

## “tied up in knots”

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Text of a review of *Menace* Collin Bennett, first Published in *The Age 'Arts and Entertainment'* Monday, June 6, 1977.

On the same programme, *Menace*, which following *Hollywood on Trial*, and *The Front*, reminds us that Australia was right in the thick of it in the late 40's and early 50's, suffering an ugly McCarthyism.

John Hughes' documentary consists mainly of recent interviews with veteran communists who recall the Cold War, Sir Charles Lowe's Royal Commission into Communism. Cecil Sharpley, Menzie's Communist Party Dissolution bill and the subsequent referendum.

Unfortunately Hughes' mini-budget effort can afford to spend little on contemporary newsreels where they exist.

And he breaks the first rules of journalism by failing to identify his speakers, such as Ralph Gibson, Lloyd Edmunds, Noel Counihan and Ted Laurie, the QC who defended the party in the Royal Commission and the High Court.

But this openly partisan recollection of Right-wing extremism and security checks, anti-unionism and suppression of anything Left-of-centre, is a timely eye-opener to all who are too young to remember and to many who have conveniently forgotten how close Australia came to emulating the fascism it had recently fought.