



Golden Age of Hollywood: Hollywood Ten Historical Committee Background Guide

TORREY MUN

Chairs: Angelina Moreno & Lucia Araya

Chairs' Letters

Hello Honorable Delegates!

My name is **Lucia Araya**, and I'm a senior at LJCDs. Angelina and I are pleased to host you in our Hollywood Golden Age committee. The Golden Age of Hollywood is my favorite period of history, and we are ecstatic to be chairing a committee discussing the cultural and political impacts it has left. Firstly, a little about me, I've been in MUN for three years, and this is my second time chairing a committee. During my time in MUN, I have met so many wonderful people in addition to gaining skills that will be useful in my future endeavors. Model UN has driven my passion for international relations and the law, and its intersection with my passions, such as film and culture, is my favorite part about it! I hope this committee will be enjoyable as well as educational and interesting as we dive into this complex and significant time in history. Overall, I'm excited to spend my last year in high school with this wonderful team and spending as much time as I can enjoying the last committees with Torrey MUN.

My name is **Angelina Moreno**, I'm a senior at La Jolla Country Day School, and I am honored to co-chair the Hollywood Golden Age committee. Lucia and I hope this committee topic serves as an informative and enlightening experience, but most importantly, we hope it is enjoyable.

Overlooked in history, Hollywood and film have played a significant role in our lives as we love film and we hope to share this passion with you. I have been in MUN for three years, and it's also my second time chairing a committee. Lucia and I love the skills and people we've met through MUN, and we hope to make our senior year the best!

We highly appreciate your participation and hope you enjoy this committee!

Position Paper Expectations

- a. 1 Page
- b. Times New Roman 12pt font
- c. 1-inch margins (note: Google docs default to 1.25)
- d. Header
 - i. Committee:
 - ii. Delegation:
 - iii. Delegate Name:
 - iv. School:
 - v. Date:
- e. Paragraphs:
 - i. Background of the issue (based on background guide)
 - ii. Character stance (How would your character view this issue?)
 - iii. Proposed solutions (How would your character find a solution to this issue?)

Introduction

Post-World War I and at the peak of the Red Scare, Hollywood in the 1940s and 1950s experienced a period of tension due to rising suspicion of communist infiltration. In its Golden Age, Hollywood was a driving force in culture, arts, and entertainment. Due to the cultural authority of Hollywood, Congress's investigative committee searching for communist infiltration, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), called on major screenwriters, producers, and figures in Hollywood to testify regarding communism in film. Forty-three members of the film industry were subpoenaed to appear before the HUAC to answer questions about communist propaganda and influence. Out of these forty-three members, ten refused to testify and were later known as the Hollywood Ten. These men were indicted for contempt of Congress and sentenced to a short time in prison in addition to \$1000 fines. After consistent surveillance from the FBI and Congress, in addition to intrusions into personal, political, and religious beliefs, the leaders of motion picture studios denounced the Hollywood Ten. This culminated in what is known as the Hollywood Blacklist. Going far beyond just the Hollywood Ten, key executives in a variety of areas of entertainment and studios such as Warner Bros. and MGM barred hundreds of directors, actors, writers, and producers from work on any Hollywood production and destroyed careers over unproven allegations.

This committee will highlight the complexities and the impact of the Hollywood Red Scare on American society, politics, and culture. Delegates will represent prominent figures of Hollywood and the government, and debate issues of censorship, constitutional rights, freedom, and the impact of this era on Hollywood and the United States.

Committee Background

After World War II, the United States emerged as the leading global power. With its military dominance, economic strength, nuclear power, and programs such as the Marshall Plan in 1948, the U.S. demonstrated its leadership and values globally. Balancing its preeminent role in global politics and leadership, the Soviet Union acted as a political, economic, and diplomatic rival. The ideological opposition between capitalism/democracy and communism and the rise of power in the hands of the Soviet leaders, Joseph Stalin and later Nikita Khrushchev, caused a global wave of fear and paranoia. It was the essential nature of communism to spread, according to the Long Telegram, and so western powers feared the possibility that communist ideas, communist economic models, and communist power threatened the future of any American-aligned nation.

Wisconsin Senator Joseph R. McCarthy became a significant figure in the fight against communism. In a speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, he claimed he had a list of 205 card-carrying communist employees in the U.S State Department. As a member of the Committee on Government Operations and chairman of the Senate Permanent

Investigation Subcommittee, he spoke with authority and people believed him. After that, McCarthy held a series of investigations and hearings to expose communist infiltration in American politics and life. These hearings addressed the threat of communism not just in the State Department but in American education, entertainment, and even the Army. After McCarthy's reelection in 1952, this period was known as McCarthyism, now also a term that refers to defaming and tarnishing a target's reputation with indiscriminate allegations.

McCarthy persisted in his investigations on various governmental departments and employees, publicly questioning them about their affiliations and personal beliefs. Often shown on television - a popular new form of delivery for news and entertainment that millions of Americans watched - the hearings used manipulation of evidence and perception to paint witnesses as subversive even when there was no real proof that they were anything but loyal. McCarthy's ultimate concern was communism in the U.S Armed Forces. His 36 televised hearings included one in which McCarthy accused the Army's lawyer, Joseph Welch, of working with a member of a communist front group. Fueled by McCarthy's allegations, the rising tensions of the early Cold War, and fears of a nuclear holocaust, paranoia in America rose to never before seen heights. This period of geopolitical rivalry and continuous mistrust fed McCarthy's celebrity and justified, for many people, his use of the "politics of personal destruction."

Simultaneously, Hollywood reached its peak during this period. In what is now referred to as the Golden Age of Cinema, the film industry played a leading role in shaping public opinion and entertainment, and as a symbol of glamour. As the United

States experienced economic stability and a yearning for normalcy, especially with the rise of the nuclear family and suburbanization, the film industry boomed. It offered the same sense of escapism and idealism that was experienced post-WWI in the 1920s. The wild films of the '20s sparked the Hays Code, a form of censorship that ensured that films portrayed law-abiding citizens and positive views of an orderly society.

The 1950s redefined Hollywood, though. Films during this period broke with conventional views of social relations and popularized adolescent rebellion, rock and roll music, and the socially conscious, political, and sexual revolt. Along with this, films reflected years of World War II, the atomic age, and the rise of the Cold War. Hollywood stars such as Marilyn Monroe, Rita Hayworth, and Lucille Ball became sex symbols and idols for women in America. Clark Gable and Cary Grant represented the suave, successful modern man while a young Marlon Brando portrayed younger, more rebellious characters. This mass consumption of cinema and media heavily influenced American culture, and soon intersected with politics and war. While it was a robust and glamorous era, political scrutiny brought by the Soviets and communism overshadowed its glamour. Hollywood became a target and found itself at the forefront of a foreign infiltration crisis.

The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) was created in 1938 to address concerns relating to a possible infiltration of national institutions by extreme right-wing ideology. Along with Senator McCarthy's enthusiasm for accusing federal officials of communist affiliation and investigating alleged subversives, HUAC targeted Hollywood and its writers, actors, and producers. In October, 1947, ten producers, screenwriters, and directors appeared before the Committee after being subpoenaed to

testify. This group, known as the Hollywood Ten, was thoroughly investigated and questioned for their alleged communist affiliations. When asked about their involvement with the Communist Party, they claimed their First Amendment rights to speech & association and refused to answer. Congress responded with a claim that the members were obligated to answer and were obstructing the investigation by refusing. Each member was fined and sentenced to 6-12 months in prison for contempt of Congress.

The sentences caused an uproar and put leading executives of motion picture studios in difficult positions. While the actors, writers, and directors who resisted HUAC argued that they could rely on their constitutional rights, HUAC represented communism as an existential threat to the United States. Convinced that communist subversives existed throughout American society and that they actively sought to overthrow the American government, HUAC acted radically, even illegally, to root out dangerous elements in Hollywood. Institutions, such as movie studios and the Screen Actors Guild, needed to demonstrate that they were loyal to the United States.

On November 25, 1947, entertainment executives met at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York and launched the Waldorf Statement. Executives at this meeting included Samuel Goldwyn & Louis B. Mayer (MGM), Harry Cohn (Columbia Pictures), Y. Frank Freeman (Paramount), Albert Warner (Warner Bros.), many attorneys, and the former Secretary of State, James Byrne. Together, they officially launched the Hollywood Blacklist, essentially isolating the sentenced men from the film industry. The Waldorf Statement also positioned the film industry as entirely anti-communist, up to and including support for HUAC's tactics. The declaration stated, "We will forthwith

discharge or suspend without compensation those in our employ [who refused to cooperate with HUAC or to swear publicly that they were not communists]” announcing the blacklisting of these men and publicly condemning them. This led to the demise of their careers, and as it was an industry-imposed blacklist, it led to further unemployment of anyone suspected of communist sympathies and refusal of funding for new projects that included actors, writers, producers, or directors known to have been - or accused of being- interested in communist ideas. Many of these men ultimately worked under pseudonyms or behind the scenes but were denied any open employment opportunities within the industry. An example of this is Dalton Trumbo, who later wrote the Academy Award-winning film, *Roman Holiday*, under a pseudonym.

The impact of this period on the industry is significant as it reflects on the governmental pressures and reality of a national security crisis intersecting with the entertainment industry. With careers on the line, Hollywood went from a platform of escapism and glamour to a politically intense environment, costing members of the Ten their careers and lives.

This committee begins in the wake of the Waldorf Statement, in the late fall of 1947. Each committee member must determine the right path forward as HUAC continues to search for communists and other subversives among the nation’s entertainers. Representatives of the studios must protect their business interests (or any other interests they may have), members of government must ensure safety and security in this difficult time, and talent has to make a living, one way or another.

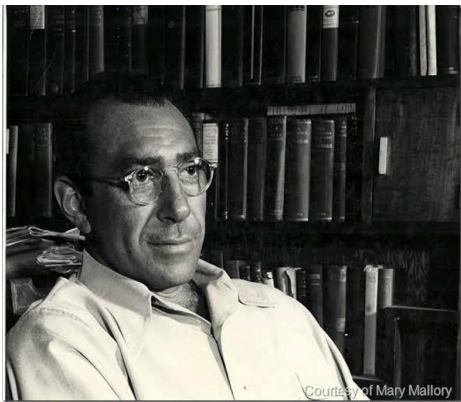
Character Descriptions:



Alvah Bessie: A passionate anti-fascist who volunteered in the Spanish Civil War before turning to screenwriting, novel writing, and journalism. He recognized Hollywood for the political and messaging platform it was. He used that to his advantage, as seen in works like *Men in Battle* (1939), where he released his firsthand accounts from the Spanish Civil War and aimed to expose the reality of fascism. When he was investigated by HUAC, he refused to answer questions about his beliefs, ultimately leading to his blacklisting and prison time.



Herbert Biberman: Screenwriter and director known for his progressive views, and was accused/flagged for having left-wing views by HUAC, which ultimately derailed his career. Similar to Alvah Bessie, when interviewed, he refused to answer questions. This action made him a part of the Hollywood Ten, a group that claimed the 1st Amendment gave them the right to refuse to answer anything. After being blacklisted, he was forced to finance his own career. This prompted him to make the film *Salt of the Earth* (1954), surrounding the mining strikes in New Mexico.



Lester Cole: Committed leftist, screenwriter, and founding member of the Screen Writers Guild. His political views were often reflected in his work, as seen in his autobiography "*Hollywood Red*" and scripts from films like "*The House of the Seven Gables*." As one of the Hollywood Ten, he refused to speak when called upon by HUAC. After his blacklist, Cole continued to write, but never regained his A-list position in the industry.



Ring Lardner Jr.: Academy Award-winning screenwriter known for his progressive expression in his pieces. He won an Oscar for “Woman of the Year” before he was blacklisted. Despite his ban, he forcefully reestablished himself with an Oscar for best screenplay for “M*A*S*H.”



John Howard Lawson: Screenwriter and playwright who heavily used expressionism in his works like “Rodger Bloomer” (1923) and “Processional.” Uproar over the alleged communist statements led to the downfall of his career. Known for integrating Marxist themes into his pieces and was a verbose critic of fascism. He became the de facto leader of the Hollywood Ten, after his blacklisting his written works focused on the role of art in politics.



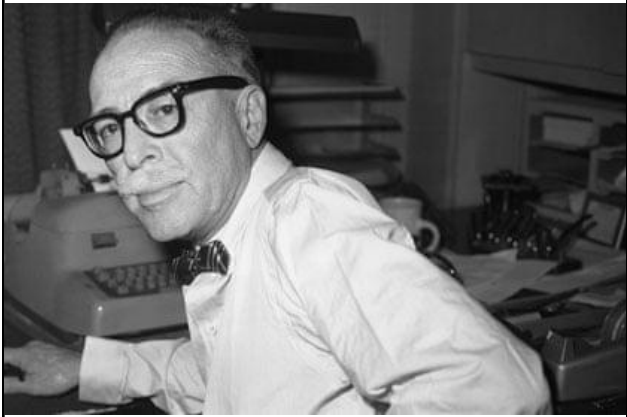
Samuel Ornitz: Influential writer and social reform activist. His upbringing as a social worker served as the foundation for his literary success, which covered topics such as crime, corruption, and social disruption. He gained recognition for pieces like “Haunch, Paunch, and Jewel” and “A Yankee Passional.” When he transitioned to Hollywood he produced films that spoke to those themes, as well. He was blacklisted and imprisoned for refusing to testify before HUAC. He ended up leaving Hollywood and returned to writing fiction with the basis of themes like justice and identity.



Albert Maltz: Playwright, fiction writer, and screenwriter. Started his career with sociopolitical plays that were produced by progressive theatrical companies such as the Group Theatre. He was heavily influenced by philosopher Karl Marx and became a screenwriter for Warner Bros. His most notable piece was the Oscar-winning documentary “The House I Live In” (1945). Due to his uncooperative behavior with HUAC, he became a part of the Hollywood Ten. This forced him to use “fronts” who sold his screenplays and took credit.



Adrian Scott: He was a writer before moving over to Hollywood, where he wrote “Keeping Company” and “Mr. Lucky.” He then became a producer, where he helped create the genre “film noir.” He later went on to produce films such as “My Pal Wolf,” “Murder, My Sweet,” and “Cross Fire,” a film that won four Academy Awards. After he was blacklisted, his wife submitted his work under the name Joanne Court. Yet after Dalton Trumbo broke his blacklist he was invited back into Hollywood where he regained some of his momentum.



Dalton Trumbo: Screenwriter and novelist who is viewed as one of the most talented of the Hollywood Ten. He started his career with film and became one of Hollywood's highest-paid writers, creating films like "Kitty Foyle" and "Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo." He persisted after his blacklisting, and wrote 30 scripts under pseudonyms and won an Oscar for "The Brave One." In 1960 he was openly credited for "Spartacus" and "Exodus," helping break the blacklist.



Edward Dmytryk: Motion-picture director who began his career in cinema as a messenger boy at Paramount. He later edited films and made his directorial debut with "The Hawk." He then became a full-time director for Paramount and released a multitude of films. When he was flagged as a communist by HUAC, he joined the Hollywood Ten after refusing to answer them. However, he made the controversial decision to succumb to HUAC by admitting his political views and naming names. Making him the first of the ten to ever do so.



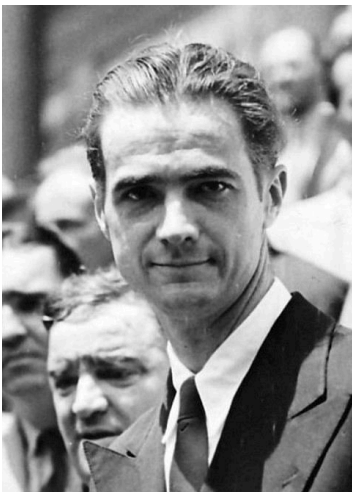
Louis B. Mayer: Businessman and the most powerful motion-picture executive in Hollywood. He was the head of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) and created the star system during the 1920s. He was a conservative who viewed Hollywood as more than entertainment, but a way to promote American values, prompting him to view communism as a threat to those values.



Darryl F. Zanuck (adds nuance as sometimes protective): Film producer and studio executive who co-founded 20th Century Pictures and later ran 20th Century Fox. Unlike his peers, he often brought an independent-minded perspective to his role. Three of his films won Academy Awards for best motion picture, and a number of others received nominations. He was multitalented, able to detect potential in screenplays and actors, and introduced many film stars like Shirley Temple and Betty Grable.



Jack Warner: Film and television actor, took on various roles in films like “The Captive Heart” and “It Always Rains on Sunday.” Additionally, a politically conservative head of Warner Bros., and took a starkly different approach from his peers, becoming one of the most active collaborators with HUAC.



Howard Hughes: Manufacturer, aviator, and motion-picture producer and director who received boundless status during his time in Hollywood. He was also the owner of RKO Pictures, producing high-budget films like “Hell’s Angels.” Turned out as one of the most controversial figures in the 20th century, as a result of his harsh anti-communism views and the boundaries he pushed in his films, including sex, violence, and spectacle. He used his position at RKO to fire “suspicious leftists,” and cooperated with HUAC heavily.



Joseph McCarthy: Politician from Wisconsin who served in the U.S. Senate. He rose to prominence as one of the most public faces of the anti-Communist movement when he claimed to have a list of Communists working in the government. He lent his name to the term McCarthyism, a broad term for his accusations that entailed no evidence, guilty by association, loyalty tests, and public fear. He helped fuel the fear that Communism had infiltrated institutions, including the film industry.



Roy Cohn: Strongly opposing Communism, he served as the Chief Counsel to Senator Joseph McCarthy. He was extremely strategic and a staunch conservative who prosecuted members of the entertainment industry during the Hollywood Ten hearings. He managed high-profile cases and was known to be feared for his manipulation skills and intimidation tactics. He is a legal aid to the HUAC and definitely intensified the Red Scare.



Marilyn Monroe: Arguably the most famous actress of all time, Marilyn Monroe was the leading sex symbol during the Golden Age of Hollywood. A cultural icon, she became the face of Hollywood and starred in blockbuster films such as *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. While she never expressed her political views, she was under high surveillance of the FBI due to her fame and suspected associations with leftist writers and her famous marriage to Arthur Miller, a playwright subpoenaed by the HUAC. She strategically used her image and projects to sway the public away from her political endeavors.



Lucille Ball: From the famous sitcom, I Love Lucy, Lucille Ball became a beloved actress known for her comedy and charm. She was a symbol of the nuclear family and traditional American values. She was questioned by the HUAC as it was revealed she was a registered Communist in the 1930s. The FBI investigated her, yet she was so supported by public opinion that she was never blacklisted from the industry.



Ronald Reagan: Before his presidency and during his short acting career, Reagan testified before the HUAC and cooperated with the committee. A Democrat at the time, he expressed his concerns about communism as he was extremely anti-communist and served as an FBI informant, balancing out the industry and government relations. Holding leadership in the Screen Actors Guild, he had significant influence in politics and the industry, becoming a key figure during the Hollywood Red Scare.



Lauren Bacall: An iconic actress known for her portrayals of provocative women, and a model with jobs like theatre usher and hostess. In 1947, she joined a group of actors, directors, and writers called the Committee of the First Amendment, who traveled to speak out about HUAC's investigations. She spoke out against censorship and supported the Hollywood Ten in their refusal to cooperate with Congress.





John Wayne: An icon of the period and President of the Motion Pictures Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals (MPA), Wayne was extremely anti-communist and with his group, supported the HUAC investigations on fellow members of the industry. He was an outspoken critic of communist ideals, and spoke of their threat to American society and values, further supporting governmental intervention during the hearings.



Zero Mostel: Known for his comedy and versatile performances, Mostel was a victim of the blacklist as he was unemployed after testifying for the HUAC. He refused to name names, and the famous mocked the committee during his hearing. He was one of the few who resisted McCarthyism and after his career was destroyed, he was able to rebuild a stage presence in years following.



Kirk Douglas: One of the biggest actors during this time due to his portrayals of pure masculinity in films such as *Paths of Glory* and *Champion*, Douglas played a role in the Hollywood Blacklist later in the golden age. In addition to being an actor, he was a producer and broke the blacklist in 1960 by hiring Dalton Trumbo to write the film *Spartacus*. Although Dalton Trumbo continued his work under pseudonyms, Douglas gave him credit under his real name and ended the era of isolation for members targeted by McCarthy and the HUAC.

	<p>Marlon Brando: Rising to stardom in the 1940s and 50s with roles in <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> and <i>On the Waterfront</i>, Brando was known for his outspoken criticism of the HUAC and McCarthy. He refused to cooperate with investigative groups, and politically challenged the government with his activism.</p>
	<p>Lena Horne: A history-making actress and singer, Lena Horne starred in musicals and excelled in the music industry. Held back by racism, and being type-casted in roles made to demean Black people, she was also targeted by the Blacklist. During the 1950s, Horne was blacklisted by studios for her affiliations with left-wing groups and figures. The HUAC and FBI condemned her for being a “communist sympathizer,” and she experienced a major career obstacle due to these allegations</p>

Questions to consider in Position Papers:

1. What rights do citizens have against government action? Do those rights extend to employment and reputational harm?
2. In a time of national emergency, how does government power expand? And should that expansion be permanent or temporary? If temporary, how long can it last and to what extent should it expand?
3. How dangerous is diversity of opinion in a national entertainment industry? Does entertainment have a responsibility to foster national values and national unity?
4. Can art ever be controlled? If not, can it ever really be managed within a capitalist structure? Is art inherently anti-communist?
5. How much compromise is too much? For individuals, for companies, and for societies, how much should we compromise to preserve our values or our livelihood?

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