

W. Decker

Sent also to Warner of

Warner Pictures

August 6, 1952

Mr. Spyros P. Skouras
Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation
444 West 56th Street
New York 19, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Skouras:

This letter is to convey to you what seems like a short history of my life during the past fifteen years, during which period while busy making moving pictures in Hollywood I took out time to help in the war effort as a contribution to the community and the industry of which I was a part. Apparently some of my actions have been misunderstood. However, I am grateful to you and thank you for the opportunity to set my record straight. I have tried to make my statement as brief as possible, although I really could fill a book.

First and foremost let me say positively without reservation that I am not now nor have I ever been a member of the Communist Party.

As a matter of philosophy, I abhor the one party system in Russia even more than the idea of Royalty. Having served the State of California in the Legislature, I even more abhor the idea of a one party system for my own country. There must be more than one party and there must be the freedom to speak ones mind. There must be room for a difference of opinion. There must be an exchange of ideas and the right to criticize the party in power. Otherwise, we run the grave danger of becoming like the thing we hate and fight against - Communism.

During my entire political career I have always been a Democrat and a member of the Democratic Party.

Even as a student at Bowdoin College, where I took a (pre-medical) course in Economics (because it required less work than the course in Government and one of them was compulsory) as I say, even then I found the materialistic doctrines of Communism with its disregard for the spiritual integrity of the individual to be a system that I would not accept nor care to support or be controlled by.

Secondly, let me say just as positively that I have never knowingly been a member of any group designated as subversive by any official of the United States Government, or by any official government body after the time such group was so designated.

As a legislator, I made friends and enemies. Unfortunately, one of the enemies was then a State Senator, Jack B. Tenney, Chairman of the Joint Fact Finding Committee on Un-American Activities of the California Legislature. I mention this because any complaints which may be made against me must find their genesis in the reports of the committee headed by my political rival after I had left the State Assembly and could not defend myself. I, therefore, propose to take every mention of my name in the reports of that committee to show that each one of them is entirely without merit in so far as any justifiable complaint may be made about me as a loyal citizen of the United States.

At this point, it might be asked why had I made no effort to officially correct the impression created by the many references to my name in the reports of the California Un-American Activities Committee, of which Jack B. Tenney was the Chairman. It is even stated on page 2980, in an excerpt from the California Senate Journal of July 23, 1949, which I saw for the first time on July 18, 1952, that my name was among the individuals "listed in the 1949 Report solely as a person who had failed to make any attempt to disprove or repudiate activities and affiliations cited in former reports, and as individuals who had never formally protested to the committee." As I look back on the situation, I realize that I should have asked for a hearing before the committee or at least sent a registered letter of protest and correction. But why did I not? For many reasons. As an actor I have never felt the need to protest or demand reconsideration from a critic who has given me a bad review even though he sat beside another critic in whose opinion I had given an excellent performance. The interpretation of every action depends not only on the performer, but the eye, the I.Q., and the intention of the beholder. This is also true of politics and I was a politician whose performance was being judged by other politicians, specifically a rival politician. So I ignored him.

The name of Franklin Roosevelt will prove my point if it needs clarification. I honor his name and memory and all my actions before going to the Legislature, while there, and since have been to help realize the ideas that he stood for in the hope that there might some day be some kind of real peace in the world. There are other people, and Westbrook Pegler is one of them, who never miss an opportunity to villify the name of Roosevelt, but the Roosevelts for the most part ignore him.

I ask why was I never summoned before the Tenney Committee? I am sure that one of the reasons is because he knows that I am not a Communist and that my testimony would end the character assassination that he, Tenney, had in mind. He certainly has done a thorough job in certain quarters. He was, however, not long ago removed from his job as Chairman and he was also defeated in the campaign for a Congressional seat in Los Angeles. Mr. Tenney, a former Democrat and Townsendite is now a Republican and in my opinion, and that of many others, he has used his Un-American Activities Committee to defeat Democrats wherever possible, particularly his own personal opponents of whom I was an outstanding one. He used his committee reports for campaign material and with a different cover, slightly changed material, he sold his reports for \$7.50 a copy. He has just recently resigned as President of an organization he helped organize called, "America Plus."

I would not now make the effort to defend myself except that I realize the damage already done interferes with my functioning as the artist that I am and keeps me from functioning at my fullest as a useful citizen not only in the theatre but in the community at large.

I have been asked why do I not sue for libel. It must be obvious that the Tenney Reports carry immunity with them and where the accusations come from elsewhere you must not only prove that you have been libeled but our law requires that you prove a money damage. I have never been able to prove a money damage, because nobody has ever refused to hire me for political reasons. My agents have told me that the reason given for not hiring me as I approach the peak of my talent is that I am either too tall, or too expensive, some of which may have at times been true. It also costs money to sue. Fredrick March spent I think \$50,000 for which he got a mild retraction; a lot of notoriety, and not one word has been changed nor is there even a notation in any report that Mr. March had been vindicated. Furthermore, these Senate committee reports are no more than that even when accepted by the Senate. The material in them exists in order to provide the basis for legislation.

There was not one piece of legislation offered to the Senate or the Assembly that became the Law for the State of California that in any way affects or concerns me. There is nothing but the smear.

Having actually been in Germany and having heard the sound of Hitler's voice in Berlin as long ago as 1933, I had seen for myself what the Hitler idea was with its anti-democratic, anti-semitic, and anti-human intent. Just as an "on-looker" I had the experience of being pushed off the street by an overzealous young member of the "Wehrmacht." In the same year, I went to Italy with my wife. We saw the constraint under which people lived with Mussolini as their Dictator. You had to get a police permit to have a guitar player come in for an evening's social entertainment.

As a well born, well educated, and happy human being, blessed with a wife and three children, well-cared for by my talent and earnings, I have lent my efforts to improving the lot of my fellowman. In this direction I worked for such projects as nursery schools for children of working mothers in war plants and elsewhere, while their husbands served in the Armed Forces. Such effort was called Communistic by Jack B. Tenney until he sponsored a bill on the same subject. I supported any measure I thought was for the general good of my community, the state, and the country.

I have three children whose antecedents by virtue of my wife's blood and mine include - Dutch, German, Jewish, Irish, Scotch, Portugese, French, Italian, Polish and who knows what else. How could I avoid believing that every man and woman be given a fair chance and an opportunity to live without prejudice against him because of the accident of birth, color or race.

My father died a retired Army officer, My brother, a Colonel, has a citation from the President of the United States for his work in some 31 countries during the war as a Typhus Expert. My sister was in the Army and is today a Major in the Air Force not far from Korea, so anyone who questions my loyalty is either sadly misinformed or has some sinister intention.

It was under the auspices of the moving picture industry while under contract to Paramount Studio that I served regularly as dish washer and master of ceremonies at the Hollywood Canteen. I toured thousands of miles with others and ~~alone~~ visiting army camps, hospitals, and navy stations helping to provide entertainment and build morale. On bond tours I helped sell millions of dollars of security for defense. On one tour we visited 14 cities in 10 days flying in a Navy bomber. I was told that our team collected something like \$185,000,000. I do not wish to seem immodest, but I know I had a fair share in this accomplishment and it should be remembered particularly when false charges are made against my name and character.

So impressed was I by the experiences that I had going about the country seeing the tremendous task that was being done, I was willing to do any job in which I could be most effective, and it was in this frame of mind that I responded to the call to serve in the lowest house of the California State Legislature for \$2200 instead of taking advantage of the jobs available in pictures because of the many men in the armed service.

Recently, I was shown a list of accusations made by others who used the Tenney Reports as the basis for their inquiry and boycott of me for actions of mine, when every action "if not taken out of context" could be explained and understood as the reasonable action of a person not only an actor but a member of the California

State Legislature, elected as a Democrat by a majority of the voters of Hollywood, to support the Roosevelt Program of which by their votes they approved.

As I read the charges I became immediately aware that the material was so organized and placed in such a relationship to other material, that someone not familiar with the technique of inference and repetition might easily come to the conclusion desired and worked for by Senator Tenney.

The fact of the matter is, however, that the case against me is that of decent human being grateful to be living in a free country who tried to help in the war effort and the fight against Hitler's Naziism and who in order to advance the program of the Democratic Party and the Roosevelt idea belonged to several associated public organizations and made speeches wherever the opportunity presented itself to speak about that program, "An Abundant American Way of Life," which I have enjoyed and wish to preserve.

I was disturbed to see that whoever compiled the material from the Tenney Reports was so positive of his or her conclusions that he was willing to use that which was not true just because it appeared on the printed pages of Jack B. Tenney's reports.

I saw immediately the attempt to magnify the importance of the charges against me by many repetitions of my name and by inference which is neither just nor supported by substantial evidence.

It is not fair to take the actions of people like myself out of context of the time in which the events occurred.

At the time the Russians were our ally. Spokesmen for our government, for whatever reason tactical or military, led us to trust the Russians and it did not seem a crime to hope that the United States and Russia could live at peace with each other. Even Walter Lippman wrote on the subject pointing out that for years we had been at peace with the Heathen Turks sworn enemies of Christendom.

It is my understanding that the House of Morgan bought and sold Russian Bonds since as far back as the Revolution which overthrew the Czar. Certainly the Jr. Chamber of Commerce sent carloads of clothing to the Russians and several societies of "The Daughters of the American Revolution" sponsored the idea of American-Soviet Friendship. Mayor Bowron of the City of Los Angeles attended at least one cocktail party given by the Russian Consulate in Hollywood on the occasion of its yearly anniversary.

I attended several banquets given by the Soviet-American Friendship Club and was either a speaker or master of ceremonies. This was not an act of disloyalty. I never joined these organizations but the enthusiasm at the time was not pro-Communist but rather pro-Russian as an ally in the war, for to my knowledge, the officials were all or nearly all well known White Russians who hated Communism but had affection for the land where they were born. Certainly Mischa Auer and Gregory Ratoff are examples of this White Russian attitude.

There was also the praise in public statements given to Russia by such men as Winston Churchill and Generals Eisenhower and MacArthur.

These statements were made at a time when we had a common objective, a time when we were fighting to win a war. It was during this period that Warner Bros., whose slogan was "Combining Good Entertainment with Good Citizenship," produced such pictures as "Underground" "Mission to Moscow" and "Watch On The Rhine." Sam Goldwyn made one called "North Star" a picture sympathetic to the Russians who were withstanding the Nazi invasion of their land and M.G.M. made "Song of Russia." These are probably subversive pictures today but at the time they were part of the war effort and had the cooperation and sanction of the United States Government and reflected the publicly popular attitude of the time.

I shall now take up each point in the formal document based on the material provided in the Tenney Reports:

At the very beginning is the expression:

"Reported as" - which of itself suggests that the material there under may not actually be true.

This is followed by the statement:

"Former pro-Communist member of the California Legislature" Un-Am. Act. in Calif., 1948, p. 346.

On page 346 - "Albert Dekker, former pro-Communist member of the California Legislature, added his voice to the defense of the Kremlin." This statement cannot be taken as evidence against me. Calling me pro-Communist is no proof, but it is certainly damaging. I was a member of the Legislature, was and am a "Liberal Democrat" in the Roosevelt tradition. It has long been the attempt to make such people in-effective by calling them Communists or pro-Communist. The committee statement which says, "I added my voice to the defense of the Kremlin" is no way explicit. It doesn't quote what I said. It only infers. How can you answer such a charge? Except under the auspices of the United States Treasury, when selling Bonds

when Russia was our ally I have had no occasion to praise Russia. As for the People's Daily World, mentioned in the report, which was mailed to all members of the State Legislature for them to read or throw away, I found it to be as overweighted in its point of view as some other newspapers are in theirs. I also found it pretty dull fare and not well written so that I seldom looked at it.

Page 346 - As for the Tenney Resolution condemning The People's World and calling on Street Vendors to carry signs against it and calling the general population to boycott it. It is stated that this Resolution was introduced and adopted by the Senate Committee. There is no indication that the Senate itself adopted this resolution nor that the Assembly was asked to act on it. In any case, I would not favor such a resolution because while it may contain much in it that was true or is true, if the paper is still published, yet it calls upon large groups of people to become self-appointed tribunals without the evidence being presented to them and without using the courts of law to weigh the evidence and without allowing a place and opportunity to answer the charges. Why was not the "seditious" newspaper brought into court and tried for its seditious acts and the responsible persons punished or acquitted?

Senator Tenney tried to get an even stronger measure passed by the Assembly when I was a member. This was an attempt to frighten people away from any support they might give to California Attorney General Kenny, who was then running for Governor on the Democratic ticket. This measure also provided no opportunity to defend oneself. Despite the fact this was a clever enough political trick to hurt the Democrats yet the measure was defeated with a majority of Republicans voting against it because they were too honorable and too aware of the unconstitutional and illegal nature of the proposal. This was a measure introduced by Assemblyman Wardel and the papers were full of it at the time.

"American Youth for
Democracy"

Master of ceremonies, A.Y.D.
birthday fete at Hollywood-
Roosevelt Hotel, 12/31/44,
Un.-Am. Act. in Calif., 1948,
page 183.

This indicated that I attended two banquets and was announced for a third at a time when I was a member of the State Legislature. But first it should be noted that this organization was not cited as subversive until the December of 1947 by the U. S. Attorney General. Mrs. Roosevelt herself was a friendly sponsor of this organization or its equivalent until she became aware of its ulterior purpose. But the experience was a

valuable one and she has been able to serve in the United Nations to better advantage as a result of it.

As a result of my own experience I know that I shall be more alert and more critical of any attempt to exploit me or my willingness to give of my talent to help what have seemed to be worthy and benevolent causes.

Page 183 - The first banquet is listed as a "birthday fete at the Hollywood-Roosevelt Hotel" 12/31/44. Honored guests were Congressmen Ellis Patterson and Ned Healy, both Democrats. That others present were later indicated to be Communists is not my responsibility. It was my duty as a Legislator to attend many banquets and many meetings to avail myself of every opportunity to speak about the program of the Democratic Party and to get people to make their utmost contributions to the winning of the war. I did not at the time know that the A.Y.D. was an outgrowth of the "Young Communist League" nor was it cited as subversive and Communist until the December of 1947 and the September of 1948 according to the Guide to Subversive Organizations and Publications which was printed May 14, 1951 and which I did not see until July 18, 1952.

The second charge is that I was announced to be M.C. at an A.Y.D. banquet in San Francisco for November 11, 1945. The charge does not say whether I attended or not, nor what the purpose was. I have no recollection of attending. My name has been used many times without my knowledge or permission. Many organizations both well intentioned and otherwise make a practice of using box office names to enlarge the attendance at their meetings. I have always objected to using my name in this way because as an artist people become disappointed when someone who has promised to appear fails to show up.

The third charge in the very same category states that "On Sunday, December 16, 1945, American Youth for Democracy sponsored a "Welcome Home Joe" dinner at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. There follows a list of more than 75 people well known in the community. What ever other connection they may have had or were later accused of having I knew them for the most part as Roosevelt Democrats and it is my opinion that much of the attack on the people mentioned in the California Un-American Activities had the intention not only of revealing the activities of the Communist Party, the Fascist Nazi Bund, The American Fascist and allied interests but primarily to use the work of the committee to embarrass and cut down the membership of the Democratic Party for political purposes to discredit the Democratic Party and Democrats like myself by the continued association and repetition of our names with those of the few people actually working for the objectives of the Communist Party. When I asked what the December 1945

banquet was about, it was represented to me as "A Tribute to America Night" a "Welcome Home G.I. Joe Dinner" honoring among others the South Pacific marine and war hero, Barney Ross, a friend to whom I was happy to pay tribute. From my point of view, although some of the sponsors have since been indicated to be Communists, there were many distinguished and honorable men and women present. If these people were window dressing, than that is the catagory in which I find myself. For these same people, like myself, are certainly anti-Communist today. For remember it was not until 1947 that the Attorney General of the United States cited the A.Y.D. as being subversive. But among those present were two duly elected United States Congressmen, three other California State Legislators still serving in the State Legislature, Christian ministers, a Rabbi, Jerome Posner, Frank Scully, and Col. Evans Carlson, then or later a candidate for the United States Senate, who presented an award to Bill Mauldin. Other awards were made by Barney Ross and Dore Schary, who then I think was the Executive Producer at R.K.O. and although a very progressive Roosevelt Democrat was certainly no Communist.

The next matter states:

"California Labor School"

Invited speaker at Asilomar conference of CLS. Final Report, Un.-Am. Act. in Calif., 1948, p. 2982

Page 2982 referring to page 101 of 1947 Report states that at a contemplated meeting in Asilomar under the auspices of the California Labor School that the list of invited speakers included Harry Budes, Albert Dekker, former State Assemblyman, Helen Gahagan Douglas, Congresswoman, Augustus Hawkins, Member of the State Assembly, George Irvine, Calif. Board Brotherhood of Locomotive Fireman & Engineers, Mervyn Rathborne, Secretary Treas. Calif. C.I.O. Council, and Dr. Roberts, Educational Director of the California Labor School. I may have been announced, certainly without my knowledge, but I am positive that I did not attend. Even if I had, this could not constitute a proper charge against me. I don't even know where Asilomar is. This organization was not indicated as subversive by the United States Attorney General until June 1948. It was later denounced as Communist controlled by the California State Federation of Labor, but at the time I was aware of its existense it had such sponsors as the United States Government, which gave it funds under the G.I. Bill of Rights and Bartly C. Crum, United States Senator Sheridan Downey, Judge Lazarus of the San Francisco Superior Court, Henry Melinkow of National Labor Bureau, Daniel Murphy, Sheriff of San Francisco, State Senator John F. Shelly, Dewey Mead, President of the American Federation of Labor's Building and Construction

Trades Council. There were many A. F. of L. organizations represented. Certainly those people had joined in good faith with the C.I.O. to support the California Labor School. But when the State A.F. of L denounced the California Labor School, I am of the opinion it was not only denouncing it for its Communist dominations but also for political reasons taking a crack at the C.I.O. In any event if the Sheriff of San Francisco was unaware of the Communistic nature of the California Labor School certainly it is reasonable to understand that I was even less informed. Surely this incident is not a basis for questioning my loyalty, and being elected to state office didn't make me necessarily smarter than anyone else.

"California Legislative Conference (organized 1947 Communist march on Sacramento)"

Sponsor. Final Report, etc., p. 2982

Page 2982 referring to page 242 of 1947 Report states that I was a sponsor of the Second Legislative Conference. Yes, I was a sponsor, but I did not believe it to be Communist inspired. The call to this conference, which was held in the Junior High School Auditorium in Sacramento, was sent out by G. F. Irvine, Chairman of the Legislative Board of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Engineers. Other sponsoring organizations represented were the C.I.O. State Council, The Hollywood Independent Citizens Committee, of which I was a board member, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, The National Citizens Political Action Committee of Southern California, The Progressive A.F. of L. Committee for Political and Legislative Action and the Townsend Clubs of California. To call this a Communist march on Sacramento is of itself an attempt by the very wording to create the inference of something destructive and subversive. People coming from all over California had to get there somehow, so the idea of a caravan announcing their destination as they went seemed a good way to get the attention of the press in order that the people of California and the Legislators themselves might be made aware of the program for which they sort legislative support from the Legislature. The meeting was held in the High School in good order and when it was over the people returned to their homes. To call this a march on Sacramento is insidious. I was there to work for a program to support the platform of the Democratic Party and the first legislative conference was held at my suggestion and in cooperation with the Democratic Party. This conference went on record in favor of a housing program, and F.E.P.C. legislation, child care legislation, a program against discrimination and restrictive covenants, nursery schools for the children of working mothers, etc. It is only with hindsight that this conference becomes Communist inspired or that certain individuals prove to be a part of the Communist Party program.

I have attended meetings and banquets given by the Chamber of Commerce and the Merchants and Manufacturers Association in the Senator Hotel in Sacramento. I have been to other gatherings organized by other Lobbyists and people with special interests. Attending these meetings does not reflect on ones loyalty.

"Citizens Committee for
the Motion Picture Strikers"

Participant. Final Report
etc., p. 2982, Un-Am. Act.
in Calif., 1948, p. 201.

This I deny. I was never a member of any Citizens Committee to help the strikers and I have no knowledge of my name having been used in that connection. As a member of the legislature in whose district some of the strike took place, I made the effort to keep myself separate in order that as an impartial person I might ultimately make some contribution toward ending the strike which I personally considered ill-advised. As an actor, my union, the Screen Actors Guild did not recognize the strike and, therefore, I worked at various studios during the entire period at which these same studios were being picketed. True, I belonged to the Hollywood Democratic Committee at the time and some of its membership went to Burbank to observe what was happening at the scene of the Warner Bros. Studios, but I was not of that group nor responsible for their actions.

"Citizens United to
Abolish the Wood-
Rankin Committee"

Supporter. Paid ad,
NY Times, 3/14/46, p.18

This information came as complete news to me. I never contributed any money for such purpose, nor do I remember lending my name to such an add though it might well have been used without my knowledge as it has been on other occasions. However, certain members of the Congressional Un-American Activities Committee conducted themselves and their hearings in such a manner that the committee's reputation suffered thereby and made such propaganda for the Russians that there are times when I have felt that these committees serve no purpose that could not be better served by the F.B.I. and our Police Departments. Specifically, because of lawful protest the Dies Committee was reformed and because of Mr. Rankin's known prejudices Mr. Wood was made Chairman and because of J. Parnell Thomas' very Un-American Activity he was ultimately removed from the Un-American Activities Committee and sent to the Federal Penitentiary.

"Emergency Committee on
KFI"

Supporter and sent
telegram in support.
Final Report etc. p. 2982

See page 183 and 186 of the 1947 Report. This relates to a decision on the part of the Hollywood Radio Station K.F.I. to dismiss six news commentators. Again this involved people in my Assembly District, which was Hollywood, and

the idea that every news commentator had to be in the direct employ of the station seemed like an infringement on the rights of sponsors as well as the right to free speech. From Sacramento I sent a telegram stating that I would present the matter to the Legislature and I did and as I recollect I introduced a Resolution which was passed by almost all the members of the Assembly calling upon the Federal Communication Commission to investigate the situation. Thomas Ford, recently retired Congressman, and John Anson Ford, Los Angeles Supervisor were also sponsors and supporters of the Emergency Committee on K.F.I. and supported the idea of establishing another radio station. Again much of this conflict is resolved into a political situation in which, as a Democrat, I felt that the absolute control of the commentators by the stations would result in the loss of support for Democratic Candidates because of the political point of view of the management of K.F.I.

"Hollywood Democratic
Committee"

Attended meeting at Hollywood-
Roosevelt Hotel, 3/4/43. Un-
Am. Act. in Calif. 1948
p. 253.

Regular candidate for Treasurer
and for Executive Board,
7/26/44, Official ballot;
App. 9, p. 783

Attended meeting, 6/5/45.
Un. Am. Act. in Calif. 1948
p. 253

Yes, I did belong to the Hollywood Democratic Committee, served on the Executive Board and was once Treasurer for a few weeks. I belonged to this organization because it was an adjunct of the Democratic Party. The funds raised were used to support Democratic candidates and the Roosevelt Administration. I was away on Bond Tours and was travelling around the country entertaining our soldiers and sailors and I was away in the State Legislature six months one year, 1945, and three months another, 1946, so missed many meetings but when present I was never aware that these meetings were dominated or controlled by Communists possibly, because not being a Communist myself, I was not aware of their planning.

Again, it is only with hindsight and the revelations on the Congressional Hearings Level that it now appears that there were some Communists in the Hollywood Democratic Committee, the Hollywood Independent Citizens Committee, and the Progressive Citizens of America. However, the great majority and there were hundreds of them for the moving picture industry, good Democrats and Republicans

whose sole purpose was, as was mine, the winning of the war and the support of President Roosevelt in the fight against Nazi Germany and Japan.

"Mobilization for
Democracy"

Member of Executive Board
Un-Am. Act. in Calif. 1948,
p. 254, p. 308; Final Report
etc. p. 2982

The inference here is that I was an Executive Board member of the Mobilization for Democracy. This I was not, although I was and am opposed to the anti-semitism, the anti-catholicism, and the K.K.K. content of Gerald L.K. Smith's violent songs of hate for everyone who does not agree with him. He was scheduled to speak at a high school in Los Angeles. His meeting was picketed. I for one opposed the idea of picketing. First, because I believe it is a much abused practice and secondly because it would get Gerald L. K. Smith the very kind of attention he was after.

I did attend a public meeting at the Royal Palms Hotel called by Robert W. Kenney, then Attorney General of the State of California. I also helped raise some money to help in the fight against Smith's very un-American program. Wm. Basset of the Los Angeles A. F. of L, the distinguished Rabbi Magnin, Raymond Booth, a member of the Society of Friends, and many civic minded men and women addressed this anti-Smith meeting at the Olympic Auditorium on the evening of July 20, 1945, the same night that Smith was having his meeting. It is my recollection that the money raised was to go to further the work of Raymond Booth's Council for Civic Unity. Instead of which a few days later there was formed a committee or organization called the Mobilization for Democracy with which I had absolutely no association and any statement to the contrary is in error.

"Hollywood Independent
Citizens Committee of
Arts, Sciences and
Professions

Member of Executive Council
Letterhead, July 1945,
Un-Am. Act. in Calif. 1948
p. 254.

Yes, I was on the letterhead and was a member of the Executive Council, but this list also includes many names of the most important and valuable people in the moving picture industry such as Bette Davis, Dore Schary, Robert Andrews, Edwin Blum, Humphry Bogart, Charles Boyer, George Burns, Eddie Cantor, Joseph Cotten, Olivia De Havilland, D. A. Doran, Joan Fontaine, Paulette Goddard, Howard J. Green, Rita Hayworth, Walter Huston, George Jessel, Jerome Kern, Jesse Lasky, Al Rogell, Mrs. Harry Tugend, and many more.

The 1948 Report California Un-American Activities Act states that the Hollywood Democratic Committee changed its name to avoid exposure as a Communist front. This is certainly not my understanding. For on this basis I would have had nothing to do with it nor the people listed above.

My understanding was that in order to expand the work of the Hollywood Democratic Committee and to unite with like-minded people in other communities some of whom were Republicans that a more general name was needed. I remember very distinctly visiting the home of Sam Goldwyn with Edwin Knopf and Yip Harberg to discuss this matter and to ask Mr. Goldwyn to lend his home for a cocktail party to raise money for radio time to help give publicity to the forth coming meeting of the United Nations in San Francisco. We had received a telegram from Secretary of the Treasury Morgeauthau and a communication from Congresswoman Douglas proposing the idea. Mr. Goldwyn had just returned from England. I remember there was a question as to whether the Democratic Party could be better served by the support of a national organization called Democratic Committee or Independent Citizens Committee and that he preferred keeping the word Democratic though we pointed out the possible conflict with the official Democratic Party. If from some other quarters there was a more sinister design, I certainly was un-aware of it. Even later when the Hollywood Independent Citizens Committee became the Progressive Citizens of American it was in order to join with the National Citizens Political Action Committee in order to do away with a duplication of effort both in the raising of money in which field there had been much previous conflict; and to conserve on office space and the cost of working for legislation and candidates both in Washington and in the local communities.

Looking backward it is often possible to see a design or plan which one does not reveal itself until unfolded. Sometimes a pattern appears that seems carefully designed but which was purely accidental.

I was not aware of any intention away from the best principles of the Democratic Party until the Hollywood-P.C.A., which is the only one with which I was familiar, refused to support Democratic Congressmen, and Democratic State Legislators that I knew to be good and worthy members of the Democratic Party. Finally when the Hollywood P.C.A. came out for a third Party and opposed the Marshal plan and prepared to join with the Independent Progress Party I resigned because the interests of the Democratic Party could no longer be served by remaining. I wrote a formal letter of resignation and Leslie Claypoole of the Los Angeles Daily News carried an account of it in his political column and so the fact was made public.

"People's Daily World
(West Coast Communist
Newspaper)

Defender of Un-Am. Act. in
Calif. 1948, p. 346.

This is an example of the careless manner in which these accusations are piled up against me by inference and repetition because it is the very same reference

referred to in the first charge which also referred to page 346.

"People's Daily World"

In picture in People's Daily World, cited in transcript excerpt; also reference by witness in transcript. Final Report, etc. p. 2982

This transcript excerpt indicates that on Friday, November 2, 1945, my picture was in the People's Daily World in what connection it does not say. My picture has been published in thousands of newspapers over which I have no control and no knowledge.

"People's Educational Center"

Connected with Un-Am. Act. in Calif. 1948, p. 346

This school was located in Hollywood, my Assembly District and as an Assemblyman I spoke to a public meeting concerning pending legislation in Sacramento and I spoke against cross-filing which is a practice in California that badly hampers the two party system in which I strongly believe. I also spoke about reapportionment and better salaries for State Legislators so that they might more diligently make of the work a full time occupation. This was my only appearance or association with the People's Educational Center.

"Progressive Citizens of America"

Signer of call to organize PCA

Official greeter at PCA meeting.

Officer of PCA. Final Report etc., p. 2982

Officer in Los Angeles branch of PCA, 10/27/47, Un-Am. Act. in Calif., 1948, p. 355

These repeated references indicate that I was a board member of the P.C.A. It may seem like a quibble to deny that I was the Official Greeter for the newly organized P.C.A., but I do deny it and mention it showing again that there has been a deliberate attempt to damage my reputation by constant repetition and magnifying the significance of my actions. Again, neither this organization nor any to which I have referred was ever cited as being subversive at the time I was a member.

"Progressive Citizens
of America"

Arts, Sciences, and Professions
Division, PCA, "Conference
on Cultural Freedom and Civil
Liberties" Hotel Commodore
NYC, 10/25-26/47. Sponsor
Official call.

To the best of my knowledge I was not a sponsor
nor did I lend my name, though my name may have been used
without my knowing it.

There is a further charge and inference under
the heading:

Note: ALBERT DEKKER formerly was known as ALBERT J. VAN DEKKER.
He was a member of the FORUM, identified as the "Communist
spearhead for penetration into the Actors Equity Association"
in the early '30s.

There is here the inference that I was using an
assumed name for some devious purpose. There is also another
careless or deliberate mis-statement. I was never known
anywhere by the name of ALBERT J. VAN DEKKER. There may be
such a person, but I am not he. I was known in the theatre
as ALBERT VAN DEKKER. When I accepted a contract at
Paramount, the studio asked me to drop the VAN and I did
so. In order to set the record straight, I later changed
my name legally.

As for my connection with the Forum, I was elected
by the Actors Equity Association to the Equity Governing
Board known as the Equity Council and I served in this
capacity for five years. It is my recollection that I
resigned shortly after going to Hollywood and since that
time, which is now some fifteen years, I have taken no active
part in the activities of either the Actors Equity or the
Screen Actors Guild.

As a member of the Actors Equity Council, I
attended meetings of the Forum and became interested in the
needs of actors during the depression years of the early
thirties and was, therefore, identified with the Forum,
but there was no membership in this group. Any actor could
partake in the discussions that concerned the livelihood
of actors. The records of the Equity Association will show
that almost every measure that was worked for and proposed
is now an accepted and standard part of the actors equity
contract. There was some Communistic activity and agitation
and again as I look back on it there probably was more than
I realized. But it certainly did get in the way of the good
work the liberal minded Equity members were trying to accomplish
such as the organization of radio, and the separation of the
California actors union from the control of the New York
Equity, shorter rehearsal periods, a decent minimum wage etc.

It is further noted: Mrs. Albert Dekker chaired a

CONGRESS OF AMERICAN WOMEN meeting in March 1947.
People's Daily World, 3/12/47; Un-Am. Act. In Calif.
1948, p. 231.

There is nothing in this statement that either impunes my wife's loyalty or my own except by inference again and the quoting of the People's Daily World. As a matter of interest, my wife was invited to be chairman because of my name. She attended only a few meetings of that organization and decided she didn't have time for it.

So much for all the accusations quoted from Jack Tenney's Reports.

There was one more, page 309 of the 1948 Report involved with leftist group steering Los Angeles Council for Civic Unity into Communist line activities. This is utterly ridiculous. I attended very few meetings although I was and am interested in the problem of civic unity. I have always felt that the better the relationship among our minority groups and the more opportunity we give them the less propaganda the Russians can make of some of the inequalities that exist and will exist until education and better understanding is achieved.

As a member of the State Legislature I was invited to join the Council for Civic Unity, but when I found that my time was too much taken up with my duties as an actor as well as legislator I resigned because I did not just wish to be window dressing.

No mention was made of my many speeches under the auspices of the United States Treasury Department, The Jr. Chamber of Commerce, The Tax Payers Association, The Merchants and Manufacturers, The Lions, The Suroptimists, The Masonic Order, The League of Women Voters, Labor Group both A. F. of L (I belong to four A. F. of L unions in order to work as an actor) The C.I.C. I addressed Church meetings, made appeals for the Community Chest, for hospitals, for whatever seems like a worthy cause.

In any case, since the last Presidential primary ¹⁹⁴⁸ I have belonged to no organization but the Democratic Party.

And now may I thank you again for your consideration and care in this matter.

Very sincerely,

Albert Dekker