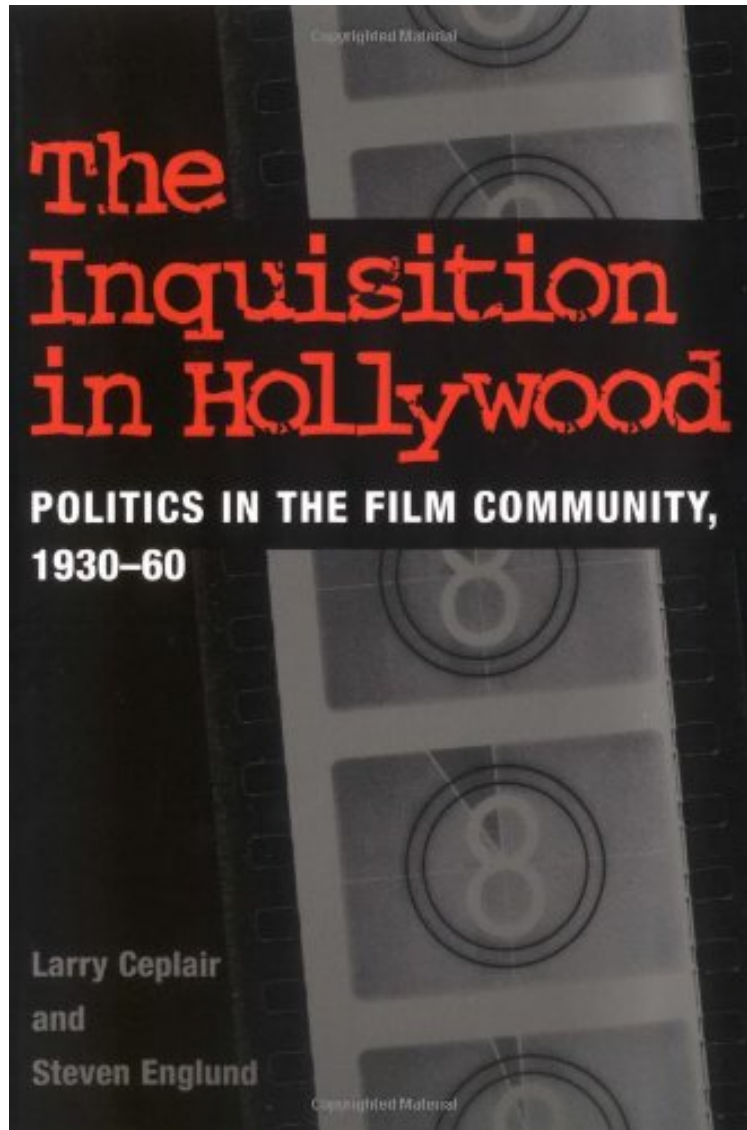


# The Inquisition in Hollywood: Politics in the Film Community, 1930-60

Larry Ceplair, Steven Englund

*\*Download PDF | ePub | DOC | audiobook | ebooks*



 Download

 Read Online

#594953 in Books 2003-07-17 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.25 x 1.70 x 5.50l, 1.59 #File Name: 0252071417544 pages | File size: 73.Mb

Larry Ceplair, Steven Englund : **The Inquisition in Hollywood: Politics in the Film Community, 1930-60** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Inquisition in Hollywood: Politics in the Film Community, 1930-60:

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. As Definitive a Book as We are Likely to Get about the Hollywood Blacklist By Richard M. Sola A fair, thorough, well, researched, and well-written history of a highly controversial

topic. Ceplair does an excellent job putting the Hollywood Blacklist into historical context and describing the global and national events in which the Blacklist was created. This book is as close to definitive as we will probably get. Unlike so many other authors, Ceplair does not glorify the Hollywood Ten and others that were blacklisted and does not minimize the existence of the Communist Party in Hollywood. 22 of 25 people found the following review helpful. Indispensable By Douglas Doepke I'm not a scholar of the period, but the book strongly recommends itself as the standard history of the blacklist era. Co-written in 1970, it's since undergone a number of reprintings, including a provocative Afterward to the 1983 issue, where the authors respond to critics. It's a voluminous work, 400+ pages, with small print, so it's definitely not a quick read, though the text flows easily. A number of appendices help keep the sometimes confusing cast of players properly sorted. As a fact-stating document, the work looks pretty exhaustive. Beginning with the Depression era 1930's, the narrative follows the growth of the Hollywood Left through the war years, to the post-war inquisition and decline, and into the cultural thaw of the 1960's. Focus is mainly on developments within and without the Screen Writers Guild (SWG), the most left-wing of the industry unions, and from whose ranks many broader industry coalitions emerge. It's their battles with the producers over the final product that constitutes a key subplot, and lesser known phase of the Hollywood wars. The emphasis throughout remains on events rather than individuals, though a number of key figures do predominate-- Trumbo, Lawson, Biberman, et al. Nonetheless, what we learn of these and other pivotal players is strictly a tale of character and conviction rather than personality or peccadillo. It's a sobering account with clear lessons for those raised on high-school civics classes. No one likes to think of democratic America as purging the unorthodox for "thought-crimes". Yet, all things considered, it's hard to resist some such real life conclusion. The pressures through which the entertainment industry were finally brought to heel make for a fascinating and essential read. For me, it's surprising the extent to which some of the studios (e.g. MGM!) resisted the onslaughts at the same time others (e.g. Warner Bros.) capitulated almost immediately. Not surprisingly, the emotions of that treacherous period have never faded away. Even now, the blacklist remains highly charged, erupting again, for example, during a 1999 awards presentation for HUAC-collaborator Elia Kazan. The book takes a generally sympathetic, but not uncritical, view of those blacklisted. Still, the various nuances, as recounted in the book, are simply too complex and various to try to summarize here. (The complexity is heightened by the many acronyms that pop up on almost every page-- a handy referencing guide would have helped.) On the other hand, the authors are categorical in their perspective on HUAC and its various incarnations. The committee is clearly viewed as a reactionary tool intent on exploiting anti-communist hysteria for basically anti-New Deal, anti-labor, and anti-Semitic aspirations. At the same time, the acumen of these forces is acknowledged. HUAC managed to pick off Hollywood's most vulnerable labor activists as part of a wider process that also sent the kind of chill through American liberalism that continues to frustrate labor organizing to present day. Proto-fascists or not, those guiding the committees knew what they were doing. The book also dispels key misconceptions. One popular belief has it that the blacklist served only to punish communists. The fuller account, however, outlines the broader anti-labor, anti-civil rights agenda, spearheaded in part by HUAC and its minions, with the result that many anti-fascist liberals, "tainted" by Popular Front or New Deal associations, were also made to suffer by the changing political winds. In fact, the dragnet spread beyond known communists to include those unwilling to embrace the new Cold War orthodoxies. There's also a widespread tendency to identify the inquisition with the quixotic career of one man, Senator McCarthy, whose name has since become synonymous with the entire era. But as the text shows, the inquisition began much earlier with the 1930's Dies' committee, while the 1947 blacklist took place well before McCarthy's 1950 advent. In fact, the New Deal backlash was much deeper than the ambitions of any one person. If there's a drawback, it's the occasional absence of specific national and international events that influenced the progress of the inquisition. Thus, little effort is made to link the purges to strains in the liberal-left alliance as impacted by the Wallace campaign of 1948 or the replacement of Party head Earl Browder in 1944. Similarly, little or no mention is made of the communist triumph in China or the war in Korea, both of which contributed greatly to the climate surrounding the 1951 hearings. Nonetheless, whatever the minor defects, the consequences of that reactionary period are still being felt, most notably through the disastrously reduced role of labor in national decision-making of which the Bush years now stand as a clear beneficiary. All in all, the Ceplair-Englund work remains essential for anyone searching for a handle on post-war America. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By The Pearl wonderful book - great history of topic

Examines the suppression of radical political activity in the film industry from the days of the Great Depression through the tumultuous House Un-American Activities Commission era to the waning days of the infamous blacklist. This book traces the history of political struggle in Hollywood back to the formation of the Screen Writers Guild in 1933.

Advance Praise: "The Inquisition in Hollywood is a classic text that refuses to be outdated: it tells the inside story of Hollywood radicals and their victimization, one of the least understood and least appreciated episodes in the history of American art. The scrupulous research, the lucid commentary and hard-hitting conclusions make The Inquisition in

Hollywood a major contribution." -- Paul Buhle, coauthor of Tender Comrades: A Backstory of the Hollywood Blacklist