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Pointing Their Pens: Herblock and Fellow Cartoonists Confront the Issues

Red Scare



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In the 1950s the nation feared the increase in communist-run countries after World War II. Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy's four-year public smear campaign began in 1950 and paralleled the intimidation tactics already underway by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), which had been founded in 1938 to root out subversive activities related to communism. McCarthy's initial popularity with the American public was fed by the Cold War-fueled fear of communist influence, which led some cartoonists to agree with him. However, by January 1954, a Gallup poll found that only 50 percent of the American public supported McCarthy. The televised McCarthy-Army hearings later that year further eroded his public support. In June 1954, McCarthy was censured and by December condemned by the Senate.



Jerry Costello (1897–1971). *How We Top a Viper*. 1953. Published in the *Albany Knickerbocker News*, September 3, 1953. India ink, graphite, and opaque white drawing. Gift of Jerry Costello, 1953. [Prints and Photographs Division](#), Library of Congress (010.00.00)
LC-DIG-acd-2a07674 © Times Union, Albany, NY

HERBLOCK, *Washington Post*

As president-elect Dwight David Eisenhower prepared to steam ahead into office early in 1953, Herblock portrayed members of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), sliding back into the past. Herblock and other journalists feared that Eisenhower would not be able to control a right-wing Congress determined to root out communists from government. In reaction to the quest for communists in the United States, Herblock wrote, "there was real pleasure in having an outlet for my anger instead of imploding with it."



Herblock (1909–2001). [Eisenhower on campaign train: proposed investigations into past](#). 1953. Published in the *Washington Post*, January 2, 1953. India ink, graphite, and opaque white drawing. Herbert L. Block Collection, [Prints and Photographs Division](#), Library of Congress (006.00.00)
LC-DIG-hlb-03196 © Herb Block Foundation

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HERBLOCK, *Washington Post*

Herblock drew parallels between the tactics of Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy's mud-slinging and Soviet Union propaganda, finding each approach unacceptable. He demanded that moderate Republicans take responsibility for McCarthy's actions. In reaction to the quest for communists in the United States, Herblock wrote, "there was real pleasure in having an outlet for my anger instead of imploding with it."



Herblock (1909–2001). ["You Go Along with That Idea?"](#) 1951. Published in the *Washington Post*, June 17, 1951. India ink, graphite, and opaque white drawing. Herbert L. Block Collection, [Prints and Photographs Division](#), Library of Congress (007.00.00)
LC-DIG-hlb-02803 © Herb Block Foundation

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HUGH HUTTON, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

In January 1947, Carl Aldo Marzani was arrested and imprisoned for being an active member of the Communist Party while in the employ of the State Department. At the time, the Federal Bureau of Investigation thoroughly investigated 314 employees, leading to dismissals and resignations. Hutton appears to believe the firings validated the methods of the House Un-American Activities Committee. Hugh McMillen Hutton spent thirty-five years as an editorial cartoonist at the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.



Hugh Hutton (1896–1976). [They Just Crawl in Everywhere](#). 1947. Published in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 20, 1947. Crayon over graphite drawing. Art Wood Collection of Cartoon and Caricature, [Prints and Photographs Division](#), Library of Congress (008.00.00)
LC-DIG-ppmsca-38555

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KEITH TEMPLE, *New Orleans Times-Picayune*

In 1953, New York Judge Edward J. Dimock offered thirteen members of the Communist Party a trip to the Soviet Union, but the convicted men and women chose, instead, to serve prison sentences varying from one to three years. As *New Orleans Times-Picayune* cartoonist Keith Temple makes clear, eight were born in what became Iron Curtain countries. His sarcastic jab suggests that he was disgusted, but not surprised, that Communists from Soviet Bloc countries refused to move to the Soviet Union.

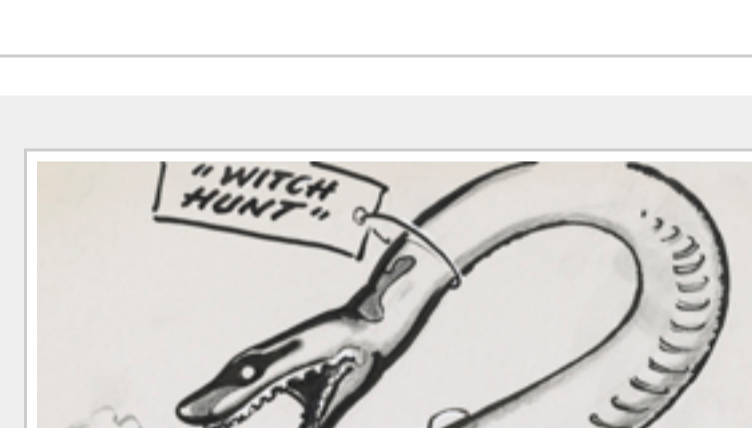


Keith Temple (1899–1980). [Can You Beat It?](#) 1953. Published in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, February 5, 1953. India ink and crayon drawing. Gift of Keith Temple, 1953. [Prints and Photographs Division](#), Library of Congress (009.00.00)
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JERRY COSTELLO, *Albany Knickerbocker News*

Referring to Harry Truman's 1948 speech in which he labeled a House Un-American Activities Committee investigation a "red herring," as well as a labor union official's criticism of Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy and his fellow senators for creating a "witch hunt," cartoonist Jerry Costello depicts communism as a vicious threat to the United States. McCarthy had just launched an investigation into the Army Signal Corps when Costello drew this cartoon. In 1954, the Army hearings became McCarthy's undoing.



Jerry Costello (1897–1971). *How We Top a Viper*. 1953. Published in the *Albany Knickerbocker News*, September 3, 1953. India ink, graphite, and opaque white drawing. Gift of Jerry Costello, 1953. [Prints and Photographs Division](#), Library of Congress (010.00.00)
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HERBLOCK, *Washington Post*

Members of the Senate were divided in their reaction to Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy's hearings to root out communism. Scott Lucas, a Democrat from Illinois, supported State Department employees working in fear of false allegation and challenged McCarthy, calling him a "liar." Owen Lattimore, a State Department employee, who had been falsely accused of being a "top Soviet espionage agent," argued that McCarthy was guilty of "Russian-type smears." In 1950, Herblock portrayed McCarthy as a lone actor, but, by 1954 the senator's investigative committee had ended many careers.

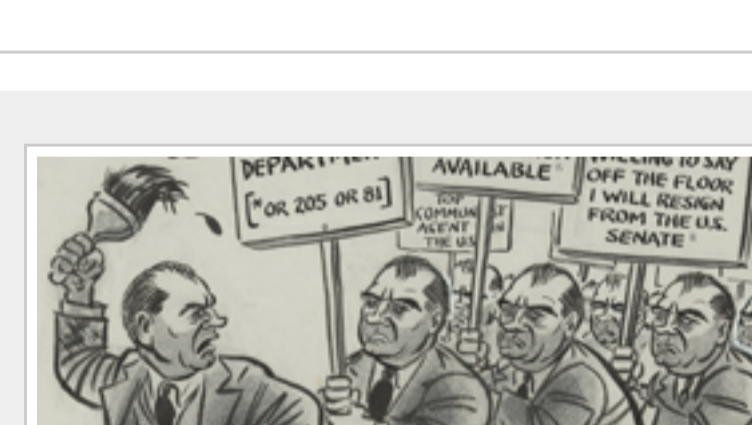


Herblock (1909–2001). [My Next Number Will Be—](#) 1950. Published in the *Washington Post*, May 5, 1950. India ink, graphite, and opaque white drawing. Herbert L. Block Collection, [Prints and Photographs Division](#), Library of Congress (006.01.00)
LC-DIG-hlb-02496 © Herb Block Foundation

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HERBLOCK, *Washington Post*

This Herblock cartoon depicts Joseph McCarthy as his own worst enemy. Soon after the senator claimed that he had a list of known communists working in the State Department, Herblock went on the attack, stating later, "there was real pleasure in having an outlet for my anger instead of imploding with it." The Catholic Archdioceses of Baltimore and Washington confronted McCarthy as did Senate Democrats, but they failed to stop his investigation of the State Department and the later investigations he led. The televised Army hearings in 1954 brought about McCarthy's downfall.

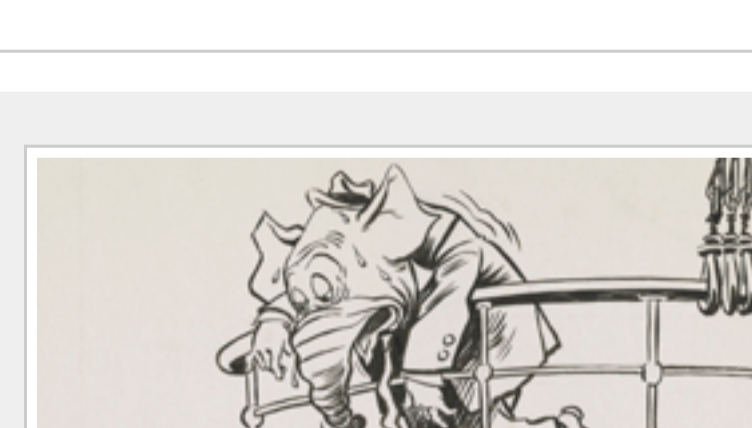


Herblock (1909–2001). [Stop Ganging Up on Me](#). 1950. Published in the *Washington Post*, April 22, 1950. India ink, graphite, and opaque white drawing. Herbert L. Block Collection, [Prints and Photographs Division](#), Library of Congress (007.01.00)
LC-DIG-hlb-02485 © Herb Block Foundation

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EDMUND VALTMAN, *Hartford Times*

In 1954, as the Army-McCarthy hearings exposed the Wisconsin senator's bullying tactics on national television, Joseph McCarthy's reputation plummeted. Estonian émigré, Edmund Valtman, who had lived through German fascism and Soviet communism, believed the Republican Party needed to purge the red scare obsession from its agenda. Already an established cartoonist, Valtman emigrated to the United States in 1949 and worked for the *Hartford Times* between 1951 and his retirement in 1975.

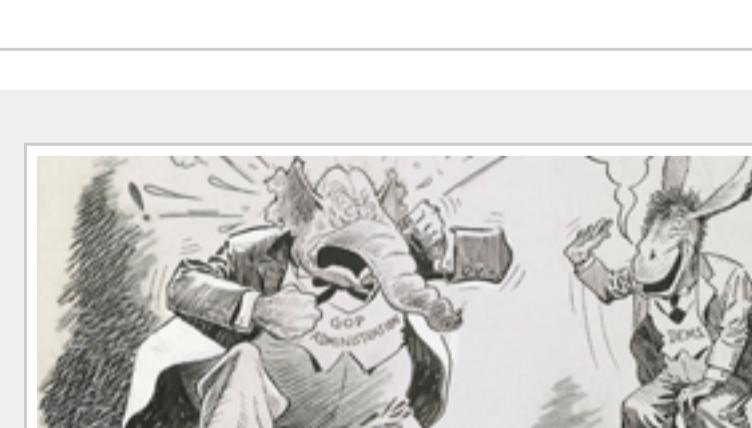


Edmund Valtman (1914–2005). [Getting It Out of His System](#). 1954. Published in the *Hartford Times*, March 11, 1954. India ink and opaque white drawing. Art Wood Collection of Cartoon and Caricature, [Prints and Photographs Division](#), Library of Congress (008.01.00)
LC-DIG-ppmsca-38556

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LEO ROCHE, *Buffalo Courier-Express*

As Joseph McCarthy continued to conduct hearings intent on exposing communists, Republicans began to distance themselves. The issue came to a head when President Eisenhower nominated Charles E. Bolen to serve as ambassador to the Soviet Union. Bolen, who was expressly in favor of accommodating rather than containing the Soviet Union, found Republican support during McCarthy's investigation. Leo Roche, who cartooned for the *Buffalo Courier-Express* for at least twenty years, shows the Democrats relishing the Republican Party dilemma.

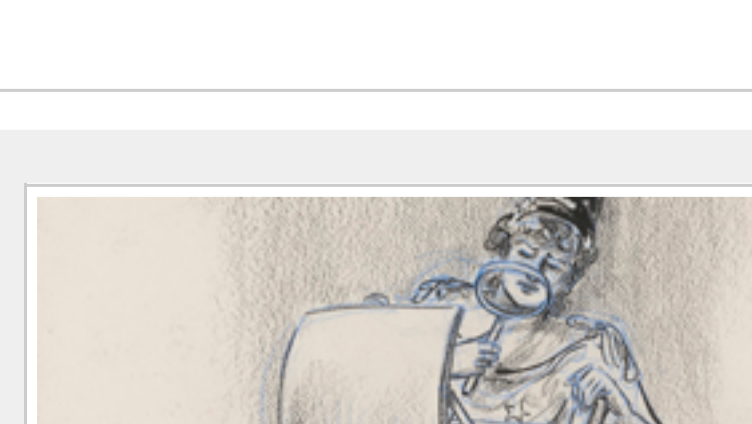


Leo Roche (1888–1974). [Old Tanglefoot—and He's Stuck with It](#). 1953. Published in the *Buffalo Courier-Express*, March 27, 1953. India ink, graphite, opaque white, and blue pencil drawing. Gift of Leo Roche, 1953. [Prints and Photographs Division](#), Library of Congress (009.01.00)
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CLARENCE BATCHELOR, *New York Daily News*

During the 1952 presidential election, Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy repeatedly accused Democratic Party candidate Adlai Stevenson of collusion with Soviet communists. Stevenson had given a deposition in favor of Alger Hiss during his Soviet espionage trial in 1948, so McCarthy and others used this as evidence of communist sympathies. Clarence Batchelor drew for the *New York Daily News* for thirty-eight years. He and his paper grew increasingly disenchanted with liberalism and by 1952 sympathized with McCarthy's rhetoric.



Clarence Batchelor (1888–1977). [Columbia—What Worries Me Is I Find No Anger Here Toward Hiss](#). 1952. Published in the *New York Daily News*, 1952. India ink, lithographic crayon, charcoal and blue pencil drawing. Gift of Clarence Batchelor, 1953. [Prints and Photographs Division](#), Library of Congress (010.01.00)
LC-DIG-acd-2a05674 © New York Daily News

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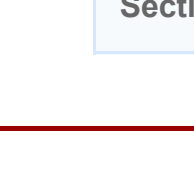
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