

Analyzing Political Cartoons

The Cold War Begins, 1945–1960

Truman vs. MacArthur Background

When China entered the Korean conflict, General Douglas MacArthur sought President Truman’s approval to blockade Chinese ports and bomb Chinese cities with nuclear weapons. When Truman refused MacArthur’s request, the general began publicly criticizing Truman and his policies. Specifically, he charged Truman with appeasement. In April 1951, Truman fired MacArthur, setting off a firestorm of public outrage.

The following two political cartoons offer different views on MacArthur’s firing. Study each cartoon and then answer the questions that follow.



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Critical Thinking

1. What does this cartoon tell you about the public’s reaction to MacArthur’s firing?
2. What does the inclusion of the Pentagon in the frying pan suggest?
3. Who is the John Q. holding the frying pan?

Analyzing Political Cartoons *Cont.*

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Making Comparisons

Compare the sentiment behind this cartoon with that of the first cartoon.



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Critical Thinking

1. What does the cartoonist believe will happen if MacArthur's plan to go to war with China is approved?
2. What is the MacArthur figure doing?
3. What does the hat represent? How do you know?