

February 22, 2001

Resolution ON WBAI

Whereas Pacifica Radio was founded in Berkeley, California in the 1940's by radical writers and conscientious objectors who wanted a vehicle for speaking out for peace and social justice, but in recent years the Pacifica National Board has been increasingly dominated by corporate leaders who seem determined to centralize control and transform its local stations from grass-roots, community-based organizations into more commercial, middle-of-the-road stations that avoid controversy; and

Whereas in March, 1999, in a move that sparked huge community protests in Berkeley, the Pacifica National Board fired the station manager and a number of other producers at the local KPFA station; and

Whereas on December 22, 2000, the Pacifica Foundation fired WBAI's station manager, Valerie van Isler, its program director, Bernard White, and the producer of the "Wake up Call" and United Electrical shop steward Sharan Harper and banned three volunteers from the premises; and

Whereas WBAI's popular and outspoken reporter Amy Goodman, who is a member of AFTA, has filed a grievance against the Pacifica Foundation for efforts to censor her "Democracy Now" program; and

Whereas on Jan. 31, 2001, the award-winning Daily News columnist Juan Gonzalez quit the "Democracy Now" program to protest the way that the Pacifica National Board "has been hijacked by a small clique that has more in common with modern-day corporate vultures than with working-class America," adding that the board "has methodically sought to squash dissent throughout the network" (LA Times, Feb. 9, 2001); and

Whereas in a letter dated February 5, 2001, veteran WBAI programmer and union activist Mimi Rosenberg was fired from the station; now therefore be it

Resolved, that the PSC-CUNY reaffirms its commitment to free speech, the democratic need for a diversity of opinions, and union solidarity; and be it further

Resolved, that the PSC-CUNY vigorously protests the recent firings and censorship efforts at WBAI and calls upon the Pacifica National Board to stop stifling community-based stations that express radical voices so often muffled in today's society.