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**Tolerance and antisemitism: Reflections of post-war America in the films "Crossfire" (1947), "Gentleman's Agreement" (1947) and "Oliver Twist" (1948)**

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**TOLERANCE AND ANTISEMITISM:**  
**REFLECTIONS OF POST-WAR AMERICA**  
**IN THE FILMS *CROSSFIRE* (1947),**  
***GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT* (1947) AND *OLIVER TWIST* (1948)**

**A Thesis**  
**Presented to the**  
**Department of Communication**  
**and the**  
**Faculty of the Graduate College**  
**University of Nebraska**  
**In partial Fulfillment**  
**of the requirements for the degree**  
**Master of Arts**  
**University of Nebraska at Omaha**

**by**  
**Susan Rips Paley**  
**Spring, 1998**

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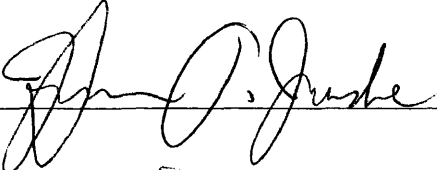

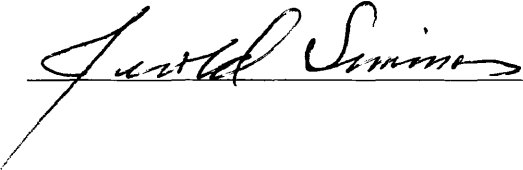


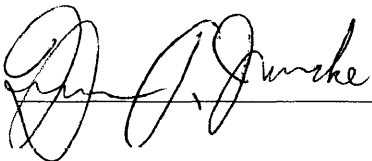
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## THESIS ABSTRACT

This thesis explores conscious liberal tolerance attitudes in America after World War II. Its specific focus is antisemitism, and it utilizes Hollywood films *Crossfire* (1947), *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947) and the British *Oliver Twist* (1948) as the context for analysis.

The origins of classical antisemitism are examined, as well as the history of antisemitism in England and America. American societal attitudes towards Jews are discussed and depictions of Jews in American films until 1947 are presented. The story and dialogue of each film is introduced, followed by the filmmakers' rationale for championing their films. Pre-release objections and concerns are addressed, and post-war public opinions about tolerance attitudes and antisemitism, revealed through scientific testing, are presented, juxtaposed to the reality of Americans' social practices.

Post-release results reveal that public opinion supported the wartime-into-peacetime message of unity and tolerance for all Americans, including Jews, but social practices did not mirror these opinions. Discrimination against Jews could be found in employment practices, restrictive housing covenants, entrance to colleges and medical schools, and restricted clubs and vacation resorts. *Crossfire* verified that baseless hatred of Jews still existed. *Gentleman's Agreement* boldly exposed social bigotry across the societal spectrum, promoting the wartime unity message that prejudice and intolerance are blatantly un-American. *Oliver Twist* validated the difference between American and British post-war attitudes toward Jews, confirming historical differences about endemic antisemitism. It also revealed the conflict between upholding the First Amendment and fighting bigotry.

The year 1947 proved to be a watershed year for American confrontation with enduring antisemitic attitudes, and for expression of conscious liberal attitudes engendered by the war. However, at precisely the same time, the House Un-American Activities Committee was actively engaged in ferreting out the "Jewish subversives" in Hollywood, convinced of the age-old anti-Jewish stereotype of a secret parliament of Jews, whose express purpose was the domination of the world. Alec Guinness' antisemitic portrayal of Fagin, and director David Lean's failure to understand the historical context in which he was working, verify the existence of unconscious antisemitic attitudes in Britain, despite the historical reality of the Holocaust. The historical conclusion is that malignant, atavistic antisemitism lived on, in spite of post-war American tolerance attitudes and Hollywood's valiant attempts to promote the conscious liberal philosophy.

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## PROLOGUE

In 1942, the Texas Seventh Calvary was stationed at Ft. McDowell, just off of Angel Island, near San Francisco. The troops were waiting to be shipped over to the Philippines to fight the Japanese. Twenty-year old Sgt. Norman D. Rips had been beaten by his first sergeant every day for a week. Rips, a tall, strong young man had done nothing to provoke the almost 400 pound first sergeant. In fact, he had never seen the man before. "Why do you keep beating me?" he asked the first sergeant. The reply, "Because you're a Jew, and I hate Jews."

Rips reported the incidents repeatedly, until a week later the colonel of the outfit, a gigantic Texan began screaming, "Rips! Where is Sgt. Rips? Get him over here. I want to see him." "Here I am, Sir," Rips replied, "You wanted to see me?" "Yes," the colonel said, "I got this report and I wanted to see for myself what you looked like. I ain't ever seen no Jew before."

Incredulously, Rips stated, "Why, this is what a Jew looks like. We look just like anybody else." Rips continued to be the target for the first sergeant's unbridled hatred until the matter was finally addressed and the first sergeant was officially ordered to leave Sgt. Rips alone. Sgt. Rips is my father.



CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION: JEWS, ANTISEMITISM AND  
THE AMERICAN DREAM

This is a study about tolerance attitudes in America after the Second World War. It focuses specifically on antisemitism and uses three films as the context for analysis. During a film history seminar, whose subject was film censorship, I studied the controversial 1948 British production of *Oliver Twist*. Alec Guinness' portrayal of Fagin ignited an angry protest from Jews in this country who were infuriated at its similarity to the Nazis' stereotypical depiction of Jews. While researching *Oliver Twist*, I learned about two Hollywood films, *Crossfire* and *Gentleman's Agreement*, both released in 1947, a few months prior to *Oliver Twist*. The American films had been critically acclaimed for their historically unprecedented exposure of intrinsic American antisemitic attitudes. *Gentleman's Agreement* won the Academy Award for the Best Picture of 1947, distinguishing it as the first Hollywood film in history to openly confront the idea that antisemitism did exist in America and that it was no longer socially acceptable. The film was also nominated for Best Actor, crediting it as the first film whose main character plays a role as an American and a Jew.

While continuing to investigate *Oliver Twist*, I also learned that uniquely American-Jewish character types had been strangely absent from the silver screen from the inception of

Hollywood in 1915 until the 1940s. This led to the broad subject of the depiction of Jewish character types in Hollywood films, as well as to the revelation that the entire subject of American antisemitism in American films was virtually ignored. All of this changed after the war.

After this interesting discovery, I began to research the extent to which antisemitism had played a historical role in the development of America, and I found, to my astonishment, that in this land of the free, vicious hatred toward Jews was as old as America itself, older, in fact. It permeated every facet of American society, and it was totally inconsistent with the democratic principles upon which this country was presumably founded.

It would seem historically obvious after the mass murder of European Jewry and the rebirth of Israel that the simultaneous emergence of a resilient, archetypical American-Jewish film character was no historical accident. Was it because American Jewish filmmakers felt guilty about not having done enough to stop Hitler, or was it newly-realized Jewish pride in the Jewish state? I found that neither the Holocaust nor the founding of a modern Israel had given rise to this new American-Jew, but that conscious liberal attitudes generated by the war had caused Americans to rethink their position on Jews. They had fought together and died together to preserve the democratic ideals of freedom and justice for all. This outlook, I realized, carried forward into peacetime

and was reflected in post-war Hollywood films.

This began an inquiry into the social impact Jewish character-types in Hollywood films had upon the greater American consciousness. The films seemed to suggest that attitudes in America were different than in Britain, so I also wondered, has America's promise of liberty for all really included its Jews? Did Americans begin to see Jews as legitimate American citizens, entitled to the same rights and privileges enjoyed by the rest of society? Did Americans begin to think about their own prejudices toward Jews? Did they even admit that they had them, and were they willing to do anything about it?

The last piece of this 1940s American-Jewish thought puzzle came in the form of the House Un-American Activities Committee's blacklisting of many Jewish filmmakers, directors, producers, scriptwriters and actors/actresses commencing, interestingly enough, in 1947. Considering this portion of '40s history from a Jewish perspective, I could not help but wonder if the entire historical episode was a flagrant antisemitic backlash against a predominantly Jewish industry which had become unexpectedly too "socially acceptable." Was this yet another expression of never-ending antisemitic prejudice, or was it possible that 1947 was an historical aberration, that in the face of manifest antisemitism, someone was courageous enough to publicly say, "Not this time?"

## RATIONALE

This discovery of a new, post-war uniquely American-Jewish character became intriguing from both a communication and an historical perspective. The speculation was that this segment of American film history might become an interesting subject for scholarly research. Subsequent investigation into relevant academic research concerning American films, the characterization of Jews in American films, antisemitism in America and its non-depiction in American films before 1940, failed to find a scholarly work which focused upon the potentially unique historical and social implications of the sudden presence of a prototypical American-Jewish film character. The year 1947 began to unfold as a possible watershed year in the history of the depiction of Jews in Hollywood films, as well as their acceptance as legitimate members of American society. Research confirmed that in the first 50 years of American films, Jews had never been portrayed as assimilated, loyal Americans, who were, at the same time, distinctly Jewish. The perennial outsider, the Jew was always an immigrant from a separate and distinctly un-American culture, desperately trying to "fit into" the American "melting pot" mold of other ethnic/racial/religious groups. Concurrently, the reality of American antisemitism was never brought to the screen prior to the onset of World War II.

All this changed abruptly during the war years with the filmic presentation of Jewish character types as part of the great American melting pot of loyal, patriotic Americans. The portrayal of Jews as a legitimate part of the greater social milieu validated the Jew's rightful place in America. Society's acceptance of Jews as equal American citizens lead directly to Hollywood's condemnation of both latent and overt antisemitism. Perhaps it was not an historical accident that *Crossfire* appeared in 1947 as the first American film to openly confront American antisemitism, but its censure of racial/religious bigotry against Jews raised the question of whether or not Hollywood's image of the Jew was consistent with the social reality. Was Hollywood mirroring the social reality or creating it? Did the tolerance messages championed in the Hollywood films change Americans' attitudes about Jews, and was there actually a decrease in American antisemitism, and what form, if any, did it take? Jews are inveterate students of history, as the state of one's Jewishness is unrelentingly called into question. *Oliver Twist* seemed to suggest that although the British had been our allies in the war against totalitarianism, they did not appear after the war to share the same democratic sentiments about Jews as we did in this country. So, I then wondered, what did this discrepancy of opinion about Jews say about America? Was it really historically different here, and, if so, what did that mean to the Jews of this country?

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Before focusing on three post-war films, this study will explore the origin and history of antisemitism in America and England, discussing American societal attitudes towards Jews through the post-war era and presenting depictions of Jews in American films until 1947. Then the thesis will closely examine *Crossfire* (RKO, 1947), *Gentleman's Agreement* (20th Century Fox, 1947) and *Oliver Twist* (J. Arthur Rank and Co., 1948), to explore their reflections of post-war conscious liberal attitudes of tolerance. Questions which will be investigated are:

1. What characterizations of classical antisemitism do the films depict?
2. How do these depictions of antisemitism compare with the wartime unity message?
3. Are the attitudes about antisemitism which the films convey consistent with post-war tolerance opinions?
4. Were attitudes revealed through public opinion research polls consistent with the reality of post-war social practices?
5. How did America react to the films?
6. Did the films change opinions?
7. Were English attitudes about antisemitism different than Americans'?

## METHODOLOGY

A qualitative study will be conducted, utilizing data collected from books, scholarly journal articles and the popular press, to probe Hollywood's unprecedented rationale for exposing American antisemitism in 1947. The standard definition of antisemitism which is used in this thesis includes:

1. belief that the Jews are different and alien, not simply in creed or faith, but in physiognomy, and even more importantly in an inner nature of psychology; 2. the tendency to think of Jews in terms of negative imagery and beliefs which leads one to see them as power-hungry, materialistic, aggressive, dishonest or clannish; 3. the fear and dislike of Jews based on their presumed alienness and on the understanding that these negative traits are not simply a response to past victimization or discrimination but rather a product or malevolence toward others, especially non-Jews; 4. the willingness to shun Jews, speak ill of them, subject them to social discrimination or deny them social and legal rights afforded to society's non-Jews on the basis of a belief that Jews must be treated differently because they are different, alien and malevolent.<sup>1</sup>

Evidence of antisemitic attitudes and negative imagery of Jews will be analyzed within the context of the American films *Crossfire* and *Gentleman's Agreement*. In *Oliver Twist*, the emphasis will be to explore the American popular reaction to Alec Guinness' alleged antisemitic portrayal of Fagin. Poll data correlating American attitudes concerning antisemitism, gathered by American Jewish organizations through national public opinion centers, will be studied in conjunction with the films' presentations of antisemitism to substantiate

whether or not societal attitudes toward Jews during the post-war period were consistent with social practices. *Crossfire* and *Gentleman's Agreement* will be presented scene by scene with dialogue. It is assumed that the more familiar story of *Oliver Twist* is common knowledge. Each film will be separately analyzed for the presence of both classical antisemitic stereotypes and post-war tolerance attitudes. In addition, reactions to the films, both before and after their releases, will be examined.

The influence of the films on audience attitudes will be considered, using data from critical popular reviews and scientific studies. This discussion will explore the films' possible influences on antisemitic attitudes and behavior toward Jews.

The films will be collectively analyzed, again through popular reviews and public opinion poll data, to reveal effects of tolerance attitudes on the post-war society. The issue of popular social opinions v. social practices will be examined, using the films as the context for discussion. The Jewish perception of post-war conscious liberal attitudes will be explored, as well as attitudes about the impact of film. The question of the legacy of conscious liberal attitudes on the post-war society will be addressed.

Lastly, thoughts about future research concerning the issues discussed in this thesis will be presented.



**CHAPTER 2 THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF ANTISEMITISM:****ANTIQUITY TO AMERICA**

**antisemitic: having or showing prejudice against Jews; discrimination against or persecuting Jews; of or caused by such prejudice or hostility (Webster's New World Dictionary)**

**ORIGINS OF CLASSICAL ANTISEMITISM**

Antisemitism arrived on history's doorstep during the birth of Jewish nationhood. Baseless hatred toward Jews by Gentiles is recorded in the Torah (Five Books of Moses) as early as 1250 B.C.E. The first exhibition of non-Jewish xenophobia is the nation of Amalek's unfounded attack on the Jews during the exodus from Egypt.<sup>2</sup>

Remember what Amalek did to you, on the way when you were leaving Egypt, that he happened upon you on the way, and that he struck those of you who were hindmost, all the weaklings at your rear, when you were faint and exhausted, and he did not fear G-d.<sup>3</sup>

No rational motivation for the attack is given. Jewish commentary states,

Their (the Amalekites) land was not endangered, either then or later. Nor had there been any prior battle between the two nations. There were only two reasons for the sneak attack: Amalek wished to show its brazen denial of G-d and His power, and it was carrying

on the ancient legacy of Esau's (the Gentile's) hatred for Jacob (the Jews).<sup>4</sup>

Prager and Teluskin posit that antisemitism is neither ethnic nor racial prejudice. Rather, "The group is persecuted because its different beliefs represent a threat to the persecuting group."<sup>5</sup> Abhorrence of Jews by Gentiles persisted unceasingly throughout Jewish history, manifesting itself most blatantly in sixth century (B.C.E.) Persia, as Haman, the descendant of Amalek, devised the first genocidal plan for the total eradication of the Jews. The fundamental antisemitic objection in all generations is implicit in the Book of Esther (3:8), the chronicle of the Persian Jewish experience.

There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from those of every people; neither keep they the king's laws; therefore it profiteth not the king to suffer them.<sup>6</sup>

Four hundred years later, the Greeks attempted the national destruction of the Jews. This was the first historical attempt to annihilate the Jews through forced conversion. Given the choice of assimilation or death, many refused to abandon their faith and chose instead to defy their would-be conquerors. The Jews' salvation, celebrated as the familiar holiday Hanukkah, is inscribed in the apocryphal Book of Maccabees.<sup>7</sup>

Thirteen centuries of ubiquitous antisemitism became consolidated in the first century C.E. with the advent of

Roman Christianity. Irrational enmity toward Jews burgeoned as the New Testament's initial charge of deicide gave rise to the belief that Jews were inhuman creatures, complete with fangs and hooves.<sup>8</sup> The Jew, perennially the object of derision and animosity, became instantaneously transmogrified into the living incarnation of Satan.<sup>9</sup> Who else but the Devil could have murdered G-d?<sup>10</sup>

**Under certain conditions, men respond as powerfully to fictions as they do to realities, and in many cases, they help to create the very fictions to which they respond (Lippmann, Public Opinion.)**

By taking advantage of the fears and superstitions of the masses, most of whom had rarely, if ever, had contact with Jews, the early Church built up a diabolical image of the Jew as the personification of the anti-Christ which persisted into the 20th century.<sup>11</sup> This gave way to classical stereotypic libels. As agents of the Devil, Jews were sorcerers who kidnapped Christian children, murdered them and drank their blood for ritual purposes; Jews poisoned wells and scattered disease (the bubonic plague); Jews have a distinctive odor; Jews were usurers, misers and thieves; world Jewry had a secret parliament; and Jews have an international banking conspiracy.<sup>12</sup>

Hatred of Jews eventually culminated in their expulsion from every European country in which they resided, beginning in England in 1290 and continuing until the 18th century partitions of Poland.

## AMERICAN ANTISEMITISM 1654-1900

If a man attributes all or part of his own misfortunes and those of his country to the presence of Jewish elements in the community, if he proposes to remedy this state of affairs by depriving the Jews of their certain rights, by keeping them from the country, by exterminating all of them, we say that he has antisemitic opinions (Jean-Paul Sartre, 1947).

Victims of unrelenting religious persecution, Jews emigrated to America with the hope of finding tolerance and freedom. America became the "goldena medina" - the golden land. No energy was expended maintaining ties with the "Old Country" because America was to be their permanent home.<sup>13</sup> Historian Arthur Hertzberg states, "Jews never had an alternative to America. They could not go home because they had none."<sup>14</sup> Yet, as a group, Jews constituted the American minority most notably to be defined by religion, and not by country of origin.<sup>15</sup>

What Jews quickly found was that the centuries-old Christian revulsion had followed them to the New World. Bearers of the guilt of the Crucifixion, Jews had been perceived throughout Europe as incapable of spiritual enlightenment.<sup>16</sup> Even in America, the tendency was to think of Jews in terms of unregenerate sinners and Christ killers.<sup>17</sup> A nation built of many nations did not rid itself so easily of the intolerance and suspicion that were the legacies of Europe.<sup>18</sup>

In 1654, the renowned Spanish-Jewish philosopher Baruch de Spinoza stated that Jews had two options. They could assimilate into the majority or re-establish their national state in the land of their ancestors.<sup>19</sup> The same year, Asser Levy and 23 Spanish-Jewish refugees from Recife, Brazil arrived in New Amsterdam. Levy had chosen to come to America **and** to remain a Jew.<sup>20</sup> These Jews were not prominent in colonial affairs, nor did they shape events in the American revolution. They did not become philosophers, scholars and statesmen as they had been in Europe.<sup>21</sup> In America, they became craftsmen and merchants. Yet, they were denied even the most elementary economic and religious rights by the colony's antisemitic governor, Peter Stuyvesant.<sup>22</sup>

Some form of religious restriction was the rule, rather than the exception, in all colonies.<sup>23</sup>

According to American historian Jonathan Sarna,

The young republic spanned the spectrum from literary and cultural stereotyping, social and economic discrimination, attacks on Jewish property, all the way to blood libels and lurid descriptions of purported anti-Christian sentiments in classical Jewish texts.<sup>24</sup>

The thrust of these restrictive and antisemitic attitudes was clear---the young nation thought of itself as Christian.<sup>25</sup> The basic mold was set early: while Jews were accepted as part of America under the Constitution, everyone knew that they were different.<sup>26</sup>

Henry Adams and friends joined other young Boston

aristocrats in 1794 in the organization of the Immigrant Restriction League, whose charter was to limit the admission of "unhealthy elements [Jews, Slavs and Italians]" to the U.S.<sup>27</sup> In 1812, Hannah Adams, Henry's niece, published a volume on the history of the Jews in which she stated that she believed that American freedom was simply an opportunity for the Jews to be converted to an enlightened Christianity, since everyone knew that the suffering of the Jews was "due to their rejection of Christ."<sup>28</sup>

A second wave of immigration began in 1825 with predominantly upper-class German Jews. In America, they rose to the middle and upper classes and were involved in retailing and finance. Although they became integrated and prosperous, they continued to play a minor role in U.S. history.

Although the law did not enjoin the supremacy of Anglo-Saxon culture, until 1900, the United States was a huge, underpopulated nation of small towns and rural villages whose destinies had been managed for more than two centuries by a white, Protestant, predominantly Anglo-Saxon elite.<sup>29</sup> Even the assimilated German Jews could not seal themselves off from the tide of white supremacist antisemitism that swept America near the end of the nineteenth century.

Modern antisemitism is generally recognized as beginning in Europe in the 1870s within the first organized political movements against the Jews.<sup>30</sup> A series of pogroms and anti-Jewish decrees in eastern Europe and White Russia forced

almost three million impoverished Jews to flee to the United States between 1881-1924. For the first time, Jews constituted a significant minority in the United States.

Serious antisemitism began to immediately appear with the advent of the foreign, Yiddish-speaking Russian Jews.<sup>31</sup> They settled in largely urban areas, and by 1910, New York city had become one of the leading centers of world Jewry. When they began to demand their rights as citizens, a large number of Americans surged into action to deny them this status through overt acts of defamation and persecution.<sup>32</sup> The American Jewish Committee was established in 1906, and in 1913, B'nai B'rith founded the Anti-Defamation League, both national Jewish "watch-dog" organizations designed to counteract this denigration.

All authorities agree that there was a steady growth of anti-Jewish prejudice and stereotyping in this country from its inception. According to Dobkowski, "Negative imagery, rather than serving as a rationalization for prejudice after the fact, can thus be seen as a catalyst for the proliferation of anti-Jewish manifestations in America."<sup>33</sup> The Jew could be denounced on allegorically Christian grounds as a Christ-killer; he could be excoriated with curses of Rothschild as the prototypical capitalist; and he could be stigmatized as the carrier of Bolshevism.<sup>34</sup>

Stereotyping, developed in all its elaborate detail and color in literature, and oftentimes presented in the spirit of logic and impartiality by influential

individuals and by respectable periodicals, created a climate of opinion that facilitated the growth of antisemitism within the general confines of a free and open American society. Ideology thus drove a wedge between Jews and gentiles simply by sharpening negative stereotypes. This is especially important because there were few countervailing images to balance the barrage of ideological anti-Semitism that permeated American culture.<sup>35</sup>



**AMERICAN ANTISEMITISM 1900-1945**

History confirms that antisemitism peaked in America during the half-century preceding World War II.<sup>36</sup> During this era of nativism and then isolationism, Jews faced physical attacks, many forms of economic and social discrimination and intense vilification in print.<sup>37</sup> Virulent antisemitism, endemic in American popular culture, appeared in newspapers, magazines, songs, vaudeville performances, theatre, school textbooks and silent movies.

The fact that the film industry was identified with Jews of recent immigrant origin, often Russian, made it especially vulnerable to charges of guilt-by-association with the alien, the radical and the subversive. In an era of extreme social crisis following World War I and the Bolshevik revolution, the medieval association of the Jews with the anti-Christ and a diabolical Jewish plot to dominate the world acquired new, mythic proportions.<sup>38</sup>

Jewish civil liberties, questionable between 1900-1919, despite provisions in the 14th amendment, were on the verge of total eradication. According to Dobkowski,

Stereotyping (of Jews), developed in all its elaborate detail and color in literature, and oftentimes presented in the spirit of logic and impartiality by influential individuals and by respectable periodicals, created a climate of opinion that facilitated the growth of antisemitism within the general confines of a free and open American society.<sup>39</sup>

From 1915-1925, the interplay of antisemitic influences in the nation created the most violent decade of the American experience for Jews.<sup>40</sup> Belth states, "An extraordinary

confluence of events gave free reign to religious prejudice and nativist bigotry, racist pseudo-science and equally racist historic myths."<sup>41</sup>

In 1916, Madison Grant, founder of the New York Zoological Society, published The Passing of the Great Race. He perpetuated the idea that Jews were a "mongrel race" and that "everything great, noble and fruitful in the world of man belonged to one family [the Aryan]."<sup>42</sup> This antisemitic ideology lead directly to Congress' passing restrictive immigration quotas in 1924. Eugenics was used by Senator Henry H. Lauglin during the immigration hearings. The honorable senator reassured the House Immigration Committee that the basis of the new law defined immigration as "primarily a biological problem." Thus, the biological basis for the new quota law proved that people from southern and eastern Europe were "intellectually and morally inferior to other people from northern Europe."<sup>43</sup>

The new immigration law was "biased, overtly and without apology, against Jews, Slavs and Italians."<sup>44</sup> Jews were admitted to the United States in small numbers to assure that the population would continue to be dominated by white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants, descendants of northern and western Europeans. Congress had implicitly declared that some people were better than others.<sup>45</sup>

Nowhere was this white supremacist attitude more evident than on the rosters of the Ku Klux Klan. Dormant since the

19th century, it was revived in 1915 by an Atlanta salesman. By 1924, its membership had swelled to over four million and was active in 43 states.<sup>46</sup>

Americans loved the movies, but fear of untoward Jewish influence in the industry, became a lodestar for antisemitism in the early 1920s.<sup>47</sup> The New York Civic League published the Catechism on Motion Pictures in Inter-State Commerce by William Sheafe Chase in 1922.

Who is to blame for the menace of the movies, the producer or the public? The answer is unambiguous: the movies are to blame for the indecent, putrid films which are defiling our land...The motion picture industry is in the despotic control of four or five Hebrews, such as Messrs. Lasky, Loew, Fox, Zukor and Laemmle.<sup>48</sup>

Henry Ford's Dearborn Independent (circulation 700,000) announced on May 22, 1920, that the Jew was "The World's Problem."<sup>49</sup> Ford used the Jews as

A cosmic scapegoat for the whole modern syndrome. In essence, the modern world and all its evils -- smoking, drinking, jazz, sex, lost youth, finance capitalism, trade unions, foreigners, international relations and urbanism were attributed to the sinister machinations of an International Jewish Conspiracy.<sup>50</sup>

Using his newspaper as a forum to expose a Jewish battle plan for the conquest of the world, Ford resurrected the 1905 antisemitic czarist "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," as "The International Jew."<sup>51</sup> This vilification of Jews lasted into the 1930s when Father Charles E. Coughlin, "The radio priest," revised "Protocols" and began quoting it as proof of the Jews'

evil design to perpetrate communist ideology and New Deal "plutocracy" onto the American body politic: There was an international Jewish conspiracy whose major aim was to involve the United States in a war against Nazi Germany.<sup>52</sup>

Antisemitism in America rose to new heights of acceptance and approval during the 1930s as corruption in labor unions, the Spanish Civil War and the rise of totalitarian governments in Germany, Italy and Japan activated Hollywood radicals, many of whom were Jews.<sup>53</sup>

Unlike the theatre, film was a mass-consumption industry with "a unique propensity to influence public perception and behavior." [There was] apprehension of having such a powerful instrument wielded by "foreign" entrepreneurs of an alien faith.<sup>54</sup>

Anti-Jewish-Populist-Communist paranoia culminated in the late 1930s with the House Un-American Activities Committee's investigations of allegedly American-Jewish connections to Russian communist ideology and the threat of a "Jewish conspiracy" to infiltrate democratic America with communist ambitions. After Hitler invaded Poland in 1939, as the very survival of the democratic ideal was in peril of being subsumed by totalitarianism, Senators Gerald Nye and Bennett Clark introduced a bill authorizing an investigation of "war propaganda," which they alleged was being "spewed forth from Hollywood studios."<sup>55</sup> Attacks on Jews surfaced in the print media. Articles pointing a finger at Jewish management, cartoons of movie moguls with long noses and stars of David

and lists of actors with Jewish birth names appeared in such right-wing, patriotic publications as Liberation (1938), World Service (1940), Roll-Call (1941) and The Free American (1941); their major thrust referred to Jewish manipulation of the media and implied a dual loyalty to the United States.<sup>56</sup>

In September, 1941, Colonel Charles Lindbergh delivered the now-famous "Des Moines Speech," in which he accused Jews of agitating to bring America into the European conflict.<sup>57</sup> Colonel Lindbergh stated,

The Jews are looking out for their own interests, and we must also look out for ours. We cannot allow the natural passions and prejudices of other people to lead our country to destruction.<sup>58</sup>

Lindbergh's view reflected the widespread belief that Jews were too powerful. During the same September of 1941, an investigation was initiated by the Senate Sub-Committee on Interstate Commerce into "Moving Picture Screen and Radio Propaganda." It was headed by the antisemitic Sen. Nye who stated,

Unquestionably there are in Hollywood today, engaged by the motion picture industry, those who are naturally far more interested in the fate of their homelands than they are in the fortunes of the United States. I would myself call it the most potent and dangerous "fifth column" in our country.<sup>59</sup>

Sen. Nye "publicly warned the Jewish people," many of whom, he noted, controlled the Hollywood industry, "against fanning race hatred in the United States."<sup>60</sup> The well-known

isolationist Sen. Burton K. Wheeler of Montana cautioned white Christian Americans about the pro-war propaganda, largely a product of the "Jewish Hollywood Hitlers."<sup>61</sup>

While the hearings were in recess, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, and within a few weeks, rather than attempting to force Hollywood to stop making "pro-war propaganda," the government was trying to convince the industry that it was "its patriotic duty to make even more."<sup>62</sup> Although most Americans interpreted the struggle between the United States and Germany as a conflict between democracy and totalitarianism, this did not lead to a revulsion from antisemitism.<sup>63</sup>

With the United States' entry into World War II in 1941, and the inclusion of all racial, ethnic and religious minorities in the war effort, antisemitism became incompatible with newly realized American ideals. It was now identified as unquestionably "un-American."<sup>64</sup>

### CHAPTER 3 AMERICAN SOCIETAL ATTITUDES ABOUT JEWS

The subtlest and most pervasive of all influences are those which create and maintain the repertory of stereotypes. We are told about the world before we see it. We imagine most things before we experience them, and those preconceptions, unless education has made us acutely aware, govern deeply the whole process of perception (Lippmann, Public Opinion).

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Antisemitism is the longest[-lived] and most universal social problem in history.<sup>65</sup> Some interpreters have declared antisemitism a mystery forever unfathomable to rationale understanding.<sup>66</sup> Wrong states, "Their bafflement arises from the enormous disproportion between the actual position of the Jews in modern society and that imputed to them by antisemitic ideology."<sup>67</sup> From the late 19th century until 1937, *Roget's Thesaurus* defined the word "Jew" as a synonym for usurer, extortioner, cunning, lickpenny, harpy, schemer, crafty and shifty.<sup>68</sup> American children happily chanted this *Mother Goose* rhyme until it was removed from their schoolbooks in the late 1930s.

Jack sold his egg to a rogue of a Jew  
 Who cheated him out of half his due.  
 The Jew got his goose,  
 Which he vowed he would kill.  
 Resolving at once  
 His pockets to fill.<sup>69</sup>

According to historian John Higham, institutionalized

social discrimination toward Jews in America began in the 1870s at social clubs and summer resorts in and around New York city.<sup>70</sup> Jews encountered restrictive housing covenants and refusals by landlords to rent apartments as early as 1880. Prestigious eastern colleges and universities were blackballing Jews, also beginning in 1880.

This trend continued into the 20th century as all Jews were excluded by "gentlemen's agreements" from fashionable clubs, socially prominent neighborhoods and resorts and college fraternities and sororities.<sup>71</sup> Demographer Gary A. Tobin states,

Although the U.S. government did not promulgate antisemitic rhetoric and action, it certainly sanctioned, and in some cases reinforced certain forms of antisemitism. Restrictive housing covenants were supported through the courts, endorsed by the Federal Housing Administration and enforced by state governments. Until the late 1940s, the imprimatur of federal and state legitimacy was granted to the segregation of neighborhoods by race and religion.<sup>72</sup>

Discriminatory employment practices against Jews were manifested during the first decade of this century as well.<sup>73</sup> Hertzberg states,

Before the Second World War, almost no Jew could make a free personal decision about his education or his career...The very fact of his Jewishness meant that many, if not more, options were simply not available to him.<sup>74</sup>

All antisemites were in agreement on one central point. "The Jew is an alien, subversive and dangerous, and cannot be allowed the freedom of unfettered competition to achieve a



place in society."<sup>75</sup> Positions of leadership were essentially closed to Jews in cultural and political circles.<sup>76</sup> Author/historian Nathan Belth writes, "No group ever believed more fervently in the American mythology of freedom and equality of opportunity, or came to face a more complex confluence of elements resisting their entry into the American way of life."<sup>77</sup>

**PUBLIC OPINION DURING THE 1920S-1930S**

Surveys of images, perceptions and attitudes towards Jews, conducted by national public opinion centers, originated in 1937 as an outgrowth of national survey research and public opinion polls designed to predict election results. Social scientists began to assess the state of public sentiment on social issues.<sup>78</sup> In the late 1930s, the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League subsidized scientific research studies to explore the psychodynamics, particularly of mental disorder and neurosis, of those drawn to antisemitic mass movements and world views, to discover trends in attitudes toward Jews.<sup>79</sup> A series of these surveys, conducted between 1939-1945, indicated that approximately two-thirds of Americans felt that Jews as a group had "objectionable traits."<sup>80</sup> These included being mercenary, clannish, pushy, crude and domineering. The most important stereotype was the greedy Jewish businessman.<sup>81</sup> A survey conducted by the American Jewish Committee corroborated that almost half of the respondents polled in 1938-1939 described Jewish businessmen as less than honest.<sup>82</sup>

Between 1938-1942, public opinion surveys found that one-third to one-half of Americans felt that Jews were too powerful. When asked what they would like to see done to reduce this power, the most frequent answers from a national survey representing 13 percent of the overall U.S. population

answered that Jews should be restricted in business and that they should be kept out of government and politics. Driving them out of the United States entirely was mentioned almost as often.<sup>83</sup>

During the 1920s and 1930s, and despite the protests of their enemies that the Jews controlled banking and finance, the opposite was true. Many (monetary) occupations excluded Jews entirely and they were a minority on Wall Street.<sup>84</sup>

Henry Ford's propaganda campaign against the Jews pictured a basic struggle between the two great forces of the modern world: creative industry and international finance, reinforcing classical stereotypes of Jews as all-powerful and greedy.

When one speaks of antisemitism, one does not necessarily refer to organized antisemitism... Nevertheless, the fact remains that there is a great deal of latent and sometimes expressed antagonism toward the Jews...It is obvious that the reams of printed material emanating from the various anti-Semitic groups in this country...must have an effect on some Americans.<sup>85</sup>

The Depression made job discrimination more acute than ever. Non-Jewish legal firms refused to hire Jewish lawyers. It was generally understood in New York that a Jew stood no chance of getting a white collar job if a non-Jewish applicant was available.<sup>86</sup> In February, 1936, the editors of Fortune magazine defined the Jew in America as a "universal stranger, in need of toleration and respect."<sup>87</sup>

It was impossible for Jews to become banktellers or

salesclerks in non-Jewish stores.<sup>88</sup> Almost no Jews could be found in the central management of various insurance firms. The same 1936 Fortune magazine article found, "The absence of Jews in the insurance business is noteworthy."<sup>89</sup> The same was true of heavy industry. The management of the steel and coal companies, as well as the auto manufacturers, was simply closed to Jews.<sup>90</sup>

Western Union refused to hire Jewish boys, and the New York telephone company "regretted that it [could not] employ Jewish women as operators, as it [found] that their arms were too short to handle the switchboards."<sup>91</sup>

Barriers to education were equally formidable. For American Jews, no pattern of discrimination was more emotionally charged than the college quota system; it impacted the very core of their existence as Americans.<sup>92</sup> Social critic Walter Lippmann, declared, "The revival of antisemitism (in the early 1920s) has so infected public life that private universities [have begun] to restrict admission to Jewish students."<sup>93</sup> In 1922, Harvard imposed a Jewish quota. Shortly thereafter, Jewish Harvard philosopher, Harry Austyn Wolfson, published a pamphlet titled Escaping Judaism (1922).

Because of our Judaism...we must be prepared to make sacrifices because of other disadvantages with which we may happen to be born...Some are born blind, some deaf, some lame, and some are born Jews.<sup>94</sup>

Yale and Columbia soon followed with their own Jewish quotas.<sup>95</sup> A Roper Survey in 1947 found that although 68

percent of Jews applied to colleges, compared to 35 percent among Protestants and 25 percent among Catholics, 77 percent of Protestant applicants were accepted by colleges, 67 percent of Catholic applicants were accepted and only 57 percent of Jewish applicants were admitted.<sup>96</sup> By 1948, it had become standard operating procedure for elitist schools to invoke the privilege of discrimination.<sup>97</sup>

English departments of universities refused to have any Jewish teachers. Hertzberg explains, "By antisemitic definition, and no matter what he thought or knew, a Jew was simply incapable of entering into the spirit of Anglo-Saxon literature or American history."<sup>98</sup> The most modern American writers, Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald, mentioned Jews only to insist that they were irretrievably outsiders.<sup>99</sup>

Quotas in medical schools forced hundreds of Jews to study abroad. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) reported that three out of every four non-Jewish students applying to medical schools were accepted, compared to one out of every thirteen Jewish students. According to ADL, "These ratios do not have the slightest relation to mental equipment, natural aptitudes and other rational, scientific standards of selection."<sup>100</sup> Even after graduation, the gentile-controlled hospitals allowed very few Jews to join their staffs, and even medical research for certified doctors was closed to Jews.<sup>101</sup>

**ANTISEMITIC ATTITUDES IN THE 1940s**

During the 1930s and 1940s, antisemitism became the "classical prejudice," a sure indicator of the authoritarian personality and a litmus-paper test of the racial nationalism that liberals were fighting.<sup>102</sup> An impressive body of poll data suggests that hostile attitudes towards Jews rose substantially during the war years, despite the presence of a common enemy.<sup>103</sup> One-third to one-half of the respondents polled throughout the war years would have actively supported a hypothetical antisemitic campaign or at least sympathized with it.<sup>104</sup>

Other studies taken between 1941-1945 disclosed that 67 percent of Americans felt Jews had too much power and influence.<sup>105</sup> Surveys given in 1938, and repeated in 1940 and 1946, asked "What qualities do you object to in Jews?" Over one-half thought of Jews as greedy and pushy and 25 percent thought of Jews as clannish and gross. Charles H. Stember, director of the National Opinion Research Center, notes that these results are all traditional Jewish stereotypes -- the greedy Jew (Shylock), the notion of loyalty only to each other, dating from the writings of Tacitus, and the idea of physical repulsiveness, which is first found in third century Christian writings, declaring Jews to be descendants of lepers -- incarnations of ancient beliefs persisting into the 1940s.<sup>106</sup> This data exposes Americans' latent attitudes of

antisemitism, as large numbers of people were "ready and willing to accept the myth of the all-powerful Jew when it was suggested to them."<sup>107</sup>

Modern antisemitism peaked in 1944 as wartime surveys disclosed that 25 percent of Americans believed Jews to be less patriotic than other Americans and a greater national menace than German-Americans and Japanese-Americans.<sup>108</sup> A 1944 survey asked, "Once they are in the service, which groups are more likely than other Americans to try to get out of actual fighting?" Thirty-seven percent answered "Jews," three times higher than any other group.<sup>109</sup> The implication was that since Jews were perceived to be greedy and shrewd, it was inevitable that they should be looking for military exemptions and loathe to give up civilian lives with opportunities for making money.<sup>110</sup>

Responses to wartime surveys concluded that events in Europe warranted no increase for sympathy for Jews in this country.<sup>111</sup> In 1939, more than six out of ten Americans opposed special quotas for Jewish children from Europe, despite the fact that the alternative for them was remaining within Hitler's reach. Wartime surveys disclosed that even Chinese immigrants, labelled the "Yellow Peril," were viewed as more desirable than Jewish immigrants.<sup>112</sup>

Revelations of the horrors of the Holocaust did little to diminish American antisemitism. A national survey conducted in 1946 revealed that only five percent of the American people

avored allowing European refugees to enter the U.S. in large numbers, and a majority of those polled wanted all immigration drastically reduced or even halted.<sup>113</sup> A similar 1944 poll found Jews to be the least desirable of all immigrants, with the exception of the Germans and Japanese, with whom we were at war.<sup>114</sup>

A report from the Office of War Information surveying public opinion on July 27, 1942, found widespread antisemitic sentiments in half of the 42 states surveyed. Criticism included the contention that Jews had taken over the government and were war profiteers avoiding the draft and seeking noncombatant commissions in the military.<sup>115</sup> An OWI field representative exclaimed,

There is definite antagonism against the Jews. This unreasonable hate, voiced at the bridge tables and at dinner parties in the homes of the middle class, convinces us that all is not going too well in our effort to make this war meaningful.<sup>116</sup>

Following the war, Jews sought to eliminate antisemitism completely, rather than to simply contain its influences. After the Holocaust, antisemitism meant not merely the exclusion of Jews from clubs, neighborhoods and colleges. It also involved mass murder.<sup>117</sup> As a direct response to dozens of nationally conducted public opinion polls and surveys about antisemitism in America, the American Jewish Congress and the ADL combined forces in 1944 to form the National Community Relations Advisory Council. Its purpose was to co-ordinate



activities and to act as a clearinghouse against bigotry. The Council lobbied at both the state and federal levels for anti-discriminatory legislation, pressured colleges and universities to ease up on quota restrictions and sponsored local programs to overcome prejudice.<sup>118</sup>

## POST-WAR ATTITUDES TOWARD JEWS

After the war, America's task was "to wipe out altogether discrimination of minority groups which still tainted American life."<sup>119</sup> All veterans' organizations officially condemned bigotry as un-American. Popular magazines and radio openly discussed antisemitism, and clergymen preached against religious and racial intolerance.<sup>120</sup> During a five-month period in 1947, popular nationally circulated magazines published stories exposing social discrimination against Jews. Collier's published a story titled "The Outcasts," an indictment of restrictive housing covenants in real estate; it recounted the true story of a Jewish family who attempted to move into an "exclusive community;" Better Homes and Gardens published "How to Stop Hatemongers in Your Town" as a seven-part series; Women's Home Companion reported what was being accomplished by American housewives [sic] determined to "rub out the patterns of hate in American life;" Ladies' Home Journal introduced America into the home of a noted Boston rabbi; Seventeen magazine urged young people to "get together and talk over the day-to-day things you teenaged Americans can do to fight prejudice and strengthen the rights of all people in your communities;" and New Republic discussed causes, manifestations and possible remedies of antisemitism.<sup>121</sup>

If average Americans missed the point because they did not read the popular press, they got the message on the radio.

In 1948, the National Broadcasting Company aired 11 civil rights programs produced by the ADL on over 500 stations.<sup>122</sup>

Even the church, the longest-standing perpetrator of antisemitism, took a stand against bigotry. Archbishop Cushing of Boston said that the number of prejudiced people in America was "staggering," admonishing Catholics, "No true Christian could support [such] bigotry."<sup>123</sup>

By the end of the 1940s, a standard American encyclopedia defined race as "an obsolete division of humanity" and virtually the entire intellectual American community had been converted to a staunchly egalitarian point of view of minority problems.<sup>124</sup>

The whole point of view was pluralistic. The solution to ethnic problems was believed to lie in obliterating inequalities of condition, while fostering and praising differences of culture. Democracy was conceived as a system for conserving rather than liquidating cultural differences. Any expression of a specific ethnic hostility, such as antisemitism, was to be understood as a manifestation of a generally anti-democratic temper.<sup>125</sup>

Socio-historian Morton Keller echoes this sentiment stating that the new attitudes about Jews had their origins in what was happening in society in general, in relation to the feeling that principles of tolerance and equality had never had more intellectual, moral and social responsibility than in the post-war era.<sup>126</sup> Keller states, "Seen in this context, the decline of antisemitism is part of a general triumph of the principle and practices of cultural pluralism."<sup>127</sup>

Following the war, Jews were institutionalized as a legitimate part of American society. During these years, novels by Jewish authors about Jewish life became popular bestsellers and were read for the first time in American history by audiences outside the Jewish community.<sup>128</sup> The first on this list was Gentleman's Agreement by Laura Z. Hobson, published in 1946.

Judaism was now elevated to equal status with Protestantism and Catholicism as a third quasi-official religious division in American society, despite the fact that Jews constituted less than three percent of the overall American population.<sup>129</sup>

According to Nathan Belth, people were now beginning to talk about the evils of prejudice, and the very talk was having the effect of making bigotry unfashionable.<sup>130</sup>

California Governor Earl Warren delivered the opening address at the 35th anniversary of the ADL in May, 1948.

Because intolerance has been directed against the Jews does not make it merely the problem of the Jews. Whenever and wherever intolerance rears its ugly head, it is the job of all Americans...to suppress it. Anything which limits the opportunity for full citizenship because of racial origins, religious or economic status in life is the direct denial of the principles under which this government was founded.<sup>131</sup>

World War II was the great turning point in the history of the American Jewish identity.<sup>132</sup> With the annihilation of most of European Jewry, the United States became the most important Jewish community world-wide. American Jews had

become the guarantors of the future of Judaism, and America was the place where it would happen. American Jewry emerged from the struggle convinced that they were no longer "an exotic ethnic and religious minority, but an integral part of American culture."<sup>133</sup>

In the post-war decades, American Jews were more prosperous and secure than ever before. Jews in this era witnessed a lowering of economic and social barriers unparalleled in American history.<sup>134</sup> Never before had such a large number of the Jewish people in any one country of the Diaspora been counted as the elite. The combination of the new social and economic mobility and the growing acceptance of Judaism as a legitimate part of America's cultural and religious landscape transformed the nature of American Jewish identity.<sup>135</sup> The surest sign of acceptance by gentiles after the war was the increase from 50 percent to 66 percent of gentiles who said they would accept their children marrying Jews.<sup>136</sup> Thomas F. Odea states,

We have seen that under the particular conditions of American life, the basic structure of gentile-Jewish relations has altered to the point where the old hostile imagery is fading at last. Beyond doubt, part of the spectacular opinion change revealed by the polls mirrors this decline of ancient, deep-seated hostility. Obviously, the accumulated hatred of two thousand years could not have been dissipated altogether in a few decades. Yet, over and above the momentary fluctuations of public opinion, we appear to be witnessing an historic change...for effectively combatting the age-old evil of antisemitism.<sup>137</sup>

This metamorphosis of American Jewry paralleled the

decline of American antisemitism. One measure of the new sense of security was a noticeable lessening of Jewish defensiveness. The Jewish reluctance to stand out in a crowd gave way to a willingness to publicize one's Jewishness.<sup>138</sup> Hollywood echoed this posture.

#### CHAPTER 4 FOUNDATIONS OF BRITISH ANTISEMITISM AND DICKENS

Jews had inhabited England since the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in A.D. 70. Haunted and hunted by Christian stereotypes and prejudices, they were expelled from British soil in 1290, in the culmination of the infamous "Hugh of Lincoln" blood-libel. Hysteria over the disappearance of a young Christian boy, Hugh of the city of Lincoln, convinced the masses that Jews had kidnapped him for ritual purposes, to kill him and use his blood to bake matzos. A massacre of Jews ensued, and the Jews were ordered off of English soil through royal decree.

Antediluvian Christian stereotypes persisted throughout the Middle Ages, despite the fact that there were absolutely no Jews residing in England.

The birth of the deprecatative "Stage Jew" stereotype, commonly known as the Jew-Villain, preceded the creation of the motion picture by some 650 years. The archetypical stage Jew first appeared at the summer festival of Corpus Christi, founded by Pope Urban IV in 1264. Judas, the Jew and betrayer of Christ, was portrayed with a red beard and was bent under the weight of his money bags.<sup>139</sup>

The Church perpetuated this stereotype throughout medieval times in sermons, plays and religious literature.<sup>140</sup> The typical Stage Jew was a "rapacious money-lender, or perhaps a thieving peddler...He shuffled about...in a broad-

brimmed hat...red whiskers and hooked nose...and spoke in outlandish accents."<sup>141</sup> The mere mention of the word "Jew" carried with it scorn and contempt.<sup>142</sup> When "Jew" was used in the Elizabethan theatre, it was always an epithet of the lowest form.

The Stage Jew stereotype was sustained in Christian England by the Elizabethan theatre and appeared most notably in Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice" as the infamous Shylock. From the stage, the Jew-Villain found his way into classical literature as Isaac of York in Sir Walter Scott's Ivanhoe. The Jew in literature, as well as in society, provided society with a convenient scapegoat.

According to Patricia Erens, the last, and most egregious literary Jew-Villain is Fagin. "Atavistic, cowardly and obsequious, he even lacks the quality of being a persecuted Jew."<sup>143</sup> Both Charles Dickens and his illustrator George Cruikshank were influenced by the time-honored British tradition of the Stage Jew.<sup>144</sup> Dickens' describes Fagin as "a shrivelled, old Jew, whose villainous-looking and repulsive face was obscured by a quantity of matted red hair."<sup>145</sup> Fagin is constantly referred to by Dickens as "The Merry Old Gentleman," a traditional euphemism for the Devil.<sup>146</sup> In addition, Dickens refers to Fagin as a "loathsome reptile." Linking the Jew to bestial imagery was also a part of the antisemitic Stage-Jew tradition, as Jews were frequently played in non-human terms.<sup>147</sup> Oliver's introduction to Fagin



in the novel happens as he (Fagin) is toasting sausages with a fork, the Devil's toasting fork, evoking all [the Medieval] associations of ritual murder of Christian boys by Jews.<sup>148</sup>

As a receiver of stolen goods, Fagin recalls the parasitic qualities which are traditionally associated with Jews.<sup>149</sup> The scene of Fagin gloating over his jewels, which appears in the uncensored version of the 1948 film, echoes the prevailing cultural prejudice about the supposed avarice of the Jews.<sup>150</sup>

The novel's original subtitle was The Parish Boy's Progress. Oliver is the first and prototypical all-Britannic waif, the embodiment of Absolute Christian Goodness.<sup>151</sup> Fagin, the evolved Stage Jew, becomes the literary incarnation of Absolute Evil.

For Dickens, it was axiomatic that Fagin was typically Jewish; in no other way could he have justified him morally.<sup>152</sup> Sir Oswald Mosley argued, "Antisemitism came from a long British tradition springing from the soil...Antagonism to Jews was probably latent in the racial consciousness of a great many [English] men."<sup>153</sup> Thus, the popularity and success of the stereotype were large ensured by its very antiquity. It had always been there. It had tradition to recommend it.<sup>154</sup>

CHAPTER 5 DEPICTIONS OF JEWS IN AMERICAN FILM TO 1947

Negative images of Jews were shifted from literature directly into film, and by 1910 there were some clear-cut stereotypes and caricatures of Jews present in American motion pictures. During 1900-1910, the Jew was generally pictured as a buffoon, a tragic figure or a stereotyped money-grubber.<sup>155</sup> In addition, American producers had taken the vaudeville and burlesque Stage Jew, the progeny of the medieval Stage Jew, and transposed him onto the screen. He appeared wearing derby hats and dark beards, replete with Yiddish accents and gross gesticulations. Comic routines centered around the Jews' greed, clever manipulations and cowardice.<sup>156</sup> There was little else upon which to draw.<sup>157</sup> According to Kanin,

These early variety artists, in their buffoonery and stereotyped characterizations, had only one objective in mind- to entertain and please their audiences...It was in the midst of this self-deprecating tradition of Jewish stage humor that the moving picture was born.<sup>158</sup>

### THE PRELIMINARY YEARS

Samuels states that from the early 1900s until 1945, "In an industry where Jews were the major sources of directors, actors, studio executives, producers, lawyers and scriptwriters, the image of the Jew was almost invisible on the screen."<sup>159</sup> This apparent anomaly is explained by Howard Suber who states,

As the most popular and most novel form of entertainment in 20th century America and as an agent of social change and a prime influence on popular taste, the movies were also regarded with grave suspicion by those who felt threatened by change, who were distrustful of Jews and who saw themselves as the self-appointed guardians of an older America under siege by ominous foreign elements.<sup>160</sup>

Late nineteenth century strains of hostility toward Jews centered around involvement in the world press. The medieval Christ-killers now emerged as an international Jewish conspiracy whose *raison d'etre* was the destruction of Liberalism in order to occasion the Jewish domination of the world.<sup>161</sup> This conclusion lead directly to Hollywood where Jews were attacked as "pushing Jewish values and interests."<sup>162</sup>

In spite of manifest antisemitism, Jewish character types appeared in Edison one-reelers as early as 1903.<sup>163</sup> One of the first films designed to counteract antisemitism was *The Yiddisher Boy* (1908), the story of a young Jewish boy who returns good for ill.<sup>164</sup> Yet, despite the presence of Jews

in all aspects of the creation of motion pictures, the same stereotypical visions which plagued other groups "bedeviled Jews as well."<sup>165</sup>

### THE SILENT ERA

The year 1915 is seen as a watershed year in film history, as the first generation of movie makers who had come from Anglo-Irish stock--D.W. Griffith, J. Stuart Blackton and Thomas A. Edison--lost control of the film business to the new Jewish immigrants.<sup>166</sup> It was the penniless eastern European Jews who developed the American film industry. Having been forced since the Middle Ages to constantly adapt to new professions by antisemitic Christian society, the Jewish film moguls' ability for accommodation was a prerequisite for their great international success in the rapidly changing public industry of motion pictures.<sup>167</sup> This adaptability, a particularly Jewish trait, had been acquired through centuries of being the outsider.<sup>168</sup> The first three decades of film chronicled their own stories of pogroms, immigration, ghetto living and upward mobility.<sup>169</sup>

Lippmann asserted that the real cause of American antisemitism "lay neither in the racist propaganda disseminated by those like Henry Ford, nor in the fevered visions of a World Zionist Conspiracy held by unsophisticated people."<sup>170</sup> Antisemitism was rooted, according to Lippmann, in the fact that Jews are different. "Given this fact, the proper course for the Jew [is] to make himself [sic] less noticeable."<sup>171</sup> Lippmann felt the assimilated Jew "could be granted a passport for full acceptance into American

life."<sup>172</sup>

Assimilation and success seem to be among the most prominent motifs in silent films, with Jewish themes produced by the new "Jewish" studios which tended to glorify the shedding of Jewish traits in the Americanization process.<sup>173</sup> What appears (on the screen) are those aspects of immigrant and ethnic life which are universal enough to be of major interest to a mass audience. The stories are universalized sufficiently to appeal to all groups, especially the desire for assimilation, "which always wins out over traditionalism and the drive for upward mobility. Both mesh with the goals of the American Dream."<sup>174</sup>

Increasing Jewish domination of Hollywood made an inviting target for fringe antisemitic groups and the moguls were sensitive to the threat.<sup>175</sup> The collective sentiment of Hollywood was, "We don't want people to cling to the idea that all Jews look a certain way."<sup>176</sup> This attitude caused the moguls to "hardly ever touch a story with a Jewish character," and if they did, "they always cast a gentile for the part."<sup>177</sup>

The fear of being different and the unlimited educational opportunities available in this country created a generation of immigrants who fostered the assimilation of their children into American society.<sup>178</sup> The silent films of the 1920s depicted this second generation's miraculous rise into mainstream society.<sup>179</sup> According to Lester Friedman,

Most commentators who write about Jewish silent films bemoan the fact that they present superficial portraits of Jews and never confront actual social conditions facing immigrants...No silent films (of the '20s) deal with the issue of American antisemitism.<sup>180</sup>

By the end of World War I, the movie Jew had "grown into a nostalgic, benign icon of the ritual of Americanization."<sup>181</sup>

The blockbooking of motion pictures into urban movie houses contributed to the growing perception that Jews had lives and problems similar to other immigrant groups.<sup>182</sup> American audiences learned that Jews were "more like themselves than they had ever suspected."<sup>183</sup> Jews, too, learned to be like their American neighbors. The films of the Silent Era, according to Friedman, are "a rich legacy ...irrefutable evidence of the American rite of passage, the achievement of the American dream for Jews, as well as other ethnic immigrant groups."<sup>184</sup>

Films of the Silent Era revealed challenges and obstacles which were consistent with social practices. The most notable are the Jewish-Irish films, emphasizing the themes of inter-marriage and universal assimilation: *The Cohens and the Kellys* (1926), *Private Izzy Murphy* (1926) and *Abie's Irish Rose* (1928).<sup>185</sup> *Private Izzy Murphy*, also a Jewish-Irish love story, drives home the point that there is really little difference between good men of any religion. In the final analysis, a man's character is more important than his nationality or religion.<sup>186</sup>

### THE SOUND ERA

The most compelling evidence of the dominance of sentimental assimilationist movies in Hollywood appeared on the eve of the Sound Era.<sup>187</sup> *The Jazz Singer* (1927) is the story of an immigrant cantor's son who breaks with Jewish tradition by becoming a successful American pop singer, instead of following his father into the traditional religious family profession. The film marked both the culmination of the Silent Era films with Jewish themes, as well as the beginning of the Sound Era. It established the incontrovertible fact that second generation Jews were now a legitimate part of mainstream America.<sup>188</sup>

Screen Jews of the '20s at least existed; in the '30s they nearly vanished.<sup>189</sup> Rather than building on the strengths of *The Jazz Singer*, films from the Sound Era tended to ignore Jewish life completely. The sound films of the 1930s "cloaked Jews in the invisibility of neglect."<sup>190</sup> The most prominent character's absence during this time period is the Jewish Agitator, a common hero of proletarian novels of the 1930s.<sup>191</sup> According to all authorities, the absence of identifiable Jewish film character types during this time period seems to be a direct result of the moguls' ultimate phase of assimilation, as the screen Jew became a non-semite. In addition, conspicuous antisemitism prompted by historical events of this decade, further reinforced the studios'



position on highlighting Jewish characters. Although certain film actors in prominent roles might bear a Jewish name, the character was essentially de-semiticized.<sup>192</sup> Alan Spiegel states,

This new de-Semiticized situation (in the 1930s)... conformed with new stipulations [that films were designed to reach the interests of a mass audience]...in this manner, the hero would often be a vague, idealized American who, as played by Gary Cooper or James Stewart or Henry Fonda, was often assumed to be a W.A.S.P. largely because he did not seem to look like any member of a specific minority.<sup>193</sup>

Numerous notable film versions of literary works containing Jewish characters were produced during the '30s. Paradoxically, the portrayal of these personalities "usually rob[bed] these figures of telltale ethnic traces, [including] names, mannerisms and issues."<sup>194</sup> In two prominent films where antisemitism was a noticeable factor, *The House of Rothschild* (1934) and *The Life of Emile Zola* (1937), it received superficial treatment.<sup>195</sup> The cinema reflected the desire of many American Jews to maintain a low profile, to stress their similarities with other Americans, rather than their differences.<sup>196</sup> The goal was an official studio ideology of democratic idealism, the ultimate homogeneity of all human beings.<sup>197</sup>

According to Woll and Miller,

One might [have] expected a change as the situation worsened for European Jews during the 1930s. Yet films dramatizing the plight of Jews facing the Nazi menace were far and few between. It was a continuation of the

non- depiction of Jews in major roles.<sup>198</sup>

As social critic I. C. Jarvie indicates, however,

The Hollywood tendency to reflect the mores of a part of society which is in advance or deviates significantly from the rest was vigorously suppressed by the strict enforcement of the Production Code from 1934 onwards.<sup>199</sup>

Yet, as Friedman points out, the studio heads were trapped in a cruel financial dilemma. How could they depict the momentous events taking place in Europe and still remain sufficiently apolitical so as to not jeopardize their foreign markets?<sup>200</sup> Having been accused by the HUAC of a liberal/communist bias, the moguls worried lest any mention of Nazi antisemitism might be construed as covert propaganda designed to edge America into the war to save their fellow Jews.<sup>201</sup> Fearful of government intervention into the film industry, Hollywood's Golden Era reflected the industry's desire to skirt controversy and produce for a mass audience.<sup>202</sup> The movie moguls felt they needed to please everybody, and as a result, movies until the 1940s were "often given a gloss of timid acquiescence towards society and its problems."<sup>203</sup> Only Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* (1940) violated their "veil of silence." by exposing Hitler's ultimate intentions.<sup>204</sup>

**THE EARLY '40S**

War historian Frank Krutnik states,

The United States' entrance into World War II...set into motion a rapid process of cultural mobilization, a wide-scale shift from a rather nervous ideology of isolationism to one of commitment and community.<sup>205</sup>

Thomas Cripps adds, "Times of crisis in American history have often released social forces...and revived...`the promise of America.'"<sup>206</sup> During the war, the movie studios found themselves accepting a far greater social and political responsibility than that originally contemplated by the Production Code of ethics.<sup>207</sup>

Hollywood films produced during the 1940s championed the liberal American democratic ideals of freedom and brotherhood. A dimension of ideological persuasion was appended to '40s films as the Hollywood film industry "demonstrated a conscious effort to bring about greater understanding between the various ethnic and racial groups in America."<sup>208</sup> Between 1941-1945, the long-standing domestic wars over class, ethnicity, religion and race were negotiated, curtailed and denied. In official government posters and proclamations, "Americans All!" closed ranks.<sup>209</sup> According to Thomas Doherty, "The native melting pot, a harmonious blend of ethnic flavors and class elements, was the staple fare for all parts of the staple program."<sup>210</sup>

In a world convulsed by new ideologies and false issues it was necessary to reaffirm a faith in democracy, only now it needed more than ever to be imbued with positive virtues and with a virile and aggressive mass spirit. The American people...needed to be "emotionalized" about the necessity to defend what they had for so long taken for granted.<sup>211</sup>

Doherty states,

The rough egalitarianism of the military and the universality of the draft made the depiction credible; the need to unify a pluralistic and contentious people made it urgent. American strength-in-heterogeneity was an instant rebuff to Master-Race eugenics.<sup>212</sup>

The conscious-liberal tenets were broadened now to include unity of all Americans across lines of group and class and tolerance of group differences, expressed as contributions to American culture and brotherhood.<sup>213</sup> Thus, "The spirit of democracy occasioned by the great levelling forces during the war spilled over to create a Hollywood cinema even more resolutely dedicated to 'Americanism' above all else."<sup>214</sup>

### THE WAR RATIONALE

During World War II, the probability of a liberal mood increased and promised to extend into peacetime because liberal beliefs were seen as opposed to the political systems of foreign enemies, and therefore regarded as legitimate fruits of victory.<sup>215</sup> "Conscious liberalism" during the '40s was a loosely defined political faith that eventually became part of American public policy as a result of the inclusion of many of its beliefs in the propaganda slogans that expressed allied war aims to American civilians.<sup>216</sup> Conscious liberalism, as it applied to racial (religious) matters, according to Cripps, "began with a generalized support for the 'underdog,' a wish for 'fair play' and a vague belief in an open society that provided equal opportunity for all its citizens."<sup>217</sup> The OWI promoted an agenda of national unity, purpose and struggle which sought to displace the divisions of class, race and sexual inequality which had been openly addressed in the pre-war era.<sup>218</sup>

Racial (and religious) politics moved from the perimeters of American attention toward the center of power, and motion pictures reflected and reinforced this trend.<sup>219</sup> According to Doherty, the OWI's insistence that American films reflect the democratic credo was proof of the realization that the movies had tremendous educational importance and ideological impact on spectators.<sup>220</sup>

## WORLD WAR II

After the United States' entry into the war, Hollywood produced a plethora of "platoon films" which emphasized the country's united racial front against a common enemy and showed fighting units as an idealized microcosm of the entire American society.<sup>221</sup> Ethnic, religious and even gender bias buckled under the pressure of "the present emergency," expanding participation and refashioning stereotypes.<sup>222</sup> These films further reinforced the democratic ideal as they demonstrated the ability of diverse, multi-ethnic platoons to work together for their common survival.

War films caused the heroes to...assume the role of their brother's keeper regardless of nationality...The scruffy band of ethnically separate individuals who learn to cast aside their particular prejudices for the good of the country become part of America's self-generated mythology.<sup>223</sup>

Jews appear as lead characters in many of the platoon films, most strikingly in *Bataan* (1943), *Winged Victory* (1944), *Purple Heart* (1944) and *Pride of the Marines* (1945).<sup>224</sup> The Jewish portrayals in these films are of intelligent, articulate, brave Americans.<sup>225</sup> As the war progressed, the Jewish characters in films began to be "recognizable and valued American citizens."<sup>226</sup> In *Pride of the Marines*, the Jewish character, Lee Diamond, emphasizes the new American liberal, humanitarian position as he reminds his war-shattered comrades of the reality of the American Dream,

as well as the antisemitism which severely limited his share of it.

There's guys who won't hire me because my name is Diamond instead of Jones; because I celebrate Passover instead of Easter. Do you see what I mean? You and me, we both need the same kind of world, a country to live in where nobody gets booted around for any reason.<sup>227</sup>

In 1946, Dore Schary released *Till the End of Time*, directed by Edward Dmytryk. The film's climactic scene, starring Robert Mitchum, takes place in a cheap bar. Mitchum is approached by two men who explain that all Americans are eligible here, except Jews, Negroes [sic], and Catholics. Mitchum is sure that his best friend Maxie Klein, who had been buried on Guadalcanal, would not have liked the policy. Grabbing the unidentified man, he says, "I am gonna' spit in your eye for this, because we don't want to have people like you in the United States of America. There is no place for racial discrimination here now."<sup>228</sup>

## POST-WAR EUROPEAN INFLUENCE ON HOLLYWOOD

There was a Jewish tradition in America which said, "Antisemitism here is not so bad. If we complain about it, it will get worse."<sup>229</sup> This feeling had been paralleled by Hollywood from 1915 on. But World War II brought the plight of the Jews to the attention of the whole world.<sup>230</sup> During the war, antisemitism was the key element in Nazi Germany's ideology. To be antisemitic after the war meant to ally oneself to America's mortal enemy.<sup>231</sup>

Hitler's persecution of the Jews of Europe posed a profound problem for the allied propagandists.<sup>232</sup> It was easy to criticize Nazi Germany for antisemitism but difficult to reconcile that criticism with the anti-Jewish prejudice that prevailed throughout almost every section of the United States.<sup>233</sup>

With full revelation of the horrors of the Holocaust, American Jews "set about to comprehend the incomprehensible. 'What were the roots of antisemitism? How had the Holocaust happened? and Could it happen here?'"<sup>234</sup> Lester Friedman writes, "The devastating shock of events abroad tended to intensify Jewish fellowship at home. German Jews were considered the most highly cultured and best assimilated in the world. If it could happen there, why not in the United States?"<sup>235</sup>

In 1943, the S.S. Dorchester had been sunk in the North



Atlantic. Four chaplains, including a rabbi, Alexander Goode, gave up their life preservers to four enlisted men. The chaplains perished with the ship. Survivors said the chaplains went into the water with their arms linked together in prayer.<sup>236</sup> The United States' postal service issued a commemorative stamp in 1948 whose inscription read "These immortal chaplains. Interfaith in action." This public display of loyalty served to refute the antisemitic charge that Jews had shirked military service. It also raised the question: In view of such great sacrifices, could Jews now be denied the benefits of American citizenship? Post-war American popular culture began to ask the same question.<sup>237</sup>

Immediately following the war, the Hollywood film industry demonstrated a conscious effort to bring about greater understanding between the various racial and ethnic groups.<sup>238</sup> Lee Diamond's sermon at the end of *Pride of the Marines* summed up the total experience of American antisemitism: The dictators were dead, but racism lived on; could post-war America defeat that enemy as well?<sup>239</sup>

At the war's end, Hollywood's stature was so great that it was now considered to be the greatest educational tool of all time, destined to alter the face of American society.<sup>240</sup> Friedman states that after years of presenting a culturally harmonious America at home and at war, the problems, rather than the promise of American society, became its focus.<sup>241</sup> This introspection lead directly to the inauguration of the

"social conscious" film genre. According to Doherty, "The social problem films attracted a disproportionate measure of earnest attention because so many of them were trailblazing big screen 'firsts.'"<sup>242</sup> For the first time in film history, Hollywood began to unmask long-veiled social predicaments endemic to America-at-large. And one of the longest-standing and more malicious social ills was, of course, American antisemitism.

According to historian Edward S. Shapiro, 1947 was the pivotal year in the history of Hollywood's portrayal of Jews.<sup>243</sup> For the first time, films such as *Crossfire* and *Gentleman's Agreement* helped to make antisemitism unrespectable by showing it as a gentile problem, not a Jewish one. The fault was with those who insisted on perpetuating untrue stereotypes.<sup>244</sup> "Finally...the entire dirty issue of American antisemitism belatedly reached the screen in [one of] the decade's...most controversial films, *Crossfire* (1947)."<sup>245</sup> Film critic James Agee remarked at *Crossfire*'s premier, "Millions of people will look forward [to films about antisemitism] if only for the questionable excitement of hearing actors throw the word 'Jew' around."<sup>246</sup>

*Gentleman's Agreement* followed within weeks; Hollywood called the film a "profound occurrence in the history of the Motion Picture industry."<sup>247</sup> Phil Green, *Gentleman's Agreement*'s protagonist, states America's post-war position on tolerance and pluralism as his son asks, "What is

antisemitism?"

Some people don't like other people just because they're Jews...Some are bad and some aren't. Just like everybody else...There are lots of different churches. Some people who go to them are called Catholics. People who go to other churches are called Protestants. Then there are others who go to still different ones and they're called Jews, only they call their churches synagogues and temples...You can be an American and a Protestant or a Catholic or a Jew. Religion is different from nationality.

Mrs. Green's soliloquy (*Gentleman's Agreement*) epitomizes American post-war attitudes about racism and bigotry,

Wouldn't it be wonderful, Phil, if it turned out to be everybody's century, when people all over the world, free people, found a way to live together?

It is a non-Jew in *Crossfire*, also, who articulates American post-war attitudes about antisemitism, as Detective Finley (Robert Young) delivers this film's final message.

This business about hating Jews comes in a lot of different sizes. There's the "you can't join our country club" kind. The "you can't live around here" kind. The "you can't work here" kind. Because we stand for all these, we get Monty's (the killer's) kind. He grows out of all the rest...Hating is always insane, always senseless.

**CHAPTER 6 CROSSFIRE: THE AFFIRMATION OF**  
**CONSCIOUS LIBERALISM**

**CROSSFIRE'S NARRATIVE**

The film opens on a soldier, shrouded in shadows, viciously beating a man to death. Police Captain Finley (Robert Young) finds an army cap and wallet belonging to a serviceman named Mitchell in the Washington D.C. apartment of the victim, Joseph Samuels (Sam Levene). A blond woman, Samuels' girlfriend, is there, visibly grieved. As he is examining the crime scene, Sgt. Montgomery (Robert Ryan) appears at the door, allegedly looking for his friend Mitchell. He tells Capt. Finley that he and Mitch and another serviceman, Floyd, met Samuels in a bar, and later went with him to his apartment where they had a few drinks. Mitch left because he was unwell. Monty (Montgomery) had come back to find Mitchell. This leads Capt. Finley to a group of Signal Corpsmen, housed in a downtown hotel, waiting their release from the army.

The military police burst in upon a poker table of soldiers. They are hunting Mitchell, but are also looking for Keeley, Mitchell's close friend. Sgt. Keeley (Robert Mitchum) has been summoned to police headquarters to be questioned by Capt. Finley, as Mitchell has disappeared. As Keeley enters the police captain's dimly lit office, a picture of President

Roosevelt hangs on the wall, looming larger than life. Montgomery is also present. Keeley goes to great lengths to shield the captain's inquiry away from Mitch. Keeley cannot provide Finley with any information, but assures him that Mitch could never have murdered Samuels and infers that he (Mitch) has been traumatized by the war and couldn't kill if his own life depended upon it.

The Mitchell character represents the displaced soldier in Leff's and Simmons' analysis of post-war effects on the returning soldiers and is the subplot of the film. Keeley had already, and without knowledge of the crime, called Mitch's wife to fly down to Washington to see him, as he felt Mitch had become increasingly despondent and troubled. This subplot adds to the suspense of the main theme as the viewer imagines that the anxious and distraught Mitchell murdered Samuels.

The actual events leading up to the crime are depicted through a series of flashbacks from the various characters' points of view. Montgomery is called in, and he also assures Capt. Finley that Mitch "is not the kind of guy who knows the scoop on a thing like this." Again, the audience wonders if this is a cover-up for Mitchell. Montgomery reconstructs the scene in the bar.

There was Leroy, this dumb hillbilly from Tennessee. He's a good boy; he's just dumb. I'm regular army, not stinking civilians. Guys [like that] don't respect the service. They spoil the army for a guy like me.

In his flashback, Samuels is seated to Montgomery's right.

Leroy and Mitch are to the left. Samuels is dressed in civilian clothes, a suit and tie; the others are in uniform. He is a middle-aged, balding, clean-shaven man, with no identifiably ethnic characteristics. There is no reference to Samuels' religious identity.

In Montgomery's reconstruction, Mitch bolts from the conversation, visibly agitated, to the other side of the bar. Samuels, obviously uncomfortable with Monty's bigoted rhetoric about Leroy, also leaves the conversation and joins Mitch. The next scene shows Sammy and Mitch engrossed in conversation.

Montgomery's antisemitic opinions emerge at the very beginning of the investigation as Capt. Finley asks him if he has ever seen Samuels (the victim) before.

Montgomery: We left the bar together. I figured if the Jew-boy was setting up drinks, we'd follow. Didn't want to miss the party.

Finley: Did you have an argument with Samuels?

Montgomery: No. Of course, I've seen a lot of guys like him, played it safe during the war. Sat it out dressed in civvies with swell apartments, swell dames. You know guys like him.

Finley: I'm not sure that I do, just what kind?

Montgomery: You know, some of them are named Samuels, some of them have funnier names.

Finley dismisses Montgomery. Keeley emerges from the shadows, and with Roosevelt's portrait behind him says to Finley, "He

ought to look at the casualty list some time. There are a lot of funny names there, too." Keeley takes leave of Finley and returns to the hotel where he tells his buddies to spread out and find Mitch. The next scene is at the bar where Finley is waiting for Mitchell. As he enters, Keeley's boys stage a confusion, and Keeley spirits Mitch away from the police captain and into the balcony of a darkened all-night movie theatre.

Keeley: Tell me everything.

Mitch: I just wanted to be alone (in the bar).  
Somewhere else.

In Mitch's flashback to Keeley, the audience sees Samuels leave Montgomery to seek Mitchell at the bar's opposite end. It is obvious that Mitchell is disturbed and that Samuels is sympathetic. He speaks softly and kindly to Mitchell, a sharp contrast to Monty's brashness. Mitch struggles to identify the source of his malaise, but Sammy correctly concludes that it is the apres-war soldier's syndrome, undirected rage. He picks up a peanut from a dish.

Samuels: It's like this peanut. There are a whole lot of peanuts to fight and then one day, there's only you...There's a whole lot of hate that doesn't know where to go...

Samuels' girlfriend joins him and the three leave together.

The next scene finds them in Samuels' apartment where Monty and Floyd soon join them. In a haze, Mitch recalls

Monty's conversation with Samuels.

Montgomery: (belligerently) What's the matter Jew-boy? You afraid we'll drink up all your stinkin' liquor?

Mitch feels ill and staggers out of the apartment. He wanders around, sick and drunk, until he comes to a cheap bar where he meets a girl named Ginny. They dance, and he accompanies her to her apartment where he passes out.

The action then switches to Monty and Floyd, together in a darkened apartment where Floyd has taken refuge. Floyd is the only eyewitness to the crime.

Floyd: Why did you have to go after the guy anyway?

Monty (ferociously strangling Floyd): No Jew is going to tell me how to drink his stinking liquor.

Floyd: Monty, you went crazy. Sammy didn't do nothin' to you.

Monty: I don't like Jews and I don't like nobody who likes Jews.

The film's opening scene is repeated as a brutal fight scene ensues in shadows and darkness. Monty bludgeons Floyd, murdering him.

The action returns to the police station where Mitch's wife, Mary, arrives. Finley allows Keeley to take her to meet with him in the darkened movie balcony before moving in to arrest him. The film noir subplot of the displaced soldier is reinforced through the couple's dialogue.



Mitchell: Samuels understood me. I started hating myself because I was afraid of being myself again.

They reconcile, and Mitchell is taken to the police station where Finley interrogates him.

Mitchell: Why would I kill Samuels?

Finley: Hate's a good motive.

Mitchell: I hardly knew him. He seemed like a nice guy.

Finley: You knew he was a Jew?

Mitchell: No.

Finley: You didn't know he was Jewish?

Mitchell: No, I didn't think about it. What would that have to do with it?

A police officer interrupts the interview to bring Capt. Finley a portfolio from the Office of War Information. The camera magnifies the text, revealing that Samuels received an honorable discharge from the service after being wounded at Okinawa. It is dated 28 August, 1945. Finley, with Samuels' war record in hand, steps into the hallway where Montgomery is dutifully waiting.

Finley: Monty, how did you know Samuels wasn't in the army?

Monty: You can tell. Those guys got ways of keepin' theirselves from gettin' dirty.

Finley returns to his office and Keeley, convinced now that Montgomery is Samuels' murderer.

Finley: I look for motives... (you) usually have to know something about a man to want to kill him...It had to be something else. The motive had to be inside the killer himself, something he brought with him, something he's been nursing for a long time, something that had been waiting. The killer had to be someone who could hate Samuels without knowing him...mistakenly and ignorantly...I should have known right away, but the motive was so simple, so general, it slipped through the machinery.

Finley sends for Leroy and attempts to solicit his help in catching Montgomery. Leroy arrives, accompanied by his commanding officer, a major. Leroy balks.

Leroy: Monty says I'm stupid, that everybody from Tennessee's stupid and a dumb hillbilly.

Finley: Monty's never been to Tennessee, Leroy.

Leroy is confused, bewildered and afraid.

Finley: Monty thought he had a reason to kill Samuels.

Leroy: I guess I heard him say a couple times about the Jewish people living off the fat of the land.

Finley: This business of hating Jews comes in a lot of different sizes. There's the ah, you can't join our country club kind; and you can't live around here kind. Yes, and the you can't work here kind. Because we stand for these we get Monty's kind. He's just one guy, we don't get him very often but he grows out of all the rest. Monty's hate is like a gun. You carry it around with you and it can go off. It killed Samuels last night.

Leroy: (turning to the major) Monty was in my outfit.

Major: The army's never been proud of men like Montgomery.

Leroy: (to Finley, frightened) Why is this my business?

Finley: Monty makes fun of your accent. Calls you a hillbilly and says you're dumb. He laughs at you because you're from Tennessee. He's never even been to Tennessee. Ignorant men always laugh at things that are different, things they don't understand. They end up hating them.

Leroy: (to Finley) How do I know that you're not a Jewish person yourself?

Finley: You don't--but would it make a difference?

Finley proceeds to deliver the film's pro-tolerance message. Keeley and Leroy are present. President Roosevelt's picture, clearly visible in the dimly lit office, looms larger than life. Finley stares out the window at the sleeping city, reminding the audience that the story is unfolding in Washington, D.C., the national symbol of justice and equality for all American citizens.

Finley: About 100 years ago, the Irish potato crop failed, and they came over here. They were different and their religion was different. They were Catholics...One of them I knew about. He stayed and worked in Philadelphia, saved and bought land and thought of himself as just another man in America. But suddenly, one day he looked around and saw that something had happened and it frightened him. Fear and hatred of all Irish Catholics had developed and spread like a terrible disease. He saw he wasn't an American anymore. He was a dirty, Irish mick. He was a priest-lover who took his orders from Rome, a foreigner, trying to rob Americans of jobs...One

night, he stopped off at a bar for a drink. When he left, two men followed him carrying whisky bottles. They didn't mean to kill him. They didn't start off to kill him. They just started off hating, the way Monty started out. But 20 minutes later, my grandfather was dead. That's history Leroy. They don't teach it in school. Thomas Finley was killed in 1848 just because he was an Irishman and a Catholic. And last night Joseph Samuels was killed just because he was a Jew. Do you see any difference, Leroy? Hating is always the same, always senseless. One day it kills Irish-Catholics. The next day Jews. The next day Protestants. The next day Quakers. Where does it stop? It can end up killing men who wear striped neckties or people from Tennessee.

Leroy agrees to help Finley but worries that he won't know how to stand up to Monty. Finley reassures him, "I'll tell you exactly what to do."

The scene switches to the men's bathroom in the hotel where the soldiers are billeted. It is the following morning, and Leroy is peacefully shaving. Monty enters, and Leroy explains to him that he has seen Floyd and that he (Floyd) wants Monty to meet him. Monty, visibly taken aback, having already killed Floyd, tells Leroy to give him the address of the house where Floyd is allegedly waiting. In Leroy's room, Monty takes the scrap of paper upon which the address is written, crumples it up and throws it menacingly into the wastebasket. There is some drama, worrying the audience that Monty might harm Leroy, but he does not. Leroy tells Monty that he is to meet Floyd that evening at 10 p.m.

Monty buys every newspaper on the street, frantically

searching the obituaries for Floyd's name, but Finley has instructed the press that the obituary remain unlisted. Monty becomes increasingly deranged, as he now wonders if Floyd is really dead. Night falls and Monty returns to his room to wait until the appointed hour. Empty whiskey glasses and ashtrays full of cigarette butts fill his spartan room. He is lying on the bed in his sleeveless undershirt, chain smoking, in a deep sweat. At 9:40 p.m. he bolts dementedly from the room.

He enters the building where he and Floyd had previously met, anxious and confused. Finally, he enters the room, looking for Floyd, but of course, it is Finley whom he encounters. Monty assures Finley that he is just looking for Floyd. Finley asks the address which Monty was given. He repeats the address on Leroy's paper. Finley quickly traps Monty by informing him that he (Finley) wrote the address and that it is the address of the house next door. Monty returned to **this** house because he had been there already, the night he murdered Floyd. Finley now lays out the facts of both murders to Montgomery with all the evidence pointing to him as the killer. Monty bolts madly from the room. Finley yells to him to stop as he runs insanely down the darkened street. Finley smashes the window with his gun and fires two shots. On the street below, Monty falls, dead. Keeley and Leroy emerge from the shadows. "Is he dead?" Leroy asks Finley who has joined them in the street.

Finley: He was dead for a long time. He just  
didn't know it.

The film's final scene shows Keeley and Leroy walk off,  
Keeley's arm securely around Leroy. Finley steps into the  
police car, case closed.

**CROSSFIRE'S RELATIONSHIP TO POST-WAR TOLERANCE ATTITUDES**

*Crossfire's* momentous arrival on the screen of film history precisely coincided with the pervasive mood of liberalism which swept the United States after World War II. Eradicating prejudice was so dominant a social theme in post-war America, the American Council of Race Relations sponsored a three-day public relations workshop to discuss its communal ramifications. Participants included experts in the general field of public relations, including advertising, direct mail, film, radio and the press; professional workers from national and local agencies specifically concerned with fighting group discrimination; and social scientists from major universities and national defense agencies. The Council acknowledged the local, national and international efforts by "people of good will" to combat the "menace of race hatred," prompted by the desire to

Do good, to spread brotherhood and unity, to secure fair and just treatment for all men regardless of the color of their skins, countries of birth or forms of worship. And permeating it is an unmistakable pressure of dread, an urgent sense of the need for immediate action against an enemy endangering the well-being and future of America.<sup>248</sup>

The Council's focus was to determine if current appeals to "good will and understanding," "brotherhood and unity," "Americans all-immigrants all" were really effective in producing the desired attitudinal changes.<sup>249</sup> The Council

concluded

The merit in attacking the prejudiced attitudes of individuals while they are together in groups in factories or offices or at social affairs rather in isolation is that this harnesses the powerful sanction of group approval or disapproval for changing attitudes... The intended targets for mass appeals are surely not those who have managed to escape the powerful psychological and cultural forces that produce prejudiced individuals. Yet those who are already on "our side" may gain from reasoned arguments more strength and new stimulation to hold steadfast in their position; they may even be impelled to undertake work toward influencing the prejudiced.<sup>250</sup>

At the same time that Americans were considering the social responsibilities of tolerance and brotherhood, the Commission on Freedom of the Press (CFP) was empowered. It was also an immediate result of this post-war progressive, liberal force. Its express purpose was to consider the freedom, functions and responsibilities of the major agencies of mass communication, which included the film industry.<sup>251</sup> Its recommendation was,

The motion picture industry, by its own action, should place increasing stress on its role as a civic and informational agency conscious of the evolving character of many political and social problems. The industry as a responsible member of the body politic cannot shirk its obligation to promote...an intelligent understanding of domestic and international affairs...This service to good citizenship...in a free society like ours is a duty.<sup>252</sup>

Dr. Leo Rosten, a member of the Commission, concluded that "Freedom no longer sanctions the right to suppress truths, present lies, practice injustice...or be irresponsible in the fulfillment of public obligation."<sup>253</sup>



American Jews in the post-war era turned their attention from the struggle for recognition and legitimacy as rightful members of society to eradicating the remaining facets of racial and religious bias.<sup>254</sup> "The spectre of the Holocaust," stated distinguished Holocaust chronicler Lucy S. Dawidowicz, "continued to haunt Jews everywhere and to define their priorities, and whether they liked it or not, American Jews became the bearers of Jewish destiny immediately following the war."<sup>255</sup> Movies, a predominantly Jewish industry, followed this trend at every stage of development, despite the "most reassured proverb in Hollywood, 'This is an entertainment industry; if you have a message, send it by Western Union.'"<sup>256</sup>

In the Jewish community, these new concerns raised important questions relating to the impact of film, media responsibility and the position of the American Jewish community vis-a-vis the screen.<sup>257</sup> This uneasiness directly caused the formation of the Motion Picture Project (MPP) by the National Jewish Community Relations Council in 1947. The MPP was composed of representatives from every major American Jewish agency. Its purpose was to form a "coordinated nationwide relationship with the motion picture industry, aimed at developing the potentialities of the motion picture as a medium for fostering good human relations."<sup>258</sup> In particular, the MPP was to manage problems "arising from defamatory and stereotypical characters of minority groups, primarily

Jewish."<sup>259</sup> Its function was to "encourage positive images whenever possible," and to "serve as an information agency to aid studios in accurate presentations (of Jews). At heart was the belief that film was a powerful and persuasive tool."<sup>260</sup>

As a cultural institution, Hollywood sought to address these societal changes.<sup>261</sup> This manifested itself as the "social conscious" film genre. Twentieth Century Fox 's Darryl F. Zanuck, producer of *Gentleman's Agreement*, said,

There is a new concept of entertainment developing in screen drama. The thought process of the public can be stimulated and shaped by a film play even while it is stimulating the emotions. A film can provide diversion and at the same time have something to say about life and its problems.<sup>262</sup>

Socially conscious films presented depictions of intolerable situations: a particular social group denied the ordinary rights and privileges of American citizens and human beings.<sup>263</sup> RKO studio head Dore Schary, in accord with the CFP, insisted that

Movies seldom lead opinion; they merely reflect public opinion and perhaps occasionally accelerate it. No motion picture ever started a trend of public opinion or thinking. Pictures merely dramatize those trends and keep them going.<sup>264</sup>

RKO adapted *Crossfire* for the screen from Richard Brooks' mystery novel The Brick Foxhole. Written during Brooks' tour of duty in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II, the novel's plot involves the baseless murder of a homosexual. RKO changed the victim to a Jew, presumably

because it was "more acceptable to Hollywood's Production Code and potential audiences."<sup>265</sup> The author felt this replacement did not in any way alter the story [his emphasis] because it was "the story of unthinking passion, vicious, hysterical, violent compulsion toward brutality...which is sometimes unleashed for trivial reasons on any handy victim."<sup>266</sup>

Post-war Hollywood films which sought to present social conscious themes relied on a new kind of film technique which French film critic Nino Frank coined the "Film Noir."<sup>267</sup> Film noir shifted from an obsession with psychological breakdown and sexual malaise of earlier crime films, such as *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) and *Double Indemnity* (1944) and recast these elements within a perspective which stressed the normative processes of law and social order.<sup>268</sup> It was a shift from a psychological to a sociological perspective. *Crossfire's* message is the need for tolerance and an end to prejudice and bigotry in America.<sup>269</sup> *Crossfire* is concerned with **why** the protagonist is murdered, rather than with **who** did the killing, as the murderer's identity becomes known less than half-way through the film.

*Crossfire* is described as a "tense message picture with a strong noir style and mood."<sup>270</sup> As a film noir, *Crossfire* presents universal images of time, place and identity by juxtaposing plot with dark and confusing images. It creates a shadowy film world which shows "the seamy underbelly of American nightlife" through the use of low-key lighting, low

angles, alternative points of view, out of focus images, double exposures and a multi-level soundtrack.<sup>271</sup> *Crossfire* becomes a film noir as it "overtly combines characteristics of the 1940s' 'tough thriller'--chiaroscuro sequences, flashbacks and an investigative narrative--with a social problem drama."<sup>272</sup>

Robert Sklar states that "Hollywood movies of the post-war period seem to possess a visual tone and feel unlike anything before or since."<sup>273</sup> *Crossfire* seems unique because of its urgency, as its story concerns matters of truth and justice.<sup>274</sup>

*Crossfire* epitomized America's pervasive post-war conscious liberal ideology. It had become one's civic duty to expose and confront long-buried, irrational racial (religious) hatred and establish its socially unacceptable position. Gentile producer Adrian Scott said,

Monty, the antisemite in *Crossfire* exists. This very night he is roaming the streets of Queens, New York, looking for a Jew to beat up. He has already beaten up many...They want a scapegoat for their own insecurity and maladjustment. They are the stormtroopers of tomorrow.<sup>275</sup>

The film's unveiling of American antisemitism was "sufficiently unique," and *Crossfire* became a cause celebre.<sup>276</sup>

**PRE-RELEASE REACTIONS FROM THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY**

While prevailing social conditions may have changed, Jews in America were mindful that antisemitic attitudes had crested during the war, and that prejudice against Jews was still widespread. For Jews, some things never change, and having been preoccupied with escaping the ravages of antisemitism for more than three millennia, American Jews were not altogether as elated as the critics in publicly unmasking racial (religious) hatred in the United States. This trepidation was confirmed through the "Mr. Biggott" studies sponsored in 1946 by the Department of Scientific Research of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and conducted through the Bureau of Applied Social Research of Columbia University.

An inquiry was directed toward an understanding of prejudiced peoples' response to various anti-prejudice propaganda by measuring responses to various cartoon situations involving a prejudiced character, Mr. Biggott. One conclusion involved reactions to a pro-tolerance propaganda booklet presenting, in comic book form, a series exposing the absurdity of generalizations about various groups.<sup>277</sup> The story's conclusion was, "Live and let live." The social scientists at Columbia found that prejudiced persons frequently followed the whole story with interest and amusement to the end, accepting the Golden Rule, but adding, "It's the Jews that don't let you live; they put themselves

outside the rule."<sup>278</sup> The anti-propaganda message became invalidated by the bigot who accepted in general terms that racism was unseemly, but did not apply the principle to particular circumstances.<sup>279</sup> The predominant conclusion of this research was that prejudiced people evaded attempts to change their attitudes through anti-prejudice propaganda because acknowledging their prejudices would "undoubtedly set up disturbing tensions which would in turn involve serious difficulties for most people."<sup>280</sup>

Armed with these sociological conclusions, representatives from the AJC met with RKO studio head Dore Schary in an effort to dissuade him from proceeding with *Crossfire's* production. They were "paralyzed with fright over what they imagined the consequences of the film might be."<sup>281</sup>

Until the 1940s, Hollywood's screen image of the Jew had been to depict Jews as "nominal," characters who bore a Jewish name and sometimes even looked Jewish. Race and religion were "not seen or even inferred as part of his intrinsic condition, but as something entirely separate and detachable from his [sic] quintessential and non-denominational personhood."<sup>282</sup>

The AJC insisted that Schary cancel production because "such an amateurish attempt to improve the problems of race relations could have the opposite effect."<sup>283</sup> For the pro-tolerance propaganda to have the desired effect, they argued, "The whole of the nation's 140 million people" would have to see the film."<sup>284</sup>

There was a well-documented tendency for those to whom such a message was especially addressed to avoid seeing or hearing it. Even if the bigots got the message, there was substantial evidence to show that propaganda generally tended to be rejected by antagonists. The message, even when it reached the bigot, was invalidated by his accepting the message in general but not in the particular.<sup>285</sup>

The AJC felt that although mass pro-tolerance was correct in principle, the current attempts, including what they knew about *Crossfire*, were "deficient in content...doomed to ineffectiveness because generally the conditions for successful mass persuasion were absent."<sup>286</sup> The AJC even went so far as to suggest to Schary that the victim be a Negro [sic], but "Keep the Jews out of it!"<sup>287</sup>

As a Jew, Schary had a personal stake in the success of the film, despite the dangerous professional risk he was taking in "crossing the line which had separated Hollywood from the reality of antisemitism."<sup>288</sup> As a parting threat, the AJC promised to use the press against the project. Schary was "unimpressed by that kind of pressure," and even Warner Bros.' last minute threat to cancel *Crossfire's* distribution to its theatres failed to deter him.<sup>289</sup>

In addition to pressure from the American Jewish Congress, RKO executives in New York became apprehensive about producing the film, fearing that such a serious subject would not draw a popular audience.<sup>290</sup>

Despite the seemingly overwhelming evidence against the production, Schary persevered toward the film's rapid

completion. It was shot in 22 days and was considered by Hollywood standards to be a low-budget picture, the costs totalling only \$550,000. Before releasing the film, Schary, with aid from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith, arranged several preview screenings for every possible kind of group: priests, rabbis, Germans, Irish, young and old.<sup>291</sup> A committee, headed by Dr. Louis E. Raths, Director of Research at the School of Education, New York University, was commissioned which included over 50 psychologists, psychiatrists, educators and film industry personnel. The reviewers' charge was to weigh the "boomerang" effect of anti-propaganda. They sought to ascertain whether or not *Crossfire's* message did, as the AJC had predicted, backfire and further reinforce antisemitic attitudes among people previously disposed toward prejudice of Jews.<sup>292</sup> This committee unanimously agreed that the film was worthy and that research should be undertaken to determine audience reactions.<sup>293</sup> The reviewers noted that the film attempts to point out the interrelation among many forms of prejudice, including xenophobia, and many forms of societal discrimination in the workplace, at schools and in residential neighborhoods.

The committee wondered what effects these more ubiquitous issues might have upon prevailing opinions, particularly of young people with respect to foreigners, African-Americans and to liberals in the process of defending minority groups.<sup>294</sup>



All members of the committee "voiced the conviction that a single picture would not, of itself, produce a tremendously significant difference in changing basic attitudes," but it did feel that *Crossfire* "would stimulate audiences to think over many ideas of their own relating to prejudices of one kind or another."<sup>295</sup> That the picture provoked reflection, the committee stated, was "a good thing in itself and reflects[s] credibly on Hollywood."<sup>296</sup>

Test groups comprised of a cross-section of white, native-born, Protestant and Catholic populations were established throughout the U.S. from the committee's recommendations. One of the survey questions asked of the high school test groups was: How many young people that you know could be counted as having prejudice against Jews? Dr. Raths explained,

There is a school of thought which holds that discussion of itself tends to produce more prejudice, to increase intolerance (the AJC's position). Another school of thought maintains that it depends upon the discussion and how it is handled. These people believe that *Crossfire* was not only an artistic motion picture, but that it would also be an effective instrument for helping to clarify pro and anti-Jewish sentiment; and that through this clarification, intolerance would be decreased. The evidence is conclusive in the sense that no adverse trend is apparent. The evidence is in the direction of diminishing intolerance.<sup>297</sup>

The responses from adult audience surveys conducted at "Sneak Preview" screenings nationwide indicated that viewers had no serious adverse attitude changes toward Jews and that those people who saw the film did, in fact, change their

attitudes in a favorable direction in issues relating directly to those addressed by the film.<sup>298</sup>

The committee's final conclusion was that *Crossfire* initiates a learning process.

It does not change anyone's basic attitudes; but it is one more instrument which can help in that learning process (of ferreting out and putting an end to irrational prejudice) which ultimately will make of America a richer and more fully democratic society.<sup>299</sup>

## POPULAR REACTIONS TO THE FILM

*Crossfire* opened to rave reviews on July 22, 1947. The film won Best Social Film at the Cannes Film festival, the Film Daily award for Best Picture and Best Direction, as well as five Academy Award nominations.<sup>300</sup> Variety's pre-release coverage claimed that the intent was "on skirting the pitfall of marketing the film as an out-and-out propaganda piece," and that RKO would "plug *Crossfire* as a topical murder-mystery rather than a treatise on antisemitism."<sup>301</sup> Yet, Variety also called the film "Daring Pays Off at the Box Office."<sup>302</sup> Quoting the New York Morning Herald, the article stated,

One of the most startling pictures to ever come out of Hollywood...Calls a spade a spade! Will undoubtedly arouse a good deal of discussion. The more discussion, the more people will see it, and the more people see it, the more it will stand as a triumph for the American screen.<sup>303</sup>

*Crossfire* was hailed as one of the most important and exciting films in Hollywood's history.<sup>304</sup> This sentiment was echoed by the New York Post, "A film to be praised, praised again and seen by all. Excellent! Not merely a step forward...it's a step into another world of thinking and doing."<sup>305</sup>

*Crossfire's* message of racial (religious) intolerance was unprecedented in the history of American film. The spoken word "Jew" had always carried with it the conspicuous derision which had accompanied its use for the previous thirty-four

centuries. *Crossfire* spectacularly altered this persistent and ubiquitous perception.

The New Yorker explained, "There is no attempt to use euphemisms for that troublesome term 'Jew' and most of the xenophobic nonsense that one hears so constantly these days is bluntly attacked."<sup>306</sup>

Never before had such an explosive internal social problem been dealt with on the American screen.<sup>307</sup> New York Times film critic Bosley Crowther reviewed the film on opening night and concluded,

An unqualified "A" for the effort in bringing to the screen a frank and immediate demonstration of the brutality of religious bigotry as it festers and fires ferocity in certain seemingly normal American minds...(The film) evolved (as) a drama in which intolerance, supported by loyalty, is pitted against social justice and the righteousness of humanity.<sup>308</sup>

Director Edward Dmytryk called *Crossfire* a milestone in his career, claiming that because he, producer Adrian Scott and scriptwriter John Paxton were not Jewish, "No one could accuse us of selfish interest or religious bias."<sup>309</sup> Their status as non-Jews verified the prevailing societal attitudes on antisemitism.

That *Crossfire* was intended to be a "message" film was evident. New Republic stated, "*Crossfire* has an important point to make. It is the story of intolerance growing into bigotry and breeding murder, of dislike becoming prejudice."<sup>310</sup> Canadian Forum said, "It is difficult not to

realize that the anti-antisemitism campaign does create an awareness where possibly no awareness existed before."<sup>311</sup> Saturday Review echoed this perspective. "There are those, and they are at best Milquetoasts, who feel that the wisest policy on the subject of racial hatred is to say nothing."<sup>312</sup> The article quotes Joseph Pulitzer's philosophy that the media should be used to expose social problems, "Get these things out into the open, describe them, attack them, ridicule them...and sooner or later, public opinion will sweep them away."<sup>313</sup>

Leff and Simmons feel that *Crossfire's* use of the narrative as a strategy to resolve the theme of the veteran's search for identity in post-war America is exceptional. It is this search for identity and the suggestion of a solution through storytelling which lend *Crossfire* its timeless quality.<sup>314</sup> They conclude that the film transcends its status as a social statement "encased in an efficient film noir" and emerges "as a lesson in the quest for life's meaning in an everchanging world."<sup>315</sup>

**POST-RELEASE REACTIONS FROM THE JEWISH COMMUNITY**

Despite the ADL's scientific conclusions, the American Jewish Committee was still convinced that repercussions from *Crossfire* would intensify already existent antisemitism. Elliot E. Cohen, editor of the AJC's national monthly journal Commentary, denounced both Schary and RKO for the film's release in the August, 1947 edition.

Would the unthoughtful, average movie-goer, with his hodge-podge of accumulated conditioning about Jews---the Christ-killer stigma, the "alien" taint, the various social "exclusions," the cluster of traditional stereotypes, usurer, radical parasite, wizard, etc.--would he [sic] be influenced?<sup>316</sup>

Cohen's attitude was that the film could not possibly convert the rabid antisemite, and therefore, missed its mark. Echoing the AJC's stance, and quoting the anti-propaganda research of the times, he feared that the film would boomerang to the point of evoking sympathy for Sgt. Montgomery.

A tough character...but you're drawn to him...A plain, husky fellow, not much education, visibly troubled, up against a world too smart for him...The chances are good that he will be taken as a kind of hero-victim, the movie equivalent of the Hemingway-Faulkner-Farrell male, hounded and struck down by a world he never made.<sup>317</sup>

Cohen raises the possibility that *Crossfire* might bring hidden emotions to the fore and actually stimulate violence. Evoking recent memories of Europe's six million murdered Jews, he refers to the "germs" of antisemitism which lie latently

everywhere in America, manifesting themselves in "discreet discriminations and exclusions, stimulating others to more or less open hatred." He feared that this disease could flare epidemically--"and tens of thousands cry 'Kill the Jew'--while the other millions stand passively by."<sup>318</sup> Historian K.R.M. Short states that this was a response to a current Roper Poll in Fortune magazine which found that 36 percent of Americans believed that Jews had too much economic power and 21 percent said Jews had too much control over government.<sup>319</sup>

According to Cohen, Finley's plan for Leroy is not merely to give Montgomery up, but "to trap him to his doom like a Judas!"<sup>320</sup> And so, Cohen continues,

They corner Montgomery in the street--and they don't give him a trial, they don't even give him a chance to tell his story--they let him run up and down like a rat, and shoot him like a rat. What the hell kind of justice is that, a soldier, who fought for his country, just for roughing up some smart-aleck Jew, and when the soldier was blind drunk and on a tear? What kind of a country do you call this? Can you be sure the antisemites in the audience won't react this way?<sup>321</sup>

He dismissed Schary's opinion polls as "superficial, low-standard and unreliable," as they did not prove whether or not people understood the film.<sup>322</sup>

Cohen states that in 1947, filmmakers, for the first time in movie history, had a responsibility to make the medium a social-conscious force, "to lend their art to the purposes of enlightenment and progress." He feels unequivocally that film is the "most powerful medium yet devised for the communication

of art and entertainment to a mass audience," and challenges movie makers to expose social problems through scientific testing, rather than "half-baked 'progressive' catchwords or pious indoctrinations."<sup>323</sup> Cohen's closing argument called for the development of a more sensitive, mature film art to adequately address complex human issues, including race hatred and antisemitism.<sup>324</sup>

Schary's response followed in Commentary's October issue. He noted that *Crossfire* "has been received with glowing and exciting notices by all but a very few critics," and that mail received indicated that "93 percent of opinions were enthusiastic and approving. Of the remaining seven percent, some five are cautious and apprehensive, and the last two percent are antisemitic in character."<sup>325</sup>

Schary stated that *Crossfire's* purpose was "never to convert the violent antisemite. It was intended to insulate people against violent and virulent antisemitism."<sup>326</sup> He dismissed Cohen's anxiety about the "Judas theme," pointing out that this question was specifically asked in each of the three preview cities and that 92 percent approved completely of the trapped ending. There was, according to Schary, absolutely no expression of the "Judas" fears. All survey participants hated Montgomery and "enjoyed his getting two bullets in his hide."<sup>327</sup>

In addressing Cohen's characterization of Montgomery as a helpless societal victim, Schary replied that the audiences



polled viewed Montgomery as a coward, a double-crosser who kills his best friend, and a hater of civilian soldiers, who comprise 95 percent of the U.S. armed forces. In addition, "He is sweaty and sloppy, no bobby-soxer virtue for heroes."<sup>328</sup>

Schary rejects the anti-propaganda "boomerang" effects of *Crossfire* stating that the soldiers do not unite to trap one of their own, but rather, they come together to protect Mitchell, and the trap that is laid is for a man who has been clearly established as a double murderer. Regarding the Jews, he further repudiates the boomerang theory by recounting the fact that

A world horrified by the slaughter (of six million Jews) fought against Nazism. They didn't side with Hitler. If your thesis (Cohen's) about *Crossfire* stimulating violence was true, the spectacle of all those sad, dead six million would have raised enough violence to have had us all butchered.<sup>329</sup>

He concludes his rebuttal to Cohen by reiterating that *Crossfire* was not made in an intellectual vacuum. Schary felt if he had accepted all the reservations of the experts, "We would have compromised and inhibited and vitiated a picture that right now seems to be doing the job it was aimed at doing."<sup>330</sup>

Cohen's reply follows Schary's response. He points out that the issue is not whether Schary is proud of the film or whether it is doing well at the box office. "The point at issue," Cohen says, "is whether *Crossfire* is effective in

fighting antisemitism."<sup>331</sup> He continues to worry that the film's depiction of antisemitism is not mainstream, that it is "an irrational act by an irrational man, a fringe lunatic and to whom someone genteel members of society cannot relate."<sup>332</sup>

Producer Adrian Scott defended the film on different grounds. For Scott, a non-Jew, it was a realistic portrayal of life.<sup>333</sup> "Monty, the antisemite in *Crossfire*, exists. This very night he is roaming the streets of Queens, New York, looking for a Jew to beat up."<sup>334</sup> Scott stated that the Jewish community could "no longer afford to hide its head in the sand and hope the problem would go away."<sup>335</sup> Echoing post-war societal attitudes, Scott felt that bringing social problems to the forefront of society would help to make a change for the better.<sup>336</sup>

Screenwriter John Paxton took it a step further. According to Paxton, the decision to have Finley shoot Montgomery as he attempts to escape was made "on the set...It demonstrated just how effectively democracy's brand of frontier justice dealt with antisemites."<sup>337</sup>

**CHAPTER 7 GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT: AMERICAN ANTISEMITISM**  
**EXPLODES ON THE SCREEN**

**GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT: THE STORY**

Phil Green (Gregory Peck), a widower, his 11 year-old son, Tommy (Dean Stockwell), and his mother (Anne Revere) have just moved from Los Angeles to New York where Phil, an investigative reporter, is ready to begin a new job at *Smith's Weekly* magazine. The film opens with Phil sitting on a park bench. A statue of Atlas carrying the world on his shoulders is in the background. Tommy turns to his father, points to Atlas and says, "That's what Grandma says you do!"

The next scene shows Phil in his employer Mr. Minify's office. Minify excitedly tells Phil that he has been working up a great idea for a story about antisemitism, and that he wants Phil to do it. He invites the hesitant Phil to a cocktail party at his home the same evening to meet some influential people. It is there that Phil is introduced to Minify's niece, Kathy (Dorothy McGuire), a socialite and recently divorced.

Kathy: (to her uncle) Do I get a credit line?  
Don't you remember around Christmas last year that Jewish schoolteacher resigning?  
I was the one--

Phil: Funny, you're suggesting the series.

The next morning at breakfast, Phil discusses the idea

with his mother as she dotingly cooks his breakfast. Tommy asks Phil to explain antisemitism. Phil ignores him, but Tommy persists until his father answers.

Phil: Oh, that's where some people don't like other people just because they're Jews.

Tommy: Oh, why? Are they bad?

Phil: Some are, some aren't; it's like everybody else.

Tommy: What are Jews, anyway? I mean exactly.

Phil: Well, remember last week that big church and I told you there were lots of different churches? Well, there are people who go to that particular church and they are called Catholics. Then there are people who go to other churches and they're called Protestants. Then there are others who go to still different ones and they are called Jews; only they call their churches synagogues or temples.

Tommy: And why don't some people like those?

Phil: Well, that's kind of a tough one to explain, Tom. Some people hate Catholics and some hate Jews.

Tommy: And no one hates us because we are Americans?

Phil: (clearing his throat) Well, no, that's another thing again. See, you can be an American and a Catholic or an American and a Protestant and an American and a Jew. It's like this Tom, one thing's your country, see, like America, or France, or Germany, or Russia, all the countries, the flag is different...but the other thing is religion, like the Jewish or the Catholic or the Protestant religions, see, that doesn't have anything to do with the flag or the uniform. You got it? (Tommy: Yep.) Now don't ever get it mixed up. Some people are mixed up.

Ma interrupts. It's time for Tommy to go to school. After he leaves,

Phil (lamentingly): I wish I could do something natural. I know people would read the story.

Ma: Oh, you mean there's enough antisemitism in real life without people reading about it?

Phil: What could I possibly say that hasn't been said before?

Ma: Maybe it hasn't been said well enough. You explained it to Tommy the way your father and I explained it to you. It would be nice once not to have to explain it to someone like Tommy. Kids are so decent to start with.

The scene switches to Minify's office where Phil tells his boss that he will take the assignment. He then tells Minify how he had to explain it to Tommy, because, he says, "It's really each house, each family that decides it."

Minify: I want some compelling device to humanize it so it gets read, not facts and figures...There's one thing to go after the crackpot story...It's the wider spread of it. I want the people who would never go near an antisemitic meeting or send a dime to Gerald L. K. Smith.

At home, later that night.

Phil: I've tried everything (to find the right angle for the story). Oh, it's there all right--in business, labor, professions. Gee, I wish Dave were here.

Ma: Dave Goldman?

Phil: Yeah. Hey, maybe that's something. So far I've been digging into facts and statistics, but I've ignored feelings. What's a fellow like Dave feel about this thing? Over and above what we feel about it? Dave! Can I think my way into Dave's mind? How would it be if I were a Jew? We grew up together. We lived in the same kind of homes. We did

everything together. What does he feel? Indifference? Outrage? Contempt? What would be Dave's feeling not only as a Jew, but the way I feel as a man, as an American, as a citizen? Isn't that right, Ma?

Phil hurries to his typewriter to write to Dave.

Phil: (to Ma) What do I say? Dear Dave, how do you feel low down in your guts when people call you *kike*? How do you feel about Jewish kids getting their teeth knocked out by Jew-haters in New York city?

Phil finishes the letter and addresses it to Captain Dave Goldman. Ma is suddenly unwell, and Phil phones Kathy to ask about getting the right doctor for her. He comes to the apartment to see her, and after the examination tells Phil that he'll be dropping in for the next few days to keep an eye on her. After the doctor leaves,

Phil (to Ma): There are some questions you can only know the answers to when you're lying there yourself (regarding her heart condition). That's how it is with the story. I posed as a coal miner for that story and all the roles for all the other stories. I'll just say I'm Jewish. I can live it myself. "I Was Jewish for Six Months"...I can just tell them and see what happens. (Looking into the mirror), Dark hair, dark eyes. So does Dave. So do a lot of guys who aren't Jewish. No accent. No mannerisms. Neither does Dave. (The) name Phil Green might be anything.

Phil phones Kathy to tell her about his outrage over the subject (antisemitism). Kathy agrees that it's a terrible issue, and their romance blossoms.

The scene switches to Minify's office. Irving Wiseman,

a major investor in the magazine is present as Phil excitedly tells Minify about his angle for the story. Minify is overjoyed.

Wiseman: John (to Minify), it's a horrible idea! It's the worst, most harmful thing you could do. It will only stir it up more. We'll handle it in our own way.

Minify: The hush-hush way?

Wiseman: Let it alone. You can't write it out of existence. We've been fighting it for years, and we know the less talk there is about it, the better.

Minify: Pretend it doesn't exist and add to the conspiracy of silence? Keep silent and let Bilbo and Gerald L. K. Smith do all the talking? Irving, you and your let's-be-quiet committee have gotten exactly no place. We're going to call a spade a dirty spade. It's high time and a fine idea.

Minify calls the entire staff to his office to allow Phil to tell them about the story. Phil tells them that he's really "hot" about the topic, adding, "and I don't think it has to do with the fact that I'm Jewish myself." There are a few startled glances. Phil then meets with his secretary, Elaine Wales.

Phil: Start a file, Miss Wales. Write to clubs, resorts, interviews for jobs, apartments for lease, applications to medical schools--send two letters to each address, one signed Skyler Green and the other signed Philip Greenberg.

Wales: Of course you know it will be "Yes" to the Greens and "No" to the Greenbergs.

Phil: Sure, but I want it for the record.

Wales: If your name were Sol or Irving, you wouldn't have to change it. I changed mine, you know. It's Estelle Wallofsky. No one would take my application. So, one day I wrote the same firm two letters, same as you're doing now. I sent the Elaine Wales one after they said there were no openings to my first one. I got the job all right. Do you know what firm that was? *Smith's Weekly* (their employer)--the great liberal magazine that fights injustice on all sides...I heard you were Jewish--

Phil: (surprised) You heard it?

Wales: When you finished luncheon and went back to Mr. Minify's office--it kind of got around--

Phil is now home and waits for the doctor to visit Ma.

Phil: (to the doctor regarding a heart specialist)  
The magazine recommended Dr. J. Abrams at Mt. Sinai Hospital.

Doctor: I have two other names for you. Either Dr. Vendick or Kent. I'll arrange it.

Phil: Why? Isn't this Abrams fellow any good?

Doctor: Nothing like that. Good man, completely reliable, not given to overcharging and stringing things out the way some do.

Phil: You mean the way some doctors do or the way some Jewish doctors do?

Doctor: I suppose some of us do it too, not just the chosen people.

Phil: I have no loyalty to Jewish doctors simply because I'm Jewish myself.

Doctor (taken completely aback): No, a good man's a good man. I don't believe in prejudice.

He leaves and Phil fumes. Phil flies down the stairs to the mailboxes, and finding his, scribbles out "Green" and writes



"Greenberg." The building supervisor tells him to fill out a card at the post office but to leave the mailbox as "Green" and starts to erase "Greenberg."

Phil: (angrily) Leave that alone!

Olsen: It's nothing I can help, Mr. Green. It's the rules. The rental agent should have explained.

Phil: (even angrier) This is my place for two years and **don't touch that card!**

Later the same evening, Phil has dinner with Kathy. She presses him to tell her his angle for the story.

Phil: I'm just going to let everybody know that I'm Jewish, that's all.

Kathy: Jewish? But you're not Phil, are you? Not that it would make any difference to me. (hesitatingly) It's just that you caught me off guard. It's just that I think the angle will mix everybody up. People won't know what you are. After the series, it will keep cropping up, won't it?

There is tension, furtive glances and no further discussion about the subject. Phil says goodnight without kissing her, and he leaves, frustrated and angry with her attitude. He dashes back to her apartment.

Phil: I don't know what happened. If I were Jewish, I don't think I could have been more insulted.

They reconcile. Now, it is the next day in Minify's office. Phil is present as Minify quizzes the personnel manager, Jordan, about his hiring practices. He insists that he hires

only secretaries whose personalities are the type that fit in.

Minify: (screaming) It's just by coincidence that we haven't one secretary named Finkelstein or Cohen in the city of New York? (to his own secretary) Miss Miller, take a help wanted ad: Expert secretary for education department. Exacting work. Good pay. Religion is a matter of indifference to this organization. (to Jordan) In any other ad you run, be sure you use that last line. And by the way, if you should have to fire Miss Wales for any reason at any time, remember, I'd like to review the case first. (turning to Phil) I'm ashamed of myself and this magazine, too. The sloppy discovery that everybody's busy doing bigger things-- There isn't anything bigger than beating down the complacency of ordinary, decent people about prejudice--

Back in his own office, Miss Wales questions Phil about the ad.

Wales: Mr. Green, you don't really want things changed around here, do you? I mean, let them just get one wrong one in here and it will all come out on us. It's no fun being the fall-guy for the *kikey* ones.

Phil: Now look, Miss Wales. We need to be perfectly frank with each other. Words like *yid* and *kike* and *nigger* and *coon* are sick no matter who says them.

Wales: But sometimes I say to myself, "You're such a dumb *kike*." But it's just that one objectionable one, the one that's too loud with too much rouge--

Phil: There are lots of loud, vulgar girls here.

Wales: Why are you heckling me? You know that sort that starts trouble in a place like this and the sort that doesn't like you or me.

Phil: You mean because we don't look especially Jewish, because we're okay Jews, because with

us it can be kept nice and comfortable---Now listen, Miss Wales. I hate antisemitism and I hate it just as much when it comes from you as when it comes from a gentile.

Fashion editor Ann (Celeste Holm) invites Phil for a drink after work. A friend from the magazine, Bert, joins them in the bar.

Bert: When I was stationed at Guam, our C.O. used to talk about it. (looking at Phil) You were in P.R., weren't you?

Phil: What makes you say that?

Bert: You just seem to be a clever sort of guy.

Phil: (angrily) What makes you think I wasn't a G.I.?

Bert: Why, for goodness sake, Green, some of my best friends--

Ann: And some of your friends never bother to say it.

Bert: Now look, Ann-- (he leaves abruptly)

Ann: (mockingly) Now for goodness sakes, Green-- He really believes it, too. He also approves of the poll tax and Bilbo. He comes right out and says so.

Ann invites Phil to a party for the next evening. He asks if he can bring Kathy. Later Phil phones Kathy to tell her about the party. Kathy wants to let her sister Jane and brother-in-law in on Phil's secret, but he insists on secrecy.

Kathy: But they want to fight this awful thing as much as we do.

The next night at Ann's party, Phil and Kathy are introduced

to the world-renowned physicist, Professor Liebermann (Sam Jaffe).

Phil: I thought we might hash over some ideas, Palestine, for instance.

Liebermann: Zionist refuge or Zionist movement for a Jewish state? Right now, I'm starting a movement of my own. You see, I have no religion of my own, so I'm not Jewish by religion. I'm a scientist, so I must rely on science to show me I'm not Jewish by race. There's no such thing as a distinct Jewish race. There's not even such a thing as a Jewish type. There must be millions of people nowadays who aren't religious in any sense. I've often wondered why the Jewish ones among them still go on calling themselves Jews. Can you guess why, Mr. Green? Because the world still makes it an advantage not to be one. Thus, for many of us, it becomes a matter of pride to go on calling ourselves Jews. So you see, I will have to abandon my crusade before I begin. Only if there were no antisemitism could I go on with it.

Phil takes leave of the professor and meets Ann at the buffet table. He tells her that he and Kathy are to be married soon. Ann asks if he's met Kathy's sister yet, and tells Phil it would be a good idea to meet the family first because it "saves wear and tear afterward."

Phil finds Kathy and pleads with her not to tell Jane (her sister) that he is really a gentile. Kathy replies that she's already told her sister who thinks it's a great idea for a story and that Phil should "Just skip the whole thing for the (engagement) party."

Phil: No! I won't skip the whole thing for the

party.

Kathy: Why do you always lose your sense of humor when the subject is mentioned? That's what was so wonderful about Professor Liebermann. He certainly feels the problem as much as any of us, but he maintains a sense of humor about it. You know those suburban groups in Connecticut and up there. You'd just start a whole mess for Jane and Harry for nothing. And if it were something, but Phil, you're not Jewish. It would just ruin the party for Jane.

Phil: Let's call the party off.

Kathy: It would seem so queer. Her only sister getting married. And if you were (Jewish), I'd manage. Jane and Harry are grand, but some of their friends. It would just make a mess.

Phil leaves her, distraught. The next morning, Phil's phone rings. It's Dave Goldman (John Garfield). He's in New York. Overjoyed, Phil invites him to immediately come over for breakfast. Phil jumps into the shower, and Tommy walks into the bathroom.

Tommy: Say, Pop! Are we Jewish? Jimmy Kelly says we are. His janitor told our janitor--

Phil: (sticking his head out of the shower) It's a kind of a game I'm playing for a story I'm doing. Tell your friends that your dad says he's partly Jewish.

Tommy leaves for school and Dave enters. He tells Phil and Ma that he's been transferred to New York and plans to bring his wife and kids from California. "It all depends, of course, if I can find a place to live." Dave is in uniform. As Ma whips up her "famous hot cakes," Dave questions Phil about his new

series. Phil becomes increasingly morose as he describes his story angle.

Dave: It's just that I'm on the sidelines of antisemitism. Listen, I don't care about the Jews as Jews. It's the whole thing, not the poor, poor Jews.

Dave again asks Phil to tell him about the series. Phil explains that he is posing as a Jew.

Phil: It's working too well. I keep getting my nose rubbed in it, and I don't like the smell.

Dave: You're not insulated yet, Phil, so the impact must be quite a business on you.

Phil: You mean you get indifferent to it in time?

Dave urges Phil not be so hard on Kathy and insists that he call her. He tells Phil that he's going to start looking for a house for his family. That evening, Dave, Ann and Phil meet at a restaurant for dinner. A man, presumably drunk, bumps into Dave as he passes their table.

Man: I don't like officers. What's your name, Bud?

Dave: Dave Goldman. What's yours?

Man: Never mind what my name is. I told you I don't like officers, especially if they're yids.

Dave jumps up, punches the man, but allows a friend to take him away. The friend apologizes to Dave for his friend's behavior. Phil, in the meantime, has slowly risen from his

chair, seething with outrage. Dave orders Phil to sit down. The maitre d' comes to the table and also apologizes to Dave.

Phil is called to the telephone. It's Kathy. She is in Connecticut with Jane to "square things up" for the engagement party which is to take place the following evening.

The scene switches to Darien, Conn. where Kathy is waiting for Phil at the train station. They embrace and drive directly to the party. Kathy notices that several of her sister's closest friends are absent from the party. When she questions Jane, there is an excuse for each of them.

Kathy: Jane, darling, I'm in this as much as Phil.  
You've done some careful screening--

Jane: Oh, darling, you're mad (crazy)!

Phil and Kathy take a walk in the garden behind the house.

Phil: They all asked about the series. Not one  
lifted eyebrow in the bunch.

Kathy doesn't disclose to Phil that Jane has carefully screened the guest list. Kathy shows Phil the cottage house which she had built and furnished for her previous husband. She tells Phil how much she loves the house and how important it is to her.

Kathy: This house is more than a home. It's  
everything I'd ever hoped for. Darling, you  
and I are going to be so happy here.

The next evening Phil, Kathy, Ann and Dave are having dinner.

It is two days before the wedding.

Kathy: (to Ann) We're going to Flume Inn for our honeymoon.

Ann: Oh no! You're kidding. Not Flume Inn!

Dave: What's the matter with Flume Inn?

Ann: It's restricted, that's all.

Phil: But they've confirmed the reservation. I'm not going to let them off the hook.

Kathy: Those nasty little snobs aren't worth fretting over.

Dave: You can't pin them down, Phil. They never say straight out or put it in writing. They get out of it one way or another. They usually do.

There is a phone call. Ma is ill and the wedding is postponed. Dave is frustrated and unhappy.

Dave: (to Phil) I won't be at the wedding (anyway). I can't look for a house forever. I've got to go back (to my family). I'm licked.

Phil: This (job) is your whole future!

Dave: I'll live. I did before.

Phil: (angry) I'm going to Flume Inn.

Dave: You're wasting your time.

Phil: Sure, but there must be a time when you fight back. (to Kathy) They are more than nasty little snobs, Kathy. You can call them that and it's too easy. You can dismiss them and that's too easy. They're persistent little traitors to everything this country stands for and stands on. You **have** to fight them. Not just for the poor, poor Jews, as Dave says, but for everything this country stands for.



The scene switches to the countryside at Flume Inn resort.

Phil is filling out the registration card as Phil Green.

Phil: (to the front desk clerk) And one more thing, is your hotel restricted?

Clerk: I'd hardly say it's restricted.

Phil: Then it's not restricted?

The clerk steps to a back-room door and asks the manager to come out.

Manager: (smiling) In answer to your question, may I inquire, are you? That is, do you follow the Hebrew religion yourself, or is it that you just want to make sure?

Phil: I've asked a simple question. I'd like to have a simple answer.

Manager: Well you see, we do have a very high-class clientele.

Phil: Then, do you restrict your guests to gentiles?

Manager: Well, I wouldn't say that, Mr. Green. But in any case, there seems to be some mistake because we don't have a free room in the entire hotel. (still smiling) If you'd like, I can fix you up with a room at the Brewster Hotel down near the station.

Phil: I'm not going to the Brewster. (agitated) Look, I'm Jewish, and you don't take Jews. That's it, isn't it?

Manager: I never said that.

Phil: (shouting) If you don't accept Jews, says so.

Manager: Don't raise your voice to me, Mr. Green. You speak a little more quietly, please.

Phil: (screaming) Do you, or don't you?

Manager: Mr. Green, I'm a very busy man. If you want me to phone for a cab or a room at the Brewster, I'll be glad to do it. Otherwise---

Phil: Otherwise what?

The manager rings for the bellhop to carry Phil's bags out of the hotel. He turns his back on Phil, and without speaking, walks into his office and slams the door. Phil is livid and walks out. Exhausted, he returns to Kathy.

Phil: Dave was right. It was a waste of time. I'm just thinking about Dave.

Kathy: I suppose you're thinking about the cottage for him? So have I, and you must know that it wouldn't work, Phil. It would be too uncomfortable for Dave knowing he'd moved into one of those neighborhoods. It's detestable, but that's the way it is. It's even worse in New Canaan (Conn.) There, nobody will even sell or rent to a Jew. And even in Darien where Jane's house and my house is, there's a sort of "Gentleman's Agreement"-----

Phil: Gentleman's agreement! Kathy! You can't! You're not going to fight it, Kathy; you're just going to give in and let those idiotic rules stand--

Kathy: But what can one person do?

Phil: (emphatically) You can tell them to go jump into the lake!

Kathy: (horrified) They'll ostracize him (Dave)! Some of the store owners won't even wait on him. The markets won't deliver food--Phil, face facts.

Phil: You expect us to live in that cottage once I know all this?

Kathy: You know I'm on Dave's side.

Phil: (angrily) I'm not on any side. I'm against this, though. Kathy--do you or don't you believe in this?

Tommy, visibly upset, interrupts the argument. Concerned, Phil questions Tommy who bursts into sobs.

Tommy: They called me a dirty Jew and a stinking kike.

Kathy: (hugging him close) Oh, darling! It's not true. You're no more Jewish than I am. It's just a horrible mistake.

Phil: (furious) Kathy!

Phil takes Tommy into the bathroom to wash his face.

Phil: Where did it happen?

Tommy: On our corner. They were playing and I asked if I could play with them and they all yelled those other things. I started to speak and they said, "Your father has a long, dirty beard," and turned around and ran. (sobbing) Why, Pop? Why?

Phil: Did you tell them you weren't really Jewish?

Tommy: No.

Phil: Good. Because it would be like admitting there was something bad in being Jewish and something swell in not.

Tommy: They wouldn't fight. They just ran.

Phil: Yeah. I know. There's a lot of grownups like that, too. Only they do it with wisecracks instead of yelling.

Phil returns to Kathy who is in the living room.

Kathy: Phil, I've got something to tell you. I'm pretty tired of feeling wrong. Everything

I say or do is wrong about being Jewish. What I did now was to face facts about Darien and to tell Tom just--

Phil: (interrupting) You've just assured him that the most wonderful creature is a white, Christian American. You instantly gave him a lovely taste of superiority, the poison that millions of parents drop in the minds of children.

Kathy: You really do think that I'm an antisemite? (indignantly) You've thought it secretly for a long time.

Phil: No. It's just that I've come to see there are lots of nice people who aren't, people who despise it and detest it and deplore it and protest their own innocence, and then help it along and wonder why it grows. People who would never beat up a Jew, or yell "Kike" at a child, people who think antisemitism is something way out in some crackpot place with low-class people. That's the biggest discovery I've made about this whole business, Kathy. It's the good people--the nice people--

Kathy: (vehemently) I hate it! I hate it! I hate it! They always make trouble for everybody--even their friends, and then they force their friends to take sides against them. (incensed) Don't treat me to any more lessons of tolerance. I'm sick of it! You've changed since that first night I met you at Uncle John's. You know why I drew back when you told me the angle? You're doing an impossible thing. You are what you are for the one life that you have. If you were born Christian, instead of Jewish, it doesn't mean you're glad you were. But, I am glad. There. I've said it. It would be terrible (to be Jewish), and I'm glad I'm not. But, I could never make you understand that. It's a fact, like being glad you're good-looking instead of ugly, or rich instead of poor, young, instead of old, well, instead of sick. It's just a practical fact, not a judgment that I'm superior. But you twist it into something horrible, that I'm conniving, aiding and abetting something I loathe as much as you do. I hate you for doing this!

We could have been so happy--

Indignant, she leaves abruptly. Phil is crushed. It is now the middle of the night. Dave and Ann rush into Phil's bedroom.

Dave: What's wrong, Phil?

Phil: Tommy got called a dirty Jew and *kike* by some kids at school today.

Dave: (gently and sympathetically) Now you know it all. That's the place they really get you-- your kids. Well, you can quit being Jewish now. There's nothing else. My own kids got it without the names, Phil, setting their hearts on a summer camp their bunch were going to, being kept out. It's wrecked 'em for a while-- There was a boy in our outfit, Dave Schessman, a good soldier. One night we got bombed, and he caught it. Somebody said, "Give me a hand with this *sheenie*." Those were the last words he ever heard.

The following morning at the office, Miss Wales reads the completed story, "I Was Jewish for Eight Weeks."

Wales: (astounded) Why, Mr. Green. You're a Christian! But I never--But I've been around you more than anybody and never once--

Phil: What's so upsetting about that, Miss Wales? You mean there is some difference between Jews and Christians? Look at me, hard. I'm the same man I was yesterday. You look so astonished. You still can't believe anybody would give up the glory of being a Christian. If I tell you that's antisemitism, your feeling of being Christian is better than being Jewish, you're gonna say that I'm twisting your words around, or just facing facts, as someone else said to me. (forcefully) Take my hand, Miss Wales. Same flesh as it was yesterday, no difference. The only thing that's different is the word

"Christian."

Phil informs John Minify that the story is finished and that he's going back to California. The art editor comes in to congratulate Phil and talk about photos.

Phil: No pictures of me, my kid or my mother.

Editor: That's the trouble with you Christians, (laughingly) always pushing people around!

Ann: The place is in a frenzy over the wonderful plot. This something--Boy, if everybody acted it out for just one day, it'd be curtains on the thing overnight.

Ann invites Phil over for dinner.

Ann: I'm intolerant of hypocrisy, and this is about hypocrisy. She'd (Kathy) rather let Dave lose that job than risk a fuss up there. That's what all this is all about, isn't it? She's afraid. The Kathys everywhere are afraid of getting the gate from their little groups of nice people making clucking sounds of disapproval. They want Uncle John (Minify) to take sides and stand up and fight, but do they fight? No. Kathy and Harry and Jane and all of them scold Bilbo twice a year, and they think they fight the good fight for democracy in this country. They haven't got the guts to take the step from talking to action. One little action on one little front. I know it's not the whole answer, but it's got to start somewhere, and it's gotta be with action. Not with pamphlets. Not even with a magazine series. It's gotta be with people, nice people, rich people, poor people. And it's gotta be quick. Not Kathy. She can't. She never will.

While Phil dejectedly listens to Ann, the scene switches to a restaurant. Kathy is seated, waiting for Dave who

hurries to her table.

Kathy: You know about Phil and me?

Dave: Yes.

Kathy: I want to ask you something. Do you think I'm an antisemite?

Dave: No, Kathy. I don't.

Kathy: Why can't Phil see it? The other night at dinner a man told a vicious little story, and I was sick with shame.

Dave: (gently) What kind of story, Kathy?

Kathy: Oh, all right. A man named Lockhart tried to get laughs with words like *kike*. I despised him, and so did everybody else at the table.

Dave: What did you do, Kathy, when he told the joke?

Kathy: (stunned) What do you mean?

Dave: What did you say when he finished?

Kathy: I wanted to yell at him. I wanted to get up and say to the people at that table, "Why do we sit here and take it, him attacking everything we believe in? Why don't we call him on it?"

Dave: (emphatically) What did you DO?

Kathy: I just sat there, and I felt ashamed. We all just sat there.

Dave: Yeah, and then you left and got me on the phone.

Kathy: Later, after dinner was over, I said I was ill, and I'm still sick through.

Dave: I wonder if you'd feel so sick now, Kathy, if you had nailed him. There's a funny kind of elation about socking back. I learned that a long time ago. Phil's learned it. A lot of things are pretty rough, Kathy. This is just a different kind of war.

Kathy: And anybody who crawls away is a quitter?

Dave: I didn't say that, you did. Somebody told a story, a man at a dinner table, and then nice people didn't laugh. They even despised it. But, they let it pass. The joke is at Flume Inn and in Darien and with Tommy and those kids--

Kathy: And if you don't stop with that joke, where do you stop? Is that what you mean?

Dave: That's right.

Kathy: Where do you call a halt? I've been getting mad at Phil because he expected me to fight this instead of getting mad at the people who help it along, like Lockhart.

Dave: Not just ol' Lockhart. At least he's out in the open. What about the rest of the dinner guests? They're supposed to be on your side, and they didn't--

Kathy: No, they didn't. And I didn't. That's the trouble. We never do. It all links up, Dave.

Dave: You're not cast in bronze, Sweetie. You're nice and soft and pliable, and you can do **anything** you have to or want to with yourself.

Kathy: (eyes brimming with tears) Can I? Can I? Well, it's got to be more than talk.

Next scene, Phil's apartment.

Ma: (glancing up from reading Phil's story) I wish your father could have read this, Phil. He'd have liked this, "Driving away from the inn, I knew about every man or woman who'd ever been told that a job was filled when it wasn't, every youngster who'd ever been turned down by a college or summer camp. I knew the rage that pitches through you when you see your own child shaken and dazed--From that moment, I saw an unending attack by adults on kids of seven or eight or 12 on adolescent boys and girls trying to get a job



or into college or into medical school. And I knew that they had known it, too, they, those patient, stubborn men who argued and wrote and fought for and framed the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. They knew the tree is known by its fruit, and injustice corrupts a tree, that its fruit shrivels and withers and falls at last to that dark ground of history where other great hopes have rotted and died-- for equality and freedom remain still the only choice for wholeness and soundness in a man or in a nation." Your father would have liked to hear you say that, Phil.

Phil: Not enough of us realize it, Ma. Time's getting short--not just Kathy, all the Kathys everywhere.

Ma: I suddenly want to live to be very old. I want to be around to see what happens. The world is stirring in very strange ways. Maybe this is the century for it. Maybe that's why it's so troubled. Maybe it won't be the American century or the Russian century or the atomic century. Wouldn't it be wonderful, Phil, if it turned out to be everybody's century? When people all over the world, free people, find a way to live together? I'd like to be around to see some of that.

Dave bounds in and excitedly runs to telephone his boss.

Dave: (into the phone) I'm bringing my family from California immediately! I've got a house. (turning toward Phil) She's (Kathy) gonna live up there all summer at her sister's. If anybody dishes anything out, she'll be right there to dish it back.

Ma: (to Phil) Yessir, I think I'll stick around for a long time.

Phil bolts out the door and dashes madly to Kathy's apartment. She opens the door. He sweeps her into his arms, and the film ends with their embrace.

### THE POST-WAR SOCIAL REALITY ABOUT JEWS

Rep. John Rankin of Mississippi was considered to be one of the most flagrant bigots in Congress, his speeches punctuated by frequent references to *kikes* and *niggers*.<sup>338</sup> He publicly referred to columnist Walter Winchell as a "little, slime-mongering kike."<sup>339</sup> During the early 1940s, he blamed the Jews for agitating to involve America in the war. "Ninety-nine percent of white, Christian America wanted to stay out of the war, [but] a certain international element that has no sympathy for Christ (brought us into it)."<sup>340</sup> He said the Jews

controlled the world's gold supply, [and] for 2,000 years have attempted to destroy Christianity and everything that is based on Christian principles. They have overrun and virtually destroyed Europe, and they are now trying to undermine and destroy America. God save the country from such a fate.<sup>341</sup>

Although the purpose of the House Un-American Activities Committee was to investigate alleged subversive communist activities, the antisemitic Rankin saw their charge as nothing less than "Yiddish communism vs. Christian civilization."<sup>342</sup>

Rankin then announced "with great fanfare" in July, 1945, that he had uncovered within the movie industry "one of the most dangerous plots ever instigated for the overthrow of the United States government," and that Hollywood (a Jewish industry) was the "greatest hotbed of subversive activities in the U.S."<sup>343</sup> During the summer of 1947, two HUAC

investigators arrived in Hollywood to inform the industry that it had 60 days to rid itself of subversives. On November 1, 1947, just weeks before *Crossfire* was scheduled to open, the House Un-American Activities Committee, lead by Rep. Rankin reaffirmed that antisemitism was alive and well in the post-war era as full-scale public hearings into communist activity in Hollywood began. According to Howard Suber, "(For Rankin) to call a Jew a communist was a tautology."<sup>344</sup> Rankin told the House of Representatives that Jews in Hollywood who had changed their names had done so to cover up hidden subversive activities. The traitors had to be rooted out.

Membership in the Communist party among Jews was a carry-over from Eastern Europe, as Jews had long been at the forefront of social causes. Jewish bundists and labor socialists had begun fighting for workers' rights and social equality in the mid-nineteenth century. When they came to America, they carried their ideals with them. Communism, for Jews, was seen as a social force. Following the war, the Soviet Union, lead by the murderous and repressive Stalin, became the United States' arch enemy. After so many Americans had died fighting to eradicate world-wide totalitarianism and to preserve the democratic way of life, to be a communist in America post-war became synonymous with treason. This turn of history fueled the antisemitic Rankin's claims that Jews were outsiders, subversives disloyal to the government of the U.S. and to democratic ideology. It was not surprising that

Hollywood, known not only as a predominantly Jewish industry, but also as a medium which wielded such great influence over the minds of Americans, should become the HUAC's first target. No one in Hollywood, Jew or gentile, was immune to the committee's scrutiny as it zealously attempted to exterminate the red menace and make America safe for loyal Americans. As the threat of global communism increased, it became every citizen's patriotic duty to expose any person who was, or had ever been, associated with communism.

The hearings blossomed in the spring into the now-famous case of the Hollywood Ten, which included *Crossfire's* director Edward Dmytryk and its producer Adrian Scott, both non-Jews. Scott maintained that he and Dmytryk had been subpoenaed by the committee because they had just produced and directed *Crossfire*, the first Hollywood film to confront American antisemitism. Scott felt that the committee's summons and that their entire case was an overt antisemitic act. The congressional brief printed on the contempt citations of the Hollywood Ten showed that a majority of the congressmen believed them to clearly be members of "the international communist (read Jewish) conspiracy."<sup>345</sup>

The proliferation of the hate press was further fueled by Rankin and Sen. Joseph McCarthy (Wis.). A survey of the antisemitic press, published in 1947 by the Jewish War Veteran, reported that the "mainstays" of antisemitic rhetoric were

1. the smearing of Jews and Jewish movements and organizations as "Communist,"...2. A new atomic line-- that the Jews possess the secret of the atomic bomb and are plotting to turn it over to Russia...<sup>346</sup>

Post-war antisemitism reached its zenith during the sensational Rosenberg case. In 1950, two Russian-Jewish immigrants, Julius Rosenberg and his wife, Ethel, were accused of being communists and forwarding top secret information to the Soviet Union. They were found guilty of espionage against the United States and executed in 1953. The Rosenbergs' supporters wondered why the New York jury which convicted them did not contain one Jew, even though the city's population was 30 percent Jewish.<sup>347</sup> It was also noted that even if guilty as charged, the "crime" had been committed during World War II when the [former] Soviet Union was America's ally, not our enemy. It is not a capital crime to pass information to an ally, and supporters felt that it certainly did not warrant the death penalty.<sup>348</sup>

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) had begun to gather comprehensive survey data about American societal attitudes towards Jews early in the 1930s. Beginning in the late 1930s and continuing to the present day, the ADL maintains a scientific research department to monitor antisemitic social attitudes and practices. The HUAC's witchhunting, culminating in the Rosenberg case, prompted many of the post-war public opinion surveys about antisemitism which the ADL and AJC sponsored. Their post-war surveys reveal a significant amount

of covert social antisemitism. Some of their most prominent findings are quoted here.

In 1947, the National Interfraternity Council's constitution included discriminatory racial and religious clauses. In some instances, "the vague and equally reprehensible 'socially acceptable' clause has been substituted."<sup>349</sup> As late as 1962, an ADL survey of almost 1,200 private clubs found that religious discrimination was extensive and pervasive. Sixty-seven percent of all clubs studied practiced religious discrimination,

Showing a serious failure on the part of the American community to accept individuals on the basis of individual worth and merit...The extent of discrimination of Jews in clubs is far greater than other areas: education, employment, housing and public accommodation.<sup>350</sup>

After the war, a series of surveys confirmed continued discrimination toward Jews in admissions policies of medical schools. A five-year study by the Philadelphia Fellowship Commission, published in 1957, reported,

The applicant of Catholic or Jewish background is less likely to be accepted than the applicant of Protestant background. The Jewish applicant is at even greater disadvantage than the Catholic.<sup>351</sup>

New York City Councilman Walter Hart examined the admissions practices of the city's medical schools and reported in 1947, "These institutions severely restricted the admission of the graduates of New York City colleges whose

student bodies contained large percentages of Jews."<sup>352</sup> In the late 1940s, half of the total Jewish population in the United States was centered in New York state. The admissions policy for medical schools nationwide was to admit applicants native to their home state. In six of the ten years between 1936-1946, Cornell University Medical School did not accept a single graduate from the College of the City of New York.<sup>353</sup>

According to a 1952 study conducted by the Council on Medical Education of the American Medical Association, 25 percent of the nation's medical schools barred out-of-state students altogether. Thus, Jewish pre-med students, primarily from New York state, could not be admitted to schools out of state and faced extensive in-state discrimination as well.<sup>354</sup>

Regarding employment discrimination, the 1936 *Fortune* magazine survey found, "The absence of Jews in the insurance business is noteworthy." ADL found that even into the 1950s, "The habit of discrimination continues to operate against them [the Jews], particularly in recruitment for executive and administrative positions."<sup>355</sup>

According to post-war surveys of hiring practices in Chicago, Los Angeles, Denver and San Francisco, job discrimination because of race and religion continued at a high rate nation-wide, and this job bias is directed to a marked degree against Americans of the Jewish faith.<sup>356</sup> The ADL and the Bureau on Jewish Employment Problems found between 22 and 27 percent of job orders placed restrictive to Jews.

Of the 5,500 firms covered, 1,500 (27 percent) specified restrictions against Jews.<sup>357</sup> Job orders contained statements as,

Protestants only, no Jews or Orientals.

We have no religious preferences as long as they are of the Nordic race.

This is a Gentile firm, a Jewish girl wouldn't be comfortable here.

We're desperate, but not desperate enough to hire Jews.

We can't use any of the forbidden race.

We only employ high-type Anglo-Saxons.<sup>358</sup>

Placement offices in colleges and universities were also found to be discriminatory. In 1954, 155 college placement offices in seven midwestern states were surveyed by the Midwest Regional Committee on Discrimination in Higher Education. The survey found that 66 percent reported receiving job-orders specifying restrictions against Jews and other minority groups, and 71 percent, as a matter of administrative routine or on request, furnished employers with information regarding the religion of student applications.<sup>359</sup>



**THE MAKING OF GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT**

According to historian K.R.M. Short,

Twentieth Century Fox had every reason to expect that *Gentleman's Agreement* would flop because it believed that movie audiences in America as a whole did not want to be lectured on whom they should love. It was also generally recognized that there was a significant level of antisemitism existing throughout the nation.<sup>360</sup>

One indication of this was the Office of War Information's confidential survey of 1942 which indicated that while only two percent of respondents in the rural Midwest expressed antisemitic grievances, the figure in the South was 15 percent.<sup>361</sup>

Yet, Darryl F. Zanuck, head of Hollywood's only "goy (non-Jewish)" studio, felt that "[a] film can provide diversion and at the same time have something to say about life and its problems."<sup>362</sup> Zanuck's marketing department predicted that the film would not do well in the South because it usually rejected "message" pictures, but Twentieth Century Fox was prepared to take the risk because of the novel's enormous nation-wide popularity. Despite the expectations, the film was extraordinarily successful in the South, but failed in the Midwest.<sup>363</sup>

The production of *Gentleman's Agreement* went ahead as mixed reviews of *Crossfire* were coming in from the liberals and the Jewish community. The film based on the 1946 Laura Z. Hobson best-selling novel, was to be directed by Elia Kazan,

with screenplay by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Moss Hart. Zanuck personally produced the film and backed it with a \$2 million budget. Author Eric Goldman states, "Never before had such an explosive internal social problem been dealt with on the American screen."<sup>364</sup> *Gentleman's Agreement* was produced

in direct response to social tensions arising from the presence...of certain dispossessed or deprived minority groups...In the case of the Jews, the deprivation was not new, but the awareness of it, springing from the wartime experience, was.<sup>365</sup>

Hart develops the pivotal issues of American middle-class antisemitism through several key scenes including: Phil's initial attempt to explain to Tommy what a Jew is; the conservative Jewish opinion on ignoring antisemitism put forth by Prof. Liebermann (as well as the post-war-existentialist-Jewish-rationalist philosophy); the Minify-Weismann dialogue on the magazine series; Dave's statements on being the object of antisemitism, that the key to defeating prejudice lay in the fair-minded liberals who refused to speak out and thereby allowed prejudice to continue to fester in American life; and Mrs. Green's optimistic summary statement at the end of the film.<sup>366</sup>

Kazan stated, "Darryl made what he felt the public would buy. The success of Laura Hobson's novel indicated there was a large public ready for the subject."<sup>367</sup> Hobson was "adamant" that the book be perceived as "an American book

about Jewish matters."<sup>368</sup> The "liberal" problem of keeping silent in the face of antisemitism is placed in the context of Phil's relationship with Kathy.<sup>369</sup> In the film's climactic scene, Kathy recounts the details of "a vicious little story" to Dave, who enlightens her about "the kind of elation involved in socking back."

The trouble lay with the nice people refusing to fight for the American principles of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights for which the war had been fought; prejudice was as real an enemy as the Nazis. This self-revelation leads Kathy to defend her beliefs, and as Phil's articles go to press, they are reunited.<sup>370</sup>

After the war, French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre wrote Anti-Semite and Jew (1945), published in America in 1948. Sartre, a Jew, dissects the liberal democratic ideology as it confronts antisemitism. His thesis epitomizes the assumptions upon which *Gentleman's Agreement* rests.<sup>371</sup> Sartre states,

The Jews have one friend...the democrat. But he is a feeble protector. No doubt he proclaims that all men have equal rights; no doubt he has founded the League of the Rights of Man, but his own declarations show the weakness of his position. ... The democrat, like the scientist, fails to see the particular case; to him the individual is only an ensemble of universal traits. ... He fears the Jew will acquire a consciousness of the Jewish collectivity...His defense is to persuade individuals that they exist in an isolated state. "There are no Jews," he says, "there is no Jewish question." This means he wants to separate the Jew from his religion, from his family, from his ethnic community, in order to plunge him into the democratic crucible whence he will emerge naked and alone, an individual and solitary particle like all the other particles.<sup>372</sup>

The only difference between Jew and gentile is that of label,

and Phil is able to pass as a Jew without difficulty,

(Phil, looking at himself in the mirror): Dark hair, dark eyes, sure, so's Dave. So have a lot of guys who are Jewish. No accent. No mannerisms, neither has Dave.

Phil sums up the "Americans All" credo as he says,

Whatever Dave feels now--indifference, outrage, contempt--would be the feelings of Dave not only as a Jew but the way I'd feel as a man, as an American, as a citizen!

The dissolution of Jewish identity is constantly proposed in dialogue which stresses abstract citizenship.<sup>373</sup> Dave echoes this position when he says,

I'm on the sidelines of antisemitism. It's your fight, brother. It's not about the poor, poor Jews; it's the whole thing.

Zanuck ran into the same opposition from the organized Jewish community as Schary had. This time, a group of wealthy Hollywood Jewish elite came to his office to convince him that antisemitism would only be fanned by raising the issue in a film.

There was a terrific uproar from the rich Jews of the Hollywood community. And there was a meeting at Warner Bros. called, I think, by Harry Warner. At that meeting, all the wealthy Jews said: For Chrissake, why make that picture? We're getting along all right. Why raise the whole subject? And Zanuck, in a polite way, told them to mind their own business.<sup>374</sup>

Zanuck dramatized his own confrontation with Jewish leaders in

the scene between Minify and Weismann. Weismann's wanting to "leave it alone...we'll handle it in our own way" represents the Jews' historic position toward the public confrontation of antisemitism. Minify reflects Zanuck's advocacy of the democratic liberal ideology. This scene was not in the novel, but Zanuck's personal contribution to the film.

Like Schary, Zanuck also used scientific testing to validate his position. A study, commissioned through the psychology department at the University of Pittsburgh, aimed to demonstrate the effect of the film on attitudes towards Jews. After pre and post-testing to both experimental and control groups over a three-day period, the study found that 73 percent of participants showed more favorable attitudes towards Jews. Eighty-one percent of the students felt that more pictures on minority groups were desirable to educate the public. Only 19 percent of respondents felt such movies could boomerang. The authors also reported that the cumulative effect of two or more motion pictures on a given social issue is greater than that produced by a single film. Follow-up studies indicated a demonstrable persistence of positive effects of the films on antisemitic attitudes.<sup>375</sup> The psychologists found overall that the subjects projected the direction of their own change in attitude into their predictions of the way the public would receive future similar pictures.<sup>376</sup>

**POPULAR REACTIONS TO GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT**

The film became, according to Variety, the most acclaimed motion picture in screen history, winning 39 awards, including the New York Film Critics Circle award for Best Picture of the Year. It also won Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Supporting Actress (Celeste Holm) and Best Director.<sup>377</sup> Variety proclaimed it to be "One of the most vital and stirring and impressive [films] in Hollywood's history, providing a [truly universal and] overwhelming emotional experience."<sup>378</sup> Its impact was so astoundingly pervasive, Zanuck booked *Gentleman's Agreement* into 359 theatres for the Easter weekend.<sup>379</sup> Simultaneous ads in Variety by the National Conference of Christians and Jews called for spreading friendship and tolerance throughout the nation.

In contrast to scientific projections that the film would fail in the anti-Jewish South, it became 20th Century Fox's second largest grosser in the South, which had also been historically weak for social problem message pictures. The studio had no explanation.<sup>380</sup> The antisemitic Gerald L. K. Smith attempted to ban the film in Tulsa, but a judge denied the motion. Buoyed by the decision, Twentieth Century's sales chief declared, "This picture has been widely acclaimed by disinterested observers as marking a new era in forthright entertainment and honest treatment of current themes of major

interest."<sup>381</sup>

The film's message had international repercussions. *Gentleman's Agreement* was banned in Spain. Eric Johnston, head of the Motion Picture Association of America, pointed out the inadvisability of outlawing the film in view of Spain's attempts to establish diplomatic relations with the United States. A Spanish church censor had stated, on the record,

It is a grievous sin for Phil to masquerade as a Jew for even eight weeks...and while it is a Christian duty 'to stimulate love among individuals, societies, nations, and peoples,' this duty should not extend to the Jews...The enemies of Christ's holy church, including the Jews, must be humiliated.<sup>382</sup>

Furthermore, the film was found to be unacceptable because it stated that there was no real difference between Christians and Jews when "Christians are [sic] superior to Jews."<sup>383</sup> Francis Cardinal Spellman blasted the Spanish censor who later alleged, "There is neither semitism or antisemitism in Spain." Johnston appealed to Franco, and the ban was lifted.

The Committee on Exceptional Motion Pictures, sponsored by the National Board of Review, declared *Gentleman's Agreement* to be

A rare combination of passion and truth. Its focus turns to the light the most common aspects of antisemitism practiced in America today. Not by violent and dreadful people like Hitler...but by nice, very nice people. Let me suggest, people like you and me (if we happen, that is, not to be Jews ourselves). By people who belong to clubs to which no Jews are admitted, by those of us who live in "restricted areas" where there is

a "gentleman's agreement" that Jews shall not also live. By people who go to hotels from which Jews are habitually turned away. By those who give jobs to Greens not Greenbergs, and by others whose children sometimes call the little Rosens and Adlers "dirty kikes." By the many who are often heard to say that they have no prejudices against Jews, that indeed some of them are their best friends. It is because we, the "nice," the unprejudiced, well-placed Americans are somehow shown to be implicated in these un-American attitudes.<sup>384</sup>

Time concurred.

*Gentleman's Agreement* is an important experiment, honestly approached, an almost overpowering polemical film...Like the novel, the movie contends that decent, intelligent people, who know better than to be antisemitic, but take no militant steps to stamp out the social weed, are chiefly to blame for its hardy growth.<sup>385</sup>

Director Elia Kazan said, "It was saying to the audience, you are an average American and you are antisemitic."<sup>386</sup>

According to film historian Patricia Erens, "Kathy learns by complacency and passive reaction that she contributes to the survival of prejudice."<sup>387</sup> The message of the film, says Erens, is that we are all responsible for openly challenging prejudice and for supporting American values.<sup>388</sup>

Elliot Cohen, editor of Commentary magazine, noted, "Antisemitism is the problem of Christian mentality."<sup>389</sup>

America, if I read the old documents right, was not meant to be a country club for people "just like us." The exclusiveness of the gentleman's agreements, collusive or legal, was no part of the picture, nor was the genteel pattern, active or acquired, the prescribed ticket of admission. It was to be a free land for all kinds of people.<sup>390</sup>



Yet, he observes, *Gentleman's Agreement* "builds on American strength."

The conflict broadens into the issue that is the most central of all to the future of our democratic society (referring to Kathy and Phil's quarrel), "What can be expected of me and what can I expect of myself? I, who am only one lone individual in a huge, buzzing, global, industrial society..." What grim, tenacious Phil learns is that we must fight not only the Gerald L. K. Smiths or the high society antisemites, but the good, wholesome, liberal Kathies of the nation, not merely the actively evil, but the inactively good... In lending her cottage to Dave, when it comes to antisemitism, *Gentleman's Agreement* says we must work at it where it counts doubly, in the daily circumstances of our personal lives, one by one, individually.<sup>391</sup>

*Gentleman's Agreement* presents in pure form the liberal-democratic ideology of the individual.<sup>392</sup> The Committee on Exceptional Motion Pictures declared,

Darryl F. Zanuck has done a service to his country, to the screen and to the American spirit in producing this sane, responsible, this telling analysis of intolerance. He need not fear how our democracy will stand before the world if we are represented abroad by a picture such as this courageous producer has given us here.<sup>393</sup>

Echoing this posture, the New Republic stated that "Hollywood [has] broken its self-protective silence on social questions to raise the issue of antisemitism, in many ways, the nastiest of them all."<sup>394</sup>

Darryl F. Zanuck's production... is an unrelenting diagnosis of a miserable disease... The spoken word carries a greater shock than the written one. Images of the mind can never be as convincing as images of the eye. That fact, which has always been the only valid excuse for the timidity of Hollywood's moral code, now in a

different context gives force to this film. You find the word *kike* distasteful here on the page; it is much more offensive when you hear it spoken in a theatre.<sup>395</sup>

Saturday Review of Literature was unrelenting in its attack on bigotry.

The newspapers have no monopoly on the responsibilities that go with the public statement of public wrong. The stage, the screen, the radio and literature all share the same burden...Race prejudice is a vice which, whether it becomes criminal or not, is, even when dormant, a crime against the democratic belief. It is a matter of inherited prejudices, of malconditioned reflexes, of stupidities which persist mainly because the stupidity has never been exposed...It is because it dares to call real abuses by their proper names and to skywrite some of the ugly, underground truths of racial intolerance in this country that *Gentleman's Agreement*...establishes a new relationship between screen and audience...if only [they] are not frightened by congressional investigation.<sup>396</sup>

Reflecting the democratic ideology of the individual, New York Times film critic Bosley Crowther asserted,

Such aspects of antisemitism as professional bias against Jews, discrimination by swanky hotels and even the calling of ugly names have been frankly and clearly demonstrated for the inhuman feeling that they are...Citing such names as Bilbo, Rankin and Gerald K. Smith give it realism and authenticity.<sup>397</sup>

Theatre Arts stated

Because Mr. (Moss) Hart has used Mrs. Hobson's blueprints to give us people for whom we care, we are soon involved with the stuff of their conflicts as well. No argument could be more persuasive. It demonstrates the many ways in which antisemitism can feed on the unintentional acts of well-meaning people. It establishes beyond argument that this is everybody's battle as it strikes at the root of all intolerance.<sup>398</sup>

That we are all brothers under the skin is not new in film, Erens concludes. What is new is that it is un-American to be antisemitic.<sup>399</sup>

## THE AFTERMATH OF WAR

Social historian Henry Feingold states that during the war,

The remarkable fact about American antisemitism is that at the historical juncture when the nation became involved in a life-and-death struggle with an enemy whose primary objective was to rid the world of Jews, its own antisemitism was reaching new heights of intensity.<sup>400</sup>

Atavistic prejudices against the Jew as an alien and subversive served to heighten isolationists' fears about the U.S. entry into the war. Loyal, patriotic Americans were not lobbying to drag the beleaguered, Depression-worn, white, Christian Americans into Hitler's war. As the fear of war spread into the early 1940s, Americans needed someone to censure. It was historically consistent and completely logical that the Jews would be to blame. After all, it was common knowledge that the Jews were united in an international banking conspiracy designed to control the world's monetary resources. Entering the war would only facilitate their ultimate monetary dominance of the U.S. economy. Since the Jews were communists, entering the war would aid them in their secret mission to overthrow the United States government. Then came the reality of the war.

Surveys conducted by the American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup Poll) and the National Opinion Research Center about trends in antisemitism found that feelings against Jews

increased from 29 percent in 1939 to 58 percent in 1946.<sup>401</sup> The respondents' conclusion as to why antisemitic feelings among Americans doubled: The war made us conscious of the Jews.<sup>402</sup>

After the war, despite the Nazis' goal to eradicate Jews from the face of the earth and the subsequent murder of six million Jewish people, including one million children, the creation of the sovereign state of Israel, affluence and the two pro-tolerance films, antisemitism in America did not lessen. It actually increased.

Revelations of the Holocaust did not have a significant impact on American public opinion immediately after the war, as the threat from the Soviet Union preempted interest in the horrors of Nazi Germany.<sup>403</sup> In addition, the status of West Germany as America's ally made Americans reluctant to embarrass Germans by drawing attention to their recent past.<sup>404</sup> American attitudes toward immigration also reflect public indifference to the Holocaust. Most Americans surveyed remained opposed to the admission of large numbers of refugees, Jewish or otherwise; this attitude also included children.<sup>405</sup>

However, working, fighting and dying side-by-side during the war years served to unmask time-honored prejudices against Jews. Cognizance of their Jewish neighbors as loyal citizens caused Americans to confront the post-war reality: We are all equally Americans. By the end of 1946, animosity toward Jews

began to decline. Survey data confirmed that increased tolerance toward Jews was induced by the war itself and not by victimization of Jews during the war.<sup>406</sup>

The good news: According to scientific research studies, it was no longer socially acceptable to hate Jews. Not because we felt sorry for them. But because they were our brothers and sisters. The inconsistency between public opinion poll results and actual social practices reflected the struggle between adopting post-war tolerance attitudes because it was one's patriotic duty and actually reversing one's inherent beliefs about Jews.

CHAPTER 8 OLIVER TWIST: THE LITMUS TEST

THE 1948 BRITISH FILM *OLIVER TWIST*

The past does not die. We must contemplate it and know how to recognize the future in it.

Viktor Shlovsky, 20th century Russian filmmaker

While *Gentleman's Agreement* was being hailed as the most acclaimed motion picture in film history, British film tycoon, J. Arthur Rank, was busily preparing a screen adaptation of Dickens' classic novel Oliver Twist.<sup>407</sup> Rank's Cineguild Studios, under the direction of David Lean, produced Dickens' *Great Expectations* the previous year and had been nominated for Best Picture at the 1946 Academy Awards. *Oliver Twist* would also be directed by Lean and was anticipated to be another award-winning production.

The reviews of *Great Expectations* distinguished Lean as "one of the great narrative masters of the screen, with power to evoke the Dickens' scene, character and movement."<sup>408</sup> Realizing that Oliver Twist's complex sub-plots would be difficult and confusing to translate onto the screen, Lean determined that the film's basic theme would focus on Oliver's story. "He boldly cut everything [the novel's other sub-plots] that was, in his opinion, irrelevant."<sup>409</sup> He wanted to give "his own first impression of the novel, unencumbered by Dickens' labyrinthine plot."<sup>410</sup> Producer Ronald Neame

explained, "We shall inevitably get into trouble with Dickens lovers...so we decided...to develop characters that seemed to be the most rewarding."

Lean asserted that Oliver Twist found inspiration not only in the Dickens' text, but in George Cruikshank's famous illustrations which have developed a life nearly independent of the text they accompany.<sup>411</sup> (See Appendix #A.) Alec Guinness, at that time an aspiring actor, pressed Lean for a screen test for Fagin's part. Guinness, taking his cue from Cruikshank, exacted Lean's promise that his creation would remain unseen until the audition.<sup>412</sup>

"This extraordinary thing came on," Lean remembered.<sup>413</sup> Fagin had leaped off Dickens' pages and onto Lean's set. Guinness had become a full-blooded, pathetic, Victorian monster.<sup>414</sup> (See Appendix #D.)

The film opened in London to rave reviews on June 22, 1948, and brought Guinness instant international popularity. The London Times reported, "Mr. Alec Guinness enters into the spirit of Cruikshank in his careful, gloating, intelligent drawing of Fagin."<sup>415</sup> Variety declared, "From every angle, this is a superb achievement. Alec Guinness gives a revoltingly faithful portrait of Fagin."<sup>416</sup>

Canadians, too, relished the film. "Fagin is much to our taste: grotesque, powerful, perverse."<sup>417</sup> Biographer Kenneth Tynan stated, "Guinness made a grim but not unlikable Fagin, replete with Punch-like gouaillerie."<sup>418</sup> (See Appendix #B.)



British film critic Catherine Henry said, "Almost alone among film actors, Guinness can assume the paraphernalia of make-up and funny voice and eccentric walks without losing a bit of credibility."<sup>419</sup> His performance was so very credible that it precipitated an Anglo-American box-office war which lasted into the spring of 1951.

**PRE-RELEASE REACTIONS TO *OLIVER TWIST***

In America, the Production Code Administration (PCA) office was the official film censorship agency of the motion picture industry from its inception in 1934 to its dissolution in 1966. All films distributed in America embodied the moral precepts stipulated by the Motion Picture Production Code. Articles VIII and X stated, respectively, that there would be no defamation of any religious faith and that the history, institutions, prominent people and citizenry of other nations would be represented fairly.<sup>420</sup> The British Board of Film Censors, the official English film censorship agency, did not maintain a similar policy.

The Production Code office in America had long been aware of Fagin's controversial status. As early as 1930, MGM had considered making an American version of *Oliver Twist*. Opinions from Jewish organizations had already been raised, as "Fagin and Shylock had always been uncertain (as paradigms of antisemitic stereotypes)."<sup>421</sup> Although MGM ultimately dropped the idea, its producers had assured the PCA that Fagin would be treated with great care.<sup>422</sup> The PCA would verify that the characterization would not be "objectionable either as a treatment of a Jew or in the sense that elimination of Jewish characteristics [would] be looked upon as an alteration for [Jewish] propaganda purposes."<sup>423</sup>

Six film versions of *Oliver Twist* predated Alec Guinness'

arrival onto the stage of history. All had been produced in England and widely distributed in the U.S. Nate Goodwin's 1912 Fagin was a large success. He had toned down Fagin's harsher aspects to make him more appealing to 20th century audiences.<sup>424</sup> Tully Marshall (1916), Irving Pichel (1933) and later, Ron Moody (1968), all drew on Goodwin's characterization, realizing that Fagin would be more acceptable as a charming villain.<sup>425</sup>

Sol Lesser, producer of the 1922 rendition, had debated with director Frank Lloyd over changing Fagin's character and the implications of altering Dickens. Lloyd said, "Well, it's the book. It doesn't mean every Jew." But Lesser insightfully knew, "People perceive it differently. It's a reflection on the Jews."<sup>426</sup> Guinness, manifesting an intrinsic British antisemitic heritage, however, fashioned his own unique caricature.

Following in the time-honored British tradition of successful Oliver Twist adaptations, Rank and Co. sent the first draft of David Lean's interpretation to Joseph Breen, head of the Production Code office, in May, 1947, approximately the same time that *Crossfire* and *Gentleman's Agreement* were in production. Breen's response reflected the new, post-war tolerance attitude.

We assume, of course, that you will bear in mind the advisability of omitting from the portrayal of Fagin any elements or inferences that would be offensive to any specific racial group or religion. Otherwise, of course, your picture might meet with very definite audience

resistance in this country.<sup>427</sup>

On July 9, 1947, there were hundreds of protests from Jewish groups opposing a Hungarian production titled *The Trial*. The story depicted factual events just prior to World War I when a mysterious killing in Hungary led to a ritual murder legend and a public trial. Jews pointed out that "the time (directly after the Holocaust) isn't ripe for such plays."<sup>428</sup> Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* (1940) had been banned in Europe, as the "situation in Europe [was] still too serious to be laughed at."<sup>429</sup>

**POST-RELEASE REACTIONS TO OLIVER TWIST**

American Jews were outraged by Guinness' performance. They claimed Guinness' Fagin was "a gross and dirty stage Jew, with a hook nose, black teeth, long, ratty hair and a foreign accent."<sup>430</sup> Guinness' decision to wear the broad-brimmed hat and long caftan which typified the dress of Central European Jews further reinforces the viewer's understanding that Fagin is unmistakably Jewish.

Alec Guinness' Fagin evokes every conceivable anti-Jewish stereotype. Fagin, the symbol of The Devil, lived in the darkness of the Underworld. He was the master of a slave army of orphaned Christian boys whom he instructed in evil. He was a fence, a usurer and a miser. He was a physical coward. He slithered as he walked, creating the image of the Jew as a reptile, the snake who tempted Eve, the incarnation of Satan. He was secretive in his living habits, invoking the image of a secret world parliament of Jews. His relationship with Christians was servile. For physical signposts, he had an outlandish nose, a long, unkempt beard and presumably red hair, an unpleasant odor and a speech impediment.<sup>431</sup>

Dodger encounters Oliver and escorts him to Fagin's underground lair, evoking stereotypes of the Devil. Dodger presents Fagin with a strand of pearls he has just stolen, indicating to the audience that Fagin is a fence. Fagin gleefully shows Oliver how to pick a pocket (See Appendix #E).

He hoards his treasures in a hidden box, and turning to Oliver says, "They call me a miser," a classic pejorative Jewish stereotype.

When Bill Sykes comes to see Fagin, he greets him with, "Ill-treating the boys again, you avaricious old fence?" After Oliver is kidnapped from Mr. Brownlow by Nancy and returned to Fagin, he begins to beat the boy. "You thief! You liar!" she exhorts Fagin. The scene is dark and foreboding. Fagin looks hateful and sinister, the antithesis of Mr. Brownlow, the impeccable British gentleman. His accent further reinforces his alienness.

Later, in the bar, Fagin meets Bill, whose dog begins to bark madly. Bill, turning to Nancy, says, "Now, now, don't you know the Devil when you see him?" Fagin and Bill make plans to murder the boy, as they are terrified that he will expose them. Fagin says, "It's cold," and Bill replies, "It must be a piercing one to go through your heart." The implication is that Fagin is unmistakably the Devil.

After Bill strangles Nancy, Mr. Brownlow goes to the police who print "Wanted" posters for Bill and Fagin. The text of Fagin's poster says, "Wanted for abduction, a receiver of stolen goods known as Fagin," again, evoking ancient stereotypes of Jews as thieves and abductors of Christian boys.

Director Lean was astonished. "When the film came out, I didn't know what hit me. I was accused of being anti-

Semitic. I wasn't anti-Semitic. I was just doing a Jewish villain," he said."<sup>432</sup>

Variety reported on September 1, 1947, that it was Neame and Lean who had given Fagin the long, scraggly beard and hooked nose.

By coincidence only, it is said, that very character was widely used by the Nazis in their films and treatises of hate produced under Adolph Hitler...Neame and Lean saw no reason to change Fagin's appearance since all the other parts, including renegade Britishers, were identical with Cruikshank's drawings.<sup>433</sup>

Breen's predictions to Rank had proved prescient. On Sept. 7, 1948, three months after the film's release in England, the New York Board of Rabbis (NYBR) formally protested Guinness' portrayal of Fagin. They asked Motion Picture Association president Eric Johnston to do "everything possible" to keep *Oliver Twist* out of the U.S., as it was "a vehicle for blatant antisemitism."<sup>434</sup> Rabbi Theodore N. Lewis, NYBR president, said,

The movie industry in this country bears too great a social responsibility to put dollars before the peoples' welfare...No American would patronize any endeavor that strikes a blow at the entire structure of Americanism.<sup>435</sup>

The next day, September 8, 1948, representatives of the ADL were shown a private screening of the film. ADL was told, "It is understood that Neame and Lean went ahead on their portrayal of Fagin against the advice of J. Arthur Rank."<sup>436</sup>

The [Jewish] Joint Public Relations Committee of Canada

condemned the film, describing Guinness' portrayal of Fagin as "a product of Nazi Germany with the Streicher trademark."<sup>437</sup> The Toronto Globe and Mail declared,

While the producers point out that Fagin is not necessarily a Jew and that the makeup is accidentally Jewish in appearance, they have not explained certain little Jewish hand mannerisms or the use of a particular type of flat hat that Fagin uses and which is strictly a period piece of Jewish headgear.<sup>438</sup>

On February 21, 1949, the London Times reported that Jews in Berlin staged a demonstration in the British sector to prevent the film from being shown.<sup>439</sup> The U.S. Civilian Army Chief of the Army Motion Pictures branch declared, "Oliver Twist will not be shown in the American sector [of Berlin]."<sup>440</sup> In America, the ADL issued a public statement,

The picture, dramatically fine as it may be, portrays Fagin as a grotesque caricature of a Jew...Fagin in the movie is the stereotype [based on Cruikshank's drawings] which Julius Streicher [in his newspaper Der Sturmer] and the Nazis tried to impose on the world. (See Appendix #C.) It is our conviction that this picture may do serious harm. This is all the more unfortunate because obviously the Rank organization did not intend to stimulate bigotry.<sup>441</sup>

ADL concluded, "Alec Guinness was all too successful an incarnation of Cruikshank's loathsome drawings and Streicher's hateful latter-day imitations."<sup>442</sup>

After viewing the film, New York Star columnist Albert Deutsch charged, "Even Dickens...could not make Fagin half so horrible."<sup>443</sup> It seemed that in Fagin's case, Lean actually followed Cruikshank more closely than Dickens.<sup>444</sup>



Although Dickens refers to Fagin some 300 times in the novel as "The Jew," Fagin's religious origin is not identified in the film. The assumption was that such information was common knowledge.<sup>445</sup> According to Time, Oct. 4, 1948, Guinness was "faithfully villainous and repulsive, and unmistakably a Jew." The Canadian Forum said,

It is no accident that the scene we remember best...is Fagin's instruction of the boys in the art of pocket-picking; his lisp, vulture's sweep, his evil gentleness...This whole sequence has something medieval about it.<sup>446</sup> (See Appendix #E).

Saturday Review, articulating America's post-war perspective on tolerance, stated,

The effect of this (*Oliver Twist*) is to intensify majority versus minority issues at a time when every attempt must be made to strengthen and dramatize the common-ground aspects of our society.<sup>447</sup>

In Australia, Rabbi Sanger of Melbourne, echoing American post-war tolerance attitudes, criticized stage performances of Fagin and Shylock in general.

When you think of the Jew, you think of him as the classmate who you knew, or as the man who fought beside you in the army, the navy or the air force, and you think of him as a comrade.<sup>448</sup>

The Independent Film Journal deemed *Oliver Twist*

"A Black Eye for Brotherhood," [as] Fagin is a faithful reproduction of the Cruikshank drawings which [were] used so extensively by Hitler in fanning religious hatred and creating his stereotype of the Jew...The picture breeds hate and should not be shown.<sup>449</sup>

### THE CONTINUING DISPUTE OVER *OLIVER TWIST*

The controversy surrounding *Oliver Twist* became amplified as civil libertarians denounced criticism of the film as a violation of First Amendment rights.<sup>450</sup> In April, 1950, "Democracy's Dilemma" was the cover story of The ADL Bulletin.

Censorship? Was the publicly expressed opinion that the movie had a harmful potential, in and of itself, an exercise in censorship? Here is the principle of free speech clashing with itself. Untrammelled freedom undoubtedly includes the right of the producer to exhibit his product. The same untrammelled freedom clearly guarantees the right of anyone to express his opinion--even though a direct result of that opinion may be the refusal of theatres to exhibit *Oliver Twist*...Unfettered license to say and do as one pleases does not limit the right of others to condemn what is said.<sup>451</sup>

Rank and his advisors preferred to withdraw the film rather than risk a potential international incident. In contrast, Rank's distributor, Eagle Lion Company, pressed the MPAA to overturn Joseph Breen's censorship ruling. After re-examining the film, Breen told ELC,

Merely cutting will not do...By the careful elimination of certain photography dealing with Fagin, the gross offense of the film may be materially lessened. You may resubmit the film after you cut it.<sup>452</sup>

Breen's proposed cuts totalled over 800 feet of celluloid.

Lean was devastated. "You've cut all the humor. In fact, you've made it antisemitic."<sup>453</sup> He pleaded for the restoration of the scenes, feeling that the cuts would yield a plain villain, rather than a "humorous old villain."<sup>454</sup> He

expressed concern that once audiences knew of the deletions, they would imagine that the cuts contained "unspeakable antisemitic propaqanda, [and the thought] of such unfounded assumptions gravely disturbs me."<sup>455</sup>

Lean then offered to add a new scene in which a respectable member of the Jewish community would offer to help the police hunt for Fagin, feeling that this would dramatize the notion that Fagin was an aberrant member of the legitimate Jewish community.<sup>456</sup> This scene never materialized.

The revised *Oliver Twist* was approved by the MPAA board for a Production Code seal on February 21, 1951, two years and eight months after the London premier. The decision was not unanimous. Although liberals were jubilant, as late as May, 1951, Motion Picture Herald indicated that the Cruikshank modeling was "a serious error," and Guinness' emphasis on appearance had created a caricature "in highly questionable taste," which would prove "offensive to any person of discernment."<sup>457</sup> The film played sporadically throughout the U.S. and a few months later, faded quietly into obscurity.

Lean's defense of the film was that it could only be objectionable to the extent that the novel was objectionable. Yet, he established from the very beginning that his screen images were selectively chosen.<sup>458</sup>

By pleading fidelity to the written text, Lean unconsciously perpetuated the antiquated and obscene British "stage Jew" stereotype. ADL asserted, "Absence of malice

neither excuses nor mitigates the destructive consequences of stereotyping."<sup>459</sup>

One would be hard-pressed to find a group more dedicated to fighting censorship than the Jews.<sup>460</sup> Or more devoted to conscious liberal ideals of tolerance for all peoples. By protesting the use of a stereotype, do we inhibit freedom of speech, or is it, rather, a desire to tell the truth? And does the right to defend oneself against another's truth of bigotry, hate and prejudice preclude the other's right to express that same bigotry, hate and prejudice?

The implications of the misadventures of *Oliver Twist* are not exclusively the invalidity of invoking Jewish stereotypes. The question becomes, rather, what effects do stereotypes of any kind have on a person's capacity to perceive reality and to act morally in the world in which s/he lives?<sup>461</sup> In post-war America, every avenue of social discourse was dedicated to breaking down the barriers of prejudice and erecting in their place a society which guaranteed equality and justice for all. The *Oliver Twist* case clearly upholds conscious liberal post-war attitudes, while at the same time, maintaining the first amendment. Yes, to the civil libertarians. Alec Guinness certainly is within his rights to play his adaptation of Fagin. And, no. This caricature was inconsistent with the new conscious liberalism generated by the war. Having scientifically established that films did have the capacity to influence audience attitudes and behaviors, allowing *Oliver*

*Twist* to play in the U.S. as just another conventional film adaptation of the novel, would have been completely contradictory to the post-war tolerance attitudes. *Oliver Twist* affirms American public opinion after the war: There is no place for bigotry here.

**CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSIONS: RELATIVE TRUTHS, HISTORICAL AND  
SOCIAL REALITIES AND THE PERSISTENCE OF ANTISEMITISM**

**CONSCIOUS LIBERALISM'S IMMEDIATE LEGACY**

**The destruction of a prejudice, though painful at first because of its connection with our self-respect, gives an immense feeling of pride when it is successfully done.**

**Walter Lippmann (Public Opinion)**

Less than one week after the Japanese surrender on Sept. 2, 1945, and during the height of American antisemitism, Bess Meyerson, the daughter of immigrant Jewish parents, was crowned Miss America. For Jews, she became the symbol of the promise of the American Dream, as well as their collective victory over bigotry.<sup>462</sup> On September 30, 1945, Hank Greenberg, the first major league Jewish baseball star, hit a ninth inning grand-slam and won the American league pennant for the Detroit Tigers. Greenberg served in the U.S. military for 49 months and came out a hero. Americans admired him for sacrificing his baseball career to serve his country. Jews pointed to Greenberg as proof that they did not shirk their military obligations.<sup>463</sup> In 1940, he was the first major league player to enlist in the army, pleading with the Armed Forces to take him, despite the fact that he was over-age and was not obligated to go to war.

For the first time, Jews had successfully crossed over from ethnic favorites to national heroes without

being isolated or absorbed; they had arrived without being assimilated or stereotyped.<sup>464</sup>

In December, 1946, President Truman established the Commission on Civil Rights, signalling a new era in race relations in this country. On April 15, 1947, Jackie Robinson, the first African-American to cross major league baseball's color line, stepped out onto the field for the Brooklyn Dodgers. The President's Commission on Higher Education was also instituted at this time.

Pressured by local and state governments and by the courts, universities began to repeal quotas for Jewish students, corporations began to increase their hiring of Jewish employees and previously restricted neighborhoods began to open their borders to Jews.<sup>465</sup> In May, 1948, the Supreme Court ruled 6-0 that the powers of neither state nor federal courts could be invoked to enforce restrictive real estate covenants limiting the sale or occupancy of houses on the basis of race or religion.

By executive order, Truman declared discrimination in employment by government agencies unlawful.<sup>466</sup> By 1949, seven states had banned employment discrimination. A Congressional bill was introduced calling for antisemitism to be considered a crime.<sup>467</sup> National, state and city Human Relations Councils began to form, and the national media began to focus on human relations problems as they sensed the public interest.<sup>468</sup> And novels about Jewish issues, written by

Jewish novelists, including the best selling Gentleman's Agreement, were being read by everyone.



**WHY OLIVER TWIST FAILED**

It came as no surprise that some members of the organized Jewish community were apprehensive about openly confronting antisemitism. Although properly labelled as "un-American," the incontrovertible historical fact was that America "ha[d] betrayed its ideals [toward Jews] innumerable times."<sup>469</sup> After the war, conscious liberal attitudes had inspired Americans to finally "Love thy neighbor as thyself," but Jews had discovered that one could simply eliminate the neighbor and the world would make no protest.<sup>470</sup> In addition, the world war and its attendant consequence, the Holocaust, had placed a contemporary burden on the Jews of America. Like it or not, they were now responsible for safeguarding the security of Jews world-wide, making sure that the horrors of Europe were not repeated in the U.S. or anywhere else.

Sociologist Herbert Gans states that changes in film content can be traced to changes in the audience, and these content changes are ultimately to be seen as responses to transformations in society.<sup>471</sup> But, with antisemitic attitudes possibly at an all-time high in 1946, from the Jewish perspective, it seemed dangerously inopportune to publicly call attention to it, especially through the powerful medium of the motion picture.

But timing is everything in life, and *Oliver Twist* becomes a classic case in point. In reporting on the Berlin

riot which ensued in 1949 as distributors attempted to show *Oliver Twist*, Life magazine proposed that Fagin's caricature in Dickens' and Cruikshank's era, had seemed an unimportant literary matter. However, the article stated, "Between Charles Dickens and David Lean, history had interposed the ghosts of six million murdered Jews and the specter of genocide."<sup>472</sup> There had been dozens of benign Jewish filmic stereotypes pervasive throughout film history: The Jewish Father and the Jewish Mother, the Prodigal Son and the Beautiful Daughter, the Yiddisher Cowboy, the saintly Rabbi.<sup>473</sup> It had been common practice until the 1940s to hire gentile actors to play the Jewish roles, so sensitive were Jews to the idea of an all-pervasive Jewish stereotype.<sup>474</sup> To empower a "Jew-Villain" in such close historical proximity to the Holocaust is unfathomable from the American post-war perspective. Questioning the logic and judgment of bringing Guinness' Fagin to the screen at this time was consistent with not only Jewish attitudes, but societal attitudes of conscious liberalism in general.<sup>475</sup> The British filmmakers, it seemed, had approached their project with "commendable artistic fervor, not matched by an equal understanding of the human relations realities of the 20th century."<sup>476</sup> Lean's *Oliver Twist* verifies, "The truth in many instances is of comparative value."<sup>477</sup>

French sociologist Michel Foucault remarks, "Social discourse is never a purely self-contained discourse that

could work in ignorance or disdain of changes in reality."<sup>478</sup> Studies of the adaptation of novels into film must focus on the question of whether or not significant cultural and ideological shifts have occurred when a novel, written in a specific historical period, is transposed into a modern film.<sup>479</sup> This was unquestionably the predicament which David Lean faced. The artist does not create in a cultural vacuum. Championing conscious liberalism after the war became everyone's patriotic obligation, regardless of what form it took. This raises further important questions concerning whether or not the artist is socially and morally free to create art for its own sake. In post-war America, the answer was "No." Lean's thinking of Fagin as a "humorous old villain" reinforces centuries of latent British antisemitism, stemming from the deprecative stage-Jew tradition. Seen through American eyes, Lean's complicity in sanctioning Guinness' portrayal of Fagin signified his abdication of intrinsic moral responsibilities to society and to history.

It is historically intriguing that Dore Schary moved to MGM in late 1948 to produce *Ivanhoe*. The Jewish Isaac of York is the third major stereotypical Jewish character in English fiction. Despite the liberties which were taken with the original text, the British turned out in great numbers, making *Ivanhoe* the top grossing film in London since 1929.<sup>480</sup> According to Erens, "Isaac emerged as a British Chaim Solomon who made it possible for Richard the Lionhearted to free

England from the feudal Norman yoke."<sup>481</sup> The first axiom of persuasion is to know your audience. Schary understood the motion picture's tremendous influence on its audience. Lean, creating in an artistic void, indisputably, failed to understand this premise.

**CONSCIOUS LIBERALISM AND ANTISEMITIC STEREOTYPES IN  
CROSSFIRE AND GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT**

One of the outcomes of the war was that it had helped to forge an extraordinary new ethnic type, the American Jew. This Jew, imbued with all the rights and privileges of American democracy, was an equal partner in the creation of a distinctive American liberal ideology.<sup>482</sup> A new war was being waged in America, to win the battle of citizens' rights for all Americans. The war against antisemitism became a symbol of the struggle for the principles of democracy.<sup>483</sup> In Hollywood, two gentiles, Adrian Scott and Darryl F. Zanuck, pushed this new, American Jew onto the forefront of the national democratic post-war agenda by exposing lingering social problems which stood in conflict with the new attitudes of conscious liberalism. Antisemitism simply had no place in the popular post-war agenda.

Sammy Samuels is murdered in *Crossfire* because he is a Jew. He has done nothing except exist, and it is his very existence which Sgt. Montgomery hates. Samuels' character is the personification of the Jew-as-Innocent Victim. Monty calls Samuels a "stinking Jew." "No stinking Jew is going to tell me how to drink his liquor." Baseless hatred of Jews had been ongoing for almost 3,500 years before *Crossfire*. Montgomery was its latest historical manifestation. The simple Leroy, too, realizes that Jews are just like everybody else.

Although he is torn about informing on his buddy, he realizes that Monty is a bigot and that bigotry is wrong. Again, the filmmakers emphasized the post-war tolerance message.

Samuels had an obviously gentile girlfriend, invoking the stereotype of Jewish men out to seduce Christian women. Montgomery makes derogatory comments about money in connection with Samuels, recalling antisemitic stereotypes about Jews being greedy and miserly.

Montgomery alludes to the antisemitic notion that Jews were draft dodgers, cowards who were not loyal to the U.S. This myth is dispelled as Capt. Finley calls for Samuels' war record to be found, and the audience sees that he served America bravely during the war, receiving an honorable discharge. Keeley also supports this position in his speech about his Jewish buddy who died fighting to keep democracy alive.

In the film's longest speech, Capt. Finley establishes the basic tenets of conscious liberalism, as he tells the story of his own Irish grandfather's death at the hands of a drunken mob. "Just because he was different. There's no place for that in America now." Having the soliloquy delivered by one of Hollywood's standard bearers of the American way of life, Robert Young, makes the message even more powerful. In the end, Finley shoots and kills Monty, while begging him to stop. But Monty can't stop. Irrational hatred is too enormous to be contained. *Crossfire's* point is

that prejudice of any kind is wrong. The film's final message is: There is only one way to stamp out bigotry. It must be completely eradicated. Its existence is irreconcilable with tolerance attitudes in the post-war era.

*Gentleman's Agreement* touches on the full spectrum of social antisemitism, while at the same time, affirming the sameness of Jews with all other Americans. As Phil contemplates being Jewish, he looks into the mirror, and, thinking of his Jewish friend Dave, says, "Dark hair. Dark eyes. Sure. So's Dave. No accent. No mannerisms. Neither has Dave." The viewer is alerted early in the film that its message is: The Age of Bigotry is over. We are all the same in America. There are no differences between Jews and Christians.

Phil experiences the scathing effects of the mere mention of the word "Jew," as he discovers that people treat him one way when they assume he is a gentile, and change their attitudes diametrically when they believe him to be Jewish. As Phil has not changed, he concludes that antisemitism is also a matter of naming. Again, the film echoes the wartime cry: Underneath it all, we are all alike.<sup>484</sup> This is the crux of Sartre's thesis. It is the antisemite who defines the Jew. Without prejudice, the matter of one's religious identity is a matter of indifference in a democratic ideology.

Phil comes face to face with every socially discriminatory prejudice against Jews: employment hiring

practices, restrictive housing covenants, resorts which are off-limits, slander against Jews in the medical profession and in the army, bigoted insults, baseless hatred and Jewish self-hatred. When Phil suggests a Jewish doctor to the society physician Kathy has recommended for Ma, the doctor tells Phil to watch out for what he'll charge; it's those Jews, you know. Here is the age-old stereotype of Jews as misers and thieves. Angrily, Phil rushes to his mailbox, crosses out "Green," and writes in "Greenberg." The janitor begs him not to do it, informing him that this apartment building is off limits to Jews. When Phil replies that he has signed a lease, the response is that it won't matter. This is the concept of Jews-as-Outsiders.

At Flume Inn, the would-be honeymoon hotel for he and Kathy, Phil discovers that it is understood that Jews are not welcome. Although he cannot coerce the manager into explicitly stating it, the fact is implicit in the manager's tone of voice. Phil produces a voucher for a reservation, but then declares his Jewishness; he is ushered out of the hotel. Again, the old stereotype of White Anglo-Saxon supremacy surfaces. Jews-as-Aliens are not welcome nor can they be a part of gentile society. Kathy, espousing the wartime tolerance message, exclaims, "They're (the Flume Inn management) persistent little traitors to everything this country stands for."

The most crushing blow comes when Tommy, Phil's son, is



beaten and insulted by the neighborhood boys who pelt him with epithets learned from their own parents. They have no reason to hate Tommy, except, of course, that he (they think) is Jewish. Tommy tells Phil, "They yelled at me and said 'Your father has a long, dirty beard.'" Here is the stereotypical physical image of the foreign Jew, the un-American image. And again, we see the Jew-as-Innocent Victim. Phil comes face to face with the guts of the problem: People hate Jews because they are Jews. Baseless hatred of Jews is the oldest of all anti-Jewish prejudices and the core of all the others.

Miss Wales, Phil's secretary, represents job discrimination toward Jews. She writes two letters of application to the magazine, signing one with her real name, Walovsky, and the other as Wales. She bitterly recounts the story to Phil, exclaiming, "Guess which one got the job?" She typifies the "self-hating Jew." Discriminated against because of her Jewishness, she turns against Judaism, wondering why anybody would want to acknowledge the fact of his/her birth as a Jew.

Prof. Liebermann is the intellectual's response to antisemitism. He speaks with a foreign accent and is a psychiatrist, a distinctly Jewish profession. He denies Judaism as a race, "since there is no such thing as a distinctively Jewish race." And since he subscribes to no religious beliefs of any kind, stating that he is a rationalist, he concludes, "So, I am not Jewish by religion."

Liebermann is Sartre's answer to why antisemitism exists. Jews are Jews because the antisemites of the world declare them to be. The Jews still cling to Judaism because the world insists that it is a disadvantage. For Liebermann, it is a matter of pride. It is the ultimate Jewish revenge: We will continue to exist so that you (the gentile) will be bothered by us.

Dave Goldman bursts into the film as Phil's childhood friend, exactly the same as Phil, only Dave is Jewish. Dave is in uniform, dispelling the antisemitic conviction that Jews were draft dodgers and cowards. He insists that he has become insulated to antisemitism through a lifetime of antisemitic incidents, but in a conversation with Phil and Kathy, it slips out that his kids "had their hearts broken about going away to camp with their bunch, but they'll get over it." Grown-up resorts weren't the only vacation spots closed to Jews. The discrimination extended to their children, too.

Seeing Dave in uniform with Phil and Kathy in a restaurant, a drunk slobbers insults about disliking army officers, adding, "Especially if they're yids." Instinctively, Dave leaps to his feet and grabs him. As in *Crossfire*, this attack against Jews is intertwined within a context of being un-American.<sup>485</sup> Again, this scene reveals to the audience that baseless hatred of Jews is unacceptable in the post-war era. The film has been criticized for touting the message that there is nothing distinctive about being Jewish, but this

scene suggests that although we are all the same, the matter of one's Jewishness is not so easily lost. Yet, Dave, again, advocating the post-war tolerance message states, "It's the whole thing, not just the poor, poor Jews." And this is also the film's purpose, to drive home the point that in post-war America bigotry of any kind is unacceptable.

Dave is decent, honest and a patriot. That he happens also to be Jewish makes him a target for Kathy's antisemitic sister and her snobby friends. Dave may have to give up his job because no one will sell him a house. Here the film focuses on the restrictive housing covenant issue. Kathy, with Dave's gentle help, finally understands social antisemitism for what it really is, undemocratic and un-American. This leads directly to her renting Dave and his family her cottage in the middle of WASPy Connecticut and vowing to fight anyone who stands in his way.

Minify, Phil's boss at the magazine, is overjoyed with his expose, and everyone in the office congratulates him, shocked by the revelation that he, in fact, is not Jewish. Prior to the story, Irving Wiseman, a major investor at Smith's Weekly who is also Jewish, begs Minify not to do the article, saying, "We'll handle it in our own way, like we always do." Wiseman's character is not in the novel and was Zanuck's personal contribution to the script, a direct response to the AJC representatives who attempted to pressure him into dropping *Gentleman's Agreement*, fearing an

antisemitic backlash. Minify's reponse to Wiseman is the film's pro-tolerance theme. "You'll handle it in your own way? You mean the 'Hush, hush way?' There isn't anything bigger than beating down the complacency or ordinary, decent people about prejudice." Phil discovers that it's the good, nice people, the "Kathies," who are responsible for perpetuating bigotry, and his story, "I was Jewish for Eight Weeks," drives home the wartime tolerance message: Antisemitism is totally and completely unacceptable in a democratic society and fighting it is everybody's battle. Dereliction in fighting prejudice is a failure to defend the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, both of which America had just battled so hard to preserve. Prejudice, in the post-war era, had no place in the American democracy.

Kathy, the film's heroine, is the metaphor for the ultimate triumph of conscious liberalism. Kathy knows that antisemitism exists and feels that it is wrong, but she is afraid and unwilling to do anything about it. "Why can't you just let it alone?" she screams at Phil, "They always make trouble for everybody, even their friends." Kathy is a victim of socially sanctioned bigotry. She doesn't hate Jews, but their presence is a source of consternation. When she meets Dave, after she and Phil have had a seemingly irreconcilable argument about this very subject, she recounts her horror to Dave of being at a dinner table with an antisemite. Dave gently prods her, "What did you do about it, Kathy?" She

tells him that she hated him and all his awful friends. "Yes," Dave continues, "we all hate them. But what did you do about it?" Gradually, Kathy comes to understand that the fight against antisemitism is everybody's war. And it must be fought in hand-to-hand combat, at the dinner tables, bridge tables and in the living rooms throughout America. Kathy discovers that acknowledging antisemitism isn't ever going to make it go away. She begins to understand that good, decent Americans must fight, as Kathy says, "This thing." Antisemitism has become a "thing", something detestable. This is the essence of the film and the definitive victory of conscious liberalism. Antisemitism isn't just Dave's fight. It is un-American, and it is everybody's patriotic duty to eradicate it from our shores.

Ma's final message, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if this were everybody's century?" is conscious liberalism's forthright proclamation of equality, fairness and tolerance for all Americans.

## SCIENTIFIC CONCLUSIONS

For the most part, we do not first see and then define, we define and then see. In the great, blooming buzzing confusion of the outer world, we pick out what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture.

Walter Lippmann in Public Opinion

Scientific investigations concerning the psychological and social influences of film had been explored since the beginning of the Sound Era. The Payne Fund Studies of the 1930s revealed that movies did have a great impact on morality, social behavior and attitudes, particularly on children.<sup>486</sup> The Palache Report from England in the early '40s confirmed, "Already the screen has great influence, both politically and culturally, over the minds of the people."<sup>487</sup>

June Blythe, the director of the American Council on Race Relations published "Can Race Relations Help Reduce Prejudice?" in the fall of 1947, concurrent to the release of both *Crossfire* and *Gentleman's Agreement*. The Committee found that attitudes and behaviors are influenced, "if not determined," by prejudices which have become part of our way of life.<sup>488</sup> This, the committee said, subverts the concept of a full democracy.<sup>489</sup> Quoting from the results of a 1944 study of racial conflicts conducted by the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis, she states, "To our own society or culture the most significant and self-evident fact about race prejudice is that it is socially sanctioned and learned."<sup>490</sup>

Prejudice is functional, and it serves a purpose, however irrational, in the common need we feel to justify our own behavior.<sup>491</sup>

In 1949, the Opinion Research Center at the University of Denver published the results of a survey commissioned by the ADL to determine stereotypes about Jews. The researchers found that

Two constellations of stereotypes bulk large: the socioeconomic, involving money, business ethics, exploitation and parasitism, echoing the primary image of Jews by Christians since the Middle Ages; and the sociopsychological, which is the response of gentile society to the Jews since 18th century emancipation. Jews then discovered that the existence of rights did not automatically make possible the full exercise thereof. Gentiles, guilty of failure to abide by its constitutional code, displace their guilt feelings by creating rationalizations, stereotypes, designed to exculpate it.<sup>492</sup>

The repercussions were that the presence of stereotypes does bear a positive relationship to antisemitism, and that the image of the Jews is determined by the value systems of various socioeconomic groups, by their sociopsychological patterns and by their level of educational attainment.<sup>493</sup>

The Council on Race Relations' conclusion is important because it provides an antidote to the chronic persistence of antisemitic attitudes. It is not the number of contacts with members of a minority, including Jews, that is important, they deduced. It is the intimacy and equality of contact that can cause a marked decrease in prejudice and that "organized, purposive effort can exert an appreciable degree of control

over behavior in inter-group relations."<sup>494</sup> The groundbreaking point was: Although antisemitic attitudes and behaviors are learned socially, they can be overcome.



**THE POST-WAR SOCIAL REALITY**

Instead of the usual, "Why can't we make movies more like real life," I think a more pertinent question is "Why can't real life be more like the movies?"  
War correspondent Ernie Pyle in Film and Society

Jews profited from the prevailing liberal consensus of the post-war years by gaining institutional, corporate, federal and state action against discrimination.<sup>495</sup> The major Jewish defense organizations, the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League, pushed for an end to educational and employment discrimination, to sensitize public consciousness about stereotypes and negative images and to combat antisemitic political movements and demagoguery.<sup>496</sup>

In spite of scientific results, the researchers confirmed that social practices lag behind public attitudes.<sup>497</sup> Dennis Wrong, Professor of Sociology at New York University, verifies that the survey data "may prove merely that antisemitic utterances are no longer respectable, but not that underlying attitudes relevant to conduct have changed," as contradictions between expressed attitudes and actual behavior seem undeniable.<sup>498</sup> *Crossfire* and *Gentleman's Agreement* mirror this assumption, affirming that public opinion and social practices may be completely contradictory. *Oliver Twist* confirms it.

Echoing this posture, historical sociology professor Ben Halpern states,

All poll findings must be considered in terms of the respondents' willingness or unwillingness to reveal their antisemitic attitudes...We must conclude that the striking changes shown in the poll findings register not necessarily the prevalence of antisemitism, but perhaps only its respectability, as it may have been affected by the historical events [the war] of the period.<sup>499</sup>

Yet, in 1946, a majority of Americans polled felt that Jewish power and influence in America was too great. They refused to sell homes in their neighborhoods to Jews, hire them in their businesses, enroll them in their colleges, admit them as members to their clubs, allow them entrance to their vacation resorts, or permit them to marry their children. Only the assumption that anti-Jewish feeling was inherent in society could explain why the belief in Jews-as-a-threat remained at such an astonishingly high level.<sup>500</sup>

Historian David S. Gerber resolves,

While the attitude sampling and personality testing and evaluations offered pathbreaking insights into the social and psychological correlates of intolerant beliefs in the individual, they could not connect individual consciousness with daily social relations or with the movement of history.<sup>501</sup>

Columbia University sociologist Thomas Odea affirmed,

We do not doubt that the polls accurately reflect the expressed attitudes of the moment. We question, rather, whether survey responses can be accepted as evidence of a deeper sentiment when they deal with a phenomenon of the psychological depth and historic longevity of antisemitism.<sup>502</sup>

Contemporary social researcher Gary A. Tobin also says that poll data do not reflect the discrepancy between attitude

and behavior.

Attitudes cannot always be equated with behavior. The measurement of antisemitism in the polls consistently probes how non-Jews think or feel about Jews. They rarely ask questions about how non-Jews behave toward Jews. Survey data form a picture of how non-Jews say they feel, not what they do.<sup>503</sup>

These latent behaviors were inconsistent with post-war conscious liberalism. Contemporary Jewish film historian Alan Spiegel, echoing Sartre, extrapolates,

In both *Crossfire* and *Gentleman's Agreement*, in place of the figure who was a Jew because he had a Jewish name stood a figure who was a Jew because an antisemite defined him as such; the Jew was forced to declare his Jewishness but only by means of prejudicial insistence, the presumption being that without bigotry, the issue, as well as the fact of one's Jewishness, need never arise.<sup>504</sup>

Thomas Pettigrew, professor of social psychology at Harvard, explains,

It is commonly held that attitudes must change before behavior does, yet recent advances in social psychology point conclusively to the opposite order of events. Behavior changes first because of new laws or other institutional interventions. After the fact, individuals modify their ideas to fit their new actions, often proving amazingly adaptable in doing so.<sup>505</sup>

This was precisely the motivation behind the social conscious film genre. Liberal ideology maintains that "social problems are more like sores which will fester unless attended to."<sup>506</sup>

Identifying them is but the first stage in the

treatment program which consists of some kind of social action. It follows that the social conscious movie... forms a part of the liberal branch of bourgeois ideology...Within the genre, the liberal purpose of focusing attention on a social problem in order to provoke corrective action remains uppermost.<sup>507</sup>

Echoing public opinion, Hollywood picked up the cause from the social scientists' world of research and placed it squarely into the epicenter of the world of social reality. American antisemitism had erupted onto the big screen. Hollywood's message: Bigotry is unconditionally incompatible with the new conscious liberal attitudes of equality, fairness and tolerance. Having just sacrificed millions of lives on the altar of democratic ideology, it was now time to test the hard-won victory at home. The motion picture industry was betting that America was up to the challenge.

## HISTORY'S DIALECTIC

*Crossfire* opened in July, 1947 and was still playing when *Gentleman's Agreement* premiered that same fall. With perfect and unerring Hegelian timing, the fateful House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) convened full-scale public hearings in November, 1947, to uncover the perpetrators of an alleged communist takeover of the U.S. by that predominantly Jewish industry, Hollywood. Both *Crossfire's* director, Edward Dmytryk, and its producer, Adrian Scott, were summoned before the Committee as part of the infamous Hollywood Ten. Although they were not Jewish, Scott maintained, "It was no coincidence," since *Crossfire* was Hollywood's first open attack on antisemitism.<sup>508</sup> The Congressional brief on the debate of their contempt citations shows that a majority of congressmen believed they were "clearly members of the 'international communist conspiracy.'"<sup>509</sup>

Thanks to the Nativists, Charles Lindbergh, Henry Ford and Father Coughlin, the time-honored stereotype of an international Jewish conspiracy continued to thrive in post-war 20th Century America. That, coupled with the actual fact that Jews, traditionally in the forefront of social action, had belonged to the Bund in Europe and to communist groups in Russia, was just enough to deduce after the war, when fear of the undemocratic and totalitarian Soviet ideology was rampant, that the Jewish communists were plotting to overthrow the U.S.

government. Modern-day bigots had found a new focus for their hatred of Jews--Hollywood.

This historically consistent anti-Jewish stereotyping further reinforces the belief that 1947 was unique in the annals of American film, as well as society in general. In 1947, Hollywood valiantly strove for the first time to present Jewish issues to the American public as they really existed, not as a sanitized or sentimentalized version of the truth. The swift result of Hollywood's candor in exposing socially problematic issues was the forced cessation of its involvement with controversial social issues of any kind. This caused irreparable damage, as many Hollywood liberals, the majority of whom were Jews, suddenly found themselves *blacklisted*, their careers abruptly over.<sup>510</sup> Abiding American antisemitism became liberated by the menacing Cold War. Conscious liberalism, spawned by the World War II, had not defeated antisemitism. It had only momentarily restrained it.

**JEWISH PERCEPTIONS OF POST-WAR ANTISEMITISM**

**Jewish history does not consist of a sequence of objective events, but a sequence of essential attitudes towards such events, and these attitudes are the product of collective memory.**

**20th Century Jewish philosopher Martin Buber**

According to Halpern, the poll findings compiled by the American Jewish Committee after the war conclude,

To take for granted that the observed improvements of attitudes will continue would be reckless as well as presumptuous, for throughout the long history of the Jews, periods of acceptance and security have alternated with periods of rejection and oppression. But we may confidently state that the current trend toward more and more complete acceptance of the Jew--both individually and in the abstract--appears unlikely to be reversed by anything short of a catastrophic crisis in American society. The longer such a crisis is averted, the more firmly will recognition of the Jews as equal and respected fellow citizens become more grounded in the mores of the American people.<sup>511</sup>

This attitude was reaffirmed in 1990 by Liebman and Cogen who stated,

The conceptions of the Jew as distinct from the non-Jew and of the reality of antisemitism have been eroded... The traditional images of Jews and gentiles are not as powerful as they once were, nor are they compatible with America's integrationist and pluralist ethos.<sup>512</sup>

Yet, Tobin feels,

We cannot interpret the fact that some items on a scale have declined to mean that antisemitism is on the wane [completely]. If anything, the true level of antisemitic beliefs may seriously underrepresent the true feelings of a more sophisticated population that knows it

is wrong to say that Jews are "too pushy."<sup>513</sup>

This reiterates the post-war scientific conclusions that public opinion survey responses may express attitudes respondents feel are politically correct, but do not necessarily mirror their true feelings.

Allen Rivkin, a screenwriter and former head of the Jewish Film Advisory Board [the Motion Picture Project], cautioned, "Whatever we [American Jews] may like to think, we are not solid enough, not secure enough in this country to strip ourselves bare on the screen."<sup>514</sup>

Sir Martin Gilbert, Oxford University, considered to be the preeminent 20th Century Jewish Historian, has just published the definitive History of the Twentieth Century. Sir Martin notes,

There's no doubt there's a Jewish dimension to the century--or several Jewish dimensions...The Jew in the 20th century is [the] victim, and the Jew is also somebody who is seen as the enemy.<sup>515</sup>

History marches inexorably on, and primeval, malignant, Christian antisemitism perseveres at a zealous pace. The World Jewish Congress reported in December, 1995,

Resurrecting the centuries-old anti-semitic blood libel, the Bucharest weekly Baricada reported that Israelis there were smuggling babies to Moldova. The report stated that there was no chance of ever seeing the smuggled children alive because "as is well-known, Jewish matzah demands kosher, young Christian blood."<sup>516</sup>

The Omaha World-Herald, June 20, 1997, reported that the



neo-Nazi National Socialist White People's Party was distributing fliers, filled with "anti-semitic and racist rhetoric" in several Omaha-area neighborhoods.<sup>517</sup>

The stereotypes of the international Jewish conspiracy, the Jew-as-Alien and [possibly] dedicated to the overthrow of the U.S. government have reinvented themselves in the form of anti-Israel attitudes. One in four Americans polled by Roper at the beginning of this decade believed that Jews were more loyal to Israel than to the U.S.<sup>518</sup>

In 1998, antisemitism manifests itself in the form of militia and white supremacist groups, Holocaust revisionism and Louis Farrakhan. Each of these utilize the most virulent antisemitic ideologies and are coupled with their advocacy of violence.<sup>519</sup>

The Internet has become the newest medium for their dissemination of hate. According to ADL,

Shrewd bigots of all kinds...are rushing to use th[is] enormous power to rally their supporters, to preach to the unconverted and intimidate and assault those groups which are targets of their hatred...Their Web sites all share one common goal--to stir social unrest and conflict, and to spread the seeds and cultivate the bitter fruits of antisemitism and other forms of bigotry.<sup>520</sup>

Holocaust denial has become the fastest-growing antisemitic theme. David Duke, Gary Lauck, the neo-Nazi National Alliance, the KKK, the Identity "Church" Movement, the Posse Comitatus and Militia and "Common Law Court" groups all have established a significant number of Web sites from which they

disseminate justification for white supremacy, racism and antisemitism.<sup>521</sup> The Identity's (Church) Aryan Nations Web page asserts that white, Anglo Saxons, not Jews, are the real Biblical "Chosen People," that non-whites are inferiors, "mud people," without souls and on the same spiritual level as animals. The Jews, are the anti-Christ, the descendants of a union between Eve and Satan, the embodiment of all that is wicked in the world (See Appendix #F.)<sup>522</sup> An excerpt from the Web page describes Jews as

the natural enemy of our Aryan Race. This is attested to by scripture and all secular history. The Jew is like a destroying virus that attacks our racial body to destroy our Aryan culture and the purity of our Race (See Appendix #G).<sup>523</sup>

Another site called G.O.A.L.--God's Order Affirmed in Love--is filled with full-length books, including Jewish Ritual Murder, by Arnold Leese. Many of the Web sites refer to the United States as ZOG--the Zionist Occupied Government.

And the list is endless. The potential audience for this rabid, maniacal hate is massive, and grows every day. Having struck down the proposed Communications Decency Act, the U.S. once again, finds itself in Democracy's dilemma, balancing the First Amendment and the eradication of bigotry. The ADL, espousing post-war conscious liberalism, demands tolerance for all peoples.

People of goodwill must continuously monitor the Internet...They must use all available resources to expose the agendas and history of those committed to

spreading bigotry and challenge their lies and distortions. Hate must be countered with information that promotes understanding, tolerance and truth.<sup>524</sup>

While referring to his own country, Sir Winston Churchill ironically stated the collective historical and contemporary Jewish attitude toward intolerance, "We must have constant vigilance."

How far is the distance from Auschwitz to cyberspace? Contemporary social commentator Leonard Fein sums up the prevailing American Jewish position,

To be a Jew in America is to carry with you the consciousness of limitless savagery. It is to carry that consciousness with you not as an abstraction, but as a reality; not, G-d help us all, only as a memory, but also as a possibility.<sup>525</sup>

## THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE MOTION PICTURE

Let us not then attribute to the stage a power of changing opinion or manners, when it has only that of following or heightening them.

Jean Jacques Rousseau, 1759

Prior to Hiroshima, Gen. George Marshall stated, "The war has seen the development of two new weapons--the airplane and the motion picture."<sup>526</sup> Eric Johnston, Motion Picture Association president, wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt on May 7, 1946,

[The war had proven that] the motion picture is one of the most potent instruments ever devised for the dissemination of ideas, information and mutual understanding between peoples.<sup>527</sup>

The impact of motion pictures was a permanent heritage of Hollywood's war record.<sup>528</sup>

Not until Hollywood was enlisted as an active agent in the Second World War did the ephemeral popular art dedicated to mere entertainment suddenly and seriously matter. The War Department, the Office of War Information and spectators were made sensitive to the educational importance and ideological impact of the movies. Shocked and enlightened by the motion picture propaganda of the Nazis, America was now obliged to obey new codes of conduct...The motion picture industry became the preeminent transmitter of wartime policy and a lightning rod for public discourse. Thereafter, popular art and cultural meaning, mass communication and national policies would be intimately aligned and commonly acknowledged in American culture.<sup>529</sup>

Wartime film historian Thomas Doherty explains,

The war ignited a revolution in film content and

filmmaker consciousness. The postwar emergence of the polemically driven production, a Hollywood feature dealing seriously and directly with a social problem was a direct consequence of the war-born realization of what commercial Hollywood cinema might presume.<sup>530</sup>

In the Commentary magazine dialogue with its editor, Elliot Cohen, Dore Schary reflected this outlook.

The visual impact of the screen is so powerful and so vivid that in the hands of irresponsible people it can be dangerous. In the hands of those who respect it, it can accomplish wonders.

Eric Johnston commented in 1946, "The motion picture, as an instrument for the promotion of knowledge and understanding among peoples, stands on the threshold of a tremendous era of expansion."<sup>531</sup>

In 1947, the Commission on Freedom of the Press concluded,

The motion picture industry should place increasing stress on its role as a civic and informational agency conscious of the evolving character of political and social problems. The industry as a responsible member of the body politic cannot shirk its obligation to promote...an intelligent understanding of domestic and international affairs. It should guard against misrepresentations of social groups and foreign peoples.<sup>532</sup>

As a direct response to this perspective, the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council established the Motion Picture Project in 1947. Its purpose was

To form a co-ordinated nation-wide relationship with the motion picture industry, aimed at developing the potentialities of motion pictures as a medium for

fostering good human relations;...to deal with problems arising from defamatory and stereotypical characterizations of minority groups, primarily Jewish; to encourage positive images wherever possible and to serve as an information agency to aid studios in accurate presentations. At heart was the belief that film was a powerful and persuasive tool...In addition, the Project was also sensitive to demeaning Jewish stereotypes.<sup>533</sup>

Guinness' Fagin was exactly what the MPP did not want. "We don't want people to cling to the idea that all Jews look a certain way...with a long nose, greasy face, beard and derby."<sup>534</sup>

*Crossfire's* pre-screening committee of psychologists and social experts felt that the film would stimulate audiences to think over many ideas of their own in relating to prejudices of one kind or another.<sup>535</sup> Many of the students interviewed said that the film indeed made them stop to reflect about their own prejudices.<sup>536</sup>

According to Doherty, the "social-problem" films attracted a disproportionate measure of earnest attention because so many of them were "trailblazing, big-screen 'firsts.'"<sup>537</sup> *Crossfire* and *Gentleman's Agreement* courageously laid the groundwork for exposing antisemitism, one of America's oldest and most contemptible social evils. *Crossfire's* producer Adrian Scott said that the purpose of the film was to inform Americans, "When any minority is abused, degraded or deprived of earning a living, this constitutes a crisis for the entire nation."<sup>538</sup> Quoting Dore Schary,

This is the salient characteristic of *Crossfire*. It

initiates a learning process. It does not change anyone's basic attitude, but it is one more instrument which can help in that learning process which will ultimately make of America a richer and fuller democratic society.<sup>539</sup>

Darryl Zanuck argued that the grosses from *Gentleman's Agreement* settled the viability of social awareness in the cinema.

The thought process of the public can be stimulated and shaped by a film play. A film can provide diversion and at the same time have something to say about life and its problems. It is a matter of personal satisfaction that *Gentleman's Agreement* has demonstrated this point because it was undoubtedly one of the severest tests.<sup>540</sup>

In analyzing the social and cultural implications of film, social psychologist Siegfried Kracauer posited in 1949,

Whether our image of a foreign people comes close to true likeness or merely serves as a vehicle of self-expression...depends upon the degree to which our urge for objectivity gets the better of native subjectivity.<sup>541</sup>

This certainly applies to gentile Americans' perceptions of Jews, as the Jew had been thought of as an alien throughout American history. Kracauer also comments about the social conscious film genre,

Only since the end of the war [WWII] have ideological conventions undergone a change. That change must be traced to mass moods. Artifacts, such as cinema, are intimately responsive to changes in social ideology.<sup>542</sup>

His conclusion confirms that art mirrors life and does not

create it,

To be sure, American audiences receive what Hollywood wants them to want; but in the long run, audience desires, acute or dormant, determine the character of Hollywood films.<sup>543</sup>

Reflecting this position, the Institute for Religion and Social Studies concluded in 1946, "Mass media clearly serve to reaffirm social norms by exposing deviations from these norms to public view."<sup>544</sup> Thirty years later, Barry Gross, writing for the Journal of Ethnic Studies corroborated,

The images and metaphors of America that Hollywood films convey are not just of the American screen; they are of the American scene, the American psyche. What we are is inseparable from our technicolor musicals, our comedies, our crime melodramas, our westerns and our social critiques.<sup>545</sup>

Author Richard Taylor states, "Propaganda cannot create opinion out of a void, but it can build upon what is already there."<sup>546</sup> Quoting Aldous Huxley, Taylor continues,

Political and religious propaganda is effective... only upon those who are already partly or entirely convinced of its truth... Propaganda gives force and direction to the successive movements of popular feelings and desire; but it does not do much to create these movements. The propagandist is a man who canalizes an already existing stream. In a land where there is no water, he digs in vain.<sup>547</sup>

Long-time Hollywood producer Irving Thalberg contended that when he was asked what kind of movie should be made, the greatest problem to be settled was that "of judging whether or not the subject matter of the story is topical. What is



accepted by the public today may not be acceptable tomorrow."<sup>548</sup> MacCann states, "Producers must realize that a social problem film can do little good if production is held back until the public crisis is past."<sup>549</sup> This is what made *Crossfire* and *Gentleman's Agreement* so powerful, as well as why *Oliver Twist* was so completely unacceptable. The American films reflected the public's immediate need to expose intolerance and were hailed as victories in the war against bigotry; *Oliver Twist* reinforced prejudice, the antithesis of the public mood.

Both Dory Schary's and Darryl Zanuck's courageous determination to bring *Crossfire* and *Gentleman's Agreement* to the screen must be lauded from all perspectives as extraordinary, not only in the annals of Hollywood films, but also in the history of the public confrontation of American antisemitism. The films are examples of the democratic ideology at its finest: admit and expose the social problem, acknowledge the system's failure and then move to rectify it. The social conscious movie, which includes *Crossfire* and *Gentleman's Agreement*, "while portraying the negative aspects of society, paradoxically celebrate[s] the system for being flexible and susceptible to amelioration."<sup>550</sup> If film mirrors society, *Crossfire* and *Gentleman's Agreement* are extraordinary reflections of the very best this society professes to be, one which is uniquely dedicated to the guarantee of true liberty and real justice for all.

**CONSCIOUS LIBERALISM AND THE FILMS' SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Did the three films really change antisemitic attitudes? All three groups of social scientists involved in pre and post-audience testing found the answer to be positive, but none could provide assurance that the changes were permanent. The collectively most important point was that the films caused people to think about antisemitism. The filmmakers' hopes were that through thinking would come action. Gans verifies that effect studies show movies do little to change fundamental ideas, but "the magic of the medium is so rich that it can encourage audiences to think and question their preconceptions as they sit in the darkness of the theatre, temporarily isolated from society."<sup>551</sup>

William Cutter asserts,

One of entertainment's primary goals is to educate people to penetrate the ambiguities of the human situation. We can hardly serve this end if we simply encourage more of the same kind of superficial response--even if we do it to serve a higher end.<sup>552</sup>

Anthropologist Hortense Powdermaker says it is this quality of realness which makes [social conscious] movies so powerful.<sup>553</sup>

Schary's and Zanuck's test case studies, as well as the ADL's studies in conjunction with *Oliver Twist*, proved that filmmakers can qualify their decisions to undertake certain film projects based upon pre-release audience feedback.

*Crossfire* and *Gentleman's Agreement* helped to make American antisemitism unrespectable by demonstrating to the American people that its continued existence was the gentiles' problem. *Oliver Twist's* momentarily inappropriate historical timing was confirmed, also, by pre-release screenings. RKO's and 20th Century Fox's judgment in bringing *Crossfire* and *Gentleman's Agreement* to the screen was not, as the AJC had believed, a reckless action engendered by the new post-war conscious liberalism, but rather a direct reflection of concrete, measured social change.

Gans states,

If moviemakers knew more about their audiences--not statistical studies of audience characteristics that quantify the already known, but narrative analyses of how various publics react to film, what they see in them and how they understand and judge what they see--it would remove some of the uncertainty under which the film industry operates.<sup>554</sup>

*Crossfire* and *Gentleman's Agreement* were heroic steps forward in the chronicle of American film history. They were a courageous and noble attempt to validate the post-war societal status quo of conscious liberalism, corroborating that the democratic ideology for which America had so resolutely fought to preserve had, after all, been worth dying for. Guinness' Fagin was their anachronistic antithesis.

*Crossfire* and *Gentleman's Agreement* verified four things:  
1. Antisemitism did exist in America; 2. It was incompatible with wartime-into-peacetime ideals of conscious liberalism and

tolerance; 3. Scientific studies conducted in conjunction with the films revealed that social practices did not mirror popular public opinion; and 4. Scientific studies also demonstrated that attitudes about Jews could be changed for the better, but there was no way to measure the extent and longevity of those changes. *Oliver Twist* affirms 1. Antisemitic stereotyping was irreconcilable with post-war conscious liberalism and tolerance attitudes; 2. The First Amendment would continue to be upheld in the post-war society but at the same time, there was no place for bigotry within that society; 3. The transposition of literature into film must be undertaken within the context of the existing historical and social reality; and 4. British post-war attitudes toward Jews were fundamentally different than those of Americans due to intrinsically dissimilar historical, cultural and political underpinnings.

The films also corroborate the belief that the motion picture was a powerful tool which could be utilized for the great benefit of mankind, but that despite the very purest of intentions, prejudice and bigotry were not going to disappear in the post-war or any other era.

Demographer Gary Tobin's research in the late 1980s found this attitude to be constant among Jews in America: All survey respondents were unified in believing that an increase in antisemitism will inevitably occur, to some degree, during times of economic crisis. For all of the current security in

America, this belief was consistent.<sup>555</sup>

I don't think there will ever be a time in which there is no antisemitism. I think we have reached a good, low point (1987) with which we can live as Americans and Jews. But there will always be outcroppings, incidents, people, who for one reason or another, need to use antisemitism as a tool, and that's when I think you begin to see a reprise. And we will have that.<sup>556</sup>

"To be a Jew," said literary critic Alfred Kazin, "means one's very right to existence is always in question."<sup>557</sup> From its incipient beginnings in 1915, until the pivotal 1947, the predominantly Jewish Hollywood film industry vigilantly safeguarded its Jewish images. Having lived and learned the lessons of history, the Jewish moguls, screenwriters, directors, producers and actors knew inherently that they were the perennial outsiders, momentarily accepted by society, only to be persecuted as each dominant culture was replaced by another. Antisemitism had been extant for three millennia. American antisemitism was simply the most historically recent manifestation of irrational hatred toward Jews.

From its origin in 1775, the American Founding Fathers' constitutional guarantee of "liberty and justice for all" had not included its Jewish citizens. Endemic centuries-old stereotypes and prejudices do not easily die, despite the most selfless and worthy of aspirations. Foucault posits,

Even as it constructs a reality for its social subjects, social discourse finds that there are realities themselves socially constructed that limit the powers of discourse, that show its subservience to forces that

exceed its supposedly authoritative sway.<sup>558</sup>

And yet, according to K.R.M. Short, "1947 proved to be a year of importance for the slowly emerging honesty with which America faced the reality that antisemitic prejudice existed in the home of the brave and the free."<sup>559</sup> The post-war era indisputably was the catalyst for the development of tolerance attitudes engendered by the philosophy of conscious liberalism induced by the war.

Contemporary historian Jonathan Sarna postulates, "[Despite rampant antisemitism,] the American Jewish experience is truly historically unique."<sup>560</sup> America, it seemed, had materialized in the post-war age as an historic anomaly.

Tobin's survey research supports Sarna's thesis through the second constant finding. Nearly all Jews surveyed in personal interviews believed that the war, and the immediate post-war period, ushered in a new era of greater knowledge among ethnic and racial groups. The direct consequence was a greater tolerance toward Jews.<sup>561</sup> For the first time in Jewish history, a dominant culture had acknowledged that all of its citizens, including its Jewish citizens, had the inalienable right to be equal members of its society. This truly was an historic anomaly.

According to film historian Lester Friedman,<sup>562</sup>

Jews who strive to keep their own ethnic identity, while at the same time demanding to be recognized as

full-fledged American citizens, test the very premise of our democratic ideals. They help mark the boundaries of what a state can ask of its citizens and what a citizen owes his country.<sup>563</sup>

The story of America's celluloid Jews, Friedman says, remains important for what it reveals about the American Dream, and ultimately, about America itself.<sup>564</sup> *Crossfire* and *Gentleman's Agreement* function as a window through which unprecedented social history may be viewed. The celebrated myth of America has always been utopian optimism. In glimpsing these films, we undeniably behold America's promise.

## FUTURE RESEARCH

Lester Friedman writes,

By examining how Jews were presented in movies, one might learn what some Jews thought about themselves, how the image of Jews in the national consciousness changed over the years and what Jews were willing to show of themselves to a largely gentile audience.<sup>565</sup>

The acculturation process of America's Jews is valuable to the study of all minorities within the American culture. Endless volumes could be written about the Jewish experience here, in society, as well as in film, as an exceptional historical phenomenon. Knowledge gained from historical precedent would serve to better understand the contemporary position of Jews in American society, as well as the presence of Jews and Jewish character types in Hollywood films. Speculation about the future could then be qualified and predictions about the American Jews' position in society could be predicted and depicted through film.

Research directed toward the portrayal of Jews in American films could be compared to foreign countries' filmic depictions of Jews to quantify the degree to which antisemitism may or may not be pervasive here and abroad. Also, comparative research as to the position of Jews in America versus other countries would help to substantiate whether or not the Jewish experience in America is truly unique.



Research could also be focused toward documentation of a trend of Americanized Jewish film characters, characterizations and stereotypes from Hollywood's creation to the present, highlighting a universal theme of the assimilation-acculturation process of Jews into mainstream American society as epitomized through film. Establishment of such a trend would provide definitive evidence for scholarly conclusions about the full spectrum of Jewish life in 20th century America.

An exhaustive analysis of 1940s films could be conducted for evidence of Hollywood's contribution toward celebrating the spirit of American democracy and tolerance attitudes through an assimilationist cinema, which, while reflecting earlier Hollywood themes of the American "melting pot" mentality, would reveal new post-war attitudes of conscious liberalism.

Social conscious films produced during the 1940s could be scrutinized to see if they, in fact, serve as the standard for reflecting the film industry's ideological function. The impact of these films on society could be analyzed to determine to what extent, if any, their production aided in society's ability to confront and resolve the social problems the films present.

According to K.R.M. Short, no one has suggested the extent to which the projection of American democracy as seen in Hollywood films might have influenced Britain and/or

British films after the war.<sup>566</sup> An entire line of research could be directed toward examining the different views of politics, morality and tolerance in British post-war films versus American post-war films.

Another line of research could involve the inherent differences between the Production Code of America and the British Board of Film Censors and how those differences manifested themselves before, during and after the war. This line of research could be expanded to include films from other countries as well, to determine the extent to which the pro-tolerance message in 1940s films may or may not have influenced fledgling democracies in their attempts to build stable governments after the war. This could also be expanded to research current democratic themes in contemporary films from other countries to determine if these films are an outgrowth of the 1940s American films.

Future research could be aimed at an extensive content analysis of films noir to validate whether or not the use of the narrative technique presented in *Crossfire* and *Gentleman's Agreement* represented a recurrent pattern in post-war social problem films. Also, the narrative technique could be analyzed to confirm its ability to provide solutions and/or closure to the social problems the films raise.

There is an obvious dilemma when transposing from one medium to another, and an entire line of research could be directed toward analyzing the metamorphosis of novels into

film, the narrative's effect on the audience versus the visual influences of film and the impact on the audience of the transition of the written word into the spoken word. In connection with this research, data could be gathered to determine the effects of the storyline on the audience with reference to differences in the value system of the historical period in which a particular novel was written versus its impact on a contemporary audience.

And, lastly, the undaunted expose of American antisemitism in *Crossfire* and *Gentleman's Agreement* could be explored and expanded to films dating from 1947 to the present for evidence of an increasing trend toward tolerance and acceptance, or a reversal of the 1940s mode. Individual Jewish roles from films after 1947 could also be analyzed to determine whether or not they represent a pattern toward assimilation, or as prototypes for acculturated Jewish characters/character types who maintain their Jewish identities, while at the same time, function as equal and legitimate members of American society. This research could be expanded to include other minorities as well, including specifically African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans and Asian-Americans. From this vantage point, research could evolve into current minority issues, documenting tolerance attitudes towards homosexuals and gender discrimination or acceptance of women as equals in society.

**APPENDIX****THE EVOLUTION OF A STEREOTYPE**

- A. George Cruikshank's original illustration of Fagin in the novel Oliver Twist.
  
- B. Cruikshank's Fagin is used to personify Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli in the satirical, newspaper Punch, November 9, 1867.
  
- C. Julius Streicher's depiction of Jews in his antisemitic Nazi propagandist newspaper Der Strumer. His characterization of Jews was modeled on Cruikshank's Fagin.
  
- D. Alec Guinness in full makeup as Fagin. His character was also modeled on the original Cruikshank drawing. British Film Collection, 1896-1984: A History of British Cinema in Pictures, Patricia Warren, ed., p. 145.
  
- E. Alec Guinness in full costume teaches John Howard Davies as Oliver to pick his pocket. Jerry Vermilye, The Great British Films, p. 119.
  
- F. The Identity "Church" Internet incarnation of the Jew as the serpent Satan who seduces Eve in the Garden of Eden. ADL, High-Tech Hate: Extremist Use of the Internet, p. 30.
  
- G. The continuing evolution of the Cruikshank illustration as Nazi propaganda on the Internet, titled "The Eternal Jew." ADL, High-Tech Hate: Extremist Use of the Internet, p. 73.



George Cruikshank

*Oliver's Reception by Fagin and the Boys*

A.

(p. 112)



B. FAGIN'S POLITICAL SCHOOL

# Der Stürm

Wöchentliches Wochenblatt zum Kampfe um die W.

HERAUSGEBER: JULIUS STREICHER

<p>5                  1. Jahrgang                  1. Heft</p>	<p>Verlagsanstalt: Julius Streicher Verlag, München, Schloßbergstr. 10                  Telefon: 111111</p>	<p>München,                  Reichsparteitag 1936</p>	<p>Druck: Die Deutsche Druckerei, München, Schloßbergstr. 10                  Telefon: 111111</p>
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## Die Geheimnisse der Weisen von...

### Das große Rätsel

Der Reichsparteitag 1936 findet in einer Zeit statt, die gekennzeichnet ist durch Kämpfe, Revolutionen und blutige Bürgerkriege. Eine gewaltige Erschütterung greift durch die Welt. Verschörungen haben sich in allen Ländern gebildet. Ihre Ränke reiten herein bis in die höchsten Stufen der Politik und der Wirtschaft. Politische Attentate sind fieberhaft tätig und weltliche die Massen auf. Ein großer Teil der Weltbevölkerung scheint geheime Richtlinien bekommen zu haben. Er streut offen oder verhehrt auf ein bestimmtes Ziel los. Dieses Ziel heißt: Durch die Weltrevolution zum Weltkommunismus.

Wer nicht völlig mit Blindheit geschlagen ist, sieht die Gefahr ungeheurer und riesengroß am Himmel stehen. Überall zeigen sich die Zeichen der Zeit. Schon schlagen die Klammen des in allen Ländern angelegten kommunistischen Brandherdes da und dort zum Himmel empor. In Brasilien brach vor nicht langer Zeit ein bolschewistischer Aufstand aus. Er wurde mit Wut und unter großen Opfern niedergeschlagen. In anderen Ländern Amerikas treten die bolschewistischen Agitatoren offener und gewalttätiger auf denn je. In den Vereinigten Staaten stellen anlässlich einer kommunistischen Kund-

### Das auserwählte Volk



Den Satan, der die Menschheit quält / hat nur der Teufel...

gebung die beiden größten amerikanischen Radiogestaltungsgesellschaften ihren Kampf um eine Reputationssteigerung für die Regierung. Die Staat Uruguay brach die diplomatischen Beziehungen zur Regierung...

## c. Die Juden sind unser Unglück

17. The 1936 special edition on the Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion.



*National Film Library*

Fagin in the film *Oliver Twist*

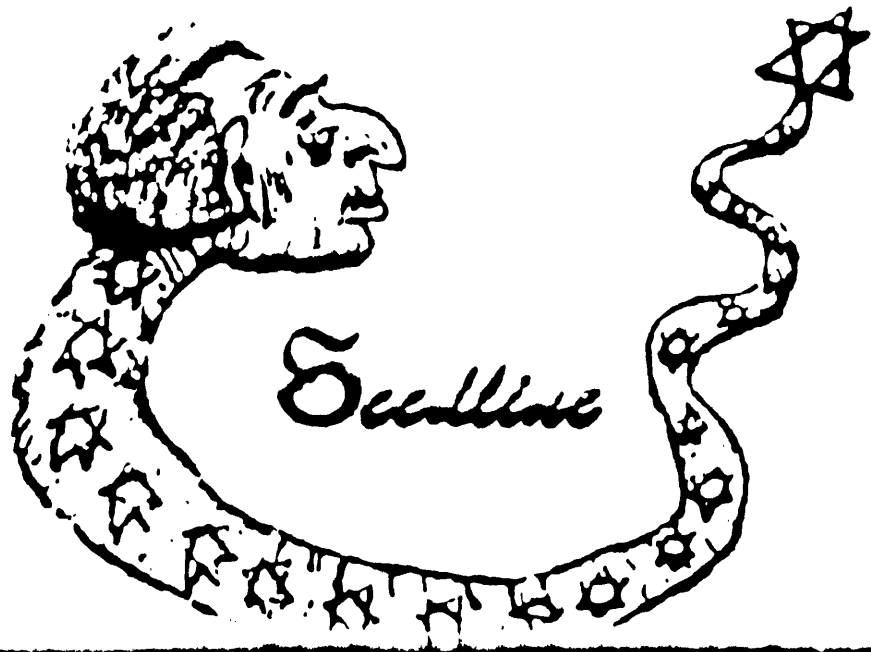
D.





E.

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW  
ABOUT



*The Iconography of Identity: The Jew as serpent/  
Satan who seduces Eve in the Garden of Eden.*



*Nazi propuganda lives on the Internet:  
A promotion poster for the anti-  
Semitic propaganda film, "The Eternal  
Jew," produced in Nazi Germany. One  
of many Nazi-era posters reproduced  
on the Alpha Web site.*

G.

**NOTES**

**CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION**

1. David S. Gerber, "Anti-Semitism and Jewish-Gentile Relations in American Historiography and the American Past," Anti-Semitism in American History, David S. Gerber, ed., (Chicago: University of Illinois Press), 1986, p. 3.

**CHAPTER 2 THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF ANTISEMITISM:  
ANTIQUITY TO AMERICA**

2. The first mention of Amalek is in Exodus, Ch. 17, V. 8.

3. Quoted in Deuteronomy, Ch. 25, V. 17.

4. Scherman, Rabbi Nosson, Ed., The Stone Edition Chumash, (New York: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 1993), 390.

5. Dennis Prager and Joseph Teluskin, Why the Jews? The Reason for Antisemitism, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), p. 25.

6. Ben Halpern, "Anti-Semitism in the Perspective of Jewish History," Jews in the Mind of America, Charles Herbert Stember, ed., (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p. 279.

7. For a complete overview of Jewish history, see Rabbi Berel Wein's trilogy, Echoes of Glory: The Story of the Jews in the Classical Era, 350 BCE-750 CE; Herald of Destiny: The Story of the Jews in the Medieval Era, 750-1650 CE; and Triumph of Survival: The Story of the Jews in the Modern Era, 1650-1990 CE, (New York: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 1993)

8. Hyam Maccoby, Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil, (New York: The Free Press, 1992), p. 34; Patricia Erens, The Jew in American Cinema, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 11.

9. Maccoby, p. 34.

10. Prager and Teluskin, p. 92.

11. Bernard Glassman, Anti-Semitic Stereotypes Without Jews: Images of the Jews in England, 1290-1700, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1975), p. 16.

12. See Joshua Trachtenberg, The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation to Modern Antisemitism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943); John P. Roche, The Quest for the Dream: The Development of Civil Rights and Human Relations in Modern America (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1963); Jonathan D. Sarna, "Anti-Semitism and American History," Commentary, vol. 71, March 1981, 42-47. Sarna recounts that a blood libel incident occurred as late as 1928 in Massena, a small town in upstate New York. Four year-old Barbara Griffiths disappeared two days before Yom Kippur (The Jewish Day of Atonement, considered to be the holiest day of the Jewish year). Officials asked members of the local Jewish community whether "your people in the old country offer human sacrifices." A few hours later the girl emerged from the woods to the great relief of all concerned.

13. Erens, p. 7.

14. Arthur Hertzberg, The Jews in America: Four Centuries of an Uneasy Encounter: A History, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), p. 254.

15. Erens, p. 7.

16. Michael N. Dobkowski, The Tarnished Dream: The Basis of American Antisemitism, (London: Greenwood Press, 1979), p. 9.

17. Ibid.

18. Dobkowski, p. 11.

19. Hertzberg, p. 13.

20. Ibid.

21. Max I. Dimont, Jews, God and History, New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1962), p. 359.

22. Dobkowski, p. 12.

23. Dobkowski, p. 12.

24. Jonathan D. Sarna, "Anti-Semitism and American History," Commentary, vol. 71 (March, 1981), p. 43.

25. Dobkowski, p. 13.

26. Hertzberg, p. 89.

27. Hertzberg, p. 189.

28. Hertzberg, p. 88. In 1817, when the first Jew arrived in Cincinnati, a farm woman who heard the news travelled two days in a horse and wagon to see the horns and tails which Jews were said to possess. See Arthur Hertzberg, The Jews in America, Four Centuries of an Uneasy Encounter: A History, (New York: Simon and Schuster), 1989, p. 120.
29. Hertzberg, p. 187; Also, John P. Roche, The Quest for the Dream: The Development of Civil Rights and Human Relations in Modern America, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), p. 5.
30. Robert Singerman, Antisemitic Propaganda: An Annotated Bibliography and Research Guide, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1982), p. xxix.
31. Hertzberg, p. 177.
32. Roche, p. 79.
33. Michael N. Dobkowski, The Tarnished Dream: The Basis of American Anti-Semitism (London: Greenwood Press, 1979), 235.
34. Roche, p. 88.
35. Dobkowski, 235.
36. John P. Roche, The Quest for the Dream: The Development of Civil Rights and Human Relations in Modern America (New York: The MacMillan Company), 1963: p. 93. From 1910-1920 there was an enormous mistrust of foreigners by "native born" white Americans which co-incided with the mass influx of immigrants during these years. After the United States' entry into World War I, the Army issued a manual for draft board medical examiners which included a section on the detection of malingerers. "Foreign-born, and especially Jews, are more apt to malingere than the native born."
37. Jonathan D. Sarna, "Anti-Semitism and American History," Commentary vol.4 (October 1947), no. 4: 43. According to Sarna, James Gordon Bennett's widely read New York Herald displayed particular vehemence in its denunciation of Jews. He quotes from the Nov. 18, 1837 issue. "Here are pictured forth, from their own sacred writings, the Talmud, which is considered a second part of the Bible, the real opinion of the Jews on the original and Sacred Founder of Christianity...In the midst of Christians, surrounded by Christian usages, the Jews may conceal these opinions and doctrines---may attempt to beguile and deceive those among whom they live, in order the better to crush all religion under that secret position of infidelity and atheism, but their Talmuds and Targums are evidence against them."

38. Howard Suber, "Politics and Popular Culture: Hollywood at Bay, 1933-1953," American Jewish History, vol. 76 (June 1979), p. 517.

39. Dobkowski, p. 235. Historian Arthur Hertzberg notes interestingly that at the same time the Nativists were vilifying Jews, a celebration was held on Thanksgiving day, 1905, in Carnegie Hall to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the settlement of Jews in the United States. President Theodore Roosevelt wrote, "Even in our colonial period, the Jews participated in the upbuilding of this country; they have become indissolubly incorporated into the great army of American citizenship. See Arthur Hertzberg, The Jews in America: Four Centuries of an Uneasy Encounter: A History, (New York: Simon and Schuster), 1989, 185.

40. Nathan C. Belth, A Promise to Keep: A Narrative of the American Encounter with Anti-Semitism, (New York: Times Books, 1979), p. 58.

41. Ibid.

42. Belth, p. 30.

43. Hertzberg, p. 242.

44. Hertzberg, p. 237.

45. Ibid.

46. Henry L. Feingold, A Time for Searching: Entering the Mainstream, 1920-1945, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), p. 3; See also Robert P. Ingalls, Hoods: The Story of the Ku Klux Klan, (N.Y.: G.P. Putnam, 1979), p. 70.

47. Feingold, 1992, p. 131.

48. Erens, p. 192.

49. Roche, p. 99.

50. Roche, p. 120.

51. Suber, p. 517. Ford ultimately backed down, publishing a retraction of the Protocols and speaking favorably about the Jews.

52. Roche, p. 173. For a full treatment of Father Coughlin's speeches, his rabid antisemitic attacks on Jews and the effects of propaganda, see The Fine Art of Propaganda, A Study of Father Coughlin's Speeches, published by the Institute for

Propaganda Analysis, Alfred McClung Lee and Elizabeth Briant Lee, eds., (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939).

53. Suber, p. 521; Dobkowski, p. 241.

54. Feingold, 1992, p. 85.

55. Suber, p. 526.

56. Erens, p. 192.

57. Edward S. Shapiro, A Time for Healing: American Jewry Since World War II, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), p. 6.

58. Shapiro, p. 6.

59. Thomas Doherty, Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture and World War II, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 40.

60. Suber, p. 526.

61. Shapiro, p. 6.

62. Suber, p. 526.

63. Shapiro, p. 5.

64. Roche, p. 178; Howard Suber, "Politics and Popular Culture: Hollywood at Bay, 1933-1953," American Jewish History vol. 76 (June 1979), p. 517-533.

### **CHAPTER 3 AMERICAN SOCIETAL ATTITUDES ABOUT JEWS**

65. Halpern, p. 288.

66. Dennis H. Wrong, "The Psychology of Prejudice and the Future of Anti-Semitism in America," Jews in the Mind of America, Charles Herbert Stember, ed., (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p. 329.

67. Wrong, p. 329.

68. Michael N. Dobkowski, The Tarnished Dream: The Basis of American Anti-Semitism (London: Greenwood Press, 1979), 104.

69. Ibid. Quoted from Jeffrey Drage, "Poland," Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed., vol. 32, p. 123.



70. John Higham, "American Antisemitism Historically Reconsidered," Jews in the Mind of America, Charles Herbert Stember, ed., (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p. 245.
71. Ronald Steel, Walter Lippmann and the American Century, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980), p. 187; David Desser and Lester D. Friedman, American-Jewish Filmmakers: Traditions and Trends, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), p. 22. Also, in Omaha, Ne., the Highland Country Club was formed in 1922 by Jews who wanted their own place to socialize and conduct business meetings, as they were excluded from membership in the city's existing country clubs.
72. Gary A. Tobin, Jewish Perceptions of Antisemitism, (New York: Plenum Press, 1988), p. 17.
73. Higham, p. 245.
74. Hertzberg, p. 245.
75. Hertzberg, p. 251.
76. Tobin, p. 16.
77. Belth, p. 28.
78. Stember, p. 34.
79. David A. Gerber, "Anti-Semitism and the Jewish-Gentile Relations in American Historiography and the American Past." Anti-Semitism in American History, David S. Gerber, Ed., (Chicago: The University of Illinois Press), 1986, p. 8.
80. Stember, p. 8. Dozens of surveys were undertaken between 1939 and 1962 by the American Jewish Committee. Quota sampling was utilized until 1948 when probability sampling was instituted. The surveys were conducted by the American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup Poll), the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, and Elmo Roper Service. See Charles Herbert Stember, "The Recent History of Public Attitudes," Jews In The Mind of America, (New York: Basic Books), 1966, p. 31-231.
81. Shapiro, p. 5.
82. Charles Herbert Stember, "The Recent History of Public Attitudes," Jews in the Mind of America, Charles Herbert Stember, ed., (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p. 8.
83. Stember, p. 120.
84. Hertzberg, p. 245.

85. Belth, 1939, p. 18.
86. Higham, p. 246.
87. Hertzberg, p. 287.
88. Feingold, 1992, p. 2.
89. "Employment in Insurance Companies," RIGHTS, vol. 2 (November-December, 1959), no. 8, p. 59.
90. Hertzberg, p. 246.
91. Feingold, 1992, p. 2.
92. Belth, 1979, p. 185.
93. Steel, p. 193.
94. Shapiro, p. 15.
95. Yale decided that students should be admitted on the basis of character, rather than strictly on scholarship. Dean Frederick Jones had discovered that "every single scholarship of any kind is won by a Jew" and that "we cannot allow that to go on. We must put a ban on Jews." He agreed that "in terms of scholarship and intelligence, Jewish students lead the class, but their personal characteristics make them markedly inferior." See Hertzberg, 246.
96. It should be noted that the Roper Survey set the stage for the American Council of Education's effort to end the practice of quota systems. See Nathan C. Belth, A Promise to Keep: A Narrative of the American Encounter with Anti-Semitism, (New York: Times Books), 1979, 188.
97. Belth, 1979, p. 186.
98. Hertzberg, p. 247.
99. Hertzberg, p. 247.
100. "Admission Policies of Medical Schools," RIGHTS, vol. 2 (January-February, 1958), p. 25.
101. Hertzberg, p. 246. A 1952 report of the New York Board of Regents concerning the state's nine medical schools cited the effect of a new "personality appraisal" of candidates for admission. It found that "a combination of cultural traits, perhaps related to stereotypes in the minds of admissions officers," contributed greatly to discriminatory patterns. This study found that Jewish and Italian Catholic applicants

with two foreign-born parents were more discriminated against than applicants with only one parent born abroad. See Belth, 1979, p. 199.

102. Higham, p. 240.

103. Morton Keller, "Jews and the Character of American Life Since 1930," Jews in the Mind of America, Charles Herbert Stember, ed., (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p. 265.

104. Stember, p. 8.

105. Stember, p. 9; Keller, p, 267.

106. Stember, p. 54.

107. Stember, p. 9.

108. Shapiro, 1992, p. 7.

109. Stember, p. 118.

110. Stember, p. 118; In 1946, the Jewish Welfare Board published two volumes of lists of Jews who had distinguished themselves in combat, more than 500,000. This was evidence that the Jews had earned an equal share in America's future. See Hertzberg, p. 309.

111. Halpern, p. 209.

112. Edward S. Shapiro, A Time for Healing: American Jewry Since World War II, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press), 1992, p. 3.

113. Friedman, 1982, p. 108.

114. Stember, p. 9.

115. Short, 1983, p. 164.

116. Ibid.

117. Shapiro, p. 16.

118. Shapiro, p. 17.

119. Stember, p. 35.

120. Stember, p. 39.

121. Belth, 1979, p. 176.

122. Belth, 1979, p. 184.
123. Ibid.
124. Higham, p. 239.
125. Ibid.
126. Keller, p. 269.
127. Ibid.
128. Erens, p. 17.
129. Wrong, p. 331; In 1952, President Eisenhower said, "Our government makes no sense unless it is founded in deeply felt religious faith, and I don't care what [faith] it is." See Stember, p. 53.
130. Belth, 1979, p. 183.
131. Belth, 1979, p. 181.
132. Edward S. Shapiro, A Time for Healing: American Jewry Since World War II, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press), 1992, p. 15.
133. Ibid.
134. Shapiro, p. 29.
135. Shapiro, p. 195.
136. Stember, p. 105.
137. Thomas Odea, "The Changing Image of the Jew and the Contemporary Religious Situation: an exploration of ambiguities," Jews in the Mind of America, Charles Herbert Stember, ed., (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p. 321.
138. Shapiro, p. 54.

#### **CHAPTER 4 FOUNDATIONS OF BRITISH ANTISEMITISM AND DICKENS**

139. See Joshua Trachtenberg, The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation to Modern Antisemitism, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943). The Church did not allow Christians to handle money in the Middle Ages. The practice of money-lending fell to Jews as one of the only professions they were allowed to practice. This gave way to the classical image of the Jew as a miser.

140. Bernard Glassman, Anti-Semitic Stereotypes Without Jews: Images of the Jews in England, 1290-1700, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1975), p. 152.
141. Kaplan, p. 450.
142. Glassman, p. 153.
143. Erens, p. 13.
144. Patricia Erens, The Jew in American Cinema, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 11-13; Anderegg, p. 60.
145. This is Dickens' introductory description of Fagin in every published edition of Oliver Twist.
146. David Paroissien, The Companion to Oliver Twist, (Edinburgh: University Press, 1992), p. 97.
147. Ibid, p. 152.
148. Joseph Gold, Charles Dickens: Radical Moralists, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972), p. 65.
149. Edgar Rosenberg, From Shylock to Svengali: Jewish Stereotypes in English Fiction, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), p. 5.
150. Paroissien, p. 102.
151. Rosenberg, p. 125.
152. Rosenberg, p. 37.
153. Tony Kushner, The Persistence of Prejudice: Anti-Semitism in British Society During the Second World War, (New York: Manchester University Press, 1989), p. 43.
154. Rosenberg, p. 37.

#### CHAPTER 5 DEPICTIONS OF JEWS IN AMERICAN FILM TO 1947

155. Tom Tugend, "The Hollywood Jews," Dayka, vol. 5 (1975), no. 3, p. 8; Roche, p. 92. Early silent films labelled "Jew Comedy" became a staple. An ADL study noted, "Whenever a producer wished to depict a betrayer of public trust, a hard-boiled usurious money-lender, a crooked gambler, a white slaver...the actor was directed to represent himself as a Jew. The producers could not yet inject a Jewish dialect, but they used every stereotypical device at their command, notably the hawk nose, earlocks and long, sloppy-tailed coat."

In "The Movie Jew as an Image of Assimilation, 1903-1927," by Thomas Cripps, Journal of Popular Film vol. 4 (1975), p. 190-207, Cripps offers an alternative interpretation of the role of the Jewish character in early films. He states that the first decade of American movies was a "friendly" depiction of immigrants...which softened and sentimentalized the experience of Americanization into the metaphor of the melting pot. Cripps sees the early Jewish film experience as a nostalgic outgrowth of social liberalism, serving "as a preconditioning contributor to the fading of popular antisemitic stereotypes."

156. Erens, p. 15.

157. Josh Kanin, "Jews in Early Moving Pictures," Davka, vol. 5, (1975), no. 3, p. 11.

158. Kanin, p. 9.

159. Stuart Samuels, "The Evolutionary Image of the Jew in American Film," Ethnic Images in American Film and Television, Randall K. Miller, ed., (Philadelphia: The Balch Institute, 1978), p. 23.

160. Howard Suber, "Politics and Popular Culture: Hollywood at Bay, 1933-1953," American Jewish History, vol. 76 (June, 1979), p. 517.

161. See Robert Singerman, Antisemitic Propaganda: An Annotated Bibliography and Research Guide, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1982).

162. Singerman, p. xvii. This antisemitic trend follows into television where it is contended that Jews had a conduit into the family through which they could pollute and dominate society. Rabid antisemitism continued to penetrate every arena of American society as Eustace Clarence Mullins, obsessed with biological racism, reduced Jonas Salk's development of the polio vaccine to a newspaper headline which read, "Jews Mass Poison American Children." See Singerman, Introduction.

163. Erens, p. 29.

164. For a fascinating account of the little known pioneer of commercialized movies, see Eckhardt, Joseph P. and Linda Kowall, Siegmund Lubin and the Creation of the Motion Picture Industry 1896-1916, (Philadelphia: National Museum of American Jewish History, 1984).

165. Allen L. Woll and Randall K. Miller, Ethnic and Racial Images in American Film and Television, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1987), p. 309.
166. Stuart Fox, Jewish Films in the United States: A Comprehensive Survey and Descriptive Filmology, (Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1979), p. ix; Thomas Cripps, "The Movie Jew as an Image of Assimilation, 1903-1927," Journal of Popular Film vol. 4 (1975), p. 196; Lester Friedman Hollywood's Image of the Jew (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1982), p. 60. From 1908, when Walter Selig moved his company to California, until the present time, with the exception of Darryl Zanuck who ran the town's only "goy (non-Jewish) studio," (20th Century), Jews dominated the industry: Jesse Lasky, B. P. Schulberg, Adolph Zukor and Barney Balaban (Paramount); Marcus Loew, Louis Mayer and Irving Thalberg (MGM); Harry, Jack, Albert and Sam Warner (Warner Bros.); David O. Selznick (Selznick International); Samuel Goldwyn (Goldwyn Pictures); Harry Cohn (Columbia); Carl Laemmle (Universal); and William Fox (Fox Pictures).
167. Joseph P. Eckhardt and Linda Kowall, Siegmund Lubin and the Creation of the Motion Picture Industry 1896-1916, (Philadelphia: National Museum of American Jewish History, 1984), p. 17.
168. Ibid.
169. Erens, p. 4.
170. Steel, p. 191.
171. Ibid.
172. Steel, p. 195.
173. Woll and Miller, p. 310.
174. Erens, p. 20.
175. Tugend, p. 6.
176. Murray Schumach, The Face on the Cutting Room Floor: The story of movie and television censorship, (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1964), p. 105.
177. Tugend, p. 5.
178. Friedman, 1982, p. 33.

179. Friedman, 1987, p. 23; According to Lester Friedman (1982, p. 9) the most important silent films can be divided into the following general areas: historical Jewish personages, Biblical Jews, classic Jewish characters adopted from literary sources, Jews as hapless victims of society, cleaver-sneaky Jews, Jewish-gentile relationships, Jewish-Irish relationships, Jews as butts/creators of humor, ghetto life and foreign Jews. Jews were depicted in these films as pawnshop owners, clothing merchants, money brokers, sweatshop workers, peddlers, tailors and grocery and delicatessen owners.

180. Friedman, 1982, p. 40.

181. Cripps, 1975, p. 197.

182. K.R.M. Short, "The Experience of Eastern European Jewry in America as Portrayed in the Cinema of the 1920s and '30s." History & Film: Methodology Research Education The Proceedings of the VIII International Conference on History and the Audio-Visual Media, K.R.M. Short and Karen Fledelius, eds., (Copenhagen: Eventus, 1980), p. 148.

183. Friedman, 1982, p. 53.

184. Friedman, 1982, 53. Films of the Silent Era about Jews stress economic success, intermarriage and freedom and accommodation to American middle-class values. According to Friedman, only superficial, outward elements distinguish Jews from their neighbors; inner strengths bind them to all Americans.

185. *Abie's Irish Rose* (1926) was the screen version of Anne Nichols' fantastically successful 1924 play which was the classic Jewish-Irish love story between Rosemary Murphy and Abie Levy. Various versions of *Abie* appeared in the theatre and on screen for over two decades. It eventually was serialized for radio and even found its way into television as "Bridget Loves Bernie." See Lester Friedman, 1982, p. 28-34.

186. Friedman, 1982, p. 32.

187. Cripps, 1975, p. 202.

188. Short, 1980, p. 130.

189. Friedman, 1982, p. 64.

190. Friedman, 1987, p. 123.

191. Erens, p. 19.



192. Woll and Miller, p. 311.
193. Alan Spiegel, "The Vanishing Act: A Typology of the Jews in the Contemporary American Film," From Hester Street to Hollywood: The Jewish American Stage and Screen, Sarah Blancher Cohen, ed., (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), p. 260.
194. Friedman, 1982, p. 57; Also, Friedman, 1982, p. 74. Dramatist Elmer Rice's *Counselor at Law* (1933) was directed by a cousin of Carl Laemmle. He wanted to use a Jewish actor for the leading role. Producer Sam Goldwyn scorned, "You can't have a Jew playing a Jew. It wouldn't work on the screen."
195. Friedman (1982), p. 78. *The Life of Emile Zola* received Academy Award nominations for Best Actor, Best Supporting Actor, Best Original Screenplay, and won for Best Picture. The movie, which is the story of the Dreyfus Affair, almost totally ignores the blatant antisemitism which destroys Dreyfus' career. The word "Jew" is never heard in the film. Two years after Hitler proclaimed the antisemitic Nuremberg Laws, Warner Bros. produced a universally acclaimed film about the internationally famous Dreyfus Case that failed to emphasize why he was singled out, how he could have been so unjustly accused and why people were willing to believe he was guilty.
196. Friedman, 1987, p. 123; Also, Tugend, p. 6. It is a well-known historical film fact that the Jewish heads of the major studios met in the late 1930s to devise a defense plan against a growing perception that their films were biased toward Jews and Jewish causes. According to Tugend, they executed a three-point programme: 1. They would keep all Jewish names off the screen (hence, the name changes for all major actors/actresses), 2. All Jewish executives would sell their Cadillacs and Rolls Royces and 3. All the moguls would "get rid of their *shiksa* (gentile) mistresses." See Tom Tugend, "The Hollywood Jews," Dayka vol. 5 (1975), no. 3, 4-8.
197. Spiegel, p. 260.
198. Woll and Miller, p. 311.
199. I.C. Jarvie, Movies as Social Criticism, (London: The Scarecrow Press, 1978), p. 196. For a full presentation of film censorship and the Production Code, see Leonard J. Leff and Jerold L. Simmons, The Dame in the Kimono: Hollywood, Censorship, & The Production Code From The 1920s To The 1960s (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990).
200. Friedman, 1982, p. 79.

201. Ibid. Also, Friedman, 1982, p. 80 and 83. Interestingly, the Russian film *Professor Mamlock* (1938), which was the story of overt antisemitism to a "non-aryan," was reviewed in the New York Times which complained about the lack of such subjects in our own cinema. "The film says nothing of Nazi persecution of Jews in Germany, but that it says anything at all, should be news to American filmgoers." An American-made film, *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* (1939), was a "heavy-handed attack" on Nazi activities in America. The film proved extremely controversial. Pro-Nazi sympathizers in Milwaukee burned a theatre in the heavily populated German city. Yet, *Confessions* has no Jewish characters and Jews are never mentioned.

202. Friedman, 1982, p. 115. The continuing emphasis on total assimilation is a part of the homefront films. Jews remain practically invisible beneath their Americanized exteriors. Examples are Lee J. Cobb's portrayal of Dave Morris, the Jewish lawyer in *Men of Boys Town* (1941). The character's Jewishness is incidental to the plot and to his personality. Entertainment biographies of famous Jewish entertainers appeared during the '40s (Al Jolson, *The Jolson Story* 1946; George Gershwin, *Rhapsody in Blue*, 1945; and Jerome Kern, *Till the Clouds Roll By*, 1947). If mentioned at all, the subject's ethnic background is downplayed and his Americaness, not his Jewishness, is emphasized (p. 90).

203. Jarvie, 1978, p. 93.

204. Woll and Miller, p. 312; Also, K.R.M. Short, "Hollywood Fights Antisemitism, 1940-1945," Film and Radio Propaganda in World War II (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press), 1983, p. 159. In January, 1943, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, president of the American Jewish Congress (AJC), received a cable from representatives of the World Jewish Congress in Switzerland that the Nazis were killing 6,000 Polish Jews a day. The AJC mounted a campaign using every form of political pressure and public persuasion...which included a direct approach to the leaders of the motion picture industry with pleas that some studio should produce a film dramatizing the genocide raging in Europe. The AJC was advised by the chief of the Bureau of Motion Pictures Office of War Information that the moguls' reaction was, "It might be unwise from the standpoint of the Jews themselves to have a picture dealing solely with Hitler's treatment of their people, but interest has been indicated in the possibility of a picture covering various groups that have been subject to the Nazi treatment. This of course would include the Jews."

205. Frank Krutnik, In a Lonely Street: Film Noir, Genre, Masculinity, (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 57.

206. Thomas Cripps, *Casablanca, Tennessee Johnson and The Negro Soldiers--Hollywood Liberals and World War II*, Feature Films as History, K.R.M. Short, ed., (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1981), p. 138.

207. K.R.M. Short, "Hollywood Fights Antisemitism, 1945-1947," Feature Film As History, K.R.M. Short, ed., (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981 b), p. 157; Also, Friedman, 1982, p. 195. Once America entered the war, a series of anti-Nazi films exploded with Jewish characters. The 1944 films *None Shall Escape* and *The Seventh Cross* portray Jews as symbolic victims of Nazi cruelty.

208. Garth Jowett, Film: The Democratic Art, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1976), p. 313.

209. Doherty, p. 139.

210. Ibid.

211. Jowett, p. 313. Also, Isadore Kaufman. American Jews in World War II, Volume I. (New York: Dial Press, 1947), p. 349. Contrary to popularly held antisemitic opinions about Jews as cowards, a total of 550,000 Jewish men and women served in the armed forces during the war. Approximately 11-12% of the total Jewish population of the U.S. were service people; this was consistent with averages for the total U.S. population. Jews in the armed forces were three and one-half percent of the total armed forces which approximates their ratio in the total U.S. population.

212. Doherty, p. 139.

213. Cripps, 1981, p. 138.

214. Friedman, 1982, p. 89.

215. Cripps, 1981, p. 138.

216. Ibid.

217. Ibid, p. 138.

218. Krutnik, p. 57.

219. Cripps, p. 139. Also, it must be understood that in this era, the term "racism" meant both racial and religious discrimination. "Race hatred" was a euphemism for antisemitism, or "Jew hatred."

220. Doherty, p. 5.

221. Friedman, 1982, p. 95; Erens, p. 171. Darryl Zanuck declared, "I look back and I recall picture after picture, pictures so strong and powerful that they sold the American way of life not only to Americans, but to the entire world. They sold it so strongly that when the dictators took over Italy and Germany, what did Hitler and his flunky, Mussolini, do? The first thing they did was ban our pictures." See Thomas Doherty, Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture and World War II, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 41.
222. Doherty, p. 205.
223. Friedman, 1982, p. 96.
224. Erens, p. 171.
225. K.R.M. Short, "Hollywood Fights Antisemitism, 1945-1947," Feature Films as History, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press), 1981, 159. Darryl F. Zanuck's *The Purple Heart* (1944) is representative of the platoon genre films. The eight members of the flight crew represented White Anglo-Saxon America, as well as the Irish, Italian and Polish immigrant communities and the religious beliefs of Protestantism, Roman Catholicism and Judaism. The film's Jewish character, Lt. Wayne Greenbaum (Sam Levene) provides both humanity and the voice of the law.
226. Short, 1981 b, p. 157.
227. Erens, p. 172; Friedman, 1982, p. 168; Short, 1981b, p. 162. Also, Lester Friedman, The Jewish Image in American Film (Seacaucus, N.J.: Citadel Press, 1987), p. 124. The soldier-Jew never seems to be concerned with his fellow Jews perishing in Europe. The moguls and filmmakers throughout the 1940s feared that even hinting at a possible connection between American Jews and those suffering in Europe would lead critics to conclude that Jews were fighting for personal rather than patriotic reasons.
228. Short, 1981b, p. 163.
229. Friedman, 1982, p. 169.
230. Samuels, p. 30.
231. Shapiro, p. 16.
232. K.R.M. Short, "Hollywood Fights Antisemitism, 1940-1945), Film & Radio Propaganda in World War II, K.R.M. Short, ed., (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983), p. 146.

233. Ibid.
234. Erens, p. 173.
235. Friedman, 1987, p. 131.
236. Shapiro, p. 17.
237. Ibid.
238. Jowett, p. 326.
239. Short, 1983, p. 169.
240. Friedman, 1982, p. 95.
241. Friedman, 1982, p. 118.
242. Doherty, p. 271.
243. Shapiro, p. 18.
244. Friedman, 1982, p. 124.
245. Ibid, p. 118.
246. Spiegel, p. 262.
247. Shaprio, p. 19.

**CHAPTER 6 CROSSFIRE: THE AFTERMATH OF CONSCIOUS LIBERALISM**

248. Samuel Flowerman and Marie Jahoda, "Can We Fight Prejudice Scientifically Toward a Partnership of Action and Research," Commentary, vol. 2 (December, 1946), no. 6., p. 583.
249. Ibid, p. 386.
250. Flowerman and Jahoda, p. 585.
251. Ruth Inglis, Freedom of the Movies: A Report on Self Regulation from The Commission on Freedom of the Press (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1947), p. iv.
252. Ibid, p. vi.
253. Leo Rosten, "Movies and Propaganda," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Gordon S. Watkins, ed. (Philadelphia: The American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1947), p. 124.

254. Roche, p. 254.
255. Short, 1983, p. 132.
256. Richard Dyer MacCann, "The Problem Film in America," Film and Society, Richard Dyer MacCann, ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), p. 51.
257. Ibid, p. 174.
258. Erens, p. 187.
259. Short, 1981b, p. 197.
260. Erens, 1984, p. 175.
261. Krutnik, p. 58.
262. Campbell, p. 59.
263. Russell Campbell, "The Ideology of the Social Conscious Movie: Three Films of Darryl F. Zanuck," Quarterly Review of Film Studies vol. 3, (Winter, 1978), p. 57.
264. MacCann, p. 54. MacCann is quoting from a speech Schary delivered to the National Conference of (Motion Picture) Controllers titled "Motion Pictures and Their Influence on the Modern World," 1955.
265. K.R.M. Short, "Hollywood Fights Anti-Semitism, 1945-1947," Feature Films as History, K.R.M. Short, Ed. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981), p. 167.
266. Ibid; Interestingly, producer Adrian Scott and director Edward Dmytryk had approached Dore Schary as soon as he was appointed to head RKO studios in 1945 regarding filming Crossfire. Scott suggested substituting the homosexual character in the novel with a Jew, feeling this would enable them to deal with the "destructive consequences of prejudice, as well as zero in on a timely subject (antisemitism)." See Erens, 1984, p. 174.
267. Krutnik, p. 15.
268. Ibid, p. xiv.
269. "Crossfire," International Directory of Films and Filmmakers: Films, Nicholas Thomas, ed., vol. 1. (London: St. James Press, 1991), p. 216-217.
270. Spencer Selby, Dark City: the Film Noir (London: McFarland, 1984), p. 138.

271. Friedman, 1982, p.125.
272. Krutnik, p.209.
273. Robert Sklar, Movie-Made America: A Social History of American Movies (New York: Random House, 1975), p. 280.
274. Leonard J. Leff and Jerold R. Simmons, "Film into Story: The Narrative Scheme of Crossfire," Literature Film Quarterly vol. 12 (July, 1984), p. 176.
275. Adrian Scott, "Some of My Worst Friends," Screenwriter, vol. 3 (October 1947), p. 2.
276. Erens, 1984, p. 174.
277. Eunice Cooper and Marie Jahoda, "The Evasion of Propaganda: How Prejudiced People Respond to Anti-Prejudice Propaganda," Journal of Psychology vol. 23 (January 1947), p. 19.
278. Idid, p. 19.
279. K.R.M. Short, 1981b, p. 168.
280. Cooper and Jahoda, p. 24.
281. Goldman, p.24.
282. Alan Spiegel, "Contemporary American Film," From Hester Street to Hollywood: The Jewish-American Stage and Screen, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), p. 261.
283. Short, 1981b, p. 167.
284. Ibid, p. 168.
285. Short, 1981b, p. 168.
286. Ibid, p. 168. For a full discussion of the effects of mass propaganda on attitudes involving bigotry, see Samuel H. Flowerman, "Mass Propaganda in the War Against Bigotry," Journal of Abnormal Psychology, vol. 42, (October, 1947), no. 4, p. 429-439.
287. Ibid, p. 169.
288. Short, 1981b, p.169.
289. Goldman, p.24.
290. Erens, p. 175.

291. Short, 1981b, p. 169.
292. I.C. Jarvie, Movies as Social Criticism, (London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1978), p. 15. According to Jarvie, sometimes the propagandist message will not just be missed, it will be reversed, as when antisemitic remarks in a film campaigning against antisemitism are absorbed into the viewer's antisemitism. Selective perception is so strong that the intended message is reversed and has been labeled as the "boomerang" effect. The boomerang effect is operating when reactions to a film's message can be predicted on the basis of previously held audience attitudes.
293. Louis E. Raths and Frank N. Trager, "Public Opinion and Crossfire," Journal of Educational Sociology, vol. 21, (February, 1948), p. 348.
294. Ibid, p. 351.
295. Ibid, p. 348.
296. Ibid, p. 349.
297. Ibid, p. 358.
298. Ibid, p. 362.
299. Ibid, p. 368.
300. Leff and Simmons, 1984, p. 172
301. Variety, (18 June 1947), p. 55.
302. "Daring Pays Off at the Box Office," Variety (30 July 1947), p.10-11.
303. Ibid, p. 11.
304. Variety, (16 July 1947), p. 6; (30 July 1947), p. 11.
305. Ibid.
306. "The Current Cinema: Anti-Semitism and Advertising," New Yorker vol. 23 (19 July 1947), p. 46.
307. Eric A. Goldman, "The Fight to Bring the Subject of Anti-Semitism to the Screen: The Story of the Production of Crossfire and Gentleman's Agreement," Davka vol. 5 (1975) no. 3, p. 24.



308. Bosley Crowther, "Crossfire," New York Times Film Reviews, 1913-1968, volume 3 1939-1948, (New York: New York Times and Arno Press, 1970), 23 July 1947.
309. Lester Friedman, 1987, p. 142.
310. "Movies," New Republic vol. 117 (11 August 1947), p. 34.
311. D. Mosdell, "Film Review," Canadian Forum vol. 28 (May 1948), p. 40.
312. John Mason Brown, "If You Prick Us," Saturday Review of Literature vol 30 (6 December 1947), p. 68.
313. Ibid.
314. Leff and Simmons, 1984, p. 171.
315. Ibid, p. 178.
316. Elliot E. Cohen, "Letter to the Movie-Makers: The Film Drama as a Social Force," Commentary, vol. 4 (August, 1947), no. 2, p. 111.
317. Ibid, p. 112.
318. Ibid, p. 117.
319. Short, 1981b, p. 173.
320. Ibid, p. 113.
321. Ibid.
322. Ibid, p. 173. Short cites, as Cohen's argument, that of the 1,200 people polled in Boston and Denver, there was almost a 50-50 split on whether or not participants felt that Montgomery should have had a better reason for killing Samuels.
323. Cohen, p. 117.
324. Cohen, p. 114.
325. Dore Schary, "Letter from a Movie-Maker: Crossfire as Weapon Against Anti-Semitism," Commentary vol.4 (October, 1947), no. 4, p. 344.
326. Ibid.
327. Ibid, p. 345.

328. Idid.
329. Ibid, p. 346.
330. Ibid, p. 347.
331. Cohen, 51.
332. Ibid, 52.
333. Erens, 1984, p. 176.
334. Ibid. Erens uses Scott's quote from an article he authored titled "Some of My Worst Friends," Screenwriter, (October 3, 1947), p. 1-6.
335. Ibid.
336. Erens, 1984, p. 176.
337. Leff and Simmons, 1984, p. 177.

**CHAPTER 7 GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT: AMERICAN ANTISEMITISM  
EXPLODES ON THE SCREEN**

338. Howard Suber, "Politics and Popular Culture: Hollywood at Bay, 1933-1953," American Jewish History, vol. 76 (June 1979), p.527.
339. Erens, p. 193.
340. Shapiro, p. 41.
341. Ibid, p. 42.
342. Ibid, p.42.
343. Suber, p. 527. It should be noted that the HUAC focused its attention on any one or group whom it deemed anti-American, not only the Jews. Since the Hollywood industry was known to be fairly radical and since it was primarily comprised of Jews, it became a convenient forum for Rankin's antisemitic prejudice, as well as an obvious target for the HUAC.
344. Ibid, p. 527.
345. Suber, p. 528-531.
346. George Kellerman, "A Survey of the Anti-Semitic Press," The Jewish War Veteran, (March 1947), p.4.

347. Shapiro, p. 36.
348. Ibid, p. 36.
349. "The Decline of Fraternity Bias," RIGHTS vol. 1 (April-May) no. 6, 1957, p.14.
350. "A Study of Religious Discrimination by Social Clubs," RIGHTS vol. 4 (January 1962), no. 3, p. 86.
351. "Admissions Policies of Medical Schools," RIGHTS, vol.2 (January-February 1958), no. 1, p. 25.
352. Ibid.
353. Ibid, p. 26.
354. Ibid, p. 27.
355. "Employment Discrimination," RIGHTS, vol. 1 (December 1956) no. 4, p. 5.
356. Ibid.
357. Ibid.
358. Ibid.
359. Ibid, p. 6.
360. K.R.M. Short, "Feature Films as History," Feature Films as History, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981), p. 31.
361. Ibid, p. 31.
362. Campbell, p.59.
363. Short, 1981b, p. 32.
364. Goldman, p.24.
365. Ibid, p.69.
366. Short, 1981b, p. 175.
367. Elia Kazan, Elia Kazan: A Life, (New York: Knopf, 1988), p. 250.
368. "Masha Leon," Forward, (March 14, 1997), p. 11. Columnist Masha Leon interviewed Laura Z. Hobson for the Forward in 1984. Leon notes that "Z" stands for Zametkin.

Hobson's parents emigrated to the U.S. from Russia and insisted that their children become Americanized, instructing them not to speak Yiddish or exhibit any Jewish mannerisms.

369. Short, 1981b, p. 179.

370. Ibid, p. 179.

371. Campbell, p. 64.

372. Jean-Paul Sartre, Antisemite and Jew, (New York: Schocken Books, 1948,) p. 55-57.

373. Campbell, p. 66.

374. Lester Friedman, The Jewish Image in American Film, (Seacaucus, N. J.: Citadel Press, 1987), p. 143. Recalled by an unnamed stagehand working on the crew of Gentleman's Agreement.

375. Irwin C. Rosen, "The Effect of the Motion Picture Gentleman's Agreement on Attitudes towards Jews," Journal of Psychology vol. 26 (October 1948), p. 529.

376. Ibid, p. 536.

377. Variety (February 4, 1948), p. 8; Variety, (February 18, 1948), p. 11.

378. "Gentleman's Agreement: The Academy Award Picture," Variety, (March 31, 1948), p. 5.

379. "20th's Good Breaks On 'Gentleman's' for Easter, 'Iron Curtain' for Timing," Variety, (March 17, 1948), p. 2.

380. 'Agreement' 20th's Top Grosser This Year, \$3,900,000," Variety, (Dec. 22, 1948), p. 3.

381. "Tulsa Court K.O.'s Gerald Smith Suit Vs. 'Agreement,'" Variety, (April 14, 1948), p. 5.

382. "Johnston's Pitch to Franco Gets Spanish OK on 'Agreement,'" Variety, (Dec. 29, 1948), p. 2.

383. Short, 1981b, p. 185.

384. Mary B. Miller, "The New Movies: Gentleman's Agreement," National Board of Review Magazine vol. 22 (December 1947) no. 7, p. 4.

385. "New Pictures: Gentleman's Agreement," Time, vol. 50 (Nov. 17, 1947), p. 105.

386. Erens, p. 177.
387. Ibid, p. 177.
388. Ibid, p. 177.
389. Elliot Cohen, "Mr. Zanuck's Gentleman's Agreement," Commentary, vol. 5 (January, 1948), no. 1, p. 51.
390. Ibid, p. 56.
391. Ibid, p. 53.
392. Campbell, p. 64.
393. Miller, p. 5.
394. "Movies: Gentleman's Agreement," New Republic, vol. 117 (November 17 1947), p. 38.
395. Ibid, p. 38.
396. Brown, p. 68 and 71.
397. Bosley Crowther, "Gentleman's Agreement," New York Times Film Reviews, 1913-1968 volume 3 1939-1948, (New York: New York Times and Arno Press, 1970), Nov. 12, 1947.
398. Hermine Rich Isaacs, "Love and the Beast," Theatre Arts, (January, 1948), no. 32, p. 32-33.
399. Erens, p. 177.
400. Henry L. Feingold, Bearing Witness: How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995), p. 198.
401. Stember, p. 79.
402. Stember, p. 83.
403. Shapiro, p. 4.
404. Ibid, p. 5.
405. Ibid, p. 4.
406. Ibid, p. 83.

**CHAPTER 8 OLIVER TWIST: THE LITMUS TEST**

407. "Facts: Gentleman's Agreement," Variety, (May 12,

1948), p. 14. The film had become, according to the article, "the most honored picture in screen history, the winner of 53 awards."

408. Neil Sinyard, Filming Literature: The Art of Screen Adaptation, (London: Croom Helm, 1986), p. 118.

409. Pixie Benson, "And Now Oliver," Christian Science Monitor, (July 24, 1948), p. 5.

410. Ibid.

411. Michael Anderegg, David Lean, ( Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984), p. 49.

412. It is important to note that Cruikshank indicated that he had intended Fagin to be a "Jewish old clothes man," but Dickens seems to have another vision for this character. See William Feaver, Ed., George Cruikshank, (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1974), p. 18.

413. Stephen M. Silverman, David Lean, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1992), p. 76.

414. Catherine Henry, "Sir Alec Guinness," International Directory of Films and Film Makers: Actors and Actresses, Nicholas Thomas, Ed., vol. 3 (London: St. James Press, 1992), p. 425.

415. "Oliver Twist: Dickens and the Screen," Times (London, June 23, 1948), p. 7D.

416. "Oliver Twist--Review," Variety (June 30, 1948), p. 10.

417. D. Mosdell, "Film Review--A Mixed Bag," Canadian Forum, vol. 28, (November, 1948), p. 183.

418. Kenneth Tynan, Alec Guinness, (London: Theatre Book Club, 1953) p. 65. The politically satirical newspaper Punch was founded in London in 1841 and often depicted Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli as Fagin. The newspaper's sketches were modeled on Cruikshank's drawings in the novel Oliver Twist. See Appendix #B. The members of the Punch staff were Dickens' closest friends. See Fred Kaplan, Oliver Twist: Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Sources, Early Reviews and Criticism, Fred Kaplan, Ed., (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1993), p. 450.

419. Henry, p. 424.

420. Leonard J. Leff and Jerold L. Simmons, The Dame in the Kimono: Hollywood Censorship and the Production Code from the 1920s to the 1960s, (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990). See Appendix for the entire text of the Motion Picture Code.
421. W.F. Willis, MGM employee, to unidentified, January 24, 1930, *Oliver Twist* file, PCA.
422. Islin Auster, PCA, to Gabriel Hess, general attorney for the Motion Picture Association, July 3, 1935, *Oliver Twist* file, PCA.
423. Ibid.
424. Friedman, 1982, p. 17.
425. Jerry Vermilye, The Great British Films, (Seacaucus, N.J.: The Citadel Press, 1978), p. 120.
426. Erens, p. 189.
427. Breen's response to Reginald Allen of J. Arthur Rank after receiving the first draft of Lean's script for review, May 13, 1947, *Oliver Twist* file, PCA.
428. "G.W. Pabst's *Ritual Murder* Film Production Stirs Austrian Protests," Variety, (July 9, 1947), p. 3.
429. Ibid.
430. Erens, p. 232.
431. Erens, p. 10.
432. Silverman, p. 77.
433. "EL Sensitive on 'Twist' for the U.S.," Variety, (September 1, 1948), p. 4.
434. "Eric Johnston Reply to New York Board of Rabbis," New York Times, Sept. 10, 1948, p. 4.
435. "The Shape of Things," Nation, (October 30, 1948), p. 479.
436. "Rank Seems Kinda All Twisted Up On 'Oliver' in the U.S.," Variety, (September 8, 1948), p. 3 and 48.
437. *Oliver Twist* Dramatizes Nazi Stereotypes of Jews," ADL Bulletin, (April, 1950), p. 6. Julius Streicher's pre-war German newspaper Der Strumer was responsible for fomenting German hatred of Jews. It was a propaganda tool of the Third

Reich and often ran pictures of Jews modeled on George Cruikshank's illustrations. For a full treatment, see Randall L. Bytwerk, Julius Streicher, (New York: Stein and Day, 1983).

438. "Rank Stalling 'Twist' for U.S. Market a Year," Variety, (September 15, 1948), p. 22.

439. "Berlin Jews Object to 'O.T.' Film," Times (London, February 21, 1949), p. 3D; "Fagin in Berlin Provokes a Riot," Life, (March 7, 1949), p. 38.

440. "No 'Twist' Curves in American Zone," Variety, (February 23, 1949), p. 3.

441. *Ibid*, p. 6.

442. "The Tangled Tale of *Oliver Twist*," ADL Bulletin, (March, 1951), p. 1.

443. "Anti-Semitic *Twist*?" Time, (October 4, 1948), p. 96.

444. *Ibid*.

445. Erens, p. 232.

446. Mosdell, p. 183.

447. Erens, p. 233. Quoting the Saturday Review, May 28, 1949.

448. "Aussie Rabbi Pleads For More Understanding Of Jews in Making of Films," Variety, (October 20, 1948), p. 50.

449. Quoted from the Independent Film Journal, December 2, 1950, *Oliver Twist* File, PCA.

450. "*Oliver Twist* Ban Scored," New York Times, (December 11, 1950), p. 31; "*Twist*" Twists," Newsweek, (December 18, 1950), p. 93; Merle Miller, "Love Fagin and the Censors," Saturday Review, (January 27, 1951), p. 28-30; Henry Hart, "*The Miracle and Oliver Twist*," Films in Review, vol. 2, (May, 1951), no. 5, p. 1-6.

451. ADL Bulletin, (April, 1950), p. 1; Arnold Forster, A Measure of Freedom: An Anti-Defamation League Report, (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1950). In May, 1949, the nine Supreme Court justices wrote four separate opinions in the case of the City of Chicago v. Arthur Terminiello. The issue was: How far could a rabble-rouser go in inciting an audience in a public hall against a religious group. The *Oliver twist* controversy might have been resolved if there had been basic



agreement on Terminiello. Is the question freedom to speak, as in protesting the stereotype which Fagin represented or is it freedom to destroy a religious or racial group, as in allowing Rank to distribute his film? ADL points out that this is the dilemma inherent in the right of free speech. It says, "Can the first be protected without stopping short of the second?"

452. Breen to MacMillan, Jr., (January 18, 1951), *Oliver Twist* File, PCA.

453. Silverman, p. 78.

454. John Davis of the Rank organization in London to R. Benjamin, Rank's representative in New York, conveying Lean's message, (April 2, 1951), *Oliver Twist* File, PCA. According to Edgar Rosenberg, From Shylock to Svengali: Jewish Stereotypes in English Fiction, Fagin is considered by Dickens' devotees to be one of his great comic villains. Guinness' frame of reference for his elaborate caricature was this image of "hilarious evil." See Rosenberg, p. 125; also, George Ford, Dickens and His readers: Aspects of Novel Criticism Since 1836, (Princeton: University Press, 1955), p. 139.

455. Davis to Rank, (April 2, 1951), *Oliver Twist* File, PCA.

456. Ibid. Lean felt the inclusion of such a scene would demonstrate the righteous indignation of the Jewish community against one disreputable member defaming the respectable reputation of the many.

457. Unidentified quote from the Motion Picture Herald, (May 5, 1951), *Oliver Twist* File, PCA.

458. Anderegg, p. 60.

459. ADL Bulletin, (March, 1951), p. 1 and 6-8.

460. Murray Schumach, The Face on the Cutting Room Floor, (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1964), p. 103.

461. Ilja Wachs, "The Jewish Stereotype," ADL Bulletin, (May, 1974), p. 2.

**CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSIONS: RELATIVE TRUTHS, HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL REALITIES AND THE PERSISTENCE OF ANTISEMITISM**

462. Shapiro, p. 10.

463. Shapiro, p. 13.

464. Shapiro, p. 15.
465. Shapiro, p. 38.
466. Belth, p. 179.
467. Ibid.
468. Nathan C. Belth, A Promise to Keep: A Narrative of the American Encounter With Anti-Semitism, (New York: Times Books, 1979), p. 176.
469. Sarna, p. 47.
470. See Henry Feingold, Bearing Witness: How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995).
471. Herbert J. Gans, "The Rise of the Problem Film: An Analysis of Changes in Hollywood Films and the American Audience," Social Problems, vol. 11, (Spring, 1964), no. 4, p. 331.
472. "Fagin in Berlin Provokes a Riot," Life, (March 7, 1949), p. 38-41.
473. See Erens "Introduction," p. 1-28.
474. Erens, p. 149.
475. Dore Schary, "Censorships and Stereotypes," Saturday Review, (April 30, 1949), p. 9.
476. Belth, p. 53. "British Incensed at 'Sword' Film," Variety, (August 24, 1949), p. 4. During the summer of 1949, Universal released *Sword in the Desert*. Variety said, "The controversial film about the birth of Israel has met with universal condemnation by the British national press which objected to showing British soldiers being killed by Jews. The headlines from Britain are 'The U.S. sends us a film not fit for the eyes of Britons.'" British post-war attitudes about Jews were altogether different from the Americans, as Britain had been unofficially at war with Zionists who were attempting to oust the British from Palestine. Endemic British antisemitism, coupled with national attitudes of British patriotism, helped to make antisemitism a completely different issue in Great Britain than in the U.S. Compounding this difference in attitude was the contrast between the Production Code office in America and the British Board of Film Censors (BBFC) in England. According to K.R.M. Short, film historian, the story in England during the post-war period is different primarily in the extent to which the

function of censorship was an informal expression of the government operating through the BBFC. The Hays Office (PCA) concerns were moral, but the BBFC also sought to preserve and protect the [British] nation's political and class institutions. See Short, 1981a, p. 34. These factors must be considered when analyzing the British rationale which allowed the making of *Oliver Twist* (1948).

477. See Schary, "Censorships and Stereotypes."

478. Dana Polan, Power and Paranoia: History, Narrative and the American Cinema, 1940-1950, (New York: Columbia University, 1986), p. 7.

479. Michael Klein and Gillian Parker, The English Novel and the Movies, (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1981), p. 9.

480. Erens, p. 231.

481. Ibid. Also, Chaim Solomon, a Jew, helped to finance America's Revolutionary War.

482. Friedman, 1982, p. 5.

483. Campbell, p. 66.

484. Erens, p. 177.

485. Erens, p. 177.

486. Leff and Simmons, p. 37.

487. George Perry, The Great British Picture Show, (London: Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, 1974), p. 112.

488. June Blythe, "Can Public Relations Help Reduce Prejudice?", Public Opinion Quarterly, vol. 11, (Fall 1947), no. 3, p. 342.

489. Ibid.

490. Ibid, p. 344.

491. Ibid, p. 345.

492. Don Calahan and Frank N. Trager, "Free Answer Stereotypes and Anti-Semitism," Public Opinion Quarterly, vol. 13, (Spring, 1949), no. 1, p. 97.

493. Ibid, p. 101.

494. Blythe, p. 350. In discussing antisemitic attitudes, it is important to point out that prior to WWII, Jews were characterized as a race. Classic stereotypic images of Jews as clannish, aliens and outsiders with loyalties to foreign governments spring from this perception. After the war, Jews were viewed as a separate social group, rather than a distinctly different race. According to Charles Stember, director of the National Opinion Research Center, the notion that Jews are a race provides a basis for the frequent antisemitic references to the Jews' peculiar appearance. If the Jew is a member of an alien race, it is appropriate for him to have distinct physical characteristics. Racial perceptions of the Jew implied that both the over-all image of the Jew and its components are biologically fixed, and therefore, independent of cultural factors. See Stember, p. 59.

495. Gerber, p. 34.

496. Ibid.

497. Ibid, p. 93.

498. Dennis H. Wrong, "The Psychology of Prejudice and the Future of Anti-Semitism in America," Jews in the Mind of America, Charles Herbert Stember, Ed., (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p.328.

499. Ben Halpern, "Anti-Semitism in the Perspective of Jewish History," Jews in the Mind of America, Charles Herbert Stember, Ed., (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p. 285.

500. Stember, 127.

501. Gerber, p. 8.

502. Stember, p. 303.

503. Gary A. Tobin, Jewish Perceptions of Antisemitism, (New York: Plenum Press, 1988), p. 33. Tobin's surveys were conducted through the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University and the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago.

504. Spiegel, p. 262.

505. Thomas F. Pettegrew, "Parallel and Distinctive Changes in Anti-Semitism and Anti-Negro Attitudes," Jews in the Mind of America, Charles Herbert Stember, Ed., (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p.398.

506. Campbell, p. 60.

507. Ibid.
508. Suber, p. 530.
509. Ibid.
510. For a complete treatment of the HUAC hearings see Larry Ceplair and Steven Englund, The Inquisition in Hollywood: Politics in the Film Community, 1930-1960, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1980).
511. Halpern, p. 297.
512. Charles S. Liebman and Steven M. Cogen, Two Worlds of Judaism: the Israeli and the American Experience, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 49.
513. Tobin, p. 39.
514. Tom Tugend, "The Hollywood Jews," Davka, vol. 5 (1975), no. 3, p. 8.
515. Robert Leiter, "Taking History Personally: Martin Gilbert Charts the Chaos of the 20th Century," Forward vol CI (January 2, 1998) no. 31,165: p. 10.
516. "Baby-smuggling," Jewish Press of Omaha, (December 22, 1995), p. 7.
517. Christopher Burbach, "Neighborhoods: Aspects of Hate," Omaha World Herald, (June 20, 1997), p. 37.
518. Ibid, p. 49.
519. Tobin, p. 60. A 1985 article in the Baltimore Jewish Times, states, "Those who say that 'it can't happen here' should be reminded that not very far from Baltimore--only a 45 minute drive from the White House--at Loudon, Va., Lyndon H. La Rouché, Jr. has recently established on a \$2.3 million property, the national headquarters of his well-bred antisemitic, neo-nazi organization, which lists as its enemies 'narcotic gangsters, liberals, zionists, agents of Moscow, the Rockefellers, the trilateral commission, the queen of England and international terrorism.' Not only can it happen here. It is happening here." See Tobin, p. 93.
520. David S. Hoffman, High-Tech Hate: Extremist Use of the Internet, (New York: ADL, 1997), p. 4-5.
521. Ibid, p. 1.
522. Ibid, p. 30.

523. Ibid, p. 31.
524. Ibid, p. 73.
525. Shapiro, p. 230.
526. Thomas Doherty. Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 266.
527. Inglis, p. 5.
528. Doherty, p. 266.
529. Ibid, p. 5.
530. Ibid, p. 269.
531. Siegfried Kracauer, "National Types as Hollywood Presents Them," Public Opinion Quarterly, vol. 13, (Spring, 1949), no. 1, p. 57.
532. For a full presentation, see Ruth A. Inglis, Freedom of the Movies: A Report on Self-Regulation From the Commission on Freedom of the Press, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947).
533. Erens, p. 187.
534. Erens, p. 149.
535. Rath and Trager, p. 349.
536. Ibid, p. 363.
537. Doherty, p. 271.
538. Adrian Scott, "Some of My Worst Friends," Screenwriter, vol. 3, (October 1947), p. 5.
539. Rath and Trager, p. 368.
540. Campbell, p.59.
541. Kracauer, p. 55.
542. Ibid, p. 57.
543. Ibid, p. 56.

544. Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Robert K. Merton, "Mass Communication, Popular Taste and Organized Social Action," The Communication of Ideas: A Series of Addresses for the Institute for Religion and Social Studies, 1946-1947, Lyman Bryson, ed., (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1964), p. 105.
545. Barry Gross, "No Victim, She: Barbra Streisand and the Movie Jew," Journal of Ethnic Studies, vol. 3, (Spring, 1975), p. 28.
546. Richard Taylor, Film Propaganda: Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany, (London: Croom Helm, 1979), p. 22.
547. Ibid.
548. Irving Thalberg, "The Modern Photoplay," Film and Society, Richard Dyer MacCann, ed., (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), p. 45.
549. Richard Dyer MacCann, "The Problem Film in America," Film and Society, Richard Dyer MacCann, Ed., (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), p. 58.
550. Campbell, p. 60.
551. Gans, p. 336.
552. William Cutter, "Stereotyping: A Dissenting View," Davka, vol. 5, (1974), no. 3, p. 33.
553. Hortense Powdermaker, Hollywood the Dream Factory, (Boston: Little, Brown), 1950, p. 14.
554. Gans, p. 335.
555. Tobin, p. 104.
556. Tobin, p. 105.
557. Friedman, 1982, p. 108.
558. Polan, p. 8.
559. Short, 1981 b., p. 183.
560. Sarna, p. 47.
561. Tobin, p. 101.
562. Friedman, 1987, p.10.

- 563. Ibid.
- 564. Friedman, 1987, p. 10.
- 565. Friedman, 1982, p. vii.
- 566. Short, 1981 a., p. 34.



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