

V Los Angeles Times VIEW

PART IV

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1975

JACK SMITH

A Man's Pest Friend

My suggestion that people keep insects for pets, instead of dogs and cats, has provoked a not entirely unfriendly response.

To begin with, it is not easy to dispose of my two main points—that keeping insects would lighten one's pet food bill and also help to check the morbid proliferation of dogs and cats.

Thanks to several readers, I also have support for my notion that an insect might be an amusing and interesting pet, even though a man could not expect to have as warm a relationship with a beetle as he could with a mammal.

"Perhaps the barrier that makes you feel hopeless in your initial search for communication with these creatures is the word *master*," writes Marjorie Sherbert of Altadena. "Certainly no self-respecting beetle could be expected to renounce its centuries-old sovereignty at the command of a mere man."

"But in Africa, Goliath beetles have been persuaded to fly at the end of a string. And there are species that, although they would scorn sitting up and begging, do stand on their heads. Others are skilled gymnasts, trained by instinct rather than man."

Miss Sherbert says she agrees that we might find enchantment in observing the lives of beetles, but is puzzled by my generalization that the cockroach is an abomination.

"Which one?" she asks. "According to entomologists, there are 1,000 to 2,000 species of roach. Could they all be abominable? I once had one that lived in my bathtub drain; he (or she) played harmlessly in the tub during dry seasons and discreetly retired down the drain when the shower was turned on. We did not establish a warm relationship, but neither did either of us infringe on the rights of the other to live and enjoy our separate lives."

★

Perhaps I should explain that the species I had in mind was the Hawaiian cockroach. For a time we lived near Waikiki Beach in a house that was hardly more than a grass shack, and we shared our kitchen with cockroaches. Without exception, they were abominable.

I was not surprised to learn that Louise Huebner, our resident witch here on Mt. Washington, keeps beetles as pets. "They are called ironclads, and are black, hard, sleek, beautiful and efficient," she says. "They are mysterious and independent. You can not find one at will. You



Blacklisting

BY GREGG KILDAY
Times Staff Writer

"Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?"

The question, posed to the Hollywood Ten when they were called before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1947, is having a rehearing.

Only now, in 1975, the interrogation into the blacklisting period that began in the late '40s and extending into the early '60s is being led by some of the blacklist's victims.

When the blacklist, secret lists of unemployable actors, directors and screenwriters suspected of Communist Party membership or other left-wing political sympathies, was operative, nobody, not the courts nor the congressional investigatory committees nor the entertainment establishment, would admit that it existed.

Even after the blacklist was symbolically destroyed in 1960 with the release and resounding commercial success

Rockefelle

BY MARLENE CIMONS



A PIECE OF HOLLYWOOD HISTORY REVISITED

When actor Will Geer, left, appeared before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1951, he remarked, "Everyone has to appear in a turkey now and then." Having survived the blacklist, Geer led a discussion of the era Saturday in North Hollywood along with, left to right, moderator Bob Gottlieb, writer Paul Jarrico, actors Karen Morley and John Randolph.

Times photo

Comes Out of the Shadows

of "Exodus," a film for which previously blacklisted writer Dalton Trumbo received screen credit, many of the victims of the blacklist preferred to put painful memories behind them as they tried to return to work.

But during recent years that reticence to speak has changed. Not only is the blacklist period now being studied by historians and debated by radicals of a younger generation, but it is also becoming a permissible subject for mainstream, commercial entertainments.

Just how current a topic the blacklist has become was demonstrated Saturday night when an overflow crowd showed up at the Oakwood School Auditorium in North Hollywood for a program devoted to the Hollywood blacklist sponsored by the New American Movement Media Group, a Socialist-oriented coalition of young filmmakers, journalists and broadcasters dedicated to radicalizing the media.

Ten years ago, the student left showed little interest in learning of the experiences of older American leftists;

program notes issued by the NAM members Saturday night proclaimed "we feel strong bonds with the men and women in Hollywood who fought to change the entertainment industry decades ago and were punished for their efforts by the Cold War inquisitions. We want to learn from their struggles and personal experiences."

"History of course is really nothing but gossip. I'm not inclined to believe that I'm a part of history yet," actor Will Geer prefaced his remarks with characteristically crusty wit.

Nonetheless, he and his fellow panel members, actors John Randolph and Karen Morley and screenwriter/producer Paul Jarrico did represent a certain response, a defiant refusal to submit, to a certain historical moment, the paranoid, red-baiting '50s.

Saturday night, however, the panelists chose to emphasize more contemporary matters as Geer advanced the senatorial candidacy of Tom Hayden and the presidential

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rs Unfurl Welcome Mat

Blacklisting Comes Out of Shadows

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aspirations of Sen. Fred Harris (D-Okla.); Morley spoke of the differences between the silent generation of the Eisenhower era ("It came as a terrible shock to people like me") and that that followed ("I feel very close and very warm toward the generation that stopped the Vietnamese War"); and Randolph advocated vigilant trade unionism ("In Hollywood, you live alone, you are isolated and isolation breeds a kind of weakness. You have to fight with the other unions").

But if the past was old hat to the panelists, it has taken on a compelling reality for many in the entertainment industry. Although HUAC investigated a wide range of professions, turning to its forays into Hollywood whenever it felt a need for the attendant publicity, it is the investigations into Hollywood that have captured the present imagination to the exclusion of all the other investigations.

Two years ago, the distrust triggered in Hollywood by the HUAC hearing provided a romantic stumbling block for Barbra Streisand and Robert Redford in "The Way We Were."

Since then, reports the story development editor for one major television production company, "We've been besieged with scripts about the blacklist."

Already completed or currently in production are a great variety of projects:

—"Are You Now or Have You Ever Been," a dramatization of the HUAC investigations as compiled by critic Eric Bentley, is currently running at the Hollywood Center Theater on N. Las Palmas.

Actor Alan Miller, who had appeared in the play's two previous, though short-lived productions at the Yale Repertory Theater and the Riverside Church in New York, optioned it for a Los Angeles production. With the assistance of producers Joseph Stern and Kathleen Johnson and director William Devane, he opened the play at the 50-seat East Theater seven months ago. The show moved to the Hollywood Center Theater in early April. Stern predicts that the play could run as long as two years. A second company opens at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 22.

Stern credits Devane for shaping Bentley's text into the current success. "The play was good guys vs. bad guys.

Devane took out the irrelevant and loaded passages," Stern explained. "He did a very meticulous job."

"The play has had an incredible appeal to a great variety of people. One-quarter to one-third of our audiences are students. There are a lot of older people. It generates a lot of talk. People don't seem to have a perspective on the period. They are still dizzy from it 25 years later. It's an open wound and people find themselves asking what would they have done."

—"Fear on Trial," a dramatization by David Rintels based upon the book by John Henry Faulk, will be broadcast by CBS Oct. 2. Faulk was a CBS-radio talk-show host who was blacklisted by the network when Aware, Inc., a Red-hunting organization of the '50s, accused him of Communist sympathies in retaliation for Faulk's stated opposition to blacklisting procedures.

Produced by Stan Chase and directed by Lamont Johnson, the project first met with the approval of Steve Mills, who develops television movies for CBS. "CBS gave me assurances before I agreed to go ahead with the script," Rintels said.

Why has CBS agreed to wash its dirty linen in such a public forum?

"There is an element of *mea culpa* involved," Rintels said. "When you ruin a guy's life and everyone knows about it, if you are the first to admit to it, then it takes some of the heat off."

But Rintels also offered a more Machiavellian motivation: "Television is at the mercy of a lot of pressure groups. What CBS may be saying by airing this program is 'We are a timid business. You must be careful what you

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