

Mr. Speaker, if we do nothing else this International Women's Day, I ask that we think about women in the Third World who have been abandoned by our contraceptive counseling policy, and I think we, at best, have an obligation to think seriously about how to make our way back to the inroads we were beginning to make.

RADIO FREE SPEECH IS BEING DENIED IN NEW YORK CITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, tyrants in control of totalitarian countries like China, Serbia and Iraq consider control of the airwaves an absolute necessity. They ruthlessly enforce censorship of a kind few of us can imagine in America.

Last Monday, however, I had the weird and frightening experience of being gagged by a radio station manager in my own home City of New York. It started with a routine request that I call in for a phone interview on a show hosted on Radio Station WBAI by Ken Nash which focuses on union and labor news and features.

The name of the show which commences at 2 p.m. was Building Bridges. As the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Workforce Protections, I welcome the chance to appear on shows related to working families or unions.

It is important to note that Radio Station WBAI is a nonprofit station. It runs primarily on contributions solicited from its mass of diverse listeners. Since last December, this station has experienced considerable turmoil internally and long-term producers and hosts have been fired or locked out of the station.

Like many New Yorkers, I am concerned about the present and future of this vital outlet for free speech on the radio. Without knowing all of the specific tensions and confrontations within the station, I have indicated my interests in working towards the resolution of the problems hampering the continuation of the unique and robust programming of WBAI.

It is important to note that I am presently seeking ways to get more avenues opened for radio free speech in my city in general.

Five low-powered Haitian stations have been shut down. The survival of WBAI is vital for the entire movement seeking more access to the airwaves. The bully monopolies of commercial radio provide the continuing roadblocks to these stations. My knowledge of the reputation of certain recent appointments to the board of Pacifica Network, which is the parent nonprofit institution responsible for WBAI, leads me to conclude that there is a clear and immediate danger that attempts will be made to sell WBAI to a commercial owner. Such a sale would mean the loss of a vital voice for working families in New York City.

My beliefs and point of view are considered heresy by Station Manager Utrice Leid. Without explanation or apology, she shut down the microphones and proclaimed that she had to intervene because it was her job to allow only the truth over the airwaves.

The following is a summary of the statement I would have made had I not been censored and shut off:

The situation at WBAI has implications far beyond this one station. Freedom of speech over the airwaves via radio, broadcast television and cable television is presently quite limited for the majority of Americans, and they are not aware of this. We have a problem of great magnitude that is not being appropriately addressed. The WBAI arrangement and structure offered one model to be emulated. As a listener supported station with a very diverse set of programs, procedures and guests, WBAI represents the optimum use of radio in the service of ordinary people.

When I attended the memorial service of the late Samori Marksman, who is a former WBAI station manager, last year in the great hall of St. John's Cathedral, I saw at that funeral a more diverse assembly than I have seen anywhere in New York City. Folks from all races, religions, income levels, and political persuasions were there. There were intellectual snobs who support programs broadcasting esoteric operas mingling with radical, grassroots political activists. Indeed, as a politician, one immediate reaction I experienced as I contemplated all of the diversity and the solidarity was at that funeral I felt that some of the powerful people in powerful places would see WBAI as a threat and seek to destroy it.

Mr. Speaker, WBAI represents radio freedom of speech that does not make profit for anyone. There are those who see profits being made via WBAI and other Pacifica stations. There are others in powerful stations who feel that only commercial stations should exist; or if there are public stations, they should be indirectly controlled by corporate grants and benign corporate advertisements.

Some of the persons who have recently been appointed to the Pacifica Board represent such powerful commercial interests and, in my opinion, WBAI is an endangered station as long as such business predators are on the Pacifica Board. Persons far removed from the original ideals and philosophy of the founders of the Pacifica chain are not likely to promote the original intent of this very well conceived system.

The basic question which must be tested as soon as possible in the courts is who owns a nonprofit entity? Who has a right to sell a nonprofit radio station? Does the original charter or licensing by the FCC permit any group of trustees or directors to treat Pacifica and WBAI as if they were commercial entities?

While the Pacifica turmoil is raging, I strongly urge WBAI to seek to pre-

serve its freedom by exploring the necessary steps to become independent of Pacifica. As a nonprofit entity, WBAI should use the university structure as a model. It should elect the board of trustees through a voting process utilizing its contributors and supporters as the voters. The trustees should be responsible for basic business operations while the producers and staff should be given a role similar to the faculty of a university. Basic freedom similar to academic freedom and tenure should be conferred upon the long-standing producers and long-term paid and unpaid staff participants.

We want to preserve WBAI in New York City.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, as the cochair of the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues, I am proud to rise today to acknowledge International Women's Day.

This day is a symbolic recognition of the great contributions that women around the world make everyday in society as mothers, teachers, farmers, doctors, maids, engineers, accountants, social workers, lawyers and activists. It is also a time to review the progress of women in the public arena and the workplace, as well as their struggle for equal status and full participation in society, justice and peace.

International Women's Day is celebrated in the United States, United Nations and in many countries throughout the world. International Women's Day was declared in August 1910 at a meeting in Copenhagen. The Women's Socialist International Organization decided to commemorate March 8 as Women's International Day due to the strikes by hundreds of women workers in garment and textile factories in New York. The strike was against low wages, 12-hour workdays and inhumane working conditions.

In 1975, during International Women's Year, the United Nations began celebrating March 8 as International Women's Day. Two years later, in December 1977, the General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace to be observed on a date to be chosen by each Member State.

Women around the world have assumed positions of influence in all sectors of society, Mr. Speaker, and also have contributed to economic and social advancement. Yet, women face discrimination in many areas of society, and violence against women is part of everyday life for many.

Women constitute the majority of the world's poor. Eighty percent of all refugees are women. One in every three women have been beaten or abused in some way.