

UNDO THE COUP AT WBAI!

Pacifica National Removes General Manager - Program Director Next? Gag Rule Imposed on Programmers Who Dissent from National Takeover

WBAI is under attack from Pacifica's Interim Executive Director, Grace Aaron of Los Angeles, as well as from the Pacifica National Board majority and the WBAI Local Station Board majority. Exploiting a very real financial crisis at the station, they want to impose their own brand of programming – removing what some label “racial divisiveness and balkanization,” meaning community self-determination programs, particularly those by and for the Black community.

On May 6, Aaron removed WBAI's progressive Black General Manager, Tony Riddle, and replaced him with LaVarn Williams, Pacifica's Interim Chief Financial Officer, from Berkeley. Another progressive Black manager, Program Director Bernard White, has been harshly attacked by majority board members locally and nationally; he is likely to be fired soon. The Local Station Board reportedly held an “executive session” on April 20 at which the majority did a snap “evaluation” of these 2 managers (over strong minority objections), which initiated the process of firing them. No data was collected and they were given no chance to respond. Riddle had served as manager for 13 months. White, a 30-year station veteran, has recently resumed work after major surgery.

These actions follow Riddle's and White's vocal and written protests about **the recently revealed attempt by Aaron to hijack the station by changing the locks on the station's broadcast transmitter room and installing equipment for remote control of programming – all without notifying manager Riddle.**

Meanwhile, Aaron has imposed a gag rule threatening any programmer who discusses matters on air that she deems a “risk” to Pacifica will be removed from the air. Already, Wakeup Call programmers Don DeBar and Errol Maitland, who have dissented on the air, have been disciplined.

All these steps are reminiscent of the Christmas Coup of December 2000, when Pacifica changed locks, fired local managers, and purged dissenting programmers & other staff, with the goal of mainstreaming BAI – until a mass movement of listeners and staff fought back and won back control of the station and network.

- **Attend a Public Forum on the WBAI Crisis – Tues., May 12, 7:00 PM**
at Dist. 1707, 75 Varick St. (n. of Canal St.), 14th Fl., Manhattan (A or 1 train to Canal St.) – Sponsor: Ad Hoc Community Activist Coalition on WBAI – for info on this event & those below, call 212-561-7231.
- **Attend CEMOTAP's Great Debate on Bloomberg's Policies - Sun., May 17, 6 - 9 PM**
- **Bernard White speaks re WBAI, 7:30** - Salem Church, 129th & AC Powell Blvd., Harlem
- **Speak out at the WBAI Local Station Board mtg., Wed., May 20, 7 PM** – place TBA

***Fight Back!* VOICE YOUR PROTEST * BECOME A WBAI VOTING MEMBER!**

Send an email to the Pacifica National Board at pnb@pacifica.org – which reaches each board member individually, including Grace Aaron. Please send a cc to info@justiceunity.org.

Demand Hands Off WBAI Management! Maintain local control of programming!

* Also call Grace Aaron at (310) 286-1011 or (310) 402-4087 with the same message.

* Sign a petition to RECALL Local Station Board members Steve Brown, Mitch Cohen, James Ross, and Carolyn Birden, leaders of the attack on WBAI management.

* At this point, **IT IS URGENT THAT YOU JOIN THE STATION** (by donating \$25 or more or 3 hours of volunteer work) so that you have the right to vote for Justice & Unity board candidates and to recall destructive board members. Call the station's pledge line at (212) 209-2950 – ask them to **note on the card that you oppose removal of local management.** Or pledge at www.wbai.org.

Stay updated with: **THE WBAI JUSTICE & UNITY CAMPAIGN**

(212) 591-2111 * www.justiceunity.org (join our email list there) * info@justiceunity.org