Chapter 1

Reel Reds, Real Americans:
Politics and Culture in the Studio System

> I liked the old studio world. I miss it sometimes. It was comfortable. You knew who your friends and enemies were. Your enemies were up there in the front office, making inter-studio deals, playing gin-rummy in Palm Springs, or off somewhere consorting with exhibitors. Your friends were all the other writers, the salaried underpaid producers, directors, editors and analysts you had coffee with in the commissary. The Communists, that's who they were to be perfectly honest. The Reds. You could tell them because they were always talking story—theme, plot, and motivation. Always hitting you up (in the men's room usually) for a contribution to something like milk for rickety babies in rural Georgia, or some such subversive cause. . . . They were gentle patriots . . . , a friendly if often pedantic group, incessantly interested in ideas and humanity.
>
> —John Paxton

Screenwriter John Paxton captures some of the Hollywood "studio world" in the 1930s and 1940s, as well as the appeal and aura of the progressive film community during the period of the Popular Front. Paxton chose to remain aloof from organized politics, but Adrian Scott, one of his closest friends and his collaborator on the films that launched Paxton's screenwriting career, was a Communist. So—for a time, at least—was Edward Dmytryk, the third man in the creative triumvirate responsible for *Murder, My Sweet*; *Cornered*; *So Well Remembered*; and *Crossfire*.

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Paxton's statement suggests several of the major themes of this work: the power of the studio system and its near-monolithic control of filmmaking; the conflicts engendered by the hierarchical power relations within the studio system; the presence and relative influence of a radical minority in the film community; the relationship between sociability and political engagement that inspired the creative community, and the confluence of politics and culture during the 1930s and 1940s. This quote also points clearly to the conflicted nature of the studio system, a conflict readily evident in Paxton's description of the studio system as a nexus of "friends and enemies." His is the language of struggle, of a battle in which the lines were clearly drawn. The "enemies" were the men in the front office, the money men, the deal makers—a very different group from the film workers. Paxton's description of "friends" also reflects the profound gulf between studio management and the studio workforce—a gulf that was simultaneously economic, cultural, and political.

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And yet, Paxton's nostalgia for the old days is clear. His description of the studio system as "comfortable" reveals the ways in which the predictability of conflict between the front office men and the film workers created friends as well as enemies, and details the construction of imagined communities within the film industry.[1] The industrial structure that produced the phenomenal success and international hegemony of American movies also stringently divided film workers by craft and class, and separated them from the studio heads. The hierarchies of the studio system thus created an "us and them" mentality that ultimately enabled a broad-based solidarity among film workers, an imagined community of cultural workers. Defined in contrast to the perceived cultural crassness and political conservatism of the studio moguls, the cultural workers made their imagined community "real" by their own creative engagement and progressive political commitment.

Despite the constraints of working within the studio system, the amalgam of sociability, politics, and creativity made Hollywood an exciting, challenging place to work during this period. As Hollywood movies became a cultural front line in the war against fascism for this class of Left intellectuals, the reality of fascism dissolved the boundaries between high culture and low culture, at least momentarily. Significantly, the writers who came to Hollywood in the late 1930s and 1940s—Scott and Paxton among them—did not have the same conflicts as those of an earlier generation, who often considered themselves "serious artists" and felt that they had sold out to Hollywood. The younger generation, though they struggled mightily against the indignities of mass production within the studio system, did not have the same fear and loathing of "mass culture" that marked the "literary" film workers. Rather, as Larry Ceplair and Steven Englund note, they "regarded the film form as a high art. Raised on 'fine' films, they understood the potential of the medium in a way that their 'greenhorn' forebears did not. Much less torn by the desire to be recognized as novelists or playwrights, they devoted themselves to movie writing."[2] This commitment to the craft of moviemaking—Paxton's "theme, plot, and motivation"—created a common creative ground that helped to bridge the ideological and artistic differences within the film community.

Adrian Scott: Starting Out in the Thirties

Born on February 6, 1911, Robert Adrian Scott grew up in Arlington, New Jersey, one of the centers of the American textile industry, a key site in the history of industrial capitalism and a hotbed of radical labor agitation. Arlington was only twelve miles to the south of Paterson, where the 1913 strike of 25,000 silk workers brought together socialists, Wobblies, and Greenwich Village intellectuals and inspired a massive fundraising pageant performed at Madison Square Garden.

In 1926, when Scott was fifteen years old, 20,000 textile workers in nearby Passaic, New Jersey, closed down the mills. One of the first mass walkouts led by the Communist Party, the strike remained in the national headlines for more than a year;[3] surely it entered the consciousness of the young man at some level. Though the Irish Catholic Scott family was relatively affluent—Adrian's father worked in middle management for the New York Telephone Company—certainly the dark, gray, and dirty mills, factories, and working-class neighborhoods of Adrian's childhood left a lasting impression on him and helped to shape his later political commitments.[4]

Another significant influence on the young Adrian Scott lay across the Hudson River from Arlington: the lights of Manhattan, America's cultural mecca, home to Broadway, the "Great White Way"; to the bohemian communities of Greenwich Village; to Tin Pan Alley and Harlem, sources for ragtime and hot jazz, the soundtrack of American modernism. The theater was an early passion of Adrian's, encouraged perhaps by his older brother Allan, a playwright (and later screenwriter) whose comedy *Goodbye Again* ran on Broadway for most of 1933. Perhaps hoping to follow in his older brother's footsteps, Adrian Scott was particularly active in theater productions at Amherst College, where he majored in English and history. His drama professor F. Curtis Canfield remembered, "No student was more popular and respected than Adrian. He was quiet, serious and extremely capable in his college work."[5] The *Olio*, the Amherst yearbook, offered a charming and quite telling portrait of the artist as a young man:

> Hat cocked back at a rakish angle, cigar in the corner of his mouth, his fingers playing nimbly over the typewriter keys, the inimitable R.A.L. Scott is again displaying his versatility by creating a Lee Tracy atmosphere while pounding out a thesis for his Genetics course. Among his other weaknesses are: an uncontrollable passion for high pressure music (Black Jazz, Tiger Rag and Maniac's Ball being among the most offensive). . . . An irresistible personality, tolerant and understanding, he is one whose friendship is well worth acquiring. A mild Epicurean, he lends conviviality and constructive thought to any party. . . . Smooth, always the gentleman, this curly haired young man merrily and unconcernedly goes his way, unenvious of fame or fortune, but content. To predict his future is an impossibility. Nevertheless, it seems certain, despite his dislike of publicity, that he will be heard from. His talents are too many to go unnoticed.[6]

After graduating from Amherst in 1934, at the lowest point of the Depression, Scott went west to seek his fortune in Hollywood. His brother Allan had moved from Broadway to Hollywood in 1934, working at RKO on several major Fred Astaire–Ginger Rogers musicals including *Top Hat* (1935), *Swing Time* (1936), and *Shall We Dance* (1937). Allan's presence at the studio probably was a factor in Adrian's being hired at RKO in 1934 as a $25-a-week technical consultant on

Gridiron Flash, a college football drama for the studio's low-budget B-unit, though he did not receive screen credit for his contributions. For a young writer with a burgeoning social consciousness and dreams of becoming a serious dramatist, his relegation to such low-budget B-unit films as *Gridiron Flash* must have been difficult to swallow. And without screen credits, he had no hope of being assigned to more challenging projects. After three frustrating years, Scott left Hollywood for New York to try his luck writing for the theater.[7]

In 1937 he was hired as assistant editor for film at *Stage Magazine*, and another desk was squeezed into the office—a "dungeon" behind the filing cabinets—that he would share with another aspiring playwright and *Stage*'s assistant editor for drama, John Paxton. Scott and Paxton had much in common. Like Scott, John Paxton came from a fairly affluent Anglo family, though he was raised Protestant rather than Catholic. Paxton was born (a mere two months after Scott) in Kansas City, Missouri. Horrified at the idea of going into business and sitting at a desk all day, Paxton studied journalism at the University of Missouri. However, he was equally drawn to the theater, which he felt was more social than writing and had the added attraction of "pretty girls and excitement." Like Scott, he graduated from college in the depths of the Depression. When he was unable to find newspaper work, he spent several months traveling around the country with an acting troupe. Eventually settling in New York, intending to pursue a career as a writer rather than as an actor, Paxton worked in industrial publicity and managed a playwriting contest for the Theater Guild before moving to *Stage Magazine* in 1937.[8] The two young men quickly became friends and often ate lunch together, talking endlessly about drama. At this point, Scott was writing plays on the side, and "had a great ambition to be a playwright." Paxton recalled that he and Scott had an "immediate rapport on an artistic level, and it never ended. We went on from there."[9]

The 1930s was a decade of enormous excitement and innovation in the New York theater world. The Federal Theater Project (FTP), created under the auspices of the New Deal's Works Progress Administration to provide work for unemployed stage artists and to bring theater to a broad cross-section of Americans, had revitalized theater throughout the country. From the FTP's 1936 production of a stage version of Sinclair Lewis's antifascist novel *It Can't Happen Here*, to the appropriation by its Living Newspaper troupe of the strikes and radical upsurges that dominated headlines, the FTP created a new model of socially conscious *and* federally subsidized theater. The Mercury Theater burst onto the New York scene from 1937 to 1939; through their productions of *Julius Caesar* and a groundbreaking *Macbeth* with an all-black cast, collaborators Orson Welles and John Houseman hoped to "democratize elite culture, expropriating the cultural wealth of the past for the working classes." Perhaps the pinnacle of experimental,

left-wing theater, however, was the Group Theater, whose 1936 production of Clifford Odets's *Waiting for Lefty* had brought the audience spontaneously to its feet, not in applause, but as participants in the drama, blurring the line between performers and spectators.[10] Though there is no evidence that either Paxton or Scott was associated with the FTP, the Group, or the Mercury Theater during their time in New York, it is simply impossible that these two young aspiring writers, who shared a love of and commitment to "serious" drama, could work in the New York theater world in the mid-1930s and be unaware of these significant new cultural formations.

Stage Magazine, however, was far removed from the radical ferment in 1930s theater. A slick magazine whose pages featured as many glossy ads for liquor, restaurants, and tony department stores as serious articles and reviews, *Stage* was "a country cousin of the *New Yorker*," in the words of John Paxton, who noted that the magazine was constantly in financial crisis. Nevertheless, *Stage* was an incredible opportunity for the fledgling writers, who routinely served as ghostwriters for articles published under the bylines of American and European notables from a broad range of political persuasions and cultural fields. Through their work on *Stage*, Scott and Paxton were immersed in a heady world of ideas and culture, as they interviewed or corresponded with such intellectuals as John Strachey and Max Eastman; theater luminaries from Kurt Weill and Max Reinhardt to Eve La Gallienne and Robert Sherwood; literary figures from John Steinbeck to James Thurber; and Hollywood heavyweights from Alfred Hitchcock to Frank Capra and Charles Laughton. Paxton remembered, "There was a point where Allen Churchill, Sidney Carroll, Adrian and I were writing the whole magazine." By 1938, however, financial difficulties finally forced *Stage* to cut back its staff, and Scott was one of the casualties. After seven months in New York, he left to take another shot at Hollywood. Paxton stayed in New York, working at *Stage* until it finally folded in 1939, and then as a play analyst and publicist at the Theater Guild, before he, too, headed west to Los Angeles.[11]

Stage provided an invaluable apprenticeship for Scott and Paxton, cementing their friendship as well as their sense of themselves as belonging to the world of theater, writing, and "Culture." It is also significant that much of their work at *Stage* was a sort of literary performance, training them to write not only for others, but *as* others. Thus, instead of finding their "authentic voices," Scott and Paxton learned to mimic and reproduce the voices of well-known and easily identifiable others—a chameleon exercise that prepared them well to work in Hollywood. Indeed, despite his notable success as a screenwriter, John Paxton always described himself as a "script doctor," a writer who fixed or "cured" the sick and ailing words of others, rather than as an "original" artist: "I was never that kind of writer," he insisted. Thus, though both men had left the theatrical

world for the film industry by the end of the decade, their brief years in New York had a lasting impact on their work. Both valued "exaltation and ennoblement" in drama and wanted to "transfer the seriousness and integrity of Broadway to Hollywood."[12]

Friends and Enemies: Working in the Studio System

Hollywood during the studio era was a quintessential site of insiders and outsiders, a company town in which filmmaking dominated all aspects of life, personal as well as professional. Many, especially those who had earned success and reputation in the world of theater or literature, found Hollywood appalling and déclassé, filled with rubes and poseurs. In some ways, this was not untrue. The image of Hollywood glamour, decadent nightlife, and rampant promiscuity was generally overrated. Certainly the divorce rate was no higher in Hollywood than in other major cities, and many contemporary observers remarked on the relative parochialism and banality of the film colony. Transplanted New Yorkers—drawn by the possibility of big money, if not the opportunity to create great art—particularly scorned the lack of sophistication and intellectual stimulation; songwriter Harry Warren even described living and working in Hollywood as "like being in Iowa."[13] Indeed, despite—or perhaps because of—the worldwide dissemination and circulation of Hollywood films and lives, the film community in the 1930s and 1940s was remarkably insular. The very phrase "film colony," which had broad currency during this period, evokes not only Hollywood's cultural imperialism, but also suggests a small band of settlers circling the wagons to protect themselves from incursion by unknown, outside Others. The strict division of labor within the studio system shaped the very patterns of sociability, as seen in the "writers' table" or the "ingenues' table" in the studio commissaries. Similarly, though gala openings or large affairs drew "mixed" audiences, off the lot, screenwriters tended to socialize with other screenwriters, actors with other actors, studio heads with other studio heads.[14]

At the pinnacle of Hollywood's hierarchy of communities, imagined and real, were the studio heads. Though competition within the film industry could be ruthless, the ties that bound the studio moguls together were far stronger than the power struggles or personalities that divided them. The moguls consistently presented a united front that enabled control of the industry, stabilization of markets and profits, and protection from external threats and internal "subversion." In short, the Hollywood studios were, in the words of Ceplair and Englund, "one large family financed by the same banks, taking the same risks, making the same product with the same conventions, interchanging a stable corps of artists, battling common enemies, and adopting standardized policies in a whole range of areas, from foreign and domestic public relations and marketing to labor contracts

and trade union policies."[15]

Power relations within the studio system, as well as the unmistakable style and ideological thrust of the film genres associated with classical Hollywood, grew out of the fact that by the 1930s, the film industry was dominated by a handful of Eastern European Jewish immigrants who came of age on the fringes of American culture, poor and hungry to succeed. Though the earliest filmmakers had been largely native-born, bourgeois Protestants, the Hollywood Jews entered the business and exhibition end of the industry in the 1910s, and they presided over its transition to the centralized studio system through the 1920s, applying entrepreneurial skills learned in the garment industry and other retail trades to the marketing of films and theaters in a way that helped transform moviegoing into the great American pastime.[16] Of the major players who dominated the film industry into the 1950s—Jesse Lasky, Adolph Zukor, Carl Laemmle, Cecil B. DeMille, William Fox, Louis B. Mayer, Marcus Loew, Samuel Goldwyn, Harry Cohn, Joseph and Nicholas Schenk, David O. Selznick, Irving Thalberg, Darryl F. Zanuck, and Sam, Harry, Albert, and Jack Warner—only DeMille and Zanuck were not immigrant Jews.[17]

These men, along with a handful of American-born Jews (often sons, nephews, or sons-in-law) and a few Gentiles who shared their imperial vision, were Paxton's "front-office men"—a phrase that points to the rigid hierarchies that defined the relations of power in Hollywood. Within the studio system, the studio executives—whether in New York or Hollywood—operated as a bloc, wielding an almost autocratic power over the process of filmmaking. Though ultimate authority rested with the "money men" in the New York offices, the studios in Hollywood were dominated by powerful production heads who wielded enormous authority over the daily running of the studio, as film historian Thomas Schatz has described:

> These men—and they were always men—translated an annual budget handed down by the New York office into a program of specific pictures. They coordinated the operations of the entire plant, conducted contract negotiations, developed stories and scripts, screened "dailies" as pictures were being shot, and supervised editing until a picture was ready for shipment to New York for release.[18]

If the studio heads were remarkable in their homogeneity and cohesion, Hollywood's creative workers—who often defined themselves in contradistinction to the moguls, as seen in Paxton's juxtaposition of "friends and enemies"—stand out for their diversity: Protestants, Catholics, and Jews; native-born, ethnics, and émigrés (though almost universally white); radicals, liberals, and conservatives; men and women (though far more men than women); the famous and the

unknown. At times it seemed the only unifying thread was their common struggle to produce meaningful creative work within the studio system. Nevertheless, that very sense of solidarity in opposition was the foundation of the other significant imagined community in the film industry: the "cultural workers," a broad-based constellation of leftists and liberals that coalesced around the art and politics of the Popular Front.

Hollywood's cultural workers were part of a larger political and cultural transformation during the 1930s and 1940s. Though historians have vigorously debated the relative radicalism or conservatism of this era, all agree that this was a period of significant transformation.[19] Among political and labor historians, the realignment that took place during these decades is often conceptualized as the age of FDR, the New Deal era, or the age of the CIO. Among cultural historians, this period is being reconceptualized as a "second American Renaissance" that transformed the relationship between modernism, mass culture, and progressive politics and profoundly shaped the generation of artists and intellectuals who came of age during these decades. Michael Denning makes reference to "the cultural front." Saverio Giovacchini speaks of "Hollywood modernism." Lary May describes what he calls the politics of "the American Way." All agree, however, that Hollywood played a key role in this political and cultural realignment, challenging Manhattan as the center of American modernism and, indeed, often siphoning off major New York talents, such as Dorothy Parker and F. Scott Fitzgerald, as well as attracting a cadre of European émigré artists and intellectuals.[20] For this cosmopolitan Popular Front generation, movies—like jazz, cartoons, radio, and the other "lively arts"—were both quintessentially modern and quintessentially American. Though Hollywood had often been disdained by the "high modernists" of the 1920s as a site of Fordism, frivolousness, and false consciousness, for the Popular Front generation Hollywood "promised the construction of a democratic modernism, a common language, able to promote modernity while maintaining a commitment to democracy as well as the political and intellectual engagement of the masses."[21]

Indeed, political engagement was at the heart of this realignment, and the cultural workers in Hollywood, both liberals and radicals, embraced a wide-ranging and interconnected political agenda that included industrial unionism and social democracy, antifascism and antiracism, cosmopolitanism and internationalism. To this end the European émigrés (often refugees from fascism) and New Yorkers (often from working-class or ethnic backgrounds) who converged on the film industry in the 1930s and 1940s called for a greater realism in filmmaking, urging Hollywood to bridge the gap between the popular and the political, between entertainment and art, and to make films that both spoke to and enlightened "the people." Though painful, incomplete, and highly

contested, the emergence of this "culture of the masses" created a surge of excitement among Hollywood progressives such as Adrian Scott and John Paxton, who hoped to integrate their political commitments into their creative work. Though Paxton remained somewhat aloof from the political activism that animated many of his peers, he felt he was "able to contribute because of this thing [he] had inherited from Anderson and the theater. . . . And this meant dealing with real material. [They] all did feel that we were the beginning of a new age."[22]

Certainly, the desire to make good movies was universal in Hollywood; however, the cultural workers and the front-office men often defined that goal quite differently, and conflict between the two groups—sometimes friendly, sometimes not—was a constant feature of work in the studio system. At stake in this struggle between the film workers and the studio heads were two interrelated issues: 1) the relative autonomy of the creative workers within the studio system; and 2) the relative power of each group to influence film content. In this, the studio moguls clearly had the upper hand, but the conflict was exacerbated by the autocratic manner in which the studio heads managed their employees. The situation of the screenwriters—who resisted the control of the studios most intensely and consistently—illustrates the nature of the conflict. Though the film industry was irrevocably dependent upon writers, the moguls steadfastly refused to abdicate their authority and control. In their minds, writers were less artists than hired hands. Ceplair and Englund note that "the producers willingly paid gargantuan salaries to the best actors, directors and screenwriters, but steadfastly resisted any encroachment on creative decision-making. In fact, the high salaries were partially intended to secure the producers' autocracy, that is, to sooth the itch for artistic autonomy with the balm of wealth."[23] Indeed, Neal Gabler suggests that serious writers such as Fitzgerald or Faulkner were not hired for their literary skills as much as for "the distinction they brought to the men who hired them." To the Hollywood Jews, the screenwriter was "simply another affectation along with the racehorses, the mansions, the limousines, the tailored suits. He was a reproof against accusations of vulgarity . . . , a scapegoat for the indignities they felt they had to suffer for their lack of education and refinement."[24] Having escaped the shtetls of Eastern Europe, having pulled themselves out of the immigrant ghettos to become some of the wealthiest men in the country, the Hollywood moguls saw themselves as quintessentially American Horatio Algers. The American Dream had become their personal reality, and that reality in turn shaped the often romanticized vision of America they projected through their films.

At the same time, however, the studio heads shared a sense of being on the outside looking in during an era of raging xenophobia and anti-Semitism. The

Hollywood moguls, producer Milton Sperling explained, "felt that they were on the outside of the real power source of the country. They were not members of the power elite . . . that New England–Wall Street–Middle West money."[25] This sense of alienation and desire for respectability spurred in the Hollywood Jews a "ferocious, even pathological" drive to repudiate their "foreignness" and be accepted as "real" Americans.[26] Significantly, once the Hollywood Jews consolidated their control of the film industry, Jewish characters and themes virtually disappeared from the screen. Jewish characters—and indeed, Jewish actors—were de-ethnicized, and even the rare films about anti-Semitism, such as *The Life of Emile Zola*, were vague and indirect. Both assimilationist desires and fears of the charge of "Jewish domination" of the film industry fed into this trend.[27]

Still, the very fact of their success convinced the Hollywood Jews that they knew better than anyone, including the writers, what the public wanted to see. And they were in a position to make sure the public got what it wanted. For example, left-wing screenwriter John Wexley remembered watching with Louis B. Mayer the rushes for MGM's *Song of Russia*—a film that had deep political significance for Wexley. Mayer was outraged to see that one of the actresses had dirt on her face:

> "The heroine! In all the pictures we have ever made the heroines never have dirt on their face! I won't have my lead actress shown with dirt on her face, and by the way, her hair should be dressed properly!" Wexley objected, saying, "Your heroine is running through bombs. How can she look like she just came from the hairdresser?" Mayer took him outside and told him, "Look, I built this studio on this policy. So don't tell me what to do. You're only a writer."[28]

Countless incidents such as this fueled the resentment and frustrations of the cultural workers and confirmed their perception of the studio heads as philistines. Indeed, Paxton's rather contemptuous description of the "work" performed by these studio heads reveals his sense that the executives were superfluous, if not deliberately counterproductive, to the *creative* process of making movies. Paxton's reference to their "consorting with exhibitors" is a reminder that Hollywood films were ultimately products to be purchased and consumed, thereby generating profits for the studios. It was the exhibitors and the audiences who needed to be wooed, not the studio employees. His image of the moguls "playing gin-rummy in Palm Springs" suggests the incredible wealth and leisure the studio heads claimed for themselves, a constant source of resentment for many in the film industry. His pointed sarcasm clearly reflects his resentment of the top-down structure of power in Hollywood, and perhaps more importantly, reveals his sense that the studio moguls were a kind of cabal whose loyalty lay with one another rather than with the people who worked for them—giving lie to the "family"

rhetoric employed by studio heads like Louis B. Mayer.

Thus, in the nexus of "friends and enemies," Paxton aligns himself with the middle strata of film workers: "the other writers, salaried underpaid producers, directors, editors and analysts." There is a crucial distinction here between the "salaried underpaid producers"—like Paxton's friend Adrian Scott—who were dependent upon the largess of the studio, and an independent producer such as David O. Selznick, whose financial resources and creative autonomy—and Jewishness—put him far closer in status and power to the studio heads, or writer-producer-actor-director Orson Welles, whose *wunderkind* reputation and personal charisma gave him astonishingly free rein at RKO during the early 1940s. Paxton's emphasis on the "inter-studio deals" of the studio executives further suggests the relative powerlessness of film workers, who were generally hired on long-term, ironclad contracts that left them little room to maneuver or control the conditions of their work, and who were subject to loan-outs on the whims of management or assignment to stories or projects not of their own choosing. Thomas Schatz notes that "because of the different stakes involved for each of these key players, studio filmmaking was less a process of collaboration than of negotiation and struggle—occasionally approaching armed conflict."[29]

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Indeed, for every literary star such as F. Scott Fitzgerald or Dorothy Parker, there were dozens of lesser-paid contract writers and hundreds more unemployed aspirants or freelancers bouncing from studio to studio. Anthropologist Leo Rosten described the vulnerability of most Hollywood writers:

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> For two decades [1921–1941] the movie writers in the low salary brackets (of whom there are plenty) were not given the protection of minimum wages or minimum periods of employment. They were discharged with no advance notice; their employment was sporadic and their tenure short-lived. They were laid off for short-term periods, under contract but without pay. They worked on stories on which other writers were employed, without knowing who their collaborators (or competitors) were. Their right to screen credits was mistreated by certain producers who allotted credit to their friends or relatives or—under pseudonyms—to themselves. They were frequently offered the bait of speculative writing without either guarantees or protection in the outcome.[30]

The lack of autonomy and creative control—experienced by all creative workers under the studio system, despite the relatively high salaries of some—spawned intense and convoluted struggles throughout the 1930s to unionize key sectors of the film industry. In 1927 the studio executives had banded together to form the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) as a company union embracing producers, directors, actors, writers, and technicians. The Academy succeeded in forestalling labor unrest for five years, but when the studio

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executives used the occasion of Roosevelt's bank holiday in 1933 to cut screenwriters' salaries (though not their own), the writers rebelled. The Screen Writers Guild (SWG) was founded in April 1933; the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) was formed three months later. The studio executives fought unionization with belligerence and divisiveness. Though the 1935 National Labor Relations Act authorized collective bargaining, it was ignored by the studios. The threat of an actors' strike two years later finally forced the studios to recognize SAG in 1937, but the bread-and-butter concessions they made to the actors did not threaten the executives' authority in any fundamental way.   The screenwriters' demands, on the other hand, struck deep into the heart of power relations within the studio system. The SWG's left wing drew up a platform with three goals: "1) a union strong enough to back its demands by shutting off the supply of screenplays; 2) alliances with the Dramatists Guild and other writers' organizations so as to be able to stop the flow of all story material at the source; and 3) remuneration on a royalty basis that would give authors greater control over the content of their work by making them part owners of the movies based on their scripts." The platform caused bitter splits within the SWG, not only between progressives and conservatives, but also between liberals and radicals.   In 1936, the right-wing screenwriters formed the Screen Playwrights, a company union to which the studios immediately awarded a five-year contract. The SWG responded by filing a representation petition with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). In August 1938, the NLRB certified the SWG as the sole bargaining agent for Hollywood screenwriters; however, it took the writers and executives three years, until May 1941, to agree on a contract. This bitter and protracted battle with the studios reinforced the participants' sense of themselves as cultural *workers* and gave birth to a highly politicized, progressive cadre in Hollywood.   Indeed, one screenwriter joked that Louis B. Mayer had "created more Communists than Karl Marx."[31] The left wing of this movement, particularly, had a profound impact on the film community through the end of the 1940s.

Red Hollywood: Politics and Culture of the Popular Front

Adrian Scott's return to Hollywood in 1938 coincided with a period of intense political activity in the film colony. During this period Scott worked to define himself as an artist and to integrate his emerging political vision into his art. The political commitments he formed during this period, the friends that he made, and his experiences as a struggling screenwriter profoundly shaped his approach to filmmaking, the kind of producer he became, and the kinds of films he made. This was a transformative period for him, and his ongoing struggle to succeed as a screenwriter was interspersed with work on other creative projects outside the studios, as well as a burgeoning interest in the political issues that shaped Hollywood in the late 1930s, from the struggles to unionize the film industry, to

the fight against European fascism, to the campaigns against racism and discrimination. The Communist Party of the United States of America (the CPUSA or simply CP) was on the front lines on all these issues and, for many, seemed to be the only organization that was consistently fighting for fundamental social and political change. Though there is no doubt that Scott's interest in progressive politics led him to join the Party at some point during this period, he never spoke or wrote publicly about being a Communist. But according to Joan Scott, Adrian's third wife, he was deeply affected by the terrible suffering of the Depression: "The CP was the only place he could find that addressed it all. He was in his late twenties and was very impressed by the Communists. Adrian was like anyone else who came to good politics at that time: he was a good decent person, who cared about other people's welfare and couldn't just walk away."[32]

The 1930s and 1940s were the heyday of American Communism, with interest in the Party catalyzed initially by the Great Depression and the growing sense that neither capitalism nor liberalism offered solutions to—and indeed, might be the root cause of—the economic and political dislocations that wracked much of the world.[33] It was the rise of fascism in Europe, however, that truly transformed the Left during this period, both internationally and in the United States. As fascist regimes in Germany and Italy cracked down on labor and Communist movements, the Soviet Union was one of the first nations to feel threatened; and in 1935, the Comintern stepped back from its agenda of worldwide revolution and embraced the ideology of a Popular Front, an alliance of radicals and liberals against the forces of reaction and fascism. This was a sea change in international Communist Party policy, with political and cultural implications that reverberated throughout the world. During this early period, the Soviets led the charge against international fascism, particularly in their support for the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War, a conflict that many on the Left saw as a dress rehearsal for another world war.[34]

The shift in policy toward support of a Popular Front against fascism electrified the American Communist Party and particularly captured the imagination of the younger generation of radicals. As Party activist George Charney described it:

> Everything seemed right—the emphasis on the struggle against fascism, the overriding urge for unity. Overnight we adjusted our evaluation of Roosevelt and the New Deal. Where we had been prone to damn all things American, we were now reassured that patriotism was not necessarily reactionary or the "last refuge of scoundrels," that there was a difference between bourgeois democracy and fascism, that we had to cherish democratic traditions, and, above all, that transcending the class struggle, a basis existed for common action between the Soviet Union and the bourgeois democratic nations of the West.

Charney also notes that while American Communists had been prepared to work, however "sluggishly," within the framework of the old policies, they were thrilled by the prospect of "a policy that was natural, that heeded reality, and that could unleash our creative talents and energies."[35]

The Popular Front in America operated as a loose coalition of organizations committed to four primary goals: pressing the Roosevelt administration toward a worldwide antifascist alliance; supporting defenders of democracy and victims of fascist militarism, particularly the Spanish Loyalists in their struggle against Franco; countering domestic fascism; and defeating the attempts of big business to thwart the labor movement and social-reform legislation. Particularly significant for the Hollywood progressives, the Popular Front also shifted the Party's priorities away from notions of "art as a weapon" and the proletarian fiction of working-class and African American writers, toward "a strategy aimed at aligning bourgeois literary and screen luminaries into the anti-fascist mobilization." For many members of the Hollywood film community, including Adrian Scott, the Popular Front's commitment to solidarity and a united stand against fascism was enormously appealing and helped sustain the collaboration between liberals and radicals in their struggles to unionize the film industry and their campaigns against racial discrimination.[36]

A number of historians, including Michael Denning and David Roediger, have argued that the emphasis on the CPUSA (or, indeed, the Comintern) in analyses of the Popular Front is misleading. They suggest that the historical "fixation" with the model of a Party "core" and a "periphery" of liberals and sympathizers ultimately reduces the Popular Front to a cynical formulation of the Party line or a fleeting political coalition of leftists, liberals, and "fellow travellers." Denning, in particular, argues that, within the *cultural* front (though not necessarily in the labor movement, for example), the non-Communist socialists and independent leftists—such as Orson Welles, Richard Wright, Carey McWilliams, Louis Adamic—*were* the Popular Front and worked to create a "culture that was neither a Party nor a liberal New Deal culture." In Denning's formulation, the Popular Front is more productively viewed in Gramscian terms, as a "historical bloc uniting industrial unionists, Communists, independent socialists, community activists, and émigré anti-fascists around laborist social democracy, anti-fascism and anti-lynching." Denning also offers a corrective to interpretations that suggest that the Popular Front represented an unfortunate retreat from earlier "real" radicalism (particularly on race and gender) that ultimately compromised the influence of the Left and undermined the revolutionary impulse and cultural legitimacy of proletarian art and literature.[37]

While I agree with the sentiment behind Denning's call for a shift away from

Communist Party–centered interpretations—many of which are motivated by a not-so-subtle antiradicalism[38]—the exceptional influence of Party members within the Hollywood progressive community, as well as the issue of Party membership in postwar attacks on Hollywood and on Adrian Scott, Edward Dmytryk, and *Crossfire*, in particular, mandate an extended analysis of the role of the Party in the film industry. Though Scott himself remained silent about his CP membership, some of his friends and comrades in the industry have written powerfully of their experiences, and their memories offer a window onto that world—the urgency of the times and the issues that "made them feel it was important to be a Communist. In that way, and *in that way only*, could people overcome what they felt was the major political action in the world, which was becoming Fascist."[39]

The strength and appeal of the Party—the romance of American Communism, as Vivian Gornick has called it[40]—in the 1930s and 1940s was such that every progressive in America had to grapple at some point with the question: "Should I join?" Many chose not to. Some were put off by the hierarchical structure of the Party, others by the rigidity of some of the Communists themselves. Some joined and then left, disturbed by reports of purges and atrocities in the Soviet Union or abrupt shifts in the ideological line. Many, both inside and outside the Party, were deeply disturbed by the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939, and were alternately amused and outraged by the overnight transformation of the Party position on the war, from intervention to isolationism in 1939, and then back to interventionism again in 1941, after the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union. These sudden ideological shifts gave credence to charges that American Communists blindly followed orders from Moscow and created suspicions that undermined the left-liberal solidarity of the Popular Front period.[41]

Nevertheless, the Party's appeal to social idealism gave it a strong toehold among Hollywood progressives, and in fact, many Hollywood Communists have insisted that their experiences within the Party were markedly different from those of Communists in other industries or locales. From the beginning, the Party's desire to attract Hollywood luminaries translated into a relaxation of both discipline and dogma. Founded in 1934, the Hollywood branch of the CPUSA was answerable only to the Party leaders in New York, giving the Hollywood Communists an unusual degree of autonomy. From an initial membership of four screenwriters, the section grew to over one hundred members within a year and nearly three hundred within three years. The section was advised intermittently by the Party's cultural commissar, V. J. Jerome, while John Howard Lawson ran the section on the local level.[42] According to Abe Polonsky, Party member and writer-director of several important films noir, including *Body and Soul* and *Force of Evil*,

The Party style of Marxism didn't have a chance here, or in New York

either, among intellectuals. The leadership's behavior violated the whole intellectual life of Marxism, and the Party itself also did that constantly. . . . [V. J. Jerome] would raise hell with about eleven people. We didn't give a shit. The cultural leadership obviously didn't know what they were talking about. We ignored them out here, and we did a lot of wonderful things despite them.[43]

The Party leadership in New York also chose to overlook the divergences between many of the Party's avowedly revolutionary goals and the more mainstream social passions of the film community—the defeat of the Axis powers, the success of the labor movement, and the eradication of racism in America. Ceplair and Englund note that "these interests were not mutually exclusive; in fact, there was considerable tactical and strategic overlap. Nevertheless, these divergences created a basis for confusion." Screenwriter Guy Endore's statement is particularly telling in this context:

> I wasn't really a Communist. I didn't agree with [all the Party's doctrines]. [What] united me with it was simply the fact that they represented the most extreme protest to what I saw going on in the world. . . . I was a Communist only in the sense that I felt it would stop war and it would stop rac[ist] feelings, that it would help Jews, Negroes, and so on. I wasn't a Communist in wanting the Communist Party to run the world or in wanting the ideas of Karl Marx to govern everything.[44]

Such divergences between Party dogma and the political consciousness of most Hollywood Communists help to explain Paxton's characterization of the "Reds" with such rare sympathy. He scoffs at the idea of the Communists as dangerous revolutionaries through the example he gives of their political activity—dunning him for money in the men's room to buy milk for rickety children in Georgia. Instead, he describes them as "gentle patriots." Indeed, the "Americanized" rhetoric of the Popular Front period not only helped to make the Party more palatable to liberals in the film community, but also transformed the radicals' perception of themselves, as George Charney describes:

> It was as though a new day had dawned for the American movement. We were not only Communists, we were Americans again. . . . [W]e were readily convinced that [Marxism and Americanism] were not only compatible but inseparable. . . . We became Jeffersonians, students of American history, and as we rediscovered our revolutionary origins, we reinterpreted them in Marxist terms. . . . We even projected a flamboyant slogan, 'Communism Is Twentieth-Century Americanism,' to dramatize our new outlook as well as to suggest a historical link between democracy and communism.[45]

Though some have suggested that the Party's newfound patriotism was merely cynical posturing, Ceplair and Englund argue that the Hollywood Communists were "courageous American radicals in the Jeffersonian, or abolitionist traditions,

who joined [the CPUSA] not as a response to class exploitation, but because they regarded it as the most effective means to live out their principles in the twentieth century."[46]

Indeed, John Bright, one of the founders of the Hollywood branch of the Party, proudly defined himself as an "indigenous" radical, and credited his family's history of antiracist work as the inspiration for his avid support for the Scottsboro Boys. He described the Party as: "the only organization in the country that cared and did something about what I believe is the great cancer in this country—racial prejudice. The Socialists didn't do anything about it, and certainly the Democrats and Republicans didn't do anything about it. But the Communist Party did. That attracted me originally, and I went all out."[47] Bright's sentiments were echoed by many others in the film community who were politicized during this period. In the words of screenwriter Anne Froelick, "You couldn't see what happened during the Spanish Civil War any other way: it was the Communists against the Fascists. For a writer in Hollywood, the Communists in the Screen Writers Guild were the ones raising our professional standard, winning our rights in various ways. And they were way, way out in front of everyone else on Negro rights." Howard Koch, a lifelong progressive, though not a member of the Party, recalled the early 1940s as "a high point in his life, a time when, with Roosevelt in the White House and 'the Depression in back of us,' everything seemed possible." Koch characterized the political commitment of Hollywood progressives—liberals and leftists—in simple terms: they were "involved in the struggle against fascism, in whatever form it appeared, and in working for a more democratic society, economically and racially."[48] This was certainly the case for Adrian Scott, and this alternative Americanism is evident throughout his creative work as a filmmaker.

Another fundamental appeal of the Hollywood Left was its sociability. Paxton's remembrance tells us a great deal about the appeal of the studio system for its creative personnel, emphasizing the seamlessness between work and life that was so compelling and seemed so absent, ordinarily, in the modern world. Paxton's warm memory of drinking coffee in the commissary with the comrades, "always talking story" with idealistic, socially conscious friends, is an apt metaphor for the desire for belonging and meaning that was extremely powerful for Hollywood progressives. Actress Betsy Blair Reisz frequently attended Marxist discussion groups when she lived in New York, but found that in Hollywood talk of politics was as much a part of the social scene as of organized political activity: "All of my theoretical discussions were at Schwab's [Drugstore] or at the delicatessen across the street from the Actors Lab, where, believe me, with people like Arnie Manoff and Jack Berry screaming and yelling, we had big political discussions about everything."[49] Abe Polonsky, a more theoretically sophisticated Marxist than most of his radical peers, tellingly described the Party in Hollywood as a "kind of *social*

club."[50] Activist Ella Winter, who was married to screenwriter Donald Ogden Stewart, wrote in *The New Republic* in early 1938: "There is hardly a tea party today, or a cocktail gathering, a studio lunch table or dinner even at a producer's house at which you do not hear agitated discussion, talk of 'freedom' and 'suppression,' talk of tyranny and the Constitution, of war, of world economy and political theory." Indeed, liberal screenwriter Mary McCall complained at the time, "We're up to our necks in politics and morality. . . . There are no gatherings now except for a Good Cause. We have almost no time to be actors and writers these days. We're committee members and collectors and organizers and audiences for orators."[51]

Hollywood cultural workers were impressed by movies with progressive themes, particularly biopics such as *Juarez*, *The Story of Louis Pasteur*, and *The Life of Emile Zola*, or stories of "little men" or "the people" such *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang*, and *The Grapes of Wrath*. These were the kinds of films that they tried to write as well. The Party held workshops to help writers engage politically in their cultural work. The Writers Clinic was an informal board of successful left-wing screenwriters, including George Sklar, Albert Maltz, and John Howard Lawson, who read and commented on screenplays submitted by writers. Though the Party was interested in helping writers develop politically and meld their politics and their creative work, the leadership did not attempt to formally censor screenplays. Ceplair and Englund assert that while the criticisms from the Writers Clinic might be "plentiful, stinging and (sometimes politically) dogmatic," the writers were free to embrace or ignore them without repercussions.[52] Norma Barzman found Sklar's critiques of her work in a Party-run clinic very helpful and "a wonderful example of how writers could work together. The atmosphere among Communist writers in Hollywood was like no other. People cared about each other, about ideas, about doing good things. It sounds Pollyannaish, but they enjoyed working together." Anne Froelick agreed, though she thought the Party discussions about screenwriting "sounded like harangues, and the books about theory were just terrible. . . . But the Party made you feel that your favorite friends were all working together and that you were helping the world to be a better place in small ways."[53] Significantly, it was on the terrain of creativity that Hollywood radicals tried to win over liberals in the film colony. As Ceplair and Englund report, "Scarcely a liberal or sympathizer in Hollywood missed getting an invitation, between 1936 and 1946, 'to come talk films with us.' Those who accepted found themselves, to their amusement or consternation, at a weekly get-together of a [M]arxist study group. . . . [N]ew people in Hollywood, or old-line liberals, were considered fair game."[54]

One question of intense interest to Hollywood progressives was the degree to which they were able to influence the content of the films on which they worked.

Alvah Bessie remembers receiving conflicting advice when he arrived in Hollywood after writing cultural criticism for the *New Masses*. John Howard Lawson told him, "You can do good work here, if you understand the limitations of this medium in this particular system." Daniel Fuchs, on the other hand, warned him: "Everything you are given here will be shit. And you cannot make anything out of it except shit. That is all you can do with it. But . . . if you play your cards right, you can be on the top of the heap in a year, making big money." Even Communist Party leader William Z. Foster had an opinion. Speaking at a meeting of the Hollywood section, he told the writers, "You can't really do very good work in this industry because they won't let you. But you can prevent them, if you know how to do it, from making really anti-black, anti-woman, anti-foreign-born, anti-foreign-country pictures. You can prevent them from making anti-human pictures, and that is a very worthy thing to be doing."[55] Comedy writer Allen Boretz believed, "Content could be made an integral part of the structure of a film, if it lived up to its dramatic purpose and was not inserted willy-nilly. Otherwise it would stand out like a sore thumb. Everything depended on the effect it was supposed to have. It could be too strong, but it could also be too subtle, in which case it was useless."[56] Betsy Blair Reisz insisted,

> Of course, there was a Communist conspiracy in Hollywood. There was a conspiracy to get a black character into a movie or to express a liberal idea in a movie. It's a joke that it was a Communist conspiracy to overthrow the country. It was a conspiracy to do good work and establish the movie unions. People sneer at the 'champagne socialists.' . . . But it is false to think that you couldn't take those people seriously and that they were doing it for show. . . . Everybody I knew was doing it idealistically.[57]

Film historian Brian Neve concludes that "the radical writers may not have had a radical aesthetic about film, or any significant power base within the studio system, but the interest of the Community Party in the craft of the screenwriter, and the discussions in their writers' clinics, had some effect in a period when the new Hollywood interest in politics and messages increased the prestige and bargaining power of the writer."[58]

The interplay of politics and culture was a heady mix for Hollywood progressives during this period, and despite the constraints of working within the studio system, the amalgam of sociability, politics, and creativity made Hollywood an exciting, challenging place to work during this period. Ceplair and Englund note that "virtually all screenwriters were held fast by the large salaries and by the unique, peculiar, and undefinable sense of challenge and accomplishment presented by their craft."[59] This was certainly the case for Scott and Paxton, who were drawn together initially by a shared love of the theater and a desire to translate the seriousness and integrity of theater to film. By the end of the

decade, their commitment to realism in art was inseparable from their progressive political commitment, and for Scott, membership in the Communist Party. Paxton remembered that the artists he worked with, whether or not they were Communists, shared an "enormous social conscience. . . . Today they'd say 'Tell it like it is.' The town at that time was feeling a surge of excitement, and film was the most exciting medium there was."[60]

Adrian Scott in Hollywood

Like many young screenwriters during this period, Scott hoped to integrate his burgeoning radical politics into his creative work. At this point in his career, however, Scott was still struggling to make a name for himself within the studio system, working as a freelancer and under short-term contracts with no tangible success for more than a year. His frustrations with screenwriting, and his emerging political vision, soon led him outside the studio system to documentary filmmaking. Richard Pells suggests that the documentary impulse of the 1930s grew out of the sense that fiction and drama were inadequate to explain the "intolerable confusion and disorder" and loss "of control over their institutions, their environment, and their lives" felt by many Americans, conditions created by the Depression at home and fascism abroad. As writer Elizabeth Noble argued in the *New Masses* in 1937, "With real events looming larger than any imagined happenings, documentary films and still photographs, reportage and the like have taken the place once held by the grand invention." In his desire to reflect the "truth" of his times, Scott joined many literary luminaries including James Agee, John Dos Passos, Sherwood Anderson, Theodore Dreiser, and Louis Adamic. Pells also suggests that the documentary impulse allowed writers to address their own internal discord as well as that of the society. He argues that "by portraying what he saw as truthfully and completely as possible, the artist could feel that he was engaged in a purposeful enterprise, that he had regained control over some portion of his life, that he had recovered his competence and self-respect. To this extent, the documentary became for many writers a natural response to social chaos and inner turmoil."[61] This analysis seems particularly applicable to Adrian Scott during this transitional period in his life, as he struggled on a number of levels to define himself and to integrate his aesthetic and political visions.

Abe Polonsky offers another perspective on the appeal of documentaries, suggesting that the constraints and frustration of working within the studio system itself forced Hollywood artists to question their career choices:

> According to Marxist theory, no decent picture could be made in Hollywood. In the meetings of the Hollywood clubs—a word we preferred to cells—one of the great discussions that used to go on all the time was: Should I be in Hollywood, and should I be writing movies? Or should I,

say, do documentaries? Or should I try to make films apart from Hollywood that would in some way deal with the theoretical basis of why we are in fact in the Communist Party? . . . But when you want to get into making movies, and if you're fascinated with movies and care about movies, then there's only one thing to do: you try to make feature films for studios. It may not be the best solution to an artistic problem. It may end in the total defeat of every impulse that the writer, the director, and the actor has. But the fact of the matter is, that's the only choice, and that is why so many people who became Communists in Hollywood didn't rush to go elsewhere.[62]

Nevertheless, in April 1939, in an attempt to make an end run around the studio system, a handful of left and liberal filmworkers, including Adrian Scott, as well as Nathanael West, John Wexley, Ring Lardner Jr., John Howard Lawson, Lillian Hellman, Budd Schulberg, and John Garfield formed the Motion Picture Guild (MPG). This progressive film group planned to make a series of socially relevant films and short documentaries on key topics close to the heart of the progressive film community, from union campaigns to the New Deal to the evils of fascism. In 1939, the MPG purchased the rights to *School for Barbarians* by Erika Mann, who had barely escaped Nazi Germany in 1938 with her father, the novelist Thomas Mann. Scott was particularly interested in working on a film version of this exposé of the propaganda techniques aimed at the Hitler Youth.[63] The project never materialized, but Scott's interest in Mann's book and his involvement with the MPG reveal that by 1939 he was running in the more radical circles of the Hollywood progressive community. In all likelihood, Scott had joined the Communist Party at this point.[64]

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During this period Scott also hoped to adapt Paul de Kruif's 1938 book, *Fight for Life*, as a series of short films on diseases like pellagra, tuberculosis, and polio that had reached epidemic proportions in the 1930s. Film historian Bernard F. Dick argues that Scott saw his own political vision reflected in de Kruif's premise that "humankind has a right to life and that whatever endangers that right (such as poverty and disease) must be eradicated . . . and that the fight for life was a people's fight that could be won only through a national health program." Scott took his idea for a documentary series to RKO, an ideal choice since the studio owned the distribution rights for both *Pathé News* and *The March of Time*. However, filmmaker Pare Lorentz—best known for the documentary *The Plow that Broke the Plains*, a vivid exposé on the plight of the Okies—was also interested in de Kruif's book, and he beat Scott to the punch. Lorentz's documentary on the squalid conditions in maternity wards for the poor was released in 1939 as *The Fight for Life*. Though Scott wrote a script based on de Kruif's chapter on tuberculosis and pitched it to RKO, it was rejected by Pathé's Frederick Ullman Jr. as being too expensive to film.[65]

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Even as he was exploring the possibilities of writing and producing documentaries, Scott also worked as a freelance screenwriter, though he did not receive on-screen credit. For example, in late 1939, Scott wrote a screenplay at Columbia with Bernard Feins entitled *March of Crime* that was deemed "unacceptable" by the Breen Office for its violence and depiction of the corruption and lawlessness of American society.[66] During this period, Scott also may have worked on any number of other projects that did not materialize, as had been the case with his work on documentaries. Indeed, the memoirs of Hollywood screenwriters are filled with stories of ideas pitched to no avail, scripts started or finished and shelved, or turned over to another writer and revised into something unrecognizable to the original writer. Finally, at MGM in 1940, Scott received his first screen credit, for *Keeping Company*, which he described as "one of the horrors of all time." The following year, he made credited contributions on two more screenplays: *We Go Fast* at Twentieth Century–Fox and *The Parson of Panamint* at Paramount, which he scornfully remembered as "one of those things starring Wallace Beery."[67]

Nevertheless, *The Parson of Panamint*, the story of a thriving mining town that has fallen on hard times, offers some insights into Scott's early attempts to invest his writing with a social message. In Scott's revision of Harold Schumate's original script, the townspeople of Panamint hire a minister who wins over the gamblers and prostitutes, helping to revitalize and bring respectability to the town. However, the parson also challenges the complacency of the townspeople, warning about the danger that flooded mines pose to the safety of the town, and preaching sermons in defense of the poor and hungry. According to Bernard F. Dick, "For all his idealism, [Scott] was not blind to the darkness of the heart; it is that darkness, in the form of venality and hypocrisy, the destroys the town of Panamint and leads to the persecution of its parson, whose gospel of brotherly love falls on deaf ears."[68]

In the summer of 1941, as *The Parson of Panamint* was being readied for release, John Paxton arrived in Hollywood, on an extended vacation following the close of the New York theater season. In Hollywood, Albert McCreery, who had covered the Little Theater circuit for *Stage*, had turned to screenwriting and needed help with a script. Paxton was amused, having heard this story before. McCreery was an idea man, not a writer (though he eventually became a successful director); in the late 1930s, he was about to be fired from *Stage* when Paxton stepped in as McCreery's ghostwriter, earning $15 a month (which translated for him into three good dates at a steakhouse, with wine). Now, McCreery had successfully pitched a story to director Mitchell Leisen, but wasn't able to follow through on paper and was about to be fired again. Paxton was on vacation and wasn't interested, but he relented after McCreery "cried and carried on." Though he had never even seen a

screenplay before, he jumped in with both feet, writing "two lines ahead of the camera." The film was released by Columbia in 1942 as *The Lady is Willing*, with Albert McCreery as the credited screenwriter. Scott, after reading the script, told Paxton he had a "knack." At that point, Paxton was still planning to return in the fall to his job as a publicist for the Theater Guild, but Scott convinced him to stay in Hollywood, promising him, "We'll work together, we'll make it together."[69]

Paxton wrote several more scripts for McCreery, as well as several on his own (all uncredited). In the interim, in July of 1942, Scott was put under contract again at RKO, earning $300 a week—12 times his salary in 1934. Soon afterward, Scott and Paxton finally collaborated—with disastrous results—on a screenplay for *The Great Gildersleeve* series, produced by the RKO B-unit. Producer Herman Schlom insisted that they write a treatment before proceeding on to a full-length script. After turning in the treatment for *Great Gildersleeves on Patrol*, they discovered that Schlom believed that if a story was good, he could tell it without having to refer to the written word. Scott and Paxton endured daily sessions during which Schlom would begin narrating the story, only to stumble at a certain (and always the same) point and announce that the script was in trouble. Scott and Paxton repeatedly referred him to the treatment on his desk, but Schlom insisted that he must tell the story without prompting. As Paxton remembered,

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> Adrian endured this for about a week. He'd always come in every day and stretch out on the sofa and take off his shoes, usually cover his face while Herman would laboriously go from the opening to the door of the library with the man with the knife in his back and then get stuck. [Eventually] Adrian got the most typical case of hysterics I've ever seen. Laughing, crying, he got up, couldn't find his shoes, walked out of the studio barefoot and never came back. That was the end of that project.[70]

During this period, discussions of such frustrations were common among Scott's close friends, who included John Paxton and Ben Barzman, a writer who was also under contract at RKO, and Ben's fiancée, Norma, also a screenwriter as well as a reporter for the *Los Angeles Herald*. Norma remembers these men as "the three Musketeers—they were so close and really loved each other." By the early 1940s, Scott was almost certainly a member of the Party, as were Norma and Ben. Though Paxton was not a "joiner," he "agreed with all the left positions straight down the line;" Norma describes him as a "progressive who stayed out of the Party, as opposed to an active liberal like Eddie North," one of Scott's friends from Amherst.[71] For this intimate circle of politically committed artists, experiences like *The Great Gildersleeve* debacle were too frequent and too far from the hopes and expectations they had, not only for their own work but for the great social potential they saw in Hollywood movies. Adrian, Ben, and Norma had all attended the Party's writers' clinics (Paxton was not impressed with the claims that the

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clinics would make him a better writer) and were deeply committed to the principle of political filmmaking. Nevertheless, the yawning chasm between their political vision and the realities of working within the studio system sometimes seemed unbridgeable.

This was also a difficult time for Scott personally. In January 1943, his wife of two years, model Dorothy Shipley, sued him for divorce, and he went to live with Ben and Norma Barzman, who had been married only days earlier.[72] Clearly, Scott and the Barzmans were exceptionally close, and Norma was particularly fond of Scott: "Adrian was a very sweet person, an extraordinarily lovely person." Nevertheless, Norma felt that unintentionally, the men, who were "so close and already had a history together," shut her out. While Norma cooked their meals and did the dishes, they talked about movies.[73] As Norma remembers, "Adrian and Ben used to talk away about making good, cheap pictures . . . pictures *about* something. Their dream was to do it all: write, produce, direct. They were intensely interested in this, and they were always looking for ideas for projects."[74]

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As Brian Neve points out, for the younger generation of filmmakers like Adrian Scott, "the aspiration to make *better* films was linked to the desire to make more *progressive* films."[75] Many screenwriters—including Robert Rossen, Abe Polonsky, and Nicholas Ray—turned to directing in search of artistic autonomy within studio filmmaking. However, Scott believed strongly that as a producer, with the ability to pick and choose projects, to assign writers and directors, to make casting decisions, and to influence the film's budget, he would have the autonomy necessary to fulfill his artistic and political agenda.[76] At this point, fascism and the war in Europe dominated Scott's political vision, but he was not yet in a position to truly express that vision artistically. Scott finally got his chance in the 1940s, particularly after the American intervention in World War Two, as the Hollywood studios rallied to the antifascist cause, producing hundreds of feature films and documentaries that raised the cry of alarm and explained to the American public "why we fight." This wartime elaboration of an antifascist popular nationalism inaugurated a new era of political filmmaking in Hollywood and helped to legitimize the vision of radical filmmakers like Scott.

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Notes

Note 1: In some ways, Hollywood itself can be seen productively as an imagined community. Just as the star system was built on the imagined personas of individual actors, carefully cultivated for public consumption via advertising, publicity, and fan magazines, as well as the movies themselves, so the image of Hollywood was self-reflexively constructed and disseminated to the American public, with the help of a constellation of "outside" publicists, from journalists and film critics to the advertising industry and merchandisers, and even to intellectuals, such as anthropologist Leo Rosten, whose 1941 ethnography, *Hollywood: The Film Colony, the Movie Makers*, lent the weight of academic analysis to the

imagined community. On the one hand, Hollywood presented itself as "Tinseltown" or the "Glamour Capitol of the World," a construction that emphasized the wealth, beauty, style, and youth of the stars and filmmakers and paraded their opulent and exciting lifestyles for vicarious consumption by voyeuristic fans. On the other hand, the film colony presented itself as "Hollywood, U.S.A.," a construction that worked both to combat images of decadence and depravity by insisting on the "normality" of life in the land of sunshine, oranges, and eternal youth, and to suggest that Hollywood was simply a microcosm of the rest of the nation, sharing similar values and mores, and that its film products fully and naturally reflected that nation back to itself. For a fascinating discussion of this process, see Ronald L. Davis, *The Glamour Factory: Inside Hollywood's Big Studio System* (Dallas, Tex.: Southern Methodist University Press, 1993), particularly chapter 16 on social life in Hollywood.

Note 2: Larry Ceplair and Steven Englund, *The Inquisition in Hollywood: Politics in the Film Community, 1930–60* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 4–5.

Note 3: George W. Carey, "Paterson Strike of 1913," and David J. Goldberg, "Passaic Textile Strike of 1926," both in Mari Jo Buhle et al., eds., *Encyclopedia of the American Left* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 558–560, 562–563.

Note 4: Joan Scott, interview with author, April 1999, Los Angeles.

Note 5: Canfield's comments were made in support of Scott's request for parole in 1951; quoted in Robert Kenny to Scott, typewritten letter, January 5, 1951, in Robert W. Kenny and Robert S. Morris Papers (hereafter, Kenny-Morris Papers), B10-F5.

Note 6: Scott bio from the *Olio* (1934), the Amherst College yearbook. I am grateful to Jonathan Kauffman for sharing this with me.

Note 7: Joan Scott, interview with author, April 1999, Los Angeles; Bernard Dick, *Radical Innocence: A Critical Study of the Hollywood Ten* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1989), 121-122.

Note 8: John Paxton, interview with Larry Ceplair, June 29, 1977, Los Angeles. I am grateful to Larry Ceplair for sharing his notes with me.

Note 9: Virginia Wright, *Los Angeles Daily News*, April 16, 1946, in Paxton Papers, folder 5, AMPAS; Dick, *Radical Innocence*, 121; Sarah Jane Paxton, interview with author, April 1999, Los Angeles; John Paxton, taped interview [n.a.], 1977, Los Angeles. Sarah Jane Paxton graciously loaned me her copy of this tape.

Note 10: Jane DeHart Mathews, *The Federal Theatre, 1935–1939: Plays, Relief, and Politics* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1967); Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Verso, 1996), 362–371; Wendy Smith, *Real Life Drama: The Group Theatre and America, 1931–1940* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990). The Group Theater's historical reputation is often based on its pioneering approach to acting—emotional realism or The Method, as it is popularly called. Inspired by the example of the Moscow Art Theater, which had toured the United States in the 1920s, the Group also envisioned a radically different working relationship, based on the priority of the collective over the individual. The members experienced a personal transformation through their commitment to the Group. Their experience taught them about the interconnections between culture and politics, the personal and the political—that art is, or should be, for the people. The primary goal of the Group was to break down artificial barriers: between actors, between playwrights and production companies, and most importantly, between the players and the audience. In the fall of 1937, while Paxton and Scott were both working at *Stage*, the Group produced *Golden Boy*, the second major play by Clifford Odets to receive stellar reviews and enhance the reputation of the theater troupe. Included in the cast were a number of Group actors who would later move to Hollywood: Jules (later John) Garfield, Luther Adler, Frances Farmer, and Elia

Kazan. See Smith, *Real Life Drama*, especially 432.

Note 11: Sarah Jane Paxton, interview with author, April 1999. Bernard Dick says that Scott's writing was never published in *Stage* and that John Paxton wrote only a handful of articles (Dick, *Radical Innocence*, 121). However, John Paxton makes clear in the 1977 taped interview that he and Scott, with several other staff members, were responsible for many of the articles that appeared under the names of others.

Note 12: Paxton, interview with Ceplair, June 29, 1977; Paxton, taped interview, 1977. Paxton believed that his work as a critic undermined his originality as a writer: "I know what critics hate. I start originals, see all the pitfalls, and I usually stop. . . . I have to have something to go on, a novel, a short story, however slight, before I can write." J. D. Marshall, "The Greeks Had Another Word for It, Meaning—Exaltation—John Paxton" [interview with Paxton], in J. D. Marshall, *Blueprint in Babylon* (Tempe, Ariz.: Phoenix House, 1978), 258.

Note 13: Davis, *The Glamour Factory*, 324–325.

Note 14: Distinct circles of sociability—the "Irish Mafia" group of former New York actors such as James Cagney, Pat O'Brien, and Spencer Tracy; the expatriated New York writers such as F. Scott Fitzgerald, John O'Hara, Dorothy Parker, and Lillian Hellman who gathered at the Garden of Allah Hotel; the Holmby Hills group that formed around power couples like Joan Bennet and Walter Wanger and Lauren Bacall and Humphrey Bogart; or the group of men drawn together through their interest in sports shooting (Clark Gable, Fredric March, Gary Cooper, Robert Taylor, and Fred McMurray)—reflected the hierarchies of craft and status that were endemic to the studio system. Actress Betsy Blair Reisz, who was married to dancer Gene Kelly during this period, remembers that their social set was composed almost exclusively of old friends from the New York stage and new ones from the MGM production unit that worked on Kelly's musicals. Their sense of identification with the MGM group was such, she remembers, that "we didn't socialize with people from the other studios. The people in musicals at Fox, for instance, were people we scoffed at—Betty Grable and Cesar Romero." Davis, *The Glamour Factory*, 333–335; Betsy Blair Reisz, interview with Patrick McGilligan, in Patrick McGilligan and Paul Buhle, *Tender Comrades: A Backstory of the Hollywood Blacklist* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 546.

Note 15: Ceplair and Englund, *Inquisition in Hollywood*, 1–2.

Note 16: By the 1920s, the storefront nickelodeons had given way to opulent pleasure palaces, a definitive sign that the movies had become respectable entertainment. However, these theaters also represented the democratizing power of the movies, as filmgoers of all classes (though not necessarily all races) sat together in the dark, mesmerized by the images on the silvery screen. Particularly after the arrival of "talkies" in the late 1920s, the public appetite for movies appeared insatiable. The weekly film audience was between 20 and 30 million in the 1920s, and the majority of American recreation dollars was spent on movies. By 1946, the weekly film audience had skyrocketed to 90 million. Lary May, *Screening Out the Past: The Birth of Mass Culture and the Motion Picture Industry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 163–166, 202; Davis, *The Glamour Factory*, 368; Neal Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* (New York: Anchor Books, 1988), 1–4; Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black, *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits, and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies* (New York: Free Press, 1987), 4; Thomas Schatz, *The Genius of the System: Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era* (New York: Pantheon, 1988), 5–6.

Note 17: Michael Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 78.

Note 18: Schatz, *Genius of the System*, 6–7.

Note 19: Historians have hotly debated the relative radicalism and long-term impact of

these political, social and cultural transformations of the 1930s. Many argue that the New Deal, rather than being a sharp break with the past, should be viewed not only as the logical culmination of the trend toward government bureaucratization and centralization, but also as a fundamentally conservative attempt to preserve capitalism and the status quo. These historians, noting the continuities between the New Deal and the old deal of the Progressive era, emphasize the ways in which the outwardly innovative and inclusionary reform policies actually worked to buttress the traditional socioeconomic order and reinforce existing class and race relations. See, for example, Barton Bernstein, "The New Deal: The Conservative Achievements of Liberal Reform," in *Towards a New Past*, ed. Barton Bernstein (New York: Pantheon, 1968); Thomas Ferguson, "Industrial Conflict and the Coming of the New Deal: The Triumph of Multinational Liberalism in America," in *Rise and Fall of the New Deal, 1930–1980*, ed. Gary Gerstle and Steve Fraser (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989); Ellis Hawley, *The New Deal and the Problem of Monopoly* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966); and Gabriel Kolko, *Main Currents in Modern American History* (New York: Pantheon, 1975). Similarly, in the cultural arena, Warren Susman has argued that the new Americanism was profoundly conservative and conservatizing, and that the "Red Decade" was an aberration, a brief fling with cultural radicalism and labor insurgency that evaporated, with few long-term effects, with the defeat of fascism and the return to normalcy and prosperity after World War Two. See Warren Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon, 1984). For a similar argument from the perspective of labor history, see Melvyn Dubofsky, "Not So 'Turbulent Years': A New Look at the 1930s," in *Life and Labor: Dimensions of American Working-Class History*, ed. Charles Stephenson and Robert Asher (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986).

Note 20: In the past decade or so there has been a flurry of innovative work on the intersections of politics and culture, particularly in Hollywood, during the Popular Front era. The books that I have found particularly helpful include Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front*; Saverio Giovacchini, *Hollywood Modernism: Film and Politics in the Age of the New Deal* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001); and Lary May, *The Big Tomorrow: Hollywood and the Politics of the American Way* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

Note 21: Giovacchini, *Hollywood Modernism*, 5.

Note 22: Marshall, "The Greeks Had Another Word" [interview with Paxton], 264–265.

Note 23: Ceplair and Englund, *Inquisition in Hollywood*, 18.

Note 24: Gabler, *Empire of Their Own*, 325.

Note 25: Quoted in Gabler, *Empire of Their Own*, 5.

Note 26: For example, in the late 1940s, screenwriter Ben Hecht was soliciting money and support for Palestine and met with a wall of refusal from the Hollywood Jews. Hecht approached David O. Selznick, who told him he didn't want to have anything to do with supporting a Jewish homeland or a Jewish political cause. "I'm an American and not a Jew," Selznick informed Hecht. "It would be silly of me to pretend suddenly that I'm a Jew, with some sort of full-blown Jewish psychology." Hecht, amused and more than a little annoyed, made a bet with Selznick: Hecht would call any three people Selznick chose and ask them whether they thought of Selznick as an American or a Jew. If even one agreed with Selznick, Hecht would stop pestering him. Selznick took the bet and had Hecht call Martin Quigley, publisher of the *Motion Picture Exhibitors' Herald*; Nunnally Johnson, prominent—and liberal—screenwriter, perhaps best known for adapting Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*; and powerhouse agent Leland Hayward. All agreed that—forced to choose—they would identify Selznick as a Jew. Leland Hayward snapped, "For God's sake, what's the matter with David? He's a Jew and he knows it." Otto Friedrich, *City of Nets: A Portrait of Hollywood in the 1940s* (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), 359–360.

Note 27: Lester Friedman, *Hollywood's Image of the Jew* (New York: Frederick Ungar,

1982), 57–64. For an exhaustive discussion of this issue see Steven Carr, *Hollywood and Anti-Semitism: A Cultural History up to World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Note 28: John Wexley, interview with McGilligan and Ken Mate, in McGilligan and Buhle, *Tender Comrades*, 715–716.

Note 29: Schatz, *Genius of the System*, 12.

Note 30: Leo C. Rosten, *Hollywood: The Movie Colony, the Movie Makers* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1940), 136, quoted in Ceplair and Englund, *Inquisition in Hollywood*, 21.

Note 31: Tino Balio, ed., *The American Film Industry* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976; 2d rev. ed. 1985), 271–275; Ceplair and Englund, *Inquisition in Hollywood*, 16–46; Albert Hackett quoted in Gabler, *Empire of Their Own*, 322.

Note 32: Joan Scott, interview with author, April 1999.

Note 33: There is a vast literature on the Communist movement in the United States. While the older works on the CPUSA tend to be painfully anti-Communist, some of the more useful general works include: Michael Brown et al., eds., *New Studies in the Politics and Culture of U.S. Communism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1993); Vivian Gornick, *The Romance of American Communism* (New York: Basic Books, 1977); Maurice Isserman, *Which Side Were You On? The American Communist Party during the Second World War* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1982); and Harvey Klehr, *The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade* (New York: Basic Books, 1984). There are also many excellent biographies and autobiographies of individual Communists. I found Dorothy Ray Healy and Maurice Isserman, *California Red: A Life in the American Communist Party* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), particularly useful in placing the Hollywood Communist Party in a larger regional context. For general works on radical cultural production, see Richard H. Pells, *Radical Visions and American Dreams: Culture and Social Thought in the Depression Years* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973; Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998); and Alan Wald, *The New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Decline of the Anti-Stalinist Left from the 1930s to the 1980s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987).

Note 34: The major European powers, as well as the United States, meanwhile, held to a policy of nonintervention, offering limited humanitarian supplies to the beleaguered Republicans but no military aid. In 1938, nonintervention was replaced by outright appeasement, as British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, reneging on Britain's treaty agreement with Czechoslovakia, agreed not to challenge Germany's takeover of the Sudetenland.

Note 35: George Charney, *A Long Journey* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968), 59.

Note 36: Ceplair and Englund, *Inquisition in Hollywood*, 55–57.

Note 37: Denning, *The Cultural Front*, especially 4–6. One very persuasive example of the argument that the Popular Front marked a step away from radicalism, particularly on gender and feminist issues, is Paula Rabinowitz's *Labor and Desire: Women's Revolutionary Fiction in Depression America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991). On proletarian literature, see also Daniel Aaron, *Writers on the Left: Episodes in American Literary Communism* (1961; rpt. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992); Walter Rideout, *The Radical Novel in the United States, 1900–1954* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956); and Alan Wald, "Culture and Commitment: U.S. Communist Writers Reconsidered," in *New Studies in the Politics and Culture of U.S. Communism*, ed. Michael Brown et al. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1993), 281–306.

Note 38: See, for example, the relentlessly anti-Communist screed by Ronald Radosh and Allis Radosh, *Red Star Over Hollywood: The Film Colony's Long Romance with the Left* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2005).

Note 39: Polonsky, interview in McGilligan and Buhle, *Tender Comrades*, 492. The italics are mine.

Note 40: As Vivian Gornick describes it, "At the indisputable center of the progressive world stood the Communist Party. . . . It was the Party whose moral authority gave shape and substance to an abstraction, thereby making of it a powerful human experience. It was the Party that brought to astonishing life the kind of comradeship that makes swell in men and women the deepest sense of their own humanness, allowing them to love themselves through the act of loving each other. For, of this party it could be rightly said, as Richard Wright in his bitterest moment did, nonetheless, say: 'There was no agency in the world so capable of making men feel the earth and the people upon it as the Communist Party.'" Gornick, *The Romance of American Communism* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 9.

Note 41: American Communists were often terribly, painfully naïve in their support of the Soviet Union and its policies. In many cases, they claimed not to have known about or not to have believed reports in the "capitalist" press about such atrocities as the show trials, purges, and executions of the 1930s, a blindness that in hindsight seems indefensible. Certainly, many American Communists struggled with the very issues that provoked external criticism, from the U.S. Party's ties to Moscow to its top-down structure and authoritarianism. From their perspective, however, the failings of the Soviet Union were more than matched by those of the capitalist countries that had led them to join the Party in the first place. Thus, in defending the Hitler-Stalin Pact, American Communists pointed out that only the Soviets and the international Communist movement had stepped in to defend democracy in Spain against Franco and the Nazis, while the major European powers, as well as the United States, held to a policy of nonintervention. They pointed to the silence of the American press on the persecution of European Jews and the failure of the United States to relax immigration restriction to help refugees from fascism. They pointed to the collusion of western capitalism with fascism, citing the American corporations that continued to do business with fascist nations, selling war matériel to belligerent nations. They argued that the western democracies' failure to support the Soviets in the Popular Front against fascism had forced Stalin to make a deal with the devil; or they argued that the war itself was an imperialist war, pursued to further the common interests of the fascist aggressors and the western democracies, in which case opposition to the war represented the moral high ground—a position that most Communists happily discarded after the German invasion of the Soviet Union.

Note 42: John Bright, interview with Pat McGilligan and Ken Mate, in McGilligan and Buhle, *Tender Comrades*, 145. The autonomy of the Hollywood Communists is corroborated by many of the other interviews in *Tender Comrades*.

Note 43: Polonsky, interview in McGilligan and Buhle, *Tender Comrades*, 494.

Note 44: Ceplair and Englund, *Inquisition in Hollywood*, 70, 76.

Note 45: Charney, *Long Journey*, 60–61.

Note 46: Ceplair and Englund, *Inquisition in Hollywood*, 75.

Note 47: Bright, interview in McGilligan and Buhle, *Tender Comrades*, 145–147.

Note 48: Anne Froelick, interview with Paul Buhle and Dave Wagner, in McGilligan and Buhle, *Tender Comrades*, 257; Brian Neve, *Film and Politics in America: A Social Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 62–63.

Note 49: Reisz, who was married to dancer Gene Kelly during this period, applied for Party membership but was rejected for fear that knowledge of her membership might taint Kelly's reputation as an "independent" and limit his ability to take radical positions in Popular Front organizations without being considered a dupe. Betsy Blair Reisz, interview with Pat McGilligan, in McGilligan and Buhle, *Tender Comrades*, 547.

Note 50: Polonsky, interview in McGilligan and Buhle, *Tender Comrades*, 493 [italics are

mine].

Note 51: Gabler, *Empire of Their Own*, 328; Ceplair and Englund, *Inquisition in Hollywood*, 55.

Note 52: Ceplair and Englund, *Inquisition in Hollywood*, 58–59, 76.

Note 53: Norma Barzman, interview with Larry Ceplair, in McGilligan and Buhle, *Tender Comrades*, 4–5; Froelick, interview in McGilligan and Buhle, *Tender Comrades*, 258.

Note 54: Ceplair and Englund, *Inquisition in Hollywood*, 4–5, 13–14, 68–69.

Note 55: Alvah Bessie, interview with Pat McGilligan and Ken Mate, in McGilligan and Buhle, *Tender Comrades*, 103.

Note 56: Allen Boretz, interview with Pat McGilligan and Ken Mate, in McGilligan and Buhle, *Tender Comrades*, 121.

Note 57: Reisz, interview in McGilligan and Buhle, *Tender Comrades*, 550–551.

Note 58: Neve, *Film and Politics in America*, 78.

Note 59: Ceplair and Englund, *Inquisition in Hollywood*, 13.

Note 60: Marshall, "The Greeks Had Another Word" [interview with Paxton], 264–265.

Note 61: Pells, *Radical Visions and American Dreams*, 194–197.

Note 62: Polonsky, interview in McGilligan and Buhle, *Tender Comrades*, 493.

Note 63: Ceplair and Englund, *Inquisition in Hollywood*, 116; Dick, *Radical Innocence*, 122–123.

Note 64: Adrian Scott never wrote publicly about when or why he joined the Communist Party, though there is no doubt that he was a member. Norma Barzman, one of Adrian's closest friends, remembers that he was in the Party at the same time as her husband Ben, who became a member in 1939. Norma Barzman, interview with author, April 1999. See also Barzman, interview in McGilligan and Buhle, *Tender Comrades*, 5.

Note 65: Dick, *Radical Innocence*, 122.

Note 66: Joseph Breen, PCA, to Harry Cohn, Columbia, typed letter, February 6, 1940, in Scott Papers, American Heritage Center (AHC), University of Wyoming-Laramie. [Note: Scott's papers were not yet catalogued when I did my research at the American Heritage Center; therefore, I am unable to provide detailed information on the location of specific documents in this collection.]

Note 67: Article by David Hanna, [no source listed] July 19, 1945, in Scott Papers, AHC.

Note 68: Dick, *Radical Innocence*, 123. Dick notes that it is unclear whether Scott wrote this portion of the screenplay.

Note 69: Paxton, of course, did not receive screen credit for his work with McCreery, though he did attend the preview screening of *The Lady is Willing*, giving McCreery "conniptions" by lurking in the lobby to eavesdrop. Paxton, taped interview, 1977; see also Marshall, "The Greeks Had Another Word" [interview with Paxton], 260–261.

Note 70: Paxton, taped interview, 1977; Dick, *Radical Innocence*, 124. Norma Barzman remembers that Adrian had a habit of removing his shoes as soon as he sat down—anywhere. "There wasn't anything strange about it. It was just something he did and it seemed very right and natural. And he always wore such lovely, fuzzy, clean argyle socks." Barzman, interview with author, April 1999.

Note 71: Barzman, interviews by author, April 1999 and June 2004. In the 1977 taped interview, Paxton remembers being invited to attend Marxist meetings (though he loathed meetings) and approached to join the Party in the late 1930s: "I was asked by Dan James way back in New York, but the first thing he wanted me to do was get up at 5:00 one morning and go pass out handbills. I said, 'Don't be ridiculous.' It was cold and raining and I

saw myself on Sheridan Square at 5:30, 6:00 on a Sunday morning in the rain passing out handbills and I said this is nonsense. I wasn't about to do anything like that."

Note 72: Scott and Dorothy Shipley were married in Kingman, Arizona, on March 4, 1941, and were formally separated on June 27, 1943. Their divorce was finalized on February 7, 1945, on the grounds of "grievous mental suffering and extreme cruelty." Adrian kept the bonds, the bank account, and his 1940 Oldsmobile, while Dorothy kept the house and received 25 percent of Adrian's net income for one year. Unsigned typescript of divorce agreement, n.d., in Scott Papers, AHC.

Note 73: Norma's frustrations with "progressive men who talked a good game on gender" were experienced by many, many women on the Left. Though the Party had an official, theoretical position against "male chauvinism," it was applied more often in theory than in practice. See Rosalyn Baxandall, "The Question Seldom Asked: Women and the CPUSA," in Brown et al., eds, *New Studies in the Politics and Culture of U.S. Communism*, 153–157.

Note 74: Barzman, interview with author, April 1999.

Note 75: Neve, *Film and Politics*, 87.

Note 76: Barzman, interview with author, April 1999; Joan Scott, interview with author, April 1999.