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March 19, 1945

Mr. Paul Porter, Director
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Porter:

This letter is a formal request for an investigation of action taken by Radio Station KFI in Los Angeles on February 10th, which we as citizens believe endangers the vitally important principles of free speech and freedom of the air.

On February 10th KFI sent a telegram to the sponsors of five programs of news analysis informing them that effective March 1 "all newscasters and news analysts will be employees of KFI," and serving notice in effect that the sponsors' present news analysts must be replaced as of March 1. In other words, the sponsors were given until March 1 to replace their news analysts with other types of program, or to accept as news analysts the persons on the KFI payroll.

This summary action has provoked wide-spread public indignation over the sudden and unexplained disappearance from the air of news commentators who had built up a large following, but we believe the fundamental issues to be broader than any question of personalities. The question is, has the owner of a radio station the right to declare that only his own employees shall analyze the news for listeners to his station?

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This policy totally disregards the rights of sponsors, but it also disregards the rights of the public. Congress has recognized these rights in the Federal Communications Act which directs the granting of a license to operate a radio station "if public convenience, interest or necessity is served thereby." We hold this to mean that a radio station cannot be operated solely according to the personal desires, politics, or whims of its owner.

With all newscasters and news analysts on its payroll, KFI will have the sole power to decide what news shall be presented to its listeners and what withheld. It will have the sole power to interpret such news. It will also be in sole control of the clear channel assigned to it by your commission. We believe this combination of powers is too great to be held and administered by any person or corporation. We believe the power which KFI has arrogated to itself, the power of news selection and interpretation, is so vast it should be controlled by the sovereign will of the people, as expressed in a free choice of news and news analysis programs on any and all stations.

We believe this sovereign right of the people is being endangered by the action of KFI, and we respectfully request an investigation of all the facts of the case, with a view to such action as the Commission may deem appropriate.

Sincerely,

HOLLYWOOD DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE

Marc Connelly
CHAIRMAN

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