



UCLA'S JOURNAL OF CINEMA AND MEDIA STUDIES

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Gray or Black? Howard Koch and the Elusive Architecture of the Hollywood “Lists”¹

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In 1947, nineteen members of Hollywood’s filmmaking community were served with subpoenas to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). Eleven of these men testified in October; one (Bertolt Brecht) fled the United States immediately after giving his testimony. The remaining ten were cited with contempt of Congress on November 24 and placed on a blacklist by the studio moguls the following day. Thus the Hollywood Ten were born and the Hollywood blacklist was begun. But what of the other eight, those who did not testify before the hearings were prematurely canceled on October 22? The actor Larry Parks, the directors Robert Rossen, Lewis Milestone and Irving Pichel, and the screenwriters Howard Koch, Waldo Salt, Gordon Kahn, and Richard Collins all returned to work, by simple virtue of never having appeared before the Committee.



HUAC returned to Hollywood in 1951 and began to target individuals. Industry professionals who were named communists before the Committee and who refused to cooperate by naming names were themselves added to the original list of ten. But what of the members of the graylist, those who were never named as communists before the Committee, but who nevertheless lost their jobs because of leftist politics? Our understanding of the "Nineteen" as opposed to the "Ten," and the graylist as opposed to the black, is limited at best. This paper steps back and takes a document-based historical approach to reconstruct the career of one of the Nineteen, screenwriter Howard Koch² (best known for Casablanca and Letter from an Unknown Woman), in an attempt to bring the line of demarcation between gray and black into better focus. Initially, Koch crafted a public image that differentiated him from the Nineteen and especially the Ten; as the period wore on, however, Koch increasingly withdrew from the public eye. Hardly generalizable, Koch's response to this period in Hollywood history underscores the ad hoc and uneven construction of both lists, and suggests that a return to foundational document-based historical research is necessary for full understanding of the workings of either.



October 27, 1947, Washington, DC: The group of Hollywood writers and producers summoned to appear before HUAC photographed leaving the investigation. Front row: Lewis Milestone, Dalton Trumbo, John H. Lawson, who was cited for contempt, and Bartley Crum, attorney for witnesses. Center row: Gordon Kahn, Irving Pichel, Edward Dmytryk, Robert Rossen. Top row: Waldo Salt, Richard Collins, Howard Koch and Albert Maltz; Herbert Biberman; Lester Cole and Ring Lardner, Jr., writers and Martin Popper, another attorney for the group. Photo G.B. Kress, Corbis.

The blacklist, as it was created on 25 November 1947, had a visible structure. On that day, Eric Johnston, president of the Motion Picture Association (MPA) and industry spokesperson for Hollywood, issued a clear statement:

- Members of the Association of Motion Picture Producers (Coast Affiliate of the Motion Picture Assn.) deplores (sic) the action of the 10 Hollywood men who have been cited for contempt by the House of Representatives. [...]
- We will forthwith discharge or suspend without compensation those in our employ, and will not reemploy any of the 10 until such time as he is acquitted or has purged himself of contempt and declared under oath that he is not a Communist.
- On the broader issue of alleged subversive and disloyal elements in Hollywood, our members are likewise prepared to take action.
- We will not knowingly employ a Communist or a member of any party or group which advocates the overthrow of the Government of the United States by force or by any illegal or unconstitutional methods.³

Initially, the blacklist held only the names of the Ten, but after HUAC's attention returned to Hollywood in the spring of 1950, the list ballooned, encompassing all those who appeared before the Committee and refused to cooperate, as well as those who were identified as communists by others who did cooperate.⁴ Those in the first category (i.e., those issued a contempt citation, or those who plead the Fifth, or those who refused to "name names") were guaranteed blacklisted status until the end of the blacklist period. Those in the second (i.e., those named by others) could clear themselves by appearing before the Committee, stating the full nature of their

involvement with the Communist Party, recanting their association with communism, and incriminating their peers ("naming names"). In this way, a public ritual was made of the blacklist.⁵

By contrast, the graylist was far less transparent, but over time it, too, was ritualized. The graylist's membership included all those who suffered a decline in employment opportunities because of political affiliation. In light of the number of variables involved in employment, it can be very difficult to establish causality between graylist status and unemployment. Doubtless, it was also quite difficult for Hollywood employers to recognize radical employees during the blacklist period. A handful of private institutions, however, lent definition to the landscape of the graylist. Blacklist historians Larry Ceplair and Steven Englund identify the American Legion (publishers of Firing Line and American Legion Magazine), American Business Consultants (publishers of Counterattack and Red Channels), the Wage Earners Committee (publishers of National Wage Earner), and Aware, Inc. (publishers of Confidential Notebook and supplements to Red Channels), as the key "smear and clear" organizations.⁶ These groups singled out radical elements in Hollywood sometimes with only a modicum of incriminating evidence and published their names in widely-circulated tracts like the ones mentioned above. Those whose names appeared in "smear" publications were effectively graylisted; according to Ceplair and Englund, they were unemployable after 1951.⁷ In essence, the graylist was constituted according to a broader definition of "the named." Like the blacklisters who had been awarded their status thanks to the testimony of others, graylisters could be "cleared." Organizations like the American Legion and the Motion Picture Industry Council, and private individuals like lawyer Martin Gang, helped graylisters get appointments to appear before the Committee to undergo the established blacklist ritual for clearance.⁸

Where did Howard Koch stand in all this? Koch's position in Hollywood political history is a fittingly ambiguous one in histories of the blacklist, Koch has been cast as both a faithful member of the Nineteen and a traitor amongst them, as both a gray- and black-lister. In short, he is a problematic figure for blacklist historians. Ceplair and Englund, for example, first seek to assimilate him with the other Nineteen, but then largely drop him from their history after he "defects" and abandons the group's legal and public relations strategy. He is mentioned only once more in their history, as the example cited of a writer graylisted for affiliation with the Hollywood Ten.¹⁰

Most other scholars who address Koch, meanwhile, ignore his graylisting altogether, and draw on his case instead as one of many instances of a writer ruined by the blacklist. Thom Andersen attaches the epithet "blacklist victim" to his name.¹¹ Victor Navasky writes, "Koch fought for a decade to get off the blacklist without naming names. The message was always the same."¹² Stephen J. Whitfield paints a still more dramatic picture:

Consider the worse fate of scenarist Howard Koch, who had never been a Communist but had drawn the assignment of adapting Mission to Moscow in 1943. When the political climate got chillier, no studio boss was more eager to discover hidden Communists than Jack Warner, who blamed the late President Roosevelt for pressuring the studio to make Mission to Moscow. The Reader's Digest, which had serialized Davies' memoir during World War II, suffered no penalties whatsoever for its global dissemination of excerpts from this egregiously pro-Stalin book. But Koch was blacklisted.¹³

Whitfield's sensational account implies direct causality between Koch's participation in the HUAC target Mission to Moscow (a 1943 film adaptation of the Joseph E. Davies book meant to familiarize Americans with their new allies) and his blacklisting, although in fact Koch was not one of the Ten and therefore was not fired in the wake of the Waldorf Decision.

Then again, by the 1994 publication of A Political Companion to American Film, even Larry Ceplair seems to have changed his mind, declaring that Koch was blacklisted throughout the 1950s. Analogously—if also inexplicably—a Variety obituary reports that Koch was one of the "unfriendly 15" (my emphasis) and that he was blacklisted in 1950, a year that saw no HUAC activity in or about Hollywood.¹⁵ Further evidence of the contradictory nature of Koch's "roles" in blacklist histories can be found in Buhle and Wagner's Radical Hollywood. Early in their history, the authors identify Koch as a "Non-Communist."¹⁶ In a discussion of the Hollywood Nineteen, though, they forget the screenwriter entirely when they write, "The FBI had long since identified all (accurately, with the exception of Milestone and the possible exception of Brecht) as Hollywood Communists."¹⁷

Whence all the confusion? Koch's story troubles blacklist histories for at least three reasons, which, while hardly novel (Smith and Anderson pointed to these historiographical dilemmas almost 20 years ago),¹⁸ are nonetheless worth repeating. First, scholarly attention to HUAC's aftermath has been drawn to the more visible blacklist, rather than the graylist. From this perspective, Koch would have become a more relevant historical example had he been blacklisted. Thus, Whitfield, Navasky and *Variety* downplay or altogether ignore his time on the graylist, while Ceplair and Englund relegate Koch to a single parenthetical after their account of the 1947 hearings.¹⁹ Second, as others before me have pointed out, blacklist scholars have tended to approach the period's history as a sort of morality play, casting the Ten—and subsequently blacklisted filmmakers as—heroes. Koch's story, as the Whitfield citation above suggests, becomes a more involving one if he followed the trajectory of the Ten. Ceplair and Englund therefore depict Koch's personal strategy as a "defection" while Whitfield and Navasky simply fit Koch to the character mold of the blacklistee.

Third, and more fundamentally, the historiographical tradition in blacklist scholarship has tended to focus on "survivor" interviews rather than contemporary documentation, which may have fostered confidence in Koch's own reconstruction of events.²⁰ In his 1978 biography *As Time Goes By* Koch claims that he was outright blacklisted in the early 1950s.²¹ It is problematic, of course, to rely upon a narrative²² delivered 20 years after the fact by a septuagenarian, particularly when portions of it are contradicted by documentation of the blacklist period in his own papers. In fact, within the decade widely understood as his period on the blacklist, Koch described himself as a "graylistee,"²³ which lends credence to Ceplair and Englund's account. Undoubtedly, the paucity of black- and gray-list documentation creates a difficult position for historians, and encourages interview-based historical methodologies. Koch himself donated relatively few records documenting the blacklist period, and what he did donate is sparse and poorly identified.²⁴ Navigating Koch's own contradictory history of this period is no small task.

Three major lines of inquiry about Koch's position in a history of the blacklist period ought to be evident from the contradictions cited above: First, what was Koch's relationship to the Nineteen? What was his strategy during the 1947 hearings, and was it a successful one? Second, was Koch actually blacklisted? If so, when? Was he instead graylisted throughout the 1950s? Third, when, and how did he resume work?

Part or Whole? The 1947 Hearings

The extent to which the "Hollywood Ten" has come to stand in for the "Hollywood Nineteen" is evidenced by Ceplair and Englund's discussion of the defense chosen for the 1947 hearings. Although they admit to a high degree of heterogeneity among the witnesses called, Ceplair and Englund nonetheless want to emphasize unity among the group called to testify. Koch is grouped with Dalton Trumbo, Adrian Scott, Ring Lardner, Jr., Larry Parks, Lester Cole, and Edward Dmytryk as a contract employee with a high salary,²⁵ and with Irving Pichel and Lewis Milestone as a non-communist. Yet, "the potential disagreements resulting from the personal, professional and political differences never threatened to divide the Nineteen."²⁶ Ceplair and Englund brush aside Alvah Bessie's claim that three of the Nineteen signed affidavits asserting they were never communists (Pichel, Milestone, and Koch?) as well as Dmytryk and Scott's subsequent protestations that they objected to the final legal strategy, stressing instead Margolis and Maltz's ignorance of any such avowals. In respect to the legal strategy, too, the authors stress cohesion: "A consensus achieved, and afterthoughts notwithstanding, the Nineteen gave unanimous support and unstinting support to the plan which they adopted. For the next three years they would display to the public and their adversaries a united front."²⁷



December 12, 1947, Washington, D.C. Nine of the Hollywood Ten await fingerprinting in the US Marshall's office after they surrendered. They are (left to right): Robert Scott, Edward Dmytryk, Samuel Ornitz, Lester Cole, Herbert Biberman, Albert Waltz, Alvah Bessie, John Lawson, and Ring Lardner, Jr. Dalton Trumbo is scheduled to appear shortly. Photo Bettmann, Corbis.

All, that is, except one:²⁸ "Howard Koch alone broke ranks with the strategy which had been agreed upon in early October."²⁹ The day of the Waldorf Decision, Koch publicly disassociated himself from the Communist Party. In a 26 November 1947 advertisement in the Hollywood Reporter entitled "Letter to my Fellow Workers in the Motion Picture Industry," Koch announced that he had made a "sworn statement of non-affiliation." Koch went on to explain that, although he had made a sworn statement, he "reserves the right to refuse to make it if I so choose at any future hearing of the House Committee on un-American Activities."³⁰ Koch even implied that he had wanted the chance to take a stand against the Committee. Inspired, perhaps, by a recent decision of the New York State Court of Appeals ruling red-baiting libelous,³¹ Koch stated that he had been "libeled three times," but had not been provided the opportunity to "face my accusers."³² In effect, Koch negotiated a very different strategy from the Ten, a strategy both demanded and facilitated by the divergences Ceplair and Englund want to brush away: on the one hand, his salary meant he had more to lose than some of the more vocal members of the Ten;³³ on the other hand, his non-communist status made an affidavit of non-affiliation a viable possibility.

Subsequently Koch, like Dmytryk and Scott, would claim that he disagreed with the legal strategy chosen from the beginning. Certainly, as the hearings progressed Koch began to envision a very different public relations strategy for himself. In November of 1947, Koch started to make a more active effort to have his voice heard in the popular press. When 17 of the 19 appeared together at a Progressive Citizens of America (PCA)³⁴ meeting in Gilmore, CA, Koch was one of only five to deliver talks. Of the five, he was also the first listed by the Los Angeles Times, and the only one who did not actually testify. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, he was the only speaker whose words were paraphrased or quoted in the article: "Koch declared that in Washington

their telephone wires were tapped and their casual meetings watched, with the result that they were obliged to consult with their attorneys on the street. Some of them became so immersed in their roles, he said, that they lower their voices when they ask for cigarettes."³⁵

Only days later, Koch issued the statement of non-affiliation in the Hollywood Reporter, but his papers suggest that he began to conceive of the move up to a month earlier. Koch saved and underlined a 28 October 1947 Washington Daily News article by the "News Drama Editor." The article, called "The Hearing Needs a Hero," laments the dearth of clear protagonists present at the hearing. Koch penciled brackets around one section of the article: "One lady journalist thoughtfully tapped her teeth with her pencil. 'Honestly,' she murmured to a friend, 'I've never had anybody yet tell me he was a Communist. They all say they haven't got any comment, or they're standing on their rights or something.'" The author, taking a clearly sarcastic editorial line, concludes the article (in a segment also bracketed by Koch), "If a playwright worth his salt had written yesterday's play, Mr. Lawson³⁶ would not have appeared. His place would have been taken by some irreproachably all-American figure, like Herbert Hoover or Babe Ruth, who would have refused to testify as a pure gesture of protest."³⁷ In spite of the article's tone, Koch set out to cast himself in just such a role in the public's eyes, denying any affiliation with the Communist Party even as he refused to offer the same information to the Committee.

There is, too, at least one document confirming that his strategy was a successful one. A Variety editorial about the so-called "probe" to my knowledge, the only Variety article that makes more than a passing mention of Koch's name in relation to HUAC in 1947 favorably compares Koch's public image to that of the Ten:

The lack of good public relations is perhaps best pointed up by the contrarily good tact which Howard Koch took in his open "Letter to My Fellow Workers in the Motion Picture Industry," when he stated unequivocally that he is not and never has been a member of the Communist Party. He added, however, a thought which the perhaps ill-advised "unholy 10" might have well adopted as a credo, instead of the foolhardy defiance to tell a duly ordained Congressional Committee that it was none of their business. He stated, in denying any Communistic tinge, that he "reserves the right to refuse to make it (any statement on his political beliefs) if I so choose at any future hearings."³⁸

Variety's status as a trade journal is key here, as its endorsement of Koch's statement implies that Koch had found an alternative public image, one that might be palatable to producers. Over the month between the Hollywood hearings themselves in late October and the Waldorf Decision in late November, the trade journal followed the industry in reversing its opinion about the Ten.³⁹ Koch, it seems, was the only member of the Nineteen to emerge unscathed from the reversal.

It is important to note that Koch was also careful to appeal to community in his statement. He chose a title that carried communist connotations, and, as Ceplair and Englund begrudgingly concede, he "softened the blow of his defection somewhat by admonishing the industry to 'stand firm' and 'defend ourselves by defending each other.'"⁴⁰ Thus, Koch clearly, *publicly*, yet tastefully, differentiated himself from the other Eighteen, an action that suggested a re-evaluation of the group dynamic might have been in order.

Gray or Black? 1947-1959

After the Committee prematurely ended the inquest, Koch returned to screenwriting as a freelancer. During the three-year period between HUAC investigations into Hollywood, three films scripted by Koch were produced and distributed: Universal International's Letter From an Unknown Woman (produced between August and October of 1947; released in May 1948),⁴¹ Columbia's No Sad Songs for Me (produced between 13 October and 19 November 1949; released in May 1950),⁴² and 20th Century Fox's The 13th Letter (produced between September and November 1950; released in February 1951).⁴³ The success of Koch's public relations campaign might well be measured by his ability to make these three films with top industry talent without a binding contract to any studio. The films also clearly demonstrate that Koch was neither openly nor unofficially blacklisted as a direct result of his status as one of the Nineteen.⁴⁴



If three of his films were completed, a corresponding number never materialized; however, given Koch's status as a freelancer, and the multiplicity of variables that might call a halt to a production, I am not sure these are significant. In 1949, a collaboration between Koch and (fellow member of the Nineteen) Richard Collins was announced. The independent project, which Koch and Collins described to The New York Times as "an exposé of organized bigotry in America," was an adaptation of Lewis Browne's See What I Mean?⁴⁵ It never got past pre-production. That same year, Koch was hired to adapt the novel Sheila, for a film slated to star Anne Sheridan. Although Koch's revisions were only predicted to take ten days, and although it was not described in the overtly political terms used for See What I Mean?, Sheila disappeared from the entertainment columns.⁴⁶ Finally, in early January 1950, Koch and his wife traveled to a leper colony to do research for a film first titled Who Walk Alone and then re-titled The Unclean. That production, too, failed to transpire.⁴⁷

Over the same period, Koch also suffered from rejection on Broadway. His play The Facts of Life was considered by Sidney Harmon for production in late July 1947 but never made it to the stage.⁴⁸ In May 1948, Koch was fleetingly rumored to be collaborating with Max Ophüls on a stage play starring Paul Draper.⁴⁹ Then in December, producers Stephen Ames and Charles H. Russell picked up The Glass House, a play Koch had written with his wife, Anne Green. Joseph Losey (on leave from RKO) was slotted to direct, and rehearsals were to start in January 1949.⁵⁰ By the end of January, though, it was no longer clear that Norman Corwin or Katherine Locke would be able to appear in the play, or that Losey would be able to direct.⁵¹ The Glass House, like the other plays, slipped through the cracks. None of Koch's plays made it to the New York stage until after the collapse of the Hollywood lists in the 1960s, which might suggest that the theater may not have been a refuge for politically suspect writers. But then again, Koch's last play was produced in 1941, several years before his trouble with HUAC. Without detailed production histories of Koch's film and theater efforts, we cannot be sure about their relationship to his Hollywood list status.

Nevertheless, Koch began to distance himself from the political realm in the late 1940s. Although he later dated

his exit from politics to the early 1950s,⁵² the writer ceased to appear in the popular press as a political figure late in 1948. Initially, his flirtation with HUAC hardly seemed to affect Koch's level of political engagement. He sponsored a World Peace Conference⁵³ and backed Progressive Party candidate Henry A. Wallace in the 1948 presidential race. At a two-day conference of the liberal activist group the Political Citizens Association (PCA), Koch made the following statement: "There is hardly anyone in the Wallace movement who would not rather lose with Wallace than win with any other man."⁵⁴ Strangely, in spite of his strong endorsement, the National Council of Arts, Sciences and Professions (the ASP, of which Koch was chair) was the only chapter of the PCA that remained independent of the Wallace Party in a merger between the party and the PCA in June of 1948.⁵⁵ As tempting as it may be to attribute this defection to Koch's own political strife, several months later he nonetheless endorsed a visit by Hewlett Johnson, dubbed the "Red Dean of Canterbury" because of his support of the Soviet Union.⁵⁶ Dean Johnson's November 1948 tour constituted, however, Koch's last political cameo in the Los Angeles Times before his move to Europe.

This absence is particularly important because Koch specifically cited a Los Angeles Times article as the impetus for his "blacklisting," which he maintained began in 1950. In a 1958 statement of his "political views and activities," Koch recalled, "Up to then, hardly a week went by without some producer approaching my agent with a request for me to undertake a writing assignment; suddenly the flow of offers dried up. In the atmosphere of the moment, I realized nothing could be done to repair the damage. Eventually in 1952 my family and I left California."⁵⁷ According to his memoir, *As Time Goes By*, in 1950 he was still functioning as a sort of "inactive" chairman of the ASP, although he had previously resigned when his family moved out of the city. Unfortunately, an overeager secretary (tactfully unnamed by Koch) sent "red roses" to a Chinese Peace Delegation visiting New York at precisely the moment China and the United States entered armed conflict. As a result of the faux-pas, Koch's "name was splashed across the front page [of the Los Angeles Times] as a Benedict Arnold, giving aid and comfort to the enemy."⁵⁸ Yet, to my knowledge, no such article exists in the Los Angeles Times certainly not during October or November of 1950, when Chinese forces entered the Korean War.⁵⁹ Of course, this does not prove that the incident did not take place; after all, Koch's name is erased from the popular press in the two major cities of the entertainment industry after the release of *The 13th Letter* in February 1951.⁶⁰ Moreover, Koch's 1958 statement makes no mention of any such sensational press coverage, but does assert causality between the faux-pas and the evaporation of offers for work.⁶¹

Regardless of the episode's absence from the headlines of the Los Angeles Times, the mistake is an unlikely cause for blacklisting, since it has nothing to do with HUAC. Koch was never called to testify and was, after the 1947 hearings, a known non-communist. To place Koch on the blacklist, we would have to profoundly alter our understanding of the more transparent list. The case of another writer, Bernard Gordon, provides an intriguing parallel. Gordon, who was never actually called to testify, claims to have been blacklisted after receiving a HUAC subpoena for telling MPPDA head Joseph Breen that he had no intention of cooperating with the Committee.⁶² Koch, like Gordon, never faced the Committee, but everyone expected him to. The last New York Times article to mention Koch, published in March 1951, assumes that the writer would be called before the committee a second time. The article explicitly links the impending 1951 hearings with the blacklist: "for those witnesses who refused to answer questions, the policy of banning 'known' Communists from employment would be applied."⁶³ So far as I know, a subpoena was never issued for Koch's testimony, but perhaps Koch's unchallenged 1947 affidavit was read by the industry as a simulated Committee appearance. Though it cleared him of "Commie charges," it also strongly hinted that he would take the position of an unfriendly witness if called.

Though tantalizing, the state of the historical record makes these theories very difficult to prove. And they, too, would constitute a new definition of the blacklist, or at least the creation of a third list along the lines of Larry Ceplair's "unpublicized" blacklist. Yet, there is a far more likely cause for Koch's industry trouble after 1951. Until 1950, the graylist must have been a very loose construction indeed. Ceplair and Englund reference a "gray area on the graylist" for those who joined its ranks between HUAC's Hollywood visits as a result of supporting the Ten or the Screen Writers Guild.⁶⁴ But in June 1950, the publication of *Red Channels* gave studios access to a list of possible subversives who had not yet been called before the Committee. Koch's name was among those listed in the document, which was compiled by two ex-FBI agents and one right-wing television producer at the request of Motion Picture Industry Council president Roy Brewer.⁶⁵ As the Hollywood representative of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), Brewer had a professional interest in red-baiting: his organization was vying for power with the leftist Conference of Studio Unions (CSU). Koch's 1950s

correspondence contains references to Roy Brewer and the American Legion as the cause for his troubles rather than the Committee—graylist, rather than blacklist, enforcers.⁶⁶

But perhaps the strongest evidence that Koch was never blacklisted is that during the late 1950s he did not consider himself to be: in a 1958 letter to his friend, the actor Phil Brown, Koch labels himself a “gray-lister.” Koch’s subsequent descriptions of blacklisting correspond almost exactly with Ceplair and Englund’s description of *graylisting*: “The great frustration of the graylist was that it seemed to many sufferers to be an ailment which had no origin, diagnosis or treatment. One simply stopped hearing the telephone ring.”⁶⁷ Like others named in Red Channels, Koch no longer found work in Hollywood under his own name in 1951. Instead, he turned to European prospects. An (admittedly questionable) producer tracked Koch down in Woodstock, NY after the writer left California: “a former Rumanian promoter. Since his filmmaking credits were as dubious as the royalty claim of the famous Beverly Hills restaurateur, [Koch calls] him Mr. Roman without the off.”⁶⁸ The mysterious Mr. Roman whisked Koch and his family first to Rome, then Paris, then finally Germany, where he abandoned them altogether. Koch and his wife slowly came to realize that the funding for the project had “collapsed.”⁶⁹ If funding was tight, though, that fact was hardly reflected in “Mr. Roman’s” treatment of Koch, who paints a picture of revelry and even decadence as he and his family flit from first class cabin to first class coach, and then through a succession of five star hotels and expensive apartments.⁷⁰

At the end of the line, Koch and his family joined a community of ex-patriots in London. He remembers signing a contract within a month with Rank Productions to write a screenplay for Elizabeth Taylor with American distribution from UA (although, for a fee much lower than his “established price in Hollywood”). According to Koch, the project fell through when United Artists realized he was associated with the picture.⁷¹ At roughly this time, Koch received a cable from his agent: “Discussion with Roy Brewer indicates you deeply (sic) involved and identified with important activities even after socalled (sic) dupes had left stop since your record substantial personally appearing here and unequivocally answering all questions only way rehabilitating yourself which Brewer indicated could be accomplished.”⁷² Koch amicably allowed Rank to break the contract and apparently ignored the invitation for clearance from Brewer. Instead, he and his wife chose to adopt the pseudonyms of Peter Howard and Anne Rodney.⁷³

With his pseudonym, Koch once again began to work. His first major project in England was an adaptation of his own science-fiction work, The Island, a story about a pilot (loosely modeled on Howard Hughes) who crash-lands on a mysterious island. The project, picked up by Columbia-British, fell through following a dispute between the director and the producer, according to Koch’s recollection.⁷⁴ Koch’s wife Anne, on the other hand, found work on the Robin Hood TV show. Although he makes no mention of it in his memoirs, Koch served as a script editor for the show, drawing paychecks from the wildly successful TV property.⁷⁵ Throughout the same period (and beyond), Koch was also receiving royalties from a string of science-fiction compilations, each of which reprinted excerpts from the Mercury Playhouse production of War of the Worlds, which was authored by Koch (not, as is often believed, Orson Welles). In these cases, Koch was able to publish under his own name.⁷⁶



During his stay in England, Koch (under his admitted pseudonym, Peter Howard) had only one feature film credit, as the screenwriter of Joseph Losey's 1956 film The Intimate Stranger, which recounts the story of a Hollywood producer who is blackmailed. Koch himself is utterly dismissive of the film: he relegates it to a single phrase in his memoir, dismissing it out of hand as a film "of no importance" without even mentioning its title.⁷⁷ The Intimate Stranger was distributed in the United States by RKO, but as Koch's indifference to the film indicates, it played as the second half of a double bill.⁷⁸ The paucity of film credits Koch received under his pseudonym suggests either that the majority of the work he did was in television or that he used other pseudonyms as well. Like Trumbo, Koch seems to have used his other name (or names) to distance himself from the works of which he was less proud.⁷⁹

Then, around 1956 (the same year that blacklisted Carl Foreman was granted clearance without naming names, and four years before Trumbo's screen credit for Spartacus),⁸⁰ Koch received a rather unique offer for clearance, one that seemed to circumvent the established HUAC procedure:

I was issued a sort of invitation to return to Hollywood for an assignment and reinstatement in 'the industry' by an 'un-named major studio executive.' I couldn't take advantage of this opening at the time because I was doing that picture with Joe [Losey]. However, the letter convinced me that my situation could be cleared up in that painless fashion and that the list was practically non-operative as far as I was concerned. The past six months have proved that an illusion.⁸¹

After five years on the graylist, it had appeared in the mid-1950s that Koch could return to work as usual. As late as 1958, though, Koch was still struggling to gain full clearance.

Names or No? 1956-1964

Koch was not reinstated in 1956 as the "un-named major studio executive" promised, but his name resurfaced in the popular press in September 1958. In the late 1950s, Broadway producers were apparently willing to hire Koch without a pseudonym as the writer of the book and lyrics for a (rather dubious sounding) science-fiction musical updating the Rip Van Winkle story called Sleepy Rip. According to the New York Times, it was to be

Koch's first stage production since 1941's In Time to Come.⁸² Sleepy Rip, like Koch's Broadway projects of the late 1940s, failed to make it to the stage. He had more luck on the small screen, where he was credited under his own name in January 1959 for an NBC-TV adaptation of Ten Little Indians.⁸³ Then, in October 1959, Koch's first film job was announced. Although it took two years to reach screens, the English film The Greengage Summer (distributed by Columbia as Loss of Innocence) was produced and distributed and accredited to Koch. But if Koch used a very public strategy to clear his name in 1947, a decade later he took a far more private route.

It took Koch approximately two years to negotiate his clearance. Upon returning to New York, the writer tried to resume his career without a pseudonym. He first attempted to sell The Island (retitled World Without End) to Joseph Mankiewicz. In November 1956, though, Koch's agent, Monica McCall, contacted Koch to inform him that Mankiewicz would not be able to take the screenplay because he purchased the rights to The Quiet American and "proceeded to write the screenplay himself eliminating much of the childish anti-American feeling which Graham Greene had given vent to, and he [was] shortly to go to Vietnam to start shooting." As a result of his engagement with the inflammatory political text, Mankiewicz was "most severely attacked in the press." In her letter, McCall explains that she emphasized Koch's willingness to employ a pseudonym, but even that pseudonym was "too risky as many people in the industry, Peter Glenville⁸⁴ for one and now Walter Wanger and probably others, [knew] of the existence of the script and that you wrote it."⁸⁶ For Mankiewicz, Koch's name was only fuel for an already raging public relations fire.

Even before the Mankiewicz cancellation, though, Koch had been contemplating "getting a 'clearance'" according to the McCall letter.⁸⁷ Without Koch's knowledge,⁸⁸ the Paul Kohner agency for which McCall worked spoke to notorious blacklist lawyer Martin Gang about Koch's case. Gang counseled black- and gray-listers alike to appear before the Committee for clearance, a procedure he facilitated. Eleven months after McCall's letter was sent, Alvin G. Manuel, of the Alvin G. Manuel Agency, contacted Koch:

I just had a talk with Martin Gang and he was very nice, but he says there are only two ways of clearing up the matter: either appear before the Committee and let them publicize the appearance, or get some employer who is willing to take an affidavit and use you on an assignment. I don't know how rugged the Committee meetings could get, but from your background I'd think they would be glad to get you out of there as soon as possible.⁸⁹

In the short term, Koch merely sent Gang a lengthy statement about his career and political affiliations. In the statement, Koch explained, "I found myself to be in opposition to what I understood to be certain of its basic assumptions. First, I could never accept a conception of American society which assumed rigid class distinctions and made its political appeal on that basis. Second, I have a deep personal aversion to secret societies regardless of their nature or their purpose."⁹⁰ He renounced his support for Wallace as a third party candidate,⁹¹ denied any rumors that he was a "propagandist,"⁹² and reaffirmed his patriotism: on the subject of "overt acts of disloyalty to the U.S.," Koch wrote, "If I had ever been a witness to such an act, I would have openly repudiated the organization and, if the disloyalty was of a criminal nature, I would have reported it to the proper authorities."⁹³

Koch's emphasis on "overt acts of disloyalty," however, points to a strategy that runs throughout his statement. Whenever possible, he stresses his own ignorance. After laboriously detailing the organizations and activities in which he participated between the New Deal and the early 1950s, Koch goes on to claim, "I realize that some of the organizations to which I belonged or contributed eventually appeared on the Attorney General's Subversive List for reasons of which I have no knowledge."⁹⁴ Analogously, Koch "never bothered to find out whether the Communist Party, or any other party, reached the same or a different conclusion. Nor was I particularly interested in the political affiliation of people I associated with."⁹⁵ He specifically cites only one event "when anything that might be termed 'pressure' was brought to bear on me to influence my actions:"⁹⁶ the HUAC hearings in 1947. The screenwriter asserts, "Some of the more militant members of the group who later formed the nucleus of the Hollywood Ten brought considerable pressure on me to accept their policy." Koch makes a real effort to differentiate himself from the other eighteen called, asserting that he had not met them as a group before arriving in Washington, and explaining that he objected to their legal strategy, "on several grounds (1) that the Committee was legally appointed by Congress (2) that if a fascist group were to stand on the First Amendment in refusing to answer questions about their political activities, we would not sympathize with their

stand and (3) that a crusade based on the right not to speak was a dubious way to defend honestly held liberal views."⁹⁷

Thus, Koch revisited his 1947 advertisement in his letter to Gang, unequivocally distancing himself from the Party while making an appeal to First Amendment rights. Yet, while criticism of the Ten was certainly implicit in his 1947 public relations move, he makes it quite explicit in his letter to Gang. The gesture was not, however, enough Gang's reply to Koch said that the latter would need to provide more "specific" answers. Koch met with Gang, who advised Koch to appear before the Committee and to publicize his appearance. First, though, Gang thought Koch ought to "bone up" on extant Committee testimony and to generally avoid acting so "naïve" as he did in his letter. Ultimately, Koch decided to follow the alternate route suggested by the Kohner agency and sign an affidavit for a studio executive (a strange demand, since he had publicized a similar document a decade before). Having heard this decision, Gang "reversed himself completely, agreeing that this approach was more suitable in my case and `less work for both of us.'"⁹⁸

No direct evidence of an affidavit exists in Koch's papers, but around this time, he went back to work in theater and television. The film industry may not have been so forgiving. A February 1959 letter from Civil Rights attorney Edwin Bennet Williams suggests that if an affidavit was signed, it alone could not grant Koch full reinstatement in the industry:

I am sorry not to have communicated with you earlier, but I have been attempting to run down the cause of the trouble which you called to my attention. I am satisfied that as soon as your position is explained as I have done it, any trouble that you may have on a temporary basis will be eliminated permanently. I do not expect that you will have further difficulties. However, I wish you would stay in regular contact with me to let me know how you are faring.

The Motion Picture Alliance Group is still active on the Coast and it is from that source that any difficulties that you may have in the future will come. I hope I have that situation under control for you.⁹⁹

What exactly Edwin Bennet Williams did remains unclear, although it likely led to Koch's screen credit for The Greengage Summer. Even so, Koch would have to wait until 1964 for screen credit for an American production.¹⁰⁰

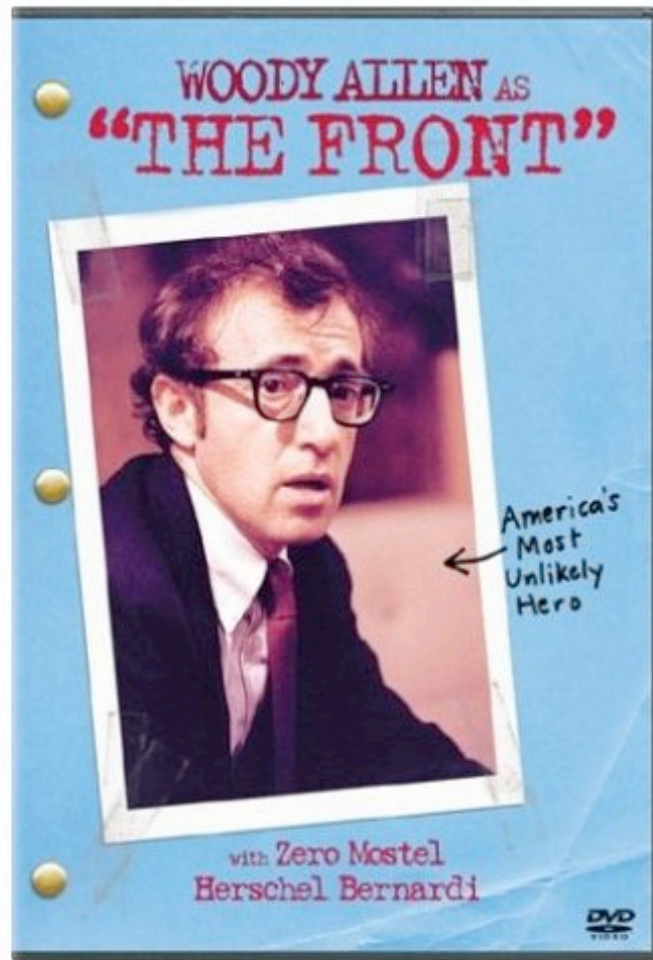
Koch professed a degree of ignorance (or perhaps re-adopted the strategy of "naïveté" he employed in his letter to Gang) in a letter accompanying the deposit of his papers: "It is my understanding that he accomplished this by his personal endorsement of my political and personal loyalty after looking up the records of my activities during the period in question and by making it clear to the [American] Legion and the Motion Picture Alliance that he considered any further ~~blacklisting~~ efforts on their part to prevent my employment as actionable at law."¹⁰¹

Whatever Williams did or did not do, what is crucial for our purposes is that it was under a veil of secrecy that extended even as far as Koch himself (or at least, that is what he wanted readers of his papers to believe in the mid-1960s).¹⁰² A public campaign was no longer desirable to the writer. After 1948 (or at the latest 1950), he was a resolutely private figure. Koch seems to have avoided ever testifying or "naming names" (although he admitted to considering it in the late 1950s), but he hardly broke or even likely damaged the Hollywood lists.¹⁰³ Unlike Trumbo who made his reinstatement a public relations event, Koch employed the quietest possible methods to return to work¹⁰⁴ and when he returned to work, he did so without fanfare.

Conclusion

In an article on films revisiting the blacklist years, Jeanne Hall laments the depiction of HUAC proceedings. Invariably, in these films, the hero is a non-communist who valiantly opposes the Committee, evacuating some of the more troubling moral questions posed by the blacklist.¹⁰⁵ For Hall, these are misrepresentations, but the parallels between Koch and the heroes of films like The Front and Guilty By Suspicion are striking. Indeed, his 1947 statement enacted just such a confrontation between the Committee and a non-Communist for the public. And if Hall has complained that these films depict "going into exile" as "child's play,"¹⁰⁶ Koch's chapter called "Exile" reads like a marvelous romp through Europe. The effects of the period on Koch, however, are reflected in

his withdrawal from political activism. Whereas Woody Allen's naive character is politicized by the activities surrounding him in The Front, Koch comes to adopt a stance of naiveté as a strategy to deflect political entanglements.



In the end, Koch's story never made it to the big screen in spite of the screenplay format adopted in sections of his autobiography because when it came down to it, he avoided the HUAC confrontation he so brashly demanded in 1947. For many scholars of the blacklist, Koch betrayed the cause in 1947; for the popular histories that may have celebrated his case, he lost any appeal in the 1950s. By the very virtue of how distorted his case has become in histories, though, we can find evidence of how weak our understanding of the period remains. The mysteries that still surround many of Koch's behaviors and assertions during the blacklist period highlight areas of future research and historiographical inquiry. Ceplair and Englund's observation that the graylist existed in the "shadows" of the blacklist still seems all too true.¹⁰⁷ Was Koch truly alone in "breaking ranks" in 1947? How consistent was the persecution of those named in graylist publications like *Red Channels*? How did clearance operate for others on the graylist? Did Koch's 1947 strategy have a lasting positive effect on his career, or is his case representative of graylist operations? For better or worse, Koch's case also signals that these questions can probably only be answered through a continued case-by-case document-based approach, one that mirrors the strange case-by-case working of the Committee and the lists themselves. Koch himself puts it quite aptly:

My experience could be multiplied by the thousand and I hope there will be a future historian to fill out the record which eventually contributed to the breakdown (sic) of Hollywood as the film center of the world. The personal tragedies poverty from unemployment, illness, exile, marital troubles, suicides are well known but uncounted and, as far I know, undocumented. My own experience, by comparison with most affected, was not too bad.¹⁰⁸

Notes

- 1 This essay grew out of a seminar on the Hollywood Blacklist taught by Dr. Jeff Smith at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the spring of 2007. Portions were delivered at "Architectures of the Moving Image," the Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference held in March 2008 in Philadelphia, PA. Thanks to the members of Dr. Smith's seminar, two anonymous peer reviewers, and my friends, for their comments, criticisms, and support.
- 2 Producer/director Howard W. Koch was also active during the blacklist period, and sometimes appears as Howard Koch in articles and memoirs about this period. He bears no relation to the screenwriter who is the focus of this piece.
- 3 Published in "Film Industry's Policy Defined." Variety 26 Nov. 1947: 3.
- 4 I am using the definition offered by Larry Ceplair and Steven Englund in their comprehensive history of the blacklist period, The Inquisition in Hollywood. To my knowledge, no one has challenged their definition (with the possible exception of Ceplair himself, see n. 44 below). Ceplair, Larry and Steven Englund. The Inquisition in Hollywood: Politics in the Film Community, 1930-1960. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003. 387.
- 5 Blacklist historian Victor Navasky has called the proceedings of the Committee "degradation ceremonies." See Navasky, Victor S. Naming Names. New York: Hill and Wang, 2003.
- 6 Ceplair and Englund, 386.
- 7 Ceplair and Englund, 387.
- 8 Ceplair and Englund, 388-389.
- 9 It is important to note that virtually all of the references that follow are taken from survey histories, in which Howard Koch is unlikely to play a major role. I hardly mean to assign blame to the historians cited, particularly in light of the overall importance of their publications. In the words of Thom Andersen: "even those of us who write too little are not immune to sloppiness." Andersen, Thom. "Afterward," "Un-American" Hollywood: Politics and Film in the Blacklist Era. Eds. Frank Krutnik et al. New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press, 2007. 270.
- 10 Ceplair and Englund, 394.
- 11 Andersen, Thom. "Red Hollywood," "Un-American" Hollywood: Politics and Film in the Blacklist Era. Eds. Frank Krutnik et al. New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London, 2007. 272.
- 12 Navasky 167. It is worth noting that Navasky consulted Koch's papers.
- 13 Whitfield, Stephen J. The Culture of the Cold War. 2nd ed. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. 143-144.
- 14 Ceplair, Larry. "The Unfriendly Hollywood Nineteen." The Political Companion to American Film. Ed. Larry Crowds. Chicago: Lakeview Press, 1994. 439.
- 15 "Obituary." Variety 21-27 Aug. 1995: 28.
- 16 Buhle, Paul and Dave Wagner. Radical Hollywood: The Untold Story Behind America's Favorite Movies. New York: The New Press, 2002. 101.
- 17 Buhle and Wagner 382. To be fair, Paul Buhle and Patrick McGilligan do not suffer from the same confusion in their 1999 history, Tender Comrades. See McGilligan, Patrick and Paul Buhle. Tender Comrades: A Backstory of the Hollywood Blacklist. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. 45, 257, 406.
- 18 See Andersen, Thom. "Red Hollywood." Literature and the Visual Arts in Contemporary Society. Eds. Suzanne Ferguson and Barbara S. Groseclose. Columbus: Ohio University Press, 1985. 141-196. Republished in "Un-American" Hollywood: Politics and Film in the Blacklist Era. Eds., Frank Krutnik et al. New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press, 2007. 225-263; Smith, Jeff. "A Good Business Proposition." The Velvet Light Trap 23 (1989): 75-100. Republished in Controlling Hollywood. Ed. Matthew Bernstein. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999. 206-237. For a more recent, and more vehement, version of the same argument, see Eckstein, Arthur. "The Hollywood Ten in History and Memory." Film History 16.4 (2004): 424-436.
- 19 Ceplair and Englund, 394.
- 20 In a rather extreme example, Michael Freedland relies on an interview with "Eric Sherman, son of Humphrey Bogart's favourite director Vincent Sherman" for his account of Warner's testimony against Koch. Not surprisingly, it contains inaccuracies. Freedland, Michael with Barbra Paskin. Hollywood on Trial: McCarthyism's War Against the Movies. London: Robson Books, 2007. 25.
- 21 Koch, Howard. As Time Goes By: Memoirs of a Writer. New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979. 179.
- 22 "Narrative" is no accidental term here. Koch peppers his autobiography with the terminology (and sometimes even formatting) of a screenplay. His section on Mission to Moscow is almost a pastiche of the film itself: The writer refuses to answer the phone until he realizes that both Warners want to speak to him, and on his journey to the East Coast to write the screenplay, he falls in love with his co-star (his secretary) in good Hollywood fashion. Koch, As Time Goes By, 96-108.
- 23 The letter to Phil Brown in which Koch makes this reference is rather difficult to date. Certainly, it was sent after 31 October 1957, the date Alvin G. Manuel wrote a letter Koch mentions within his letter to Brown. An archivist tentatively dated it 1958. Howard Koch, letter to Phil Brown, [1958], box 3, folder 15, Howard Koch Papers, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society.
- 24 Koch donated only four folders worth of material directly related to the blacklist to the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research (WCFTR). In the absence of full documentation, context is provided by a letter written from Koch to WCFTR archivist David Knauf in 1964,

in which the screenwriter seems unsure that even such a small volume of materials would be of interest to the Center: "I don't know whether this batch of papers has any place in the research material for the Wisconsin Center or not. If not, would you please return them to me." Howard Koch, letter to David Knauf, 29 January 1964, box 3, folder 15, Howard Koch Papers, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society.

25 Any relevant contracts are not included in the Howard Koch Papers, so it is impossible to know for sure if Koch was in fact a contract employee. It seems more likely, though, that Koch was freelancing when called. In the original manuscript for As Time Goes By, Koch claims to have purchased his contract from Warner Bros. after the Warners strikes. After leaving that studio, he says, he made \$3,000 a week working for Goldwyn, ultimately drawing \$75,000 for Earth and High Heaven, a film that never even got made. See Howard Koch, As Time Goes By manuscript, p. 169-172, additions box 1, folder 9, Howard Koch Papers, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society. In this case, the historical record seems to corroborate Koch: he worked at several studios in the late 1940s, and Jack Warner's testimony before the Committee makes mention of the \$10,000. See n. 33, below. On the other hand, in May 1947, the New York Times reported that Koch would be moving to Paramount, along with the others under contract to Wyler and Capra's Liberty Productions, suggesting that Ceplair and Englund may correctly group him with other contracted writers. See Brady, Thomas F. "Paramount Deal with Liberty Set." New York Times 17 May 1947: 9.

26 Ceplair and Englund, 263. Interestingly, in his interview in Tender Comrades, Ring Lardner, Jr. only mentions Koch twice in passing, and both times affirms the latter's non-Communist standing. McGilligan and Buhle, 406.

27 Ceplair and Englund, 271.

28 Actually, two. We should technically speak of the Eighteen, since Brecht planned his flight to Switzerland from the beginning and never consulted with the legal team of the other Eighteen. Ceplair and Englund, 263.

29 Ceplair and Englund, 341.

30 Quoted in "Major Legal Contest Seen." New York Times 26 Nov. 1947: 27.

31 "Commie' Charge Ruled Libelous." Variety 22 Oct. 1947: 2.

32 Quoted in "Major Legal Contest Seen," 27.

33 In closed sessions, Jack Warner had originally claimed that he fired Koch for political reasons. As an annotated clipping in Koch's papers demonstrates, Warner retracted this statement during the public hearings in October 1947: "screen writer Howard Koch, instead of being 'fired' by Warners, had to pay \$10,000 for release from Warner Brothers' contract, to go to a bigger job at another studio." Strout, Richard L. "Warner Charges Un-Americanism in Film Writing." The Christian Science Monitor 21 Oct. 1947: 1, in box 3, folder 16, Howard Koch Papers, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society.

34 The PCA was a leftist group formed in 1946 by Communists and fellow travelers. According to Ceplair and Englund, it "was not officially Communist, nor even a Communist front group." Koch was a long time active PCA member. In July of 1947 he organized a "Conference on the Subject of Thought Control in the United States as a means to warn the public of, in Howard Koch's words, the 'alarming trend to control the cultural life of the American people in accordance with reactionary conceptions of our national interest.'" Ceplair and Englund, 273-274.

35 "P.C.A. Speakers Attack House Inquiry Group." Los Angeles Times 17 Nov. 1947: A3.

36 John Howard Lawson's behavior at the hearings is notorious. Ceplair and Englund, who are themselves very sympathetic to the Ten, observe, "Lawson's shouting disturbed a lot of observers who might otherwise have sympathized with one whose treatment at the hands of HUAC differed so radically from that accorded all previous witnesses." Ceplair and Englund, 283.

37 The bracketed section continues, "Then this question of whether our Bill of Rights should extend its protection even over those who would abolish it need never have come up." Koch also bracketed the following segment from the article's introduction: "You always know where you are, when to cheer and when to hiss. But put a debate involving civil liberties on the stage of the House of Representatives and everything becomes disorganized. Nobody seems to know what the plot is, or who is doing what to whom. What is the House Committee on Un-American Activities after, and what is an un-American activity? What is the political hue of Bugs Bunny?" Donnelly, Tom. "The Hearing Needs a Hero." The Washington Daily News 28 Oct. 1947: 5, in box 3, folder 16, Howard Koch Papers, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society.

38 Abel., "House in Order-II." Variety 3 Dec. 1947: 3.

39 An article penned by the same author just over a month earlier is far more sympathetic to the Ten, valiantly declaring, "The committee must not create a situation where it's safer to keep quiet than run the risk of being unfairly labeled as pinko or red." Abel. "That Commie Probe." Variety 22 Oct. 1947: 3.

40 Ceplair and Englund, 341.

41 "Letter from an Unknown Woman." American Film Institute Catalog 11 Oct. 2008. http://afi.chadwyck.com/film/full_rec?action=BYID&FILE=../session/1223755078_9629&ID=25618 .

42 "No Sad Songs for Me." American Film Institute Catalog. 11 Oct. 2008 http://afi.chadwyck.com/film/full_rec?action=BYID&FILE=../session/1223755018_9410&ID=26427 .

43 "The 13th Letter" in American Film Institute Catalog, 11 Oct. 2008 http://afi.chadwyck.com/film/full_rec?action=BYID&FILE=../session/1223755120_9960&ID=50337 . In a 1978 interview, Richard Corliss asked Koch if Columbia's Cohn and Fox's Zanuck were "less cowed by the pressure." Koch replied, "Partly. It was also that my pictures had made money; nobody's a sentimentalist

in Hollywood. But a time came when even those men who were willing to take the chance on hiring me couldn't do it." Corliss, Richard. "The Hollywood Screenwriter: Take 2." Film Comment 14.4 (July-Aug. 1978): 38. See also Lewis, Jon. "We Do Not Ask You to Condone This': How the Blacklist Saved Hollywood." Cinema Journal 39.2 (Winter 2000): 3-30, which argues that economic forces were prime motivators for the blacklist.

44 Larry Ceplair's 1997 assertion, that "There were also unpublicized additions to the blacklist: three of the 'unfriendly' witnesses who had not testified Waldo Scott, Gordon Kahn, and Howard Koch-were either fired or ceased to receive contract offers," also appears to be false. See Ceplair, Larry. "The Hollywood Blacklist." The Political Companion to American Film. Ed. Larry Crowds. Chicago: Lakeview Press, 1994. 195. The statement is strange to make in the first place: Why would Koch, a very successful freelance, be adversely affected by a cessation to contract offers? More fundamentally, is Ceplair adding the uncalled to the blacklist? Equally strange on this point is Koch's memoir, which places the HUAC hearings after chapters on No Sad Songs for Me, Who Walk Alone, and Letter from an Unknown Woman, but before The 13th Letter. Koch, As Time Goes By, 138-177.

45 Weiler, A.H. "By Way of Report." New York Times 1 Jan. 1950: 51.

46 See Hopper, Hedda. "Harry Popkin Plans 'Sheila' for Sheridan." Los Angeles Times 18 Mar. 1949: 18; Schallert, Edwin. "Popkins Will Schedule Three Summer Features; Cooper Seeks Valli Deal." Los Angeles Times 23 Apr. 1949: 9.

47 In his autobiography, the writer remembers Harry Cohn refusing to see them upon their return out of fear of infection. According to Koch, Cohn decided not to go forward with the production because another film about a debilitating disease had just failed. Koch, As Time Goes By, 153.

48 Funke, Lewis. "News and Gossip Gathered on the Rialto." New York Times 27 Jul. 1947: X1.

49 "Habimah Opening on Rialto Tonight Louis Calta." New York Times 1 May 1948: 18.

50 Calta, Louis. "Hayward Obtains Play' Kingsley." New York Times 17 Dec. 1948: 38. See also, "Movieland Briefs." Los Angeles Times 9 Dec. 1948: B9; Schallert, Edwin. "Keep Costs Down' Gains Further Studio Support; Arden Package Proposed." Los Angeles Times 22 Dec. 1948: A7.

51 Zolotow, Sam. "Abbott Will Stage Milford Musical." New York Times Jan. 1949: 30.

52 In a statement about his political activities (circa 1957 see n. 57, below), Koch writes, "It is now about seven years since I came to the conclusion that amateur political activities in this period can only lead to fruitless Quixotic ventures, to misunderstandings of motives and affiliations and to complete frustration. Therefore, I disassociated myself from all political affiliations and activities. Since that time I have been enjoying an exceedingly private life." Howard Koch, statement about political affiliations, [1957], p. 9, box 3, folder 15, Howard Koch Papers, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society.

53 "Sponsors of the World Peace Conference." New York Times 24 Mar. 1949: 4.

54 "P.C.A. Merger Authorized to Back Wallace." Los Angeles Times 19 Jan. 1948: 1.

55 "Wallace Party Absorbs PCA in Southland." Los Angeles Times 18 Jun. 1948: 11.

56 "New Committee Named to Welcome 'Red Dean,'" Los Angeles Times 26 Nov. 1948: 15. Johnson, a Dean in the Anglican Church, had recently been awarded the Order of the Red Banner for Soviet Aid.

57 In a 1964 letter to the Wisconsin Center for Film and Television Research detailing his most recent donation, Koch refers to the statement only as a "complete voluntary statement on my part in reference to my political views and activities." Koch, letter to David Knauf. The statement itself is undated, and addressed merely, "To Whom It May Concern." Certainly, it must have been penned after Koch's return to the United States: "I worked for films and television in Europe for nearly five of the past seven years and could have remained there either as an independent or as a contractually employed writer. However, I chose to come home and so did my family." Koch, statement of political affiliations 10. A description of a statement to blacklist lawyer Martin Gang in his letter to Phil Brown leads me to believe that this statement was written for Gang: "They [the Kohner Office, Koch's agency] went to the Writers Guild and were advised to approach Martin Gang. This was done without my knowledge and I was not very happy about it but anyway I sent him a statement of my political history which he asked for. It was a description of the aims and methods of the organizations I'd been connected with and, since it was factual, it was in essence a defense of those things I worked for and the people I worked with." Koch, letter to Phil Brown.

58 Koch, As Time Goes By, 178-179.

59 I also checked the New York Times and Variety and found no trace of the article Koch mentions. Of course, this is hardly a comprehensive list (the Los Angeles tabloids seem like a good place to continue the search). Interestingly, there is a New York Times article that mentions a movement to send flowers to the United Nations to support a change in policy with respect to the conflict with China in Korea. Is this what Koch remembers? In any event, it hardly matches Koch's recollection-the flowers only made the fourteenth page of the Times, and Koch's name is not mentioned. "A Flowery Protest to the UN is Proposed." New York Times 12 Nov. 1950: 14.

60 Brady, Thomas F. "Sinatra to Play Lead In Musical." New York Times 19 Feb. 1951: 19.

61 Koch, statement of political affiliations, 7.

62 Gordon, Bernard. Hollywood Exile Or How I Learned to Love the Blacklist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999. 45, 52-53.

63 Brady, Thomas F. "Movie Industry Wary of New Communist Hunt." New York Times 18 Mar. 1951: E10.

64 Ceplair and Englund, 394.

65 Koch's list of offenses is relatively brief: signed a pro-Wallace advertisement in the New York Times, sponsored the 1949 Scientific and Cultural Conference for World Peace, sponsored a 1948 Civil Rights Congress, signed an Amicus Curiae Brief in favor of Hollywood Ten

- members John Howard Lawson and Dalton Trumbo, and sponsored the September 1949 American Continental Congress for Peace. Notably (inexplicably) lacking from the list is any reference whatsoever to Koch's status as one of the original Nineteen. Red Channels: The Report of Communist Influence in Radio and Television. New York: American Business Consultants, 1950. 94.
- 66 See, for example: Paul Kohner, telegram to Howard Koch, [Oct. 1953], box 3, folder 13, Howard Koch Papers, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society; Edwin Bennet Williams, letter to Howard Koch, 5 Feb. 1959, box 3, folder 13, Howard Koch Papers, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society. In his memoir, he also assigns at least partial blame to John Wayne, calling the right wing actor a "custodian of the blacklist." Wayne, too, is better classed as a graylist enforcer. Koch, As Time Goes By, 179.
- 67 Ceplair and Englund, 338.
- 68 Koch, As Time Goes By, 182.
- 69 Ibid. 198.
- 70 Ibid. 182-198.
- 71 Ibid. 201.
- 72 Kohner. In the 1960s, Koch associated the telegram with his broken contract with Rank: "The cablegram from my then agent, Paul Kohner, demonstrates the power of the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals, working hand in hand with the House Un-American Activities Committee and the American Legion, to prevent the employment of a writer or the sale of his literary properties if they disapproved of his political convictions or affiliations. This censorship extended even to Europe ♦ Even a company as important as Rank in Europe submitted to this censorship during the so-called McCarthy era." Koch, letter to David Knauf. It should be noted, however, that Koch's statement tends to downplay Rank's importance in Hollywood, when in fact the British producer was constantly discussed in the trade journal Variety during the blacklist period, and would have been quite well known in the Los Angeles community.
- 73 Koch, As Time Goes By, 201. Interestingly, Koch only adopts a pseudonym two years after the 1951 date Ceplair and Englund cite as de rigeur for graylisters. This was likely, however, a function of the more relaxed political climate in Europe.
- 74 Koch, As Time Goes By, 202.
- 75 Neale, Steve. "Swashbuckling, Sapphire, and Salt: Un-American Contributions to TV Costume Adventure Series in the 1950s." "Un-American" Hollywood: Politics and Film in the Blacklist Era. Eds., Frank Krutnik et al. New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press, 2007. 199.
- 76 Koch retained the rights for the famous Orson Welles broadcast. See, for instance, Koch, Howard. "Invasion from Mars." Invaders of Earth. Ed. Groff Conklin. New York, NY: The Vanguard Press, Inc. 1952. 193-214; Koch, Howard. "The Invasion from Mars: A Radio Adaptation by Howard Koch of H.G. Wells' War of the Worlds." The Treasury of Science Fiction Classics. Ed. Harold W. Kuebler. Garden City, New York: Hanover House, 1954. 417-438; Koch, Howard. "Invasion from Mars." Speculations: An Introduction to Literature Through Fantasy and Science Fiction. Ed. Thomas E. Sanders. New York and Beverly Hills: Glencoe Press, 1973. 266-284.
- 77 Koch, As Time Goes By, 203. It might be tempting to attribute allegorical implications to The Intimate Stranger. However, Koch's dismissal of the film makes this possibility seem unlikely to me, especially in light of his 1961 praise for allegory in science-fiction: "In the dark McCarthy era when it was unfashionable and dangerous for authors to have any ideas whatsoeveron (sic) political questions such as War and peace and the rights of minorities, science-fiction writers used their allegorical language to express dissenting points of view that were not publishable in any other form." Howard Koch, introduction to the "Invasion from Mars" broadcast, Convention of Science Fiction Writers, 1962 in box 1, folder 1, Howard Koch Papers, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society. Koch's clear respect for allegory suggests that he would have claimed credit for an anti-blacklist work, even if it were not-as The Intimate Stranger is not-a work of science-fiction.
- 78 The first half was the Richard Egan-Dorothy Malone film, Tension at Table Rock. Advertisement, Los Angeles Times 7 Nov. 1956: C11.
- 79 The best evidence of this might be Koch's continued use of his pseudonym in theater into the 1960s, well after he was able to work under his proper name. The play "Voice of the Hurricane," which was lambasted by Bosley Crowther once adapted to the screen, was credited to Peter Howard in 1964. See Crowther, Bosley. "Screen: ♦Voice of the Hurricane': Film on Racial Strife Opens at Trans-Lux." New York Times 3 Jun. 1964: 36.
- 80 Carl Foreman appeared before the Committee in 1951, when he pleaded the Fifth Amendment. He was able to return to work at studios in 1956, after appearing a second time and testifying. Ceplair and Englund 396.
- 81 Koch, letter to Phil Brown. Based upon the production dates of The Intimate Stranger, it seems safe to assume that Koch got the offer between 1955 and 1956. In his letter, Koch seems quite sure that he would be cleared without naming names: "I should point out, Phil, that as a last resort appearing before a member of the Committee is no longer an impossible procedure to contemplate. It depends, I should say, on how skillfully one is able to walk the tight-rope, balancing between what they want to hear and what you're willing to say. It's not a question of being asked to name names-that's out with us and it even was in Carl's case."
- 82 Funke, Lewis. "News and Gossip of the Rialto." New York Times 28 Sept. 1958: X1.
- 83 Scheuer, Philip K. "Is Editing of Film Becoming Lost Art?" Los Angeles Times 16 Jan. 1959: 23.
- 84 Koch identifies Peter Glenville (Beckett) as the director originally attached to the project in his memoir. Koch, As Time Goes By, 202.
- 85 A decade earlier, producer Walter Wanger was among those who crafted the Waldorf Decision letter. Ceplair and Englund, 329.

86 After conveying the news that Joseph Mankiewicz "cannot proceed with WORLD WITHOUT END," McCall asks, "Now, what was it you told me when I was up in Woodstock for the weekend about getting a clearance'? I seem to recall your saying something, and if so is this a step that could be taken and how long would it take?" Monica McCall, letter to Howard Koch, 19 Nov. 1956, box 3, folder 13, Howard Koch Papers, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society.

87 McCall.

88 Koch, letter to Phil Brown.

89 Alvin G. Manuel, letter to Howard Koch, 31 Oct. 1957, box 3, folder 13, Howard Koch Papers, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Wisconsin Historical Society.

90 Koch, statement of political affiliations 1.

91 Ibid. 4.

92 Ibid. 8.

93 Ibid. 5.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid. 6.

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid. 7-8.

98 Koch, letter to Phil Brown. In the letter, Koch expresses clear distaste, bordering on pity, for Gang, describing the lawyer as "schizoid" and "a very troubles (sic) man."

99 Bennet Williams.

100 The 1964 film was the Mirisch production 633 Squadron. See Archer, Eugene. "An Aviation Story About World War II." New York Times 25 Jun. 1964: 25. It must be acknowledged, though, that Koch's inability to find work in Hollywood may well have been more a function of his longtime absence from the Los Angeles community than of his political affiliations.

101 Koch, letter to David Knauf.

102 In his autobiography, published roughly fifteen years after he wrote the letter to David Knauf, Koch asserts that Bennet Williams merely threatened to sue the American Legion for \$1 million. Koch, As Time Goes By 211.

103 Koch's autobiography paints a very different picture of clearance than his papers. A minimum of three years is compressed into four paragraphs with virtually no identifying dates, conveying the distinct impression that Koch's reinstatement was a relatively painless process. Koch, As Time Goes By 210-211.

104 After Koch's frequent denunciations of the Communist Party, one might even see an irony in Koch's secretive actions. In any case, Koch never had quite Trumbo's level of PR savvy. For a full account of Trumbo's reinstatement, see Jeff Smith, "A Good Business Proposition."

105 See Jeanne Hall, "The Benefits of Hindsight: Re-Visions of HUAC and the Film and Television Industries in The Front and Guilty By Suspicion," Film Quarterly 54.2 (December 2000/January 2001): 15-26.

106 Hall 22. In light of Koch's treatment of clearance in his autobiography, we might also question his depiction of exile.

107 Ceplair and Englund, 387. The graylist's status in film history might well be symbolized by Ceplair and Englund's insistence on putting quotations around "graylist" when defining it, though they do no such thing for the blacklist.

108 Koch, letter to David Knauf.



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Heather Heckman is a PhD student in Communication Arts at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Her publications include book reviews published in The Velvet Light Trap and Screening the Past, Muscle Nerve and Journal of Neurophysiology. She plans to write a dissertation on the 1910s French director Léonce Perret. Heather is a programmer for the UW Cinematheque, and volunteers at the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research in her spare time. This year, she was awarded the Mary Pickford Foundation Scholarship by the Association of Moving Image Archivists.

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