

# Anti-Communist Trading Cards, 1951

## Introduction

---

On June 25, 1950, war broke out on the Korean peninsula when the Soviet-backed Communist forces in North Korea invaded the recently founded democratic republic of South Korea. Following a unanimous UN resolution condemning the invasion, President Harry S. Truman committed US troops to the conflict. During the 1950s, the United States took the lead in fighting against North Korea to combat the spread of Communism. The events in Korea contributed to the escalation of the Cold War, a decades-long rivalry between the US and the Soviet Union. Active combat on the [Korean peninsula](#) ended in a cease-fire in 1953, but no peace treaty has ever been signed. The legacy of the Korean War continues to shape relations between the United States, South Korea, and North Korea.

This set of 48 trading cards entitled *Fight the Red Menace: Children's Crusade against Communism* was designed to teach American children about the threatened spread of Communism. They were part of the propaganda initiative to gain the support of Americans for the war by creating fear and demonizing the enemy. Each card features a dramatic, colorful depiction of American military heroes and victories, or Communist villains and their atrocities. The text on the reverse uses strong language to focus on the threat posed by Communism, building on fears of infiltration at home and military attacks from abroad. The cards were officially marketed to children. However, the inclusion of a note encouraging children to tell their parents to read the Department of State Bulletin "if they want to learn more about the brutal conditions of life under communism" is a clear indication the cards were intended for an adult audience as well.

## Questions for Discussion

---

1. What are the mood and tone of the five images?
2. Read the text that was printed on the back of the cards. What is the most powerful phrase in each text? Describe why each one is powerful.
3. Based on the images and texts on the cards, list three values that the creators believe are important or central to the American democratic way of life. Use examples from the text to support your answer.
4. List three Communist activities that, according to the creators of the cards, threaten American democratic values.
5. Look at the faces and colors in the cards. How does the artist use colors and depictions of people to support his point of view?

Images



**CHILDREN'S CRUSADE AGAINST COMMUNISM**

**6. Landing at Inchon**

We couldn't stand by and let North Korean Reds gobble up South Korea. So we sent troops to help the South Koreans keep their freedom. Our soldiers had a rough time because the enemy had lots more men than we did. We had to retreat down the Korean peninsula. Things looked bad in September 1950. Then we pulled a surprise punch. Our troops stormed ashore at Inchon, 150 miles behind the enemy lines. We recaptured Seoul and kept going. We had freed most of Korea when the Chinese Reds struck us from Manchuria.



**FIGHT THE  
RED MENACE**

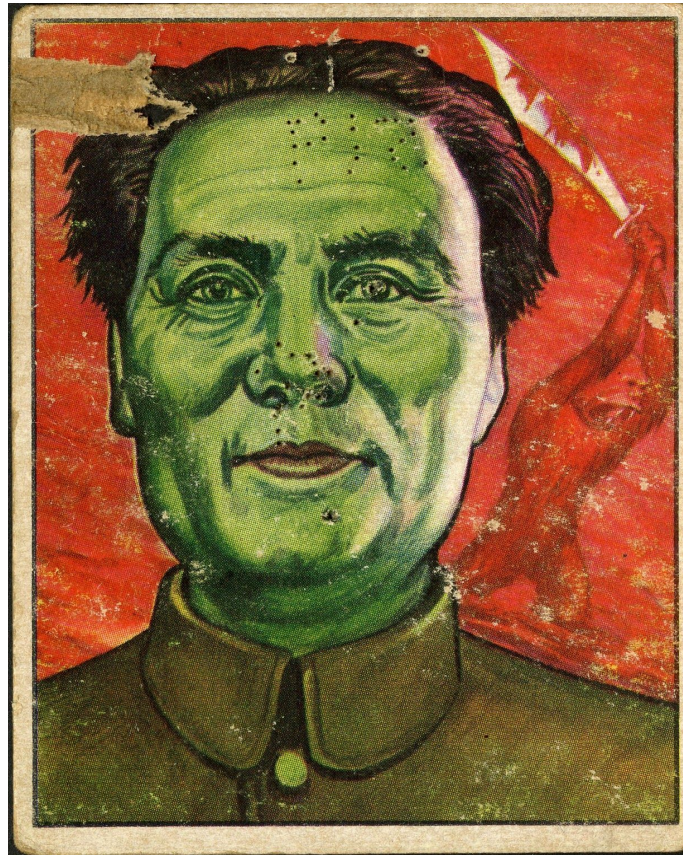


© 1951 Bowman Gum, Inc., Phila., Pa., U.S.A.

"6. Landing at Inchon," *Fight the Red Menace: The Children's Crusade against Communism* trading cards, Bowman Gum Company, 1951. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC09627.06.)



## Anti-Communist Trading Cards, 1951



### CHILDREN'S CRUSADE AGAINST COMMUNISM

#### 47. War-Maker

Mao Tse-tung is the leader of the Chinese Reds who attacked the United Nations forces in Korea. His army was built up, in the first place, with the help of outlaws. Later the Russian Reds supplied him with arms and advisers. He captured the China mainland in three years of savage warfare against the Nationalist government. Mao delights in war. History, he says, "is written in blood and iron." The free world must find a way to keep war-makers like Mao Tse-tung from shedding the blood of innocent people.



**FIGHT THE  
RED MENACE**



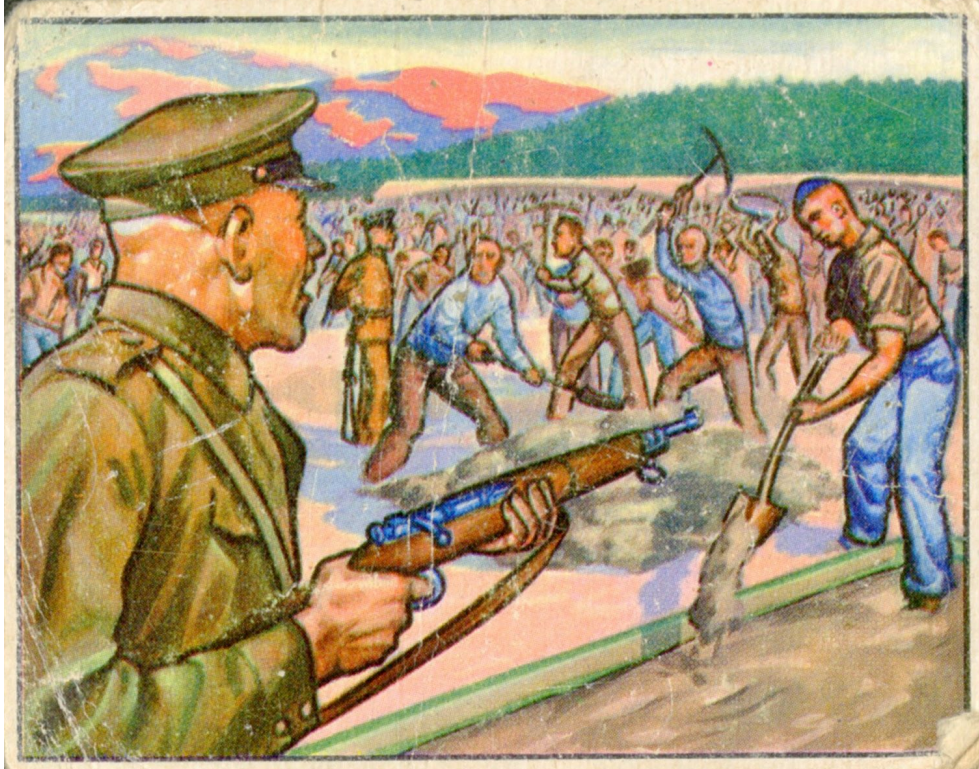
© 1951 Bowman Gum, Inc., Phila., Pa., U.S.A.

GLC09627.47

"47. War-Maker," *Fight the Red Menace: The Children's Crusade against Communism* trading cards, Bowman Gum Company, Philadelphia, PA, 1951. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC09627.47)



## Anti-Communist Trading Cards, 1951



### CHILDREN'S CRUSADE AGAINST COMMUNISM

#### **3. Slave Labor**

The Soviet Union claims to be the champion of human freedom. It claims to be the friend of people who do the world's work. Yet in Soviet Russia, and in other countries which the Reds rule, millions of human beings have been herded into concentration camps. They are forced to do slave labor under conditions of great cruelty. (If your parents would like further information about this, they can find it in *The Department of State Bulletin* for Sept. 25, 1950, which is a United States government publication.)



**FIGHT THE  
RED MENACE**



© 1951 Bowman Gum, Inc., Phila., Pa., U.S.A.

"3. Slave Labor," *Fight the Red Menace: The Children's Crusade against Communism* trading cards Bowman Gum Company, Philadelphia, PA, 1951. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC09627.03)



## Anti-Communist Trading Cards, 1951



### CHILDREN'S CRUSADE AGAINST COMMUNISM

#### **35. Visit by Red Police**

Why is this Russian family being arrested? Perhaps the radio is a clue. These people may have been listening to the "Voice of America." The "Voice," you know, is a radio program in which our State Department tells the truth about the free world. The Red leaders do not want the Russian people to learn what real freedom is like. They might ask it for themselves. But who reported that this family tuned in on the "Voice"? Perhaps someone they thought was a friend. Who can tell who may be a spy for the secret police?



**FIGHT THE  
RED MENACE**

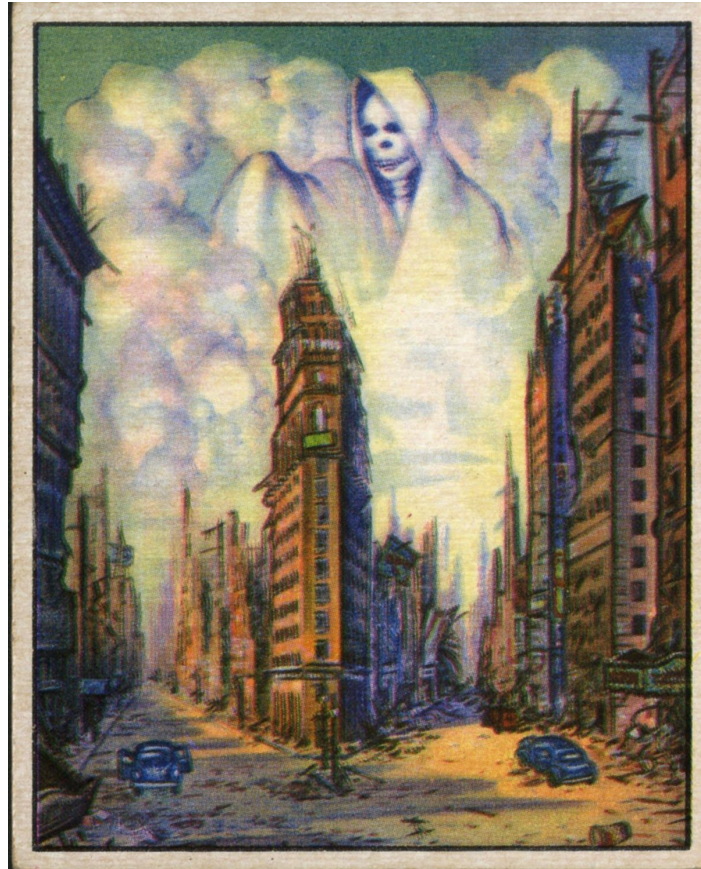


© 1951 Bowman Gum, Inc., Phila., Pa., U.S.A.

"35. Visit by Red Police," *Fight the Red Menace: The Children's Crusade against Communism* trading cards, Bowman Gum Company, Philadelphia, PA, 1951. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC09627.35)



## Anti-Communist Trading Cards, 1951



### CHILDREN'S CRUSADE AGAINST COMMUNISM

#### 23. Ghost City

The picture is an artist's idea of what an atom bomb could do to a great American city. The Reds like us to think of this. They think it will make us afraid. But actually, we are growing stronger by realizing that this *could* happen to us. We are working to make America stronger day by day, week by week. We must continue to work for peace through the United Nations and in every possible way. But an America fully prepared to defend itself is not likely to be attacked. The Reds understand this language.



**FIGHT THE  
RED MENACE**



© 1951 Bowman Gum, Inc., Phila., Pa., U.S.A.

"23. Ghost City," *Fight the Red Menace: The Children's Crusade against Communism* trading cards, Bowman Gum Company, Philadelphia, PA, 1951. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC09706)