



NPR and Juan Williams

In a way, the history of National Public Radio, now known simply as NPR, follows the slow, incremental creep of America toward socialism. Created by the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, it was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson, a liberal Democrat who beat Barry Goldwater in a crucial presidential race. One should not forget that it was also the Johnson administration that gave us federal funding for education, the War on Poverty, Medicare and Medicaid, and the Gun Control Act of 1968.



The 1967 law created the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), which also created the Public Broadcasting Service. Of this new law, Johnson observed:

It announces to the world that our Nation wants more than just material wealth; our Nation wants more than a “chicken in every pot.” We in America have an appetite for excellence, too. While we work every day to produce new goods and to create new wealth, we want most of all to enrich man’s spirit. That is the purpose of this act.

Actually, the purpose of the act was to use federal funds to create a liberal public radio system to promote the agenda of the Left under the guise of “enriching man’s spirit.”

Johnson added:

It will give a wider and, I think, stronger voice to educational radio and television by providing new funds for broadcast facilities. It will launch a major study of television’s use in the Nation’s classrooms and their [sic] potential use throughout the world.

Thus, by an act of Congress, dominated by liberal Democrats, a public/private broadcasting system was created in the interest, supposedly, of enriching education. Its actual aim was to supplement and bolster the education system’s progressive agenda with radio facilities of enlightenment.

NPR’s first board of directors was chaired by Bernard Mayes, a former BBC journalist who migrated to the U.S. in 1958, where he became an Episcopal worker-priest in New York’s Greenwich Village, and later moved to San Francisco. In 1968, he helped organize the Public Broadcasting System, becoming first the founder of KQED-FM and Executive Vice President of KQED TV in San Francisco, then the first working chairman of NPR. He later became a consultant for the CPB in Washington.

In 1984, Mayes joined the English faculty at the University of Virginia, and in 1991 was appointed assistant dean in the College of Arts and Sciences, where he founded the Program for Media Studies. In 1991 he co-founded the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual Faculty, Staff and Graduate Student Association at the university, known as UVa Pride. His autobiography, *Escaping God’s Closet*, published after his retirement in 1999, earned him the national Lambda award for religion and spirituality.

NPR obviously got off to a great liberal start, and has adhered to its progressive-leftist agenda since 1968. Its influence has grown by leaps and bounds. As a privately- and publicly-funded tax-exempt



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membership organization, it serves as a national syndicator of 797 public radio stations across America, producing and distributing news and cultural programming for the entire system. Most public radio stations broadcast a mixture of NPR programs, plus content from other providers: American Public Media, Public Radio International (in cooperation with BBC), and Public Radio Exchange, as well as programs produced locally. NPR also manages the Public Radio Satellite System.

NPR's most-listened-to programs are its drivetime "Morning Edition" of the news and in the afternoon, "All Things Considered." Anyone who has listened to these programs over the years clearly recognizes their leftist slant.

As for funding, during the 1970s and early 1980s, most of NPR's finances came from the federal government. Steps were taken during the 1980s to completely wean NPR from government support. Indeed, a funding crisis in 1983 forced the network to turn to private listeners, foundations, and corporations for financial support.

In 2009, NPR revenues totaled \$164 million, with most of the money coming from programming fees, grants, contributions and sponsorships. According to its 2009 financial statement, about 40% of NPR revenues come from the fees it charges member stations to receive programming. Member stations receive 6% of their funds from local governments and 10% of their revenues from the federal government through CPB grants. They also raise funds through their periodic pledge drives, corporate underwriting, and grants from state governments and universities.

In 2009, NPR's endowment was \$258 million. About \$34 million of it is owed to the fact that on November 6, 2003, NPR was given over \$225 million from the estate of the late Joan B. Kroc, the widow of Ray Kroc, founder of the McDonald's hamburger empire. This was a record — the largest-ever monetary gift to a cultural institution.

In 2003, the annual budget of NPR was \$101 million. In 2004, the Kroc gift increased that budget by over 50% to \$153 million. NPR's 2005 budget was about \$120 million.

Last month, NPR accepted a \$1.8 million grant from George Soros through his Open Society Foundations. The purpose of the grant is to add at least 100 journalists at NPR-member radio stations in all 50 states over the next three years in a project called Impact of Government. The goal is to counter the strong influence that Fox News and conservative commentators such as Bill O'Reilly and Glenn Beck are having on the American public.

Which brings us to the firing of Juan Williams, who had worked for NPR as a journalist for ten years. He was summarily fired for having made a rather innocuous comment about his uneasy feelings when seeing fellow passengers at the airport in Muslim garb, affirming their Muslim faith. He revealed his feelings during a discussion about the conflict going on in New York City over the building of a mosque near Ground Zero.

The comment was hardly worth getting excited about. But NPR's president, Vivian Schiller, was so offended that she summarily fired Williams. She even implied that he might have a mental problem that only he and his psychiatrist could deal with. Of course, to a progressive, all conservatives need psychiatric treatment. In Lenin's Russia, dissidents were put in psychiatric hospitals and drugged because it was believed that anti-communism was a serious mental illness.

Interestingly enough, Ms. Schiller knows a lot about communist Russia. At Cornell University she earned a bachelor's degree in Russian and Soviet studies, and at Middlebury College, she received a Master's degree in Russian. Prior to becoming president of NPR, Schiller was general manager of the



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New York Times website, before which she was a senior vice president at CNN, Fox News's greatest competitor.

Williams was also "guilty" of appearing as a regular panelist on Fox's "Sunday News" program. His role was to provide a liberal counterpoint to the conservative viewpoints expressed by Brit Hume and the other panelists. Does Ms. Schiller still harbor a deep resentment against Fox, her former competitor?

Another NPR journalist who has appeared regularly on this Fox panel is Mara Liasson, one of the purest journalists in the media. I have never heard her utter a single biased opinion about anything. She is extremely effective as a reporter. So far, she has not been fired, but it is assumed that her participation in a Fox News program does not sit well with Ms. Schiller, who no doubt believes that NPR's mission is to provide progressives with an undiluted opportunity to get their message out to the American public, and that anyone who works for Fox should not be working for NPR.

The firing of Juan Williams has spurred calls for defunding NPR. After all, there is no reason for taxpayers to be forced to support a progressive communications conglomerate. With supporters such the late Joan Kroc and the political Leftist billionaire George Soros, why should NPR receive any taxpayer money? The NPR communications empire is obviously able to stand on its own two feet by now.

As for Williams, Fox News has given him a three-year contract worth two million dollars, so his firing may turn out to be a blessing in disguise. One result is that Americans are now aware of how biased NPR is. Will the firing make Williams become a conservative or will he continue as a liberal? It will be interesting to see how this story unfolds in the months ahead. The public has certainly learned that NPR does not believe in free speech. Unfortunately, there are many progressives in America who agree with NPR and think Williams got what he deserved.

If they had total power in America, they would shut us all down.



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