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Mrs. Nimmer

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### The Hollywood Ten

When asked why he never disclosed his political affiliations, Herbert Biberman replied “Citizens in cultural pursuits, such as myself, had to choose in such a way that history will not label us as cowards or chumps.” (“Herbert Biberman Dead at 71.”) Biberman, along with 9 other artists working in film, was abruptly put on trial and asked whether he was or was not affiliated with the communist party. When all ten of the witnesses (they would soon be called the Hollywood Ten) refused to disclose their political views, their names were placed on a blacklist. A blacklist was a list of names that would be ostracized and have difficulty keeping or finding employment due to their presumed problematic or inconvenient political views (Burnette). Despite this blatant obstruction of his first amendment rights, Biberman was sent to jail for six months, while most of the other Hollywood Ten members were sent to jail for one year. During this period, more and more names were added to the blacklist. This era marked a period of humiliation, betrayal, and the pressure to maintain one’s reputation. While artists in the Hollywood film industry with alleged communist affiliations suffered due to being registered on a blacklist which also initiated an immediate anti-communist movement in Hollywood film production, artists and their alleged affiliations actually became glorified in the late 1950s and ’60s once the blacklist was dismissed, causing there instead to be a stigma against those who had turned in artists to the House Un-American Activities Committee.

The Red Scare refers to the widespread hysteria over communism that took over the American public. The first Red Scare had occurred after the Bolshevik Revolution causing many poor laborers to admire communist ideologies. The Sedition Act of 1918, however, targeted anyone who criticized the government and the traditional American way of life. With the Cold War fought between the United States and the Soviet Union in the late 1940s, there was another Red Scare, heightened by the media and political leaders. One specific political leader that spearheaded a lot of communist fear was Republican senator from Wisconsin, Joseph McCarthy. McCarthyism was coined to represent the period where McCarthy spread communist fear through largely public allegations, often based on little to no evidence (Stockdale). This trend was popular during this era, specifically when the US House of Representatives' House Un-American Activities Committee(HUAC) in 1943 launched an investigation of communist presence in the Hollywood film industry, despite having any substantial evidence (Carlin).

The HUAC, aiming to destroy any connections between Hollywood and the communist party, called the witnesses to the stand. The hearings began in 1947 and included both "friendly" and "unfriendly" witnesses(Stockdale) The "unfriendly" witnesses argued that the HUAC was violating the first amendment. When asked "Are you now, or have you ever been, a member of the American Communist Party?" The "unfriendly" witnesses, who would soon be called the Hollywood Ten, deemed the question as a whole unconstitutional and refused to answer. They were cited for contempt of Congress and sent to jail for 6-12 months. The Hollywood Ten members: Albert Maltz, Dalton Trumbo, Alvah Bessie, Samuel Ornitz, Ring Lardner Jr., Lester Cole, Herbert Biberman, Edward Dmytryk, and Adrian Scott were put on a blacklist in the

Hollywood film industry (Burnette). Over the years, more names were added to the blacklist, as communist fear spread and people looked to turning in names to uphold their reputation.

As the HUAC sought to expel communist influence in Hollywood, the film industry became increasingly anti-communist. After the allegations of the communist affiliations in film surfaced, the Motion Picture Association of American resolved that they would never hire a known communist, and the Screen Actors Guild had an obligatory oath members had to sign to prove they were against communism (Stockdale). While the members of the Hollywood Ten were sent to jail, and more artists were constantly being added to the blacklist, different film companies sent out anti-communist propaganda to prove that they had no associations with blacklisted artists or the communist party. Walt Disney and head of Screen Actors' Guild Ronald Reagan distributed anti-communist propaganda to film studios(Stockdale). As these two prominent figures in Hollywood strongly discouraged any hints of communism in films, many other film producers followed suit. The Bureau played many anti-communist films, including the show "GangBusters" (Stabile). Anti-communist films were also being produced like "Iron Curtain" (1948) and "The Red Menace and I Married a Communist"(1949) (Feuerherd). In addition to the large volume of anti-communist films being produced, there was also literature regarding supposed communist infiltration in Hollywood like the *Red Channels: The Report of Communist Influence in Radio and Television* (1950) which encouraged people to turn in supposed communists and spread anti-communism (Stabile). Anti-communist propaganda spread throughout the media, pressuring people to turn in suspects to the blacklist.

While the blacklist was being implemented, artist's careers either faltered, or they were forced to work in more degrading positions. Unfortunately, more and more names were added to

the blacklist as the US government, along with organizations in media and film, set out to blacklist hundreds of other artists (Stockdale). As a result, many artists lost their employment, had their careers destroyed, or were imprisoned. Many blacklisted artists, after a period of unemployment or working odd end jobs, decided to return to film making under a pseudonym. Working under a pseudonym entailed receiving a dramatically smaller salary and not being able to gain credit for one's work(Burnette). Alvah Bessie, one of the members of the Hollywood Ten, worked under a pseudonym from 1947-1950 and was paid half of his established salary("Alvah Bessie Papers, 1929-1999"). Dalton Trumbo, a screenwriter from the Hollywood Ten, worked under a pseudonym to create "The Brave One", "Gun Crazy", and more (Schickel). Ring Lander Jr. also created films under a pseudonym (Appendix A). Although many blacklisted artists were able to work, their lack of reasonable earnings and credit made the experience, as a whole, degrading.

When the McCarthy era began to decline and the blacklist lost its influence in the late 1950s and early '60s, many blacklisted artists were able to resume their careers and thrive. McCarthy lost his influence in the late '50s when the senate stopped supporting him, and with his decline came the decline of the widespread fear of communism (Carlin). Film companies like CBS began clearing names of previously blacklisted artists, and they were praised for their talents and contributions to the film industry (Cold War Cool Medium). Film production began to dismiss the blacklist, starting in 1957 when Alfred Hitchcock began hiring blacklisted artists(Stockdale). Blacklisted artists were also given credit for the work that they had created during their period on the blacklist. Dalton Trumbo, for example, was given credit for all of his films created under the pseudonym "Robert Rich" and once the blacklist was lifted, he went on

to create more films under his real name, receiving the Academy Award for Best Story(1957), the Writers Guild of America Award(1970), and Oscar awards (Stockdale). Ring Larnder Jr. also was able to win many awards after the blacklist was dismissed like the highly coveted Laurel Award for Screenwriting Achievement(1989), Academy Award for Best Writing Adapted Screenplay(1971), Writers Guild of America Award for Best Adapted Comedy(1971), and the Ian McLellan Hunter Award(1992) ("Appendix A). Blacklisted screenwriter Millard Lampell won an Emmy in 1965, writer Walter Salt received an oscar in 1968, screenwriter Carl Foreman won the Laurel Award in 1969, and more (Appendix B). It was clear that blacklisted artists were no longer being ostracized for their refusal to conform to societal norms; they were being celebrated for it.

As blacklisted artists were able to resume work and become celebrated, their act of standing against the HUAC and government became glorified. Society became fascinated with the Hollywood Ten. Film and literature during this era depicted the events of the Hollywood Ten members and other blacklisted artists(Appendix C). In 1963, CBS showed a film "Blacklist" on their series "The Defenders". The film portrayed the injustice of the HUAC and was extremely popular(Appendix B). Society was finally aware of the injustices committed by the HUAC, and they glorified blacklisted members for standing against the oppression and continuing to adhere to their beliefs. Being on the blacklist became a symbol of status and an indication of honor(Appendix B).

While past blacklisted artists were celebrated and glorified, those who had turned in artists to the HUAC were vilified. There was a huge stigma against those who had been blacklisters; they were seen as betrayers and villains (Appendix B). Edward Dmytryk, a film

director from the Hollywood Ten, later claimed he was separated from the communist party, and in 1951, he turned in names of people he believed had had communist affiliations ("Edward Dmytryk, Film Director, Dies at 90."). While immediately after, he was able to create more films, as society began to acknowledge the injustice blacklisted artists had faced and began to glorify the Hollywood Ten and other blacklisted artists, Dmytryk was seen as a villain. At a film festival in Barcelona in 1988, the Hollywood Ten and other blacklisted artists were invited to speak about their experience. Blacklisted artists, however, refused to stand with Dmytryk, instead publicly calling him "Judas" and an "informer"(Appendix D). Some blacklisted artists turned to legal action to seek their revenge. In 1962, John Henry Faulk filed a lawsuit against AWARE Inc., Laurence A. Johnson, and Vincent Hartnett. They had placed Faulk on the blacklist because of his public anti-blacklist platform. The Lawsuit was highly publicized, and it presented the blacklisters as greedy villains(Cold War Cool Medium). While immediately after the blacklist was created, those who turned in names were rewarded and praised, they were now seen as villains and oppressors.

Despite the Hollywood Blacklist leading to the short-term disruption of careers and causing an immediate anti-communist movement, once the blacklist was lifted and society became more aware of the obstruction of justice caused by the HUAC and other blacklisters, the Hollywood Ten and other blacklisted artists were glorified and celebrated. Today, the Hollywood industry openly uses film to stand against societal norms and discuss issues in society. From 2016-2020, award shows like the Golden Globes, The Oscars, The Grammys, The Emmys, and more poked fun at current President Donald Trump(The Resistance Has Come to Celebrity Award Shows). Hollywood is known to be very liberal and whether they prove this through the

themes shown in films, witty comedy sketches, or award ceremony speeches, many celebrities are not afraid to show their opposition to conservatism, similar to the blacklisted individuals allegedly affiliated with the communist party. Celebrities use their platforms to voice their beliefs and, when necessary, stand against societal norms.

# Appendix A

## "Ring Lardner Jr., Wry Screenwriter and Last of the Hollywood 10, Dies at 85."

*The New York Times*, 2 Nov. 2000, www.nytimes.com/2000/11/02/movies/

ring-lardner-jr-wry-screenwriter-and-last-of-the-hollywood-10-dies-at-85.html.

**Ring Lardner Jr., Wry Screenwriter and Last of the Hollywood 10, Dies at 85**

By RICHARD SEVERO

Ring Lardner Jr., whose satirical screenplays twice won the Academy Award but whose career collapsed in 1947 after he refused to tell Congress if he had ever been a Communist, died on Tuesday at his home in Manhattan. He was 85.

Mr. Lardner was the last surviving son of Ring Lardner, the baseball writer, humorist and short-story author. He was also the last surviving member of the Hollywood 10, the notorious group of writers, directors and producers who were sent to Federal prison in 1950 for refusing to name names to the House Un-American Activities Committee if they were or ever had been members of the Communist Party, or if they knew of any Hollywood colleagues who were.

Mr. Lardner Jr. shared an Academy Award for best original screenplay with Michael Kazin in 1942 for "Women of the Year," a comedy that marked the first teaming of Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy. In 1939 he forcefully reestablished himself with an Oscar for best screenplay for "The Sign of the Cross," which was based on Hildesheim's novel about an irreverent Army medical unit during the Boer war. These two movies were in either end of a quality period between 1942 and the early 1950s when Mr. Lardner was able to get work as Hollywood under his own name.

In 1947 Mr. Lardner was an unrepentant and ferociously outspoken witness when he was interrogated by the committee's chairman, the faculty aggressor J. Parnell Thomas, Republican of New Jersey. Mr. Lardner was, in fact, a Communist, but he refused to answer Thomas because he felt that his political leanings were none of the government's business.

**'I'd Hate Myself In the Morning'**

At one point Thomas demanded to know if Mr. Lardner was or ever had been a Communist. Mr. Lardner started to reply, then hesitated.

"It is a very simple question," the congressman said sharply. "Anybody would be proud to answer it — any real American would be proud to answer the question, 'Are you or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?'"

"I could answer the question exactly the way you want," Mr. Lardner replied. "But if I did, I would hate myself in the morning."

An angry Thomas had been removed from the witness stand.

In late 1947, 20th Century-Fox, which had been paying Mr. Lardner \$250 a week, announced that "his employment with the company has been terminated." Two weeks after that, Mr. Lardner and the nine others who refused to answer were indicted and subsequently convicted of contempt of Congress.

Lawyers for the Hollywood 10 succeeded in limiting the extent to which procedural details of the case were disseminated. But the nine other guys were sentenced to 30 days in prison for obstructing their clients, who, as ad-

vised, in 1954, he used the name Philip Bush in credits on a movie he wrote or adapted, "Polter," called "Virgin Island," and was the same name turned up and sent a tart letter to "The Times" of Lardner, saying that he had absolutely nothing to do with the movie.

Some people in Hollywood tried to help Mr. Lardner. In the early 1950s, the producer and director Otto Preminger was accused by the American House of Representatives after he hired Mr. Lardner to adapt "Cactus," a movie by Howard Fast, for the screen. The project was ultimately shelved.

During the same time period Mr. Lardner collaborated with Ted Post on several projects, including "Tape," a Bert Lahr musical that failed on Broadway. Mr. Lardner did have some success, however, as the author, with Terry Southern, of the 1952 movie "The Cincinnati Kid," which starred Steve McQueen and Edward G. Robinson.

Among Mr. Lardner's other screen projects, either as author or co-author, were "Meet Dr. Christian" (1950), "Corporation Dr. Christian" (1950), "The Cross of Lorraine" (1951), "Tomorrow the World" (1951), "Cook and Chigger" (1952) and "Fever Pitch" (1957). Among his screenplays he either wrote or contributed to were "The Apartment" (1960), "The Sandlot" (1980) and "Four Days Leave" (1981). One of his screenplays he wrote after the blackout was "The Great Out" (1977), starring Maimonides.

Engaged Wilmer Lardner Jr. was born in Chicago on Aug. 13, 1915, one of four sons born to Ring Lardner and the former Ellen Albert. The other three sons, James, David and John, also became writers but died relatively young. James, 24, fought and died in the Spanish Civil War as a volunteer with the Lincoln Brigade. David, 33, was killed by a land mine in Germany while covering the World War II background for "The New Yorker" as a critic and journalist, died of a heart attack in 1960.

Mr. Lardner's first byline appeared in 1931, when he was just 4 years old. It was a travel story called "The Young Immigrants" but it was really written by his father and secured the same wages of a cross-country trip by automobile.

**Introduced To David O. Selznick**

When Mr. Lardner was about 6, his family moved to Groton, Conn., and then to Great Neck, an Long Island, where wealthy and regular visitors included the journalist Herbert Bayard Swaps, Grandfather Dix and Howard Brown, the authors H.L. Menckin, Dorothy Parker and Alexander Wolcott and the composer and critic Deems Taylor. Mr. Lardner was naturally inherited person, but his parents instructed him to write and eat with his right hand. He thought this probably caused him to

established to encourage young Americans to support the Soviet system. Young Lardner was not over. He returned to New York and in 1935 got a job working for Stanley Walker, then editor of the Daily Mirror. He did not remain there long. His roommate at Princeton had been Herbert Bayard Swaps Jr., whose father, a former executive editor of The New York World, introduced him to David O. Selznick, who was then on the process of starting his own movie company. So soon, Mr. Lardner was assigned to work with Selznick's publicity director. But after a year or so passed, Mr. Selznick asked Mr. Lardner and a coworker, Budd Schaeberg, a reader in the story department, to rewrite some scenes for a new movie featuring Francis March and Janet Clayton. It was called "A Star Is Born" and it already had four writers assigned to it at Selznick. The part he created with the room line at the end of the film, "This is Mrs. Norman Maine speaking." Mr. Selznick liked their work and said that the two should consider themselves screenwriters.

Not all Mr. Lardner's judgments were wise, however. Mr. Selznick asked his secretary, Sylvia Robinson, and Mr. Lardner, who was doing "A Star Is Born" with the "Horse Man" a short time with the

The Hollywood 10 in Washington in 1948. Top row from left, Ring Lardner Jr., Edward Dmytryk, Adrian Scott; second row from left, Dalton Trumbo, John Howard Lawson, Alvin Sargent, Samuel Oltus; from front left, Herbert Biberman, the two attorneys, Martin Popper and Robert W. Kenney, and Albert Maltz and Lester Cole.

in the Army Signal Corps and was sent into battle for in Anzio, Queens, where he spent most of his military career writing the script for a training film.

**Credit, of Course, For 'MASH'**

Mr. Lardner felt that he had, if not for all the other members of the Hollywood 10, the blindest end of a good spot in the 1950's and there was no question about his receiving credit for the work he did on "MASH." After "MASH" proved to be a big moneymaker, he was asked if he thought it could be adapted for television. He said that "MASH" had no future as a television show. In fact, the film of screenwriter's most successful screen, from 1970-83) to 1981, Mr. Lardner turned from screenwriting to concentrate on books in addition to "The Lardner." My "Daddy Remembers" he was the author of two novels, "The Factory of Open Mouth" and "All For Love." His first book, "I'd Hate Myself in the Morning" (Oxford Books), a memoir, is scheduled for publication in January.

Mr. Lardner's marriage to Miss Selznick ended in divorce. He is survived by his

CONTINUE READING: Full Text

## Appendix B

Navasky, Victor. "Chapter 10, Degradation Ceremonies." *Victor Navasky's Naming*

*Names*, www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/50s/navasky-chap10.html.

Originally published in *The Viking Press* [New York], 1980.

### Victor Navasky's *Naming Names*

(New York: The Viking Press, 1980)

[Back](#) to *Naming Names* contents page.

#### Chapter 10, Degradation Ceremonies

On only one issue did the House Un-American Activities Committee and its most visible victims, Kazan and Polonsky, the blacklists and the Hollywood Ten, Sokolsky and the Daily Worker, all agree: the test for friend or foe was the willingness to inform. Why did such a consensus develop on the meaning of the names test? Why did the Committee insist on it?

Suspend the search for individual motives and consider the under-reported testimony of one William Ward Kimple. On June 30, 1955, Kimple appeared as a witness before the Committee and told a story whose significance may have been lost at the time. He was not a star witness. The hearings had stopped making news. The dozen or so names he read into the record were those of mostly anonymous Party functionaries. In other words, who cared...

--that he had been a member of the intelligence unit of the Los Angeles Police Department from 1924 to 1944;

--that from 1928 until September 1939 he was a member of the Communist Party under the name William Wallace;

--that he served the Party as unit literary agent, unit educational director, unit organizer, alternate on the county-level disciplinary committee, and, last but not least, assistant to the L.A. County membership director;

--that in this latter capacity he had all the membership records;

--that during the years 1936, 1937, 1938, and 1939--years of the Popular Front, when Party membership skyrocketed--he had charge of the membership lists and kept them in his own possession;

--that there had been 100 members of the Communist Party in Los Angeles when he joined, and 2880 when he left in September 1939;

--that it was his extracurricular duty "to keep the police department informed . . . of the 'who and what and when' and the 'where and the why' of the Communist movement and activities."

As he put it in his testimony before the Committee:

My duties . . . were to keep the membership records of the Communist Party in order to assist in the annual registration of Communist Party members, to assist in the mid-year control of the Communist Party membership books. That was an activity taken about the first of July--to check on all Communist Party members, to see to it that they were paid up in dues and when.... When their books were inspected and [they were] found to be paid-up members, then a control card was detached from the membership book and sent back to the membership

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Then I, as assistant membership director, would check against the records and show that they were Communist Party members in good standing. I would also assist in the transfer of Communist Party members from one unit to another, one section to another; see to it that their Communist Party cards were kept in place so that at all times we knew where each CP member was and where he was functioning and what his duty was supposed to be.

The following dialogue then took place with Frank Tavenner, counsel to the Committee:

**MR. TAVENNER:** Then it would be correct to say that you had in your custody or under your control at one time or another the record of memberships in the Communist Party in the Los Angeles area?

**MR. KIMPLE:** Yes, sir.... I furnished [my police superior] copies of the CP membership records and, where possible, I furnished him copies of the Communist Party membership registration and, where possible, I turned in to him the Communist Party membership books which were picked up at the end of the year when the new books were issued, and the old books I turned over to him.... My instructions were to destroy the old books and the method I used was to turn them over to the police department.

**MR. TAVENNER:** Did you follow that practice with regard to the entire membership of the Communist Party during this period that you were membership director? I mean, did you furnish the department with the records of membership of all the members?

**MR. KIMPLE:** Yes, sir....

**MR. TAVENNER:** . . . You said you had some assistance in this work from another person employed by the police department. In what way did she assist you in that work?

**MR. KIMPLE:** Well, sir, we worked as a team all the time and she was the Los Angeles County dues secretary for the Hollywood subsection, dues secretary at the time she was in the new unit. She was also secretary of the Los Angeles County disciplinary committee of the Communist Party. And working together we kept the police department pretty well informed.

**MR. TAVENNER:** Have you recently been in a position to review the reports and records which you and the person whom you later married turned over to the police department?

**MR. KIMPLE:** I have, yes, sir; many of them, not all of them.

At the close of Kimple's testimony, Congressman Donald Jackson thanked him, and observed:

It is by virtue of informed testimony such as this that it has been possible to piece together across the years the nature and the extent and the objectives of the Communist Party in the United States. Of course, anyone who serves on this Committee is automatically a heel in the eyes of the comrades. Your future will be that of a stool pigeon.

**MR. KIMPLE:** I have been so labeled many times.

**MR. JACKSON:** However I feel that that will reflect a very small vocal minority viewpoint and that by and large the people of the city of Los Angeles, California in general, and of the Nation owe to you and other people who have been willing to take on assignments of this kind in the line of official duty, separating yourself in large part, as I know you must have,

Jackson then asked whether the witness was in a position to give the Committee additional names. "I am in the position, sir," said Kimple, "to positively identify the Communist Party membership of close to a thousand people."

**MR. JACKSON:** A thousand people?

**MR. KIMPLE:** In Los Angeles, yes, sir.

**MR. JACKSON:** Is the Committee in possession of that information?

**MR. KIMPLE:** They are.

**MR. JACKSON:** Thank you very much.

Three years before Kimple testified, in 1952, the Committee had heard from one Max Silver, who had been the paid full-time organizational secretary for the Southern California Communist Party from 1938 to 1945. In other words, Silver's West Coast duties commenced the year before Kimple had retired. Silver guessed that there were four thousand members in the Los Angeles County Party. So between Silver and Kimple alone, the Committee had access to all of the Party's local names from 1936 through 1945. And then, to bring the Committee up-to-date on the postwar period, it had witnesses such as Roy Erwin, a Hollywood radio worker who had joined the Party in 1945 and who doubled as an FBI informant and Party member from 1947 to 1949. The testimony of Kimple, Silver, and Erwin, combined with intelligence from the FBI and countless other government sources in the business of trading information (with such as the good-natured investigator Bill Wheeler and his colleagues on HUAC), meant that the last thing the Committee needed to do its job was to accumulate more names. Moreover, almost all the witnesses who named names publicly preceded their public testimony with a private, executive-session rehearsal, which means that the public hearings were indeed largely ceremonial. Why did they agree to participate in the ceremony? Lest there remain any doubt about the informational irrelevance of the public naming, let us remember Wheeler's own injunction to the penitent Martin Berkeley: "When Berkeley came down with his list of 154 people, I told him, I said, Don't name that many. You're just going to get yourself in big, deep trouble." I said, "We don't need all this. Put the rest of it in executive testimony." Names were turned on and off like water by the Committee's counsel and investigator, depending on the symbolic goal of the day. Thus, on January 21, 1952, Wheeler reined in

Max Silver: "I advised him not to identify too many people because I told him I wanted from him the theory of Communism, the story of the way the Hollywood section of the Party was divorced from the Los Angeles section and how they got their directives from New York, and the fight about how New York picked up all the money. I wanted the hearings to focus on the big argument about whether under the Hollywood tithing system they got ten percent of the gross or ten percent of the net. Well, I think he still named about thirty people or something like that, and there were the usual big headlines in all the Los Angeles papers--you know, EX COMMUNIST IDENTIFIES THIRTY, and they left out all the theory, they just skipped it."

And the Committee's critics are further confirmed in one of their several indictments of its activities: The purpose of the public hearing was not, as HUAC and its defenders insisted it was, to gather information for legislation. The information it demanded in public it already had, and other information that might have been useful to it was rejected. (When Lillian Hellman, Arthur Miller, Robert Rossen, Larry Parks, Sidney Buchman, and others offered to tell all about themselves as long as they weren't required to name others, the Committee said no.) Its "official" reason for demanding the naming of names was perhaps most forcefully stated by Congressman Jackson, who believed that only the naming of names was the final proof that a witness had broken with his past. He said: "I personally will place no credence in the testimony of any witness who is not prepared to come before this Committee and fully cooperate with respect to activities within the Communist Party." And naming names was "the ultimate test" of a witness's cooperation. In theory the failure to name names left open the possibility that one was still in the business of protecting one's old comrades.

Jackson's test may help to explain why the practice was inaugurated but not why it persisted. Nor are we given much guidance in the histories, political analyses, or legal briefs of the period, which concern themselves primarily with matters of the separation and abuse of powers, and the reputation of various constitutional amendments.

One turns instead to the sociologists and anthropologists, students of ritual, ceremony, and symbolism, of the meaning of deviance, the visiting of stigma, and the persistence of social evil. For the lesson of Kimple, Silver, et al. is surely that whatever the practical consequences of the naming of names, the ritual's real significance was symbolic. That this was sensed by many participants in

The HUAC hearings were degradation ceremonies. Their job was not to legislate or even to discover subversives (that had already been done by the intelligence agencies and their informants) so much as it was to stigmatize.

For a degradation ceremony to work it needs a denouncer. And the most credible denouncer, with the most impeccable credentials, is the one who has been there himself. The ex-Communists constituted a steady supply of denouncers.

A successful status-degradation ceremony must be fueled by moral indignation. The anti-Communist hysteria of the cold war provided an ideal environment.

What makes the degradation ceremony so serious an occasion is the nature of the public denunciation. As Harold Garfinkel, a UCLA sociologist who has written an important article on degradation rites, describes the process, the public, through its agent, delivers a curse which says in effect, "I call upon all men to bear witness that he [the denounced person] is not as he appears but is otherwise and in essence of a lower species." The target becomes in the eyes of his condemners literally "different," "a new person." It is not that new attributes are added to the old identity. He is not changed; he is, rather, reconstituted, transformed. "The man at whose hands a neighbor suffered death becomes a 'murderer.'" The former identity, at best, is seen as something of a sham appearance. The new identity is the "basic reality."

Scholars who undertook to challenge the work of the congressional committees during the cold war years focused for the most part on rights rather than rites. But of course most scholarship of the period divorced itself from concern with the content of actions. In literature the New Critics focused on form over contents in philosophy the positivists were preoccupied with the verifiable rather than the meaningful, in psychology the behaviorists rejected Gestalt analysis in favor of stimulus-response studies. Even in the relatively new discipline of sociology, whose subject was largely contemporary society, confrontation with McCarthy, the man or the ism, took the form of esoteric studies in conformity. But perhaps there is some sort of unwritten law on the inevitability of relevance, which says that contemporary moral, political, and social issues are inescapable. At any rate, one of the more obscure developments in the sociology of the 1950s turns out to offer perhaps the most useful framework for understanding the politics of that time--namely, the study of "the deviant," by which was usually meant a juvenile delinquent, a mental patient, or a religious fanatic. Thus the sociologist Kai Erikson's description of a community's decision to bring what he calls "deviant sanctions" against one of its members turns out to be a description of the elements of the sort of status-degradation ceremony I have been talking about:

To begin with, the community's decision to bring deviant sanctions against one of its members is not a simple act of censure. It is an intricate rite of transition, at once moving the individual out of his ordinary place in society and transferring him into a special deviant position. The ceremonies which mark this change of status generally have a number of related phases. They supply a formal stage on which the deviant and his community can confront one another [as in a HUAC hearing]; they make an announcement about the nature of his deviancy [the witness is named as a Communist or former Communist]; and they place him in a particular role which is thought to neutralize the harmful effects of his misconduct [he is put on a blacklist which renders him unemployable]. These commitment ceremonies tend to be occasions of wide public interest and ordinarily take place in a highly dramatic setting [the HUAC hearings, frequently televised, often made page one]....

Now an important feature of these ceremonies in our own culture is that they are almost irreversible. Most provisional roles conferred by society--those of the student or conscripted soldier, for example--include some kind of terminal ceremony to mark the individual's movement back out of the role once its temporary advantages have been exhausted. But the roles allotted the deviant seldom make allowance for this type of passage. He is ushered into the deviant position by a decisive and often dramatic ceremony, yet is retired from it with scarcely a word. As a result, the deviant often returns home with no proper license to resume a normal life in the community. Nothing has happened to cancel out the stigmas imposed upon him [commitment ceremonies]; nothing has happened to revoke the verdict or diagnosis pronounced upon him at that time. It should not be surprising, then, that the people of the con-  


gressional degradation ceremonies served the purposes of too many constituencies to be easily discarded. From the perspective of the state, it functioned to reinforce group solidarity. The apparent willingness of former Communists to engage in wholesale denunciations of their former comrades confirmed the state in its conviction that the ceremonies were warranted. The process of stigmatizing individuals as subversives, as agents of a foreign power, as conspirators, as having rejected the American heritage, reassured middle Americans of their own patriotism.

Americans have always defined themselves largely by what they are against: America is for Americans; go back to where you came from; the foreign, the different, the strange, the subversive should get out of town. From the perspective of the Committee, the ceremonies not only brought publicity but alerted the freelance blacklists, who functioned as the enforcement arm. Those who were denounced at HUAC had broken no law, and under the American system where there is no crime the state visits no punishment. But the ceremonies enabled the Committee to perpetrate the fiction that the mere publicizing and publication of names--in the form of testimony, indexes, supplements, and cumulative indexes, in effect blacklist deskbooks--was no punishment. No one asked, "Why are you turning out these interminable lists with the taxpayers' money?" The ritual masked the fact that these lists were never intended to help Congress pass any laws.

From the perspective of the free-lance enforcers, the degradation ceremonies promised a continuous generation and supply of the raw material of their trade. The hearings were free advertising, a preview of coming attractions, and an identification of the next round of targets.

From the perspective of the informers, the hearings insulated them from direct contact with the moral dilemmas of betrayal. The anthropologist Ernest Becker has described the age-old dynamic of sacrificial scapegoating as "the sadistic formula par excellence: break the bones and spill the blood of the victim in service of some 'higher truth' that the sacrificers alone possess." But the ceremonies shielded the informers from the consequences of their action. By pronouncing a particular set of former friends as Communists (or unrepentant ex-Communists), as deviants, unclean, foreign, they were by definition absolving themselves of moral responsibility: The "subversives" had the same opportunity as the informers did to "come clean," to "purge" themselves; if they chose not to do so, that was not the informer's responsibility. And of course on a more mundane level the hearings generally provided the informers with a ticket back to employment, simultaneously exonerating the witness who wished to go back to work and the employer who wished to employ him. It was a form of stigma transfer--from namer to namee. For some, the very act of denouncing was a form of assimilation, of status elevation. Some critics called [Lillian Hellman](#) a snob for speculating in her memoir, *Scoundrel Time*, that "The children of timid immigrants are often remarkable people: energetic, intelligent, hardworking; and often they make it so good that they are determined to keep it at any cost." But the truth was that by denouncing fellow immigrants (or children of immigrants) before HUAC, one consolidated one's identification with the dominant society. The practice came with the prestige of the state conferred upon it; it legitimated betrayal.

The degradation ceremonies satisfied the needs of the mass media, which were either incapable of, or uninterested in, exposing the ways in which the ritual distorted truth when it lent itself so elegantly to reproduction on radio and television. And the degradation ceremonies exploited the peculiar vulnerability of mass media to the pseudo-event. The phrase "pseudo-event" was, appropriately enough, introduced into the language by Daniel J. Boorstin, now Librarian of Congress, distinguished historian, and participant in the degradation ceremonies of 1953, when he named five of his former Harvard colleagues before the Committee. In his elegantly written book called *The Image, or What Happened to the American Dream* (1961), Boorstin offered a four-part definition of the term "pseudo-event":

1. It is not spontaneous, but comes about because someone has planned, planted, or incited it. Typically, it is not a train wreck or an earthquake, but an interview.
2. It is planted primarily (not always exclusively) for the immediate purpose of being reported or reproduced. Therefore, its occurrence is arranged for the convenience of the reporting or reproducing media. Its success is measured by how widely it is reported.... The question "Is it real?" is less important than, "Is it newsworthy?"
3. Its relation to the underlying reality of the situation is ambiguous. Its interest arises largely from this very ambiguity.... While the news interest in a train wreck is in what happened and in the real consequences, the interest in an interview is always, in a sense, in whether it really happened and in what might have been the motives. Did the statement really mean what it said?
4. Usually it is intended to be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Pseudo-events are staged to give people something to talk about. They become a test for being informed. "Once we have tasted the charm of pseudo-events," Boorstin observed, "we are tempted to believe they are the only important events. Our progress poisons the sources of our experience. And the poison tastes so sweet that it spoils our appetite for plain fact."

The degradation ceremony used the press to promote the ritual, the message, the Committee, the myth, the image of the Communist as conspirator. It repackaged for home entertainment the trivial and sometimes dull, tedious, and occasionally unconvincing of witness work into melodramatic reality plays for national audiences. Yet one cannot help believe that, especially as a historian

The degradation ceremony used the press to promote the ritual, the message, the Committee, the myth, the image of the Communist as conspirator. It repackaged for home entertainment the trivial and sometimes dull, boring, and meaningless experiences of misspent youth into melodramatic morality plays for a national audience. Yet one cannot but believe that, consciously or otherwise, Boorstin's formulation was informed by his own experience as a public denouncer.

The degradation ceremony complemented the status needs of certain former Communists, socialists, and others of the liberal left who were, as we have already seen, caught in the net of the red hunters of the day. To the extent that the ritual public denunciations succeeded in stigmatizing Communists and unrepentant former Communists, by implication they exonerated from intimations of guilt other members of the anti-Communist left. The degree of treason of these particular clerics may be measured in terms of their willingness to participate in the degradation ceremonies of the day. It is true that there was a small minority of non-Communist liberals who saw McCarthyism and domestic repression as the enemy and thought it counterproductive to participate in any way. For their troubles they were dismissed by cold war liberals as fellow travelers. There was also a tiny minority of anti-Stalinist socialists who fought the persecution of Communists at every step. Their journal was *Dissent*, and their message was that while Stalinism was an unqualified social evil, domestic Communists were entitled to the same rights and presumptions as the rest of our citizens. They denounced the congressional hearings and their adjuncts as intrusions on individual liberty.

But the majority of center-liberals lived in the penumbra of the degradation ceremony and reinforced it by playing its game. McCarthy and McCarthyism were to be feared not because they represented a threat to individual rights so much as because they represented an interference in the fight against Communism. The degradation ceremony was deficient only to the extent that it confused an occasional "innocent" (anti-Stalinist) with the "guilty" (those unwilling to denounce Communism). But as long as it succeeded in delivering up bona fide reds the ceremony was to be supported.

The extent to which the center liberal had internalized the assumptions underlying and the myths advanced by the degradation ceremonies may be gathered from an article written in 1954 in *Commentary* by Alan Westin, later editor of the *Civil Liberties Review*. In assessing the effect of the Army-McCarthy hearings on American opinion, Westin considered the message of a 25--pamphlet called "McCarthy on Trial," which itself used the degradation ceremony as a device by "trying" McCarthy in "the court of public opinion."

By this time most readers will have recognized "McCarthy on Trial" for what it is--a full-strength dose of Communist propaganda peddled under the label of anti-McCarthyism. It is probably unnecessary to name the booklet's editor as Albert E. Kahn (*The Great Conspiracy against Russia*); to note that the "jury" had such tradeunion affiliations as the Fur and Leather Workers, the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, and the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers; to learn that the chief prosecution counsel was president of the New York City chapter of the National Lawyers Guild; or to go deeply into the political character of witnesses like [Howard Fast](#), Mrs. Paul Robeson, and James Aronson (the executive editor of the *National Guardian*). Actually, the reader can get his bearings simply by looking at the books advertised by the same publisher (Cameron & Kahn) on the back cover of the pamphlet: *Eyewitness in Indochina* by Joseph Starobin, "the only American newspaperman yet to travel behind the Viet Minh lines, to interview Ho Chi Minh . . ." (and who just happens to be foreign correspondent for the *Daily Worker*); or *The Truth about Julius and Ethel Rosenberg* by John Wexley (also author of *They Shall Not Die* and *The Last Mile*). Nor is it difficult to see the book's conclusion for what it really is--an attempt by the Communists and Communist collaborators to slip back into respectability through the door of a new "popular front" against McCarthyism, and to exploit the fight against that unsavory and sinister politician solely in their own equally unsavory and sinister interest.

What is at issue here is not the accuracy of Westin's analysis, but the genesis of his standards and assumptions. His assumptions about the National Lawyers Guild were informed by the attorney general's list, which although arbitrarily assembled had been legitimized partly through incessant invocation at countless investigative sessions as evidence that the deviant writer organizations, Communist fronts. (Eventually the Lawyers Guild fought its way off the lists.) His assumptions about Angus Cameron (of Cameron & Kahn), one of America's distinguished book editors, were informed by the fact that he was forced out of his job as editor-in-chief of Little, Brown less because of the undeniable political coloration of his well-known leftist politics and his refusal to ratify the rituals of the various committees which subpoenaed him. Where Westin is not assuming, he is playing the Communist game, as in his references to James Aronson and John Wexley. Thus did a committed libertarian, accepting the labels and definitions and symbols of the cold war, use them to men whose rights one would have thought he would defend. Even when taking action against the cold war ceremonies, liberals could not always resist imitating them, so deeply had the rituals been internalized. We have already seen how James Wechsler chose to try to beat McCarthy at his own game, attempting to use his ritual against him and to play the unfriendly informer. The extraordinarily perceptive and talented journalist Richard Rovere, himself a former Young Communist Leaguer, provides a more poignant example of the same tactic.



Rovere was sitting in the press gallery one day when he heard Senator McCarthy begin to describe his latest case. A good listener with a better memory, Rovere quickly recognized that the suspect was someone whom he had reason to believe was actually an unconfessed former Communist. "I had the feeling, sitting there and listening to McCarthy harangue a practically nonexistent audience, that he might be on the point of enjoying his first real success."

Rovere saw a way of depriving the senator of his victory. As he wrote about it:

Reluctantly--for it involved an intervention in politics which is something that, as a correspondent, I had always sought to avoid--I took it upon myself to go to an official of X's agency and tell him my story.... I made my point. And it turned out that X, in the course of the various security and loyalty checks he had been through, had chosen to conceal his Communist past--a choice that might allow any one of several moral judgments, but one that, to his misfortune, exposed him to charges of perjury. He was advised that it would be necessary to reopen the case. Within a few days, he quit the government."

As John Caughey of UCLA later asked: "How does one explain a man, much opposed to McCarthy, acting to deny the senator a possible triumph but taking in stride that the means employed were pure McCarthyism? The king was dead, but his kingdom was well institutionalized on the conscious and unconscious levels. McCarthyism marched on."

With the years the blacklist passed. Its death was symbolized in publications, credits, prizes, honors, speeches, ceremonies. In 1952 the ACLU sponsored Merle Miller's *The Judges and the Judged*, an expose of blacklisting in television, although his unhappy findings caused, as we have seen, a split in the ACLU's board of directors and a criticism by one ACLU board member for failing to give equal time to blacklisting by the left. In 1954 Frontier magazine published its blacklist expose, "The Hollywood Story" by Elizabeth Poe Kerby, and in 1956 the [Fund for the Republic's](#) two-volume *Report on Blacklisting* appeared (which confirmed the earlier findings of Miller and Frontier); this prompted Congress to investigate not blacklisting but the fund and the authors of the report on what Chairman Walter called "so-called blacklisting."

In 1955 at the Cannes Film Festival, the blacklisted director Jules Dassin won an award for *Rififi* as a French entry. When an interviewer commented, "Quelle belle revanche," Dassin said, "The truth is, it made me sad." In 1956 the Academy Award for the best motion-picture story went to one "Robert Rich" for *The Brave One*, and when he failed to show up to accept it (those in attendance were told he was at the bedside of his wife who was about to give birth to their first baby), rumors spread that Rich also traveled under the name of [Dalton Trumbo](#). (See an essay about blacklisting for frequent references to [Trumbo](#).)

In 1957 the Oscar for best screenplay went to Pierre Boule for *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, even though it was an open secret that the true screenwriters were the blacklisted Carl Foreman and Michael Wilson.

In 1958 an Academy Award was won by "Nathan E. Douglas" and Harold Jacob Smith for their joint screenplay of *The Defiant Ones*. Douglas turned out to be the blacklisted Ned Young (who, in an inside joke, appeared on the screen while the Douglas credit appeared).

In 1959 the Motion Picture Academy rescinded its bylaw prohibiting awards to those who refused to cooperate with HUAC. In 1960 Otto Preminger announced (and *The New York Times* reported on its front page) that Dalton Trumbo had written his upcoming United Artists release *Exodus*. Later in the same year Frank Sinatra declared in an ad in *Variety* that he had hired the blacklisted Albert Maltz to write the screenplay for *The Execution of Private Slovik*, although public pressure from the American Legion, the Catholic War Veterans, and the Hearst press (plus, it was rumored, a private request from presidential candidate John F. Kennedy's father) caused Sinatra to renege. And shortly after his election, the president-elect and his brother Robert crossed American Legion picket lines to see Spartacus, whose screenplay was openly credited to Trumbo. (For more on Kennedy and the cold war, see [this](#) and [this](#).)

In 1962 John Henry Faulk was awarded \$3.5 million (later reduced to \$550,000) in his six-year libel suit against his blacklisters--the fanatical Lawrence A. Johnson, owner of a chain of supermarkets in Syracuse, New York, who had mounted a campaign based largely on material from *Counterattack* and aimed directly at sponsors, agencies, and networks to prevent them from employing Faulk and other of "Stalin's little agents." Since about 60 percent of television advertising revenue came from goods sold in supermarkets, Johnson's campaign was effective. Other defendants in Faulk's suit were the professional anti-Communist Vincent Hartnett and his Aware, Inc., the organization which cleared for a fee the performers it exposed.

defendants in Faulk's suit were the professional anti-Communist Vincent Hartnett and his Aware, Inc., the organization which cleared for a fee the performers it exposed.

In 1963 CBS Television presented a special drama entitled "Blacklist" on its long-running series *The Defenders*, by Ernest Kinoy, about a blacklisted actor in the 1950s. In 1965, *Inquisition in Eden*, Alvah Bessie's combative memoir on life under the blacklist and in prison was published by Macmillan. That same year Millard Lampell, accepting an Emmy for his Hallmark television drama "Eagle in a Cage," said simply, "I think I ought to mention I was blacklisted for ten years," and received a roaring ovation. In 1968 the blacklisted writer Waldo Salt won an Oscar for the screenplay of *Midnight Cowboy*, and the next year Ring Lardner, Jr., won for *M.A.S.H.* In 1969 the winner of Hollywood's coveted Laurel Award (given by the Screen Writers Guild) was the blacklisted director Carl Foreman, of whom his introducer said, "Those of us who lived through the era of fear in Hollywood have some slight conception of the guts it took for one man to stand up and risk his livelihood and his future in defense of a principle; to face exile from the country of his birth rather than compromise what he felt was his honor. It was six long and troubled years after he won the guild's award for his screenplay of *High Noon* before his name again appeared officially among the screen credits of a motion picture . . . and unlike the rest of us, he couldn't blame his agent." The next year the Laurel Award went to Dalton Trumbo.

By 1975 CBS-TV and Xerox had won nationwide press coverage for David Rintels' special dramatization of "Fear on Trial," the story of how CBS Radio and Aware, Inc., ganged up on John Henry Faulk. And then there was that evening in 1976 when the Screen Writers Guild chose Foreman to present the Laurel Award to Michael Wilson, and he proposed that they jointly send a letter to Pierre Boule, the French author of *Bridge over the River Kwai*, credited with the screenplay they had written: "Dear Pierre. Hello there, how are you? We are fine, and hope you are the same. Say, by the way, do you think you might send us our Oscar, COD, and we will work out the custody for same between us. Thanking you in advance, yours truly, Mike and Carl."

That same year saw the release of *The Front*, starring Woody Allen. The film was written by the blacklisted Walter Bernstein, produced and directed by the blacklisted Martin Ritt, and in the credits after each actor's name--Zero Mostel, John Randolph, Lloyd Gough, Joshua Shelley, Herschel Bernardi--appeared the date on which he was blacklisted. And the Motion Picture Academy amidst cheers and tears honored Lillian Hellman, whose just published memoir, *Scoundrel Time*--entitled partly for the informers whom the author felt should have known better--was a best-seller.

The sociologists of deviance, then, proved only partially correct prophets. These particular deviants, the blacklistees, reversed the "irreversible." They returned home and eventually resumed a "normal" life in their abnormal Hollywood. They invented their own rituals of return. They turned the tables. Events conspired to make having been a blacklistee something of a status symbol. They shed their stigma, transformed it into a badge of honor.

But the degradation ceremony had done its work too well. Even as the blacklistees reentered polite society, the myth of the informer as hero, the informer as patriot, passed from our culture. And when that happened, the denouncers themselves became victims of the ceremonies they had made possible. Now society at large began to see them the way their victims saw them--not as heroes but as villains, not as patriots but as betrayers. The stigmatizers became the stigmatized. If it was no longer possible to regard a Trumbo or a Lardner as an agent of a foreign power, it was all too easy to regard Parks or Kazan or Collins as informers "in essence." The denouncers rather than the denounced were stuck with their new identity. It was the informer who was now seen as "what he was all along." The sociologist Harold Garfinkel has explained that the paradigm of moral indignation is public denunciation. Remember the curse: "I call upon all men to bear witness that he is not as he appears but is otherwise and in essence of a lower species." As he elaborates in a footnote, "The person who passes on information to enemies is really, i.e. 'in essence,' 'in the first place,' 'all along,' 'in the final analysis,' 'originally,' an informer."

They named the names because they thought nobody would remember, but it turned out to be the one thing that nobody can forget.

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### Appendix C

Schickel, Richard. "Return of the Hollywood Ten." *Film Comment*, vol. 17, no. 2,

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Zoom Out

1 of 6 pages

**Return of the Hollywood Ten**

Richard Schickel

In 1950, when he was presented with the Writers Guild of America Laurel Award, annually bestowed upon a winner of the screenwriting craft for the best of his work, Dalton Trumbo, he sat atop the iron throne of the Hollywood Ten, and the occasion to make what has become the most famous formal address in Hollywood history. Known now as the "Only Victim" speech, it was an eloquent plea for reconciliation between two groups that had become, over a period of about two decades, reluctant adversaries: those famous (and not-so-famous) writers who had refused to testify before the House Committee on Un-American Activities about their intricate Communist Party affiliations, and those who had, mostly in reluctance and terrible guilt, "named names" in order to protect their careers and their families.

Trumbo took the position that the time of the blacklist had not only just been drawing to a close but had been "a time of evil" — a time, indeed, of such evil, that the "victims" of those unjustly "named" had passed beyond the control of mere individuals, so that such persons "acted as his agent, his mouth, his consciousness, and his particular consciousness compelled him to."

There was, said Trumbo, "not faith and good, honesty and dishonesty, courage

and cowardice, softness and opposition, wisdom and stupidity, goodness and bad on both sides. . . ." In the end, he said, it was wisdom to search for citizens and heroes in the history of that time, because "names" sufficed: how that others, some given and some distributed, but in the final tally, no wins or victories because almost without exception, each of us felt compelled to do things he did not want to do, to deliver and receive wounds he rich did not want to exchange. "None," he concluded, "emerged from that long nightmare without sin."

It was a noble sentence—quite characteristic of a man whose wit and style, whose fierce honesty of spirit, were so commonly characteristic of his fellows on the Hollywood left in particular, or of screenwriters (by and large a globally minded of opinion) collectively in general. It was also characteristic of him in other ways, for there was no one here more than Trumbo—with his ghastly facial and pointed mustache, his jagged cigarette holder, his dramatically given voice—or fearlessly stating an opinion and making the dramatic point of it. It was that spirit, supported by an indomitable strength, that had allowed Trumbo to sail triumphantly through the blacklist period, writing his only Oscar film *The Brave One*, under the pseudonym Robert Black, and writing his best script (*The Gas Club*, also under

a pseudonym). It seems to me a matter of perfect justice that, more than a decade after that speech, and more than three decades after the first congressional hearings into alleged subversion in the motion picture industry, it should be Trumbo who set the basic terms of the argument about what we—what history—should think about the period that Trumbo, in his 1960 pamphlet (the way never run to more than two times, termed "The Time of the Trial")

The fact that the argument about how one should or should not have behaved may lack when circumstances unfolded in one of the many disturbing chapters in Victor Navasky's much praised *Hollywood Names* (Viking Press, \$15.95). Indeed, one passage, most that took grew out of a piece Navasky wrote for *The New York Times Magazine* in 1973, when the blacklist was at last finally dealt and writing about it was becoming all the rage. It myself did a reference show that involved around in 1972, that it was the continuing reluctance of the quoted here: Trumbo and the critics of his antifascist position—most notably another screenwriter member of the Hollywood Ten, Albert Maltin—that had Navasky to believe there was a history of continuing moral reluctance to be written. The work would not merely be an interesting narrative of a certain moment in time, but might have didactic value, as a guide for right behavior in times to come. In any event, his book makes its claims with—and draws its intellectual reason from—an examina-





realize that where there is smoke there must be fire, or to put the point more directly, that where there is silence there must be guilt. Thus, in effect, their silence made them responsible for any one who is silent when they become co-conspirators with their committee counterparts in covering the claims in which McCarthy shined like his name.

They had done what Congressmen always liked to do: force a confrontation in which the institutions of capital society were seen in a light that could only be termed reprehensible. Theoretically, that was fine—Marxism is self-fulfilling prophecy. Practically speaking, it was a little hard on individuals. For now one had only two options if confronted before the Committee, and both of them were ugly. One could talk fully about one's past associations, which meant "naming names," and thus preserve one's career or the risk of being branded an informer; or one could refuse to speak (taking the Fifth Amendment, which at least saved one from serving prison) and then not work again in the entertainment industry. Whatever side you of-fered, there was no forgiveness—which means that, whatever you did, you life was, for the foreseeable future, ruined.

It is of course, always dangerous to deal in speculation about historical al-ternatives that never came to pass. But one cannot help wondering what might have happened if the Ten had avoided themselves of the opportunity that Danes and the other liberals offered. Suppose they had chosen not to con-sent to their identification with other in-formation at our, had said, "Now, we're Congressmen for work, and as what? It's a legal party [the Smith Act] had not yet happened and we've even done some good work along the way."

It is at least arguable that hundreds might have been spared, over the de-cade that followed, much pain, and that the body politic, as well, might have enjoyed a healthier period. To begin with, an open policy might have taken a great deal of the wind out of McCarthy's sails. If a group is open about its membership, it is deemed difficult to persuade people that it is compromised, let alone subversive. Moreover, such a policy might have made it possible—even supposing the Committee had-just continued its investigations in an open climate—for witnesses to discuss their differences candidly and with some social and psychological dimension, in-stead of being forced into the sterile and

degrading process of giving the Com-mittee witness in a hostile hall.

This is what I mean—what I pre-sent. I realize I realize—when he made his remarks about the case emerging from the nightmare years, testified. Of course the primary cause was the Com-mittee and the threat of the about it was nothing. But the response of the Committee was, if not calculated to make a bad situation worse, then dis-posed to insist, in all cases, that one self-published martyrdom. There was not the slightest effort on their part to judge the effects of their actions on others—which, given the pressures they were under and their lack of fore-knowledge, they are forgiveable. What seems to me undesignable in their con-

duct, for a hundred thousand times. It was a small piece of blaming a witness whose conduct on a short story writer and novelist were perhaps the strongest of any of the left-wing screenwriters. Within weeks, meetings were being held, poor Maltz was being publicly bad-ded for his (over)shallow reflections—used soon enough, he published a monograph of them. No job was to make in the affair, nothing was lost over Maltz. And yet surely those Party meetings were "agitation committees" at least as an affair of other people's behavior.

Here he is, for example, in the opening passage of his first public response to the Committee's speech: "To put the point



*'In the final tally we were all victims because each of us felt compelled to say things he did not want to say, to do things he did not want to do.'*

sharply: If an informer in the French underground who says I found in the same chambers of the George was equally a victim, then there can be no right or wrong in life that I understand."

Well, yes. Of course. But wait. The analogy between Maltz and the George and an appearance before the Com-mittee is not as simple as that. Let that pass, though, and let us take up instead the question raised by the word "friend."

Throughout the blacklist pe-riod, people like Maltz kept coming on the word, implying that their close Party collaborations were, among in-formational, which they supplied names to the Committee. But most of these friendships were not friendships at all; they were working acquaintanceships from years back. And most of them had dissolved into the segment of mem-berships as lives moved along their separate paths, as the ones which might have been formed in the course of brief encounters were dissolved by sectarian-political differences. In the age and climate of social life is a competitive one. A quarter that should at least be noted in a book that proceeds to make fine moral distinc-tions is one what we owe to institutions, or to colleagues we have knowingly joined

using self-interest on the matter; their momentary modification of themselves and the drama in which they were caught up, their insistence that there was the only truth in the situation; their refusal to consider the slightest compromise for anyone who about a course different from theirs. In the aftermath, a political issue that may or may not have been suitable to its moment has been turned into an interminable moral imperative.

Naturally—everyone—is still arguing the case from their premises. His re-luctant moral modification proceeds from them, and ends with them. There is no means in his scheme of things, even for human frailty, no acknowledgment of the very simple fact that a person whose involvement with organized commit-tees was brief and transient might have quite different priorities, under pres-sure, than a person whose controlling thought—as a dedicated Communist's thought—is political.

On this point the case of Arthur Maltz is particularly interesting. Not long be-fore the hearings he wrote a piece for the New Masses in which he argued persua-sively against a too-narrow definition of social realism in literature. In effect,





javascript:void(0)





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