

## “Enemies from Within”: Senator Joseph R. McCarthy’s Accusations of Disloyalty

Wisconsin Republican Joseph R. McCarthy first won election to the Senate in 1946 during a campaign marked by much anticommunist Red-baiting. Partially in response to Republican Party victories, President Harry S. Truman tried to demonstrate his own concern about the threat of Communism by setting up a loyalty program for federal employees. He also asked the Justice Department to compile an official list of 78 subversive organizations. As the midterm election year got underway, former State Department official Alger Hiss, suspected of espionage, was convicted of perjury. McCarthy, in a speech at Wheeling, West Virginia, mounted an attack on Truman’s foreign policy agenda by charging that the State Department and its Secretary, Dean Acheson, harbored “traitorous” Communists. There is some dispute about the number of Communists McCarthy claimed to have known about. Though advance copies of this speech distributed to the press record the number as 205, McCarthy quickly revised this claim. Both in a letter he wrote to President Truman the next day and in an “official” transcript of the speech that McCarthy submitted to the *Congressional Record* ten days later he uses the number 57. Although McCarthy displayed this list of names both in Wheeling and then later on the Senate floor, he never made the list public.

“History Matters.” <<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6456>>

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**Arthur Miller**

### McCarthyism

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s America was overwhelmed with concerns about the threat of communism growing in Eastern Europe and China. Capitalizing on those concerns, a young Senator named Joseph McCarthy made a public accusation that more than two hundred “card-carrying” communists had infiltrated the United States government. Though eventually his accusations were proven to be untrue, and he was censured by the Senate for unbecoming conduct, his zealous campaigning ushered in one of the most repressive times in 20th-century American politics.

While the House Un-American Activities Committee had been formed in 1938 as an anti-Communist organ, McCarthy’s accusations heightened the political tensions of the times. Known as McCarthyism, the paranoid hunt for infiltrators was notoriously difficult on writers and entertainers, many of whom were labeled communist sympathizers and were unable to continue working. Some had their passports taken away, while others were jailed for refusing to give the names of other communists. The trials, which were well publicized, could often destroy a career with a single unsubstantiated accusation. Among those well-known artists accused of communist sympathies or called before the committee were Dashiell Hammett, Waldo Salt, Lillian Hellman, Lena Horne, Paul Robeson, Elia Kazan, Arthur Miller, Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, Charlie Chaplin and Group Theatre members Clifford Odets, Elia Kazan, and Stella Adler. In all, three hundred and twenty artists were blacklisted, and for many of them this meant the end of exceptional and promising careers.

During this time there were few in the press willing to stand up against McCarthy and the anti-Communist machine. Among those few were comedian Mort Sahl, and journalist Edward R. Murrow, whose strong criticisms of McCarthy are often cited as playing an important role in his eventual removal from power. By 1954, the fervor had died down and many actors and writers were able to return to work. Though relatively short, these proceedings remain one of the most shameful moments in modern U.S. history.

PBS.org. <<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/episodes/arthur-miller/mccarthyism/484/>>

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### Speech of Joseph McCarthy, Wheeling, West Virginia, February 9, 1950

1 Ladies and gentlemen, tonight as we celebrate the one hundred forty-first birthday of one of the greatest men in American history, I would like to be able to talk about what a glorious day today is in the history of the world. As we celebrate the birth of this man who with his whole heart and soul hated war, I would like to be able to speak of peace in our time—of war being outlawed—and of world-wide disarmament. These would be truly appropriate things to be able to mention as we celebrate the birthday of Abraham Lincoln.

2 Five years after a world war has been won, men’s hearts should anticipate a long peace—and men’s minds should be free from the heavy weight that comes with war. But this is not such a period—for this is not a period of peace. This is a time of “the cold war.” This is a time when all the world is split into two vast, increasingly hostile armed camps—a time of a great armament race.

3 Today we can almost physically hear the mutterings and rumblings of an invigorated god of war. You can see it, feel it, and hear it all the way from the Indochina hills, from the shores of Formosa, right over into the very heart of Europe itself.

4 The one encouraging thing is that the “mad moment” has not yet arrived for the firing of the gun or the exploding of the bomb which will set civilization about the final task of destroying itself. There is still a hope for peace if we finally decide that no longer can we safely blind our eyes and close our ears to those facts which are shaping up more and more clearly . . . and that is that we are now engaged in a show-down fight . . . not the usual war between nations for land areas or other material gains, but a war between two diametrically opposed ideologies.

5 The great difference between our western Christian world and the atheistic Communist world is not political, gentlemen, it is moral. For instance, the Marxian idea of confiscating the land and factories and running the entire economy as a single enterprise is momentous. Likewise, Lenin’s invention of the one-party police state as a way to make Marx’s idea work is hardly less momentous.

6 Stalin’s resolute putting across of these two ideas, of course, did much to divide the world. With only these differences, however, the east and the west could most certainly still live in peace.

7 The real, basic difference, however, lies in the religion of immoralism . . . invented by Marx, preached feverishly by Lenin, and carried to unimaginable extremes by Stalin. This religion of immoralism, if the Red half of the world triumphs—and well it may, gentlemen—this religion of immoralism will more deeply wound and damage mankind than any conceivable economic or political system.

8 Karl Marx dismissed God as a hoax, and Lenin and Stalin have added in clear-cut, unmistakable language their resolve that no nation, no people who believe in a god, can exist side by side with their communistic state.

9 Karl Marx, for example, expelled people from his Communist Party for mentioning such things as love, justice, humanity or morality. He called this “soulful ravings” and “sloppy sentimentality.” . . .

10 Today we are engaged in a final, all-out battle between communistic atheism and Christianity. The modern champions of communism have selected this as the time, and ladies and gentlemen, the chips are down—they are truly down.

11 Lest there be any doubt that the time has been chosen, let us go directly to the leader of communism today—Joseph Stalin. Here is what he said—not back in 1928, not before the war, not during the war—but 2 years after the last war was ended: “To think that the Communist revolution can be carried out peacefully, within the framework of a Christian democracy, means one has either gone out of one’s mind and lost all normal understanding, or has grossly and openly repudiated the Communist revolution.” . . .

12 Ladies and gentlemen, can there be anyone tonight who is so blind as to say that the war is not on? Can there be anyone who fails to realize that the Communist world has said the time is now? . . . that this is the time for the show-down between the democratic Christian world and the communistic atheistic world?

13 Unless we face this fact, we shall pay the price that must be paid by those who wait too long.

14 Six years ago, . . . there was within the Soviet orbit, 180,000,000 people. Lined up on the antitotalitarian side there were in the world at that time, roughly 1,625,000,000 people. Today, only six years later, there are 800,000,000 people under the absolute domination of Soviet Russia—an increase of over 400 percent. On our side, the figure has shrunk to around 500,000,000. In other words, in less than six years, the odds have changed from 9 to 1 in our favor to 8 to 5 against us.

15 This indicates the swiftness of the tempo of Communist victories and American defeats in the cold war. As one of our outstanding historical figures once said, "When a great democracy is destroyed, it will not be from enemies from without, but rather because of enemies from within." . . .

16 The reason why we find ourselves in a position of impotency is not because our only powerful potential enemy has sent men to invade our shores . . . but rather because of the traitorous actions of those who have been treated so well by this Nation. It has not been the less fortunate, or members of minority groups who have been traitorous to this Nation, but rather those who have had all the benefits that the wealthiest Nation on earth has had to offer . . . the finest homes, the finest college education and the finest jobs in government we can give.

17 This is glaringly true in the State Department. There the bright young men who are born with silver spoons in their mouths are the ones who have been most traitorous. . . .

18 I have here in my hand a list of 205 . . . a list of names that were 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. . . .

19 As you know, very recently the Secretary of State proclaimed his loyalty to a man guilty of what has always been considered as the most abominable of all crimes—being a traitor to the people who gave him a position of great trust—high treason. . . .

20 He has lighted the spark which is resulting in a moral uprising and will end only when the whole sorry mess of twisted, warped thinkers are swept from the national scene so that we may have a new birth of honesty and decency in government.

## Diction and Syntax Analysis of McCarthy's "Enemies from Within" Speech

AP English Language and Composition: Johnson

Analyze the diction in your assigned selection from the speech. Write down your findings in your "Class Discussion of Texts" section of your Reader's Notebook. Be ready to discuss your findings with the class.

1. Analyze the piece for the SOAPStone elements. It is not necessary to write this up in any overly-complex fashion—just write down the basic ideas so you'll have some notes for discussion.
2. Next, identify the claims that appear in your assigned selection. Be sure to phrase these as statements of the author's argument ("Mr. Johnson argues that clearly identifying claims is vital to a successful analysis," for instance).
3. Next, analyze the evidence provided by McCarthy. What sorts of support does he include? Is the support sufficient? Is it trustworthy? Is it verifiable? Compare his evidence to the "Qualities of Effective Evidence" notes in your Writer's Notebook "Strategies" section. Is his evidence effective?

### 4. Diction Analysis

- Mark/write down the most important verbs, nouns, adverbs, and adjectives. Select the words that either contribute most notably to the tone of your section or most notably influence the reader.
  - Discuss the connotations of each of the words you marked above. Complete the diction bullseye for each of the words you selected.
  - What clues are we given with each of these words in terms of the author's attitude and argument? That is, how do these words (and their respective connotations) reveal McCarthy's attitude towards his subject (you will have to identify this!) and the attitude that he intends for the reader to take after hearing the speech?
- Assess the level of McCarthy's diction in your section. Discuss why he used this level of diction (or these levels, if there is any shift); how does this level help him to achieve his purpose and influence the reader?
- Analyze the degree of abstraction in your section. What words (or phrases) are concrete? Which are abstract? Explain why each word is concrete or abstract—why did McCarthy use concrete, rather than abstract, diction (and vice-versa) convey the specific idea in that section.
- Identify any shifts in connotation, level, and degree of abstraction in your section. Account for the shifts—why did McCarthy utilize them?

### 5. Syntax Analysis

- Analyze the lengths of the sentences and the placement of independent and dependent clauses within the sentences.

- Why are certain sentences shorter and others longer? Deal with each example on its own.
  - Is there a pattern? What is it? Why did McCarthy utilize this pattern—how does it help him convey his purpose and influence his audience?
  - What is emphasized in each example? Why did McCarthy emphasize this idea—how does this emphasis help him convey his purpose and influence the audience?
  - Find any appositives in your section. What is the purpose of the appositive; does it emphasize or deemphasize a particular idea? Why did McCarthy do this?
- Identify loose and periodic sentences in your segment: use your identification of dependent and independent clauses in the above section to help you.
  - Analyze any other strategies or devices you notice (e.g. asyndeton or polysyndeton, antithesis, anaphora and epistrophe, etc.) For any that you find, explain the effect that the example creates, how the example creates that effect, and why McCarthy used that device or strategy—how does it help him convey his purpose and influence the audience? (bet you saw that last one coming)