

Cambridge University Press

0521571189 - Hollywood and Anti-Semitism: A Cultural History up to World War II

Steven Alan Carr

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Hollywood and Anti-Semitism

Hollywood and Anti-Semitism: A Cultural History up to World War II examines how the public perceived American Jews in the entertainment industry from the turn of the century to the outbreak of World War II. Eastern European Jewish immigrants are often credited with building a film industry during the first decade of the twentieth century and dominating it by the 1920s. In this study, Steven Carr reconceptualizes Jewish participation in Hollywood by examining prevalent attitudes toward Jews among American audiences. Analogous to the Jewish Question of the nineteenth century, which was concerned with the full participation of Jews within the sphere of public life, the Hollywood Question of the twenties, thirties, and forties addressed the Jewish population within mass media. This ground-breaking study reveals the powerful set of assumptions about ethnicity and media influence as it related to the role of the Jew in the motion picture industry.

Steven Alan Carr is associate professor of communication at Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne. He has contributed to *Shared Differences: Multicultural Media and Practical Pedagogy* and *Jewish Women in America*, among other publications.

Cambridge University Press

0521571189 - Hollywood and Anti-Semitism: A Cultural History up to World War II

Steven Alan Carr

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge Studies in the History of Mass Communication

General Editors

Kenneth Short, University of Houston

Garth Jowett, University of Houston

David Culbert, Louisiana State University

Cambridge Studies in the History of Mass Communication includes books that examine the communications processes and communications systems within social, cultural, and political contexts. Inclusive of empirical, effects-based research, works in this series proceed from the basis that the histories of various media are an important means to understanding their role and function in society. The history of a medium – its pattern of introduction, diffusion, acceptance, and effects – varies in each society, interacting with, and in turn shaping, its culture. Moreover, each society reacts differently to the introduction of a medium, and regulatory policies are shaped by both political and cultural forces. The detailed study of various communications forms and their complex message systems is now understood to be the key to unraveling the evolution of modern society and its culture.

Other books in the Series:

U.S. Television News and Cold War Propaganda, 1947–1960

by Nancy Bernhard

South Africa's Alternative Press by Les Switzer

Propaganda and Democracy by J. Michael Sproule

Hollywood's Overseas Campaign: The North Atlantic Movie Trade, 1920–1950 by Ian Jarvie

Ronald Reagan in Hollywood: Movies and Politics by Stephen Vaughn

Hollywood Censored: Morality Codes, Catholics, and the Movies
by Gregory Black

Children and the Movies: Media Influence and the Payne Fund Controversy
by Garth Jowett, Ian Jarvie, and Kathryn Fuller

The Making of American Audiences by Richard Butsch

Cambridge University Press

0521571189 - Hollywood and Anti-Semitism: A Cultural History up to World War II

Steven Alan Carr

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

HOLLYWOOD AND ANTI-SEMITISM

**A CULTURAL HISTORY UP TO
WORLD WAR II**

Steven Alan Carr

Indiana University–

Purdue University Fort Wayne



Cambridge University Press

0521571189 - Hollywood and Anti-Semitism: A Cultural History up to World War II

Steven Alan Carr

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, VIC 3166, Australia
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa
<http://www.cambridge.org>

© Cambridge University Press 2001

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2001

Printed in the United States of America

Typeface Goudy 10/13 pt. System DeskTopPro_{JUX} [BV]

A catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Carr, Steven Alan, 1964–

Hollywood and anti-semitism : a cultural history up to World War II / Steven Alan Carr.

p. cm. – (Cambridge studies in the history of mass communications)

Revision of the author's thesis (doctoral – University of Texas at Austin, 1994) presented
under the title The Hollywood question.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-521-57118-9 – ISBN 0-521-79854-X (pbk.)

1. Motion picture industry – California – Los Angeles – History. 2. Jews in the motion
picture industry – United States. 3. Antisemitism – United States. I. Title. II. Series.

PN1993.5.U65 C37 2001

384'.8'089924073–dc21 00-058532

ISBN 0 521 57118 9 hardback

ISBN 0 521 79854 X paperback

Cambridge University Press

0521571189 - Hollywood and Anti-Semitism: A Cultural History up to World War II

Steven Alan Carr

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

For Nancy, Maxine, and William

Cambridge University Press

0521571189 - Hollywood and Anti-Semitism: A Cultural History up to World War II

Steven Alan Carr

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	page xi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xiii
Introduction: What Is the Hollywood Question?	1
Part 1: The Hollywood Question and American Anti-Semitism, 1880–1929	
1 Anti-Semitism and the American Jewish Question	23
2 Religion, Race, and Morality in the Hollywood Question	60
Part 2: The Hollywood Question for a New America, 1929–1941	
3 A New Deal for the Hollywood Question	97
4 The Hollywood Question in Popular Culture	132
5 The Politics of the Hollywood Question	154
6 Answering the Hollywood Question	182
Part 3: The Hollywood Question, 1941 and Beyond	
7 Popular Culture Answers the Hollywood Question	217
8 The Hollywood Question in Crisis, 1941	238
9 The New Hollywood Question	278
<i>Notes</i>	293
<i>Bibliography</i>	325
<i>Index</i>	337

Cambridge University Press

0521571189 - Hollywood and Anti-Semitism: A Cultural History up to World War II

Steven Alan Carr

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Illustrations

1 W. T. Hornaday, New York Zoological Park, 1910	page 35
2 Cartoon referring to coverage of the Spanish-American War, 1898	40
3 “American Drama as Leading Lady,” shackled and garlanded, 1901	45
4 Three globes help solve the “puzzle,” 1901	46
5 Cartoon of theater producer, 1901	47
6 Weber and Fields pummel the Gentile patron, 1901	48
7 Jewish control over actors and actresses, 1901	48
8 Andrew Carnegie “hastens the day” when American theater will no longer be beholden to Jewish control, 1901	49
9 The Jew as impresario, 1898	50
10 Christian Art prostrate before Jewish Commerce, 1895	51
11 Will H. Hays delivering the opening speech at the 17th Republican National Convention, 1920	65
12 Henry Ford leaving the White House after a visit with the president, 1927	83
13 Driving out the money changers in the midst of the 1931 presidential campaign	100
14 The inauguration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1932	101
15 Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1933	103
16 Los Angeles anti-Semitic leaflet from the 1930s	112
17 High hopes for the Legion of Decency from the Catholic press, 1934	128
18 Illustration from Charles Ray’s <i>Hollywood Shorts</i> (1935)	140
19 Portrait of Carl Van Vechten by Prentiss Taylor, 1932	147
20 Nathanael West in Hollywood	218
21 Portrait of F. Scott Fitzgerald by Carl Van Vechten, 1937	221
22 Lindbergh with his mother and President and Mrs. Coolidge, 1927	245

Cambridge University Press

0521571189 - Hollywood and Anti-Semitism: A Cultural History up to World War II

Steven Alan Carr

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xii

Illustrations

23 Lindbergh Day, Springfield, Vermont, 1927	246
24 The Republican Party notifies Wendell L. Willkie of his nomination, Elwood, Indiana, 1940	257
25 Senator-elect D. Worth Clark (Idaho), Senator-elect James M. Mead (New York), Vice President John N. Garner, and Senator-elect Sheridan Downey (California), 1939	270

Cambridge University Press

0521571189 - Hollywood and Anti-Semitism: A Cultural History up to World War II

Steven Alan Carr

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgments

This work has some of its own history, characterized in large part by my good fortune and the generosity of those around me. It was originally a dissertation, and numerous individuals mentioned in that document have had a formative influence. I owe certain people, however, my redundant gratitude. Much of the dissertation came together through the generosity and patience of Kimberly Jones, who offered both compassion and living quarters in those final weeks as I prepared to deposit a document for my doctoral degree from the University of Texas at Austin. Only in retrospect do I truly recognize the immense debt of gratitude I owe my dissertation committee and my advisor, Charles Ramírez-Berg. In particular, committee member Thomas Schatz has played a lasting role as both mentor and editor in giving me sage advice. In terms of both the dissertation as well as early stages of the revision, he remained key to the shape of the work.

Since I deposited my dissertation, new encounters and opportunities have greatly aided the reformulation of this work. Yossi Khen, a fellow compatriot from the now defunct New Jewish Agenda, generously opened his home to me on numerous occasions while I did research in Los Angeles. Faye Thompson and especially Barbara Hall of the Margaret Herrick Library in Los Angeles proved invaluable sources of information. Bob Marshall, Tony Gardner, and the other archivists at Urban Archives Center on the campus of California State University–Northridge managed to survive both my visit and an earthquake. That archive remains a veritable and relatively overlooked treasure trove of California history.

I am incredibly fortunate to work at Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW). Here, I have received a great deal of institutional, collegial, and academic support. An Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW) Summer Faculty Research Grant helped defray research and writing expenses in 1996. The Document Delivery Service at IPFW has spent countless hours tracking down obscure materials – Cheryl Truesdell and Chris Smith were particularly diligent and patient with my

Cambridge University Press

0521571189 - Hollywood and Anti-Semitism: A Cultural History up to World War II

Steven Alan Carr

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

requests. My colleague Rodney Farnsworth generously shared his library carrel, away from the diversionary allure of telephone and Internet. The collegiality of my department members – Jane Banks, Jeanne Barone, Marcia Dixson, Richard Hess, Mary Anne Higgins, Claudia McCalman, Dave Switzer, and Jonathan Tankel – helped to sustain me throughout the project. Department chair John Parrish-Sprowl expertly mentored me, patiently but insistently prodding completion of the work (and yes, I have finally finished the book). I am also grateful to the students at IPFW, who have taught me how to be a better teacher and scholar. The fall 1996 COM 316 Controversy in America class especially inspired many new insights and observations. That class helped me to think about new ways of explaining culture and provided me with one of the most moving and rewarding teaching experiences of my career.

Although I had to make a difficult choice between publishers, I am grateful to those associated with Cambridge University Press. Professor Garth Jowett first encouraged me to submit the work to the History of Mass Communication series. Beatrice Rehl has patiently guided me through the publication process – so patiently, in fact, that she had time to leave, take another job, and then return to Cambridge as my editor while I was working on the book. Professor K. R. M. Short has also demonstrated his patience. Working closely with me on a major overhaul of this manuscript, he has provided his indispensable advice and insight. His wisdom extends well beyond his scholarship. He has proven an excellent mentor and friend as well. Designer and production editor Holly Johnson and copyeditor Barbara Folsom have expertly guided me through the publication process. Their hard work, patience, and professionalism greatly improved the manuscript, making this stage more enjoyable than it should have been.

Finally, a series of loving, close, and supportive relationships have carried me further than I deserve. My aunt, Gladys Justin Carr, freely offered her wealth of experience as Vice-President/Associate Publisher for HarperCollins. My parents, William and Maxine, as well as my brothers, Jackie and Daniel, continue to prove an inspiration in my life. My parents' love of books and learning, plus my father's talent as a writer, first planted the seed in my six-year-old mind. My career as an author began with magic-markered tomes consisting solely of a list of upcoming (and yet to be written) works. Thirty-five years of others' nurturing, love, and faith in me has allowed actual achievement, as opposed to my own empty ambitions. More recently, I have somehow managed to meet someone willing to put up with me on a day-to-day basis. Between tolerating my writing anxiety, Nancy Virtue provided me with countless suggestions, insights, and ways of

Cambridge University Press

0521571189 - Hollywood and Anti-Semitism: A Cultural History up to World War II

Steven Alan Carr

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgments

xv

explaining a difficult topic. Modest to a fault, she is a first-rate teacher, scholar, and editor. Our conversations on her work as well as mine – plus her true genius for rendering complex ideas accessible – account for the clearer passages of this book. I would be lost without her friendship, although she is so much more than just a friend.