



# Film and the American Left: A Research Guide

*M. Keith Booker*

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The American Left has produced a rich and varied cultural tradition that was largely suppressed during the Cold War but whose influence on the larger society has always been significant. Much of this tradition found its expression in film and despite the suppression of overtly leftist content in most Hollywood films, there is still a substantial amount of leftist material in American movies. Booker's study gives the attention to the films of the American Left that they have long deserved by examining the full range of their history. Such well known directors as Charlie Chaplin, Orson Welles, William Wellman, Fritz Lang, John Huston, Stanley Kubrick, Oliver Stone, and John Sayles often showed leftist inclinations in their work. Other films associated with the American Left have been produced in a number of modes and subgenres, including war films, historical films, detective films, and science fiction. Some of these directors have offered overt criticisms of capitalism in films dealing with labor and business. This reference book thoroughly explores leftist elements in American films.

The book begins with a brief historical survey of the development of this important cultural phenomenon. It then provides detailed entries for more than 260 films associated with the American Left. The entries are arranged chronologically, so that the reader may trace the cinematic representation of the American Left across time. The entries include not only plot summaries, but also critical examinations of the political content and implications of the films. Included are discussions of such classic works as *Citizen Kane* and *The Grapes of Wrath*, along with considerations of more recent films, such as *Apocalypse Now*, *Taxi Driver*, and *Men with Guns*. Two appendixes and index provide alphabetical access to the entries. The individual entries provide brief bibliographical citations, while the volume closes with a bibliography.

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