

HAZEN

October 12, 1995

Nolan Bowie  
Via FAX: 617-495-8696

**Institute  
for  
Alternative  
Journalism**

**President**

Katherine Fulton  
Duke University  
North Carolina Independent  
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Durham, NC 27707  
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Dear Nolan,

The Institute for Alternative Journalism is orchestrating an unprecedented Media & Democracy Congress, February 29-March 3, 1996 in San Francisco. The overarching goal of the conference is to build a stronger independent media community. I am inviting you to participate and speak at what promises to be a landmark event.

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Our larger panels will address: The Future of Journalism; The Impact of the Right on Freedom of Expression and the First Amendment; The Technology Explosion and its Impact on Democracy; The Media Merger Mania and the Global Culture Industry, and an overview of the big issues facing us as we prepare for the public media of the 21st century.

Susan Faludi, Barbara Ehrenreich, Ray Suarez, Jeff Cohen (FAIR), Ben Bagdikian, Jim Yee, Charles Lewis (Center for Public Integrity), Jim Hightower, and others are presently committed to participating. Attached is a Congress invitation, a response form, and a current list of committees and co-sponsors.

Please consider joining us this winter in San Francisco. We have the highest respect and value for your work as a writer, academic and ITVS board member and would be delighted to have your participation inform Congress debates. I look forward to discussing the Congress, our ideas and the possibilities as soon as possible. I can be reached at IAJ at 415-284-1420.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,



Don Hazen  
Executive Director, Institute for Alternative Journalism  
on behalf of the Media & Democracy Congress Planning  
Committee

**Executive Director**

Don Hazen  
77 Federal Street  
San Francisco, CA 94107  
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CompuServe 71362,27

**IAJ**

**AlterNet**

# Institute for Alternative Journalism

October 12, 1995

Nolan Bowie  
Via FAX: 617/495-8696

Dear Nolan,

For those of us who have long worked in progressive media and on promoting alternative visions, the country seems suddenly to have stepped through the looking glass. Intolerance and attacks on civil liberties and freedom of expression are pervasive. There is alarming public cynicism about government. Long accepted notions of pluralism and civic life are under fierce threat.

Contributing to the present situation is a global media system that has little to do with the responsibilities of a free press in a democratic society. Today, solid journalism is being overwhelmed by entertainment and tabloidization in the new information marketplace, as the role of the citizen is being displaced by that of the consumer.

Current trends in the mass media often foster reactionary points of view and marginalize -- or render non-existent -- independent and diverse voices. Many Americans are unsure about how to react to the increasing media coverage and legitimization of right wing groups that challenge not just the role of government, but the foundations of public life.

In the response to the current media and political climate, leaders from independent print, radio, television, video, and online services, led by the Institute for Alternative Journalism, have been exploring ways of collaboratively building a stronger independent media system. This diverse group of media activists is also grappling with the success of the right wing in framing issues in the mainstream media and in building a powerful media infrastructure of its own.

It is clear that no matter how we define the present problem -- the narrowing range of voices and opinions, the destabilizing effect of the media's obsession with extremes, the capacity of right wing media to shape and distort debate, the further concentration of ownership and control of information outlets -- new methods of building a more synergistic independent media and reaching a wider audience must be found.

Planning is now underway for an unprecedented **Media & Democracy Congress**, slated for **February 29-March 3, 1996** in San Francisco. The overarching goal of the conference is to prepare for the public media of the 21st century.

## President

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North Carolina Independent  
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# IAJ

## AlterNet

Plans for the conference include initial strategizing within "affinity" groups (e.g. progressive talk radio, independent television, media criticism/activism) and then coming together to explore ideas for cross-media collaboration and building a stronger independent media infrastructure. We also plan a "hands on" focus, with training opportunities in areas such as tracking and covering the right and attacks on freedom of expression, using online communications and computer-assisted reporting, and covering the telecommunications policy, especially as reflected by the Telecommunications Act of 1995. Finally, we hope to debate and endorse an "Information Bill of Rights" which can be circulated after the Congress.

Staging this conference is an ambitious undertaking, and we hope we can count on your support. We invite you to participate in the **Media & Democracy Congress** by joining our advisory committee or planning committee, by signing your organization on to our growing roster of co-sponsors, or by a combination of the above.

Attached is a current list of advisory and planning committee participants and co-sponsors; also enclosed is a form for your response to this invitation. Please return via fax, e-mail or regular mail, along with any thoughts or suggestions you might have. We will be in touch soon. In the meantime, if you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact me or Viveca Greene, conference coordinator, at 415-284-1420.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,



Don Hazen  
Executive Director, Institute for Alternative Journalism  
on behalf of the Media & Democracy Congress Planning Committee

## Committee & Sponsor Lists

### 9/29/95

#### Planning Committee

Safir Ahmed  
Hollie Ainbinder  
John Anner  
Frank Beacham  
Robert Bray  
Bruce Brugmann  
Laura Burstein  
Lynn Chadwick

Farai Chideya  
Jeffrey Chester  
Jeff Cohen  
Ruth Denny

Kim Detertine  
Julie Drizin  
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Fred Goff  
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Kate Horsfield  
Allen Hunter  
Janine Jackson  
David Jensen  
Mona Jimenez  
Rory Kennedy  
Nan Levinson  
Austin Long-Scott

Marianne Manilov  
David Mendoza

Rory O'Connor  
Patrice O'Neill  
Laurie Ouellette  
Raul Ramirez  
Ivan Roman

Loretta A. Ross  
Randy Ross  
Danny Schechter  
John B. Schwartz  
Jeremy Smith  
Sam Smith  
Michael Stein  
Jude Thilman

Lisa H. Thurau

Jay Walljasper  
Martha Wallner  
Omar Wasow  
Marc Weiss  
Ron Williams  
Parti Wolter  
May Ying Welsh  
Erika Wudtke  
James Yee

Riverfront Times  
Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting  
Third Force Magazine  
Columnist  
National Gay & Lesbian Task Force  
San Francisco Bay Guardian  
Institute for Policy Studies  
Nat. Federation of Community Broadcasters  
MTV News  
Center for Media Education  
Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting  
Native American Journalists Association  
Media Alliance, San Francisco  
Pacifica Network News  
Voyager  
Institute for Alternative Journalism  
Data Center  
Univ. of California, San Diego  
Mother Jones  
Video Data Bank  
Progressive Media Project  
FAIR/Counterspin  
Getty Trust  
Media Alliance, New York  
Longfellow Pictures  
Freelance Journalist  
San Francisco State University, Dept. of Journalism  
UNPLUG  
Nat. Campaign for Freedom of Expression  
Globalvision  
California Working Group, Inc.  
Utne Lens  
Center for Investigative Reporting  
San Francisco State University, Dept. of Journalism  
Center for Democratic Renewal  
American Indian Telecommunications  
Globalvision  
The 90's Channel  
Alternative Campus Media Project  
The Progressive Review  
Institute for Global Communications  
KPFA-FM/Communications Revolution  
Nat. Committee for Public Education & Religious Liberty  
Utne Reader  
Access for All  
NY Online  
POV  
Detroit Metro Times  
Mother Jones  
Producer  
Media Alliance, San Francisco  
ITVS (Independent Television Service)

#### Advisory Committee

Harriet Barlow  
David Barsamian  
Chip Berlet  
Larry Bensky  
Marc Cooper  
Herbert Chao Gunther  
Donna F. Edwards  
Barbara Ehrenrich  
Susan Faludi  
Tom Frank  
Kathy Garmezy  
Colin Greer  
Marjorie Heins  
Jim Hightower  
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Charles Lewis  
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Ada Sanchez  
Leslie Savan  
Geoff Sears  
Ricki Seidman  
Erna Smith  
Gar Smith  
Norman Solomon  
Robert Stein  
Ray Suarez  
Jonathan Tasini  
John Tirman  
Katrina vanden Heuvel

Bluc Mountain Center  
Alternative Radio  
Political Research Associates  
Pacifica  
Journalist  
Public Media Center  
Center for a New Democracy  
Author  
Author  
The Baffler  
The Hollywood Policy Center  
The New World Foundation  
ACLU Arts Censorship Project  
Hightower Radio  
Assoc. of Alternative Newsweeklies  
Levity  
Center for Public Integrity  
Deep Dish TV  
Pacifica Radio  
Sirius Business  
Prodigy  
Center for Responsive Politics  
Johns Hopkins University  
The Nation  
Center for Democratic Renewal  
Hampshire College  
Village Voice  
Institute for Global Communications  
Rock the Vote  
SFSU Dept. of Journalism  
Earth Island Journal  
Syndicated Columnist  
Voyager  
National Public Radio  
National Writers Union  
The Winston Foundation  
The Nation

#### Organizational Co-Sponsors

Center for Democratic Renewal  
Center for Media Education  
Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR)  
Free Speech TV - The 90's Channel  
Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities  
Globalvision  
Institute for Global Communications  
ITVS (Independent Television Service)  
Making Contact - National Radio Project  
Mother Jones  
The Nation  
National Gay & Lesbian Task Force  
National Writers Union  
Pacifica Radio  
Political Research Associates  
Progressive Media Project  
The Progressive Review  
Public Media Center  
San Francisco Bay Guardian  
Third Force Magazine  
UNPLUG  
Voyager

I'd like to support organizing the Media and Democracy Congress to be held in San Francisco, February 28-March 2, 1996 in the following way(s):

\_\_\_\_\_ ORGANIZATIONAL CO-SPONSOR (commitment of time and/or resources from your organization in helping to set up some component of the conference, e.g. a panel discussion, arranging for a speaker, providing online training)

\_\_\_\_\_ PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBER (help with the hands-on work of organizing the conference, e.g. brainstorming ideas, tracking down speakers, drafting conference materials)

\_\_\_\_\_ ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER (join a loose network of supporters and advisors who we keep updated as plans are developed)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE/FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE RETURN TO VIVECA GREENE AT IAJ  
77 Federal Street, San Francisco, CA 94107  
PHONE: 415-284-1420 / FAX: 415-284-1414  
E-MAIL [alternet@alternet.org](mailto:alternet@alternet.org)