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0521629055 - The Catholic Crusade against the Movies, 1940-1975

Gregory D. Black

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THE CATHOLIC CRUSADE AGAINST THE MOVIES, 1940–1975

For more than three decades the Catholic church, through its Legion of Decency, had a power that modern politicians can only dream about: the power to control the content of Hollywood films. From the mid-1930s to the late 1960s the Catholic Legion served as a moral guardian for the American public. Hollywood studios submitted their films to the Legion for a rating, which varied from general approval for all age groups to outright condemnation – the mere threat of which could spur Hollywood executives to remove offending material.

The Catholic Crusade against the Movies, 1940–1975, details how a religious organization got control of Hollywood and how films like *The Outlaw*, *Duel in the Sun*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Lolita*, and *Tea and Sympathy* were altered by the Legion to make them morally acceptable. Documenting the inner workings of the Legion, this book also examines how the changes in the movie industry, the Catholic church, and American society at large in the post-World War II era eventually conspired against that institution's power and led to its demise.

Gregory D. Black is Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Missouri, Kansas City. He is the author of *Hollywood Censored: Morality Codes, Catholics, and the Movies* and coauthor of *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits, and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies*.

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To

Robert Dale Black

for a lifetime of support, encouragement, and friendship

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ILLUSTRATIONS

The following photographs appear on unfolioed pages in the middle of the book:

- 1 Hollywood censor Joseph Breen
- 2 Gregory Peck and Jennifer Jones in David O. Selznick's *Duel in the Sun*
- 3 Silvana Mangano in *Bitter Rice*
- 4 Silvana Mangano in *Bitter Rice*
- 5 Anna Magnani in *The Miracle*
- 6 Otto Preminger directs Frank Sinatra and Kim Novak in *The Man with the Golden Arm*
- 7 Publicity poster for MGM's *Tea and Sympathy*
- 8 Deborah Kerr and John Kerr in *Tea and Sympathy*
- 9 Carroll Baker in *Baby Doll*
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- 11 Paul Newman and Elizabeth Taylor in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*
- 12 Sue Lyon in *Lolita*
- 13 James Mason and Sue Lyon in *Lolita*
- 14 Rod Steiger and Brock Peters in *The Pawnbroker*
- 15 Richard Burton, Elizabeth Taylor, George Segal, and Sandy Dennis in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

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