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McCarthy Denies He Set Terms

Associated Press

Sen. Eugene J. McCarthy (D-Minn.) was quoted by his office yesterday as declaring that he had laid down no terms to Vice President Humphrey for his support.

Forces supporting Humphrey for President have been interesting in getting McCarthy, whom the Vice President defeated for the Democratic presidential nomination, to give Humphrey a personal endorsement.

McCarthy's office said he had telephoned from New York a statement saying the substance of the McCarthy position reported by Gerald N. Hill, San Francisco lawyer, was relatively close to his stand.

Hill, who headed McCarthy's campaign in California, told newsmen in Minneapolis Sunday he had been authorized by McCarthy to release the conditions on which he would support Humphrey.

Hill, saying none of the conditions had been met, said they call on Humphrey to agree to a halt to the bombing of North Vietnam; national election in Vietnam including "all elements" of the political structure; reform of the U.S. military draft system, and reform of the Democratic party structure.

SPORTS WRITERS hanging around the batting cage before World Series games had a ball asking political questions of a familiar figure covering the event for Life Magazine.

What did he think of Hubert Humphrey? Well, Humphrey was the kid who could only get into the game by letting them use his school bag as second base.

And Spiro Agnew? Well he was like Zeke Bonura, the lumbering first baseman of immigrant stock who never knew whether to go for a ball hit between first and second or to cover the base.

Those snide cracks announced to anybody who didn't know it that Gene McCarthy was back in form after his post-convention vacation. And now the end of his World Series assignment brings McCarthy face to face with the problem he has been dodging since the New Hampshire primary last spring—the problem of a re-entry to normal participation in American politics.

For despite all his stress on participation politics McCarthy is almost exclusively an engine for participation by Americans who think of themselves as better than other Americans—the leader of the Pharisees.

BECAUSE HE caters to their feelings of moral superiority, McCarthy's candidacy, as the battle of Chicago indicated enflamed the basic social tension in this country—the tension between low-income and upper-income whites. And a necessary condition to the winding down of that fearful tension is that McCarthy in the next few weeks bring himself and his followers back into the normal game of give-and-take politics.

To explain all this it is necessary for me once again to advert to the concept of Middle America—the great mass of low-income whites who make up the overwhelming majority in this country. During the past few years, Middle America has been placed under enormous pressure by the growing demands of upper-income highly educated Americans.

For openers, upper-income America has demanded better quality in restaurants, garages, schools, hotels, police protection, and a thousand other services chiefly

supplied by low income whites. It has, additionally, wanted to improve the status of the Negro, at the expense of Middle America; to raise taxes, also at the expense of Middle America; and to circumscribe the power used in wars fought chiefly by the sons of Middle America. When these demands have been contested, Middle America has been scorned as dim-witted jingo.

Without altogether meaning it perhaps, Senator McCarthy has been the political validation of upper-income America. His snide cracks express with vehement brilliance contempt of Middle America.

HIS UNHEROIC, casual concept of the Presidency put a discount on leadership, and a premium on the release of fine feelings. His solution for most of the country's problems was to get rid of the folksy figures despised by upper-income America—J. Edgar Hoover, General Lewis Hershey, Dean Rusk. Even on the problem of Vietnam, his main prescription was to be morally superior, to let go.

Precisely because he did not grapple directly with problems, McCarthy made almost no appeal to the basic interest groups comprising the Democratic Party, and he never had a chance for the party's nomination. After the enormous achievement of causing President Johnson to withdraw, the responsible course was to make for himself and his followers an accommodation with another Democrat who came close to his position on the key issue of Vietnam.

Twice this logical ending to the McCarthy movement has been averted by fate working in conjunction with the Senator's disposition to take himself more seriously than his work. Thus McCarthy played the injured party when Senator Robert Kennedy came into the race, and then assassination snuffed out the chances for an entente. Similarly, he acted as though he had been personally wronged by Vice President Humphrey's victory at the convention, and then the Chicago cops, by beating up on his followers, made it a martyr's act not to

support the Humphrey-Muskie ticket.

NOW THE McCarthy re-entry problem comes up for a third time. He has an opportunity to bring himself and his followers back into a Party which has gone a long way to meet his own stand on Vietnam. By a rapprochement, he could probably induce an even stronger approach to peace.

But probably Senator McCarthy will not follow that sensible course. Probably he will continue to play the outsider, asserting by smart cracks and the casual stance, the sense of superiority that continues to set him and his followers apart from normal participation in the American result. And the predictable result is that the deep malevolence already so widespread in Middle America will be further enhanced, and more goaded to express itself in assaults on the McCarthy followers and on the values dear to them and, they might remember, to not a few others among us.

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McCarthy's Political Re-Entry Could Enhance, Hurt System