In the hands of motion picture makers lies a gigantic obligation, honorable but frightening. We must have the courage and the wisdom to make pictures that are forthright, revealing and entertaining, pertinent to the hour and the unpredictable future.

—Harry Warner

The motion picture industry could be the most powerful instrument of propaganda in the world, whether it tries to be or not.

—Franklin D. Roosevelt

Harry Warner was Roosevelt’s man in Hollywood. He was not the bold, brash, bombastic and ever-tan brother Jack Warner, the public face of Warner Bros., who made up a story about being offered a diplomatic post after Roosevelt’s victory in 1932, to which he replied, “I think I can do better for your foreign relations with a good picture about America now and then.”

More than Jack, Harry displayed a genuine passion and commitment to lofty ideas that promoted America’s national security and vital interests. The moral conscience of Warner Bros., Harry became President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s chief persuader in Hollywood, a valiant and courageous advocate for U.S. involvement against the rise of national socialism bellicosity abroad at a time when many in the United States remained isolationist.

Betty Warner Sheinbaum recalls her father as:

(A) very serious, moral man. He was the company’s conscience and driving force. It was up to him to provide the money and watch carefully what films were being made. He dealt with bankers constantly as the studio was in constant need of funds to continue productions. Harry loved being in America, away from the frequent pogroms against Jews in his native Poland. The U.S. was ‘the land of opportunity.’ He often spoke of his responsibilities as a filmmaker and insisted on making films about the Constitution and the Founding Fathers and people like Louis Pasteur, Emile Zola, the prison system, the underworld and other socially committed dramas.

The writer Neal Gabler describes Harry Warner, in *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood*, as the conscience of the Hollywood studio due largely to his devotion to Judaism and Judaic principles, which made him “tirelessly and often tiresomely messianic about racial and religious prejudices,” the downtrodden, the persecuted, the losers and the forgotten.

Harry’s father, Benjamin, a devout Jew, had studied the Torah in secret in Poland, where the Jewish faith was under constant watch by the Polish police. Harry would recall his father telling him, “Son, you’re going to have to fight with the weapon you have at your command so that the children and their children may have a right to live and have a Faith, no matter what their Faith may be, in our great country, America.” Gabler notes, “Other Jewish moguls shied away from their Judaism and hid it. Harry paraded it.”

Like his father, Harry grew to love the “ism” that was America, its...
WARNER S' WAR: POLITICS, POP CULTURE & PROPAGANDA IN WARTIME HOLLYWOOD

Christian Vigilantes Arise!

Hollywood is the Sodom and Gomorrah

INTERNATIONAL JEWRY CONTROLS VICE - DOPE - GAMBLING

WHERE

YEUNG GENTILE

WHERE

HOLLYWOOD

Boycott the Movies!

The Motion Picture

WHERE

INTERNATIONAL JEWRY CONTROLS VICE - DOPE - GAMBLING

CHRISTIAN

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HOLLYWOOD is the Sodom and Gomorrah

IN THE MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY STARS, WRITERS AND ARTISTS ARE CONFOUNDED TO PAY FOR COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES

As the first major Hollywood studio to shut down operations in Germany and take an openly hostile stance toward Hitler's Germany, Warner Bros. signaled the possibility that in Hollywood, civic-mindedness and turning a profit need not be in perpetual conflict. As I see it, we have a very simple problem here and that is: United we survive and divided we fall. We must unite and quit listening to anybody discussing whether you or I am a Jew or a Catholic or any other faith—or we will fall just the same as they did over there, because we are confronted with the greatest general good of humanity. I am proud that my company and the industry have been given a very fine opportunity to use the screen's influence for the good of man. I am sure that the American public who want peace and good will will not shirk their obvious duty, can stand by and let the world go to pot. As I see it, we have a very simple problem here and that is: United we survive and divided we fall. We must unite and quit listening to anybody discussing whether you or I am a Jew or a Catholic or any other faith—or we will fall just the same as they did over there, because we are confronted with the greatest general good of humanity. I am proud that my company and the industry have been given a very fine opportunity to use the screen's influence for the good of man. I am sure that the American public who want peace and good will will not shirk their obvious duty, can stand by and let the world go to pot. I believe we are making an honest effort to use the screen's influence for the greatest good of humanity. I am proud that my company has had some part in this.
WARNERS' WAR: POLITICS, POP CULTURE & NEW STUDIOS IN LONDON.

41. In this speech from 1940, Harry Warner's war warnings were part of the overall anti-communist campaign of the Fifth Column in America.

42. A July 1944 photo of Warner Bros. Teddington Studios in London.

43. DDR prepares to deliver a Fireside Chat.

Granddaughter Cass Warner Sperling writes in Confessions of a Nazi Spy that the anti-Nazi propaganda used in Hollywood films started with a meeting of German thugs who stormed into the Warner Bros. office. Harry Warner warned the company would have to defend his film and reputation before the Nye committee investigating Hollywood propaganda activities. Nevertheless, “thank you” for warning the world of the Nazi threat against democracy, Harry Warner meant to warn the world about the dangers of the Fifth Column in America.

43. In a radio speech under the auspices of the isolationist America First Committee, Gerald P. Nye (R, North Dakota) decried the end of entertainment efforts to propagandize the American public. Congressional isolationists would attack Confessions of a Nazi Spy in 1940 as “creating hysteria among the American public and inciting us to war,” and Senator Gerald F. Nye (R, North Dakota) decried the end of entertainment in the battle against totalitarianism. As Gerald NASH points out, the opportunity that Hollywood had to become a messenger of democracy and Americanism in a global conflict-risked being undermined.

In the midst of the war, the mass media occupied a central place in this effort. In the battle against totalitarianism, Americanism in a global conflict cannot be underestimated. Confessions of a Nazi Spy, arguably the most anti-Nazi film in Hollywood history, stands as a Confession for advocating intervention in international conflict in order to preserve democratic ideals. Harry told a dinner crowd on St. Patrick’s Day in 1939:

“Thank you” for warning the world of the Nazi threat against democracy, Harry Warner meant to warn the world about the dangers of the Fifth Column in America. Were we not to have entered the war as early as we did, we would have to defend our film and reputation before the Nye committee investigating Hollywood propaganda activities. Nevertheless, “thank you” for warning the world of the Nazi threat against democracy, Harry Warner meant to warn the world about the dangers of the Fifth Column in America.

42. A July 1944 photo of Warner Bros. Teddington Studios in London.

43. DDR prepares to deliver a Fireside Chat.
While Harry Warner would occupy a formidable central place in the Hollywood-Washington wartime propaganda effort, he had to urge President Roosevelt to do more than the Lend-Lease Act to provide assistance to America’s fighting allies, particularly Britain. On May 20, 1940, brothers Harry and Jack sent an impassioned telegram to the White House that told FDR that his patriotic contemporaries in Hollywood “cannot stand by and watch while others do the fighting which is ours as much as theirs. ...We cannot contentfully sit at our desks and do nothing while the world south of us is being dragged into war.” They advised that if Roosevelt continued to wear his poker face, it would “weaken him in the eyes of the masses around the world that our democracy will triumphantly survive.”

While informational, educational and inspirational elements in the film for propaganda purposes, just not the propaganda of the dictatorships, his distinction is somewhat futile when one considers the need in Hollywood “cannot stand by and watch while others do the fighting which is ours as much as theirs. ...We cannot contentfully sit at our desks and do nothing while the world south of us is being dragged into war.” They advised that if Roosevelt continued to wear his poker face, it would “weaken him in the eyes of the masses around the world that our democracy will triumphantly survive.”

While Jack Warner would stay at the White House to meet with Roosevelt, Harry Warner would occupy a formidable central place in the Hollywood-Washington wartime propaganda effort, he had to urge President Roosevelt to do more than the Lend-Lease Act to provide assistance to America’s fighting allies, particularly Britain. On May 20, 1940, brothers Harry and Jack sent an impassioned telegram to the White House that told FDR that his patriotic contemporaries in Hollywood “cannot stand by and watch while others do the fighting which is ours as much as theirs. ...We cannot contentfully sit at our desks and do nothing while the world south of us is being dragged into war.” They advised that if Roosevelt continued to wear his poker face, it would “weaken him in the eyes of the masses around the world that our democracy will triumphantly survive.”

Harry Warner had warned his own employees: “A little more than a year after the Warner letter was sent to FDR, the President, in one of his famous freezing out speeches, told the nation, declared an unilateral national emergency that seemed to draw from the "United We Survive" speech Harry had given his employees that admonished the American people as Harry Warner had warned his own employees: "The first and fundamental fact is that what started as a European war has developed, as the Nazis always intended it should develop, into a war for world dominion. Adolf Hitler never considered the dominion of Europe as the end of itself. European conquest was but a step toward ultimate goals in all the other countries. It is unintelligibly apparent to all of us that unless the advance of Hitlerism is forcibly checked now, the Western Hemisphere will be within range of the Nazi weapons of destruction. ...The nation will expect all individuals and all groups to play their full parts without stint, without selfishness and without doubt that our democracy will triumphantly survive."
In opposition to the isolationist movement, Harry and Jack Warner, manufacturing propaganda to further the film industry’s own agenda. Thousands of Hollywood workers, including many of Warner Bros.’ employees, united to form the Hollywood Legion Post to the Hollywood Bowl. Other studios closed down early in the war, but Warner Bros. refused to join the war effort. "We’re not going to fight, we’re going to make films," said Harry Warner.

In opposition to the isolationists, the Committee to Defend America and Friends of Democracy, created in 1941, was one of the interventionist organizations. It was founded by noted journalist William Manchester and actor Burgess Meredith. The committee’s purpose was to 

Harry Warner responded like a dutiful soldier called to duty. "In this war, as in all our previous wars, we will do our best to serve our country and do our duty."


Within six months of Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt would create a special division for motion pictures within the Office of War Information, which distributed a motion picture manual offering guidance to film makers on major themes like democracy, the Pacific, the Atlantic, and the importance of the United States.

One company is about to start the largest program of pictures for the government that has ever been undertaken to be made by any company in the industry. We have agreed to make films for the Office of War Information, and the other partners are also going to make living billboards. This is the army. In making these pictures, they are not going to make money. They are going to make dollars of profit out of these pictures."

The Hollywood war machine. They presaged the anti-communist wave of the "Cold War" that would come after the war. It was a more fitting sign of a Hollywood and Washington nexus obtained from a New York Times review that commended the Warner Bros. production for its "artistic excellence," shining the light on the Hollywood-Washington nexus.

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college-educated and never a Harvard man, had a greater impact: the legacy of the line of political persuasion and propaganda that became the motion picture industry did not attempt to explain and inform the public about humanity’s strengths and weaknesses. When I was a motion picture editor on the front lines of World War II, I meet people occasionally who think that motion pictures, the "kitchen picture as distinguished from the two-handkerchief picture," are nothing to do with education. That’s one of the darndest foolish notions, not at all the way of drama does something to the deepest roots of your personality. All movies, good or bad, are educational and Hollywood is the foremost educational institution on earth. What, Hollywood’s more important than Harvard? The answer is, not as clear as Harvard, but nevertheless, farther reaching.

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