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ELIA KAZAN CONTROVERSY: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

By
Linda M. DiAngelo

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
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at
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Approved by _____
Professor

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ABSTRACT

Linda M. DiAngelo
Elia Kazan Controversy: Past, Present, and Future
2002
Dr. Elisabeth Hostetter
Master of Arts in Theatre

The Academy of Motion Pictures and Sciences awarded Elia Kazan a Lifetime Achievement Award for his contributions to the film industry at the 1999 Academy Awards ceremony. He received the award but amongst much controversy. Whether or not he deserved the Oscar has been debated, but the answer to that question is not the larger goal of this study. The purpose of this study is to examine what Elia Kazan's testimony to the House on Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) meant to Americans and the entertainment industry in the 1950s and in present times, and to determine what these meanings may suggest for artists and society in the future. That there is a thread that connects the past to the present and that this controversy forecasts relevant issues for our culture in the future is pertinent. The interdependence of art and politics in America plays a significant role in the Kazan debate. The ramifications of the Kazan's HUAC testimony in 1952 and his controversial 1999 Lifetime Achievement Award pervade America. The primary research methods of this project include an objective analysis of literature pertaining to the McCarthy era, the House on Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and Hollywood, and Elia Kazan's career and

HUAC testimony. Other methods included extensive investigation of electronic sources of past and present reactions to Kazan along with political and entertainment information. The conclusions provide relevance and connections between the Kazan controversy and artists of today.

MINI-ABSTRACT

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Utilizing Elia Kazan's 1999 Lifetime Achievement Award as the ignition for the investigation, this study examines the history and outgrowth of American society in which art and politics intersect within the culture. It addresses the McCarthy Era and Kazan's testimony to the House on Un-American Activities. It discusses the 1952 reactions to Kazan's "naming names" and the reactions to Kazan's testimony and Lifetime Achievement Award in present times. Also, the relevance and the ramifications of the Kazan controversy today will be examined.

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Chapter I: INTRODUCTION

Elia Kazan is indisputably one of the most significant directors of the twentieth century. Between 1945 and 1957 Kazan directed ten critically acclaimed motion pictures. He won Academy Awards as best director for *Gentlemen's Agreement* (1947) and *On the Waterfront* (1954). Kazan also received nominations for best director for two other films during this period, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951) and *East of Eden* (1955). In addition, he directed two of the most influential dramas in Broadway history, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) and *Death of a Salesman* (1949).

However, after the Academy of Motion Pictures and Sciences announced January 7, 1999, its unanimous decision to honor Elia Kazan with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Academy Awards ceremony March 21, controversy erupted. Ed Rampell explains the situation in his article, "The Screenwriter Who Came in From the Cold,"

The Committee of Silence, consisting of screenwriters 'blacklisted' during the notorious McCarthy era, organized a protest in front of the Dorothy Chandler Building on Oscar night and ran advertisements beforehand asking people not to applaud the 89-year-old Kazan when he received his Oscar.¹

¹ Ed Rampell, "The Screenwriter Who Came in From the Cold," Written By, August 2000, 9 July 2001 <<http://www.wga.org/WrittenBy/0800/gordon.html>>.

Protestors claimed that because Kazan, a former member of the Communist Party, gave the names of his fellow party members in his testimony before the House of Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) April 10, 1952, he did not deserve such an important and coveted tribute. As a result of his testimony, Hollywood studios had blacklisted these writers, directors, and actors. They lost their jobs, and no one in the entertainment industry hired them. Many of them never worked again under their legitimate names.

The recent controversy over Elia Kazan's Oscar provides a connection with America's past, McCarthyism, the Red Scare, and all that encompassed the hunt for Communists in America. The American public and Hollywood of today based their opinions concerning Kazan on the status quo of America today and in 1952, on Kazan's own political and personal beliefs, and on his decision to inform on friends and coworkers. The uproarious reactions of Americans to Kazan 50 years after the testimony clearly broadcast the relationship between artists and the American public. The personal accountability of the artist to his or her public is the essential and enduring issue.

Relevance

This study is essential for understanding the reaction of the American public and entertainment industry 50 years after the Elia Kazan's 1999 Lifetime Achievement Award. In order to gain this understanding, it is necessary to explore America in the 1950s, Kazan's political experiences and

personal beliefs, and the reactions of Americans and artists to Kazan's testimony to HUAC in the past as well as in the present climate.

The past explains the present and forewarns for the future. Writers, directors, and actors need to evaluate the lasting impact on America of a legacy and circumstances behind a prominent director's decision to betray colleagues and friends in 1952. On a larger scale, the professional and personal survival of artists often depends on their personal decisions and private morality as well as the public views and evaluates these choices.

Granted, America in 1952 was in the midst of the "Red" hysteria, the hunt for Communists in America, and the entertainment industry was the central focus of this hunt. Lives of many Americans suffered. Kazan ruined the lives and careers of artists. Artists and the American public remember. The past cannot be changed.

However, even today as America struggles with political battles outside and within the country, artists involve themselves to an extent, and the public reacts to this involvement and its effects. Theatre and film historians need to know and reevaluate the condition of America in the 1950s and the effects of Kazan's testimony in 1952 in order to analyze America's relationship between politics and art in the future.

Purpose

This study will analyze what Elia Kazan's HUAC testimony meant to the 1950s and to present times and what these meanings convey for the artist and

society in the future. The areas discussed are (1) the status quo and mood of America in the 1950s, (2) Elia Kazan's political experiences, personal life, and career, (3) Kazan's testimony to the House of Un-American Activities (HUAC), (4) the responses of the American public and entertainment industry in 1952 and 1999 to Kazan's HUAC testimony, and (5) what it all means in terms of the American society.

This study is useful for film and theatre historians for several reasons. It attempts to provide a distanced and even-handed historical examination of the House of Un-American Activities Committee's investigation of the entertainment industry. Also, it compares and contrasts the reactions of the American public and writers, directors, and actors of 1952 and 1999 to the HUAC testimony of Elia Kazan. Third, a closer look into Kazan's life justifies many of America's past and current responses to Kazan's testimony on both sides of the issue. Finally, the researcher adds relevance and universal scope to the study by weaving the past to the present and future to address a larger issue of America's relationship between art and politics.

Importance

This study provides an up-to-date reference for theatre and film historians. It offers a historical account of the age of McCarthyism in America and Hollywood in the 1950s and a comprehensive depiction of the fervor of the period. It focuses primarily on the HUAC testimony of Elia Kazan in 1952 and the reactions of Americans and the entertainment industry then and now.

This study is unique in its examination of the two era's responses to Kazan's HUAC testimony and its connection and analysis of the ramifications that have sprouted due to the Kazan controversy. It was difficult in the past to look at this material without a personal opinion and historic bias about Kazan. The goal of this thesis is to objectively share this information with readers. After a fifty-year span, the legacy of the 'Red' panic surfaced again at the 1999 Academy Awards with Kazan's Lifetime Achievement Award, and this study explains why and speculates on the future relationship between art and politics in American society.

Limitations

This study does not attempt to choose sides or debate over whether Elia Kazan deserved the 1999 Lifetime Achievement Award given to him March 21 at the 71st Academy Awards Ceremony. It does not evaluate Kazan positively or negatively. Since in this compelling argument, there is no right or wrong answer.

It accepts Kazan as one of the most influential and outstanding directors of the twentieth century but does not support or dismiss his HUAC testimony or his receiving the Lifetime Achievement Oscar. Although the researcher mentions Kazan's films, this study will not review Kazan's artistic works. What is relevant is that his films and his theatre work oftentimes reflect America's politics as well as his own.

It also needs to be recognized that in addition to Kazan's own works, other works of fiction and art literature focus on the hearings of the House on Un-

American Activities as well. For instance, Arthur Miller wrote *The Crucible*, a play set in Salem, Massachusetts, during the witchcraft trials of the 1600s, which tells the story of a community in the grip of terror. The connection between the HUAC hearings is apparent. Also, Miller's autobiographical play, *After the Fall*, deals with the protagonist, Quentin, a one-time Communist, who breaks with a friend who is about to inform before a Congressional committee. Furthermore, Miller's play, *A View From the Bridge*, is his response to Kazan's movie, *On the Waterfront*, which treats the subject of the nobility of whistle blowing. The researcher has chosen not to delve into the association and obvious connections between these artistic works of Kazan and Miller.

Nevertheless, the work is not dedicated to script analysis, and the researcher believes that these limitations strengthen and focus the investigation into the ramifications of the Kazan Oscar controversy in American art and politics.

Survey of Literature

Research for this thesis involved numerous sources. There are many books written on the McCarthy Era and the Red Scare, which describe that particular period in American history. Griffin Fariello's *Red Scare, Memories of the American Inquisition* (1995), Richard M. Fried's *Nightmare in Red* (1990), and Ellen Schrecker's *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (1998) provided both background information on the period as well as personal accounts from the author and others involved such as the blacklisted. Chapter 2 of this

thesis surveys the historical research to enable readers to understand the fervor of the period. Not only American history but also Hollywood history during the House on Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) hearings is an important foundation of this study. Larry Ceplair and Steven Englund's book, *The Inquisition in Hollywood Politics in the Film Community, 1930-1960* (1980), supplied the history of the anti-Communist movement in Hollywood. The researcher formulated a glossary of terms from these sources to aid the reader in a clearer understanding of America at this time (See Appendix 1). Also, Victor Navasky in his book, *Naming Names* (1980), dedicated an entire chapter to Elia Kazan's case. Navasky's book focused on the role and consequences of an informer. In addition, the statement, or ad, Kazan placed in *The New York Times* two days after his HUAC testimony is included in primary text format in Navasky's book (See Appendix 3). This study pulled the majority of the historical information for Chapter 2 from these sources.

The bulk of the sources are Internet articles written about the HUAC hearings in Hollywood, reactions to Kazan's testimony in 1952 as well as the responses to Kazan's 1999 Lifetime Achievement Award. These sources, written within the past three to four years, record reactions of Kazan and the HUAC hearings from the actual McCarthy era. Also, many of these articles focus on the recent Kazan controversy and provide arguments and discussions either opposing or supporting his Oscar on the basis of his informing in 1952. These articles often reflect the professional, political, and/or personal bias of the writers. For example, *The Nation* and the *World Socialist Website*, represent a left-wing

political orientation. The blacklisted artists were instrumental voices in many of these articles, therefore, presented views against informers, especially Kazan. Other sources include the autobiographies of Elia Kazan (*A Life*, 1988), Arthur Miller, (*Timebends-A Life*, 1987), and Lillian Hellman (*Scoundrel Time*, 1976). Obviously, these autobiographies are personal accounts and respond with a bias. The researcher recognizes and appreciates these biases but considers their subjectivity for research sake.

Also, some contemporary articles were used for factual content only in order to elaborate on point or statement. These articles deal with former President Bill Clinton, Senator Joseph Lieberman, current political issues, and specific Hollywood films in relation to politics. It was necessary to utilize such sources to speculate on present and future ramifications to Kazan's testimony and Oscar controversy.

The literature, extensive and often biased in nature, led the researcher through an objective study of the Red Scare, HUAC hearings of Hollywood in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and Kazan's HUAC testimony in which he names names of co-workers and friends. It also consisted of reactions to Kazan's testimony then and now and reactions to Kazan's receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Academy of Motion Pictures and Science in 1999. The literature aided the researcher in the examination of the relevance and ramifications of this controversial Oscar in present and future times. The realm of the McCarthy period is where it all begins.

CHAPTER II: THE McCARTHY ERA

Introduction

Today Americans call it the McCarthy Era. “Joseph McCarthy’s villainy was so plain that his name became a malediction in the very year of his ascendancy,” writes Griffin Fariello in his book, *Red Scare, Memories of the American Inquisition*.² Elected to the Senate in 1946, McCarthy was almost invisible on the public scene until February 1950. According to Fariello, it was then in Wheeling, West Virginia, that McCarthy stumbled upon his cause. Fariello explains that the *Wheeling Intelligencer* reported McCarthy’s remarks the next day:

I have here in my hand a list of 205 that were known to the secretary of state as being members of the Communist Party and who, nevertheless, are still working and shaping the policy of the State Department.³

“For the next five years, McCarthy’s accusations dominated public life, influenced foreign and domestic policy, and held two Presidents hostage,” states Fariello.⁴ He adds, “McCarthy waged a guerilla war against the establishment,

² Griffin Fariello, *Red Scare, Memories of the American Inquisition* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995) 27.

³ Fariello 27.

⁴ Fariello, 28.

accusing the State Department, the Democratic Party, the United States Army--even Truman and Eisenhower themselves--of treasonous pro-Communist behavior.”⁵ Henceforth, a Red panic permeated American life, and even generated a new vocabulary. Richard M. Fried reports in his book, *Nightmare in Red*,

A new vocabulary entered political discourse. ‘Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?’ ‘I refuse to answer on grounds that the answer may tend to incriminate me.’ ‘Fifth Amendment Communist!’ ‘Soft on communism.’ ‘Witch-hunt!’ ‘McCarthyism!’⁶

With all of these accusations during the late 1940s and early 1950s, “reputations were made or ruined, careers blasted or created, lives and families shattered,” writes Fried.⁷

This anti-Communist drive touched thousands of ordinary Americans such as printers in the U.S. Government Printing Office, linguists and engineers at the Voice of America overseas broadcasting service, a Seattle fireman, local public housing officials, janitors, men’s room attendants, teachers, lawyers, and college students. “These people responded to the anti-Communist fervor by reining in their political activities, curbing their talk, and keeping their thoughts to themselves.”⁸ However, it was the Hollywood film industry that became the

⁵ Fariello, 28.

⁶ Richard M. Fried, *Nightmare in Red* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1990) 3.

⁷ Fried 3.

⁸ Fried 4.

major focus of the House on Un-American Activities (HUAC). Ellen Shrecker explains in her book, *Many Are the Crimes, McCarthyism in America*, that conservatives feared that Communists were poisoning the American screen. She writes, “As a result, purging the movie industry of Communists became a high priority within the anti-Communist network.”⁹ These entertainers were first called to testify to HUAC in 1947 and faced a blacklist.

For many the McCarthy Era stands as the grimmest time in recent memory. This chapter provides the background on the economic and political landscape in the 1940s and 1950s in America. It examines as well the history of not only the blacklist’s victims, but also the influential men and women, particularly Elia Kazan, who “named names,” and cooperated with the congressional committees investigating Hollywood during the 1950s.

Post World War II Economy in America

“In 1945 America emerged from World War II with her continental expanse untouched by the ruin visited among the other nations of the globe,” writes Richard Fried in *Nightmare in Red*.¹⁰ At that point the United States was the most powerful country on earth. The domestic front was strong, also.

The postwar economy flourished. Fried reports,

The joblessness of the 1930s vanished. With \$140 billion in pent-up wartime savings, Americans went on a buying spree. New autos rolled off assembly lines too slowly to slake

⁹ Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (New York: Little Brown & Company, 1998) 318.

¹⁰ Fried 4.

demand. Freezers, refrigerators, and soon televisions flowed out of factories into homes. The landscape changed beyond recognition as new suburbs sprawled out from the central cities, woven to the workplace by highways. Freshly erected, moderately priced homes sprang up. The family car and the single-family home became the norm.¹¹

Fried continues,

The social landscape changed as well. Though poverty persisted, affluence was far more visible. There were recessions, but no Depression. Products found buyers. Buyers had jobs. Thanks to the GI Bill, veterans, many from blue-collar homes, went to college, entered professions, and attained white-collar status. They moved with their families to the thronging new suburbs.¹²

Life was comfortable for most Americans. “Most lived better and longer, sharing the American dream of home ownership and enjoying the fruits of social mobility,” states Fried.¹³ However, everything seemed to change from a political perspective.

Post World War II Political Atmosphere in America

President Franklin D. Roosevelt died of a stroke April 12, 1945, after twelve years in office. Vice-President Harry Truman succeeded him. According to Fariello in *Red Scare, Memories of the Red Inquisition*,

Truman knew little of foreign affairs and had been viewed with indifference by Roosevelt. Truman was told nothing of the crucial deliberations at Yalta, or of the existence of the atom bomb, or of Roosevelt’s plans for the postwar world. In fact, Truman had met with the President only two or three times during the eighty-two days of his vice-presidency.¹⁴

¹¹ Fried 4.

¹² Fried 4.

¹³ Fried 5.

¹⁴ Fariello 28.

“Truman entered the White House a highly insecure man, at a point when the world was changing radically. To compensate for that insecurity, he was determined to establish that he was in fact in charge,” explains Fariello.¹⁵ Fariello adds that “within twenty-four hours of taking office, Truman announced to an aide that it was time to ‘get tough’ with the Russians. Everything changed at the end of the Second World War. The ally Russia became the enemy. Anybody who had sympathy became a suspect.”¹⁶ On March 12, 1947, President Truman appeared before a joint session of Congress to request support for a global war against Communism. It was the unveiling of the Truman Doctrine, the foundation of our foreign policy for the next three decades. Fariello continues,

Wherever aggression threatened peace or freedom, Truman intoned, America’s security was involved, and it would be necessary to ‘support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressures.’ Although the Soviet Union was never mentioned by name, the inference was plain: America was challenged by a worldwide campaign of Communist subversion and Soviet expansion.¹⁷

The Red Scare was Truman’s Cold War. Fariello observes, “Although the United States was the most powerful country on earth, our moral and intellectual life seemed dominated by a foreign nation.”¹⁸ In *Red Scare, Memories of the American Inquisition*, Fried cites a 1949 essay by Archibald MacLeish,

American foreign policy was a mirror image of Russian

¹⁵ Fariello 31.

¹⁶ Fariello 31.

¹⁷ Fariello 31.

¹⁸ Fariello 31.

foreign policy: whatever the Russians did, we did in reverse. American domestic policies were conducted under a kind of upside-down Russian veto: no man could be elected to public office unless he was on record detesting the Russians, and no proposal could be enacted, from a peace plan at one end to a military budget at the other, unless it could be demonstrated that the Russians wouldn't like it.¹⁹

The Congress, with much help from President Harry Truman, led the panic and hunt for Communists. "The media sounded the alarm: encircled by Soviets and betrayed from within, our nation was endangered," writes Fariello.²⁰ The fear penetrated American life. American citizens, starting with government employees, then teachers, and soon Americans from all walks of life, recited loyalty oaths. "State and federal investigators grilled suspected citizens on their reading habits, voting patterns, and church attendance," reports Fariello.²¹ He adds that public and school libraries banned heretical literature, and some communities held book burnings. "Neighbors informed on neighbors, students on their teachers. Readers of 'questionable' works hid their leftist tomes or buried them in the back garden," states Fariello.²² It did not stop there.

Hollywood was next. The House on Un-American Activities commenced its investigation into films with Communist subversive messages. This was not, however, HUAC's commencement. HUAC existed for nine years before the first series of Congressional hearings in 1947.

¹⁹ Fried 24.

²⁰ Fariello 24.

²¹ Fariello 25.

²² Fariello 25.

History of the House on Un-American Activities (HUAC)

In 1938, the Special House Committee on Un-American Activities (later known as HUAC) began its seven-month investigation of un-American propaganda, led by Texas Democrat Martin Dies, according to Ellen Schrecker in her book, *Many Are the Crimes, McCarthyism in America*.²³ The Dies committee, as HUAC was then called, used the anticommunist committee to attack the Roosevelt administration. “Though it did take some testimony about the nation’s leading Nazi sympathizers, the committee devoted most of its efforts to exposing alleged communist influence in CIO unions and New Deal agencies,” states Shrecker.²⁴ She explains that anticommunism made headlines and the committee’s investigations received enormous publicity. Shrecker reports,

The Gallup poll recorded consistently high public approval ratings for the committee’s investigations. Few congressmen dared to oppose Dies, whether they approved of his activities or not.²⁵

Every year, from 1938 until HUAC became a permanent committee in 1945, the committee’s reauthorization passed by overwhelming margins.²⁶

Martin Dies ceased being chairman of HUAC in 1944. Edward Hart (1945), John S. Wood (1945-1946), John Parnell Thomas (1947-1948), John S. Wood (1949-1952), Harold Velde (1953-1954), and Francis Walter (1955-1963)

²³ Schrecker 90.

²⁴ Schrecker 91.

²⁵ Schrecker 91.

²⁶ Schrecker 91.

followed as chairmen of HUAC. Other key figures on the Committee included John Rankin of Mississippi, Karl Mundt of South Dakota, and Richard Nixon of California.²⁷

In the 1940s the Committee chose the entertainment industry as its special target to continue its hunt for Communists. In his book *Naming Names*, Victor Navasky explains that HUAC knew that the Communist Party focused on Hollywood since 1936, when Communist Party organizers set up a movie-industry branch on the West Coast. He continues,

Hollywood represented a prestige of stars, a source of financial support, and a chance to control the movies. Hollywood was glamour. The inhabitants manufactured the public's dreams as well lived them. Not only their salaries but also their cars, pools, breasts, alimony payments, mansions, muscles, talents, and images were like the images on the silver screen, larger than life. HUAC saw the opportunity to share in the publicity glow of Hollywood's stars.²⁸

Dies, who first went after Hollywood in 1940, failed and State Senator Jack Tenney of California's Joint Fact Finding Committee on Un-American Activities failed. However, this time one newly founded organization in Hollywood stood ready to align itself with HUAC.

²⁷ "Un-American Activities Committee," *Spartacus Education on the Internet and Teaching History Online*, 3 September 2001, 25 July 2002, <<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAhuac.htm>>.

²⁸ Victor Navasky, *Naming Names* (New York: Viking Press, 1980) 78.

The Anti-Communist Movement Within the Film Community

The anti-Communist movement within the film community began with the formation of the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals (MPA) in 1944. "It was the brainchild of a prominent group of Hollywood anti-Rooseveltians--foremost Sam Wood, the MPA's first president," states Ceplair and Englund in their book, *The Hollywood Inquisition*. They continue,

Films such as *Mission to Moscow* moved Wood and some of his cronies--directors Clarence Brown, Norman Taurog, Victor Fleming; art director Cedric Gibbons and screenwriter Howard E. Rogers--along with Walt Disney, Gary Cooper, and other Hollywood conservatives to start organizing against Reds.²⁹

Ceplair and Englund quote the members of the MPA:

In our special field of motion pictures, we resent the growing impression that this industry is made up of, and dominated by, Communists and radicals. We pledge to fight with every means at our organized command, any effort of any group or individual, to divert the loyalty of the screen from the free America that gave it birth.³⁰

According to Ceplair and Englund, from the outset the Motion Picture Alliance was out for blood and exhibited an anti-Communist zeal and tenacity greatly overshadowing its members' loyalty to the film industry.³¹ The division increased amongst Hollywood conservatives and liberals between 1945 and 1946. Fariello explains that the studios sided with the conservative International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) and its anti-Communist boss,

²⁹ Larry Ceplair and Steven Englund, *The Inquisition in Hollywood, Politics in the Film Community, 1930-1960* (Garden City: Anchor City Press, 1980) 210.

³⁰ Ceplair and Englund 210.

³¹ Ceplair and Englund 211.

Roy Brewer, instead of the left-wing Conference of Studio Unions (CSU) with its president, Herbert Sorrell.³² Within two years the CSU folded, and the studios were glad to be rid of a Communist upstart like the CSU. However, the studios executives were not prepared when “the Motion Picture Alliance (MPA) openly invited HUAC to investigate Hollywood and supplied the committee with an extensive list of Reds and fellow travelers.”³³ Fariello reports,

In March 1947 Representative John Rankin of HUAC called for a cleansing of Hollywood. Two months later the Committee took direct aim at the New Deal with allegations that ‘flagrant Communist propaganda films’ had been produced during the war at the behest of Franklin Roosevelt, and that the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ‘infiltrated’ Communists into the film industry.³⁴

At this point the Hollywood investigation and congressional pressure began. The hearings in the early months of 1947 paved the way for the Congressional hearings of October 1947.

The HUAC Hearings of 1947

On May 9, 1947, J. Parnell Thomas, New Jersey Congressman and Chairman of HUAC, and John McDowell, Pennsylvania Congressman, arrived in Los Angeles, established themselves at the Biltmore Hotel, and proceeded to

³² Fariello 256.

³³ Fariello 256.

³⁴ Fariello 256.

interview fourteen “friendly” witnesses in executive or secret session, according to Ceplair and Englund.³⁵ Most of the “friendlies” were members of the Motion Picture Alliance (MPA) and were eager to talk about Communism in the motion picture industry. Parnell and McDowell “extended their stay in order to hear Robert Taylor, Richard Arlen, Adolphe Menjou, Leo McCarey, Howard Emmett Rogers, James Kevin McGuinness, Rupert Hughes, and others detail the extent and nature of ‘Communist subversion’ in Hollywood.”³⁶ Pressure mounted, and HUAC issued subpoenas.

On September 21, 1947, the House of Un-American Activities Committee issued subpoenas to forty-three members of the Hollywood film industry requiring that they appear as witness before the Committee during its October hearings in Washington.³⁷ In Simona Sara’s article, “The Blacklisting of Hollywood’s Talent,” Sara lists some of the “friendly witnesses,” including Jack Warner and Louis B. Mayer, representing the studio heads; Ronald Reagan, president of the Screen Actors Guild; Walt Disney, Gary Cooper, Ayn Rand, Adolphe Menjou, and Robert Taylor, who answered questions openly, willingly, and honestly.³⁸ HUAC treated them with respect and many read pre-compiled answers. HUAC did not suspect these friendly witnesses of any wrongdoing. Sara

³⁵ Ceplair and Englund 258.

³⁶ Ceplair and Englund 259.

³⁷ Ceplair and Englund 261.

³⁸ Simona Sara, “The Blacklisting of Hollywood’s Talent,” *Lopers*, 1994-1999, 9 July 2001 <<http://home.earthlink.net/~tenspeed/SimonaSara/blacklist.htm>>.

explains that out of these forty-three subpoenaed witnesses, the Committee singled out nineteen known leftist directors, producers, screenwriters and actors as enemies of the state or Communists. Sara continues,

They were declared as ‘unfriendly’ because they refused to answer questions about their political beliefs. Eleven of the nineteen were questioned about their connection with the Communist Party. As a result, their lives were greatly affected. Bertolt Brecht, the German emigrant playwright, was the only person of the eleven ‘unfriendly witnesses’ who answered questions while on the stand. After claiming he wasn’t a Communist, he immediately returned to East Germany. The remaining ten ‘unfriendly’ acquired the name ‘The Hollywood Ten.’ The Hollywood Ten consisted of one Director (Edward Dmytryk) and nine screenwriters (Alvah Bessie, Herbert Biberman, Lester Cole, Ring Lardner Jr., John Howard Lawson, Albert Maltz, Samuel Orinintz, Adrian Scott, and Dalton Trumbo). Claiming their Fifth Amendment rights at the stand, they refused to answer any questions.³⁹

The Fifth Amendment guaranteed the Ten protection against self-incrimination, and the First Amendment guaranteed freedom of association and free speech.

Sara comments, “Testifying incriminated yourself and those who you named.

Refusing to do so also incriminated you, for one was ‘guilty’ by testifying to the crime and for not.”⁴⁰

In the beginning it was not clear whether the studios would punish the unfriendly witnesses. According to Sara, after a two-day secret meeting of the heads and executives of the major Hollywood studios November 24, 1947, they released a statement that the Hollywood Ten were suspended without pay: “We will not knowingly employ a Communist or a member of any party or group

³⁹ Sara 1.

⁴⁰ Sara 2.

which advocates the overthrow of the Government of the United States by force, or by any illegal or unconstitutional method.”⁴¹ Later the executives fired the Ten and explained that they would not be rehired until the Committee had cleared them, thus creating “the blacklist.”

Sara points out in her article that the Hollywood Ten had three choices: “They could perjure themselves by claiming that they had never been Communists, admit to membership of the Communist Party and name names of other Communists, or refuse to answer all questions asked.”⁴² Their decision was to refuse to answer any questions under the Fifth Amendment. HUAC and the courts disagreed, and Congress held all Ten in contempt. By 1950 all ten were in prison. Each served between six and twelve months in jail, except Edward Dmytryk did not serve the entire sentence because he eventually cooperated with HUAC. While the Ten were in prison in 1951, the second series of hearings led by Senator Joseph McCarthy began in Washington and Hollywood.

The Return of HUAC to Hollywood in 1951

With Senator Joseph McCarthy at the helm in 1951, a newly determined House on Un-American Activities Committee, now chaired by John Wood, Democratic Congressman from Georgia, returned to Hollywood. Ceplair and Englund write,

The Committee’s hold on public opinion had strengthened by a series of national and international events whose significance far

⁴¹ Sara 2.

⁴² Sara 2.

outweighed the defiant resistance provided by the Hollywood Ten; namely, the conviction of Alger Hiss, the fall of China to the Communists, the first successful atomic explosion by the Soviet Union, the arrest of atomic spy Klaus Fuchs in England, the passing of the McCarran Act (Internal Security Act of 1950), the outbreak of the Korean War, and the arrest of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg.⁴³

McCarthy's timing was perfect. The media frenzy surrounding these events bolstered the Committee. McCarthy's name was constantly in the headlines with his anti-Communist fervor after his two speeches against Communism; one to the Republican Women's Club in Wheeling, West Virginia, February 9, 1950, in which he claimed to have a list of 205 individuals who are Communists and the six-hour speech on the floor of the Senate February 20, in which he then claimed to have evidence of only 81 Communists working in the State Department.⁴⁴ From 1950 to 1954 McCarthy was on top. During the second series of HUAC hearings, McCarthy, with the help of J. Edgar Hoover, who was at that time director of the FBI, led the charge. McCarthy was in the public eye and subpoenaed some of the most prominent entertainers and demanded names of Communists from them.

McCarthy and HUAC ignored film content and went after individuals. Sara reports in her article, "A list of 324 people, Hollywood employees who had any affiliations with the Communist Party, was compiled. All were placed on a

⁴³ Ceplair and Englund 362.

⁴⁴ Fried 123-124.

blacklist, in other words, a list of people who are not to be hired.”⁴⁵ The 212 people who were working when the list was released immediately lost their jobs.

In this second set of HUAC hearings, the Committee subpoenaed 110 of Hollywood’s men and women. The Committee demanded all names of suspected Communists in the film industry. The defiant cited the Fifth Amendment to avoid prison but faced the ruination of their careers. For example, “Sam Jaffee, nominated for an Oscar for *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950) and known for his roles in *Lost Horizon* (1937) and *Gunga Din* (1939), was a lifelong non-Communist progressive, but was blacklisted for refusing to collaborate,” states Simona Sara.⁴⁶ Stripped of his acting career, Jaffe resorted to teaching high school math. The Committee made it perfectly clear that anyone who did not cooperate and name names would be blacklisted.

On the other hand, of these 110, fifty-eight of them were informers. They decided to disavow their Communist past and provide the Committee with the names of others. According to Ceplair and Englund, there were thirty-one ‘important’ Hollywood artists--19 writers, 4 directors, 5 actors, 1 producer, and 2 composers. They report,

As a group these 31 people recited an average of 29 names each, which, when duplications were taken into account, amounted to over 200 Hollywood Communists. Individually, the 31 varied widely in the number of names they gave to HUAC, ranging from Martin Berkeley’s 155, Paula Townsend’s 83, and David Lang’s 75 to 7 for Sterling

⁴⁵ Sara 2.

⁴⁶ Sara 2.

Hayden and 6 for Clifford Odets.⁴⁷

Elia Kazan named eight names of people he considered as Communist at his April 1952 testimony to HUAC. *Reel Classics* reports that as a result of Kazan's testimony, these Communist sympathizers were exposed and blacklisted by the all-powerful studios; many did not work again under their proper names.⁴⁸ A clear explanation of Kazan's life, art, and politics is necessary at this time to understand the legacy of the controversy over his 1952 HUAC testimony.

Elia Kazan

Kazan earned his success and power through talent and effort. Kazan was born in 1909 in Istanbul, Turkey, to the Kazanjoglouses, a family of Anatolian Greeks who emigrated to the United States when he was four years old. He worked his way through Williams College and Yale Drama School as a waiter.

In the early 1930s he was a founding member of the left-wing Group Theater in New York. The Group Theater was collaborative theatre committed to ensemble acting and social realism.⁴⁹ Under the tutelage of Lee Strasberg, the actors explored the interior techniques of the Russian director/teacher, Stanislavski. "It was at this time in the beginning of 1934 that Kazan joined the Communist Party because he was concerned about the depression and the rise

⁴⁷ Ceplair and Englund 372.

⁴⁸ "On Elia Kazan's Lifetime Achievement Award," *Reel Classics*, 21 March 1999, 9 July 2001 <<http://www.reelclassics.com/Directors/Kazan/kazan-article2.htm>>.

⁴⁹ Brewer's Theatre (New York: Harpers Collins Publishers, 1994) 204-205.

of Hitler,” writes Glen Woiceshyn in his article, “Justice for Kazan” in *Capitalism Magazine*.⁵⁰ Kazan liked what the Communists preached. However, in 1936, Kazan left the Communist Party because the Party “attempted to control thought, suppress personal opinion, dictate personal conduct, and distort, disregard, and violate the truth,” states Woiceshyn.⁵¹

Even after his resignation from the Communist Party, Kazan continued to support some core Communist philosophy. From his autobiography, *A Life*, his own words are:

The theatre is a weapon. A play must teach a lesson.
The third-act climax must send the audience home with
hope and courage born of sweeping revolutionary insight.
I continued to regard the society around me as hostile,
repressive, and corrupt. Trust the working class only.
Defend the U.S.S.R. with all its faults. My duty as a theatre
artist was to teach others the right way and lead them down
the right path.⁵²

Party members did not change toward him either. The Party was interested in what was most useful for the survival of the U.S.S.R., and it foresaw the onslaught of Hitler and World War II. Everyone was needed in the coming crisis. Although Kazan’s official involvement with the Communist Party was only a year and a half, he continued to do the kind of political and social theatre that he had been doing.

⁵⁰ Glenn Woiceshyn, “Justice for Elia Kazan,” *Capitalism Magazine* March 1999, 9 July 2001 <<http://www.capitalismmagazine.com/1999/march/kazan.htm>>.

⁵¹ Woiceshyn 3.

⁵² Elia Kazan, *A Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998) 132.

In the late 1940s Kazan, along with Lee Strasberg, helped to establish the Actors' Studio, which gave America the Stanislavski-based 'Method' and trained such talents as Marlon Brando, Julie Harris, Lee J. Cobb, Montgomery Clift, Shelley Winters, and James Dean. In addition to Arthur Miller's plays, Kazan was the first director of such classics as Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth* and Tennessee Williams' *Streetcar Named Desire*. As a screen director, Kazan's first feature film, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (1945) secured his place at Twentieth-Century Fox for the next nine years. The controversial *Gentlemen's Agreement* (1948), the documentary-style *Boomerang* (1947), and the powerful screen version of *Streetcar* (1951) were successes that had him at the top of his field at the time of his HUAC testimony.⁵³ According to Navasky, from 1946 on, Kazan had first-refusal rights on any Broadway-bound play, and since the blacklist never dominated the New York theatre as it did Hollywood, Kazan was in such a strong position that he did not have to inform to save his career.⁵⁴

In addition to his success, Kazan had a reputation for caring about the social content of his work. "As an actor in the Group Theatre, he was a taxi driver in Clifford Odets's *Waiting for Lefty* who held up his fist at the end and yelled, 'Strike!' as the audience yelled 'Strike!' right back in unison."⁵⁵ Navasky continues,

As a member of the proletarian theater movement, Kazan had co-authored a play with Art Smith (on whom he later informed)

⁵³ Navasky 200.

⁵⁴ Navasky 200.

⁵⁵ Navasky 200.

called *Dimitroff*, subtitled *A Play of Mass Pressure*. It told how the pressure of the world proletariat forced the release of the Bulgarian Communist Dimitroff after he gave a stirring courtroom speech and refused to confess falsely to the setting of the Reichstag fire. The villain of the play was the informer Vander Lubbe, who had been persuaded by Hitler and Goring to put the finger on Dimitroff. The hero of the play, the authors explained in an introductory note, is 'mass pressure'.⁵⁶

On Broadway, Kazan directed plays with problems of conscience, responsibility, and personal honor in a materialistic society, and in Hollywood he dealt with such socially significant themes as anti-Semitism in *Gentlemen's Agreement*, racial discrimination in *Pinky* (1949), and revolution in *Viva Zapata* (1952).⁵⁷ It was because Kazan seemed to take the social content of his art so seriously that his appearance before HUAC caused such fear, dejection, and astonishment among his loyal friends and colleagues.

Elia Kazan's HUAC Testimony in 1952

In January 1952 Kazan met privately in an executive session with eight members of the Committee in the hearing room of HUAC. At this meeting Kazan said that he would cooperate in every way about himself but would not discuss others. He would not name names of other confirmed Party members in the Group Theater who were his colleagues when he was a member of the Communist Party between 1934 and 1936.⁵⁸ "In April 1952 Kazan told the Committee that he had come to the conclusion 'that I did wrong to withhold these

⁵⁶ Navasky 201.

⁵⁷ Navasky 201.

⁵⁸ Kazan 446.

names before, because secrecy serves the Communists, and is exactly what they want,” writes Navasky.⁵⁹ Kazan’s testimony, written in advance, was articulate, tough, and detailed as he named eight members of the Group Theatre and some already known Party functionaries. The names Kazan named from the Group Theatre were Phoebe Brand, J. Edward Bromberg, Morris Carnovsky, Tony Kraber, Lillian Hellman, Lewis Leverett, Paula Miller Strasberg, Clifford Odets, and Art Smith.⁶⁰ (See Appendix 2 for biographical information on these eight people.) Lives of these people drastically changed due to Kazan’s testimony.

In addition to naming names, Kazan’s prepared written testimony explained that he left the Party because of its attempt to use him to take over the group. He read to the Committee,

I was instructed by the Communist unit to demand that the group be run ‘democratically.’ This was a characteristic Communist tactic; they were not interested in democracy; they wanted control. They had no chance of controlling the directors, but they thought that if authority went to the actors, they would have a chance to dominate through the usual tricks of behind-the-scenes caucuses, block voting, and confusion of issues.

This was the specific issue on which I quit the Party. I had enough regimentation, enough of being told what to think and say and do, enough of their habitual violation of the daily practices of democracy to which I was accustomed. The last straw came when I was invited to go through a typical Communist scene of crawling and apologizing and admitting the error of my ways. I had had a taste of police-state living and I did not like it.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Navasky 202.

⁶⁰ Yael Schacher, “The People Who Kazan Named,” *Village Voice*, 17-23 March 1999. 12 July 2001 <<http://www.villagevoice.com/features9911/schacher.shtml>>.

⁶¹ Navasky 202.

If Kazan simply told his story and named names along with all of the other witnesses, he might have been denounced on the Left, celebrated on the Right, and his testimony forgotten.⁶² However, Kazan did not feel as if the affidavit was sufficient. Navasky writes,

First, he appended to his testimony an annotated bibliography which listed and explained the entire history of his 25 professional forays as a director. Most of the items on his list were harmless, but whenever there was the possibility of an interpretation that conflicted with the prevailing dogma, Kazan anticipated the objection.⁶³

Here are a couple of examples from Kazan's list:

Boomerang (picture), 1946: Based on an incident in the life of Homer Cummings, later Attorney General of the United States. It tells how an initial miscarriage of justice was righted by the persistence and integrity of a young district attorney, who risked his life to save an innocent man. This shows the exact opposite of the Communist libels on America.

All My Sons, by Arthur Miller, 1947: The story of a war veteran who came home to discover that his father, a small manufacturer, had shipped defective plane parts to the Armed Forces during the war. Some people searched for hidden propaganda in this one, but believe it to be a deeply moral investigation of problems of conscience and responsibility.⁶⁴

Two days after his HUAC testimony, April 12, 1952, Kazan placed an ad, with a statement in *The New York Times* explaining his position and urging others to do what he did (See Appendix.) His rationale is that one may inform on friends and colleagues because the Communist Party was so authoritarian and

⁶² Navasky 203.

⁶³ Navasky 203.

⁶⁴ Navasky 203.

manipulative.⁶⁵ Kazan believed that the way to fight totalitarian secrecy was with free world openness. The last sentence of the letter is “I expect to continue to make the same kinds of pictures and to direct the same kinds of plays.”⁶⁶

Kazan admitted to feeling ashamed when he read the front page of the newspaper the following day of his HUAC testimony. After being attacked by everyone for his testimony, Kazan wondered whether what he had done was “repulsive.”⁶⁷ However, this attack of conscience soon subsided. In *A Life*, Kazan writes, “Do I feel ashamed of what I did? The truth is that within a year I stopped feeling guilty or even embarrassed.”⁶⁸ He continues,

Reader, I have been telling you only some of the things I was asking myself on the way ‘down.’ But if you expect an apology now because I would later name names to the House Committee, you’ve misjudged my character. The horrible, immoral thing I would do, I did out of my true self. Everything before was seventeen years of posturing. The people who owe you an explanation are those who, year after year, held the Soviets blameless for all of their crimes.⁶⁹

There is a discernable arrogance and insensitivity in Kazan’s attitude toward naming names to the House on Un-American Activities in 1952. The interesting and significant voices are those of the time, those directly and indirectly affected by Kazan’s testimony. These are the voices of America and

⁶⁵ Fried 204.

⁶⁶ Navasky 206.

⁶⁷ Kazan 446.

⁶⁸ Kazan 465.

⁶⁹ Kazan 460.

the Hollywood film industry. These are the voices that perpetuate the legacy of Kazan.

CHAPTER III: REACTIONS TO ELIA KAZAN'S HUAC TESTIMONY IN 1952

Reactions Opposing Kazan's Testimony

The motion picture industry reacted to Kazan's testimony with vehemence. Several issues surrounding Kazan's testimony caused strong negative reactions. First, colleagues felt that the pages and pages of the plot summaries of all of Kazan's films and plays and the explanation of why each was anti-Communist were unnecessary. Many felt that Kazan apologized and kowtowed to please the Committee's every whim.

Second, rumors spread that Kazan had a big-money film deal with Spyros Skouras of Twentieth-Century Fox if he named names.⁷⁰ When HUAC asked the folksinger Tony Kraber, another Group Theatre alumnus who had been named by Kazan, whether they had known each other in the Party, Kraber responded, 'Is this the Kazan that signed the contract for five hundred thousand dollars the day after he gave names to the Committee?'"⁷¹ In fact, in 1952 Kazan told Lillian Hellman, a prominent playwright, "I made \$400,000 last year from films. But

⁷⁰ Navasky 206.

⁷¹ Navasky 207.

Skouras says that I will never make another movie if I don't cooperate."⁷² Lillian Hellman claims that to Kazan his betrayal was a matter of money. She says that Kazan cooperated to save his career. She writes in her autobiography, *Scoundrel Time*,

The attempt to save jobs, status, or an Academy Award, led men like Larry Parks and Elia Kazan to name the guiltless in order to sweeten their own guiltlessness into what the Committee would call innocence.⁷³

Lillian Hellman (whom Kazan named) was one of Kazan's most fervent attackers at the time. Before he testified, Kazan met with Hellman. He told her that he considered naming names. Both Hellman and Kazan have passages in their biographies about this scene. Kazan writes,

I laid everything on the table, told her I wouldn't be able to work on films if I didn't testify to everything I knew. Then I told her that while it would be a blow, I had prepared for it and could get along okay without film work. Lillian was silent as a coiled snake. I didn't realize until later how threatened she felt in the same emergency. She said nothing to turn me away from where I seemed to be moving.⁷⁴

Hellman said about the same incident that she "didn't want to talk anymore and so we stood in silence until Kazan said, 'It's O.K. for you to do what you want, I guess. You've probably spent whatever you've earned.'"⁷⁵ Thus Hellman claims that Kazan's testimony was based on money and career.

⁷² Ceplair and Englund 377.

⁷³ Lillian Hellman, *Scoundrel Time* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1976) 30.

⁷⁴ Kazan 462.

⁷⁵ Hellman 67.

In May 1952 Lillian Hellman defied the House Committee in her testimony. Before her appearance, she wrote a letter to HUAC in which she offered to tell everything the Committee wanted to know about her, but that she would not name names. If the Committee would refuse her offer, she would take the Fifth Amendment. She writes,

To hurt innocent people whom I knew many years ago in order to save myself is, to me, inhuman, indecent, and dishonorable. I cannot and will not cut my conscience to fit this year's fashion.⁷⁶

The Committee denied her offer, and on May 21, 1952, Lillian Hellman took the Fifth Amendment when she appeared before the House on Un-American Activities Committee. After her testimony, Hellman was not to get another film credit to her name in the United States until 1961.⁷⁷ Hellman remained a staunch critic of the informers.

A third issue for which critics attacked Kazan was that he was financially successful at the time of his testimony. He was a prominent film director with an Academy Award. At the time of his testimony, he was filming *Viva Zapata*, starring Marlon Brando. In Navasky's book *Naming Names*, a director-victim of the day speculates, "If Kazan had refused to cooperate with HUAC, he couldn't have derailed the Committee, but he might well have broken the blacklist. He was too important to be ignored."⁷⁸ Navasky remarks,

Probably no single individual could have broken the

⁷⁶ Hellman 93.

⁷⁷ "Kazan and Lillian Hellman," *American Studies Online*, 17 Feb. 2002 <<http://www.stud.hum.ku.dk/rikkebj/luackazan.htm>>.

⁷⁸ Navasky 200.

blacklist in April 1952, and yet no person was in a better strategic position to try than Kazan, by virtue of his prestige and economic invulnerability, to mount a symbolic campaign against it, and by this example inspire hundreds of fence sitters to come over to the opposition.⁷⁹

A final topic of discussion that infuriated Kazan's opponents of the time was the advertisement in *The New York Times*. Navasky explains that Kazan implied in his ad that "the employment of liberals was threatened because they had allowed themselves to be associated with Communists rather than because some freelance vigilantes had joined with HUAC to create and enforce a blacklist."⁸⁰ Also, according to Kazan's ad, communist censorship is "thought control," and Kazan did not mention HUAC intimidation. Critics stressed a significant point against Kazan, although Kazan did not mention it in his ad; the main reason Kazan left the Communist Party is that the Communists wanted him to confess error and humiliate himself. His adversaries believe that is just what he did for HUAC.⁸¹ Kazan's testimony, the apologetic agenda of the testimony, and *The New York Times* advertisement, along with rumors of movie deals established him as the ultimate betrayer of that era.⁸²

Kazan's testimony to HUAC ended his friendship and collaboration with playwright, Arthur Miller. After Kazan's testimony, they no longer spoke. Kazan did not hear anything from Miller following his HUAC testimony until one day he read in a newspaper that Miller disapproved of his action and that he would have

⁷⁹ Navasky 200.

⁸⁰ Navasky 204.

⁸¹ Navasky 204.

⁸² Navasky 206.

nothing more to do with him.⁸³ Miller did not ask Kazan to direct his next play, *The Crucible* (1953). Navasky writes that Sam Zolotow, reporter and Drama Desk President for *The New York Times* in 1953, delicately reported on Miller and Kazan, "It is known that a disagreement--nothing to do with the play, though--exists between them that would make their further association incompatible."⁸⁴

There is an incident in early April 1952 that both Miller and Kazan describe in their autobiographies. It is a day when the two of them take a walk in the woods, and Kazan tells Miller about his decision to name names. Although they describe the exact same scene, even down to the weather condition, the interpretation of what took place is drastically different. Kazan says that he felt his friend Arthur understood him and forgave him for what he would do, and they parted on affectionate terms.⁸⁵ Kazan writes,

Walking back to the house, Miller put his arm around me in his awkward way and said, 'Don't worry about what I'll think. Whatever you do will be okay with me. Because I know your heart is in the right place. There is no doubt that Art meant it and he was anxious to say this to me before we separated.'⁸⁶

In his book, Miller describes the drive up to see his friend Kazan and how he had a strong feeling of what Kazan was going to tell him. Miller says that he felt his

⁸³ "The House Un-American Activities and the Rise of Anti-Communism," *Third World Traveler Internet*, 2001, 27 June 2002 <http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/McCarthyism/HUAC_Rise_AntiCommun.html>.

⁸⁴ Navasky 199.

⁸⁵ "Elia Kazan, His Conscience, and His Friends," *American Studies Online*, 27 June 2002 <<http://www.stud.hum.ku.dk/rikkebj/luacelia.htm>>.

⁸⁶ Kazan 461.

“anger rising, not against Kazan, whom I loved like a brother, but against the Committee.”⁸⁷ When Elia Kazan told Miller about what he was going to do,

Miller felt both sympathy and fear towards him. Miller writes,

Had I been of his generation, he would have had to sacrifice me as well. And finally that was all I could think of. I could not get past it. I was growing cooler. I could still be up for sacrifice if Kazan knew I had attended meetings of Party writers years ago. I felt silence rising around me. It was sadness, purely mournful, deadening silence.⁸⁸

As he drove away, Miller wrote, “We waved rather grimly as I pulled away.”⁸⁹

The House Committee’s hearings destroyed many friendships, this one among the most famous.

In his autobiography, *Timebends*, Miller is clear about his feelings toward the people who named names. He said that he felt “distaste for those who groveled before this tawdry tribune of moralistic vote-snatchers, but I had as much pity as anger toward them.”⁹⁰ With his conscience bothering him about Kazan, Miller writes,

I was experiencing a bitterness with the country that I had never imagined before, a hatred of its stupidity and its throwing away freedom. Who or what was safer now because this man in his human weakness had been forced to humiliate himself? What truth had been enhanced by all this anguish?⁹¹

⁸⁷ Arthur Miller, *Timebends-A Life* (London: Methuen, 1987) 332.

⁸⁸ Miller 333.

⁸⁹ Miller 333.

⁹⁰ Miller 329.

⁹¹ Miller 334.

Interestingly, before Kazan's testimony, Kazan and Miller planned to collaborate on a movie about the life on an urban working class waterfront entitled *The Hook*." Instead, Kazan and fellow informer, Budd Schulberg, made the film, *On the Waterfront*, in which Terry Malloy realizes his obligation "to fink on his fellow hoods." Meanwhile, Miller, who in 1956 testified as an unfriendly witness before HUAC, wrote his own waterfront play, *A View From the Bridge*, in which he tried to both understand and condemn the informer. According to Navasky, "Kazan emerged in the folklore of the Left as the quintessential informer, and Miller was hailed as the risk-taking conscience of the times."⁹²

The media criticized Kazan as well. According to Navasky, the May 7, 1952, edition of *The Daily Worker* attacked Kazan's testimony. It remarked on Kazan's having named his co-author of *Dimitroff*, Art Smith. *The Worker* rhetorically asked, "Isn't it clear that Kazan, like Vander Lubbe, is repeating the same old vicious lies the Nazis invented to cover up their murderous aggression! And for a similar purpose--to aid Wall Street's drive to world power?" *The Daily Worker* observed that in Scene One of *Dimitroff*, Hitler puts his arms around Vander Lubbe and says, "This is the greatest moment of my life."⁹³ Said the *Worker*:

Kazan's belly-crawling statement calling upon U.S. intellectuals to prostrate themselves before the Big Money sounds as if he too really believes (one can visualize the chairman of the Un-American Activities Committee putting his arm around him), 'This is the greatest moment of my life.'⁹⁴

⁹² Navasky 199.

⁹³ Navasky 206.

The Daily Worker adds, "It is the lowest moment of Kazan's life, one which will haunt him forever."⁹⁵

Criticisms came from others in the film industry. Years later Bernard Gordon, a blacklisted screenwriter explains the general feeling about cooperating with HUAC at the time:

It never seemed possible to be an informer; it never occurred to us that this was a choice. Party members were usually our closest friends. We were a besieged company, and that drew us closer together. To turn on such friends for reasons of fear or personal gain would be an act of betrayal, not only of principle, but of personal loyalty. It wasn't even considered. It was not a heroic decision; it simple decency, the sort of thing I'd expect from most people.⁹⁶

Also, actor Rod Steiger described Kazan's testimony before the House Committee as a shock and a disgrace. Steiger comments on how he and others felt at the time,

He was our father image. He was Elia Kazan carrying the torch of truth, personal involvement, and creativity. It's like we found him sleeping with our sister. It was unbelievable. It really was a psychological shock.⁹⁷

Kazan recorded personal reactions of coworkers in a diary, which he published in his autobiography, *A Life*. He wrote that when he returned to the studio after his HUAC appearance, people ignored him; they crossed the street to avoid meeting him, and he received crank phone calls as well as hate mail. One person blamed

⁹⁴ Navasky 206.

⁹⁵ Navasky 206.

⁹⁶ Rampell 3.

⁹⁷ Jim Moret, "Red Scare Era Haunts 'East of Eden' Director," *CNN.com* 22 February 1999, 17 Feb. 2002 <<http://www.cnn.com/SHOWBIZ/Movies/9902/22/eliakazan/htm>>.

him for an actor's dismissal because he said that Kazan had mentioned his name. Another said, "I shall continue to greet you in the course of our associations but only on the basis of formal courtesy."⁹⁸

Reactions Supporting Kazan's Testimony

Although dissension toward Kazan was great in 1952, he had supporters. The Right-wingers hailed him as a patriot, and the centrist liberals praised Kazan for doing the right thing.⁹⁹ According to these supporters, Kazan defended individual rights and exposed the Communists in the American film industry who wished to replace freedom with totalitarianism. The American Committee for Cultural Freedom put Kazan on its letterhead. Roy Brewer, the former head of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), testified to HUAC as a friendly witness in 1947. He wrote in a recent statement,

I encouraged and supported Mr. Kazan against the Communist Party. I thought he made the right decision then and I have not changed my mind. He was right to testify before HUAC because the Communist Party wanted to destroy the rights of American citizens and replace our free system with a dictatorship.¹⁰⁰

Anti-Communist organizations and the Right stood behind Kazan in 1952. He strengthened their belief in him with his first post-HUAC film dealing with an anti-Communist theme, *Man on a Tightrope* (1953). However, his reputation as the epitome of a betrayer was something he could not erase. The indignation of

⁹⁸ Kazan 468.

⁹⁹ Navasky 206.

¹⁰⁰ "Former 'Hollywood 10' Member Supports Pro-Kazan Group," *Ad Hoc Committee for Naming Facts-The Ayn Rand Institute*, 9 March 1999, 30 June 2002 <<http://www.namingfacts.aynrand.org/dmytryk.shtml>>.

the Communist Party diminished, but the blacklisted and the film industry remembered.

In Kazan's defense at that time was the argument that the names he gave the Committee were not new. They merely confirmed already suspected Communists and Communist sympathizers. The names disclosed no new information and provided no new leads into the investigation of Communist activities. In some cases, persons named were already dead. Kazan named J. Edward Bromberg, who died a year earlier. Also, Kazan and Clifford Odets made a pact about naming each other. Kazan's supporters believed that the true problem was the Committee and the blacklist. Kazan was just another informer--an important one--but still just another informer. Through the House Committee, the people Kazan named and the other blacklisted men and women were deprived of the right to work in their chosen professions. Margaret McGurk writes in her article, "Kazan Should Be Honored for His Work, Not His Actions," Lauren Bacall, an opponent of the Committee in the 1950s, argued that it was the studio bosses and the congressional Red baiters, not Mr. Kazan, who bore responsibility for damaging lives and careers."¹⁰¹ Kazan did not create the blacklist. He was just a pawn in a larger game. Those were horrible times. Arthur Schlesinger writes in his article, "Hollywood Hypocrisy,"

Little has disgraced Congress more than the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Its inquiry into Communism in Hollywood was among the most indefensible, scandalous, and cruel episodes in the entire history of legislative investigations. The idea that a few Stalinists and fellow-travelers in the film industry

¹⁰¹ Margaret A. McGurk, "'Kazan Should Be Honored for His Work, Not His Actions,'" *The Cincinnati Enquirer*. 21 March 1999, 19 July 2002 <http://enquirer.com/editions/1999/03/21/loc_kazan_should_be.html>.

was a grave threat to the republic rates high in the annals of Congressional asininity. Collaboration with these clowns had its elements of disgust and shame, as Mr. Kazan admits in his memoir.¹⁰²

The blacklisted were not the only ones who experienced loss. America experienced cultural damage through the dramas not written, the films not directed, and the roles not played because of the blacklist. America lost.

In 1952, Kazan was a significant director. He achieved status as an actor's director. His ability to handle actors and get the most from them was his strength. Supporters insisted that Kazan's role in the development of such actors as Marlon Brando and James Dean was sufficient to overcome the ill feeling of his HUAC testimony. After Kazan testified, Brando commented to Clifford Odets, "That was a terrible thing that Gadge (Kazan's nickname) did in Washington. I'm not going to work with him anymore. But he's good for me. Maybe I'll work with him a couple more times, at least once."¹⁰³ Brando's alienation of Kazan was not so final. He did *On the Waterfront* with Kazan in 1954. Marlon Brando describes and praises Kazan's working relationship with actors, in an excerpt from Lawrence Groebel's book, *Conversations With Marlon Brando* (1991),

Kazan is the best actor's director you could ever want because he was an actor himself, but a special kind of actor. He understands things that other directors do not. He also inspired you. Most actors are expected to come with their parts in their pockets and their emotions spring-loaded, when the director says, 'Okay, hit it,' they go into a time slip. But Kazan brought a lot of things to the actor and he invited you to argue with him. He's one of the few directors creative and understanding enough to know where the actor's trying to go. He'd

¹⁰² Arthur Schlesinger, "Hollywood Hypocrisy," *New York Times*, 28 February 1999, 17 February 2002 <<http://www.frontpagemag.com/archives/hollywood/schlesinger03-01-99.htm>>.

¹⁰³ Michael Mills, "Elia Kazan-Postage Paid," *Modern Times*, 1999, 9 July 2001 <<http://moderntimes.com/palace/kazan/index.html>>.

let you play the scene almost any way you'd want.¹⁰⁴

Kazan dishonored his contemporaries. However, supporters believed it was all about the work. His colleagues agreed that he made outstanding contributions to film and theatre. The controversial issue of separation between art and politics was as intense in Hollywood in 1952 as it is in present times. Lauren Bacall stated, "I'm a fervent subscriber to the motto: 'Life is short. Art is long.' Artists die but their best work lives on. It is a mistake to get the two mixed up."¹⁰⁵ Kazan's work was too substantial in 1952 to ignore it and him. Some excused his betrayal for arts' sake.

America's Reactions to the Red Scare

As the film industry was on trial, the American public watched and feared for its own safety. The Truman administration fueled the American public's fear of Communists. Ellen Schrecker writes in her book, *The Age of McCarthyism, A Brief History With Documents*,

Perhaps no single weapon in the federal arsenal was as powerful in the government's construction of anti-Communist consensus as the criminal justice system. By putting Communists on trial, the Truman administration shaped the American public's view of domestic Communism. It transformed party members from political dissidents into criminals--with all the implications that such associations inspired in a nation of law-abiding citizens.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ "Elia Kazan (1909-)-Elia Kazanjoglous, 'Gadge,' *Books and Writers*, 2000, 9 July 2001 <<http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/kazan.htm>>.

¹⁰⁵ McGurk 3.

¹⁰⁶ Ellen Schrecker, *The Age of McCarthyism: A Brief History With Documents* (Boston: St. Martin's Press, 1994) 22.

The “Red Menace” pervaded the American community in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The Hollywood HUAC hearings affected the American public.

Newsweek received letters of suspicion, fear, and outrage from American citizens concerning this Hollywood Inquisition. Thomas B. Peck, Jr. of Princeton University wrote a letter that appeared in the September 15, 1947, issue of *Newsweek*. He writes,

If the Committee is successful in halting production of such films as *Mission to Moscow*, *Song of Russia*, and *The Best Years of Our Lives*, the action may well lead to unchecked and arbitrary censorship of the film industry. Shades of Gestapo! Indeed, if I receive a subpoena to appear before this all-powerful committee to account for my own un-American ideas presented here, I shall not be at all surprised, in view of what has gone before.¹⁰⁷

Peck, enraged by the censorship of films and the control HUAC gained, showed his indignation of the Communist hunt in the letter. There were reactions of panic, not directly related to Kazan, but amongst everyday Americans that demonstrate the terror not only in Hollywood but also in the communities of the United States. The FBI received reports consisting of people’s testimonies about other people’s probable political opinions. The FBI file contained information from neighbors, coworkers, social acquaintances, and the personnel files of employers of particular people about whom others suspected. Here is an extract from the FBI civilian file of an average American, Gordon Kahn:

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Kahn belong to the Russian-American Club. Kahn personally remarked that he

¹⁰⁷ “The Public and the News Media on the Red Menace,” *American Studies Online*, 17 February 2002 <<http://www.stud.hum.ku.dk/rikkebj/huacpublic.htm>>.

had no objection to living next door to Negroes, Japanese, or any others. I am convinced he is definitely a Communist, although I have no proof of card membership.¹⁰⁸

The FBI special agents gathered some of the information. Some people wrote to J. Edgar Hoover himself. Many Americans trusted no one.

Not only studio heads but also university presidents, leaders of the nation's major corporations and private institutions demanded the dismissal of someone openly identified as a Communist or even of people who were controversial. High school and elementary school teachers, college professors, industrial workers, and lawyers lost their jobs. Yale Law School professor Ralph Brown, who conducted the most systematic survey of the economic damage of the McCarthy era, estimated that roughly ten thousand people lost their jobs.¹⁰⁹ America was in a Red frenzy.

Although the entertainment industry was the most visible victim, Americans moviegoers did not desert the theaters. It was the rise of television that exacerbated the film industry's financial slump and reinforced the major studios' reluctance to offend any segment of their audience. Americans watched in fear. Then, approximately fifty years later, the Academy of Motion Pictures and Science honored Elia Kazan with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the 71st Academy Awards ceremony March 21, 1999. Disputes arose over whether Kazan, the informer, deserved this award. The film community of today burst into uproarious conflict while a new America observed and participated.

¹⁰⁸ "The Public and the News Media on the Red Menace" 2.

¹⁰⁹ Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes* 55.

CHAPTER IV: REACTIONS TO ELIA KAZAN

IN PRESENT TIMES

Reactions Opposing Kazan

Protests against giving a Lifetime Achievement Award to Elia Kazan began early in 1999 after the announcement of the intended award. Bernard Gordon, a blacklisted screenwriter, now 81 years old, wrote a letter to the *Los Angeles Times* when he heard about it. Fellow-blacklisted, still outraged, organized a committee, the “Committee Against Silence,” to protest against Kazan’s honorary Oscar. This committee, with Gordon as co-chairman, formed a picket line at the Academy Awards ceremony. About 500 protestors gathered outside the Dorothy Chandler Pavillion Sunday afternoon, armed with placards with such slogans as “Elia Kazan: Nominated for the Benedict Arnold Award,” “Don’t Whitewash the Blacklist,” and “Kazan—the Linda Tripp of the ‘50s.”¹¹⁰

But the protest inside was more of a sit-down strike when Kazan received his Oscar. The slogan that Gordon created, “Sit on your hands,” meant sit down and do not applaud. “As is tradition, Kazan received a standing ovation from

¹¹⁰ Patrick Goldstein, “Many Refuse to Clap as Kazan Receives Oscar,” *Los Angeles Times on the Web*, 22 March 1999, 29 June 2002 <<http://www.english.upenn.edu/~afilreis/50s/kazan-protest.html>>.

members of the audience, but only some of them,” reports *Reel Classics*.¹¹¹

Goldstein from the *Los Angeles Times* reported that television cameras caught

Warren Beatty, Helen Hunt, and Meryl Streep standing and applauding.¹¹²

Gordon remarked in Rampell’s article that a majority of the people in the audience did not stand. Army Archerd, the reporter for *Variety*, reported that

sixty percent of the people in the audience did not stand and applaud Kazan.¹¹³

Some of the artists who chose to remain seated included Ed Harris, Nick Nolte,

Richard Dreyfuss, and Mare Winningham.¹¹⁴ Others like Steven Spielberg

clapped but remained seated.¹¹⁵ Gordon stressed in Rampell’s article,

We were not against Kazan receiving awards as a director. But a Lifetime award, in front of the largest possible audience in the world, was beyond something that had to do with what the man does behind the camera. It had to do with what a man’s life was and what effect he had on the community.¹¹⁶

The argument is that by honoring Kazan with a Lifetime Achievement Award, the

academy is honoring all that encompasses Kazan’s life, his art and his politics.

It is difficult to separate Kazan’s art from his politics to justify the

Lifetime Achievement award. According to the article, “Symbolically Sitting on

My Hands,”

The award is usually given to someone who deserved and failed to receive recognition for a particular collection of his

¹¹¹ *Reel Classics* 1.

¹¹² Goldstein 2.

¹¹³ Rampell 5.

¹¹⁴ Goldstein 2.

¹¹⁵ *Reel Classics* 1.

¹¹⁶ Rampell 1.

films. Kazan already has received two Best Director Oscars. That is two more than Alfred Hitchcock, Orson Welles, Martin Scorsese, and Stanley Kubrick. Kazan has received his recognition and to suggest his talent rises above this list of some of the finest directors in history is preposterous. This is not an award for Kazan's art. This is the Academy making a political statement.¹¹⁷

The Academy's political statement is that the time has come for the excusing or forgiving Kazan's politics and honoring his art, even though Kazan's art directly reflects his politics and the society. His films comment on controversial political and societal subjects. *On the Waterfront* is the epitome of support for the actions of HUAC. It is filled with talk about "rats," "stoolies," "canaries," and "cheesies." "Terry Malloy gains the courage to inform and achieves heroic stature as he single-handedly takes on the mob at the risk of his own life and in the process comes to true self-knowledge."¹¹⁸ Navasky writes,

The film seems an allegory for the 1950s anti-Communist movement, with the Waterfront Crime Commission an analog for HUAC. The Kazan-Schulberg movie created a context in which naming names is the only honorable thing to do--the maximum case for informing.¹¹⁹

Based on an analysis of Kazan's films, the separation of art and politics is not a justifiable argument in defense of Kazan's receiving the 1999 Oscar.

Along with Bernard Gordon, many of the surviving blacklisted writers and actors denounced the Kazan award. These artists maintain that Kazan and other informers destroyed their careers and ruined their lives. They were fired on the spot and remained unemployed in Hollywood and in theatre. "Some blacklisted

¹¹⁷ "Symbolically Sitting on My Hands," Website by Robin, Elsinore Studios, March 1999, 29 June 2002 <<http://www.elsinore.net/deedop/politics/kazan.htm>>.

¹¹⁸ Navasky 209.

¹¹⁹ Navasky 210.

survived by driving cabs, selling blood, or writing for reduced fees under assumed names. Some died of heart attacks or suicide,” writes Rampell.¹²⁰ Gordon wrote under a pseudonym in the United States for a while then relocated to Europe, where he wrote scripts. For Phoebe Brand, it was 40 years before she appeared in her next film. Kazan told the congressional Committee that Miss Brand had been a member of the Communist Party. Brand says, “I forgive. I forgive a lot, but I don’t and can’t forgive Kazan.”¹²¹ J. Edward Bromberg, whom Kazan named, refused to testify before HUAC and died of a heart attack. Patrick Goldstein of the *Los Angeles Times* quotes the statements of some of the blacklisted:

Joan Scott, a blacklisted writer along with her husband, Adrian Scott, one of the Hollywood Ten, said, ‘Like Judas, informers are never forgiven. I had to go into hiding to avoid a subpoena. Being blacklisted still affects me.’ Robert Lees, a blacklisted screenwriter, said, ‘Kazan crawled through the mud for a big money contract at Twentieth Century Fox. He should apologize.’¹²²

Kazan ruined lives of the blacklisted, their families, and friends. The award brought out the animosity that the blacklisted have been suppressing since the 1950s.

¹²⁰ Rampell 4.

¹²¹ “Elia Kazan: Forgive or Forget?” *BBC Online Network*, 21 March 1999, 29 June 2002 <news.bbc.co.uk/1/English/entertainment/the_oscars_1999/newsid_297000/297214.stm>.

¹²² Goldstein 3.

Reactions Supporting Kazan

“Kazan defenders were equally vociferous in support of the director,” writes Patrick Goldstein of the *Los Angeles Times*.¹²³ He continues, “Mr. Kazan was a moral hero, said Scott McDonnell, a leader of the Ad Hoc Committee for Naming Names, organized by the Ayn Rand Institute. “He was a brave and courageous man, and the people who apologize are the Communists who wanted him to stay quiet about what he had witnessed.”¹²⁴ The Ad Hoc Committee For Naming Names was one of the groups protesting in favor of Kazan’s award across the street from those protesting against Kazan. These protesters, numbering about 60, carried yellow signs saying, “Kazan Defender of Freedom in America” and “Hollywood Communists Should Apologize,” reports Goldstein.¹²⁵ The Committee also asked Oscar ceremony attendees to wear an American flag lapel pin as a symbol of support for Kazan and his opposition to Communism. Richard W. Tracinski writes in his article, “Elia Kazan: Moral Hero,” for The Ayn Rand Institute,

Kazan deserves to be honored, not despite his testimony, but because of it—not because we should separate his politics from his art, but because his politics helped preserve artistic freedom for everyone in America. Kazan was the one defending freedom—while it was Hollywood communists who were betraying ‘the lives and futures’ of their fellow man.¹²⁶

¹²³ Goldstein 3.

¹²⁴ Goldstein 3.

¹²⁵ Goldstein 2.

¹²⁶ Robert W. Tracinski, “Elia Kazan: Moral Hero,” *The Ayn Rand Institute Media Link* 1999, 9 July 2001 <<http://www.aynrand.org/medialink/op-eds/kazan.txt>>.

The Ayn Rand Institute supports Kazan on the basis of his politics and his art. Others defend him strictly on the fact that Kazan's outstanding talent and work deserve recognition. *Reel Classics* reports that Charlton Heston pointed out on *Larry King Live* that Kazan deserves the award "in appreciation of a long, distinguished and unparalleled career during which he has influenced the very nature of filmmaking through his creation of cinematic masterpieces."¹²⁷ In other words, he deserves the honorary Oscar for lifetime cinematic achievement, and that should be enough.

New York Times writer Bernard Weintraub reports in his article, "Kazan Snubbed by Some, to Get Honorary Oscar," that the other Hollywood organizations rejected Kazan for years for several lifetime achievement awards. "Two years ago, about 1997, after debating, the Los Angeles Film Critics Association and the American Film Institute rejected proposals to honor Kazan with life achievement awards," reports Weintraub.¹²⁸ Weintraub adds,

At the time his supporters said that he was a victim of Hollywood hypocrisy and trendy politics. They said that many organizations give lifetime and so-called humanitarian awards to men and women with messy and sometimes destructive personal lives.¹²⁹

Kazan himself was on a type of blacklist. Finally, in 1999 the thirty-nine board member of the Academy decided to give Kazan the honorary award. Reported in the *New York Times* by Bernard Weintraub, the decision was unanimous:

¹²⁷ *Reel Classics* 3.

¹²⁸ Bernard Weintraub, "Kazan Snubbed by Some to Get Honorary Oscar," *New York Times on the Web*, 13 January 1999, 29 June 2002 <<http://www.english.upenn.edu/~afilreis/50s/kazan-snub.htm>>.

¹²⁹ Weintraub 1.

Robert Rehme, academy president said, "I am proud of doing this. He said of the vote: 'There was no debate, no discussion; it was overwhelmingly approved with enthusiasm. Elia Kazan is one of the most extraordinary directors of the century.' Reheme said that the board voted after a speech by actor Karl Malden, who appeared in three of Kazan's films. 'Just look at the work he has done,' Malden said. If anyone deserved this honorary award because of his talent and body of work, it was Kazan.¹³⁰

Malden added: "Here is a man who is in his 80s who hasn't gotten what he deserves. It is about time."¹³¹ Indeed, time, talent, and art are in Kazan's favor.

Kazan's award parallels the vindication of the stained reputations of other legends in other forums that are recent controversial issues. Pete Rose, Mike Tyson, and Bill Clinton are cases that draw similar but different conclusions. *Reel Classics* explains that Pete Rose's situation is different because he broke more than just civil law. Rose violated the rules of the sport of baseball, which might have honored him had he not chosen to gamble on professional baseball.¹³² Second, rape and assault aside, Mike Tyson, violated the rules of his sport with the ear-biting incident, in which he almost severed the ear of a fellow boxer in a prize match.¹³³ Third, accused of having an inappropriate relationship with a young intern in the Oval Office, Bill Clinton remained in office as President of the United States.¹³⁴ He committed the crimes of obstruction of justice and perjury while attempting to conceal the affair. *Reel Classics* states,

¹³⁰ Weintraub 1.

¹³¹ Weintraub 2.

¹³² *Reel Classics* 3.

¹³³ *Reel Classics* 3.

¹³⁴ *Reel Classics* 3.

Just as civil law, rape, and sexual innuendo were not the real concerns in these cases, so Kazan's testimony is not an issue regarding lifetime achievement. Kazan violated no laws or rules of the motion picture industry or of anyone else when he testified before HUAC in 1952. He violated a school-boy code that says, 'Even when you know they are guilty, you don't turn in your friends.' Because he broke no rules, Kazan's testimony must always be analyzed subjectively; whereas Rose, Tyson, and Clinton's infractions can all objectively be defined as wrong.¹³⁵

Ellen Schrecker, author of *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America*, told Weintraub of the *New York Times*, "One can maybe learn a lesson from Bill Clinton and compartmentalize, and separate Kazan, the informer, from Kazan, the artist."¹³⁶ These current cases reinforce Kazan's supporters stand: for whatever reason Kazan testified, Kazan deserved the Lifetime Achievement Award.

The passing of time is another significant reason to let bygones be bygones. David Walsh writes in his article for World Socialist Website, "Filmmaker and Informer," that Victor Navasky, author of *Naming Names*, commented, "With the passage of time, some of the passions have cooled and things are being put in a different perspective."¹³⁷ The Cold War between Russia and the United States and the McCarthy era are in the past. It was 50 years ago. At the time of the Oscars in 1999, almost all of the Hollywood Ten were dead. According to Fariello in his book, *Red Scare, Memories of the Red Inquisition*, for many Americans, only the barest sketch of the era remains, or nothing at all. In

¹³⁵ *Reel Classics* 3.

¹³⁶ David Walsh, "Hollywood Honors Elia Kazan, Filmmaker and Informer," *World Socialist Web Site*, 20 February 1999, 12 July 2001 <<http://wsws.org/articles/1999/feb1999/kazl-f20.shtml>>.

¹³⁷ Walsh 3.

1992, Fariello asked a 30-year-old man, who worked at a San Francisco publishing firm, to tell him what he knew of the Red Scare. The man said, “It was Joseph McCarthy, and he went after some Hollywood actors for the sake of publicity. Richard Nixon was in on it.” A woman of thirty-five asked Fariello, “When did all of this happen?” Another of the same age, after confusing ‘Reds’ with her favorite baseball team, exclaimed, “America had a Communist Party?”¹³⁸ America’s collective memory is fading.

On the other hand, the controversy over Kazan’s Oscar also served to remind Americans of the evils of McCarthyism and the repression of free thought. It also made today’s movie-going audience aware of Kazan as the fragile-looking old man who caused all of the fuss at the 1999 Oscar ceremony. Blacklisted writer, Walter Bernstein agrees, “The only good thing is that it may have made more people aware that there once was a blacklist,” reports Patrick Goldstein of the *Los Angeles Times*.¹³⁹

In Ed Rampell’s article, Bernard Gordon reminds the younger generations not only that ‘it can happen here,’ but also that it did happen here. Gordon ends his own book declaring: “America is a grand old place, but it has some bad old ways and some bad new ones. I still believe it needs a lot of fixing.”¹⁴⁰ America can learn from her past.

Summary

¹³⁸ Fariello 24.

¹³⁹ Goldstein 2.

¹⁴⁰ Rampell 5.

Kazan's honorary Oscar sparked an acrimonious war amongst Hollywood, left and right political organizations, newspaper and magazine writers, television talk shows, film critics, and the American public. "The gesture at first seemed to signal an end to years of wrangling over Kazan's April 10, 1952, testimony before the House on Un-American Activities," writes Goldstein.¹⁴¹ Even Kazan's acceptance speech for the Lifetime Achievement Award that night was anti-climatic: "I want to thank you all very much. I think that I can slip away."¹⁴² However, the debate lingered and so have the memories of the Blacklist era. The arguments about Kazan's testimony are not about the events of the 1940s and 1950s; they are about today and how Americans judge artists, politics, and society in our country. There is significance in this award's happening today.

¹⁴¹ Goldstein 2.

¹⁴² Goldstein 2.

CHAPTER V: PRESENT AND FUTURE OF ART, POLITICS, AND AMERICAN SOCIETY

In many ways Kazan's Lifetime Achievement Award of 1999 is a bridge connecting the past to the present to the future. This award conveys meaning and relevance today. The ramifications from Kazan's Oscar and the controversy ignite debates about the separation of art and politics, civil liberties, and repression of artists.

Art and Politics

The separation of art and politics begins the connection. This was the strongest argument in support of Kazan's honorary Oscar. The questions are: Are art and politics two separate worlds that are can be separate in the film world? ; has the Kazan Oscar enlightened America of this possibility or impossibility? The seesaw history of art and politics in Hollywood is an interesting one. At one time Hollywood and Washington were separate entities, working in their own environments. By the 1930s the Hollywood film community and the New York theatre groups were the most important centers of national and international consciousness and activism in the United States. Actors, writers, and directors

organized unions, supported the democratically elected government of Spain, and protected victims of war, repression, and aggression. The Communist Party established itself in the 1930s with the aid of thousands of motion picture industry people who looked for answers to the Depression and Hitler's rise to power. Hollywood's organized efforts turned out to be the most successful left-wing assemblage in the United States.¹⁴³ The 1930s is "The Golden Age of Hollywood" when silent films faded. The early talking pictures from 1930–1934 depicted the Depression era and candidly explored political and social issues such as prostitution, crooked politics, corrupt business, and child exploitation with stars such as Jean Harlow, Barbara Stanwyck, Bette Davis, Humphrey Bogart, and Clark Gable. In 1934 the Production Code strictly enforced the guidelines for sex, violence, religion, and crime in films. The 1930s was the decade of the sound revolution with the advancement of talkies and film genres such as gangster films, musicals, newspaper-reporting films, screwball comedies, and westerns.¹⁴⁴ The studios were in control. Because of the industry's enormous wealth and cultural impact, Hollywood definitely had a grasp on and in Washington.

Investigations into Communists in the film industry began in the late 1930s but failed. Then in the late 1940s and 1950s the investigations of the House on Un-American Activities drove Hollywood and Washington apart, but their true relationship became symbolically entwined. The major studios caved in and succumbed to the blacklist and the House Committee. Hollywood remained part

¹⁴³ Ceplair and Englund 94.

¹⁴⁴ "Greatest Films of the 1930s," *Filmsite* 1996-2000, 1 July 2002 <<http://www.filmsite.org/30sintro.html>>.

of politics though. In 1956, the Academy awarded the Oscar for the writing of *The Brave One* to a person whom no one could find or who could not even accept the award. The academy knew blacklisted writer Dalton Trumbo wrote it using the pseudonym 'Robert Rich.' Here is the academy involving the idea of politics in the awarding of Oscars.¹⁴⁵

In the 1960s President John F. Kennedy reunited Washington and Hollywood's friendship. Political influences favored the blacklisted in the early 1960s. "'Peaceful coexistence' with the Soviet Union and the election of John F. Kennedy signaled a liberalized political climate in the United States," states Ceplair and Englund.¹⁴⁶ In 1960 the motion picture blacklist ended when the Academy awarded the Oscar for the writing of the screenplay of *Spartacus* to Dalton Trumbo, the first blacklisted writer to use his own name when he wrote.¹⁴⁷ The Academy once again involved itself in politics.

By the 1980s, with Ronald Reagan as President of the United States, the conflation of Hollywood and Washington was complete. (Reagan, the actor and president of the Screen Actors Guild, SAG, was a 'friendly' witness at the 1947 HUAC investigations.) Peter Biskind writes in his article, "When Worlds Collide," "The Reagan presidency was a watershed of sorts, overcoming the last vestiges of resistance to the involvement of entertainment figures in politics and raising to a fine art such familiar Hollywood phenomena as focus

¹⁴⁵ Cliff Rothman, "Shud He Have Been a Contendah?" *The Nation*, 5 April 1999 30 June 2002 <<http://thenation.com/issue/990405/0405rothman.html>>.

¹⁴⁶ Ceplair and Englund 418.

¹⁴⁷ "Dalton Trumbo," *Education on the Internet and Teaching History Online*, 5 December 2001, 30 June 2002 <<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk?USATrumbo.htm>>.

groups, TV spots, and photo ops.”¹⁴⁸

“In the 1990s President Bill Clinton slowly attached himself to the world of glamour and fabricated excitement with startling results for himself and American culture,” writes Robert Fulford in his article in *The National Post*, “How Bill Clinton Changed Political Movies.”¹⁴⁹ Clinton understood that the entertainment industry dictated the style and attitudes of America. Hollywood executives and stars became his allies. Actor, Alec Baldwin, an ardent supporter of President Clinton, spoke out vehemently on *Late Night With Conan O’Brien* against the Congressmen who voted for President Clinton’s impeachment in the obstruction of justice and perjury hearings in the Monica Lewinsky scandal.¹⁵⁰

Not until the 1990s was the White House a favored locale for movies. Whether it was Clinton’s friendliness toward the industry or the drama in his administration (illicit sex, a famous suicide, and widespread mendacity), Hollywood turned out presidential movies in unprecedented numbers. Fulford reports,

The Internet Movie Database identifies 83 feature films that focused on presidents since the invention of motion pictures; 24 were made during the Clinton era. Some of these include *Dave* (1993), *Clear and Present Danger* (1994), *The American President* (1995), *Wag the Dog* (1997), and *Primary Colors* (1998).¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Peter Biskind, “When Worlds Collide,” *The Nation*, 5 April 1999, 1 July 2002 <<http://past.thenation.com/issue/990405/04biskind.shtml>>.

¹⁴⁹ Robert Fulford, “How Clinton Changed Political Movies,” *The National Post* 28 October 2000, 1 July 2002 <<http://www.robertfulford.com/BillClinton.html>>.

¹⁵⁰ Fulford 2.

¹⁵¹ Fulford 2.

Clinton was a gift to the entertainment industry. Peter Biskind states, "With next year's Democratic convention to be held in Los Angeles and the California primaries moved up to March, Hollywood can be expected to exert more influence than ever on the selection of candidates."¹⁵² This was an interesting prognosis. The election was close. Hollywood's candidate, Democrat Al Gore, lost the election. However, Hollywood's influence did not diminish.

Since his inauguration in January 2001, President George W. Bush has had a rough start following the close election results and the recounting of votes. Then came the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Hollywood and Washington joined forces. In November 2001, representatives of Hollywood's major studios, television networks, and creative community met with White House delegation for a discussion on how the entertainment industry can help the war against terrorism, states CNN.¹⁵³ "Despite the sometimes contentious relationship between the worlds of entertainment and politics, there was a seamless web of unity," said Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America and former adviser to President Lyndon Johnson.¹⁵⁴ Valenti continues, "This was about contributing Hollywood's creative imagination and their persuasion skills to help in this war

¹⁵² Biskind 2.

¹⁵³ "Hollywood Considers Role in War Effort," *CNN.com*, 12 November 2001, 2 July 2002 <<http://www.cnn.com/2001/US/11/11/rec.hollywood.terror.html>>.

¹⁵⁴ "Hollywood Considers Role in War Effort" 1.

effort so that one day Americans can live normal lives again.”¹⁵⁵ Both Valenti and senior White House adviser Karl Rove said that Hollywood would make its own decisions about how to help in the war effort and the White House was not asking the entertainment industry to produce propaganda. “Directors, writers, producers, and studios will determine the kind of pictures they choose to make compelling stories they want to tell,” said Valenti.¹⁵⁶ CNN reports, “Ideas mentioned were developing public service announcements for distribution domestically and abroad, providing first-run movies to troops overseas, and encouraging Hollywood stars to participate in USO shows to entertain troops.”¹⁵⁷ Hollywood and Washington work together. In defiance of conventional wisdom, that the two don’t mix; that doesn’t seem to be the case.

The separation of art and politics is not possible. The history of Hollywood and Washington and the 1999 Oscar ceremony honoring Kazan showed Americans and the film community that. According to the article, “Symbolically Sitting on My Hands,” “This is about as simple as separating church and state--something this country is never able to pull off very well despite its being part of the Constitution.”¹⁵⁸ From the beginning art and politics in the entertainment industry have been intertwined. Kazan’s entire life, from the Group Theatre to films to personal decisions, represents something that has now become

¹⁵⁵ “Hollywood Considers Role in War Effort” 1.

¹⁵⁶ “Hollywood Considers Role in War Effort” 1.

¹⁵⁷ “Hollywood Considers Role in War Effort” 2.

¹⁵⁸ “Symbolically Sitting on My Hands” 2.

a rarity: a career fully committed to art and politics, with the politics feeding the work. After all, it was his decision to inform that inspired his masterpiece, *On the Waterfront*.

It is a rarity, indeed, to incorporate one's political beliefs and experiences into one's films today. Actor, director, and political activist Tim Robbins comes closest to this rarity in present times. His life of political involvement and fighting for causes is documented in his films. Robbins's directorial debut, *Bob Roberts*, (1992) is a mock documentary brutally parodying right-wing politics. Robbins portrays Bob Roberts, a filthy rich, young conservative folk singer in Pennsylvania, running for the Senate. His opponent is the incumbent die-hard liberal and academic, Paiste Brickley. Roberts' popularity is rising in the polls, and he will do anything to win the election. Soon, Roberts campaigns around the state in a bus and begins what could be an electoral upset.¹⁵⁹ The movie predates Clinton's campaigning in a bus during his 1992 election. The reviewer for Waffle Movies.Com comments,

Bob Roberts appears on hip television programs and uses the media to his advantage in a way that every conservative wishes he could. After spending years as a Republican in the political battlefield, I remember how much my contemporaries wished they could run a campaign like the Roberts' race. Many times I heard and even thought, if I could only get my candidate on that TV show or get the kind of cream puff interview Clinton often plays like a master. Conservatives want to be seen as the 'good guys,' not the fuddy duddies that they often are portrayed as. Robbins allows Roberts to do that.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ "Bob Roberts," *Waffle Movies.Com*, 2-4 November 2000, 2 July 2002 <<http://www.wafflemovies.com/bobroberts.html>>.

¹⁶⁰ "Bob Roberts" 1.

Of course, Robbins then uses the conservative dream against them. While Roberts appears to be hip, charming, and lovable, he really is not a nice man. Everything has been designed to hide some major character flaw in Roberts. “Robbins delivers a wicked and clever look at politics that was ahead of his time,” writes Waffle Movies.com.¹⁶¹ In addition, Robbins played a significant and vocal role in the past presidential election in which he supported Ralph Nader, not Bush or Gore.

Dead Man Walking (1995) dealt with the issue of capital punishment and themes of redemption, crime and punishment, and fear and salvation. It is a story of Matthew Poncelet, convicted rapist and murderer, played by Sean Penn, and his spiritual advisor, Sister Helen Prejean, played by Susan Sarandon. A bond develops between the two of them as Sister Helen leads Matthew to accept his fate and repent. The movie objectively presents both sides of capital punishment.¹⁶² Finally, Robbins directed *The Cradle Will Rock* (2000), about the making of a Broadway musical in 1937 amidst the early HUAC hearings. The film suggests it was un-American to support anti-Communism, the backdrop for the 1999 Kazan Oscar. Robbins was one who sat with crossed arms when Kazan received the award. In many cases art reflects the politics of an artist.

The Academy continues to make political statements at the Oscar ceremony. The 2002 Academy Awards oozed with political statements. First,

¹⁶¹ “Bob Roberts” 2.

¹⁶² James Berardinelli, “Dead Man Walking, a Film Review,” *Reel Views: Current Reviews*, 1996, 2 July 2002 <<http://www.reelviews.net/movie-reviews.colossus.net/movies/d/dead-man.html>>.

Academy Award voters chose *A Beautiful Mind* as best picture, despite the negative publicity surrounding the film's content. *Los Angeles Times* writer, Robert W. Welkos, writes, "A smear campaign accused filmmakers of omitting potentially embarrassing details about John Forbes Nash, Jr., the real-life mathematical genius on whom the film is based."¹⁶³ Despite allegations that filmmakers omitted from the screenplay that Nash allegedly had homosexual encounters and had uttered anti-Semitic remarks during the years he struggled with schizophrenia, Oscar voters ultimately decided to go with what was on the screen and not off. "I am certain the vote was a lot closer when it was finally taken than it would have been three months ago before the controversy," said Hollywood historian Neal Gabler.¹⁶⁴ Director Mark Rydell (*On Golden Pond*) stressed that the film is not a documentary of Nash; it is a feature film.¹⁶⁵ The lowbrow political tactics used to tar the film affect the process itself. Gabler adds,

Three months ago, *A Beautiful Mind* could have won in a walk and the film's star, Russell Crowe, would win best actor as well. As it turned out, Denzel Washington won for best actor for *Training Day*. This was the most political of Oscars, both in terms of industry politics and external politics. I can't remember an Oscars—maybe *Coming Home* and *The Deer Hunter* going back to 1978—that was so political. Julia Roberts, in an interview with *Newsweek*, was already injecting race into the Oscar race when she said that Denzel Washington had to win and if he didn't win, it would be awful. It was a peculiar nimbus around these Oscars.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Robert W. Welkos, "How Big a Role Did Politics Play?" *Los Angeles Times.Com* 26 March 2002, 2 July 2002 <<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/movies/oscar/la-32703oscareaux.story>>.

¹⁶⁴ Welkos 2.

¹⁶⁵ Welkos 2.

¹⁶⁶ Welkos 2.

The Oscars are a political exhibition of Hollywood. Gabler believes that a combination of factors hurt Crowe's chances for the award. The first factor deals with inside the industry politics. At the British film awards, Crowe angrily berated the show's producer for having deleted from the telecast some of his acceptance speech. In terms of external politics, the Nash controversy and the racial factor affected the vote.¹⁶⁷ Gabler states,

There was a statement being made about Denzel Washington's being voted over Crowe. One of the interesting things about the broadcast is that in the guise of being forward-thinking about race, it actually turned out to be backward-thinking about race because the great-to-do made about the fact that two African-American actors (Denzel Washington and Halle Berry) won best actor and actress only shows you how little we had advanced—and it was not that far.¹⁶⁸

The debate over *A Beautiful Mind* and the racial issue created a political environment. The Academy is still making political statements. The Oscars have been and always will be about more than pure artist's merit. The artist is part of the political agenda. There is nothing to separate art and politics except for president of the National Rifle Association, Charlton Heston's, firm stand to put aside politics and honor Kazan the artist.

There was an interesting article, "The Industry's Conservatives" and a poll in the May 31, 2002, issue of *The Hollywood Reporter*. The article concluded that some of Hollywood's famously liberal celebrities drifted to the right since

¹⁶⁷ Welkos 3.

¹⁶⁸ Welkos 3.

September 11, 2001.¹⁶⁹ Also, the article features the results of a poll conducted exclusively for *The Hollywood Reporter* by the firm E-Poll in March 2002. The firm surveyed a random sample of 1, 041 adult Americans of all political persuasions. (The findings represent a 95% confidence level and a sample error of +/- 3%.) The poll sought the nation's opinion of Hollywood and its celebrities and their political musings since September 11, 2001.¹⁷⁰ According to the poll,

The celebrities that are most admired for their public and political positions are Charlton Heston (11% named him), Rosie O'Donnell (8.7%), Arnold Schwarzenegger (7.7%), Oprah Winfrey (4.4%), and Bono (4.4%). Topping the disliked list were Jane Fonda (11.8%), Charlton Heston (10.8%), Alec Baldwin (10.6%), Barbra Streisand (10.5%), and Rosie O'Donnell (9.2%). Since the poll sought the opinion of Democrats and Republicans, the most outspoken celebrities appeared on both the most-admired list and the list of most disliked celebrities based on their politics.¹⁷¹

This poll stresses the political involvement of celebrities and that the political opinions of celebrities, directors, and writers matter to Americans. The survey is an indication of Hollywood's influence over Americans and the accountability factor of the artist to his or her public. Americans listen to and watch the politics of the Hollywood celebrities. In the end, it comes down to money. Are the politics of the celebrity going to affect the box office? Peter Biskind quotes Danny Glover as saying:

Money always had an important place in Hollywood, but it was in that critical period that Hollywood began to change and became a place where money became the main force of the community. The blacklist created a

¹⁶⁹ "The Hollywood Reporter Publishes 'Hollywood & Politics' Article Today," *The Hollywood Reporter*, 31 May 2002, 2 July 2002 <http://biz.yahoo.com/prnews/02053/laf023_2.html>.

¹⁷⁰ "The Hollywood Reporter Publishes 'Hollywood & Politics' Article Today" 2.

¹⁷¹ "The Hollywood Reporter Publishes 'Hollywood & Politics' Today" 2.

moral vacuum in Hollywood that allowed materialism to entrench itself as never before.¹⁷²

The argument is returning full circle to the blacklist, the House on Un-American Activities, and Kazan. The Academy did not separate Kazan's politics from his art, Kazan did not separate his politics from his art, and America has not either. The artists of the past, present, and future are invariably a part of the politics in which they involve themselves and always have been.

Civil Liberties

What future generations should also take from the controversy over Kazan's honorary Oscar is that Americans have the right to resist attempts to erode the civil liberties upon which this country is based. The McCarthy era represents a sad period in America's past, but future generations should learn from the mistakes of their predecessors, not repeat them. This presents a dilemma. In times of war and crisis, such as in the McCarthy era and in present-day America (2002) with the threat of terrorism as a way of life, the government has a heightened responsibility to protect those civil liberties. If the United States government believes that its citizens are in danger of invasion or attack from another power, does it have the right to infringe upon an individual's liberty, "the freedom and the right to live one's own life without threats, fear or some sort of retaliation"? Whose rights become more important in a time of crisis, and who is empowered to decide? The Communists were a perceived threat to the nation. The Congress searched or hunted for Communists who were a danger to

¹⁷² Biskind 3.

America's freedom and democracy in the late 1940s and early 1950s. It is similar to America's exploitation and fear of people of Afghani or Islamic decent in the search for Osama Bin-Laden's Taliban and suicide bombers. Everyday America worries about and prepares for a terrorist strike. Security increased at airports, stadiums, national monuments, and everywhere in America. The United States does not feel safe since September 11. Singling out Islamic people to question and search is potentially a violation of civil liberties. The search for America's enemies invades the civil liberties of these people. Arguments exist that the war on terrorism excuses this breach of individual rights just as the war on Communism excused or supported it in the 40s and 50s. That "history repeats itself" is a cliché, but America must be aware of the possibility that a similar panic to the Red Scare is conceivable. As suspicion of Arabs and Afghanis builds and the fear of terrorism intensifies in America, there is no way that the United States is going to allow certain people to work in places where they can shape public opinion against United States war plans. It harkens back to the conditions of the HUAC hearings all over again.

The HUAC hearings were full-scale political persecutions aimed against Communists. The Hollywood inquisitions of the 1940s and 1950s are the most publicized. However, inquisitions occurred in schools and universities, among people from all walks of life, doctors, lawyers, and federal workers. The hearings were a huge and deep attack against all people. Allowing such persecutions to occur again is not learning from predecessors' mistakes. The Kazan Oscar controversy brought this comparison to light.

Political Repression of Artists

“The McCarthy era and the Hollywood blacklist that resulted from the HUAC hearings was one of the ugliest campaigns of political repression against artists in modern history,” states Michael Slate in his article, “Elia Kazan: Snitch With an Oscar.”¹⁷³ Slate finds significance of this award in what is happening today. He sees connections between then and now. He cites the example of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the African-American journalist who has been on death row since 1982 for killing Philadelphia policeman, Daniel Faulkner in 1981. According to “Refuse and Resist,” a website supporting Mumia’s case, at Abu-Jamal’s trial, the prosecution demanded the death sentence on the basis of Abu-Jamal’s revolutionary political beliefs.¹⁷⁴ A powerful movement demanded justice for Mumia, and tens of thousands protested Mumia’s unjust conviction and demand his freedom. The actions of people in the United States and around the world stopped Abu-Jamal’s execution twice, once in 1995 and again in 2001. A federal judge set aside Mumia’s death sentence in December 2001. Hollywood celebrities such as Martin Sheen and many European figures supported Mumia and regard him as a political prisoner of injustice.¹⁷⁵ Slate explains that the Los Angeles police as well as the media viciously attacked the band “Rage Against the Machine” which organized a concert in support of Mumia Abu-Jamal in

¹⁷³ Michael Slate, “Snitch With an Oscar,” *Revolutionary Worker Online*, 21 March 1999, 27 June 2002 <<http://rwor.org/a/v20/990-99/999/kazan.htm>>.

¹⁷⁴ “Stop the Legal Lynching of Mumia Abu-Jamal,” *Refuse and Resist Website*, 2001, 3 July 2002 <<http://refuseandresist.org/mumia/>>.

¹⁷⁵ “Stop the Legal Lynching of Mumia Abu-Jamal” 2.

January 1999. The concert turned into a political riot because the police began shooting plastic dummy bullets into the crowd. This is political harassment of artists. Slate writes, "Kazan's Lifetime Achievement Oscar is a bridge bringing together the witch hunts of the 1950s with the ongoing political harassment of artists and the culture wars today."¹⁷⁶

Current censorship of films and television is another example of this political harassment or repression of artists' expression. Senator Joseph Lieberman, Al Gore's vice presidential running mate, is a proponent of censoring film and TV to keep children of America safe from seeing violent images. In his article, "Hollywood Wakes Up to Lieberman Reality," Brian Carnell writes, "During the 1999 presidential campaign, Lieberman pressed Hollywood to curtail violence and sexual content voluntarily and threatened federal action if Hollywood does not go along."¹⁷⁷ Hollywood continued to back the Gore/Lieberman ticket as it had supported the Clinton administration with star power and campaign funds. Carnell states, "In June 2001 after the Presidential election, Lieberman's proposal was a bill that would allow the Federal Trade Commission to go after the entertainment industry for deceptive advertising. Senator Hillary Clinton supported the bill."¹⁷⁸ The bill is a direct form of censorship to control the advertising of the entertainment industry's art. Censorship is where HUAC began its control in the film industry. The political

¹⁷⁶ Slate 1.

¹⁷⁷ Brian Carnell, "Hollywood Wakes Up to Lieberman Reality," *Liberty Search.Com*, 28 June 2001, 3 July 2002 <<http://www.libertysearch.com/articles/2001/000084.html>>.

¹⁷⁸ Carnell 1.

and cultural battles continue to attempt to repress artist's freedom of expression in art. Censorship is where HUAC began its control. HUAC and the blacklist tried to regulate the content of Hollywood films using the most direct and public methods. Today's censorship is a controversial issue that Hollywood continues to fight. Hollywood is not in a panic this time. With the strength of the current entertainment industry and the control it has over the American public, the government will think before it begins an outright war on censorship and individual Hollywood artists. The entertainment industry and Americans saw what happened when the government gets too much control over the content of films and the actors, writers, and directors that make these films.

Conclusion

The Kazan Lifetime Achievement Award controversy angered, reminded, and educated Americans about the House on Un-American Activities and the blacklist. The blacklist has a living legacy because a lot of people were hurt. The blacklisted, their families, and friends will not forget the pain. Kazan is a living legacy because he is part of the cause of the pain. Honoring him was a political move on the part of the Academy, but perhaps a smart or even a fortuitous one. Whatever Academy's motive was, it sprouted an ongoing debate about the future of America. Arguments about the blacklist and Kazan's Oscar are not only about the 1940s and the 1950s. They are about today and how we judge our country's role in the world. Some say that the HUAC hearings happened in a world that was very different from today. Back then the Soviet Union and China were

socialist/communist countries that tried to inspire people to stand up against United States imperialism while Korea and Indochina were in a war against America. The American government considered launching a full-scale war against these socialist/Communist countries. Presently, America is in a war against terrorism with troops in Afghanistan. There is a fear of terrorism, not Communism, throughout America. America's freedom and democracy are at stake again. The American government will not tolerate anyone or any organization that supports terrorism. The world of today does not seem that different from the McCarthy era. The Kazan award definitely connected the Red Scare era to the present and future more than anyone imagined. In his article in *The Nation*, Stuart Klawans sums up the connection, "To seek an award for Kazan is in effect to propose that America exerts force against citizens of other nations only when provoked to do so, and America brings down violence on its own citizens only when they are disloyal."¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹ Stuart Klawans, "Oscar Who?" *The Nation*, 15 March 1999, 3 July 2002
<<http://past.thenation.com/issue/990315klawans.shtml>>.

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Appendix 1

Glossary of Terms

American Federation of Labor (AFL)- A federation of trade unions organized in 1886, united with the C.I. O. in 1955.

Amendment I- “Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances” (Constitution of the United States).

Amendment V- “No person...shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law” (Constitution of the United States).

Blacklist- A list of names of writers, directors, and actors who were placed under suspicion, disfavor, and censure who subsequently lost their jobs and were not rehired.

Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO)-A federation of labor unions, founded in 1935 within the AFL but independent of it from 1935-1955.

Cold War-An intense economic, political, military, and ideological rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union beginning in 1945.

Communism-A theory or system of social organization based on the holdings of all property in common, actual ownership being ascribed to the community as a whole or to the state.

Fuchs, Klaus-A German refugee scientist who, working with the Soviets, had spied on the Manhattan Project’s effort to develop the atomic bomb in 1950, which led to the arrest of the Rosenbergs.

Hiss, Alger-A United States New Deal government official accused of Communist affiliations and espionage, imprisoned for perjury from 1950-1954.

Hollywood Ten-The remaining ten “unfriendly” witnesses who claimed their Fifth Amendment rights at the stand and refused to answer all questions asked by HUAC.

HUAC-A pejorative acronym for the House Committee on Un-American Activities used only by critics of the Committee when “HCUA” is correct sequentially.

House on Un-American Activities (HUAC)- 1938-1975, preceded by the Dies Committee, became in 1945 the first permanent and most powerful committee established to investigate “subversive” and “un-American” propaganda and activities; from 1945 to 1957. It held at least 230 hearings, at which more than 3,000 persons testified, of whom more than 100 were cited for contempt.

Left-The advocates of liberal reform or revolutionary change in the social, political, or economic order.

McCarran Act or Internal Security Act of 1950-Required the registration of all Communist organizations; authorized the creation of concentration camps for suspected subversives for emergency situations.

McCarthy, Joseph-Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy who led the anti-Communist campaign in America in the 1950s

McCarthyism-The term assigned to the era led by Senator Joseph McCarthy; originated in a political cartoon by Herblock March 29, 1950, in the *Washington Post*, portrayed a struggling GOP elephant being dragged and pushed by right-wingers toward a stack of dripping tar buckets topped by a barrel labeled “McCarthyism.”

New Deal-The domestic policies of the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Red Scare-A term that refers to the fear and panic to reveal Communists or anyone associated with the Communist Party in America.

Right-Those opposing any change in a liberal direction and usually advocating strict maintenance of the established social, political, or economic order.

Rosenberg, Ethel and Julius-An American couple who were tried for conspiring to pass the secrets of the atomic bomb to the Soviet Union, sentenced as if they were convicted of treason; in 1953 executed in the electric chair for espionage.

Unfriendly witness-Witnesses who refused to answer HUAC's questions about their political beliefs.

Yalta-A wartime conference of Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin, February 4-12, 1945.

Appendix 2

The People Kazan Named

The following accounts of the people Kazan named are in the *Village Voice* article entitled “The People Kazan Named,” by Yael Schacher.

Phoebe Brand joined the Group Theatre in 1931, where she worked with Stella Adler, Lee Strasberg, and Morris Carnovsky, whom she married in 1941. After moving to Los Angeles with Carnovsky, she taught the Method at the Actors’ Lab. Leo Townsend first gave Brand’s name to HUAC; then Elia Kazan did. She returned to New York in the 1950s and directed plays for the Theatre in the Street, which she co-founded.

J. Edward Bromberg was a character actor. Forced to appear before HUAC against doctor’s orders, he suffered a fatal heart attack in December 1951. Kazan named Bromberg in April 1952.

Morris Carnovsky was one of the first actors in the Group Theatre, where he worked until 1939. He refused to give names to HUAC; therefore, his successful film career stopped for 10 years. After moving back to New York, Carnovsky worked Off-Broadway until John Houseman recruited him to work for the American Shakespeare Festival. In 1965 he described his HUAC experience as “revolting, injurious, and hurtful.” However, he added, “In an odd way it nurtured me, strengthened me, made me hard, objective, and even resigned. I think it fed me as an actor.” Carnovsky died in 1992.

Tony Kraber was an actor and folksinger who held executive positions in radio and television before the Communist investigations. In 1951, CBS Network, suspecting that HUAC would be subpoenaing him, fired Kraber. Kazan named Kraber in 1952. When Kraber testified unwillingly before HUAC in 1955 and asked if he knew Kazan, Kraber demanded, "Is this the Kazan that signed the contract for \$500,000 the day after he gave names to the Committee? Would you sell your brothers for \$500,000?" Kazan, appalled at the lie, disagreed that Tony was his "brother." Kazan said that he was Kraber's "brother" from 1933 to 1935. When Kazan quit the Party, he was not Kraber's "brother." After the Group reorganized in 1937, Kraber was not a part of the new company. Kazan stated in *A Life*, "As for his being fired from CBS, I believed then as I do now that Communists should not be in positions of control in communications. When the anti-Communist rage diminished, Kraber directed films including the prize-winning documentary *Boundary Lines*. Kraber died in 1986.

Lillian Hellman was a successful dramatist. Her first big Broadway success was *The Children's Hour* in 1934. Kazan met with Lillian Hellman for lunch days before his testimony to tell her that he planned to name her. (Kazan met with only three of the people he named beforehand to warn them.) Of course, this led to her HUAC testimony in 1952, in which she agreed to waive the privilege against self-incrimination and told information about only herself. She did not name any names. She remained on the blacklist for years and worked as a salesgirl at Bloomingdale's. Her memoir, *Scoundrel Time*, is about the horrendous effects of McCarthyism on her life and profession. Kazan stated that she spent the last 15 years canonizing herself. She died in 1984.

Lewis Leverett was an actor and a co-leader of the Group Theatre's Communist Party unit. He supposedly had the habit of disappearing for weeks without explanation, which interested HUAC.

Paula Miller Strasberg was an actress who joined the Group Theatre in the early 1930s and later married Lee Strasberg. She was another person whom Kazan visited before his HUAC testimony to tell her that he was going to name her. She worked as an acting coach with her husband until her death in 1996.

Clifford Odets was a playwright, cofounder of the Group Theatre, and a screenwriter. His second play, *Waiting for Lefty* (1935), earned him much acclaim. In his testimony he named names, including Kazan's. Kazan met with Odets and asked him permission to name him, that is, if Kazan decided to cooperate with the Committee. It turned out that Odets needed Kazan's permission to name him to HUAC. Both testified and gave names to the Committee, but Clifford died in spirit. Kazan wrote, "What in the end gave me strength drained him of his." A couple of years later, Odets, needing money, returned to Hollywood, where he rewrote scripts of other men. Kazan had heart-felt sympathy for Odets. Kazan wrote in his autobiography that Odets could not handle the public scorn thrown on him for his friendly testimony before HUAC. He was the leading playwright of his generation, the spokesman for the common man, and he became a lackey for those who previously worshipped him as their hero. Odets died in 1963.

Appendix 3

In April 1952, two days after his HUAC testimony, Kazan explained why he testified in an open letter advertisement in *The New York Times*. According to the article in *Third World Traveler*, Kazan's wife at the time, Molly, suggested and wrote this statement. She felt that the ad would explain why Kazan had done what he did (named names). This is his statement, found in Chapter 7 of Victor Navasky's book *Naming Names*.

A STATEMENT

by Elia Kazan

In the past weeks intolerable rumors about my political position have been circulating in New York and Hollywood. I want to make my stand clear:

I believe that Communist activities confront the people of this country with an unprecedented and exceptionally tough problem. That is, how to protect ourselves from a dangerous and alien conspiracy and still keep the free, open, healthy way of life that gives us self-respect.

I believe that the American people can solve this problem wisely only if they have the facts about Communism. All the facts.

Now, I believe that any American who is in possession of such facts has the obligation to make them known, either to the public or to the appropriate Government agency.

Whatever hysteria exists--and there is some, particularly in Hollywood--is inflamed by mystery, suspicion and secrecy. Hard and exact facts will cool it.

The facts I have are sixteen years out of date, but they supply a small piece of background to the graver picture of Communism today.

I have placed these facts before the House Committee on Un-American Activities without reserve and I now place them before the public and before my co-workers in motion pictures and in the theatre.

Seventeen and a half years ago I was a twenty-four-year-old stage manager and bit actor, making \$40 a week, when I worked.

At that time nearly all of us felt menaced by two things: the depression and the ever growing power of Hitler. The streets were full of unemployed and shaken men. I was taken in by the Hard Times version of what might be called the Communists' advertising or recruiting technique. They claimed to have a cure for depressions and a cure for Naziism and Fascism.

I joined the Communist Party late in the summer of 1934. I got out a year and a half later.

I have no spy stories to tell, because I saw no spies. Nor did I understand at the time, any opposition between American and Russian national interest. It was not even clear to me in 1936 that the American Communist Party was abjectly taking its orders from the Kremlin.

What I learned was the minimum that anyone must learn who puts his head into the noose of party "discipline." The Communists automatically violated the daily practices of democracy to which I was accustomed. They attempted to control thought and to suppress personal opinion. They tried to dictate personal conduct. They

habitually distorted and disregarded and violated the truth. All this was crudely opposite to their claims of “democracy” and the “scientific approach.”

To be a member of the Communist Party is to have a taste of the police state. It is a diluted taste but it is bitter and unforgettable. It is diluted because you can walk out.

I got out in the spring of 1936.

The question will be asked why I did not tell this story sooner. I was held back, primarily, by concern for the reputations and employment of people who may, like myself, have left the Party many years ago.

I was also held back by a piece of specious reasoning which has silenced many liberals. It goes like this: “You may hate the Communists, but you must not attack them or expose them, because if you do, you are attacking the right to hold unpopular opinions and you are joining the people who attack civil liberties.”

I have thought soberly about this. It is, simply, a lie.

Secrecy serves the Communists. At the other pole, it serves those who are interested in silencing liberal voices. The employment of a lot of good liberals is threatened because they have allowed themselves to become associated with or silenced by the Communists.

Liberals must speak out.

I think it is useful that certain of us had this kind of experience with the Communists, for if we had not we should not know them so well. Today, when all the world fears war and they scream peace, we know how much their professions are worth. We know tomorrow they will have a new slogan.

Firsthand experience of dictatorship and thought control left me with an abiding hatred of these. It left me with an abiding hatred of Communist philosophy and methods and the conviction that these must be resisted always.

It also left me with the passionate conviction that we must never let the Communists get away with the pretense that they stand for the very things which they kill in their own countries.

I am talking about free speech, a free press, the rights of property, the rights of labor, racial equality and above all, individual rights. I value these things. I take them seriously. I value peace, too, when it is not bought at the price of fundamental decencies.

I believe these things must be fought for wherever they are not fully honored and protected whenever they are threatened.

The motion pictures I have made and the plays I have chosen to direct represent my convictions.

I expect to continue to make the same kinds of pictures and to direct the same kinds of plays.