

Analysis of anti-semitism and racism in gentleman's agreement(1947) movie



21 March Anti-Semitism and Racism in " Gentleman's Agreement" (1947)

Movie: Analysis: The movie " Gentleman's Agreement" directed by Elia Kazan presents a fairly thought provoking account of the way Jews were treated in America till the first half of the 20th century. Because of its unique subject, clarity of expression and excellent cinematography, this movie won three Oscar awards, one for being the Best movie in 1947, second for having the Best Director, and the third award went to Celeste Holm for being the Best Supporting Actress. Jews have for longed, suffered in America. Jews had been subjected to anti-Semitism in America. In Fortune, an article was published in 1936 which said that Jews were subjected to attacks because of " inviting prejudice because of their notorious tendency to agglomerate not just in cities but in self-constituted communities within cities..." (Blum 173). Such articles flared up the stereotypical images of Jews in the public. Jews were treated were badly. There used to be overt expression of racial discrimination by other communities against the Jews. There was discrimination against Jews in the fields of education, accommodation, immigration and employment. Phil Green who is one of the leading characters in the movie Gentlemas's Agreement, plays the role of a news reporter that experiences racial discrimination. Phil is tasked to express his views on anti-Semitism. In order to achieve that, Phil presents himself before the public as a Jew contrary to the fact that he is a Gentile. Phil says, " Ma, I've got it! I've got the idea, the angle, the lead. I'll be Jewish! Why, all I've got to do is just say it! No one around here knows me. I can live with myself for six weeks, eight weeks, nine months. Ma, this is it!" (Kazan). Phil changed his name to Greenburg for the very purpose. This way, he is best in the position of a Jew and analyze how they are treated in the society. Phil found <https://assignbuster.com/analysis-of-anti-semitism-and-racism-in-gentlemans-agreement1947-movie/>

the establishment of the lodge to be too restrictive towards Jews when he made an attempt to reserve it for celebrating the honeymoon with his fiancée. In another occasion, Phil's sister-in-law wished to invite him and his fiancée for the celebration of their engagement. But as soon as she discovered that Phil became a Jew specifically for the occasion, she opted to leave all guests that she deemed important out so that they would not gain a bad impression of her. These and several other incidents like them have been put forth in the movie to explain the extent to which the Jews were exposed to anti-Semitism in America till the mid of the 20th century. Gentleman's Agreement is one of the very few movies that have been successful in conveying the true color of racism, discrimination and anti-Semitism in the society to date. The movie displays discrimination from various angles that open the eyes of the audience and they get to realize the gravity of this problem. Overall, the movie is an excellent source of knowledge about the widespread anti-Semitism that has prevailed in America for Jews in the past. Works Cited: Blum, John Morton. *V Was For Victory*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976. Kazan, Elia, dir. *Gentleman's Agreement*. 1947. Film.