

Present State of the Blacklist

Conditions have never been more favorable for blacklisted ~~writers~~ ^{writers} to work secretly in motion pictures, under pseudonyms or anonymously, at cut rates. Practically everyone who had any record of successful production before the blacklist, and who wishes to earn his living by writing films, is now able to do so. I should hazard that two dozen films---and perhaps more---will be written this year by blacklisted writers in Hollywood alone. You yourself know how ~~many~~ many European films are being written by ~~Hollywood~~ blacklistees. The advantages to blacklistees, in contrast to their previous state of penury, are too obvious to mention. The disadvantages, in terms of cut-rates, anonymity and isolation are also obvious. The spread of the black market has been a life-saver to all of us. It has been accompanied by two ~~features~~ features that are dangerous to us: (1) it has become almost a legitimate institution in Hollywood, which means that it threatens to become permanent; (2) it has spread to England, France and Italy, which means that in films' new world market the power of the American blacklist may well produce a world blacklist.

On the other hand, conditions were never so favorable as now to break the blacklist if only there were an operable plan to do the job. The reasons why this is so present a rather interesting picture:

First, the fragmentation of the motion picture industry. It is no longer a monolithic industry tightly controlled by six big corporations, and capable, therefore, of such monolithic action ~~was~~ as the original Johnston promulgation of the blacklist. The changing market has broken the power of the major studios, individually and as a combine. ~~It~~ Instead of six ~~producing~~ producing corporations, there are now scores (perhaps hundreds) of ~~independent~~ small, independent producers, most of them richly financed. Instead of monolithic agreement, these new independents are frantically competitive in their search for talent. Never before have there been such rich rewards for genuinely talented or successful people. The independents, by and large, don't give a damn whether a man was, is or is going to be a Communist. What they want is his work. They are buying it now at cut-rate prices, but they'd sooner pay standard or even super-standard prices if they could ^{NO,} also use the name (which ~~they~~ they realize has ~~value~~ value in casting). They didn't start the blacklist, they don't ~~concern~~ ^{FEEL} themselves bound by the Waldorf announcement of eleven years ago, and they consider the blacklist disadvantageous to themselves. They are not blacklisters. They are persons on whom the blacklist has been imposed by the same forces and groups and circumstances that imposed it on us. Unless I ~~badly~~ badly misjudge the situation, a number of them are eager for a formula that will permit them openly to hire blacklisted personnel, and almost any formula will do since actually they are not at all curious about the politics of a man who has something they want. However, they can't make the formula. Individual blacklisted persons will have to devise formulae for themselves if the thing is done at all. ^{GENUINE}

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Second, the fragmentation of the right. The old order, under which the blacklist was promulgated eleven years ago, is passing. Mayer, Sidney, Cohen, Lasky, Lichtman, Hartman are dead, not to mention such grand old men as Wood, McGuinness and other hot-heads of the MPA. Schary has been replaced at Metro, Zanuck at Fox, etc. The MPA is practically inactive. The committee, its wings clipped, will never, I think, have a profitable Hollywood ~~season~~ ^{SEASON.} ~~home again.~~ There are simply no more attractive victims. Aware, Alert and others, without fresh meat, are starving, their influence steadily diminishing. The end of McCarthyism, the new sense of a world market, the cultural rapprochement between east and west make the blacklist an unpleasant and uncomfortable subject. The industry and the Academy regard any press mention of the blacklist as bad for the industry. Where formerly the MPA and its press corps shouted their patriotism in having a blacklist, they now exert every possible pressure to see that ~~it~~ ^{it} ~~the blacklist~~ is never mentioned. It's bad publicity, and they don't like it, and they want to hush it up. You can't get a producer in town today to publicly admit ~~that~~ even the existence of a blacklist, where five years ago he was proud of its existence and eager to have it publicly known. Even the channels for blacklisting are fragmented, breaking down. As one producer said to me the other day in relation to a writer he was trying to get a line on: "There's nobody you can go to any more and be sure. It's not like the old days when all you had to do was call Ward Bond. I just can't find out whether this man is okay or whether he isn't."

*Martin
Schein's*

Third, the fragmentation of the left. The existence of a presumably flourishing and highly organized Communist Party in Hollywood and in the nation was the ostensible excuse of the committee for examining the film industry and the ostensible excuse for the blacklist. Today, when its civil liberties are better protected than at any period during the past decade, the ~~Communist Party~~ American Communist party has all but disappeared. Scores of leaders have resigned ~~and~~ ~~the country~~ with ringing condemnation of the organization. It probably ~~is~~ has less than 8,000 members in the whole country, and ~~the~~ bitter warfare between its endless factions will undoubtedly reduce it further. As for a Communist Party in Hollywood, one would be almost correct in saying it doesn't exist. I would be astonished if someone told me that among the 235 blacklisted Hollywood artists there are 10 who remain Communists today. If there are so many as 10, they ~~are~~ themselves are totally inactive as a community force, undoubtedly squabbling ~~among themselves~~ on doctrinal or tactical problems, and vastly uncertain of the future. To call such a group a party is preposterous. It is an ineffective remnant, a residue, and, in certain ways, a burden on the blacklisted community. While I am compelled to defend its right to exist as a section of the Communist Party ~~or~~ or any other party, I would consider its dissolution a virtue. I assert that the fragmentation of the industry, the fragmentation of the blacklisting right, and ~~the~~ the blacklisted left ~~constitute~~ constitute a drastic change in the ~~the~~ motion picture industry, a change in the forces that operate for and against the blacklist,