

The Meaning of McCarthy's Attack on Ike

The violence of McCarthy's attack on the President is a measure of his desperation. He first sent the statement to Mundt who refused to read it for him, remarking that he could accept no responsibility "for an attack upon the President." McCarthy then turned up and read it himself. Mundt's attitude and Knowland's quick disclaimer of sympathy are indicative. McCarthy is no longer playing practical politics.

But the sensational exchange between McCarthy and the White House, in retaliation for Eisenhower's "well done" to Watkins, should not hide the more serious difficulties of the Administration. Knowland is entrenched as majority leader and Bridges is headed for the chairmanship of the Republican policy committee in the Senate. The China Lobby, the preventive war crowd, the trouble-makers occupy key posts.

The President deserves applause and support for the extraordinary restraint he has shown under pressure at home and provocation from abroad. What we are seeing is the painful task of slowly extricating the United States from the cold war, and preparing the way for peaceful co-existence.

Only a General at the head of the conservative party, backed by big business, could do it. If the Democrats were in, the air would resound with cries of treason.

It is unfortunate that we have been pushed as a nation into so undignified a position by a policy of half war, half peace with the new China. We cannot logically finance Chiang, operate CIA monkey business and refuse to recognize Peking without running into just the kind of humiliation we are now suffering in the case of the 11 aviators.

But as a matter of practical politics, our China policy cannot be reversed in a day. A "cooling off" period is necessary and it is the job of the neutral powers and of Moscow to sober up a Peking which begins to seem "giddy with success."

The balance of forces in Washington is precarious. It would be criminal folly for Moscow or Peking to take for national weakness what the President is doing in his search for peace. If they want co-existence, they had better not undercut the one man who can bring it about.

McCarthy and the Catholics

What really unnerved the more intelligent McCarthyites is that, though there are large blocks of Irish Catholic votes in the urban areas which are traditionally Democratic, these if really pro-McCarthy had no influence on the census vote. Of seven Catholic Democratic Senators, six (Mansfield, Murray, O'Mahoney, Chavez, Burke and Pastore) voted to condemn McCarthy. The seventh, Kennedy, is ill. McCarran, the only Democratic Catholic Senator who would have supported McCarthy, is dead. The two other Catholic Senators, Barrett of Wyoming and Purtell of Connecticut, voted for McCarthy but both are Republicans. Most of the East Coast hierarchy, particularly Cardinal Spellman, is indeed pro-McCarthy, but they were also mostly anti-Roosevelt, and then too the clerical bark was no clue to the electoral bite.

Mendes-France and the H-Bomb

At the last minute, on objections from Secretary Dulles, Mendes-France eliminated from his United Nations speech in New York a proposal (like Nehru's) for a standstill agreement to end further H and A bomb tests. The news leaked to *Paris-Presse*. The French Prime Minister's thinking is reflected in an article in the latest issue of his friend Servan-Schreiber's *L'Express* which reprints the warnings about the danger of radioactivity expressed by the French physicist, C. Noel Martin. While in Washington, Mendes-France joined the British in opposing the Dulles plan for a SEATO meeting at Bangkok to frame a new agreement for

common action against "internal aggression" or "subversion." Anglo-French objection sees this as a step toward the kind of interventionism exemplified in Guatemala.

When Junker and Samurai Have The H-Bomb

Possession of the H-Bomb may act as a brake on war in the hands of two such powers as the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. For all their differences, neither has a hereditary military caste nor a tradition which glories in war. For both peoples war is an unpleasant necessity. But what happens when, as is inevitable, these dread new weapons are in the hands of the Germans and Japanese, which have such a caste and such a tradition? At the end of the road opened by East-West conflict over Germany and Japan stands a new Hitler, armed this time with the capacity to turn the whole earth into a crematorium.

The Old Japan Begins to Re-Emerge

A visit to the U.S. seems to be dangerous for European statesmen. Adenauer went home to lose an election, Mendes-France to face an Assembly slipping back into its old splinter habits, Yoshida to lose his job as Prime Minister. His successor is worse. Washington finds consolation in the fact that Hatoyama is so fiercely anti-Communist, Moscow in the fact that he is for diplomatic relations with Russia and China. Both Washington and Moscow blind themselves to the fact that with the change Japan swings back further to the pre-war type of mentality which cost America and Russia so much in the past.

Georgia's Chain Gang System Before The Supreme Court

Article VIII of the Bill of Rights forbids "cruel and unusual punishments." The clause is invoked by an appeal which has just been filed here in the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of Edward Brown by the Philadelphia lawyer, David Levinson, and counsel for the NAACP. The Court is asked to overrule an extradition order from Governor Herman Talmadge of Georgia which has been upheld by the Pennsylvania courts. Seventeen years ago Brown was arrested for the accidental death of a man. On the advice of a white attorney, he pleaded guilty and was sentenced to life on the chain gang. This is his terrible story, as told in the bald language of an NAACP release:

"Brown testified in the lower courts that he had been subjected to all sorts of cruel treatment which included being placed in a sweat box . . . with no ventilation except a two-inch opening, with no toilet facilities or water. He was beaten with blackjacks, rubber hoses and other instruments.

"On December 19, 1937, he escaped and on June 21, 1940, was recaptured. Despite the promises of the Georgia Prison authorities that the chain gang system was no longer in existence . . . the moment Brown was back in the State of Georgia, he was subjected to even more cruel treatment.

"Brown escaped again on September 22, 1940, and was at liberty until 1947 when he was recaptured. The treatment on his recapture was the same as before except for chains . . .

"On two occasions he was put in the 'stretcher' which resembles a medieval rack. Once he was strung from a tree by the wrists and beaten until the blood dripped from his body. On another occasion when he had caught cold he was given a half pint of castor oil, staked to the ground and covered with molasses to attract insects and animals. On this occasion the warden's son urinated in his face.

"In January 1950, he escaped once more and fled to Philadelphia. In April 1952 Brown was taken into custody and put into jail at the request of Governor Talmadge . . ."

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McCarthy's Charge That Investigators Put A "Mail Cover" on Him

Opening The Door on A Police State Skeleton in The Postoffice

McCarthy, always a stickler for civil liberties where his own are involved, put the spotlight on a real issue when he protested the "mail cover" put on him by the Gillette sub-committee.

It is a crime to interfere with someone's mail in order "to pry into the business or secrets of another." It is also a crime for a postal employe "unlawfully to detain or open any letter." Despite these two provisions of the law, it appears that the postal service is accustomed to place "covers" on the mail of suspected persons. Such a "cover" was used in the McCarthy investigation.

David H. Stephens, the chief postal inspector, testified on the matter at the one-day hearing held by the special Ferguson-George committee on December 2. Stephens explained that the postoffice imposes such "covers" at the request of police or other government investigators. But he insisted that no letters are opened and that the postoffice merely reports "what the exterior of the letter discloses," i.e. the postmark, the return address and any similar information. Stephens also said the postal employe "may not in so doing in any way retard the handling of the mail." Whether a "cover" can be operated without delaying the mails is open to question.

No Test Because Secret

The practice of imposing "covers" rests on a postal regulation which says that "to aid in the apprehension of fugitives from justice, a postmaster may give to officers of the law, upon proper identification, information regarding the addresses, return cards or postmarks on mail, but shall not withhold such mail from the addressee or delay its delivery." There is reason to suspect that in other cases, as in McCarthy's, the use of a "cover" is not limited to fugitives. It would be miraculous in the current atmosphere if "covers" were not used for political espionage. The legality of the regulation has never been tested because people never know when their mail is being watched.

A legal test would start with the leading case on the subject, an 1877 Supreme Court decision (96 U.S. 727) in which Mr. Justice Field ruled that letters or sealed packages "in the mail are as fully guarded from examination and inspection, except as to their outward form and weight, as if they were retained by the parties forwarding them in their own domicile. The constitutional guaranty of the right of the people to be secure in their persons against unreasonable searches and seizures extends to their papers, thus closed against inspection, wherever they may be . . ." The question to be decided by the courts is whether reporting the source and character of a man's mail from outward examination is not equally an invasion of his privacy.

Never Before Against A Senator

The unpopularity of McCarthy and his own readiness to use improper methods should not blind us to the gravity of the charge. The chief postal inspector testified that he had never before heard of a mail "cover" being used against a U.S. Senator.

A grand jury inquest is certainly called for. Even more important would be a full Senatorial investigation to determine just how widespread the practice is. McCarthy has opened a door on a real police state skeleton in the postal service. But there ought to be opposition to McCarthy's effort to make ex-FBI man Paul J. Cotter, chief counsel of the Gillette committee, the goat of that inquiry. McCarthy's interrogation of Cotter showed how eager he is to punish Cotter for his temerity in daring to investigate McCarthy's bank accounts.

Cotter told an interesting story in his own behalf. He said he and McCarthy had mutual friends and when he took over the job, "I felt that perhaps by sitting down with him

De Profundis

Westbrook Pegler at a McCarran Memorial Meeting in (appropriately enough) Lost Battalion Hall, Queens, N. Y., Dec. 6, said small crowds at recent pro-McCarthy rallies were "melancholy and depressing." "Let's face it," he said, "we have been laying some terrible eggs lately—let's not kid ourselves. We're a minority. I don't know why we can't turn out a good crowd." (Source: N.Y. Journal American, Dec. 7).

[McCarthy] . . . and discussing a lot of these allegations and finances informally that we could clear up a lot of this smoke."

McCarthy declined to talk with Cotter informally about the financial charges against him "but suggested," according to Cotter, "that we meet at a dinner, my wife and Miss Kerr and he and another chap and his wife, at this third party's house." Cotter said, "That I did not want to do," explaining later in the hearing "I did not feel the place to do it was at a social gathering." This refusal to be "shmoosed" does credit to Cotter.

The Intermediary Was Robert E. Lee

When McCarthy pressed Cotter to give the name of that third party, Cotter reluctantly identified him as "Bob Lee", that is now Federal Communications Commissioner Robert E. Lee. Though this was one of the "hottest" items in the testimony, so far as I know not a single newspaper or radio commentator has published the fact that Lee was the intermediary. Cotter said when McCarthy declined to discuss the charges, a mail "cover" was ordered to determine whether he had other banking accounts and through what brokerage houses and third parties he was speculating.

Cotter said he was familiar with mail covers from his work with the FBI and other investigating agencies. "It is a pretty common practice," he told the committee. "When I took this investigation," Cotter said to McCarthy during the hearing, "I was quite as willing to clear you as to determine any information . . . I have a number of friends who are great admirers of yours."

Cotter said the actual mail cover order came from another ex-FBI man employed by the committee, Francis X. Plant, whom the McCarthy committee tried to hire. Cotter, giving Plant's credentials, said Plant was "with Whittaker Chambers during the Hiss trial."

Jean Kerr and The Soy Beans

McCarthy wanted to know why a mail cover was also put on Jean Kerr, then his fiancée. "It was Jean Kerr," Cotter explained, "who went down and made that transfer of the money you got from the new Congressman from Michigan [Bentley]. You had her take the money out of the bank and send it to the chap in Wisconsin who put it in the brokerage account and bought the soy beans with it. So this was all an intimate group to you . . ." McCarthy dropped that line of questioning.

The mail cover apparently was imposed without the knowledge of any member of the Gillette committee. Senator Hayden pointed out that in one McCarthy hearing McCarthy told a witness, "We have 600 of your telephone calls recorded." Hayden said this was the equivalent of a mail cover. Nobody asked McCarthy if he or his staff used mail covers. A safe guess is that McCarthy's ex-FBI men have used this device as readily as ex-FBI man Cotter. Since this may be the last chance in a long time to really explore the practice, it is to be hoped that liberal Senators will press for a full inquiry.

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