

Henry R. Luce ran a huge publishing empire while being “editor in chief” of *Time* magazine, his original publication that began in 1923. Politically, he was a moderate Republican, a devoted internationalist, and a strong anticommunist. In company with conservative Republicans, he asserted that the Truman administration, through misguided and inept policy choices, had lost China to communism (a dubious claim according to China experts). As a Republican, a Truman critic, an anticommunist, and an American who detested the “loss” of China, Luce had much in common with Senator Joseph R. McCarthy of Wisconsin. What he did not share with McCarthy, however, was “McCarthyism.” “McCarthyism,” which had recently become a word, is described and derided in the *Time* magazine cover story that follows. This story contains no byline, which was typical with *Time* articles, because they were often distillations of reportage found in other publications as well. Absent a byline, neither Luce nor anyone else should be considered the “author” of the article, but Luce’s personal view of Senator McCarthy is undoubtedly expressed in the excerpt below.

***Time* Magazine on Joe McCarthy**

(“Demagogue McCarthy: Does he deserve well of the republic?” *Time* magazine cover story, no byline, October 22, 1951, pages 21-24.)

“Man is born to do something,” says restless Joe McCarthy. Joe is doing something. His name is in headlines. “McCarthyism” is now part of the language. His burly figure casts its shadow over the coming presidential campaign. Thousands turn out to hear his speeches. Millions regard him as “a splendid American” (a fellow Senator recently called him that). Other millions think McCarthy a worse menace than the Communist conspiracy against which he professes to fight.

...McCarthy’s jump from obscurity to the national limelight began nearly two years ago, when he made a speech in Wheeling, W. Va. He said: “I have here in my hand a list of 205, a list of names made known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist Party and who nevertheless are still working and shaping policy in the State Department.” Next day in Salt Lake City, he declared: “I hold in my hand the names of 57 card-carrying Communists” working in the State Department. Ten days later, on the Senate floor, he cited 81 “cases,” particularly “three big Communists.” Said McCarthy: “While there are vast numbers of other Communists with whom we must be concerned, if we can get rid of these big three, we will have done something to break the back of the espionage ring within the State Department.”

In a nation that had finally learned (without any help from McCarthy) that it was locked in a life-or-death struggle with world Communism, these charges were as grave as any that could be made. The underlying accusation was that its State Department was harboring Communists, knew they were Communists, and was doing so deliberately. To investigate these charges, the Senate set up a committee headed by conservative Democrat Senator Millard Tydings of Maryland.

McCarthy, who had said that he “held in his hand” the names of 205 Communists then in the State Department, did not give the Tydings committee the names of 205. He did not

give it the names of 57. He did not produce the name of even one Communist in the State Department.

Logically, that failure might have been expected to end the rocketing flight of Joe McCarthy. That it was a beginning, not an end, is partly explained by McCarthy's personality. Another man, humiliated by failure to produce evidence he said he held, would have retreated and wiped a bloody nose. McCarthy, who was a boxer in college, says: "I learned in the ring that the moment you draw back and start defending yourself, you're licked. You've got to keep boring in." This is not necessarily true of either boxing or politics—but Joe McCarthy thinks it is true.

He bored in, hitting low blow after low blow. He set up a barrage of new accusations that caught the headlines, drawing attention away from the fact that he had not made good on his original charge. He even began to produce some names. But most of the men he has named never were in the State Department. His most sensational charge was that he knew the name of "the top Soviet espionage agent" in the U.S. The man so accused turned out to be Owen Lattimore, a Johns Hopkins professor and writer on Far Eastern affairs. Lattimore, in fact, had great influence in U.S. academic and journalistic circles dealing with the Far East. He was an important factor in leading the U.S. toward policies that many Americans regard as tragically wrong.

But that was not what McCarthy said about Lattimore. He said that Lattimore was "the top Soviet espionage agent"—and to this day McCarthy has not produced a scrap of evidence indicating that Lattimore was a spy or in any way disloyal. The question of whether Lattimore's analysis of the Far East was correct or incorrect—which is still a highly relevant and important question—does not interest Joe. Such questions have no appeal to demagogues.

...Before the Tydings committee, Joe demonstrated the technique he still uses: kicking up a storm of denunciation and then shifting his ground. When he first made his charges, he explained: "Everything I have here is from the State Department's own files." When the Tydings committee asked for proof, Joe set up a chant: "Get the files. If you do, you will find that every word I have said is the truth." Harry Truman refused to let the committee have the files, on the sound ground that it was necessary to protect the reputations of those who might be subsequently cleared.

Joe's chant became deafening. How could he supply the proof without the files? Then Truman changed his mind. Before McCarthy even saw what the State Department turned over to the committee, he pronounced it "a phony offer of phony files." The files had been "raped," he cried. Tydings had the FBI send over a copy of all investigative reports it had; two security officers checked, and found everything there. But Tydings carelessly announced that the FBI had checked the files. McCarthy finally got a letter from FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover saying that the FBI itself had not made the check. Tydings then had the FBI check in person. But Joe insisted that, by the time the FBI got there, the damning papers had been sneaked back.

Finally, when the Democratic majority brought out a report denouncing his charges as “a fraud and a hoax on the American people,” Joe was ready. “Whitewash,” he cried.

Tydings made the mistake of underestimating Joe McCarthy. He bickered impatiently with Joe, defended the Administration at every turn, including some points where it was not readily defensible.

Tydings was up for re-election to a seat he had held since 1926. Franklin Roosevelt in 1938 vainly tried to beat Tydings on the ground that he was too conservative. McCarthy, by accusing Tydings of sympathy for Communism, succeeded where Roosevelt had failed. The campaign against Tydings included a faked photograph showing Tydings and Communist Earl Browder cheek by jowl. On other occasions, Joe has said: “You have to play rough if you are going to root out this motley crew.”

...The Tydings defeat made Joe a power. If he could successfully smear one of the most conservative and best-entrenched Senators, was any man safe from his furious onslaught?

The Reds in government, if any, were safe. After nearly two years of tramping the nation, shouting that he was “rooting out the skunks,” just how many Communists has Joe rooted out? The answer: none. At best, he might claim an assist on three minor and borderline cases that government investigators had already spotted. Joe tries to include himself in by saying: “We got Alger Hiss out, we got Marzani out, Wadleigh, George Shaw Wheeler and a few others.” McCarthy had nothing to do with any of them. Hiss was flushed by the House Un-American Activities Committee. Wadleigh, like Hiss, was named by Whittaker Chambers. Judith Coplon (who was employed in the Justice Department) was arrested by the FBI. Marzani was discovered by the State Department’s own loyalty investigation in 1946. George Shaw Wheeler was never in the State Department, but with the U.S. Military Government in Germany; he was denounced by Michigan’s Representative George A. Dondero in 1947 and eased out while facing an army checkup.

...On such a miserable showing as an exposé of Reds, how has Joe McCarthy created such an uproar and kept it roaring? A large part of the answer is that Joe McCarthy in 1950 had hit a highly sensitive public nerve. When McCarthy first spoke up, Hiss, whose case Truman had called “a red herring,” had just been convicted, and Acheson had declared: “I do not intend to turn my back on Alger Hiss.” The U.S. people had just begun to realize fully the malevolence of the enemy they faced. Abroad, the West had suffered a grievous setback in the loss of China to Communism.

The public, quite correctly, thought that someone must be to blame. Joe McCarthy went into the business of providing scapegoats. It was easier to string along with Joe’s wild charges than to settle down to a sober examination of the chuckle-headed “liberalism,” the false assumptions and the fatuous complacency that had endangered the security of the U.S. That he got a lot of help from the Administration spokesmen who still insist that nothing was wrong with U.S. policy helps to explain McCarthy’s success—although it in no way excuses McCarthy.

Joe, like all effective demagogues, found an area of emotion and exploited it. No regard for fair play, no scruple for exact truth hampers Joe's political course. If his accusations destroy reputations, if they subvert the principle that a man is innocent until proved guilty, he is oblivious. Joe, immersed in the joy of battle, does not even seem to realize the gravity of his own charges. On countless rostrums, he has in effect accused Ambassador at Large Philip Jessup and Secretary of State Acheson of treason. This is a crime punishable by death in the U.S. Asked what he would do with Jessup if he were in charge, McCarthy has a simple answer: "Fire him." When he met Acheson in a Senate elevator, Joe grinned, introduced himself, and shook hands as if the meeting were a cordial encounter between rival baseball managers.

...McCarthy never answers criticisms, just savagely attacks the critic. Anyone who voices reservations about his methods is blasted as a "defender of Communists." The Senate resolution of Connecticut's William Benton asking his ejection charges McCarthy with misrepresentation, deception and outright perjury. Last week a subcommittee of Senators decided that the charges warranted a full investigation. McCarthy's response: the committee is trying to throw him out of the Senate "because of my fight against Communism."

He regularly tries to intimidate reporters by going over their heads to their bosses. When he denounced Drew Pearson (who is not always careful in his own accusations) as a "Kremlin mouthpiece," he demanded that Pearson's radio sponsor, Adam Hat Stores, Inc., drop him immediately, and urged the public to boycott Adam Hats. The company dropped Pearson as promptly as the voters of Maryland had dropped Tydings—apparently fearing that their customers would do what McCarthy suggested.

To get action that fast gives a man a sense of power. McCarthy's infatuation with his own crusade has showed signs recently of being stronger than his sense of what his audience will stand. Last summer, when he spent three hours accusing General George Marshall of conspiracy to "make common cause with Stalin," all but three Senators walked out on him.

...Some have argued that McCarthy's end justifies his methods. This argument seems to assume that lies are required to fight Communist lies. Experience proves, however, that what the anti-Communist fight needs is truth, carefully arrived at and presented with all the scrupulous regard for decency and the rights of man of which the democratic world is capable. This is the Western world's greatest asset in the struggle against Communism, and those who condone McCarthy are throwing that asset away. As the *New York Times* put the case: "He has been of no use whatever in enabling us to distinguish among sinners, fools and patriots, except in the purely negative sense that many of us have begun to suspect that there must be some good, however small, in anybody who has aroused Senator McCarthy's ire."

A very practical danger lies in this inevitable, negative reaction to McCarthy. The Administration supporters have gradually come to see that they could make capital out of "McCarthyism." If anybody criticizes the judgment of any State Department official in his past or present analysis of Communism, the cry of "McCarthyism" is raised. This

McCarthyism in reverse was apparent last week in the Senate hearings over the confirmation of Ambassador Jessup. Harold Stassen had been careful to say that he was raising no question of Jessup's loyalty or his affiliations; he was simply questioning Jessup's past record of judgment. One observer quickly concluded that Stassen was "the rich man's McCarthy," presumably because McCarthy had also attacked Jessup—on different and far shakier grounds.

On the other hand, a larger share of responsibility for the confusion of McCarthyism belongs to those Republican leaders who have either openly encouraged McCarthy or failed to disavow him, in the belief that he was making votes. Republican Senate leader Kenneth Wherry recently declared that McCarthy had done the U.S. a "great service." Even Ohio's Robert A. Taft came to McCarthy's defense when Truman described Joe as "a Kremlin asset."

In less McCarthyesque language, McCarthy can be summed up this way:

1. His antics foul up the necessary examination of the past mistakes of the Truman-Acheson foreign policy.
2. His constant imputation of treason distracts attention from the fact that patriotic men can make calamitous mistakes for which they should be held politically accountable.
3. There are never any circumstances that justify the reckless imputation of treason or other moral guilt to individuals in or out of office.
4. McCarthy's success in smearing Tydings and others generates fear of the consequences of dissent. This fear is exaggerated by the "liberals" who welcome McCarthyism as an issue; but the fear exists—and it is poison in a democracy.

...Some of the sentries of the republic were asleep after the war [World War II]—and some are still drowsy. The finding that they were not traitors does not answer the charge that they were bad sentries.

And the drowsy sentry is no worse sentry than the one who maliciously cries wolf, shoots up the coconut trees, and keeps the camp in a state of alarm and confusion.