**EDITORIAL**

Hollywood Review has devoted most of its current issue to a study of the effect of political blacklisting upon the content of motion pictures.

There is an older and larger blacklist that also has a significant influence on the pictures Hollywood makes—the blacklist of Negro artists and film craftsmen.

The cosmopolitan film capital of the western world is a Jim Crow town. There is not a single Negro producer, director or writer working in Hollywood today. There are no Negro cameramen, film cutters, sound engineers, set designers.

Negroes have been systematically excluded from most skilled crafts since the time the film industry was young.

This blacklist has had a concrete influence on the content of motion pictures. The very absence of Negroes from the studio premises—except in menial positions—means that the Negro does (Continued on Page 2)

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**THE LIBERAL’S STRAIGHTJACKET AND IT’S EFFECT ON CONTENT**

By ADRIAN SCOTT

Speaking before the Anti-Defamation League of the B’nai B’rith in May of this year, Dore Schary, vice-president in charge of production at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, said: "If we eliminate from our academic ranks the opinions and voices of professors only because we do not agree with them, we will be embarking on a program of sterile education... We must speak out against it. Once we start bashing books, the inevitable next step is to burn the bodies and minds of men."

Schary continued, "The questioning and searching attitude must be maintained. The intellectual must be deeply concerned always by the forces that abuse him or attack him, but he cannot permit himself to be panicked or frightened by them because, if he does, his judgment becomes confused, and his effectiveness is weakened."

These brave good words are liberal expressions at its best. Yet what Schary says as a liberal and what he does as an executive of a major Hollywood studio are in clear conflict. Within his studio there exists an office which engages in the equivalent of the book burning that Schary’s speech deprecates.

The office clears liberals with the witchhunters and arranges settlements and inducements when a letter attempting to clarify past associations and acts is not sufficient. Here Schary’s fellow liberals are required to repudiate acts of liberalism in order to work for Schary.

There is no bongo in the clearing office to which books and plays are consigned; but works are indexed, proscribed and denied access to the screen because their authors are unacceptable to the witchhunters. It may be that Schary, the liberal, finds great pleasure in the novels and plays of Albert Maltz and the plays of Lillian Hellman— but Schary, the executive, will not authorize their purchase for film.

Schary may respect the skill of screenwriters such as Dalton Trumbo, Carl Foreman, Ring Lardner and Michael Wilson, whose works have been honored by the Academy, but he will not hire them to work at his studio.

Two Scharys exist today; one the maker of benevolent liberal speeches, the other the persecutor of liberal ideas; one who opposes the blacklisting of professors, another who actively engages in the blacklisting of writers; one who supports the right of educators to dis- sent, and one who denies employment to dissenting actors; one who urges intellectuals to be unafrid, but who is himself afraid.

Schary is a dramatic example of the conflict that besets the liberal, and the dilemma of all liberals who work in Hollywood today.

It is no secret when the liberal’s dilemma began. In the closing months of 1947, the Un-American Activities Committee conducted its first hearings on Hollywood. At that time liberals were active in the campaign to resist the Committee’s objectives and for this purpose worked in the Committee for the First Amendment.

This group chartered a plane and sent a delegation of Hollywood’s most prominent stars, directors and writers to Washington, where they held press conferences, issued statements and petitioned Congress for a redress of grievances.

The group also sponsored a series of radio broadcasts that were an eloquent and memorable defense of the First Amendment and a formidable counterattack on cultural inquisition.

These Hollywood liberals were not babes in the political woods. Most of them had a history of active involvement in the program of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Under Roosevelt’s leadership, Hollywood liberals had performed valuable services for the New Deal.

Although it was the custom of reactionaries to speak contemptuously of the political activities of Hollywood people, particularly actors, it was a contempt born of enmity to the New Deal and calculated to destroy the effectiveness of their appeal to large sections of the public.

Therefore, when the Un-American Activities Committee held its hearings, the Committee for the First Amendment held its own hearings. The results were a national sensation. The Committee for the First Amendment emerged as the most effective group operating in Hollywood today.

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**TELEVISION**

Summer Slump and Fall Prospects

The TV summer season was initiated in the trade press with expressions of high hopes that the so-called "traditional" slump in quality would not return this year. A number of TV personalities had picked their own replacements, others had undertaken to function as producers of the shows replacing them as performers.

The one-hour live dramatic shows were continuing through the summer, and selected reruns of certain popular shows were scheduled. A slump is a slump, however, whether dignified as "traditional" or not. Jonathan Winters is not as funny as George Colehl, Phil Foster is not as funny as Sid Caesar. It’s just as well to have Ed Sullivan back in person on "Toast of the Town," since his hand-picked substitutes have kept his memory alive for the summer audience with frequent hashed references.

The trouble with reruns of comedy shows is obvious: the fan is more than likely to have heard the jokes before. And even if they are Crouch’s jokes or Bob Cummings’ or Lucy’s, they do not age well. Dramatic shows not listed as reruns have often turned out this summer to be casual selections from the fast accumulating storehouse of reduced-price TV films.

There are those who view TV’s growing storehouse of mediocrity as a potent argument for broadcasting live. It’s more ephemeral that way. Melodramas based on the promise of a surprising turn of events are even faster than jokes, especially if the turn of events was not so surprising to begin with.

The quantity of hour-long dramatic shows has hit a new high this summer, but the quality is at a new low, many producers having adopted what they consider a "popular demand mass appeal style." This is more than a seasonal slump, it is a slump in policy. It is a rejection of the intimate, informal TV style developed by New York’s live dramatic shows in favor of well-worn notions of Foreman, Foreman, Bing Lardner and Michael Wilson, whose works have been honored by the Academy, but he will not hire them to work at his studio.

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The Black List and The Grey List

Unnumbered thousands who may be blissfully unaware of it are nevertheless "blacklisted" in the motion picture industry. The industry's clearance system applies to new applicants for employment well as to old. The following survey is limited to persons who are known to have been regular studio employees before being "blacklisted" or "greylisted."

The "blacklist" includes some 214 motion picture craftsmen and professionals who are now barred from employment in the motion picture industry. Among them are:

- 106 writers
- 4 producers
- 38 actors
- 6 musicians
- 320 assistants
- 11 directors
- 44 other craftsmen and professionals

They became unemployed by failing in one or more of the following ways to "cooperate" with the House Committee on

The Blacklist and The Greylist

American Activities in 1947:
(a) by invoking the First Amendment to the Constitution, protecting freedom of speech and association;
(b) by invoking the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution, protecting a witness from being required to testify against himself;
(c) by not appearing before the Committee as an informer after being named as a Communist, or former Communist, by an informer.

The "greylist" includes hundreds of studio craftsmen and professionals who are partially unemployed; that is, whose employability in the studios is limited in varying degrees. They become "greylisted" by failing to repudiate (convincingly) activities such as the following:
(a) support for New Deal or Independent political organizations such as the Hollywood Democratic Committee and Progressive Citizens of America;
(b) support for anti-Fascist organizations such as the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League and the Committee to Aid Spanish Refugees;
(c) support for organizations responsible for civilian war work in World War II, such as the Hollywood Writer's Mobilization and the Actors Lab;
(d) attending or teaching at schools such as the League of American Writers School and the People's Educational Center;
(e) subscribing to left-wing publications such as the National Guardian and the People's World, or being mentioned favorably in such publications;
(g) opposing the Un-American Activities Committee by such actions as signing the Amicus Curiae brief in behalf of the Hollywood 10 and supporting the Committee for the First Amendment;
(h) union activity, such as signing a nominating petition for a blacklisted person and contributing to a strike welfare fund;
(i) expressing disapproval of informers, through word or deed.

The Blacklist and the Greylist authors were threatened by blacklisters and organizations of liberal democracy began to crumble.

The liberal, driven into a corner, had the choice of continuing to defy the Committee (and face blacklisting), or to conform. Increasingly, he conformed, and, with rarer and rarer exceptions, he has continued to conform since 1947.

A set of rigid requirements has been established to make him employable. His office exists in every studio. Here the liberal is required to sign affidavits, denying or explaining positions of his past involvement with "subversive" activity. If he has been a member of the Committee for the First Amendment, he must state that he was "mistaken" and "unwillingly" and "unconsciously" employed by one simple, but by now commonplace, act: he appears before the Committee, denies any witch-hunt and unfair others—and turns informer.

The result is that the inquisitorial cabal and its allies control both the liberal's employment and his political life. Some liberals have willingly embraced the new loyalty, announcing their approval of the blacklist and their support of the Un-American Committee's objectives. Others, sickened by the developments, have refused to repudiate their past values and are out of the industry.

For those who remain—and they are the rare and the brave—there is the retreat of the intellectual who may exprene in a world dominated by the blacklist. They may deplore the blacklist, but they dare not oppose it for fear of being victimized by it. As the blacklist endures, the once clear voice of the liberal is silenced. The effect of this silence on the content and the quality of motion pictures is the subject of this study.

Inevitably, the conditions under which this study can be made and reflected in their work. It would indeed be surprising if the liberal film-maker were an exception to the rule. But current trends in the content of pictures, let us be reminded of the shape and content that existed before the Un-American Committee began to police the Hollywood industry, and that we can demonstrate what was against what was.

WHAT WAS

The great upheaval in the social and political consciousness of the American people in the mid-thirties, when progressive concepts fired the imaginations of millions, found some expression in the Hollywood film. While it is true that Hollywood has never been an accurate barometer of the national consciousness, and that the bulk of its product has little to do with the realities of American life, the New Deal period gave us a number of notable pictures.


During the war years a number of men responsible for the above films went into the service. Those who remained continued to explore their new craft, and the new virtues directed or directed films with significant contributions during the war period. Their contributions included:

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MORE ON BLACKLIST AND ITS EFFECT ON CONTENT

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“All That Money Can Buy”, “The Grapes of Wrath”, “Citizen Kane”, “How Green Was My Valley”, “The Long Voyage Home”, “Hail the Conquering Hero”, “The Great McGinty”, “The Oxbow Incident”, and “This Land is Mine”. War films of the same genre included “A Medal for Benny”, “So Proudly We Hail”, “This is the Army”, “The More the Merrier” and “Casablanca”. In these films, an emphasis on democratic values was often coupled with irreverence and satire—a sharp contrast to the rigid, humorless demands of Herr Goebbels’ film section.

With the end of the war, the same tradition was carried forward in such films as: “The FarewellDaughter”, “The Best Years of our Lives”, “Gentlemen’s Agreement”, “Wilson” and several others. All these distinguished films reflect, in varying degrees, some aspect of the humanist, democratic and anti-fascist values that were the life blood of Americans during the New Deal and the war against fascism. Many of them contained elements of vigorous social criticism. The “controversial” subject—whether it be political corruption, minority prejudice, a violation of civil liberties, the struggles of working people or the nature of fascism—was scarcely if ever tackled head-on, but liberal film-makers did not run away from it, either. And hereby hangs a point. All the above films were made by employable people. I have excluded from this list the works of writers, directors and producers now officially proscribed by the blacklist. By “officially” I mean those men and women identified by informers, erroneously or not, as communists or former communists in testimony before the Un-American Activities Committee, and who have not themselves appeared before the Committee as informers.


What is immediately apparent in the films of these blacklist people is the striking similarity to the humanist, democratic and anti-fascist content found in the films of the aforementioned non-blacklisted people. There was nothing alien to American interest in any of these pictures. But if the Un-American Committee could charge that the alleged communist was injecting dangerous ideas into film, the same charge, by simple logic, applied to the pro-fascist liberal—and it did. It should also be apparent that I am directing the reader’s attention to the cream of the crop—not to the bulk of the Hollywood product, but to a small and significant cluster of pictures that dealt with some aspect of reality in our time. Hollywood’s run-of-the-mill pictures—with its salacious treatment of sex, its preoccupation with crime, its tendency toward unmotivated violence—has been with us for a long, long time. Blacklisting did not debase this staple commodity; it was already debased.

But for anyone to conclude thereby (and I have heard it said) that there has been no appreciable change in the content of pictures, is to miss the point. Would we say of the publishing industry that there is no significant trend in American literature merely because murder mysteries and trashy sex novels have long been with us?

In describing what was, I have confined myself to Hollywood’s “best”—because it is my contention that this “best” is no longer with us. All the pictures I have so far listed are pre-1947, pre-blacklist; all were financially successful; most of them received critical acclaim and broad audience response; and each of them—whether created by communists or non-communists, New Dealers or maverick Republicans—reflected and enhanced the spirit of liberalism.

So much for what was. As to what is, an initial examination of the recent work of a number of distinguished (and employable) film-makers may prove illuminating.

WHAT IS

John Ford once directed a series of socially oriented films that is without equal in American motion pictures. “The Informer”, “The Grapes of Wrath”, “Young Mr. Lincoln”, “How Green Was My Valley” and others. In recent years, however, his themes have not been distinguishable in general from the bulk of Hollywood product.

In “The Quiet Man” (1952), he offered stereotypes of Irish quaintness—moodyness and violence in place of the deep compassion and pride he expressed toward the Irish struggle for independence in “The Informer.” His most recent film, “The Long Grey Line” is a sentimental institutional tribute to West Point and the career officers of the U. S. Army.

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setback for tv news

Edward R. Murrow's "See It Now," one of the most thoughtful attempts to explore TV as a medium of reportage, has been dropped by Alcoa, a seven-hour half-hour show. Since Alcoa has retained its option on the time and has not at this date announced a show to replace Murrow, audience demand can affect the situation. Among the outstanding programs broadcast by Murrow in the last year were an interview with Alekhine, a survey of reactions to the Supreme Court's desegregation ruling, a survey of efforts to ban books in California libraries.

By 1951, when blacklisting became widespread, the cycle had ended, not to be resumed. Hollywood had merely scratched the surface, and any attempt to probe more deeply into the realities of Negro life would only have increased the wrath of the witch-hunters. It goes without saying that the content of the Holly- wood's most famous films was not transformed overnight with the initial assault of the witch-hunters in 1947, because a continuing re-make re-investigation and blacklisting as as- ternal wholesale blacklisting for nearly four years. During this period, a small moiety of film-makers did manage to maintain elements of humanism in their work. ("Born Yesterday", "Another Part of the Forest", "Rachel and the Stranger" and other films.) But by 1951, with most of the liberals in full re- cessional, the blacklists were developing more than a hundred top-flight artists, liberal ideas in film had reached a vanishing point. With the deterioration of humanist and democratic themes, other themes have moved in to fill the vacuum. They reflect specifically the cultural demands of the Committee on Un-American Activities in general followed the ideological trends of the cold war.

ANTI-COMMUNIST FILMS

In 1947, the Un-American Activities Committee bluntly asked Hollywood producers appearing before it to name friendly witnesses why no anti- Communist films had been produced. The reply was that there would be, and there have been. Most of them have been cops-and-robbers stuff, spv melodramas, in which old formulas were dusted off and Communists were substituted for jewel thieves, gangsters, kidnappers and murderers. Efforts to probe with Communism as a political philosophy or as an economic program have been all but non-existent. Leo McCarey's suggestion in "My Son, John" that reading books and disinterested in competitive sports and interested in how the Negro was accepted by the white man, was not well received by the critics, who may tend to prefer reading to fighting. Yet, the picture's appeal is on the black- list. The liberals among those who remain employable in the studio are not in a position to earn criticism as make-believers, but deny it to themselves. The dilemma that dominates the
NOT ONLY THE BLACKLISTED ARE VICTIMS

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liberal's personal or political life dominates his creative life as well. Thus, given a social subject to translate into film, the internalgalvanicspells set the work in the liberal. He prevents himself from coming to grips with his subject-matter. His justification is that he did come to grips with it, the studio would order revisions or stop the film's production.

It is not that restrictions on content are new. They have always existed for the liberal in the studios. Many themes were verboten, and those available to him were subject to surveillance or veto of the men controlling the purse strings. But despite the restrictions, the liberal was able to function culturally in the past.

Moreover, the films that expressed liberal and democratic convictions were successful. They had to be. They would not have been made otherwise.

THE BUSINESS MAN

In 1947, a number of "friendly witnesses" before the Un-American Activities Committee expressed concern for the future of the business man had fallen on the screen. Members of the committee heartily concurred in the view that unsympathetic treatment of the business man is fundamentally subversive.

The only immediate response of the industry was to point out that several of its productions, notably "American Romance," had lauded the industrialist; and thereafter the industry forbade itself films like "The Little Foxes" and "The Best Years of Our Lives".

Recently, however, the industry appears to have undertaken a campaign to glorify the business man. In "Executive Suite" the vice-president who wins control of a factory is the one who views business as service to the public. The picture states that business awards increased power to the idealists in its executive ranks, and shorts aside those who are primarily interested in making profits.

In the comedy "Sabrina," a seemingly cold, hard-working industrialist proves to have not only superior sex-appeal, but a loving nature, wit and idealism about the function of business. The capital expansion of his company into Puerto Rico, he explains, is gratifying to him because it provides employment for the natives and puts shoes on their children.

The sophisticated industrialist in "A Woman's Way," the most successful as best-qualified for promotion to General Manager not the man who is happily married, not the man who tends to be happily married, but the man with the strength of character to get rid of the wife who is a handicap to him.

"Patterns," originally a television play showing that a brutal executive is really a heroic figure, was grabbed up for production in Hollywood.

Its author was immediately given a studio contract. Industry may destroy weak individuals in its forward march, the teleplay said, but it brings to the heights of humor and sentiment the men who fight for its welfare mercilessly. As I recall, the industrialist said, "This company is my religion.

But perhaps I was only in effect.

MILITARY FILMS

Previous articles in The Hollywood Review ("Hollywood and Kore", Vol. I, no. 1; "From Here to Eternity", Vol. I, no. 3) have analyzed recent trends in the treatment of the military in Hollywood. It can be noted in addition that the treatment of the military in recent films is similar in certain respects to the treatment of business.

Eight years have passed since the forces of reaction, spearheaded by the Un-American Activities Committee, inaugurated the blacklist in Hollywood. With the evidence at hand today, the conclusion is inescapable that the immediate victims of the blacklist—those who refused to submit to the Committee's demands—were not its ultimate target.

It was the liberal who would remain employable that the Committee was after; and the ultimate objective was the elimination of the liberal's ideas from the screen. In this objective the Committee has largely succeeded. By succumbing to political conformity, the liberal film-maker has accommodated to cultural conformity. He has been "chased" indeed—not by his erstwhile leftwing colleagues, but by his own employers, who promised him that once the industry cleaned house, once he was rid of associates who might subvert or corrupt him, he could go on to make greater humanistic pictures.

It didn't turn out that way. The housecleaning swept out his own ideological brethren—those women with whom he had worked.

In this connection it is interesting to note the cultural role of the Committee. The Committee has shown how to publicize its informers' "liberation" from the thralldom of communist thought-control. The record of Elia Kazan will serve, because he is perhaps the most talented of his kind.

Prior to turning informer, Kazan directed a number of excellent liberal films: "Boomerang," "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" and "Gentlemen's Agreement." Since purging himself, the liberated Kazan has given us, in succession: "Viva Zapata" (theme: power corrupts revolutionaries); "On the Waterfront" (theme: courageous steelfigion frees sheep-like longshoremen from tyranny of corrupt union); and "East of Eden" (theme: good is really evil and really good in this hopeless, meaningless world). But informers are a special breed, and, except for that one concerned with their artistic deterioration. What concerns us is the future of the liberal film-maker in America. The liberal who wants to make decent American pictures, the film-maker who saved his job and lost his democratic heritage. What prospect has he of regaining this heritage? Of expressing it in his art?

Today a clean new word is blowing across the nation. The McCarthyite blitz has been definitely reined, and in the struggle to preserve our democratic institutions the American people have recently won some significant, if not yet decisive, victories. Most important of all, the propaganda that peace seemed brighter now than at any time since the cold war began.

This change in the political climate is only beginning to be felt in Hollywood. There is no reflection of it at all in the current product. Reactivity's eight years of siege and assault have immobilized the Hollywood liberal. He is still ridden with fears and doubts; his allies have been dispersed, and he feels himself alone in a company town.

This is not to say that the Hollywood liberal is beyond recovery. A great democratic upsurge in the country would certainly help to restore his morale. But that alone would not cause him to renew the struggle for liberal and democratic values. The liberal will not recover his initiative— as artist or citizen—until he fights the every thing he has brought to this pass—the blacklist, for the blacklisting of other men was, in essence, the blacklisting of his own liberal ideas. Unless American society squarely faces up to this fact, and acts upon it, he is not likely to create the kind of motion pictures that once gave him stature.

VIEW FROM THE SUMMIT

Last spring the studios shied away from the State Department's express intention to sell films to Russia. Studio spokesmen referred to the risk of incurring disapproval in certain sections of American opinion. It was a striking illustration of the studios' capitulation to McCarthy standards of Americanism in the era of the blacklist.

With agreement at Geneva that increased trade and travel between East and West are an important key to re-building peaceful world relations, with the Russians on record as wanting to see American films, with artists, farmers, churchmen and diplomats engaging in an exchange of delegations between East and West, the studios may now be ready to reconsider their self-imposed boycott.

They may even start thinking about matching Senator Fulbright's contribution to dramatizing the American will toward peace.

As the Russian physiologist Pavlov showed with his Russian dogs, even a conditioned reflex as severe as cringing when the word "Russia" is said, can be unlearned.

The Author's Conclusion

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