

SENATOR JOSEPH R. McCARTHY



I Hold in My Hand, Photograph by United Press International Newspictures, October 27, 1952. Wisconsin Historical Society (<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/whi/feature/mccarthy/>). Elected to the U.S. Senate in 1946, Joseph McCarthy created a sensation in 1950 when he announced during a speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, that communist members of the State Department were influencing American foreign policy. At the time, communist expansion in Eastern Europe and Korea fueled Americans' anxiety that their way of life was under attack. McCarthy capitalized on people's fears of encroaching communism to launch a public campaign aimed at eliminating the supposed communist infiltration of government.



McCarthy & Cohn at the Army-McCarthy Hearings, 1954 . From a Library of Congress collection
(<http://www.yale.edu/terc/democracy/may1text/images/McCarthyandCohen.jpg>)



Army-McCarthy Hearings: At a congressional hearing in 1954, Senator Joseph McCarthy points to a map purportedly showing Communist Party influence in the United States in 1950. His chief antagonist at the hearing, lawyer Joseph Welch, sits at left. Welch successfully discredited McCarthy at these hearings, which were among the first to be televised across the country (<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/histryotln/turmoil.htm>).



December 2, 1954: **The Senate condemns McCarthy and defends free speech (New York Times)**

"We are alive to the danger Communism holds for our way of life. But we want to make the fight against it...according to the principles...in our Constitution."

—Senator Herbert Lehman

We've been glued to our TV sets for three months, mesmerized by the sight of Senator Joseph McCarthy trying to bully the nation's military leaders. After accusing the State Department and other federal agencies of being "infested with Communists," McCarthy has turned on the Army.

He's grown so powerful, people have been afraid to speak. McCarthy's charges have destroyed public careers. But for all his accusations, he hasn't produced proof that any federal employee is a Communist.

Even those concerned about Communism here see this "witch hunt" as a threat to free speech, freedom of association, and the rule of law—the very freedoms at stake in this Cold War.

After five years, the Senate's had enough. Today it condemned McCarthy, censuring him for conduct unbecoming of a senator.

Even in troubled times, free speech finds its champions. (http://www.constitutioncenter.org/timeline/html/cw10_12230.html)