



ARE YOU NOW OR HAVE YOU EVER BEEN?

by Eric Bentley

Teacher's Study Guide



Alive & Aloud • Radio Plays for Learning in the Classroom

Dear Participating Teacher,

Fall 1999

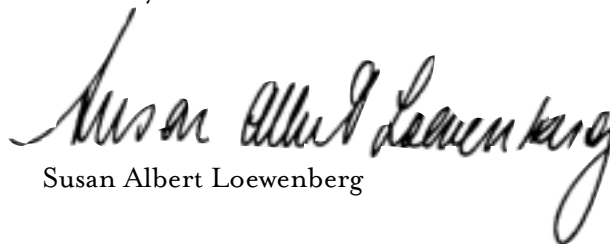
We are pleased to provide you this Study Guide as part of our educational program **ALIVE & ALOUD: Radio Plays for Learning in the Classroom**. It is our hope that the enclosures will support your classroom lesson plans for all your students—wherever they are on the learning continuum. Using the educational materials to prepare the students to listen to the radio play will deepen the educational value of the theatre experience.

During the 1950's the fear of communist influences in America led the House Un-American Activities Committee to question prominent figures in the entertainment industry. **ARE YOU NOW OR HAVE YOU EVER BEEN?** by Eric Bentley focuses on the testimony of anguished witnesses who were forced to choose between incriminating their friends and colleagues or bearing the consequences of silence.

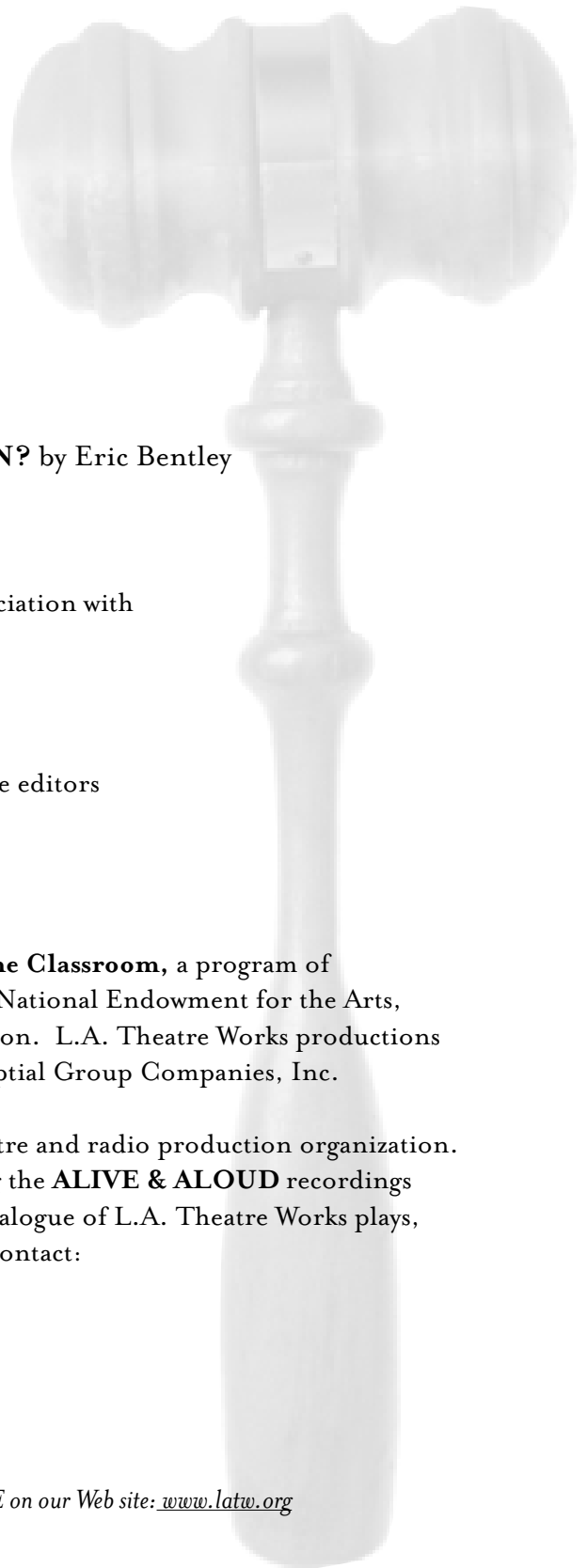
You may want to experiment with various approaches to integrating **ALIVE & ALOUD** into your lesson plans. Students can listen to the audio plays individually with their own headset, in a group setting or on their own time outside of class. You may find that certain Study Guides exercises and activities require group listening in teams of students or with the class as a whole. Dividing the play into sections to focus on one part at a time can enhance group listening to the plays.

The Study Guide emphasizes the curriculum core subjects of secondary schools. It is organized to pose important questions and to develop significant study units inspired by the content of the play. These curriculum ideas are our way of promoting academic achievement and enriching the learning process of young people in the classroom.

Sincerely,



Susan Albert Loewenberg



ARE YOU NOW OR HAVE YOU EVER BEEN? by Eric Bentley

Director, Martin Jenkins

Executive Producer, Susan Albert Loewenberg

An L.A. Theatre Works/BBC co-production in association with
KCRW/Santa Monica, CA.

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L.A. Theatre Works is a 25 year-old nonprofit theatre and radio production organization. We welcome your comments and inquiries regarding the **ALIVE & ALOUD** recordings and study guides. To reach us or to request a free catalogue of L.A. Theatre Works plays, docudramas and novels available on audio cassette, contact:

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ARE YOU NOW OR HAVE YOU EVER BEEN?

by Eric Bentley

·TEACHER'S STUDY GUIDE·

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“This Committee is the grand jury of America....
What this Committee is trying to do is save the country.”

— Congressman John E. Rankin, 1947, 1948



The House Un-American Activities Committee, 1948. Chairman J. Parnell Thomas second from left, Representative Richard M. Nixon at far right.

“We have the problem of determining in this country
the fine point where legitimate dissent ends and
criminal disobedience begins.”

— Congressman Richard H. Ichord, 1968

Introduction From The Playwright

The dialogue of ARE YOU NOW OR HAVE YOU EVER BEEN? is taken from hearings before the House Un-American Activities Committee. Hence no resemblance between the witness and the actual person is coincidental. These characters wrote their own lines into the pages of history. Though I did abridge and tidy up the record, I did not write in additional dialogue. Transpositions—of words within a sentence or of sentences within a sequence—I tried to hold down to a minimum lest there be any distortion of the sense.



No names have been changed, except that names of Committee members occur only as mentioned in the dialogue. Committee membership varied a good deal in the course of the eleven years covered. The image is of a single Committee in session throughout, presided over by a single Chairman, assisted by Investigators. Confronting them is a witness, usually accompanied by his attorney. All participants are equipped with microphones. (*The New York Times* described the Hollywood hearings of 1947 as follows: “Scores of correspondents covered the proceedings, which took place before 30 microphones, six newsreel cameras and blazing klieg lights. Fervent applause, boos, cheers, hisses and laughter punctuated the packed sessions, at which Mr. J. Parnell Thomas presided with a rapping gavel and flourishes of rhetoric.”) The room was not always the same. It was not always even in Washington, D.C. But, for the imagination, a single room will suffice, looking like any courtroom, or better, like any larger room in a Government building. Except as the text itself indicates that the room is cleared for an “executive” or closed session, there is an audience, and sometimes it fills the room to over-flowing and the Chairman has to pound his gavel for attention. When the witness is a movie star, the Chairman may have to ask press photographers to be less obtrusive. Sometimes a witness may himself object to the use of TV lights and cameras. Such is the transaction—the drama—known as Investigation.



Hollywood protest led by Lauren Bacall and Humphrey Bogart.

The investigation of show business is presented here in the testimony of a small minority of those actually investigated, and this testimony has been abridged, edited, and arranged. All these processes—choice of witnesses, abridgment, editing, arrangement—bring into play the personal judgement, not to mention talent, of the writer responsible. To the extent that he is either a knave or a fool, the result will reflect his knavery or folly. I can only say I am aware of this, and I invite the skeptical or suspicious reader to check out his doubts and suspicions. Unlike many historians, I am not using sources which the average person wouldn't have access to. On the contrary, I have used a record published by the United States Government, and most of the testimony drawn upon can be found in its broader context in my own volume *Thirty Years of Treason*.



While I have my own opinions and commitments, I have tried to be fair, and my aim in employing a high degree of selectivity was not, lawyer-fashion, to make an overwhelming case for a client. The kind of client I represent would not be served by suppression of any relevant factors. Those who wish to study the investigation of show business in a more scholarly manner can do so by turning to my longer book or even the HUAC records as printed in extremis by the government. What I hope to have captured in this shorter treatment is a story, a newspaperman's "story," and a writer's, even perhaps a playwright's story: a dramatic action. I have succeeded for you, the reader, if the reading of this book holds you from beginning to end and leaves with you an impression of wholeness, of a single tale told at the proper pace in proper sequence, without wasted motion, without loose ends.



Like almost anyone who tells a story, I would like to believe that I have also presented credible and interesting human beings. Some of the characters in ARE YOU NOW OR HAVE YOU EVER BEEN pass too quickly across our line of vision to be portraits in any detail, but several of the witnesses whom the Committee held on to for hours (though here reduced to minutes) revealed themselves abundantly, more abundantly, in some instances, than they'd have wanted.

— Eric Bentley, January 1972

About the Playwright



Eric Bentley is well known for his translations of playwrights such as Bertolt Brecht and Luigi Pirandello, as well as his criticism of theatre. He is the author of such books as *The Playwright as Thinker* and *What is Theatre?* Bentley has been named as a scholar at several prestigious educational institutions. He was recently inducted into New York's Theater Hall of Fame. In addition, Bentley often performs in nightclubs, playing music from such works as Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*.

Cast of Characters

CHARACTERS

ACTORS IN THE L.A. THEATRE WORKS/BBC
RADIO THEATRE PRODUCTION (*in order of appearance*)

Committee Member	JACK COLEMAN
Witness	RICHARD DREYFUSS
Chairman	EDWARD ASNER
Narrator	MICHAEL YORK
Judy Garland (Singer/Actress)	BONNIE BEDELIA
Gregory Peck (Actor)	HARRY HAMLIN
Sam G. Wood (Producer/Director)	RICHARD MASUR
Investigator	JAMES WHITMORE
Edward Dmytryk (Director)	RENE AUBERJONIS
Ring Lardner Jr. (Writer)	BUD CORT
Arthur Rankin (Actor)	RICHARD DREYFUSS
Richard Milhous Nixon (Congressman)	JOE SPANO
Larry Parks (Actor)	ROBERT FOXWORTH
Louis Mandel (Parks' attorney)	RICHARD MASUR
Sterling Hayden (Actor)	HARRY HAMLIN
Abe Burrows (Playwright/Director)	HECTOR ELIZONDO
Elia Kazan (Director)	JOE SPANO
Lillian Hellman (Playwright)	BONNIE BEDELIA
Jerome Robbins (Choreographer)	FRANKLYN SEALES
Martin Berkeley (Screenwriter)	BUD CORT
Lionel Stander (Actor)	HARRIS YULIN
Arthur Miller (Playwright)	RICHARD MASUR
Director of The American Legion Willand	ROBERT FOXWORTH
Paul Robeson (Singer/Actor)	JAMES EARL JONES

Suggested Vocabulary

Rr

advocates
affiliating
citation
consequential
credibility
disclosure
discredit
divulge
endeavor
evaded
expedient
guild
harangue
infiltrate
innuendo
interrogation

y

leeway
liberal
nationalized
pertinent
plaudits
relevant
resemblance
segment
spiritualism
vituperation

S

Aa



THINKING, WRITING & READING EXERCISES

1. When they appeared before the Committee, witnesses were asked to “name names.” They were to list others who had participated in suspect activities. What criteria should a person use when determining whether to inform the authorities about the actions of others?
2. What did the Communist Party offer that was appealing to its members?
3. Research the way various screenwriters and filmmakers assisted with the war effort during World War II. What values were emphasized? How were political and military leaders portrayed?
4. Conduct a survey of students and community members asking what influence they believe the entertainment industry has on the behavior of society? Do they believe in some form of government regulation for the industry?
5. Larry Parks stated that he would not have been called before the committee if he had not been a Hollywood star. What did the committee stand to gain by requiring celebrities to testify?
6. Of the many witnesses that you heard, which one stands out most in your mind? Why?
7. Write a scene in which the people who have been witnesses meet to discuss what happened.
8. Create a poem that expresses the emotions of one of the participants in the hearings.
9. Watch a film associated with one of the witnesses. Research to find out what effect the hearings had on the person’s career.
10. Look up the definition of *subversion*. Do any of the actions or beliefs revealed in the testimony seem to fit the definition?
11. Several of the writers who appeared before the committee were “blacklisted.” If they wanted to keep working in the film industry, they often had to use fake names or they wouldn’t be hired. Many years later their names were restored to films they wrote. Was restoring their names the appropriate action to take? If you had been one of those writers, would that have been something you lobbied to achieve?
12. What advice would you have given to someone who had been called to testify?





RELATED DOCUMENTS

Letter by Lillian Hellman to answer the summons to Washington

Dear Mr. Chairman,

May 1952

I have been advised by counsel that I have constitutional privilege to decline to answer any questions about my political opinions, activities, and associations, on the grounds of self-incrimination. I do not wish to claim this privilege. I have nothing to hide from your Committee and there is nothing in my life of which I am ashamed. I am willing to testify before the representatives of our government as to my own opinions and actions, regardless of any risks to myself. But I am advised by counsel that if I answer questions about myself, I will have waived my rights under the Fifth Amendment and could be forced legally to answer questions about others. If I refuse to do so, I can be cited for contempt. This is very difficult for a layman to understand. But there is one principle that I do understand: I am not willing now, or in the future, to bring bad trouble to people who, in my past association with them, were completely innocent of any talk or any action that was disloyal or subversive. I do not like subversion or disloyalty in any form, and if I had ever seen any, I would have considered it my duty to have reported it to the proper authorities. But to hurt innocent people whom I knew many years ago in order to save myself is, to me, inhuman, indecent and dishonorable. I can not and will not cut my conscience to fit this year's fashions. I was raised in an old American tradition and there are certain homely things that were taught to me: to try to tell the truth, not to bear false witness, not to harm my neighbor, to be loyal to my country. I respect these ideals of Christian honor and did as well with them as I knew how. It is my belief that you will agree with these simple rules of human decency and not expect me to violate the good American tradition from which they spring. I am prepared to waive the privilege against self-incrimination and tell you everything you wish to know about my views or actions if your Committee will refrain from asking me to name other people.

Sincerely,
Lillian Hellman

DISCUSSION



Lillian Hellman

- What lines from Lillian Hellman's letter stand out? Do you agree with her ideas?
- Write a letter describing the principles that you would never violate.
- Examine the letters to the editor section of your newspaper.
 - What topics are being discussed?
 - Which letters express opinions most effectively?
 - What are the characteristics of those letters?

TEAM RESEARCH PROJECTS



Setting the Scene

To fully appreciate the historic setting, select one of the topics below and research it using reference and Internet resources. Focus questions follow each topic. Share your findings with the class.

COMMUNIST PARTY IN AMERICA

What were the requirements of party membership?
What are the estimates of its strengths 1947?
What were the major beliefs it represented?

HOLLYWOOD BLACKLIST

Who made decisions about who was to be blacklisted?
What might have been the motives or evidence used for blacklisting a star?
What was done to writers and actors who were blacklisted?



Paul Robeson

PAUL ROBESON

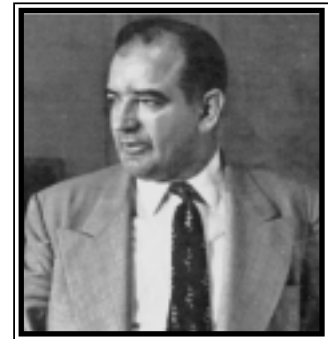
Trace his unusual career as an athlete, performer and activist. What causes did he fight for?
What sacrifices was he forced to make because of his beliefs and his outspokenness?

HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS

What were the major studios controlling filmmaking during the period?
How did exclusive contracts affect the careers of actors?

REPRESENTATIVE (AND FUTURE PRESIDENT) RICHARD M. NIXON

What was his role in HUAC?
How did his role affect his future Presidency?



Senator Joseph McCarthy

SENATOR JOSEPH MCCARTHY

What was his role in the HUAC?

HOLLYWOOD TEN

Who were they?
In what ways were their careers affected by the hearings?

IRON CURTAIN

What does that phrase represent?
Who coined it and under what circumstances?

TALKING POINTS



HIGHLIGHTS IN THE RECORDING FOR CLASS DISCUSSION.

TAPE SIDE 1

Ring Lardner, Jr. - One of the Hollywood Ten

CHAIR: (angry that Ring Lardner, Jr. has avoided answering a question) It is not a question of our wanting you to answer that. It is a very simple question. Anybody would be proud to answer it—any real American would be proud to answer the question, “Are you or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?”—any real American.

LARDNER: It depends on the circumstances. I could answer it, but if I did, I would hate myself in the morning.

CHAIR: Leave the witness chair.

LARDNER: It was a question that would—

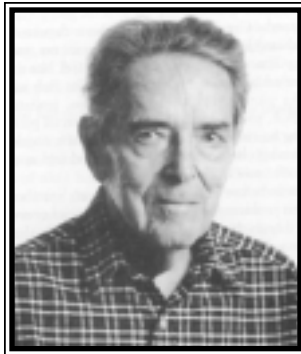
CHAIR: Leave the witness chair.

LARDNER: Because it is a question—

CHAIR: (pounding gavel) Leave the witness chair.

LARDNER: I think I am leaving by force.

NARRATOR: Dmytryk and Lardner and their eight colleagues went to jail, and so, as it happened, did the Chairman of the Committee at that time, J. Parnell Thomas, who had been stealing the taxpayers’ money. Before the Grand Jury, Thomas invoked the Fifth Amendment. Eventually, he would receive a presidential pardon from Truman.



Ring Lardner, Jr.

DISCUSSION

- If Lardner had admitted membership in the Communist Party, would that have been a reason to jail him?
- He said that testifying would cause him to hate himself. What message was he trying to convey about the committee and its purpose?
- What is the irony of the Narrator's comment?

Larry Parks - An Anguished Witness

PARKS: My people have a long heritage in this country. They fought in the Revolutionary War to make this country, to create the government of which this Committee is a part....I have two boys, one thirteen months, one two weeks. Is this the kind of heritage I must hand down to them? Is this the kind of heritage you would like to hand down to your children? For what purpose? I don't think I would be here today if I weren't a star, because you know as well as I, even better, that I know nothing that would be of great service to this country. I think my career has been ruined because of this, and I would appreciate not having to testify. Don't present me with the choice of either being in contempt of this Committee and going to jail or being forced to crawl through the mud and be an informer! For what purpose? I don't think this is a choice. I don't think this is American justice for an innocent mistake in judgment, if it was that, with the intention of making this country a better place to live. This is probably the most difficult thing I have ever done, and it seems to me it would impair the usefulness of this Committee. If you do this to me, it will make it almost impossible for a person to come to you and tell the truth. I beg you not to force me to do this!

DISCUSSION

- What effects might Parks' decision have had on his family if he did/did not testify?
- What might be the Committee's purpose in making Parks testify, if not to "make this country a better place to live?"

Elia Kazan - An Ex-Communist

On April 11, 1952, The New York Times printed a paid ad signed by acclaimed film director Elia Kazan. It read:

Seventeen and a half years ago, I was a 24 year old stage manager and bit actor making \$40 a week when I worked. At that time nearly all of us felt menaced by the Depression and by Hitler. The streets were full of unemployed and shaken men. I joined the Communist Party in the summer of 1934.

Embittered by his experience in the party, Kazan chose to testify.

KAZAN: I want to tell you everything. (reads from a paper) I was a member of the Communist Party from 1936. For the 19 months of my membership I was assigned to a unit composed of members of the Group Theatre. These were Lewis Leverett, J. Edward Bromberg, Phoebe Brand—later Mrs. Morris Carnovsky, I was instrumental in bringing her into the Party, Morris Carnovsky, Paula Miller, later Mrs. Lee Strasberg, Clifford Odets, Art Smith, Tony Kraber—he recruited me into the Party. The last straw came when I was invited to go through a typical scene of crawling and apologizing and admitting the error of my ways. The invitation came from a functionary from Detroit. I regret I cannot remember his name. He made a vituperative analysis of my conduct in refusing to fall in with the Party plan for the Group Theatre and invited my repentance. I had enough. I had a taste of police-state living, and I didn't like it. That night I quit. (glances up from paper) There follows a list of the plays I have done and the films I have made. "Sing Out Sweet Land" by Jean and Walter Kerr. Full of American tradition and spirit. "The Strings My Lord Are False" by Paul Vincent Carroll shows courage in many kinds of people including, prominently, a priest. "Viva Zapata" is an anti-Communist picture. Please see my article on this picture in the Saturday Review, which I have forwarded to your investigator. I have placed a copy of this affidavit with Spyros P. Skouras, President of 20th Century Fox.

INVESTIGATOR: Mr. Kazan, the Committee may desire to recall you for further explanations.

KAZAN: I will be glad to do anything you consider necessary.

DISCUSSION

Elia Kazan

- Kazan once said that "a difficult decision means: either way you go, you lose." How does that comment apply to the situation in which he found himself?
- What parallels do you see between the way the Communist functionary treated Kazan and the way the committee treated the witnesses?
- Discuss the national controversy that accompanied Kazan's receipt of an Academy Award for lifetime achievement in 1999.

Paul Robeson - Communist and Crusader

ROBESON: Could I be allowed to read from my own statement here?

INVESTIGATOR: Will you just tell this Committee, while under oath, Mr. Robeson, the Communist who participated in the preparation of that statement?

ROBESON: (in disgust) Oh, please. The reason I am here today, from the mouth of the State Department itself, is: I should not be allowed to travel because I have struggled for the independence of the colonial peoples of Africa. The other reason I am here today, again from the State Department and from the record of the court of appeals, is that when I am abroad, I speak out against injustices against the Negro people of this land. That is why I am here. I am not being tried for whether I am a Communist; I am being tried for fighting for the rights of my people, who are still second-class citizens in this United States of America. My mother was born in your state, and my mother was a Quaker, and my ancestors in the time of Washington baked bread for George Washington's troops when they crossed the Delaware. My own father was a slave. I stand here struggling for the rights of my people to be full citizens in this country. And they are not. They are not in Mississippi. And they are not in Montgomery, Alabama. And they are not in Washington. They are nowhere, and that is why I am here today. You want to shut up every Negro who has the courage to stand up and fight for the rights of his people, and the rights of workers, and I have been on many a picket line for the steelworkers too. And that is why I am here today.

DISCUSSION

- Why is Robeson disgusted with the investigator's question about who assisted him with the preparation of his statement?
- How does he use his appearance before the Committee to raise issues about which he is concerned?
- How might he and members of the Committee identify different threats to U.S. democracy?
- Paul Robeson is also featured prominently in *MR. RICKEY CALLS A MEETING*, another *ALIVE & ALOUD* recording. Compare the "red-baiting" demonstrated Robeson's peers to that of HUAC.



Paul Robeson

Bibliography

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MANY ARE THE CRIMES: MCCARTHYISM IN AMERICA; Schrecker, Ellen; Little Brown and Company, 1998.

ONLY VICTIMS: A STUDY OF SHOWBUSINESS BLACKLISTING; Vaughn, Robert; Limelight Editions, 1996.

Hear More About It

OTHER L.A. THEATRE WORKS RECORDINGS OF INTEREST FROM THE AUDIO THEATRE COLLECTION:

- **ADDITIONAL DIALOGUE: THE LETTERS OF DALTON TRUMBO** by Christopher Trumbo
Starring: Harry Groener, Paul Winfield, Jeff Corey and Christopher Trumbo
In 1947, witty, outspoken, irascible Dalton Trumbo (Academy Award-winning screenwriter) went to prison for defying HUAC and became one of the Hollywood Ten. Trumbo's letters to his son create a touching portrait of an extraordinary man.
- **THE VALUE OF NAMES** by Jeffrey Sweet
Starring: Garry Marshall, Hector Elizondo and Sally Murphy
Thirty years ago, Benny Silverman's acting career was nearly destroyed when his friend and colleague, Leo Greshen, "named" him in front of HUAC. The two men haven't spoken since. They meet in Malibu where Benny's daughter is to star in a play directed by Leo.
- **THE WALDORF CONFERENCE** by Nat Segaloff, Daniel M. Kimmel & Arnie Reisman
Starring: Edward Asner, Charles Durning and Ron Rifkin
A dramatic speculation of what occurred when the most powerful men in American film met in New York's Waldorf-Astoria Hotel to decide how to address the HUAC communist witch-hunt. At this conference, the blacklist was born.



Resources on the Internet

Elia Kazan: Postage Paid

<http://www.moderntimes.com/palace/kazan/>

- background on Kazan's testimony and its results, photos

HUAC Committee Hearings and the People They Affected

<http://www.stud.hum.ku.dk/rikkebj/huac.html>

- information on many of the major people interviewed

Lardnermania: Spooldrummings: Ring Lardner, Junior

www.tridget.com/lardnermania/

- detailed site covering the life of Ring Lardner, Jr. includes many facts about his involvement in the Communist party and the hearings.

Larry Parks: One Film Wonder?

<http://www.geocities.com/Broadway/4195/larry.html>

- brief comments on his film career

Letter from John Steinbeck

<http://ocean.st.usm.edu/~wsimkins/huac.html>

- letter on the need for writers to respond, comments on Ed Murrow

Lillian Hellman biography

<http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/lhellman.htm>

- brief background

The Literature & Culture of the American 1950s

<http://www.english.upenn.edu/~afilreis/50s/home.html>

- alphabetical listing of prominent names and subjects, links to articles and information

Paul Robeson Timeline

<http://www.rutgers.edu/robeson/main.html>

- alma mater tribute to famous graduate; information about political and artistic achievements throughout his life, many photos

Seeing Red

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment/july-dec97/blacklist_10-24.html

- transcript and photos of participants who discuss the hearings

