

《银色帝国的梦》

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作者简介

Howard Melvin Fast (November 11, 1914 – March 12, 2003) was an American novelist and television writer. Fast also wrote under the pen names E. V. Cunningham and Walter Ericson.

Fast was born in New York City. His mother, Ida (née Miller), was a British Jewish immigrant, and his father, Barney Fast, was a Ukrainian Jewish immigrant whose name was shortened from Fastovsky upon arrival in the USA. When his mother died in 1923 and his father became unemployed, Howard's youngest brother, Julius, went to live with relatives, while he and his older brother Jerome worked by selling newspapers. He credited his early voracious reading to his part-time job in the New York Public Library.

Young Howard began writing at an early age. While hitchhiking and riding railroads around the country to find odd jobs, he wrote his first novel, *Two Valleys*, published in 1933 when he was 18. His first popular work was *Citizen Tom Paine*, a fictional account of the life of Thomas Paine. Always interested in American history, he also wrote *The Last Frontier*, about an attempt by Cheyennes to return to their native land; and *Freedom Road*, about the lives of former slaves during Reconstruction.

The novel '*Freedom Road*' is based on a true story and was made into a 1979 film starring Muhammad Ali, who, in a very rare acting role, plays Gideon Jackson, an ex-slave in 1870's Virginia who gets elected to the US Senate in Washington DC and battles other former slaves and white sharecroppers to keep the land they tended all their lives. Fast spent World War II working with the United States Office of War Information, writing for *Voice of America*. In 1943, he joined the Communist Party USA and in 1950 he was called before the House Committee on Un-American Activities; in his testimony, he refused to disclose the names of contributors to a fund for a home for orphans of American veterans of the Spanish Civil War (one of the contributors was Eleanor Roosevelt), and was given a three-month prison sentence for contempt of Congress.

It was while he was in jail that Fast began writing his most famous work, *Spartacus*, a novel about an uprising among Roman slaves. Blacklisted by major publishing houses following his release from prison, Fast was forced to publish the novel himself. By the standards of a self-published book, it was a great success, going through seven printings in the first four months of publication. (According to Fast in his memoir, 50,000 copies were printed, of which 48,000 were sold.) He subsequently established the Blue Heron Press, which allowed him to continue publishing under his own name throughout the period of his blacklisting. Just as the production of the film version of "*Spartacus*" (released in 1960) is considered a milestone in the breaking of the Hollywood blacklist, the reissue of Fast's novel by Crown Publishers in 1958 effectively ended his own blacklisting within the American publishing industry.

In 1952, Fast ran for Congress on the American Labor Party ticket. During the 1950s he also worked for the Communist newspaper, the *Daily Worker*. In 1953, he was awarded the Stalin Peace Prize. Later in the decade, Fast broke with the Party over issues of conditions in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

In the mid-1950s, Fast moved with his family to Teaneck, New Jersey.[2] In 1974, Fast and his family moved to California, where he wrote television scripts, including such television programs as *How the West Was Won*. In 1977, he published *The Immigrants*, the first of a six-part series of novels.

He married his first wife, Bette Cohen, on June 6, 1937. Their children are Jonathan and Rachel. Bette died in 1994. In 1999 he married Mercedes O'Connor, who already had three sons. He died in Old Greenwich, Connecticut on March 12, 2003.

Fast's son Jonathan Fast, himself a novelist, was married to novelist Erica Jong; their daughter is the novelist Molly Jong-Fast.

The writer Julius Fast was Howard Fast's younger brother.

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