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## FBI FILE: HOLLYWOOD AND J. EDGAR HOOVER: INVESTIGATIONS OF ACTORS AND DIRECTORS



J. Edgar Hoover (1895-1972), the first director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, held longstanding interest in the Hollywood film industry as well as deep distrust of anyone on the political left. In August 1942 he ordered the bureau's Los Angeles office to report on Communist activities of various motion picture personalities, including actors, directors, producers, and writers. The FBI's investigation of Hollywood revealed a growing operation organized in the early 1940s, and after the Second World War the investigation evolved into a sophisticated operation. Between 1944 and 1954 agents conducted extensive surveillance of suspected Communists, "left-wingers," and "fellow travelers," and assembled information used by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in an effort to purge Hollywood of Communist influence.

**Date Range:** 1922-1961

**Content:** 9,398 images

**Source Library:** Federal Bureau of Investigation Library

### **Detailed Description:**

This publication contains reporting from informers, such as Ronald Reagan, president of the Screen Actors Guild; data on influential figures; and FBI "reviews" of mainstream films that were believed to contain Communist propaganda. Documentation includes: FBI surveillance and informant reports; Justice Department and FBI memoranda, correspondence, and analyses; news clippings and articles; excerpts from HUAC hearings; briefing papers; speech excerpts; and transcripts of conversations. Subjects include: Lucille Ball; Humphrey Bogart; Bertolt Brecht; James Cagney; Charles Chaplin; Jules Dassin; Walt Disney; Howard Fast; Lillian Hellman; Danny Kaye; Gene Kelley; Peter Lorre; Groucho Marx; Vincent Prince; Edward G. Robinson; James Stewart; Gloria Swanson; and others.

This collection comprises the FOIA files related to a variety of subjects under FBI surveillance due to their alleged Communist or “fellow traveler” activities. It does not include the files related to the Hollywood Ten.