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The Blacklisters' Bible: *Red Channels*

If there was an official blacklist in the entertainment industry, *Red Channels* was it. Issued on June 22, 1950, just three days before the outbreak of the Korean War, it was a compilation of the allegedly subversive affiliations of 151 writers, directors, and performers.¹ Its

¹Those listed were Larry Adler, Luther Adler, Stella Adler, Edith Atwater, Howard Bay, Ralph Bell, Leonard Bernstein, Walter Bernstein, Michael Blankfort, Marc Blitzstein, True Boardman, Millen Brand, Oscar Brand, J. Edward Bromberg, Himan Brown, John Brown, Abe Burrows, Morris Carnovsky, Vera Caspary, Edward Chodorov, Jerome Chodorov, Mady Christians, Lee J. Cobb, Marc Connelly, Aaron Copeland, Norman Corwin, Howard Da Silva, Roger De Koven, Dean Dixon, Olin Downes, Alfred Drake, Paul Draper, Howard Duff, Clifford J. Durr, Richard Dyer-Bennett, José Ferrer, Louise Fitch, Martin Gabel, Arthur Gaeth, William S. Gailmor, John Garfield, Will Geer, Jack Gilford, Tom Glazer, Ruth Gordon, Lloyd Gough, Morton Gould, Shirley Graham, Ben Grauer, Mitchell Grayson, Horace Grenell, Uta Hagen, Dashiell Hammett, E. Y. ("Yip") Harburg, Robert P. Heller, Lillian Hellman, Nat Hiken, Rose Hobart, Judy Holliday, Roderick B. Holmgren, Lena Horne, Langston Hughes, Marsha Hunt, Leo Hurwitz, Charles Irving, Burl Ives, Sam Jaffe, Leon Janney, Joe Julian, Garson Kanin, George Keane, Donna Keath, Pert Kelton, Alexander Kendrick, Adelaide Klein, Felix Knight, Howard Koch, Tony Kraber, Millard Lampell, John La Touche, Arthur Laurents, Gypsy Rose Lee, Madeline Lee, Ray Lev, Philip Loeb, Ella Logan, Alan Lomax, Avon Long, Joseph Losey, Peter Lyon, Aline MacMahon, Paul Mann, Margo, Myron McCormick, Paul McGrath, Burgess Meredith, Ben Myers, Arthur Miller, Henry Morgan, Zero Mostel, Jean Muir, Meg Mundy, Lynn Murray, Dorothy Parker, Arnold Perl, Minerva Pious, Samson Raphaelson, Bernard Reis, Anne Revere, Kenneth Roberts, Earl Robinson, Edward G. Robinson, William N. Robson, Harold Rome, Norman Rosten, Selena Royle, Coby Ruskin, Robert St. John, Hazel Scott, Pete Seeger, Lisa Sergio, Artie Shaw, Irwin Shaw, Robert Lewis Shayon, Ann Shepherd, William L. Shirer, Allan Sloane, Howard K. Smith, Gale Sondergaard, Hester Sondergaard, Lionel Stander, Johannes Steel, Paul Stewart, Elliot Sullivan, William Sweets, Helen Tamiris, Betty Todd, Louis Untermeyer, Hilda Vaughn, J. Raymond Walsh, Sam Wanamaker, Theodore Ward, Fredi Washington, Margaret Webster, Orson Welles, Josh White, Irene Wicker, Betty Winkler, Martin Wolfson, Lesley Woods, Richard Yaffe.

Red Channels, American Business Consultants, New York, 22 June 1950, 16–17, 75–77, 79–80, 90, 110–13, 155–56.

authors—three former FBI agents and an aspiring television producer named Vincent Hartnett—drew their citations from a miscellaneous potpourri of left-wing letterheads, clippings from the Communist party's *Daily Worker*, and the publications of HUAC and other investigating committees.

Each individual entry contained from one to forty-one citations, annotated to indicate the source of the incriminating information. Some of the allegedly Communist groups cited in *Red Channels* were, like Consumers Union, the publisher of *Consumer Reports*, politically innocuous. Most, however, were the so-called front groups, organizations like those on the attorney general's list (see Document 9) that had close ties to the Communist party. Although party members belonged to these groups, so too did non-Communists. In addition, *Red Channels* treated the 1948 presidential campaign of Henry Wallace and the Progressive party as a questionable activity, as it also did any sign of public opposition to the anti-Communist purges.

Many of the individual entries were simply wrong—cases of mistaken identity or erroneous listings and false reports in the Communist press. Others ignored history and treated as suspect the willingness of many American entertainers to rally support for the Soviet Union as part of the U.S. war effort. Of the two citations that derailed actor Joe Julian's career, one was for an innocuous public appearance during World War II and the other for a meeting that he walked out of when he discovered its sponsors had Communist ties. Lena Horne, like many African American entertainers, got into *Red Channels* because of her support for left-wing civil rights groups.

The following selections are representative. They show the types of affiliations that *Red Channels*' compilers considered subversive as well as the sources of information they used. What they do not show is the damage the booklet inflicted. It temporarily (and sometimes permanently) ruined the careers of almost every entertainer whose name appeared in it. "Nobody has to tell me not to use anybody listed in *Red Channels*," an account executive in an advertising agency explained at the time. "I just know not to."

Red Channels:
*The Report of Communist Influence
in Radio and Television*

1950

Lillian Hellman

PLAYWRIGHT, AUTHOR

REPORTED AS:

- Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions
 Progressive Citizens of America, National Arts, Sciences, and Professions Council
 National Council of American-Soviet Friendship
 National Wallace for President Committee
 Harlem Women for Wallace
 "New Party" (Wallace)
 Writers for Wallace
 Moscow Art Theatre
 Progressive Party
 National Council of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions
- Speaker, Theatre Panel, Conference of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions, 6/22, 23/45. *Daily Worker*, 6/10/45, p. 14.
 Participant, Cultural Freedom Conference, 10/25, 26/47. *Daily Worker*, 10/27/47, p. 2.
 Signer. Women's Committee. Greetings to women of Soviet Union in celebration of International Women's Day. *Daily Worker*, 3/9/48, p. 5.
 Member. *Daily Worker*, 3/26/48, p. 7.
 Speaker, 6/9/48; gave forceful tribute to Wallace. *Daily Worker*, 6/10/48, p. 6.
 Member, Platform Committee, 7/23/48. *Daily Worker*, 7/19/48, p. 5.
 Member, Initiating Committee. *Daily Worker*, 9/21/48, p. 7.
 Sent greetings to directors and members. Celebration of Moscow Art Theatre's 50th Anniversary. *Daily Worker*, 11/1/48, p. 13.
 Attended three-day conference. *Daily Worker*, 11/16/48, p. 5.
 Signer. Statement calling for abolition of House Committee on Un-American Activities. *Daily Worker*, 12/29/48, p. 2.

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- Scientific and Cultural Conference for World Peace
 Amicus Curiae Brief
 Moscow Theaters
 American Committee for Democracy and Intellectual Freedom
 American Committee to Save Refugees; Exiled Writers Committee of the League of American Writers; United American Spanish Aid Committee
 American League for Peace and Democracy
 Russian War Relief, Inc.
 Artists' Front to Win the War
 Citizens Committee for Harry Bridges
Equality
 Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade
- Signer. Invitation to conference. *Daily Worker*, 1/10/49, p. 11.
 Member, Program Committee. *Daily Worker*, 2/28/49, p. 9.
 Signer. Petition to Supreme Court to review the conviction of [John Howard] Lawson and [Dalton] Trumbo.
 Plays, "The Watch on the Rhine," "The Little Foxes," performed in Moscow theaters. *Soviet Russia Today*, 10/45, p. 32.
 Signer. Petition to discontinue Dies Committee. *House Un-Am. Act. Com., Appendix 9*, p. 331.
 Chairman, "Europe Today" dinner forum, 10/9/41. *House Un-Am. Act. Com., Appendix 9*, p. 357.
 Sponsor, Refugee Scholarship and Peace Campaign, 8/3/39. *House Un-Am. Act. Com., Appendix 9*, p. 410.
 Signer. Advertisement asking for help on behalf of the Russian people, 10/10/41. *House Un-Am. Act. Com., Appendix 9*, p. 475.
 Participant. Meeting, 10/16/42. *House Un-Am. Act. Com., Appendix 9*, p. 575.
 Member and sponsor, 1941. *House Un-Am. Act. Com., Appendix 9*, p. 599.
 Member, Editorial Council, 12/39. *House Un-Am. Act. Com., Appendix 9*, p. 698.
 Sponsor, 6/11/38. *House Un-Am. Act. Com., Appendix 9*, pp. 753-56.
 Sponsor. Disabled Veterans Fund, 3/22/39. *House Un-Am. Act. Com., Appendix 9*, p. 753.

- Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee Sponsor. Dinner, 10/27/43. *House Un-Am. Act. Com., Appendix 9*, p. 941.
- The League of Women Shoppers, Inc. Vice-president. *House Un-Am. Act. Com., Appendix 9*, pp. 1007-10.
- National Emergency Conference for Democratic Rights Signer. "Open Letter to the United States Senate." *House Un-Am. Act. Com., Appendix 9*, p. 1212.
- Progressive Committee to Rebuild the American Labor Party Member, Executive Committee. *House Un-Am. Act. Com., Appendix 9*, p. 1500.
- Statement by American Progressives on the Moscow Trials Signer, 5/3/38. *House Un-Am. Act. Com., Appendix 9*, p. 1617.
- Theatre Arts Committee Member, Executive Board. *House Un-Am. Act. Com., Appendix 9*, p. 1626.
- Frontier Films Member, Advisory Board, 4/6/37. *Un-Am. Act. in California, 1948*, p. 96.

Lena Horne

SINGER—STAGE, SCREEN, RADIO

REPORTED AS:

- American Committee for Protection of Foreign Born Speaker. Mass Rally. *Daily Worker*, 3/3/48, p. 7.
- Civil Rights Congress Speaker. *Daily Worker*, 10/6/47, pp. 5, 8. Speaker. Civil Rights Congress of N.Y. Conference, Manhattan Center, 10/11/47. Program.
- Citizens Non-Partisan Committee for Re-election of Benjamin J. Davis² to the City Council Supporter. *Daily Worker*, 9/25/45, p. 12.

²Benjamin Davis was a leading African American Communist who served on the New York City Council in the early 1940s and was convicted under the Smith Act in 1949 along with the Communist party's other top leaders.

- New Masses* Received award from New Masses Dinner Committee. *New Masses*, 1/23/45, p. 32. Contributor. *New Masses*, 9/16/47, p. 16.
- People's Songs Sponsor. *Bulletin of People's Songs*, 5/47.
- Council on African Affairs Sponsor, South African Famine Relief Letterhead, 5/4/46.
- United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America Participant. Radio program, "Fighters for Liberty." *Daily Worker*, 2/9/48, p. 13.
- Southern Conference for Human Welfare Fund raiser. *People's Daily World*, 5/25/48, p. 5.
- United Negro and Allied Veterans of America, Inc. Affiliated. *Daily Worker*, 7/2/47, p. 4. Member, National Advisory Board. Letterhead.
- Outstanding women who received praise of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn Listed. *The Worker*, 3/9/47, p. 7.
- Communist Party celebration in honor of Benjamin J. Davis Announced as performer by Communist Party State Committee, 5/6/45, Golden Gate Ballroom, NYC. *U.S. Senate Hearings on S1832*, p. 593.

Joe Julian

ACTOR—RADIO

REPORTED AS:

- Artists' Front to Win the War Speaker. Meeting, 10/16/42. *House Un-Am. Act. Com., Appendix 9*, p. 575.
- National Council of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions Attended meeting to abolish House Un-American Activities Committee, Hotel Commodore, NYC, 1/9/49. *NY Journal-American*, 12/30/48.

*In memory of Andrea Eagan
(1943–1993)*

For Bedford/St. Martin's

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Senior Production Supervisor: Dennis J. Conroy
Marketing Manager: Jenna Bookin Barry
Project Management: Books By Design, Inc.
Text Design: Claire Seng-Niemoeller
Indexer: Books By Design, Inc.
Cover Design: Richard Emery Design, Inc.
Cover Photo: Joseph McCarthy, Bettmann/Corbis.
Composition: Stratford Publishing Services, Inc.
Printing and Binding: Haddon Craftsmen, an R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company

President: Charles H. Christensen
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Library of Congress Control Number: 2001089428

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Manufactured in the United States of America.

7 6 5 4 3 2
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For information, write: Bedford/St. Martin's, 75 Arlington Street, Boston, MA 02116
(617-399-4000)

ISBN: 0-312-39319-9 (paperback)
0-312-29425-5 (hardcover)

Acknowledgments

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