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Oh, Ya Got Trouble! Right Here in New York City! or Gotta Find a Way to Keep the Young Ones Moral After School: The Boycott of Hollywood, March-July 1934

Abstract

This article discusses the movie boycotts of 1934. These were started because religious groups, especially the Catholic Church, were concerned about the sexual and violent content of movies and how it was affecting children. The article states that it is unsure whether or not these boycotts and protests were agreed upon by the majority of Americans at the time, or if there was an amount of bias in reports from the time.

Oh, Ya Got Trouble! Right Here in New York City!

or

Gotta Find a Way to Keep the Young Ones Moral After School:

The Boycott of Hollywood, March-July 1934

Jenna Simpson

In the late spring and early summer of 1934, all hell broke loose in the American movie industry. Actually, the trouble started because critics of Hollywood felt that hell and all the vices that might lead a soul into it were already too prevalent on the silver screen. The uprising was led by church groups, educators, and women's clubs who sought to use the pressure of public opinion to "clean up" the "dirty" films that were being produced. The public was warned about the effects of movies on their children's morals and in response the people rose up in an impassioned boycott of the industry. Or did they? While concerned groups and individuals carefully played upon the heart-strings of conscientious parents and responsible adults, pointing out the duplicity of Hollywood producers and the dangers their products posed to the moral fabric of America, the true popularity of the boycott movement is questionable. It is difficult to determine the actual public opinion from the time because one must work from a limited number of sources, many of which may very well have been edited or carefully selected before they were published. I have based my research largely upon articles written at the time of the boycott, especially those from the *New York Times*, but I cannot be certain of the personal opinions and biases of the writers. The articles from contemporary magazines and newspapers do show great support for the boycott and a belief among many that the morals of children were indeed at stake, although there is reason to believe that the movement was not as widely popular as its proponents might have wished.

Efforts at censorship were nothing new in the motion picture industry. Chicago had founded its movie censorship board in 1907, and by 1908 was already refusing to allow theaters to show certain films. From the beginning there was fear that movies would be a corrupting influence on young minds. In 1912, Jane Addams feared that pictures were threatening "to fill youthful minds with that which was 'filthy and poisonous,' leaving them with 'a sense of dreariness' and 'a skepticism of life's value.'"¹ By the 1920s, the pressure began to threaten studios, as the cause of censorship was boosted by a number of Hollywood sex scandals and the infamous death of an actress at a "drunken Labor Day weekend party" with Fatty Arbuckle.² Fearing outside control, in 1922 the producers and directors agreed to a system of self-censorship through

¹ Stephen Vaughn, "Morality and Entertainment: The Origins of the Motion Picture Production Code," *The Journal of American History* 77:1 (1990): 40.

² Frank Walsh, *Sin and Censorship: The Catholic Church and the Motion Picture Industry* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1996), 25.

the new Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association (MPPDA). They hired William Harrison Hays, a Presbyterian elder, prominent Republican, and former Postmaster General, to be “their front man to clean up the image of the movies.”³

The studios didn’t live up to their promise to reform, however, and by the late 1920s the “kisses became so long and the orgies so spectacular” that censorship advocates were again at their door. Hays “came to the rescue” with a code of “don’ts” and “be carefuls” to guide the studios and reassure the public that the movies would be cleaned up.⁴ In 1930 the “defenders of the public’s morals rebelled” again, and once again Hays soothed the protesters with a code of conduct for the industry.⁵ This time Hays invited the input of a number of Catholic priests and laymen in the writing of the code, most notably Cardinal Mundelein and Father Lord.⁶ While this appeased the Church hierarchy and other protesters at the time, it was to backfire in coming years.

As before, Hollywood ignored its own rules. As an MPPDA representative explained, in the early 1930s a “studio relations committee. . . examined scripts, blocked out elements it considered objectionable, [and] held conferences with the producer.” When the movie was finished, a committee viewed the film. It could “object to the product in its entirety, or insist upon changes here and there. If the producing company did not agree, the matter was referred to a committee of three jurors—each of whom represented a neutral producer. They had the final word.”⁷ However, the jurors often traded favors, passing an objectionable film knowing that the film’s producer would return the favor when one of the juror’s movies was on trial. Hays had no real power to enforce the code and so it was often disregarded.

By 1934 the films had still not been cleaned up, and the time was ripe for another protest. One organization in particular laid the foundations for this new uprising: the Motion Picture Research Council (MPRC). The MPRC was led in 1934 by Mrs. August Belmont, and had such prestigious members and supporters as the President’s mother, Mrs. James Roosevelt; Dr. A. Lawrence Lowell, a former president of Harvard; the Rev. William Harrison Short; and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge. Belmont, speaking on national radio on the 22nd of March, 1934, announced that the organization, long an opponent of “indecent” in motion pictures, was officially starting a new movement for “the elimination of objectionable films, the production of pictures designed especially for children, and the production of new types of educational films.”⁸ Belmont announced that while the MPRC opposes government censorship and favors “the freedom of the community to select and reject material found in the films, it aims to limit

³ John Springhall, “Censoring Hollywood: Youth, Moral Panic and Crime/Gangster Movies of the 1930s,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 32:3 (1998): 137.

⁴ Douglas W. Churchill, “Hollywood Heeds the Thunder,” *New York Times*, 22 July 1934, sec. 6, p. 2.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Vaughn, “Morality,” 59-60.

⁷ “Film Parley Fixed By Mrs. Belmont,” *New York Times*, 28 June 1934, 9.

⁸ “Film Drive Opened by Mrs. Belmont,” *New York Times*, 22 March 1934, 26.

the subjects of crime, indecency, and horror so often displayed.”⁹ Coolidge, an honorary vice-president of the organization, said that they hoped to be “drawing in the junior leagues, the parents’ leagues, the women’s clubs and the other groups, so that we shall have the force of widespread concerted public opinion behind our efforts.”¹⁰ Belmont also spoke of spreading the movement, going to Philadelphia to support the creation of a new branch of the council and eventually resigning to devote more time to the cause.¹¹

The movement did in fact gain the support of women’s organizations and educational groups. The New York City Federation of Women’s Clubs opposed an official boycott of films but declared in late June of 1934 that it “would not relax the efforts it had been making for many years to select worth-while pictures and keep its members informed by monthly reviews” of which films were unsuitable.¹² Eleanor Roosevelt herself declared that the movie problem had long been “a question of great interest to women’s organizations, particularly, of course, because of the fact that moving pictures are so popular with children.”¹³ Dr. Harold G. Campbell, Superintendent of Schools in New York, added the voice of education to the argument, declaring that “much of the good that the schools are doing, especially in the field of character training and the development of right social attitudes, is being undermined and even thwarted by substandard motion pictures.”¹⁴ The National Education Association also put itself on the record as “joining in the fight against indecent movies and those glorifying the gangster influence.”¹⁵

Secular forces were certainly not alone in pushing the fight for traditional morals in movies. Catholic Church officials felt that they had been deceived by Hollywood producers, having been promised change when they helped shape the code in the early 1930s, and so they took a leading role in the new movement. In 1933 the Legion of Decency was founded by Catholics to oppose indecency in films. On May 7, 1934, the *New York Times* first published an article about the Catholic boycott movement, stating that priests in the Albany Diocese had asked their parishioners to “further a campaign for ‘clean movies’ by going only to theatres which show pictures that ‘do not offend decency and Christian morality.’”¹⁶ Soon Catholics all over the country were being asked to sign the Legion of Decency pledge boycotting “dirty” films, blacklists of objectionable movies were published, and the Hollywood boycott of 1934 was under way. The boycott took a more extreme turn in Philadelphia, where Cardinal Dougherty declared a total boycott of all films on May 23. Dougherty lashed out against the movies, declaring that a “vicious and insidious attack is being

⁹ “Movie Censorship Decried by Women,” *New York Times*, 19 April 1934, 27.

¹⁰ “Film Drive,” 26.

¹¹ “Youthful Crimes Laid to the Movies,” *New York Times*, 12 May 1934, sec. 1, p. 13.; “Film Parley,” 9.

¹² “Movie Producers Toning Down Films,” *New York Times*, 27 June 1934, 21.

¹³ “Movies Discussed by Mrs. Roosevelt,” *New York Times*, 10 July 1934, 19.

¹⁴ “Dr. Campbell Asks Reform in Movies,” *New York Times*, 24 June 1934, sec. 2, p. 24.

¹⁵ “Class Teachers Seek a New Deal,” *New York Times*, 4 July 1934, 16.

¹⁶ “Asks Indecent Films Ban,” *New York Times*, 7 May 1934, 20.

made on the very foundations of our Christian civilization, namely, the sacrament of marriage, the purity of womanhood, the sanctity of the home and obedience to lawful authority. This sinister influence is especially devastating among our children and youth.”¹⁷ Dougherty declared it a sin for Catholics to patronize any movie theater, whether its films were “decent” or “indecent.” While no other city had a boycott as comprehensive as that in Philadelphia, Catholic anti-film crusades spread across the nation, from Maryland to Georgia, and an estimated seven to nine million Catholics signed the Legion of Decency pledge.¹⁸

The Catholics were quickly joined by Protestant and Jewish forces. While these groups did not enter the Legion of Decency itself, they declared their hearty support of the Catholic movement and many urged boycotts of their own. The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, a leading Protestant organization, issued “a recommendation that members of Protestants [sic] denominations in the United States and Canada cooperate with the Legion of Decency, the Catholic organization for clean films, by refusing to patronize objectionable films” and by mid-July issued pledge cards for Protestants similar to those of the Catholic Legion of Decency.¹⁹ The Central Conference of American Rabbis, meeting in Pennsylvania on June 18th, also “deplored ‘the harmful influence exerted by many motion pictures upon the public mind and morals, and particularly upon the minds of youth and children.’”²⁰ In mid-July they resolved to join, “without reservation, the crusade,” and to preach it during the Jewish High Holy Days.²¹

For all of these groups, secular and religious alike, a main battle cry was the danger movies posed to the innocent minds of the young. A long-standing opponent of “dirty movies,” in 1928 the MPRC had commissioned a study on the effects of movies on children. It was financed by a grant of \$200,000 from the Payne Fund, a philanthropic establishment which regularly financed “children and youth research.”²² A number of “reputable sociologists, psychologists, and social psychologists” were responsible for the research, and the findings, known as the “Payne Studies,” were published in nine volumes in 1933.²³ While some of the studies were scientific and most of the books’ conclusions were carefully qualified, other elements of the Payne studies were, as James Rorty pointed out in the summer of 1934, “as silly-scientific as Walt Disney: for example the experiments in which a number of helpless boys and girls out of an orphanage, when exposed to the amours of screen lovers, promptly boosted the needle of the psycho-galvanometer. The ‘scientific norm’ in these experiments was the reaction of the

¹⁷ “Cardinal Dougherty Orders Film Boycott Throughout the Diocese of Philadelphia,” *New York Times*, 9 June 1934, 3.

¹⁸ “Aid Clean Films Drive,” *New York Times*, 15 June 1934, p. 19; “Georgia Bishop Asks Pledge,” *New York Times*, 12 July 1934, 15; Vaughn, “Morality,” 64.

¹⁹ “Federal Council Joins Movie Fight,” *New York Times*, 23 June 1934, 1.

²⁰ “Rabbis Denounce ‘Harmful’ Movies,” *New York Times*, 19 June 1934, 24.

²¹ “Goldstein Urges Clean-Film Board,” *New York Times*, 16 July 1934, 11.

²² Arthur R. Jarvis, Jr., “The Payne Fund Reports: A Discussion of their Content, Public Reaction, and Affect on the Motion Picture Industry, 1930-1940,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 25:2 (1991): 129.

²³ John Springhall, “Censoring,” 143.

fiancee of one of the experimenters to a kiss administered in the laboratory.”²⁴

Were the experimenters biased and using such “silly science” to get the results they wanted, or were the studies done in good faith? I have found little historical evidence pointing to the motives of the researchers themselves, although the careful qualification of many conclusions in the studies leads one to believe that they did try to maintain professional scientific standards. The MPRC, however, cannot be given such a lenient verdict. Many historians have noted that the MPRC commissioned the research with a conclusion already in mind, and when the experimenters did not come to that conclusion, they actually suppressed the information. As John Springhall writes, “one of the key projected studies, announced as *Boys, Movies and City Streets*, was [not published as a book] owing to its authors’ suggestion that film, instead of being the negative influence on social behavior predetermined by Short’s MPRC, could have positive educational value if used properly in schools.”²⁵ The study was only published as a journal article, where relatively few noticed it.²⁶

The Payne Study was further twisted for the MPRC’s purposes in *Our Movie-Made Children*, a summary of the study’s findings written by Henry James Forman that was the first volume of the study to be published. Forman “sensationalized” the results of the study, picking and choosing researchers’ conclusions without noting the researchers’ qualifications of those conclusions and highlighting “specific details that showed film’s dramatic effect on youth.”²⁷ This volume went on to become a best-seller and excerpts were printed in popular magazines, while Forman himself “toured the country denouncing the movies.”²⁸ Working from the Payne Studies, Dr. Frederick Peterson, a former president of the New York Neurological Society and the State Commission on Lunacy, informed concerned parents that the “sensational, criminal and vulgar suggestions of so many pictures are bound to produce a harvest of nervous disorders and moral disintegration” in children.²⁹ Dr. Bernard Sachs of the New York Academy of Medicine declared that “the moving picture, in its presentation of excessive sex drama and above all in its presentation of the gangster activities has become the veritable school of crime” and said “there should not be put before the public a new method of development and even of teaching crime, such as the gangster films of the day have revealed.”³⁰ Rev. Russell M. Sullivan, a pro-

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²⁴ James Rorty, “‘It Ain’t No Sin!’”, 1 August 1934, 125. James Rorty is an intriguing figure in regards to the Payne study. In this article he utterly dismissed the study’s findings and suggested that the movie boycott was misguided and silly. In 1933, a James Rorty wrote a series of articles in support of the Payne studies and suggested the creation of special movies for children in a set of articles in *Parent’s Magazine* (Jarvis, “Payne,” 133). If this is the same James Rorty, it would be interesting to know what made him change his stance. It may be that Rorty wrote his first articles before the full studies had been published: he refers to the books as “actual reports to be issued [in the summer],” although his article did appear in August (James Rorty, “New Facts About Movies and Children,” *The Parents’ Magazine*, August 1933, 57.)

²⁵ Springhall, “Censoring,” 142.

²⁶ Jarvis, “Payne,” 130.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 131-132.

²⁸ Springhall, “Censoring,” 144.

²⁹ “Film Drive,” 26.

³⁰ “Youthful Crimes,” 13.

fessor of philosophy at Boston College, warned that movies caused the “corruption of public morals, particularly the morals of boys and girls” and “teach our little ones the ennobling romance of ‘kept women’ and . . . the ‘uplifting ways of prostitutes.’”³¹ Cardinal Hayes wrote a letter to be read in every Catholic Parish in the Archdiocese of New York that declared: “Were the mothers of America aroused to the necessity of protecting their children from the moral defilement that lurks in every depraved motion picture they would shun the place that presents it as they would avoid with horror a pesthouse.”³² The Payne study findings were also distorted and sensationalized in *The Christian Century* and a series of articles in *The Parents’ Magazine*. The conscientious readers of *Parents’* were warned that “Attending one movie is equal to losing three hours sleep for a child even though he may go to bed at the usual time,” that “Horror pictures often sow the seeds of nervous disorders which are long-lived,” that “Passionate and emotional movies lead a child up to a pitch of action with little self-control left,” and that “Delinquent boys gave 32 different techniques of crime they learned from the movies.” The “standards of life as shown in the movies are just the opposite of those we hold up to children at home, school, or church,” the article declared, and then asked: “Would you choose the above forms of education for your children and the nation’s children?”³³

Many Americans picked up on this message of childhood corruption, and wrote of it in letters to the editors of the *New York Times*. Some wholeheartedly believed that the films were corrupting their children and fully supported the boycott. James J. Finnerty wrote to the *Times* on June 24, saying that the “harmful effect” of gangster films was “amply evidenced by the hundreds of young criminals admittedly influenced by such fiction.”³⁴ Another reader remarked that suggestive phrases from the movies like “come up an’ see me some time” were becoming catchwords innocently repeated by children. But “when the little mind demands an answer—what then?” he pointed out.³⁵ James M. Connolly wrote and opined that it was the duty of the public, and “especially [of] mothers and fathers of growing girls and boys,” to see to it that better movies were produced.³⁶

Even those who opposed censorship were well aware of the importance of children in the argument. Thomas M. Dobbins wrote that “if the proper method is used in our teaching in the schools and the home, moving pictures will no more make criminals of our children than they did you and me.”³⁷ Another letter asked of the boycott advocates: “who asks them to let their children sit through scenes

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³¹ “Cardinal’s Aide Assails Film Actresses As Teaching Indecency to Children,” *New York Times*, 23 July 1934, 18.

³² “Cardinal Declares War on ‘Evil’ Films,” *New York Times*, 13 July 1934, 14.

³³ Henry James Forman, *Our Movie-Made Children* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), quoted in “The Motion Picture Research Council Has Uncovered These Facts,” *The Parents’ Magazine*, June 1934, 61.

³⁴ James J. Finnerty, “For More Wholesome Movies,” editorial, *New York Times*, 26 June 1934, 18.

³⁵ Walter Scott Howard, “Brief for the Prosecution,” editorial, *New York Times*, 23 July 1934, 14.

³⁶ James M. Connolly, “Boycott, Not Legislation,” editorial, *New York Times*, 13 July 1934, 16.

³⁷ Thomas M. Dobbins, “Films Have Their Virtues Although Some Are Inane,” editorial, *New York Times*, 11 July 1934, 16.

whose themes and treatment are obviously designed for adult eyes and minds?"³⁸ One person directed the responsibility for children's morals back to the parents, writing that "neither the church nor the State can keep children away from adult pictures if the parents have not sufficient interest in their own offspring to do so."³⁹ And Viola Irene Cooper went so far as to write that she "would gladly exchange my early protected years for those of any boy or girl today who has been reared on 'talkies,' and be the better for it."⁴⁰ While all of these writers opposed the boycott and censorship movement, all accepted the premise that movies might have an adverse effect on children.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to know what the majority opinion truly was in 1934. The editorial section of the *New York Times* from March through July of 1934 includes the opinions of both those for and those against the boycott, but the news articles overwhelmingly speak of the movement's growth and successes. Only a few short selections mention groups such as the Association for the Preservation of the Freedom of the Stage and Screen, which was founded in early July to oppose the boycott and censorship movement. This may be because of a genuine lack of boycott protesters, or it could be because, "as Roy Howard, chairman of the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain, acknowledged, 'most newspapers are frightened to death of church sentiment and especially of Catholic church sentiment.'"⁴¹ It is especially hard to judge the motives of the *Times* because it catered to such a large and varied audience. However, the fact that the majority of the letters to the editor from this period are in favor of the boycott movement and the fact that all of the editorial pieces support the boycott lead one to suspect the possibility of a pro-boycott bias. Other periodicals from the time, such as *Commonweal*, *The Christian Century*, and *The Nation*, also included editorials on the boycott, but their contents can be seen to reflect their audiences. *Commonweal* was a Catholic publication and *The Christian Century* a Christian magazine. Understandably, these works published a profuse number of articles against the movie industry. In trying to ascertain the general public feeling at the time, I chose not to concentrate on the articles from these works. Similarly, while not as clearly declaring its affiliation, it is doubtful that faithful readers of *Commonweal* were also fans of *The Nation*, considering the general anti-boycott tenor of many *Nation* articles from the time and noticing the half-page ad that ran in the magazine on October 10, 1934. The ad promotes a book about "Sex Technique in Marriage," which features a section on "The Value of Birth Control."⁴²

It is also difficult for me to judge the general feeling of the nation because I only have articles written at the time to work from. Did Philadelphia Catholics stay away from the movie theaters because they disliked the films available, or

³⁸ Karl M. Chworowsky, "Censors Considered Somewhat Confused," editorial, *New York Times*, 15 July 1934, sec. 4, p. 5.

³⁹ N. L., "The Indifferent Public," editorial, *New York Times*, 29 July 1934, sec. 4, p. 5.

⁴⁰ Viola Irene Cooper, "Witness for the Defense," editorial, *New York Times*, 15 July 1934, sec. 10, p. 2.

⁴¹ Walsh, *Sin and Censorship*, 110.

⁴² *The Nation*, 10 October 1934, 409.

did they stay away because Bishop Dougherty had declared it to be a sin to attend? Did the Jewish community join the movement out of disgust at the films or out of fear of increased anti-Semitism? A quote from Dr. Goldstein, a representative of the Central Conference of American Rabbis at the time, suggests this possibility: since "as is generally known, so large a part of the persons in the motion picture industry are Jewish," the filth in films "is a species of national disgrace for us, in so far as Jews are responsible."⁴³ Were the supporters of the boycott really concerned about their children, or as Thomas Doherty suggests, were they feeling guilty about their own extravagances and the frivolity of the country in the Roaring Twenties?⁴⁴ And did Catholics, Protestants, and Jews around the nation heed the calls to a boycott that were reported almost daily in the *Times*? A lack of documentary evidence about the true feelings of those involved prevents judgment on these issues. It is impossible to even try to recover much of this information, as there simply is no library of personal journals recording the feelings of every single American living in 1934.

While the opinions of Americans in general cannot be truly measured, their actions can. And the actions of the American people in the summer of 1934 suggest that the boycott was not as popular as it seems. As Joseph Breen, who was put in charge of the Motion Picture code in response to the boycott, pointed out: "An obligation rests not only upon us [those with power in Hollywood] to raise the quality of the supply but also upon our friends to raise the standard of the demand."⁴⁵ The very boycott was based upon this theory: the producers would be forced to make cleaner pictures because they would lose money on any other type. However, it would seem that the "standard of demand" was not noticeably raised. On July 11, the *New York Times* reported that a survey in *Variety* showed "there was little or no marked effect from the spreading boycott movement. The survey shows that a number of pictures included in a recent Chicago 'black list' as 'indecent and immoral' are playing to crowded houses all over the country."⁴⁶ In fact, when Will Hays sent an agent across the nation to interview "newspaper editors, movie critics, theater owners, [and] local politicians" about the effect of the boycott, he found that the only place that experienced a noticeable negative effect was Philadelphia. "Everywhere else," the agent found, "a natural reaction occurred: People who might not otherwise go to the movies dashed out to their

⁴³ "City Clergy to Widen Film Drive To Clean Up Stage, Dance Halls," *New York Times*, 9 July 1934, 16.

⁴⁴ Thomas Doherty, *Pre-Code Hollywood: Sex, Immorality, and Insurrection in American Cinema, 1930-1934* (New York: Columbia UP, 1999), 22.

⁴⁵ "Movie Trade, Feeling Attacks, To be 'Careful,' Code Head Says," *New York Times*, 25 June 1934, 17.

⁴⁶ "Sunday Night Films in Churches Urged," *New York Times*, 11 July 1934, 19. The article goes on to admit that there was a decrease in earnings, but says that the *Variety* survey "attributed [them] to the heat and to the seasonal decline, although in Chicago and Philadelphia 'censor and church interference' and the 'church ban' were blamed as well as the heat." *Commonweal* also speaks of a decrease of 12 percent from the previous year's earnings, but attributes the decrease to the boycott. "Hollywood Wins a Truce," *Commonweal*, 20 July 1934, 2.

local theaters to see condemned films; regular moviegoers continued to attend as usual.⁴⁷ Even in Philadelphia the boycott began to peter out by autumn.⁴⁸

Despite the obviously mixed reactions to the boycott of 1934, Hollywood was worried enough to take serious action. Joseph Breen, a Catholic, was appointed to take the place of the three-man jury system, and beginning on July 15, 1934, he had the final word about the release of pictures. If a movie was released after Breen had rejected it, the producer could be fined \$25,000. The boycott had effectively convinced Hollywood that censorship was a serious threat, and the potential financial losses, when considered together with losses stemming from lowered receipts during the early years of the Great Depression and the studios' indebtedness from the conversion to sound, forced them to give in to the protesters' demands.⁴⁹

Thus the boycott of Hollywood, mobilized in the late spring and early summer of 1934, was highly successful. As Stephen Vaughn writes, after the boycott "the Production Code was exceptionally effective in regulating what people saw in theaters, and it continued to influence the tone of cinema well into the 1960s."⁵⁰ The movement brought together Catholics, Protestants, and Jews with women's clubs, educators, and social groups to bring about change in the movie industry. It achieved its goals largely by playing upon the parental instincts of the American public, going so far as to publish "scientific research" about the harmful influences of the movies on children. The full effect of this movement upon the mind of the American public is impossible to determine. A researcher is limited to the documents available, and even these may have been edited before they were published. I have only been able to work with articles from a limited number of sources, and out of both a lack of resources and the need for brevity I have had to ignore a number of important issues, such as the controversy over federal censorship, the roles that children themselves played in the boycott, and the specific doctrinal motivations that each religious group had in joining the boycott. However, I believe that I have been able to prove the importance of "childhood innocence" in the boycott and to show that the boycott was widely followed. The sheer number of groups and individuals supporting the movement offers proof that it stirred the minds of millions of people. While reports of the actual box-office receipts suggest that the boycott was not as universal as its supporters would have liked one to believe, there is ample evidence that the clean-movie campaign successfully created controversy over the effects of film in daily life and provoked change within the film industry.

⁴⁷ Gregory D. Black, *Hollywood Censored: Morality Codes, Catholics, and the Movies* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1994), 190.

⁴⁸ Walsh, *Sin and Censorship*, 117.

⁴⁹ Doherty, *Pre-Code*, 16.

⁵⁰ Vaughn, "Morality," 64.

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