

The PBS-Democrat Complex is Exposed

WGBH is not just Boston's PBS affiliate. It is a massive commercial enterprise, a flagship of the nation's public broadcasting system. Conservatives know them best for putting out "Frontline," a liberal-tilting documentary series. But they've always denied carrying water for liberal Democrats. So when reporters discovered that WGBH was swapping direct-mail fundraising lists with the Democratic National Committee, it shredded the veil of the station's nonpartisan stance.

But it gets worse. When first confronted by the practice - when a 4-year-old "Barney" fan received a fundraising pitch from the DNC when his mom contributed \$40 to WGBH - the station's spokesmen lied. Jeanne Hopkins told The Washington Times, "we have a policy against exchanging names with political or religious groups. This was in violation with our own policy. It was a misunderstanding." But this was not a one-time mistake. The Boston Globe reported that WGBH has been swapping names with the DNC since 1994. Five years of misunderstandings? More to the point: It began when the station went to the DNC for names, not the other way around.

Within the PBS world, this is a major scandal. Not only do Republicans surrender their tax dollars to get defamed by liberal WGBH programs, now WGBH takes their tax dollars and helps the Democrats with their direct-mail fundraising. The conservative taxpayer is double-screwed, and they ought to

demand a very thorough investigation from Congress and the IRS. Congress ought to put off any appropriation to PBS until the public gets some answers.

This is not just a scandal for PBS and the Democrats, but for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and congressional Republicans, whose mission is supposed to be "oversight."

Truth be told, the idea that the GOP would ever reign in this liberal monstrosity is a joke. Remember all those promises in '95 that the new GOP majority would finally privatize this wholly unnecessary bureaucracy? Back, then the CPB budget was under \$300 million. Guess what is being considered today by the Republicans? A whopping \$475 million by 2002 - with no questions asked. These Republicans are not overseers. They act like PBS bellboys.

The House subcommittee chairman in charge of monitoring PBS, Rep. Billy Tauzin, who supposedly switched to the Republican Party, sent out his spokesman, Ken Johnson, to tell the Washington Times: "It's incredibly stupid for the television station to do this, given the current sensitivities...We were trying to dispel the myth that PBS is a left-leaning organization."

Johnson told AP: "The worst part about this whole thing is that it feeds the old stereotypes. There are a number of people in our party who are absolutely convinced that public broadcasting is in the hip pocket of the Democratic Party and liberals in this country." Translation: I can't believe they'd get caught at this while we're trying to maximize their government funding!

Forget the working assumption that Johnson has probably never watched PBS. It's awfully hard to claim PBS liberalism is a "myth"

when its supporters are coveted as top money prospects for the Democrats. This is the classic PBS way of doing business: using a nonpartisan, tax-funded operation to feather the Democratic nest, whether it's on-air propaganda or off-air wheeling and dealing. They initiated the deals with Democrats, not the other way around.

Was this stupid? Sure, if you were actually worried about proving conservatives right. But with "Republicans" like Billy Tauzin around, they just aren't worried, period.

Look, if I were a fundraiser for the DNC, I would consider the donor list of WGBH - and every other public station - a natural list to troll for liberal money. It wouldn't surprise me in the least if DNC has tried this with every PBS and NPR station. Nor would I be shocked if these PBS stations have swapped lists with Greenpeace, The Nation magazine, and every other liberal outfit. This is just another way for public stations to bloat their budgets, and still Tauzin & Co will give them even more. Life is good when you're PBS.

WGBH is a particularly blatant example of a station that doesn't need tax dollars. It's rolling in corporate and foundation contributions. In his new book, "Masterpiece Theatre and the Politics of Quality," PBS critic Laurence Jarvik notes that WGBH is the largest producer of programs for the PBS system, gets over \$10 million annually from Mobil, has a total budget of over \$100 million, and gets some 90 percent of its funding from someplace other than CPB.

Wouldn't it be smarter for Republicans to support other corporate-welfare boondoggles and just cut off PBS? Give that money for mohair price supports or helium subsidies? At least

these antiquated lobbies take their tax dollars to the bank
instead of funding partisan schemes to destroy the Stupid Party.