

NPR and Juan Williams

By Samuel L. Blumenfeld

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 B. Johnson, liberal Democrat who beat Barry Goldwater in a crucial presidential race. One should not forget that it was the Johnson administration that gave us Federal Funding for Education, the War on Poverty, Medicare and Medicaid, the Gun Control Act of 1968, and Public Radio.

The new law created the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), which also created the Public Broadcasting Service. Of this new law, Johnson said: "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 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 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 United States 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 then became a consultant for the CPB in Washington.

In 1984, Mayes was invited to join 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.

Obviously, NPR got off to a great liberal start, promoting a progressive-leftist agenda which they have adhered to since 1968. Since its founding, the influence of NPR has grown leaps and bounds. As a privately and publicly funded tax-exempt membership organization, it serves as a national syndicator to 797 public radio stations across the American continent. It produces and distributes 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 drive-time news program, Morning Edition, 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 get 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 monetary gift ever to a cultural institution.

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

In October 2010, 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. Their goal is to counter the strong influence that Fox News and conservative commentators like 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 in the context of 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 inferred that Williams might have a mental problem that only he and his psychiatrist could deal with. Of course, to a progressive, all conservatives need psychiatric treatment. Under communism in 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 got a Bachelor's degree in Russian and Soviet studies, and at Middlebury College, she earned a Master's degree in Russian. Prior to becoming president of NPR, Schiller was general manager of the New York Times Web site, and prior to that she was a senior vice president at CNN, Fox News's great 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 conservative 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.

Williams' firing 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 like the late Joan Kroc and the politically biased 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 thing it has done is made America aware of how biased NPR is. Will the firing make Williams become a conservative or continue as a "liberal"? It will be interesting to see how this story continues to unfold in the months ahead. What the public has learned so far is that NPR does not believe in free speech. Unfortunately, there are enough progressives in America who agree with NPR and believe that Williams got what he deserved. If they had total power in America, they would shut us all down.

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For other uses, see [NPR \(disambiguation\)](#).
NPR



Type	Public radio network
Country	United States
First air date	April 1971
Availability	Global
Founded	February 24, 1970
Endowment	US\$258 million
Revenue	US\$159 million
Net income	US\$18.9 million
Owner	National Public Radio, Inc.
Key people	Kevin Klose , President Emeritus Vivian Schiller , President and Chief Executive Officer Mitch Prayer , Chief Operating Officer Howard Stevenson , Chair of the Board of Directors
Former names	Association of Public Radio Stations National Educational Radio Network
Affiliation	World Radio Network
Official Website	npr.org