

blee to recant. It can happen here, we are warned, if we give McCarthyism its rein.

This argument forgets that societies are, after all, educated as well as educable. It is one thing for society to give a hearing to new ideas, and quite another thing for it to feel impelled to put new ideas—simply because they are new or unorthodox—on a plane of equality with cherished ideas that have met the test of time. It is, for example, one thing to study Jean Paul Sartre and allow the free circulation of his books (which this country is doing) and quite another thing to give existentialist ideas the inside run in the curriculum of our university philosophy departments (which this country is not doing). It should after all be clear that a free market in ideas ceases to be free or a market if the latest huckster to arrive can claim his share of trade without regard to the quality or appeal of the commodity he is selling, and merely because he is a parvenu. The Liberals, bewitched as they are with the value of innovation, tend to forget that a free market is one where the customers can, if they so wish, keep on trading with the same old butcher.

Moreover, the argument tends to equate "innovation" with progress. The innovator can regale society with a cornucopia of wealth and happiness; but he can also open a Pandora's box. A measure of healthy skepticism about new ideas is not a sign of obscurantism—nor, necessarily, an indication of stagnancy. Most of what we correctly call progress is a matter of the natural development and growth of old ideas. The statement that the heterodoxy of today is the orthodoxy of tomorrow, which we hear so often in this connection, is a piece of absurd oversimplification. *One* of today's heterodoxies may become tomorrow's orthodoxy; but if so, then, by definition, the remainder will not. And today's heterodoxies are always numerous in a way that the cliché fails to recognize. Witness in our country the brief flowering and unlamented demise of Know-Nothingism and Ku-Kluxism—both of them heterodoxies that did not, on the morrow, become orthodoxies. Nor is it true, as the argument suggests, that there is net social gain, or progress, necessarily and as a matter of course, every time a heterodoxy displaces an orthodoxy. Societies often progress backwards.

Even so, progress *does* occur, and no intelligent society should adhere to a conformity so rigid as to make the airing of alternatives dangerous or impossible. Our major differences with the Liberals in this area have to do with whether McCarthyism tends in any such direction. And this brings us, at last, to the question: What is the actual extent of the conformity McCarthyism seeks to impose?

## McCarthyism's Call to Conformity

MCCARTHYISM, on the record, is not in any sense an attempt to prevent the airing of new ideas. It is directed not at *new* ideas but at *Communist* ideas, of which the last thing that can be said is that they are new or untried. The McCarthyites are doing their resourceful best to make our society inhospitable to Communists, fellow-travelers, and security risks in the government. To this end, they are conducting operations on two fronts: (1) they seek to vitalize existing legal sanctions, and (2) they seek to harden existing anti-Communist prejudices and channel them into effective social sanctions.

Valid laws and auxiliary Executive Orders prohibited Communists—or persons about whose loyalty or reliability there was a reasonable doubt—from holding government posts long before Senator McCarthy started talking; but they were frequently evaded, and sloppily administered. McCarthy and his allies have simply insisted that they be vigorously enforced. McCarthyism is primarily the maintenance of a steady flow of criticism (rallies, the Liberals call it) calculated to pressure the President, Cabinet members, high officials, and above all the political party in power, to get on with the elimination of security risks in government. In a sense, the major "victims" of McCarthy's drive for conformity have been those responsible for the so-called loyalty program, whom he has tried to inch into performing their clear legal duties.

On the second front, McCarthy has tied into fellow-travelers who have no tangible affiliation with the government. For example, he early aimed his fire at Harlow Shapley, Frederick Schuman, and Owen Lattimore.\* McCarthy exposed their party-lining and did what he could to build up social pressure against them. He has not, or at least not yet, succeeded in eliminating them from positions of power and influence in national academic life: all three continue to teach at important universities. But there is no doubt—the fact that they are less influential than they were before. Their pronouncements on foreign policy are no longer cited as

\* To be sure, McCarthy first became interested in these men because of their alleged connection with the government. Insofar as their government affiliations were either past history or of a merely peripheral nature, it can be argued that he attacked them in the wrong context. But that is beside the point as far as the present question (what degree of conformity is McCarthyism attempting to bring about?) is concerned.

authoritative. Lattimore's future books about solutions in Asia are unlikely to become bestsellers.\*

The conformity attendant upon McCarthyism, then, adds up to something like this: (1) *persons who conspire to overthrow the government by force* are subject to legal sanctions (the Smith Act, for example), primarily that of imprisonment; (2) *persons in public service about whose loyalty or security there is a "reasonable doubt"* are subject to legal sanctions (the various security regulations), primarily that of exclusion from government employment; (3) *persons other than government employees about whom there exist reasonable grounds for believing they are "pro-Communist,"* are to some extent subject to legal sanctions (possibly the McCarran Act or the Attorney General's list of subversive organizations), primarily that of having their activities officially labeled as "Communist" or "subversive" or (as with the Feinberg Law or the statutory loyalty oath requirements) that of being excluded from certain jobs; they are furthermore subject, increasingly, to social sanctions, primarily of the type that have been aimed at Lattimore and Schuman and Shapley.

These sanctions are not the same all over the country. In some localities, in sections of the Midwest for example, the sanctions hit people who might escape them elsewhere. In the rare instance, a single Communist-front affiliation may engender public hostility and bring down severe social sanctions on a man's head. In the academic arena of the East, by contrast, the level of enforced conformity is decidedly lower, and sometimes descends nearly to zero. Southern Baptist College X fires Jones when there are apparently no reasonable grounds for believing him to be a pro-Communist. But Harvard, Williams and Johns Hopkins retain Shapley, Schuman and Lattimore on their faculties when reasonable grounds abound for believing them to be pro-Communist.

The claim is often made that McCarthyism has as its ultimate objective the exclusion of Liberals from positions of power, prestige,

\* We stress the discomfort that the three professors have suffered without attempting to balance it against the comfort they have presumably drawn from their apotheosis by the Liberals. It has for several years been a popular—and adroit—witticism among young academicians that "if only I were a Communist, then I could be sure I wouldn't be fired. They wouldn't dare!" The insecure professor who embraces Communism in order to frustrate the college president's attempt to get rid of him is the central figure in a recent novel about university life.

and influence in the American community; and that the present campaign against Communists and fellow-travelers is merely the thin edge of the wedge. It is therefore curious that the one instance which lent a modicum of factual support to this fear received little or no attention from Liberal publicists.

In October of 1952, Senator McCarthy delivered his widely heralded attack on Adlai Stevenson, which people generally expected would turn into an attempt to connect the Democratic candidate with Communism. With millions of listeners glued to radio and TV, McCarthy reached, not for a red paint brush, but for a list of some of Stevenson's top advisors: Archibald MacLeish, Bernard De Voto, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. Was his point that these men were Communists? No, that was not McCarthy's point. His objection to these men was not that they were Communists, or even pro-Communists, but that they were Liberals—atheistic, soft-headed, anti-anti-Communist, ADA Liberals. And his major point turned out to be that this was sufficient reason for rejecting the candidate for whom they were serving as Edgar Bergens.

Whether the speech was a conscious effort to narrow the limits of tolerable opinion so as to exclude left-wing Liberals, only McCarthy can say. The fact that he has not reiterated the point suggests that, if this was his intent, he was not very serious about it. It is far more likely that he intended to deliver a traditional political campaign speech highlighting the disqualifications of his Party's opponents. But it may well be we have not heard the last of this idea. Some day, the patience of America may at last be exhausted, and we will strike out against Liberals. Not because they are treacherous like Communists, but because, with James Burnham, we will conclude "that they are mistaken in their predictions, false in their analyses, wrong in their advice, and through the results of their actions injurious to the interests of the nation. That is reason enough to strive to free the conduct of the country's affairs from the influence of them and their works."\* But the real point, for our purposes, is that the mainstream of McCarthyism flows past the Liberals as gently as the Afton; and that the MacLeishs, De Votos and Schlesingers have no grounds for arguing that any sustained effort is being made to read them out of the community.

\* Burnham was referring to "Wechsler and his political associates" (*The Freeman*, June 15, 1953). He was most clearly advocating social sanctions against them.



It is still only *Communist* ideas that are beyond the pale. And the evidence is convincing that the function of Senator McCarthy and his colleagues is not that of defining or creating a new orthodoxy with which individuals are being called upon to conform. The American community affirmed anti-Communism long before McCarthy started in. McCarthy's function has been to harden the *existing* conformity.

We are left with the final question: whether the conformity urged by McCarthyism is doing a service to America and, therefore, whether we should view it with approval. Certainly the vast majority of the American people have already given their answer to the question; for, after all, the approaching conformity is of their own making, and they must be presumed to approve what they are doing. Most Americans, the available evidence seems to say, favor anti-Communism, and tight security in the civil service. But we are asking, of course, whether the majority is *right*; and therefore we must take account of the misgivings of the intelligentsia. What should be said of their resolute and impassioned opposition to McCarthyism?

Simply this. They are confused, they have misread history, and they fail to understand social processes. What is more, they do not feel the faith they so often and so ardently express in democracy. There is only one alternative to this explanation: that they are opposed to the decline of Communist influence at home. The determination of the American people to curb Communism cannot be dismissed as a capricious, ignorant, or impetuous decision. There is, we contend, a great deal of difference between a society's harassing the exponents of an idea that has been thoroughly examined and found objectionable, and its harassing the exponents of an idea simply because it hurls a novel challenge at traditional notions. Our Schumans, Shapleys, and Lattimores have become unacceptable not because they are known to hold ideas and values at variance with those of the majority of Americans, but because they expound a *particular* set of ideas and values which Americans have explored and emphatically rejected, and because the propagation of these ideas fortifies an implacable foreign power bent on the destruction of American independence.

The ideas of the Schumans, Shapleys and Lattimores are not, as we say, new ideas; they are exploded ideas. America has had access to the literature of Communism for more than a generation. Every-

thing from *Das Kapital* and *The Problems of Leninism* to monthlies, weeklies and dailies reflecting the least adjustment in the Party Line, has for years circulated freely in American classrooms, libraries, and living rooms. Communist missionaries have roamed the land to urge their ideas through the spoken word. In short, America could hardly have given Communism a fairer or more exhaustive hearing without inviting over a dozen commissars to conduct an American Five Year Plan.

Having heard the case, America has rejected it. And because the case is championed by a mobilized, aggressive, titanic enemy state, America has gone further: she has turned to the offensive against Communism. We are at war, and there are many strategies, many tactics, many weapons, many courses of action open to us. Our lines could be advanced by innumerable enterprises, some foolish, some proper—by assassinating Malenkov, by atom-bombing Soviet industrial plants, by subsidizing a Russian underground, by providing leadership and funds for prominent European and Asiatic anti-Communists, by imprisoning violators of the Smith Act, by purging the Civil Service, and by exposing and persecuting Communist apologists in whatever occupation they are engaged. One thing is certain: Communism will not be defeated—any more than freedom was won—by postulating the virtues of democracy and of Christianity as evident truths and letting it go at that.

McCarthyism, then, is a weapon in the American arsenal. To the extent that McCarthyism, out of ignorance or impetuosity or malice, urges the imposition of sanctions upon persons who are *not* pro-Communist or security risks, we should certainly oppose it. When persons about whose loyalty or security reliability there is no reasonable doubt are flushed from government service for security reasons, those responsible should be criticized and held to an accounting both at the polls and before investigating committees. Whenever the anti-Communist conformity excludes well-meaning Liberals, we should, in other words, go to their rescue. But as long as McCarthyism fixes its goal with its present precision, it is a movement around which men of good will and stern morality can close ranks.