

(Introduce with anecdote about Washington District Jail. Then:)

Two weeks later we were inmates of the Federal Penitentiary in Ashland, Kentucky. I think I should first tell you a few facts about what is legally known as the Commonwealth of Kentucky. It is a state in which 42% of the farms cannot be reached by improved roads of any kind, ~~and~~ in which 34% of all farms are worth less than \$300 apiece. Only 25% of Kentucky farms have electricity. Only 16% have telephones. The average farm income per agricultural family in 1940 was \$12 a week --for the entire family, mind you, and Kentucky farm families are large. ~~and it is only a fraction higher today~~ It is a state in which only 3% of the farms have indoor toilets. Forty-two thousand Kentucky farms have no toilet of any kind, indoors or out-of-doors. Only 78% of Kentucky school-age children are enrolled in school, and only 2 1/2% of ~~these en-~~ <sup>that 78%</sup> ~~rolled finish~~ high school. Every twenty-eighth person in Kentucky has syphilis. It's death rate from tuberculosis is the third highest in the union, and only one American state---John Rankin's Mississippi--- has a higher percentage of illiteracy.

~~and~~ Who are the leaders of this backward and degraded area?

Well---one of them is Andrew W. May, war time Chairman of the House Committee on Military affairs---although during the time I ~~was~~ associated with him he was <sup>simply</sup> known as Inmate Number 6683. Then there is Aiben W. Barkley, <sup>now</sup> vice-president of the United States, who made campaign speeches for Mr. May after the congressman had been convicted of taking bribes. Another representative of Kentucky culture is the Honorable Harold Burton, Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court. And the town from which our prison took its name is the residence of the greatest Kentuckian of them all---Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

Fred Vinson. I ~~strongly~~ suggest that we never underestimate the Commonwealth of Kentucky; for the men who have built their political careers upon its poverty, its filth, its disease and its illiteracy today occupy positions of enormous power in the Federal government, and they are using <sup>that</sup> ~~their~~ power to make America over in the image of their dreams.

It is the policy of the Bureau of Prisons to send convicts to the institutions nearest their homes <sup>so that they may receive visits from</sup> ~~in order that~~ their families. ~~may visit them as often as possible.~~ The only exception to this humane rule occurs with political prisoners, who are sent as far from their homes as possible. Since Ashland is a Kentucky prison, it draws its inmates mainly from the south, and hence its percentage of illiteracy is very large. Every night at mail call those who cannot read take their letters to friends who can, and those who cannot write seek out friends to whom they can dictate their ~~answers.~~ <sup>replies.</sup>

Several weeks after we arrived in Ashland a notice signed by the warden was posted on the prison bulletin board. It stated that any inmate who was discovered charging cigarettes for writing letters would be severely disciplined. Now both Jack and I had written many letters for inmates and had never thought of <sup>taking</sup> ~~charging~~ cigarettes <sup>in return.</sup> ~~for the same~~ ~~use.~~ But at the same time we are both <sup>old</sup> ~~long-time~~ members of the Screen Writers' Guild, and one of our first principles has always been that writers should be paid for their work. Moreover we knew it was common practice for inmates to make picture frames, pocketbooks, writing boards and even rugs, and sell <sup>their</sup> ~~their~~ handiwork to other inmates in return for cigarettes. Why was it, we asked ourselves, that of all the skills that might be charged for in that prison, only writing was excepted, only writing had to be free?

And then, after thinking it over, we understood. Writing is

primarily a means of expressing thought, and only secondarily a means of earning money. Writing is communication, and every man has the inalienable right to communicate. Even the warden recognized that right and was determined to preserve it. And Jack and I agreed with him. How, indeed, could we disagree, since it had been our assertion of that same inalienable right to communicate which <sup>had finally</sup> ~~had~~ landed us in prison? The warden, dimly and obscurely and without understanding them at all, was recognizing the validity of our principles. He was asserting in his own way and as a matter of right what the Supreme Court had failed to assert as a matter of <sup>duty and of</sup> Constitutional law.

I think, if I may indulge in fantasy, that the warden, if he were consistent, would be pleased to see me here tonight. For it is our insistence upon the inalienable right of <sup>all</sup> men to communicate, to speak, to write, to advocate, and, if they be capable of it, to teach ---it is our insistence upon this right which brings us together. Indeed, I regard my appearance here as a personal triumph for the warden of Ashland Penitentiary.

I have a confession to make tonight which I think will illustrate the changing content of motion pictures in America. A good many years ago, in one of my earliest screenplays, I dealt with a heroine who was trying to persuade the hero of the picture to marry her. At one point ~~xxxxxxx~~ I had her say: "But why not get married? We're both white, aren't we?" And at another point she said, "Well, we're both free, white and twenty-one." Yes, those were the lines, and I, who considered myself a decent American, am the man who wrote them.

Five years later, not only would I not have written those lines, but if I had written them my producer would have cut them from the script. Why? Because a progressive movement, a very broad and popular progressive movement had sprung up in Hollywood to speak out for the rights and privileges of free men in a free society. It was my <sup>good fortune</sup> ~~xxxxxxx~~ <sup>And to learn from it.</sup> to ~~learn from and~~ <sup>to</sup> be associated with that progressive movement. <sup>In the</sup> ~~space~~ <sup>period</sup> of a few brief years all ~~of~~ the old stereotypes were swept from the American screen. <sup>Have you ever wondered</sup> What happened to the caricature Negro, the dialect Jew, the drunken Irishman, the lazy Latin and the comical Chinese laundryman in motion pictures? They were murdered. They were utterly destroyed by the progressive artists of the American motion picture industry.

And in <sup>this</sup> ~~the~~ process of ~~eliminating~~ destroying the anti-human content of motion pictures there occurred a genuine flowering of progressive thought in Hollywood. Those were ~~the~~ days in which the Hollywood Quarterly and the Screen Writers' Guild Magazine were seriously read and thoughtfully reviewed in every capital of the free world. Those were days in which the finest creative minds of the anti-Fascist ~~xxxx~~ coalition met at the University of California at Los Angeles in the Writers Congress of 1943. There <sup>they</sup> ~~xxxxxxx~~ <sup>mere</sup> ~~the Congress was~~ greeted by Franklin Roosevelt as "a symbol of our

American faith in the Freedom of Expression---of our reliance upon our writers to present and clarify the issues of our times." There they were addressed by Dr. Enrique de Lozada, General Evans Carlson, Joris Ivens, Owen Lattimore, Darius Milhaud, William Grant Still, Earl Robinson, Oscar Hammerstein, Lion Feuchtwanger, Yu-Shan Han, ~~Phyllis~~ Phyllis Bentley, Vladimir Pozner, James Hilton, Marc Connelly, Walter White, Thomas Mann and dozens of others. There they analyzed the problems and obligations of those who engage in the art of communication.

There they asserted their anti-Fascist solidarity and unanimously adopted the Writer's Crēdo, which begins with these noble words: "The first principle of the Writer's Crēdo is the obligation to seek and find the truth. The second principle of the Writer's Crēdo is the obligation to respect and guard freedom of expression, the right of independent faith and belief and statement . . . "

Nor were these sentiments merely endorsed as empty words. They were ~~actually~~ translated into creative action. The American screen began, for the first time in its history, to accept its responsibility as an instrument of positive democracy. John Howard Lawson wrote Sahara, the first American film to treat a Negro as a dignified and heroic human being. He also wrote Action in the North Atlantic, the first film to pay tribute to the war efforts of American labor unions and their members. ~~Herbert Biberman wrote and directed The Master Race, one of the earliest attacks on Nazi racism.~~

Ring Lardner Jr. wrote The Brotherhood of Man, an animated cartoon based upon the book The Races of Mankind---a devastating and scientific attack upon the myth of Aryanism and racial supremacy. Albert Maltz won an Academy Award for his film The House I Live In, which was a veritable hymn to America and the democratic ideal. Adrian Scott and Edward ~~Byrnes~~ Dmytryk produced and directed Crossfire, the first American film to deal with anti-Semitism. I do not mean to imply that these men