

## **The banning of Confessions of a Nazi Spy in Norway**

The paper deals with Norwegian authorities and the banning of the American spy movie *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* in Norway in the summer of 1939. The cinema program in Norway in the 1930s was packed with spy films. Most of the films were made by producers in the major world powers - England, Germany, France and the United States - and the actions in the movies were mainly related to the First World War. *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* was different. It was the first Hollywood production attacking Hitler Germany and Nazism. The screenplay was written by Milton Krims and John Wexly, directed by Anatole Litvak, and presented by Warner Brothers.

The film was based on an actual spy process that took place in New York in 1937 after US authorities revealed a comprehensive network of Nazi spies involving many German-Americans. These were members of the so-called German-American Bund - a Nazi Federation with close ties to their homeland and their representatives in the United States. Members of the Bund carried out extensive propaganda operations and spying within the US.

The German authorities carried out extensive diplomatic activities during the spring of 1939 to prevent the film from being shown in several countries. The Norwegian film censorship law opened for censorship based on immorality and violence. Even though the censorship law did not give legal access to a censorship on a political basis, the film was banned by the Norwegian Censorship Board in July 1939. The Board did not give any reasons for their decision. The real reason was German political pressure on the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The banning of *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* was one of several cases of political censorship of films without legal basis in the 1930's in Norway after German diplomatic pressure.