

April 28, 1947

Dear Mr. Horkheimer:

Thank you very much for your letter and for your opinion about the film "CROSSFIRE".

I respect very much all you had to say, although I am compelled to disagree with your final point.

I don't think we can argue this out by letter, but the one point I want to make in answer to your overall fear is this: if you are right in your contention, then one could pose this thesis: if the murderer played in our picture exactly as he is was a Jew, and if he had killed a Protestant, would you contend then that we had made a good picture for the Jew, because we would have created a sympathetic character that the audience would have accepted, and because of that would they like the Jews because their sympathies would have been with the killer?

According to your own argument, this picture would not be damaging to the Jews if the killer were a Jew, because you argue that sympathy is with him and with his motives. Do you believe we would be making a contribution in fighting anti-semitism if the killer were a Jew?

We screened the film since you saw it on two other occasions, and no one else has expressed your psychological point of view. Of course, I grant that it is still not played in front of a general audience. I believe, too, that we will receive criticism, but I expect that. I believe that any controversial subject will have a minority point of view. I think it is normal and natural that anything which sets mens' minds thinking creates an antagonism. The atom bomb won a war and created attention. President Roosevelt brought a nation out of chaos and created his enemies. Lincoln led the nation in a struggle to free the slaves and set up southern prejudice. Our anti-Nazi films destroyed the bund, but didn't do away with Gerald L. K. Smith. I don't believe there is any psychological panacea to anti-semitism that will not leave in its wake, mental flotsam and debris.

Mr. Max Horkheimer

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This film will not reform anti-semites, but it should insulate people against the virus of religious or racial hate.

I do not see how it can do more harm than good. I disagree with you sharply, and of course if I didn't disagree with you I would not have made the film.

In any event, I appreciate your time and thought, and perhaps we can talk about this sometime in the future, and discuss it more, in detail.

Very sincerely,

DB:mr

Mr. Max Horkheimer
13524 D'Este Drive
Pacific Palisades, Calif.

Dore Schary to Max Horkheimer, April 28, 1947.
Courtesy Dore Schary Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society.