A thick, electric tension hummed through the stuffy air of Chicago’s Palmer House Hotel. Camera shutters snapped blinding flashes across burning, determined eyes, bulbous black brows, a snide and disgusted scowl. Senator Joseph McCarthy was a proper showman, as arresting in his demeanor as he was arrested by his own ambition, and he was feeling particularly ambitious on the night of October 27, 1952. He had an audience with the Chicago Loop, the central business district of the city and the government seat of the state’s largest county, and with a nation full of eager listeners pressed to their television sets. The presidential election was only a week away, and it was time to knock the Democrats down a few pegs and right out the White House door. While he promoted himself as a vanguard of national security in a time of international crisis, Senator Joseph R. McCarthy’s leadership of the anticommunist crusade, from his rise to national prominence in 1950 until the Republicans won the presidency in November 1952, was decidedly partisan. Peppering his October 1952 address on the candidacy of Democratic presidential nominee and Illinois Governor Adlai Stevenson with allusions to Alger Hiss, McCarthy painted the picture of a nefarious leftist conspiracy to overthrow America from within; a conspiracy of which Stevenson was allegedly a part. McCarthy built his speech around popular stereotypes of communists as violent revolutionaries, Stevenson’s known associations with various alleged subversives, and an ardent championing of Eisenhower’s heroism. The highly politicized nature of the Wisconsin senator’s address made it

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1 Joseph McCarthy, “Address on Communism and the Candidacy of Adlai Stevenson.” Speech given at Palmer House, Chicago, October 27, 1952. From http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/joemccarthyagainststevenson.htm Accessed May 4, 2015. In-text quotations come directly from a transcript prepared from an audio recording of the address. Only the first thirty minutes of the speech were televised and recorded, but McCarthy ended with a statement of his intent to “complete, for this audience, the documentation [of Stevenson and his presidential campaign team’s communist ties].”
clear that, for him, this was not only a war between liberty and communism, but a war between liberalism and conservatism. Historians such as Ellen Schrecker, Stephen J. Whitfield, and Thomas Doherty have already built up a substantial literature on McCarthyism, and Senator McCarthy’s monumental speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, has been studied extensively.\(^2\) New conclusions can, however, be drawn from an analysis of his Palmer House address in October 1952. This speech further illuminate McCarthy’s dangerous rhetorical genius as well as the intensely paranoid anticommunist fanaticism which had gripped much of the American public by the time of the presidential elections of 1952. It was this fanaticism, engendered by McCarthy and the rest of the anticommunist movement, which helped to swing the country Republican later that year. This speech represented the culmination of McCarthy’s partisan efforts of the previous two years and made clear his role as his party’s greatest—and most sensationalist—propagandist.

McCarthyism, born as the American-Soviet ideological conflict reemerged in the ashes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, preceded and ultimately outlived its eponymous ringleader. President Truman, replacing President Roosevelt as Soviet influence exploded outwards from Moscow and across Eastern Europe, failed to knock the burgeoning anticommunist crusaders down as their movement kicked into action. Alger Hiss, a prominent New Dealer, was convicted of peddling secrets to the Soviets in 1948. The highly publicized Hiss trial lent credence to the Republicans’ repeated claim, leftover from 1933, that the Roosevelt administration had not only been soft on communism but had instituted its own socialist policy in the form of the New Deal.\(^3\) If Americans in the mid-twentieth century knew anyone’s name, they knew that of Alger Hiss, who Joseph

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McCarthy so aptly deemed “the arch-traitor of our time.”

In 1949, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover took the leaders of the American Communist Party (CP) to court and saw them convicted under the Smith Act for illegally advocating the violent overthrow of American government. The Korean War erupted in June of 1950, and paranoia spiraled so out of control that national security, as the Supreme Court declared in 1951, then superseded constitutional right. Having lost their original case due to the conservative prosecution’s sensationalizing of CP literature and illicit uncovering of the party’s legal defense strategy, CP leaders turned to the Supreme Court and had their hearing in 1950. The justices, however, ruled that the federal government had the authority—indeed, the obligation—to subjugate First Amendment rights if the accused posed a significant threat to national security. It was onto this rickety, emotional, highly politicized stage that McCarthy stepped on February 9, 1950, with his famous speech in Wheeling, West Virginia. An accomplished slanderer, he spent the next two years denouncing the Democratic Party alongside Alfred Kohlberg and other members of the China Lobby, a particularly vocal group of anticommunists operating within and outside of Washington. With McCarthy as one of its most boisterous mouthpieces, the group was stringently and wholly devoted to proving that the Democratic, “communist-controlled” State Department had purposefully lost China to Mao Zedong in 1949. With the presidential elections of 1952 looming, McCarthy traveled to Chicago to publicly denounce Stevenson and the Democrats and to give Eisenhower and the Republicans the electoral edge, an edge they certainly needed in what later proved to be anything but a landslide victory. In fact, an analysis of the results of the 1952 election

4 McCarthy, “Address on Communism.”
5 Schrecker, Many Are the Crimes, 97-8. Passed in 1940, the Smith Act criminalized the advocacy of the violent disposition of American government and forbid membership in any groups which openly called for such violent, anti-democratic rebellion.
6 Ibid., 190-200.
7 Ibid., 244.
shows that Illinois went to the Republicans by a margin of only 9.9 percent of the vote; the fifteenth smallest margin of victory in the country. Stevenson, moreover, was a force to be reckoned with from coast to coast. Save for Roosevelt in his 1932 and 1936 campaigns, Stevenson won more votes than any previous victorious candidate in United States presidential history. In reality, Illinois may have gone to Eisenhower without McCarthy’s intervention, but in what McCarthy and the Republicans might have perceived to be dire electoral conditions, this final denunciation of Stevenson and his allegedly traitorous philosophy was indeed crucial.

McCarthy’s crusaders relied on popular stereotypes of communists as Stalin’s cunning, omnipresent, conspiratorial puppets in order to sell their anticommunist propaganda. Perhaps the most effective of these stereotypes surrounded the threat communist agents leading the labor movement allegedly posed to national security; that of sabotage. FBI Director Hoover and his agents struggled to round up the communist kingpins supposedly busy seizing control of public utilities, communications networks, and manufacturing facilities. With control of these so-called vital industries, the anticommunists believed Soviet subverters would poison water supplies, taint pharmaceutical products, and indoctrinate anyone unfortunate enough to dial up the radio. FBI informants and ex-communists unjustly cultivated many of these stereotypes, but, by the time McCarthy arrived in Chicago in October 1952, these gross generalizations were already established in the public mindset as antithetical to national security and to the constitutional liberties communists were ironically denied.

All too keenly aware of the power of these stereotypes, McCarthy began his speech by

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9 Whitfield, *Culture of the Cold War*, 17.
capitalizing on popular hysteria, declaring that America’s “loyal Democrats no longer have a party in Washington.”  

Unsurprisingly, McCarthy referred to Stevenson as the “Democrat candidate” throughout his address despite his refusal to stigmatize liberal ideology when “certainly . . . the millions of Americans who have long voted the Democrat ticket are just as loyal [as the average Republican].”  

While he needed their votes to swing Stevenson’s home state of Illinois conservative, McCarthy saw the liberal voter as little more than a pawn, and an un-American pawn at that. “Will communism win,” he thundered, Chicago enraptured before him, “or will America win?”  

With liberalism thus equated to communism, he had an easy time convincing his audience that the Democrats, like any good Stalinists, were gleefully steering America towards disaster.

Central to McCarthy’s visceral characterization of the “Democrat candidate” was Stevenson’s choice of controversial liberal advisors. While McCarthy references many alleged communists and CP front groups, the majority of his address was devoted to attacks on the following four people: Wilson Wyatt, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Richard DeVoto, and James A. Wechsler.  

According to McCarthy, Stevenson’s personal manager, Wilson Wyatt, not only “condemned the loyalty program in the most vicious terms” but had the nerve to step into the

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13 McCarthy, “Address on Communism.”
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid. McCarthy also connected Stevenson and his supposedly communitistic associates to Dean Acheson, Truman’s Secretary of State; Owen Lattimore, a sinologist famously accused of masterminding the loss of China to Mao Zedong; Archibald Macleish, another of Stevenson’s advisors who reportedly brought Stevenson into the State Department; Frank Coe, an alleged communist who joined Alger Hiss in recommending Stevenson to the Mount Tremblant Conference to formulate postwar policy in Asia; the World Citizens Organization, which, according to McCarthy, supported the establishment of a tyrannical world government; Palmiro Togliatti, the leader of the Italian Communist Party; and the Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR), a communist front group. Communist front groups, while they did not openly disclose their communist affiliations or sponsors, were believed to be communist-controlled and ideologically aligned with the Reds. Under the Internal Security Act of 1950, they were made to register, along with openly communitistic groups, with the federal government.
campaign ring after having headed up “the left wing . . . Americans for Democratic Action.”\textsuperscript{17} Attacking President Truman’s loyalty program was itself a dangerous move and one that the American right had long been pointing to as a telltale sign of communist affiliation. Without any concrete definition of what made a communist a communist, the crusaders turned to the infamous duck test. Its seemingly logical but inherently oversimplified reasoning—if someone looks like a duck, quacks like a duck, and waddles like a duck, then they are most certainly a duck—indicted alleged communists for nothing more than their affiliations with CP front groups and their Democratic, anti-anticommunist leanings.\textsuperscript{18}

More glaring than the spotlight on Wyatt’s unpopular views on the administration’s loyalty program, however, was McCarthy’s pointed characterization of the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) as “left wing.” The classification of any organization as leftist carried with it a backbreaking weight during the mid-twentieth century, one which was, in this case, made even heavier by the senator’s reading of the ADA program’s five major points:

Point number one: Repeal the Smith Act, which makes it a crime to conspire to overthrow this government.

Number two: Recognition of Red China.

Number three: Opposition to loyalty oaths.

Number four: Condemnation of the FBI for exposing traitors like Coplon and Gubitchev.

And number five: Continuous all out opposition of the House Committee on Un-American Activities.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{18} Schrecker, “McCarthyism,” 1062.

\textsuperscript{19} McCarthy, “Address on Communism.”
In actuality, McCarthy was presenting a rough paraphrase of the ADA’s program rather than a direct quotation; the ADA had consistently opposed Marxism and had even been one of the earliest to approach Eisenhower – who was not and had never been a liberal – in an effort to convince him to run for the presidency.\textsuperscript{20} It did indeed oppose the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) and its suppressive, undemocratic activity against the movie industry and beyond, but there is little evidence to suggest that the leftists were defending Coplon’s spy ring or the brutal dictatorship of Soviet Russia.\textsuperscript{21} Rather, the ADA’s opposition to HUAC rested on its determined advocacy for Constitutional rights in an increasingly oppressive time and its belief that the CP was fundamentally different from other political groups in that it held but a meager share in the public marketplace of ideas and was already facing numerous federal hurdles to continued existence and freedom of expression.\textsuperscript{22} Indeed, it was this somewhat ambivalent attitude towards the rights of an organization it adamantly opposed which McCarthy exploited to thus twist the ADA’s logic to the lefts’ detriment. It is worth noting that, rather ironically, such liberal anticommunists as Eleanor Roosevelt and even Ronald Reagan were but a few of the ADA’s principal founders.\textsuperscript{23}

While McCarthy exaggerated the ADA’s political philosophy in order to suit his rhetorical needs, the very idea of repealing the Smith Act, which the FBI had used to convict the CP leaders in 1949, must have shocked McCarthy’s audience beyond words. Even worse, though, the ADA wanted to recognize Red China, an active communistic combatant in the Korean War, and allegedly protect Judith Coplon, who had been caught in the act of feeding secrets to her Soviet handler.\textsuperscript{24}

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{20}] Whitfield, \textit{Culture of the Cold War}, 20-1.
\item[\textsuperscript{22}] Whitfield, \textit{Culture of the Cold War}, 49-50.
\item[\textsuperscript{23}] Ibid., 19.
\item[\textsuperscript{24}] Schrecker, \textit{Many Are the Crimes}, 175-6. Coplon was a Justice Department employee at the time she was found to have been passing secrets to the Soviets. Most of the stolen data, however, proved innocuous; the greatest damage was done to the FBI’s reputation, for the stolen secrets, exposed during the highly publicized Coplon trials, helped to
What McCarthy did not see fit to mention was that Coplon was arrested without a warrant and her phone illegally wiretapped by the FBI so Hoover could listen in while she planned her defense with her attorney.\textsuperscript{25} Linking Stevenson to Wyatt, and Wyatt to the ADA, thus meant linking Stevenson, once again, to the Soviet agents who had allegedly devoted themselves, body and soul, to the annihilation of the free world. Indeed, this was the duck test at its very best.

The gun swiveled next to Stevenson’s chief speechwriter, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. Perhaps an even uglier traitor than Wyatt, Schlesinger was, according to McCarthy, guilty of defending communists’ constitutional rights to free speech and freedom of religious expression. “It’s in the New York Times,” McCarthy sneered. “Stevenson’s speech writer saying, ‘I think that communists should be allowed to teach your children.’”\textsuperscript{26} Schlesinger was not the first to be berated for advancing the right to teach unorthodox philosophies. In fact, the CP leaders convicted under the Smith Act used as their defense their movement’s controversial doctrine, opting to educate the jury on the true nature of their misunderstood movement in a hopeless attempt to convince America of its legality.\textsuperscript{27} They were convicted anyway, and the Supreme Court, in its 1951 ruling in the case of Dennis v. United States, declared that communist leaders could be convicted for educating—for indoctrinating—the public.\textsuperscript{28} Schlesinger, then, was little more than a mouthpiece for the nation’s most dangerous criminals.

Schlesinger’s religious views, deviating as they did from mainstream, conservative, anticommunist orthodoxy, drew similarly biting criticism from McCarthy: “Whittaker Chambers . . . maintain[s] that a belief in God was the hope of the free world, a feeling which most Americans reveal the true extent of Hoover’s own domestic spy network.

\textsuperscript{26} McCarthy, “Address on Communism.”
\textsuperscript{27} Schrecker, Many Are the Crimes, 196-200.
\textsuperscript{28} Schrecker, “McCarthyism,” 1046.
have regardless of whether Protestant, Jewish, or Catholic. Well, Schlesinger wrote about that.”

And Schlesinger did. He attacked religion as a root cause of human depravity and egotism, and, in so doing, exposed his true nature. While both parties had turned on the CP, the conservatives in particular, with their strong Christian leanings, emphasized communism’s atheism as symbolic of its un-Americanism. Consequently, even though both parties had joined in the anticommunist crusade, McCarthy continued to attack Stevenson and his team expressly for espousing liberal ideology. The conservatives claimed to feel Russia’s shadow stretching across every liberal policy or administration with which they disagreed. We see this reflected in the Republicans’ condemnation of President Roosevelt’s New Deal as socialist and anti-American. It was manifested in McCarthy’s assertion that Alger Hiss’s presence at the Yalta Conference in 1945 precipitated Russia’s subsequent expansion across Eastern Europe. It further appeared in the crusaders’ treatment of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee (JAFRC).

The JAFRC was the first organization to be targeted by HUAC, but more importantly, it was also the first to challenge HUAC, its ideology, and its unconstitutional methods. Uncoincidentally, the group’s entire executive board was facing jail time in 1950, less than five years after HUAC’s initial inquiry into the JAFRC. Like many of McCarthyism’s victims, evidence of JAFRC founder Edward K. Barsky’s ties to the CP at the time of his indictment were tenuous at best, but proof of

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29 McCarthy, “Address on Communism.”
30 Schrecker, Many Are the Crimes, 146.
31 Barson and Heller, Red Scared, 11.
33 Made an official standing committee in 1946, HUAC was one of the most iconic institutions of McCarthy’s anticommunist movement and the most infamous of the anticommunist investigative committees. Working closely with FBI Director Hoover, HUAC famously accused and publicly attacked alleged communists. To prove their innocence, the accused would have to name names or suffer popular condemnation and ridicule. So-called Fifth Amendment Communists refused to self-incriminate, but taking the Fifth Amendment was considered an informal admission of guilt and frequently resulted in ruthless stigmatization.
his liberalism abounded. Not only did he support the anti-fascist, allegedly communist Spanish Loyalists during the Spanish Civil War, but he also founded an entire organization dedicated to the economic well-being of Spanish refugees across the globe following the war. His goal was the social and economic advancement of refugees landing in America, France, and Africa in the aftermath of the Royalists’ fall. Roosevelt’s War Relief Board granted Barsky’s JAFRC a license to provide aid during World War II and even granted it tax-exempt status. Legitimacy, however, was hardly an obstacle to HUAC. McCarthy’s successors were as close-minded and intolerant of dissention and criticism as he was, and, once again, liberals paid the ever-inflating price of voicing their opinions. After years of relentless conservative politicking and more than a few unjustified court hearings, the JAFRC voted to dissolve itself in February 1955.

Next on McCarthy’s hit list was another of Stevenson’s assistants, Richard DeVoto. “Now DeVoto has violently attacked our strongest defense against communism,” McCarthy chided. “The FBI . . . Then he says this, ‘and I would refuse to cooperate with the FBI.’” But the FBI was inviolate, and Hoover was a celebrity. By the time McCarthyism crumbled, Hoover had published a slew of articles and books espousing his own narrow-mindedness, and America, thoroughly indoctrinated by the anticommunists, defended him and his agents with a particularly frightening zeal. Defying the FBI was as bad as attacking the federal loyalty programs, but, according to McCarthy, DeVoto went even further. “Now the Communist Daily Worker of February 13, 1947,” McCarthy rumbled, “reports that Stevenson’s man, DeVoto, headed a group seeking a permit for a meeting for the wife of Gerhart Eisler.” Eisler’s connection to Stevenson, as thinly stretched as it

35 Deery, A blot upon liberty,” 170-3.  
36 Ibid., 192.  
37 McCarthy, “Address on Communism.”  
39 McCarthy, “Address on Communism.”
was, was remarkably damaging, for the FBI had long since branded Eisler the mastermind of the American Communist Party. Having escaped Vichy France in the late 1930s, Eisler, a German Comintern agent, was detained in America while on his way to Mexico. After several years spent defending himself against the FBI’s highly publicized charges, Eisler finally escaped to East Germany, but not before he had become the unofficial symbol of the entire American communist movement. McCarthy attacked the Truman administration for letting Eisler get away and even tried to manufacture another link between the beleaguered political refugee and the Chinese Revolution.40

The case of James A. Wechsler, another of Stevenson’s speechwriters and an especially vocal critic of McCarthy and his crusade, is of particular note. Wechsler, an emphatically liberal and anticommunist editor of the New York Post, had flirted with the Young Communist League (YCL) in the 1930s but had officially broken with the group only a few years later and submitted a formal statement to the FBI in an attempt to prove it.41 Wechsler’s documented break with the Young Communist League should have hit McCarthy hard, proving that communists were not, as Americans had come to believe, forced into lifelong party membership. Nor, it would seem, were liberals and communists one and the same. But old habits die hard, and McCarthy, bursting at the seams with charisma, once again drew on popular, impossibly persisting stereotypes to justify his attack on one of the most courageous media icons of the day: “Now Wechsler and his wife both admit—both admit to having been members of the Young Communist League.”42 Despite the obvious questions surrounding the legitimacy of those ex-communists who alleged that Wechsler could not have broken with the YCL when they themselves had apparently done so, their backwards, politicized logic was used again and again to indict countless alleged communists for

40 Schrecker, Many Are the Crimes, 122-31.
42 McCarthy, “Address on Communism.”
Wechsler’s anti-McCarthy “Smear, Inc. – A One Man Mob” series granted him an unwilling audience with the senator’s investigative committee in April 1953. While he eventually bartered a deal with McCarthy to have the transcripts of the hearings released to the public, that deal required that Wechsler name names. By the time he had submitted the transcripts to the American Society of Newspaper Editors and complained that McCarthy’s tactics represented a clear threat to the expressive independence of the entire journalistic community, McCarthy had already convinced the public of Wechsler’s two-faced treachery. Far too many journalists, fearing for their reputations, turned on Wechsler and scoffed at his case. McCarthy’s attacks on Wechsler in October 1952 not only proved the points Wechsler would make a year later but showed just how partisan the senator’s movement was. Not only was Wechsler an ardent liberal, but he was trying to turn public opinion against the anticommunist crusade more generally and against McCarthy more specifically. An attack on McCarthy was an attack on Republicanism, and McCarthy was none too pleased about that: “That’s the speech [written by Wechsler] also in which he [Stevenson] condemned . . . my exposure of communists as ‘low comedy.’ Well I just doubt whether the mothers and wives of the hundred and twenty thousand Korean casualties consider it low comedy.”

McCarthyism reveled in and grew in no small part because of highly publicized political trials. Criminal action being taken against alleged communists like Alger Hiss proved to the public that the communist menace was not vague and intangible but real and immediate. It is fitting, then, that McCarthy modeled his address after a trial: “Tonight I am a lawyer giving you the facts and the

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43 Schrecker, Many Are the Crimes, 133-5.
45 McCarthy, “Address on Communism.”
evidence in the case of Stevenson versus Stevenson.”\textsuperscript{46} McCarthy did far more than attack Stevenson and his associates for their political alignments. As his treatment of Stevenson and his advisors has already shown, he indicted them. He accused them of subversion and treason and “examine[d] a few of those advisors” as an attorney would a witness’s testimony.\textsuperscript{47} But McCarthy was trying “terrorists,” not common criminals, and the jury, in the form of the electorate, brought the gavel down swift and hard against Stevenson with a guilty verdict.

With the Democratic Party’s reputation thus dismantled, McCarthy needed only to ennoble Eisenhower and the Republicans and he could be sure that Chicago would be in General Ike's pocket. Fortunately for McCarthy, Eisenhower was indeed an immensely popular war hero. While Stevenson was busy plotting the destruction of free market capitalism, Eisenhower, according to McCarthy, was striking back against Hitler’s black-hearted empire: “He had the task . . . of winning the war in Europe with the loss of the smallest amount of bloodshed and lives and he did that job very well.”\textsuperscript{48} While Stevenson and the State Department were off “handing the keys to Beijing” over to a beaming, mustache-twirling Mao Zedong, Eisenhower and the Republicans were struggling—so valiantly and so earnestly—to toughen President Truman’s resolve against the Red menace: “You know and I know that Eisenhower had nothing to do with formulating State Department policy.”\textsuperscript{49} While Stevenson was rushing to erase any evidence of his connections to Hiss, “imply[ing] that his knowledge of Hiss was casual, remote, and that he was not vouching for Hiss’s character,” Eisenhower was campaigning to save America from “the Democrat candidate for the presidency—who endorses and would continue the suicidal, Kremlin-directed policies of this nation.”\textsuperscript{50} Just as

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
communism was made antithetical to Americanism, communism was also made antithetical to Eisenhower’s staunch Republicanism.

McCarthy, ever the showman, did not hesitate to pat himself on the back for a job well done: “Now for the past two and a half years I have been trying to expose and force out of high positions in government those who are in charge of our deliberate, planned retreat from victory.” 51 Indeed, the Democrats were in charge of a certain “deliberate, planned retreat from victory,” but it was a retreat from a Republican victory, not an American victory. McCarthy’s address on the candidacy of Adlai Stevenson was thus illustrative of the true nature of the infamous senator’s wildly partisan crusade, for it was with the presidential elections of 1952 only a week away that McCarthy, hidden behind his hollow devotion to liberty and Americanism, descended on Chicago to swing the city conservative. Ironically but predictably, he subjected Stevenson to the duck test, and the sinister “Democrat candidate” failed miserably. A fervid liberal, he looked, quacked, and waddled like a duck, and, as if all that were not enough, his campaign team—Wilson Wyatt, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Richard DeVoto, James A. Wechsler—was infested with them. Stevenson was guilty by far more than association, and McCarthy was eager to play judge, jury, and executioner.

It is worth nothing that, even after they had betrayed the CP, the Democrats were concerned about the increasingly conservative administration’s clampdown on constitutional rights. President Truman may have instituted the loyalty security program, but the immense political pressure from the right played a significant role in his decision, and he repeatedly tried to reform or kill it once it started to spiral out of control. He went so far as to have the National Security Council formally investigate the program in 1952, but its report was largely ignored in the wake of the presidential

51 Ibid.
Truman also went after McCarthy himself, appointing the Tydings Committee in 1950 to deflate the senator’s charges against his administration and to expose the communist witch hunter’s fanaticism to the public. Unfortunately, the bipartisan committee was anything but bipartisan: while Tydings’s Democrats dismissed McCarthy’s unsubstantiated charges, the Republicans never signed the final report, thus making the liberals look like petty partisan point-scorers.\(^53\) The Democrats’ reluctance to trample on constitutional rights was also reflected in the marked shift away from anticommunist conservatism which occurred following the Army-McCarthy hearings, the election of a Democratic Congress in 1954, and most importantly, the eventual appointment of several moderate Supreme Court justices. These were the justices behind the monumental *Cole v. Young* decision of 1956. Following this ruling, it was no longer legal to terminate employees for posing threats to national security if their jobs did not place them in a position to actually threaten national security. Cole, for his part, worked for the Food and Drug Administration and was deemed incapable of acting to jeopardize America’s war against the Soviets.\(^54\) By 1962, hampered once again by a Democratic administration and an increasingly open-minded judiciary, the movement to which McCarthy had given his name had finally ground to a halt.\(^55\)

While McCarthy continued to attack the presidency even after Eisenhower took office in January 1953, implying that he may have come to believe his own anticommunist propaganda, the years he spent inflaming public opinion against President Truman and the rest of the Democratic Party suggest, not conviction, but a strong-armed effort to advance his party’s agenda.\(^56\) Infused with popular stereotypes of communists as deadly subversives, near-constant references to Stevenson’s

\(^{52}\) Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes*, 289-90.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., 247-9.

\(^{54}\) Ibid., 295-7.

\(^{55}\) Ibid., 292-8.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., 242.
allegedly un-American associates, and a glorification of Eisenhower’s heroism, McCarthy’s address was itself a weapon against liberty and American constitutionalism, a loaded rifle aimed right at the donkey and about to go bang.