

SCRIPTS - SEALS

Screen & Set Designers Union

Williams:

I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter of Nov, 25th, but my work with the UN kept me busier than usual,

I read your letter with interest but do not see that there is much that I can do in a situation such as this,

HELEN GAHAGAN DOUGLAS
14TH DISTRICT CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE
FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

*Screened & let
design. 1/1/50*

Monday, December 16th

Dearest Mrs. R.:

There really isn't anything you can do about this - except keep out of it.

It is a local labor fight in which no outsider can give any advice or take any part. None of us who live out there have been able to do a thing.

I'd just send them a nice, non-committal letter and not get myself into a position that would make it possible for them to quote me. You know - a run-around letter!

ho

love

Helen

*P.S. What a joy it was to work
with you - I am still a fan
Helen Frank*

ROOM 801
~~36 MADISON AVENUE~~
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

29 Washington Sq., W.
December 2, 1946

Dear Helen,

I have enclosed a letter which I recently received and would appreciate your advice on it.

Affectionately,

Eleanor Roosevelt

SCREEN SET DESIGNERS
ILLUSTRATORS & DECORATORS

(LOCAL 1421)

1995 NO. SYCAMORE AVENUE
LOS ANGELES 46, CALIFORNIA
TELEPHONE GLADSTONE 4187

107

November 25, 1946.

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt
Hyde Park
New York

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

I am taking the liberty of writing you because I feel you will be interested in helping to preserve the existence of all truly democratic trade-unions in our country. The free and independent unions in the Conference of Studio Unions in the motion picture industry have succeeded in gaining a beach-head of democratic and progressive trade-unionism in Southern California against the anti-labor sentiment and activity that has always existed here. Although seriously threatened today, this ground still holds because of the key positions in the industry of these unions and the quality of their incorruptible leadership.

The violent and frequent strikes in Hollywood have been given much space in the country's newspaper headlines but, except for a few liberal newspapers and labor publications, our fight against the efforts of the Producers' Association to break up our unions and force us into the IATSE, (International Association of Theatrical and Stage Employees) thereby achieving a completely company dominated union situation, has been represented in the press as petty jurisdictional squabbling between local unions.

I do not know how much you may ^{heard} have of the beginnings of this union trouble in Hollywood. I believe that most well informed persons hereabout realize that the collusion between the international heads of the IATSE and controlling personalities in the Motion Picture Producers' Association goes back to the infiltration of certain Chicago gangsters and racketeers into the IA about 1933. An IATSE leader was shot to death on a Chicago street and the gangsters, George Browne and Willie Bioff, took control of the local IA unions there, following up this gain with the election(?) of Browne to the IATSE international presidency, at a convention completely dominated by guns and goons.

Subsequently Bioff and Browne came to Hollywood and obtained a closed shop contract with the Motion Picture Producers' Association in 1935 for all local of the IATSE which had ever had charters in Hollywood. This agreement was made with astonishing ease when one considers the consistent effort made by the producers here to fore to oppose any trade-union movement in their industry.

There had been a so-called jurisdictional strike some time before this which had succeeded in disintegrating the IATSE union memberships in the moving picture /in IA local industry. There were only one hundred and ninety workers left after this early strike and Bioff and Browne quickly filled all vacancies, arbitrarily organized workers and issued other charters and then levied a 2% tax against all IA members to total the sum of over a million dollars which was never accounted for to the union members.

Long before their advent in Hollywood, George Browne and Willie Bioff had racketeering records in Chicago of the most unsavory sort. Through the efforts of private citizens here in tracing his history, and with the help of a Hollywood newspaper columnist in bringing about his public exposure, Willie Bioff was extradicted to Chicago to serve an unfinished sentence for pandering.

It was after Bioff's return to Hollywood once more that he and Browne, in 1937, were sentenced to prison on conviction of extortion from motion picture producers. One of the producers, Joseph Schenck, who was sentenced to one year in prison for evasion of federal income tax returns, admitted having paid the men the \$100,000 discovered by FBI agents in a Westwood bank savings account in Bioff's name, and testified he was threatened and in danger of his life from the gangsters, -though it is pertinent to note that testimony at the trials, - of other large sums given Bioff and Browne, of gifts of furniture and rugs and of bon voyage notes written the two by moving picture officials, strongly pointed to collusion between the gangsters and the producers. Accounts of the trials were given no space in the press at the time, but Mr. Carey McWilliams, prominent Los Angeles attorney, writer and lecturer, has since written a number of articles for the New York newspaper, PM, in which many more details are given.

The imprisonment of Bioff and Browne in 1937 gave the small minority of independent unions in the industry the chance of strengthening their bargaining position by leaguening together in a voluntary association which they called The Conference of Studio Unions. Then the CSU became the target of the producers' attack through Richard Walsh, an IATSE vice-president, appointed by Bioff and Browne while in prison, to succeed them in office as international IATSE president. Though their efforts are a trifle less crude now a-days, the Producers' Association is still trying, through Walsh's marauding jurisdictional tactics, to break up the CSU unions and force its members into the IATSE.

Richard Walsh has boldly announced recently that there should be only three union groups in the moving picture industry, -the actors, the musicians and the IATSE.

When Mr. Eric Johnston first took over the post of president of the Moving Picture Producers' Association in the fall of 1945, in his inexperience of producer methods, he talked rather freely and openly with the CSU leaders in his private meetings with them. A woman friend of mine, Frances Millington, the then president and business agent of the Screen Story Analysts, told me he said in one such meeting, -"but you don't understand, -the producers are committed to Walsh. They have agreed, that if he will furnish the labor, they will turn over all of the Hollywood unions to him."

Walsh has done so badly for some of his own Hollywood unions, (and so well for the producers, as far as wages, hours and conditions are concerned) that some memberships have repeatedly refused to accept the contracts he has arbitrarily secured for them. One such group, the Laboratory Technicians, IA local 683, has openly revolted now and overwhelmingly voted to join the CSU picket lines and fight for a decent contract and local autonomy, in spite of threats of violence and an official "take-over" by the international IA president, through his personally appointed representative, Roy Brewer.

We are now engaged in the third strike situation within two years in Hollywood. The second strike, -for wages, hours and conditions, -was over in two days, with a 25% raise gained for all workers in the industry, including those in the IATSE unions. The first and third strikes, -instigated by Walsh with the producers' backing, have been long, costly and exhausting, emotionally and financially.

Now we face the Christmas season. Many of our members with families of children find it hard to be courageous. The international vice-presidents of the AFofL ~~International Unions~~ are taking their time in OKing the local machinery for jurisdictional arbitration which Joseph Keenan has gone back east to try to secure for Hollywood. Last week our leaders were indicted on framed felonious conspiracy charges by the Grand Jury, through a corrupt coup in the District Attorney's office, which threatens all of Los Angeles' citizens with a return of the gangster controlled politics of the days of the 1937 recall of Mayor Frank L Shaw.

We find ourselves under the most extreme pressure we have yet been subjected to. Whether our unions survive will depend upon what further courage and determination we can summon to meet the situation ourselves and what help we can get from interested persons and publishers who will champion our cause in the public press.

If the Conference of Studio Unions leaders^{and officers} are sentenced and imprisoned on these trumped up charges of criminal conspiracy, a precedent will be set that may well sound the death knell to union leadership of any kind, - for no union leader or officer could issue directions to members during a strike, nor could two or more union members agree to walk together on a picket line without exposing themselves to an unscrupulous employer's law-breaking charges, - should such employer have spent his ten dollars to obtain an injunction from some anti-labor judge.

There are enormous profits made in the motion picture business. Louis B. Mayer and Nicholas Schenck, as president and vice-president of Lowe's Inc. and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios, paid the highest income taxes of any individuals in the United States in 1945. Many of the older actors are now producers themselves. Robert Montgomery, the president of the Screen Actor's Guild, had already announced his intention to become a producer when he took office this last fall. Other officials of the actors' guild are known to have similar plans. It is easy to see why real trade unionism has such an up-hill fight in Hollywood.

If the selfish and monopolistic big business interests in this country are allowed to smash the free and honestly organized trade unions of America, I believe that our country will have lost a fundamental element of true democracy, and humanity everywhere will then lack an important factor in the world's prosperity, security and future peace.

Thank you very much for your kindness and patience in reading this long letter.

Sincerely yours,

Dorothy Williams

Dorothy Williams
Screen Set Designers, Illustrators
and Decorators. Local I42I.
Brotherhood of Painters,
Paperhangers, and Decorators
of America.

Is this Coincidence?

THAT on November 9, 1946, the producers answered the Conference of Studio Unions' November 5 request for contract negotiations by stating that they had taken the matter "under advisement."

THAT during the ensuing week of this delay came the wave of terrorism and bombing.

THAT when the producers finally replied to the CSU, they charged the CSU with acts of violence - WITHOUT A PARTICLE OF PROOF - as one reason for refusing to bargain on contracts.

THAT the producers' reply came on the same day - Friday - that 679 pickets were arrested for assembling peaceably to protest illegal use of injunctions.

THAT on Sunday, at an IATSE meeting, Ronald Reagan of the Screen Actors Guild Executive Board, said "I am no longer neutral. The CSU has proved itself completely unreliable."

THAT yesterday - Monday - criminal conspiracy charges were filed against 14 trade union officers and members - while more than 700 pickets were still in jail.

THAT today, the SAG Executive Board has issued a statement "reluctantly" attacking "certain leaders of the CSU."

IS THIS COINCIDENCE?

OR IS THIS A WELL-CONCEIVED, WELL-EXECUTED PLAN ATTEMPTING TO DESTROY FREE TRADE UNIONISM IN HOLLYWOOD?

RELEASE FROM CSU NEWS BUREAU November 21, 1946

The Conference of Studio Unions has learned from unimpeachable sources that a political deal has been made whereby Los Angeles' District Attorney Fred N. Howser will resign from his post on Tuesday, November 26, instead of December 1, as has been publicly announced. He is resigning, allegedly, to "take a rest" before assuming his duties as Attorney General of California on January 1, 1947.

The deal, as reported to the CSU, calls for the sudden appointment of Howser's Chief Deputy, William E. Simpson, as the new District Attorney.

Simpson, according to the CSU's informant, is backed by the Motion Picture Producers Association and by Bob Gans, known as the "slot-machine king" during the infamous regime of Mayor Frank L. Shaw who was kicked out of office in 1938.

It is believed that the alliance of the motion picture producers with the underworld, as represented by Gans, will bring back to Los Angeles the gangster controlled government of the discredited Shaw administration.

Conspiracy charges against fourteen strike leaders were filed by the District Attorney's office on November 17. The men were held on \$5,000 bail. Violations of Sections 182, 166, 409, 245 and 518 of the Penal Code were charged. The sections cover conspiracy to commit acts to pervert and obstruct due administration of laws, to willfully disobey the process and lawful orders of the court, to refuse to disperse an unlawful assembly after having been instructed to do so, to commit assault with a deadly weapon and to commit extortion. The extortion accusation relates to depriving persons of their property rights by preventing them from working when they want to do so.

Labor spokesmen maintain that these framed-up charges

constitute one of the most dangerous attacks on labor's rights to strike and picket that has yet been made by employer groups,

Howser refused to issue felony complaints against strike leaders on the demand of motion picture producers in the 1945 film lockout. Now, when the same charges are being made against CSU leaders, Howser, who has been safely elected Attorney General, is side-stepping the situation and giving his silent consent to the anti-labor conspiracy by resigning from office. Even when the false conspirac charge falls through, it will have served a two-fold purpose. First, it will give the picture producers another chance to wreck honest trade unionism and turn workers over to labor racketeers. Second, it will throw up a fine smoke-screen to hide from the taxpayers the fact that Gans and his associates are again establishing a beachhead in the city and county governments.

The CSU, through its attorneys, will demand a Federal Grand Jury investigation of the conspiracy. The CSU will also seek a congressional investigation of the importation of professional strike breakers by the producers, their collusive destruction of labor's rights under the Wagner Act, and the subsidizing by the motion picture producers of our local government and law-enforcement authorities in their campaign to discredit labor.

The entire national labor movement has been aroused by this studio-gangster plot, and an all-out drive to expose the conspiracy is being organized. Protests to the District Attorney's office are being registered from all over the country.

It has been announced that Joseph A. Padway, Chief AFL Council, is expected in from Honolulu to take over the case for the defendants.

Library

SCULLY
July 27 1946

Mrs F.D.P.

✓ Independent Com
Shank

a fine tribune to F.D.P. a
rare man only one in a
life time. God Bless Him
& his memory.

The Hartford Times

J. E. Scully
107 Liberty St.

LScully

... blood of the land was
being spilled to preserve the nation.

The Roosevelt Memorial

John G. Winant, former governor of New Hampshire, former Ambassador to the Court of St. James's and now the representative of the United States on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, was well fitted to be the speaker at the memorial service to the late Franklin Delano Roosevelt at the recent joint session of Congress. He was a friend of the late President, as well as one who worked closely with him through the critical years of his administration.

No one will dispute Mr. Winant's tribute to Mr. Roosevelt, that is, no one who would be fairminded.

Roosevelt came upon the American political scene a young man who seemed dedicated to public service. He became President when the country was at the very depths of an economic crisis. He inaugurated methods of relief that disturbed advocates of the old ways of doing things. He was assailed and buffeted and maligned, but he led the nation out of the despair of depression and carried it through to victory in the most terrible war the world ever has seen. He helped lay the foundations for what all hope may be a lasting peace. He did not live to see his most important ideas take form.

Men like Franklin Delano Roosevelt inspire intense hatred and equally intense admiration. The former Presi-

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dent never pulled any punches in attacking what he regarded as the evils of his time. He literally fought with all his strength for what he believed was right. Those who agreed with him—the plain people—loved him and revere his memory. Those who disagreed believed he was ruining the country, and fought back. Between the admiration of one group and the hatred of the other lies the true evaluation of the late President. He was a great man, by whatever standard his career may be measured, who always will be remembered.