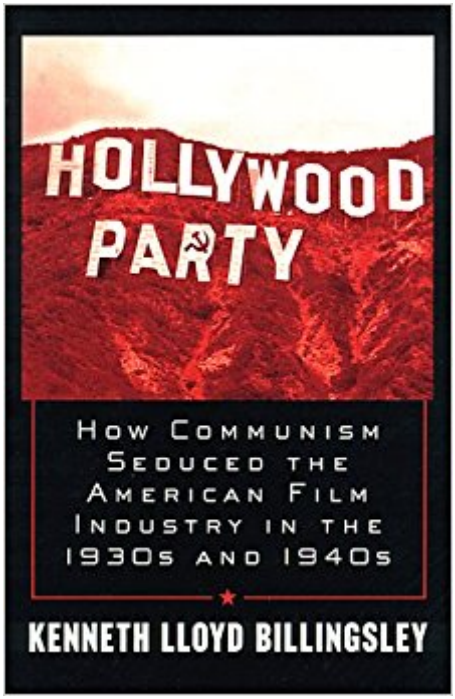
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Hollywood Party: How Communism Seduced The American Film Industry In The 1930s And 1940s



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Synopsis

In the fall of 1997 some of the biggest names in show business filled the Motion Picture Academy theater in Beverly Hills for Hollywood Remembers the Blacklist, a lavish production worthy of an Oscar telecast. In song, film, and live performances by stars such as Billy Crystal, Kevin Spacey, and John Lithgow, the audience relived a time some fifty years before, when, as the story has always been told, courageous writers and actors stood firm against a witch-hunt and blacklist that wrecked lives and destroyed careers. Left untold that night, and ignored in books and films for more than half a century, was a story not so politically correct but vastly more complex and dramatic.In Hollywood Party the complete story finally emerges, backdropped by the great upheavals of our time and with all the elements of a thrillerÃ¢â ¬â •wrenching plot twists, intrigue, betrayal, violence, corruption, misguided passion, and lost idealism. Using long neglected information from public records, the personal files of key players, and recent revelations from Soviet archives, Kenneth Lloyd Billingsley uncovers the Communist Party's strategic plan for taking control of the movie industry during its golden age, a plan that came perilously close to success. He shows how the Party dominated the politics of the movie industry during the 1930s and 1940s, raising vast sums of money from unwitting liberals and conscripting industry luminaries into supporting Stalinist causes.In riveting detail, the shameful truth unfolds: Communist writers, actors, and directors, wealthy beyond the dreams of most Americans, posture as proletarian wage slaves as they try to influence the content of movies. From the days of the Popular Front through the Nazi-Soviet Pact and beyond World War II, they remain faithful to a regime whose brutality rivaled that of Hitler's Nazis.Their plans for control of the industry a shambles by the mid-1950s, the Party nonetheless succeeded in shaping the popular memory of those days. By chronicling what has been left on the cutting-room floor, from "back story" to aftermath, Hollywood Party changes those perceptions forever."Mr. Billingsley's book is the best exploration I've seen of the Hollywood blacklist and the Communist Party's role in that conflict. Hollywood Party covers it all with insight, meticulous research, and some wry perceptions."Ã¢â ¬â •Charlton Heston"For years we've been treated to the left-wing version of the Hollywood blacklist. Now Lloyd Billingsley has provided us with the rest of the story."Ã¢â ¬â •David Horowitz, author of Radical Son"Now the whole story can be told; the blacklist was never black and white after all, but can only be depicted accurately in shades of gray. From this day forward, no future backstage history of Hollywood can be called complete without taking into account the evidence that Lloyd Billingsley has uncovered."Ã¢â ¬â •Gary McVey, film curator, former director of the Los Angeles International Film Festival"Hollywood Party is an absolutely captivating achievement."Ã¢â ¬â •Richard Grenier, columnist and author of Capturing the

CultureAbout the AuthorKenneth Lloyd Billingsley is the editorial director of the Pacific Research Institute in San Francisco. He has served as California correspondent for the Spectator (London) and written for the Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Daily News, San Francisco Chronicle, and many other publications. He currently divides his time between Sacramento, the Bay Area, and Southern California.

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Customer Reviews

Here’s what most people know about the clash between Washington, D.C., and Hollywood involving Communist influence over the film industry: the House Committee on Un-American Activities led an organized witch hunt against writers and actors with left-wing sympathies, creating an environment that led to a blacklist destroying many talented people’s careers. But some insist this isn’t the whole story. "It’s a false parallel. Witch hunt!" wrote Molly Kazan, whose husband Elia testified before the committee, saved his career as a film director, and earned enmity from Hollywood liberals continuing to the present day. "The phrase would indicate that there are no Communists in the government, none in the big trade unions, none in the press, none in the arts.... No one who was in the Party and the left uses that phrase. They know better." Kenneth Lloyd Billingsley works to fill in some of the historical gaps with Hollywood Party. The information on the role of Communist (and Communist- sympathetic) screenwriters is not particularly revelatory to those familiar with the basic outlines of the story, although Billingsley pushes the Communist angle hard, noting the Party’s lockstep support of Stalin and what might charitably be called his "policies," as well as the vicious

backlash against any leftist who spoke out against the Communists. His chronicle of Communist efforts to control the studio workers' unions, however, illuminates a less glamorous but perhaps more substantial aspect of the story. Those in search of celebrity dirt will be mildly disappointed; there are several star-studded scenes, but mostly mild anecdotes on the level of Ronald Reagan's gradual realization that, as an SAG activist, he was being played for a dupe by the Reds. Unless, that is, Billingsley is writing about a Communist or a fellow traveler, in which case no personal quirk, from screenwriter Dalton Trumbo's penchant for working in his bathtub to Bertolt Brecht's lack of hygiene to left-wing journalist Ella Winter's mannishly short hair, is overlooked. -- Ron Hogan

The Soviet Union's demise, the release of spy-era files and the 50-year anniversary of the year in which Joseph McCarthy wielded lists of supposed Communists like so many sickles, has prompted new studies on the House Committee on Un-American Activities and Cold War politics. Examining accounts of movie industry unions, money trails between Russian Communists and American Communists, the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League and other groups' response to the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of 1939 and industry insider allegiances and betrayals, Billingsley throws a wet blanket on the gushing self-congratulation with which the entertainment world has memorialized the Hollywood Ten and the era of blacklisted writers and producers. The House Committee and the blacklist it spawned, he contends, were no simple versions of the Spanish Inquisition. Not everyone accused and even persecuted was innocent of the Communist label; not every Hollywood figure told the truth. Heroes and villains, he points out, were not nearly so clear-cut as movies, like the 1991 DeNiro feature, Guilty by Suspicion, and gala events like Hollywood Remembers the Blacklist, a recreation of the HUAC hearings, would have us believe. On this point, Billingsley convinces, supplying what he calls "backstory" to subvert the assumption that the House Committee was pure sham. Filled with specific details of infiltrators and full-fledged activists, his study discloses veins of Communist influence within the studios of that era. But Billingsley also attempts to prove that a battle for control over movies themselves was nearly lost to Communist "seduction," and with this provocative charge, his argument falls apart. The stories he documents of director Edward Dmytryck, writer Dalton Trumbo and countless lesser players, who he accuses of championing themes that were consistent with the Party line, fail to add up to an underground movement to smuggle Communist ideology into American cinema. Its racy subtitle notwithstanding, this volume ultimately fails to provide a convincing picture of those dramatic times. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

The research done by Mr. Billingsley is astounding. Anyone wanting to live free in America and understand how Hollywood was shaped and taken over by a sadly horrific ideology MUST read this. I spent fourteen years in New York and another ten in Hollywood in the industry and it is clear that the monster, Stalin, was a huge fan of films and knew if he could get control over the hearts and minds of filmmakers, he could rule the world - indeed, in many ways he's still filling minds with this poison from the grave. Hopefully, sound principles of liberty and freedom, our truly unique US Constitution and Bill Of Rights will ultimately prevail. But, I'm most grateful to have a bravely written and researched document to recommend to people who want to know what REALLY happened during that time period of our culture - not the upside down version of the issues I was fed as a young actor/writer myself. Excellent and essential reading!

What an eye-opener of a book! Earlier 5 star reviewers have said what needs to be said about this book so I'll only support their praise.The Commies played dirty and their myth-making machinery lives on. Surprising how many people still deny penetration by the Russian Communists to this day.Interesting that the plan was to hit both high and low. The screenwriters slipped in the propagandist content and the union thugs controlled the physical production.Of interest to me was the social angle. How a newbie could gain entre to the "in-crowd" by joining a cell. That could result in a instant network of business and social connections, even improve one's sex life. Reminds me of Joan Baez and friends and their anti-war poster - "Girls say yes to boys who say no."Even today, the Left is playing on the same insecurities and high school pressures

Finally we have a true and objective history of the 1930-1950 Hollywood period. Mr. Billingsley tells the truth when keeping within his subject. He shows that much of what the media has said about this period is propaganda, or exaggerated. He does not tell it as a conservative anti-communist, but rather as a seeker of truth. He does not demonize people, but shows them as they are. If you value truth read this.

The left controls the schools, the colleges, the news and the arts today in the US. So, if you believe the rubbish and lies from the left that Congress began a witch hunt to find Communists in Hollywood then you need some psychiatric help. The Communists that did testify - they all weaseled out. Not one of them said, "I detest capitalism. I believe the worker is the backbone of the nation, and I am proud to say I am a Communist".Hollywood was infested with Communists and they were in Eric Hoffer's words: True Believers. The rest of the US had local cells reporting up the communist

ladder. Not Hollywood though. They reported directly to HQ. They were allowed no deviation from whatever the Party in Moscow dictated. Moscow told them what to believe and what to say. If Moscow said on Monday that hamburgers were Fascist then they were Fascist. If on Wednesday hamburgers were the food of the Communist Party, well then, they were to be extolled as wonder food of the working man.Billingsley exposes these sorry people to the sunlight they have needed for years. Once Stalin was dead, the truth came out about the tens of millions tortured, murdered and starved to death. When Krushchev exposed the horrors of Stalin in the "Secret Speech" most of Hollywood turned in their party cards as they then realized the truth. The party had hidden the truth from them very well.Who fought against the Communists in Hollywood most effectively? The vast majority were other Democrats who had not swallowed the Kool Aid like Roy Brewer who was a union man but an anti-Communist. We have them to thank for all the anti-Communist successes, not the Congressmen in Washington DC.Did you know Hollywood caved to the Nazis. How courageous:http://www..com/Collaboration-Hollywoods-Pact-Hitler/dp/0674724747/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1417388854&sr=8-1&keywords=hollywood+and+the+nazisHollywood will always find a way to make a new movie covering up its sordid past. "The Front" starring Zero Mostel and Woody Allen was done to whitewash Hollywood's Communist past. At the beginning of the movie, lots of pictures of Joe McCarthy, who 1) Had nothing whatsoever to do with the Hollywood 10 and 2) was denounced by the same courageous Democrats who outed and then beat the Communist movement in Hollywood.Hollywood today buys book rights with Muslims as the villains and then the screenwriters change the Muslims to Nazis. Back then the Communists made sure that businessmen were not ever to be portrayed in a good light. 65 years later it's still the same. Nothing much changes, does it? But Hollywood will insist it is courageous and is totally in favor of artistic expression. What a joke.

I was too young to understand this issue and bought this book after watching the movie, "The Way We Were" and seeing some of the stars "disrespect" Kazan at the 99 Oscars. Therefore I felt it was time to understand the blacklist. As most readers, I was surprised by the "conservative view" truth. I consider myself liberal but I can't see how anyone could support the belief that communism equals freedom of speech after reading this review.What will you learn? The beginning of Ronald Reagons's activism, exactly how influential the communist party was in Hollywood unions, and the blind support given by so many celebrities to this brutal regime.This is not a fun read, but a in-depth analysis of an important issue to the development of our country. Frankly, I don't recognize this country that would embrace communism as some Americans did in the 30s to 50s. For this reason,

the book provided a valuable intellectual journey in my discovery of American history and would recommend it to others.

This is a book of answers, if you wanted to know why Hollywood has become 'Commiewood'. It is sad that the House Committee on UnAmerican Activities has gone out of fashion and that McCarthy was so badly maligned by the Communist Party and the 'left'. Still, this bit of history is vital to understanding why Hollywood moved so far to the left and how it could become so brain-washed.

Excellent service, no problems.

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