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THE LIBERAL BIASES OF THE MOVIE-MAKERS

Are the movie-makers deliberately selling us leftwing, liberal propaganda on political and social issues? Or, are they merely free-enterprise entrepreneurs who are interested only in making fast bucks by giving the public what it wants?

Put another way, are the movies a maker of moral standards and social attitudes, or merely a mirror to reflect the changing mores of society?

The respected research team of Stanley Rothman (professor of government at Smith College) and S. Robert Lichter (assistant professor of political science at George Washington University) has made an important study of the decision-making group in the movie industry. Like the earlier Rothman-Lichter study on the elite group of people who run the national news media, this study of movie-makers reveals extreme liberal attitudes far out of touch with mainstream America.

Using Variety as a source to identify the writers, producers and directors of the 50 top-grossing movies from 1965 through 1982, Rothman and Lichter surveyed the attitudes of these most successful of Hollywood's movie-makers. The survey results are extremely revealing in exposing the bias of a group which we shall call the "movie elite," for the sake of convenience.

The movie elite overwhelmingly prefer the Democratic candidate for President, and the more liberal he is, the more he is preferred. Accordingly, 82% preferred George McGovern in 1972 (when the American people rejected him in 49 of the 50 states).

In 1968, 76% of the movie elite preferred Hubert Humphrey over Richard Nixon. In 1976, 78% preferred Jimmy Carter over Gerald Ford. In 1980, 51% preferred Carter and 17% preferred John Anderson, while only 29% preferred Ronald Reagan. The 68% who are anti-Reagan would probably correlate with the 68% who do not think we should be more forceful in dealing with the Soviets.

Only 4% of the movie elite attend church or synagogue regularly. A big 55% admit they have no religious preference at all (compared to less than 10% of the American

populace who admit to having no religion).

The movie elite has a rather different view of moral standards from that of Middle Americans. Only 14% strongly condemn extra-marital sex; 60% think adultery is not wrong. A whopping 96% support abortion on demand. Only 28% believe homosexuality is wrong; almost 9 out of 10 think homosexuals should be allowed to teach in the schools.

One of the most revealing parts of the survey is the attitude of the movie elite toward the role and influence of the film business. 67% believe that television should be used as a force to promote social reform. The Rothman-Lichter survey didn't ask the parallel question about whether movies should be used to promote social reform, so we can only guess at their probable answer to that.

The survey revealed an interesting variation of attitudes toward sex and violence on television; 67% of the movie elite think that there is too much violence on TV, while 76% do not believe that there is too much sex on television.

The movie elite are a 99% white, male and wealthy group. They grew up in homes that were relatively affluent, and today 64% report family incomes of more than $200,000.

The movie elite clearly like our economic system which rewards their talents so generously; 94% think that people with more ability should earn more, and they think they belong in that class. On the other hand, 59% think that the government should redistribute income (presumably of others), and 45% think that the government should guarantee jobs for all.

What information sources do they think are reliable? The New York Times ranks first. Second is PBS which the Rothman-Lichter survey showed is the most liberal of the national television networks. Next are the liberal Newsweek and the New York Review of Books. The Nation and the New Republic are high on the list.

If you have suspected that movie-makers have a low regard for American institutions and values, now you have the proof. It's no wonder that more and more movies are dishing out political propaganda. This year's propaganda films include "Daniel" (which rehashes the Rosenberg spy case), "Silkwood" (which attacks the nuclear industry), "Deal of the Century" (which attacks the arms industry), and "Under Fire" (which opposes our anti-Communist policies in Nicaragua).