

Albert Maltz:

An Inventory of His Collection in the Manuscript Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Maltz, Albert, 1908-1985
Title:	Albert Maltz <i>This Gun for Hire</i> Collection
Dates:	1941
Extent:	.5 box (0.21 linear feet)
Abstract:	The Albert Maltz Collection consists of 1941 screen treatment, containing photographs and sketches, and a first draft shooting script bound into one volume, as well as four loose promotional photographs for the film, <i>This Gun for Hire</i> .
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-04921
Language:	English
Access:	Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition:	Purchase, 2003 (R15198)
Processed by:	Amy E. Armstrong, 2009
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Biographical Sketch

Albert Maltz was born on October 28, 1908, in Brooklyn, New York. He graduated, Phi Beta Kappa, with an A. B. in Philosophy from Columbia University in 1930. He then pursued graduate study for two years at Yale University's School of Drama and began writing plays with fellow student and collaborator George Sklar. Influenced by the social and economic conditions of the time, Maltz and Sklar coauthored *Merry Go Round* (1932) and *Peace on Earth* (1933). In 1932, the two playwrights helped form a production company, the Theatre Union, which dissolved in 1937. Political corruption, antiwar sentiment, and labor issues were common themes of the company's productions. In 1935, the same year Maltz joined the Communist Party, the company produced Maltz's play, *Black Pit*. Maltz married his first wife, Margaret Larkin, in 1937.

Maltz expanded his exploration of America's social and economic conditions and critique of American capitalist society in his short stories. These pieces enjoyed critical success and were published and reprinted in numerous publications. "The Happiest Man" won first prize in the O. Henry Memorial Awards for 1938. Many of Maltz's stories were collected and published as *The Way Things Are and Other Stories* (1938) and *Afternoon in the Jungle: The Selected Short Stories of Albert Maltz* (1970). Maltz published his first novel, *The Underground Stream: An Historical Novel of a Moment in the American Winter*, in 1940 but was unable to achieve financial success in New York. Intending to write screenplays to finance his other writing, he and his family moved to Los Angeles, California, in 1941.

Maltz's first produced screenplay, *This Gun for Hire*, based on Graham Greene's novel of the same name (also published as *A Gun for Sale*), was cowritten with W. R. Burnett in 1941. While in Hollywood, Maltz wrote and collaborated on several screenplays and continued writing novels. His screenplays include *Destination Tokyo* (1943), *Cloak and Dagger* (1946), and *The Naked City* (1948). He received an Academy Award nomination for *Pride of the Marines* (1945) and won Academy Awards for his work on the documentary *Moscow Strikes Back* (1943) and for the film short *The House I Live In* (1945). Maltz's second novel *The Cross and the Arrow* was published in 1944.

In spite of his successful writing career, Maltz may be best remembered as one of the "Hollywood Ten." In 1947, Maltz, along with other Hollywood artists, was called to testify at the House Un-American Activities Committee regarding his status as a Communist. He and ten other Hollywood writers refused to respond and were held in contempt of Congress. In 1949, while his case progressed through the court system, Maltz published his third novel, *The Journey of Simon McKeever*. The following year, Maltz was sentenced to one year in prison and served from June 1950 to April 1951.

Upon his release, Maltz moved to Mexico where, despite his blacklisting, he continued to write stories, novels, and screenplays. He sometimes used the pseudonym Julian Silva or a front man to get his works published or produced. He returned to Hollywood in 1962 and one year later divorced his first wife, Margaret. In 1964, Maltz married Rosemary Wylde. One year after Wylde's death in 1968, Maltz married Esther Engelberg. In 1970, Maltz's 20 year status on Hollywood's blacklist ended with his

credited screenplay *Two Mules for Sister Sara*.

Maltz died on April 26, 1985, in Los Angeles, California. In 1991, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences posthumously restored Maltz's name to the 1950 nomination for his previously uncredited screenplay, *Broken Arrow*.

Sources:

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. *Academy Awards Database*, http://awardsdatabase.oscars.org/ampas_awards/BasicSearchInput.jsp (accessed 10 February 2009).

"Albert Maltz." *Contemporary Authors Database*. <http://galenet.galegroup.com> (accessed online 22 January 2009).

Ceplair, Larry. "Albert Maltz, Philip Stevenson, and 'Art Is A Weapon.'" *Minnesota Review*, ns 69, Fall/Winter 2007, <http://www.theminnesotareview.org/journal/ns69/ceplair.shtml#> (accessed 10 February 2009).

Robb, Kenneth. "Albert Maltz." *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 102: American Short-Story Writers, 1910-1945, Second Series*, <http://galenet.galegroup.com> (accessed online 10 February 2009).

Scope and Contents

The Albert Maltz Collection consists of a 1941 screen treatment, containing photographs and sketches, and a first draft shooting script bound into one volume, as well as four loose promotional photographs for the film, *This Gun for Hire*.

The screenplay, coauthored by Albert Maltz and W. R. Burnett with Frank Tuttle, is based on Graham Greene's novel of the same name. The film was directed by Frank Tuttle and released by Paramount Pictures in January 1942.

The 114-page carbon copy screen treatment incorporates fourteen interspersed pages containing twenty-six black-and-white location photographs, as well as two pages of design drawings depicting "Raven's Dream" and "Drelingcourt's Tower Apartment." The 143-page shooting script contains a page signed by Maltz and is dated December 8, 1941. The collection also includes one color and three black-and-white promotional photographic prints of the film's actors, including Veronica Lake and Alan Ladd.

The collection is in excellent condition.

Related Material

Related collections at the Ransom Center include the James Donald Adams Collection, the Lester Cowan Papers, the Graham Greene Collection, the Lillian Hellman Papers, and the Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Records.

The Albert Maltz Papers are housed at the University of Wyoming American Heritage Center and the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theatre Research administered by the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Wisconsin Historical Society. In addition, the University of California-Los Angeles, Columbia University, and the University of Southern California have holdings associated with Albert Maltz.

Index Terms

People

Burnett, W. R. (William Riley), 1899-1982.

Greene, Graham, 1904-1991--Film and video adaptations.

Maltz, Albert, 1908-1985.

Tuttle, Frank, 1892-1963.

Subjects

Crime -- Drama.

Motion picture plays.

Document Types

Photographs.

Scenography.

Screenplays.

Series I. Works, 1941

This Gun for Hire, screenplay

Bound original treatment and first draft of shooting script, including location
photographs and design sketches, 1941 **Container**
1.1

Publicity photographs, 1941 **Container** 1.2