy."⁸⁶

As it turned out, McCarthy did not perform well on television. In fact, his performance was downright miserable. He complained bitterly of being interrupted, was stubborn, verbally brutal and repetitious. Moreover, "with his easily erupting temper, his menacing monotone, his unsmiling mien, and his perpetual 5-o'clock shadow, he did seem the perfect stock villain. Central casting could not have come up with a better one."⁸⁷ Furthermore, throughout the hearings, McCarthy was skillfully outpointed in verbal debates by the army's lawyer Joseph Welch. Thus, if there was a loser in this personality contest, it was Joe McCarthy.

Many claim that McCarthy's downfall can be traced to his poor television performance. As one writer put it, "the American people had finally had a good look at Joe

McCarthy and he was finished."⁸⁸ This theory, though, is false, for public opinion polls, taken months after the hearings had concluded, indicated that "the hearings did not cause a definitive turnabout among the public. The Senator's supporters did not collectively turn their backs on him."⁸⁹ This is not to say that the hearings did not damage his political career, as they did result in the abandonment of McCarthy by the political centre.⁹⁰ But, for the most part, those who supported him before the hearings still supported him after the hearings. In fact, claimed Roy Cohn, "he had the support of millions who understood the seriousness of the Communist issue. These millions were not discouraged by his lack of TV personality, but continued in their belief in him and his dedication to that cause."⁹¹

Yet, to the liberals, the hearings were a signal to accelerate their attacks against McCarthy. Indeed, "never had the senator been under such widespread, sustained and organized attack."⁹² The most startling attack came from his own state, where anti-McCarthyites launched a movement to have him recalled. It was the largest grass-roots protest in Wisconsin history.⁹³ The anti-McCarthy movement convinced the Republican hierarchy that McCarthy was a liability. Therefore, the Republican National Committee let it be known that he would not be invited to take a leading role in the 1954 election campaign. Moreover,

many Republican candidates declared that they wanted nothing to do with him.

His most serious problem, however, was in the Senate itself, where a debate was raging on whether or not he should be censured for his actions. This movement started on July 30, when Senator Flanders made a speech on the Senate floor which included a resolution calling for McCarthy's censure. On August 2, the censure resolution was referred to a special committee for study. The committee was made up of three Republicans and three Democrats, but it was hardly impartial. One member, for instance, told a closed door meeting of the Democratic Policy Committee on July 29, that his mind was made up on McCarthy and that he was going to vote for the Flanders' resolution.⁹⁴ On September 27, after holding public but not televised hearings, the committee issued a report which recommended the censure of McCarthy on two counts. The committee felt he should be condemned for not appearing before the Subcommittee on Privileges and Elections in 1952 (the committee which had prepared the infamous Hennings report) and for his abuse of General Zwicker. The Zwicker charge was later dropped and replaced by the charge that McCarthy had abused the Watkins Committee (the committee investigating the resolution).⁹⁵

On November 8, the Senate met to debate the censure question, at which time McCarthy blasted the Watkins Committee as the "unwitting handmaiden of the Communist

Party." He was angry and fully expected the Senate to censure him. Yet, had he been willing to compromise, McCarthy could have easily escaped the Senate condemnation, for the Southern Democrats, who were mostly conservatives, were willing to vote against censure if McCarthy would apologize for his behaviour.⁹⁶ Many of his friends pleaded with him to make just such a compromise. "A cynical man would have wasted no time. But Joe was unprepared to give an inch in what he saw as his personal war to protect the flag. In his view, any punishment, no matter how severe, was preferable to compromise or appeasement. He would never yield to those doing the work of Reds."⁹⁷ As a result, the Senate voted to condemn him by a vote of 66 to 22. All 44 Democrats voted for censure, as did 22 moderate Republicans, while 22 conservative Republicans voted against the motion.

Conceivably, McCarthy could have effectively continued his crusade despite his censure. He still retained his privileges, and there were no penalties connected with the censure. Moreover:

He stood condemned for insulting and defying a Senate committee that had become seriously involved in partisan politics and had propagated charges that were often flagrantly inaccurate. He also stood condemned for attacking a committee that contained senators who had not been entirely objective toward the censure question and who had used harsh and inflammatory language themselves.⁹⁸

Finally, he still had the support of millions, despite the

censure. However, after the Senate vote, McCarthy faded from public view into relative obscurity. There were several reasons for this. In the first place, he simply had the fight drained out of him by the beginning of 1955. The fight went out of him because he "had taken more punishment than a normal man could be expected to absorb. It is a fact that no man in this century was subjected to such a campaign of vilification as the junior senator from Wisconsin. Never have so much vituperation and defamation been directed toward a person in public life."⁹⁹ The censure was the last straw for it, "destroyed his spirit, accelerated his physical deterioration, and hastened his death."¹⁰⁰ After the censure, as Roy Cohn wrote, "where once he had enormous reserves of energy, he was now overcome by apathy. He stayed away from his office and the Senate floor more and more often."¹⁰¹ The liberals had succeeded in destroying him.

Another reason for his decline was that, in 1954, McCarthy lost his committee chairmanship, because the Democrats had succeeded in recapturing the Senate that year. As a result he was reduced to being simply a senator of a minority party without the facilities of a Congressional committee at his disposal. Obviously, he could no longer conduct effective investigations.

However, the main reason for his lapse into obscurity is that the liberal community, which had vilified him for

most of his career, now chose to ignore him. The press, for instance, no longer considered him newsworthy. As one Senator declared:

The difference between McCarthy before censure and McCarthy after censure is the difference between getting headlines on page one and being buried with the classified ads. From here on out McCarthy will wear a scarlet 'C' on his chest--a 'C' for censure¹⁰²

The reason for this strategy his clear. The liberals had finally succeeded in discrediting McCarthy. It did not matter that the censure was simply a slap on the wrist. "All that mattered was that the Senate had voted to condemn McCarthy. Insofar as an act of judgement could be had, it had been achieved, the lights could be turned off, the show at long last was over."¹⁰³ Thus, liberals wanted to regard the censure as the final word on McCarthy. Accordingly, they refrained from giving him an unnecessary publicity.

It should be pointed out that McCarthy did continue to fight communism after the censure, but on a much smaller scale. He persisted in warning about the dangers of domestic communism, and he spoke out against detente with the Soviet Union. His "moral commitment was stronger than it had ever been. He had a passionate conviction of having been right. He wanted to carry on his battle and win again."¹⁰⁴ Unfortunately, his battle ended with his death in the spring of 1957.

Despite its rather ignominious end, McCarthy's

career was, on the whole, rather successful. While it is true that his contributions to the fight against domestic communist subversion were not achievements of the first rank, they were nonetheless valuable. For instance, he drew public attention to the fact that the State Department's security procedures were lax and improper. "The subsequent acceleration of the State Department's security process was certainly the result, at least in part, of the public pressures stimulated by the Senator's activities."¹⁰⁵ Moreover, other government agencies, like the Government Printing Office and the army, reassessed their security programs because of McCarthy's investigations. In the private sector the General Electric company agreed to fire any employee who was communist or who pleaded the Fifth Amendment when asked about his political affiliations. McCarthy also raised important questions about how communism was to be treated in the United States. "There is no doubt that the furor aroused by Senator McCarthy in several instances caused many persons to reconsider problems about Communism that they had tended to ignore."¹⁰⁶ He raised the question of whether or not the United States should have books by communist authors on the shelves of government libraries abroad. He also brought out into the open the question of whether or not the army should draft communists, give them commissions and then honourable discharges. Finally, he asked if it was proper for people who plead

the Fifth Amendment to be employed in important defence industries. Naturally, he answered every one of those questions with a resounding no.

It must not be forgotten, however, that McCarthy definitely did have deficiencies in his character. He was stubborn, impatient, overly aggressive, overly dramatic and often acted on impulse. In addition, he frequently sensationalized evidence and neglected to do proper research. It is also a fact that he often said foolish things and that he smeared opponents and bullied witnesses at his hearings. Despite these drawbacks, he was not the villain he is portrayed to be in many histories. He simply used the best methods available to him to fight what he considered to be a great evil. "The job he felt he had to do could hardly be done by a gentle, tolerant spirit who could see all around the problem."¹⁰⁷ At any rate, his methods were not as bad as many critics like to suggest. "They were the small change of American politics--nothing that has not been used on every side of every political controversy for scores of years."¹⁰⁸ He was not, for instance, the first Congressional Chairman to abuse a witness nor was he the first Senator to attack verbally opponents. It should also be remembered that the liberal opponents of McCarthy, who are often portrayed as heroes and as defenders of decency, also used excesses and outrageous methods in their assault on McCarthy.

Joseph McCarthy was not a villain, but a patriot who simply wanted to protect his country from the menace of communism. "When his day of destiny came, he looked around, innocently, and saw the gargoyles of the Anti-Christ staring and sneering at him from everywhere, and innocently he reached out to crush them."¹⁰⁹

But what motivated McCarthy to fight communism the way he did? The answer, as will be proven in the next chapter, was simply his conservatism.

NOTES

¹ Robert Griffith, The Politics of Fear, Joseph R. McCarthy and the Senate (Lexington, 1970), 2.

² Thomas Reeves, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy, A Biography (New York, 1982), 4.

³ Ibid., 5.

⁴ Richard Rovers, Senator Joe McCarthy (Cleveland, 1959), 83.

⁵ Reeves, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy, 9.

⁶ Roy Cohn, McCarthy (New York, 1968), 13.

⁷ Reeves, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy, 17.

⁸ Cohn, McCarthy, 14.

⁹ Griffith, The Politics of Fear, 4.

¹⁰ Reeves, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy, 35.

¹¹ Ibid., 60.

¹² Roberta Strauss Feuerlicht, Joe McCarthy and McCarthyism, The Hate that Haunts America (New York, 1972), 58.

¹³ Cohn, McCarthy, 18.

¹⁴ Michael Miles, The Odyssey of the American Right (Oxford, 1980), 196.

¹⁵ Reeves, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy, 110.

¹⁶ Ibid., 120.

¹⁷ Griffith, The Politics of Fear, 16.

- ¹⁸ Reeves, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy, 137.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., 140.
- ²⁰ Ibid., 167.
- ²¹ Fred J. Cook, The Nightmare Decade, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy (New York, 1971), 131.
- ²² Richard Fried, Man Against McCarthy (New York, 1976), 43.
- ²³ Ibid., 45.
- ²⁴ Edwin Bayley, Joe McCarthy and the Press (Madison, 1981), 18.
- ²⁵ William Rushers, Special Counsel (New Rochelle, 1968), 246.
- ²⁶ Congressional Record, February 29, 1950, p. 1959.
- ²⁷ Ibid., 1968.
- ²⁸ Griffith, The Politics of Fear, 54.
- ²⁹ William Buckley and L. Brent Bozell, McCarthy and His Enemies, The Record and its Meaning (Chicago, 1954), 60.
- ³⁰ Reeves, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy, 243.
- ³¹ Buckley and Bozell, McCarthy and His Enemies, 65.
- ³² Ibid., 165.
- ³³ U.S. Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations, State Department Employee Loyalty Investigation, 1950, 11, 12.
- ³⁴ Griffith, The Politics of Fear, 68.
- ³⁵ Buckley and Bozell, McCarthy and His Enemies, 181.

- 36 Ibid., 166.
- 37 Ibid., 170.
- 38 Ibid., 62.
- 39 Rusher, Special Counsel, 246.
- 40 Reeves, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy, 315.
- 41 William Buckley, Up From Liberalism (New York, 1968),
53.
- 42 Reeves, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy, 287.
- 43 Fried, Men Against McCarthy, 120.
- 44 Griffith, The Politics of Fear, 132.
- 45 Cook, The Nightmare Decade, 330.
- 46 William Buckley, A Hymnal: The Controversial Arts
(New York, 1978) 32.
- 47 Miles, The Odyssey of the American Right, 197.
- 48 Michael O'Brien, McCarthy and McCarthyism in Wisconsin
(Columbia, Missouri, 1980), 119.
- 49 Cohn, McCarthy, 244.
- 50 Bayley, Joe McCarthy and the Press, 142.
- 51 Miles, The Odyssey of the American Right, 197.
- 52 Griffith, The Politics of Fear, 156.
- 53 Ibid., 157.
- 54 Fried, Men Against McCarthy, 202-203.
- 55 Reeves, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy, 413.

- 56 Bayley, Joe McCarthy and the Press, 127.
- 57 Feurerlicht, Joe McCarthy and McCarthyism, 94.
- 58 Ibid., 94.
- 59 Fried, Men Against McCarthy, 225.
- 60 Ibid., 238.
- 61 Reeves, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy, 449.
- 62 Fried, Men Against McCarthy, 249.
- 63 George Gallup, The Gallup Poll, Public Opinion 1935-1971 (New York, 1972), 1115.
- 64 Lately Thomas, When Even Angels Wept: The Senator Joseph McCarthy Affair--A Story Without a Hero (New York, 1973), 284.
- 65 Fried, Men Against McCarthy, 258.
- 66 Cohn, McCarthy, 130.
- 67 James Rorty and Moshe Decter, McCarthy and the Communists (Boston, 1954), 17.
- 68 Fried, Men Against McCarthy, 259.
- 69 Buckley and Bozell, McCarthy and His Enemies, 178.
- 70 Fried, Men Against McCarthy, 264.
- 71 Griffith, The Politics of Fear, 70.
- 72 Reeves, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy, 523.
- 73 Ibid., 526.
- 74 Ibid., 526.

- 75 Bayley, Joe McCarthy and the Press, 187.
- 76 Ibid., 187.
- 77 U.S. Congress, Senate, 81st Session, Committee on Government Operations, Subcommittee on Permanent Investigation, Communist Infiltration in the Army (Washington D.C. 1953), 146-153.
- 78 Reeves, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy, 547.
- 79 Ibid., 557.
- 80 Bayley, Joe McCarthy and the Press, 185.
- 81 Ibid., 190.
- 82 Reeves, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy, 578.
- 83 Griffith, The Politics of Fear, 273.
- 84 Bayley, Joe McCarthy and the Press, 190.
- 85 Cohn, McCarthy, 210.
- 86 G.D. Wiebe, "The Army-McCarthy Hearings and the Public Conscience", Public Opinion Quarterly, XXI (Winter 1959), 490.
- 87 Cohn, McCarthy, 208.
- 88 Feurerlicht, Joe McCarthy and McCarthyism, 138.
- 89 Wiebe, "The Army-McCarthy Hearings and the Public Conscience", Public Opinion Quarterly, 492.
- 90 Miles, Odyssey of the American Right, 218.
- 91 Cohn, McCarthy, 207.
- 92 Thomas, When Even Angels Wept, 190.

- 93 O'Brien, McCarthy and McCarthyism in Wisconsin, 158.
- 94 Reeves, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy, 645.
- 95 Miles, Odyssey of the American Right, 218.
- 96 Reeves, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy, 661.
- 97 Ibid., 636.
- 98 Ibid., 665.
- 99 Cohn, McCarthy, 254.
- 100 Reeves, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy, 665.
- 101 Cohn, McCarthy, 254.
- 102 Thomas, When Even Angels Wept, 628.
- 103 Rusher, Special Counsel, 247.
- 104 Reeves, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy, 660.
- 105 Rorty and Decter, McCarthy and the Communists, 13.
- 106 Ibid., 17.
- 107 Cohn, McCarthy, 279.
- 108 William Chamberlain, "The Meaning of McCarthyism", National Review, IV (May 18, 1958), 438.
- 109 William Schlamm, "Across McCarthy's Grave", National Review, III (May 18, 1957), 416.

CHAPTER V

McCARTHYISM AND THE AMERICAN RIGHT.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. It will attempt to provide evidence that Joseph McCarthy was indeed a dedicated conservative and secondly, it will show that his actions were based on the conservative philosophy of the 1950's.

There have been several theories put forward by historians to explain what motivated Joe McCarthy to do what he did. Nearly all are defamatory, and many are ridiculous. One absurd theory holds that McCarthy was driven by his own sense of inferiority and self-hatred. One historian, for instance, when describing McCarthy, wrote of "those demons of fear and self-hatred which pursued him on his short race through life."¹ This theory, which is based solely on two biased studies done in the 1950's by psychiatrists who had neither met McCarthy nor conducted original research into his life, is simply not based on reality.²

Indeed, McCarthy was, if anything, extremely self-confident and bold. As one person who knew McCarthy put it: "to understand McCarthy you must realize that he thought he regularly talked with God. Another person who

knew Joe compared him to Evel Knievel."³ Clearly, it seems that McCarthy did not feel inferior about anything.

One of the most popular explanations of McCarthy's behaviour is that he was a cynical demagogue without principles who hungered for power and publicity. According to this theory, he adopted the anti-communist issue, not because he was sincerely concerned about Red subversion, but because he was it as a way to grab headlines and to boost his influence. As one writer put it,

I know of nothing to suggest that he ever for a moment really thought the government was riddled with communists. Had he really believed this, had he really cared, he would not have abandoned investigations merely from ennui or because of their failure to produce the headlines he expected. He was a political speculator, a prospector who drilled Communism and saw it come out like a gusher. He liked his gusher,⁴ but he would have liked any other just as well.

Another writer declared that "there is no evidence he ever believed in his own crusade, . . . For him a lie was the shortest route between today's obscurity and tomorrow's headlines."⁵ Thus the controversy concerning communist subversion in the early 1950's was explained as the result of McCarthy's unsavoury behaviour. Once he departs, the "problem" of McCarthyism disappears.⁶

It is difficult to understand why so many historians subscribe to this theory, as it is based on false premises and curious logic. In the first place, as was shown in the previous chapter, there is overwhelming evidence to the

effect that Joe McCarthy was a sincere anti-communist and that he was genuinely concerned about Communist subversion in the United States government. As one historian wrote,

Those closest to Joe knew that, oratorical flourishes aside, he was entirely sincere. When Lloyd Tegge (a friend of McCarthy) would ask him privately to soften his charges a bit for fear they were hurting him politically, Joe would launch into a frenetic tirade about Reds in Washington. "He'd tear me apart" Tegge later recalled.

It cannot be denied, of course, that McCarthy did like publicity and that he did have a talent for making himself the centre of attention, but all that proves is that he was a skillful politician who knew how to use the press to get his message across to the people. There is no evidence, moreover, that he tried to use the anti-communist issue as a platform to higher office. He never seriously considered running for President nor did he try to form a third party. "He sought only to retain his seat and best serve the public by kicking the Communists and pro-communists out of Washington."⁸ Finally, if McCarthy really was the power-hungry demagogue his critics suggest he was, why would he continue to hang on to an issue after it was hurting him politically? As William Rusher has written, "it would have taken a man far crazier than his worst enemies even alleged McCarthy to be to have supposed that his public image was on balance being improved or his personal power effectively augmented by the furious struggle in which he

found himself engaged from 1950 onward."⁹ Clearly, then, McCarthy was not totally motivated by a desire for fame or power.

Another interesting theory that has emerged has suggested that McCarthy was a Populist. According to this argument, his target was not simply Communists, but also the eastern educated, financial, political and intellectual elite. For one writer,

The emergence of McCarthy out of the wreckage of the LaFollette Progressive movement in Wisconsin is a clue to what he represents. He inherits the bitterest and most provincial aspects of a populism to which smooth talking has always meant the Big City, and the Big City has meant the Enemy.¹⁰

This idea is based upon the fact that McCarthy drew most of his support from the Mid-West which had been a strongly Populist area. However, as Michael Rogin pointed out, the Mid-West had by the 1950's "undergone an evolution from agrarian radicalism to extreme conservatism."¹¹ In addition, McCarthy, as will be shown later on, was an opponent of the New Deal, which Populists supported.¹² Finally, the charge that McCarthy liked to attack intellectuals and political elites is contradicted by the fact that many intellectuals and elites actually supported McCarthy and his crusade.¹³ Thus, the theory that McCarthy was a Populist does not stand up under close scrutiny.

All of these theories which supposedly explain why Joe

McCarthy was an anti-communist incredibly overlook or ignore the real key towards understanding his motivations, namely, his political conservatism. McCarthy was simply a conservative activist who based much of what he said and did on the ideology and attitudes of mid-twentieth century American conservatism. As mentioned in the previous chapter, McCarthy initially did not attach himself to any particular political ideology. Yet, during the 1946 Congressional election, he ran as a true-blue conservative. Throughout the campaign, for example, he condemned the New Deal, claiming that government bureaucracy "was sucking the very life blood from the nation and stifling the type of initiative which had previously made this nation the greatest on earth."¹⁴ In place of New Deal programs he called for less government and for less government control over the economy. In addition, he was against Big Labor, and was concerned about America's seeming retreat before Soviet imperialism.¹⁵ All of these positions, of course, were standard fare for conservatives of that time.

There is no direct evidence as to why McCarthy decided to embrace conservatism but it is probably safe to assume that, like so many other Americans in the mid-1940's, he simply became disillusioned with the way liberals were running the country and as a result shifted to the right. His military stint might also have influenced him, as several of the young veterans who ran for the Senate that

year were to the right of the political spectrum. Indeed, once in the Senate, this group of conservative veterans, which was known as the class of '46, distinguished itself by "vocal opposition to Communists, particularly of the domestic variety, . . . On socio-economic questions they were unabashed conservatives."¹⁶ Thus, McCarthy was actually only one of several young conservatives elected to Congress that year.

To remove any doubt as to his attitude, one needs only examine his voting record in the Senate which clearly reveals his affinity with right wing philosophy. From 1947 through 1949, for instance, he voted consistently for restrictive labor legislation, the lifting of price and quantity controls on consumer goods, tax cuts for higher income groups and smaller federal budgets. At the same time he voted against federal aid to education, public housing and public power appropriations. In fact, the leftist labor union, the CIO-PAC, considered his voting record to be one of the worst in the Senate.¹⁷ It is true, though, that he did favour a limited amount of public housing, but this did not detract from his generally conservative stance. It must be remembered that the United States was facing an extreme housing crisis after the war and that many conservatives felt that public housing of some sort was needed. Indeed, the dean of Republican conservatism, Robert Taft, supported public housing even more than McCarthy

did. There can be no doubt that, for all intents and purposes, his voting record in the Senate reveals him to be a right wing Republican on domestic issues.¹⁸

The most important aspect of Joe McCarthy's career, unquestionably, was his anti-communist crusade which began in the year 1950. It was his anti-communist activities that made him an important historical figure and in the minds of American liberals, at least, a villain. Clearly, it is of the utmost importance to know whether or not his crusade was consistent with conservative philosophy. In other words, was his battle against communism an example of conservatism in action?

Before that question can be answered it will be necessary to understand exactly what conservatives of 1950 thought about communism and why they felt the way they did.

Naturally, conservatives utterly detested communism, which to them represented socialism, atheism, and immorality.¹⁹ There is no need at this point to explain why they so passionately rejected it, as this was done in a previous chapter. They simply regarded communist philosophy as an absolute evil. What has to be examined is the evolution of conservative anti-communism, for while the American right has always hated and feared communism, the intensity of that hatred and dread has changed over time.²⁰ Since modern conservatism emerged in the 1930's, any study of right wing philosophy must logically begin there.

It may come as a surprise to many to discover that anti-communism was not a top priority for conservatives of the 1930's. They were, in fact, more concerned about the collectivist schemes of the New Deal than with any external communist threat.²¹ There were, however, a handful of conservatives in that era who tried to alert the nation to what they saw as the real and serious danger posed by Soviet communism. This small but important group of conservatives, which included, ironically, many ex-communists, was appalled by the fact that many liberals at that time saw the Soviet Union as a democratic, progressive state. They were even more outraged by the fact that many prominent liberals were collaborating with Communists in an American Popular Front.²² In an effort to dispel the liberal notions about communism, these early anti-communists tried to draw attention to the contrived famines, purge trials and slave labour camps, which were all part of Soviet life. But their efforts were in vain, "for these were men whose anti-communist voices cried in the desert of naively idealistic liberalism of the early 1930's and 1940's."²³ Thus, the anti-communists made very little impact on either public opinion or the mainstream conservative movement.

The contention that most conservatives were not overly concerned about Soviet communism is not undermined by the fact that conservative Congressmen created in 1938 the Special Committee on Un-American Activities. It is true

that this committee, which was chaired by Martin Dies, was designed to investigate subversive activities of both Communists and National Socialists. It is also true that it did a great service for the American people in that it educated the public as to the nature and aims of the communist party. However, the actions of the Committee were motivated more by a desire to embarrass the Roosevelt Administration than by anything else.²⁴ For instance, it eagerly investigated Communist infiltration of federal projects and often publicized the membership of Communist front organizations if they included the names of New Deal bureaucrats, an occurrence that was by no means rare. In 1939, for example, they discovered that 563 government employees were members of one such front.²⁵ At any rate, despite the publicity that the Committee often got, it was relatively unimportant when compared to the other committees that were operating at that time.²⁶

It was only during the latter stages of World War II that the anti-communists began to get a receptive audience. Conservatives who were never enthusiastic about the United States' alliance with the Soviet Union, began to attack what they considered to be appeasement of Russia. "From 1943, until the announcement of the Truman Doctrine conservative writers warned repeatedly that Soviet expansion would continue and that peace between the United States and the Soviet Union was an illusion of liberals and fellow travelers."²⁷ They argued that Russia was an

aggressive, imperialistic power that would continue to expand once Germany had been defeated. According to conservatives, the Soviets' cooperation with the West during the war was just a temporary halt to their aggressive plans. Thus, they were particularly vexed by the wartime conferences held at Teheran and Yalta, which to their minds were the ultimate in shortsighted appeasement. As result, conservatives complained loudly that Roosevelt had created a second Munich and handed over Eastern Europe to the Soviets.²⁸ However, at this point the Soviet Union was still a wartime ally and most Americans favoured a policy of detente with the Russians, believing that cooperation between the two powers would continue after the war.²⁹ Thus, the warnings of the conservative community fell on deaf ears.

Conservatives were also critical of the Democrats' policies toward China. "They interpreted the revolutionary turmoil in that country as part of the communist world conspiracy, and they criticized the United States government for faltering in its support of Chiang Kai Shek."³⁰ To save China from falling into the hands of the Communists, conservatives urged the Roosevelt and later the Truman Administration to grant military aid to the Nationalist forces. Once again their pleas were not heeded.

Events in the postwar years, however, quickly vindicated the right's mistrust of the Soviet Union. It soon became

apparent that the Soviet Union was not, as the conservatives had warned, a peaceful country, but was rather a dangerous enemy of freedom which was bent on dominating the world. This fact became perfectly clear to all but the willfully blind as Soviet Russia swiftly and brutally extended her influence across Eastern Europe, employing military coups, fabricated revolutions, and outright military occupation. Furthermore, the Soviets, who maintained a vast army in Eastern Europe, tried to seize West Berlin through a blockade. Nor was the Communist menace limited to Eastern Europe, as it also manifested itself in an insurrection in Greece and in the refusal of the Soviet Union to withdraw its forces from northern Iran. In 1949, China fell to the Communist forces and a year later Communist North Korea invaded South Korea. Even Western Europe was not immune, as large domestic Communist parties threatened the stability of France and Italy.

While this seemingly unstoppable expansion of worldwide Communism shocked virtually all Americans, it had a more profound impact on the conservative community. They became more convinced than ever that the Soviet Union, driven as it was by the revolutionary philosophy of Marxist-Leninism, was determined to spread Communism to every nation on the planet.³¹ This, of course, would result in the destruction of the most cherished values of Western civilization. Even the United States was vulnerable after 1949 when the Russians

developed their own nuclear weapons. Thus postwar conservatives had to face the unpleasant fact that the Soviet Union could conceivably impose its will on all mankind. No longer just an abstract concept, communism was now a concrete menace, and this led conservatives to see it as the primary danger threatening American freedom. His perception of Communism as a global menace came to dominate the American right as conservatives now saw the external threat of the Soviet Union as more important than the internal threat of domestic socialism.³³

Faced with what they considered to be an implacable and evil enemy, American conservatives devised various strategies to ensure the United States' survival. Conservatives were traditionally opposed to military conscription and to extensive foreign involvements.³⁴ Clearly, they were reluctant to endorse such policies, as they felt it would lead to the centralization of power in Washington which would translate into large budgets and extensive taxing powers for the government. In the name of battling communism, however, conservatives supported the draft, foreign military and economic aid, and collective security for such drastic measures were needed if the United States was to survive.³⁵ In the words of one conservative, "we will have to support large armies and air forces, atomic energy, central intelligence, war production boards, and the attendant centralization of power in Washington . . . for

neither an offensive nor defensive war can be waged . . . except through the instrument of totalitarian bureaucracy within our shores."³⁶ In the name of security, therefore, the American right was willing to sacrifice limited amounts of its cherished freedom which was an indication of just how concerned its members were with the Soviet threat.

This part of the right's anti-communist strategy was not controversial as even the liberals, who by now also felt the Soviet Union was a threat, accepted those policies. In fact, the liberal Truman Administration, among other things, began a containment policy designed to check the growth of Soviet Communism. Yet, most conservatives were not satisfied with merely containing Communism, as they saw this as a defensive policy which would do little to weaken the Soviet Union. Thus, in theory conservative strategy went further than containment and also called for defeating Communism by liberating those countries under Communist control. As one conservative writer put it, "if the Communists succeed in consolidating what they have already conquered then their complete world victory is certain . . . what this means is that liberation is the only defence against a Soviet world victory."³⁷ Among other things, liberationist policy, as it was known, called for massive world-wide propaganda, aid to anti-communist allies, and refusal to collaborate with the Soviet Union. Conservatives also felt the United States should encourage resistance movements

behind the Iron Curtain and prevent Russia from re-conquering Titoist Yugoslavia.³⁸ Thus, conservatives hoped not merely to contain Communism but to smash it.

These measures were designed to combat the external Communist threat, but there was also a Communist threat from within. One primary concern for conservatives was that their own government had been infiltrated with communist spies. This fear, moreover, was based on facts and not on hysterical fantasies.

There was, in fact, a serious penetration of the United States government in the 1930's when the liberal-dominated government was ripe for infiltration. That was the era of the New Deal when the United States bureaucracy grew to enormous size in a very short time. Of course, the government had to find people to administer this new bureaucracy. "The requirements of public service in 1933 were so extensive that there was an immediate demand for over a quarter of a million new functionaries."³⁹ Since many New Deal recruiters had at least some sympathy for Marxism, they could hardly avoid filling government posts with Communists.

The Roosevelt Administration, reaching out among the intelligentsia for representatives of just about every point of view that could conceivably pass muster as 'liberal' brought to Washington and installed in positions of power there exponents of the entire spectrum of Marxist and quasi-Marxist thought, including a substantial number of discreet but committed communists.⁴⁰

Moreover, once in government, the Communists brought in more of their Red comrades. "In this respect, it was a matter of building up the party in accordance with principles laid down by President Andrew Jackson and Senator Marcy and faithfully followed by non-communist politicians before and since."⁴¹ In this way the seeds of treason were planted within the American government.

The most dangerous thing about these newly installed traitors was the way they easily blended into the background, becoming to all appearances like any other bureaucrat. This was a new kind of Communist.

Under Stalinist leadership the lineaments of the archetypal underground communist had entirely changed. The resolute and romantic organizer of street war had been put away in a museum. Into his place had stepped the iron bureaucrat—the well dressed, softspoken capable executive who sat in the boardroom or on the Government committee. This man with a briefcase led a secret life of his own. If Communist rule should be proclaimed in this country he would move to the head of the table.⁴²

The liberals, of course, realized that Reds had entered the government, but it was "generally believed even as today's sincere pacifists and civil rights demonstrators too often believe, that Communists could be worked with and kept in bounds."⁴³

Some argue that this penetration was small and unimportant, but others claim that there was a massive infiltration of Soviet spies who greatly assisted Russian aims.

The latter claim seems to be the more correct.

The public record supports the finding that there was considerable activity and that it was not negligible even if exaggerations are discounted. And the public record is by no means the whole record, which will doubtless never be known.⁴⁴

During the war these spies served their master in Moscow faithfully. "Stalin was served gratuitously by a special front of his own in the Washington bureaucracy-volunteer groups performing espionage for the Soviet fatherland, most often out of touch with each other but supplying information to ambiguous superiors by way of pseudonymous couriers."⁴⁵

Slowly but surely, however, Americans began to learn of the treasonous activity which was occurring within their government. In February 1945, agents of the FBI and the Office of Strategic Services raided the offices of Amerasia, a pro-Communist journal, and discovered hundreds of classified government documents. These documents, it turned out, had been passed to the editor of Amerasia by a State Department employee named John Service, a China expert.⁴⁶

Later that year, Elizabeth Bentley, a former Communist, told the FBI that there had been two extensive spy rings operating in the United States during the war. One network was headed by Nathan Gregory Silvermaster, a Treasury Department economist, and the other was led by Victor Perlo, who worked for the War Production Board. The Perlo group

supplied the Soviets with information on "aircraft production, including information about the production of aircraft, the location of engine making plants and the location of factories making struts, wings, aircraft armament, B-29 synchronized turrets, automatic computing aircraft gunsights and so on."⁴² The Silvermaster group provided information to the Soviets from government agencies like the Foreign Economic Administration, the Justice Department and the Board of Economic Warfare.

Also in 1945, a Russian clerk named Igor Gouzenko defected from the Soviet embassy in Ottawa and exposed important Communist espionage activities in Canada. After investigating documents provided by Gouzenko, the Canadian government declared in 1946 that a number of Canadians had helped transmit secret information concerning the atomic bomb to Russia. He also provided evidence that spying was taking place in the United States as well. Then, in 1948, Elizabeth Bentley was again in the headlines as she appeared before the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security and exposed William Remington, a former Commerce Department employee, as a spy. The House of Un-American Activities Committee investigated her charges and did, indeed, find evidence linking him with the Communist party.⁴⁸

Of even greater importance, however, was the Hiss case which began on August 3, 1948. On that date, Whittaker Chambers, a senior editor for Time magazine and a former

member of the Communist party, identified several people as members of an important spy ring working in Washington D.C during the 1930's and 1940's. One of the people he identified was Alger Hiss, a man much respected in the liberal community. Hiss had entered the federal service in 1933 and subsequently served in the Agriculture, Justice and State Departments. During the war he attended many international conferences and was an advisor to President Roosevelt at Yalta. After the war he served as temporary Secretary-General of the United Nations and later assumed the respectable position of President of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.⁴⁹ Hiss's seemingly impeccable record made Chambers's charge seem all the more incredible.

An apparently outraged Hiss denied the charge and sued Chambers for libel. The Justice Department, after looking into the case, decided that there was not enough evidence to convict either man of perjury. However, in November 1948, Chambers produced documents which clearly connected Hiss with a Communist spy ring.⁵⁰ Since it was now obvious that Hiss had lied when he denied Chambers's charge, he was convicted of perjury in 1950. The statute of limitations prevented the government from convicting him on charges of treason and espionage.

Hiss was not the only spy named by Chambers in 1948. He also named Harry Dexter White, Noel Field, Laurence

Duggan and Maurice Halpern. White had been an assistant secretary of the Treasury and was later an official of the International Monetary Fund, while the others were all former State Department officials. None of these men were prosecuted. White, who had been named as a possible spy by Elizabeth Bentley, died of a heart attack in 1948. Duggan also died in that year after he fell from a sixteenth floor office window. Noel Field left the United States during the Hiss trial and eventually settled in Hungary. Halpern did testify before a Congressional Committee in 1953, but he refused to say whether or not he was a Communist, since his answer would incriminate him. In 1958, he moved to the Soviet Union where he became associated with the Soviet Academy of Sciences.⁵¹

All these shocking spy scandals had a profound effect on conservatives, especially conservative Republicans who became convinced that there were still communists in the government and that the Democratic Administration was doing little to root them out.⁵² Even Truman's federal loyalty security program which was established in 1947 to remove traitors from the government was dismissed as too lax by most conservatives.⁵³ For one thing, the Loyalty Review Board set up to investigate possible treason could only call for an employee's dismissal if there were reasonable grounds to suspect his loyalty. This was too lenient for conservatives, who felt an employee should be dismissed

even if there was reasonable doubt as to his loyalty.⁵⁴ Such a strong loyalty program was considered essential by conservatives, since in the age of atomic weapons, a single well-placed traitor could shift the balance of power by handing to his country's enemies certain technological secrets. Thus, conservatives feared that an Alger Hiss, critically situated, could greatly aid the Soviet Union in its campaign to destroy individual freedom throughout the world. Therefore, in the interest of national survival, conservatives argued that it was necessary to have a tough security program even if it meant some innocent people would suffer. In the words of one conservative, "the communist cancer must be cut out if we are to survive as a free nation. Perhaps in the operation some healthy tissues on the fringe will be destroyed."⁵⁵ Obviously, the problem of domestic subversion was a serious one for conservatives.

The right wing assault against domestic communism entailed more than just strict security programs for government employees. In fact, conservatives generally felt that the entire domestic communist movement should be suppressed.⁵⁶ One conservative wrote that the United States ought to suppress Communism "on the grounds merely that such a movement is undesirable in the United States and that the proscription of an undesirable movement is clearly within the powers of Congress - clearly, and without any complication about impairment of 'freedom of speech'

or 'clear and present danger'.⁵⁷ Thus, conservatives wholeheartedly supported various legal sanctions which were aimed against communists. They applauded, for instance, the Smith Act, which made it a crime to teach and advocate the overthrow of the United States government by force and violence. They also supported the Feinberg law which denied employment to Communist teachers. At the same time they also had some reservations as to the value of legal sanctions. For one thing, they added to the power of the state and they imposed a value system on a dissenting minority. Thus, when applicable, most conservatives preferred social sanctions to legal ones, as they would maximize the minority's freedom.⁵⁸ Social sanctions would include individual schools refusing to hire Communist professors, or radio stations firing Communist artists, or labour unions denying membership to Communist workers.

These actions, which were designed to suppress Communism, were justified by conservatives as necessary because Communism was wrong and immoral and dedicated to destroying institutions that the vast majority of Americans supported. According to their argument, every society had a right to protect its favoured institutions from its enemies with coercive action.⁵⁹ Thus, since Communists were opposed to America's favoured institutions, American society had a right to suppress them with both legal and social sanctions. Conservatives did not want to establish an anti-Communist police state, but they did want to exclude

Communists from positions of public trust and popular esteem and in general to make society inhospitable to them. This is understandable as conservatives saw communism as an absolute evil, and domestic Communists as allies to the state that wanted to impose that evil system on the United States.

These were the principles which motivated Joe McCarthy. Like other conservatives, he saw "the central truth of his age: that his country, his faith, his civilization was at war with Communism."⁶⁰ It is little wonder that he would do his best to prod the government into eliminating security risks or that he would insist that the loyalty program be vigorously enforced. One would expect such activities from a conservative politician. Indeed, by early 1950, the themes of subversion and Communism in government bade fair to become a major political issue, as conservative Republicans like Robert Taft, Patrick McCarran and William Jenner, to name just a few, were all complaining about the government's lax loyalty program.⁶¹ This was such a prominent issue for conservative Republicans that the Republican National Committee in a statement of principles deplored "the dangerous degree to which Communists and their fellow travelers have been employed in important Government posts and the fact that information vital to our security has been made available to alien agents of questionable loyalty."⁶² Moreover, the Republicans promised an overhaul

of the loyalty program and prompt removal of "all Communists, fellow travelers and Communist sympathizers."⁶³

Clearly McCarthy's accusations were not that original, as many other conservatives were saying much the same things.

In addition, McCarthy's repeated attacks on the State Department were completely legitimate from the conservative's viewpoint. In fact, the State Department had been under right-wing attack even before McCarthy became a public phenomenon. Conservative critics insisted that the success of Communist expansion around the world was due, in part at least, to the dubious judgement and questionable loyalty of some State Department officials who guided American foreign policy in the 1940's.⁶⁴ More specifically, they were convinced that traitors within the State Department had caused United States policy to shift from support of the Nationalist Government of China to a neutrality in that country's civil war which lead ultimately to acceptance of a Communist takeover. According to their argument, certain subversives within the State Department, acting on direct orders from the Kremlin, did everything in their power to bring American Far Eastern policy in line with Communist objectives. Moreover, conservatives claimed that these traitors were given immense help by a group of Communists working through the Institute of Pacific Relations. It was the IPR, for instance, that popularized "the convenient myth that the Chinese Communists under Mao Tse-Tung

were not really Communists but 'agrarian reformers' dedicated to the ideal of genuine democracy for China. Anything to discredit Chiang Kai-Shek in American eyes; and as we know the final result was a Washington policy that contributed to Chiang's ultimate defeat on the mainland."⁶⁵ Thus, the IPR working with subversives in the State Department, "finally persuaded the United States government to accept, in general, the Communist position about China as the basis for its own decisions."⁶⁶

Conservatives were also convinced that many of the same spies who betrayed Chiang were still operating in the State Department as a result of that agency's lax security program. They were disturbed by the fact that, during the period 1947 to 1950, the State Department did not fire one employee as a security risk. This seemed unusual as during the same period, over 300 people were discharged as loyalty risks from other branches of government.⁶⁷ Given the role of the State Department in the right's theory of subversion, it was a natural object of investigation by Senator McCarthy.

As has been well-established it was McCarthy's claim in 1950 that there were subversives in the State Department, established him among liberals as the arch-villain of American politics.⁶⁸ The explanation for this is that, in his attack, he publicly smeared innocent people. This smearing supposedly occurred when he named nine people before the Tydings Committee as possible security risks. To

the liberal viewpoint, his charges were irresponsible and reckless. As one writer put it, "the sum of McCarthy's nine 'public cases' was not impressive. Of the nine, only four were in the State Department, and all four had been carefully checked by the Department's security force."⁶⁹

Thus, in their attempt to discredit McCarthy, liberals will invariably list his assault on the State Department as an example of his crude and insatiable publicity seeking.

However, from a conservative standpoint, McCarthy's charges before the Tydings Committee were not reckless or irresponsible. In the first place, the fact that five of the people he accused were no longer in the State Department was irrelevant since the main objective of McCarthy was to show that the Department's loyalty program was ineffective. Thus, it did not matter in this instance if the people he charged as possible security risks were no longer working in the government. Conservatives wanted to know why they had been employed at all. Secondly, conservatives were not impressed by the claim that McCarthy's charges were false because the Department's own security force had already cleared the accused. After all, the one main premise of conservative opinion was that the State Department's security program was inadequate. Finally, they generally felt that the evidence McCarthy used to support his charges was strong. In their book, McCarthy and His Enemies, conservatives William Buckley and L. Brent Bozell

examined the accusations made by McCarthy and conclude that each person named could have been a loyalty risk. At the very least, they write, McCarthy's "evidence added up to a prima facie case against State Department security practices."⁷⁰ They indicated, for instance, that each of the nine had at some point or other shown at least some sympathy for Communism or for Communist objectives. Indeed, conservatives felt that McCarthy had developed especially strong cases against Haldore Hansen, John Stewart Service, Owen Lattimore and Philip Jessup (a leading member of the IPR). All these men, it was charged, were influential in bringing about a change in United States policy, making it more favourable to the Chinese Communists.

While these charges did not mean necessarily that conservatives felt these men were Communists, they certainly felt there was a reasonable doubt as to their loyalty.

Whether Jessup, Lattimore and McCarthy's other public cases were Communists was in the last instance immaterial to Buckley, Bozell, and (among politicians) Senators McCarthy, Nixon, Knowland, Taft, Bridges, Wherry, Mundt, Ferguson, Jenner, and Brewster. It mattered only that they were "objectively" on the Communists side, ie, that they held some ideas that coincided, if vaguely, with those of Communists.

While some might consider the phraseology of guilt vague, to conservatives it was enough to justify McCarthy's charges.

Conservative theories also motivated McCarthy to investigate the Voice of America which was the propaganda arm of

the State Department. As already mentioned, an important aspect of the right's liberation policy was a world-wide propaganda campaign designed to stir Soviet citizens and those in Soviet-dominated areas to revolt. To the conservatives, however, the Voice of America was just not hard-hitting enough.⁷² Indeed, "with Raymond Swing, a left-of-centre broadcast journalist as its chief commentator, the Voice of America was obviously in no shape to lead the contemplated offensive into Eastern Europe."⁷³ Thus, it was a frequent target of right-wing criticism. Reacting to that fact, President Eisenhower established a committee designed to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of psychological activities. In addition, conservative Senator Hickenlooper, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, began a review of the information and exchange programs of the International Information Agency.⁷⁴ At the same time, the House of Representatives was conducting an investigation of program finances. Senator McCarthy also sought to increase the efficiency of the Voice of America by purging it of any Communists or Communist sympathizers. Clearly McCarthy "had taken it upon himself to prepare American propaganda agencies for their role in the strategy of liberation."⁷⁵ It was only logical that McCarthy and other conservatives would want to make sure that the Voice of America was free of Communist influence.

McCarthy's adherence to conservative theory also explains

why, in 1953, he spoke out against what he called the "blood trade" between America's allies and Red China and why he negotiated an agreement with Greek shipowners who agreed not to trade with Communist nations.⁷⁶ Both these actions were reasonable for a conservative as one part of the liberationist strategy stressed that the United States should discourage trade with countries sympathetic with Communism. Therefore, McCarthy's actions in this regard were perfectly in line with conservative thought.

In the same way, there was nothing unusual about his decision to investigate the army for subversion. The Republican right, in fact, had long been disturbed by the possibility that the armed forces were infiltrated by Communists.⁷⁷ However, few Republicans would dare start any investigation of the army as this would affect the personal prestige of General Eisenhower. McCarthy, however who was never one to back down, took on the army directly.

As a conservative, McCarthy would naturally oppose and lash out against liberals. Indeed, as mentioned in the previous chapter, McCarthy would launch excessive attacks against his liberal critics, often labelling them as communists or pro-Communists. Such assaults, of course, were reckless, and even McCarthy apologists like William Buckley called them reprehensible. Moreover, liberals often interpreted these attacks by McCarthy as assaults against liberalism itself. In fact, one writer believed that

McCarthy and the entire right wing were more interested in attacking New Deal liberals than Communists.

The real foe was always the American liberal—the New Deal, the innovator, the idealist who saw the injustice in American society and advocated the use of the instrumentalities of democratic government to effect reforms.⁷⁸

Yet, McCarthy impugned the loyalty of liberals not so much to discredit the New Deal but rather because, to the conservative mind, liberalism and Communism were somehow in accord.

To understand how this conservative opinion evolved, it is necessary to examine what the liberal attitude toward Communism actually was and how it developed. First, it is fair to say that liberals, especially liberal intellectuals, have always been sympathetic to political movements of the left. "Almost since the turn of the century the tide of intellectual opinion had flowed swiftly in the direction of Marxism and various related scientific determinisms."⁷⁹

This affinity for Marxism was natural, as both ideologies shared certain characteristics, such as a belief in the welfare state and in the centralization of power.

Indeed, Marxism became even more popular with liberals after the Great Depression of 1929 when it seemed that Marx's economic forecasts had been fulfilled.⁸⁰ Given this attitude, it is not surprising that some liberals of the 1930's looked favourably upon Communists, both domestic and foreign. On the homefront, Communists were seen as domestic allies who could be worked with to bring about social reforms.⁸¹ On the

international scene they saw the Soviet Union, which one liberal labeled the "moral capstone of the world" as a progressive and democratic state that could help stem the advance of world fascism.⁸²

The world-wide Communist tactic of the Popular Front encouraged these suppositions. This ploy began in 1935 when the Soviet dictator, Joseph Stalin, fearing the growing strength of Germany, decided to form alliances with the hated capitalist states of the West. Therefore, in order to win approval in the United States, the Communist party of America on direct orders from Moscow changed its image, going from a violent, dogmatic, anti-democratic organization to a democratic, non-violent, American organization. American Communists began to claim that they were the champions of liberty and democracy, and instead of calling for the overthrow of the government, they called for harmony with the Establishment. They wanted to make it clear more-over, ^{that} the Communists no longer adhered to strict Marxist dogma. In a party bulletin of 1936, it was explained that the Communists were trying to "make our party a party of human beings who live and laugh just as everybody else does."⁸³

Yet, all these changes were merely cosmetic. The party was still dedicated to overthrowing the American government. The Reds understood that "in order to carry out the Popular Front line a new type of party was necessary; neither the

old revolutionary sect nor a reformist society, but a party in which a hard core of the former set about to create the appearance of the latter."⁸⁴ Unfortunately, liberals who did not need that much encouragement to favour Communism anyway were completely duped by this Red trick. They were all too eager to join with Communists in a Popular front. In the words of one conservative Congressman, Stalin baited his hook with a 'progressive' worm and the New Deal suckers swallowed bait, hook, line and sinker."⁸⁵ Indeed, during the Popular Front era, "the Communists scored their greatest gains, not among workers and immigrants, but among radical middle class intellectuals, writers and professionals."⁸⁶

In fact, it even became fashionable for the liberal intelligensia to be associated with Communists or to be pro-Soviet Russia. Some liberal intellectuals defended or ignored the repression being carried out in Russia and referred to the Soviet Union as some kind of Utopia. Cocktail parties were held to raise money for various Communist causes, while some college professors biased their lectures in favour of Communist ideology. Those who dared to criticize the Soviets were dismissed as fascists.⁸⁷

Moreover, liberals flocked to join various Communist front organizations which were vital parts of the Soviet propaganda framework. They were drawn to these fronts "because of the nobly expressed aims: to fight for peace,

seek equality of opportunity, end racial discrimination, foster Soviet-American cultural activities, and help refugees from fascism."⁸⁸ Clearly, in the 1930's the American liberal community tended to be favourably disposed to Communism.

The Soviet-Nazi pact of August 1939 put an end, temporarily at least, to the liberal-communist love affair. Liberals who had been presenting the Soviet Union as an effective bulwark against fascism were shocked and stunned when Germany, the foremost fascist power, made a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union. Amazingly, however, when Russia and the United States became military allies in World War Two, liberals were eager to forgive the Soviet Union. The Popular Front mentality was resurrected as liberals once again saw Communism as a positive force in the world.

Throughout the war, liberals advocated long-range cooperation with the Soviets after peace had been won. It was their goal to create an international order which would eliminate the factors which had caused the depression, fascism and the war. They, in effect, wanted to create a New Deal for the whole world and to do this they felt it was necessary to have Soviet cooperation. Acting as if the years 1939 to 1941 had never happened, they were "looking with hope and confidence to a coming social revolution in Nazi occupied Europe, where they saw Russia as a positive force in the development of the people's revolution in

Europe."⁸⁹

Another goal of the liberals was to expand the New Deal in the United States. To do this they were just as willing to cooperate with Communists domestically as they were internationally. While they did not like the Communist tactics of deceit, they maintained that the Communists' destructive tactics were understandable, given the Soviet revolutionary model and the reality of substantial repression in the United States.⁹⁰ Obviously, these liberals, still did not understand the true dangers of Communism.

However, the years 1945 and 1946 brought about a profound change in the thinking of most American liberals for as soon as Nazi Germany was defeated, Stalin, no longer needing the help of the West, dropped his façade of friendly cooperation and began a campaign designed to enlarge the Soviet empire. The era of Soviet-American cooperation was over. This development was a rude shock to most liberals who now realized that the Soviet Union was something less than the peace-loving progressive state they had pictured it to be. Moreover, domestic Communists by this time revealed that they were just puppets of Moscow, as they "now moved in practiced obedience to their Russian master, to break with their old colleagues in the Democratic party on the whole spectrum of issues related to the Cold War."⁹¹ Consequently, by 1947 pro-Communism was no longer a tenet of liberalism.

At the same time most liberals did not evolve into staunch anti-Communists. While they endorsed the containment of Soviet imperialism, they did not call for the liberation of territories under Soviet control. Moreover, they took the position that the whole subject of Communist subversion was vastly exaggerated, and those called for loyalty programs that were not as tough as those endorsed by conservatives.⁹² Nor had pro-Communism been completely eradicated from the liberal mentality. Indeed, as late as 1948 Henry Wallace, an arch-liberal and former Vice-President, ran for the Presidency with a platform that called for detente with Russia and regarded the containment policy as the creature of Wall Street and the military.⁹³

Admittedly, not all liberals were as misguided as Wallace and his followers. They were, in fact, neither pro-Communist nor anti-Communist, but rather anti-anti-Communist. For instance, when investigations were begun to root out Reds in government, liberals loudly denounced them as witch hunts. "They brought enormous pressure to bear in their professional fields to fight against the exposures and they were, by and large, successful. Opponents of Communism were ridiculed in large segments of the press, painted as witch hunters, red baiters, demagogues."⁹⁴ Yet, the liberals went further.

In fact, prominent liberals publicly defended people accused of being Soviet agents. The most significant

example of this phenomenon was the Alger Hiss case. To liberals, Hiss was a prototype New Deal liberal, a man to be respected. "In his Brooks Brothers suit, he seemed the very model of a young-old New Dealer-badgered now and brutally mistreated by reckless slanders."⁹⁵ To their eyes he was a "martyr to social justice, and Chambers was a vicious pathological liar in league with reactionary Republicans led by Congressman Richard Nixon."⁹⁶ Consequently, liberals eagerly rushed to defend their besieged and, in their view, wrongfully accused colleague. No less prominent liberals than Dean Acheson, Adlai Stevenson and Eleanor Roosevelt publicly defended Hiss. In addition, numerous professors from famous universities stood up for Hiss, and even President Truman declared that the whole affair was nothing but a "Red Herring" created by the Republicans for political reasons.

But the liberals were not content just to defend Hiss, as they also launched a vicious attack against Whittaker Chambers. Arthur Schlesinger Jr, one of the few liberals who believed Hiss was guilty, wrote

One could hardly blame him (Chambers) for being bitter, when one recalls the ugly and vicious stories invented and repeated by respectable lawyers and college professors-stories which purported to 'explain' everything, but which when the time came, the Hiss defence never cared to bring up in court . . . The anti-Chambers whispering campaign was one of the most repellent of modern history.

Conservative James Burnham went further when he wrote, "At

Washington dinners and cocktail parties held or attended by State Department and Intelligence officials no bitterness or contempt was ever expressed against Alger Hiss. At those same gatherings no vile and shameless slander against Whittaker Chambers was omitted."⁹⁸ Thus American liberals arrogantly and confidently defended Hiss against his conservative attackers. They also ended up getting burned very badly when he was convicted of perjury in January 1950, "America's liberals tasted a bitter and strangely personal defeat. It was politically and emotionally their nadir."⁹⁹

Despite these setbacks, liberals were still unwilling to acknowledge that there had been a serious penetration by Communists of the federal government. They continued to protest the investigations conducted by Congressional Committees in an effort to uncover Soviet spies.

The committees were perceived by liberal left partisans as engines of anti-intellectual reaction, vehicles for the self-promotion of committee chairmen, agencies of bitter revenge upon the champions of the New Deal by spokesmen for a coalition of small town provincials, anti-Semites, business Babbits, labor-baiters, Ku Klux Klans, hypocrites, political philanderers, and narrow gauge bigots.¹⁰⁰

Thus, while conservatives like Joe McCarthy were eager to root out Soviet spies in government, liberals seemed content to ignore simply the problem and assault those who did not.

Conservatives, for their part, could not understand this

liberal reaction, and it led them to take a closer look at the whole liberal movement. They were especially outraged by the way liberals defended Hiss and by the way they tried to disrupt investigations of subversion in government. They eventually came to the conclusion that despite the brutal realities of the Soviet ideology and all the spy revelations, liberals were still tolerant of Communism. That is, they resisted the notion that Communism should be subjected to social and legal sanctions at home.

Indeed, many conservatives came to believe that liberalism and Communism were somehow linked or in accord. They began to wonder just how far left New Deal liberalism was going to drift before coming to a halt.¹⁰¹ Was the ultimate goal of liberalism the creation of a socialistic state? Were liberals still secretly just as pro-Communist in 1950 as they were in the 1930's and 1940's? Considering the ambiguous attitude of liberals towards Communism, the answer was not clear. Whittaker Chambers, in his influential book, Witness, felt he knew the answer.

For men who could not see that what they firmly believed was liberalism added up to socialism could scarcely be expected to see what added up to Communism . . . they reacted, not like liberals, but with the fierceness of revolutionists whenever that power was at issue . . .

Every move against the Communists was felt by the liberals as a move against themselves . . .

The simple fact is that when I took up my little sling and aimed at Communism, I also hit something else. What I hit was the forces of the great socialistic revolutions which, in the name of liberalism . . . has been inching its ice cap

over the nation for two decades . . . It was the forces of that revolution that struck at the point of its struggle for power . . .

It was the forces of this revolution that had smothered the Hiss Case (and much else) for a decade, and fought to smother it in 1948. ¹⁰²

Liberals who were considered simply stupid or hypocritical by conservatives in the 1930's, were now seen to be much worse. As one conservative writer put it, "is it not the prevailing political 'liberalism' of the mid-century, that potpourri of indiscriminate do-goodism trending into statism and Marxism and blending indistinguishably with treason that is the deepest enemy of traditional America and the West." ¹⁰³

It has been argued by some that this anti-liberal sentiment was just a tactic to discredit domestic New Deal policies or a way to get votes. But as George Nash points out:

It would be a mistake, to attribute their attack on liberalism simply to political malice. What many anti-Communist conservatives abhorred about the Roosevelt administration was less its domestic reforms than its alleged appeasement of Communism at home and abroad. The Communist issue was not, in other words, just a convenient pretext for criticizing the New Deal, or seeking votes. It was, at least for many conservative intellectuals, the yardstick for measuring the New Dealers' and the liberals' performance in the struggle not just for office but for survival. Motivating the intellectual conservatives was something more deep-seated than concern for the next election. It was the suspicion (for some the conviction) that liberalism meant treason. For the Communist issue was not an ordinary issue. ¹⁰⁴

Simply put, conservatives struck out against liberals because, as one conservative put it, liberals were "mistaken in their predictions, false in their analyses, wrong in their advice and through the results of their actions injurious to the interests of the nation."¹⁰⁵

It is little wonder, then, that by the early 1950's some conservatives like Joe McCarthy would openly question the loyalty of liberals. To a conservative, Communism was evil and was to be resisted at all costs. Yet, during the 1930's and 1940's liberals often openly allied themselves with Reds and acted as apologists for the Soviet Union. Moreover, liberals defended Communists and impeded the search for traitors within the government even after the threat of Soviet Communism was readily apparent. Puzzled conservatives asked themselves why liberals were not more anti-Communist. Some believed that liberals were simply stupid, but others felt that they were disloyal. This latter opinion was not that far-fetched, if one considers that Alger Hiss was once considered to be a respected liberal. Thus, in impugning the loyalty of some liberals, McCarthy was expressing a suspicion shared by many conservatives.

Admittedly, this does not excuse McCarthy for challenging the loyalty of innocent liberals, but it at least explains what motivated him to such action. Moreover, it should be emphasized that he did not accuse everyone who opposed him of being a Communist. In fact, as mentioned in the

previous chapter, he reserved that charge mainly for liberal newspapers. Also, it should be pointed out that in making these kinds of charges, McCarthy was no worse than many of his contemporaries. For instance, on October 30, 1948, President Truman made the ridiculous charge that "powerful forces, like those that created European fascists, are working through the Republican party (to) undermine . . . American democracy."¹⁰⁶ Then in 1952, he accused Eisenhower of anti-Semitism, anti-catholicism and indulging in a campaign of lies.¹⁰⁷ Thus, McCarthy's tactics were no more objectionable than those of other politicians of his day.

One final test of McCarthy's conservatism is to examine the political philosophy of the people who supported McCarthy. For instance, if McCarthy had been a populist or a mere demagogue, he never would have garnered widespread support from the American right. Yet, in fact, for the most part the apologists and supporters of Senator McCarthy were conservatives. For example, he was very popular in the American Middle West which was a bastion of Republican conservatism. "On traditional economic issues as well as on foreign policy midwest Republicans had been more conservative than their eastern counterparts for a decade before McCarthyism."¹⁰⁸ Indeed, it was the conservative wing of the Republican party, based in the Midwest, which mobilized itself behind McCarthy and voted against the censure resolution in 1954. Thus, to traditional conservative Republicans, McCarthy was a hero as he seemed to

embody all their hopes and frustrations. This was not a new American right but rather an old one with new enthusiasm and new power.¹⁰⁹

Besides his regional base in the conservative Midwest, McCarthy was also strongly supported by another component of Republican right, namely economic conservatives. Polls clearly revealed that "measures of such attitudes as positions on liberalism in general, laws to prevent strikes, a federal health program, and support of private development of national resources all indicate that the conservative position of these issues was associated with greater support for McCarthy."¹¹⁰ Wealthy businessmen, for example, who never supported the New Deal, tended to be pro-McCarthy. This was shown by a survey done in early 1954; of 253 executives were "well disposed to McCarthy up to the point of his confrontation with the army because of his anti-Communism and uncompromising attitude toward the New and Fair Deals. Among these men, McCarthy was most popular in Chicago, capital of the Old Republican right, and in Texas, locale of an economic boom and new generation of millionaires."¹¹¹ But, while some executives on Wall Street were well-disposed toward McCarthy, he drew most of his business support from Main Street. In other words, small businessmen were strongly and consistently pro-McCarthy.¹¹² The point is that these economic conservatives would not have supported McCarthy if he had developed a liberal or populist economic program.

They supported him because he was a conservative.

McCarthy also enjoyed the support of the right's, political and intellectual elite. Indeed, "a large segment of conservative intellectuals found themselves on McCarthy's side of the ideological barricades, and a considerable number proclaimed themselves his allies."¹¹³ Their support was manifested in many ways. For instance, two conservative Yale graduates, William Buckley and Brent Bozell, ably defended McCarthy's record in their book McCarthy and His Enemies which was published in 1954. In addition, several prominent conservative intellectuals signed a petition in 1953 which accused the Press of treating the Senator unfairly. In 1954, conservative intellectuals signed another petition protesting the censure of Joe McCarthy.¹¹⁴ Thus, the well-educated conservative elite also supported McCarthy. McCarthy "fed into an existing conservative tradition at the elite level, which was very conservative on both foreign and domestic questions."¹¹⁵

Admittedly, not all conservatives supported McCarthy. Southern conservative Democrats, for instance, were not pro-McCarthy. The South was solidly Democratic, making it difficult for a Republican like McCarthy to win popular support. Moreover, the fact that he was a Roman Catholic did not endear him to most Southerners.¹¹⁶ In addition, McCarthy did begin to lose some right-wing support after his confrontations with the army and with Eisenhower.¹¹⁷ Yet, "most of those who mobilized behind McCarthy at the national

level were conservative politicians and publicists, businessmen and retired military leaders discontented with New Deal, with bureaucracy, and with military policy."¹¹⁸ The point is that McCarthy was part of, and therefore was supported by, an already existing faction of the Republican party - a faction concerned about Communism and subversion.¹¹⁹ Had he been anything other than a sincere right-wing Republican, it is doubtful he would have won the enthusiastic support of the American conservative community.

Senator Joseph McCarthy was a dedicated conservative, and his famous anti-Communist crusade was a reflection of his political beliefs. Those who contend that his anti-Communism was based on populism or on a lust for power ignore the fact that his voting record in the Senate was consistently conservative. Moreover, if McCarthy had been anything other than a right-wing Republican, he never would have received the enthusiastic support of American conservatives. Finally from this perspective it could be argued that his anti-Communist crusade was not reckless, unprincipled or aimless. It was on the contrary, from the conservative view at least, a reasoned and consistent attack on people or institutions of suspect loyalty. In fact, McCarthy was only one of several right-wing politicians trying to dramatize the Communist problem. He just received more publicity and attention than the others.

NOTES

¹Robert Griffith, The Politics of Fear: Joseph R. McCarthy and the Senate (Lexington, 1970), 14.

²Thomas Reeves, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy: A Biography (New York, 1982), 102.

³Ibid., 110.

⁴Richard Rover, Senator Joe McCarthy (New York, 1959), 72.

⁵Roberta Strauss Feuerlicht, Joe McCarthy and McCarthyism, The Hate that Haunts America (New York, 1972), 70.

⁶Earl Latham, The Communist Controversy in Washington: From the New Deal to McCarthy (Cambridge, 1966), 409.

⁷Reeves, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy, 427.

⁸Ibid., 494.

⁹William Rusher, Special Counsel (New Rochelle, 1968), 241.

¹⁰Latham, The Communist Controversy in Washington, 411.

¹¹Michael Rogin, Intellectuals and McCarthy: The Radical Specter (Cambridge, 1967), 220.

¹²Latham, The Communist Controversy in Washington, 412.

¹³Rogin, Intellectuals and McCarthy, 249.

¹⁴Reeves, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy, 72

¹⁵Ibid., 106.

¹⁶Richard Fried, Men Against McCarthy (New York, 1976), 37.

¹⁷David Oshinsky, Senator Joseph McCarthy and the American Labor Movement (Columbia, 1976), 82.

¹⁸Michael Miles, The Odyssey of the American Right (Oxford,

1980), 137.

¹⁹ Rogin, Intellectuals and McCarthy, 223.

²⁰ Ronald Lora, "A View From the Right: Conservative Intellectuals, the Cold War, and McCarthy", in Robert Griffith, ed., The Specter, Original Essays on The Cold War, and the origins of McCarthyism (New York, 1974), 45.

²¹ George Nash, The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America; Since 1945 (New York, 1976), 86.

²² Ibid., 86.

²³ James Rorty and Moshe Decter, McCarthy and the Communist (Boston, 1954), 118.

²⁴ Miles, Odyssey of the American Right, 36.

²⁵ William Rickenbacker, "A Short History of the Committee", in William Buckley, ed., The Committee and its Critics; A Calm Review of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (New York, 1962), 101.

²⁶ Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab, The Politics of Unreason: Right-Wing Extremism in America, 1790-1977 (Chicago, 1978), 215.

²⁷ Lora, "A View From the Right: Conservative Intellectuals the Cold War, and McCarthy", in The Specter, Original Essays on the Cold War and the Origins of McCarthyism, 48.

²⁸ Ibid., 49.

²⁹ Nash, The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America; Since 1945, 89.

³⁰ Lora, "A View From the Right: Conservative Intellectuals the Cold War, and McCarthy", in The Specter, Original Essays on the Cold War and the Origins of McCarthyism, 51.

³¹ Ibid., 48.

³² Nash, The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America; Since 1945, 86.

33 Murray Rothbard, "The Transformation of the American Right", Continuum, II (Summer 1964), 220.

34 Nash, The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America, Since 1945, 93.

35 Lora, "A View From the Right: Conservative Intellectuals and the Cold War, and McCarthy", in The Specter; Original Essays on the Cold War and the Origins of McCarthyism, 60.

36 Ibid., 60.

37 Nash, The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America, Since 1945, 95

38 Ibid., 95.

39 Latham, The Communist Controversy in Washington, 75,

40 Rusher, Special Counsel, 243.

41 Latham, Communist Controversy in Washington, 75.

42 Ibid., 96.

43 Rusher, Special Counsel, 244.

44 Latham, The Communist Controversy in Washington, 152.

45 Ibid., 151.

46 Cohn, McCarthy, 12.

47 Latham, The Communist Controversy in Washington, 152.

48 Cohn, McCarthy, 21.

49 Roberta Feuerlicht, Joe McCarthy and McCarthyism; The Hate That Haunts America (New York 1972), 52.

50 Ralph De Toledano, "The Hiss Case", in William Buckley, ed., The Committee and its Critics; A Calm Review of the

House Committee on Un-American Activities (New York, 1962), 168.

⁵¹ Latham, The Communist Controversy in Washington, 194-201.

⁵² Fried, Men Against McCarthy, 20-21.

⁵³ Lora, "A View From the Right: Conservative Intellectuals the Cold War, and McCarthy", in The Specter, Original Essays on the Cold War and the Origins of McCarthyism, 56.

⁵⁴ William Buckley and L. Brent Bozell, McCarthy and His Enemies; The Record and its Meaning (Chicago, 1954), 24.

⁵⁵ Griffith, The Politics of Fear, 86.

⁵⁶ Lora, "A View From the Right: Conservative Intellectuals the Cold War, and McCarthy", The Specter, Original Essays on the Cold War and the Origins of McCarthyism, 63.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 64.

⁵⁸ Buckley, McCarthy and His Enemies, 327.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 330.

⁶⁰ William Schlamm, "Across McCarthy's Grave", National Review, III (May 12, 1957), 416.

⁶¹ Fried, Men Against McCarthy, 21.

⁶² Ibid., 21.

⁶³ Ibid., 21.

⁶⁴ Nash, The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945, 89.

⁶⁵ Willmoore Kendall, "Subversion in the Twentieth Century", in William Buckley, ed., The Committee and its Critics: A Calm Review of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (New York, 1962), 75.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 75.

- ⁶⁷ Buckley, McCarthy and His Enemies, 29.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid., 62.
- ⁶⁹ Griffith, The Politics of Fear; 72.
- ⁷⁰ Buckley, McCarthy and His Enemies, 161.
- ⁷¹ Lora, "A View From the Right: Conservative Intellectuals, the Cold War, and the Origins of McCarthyism", in The Specter, Original Essays on the Cold War and the Origins of McCarthyism, 67.
- ⁷² Robert Elder, The Information Machine: The United States Information Agency and American foreign Policy (Syracuse, 1968),
- ⁷³ Miles, The Odyssey of the American Right, 210.
- ⁷⁴ Elder, The Information Machine, 38.
- ⁷⁵ Miles, The Odyssey of the American Right, 210.
- ⁷⁶ Fried, Men Against McCarthy, 287.
- ⁷⁷ Miles, The Odyssey of the American Right, 216.
- ⁷⁸ Fred J. Cook, The Nightmare Decade, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy (New York, 1971), 570.
- ⁷⁹ Rusher, Special Counsel, 243.
- ⁸⁰ Ibid., 242.
- ⁸¹ Ibid., 244.
- ⁸² Frank Warren, Liberals and Communism: The "Red Decade" Revisited (Bloomington, 1966), 164.
- ⁸³ Carl Burghardt, "Two Faces of American Communism", Quarterly Journal of Speech, LXVI (December 1980), 385.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid., 385.

- 85 Fried, Men Against McCarthy, 10.
- 86 Burghardt, "Two Faces of American Communism", Quarterly Journal of Speech, 385.
- 87 Eugene Lyons, The Red Decade: The Stalinist Penetration of America (New York, 1941), 185-186.
- 88 Cohn, McCarthy, 7.
- 89 Norman Markowitz, "A View From the Left: From Popular Fron to Cold War Liberalism", in Robert Griffith, ed., The Specter, Original Essays on the Cold War and the Origins of McCarthyism (New York, 1974), 96.
- 90 Ibid., 97.
- 91 Rusher, Special Counsel, 246.
- 92 Ibid., 246.
- 93 Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. ed., History of American Presidential Elections 1798-1968, Volume IV (New York, 1971), 3101.
- 94 Cohn, McCarthy, 8.
- 95 Rusher, Special Counsel, 246.
- 96 Nash, The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America, Since 1945, 100.
- 97 Ibid., 100.
- 98 Ibid., 100.
- 99 Rusher, Special Counsel, 246.
- 100 Latham, The Communist Controversy in Washington, 8.
- 101 Joseph Sobran, "Tragedy of Manners", National Review, XXXIV (June 11, 1982), 700.

102 Whittaker Chambers, Witness (New York, 1952), 471-472.

103 Nash, The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America, Since 1945, 107.

104 Ibid., 107.

105 Buckley, McCarthy and His Enemies, 333.

106 Ibid., 303.

107 Ibid., 306.

108 Rogin, Intellectuals and McCarthy, 220.

Conclusion

Throughout American history there have been those who have supported the conservative conviction that the ideal of individual liberty should be promoted and protected. Indeed, the history of American conservatism has been a long and continuous fight for freedom. For instance, the first American conservatives, the Federalists, fearing that liberty was being threatened by the growing trend of egalitarian democracy, created a constitution that was designed to check the power of the masses. Later on laissez-faire conservatives sought to promote a philosophy which called for unrestrained economic freedom. Then in the 1930's modern conservatism emerged to challenge what it saw as the freedom-threatening programs of the New Deal. Clearly, the Federalists, the laissez-faire conservatives and the modern conservatives represent a proud and important tradition in American history.

One person who was definitely part of that tradition was Joseph McCarthy, for his goal was to protect traditional conservative freedoms, forged by men like John Adams and William Graham Sumner, from the menace of Communist infiltration. This love of liberty, which caused him to reject Communist tyranny as well as New Deal egalitarianism, made McCarthy and other conservatives of the early 1950's important parts of the American conservative tradition.

Admittedly, McCarthy was crude, and some of his tactics

were inexcusable. But it should be remembered that he was essentially correct in his view that loyalty risks had been found in government employment and that the loyalty program was too lax. It is also true that in McCarthy's drive to strengthen the federal loyalty program, some innocent people suffered. Yet perhaps this was a price which had to be paid if the United States government was to be cleansed of Communist agents. Those who doubt that such a strong program was necessary should study the example of Britain. Unlike the United States, the British government did not have a loyalty program nor was there a British equivalent of Joe McCarthy. As a result Britain did not experience the "witch-hunts" or "reign of terror" which supposedly characterized American life in the early 1950's. In exchange however Communist spies like Donald Maclean, Guy Burgess, Kim Philby and Anthony Blunt, to name but a few, were able to operate unhindered within the British government and hand over vital information to the Soviet Union. Thus, McCarthy may have trampled on some civil liberties, but history should vindicate his results.

This interpretation is diametrically opposed to the conventional picture of McCarthy, who is usually depicted as a wicked cynical fiend. Yet it should be pointed out that liberal historians created the McCarthy monster for definite reasons. In the first place, they hoped to draw attention away from the fact that liberals were duped by Communists in the early 1930's and 1940's and as a result

had unwittingly advanced the cause of Soviet imperialism. Furthermore, liberals find the mythical McCarthy to be an excellent weapon when they were attacked by critics on the right. Indeed, if a conservative warns of the danger of Soviet expansionism or raises the possibility of domestic Communist subversion, liberals will usually raise the spectre of McCarthy. The purpose of this tactic of course is to smear anti-Communists as witch-hunting brutes in the mold of liberal fantasy. Thus, if for no other reason than to aid the anti-communist movements of the Western world, the McCarthy myth must be laid to rest forever. It should be understood that anti-Communists like McCarthy were and still are patriotic citizens dedicated to resisting Soviet slavery. Finally, conservatives should stop feeling guilty about Joseph McCarthy and reflect that he served his country infinitely better than those left-wing liberal intellectuals who in the name of protecting civil liberties, would have allowed possible Communist agents to operate freely with the United States government. Certainly Joe McCarthy was an extremist, but in the words of Barry Goldwater: "Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice; moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue."¹

NOTES

¹Walter La Feber and Richard Polenberg, The American Century, A History of the United States Since the 1890's (New York, 1975), 462.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Documents

- U.S. Congress. Congressional Record, vol. 96, 1950.
- U.S. Senate: Committee on Foreign Relations. State Department Employee Loyalty Investigation. Hearings ... 81st Cong., 2d sess., 1950.
- U.S. Senate: Committee on Government Operations. Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. Communist Infiltration in the Army. Hearings..., 83rd Cong., 1st session, 1953.

II. Books

- Anderson, Thornton. Jacobson's Development of American Political Thought. New York, 1961.
- Bailyn, Bernard et al. The Great Republic. Lexington, 1977.
- Bayley, Edwin. Joe McCarthy and the Press. Madison, 1981.
- Beitzinger, A.J. A History of American Political Thought. New York, 1972.
- Buckley, William, and L. Brent Bozell. McCarthy and His Enemies, The Record and its Meaning. Chicago, 1954.
- Buckley, William. Up From Liberalism. New York, 1968.
- _____. A Hymnal: The Controversial Arts. New York, 1978.
- Cohn, Roy. McCarthy. New York, 1968.
- Cook, Fred. The Nightmare Decade, The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy. New York, 1976.
- Dies, Martin. The Trojan Horse in America. New York, 1940.
- Einaudi, Mario. The Roosevelt Revolution. New York, 1954.
- Elder, Robert. The Information Machine, The United States Information Agency and American Foreign Policy. Syracuse, 1968.

- Evans, Stanton. Clear and Present Dangers, A Conservative View of America's Government. New York, 1975.
- Feurerlicht, Roberta. Joe McCarthy and McCarthyism, The Hate that Haunts America. New York, 1972.
- Fischer, David. The Revolution of American Conservatism, The Federalist Party in the Era of Jeffersonian Democracy. New York, 1965.
- Flynn, John. The Decline of the American Republic. New York, 1955.
- Fried, Richard. Men Against McCarthy. New York, 1976.
- Friedman, Milton. Free to Choose. New York, 1979.
- _____. Capitalism and Freedom. Chicago, 1962.
- Gallup, George. The Gallup Poll, Public Opinion 1935-1971. New York, 1972.
- Gerber, William. American Liberalism: Laudable End, Controversial Means. Boston, 1975.
- Goldwater, Barry. Conscience of a Conservative. New York.
- Griffith, Robert. The Politics of Fear, Joseph R. McCarthy and the Senate. Lexington, 1970.
- Grimes, Alan. American Political Thought. New York, 1962.
- Guttman, Allen. The Conservative Tradition in America. New York, 1967.
- Hofstadter, Richard. The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made it. New York, 1949.
- Howe, Daniel. The Political Culture of the American Whigs. Chicago, 1979.
- Kirk, Russell. The Conservative Mind. London, 1954.
- Labaree, Leonard. Conservatism in Early American History. London, 1948.
- La Feber, Walter and Polemberg Richard. The American Century A History of the United States Since the 1890's. New York, 1975.
- Latham, Earl. The Communist Controversy in Washington, From the New Deal to McCarthy. Cambridge, 1966.

- Lipset, Seymour and Raab Earl. The Politics of Unreason: Right-Wing Extremism in America, 1790-1977. Chicago, 1978.
- Livermore, Shaw. The Twilight of Federalism, The Disintegration of the Federalist Party, 1815-1830. Princeton, 1962.
- Lyons, Eugene. The Red Decade, The Stalinist Penetration of America. New York, 1941.
- Miles, Michael. The Odyssey of the American Right. New York, 1980.
- Morris, Robert et al. America, A History of the People. Chicago, 1971.
- Nash, George. The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945. New York, 1976.
- O'Brien, Michael. McCarthy and McCarthyism in Wisconsin. Columbia, Missouri, 1980.
- Oshinsky, David. Senator Joseph McCarthy and the American Labor Movement. Columbia, 1976.
- Potter, David. The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861. New York, 1976.
- Reeves, Thomas. The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy, A Biography. New York, 1982.
- Rogin, Michael. Intellectuals and McCarthy, The Radical Specter. Cambridge, 1967.
- Rorty, James and Moshe Dector. McCarthy and the Communists. Boston, 1954.
- Rossiter, Clinton. Conservatism in America, The Thankless Persuasion. New York, 1962.
- Rovere, Richard. Senator Joe McCarthy. New York, 1959.
- Rusher, William. Special Counsel. New Rochelle, 1968.
- Schlesinger, Arthur, ed. History of American Presidential Elections 1798-1968, Vol. 4. New York, 1971.
- Sexson, Paul and Miles Stephen. The Challenge of Conservatism, Its Role in the Coming Head-On Collision. New York, 1964.

Thomas, Lately. When Even Angels Wept, The Senator Joseph McCarthy Affair, A Story Without a Hero. New York, 1973.

Vierck, Peter. Conservatism: From John Adams to Churchill. Princeton, 1956.

Warren, Frank. Liberals and Communism, The "Red Decade" Revisited. Bloomington, 1966.

III. Articles

Ashworth, John. "The Jacksonian as Leveller", The Journal of American Studies, XIV (December, 1980).

Burghardt, Carl. "Two Faces of American Communism", Quarterly Journal of Speech, LXVI (December, 1980).

Chamberlain, William. "The Meaning of McCarthyism", National Review, IV (May 18, 1958).

De Toledano, Ralph. "The Hiss Case", in William F. Buckley ed., The Committee and its Critics, A Calm Review of the House Committee and Un-American Activities. New York, 1962.

Evans, Stanton. "A Conservative Case For Freedom", in Frank S. Meyer ed., What is Conservatism? New York, 1964.

Goldsmith, M. "The New American Conservatism", Political Studies, XX (March 1972).

Kendall, Willmoore, "Subversion in the Twentieth Century," in William F. Buckley ed., The Committee and its Critics, A Calm Review of the House Committee on Un-American Activities. New York, 1962.

Koch, Adrienne. "Hamilton, Adams, and the Pursuit for Power", Review of Politics, VI (January, 1954).

Livingston, John. "Alexander Hamilton and the American Tradition", Midwest Journal of Political Science, I (November, 1957).

Lora, Ronald. "A View From the Right, Conservative Intellectuals, the Cold War, and McCarthy", in Robert Griffith ed., The Specter, Original Essays on the Cold War and the Origins of McCarthyism. New York, 1974.

- Madison, James. "The Federalist No. Ten", in Jacob Cooke ed., The Federalist. Middletown, 1961.
- Main, Jackson. "Government by the People, The American Revolution and the Democratization of the Legislatures", The William and Mary Quarterly, XXIII (July, 1966).
- Markowitz, Norman. "A View From the Left, From Popular Front to Cold War Liberalism", in Robert Griffith ed., The Specter, Original Essays on the Cold War and the Origins of McCarthyism. New York, 1974.
- Meyer, Frank. "Conservatism", in Robert A. Goldwin ed., Left, Right and Center, Essays on Liberalism and Conservatism in the United States. Chicago, 1965.
- Patterson, James. "A Conservative Coalition Forms in Congress, 1933 - 1939", The Journal of American History, LII (March, 1966).
- Ropke, Wilhelm. "Education in Economic Liberty", in Frank S. Meyer, ed., What is Conservatism? New York, 1964.
- Richenbacher, William. "A Short History of the Committee", in William F. Buckley ed., The Committee and its Critics, A Calm Review of the House Committee on Un-American Activities. New York, 1962.
- Schlamm, William. "Across McCarthy's Grave", National Review, II (May 18, 1957).
- Sobran, Joseph. "Tragedy of Manners", National Review, XXXIV (June 11, 1982).
- Van Deusen, Glyndon. "Some Aspects of Whig Thought and Theory in the Jacksonian Period", American Historical Review, LXIII (January, 1957).
- Wiebe, G.D. "The Army-McCarthy Hearings and the Public Conscience", Public Opinion Quarterly, XXI (Winter, 1959).
- Wiltse, Charles. "Jeffersonian Democracy, a Dual Tradition", The American Political Science Review, XXVIII (October, 1934).

VITA AUCTORIS

Gerald Nicholls was born on July 14, 1958 in Windsor Ontario. He is the son of Gerald and Ernestine Nicholls.

He completed his elementary education in the Roman Catholic school system and his secondary education at Riverside High School. He graduated with a Secondary School graduation diploma in 1977.

He registered at the University of Windsor in the fall of 1977 and graduated in the Spring of 1981 with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in International Relations. He then undertook further study and graduated from the University of Windsor with a Master of Arts in history in the Spring of 1984.