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Roger Biles

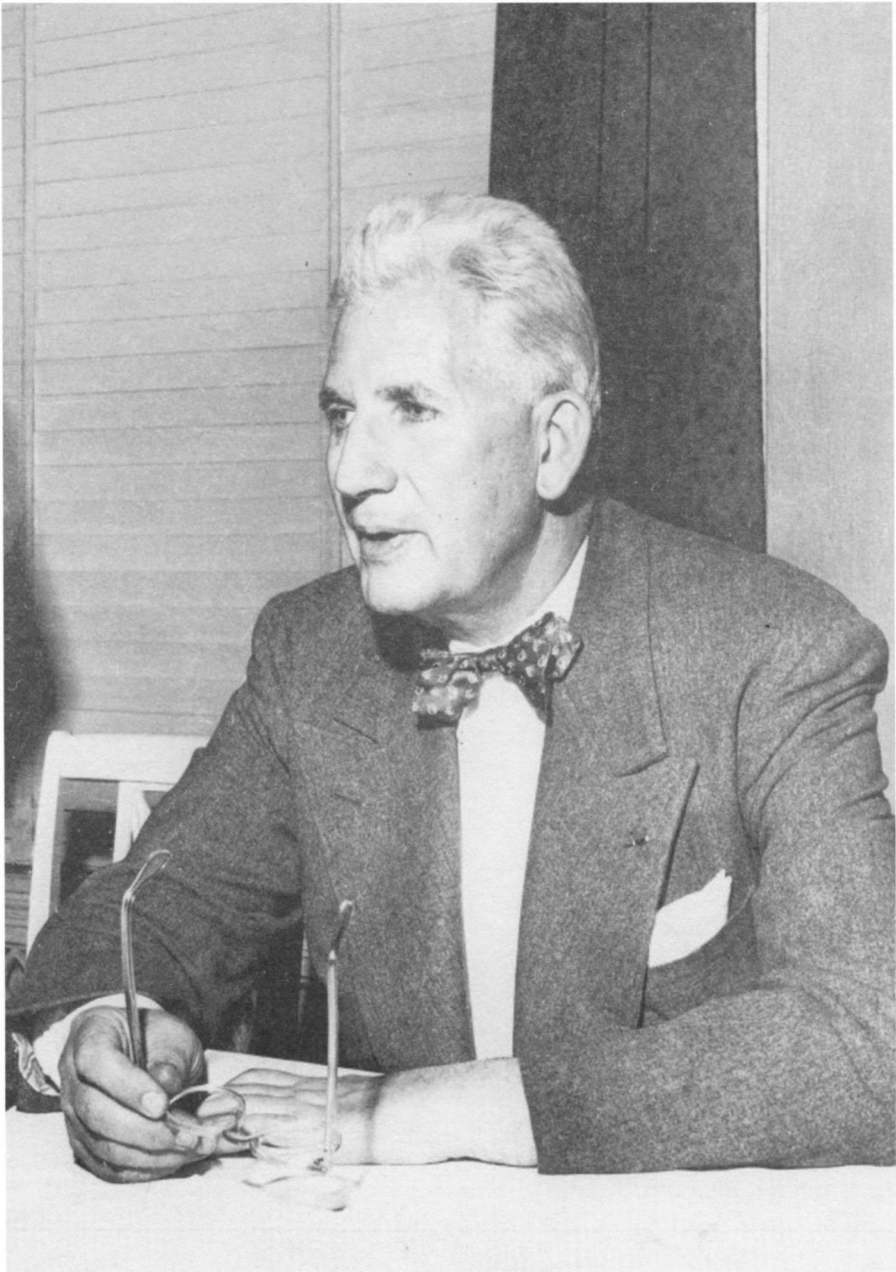
In 1954, after six years in the U.S. Senate during which he had become known as one of Congress's leading liberals, Paul Douglas of Illinois faced his first reelection campaign. In 1948 he had been elected by 435,000 votes, the second largest victory margin ever in an Illinois senatorial election. His 1954 reelection campaign attracted considerable interest nationwide for several reasons. In 1952 the Republican party had captured the White House for the first time in a generation, but President Dwight D. Eisenhower's coattails had been short; the Republicans nominally controlled both houses of Congress but by slim margins, enjoying majorities of only eight votes in the House of Representatives and one in the Senate. In 1954 the Republicans hoped to strengthen their tenuous control of the legislative branch and Paul Douglas, one of Eisenhower's most persistent and pungent critics on Capitol Hill, became an inviting target. In addition, the campaign that year unfolded amid unusual partisan bickering as the Senate considered the censure of Republican Joseph McCarthy. With McCarthy's brand of domestic anti-communism on trial in the Senate, how would a noted liberal like Douglas fare in his bid for reelection? And how involved, if at all, would McCarthy of Wisconsin become in the senatorial campaign of neighboring Illinois?¹

Paul Douglas's path to the U.S. Senate had proved to be a long and tortuous one. Born in Salem, Massachusetts on March 26, 1892, Douglas spent most of his boyhood on an isolated farm in Maine. After graduating from Bowdoin College, he earned M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in economics from Columbia University. He occupied adjunct teaching positions at several colleges before joining the faculty at the University of Chicago in 1920. During the next twenty years, he became an internationally renowned economist specializing in labor relations and retirement pensions, a member of the Consumer's Advisory Board in the New Deal's National Recovery Administration (NRA), and a tireless reformer who earned a national reputation as an effective opponent of monopoly in the utilities industry. From 1939 to 1942, he served in the Chicago City Council representing the reformist Fifth Ward. Renouncing the non-violence of his Quaker faith, he enlisted in the U.S. Marines at the age of fifty to fight in the Second World War.

Wounded in action, he returned to the country a decorated war hero. A university professor and idealistic reformer, Douglas seemed an unlikely politician but in 1948 received the Democratic nomination for U.S. senator. With the support of Chicago's infamous Democratic machine, he defeated the incumbent Republican Senator, Wayland "Curly" Brooks, in a stunning upset.²

During his first six years in the Senate, Douglas won numerous accolades for his performance from the Washington press corps and from fellow members of Congress. Although identified as a fierce partisan, he received high marks from members of both political parties for his hard work, reasonableness, and eloquent oratory. He fought for tax reform, civil rights, public housing, and a host of measures designed to safeguard consumer interests. At the same time a devout Cold Warrior, he defended U.S. military involvement in Korea, opposed the entry of the People's Republic of China into the United Nations, and consistently endorsed increases in military expenditures to underwrite the nation's containment of communism. Stubbornly independent, he broke party ranks on some roll call votes and clashed openly with President Harry Truman on several occasions. Known for his steely incorruptibility and unshakable integrity, Douglas was called "the conscience of the Senate." Party leaders and political pundits considered him one of the leading candidates to replace Harry Truman in the White House in 1952, but he declined to mount a campaign for president and repeatedly affirmed his intention of seeking reelection to the Senate in 1954.³

Although he played no formal role in the Senate's consideration of Joseph McCarthy's conduct, Douglas lamented the unhealthy climate that had developed as a byproduct of domestic anti-communism. On July 16, 1953, he delivered a speech on the Senate floor, "Fair Play in Congressional Investigations," which by implication criticized McCarthy and others who had used congressional forums to conduct improper investigations of American citizens. Emphasizing the damage irresponsibly conducted investigations could do to the reputations of innocent men and women, Douglas observed that the fairness or lack of fairness in congressional proceedings depended in large measure upon the conduct of the committee members themselves—and particularly upon the committee chairmen, who all too often made their own rules, did anything they desired, and behaved as though they had been given unrestricted hunting licenses. The temptation of publicity often led committee members to cut ethical corners as well. At the end of the speech, Douglas offered "ten commandments for fair play" in congressional inquiries that prescribed, among other changes, less public disclosure of derogatory remarks in congressional hearings in order to protect the reputations of witnesses, guarantee of the right of counsel for



Paul H. Douglas

Photo courtesy of Illinois State Historical Library

witnesses, the right of witnesses to cross-examine other witnesses, and more expeditious procedures to shorten the duration of the proceedings.⁴

Unlike some other liberals, however, Douglas spoke infrequently against the abuses of McCarthyism and never delivered a speech inside or outside of Congress that specifically reproved the Wisconsin senator. Indeed, historians of the domestic anti-communism practiced in the early 1950s have commented on Douglas's surprising quiescence on the issue. In Senator Joe McCarthy, for example, Richard H. Rovere wrote: "Paul Douglas of Illinois, the possessor of the most cultivated mind in the Senate and a man whose courage and integrity would compare favorably with any other American's, went through the last Truman years and the first Eisenhower years without ever addressing himself to the problem of McCarthy." In her discussion of Eleanor Roosevelt's stand against McCarthyism, the historian Allida Black observed that "Senator Paul Douglas . . . whose credentials for liberalism and integrity were heretofore impeccable, refrained from discussing McCarthy until it was politically safe to do so." The historian Richard M. Fried similarly noted the apparent anomaly and provides this explanation: "Paul Douglas (not noted for a lack of courage), while disapproving of McCarthy's methods, had to concede that "we have had some Alger Hisses in government." Fried quotes Douglas as saying: "We were handicapped by the fact that many of the men who McCarthy singled out were implicated to some extent."⁵

The fact that Douglas did not emerge as one of McCarthy's principal antagonists in the Senate and played only a marginal role in the Wisconsin demagogue's demise may be explained by several factors. An avid defender of civil liberties who had been the frequent target of red-baiters during his own political career, Douglas genuinely deplored McCarthy's methods yet—as the quotations cited by Fried suggest—he grudgingly admitted that the proven existence of communist spies necessitated the unpleasant kind of investigative work conducted by the red hunters. Furthermore, Douglas scrupulously confined himself to taking issue with policies and proposals advanced in the give-and-take of the legislative process but refrained from attacking the veracity or conduct of his senatorial colleagues. Even though McCarthy presented an inviting target and never himself hesitated to attack a colleague, Douglas would not engage in *ad hominem* verbal exchanges. Thus, he might deliver a speech calling for the improvement of congressional investigations without directly indicting the primary culprit whose excesses prompted the reproofs. Douglas privately expressed his contempt for McCarthy and later reiterated those feeling in his autobiography, but stopped short of expressing his

feelings publicly at the time. He did, however, vote with just eleven other senators for immediate action on Senator Ralph Flanders' Resolution 301 to censure McCarthy, a demand deflected by the referral of the resolution to a six-man select committee chosen by the Vice-President. Following the select committee's recommendation, Douglas voted for censure.⁶

The controversy swirling around McCarthy provided the backdrop for Douglas's 1954 reelection campaign. Political analysts suggested that McCarthy would respond to the threat of censure in the Senate by lashing out at Democratic senators seeking reelection that year and, as embattled as the Wisconsin senator seemed that summer, his name still evoked fear in many quarters. Although scholars later disputed the belief that McCarthy's interventions in a number of state contests in 1950 had been decisive in defeating his Democratic opponents, in 1954 the stories of his influence four years earlier still held currency; in particular, his incursions into the 1950 Maryland and Illinois senatorial races supposedly contributed significantly to the defeat of incumbent Democrats Millard Tydings and Scott Lucas respectively. Douglas seemed a likely target in 1954, and the press reported that McCarthy would campaign in Illinois against him. Life magazine suggested that so many (ten) Republicans entered the Illinois senatorial primary that year because, as a "superliberal" and a "superinternationalist," Douglas seemed especially vulnerable and that the Republican receiving the nomination could expect generous assistance in the campaign from McCarthy.⁷

All of the accolades Douglas had received during his six years in the Senate notwithstanding, many political observers speculated that he could be defeated in 1954. His purported vulnerability owed to a combination of demographic factors and personal shortcomings that gave hope to potential rivals. Despite the Cook County Democratic machine's continued control of the Chicago electorate, the Republican party controlled 90 of the state's 102 county courthouses. Moreover, demographic trends seemed to be running against the Democrats. The number of registered voters in Chicago fell from 2,077,775 in 1952 to 1,928,102 in 1954, and the voters who moved to the suburbs evidenced a much greater likelihood of voting Republican. In addition to the considerable opposition of Illinois Republicanism, which was underwritten by Colonel Robert McCormick and editorially boosted by his *Chicago Tribune*, Douglas would have to allay the concerns of the state's Democrats. Many party loyalists questioned the independence of a man who had maintained an uneasy relationship with Governor Adlai Stevenson and had openly feuded at times with President Harry Truman. (Douglas and Truman had clashed publicly over a number of matters, including most

notably the dispensation of patronage in Illinois and the Senator's refusal to support all administration measures automatically). Some liberals thought Douglas too much of a cold warrior, too quick to enlist the military on behalf of containment and too tolerant of the witch-hunting produced by the fear of communist subversion at home . . . and too hesitant to speak out against Joe McCarthy and his minions. To be sure, the voters appreciated Douglas's flinty integrity and knew where he stood on the issues, but did they endorse his ideas? Would Douglas's full-throated internationalism seem reasonable to the voters in a state known for its isolationism or would they prefer to fight communism only at home? What would they think of his brand of liberalism in the conservative Ike Age?⁸

Surviving the crowded Republican primary, Joseph T. Meek emerged as Douglas's opponent that year. (Meek received 300,000 votes while Douglas, running unopposed, won twice that many in the Democratic primary). A life-long businessman and lobbyist with no previous political experience, Meek served as president of the Illinois Federation of Retail Associations, a prosperous lobby that served the interests of an estimated forty thousand to sixty thousand members in the state. A jovial glad-hander who referred to himself as "Mr. Retail," Meek explained his initial foray into politics as a patriot's defense of Americanism against the country's insidious drift toward socialism. Although Meek genially assured reporters that he and Douglas were friends who would conduct a civilized campaign—"It's always been Paul and Joe between us," he said—he soon referred to Douglas as "the Senior Socialist Senator from Illinois" and the "Medicine Man from the Midway." Douglas likewise ridiculed his opponent's conservatism, calling Meek "the Republican Rip Van Winkle who has slept twenty years in Lobbyland" and "a man who was dragged screaming into the twentieth century." The two candidates could not have differed more completely in their political views, offering the voters of Illinois a clear choice of ideologies and programs. The campaign promised to be contentious.⁹

In December 1953, Meek wrote to Senator Everett M. Dirksen, Chairman of the Republican Committee on Senatorial Contests, to discuss Douglas's vulnerabilities and propose a strategy for defeating him. Predicting that he would be the Republican candidate the following year, Meek urged Dirksen to keep a careful record of Douglas's statements and senatorial votes so that they could be used against him with the Illinois electorate. Meek called Douglas a "veritable giant of the art of double-talk" who routinely uttered "half-truths" in order to fool the unsuspecting voters. In Meek's view, Douglas had consistently received a favorable press "despite his many shortcomings as a U.S. senator" because of the widespread

perception of him as a "delightful fellow personally, full of good will." Furthermore, Meek averred, Douglas's record showed an unsettling penchant for government action as the cure for all economic ills and an indifference to rugged individualism. In short, the Democratic senator "is dedicated to installation of the Federal Government as master of our lives." Meek's sulfurous letter closed with his assurance that he could defeat Douglas but only if the national Republican organization provided the necessary support.¹⁰

Throughout the campaign, Meek projected an image of down-home congeniality. A short, round, ruffled man with horn-rimmed glasses and a ubiquitous smile, he veritably oozed unpretentiousness. Sprinkling his speeches with country aphorisms, especially when campaigning in Illinois' many isolated towns and hamlets, he mocked Douglas's erudition even as he proudly admitted his own intellectual limitations. An energetic campaigner who seemed to enjoy the endless hand-shaking and baby-kissing necessary in a statewide political contest, he impressed onlookers with his apparent modesty and self-effacing wit. "Hell, everybody likes Joe Meek" in downstate Illinois, concluded a *New York Times* reporter assigned to the campaign.¹¹

Meek's affability notwithstanding, however, his combative speeches attacked every aspect of Douglas's political career and crackled with right wing ideology. Referring to his opponent as "Paul the Planner," a "Fabian socialist," and a "high-pressure lobbyist for the overthrow of capitalism," Meek portrayed Douglas as an unwitting dupe of nefarious agents who sought to divert Americans onto the road to communist enslavement. Douglas and the Democrats had aided in this process, the Republican alleged, by supporting the program of Earl Browder, leader of the American Communist party.¹² Revealing the extremism of his thinking, Meek enumerated a list of subversive programs championed by the Democrats. The list included: Government deficit financing, manipulation of bank reserve requirements, insurance of bank deposits, guarantees of mortgages, control of bank credits, tinkering with the currency system, regulation of installment buying, price controls, price support for farm products, agricultural credits, RFC loans for business corporations, social security systems for workers, various benefits for veterans, government housing, public works projects to provide employment, many projects for conservation of national resources, juggling of the tax structure, new tariff regulations, government organized foreign loans, the employment act, the President's Economic Committee, and the stimulation of war armaments production on a large scale.¹³

While Meek leveled a series of spirited attacks on the principles of the Democratic party, Douglas became the target of rumors and innuendoes that had been leveled against him by right-wing opponents in earlier campaigns, questioning his patriotism and casting him as a former socialist. A pamphlet widely distributed by the Abraham Lincoln Republican Club, an independent organization with no direct ties to the Republican party, resurrected charges made against Douglas during his 1939 campaign for alderman and his 1948 senatorial race. The pamphlet listed a number of "communist-front" organizations to which Douglas once belonged, retold the story of a 1927 fact-finding visit he had paid to the Soviet Union, and erroneously reported that he had previously been a member of the Socialist party. The *Chicago Sun-Times* discovered that Meek's campaign manager, Mark G. Van Buskirk, had secretly commissioned the printing and distribution of the material. As before, Douglas vigorously defended himself, pointing out that he had long ago resigned from leftist organizations that he judged too radical and carefully explained the circumstances under which he had gone to the USSR. (Douglas and several other economists and labor leaders had participated in a fact-finding tour to study the communist regime's economic policies; his written report of the visit had given the Soviet Union's experiments at collectivization low marks). He denied ever having been a member of the Socialist party and offered as corroboration a letter from Norman Thomas. Confirming that Douglas had never joined the Socialist party, Thomas concluded: "I should frankly add that I wish [your reform program] came closer than it does to my own socialist point of view." Reiterating his rejection of socialism and communism, Douglas reminded voters that he had demonstrated his patriotism by fighting for his country in the Second World War—a claim that Meek, who had no record of military service, could not make.¹⁴

The Republicans also tried to link Douglas to a scandal in the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) uncovered by a Senate Banking Committee investigation. The Copley Press newspaper syndicate published stories in several northern Illinois dailies alleging that Douglas's campaign had illegally profited from overpayment of an FHA award for the construction of an apartment complex to a Chicago developer. An FHA bureaucrat, a former Republican ward committeeman in Chicago, transmitted a letter to the office of Republican Senator Everett Dirksen that supposedly implicated Douglas in the scandal; a Dirksen aide then leaked the information to the Copley Press's Washington correspondent. Any notion of Douglas's involvement quickly evaporated when the Chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, Homer Capehart (Republican, Indiana), clarified the purloined letter's contents. Explaining that the government had not overpaid the

developer and that Douglas had not shared in any windfall, Capehart pointed out that the FHA loan actually fell nearly a million dollars short of the cost of construction. Capehart's detailed summary of the project's costs totally exonerated Douglas and exposed the attempt to smear him as an amateurish effort.¹⁵

Because Congress did not adjourn until late in August, Douglas could not begin campaigning in earnest until after Labor Day. In the weeks that followed, despite a lingering illness that left him listless and occasionally made walking difficult, he campaigned at a torrid pace throughout the state. With unrelenting zeal, he exploited the issue of Meek's right-wing extremism. Noting his opponent's objection to social security, dislike of minimum wages for women, call for the withdrawal of all U. S. Troops from Europe, endorsement of Joe McCarthy, support for the Bricker Amendment, and boasts that he had helped defeat three Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) bills in Illinois, Douglas concluded that Meek belonged firmly in the Old Guard wing of the Republican party. Indeed, Douglas claimed, he stood closer than his opponent to President Eisenhower and the responsible element in the GOP. Douglas supported the president's foreign policy initiatives to combat communism and selectively backed the domestic policy programs he judged to be worthwhile. A primary example involved public housing. Whereas Eisenhower had agreed with Douglas that the government had a moral obligation to provide some low-income housing and had signed the Housing Act of 1954, Meek contended that "you can't get away from the persistent threat of socialism and communism unless you begin doing for yourself that which you are now willing for the government to do for you . . . including slum clearance." Douglas also cited the case of national health insurance. Recalling that he had opposed the Murray-Dingell bill championed by President Truman for going too far, he lauded the more circumscribed Eisenhower medical plan that Congress had recently rejected.¹⁶

At the same time that he portrayed Meek as drastically out of step with his own party's leadership in Washington, Douglas also took the Eisenhower administration to task over its economic policies. Despite the apparent health of the national economy, Douglas boldly forecast the onset of a recession due to Republican mismanagement during the previous two years. In his travels around Illinois, Douglas informed the voters, he had spotted telltale signs of economic problems—unusually empty parking lots adjacent to the farm-implement factories in Rock Island and Moline, long lines at employment insurance offices, growing inventories of unsold vehicles at downstate automobile dealerships—before economists recognized a

national problem. Republican leaders dismissed Douglas's warnings as the gloom-and-doom of a desperate politician, and the *Chicago Tribune* accused him of using scare tactics for his own personal gain. In *Economy in the National Government*, a book he had published just two years earlier during a Democratic administration, Douglas had termed six per cent unemployment an acceptable rate. With a Republican in the White House, complained *The Tribune*, Douglas was suddenly finding five per cent unemployment excessive and predicting dire economic consequences. Douglas rejoined that a sophisticated assessment of the national economy had to go beyond a cursory comparison of unemployment data; he continued to cast the putative Republican prosperity as a kind of Potemkin village.¹⁷

In the campaign's closing days, Meek attempted to position himself nearer to the Republican middle ground. Acknowledging the value of a closer association with President Eisenhower, whose personal popularity remained high with voters, Meek de-emphasized his disagreements with the administration's policies. He persuaded Everett Dirksen to take him to the White House for a fence-mending session with the president, after which Dirksen assured Eisenhower that Meek was "a team player." Likewise, he tempered his enthusiasm for the ruthlessness of Joe McCarthy's red-hunting escapades. Earlier a spirited defender of McCarthy's methods, Meek became increasingly vague about the acceptability of the investigative tactics employed by congressional committees. His strained attempts to drift into the political mainstream seemed calculated and unconvincing, as when he said: "The objectives of the McCarthy Committee are very essential. Sometimes the methods of the man are not acceptable. Sometimes they are." Even though his political positions remained contrary to views held by the Republican administration in Washington, Meek handled the awkward McCarthy situation effectively enough to receive Eisenhower's tepid endorsement.¹⁸

Contrary to the speculation that McCarthy would campaign extensively in Illinois against Douglas in 1954, he never appeared in the state that year. He cancelled a September 26 speech in Naperville, citing sinus problems that forced him to check into a hospital for treatment, and similarly backed out of two other scheduled speeches in Illinois that autumn. On October 31 Senator John Bricker of Ohio and other party stalwarts, who had been dispatched by the Republican National Committee, addressed a rally in Galesburg alongside Meek, but McCarthy was noticeably absent. Everett Dirksen felt that appearances by McCarthy could have aided Meek and other Republican candidates in Illinois and, although he stopped short of publicly criticizing Eisenhower and White House staff, lamented the party

leadership's decision not to bring the Wisconsin senator into the state. Wary of the controversy swirling around the embattled McCarthy, Republican leaders seem to have concluded that his presence in Illinois would potentially do more harm than good.¹⁹

The issue of McCarthyism arose one last time when Douglas and Meek appeared on the television news program, "Meet the Press," the Sunday before the election. Asked how they would vote on the upcoming resolution in the Senate to censure the Wisconsin senator, the two candidates gave strikingly different answers. Deriding the unethical tactics employed by partisan Democrats against the beleaguered McCarthy, Meek came down firmly against censure. Douglas offered a long, rambling response that at first seemed noncommittal but eventually suggested that he would vote for the resolution. He began by saying that he would reserve judgment until reading the report of the special committee studying the charges—to do otherwise would be to prejudge the case—but later reminded the audience that he had been one of the few senators who voted for immediate action on the resolution. Douglas indeed seemed to be trying to have it both ways, claiming to have an open mind pending full disclosure of the evidence and yet also hinting that he found McCarthy's conduct censurable. McCarthy fired off an angry telegram to Douglas, charging him with hypocrisy and attempting to deceive the voters when he obviously had already thrown his lot in with the senators favoring censure. Praising the forthright position taken by Meek, McCarthy denounced Douglas in the press and called for his defeat at the polls.²⁰

In the campaign's closing weeks, *The Chicago Tribune* likewise weighed in heavily against Douglas. Grudgingly acknowledging the senator's cold war credentials, the newspaper nevertheless criticized his eagerness to commit U.S. military forces in the fight against communism globally. Even more problematic, *The Tribune* maintained, was Douglas's devotion to government meddling in the economy. His warnings about rising unemployment and the threat of an impending recession made him a demagogue. Though stopping short of overtly red-baiting him, the newspaper continued to refer to his earlier associations with leftist organizations. The virulence of *The Tribune's* campaign against Douglas peaked with its publication of a critical series of articles just before election day. In one of those acerbic pieces, Republican state auditor Orville Hodge called Douglas "morally unfit" to hold elective office. (Two years later, Hodge was in prison, having been found guilty of embezzling \$2.5 million from the state). In all, *The Tribune's* endorsement of Joe Meek seemed to be an afterthought, its principal goal being the removal of Douglas from office.²¹

Douglas won the election by approximately 237,000 votes. He received 53.6 per cent of the ballots cast, about one percentage point less than in 1948, but still triumphed by the largest margin of any Democratic congressional candidate that year. Douglas attributed his success to the rising reaction against McCarthyism and the public's concern about an impending recession brought on by misguided Republican economic policies. In his view, the righteousness of his positions on the issues triumphed over a vacuous but generously funded Republican campaign. "For a second time," he exulted, "I had beaten the moneyed Establishment." Meek naturally saw it quite differently. He pointed to disunity in the Republican party as the salient factor in explaining the election's outcome. He felt unaccepted by both the Eisenhower and Taft wings of the party and rued his inability to heal the rift between the two factions. Most important, he had been unable to alter the perception that he was "pro-McCarthy" and "anti-Eisenhower." These internal fissions, he surmised, explained the low voter turnout in traditionally Republican areas of the state. Disgusted at the party's fractiousness and unsure of Meek's loyalty to the popular Eisenhower, many Republicans simply stayed at home on election day.²²

Both candidates' analyses contained some perceptive insights, but their brief assessments touched on just a few of the many factors that contributed to the incumbent's reelection. Douglas's decision to emphasize dollars-and-cents issues undoubtedly yielded considerable dividends. His jeremiads about worsening economic conditions seemed to have paid off in the industrial regions of East Saint Louis, Rock Island, Moline, and southern Illinois coal mining communities, all of which were already experiencing severe unemployment, but less so in cities like Peoria and Rockford where conditions remained healthy. Organized labor rallied to Douglas's cause, partly because of his many years of support for unions and solid voting record in Congress and also because Joe Meek's twenty year history of complete opposition to any pro-labor legislation in Illinois made him anathema to the leaders of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). Meek's paeans to free enterprise and fulminations against government intrusions into the operations of the free market may have played well with Chambers of Commerce and other businessmen's organizations, but his strenuous objections to government aid to agriculture struck a discordant note among Illinois farmers. Although Douglas's liberalism may not always have appealed to his constituents, the state's farmers recognized that at least in this instance, his support of an activist government served their interests.²³

Despite losing some of its power because of population decline in Chicago and the concomitant growth of the suburbs, the Cook County

Democratic machine remained a potent force in state politics and supported Douglas strongly. Uncharacteristically unsuccessful in the 1950 and 1952 elections, and beset by a series of scandals, the machine valued its association with Douglas more than ever and responded accordingly in 1954. The payoff came in the huge majorities he enjoyed from Chicago precincts on election day. Meek carried suburban Cook County by 80,000 votes and the rest of the state by 68,000 votes, but the Chicago leviathan made the difference for Douglas. (The area immediately surrounding Cook County, the so-called "collar counties" of McHenry, DuPage, Kane, and Lake, gave Meek a plurality of 59,000 votes). Chicago's continuing loss of population and the growing affinity between the Republican party and suburban voters provided Colonel McCormick with some consolation and hope for future electoral triumphs, but not enough electoral muscle to save Joe Meek.²⁴

In reelecting Douglas, Illinois voters knew that they were returning to Washington an independent Democrat who would support the Republican administration on some issues, namely in championing a staunch anti-communism in foreign affairs, while demanding more government activism in behalf of social welfare measures. The state's electorate no doubt recognized the expediency of Meek's eleventh-hour rapprochement with Eisenhower and understood that he truly occupied a niche much farther to the right than the president on the political spectrum. If Douglas was more liberal than many Illinois voters, he stood less removed than Meek from the state's political epicenter. In the waning days of Joe McCarthy's influence in the U. S. Senate, politicians like Meek who were closely associated with the discredited Wisconsin Senator could only fare worse than those like Douglas who possessed any kind of a record in opposition to the excesses of domestic anti-communism. Reelected by a substantial if not overwhelming margin, Douglas could return to the Senate secure in the fundamental soundness of his political beliefs and prepared to resume the struggle for liberal reform.²⁵

Notes

- 1 Paul H. Douglas, *In the Fullness of Time: The Memoirs of Paul H. Douglas* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1971), 139-40; Charles C. Alexander, *Holding the Line: The Eisenhower Era, 1952-1961* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), 24. On the politics of the Eisenhower years, see Stephen Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990); Elmo Richardson, *The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1979); Robert F. Burk, *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Hero and Politician* (Boston: Twayne, 1986); Michael S. Mayer, ed., *The Eisenhower Presidency and the 1950s* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998); and Gary W. Reichard, *The Reaffirmation of Republicanism: Eisenhower and the Eighty-third Congress* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975).
- 2 The most complete source on Douglas's early life remains his autobiography, *In the Fullness of Time*. Also consult the following: Jerry M. Anderson, "Paul H. Douglas: Insurgent Senate Spokesman for Humane Causes, 1949-1963," Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1964, Chapters 1-3; "The Making of a Maverick," *Time* 55 (January 16, 1950), 16-19; Joe Alex Morris, "Senator Douglas: Hard-Boiled Idealist," *Saturday Evening Post* 222 (August 6, 1949), 108; Mortimer Smith, "Senator Paul H. Douglas," *American Mercury* 71 (July 1950), 28-9; and Cabell Phillips, "Paul Douglas—Instinctive Liberal," *New York Times Magazine*, June 24, 1951, 10.
- 3 On Douglas's early years in the Senate, begin with his *In the Fullness of Time*. Also see Anderson, "Paul H. Douglas," Chapter 6; and Oral History Interview with Howard E. Shuman, Senate Historical Office, Washington, D.C.
- 4 Congressional Record, 83rd Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 99, Pt. 7, July 16, 1953, 8953-4; Press Release, 7/16/53, Paul H. Douglas Papers, Box 518, Folder 7/16/53, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois. A vast historical literature has grown up around McCarthyism. See, for example, Richard H. Rovere, *Senator Joe McCarthy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1959); Richard M. Fried, *Men Against McCarthy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976); Richard M. Fried, *Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 90); and Ellen Schrecker, *Many are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1998). On Eisenhower and McCarthyism, see Jeff Broadwater, *Eisenhower and the Anti-Communist Crusade* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).
- 5 Richard H. Rovere, *Senator Joe McCarthy*, 13 (first quotation); Allida M. Black, *Casting Her Own Shadow: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Shaping of Postwar Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 169 (second quotation); Fried, *Men Against McCarthy*, 186 (third and fourth quotations).
- 6 Fried, *Men Against McCarthy*, 297. Douglas discussed his feelings about McCarthy in his autobiography, *In the Fullness of Time*, 249-52. In an effort to save the U. S. Marine Corps from being terminated by legislative fiat, Douglas drafted a bill that guaranteed the perpetual existence of at least four divisions of Marines. He calculated that to ensure the measure's passage, he needed Joseph McCarthy's support. The Wisconsin senator sent word that Douglas must approach him on the Senate floor, in full view of the press gallery and all of their colleagues, and publicly ask for his support. Douglas found the prospect extremely distasteful, but his love for the

Marines prevailed and he satisfied McCarthy's conditions for the needed support. Oral History Interview with Howard E. Shuman, 99-100; Paul H. Douglas, *In the Fullness of Time*, 347-8.

7 Fried, *Nightmare in Red*, 129-30; Douglas, *In the Fullness of Time*, 251; "Ten Try For Chance to Replace Douglas," *Life* 36 (February 22, 1954), 34. On Lucas's defeat in Illinois, see Edward L. Schapsmeier and Frederick H. Schapsmeier, "Scott W. Lucas of Havana: His Rise and Fall as Majority Leader in the United States Senate," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 70 (November 1977), 302-320; and Brian Deason's article in this issue. The ten Republican aspirants were John Crane, Lar Daley, Edgar Elbert, Herbert Geisler, Edward Hayes, Julius Klein, Park Livingston, Joseph Meek, Deneen Watson, and Austin Wyman.

8 Hubert Cordier, "Campaigning With Television: The Speaking of Senator Paul H. Douglas in the 1954 Campaign," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1955, 10-11; Elmer Gertz, "Shall the Meek Inherit? Douglas Faces a Fight," *The Nation* 179 (October 23, 1954), 362. On McCormick and the Tribune, see Richard Norton Smith, *The Colonel: The Life and Legend of Robert R. McCormick, Indomitable Editor of the Chicago Tribune* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

9 Theodore H. White, "Pivotal Campaign in Illinois: Joe Meek vs. Paul Douglas," *The Reporter* 11 (October 7, 1954), p. 35; Hubert Cordier, "Campaigning With Television," 10; "Mr. Retail v. The Professor." *Time* 63 (April 26, 1954), 28 (first and second quotations); "Opposites in Illinois," *Time* 64 (October 25, 1954), 15 (third, fourth, fifth, and sixth quotations).

10 Joseph T. Meek to Everett M. Dirksen, December 24, 1953, Joseph T. Meek Papers, Box 1, Folder Senatorial Race May 1953-February 1954, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois. On Dirksen, see Byron C. Hulsey, *Everett Dirksen and His Presidents: How a Senate Giant Shaped American Politics* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000); and Edward L. Schapsmeier, "Dirksen and Douglas of Illinois: The Pragmatist and the Professor as Contemporaries in the United States Senate," *Illinois Historical Journal* 83 (Summer 1990), 74-84.

11 Cabell Phillips, "Communiqué on the Illinois Campaign," *New York Times Magazine*, September 26, 1954, 14.

12 "Formal Announcement of Candidacy of Joe Meek," November 15, 1953, Joseph T. Meek Papers, Box 1, Folder Senatorial Race May 1953-February 1954; Cabell Phillips, "Communiqué on the Illinois Campaign," 79 (first quotation); White, "Pivotal Campaign in Illinois," 36 (second quotation); Gertz, "Shall the Meek Inherit?" 361 (third quotation).

13 Theodore H. White, "Pivotal Campaign in Illinois," p. 36.

14 *Chicago Sun-Times* clipping, October 14, 1954, Paul H. Douglas Papers, Box 114, Folder McCarthy Era Smears on Douglas; "Bushwhackers Work on Douglas," *The New Republic* 131 (November 1, 1954), p. 5; Undated news release, Paul H. Douglas Papers, Box 114, Folder Articles Pertaining to P.D.'s Marine Service, Etc.; Norman Thomas to Douglas, July 1, 1954, Douglas Papers, Box 428, Folder Norman Thomas, 1954 (quotation); Cordier, "Campaigning With Television," 80.

15 *Chicago Tribune*, October 27, 1954; "Bushwhackers Work on Douglas," 5.

16 Statement by Paul H. Douglas, July 30, 1954, Douglas Papers, Box 519, Folder

July 30, 1954; *New York Times*, May 15, 1953; Cordier, "Campaigning With Television," 120 (quotation); "Douglas Answers Doctor's Health Insurance Query," Paul H. Douglas Papers, Box 519, Folder July 20, 1954; St. Louis Post-Dispatch clipping, September 26, 1954, Adlai E. Stevenson Papers, Box 25, Folder 11, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey. The Bricker Amendment, which Eisenhower strongly opposed, limited the president's power to make treaties and other international agreements, and increased the role of Congress in the conduct of foreign affairs; the amendment narrowly failed. Reichard, *The Reaffirmation of Republicanism*, 51-52. On Eisenhower and public housing, see Roger Biles, "Public Housing in the Eisenhower Administration," *Mid-America* 81 (Winter 1999), 5-25.

17 Douglas, *In the Fullness of Time*, 569; *Chicago Tribune*, October 26, 31, 1954. See Douglas, *Economy in the National Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952).

18 *Chicago Tribune*, October 25, 1954; Hulseley, *Everett Dirksen and His Presidents*, 72 (first quotation); Cabell Phillips, "Communiqué on the Illinois Campaign," 74 (second quotation); William S. White, *Citadel: The Story of the U. S. Senate* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), 150.

19 *Chicago Tribune*, September 24, 1954, October 31, 1954; *New York Times*, September 19, 1954; Hulseley, *Everett Dirksen and His Presidents*, 79.

20 Joseph McCarthy to Joe Meek, November 1, 1954, and Joseph McCarthy to Douglas, November 1, 1954, both in Joseph T. Meek Papers, Box 3, Folder Senatorial Race Nov.-Dec. 1954; *Chicago Tribune*, November 2, 1954; Douglas, *In the Fullness of Time*, 251.

21 Undated *Chicago Tribune* clipping, Adlai E. Stevenson Papers, Box 25, Folder 11; Douglas, *In the Fullness of Time*, 568. Also see *The Chicago Tribune's* articles and editorials during the two weeks preceding the November 2 election.

22 Douglas, *In the Fullness of Time*, 569 (quotation); Meek to Robert Humphreys, December 3, 1954, Meek Papers, Box 3, Folder Senatorial Race Nov.-Dec. 1954.

23 Richard Lewis, "Illinois," *The Nation* 179 (November 13, 1954), 419; White, "Pivotal Campaign in Illinois," 38.

24 *Chicago Tribune*, November 7, 1954; White, "Pivotal Campaign in Illinois," p. 38. Adlai E. Stevenson endorsed Douglas, donated \$500 to his campaign, and gave a number of speeches for him throughout the state. Stevenson to Douglas, May 3, 1954; Douglas to Stevenson, August 25, 1954; and Douglas to Stevenson, November 11, 1954, all in Adlai E. Stevenson papers, Box 25, Folder 11.

25 This view of Douglas's reelection is confirmed by the endorsements he received from several Illinois newspapers. See, for example, the undated clippings from the *Decatur Sunday Herald and Review*, the *Fulton Journal*, and the *Freeport Journal-Standard* in the Adlai E. Stevenson Papers, Box 25, Folder 11.