

# This issue

**K**EN OWEN, in our interview in this issue, makes the point that "a helluva fight is brewing" over the freedom of the press. This will come as no surprise to most journalists, many of whom simply could not believe their luck after 2 February 1990. Even in those post-speech days, when the National Party went into reform hyperglide, journalists spoke openly of a window of opportunity across which, the assumption seemed to be, the state would eventually draw the curtains.

The ensuing brushes between the press and our democratic representatives have been warning enough that press freedom will have to be safeguarded. Surprisingly, as Guy Berger notes, the media have been remarkably slack in discussing the future basis for this. Coverage by the press on the constitutional debate, as it pertains to press freedom, has been scant. And the draft constitution ignores the well-researched Conference of Editors' submission made at the Constitutional Assembly.

Part of the fight revolves around ownership and affirmative action. Both issues have been bubbling for many years — and arguments have reached a refined summation. The media have always been (to resurrect a 1980's phrase) a site of struggle and much of government criticism of the fourth estate uses ownership structures and the racial composition of the print media as a basis. It is clear, after reading Thami

Mazwai and John Patten on this, that the issues are more complex than many players will admit to. But, complexity aside, the time may come, hints Moegsien Williams, when the government may legislate against the press — and the law will go through.

But, while some of our editors and politicians concern themselves with such weighty matters, working journalists have to get on with the myriad day-to-day decisions that face media on deadline. One such was how far to go in covering the Chris Hani shooting. In a world of multi-deadline days this assassination, in its full-colour-gory-page-one detail, is history. However, with the old adage about those who fail to learn from the past etc in mind, Cathy O'Dowd's interviews with those involved in the editorial decision-making process are a thoughtful study of South African newsroom ethics.

And, although politicians may be focused on print media it would appear, at least if you agree with Richard Calland, that the reverse is not true. His charge that the press is not doing its job in covering parliament — refuted by Kaizer Nyatumba — lays even the centuries-old claim to the role of societal watchdog open to criticism.

Even if editors are right and the public really doesn't give a damn about parliamentary pontifications, there can be few who doubt their interest in radio. Canadian Keith Watt, who has done some work with the SABC, remains unimpressed with both that organisation and the IBA. The latter is isolating the

SABC from its audience while the programming on AM Live is "arid", he claims. SAfm's falling listenership figures suggest Watt is close to the truth. Not only has SAfm failed to establish a rapport with keen radio listeners, but it has succeeded in driving them in their thousands to local radio stations — which the IBA wants sold off. That said, it is worth remembering that SAfm (even a successful SAfm) is small fry in terms of listenership, a point Franz Kruger makes in describing the accomplishments of other stations in the SABC.

*Review's* focus on the internet is apt, given that Rhodes University pioneered the superhighway in southern Africa. The deep history of the internet is perhaps worth recounting. The original gateway used by Rhodes, and thus the whole of the country, was a computer in the garage of Randy Bush, a United States consultant and long-standing friend of this university. The entire news and mail feeds to South Africa flowed through his home and it was only recently that he ceased to act as the FidoNet gateway between the United States and the rest of the world. For those who have the toys, the Internet Focus is also available (courtesy of Roland Stanbridge of Stockholm University) on: <http://www.ru.ac.za/departments/journ/review/index.html>. The electronic version offers you wondrous trips into, to borrow Neil Jacobsohn's description, "the wired blue yonder".

Charles Riddle — Editor

## SA PHOTOJOURNALISM CONFERENCE

The Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University is hosting the SA Photojournalism Conference from 30 June to 3 July 1996.

We see this exciting conference as an important event that will bring together photographers and academics from different media organisations and educational institutions to share their vision and experience.

As we move into a new era — a new country, extensive new technology, new demands on teaching curriculum — it is time to stop and take stock of the state of photojournalism in South Africa today, and where we hope it will be moving in the next century.

The Conference will cover areas of Copyright, Photojournalism Education, Ethics, Community Photojournalism, New Technology (digital) and Documentary Photography.

Speakers confirmed include top South African photojournalist, Jurgen Schadeburg; Web publishing expert, Paul Velasco from Southlight Photo Agency; copyright expert, Kurt Buchman (who is also the World Council of Professional Photographers board member on copyright), and Denis Farrell of Associated Press (SA).

Overseas speakers include Professor Rich Beckman, chair of the Electronic Photojournalism Workshop section of the National Press Photographers Association (USA) and Roland Stanbridge, from the Digital

Media Unit of the University of Stockholm, an expert on the Internet and publishing on the Web.

Lecturer Montgomery Cooper is organising the conference as part of his portfolio in his newly appointed capacity as chairman of the photojournalism subcommittee for the World Council.

The conference's main sponsor is Kodak SA.

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## THE WAY TO GO

### Photojournalism of the Future

Department of  
Journalism and  
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Rhodes University  
Grahamstown

30 June - 3 July 1996