

## Michael Gold & Dalton Trumbo on *Spartacus*, Blacklist Hollywood, Howard Fast, and the Demise of American Communism<sup>1</sup>

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*Howard Fast is in town, helping them carpenter a six-million dollar production of his Spartacus. It is to be one of those super-duper Cecil deMille epics, all swollen up with costumes and the genuine furniture, with the slave revolution far in the background and a love triangle bigger than the Empire State Building huge in the foreground.*

Michael Gold, 30 May 1959

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*Mike Gold has made savage comments about a book he clearly knows nothing about. Then he has announced, in advance of seeing it, precisely what sort of film will be made from the book. He knows nothing about the book, nothing about the film, nothing about the screenplay or who wrote it, nothing about [how] the book was purchased.*

Dalton Trumbo, 2 June 1959

### Introduction

Of the three tumultuous years (1958-1960) needed to transform Howard Fast's novel *Spartacus* into the film of the same name, 1959 was the most problematic. From the start of production in late January until the end of all but re-shoots by late December, the project itself, the careers of its creators and financiers, and the studio that sponsored it were in jeopardy a half-dozen times. Blacklist Hollywood was a scary place to make a film based on a self-published novel by a "Commie author" (Fast), and a script by a "Commie screenwriter" (Trumbo).<sup>2</sup> There were other factors as well that threatened the production.<sup>3</sup> In 1959, the span of a single month (late May – late June) may be singled out as the most critical portion of that calendar year. With principal shooting two months from completion, Dalton Trumbo went on strike. Although this was a calculated move on his part, it might not have been as effective without the confluence of several critical factors. Some originated within the production itself, but others were external, and therefore, more difficult for Trumbo to anticipate and control.

Trumbo's decision to strike precipitated a chain of events that led, in late 1960, to his name reappearing on screen as the writer, not just of the Roman-era epic *Spartacus*, but also for scripting the film version of Leon Uris' *Exodus*. It was the first time since 1947 that Trumbo emerged from behind "fronts" and was openly acknowledged in film credits. This was not due to a lucky break or accident, nor did it occur without help. However, it would not have happened then if Trumbo himself had not played a major role in orches-

trating events, persuading key people to assist him, and leveraging every bit of publicity he could to bring the blacklist to an end.<sup>4</sup> Central to that was his strike. Part of what prompted him to act then was a late-May column by lifelong Marxist journalist Michael Gold. The column zeroed in on blacklist Hollywood and Trumbo's role within it, eliciting from him a quick and scathing response. Those two documents—the column and unpublished letter—are the focus of this article (excerpt above).

Gold's column appeared in the Communist weekly *People's World* (*PW*)<sup>5</sup> and helped set in motion a major crisis during the making of *Spartacus*. Though the filming of *Spartacus* was not the principal issue in the exchange between Gold and Trumbo, the movie and the involvement of Fast and Trumbo had already served as a lightning rod for differing views from the Left about how the blacklist might be ended. The Gold-Trumbo dialogue also contrasts the declining fortunes of the Communist Party of the USA (CPUSA), with the simultaneous literary rehabilitation of Fast, its once-stalwart ideologue and reluctant-to-depart member. Trumbo's letter challenging many of Gold's assertions was directed to Al Richmond, editor of the *PW* and himself a Russian-born CPUSA member (until 1968), with whom Trumbo was well-acquainted. Richmond must have read and approved the column before it ran. Trumbo's response makes it clear that he expected Richmond to share it with Gold.

Had Trumbo read the column and regarded it as no more than a screed written by a political hack he would have ignored it. Instead, he took the time and made the effort to set out a point-by-point rebuttal that he wanted Richmond to keep "in house." Whether Trumbo's response was received and read by Richmond and Gold matters less than the fact that Gold's column provoked a measured response that has survived.<sup>6</sup> The letter provides key insights into Trumbo's thinking at the onset of his strike. Here it will be useful to provide some context concerning Michael Gold and Dalton Trumbo for readers unfamiliar with either. For Trumbo there is a vast amount of contemporary documentation available, written either by or about him.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, there is no corresponding trove of detailed information by or about Gold for this period in his life.<sup>8</sup> The salient features of Fast's career, also well charted in several of his memoirs, are noted in passing. Readers interested in the broader picture may consult the recent, highly critical biography *Howard Fast: Life & Literature in the Left Lane* by Gerald Sorin.<sup>9</sup>

### **Michael Gold**

Michael Gold is no longer a household name among political commentators. His death in 1967, just after his 74<sup>th</sup> birthday, was shortly followed by a now-standard collection of his writings: *Mike Gold: A Literary Anthology*.<sup>10</sup> This anthology features a useful and critical biographical essay by its editor (and Gold's friend)

Michael Folsom, but even before then Gold's once-bright star had dimmed noticeably.<sup>11</sup> In part, that was due to the general decline in influence of the CPUSA since the late 1940s, and to the specificity of time, place and circumstance in most of Gold's writings, particularities that now render many of his essays and reviews very dated and a few even irrelevant. Thus, it is easy today to characterize Gold as a "die-hard Leftie" who maintained his Party membership far beyond the limits of common sense. Fast left the CPUSA after the Hungarian revolt in late 1956, and Richmond after the "Prague Spring" of 1968. Had Gold lived a year later than he did, even *his* loyalty might have been tested to its limit. Gold's friend and editor of *A Literary Anthology* recognized in 1972 that

... Gold is a kind of legend now—a devil or a saint, depending on your point of view—and all the more legendary because his memory is obscured by fond rumor, ill will, and ignorance. Aside from [his novel] *Jews Without Money* [1930], almost none of his voluminous works is available in print, and many who have strong opinions about Gold and his work (pro and con) really know little about either.<sup>12</sup>

Someone who knew Gold very well during the late 1950s was Al Richmond, editor of *PW* and—like Gold—a CPUSA member who believed the Party had not exhausted its potential for positive social change in the USA. But there was a striking contrast between the ways in which Gold understood that potential, and Richmond's sense of it. In his autobiography *A Long View From the Left* (1973), Richmond outlines that sharp difference, and in so doing, allows us a glimpse of his world as a journalist. First is his explanation of why he remained a member of the CPUSA:

I did not join the exodus [after 1956] ... In the California party there was an openness that permitted grappling with the unsolved problems of creating a viable Socialist movement. And there was the paper [*PW*]. At its nadir circulation was 6,000, and to cite this figure is already to guard against any exaggeration of its effect; nonetheless, given the general condition of the California Left in the late 1950s, the paper was the most potent single factor on the scene ... In its tone, its range, in its treatment of events and of social and cultural phenomena, in its relation to existing movements, in the discussion it stimulated, the paper could, I believed, contribute to a revival of the Left. Editing it struck me as useful work that could be done with integrity.<sup>13</sup>

He then summarises the shock of downsizing *PW*: reducing the number of pages, overseeing its transition from a daily to a weekly, accepting the loss of half of its staff, and grappling with the possibility that in time there would be no publication at all.<sup>14</sup> Into that constrictive, depressive atmosphere came Gold. Richmond speaks warmly of Gold, who was hired in early 1957:

Against the stream of farewells there was one brave hello: for Mike Gold, prophet of ‘the red decade of proletarian literature’ [the 1930s] when he, a few years older than the century, was also in his thirties. In that time he was the most beloved of Communist writers. His was an incandescent light then, luminous and intense. His column, ‘Change the World’, was a popular feature of the *Daily Worker*. By the mid-1950s his column was a fading memory. Even in better times, Communist solicitude for cultural figures was not great; in the McCarthyite time Mike was left pretty much on his own [and was] encouraged to revive his column ... The most distinctive vein in Mike’s writing was a fierce, occasionally abrasive, partisan passion ... When he brought in his weekly column it bore the marks of his difficult labor.<sup>15</sup>

It is easy enough now, nearly a half-century after Gold’s death, to judge him solely through the propagandistic output of his last decade at *PW*. Certainly there is that aspect in the bitter tone of his column “Winds of Freedom.” He left behind a large amount of writing that can be mined solely for its partisan views on this topic, or that issue, *du jour*. The edited *Literary Anthology* by Folsom is probably the kindest collection Gold could have hoped for. His brief “intersection” with Fast and Trumbo over the filming of *Spartacus* offered just the opportunity he needed to voice his anger at what had happened to the Left throughout the USA, not just in Hollywood, during the Cold War. More recently, Gold’s legacy as a chronicler of poverty and its social consequences in his novel *Jews Without Money* has been championed by Morris Dickstein in his study of the Great Depression, *Dancing in the Dark* (2009).<sup>16</sup> As one reviewer put it, with salutary candor, “Dickstein disentangles Gold’s literary skill from his political stupidities.”<sup>17</sup>

Those “stupidities” are certainly on display in “Winds of Freedom,” but there is more to Gold’s column than the *ad hominem* attack on Fast, and Gold’s mistakes about the plot of Fast’s novel and its interpretation in the movie. Gold’s column served as one of several “triggers” for Trumbo’s next move because of its timing. This was not because Gold’s readership was vast and influential. As film historian Duncan Cooper noted accurately in an e-mail to me 28 July 2014, Gold “preached from a tiny pulpit” at *PW*, and sermons from that pulpit went out to a tiny congregation. He was hardly a Hollywood “insider” and even if his sources were accurate regarding *Spartacus*’ bloated budget, and the urgent need for Fast as a “script doctor,” few readers of “Change the World!” would have noticed. Nevertheless, among the congregation hearing his message that week was Trumbo, and Gold certainly got his full attention.

## Dalton Trumbo

Unlike Gold, Trumbo still enjoys recognition and respect almost forty years after his death in 1976, at age 70. He was already a prominent screenwriter before the blacklist,<sup>18</sup> and as he became instrumental in breaking it, his reputation only grew. By breaking the blacklist in 1960, he also helped others in the cinema community regain some semblance of their former status.<sup>19</sup> Trumbo's name is constantly displayed through the many notable movies he scripted, several biographies or biographical documentaries, as well as a feature film (*Trumbo*) now in post-production.<sup>20</sup> Trumbo's attitude to Hollywood, before and after the World War II, is revealed in a conversation recalled by fellow blacklisted John Berry in 1976:

... [W]e reexamined issues, the past, shared experiences between us ... We talked about politics and the blacklist and the relationships ... We talked about society in general. He [Trumbo] said the thing I didn't understand was that our society [i.e. the movie industry] was a 'money society.' "You never really understood that," he said. "You have other naïve horseshit ideas. If you're going to be here [in Hollywood] you have to be part of the money society."<sup>21</sup>

That unhappy era within Hollywood has never lost its attraction to analysts of all stripes, including those, like insider Kirk Douglas, whose recent memoir *I Am Spartacus* (2012) has re-stirred the pot of controversy.<sup>22</sup> That film's producer, Edward Lewis, is currently preparing his own memoir or autobiography for publication.<sup>23</sup> News that a biopic about Dalton Trumbo's life during the blacklist will be screened near the end of 2015 makes this Gold-Trumbo exchange very timely indeed.<sup>24</sup> The bibliography on the blacklist era in the entertainment industry was already immense within two decades of Trumbo's personal triumph in 1960. Two books that appeared toward the end of that initial period are Ceplair and Englund's *The Inquisition in Hollywood* (1979), and Navasky's *Naming Names* (1980).<sup>25</sup> Both studies have enjoyed several editions since they were first published. Emblematic of the solid research that has continued apace, but far broader in scope than either volume just noted, is Buhle and Wagner's *Hide in Plain Sight* (2003). Within every book on the blacklist years, Trumbo's name is prominent. He believed that what he did, alone or in concert, was for the benefit of not just himself, but every other blacklisted.

Trumbo's manipulation of almost every person and institution with which he had some relationship was clear from the beginning of 1959. Helen Manfull, editor of Trumbo's letters, was well aware of this in her introduction to section nine of that volume, suitably and accurately entitled "Guerilla Warfare" (itself a designation taken from a Trumbo letter written a year earlier):

By 1959 Trumbo believed he had waited long enough. If he was going to fight for the destruction of the detested blacklist, he recognized the

necessity of establishing an appealing and novel public image. After all, he reasoned, it would be impossible to get public sympathy for \$100,000 a year [screenwriters] who were now earning somewhere around \$10,000. He knew, also, that most intellectuals and writers considered screen writers to be hacks and would offer little support. He was aware that the whole case of the Hollywood Ten was remote and probably forgotten. And finally he realized that no one was interested in victims, in angry martyrs, or in public weeping ... Trumbo resolved to play the scamp who snipes at the tender parts of upright Hollywood institutions and has a good deal of fun doing it. He appeared on numerous television shows, offered press statements, wrote articles attacking the blacklist and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences [AMPAS], refused to deny or confirm authorship of any film thereby gaining credit for much that was not his, and extolling the black market—all in the image of fun-loving scallywag. He made himself and his colleagues out to be victors over the blacklist; the black market was working; everyone was in on it; why not admit the fact and bring it out in the open?<sup>26</sup>

Manfull then presents a dozen letters that Trumbo wrote between January and December 1959, divided almost equally by the two halves of that year. The seven letters he wrote between January and July *all* dealt with aspects of the blacklist.<sup>27</sup> Three of them were to other blacklisted scriptwriters: one each to Albert Maltz and Michael Wilson, and one to both of them.<sup>28</sup> Two were to California TV commentators regarding talk shows on which Trumbo might appear.<sup>29</sup> One was to the mediator of a dispute between outgoing AMPAS president George Stevens and Trumbo. The seventh was to Eddie Lewis, producer of *Spartacus* and “front” for Trumbo.<sup>30</sup> Of particular interest here is that the letter to Lewis was written on 3 June, the day following the letter to “Al.” It was written in response to a communication from Lewis regarding wages, and is entirely, or at least the lengthy extract published by Manfull, focused on the complex and devious way that Trumbo was compensated for his work, past and present. It was primarily the repeated interference with his screenplay for *Spartacus*<sup>31</sup> that prompted him to strike.

However, that letter to Lewis was written *after* Trumbo replied to Gold’s critique at the beginning of his strike. In order to fully understand the importance of this exchange we first need to consider the salient points of each in the summary that follows. An overview of Trumbo’s strike and its outcome will follow. Complete transcriptions of both documents can be found in *Appendix One* below. They add to the length of this article, but my reason for including them is that they are not readily available. *Appendix Two* is a timeline of all the important events that took place in May/June of 1959, that incorporates these two documents within a continuum.

### Gold's Column: 1950s Hollywood and the Left:

"Winds of Freedom" was written while Gold had just begun using his column in *People's World* for a series of eleven autobiographical sketches that ran between 11 April and 17 October of 1959.<sup>32</sup> "Winds of Freedom" appeared between the fourth and fifth installment of that series.<sup>33</sup> It was clearly prompted by information from "a friend who works in the dream factories"<sup>34</sup> of Hollywood. As Gold saw it, the film industry was mired in a malaise of mediocrity. The big studios were again under the scrutiny of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and the American Legion for laxity in enforcing the Waldorf Agreement.<sup>35</sup> In late May, the Legion's California branch, prompted by an editorial in the organization's monthly magazine, resumed its attacks on the Hollywood film studios (Universal-International in particular) for secretly using blacklisted writers like Trumbo.<sup>36</sup>

It was not only the mega-studios that were in the crosshairs of the Right. Gold noted that "[i]ndependent producers, not tied up as tightly as the biggest outfits, have therefore been dealing under the table with the blacklisted writers, among whom have been some of the best brains Hollywood money could buy."<sup>37</sup> Without a pause, in the next paragraph Gold offers a perfect example of that:

Dalton Trumbo, for instance, has never starved for a day. Trumbo is considered among the top six best script technicians in Hollywood, with an enormous facility and know-how, I am told. He is the anonymous "Robert Rich," of course, who won the Oscar ([for *The Brave One* in 1957] but could not claim it. Carl Foreman and Michael Wilson are other such blacklisted authors who have won anonymous Oscars with such pictures as *The Bridge on the River Kwai* [1957] and *Friendly Persuasion* [1956]).<sup>38</sup>

That Trumbo was not the main target of Gold's "peek behind the curtain" focus on Tinsel Town is immediately clear. Gold singles out the production of *Spartacus* for special attention, but without directly tying Trumbo to it. The entire central section of his column turns to former CPUSA member Howard Fast, author of the novel upon which *Spartacus* is based. Fast joined the Party the same year (1943) as Trumbo, both were unfriendly witnesses during the HUAC hearings in 1947, and both served prison sentences in 1950/51. Trumbo left the CPUSA in 1950, but temporarily rejoined it in 1956/57 "as an act of solidarity" with Smith Act defendants in California.<sup>39</sup> Fast maintained his Party ties and doctrinaire views beyond the revelations of Stalinist terror in Khrushchev's speech to the Soviet Politburo in February 1956. Not until the Hungarian revolt of Oct.-Nov. 1956 did Fast break with the CPUSA, first through a *NEW YORK Times* front-page story on 1 Feb. 1957, and then with the publication of his *mea culpa* explanatory memoir *The Naked God* in November 1957.<sup>40</sup>

Gold excoriates Fast not only for a noisy exit from the Party and the apologetic tone of his account of it in *The Naked God*, but also for capitalizing on his redemption by the sale of *Spartacus* to Hollywood. Gold notes that Fast “is in town” busily working on the film, but that the historical story line is diminished by its emphasis on big-budget special effects and “love-triangle” subplots, “with the slave revolution far in the background.”<sup>41</sup> Fast was not yet back in Hollywood, but in a few days he would be there as a script-doctor. Gold was also correct that the plot of the film, four months into production, was in serious trouble, precisely because it emphasised the repressive Roman force at the expense of the underlying, and historically attested, insurrectionist events.<sup>42</sup>

There is no prior evidence of Gold’s interest in blacklist Hollywood, although his hardline Party criticism of screenwriter Albert Maltz in the 1940s was widely known.<sup>43</sup> Gold’s opinion of “soft Leftists” within Hollywood had not changed since the end of the Second World War.<sup>44</sup> Gold’s leftist approach to Hollywood in his column was mild in comparison to the harsh reactionary language about the entire entertainment industry (with a special emphasis on movies) found on the editorial page of the *American Legion* magazine for May 1959.<sup>45</sup> Under the bold header *Red Resurgence* the unsigned “Editorial Corner” stated that:

For the benefit of complacent Americans who think that communism is nothing to worry about, we’d like to quote the publisher of the official communist paper, **The Worker**: ‘McCarthyism has sustained a heartening defeat in our country.’ ... In other words, the commies now feel that it is safe to come out from under the rocks and operate in an atmosphere where they know they can get away with things that previously would have landed them before an investigating committee if not in jail ... Because the American people cool off so quickly, even toward those who are traitors and who have tried to sell out our country, many notorious commies and commie stooges are back in jobs from which they were fired when they were exposed. You’ll find them once again on big TV and radio shows, on the stage, and in motion pictures. They are writing books, sounding off in pulpits and on podiums, and otherwise carrying on as though they had never been discredited. Along with all this, they are once again being lionized by people with a passion for red (emphasis mine).

Gold’s observation that “slowly, the McCarthyite filth is ebbing with the great world tide”<sup>46</sup> is very much in keeping with the sentiments quoted from *The Worker*—though not so bold as to claim right-wing “defeat.” He excoriates not only Fast as a panderer to filmdom, but Hollywood itself as a debased remnant of the beacon of freedom it was during World War II when it inspired the public to fight against the “Beast of Berlin.”<sup>47</sup> But all is not lost for Gold. He includes the optimistic observation: “But now the bugles are blowing and pic-



tures like *The Defiant Ones* (1958) are appearing, to fight for the good old cause. The great struggle for Negro integration and full human rights fills the newspapers and is being reflected in Hollywood.”<sup>48</sup> Gold’s “die-hard” Leftist rhetoric in the face of a bleak future for the CPUSA is dominant throughout the column, and it underscores that, in spite of his optimism, the “winds of freedom are blowing through Hollywood,” but at least some of them are headwinds requiring skilled sailing ability.

### **Trumbo’s Response: 1950s Hollywood and the Left:**

Trumbo’s quick reaction to Gold is set out in his tightly structured rebuttal letter to “Al” [Richmond].<sup>49</sup> All but one of the ten points of contention that Trumbo enumerates can be matched correctly with issues in Gold’s column (see *Appendix One*). I have placed Trumbo’s point #7 where it seems most appropriate, but I cannot be certain. Some points are simply Trumbo’s corrections of misunderstandings or misinformation on Gold’s part. But several of them demand additional attention because they focus on larger issues. These are connected with Fast’s and Trumbo’s membership in the CPUSA, their respective roles in the prolonged and contentious production of *Spartacus*, and the impact that particular movie might have on the film industry following its release in 1960—thirteen years after the McCarthy/Cold War inspired blacklist became a reality in 1947. Considered separately is Trumbo’s rejection of Gold’s insistence that Hollywood’s decadence inevitably subverts the truly creative expression that “poverty and freedom” naturally offer gifted writers.

First on Trumbo’s list of disagreements about *Spartacus* (#1 below) is Gold’s assertion that “Howard Fast is in town” and will help “to carpenter” the screenplay. This is not quite the mistaken assertion that Trumbo makes it out to be. At the date of Trumbo’s response, 2 June 1959, Fast was *coming back* to Hollywood. The following week he was there, at the telephone request of director Stanley Kubrick and Kirk Douglas as early as 26 May.<sup>50</sup> Since the shooting of *Spartacus* began in late January 1959, production had been plagued with difficulties. Director Anthony Mann was fired by Douglas after just two weeks of filming,<sup>51</sup> the German starlet who was to play the female lead was rejected, and replacement director Kubrick played “catch-up” on the set with a cast that included several actors who had either directed or scripted (in some cases had done both) films of their own.<sup>52</sup>

Trumbo had expressed particular disappointment that his screenplay was being modified, or in some instances *replaced*, with dialogue created by Peter Ustinov in collaboration with Charles Laughton. That had begun under Mann early in filming, involving only Ustinov, and continued under Kubrick when scenes with Laughton were shot. Trumbo is correct that Fast had been in Hollywood the previous year, at the onset of pre-production in May and June of

1958. Fast's contractual agreement was to create a film treatment (step outline), and then a first-draft screenplay. This he did, with exemplary alacrity, between early May and the end of June.

What Fast did not know then was that Trumbo had also agreed to write a screenplay. Douglas' own company, Bryna Productions hired Trumbo earlier in 1958 by to script a western. When Fast's treatment was deemed to be "unusable," Trumbo was asked to shelve the western script and draft an alternate step-outline. That, in turn, was credited to *Spartacus*' producer, Edward Lewis. Fast dutifully followed that radically altered treatment while writing his first-draft screenplay (187 pages in length), finished in a month. It was never filmed as written, but *was* utilized later for rewrites.<sup>53</sup> The fact that two scripts were simultaneously underway for the same film production, with Fast unaware of Trumbo, was a breach of the industry rule. From the beginning, Fast laboured under a deliberate disadvantage.

What Gold's column reveals is that Trumbo's unhappiness was evident to many on the set of *Spartacus*, and probably leaked to Gold by a leftist on the crew who also had knowledge that Fast would be brought back for work as a "script doctor." On 30 May "Winds of Freedom" appeared in *PW*, and the following day Trumbo notified Lewis and Douglas in two sequential telegrams that he was finished. In the second he laid out his position bluntly:

I have arrived at the decision that I quit the picture absolutely.

Inadvertent or unintended insults do not disturb me. Calculated ones, in which what I have always felt to be an honorable profession, are too degrading for me to endure. There are more talented men in the art of acquiescence who will serve you better throughout your careers.<sup>54</sup>

Two days later, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June, Trumbo wrote to Al Richmond, and the next day to Lewis (see above). It is clear from Trumbo's response that Gold's column troubled him. While it alone was not the *cause* of Trumbo's strike, it may have prompted him to strike at that particular moment.

Trumbo's announcing his decision to quit certainly prompted Douglas' reaction. He selected one of his "pool" of blacklisted writers to begin scripting in Trumbo's absence.<sup>55</sup> That failed, and Fast did return (9-23 June 1959), and wrote a total of twenty-two new scenes.<sup>56</sup> Some were incorporated within a few months, and others inserted when additional footage was filmed in Spain at the end of 1959. While Trumbo may not have had Fast's script to consult in 1958 because Douglas and Lewis "buried it" after Fast's departure, it is now clear that when Fast's new scenes were spliced in Trumbo was given access to Fast's complete screenplay. There are scenes in the latter, following the final defeat of the slave army, which can be clearly identified in the completed film with only minor alterations. That means that Fast made use of *his own 1958 script* as a re-write source in June, 1959 and that Trumbo also used it later.<sup>57</sup> At least one-third of the final screenplay was the work of Fast, with another five per-cent shared by

Ustinov, Kubrick, and Douglas. But Trumbo alone received on-screen credit for scripting *Spartacus*.<sup>58</sup>

Second among the concerns expressed by Trumbo is Gold's interpretation of the story-line of Fast's novel as well as the plot of the movie (#2 & #3 below). Trumbo was correct in stating that there was no "love triangle" within either. What interaction occurs between Spartacus, his wife Varinia, and the Roman general Crassus in the novel, and what Trumbo envisions in his script, is clearly *the tension between slave and master in Roman society of the time*. Varinia's only display of affection for a Roman is through her immense gratitude to the character of Gracchus for stealing her, and her infant son, from bondage to Crassus. That is followed by Gracchus' manumission of mother and child, and then their safe transport from Rome to freedom. Gold's misunderstanding of that interplay is inexcusable regarding Fast's novel, which he clearly had not read with attention to detail. What he knew of the film and its script could only be through someone on the set. At the time Gold wrote, principal filming was still two months from completion. The movie's final story-line was not yet clear to *anyone* at Bryna Productions or U-I, (not even to Trumbo. Final pre-release cuts by U-I's in-house censors a year later (summer, 1960) modified the plot yet again to the detriment of the released film.<sup>59</sup>

Trumbo was wrong to downplay the scale of *Spartacus*. Gold was correct that it was becoming an epic, though non-biblical in contrast to DeMille's recent box-office success *The Ten Commandments* (1956) and director William Wyler's *Ben-Hur* (released in Nov. 1959). In terms of cast and "extras," dimensions of the story, size of the budget, and scale of the pictorial image, *Spartacus* already was, a year from completion, a film of epic proportions. In late 1959 production moved to Spain for a month, where final battle scenes were orchestrated to ensure that audiences would enjoy the spectacle for its own sake. Trumbo hoped the film's original emphasis on "the slave rebellion" would ensure that his "Large Spartacus" vision would triumph.<sup>60</sup> Trumbo, Douglas and Kubrick learned, to their bitter dismay, that U-I's studio head Edward Muhl and others made sure that a "Small Spartacus" image emerged from their editorial butchery. That diminished version of *Spartacus* endured until the partial restoration of 1991, best seen via background material included in the Criterion Collection edition available since 2001. Gold's comment that the slave rebellion had been kept "far in the background" was accurate then, and still is now. Most of the excised film footage was discarded in the 1970s.<sup>61</sup>

Third, and last, of Trumbo's major criticisms of Gold's comments on *Spartacus* was the issue of Fast's alleged "package deal" for the movie rights (points #4-6 below). Gold does go too far in suggesting that Fast "purged himself" in the knowledge that a "cash reward would be ready" when he did so. It was common knowledge in Hollywood in the late 1950s that Trumbo detested Fast for making a "noisy exit" from the CPUSA as late as 1957. Thus, it is inter-

esting to see Trumbo defending Fast against the *quid pro quo* allegations made by Gold. Nevertheless it is clear that the negotiations between Bryna and Fast regarding the film rights to *Spartacus* did not begin until almost the end of 1957. Douglas himself provides the essential timeline in his autobiography *The Ragman's Son* (1988) and again in his recent memoir *I Am Spartacus* (2012).<sup>62</sup> Fast first “went public” regarding his break with the CPUSA in a *New York Times* front-page report on 1 Feb. 1957.

He immediately began writing *The Naked God*, his explanation (but hardly an apology) for not leaving the Party earlier.<sup>63</sup> It was published in early December 1957 and may be considered the point at which Fast’s “rehabilitation” within the literary world succeeded.<sup>64</sup> Thus it is no accident that Eddie Lewis presented Kirk Douglas with Fast’s *Spartacus* as a 41<sup>st</sup> birthday gift on 9 December 1957, urging that Bryna should film it. The novel could now be optioned openly (after a USA publication ban of almost seven years), but that did not involve a previously arranged “deal.” Optioning was done within a month, with Fast’s agent gaining the concession that the first-draft screenplay would be written by Fast. The option fee of \$100 was an “inside” joke. Fast was eventually paid \$75,000 when his film treatment and initial script were completed by the end of June 1958.<sup>65</sup> He did not know that Douglas and Lewis had already decided to replace him with Trumbo, or that Trumbo’s screenplay was well underway.

When Fast left Hollywood at the end of June 1958, his draft was “buried” by Douglas. On several occasions over the next year, Fast was kept abreast of the film project, first by Douglas on 3 November 1958, and then by Mann in early 1959 following his dismissal as director.<sup>66</sup> Fast had no further active role in *Spartacus* until he was recalled by Douglas, almost certainly with the intercession of Kubrick, in early June 1959. His return was due to a major crisis: a planned “strike” by Trumbo was underway, and it threatened the completion of *Spartacus*. Gold’s column had correctly identified three aspects of this in advance: tensions regarding the film’s story line, Trumbo’s status as a gifted blacklist writer, and Fast’s involvement in salvaging the script based on his book. The outlines of how this crisis began are only now beginning to be understood. Before turning to the last of Trumbo’s points of disagreement with Gold, the sequence of events that precipitated the strike, excerpted from the Timeline in *Appendix Two*, is set out here:

**Late May:** The California branch of the *American Legion* again attacks Hollywood film studios (U-I in particular) for secretly using blacklisted writers like Trumbo.

**26 May:** KD sends latest version of script to Fast, alerts him that he may be needed shortly for re-writes.

**30 May:** Gold’s “Winds of Freedom in Hollywood” column runs in the weekly *People’s World*.

**31 May:** Trumbo sends two telegrams to Lewis (and Douglas) announcing he is going on strike.

**1-7? June:** Douglas attempts to use a Bryna blacklisted screenwriter for needed script revisions.

**2 June:** Trumbo writes letter of response to *People's World* editor Al Richmond.

**3 June:** Trumbo writes to Edward Lewis regarding payments made for work on *Spartacus*. He encloses a dated, inscribed copy of his reprinted 1939 novel *Johnny Got His Gun*.

**7-8? June:** Douglas (with assistance from Kubrick) convinces Fast to return to Hollywood.

Fourth, but not specifically related to the foregoing three points, is Trumbo's rebuttal of Gold's philosophical or ideological observations. These are well worth noting because they speak to the contrasting beliefs in how creative individuals function within economic conditions of poverty or wealth. Gold is convinced "*that only in the period when freedom burned high in the mind of Hollywood that its greatest art was created* [emphasis added]."<sup>67</sup> For him it was the anti-fascist films of World War II Hollywood that best demonstrated this point. Yet in spite of what Gold saw as signs of a renewal of interest in some great social issues within the cinema community (e.g. *The Defiant Ones*, 1958), he questioned (point #9 below) why so many good authors of the Left have been willing to lose themselves in Hollywood. Not a single Leftist author is named. "Winds of Freedom" closes with a statement (point #10 below) that clearly betrays his myopic, blinkered view of potential creativity stifled by the ideological and political restraints on the 1950s film industry: "The years slip by and they never produce the great books some of them might have created in poverty and freedom."<sup>68</sup>

Gold improved his critique of *Spartacus* by aiming his concluding remarks at the twin hazards of filmmaking at that moment: The Motion Picture Production Code (aka Hays Code) monitoring of American cinema morality since 1930, and the McCarthy/HUAC-led vendetta against the entertainment industry in general since World War II.<sup>69</sup> By broadening his critique to embrace Hollywood as a creative *cul-de-sac* best avoided by talented writers, and insisting that poverty is necessary for authorial freedom of expression, Gold fell flat on his face. Trumbo's response to each point in the final two numbered paragraphs is characteristically sharp. He is noticeably neutral in his description of Hollywood as "the most influential medium for the communication of dramatic ideas, and that the movies made there are a very great art form ... that a good author might prefer writing [for than] to writing for other and older art forms."<sup>70</sup>

But Trumbo directed real scorn at Gold's argument that poverty is necessary for expressive freedom, and his focus goes far beyond Gold's focus on Hollywood: "Let Gold list the world's great literature; then let him divide the list

into those written in poverty, and those written in comfortable circumstances.”<sup>71</sup> He then singles out Karl Marx as a prime example of an influential author whose published ideas emerged not from a poverty he sought and embraced for its creative inspiration, but was instead a consequence of his personal life: poverty that he hated, and yet was unable to avoid. In the coda to his ten points, Trumbo broadens his criticism of Gold’s faults as a journalist to the profession at large when he wrote: “Most journalists, right, left, and center, have long ceased to look up the facts before they do their pieces. Facts might interfere with their predetermined theses. Therefore they invent facts to match the thesis—and thereby prove it!”<sup>72</sup>

### **Trumbo’s Strike: A Summary**

Trumbo felt that constant interference with his script was beginning to skew the story toward an emphasis on Rome and away from the slave rebellion. Gold must have learned this from his informant, and it probably irked Trumbo as a genuine concern regarding the film’s ultimate impact on audiences. Thus it was not a coincidence that within a day of “Winds of Freedom,” Trumbo informed Douglas and Lewis that he was “opting out” of production. His decision to strike did not blindside Bryna Productions, since Douglas had a back-up plan in place. The immediate counter-move was to assign a blacklisted staff writer as script-doctor, and when that failed bring in Fast to write the scenes needed to keep the final months of filming on track.

Gold’s intuition about Fast’s fill-in role as a script “carpenter” was accurate. Trumbo had calculated months earlier that a strike might be the only leverage he had left to “move the dial” on receiving screen credit for *Spartacus* and thereby, at least for himself, breaking the blacklist. Douglas was also walking a tightrope on this issue, with his Hollywood career in jeopardy. He and U-I would be bankrupt if Trumbo’s association with *Spartacus* ultimately torpedoed what was by then a more than \$10 million project. HUAC and the American Legion still posed a threat. Trumbo created an issue he hoped would be decisive, but one that he saw (via his “guerilla-war” strategy) as a “win-win” deal: break the blacklist, and allow studios to rescind the strictures of the Waldorf Agreement.

An outline of events can be created from the available sources even if certain points are disputed. Douglas went into great detail about an immediate meeting with Trumbo, an ensuing agreement that script interference by other cast and crew would end at once, and Douglas’ verbal promise that Trumbo’s name would be on the finished film. By the next day, according to Douglas, Trumbo had written and delivered new pages of script, and gifted Douglas with a signed copy of his just-reprinted novel *Johnny Got His Gun*. In Douglas’ account he had averted a catastrophe in the production schedule of *Spartacus*, and “stepped up to the plate” regarding the blacklist, all within less than one day.

There is no mention of any attempt to find a replacement for Trumbo during a negotiated settlement. Indeed, if the strike lasted only 24 hours as Douglas claimed, there would have been no need.<sup>73</sup>

Howard Fast remembers this “interlude” quite differently in his unpublished typescript entitled “Spartacus Revisited.” This includes a vaguely dated episode during which he reluctantly agreed to return to Hollywood.<sup>74</sup> Fast then details writing “twenty-three new scenes [that turned] the formless body of shot film [90 minutes at that point, which would become six hours by the close of filming] into a story with coherence and a beginning and an end.”<sup>75</sup> Fast’s recent biographer Gerald Sorin utilizes “Spartacus Revisited” in his own account of this episode, but unfortunately and mistakenly conflates it (as do both Douglas and Lewis, but in their case on purpose) with Fast’s initial Hollywood visit the previous year.<sup>76</sup>

Fast was at work on the script (including talks with Kubrick while viewing portions of the film) for about two weeks (9–23 June). During that time negotiations were started among the financial and legal staffs at Bryna Productions regarding Trumbo’s status as screenwriter and the possibility of granting him (as “Sam Jackson” or Dalton Trumbo) screen credit for *Spartacus*.<sup>77</sup> The importance of this cannot be overestimated:

By June 9, 1959 the problem [of Trumbo’s name associated with the script of *Spartacus*] became acute enough for Bryna controller Jeff Asher to suggest a meeting with Leon Kaplan and Lew Wasserman, president of MCA ... With Bryna and U-I executives discussing the possibility of screen credit for Trumbo ... the likelihood that his name would appear onscreen became even greater.<sup>78</sup>

Trumbo must have been aware of these meetings through Lewis or Douglas, and the sense that his strike was well timed must have been satisfying. On 23 June Fast returned to his home in New Jersey and Trumbo came back to work. When he went on strike he gifted Lewis with a signed copy of *Johnny Got His Gun*, and when his strike was over he presented Douglas with a second signed (but undated) copy.<sup>79</sup>

### Conclusion:

*“To put Christopher’s [Trumbo] questions [about who “broke” the blacklist] differently: How can a collusive, unwritten but uninstitutionalized agreement not to hire a particular group of people be “broken”?”*<sup>80</sup>

“Winds of Freedom” served as one, of several, “triggers” for Trumbo’s strike. Gold’s critique, inaccurate as it was in several respects, focused Trumbo’s thinking about what leverage he actually had to enhance his orchestrated bid to break the blacklist by openly receiving screen credit for *Spartacus*. His point-by-point

response underscores his concern that his association with the film, common knowledge in Hollywood by then, was badly misrepresented by Gold. The volatile, troubled mixture of ideologies and personalities represented by Gold, Fast, and Trumbo emerges clearly in the two documents under consideration. They are emblematic of the blacklist period in Hollywood, the setting that brought all three of them into focus. Gold's column alone, or Trumbo's letter in isolation, has little valence or value. But when placed within the context of Gold's declining career as an influential Leftist observer of American social and political mores, Fast's recent emergence from literary oblivion within the CPUSA, and Trumbo's then-marginalized existence in McCarthy-era Hollywood, looking closer at what is said in the column and in the letter gives context and colour to these important issues.

Howard Fast was a special target of Gold's invective because Fast's career as a writer *and* a CPUSA member had finally diverged, and by 1959 Fast enjoyed all the benefits of the redeemed red. Gold remained in 1959, a willing, but very captive Communist, who now fit "the stereotyped image of him as a venomously obedient [Party] *apparatchik*."<sup>81</sup> Gold and Fast had little in common. Both were first-generation sons of Eastern European Jewish immigrants. They were born, and grew up, in Manhattan, NYC a generation apart. They had little parental guidance and many siblings. Both joined the CPUSA in their late twenties, and both took a doctrinaire approach to its ideology. But apart from that their lives developed in very different circumstances. By the end of the Second World War, Gold's career was already in decline, and Fast's rehabilitation was on the ascendency. Fast experienced several months of work-camp imprisonment for contempt of HUAC, Gold was never jailed.

By the late 1950s Gold was ageing, ill, impoverished, and nearly forgotten as a voice in the Leftist movement. Fast's sidelined literary career was enjoying a resurgence, not least because of his association with *Spartacus*. In 1959 they were worlds apart; it is doubtful if Fast was even aware of Gold's existence, much less his column on "Winds of Freedom" in circulation the week he returned to resuscitate the project to film his novel.<sup>82</sup> Trumbo's strike on 31 May was prompted in part by Gold, and Fast's efforts to salvage *Spartacus* were far more important than Trumbo wanted to admit. Trumbo's concerns, enumerated in his response to "Al," are pragmatic, not dogmatic: this was not the right time for the CPUSA to start rocking the boat too hard from the outside. Trumbo and others should do that from within the studios that used blacklisted writers, and do it without provoking a major crackdown by HUAC.

Trumbo's response was emblematic of his personal split from the orthodox Left's approach to ending the blacklist, and of his willingness to leave old, bitter political conflicts (e.g. between Fast and the CPUSA) behind. The very fact that he had agreed to script Fast's novel is indicative of that conciliatory attitude toward Fast. There is considerable evidence of Trumbo's increasing frustra-



tion and tension with the CPUSA over the failed legal and other strategies that had been used to enable blacklisted to regain their careers. Trumbo was also aware of how blacklisted were being manipulated to support other causes and issues, because they could no longer be the rallying point themselves. As film historian Duncan Cooper has put it, “Trumbo was now quite willing, as Hollywood chronicler Jeff Smith implies, to abandon a ‘principled struggle’ with the studios and simply approach them on their own crass business terms, using even questionable methods (such as his strike idea), since those are the only ones that might work, to win a qualified victory over the blacklist.”<sup>83</sup>

Trumbo envisioned any campaign against the blacklist that was headed or organised or even sanctioned by the CPUSA as dead on arrival. Thus he hoped instead that the Center, not the Left, would be the prime mover for ending the blacklist. His response to Gold is part and parcel of this internal battle to keep the Party hardliners and the liberal Left from getting in the way and re-polarizing the entire situation within the Center.<sup>84</sup> In his letters to other blacklisted screenwriters during the past several years, Trumbo made that clear. Perhaps the best example is his letter to writer Alvah Bessie, one of the Hollywood Ten called to testify before HUAC in 1947. Trumbo wrote to him on 21 May 1958,<sup>85</sup> precisely when he began to script *Spartacus* with the hope that he might leverage screen credit for doing so:

Dear old boy:

For eleven years I have been trudging up and down the country from one banquet to another, being “honored” by left-wing organizations and causes as a representative of those defeated heroes, the Hollywood blacklisted. The point of all these appearances is not to break the blacklist, but to attract persons and money to the sponsoring cause. Hollywood blacklisted have adorned other causes long enough. They, like every other organization or group in the country, must from this point forward look strictly to their own best interests, and to nobody else’s. Interconnection be damned.

Hollywood blacklisted have suffered sixteen straight defeats in the courts. They can expect no legal relief. As of this day they have fewer civil rights than the editor of the People’s World or, for that matter, even than officials of the Communist Party...

The public fight against the blacklist has failed just as the legal struggle has ended. Such inroads on the blacklist as have been made thus far have not come through organisations or mass meetings or honoring banquets or petitions; they have occurred through the stubborn efforts of a very few individuals who have conducted a small guerilla warfare strictly on their own, and whose activities have produced valuable publicity in the popular press rather than just in the Left press. **It will be a continuance of these individual efforts that**

**finally breaks the blacklist, and not the work of any organization nor the result of any “fight”... [my emphasis]**

A restoration of good public relations for Hollywood blacklistees is the sine qua non of breaking the blacklist, like it or not. It is not good public relations for me to appear at an event sponsored openly or covertly by the People’s World ... This has no relation to my opinion of the People’s World or anything else; it has relation only to the cold-blooded needs of the most thoroughly trounced bunch of people in America ... The problem, after eleven years of seeking the absolute, is how to find qualified victory, and how much must be yielded to achieve it.<sup>86</sup>

It would be more than two years after this “manifesto” before U-I announced officially that Trumbo would receive sole screen credit under his name for scripting *Spartacus*. Between the time of his strike in May/June 1959 and that announcement there were still other hurdles. By the end of 1959, Trumbo was done with *Spartacus* and had already begun to salvage the bloated (400+ pages) screenplay for Otto Preminger’s *Exodus*.<sup>87</sup> That proved to be a fortuitous overlap of film projects for Trumbo. Sensing that the time was right to “out” Trumbo, Preminger announced on 19 January 1960 that the blacklisted screenwriter had scripted *Exodus* and that his name would be on the movie when it was released at the end of that year.<sup>88</sup> There is still some uncertainty about Preminger’s motivation and timing for his decision, and it was met with resistance from the usual array of right-wing organisations. But no uncertainty obscures the fact that Preminger had enabled U-I executives in August of 1960 to validate Trumbo’s role in *Spartacus* and publicly award him sole screen credit in an announcement to the media.

*Spartacus* was released to mixed reviews on 6 October 1960,<sup>89</sup> and *Exodus* a few months later. Both films endured some initial reactionary backlash, but both went on to enviable financial success. *Spartacus* garnered four Academy Awards in April 1961. No one expected Trumbo to be nominated for the Oscar for best screenplay in either movie, and he was not. Those who hoped that the blacklist would be “broken” for all who laboured under it were disappointed. Nevertheless Trumbo’s achievement was important: for the first time since 1947 a major Hollywood studio, rather than an independent company, had financed and released a film written by a blacklistee. Throughout the 1950s, Trumbo was among the highest-profile screenwriters working in secrecy. In the month of June 1959 he carried through on his promise to Alvah Bessie: it was Trumbo’s “individual effort” that made his strike, and breaking the blacklist for himself, a reality. Gold’s column, and Trumbo’s response to it, opens a small window into that troubled month, no doubt there is still more to see.<sup>90</sup>

## Appendix One: Gold's Column, Trumbo's Response<sup>91</sup>

Michael Gold on Hollywood and Howard Fast:

Gold's essay appeared in *People's World* Vol. 22 # 22 (30 May 1959) p. 6 under his weekly column "Change the World."<sup>92</sup> Numbers within square brackets [ ] are my own editorial insertions and refer to numbered points made in Trumbo's response to Gold's column (which directly follows this):

### Winds of Freedom are Blowing in Hollywood

Los Angeles

*A friend who works in the dream factories says the movies are fast becoming a sick industry. Layoffs, shutdowns, and unemployment have become the general pattern, and across the nation, hundreds of movie houses are expiring because of "tired blood."*

*The audiences are voting with their feet. They can now see mediocre pictures on TV for nothing. Yet, when a really good film comes along, the movie houses are crowded. Independent producers, not tied up as tightly as the biggest outfits, have therefore been dealing under the table with the blacklisted writers, among whom have been some of the best brains Hollywood money could buy.*

*Dalton Trumbo, for instance, has never starved for a day. Trumbo is considered among the top six best script technicians in Hollywood, with an enormous facility and know-how, I am told. He is the anonymous "Robert Rich," of course, who won the Oscar but could not claim it. Carl Foreman and Michael Wilson are other such blacklisted authors who have won anonymous Oscars with such pictures as The Bridge on the River Kwai and Friendly Persuasion.*

*The producers like this situation. They had the authors over a barrel and paid them a tenth and less of their customary fees. But latterly, this tidy arrangement has been breaking down. The underground authors have been surfacing. Carl Foreman's name has appeared openly on the pictures he has written and directed. Everything changes in the world, here as elsewhere. Slowly, the McCarthyite filth is ebbing with the great world tide.*

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[1] *Howard Fast is in town, helping them carpenter a six-million dollar production of his Spartacus. [2] It is to be one of those super-duper Cecil deMille epics, all swollen up with costumes and the genuine furniture, with the slave revolution far in the background and a love triangle bigger than the Empire State Building huge in the foreground.*

*The triangle in Fast's book is a Hollywood natural. It fits the place like a rubber cap. [3] Fast has the widow of Spartacus accept the love of the bloody Roman general who crucified him. This, as several of us pointed out when the book appeared, is about as false to life as if a Jewish widow should think of marrying the Nazi brute who had just burned her husband alive in the furnace.*

*Fast resented such criticism. We should have known at the time that an author who could defend such a perversion of history and human nature contained a secret rottenness at the heart. [4] It is just possible that he already had Hollywood in mind when he stood by his bunk of shiny paste. How rapidly after his declaration of allegiance to Wall Street did the movie tycoons sign [him] up? [5] Negotiations for a script contract usually take months. [6] It must have been a package deal—when he purged himself, the cash reward would be ready. Rest in peace, if possible, Howard Fast.*

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*By the way, where were the American intellectuals who so valiantly defended Boris Pasternak when Howard Fast needed to be saved? For years he [Fast] was blackmailed. No respectable publisher would touch him with a 40-foot pole. He was forced to publish his own books but not a book critic would give them a line of notice, not even to this six-million dollar Spartacus.*

*No, not one little star in the literary sky dared to twinkle for Howard Fast. They were carefully, prudently silent on such dangerous matters in the McCarthyite era. Fast had to prostrate himself before the dollar throne, turn himself inside out, spit on his decade of passionate experience and faith, before the publishers, critics, and "freedom fighters" of American literature dared notice him again. It is not the "Pasternakians" who will march on the picket lines of American freedom.*

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*Somebody should write a little history of freedom in Hollywood. It has had its own sad entombings and glorious resurrections, reflecting, of course, the state of the nation that contains the industry.*

*[7] It seems to me a historic fact that only in the period when freedom burned high in the mind of Hollywood that its greatest art was created.*

*The world struggle against the Nazis, the tragic war against fascism in Spain, then America's entrance into the world alliance to end the Hitler plague, all this inspired Hollywood to its finest hour. The American movie became a passionate voice of freedom, a teacher of the people, a leader in the fight of humanity against the Beast of Berlin.*

*That fabulous invalid, Democracy, has been again stirring in the dirt under which they buried her in Hollywood. [8] In a time when she seems dead, it is third-raters like John Wayne or Adolph [sic] Menjou who rule the roost. But now the bugles are*

*blowing and pictures like The Defiant Ones [1958] are appearing, to fight for the good old cause. The great struggle for Negro integration and full human rights fills the newspapers and is being reflected in Hollywood.*

*It is good to see this happen. Nevertheless, [9] I always wonder why so many good authors of the Left have been willing to lose themselves in Hollywood. [10] The years slip by and they never produce the great books some of them might have created in poverty and freedom.*

Dalton Trumbo on Michael Gold and Howard Fast:

Unsigned (two-page, typed) draft letter from Dalton Trumbo to "Al" dated 2 June 1959 (from the Trumbo Files, *Kirk Douglas Collection*, Wisconsin Center for Film & Theater Research, University of Wisconsin, Madison).<sup>93</sup> The page break is shown in square brackets:

*Dear Al:*

*This note refers to Mike Gold's article entitled "Winds of Freedom are Blowing in Hollywood." It is not for publication, nor should it be bruited about. Nonetheless I think both you and Gold would wish to know [how] wildly inaccurate the column is. I therefore enclose a copy of it, with a number preceding each sentence in which the inaccuracies occur. There are ten in all, as follows:*

*1 False. Fast spent six weeks in Hollywood a year ago in connection with Spartacus. He is not in town now, and he has had nothing to do with "helping them carpenter" the production or script of Spartacus since his departure.*

*2 The film is not a "super-duper Cecil de Mille epic"; nor does it rely on spectacle for its effects. It relies primarily on the combined talents of one of the most brilliant group of actors ever assembled for a single film: Olivier, Laughton, Ustinov, Douglas, Curtis, Simmons, etc. It is true that to do a film on ancient Rome you must build sets, and utilize costumes and furniture, and that the careful research of qualified scholars must be used to make them appear "genuine." It does not place the slave rebellion in the background, it places it in the foreground. It does not have a "love triangle bigger than the Empire State Building." It has no love triangle at all.*

*3 Fast's novel does not have the widow of Spartacus accept the love of the bloody Roman general who killed him. It does not have her accept the love of anyone except her husband. It does have her offer, in gratitude for her freedom, to allow a Roman politician to live with her in a different country, with the proviso that he understands that she will never love any man but Spartacus. The offer is rejected and she is glad. Without defending the situation, it is quite different from Gold's version that she "accepts the love" of any Roman, or of any man except her husband. And the Roman [that] Gold says she accepted was in the Fast book the Roman she specifically and repeatedly rejected.*

*4 Any author hopes Hollywood will purchase his books; and the author who does*

*sell his book to Hollywood may be certain that the works of the greatest writers in history have preceded him onto the screen.*

*5 I have negotiated the sale of many scripts. No contract took longer than two weeks to complete. Gold elongates the time because the inaccuracy is necessary to the erroneous deduction he intends to make.*

*6 I have personal knowledge that there was no package deal of any kind. The book was purchased exactly as any other book is bought. Gold's "must have been" to the contrary, *Fast* has here been lied about, and the speculative evidence upon which the lie is founded is flatly untrue. [End of p. 1]*

*7 The left-wing press did not say so at the time; and the left-wing theoreticians said the opposite.*

*8 As a motion picture actor in the kind of motion pictures he is suited for, John Wayne is no third-rater: he is one of the two or three most popular film actors in the world, and perfectly competent in the roles to which he confines himself. Adolphe Menjou is a first-rate actor in any medium he chooses, and always has been.*

*9 Two reasons come to mind: motion pictures are the most influential medium for the communication of dramatic ideas in the world, a fact recognized by every civilized government on earth, and by all political parties. There is no reason why good authors shouldn't work in such a medium. Then again, motion pictures are a very great art form, and it is conceivable that a good author might prefer writing [for] them to writing for other and older art forms.*

*10 Somewhere I have heard it hinted that poverty is the deadliest enemy freedom can have. I am startled to discover the two qualities here bracketed as virtues. Let Gold list the world's greatest literature; then let him divide the list into those written in poverty, and those written in comfortable circumstances. The reason the poverty list is so short, and the comfortable list so long, is poverty—the enemy of freedom and creativity. Among the books listed under poverty one will find Karl Marx. But it proves nothing in favor of poverty, since Marx spent his whole life raging and cursing against a poverty which did not give him Mike Gold's bohemian freedom, but which, on the contrary, he felt limited his efforts and hindered its work and narrowed its possibilities.*

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*There you have it. Mike Gold has made savage comments about a book he clearly knows nothing about. Then he has announced, in advance of seeing it, precisely what sort of film will be made from the book. He knows nothing about the book, nothing about the film, nothing about the screenplay or who wrote it, nothing about the circumstances under which the book was purchased. I presume his readers will believe this mélange of untruth. That is too bad. But I am persuaded it isn't the first time it's happened, nor will [it] be the last. Most journalists, right, left, or center, have long since ceased to look up the facts before they do their pieces. Facts might interfere with their predetermined theses. Therefore they invent facts to match the thesis—and thereby prove it!*

**Appendix Two: Timeline: May – June 1959**

**1 May:** The *LA Times* reports that former President Harry S. Truman denounces HUAC for the second time that spring.

**Early May:** *American Legion Magazine* (May, 1959) runs a strong anti-Communist editorial in which the entertainment industry, including Hollywood, is singled out for stringent criticism.

**Mid-May:** Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun* (1939) republished in paperback edition.

**Late May:** The California branch of the *American Legion* attacks Hollywood film studios (U-I in particular) for secretly using blacklisted writers like Trumbo.

**26 May:** KD sends latest version of script to Fast, alerts him that he may be needed shortly for re-writes.

**30 May:** Gold's "Winds of Freedom in Hollywood" column runs in the weekly *People's World*.

**31 May:** Trumbo sends two telegrams to Lewis (and Douglas) announcing he is going on strike.

**1-7? June:** Douglas uses an unnamed Bryna blacklisted screenwriter for needed script revisions.

**2 June:** Trumbo responds to Gold's column in a letter to *People's World* editor Al Richmond.

**3 June:** Trumbo writes to Edward Lewis regarding payments made for work on *Spartacus*. He encloses a dated, inscribed copy of his reprinted novel *Johnny Got His Gun*.

**7-8? June:** Douglas (with assistance from Kubrick) convinces Fast to return to Hollywood.

**9 June:** Bryna comptroller Jeff Asher suggests a meeting with Bryna lawyer Leon Kaplan to discuss adding Trumbo to list of writers' names eligible for screen credit for *Spartacus*.

**9-11 June:** Fast and Kubrick review the completed footage and note the needed changes.

**12 June:** Howard Fast begins writing new scenes for *Spartacus*.

**22 June:** Fast completes writing twenty-two new scenes for *Spartacus*.

**23 June:** Fast departs for his home in New Jersey. He is paid \$4,000 for his script contributions.

**Late June:** Douglas promises Trumbo that he will receive full credit as writer of *Spartacus*. Trumbo returns to work, gifts Douglas with an inscribed copy of *Johnny Got His Gun*.

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**NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> Duncan Cooper, Tom Sayers, and Dori Seider read through an earlier version of this article. I am especially grateful for suggestions about improving the overall presentation made by the two anonymous readers. What blemishes remain, of fact or of interpretation, are my responsibility. My use of the “historical present” in writing of past events is a personal choice for this article. I am aware of the number and density of endnotes, due to the complexity of this article’s subject.

<sup>2</sup> The “Commie” characterizations are attributed to right-wing columnist Hedda Hopper by Kirk Douglas in *The Ragman’s Son* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988) 332. They are not reprised in Douglas’ later memoir *I Am Spartacus* (2012).

<sup>3</sup> The development of this movie project, and the coeval rival project to film Arthur Koestler’s novel *The Gladiators*, is dealt with in detail in my review essay: H.I. MacAdam, “Spartacus Redivivus: Hollywood’s Blacklist Remembered,” *Left History* 16.2 (2012) 55-71. Published and unpublished sources utilized there are now supplemented by those cited throughout this article.

<sup>4</sup> In a Letter to Dan Lundberg (9 April 1959) Trumbo wrote: “I will not answer any questions concerning my present work... I will, of course, be willing to say that I have been steadily employed throughout the blacklist (twelve years of it for me), and that I am presently steadily employed, and that my commitments last many months into the future.” See Helen Manfull (ed.), *Additional Dialogue: Letters of Dalton Trumbo, 1942-1962* (New York: M. Evans & Co., Inc., 1970) 487. Lundberg’s KPOL (Los Angeles) radio “talk” show planned to feature Trumbo as one of several interviewees on the subject “Is the Hollywood Blacklist Shelved?” Trumbo’s letter set limits on the content of the questions to be asked during his scheduled 12 April 1959 appearance.

<sup>5</sup> One of several publications of the American Communist Party (hereinafter CPUSA). *People’s World* served as the west coast edition of the *Daily Worker*, which also became a weekly in the late 1950s.

<sup>6</sup> See Richmond’s obituary in the *New York Times* (9 Nov. 1987) for basic biographical data, and his autobiography (*A Long View From the Left: Memoirs of An American Revolutionary*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1973) for details of his turbulent career in journalism after the Second World War including a year in federal prison for conviction under the Smith Act in 1951. There is no “Al Richmond Archive” at Tamiment Library or any other institution or library searchable through the finding aid <https://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/>. A separate online search of The Labor Archives and Research Center (LARC) at the J. Paul Leonard Library at San Francisco State University found Richmond material related only to the Smith Act. My thanks go to Sarah Moazini, Reference Associate at Tamiment Library, and Catherine Powell, Director of the LARC, for



assisting in this search. More biographical background on Richmond is at <http://jfk.hood.edu/Collection/White%20Materials/White%20Magazines%20And%20Articles/Tocsin/03-04-64.pdf>, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Manfull's edited volume of Trumbo's letters (*Additional Dialogue*) is noted above. Biographies of Trumbo are mentioned here in context, notably the latest: Larry Ceplair and Christopher Trumbo, *Dalton Trumbo: Blacklisted Hollywood Radical* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2015). Chris Trumbo died in 2011, leaving notes and documents to be utilized by Ceplair.

<sup>8</sup> There is no correspondence in the Mike Gold files at the Tamiment Library at NYU.

<sup>9</sup> Gerald Sorin, *Howard Fast: Life and Literature in the Left Lane*, (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 2012). Readers should be aware that although this is a hostile biography, it is by no means unfair.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Folsom ed., *Mike Gold: a Literary Anthology* (New York, International Publishers, 1972).

<sup>11</sup> Folsom entitled his *Introduction* "The Pariah of American Letters" *Mike Gold*, 7-20 and then characterized this anthology of Gold's writings thusly: "There is something here to offend every taste and opinion, my own included, and that is how it should be" Fulsom, 19.

<sup>12</sup> *Mike Gold* 8. Michael Folsom seems to be known *only* for this edited collection.

<sup>13</sup> *A Long View* 382. Richmond included the observation: "... within the boundaries generally defined by its primary Communist base, the paper enjoyed a considerable autonomy, enhanced by a consensus .... that it should strive to reflect (not merely reach) a constituency broader than the party." Blacklisted screenwriter Alvah Bessie contributed reviews to *PW* as "David Ordway."

<sup>14</sup> He was overly pessimistic. *PW* survives today online at [peoplesworld.org](http://peoplesworld.org).

<sup>15</sup> *A Long View*, 382-383. Richmond's writers also included a blacklistee: "A two-page spread on culture and entertainment was presided over for some years by Alvah Bessie, [who, like Trumbo, was] one of the Hollywood Ten ..." (Ibid. 383). *Additional Dialogue* (1970) includes two letters from Trumbo to Bessie, and extracts from a third. See the Conclusion for my comments on them.

<sup>16</sup> *Dancing in the Dark: A Cultural History of the Great Depression* (New York, Norton & Co., 2009). Dickstein allotted Gold's *Jews Without Money*, as a prime example of Depression-era social literature, a large section of Chapter 2: "Michael Gold's Book of Nightmares" (19-29). It opens with a statement that may serve as an epitaph for Gold: "Unlike other American writers who flirted with Communism only at the height of the Depression, Gold came to the Party early and stayed late" 19.

<sup>17</sup> Kevin Mattson in *Dissent Magazine* (Winter, 2010). <http://www.morrisdickstein.com/dancing-in-the-dark/kevin-mattson-review-of-dancing-in-the-dark>.

<sup>18</sup> Trumbo scripted just over two-dozen films between 1936 and 1946, notably *Kitty Foyle* (1940) and *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* (1944). See Peter Hanson, *Dalton Trumbo, Hollywood Rebel: A Critical Survey and Filmography* (Jefferson, NC; McFarland & Co., 2001). Chapters 2-4 discuss these early films in detail, with the full filmography register at 209-226. Surprisingly there is *no filmography* in Bruce Cook, *Dalton Trumbo* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1977), and no register of Trumbo's film's *before the blacklist* in Larry Ceplair & Christopher Trumbo, *Dalton Trumbo* (Lexington, The University Press of Kentucky, 2015) except as they are mentioned within the book's biographically constructed "Chronology" (589-593). In the *Appendix* to that volume is a detailed list of Trumbo's "Black-Market Work," including "Deals," "Consultations," and "Original Treatments & Unsold Scripts" (585-588).

<sup>19</sup> In their discursive and anecdotal final chapter of *Hide in Plain Sight*, Buhle and Wagner give us a glimpse into the bittersweet decades following Trumbo's decisive breach of the blacklist. It is a salutary reminder of how long it took some blacklistedees to find redemption; others never did.

<sup>20</sup> The best so far is the 85 min. documentary *Trumbo* (Magnolia Home Entertainment, 2009).

<sup>21</sup> From an interview with actor/writer/director/producer Berry by Patrick McGilligan in his and Paul Buhle's *Tender Comrades: A Backstory of the Hollywood Blacklist* (New York: St. Martin's Griffen, 1997) 88.

<sup>22</sup> *I Am Spartacus! Making a Film, Breaking the Blacklist* (New York: Open Road, 2012). See also my review essay "*Spartacus Redivivus*" in *Left History*, 16.2 (Fall/Winter (2012), 55-71 based on that memoir. Some issues raised in that essay are expanded upon here.

<sup>23</sup> As a preliminary to that publication, see Lewis' series of four biographical interviews with film critic/historian Larry Ceplair conducted at the University of California at Los Angeles in late Aug. and early Sept. 2012. Transcripts are available through the UCLA Library's Center for Oral History Research at <http://oralhistory.library.ucla.edu/Browse.do?descCvPk=479210>. The transcripts are unedited. My thanks go to Duncan Cooper for knowledge of this important source.

<sup>24</sup> Also timely for a personal reflection on Hollywood and the blacklist is Lee Grant, *I Said Yes to Everything: A Memoir* (New York: Blue Rider Press, 2014). Actress Grant was blacklisted from 1955 to 1967. Surprisingly she has little to say about Trumbo and the making of *Spartacus*. Her career is representative of those blacklistedees throughout the entertainment industry for whom no "break" came when Trumbo's name reappeared on movie screens (*Spartacus; Exodus*) in

late 1960.

<sup>25</sup> Larry Ceplair and Steven Englund, *The Inquisition in Hollywood: Politics in the Film Community, 1930-60* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2003). The upper chronological limit of the title stunts the study, which devotes fewer than two pages to the “end” of it with full recognition of Trumbo’s scripting of *Spartacus* and *Exodus*. But see the authors’ “Postscript” in this latest edition. The same chronological “restriction” applies to Victor S. Navasky, *Naming Names* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2003). This third edition also includes an “Afterword” by the author.

<sup>26</sup> Manfull, *Additional Dialogue*, 469. The figure of \$100,000 (approximately \$750,000 in today’s dollar value) is a generic sum which top-ranking screenwriters earned. Trumbo had worked for far less at the beginning of the blacklist (hence the \$10,000 figure, also generic).

<sup>27</sup> In the midst of his intense work on *Spartacus*, his correspondence, and his activism with the media, Trumbo found time to write an introductory essay to a re-print of his controversial anti-war novel *Johnny Got His Gun* (1939). The “Introduction” is dated *25 March 1959*. See below for Trumbo’s “presentation” of this reprint to Lewis and Douglas after its publication in May.

<sup>28</sup> Trumbo’s letter of 24 Feb. 1959 to Wilson is of paramount importance. It is 5 ½ printed pages in Manfull, *Additional Dialogue* 480-486. In it Trumbo reflects on the present state of the black-list, sets out a plan of future action for himself, Wilson, and Maltz (referred to in the letter as “this little union of three”), and clearly presents a personal challenge regarding his work on *Spartacus*: “[A]t a certain time, perhaps three months from now [i.e. end of May] or five months from now [end of July], when *Spartacus* is nearing completion ... I intend to make a frank power play. Depending on the circumstances of personal honor ... I am going to go on strike” (Ibid. 485). The month of June is the mid-way point. Trumbo was clearly waiting for the right moment.

<sup>29</sup> Trumbo’s 9 April 1959 letter to commentator Dan Lundberg (*Additional Dialogue* 487-488) is perhaps the best example of how Trumbo adroitly prepared his host for Q&A on TV. It contains an explicit caveat: “Under no circumstances do I wish to be asked about any picture which I may or may not currently be writing” (488). Seven weeks later Gold’s column drew attention to the blacklist as “a tidy arrangement [that] has been breaking down,” and then cleverly juxtaposed Trumbo’s name with *Spartacus* without explicitly linking *that* blacklisted to *that* movie.

<sup>30</sup> *Additional Dialogue*, 489-490. She is aware of its singular importance: “The intricacy involved in the financial and banking affairs of a blacklisted is strikingly disclosed in this letter” (Ibid., 489 note 17). Coupled with his letter to Lundberg noted above, the telegrams to Lewis, and his response to Gold’s column, it is

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clear that Trumbo had already set his strike plan in motion.

<sup>31</sup> For *Spartacus* Trumbo was promised \$75,000, but Douglas saw to it that the final amount was \$100,000 plus 4% of the producer's share of the film's net income.

<sup>32</sup> The complete series of columns are reproduced as a unit in Folsom, *Mike Gold* 292-319: "A Jewish Childhood in the New York Slums." In the footnote on p. 292 Folsom reveals that Gold's assessment of them collectively was a "sequel" to his autobiographical novel, *Jews Without Money* (1930).

<sup>33</sup> The "Winds" column represents an abrupt break in that sequence. It indicates that Gold took time out to write a "one-off" report on what he was learning of troubles on the set of *Spartacus*. On 27 June he took another break, but this time the topic was "Socialism Can Give Us Each \$25,000 a year..." My thanks to Sarah Moazeni, Reference Associate at the Tamiment Library, for checking the titles of Gold's columns published in *PW* between April and July of 1959.

<sup>34</sup> "Winds of Freedom," opening paragraph.

<sup>35</sup> A brief (two-page) statement signed by the major studios in late 1947 agreeing not to hire blacklisted: actors, writers, directors, etc.

See: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waldorf\\_Statement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waldorf_Statement).

<sup>36</sup> The American Legion was one of several right-wing military groups (others were the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Catholic War Veterans) active in pro-blacklist activities since 1947. But when Trumbo (under the pseudonym "Richard Rich") won the screenwriting Academy Award for *The Brave One* (1956), the pressure on studios was intensified. HUAC threatened to re-visit Hollywood during 1959, and Trumbo feared that new hearings would "totally destroy the subterranean market for blacklisted work it had taken almost a decade to develop" (Ceplair, *Dalton Trumbo*, 341 & 644 note # 13).

<sup>37</sup> "Winds of Freedom," paragraph 2.

<sup>38</sup> "Winds of Freedom," paragraph 3.

<sup>39</sup> When the charges against the "California Fourteen" were dropped in 1957 Trumbo again left the Party. See Ceplair, *Dalton Trumbo* 316-319. In effect, Fast and Trumbo joined (1943) and left (1957) the CPUSA in the same year. They had also been imprisoned the same year (1950).

<sup>40</sup> The best account of Fast's *volte-face* in 1956-57 is the chapter devoted to it ("Howard Fast: The Writer") in Phillip Deery, *Red Apple: Communism and McCarthyism in Cold War New York* (New York: Empire State Editions, 2014) 39-73. An earlier version of this was published by Deery as "Finding His Kronstadt: Howard Fast, 1956, and American Communism," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 58.2 (2012) 81-202.

<sup>41</sup> "Winds of Freedom," paragraph 5.

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<sup>42</sup> See my “*Spartacus Redivivus*” 60; 64-65 and the sources quoted there for a summary of the major issues debated as the movie’s story-line developed and then imploded during production.

<sup>43</sup> Gold responded to Maltz’s article in *The New Masses* (12 Feb. 1946) which argued for easing the rigidly doctrinaire approach of the CPUSA toward the Party’s more “creative” writers. Gold blasted Maltz in four successive columns in the *Daily Worker* between mid-February and mid-March of 1946. These are reprinted as “The Storm Over Maltz” in Folsom, *Mike Gold* 283-291.

<sup>44</sup> Gold had moved to California and “retirement” in 1957 after a sojourn in France after WWII, and then a speaking tour of the USA during the mid-1950s. He resumed writing his column for *The Daily Worker* through its transition to becoming the West Coast weekly *People’s World* in the late 1950s, and continued contributing his *Change the World!* column until “... his final one, a brief farewell, appeared on 30 July 1966” (Richmond, *A Long View* 383). Gold died the next year, before the soul-searching that Richmond underwent regarding the “Prague Spring” of 1968.

<sup>45</sup> Vol. 66.5 (May 1959) 6. The editorial is unsigned but attributed to Editor Joseph C. Keeley. For a pdf version see: <http://archive.legion.org/handle/123456789/3896>. This edition went on sale at the same time that the *Los Angeles Times* (1 May 1959) reported that “Truman Again Rips House Committee” (p. 28). This was the second time that spring that former Pres. Harry Truman had publicly denounced HUAC as “... the greatest danger to freedom of speech in America.”

<sup>46</sup> “Winds of Freedom,” paragraph 4.

<sup>47</sup> Gold asks: “I always wonder why so many good authors of the Left have been willing to lose themselves in Hollywood?” When he wrote that he may have recalled his satirical essay of more than 30 years earlier in which the giddy capitalism of “The Roaring `20s” was depicted as a runaway train to Hollywood. See “Faster, America, Faster! A Movie in Ten Reels” in Folsom, *A Literary Anthology* 140-147 (a reprint of Gold’s original in the *New Masses*, November 1926).

<sup>48</sup> “Winds of Freedom,” paragraph 13.

<sup>49</sup> Whether the letter was sent and received is less important than the fact that we have it. It speaks to issues Trumbo faced at that moment, not simply to correcting errors of fact in Gold’s column. We know that Trumbo sometimes held back from mailing contentious letters. A case in point is one of 27 Sept. 1959 to B.B. Kahane (then head of the MPA&S), who had accused him of “doing ‘undercover work’ for Communism.” See Ceplair, *Dalton Trumbo* (2015) 401-402. In this case his response to Gold is clearly a plea for Richmond to “cool” the rhetoric used by Gold.

<sup>50</sup> This precise date (one of several to follow) is now provided by Ceplair, *Dalton*

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*Trumbo* (2015) 380 note 58. Douglas and Lewis anticipated this problem, and made provision for Fast's help.

<sup>51</sup> Mann's abrupt departure (fully paid) meant that he could retail what he wanted to about the making of *Spartacus*. Trumbo's biographer Bruce Cook put it bluntly: "Mann, who was miffed at Douglas, began talking quite freely around town about just who 'Sam Jackson' [Trumbo's pseudonym at Bryna] really was. Eventually, even the gossip columnists picked it up." *Dalton Trumbo* (1977) 271-272. By May 1959, Trumbo's writing of *Spartacus* was commonly assumed.

<sup>52</sup> Olivier and Laughton had directed; Laughton and Ustinov had written plays and/or scripts. Kubrick himself had written or co-written several screenplays. The result was a volatile mixture.

<sup>53</sup> The outlines of this deceptive scenario first came to light in Cook, *Dalton Trumbo* (1977) 270-273. More details emerged in Douglas' autobiography, *The Ragman's Son* (1988) Ch. 25 "The Wars of Spartacus" (esp. 306-312). That account was amplified in *I Am Spartacus* (2012) esp. 47-55. It is given only a single sentence in Ceplair, *Dalton Trumbo* 373: "For the next six weeks, Fast and Trumbo were writing separate scripts."

<sup>54</sup> Douglas, *I Am Spartacus* 125; Ceplair, *Dalton Trumbo* 381. There are some small differences in the wording of the text in these two sources. The final sentence is found only in Douglas, and the precise date (31 May) is found only in Ceplair (649 note 64).

<sup>55</sup> Bryna Productions had four blacklisted writers "on call" in addition to Trumbo. In his "Spartacus Revisited," Fast recalls that just prior to his return to Hollywood "... three women in the office at Universal told me that [Douglas] had farmed out the job [script revision] to another blacklisted writer, and when I asked them how they knew this, they said that the other writer kept coming into the office and doing rewrites and changes on the spot ..." (4-5). Douglas omits any mention of Fast being summoned, or of the extensive re-writes he did after arrival, in *RS* or *LAS*.

<sup>56</sup> The dates 12-22 June are provided by Edward Lewis, (*Unpublished*) *Letter to The [Screen] Writers Guild of America, West, Inc.*, 23 June 1960. 4 at page 2, but Fast may have come a few days earlier to view film footage with Kubrick. My thanks go to Duncan Cooper for bringing this document to my attention. It is archived with other Trumbo material in the Kirk Douglas Collection at the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, University of Wisconsin at Madison. Fast biographer Gerald Sorin is well aware that Douglas and Lewis deliberately minimized Fast's contribution to the screenplay. See *Howard Fast* 341; 467 note 28.

<sup>57</sup> Whether Trumbo used Fast's initial script for re-writes done in late 1959 or even early 1960 is a separate issue. Clearly Douglas and Lewis wanted to keep Trumbo's contribution separate from Fast's, and to diminish as much as possible

Fast's overall role in *Spartacus*. Lewis' letter to the SWGA-West (see the previous note), asking that Trumbo receive *sole* screenwriting credit, bears that out.

Trumbo himself, in an interview with David Chandler on 2 Aug. 1960, admitted that Fast's script had practical value: "We decided it would be good for [Fast] to do the screenplay because we would have ... work that could be used, ideas, and also you have a [non-blacklist] name." Chandler/Trumbo on p. 5 of the 59 page. interview transcript in the Douglas Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society.

<sup>58</sup> Fast and Ustinov were not the only contributors to Trumbo's *Spartacus* screenplay. Kubrick as well as Douglas re-wrote scenes, sometimes during on-the-set breaks in filming. In the end, Trumbo contributed less than two-thirds, perhaps even as little as half. Terminology matters in deciding what is meant by a "complete script" beyond the "Revised Final Screenplay" of Jan. 1959. Duncan Cooper informs me that there was a "Cutter's Continuity" of Sept. 1959 and that a "Final Shooting Script" of Jan. 1960 still exists. The transcription of the restored (1991) movie's complete dialogue is available at [http://www.script-orama.com/movie\\_scripts/s/spartacus-script-transcript-kirk-douglas.html](http://www.script-orama.com/movie_scripts/s/spartacus-script-transcript-kirk-douglas.html).

<sup>59</sup> Those were the unkindest cuts of all, undertaken for both moral and political reasons: Douglas details them in *I Am Spartacus* (2012) 156-158. At issue throughout the entire production and post-production process was the degree of socialist or Marxist interpretation the film promoted.

<sup>60</sup> When Trumbo viewed Kubrick's initial screening of *Spartacus* in August 1959 his reaction was an 80 page. critique that led to major changes. Full discussion: *I Am Spartacus* (2012) Ch. 9.

<sup>61</sup> See Duncan L. Cooper, "Who Killed the Legend of Spartacus? Production, Censorship, and Reconstruction of Stanley Kubrick's Epic Film" in Martin M. Winkler (ed.), *Spartacus: Film and History* (Malden, MA & Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007) 14-55, 52.

<sup>62</sup> What Douglas presents in detail in both books is rendered in just three paragraphs by Ceplair, *Dalton Trumbo* 369-370.

<sup>63</sup> Fast's *Naked God* was very much a case of "too little, too late" for his many critics. Not least of them is his latest (and hostile) biographer Gerald Sorin, *Howard Fast*: 331: "The central and fatal weakness of *The Naked God* is that it fails to explore the most important question, not 'How could you *not* have known?' but 'What was it that held you in "intellectual bondage" long after the vast majority of writers, artists, and intellectuals had fled [the CPUSA]?" That was also Gold's view, though the latter's tone and choice of words demonstrate a purist ideologue's deep, personal contempt for Fast. Fast had not written *The Naked God* so that the film rights to *Spartacus* could be sold, but without that widely publicized "confession" no deal could have been made. Lewis credits wife Mildred with bringing *Spartacus* to his attention in late 1957.

<sup>64</sup> Sorin, *Howard Fast* 329 dismisses *Naked God* as “a hurriedly written hodge-podge of a memoir, an episodic and evasive document with which he hoped to reenter the commercial publishing market.” Nevertheless Sorin concedes that by 1961 “The ex-Communist, whose [novel] *Citizen Tom Paine* was banned by many boards of education in 1947, who could not travel outside the USA after 1949, and whose work had been banished from schoolbooks in the 1950s, appeared to be fully ‘rehabilitated’” (*ibid.* 340).

<sup>65</sup> The rejection of Fast’s script was due to its *quality*. Cook, *Dalton Trumbo* 270 quotes producer Eddie Lewis in a personal interview as saying: “He [Fast] simply couldn’t work quickly enough to do the job for us. We had to go to an experienced professional [i.e. Trumbo].” That is Lewis’ revisionist reasoning regarding the poor professional treatment given Fast at Bryna, exacerbated by Cook’s failure to interview Fast about this issue. Lewis told journalist David Chandler that Fast had been paid “\$15-\$20,000” for a film treatment and first-draft script during an interview of 6 April 1960 (p. 9 of the unpublished transcript, now in the Kirk Douglas Papers, WCFTR). The interview was one of many with the cast and crew of the film in preparation for a publicity book, *The Year of Spartacus*, never published. Lewis’ figure for Fast’s screenplay is substantially lower than the \$75,000 paid to Fast now reported by Ceplair, *Dalton Trumbo* (2015) 373. Trumbo was paid \$100,000 for his script, plus 4% of the producer’s net profit share.

<sup>66</sup> As Ceplair notes: “Douglas does not mention any of his conversations with Fast in either of his autobiographies” (*Dalton Trumbo*, 376). The November date is given by Ceplair on that page, as well as accounts of several other communications between Douglas and Fast into and beyond the spring of 1959. Mann’s contact with Fast is recounted in Fast’s “*Spartacus Revisited*” (1988) 4. This is Fast’s personal response to the publication of *The Ragman’s Son* that year. This 10 page typescript is in the *Fast Collection* at the University of Pennsylvania. For a pdf copy of this and permission to quote from it I am indebted to Nancy Shawcross, Curator of Manuscripts, and Elton-John Torres, Coordinator of Administrative & Reproduction Services. Both are on the staff at the University of Pennsylvania’s Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books, and Manuscripts.

<sup>67</sup> “Winds of Freedom,” paragraph 11.

<sup>68</sup> “Winds of Freedom,” paragraph 14.

<sup>69</sup> HUAC was created in late 1938 to monitor fascist (particularly Nazi) subversion, but it was not until the Cold War “Red Scare” after WWII that its full potential for investigative mayhem was realized. It survived until 1975 after a change of name in 1969 to the *House Committee on Internal Security*, HCIS). Various anti-subversive “committees” preceded HUAC, beginning right after WWI, that targeted American communists and communists of other nationalities.



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<sup>70</sup> “Letter to Al,” 2 point 9.

<sup>71</sup> “Letter to Al,” p. 2 point 10.

<sup>72</sup> “Letter to Al,” p. 2 last paragraph.

<sup>73</sup> The only detailed narrative source for Trumbo’s strike until now was Ch. 8 of Douglas’ *I Am Spartacus*. The fact that Fast was recalled and contributed new scenes is omitted by Douglas but confirmed not only by Fast himself, but by Lewis’ 1960 report to the SWG-W. More recently see the detailed (and corrective) narrative set out in Ceplair, *Dalton Trumbo* 379-393.

<sup>74</sup> “Spartacus Revisited” 5-8. Fast lived then with his wife and two children in New Jersey. His offhand remark (6) that his “kids were just out of school” independently provides an early-to-mid-June date for his recall and next-day trip to California.

<sup>75</sup> “Spartacus Revisited,” 7.

<sup>76</sup> Sorin, *Howard Fast*, 341. Sorin noticed “Nothing about Fast’s writing role in the summer of 1959 appears in ... *I Am Spartacus*” (*ibid.* 467 note 28). Fast’s tally of new scenes (according to the source) varies from 22 to 23 to 27. The latter number is mentioned in a 28 June 2000 radio interview: [trussel.com/hf/ancient.htm](http://trussel.com/hf/ancient.htm). In that interview he also asserts that “Douglas asked me to give the film credit to Dalton Trumbo, and said if we could do that we could break the blacklist.”

<sup>77</sup> Jeff Smith, “A Good Business Proposition’: Dalton Trumbo, Spartacus, and the End of the Blacklist” in Matthew Bernstein (ed.), *Controlling Hollywood: Censorship and Regulation in the Studio Era* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1999) 206-237 at 224 with endnote 72.

<sup>78</sup> Smith, *A Good Business Proposition* 224.

<sup>79</sup> *I Am Spartacus* 129. The inscription to Douglas is undated but must be late June 1959 because Fast did not leave Hollywood until 23 June. There is no mention of Lewis or Douglas receiving autographed copies in Ceplair, *Dalton Trumbo*.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* 400-401.

<sup>81</sup> Dickstein, *Dancing in the Dark* 21.

<sup>82</sup> There are two references to Gold in his *The Naked God* (1957). One is accusatory of Gold’s claim that Fast’s novel *Citizen Tom Paine* “had Trotskyite tendencies,” and another for Gold’s “denouncement” of Albert Maltz for wanting to liberalize the CPUSA’s strictures on members’ freedom in art and literature. There is no mention of Gold in Fast’s memoir *Being Red* (2000).

<sup>83</sup> This comment is part of a e-mail to the author on 10 February 2015.

<sup>84</sup> See (e.g.), Manfull, *Additional Dialogue* 414-417 (to Michael Wilson, 30 March 1958): 480-486 (to Michael Wilson, 24 Feb. 1959). My thanks to Duncan Cooper for drawing my attention to these two letters, and for several discussions (reflect-

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ed here) on Trumbo and the CPUSA.

<sup>85</sup> Manfull, *Additional Dialogue* 422-433.

<sup>86</sup> Bessie was then a contributor to the “literature and entertainment” section of *People’s World* under the pseudonym *David Ordway*. It was probably through Bessie that Al Richmond invited Trumbo to speak at this “event.” Bessie reviewed *Spartacus* favorably in *PW* (16 Dec. 1960): 6.

<sup>87</sup> Ceplair, *Dalton Trumbo* Ch. 9 offers the best current summary of Trumbo’s contribution to *Exodus*, but see also Cook, *Dalton Trumbo* Ch. 11 which covers both *Spartacus* and *Exodus*. Trumbo was Preminger’s third writer for *Exodus*, after author Leon Uris and Albert Maltz. It is to Preminger’s credit that he had chosen Maltz, who was also blacklisted. Maltz might have had *his* name on screen but for an impossible-to-film 400+ page script that Trumbo and Preminger managed to cut in half.

<sup>88</sup> Ceplair, *Dalton Trumbo* 378. Preminger made the announcement via a *New York Times* interview in which he also revealed publicly that Trumbo had scripted *Roman Holiday* (1953) and *Spartacus*.

<sup>89</sup> *Spartacus* won the Golden Globe for “Best Dramatic Film” of 1960. That reflected popularity not just among the foreign press who voted for it, but also with the film-going public outside the USA, particularly within the Soviet Union and socialist/communist countries such as Cuba.

<sup>90</sup> An important source on the background to filming *Spartacus* is the *Criterion Collection’s* two-disc edition (2001). This includes the limited film restorations made in the late 1990s. Personal commentary by a number of individuals who were central to making the film, including Douglas, Lewis, and Fast, are worth consulting. Their contributions were recorded during the restoration process. Trumbo died in 1976 leaving no extant recorded recollections of his contributions. Kubrick, who assisted the restoration, declined to offer a recorded commentary. He died in 1999, and Fast in 2003. Douglas (98) and Lewis (94) are alive and active as this goes to press. Lewis has promised a book of memoirs about his career in Hollywood, which should include at least a chapter on *Spartacus*.

<sup>91</sup> Grateful thanks to Kate Donovan, Public Services and Instructional Librarian, Rachel Yood, Collections Associate, and Sarah Moazeni, Reference Associate, all three at the Tamiment Library of New York University, for finding and scanning Gold’s article. Thanks also to film historian Duncan Cooper for drawing my attention to Trumbo’s letter, and for much good counsel. Permission to re-print Gold’s article comes from Theresa Albano, Co-Editor of *People’s World* in Chicago. Permission to publish Trumbo’s letter comes from Harry Miller, former Reference Archivist, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, and Lee Grady, his successor in that position. Thanks also to the Staff of the Robbinsville Library,

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and ILL Center, Mercer County (NJ) Library System, and the staff of the library at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ.

<sup>92</sup> For helpful assistance in providing a PDF reproduction of Gold's article, and for identifying the *PW's* editor in 1959 as Al Richmond, my thanks go to Kate Donovan, Public Services and Instructional Librarian, Rachel Yood, Collections Associate, and Sarah Moazeni, Reference Associate, all three on the staff of the Tamiment Library, NYU.

<sup>93</sup> Trumbo's 2 page. typewritten copy is a draft. In the paragraph numbered "10" on p. 2 parts of two lines, and one word, have been overtyped and corrected. In the closing paragraph on p. 2 two words have been overtyped and corrected. I am assuming that a corrected letter was sent to Al Richmond, that it was substantially unchanged from this draft, and that Gold also saw it. It is *not* among the Gold papers in Tamiment Library at NYU. There is no "Al Richmond" archive.

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