

FILE NO. 206400✓

Protest  
OF  
Residents & Citizens  
vs.  
banning of the picture  
"Stromboli".

FILED Feb. 17, 1950.

W. C. THOMAS  
CITY COMPTROLLER AND CITY CLERK

BY John B. Kellum, DEPUTY

ACTION OF THE COUNCIL

REFERRED FEB 20 1950	TO PUBLIC SAFETY ON FILE TO
REFERRED	
REPORTED	REPORT ADOPTED
REPORTED	REPORT ADOPTED
REF. FOR ORD.	C. B. ORD.
	DISPOSITION

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

Mr. President:

Your.....Committee

to which was referred the within.....

would respectfully report that we have considered the same and respectfully recommend that.....

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CHAIRMAN

CHAIRMAN

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Feb. 14. 1930.

Dear Sirs:

By last mts paper I noticed  
You have already seen the  
picture "Stromboli"; so now  
that your Curiosity is satisfied  
lets call the whole thing  
off. I'm sure there are  
very few people who really

want to see it and putting  
it out for the public in  
just suit or should I say  
practically saying people to  
go. If you have any  
minds at all you will  
condemn such outrageous  
advertising - Sincerely - Yours

124 - E. 62 St.  
Seattle 5, Wash  
Feb. 14, 1950

To the City Council:

I feel it my duty as a taxpayer and a mother to let you know my views on your ban of "Stronboli." I indignantly protest your ban, and feel it should be revoked immediately. It is an unwarranted intrusion upon my (upon any one's) liberty to decide the moral question of whether I shall or shall not be contaminated by seeing this movie. I take it as a personal insult on my moral integrity that someone else should feel I don't know right from wrong.

I do not know under whose suggestion you did such an arbitrary thing. Whoever it was has no right to prescribe what I may or may not see, in the name of "decency." If seeing such a picture offends them, let them stay away in droves. But let others see let or not



depending upon their own personal standards. "Moral censorship" is reprehensible in such a case, since, I presume, it is not the picture at all but the actors that offend.

I am a mother of two children and I defy anyone to cast aspersions on my ability to recognize and support decency. And I say, let the picture be shown and let's not have some special group set <sup>the</sup> standards of morality for the rest of us decent people.

Sincerely yours,  
Mrs. J. N. Drayner

Febr. 15  
1950



*Alpine Columbine*

To the City Council of Seattle

Sirs,

There is an old saying:

"Do not try to be more papal than the pope!"

If you forbid a movie because of the morals of its actors, you should not allow any kind of play or show (Burlesque!) before checking on the morals of its authors and actors.

Don't try to Bostonize Seattle!

Ms Paula Hochschild



Spring Hill,  
Shelton Wash., Feb 14, 1950

To Whom it may concern:  
Lerty Hall,  
Seattle, Wash.

Gentlemen:

According to the story in  
the P.D. this morning, there are very  
few broad minded people left, in regard  
to Inggrid Bergman and ~~her~~ <sup>filming</sup> of the  
picture "Stramboli". Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Mary E. Jessup-  
Formerly of Bremerton-

P.S. No notoriety please.

Please excuse the blot.

Seattle, Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>.

To The Seattle City Councilmen  
Gentlemen:

This is an open letter to all.

I protest your votes for the ban of the Ingrid Bergman picture. How can you single out one so unfortunate a mother to shame, or to ban this one picture. Yet the filth from Hollywood you pass by. Why did you not ban Rita Hayworth's pictures, that disgusting affair was one of the world's worst. Surely you have not forgotten the history of such as Sarah Barnhardt, Isadore Duncan, Marion Davies and too many others.

It would have been well had you given this reply to the church from whence the pressure came - Jesus was supposed to have said "Let he who is without sin."

I say shame on you, and I assure you that I shall not forget it when I, and mine are voting.

Mrs. Louise Petersen  
410 Highland Drive  
Seattle 9, Wash.



5539 Wallingford St.,  
Seattle 3, Wash.,  
Feb. 15, 1950.

The Mayor and City Council,  
County - City Bldg.,  
Seattle, Washington.

My Dear Gentlemen:

The freedoms of worship, speech, the press, and the right to petition the Government for a redress of grievances are clearly stated in the "Bill of Rights," or Amendments to the Constitution, as adopted by the first Congress called to meet in New York City, March 4, 1789, and later ratified and made a part of the Constitution on December 15, 1791.

In my opinion, your recently hatched ordinance

genteel citizenry.

As a former school teacher and Canadian who has recently come to live in your "home of the brave," and being of British stock, I, like most Britishers, place our personal freedom very high on the list of democratic accomplishments. This freedom is very precious. It was and is being hard won, and for anyone in a position of authority to flout it in the faces of decent, honest, upright citizens is to my mind nothing short of insulting. To be sure such dictatorships as we have in this particular case, is in itself a small beginning, but



"

banning "Stromboli," on the grounds that it will contribute to the moral and spiritual disintegration of the local populace - after your board of censors passed it - smacks of such narrow-minded, bigoted, provincial, prejudiced action, as can only be the result of a supremely self-centered, self-satisfied, hypocritical minority, which is willing to close its eyes to the already flourishing immoral forces within the community, but very very ready to ruthlessly liquidate any source - no matter how hypothetical it may be - that might contaminate the minds and souls of Seattle's pure,

10

small snowballs have a habit of growing larger when they travel down an incline. Is it anyone's right to say — "You shall not see this! You shall not hear this! It is bad for you!" — (outside of parents to wayward children?) ? Are the citizens of this busy town such morons that their personal tastes must be dictated to them by the city administrators? Are you such intellectual giants? Are you God?

I have not seen this film — perhaps I never shall. The actual seeing of this film does not particularly concern me, apart from the fact that



V

I like to compare foreign pictures to the home-grown variety - the same way a musician or artist enjoys comparing the works of his own country with those of another. What does concern me is your interference in a field completely apart from your administrative duties. If you had been placed in your offices as judges of culture and as authorities on the arts - and drama is certainly one of the arts - I would willingly bow to your judgment. Under the circumstances I can only voice my disapproval and scorn

VI  
of the unmitigated autocracy  
you have displayed in  
this instance.

You may be sure your  
ungracious treatment — to  
put it mildly — of this film,  
"Stromboli," will leave a  
lasting impression on my  
mind.

In closing, I should  
like to say that my bitter  
disappointment in you,  
not only as civic administrators  
but also as loyal representatives  
of the people, as you are supposed  
to be, is very close to contempt.

Very truly yours,  
D. Hawley.  
(Mrs. R. V. Hawley.)



February 16, 1950

Gentlemen:

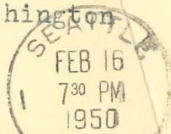
The fact that it is done means that this is only an opinion for the future. I think I would like to have a person such as Ingrid Bergman given a chance. Maybe you banned the film, "Stromboli" for another reason.

It seems to me that she has been admirable in her actions too.

Yours truly,

*Annis Brook*

433 Belmont North  
Seattle, Washington



THIS SIDE OF CARD IS FOR ADDRESS

Seattle City Council  
County-City Building  
Seattle, Washington



JOHN S. HARLOW  
ATTORNEY AT LAW  
1527 SMITH TOWER  
SEATTLE 4, WASHINGTON  
SENECA 4517

February 14, 1950

City Council  
Seattle, Washington

Gentlemen:

I add my voice to those protesting the banning of the picture "Stromboli", and for these reasons:

1. The judgment is not based upon defects inherent in the picture itself.
2. An outrageous precedent is thereby established, whereby any artistic work may be banned, not because of defects in the work, but because of alleged defects in the author or other principal connected with the work in question.
3. Due process has neither been accorded the work nor the defective principal, assuming such defect exists.
4. The punishment is hardly in accordance with the crime.
5. The ends sought by the ban will be subverted rather than achieved.
6. No condemnation of the guiltiest and most subversive influence in the entire affair has even been suggested.

I think you will agree, privately if not publicly, that the boorish taste of the Seattle newspapers, and more particularly, of the Seattle Post Intelligencer, has been the most despicable element in this matter. Whether Bergman herself is another unfortunate Bovary, I do not know. I do know that the sensationalism, the fantastic volume and prominence of the Bergman stories, each written with a hardly hidden leer, marked ~~up~~ a new low in journalism. If any condemning is to be done, there is the target. If any adolescents have been or will be subverted by this affair, there is the cause.

I regret to see my city's council urged into action through the uninformed pressure of certain groups, and hope that fair reconsideration is imminent~~s~~.

City Council - 2

As for the picture itself, in the absence of an opinion by trained psychiatrists that either it or its showing will tend to corrupt the morals of our youth, I shall be pleased to consider otherwise.

Very truly yours,

  
John S. Harlow



Honorable Members of the City Council  
City of Seattle, Washington  
County-City Building  
Seattle 4, Washington

Dear Sirs,

It seems to me that as representatives of the people of Seattle you have taken on an unlimited amount of responsibility.

With reference to the so-called Ingrid Bergman picture, since when did you as members elected by the people as a whole become so saintly that you take it upon yourselves to bow to the whims of an organized group of hypocrites who call themselves religious. The censorship board cannot find a flaw in the picture which is immoral or calculated to mislead the young into immoral ways. Nevertheless you take it upon yourselves to bar this picture from the Seattle audiences, because of the conduct of one of the actors in private life.

I wish to voice my protest against this arbitrary and pointless restriction imposed on the freedom of the people of this city.

Very truly yours,

William M. Dean

February 16, 1950

John Born

4632 1<sup>st</sup> Ave NE  
Seattle 5 Wash  
Feb 17, 1950

The City Council  
County - city Bldg  
Seattle, Wash.

Gentlemen:

Permit me to add my views to those expressed concerning the recent banning of Ingrid Bergman's latest picture.

Whether or not Miss Bergman is a person whose moral character is not of the best seems entirely beside the point in case. If you are to justify your action how can you possibly avoid banning the pictures of Robert Mitchum, Mickey Rooney, and, in fact, many other actors and actresses whose personal conduct has been the subject of press comment in the past?

It would seem that you are exceeding your express and implied



2.

authority by a great deal in the action  
you have taken, and have, in effect,  
violated any oaths you may have  
taken to safeguard the liberty of the  
people.

My advice is that you lift the  
ban on this picture, and let those  
persons who object to its showing  
remain away from the theaters  
where it is being shown. But  
there is a decided lack of justice,  
as well as a direct negation of  
the democratic principles for which  
this government presumably -  
and ostensibly - stands, in per-  
mitting the views of one group  
of persons to control the personal  
rights and liberties of all.

Very truly yours,  
Gordon W. Hackbach

308 E 77th  
Seattle 5  
Feb. 15th '50

City Council  
514 County-City Bldg.  
Seattle, Wn.

Dear Sirs;

The banning of STROMBOLI is unfortunate I think,  
for it will only increase the notoriety that it  
already has. If the Bergman affair was a publicity  
stunt with an eye on the box office, you are  
unwittingly playing into their hands.

Personnally, I think your action makes you  
appear narrowminded and ungenerous, in  
condemning the picture because of the activities  
of the players.

sincerely,

*Ethel Dunham*

206600



1011 E. 71  
Seattle 5, Washington  
February 15, 1950

Acting Mayor David Levine  
County-City Building  
Seattle, Washington

Dear Mr. Levine:

I wish to protest strongly against the ban of the moving picture "Stromboli" from all Seattle theaters.

It appears possible that you may not have personally seen the moving picture. According to reviews which I have read, there is no more in this movie which would tend to "corrupt morals" and be "offensive to the moral sense" than in many Hollywood production. Such criticisms are therefore not justified.

It also seems highly doubtful that such a picture would disturb the "peace and quiet" of this city. Movie patrons may flock to see the movie because of the publicity which has been engendered by the controversy over it, but I have more confidence in the adult men and women of Seattle than to believe that the picture would incite them to riot as you evidently maintain.

I realize that you are being deluged with letters such as this, but I should very much like to obtain a list of the groups which are agitating against the showing of "Stromboli" in Seattle. If a personal letter is impossible, perhaps a statement in the newspapers is feasible.

Sincerely yours,

*(Miss) Laurel Weber*

Laurel Weber

RECEIVED

FEB 16 1950

Mayor's Office



January 15, 1950

Dear Sirs:-

Last night I read with disgust the two leading papers of this city.

The fact that you people deliberately banned a film, not because of talent, but because of what went on behind the scenes, brought about a nauseating feeling.

Why humans behave the way they do is not for other humans to judge!

The women of the different groups who protested the actions of Bergman and Rossellini I'm sure can say that not a single member of their families had never been touched by sin!

If you the acting mayor and you the councilmen are interested in the morals of your city, you should clean up the "Stromboli" actions and sections right here in this city. I'm sure that if the newspapers could print what is really going on in certain sections many a mother would be due for a shock, both mentally and physically!!

What have you prevented by banning this film? The only thing I think has occurred is that the few who protested are feeling pretty smug.

I find much comfort in reading the Bible, at least, God Forgave, where we humans can't. When you and your councilmen say the Lord's prayer, you should dare to say, "and Forgive us our Trespases as we forgive those who Trespass against us."

Christ forgave the men who Crucified HIM. HE forgave the sinner on the Cross next to Him. He forgave Mary Magdalen - and we His children cannot, or will not, forgive Bergman, because she did give birth and was ready to face the world, rather than to abort and kill, and no one would have known the difference except God, and He would have forgiven her of that I'm positive.

We are a Christian Nation, then let us teach our children that we are not to sin but if one of us fall by the wayside we are to help them back on the road to Christ, How can we do right by our children when we adult behave the way we do? What is going to happen, when our children grow up, will they follow in our footsteps? Is that what we want? We had better think it over before it is too late.

Sincerely

God will forgive us all and for that I'm thankful.

RECEIVED

FEB 16 1950

Mayor's Office



Wed. 15, 1950

Seattle City Council  
County City Building  
Seattle, Wash.

Dear Sirs and Madam:

We the following protest your arbitrary barring of the motion picture  
"Stromboli" in Seattle.

It is indeed an alarming condition when small minority groups can place sufficient pressures on you that they can dictate what we the public can or cannot see. The first thing we know you will be barring Republican or Democratic actors on the same ground-- in fact there is just no limit to such a policy. This type of action is just the type advocated by the communists.

Surely a persons life is their own and should not be considered in judging their work.

We urge you to return to reality and reconsider this arbitrary decision.

Respectfully yours,

B. L. Holiday 5203 - 18th E.  
E. P. Olsen 1578 - E. 175<sup>th</sup>  
D. J. Davis 8602 - Ravenna ave.  
Betty Thomsen 14329 - 36<sup>th</sup> N.E.  
Elmer L. Schwartz 13539 - 23<sup>rd</sup> N.E.  
June Rack 13010 - 19<sup>th</sup> N.E.  
R. M. Costie 7340 - 56<sup>th</sup> Ave. N.E.  
W. Thomsen 14002 - 22 Ave N.E.

# NICKEL PLATE ROAD

THE NEW YORK, CHICAGO AND ST. LOUIS RAILROAD COMPANY

907 WHITE BUILDING  
SEATTLE 1, WASH.

L. M. CURTIN,  
GENL. AGENT-TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT  
R. B. WALLITNER,  
E. P. BAIRD,  
TRAVELING FREIGHT AND PASSENGER AGENTS

February 14, 1950

The City Council,  
Seattle, Washington.

Gentlemen:

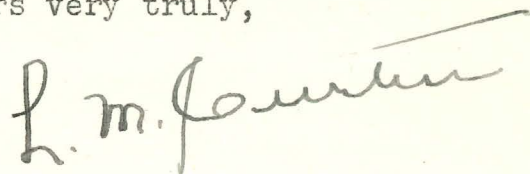
I have learned today of the action of your group in banning the forthcoming picture "Stromboli."

I think your action extremely ill-advised and not within the sphere of your authority.

Barring a picture by reason of its subject matter is understandable, but barring a picture on account of the conduct of any of its players appears to me as giving you a very peculiar jurisdiction.

Why not leave it to the intelligency of the theater going public in the city of Seattle and allow them to express their negative opinion of this picture by staying away from it, which I am sure they would do in droves.

Yours very truly,



LMC/g



715 First Avenue West  
Seattle 99, Washington  
February 14, 1950

The City Council  
City of Seattle  
514 County-City Building  
Seattle 4, Washington

Gentlemen:

We strenuously protest the action of the Acting Mayor of this City in banning the exhibition of the motion picture, *Stromboli*.

We feel that the moral conduct of motion picture actors, in no way connected with the content of a film to be exhibited, cannot possibly concern the City Council of Seattle. Any other view would justify censorship of the ordinary media of public amusement in a manner contrary to basic American notions of free speech.

We are in considerable doubt about our intention of seeing this film, but we are in no doubt that we ought to have the right to do so if we wish to do so.

Very truly yours  
L D Goldberg  
Lorraine R. Goldberg

C. N. Lane  
150 Melrose Pl. No.

Seattle, Wash.

2 / 16 / '30

Seattle Councilman - Regards

"Stramboli" - why don't you fellows  
go down to the Public Library & tear  
up Oscar Wilde & many other works  
of art while you are at it - I think the  
fun smells of Police state methods.



THIS SIDE OF CARD IS FOR ADDRESS



To/ City Councilmen -  
Seattle,  
Washington.



February 15, 1950

The City Council,  
Seattle, Washington.

Gentlemen:

I have read of the action of your Council and the Acting Mayor in banning the motion picture "Stromboli" in Seattle.

It is difficult for me to understand where it is within your province to prevent the showing of this film in Seattle because of the conduct of one of its players. If it was due to the picture itself being objectionable, this ban could be easily understood, but certainly any adverse effect on the people has already been felt by the heavy newspaper coverage given the filming of this picture, and this effect can be neither corrected or aggravated by its public showing.

I have no interest in seeing this motion picture and feel that this is a general reaction and one which would have made itself known at the box office, but I do wonder if you have not gone beyond your authority in banning the picture.

Very truly yours,

J. W. Gallagher

J. W. Gallagher,  
1416 East Roy St.,  
Seattle 2, Wash.

Seattle Wn.

Feb 15 - 50

To the City Council Members:

Dear Sirs,

As a visitor in your fair City I would like to be able to appear before you all and tell you in plain language just what I think you have done to Seattle. But as that is quite impossible, I am going to try & put on paper how I feel regarding the Burning of the picture "Stromboli". First let me state that I am sixty five years old, have always tried to live a Christian life. But if Christianity means doing what you City Fathers have done against a woman who has sinned & who has paid in hard suffering, both physically & mentally, then I don't want any more of that kind of Christianity. I wonder just how many of you were listening to "Walter Winchell" the past two Sundays? He spoke a sermon in the fewest words that I have ever had the pleasure of hearing. And when I came out of Church last Sunday morning, I was so angry & disgusted, it would have been far better if I had never gone at all. We were all told to write or call the City Council & protest the showing of the "Stromboli" picture.



I want to ask each & every one of you  
who voted against the showing of this picture -  
do you really believe you had charity in your  
hearts? do you believe that the 'Paul from  
Galilee' would have done what you men  
did? I don't think so, I think he would have  
told each & every one of you as he did the  
mob who would have stoned to death a  
certain woman by the name of Mary M.  
Let the first one of you without sin, cast  
the first stone -

What Hypocrites We all Are -  
Angrid Bergman, may have sinned, but in  
the eyes of a real Christian, she is as good  
if not better than most of us today -  
And I sincerely hope I will be lucky enough  
to see this picture in another "Theater"  
and am sure they won't all be as narrow & so  
good & holy as Seattle, I could write many  
pages on this and I could remind Mr  
Levine, but a certain time in Bellingham  
a few years ago when he was the target of a  
(mob) who so nearly stoned him that it wasn't  
funny. I happened to be in this hall & was shocked  
at what I saw, and to think he would now sit  
in a crowd who would condemn a person  
because the crowd was or are against her -  
What fools we can be. Sincerely Mrs L. B.



February 15, 1950

City Council  
City of Seattle  
City and County Building  
Seattle, Washington

Dear Sirs and Mrs. Powell:

It is not possible to ban motion pictures books or magazines on the basis of the approval or disapproval of the personal lives of the stars or authors. Over the years it has even proved of doubtful feasibility and value to censor pictures, books or magazines on the basis of content. However, the latter would seem to have more justification and has been done to some extent with some success.

In the discussion now current on Stromboli, it does not seem to me that this motion picture can be banned with justice. Robert Mitchum's movies are being shown and his personal life is no example for impressionable persons to be acquainted with.

No act of censure against the motion picture can keep the scandal from the public notice or discussion as long as newspapers sell on the street. Showing the picture cannot further influence the public morals.

Let the picture be shown.

Sincerely,

*Henrietta Davis*

Henrietta Davis  
(Mrs. Aubrey, Jr.)  
4310 Empire Way  
Seattle 8, Wn.

RECEIVED

2-14-50

FEB 15 1950

Gentlemen,

**Mayer's Office**

I just read with surprise that you have received requests not to show "Stromboli". I have never written a fan letter before in my life, but it is possible that this could be called such. Please do not add to the unhappiness of Ingrid Bergman by any action on your part. She is in my opinion and in the opinion of many others who will probably never advise you of their feelings - a wonderful woman to go through with it.

Please do not prohibit the showing of "Stromboli".  
Thanking you for your attitude, I am,

Yours truly,

Mrs. R. J. Hanley

5815 McKinley Pl., Seattle, Wn.





THIS SIDE OF CARD IS FOR ADDRESS

Mayor Devin & City Council  
County City Bldg.  
Seattle, Washington

To Acting Mayor David Lewis. 2/14/50

Dear Sir:

As a resident of the  
City of Seattle for 40 years  
I hang my head in shame  
at your action on Sloomkali.  
Remember he has not sinned  
cast the first stone!

London 103-W-40 L



THIS SIDE OF CARD IS FOR ADDRESS



Hon David Lewine  
Acting Mayor  
County City Bldg.  
Seattle Wn.

Dear Sir:

I must strongly protest the action you took in regard to motion picture "Stromboli". Such action denies me liberties guaranteed by the First Amendment.

One would presume, from the hue & cry of various groups, that "Stromboli" offers the only major threat to debasement of the public's morals. Since you are now the "Champion" of this cause, suggest you consider the "Pocket Book Editions" on sale throughout the city. Selected titles for "breezy reading" are "Lady Godiva & Master Tom" - "God's Acre". "The De Cameron" etc. When this type of literature is no longer available for those from 7 to 70, the public's morals shall have benefited.

Millard E. Nester  
3212 - 13th Ave West





THIS SIDE OF CARD IS FOR ADDRESS

Acting - Mayor David Levine  
City-County Bldg.  
Seattle, Wash.

4300 30th S.W.  
Seattle 6 - Wn

Acting Mayor David Levine  
City Council men -

Gentlemen:

I wish to strongly protest  
the banning of any film —  
specifically 'Stromboli' - on the  
basis of the conduct of any actor  
or actors - when not appearing  
on the screen.

You must be consistent,  
gentlemen! You must not dare  
to look again upon a Van Gogh  
or Gauguin painting. You would  
not approve of their private lives!  
When do you start burning books?

Mrs. A. B. Westman  
E. V. Baxter (same address)  
H. Christman