

which tended to stumble over music introductions and play tapes backward. That hardly seemed enough to earn it the enmity of the community. Yet twice within its first seven months, the KPFT transmitter was dynamited out of business. The first bombing, in May, silenced it for four weeks. The second, this month, threatened a longer, perhaps permanent silence.

The latest blast was unquestionably the work of pros. It knocked out a broadcast blockhouse that had been specially fortified with concrete and boobytrapped with alarms and electric-shock devices after the first incident. As a result, the insurance company—which raised the station's annual premium from \$750 to \$2,200 after the first bombing—canceled

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BOMBED PACIFICA RADIO STATION
A throwback to barbarism.

Silence in Houston

Some of the most enterprising public service radio programming in recent years has come from the listener-supported FM stations of the Pacifica Foundation. They tackle controversial issues from all sides, broadcast disk jockeys who are knowledgeable as well as funny, and put on first-rate readings from literature. Their news, drawn from their own Washington bureau, has unusual freshness. All this went well at the original Pacifica station in Berkeley, Calif., and at the two newer ones in Los Angeles and Manhattan. But last March, the foundation got into Texas—and trouble.

KPFT Houston tried to continue the Pacifica tradition. Though its management was anti-war and pro-civil rights it offered equal (and free) time to opposing groups, including the Ku Klux Klan. The station's gravest sin was the amateurism of its largely volunteer staff,

its coverage. That move brought the threat of repossession of KPFT's surviving equipment. Other Houston stations became more leary than ever of sharing facilities and antenna towers with the Pacifica outlet.

KPFT Manager Larry Lee figures, without much hope, that the station's future depends upon the capture and stiff sentencing of its assailants. But in its adversity, KPFT has won new and widespread supporters of its own. The Houston *Post* ran an editorial condemning the sabotage as "a throwback to barbarism reminiscent of the book burning of Hitler's Germany." The *Post* has also offered a \$1,500 reward for evidence leading to the arrest and conviction of the culprits.

So far, KPFT has raised \$6,000 locally and gotten a tentative offer of insurance from a consortium, plus financial support from national groups. Some 2,500 Houston listeners have subscribed at \$20 per year (\$12 for students). Still, KPFT subscribers cannot expect to tune in to their station again for six weeks at the earliest.