

EQUAL TIME ON RADIO AND TV :

THE PRESENTATION OF CONTRASTING POINTS OF VIEW

Thousands of extreme right-wing radio and television broadcasts are made daily in this country. One research group estimates that 35 thousand broadcasts are being made weekly. For example:

Program	No. Stations Carrying	Daily/Weekly
Dan Smoot	133	W
Howard Kershner	145	W
Billy James Hargis	44	D
Life Lines	324	D
Manion Forum	313	W
Rev. Carl McIntyre	500	D

These figures do not include such "moderate" commentators as Fulton Lewis, Jr., or the sometimes even more vicious radical right programs of local origin.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), in a public statement issued July 26, declared that "if one viewpoint of a controversial issue of public importance is presented," the radio or television station involved is obligated to make a responsible effort to present the other opposing viewpoint or viewpoints." The Commission states that "it is immaterial whether a particular program or viewpoint is presented under the label of 'Americanism,' 'anti-communism,' or 'states' rights,' or whether it is a paid announcement, official speech, editorial, or religious broadcast."¹

In a case in which the Citizens Committee for a Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty requested free time for broadcasting a tape in which the "Life Lines" position on the test-ban would be disputed, the Commission stated:

"...where the licensee has chosen to broadcast a sponsored program which for the first time presents one side of a controversial issue, has not presented (or does not plan to present) contrasting viewpoints in other programming, and has been unable to obtain paid sponsorship for the appropriate presentation of the opposing viewpoint or viewpoints, he cannot reject a presentation otherwise suitable to the licensee -- and thus leave the public uninformed -- on the ground that he cannot obtain paid sponsorship for that presentation."² [emphasis in original]

The FCC views radio and television stations as community public service institutions. Thus, stations are obligated to include all aspects of community life in their broadcasting.

If a local radio station broadcasts community announcements for white groups or broadcasts white church services, the station is obligated to do the same for Negro groups and Negro church services. If the local radio or television station is neglecting a "responsible" minority viewpoint or refuses to include minority community life in its programming, individuals or organizations can file a complaint with the FCC. All radio and television stations must be licensed by

1. FCC, 63-734, 38372; Public Notice B; July 26, 1963
2. FCC letter to WKUL, Cullman, Ala., and WARF, Jasper, Ala.; September 19, 1963

the FCC. If a station refuses to cooperate with Commission rulings, then the FCC can refuse to renew the station's license.

HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT AGAINST AN UNFAIR BROADCASTER

1. Obtain a program schedule from the station in question. The station's broadcast schedule (log) must be exhibited to the public, on request. Note when the station presents editorials, or programs by right-wing or segregationist groups. Also note if the station is adequately performing community service for local minority groups.
2. If possible, tape recordings should be made of programs in dispute. Otherwise, two people should listen to the programs and prepare affidavits on the one-sided nature of the presentation.
3. A letter should be sent to the station involved and the station manager should be asked to comply with FCC regulations. If the station refuses to allow you or any other group to present contrasting views on the subject, or if the station continues to ignore community activities of minority groups, then a formal complaint should be filed with the FCC.
4. A complaint to the FCC should include the previously mentioned affidavits, a written refusal by the broadcaster to negotiate, and a listing by date of the disputed program to establish the one-sided nature of the station's programming (a week's listing of disputed programs is adequate.) The complaint should be sent to the FCC, Washington, D. C. 20054. Send a courtesy copy to the Chairman of the FCC.

N.B. If a station presents one point of view on a controversial question, the station can be asked to present all points of view on the question.

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For further information or assistance, contact:

STUDENT CIVIL LIBERTIES COORDINATING COMMITTEE
P. O. Box 4938, Washington, D. C. 20008

The FCC views radio and television stations as community public service institutions. Your station and others are expected to include all segments of community life in their programming.

If a local radio station broadcasts community announcements for white groups or individuals while denying similar service to the black community, the station is obligated to be fair and impartial. If the local radio or television station is neglecting a "responsive" minority viewpoint or refusing to include minority community life in its programming, individuals or organizations can file a complaint with the FCC. All radio and television stations must be licensed by the FCC under the FCC Public Notice of July 26, 1961.

FCC letter to WFLA, Orlando, Fla., dated August 19, 1961.