



The House Un-American Activities Committee

Student Name _____ Date _____

Activity #2: HUAC vs. Hollywood

Directions (Group #3): Your group has been assigned to play the part of John Howard Lawson, one of the individuals involved in the 1947 HUAC investigation of the motion picture industry. Read the following document, and then prepare a 3-5 minute presentation in which you identify who you are and explain your views on the HUAC and communism in the entertainment industry. Choose one member of your group to make this presentation to the class. Be prepared to discuss, after all the presentations have been made, your opinion on whether or not HUAC was right to investigate subversive influences in the entertainment industry.

John Howard Lawson

“They Want to Muzzle Public Opinion”: John Howard Lawson’s Warning to the American Public:
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6441>

John Howard Lawson (1894-1977) was a playwright and screenwriter who in 1938 was nominated for an Academy Award for his script for the movie *Blockade*. A member of the Communist Party since 1934, Lawson was called to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee, and although he appeared before the committee on October 27, he—like nine other writers and directors also suspected of being communists—refused to answer questions. All the members of this group, which was soon dubbed the “Hollywood Ten,” were found guilty of contempt of Congress. Lawson was fined \$1,000 and served a year in prison. He also found that no Hollywood studio would hire him, as he had been blacklisted by the motion picture industry.

Note: Part of Lawson’s testimony is available in audio format at the site Authentic History (http://www.authentichistory.com/1950s/speeches/19471029_John_Howard_Lawson_of_Hollywood_10_Testifies.html)