

# THE SILVER SCREEN'S BOLSHEVIK SUBCULTURE

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## Red Star over Hollywood

### The Film Colony's Long Romance with the Left

Ronald Radosh and Allis Radosh

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*Reviewed by Virgil Hicks*

George Clooney's latest Hollywood creation, *Good Night, and Good Luck*, depicts an era in which, as received wisdom has it, a reactionary group of politicians launches vicious attacks on suspected Communists in America, with salvos aimed at Hollywood being among the most prominent. This story of the Hollywood blacklist constitutes almost a "subgenre in Hollywood," according to Ronald Radosh, author of three books on the culpability of American Communists, and his wife Allis. Despite claims to the contrary by Hollywood writers and directors that their individual works are "courageous innovations," the Radoshes show how common the theme really is, noting that "the industry would paint the era over and over in the accepted fashion: as a black-and-white story of innocent Red heroes and nasty congressional villains." The 1973 Barbra Streisand-Robert Redford romance *The Way We Were*, for example, revolved around the radical activities of Streisand's character and the non-Communist orientation of her boyfriend. In 1977, *Julia* featured Jane Fonda as Hollywood radical Lillian Hellman, while just over a decade later *Guilty by Suspicion* would find Robert De Niro as a composite fictional director resisting pressure to testify before the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC). The pace of such films only picked up from there.

For instance, Tim Robbins's ambitious film *Cradle Will Rock* (1999) pitted artists working for the Federal Project against fearsome red-baiter U.S. Representative Martin Dies. Two years later, in *The Majestic*, Jim Carrey starred as a naive screenwriter who attempted to impress a girl by attending a Communist front meeting and was then dragged through a bruising congressional inquiry. Meanwhile, in the year *Cradle Will Rock* appeared, Elia Kazan

received a "Lifetime Achievement" award for his outstanding contributions to film. Unfortunately, the ceremony was overshadowed by the protests of critics angry at Kazan for having testified and "named names" before HUAC. Clooney's *Good Night, and Good Luck*, then, exists at the core of a narrative Hollywood loves to revisit. The Radoshes, however, rain on this Hollywood parade, arguing that the entire premise of an innocent leftist core unfairly persecuted is sheer fantasy.

Ronald Radosh, former radical, is a late-in-life convert to conservatism, earning him, perhaps, the label of neoconservative. In *Red Star over Hollywood: The Film Colony's Long Romance with the Left*,<sup>1</sup> Radosh (together with his wife) has extended his purview of the inner life of American Communists and the New Left. In this case, the book is an indictment of those Hollywood personalities who took an active role in Communist politics during the pre- and post-World War II era, and it is particularly severe on those who never repented.

The Radoshes challenge the comfortable Hollywood legend that posits an evil House Committee on Un-American Activities against a progressive vanguard operating in America's film capital. "This fable of innocence destroyed by malice has acquired an almost irresistible sanctity during half a century of telling and retelling. It has become the consensus view of a troubled time and the story that Hollywood tells itself each night when it goes to sleep." In *Red Star* the Radoshes set themselves the task of refuting this fable, a welcome effort, as far as it goes. Of more interest, however, is the Radoshes' search for what lay behind the efforts of Hollywood Communists' to undermine and overthrow existing political and social life in America.

Our intention is to look once again at what really happened in Hollywood during that fateful episode in our history, and to re-evaluate this legend of good undone by evil. How and why did so many in the film community become enchanted not only with the Left, but with its most totalitarian expression, the American Communist Party (CP)? What were their aims and objectives, and how did they set about achieving them?<sup>2</sup>

The extent to which the Radoshes answer these questions will establish the relative merit of the book.

Having already written two conservative books since his apostasy from the left, red diaper baby Ronald Radosh will inevitably be compared to that other defector from the left-wing ramparts, David Horowitz. That the two share such similar backgrounds allows the reader to compare and contrast their respective takes on a fascinating slice of the American population. Regarding that Communist background, a purview of Radosh's *Commies: A Journey through the Old Left, the New Left and the Leftover Left* proves informative. Born in 1939, Radosh was early on initiated into Communist politics, thanks to his parents' bundling him in a stroller and walking him down Fifth Avenue for the Communist Party's annual May Day celebration, his "baptism into the world of Jewish radicalism, a world so small and insular that it existed inside

a political and social ghetto.”<sup>3</sup> While this observation regarding the connection between radicalism and Jewish identity might have provided a crucial focal point for the analysis in *Commies*, it rarely rises about the level of description. Unfortunately for the reader of *Red Star* as well, the same disinterest in what role Jewish identity might play is evident.

Like so many other Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe at the time, Radosh’s father was in the clothing and accessories business, and Radosh’s upbringing serves almost as a cliché for the children of such immigrants. “Of consuming interest” for the radical Radosh family was the Spanish Civil War, with Uncle Irving serving as a commissar in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. Part of young Radosh’s “intellectual marrow” during the 1940s was the “myths of the Left – to be precise, the pro-Communist Left.” At Radosh’s primary school in Washington Heights, the student body was largely Jewish, with intellectual challenges to the mostly conservative Irish teachers common. (In a preview of things to come for Hollywood leftists, a furor erupted when Radosh’s teacher, Miss Driscoll, scolded the sixth graders, calling them “un-American” and “Communist.”) Of course summer “Commie camp” was the norm for Radosh’s circle, and while there, one of the goals was to liberate the children from America, a goal Radosh took to heart for much of his life.

Radosh next went to a secondary school associated with the notorious “Little Red School House,” as the adjoining elementary school was commonly known. Alumni of both schools include the two children of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg; Kathy Boudin, a Weather Underground leader imprisoned later for the murder of guards in a robbery; Angela Davis, the African-American radical activist; Victor Navasky of *The Nation* (who wrote his own book on the Hollywood blacklist period, *Naming Names*); and also two of Woody Guthrie’s children. In time, Radosh joined the Communist Party’s youth movement (then called the Labor Youth League), where Radosh found “the camaraderie of a tight-knit group of ready-made friends, along with a sense of moral superiority...[and] a purely cultural *Yiddishkeit* that emphasized Yiddish literature and theater,” among other things. In fact, it was here that Radosh met David Horowitz, his near twin (and lifelong friend) in life on the left...then right.

For college, Radosh succeeded in doing what so many other American Jews had also done: He left the geographical confines of his ethnic neighborhood only to move to a distant but heavily Jewish community surrounded by “aliens.” Radosh entered the University of Wisconsin, in Madison, in 1955, determined to study history, “the queen of the sciences,” according to Marx. He was also intent on becoming a Communist movement leader. As with the Labor Youth League in New York, the LYL in Madison gave him a ready-made group of fellow activists, and Radosh quickly availed himself of the opportunities to propagate his beliefs. Moving to Iowa after graduation, Radosh repeated this feat of finding another comforting ethnic community,

falling in with such people as Sol Stern, "another New York Jew" and a future colleague of David Horowitz at *Ramparts*.

Once done with his master's degree, he returned to Madison to begin work on his Ph.D. While there, he became a founding member of the influential journal *Studies on the Left*. He was also fortunate enough to entertain a revolving circle of friends and acquaintances who would become well known, even famous, for one reason or another. For example, a young man named Bob Dylan asked to stay with Radosh and later told him with complete assurance, "I'm going to be as big a star as Elvis Presley."

Radosh's early and middle career teaching back in New York City were equally predictable but provide less insight into his later views of Hollywood leftists than does his early life. Only when he begins a project related to the innocence or guilt of the Rosenbergs do we gain clues as to his own motivations and his approach in his postconversion books. Working in the late 1970s on this project, Radosh is unsurprisingly attacked by his leftist colleagues because now, with a wealth of new-found evidence against the Rosenbergs, Radosh is forced to consider a question that applied equally to his leftist critics and his former self: "Why did these people love the Rosenbergs so?" Though neither as candid nor as perceptive as Horowitz would be on these issues, Radosh still offers a compelling answer: The Rosenbergs were ethnic team players who, as one correspondent related to Radosh, "knew how to die; they knew how to sacrifice for their comrades."

Radosh's framing of this insight is crucial to the ethnic nexus at the heart of his book *Commies*, just as it should be to *Red Star Over Hollywood*. The reason Radosh and his cohorts so loved the Rosenbergs was that "the Rosenberg myth was so important to 'our crowd.'" This term, of course, refers to the upper-middle class group of German Jews who settled in New York in the nineteenth century, immortalized in Stephen Birmingham's 1967 tribute "*Our Crowd*": *The Great Jewish Families of New York*. Gradually, the term has taken on a more generic meaning of American Jews in general.<sup>4</sup> Jewish ethnic solidarity, then, may be the crux of the issue. How Radosh, the consummate insider, treats it in *Red Star* will be the focus of our attention.

"The Hollywood Party," as the Communist Party was fondly called, started early in the film colony's history. Revolutionary Willi Münzenberg, a contemporary of Lenin and Trotsky, quickly realized the "propaganda potential" for Communism in film. "We must develop the tremendous cultural possibilities of the motion picture in the revolutionary sense," he argued. "One of the most pressing tasks confronting Communist Parties on the field of agitation and propaganda is the conquest of this supremely important propaganda weapon..." In this respect, Münzenberg was successful, organizing an important vanguard of "culture workers" in Hollywood. While not all such culture workers were Jews, a large proportion of them were, which the Radoshes note in individual cases. For instance, Budd Schulberg, the son of Paramount

boss B. P. Schulberg, wrote a famous novel about Jews, *What Makes Sammy Run?*, and John Howard Lawson, who “became the most influential figure in the Screen Writers Guild,” was also Jewish, as were Lester Coles, Lawson’s comrade-in-arms, and Richard Collins, a board member of the Screen Writers Guild. As the Hollywood branch of the CP grew in the mid 1930s, it was put under the control of “cultural commissar” V.J. Jerome, an immigrant who had once intended to become a rabbi.

This heavily Jewish group of Hollywood Communists was actually a subset of a larger Jewish community, for Hollywood began as and continued to be “a Jewish empire,” as Neal Gabler so helpfully noted in his 1988 *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood*.<sup>5</sup> This provided for lively intramural conflicts over subversive activities, with young Jews such as Budd Schulberg and Maurice Rapf earning the wrath of their parents and other Hollywood legends such as Louis B. Mayer, David O. Selznick, and two of the Warner Brothers. Harry Warner, for one, warned that such Communist activities would destroy Hollywood and “bring anti-Semitism down on the heads of all the movie people.” Brother Jack agreed, telling Rapf that “you’re a god-damned little fool, and you will cause a lot of trouble for all of us.” Even the legendary Irving Thalberg tried to dissuade these budding Communists. In the end, though, none of their admonitions worked, and Schulberg and Rapf went on to join the Party, where Rapf at least had the satisfaction of discovering that so many of his father’s illustrious workers were in fact Party members themselves.

This Jewish ethnic nexus is a constant throughout *Red Star*, but Radosh and his wife do nothing to explore or develop its implications. For instance, Republican John Rankin succeeded in 1945 in turning the Committee on Un-American Activities into a standing committee of the House and then went on to wage what the Radoshes and others saw as blatantly anti-Semitic attacks on Hollywood leftists. Noting that Rankin “and some others’ tirades against Jews had helped to stampede Hollywood’s studio chiefs into instituting the blacklist,” the Radoshes have the chance to step back and put into perspective what larger battle may have been taking place. Indeed, they observe in the opening pages of *Red Star* that “HUAC was the equal and opposite reaction” to the CP in Hollywood, a theme that if properly developed could have shed further light on the “aims and objectives” of Party members themselves.<sup>6</sup>

These Congressmen’s attacks on Hollywood Jews were hardly isolated. Among the most prominent of such attacks was Henry Ford’s *The International Jew*, which was published in his newspaper the *Dearborn Independent*. Ford, as author Kevin MacDonald notes, “charged that Jews in the media and entertainment industries subverted gentile morals and viewed Jewish media involvement as part of a highly orchestrated Jewish plot described in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.” Despite Ford’s forced recantation of these claims, American isolationists later blamed the film industry for its sustained attempt to draw

America into the war against Germany, with Charles Lindbergh's statement that the Jews' "greatest danger to this country lies in their large ownership and influence in our motion pictures, our press, our radio, and our government" being typical.

Addressing the central period covered in *Red Star*, MacDonald goes much further than the Radoshes in positing a Gentile-Jewish ethnic conflict. "The great majority of those stigmatized by the Un-American Activities Committee of the House of Representatives (HUAC) were Jews, many of them in the entertainment industry." Infamous anti-Semite Gerald L. K. Smith, for example, pointed to the Russian Jewish character of many in Hollywood and argued that this was the reason for the attempt to popularize Russian Communism in America through film.

Whereas the Radoshes merely note the biographical backgrounds of Jewish screenwriters, MacDonald ties them together:

The substantive basis of the opinion of Rankin and others was that beginning in the 1930s Hollywood screenwriters were predominantly Jewish and politically liberal or radical... The American Communist Party (CPUSA), which was under Soviet control during the period, sent V. J. Jerome and Stanley Lawrence, both Jews, to Hollywood to organize the writers and take advantage of their political sentiments.

MacDonald properly quotes Gabler here on this ethnic nexus: "But as much as the Hollywood Communist party was a writers' party, it was also... a Jewish party. (*Indeed, to be the former meant to be the latter as well [emphasis added].*)"<sup>7</sup> How could Ronald Radosh in particular have missed this? Here we have perhaps the core of the whole blacklist story, yet Radosh simply brushes over it. One can only wish that he had been as insightful and honest as his similarly well-positioned friend David Horowitz.

Writing as one who was also born into a parochial Communist family and one who put that worldview into practice for many years, Horowitz moved beyond his origins, a perspective which allowed him to reflect on his own parents' motives. In both *Radical Son: A Generational Odyssey* and *Destructive Generation: Second Thoughts about the Sixties* (co-authored with Peter Collier), this former sixties radical broods over his parents' lives, particularly their self-segregation, first as members of the Communist Party, then as residents of a Jewish suburb. "There was the same shared private language, the same hermetically sealed universe, the same dual posture revealing one face to the other world and another to the tribe." This meant, among other things, a conviction of being marked for persecution along with a sense of being specially ordained. In essence, their world was strictly divided between Jews and *goyim*.<sup>8</sup>

Consider these further gems proffered by Horowitz but ignored by Radosh:

For nearly fifty years our parents' little colony of "progressives" had lived in the same ten-block neighborhood of Sunnyside in Queens. And

for fifty years their political faith had set them apart from everyone else. They inhabited Sunnyside like a race of aliens—in the community but never of it; in cultural and psychological exile. They lived in a state of permanent hostility not only to the Sunnyside community but to every other community that touched them, including America itself... “Home,” to them, was not a place somewhere other than Sunnyside and America; “home” was a *time* in the future when the Sunnyside and America they knew would no longer exist. No compromise with their home ground could put an end to their exile; only a wave of destruction that would sweep away the institutions and traditions of the communities around them...<sup>9</sup>

In a reference to the Soviet Union, a reference the Radoshes easily would have understood, Horowitz confesses that for his parents, “The Soviet Union was the land of their dreams, and they had pledged their allegiance to its political future.” And, in perhaps the most revealing passage of Horowitz’s *Radical Son*, he ventures that “It was not my parents’ idealism that elicited fear and provoked hostility from the *goyim*. It was their hostility toward the *goyim*, and indeed everything the *goyim* held dear, that incited the hostility back.”<sup>10</sup> Note the fit between this revelation and the charges against Jews in the Hollywood of the period examined in *Red Star*. The centrality of the Soviet dream and particularly the hostility toward the broader American culture are evident.

If this sounds provocative, consider that this judgment differs little from the conclusion drawn by Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, whose former posts include president of the American Jewish Congress and vice president of the World Jewish Congress. Hertzberg, along with coauthor Aron Hirt-Manheimer, dares say that

Jew-hatred is not some irrational prejudice that affects the non-Jewish world. It has a cause. At its root, anti-Semitism is an angry reaction to the Jews, who have been among the most persistent dissenters in every society in which they have lived....

We reject the conventional modern argument that those who hate Jews are satisfying their own need for a scapegoat upon which to heap their anger....

All these explanations avoid the critical question: Do the Jews make any contribution to anti-Semitism? The answer is, fundamentally and unavoidably, yes. Their contribution to Jew-hatred is that they insist on being Jews; by definition they challenge the dominant dogmas... So long as Jews cling to their own faith and their own values, they call into question the majority faith and culture. Even Jewish unbelievers, such as Franz Kafka in Prague or Sigmund Freud in Vienna, challenged the seemingly self-evident beliefs and values of conventional society. So, what is anti-Semitism about? It is the fierce and often murderous anger of majorities against a people whose very existence keeps calling their verities into question.<sup>11</sup>

In essence, Hertzberg is describing a battle of civilizations, or in the more provocative German, a *kulturkampf*, and for the purposes of this review, we can posit that Hollywood was indeed a critical front in that *kulturkampf*. While Gentiles who describe this struggle outside the realm of a victimized Jew-oppressive Gentile context risk the label of anti-Semite, the effort to so describe it has been done. In fact, in 1974 John Murray Cuddihy took postcivil rights America by surprise when he released his iconoclastic *The Ordeal of Civility: Freud, Marx, Levi-Strauss, and the Jewish Struggle with Modernity*.<sup>12</sup> The ordeal in question involves the pain felt by newly emancipated Eastern Jews who began to realize that the Christian societies of Western Europe had overtaken them culturally, financially, artistically, and intellectually. When ghetto walls crumble, Cuddihy writes,

and the *shtetlach* begin to dissolve, Jewry – like some wide-eyed anthropologist – enters upon a strange world, to explore a strange people observing a strange *halakah* (code). They examine this world in dismay, with wonder, anger, and punitive objectivity. This wonder, this anger, and the vindictive objectivity of the marginal nonmember are recidivist; they continue unabated into our own time because Jewish Emancipation continues into our own time.<sup>13</sup>

This “punitive” and “vindictive” objectivity is really the subject of Cuddihy’s book, and the real ordeal discussed is the torment inflicted upon Gentile societies *into our own time*. Most observers seem to have missed this, confusing Cuddihy’s initial introduction of a Jewish ordeal with the much broader assault launched by aggrieved Jews such as the Freuds, Marxes, Levi-Strausses of the title.

Historian Albert Lindemann describes how in many histories of this confrontation with Gentile society, there is “a profound aversion to conceptualizing Jews as flawed or ordinary (‘human’) individuals...” These tendencies, writes Lindemann, “have roots deep in Jewish history, religion, and culture. So too does the parallel instinct to view surrounding Gentile society as pervasively flawed, polluted, or sick.” Premodern Jewish beliefs that Gentiles were inferior, not part of God’s chosen people, survived into modernity, an important reason that many Jews were “powerfully attracted to those modern secular ideologies that managed to reaffirm indirectly, with a new language, an older sense of the tainted qualities of prevailing Gentile life...” Among these ideologies, Lindemann identifies “socialism (both Marxist and anarchist), Zionism, and various forms of the psychiatric worldview (Freudian psychoanalysis and related schools).”<sup>14</sup>

This (largely Gentile) inquiry into the Jewish-Gentile struggle came to a head in the 1990s with the publication of Kevin MacDonald’s seminal trilogy on Jews, the third book of which, *Culture of Critique*, synthesized the *kulturkampf* view of Gentile-Jewish relations and set them in a “group evolutionary strategy.”<sup>15</sup> Despite the quality and import of the work of Cuddihy, Lindemann, and MacDonald, only Cuddihy’s book was widely reviewed in the mainstream

press, though not always favorably. In any case, it is long since out of print. Meanwhile, Lindemann's book *Esau's Tears* has met with favorable attention in professional journals but has never received the widespread attention it so richly deserves. And MacDonald's trilogy is one of those rare instances of an intellectual breakthrough so radically changing the foundations of men's understanding of their world that it will take more time to digest, affirm, and accept.

If, as I've argued, this *kulturkampf* is so central to the story of modern America (and the West more generally), and if, as I've also argued, satisfactory books on the topic are available, then why aren't people talking more openly about all of this? More to the point, where is the public discussion about Jewish activities in Hollywood, Communism, and so on? The most direct answer would be that a regime of silence has been imposed, or at least that rigid constraints have been placed on who can discuss these important issues and how. With respect to *Red Star*, the taboo would encompass talking about Jews and their connection to both Communism and Hollywood, just as it is increasingly being imposed around a current critical group of Americans, the neoconservatives.

Although the discussion of the Jews and Bolshevism is of long standing in America, recognition of the importance of the Jewish role has lessened greatly since the 1920s. For instance, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, the iconic Soviet dissent author who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1970, has most recently written *Two Hundred Years Together*, two volumes on Russian-Jewish relations since 1772, yet neither book has been translated into English. Some might say that that history – as well as that of Jews in other countries, including America – is so tortured that the less said, the better. Certainly, this seems to be the frustrating discovery even American Jews have made when trying to discuss the obvious aspects of preponderant Jewish participation in various activities.

Take, for example, Arthur Liebman's massive *Jews and the Left*, published in 1979. Noting that in sociology, the method teaches that "one of the most important pieces of information a researcher can gather on a social movement is the socioeconomic composition of its membership," Liebman was forced to ask "Why, in particular, was the question of the relationship of Jews to socialism one to be so studiously avoided by all concerned?" More curious about this connection than Ronald Radosh seems to be, Liebman found that his research "led me to realize that this relationship between Jews and the Left was a very live and, to me, very meaningful phenomenon." Though he declines to call it a taboo, Liebman avers that "the reactions of those with whom I discussed this discovery were generally disturbing. Some who had grown up in a Jewish-Left milieu thought it to be a trite bit of insight. Others thought it interesting but not very relevant or politically significant..." Meeting with very real radical Jews in Berkeley, Liebman pushed the point but noticed that "the arguments of my radical Jewish contemporaries, while persuasive, were

for me undercut by the fervor and uneasiness of the speakers communicating them. I had the distinct feeling that they were trying to convince not only me but themselves as well."<sup>16</sup>

David Horowitz ran into the same resistance when, well after his break with the left, he too was at Berkeley, in this case a seminar with a group of professors. Having just read Cuddihy's *The Ordeal of Civility*, Horowitz encountered the same thing Liebman had:

What we had to ask ourselves — and here I paused for effect — was whether Marx wasn't a self-hating Jew, and whether socialism was anything more than a wish to be included. "B-u-l-l-shit" boomed the voice next to me. It was Jeff Lustig: "We've heard this all before, and I find it boring," he said. When he finished, I spoke again: "I'm glad that Jeff has settled these questions," I said, "but just out of curiosity I'd like to hear how the other Marxists in the room identify themselves *ethnically*." I knew, of course, that they were all Jews, and that not one would demean himself to acknowledge that fact.<sup>17</sup>

Recent Gentile historians have made similar, even more pointed observations. Lindemann, a Harvard Ph.D., argues in *Esau's Tears* that "there were still many Jewish Bolsheviks, especially at the very top of the party," along with many Jewish revolutionaries in the dreaded secret police. "Simple numbers or percentages fail to address the key issues of visibility and qualitative importance... [and] citing the absolute numbers of Jews, or their percentage of the whole, fails to recognize certain key if intangible factors: the assertiveness and often dazzling verbal skills of Jewish Bolsheviks, their energy, and their strength of conviction." Lindemann goes on to note the marked overrepresentation of Jews leading Communist movements elsewhere in both Eastern and Western Europe. Alluding directly to the censorship surrounding the issue, Lindemann writes that the perception of "'foreign Jews, taking orders from Moscow' became a hot issue." As with this topic in America today, in post-World War I Europe, "it remained mostly taboo in socialist ranks to refer openly to Moscow's agents as Jewish."<sup>18</sup>

A half-similar ban is found on discussion of Jews in Hollywood, where the rule of thumb is simple, well known, and vigorously enforced: A Jew may make note of it or explore it at length, but a Gentile must remain silent on the issue. As Joe Sobran so succinctly put it, "Jewish control of the major media in the media age makes the enforced silence both paradoxical and paralyzing. Survival in public life requires that you know all about it, but never refer to it."<sup>19</sup> For instance, William Cash ran head on into this barrier when in 1994 he wrote of the new Spielberg-Katzenberg-Geffen "Dream Team" that "in one respect at least this particular combination of talent, or 'talent combo' in the local argot, will start out on the right foot. Like the old mogul founders of the early studios — and unlike most other failed build-your-own studio merchants — they are Jewish."<sup>20</sup> Though he was defended by his Jewish editor, Derek Lawson, young Cash still bore the brunt of a furious rebuke from American shores.<sup>21</sup>

Marlon Brando made a similar mistake while appearing on *Larry King Live*, bluntly asserting that Jews run Hollywood and exploit stereotypes of minorities. "Hollywood is run by Jews, it is owned by Jews," he began, and then went on to blame Jews for exploiting stereotypes of minorities, "but we never saw the kike because they know perfectly well that's where you draw the wagons around."<sup>22</sup>

Contrast this to what the following Jewish observers have said about the Jewish presence in Hollywood: "It makes no sense at all to try to deny the reality of Jewish power and prominence in popular culture. Any list of the most influential production executives at each of the major movie studios will produce a heavy majority of recognizably Jewish names" (Michael Medved)<sup>23</sup>; "From its origins, Hollywood has been stamped with a Jewish identity, but nobody else was supposed to know about it. But somehow, no matter how thorough the attempt to suppress or disguise it, Jewishness is going to bob to the surface anyway" (Stephen J. Whitfield)<sup>24</sup>; "Indeed, from the very beginnings of the industry until the present, it is impossible to ignore the influence of Jews on the movie business or to overlook the importance of a Jewish consciousness in American films" (Lester D. Friedman).<sup>25</sup> And certainly there must have been some gnashing of teeth when *Moment* magazine's August 1996 issue hit the newsstands, for on its bright purple cover was the headline: "Jews Run Hollywood." The subtitle of "So what?" hardly detracted from the jarring message. In none of these cases, however, did these observers suffer sanctions at the hands of the ADL or other Jewish groups.

What then do we make of the Radoshes' reticence on the topic? Perhaps they merely wanted to avoid trouble, or maybe they calculated that it wasn't good for the Jews. Of course, silence on the matter among Jews is hardly rare, as one scholar has noted: "Two classical social scientific studies of Hollywood as a community do not even mention the Jewish character of the movie industry, though both authors—Leo Rosten and Hortense Powdermaker—were Jews."<sup>26</sup> One further area in which ethnic interests and Jewish identity have suddenly become much less mentioned has to do with the revived neoconservative movement associated with the Bush administration and its foreign policy.

At first glance, a discussion of Jews and the neoconservative movement appears outside the purview of *Red Star*, but recall that Ronald Radosh fits the mold of a neoconservative. *Red Star's* omission of an analysis of the Jewish identity of so many in the book mirrors the fading reference to neoconservatism as a Jewish movement. Witness the fact that such comfortable homes to neoconservatives as *The Public Interest*, *The National Interest*, and *Commentary* (published by the American Jewish Committee) now almost routinely fail to note the obvious Jewish presence in the movement. In the Winter 2004 issue of *The Public Interest*, for instance, we find an essay titled "Conservatives and Neoconservatives," yet author Adam Wolfson offers

not even an oblique reference to Jews. Never mind that journal cofounder Irving Kristol is considered by many to be the father of neoconservatism, or that the other three editors over the forty-year life of the magazine have also been Jews. Over at its more foreign-policy oriented sister publication, *The National Interest*, Francis Fukuyama, in "The Neoconservative Moment" (Summer 2004) also fails to mention this connection. And in the October 2005 issue of *Commentary*, Joshua Muravchik does likewise in his article "Iraq and the Conservatives."<sup>27</sup>

This is in stark contrast to the open discussion before and during the invasion of Iraq of neoconservatism as a heavily Jewish-influenced movement, with pundits both left and right making this observation. One of the most convincing arguments was made by Kevin MacDonald in a fifty-one page essay in this journal, which he begins by noting that "neoconservatism is indeed a Jewish intellectual and political movement." MacDonald concludes that with respect to Jewish involvement in the neocon movement, "The current situation in the United States is really an awesome display of Jewish power and influence."

This ties in nicely with an exploration of power and motives in Hollywood in a comparison to MacDonald's observations on the neoconservative movement: "Taken as a whole, neoconservatism is an excellent illustration of the key traits behind the success of Jewish activism: ethnocentrism, intelligence and wealth, psychological intensity, and aggressiveness. Now imagine a similar level of organization, commitment, and funding directed toward changing the U.S. immigration system put into law in 1924 and 1952, or inaugurating the revolution in civil rights, or the post-1965 countercultural revolution..." Or establishing "an empire of their own," that is, a heavily Jewish Hollywood.

The Radoshes conclude their book by castigating modern Hollywood for wallowing in its fantasy of innocents persecuted. Specifically, they note the lack of historical context – the Korean War, the Cold War with the Soviet Union – in Hollywood's portrayal of itself in so many such films. "Also missing were the goals of the Communist Party, how it specifically targeted Hollywood, how it embedded its cultural commissars in the film capital," etc. But this too is precisely what is missing in the Radoshes' account.<sup>28</sup> Given the power of film to propagandize the masses in twentieth century America and the extensive Jewish control of that film industry, we can see what the epic battle between Hollywood leftists and HUAC actually was: The largely Jewish Communist movement in the Hollywood of the 1930s–1950s was an instance of a Jewish movement and, as the Radoshes note, HUAC was "the equal and opposite reaction." They might have added that it was an equal and opposite *Gentile* reaction. The Radoshes had the background information to discuss this in depth, for, to their credit, they undertook extensive archival research and interviewed many primary actors in this long drama. But failing to take the

broader Jewish-Gentile conflict into account makes *Red Star* a deeply disappointing book, better for reference than for a needed analysis of what those turbulent years in Hollywood really were.

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## ENDNOTES

1. Ronald Radosh and Allis Radosh, *Red Star over Hollywood: The Film Colony's Long Romance with the Left* (San Francisco: Encounter, 2005) and Ronald Radosh, *Commies: A Journey through the Old Left, the New Left and the Leftover Left* (San Francisco: Encounter, 2001).
2. *Red Star*, viii.
3. *Commies*, 1. Further notes on Radosh's upbringing come from his opening chapter in *Commies*, "Red Diapers."
4. *The Rest of Us, The New Crowd and The Self Chosen*.
5. Neal Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1988).
6. *Red Star*, viii.
7. Kevin MacDonald, *Separation and Its Discontents: Toward an Evolutionary Theory of Anti-Semitism* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), 52–54 (Gabler quote from *Empire*, 345).
8. David Horowitz, *Radical Son: A Generational Odyssey* (New York: The Free Press, 1997), 42–43; 65–72.
9. Peter Collier and David Horowitz, *Destructive Generation: Second Thoughts about the Sixties* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 309–310.
10. *Radical Son*, 44.
11. Arthur Hertzberg and Aron Hirt-Manheimer, *Jews: The Essence and Character of a People* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998), 1–6.
12. John Murray Cuddihy, *The Ordeal of Civility: Freud, Marx, Levi-Strauss, and the Jewish Struggle with Modernity* (New York: Basic Books, 1974). While Cuddihy employs a capital "K" for the term, I will use a small letter in order to distinguish this American *kulturkampf* from the original German one between the German imperial government and the Roman Catholic Church (ca. 1872–1886).
13. Cuddihy, *Ordeal of Civility*, 68.
14. Albert S. Lindemann, *Esau's Tears: Modern Anti-Semitism and the Rise of the Jews* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 13–15.
15. citations and expand on group evolutionary strategy
16. Arthur Liebman, *Jews and the Left* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1979), ix–xi.
17. *Radical Son*, 278.
18. Lindemann, *Esau's Tears*, 429–435.
19. (Sobran 1996a, 3)
20. William Cash, "Kings of the Deal," *The Spectator*, October 29, 1994, 14.

21. William Cash, "Kings of the Deal," *The Spectator*, September 1994.
22. Marlon Brando interview, Larry King Live, Friday, April 5, 1996.
23. "Is Hollywood Too Jewish?" *Moment*, August 1996, 37.
24. Stephen J. Whitfield, *American Space, Jewish Time: Essays in Modern Culture and Politics* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1996), 151.
25. Lester D. Friedman, *The Jewish Image in American Film* (Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1987), 13.
26. Stephen Whitfield, *American Space*, 156.
27. One wonders what to do with two recent books on the topic, both of which were conceived long before the current trend to refrain from claiming Jews were instrumental in bringing neoconservatives to power became apparent. The first is Murray Friedman's *The Neoconservative Revolution: Jewish Intellectuals and the Shaping of Public Policy* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), the second Irwin Stelzer's *The Neocon Reader* (New York: Grove Press, 2005).
28. *Red Star*, 237.