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## Highlights of Pacifica Radio's 50 Year History of Radio Broadcasting



- 1946 Lewis Hill moves from Washington DC to the San Francisco Bay Area and begins work toward creating a radio station dedicated to a "pacific world in our time."
- 1949 Pacifica first goes on the air April 15 as KPFA-FM in Berkeley CA.
- 1950 Opponents to the Korean war are among the many minority viewpoints given freedom of speech on Pacifica during the McCarthy era.
- 1951 Pacifica receives the first major foundation grant (Ford Foundation) for the support of a non-commercial radio broadcast operation.
- 1953 Philosopher/author Alan Watts begins a regular program on KPFA that continues until his death in 1973.
- 1954 An on-the-air discussion promotion of marijuana use results in the California Attorney General impounding the program tape.
- 1955 Poets Allen Ginsberg and Lawrence Ferlinghetti bring the Beat Generation to the airwaves. A few years later the FCC questions Pacifica's broadcast of some of their works as "vulgar, obscene and in bad taste."
- 1956 Pacifica wins its first broadcast awards for a program on the First Amendment by Alexander Meiklejohn and a children's series of *Robin Hood* by Chuck Levy and Virginia Maynard.
- 1957 Pacifica/KPFA wins its first George Foster Peabody Award for "distinguished service and meritorious public service" for programming that takes strong issue with McCarthyism.

- 1958 Nuclear war and the arms race are debated on the air by Nobel Prize winner Linus Pauling and Edward Teller, the "Father of the H-Bomb."
- 1959 Pacifica begins its second station—KPFK-FM in Los Angeles—with Terry Drinkwater as General Manager.
- 1960-1963 The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee (SISS) investigate Pacifica programming for "subversion." Broadcasts of writings by Bertolt Brecht, Norman Cousins, Carey McWilliams, Dorothy Healey, and W.E.B. DuBois were cited.
- 1960 The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requests a tape of a Pacifica broadcast of poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti that it found "in bad taste" with "strong implications against religion, government, the president, law-enforcement and racial groups"—and demands full information on Pacifica finances and governance.
- 1960 Commercial station WBAI in New York is given to Pacifica by philanthropist Louis Schweitzer. Then-Governor Nelson Rockefeller, Mayor Robert Wagner, Jr. and Attorney General Louis Lefkowitz are among the speakers honoring the first day of Pacifica Radio in New York. Early programs include a documentary on George Lincoln Rockwell and a speech by Herbert Aptheker. The SISS requests files of WBAI programs and program guides.
- 1961 KPFK wins Pacifica's second George Foster Peabody Award for excellence in broadcasting.
- 1962 KPFK broadcasts women's history profiles of Dorothy Healey and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn—programs that are later used in SISS Hearings charging Pacifica is communist infiltrated.
- 1962 WBAI is the first station to publicly broadcast former FBI agent Jack Levine's expose of J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI. The program is followed by threats of arrests and bombings, as well as pressure from the FBI, the Justice Department, and major broadcast networks.
- 1962 The FCC withholds the license renewals of KPFA, KPFB, and KPFK pending its investigation into "communist affiliations." Pacifica was never ultimately cited in any of these or subsequent investigations.
- 1962 Pacifica trains volunteers to travel to the South for coverage of the awakening civil rights movement. Andrew Goodman, son of the Pacifica president, is murdered in

Mississippi with Michael Schwerner and James Cheney.

- 1963 I. F. Stone and Bertrand Russell take to the Pacifica airwaves, leading a long list of luminaries to oppose the war in Vietnam at this early stage of direct U.S. involvement.
- 1964 The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) renews the licenses of all three Pacifica stations after a three-year delay.
- 1965 WBAI reporter Chris Koch is the first American to cover the war from North Vietnam.
- 1966 Leaders of organizations such as the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Congress Of Racial Equality (CORE), Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) discuss the future of civil rights over Pacifica stations.
- 1967 Pacifica broadcasts a live interview with Latin American leader Che Guevara months before he is killed in Bolivia.
- 1968 Pacifica Radio News (originally the Washington News Bureau of WBAI/New York) is established in Washington DC.
- 1970 KPFT in Houston goes on the air and is bombed off twice during its first year by Ku Klux Klan attacks on its transmitter tower. After months of inactivity by federal agents and Houston police, Pacifica mounts a media campaign. Federal agents ultimately arrest a Klansman and charge him with plotting to blow up KPFA and KPFK, as well as the actual KPFT bombing.
- 1971 WBAI station manager Ed Goodman is jailed for refusing to turn over taped statements by rebelling prisoners at the "Tombs," the New York City jail.
- 1972 The Pacifica Radio Archive and Pacifica Program Service are established in Los Angeles to preserve and distribute Pacifica programming to schools, libraries, individuals, and other community radio stations across the country.
- 1973 Pacifica provides gavel-to-gavel coverage of the Senate Watergate hearings.
- 1973 Third World programmers at KPFA organize to demand a programming department with paid staff and control over some airtime. The station management opposes this effort and obtains a court order banning Third World project coordinator Jeff Echeverria from the

KPFA premises. The Third World programmers file a challenge to KPFA's license on grounds of discrimination in hiring practices. The lawyer representing them is David Salniker, later to become KPFA manager and Executive Director of Pacifica.

- 1974 The Symbionese Liberation Army delivers the Patty Hearst tapes to KPFA/Berkeley and KPFA/Los Angeles. KPFA manager Will Lewis is jailed for refusing to turn the tapes over to the FBI.
- 1974 In the summer, KPFA staff and programmers go on strike to demand more democratic decision-making process, the reinstatement of the fired Third World staff, and the firing of station management. After KPFA is off the air for one month, Pacifica agrees to most of the strikers' demands. In the fall, KPFA formally creates the Third World programming department with a paid department head and control over some airtime.
- 1975 Joel Kugelmass becomes the first Executive Director of the Pacifica Foundation.
- 1975 Comedian George Carlin's "dirty words you can't say on television" routine, broadcast by WBAI/New York in 1973, leads to several years of First Amendment litigation and a hearing by the U.S. Supreme Court. No sanctions are imposed, but the Carlin Case sets the limits of broadcasting for over a decade.
- 1976 The Pacifica documentary on the assassination of Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier is instrumental in piecing together evidence that later convicts the murderers.
- 1976 In September, KPFA station manager Larry Bensky lays off two-thirds of the station's paid staff in one of the many financial crises perpetually plaguing Pacifica stations.
- 1977 WPFW/Washington DC goes on the air, after winning a six-year competitive process for the last available frequency in the nation's capital.
- 1977 Jack O'Dell becomes Chair of the Pacifica Foundation.
- 1978 The Pacifica Radio News begins to distribute news services to 20 non-Pacifica stations across the U.S. and Canada and expands international coverage by establishing correspondents in a number of foreign capitals.
- 1979 Pacifica, the League of Women Voters, and congressman Henry Waxman (D, CA) challenge the

constitutionality of the prohibition on editorializing by non-commercial broadcasters.

- 1980 Pacifica interviews Sister Ita Ford a few days before she is murdered in El Salvador.
- 1980 Sharon Maeda becomes Executive Director of Pacifica.
- 1981 KPFT/Houston becomes the first public radio station to broadcast special programs in 11 different languages, serving the multi- ethnic Texas Gulf Coast communities.
- 1981 KPFA/Berkeley creates a Women's Department with a paid director and control over some airtime. Ginny Z. Berson (a member of the collective that created Olivia Records) becomes the first director of the Women's Dept. (Women's programming had been done on KPFA since the early 1970s by a collective called Unlearning To Not Speak.)
- 1982 Pacifica provides the only continuous live national coverage of one million people demonstrating for jobs, peace, and freedom in New York's Central Park during the U.N. special session on disarmament.
- 1982 After years of development by women and people of color, the KPFA Apprentice Program is formally established as an intensive training program in broadcast skills. It is now the most comprehensive program of its kind in the country.
- 1983 WPFW heads up the all-Pacifica team which covers the 20th anniversary of the March on Washington with Julian Bond and Justine Rector as hosts/commentators.
- 1984 The U.S. Supreme Court rules in Pacifica's favor that non- commercial broadcasters have a constitutional right to editorialize.
- 1985 Pacifica broadcasts its first editorial, condemning the apartheid South African government. Pacifica Chair Jack O'Dell calls upon U.S. citizens to bring pressure on the White House to cut all ties with South Africa on the 10th anniversary of the Soweto uprising.
- 1985 WPFW helps launch the Capital City Jazz Festival in Washington DC.
- 1985 WBAI/New York organizes the now-annual Listener Action for the Homeless project to mobilize aid for New York's homeless.
- 1986 The National Federation of Community

Broadcasters (NFCB) radio archives are consolidated with Pacifica's, making the Pacifica Radio Archive 30,000 tapes strong.

- 1986 David Salniker becomes Executive Director of Pacifica.
- 1987 Pacifica's coverage of the Iran-Contra affair is carried by 33 stations and wins two national journalism awards.
- 1987 Pacifica provides the only national live radio coverage of the complete confirmation hearings for U.S. Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork, beginning a tradition that has continued to the present day of broadcasting important congressional hearings.
- 1987 Lady Smith Black Mambazo makes their first live U.S. radio appearance, on KPFA/Los Angeles.
- 1988 Pacifica stringers provide on-the-spot coverage of the Intifada, the Palestinian uprising, despite great personal danger.
- 1989 The Pacifica Radio Archive completes restoration of 7,000 one-of-a-kind recordings from the early 1950s and 1960s in conjunction with Pacifica's 40th anniversary.
- 1990 Pacifica's ongoing coverage of the preparations for and conduct of war in the Persian Gulf reaches listeners on dozens of public stations throughout the country.
- 1990 Pacifica declines two NEA grants because of content restrictions attached to the funds.
- 1991 Pacifica leads a coalition with PEN, Allen Ginsberg and broadcasters opposing Senator Jesse Helms' (R-NC) and the FCC's 24-hour ban against "indecent" on radio. The Court of Appeals agrees with Pacifica and sets the ban aside as unconstitutional.
- 1991 KPFA/Berkeley moves into its newly constructed building in September.
- 1992 KPFA's Flashpoints program, headed by Dennis Bernstein, becomes the third-most-popular program on the station (after the Morning Show and the Evening News). Flashpoints evolved from the daily Persian Gulf War update program.
- 1992 Senate Republicans put a hold on funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, claiming "liberal bias" on a host of issues, including environmental coverage. A bill is passed imposing "objectivity and

balance" conditions on CPB funding. Almost alone among broadcasters, Pacifica protests any content-conditional funding, pressing CPB to shield all news programming and editorial integrity of individual producers—which CPB agrees to in its implementation protocols. Pacifica observes that no other broadcasters, commercial or religious, are any longer subject to access and balance requirements of the now-repealed Fairness Doctrine—making public broadcasters alone subject to editorial restrictions. Immediately after passage of the content restrictions, CPB Board member Victor Gold targets KPFK for strident African American programming and controversial speech aired during Black History month, by filing an FCC complaint.

- 1993 CPB Board member Victor Gold calls for de-funding Pacifica, echoing lobbying campaign orchestrated by right-wing media critics. In a unanimous vote, CPB reaffirms Pacifica's funding irrespective of program content. Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole (R-KS) threatens public broadcasting with Congressional revenge, his aide explaining: "The First Amendment, freedom of speech, doesn't apply, because we are able to put conditions on the grants of federal money. The same as we do for farmers." Pacifica launches a campaign for unconditional funding and self-defense, led by a tremendous outpouring of "fightback donations" from listeners nationwide. CPB funding narrowly escapes cuts in the House of Representatives, with program content the driving issue. A lobbying effort keeps Pacifica funding off the Senate agenda. This is the second year in which Pacifica has received no discretionary funding from CPB (only the matching funding based upon listener contributions).
- 1993 Pacifica wins its third Court of Appeals ruling in six years, overturning the FCC restrictions on "indecent" programming as unconstitutional restrictions of the First Amendment rights of the radio audience.
- 1993 WBAI wins the Roger N. Baldwin Award for Outstanding Contributions to Civil Liberties, presented by the American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey, who state: "In the winter of 1991...a war hysteria seemed to engulf the United States and its mainstream media.... In this overheated, thought-muddling atmosphere, one of the few cool, on-target voices of rational discussion and dissent was a small FM radio station beaming steadily out of New York City.... From the armies converging on Iraq to the march for women's lives in Washington, from the killing field of East Timor to the mean streets of Manhattan's homeless, WBAI covers the local, national and international scene with a depth and integrity not even conceived of by commercial broadcasting."
- 1993 Amy Goodman, WBAI News Director and co-anchor

of WBAI's Morning Show, wins the following awards for the program "Massacre: The Story of East Timor": Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Award for International Reporting; Unda-Gabriel Award for Nationally Distributed News and Information; Radio & Television News Directors Award; and the Unity in Media Award from Lincoln University.

- 1993 The CPB Silver Award for Children's and Youth Programming goes to "Youth in Control," the two-hour live radio magazine of Executive Producer Ellin O'Leary's Youth Radio Project, produced weekly in KPFB-FM studios. This two-time CPB Award-winning program is a show produced by teens for teens, a project recruiting low income and minority youth, providing training in all aspects of news and music programming, and featuring live weekly Pacifica broadcasts and special pieces on KQED-FM, NPR, Monitor Radio and Inner City Broadcasting.
- 1993 San Francisco Foundation Executive Director Robert Fisher selects KPFA/Pacifica for the San Francisco Chronicle's feature, "How To Spot a Charity That Deserves Support: Pros Pick Notable Nonprofits" (November 22).
- 1993 Pacifica covers the Lesbian and Gay March on Washington.
- 1994 Amy Goodman wins another award for her programs on East Timor: the Alfred I Dupont-Columbia University Journalism Award.
- March, 1994 Pacifica Radio wins a Commendation Award from the American Women in Radio and Television for "Audre Lorde: A Burst of Light", a documentary about the African American poet, essayist, and feminist Audre Lorde, produced by Jude Thilman, Ginny Berson and Melanie Berzon.
- 1994 Pacifica broadcasts live from the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall march and rally in New York, commemorating the birth of the modern lesbian and gay liberation movement.
- May, 1994 Pacifica Radio broadcasts commentaries by Pennsylvania death row inmate and African American journalist Mumia Abu Jamal after National Public Radio decided not to air a series of audio essays it commissioned by him. While NPR caved in to political pressure and a vigorous campaign by the Fraternal Order of Police to silence Abu-Jamal, Pacifica took a strong first amendment stand against censorship by broadcasting the views and experiences of a man living on death row.
- December, 1994 Pacifica Covers the Zapatista Uprising



In Mexico.

- 1995 Pacifica Network News correspondents file daily reports from Haiti and document in detail the return to power of popularly elected president Jean Bertrand Aristide.
  - September, 1995 Pacifica Network News Director Julie Drizin travels to China to cover the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, where she files daily audio reports via computer, bypassing any potential censorship by Chinese authorities. Pacifica was the first public radio network in the U.S. to send international reports via the internet.
  - October, 1995 Pacifica covers the Million Man March on Washington.
  - February, 1996 Pacifica launches Democracy Now!: a daily grassroots election program focusing on the state of democracy in the U.S. and around the world. Hosted by Amy Goodman, with Larry Bensky, Juan Gonzalez and Salim Muwakkil and produced by Julie Drizin, this program garnered unprecedented listener and foundation support and stimulated dialogue and action for social change.
  - March, 1996 Pacifica Executive Director Patricia Scott, News Bureau Chief Julie Drizin and the Pacifica Radio Network are named one of the "Top Ten Media Heroes of 1996" by the Institute for Alternative Journalism "for tough, creative and unrelenting efforts in a time when alternative viewpoints and independent voices in the media have never been more vital.
  - October, 1996 Pacifica Network News carries live coverage of the Latino March On Washington.
  - 1997: Pacifica welcomes its new national board chair, Mary Francis Berry, and pays a fond farewell to long-time chair, Jack O'Dell.
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