

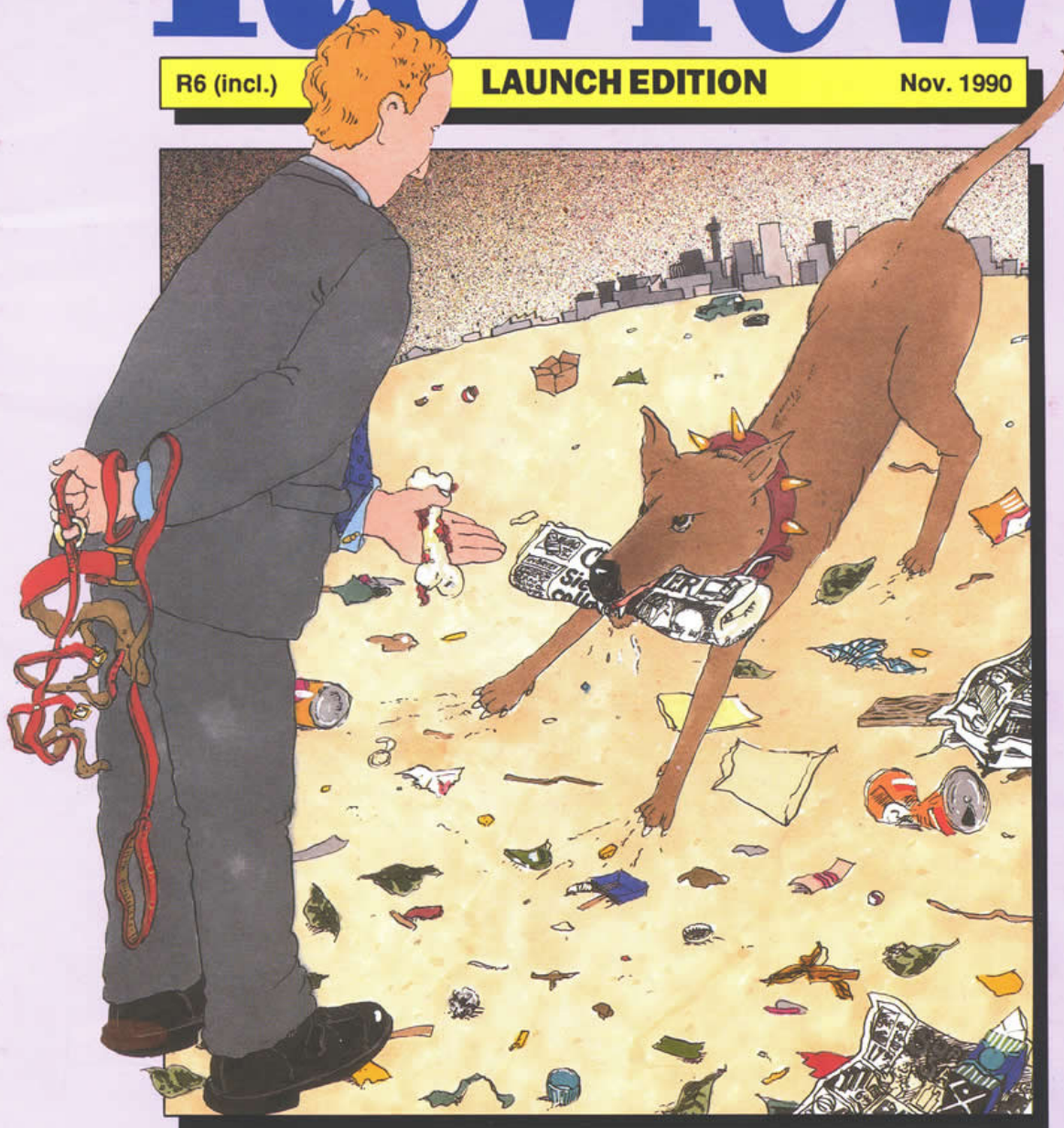
Rhodes University **1** Journalism

Review

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LAUNCH EDITION

Nov. 1990



THE MEDIA POLICY DEBATE

Donald Woods on the future of the media in SA

REPORTING THE VIOLENCE IN NATAL

Designers' Forum ● Media Bookshelf

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RHODES UNIVERSITY



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THE violence in Natal presents many challenges to the journalists covering events on the ground. In *For The Record* reporter, **FRED KOCKOTT**, puts forward some strong views on the way the story has been handled by the press – *See Page 10*.

LAUNCHING our regular feature, *Designer's Forum*, leading South African publication designer **DANI MALAN**, looks at trends in magazine design and shows how it is done with these pages designed in his Johannesburg studio – *See Page 23*.

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CURRENT President of the Public Relations Institute of South Africa (PRISA), **BRIAN CULLINGWORTH**, writes that Public Relations is rapidly coming of age as practitioners join the moves towards professionalising the industry – *See Page 59*.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF of the *Sunday Tribune* and *The Daily News* in Durban, **MICHAEL GREEN**, suggests that while the new Desk Top Publishing technology is making publishing accessible to all, it also has a moral dimension – *See Page 62*.

Editorial

The *Rhodes University Journalism Review* is a vehicle for the historical record and a forum for research and opinion across the entire media and communications fields.

It has no vested interests other than to promote critical thinking around the question of media in Southern Africa and to present it in an attractive and readable manner. So, in fact, we are trying to serve two masters – the critical faculty of research, and the disciplined demands of craft. There is no reason why they should be mutually exclusive.

The *Review* is also a product of the marketplace. It is market driven in the sense that it relies primarily on advertising rather than grants or handouts for its financial base. We believe the market is the final arbiter and that this journal must sink or swim on its own merits.

This pilot edition is published to coincide with the 21st anniversary of the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University in 1991 and we believe it is fitting that the article on the future of media in South Africa is written exclusively for the *Review* by Donald Woods, a former editor of the *Daily Dispatch*, who had close ties with Rhodes University's Department of Journalism before his self-exile in Britain and the shameless silencing of his voice in South Africa.

We welcome him 'home'.

This edition is only a first step towards establishing a credible media journal for Southern Africa.

We have undertaken to distribute it widely in the hope that all parties linked to media or who have an interest in the future of communications in the sub-continent will support the venture and throw their weight behind it.

Our next task is to establish an Editorial Board which will reflect broad media interest in the region and which will act as a touchstone for future editors.

This pilot edition, will be circulated among the following:

- Working editors and senior editorial executives of mainstream and alternative newspapers in Southern Africa;
- Universities and technikons in the sub-continent teaching media-related subjects, and select universities abroad;
- Members of the Southern African Union of Journalists (SAUJ) and the Association of Democratic Journalists (ADJ);
- Full members of the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA) and of the South African Association of Industrial Editors (SAAIE);
- The chief executive officers of the *Business Times* Top 100 Companies;
- The chief executives of Southern Africa's leading advertising agencies.

We welcome comment and constructive criticism on which to base future editions of the *Review* and we trust readers will take out a subscription for the two editions planned during 1991 (subscription details are laid out below). Subscriptions will greatly assist us in ensuring the future viability and editorial excellence of this publication.

We are also calling for manuscripts. The editorial deadline for the next edition is April 30, 1991. Please ensure that all editorial contributions reach us in good time.

Our thanks to the Embassies of Canada, Australia, Sweden and the Netherlands for their generous assistance during the recent Media Policy Workshop at Rhodes.

And finally, I wish to thank personally all those who so readily supported the *Review* project editorially and especially our advertisers who bought in sight unseen. In the interests of maintaining open communication in our sub-continent, I trust that support will be forthcoming in the future.

Kerry Swift – Editor

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Press FREEDOM

must be safeguarded in the New South Africa

If negotiations do finally succeed in establishing a genuine democracy in South Africa, it will be necessary to write into the consequent Constitution a charter of inalienable rights including the right to the unfettered operation of free media writes
DONALD WOODS
in this his first article published in South Africa since he was allowed to return

HISTORY shows us that proper democracy is unattainable without complete freedom of the media within reasonable law, because free media are irreplaceable as part of the proven system of checks and balances which alone ensure the continuation of working democratic systems.

One of the better-known quotations about democracy is Winston Churchill's statement about democracy being an imperfect system – and all other systems being worse.

It is against this summary of the practical blend of idealism and cynicism apparently applying best to democracy that the crucial factor of media freedom should be addressed, preferably after a broad survey of the democratic overview.

A complete analysis of all the pertinent aspects of such an overview would require many volumes and a degree of objectivity far beyond my brief here to meet even the most elementary standards of academic legitimacy, so what follows is blatantly subjective and should be regarded as sheer advocacy.

The human story up to 1990 suggests there are few proven formulae for the best ordination of the human condition, but what is commonly regarded as "democracy" has yielded the least bad conditions within which human beings can pursue their legitimate destinies.

In this context it is heartening that the list of democracies in the world is growing, while the list of totalitarian regimes is declining.

But what kind of democracy is best? Social democracy, as in Sweden – or pro-corporate democracy, as in the United States?

Such details matter less to me at this stage than the importance of providing a practical mechanism for each country to work out what suits it best. Many Swedes, while praising the caring style of semi-socialism in Sweden, are critical of the consequent intrusions by the State into individual privacy which the system there entails. It's great to know that no Swede has to starve or go homeless on any given night; less great that a minor traffic offence in the far north above the Arctic circle means an entry into the computer bank in Stockholm.

As for the United States, this land of the ringing denunciation of any State role in the economy is the land whose mighty modern economy was saved in the 1930's by Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. Contradictions abound.

But they don't matter. What matters at this stage of human history is the provision of at least the basics of a system which allows national majorities to chart national courses with due regard to minority concerns. Within the basic provisions of what is generally regarded as democracy, broad freedom of choice about more precise details is possible.

PLEASE TURN OVER

Guest Editorial

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It is no coincidence that in most working democracies, the most successful newspapers are those most obviously independent of the government of the day; those most disposed to be critical of the politicians

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CONTINUED

Conversely, outside these basic provisions, no democracy is possible.

You cannot, for instance, have democracy in a one-party state. One-party democracy is not only an impossibility – it is a contradiction in terms. The right to form a new political party, even if it is only for left-handed croquet players, is central in any democracy.

I have heard all the fatuous apologia for one-party states long put forward in parts of Africa, for example, and have long regarded them as deeply insulting to Africans. Fortunately, and predictably, the trend in various parts of Africa is now away from such aberrations.

The subject is often obscured by emotive silliness. For example, that “the Westminster System” is not suitable to Africa, the image conjured up here being that of Speaker’s wigs and other traditional trappings of the British. But in essence, the Westminster system has nothing to do with such trappings. The trappings are mere appendages attached by British eccentrics. The essence of the Westminster system – the passing of statute law after full debate, challenge and scrutiny by elected opposition representatives in the glare of public awareness – is appropriate to Africa as it is to America, Asia or anywhere. It is the essence of what we commonly mean by democracy.

It is that glare of public awareness that is most important to advocates of free media.

It does not mean that every citizen has to know of every statute before that statute can be passed. It does, however, mean that every citizen must have such knowledge readily available. It means further that every citizen should have it available through a variety of interpretations including, crucially, critical interpretations outside the control of the government of the day.

Only a free press can do that.

Only free media can do that.

Now before the defining of free media, let the media be kept here in their proper context as part of the components of the checks and balances necessary to a democracy.

Here again we can point to many im-

perfections in the constitution of some of these checks and balances.

Probably the best working model of a democracy in the most basic practical terms is the oldest of all democratic systems still functioning today – that of the United States.

In the United States the four main checks and balances are:

1. The Executive Presidency;
2. Congress;
3. The Supreme Court, and
4. The Free Media.

The ideal functioning thereof is somewhat diluted by the fact that Supreme Court judges are nominated by the president; though Congress can vote down each judicial appointment.

In Britain, too, you can point out that the upper house of parliament, the House of Lords, is undemocratic, being unelective.

In both these old democracies, furthermore, you can fault the composition, style and manner in which the media function. You can state, correctly in my view, that too many newspapers are owned and controlled by proprietors such as Rupert Murdoch and Robert Maxwell; or that there are too many rubbishy tabloids; or that too many media are controlled by conservatives.

All true.

But you cannot ordain it otherwise. The most you can do is limit or outlaw outright monopoly. You cannot prescribe or enforce media balance and composition. Whose balance, whose composition would it be – that of the government of the day? It cannot work like that.

All you can do is make it possible for any citizen or group of citizens with a legitimate common aim to create and publish a newspaper which must then take its chances in the marketplace – in this context a phrase representing broad public opinion.

It is no coincidence that in most working democracies the most successful newspapers and other media are those most obviously independent of the government of the day; those most disposed to be critical of the politicians.

This, indeed, is the healthiest manifestation of the service which free media can render to democratic governments – to be ever vigilant for fault or corruption; to be

Guest Editorial

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Journalists cannot expect more rights than any ordinary citizen in a democracy can expect. If an ordinary citizen breaks a law, he should expect the penalty prescribed within reasonable law. So should the journalist

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ever critical of error.

One can of course ask that this function should not be destructive or cynical; that in a perfect world all the good media will be positive about positive actions and negative about negative ones.

But this, too, cannot be ordained by any government in a democracy. The risk of journalistic unfairness, as in journalistic error, is the price of freedom.

Not that journalistic error or unfairness should go unpunished. Journalists cannot expect more rights than any ordinary citizen in a democracy can expect. If an ordinary citizen breaks a law, he should expect the penalty prescribed within reasonable law. So should the journalist.

In this respect the law of defamation is crucial in any democracy. It is one of the most important safeguards there is against unscrupulous journalism.

In my view the Americans have gone too far in their liberality of interpretation of their First Amendment right of freedom of speech and opinion, consequently it is almost impossible for an American politician, for example, to sue successfully for published defamation.

Politicians need as much protection as ordinary citizens against verbal damage, and should be entitled to redress if seriously wronged.

In the healthy continuing war between the media and the politicians which should be the normal condition in any democracy, both sides should be able to count on fair basic ground rules. And just as politicians should be able to sue newspapers or other media which unlawfully attack them through defamation, so journalists and other ordinary citizens should be protected from the outdated anomaly of parliamentary privilege under which politicians have for generations defamed their critics without having to substantiate their allegations as the rest of us have to and should continue to have to do.

This, then, is not a plea for special privileges for journalists. On the contrary it is advocacy for the extension to journalists of what should be any citizen's rights or duties in the exercise of free speech.

Any citizen should have the right to publish a newspaper, and to print in that

paper any legally permissible material whatsoever.

In the definition of what should be legally permissible, I would include any material which does not transgress normal law as manifested in other democracies. I have said the Americans go too far in permitting freedom of attack on politicians or public personalities – but rather too far than not far enough. Let the elected representatives of the people, by democratic process, decide what is too far and what is acceptable. We can only hope that in the process they will be guided by wise precedent in the most mature and experienced democracies.

But what we cannot have in any democracy – what we dare not have in a South African democracy, if that democracy is to have any hope of success – is any degree of limitation on media rights to probe government deeds and other public issues.

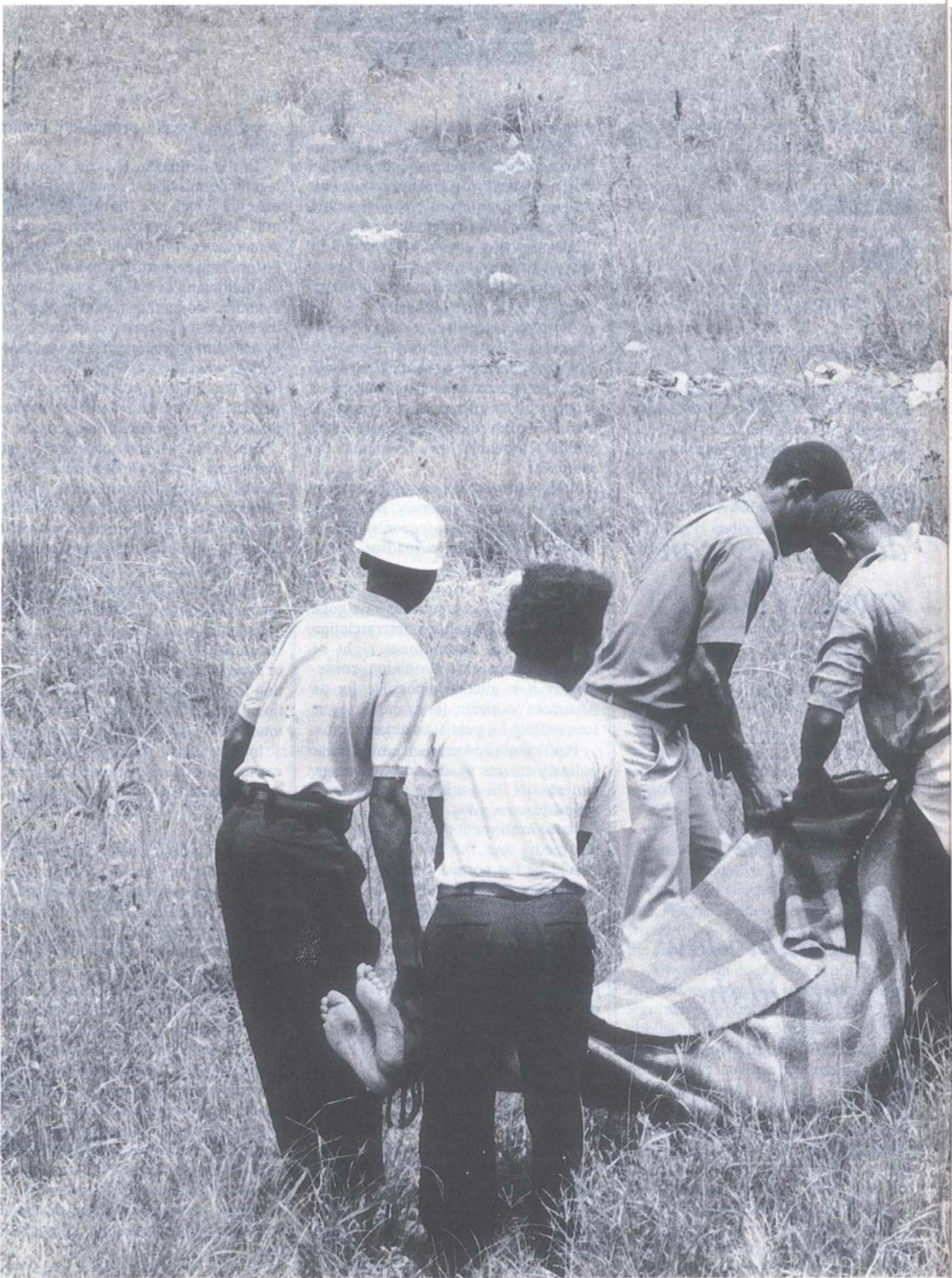
By all means pass laws forbidding the media to commit flagrant crimes such as defamatory attack; by all means define statutorily the crime of racial incitement or even promotion of racism in application to our particular post-apartheid national needs. But do not resort to the old totalitarian trap of defining such crimes so loosely that an authoritarian politician can arrogate the role of judge and jury in such matters.

A democratic South Africa must not have politicians deciding guilt or innocence, as has been the case for decades in South Africa and other authoritarian states such as the Soviet Union.

Democracies leave those duties to independent judges and ideally to juries as well. Countries without juries lack that deep trust in ordinary common sense which is central to democracy.

So if South Africa is, as most of us surely hope it is, heading towards a proper system of democracy, we must expect, and we should demand, that normal checks and balances of democratic procedure are written into the constitution, and in that acceptable democratic process there must be enshrined a charter of complete media freedom within orthodox democratic law.

With it we can build a truly free society destined for progress.



10 - REVIEW, November 1990



Natal Violence

THERE ARE FEW INNOCENTS

Photographs by Scotch Macaskill

Natal has seen some of the worst violence in South Africa's history and it has fallen to a few dedicated journalists to record the unfolding drama.

It has been a daunting task.

In this first 'For The Record' feature, **FRED KOCKOTT**, who spent five years as a reporter in Natal working mostly in the strife-torn townships, suggests the press has failed in its duty to keep readers informed.

Now read on ➤

IT WAS BODY-COUNT JOURNALISM

THREE words could summarise what I have to say on the media coverage of the Natal violence: "It has failed."

For many that statement needs little elaboration. The realities of the conflict largely remain untold. Ask a prosecutor, a builder, a shopkeeper, or a couple of doctors, lawyers, magistrates, churchmen and businessmen who have been exposed to some of these realities. Ask a policeman, a riot unit cop or plainclothes detective who has tried to solve mass murder cases. Better still, ask a judge, that most respected of commentators on society. And, if you are still unconvinced, speak to a couple of township residents.

But say to certain newsmen, particularly editorial decision makers, that the media has failed in Natal, and they will be down your throat in seconds, indignant at the slur on the trade.

It is to them that I dedicate this review. I dedicate it to them in the hope that what I write will spark some debate and a general rethink of editorial priorities.

For too long readers outside the townships – mostly comfortable in their modest or plush homes – have been lulled into a false sense of security and become bored with faceless, body-count journalism. In all that time law and order has broken down, through government proclamations and emergency regulations, and through murderous bloodletting in the streets. And now we reap the consequences. More guns pass hands today than licences are granted to trade. People believe we teeter on the brink of anarchy.

As journalists we need to place this in context. We need, through information, to counteract readers' fears, which are based largely on ignorance. We need to tell it like it is, not through twisted words of political players and official police spokesmen, but just as the mother of a victim would tell her family. We need to voice the words of such mothers. And, we need to investigate. Let's hope it is not too late!

12 - REVIEW, November 1990

Edendale Hospital

Outlying Pietermaritzburg's white suburbia and adjacent to Edendale Road there is a large facebrick building. The seven-storey complex stands behind concrete walls topped by rolls of razor wire. It rises above the uniform, square township homes and forever increasing number of shacks that litter the green landscape. Shacks sprawl out across the length and breadth of Edendale valley and out over the rolling hills to Elandskop, 36km away.

The tall building – the only one in the vicinity – is Edendale Hospital. Besides attempting to provide a health service for more than half-a-million black townfolk and serving as a referral hospital for more than 30 community clinics dotted throughout the Natal Midlands, the hospital is the major casualty centre for victims of Natal's political violence.

It is a conflict between the African National Congress and governing forces. It involves Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha movement, police and supporters of the ANC and United Democratic Front. Doctors at Edendale get a first-hand glimpse of the extent of the trauma. The nurses, of course, live in it.

**I hope
either you
or I wake
up soon**

The following letter, written by an Edendale doctor, appeared in *The Natal Witness*:

"The other morning I sat looking at my surroundings before setting off to work. The beautiful, rich green hills around 'Maritzburg, Sleepy Hollow, full of peace and serenity. I pinched myself hard; soon I would be at work facing the results of human beings' violence towards each other. Yet here

at home I could be detached from it, blissfully unaware of its existence. The last few days of escalating violence have heightened for me the disparity – a few kilometres apart – peace and war.

"I am fortunate enough to experience both, privileged because if I did not work at a large black hospital I would probably never realise what was happening on my own doorstep. It is easy to be ignorant of the harsh realities, either wilfully or through lack of information, but they exist and surely must be of interest to all who live in this area.

"Sometimes, as a foreigner, I feel that I have more interest in the goings on in this country than many of its own citizens. Here I think the press is partly to blame. Our information on the place in which we live is derived from our own experiences and by learning from others – such as the press.

"But here I find a great discrepancy between what I see every day and what I read in the news. When conflicts are reported they seem like isolated incidents – a few paragraphs of newspaper space hardly does justice to the enormity of what is happening.

"It may be nicer and safer to portray 'our' world in the heart of 'Maritzburg as the real one with township conflicts as isolated incidents, but is this fair to your readers? Is it not your duty to inform, and their right to know, what is going on in their own country?

"For me the night must be day and day the night. I must dream all that I hear and see during the day. It must be a dream because so little of it is reflected in your newspaper, which is supposedly the real news of the life in Natal.

"I hope either you or I wake up soon."
– Dr SJ Phillips, Edendale Hospital, Pietermaritzburg

Dr Sam Phillips had initially been wary of submitting her letter to *The Witness*. At Edendale Hospital doctors have to sign a contract which prohibits them from speaking to journalists. Writing a letter to the press could be inviting trouble. But she sent the letter. It was

For The Record



On the march in Sweetwaters

published under the heading: "Different Worlds".

She received no criticism from colleagues or superiors. However, a letter responding to hers did appear in the newspaper. It was written by an editorial decision maker of *The Witness*. It was headlined "What Shortcomings?"

"All right-thinking South Africans will be grateful to foreigners such as Dr SJ Phillips for coming here and lending a hand for a while. But there was nothing in his (sic) letter which I haven't already read in the local press. So perhaps Dr Phillips could write another letter and tell us exactly what it is that the local press is failing to inform us about the violence."

A debate had been sparked. It took place in the newsroom and in the local pub. Dr Phillips was told her letter was malicious and that she was ignorant of the functions of newspapers.

However, I believe Dr Phillips' letter was valid. My experiences in the townships convinced me our journalism was inadequate. I think Dr Phillips is right when she says it is time for editors to wake up. They should visit the townships. And, if they have, they should do so again and again...and send reporters to investigate.

Déja vu

I drove into Sweetwaters, Pietermaritzburg. Déja vu! I had been there before.

"...women and children stood gathered at the side of the road overlooking a township under siege. Detached, pointing, laughing, watching a battle loom. A distance below, a

group of men stood armed with assegais, pangas, kerries and sticks. Next to them was a contingent of army and police. The crowd blocked the only access road into the township. On an opposite hillside, a similar crowd had gathered, Nxamalala was surrounded..."

Exact same place, same sights, but different time.

Last time I had seen bodies in the back of a bakkie – a man's head, split open, protruding from a blanket. I evacuated an elderly couple from Soweto. They had been trapped in Nxamalala for four days. Even the old man had been forced to fight. "God bless you, you saved our lives," were their last words.

“
God
bless you,
you saved
our lives
”

This time I did not go in. The words of Sichizo Zuma, an Inkatha personality who had restrained supporters from threatening us at the previous clash, echoed in my mind: "Next time I'll let them do what they want!"

I drove cautiously towards the armed crowd and police. Police talked with the

leaders of the mob, ordering the supporters to sit. Within Nxamalala, two groups had gathered, ready to defend or attack.

Do I chance driving in? I hesitated. Hostile stares. In front of me the Inkatha crowd rose up. They were dispersing, toying towards me. I wavered. Behind me a bus blocked my passage. I could no longer see the police and army. I negotiated a gap and drove out.

Heading back to the office I contemplated what had transpired. There had been a battle, lives might have been lost, but I had not bothered to find out what had happened. My journalistic instinct had told me to go in. But what for? To return later to the office to fight for a couple of centimetres of space for my story, a story that would not tell what I had seen anyway? It simply was not worth it anymore.

The experience at Sweetwaters illustrated the resignation with which I had come to approach my job. My commitment was at its lowest ebb. In its place was fear; the fear that made me look over my shoulder in town; paranoia that made me watch my rear-view mirror when driving to Durban.

I could have coped if I were writing what I saw and investigating some of the stories. But most remained in my notebooks – uninvestigated, unpublished, unknown.

And there were many stories to tell. There *are still* many stories to tell. Creative ways were needed to report them. And time. And space. Instead it was just the violence...

PLEASE TURN OVER

NATAL VIOLENCE

CONTINUED

Violence, violence, violence. Everyday, violence. Four dead here. Five dead there. That's what most of the reporting amounted to.

"They surrounded my house, forced me inside. They beat me with a stick. One threatened me with a firearm..."

"The child was looking for his father. They killed him. They cut his eyes out...It's been about a month now. All the schools have been closed. We hear gunshots quite often..."

Such were the telephone calls I received almost every day. You then had to fight with a news editor to release you from the newsdesk to go and find out what had happened.

Now, after two years, my notebooks are littered with scribbled tales of death and destruction, evidence and lies. Tortured expressions still haunt my mind. But you adjust to it and each death means a little less until finally death is just another statistic.

When I saw someone I had interviewed a week or two previously, lying dead slumped in a kombi, I had to keep on working. Hey, there's been another shooting over there, and off I went.

I was sick and tired of it. I was sick of seeing death. I was sick of feeling nothing. I was sick of saying sorry. I was sick of being relied on to provide this coverage. I was sick of news contacts expecting me to be there. Above all, I was sick of the dead approach to news.

I believed the violence could end. I believed the press had a role. I still do.

The Debate

"It's true", I told the newly appointed editor of *The Witness*, David Willers. "We might have done a better job than the other newspapers, but that doesn't mean much. It doesn't mean we are good press."

I had resigned from my job. Willers was in the chair of former editor Richard



On the pavement in Pietermaritzburg

Steyn, who is now editor-elect of *The Star*, South Africa's largest circulation daily newspaper.

Under Steyn's 15-year editorship, *The Natal Witness* enjoyed worldwide recognition and in the late '80s had earned a reputation for providing the most comprehensive coverage of the Natal violence.

When I sat and talked with the new editor about reporting the townships, I told him of the frustrations. I told him I had become scared and had frequently wondered whether I would make it back from a job. I told him what could be done and what I thought needed to be done.

Willers listened. I wasn't sure whether he was merely being diplomatic. But he had also worked as a journalist in townships. When violence had erupted in the Cape Flats in 1976, Willers was there, writing for *The Cape Times*.

So I talked, or rambled as people who know me would say. I told Willers about a series of incidents that had occurred that weekend:

● There was a shooting at a bus rank near my home in Pietermaritzburg. I heard two gunshots. The next day a colleague was told that two special constables had been shot;

● In Edendale a man strolling with his girlfriend had his face hacked up with a bushknife;

● In Gezibuso a woman was sleeping when men claiming to be police broke

into her home. They stabbed her and her baby. The woman had too many wounds to document;

● In another incident, two sisters were shot. Both had identical gunshot wounds in the breast and thigh. They had been sleeping in the same bed when the attack occurred...

The man, baby and three women were among 54 patients treated in casualty at Edendale Hospital that weekend. At least 45 were trauma cases – 21 had either been seriously stabbed or assaulted, 12 had been shot, and 12 injured in car accidents.

Yet none of these incidents appeared in the press that week. The police had reported no incidents of political violence for that weekend. A story in *The Witness* on Monday reported several incidents of arson and stone throwing in other parts of the country, but no incidents from Pietermaritzburg.

On Tuesday, it was the same.

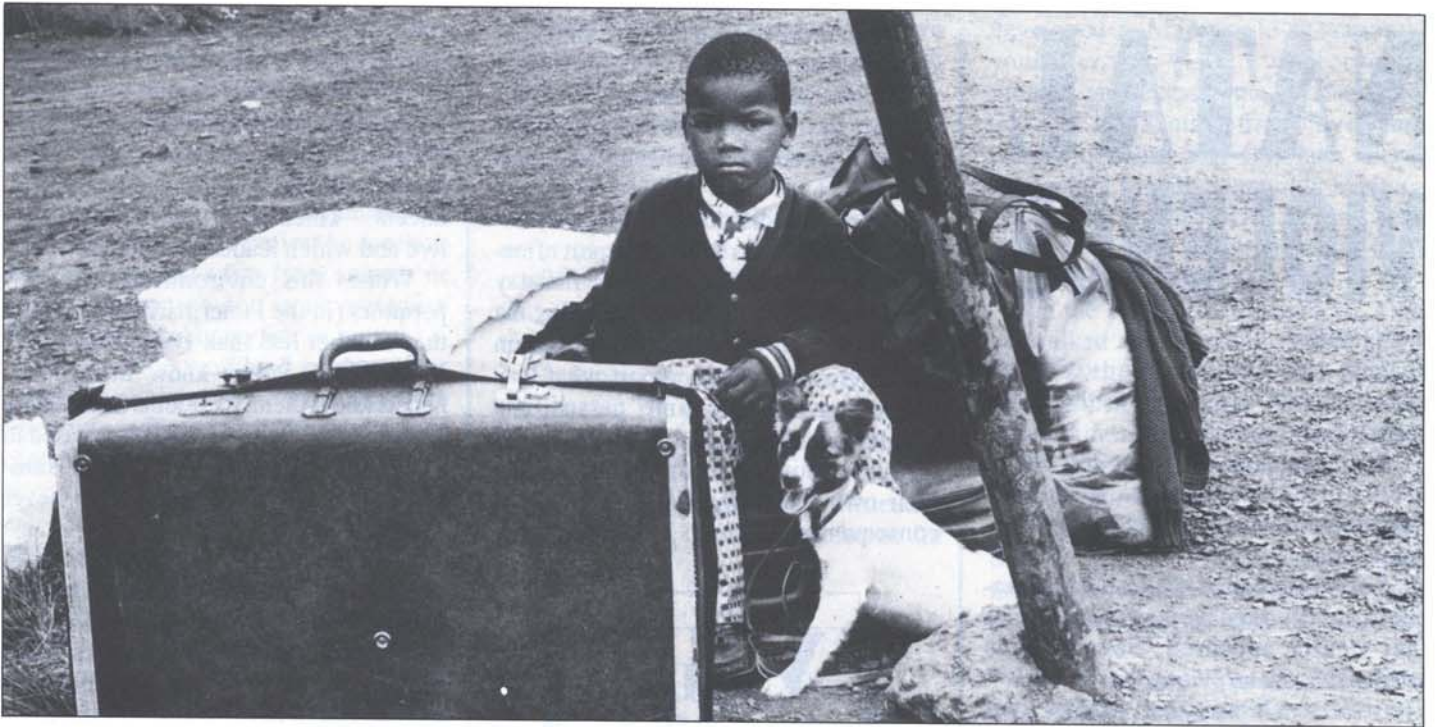
What had happened? How had reporting deteriorated to a level where it did not consistently provide information to counter deficient police reports? How come police were no longer accountable for the provision of regular and accurate information? Why was so little information getting to the newspapers?

In the townships people confronted violence at every turn. On their way to work, at work, in the city, at home, at play, at weddings, at community meetings, in their beds at night. Life in the townships, never normal under Apartheid, was now very abnormal. Coping with threats or the death of a friend had become as habitual for residents of the townships as it was for people in suburbia to lock their front door security gates when they left home each day.

While cemeteries expanded in Pietermaritzburg, elsewhere in the country people lived oblivious to the fact that a problem of national dimensions was looming.

In Natal many residents outside the townships were aware something was amiss. Others just thought it was blacks killing blacks – an attitude propagated by government and made credible by the daily press reports. A blanket existed for irregular and undercover security force activity – now a real and active legacy of the past three years. In Pietermaritzburg errant acts by policemen, like those who worked under self-chosen pseudonyms like Rambo, Boss and McGyver, began

For The Record



No place to run and no place to hide.

to happen more frequently.

"What is actually happening?" the more discerning readers asked. They were not given answers by the press, only a daily dose of headlines – "Five more die in Mpumalanga"; "Six die in two shootings"; "Families flee township"; "Pupil killed in clash".

The name of the game was body-count journalism. And, as records at Edendale Hospital illustrated, the media was even failing at that.

I gave David Willers another letter from Dr Sam Phillips – an overdue response to the newspaper's challenge.

Dr Phillips had been on duty that Sunday. She had treated many patients, including the man whose face had been hacked up with a bushknife, the two sisters with gunshot wounds and the stabbed woman and baby.

The words in her letter: "There is consistently much trauma... The extent of this trauma is not reflected in the press coverage" had rung true.

Contacts silenced

"What Dr Phillips should realise is that there is a two-way relationship between any community and the newspaper which purports to serve it," said Wyndham Hartley, political editor of the *The Witness*.

"No story just gets into the newspaper. There has to be some interplay between

the community and that newspaper."

Hartley's argument is that if information is not forthcoming from the community, a newspaper cannot be expected to perform its job properly.

But is not the onus on a newspaper to develop and maintain its contacts in the communities?

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Eno
fruit salts
and razor
blades”

If one examines *routine* contact lists in newsrooms, it is evident that little attention is devoted to finding out what happens inside the townships. There are telephone numbers for headmasters of white schools, for government officials and academics and even contacts in the House of Delegates and House of Representatives. But there are few contacts in black communities.

"Sensitive black contacts were never

put on lists for obvious reasons," said Hartley.

In covering the townships you always had to protect your contacts. I preferred taking a clean notebook into the field for fear of being stopped by police and having my notes confiscated.

Some reporters tried hard to establish and maintain township contacts. The general reporters were only encouraged to keep regular contact with city officials, police, paramedics and firemen. They were rarely, if ever, instructed to telephone possible sources of information in the townships. In Pietermaritzburg I never heard a reporter being told to develop a contact at Edendale Hospital. And judging from maps on some newsroom walls, the townships might well have not existed.

So there is a dearth of reporting on the townships. A newspaper such as *The Natal Witness* primarily serves the white community on which it depends for sales and advertising revenue.

Pictures of people grimacing and gritting their teeth while shotgun pellets are fizzed out of wounds with the aid of Eno fruit salts and razor blades have never made the *Natal* press. It is mostly after-the-fact pictures of corpses.

Reporters often had to fight for space to write "heavy" stories about *Natal's* killing fields. They were published

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NATAL VIOLENCE

CONTINUED

against the advice of advertising managers who live closer to the newspaper's purse strings.

The argument was that too much politics in the news pages would depress sales and ultimately impact on advertising revenue.

And conservative white readers certainly did get irked by the type of stories that finally appeared. Several even labelled *The Natal Witness* as "Pravda". The end result was that serious journalists were continually slapped in the face by arguments for a "lighter" newspaper.

Returning to the reliance on the community for information, Wyndham Hartley argues that the South African press did not come through the State of Emergency unscathed. Besides sparking self-censorship, the emergency regulations effectively shut down the relationship between newspapers and the community.

"The emergency incarcerated sources or silenced them in other ways. The prime mechanism of silencing people was fear. People such as Dr Phillips are a remnant of that shut down," said Hartley.

The emergency regulations certainly took their toll. They were all encompassing. But reporters could still venture into unrest areas, even if it meant continually dodging the police. Getting into the townships against police orders became a game. It took your mind off death and your own fears.

We still took pictures and sometimes published them. There were also creative ways of telling stories without directly contravening the emergency regulations. At *The Natal Witness* these were occasionally explored and some stories directly contravening the regulations were also published. At one stage *The Witness* faced 14 charges in terms of the Police Act, the Internal Security Act and the emergency regulations.

I remember hoping some of the charges would be pursued so we could further investigate some of the stories. But predictably the charges were dropped by the police, who could have been further exposed.

The regulations do not adequately explain why the press failed to report effectively in the townships. Since the first day of the emergency, June 11, 1986, the regulations provided defensible reason for newspapers *not* to report what was happening. And as time passed, the regulations became a screen behind which certain newspapers could hide their own inactivity. We now reap the consequences.

Vital
evidence
could be
missing

Prime test

The prime test in judging how the press has covered the Natal violence, is to examine the state of affairs in the townships.

In the townships people talk of well-known killers who roam the streets confident they will not be arrested, let alone convicted. The environment is such that township dwellers say they might witness a murder and recognise one of the killers. The matter may be reported to the police. Two days later the same person is still walking the streets.

Perhaps he is overheard talking openly of how he killed the "dog". And he is seen killing again. Maybe this time the victim is a brother or a close friend. Again the matter is reported to police. Perhaps the man is taken in for questioning. A week later he may be seen at the forefront of an armed crowd, policemen standing by or negotiating with him to disperse. Perhaps he is a person who police rely on for information...

For three years it has been like that. People say they have been forced to

resort to quicker methods of justice, by taking the law into their own hands. It has gone by unchecked. Slogan-bred youths acting under the banner of the ANC/UDF are often at the forefront. Each action sparks retaliation. Most victims are innocent – killed by virtue of where they live and which leader they support.

Within this environment, key perpetrators (in the Pietermaritzburg region they number less than 10) remain active in the field. Police know them. Journalists know them. Residents know them. The term "warlord" is sometimes used to describe them. Some have been summonsed to court, but they have never been convicted.

Something is fundamentally wrong. The state of criminal justice in Natal's townships has literally broken down.

The question is: Would the press have allowed the situation to deteriorate to such an extent in the white community?

Would the press have tolerated a similar state of justice to exist in white suburbs?

The media is powerful. Unfortunately in the case of Natal, it has not exercised its power responsibly. Take the situation where well-known killers are not brought to trial; when people who would almost certainly be sent to the gallows remain at large and leaders of an organisation. And what about the cases on record where a person is brought to trial, but crucial evidence, such as a gun, is lost by police?

Should the press not have been more active under such circumstances? Should it not have tried to investigate further? Should it not have made more people accountable?

"The press is not an instrument of justice," I was once told. "We are observers and recorders of fact."

The fact, however, remains that the press has seldom observed or recorded the collapse of criminal justice in Natal.

The truth is no journalists have ever been *assigned* to document the legal process, in particular:

- how many people might have witnessed a killing;
- how long it took police to act on information; and finally;
- how much available evidence is eventually led in court (that is, if a suspect was ever arrested).

Such stories could have acted as a catalyst in bringing known criminals to book, yet they have never been written.

For The Record

Vital evidence could be missing in a murder trial, but newspaper reporters will never know this. Unfortunately there are not many journalists who can access such information and none who are *taught* how to.

There has also been no examination of what it must be like to police the conflict; like coming under fire from snipers or being confronted by stone-wielding youths who display no fear of bullets.

And has the workload of detectives ever been examined? Riot Investigation detectives in Pietermaritzburg were once carrying about 50 dockets each. First they have to find witnesses. Once found, most are reluctant to make a statement, let alone go to court to testify. Appearing in court is risky as the person becomes a potential target. Witnesses *have been* killed. Exactly how many, no one can say.

Finally, has the press ever told you how many convictions have been brought in connection with about 4 000 unrest-related deaths in Natal since 1987?

Civil rights lawyers argue that by June 1990 fewer than 50 prosecutions had been brought for the first 2 500 *unrest-related* killings in the Natal Midlands – most of which failed.

This is dismissed as “naked propaganda” by Justice Minister Kobie Coetsee. He recently released statistics showing that of 6 770 prosecutions in Natal for murder and culpable homicide in the past three years, 1 620 resulted in murder convictions. However, there is no indication as to how many of these prosecutions were brought in connection with *unrest-related* killings.

The Justice Department says it cannot provide such details. Surely the press should demand that it does?

Watchdog

While the press is not an instrument of justice, it does have a watchdog function which has yet to become active in Natal. In this light it must shoulder some responsibility for letting Natal's townships degenerate into violent social decay.

Imagine if a mayor of a city was found, “on the balance of probability”, to be responsible for killing a man, but remained in office. Would the press keep quiet? I cannot imagine so.

But in Pietermaritzburg a well-known character was found by an inquest magistrate, to have been possibly responsible for the murder, in 1987, of a mother and her 11-year-old daughter. The matter was referred to the Attorney General for a decision on prosecution. The man has never been charged. He cultivates, as confirmed by the Ministry of Law and Order, friendly relations with high-ranking police officers.

He is now a member of the KwaZulu Parliament. The press has never pursued the story about the murder of mother and child and let the public know what evidence exists against him. Instead it uses him as an official spokesman for Inkatha.

The
next day
he was
murdered

There was once a town councillor in Pietermaritzburg who murdered, again and again. He became Pietermaritzburg's most notorious “warlord”. His death was met with a sigh of relief in Pietermaritzburg city and celebrated in the township streets, particularly in Imbali where he had been most active.

My worst nightmares ended the day of Jerome Mncwabe's death. So did those of a colleague who lived with me at the time. Two nights in a row we both had vivid dreams of Mncwabe. The next day he was assassinated.

Why did the press never ask what this man was doing for the community as a town councillor? Should this not have been the task of a municipal reporter, instead of just reporting on white city council affairs? Mncwabe was, after all, a member of local government, supposedly elected by people to take a leading role in the development of the community.

Instead Mncwabe and his cronies,

developed a Mafia-style operation. A youngster, then 14 or 16, who became his protégé, got access to guns and ammunition. The first shots he fired only maimed people – about six. But later Derick Phumulani Mveli, commonly known as “S'khweqe”, shot to kill. His last *seven* victims were all shot repeatedly in the head near the left ear.

On the evening of January 16, 1989, he walked along Imbali streets and in front of witnesses he shot four people in this manner, seemingly without fear of arrest. Among his victims was Simphiwe Majozi, an 11-year-old boy on his way to buy cooldrink.

S'khweqe killed for the sake of killing. He was well known in the community. He was always well dressed, had permed hair and travelled in councillors' cars.

Mveli was known to the police at the time of his first attempted murder of a man, Sibusiso Sibisi, on October 27, 1988. He was named as the suspect on the attempted murder docket. Police also knew his address. Despite this, it was only after Mveli had taken to the streets, killing, killing, and killing again that effective police action was taken. He was arrested seven days after his final killing spree, and 88 days after he had attempted to kill Sibusiso Sibisi.

After he was arrested, the charges against him were withdrawn. Mveli was placed in the custody of the Security Police, detained in terms of the emergency regulations.

Why? Why detain a man when he is a suspect about to stand trial?

Why? That was the question the press should have repeatedly asked. Many people knew about Mveli at the time. If the press did not, they should have. He was named in a dossier that was compiled on the role of the police in vigilante violence in the Pietermaritzburg area.

It was only when a Supreme Court judge, Andrew Wilson, convicted Mveli of multiple murders and attempted murders, that this question was publicly addressed.

“We have grave difficulty in seeing or understanding how any member of the Security Police...could have bona fide formed the opinion that the detention of the accused was necessary,” Judge Wilson said.

“The effect of his detention was to
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prevent, so we have heard, the investigating officers from having access to the accused and thereby interfering with and delaying the investigation of very serious charges against him. We feel that there should be some public explanation made of this apparent official interference with the administration of justice."

Judge Wilson and his two assessors, said public explanations were also needed on:

- Why Mweli's murder weapon (a FN-Browning pistol stolen from a murdered policeman) was still circulating in the community after his arrest? It was later used in another murder.

- Why police failed to arrest Mweli after his first offence?

- Why was Mweli arrested under the dubious circumstances of negotiating with an Inkatha leader who was suspected of being implicated in five counts of murder?

- How police lost the firearm that Mweli allegedly used in the commission of the first seven offences, including the murder of the policeman from whom the FN-Browning was stolen?

Judge Wilson said criticisms he had made of the police investigation were not directed at the force as a whole, but rather at specific individuals.

The Mweli conviction was a landmark judgement. It was the first time a well-known killer in Natal's townships had been convicted for multiple murders. The trial not only dramatically illustrated conditions in the townships, the corruption and killings, but also the irregular processes of law and collusion between policemen and key Inkatha members.

It also illustrated how a youth's mind had become warped by elders; how he had become a "deliberate callous murderer" who "killed for the sake of killing and enjoyed doing it".

After being sentenced to a total of more than 200 years of imprisonment, Mweli said: "You know me! You know 18 - REVIEW, November 1990

the people I have killed...I killed many others...These are only the few they got me for."

Yet the trial did not receive any special attention in the press. It was only documented at length two months later in a supplement sponsored by the Natal business community. And despite the blatant evidence of maladministration of justice, the press have not yet taken up Judge Wilson's call for the police to explain.

The question is: Will it ever?

The seriousness of the situation lies in the fact that from my experience, what was exposed in the Mweli trial, were not isolated facts but part of a greater picture.

Besides just asking for explanations, the press should do some of their own investigations. If they dig just a little deeper, they might learn that some key Inkatha leaders have been police informers for years. If they look into the background of the Mweli case, they might hear about a confession or confessions that Mweli made to police which were not even heard in court.

They might be surprised at what they find out. And they might even, like me, get frightened.

Dig
just a
little
deeper

After five years working as a journalist in Natal, I cannot recall many stories related to the conflict that have been fully investigated and taken to their conclusion.

For every white murder committed, reporters would be consistently questioning the police about their progress with the investigation. This rarely happened with township murders. It was just another nameless statistic. And stories were rarely followed up.

I could cite almost every story that I covered as an example. Take an 11-year-old named Prince Hlela Makhaye. A pic-

ture of the boy being wheeled into Mpumalanga clinic landed on my desk last year. He was clutching his stomach and died soon after the picture was taken. A policeman allegedly shot him when Prince went to school to collect his school report.

An inquest was due to be held, but no newspapers followed it up.

A year ago I concluded a feature story on the murderous events in a tiny rural township called Trust Feed, near New Hanover, with the following statement:

"Observers are now wondering whether the findings of the New Hanover magistrate will spark further investigations into the events in Trust Feed, or whether the issue, and the unsolved killings will again fade from the spotlight and public scrutiny."

This story revolved around the murder on December 3, 1988 of 11 people who had gathered at a Trust Feed home to hold a wake for an elderly man, Mr Ze Sithole who had died of natural causes.

At about 3am armed men knocked on the door and randomly opened fire, killing six women, two children and three men. The incident was dubbed the 'Trust Feed Massacre'.

Our investigations at the time, conducted under trying circumstances, suggested a possible security force operation in which Inkatha gangs drove out members of a residents' committee, burning several of their homes and the chairman's shop.

After the massacre, hundreds of residents fled and the township was left in control of Inkatha officials, who today remain the *de facto* rulers of the area.

Prior to being driven out, the residents' committee, which had successfully resisted government plans for forced removal, had negotiated with authorities for the area to be developed. A clinic costing R59 000 was nearing completion, the water supply had been improved and roads had been upgraded at a total cost of R65 000 and employing 103 local residents.

A government report leaked to the press revealed that Inkatha had been attempting to "have the South African Government put them in control of Trust Feed in direct conflict with the wishes of the people of Trust Feed". It said this was discussed at a meeting convened by the the government's Joint Management Committee.

For The Record

No one was ever arrested in connection with the Trust Feed massacre, and there was no further publicity about events in Trust Feed until an inquest magistrate pronounced last year that circumstantial evidence placed suspicion on two special constables. He also said there was possible complicity on the part of the former station commander of New Hanover, Lieutenant Brian Mitchell. He referred the papers to the Attorney General for a decision on prosecution.

Then editor of *The Natal Witness*, Richard Steyn, objected to my concluding remarks in the article about the magistrate's finding. *The Witness* had adequately documented events in Trust Feed, he said.

That was at the time of the massacre. "What had happened since?" I argued. My concluding remarks were published.

To date there have been no more stories on the Trust Feed massacre.

Has the Attorney General been asked whether he has decided to prosecute the suspects? Have the police been asked to comment on their investigations? Is the matter being investigated at all?

If reporters had investigated, they might have uncovered interesting evidence.

But no journalists have even read through the inquest records. Nor have there been any reports of what happened to the residents who fled the area or the state of the development projects in Trust Feed.

"Well, where are the stories? Why haven't you written them?" I was once asked. I was told my criticisms were a reflection of my own inability to do my job properly. There is truth in that statement. My criticism does stem from dissatisfaction with my own work. There were opportunities to dig deeper into a story and write analytical accounts. But the workload was great. Besides, you also became desensitised, dehumanised; you basically stopped thinking.

As Bryan Pearson, a reporter who provided some of the best coverage of the Natal conflict, recently wrote: "The risk of reporting on violence day after day is not so much that you may be killed as that you may get used to the bodies, the smell of death, the gaping stab wounds, the tortured expressions on the faces of the disfigured victims. Once you are this dehumanised, life takes on a dull listless hue and you very quickly lose your

creativity."

I often felt that dull, listless hue about my life. I still do. One lives with unwritten stories...The teenage girl bandaged head to toe in hospital as a result of petrol-bomb burns...the girl whose mother cried and thanked me when I offered to take books to her dying daughter...The stories are legion.

It was obvious we needed more than one reporter to work the township beat. Pearson and I worked together for a while, but even then there was far too much to document effectively.

Well,
where
are the
stories?

Pearson eventually left. Better pay and prospects attracted him to *Agence France Press* in Johannesburg. He left a gap in reporting Natal which has never been filled.

Given conditions in the townships, people might wonder why no journalists have been killed while covering the conflict. Teachers, bricklayers, lawyers, doctors, headmasters, accountants have been killed, but no journalists. It is simply because there have seldom been any journalists in the field.

Journalists who have worked on the ground can all talk of close shaves. All have ended up frustrated and most share the attitude that the Natal story remains untold.

Bryan Pearson maintains that the Johannesburg newspapers showed up Natal's newspapers when the violence erupted on the reef.

"Reporters did everything. They camped with squatters. Stayed in the hostels. They did all the things that should've been done in Natal," said Pearson.

Isabel Koch, deputy news editor of *The Witness*, and former crime reporter of *The Eastern Province Herald*, argues that coverage of Natal violence was inadequate when compared with how *The*

Herald had tackled unrest in its time. But that was before the State of Emergency.

At the *Sunday Tribune*, reporter Brian King said there were many stories needing investigation in the Durban region.

"Some are sensitive and potentially dangerous. You would need time to tackle them, but it is never given to reporters."

In Natal allegations abound about trained 'hit squads', para-military training camps and mercenaries. A story by Eddie Koch of *The Weekly Mail* that alleged that Inkatha members had been trained at SADF camps in East Caprivi was the only recent investigation of these murky areas. The newspapers seldom look beyond the immediate news.

Newspaper bosses are not taking cognisance of journalists' frustrations. They are losing good people as a result. The environment is simply unprofessional.

There has been little coordinated response from the newspapers to the violence. Most good stories that have appeared were largely due to individual initiative.

At the *Witness* there was no coordination between a reporter working in the field, the crime reporter and court reporters. At other newspapers there was little to coordinate.

Most frustrating was that what you learned was seldom adopted by the newspapers. On the surface there was little interest in what you were uncovering in the field. Perhaps just a quip: "Heh Fred, how's the revolution?"

And what reporters did write was not intelligently recorded. In newspaper libraries you will find a file on Bjorn Borg, but try and find one on a key character of Natal's conflict. One had to keep one's own references.

My resignation from *The Natal Witness* was largely due to the realisation that as long as I remained on the township beat, there would be no one else covering the townships and I would never have time to follow any stories. I was frustrated with the press. I was frustrated with my own limitations. For two years I had worked, and the Natal story had not been written. I wanted to write. That's why I resigned.

I think what best epitomises the failure of the media is the issue of names, names of the people killed. There have been more than 4 000 people killed in Natal,

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yet fewer than five percent have received the posthumous privilege of their names appearing in print.

Perhaps that's all that needs to be said about editorial perceptions of the violence. Khumalos and Ndlovus were not important enough to have their names published.

Under the emergency regulations it was police policy not to release victims' names. Whenever I asked why, I was told it would place the victims' lives in jeopardy. That the victims were already dead never deterred police from using this argument.

But we persisted. On occasions I would battle for two days to get the names of victims. I believed it was a fundamental duty, but again space constraints dictated – names were sometimes subbed out of the story.

And so while the media focused obscurely on atrocity after atrocity in the townships, it left unrest monitors to tally up the nameless and faceless statistics of the carnage.

At the Centre for Adult Education, Natal University, Pietermaritzburg, researchers managed to document every published statistic on unrest deaths and incidents in the Natal Midlands. They obtained and recorded more than 65 percent of the victims' names. It's a pity the press was not as motivated.

Parrots

"You say the media's failed," editor of *The Sunday Tribune*, Jonathan Hobday, said to me. "Failed to do what? Failed to report the violence? Our newspapers are filled with violence. In fact, our readers complain that we don't put anything else in the paper. There are sensitivities that have to be observed and balances that have to be preserved."

"Newspapering is a varied art. The mass circulation papers are catering for a very broad cross section of people, from conservative to liberal, from man to

woman, from black to white. It is not simply going about reporting deaths. Newspapers sell parrots as well. They also report the results of the jukskei.

"To say that we have failed is the easiest thing in the world to say. It's less than perfect, we know that. We could have done better? Yes. Why didn't we do better? There are hundreds of reasons, some of them because it was made impossible. Perhaps we could have had more get up and go, been more sensitive.

"One aspect is the law. If the law says you can't report something, you have two choices. You don't report it, or else you break the law and you close down. There is no point being the best newspaper if you are not on the street.

We
could
have done
better

"There are also economic constraints. Newspapers have had staff cuts over the years. Journalists have been underpaid so the quality of journalists has deteriorated. At most newspapers there are fewer staff, often less experienced staff. This is obviously going to affect the performance of the press.

"Constraints of repressive legislation and restraints for economic reasons mean we have been unable to do as an effective a job as we would have liked. We have done our best. Is that failure? We keep trying hard and we are very sensitive to criticism. We respond as best we can with the limited resources at our disposal – meaning editorial space and staff – to do the job we should do, which is to keep the public informed."

The discussion with Hobday revealed the tight-rope that media decision makers walk between social conscience and commercially viable journalism. Observing sensitivities and preserving balances, is Hobday's job. His foremost directive from newspaper owners is to boost sales and ensure a profit.

"There has always been an uneasy partnership between editors and managers," Hobday explained. "We believe our business is to produce excellent newspapers to ensure a profit. But management says the business is to make a profit to produce excellent newspapers. This is the core of the conflict. It shifts this way and that.

"The major problem is that newspaper managements have not reinvested profits in ensuring editorial excellence," said Hobday.

It is within such constraints that a newspaper such as *The Sunday Tribune* acts on social conscience issues. When given an opportunity to publish a series of in-depth articles on the Natal conflict, Hobday contacted associates in the business community and sold the idea of producing a special supplement on Natal. Eight weeks later it was on the streets as a tabloid supplement entitled: 'Towards the New Natal'. It was a mammoth production – 48 pages of differing opinions on Natal's problems, personalities and prospects.

That big businesses such as the NBS, Sappi, New Republic Bank, Prefcor, BP, and the South African Sugar Association were prepared to sponsor such an editorial project is indicative that there is something amiss in the general press coverage, and an indication that the deterioration of every facet of life in Natal has been accompanied by scant interpretation in the media.

The fact is that people who are well informed about the conflict, do not owe their insight to the media, but more to their own dealings in the community.

A situation has arisen where the enlightened business community appears to be ahead of the press in their perception of the problems facing Natal. The social responsibility of business to address the situation in Natal has advanced beyond the ability of the press to report the story.

Yet within the media there is still the age-old argument of newspapers having to sell to attract advertisers; of the public being tired of reading about death and destruction in the townships; and advertisers subsequently getting scared away by too much politics in the news pages.

The peculiar dynamics that keep South Africa's newspaper presses rolling should not be flouted as reasons why a newspaper is not reporting events in its

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own backyard. The foremost task of newspapers is to keep the public informed.

The argument that people have grown weary of reading about more deaths is perhaps most valid. I would argue that readers are bored senseless by the present coverage of political violence. As a journalist, I am intensely interested in what is happening, but when I pick up a daily newspaper and read a headline stating that there have been 10 more deaths in Mpumalanga, I seldom bother to read the story, but will only scan it to see if any relevant information is included.

The solution is not simply to cut down on editorial space for the coverage of political violence, but to search for alternative and creative ways of bringing the reality home to readers. Write about a woman giving birth while her home is petrol-bombed, and you immediately engage readers' attention.

Instead of justifying the status quo, editorial decision makers should be consistently evaluating the news coverage, searching for new angles and information and directing reporters accordingly. But today reporters often fight their own newspapers to do their job.

As a relatively inexperienced reporter, I was out there on my own, with no one to direct me, encourage or criticise me. Initially my own sympathies did intrude on my work, one is always more sympathetic to people who support a similar cause to one's own. But I quickly learned that partisan reporting causes untold harm and even fuels the conflict. There were few innocents out there. It's a lesson that was never learned by the alternative press.

The alternative press, as *The Star's* Harvey Tyson remarks, was a valuable protest medium in times of censorship and oppression and played a proud and significant role.

However, it has, particularly in the case of Natal, remained a one-eyed watchdog, quick to expose horrific deeds

by Inkatha members and its warlords, but slow, very slow to criticise, let alone expose, the violent excesses perpetrated by members and supporters of the so-called "mass democratic movement".

Journalists talked, but seldom wrote about *indiscipline* – often a euphemism for murder – among the ranks of ANC supporters.

And even when the classic "comrade-killing-comrade" syndrome had become commonplace in Natal, the alternative press remained silent.

It was an issue the regular press could not begin to tackle – there was simply not enough space. But the alternative press, with its complete devotion to extra-parliamentary politics, had ample opportunity to do so.

However, to quote Rian Malan, author of *My Traitor's Heart*, such newspapers remained "apartheid atrocities from cover to cover".

The picture the alternative media painted of Natal, portrayed the charterist Left as nothing but innocent victims of police/Inkatha violence.

The alternative press never analysed how Inkatha managed to mobilise massive forces to launch assaults on communities or why people did so. It would have learned that it was perhaps not so much subscription to Inkatha as an organisation but as a vehicle for retaliation and revenge. People felt aggrieved.

Truth

Until the media acknowledges that it has failed to tell the Natal story, it will never improve. Newsmen must accept that the press is an integral part of the abnormality of the South African society, and just as schools need to open to all races, the doors of the media need to open so that the reporting accurately reflects the society we live in.

Natal's violence was often treated as if it were occurring in a different world.

As I write, Nxamalala is under siege again. In *The Witness* there is a front page headline: "Men dressed as domestics in attacks on residents – claim".

The story alleges that riot unit policemen dressed in domestic workers' uniforms joined the assailants.

There is no story on Nxamalala in *The Daily News* or *The Natal Mercury*. *The Witness* has published a picture of a Nxamalala resident packing up his belongings before fleeing the area.

But has the story of Nxamalala ever been told? What has happened there since I first visited? How many people have been killed, and who were they?

Police spokesman cannot readily provide such information. Academic researchers, however, can do so with ease.

Had the police consistently been asked for such details, including victims' names, the flow of information would never have broken down.

And if the flow of information in newspapers' own backyards is lacking, in outlying areas it is almost non-existent. Where the press is inactive – almost everywhere outside the boundaries of greater Pietermaritzburg and Durban – the police often do not report incidents.

Admittedly the inability of police spokesmen to respond effectively to queries is a legacy of emergency rule. In terms of the regulations, information for the daily unrest reports by-passed the local police spokesmen and were filed from riot unit officers directly to police headquarters in Pretoria where an official version was compiled. The police reports would often bear no resemblance to the actual events.

A youth shot in the street in cold blood, might have been reported as a casualty when police dispersed an "illegal gathering".

Whenever possible I highlighted such discrepancies. But this was not enough. The problem needed to be addressed at a higher level. Editorials needed to be written about the sketchy and often inaccurate police reports. Editors should have met and forced senior police, if not the Minister of Law and Order himself, to address *this* problem. But police were left to compile their own versions of incidents. They were never challenged by editors to provide a more intelligent commentary; the police were never made accountable for the provision of misleading jargon.

What is disturbing is that newspapers purport to be concerned about accuracy. Yet today official comment appears to carry more weight than the truth itself.

Of all the things I learned in Natal, I learned most about truth. I learned that no one likes the truth. If you sought the truth, you made enemies – in the police, Inkatha and the ANC.

But more disturbing, even journalists and editors do not like the truth – we don't like the truth that we have failed.



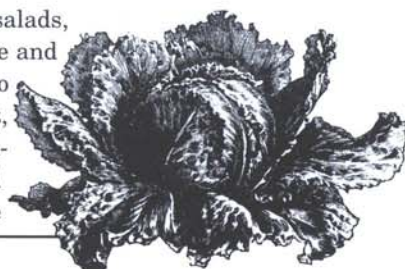
MAKING A MEAL OF IT

*Designers and art directors get to work with two types of editors. Those who sit down and share the meal with you, and those who keep confusing you with the waiter...**

Dani Malan explains the visual feast

I am a designer, but I really should have been a chef. I see food in most of what I do in graphic design. Really. The preparation of a meal is an irresistible guide to the way I structure my work. For me, a layout is not a logical act of fitting copy and visuals into a given space — it is a dish to be consumed by the eyes and then digested by the brain. The identical elements, the basic ingredients of copy and visuals, can be presented in a variety of ways. As nouvelle cuisine: very little food, a lot of plate and an 'artistic' display in neat portions. It leaves you curiously unsatisfied. Or a Cajun jambalaya: loads of spice and hot stuff; all the ingredients interacting together and served with steaming mussels and garnish on top. That aroma. That inspired mixing. . . I'd like to read this one. A graphic designer is, to me, nothing more than a sous chef of information. (That's why I'm finding writing this copy a bit like having to grow the cabbages).

In the same way as a menu is planned from the starters, soups and salads, through the main course to dessert, a magazine needs that same pace and balance. It must be a carefully judged feast. Readers should be able to wander through the various delights as they wish. Salads are the short, informative pieces that can be picked at will. Piquant snippets, compelling two-minute reads on a wide range of subjects. This section should almost represent the needs of the magazine readership profile. There



*...Thanks to HUNT LASCARIS for that line.

EXCELLENCE below) needed a style that said you drive, at least a Porche, love Polo and riding, invest in art and antiques, appreciate all the finer things and you are as randy as a rattlesnake, or at least seriously aspire to this. A use of classic typography and a two column grid suggested a hankering for yesteryear. Mixed with contemporary and raunchy pics, and graphics, did the job!

should be a few 'fringe' bits as well, to satisfy that small segment. No matter how specialised the publication, it should attempt to spread its content to accommodate the perceived readership. Main content is difficult to spread, so this 'salad' section can easily include items for the fringe browsers. Readership figures will reflect how successful the melange is.

Writers read a lot, and they seem to assume that average magazine consumers are as avid. Watch someone reading a magazine. There is seldom a cover-to-cover compulsion. People dip into magazines, select the choicest and most tantalising parts, and put the magazine down. Then they might return and try the next-best bits. The most read parts of a magazine are usually the captions and pictures. That is why I believe in designing the editorial with a sense of pace, to appeal to the wider reading public. Include starters, side dishes, a selection of wines, and even some sorbet to cleanse the saturated information centres. Make a meal of a magazine.

This prandial principle is not only for consumer publications. It applies as well to those boring trade magazines. They often seem to follow a misguided rule about serving things poached and bland. Their continuing existence is due to lack of competition, and the faithful readers will often admit that the information served is important, but not very palatable.

Readers expect to have a 'relationship' with a magazine. I frequent restaurants that I know. I go back again because I trust their fare. I expect to find my favourite dish listed in the same place on the menu; I expect the decor to remain the same, the service consistent, the quality unquestionable. This makes me a 'regular'. I do not want to be confused by a chef's whim or an owner's desire for change. I believe regular readers are the same. They get a feel for the content and hope it will remain constant and to their liking. Innovation is good, but it should be gradual and imperceptible. The reader expects a certain mix, and expects to find it in more or less the same order in consecutive issues. The valued readers of any magazine are its regulars — impulse buyers are scary; you don't know them.

We haven't really considered the logistics of layouts yet. I don't regard layouts as all that important in the great scheme of things. If a layout has

made the copy and visuals inviting and tasty it has done its best. A layout that is a feature in itself, no matter how stunning, has exceeded its requirement. Quality of copy and visuals, and the overall design concept of the publication, is the important thing. The essential personality of a magazine should be evident beyond flash-in-the-pan brilliances. Self-indulgent layout is like the man at the sedate party with a lampshade on his head. He's a witty fellow, and the lampshade is rather splendid — but it is a lampshade, and therefore out of place.

Layouts are an adventure, though. Each one is an improvisation that is



FEMME, a fashion magazine, has a variety of diverse visual elements, a loose style was appropriate, using a determined selection of type faces, but still keeping to a basic grid.

This magazine is mainly pictorial, and exact picture editing is vital. In as much as fashion trends change, the look of the magazine shifted to keep pace.

GEOLOGY



A DESERT ISLAND

A great lake, the river of Lake Victoria, once covered much of northern Borneo. Some 2,000 years ago the water dried up, leaving a desert. Today it is one of the most remote — and mysterious.

From the Borneo Mail Mail.

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GEOLOGY



For this difficulty lies in the fact that the desert is a great deal of very reliable evidence showing that it is a desert. In the first place, the desert is a vast, open, and empty space. It is a place where the sun is always shining, and the wind is always blowing. The desert is a place where the only thing that grows is a few small, hardy plants. The desert is a place where the only thing that lives is a few small, hardy animals. The desert is a place where the only thing that exists is a few small, hardy things.

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GEOLOGY



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dependent on length of copy and visual material. And they usually have to be done fast, under deadline pressure. The designer has to make quick, sure decisions. Without a solid design concept for the whole publication, these decisions take longer, and might lead to the magazine having that look of uncertainty. (Wrong decisions show, too — they're there, printed and published, and endure for the shelf life of the magazine.)

Sculptors say that the sculpture already exists in the material you choose. All you're doing is liberating it. Layouts are similar: every section and feature has its predetermined variations, and one often finds that there is a certain layout that the fee for the the given copy and pics, but if a lucid sense of possibilities, is sense emerges almost by itself. Although, s and won't relent until you've spent y

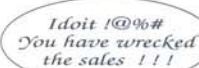
These design rules apply equally to a grey-suit business magazine, an industrial information publication or a flamboyant fashion magazine. Serious needn't mean boring. Look at the readership. Does the average banker perceive him- or herself as a really dull person on a treadmill of finance and figures? Not really. There are aspirations at work. There are beau-

tifully-designed cars, classic clothing and office decor to knock your socks off — among other lifestyle enhancers. So why ignore the stylish aspirations and produce an information-only, very dull publication for this sector? Design for their perceived style.

Many local publications lack style because the relationship between the editor and art director is not well established. Let me explain, many magazine editors come from a newspaper background, and newspapers don't need shelf-appeal or packaging to sell: newspapers need headlines. Magazines need packaging, from cover to cover, and can only partially rely on the copy content. Some magazines rely almost entirely on presentation, an idea which is not readily accepted by editors. An "art director" is not simply a layout artist: an art director plans the "look" of the magazine, directs the layouts, commissions and directs photographers and illustrators, maintains the style of the magazine and is as involved with the sales as the editor. Unlike overseas

publications, few local publications have an "art director" on their staff. Publishing houses usually have several layout artists, and one is then appointed as the head, and given the title "art director." This is partly because the advertising industry attracts the more talented people with their offers of greater creative independence, salary and status. The art director needs control over the visual elements, the same way as the editor has control over the copy content of the publication.

Many creative magazine people believe that their efforts in the layout department are seen as secondary in the publication but this is not the case. When the sales are up the editorial staff pat themselves on the back and pop champagne. But when sales are down, they rush into the layout department and glare at the layout artists saying "You guys have wrecked our sales!" This IS recognition!



Ease the Strain

Plucking the right balls out of the air at the right time is the latest management skill. Smart business decisions need accurate and timely information — and this is only possible with the implementation of powerful, flexible tools.

The pressure is on local African companies to ensure they get the maximum advantage from their investments in technology. The pressure – be it economic, cultural or religious – means innovative management techniques are the support of cost-effective computer tools.

In this and many companies are moving away from rigid and complex, which are expensive and labour-intensive and human resources to computer them, in order to use microcomputers with state-of-the-art software.

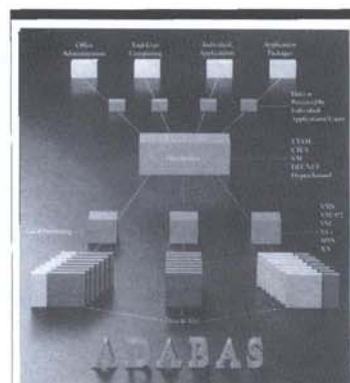
In South Africa the powerful combination of being successful and supported by GBT and IBM. One of the most winners used software development tools, a IBM, supported by IBM, IBM, IBM, which is increasingly being used on



The Real application—the administration of futures—seems like a no-brainer, since it's all so easy to comment on how the market is doing. But the real programs are still being designed, and it's not as if they are going through a learning curve.

"We intend to be close with our clients, and we are confident that we will be able to provide them with additional leads and continue nurturing our contacts without any change," says the chairman of the Vinodkumar Unit Group, Sreeniwas Vinodkumar, who has worked closely with the institution for the past year. "And his team expects to be able to deliver, and ultimately, aims simply to determine the clients to be able to take the system and it will work as I said."

"We will have to find the investors, and the VCs, and we have this problem. The maximum number of assets that we can have is 100, and we are not going to have more than 100."

[illegible][illegible]

AD was launched in mid 1985 as a full colour magazine for the creative industry, pictured below is the cover of the the launch issue, which ran cover copy. Later issues completely dispensed with that concept.

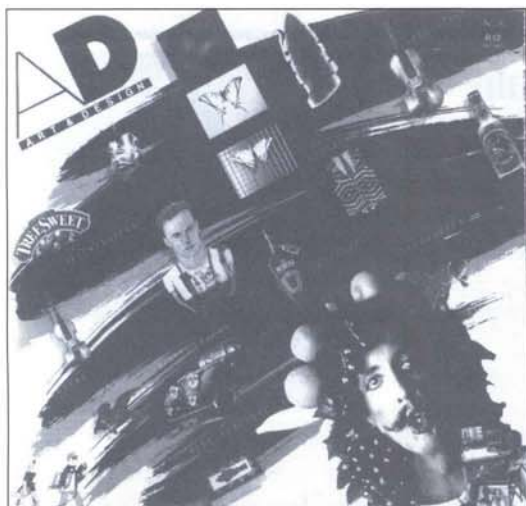


A double page from GBS REVIEW a publication for a computer company. This was a quarterly PR exercise to clients and prospective clients.

Based on a three column grid, laid out on very formal lines to appeal to the corporate sector.

Cover of AD No 10
published in 1989.





Cover of AD No 8, with a picture of the 'man with the fruit-salad head' that featured in our TV commercial.

height and width. This size would accommodate all existing ad sizes, was different from other mags, and also fitted our paper sizes.

To establish the style parameters that finally amalgamate to form the individual identity of any publication, fundamental decisions must be taken from the beginning. These root decisions can be altered at a later stage, but not without running the risk of constructing a leaning tower of Pisa. Because the editorial

content relied heavily on visual material, and the readers would expect a magazine with a strong pictorial content, a copy/pictorial content percentage had to be established. A 50 percent mix best suited the planned 'look' for the market, giving the visuals priority to encroach.

Treatment of the typography was next. This entailed a choice of fonts and sizes, and the treatment of these elements. Given the exciting and colourful visuals that we would be featuring, I needed a very laid-back neutral layout and typographic style that wouldn't impose on the content but would still have balls. I opted for a mix of the old and new — Helvetica Extra Bold for headings, Helvetica Bold Italic for intro's, and Century

Schoolbook for body text, with all type set left. This was the type-style with minor variations for certain sections. Some had a size change, but these were few and had their own very rigid rules.

Simplicity was a primary consideration. The layout concept of combining copy and visuals was squares and rectangles. Pics occupied their given space, separated from copy, and always looking to keep clean shapes with both elements.

As I would not be executing the layouts myself and the magazine would be assembled by studio assistants with limited layout experience, it was important to establish uncomplicated, rigid style parameters. Deviating from these rules would stand out like FW with a toupee. This would assure that all the issues would retain the initial identity, irrespective of staff turn-around.

Pictorial treatment was the final base decision, and keeping the magazine looking busy was important. We seldom ran big pics to fill space. All the pics were kept smallish, and we'd rather cram pics in to give more visual information. Or if the feature couldn't fill its allocated space, we would give it less space and use a filler to utilise the remaining space. Simple layouts are best with this system.

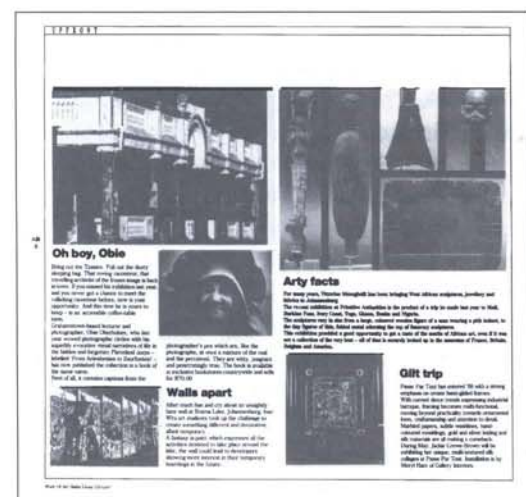


AD magazine was designed in 1985. Understanding something of the basic priorities of the design and creative fraternity I realised that my first task was to find an alternate size to set the magazine apart from any other. The problem in changing size was twofold. Firstly, odd sizes that may be common to international magazines are not compatible with our paper sizes. This would lead to paper wastage, and as paper comprised almost half the cost of print, that would be an extravagance. More important was the potential problem of trying to sell advertising space to the agencies. Nearly all ads are made up to A4, and forcing agencies to remake ads would jeopardise our selling efforts.

For years I had an idea to produce a square music magazine that would be approximately the size of an LP cover, to be merchandised in record stores with the LPs. It then seemed like the right time to use that idea. The logical square was A4 in



A lead page of a two or three-page article.



A typical AD bits page, with a variety of information snippets.



A bits page featuring a cross-section of design.

PEN Sketches seeks to record some of the rich tradition of cartooning in South Africa which has always provided fertile ground for political caricature. Regrettably some of our leading cartoonists have left the country, but *Review* will track them down in future issues.



TONY GROGAN ON CARTOONS

AAMERICAN politician, Boss Tweed of Tamany Hall, said at the height of Thomas Nast's cartoon crusade against him in 1870: "I don't care what they print about me. Most of my constituents can't read anyway – but it's them damn pictures!"

An eminent columnist once remarked with some envy that I was able to say far more effectively with a few lines what it took him two hundred carefully chosen words to say.

What is it about a cartoon which gives it a particular potency to convey a message with such impact, immediacy and directness? I think it is because the visual image exploited with wit, imagination and originality is able to sum up the mood and essence of an issue or event and present it to the reader in a highly dramatised, entertaining and exaggerated form making a powerful and lasting impact on his emotions and imagination. ☞



PEN SKETCHES

CONTINUED

The ingredients of a political cartoon are the art of caricature, the message or point of the cartoon, and the image the cartoonist uses to project it.

Caricature is the maliciously or humorously distorted representation of an individual so as to capture not only his likeness but also the essence of his personality and what he stands for.

I deliberately choose to draw politicians, regardless of how powerful or formidable they are, as rather absurd little puppets rather than as monsters. Somehow they become less paralytically terrifying when presented in this way.

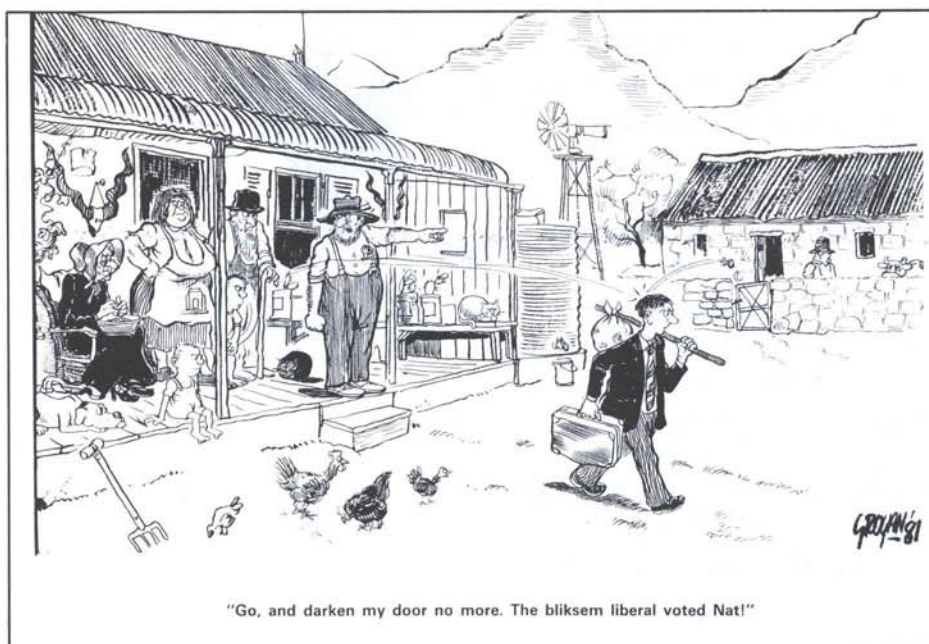
In this respect, the cartoonist is aiming at a deeper truth which has to do with the transitory nature of political power. He constructs his stage and allows the political marionettes of the day to strut and fret their parts before they disappear into the wings as so many once powerful politicians have done. I need mention no names.

The caricature says much about the nature and the character of the politician. I used to draw PW Botha as a rather bemused and irascible Elmer Fudd. This was because as a statesman I saw him as out of his depth and not up to the task of negotiating the political minefield which was South Africa in transition in the eighties.

One of my most successful parodies was casting the President in the role of the little king in Brad Parker's strip cartoon, *The Wizard of Id*. Somehow there was a close parallel with the jumped-up little autocrat. Louis le Grange, the ham-fisted Minister of Law and Order whose boot was in his mouth more or less as a permanent fixture, fitted permanently into the role of the dim, gormless knight, Sir Rodney.

The second ingredient of the cartoon is the comment or message that underpins the cartoon. This reflects the cartoonist's attitude or stance.

Ideally the cartoonist is not a propagandist who serves the cause of a particular political party or pressure group. He is there as an impartial observer to provoke, to ask the awkward



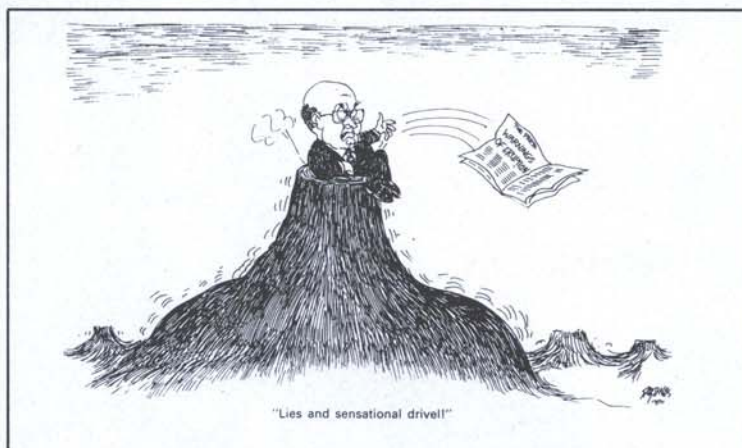
question and challenge our presumptions and prejudices.

Ideally the cartoonist's credo should be that of Czechoslovakia's poet-president Vaclav Havel who said that when he sees injustice, he takes the side of justice, when he sees lies he takes the side of truth and when he sees nonsense he takes the side of sense. There have been and remain ample opportunities to exercise these principles in South Africa's fraught political situation.

Once the cartoonist has decided on the message he wishes to make, he then has to invent or discover a scene, tableau or visual metaphor which will illuminate the political point.

This is the most difficult part of the process. Here the cartoonist has to allow his imagination to take flight and allow images, thoughts and memories to flow freely through his mind.

He might search for historical or allegorical parallels, or association with current events, always searching to place the characters in incongruous and bizarre settings in order to highlight and dramatize the message and make it amusing at the same time.



The cartoons featured on these pages first appeared in *The Cape Times*, where Tony Grogan is resident cartoonist

This is always the aim – to make a point using ridicule and lampoon, hopefully to raise a laugh, while at the same time, getting the message across as simply and directly as possible.

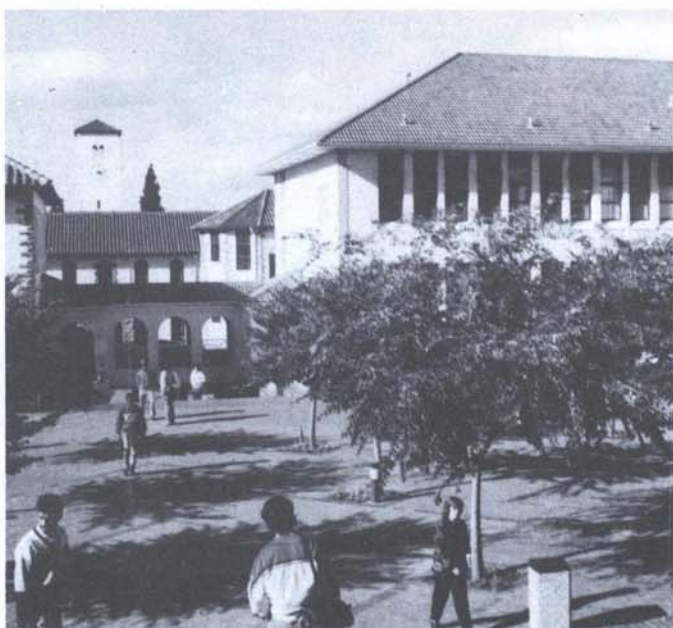
The absurdity, hypocrisy and deceit of the Apartheid system have yielded wonderful material for the cartoonist's pen as has the convoluted logic and dizzy gobbledegook which has been used to explain its demise.

For years Apartheid continued to thrive after being declared dead by one political luminary after another, and

Chris Heunis's contorted rambling illuminations on TV were a joy to any satirist. How I miss the man.

Today the political landscape is changing. The old sureties have disappeared and the targets are no longer clearly defined. FW de Klerk is a far subtler and more elusive target than the imperial tub-thumper, PW Botha. But new targets are coming to view and the prospect of continuing, what I hope will be considered valid and perceptive comments on this shifting and confusing scene, is a daunting but exciting challenge.

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Inevitably, all this, and more, has given Rhodes a great name. Which is why you might wish to write it after yours.

Rhodes University



For full details, write to the Registrar, Rhodes University, 6140 Grahamstown



The Media POLICY DEBATE

And should it even be taking place?

UNTIL fairly recently, all the talk around the "New South Africa" had yielded very little discussion about the role of the mass media.

Politicians had been conducting talks about talks and arguing about constituent assemblies or national conventions or Indabas; lawyers were talking about Bills Of Rights and definitions of Apartheid legislation; educationists were discussing the opening of schools, the need for relevance and equality, and the pros and cons of affirmative action; and economists were discussing issues such as nationalisation, mixed economies and the social responsibilities of business.

But while all this talk was going on, it seemed as if journalists were content to sit back and wait to see what kind of media system would eventually emerge in a post-Apartheid South Africa – as if the mass media would automatically take on the form and function of whatever political and economic dispensation the politicians happened to decide on: private ownership in a free-market society, public (State) ownership under a socialist government, or some kind of compromise in a mixed economy.

Thankfully this seems to be changing. Just as politicians are coming to terms with the fact that "democracy" is a rather nebulous concept, so media practitioners are beginning to realise that "press freedom" can be interpreted in various ways.

Given the fact that the media have an enormous responsibility during these exciting times of change and beyond, it is essential that interested parties define their goals clearly and make sure that the question of a "media policy" assumes its rightful place in the negotiations process.

What little discussion has emerged around this critical issue in recent months is as diverse as the entire South African political scene. It ranges from calls for the outright

nationalisation of all media so that the State will control the flow of information in the interests of the 'people', to the passionate defence of free enterprise under which the market would decide which media survive in open competition for readers, listeners and viewers.

Some would go so far as to say that there is no need for this debate at all, that any suggestion of a post-Apartheid "media policy" smacks of State control, of Big Brother in the newsroom with a censor's hat and a red pen.

Others believe the concentration of media in the hands of a few large companies limits democracy in the sense that alternative, perhaps less powerful voices, are often denied access to mass media and production processes. At the very least, this argument calls for anti-trust laws to act against monopolistic control. In its extreme form, advocates of government intervention call for outright public (State) ownership and control.

In *Review's* Special Report this issue, we look at a cross section of views expressed by journalists and media analysts at the recent Media Policy Workshop held at Rhodes University's Department of Journalism and Media Studies.

While there was clearly no meeting of minds – and no attempt to formulate anything as ambitious, or presumptuous, as a "media charter" – there was at least a genuine attempt on the part of most delegates to understand opposing views.

Something like a process of negotiation has thus been set in motion, but it looks as if any formalised media policy for a "New South Africa" is going to have a very stormy passage indeed. But at least people are now discussing these issues and putting their positions and this is infinitely preferable to the pregnant silence of the recent past.

PLEASE TURN OVER ➤

ERIC LOUW

Restructuring the media: can socialist and libertarian principles be combined?

A capitalist society, South Africa currently has a media that is driven by commercial principles. This media has failed dismally to service all South Africans with the full range of information they need to make rational decisions about their world. Those in the mainstream press have traditionally blamed government censorship for their failure to fully cover events. It is true that the state has placed enormous restrictions upon the media. However, a significant part of the problem lies in the market mechanism itself when applied to media organization. In other words there are problems inherent in the libertarian model of the media (Louw, 1984).

The claim that a libertarian ('free enterprise') media guarantees a 'free market place of ideas' is not borne out by the facts.

Rather a commercially-oriented media means market-censorship. It means a media *de facto* 'controlled' by advertisers, and the middle-class interests they pander to. Advertisers are interested in those with disposable income; and that means the middle class. And if advertisers are interested in the middle class, then it is this middle class that editors of the commercially-driven media must attract if they are to survive.



ERIC LOUW, of the Centre for Cultural and Media Studies at the University of Natal, Durban.

Non-middle class audiences are not profitable, and hence the media serving, for example, working-class opinion in a capitalist society will face enormous financial difficulties because they will have comparatively less success in attracting advertising.

The best South African example of this is the case of the *Rand Daily Mail*. This newspaper had an enormous circulation when it was closed. The problem was that too high a percentage of its readers were black. Worse, from the point of view of advertisers, they were working-class blacks, and so had little disposable income. For advertisers this meant the *Rand Daily Mail* was a bad bet

– it meant they had to pay advertising rates calculated on an enormous readership of people they believed could not afford their products. So the more successful the *Rand Daily Mail* was in attracting new black working-class readers, the less successful it became within a market-libertarian press system.

This means that to be successful as an editor within a South African libertarian press framework one has to, in effect, 'censor' news in order to please the white middle class. This group is generally conservative, and prefers not to hear the 'bad tidings' about the social struggle in South Africa. This results in a curtailment of the flow of information in society. Clearly, then, a libertarian model has severe limitations, especially in the South African context.

Given the above problem, a logical argument might be to argue for the abolishment of the libertarian media model.

The next logical step might be to argue for state intervention or "nationalisation" of the media.

In a state whose government represented a working-class constituency such pressures towards nationalisation could become very great indeed. This would certainly be the Leninist-socialist argument.

A Leninist-socialist media model could certainly overcome the skewing of the information flow which currently favours the "haves" (i.e. the capitalist

ASSUMPTIONS

owners of the media and the middle classes). Such a nationalised media could ensure, for example, that working-class opinion (and rural peasant opinion) was given a platform. However, at what cost? And does this form of media not merely skew and distort information flow in a different way?

This approach to the media has a number of serious limitations, which recent events in Eastern Europe have well illustrated. Primary amongst these is that a government adopting this approach to the media runs the risk of blinding itself.

Given the problems with both the libertarian and Leninist models, and yet recognizing the need to overcome market distortion, what is the answer?

This paper will argue for a position that attempts to marry the positive aspects of both the libertarian and Marxist approaches, and yet one that attempts to avoid the pitfalls of both. This paper will hence argue for a position between the options of (1) nationalising the media, and (2) leaving the current structures untampered with.

The third option could be termed a democratic socialist option.

I would argue that such a third route is consistent with the principles as spelled out in the the ANC's Freedom Charter. In addition, it is an approach fully compatible with the interests of the large working-class constituency within the ANC support base. Of course, the actual extent to which the Freedom Charter's principles will ultimately prevail in the formulation of a future media policy has yet to be determined. Ultimately, it will not be principles alone, but also struggles on the ground – both within the ANC and within the wider society – which will set the parameters for a media policy. However, given that the ANC seems set to be the key player in South Africa (at least in the short-to-medium term), the ANC's Charter will undoubtedly play some role in the restructuring of our society. Hence it seems valuable to brainstorm around the parameters set by (i) the Freedom Charter (and its 'national liberation'/ multi-class position), as well as by (ii) the needs of the strong working class and/or socialist constituency within the ANC.

1 Some sort of socialist redistribution of resources (including media resources) is required to redress the skewing produced by racial-capitalism. At the same time, working from the Freedom Charter's principle of a 'national liberation' (which is a multi-class position), this paper simultaneously assumes the importance of democracy, and a guaranteed diversity of opinion.

2 A national and regional media structure(s) that explicitly articulates the positions of peasants and the working class (and/or a socialist position) is required.

3 Any overt 'takeover' (nationalisation, or otherwise) of the existing commercial media will destroy this media's credibility with their existing audience and so would not serve an ANC government attempting to gain hegemony over society. In fact, nationalisation of the media would presumably only lead to the development of an 'alternative' (or even underground) press; and/or would encourage the exodus of skilled whites from South Africa

4 South Africa has a sophisticated commercial media infrastructure and related advertising industry. The latter does facilitate the transfer of wealth into the media structures. To destroy this system will only mean having to create a new bureaucracy to replace it in the task of distributing information (and paying for it). In the short-to-medium term it might therefore be more efficient for the ANC to leave these existing structures in place, but find ways to 'use' them to complement Charterist and socialist policies.

5 But, the present media-and-advertising structures operate against both the working class, peasants and unemployed through a form of 'economic censorship'. The present media system encourages a middle-class bias in news and information dispersal. A creative way of 'challenging' this prob-

lem will need to be found – i.e. what the ANC will really need to serve its constituency's interests is a way of transferring some wealth away from the conservative establishment media and into media which articulate the interests of the working class, peasants and the unemployed.

A working-class media is not economically viable in terms of capitalist accounting (because of advertising pressures). The only way a working-class media can survive is with a massive subsidy from somewhere – eg. at present church funding in South Africa.

Given that overseas (and possibly also church) funding will fall away in a post-apartheid South Africa, there is a need to give serious consideration to finding an alternative 'subsidy' arrangement.

6 A diversity of opinion in society is seen to be healthy. In other words, libertarian media theory does contain some valuable principles which it would be valuable to incorporate into a restructured South African media network.

For one thing, if each constituency has its own media this is presumably the most effective way for a government to keep tabs on public opinion. Block this information distribution mechanism and a security police mechanism is then needed to collect the information instead.

South Africa under the National Party has been a case in point. Such a security mechanism is both very expensive (and hence wasteful of limited resources) and is, in any case, less effective than an open media system.

7 The proposed democratic socialist media would be built on the joint assumptions that: (a) diversity of opinion and/or democratic public debate is to be encouraged; and (b) that the state needs to intervene to insure that working class, peasant and unemployed opinion is given a media vehicle. Such a system would constitute a 'socialist challenge' to capitalist media hegemony but at the same time avoids the mistakes of Eastern Europe.

PLEASE TURN OVER

ERIC LOUW

A democratic socialist media system

Clearly a government serving the present "have nots" (working class, peasants and unemployed) will be under considerable pressure from its constituency to change the present media system, because the present network only articulates the position of a (white middle class) minority. This paper will argue that instead of nationalising the existing commercial media, such a government might be better off creating a parallel system for the purposes of its constituency. This parallel system would consist of the following:

(1) A Media Subsidy System

A subsidy system would be designed to overcome the skewing that a capitalist media system creates – the subsidy would work with a view to ensuring that all constituencies were guaranteed access to a media of their choice.

The subsidy system would be administered by a statutory Media Council. Other countries to have tried such subsidy systems are Sweden, Holland, and Belgium.

The state would *create a fund to pay for media diversity*. This fund would be created from taxes on the commercial media and advertising sector. However, if taxing this sector cannot provide sufficient funds, the state must provide funds from its other sources. The fund would be large enough to pay for the running of the country's media so as to ensure that:

- Every major constituency has its own media network in *proportion* to the size of its constituency within the overall population. In other words if 50% of the

population are socialists and 40% nationalists then the Media Council must ensure that 50% of the resources invested in the country's media be allocated to a socialist media, and 40% to nationalist media; and

- Minor constituencies have a 'media voice' (say in the form of a time slot on 'an alternative' TV or radio network etc). For example: if 1% of the population were Ethiopian-Church Revivalists then they should get 1% of the media budget. But 1% of the total budget may be insufficient to effectively run an independent ECR media structure. For cases like this it may be best if the Council allocates money for the creation of a 'multi-voiced' TV or radio channel. Each minority group could be allocated a space on this channel in *proportion* to the size of its constituency.

The Media Council would only be responsible for allocating money to the different constituencies, and/or allocating money to grassroots Media Resource Centres. The Council would NOT run any media themselves. Neither would the Council decide how the money is to be spent.

To use the above example, once the Nationalists got their 40% it would be up to them to spend it on media *as they saw fit*. This places the onus on each constituency to use the money it is given to the best possible advantage to advance their own particular world view.

The Media Council would be created by statute to administer the subsidy system. This Council would need to be composed of a *diversity* of opinion – i.e. drawn from media experts as well as representatives from all the major constituencies in society. It would need to be independent from the pressures of any one constituency – i.e. independent from the ruling political party in power (although such a party would clearly be represented on such a Council as one of the major constituencies in society).

For this reason the Media Council might possibly also be the most appropriate body to deal with the country's satellite policy (which will become an area of growing importance in the future).

This Media Council would do a yearly 'audit' of public opinion. (If this proves too complex, it may be necessary to

publish an audit only every two or three years). The aim would be to ascertain the exact distribution of public support for each constituency in society. The 'audit' is to ensure that the subsidy system does not suffer from inertia.

In other words, if the nationalists got 40% of last year's media budget, but they messed up their media usage they might lose support. If so, and for example their constituency shrank to 35%, then their slice of the budget would shrink to 35%. This would place the onus on *them* to cut back on the size of their media network in accordance with the money available.

If, on the other hand, the nationalists used their 40% of the budget well and increased their constituency to 50%, then the following year their slice would be increased to 50% and they would be able to expand their media network. The same logic holds for smaller constituencies – if a small group use their 1% of media time well they might increase their support to 5% the next year. This might give them a large enough proportion of the budget to start their own independent channel. With this they could increase their support to 10%, 20% and so on. Hence a minority position in society could grow to a majority position (and visa versa).

The subsidy system would be able to deal with this development – i.e. it is a dynamic democratic system of matching media to actual public opinion.

The Media Council could also assist the state in ascertaining levels of taxation on the commercial media infrastructures (newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, advertising and PR agencies, film and video distributors, cinema industry, etc).

Taxation of these media is one way of re-distributing wealth away from, say, the liberal commercial press sector towards other constituencies.

Such a subsidy system would enable an ANC government, for example, to set up a media network to serve its own constituency's needs. However, it would simultaneously guarantee other constituencies their own independent media.

Under such a media system there would be no need to nationalise the existing English-liberal or Afrikaner-nationalist press in order to redress the skewing of information resources.

(2) The SABC

The SABC will present those administering a democratic socialist media policy with something of a challenge.

An incoming government voted in on a one-person-one-vote basis will be under real pressure from its constituency to 'capture' the SABC for its own purposes. In terms of the legislation governing the SABC this is made possible (Tomaselli et al, 1989). Such a takeover would, of course, merely replicate the sort of distortion of information flow perpetrated by the National Party in its handling of the SABC.

From the perspective of a democratic-socialist media policy such a 'takeover' of the SABC would be unacceptable because it would violate the (democratic) principle of generating a 'diversity of opinion'.

The question is – how would a democratic socialist media policy handle the restructuring of the SABC?

Even though a centralized media system is inherently undemocratic, it seems most cost effective (at least in the short to medium term) to retain a centralized electronic media infrastructure – i.e. retain the existing Auckland Park (and related national-network) SABC complex. However, it might be necessary for the Media Council to oversee – via representation on the SABC Board – the technical and managerial side of the SABC to ensure that no one constituency in society gained control of these 'non-editorial' functions.

However, if a centralized structure is retained, a way needs to be found of creating a diversity of opinion within this electronic media. If this is not done, this media will lose 'credibility' with the audience – as we have seen with the National Party controlled SABC and with the East European media. (I think Eastern Europe demonstrates that a socialist-controlled media which grants a monopoly to socialist opinion is not in the interests of socialism in the long term)

The following may be an option a future government could look at:

(a) Create a 'national' channel on both TV and Radio. This could consist of programming designed to 're-educate' people for a non-racial South Africa.

Such a national channel should satisfy the demands of the new government's constituency for visible intervention into the media world. This 'single' channel may broadcast simultaneously in different languages – eg. English, Afrikaans, Nguni and Sotho. (So for example, retaining the Afrikaans Service in a very similar format to the existing programming, while adding a new "nation building non-racial" content might be the most effective way to reach this sector, albeit as part of a long-term process)

But at the same time, in order to satisfy the requirements of the proposed democratic socialist media policy, there would be a need to:

(b) Create sub-networks (of TV and radio) for each constituency. Each major constituency would be allocated a percentage of broadcast time in terms of the 'audit' figures produced by the Media Council. Very large constituencies may even have their own radio or TV channel in terms of such a system. Smaller constituencies would only have time slots.

A special channel (for example, on Sundays) could be operated for 'Micro-groups' (not yet large enough to register on the 'audit'). Such micro-groups could possibly be allocated an occasional one hour slot in which to try and promote their position. If successful they might win a constituency and so ultimately become a minor constituency with a right to a media budget of their own.

In the long run it might be possible to decentralize the electronic media network itself so that studio facilities are spread into all the centres of the country. This would mean as wide a spread of people as possible are given direct access to the media. (See Nigg & Wade, 1980)

Such a diversified and less centralized media network would be democratic and more subject to direct control by grassroots constituencies at the local level.

In the long run a democratic socialist media subsidy system should perhaps make a proliferation of electronic media access points its long-term aim (perhaps in the form of cable TV networks?).

Reaching for a Media Charter

During the process of restructuring South Africa into a non-racial democratic state we have the opportunity to re-make our media into a democratic communication system. Perhaps a Media Charter would be helpful in this process.

The question is what should such a Media Charter say? Some ideas in this regard are:

- Freedom of expression should be guaranteed.

- But such freedom should not be only a 'paper right' (as in the libertarian model).

Rather, to make freedom of expression meaningful, all sectors of society must be guaranteed the actual resources/facilities required to make themselves heard. In this case the "have nots" in society present media planners with a special problem – unless society as a whole guarantees the existence of media resources for this sector, their voice will be stifled by economic pressures. This is why a democratic socialist media system would insist that a system of transferring resources into media infrastructures for all is required. A subsidy system seems then most efficient way of achieving this aim.

- A democratic media system should guarantee all citizens direct access to media resources. Local media resource centres, and (possibly) local cable TV networks, seem the most practical way of providing such access. These would also need to be subsidised by the Media Council.

- A media policy should avoid inertia in the media system, and also avoid inertia in the Media Policy itself. Society will continually change. As it does so media policy, and the administration thereof, must keep pace.

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HARVEY TYSON

Truth, tolerance, fairness and freedom are the values we should be striving for

THIS paper is supposed to focus on the so-called 'mainstream press', as opposed to the so-called 'alternative press', neither of which is capable of precise definition. There is no clear boundary between the two; certainly none as clear as, say, the line between party papers and independent ones; or the community neighbourhood press and the daily metropolitan press.

The alternative press has been part of a valuable protest medium in times of censorship and oppression. It has played a proud and significant role (and one which the established mainstream press has touched on only at risk of extinction as opposed to suspension).(1)

But as society grows closer to democracy and freedom, the distinctions between the two will of necessity fade. However, if one regime were to be substituted for another, a new type of alternative – or even underground – press may evolve.

In any event, the real discussion should be about the future role of the media, or of the printed press, not about which titles should be condemned to death in Utopia in order to benefit other favoured forms of publication. Therein lies a barren political debate, and one which presupposes lack of freedom.



HARVEY TYSON, Editor-in-Chief of The Star offers a private view.

Instead I wish to focus on the press's role in relation to fundamental values. I shall deal with only four.

Truth, Tolerance, Fairness and Freedom.

TRUTH

Truth, as John Stuart Mill explained 150 years ago during a radical political transition on another continent, is *not a single element. It is a gem of many faces, each capable of different – even contradictory – appearance.* (2)

I emphasise that statement, because it is not only basic to any meaningful debate on the press, it also encapsulates the entire argument for a free press. To summarise further Mill's logic:

It is impossible to grasp the whole truth from a single point of view; and conversely, every honest point of view achieves an aspect of truth. (3)

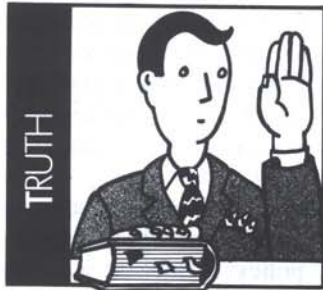
With Mill's logic in mind, let us examine some contradictory versions of truth about the South African press:

The first set of opposing "truths" consists of the following:

A. It is believed that 95 percent of the press is controlled by a handful of people in Anglo-American and Sanlam; that the capitalist press is the lackey of its masters who insist on using their monopoly on the press to ensure their own positions and their ideology; that the "mainstream" press is the creature of the regime; that the national AND the international press have submitted to or have indirectly supported apartheid. (4)

B. The contradictory version is that there are far in excess of 100 daily and

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weekly newspapers in South Africa and that only 24 of the biggest are partly owned by the shareholders of major financial institutions. (5)

Most of the major English dailies and the overseas press have always been emphatically anti-apartheid. If there has been overt bias in South African reporting, this has been mainly due, in recent years, to bannings and government censorship. It is true, however, that the mainstream press has been hugely "white-oriented", but this was part of an historical process, and there is extraordinarily rapid change.

Second versions of opposing truths:

A. It is a fallacy of Western democracy that ownership and control of the press can be separated. (6)

B. The opposite perception is that ownership and control can, and often are, separated where newspaper chains (as against sole proprietorship) exist. In fact, fact, newspaper chains, owning papers with different audiences and policies, cannot operate efficiently without divorcing ownership and editorial control. Thus editors working within a newspaper group usually have astonishing independence, and are even protected from commercial, shareholder, advertising and political pressure. (7)

Third versions:

A. Newspaper editors are responsible to no-one. It is essential for democracy

that they be made answerable to the people.

B. On the other hand, the concept of editorial policy being subject to the whims of a committee elected supposedly in the name of the people, is seen as the very antithesis of editorial independence. Committee policy over news and opinion encourages mediocrity – or worse.

No newspaper could fearlessly investigate and expose maladministration in an administration or local community if the newspaper is answerable to representatives of the administration, or the local community. The urge of members of the public or of committees to hush things up "in the wider interests of the community" is demonstrated daily.

Fourth example:

A. There is the socialist version that the SA media have failed in their duty to mobilise mass opinion for the national good.

B. There is the Western version that it is the duty of the media to avoid "mobilisation of the masses" (if this were ever possible, for people are usually inclined to think for themselves). Instead, the duty of the media is to report all sides as fairly as they can, without propaganda.

Two more versions of the truth.

A. Proponents of nationalisation and/or State control of the press say that organisations like Anglo-American Corporation must be prevented from in-

sidious control and manipulation of the main printed media.

B. Anglo-American believes that its altruistic attempts to shield part of the press from take-overs by interested parties (including agents of any government) has injured Anglo. Though Anglo has no influence whatever on anything that appears in any publication, the false perception of its "control" has guaranteed it an unsympathetic press, and damaged its reputation.

Why should Anglo, through its tenuous cross-holdings, carry on trying to uphold independence and indirectly encourage reasonable standards, when its influence is so negligible, the perception so skewed, and the criticism so virulent?

Another version of "truth":

A. Argus Newspapers has a monopoly on most of the country's press resources which creates a protective ring around its own publications. This monopoly of resources, in capital, in printing, in skills, in distribution, prevents competition and allows no rival publications to grow.

B. The response from Argus, never yet publicly expressed, is indignant. It finds itself accused of killing off the opposition through acquisition and close-down, when, in fact, it believes it is doing its best to rationalise (and pool) resources in order to keep several newspapers alive... even to the detriment of its own newspapers.

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The seventh set of truths would be:

A. Monopoly capitalist control over the media, compounded by racist policies, has effectively deprived the black majority of any access to the mass media.(8)

B. Each of the assumptions in the above sentence are denied. For example, according to the contradictory truth, it is the mis-labelled "capitalist, profit-obsessed" press, which saved the old *Bantu World* from extinction, and kept it alive for years despite a steady and inevitable loss. When *The World* was shut down by the government, Argus defiantly opened *Post*, after keeping unemployed black journalists on the payroll for months.

It risked its presses and assets to meet a principle. It supported all detained black journalists on full salary. When the government closed down *Post* during an industrial dispute, Argus went through the same costly process – only this time having to promote an unknown weekly "freebie" into a national newspaper with a suburban name; and also having to switch presses and other assets into safer channels. The costs and the risks offered no profit whatever...only more political threat.

There are many other aspects of truth; viewpoints; sets of facts and prejudices; accusations and counter-accusations; justifications and counter-arguments. Let me give you just one more set of contradictory examples.

A. One version is that advertising has a pernicious influence on the community and the press. It turns people into greedy consumers at the expense of their quality of life. It takes space from editorial. It corrupts the content of newspapers.

B. The other version is that advertising reduces by as much as two-thirds the cost of publishing (and the price for the copy of a newspaper which must be paid by

readers, or if nationalised, by taxpayers of the State).

Advertising, far from reducing space, allows additional space for editorial at no extra cost. (Successful commercial papers run to 100 pages or more. Even the biggest national State-run newspapers in the world seldom reach 24 pages). The only influence advertising is likely to have on editors, in the economically independent mainstream press at least, is one of overt hostility to any hint of pressure from any advertiser.

Those are some honestly held points of view which make up what John Stuart Mill called "aspects of truth". It doesn't matter which you choose to believe. It does matter – irrespective of anyone's political ideology, values or cultural beliefs – that everyone should be able to expound any view and have access to all information in order to discover the truth.

Which brings me to the second fundamental value directly affecting the future of the press:



TOLERANCE

Our divided society, with its interesting variety of cultures and values, has almost no tradition of democracy and justice. Yet if we cannot quickly find some genuine give-and-take form of democracy, there will be no peace.

In trying to build a future, therefore, the key element above all others has to be tolerance.

Instead of demanding freedom of the press (rather than nationalisation of the press), we need to ensure that the press deserves to be free. Instead of demanding from the public the right to speak our minds fearlessly and without regard to others' sensitivities, we ought to be persuading the people that the press deserves that right.

The press, whatever its present or fu-

ture position, whatever its views, has a serious (and uncompromising) role to play in healing the wounds inflicted by violence and oppression and counter-violence.

We need, not so much a cause-oriented, propagandising or combative press, but one which will work hard at explaining both sides of each issue to all South Africans. Save us from the fervent socialists, free-marketeers, and other ideologues in all camps!

We have a responsibility to help cure the communal blindness brought on by an official policy of racism; a mutual attitude of enmity; and a century of ignorance and mistrust between separated communities living cheek-by-jowl.

We need in this period of instability and transition, media that will be constructive, not destructive. In a word, the press needs tolerance. We need less arrogance. But that form of tolerance has a weakness. It carries a latent virus. To be "positive" and Pollyanna-like; to be constructive and constantly cheerful; is to be misleading – or worse – manipulative. We must guard against that form of weakness, but we should also guard against being party to the aggressive propaganda put out by most interests seeking power or special privilege in an unstable political situation.

This does not mean that propagandists should not be allowed to run hard-hitting newspapers. It is essential that, from the beginning, all views whether extreme or moderate must be allowed expression. But we all need to be aware that we can be hard-hitting without being intolerant; critical without being emotionally or misleadingly destructive.

These are qualities that cannot be legislated for or against. It requires peer pressure; something journalists need to think more about.

But there is a second form of tolerance required in our society if we are to have a free press.

● **Tolerance by journalists of each others' views.**

Already there is the unedifying spectacle of journalists slinging mud at one part of the press or another in order to further their own or some political interest. The press, like freedom, is indivisible when it comes to its role in society and its basic rights. If we wish to attain freedom we need to spend more time

being supportive of each other, regardless of positions and prejudices. Journalists need to spend less time spreading one-sided and inaccurate information in order to damage their rivals.

● **Tolerance by newly-formed political parties of any press that opposes them.**

Already there are ominous signs of threat, boycott and violence by some of the newly emerging political parties. Already black journalists are finding themselves worrying far less about State or proprietorial pressure, and much more about the possibility even of death at the hands of people in the community who disagree with their published views.

● **Tolerance by any government in power of all honestly held views.**

We have had little of that from government in the past 40 years...and there are signs that some future government might emulate past practices against the press with mirror-image arguments. I shall refer to this trend under the subject of Freedom.

Tolerance, being the key quality for national peace in the future, requires priority attention now. We need to be firm and strong in encouraging tolerance – and intolerant of intolerance.

As John Stuart Mill wrote: Tolerance must be seen, not as a weakness, but as a creative force.

FAIRNESS

It seems to me that of all the aspects of truth that exist about the press in this country, the one on which there is nearly consensus is the imbalance of resources, of opportunities and of media coverage of our society as a whole.

Most are agreed that the balance of resources and skills should be put right as soon as possible; even before the nation embarks on the thorny road to a new South Africa.

The reasons for the imbalance, or the blame, are of little consequence. What is of cardinal importance is HOW to ensure fairness without sacrificing democracy and freedom. There is much talk of nationalisation of the press; though this comes mainly from the SACP and socialist academics and not from major new players such as the ANC and PAC.

There is talk of "democratisation" of the press, which usually turns out to be gobbledygook, or even a deliberate move towards tyranny in the name of "the

people". It seems that we still have to learn the lessons of the Jacobins. If so, so be it – but not at the expense of true democracy and genuine press freedom.



I believe the economically independent press has a major responsibility in this regard. It has to take radical steps, immediately, to share what it has with those who have been deprived through discrimination, poverty, racism, and other historical factors.

While those on the receiving end expect nothing less in "reparations", those in the capitalist system will say that they will act out of a sense of fairness; to protect the principle of a free press, and to do normal, fair, business.

Again, the rationalisations and rhetoric provided by different interests hardly matter. But I believe the so-called monopolistic press is more than happy to share, willingly, a century and a half of effort, talent, sweat, investment and experience in order to ensure:

- fairness and balance
- equal opportunity
- diversity of opinion and news analysis.

Only by working hard to provide these can press freedom be achieved.

It seems to me that the economically independent press should now make specific offers to any major, currently historically disadvantaged interest group in a position to begin to help itself. Those in a position to launch their own media should be offered:

1. Full use of the mainstream presses (at the same rates as the papers now cost out their own printing). This would be a major concession, for the cost of a single newly imported big press is now prohibi-

tive – as much as R100 million for a large colour press with peripherals.

2. Equal use of all pooled distribution resources, again at the same rates (usually based on circulation) as the existing dailies and weeklies arrange for themselves.

3. Training facilities for editorial skills, and advice on newspapering techniques. Everything, in fact, except participation in the emerging press's editorial decisions.

4. Secondment of newspaper managerial skills.

5. Circulation expertise and distribution management.

6. Advertising advice, volunteered free by the agencies.

7. Newspaper Press Union membership and its shared facilities.

8. Media Council membership.

9. News agency and other shared feature syndication services.

10. Sharing of communication technology wherever possible.

All of these – or none of these – need be accepted by any party aspiring to introduce a new voice into the print media.

In my enthusiasm for diversifying and balancing the media market, I would wish to go one step further. I would like to see any serious new voice given an instant mass circulation if it cannot be done in the usual way. Perhaps a significant new paper could, for instance, "piggy-back" a major newspaper like *The Star*. Whether it was a separate tabloid carried within *The Star* once a week, or even a broadsheet daily, it would enjoy what *The Star* has taken 100 years to build: a daily readership of one million.

But these are only ideas, and there are snags, such as how to ensure fairness to different groups whenever an offer is made. Indeed, before offers are made, it should be up to black leaders in politics or business to evince interest in these ideas.

What if black interests or newly emerging elected political parties are against any aid from the "capitalist press"?

There is, of course, nothing to stop any group doing what countless "disadvantaged" political groups have done on several continents for the past 300 years:

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launch a party paper with the resources of sympathetic donors – and more important, with subscriptions from supporters or party members. Afrikanerdom found itself “disadvantaged” and poor in British colonial days, but managed the independent route.

Why should a new government not launch State-funded newspapers? Years ago I was one of those who lifted my hands in horror at such dependence on the State and the consequent interference in the marketplace and the free flow of news. But study of the State-subsidy systems in Sweden, Netherlands, and elsewhere suggests that the advantages from State subsidy for freedom of information and diversity are great; the disadvantages can be overcome.

But all South Africans of every creed and colour should insist that no State-funded publication meant for political or wide public consumption should enjoy any subsidy except through an independent body apportioning funds to agreed and strict rules.

There could be one exception in the new South Africa: a series of government-issue educational publications distributed in rural and under-developed areas.

Finally, black owners should be strongly encouraged to set up individual or co-operative “neighbourhood” newspapers, whether free or paid-for, but preferably supported by consumer advertising. The preference here is not for capitalism over socialism, but for individual or editorial independence over bureaucratic authoritarianism.

My only fear is that, given human nature and individual choice, the commercially independent press, paying attention to the real needs of readers rather than the perceptions of their rulers, will

quickly outclass all competition...and thus place themselves under the threat of any government which is allowed to be undemocratic.

FREEDOM.

There is nothing so effective as the threat of majority rule to make a minority government focus on democracy. It is a healthy process, which failed to occur as “liberation” governments – from Algeria to Zimbabwe; from Israel to Mozambique – took over the oppressive regulations used by retiring colonial powers. It could be different here.

For instance the SA Media Council is currently examining all the regulations and statutes which appear to conflict with the principles of any proposed Bill of Rights. The more one examines the 50 or so laws that inhibit the media, and compares them with the way nations such as the USA and Western Germany deal with similar problems, the more it becomes apparent that not a single restrictive press law is necessary to guarantee orderly government or a responsible press. Both freedom and responsibility can be properly tested in the courts in terms of a Bill of Rights.

Now is the time to put into practice Solon’s golden rule: a wise government should spend all its time abolishing laws, and preventing itself from passing new ones. In this way our society will get closer to real freedom – and distance itself from the kind of authoritarian, as well as discriminatory, legislation which has corrupted our current legal system.

In the cause of freedom of the press, it is my view that we should avoid any attempt whatever to give journalists special privileges. We should avoid the perception (especially among journalists) of their elitism. Special treatment is especially dangerous for it usually backfires on the press. Unesco has caused all genuine democrats real fear in this regard with its proposals for state-registration of journalists “for their own protection”.

To me it seems best that we should focus only on the fundamental value of freedom, and emphasise simplicity in protecting freedom of expression. Article 19 of the UN Charter does the job superbly. All that is required is the willingness of nations and the independence of courts to support the accepted principle.

Every qualification placed on freedom of expression creates a flaw, because

while almost all politicians support the principle of “freedom of the press”... each wants to insert provisos in the name of responsibility, or democracy, or justice or some other word which will protect that politician’s own interests. Thus, the National Party persuaded its own supporters that it was necessary, for the sake of democracy, to forbid freedom of expression to communists. It also passed a law forbidding incitement to racism – a law which effectively gagged almost all extra-parliamentary opposition.

Now, among the most well-meaning and liberal of extra-parliamentarians we hear proposals to ban fascism and racism...the ugly mirror-image of what the apartheid government did. Such qualifications on freedom of expression are not likely to curb either neo-nazis or racists. More likely they will result merely in banning political parties in a future State – and completing today’s vicious circle.

Freedom, I repeat, is indivisible. That is probably why the South African government, even in its worst days, was unable to suppress a hostile press. The very existence of the so-called mainstream press in South Africa, and its vociferous opposition in many quarters, allowed the so-called alternative press to come into being.

If you doubt this, you need only look to the rest of Africa, and to all those other countries in the world where no independent “mainstream” press exists. In all these countries, from China to Zimbabwe; from the Soviet Union to Iraq; there is not a single publication which can be hostile to the government and live. In only a very few of these countries some so-called opposition newspapers are allowed to criticise the Government...provided the criticism is “positive”, and does not hurt those in power.

The existence of a hostile press is the first test of freedom of expression.

In China this year I heard the Prime Minister lecturing the media on their role as good socialists. The truth, he inferred, was something for the government to decide, and the press to print. When some Chinese journalists hinted at problems – as at the time of the demonstrations in Tiananmen Square, for instance – those were purged from the news pages, radio

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stations and television screens, despite their party allegiance.

When Russian editors were called upon to exercise glasnost recently, the perils of even approaching freedom of expression resulted in one publication (named *Glasnost*) being closed down. The Editor-in-chief of *Izvestia* – a man of immense influence in the Communist Party and in the Soviet Government – expressed the view that editing a newspaper in the new era was like “walking through a minefield”. I told him that the strikingly similar phrase used in South Africa by an editor of *The Star* was, “walking through a minefield blindfolded”. And that was 30 years ago; before mass bannings and Media Regulations.

When the press is totally owned or subdued by the State; where nationalisation is done in the name of freedom; there is no freedom. Editors are not allowed to walk on their own – let alone be offered the option of a stroll in the political minefields.

Iran and South Africa make excellent contrasts in this respect. When Iran exploded in revolution, the world's political analysts, almost all the international intelligence networks; the press, TV news and the US Administration were taken totally by surprise. Why? Because the Shah tolerated only an obedient, unquestioning press.

In South Africa, from the moment the first apartheid law and the first detention-without-trial law were passed, this country was the focus of world attention, often in the most minute detail, often with far more exposure than the press of other countries gave even to their own affairs.

This was not due entirely to the crime against humanity (the crime of slavery, for instance, still flourishes elsewhere in the world without much outcry). The attention focussed on apartheid was mainly due to the “walk through the minefield” which South African journalists – usually oft-maligned mainstream journalists – have been taking for 40 years.

Which brings us back to the point of the indivisibility of freedom. You cannot exercise it by allowing “just a little freedom”. Freedom means that you and I can say what we think, provided we do not harm others. It also means that we can print what we think. You have to be of

independent mind and of independent means to be able to do that.



Yet neither freedom nor individual independence can be limitless. To whom, then, should the Press be answerable? Certainly not to itself. And, I would argue, certainly not the government, or even to the State or to “the people's representatives”. The history of tyranny in the name of “the people” is too long and too well known for me to elaborate here. But let me name just one interesting example: When the Soviet press was instructed to “think for itself” for the first time in the USSR's history, those newspapers representing the “people” did their utmost to oppose the move.

They even challenged the two giants, *Pravda* and *Izvestia* for publishing information that was hitherto secret. Why? Because the “people's press” was run by the local Soviet committees. The last thing the “People's Committees” want is for people to say what they think. It could destroy the Communist Party which, though strongly entrenched, represents a small minority.

To whom, then, should the press be answerable?

Democracy has taught us that it must be answerable to the Courts. It is the Courts who will decide where the right to free expression infringes on the right to individual privacy; on communal moral values; on the interests of the State. And it is the independent judiciary who must protect the independence of the press – just as the press must protect the independence of the Courts. This symbiosis is part of democracy, while a State press, or a press subservient to the party and/or “the people” is not helpful to democracy or to freedom.

These truisms may be obvious to you and I, and anyone else fully educated and taught to cherish these fundamental values, but they are not known to most of the under-privileged and ill-educated.

As a leader of the ANC so wisely says: unless the broad masses of the people want democracy, there will be no democracy.

We have to make them aware of their rights. We can do so only by massive moves in education. Freedom, your freedom, will depend on education. That is why all the media (and this is the first time I refer to the electronic as well as the printed media) must combine in overcoming SA's appalling backlog in education.

To sum up on press freedom. The press has to earn it. It must do so:

- by demonstrating fairness;
- by playing a part in building a fair and just society;
- by being undivided and vigilant in its support of free expression;
- by helping to protect the independence of the judiciary;
- by respecting the authority of the courts;
- by doing everything possible to help in normal education;
- by rejecting fulltime hand-outs and resisting political pressure in order to be independent;
- by ensuring that views opposed to our own are given a voice.

FOOTNOTES

(1) An example of the measure of risk for a major daily: When *The Star* decided to publish an item about people in detention without trial – after a specific warning from the Security Police that the newspaper might be confiscated if this was done – the calculated cost of losing just one day's edition was estimated for the Court at R500 000. On this scale, any closure lasting only a few days might see the end of a newspaper on whom several thousand jobs depended. The economic viability of several other newspapers would also be in jeopardy.

(2) *John Stuart Mill*, by Michael St J Packe, pref by Prof Hayek, Secker & Warburg, 1954

(3) Ibid

(4) Niddrie & Barrell, *SA mass media in a post-apartheid society*.

(5) NPU membership of daily, weekly

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and provincial newspapers; excluding periodicals, January, 1990. The total number of publications registered at the Department of Home Affairs in August, 1990 was 5 131. When the list is finally updated in 1991, it is likely that 3 000 odd publications will still be in existence.

However, the combined weekly and monthly circulations of the eight main "alternative" newspapers in South Africa amount to less than the week's output of a small "mainstream" daily.

(6) Victor Moche, *Towards a post-apartheid democratic media.*

(7) Editorial independence in Argus has been traditionally vouchsafed by a policy in which Argus Boards never discussed individual newspaper policy, and no editor was called upon to address the board. The Editor and Manager have equal responsibility for the wellbeing of their newspaper, but editors have sole charge of editorial policy.

The editor reports to no-one about the political views he expresses on his newspaper's behalf; nor is he required to heed advertisers' or other demands addressed to him or anyone else about editorial policy.

In practice he is protected from commercial and proprietorial pressures. In nearly 17 years as Editor of *The Star*, I was not once even approached by shareholders or board members or management about editorial. Threats from some advertisers to boycott the paper, unless editorial criticism was withdrawn, were easily rejected out of hand.

(9) Pallo Jordan, quoted by Niddrie & Barrell.

Notes on manuscripts

AUTHORS who wish to submit work for publication in *Review* should please send their scripts to: **The Editor, Rhodes University Journalism Review, PO Box 94, Grahamstown 6140, South Africa.**

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CHRISTINA JUTTERSTRÖM

Media must be independent of political parties, organisations and business companies

I hope South Africa ends up with a generous media constitution. At the same time, one should not have too many laws and rules. Sooner or later they limit the freedom of the press rather than enlarge it.

I belonged to those who, during the sixties and the seventies, sympathised with, and thought I understood, the use of the one-party system by newly independent African countries as a way of making democracy. I thought it would be easier for countries to develop within such a system.

I no longer believe in one-party systems where everything is directed from the top. I think you have to have a multi-party system where you never silence people or parties or organisations. Let them come up to the surface, examine them and let people take their own view and choose among several political parties. Have confidence in your readers, the South Africans.

As a consequence of this, I am an ardent advocate of pluralism in media and of impartial and truthful reporting.

For democracy to function, one has to have media independent of political parties, organisations and business companies.

Sweden has an interesting legal and organisational situation on the media side.

Sweden was the first country to establish freedom of the press by law. In 1766 Parliament adopted a Freedom of the Press Act as a part of the Constitution.

Censorship and repression against the press have occurred since then – but since the constitutional reform of 1809, freedom of the press has prevailed in Sweden.



CHRISTINA JUTTERSTRÖM, Editor of *Dagens Nyheter*, Sweden's largest daily newspaper.

The present Act dates from 1949 – as a result of what happened during the war. Any amendments or changes of the Act have to be confirmed by two successive parliaments with general elections in between.

Under the Act, censorship, or other serious restrictions on publishing and distribution of printed matter, is explicitly forbidden.

To safeguard press freedom, law makers have set out a combination of measures.

Foremost among these devices is the institution of the *responsible publisher*. Any periodical appearing four times or more a year must appoint a responsible publisher who alone is responsible for the content. He or she alone – I am one of them – is held responsible for any violation of the Freedom of the Press Act.

The law also explicitly prohibits the investigation or disclosure of newspapermen's sources. A person who contributes to a newspaper as a reporter or informant is protected against legal actions. This protection is extended even to State and municipal employees, who are thus free to give information to newspapers and other media without fear of legal repercussions.

On the other hand, this doesn't prevent, from time to time, ministers and other similar persons from trying to silence their employees – sometimes with success.

There are also some exceptions to the general rule: for example, matters dealing with State security.

Another remarkable feature of the Swedish Freedom of the Press Act is the principle of free access to public documents. (It is a part of the lawmakers' intention to support the role of public watchdog.)

Requests for public documents may only be rejected with specific reference to a particular rule or rules of the Secrecy Act.

This is the legal framework for Swedish press freedom. It is, as I said, a constitutional law. Radio and TV, in general, follow the same rules, although these are not written in the Constitution.

For many decades, Swedish press organisations have been intent on guarding against abuse of the liberties guaranteed by the Constitution. In 1916 the Swedish Press Council was formed by the national press club, Publicistklubben, the newspaper publishers' association and the union of journalists. A journalistic Code of Ethics was set up in 1923 by the Press Council. The code we have today was adopted in 1978.

The code aims at upholding high ethical standards in general and, especially, at protecting the integrity of individuals.

A special section is devoted to combating editorial advertising and other

undue outside influences calculated to mislead the readers. A special committee watches over this type of malpractice.

In 1969, the office of Press Ombudsman (PO) was established to supervise the adherence to ethical standards. Public complaints are directed to the PO who is also entitled to act on his own initiative. He may dismiss a complaint if unfounded, or get the newspaper to publish a retraction or rectification acceptable to the complainant. In clear cases of minor importance, the PO may issue ex-officio criticism of the newspaper.

When the PO finds the grievance is of a more serious nature, he will file a complaint with the Press Council, which will then publish a statement acquitting or censuring the newspaper. The findings of the Council are published in the newspaper concerned and in the business papers of the press. The offending newspaper also has to pay a fine.

The Council is composed of six members, two of whom represent the general public while three are appointed by the press organisations, and the sixth is the chairman who holds a casting-vote. This last member has always been a member of the Supreme Court.

Well, having this Freedom of the Press Act, doesn't mean that relations between media and government are without friction.

Traditionally, Swedish newspapers are more or less connected to political parties. Quite a few are owned by parties or organisations related to parties. For many years this meant to politicians and parties that they got support from their papers.

However, this political line-up has been anything but representative of the political preferences of the electorate. While Social Democrats and Communists have shared approximately half the popular vote for decades (with the Social Democrats being the overwhelmingly larger party), their share of the press amounts to only about one fifth of total circulation.

Conversely, non-socialist parties were supported by, roughly, four newspapers out of five, and here the liberal press has a share, far exceeding the Liberal Party's share of votes cast in elections.

There is a simple reason for these discrepancies. The newspaper market is governed by economic mechanisms, not by political power structures. Newspapers derive their revenue from sales to readers and from the sale of advertising space.

Structural development and financial conditions in the daily press have been under close official surveillance since the beginning of the 1960's. Five commissions have come to the conclusion that newspaper closures left the daily press less well equipped for the discharge of its functions within the Swedish democratic system and, accordingly, a series of measures were taken to counteract further concentration of ownership and to facilitate the establishment of additional newspapers. The conditions regarding subsidies to the press are geared to the workings of the market, the aim being for subsidies to supplement the market system. The first subsidy measures were taken in 1969.

The effect of the consecutive recommendations of these commissions has been to create an elaborate system of subsidies.

In 1988, direct subsidies to "low-coverage newspapers", i.e. those with not more than 50 percent household coverage in their place of issue, totalled approximately R178 million. These selective subsidies amounted to about four percent of the net circulation and advertising revenues of Swedish papers. In addition, subsidies of about R25 million were extended to newspapers participating in joint distribution schemes.

Lesser sums are paid out to support the establishment of new papers, and efforts to co-operate in production are also eligible for loans to finance plant renewal.

Production subsidies for low-coverage newspapers today give the recipient newspapers an average revenue increment of about 20 percent.

The subsidy system could not be abolished today without immediately jeopardizing vast numbers of newspapers.

The subsidies are financed by a tax on all advertising.

LOUIS RAUBENHEIMER

The position, structure, control and financing of the SABC must also be placed under the magnifying glass

AT the end of the 1980s, broadcasters and interested parties look back in wonder at the changes that have swept television and radio. The overriding issue has been the "deregulation" of broadcasting in many countries, the consequent increase in competition and the effects thereof.

The final outcome of all this is by no means certain. Indeed, the overriding characteristic of the industry at present is probably uncertainty. One dazed managing director of a European broadcasting network summed up the general attitude thus: "This is the best time to be a part of broadcasting, if only to witness how it all turns out."

In South Africa, too, the industry is in the crucible. The appointment by the Government of the Task Group on Broadcasting, and the march on the SABC in late August, testify to this fact.

South Africa is in a very critical phase of its development. And, in the future, economic and political literacy will be a prerequisite for meaningful decisions on a future dispensation – which means the public must be fully informed of all developments. I do not think it is necessary to expand on that. But what is important is that this means it will be necessary to look with the greatest circumspection at an appropriate media structure for this country.

A number of considerations of cardinal importance are relevant:

- The geography and demography of the country;



LOUIS RAUBENHEIMER is Editor-in-Chief, News Management of the SABC.

- The population composition in terms of language and cultural communities;

- The country's economic structure and, more particularly, its advertising industry;

- The need or otherwise for an educational approach to the communication sector;

- The availability of the necessary technical communication infrastructure;

- The historical phase in which the country finds itself.

It has become necessary to look incisively at an appropriate media structure for this country. And in this process, the position, structure, control and financing of the SABC must also be placed under the magnifying glass.

Many misconceptions have been cultivated, apparently deliberately, about the SABC for such reasons as self-interest. The fact is that the Corporation is not averse to an impartial appraisal of its position, the establishment of competition and the judicious "deregulation" of the broadcasting terrain, provided this is done in an orderly manner and the broadcasting requirements of the population in all its facets are given due recognition.

The real and potential role of the electronic media

Viewpoints on contentious issues such as "democratisation" and "deregulation" are closely related to one's outlook on life and one's aspirations for the community with which one associates. Equally, they are related to perspectives of recent history – including the forces and powers that are unique to the communication media in modern society.

In order to conduct a meaningful dialogue on the role and place of the media in the future South Africa it is, therefore, necessary, in my opinion, to look first at the potential contribution that the media can make in ensuring an informed and peaceful community – more

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especially as this question features prominently in the well-known MacBride Report.

A constant preoccupation of the report concerns the relationship between power and communication with the latter identified as a critical source of power and influence within the global system that creates relationships of domination and dependency, cultural imperialism and political disruption.

Traditional concepts of the power of the media

Since the advent of the electronic media much has been written and said about what is regarded as its extraordinary, almost magical, power. Reference has been made to the huge audiences that can be reached, the number of hours people spend in front of their sets, how extensive the industry has become in terms of Rands and Cents and how much is spent every year on advertising. This trend probably reached its peak in the 1960's when the popularity of the well-known Frankfurter Scôle was at its height. They issued warnings that the individuality of the human being would be destroyed in the process and that the people of the Twentieth Century would, on a large scale, degenerate into human masses without their own convictions and personalities.

Nearer home, the enormous power of the SABC, specifically as an information medium, is frequently referred to these days, and the concept "information" is then used in such a broad sense that it really includes influencing and moulding public opinion.

The more researchers study the actual impact of the media, however, the greater is the realization that this is an exceptionally complex question that will not easily be answered one way or the other. In spite of a series of empirical studies on the effect the media has on behavioural patterns, only limited understanding has been forthcoming on this question. For the reliability and validity of much of the results must be questioned because of serious methodological defects in, especially, the experimental design.

What has nevertheless become clear is that no unqualified statements can be made on the formative influence of the media. The media is neither Satan's minions nor angels with white wings.

Curren and Seaton put it this way in a summary of the course of the debate on the influence of the media thus far: "There is no adequate vocabulary to describe the relationships between the media, individuals, and society."

A more nuanced view

A number of trends are nevertheless apparent from the latest research:

- The capacity of the media to influence the public to contemplate certain pressing issues is far-reaching. Doris Graber writes:

"In short, the mass media may not be successful in telling us what to think, but they are stunningly successful in telling us what to think about."

- William McGuire is of the opinion that it is a myth that the public media has a major formative influence on the public's thoughts, sentiments and behaviour. Most of the reliable empirical

studies point to a small yet significant influence.

- Much work has been done on the effect specifically of the information media on the public's political preferences. And this confirms the trends revealed by recent research – that the media is relatively ineffective in forming political preferences and sentiments. The outstanding characteristic of the media in this respect is rather to entrench existing political attitudes.

An excellent precis of the conclusions thus far on the power of the media to mould public opinion has been formulated by Hiebert, Ungurait and Bohn:

"Most research evidence supports the hypothesis that mass media can create new opinions more easily than they can change existing ones, but that reinforcement of existing beliefs, is the main effect of most mass communication experiences. One reason for this reinforcement is the self-protective human process of selective exposure, selective perception, and selective retention. We tend to expose ourselves only to messages that agree with our existing opinions; we tend to avoid communication that is unsympathetic to our predispositions."

Unqualified claims on the opinion-forming power of the media have led in the past to what I would like to call the Great Irony of Public Communication: that the media's ability to influence sentiments and channel public opinion in a particular community in a certain direction rests rather on its perceived – in contrast to its actual – power as a moulder of public opinion. And this has been caused chiefly by the simplistic concept

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that communication operates according to a stimulus-response mechanism; that there is a casual connection between what the media publishes and what the public believe.

Remarks about the notion "Democratising the media"

Everyone agrees that the goal of any restructuring of the media should be to take into account the needs and expectations of all South Africans. The differences of opinion possibly concern the content of these needs and expectations, as well as the best way to achieve it.

In the slogan of "Democratising the media", as in "The people shall broadcast", I fear a new spectre of monopolism is haunting South Africa. And with John Kane-Berman, executive director of the South African Institute of Race Relations, I would like to point out that 36 million South Africans can hardly have a single will. This kind of language cannot be described as anything but totalitarian and has its origins in the revolutionary ideas of Jean Jacques Rousseau.

In fact, Western democracies are characterised by a rich and very diverse social texture. There are thousands of organizations which are able to operate freely and pursue their own interests. In South Africa – one of the most divided communities – there are ethnic differences, religious cleavages and class divisions; there are rich and poor, urban and rural, housed and homeless, educated and illiterate, employed and unemployed. The interests of these people do not necessarily coincide – indeed, they often conflict.

A slogan such as "Democratising the media" accordingly sounds more like an effort to mobilise the masses and to whip up emotions – action that runs the risk of further polarising South African society; and to feed intolerance precisely at a time when it has become such a disturbing phenomenon.

Clearly, in any society, news values are inseparable from national values; and editorial judgments will be made on

the basis of the interests of subscribers and listeners. And in South Africa national values have changed dramatically since February 2 – with the result that the media's handling of the South African situation has undergone a corresponding dramatic change.

The promotion of democratic sentiment is already part of the national ethos of the majority of the population.

One only has to glance from time to time at the media's coverage of recent news events to realise that it is already reflecting this new sentiment. In the case of the SABC, a course correction in the Corporation's handling of the news was already discernible during the 1989 General Election, as was reflected in the evaluation of Whites, Coloureds and Asians of impartiality in the handling of news.

I am firmly convinced that the latest surveys amongst all groups in South African society will confirm this trend and will endorse the impartiality of the SABC, notwithstanding persistent accusations of partiality from certain quarters.



Structure of the electronic media: nationalisation versus deregulation

There is wide divergence of opinion on the most desirable broadcasting model. Competition has been a way of life in the United States. According to John Abel, executive vice-president for the National Association of Broadcasters, trends around the world are bringing broadcasting closer in line with that in North America:

"It confirms for us that our system is correct – countries throughout the world are emulating the private broadcasting system that we have in this country."

On the other hand, Pierre Juneau, resident of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, refers to the American model and calls it a mistake:

"In my opinion, this is indeed a regrettable cultural mistake, for which the entire world is paying the price. The mistake consists of tying radio and television completely to business, that is, the marketing of things like chewing gum, denture aids, toothpaste, soaps of all kinds, all sorts of drinks and candies, car tyres, the cars themselves or everything related to the automobile industry."

In this country one thing emerges clearly from current arguments on the most desirable broadcasting structure: so long as you denigrate the existing structure, and in the process condemn the SABC, it is not important what alternative you propose. Proposals thus range from the two extremes of privatisation to nationalisation. (It is simply inexplicable how people who demand the "democratisation" of the media can, in the same breath, advocate "nationalisation" which, after all, implies total central government control.)

The recommendation of the MacBride Report on the undesirability of commercialisation of the media has been overtaken by recent developments in Europe and Eastern Europe, and is completely out of touch.

This is to be seen, in particular, in Recommendation 31. It calls for giving preference "in expanding communication systems to non-commercial forms of communications." This embodies the presumption that commercial media are bad per se. But stating that non-commercial forms of mass communication are preferable appears to endorse the system of the previously socialist states – without pointing out that this system has led to the establishment of media whose primary aim was to support the objectives of the governmental regimes of the particular country!

On the other hand, it would appear that genuine deregulation is also not really a workable alternative.

In a recent survey amongst a selection of European broadcasters as to their experience of deregulation, the first question many of them asked was: "Deregulation? What deregulation?"

In an article in a recent edition of *Broadcast* under the heading "The Myth of Freedom", some of these broadcasters gave their reaction. These responses are

not simply bits of special pleading by broadcasters in the private sector. If they seem rather surprising reactions from France, with its six free national television networks, that is, in part, because of the sloppy way in which we all tend to use the word "deregulation".

According to Patrick Le Lay, president of the privatised TF1, France's biggest-audience television channel, they have a very strong system of regulation. "We are more regulated than 10 years ago."

West Germany provides, if anything, an even clearer case of "What deregulation?" Albert Scharf, deputy director general of the public Bavarian Broadcasting Corporation and president of the European Broadcasting Union, explains:

"Real deregulation did not happen in Germany. The existing system was simply enhanced. The public service broadcasters face private competition, but the private broadcasters work under the same general terms as the public one".

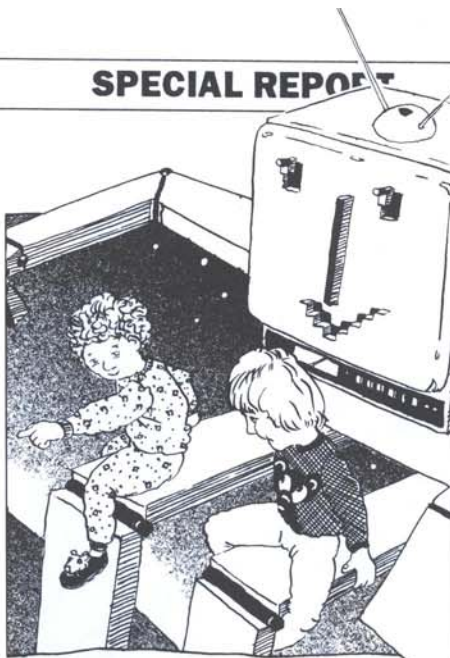
The picture that emerges here is that there are numerous factors that make it necessary to have some form or other of regulation or, rather, re-regulation.

The availability of frequencies

The first of these factors is the scarcity of one of the chief assets of the broadcasting industry, namely frequencies, which are a national resource. The consequence of this is that only a limited number of broadcasters can be allowed to operate in each country/territory. Regulation in one form or another, and to a lesser or greater degree, is as inevitable as the regulation of taxation. Without regulation of broadcasting standards, and without the allocation of wavelengths, our airwaves would degenerate into a cacophony of conflicting and discordant signals.

The safeguarding of quality

I fear that the argument on ensuring



quality broadcasting is probably not going to be part of the South African debate on a new media structure. I have the impression that this question has been so politicised that for many it does not matter what the quality will be of the services that remain or that are created.

In other parts of the Western world, and especially in Europe, this argument is central to the debate on broadcasting. Alma Brink, Opposition spokesman for Broadcasting in the House of Lords, has summed up the issue: "...the most vital ingredients for a healthy and lively broadcasting system remain the quality and diversity of programming." She adds that the greatest danger facing the broadcasting industry is that factors other than quality – such as commercial considerations – will become the most important criteria in decisions on a broadcasting structure:

"It cannot be right that those with the deepest pockets can decide, with the minimum of rules laid down by the Government, what we will be able to watch on our screens and listen to on our radios."

In general the point of departure in European countries is to broadcast radio and television programmes for citizens, not consumers. Society before business!

Freedom of speech

While freedom of speech – of the individual and the media – has traditionally meant the absence of State controls, the rationale for broadcast regulation, that is widely accepted, is that uncontrolled freedom permits – even encourages – bias. Public-spirited regulation is thought to be necessary to ensure equal media access to those on all sides of controversies and to promote equal treatment of proponents of different viewpoints.

Impartiality is one of the fundamental characteristics of responsible journalism and I believe that the authorities should provide mechanisms to safeguard and enforce this principle – as in the case of the latest Broadcasting Bill in Britain. (The Independent Broadcasting Authority as well as the BBC have expressed support for such stipulations in the Broadcasting Bill.)

An older example of such a document is the American Fairness Doctrine, which requires of radio and television licencees "to provide coverage of vitally important controversial issues of interest to the community...and...a reasonable opportunity for the presentation of contrasting viewpoints on such issues."

But vague policy documents and other prescriptions can so easily become of academic interest only in the editing booth where decisions have to be taken on many concrete things, such as the inclusion of certain gestures, a single sentence or even a solitary word.

I consequently subscribe to the school of thought that believes that such documents or conventions are not only necessary but must also be very specific.

Moreover, it is imperative that the provisions of any code must be enforceable, as is the case in respect of the Broadcasting Bill. A broadcaster who infringes the impartiality code will be liable, in terms of the Broadcasting Bill, to sanc-

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tions that are specifically defined.

Such a code should:

- be rooted in the idea of fairness and a respect for truth;
- distinguish fact from opinion;
- aim to ensure that a proper range of views and perspectives is aired over a reasonable period of time in all matters of public controversy;
- give a fair account of the subject matter.

In the case of South Africa, it is of paramount importance that certain extremely important constraints should be placed on freedom of speech. Broadcasts should not:

- incite racial emotions;
- foster violence;
- advance anti-social behaviour.

The need for different language and cultural services

The latest study on the state of the Black market comes to some exceptionally important conclusions:

■ that 80 percent of the Black audience prefers to be served in its own language, only about 17 percent has a reasonable understanding of English, and only five percent of Afrikaans;

■ that radio is, for Black communities, the most important communication medium – in particular, the cultural services in the Nguni and Sotho languages.

One of the factors that entrenched the concept of a national broadcasting role in Europe and Canada is the reality of different language and cultural groupings. Private concerns do not have the differentiated infrastructure – or the motivation – to meet these requirements.

At present the SABC is providing such language and cultural services at a great loss, by means of cross-subsidisation from a few profitable radio and television services.

Broadcasting organisations that are established with the sole purpose of broadcasting in the metropolitan areas in English can accordingly not lay claim to serving the different language groups



with information, entertainment or educational broadcasts. Their existence is clearly prompted by commercial or other considerations.

Affordability and viability of new services - licence fees and income sources

The broadcasting market does not have a built-in mechanism that guarantees a variety of choices and quality in the midst of competition. Put another way, competition does not automatically guarantee a variety of quality products for different audiences with different needs. On the contrary, competition for the same audiences and the same sources of income encourages a uniformity that narrows choices. This has been the indisputable experience in, especially, the United States.

The system that is probably the best equipped to overcome this problem is the British system – possibly because the cardinal consideration in decisions on the media structure in Britain is still that of quality and variety.

The result is a system where the BBC and the commercial services are not dependent on the same sources of income, although they serve the same public.

In my opinion a similar system would have been ideal for South Africa. But various factors would make it difficult to apply:

● Problems in the determination of a realistic licence fee that have meant that for many years licence fees have not nearly kept pace with increases in the consumer price index;

● Unwillingness on the part of members of the broadcasting audience to pay the licence fee.

The inevitable question that arises, then, is just how big is South Africa's "advertising cake", and how many commercial radio and television services can it support?

Before any final decisions can be taken on the granting of broadcasting licences, a thorough and realistic study will have to be made of the potential size of the advertising cake in the country. Independent stations will certainly not receive a licence to print money; a licence to broadcast is not a licence to print money.

Very few of the local stations developed in the UK after commercial radio was legalised in 1973 have made money. This was partly because they were up against established BBC stations and partly because they were restricted by the Independent Broadcasting Authority in respect of the amount of time they were allowed to devote to music while being compelled at the same time to give attention to less profitable, but necessary, services such as local news and actuality programmes.

In Australia the position of many broadcasting organisations is even worse.

Dangers of cross ownership

One of the key issues in the international debate on the deregulation of the media is that of cross ownership; in other words, the question of control over more than one information medium.

Throughout the world there is concern at the power that is concentrated in the hands of individuals or groups that gain control over both the printed and electronic media. Many countries accordingly have strict limitations on shareholding and cross shareholding.

In the Broadcasting Bill before the British Parliament, it is stipulated that a newspaper editor may hold only a maximum 20 percent of shares in one specific broadcasting service and a maximum of five percent in others.

In Australia there are certain geographic restrictions on cross ownership of television and the press.

Even in the economically liberated United States the owner of a press group is precluded from having control of a television or radio station in the same state.

Those who draft a new media structure for South Africa will have to take this question into account.

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A regulating and controlling mechanism

In the light of the above, it is necessary that a professionally controlled mechanism be created for the entire broadcasting environment – perhaps even the entire media environment. Such a body will obviously need to be representative of all the relevant interest groups in the country. Hopefully this route will partially depoliticise the media – and especially the broadcasting media.

Most Western countries have such a control structure, especially where there are also private broadcasters. As the SABC in the past was the only broadcaster in South Africa, with a Broadcasting Act that was applicable to it alone, there has not been an effective system to regulate the broadcasting industry as such.

In an environment in which there are a number of broadcasters it is necessary that a Broadcasting Act – quite apart from an SABC Act – should be established to regulate the broadcasting industry. The administration of such a Broadcasting Act could then be the responsibility of an independent professional agency appointed by the government of the day.

Such a “Broadcasting Council” will need to have the power to enforce regulations in order to perform effectively the following tasks:

- The drafting and enforcing of norms and standards for all broadcasters (technical standards, ethical norms, local content norms, journalistic standards, etc);
- The control of licensing conditions pertaining to the various broadcasters;
- The settlement of disputes in the case of improper practices that are brought to its attention.

Conclusion

There is a correlation between a desirable economic structure and a desirable media structure in South Africa. In the same way that nationalisation, on the one hand, or a system of unfettered economic freedoms, on the other, will not resolve South Africa's economic problems, neither nationalisation nor deregulation are the answer for our future media structure.

Rather, it would seem sensible to look for a broadcasting structure that retains both the beneficial elements of some form of planning and regulation while, at

the same time, encouraging competition and diversity.

Technology has not brought a widening choice, either quantitatively or qualitatively – which is certainly not what the governments concerned expected. In any event, the national broadcasters have no intention of abandoning broadcasting to the laws of the marketplace. They remain conscious of their cultural mission. Competition has ultimately been beneficial in that the national broadcasters are now firmly convinced that they must remain strong to assume all their roles: information, education and entertainment.

While some people still think that the Europe of television will be private or nothing, the public broadcasters have already proved that the Europe of television will be both, public and private ...or nothing.

I would, therefore, like to make a plea that what we in South Africa need is neither merely deregulation or nationalisation, but judicious re-regulation that will take cognizance of the broadcasting needs of the country and its human diversity and which will create the necessary structures to meet those needs.

NATURAL FACTS

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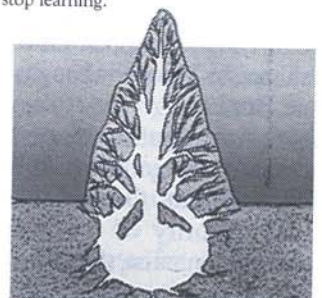
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ESSOP PAHAD

The media are too important to be left to the professionals to plan

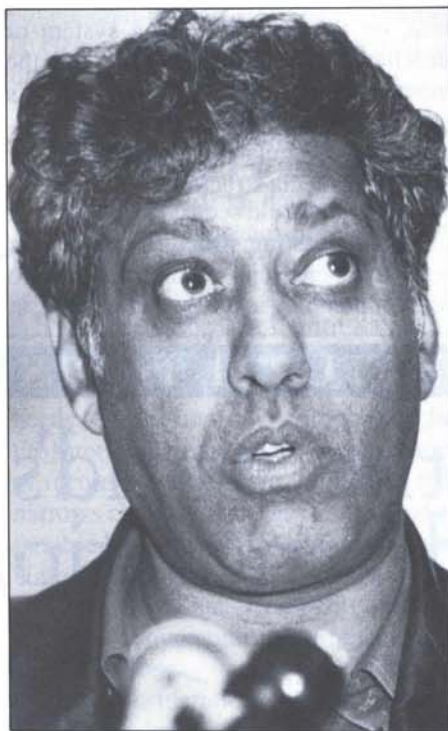
IN assessing what the media of the future are going to be like, we are talking about two things: the transition period to a post-apartheid society, and then something much further in the future. We have to begin with an understanding of what the media are like today.

This country has never had a free media. I think that is a fundamental point. So we are not talking about maintaining standards or maintaining something else. We must talk about creating something new.

The victims of this unfree media have been the oppressed and exploited people of South Africa – organisations like the ANC and the SACP. Throughout our existence there have been many things said about both the ANC and SACP which have been purposefully untrue, which have been distortions and yet they get repeated so often that people begin to believe they are true.

Having been in South Africa only a short time, I must say I find the standard of South African journalism, both in the print and the electronic media, is low. There is no real in-depth analysis and a lot of superficiality. When I was in England I never stopped criticising the British press. I never thought I would miss it. But I do!

There is an appalling ignorance about Africa in this country. At the Five Freedoms Forum Conference, when I said the majority of the countries in Africa were capitalist, the white audience started laughing.



ESSOP PAHAD, a media spokesman for the South African Communist Party. This extract is from a speech and is not a formal paper.

Later I was talking to a "top" South African journalist, and he said: "Africa is not capitalist."

So I said, "Which university did you go to? Because you had better go and collect your fees". He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "How many countries in Africa are socialist?" He said: "All of them". When I asked him to name them, he started with Zambia. At that point I gave up.

Among media people there is unfortunately great ignorance about our con-

tinents and about our country. How little was known about the ANC and the SACP until these last few months! So when we talk about creating a new media, we have to begin from scratch.

There are many journalists in this country who happen to be white, who think they are very skilled, who think they are very clever. Perhaps they don't need re-education camps, but they do need to look at themselves and their own abilities, their own skills and the way they have been used in this country.

We also need to look at the way the Police and the Security Forces have used them. When there is unrest in Soweto, many of the white journalists remain in the northern suburbs. They write about Soweto but they don't really know and understand the vibrancy, vicissitudes and ebb and flow of township life. The bulk of their information comes from the Police and the Security Forces.

Democratising the media

Now let me deal with the question of democratising of the media. I think we all agree that the media needs to be democratised, but there will be great differences of opinion about what we mean by "democratisation".

The SACP and the ANC are not going to nationalise the SABC. We think it should be democratised. There is, as yet, no clear policy position on this. But what is emerging in discussions amongst ourselves is that while the SABC should remain a national institution, it should not be the propaganda mouthpiece of any political party or group in power.

Many groups should be discussing

this, but instead we have the SABC Task Force. Here the same people who are responsible for the problems are investigating the issue.

How can you ask the head of the SABC to investigate himself out of a job? The whole question of what should happen to the SABC should be thrown open for the widest possible debate. It cannot be left to a small group of government people.

On the other hand, the SABC is involved in the process of restructuring, practically privatising parts of itself and promoting people on a long-term contractual basis. This means they want to tie the hand of a new incoming democratic government because part of any negotiations will be the honouring of those contracts. And all those who are being promoted are whites. This is clearly unacceptable.

Competition and free media

I also want to raise some questions about the relationship between competition and a free media. There are those, and they are many, who shout about a free enterprise system, and the necessity for competition. But when you point out that there is monopoly control over the media in this country; when you ask them to show you this free enterprise; when you ask whether in the interests of free media, shouldn't you dismember the monopolies, they say: "No. Why do you want to do this? It is against a free press."

But if they are interested in competition, then my understanding of competition is that there'll be more competition if you dismember the monopolies.

These people don't want competition. They talk about free enterprise but what they are really talking about is their fear that a new democratic State will intervene in this process.

If it's a free press they're concerned with, why has there been so little support from the "free marketers" for the alternative press which has suffered greatly from State oppression and curbs on its freedom?

So we need to look at the relationship between competition and monopoly.

Competition, in itself, is not necessarily an answer. In Britain competition has led to a position in which the making and scheduling of programmes is increasingly, and too frequently, determined by viewer ratings. The most popular

programmes are the ones that get screened and serious programmes are pushed behind.

The point here is that competition can kill quality.

“ —
While the SABC
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any political
party or group in
power
— ”

Lack of access

Another problem in this country is the lack of access that the working class has to the media. This really needs to be studied. There are no easy solutions here.

You can't solve the problem by saying you are going to put working-class people on some board or committee. But they need to get into the news focus. How many programmes have we seen here that deal with the lives of an unemployed worker? None! So popular access means the media should reflect the grievances, the aspirations, the feelings and the degradation of the lives of these people so we can begin to understand what the majority of the people of this country are going through.

But the present skewed access is not just about who gets into the news. Take the question of electricity for example. How do you expect people to read newspapers after work if they don't have electricity? It is virtually impossible to read newspapers by candlelight. And

who can watch television without electricity?

So the democratisation of media has to be seen in the wider context of improving the entire society we live in.

Journalists are very fond of saying what they publish is "in the public interest". But, who decides what is in the public interests? Take that British rag, *The Sun*. Every time they make a vicious personal attack on someone they claim it is in the public interest. Why the public needs to know how many people are bonking how many women, I don't know! In South Africa we shouldn't let the media violate private lives in the name of public interest.

Conclusion

Let me end by looking at censorship. This is a very controversial question. In Sweden, Britain and many other countries there is some form of censorship against racism and the publication of racist articles.

I think this is quite right. We cannot give freedom to people to attack the dignity and the colour of another person.

But you get into deeper waters with pornography. For example, should the paedophiles have the right to publish their own journals? In my view they do one of the most inhuman things, which is to use children as sexual objects. Should these people have the right to actually publish why and how they do this? Frankly, I believe not. But this is a form of censorship.

Perhaps men may be happy with no censorship of pornography. But if I were a woman I would find it highly insulting because pornography degrades women. Can we have a situation where one half of our population is going to be marketed to the other half as objects of titillation? I think this is an important question.

So there are no easy answers in media policy planning. Speakers at the Policy Workshop have argued that only we professionals must be involved in this planning. But this is a very narrow approach. We cannot exclude those who are the objects and the users of media from the process of shaping its future. So what we need in this country right now are discussions involving the broadest possible spectrum of opinion on media futures.

The media are too important to be left to the professionals to plan.

NAHUM GORELICK

Namibia's experience can offer some lessons

IT'S been very interesting listening to the discussion at this workshop, because it has all happened already in Namibia. From our experience I would offer one warning right at the start. You can never really pace yourself according to some nice crystal-ball plan. It is very difficult to anticipate change that's happening in Southern Africa.

I would like to fill you in on the background to the then SWABC (South West African Broadcasting Corporation). It was set up very much as a means of communication for passing on information – a particular type of information for the peoples – and I say again, peoples, of the country.

The radio infrastructure could reach the whole country but it was beamed out in particular languages to particular areas. In other words, there was no blanket service that could reach the whole country. Television was set up mainly to relay from South Africa in the sense that, although packaged in Namibia, the material really originated from SABC television.

So the information that was coming through was not Namibian by any means. There was very little information relating to the struggle except in a negative way and it created a vast amount of confusion and misinformation as to what exactly was going to happen.

During that time – and this was in 1988 – the SWABC decided to restructure their organisation to facilitate what they considered to be the future changes in Namibia and they set up a structure that really reinforced the links between the Administrator General, his administration and the controllers of the media.



NAHUM GORELICK is Director of the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation.

Now this all happened without anyone really thinking or knowing about what was going to happen in the future. At the time of the implementation of the UN Resolution 435, I got involved with a group called the Namibia Peace Plan 435 to study what the SWABC was putting out. The reason for the study was that the Resolution itself determined that all government and para-statal organisations had to be able to open up completely and not show any bias towards any political group.

We felt that the SWABC was not really complying with this. So we did an investigation and came to certain conclusions. From the study of 65 radio and 27 television news broadcasts, it was evident that the SWABC, which continually defended its impartiality, disseminated information in a biased manner through the use of the following techniques:

- Selective choice of content in editing and compiling news bulletins;
- Use of a style of reporting which passed on pre-selected information without verifying, examining or criticising;
- Adherence to one viewpoint with no alternative viewpoints being offered. The electorate was, therefore, not being prepared for any alternative to the South African-imposed order.

Anyway, we continued to monitor the SWABC and managed to alert the public as to what was happening.

On independence a new dilemma arose in that from November last year through to March this year, there was no government in power at all. The Constitutional Council was meeting to try and set up a Constitution. I think, in hindsight, it is at this stage that the most important work to safeguard media freedom should be done. Rather than a policy document regarding how the media can operate, you should try and establish representation in people who are going to design the Constitution and pressurise them to put clauses in which protect the right and the freedoms of speech, of the press, of the broadcasting or whatever.

With safeguards in the Constitution you could then leave it up to the various media people themselves to determine their own editorial slant. The law of a country determines how one can deal with speech that, in fact, will determine how the various media are going to be able to deal with information. So, I would suggest, direct your energies towards the architects of the Constitution.

In the meantime, the SWABC changed their name to NBC and came out with a statement of intent which, basically, said that no matter what the govern-

SPECIAL REPORT

ment said or who the government of the day was, they would portray the information according to the needs of the government of the day.

I think this was the one fatal mistake they made because what they were saying was that they would realign themselves to an independent Namibia's viewpoint and there was no chance of their ever gaining credibility for this. I think this was, in a sense, their downfall.

During that period as well, SWAPO, which was the leading party, came out with a policy of reconciliation. And that policy of reconciliation was really an attempt to try and get people to start moving together. In other words, what they did was declare some sort of path where people could move from the left and from the right – and I use those terms very loosely. And they came out with a saying: "Let's forget what has happened in the past – let's build a nation moving together into the future".

I came into the organisation with that philosophy and the first thing the Board and I did once I took over (and I will go into the control aspects later) was to come up with a policy document. This document does not change all that drastically from the original one, with the exception of one or two clauses. The policy of the NBC might give some idea of how we're thinking of disseminating information.

(See box below).

The policy guidelines are very broad and we are relying on the news people to come up with particular guidelines as to how to deal with specifics. In other words, it is up to the news people to operate within these guidelines.

In trying to democratise the process, the language services of the Corporation have created, I think, one of our biggest dilemmas. We have started a national service in English which cuts in on all the language services. Television, because it has only one channel, is a national service and therefore is run in English as well. The argument against this is strong as the common language in Namibia at this point is still Afrikaans.

The problem, however, is that the people in the country have never had the option of listening to English. The bulk of the population live in the north and no English signal was sent out to them at all. The response that we are now getting from the north is that, although they do not understand it, they are at least exposed to it and can start picking up phrases with the support of the community service lessons they are getting from the schools and churches.

So we are reinforcing a process of learning English. We are using English lessons we receive from the BBC. We are also waiting for the Ministry of Education to come in so that we can also facilitate and assist them in the process of

education.

In terms of the control of the NBC, we have a Constitution which gives us the right to freedom of speech and we have a Broadcast Act which gives us the right to broadcast. Now the Act of the old SWABC and the proposed Bill of the new NBC do not differ much at all. There are one or two innuendos in there. It doesn't really differ. What is important is that the ACT is interpreted according to the laws of the country. The Act is really there only to establish the NBC as a para-statal organisation. The task of the NBC is defined by the Board of the Corporation. So we have the Constitution, the Act, and the Board.

The Board is selected by the President of the country and must be composed of Namibians. It cannot have any political office bearers serving on it. The result is that we've got social workers, industrial relations people, professional and legal people, and education inspectors. Generally, the composition of the Board consists of people who have been working in the community, many of them at a grassroots level.

The problem of the editorial mix of national and community content is something that is going to take time. Ideally, we would like to set up community stations where community people can get involved. At the moment NBC is very much a national structure.

INTRODUCTION

The Corporation will act in the best interests of its country and its people with particular emphasis on nation-building and development.

GENERAL POLICY

The general policy of the Corporation is that publicly-supported broadcasting is primarily for disseminating information and reflecting newsworthy events. As a para-statal organisation run autonomously by an independent board in terms of the constitution which guarantees freedom of the media, the Corporation endeavours to propagate and strengthen these ideals amongst its members. At the same time the Corporation will encourage responsible and professional reporting free from government or outside interference.

In addition to the news programmes, the Corporation will encourage the

broadest possible access to broadcast disseminations for public organisations and associations which wish to inform and educate the public.

FUNCTION

The Corporation's function is to inform, entertain and to contribute to the education of the people through radio and television programme services. These services will cover Namibian events – both national and local – as well as African and international news.

Particular emphasis will be placed on reporting to the Namibian people about the internal functioning of all three branches of government.

NEWS GUIDELINES

News reports and news commentary will be presented on a factual and balanced basis. The Corporation will provide a forum for active and investiga-

tive journalism. Debate, critical analysis and discussion on current topical affairs will facilitate a free flow of information. The independent board of the Corporation will assure that news reports and commentary benefit from access to information, but are free from censorship or manipulation.

CONTENT

The content of information broadcast is subject to the constitution and the laws of Namibia. This content shall at all times remain sensitive to the value of people and uphold the principles of the Bill of Fundamental Human Rights enshrined in the Constitution.

RELIGION

Namibia is a secular state and the Corporation will, therefore, encourage tolerance and respect all religious persuasions in terms of the Constitution.

WORKSHOP ROUNDUP

*Workshop organiser, **DON PINNOCK** looks at opinions expressed in the study commissions*

THE Media Policy Workshop arranged by the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University in Grahamstown recently was aimed at opening up discussions on media futures.

The Workshop was attended by delegates from the Argus Company, the SABC, ANC, SACP, Namibian Broadcasting Corporation, FAWO, ADJ, the Swedish daily *Dagens Nyheter*, several universities, and journalism students.

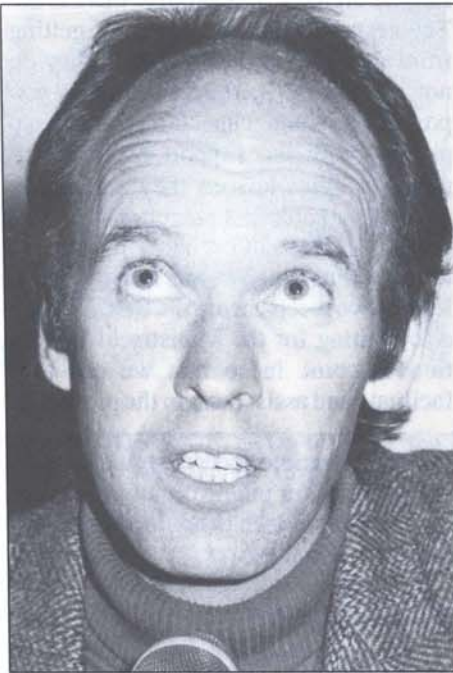
The Workshop was divided into plenary sessions at which invited delegates delivered talks on specific topics (some of these are published in *Review*), and study commissions on areas of special interest to the media.

Not all the delegates agreed with the findings of these commissions, nor were commission findings ratified. They were simply formulated as the basis for further discussion, and to stimulate thought about the future of the media in this country.

What follows is a summary of the findings of the study commissions.

Media models and systems

Freedom of expression was desirable, it was felt, but the extent of that freedom should be decided upon by a democratically elected legislative body. The commission felt that the media should act as a watchdog on both State and private



DON PINNOCK is a Senior Lecturer in Journalism at Rhodes University.

organisations, and that public agencies should make all official documents available to the public.

An independent Media Council should be set up, and through it funding, both local and foreign, should be channelled into subsidies for grassroots media.

It was suggested that a tax on advertising, levied on the media monopolies (even the current sales tax), would release large funds for smaller newspapers and even radio stations.

Working with the Media Council

should be an Ombudsman, someone who could maintain a link between the media and the public and deal with complaints.

As with the Media Council, a Film Institute should be established to assist the development of indigenous film and video production.

Media education should be developed in schools and in all forms of media, and Community Media Centres established to give a voice to people with few resources.

It was noted that SAPA should be collectively owned by all news producers and users.

Politics and propaganda

In order for democracy to work, the commission felt that everyone would need as much information as possible on which to base their decisions. For this reason, South Africa needed a free, independent and critical mass media. There was also clearly a need for more voices to be heard, but with the present media monopolies these voices were forced to remain silent. This would have to change.

Media economics

It was proposed that during the transitional period, the mainstream print media structures should remain the same. However, the 'alternative' press should benefit from the re-channelling of the advertising tax.

This funding would have to take place according to carefully-devised criteria, and be implemented according to strict

standards of eligibility by an independent Media Council.

However, although a subsidy system would ensure the survival of smaller media operations, clauses concerning natural death should also be included to prevent wasteful voices with no audiences.

Incentives should also be offered to encourage the sharing of resources between the mainstream and emerging media.

With regard to broadcasting, the commission proposed that state-funded radio and television should be maintained in the transitional period, but that the independent Media Council (or a Broadcasting Council) should administer its funds and set standards. A de-regulation of the airwaves was proposed, and independent organisations wishing to launch a broadcasting service should be allowed to do so.

Media and the law

The commission agreed that basic press freedoms should be protected within a Bill of Rights and should be subject to the judicial process. All censorship should cease, acts and regulations restricting the media should be struck down and the media should be subject to common law alone.

The task of the State would be to ensure that the basic freedoms were upheld, to prevent the development of media monopolies, and to set up instruments to assist the funding and diversification of media voices.

Journalists' rights and duties

It was generally agreed that the basic rights of journalists should be contained within a Bill of Rights. Beyond this, common law would be sufficient to define the limits and safeguards of the profession as long as the following additions were recognised:

- Journalists should, in certain situations, be granted access rights beyond those in common law;

- Public organisations should be obliged to provide information on an impartial and regular basis;

- Sources should be protected; and

- Journalists should have a right to physical protection in conflict situations.

Within this framework, however, the media should develop such instruments

as a Code of Ethics and a Media Council.

There was some dissent about whether the media could be best served by a Media Council. Among those who thought it to be a good idea, it was agreed that it should be as independent as possible, and be composed of lawyers, journalists, regional members of parliament and media union representatives.

It was generally agreed that a code of ethics for journalists should be drawn up. However, the licensing of journalists was not considered to be a viable option.

Print media

The basic call by this commission was for a diversity of media voices. The press was presently owned and controlled by big business. The commission proposed the breaking up of media monopolies, but underlined that it was not in opposition to rationalisation and co-operation between newspapers and newspaper groups.

It warned, however, that if existing newspaper groups were broken up, individual papers may not be able to survive on their own.

It was suggested that communities be granted more access to the national media, and that community newspapers should be started with the help of a subsidy system. A growing number of smaller publications would then form the basis for a national network of community correspondents.

It was also suggested that printing works be streamlined, amalgamated and centralised, and that a joint distribution scheme be implemented. Cheaper sources of newsprint should also be investigated.

Electronic media

This commission reported that in the many issues it had discussed, there was consensus only on the absence of consensus. The key points discussed in the commission were that:

- Demands made on the SABC should be achievable. The balance of forces was at this stage not in favour of those in opposition to the corporation. A lot more technical information about the day-to-day workings of the SABC was needed, because it could not be changed or democratised without knowing how it worked.

- There was a need to look at how homeland stations could be incorporated into a broadcasting network.

- Discussions about freedom of expression had generally taken place in relation to print. What was needed was discussion around a Right to Broadcast.

- It was suggested that an independent board be established to ensure some kind of balance. The Broadcasting Act actually provided for this.

- Research was needed into language policy, and training programmes needed to be reviewed in the light of affirmative action.

Literacy and access

The commission noted that in South Africa one person out of four was illiterate. Of the total population of this country, only about one person in five could read a newspaper.

This was a warning to media planners that the future of journalism in South Africa depended on a mass literacy drive.

Radio and television could be used in such a campaign (about 14 million South Africans listen to the radio every day). Community-based radio stations should be encouraged.

However, radio, and particularly television, were expensive forms of communication, and in the end print media carried the main burden of popular education.

A call was made for development journalism to be strongly supported as a genre, and efforts should be made to locate it at the centre of mass communication systems.

It was considered that English was the most widespread international language. But all children should have the right to be educated in their mother-tongue, and steps should be taken to nurture the development of literature in all indigenous languages.

Some themes

The need for freedom of expression in a new South Africa was acknowledged by all delegates.

There was general agreement that the instrument to ensure this freedom should be a Bill of Rights, and that the only curbs on the media beyond this should be common law acting through the courts.

This call was extended to broadcasting, which was seen as an important educational tool in the future society. It was strongly felt that people and groups should have the right to broadcast, and

Roundup report on media policy

CONTINUED

that the airwaves should be de-regulated.

Many delegates called for more diversity of media voices. These should be independent, critical and outside State and corporate control.

Concern was expressed about monopolistic media structures in South Africa. Some delegates and commissions called for these to be dismantled. However, there was an awareness that the profitability of the large media corporations ensured the survival of smaller newspapers, and that there was a need to move cautiously in this respect.

Considerable discussion took place about the funding of smaller newspapers and radio stations. The Swedish system of media taxing was considered to be a good starting point for planning in this regard. A tax on media advertising, even the present sales tax, would release sufficient funds to support smaller community news resources.

The allocation of such funds could be undertaken by an independent Media Council, which would have the task of supporting grassroots initiatives and mediating in disputes within the profession. The post of Media Ombudsman was suggested to assist in this task.

Further points of rationalisation called for were the sharing of printing facilities, distribution systems and wire services. Tax incentives and special rates could assist this process.

There were a number of calls for a Code of Ethics to act as a guide for media practices. This went along with a need to protect journalists and their sources, and to provide media workers and editors with a professional frame of reference.

There was also a call for better training for journalists, and for affirmative action in the selection of those who received training. Given the poor educational standards and high illiteracy rates in this country, it was felt that, increasingly, journalists needed to be educators and to receive the training necessary to do this. For this reason the ethics and practices described as development journalism should be at the heart of all mass communication systems in South Africa.

Don Pincock is a Senior Lecturer in Journalism at Rhodes University.

58 - REVIEW, November 1990

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PUBLIC Relations in the more developed countries, including South Africa, is enjoying growth rates unprecedented since the discipline as we know it today developed after the Second World War.

Percentage growth in annual expenditure on in-house and consultancy PR in recent years has, in several countries, breached the 30 percent barrier – significant even in areas such as South Africa, where unhealthy inflation rates prevail.

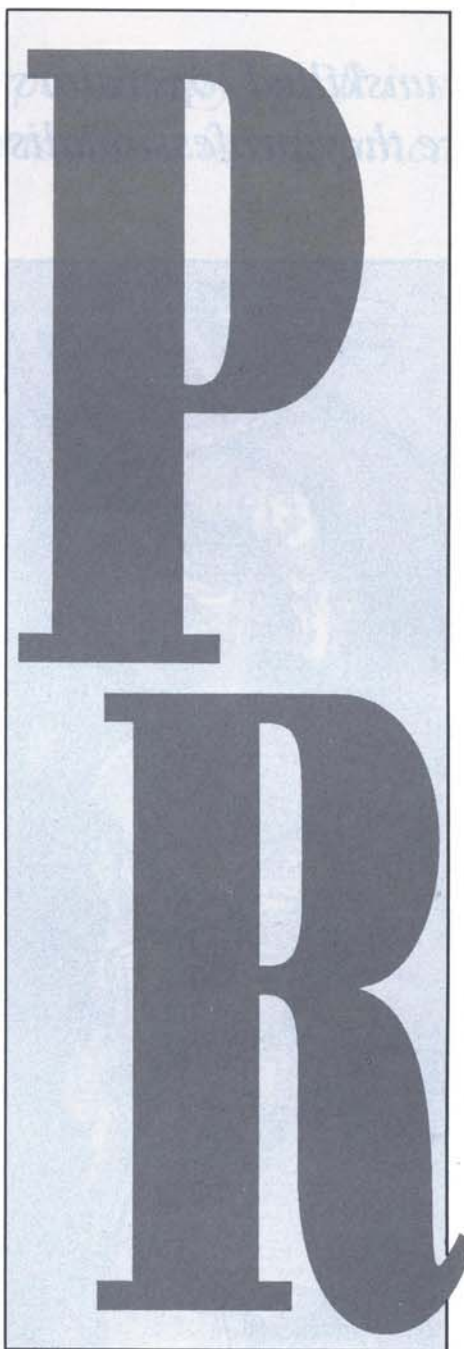
International and local assessments have indicated that a variety of factors have led to the growing recognition of public relations as an important ingredient in modern business management.

One of the most potent has been rising concern over environmental or “green” issues, particularly in America, Europe and Japan where alarm at pollution and damage to the very fabric of nature has reached the point where these abuses have become election issues.

The consequent need for organisations to develop and maintain appropriate programmes, communicate with a variety of audiences and be alive to trends and perceptions at home and abroad has created new responsibilities and a consequent demand for competent PR people.

Today’s top leaders have a much more comprehensive understanding of the “younger” professions such as marketing and Public Relations, and this has led to increased use of PR, too.

There is little doubt that the new generation of broadly experienced and trained chief executives now starting to dominate the business scene have a more educated appreciation of the power and capabilities of Public Relations than ever before. Many of today’s top leaders not only know what can be achieved by professional PR; they are also aware of the type of person and skills needed for the planning and implementation of major strategies which ultimately affect the bottom line.



COMES OF AGE IN South Africa

By Brian Cullingworth

This trend will continue as the top echelons of management are increasingly occupied by the new breed, and the old becomes more expert in combining the wide range of management skills at their disposal to maintain the competitive edge and position their organisations to best advantage in the communities where they operate.

This improved perception and understanding of Public Relations is not only being experienced in the business world; greater use, both here and overseas, is currently being made of the full range of professional PR skills by national and local government, forces and philanthropic bodies.

The old-fashioned concept of Public Relations as the product publicity or “whitewash” agency is fading as the *science* of Public Relations expands to new dimensions.

Whilst it is true to say that marketing communications remains an important element in the PR manager’s portfolio, this is only one of several key activities which the true PR professional should be capable of handling to the highest levels of efficiency.

These may embrace internal communications and audits; professional research for PR scenarios, initiatives, results and perceptions; political lobbying and liaison; strategic planning and leader counselling; strategic philanthropy; industrial relations communications and media liaison.

This calls for command of a range of ancillary technical skills which enable the PR manager to marshal a variety of techniques and disciplines in planned and accurately budgeted combinations to achieve particular objectives.

Not least amongst these skills is communications technology, a diverse field where huge technological advances in computers and electronics in recent years have created the ‘global village’ concept and revolutionised the public relations practitioner’s approach in media and techniques, imposing additional demands for trained and experienced professionals.

In recent years we have seen serious
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“Unqualified and unskilled ‘operators’ should plan for a future where they professionalise or move”

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issues turning on effective communications which have involved the advertising and PR collaborative interface in integrated campaigns.

The heavy use of media strategy in the Consgold-Minorco takeover bid; the Alaskan oil spill disaster; the Namibian issue and political manoeuvring; growth trends towards the privatisation of para-statal and increased aggression in AIDS and anti-apartheid campaigns, to name but a few. These all illustrate exciting areas of Public Relations activity.

Perestroika in East-West relationships, the effective demise of Communism and its impact on business strategies and communications in a world hitherto split between conflicting ideologies has contributed towards our stimulating new environment, whilst the radical changes in the coming decade in Hong Kong, and the new commercially unified Europe offer further opportunities.

Above all, the saner and more mature tendencies of advanced nations to communicate and negotiate their way out of warlike confrontation and its awful consequences hopefully heralds in a new and more peaceful era of collaboration in a world which is shrinking due to the speed and efficacy of modern communication.

The third principal reason for the international growth of PR is both a cause and an effect, for to deliver the goods required by a knowledgeable and results-oriented leadership in a massively challenging environment there has to be a relatively trained and experienced public relations practitioner.

Therein lies the death knell for the many unqualified and unskilled ‘operators’ who have so damaged the reputation of this young profession. The chancers should plan for a future where they professionalise or move, for they will not survive in the exciting years which lie ahead for committed PR



professionals with the requisite training and qualifications.

How has the public relations profession in Southern Africa geared up to meet the new challenges?

In common with similar professional bodies in the more developed countries, the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA) has in recent years prepared serious practitioners to take their place in the rapidly evolving new order.

South Africa has been amongst the front-runners in the international

development of PR professionalism, particularly over the past nine years, and this impetus is being maintained in consultation with similar bodies to PRISA in the United States, Britain, Canada, France and Australia.

The objective has been to provide an internationally recognised, practical framework within which practitioners can develop themselves, at the same time providing a structured range of courses for entrants to the profession.

Internationally, there is consensus that certain criteria differentiate between vocations and professions.

To illustrate SA's PR professionalism, therefore, one should look at these fundamental criteria in juxtaposition with the current PRISA situation.

1. The formation of a professional body, voting membership of which must be restricted by experience and qualification. PRISA has been in existence for 31 years, has internationally accepted restrictions and boasts a membership of well over 3 000 practitioners.

2. There must be a formal multi-tiered education and training programme. Here in South Africa, PR practitioners not only have an ongoing variety of professional development events, but education ranges from three and five-month college courses at the lower end, through three-year technikon National Diplomas to first and master's degree courses at several universities.

Initiatives have been launched aimed at the provision of Doctorate level degrees and post-graduate business leadership modules.

3. Accreditation is an important requirement for professionalism. The Public Relations Council of South Africa (PRCSA) was formed several years ago to handle this facet, and accreditation is by examination of persons with certain minimum empirical qualifications in this country.

4. Practitioners must subscribe to an

Communicators

"The scope and responsibility of PR is simply too wide and too great to leave in untrained hands"

internationally recognised code of professional conduct and ethics. All members of PRISA, and accredited PR practitioners of the PRCSA, are bound by such a code, which is backed by disciplinary procedures.

5. There should be research and development of the profession on an ongoing basis. In South Africa this is an area dominated by academics at present, and more case history work by working practitioners is needed.

6. A detailed and documented Body of Knowledge which formally encompasses the skills and knowledge for efficient professional practice of the discipline is a major requirement which few countries have achieved in Public Relations. PRISA was the first Free World PR body to compile such a publication, and the Public Relations Society of America has recently followed suit.

PRISA therefore has the necessary framework within which committed practitioners can professionalise.

The message for South Africans, whether they are in the public or private sectors is that our community can boast a small but growing core of highly competent professional PR managers and consultants.

More people are fast coming up through the educational and experience ranks within the PRISA framework, and the future supply of the right sort of practitioners is being seriously addressed in the process.

Part of the professionalism drive has been the formulation by PRISA of a competence and status structure, which gives levels of status and qualifications, and the duties which persons at those levels should be capable of performing with optimum efficiency. This guide is obviously of value to a wide range of people involved in Public Relations, not least of which are potential employers or clients who can develop a better idea of what PR is really all about, what their particular needs are and what sort of qualified per-



son they require to achieve their PR objectives.

Public Relations, public affairs, corporate communications – all are titles which have been used to identify either parts or the comprehensive practice of this new and vigorous profession. It is a profession which is here to stay as a management skill interfacing with almost every aspect of an organisation's operations and activities.

The scope of responsibility is simply too wide and too great to leave in the hands of the unskilled and untrained, and

in the same way marketing has developed into an accepted management profession, Public Relations is fast approaching a similar status.

Public Relations executives are now starting to make their appearance in the top levels of management as a consequence.

The continued growth and development of Public Relations will depend on continued commitment to the highest standards of practice and conduct by PR people, and implicit in this is a determination by those members to professionalise.

Certainly that commitment is manifested by members of PRISA at various levels of education and experience, and the future supply of motivated and qualified people looks promising.

PRISA is currently researching the question of legislative protection for the title and/or practice of Public Relations, and a major, strongly financed information campaign is planned for the near future. This will be aimed at advising certain target audiences such as business and government leaders on the true position of PR as a professional practice, and the dividing line between the real professionals and "the others".

Those private and public sector organisations which are sufficiently progressive to recognise the need for Public Relations specialists would be wise to seek out the right people to entrust this sensitive portfolio to. Those people hold specific empirical, professional and educational qualifications for the practice of their diverse craft, for Public Relations has come of age in this most dynamic and challenging world in which we live.

Brian Cullingworth is President of the Public Relations Institute of South Africa and a member of the executive of the Public Relations Council of SA.

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D.T.P.

MICHAEL GREEN takes a look at the wider implications of the new technology

DESK Top Publishing, or DTP as it is commonly known, has flourished in South Africa for about four years now, and the advantages of economy, flexibility and variety are obvious.

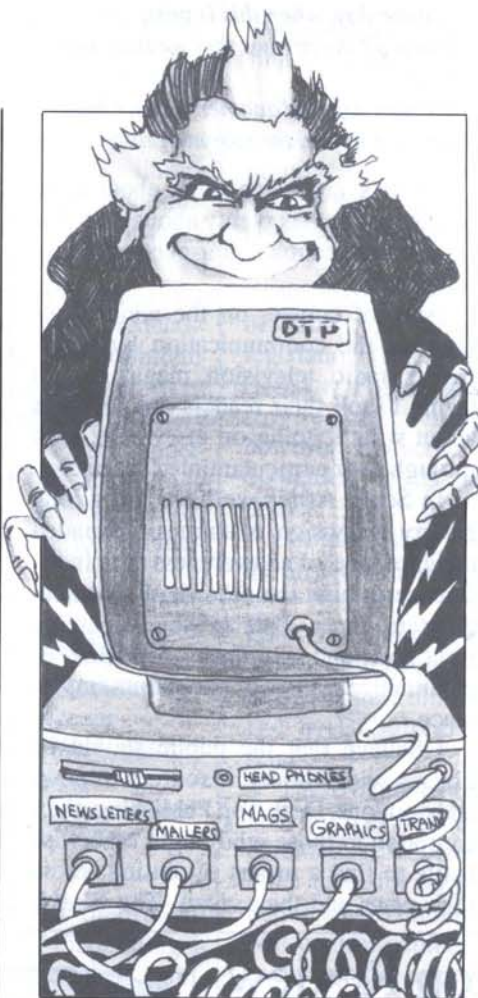
You can produce almost anything on your desk top, from a house magazine to a newspaper, from an office memo to sophisticated four-colour advertising.

On your desk-top equipment you can produce different pictures, graphics, different type styles and layout formats, but a word of caution. The equipment, the technology, cannot do everything for you. It can obey your commands, and to some degree think for you, but it does not and cannot displace human talent. You still need to have writing skills, and editing skills and visual skills. Technology is the servant, not the master, and I am always more interested in what is said than in how it was printed.

The fact that there is still a place for a writer who can tell a tale or construct an argument or pen a graceful phrase is cause for some consolation to me in my declining years.

What are the implications of the development of Desk Top Publishing? The implications are, I suggest, huge.

Anybody who has some basic skills and R20 000 or so to buy a computer, a scanner and a printer can become a publisher. Publishers exercise influence of one kind or another, no matter what they publish. The intention of the publisher is



to inform and to some degree to influence, even if it is only to persuade more people to join the Boy Scouts.

Influence in the wider, political sense has, in the past, been exercised by the big publications, the newspapers and the magazines. It requires a great deal of money to launch and sustain publications of this kind, and typically they have been in the hands of the rich and powerful, be

it the eccentric millionaire, a political party or a group of shareholders in a mining company. And the vast sums of capital at risk have imposed a responsibility, a discipline, an accountability, an inhibition if you like, on the people who run these publications.

I have many responsibilities as the Editor of *The Daily News* and the *Sunday Tribune*, but quite clearly one of my main duties is to keep them afloat, to keep them financially viable, in the interests of the readers, the shareholders and the staff who work there. It's no good being the best paper in town if you have to close down because you are losing too much money.

But this kind of restraint hardly applies to a desktop publisher who has invested R20 000, as his working capital in a computer, a scanner and a printer. He can, within reason, publish what he pleases or what he thinks there may be a demand for.

I am strongly in favour of this. I believe in communication. I don't believe that the channels of communication should be restricted to the favoured few. If anyone wants to start a daily or weekly or monthly publication propagating their own political or economic ideas, they should be absolutely free to do so. In spite of our changing times, there are still plenty of laws that would prevent publishers from preaching murder and pillage, or an avenging crusade, or the complete upheaval of our society.

But, of course, there are some disadvantages in the kind of desk top free-for-

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D.T.P

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all that one could envisage for the future. It could provide a platform for cranks or villains such as those who distributed pamphlets in Natal saying that on a certain day black people should murder whites and rape Indians.

Desk Top Publishing could also lead to a vast increase in the printed garbage that arrives in our post boxes every day, offering anything from plumbing services to insurance policies and encyclopaedias.

It could lead to the publication and dissemination of reckless and unjustified and damaging statements, with very little redress on the part of persons who may be injured by those statements. It's not much use instituting an expensive legal action for defamation against a publisher with a capital base of R20 000, and other avenues of complaint could be equally unrewarding.

I am a member of the South African Media Council, which exists to protect the freedom of the media and to consider complaints against the media, and not long ago we had to dismiss a complaint against a little desk top publication because first, it was difficult to track down who was actually responsible for it and second, it was not a member of the media within our own Media Council definitions.

There are probably other patent and latent hazards in the DTP explosion that seems likely in the nineties. A conservationist suggested to me not long ago that this would sharpen further men's insatiable appetite for paper, which would mean the felling of forests and the poisoning of rivers from the effluent of pulp mills. Rather a gloomy prognosis and perhaps too pessimistic.

Having said all that, let me look briefly into a more cheerful crystal ball. I have no doubt whatsoever that communication, in the broadest sense of the term, is the key to harmony and happiness in the world at large, if indeed those admirable qualities are ever attainable. At its most basic we have the face-to-face encounter, FW de Klerk meeting Nelson Mandela, George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev. We all know that much good can come from such forms of communication.

As the twentieth century Irish poet James Stephens says:

*My enemy came nigh;
And I
Stared fiercely in his face...
Then, as I turned away,
My enemy,
That bitter heart, and savage, said to me:
...Some day, when this is past;
When all the arrows that we have are
cast;
We may ask one another why we hate,
And fail to find the story to relate.*

There's not much there about computers but there is plenty about the value of communication, inter-personal communication.

And, of course, on the wider scale there is the communication by newspapers, radio, television, magazines, all trying to tell their readers and listeners about what's going on elsewhere, seen through their particular tinted spectacles.

In South Africa we have had a long history of division, of animosity founded on ignorance, of unawareness of or indifference to how the other half, or three-quarters, lives. That is slowly coming right now, and as it does so the lines of communication are of paramount importance.

I believe that the public should be given a wide variety of sources of news and opinions. Desk Top Publishing gives an option to those who might otherwise battle to find a means of putting across their news and their views. The Weekly

Mail is a good example, although I would not describe it as being without adequate financial resources.

I do not accept the criticism that is sometimes made that the conventional Press – the establishment Press – is blinkered and narrow in its view and interpretation of events. Most of us try very hard to reflect a wide variety of opinions; for example, the *Daily News* publishes weekly extracts from the Black Press and the Afrikaans Press, knowing that most of our readers do not normally read those newspapers.

But there is always room for a wider range of publications if, as I said earlier, they fulfil a need. There seems little doubt that people in the world in general today are better informed than they have been at any time in the past. And for that the printed word and the electronic impulse have been responsible.

The social implications are huge. Consider Eastern Europe, where decades of suppression of any critical information could not prevent an eventual political and economic upheaval. In spite of all the efforts at censorship and control, the people managed to keep themselves informed and in the end they made their own judgment on their affairs.

Some DTP practitioners no doubt will carry heavy responsibilities with their publications as we speed along to the millenium. I don't know how much interest I will be taking in these matters by the year 2000, but I have no doubt that there is an exciting road ahead, with further technological improvements and developments.

What will South Africa be like? I don't know, nor does anyone, but I think it will be a pleasant place to live in, and I think that communication at all levels will be more important than ever. On balance, I think the outlook is bright, for our country and for Desk Top Publishing.

Michael Green is Editor-in-Chief of the Sunday Tribune and The Daily News.

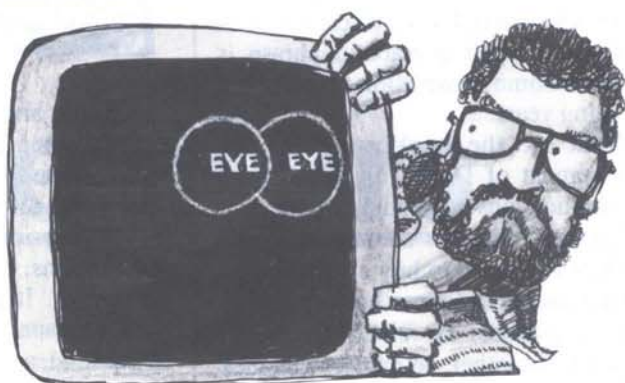
Details on the desk-top Review

The Rhodes University Journalism Review was produced on the Editor's home computer fitted with a standard 14" screen.

Output is 300dpi from an HP LaserJet III with resolution enhancement technology and using a PacificPage PostScript cartridge.

The magazine was produced using Xerox Ventura Publisher and CorelDraw, with graphics integrated at repro.

It was printed on Sappi's In-combo Gloss 80gsm with a cover section on 150gsm Dukuza Gloss.



Bookshelf



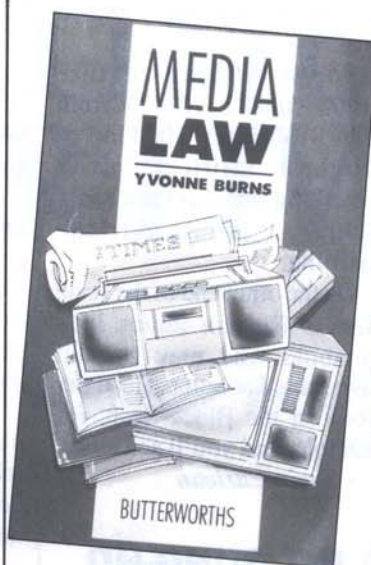
LEGAL AID

Bell Dewar & Hall, Kelsey Stuart's Newspaperman's Guide to the Law 5th ed., Butterworths, 1990; Yvonne Burns, Media Law, Butterworths, 1990.

The risk of producing textbooks which are rendered obsolete by the rush of events before they hit the street is a hazard of the publisher's trade. This is why Butterworths are to be commended for producing two new works on media law in a year which holds prospects for more change (hopefully for the better) in that area than ever before.

The late Kelsey Stuart's now somewhat anachronistically named *Newspaperman's Guide* has for so long formed part of the journalist's library that it deserves first mention.

The fifth edition preserves the format of the fourth, and merely updates the areas of the law covered by its predecessor. All new developments have been covered, the most important of which is probably the acceptance by the Appellate Division that non-trading organisations such as Inkatha have title to sue for defamation.



Yvonne Burns' new book is a handy guide to media law.

Newspaperman's Guide remains the convenient map through the minefield which it always was. The comprehensive chapters on both the common law (defamation, invasion of privacy, contempt of court) and the applicable legislation (Internal Security, Defence, Police, Key Points, etc) remain. The question, however, is whether it will be displaced by its new competitor.

For practising journalists, the answer is almost certainly

no. Yvonne Burns' new work is clearly aimed at students, and for teaching purposes is probably the more suitable work.

Media Law is a slightly bigger (and more expensive) work (420 pages) than *Newspaperman's Guide* (352 pages), and deals with its subject-matter from a rather more academic perspective. It contains, for example, a useful introduction to the law in general and the structure of the South African legal system in particular, a brief history of the South African media, and a general discussion of the principles of media law from a comparative perspective – all matters in which Kelsey Stuart remains lacking.

Professor Burns has also given more attention to the special problems faced by the electronic media, and to those (including most community newspapers) which are not party to the agreement exempting them from the provisions of the Publications Act.

As a ready reference, however, *Media Law* is probably more difficult to manage than *Newspaperman's Guide*.

- John Grogan.

USEFUL GUIDE

Perspectives on Radio and Television – Telecommunications in the United States (3rd edition). F. Leslie Smith. Harper and Row, New York, 1990.

This is not a theoretical analysis of broadcasting in terms of society, or communications, or meaning.

It is a course textbook for college journalism students aiming at professional careers in broadcasting but it also has interest for those debating the future of SA broadcasting.

If, as some maintain, there are only four types of broadcasting system in the world, then this book explains ex-

haustively how one of them works, anticipating issues that will emerge from the belly of the SABC-government alliance.

These include questions on how licences will be issued for commercial, educational, and other uses; for how long, and under what conditions? Who will control content? Nobody could get lost in esoteric suppositions here. The theoretical megaminds of our various political/cultural desks would do well to come to grips with the nuts and bolts surveyed here.

Although not a handbook on production methods, it provides a comprehensive explanation of the organisational concepts, practices and prin-

ciples. Each chapter is divided into numbered sections and subsections. This, plus many photos and diagrams gives the reader easy understanding of a massive, diverse and complex system.

- Graham Hayman

MIXED BAG

Altered State: South Africa 1990. A Guardian Book. Fourth Estate, London, 256 pp, 1990.

This book consists of the series of articles published after the week-long visit to South Africa of 10 *Guardian* journalists in May this year.

The idea was that writers

PLEASE TURN OVER

Bookshelf

CONTINUED

from Britain's most respected left-leaning paper would perhaps be able to open a window on our society that had been slammed shut by PW Botha's emergency restrictions.

But things have obviously changed since February 2, and, as the book's title suggests, the final product has emerged as a critical overview and analysis of these changes.

Understandably, the editors chose for the opening piece an essay on the release of Nelson Mandela. What a pity they chose Breyten Breytenbach to write it. The maverick Afrikaner poet has always been better at symbolic impressions than meaningful analysis, but this silly piece of hagiography doesn't qualify as either.

Qualitatively, the rest of the

book is an extremely mixed bag.

South African feature writers could learn a lot from Alan Rusbridger. His kind of delightful satirical flair is something that has been sadly lacking in South African reporting.

On the other end of the scale there is Fashion Editor Judy Rumbold who may as well have stayed at home. Read her piece on the Black Sash, for example, and you'll see why.

- Kevin Carlean

A BIT GUNG-HO

Communication, media and development. Harry Marchant. Butterworths, Durban, 1988

After years of trying to convince journalism students there's more to media than the *Sunday Times* or *M-Net*, it's good to find a book that agrees.

I suspect Marchant wrote

this book out of the same frustrations: each chapter carries its own key concepts, seminar questions and extensive bibliography. No excuse for misunderstandings!

His key idea is that the mass media are too important to be left to the marketplace. In the Third World, high-tech, top-down media systems are generally inappropriate and socially counter-productive.

For media systems to assist development, they should reflect the views of ordinary people and not merely leaders, the wealthy or, worse, foreign

multinationals. The trick is to keep media forms and messages in step with the needs of ordinary people. Marchant suggests how.

At times, though, his view of social processes is a bit gung-ho. Communication, he says, "plays a key role in the transition of a society from a traditional (authoritarian) to a modern (democratic) lifestyle". And I'm not convinced that "social change is achieved as a result of the flow of messages between people". If only...

- Don Pincock

Note to the book publishers

BOOKSHELF is a regular books section which will be reviewing works that are of interest to journalists, academics, communications students and publication designers.

Publishers should send review copies to: Charles Riddle, Books Editor, *Rhodes University Journalism Review*, PO Box 94, Grahamstown 6140, South Africa.

We will endeavour to have experts in their respective fields review books but we do not undertake to publish reviews on all books received.

NATURAL FACTS

Meet the world's most experienced ventilation engineer

Over the past few million years, termites have perfected the technology for the design, construction and maintenance of air conditioning in tower blocks that can house up to a million citizens.

In fact a termite mound, with its myriad passageways, ducts and chambers, incorporates one of the world's most efficient and sophisticated ventilation systems.

Using legs and mandibles to scratch, mould, push, carve and carry, termites move tremendous amounts of soil, grain by grain, as they excavate, construct and carry out repairs to the mound or tend their subterranean fungus farms.

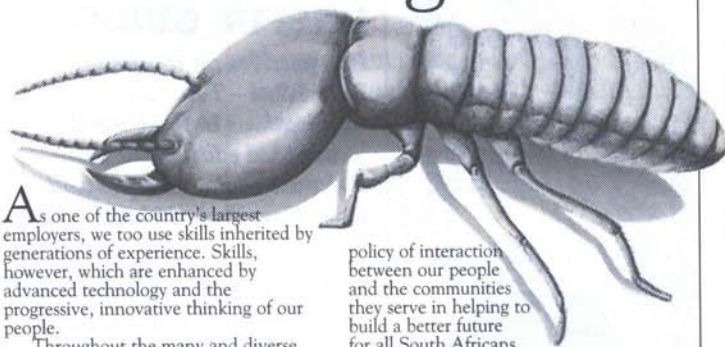
Warm air generated by all this activity and countless termite bodies rises through innumerable ducts and passageways to the mound's 'attic'. From there it is ingeniously

funnelled through a series of flues into the thick walls of the mound. Pressure from more heated air following causes it to keep moving, losing carbon dioxide and picking up oxygen as it goes.

The 'purified' air then travels down through the continuing ductwork into the 'basement' and the whole cycle begins again.

By opening and closing ducts termites are able to keep temperature fluctuations within the colony to between 2 and 3 degrees Centigrade while outside temperatures may rise or fall by 12 degrees or more.

Termite mounds — living monuments to social and industrial co-operation, second only to man's vastly more sophisticated ability to act with common purpose for the good of the community.



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