

the red scare



"Pittsburgh...the strong heart of America's industrial might, where the commies had planted themselves to throw that heart off beat"

~ Narrator, I Was A Communist for the FBI (1951)

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- During the 1930's, many Hollywood intellectuals had been sympathetic to Soviet communism, and some had even joined the American Communist party.



Senator McCarthy holds a list of “Communists”



HUAC Chairman J. Parnell Thomas

- For years the FBI had been compiling information on Communists and Communist sympathizers in the Hollywood community.
- By 1947, Congress was investigating Communist activities in the U.S. as part of the nationwide search by the **House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)** for subversive elements in government and private life.

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- In May of 1947, a number of individuals declared in secret interviews that that they were willing to name Hollywood people with Communist ties.



“Communist propaganda” in *The North Star* (1943)

Short documentary, *The Hollywood Ten* (1950)

- Fifty-six “possible friendly witnesses” and eighty-nine “possible unfriendly witnesses” were subpoenaed.
- Nineteen of those were deemed “unfriendly” because they refused to answer questions or spoke out against the unconstitutional nature of the proceedings. These individuals were ultimately whittled down to ten artists, who collectively became known as **The Hollywood Ten**.

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- Despite testifying that the First Amendment guaranteed them the right to freedom of expression in their work, the Hollywood Ten were cited for “contempt of Congress” and briefly jailed.



Members of the Hollywood Ten protesting in 1950



Anti-communist film *The Red Menace* (1949)

- When a rash of anti-Hollywood sentiment arose (boycotts and protests), a collection of Hollywood studio heads met in secrecy at New York City’s Waldorf-Historia hotel on November 26, 1947. There, they decided to sacrifice the Hollywood ten to appease both the Committee and the public. They fashioned a statement for the Committee, which has since become known as the *Waldorf Statement*.

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- The Hollywood Ten found their careers collapsing as producers blacklisted them. Most of them were unable to work openly in the industry again.



Clifford Odets' script for *Sweet Smell of Success* (1957) Dalton Trumbo's script for *The Brave One* (1956)

- Many former Communists or sympathizers saved themselves by naming others, who were in turn, blacklisted.
- Some blacklisted filmmakers were able to work under pseudonyms, while others saved their careers by going abroad.
- By 1960, the blacklist had slowly started to crumble, with only about one-tenth of its victims able to resume their film careers.

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On the Waterfront



Directed by
Elia Kazan

Written by
Budd Schulburg

Columbia Pictures,
(1954) 108 mins.