



# **The Hollywood Blacklist and the Whitewashing of American Culture**

***Ellie Gettinger***

Ellie Gettinger is the director of Digital Learning at the Jewish Theological Seminary. Prior to joining JTS, she was the Education Director at the Jewish Museum Milwaukee (JMM), where she led the Museum's educational efforts since 2007, a year before the Museum opened. Through the Museum, Ellie worked to build understanding of diverse topics such as immigration, the Holocaust, and the Jewish community to different populations, ranging from pre-school to older adults, and Jews and non-Jews. Ellie has her bachelor's degree in Jewish Studies, with a focus on history from Stanford University; she recently received her Master's degree through the Spertus Institute. She curated JMM's special exhibit about the Hollywood Blacklist.

*Hollywood Reporter - 10/21/47 - p. 14*

## The Committee for the First Amendment

We, the undersigned, as American citizens who believe in constitutional democratic government, are disgusted and outraged by the continuing attempt of the House Committee on Un-American Activities to smear the Motion Picture Industry.

We hold that these hearings are morally wrong because:

Any investigation into the political beliefs of the individual is contrary to the basic principles of our democracy;

Any attempt to curb freedom of expression and to set arbitrary standards of Americanism is in itself disloyal to both the spirit and the letter of our Constitution.

### Committee for the First Amendment

RICHARD BROOKS	PAULETTE GODDARD	BURGESS MEREDITH
EDDIE CANTOR	BENNY GOODMAN	DORIS NOLAN
RICHARD CONTE	VAN HEELIN	GREGORY PECK
*NORMAN CORWIN	PAUL HENREID	VINCENT PRICE
*PHILIP DUNNE	*KATHARINE HEPBURN	MILTON SPERLING
JULIUS EPSTEIN	JOHN HOUSEMAN	SHEPPERD STRUDWICK
PHILIP EPSTEIN	MARSHA HUNT	BARRY SULLIVAN
HENRY FONDA	JOHN HUSTON	JERRY WILD
MELVIN FRANK	NORMAN KRASNA	CORNEL WILDE
AVA GARDNER	ANATOLE LITVAK	BILLY WILDER
SHERIDAN GIBNEY	MYRNA LOY	WILLIAM WYLER
	DOROTHY McGUIRE	COLLIER YOUNG

*The above statement has been given to the American press. If it expresses your views and you wish to join with us in further action against this affront to our way of life, please wire:*

## “BILL OF RIGHTS”

CARE OF WESTERN UNION  
BEVERLY HILLS

## **The Waldorf Statement**

November 24, 1947

Released by Eric Johnston, President, MPAA

Members of the Association of Motion Picture Producers deplore the action of the 10 Hollywood men who have been cited for contempt by the House of Representatives. We do not desire to prejudge their legal rights, but their actions have been a disservice to their employers and have impaired their usefulness to the industry.

We will forthwith discharge or suspend without compensation those in our employ, and we will not re-employ any of the 10 until such time as he is acquitted or has purged himself of contempt and declares under oath that he is not a Communist.

On the broader issue of alleged subversive and disloyal elements in Hollywood, our members are likewise prepared to take positive action.

We will not knowingly employ a Communist or a member of any party or group which advocates the overthrow of the government of the United States by force or by any illegal or unconstitutional methods.

In pursuing this policy, we are not going to be swayed by hysteria or intimidation from any source. We are frank to recognize that such a policy involves danger and risks. There is the danger of hurting innocent people. There is the risk of creating an atmosphere of fear. Creative work at its best cannot be carried on in an atmosphere of fear. We will guard against this danger, this risk, this fear.

To this end we will invite the Hollywood talent guilds to work with us to eliminate any subversives: to protect the innocent; and to safeguard free speech and a free screen wherever threatened.

The absence of a national policy, established by Congress, with respect to the employment of Communists in private industry makes our task difficult. Ours is a nation of laws. We request Congress to enact legislation to assist American industry to rid itself of subversive, disloyal elements.

Nothing subversive or un-American has appeared on the screen, nor can any number of Hollywood investigations obscure the patriotic services of the 30,000 loyal Americans employed in Hollywood who have given our government invaluable aid to war and peace.

Notable participants included:

- Louis B. Mayer: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer
- Harry Cohn: Columbia Pictures
- Spyros Skouras: 20th Century Fox
- Nicholas Schenck: Loews Theatres
- Barney Balaban: Paramount Pictures
- Samuel Goldwyn: Samuel Goldwyn Company
- Albert Warner: Warner Bros.
- William Goetz: Universal-International
- Eric Johnston: Association of Motion Picture Producers and Motion Picture Association of America
- Mendel Silberberg: lawyer for Association of Motion Picture Producers
- James F. Byrnes: former United States Secretary of State
- Dore Schary: RKO Pictures

# TIRED? JITTERY? SLEEPING BADLY?

**IF YOU  
SCORE  
25  
YOU'RE  
IN THE  
DANGER  
ZONE!**

Score 5  
for each YES  
answer

**Find Out The Reason. Test Yourself! Here Are 10 Questions:**

1. Are you nervous about whom you sit with in the commissary?
2. Are you thinking about changing your name? Are you disturbed because you are a Jew? A Catholic? A Union or Guild member? A Free Mason?
3. Are you haunted by your past? Remember? Your fourth vote for Roosevelt? The ambulance you helped send to Republican Spain? Your signature to protest against lynchings down South?
4. Are you giving up that idea for a story? Or changing a scene—just a little?
5. Are you thinking you'd better drop your subscription to: The Nation? Commonweal? New Republic? The Protestant? The New Masses? The New Yorker? In Fact? The Herald-Tribune? PM?
6. Do you think you hear a strange click every time you pick up your phone?
7. Are you thinking of hiding any of your books in your incinerator?
8. Do you think about the future safety of your children—when you lie awake nights?
9. Do you experience mixed feelings at the news that England has offered sanctuary to political refugees from the American motion picture industry?
10. Do you think YOU are safe from blacklists?

TOTAL

## **FREEDOM FROM FEAR COMMITTEE**

RICHARD COLLINS      GORDON KAHN  
 HOWARD KOCH  
 LEWIS MILESTONE      IRVING PICHEL  
 LARRY PARKS  
 ROBERT ROSSEN      WALDO SALT  
**ORGANIZED TO DEFEND YOU AND "THE 19"**

★  
 6674 YUCCA ST., LOS ANGELES 28 • GL 4141  
 Send your checks NOW payable to  
 Freedom From Fear Committee

◆ If your score on the above questions alarms you, **YOU** must take action now! You must support the 19 who are testing in the courts the right of any official, high or petty, to prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, religion or other matters of opinion.

◆ The rights of the 19 as citizens are **YOUR** rights. Any abridgement of their liberties is an abridgement of your sacred right to live and think as a free American.

◆ This is a legal fight. It costs money! It affects you!

*Copies of this page  
are available to you  
if you want to  
check your  
friends.*

## Screen Guide for Americans

Ayn Rand, Published 1947

Adapted by Ellie Gettinger

[FULL TEXT AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD HERE.](#)

1. Don't take politics lightly  
"To pretend at such a time that political ideas are not important and that people pay no attention to them, is worse than irresponsible."
2. Don't smear the Free Enterprise System  
"Don't pretend that Americanism and the Free Enterprise System are two different things. They are inseparable, like body and soul."
3. Don't smear industrialists  
"While motion picture have a strict code that forbids us to offend any group or nation...we permit ourselves to smear and slander American businessmen in the most irresponsibly dishonest manner."
4. Don't smear wealth  
"Put an end to that pernicious modern hypocrisy: everybody wants to get rich and almost everybody feels that he must apologize for it."
5. Don't smear the profit motive  
"Make it clear that what you denounce is dishonesty, **not** money-making. Make it clear that you are denouncing evil-doers, **not** Capitalists."
6. Don't smear success  
"It is the Communists aim to discourage all personal effort and to drive men into a hopeless dispirited grey herd of robots who have lost all personal ambition..."
7. Don't glorify failure  
"Don't present all the poor as good and all the rich as evil."
8. Don't glorify depravity  
"Don't tell people that man is a helpless, twisted, drooling, sniveling neurotic weakling. Show the world an **American** kind of man, for a change."  
"If you preach that a depraved person "couldn't help it," you are destroying the basis of all morality. You are implying that men cannot be held responsible for their evil acts, because man has no power to choose between good and evil..."
9. Don't deify the common man  
"In America, no man is scorned or penalized if his ability is small. But neither is he praised, extolled and glorified for the smallness of his ability."  
"No self-respecting man in America is or thinks of himself as "little," no matter how poor he might be."
10. Don't glorify the collective  
"Don't fall for such drivel as "I don't wanna be dif'rent—I wanna be just like ever'body else." ...If there ever was an un-American attitude, this is it."

11. Don't smear an independent man

"Conformity, alikeness, servility, submission, and obedience are necessary to establish a Communist slave-state. Don't help the Communists to teach men to acquire these attitudes."

12. Don't use current events carelessly

"The seemingly accidental remarks, the casual wisecracks, the cowardly little half-hints are the things that arouse the anger and contempt of all those who uphold the opposite side of the issue."

13. Don't smear American political institutions

"Don't discredit our free elections. If you do that—you imply that elections should be abolished."

**FBI Files: Communist Infiltration-Motion Picture Industry**

Files available via Freedom of Information and Privacy Acts

[https://archive.org/details/FBI\\_File\\_Communist\\_Infiltration\\_Motion\\_Picture\\_Industry\\_COMPIC\\_ALL\\_EX\\_CERPTS/compic9a/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/FBI_File_Communist_Infiltration_Motion_Picture_Industry_COMPIC_ALL_EX_CERPTS/compic9a/mode/2up)

**"MISSION TO MOSCOW"**

Released by Warner Brothers, May, 1943

Producer — Robert H. Buckner

Technical Director: Jay Leyda

Screen Play — Erskine Caldwell

Author — Joseph E. Davies

"Mission to Moscow", a Warner Brothers release of May, 1943, was produced by Robert H. Buckner. Buckner was a former correspondent in Moscow of the "London Daily Mail". According to [REDACTED] he selected J. Leyda to act as technical director for the picture. Leyda had been in Moscow at the same time as Buckner where he had been connected with the Bureau of Revolutionary Writers of the Soviet Motion Picture Industry. Leyda is identified in Section I of this memorandum as a Communist. He was also active in the League of American Writers, a Communist front group.

[REDACTED] has related that the actual writer of the screen play "Mission to Moscow" was Erskine Caldwell. Caldwell has been a member of the League of American Writers for many years. He also made several trips to the Soviet Union. At one time, he was associate editor of "Soviet Russia Today", a Soviet propaganda publication. Prior to August, 1939, he was in favor of a collective security. During the life of the Hitler-Stalin Non-Aggression Pact, he supported the program of the American Peace Mobilization and openly opposed Lend-Lease and Selective Service. After June 22, 1941, which was the date that the Soviet Union was invaded by the Nazis, he called for all-out aid to Britain, Soviet Russia and China.

The picture, "Mission to Moscow" is based upon the book, "Mission to Moscow" written by former United States Ambassador to Russia, Joseph E. Davies. The pro-Soviet propaganda disseminated through this picture was so obvious that it was criticized by numerous newspapers on these grounds. Informant [REDACTED] related the picture caused a controversy which resulted in the Communist Party's changing its technique of inserting Communist propaganda into motion pictures.

"THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES"

Released by Samuel Goldwyn through RKO Pictures, Inc. On  
December 25, 1946

Producer — Samuel Goldwyn

Director — William Wyler

Screen play — Robert Sherwood

(From the novel Glory for Me by Mackinlay Kentor)

Cast: Starring — Myrna Loy

Roderic March

Dana Andrews

According to [REDACTED] the writer of this screen play, although not known to be definitely a Communist, was one who associated with them and frequently gave them aid and comfort. It was pointed out by these individuals that this was a good example of a picture in which the screen credits did not reflect any outstanding or well-known Communists as associated with the production of the picture but it was believed by these individuals that the script was "dressed" by Communist writers who did not receive screen credits. According to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Howard Koch had done some of the work as a writer on this script. Koch is believed by [REDACTED] to be a Communist.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Frederic March, one of the starring actors in this play, has been identified by Confidential Informant [REDACTED] as a Communist.

Roman Bohnen and Howland Chamberlain, both of whom are identified in Section I of this memorandum as Communists, were included in the supporting cast.

The publication "Plain Talk," in the April, 1947, issue, carried an article written by William Markham in which Markham pointed out that this picture contained Communist propoganda which was subtly injected into the film. It was referred to as a masterpiece of "subversive half-truth."

[REDACTED] Paramount Studios, in discussing the picture "The Best Years of Our Lives," stated the picture portrayed the upper class in a bad light. He recalled that the banker was portrayed as a mean, avaricious individual. One scene which [REDACTED] discussed as illustrating his point occurred when Frederic March went to see his boss, the banker, to tell the latter that he, March, had made a loan to a GI. Once March turned away, the banker's face changed and he registered disapproval of the former's action. This tended to show the banker as a mean individual. In the picture, according to [REDACTED] March attacked the banker at a public meeting, which tends to give the audience the impression that bankers as a class are evil. [REDACTED] related that other unnecessary "stuff" was also put in.

William Z. Foster, national leader of the Communist Party, USA, held a meeting on September 10, 1947, in a Los Angeles Hotel with California State Secretary William Schneiderman and Los Angeles County Communist Party Chairman Ned Sparks. Agents of the Los Angeles Office [REDACTED] heard Foster, in speaking of current motion picture productions, state with regard to the motion picture "The Best Years of Our Lives," "That was real stuff." He referred to this picture as well as "The Farmer's Daughter" and "Crossfire," which are also discussed in this Section, by stating, "They are standing them on their ears." Foster indicated that all three of these pictures were very fine productions.

**"IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE"**

Released by RKO Pictures, Inc. on December 19, 1946.  
Producer — Frank Capra  
Director — Frank Capra  
Screen play — Frances Goodrick, Albert Hackett, Frank Capra  
Cast: Starring — James Stewart  
                  Donna Reed  
                  Lionel Barrymore