the national media watch group offering well-documented criticism in an effort to correct media bias and imbalance. FAIR focuses public awareness on the narrow corporate ownership of the press, the media's allegiance to official agendas, and their insensitivity to women, labor, minorities, and other public interest constituencies. FAIR seeks to invigorate the First Amendment by advocating for greater media pluralism and the inclusion of public interest voices in national debates.25

FAIR was established in 1986 and states that it is an "anti-censorship organization." While FAIR's main purpose is to promote the airing of views of groups traditionally excluded from mainstream media, it also focuses on so-called hate radio and its personalities.

FAIR publishes a journal, EXTRA!, and a newsletter, EXTRA! Update; reports to students on Channel One, the in-school cable news service; operates a Internet Web site; has a weekly radio program, "Counterspin," which can be heard on about ninety AM and FM radio stations in thirty states and several Canadian provinces and also can be downloaded in RealAudio from FAIR's Web site. FAIR also issues periodic reports in EXTRA! over the Internet, and on "Counterspin," such as the 1994 analysis of more than 100 "inaccuracies" from Rush Limbaugh on the air; the 1996 quotes from Pat Buchanan that appear to support far-right views on race, Jews, women, immigrants, and government; a 1996 statement on WABC and Bob Grant's talk show's extremist views; and a 1995 report on Chuck Baker's extremist views over the airwaves.26 (These reports have been referred to in discussions on the respective personalities earlier in this book.)

Political Research Associates

Political Research Associates (PRA) and its senior analyst, Chip Berlet, have provided some of the most significant research on the right wing. Founded in 1991, PRA describes itself as "an independent source of opposition research and analysis on the political right wing." PRA studies the relationship between the right wing and the established political and social processes and institutions. It does so first-hand, where possible, attending right-wing meetings and conferences. It believes that currently "we find ourselves in a moment when tolerance, pluralism and fairness are under severe attack. ... If we hope to respond effectively to the scapegoating, reactionary attacks, economic redistribution, and encoded bigotry of the right, these practices must be exposed for what they are." PRA also functions as a clearinghouse, a library (one of the largest in the country on the right wing), and a source of information on right-wing funding and activities, to help people "understand the right wing threat to democracy and diversity." It publishes a quarterly newsletter, the Public Eye, and operates a Web site, both providing information on right-wing philosophies and specific anti-democratic campaigns.27

A number of other well-known and not-so-well-known groups and individuals have also taken stands against right-wing hate speech on the airwaves. See Appendix A at the end of this chapter for PRA's list of some of the organizations. A number of groups present counter-views, to greater-or-lesser degrees, through the media. One such organization is the Keeping Watch Coalition, established in 1996, along with a Web site, "to monitor and counter the agenda of the right-wing in America." Its stated purposes are

1. To monitor the political, social, and religious right wing and develop effective responses to their activities, statements, and agendas.
2. To raise awareness and educate citizens on the nature, history, beliefs, and activities of the various right-wing reactionary movements.
3. To train a network of Watchers to monitor and gather information on the right-wing.
4. To organize a network of activists to respond to the far right through writing, phoning, or e-mailing Congress; calling talk shows on radio and television; and writing 'letters to the editor' at newspapers, magazines, and other media outlets.28

In 1995 the Center for Campus Organizing was formed from the University Conversion Project, a national student peace group. While it covers a broad range of services and goals, it includes the dissemination of information about and counterviews concerning right-wing activities on campuses, particularly those that attack "equality and social justice." One of its goals is to help campus activists create alternative media and link up with other groups throughout the country. It sponsors projects such as an e-mail network, an electronic article exchange, and an alternative journalism. It has a Web site.29 Some former peace/anti-nuclear war organizations moved into other areas that they considered critical to society after the end of the Cold War. One of these is the Center for Defense Information, which had been spearheaded by retired Admiral Gene R. LaRoque, and which still deals principally with what it considers problems in the military, such as gender bias, the reliance on nuclear weapons, military spending, unneeded expensive weapons, nuclear power, policy toward Cuba, and similar issues. It includes, however, a concern with the role of America's far- and extremist right within a safe and sane defense policy for the United States. Two of its means of dissemination are a radio program, "The Question of the Week," which is carried on some 50 public radio stations throughout the country, and a television program, "America's Defense Monitor," distributed via the PBS network.30
Individuals using the Internet to combat the rhetoric of the far right run into the hundreds, perhaps thousands. Some have extensive backup, such as that of Ken McVay, mentioned earlier. McVay has some 200 assistants around the world providing him with first-hand accounts of the Nazi death camps, to counter the Holocaust-denial/revisionist organizations and Web sites. McVay himself spends about sixteen hours every day copying history books about World War II onto his computer. His Nizkor Project (which means "we will remember"), has compiled the largest collection of Holocaust-related materials that can be found on the Internet—literally thousands of documents. Its purpose is to offer point-by-point refutation of materials on Holocaust-denial/revisionist and anti-Semitic Web sites.31

An example of individuals doing the same thing without extensive support is Ohio State University history professor Mark Pitcavage. "The Web offers the same advantages to us that it does to the extremists," Pitcavage said. He operates a "Militia Watchdog" home page. "With a post-office box, moderate long-distance phone expenses, and Internet connection and Web site provider," Pitcavage added, "I am able to provide a fair amount of current information on the militia movement to people interested in knowing more."32

If you tune in your radio these days, as the century turns into a new millennium, you will hear fewer far right voices than you heard several years ago. This is true even as many of the extremist groups prepare for the Armageddon (which means "we will remember"), that they believe will come with the millennium. Shortwave broadcasts have been cutting back and microstations are not proliferating as they did in the mid-1990s. On television you see far-right productions and personalities only rarely, principally on cable channels such as the Family Channel, controlled by right wing religious groups, and on community cable-access programs. The right wing has been moving principally to cyberspace. Because the broadcast media are regulated, right-wing broadcasters have come under more and more scrutiny by the Federal Communications Commission. One reason is their use of shortwave stations, which are licensed solely for overseas broadcasting, for domestic distribution. Another is the unauthorized use of frequencies to set up the "pirate" microstations, creating potential interference problems with other stations. But the right is not giving up the traditional airwaves. One expert estimated that in mid-1998, in addition to five shortwave stations and countless dozens of pirate microstations, far-right and extremist "hate" programming was still being carried by about 400 AM stations, about 50 FM stations, and about 20 television stations nationwide.33

On the Internet the hate purveyors are subject to no regulation whatsoever. The Internet is now a province of the radical right. They have greater exposure through cyberspace than they ever had with radio and television. And the cost is considerably less—there are no time-access fees on the Internet. The Internet gives the right wing potential access to every home in the world that has an Internet connection, and the number is growing exponentially. For different reasons, frequently economic, but justified with the allegation that Jews control all the other media and prevent them from gaining access, many radical right groups in the United States and abroad have turned to the Internet. It is safe to say that the biggest single boon ever to the radical right in disseminating their message, persuading, recruiting, and organizing, is the Internet. As one example of how the Internet has rapidly been replacing traditional media as the medium of choice by right-wing groups, note the following statement on the Web site of the German National Socialist and Hammerskin Page: "This is the first German NS page on the Internet...the Jew's laws in the Fatherland do not allow freedom to express [our] beliefs, so we must go through an American server...you must no longer believe the lies from the Jewish media. We shall make our own media here on the Internet!!!"34 Another example is the action of Steven Krom, who, as a student at Albion College, had difficulty persuading his classmates to follow his "white power" philosophy. But then he established a Web site and "found support, adulation and a common understanding from the growing cadre of white supremacists, neo-Nazi and other hate groups that have taken to the world wide web to spread their word."35 Krom said: "It's one of the good things about the Internet."36

There has been special concern that children might not be able to distinguish the difference between a legitimate history site and one that, for example, describes the Holocaust as a hoax.37 David Waren of the Anti-Defamation League expressed concern that "children and students, the biggest users of the Internet, are especially vulnerable to the subtle messages of hate and half-truths, which are presented without any context or background and liable to be taken at face value by the unsuspecting and uninformed."38 Some parents have even expressed concern that their children, logging on to these Web sites, were becoming Nazis through the Internet.39

The authors of this book believe that exposure and countereducation, not censorship, are the best solutions to the increasing right-wing rancor on the airwaves. As one individual operator of a Web site, Philip Winn, put it, "A recent survey showed that barely a majority of Americans believe that groups such as the Ku Klux Klan deserve unlimited freedom of speech. Less than 70%! Don't people understand that unless everybody has the same freedom, nobody has any freedom?... If you don't like it, don't listen!!"40

However, in February 1999, the Southern Poverty Law Center reported that the incidence of hate sites on the Internet had grown by 60 percent between 1997 and 1998. It also declared that nearly half of the nation's 500 identified hate groups are employing the Internet to promote their agendas.
Said SPLC spokesman Mark Potok, “It has become the propaganda venue of choice.” Potok also noted that the number of hate groups rose almost 20 percent in the one-year period from 1997 to 1998 and that KKK and neo-Nazi organizations have grown the most.

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