

# Second red scare assignment

[History](#)



In exploring this we will touch on McCarthy origins, the Second Red Scare which enabled McCarthy, McCarthy initial accusations, and McCarthy uncanny ability to exploit the media to promote his agenda. In his first three years as a Senator, McCarthy accomplished nothing extraordinary. Upon reexamining his record, McCarthy recognized that he needed to campaign behind a dramatic issue in win re-election in 1952. When he was given the suggestion to support an anti-Communist agenda, McCarthy seized upon the idea at once. 'What's it, he said. The government is full of Communists,' he said. " We can hammer away at Revere, 123). After the trial of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg (two convicted Russian spies), and after two former members of the Communist party of America: Elizabeth Bentley and Whittaker Chambers; testified that Soviet spies and communist sympathizers had penetrated the U. S. Government before, during and after World War II, Americans began to fear infiltration of Communism in the United States. These events paved way for support of McCarthy strong anti-Communist stance.

McCarthy was so influential in the Second Red Scare that the movement to investigate suspected Communists from the late 1940's to the late 1950's is remembered in history as ' McCarthy'. His first public accusation of Communist activity was on February 9, 1950 at the Republican Women's Club of Wheeling, West Virginia. McCarthy proclaimed to the women that he had a list of 205 names of suspected Communists currently working in the State Department. The event of Wheeling received little press coverage, but it reached the State Department.

They promised him a full investigation of the 205 suspected Communists if he would send them his list of names. McCarthy insisted that he had been misquoted. “” He brought his remarks more or less in line with the Byrne letter and said he had spoken not of 205 Communists but of ‘ 205 bad security risks’ “. ( Revere, 127) A few nights later, he announced to an audience in Salt Lake City that he knew the names of “ 57 card-carrying members of the Communist party. ( Revere, 127). On February 20, 1950, McCarthy gave one of the maddest speeches in history of the Senate.

He presented 81 findings (without identifying them by name) of those he considered to be Communists in the State Department. McCarthy spectacle lasted from late afternoon to almost midnight, during which a number of Senators attempted to force McCarthy to straighten out his mixed up figures. By the end of the session, the vast majority of Washington thought McCarthy to be insane. But Washington was not the audience that McCarthy was interested in. The people of the United State were listening to McCarthy.

Although many were skeptical because McCarthy had not given up a single name of the 205 suspected Communists he claimed to know, many others believed that there had to be truth to what McCarthy was saying. People could not fathom that a United States Senator would stand before the Senate and claim he knew of such a staggering number of Communists if he, in fact, knew none. Critics also pointed out that although McCarthy had not proved himself right, no one had proved him wrong. All the debate McCarthy sparked was exactly what he hoped to achieve; the recognition of the people.

McCarthy's support began with hate groups coming out for him. " The organized hate groups and the volunteer policies of patriotism fell into his lap. Throughout the war years, they had lacked leaders and spokesmen... These people had been identifying their hatreds with Bolshevism since Bolshevism had come into being, and they were pleased with the thought that a Senator had discovered that the government was crawling with Communists. " (Revere, 141) Undeterred, McCarthy continued to publicly calumniate suspected Communists. He made his biggest accusation when he referred to Professor Owen Loiterer as a ' top Russian espionage agent.

After an investigation of Loiterer turned up nothing suspicious, the Tidings committee became further frustrated with McCarthy. The committee released a report that " McCarthy charges against the State Department were ' groundless' and that the Senate and the American people had been deceived. " (Fertility, 65) But even this report could not stop the frenzy McCarthy had created in the press and the citizens. McCarthy was a master manipulator of the news. "... He was able to generate the massive publicity that made him the center of anti-Communism because he understood the Reese, its practices and its values; he knew what made news.

He liked the company of newspapermen and sought them out... " (Bayle, 8). The press had a hard time believing that the Senator would make such critical accusations without being well informed, so they eagerly followed McCarthy's story, reporting nearly everything he did and said. " Newspapers turned McCarthy's unstained charges into sensational stories that shrieked from page 1 (Stationmaster, 147 ). One of his most successful strategies was exploiting the wire services. Wire services were extremely limited, but <https://assignbuster.com/second-red-scare-assignment/>

heavily relied on cause most news outlets did not have offices in Washington. The performance of the press as a whole during this is important month was poor. Most wire service reporting was inadequate, flat, unimaginative, devoid of interpretation or analysis, lacking even description... In most papers the stories were short and confusing; overnight leads obscured the real news... Headlines were inaccurate to the point of contradiction, creating lasting false impressions. ” (Bayle, 65 ). McCarthy used the objectivity of the news to his advantage. “ McCarthy knew that journalists would report, without comment, NY charge a LLC. S. Senator made.

Reporters were so fearful of allowing subjectivity to slip into their work that they wouldn't, for example, include in a story the fact that a particular accusation was the fifth or tenth or fiftieth institutions accusation McCarthy had made that week. ” (Stationmaster, 151 ). His overnight fame got McCarthy re-elected in 1952, and he was appointed chairman of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. He used his new position to initiate preliminary hearings of 445 people, whom were mostly people who worked for the government. “ Of these, 1 57 became subjects to lull-scale investigations- with McCarthy always chief interrogator’. Stationmaster, 149 ). Those whom McCarthy investigated were excommunicated by society, often losing their jobs. “ He was thus destroying the reputations of specific individuals, who, in self-defense, could never get the media attention he did; the charges stuck. ” (Fried, 1 The fear McCarthy imposed spread, causing companies to fire thousands of employees they suspected of Communist activities. Co-workers, friends, family, and neighbors all became wary of one

another; fearing that those they acquainted with were either Communist or McCarthy spies. One of the hardest hit industries during the McCarthy era was the entertainment industry.

The Hollywood Blacklist came into being in 1947 when the House Committee on Un-American Activities began to summon certain Hollywood entertainment professionals on the suspicion that their work was communist-inspired. By the late 1950s, some 150 actors, directors, screenwriters, producers, and editors had been added to the blacklist. Once a person's name appeared on the blacklist, they would not be hired any more in media-based production and were ostracized by their former colleagues. However in 1954 McCarthy bit more than he could chew, when he accused high ranked officers of the US Army to be spies and working for USSR. "Either the army will give the names of men coddling Communists or we will take it before the Senate" (Senator Joseph McCarthy. BBC). This event did exactly what he did not want to happen and it backfired on him, "The Secretary of the US army has ordered two generals, subpoenaed by anti-Communist senator Joseph McCarthy, to ignore the summons." and "He found himself under investigation after army officials alleged he had tried to obtain preferential treatment for a former aide drafted into the army" which led to further investigation by the Senate.