

PUBLIC OPINION AND CROSSFIRE

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Section I

Early in 1947 it was learned that Mr. Dore Schary, Executive Vice-President in charge of production at RKO Studios, was going to produce a film called *Crossfire*, dealing with the problem of anti-Semitism in particular, and prejudice in general. This in itself was a significant event, for it would mean that a major film studio was producing a film for the first time dealing with this serious social problem—and dealing with it not as a documentary film for a limited audience, but in terms of the normal screen and motion-picture audience who come to see films in regular motion-picture theaters.

The facts about the picture can be stated briefly. *Crossfire* is a screen play written by John Paxton and directed by Edward Dmytryk. It stars Robert Young as the detective-hero, Robert Mitchum as a hero who is a member of the armed forces, and Robert Ryan as a recently discharged veteran who is the villain. Sam Levene plays the small and yet significant part of the Jew who is murdered—solely because he is a Jew. The picture is written and produced in a slow-paced but deeply exciting manner, designed to ferret out the cause and perpetrator of a pair of murders. In this respect, the story stands on its own feet. It can be enjoyed as a distinguished example of a trend in motion pictures, trade-marked by such people as Alfred Hitchcock, Carol Reed, Mark Hellinger, and now, Dore Schary, among others. But beyond its theatrical satisfactions in terms of a “mystery” film it articulates a serious problem as warp and woof of the story itself. The villain is a man who is essentially pathological in his hatred—a hatred which he vents by being a bully; by murdering a Jew in the name of his hatred for Jews; by murdering his friend in order to protect himself; by indicating that he really is a sick soul,

a soul in whom the accumulated hatreds typified in his anti-Semitism finally end in tragic disaster for him as well as for his victims.

The problem of anti-Semitism has been with us a long time. Since 1933, it has been exacerbated by the startling fact that a sovereign power, for the first time in modern history, made use of all of the instruments of sovereignty in order to promote anti-Semitism at home and to export it abroad as a divisive weapon in its strategy of terror. The use of anti-Semitism became part of the war of nerves which led to the Second World War.

The villain in *Crossfire* is the kind of person who fell victim to the Hitlers in the modern world and became an instrument in bringing about the recent holocaust. The picture attempts to show not only this pathology in its worst form, namely, murder, but also through a dramatic speech by the detective-hero, it tries to point up the interrelation among many forms of prejudice: prejudice against persons in different states, called, derisively, hillbillies; prejudice against persons who themselves or whose parents emigrated from various European countries; prejudice which discriminates on the job, in the school, in buying houses; prejudice which at various times in America's history has led to explosive and murderous situations. The lesson pointed out in this speech is one which is historically true and psychologically sound. Prejudice not always eventuates in lynchings and murders but, even in its less evil form, stems from the same kind of social and emotional disease which ultimately may engulf a whole society.

This analysis of prejudice has been validated by the social scientists. It has been preached by the great religious leaders of all faiths. It has been handled dramatically from time to time on the stage and in a number of notable instances, though isolated ones, on the air. As indicated above, it is the first time that the great medium of the motion picture has attempted to treat this problem.

A curious thing happened. Whereas treatment of this problem

on the air, in the press, in speeches, has been commonly accepted as appropriate, objection was raised to its portrayal on the screen. Now there were certain legitimate worries relating to a Hollywood film on anti-Semitism. Would the film producers develop a picture in which the problem was intelligently treated? Would reviewers condemn it because Hollywood tried to be serious as well as entertaining? Would audiences condemn Hollywood for the same reason and stay away from the picture? Would the picture have any effect upon audiences; that is, would they be the better or the worse, or the same, for having seen the picture? These, we indicate, were legitimate worries. Early previews brought in another kind of worry which seemed to many of us farfetched and improbable; namely, that audiences might tend to identify themselves, not with the forces of good, as portrayed by the detective-hero and the sergeant-hero, but because of the issue of anti-Semitism, identify themselves with the villain. In other words, that Americans might applaud the anti-Semitism of the villain who murders as the final expression of his internal hatreds. Because of these questions, and with the permission of the producer, we decided to arrange for a number of previews and tests of the picture before it opened on July 22 at the Rivoli Theater in New York City. Here are the steps we took:

1. In mid-June 1947 the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith invited some fifty people representing a variety of Christian and Jewish agencies, engaged in the task of educating for good human relations, to preview the film. With the exception of representatives from one Jewish agency, the reaction of this audience overwhelmingly endorsed the picture and praised both its intent and production.

2. The next day, a preview was arranged for a small group of experts who had formed a committee, on the invitation of the Anti-Defamation League, to set up an evaluation and testing procedure with respect to *Crossfire*. The persons at this preview included Dr. Louis E. Raths, Chairman; Dr. Avrum Ben-Avi, Clinical Psychologist, New York University; Dr. Lloyd Allen Cook, Professor of Educational Sociology,

Wayne University, Detroit; Dr. Elaine Forsythe, Professor of Social Psychology, Albany State Teachers College; Mr. Charles Siepmann, formerly of the British Broadcasting Company, now Director of the Center for Communications, New York University; and Mr. Frank N. Trager. This committee agreed unanimously that the film was indeed a worthy one, and that research should be undertaken to determine audience reaction.

After seeing it, they raised a number of questions with the producer, Mr. Schary; made several suggestions in connection with cutting the film and redoing one or two scenes; and then discussed with him the kind of questions which they would like to have explored with various audiences. These questions related to the possible reactions of audiences to the villain; to the way in which he is ultimately handled in the film; to the motivation of the principal characters in the film; to possible identifications audiences would make with various characters in the film. Notwithstanding their own favorable reaction to *Crossfire*, the committee was hesitant in anticipating or predicting audience reaction. They felt that the film should be put to the test.

Every member of the committee voiced the conviction that a single picture would not, of itself, produce a tremendously significant difference in changing basic attitudes. Moreover, the committee members were convinced that the effect of the motion picture would vary under different circumstances and that the film would probably have more significant effects if those who saw it became involved in discussions of the issues in informal home and community situations. However, having so effective a picture followed by other pictures and the general use of means of communication to air these problems would, in all probability, significantly affect the mores of the community. In testing the consequences following the showing of *Crossfire*, our committee would not, of course, be testing the worth of the cumulative effect of such a series. The job of testing the impact of a cycle or a program of such

events remains for the future. The committee felt that *Crossfire* might be significant in still another way: it would stimulate audiences to think over many ideas of their own relating to prejudices of one kind or another. The picture has a quality which provokes reflection. This is a good thing in itself, and reflects creditably on Hollywood.

As a result of this second preview, the committee, headed by Dr. Raths, agreed with Mr. Schary on a series of tests with a high-school audience in a city in Ohio, and an average adult audience in Boston and Denver. The following sections describe in more detail these tests.

Section II

Preface

A city of 50,000, located in the state of Ohio, was chosen as the center for testing on the high-school level. The particular city was chosen because in many respects it was thought to represent a "typical Middletown city," and also because in the very recent past it had been the subject of study by various faculty members of the near-by university. School officials, teachers, and the students were willing to co-operate in the study, and it was agreed that all reporting would be done in an anonymous fashion. The population of the selected city is predominately white, native-born, Protestant, with a reasonably large Catholic element. Good municipal planning is reflected in its well-paved and well-lighted streets. It has its own gas, light, and water utilities. The leading industries are: (a) production of metal castings, (b) manufacturing of safes, (c) paper-making, (d) machine-tool-making.

This community depends largely upon its own resources for its social life. It has such organizations as the Elks, Moose, Y.M.C.A., and Catholic Centers. Since there are no large auditoriums in the city, the high-school auditorium has been used for concerts and dramatic presentations.

In regard to the schools, it may be stated that the community people have been actively interested in their welfare. The school board has held the confidence of the citizens of the community. Satisfactory working relations have been established between the community and the schools. In all of the outwardly observable characteristics the community seemed to be the typical Middle Western town.

Issues Raised in the Motion Picture *Crossfire*

In the picture, the resources of the law are mobilized to capture the murderer. Would students tend to have less respect for the law or more respect for the law when it is actively in pursuit of a hate-monger?

In the picture, some of the principal characters are members of the armed services and some are recently discharged members of the services. Is it possible that the showing of the film might have serious consequences so far as respect for the armed services is concerned?

The film also brings in, and in a rather dramatic manner, some history of the persecution of Catholics which was not altogether uncommon in the last century. A question was raised as to whether the clarification of this particular issue might not also have adverse effects among students on attitudes toward Catholics and toward Protestants.

In the picture, a young Tennessee mountaineer is the butt of ridicule of the villain of the film. As the film carries through, this rustic Tennessean becomes party to a subtle plot to trap the real killer. This character wears the uniform of the United States Army, too. The question is raised whether students might interpret his role as that of a treacherous and perhaps double-dealing individual who brings disgrace not only upon himself, but upon his military outfit.

The principal character of the film is a detective who is portrayed by Robert Young. In the course of the story, Mr. Young makes several brief speeches against prejudice. He seems to want to include prejudices of all kinds, although the film itself places great emphasis upon prejudice against Catholics, prejudice against Jews, and prejudice against some other minority groups. The question was raised: What effect might this have upon prevailing opinions of young people with respect to foreigners, to Negroes, to various liberals who are vigorously defending minority groups?

In order to answer these questions and others, it became necessary to set up some plan of investigation whereby evidence could be collected relevant to the change or lack of change in attitudes following the showing (seeing) of the film. Ordinarily, attitudes have been measured in the past by simply asking people for their opinions on whatever issue was under consideration. The direct measurement of opinion by asking individuals how they stood on the relevant issues was discarded on the ground that long experience in a variety of fields has tended to show that people judge themselves to be more tolerant than may actually be the case.

A second alternative was decided upon. We made the assumption that those who saw the motion picture, *Crossfire*, would be stimulated to talk about it with their friends. We made the further assumption that, if we could get some judgment from individuals about the opinions of their friends before and after the showing of the motion picture, we would be securing evidence concerning the influence of the motion picture in bringing about a change in attitude.

At this point, attention must be directed toward the construction of the questionnaire which was used in the study. The identical form of the questionnaire had been used previously on a number of occasions in some small Ohio communities. These communities were known by informed observers to have rather defi-

nite prejudices against certain minority groups, and the administration of the test in these communities brought results which confirmed the judgments of the so-called expert, or informed, judges. In other words, there seemed to be some validity to the instrument as determined by previous trial.

In making a plan for testing whether or not *Crossfire* would bring about changes in attitudes of those who saw the picture, we might conceivably have set up a pattern which involved "control groups." By and large, however, the use of "control groups" in social experimentation is a misnomer, and tends rather to abuse sound scientific methodology. If a *control* is assumed to be a factor which is influencing the conclusion, and if a "control study" is one in which these influential factors can be measured in a way which will allow for the prediction of consequences, then with our customary lack of ability to identify the factors, it probably would have been impossible to have arranged for a controlled experiment. This was beyond possibility; attempts in that direction would probably have taken years. We therefore ruled it out as a method in this case.

Sometimes, in investigations of this kind, the so-called "comparison-group" method is used. In this instance the investigators do not delude themselves into believing that they have the situation under control. In a rather crude way, however, they wanted to determine whether or not the showing of the film to one group brought about greater changes of attitude in that group than were to be observed in another group which had not seen the film. For the purposes of the present investigation, this sort of arrangement seemed to have no practical worth. We were almost positive that the film was going to be shown commercially in practically all cities in the United States. Our primary concern was to find out whether or not those who saw the film tended to like it or to dislike it; tended to identify themselves with a certain character and to reject others; tended to be influenced strongly, mildly, or not

at all by the experience. Consequently, we chose not to have a so-called "comparison group" and we did choose to find out, as directly as we could, some of the reactions of those people who saw the picture.

It is obvious that we are unable to say that the motion picture, as a single isolated phenomenon, did or did not bring about certain changes in attitude. If significant changes had occurred, we could not have been able to say that this motion picture was the cause of those changes. On the other hand, we anticipated that if no significant changes in response did occur, we could say that the motion picture had not been tremendously influential in bringing about significant shifts in attitudes toward minority groups. This again rests upon the assumption that the instrument we used would reflect significant changes if they did occur, and we are going on the assumption that our questionnaire would in fact reveal a significant difference if one had taken place. The rejection of this assumption by the readers would probably be accompanied by a rejection of our conclusions. Doubt of this assumption would probably result in doubting the conclusions that are reported herein. At this point we will introduce our questions and report the percentages of replies before the motion picture was shown and after the motion picture was shown. *Crossfire* was viewed by these high-school students on a Wednesday. The previous day they had responded to the questionnaire, and again on Friday (of the same week) they responded to the questionnaire. Hence, any differences that are shown in the accompanying tables are differences between Tuesday and Friday. We made a second assumption to the effect that in these intervening several days, the students would probably be stimulated to voice their own individual reactions to the film, to characters portrayed in the film, and to the plot in general.

We assumed that among their friends and classmates there probably would be discussion of some of the principal incidents in the

film. The questionnaire asked each individual student to estimate the number of his acquaintances who had biases toward certain minority groups. We went ahead on the theory that if the film did release sentiments of prejudice toward minority groups, these would be apparent in a large number of interpersonal contacts, and would reveal themselves also in the second administrations of the questionnaire. In the following pages each question on the questionnaire is stated, and the before and after results are presented.

What is your own best guess about the opinions of young people whom you know?

1. Some young people have very little respect for any religion other than their own. If they are Protestants, they sometimes do not like Catholics. If they are Catholic, they sometimes do not like Protestants. They think their own religion is the very best, and they think that people with other religions are not as good as they are. How many people do you know who are like this?

	NOBODY	ONLY A FEW	MUCH LESS THAN HALF	ABOUT HALF	MUCH MORE THAN HALF	ALMOST EVERYBODY
	<i>per cent</i>	<i>per cent</i>	<i>per cent</i>	<i>per cent</i>	<i>per cent</i>	<i>per cent</i>
<i>Before:</i>	8	52	16	21	3	0
<i>After:</i>	4	63	18	11	4	0

The reader will notice that before the motion picture was shown, a total of 24 per cent of the replies were in the upper three categories, indicating that half or more of the people whom they knew think that people with other religions are not as good as they are. The film was then shown. If we may assume that the film released sentiments concerning tolerance and intolerance with respect to Protestants and Catholics, and, if we can assume further, that these individuals in marking these ballots reflected fairly well the influence of the motion picture, then we can say that there was a decrease in the number of people who said that half or more of the people whom they knew were like this,

because in the "post-test" only 15 per cent were found in the upper three categories.¹

Because many of the principal characters involved in the motion picture had relationships to our armed forces, either in the recent past or in the present, we proposed the following question:

What is your own best guess about the opinions of young people whom you know?

2. Some young people are in favor of universal military-training for all young men at the age of 18. How many people in high school do you know who favor compulsory military-training?

	ONLY NOBODY	A FEW per cent	MUCH LESS THAN HALF per cent	ABOUT HALF per cent	MUCH MORE THAN HALF per cent	ALMOST EVERYBODY per cent
<i>Before:</i>	13	35	21	19	8	3
<i>After:</i>	17	42	20	10	6	3*

* Occasionally one or two students did not answer every question and therefore our percentages do not always add up exactly to 100 per cent.

In their responses to this question, 30 per cent of the students checked one of the upper three categories, indicating that half, much more than half, or nearly all of their acquaintances were in favor of universal military-training. After the film was shown, 19 per cent of the responses were to be found in these categories. This constitutes a drop of 11 per cent. The inference was made that attitudes toward universal military-training were affected adversely.

Quite deliberately we allowed some questions to remain in the test which seemed to have little bearing upon the central theme of the motion picture with the intent that they should be consid-

¹ One hundred and thirty students of grades 10, 11, and 12, in a Middle Western city took the pretest. Of these 130, 114 saw the film and took the post-test. The percentages which are reported are based upon these two figures. Because the students did not sign their names to the questionnaires, it would have been impossible to identify every individual paper. Examination schedules within the school conflicted with the study and not every person who saw the film was able to reply to the second giving of the questionnaire. By a random sampling method we could have eliminated 16 papers of the pretest, but we decided to include all the results because the number in both instances exceeded 100, and there was no special point for controlling the number as such.

ered as "checking" questions. One of these related to labor unions and it follows:

What is your own best guess about the opinions of young people whom you know?

3. *Labor Unions.* How many young men and women of high-school age are *unfriendly* to labor unions? How many young people *do you know* who are opposed to the idea of labor unions?

	NOBODY per cent	ONLY A FEW per cent	MUCH LESS THAN HALF per cent	ABOUT HALF per cent	MUCH MORE THAN HALF per cent	ALMOST EVERYBODY per cent
<i>Before:</i>	21	38	13	18	5	4
<i>After:</i>	20	40	14	17	7	1

Here, 27 per cent of the pretest replies are to be found in the upper three categories and in the post-test, 25 per cent of the replies are located there. It is evident that no significant shift occurred here, and because the film does not bring up issues related to labor unions, the results were the expected ones.

The fourth question was related to Negroes. The subject of tolerance was so sharply treated in the motion picture that the assumption was made that a shift toward minority groups might very well be reflected in attitudes toward Negroes, and so the following question was inserted:

What is your own best guess about the opinions of young people whom you know?

4. *Attitudes toward Negroes.* Some youth look down on the Negro people. They think that white people are better than Negroes. How many young people do you know who seem to be prejudiced against Negroes?

	NOBODY per cent	ONLY A FEW per cent	MUCH LESS THAN HALF per cent	ABOUT HALF per cent	MUCH MORE THAN HALF per cent	ALMOST EVERYBODY per cent
<i>Before:</i>	7	40	19	16	16	2
<i>After:</i>	3	60	16	12	9	0

It is to be noted that 34 per cent of the replies of the pretest

indicate that half, much more than half, or nearly all of the respondents were prejudiced. If the motion picture were to release more intense feelings directed against Negroes as a group, it was thought that this second test would reflect that change. Note, however, that the post-test shows only 21 per cent of the replies in the upper three categories, and note, too, that no replies are in the uppermost category. If the motion picture did indeed provoke discussion, and if this questionnaire is sensitive enough to pick up the differences which might have been brought about by the showing of the motion picture, then those differences, too, might be said to be in a favorable direction.

Question five related to the whole idea of antipathy toward foreigners. This was not stressed in the motion picture at all and there was no reason to expect that a significant change would be forthcoming.

What is your own best guess about the opinions of young people whom you know?

5. *Attitudes toward foreigners.* Some youth are to be classed as anti-foreigners. They often use such terms as Hunkies, Dagoes, Polacks, Hunyaks, Wops, Frogs, Limeys, Canucks. Some youth dislike foreigners. How many young people *do you know* who are like this?

	NOBODY	ONLY A FEW	MUCH LESS THAN HALF	ABOUT HALF	MUCH MORE THAN HALF	ALMOST EVERYBODY
	<i>per cent</i>	<i>per cent</i>	<i>per cent</i>	<i>per cent</i>	<i>per cent</i>	<i>per cent</i>
<i>Before:</i>	29	44	13	8	1	0
<i>After:</i>	22	55	14	7	1	1

Both before and after the movie was shown, 9 per cent of the responses were to be found in the three upper categories. No significant change occurred.

As was stated previously the motion picture is more than a detective story. It assumes much increased importance because a man is killed largely because he is a Jew. There was a very grave concern about whether the showing of the movie might increase hostility toward Jewish people. Question six was designed to get some evidence on that point:

What is your own best guess about the opinions of young people whom you know?

6. *Attitudes toward Jewish people.* You know the young people around you. What is their attitude toward Jewish people? How many could be counted as having prejudice *against Jews*?

	ONLY NOBODY	MUCH LESS A FEW	ABOUT THAN HALF	MUCH MORE HALF	ALMOST THAN HALF	EVERYBODY
	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent
<i>Before:</i>	15	45	19	13	5	2
<i>After:</i>	8	56	21	10	4	1

Before the motion picture was shown, 20 per cent of the replies were in the upper three categories. After the motion picture was shown, 15 per cent of the replies are to be found in those categories. The change is small and probably insignificant. The evidence will probably help to quiet the fears of some people who are opposed to the public clarification of issues of this kind. There is a school of thought which holds that discussion of itself tends to produce more prejudice, to increase intolerance. Another school of thought maintains that it depends upon the discussion and how it is handled. These people believe that *Crossfire* was not only an artistic motion picture, but that it would also be an effective instrument for helping to clarify pro- and anti-Jewish sentiment; and that through this clarification, intolerance would be decreased. The evidence is conclusive in the sense that no adverse trend is apparent. The evidence is in the direction of diminishing intolerance but the difference is small.

Individuals who have worked with adolescent groups have frequently remarked upon a prevailing tendency to want to be like everybody else. There is a disposition among many adolescent groups "not to stick their necks out," "not to defend a position if large numbers are against it." In the film, the forces of law and order make use of a young Tennessee mountaineer in setting a trap for the murderer. He demurs on the ground that, after all, he would rather not have anything to do with the whole situation

and asserts, moreover, that he cannot see why he should be the one to play an important part in the capture. There is a kind of sentiment that he does not want to be different from other people in his outfit; he would prefer to be treated and to live the way all the others do. On the assumption that his participation might reveal among adolescent audiences more of a disposition, after seeing the film, to assert independence in their thinking, the following question was included:

What is your own best guess about the opinions of young people whom you know?

7. *Attitude toward "being different."* Do most American youth want to be like everybody else? Will they keep quiet if they see that most of the others believe something else? Will they "stick their necks out" or would they much rather go along with the crowd? How many young people *do you know* who would rather keep quiet than stick up for something that other youth do not believe?

	ONLY NOBODY	MUCH LESS A FEW	ABOUT THAN HALF	MUCH MORE HALF	ALMOST THAN HALF	EVERYBODY
	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent
<i>Before:</i>	2	32	18	28	11	8
<i>After:</i>	4	33	19	26	12	5

Forty-seven per cent of the pretest replies were found in the highest categories. After the motion picture was shown, 43 per cent were found in these categories, and the change is probably not significant.

To gather some evidence on whether or not the agencies which deal with law and order would suffer or gain in prestige through the showing of this film, the following question was formulated:

What is your best guess about the opinions of young people whom you know?

8. *Attitudes toward the law.* How does American youth, as you know it, look at the agencies we have to preserve law and order? Policemen, detectives, prosecuting attorneys, judges, and others concerned with law enforcement? How many youth *do you know* who are, in general, unsympathetic, somewhat opposed toward people whose job it is to see that laws are obeyed?

	NOBODY <i>per cent</i>	ONLY A FEW <i>per cent</i>	MUCH LESS THAN HALF <i>per cent</i>	ABOUT HALF <i>per cent</i>	MUCH MORE THAN HALF <i>per cent</i>	ALMOST EVERYBODY <i>per cent</i>
<i>Before:</i>	12	46	16	10	12	3
<i>After:</i>	12	49	18	11	4	3

In the pretest, 25 per cent of the replies are in the highest categories and in the posttest, only 18 per cent are there. Law-enforcement agencies actively engaged in the capture of a murderer who killed because of hate, showed a gain in prestige.

The film *Crossfire* does not have any character who might be associated with the stereotyped figure commonly thought of as a liberal. We see a detective who is doing his work and doing it as well as he can. Some question was raised as to whether or not the film would encourage or discourage liberalism and hence the following question was proposed for inclusion:

What is your best guess about the opinions of young people whom you know?

9. Some people do not like persons who stand up for Negroes; they do not like people who stand up for Jews; they do not like people who defend labor unions; they do not like people who defend minority groups. How many youth *do you know* who dislike persons who stand up and defend Negroes, Jews, and other minority groups?

	NOBODY <i>per cent</i>	ONLY A FEW <i>per cent</i>	MUCH LESS THAN HALF <i>per cent</i>	ABOUT HALF <i>per cent</i>	MUCH MORE THAN HALF <i>per cent</i>	ALMOST EVERYBODY <i>per cent</i>
<i>Before:</i>	25	51	11	11	1	0
<i>After:</i>	23	55	11	10	0	0

A glance at the figures indicates that 12 per cent were in the upper three levels before the motion picture was shown, and 10 per cent of the replies were in those same levels after the motion picture was shown. There was no expectation of a significant increase with respect to a generalized attitude toward liberals, and the findings are consistent with that expectation. Some concern was manifested because the motion-picture industry was introduc-

ing a very controversial topic into theaters of America. What effect might this have on attitudes toward motion pictures in general? A question was proposed which asked for opinions with respect to motion pictures, the radio, and newspapers. The percentages before and after are reported in the following question:

What is your own best guess about the opinions of young people whom you know?

10. *Social issues and radio, motion pictures and the press.* What does American youth think of the ways that the motion pictures, the radio, and the newspapers treat important social problems? Do these three give accurate, truthful pictures of life as it is, and do they use their influence to make our society a better one for all people? Since you know young people, how many of them believe that the motion picture, the radio, and the newspapers are far short of what they should be?

a) *Motion pictures are far from satisfactory.*

	ONLY NOBODY	MUCH LESS A FEW	ABOUT THAN HALF	MUCH MORE HALF	ALMOST THAN HALF	EVERYBODY
	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent
<i>Before:</i>	11	47	17	15	8	1
<i>After:</i>	12	45	22	8	10	1

The number in the upper three categories decreased from 24 per cent to 19 per cent, which may indeed indicate a favorable response to motion pictures like *Crossfire*.

b) *The radio is far from satisfactory.*

	ONLY NOBODY	MUCH LESS A FEW	ABOUT THAN HALF	MUCH MORE HALF	ALMOST THAN HALF	EVERYBODY
	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent
<i>Before:</i>	27	43	16	8	2	2
<i>After:</i>	24	41	17	10	3	3

Before the motion picture, 12 per cent of the replies are to be found in the upper three categories and after the motion picture, about 16 per cent of the replies are to be found there. The difference is not significant, but it is in a direction that is less favorable to radio.

c) *The newspapers are far from satisfactory.*

	NOBODY	ONLY A FEW	MUCH LESS THAN HALF	ABOUT HALF	MUCH MORE THAN HALF	ALMOST EVERYBODY
	<i>per cent</i>	<i>per cent</i>	<i>per cent</i>	<i>per cent</i>	<i>per cent</i>	<i>per cent</i>
<i>Before:</i>	19	36	22	11	8	2
<i>After:</i>	19	41	14	12	9	2

Here again the differences are surely not significant, and here again they are in the direction of being somewhat unfavorable to newspapers.

By and large, the responses are in the direction of supporting those who feel that the motion picture is well accepted by those adolescents who saw it, and that the changes in their attitudes are in a favorable direction so far as they relate to issues directly touched upon in the motion picture *Crossfire*.

There is no proof in these figures that the motion picture *itself* brought about favorable or very significant and far-ranging changes in attitudes. But the reader must remember that we sought an answer to the question, "Will there be a serious adverse change in attitude as a result of exhibiting *Crossfire*?" To this question the response seems to be a very emphatic negative. No serious adverse changes are reflected in these figures.

All of the replies so far discussed were anonymous and were derived from questionnaires which students filled out before and after seeing the motion picture. In the questionnaires these students identified themselves in terms of religious affiliation, academic-grade level, sex, race of father and mother, and estimated annual family income. At this writing, the replies have not been analyzed in terms of these categories. Instead, they have been treated as one single large group.

Evidence from questionnaires is viewed with some suspicion when values are at stake. Therefore, part of our design included a plan to interview intensively some of the outstanding leaders and some of the outstanding rejects among the student body of this Ohio high school. A sociometric test was given to aid in identify-

ing individuals to be interviewed, and in the process, we also secured helpful advice from principals and teachers.

The interviews were conducted by a trained psychologist and each one consumed about one hour's time. Eighteen students were interviewed under circumstances that could be described as informal, free, and permissive. The verdict of these young people was unanimous. They liked the motion picture. They admired very much the characters of the detective and the sergeant. They had certain reservations about parts of the film, as almost every individual does about practically every film. These young people thought the murderer deserved very severe punishment, though some of them were vigorously opposed to the idea that he should be shot down by the forces of law and order. Some of the students pointed out in the interviews that the murderer was a product of circumstances; that he had learned this prejudice in a society which had to share the blame. Some of these young people believed that the role of the social order in creating prejudice should have been made more clear; and two of the students thought that somehow or other an effort should have been made to re-educate this murderer to the end that he might rid himself of his prejudices and become a wholesome, normal, human being.

All in all, the evidence from questionnaires and from interviews supplemented and re-enforced each other. For nearly all the individuals who saw it, *Crossfire* was an experience that tended to produce favorable reactions. These changes were small, but the effects that were produced were uniformly in the direction that could be described as favorable.

Many of the students interviewed said that this picture made one stop and think. This comment was especially appreciated because of a charge sometimes made about motion pictures in this field. It is said that the motion pictures do not challenge beliefs. They are instead simple, banal, propaganda devices. Where young high-school people, both boys and girls, say frequently that the motion picture was the cause for reflection, we have

5. What about the ending?									
Montgomery got what he deserved	445	276	78	334	85	169	77		
Montgomery should be allowed to escape . . .			$\frac{1}{2}$		0		0		
Montgomery should be arrested and put in jail			$18\frac{1}{2}$		$8\frac{1}{2}$		19		
Montgomery should have more courage at the end and fight his way to freedom			3		$6\frac{1}{2}$		4		
6. Should they have more movies like this one? 440									
Yes		285	66	328	74	164	$66\frac{1}{2}$		
No			23		$12\frac{1}{2}$		16		
I don't know			11		$13\frac{1}{2}$		$17\frac{1}{2}$		
7. Would you like to see the picture changed so									
Yes that the soldier, Leroy, refuses to help	341	276	7	151	13	138	5		
No the detective capture Montgomery.			93		87		95		
Yes Montgomery should have a better	348	229	$58\frac{1}{2}$	257	43	151	$41\frac{1}{2}$		
No reason for killing Samuels.			$41\frac{1}{2}$		57		$58\frac{1}{2}$		
Yes Montgomery should get some punish- ment, then he should reform, and the	335	207	14	164	34	140	12		
No film should end happily.			86		66		88		

some hope that Hollywood films directed toward other and equally serious social problems may have the same effect of stimulating a reappraisal of values.

Section III Adult Reactions

Although the film company had conducted a "sneak preview" in a theater in the Yorkville section of New York City with what it described as favorable results, we decided that we should continue our independent investigation by testing adult audiences in Boston, Massachusetts, and Denver, Colorado. We formulated a simple questionnaire and made arrangements for testing adult audiences immediately after the showing of the picture. *Crossfire* was shown on Monday, June 30, in Boston at a large downtown theater, and on Monday, July 7, in Denver. In each instance, the audience did not know that it was going to see this particular picture, although it did know that it was going to see a preview of a Hollywood picture. The audience was asked to co-operate by filling out a questionnaire which was distributed in the lobby. This questionnaire was prepared as a self-sealing envelope, already stamped. A large number of individuals filled out the questionnaire in the lobby immediately after seeing the picture. Other individuals took the questionnaire home with them and mailed in their reply.

In Boston, of 1,500 questionnaires distributed, 467 persons answered the questionnaire in the lobby; 310 persons mailed it in—a more than 50 per cent return. In Denver, 1,000 copies of the questionnaire were distributed under the same conditions. Three hundred thirty-four persons filled out the questionnaire in the lobby; 170 mailed in their questionnaires—again, more than a 50 per cent return. The results are on pages 364 and 365.

Comments: In going through the questionnaire, we discovered that question four was ambiguous. Many interpreted the question to be one which required them to serve in the guise of dramatic

critics, so they were offering opinions. In a number of instances, extra comments were written in on the questionnaires, indicating their approval for the way in which Mr. Ryan dramatically handled the character of Montgomery, the soldier. We also discovered that the second part of question seven was ambiguous. Nonetheless, we are reporting the results of these two questions, for this is the way the tests were given.

Some general comments may be in order about the reactions as indicated above. It will be noted that when the respondents took their questionnaires home, they were somewhat more removed from the picture than they had been when they had seen it. This is revealed in the answers to question one. Despite the ambiguity of question four, the response to the item: "Don't like him," arose when the respondents took their questionnaires home—both in Boston and in Denver. Similarly, with the passing of time, respondents who mailed in their replies were even more approving of the soldier, Leroy, who helped the detective capture Montgomery. This was true both in Boston and in Denver. The same rise was indicated in the third part of question seven—for Denver alone. The interesting thing in this instance is that whereas in Boston approximately the same percentage of persons in the lobby and at home felt that Montgomery really got what he deserved, in Denver a large number of the audience who answered in the lobby wanted a less stringent ending; and those who answered from at home roughly approximated the Boston percentage in endorsing the justice in the film.

The Boston audience may have had a large proportion of Catholics in attendance. In Denver, the majority probably were Protestant in religion. In both places, our own observer, Mr. Herbert Litz, supervised the distribution of the questionnaires and scored them. He noted in both cities a considerable amount of enthusiasm, excitement, and oral approval given to the picture by the audiences. Motion-picture theater officials, and we ourselves, were surprised at the large proportion of returns of the questionnaires.

The picture opened at the Rivoli on July 22. The reviews carried in the metropolitan New York press on July 23 were on the whole "rave" reviews. But their "raving" was far less important than the obvious learning process which had started within them and which they, in effect, gave voice to as they wrote their reviews. This is the salient characteristic of *Crossfire*: it initiates a learning process. It does not change anyone's basic attitudes; but it is one more instrument—many are needed—which can help in that learning process which ultimately will make of America a richer and fuller democratic society.

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TULE LAKE—SOCIAL SCIENCE IN INACTION

Celia S. Deschin

The war provided many persons with experiences so vital that they became social laboratories in which to test hypotheses previously reserved for those moments when under the spell of ideas one tasted freedom. In some instances, the hypotheses thus resurrected and tested have since been applied to so-called normal situations—with disturbing results. An assignment as Welfare Counselor in the Segregation Center of the War Relocation Authority afforded me such an experience. The social laboratory was Tule Lake, California, a community of some 18,000 allegedly "disloyal" *évacués* of Japanese ancestry and some 400 administrative personnel (referred to officially as Caucasian). Except for its geographical isolation and certain externals, such as the primitive facilities under which the *évacués* lived, their confinement within a small area, the general barrenness of the location, and the barbed-wire fences separating the two groups, Tule Lake had most of the components of community life.

It had government, a police force, a general hospital, schools, limited employment possibilities (insufficient for all the *évacués*),

Louis E. Raths and Frank N. Trager, "Public Opinion and 'Crossfire,'" *Journal of Educational Sociology*, 21 (1948).