

# Koos and SACP pitch for media freedom

By Sue Valentine



**THE** highlight of the discussion on political parties' views on media freedom was the sharing of a platform by the two "CPs" of South Africa - Essop Pahad of the SA Communist Party and Koos van der Merwe of the Conservative Party.

The lowlight was the failure to appear of the ANC's Pallo Jordan and the PAC's Benny Alexander. As many of the conference delegates mused at the time, it is to be hoped that their absence from the conference was no indication of the ANC's or PAC's attitude towards the media and its future in this country.

Opening the discussion, Piet Coetzer of the National Party said freedom of the media had to be related to other rights and freedoms such as privacy and the right of reply.

"Democracy must depend on a network of checks and balances - the media should be part of them. Statutory limitations on the media

should be kept to the bare minimum."

Democratic Party spokesperson Peter Soal said the media should be as free and responsible as any individual. "There should not be any limitations on the press."

He said the baggage of the old South Africa was not needed in the new South Africa, reminding the audience of how the old restrictive legislation of the Rhodesian regime had been seized on "with glee" by the incoming Zimbabwean government.

In an entertaining presentation, the Conservative Party's Koos van der Merwe attacked the NP bias in the mainstream Afrikaans press and the SABC, saying that the Afrikaans newspapers were actively organising for the NP.

He said the CP could not live with a totally free press. "When we come to power there will have to be some form of limitations on things such as drugs, pornography, satanism, terror-

ism," he said.

Inkatha Gavin Wood said that what was the tradition and should fulfil the

SACP spokesman said the party was convinced that what was good for the country was good for the people. Pahad called for a class-driven which holds the democrats and specific class w

In the *Mail* co-edited the rhetoric marred by political pa

# Taking stock of th

**THE** traditional debate and distinction

by the state or subject to state intervention.

agreement