

CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM

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TO: Jack, Loretta, Pat, Dick, Mary, Gail, Julie, and Pacifica station managers
FR: Burt Glass
DT: 11 March 1997

RE: Questions & Answers about Pacifica

Below are some of the questions sometimes asked of Pacifica staff and GB directors, along with proposed answers. We're providing this to you to assist you in answering the concerns of your colleagues and members of the community/public radio family. I call it a "cheat sheet" to help me stay on message and represent the organization accurately and consistently.

You should always feel free to refer questions from the public to me or other designated spokespeople should you feel uncomfortable with answering. Pat has asked that all questions about national programming or about the Pacifica network in general *from members of the media*, however, should be directed to me or her for now. It may make sense to also designate one or two board members -- Jack as chair, Loretta as communications committee chair, perhaps -- as additional national spokespeople.

While there is nothing in this document that is untrue or incriminating, please do not make and distribute copies to others.

This document certainly is not the final "word" on answering these questions. Answers may be refined as circumstances changes, and new questions will be included. Please do not hesitate to forward your comments to me at any time so I can incorporate your ideas and edits. I can be reached at (510) 843-0130, ext. 253.

Labor Issues:

Why did Pacifica management hire a union-busting firm to deal with the unionized workers at WBAI in New York?

Pacifica remains a pro-union, pro-worker organization. We have never sought to "bust a union." In fact, we welcome organized labor, and have devoted countless hours of on-air programming about the struggle of union and working people.

Recognizing that we lacked the in-house expertise in some aspects of labor law, Pacifica retained the services of American Consulting Group in 1993 to be available by phone to advise us. We paid them \$1,000 for their assistance. To our chagrin, we then heard allegations that the firm had participated in some anti union activities in its history. To this day, we have been unable to verify these allegations. Still, we cancelled their contract because we value our reputation as pro-union and pro-worker.

We continue to negotiate in good faith with our New York employees to arrive at a fair contract for all parties.

Why is Pacifica trying to exclude 90 percent of your New York work force from the union?

Everyone in the Pacifica family must have a role in shaping the organization and their position in it. As a matter of justice, however, we feel uncomfortable with volunteers who do not make their living at WBAI bargaining

for the wages and working conditions of the people who do. Other mechanisms outside the formal bargaining unit of paid employees must be found to communicate the concerns of volunteers.

The National Labor Relations Board is now reviewing this case at the national level, and it would be improper for me to comment further about it until a final ruling has been made.

Now that the New York labor review board found against you, will you be acknowledging the volunteers at WBAI as full members of the union?

The decision by the regional board is under appeal. The National Labor Relations Board is now reviewing this case at the national level, and it would be improper for me to comment further about it until a final ruling has been made.

Why are you trying to gag some of your affiliates and prevent them from telling listeners about your conflict with unionized workers in New York?

Pacifica is not trying to gag anyone. We have no ability, legal or otherwise, to prevent an affiliate or subscriber station from airing a commentary or program. We also have no desire to do so.

Three community radio subscribers to Pacifica national programs have aired so-called "disclaimer" notices before and after the *Pacifica National News*, suggesting that Pacifica is engaged in union-busting. This is a false suggestion, of course, and Pacifica has asked these few affiliates to stop airing them on those grounds. We have no plans to withdraw Pacifica national programming for these stations. Other subscriber stations and affiliates were approached about airing the disclaimers and declined, arguing that such action was misleading and undermined the legitimacy of their programming.

Governance:

Why are you reducing the number of seats on Pacifica's board of directors for local advisory board members?

[Before release of strategic plan:] Aspects of the strategic plan dealing with governance issues have not been approved and are still flux. We'll be happy to comment after things are finalized.

[After release of strategic plan:] The number of board directors from our five station areas remains unchanged. In fact, two-thirds of our board are required to reside in our five station areas -- reaffirming our commitment to remain close to the needs of grassroots community radio. One-third of our board will be elected at-large.

Of those directors from our five areas, half of them will be elected from local advisory boards, and half will be elected by the board.

These refinements were made to create a healthy balance of interests between local and "big picture" perspectives. The board, after all, is charged with the responsibility of guiding the entire network. We think we've hit the right balance to guarantee a voice for everyone.

Also, many board directors were being asked to do "double-duty," serving both on the national Pacifica national governing board and on the board of the local station. The result has been less involvement by board directors in a time when we needed more. These changes should help relieve the burden felt by some board directors while making room for new directors with fresh energy.

Why didn't you just add five signal area members to the Board -- instead of subtracting Local Advisory Board representatives?

The Governing Board considered that option, but decided that Board membership should remain compact to increase the effectiveness of Board operations and committee work. Equally important, keeping the Governing Board compact contains the very considerable costs to the organization of each Board director -- expenses like flying Board directors to meetings, holding committee conference calls, etc.

Why didn't Pacifica move toward electing Board directors by the listeners, like some stations do?

Board responsibilities -- for fiscal oversight, fundraising ability, management skill, political direction, familiarity with Pacifica Radio and the time to devote and willingness to travel -- are not guaranteed by a listener election process. Pacifica is set up to depend on a working Governing Board, which week-in-and-week-out requires specific talents and time commitments.

A more limited role for the Governing Board -- which listener elections would necessitate -- would require an offsetting expansion of Pacifica management, something the organization could not commit the resources to.

Pacifica also has commitments to representation on the Board by progressives and people of color -- and a Governing Board selection process is the best assurance to meet those goals.

Board membership carries a thorough understanding of, and a thoughtful commitment to, Pacifica's mission statement and historic principles, and the public's interest in a strong Pacifica Radio is best served by a selection process that recruits and trains the strongest possible leadership.

Finally, Local Advisory Board elections have been experimented with in the past in Pacifica, and abandoned for the very reasons reviewed above. One such election would cost more than the entire annual operating budget for Governing Board work.

Democratic representation shouldn't play second fiddle to efficiency and a smooth operation -- why is efficiency being given top priority?

The issue isn't efficiency -- but really effectiveness and accountability. Board members must serve on committees, attend committee meetings by conference call, serve as committee chairs, serve as Board officers, attend national meetings away from home several times a year, read staff reports and Board committee reports, and be available for consultation and input with their peers and with staff. Most Board directors are asked to assist with fundraising, outreach and other matters that carry the work of the organization beyond Pacifica and its stations -- to community and public radio networks, to other progressive organizations, to the media and to funding institutions -- from donors to Congress. The Board needs to insure that it can take care of its business. The new system balances needs for effectiveness and accountability with representation.

Why are Pacifica board meetings closed to the public?

Pacifica Foundation business meetings of the board are not closed to the public; they are open to all. In keeping with the standard practice of other non-profit organizations, the board may retire to private session when sensitive personnel issues or proprietary financial matters are being discussed.

Recently, board directors spent time together for a series of strategic planning retreats, during which no formal action was taken or voted on. These retreats were not board meetings at all, and as with all such planning retreats in any organization, these retreats were limited to board members and senior staff.

Programming:

Why is Pacifica Foundation trying to squeeze out local programming with national programming?

Pacifica remains dedicated to the absolute primacy of local programming; it's the life-blood of community radio -- including Pacifica-operated stations. Today, Pacifica requires its stations to air only one, 30-minute national program, the daily *Pacifica National News*. Other programs made available through Pacifica are aired at the option of local station managers.

Remember that most national programs are championed and often produced by local Pacifica stations. For example, *We The People with Jerry Brown* is produced by KPFA in Berkeley. *Radio Nation* is produced by KPFK in Los Angeles.

Is it true that Pacifica plans to cancel *Flashpoints* (or other locally-produced program)?

Programming decisions over locally-produced programs such as *Flashpoints* always lie with the local station manager, not the national executive office of Pacifica.

Are Pacifica and its five stations "selling out" by changing its programming to attract more listeners -- and abandoning its historic mission to (fill in blank)?

Hell, no! Listen to any of our national programs such as *Democracy Now!* or the *Pacifica National News*, and you will find the sort of hard-hitting, alternative voices on which the public has come to depend and expect from Pacifica. We recently aired commentaries from controversial death row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal, commentaries similar to ones that National Public Radio planned to air but shelved under political pressure. Pacifica's decision was hardly the behavior of a network intent on "going corporate."

However, we are very much determined to attract more listeners, in keeping with our historical mission. We will accomplish this providing high quality programming that offers fresh, alternative voices to the public -- all the while maintaining our independent funding base. In these days of bland, homogenized radio, we think it's a winning formula.

Will Jerry Brown keep his program if he runs for Oakland mayor?

Pacifica is proud to provide *We The People with Jerry Brown* to a national audience, and we have no plans to end its distribution at this time. Pacifica, of course, will fully comply with relevant campaign law when and if Jerry decides to run for elected office in the future.

Funding:

How much is Pacifica receiving through CPB?

Pacifica receives about 15 percent of its annual budget through CPB. For 1996, that was \$1.3 million out of a \$8.5 million dollar budget.

Does Pacifica accept corporate underwriting of any kind?

Pacifica is steadfast in its commitment to maintain an independent funding base. Pacifica has not sought, does not have, and will not accept corporate underwriting of programming -- period. Our funds come from individual listeners who appreciate our programming and understand the importance of a truly independent voice in a free society.

Why must Pacifica's five stations give 13 percent of their income to Pacifica's national office?

Pacifica-owned stations pool resources at the rate of 13 percent of local revenues to pay for shared network activities, including insurance, accounting, legal and management services, Governing Board operations, and government and public relations services.

Other questions:

What is Pat Scott's (or other Pacifica Foundation employee) salary?

It is Pacifica's long-standing policy not to publicly discuss employee salaries.

Isn't Pacifica too left-wing and too biased to report on the news?

Of course not. Pacifica strives to promote diversity and pluralistic community expression, and to provide a forum for various and, sometimes, neglected viewpoints. That's why our reporting sounds a little different from what a listener might hear on commercial radio. If anything, our commitment to alternative voices has enhanced our reporting, because we're been able to offer our listeners a side to stories that is usually omitted elsewhere.

Why did you hire a former press secretary for the Justice Department's police hiring office? Isn't that antithetical to Pacifica's mission?

Burt worked for the Justice Department's office dealing with community policing, a crime-fighting strategy that more fully involves the public and reconnects the police to the communities they are sworn to serve. A good community policing program, for example, places less emphasis on reacting to 911 calls and more time preventing crime by helping start neighborhood crime watches and building one-on-one relationships with people in their communities.

However, most of Burt's experience comes from his many years with the grassroots peace and disarmament movement, both with Peace Action (formerly SANF/TREEZE) and Physicians for Social Responsibility. Before coming to Pacifica, Burt worked as director of press relations for the League of Conservation Voters, the political arm of the environmental movement.

With his experience in press relations at the national level, especially on behalf of the progressive community, Burt is a good fit for Pacifica.