



Inside Out: A Memoir Of The Blacklist

By Walter Bernstein

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During World War II, Walter Bernstein was a correspondent for the U.S. Army magazine *Yank*; after the war, he joined the Communist Party. When Senator Joseph McCarthy began his notorious witch hunt for Communists in the late 1940s, Bernstein—a writer for film and television—found himself blacklisted. For a decade he would scrape a living together by selling scripts through front men. Jonathan Yardley of the *Washington Post* has called *Inside Out* "a lovely piece of work . . . a memoir of the blacklist that, without minimizing any of its offenses or forgiving any of its architects, finds humanity and humor in the period." The author vividly recalls an entertainment community torn between those who were willing and those who refused to denounce their friends, and he provides unforgettable glimpses of leading Hollywood figures such as Burt Lancaster, Elia Kazan, Bette Davis, and Zero Mostel. The *Cleveland Plain-Dealer* has hailed this as, simply, "the best personal account of the era."

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Walter Bernstein was a war correspondent for the U.S. army magazine *Yank*. During World War II, he joined the Communist Party in 1946 after he was inspired by the Communist partisans in France and Yugoslavia. (He had interviewed Marshall Tito for the magazine.) Shortly afterwards Joe McCarthy's House Committee on Un-American Activities initiated its notorious witch-hunt for Reds in the government and, to garner publicity, in Hollywood, where Bernstein had become a writer for film and television. Though he successfully avoided appearing before the Committee, Bernstein was blacklisted, and forced to scrape a living together by selling his scripts through front men. In this memoir, he recalls the days of the blacklist, celebrates the movie business, and defends his political allegiances.

From Publishers Weekly

Those who saw the Soviet system as the hope of the future were embattled even before the Spanish Civil War became a focus for what was later called premature antifascism. For screenwriter Bernstein, the Communist Party of the 1930s opposed social and political injustice and had no Stalinist agenda. His wartime experience, including a period as a GI reporting about Tito for *Yank*, reinforced his ardor, and he obtained a Party card. Even earlier, however, Hoover's FBI was watching him, and when the postwar McCarthy witch-hunting began, he was a marked man. A blacklist based upon "terror, falsehood and profit" left him "isolated, marginalized, rejected and criminalized," able to write for film and TV only under pseudonyms. The furtive life working under fronts for a media world hostage to fear and hypocrisy has been exposed before, but Bernstein is the writer of the film about that contemptible era, *The Front*, and he vividly evokes the disgust only suggested on the screen. Yet the past, he confesses, has "a stubborn habit of conditioning the present." The memory of idealism, however subverted by Moscow, remains cherished by him despite the grossness of the gulags, the show trials, the crushed Prague Spring, the Red tanks in Budapest. There had been a cause, however vulnerable. Bitterness and nostalgia confront each other movingly in Bernstein's memoir, and the movie-addicted author's seemingly coincidental encounters, wartime and postwar, with the film musical *You Were Never Lovelier* have a symbolic resonance possibly even beyond his intent. Illustrations.

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From Library Journal

Bernstein, a screenwriter for countless television shows and feature films such as *Fail Safe*, *Paris Blues*, and *The Front*, tells his story as a survivor of the entertainment industry's blacklist of suspected Communists during the 1950s. Readers will come away with a palpable sense of what it was like for the writers, actors, and directors whose livelihoods were taken from them when their names appeared on secret lists that were maintained by studios, sponsors, and politicians alike. The author made his living during this period by using a "front"—someone who was not blacklisted whose name could be used for the purpose of selling scripts. Bernstein covers in human terms one of our nation's darkest periods, providing a degree of insight that is not found in most historical treatments of the blacklist era. Of interest to both general and informed readers, this work is recommended for all libraries.—Robert J. Favini, Bentley Coll. Lib., Waltham, Mass.

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Users Review

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Paula Salas:

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Craig Palmer:

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