What Makes a Hollywood Communist?

By RICHARD ENGLISH

Edward Dmytryk started with nothing, rose to earn $2500 a week as a movie director before he was forty. Yet he became a communist. Here is the case history of what he now knows was his personal tragedy.

Edward Dmytryk was the seventh witness to defy the committee at those Washington hearings and, with three others, was to become one of the Hollywood Ten. The Ten were soon to become slightly more famous than the picture industry itself, their appearances at rallies having all the hoopla usually found only at Hollywood premières.

Now, having served his sentence for contempt of Congress, Dmytryk is back in Hollywood, a man with a brilliant past, a clouded present and an unknown future.

The first of the Hollywood Ten to admit he was ever a communist, Edward Dmytryk, now forty-two years old, has reached the point of no return. His awareness of this is shown in his very tenseness. Five-seven and a husky 170 pounds, he is a compact man in a lumberjack shirt and brown trousers, a small cleft in his chin, and the brown hair and eyes that are part of his Ukrainian descent.

"Actually," he said, pacing the floor, "I passed the point of no return a long time ago. But I was a communist. I joined in the spring of 1944 and dropped out of the party late the next fall. And I never broke completely with them until I was in jail. Though I was no longer a party member, I stood with the Ten on my own personal convictions about civil liberties. And when we lost, I couldn't say anything until after I had served my time. I wouldn't have wanted it to appear that I was trying to escape any consequences of my original stand."

Upstairs the baby was crying, and he looked after his wife, Jean Porter, as she went up the stairs. A small brown-eyed blonde, her own career as an actress has been in a rather gray limbo from the day she was convicted. For a moment he hesitated, then said soberly, "Breaking off like this takes more courage than going to jail. Then I was carried along—by a tide—a lot of good people felt that the hearings had been aimed more at blacklisting all Leftists in pictures than at investigating party membership. But they didn't know what they were backing. I learned more about communism in the three and a half years I was one of the Ten than I ever learned when I was actually a party member. And it's no good.

He Learned About Communism the Hard Way

There is a time now when even the fellow traveler must get out. They're like the waxy capsule that protects the tubercle—dissolve that waxy covering and you could kill tubercle bacilli in no time. And that's what you have to do with communism. I know. I've been there." Grimly, he picked up a pipe and looked around for tobacco. Then, quietly, "I know now that you can't aid a communist front in any way without hurting your own country. The Hiss conviction, the Judith Coplon trial, they all show that no matter how small a fraction of the party is guilty of espionage, the responsibility is on the whole party, and anyone who supports it."

The feelings that make Dmytryk talk now may supply the answer to a question that has been tearing Hollywood apart ever since those fateful Washington hearings. The day eight prominent writers and two directors, John Howard Lawson, Dalton Trumbo, Albert Maltz, Alvah Bessie, Samuel Ornitz, Herbert Biberman, Dmytryk, Adrian Scott, Ring Lardner, Jr., and Lester Cole went to jail for contempt of Congress, the picture business received a black eye from which it has not yet recovered. The public wanted to know what made a Hollywood communist, and Hollywood couldn't tell them.
"There isn’t any simple answer as to what makes one," Dmytryk said slowly. "When I was in the party I’d guess there were perhaps 150 ‘intellectual’ communists in the picture business. By that I mean men who work with their heads, the creators. And the ‘intellectual’ communists don’t run to pattern either in actions or in the motives that cause them to become commies. The only thing I learned was this: the same ideals that take a liberal into the Communist Party take him right back out again."

Determined not to be regarded as either a dope or a dupe who did not know what he was doing, Dmytryk moves restlessly around the cluttered living room of his apartment. There, in a crowded room with rice-cloth walls are his books and jazz records, the bar bells with which he works out three times a week, doing 140-pound presses. Daily Variety and the Hollywood Reporter are on a coffee table, mute reminders of the business in which he was so prominent a figure. "It’s not just one thing that gets you interested in communism," he said slowly. "It’s where you came from, what you believe in, the way you feel about people. It’s all those things put together."

To show you that Dmytryk’s story which I am telling here may be more than a superficial analysis of what makes a Hollywood communist, I might explain that I have been a motion-picture writer for fifteen years. For two years I was on the executive board of the Screen Writers’ Guild, having been one of a group which defeated the far-Left elements, and was the third and last editor of the Screen Writer Magazine, succeeding Dalton Trumbo and Gordon Kahn, who were both called up before the Washington hearings, although only Trumbo testified. With that background, I know something of Dmytryk’s past as well as his career.

Dmytryk’s childhood was not a particularly happy one. He was born September 4, 1908, in Grand Forks, British Columbia. His father, Michael, was a Ukrainian truck farmer who worked winters in the local copper smelter. Eddie was the second oldest of four sons. Harold, the first-born, is a successful businessman. Arthur, the third-born and to whom Eddie feels the closest, is a laborer. William, the youngest, is now a major in the USAF, stationed in England.

While he is not now a member of any church, Dmytryk’s family was Catholic. But any formal religious training ended with the death of his mother at the age of thirty-three in Northport, Washington, a lead-mining town. Left with four small boys on his hands, his father moved the family to San Francisco, where he became a motorman. His father soon married a Protestant and moved on to Los Angeles, where he again worked on streetcars. Although he leans backward in talking of his father, who died in 1946, it is obvious that Eddie had little affection for the man who raised his family on strictly European ideas.

While Dmytryk was in grade school he and his brother Arthur became one of Professor Terman’s Group. Professor Terman, one of the developers of the Stanford-Binet tests for intelligence, selected what he called “1000 Gifted Children” in 1920. All had a base I.Q. of at

(Continued on Page 147)
At the age of thirty-one he became a movie projectionist, and he became a full cut-and-play projectionist. With him there was a semblance of respect and regard as something of a boy wonder. He was well-liked by the people of the neighborhood and regarded as something of a boy wonder. He was a success in the industry of his choice, and he had an outstanding reputation for so young a man and he was making pictures with the social significance he thought so important. On the debit side, his first marriage ended in an unhappy divorce in 1947. And, regardless of actual party membership, his association with communists on certain grounds continued until last September, and only now is publicly ended.

"I know it doesn't add up," he said slowly. "Just as everybody goes into communism seeking different things. I thought this was the best country in the world, but that we could do better. I know I sounds unrealistic—and is—but I was trying to help people as I had been helped. And you just can't do it alone, or through charity. I know how I felt about charity myself. So you decide things have to be done on a scientific basis, so that people are really taken care of all the time. So you begin hearing about systems. With me it was Marxism."

"By 1942 Dmytryk was widely known in the movie industry for "wanting to make honest pictures about people" and was ripe for communist indoctrination along those lines. "Late that year," he said, "I got my citizenship, became a director, everything."

Starting with B pictures, Dmytryk's rise was gradual until, after also working for Monogram and Columbia, he moved to RKO and hit the jack pot with Hitler's Children. His career shot up then as he made such pictures as Tendre Comrade; Murder, My Sweet; Back to Bataan; Cornered and Crossfire. In eight years and twenty-four pictures, including eleven for RKO alone, his salary had climbed from $250 a week to $2500 a week. And during that time he had become a communist.

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The one thing the communists were always after was to get Hollywood members to contribute 10 per cent of their gross pay, and Dmytryk believes that Hollywood could pay far more money than any other group its size in this country. That he never contributed to the scheme himself is borne out by his business manager's records. "Actually," Dmytryk said, "if it hadn't been for the hearings and what followed, it wouldn't have been an important phase of my life. I was already beginning to doubt their sincerity. And what really upset me was that the party tried to do a picture of mine."

RKO purchased a story that was ultimately released as Cornered, starring Dick Powell and John Dmytryk and Adrian Scott—also one of the Ten—were assigned to it as the director and producer, respectively. The story was that of a Canadian flier who, bent on revenge for his wife's death, tricked the Nazi who killed her to Buenos Aires. "John Wexley wrote the first script," Dmytryk said, "and when I saw it I just didn't like it. While his script was highly antifascist, I didn't see much of his story in its present development."

"Consequently I suggested to Adrian Scott that we put another writer on it. I wanted it made more dramatic and I wanted something cut the wood胫 too. He agreed and a second writer came in and we got a bang-up job. I shot the picture, and as far as I was concerned, it was first rate."

Meanwhile John Wexley had protested the credits on the script, and a Screen Writers' Guild arbitration committee found against Wexley, with the picture about to be released, John Wexley called Adrian Scott and insisted that the three of us have a meeting regarding the story. "The meeting was attended by Albert Maltz—also a member of the Ten—in order to argue our side. He did this so ably that the meeting ended in a stalemate. All that came of it was my disassociation from the party."

But the repercussions had only started. After three weeks of careful looking at the matter he wrote a letter to the board. He was accused of subversive tendencies, a charge he had already faced in 1941. But he had also been forced to take a stand by the Daily Worker and the New York Daily News. The board, in their discussion, suggested that the picture be changed, and Dmytryk, as director, was fired. The Ten issued a statement that they would challenge the decision of the committee, and Dmytryk was given permission by the board to appeal.

"The charges of the "friendly witnesses" so steamed up Hollywood liberals that they rushed right into the Daily Worker and the Daily News, which was accomplished by a junket of top stars and writers who, banded together as the Committee for the First Amendment, charged Dmytryk with making a stand against Woodrow Wilson, loudly decrying both the intent of the hearings and the testimony of the "friendly witnesses.""

The press really had a ball then, as Laurence Bacall wrote a feature story for a Washington paper, protesting such an investigation. Danny Kaye made speeches and Paul Robeson stepped forward. The Ten was later to regret publicly the whole thing, contributed his views of the committee's "disorganization.""The meeting with Maltz was late in the evening. When he reached his Leftist friends, there is no record of his participation in the party after that time, aside from his name still appearing among the party investigatory list for the next two years he was to make a number of pictures and, having parted from his wife, was to fall in love with Jean Porter, who has since become his wife.

But in September, 1947, the Hollywood Un-American Activities Committee, trying to prove communist infiltration of the picture business, served nineteen subpoenas on Hollywood Leftists, of whom Dmytryk was one. The committee had already made a highly unpopular report to a Hollywood liberal, who feared that its real aim was Government censorship of all motion pictures. As Dmytryk said, "All of the people besides the communists were anxious to appear before it, if only to challenge it on constitutional grounds."

The formal hearings started in Washington on October 20, 1947, conducted with all the lights and microphones that normally make up a Hollywood super-production. The committee had selected fourteen "friendly witnesses" to appear first. The "friendly witnesses," who attempted to show there was no communist influence in Hollywood, included such stars as Gary Cooper and Robert Taylor, and the press had a field day. A number of pictures were cited as "examples" of how communist writers and directors had tried to slip a loaded message to the public, but, ironically, Cornered was never mentioned."

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Before they made THE PENCIL with rounded edges... puts comfort in your hand. and cannot split. The job was hard in nothing flat. The charges of the "friendly witnesses" so steamed up Hollywood liberals that they rushed right into the Daily Worker and the Daily News, which was accomplished by a junket of top stars and writers who, banded together as the Committee for the First Amendment, charged Dmytryk with making a stand against Woodrow Wilson, loudly decrying both the intent of the hearings and the testimony of the "friendly witnesses.""

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By October 27, 1947, the stage was set for the dramatic appearance of the nineteen "unfriendly witnesses.""We had had daily conferences in Washington hotels," Dmytryk said, "and we had decided each of us was to make up his own mind how to testify. And all of us came to the conclusion we would refuse to answer any questions on constitutional grounds. On that basis we felt we could take the contempt charge and win there. I felt strongly that the First Amendment protected me on a point of privacy."

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Dmytryk's brief testimony ended when it became apparent he was pursuing the same line as the other witnesses."

The Ten went right down the line refusing, with the exception of Lawson and Dmytryk, even to answer whether they belonged to the Screen Directors' guilds. Lawson and Dmytryk answered the question on their guild affiliations largely because they already had a small amount of damage against RKO. The suits are promptly brought civil suits for damages against RKO. The suits are still pending.

"While I knew at least seven of the Ten were communists," Dmytryk said, "I stayed with the group because of my own personal convictions. I was very angry at first, feeling I had been wronged as an individual, and I wanted to stand firmly along wholeheartedly in the fight. I was asked to rejoin the party then, but I didn't go. I wanted to fight for civil liberties and against the black list."

The Ten's immediate concern was to rally public opinion to their side. This was done by the writing of pamphlets by Gordon Kahn's "Hollywood on Trial," organizing appearances before fellow-traveler groups throughout the country, seeking out committees to help raise money for the defense, and making a short subject of the Hollywood Ten, showing the men and their families in a positive light."

Dmytryk married Jean Porter, a nurse from Ellicity City, Maryland, on May 12, 1948, and now, seated beside him on the divan, small and quiet in her gray lounging pajamas, she said, "We were already going together when all this started, and I asked Eddie about it. He had been to jail back in 1945, and that while he wasn't a communist any more, he couldn't just walk out on them. Her voice is light and, childlike, she didn't make any difference to me because I knew the kind of a guy he really was. If it made a difference to some of my friends, I should quit going with him, that it would hurt my career, and when all the headlines came out, they — well, sort of just disappeared."

Although Dmytryk had earned $137,000 in 1947, he was almost flat broke. He had made an expensive divorce settlement with his wife, and now the Government found him $27,000 in tax arraers. Borrowing on his insurance settlement, he almost everything else, he squandered his bills and started looking for a job. With his career so abruptly ended in Hollywood, he went to England with his wife in the summer of 1948. He said, "I made some money, and the Ten was about all by directing two pictures there in the next eighteen months. But going to England was still the best thing I ever did."

In England he had no communist friends, and he said, "I was completely out of that atmosphere of isolation that forms around all fellow-travelers. I had had no reason to worry about my career at home that I hadn't realized how I had gradually sealed myself off from outside thoughts and influences. And the people I met abroad, living much closer to communism than we do, see it more clearly for what it really is. One thing that hit me..."
was when Oksana Kosenkina jumped out of the Soviet consulate in New York rather than be sent back to Russia. That really made me think.

"When you're away," he said slowly, "you realize how much your country means to you. I really found that out the day the French embassy in London called me and said they had a subpoena there, wanting me to appear as a witness at the Victor Kravchenko trial in Paris." (Kravchenko, the author of I Chose Freedom, had sued a Paris communist newspaper, Les Lettres Françaises, for saying his book, exposing conditions in Russia, was untrue, and was to win nominal damages in his action.) "This commie paper wanted to use me as a witness to show there was persecution in America as well as Russia. I really got mad then at the communists wanting to exhibit me in a case in which there was absolutely no grounds for my appearance. It was completely callous, wanting to use me to prove that Russia was right in contrast to America, and completely disregarding the fact I am an American. That was definite proof that communists place the party above any country except Russia, and that no communist can ever possibly be a loyal citizen. Whatever my personal beef was, I was certainly not going to air any dirty linen in a foreign country and I turned the subpoena down cold."

While Dmytryk was in England, John Howard Lawson and Dalton Trumbo were tried and convicted, and appealed. The eight other members of the Ten waived trials at that time, stipulating that they would abide by the Supreme Court decision in the Lawson and Trumbo cases. A decision was expected at any time, and so Dmytryk and his wife returned to Hollywood in August, 1949.

"After you've been away," Dmytryk said, "your eyes are really clear, and what hit me first was the way the psychoanalysis craze had hit the Hollywood communists. All of them were trying to solve the contradictions in their thoughts and the way they lived, trying to reconcile themselves to present-day conditions. The second thing that hit me was the way the Ten were being turned into martyrs, another Scottsboro case. It was like everything else the communists do; they will go into a lynch case, for example, but instead of trying to help the Negroes, what they are really after is to use the incident to stir up still more trouble. The Negroes don't matter; they're just a means to an end. And that had happened with the Ten. When I left, it had basically been a good civil-liberties case. Now it was being used as a spearhead against all attacks on communism.

"People like Thomas Mann, Linus Pauling and Carey McWilliams had been attracted to the cause of the Ten, and now I saw them being used time and again for other purposes. By dialectic extension, the party was trying to make our case apply to all communist cases, such as the eleven party leaders who were tried in New York, and the Bridges case in California. I promptly got into my own fights with the Ten, wanting to keep it just a civil-liberties case, but the group always insisted and always won out, and it got so a statement was never issued without bringing in the question of peace and whatever else happened to be in the current party line."

He hesitated, then said slowly, "The hardest thing I had to live with was the realization that they were trying to protect communism in this country by invoking the Constitution and civil liberties, things that wouldn't last five minutes if the commies ever took over." For the only time his voice was low. "This was on my conscience constantly."

On May 29, 1950, the Supreme Court refused for a second time to review the Lawson and Trumbo convictions, and on June ninth, Lawson and

**Timely Tips by Little Lulu**

**How DO YOU SCORE ON THESE HELPFUL WAYS TO SAVE?**

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*THE SATURDAY EVENING POST*

"Actually—we're looking for a nice picnic spot for this Sunday."

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**What's a "saving" way to clean dust mops?**

- [ ] Shaking
- [ ] Vacuuming

No dusty "map" from mop shaking! Not when you de-dust the mop via vacuum cleaner. It's a face saver. **Like Kleenex tissues.** After cold-creaming, see how gently soft, absorbent Kleenex lifts out the day's dirt—lifts die-hard makeup from delicate complexions. A special process keeps this tissue extra soft. Ideal for beauty care!

---

**Can you help keep colds from spreading, with—**

- [ ] Nail polish
- [ ] Kleenex tissues

When one of the family has a cold, don't let the family's other hands be red nail polish (removable later). Protects others. **Kleenex, too, helps check the spread of colds.** You Kleenex just once, then destroy—guess and all. Softening soft, this tissue has just-right strength to another "ker-choo." Comforts tender noses.

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**What's best for quieting a noisy clock?**

- [ ] A hammer
- [ ] Shoot the works
- [ ] Wear earmuffs

If that loud "tick-tock" annoys you—cover clock with large glass bowl. And save sleep, temper, by keeping Kleenex at your bedside. No need to turn the light on for a Kleenex tissue. That fumble-proof box serves one at a time (not a handful!)—and the next pops up. So different from just "tissues"!

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**To get better looking, should you try—**

- [ ] Binoculars
- [ ] Kleenex eyeglass tissues

Long time no see? Sparkle your "specs" with new Kleenex eyeglass tissues: big enough... strong enough... list-free! Each tissue's silicone-treated on both sides. Leaves your lenses gleaming—free from finger marks, dust, dirt, smears. And handy Kleenex eyeglass tissues serve one at a time. Why not buy a pack today?

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**Kleenex ends waste—saves money...**

1. **INSTEAD OF MANY...**
2. **YOU GET JUST ONE...**
3. **AND SAVE WITH**

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**THE SATURDAY EVENING POST**

**AMERICA'S FAVORITE TISSUE**

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Trumbo went to jail. Dmytryk, who had testified to having been a member of the Ten in their last money-raising campaigns, flew back to Washington and on June 29, 1950, had a perfunctory formal trial. Judge Kheel sentenced him to six months in Federal prison and a $10,000 fine, and remanded him to the District of Columbia jail the same day, where he was to handle a bootlegger as his first cellmate.

The war had just started in Korea and it was the big subject of conversa-
tion, bootlegging to have Ten in Washington jail. Walking back and forth during their exercise periods, they hushed it over, always insisting it was the last time their conditioned think-
ing; that there was no independence of thought, there couldn't be. I was really through then."

"All that I found, things that I had once believed in, had just been a blind to disarm the Western world."

With Albert Maltz he was trans-
ferred to Mill Point Prison Camp. On
July 17, 1950, There, where he was as-
signed a job as a garage clerk in a camp
largely devoted to logging and sawmill
operations. During his time in the gar-
der. Finally," he said, "when the
Chinese entered the war, I swore to an
affidavit before Superintendent Thie-
man," The affidavit, while reiterating
his feelings that he had been right on
the ground, stated his loyalty to this
country and ended with the
statement that, at the time of the
hearings, he was not a Communist
Party member.

Albert Malz pleaded with him not to
issue the statement. "He used the
clencher they always have on ex-com-
munists," Dmytryk said slowly. "He
said, 'People don't believe you; how; they think that if you were once
a communist you're always one,
and Hollywood will be as afraid of pub-
lic opinion as it ever was.' And maybe
he's right. But I had to hide it off my
chest. The only reason I didn't admit
then that I had ever been a commu-
nist was that I wanted to wait until I
had put it all together in my mind, all
the things that took me into the party
and back out again."

Released November 15, 1950, after
serving four months and seventeen
days as a result of time off for good
behavior, Dmytryk flew to Holly-
wood to pick up his unknown destiny.

While only one independent producer
has shown a real interest in having
him direct a picture at some future
date, the communists had already
started their local smear campaign. At
Lucey's Restaurant one of them ex-
plained away Dmytryk's affidavit, say-
ing, "You know the inside on that,
don't you? He made a deal with the
producer that he was to start work at
MG M at $5000 a week the minute he
get out, if he would just sign that affi-
davit."

THE KREMLIN'S BILLION-
DOLLAR STOOGES

(Continued from Page 29)

250 boxes of communist propa-
ganda material

40,000 pairs of rayon stockings

300 boxes of Meissen china

5000 pairs of rayon stockings

26 optical instruments

Still another variety of smuggling
goes on along the Belgian border.

There the city of Aachen lies close to
a border that winds through extensive
woodlands. Tens of thousands of peo-
ple make a career out of smuggling.

They work in carefully organized
bands and are often armed and protected in
military fashion by advance and rear
guards.

In this region of a few dozen miles of
border country, customs police made
40,000 arrests last year—each arrest
averaging six pounds of coffee.

"Those figures look fine on paper," one
customs guard said, "but for every
pound they try to crack, at least fifteen
pounds escape us."

There is no trick of the trade that the
smugglers haven't learned. Methods differ, But
whether they are the small profession-
als of Aachen, homeless DP's, members
of the occupation forces, the poor
veterans of the Communist Party or
big-time organizers, the result is the
same.

Vast sums of money which should be
used to support the occupation forces of
Germany go into private pockets. And large
amounts of vital materials go to the
Soviets when they should he available
to the defense preparations of the
West. Some "independent" smugglers
have no connection with the Soviets.

But they help Moscow by their opera-
tions."

Those on the Right have a violent dis-
trust for any ex-communist and are in-
sistent about the need to purge them-
selves with a steady "disin-
festing process." No one knows what
that may be.

In that quiet apartment Dmytryk
tries to forget those things by working
on a screen play. The phone rings ver-
much, and he said, a bit wearily,
That's not so. He has no intention of
sneaking out. In breaking clean, a lot
of the people who were closest to you are
gone too. This isn't like Alcoholics
Anonymous, it's not for some other
man. They know that awful loneliness
a man gets—so there's always that
phone to come back in the middle of
the night and tell him it's all right.

Maybe, but often, he thought, it is the
thought of so many people who are trying to quit
sort of an Ex-Communists Anony-
umous. He smiled faintly, watching his
wife. "It's an idea, anyway."

The German's main interest was to
keep alive his own, and by hook or by
crook. The occupying powers had lent
their hands to this operation to dis-
tant manipulation. Sometimes the
chain of command is so tenuous that the
man doing the job doesn't even
know he is doing it.

The growth of the Soviets' contraband
organization is particularly re-
mindful, since at first, after the war, the
Russians had little to do with the
orgy of illicit trading in ruined Ger-
many. Then, the black market was just
a legacy of the war—the weeds that
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cities.

Those who had once been called
"Nazis" and "typical Germans" were
now "big-time" smugglers. They knew
that awful loneliness a man gets—so there's always that
phone to come back in the middle of
the night and tell him it's all right.

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The new German customs forces are
unarmed, often corrupt and totally in-
sufficient in numbers. Above all, they
were permit holders for authority over non-German nationals.

That was the era when a whole na-
tion, not just the golden calf, but American cigarettes and a
handful of coffee. Which visitor
to Frankfort does not recall the official
"German Customs" stall, the Hand-
lungszentrale, where the contraband went
just outside the American com-
pound? German housewives brought
their valuable smokes to the Zentrale
and received American cigarettes—coffee
or soup in return. Two packs
of cigarettes bought a fine camera,
worth $100, or more, and a fine antique
coffee table could be had for four packs.
In those days anybody who had ac-
cess to American and British supplies
could amass a small fortune. And many
did.

Gradually the occupation forces
lightened their regulations. Allied
citizens were required to submit to
customs examination. More self-
government was granted to the Germans. Their customs service improved.

Naturally, you want the uni-
valued color beauty and clean-
ability of Masland Duran when
you buy plastic upholstered
furniture. Know for sure that you're getting Masland Duran.

Ask for "MASLAND DURAN" not just "plastic." Also insist on
seeing the Masland Duran tag. It's your positive assurance of
upholstery excellence on furniture
for every room.

225 rolls of newpapr for the West
German communist press
190 ladies' panties (dark blue)
40 pairs of United States nylon
stockings

for every room.

"150

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