

Chapter 2

Raising the Cry of Alarm: Popular Nationalism, World War Two, and the New Political Filmmaking

In Bloomington, Ind., Mary Weaver, 11, playing hide-and-seek, counted to a hundred by fives, then shouted "Hitler!" This, she explained, meant "Ready or not, here I come!"

—*Time*, October 2, 1939

The encounter with European fascism marked a critical transition in American society and culture, and between the 1920s and the 1940s, American consciousness underwent a profound shift from fervent isolationism to equally fervent interventionism. The growing threat of fascism—at home as well as abroad—powerfully reinforced the 1930s elaboration of an American Way of Life and of an imagined community grounded in ethnic tolerance, national unity, and democratic traditions. Hollywood films played a key role in articulating this antifascist popular nationalism, beginning in the late 1930s with a cycle of films that raised the cry of alarm to the American people about the dangers of fascism and ushered in a new era of "political" filmmaking.

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The propaganda needs of the Second World War had a wide-ranging impact on Hollywood, fostering a new relationship between the film industry and the state, but also heightening public concerns about film as an ideological tool. Many Americans were suspicious of propaganda in general, remembering the sensationalism of George Creel's Committee on Public Information during the First World War and aware of the more recent manipulation of mass media by the Nazis in their rise to power. Nonetheless, the need to counter fascist propaganda spurred an acceptance, however uneasy, of propaganda in the service of democracy. Throughout the 1940s, many in Hollywood pointed to "freedom of the screen" as one of the primary distinctions between American democracy and fascist repression—though the postwar period proved that this phrase had multiple meanings and interpretations. During the war years, the film industry cooperated fully with the Office of War Information (OWI) and its guidelines for explaining to the American public "why we fight." Ironically, perhaps, Hollywood's avid response to the OWI's wartime call for greater realism in movies ultimately worked to undermine the Production Code, the industry's internal censorship body, a change that had significant implications for the postwar period. Finally, the wartime urgency to place film in service to the state also helped to legitimize radical filmmakers, whose political "expertise" became an asset rather than a liability. In many ways, however, the imagined community constructed during the

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war years simply papered over fundamental tensions and divisions that became apparent after the war, and the popular nationalism articulated in World War Two Hollywood merely set the stage for the bitter struggle over the meaning of Americanism that dominated the postwar period.

Popular Nationalism between the Wars

One of the hallmarks of the interwar years was the rise of popular nationalisms across the political spectrum, as diverse peoples and countries struggled to address the complex and often devastating fallout of the First World War and the worldwide depression. Casting the history of twentieth-century Europe as a struggle between competing ideologies—fascism, Communism, liberalism—historian Mark Mazower argues that the ascendancy of the Right in the 1920s and 1930s was not particularly surprising, given liberalism's shallow roots in much of Europe and the inability of most liberal governments to impose order in a period of radical political and economic dislocation. To many in Europe, and indeed, in the United States, liberalism seemed impotent in the face of widespread economic depression and staggering inflation, violent labor unrest, ethnic and regional tensions, and a growing sense of a world out of control. Fascism, on the other hand, appealed directly to these anxieties and fears, and its antidemocratic authoritarianism seemed a small price to pay for an end to this chaos and a return to order and prosperity.¹

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The rise of European fascism had little negative impact on the political consciousness of most Americans until well into the 1930s. Though the Italian Fascist Party was founded in 1919 and came to power in 1922 under the leadership of Benito Mussolini, during the 1920s few Americans found the regime particularly threatening, and Il Duce himself—with his elaborate uniforms and pompous posturing—was more a source of bemusement than concern or fear. In fact, for some Americans, Italian fascism seemed to be a compelling social and political experiment, and they were drawn to its taming of unruly political unrest, its modernist aesthetic, and its efficiency. Though the Nazi regime, with its virulent anti-Semitism and expansionist drive, presented a different kind of challenge to democracy, some Americans also found much to admire in the German variant of fascism, particularly its aggressive anti-Communism.²

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Americans, too, were not always fully informed of the situation in Europe. Foreign correspondents, many of whom had lived in Europe throughout the 1920s and were only too aware of the profound impact of the fascist regimes on everyday life, were among the first to raise the cry of alarm about the dangers of German fascism. From their front-row seat, American journalists watched and reported with growing apprehension Germany's transition from the economic dislocation

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and political despair of the Weimar Republic to the political repression and violence of National Socialism. The foreign correspondents walked a dangerous tightrope in their reportage: though they went to great lengths to uncover and tell the truth about the menace of fascism, and to counteract the Nazis' deliberate misinformation campaign, they also worked under an immense burden of censorship imposed by the state propaganda apparatus.³

Despite the constraints imposed by the Nazi regime, foreign correspondents used their unique position as eyewitnesses to provide American readers with daily reports of the growing fascist menace. As Deborah Lipstadt points out, "There was practically no aspect of the Nazi horrors which was not publicly known in some detail long before the camps were opened in 1945." However, Lipstadt also forcefully demonstrates that the way that critical information was presented in the national press shaped American perceptions of Germany and Nazism. Many newspaper editors—either unable to believe the dispatches from abroad, unwilling to discount the official reports issued by the Nazi government, or perhaps remembering the backlash against the reports of German atrocities in Belgium during the First World War—strove to present a "balanced" view of international events, or even buried the more controversial stories in the back pages of their newspapers. These journalistic strategies tended to cast doubt on the accuracy and reliability of reports of Nazi barbarism and repression and ultimately reinforced the isolationist sentiments of the American people.⁴ Well into the 1930s, then, it was possible for many Americans to see fascism as a specifically European problem, with little relevance for the United States.

Nonetheless, during the Depression years, the United States, like Germany, explicitly sought to build a national culture that could provide unity to a diverse people in crisis. The resulting articulation of an American Way of Life represented class (and, to a certain extent, race and gender) as secondary to "our" common identity as Americans. This shift was reinforced by key demographic and social changes during the 1920s and 1930s, as declining immigration and centralizing tendencies within industry, communications, and culture—from radio and movies to chain stores and standardized national brands—worked to nationalize and homogenize the public and private experiences of most Americans, blurring divisions of class and taste and weakening traditional ethnic loyalties.⁵

By the 1930s, the idea of an "average American" was widely disseminated by the advertising industry and a wide array of experts, from pollsters such as George Gallup to social scientists such as Robert and Helen Lynd, famous for their ethnography *Middletown* (1937), a study of a "typical" American city.⁶ At the same time, the new Americanism also embraced a subtly assimilationist cultural pluralism, based on the belief that "diversity was a good thing and always to be

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prized—unless, of course, it was 'divisive,' for divisiveness was somehow bad, even though pluralism was good." During the 1930s, this amorphous cultural pluralism became a powerful paradigm through which Americans reconciled the homogenizing tendencies of industrial capitalism and "mass society" and the desire to preserve heterogeneity and individuality.⁷

The more populist and democratizing potential of the new Americanism of the 1930s can be seen in the synergy between the Popular Front, with its inclusionary cultural politics, and the New Deal, with its wide-ranging economic reforms, support for the labor movement, and inclusion of working-class Catholics and Jews and, to some extent, African Americans in the New Deal political coalition. Roosevelt's famous Fireside Chats, too, were part of an explicit nationalizing project, as the president opened each of his broadcasts with the words "My fellow Americans," and invoked tradition, history, and a pantheon of American heroes—Jefferson, Paine, and especially Lincoln—to legitimize the innovations of the New Deal.⁸ The "rediscovery" of America drew in a wide array of artists and intellectuals and produced such varied articulations as Martha Graham's choreography for Aaron Copland's "Appalachian Spring," Carl Sandburg's "The People, Yes!" and Paul Robeson's "Ballad for Americans."⁹

Though this new, inclusive Americanism represented a fundamental reorientation in national consciousness, the process was highly contested and necessarily incomplete. Indeed, for some in the United States, as in Germany, the political and economic dislocation of the Depression fueled a search for panaceas and scapegoats. Many of the Americans who sought solace for their frustration and fear in reactionary political movements were drawn from the old lower-middle classes, "men and women clinging precariously to hard-won middle-class lifestyles; people with valued but imperiled stakes in their local communities."¹⁰ The reactionary ideology of the 1930s drew on an older American tradition of xenophobic nativism. By the 1920s, four decades of massive immigration had created a significant "foreign" presence in the United States, particularly in urban areas, that seemed a profound challenge to the social order and the hegemony of native-born Americans—white Anglo-Saxon Protestants caught up in their own fears of "race suicide." The newer immigrants, often Jewish or Catholic and seemingly attracted to such supposedly imported ideologies as socialism or militant trade unionism, appeared to be profoundly "unmeltable," resistant to the myriad attempts at Americanization. This antimodernist nativism pervaded the 1920s, but it was particularly visible in the scientific racism of the eugenics movement, the xenophobia of the "100 percent American" movement, the sharp resurgence in the Ku Klux Klan, the post-World War One Red Scare (directed primarily at immigrant radicals), and in a series of draconian immigration restriction acts.¹¹

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Not surprisingly, Jews were particularly disturbing to American nativists, who in the 1930s echoed Nazi arguments that Jewish manipulation of international finance had fueled both the Depression and American entry into the First World War. Thus, the phrase "international bankers" served as a code for the alleged control of world finance by Jews—though Jews were just as often condemned as leaders of a worldwide Communist conspiracy. The Jewish-Communist conspiracy charge was frequently leveled at the film industry, and throughout the 1930s, right-wing groups called for boycotts of Hollywood's corrupting and "un-American" products.¹² At the heart of this obsession with Jewish "internationalism" was the very question of their Americanness; and "internationalist," a term with a whole constellation of implications—foreignness, inability to assimilate, refusal to repudiate the heritage of Judaism, lack of nationalist feeling or patriotic commitment—became one of the primary perjoratives hurled at Jews. Caught between a rock and a hard place, Jews were condemned for clinging too closely to their identity and heritage as Jews, for being "clannish," at the same time that they were denounced as overly aggressive, as social climbers who pushed their way into a society that did not welcome them.¹³

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The New Deal, with a reform agenda that some Americans viewed as socialistic, was a particular target of the nativists. Beginning with Roosevelt's inauguration as president in 1933, American anti-Semites denounced him as a "Jew-lover" and attacked the New Deal as the "Jew Deal." Certainly, Jewish intellectuals and activists formed an important part of the new Democratic coalition responsible for the election of Roosevelt. In addition, Jews held a greater number of key positions under FDR than in any previous administration, and labor leaders such as Sidney Hillman and Rose Schneiderman, and Supreme Court Justices Felix Frankfurter and Louis Brandeis, were prominent among Roosevelt's most trusted advisors and friends.¹⁴ All of these factors, in the hands of anti-Semites, served as proof of Jewish domination of the federal government. In May 1934, for example, Pennsylvania Congressman Louis McFadden delivered a blatantly anti-Semitic speech on the floor of Congress, linking Roosevelt with a Jewish plan for world domination. In his magazine *Defender*, notorious anti-Semite Gerald Winrod offered a genetic explanation for Roosevelt's supposed participation in the Jewish conspiracy: Roosevelt himself was secretly a Jew. Winrod warned that this alleged Jewishness "proves unmistakably, that the Roosevelt administration offers a biological as well as a political problem. . . . It is therefore, as natural to him to be radical as it is for others to be true Americans. . . . He is not one of us!"¹⁵

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By the summer of 1935, the American political situation seemed an eerie reflection of events in Europe. Contemporary observers saw an ominous potential for fascism in the significant popular support for an astonishing array of populist demagogues, Christian fundamentalist preachers, Nazi sympathizers, and other

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self-appointed messiahs. Journalist Raymond Gram Swing, in his 1935 book *Forerunners of American Fascism*, insisted that Father Charles Coughlin, the infamous "Radio Priest," and Louisiana governor Huey Long were American versions of Hitler and Mussolini.¹⁶ That same year, Sinclair Lewis drew on the shenanigans of Long and Coughlin to depict the rise of a fictional American fascist regime in his satiric novel *It Can't Happen Here*.¹⁷

Though not overtly anti-Semitic, Huey Long's Share Our Wealth program, and to a certain extent the pension plans advocated by Dr. Francis E. Townsend and others, were particularly threatening. Mirroring European fascism's simultaneous appeal to the Right and Left, the pension plans combined a quasi-socialistic, anticapitalist appeal to the disaffected classes with an embrace of traditional values and a plea for social stability to assuage the bourgeoisie and capitalists. Though frequently derided as economically unsound, these quick-fix schemes proved to have enormous appeal for ordinary Americans alarmed by the upsurge in union and radical militancy and frustrated by the uneven and sometimes unsettling impact of New Deal reforms. In 1935, after only a year of organizing, 27,000 Share Our Wealth clubs were in operation, and Long claimed to have nearly eight million supporters from the midwestern farm belt and northern industrial centers as well as Louisiana and the South. Concerned that such wide-ranging support represented a significant threat to Roosevelt's plans for a second presidential term, in the summer of 1935 the Democratic National Committee conducted a secret poll that revealed that between three and four million Americans supported Long's wealth-sharing scheme and might vote for him as a third-party presidential candidate.¹⁸

Father Charles Coughlin commanded an equally impressive following, particularly among middle- and lower-class Catholics,¹⁹ and millions listened to his weekly radio show. Though at first Coughlin was not overtly anti-Semitic, by the late 1930s the political, cultural, and economic machinations perpetuated by world Jewry and the international conspiracy to undermine Christian civilization had become key themes in his broadcasts, as well as in his magazine, *Social Justice*. In the summer of 1938, as the situation in Europe became increasingly volatile, Coughlin reprinted a version of the notorious Protocols of the Elders of Zion, the alleged blueprint for Jewish world domination.²⁰ In embracing the Protocols, Coughlin "crossed the Rubicon of political anti-Semitism," as Donald Warren describes it. After 1938, Coughlin's pronouncements were not only overtly anti-Semitic, but also increasingly profascist. For example, after *Kristallnacht*, his broadcast explained that German anti-Semitism was a natural response to the Jewish-Communist conspiracy. Thus, according to Coughlin, the Nazi campaign against the Jews was a necessary defense against Communism.²¹

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Long and Coughlin, however, were only the best-known of the myriad spokesmen for the disaffected. The German-American Bund, founded in 1933 and led by Fritz Kuhn, a German veteran of the First World War, represented the Nazi Party in America, complete with uniforms, swastika armbands, goose-stepping, drill camps, and youth indoctrination. Boasting nearly 25,000 members, the Bund, along with Coughlin, represented the far-Right fringe of American anti-Semitism: "'We do not consider the Jew as a man,' said Bund leader Kuhn, while one of his lieutenants spoke of the eventual need 'to wipe out the Jew pigs.'"²² Though not officially connected to the Nazis, William Dudley Pelley founded the Silver Shirt Legion the day after Hitler took power in Germany in March 1933, and he often spoke and wrote of his dream of becoming an "American Hitler." Kansas-based Reverend Gerald B. Winrod organized fundamentalist Protestants into the Defenders of the Christian Faith; his mouthpiece, *Defender Magazine*, had a circulation topping 100,000. The Black Legion, a secret society founded by a Ku Klux Klan member, flourished in the Midwest and was a powerful force within the auto industry in Detroit. The flamboyant Gerald L. K. Smith, once described as "the most persistently successful of America's anti-Jewish propagandists" and "the most infamous American fascist," was a former fundamentalist preacher who worked with Huey Long's political machine, the Townsend movement, Coughlin's Social Justice movement, and Pelley's Silver Shirts, before forming his own Committee of One Million.²³

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The year 1938 marked a critical turning point in the campaign against Jews, both at home and abroad. In Germany, the Nazis stepped up their crusade to rid the Fatherland of the Jews. In the spring came the *Anschluss*, the Nazi annexation of Austria. In the fall, Polish Jews were deported *en masse* from Germany. In November, after a Jewish youth murdered a minor Nazi functionary in Paris, the Nazis retaliated with *Kristallnacht*, a highly organized campaign of anti-Semitic terror in which Jewish businesses were burned and looted and Jews were beaten on the streets, dragged from their homes, arrested, and herded into jails and camps. As events in Europe began to take on a terrible urgency, anti-Semitism in the United States also became increasingly virulent, dominating the political rhetoric and activism of reactionary spokesmen and exerting a powerful influence on public policy, particularly in the debate over European refugees from fascism. In early 1939, in response to *Kristallnacht*, Senator Robert Wagner and Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers cosponsored a bill to allow 20,000 refugee children (above the immigration quota) into the United States over a two-year period. Despite support from a wide range of organizations, from the YMCA to the AFL and CIO, the bill met violent opposition from "patriotic" groups such as the American Legion and the Daughters of the American Revolution. Rallying around the 1920s slogan "America for the Americans," opponents rekindled the nativist arguments of previous decades. Pointing to the many American children who were

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hungry and homeless to argue that charity should begin at home, critics claimed that the 20,000 would simply be an opening wedge for thousands more. And as the wife of the U.S. Commissioner of Immigration commented: "20,000 children would all too soon grow up into 20,000 ugly adults."²⁴ Polls indicated that such sentiments were widely shared, and President Roosevelt, notoriously sensitive to public opinion, chose to keep his distance. The sponsors of the bill, cowed by the overt anti-Semitism of the opposition and unwilling to press the issue, ultimately decided not to bring it to a vote.²⁵

The rising tide of domestic anti-Semitism was particularly alarming to leaders of American Jewish defense organizations such as the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL); they feared that American Jews, like their German counterparts, might be "lolling in a false sense of security" that could have similarly disastrous results. Thus, in 1937, as a "practical safety measure," the AJC embarked on a wide-ranging effort to measure the level and degree of anti-Jewish sentiment and support for fascist ideologies among the American people. Drawing on the polling techniques developed by Elmo Roper and others to analyze political campaigns, the AJC initiated a series of nationwide surveys focusing on the public image of the Jew and beliefs concerning the position and treatment of Jews in American society.²⁶

Fourteen polls between March 1938 and February 1946 revealed that between one-third and one-half of the population believed that Jews had too much power in the United States. In 1938, between 12 and 25 percent of Americans advocated measures to reduce the power of the Jews, including restricting access to business and government, and even driving Jews out of the country altogether. Concerns about Jewish power tended to focus primarily on the economic sphere. Between 1938 and 1946, between 30 and 50 percent of those polled regularly indicated that Jews had too much power in the fields of finance, business, and commerce, while smaller numbers were concerned with Jewish power in politics. Interestingly, the number of those polled who believed that Jews held too much power in the entertainment industry declined significantly, from 21 percent in 1938 to a mere 9 percent in 1946.²⁷ At the same time, however, as fears of the Germans and Japanese receded toward the end of the war, the perceived threat posed by Jews remained stable, hovering between 15 and 24 percent as late as February 1946. The AJC researchers concluded from their poll data that anti-Semitism was deeply rooted in American culture.²⁸ As one AJC leader later wrote:

In light of events in Germany, these movements appeared a good deal more threatening than they might have during calmer times. If a preposterous paperhanger could unleash terror and persecution on the Jewish citizens of one of the world's most advanced countries, then

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anti-Semitic movements everywhere—even in America—had to be reckoned with as an authentic menace, no matter how fantastic their aims or how slim their chances of success.²⁹

Antifascist Filmmaking in Hollywood

By the late 1930s, antifascism dominated progressive politics in the film industry, as European refugees flooded into the film community and helped awaken Hollywood to the true scope of the Nazi threat. Many highly regarded artists (often leftists, or Jewish, or both) had fled Nazism and settled in Hollywood, bringing a refreshing cosmopolitanism to the film community and infusing Hollywood politics with a new internationalism. Their firsthand accounts of the dangers of fascism confirmed the stories told by Lillian Hellman, Ernest Hemingway, and other Americans who had witnessed the Spanish Civil War or Hitler's rise to power while living or travelling abroad. As actor Melvyn Douglas remembered: "I had only a dinner table interest in politics. My political involvement rose specifically out of the appearance of Nazism. Helen [Gahagan Douglas] and I went to Germany in 1936 where we were terrified, traumatized, and profoundly shocked by what we saw and heard. On our return we looked around for a group who knew what was going on—and found the Anti-Nazi League."³⁰

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The Hollywood Anti-Nazi League, founded in 1936, was a model of Popular Front collaboration, drawing support not only from liberals and leftists, including Adrian Scott, but also from a few studio executives such as Harry and Jack Warner. In addition to star-studded benefits, panels, and mass meetings, the League produced a biweekly newspaper, *Hollywood Now*, and two weekly radio shows that exposed the activities of both domestic and international fascists. The scope and energy of the Anti-Nazi League were enormous. In January 1937 alone, the League sponsored an interracial demonstration against Nazism featuring W. E. B. Du Bois, a forum on the Spanish Civil War featuring André Malraux, and a radio show that satirically reviewed "Four Years of Hitler."³¹

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Though the Hollywood progressive community was staunchly antifascist, most studio moguls were slow to rally to the cause. The rise of European fascism posed a quandary for American Jews, in Hollywood and across the nation. On the one hand, the overt anti-Semitism of Hitler's regime pushed Jewish liberals farther to the left. Screenwriter Samuel Raphaelson remembered, "There were a lot of liberals like me in Hollywood then who weren't communist. . . . But most Jews, because of their fear of anti-Semitism, contributed to all the antifascist causes. I felt that if the world were going to go communist or fascist, I'd rather see it go communist." The Jewish studio executives, on the other hand, found such a position unthinkable, and most of them steadfastly refused to work with or make

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contributions to the antifascist efforts in Hollywood. For the Hollywood moguls, political affiliation served as a significant touchstone of Americanness. As politically conservative as they were idealistically patriotic, the moguls were rock-ribbed Republicans almost to a man (with the notable exceptions of the brothers Warner and Samuel Goldwyn), and they deliberately sought political alliances with rabid conservatives like William Randolph Hearst and Joseph P. Kennedy. Indeed, Mayer's political naiveté was such that he was honestly relieved when his good friend Hearst assured him that "Hitler's motives were pure."³²

The assimilationist drive that led the film moguls to repudiate their foreignness (and often their Jewishness in the process) by embracing a politically conservative Americanism made it difficult for them to respond as Jews to the threat of fascism. In fact, some in Hollywood argued that the executives refused to take a stand against fascism as a way of proving to themselves as well as to the public that they were more American than Jewish. Certainly, the executives were extremely sensitive to the public perception of filmmaking as a Jewish industry. Many felt that it would be counterproductive to draw attention to themselves and to the industry by either working publicly against fascism or by making antifascist films. Harry Warner often reminded the other Hollywood moguls, "We've got to be aware that we are Jews . . . and that we will be looked upon by the community, not just Hollywood, of saying certain things *because* of being Jewish."³³

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Throughout the 1930s, the Hollywood moguls sought to distance themselves from the political situation in Europe and insisted that politics had no place in the business of making movies. In 1939, Paramount head Adolph Zukor summarized this position: "I don't think that Hollywood should deal with anything but entertainment. The newsreels take care of current events. To make films of political significance is a mistake. When [people] go to a theatre they want to forget. If it's entertainment, it's all right—but not propaganda."³⁴ Many Hollywood progressives noted that a significant percentage of the studios' profits lay in foreign distribution of American films and believed that financial self-interest lay behind the studio executives' refusal to take a stand against Hitler. As late as 1941, Louis B. Mayer took director William Wyler to task for the anti-German bias he detected in the early rushes of *Mrs. Miniver*:

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"We're not at war with anybody," Mayer explained. "This picture just shows these [English] people having a hard time, and it's very sympathetic to them, but it's not directed against the Germans."

"Mr. Mayer, you know what's going on, don't you?" Wyler protested.

"This is a big corporation," Mayer said. "I'm responsible to my stockholders. We have theaters all over the world, including a couple in Berlin. We don't make hate pictures. We don't hate anybody. We're not at

The Warner brothers were the exception to this general rule. Unlike most of the other Jewish executives, Harry Warner, seeing that the nation was in crisis and fearing a revolution, had embraced the Roosevelt coalition. He brought his brother Jack into the Democratic Party along with him, despite the younger man's misgivings. Harry Warner stood virtually alone among the Hollywood moguls in taking an early and vociferous stand against Nazism. Motivated by his deep faith in Judaism and his alarm over the rabid anti-Semitism of German fascism, Harry was one of the few film executives to publicly denounce Hitler's regime and to actively participate in organizations like the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League. Under Harry's leadership, Warner Bros. became the first studio to close its foreign offices and withdraw its films from distribution in fascist countries, sacrificing significant profits to take the moral high road. And though the younger and more flamboyant Jack Warner oversaw film production in Hollywood, it was Harry who controlled the purse strings from the studio's corporate offices in New York and who committed the studio to a broad program of antifascist films that included newsreels and cartoons as well as features.³⁶

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In many ways Warner Bros. was the logical studio to take the lead in antifascist filmmaking. From the early 1930s, Warner Bros. had made its reputation as Hollywood's scrappiest and most political studio with gritty, realistic films inspired by banner headlines and controversial social problems—films such as *Public Enemy* (1931) and *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang* (1932). By the late 1930s, both the looming specter of fascism in Europe and the resurgence of violently nativist and anti-Semitic organizations in the United States provided ample grist for the Warner Bros. movie mill. *Black Legion* (1936), *They Won't Forget* (1937), and *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* (1939)—all based on true stories—raised the cry of alarm about Nazism and the American potential for fascism.³⁷

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The controversial *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* illustrated the problems faced by overtly political films in Hollywood during this period. Screenwriter John Wexley, together with the European émigrés involved in the project, "saw the idea in terms of educating the public about the threat of pro-Nazi organizations in America." Based on intelligence gathered by an undercover FBI agent, the film was produced despite opposition from the Hays Office and the Production Code Administration (PCA), though allegedly it had the support of J. Edgar Hoover.³⁸ Nazi sympathizers were also outraged by the film: the German-American Bund filed a suit for \$500,000 in damages, while the Nazi government lodged a complaint with the State Department. Jack Warner recalled that the Hollywood moguls feared an anti-Semitic backlash. Warner—who had a flair for self-dramatization—responded indignantly:

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"Hurt what? Their pocketbooks? Listen, these murdering bastards killed our own man in Germany because he wouldn't heil Hitler. The Silver Shirts and the Bundists and all the rest of these hoods are marching in Los Angeles right now. There are high school kids with swastikas on their sleeves a few blocks from our studio. Is that what you want in exchange for some crummy film royalties out of Germany?"³⁹

Beginning in 1940, as foreign markets became closed to Hollywood, the studio executives became more interested in making antifascist films. Despite all the controversy, *Confessions* had proved successful at the box office, and other antifascist films trickled out of the studios, including Alfred Hitchcock's *Foreign Correspondent* (1940) and Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* (1940). The flow of pro-intervention movies like *Sergeant York*, *A Yank in the RAF*, and *Man Hunt* continued in 1941, despite objections from isolationist Congressmen that Hollywood was creating war hysteria.

A two-pronged political backlash against Hollywood in 1940 and 1941 confirmed the worst fears of the Hollywood Jews. In 1940, Texas Congressman Martin Dies—a founding father of the House Un-American Activities Committee—proclaimed Hollywood a "hotbed of communism."⁴⁰ A former Communist had provided him with a list of forty-two names of suspected Communists, which included such major stars as Frederich March, James Cagney, and Humphrey Bogart, and throughout the summer of 1940, with the cooperation of the studio executives, Dies conducted interviews in Los Angeles and "cleared" everyone who had been named except actor Lionel Stander, who was summarily fired by Republic Studio. Though Hollywood progressives were outraged by the investigation and Dorothy Parker accused Dies of seeking to control the film industry in order to "bring fascism to this country," the Hollywood moguls felt that they had gotten off lightly.⁴¹

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A year later, in the summer of 1941, Hollywood was targeted again for investigation, this time by rabidly isolationist senators in the America First movement. Charles Lindbergh, America First's most charismatic spokesman, warned a midwestern audience that Jewish control of the film industry, press, radio, and the government was the greatest danger facing America.⁴² Senator Burton Wheeler, an America Firster from Montana, claimed that Hollywood and the Roosevelt administration had conspired in a "violent propaganda campaign intending to incite the American people to the point where they will become involved in this war." Senator Gerald Nye of South Dakota reeled off the obviously Jewish names of the studio executives, leeringly suggesting that their Eastern European and Jewish heritage made them subject to dangerous "racial emotions" and compromised their patriotism and loyalty to the United States. Nye warned: "Unquestionably there are in Hollywood today, engaged by the motion picture

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industry, those who are naturally far more interested in the fate of their homelands than they are in the fortunes of the United States. . . . I would myself call it the most potent and dangerous 'fifth column' in our country."⁴³

In September, Nye and Wheeler embarked on a Senate investigation into Hollywood war propaganda, targeting a number of films including *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* and *Sergeant York*, as well as ten *March of Time* newsreels. This time, confident that they had the support of the American public as well as the Roosevelt administration, the Hollywood Jews decided to take a stand, and they hired Wendell Willkie, one-time Republican presidential candidate and author of the internationalist manifesto *One World*, to defend them. Willkie argued that the investigation was a waste of time since the studio moguls were indeed opposed to fascism. Without apology, he stated, "'We make no pretense of friendliness to Nazi Germany nor to the objectives and goals of this ruthless dictatorship. We abhor everything which Hitler represents.'" Twentieth Century–Fox mogul Darryl F. Zanuck testified that Hollywood films represented the very heart of patriotic Americanism:

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I look back and I recall picture after picture, pictures so strong and powerful that they sold the American way of life not only to America but to the entire world. They sold it so strongly that when dictators took over Italy and Germany, what did Hitler and his flunky, Mussolini, do? The first thing they did was ban our pictures, throw us out. They wanted no part of the American way of life.⁴⁴

By Willkie's calculation, only about 50 of the 1,100 Hollywood movies produced since 1939 had war-related themes, but he emphasized Hollywood's pride that those 50 films "do portray Nazism for what it is—a cruel, lustful, ruthless, and cynical force." Using the senators' blatant anti-Semitism against them, Willkie embarrassed Nye into revealing that he had seen only one of the targeted films, and the investigation went to committee after three weeks of testimony. Before the committee reconvened, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, and the issue became moot.⁴⁵

Hollywood Goes to War

The American entry into the Second World War temporarily silenced the critics of the film industry and had a profound impact on Hollywood filmmaking. Almost overnight any residual ambivalence toward "political" filmmaking disappeared, and the studios committed themselves to the war effort, producing both feature films and documentaries in the service of the state.⁴⁶

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The key challenge facing Hollywood (and Washington) was to create propaganda films that could not be accused of being propaganda—a term that was anathema

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to many Americans, conjuring the legacy of the Creel Committee's manipulation of the public during the First World War, on the one hand, and the blatant "mind-control" techniques used by the enemy, on the other. Army General George C. Marshall recognized the importance of an informed military in the war against fascism, arguing:

Young Americans, and young men of all free countries, are used to doing and thinking for themselves. They will prove not only equal, but superior to totalitarian soldiers, if—and this is a large if, indeed—they are given the answers as to why they are in uniform, and if the answers they get are worth fighting and dying for. . . . To win this war we must win the battle for men's minds. . . . I think films are the answer.⁴⁷

To produce a series of propaganda films explaining "why we fight" to the American military, General Marshall tapped Frank Capra, director of *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936), *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), and other films depicting the essential goodness of the common man and the inevitable triumph of decency and justice over greed and corruption. Between 1942 and 1945, Capra and a top-notch cadre of writers and directors produced seven one-hour films for the *Why We Fight* series. *Prelude to War* (1942) presented critical background to the conflict; *The Nazis Strike* (1942) and *Divide and Conquer* (1943) offered chilling insights into the tactics and ideology of the fascist juggernaut; *Battle of Britain*, *Battle of Russia*, and *Battle of China* (all 1943) valorized the antifascist struggles in specific Allied countries; and *War Comes to America* (1944) glorified the American national character. Though the series was intended primarily for American military audiences, Capra's most eloquent contributions—*Prelude to War* and *War Comes to America*—were screened in commercial theaters throughout the United States, while others were used to lift the morale of the Allies abroad.⁴⁸ Taken together, the *Why We Fight* series represents the most overt and sustained articulation of the major themes of wartime popular nationalism: 1) the war as a struggle between freedom and slavery; 2) the barbarism and intolerance of the enemy versus the civility and tolerance of the democracies; and 3) the strength of America as stemming from both its history of cultural diversity and its commitment to shared democratic ideals.⁴⁹

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"Freedom!" was the rallying cry of the Second World War, as Eric Foner has amply documented. In 1941, President Roosevelt explained "why we fight" in terms of the Four Freedoms—freedom from want, freedom of worship, freedom from fear, and freedom of speech. In June 1942, the Roosevelt administration created the Office of War Information (OWI) to oversee domestic propaganda efforts, using radio, film, the press, and other media to elaborate on the Four Freedoms as the embodiment of the principles of the New Deal and as essential American ideals worthy of international dissemination. Roosevelt himself compared the Four

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Freedoms to the Ten Commandments, the Magna Carta, and the Emancipation Proclamation. Indeed, history was frequently invoked during the war to buttress the rhetoric of freedom. For example, one OWI poster depicted an American family and their minister huddling together under the shadowy lash of fascism, under the title "This World Cannot Exist Half Slave and Half Free," adapting to the war against fascism Lincoln's Civil War calls for unity and moral purpose. Another poster drew an analogy between the Revolutionary War and the Second World War, linking the citizen-soldiers of 1778 to the GIs of 1943 through the headline, "Americans always fight for liberty."⁵⁰ This wartime imagery of the citizen-soldier drew on the mythology of the founding of the United States, in which ordinary citizens, responding voluntarily to the cry of alarm, took up arms against British and Hessian "invaders." During the Second World War, the mobilization of civilians was unprecedented in scope. Despite the fact that many of the men were there through involuntary conscription, the multiethnic composition of the armed forces reinforced the sense of the military as a site of democracy and bolstered the image of citizen-soldiers as ordinary men who fought and willingly gave their lives to defeat fascism and make the world free.⁵¹

Hollywood feature films echoed the democratic, pluralist popular nationalism articulated by Capra's documentary film series. The film industry's primary ally, as well as watchdog, in this work was the Office of War Information. White House aide Lewis Mellett, former editor of the *Washington Daily News*, was in charge of coordinating government films as well as establishing a liaison with the Hollywood studios. Roosevelt, anxious to enlist the power of movies for the war effort but remembering the public backlash against sensationalistic World War One propaganda, was also determined that neither the government nor the film industry could be charged with blatantly manipulating public opinion. In the spring of 1942, Roosevelt explained to *Fortune* magazine: "The American motion picture is one of our most effective mediums in informing and entertaining our citizens. The motion picture must remain free insofar as national security will permit. I want no censorship of the motion picture." Mellett, too, assured the Hollywood executives that the government would not encroach in any way on the studios' autonomy and suggested instead that the studios submit screenplays to the OWI for review and suggestions. Nelson Poynter, head of the OWI's office in Los Angeles, remembered having difficulties convincing the studios that the OWI had no censorship authority and that he simply wanted to help the studios incorporate the government message into their films.⁵² Ironically, the OWI's emphasis on realism in wartime films ultimately worked to undermine the authority of the Production Code and opened the door, however slightly, in the postwar period to issues—from adultery to political corruption to racial discrimination—that previously had been off-limits.

To ensure that Hollywood films would deal fully and correctly with the issues at hand, the OWI provided a set of guidelines for the studios, including seven questions for filmmakers to consider, such as "Will this picture help win the war?" and "Does the picture tell the truth or will the young people of today have reason to say they were misled by propaganda?" The OWI manual also addressed specific issues that they hoped Hollywood films would dramatize. The section "Why We Fight," for example, urged Hollywood to show that this was a "people's war," a continuation of the revolutionary struggle begun in 1776, and that all Americans, regardless of class, race, or ethnicity, had a stake in the Allied victory. The section titled "The Enemy" emphasized that the foes of democracy were not simply the Axis countries, but anyone with antidemocratic tendencies, from fifth-columnists and saboteurs to the uncommitted and pessimistic. The goal articulated in "The Home Front" section was to show Americans working together and sacrificing equally, whether buying war bonds or bringing their own sugar when dining with friends. Women were to be depicted carrying on heroically in the absence of their men, shouldering their share in war industries and volunteer work, and happily placing their children in day care. The OWI manual functioned, in effect, as a second production code, rivaling that of the Breen Office, though many in Hollywood, particularly progressives, found in the OWI code an ideological vision that matched their own.⁵³

Hollywood's commitment to the war effort and the OWI guidelines was impressive. As Neil Gabler put it, "Draped in the flag, the Hollywood Jews were deliriously patriotic, turning out film after film about the Nazis' cruelty, the sedition of Nazi sympathizers here, the bravery of our soldiers, the steadfastness of our people, and the rightness of our mission."⁵⁴ During the war itself, persecution of minorities was a major theme of anti-Nazi propaganda. Wartime combat films that called for national unity against a common foe emphasized America's own tolerance of racial and cultural diversity and reinforced the multiethnic imagined community constructed by the *Why We Fight* documentaries. Thus, the fictional combat units routinely included an array of representative types: a New York Jew or a Chicago Irishman, generally a working-class "city boy;" a Midwestern Scandinavian or Slav, usually a wholesome corn-fed farm boy; an upper-crust New England WASP; a Southerner, almost always white, though an occasional black soldier cropped up despite the general segregation of combat units. These multiethnic representations worked on two levels to combat public concerns that participation in the war would undermine American democracy and that the United States would come to resemble the militaristic enemy. First, they reassured audiences that even a regimented and authoritarian institution like the military could be democratic when composed of ethnically diverse and freedom-loving Americans. Second, by invoking ethnic and regional differences, they suggested the inherent individuality

of the American soldiers, in contrast to the automaton-like interchangeability of the "racially pure" Axis soldiers. Significantly, Jewish characters were shown as important members of the battalions in films such as *Air Force*, *A Walk in the Sun*, and *Objective Burma*. In *Action in the North Atlantic*, a Jewish Merchant Marine (played by Sam Levene) even serves as the heroic spokesman for American democracy, explaining for audiences "why we fight": "You've got a right to say what you want. That's what we're fighting this war for. The Czechs and Poles, they didn't have a chance to say or do what they wanted."⁵⁵

During World War Two, progressive screenwriters gained a new legitimacy as the studio executives relied on their political sophistication and knowledge of international events. As Brian Neve explains, "Political knowledge and analysis was in demand, and radical writers, along with some liberals, were best prepared to respond by writing, in particular, about resistance and the enemy." Thus, Hollywood progressives played a critical role in the development of wartime genres—from domestic melodramas like *Tender Comrade* and *Since You Went Away* to battlefield epics like *Guadalcanal Diary* and *The Story of GI Joe*—and contributed to the "shift of emphasis that such films exhibited, from the individual hero toward the collective effort and teamwork needed for victory."⁵⁶

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Mr. RKO: Edward Dmytryk and the New Political Filmmaking

Unlike many Hollywood progressives, Edward Dmytryk did not romanticize the American working class or the desire for a proletarian revolution: "I felt no great pity for the afflicted; I had grown up in the same world, and if I could get out, so could they." Born in 1908, Dmytryk was the son of Catholic immigrants from the Ukraine who settled first in British Columbia before moving south to Los Angeles. After running away from his abusive home at the age of fourteen, he put himself through high school doing odd jobs at the Famous Players–Lasky (later Paramount) Studio. A promising student of mathematics, he attended California Institute of Technology for a year on a \$1,000 stipend provided by Hector Turnbull, Jesse Lasky's brother-in-law. However, like many working-class students at elite universities, Dmytryk felt uneasy and out of his element: "Though I enjoyed the year at Cal Tech as *something completely out of my world*, now and then small second thoughts nickered at the back of my brain." In 1927, after a year at college, he decided that he did not belong in the ivory tower and returned to work in the film industry. In true Horatio Alger fashion, Dmytryk worked his way up the craft ladder at Paramount, from projectionist to film editor to director. By the late 1930s, he was directing B-pictures such as *Sweetheart of the Campus* and *The Blonde from Singapore*, first at Paramount and later at Columbia. By the time he moved to RKO in 1942, Dmytryk had earned a reputation as an intense young director who worked quickly and well.⁵⁷

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Three of the films directed by Dmytryk during the war years are stellar examples of the new political filmmaking encouraged by the Office of War Information and suggest the overlap, both political and creative, between liberal and radical perspectives within the antifascist Popular Front. *Behind the Rising Sun* and *Hitler's Children*—both scripted by liberal Emmett Lavery and released in 1943—followed the OWI injunction to examine the nature of the enemy. Most cinematic representations of the war in the Pacific were overtly racist, depicting the Japanese as akin to subhuman apes or other vicious and uncivilized beasts.⁵⁸ In contrast, *Behind the Rising Sun* suggests that the rise of militarism in Japan during the 1930s had corrupted the essential humanity of the Japanese people. Dmytryk had long conversations with OWI's Nelson Poynter about the film, which convinced him that "films which painted all members of a race as barbarians did little to explain the Japanese." Instead, Dmytryk wanted to use the film to show that the Japanese cult of militarism, rather than any racial imperative, "hardened" young men and drove them "to the point where there was no longer room in their minds for liberalism, consideration of the people, or any of the ideas which make possible a free government of the people." Interestingly, the OWI was disappointed with the initial script because it did not make clear that Japan was a specifically *fascist* state. The OWI was also concerned that there was no explanation of the main character's transition from an enlightened, westernized Japanese to a racist killer. Dmytryk, however, felt that the transformation had been explained visually and refused to make changes in the film's dialogue. The OWI, in turn, refused to grant an export license on the grounds that the film was "too openly propagandistic." Film critics largely agreed; *Time* magazine, for example, dismissed the film as "an 88 minute jag of ferocious anti-Japanese propaganda."⁵⁹

Similarly, *Hitler's Children* examines the political indoctrination of German youth, with a sensationalistic plot device revolving around the Nazi program of forced procreation and sterilization to preserve racial purity. The OWI, remembering the backlash against World War One atrocity stories, was concerned that moviegoers would feel "defrauded and bamboozled" by *Hitler's Children*. When Mellett read an early version of the script he feared that "it would probably arouse more skepticism on the part of the average audience than acceptance." Poynter conferred regularly with screenwriter Emmet Lavery as the project developed, and ultimately, the OWI reviewers decided that *Hitler's Children* exposed a little-understood aspect of the Third Reich and that Lavery had succeeded in balancing the evil Nazis with good Germans who appreciated freedom and democracy. The Breen Office had been similarly apprehensive about the film, but in the end decided that it "contained enough circumlocutions" to earn the PCA seal of approval.⁶⁰

Dmytryk next shifted his lens from the foreign enemy to the home front in *Tender Comrade*, a Ginger Rogers star-vehicle centered on four working women who pool their resources to rent a house together while their men are away for the duration. Written by prominent left-winger Dalton Trumbo, *Tender Comrade* is a virtual exegesis of the OWI recommendations for depicting the home front. The film takes on hoarders and black marketeers, war-industry slackers and women who date while their husbands are serving overseas, characterizing all those who aren't 100 percent for the war effort as "the kind of people Hitler counted on when he started this war." The film closes with Ginger Rogers explaining to her infant son that his father died to give him a "better break" in life—the "best world a boy could ever grow up in." Ironically, *Tender Comrade* came under attack in the postwar period when Lela Rogers, Ginger Rogers's mother, decried the film as Communist propaganda, pointing to the line delivered by her daughter: "Share and share alike, that's democracy." At the height of the war, however, the Hollywood office of the OWI was thrilled with *Tender Comrade*. Nevertheless, most critics panned the film, and James Agee, the film critic for the *Nation*, called it "one of the most nauseating things I ever sat through." Preview audiences agreed that the heavy dose of propaganda was "sickening" and dismissed the film as boring and heavy-handed. Indeed, the OWI's Overseas Branch in New York felt that the film made a mockery of the real deprivation experienced by the British and others, and decided that the film was unsuitable for international release.⁶¹

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Nonetheless, RKO executives were impressed by Dmytryk's work on these films, and by the end of the war he had become known as "Mr. RKO." He had also become a member of the Communist Party. According to Dmytryk, as late as 1944 he "held no strong political views" and was antifascist on "humanitarian rather than political grounds." Having come of age during the Depression, Dmytryk believed that it was possible to be concerned about social issues without making a commitment to either the Right or the Left. Nevertheless, he was deeply influenced by the arrival in Hollywood of both New York radicals and the European refugees from fascism:

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To us natives, they were definitely a political breed, activists of a type we had rarely seen. They seemed to live much closer to reality, and whatever their political affiliations, their dramatic theories were based on marxist philosophy. Their ideas flooded our arid community, and some of us began to realize how unsophisticated we really were. In the main, the old guard ignored them, but many of the town's younger filmmakers, who were at odds with Louis B. Mayer's vision of the world, embraced the new ideas and eagerly explored the avenues that had opened up in the development of story, background, and especially character and social concerns. It was a new frontier, and what curious mind could ignore it?⁶²

During the war years Dmytryk began a "leftward lean." He was probably first

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drawn into the Popular Front through the People's Educational Center (PEC), where he taught classes on editing and directing. Dmytryk remembers that he had no idea that the PEC was a "front" organization, but he was very impressed with its work and considered it irreplaceable since it was the only school in the state that offered courses in filmmaking. Dmytryk was equally impressed by the work of the Hollywood Writers' Mobilization, which produced pamphlets, radio scripts, and other written material to educate the nation about "why we fight." He also served on the board of the Hollywood Democratic Committee, later HICCASP (Hollywood Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions), the film industry's leading Popular Front organization during the war. Dmytryk remembers, in his autobiography:

While I was involved in these movements, I had looked around, wanting to do more. As usual, neither the Democrats nor the Republicans were taking any organized action to mobilize American youth. It suddenly seemed quite clear that only the communists cared. And though I had previously given no thought to becoming a party member, when I was approached, sometime in 1944, I was ready to be had.⁶³

Ironically, Dmytryk joined the Communist Party just months before Party head Earl Browder dissolved the CPUSA, replacing it with the Communist Political Association (CPA). The creation of the CPA, perhaps the high point of the Popular Front in America, represented more than just a change in name. The CPA also reflected the changing structure, culture and demographics of the Communist movement in the United States, in response to the massive growth in Party membership during war years. In 1943, 15,000 new members joined the Party, many of them female, middle class, or African American. As Party branches composed of "a small handful of loyal comrades" gave way to a much more diverse membership working through neighborhood "clubs," the CPA became "a looser, more popular, less Leninist organization" than the original CPUSA. With their eyes on the postwar period, Browder and his supporters hoped the change to the CPA would enable Communists to move into the mainstream of American politics and would revise the view of Communism as a fringe movement that took its marching orders from Stalin and Moscow.⁶⁴

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Not coincidentally, the CPA period overlapped with a period of friendly relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, when the two nations were joined with Britain in the Great Alliance against fascism. Particularly after the 1943 Soviet victory at Stalingrad, after nearly six months of siege and battle during the bitter Russian winter, American propaganda shifted gears in its depiction of the Soviet Union to emphasize the antifascist struggle of the valiant Russians (now rarely called Soviets or Communists). *Time Magazine*, for example, devoted its March 1943 issue to the Battle of Stalingrad, and hailed Stalin—soon

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dubbed "Uncle Joe"—as a nationalist hero.⁶⁵ At the urging of the OWI, Hollywood produced a flurry of films, including *Mission to Moscow* and *Song of Russia*, that celebrated the fighting spirit of the Russian people, while Capra's documentary, *The Battle of Russia*, depicted the resistance to the German incursion as part of a long history of Russian defense against invasion from the West. The honeymoon wouldn't last long, but while it did, the union of patriotism and progressivism seemed to be a marriage with a future.

Indeed, in an interview with the FBI in the early 1950s, Dmytryk made very clear that he had joined the CPA "shortly after Stalingrad when the relationship between this country and Russia was apparently very friendly." (Among his myriad organizational ties during this period, Dmytryk served on the advisory council for the Russian-American Club of Los Angeles.) Dmytryk was also careful to point out that he was drawn to the Communist Party by "intellectual curiosity." The FBI report of the interview continues, "He stated that he was somewhat familiar with Marxism although he found Marx impossible to read, personally." He particularly recalled a meeting that focused on "the Negro Question," which was "the type of discussion that really interested him for he has seen a great deal of oppression, misery and the plight of various minorities, and the study of such problems and their ultimate solution vitally interested him."⁶⁶ It was not abstract Marxist theory or revolutionary zeal, then, that drew Dmytryk to the Party, but the issues of the day, and his sense that the Communists were at the forefront of both domestic and internationalist engagement.

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Mr. Lucky: Adrian Scott and the New Political Filmmaking

The wartime overlap between patriotism and internationalism is also evident in the creative and political work of Adrian Scott. Like many in Hollywood, Adrian Scott had offered his services to the military as soon as the call for volunteers was made. Though rejected for active duty due to chronic sinusitis, Scott hoped to join the Army Signal Corps, which produced most of the military training films. In the meantime, in March of 1942, he joined the California State Guard, and in July, his application to join the Civil Service to write motion picture shorts for Air Corps training had been accepted. However, by this point, Scott's situation had changed: on July 20, 1942, he had been put under contract at RKO as a screenwriter. On August 11, after being ordered to report for induction, he wrote to the draft board, asking for an extension of one month to allow him to complete a war picture starring Cary Grant called *Bundles for Freedom*. He explained to the draft board that the film represented his break into "A films" and that he didn't want to jeopardize his advancement in the film industry after the war. In addition, RKO producer David Hempstead wrote a letter supporting Scott's request for a deferment, saying, "This movie is important to Mr. Scott personally. He has been

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what is known as a writer of B pictures in the industry. It is a stage a writer goes through against that day he gets that opportunity [to advance to the A-list.] *Bundles for Freedom* is his opportunity. If he is permitted to finish his script and receives the writing credit, his career is secure when he returns from the war." Though he did receive a cable on November 3, 1942, offering him a position with the Signal Corps Training Film Production Lab in Ohio (for a salary of \$3,839.00 a year!), he declined. RKO apparently didn't want to lose Scott and used the studio's status as a war industry to keep him. Scott's request for a deferment was obviously granted and he stayed in Hollywood for the duration.⁶⁷

Bundles for Freedom (released as *Mr. Lucky*) was indeed an important film for Scott. The original story was inspired by the work of an actual organization called Bundles for Britain, founded by a New York society matron to raise funds and supplies for the embattled British during the Blitz. Milton Holmes, a former manager of the Beverly Hills Tennis Club, wrote a short story, "Bundles of Freedom," which was published by *Cosmopolitan* in June 1941. RKO had purchased Holmes's story as a serious vehicle for Cary Grant and had assigned veteran screenwriter Charles Brackett to help Holmes with the adaptation. In the original story, gambler Joe Boscopoulos runs a con on a group of wealthy socialites who are planning a charity ball to raise funds for war relief, but he has a change of heart upon learning that his brothers have been killed in the Nazi invasion of Greece. The tragedy transforms him into a patriot, and he turns his gambling boat into a relief ship, which sails toward Europe, possibly never to return. When Scott was assigned to the story in the summer of 1942, he was unaware that the treatments from which he was working had been written by Brackett and Holmes, or that Dudley Nichols had also been assigned to write a screenplay from the same material. The situation reflected a standard studio policy that not only pitted writers against each other, but also helped insure that writers—if they wanted to have their version of a story produced—would acquiesce to whatever changes the studio might demand. Ultimately, RKO gave Scott the Nichols script to work from as well, and it was Scott's version of the screenplay that was filmed. He did, however, share a screenwriting credit with Milton Holmes, whose treatments, written with Brackett, had sketched out the plot and added an assumed-identity twist and a framing device to the original short story. In the Holmes-Brackett version, the gambler narrates the film from a life raft (in actuality the top of a crap table), which is all that survives after the gambling boat—cum—relief ship has been torpedoed. In his version, however, Scott shifted the framing device to a New York pier, where a ship's captain explains to a night watchman why a beautiful woman keeps vigil for the gambler. Scott also retained the assumed-identity angle from the Holmes-Brackett version, in which the gambler Joe Adams (Cary Grant) not only takes the name Joe Boscopoulos from a dying member of his crew, but also appropriates his 4-F draft

status. From the Nichols screenplay, Scott retained only a few details: the radical heritage of the wealthy heroine, whose family fortune was made by a former slaveholder who "caught fire" from abolitionist John Brown and was shot defending him at Harper's Ferry; and the rhyming slang used by the gamblers, which gives the film a witty charm.⁶⁸

Though intended as a dramatic wartime vehicle for Grant, the film often plays like the screwball comedies of the 1930s. Indeed, the rapid-fire, witty contest of will and words between Joe, the incorrigible con man, and Miss Bryant, the socialite turned patriotic fundraiser, is more reminiscent of *His Girl Friday* than *Casablanca*. As a "city boy" of the international working class, Grant is simultaneously polished and rough around the edges, charming and more than a little dangerous. Of course, the bourgeois heroine cannot resist him (nor he her, though he tries), and in the final scene, their love ultimately transcends their class differences. Before the happy ending, however, Scott uses the tale of cross-class romance to get in a few digs at the American class structure. When the heroine blackmails her elitist grandfather into calling off the cops by threatening to marry a common gambler, Joe erupts:

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You think the worst thing that could happen to you is to marry me. To people like you, folks like me are animals. We're so *bad*. And you're so very good. What do you expect—credit for it? How else did you expect to turn out? You had so much going for you—you ought to be horsewhipped if you didn't turn out right. What are you so high and mighty about? What did you ever do?⁶⁹

Amid the romantic punning and maneuvering, Scott narrates a commitment to the antifascist cause. Though Joe begins the film as a devil-may-care gambler concerned only with staying out of the war and fleecing the women of War Relief, Inc., he is ultimately converted to patriotic action, first through the example of the women themselves—for whom no sacrifice is too great for the cause, whether giving blood or allowing a gambling concession at their heretofore respectable charity ball. In a wildly funny, gender-bending scene, Miss Bryant convinces Joe to undertake a "propaganda" project: learn how to knit, in order to set an example for other men. Joe is aghast, uncomprehending.

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Joe: Knit?

Miss Bryant: In England incapacitated men knit without hesitation.

Joe: I don't knit.

Miss Bryant: That's exactly the attitude we're trying to combat. We want a group of obviously masculine men to take up knitting, do it perfectly casually in public places.

Joe: Do you think I'm strong enough?

Miss Bryant: I'm perfectly serious. Half the women knitting last year are now being trained to drive ambulances and buses . . .

Joe: Do I get to trim a hat?

Ultimately, Joe does learn to knit and, through his example, so does his burly sidekick Krunk, who then teaches the feminine craft to the rest of the men on the gambling ship.

Joe's penultimate conversion experience, however, is utterly serious and occurs, appropriately, in a Greek Orthodox church, where he has taken a letter from the mother of the real Joe Boscopoulos to be translated into English by the priest. The mother writes to tell her son that his brothers have died defending their humble village from the invading Nazis and that she now expects him to carry on the struggle, to ensure that his brothers did not die in vain. She concludes, "I believe God will open your eyes and cleanse your heart," and the priest offers a prayer, "Bless Joseph, brother of all men." Joe is converted, not to the church, but to the international brotherhood and solidarity of the antifascist cause. Released in 1943 as *Mr. Lucky*, the film deserves greater recognition as one of the classic wartime conversion narratives.⁷⁰

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The Conservative Backlash: Hoover versus Hollywood

Hollywood's wartime propagandizing did not escape the attention of FBI director J. Edgar Hoover. Given Hoover's long history as a Red hunter and Hollywood's reputation as a hotbed of Jews and Communists, it is not surprising that Hoover would commit significant federal resources to investigating the film industry. The FBI had begun monitoring Communist activity in Hollywood in the 1930s, focusing initially on unionization campaigns and strikes, and later on left-wing control of "front" organizations such as the Hollywood Democratic Committee, the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League, and the Civic Unity Council. By the summer of 1942, the agency had shifted its attention to radical influence on film content. At Hoover's request the Los Angeles FBI office prepared two comprehensive reports on subversive influences in the film industry; the report of July 1943 named seven films that contained Communist propaganda—*Mission to Moscow*, *Action in the North Atlantic*, *Hangmen Also Die*, *Keeper of the Flame*, *Edge of Darkness*, *Our Russian Front*, and *This Land Is Mine*—as well as nine others then in production, including *North Star*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and *Song of Russia*.⁷¹ Though at this point the Soviet Union had joined the Allies and Hollywood was working closely with the federal propagandists at the Office of War Information to produce films that valorized the Russian people in their fight against fascism,

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titles like *Mission to Moscow* and *Song of Russia* could only have made a diehard anti-Communist like Hoover apoplectic.

Despite a great deal of work by agents in the Los Angeles office, the investigation had revealed little more than a list of Red-sounding films. In a search for "hard" evidence of ideological crimes, they turned to black-bag tactics. In July 1943 FBI agents broke into offices of the Hollywood section of the CPUSA—the first of multiple break-ins over the next two years—and copied membership files. The files, which included first names and last initials, addresses of homes where meetings were held, and dates of these meetings, enabled the FBI to piece together a fairly comprehensive list of Communists in the film industry and to link those names with film credits. By October 1947, FBI agents had identified "47 actors, 45 actresses, 127 writers, 8 producers, and 15 directors as former or current Communists."⁷²

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The FBI file on Adrian Scott offers fascinating insights into the investigative techniques and ideological assumptions of the FBI, but also into Scott's political activities during the war years. The first entry in Scott's file is dated March 1944, suggesting that he was among the Communists identified through the break-ins at Party headquarters. In compiling information on Scott, agents relied on a number of traditional (and legal) investigative strategies as well, running criminal and credit checks (both negative), consulting local draft and election boards, and reviewing marriage and divorce records. This initial report identifies Scott as a U.S. citizen and a registered Democrat, as well as a member of the Writers Branch of the NW Section of the Los Angeles County Communist Party, an alternate member of the Board of Directors of the Screen Writers Guild, and a delegate to the Los Angeles County Communist Party Convention in October 1943. The FBI's investigation also revealed that in 1943, the year of breakthrough victories by the Red Army on the eastern front and the height of pro-Soviet sentiment in the United States, Scott participated in several pro-Russian activities. Though it is not clear whether this information was gleaned from a reading of publicly circulated documents (event programs, for example), from documents obtained during break-ins, or from confidential sources, FBI agents noted that Scott's name, along with the names of "several other known Communists," had appeared on the program committee for a "Salute to Our Russian Allies," presented at the Shrine Auditorium on November 8, 1942, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Soviet Republic, and that "a mimeographed copy of contributors to the Russian War Relief Association of Southern California" revealed that Scott had donated \$25. The report further noted, "The above organization was one of several instigated by Herbert Biberman and no doubt was Communist dominated."⁷³

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Surveillance by special agents was also a key source of information on the activities of Scott and others. Agents observed Scott, for example, at the Shrine Auditorium working on a script titled "Damn the Torpedoes, Full Speed Ahead," which was presented at "the Communist Rally held July 18, 1942 . . . honoring William Z. Foster, National Secretary of the Communist Party in the United States." A survey of automobiles parked outside a June 12, 1943, meeting revealed that Scott was "among approximately fifty persons present identified by the agents through car license. Practically all of those present are known to have Communist Party affiliations." Scott's car also was seen at Communist meetings in August and October of 1943. According to a confidential informant, Party meetings were also held at Scott's own apartment at 9034 ½ Barratt Street in Hollywood.⁷⁴ 56

Confidential informants were perhaps the greatest source of information. Apparently once an informant offered up "reliable" information, any further information he or she supplied was also assumed to be reliable. Significantly, once a piece of "evidence" was entered into a report, it appeared in every subsequent report, and the bulkiness of Scott's file is due, to a great extent, to the serial repetition of previously gathered information. Information gleaned from informants was often rather opaque, sometimes little more than hearsay, but it was recorded diligently nonetheless; for example: "[Redacted] advised that [redacted] advised AS on August 5, 1942, that he, Adrian, was not to discuss the 'program' with anyone except the CIO." FBI agents admitted, "The purpose of this is not known but indicates his contact with Northwest Section leaders in an active capacity."⁷⁵ 57

A confidential informant had also furnished the local FBI office with a list of the delegates, including Scott, to the 1943 Los Angeles County Communist Party Convention. Even more intriguing, thanks to "Source B"—another confidential informant? a mole in CP headquarters? an agent undercover within the Party?—the agents also gained access to a photostatic copy of the credential form Scott filled out as a delegate to the convention. According to the report, "Scott's application blank indicated that he was 31 years of age, Scotch, English, Irish American descent; that he has spent four years in the party and is a writer by occupation. His main activity in the branch is that of Legislative Director. His war activity is writing. He is a member of the Independent Union Screen Writers Guild, a member of the Hollywood Democratic Committee, subscriber to the *People's World* and a regular reader of the *Communist*." The report also noted that "Scott's car was observed at the Communist Party convention on October 30, 1943, by agents of this office."⁷⁶ 58

Another frequent source of information for the FBI was the press, and Los Angeles 59

agents clearly devoted a great deal of time to reading the Hollywood trade papers. Entries in a report on Scott from March 1947 reported on developments in his career, films he was working on, and plans for upcoming projects, all gleaned from articles in *Daily Variety*, the *Hollywood Reporter*, and drama critic Virginia Wright's column in the *Los Angeles Daily News*. The FBI used such sources to comment upon possible radical content in Scott's films. *Mr. Lucky* was described as carrying a "war theme embracing the issues of how an anti-social draft dodger, among other things, is convinced that even though society does not recognize him, he nevertheless has a place in this world." Scott's plans to address problems of fascism and race prejudice in *Cornered* and *Crossfire* were also duly noted by the FBI agents.⁷⁷

As Scott's FBI file suggests, little of the information gathered by the FBI in their investigation into Hollywood subversion was particularly damning. Nevertheless, the "complete memo" of Communist influence in Hollywood reported with great assurance that Communists were engaged in a variety of nefarious activities that threatened internal security, whether using the "present apparent patriotic position of the party" to win recruits to the Soviet cause or organizing demonstrations, letter-writing campaigns and "slander campaigns . . . to browbeat and terrorize public officials." Most worrying, according to this report, the Hollywood Communists were influencing film content, forcing the studios to produce agitprop films that glorified the Soviet Union and depicted "the Negro race in most favorable terms."⁷⁸ However, the FBI investigations never "uncovered evidence that Hollywood Communists engaged in espionage or violated any other federal law." Interestingly, a follow-up report from the Los Angeles office to Hoover in August 1944 concluded that although Hollywood Communists did "inject small portions of propaganda" into films, they had "almost completely abandoned the idea of putting over any pictures filled with propaganda and are just as active to see to it that propaganda pictures favorable to America are kept to a minimum." Despite this conclusion, the Los Angeles office never reassessed its earlier contentions about the Communist threat. Athan Theoharis notes that "FBI reports soon stopped examining the propaganda nature of specific films and instead merely compiled and regularly updated a 'ready reference' of all Hollywood employees" who were Communists.⁷⁹

In October 1944, J. Edgar Hoover brought his concerns about Communist influence in Hollywood to the attention of Attorney General Francis Biddle. Though he was careful to say that the FBI had not undertaken a "direct investigation" (since some of its tactics had indeed been indirect—as well as illegal), Hoover reminded Biddle of the power of Hollywood—as entertainment, education, and propaganda—to sway the hearts and minds of Americans. Though Biddle did not respond to Hoover's briefing report, the FBI director was not dissuaded from his

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campaign. Stymied by the fact that none of this Red activity was illegal—Hollywood Communists had not engaged in espionage or conspiracies to overthrow the U.S. by force, and as yet it was not illegal to be a member of the Communist Party or to employ a Communist in the film industry—no avenue to criminal prosecution was available, and Hoover was forced to bide his time.⁸⁰

Notes

Note 1: Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000).

Note 2: Historical studies of fascism are simply innumerable. The works I have found most helpful include: Roger Eatwell, *Fascism: A History* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995); Richard Breitman, *Official Secrets: What the Nazis Planned, What the British and Americans Knew* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998); Alice Yeager Kaplan, *Reproductions of Banality: Fascism, Literature, and French Intellectual Life* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, vol. 1, *Women, Floods, Bodies, Histories*, trans. Stephen Conway (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987); George Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985); Linda Mizejewski, *Divine Decadence: Fascism, Female Spectacle, and the Makings of Sally Bowles* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992); Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family, and Nazi Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987); Renate Bridenthal et al., eds., *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984); Atina Grossman, "The New Woman and the Rationalization of Sexuality in Weimar Germany," in *The Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, Ann Snitow et al., eds. (New York: Virago, 1983); and Richard Plant, *The Pink Triangle: The Nazi War Against Homosexuals* (New York: Henry Holt, 1986). On the American encounter with fascism, see John P. Diggins, "Flirtation with Fascism: American Pragmatic Liberals and Mussolini's Italy," *American Historical Review* 71 (January 1966), and especially Benjamin L. Alpers, *Dictators, Democracy, and American Public Culture: Envisioning the Totalitarian Enemy, 1920s–1950s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

Note 3: Deborah Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933–1945* (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 13–39. One of the most fiercely antifascist of the American journalists, William L. Shirer, served as the Berlin correspondent for Hearst's *International News Service* before he was recruited by Edward R. Murrow to join CBS as a radio correspondent. In his memoir *Berlin Diary*, Shirer relates countless occasions on which his radio scripts were censored or his broadcasts summarily cancelled by the Nazi authorities. Others were even less successful in playing the system. H. R. Knickerbocker, the Berlin correspondent for the *New York Evening Post*, was ousted from Germany for his outspoken reports on the regime's atrocities, particularly against Jews, while Edgar Ansel Mowrer, correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News*, was recalled from his post in late August 1933 after Frank Knox, the paper's publisher, caved in to pressure from the Nazi government. Dorothy Thompson, correspondent for the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* and the first woman to head a major foreign news bureau, was also one of the first American journalists to interview Hitler. Deported from Germany twice, in 1932 and 1934, for her mocking book *I Met Hitler*, Thompson became one of the most outspoken antifascists, as well as one of the most widely read and influential journalists of her generation. Her weekly column, *On the Record*, was syndicated throughout America, and her pointed commentary evoked heated debate. William L. Shirer, *Berlin Diary: The Journal of a Foreign Correspondent, 1934–1941* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941); Peter Kurth, *American Cassandra: The Life of Dorothy Thompson* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990),

84–85, 91. See also Marion K. Sanders, *Dorothy Thompson: A Legend in Her Time* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973).

Note 4: Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, 2, 13–39.

Note 5: Michael Kammen, *American Culture, American Tastes: Social Change and the Twentieth Century* (New York: Knopf, 1999); Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919–1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), especially chapters 2 and 3.

Note 6: Zunz, *Why the American Century?*, especially 48–65. This is not to say that divisions of class, race, or gender ceased to exist or matter, simply that the 1930s nationalizing project worked to paper over those differences. On the persistence and negotiation of these divisions, see especially Richard Polenberg, *One Nation Divisible: Class, Race, and Ethnicity in the United States since 1938* (New York: Penguin, 1980).

Note 7: Philip Gleason, "Americans All: World War II and the Shaping of American Identity," *The Review of Politics* 43 (1981): 483–518; see especially 504.

Note 8: Eric Foner, in *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: Norton, 1998), argues that the Popular Front, rather than the Democratic Party, was the primary mover in this new Americanism (212–213). For an interpretation that gives more weight to the cultural politics of the New Deal, see Giuliana Muscio, *Hollywood's New Deal* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997).

Note 9: Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Verso, 1996).

Note 10: Robert S. McElvaine, *The Great Depression: America, 1929–1941* (New York: Times Books/Random House, 1984), 237.

Note 11: The literature on American nativism in the 1920s is extensive. See, for example, David H. Bennett, *The Party of Fear: The American Far Right from Nativism to the Militia Movement*, rev. ed. (New York: Vintage, 1995); Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (New York: Vintage Books, 1982); John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1965); Dale Knobel, "America for the Americans": *The Nativist Movement in the United States* (New York: Twayne, 1966); and Donald Warren, *Radio Priest: Charles Coughlin, the Father of Hate Radio* (New York: The Free Press, 1996). On the Klan in the 1920s, see Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). For an excellent discussion of the ways in which racism, particularly anti-Semitism, shaped national ideology and permeated American high modernism in the 1920s, particularly in the work of such canonical writers as Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Cather, and others, see Walter Benn Michaels, *Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995). On the eugenics movement and scientific racism, see Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), and Elazar Barkan, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism: Changing Concepts of Race in Britain and the United States between the World Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Note 12: Steven Carr, *Hollywood and Anti-Semitism: A Cultural History up to World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Note 13: Charles Herbert Stember, et al., *Jews in the Mind of America* (New York: Basic Books, 1966). See below for details from Stember's poll data suggesting that these attitudes were widely shared by the American public.

Note 14: Polenberg, *One Nation Divisible*, 42; Leonard Dinnerstein, *Uneasy at Home: Anti-Semitism and the American Jewish Experience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 61–62.

Note 15: Warren, *Radio Priest*, 138–139.

Note 16: Raymond Gram Swing, *Forerunners of American Fascism* (New York: Messner, 1935), 40–45.

Note 17: As Lewis biographer Mark Schorer points out, *It Can't Happen Here* might never have been written had Lewis not been married to journalist Dorothy Thompson, whose intimate knowledge of German fascism clearly informs his work. Nevertheless, the power of Lewis's novel lies in his interweaving of European fascism with the portrayal of a uniquely American political culture, drawn from Lewis's own unerring, satiric gift for Americana. *It Can't Happen Here* has much of Lewis's comic satire, though it is also deadly serious. The novel demonstrates the ways in which Americanism might be marshalled in the interests of reaction. The dictator Windrip is modelled less on Adolph Hitler than on Louisiana demagogue Huey Long (though the name "Windrip" is also a scatological spoof on protofascist Gerald B. Winrod), while the demagogic priest, Bishop Prang, is clearly taken from Father Coughlin. Windrip is a good old boy from Ohio, a common man, both in the sense of being an "ordinary" American, a man of the people, and being "common" in the snobbish eyes of the elite. Windrip's homespun storm troopers are called the Minute Men (MM), in a satiric nod to the citizen-soldiers of the American Revolution. Lewis presents the MM as lower-class thugs, as was often true of groups playing similar roles in fascist Italy and Germany. In invoking the pageantry of fascism—the uniforms, the rituals, the songs—Lewis draws on a uniquely American symbolism and history. For example, he transforms the populist religious hymn "Give Me That Old-Time Religion" into "Bring Back That Old-Time Musket." The MM uniform—dark blue tunics with a five-pointed star on the collar, light blue pants with a yellow stripe down the side tucked into black boots, and a slant-topped blue forage cap—is reminiscent of a Civil War cavalryman or the "Indian fighters under Custer." As Windrip boasts: "All these degenerate European uniforms of tyranny! No sir! The Minute Men are not Fascist or Communist or anything at all but plain Democratic—the knight-champions of the rights of the Forgotten Men—the shock troops of freedom!" Sinclair Lewis, *It Can't Happen Here* (New York: Signet, 1935), 92. See also Mark Schorer, *Sinclair Lewis: An American Life* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1961); Kurth, *American Cassandra*; and Sanders, *Dorothy Thompson*.

Note 18: McElvaine, *The Great Depression*, 241–247.

Note 19: Many Catholics, however, feared an anti-Catholic backlash and wrote to Church leaders asking them to curb Coughlin: "Unless you get Coughlin off the radio, you are going to be responsible for one of the greatest anti-Catholic movements this country has ever seen. . . . Coughlin has put the Catholic Church squarely into politics . . . , this will not go down the throats of the people in this country—the Catholic-hating population is too great." Another wrote: "But not until the recent broadcast in which he avowedly excused Hitler, and voiced anti-Semitism, did he loom as important on my horizon. I am constantly on the defensive. . . . We, as Catholics, should be ashamed of intolerance of any sort voiced by a minister of Christ." Quoted in Warren, *Radio Priest*, 216–217.

Note 20: The Protocols purport to be the minutes of a clandestine meeting of Jewish leaders to seize control of the world. However, significant portions of the text were plagiarized from John Robinson's *Proofs of a Conspiracy*, an obscure French satire that popularized the role of Freemasons in the French Revolution. In the 1920s, Henry Ford had published a version of the Protocols in the *Dearborn Independent* as the centerpiece of his own anti-Semitic campaign. Warren, *Radio Priest*, 149.

Note 21: *Ibid.*, 150–156.

Note 22: Polenberg, *One Nation Divisible*, 41.

Note 23: David S. Wyman, *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938–1941* (New York: Pantheon, 1968), 14–19; McElvaine, *The Great Depression*, 237; and Glen Jeansonne, *Gerald L. K. Smith: Minister of Hate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 6 and

passim.

Note 24: Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 75–98.

Note 25: Polenberg, *One Nation Divisible*, 42; Dinnerstein, *Uneasy at Home*, 61–62.

Note 26: Dinnerstein, *Uneasy at Home*, 32–36. The AJC surveys were part of a larger impulse during the 1930s to document the attitudes and behavior of "average Americans." Drawing on the pioneering work of social and behavioral psychologists in the 1920s, public-opinion polls were widely used in the 1930s by advertisers and social scientists to take the pulse of the American people, measuring consumer trends and desires, and political attitudes and behavior. Though polling gave a voice to ordinary Americans that was potentially democratizing, ultimately these public-opinion polls served to reify the notion of an "average American" in ways that ignored complexity and diversity and promoted adjustment to a "norm." Zunz, *Why the American Century?*, 48–69. Indeed, the AJC surveys of the 1930s assumed that anti-Semitism was a product of ignorance and could be combated and eventually eradicated by "adjusting" public attitudes. In the postwar period, social science would play an even larger role in Jewish defense work. This is discussed in greater detail in chapter 6.

Note 27: Stember et al., *Jews in the Mind of America*, 120–124.

Note 28: Ibid., 127–133.

Note 29: Ibid., 110.

Note 30: Larry Ceplair and Steven Englund, *The Inquisition in Hollywood: Politics in the Film Community, 1930–60* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 94–97, 139.

Note 31: Other leading progressive organizations in Hollywood during this period included the Motion Picture Democratic Committee, created to monitor state and local elections, particularly after studio executives colluded in the defeat of Upton Sinclair's campaign for state governor in 1934, and the Motion Picture Artists' Committee (MPAC), created to aid Republican Spain's war against Franco. Under MPAC auspices, a stellar committee led by Lillian Hellman, Clifford Odets, Dorothy Parker, and Ernest Hemingway produced the documentary *The Spanish Earth*; four Hollywood screenings in 1936 raised \$35,000 for the cause. In the postwar period, such activities were often used against suspected Communists as evidence of "premature" antifascism (i.e., antifascism expressed prior to formal American entry into World War Two). Ceplair and Englund, *Inquisition in Hollywood*, especially 104–108, 115, 118.

Note 32: Neal Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* (New York: Anchor Books, 1988), 331, 338.

Note 33: Ibid., 338–343.

Note 34: Ibid., 340.

Note 35: Otto Friedrich, *City of Nets: A Portrait of Hollywood in the 1940s* (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), 49.

Note 36: Michael E. Birdwell, *Celluloid Soldiers: Warner Bros.'s Campaign against Nazism* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), especially 17–20; Muscio, *Hollywood's New Deal*, 42, 61–62.

Note 37: Birdwell, *Celluloid Soldiers*, 35–86.

Note 38: Brian Neve, *Film and Politics in America: A Social Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 57.

Note 39: Jack Warner, quoted in Friedrich, *City of Nets*, 50. Jack Warner frequently claimed that the decision to close the studio office in Germany came after the studio's representative, Joe Kauffman, was murdered by Nazi thugs. However, historian Michael Birdwell has recently proven that the facts do not bear out Warner's apocryphal story. See

Birdwell, *Celluloid Soldiers*, 17–18.

Note 40: The HUAC was first proposed in the early 1930s by liberal Jewish Congressman Samuel Dickstein (D–New York), who hoped to use Congress's investigative function to contain the alarming rise of pro-Nazi activity. Ironically, his campaign was taken up by Texas Democrat Martin Dies, whose resolution calling for a Special Committee on Un-American Activities was passed in 1938 by a vote of 191 to 41. Under Dies's leadership, the Committee's investigations focused almost exclusively on the menace of Communism rather than fascism, and Dickstein, who was not invited to serve on the Dies Committee, came to regret deeply his role in its creation. John Rankin, an overt anti-Semite who had opposed Dies's resolution until assured that the committee would be led by the conservative Texan Dies rather than the Jewish New Yorker Dickstein, was largely responsible in early 1945 for resuscitating the Dies Committee, which had become disreputable and was nearly defunct; his motion to make HUAC a permanent committee passed with a vote of 207 to 186. Walter Goodman, *The Committee: The Extraordinary Career of the House Committee on Un-American Activities* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1968), 2–23; David Caute, *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge under Truman and Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), 88–91.

Note 41: Ceplair and Englund, *Inquisition*, 156–157; Friedrich, *City of Nets*, 52–53.

Note 42: In the late 1930s, high-ranking German officials, particularly Reichsmarshal Herman Goering, assiduously cultivated Lindbergh, wining and dining him, escorting him on tours of Nazi airplane factories, and even awarding him the Service Cross of the German Eagle, the highest honor given to non-Germans (Henry Ford was the only other American to have received the award). Lindbergh was impressed by the German rearmament, reporting to British and American military leaders that the Allies could not hope to compete with the Nazi war machine, particularly the Luftwaffe. However, Lindbergh was also impressed with Nazism as a social, political, and even racial ideology, and, certain that the Nazis would win the war anyway, he argued that it was in America's best interest to collaborate fully with the fascist regime. Lindbergh's involvement with America First in the early 1940s was a great boost to the isolationist movement, but it earned him the wrath of the Roosevelt administration. Ultimately, Lindbergh's outspoken admiration for the Nazi regime, the anti-Semitic slurs he voiced in Des Moines, and his renunciation of his Air Force commission discredited him in the eyes of most Americans. See Albert Fried, *FDR and His Enemies* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999) and Leonard Mosley, *Lindbergh: A Biography* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1976), 208–302.

Note 43: Friedrich, *City of Nets*, 51–52; Gabler, *Empire of Their Own*, 345–346.

Note 44: Doherty, *Projections of War*, 41.

Note 45: *Ibid.*, 41; Ceplair and Englund, *Inquisition in Hollywood*, 160–161; Friedrich, *City of Nets*, 51–52; Gabler, *Empire of Their Own*, 346–347.

Note 46: Many in Hollywood—from famous actors and directors to studio executives—also volunteered for military service. Clark Gable, James Stewart, and Tyrone Power, for example, served with distinction in the European theater. However, most Hollywood enlistees spent their military service doing what they had always done—making movies. Darryl F. Zanuck, John Huston, and Frank Capra, among many others, worked within military film units, particularly the Army Signal Corps, producing documentaries and military training films. See Frank Capra, *The Name Above the Title: An Autobiography* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 326–343; George F. Custen, *Twentieth Century's Fox: Darryl F. Zanuck and the Culture of Hollywood* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 257–260; and Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black, *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits, and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies* (New York: Free Press, 1987), 122.

Note 47: Capra, *The Name Above the Title*, 361. Benjamin L. Alpers argues that military leaders placed great faith in the power of facts to galvanize American soldiers and to

illustrate the differences between fascism and democracy. Alpers, "Imagining a Democratic Military in World War II," *Journal of American History* (June 1998): 155–156.

Note 48: Capra, *The Name Above the Title*, 373; Doherty, *Projections of War*, 79.

Note 49: Creating a sense of national unity became increasingly important as the pressures of the war exacerbated ongoing tensions and fissures in American society, particularly over issues of race. As Richard Polenberg notes, "By introducing two powerful solvents—migration and manpower shortages—the war upset the delicate patterns of behavior governing race relations" (*One Nation Divisible*, 72). In some cases, the tensions turned violent: during the war race riots broke out in Detroit, Los Angeles, and other urban centers, as well as on eight military bases. Embittered by the slippage between the wartime rhetoric of democracy and tolerance and the realities of continuing discrimination, the African American press called for a "Double V" campaign to fight for victory over fascism abroad and racism at home. The internment of Japanese Americans on the West Coast also raised powerful questions about the American commitment to tolerance, though few raised the issue at the time. Polenberg, *One Nation Divisible*, 69–85.

Note 50: Foner, *Story of American Freedom*, 220–227. Historian George L. Mosse has noted the critical shift in both the composition and public representation of armies since the French Revolution, from mercenaries who fought for material gain and peasants who fought to fulfill their feudal debt, to "citizen-soldiers" who fight for national pride or "patriotism." The citizen-soldier is an integral component of the ideology of democracy, in which the need for a standing army of professional, career soldiers signals the weakness or even failure of voluntary, democratic institutions. George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 3–20.

Note 51: In his article "Imagining a Democratic Military," Benjamin Alpers demonstrates the ways this image was deliberately constructed to combat public fears that militarization would undermine American democracy and individuality.

Note 52: Tino Balio, ed., *The American Film Industry* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976; 2d rev. ed. 1985), 283; Koppes and Black, *Hollywood Goes to War*, 56–70.

Note 53: Koppes and Black, *Hollywood Goes to War*, 56–70.

Note 54: Gabler, *Empire of Their Own*, 348.

Note 55: Alpers, "Imagining a Democratic Military," 143–144; Peter Roffman and Jim Purdy, *The Hollywood Social Problem Film: Madness, Despair, and Politics from the Depression to the Fifties* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1981), 237.

Note 56: Neve, *Film and Politics in America*, 78.

Note 57: Edward Dmytryk, *It's a Hell of a Life, But Not a Bad Living* (New York: Times Books, 1978), 3–44; quotations from p. 11. See also Bernard Dick, *Radical Innocence: A Critical Study of the Hollywood Ten* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1989), 135, 234.

Note 58: See John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon, 1986), for a fascinating survey of American representations of the Japanese (and Japanese representations of Americans).

Note 59: Koppes and Black, *Hollywood Goes to War*, 271–275.

Note 60: *Ibid.*, 298–99.

Note 61: Dmytryk, *It's a Hell of a Life*.

Note 62: Edward Dmytryk, *Odd Man Out: A Memoir of the Hollywood Ten* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996), 5–6.

Note 63: Dmytryk, *It's a Hell of a Life*, 64; Dmytryk, *Odd Man Out*, 6–9.

Note 64: Joseph R. Starobin, *American Communism in Crisis, 1943–1957* (Berkeley:

University of California Press, 1975), 24, 42.

Note 65: John Patrick Diggins, *The Proud Decades: America in War and in Peace, 1941–1960* (New York: Norton, 1988), 59.

Note 66: Memo/report—Los Angeles SAC to Director, FBI, March 10, 1951, in Edward Dmytryk FBI File.

Note 67: Dick, *Radical Innocence*, 124; see also miscellaneous correspondence, April 1941 to November 1942, in Scott Papers, AHC.

Note 68: Dick, *Radical Innocence*, 124–125; on *Bundles for Britain*, see *Look Magazine* 4:25 (December 3, 1940): 35.

Note 69: All quotes from *Mr. Lucky* are taken from the American Movie Classics broadcast of the film.

Note 70: After *Mr. Lucky*, RKO loaned Scott to Paramount, where he worked on an adaptation of Augusta Tucker's novel *Miss Susie Slagle's*. Though *Miss Susie Slagle's* was not a war picture, the project offers interesting insights into Scott's political vision as well as into the obstacles to realizing that vision within the studio system. Paramount had been interested in adapting the novel since 1939. Veteran screenwriter Frances Marion took the first stab at the novel, but her work on the project ended in early 1940, soon after she completed a 126-page script. The project lay dormant for nearly three years, until Paramount assigned Scott and Anne Froelick to revive it. In Scott and Froelick's treatment, dated December 14, 1943, the story of a group of medical students living at Miss Slagle's boarding house is infused with a progressive ethos. Working within the conventions of mainstream melodrama, Scott and Froelick gave great attention to the novel's class and race issues, emphasizing the diversity of the characters, "especially the working-class student who inveighs against privilege and condescension, and the self-effacing Jew whose confidence returns when he hears that Jews are natural doctors because of their history of persecution." Scott and Froelick included the obligatory hospital scenes, but also inserted a number of scenes of racial diversity and cooperation, including the delivery of a black child and the performance of a black gospel choir, which inspires the interns and a group of children to join the singing. A Jewish intern remarks, "It's good to be reminded that prejudice isn't congenital. What a great world this would be if we could all grow up to be children!" The romantic, humanistic radicalism of the Popular Front is also evident in Miss Susie Slagle's mantra: "It is the passionate people who make the world progress. Use your brains, my dears, but never stop thinking with your hearts." Dick, *Radical Innocence*, 126–127. I could not locate a copy of this film and have relied on Dick's description.

Note 71: Athan Theoharis, *Chasing Spies: How the FBI Failed in Counterintelligence but Promoted the Politics of McCarthyism in the Cold War Years* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002), 153.

Note 72: *Ibid.*, 154–155.

Note 73: Report from Los Angeles office, March 3, 1944, in Adrian Scott FBI File.

Note 74: *Ibid.*

Note 75: *Ibid.*

Note 76: *Ibid.*

Note 77: *Ibid.*

Note 78: Theoharis, *Chasing Spies*, 154.

Note 79: *Ibid.*, 155.

Note 80: *Ibid.*, 155–156.