Hollywood
Communist Agenda
under the Second
Red Scare
“There are today many communists in America. They are everywhere ... and each carries in himself the germ of death for society.”

—Attorney General J. Howard McGrath
Dear Delegates,

Welcome to WUMUNS and to Washington University in St. Louis! My name is Collin Wettach and I am phenomenally excited to be acting as your committee director. I am a junior pursuing majors in Political Science and Philosophy with a minor in Religion and Politics, and I plan to attend law school following graduation. I was introduced to Model UN shortly before my freshman year and have since been swept away in a whirlwind of backroom dealings, shifting alliances, and political intrigue.

Inspired by the movie *Hail Caesar*, this committee was born out of one simple question: what if Senator and infamous communist-hater Joseph McCarthy was right in his paranoia, especially as it related to Hollywood? You, the delegates, will be placed into the roles of Hollywood’s makers and shakers as they use their influence, both through and outside of media, to support their collective political agenda and protect themselves. The committee laid out before you is not conventional. Rather, its novelty will provide you even more opportunity to conspire, coerce, and change history in unique and exciting ways. To this effect, I encourage you to have fun with the characters and setting. Know that all the while my team and I will demand cleverness, cooperation, and a seriousness for the task at hand.

Your new-found power will not come without considerable adversity. Centered around the Second Red Scare and the emergent threat of McCarthyism, the committee will be hounded as it attempts to exert control over a turbulent American people. Struggles will be both offensive and defensive and will not be strictly limited to the movie screen or radio broadcast. You have been cast as the underdog. You must employ a great wealth of political wit in order to sway a nation that is becoming increasingly defined and radicalized by its opposition to communism and its associated politics.

I wish you the best of luck and look forward to meeting you in the committee room. Feel free to reach out to me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Collin Wettach

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Comrades,

I do not need to be the first to tell you that we live in dangerous times. It is August, 1947. The passage of the Truman Doctrine positioned United States foreign policy in opposition to the Soviet Union. Executive Order 9835, otherwise known as the “Loyalty Order,” has infected the American mentality with the perception that their homeland is under siege. The nation sits on the precipice of a Second Red Scare. Emergent political figures such as Senator Joseph McCarthy and the further establishment of the House Un-American Activities Committee in Congress pose new and terrifying threats. This endangers not only the aims of communism, but the civil liberties of all Americans.

It is for this concern that I charge you, my fellow communists, communist sympathizers, and civil rights-minded members of the great American media industry to fight this ever-growing wave of condemnation against our glorious cause. I implore you to use your control over the television screen, over the radio wave, and over the written page to not only halt the march of this red scare, but to reverse its flow. As influential members of the media, you are encouraged to draw upon your wide array of connections to fight this battle not only in the theater, but—if you must—to also take it to the highest echelons of government.

To quote our great progenitor Karl Marx, “History is not like some individual person, which uses men to achieve its ends. History is nothing but the actions of men in pursuit of their ends.” Though you may come from different backgrounds, hold different powers, and differ in your fervor towards Communism, you must cast aside internal conflict and cooperate fully, as you are now being given a chance to write history.

Best,

Leon Trotsky
### Historical Background

**Timeline:** The background will give relevant information that precipitated the Second Red Scare, which itself will be the time frame of the committee (1947-1957). The background timeline is somewhat disjointed by the occurrence of World War II, where the alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union delayed tensions. Historical background will begin with some discussion over the First Red Scare, occurring from 1917 to 1921. History will pick up again directly following the end of the World War II in 1945, and continue into the fall of 1947, after the Truman Doctrine which went into effect in March and July of that year, and Executive Order 9835, which also went into effect in March of 1947.

**Committee start date:** June 1947

The First Red Scare occurred in the wake of World War I from 1917 to 1921. Having borne witness to a Communist inspired revolution that saw the complete overhaul of the Russian government, many Americans grew wary of communism causing similar political instability domestically. This fear was further exacerbated by communist inspired anarchist bombings and massive labor protests, which were met by illegal American government suppression.

Following World War II, the Communist Party in the United States begins seeing increased membership, ironically countered by increased paranoia in the general population. This rise was in part spurred by the widening of what was seen as permissible left politics, the political domination by the left in years prior, and the rise and perfusion of communism in Eurasia, Eastern Europe, and the East. Though divisive amongst the lower class it posits to represent, communism has taken root in the burgeoning liberal intellectual and media elite, where progressives view it as a promising solution to issues of economic and racial suppression.

Communism was and is certainly no monolith. One need only look so far as the infighting and expulsion of communist intellectuals in the Soviet Union to see that true and right communism consisted of an intense and sometimes violent debate. Across the ocean, this same principle held true, where within the Communist Party and political Left, members varied in their level of political fervor and support of communism. The Far Left at the time constituted as mix of socialists, communists, intellectuals, and civil rights advocates, not all of whom wished to see true communism manifested in the United States. Some intense communists did wish to institute a full, classless communist state. Some only desired greater labor rights and centrally planned economies, while others only wanted to defend communism as a legitimate ideology from the oppression of the Second Red Scare, but did not wish to institute it.

Even amongst those viewing themselves as truly communist, several issues were fiercely contested. One such issue was support for the USSR. For
some, the amalgamation of communists states shone as a beacon for future communist revolution. This certainly seemed true at first glance, as more and more states saw governmental reform and consolidation within the Soviet regime. However, others viewed the Soviet bureaucracy, with its violations of free speech, failures in economic planning, and strong hand of government as antithetical to communist ideas, instead viewing it as an empire willfully stuck in the socialist stage of economic progression and a dangerous misappropriation of the good name of socialism. This debate became especially significant in the deterioration of US-USSR relations, as the question of what the relationship should be had become a topic of mainstream political discourse, with public opinion now opposing those communists that supported the USSR to the point that even a soft-line approach to US-USSR had become politically devastating.

Precipitated by labor fears and disappointment in the actions of President Truman, the 1946 saw a major victory for Republicans as they took majority control in both the House and the Senate in the largest pro-Republican upset since pre-Hoover victories. This election signaled the end of a long period of political control by the Democrats that had seen the redefinition of the federal government as an economically interventionist force, rather than a mere regulatory one. Having learned to stoke anti-communist paranoia, the party was able to wrestle political power away from the Democrats who had previously dominated under Roosevelt, especially by using the platform that Democrats, especially Truman, had been soft on communism. Leading into, and during, the Second Red Scare, Democrats hardened their stance against Communism.

Spurred by an increasingly powerful Soviet Union, the Truman Doctrine marked a major shift in U.S. foreign policy. The Doctrine promised United States’ support to any nation in conflict with an internal or external threat from an authoritarian state, deeming the Soviet Union as such. Of particular focus for the Truman Doctrine was the civil war in Greece, where the United States was to provide support for the Greek government’s war against the Greek Communist Party. With the establishment of the Truman Doctrine, the U.S. would now be an interventionist state, becoming embroiled in conflicts not directly involving it.
Executive Order 9835 was provoked by fears of communist subversion in the United States government. It established loyalty investigations for civil servants. It stated, “There shall be a loyalty investigation of every person entering the civilian employment of any department or agency of the executive branch of the Federal Government” with membership in a communist organization being a mark of disloyalty.

Following World War II, relations between the United States and the Soviet Union quickly deteriorated, especially as the Soviet Union massively expanded its power through expansion and the establishment of puppet governments in Turkey and Greece, which would later be opposed by the Truman Doctrine. Fear of the USSR in America stemmed from social, economic, and security concerns.

Internationally, the USSR’s rise as a global superpower threatened American military and economic superiority, and so was at odds with her interests. The USSR expanded its dominion and gained the support of smaller states spanning the globe. This pushed the U.S. to engage in similar and competitive action against the union. This was coupled with a technological competition that lead to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, startling advancements in methods and means of waging warfare, but also developments that would bring humankind to space.

Furthermore, with an economic system requiring isolation and self-sufficiency, the spread of the U.S.S.R. threatened the spread of global capitalism that enriches America. With a capitalist economy bolstered by state intervention, the United States had much to gain from economic globalization through competition and cooperation with foreign nations.

This military revolt against the Republican government of Spain, supported by conservative elements within the country, occurred from 1936 to 1939, and provided many leftists and communists activists a war in which to gain experience and network with those of similar ilk. When an initial military coup failed to win control of the entire country, a bloody civil war ensued, fought with great ferocity on both sides. The Nationalists, as the rebels were called, received aid from Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. The Republicans received aid from the
Soviet Union, as well as from International Brigades, composed of volunteers from Europe and the United States.

The House Un-American Activities committee was formed in the later 1930’s in order to uncover and root out those disloyal to the United States, especially with regards to fascism and communism, and among those two, with special emphasis on communism. The Committee became a standing committee in 1945 where it was headed by Democrat Edward J. Hart. It was given special permission and focus to investigate and upend subversive propaganda efforts by Public Law 601.

This committee, first established in 1938, was resurrected during this period to investigate people suspected of posing a threat to national security, and spectacular public hearings were held that added to the general state of paranoia. The entertainment industry was especially vulnerable to investigative efforts because the exposure of well-known persons was of great interest to the press and because many feared that the large audiences commanded by entertainers might make the consequences of their political intentions all the more insidious.

From the end of the silent film era, about 1927, to around 1948, the Hollywood movie studio system controlled what films were shown across the country. This system was a departure from Hollywood’s more varied fledgling stage, and saw the domination of the industry by media titans. Five major Hollywood-area studios owned large, grand theaters where they would show only movies produced by their studios and made with their contracted actors. These studios were Paramount, RKO, Twentieth Century Fox, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), and Warner Bros.

Each studio produced a distinctive style of entertainment, depending on its corporate economy and the personnel it had under contract. MGM, the largest and most powerful of the major studios, was also the most “American” and was given to the celebration of middle-class values in a visual style characterized by bright, even, high-key lighting and opulent production design. Paramount, with
its legions of UFA-trained directors, art directors, and cameramen, was thought to be the most “European” of the studios. It produced the most sophisticated and visually baroque films of the era. Conditioned by its recent experience as a struggling minor studio, Warner Brothers was the most cost-conscious of the major companies. Its directors worked on a quota system, and a flat, low-key lighting style was decreed by the studio to conceal the cheapness of its sets. Warner Brothers’ films were often targeted for working-class audiences. Twentieth Century Fox acquired a reputation for its tight budget and production control, but its films were noted for their glossy attractiveness and state-of-the-art special effects. RKO Radio was the smallest of the major companies and never achieved complete financial stability during the studio era; it became prominent, however, as the producer of *King Kong* (1933), the Astaire-Rogers dance cycle, and Orson Welles’s *Citizen Kane* (1941) and also as the distributor of Disney’s features.

**Censorship Regulations**

An important aspect of the studio system was the Production Code, which was implemented in 1934 in response to pressure from the Legion of Decency and public protest against the graphic violence and sexual suggestiveness of some films (the urban gangster films, for example). The Legion had been established in 1933 by the American bishops of the Roman Catholic Church to fight for better and more moralized motion pictures. In April 1934, with the support of both Protestant and Jewish organizations, the Legion called for a nationwide boycott of movies it considered indecent. The studios, having lost millions of dollars in 1933 as the delayed effects of the Depression caught up with the box office, rushed to appease the protesters by authorizing the MPPDA to create the Production Code Administration. A prominent Catholic layman, Joseph I. Breen was appointed to head the administration, and under Breen’s auspices Father Daniel A. Lord, a Jesuit priest, and Martin Quigley, a Catholic publisher, coauthored the code whose provisions would dictate the content of American motion pictures, without exception, for the next 20 years.

In a swing away from the excesses of the “new morality” of the Jazz Age, the Production Code was monumentally repressive. It prohibited showing “scenes of passion,” and adultery, seduction, and other taboos could not even be alluded to unless they were absolutely essential to the plot and severely punished by the film’s end. The code demanded that the sanctity of marriage be upheld at all times. It forbade the use of profanity, vulgarity, and racial epithets; prostitution, miscegenation, or drug addiction; nudity, suggestive dancing or costumes, and “lustful kissing”; and excessive drinking, cruelty to animals or children, and the representation of surgical operations, especially childbirth, “in fact or silhouette.” In the realm of violence, it was forbidden to display or to discuss contemporary weapons, to show the details of a crime, to show law-enforcement officers dying at the hands of criminals, to suggest excessive brutality or slaughter, or to use murder or suicide except when crucial to the plot. Finally, the code required that all criminal activity be shown to be punished; under no circumstances could any
crime be represented as justified. Studios were required to submit their scripts to Breen’s office for approval before beginning filming, and completed films had to be screened for the office, and altered if necessary, in order to receive a Production Code Seal, without which no film could be distributed in the United States. Noncompliance with the code’s restrictions brought a fine of $25,000, but the studios were so eager to please that the fine was never levied in the 22-year lifetime of the code.

The studio heads were willing to accept and also to institutionalize this system of de facto censorship and prior restraint because they believed it was necessary for the continued success of their business. The economic threat of a national boycott during the worst years of the Depression was real, and the film industry, which depends on pleasing a mass audience, could not afford to ignore public opinion. Producers found, moreover, that they could use the code to increase the efficiency of production. By rigidly prescribing and proscribing the kinds of behavior that could be shown or described on the screen, the code could be used as a screenwriter’s blueprint. A love story, for example, could move in only one direction (toward marriage); adultery and crime could have only one conclusion (disease or horrible death); dialogue in all situations had well-defined parameters; and so forth. The code, in other words, provided a framework for the construction of screenplays and enabled studios to streamline what had always been (and still is) one of the most difficult and yet most essential tasks in the production process—the creation of filmable continuity scripts. Furthermore, the Depression was a time of open political anti-Semitism in the United States, and the men who controlled the American motion-picture industry were mainly Jewish; it was not a propitious moment for them to antagonize their predominantly non-Jewish audience.

During the U.S. involvement in World War II, the Hollywood film industry cooperated closely with the government to support its war-aims information campaign. Following the declaration of war on Japan, the government created a Bureau of Motion Picture Affairs to coordinate the production of entertainment features with patriotic, morale-boosting themes and messages about the “American way of life,” the nature of the enemy and the allies, civilian responsibility on the home front, and the fighting forces themselves. Like other American industries, the film industry was pushed to new heights of productivity in response to World War II, meeting the demand of wartime films. During World War II, the film industry produced a multitude of propagandas, documentaries, educational programs, and raised awareness for the needs and demands of the war, with 1946 marking the then all-time high for both attendance and profits.

When World War II ended, the American film industry seemed to be in an ideal position. Full-scale mobilization had ended the Depression domestically, and victory had opened vast, unchallenged markets in the war-torn economies of western Europe and Japan. Furthermore, from 1942 through 1945, Hollywood had experienced the most stable and lucrative three years in its history, and in
1946, when two-thirds of the American population went to the movies at least once a week, the studios earned record-breaking profits. The euphoria ended quickly, however, as inflation and labor unrest boosted domestic production costs and as important foreign markets, including Britain and Italy, were temporarily lost to protectionist quotas. The industry was more severely weakened in 1948, when a federal antitrust suit against the five major and three minor studios ended in the “Paramount decrees,” which forced the studios to divest themselves of their theatre chains and mandated competition in the exhibition sector for the first time in 30 years. Finally, the advent of network television broadcasting in the 1940s provided Hollywood with its first real competition for American leisure time by offering consumers “movies in the home.”

However, this waning of power from the Golden Age of Hollywood be no means meant that the industry was not still a cornerstone of American life. Though desires to retain the profits of the previous decades drove executives to push their studios harder than before, the size of attendance remained strong enough for the industry to remain not only financially significant, but politically influential. With the massive exposure that films had to a wide viewing public, many took note of that power, and it is just that scrutiny that drove much of the antagonism to Hollywood during the Second Red Scare.

**Topic A: Communism and Marx’s Legacy**

Communism is a political and economic doctrine that aims to replace private property and a profit-based economy with public ownership and communal control of at least the major means of production (e.g., mines, mills, and factories) and the natural resources of a society. Communism is thus a form of socialism—a higher and more advanced form, according to its advocates. Exactly how communism differs from socialism has long been a matter of debate, but the distinction rests largely on the communists’ adherence to the revolutionary socialism of Karl Marx.

Like most writers of the 19th century, Marx tended to use the terms communism and socialism interchangeably. In his Critique of the Gotha Programme (1875), however, Marx identified two phases of communism that would follow the predicted overthrow of capitalism: the first would be a transitional system in which the working class would control the government and economy yet still find it necessary to pay people according to how long, hard, or well they worked; the second would be fully realized communism—a society without class divisions or government, in which the production and distribution of goods would be based upon the principle “From each according to his ability,
to each according to his needs.” Marx’s followers, especially the Russian revolutionary Vladimir Ilich Lenin, took up this distinction.

In State and Revolution (1917), Lenin asserted that socialism corresponds to Marx’s first phase of communist society and communism proper to the second. Lenin and the Bolshevik wing of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers’ Party reinforced this distinction in 1918, the year after they seized power in Russia, by taking the name All-Russian Communist Party. Since then, communism has been largely, if not exclusively, identified with the form of political and economic organization developed in the Soviet Union and adopted subsequently in the People’s Republic of China and other countries ruled by communist parties.

Marx believed that capitalism is a volatile economic system that will suffer a series of ever-worsening crises—recessions and depressions—that will produce greater unemployment, lower wages, and increasing misery among the industrial proletariat. These crises will convince the proletariat that its interests as a class are implacably opposed to those of the ruling bourgeoisie. Armed with revolutionary class consciousness, the proletariat will seize the major means of production along with the institutions of state power—police, courts, prisons, and so on—and establish a socialist state that Marx called “the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.” The proletariat will thus rule in its own class interest, as the bourgeoisie did before, in order to prevent a counterrevolution by the displaced bourgeoisie. Once this threat disappears, however, the need for the state will also disappear. Thus, the interim state will wither away and be replaced by a classless communist society.

Marx’s vision of communist society is remarkably (and perhaps intentionally) vague. Unlike earlier “utopian socialists,” whom Marx and Engels derided as unscientific and impractical—including Henri de Saint-Simon, Charles Fourier, and Robert Owen—Marx did not produce detailed blueprints for a future society. Some features that he did describe, such as free education for all and a graduated income tax, are now commonplace. Other features, such as public ownership of the major means of production and distribution of goods and services according to the principle “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs,” remain as radical as they were in Marx’s time. But for the most part, Marx believed that the institutions of a future communist society should be designed and decided democratically by the people living in it; it was not his task, he said, to “write recipes for the kitchens of the future.” Yet, though Marx was reluctant to write such recipes, many of his followers were not. Among them was his friend and coauthor, Friedrich Engels.
To understand the public antagonism towards communism is to understand the emergence of right wing populism following the Second World War. Having been shut out of governmental control under the executive domination of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, followed by the subsequent election of Harry Truman, a sense of political exclusion in the Right had given way to populist furor. As is the nature of populism, it maligned against a perceived elite class of Democrats. This anti-elitism, for the first time in American history, recognized not only political and class division, but cultural cleavages.

To this effect, the Left was viewed and portrayed as manipulative in politics, while being made up of a liberal cosmopolitan elite. This liberal cosmopolitan elite was too educated to understand the plight of the common man, and thought it knew better and so engaged in paternalistic and overreaching policies. This provided a basis for a rejection of all centrally planned economic systems, whether Keynesian or Marxian. Furthermore, the Left’s departure from conservative religion allowed them to be portrayed as godless, and so without morals. Considering this caricature of the Left, it is unsurprising that anti-communism acted as a rallying point for those hoping to oust Democrats from office.

The public opposition to populism could be understood in economic, political, and, most importantly, social aspects. Economically, communism was portrayed as both ineffective, a great method for producing breadlines and failed farming system, and an affront to the economic liberties of the free market. Furthermore, it conflicted with the long-held American ideal of self-sufficiency, exemplified by a veneration of the middle class. This desire for each person’s economic self-sufficiency would inform later Republican opposition to the welfare state, such as President Ronald Reagan’s imagination of the epitomes
“welfare queen” and calls for reductions in social services posited to foster systemic dependency.

Politically, communism, or more specifically its proto-form socialism, calls for an expansion of state regulation and control of industry, and so grants great powers to the state for its paternalistic ends. Opposition to New Deal politics found an effective comparison, claiming that the New Deal was communist-esque, and would make the government too powerful, ultimately giving way to socialism and communism.

Culturally, communism represented an invasion of foreign and atheistic values, and a departure from a traditional Christian identity. An increase in secularity amongst those viewed as the Left cultural elite fostered sectarian concerns. Considering the placement of secular liberals in positions of education and entertainment, such as universities or, as the focus of the committee, the media industry, conservative religious groups were especially concerned that those in a position of cultural authority would guide more weak-minded Americans away from traditional values and towards Communism. The vestiges of this era’s re-integration of religion and politics in order to opposed communism can still be seen today in religious language inserted into governmental language, such as currency or the Pledge of Allegiance. Especially effective or voracious in their opposition were those groups that married religion and nationalism, such as the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars).

McCarthy stands out as a classic populist figure in American history. A republican from Wisconsin, he made anticommunism his issue and became the “star” of the anticommunist frenzy. He made spectacular accusations in public, claiming at one point that a spy ring of “card-carrying communists” was operating in the State Department with the full knowledge of the secretary of state. McCarthyism became a watchword of the times, referring to the blacklisting, guilt-by-inference, and harassment tactics that the senator used, and dictionaries define McCarthyism as the practice of making accusations of subversion or treason without proper regard for evidence. McCarthy received great strength in support by stoking anti-communist paranoia, becoming in large part the face of the Second Red Scare.

Topic C: Labor Rights, Corporate Interests, and Hollywood’s Internal Divisions

As displayed in the First Red Scare, the protection and support of labor rights provided a major justification for the growth of American support for communism, and this focus on labor as an essential part of identity was only
bolstered by the New Deal’s focus on labor and Keynesian economics. Unions had become a major actor in labor politics, with numbers having tripled since the 1930s. By 1947, demand for labor rights had spread to Hollywood. Guilds were formed in order to united play actors, screenwriters, producers, and the like into internal networks through which to coordinate action and disseminate information. Many of these organizations were publicly recognized as Left-leaning, such as the Theater Union which provided a platform for new and controversial ideas about class and race to reach the stage, or the Screenwriters Guild, which as the first real Hollywood union held a unique place in the frustrations of anti-unionists in the industry. They had unsurprisingly been met with hostility by the upper ranks of media companies who feared they would diminish profit and productivity. Furthermore, they feared both the disruption and negative press union and unionization practices would bring. Riots and protests might have required government and police suppression, and so would bring unwanted scrutiny, along with drawing the attention of other labor rights activists in the broader United States. With the rise of the Second Red Scare, labor rights movements were increasingly attributed to communism. Walt Disney, for example, vehemently held that the labor strikes at his studio is 1941, and suspected animator David Hilberman of being a communist.

Though the industry clearly leans left, prominent voices within it call for the eradication of its anti-American elements. Take, for example, the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals. With the likes of John Wayne, Jim McGuiness, MGM’s production head, Roy Brewer, the theatrical union leader, directors Leo McCarey and Sam Wood, and actor Clark Gable, to name a few, as members, this organization stood in direct opposition to the goals and means of the committee. Actors both new and old used the public desire for a right-wing media to assist their careers, and the destruction of communist media influences would certainly be a selling point for their next performance. Thus, though the public feared communist influence in Hollywood, there remained a burgeoning anti-communist faction within the industry, and it wasn’t confined to the top. Actors such as John Wayne lambasted the communism as a threat and insult to American ideals and actively fought to suppress it. Others, whether spurred by fears that unionization would kill the industry, moral frustrations with communist ideals, the fierce fires of patriotism, or perhaps seeing an opportunity to eliminate industry opponents sought to expose the communist threat, including a young Ronald Reagan who would go on to run for president under the auspices of welfare reform and a return to traditional American values of individualism and self-sufficiency.

As early as 1947, three ex-FBI agents began publishing *Counterattack: The Newsletter of Facts on Communism*, which gathered the names of employees in the broadcasting industry who had appeared in publications, at rallies, or on petitions of a “leftist” nature. The publishers sent *Counterattack* to television executives and sponsors and called for those listed to be fired immediately and treated as traitors. These complaints did not fall on deaf ears, and only grew a
sense of justification for even centrists to expel communist elements within the industry.

## Delegate Positions

**Alvah Bessie**  
Alvah Bessie is a novelist, journalist, and screenwriter. Alarmed with the rise in fascism, Bessie worked for anti-fascist causes in the 1930’s. He would go on to fight as a volunteer in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade of the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War, a paramilitary organization set up by the Communists International to support the Popular Front. Following this, he began film and publishing work, and joined the American Communist Party. As a result of his involvement in the Spanish Civil War, he holds solid connections to leftists abroad.

**Herbert Biberman**  
Biberman is a screenwriter and director. Having left his parents’ textile business, Biberman rose to media significance through his involvement with the left-wing Theater Guild, joining as a director and debuting with Eight Bells (1935) for B.P Schulberg Productions and Columbia. Biberman moved to Hollywood and directed several films, such as One Way Ticket (1935), Meet Nero Wolfe (1936), and The Master Race (1944). He also wrote Together Again (1944) and New Orleans (1947). He is a known member of the American Communist Party and a supporter of the efforts of the Soviet Union in spreading communism.

**Lester Cole**  
Cole is a screenwriter born to Jewish Polish immigrants. His father was a Marxist garment industry union organizer, and Cole was a dedicated socialist from childhood. He was a member of the American Communist Party. In 1933, Cole and eight other screenwriters, including John Howard Lawson and Samuel Ornitz, organized the Screen Writers Guild (SWG), the first and most radical of the Hollywood guilds. He was also a member of the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League, an organization with Soviet sympathies, and became well-known for his left-wing activities.

**Edward Dmytryk**  
Oscar-nominated director Dmyrtryk is the son of Polish-Ukranian immigrants, and he got his start in Hollywood as a messenger at Famous Players-Lasky. He would go on to make his directorial debut with The Hawk (1935), and become well known for directing film noirs, including Crossfire (1947) which would garner him an Oscar nomination, along with several World War II films, working with the likes of John Wayne. He was briefly a member of the American Communist Party in 1945.

**Ring Lardner, Jr.**  
A journalist and screenwriter, he was born the son of journalist Ellis (Abbot) Lardner and comedian Ring Lardner. He became involved with communism by joining the Socialist Club at Princeton, and would join the American Communist
Party in 1937. He worked as a publicist before becoming a screenwriter himself, winning an Academy Award for Writing Original Screenplay for the 1942 film Woman of the Year. Open about his left-wing leanings, he organized anti-fascist demonstrations and raised funds for the Republican cause during the Spanish Civil War, which his brother would fight and die in through the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

John Howard Lawson

Writer and screenwriter John Howard Lawson, named for prison reformer John Howard, first became involved with writing in college. Though opposed to American involvement in World War I, he would serve in the Norton-Harjes Volunteer Ambulance Corps and ultimately the American Red Cross. Following this, he would go on to work as an editor and playwright both domestically and abroad, and found the Screen Writers Guild with Samuel Ornitz and Lester Cole. His political involvement included his attempted founding of the Proletarian Artists and Writers League, his protesting of the Sacco and Vanzetti trial. After being accused of political apathy, Lawson joined the American Communist Party, and would go on to write on violent labor conflict in the American South, along with making several political films such as Blockade (1938) and Counter-Attack (1945).

Albert Maltz

Playwright, fiction writer, screenwriter; a strong communist, Maltz was inducted into Marxism during his college years. He would go on to work as a playwright for the Theater Union. During World War II, Maltz gained acclaim through scripting propaganda films, such as Moscow Strikes Back (1942) and Destination Tokyo (1943). Though a proponent of Marxism, he famously criticized the self-censorship of the Communist Party, garnering accusations of disloyalty.

Samuel Ornitz

Screenwriter and novelist; from the age of twelve, Samuel Ornitz was an avowed socialist, choosing not to follow his fellow family members into business. He was a founding member of the Screenwriters Guild, along with John Howard Lawson and Lester Cole. An outspoken political figure, Ornitz publicly supported the communist government of the Soviet Union, and took a party-line approach to the support of communist regimes, alienating those leftists critical of the U.S.S.R.

Adrian Scott

Screenwriter and film producer; born in Arlington, New Jersey, Scott grew up in one of America’s most intense areas of labor conflict, witnessing at a young age massive strikes and factory shutdowns. Scott got his start in Hollywood as a screenwriter for RKO, and would go on to production, including working with Dmystryk on Crossfire (1947). The film was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Picture. He joined the Communist Party in 1944. He developed a relationship with fellow screenwriter and trade union activist Joan LaCour Scott.

Dalton Trumbo

Screenwriter and novelist Trumbo first made a splash with his story work, writing socialist-themed and anti-war literature prior to World War II. He was an isolationist, writing political satire advocating against America’s involvement in
World War II. Following the war, he wrote publicly in defense of the actions of the Soviet Union, portraying the nation as subject to American Menace. He joined the Communist Party in 1943, though he had ties to it prior to the 1940’s. Despite having been criticized for his communist sympathies, his work on films such as Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo (1944), Our Vines Have Tender Grapes (1945), and Kitty Foyle (1940) which garnered him a nomination for an Academy Award, he remains one of the most influential and talented screenwriters in Hollywood.

Composer Hans Eisler was born in Saxony in 1989 and would go on to serve in the Astro-Hungarian Army on the frontlines of World War I. After moving to Berlin, he joined the Communist Party of Germany, and collaborated with other communist composers and artist, growing close to Bertold Brecht. With the rise of the Nazi Party, Eisler went into exile with work having been banned in Germany. After emigrating to America, Eisler composed many award winning scores for movies in documentaries, garnering two Oscar nominations.

A writer and producer born in Connecticut to Russian Jewish immigrants, Gordon moved from the family home to California shortly after graduating in order to become involved with the film industry. An activist for industry workers’ rights, he helped found the Screen Reader Guild, and joined the Communist Party in 1942, compelled by what he viewed to be systemic economic failures that had depressed his father as an entrepreneur. He is married to fellow activist Jean Lewin, one of the organizers of the Hollywood Canteen.

Aaron Copland was an American composer, composition teacher, writer, and later a conductor of his own and other American music. Copland was referred to by his peers and critics as “the Dean of American Composers.” Copland held a wide and varied musical career, composing ballets, symphonies, and pushing the genre of orchestral music to change and grow. He entered movie composition in the 1930’s where he wrote the scores for Of Mice and Men (1939) and Our Town (1940). He openly supported the Loyalists during the Spanish Civil War. Though his leftist politics lead him to support the Communist Party in elections, he often decried the Soviet Union’s suppression of artistic freedom.

Joan LaCour Scott was an American trade union activist and screenwriter. Raised by a mother working in vaudeville, Scott was introduced to the stage at a young age. Eventually, her family would move to California seeking fame for her sister and her, though Scott would choose to become a screenwriter. In 1946, she joined the Hollywood Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions (HICCASP) at the same time as Ronald Reagan, and would be involved in the struggle over the political orientation of the organization. It was here that she was first exposed to the Communist Party which she would join briefly, though she remained a vocal proponent for trade unions and labor rights.
During this time, she became romantically involved with fellow screenwriter Adrian Scott.

**Paul Draper**

Actor and dancer; Paul Draper was born to well-respected and socially influential family in New York and is the nephew of art innovator Ruth Draper. From a young age, Draper impressed many with dancing skills, and has gone on to dance and choreograph, performing on Broadway and the Silver Screen. While Draper has no official Communist connection and is averse to being publicly labeled as a sympathizer, he has been known to support Progressive candidates. His celebrity status gave him exposure to many outside of the Hollywood set. He can often be seen rubbing shoulders with the social and political elite of Las Angeles and New York City, where he charms all of those in attendance time and time again.

**Sheridan Gibney**

Screenwriter and producer; Sharidan Gibney is currently serving his second term as president of the Screenwriters Guild, and is a member of the League of American Writers, and organization founded by the Communist Party USA in 1935. Gibney is not publicly a communist, though his participation in such organization has led many to deem him a “fellow traveler.” He is a prominent screenwriter, having won two shared Oscars for The Story of Louis Pasteur (1936).

**Lillian Hellman**

Playwright and screenwriter; born to a Jewish family in New Orleans, at a young age Lillian Hellman was drawn to socialism in Germany, though off put by its attachment to antisemitism. She joined the Screenwriters Guild in 1935, swiftly becoming one of its foremost proponents and driving up membership. In 1937, she joined with 87 other public figures in condemning the examination of Trotsky’s defense of the Soviet Union, holding that Trotsky’s defenders would undermine the Soviet Union and threaten the bulwark to fascism that it had become. Later that year, she would participate in the Spanish Civil War under the International Brigades. She was a member of the Communist Party from 1938-1940, though left feeling that it stifled her maverick nature, and would go on to support the Soviet invasion of Finland. As a screenwriter, she received Academy Award nominations for The Little Foxes (1941) and The North Star (1943). She is romantically involved with Dashiell Hammett.

**Canada Lee**

Actor born in Manhattan, Canada Lee lived a wild a varied life from a young age, rising as a symbol of African-American achievement in a prejudicial society. Though raised to play the piano and violin, Lee made and lost a fortune working as a jockey and later, a boxer. Returning to music, Lee failed to gain popularity, despite the assistance of his friend Ed Sullivan. Driven by the love of showmanship that Lee had developed as a boxer, he moved on to a career in acting. He would gain ultimate fame for his performance in Native Son, also directed by Welles. Along with a successful stage career, Canada Lee starred in such radio and film productions as Hitchcock’s Lifeboat (1944) and New World A-Comin’ (1944). Offstage, Canada Lee fought for the civil rights of fellow people
of color, advocating against segregation in the military, though remaining supportive of its efforts in World War II, and opposing apartheid in South Africa. Lee kept contact with Langston Hughes, and took in a young H. Jack Geiger in 1940.

**Richard Wright**
Writer Richard Wright was born in Natchez, Mississippi, on 4th September, 1908. Raised by single mother in the Jim Crow South, he was forced to find work at a young age and was largely self-taught. After working several menial jobs and being unemployed as a result of the Great Depression, Wright was given a break in working with the Federal Writer’s Project. As an accomplished writer, he would go on to publish literature essential to the civil rights movement, such as Black Boy and Native Son. Wright began attending the Marxist John Reed Club in 1932, where he was exposed to fellow communists, though he would be subject to internal tensions over the intersection of racism, racial activism, and communism.

**Peter Seeger**
Peter Seeger was an American actor and activist. Though Seeger was educated as a botanist, he pursued acting after college, getting his start in tent and steamboat shows. From his beginnings in acting, he was involved in political action, involving himself in the production of left-oriented and labor rights documentaries. He rose to fame for his stage acting, and breached into film acting in the 1940’s. Through his acting, he would meet his partner and fellow activist Harry Hay. Together they supported a variety of labor strikes and labor rights movements. He joined the Communist Party in 1934.

**Dorothy Parker**
Dorothy Parker was a writer, poet, and critic. She began her career selling her writing to Vanity Fair and working as an editorial assistant for Vogue. Following this, she would become a successful poet, publishing several successful collections, notably Too Much Rope and Death and Taxes. Developing a relationship with Alan Campbell, both moved to Hollywood with aspirations of screenwriter where they worked as freelancers. A political activist, Parker reported on the Loyalist cause during the Spanish Civil War for a communist magazine, and helped form the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League at the behest of Otto Katz.

**Edward G. Robinson**
Edward G. Robinson arrived in the United States at age ten, and his family moved into New York’s Lower East Side. He took up acting while attending City College, abandoning plans to become a rabbi or lawyer. The American Academy of Dramatic Arts awarded him a scholarship, and he began a career as a Broadway actor. As a film actor, he became a true star with his performance in Little Caesar (1931). Unable to enlist in World War II due to his age, he became an outspoken critic of fascism. Publicly, he remained quiet on the issue of Stalin, though has noted the Soviet Union’s importance in the war and donated to charities with communist ties. He was a supporter of civil rights, especially as they related to the labor rights of racial minorities.
Paul Robeson was an American concert artist and activist. After graduating law school and playing in the NFL, Robeson became engaged in the Harlem Renaissance, performing in “The Emperor Jones” and “All Gods Chillun Got Wings”. Additionally, at this time he recorded and released songs. While touring abroad, his political activities began with his involvement with unemployed workers and anti-imperialist students whom he met in Britain and continued with support for the Loyalist cause in the Spanish Civil War and his opposition to fascism. He openly supported the Soviet Union and China and decried acts of American imperialism.

Dashiell Hammett was an American author of hard-boiled detective novels and short stories, screenwriter, and political activist, writing such famous novels as The Maltese Falcon and The Red Harvest. Leaving school at the age of 13, he became employed with the Pinkerton National Detective Agency, though he became disillusioned as a result of the agencies involvement in breaking union strikes. He served in the Motor Ambulance Corps during World War II, and later reenlisted to serve in World War II. He was a prominent left-wing activist, using the characters in Red Harvest to posit Marxian critiques, and was elected president of the Civil Rights Congress, an organization with Communist ties. He joined the Communist Party in 1937, and was romantically involved with playwright Lillian Hellman.

Samuel Joel “Zero” Mostel was an actor, comedian, and singer. A comedian through and through, Mostel began his stage work at the Café Society in downtown Manhattan, where he quickly became the nightclub’s main attraction. He then pursued a successful career in show business which was interrupted by being drafted into World War II. Though honorably discharged due to a disability, he would take this time to perform in USO shows for the troops. Though not an open member of the Communist Party, Mostel’s humor often came at the expense of the right wing, and so drew ire from conservatives in Hollywood. He was blacklisted by MGM prior to the Second Red Scare due to his participation in protests against the film Tennessee Johnson (1942).
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