

Dear Sir: -

Thought you might be interested in this ad which appeared in today's Daily Variety.

Kindly note that she intends to avail herself of her Constitutional rights, as all these rats do when cornered. As a self styled freedom-loving non-conformist, she should not be allowed to avail herself of the rights of freedom-loving AMERICANS.

Keep up the good work, for the more adverse publicity they receive the less the picture loving people will see of them, and that is all to the better.

AN AMERICAN

GALE SONDERGAARD

March 13
1951

Board of Directors
Screen Actors Guild
Hollywood
California.

Dear Board Members:

I am addressing you of the Board not only as the directors of our union but also as fellow actors. I am addressing you because I have been subpoenaed, together with other members of our union before the un-American Activities Committee. I will appear next Wednesday.

I would be naive if I did not recognize that there is a danger that by the following day I may have arrived at the end of my career as a motion picture actress.

Wishing to place my position and my request of my union before both Board and membership before I take the stand next Wednesday, March 21st, I am having this letter published in the Friday, March 16th, issue of Daily Variety.

Surely it is not necessary for me to say to this Board that I love my profession and that I have tried to bring to it honesty of feeling, clarity of thought and a real devotion. Surely it is also unnecessary for me to state that I consider myself a deeply loyal American with genuine concern for the welfare and peace of my own countrymen and all humanity.

Today I read that this particular inquisition is not directed against the industry but is directed at individuals. This would seem to imply that any number of individual actors could be destroyed without injuring the industry—and that the employers, having been guaranteed that they would not be personally involved, have given the committee carte blanche to attack individuals to their own purposes.

Employers have been known to do this before and members of unions have, in just such times, come to know the comfort and the dignity of belonging to a union and of seeking its strength and its higher moral dedication.

I believe in freedom of speech and religion and association as described in our first amendment. Unfortunately our present Supreme Court has not seen fit to spell out its legal availability to us in our own days. But it has done so in respect to the oldest right of the individual in recorded history—the right of silence—the right under the fifth amendment.

I intend to avail myself of this right before the committee.

Many Guild members, called before the committee, will not agree with my choice. They will take other roads looking to their protection from the attacks, insinuations, and sneers of the committee. But surely no one will believe that the economic well being of our members or the security of our union or the welfare of the industry is being served by the committee.

I most earnestly and fraternally ask the Board to consider the implications of the forthcoming hearing. A blacklist already exists. It may now be widened. It may ultimately be extended to include any freedom-loving non-conformist or any member of a particular race or any member of a union—or anyone.

For my own security—for the security of all our members, I ask our Board to weigh this hearing carefully—to determine whether it can afford to witness its approach with passivity.

I most especially appeal to the Board, to my fellow actors, to consider whether it will not be proper and necessary for it to make a public declaration that it will not tolerate any industry blacklist against any of its members who see fit to act upon a unanimous decision of the Supreme Court and avail themselves of the privilege against self-incrimination which is once more available for the purpose for which it was originally established—as a barrier to political and religious persecution.

I can find no reason in my conduct as an actress or as a union member why I should have to contemplate a severing of the main artery of my life—my career as a performer—because I hold to views for which during the last war I was an esteemed member of the Victory Committee and the recipient of the thanks of my government, industry and union.

With my appreciation of the Board's consideration of this request,

I am,
fraternally yours,

Gale Sondergaard



Chairman
House Un-American Activities Committee
House Office Building
Washington, D. C.