To what extent were the Hollywood Ten victims of McCarthy's hunt against communism?
one of the few that does not condemn his hunt, but with the purpose to reveal McCarthy's campaign. Evans' viewpoint however, has a strong limitation, which is the widely public accepted image of McCarthyism as being a time period of fraud and unfair accusations towards American citizens. Evans' book will therefore hardly find any supporters and only be admired by few historians that believe in conspiracies. It is however valuable, as it gives insight to McCarthy's personal life and his chains of thoughts leading to the 'accusations'.
the question exactly the way you want, but if I did, I would hate myself in the morning.”

Although the committee never justified their charges, the Hollywood Ten were sent to prison for contempt of Congress after all had refused to testify. During their time in prison, fifty of the nation’s most important movie producers decided to ban the ‘Unfriendly Ten’ and all members of the film industry that not only admitted or were accused to be communists but also merely suspected of alleged communist ties from Hollywood. The Hollywood Ten were simply blacklisted by the Hollywood Studios and instructed clearance agencies to change their identity to ever find another job again, as unrepenting communists or those who neither admitted nor renounced their communist affiliations, were considered ineligible for employment.

This case demonstrated the alarming conditions in the United States, where lives and careers were crushed, as people simply pointed out others to be communist without any substantiation. Few people opposed McCarthy’s hunt out of fear to act suspiciously pro-communist. Those who did were crushed by the committee, which was forced to condemn the opposition in order to prevent for them to seem suspicious. Many years after the blacklisting had ended, only few historians supported McCarthy’s political hunt. Stanton Evans, author of “Blacklisted by History”, argues that McCarthy was a victim of the circumstances occurring in the U.S government. Evans believes in a massive Russian spy operation in the Roosevelt and Truman administrations, aiming to overthrow the government and to form a foreign policy to advance the spread of world Communism. Although reliable research supports his conspiracy theory, too many other Americans affiliate McCarthyism with fraud and illegal means. Interestingly, most of the accused Hollywood members would eventually concede publicly — but not before the committee — that they had been communists at one time or another, which questions the view of the Hollywood Ten being a victim of McCarthy’s hunt. Lardner stated, “I’ve never regretted my association with Communism. I still think that some form of socialism is a more rational way to organize a society, but I recognize it hasn’t worked anywhere yet.” Later on, accused director Edward Dmytryk revealed that some defendants of the Hollywood Ten forced him to include communist propaganda in his films and he realized that “they made me think we were fighting for an ideal, for freedom of speech, but they weren’t. They were protecting freedom of speech for the communists and didn’t give a good goddamn about freedom of speech.”

The communist accusations had reached the film industry in the 1950s when the McCarthyism era was at its peak. Ten members of the Hollywood industry were accused of communist ties and were confronted by of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC). The hearings
Reflection

A question emerging from the analysis is to what extent the Hollywood Ten have to be mistrusted and how public opinion successfully covers up truths and contrasting claims. The public attitude towards McCarthyism shaped the era’s definition of “the practice of publicizing accusations with insufficient regard to evidence” and “the use of unfair investigatory methods to suppress opposition.” For historians questioning the widely public accepted image of McCarthyism as being a time period of fraud and unfair accusations towards American citizens, it is nearly impossible to win supporters to believe in their conspiracies. Stanton Evans will thus experience difficulty to convince the public nation of his claim that a massive Russian spy operation in the Roosevelt and Truman administrations aimed to enhance the spread of communism in the world, regardless his holding of evidence. The ordinary American viewed Communism as the biggest enemy, condemned its supporters and supported any measures to contain the Communist spread. The 1950s thus marked a time period where reason, justice and civil rights were discarded to expose the guilty using illegal means. Similar to the accused screenwriter Lawson, who stated “I am framing my answer in the only way in which any American citizen can frame his answer to a question which absolutely invades his rights”, the ordinary American citizen would argue, I am framing my opinion towards Communism in the only way in which any American citizen can frame his opinion to an ideology which absolutely opposes the Capitalist ideals. Historians questioning the time period of the accusations against the Hollywood Ten and the era of McCarthyism in the 1950s thus face challenges during their investigation, as communism was seen as the enemy of the state. The hearings of the Hollywood Ten are yet another challenge facing the historians, as their reliability has to be questioned and considered for the historians investigation. In the 1950s, the committee never justified their charges, however the hearings produced vast amounts of publicity and indicated communist activity in Hollywood to some extent. The fact that the Hollywood Ten and all members of the film industry that not only admitted or were accused to be communists, but also merely suspected of alleged communist ties were banned from Hollywood and found guilty, certainly questions the reliability of the accusations. Although most of the Hollywood Ten members eventually conceded publicly – but not before the committee – that they had been communists at one time or another, the accusations of communist activity within Hollywood, together with the era of McCarthyism, have to be questioned and put into perspective by historians.


