



MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION
OF AMERICA, INC.
1600 EYE STREET, NORTHWEST
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006

JACK VALENTI
PRESIDENT

March 3, 1976

Dear Mr. Williams:

To have someone with six years of experience in Viet-Nam write in agreement and sympathy with my views on President Johnson and the Viet-Nam war fills me with ~~gratitude~~, and I am flattered that you would want to tell me. I am most appreciative.

I am pleased too that you would write about American films abroad and I welcome the opportunity to exchange thoughts with you.

In my travels overseas I invariably find one thing that seems to me to be the key to any discussion of the subject. It is one that I believe may be too often and readily overlooked or ignored.

What impresses me tremendously in my many yearly trips abroad is the opinion that I encounter so frequently that the American film is welcomed and honored because it is born in freedom and lives in freedom. It can speak its own mind.

Artists in our country may encompass the whole range of the human condition and human emotions. The choice belongs to the creator. No government, no censor looks over his shoulder, blue pencil or scissor at the alert. Some of us as individuals may not like what is presented, we may consider it deplorable and hateful. That is our privilege as we apply subjective judgment to the arts, to films.

I can't begin to count the times I have been told by ordinary viewers in communist and other dictatorships that they like the American film because it is free. What impresses them above all is this freedom. I can sum up their views in this way: We like the American films because they are free . . . ours aren't.

America must be a great country when a moviemaker is permitted to say and film what he wants.

I wouldn't want it otherwise. I would oppose any governmental intervention on exports of films. I would equally oppose any private group attempting to do so. I think it would be the worst kind of policy for the United States.

I consider the free American film to be a national asset of high order.

If I oppose interference it is not because I push from my mind a recognition of problems in the present. Of course there are some. If I were doing it there are films that I would not send abroad. That is a personal judgment. But I would leave the responsibility to the filmmaker to make the voluntary choice. I know I am not competent to make, and I know of no one who is competent to make that decision as a substitute for the filmmaker.

Again, let me thank you for writing. If you have comments or criticisms of movies at any time, do let me know, won't you?

Sincerely,



Mr. Ogden Williams
4621 Q Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20007