

THE MAKING OF 'MENACE'

Tab 29.2.75
MENACE at the Union Theatre, Sydney University from March 29 to April 1. Available in Melbourne from the Vincent Library, Australian Film Institute. Reviewed by Richard Fletcher.

"In recent years a sinister force has appeared in our world - its leader and its army preach a new gospel - the gospel of materialism with a greed that denies God and says that you, the individual, has no soul and no human rights - that sinister force is communism."

This comes from the soundtrack of **Menace**, made in 1952. This classic piece of cold war propaganda was widely distributed throughout Australia as though it were a government film. The Department of the Interior is listed in the credits as producer.

However, the historical footage was donated by 20th Century Fox in Hollywood and was funded by Fox subsidiary Hoyts. Distributor was a 'Film Industry Committee' comprising senior executives from British and American film corporations.

Melbourne filmmaker John Hughes completed a new film titled **Menace** in 1977. It documents the Cold War in

Australia up to the 1951 referendum to ban the Communist Party.

The new film was to include the original **Menace** as an example of the propaganda techniques then used. Although Film Australia now holds the film, 20th Century Fox still have the final say over its use. They said it couldn't be used as an historical document.

The same multinationals which promoted the original **Menace** can still protect their work from criticism.

These companies can veto use of a piece of Australia's history and ensure that films like **Menace** (1977) are only shown through small independent outlets. These companies own all the major cinemas and they use mainly free short films not Australian-made shorts - and certainly not critical films.

Menace (1977) is still worth seeing. It uses fascinating clips from Movietone News and newspapers to document this remarkable period of Australian history.

The film was conceived as a 'film for a generation' to show those who hadn't lived through it, what the Cold War was like. On the whole it succeeds even though it's a bit slow in places.

See it if you can. □

WANTED

FOR ATTEMPTED MURDER OF AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRACY



RECORD:

- 1914 Resigned his Commission.
- 1938 Forced export of pig-iron to Japan.
- 1939 Cut Burma Road life-line to China.
- 1941 Infamous Brisbane Line Scandal.
- 1950 Conscripted Australian youth. Jailed Australian workers.
- 1951 Agreed to Japanese re-armament.

REWARD

FREEDOM and PEACE

Vote: "NO"
on SEPTEMBER 22nd

• A poster from the 'Vote No' campaign of 1951.