

STAR, Washington, D. C.
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Newspaper Charges Hoffman Aims Shafts At Freedom of Speech

A House speech by Representative Hoffman, Republican, of Michigan, has drawn from the New York newspaper PM a charge that Mr.

Hoffman was "seeking to destroy freedom of speech by a back-door attack on the sponsors of radio commentators he does not like."

In the speech, delivered yesterday, Mr. Hoffman propounded a series of questions, asking whether Andrew Jergens, Cincinnati toilet article manufacturer and the radio sponsor of Walter Winchell, ever had in his employ persons accused or convicted of "disloyalty." He suggested that Mr. Winchell, Mr. Jergens or PM answer.

Mentions Execution of Saboteurs.
He asked if it were "not true that at least one of Jergens' confidential employes did either give aid to or conspire with some or all of the eight saboteurs who were executed?" (Only six were executed.)

In reply, John Lewis, managing editor of PM, declared:

"I presume Congressman Hoffman addressed his question at PM because we have been fighting in support of Walter Winchell's right to exercise freedom of speech on the radio.

"I don't know anything about any of the employes of Mr. Jergens except that Winchell told on his radio program a year or so ago how a housekeeper employed by Mr. Jergens had been arrested by the FBI."

Mr. Winchell, visiting in Washington yesterday, also told of that incident in reply to Mr. Hoffman's questions, saying it was "the only thing" he could think of that the

Michigan Representative might have meant. He asked to be called before a congressional committee.

"The people ought to know a lot of things, and maybe that's the place to tell 'em," he said.

Asked Jergens to Announce It.

"She (the housekeeper) was detained by the FBI as an enemy alien, and we were the first to announce it on the radio," said the commentator. "I heard about the matter when I came back from Brazil in January a year ago and called Jergens about it and told him that we had been announcing these things about others and I thought it proper that we should be the first to announce this. He told me: 'Go right ahead.' And I went right ahead. The FBI can tell all about it. Hoffman seems to be about 14 months late."

Mr. Lewis, declaring that Representative Hoffman's "interest is not in prosecuting enemy aliens, but in destroying the freedom of speech by driving Winchell off the air," said:

"Hoffman failed in an attempt to silence the press, including PM, in its attacks on native Fascism and himself two years ago. He tried unsuccessfully to create a Dies committee to investigate the press. Now he is seeking to destroy freedom of speech by a back-door attack on the sponsors of radio commentators he does not like."

Mr. Lewis termed Mr. Hoffman's speeches "a wholesale item of propaganda" and said they had been distributed by "many of the 33 members of the Fascist conspiracy now awaiting trial on Government charges."