

NIEMAN REPORTS

THE NIEMAN FOUNDATION AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Vol. XLVI No. 4 Special Edition 1992

FIVE DOLLARS

South Africa Southern Africa

The Future of the Media

How Much Freedom?

- From Government?
- From Political Parties?
- From Monopoly?
- From Economic Restraints?
- From Public Harassment?

Journalists, Newspaper and Broadcast Executives, Government Officials
And Liberation Leaders State Their Cases

*Never before in the history of the world has the media been
so instrumental in influencing the fate of the
government of the day—Gitobu Imanyara*

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Guide

Excerpts from speakers and panels are on pages 4-62.

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Those attending the conference are listed on page 63.

EDITOR'S NOTE

These excerpts of the conference on the media in South Africa and Southern Africa, held July 1-3, 1992, in Johannesburg, are based on a transcript of an audio tape of the discussions. Some sections of the audio tape were difficult to transcribe accurately because on occasion speakers turned away from the microphone and participants, particularly some of those asking questions, did not speak directly into a microphone. While we have made strenuous efforts to check the text and are confident that it is generally accurate, in some cases, especially in the Q. & A., the excerpts may not be precisely word for word what was said. ■

THANKS

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The Conference—A Fruitful Dialogue

By BILL KOVACH

THIS SPECIAL EDITION of Nieman Reports reflects the confluence of several important trends developing in South Africa.

The first and most obvious trend is the accelerated pace of South Africa's movement toward government by the majority. This movement has been accompanied by the emergence of a vigorous alternative press, by new questions about the future of the established media trusts, and by a weakening of government control over press activities. The times argued for an opportunity for the journalists themselves to address these factors and their impact on issues concerning the press in an emerging democracy.

The second trend is the decision by the Nieman Fellows of South Africa to form themselves into an organized society to promote and elevate the standards and practices of journalism in South Africa. With thirty-four living members, the South African Niemans represent the largest national group of Nieman Fellows outside the United States.

Finally there was the decision of the African-American Institute to open a full-time office in Johannesburg to accelerate their work at this crucial time of change.

Clearly, after conferences in the United Kingdom and the United States, the time was right to make Johannesburg the location of the Africa Day Conference of the Nieman Foundation and the African-American Institute.

The record of that conference that you will read here makes it clear it was the right time and the right place. Participation in and around the conference, nationwide press coverage during the conference, correspondence and other reaction since then all reinforce that conclusion.

Many felt the most important contribution of the conference was its ability to engage top executives of the media trusts in dialogue with owners and managers of the alternative news organizations about future development of a press independent both politically and economically.

That seems to have been the judgment of D.D.B. Band, Chief Executive Officer, Argus Holdings Limited, who said in a letter afterward that he felt he had participated in a meeting, "which history will see as having played a core role in advancing the cause of press freedom in the new South Africa."

Others, including reporters in the field in South Africa today, felt the focus of attention which was given to the

Other African journalists saw the conference as the beginning of a new awareness of the possibility of forming strong regional or continental networks of journalists to support one another and further the cause of journalistic independence.

For the Niemans themselves there were a number of reasons to consider the conference a special event.

The conference helped galvanize the move toward formal organization into the South African Nieman Society.

As you will see as you read this report, no one who participated in the conference doubted the ability and strength of journalists in South and southern Africa to meet the challenges ahead. Neither did any minimize the

Many felt the most important contribution of the conference was its ability to engage top executives of the media trusts in dialogue with owners and managers of the alternative news organizations about future development of a press independent both politically and economically.

protection of journalists was a major accomplishment. In response to a challenge from Raymond Louw, Cyril Ramaphosa, General Secretary of the African National Congress, announced at the conference that Nelson Mandela had personally issued a directive to all ANC organizations to ensure that township youths were instructed to respect the journalists who cover situations of unrest in the townships.

But the conference failed in at least one important area, the role of women in the future of South African journalism or their concerns. Except for Carmel Rickard and Gwen Lister the conference panels and speeches were dominated by men.

trials and obstacles which lie in the path of democracy, self-government and a vigorous free press.

The commitment of journalists in the region seemed to be embodied in the venue of a final reception at the conference end. Along with other journalists and political and civic leaders the conference participants met at Witwatersrand University to celebrate the future. It was the opening of that University's Institute for the Advancement of Journalists brought to life by Allister Sparks (Nieman Fellow 1963) with support from the Poynter Institute for Media Studies. ■

Keynote Address

An Independent Media In a Changing South and Southern Africa

Chair—MICHAEL GREEN, Chairman, Nieman Society of South Africa

Introduction—ANTHONY LEWIS, Columnist, The New York Times

Speaker—GITIBU IMANYARA, Editor-in-Chief/Publisher, The Nairobi Law Journal

MICHAEL GREEN

WE HAVE A WIDELY represented gathering here, people from various parts of the world, men and women. The criticism has been made that there are too few women participating, but I gather that the organizers tried very hard to get a better representation. I think it's a testament to what's happened in South Africa that, in spite of the present extreme difficulties, there has been sufficient change to encourage people like the African journalists to come to this country for a conference.

Let me tell you a little bit about the African-American Institute for those of you who are not familiar with it. It's an influential body. It has been highly critical in the past in various ways of what has happened in South Africa. And maybe it's still critical.

The institute has held conferences in America, organized by Frank Ferrari of the institute, and by the Nieman Foundation. But this is the first one in this country. The Nieman Foundation of Harvard celebrated its 50th anniversary about three years ago.



Michael Green

The Nieman Society of South Africa has been in existence formally for about 20 years, thanks largely to the efforts of Aubrey Sussens, who was the first South African Nieman and who is not here this evening because of illness. We have had a South African Nieman Fellow at Harvard every year for the past 32 years.

ANTHONY LEWIS

THREE YEARS AGO THIS conference, in my opinion, could not have been held in South Africa. Many of us journalists from the rest of Africa, and the United States, could not have got visas to enter the country. Leaders of the African National Congress would have been in prison or exile. Even to wave the flag of the ANC was a crime. An industrial worker who had the initials ANC on his coffee mug was convicted of an offense.

People whose politics were thought to disagree with the governments were detained without trial, without stated reason. Other were banned, forbidden to meet more than one other person at a time, forbidden to enter a newspaper office, or a university.

Much has not changed in South Africa. The core of the apartheid system, the denial of political power to the vast majority of the population, remains in place. But the pall of silence that covered the country has been lifted. There is vigorous debate in politics and in the

newspapers. Criticism is everywhere. People argue matters so profound, really the future character of the country, that the debate puts to shame the often frivolous and irrelevant political campaigning in my country. This is the right place to hold this meeting, the perfect place I think, because South Africa demonstrates the close connection between democracy and freedom of speech and press.

During the dark decades, there were courageous journalists here who tried to tell the story of official cruelty and abuse of power. They paid a price. Lori Gander and Benjamin Pogrand were convicted of a crime because they wrote and printed stories about brutal prison conditions. Among the people in this room, I may not have spotted them all, even with assistance. If I haven't, I apologize, but at least Joe Thloloe, Z. B. Molefe, Guy Berger, Matatu Tsedu were in prison. Zwelakhe Sisulu, who will be with us tomorrow, was detained and banned. The New Nation and The Weekly Mail were shut down. Editors and reporters, some in this room, paid a heavy price, too, when their propri-



Anthony Lewis

etors had to choose between them and the government, and some chose to please the government.

Tension between the press and those who hold political power is a natural phenomenon. An inevitable one, when the press does its job. The history of the United States proves that. The First Amendment to our Constitution provides that Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech or of the press. Just 20 years ago, the Nixon Administration tried to prevent The New York Times from publishing the Pentagon Papers which told how we had been drawn into the Vietnam War. And then the Administration threatened to punish The Washington Post for uncovering President Nixon's crimes in Watergate. The need for a committed press, a courageous press, will never end, in any country that is free.

That brings me to the man of courage who will speak to us this evening. Gitobu Imanyara lives in a country, Kenya, with a constitution that guarantees free speech, freedom of association, and freedom of opinion. But those rights exist in theory only. In fact, the country is ruled by an autocratic president who over the years has become increasingly tyrannical, banning opposition parties and detaining political critics. For much of the time lately, there has been just one lonely publication daring to write about the idea of multiparty democracy. That was The Nairobi Law Monthly. Editor, Gitobu Imanyara. He had no great publishing chain behind him; he was about as alone as he could be, putting out a law journal that dared to discuss the values of free expression and due process of law. Two years ago this week, he published an issue devoted entirely to articles arguing for and against the idea of multiparty democracy. It included quotations from the speeches of Kenya's president, Daniel arap Moi. No sooner was it printed than Mr. Imanyara was taken into detention, and magazine vendors stopped selling The Law Monthly for fear of arrest. I've learned tonight that four times subsequently he was arrested, spending altogether eight



Gitobu Imanyara

months in prison. Happily, Mr. Imanyara survived that crisis. He's even managed to get his passport back.

GITOBU IMANYARA

SOUTH AFRICA HAS BEEN the source of great inspiration for many of us, but because of a climate of fear and terror that has enveloped this great land since the Nationalists seized power, it is sometimes forgotten that the great Mahatma Gandhi was born in this country, and began his venerable campaign for nonviolent struggle for the realization of full human worth and dignity here. It is sometimes forgotten that South Africa is the home of Africa's oldest and most disciplined political party cum liberation organization, ANC. The great Percy Qoboza, a South African, set standards for journalists, that journalists around the world tried to attain.

We live in exciting, dangerous and unpredictable times. The world appears to be in a state of flux and confusion, a world that will in a moment give birth to a democracy, and in another, a full scale war. It is a world in which dictators, despots and tyrants are falling at the most rapid pace. Indeed, the rate at which the world political environment is changing is what creates special challenges for journalists. Encouraged by the people revolutions of Eastern and

Central Europe, the breach of the Berlin Wall, and the consequent end of the Cold War era, the people of Africa, long subjugated, and long forgotten, are rising from the ashes of colonialism, neo-colonialism, apartheid, and single party dictatorial regimes passing off as the organization of African unity, but more accurately, as the private club of African dictators, into a new era in which democratic practices, the rule of law and respect for human rights are the guiding principles.

At the forefront of this new struggle are African journalists who have acted as the couriers of this new message of hope. Everywhere in Africa will be found young men and women, most times with little or no professional training, challenging the long established propaganda machines, and defying an amazing and treacherous maze of decrees, statutes, and regulations designed, forged, and fashioned to curb press freedoms and to ensure the propitiation of dictatorial regimes.

In Kenya, for example, a whole array of rules, regulations, and administrative presidential decrees have been used to ban newspapers, to detain journalists without trial, to refuse registration of new publications, or to impose unreasonable and oppressive conditions from publishers, or to bring malicious criminal prosecutions under the country's oppressive sedition laws. Yet Kenya, like many other African governments, is a faithful signatory of the United Nations Human Rights Declaration that declares in Article 19 that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression. This right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference, and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

What, then, is the proper role of the independent media, in a changing South and southern Africa? There cannot, in my view, be an easy and all-compassing answer to the question.

One has to examine the current media experiences, limitations, and restrictions and the whole issue of the democratization process currently sweeping the region. And one must begin with

the recognition of the elementary fact that there has not been an independent media in the region. How could there be an independent media in a region that is mostly dependent? When three decades ago, Macmillan's famous Wind of Change began the process that saw Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya gain political independence, many saw in these new nations the promise of human worth and dignity. Indeed, the constitutions of the new nations contain the wonder phrases of our commitment to ideals of democracy. Free elections. Independent judiciary. Freedom of association, of speech. An entrenched Bill of Rights. We know that within a short span of time, these hallowed phrases were reduced into meaningless chants. Africa's founding fathers disgraced us. Their conduct militated against the struggle of the others in the region. Our former colonial masters could cite the Kenyan example as an illustration of the contention that Zambians, Zimbabweans, Namibians, Mozambicans, Angolans, and the majority of African people in South Africa are "not ready for democracy." Because we were "not ready, for democracy," we were also not ready for democratic institutions such as a free press.

In Kenya, Kenyatta simply banned opposition parties, independent newspapers and publications and placed those who did not get along in preventive detention. A few, like J. M. Kariuki and Tom Mboya, disappeared or were murdered. Under Moi, bannings, detentions and murders were not sufficient: an institutional assault on the fledgling democratic institutions saw opposition parties outlawed, the secret electoral system abolished, independent judiciaries strangled and the ruling party's preeminent role entrenched to such an extent that even trade unions, women's organizations and the bar association were expected to affiliate with the ruling party so that we could achieve faster development and so that we could remain a shining example to our neighbors.

I cite illustrations from Kenya, because for far too long, Kenya was a reference point of an African "demo-

cratic country." I cite Kenya, because even as I speak to you, President F.W. de Klerk is using Kenya and a number of African countries as centerpieces of a new policy that will, unless exposed at this early opportunity, create the most serious obstacle to the democratization process in Kenya and South Africa.

As many of you are aware, President Moi has very reluctantly introduced certain political reforms in the country, as a result of intense local and international pressure.

He predicted that Kenya would be engulfed by tribal violence after the introduction of multiparty politics and that political parties in the country would be formed on tribal lines. Within

In the struggle for the restoration of the worth of the human being, for the restoration of democratic practices and the rule of law, there can be no question of neutrality. We in the media must side with those that strive for the restoration of basic rights.

no time after the presidential prediction, Kenyans have witnessed a degree of political violence not seen since the Mau Mau liberation war days. Independent investigation teams by the churches, opposition parties and journalists have established beyond a doubt that what is happening is officially instigated and perpetrated by Kenyan security forces.

President Daniel arap Moi, whose human rights record and policies have isolated him from world leaders who care about their human rights image, has found a new friend in F.W. de Klerk. The international community, while acknowledging the positive changes brought about by President F.W. de Klerk in South Africa, nevertheless feels that the gulf between the rhetoric and substantive change is still too large to enable the return of South Africa to the world community of nations. President Moi has earned himself the dubious

distinction of being the African leader who is stalling democratic transition in South Africa. Why else should President Daniel arap Moi pay a state visit to South Africa, where the majority of African people are asking that such visits be withheld?

Given President Moi's record over the last 13 years since he came to power, we in the media are entitled to probe beyond rhetoric and find out whether he is serious about holding a free and fair election. Only two years ago, he was embracing Nelson Mandela during Mandela's official visit to Kenya and publicly siding with the democratic forces in South Africa.

Today, President Moi betrays and humiliates all men and women of goodwill in South Africa. He does this by his inopportune, ill-advised, publicity-seeking contacts with a government that stands accused of massive violations of human rights, massacres of hundreds of innocent men, women and children. We in the media are entitled to ask why the maddening rush towards restoration of trade ties, air links and diplomatic relations, even as the CODESA talks stall over such basic fundamental human rights as universal suffrage.

In the struggle for the restoration of the worth of the human being, for the restoration of democratic practices and the rule of law, there can be no question of neutrality. We in the media must side with those that strive for the restoration of basic rights. Never before in the history of the world has the media been so instrumental in influencing the fate of the government of the day.

I submit to you tonight, that as the watchdog of democracy, an independent press is going to be a lot more important in our region than the springing up of many opposition parties. We shall continue to be a special target for government reprisals as we seek the truth. We shall continue to be harassed. Some of us may be arrested and detained without trial and some may even be asked to pay the ultimate sacrifice. These are the hazards of an independent journalist. ■

The Current Media Experience

Chair—AMEEN AKHALWAYA, Editor, The Indicator
Panelists

RAYMOND LOUW—Editor, The South Africa Report

HENNIE VAN DEVENTER—General Manager, Nasionale Pers

TREVOR NCUBE—Editor, The Zimbabwe Financial Gazette

AMEEN AKHALWAYA

AS YOU KNOW, the topic today for this section is the current media experience. It's quite a wide ranging topic, and I'd like to welcome our guest from Zimbabwe, Trevor Ncube, who is the editor of The Financial Gazette based in Harari, Hennie Van Deventer, fellow Nieman Fellow, general manager of Nasionale Pers in charge of newspapers and Raymond Louw, Editor of The South Africa Report.

RAYMOND LOUW

FIRST OF ALL, let's just start with what happened a few days ago, which tells you a lot about the state of the media, and that is the attack on the eight journalists who went down to cover the funerals at Boipatong. There have been attacks on journalists from time to time in grave circumstances, but to have been attacked as viciously as many of them were is extraordinary even by our standards in South Africa. I hope that the fact that they were attacked because they were white journalists is not in fact indicative that the anger and distress and frustration of the black community is turning into a racial



Ameen Akhalwaya



Raymond Louw

war. There are some grounds for believing that that may be so, because only the other day, a number of cars traveling on the Golden Highway south of Johannesburg were stoned and set on fire, and people in them were attacked. Some were killed or injured.

There have been quite a number [of attacks] over the last year or so. I've been going back through this publication called Update, which is produced by an organization called the Anti-Censorship Action Group, which records inroads and harassment of journalists, and other inroads in the sense of restrictions of freedom of expression. It is fascinating reading, to be reminded of all the events over the last year. Reporters have been banned from press conferences, which is I suppose the most innocuous of the things that could have happened to them. The Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal banned a theater critic because he wrote stories about the dangerous manner in which the

council managed its plays. But there have been rather more serious attacks as well. There was a Star motorcar, with three journalists in it, which had a hand grenade lobbed at it, and the three were injured. There was a young lady from The Weekly Mail, Rosalie Talela, who, because she was a woman, was attacked by a group of Inkatha supporters. In fact, physical attacks of this kind have risen to such an extent, that the Foreign Correspondents Association wrote to the leaders of the various liberation movements and the government to protest and ask them to insure the safety of the 160 foreign correspondents here in the country.

These are not the only impediments that impinge on the press. There are the contempt-of-court cases that have been brought against distinguished editors, like the editor of The Star, by officials of the state, in an attempt to no doubt penalize them. But in the process [causing] those newspapers great expense to defend themselves. The sum total of the effort is of course to try to inhibit free expression. Fortunately, The Star has won all the cases, but there is no doubt that it is an extension of harassment that seems also peculiar to this country.

Perhaps a rather more unusual form of harassment that has taken place occurred to the correspondents of The Independent, John Carlin, and a BBC producer, John Drury. They were investigating the activities of hit squads, and before they'd done the video, which was broadcast by the BBC, they suffered a great deal of harassment. Carlin's office was broken into, an assistant had a home broken into, (or some people got into their home by false pretenses), and

they copied the contents of a hard disk. Drury was arrested at London Airport for carrying drugs. Apparently, they found in his luggage some mandrax tablets, and some other drugs. The customs officers at London Airport had been tipped off a day before that he would be arriving with all the stuff. Fortunately he managed to talk himself out of it. But it shows the extent to which certain people who are harassing the press are prepared to go.

There has been some progress with the removal of the banning orders on the organizations like the ANC, the PAC, etc., which of course immediately meant that newspapers were now free to publish the views and opinions of the leaders of those organizations and their standpoints. They have also amended the Internal Security Act, to reduce the period of detention without trial, from unlimited detention to something like 10 days, renewable by a judge. They also made it easier for newspapers to be registered, by removing the possibility of a 40,000-rand, which is just under \$20,000, registration fee. They've also prevented the minister from summarily banning the media. And, they've lifted the restrictions and the reporting on activities in prisons and police. So these are quite substantial advances.

But if one thinks that the government has gone soft on the press, one would be mistaken. There are still a great many other laws, which various organizations, including the Campaign for Open Media and the Media Council, have requested the government to lift. The government has done very little about them—in fact, nothing. There's the Defense Act, which is an all-encompassing act which prevents the media from writing about military matters, or defense matters; the National Key Points Act; the National Supplies Procurement Act, which relates to the procurement of supplies for military and other purposes; the Petroleum Products Act, which prevents you from writing about petroleum products, that is, the buying thereof, the selling thereof and the transport thereof; the Nuclear Energy Act, which relates to the production of uranium and various other items which go into nuclear energy; the Armaments



Development and Production Act, which prohibits the discussion of anything relating to the procurement of armaments; the Publications Act, which doesn't deal directly with newspapers who are members of the newspaper press union, but does deal with newspapers that are not, and also with other forms of expression, such as film, video, and magazines. And of course, that organization which exists under that act, that is the Publications Board, which has a record in the last few months of banning publications as readily as they have done before.

Then there's the use of state funds to finance defamation actions. I will not go into that, nor will I deal very long with Section 205 of the Criminal Procedure Act, which forces journalists to disclose their sources of information and which is still being used by the government.

[Critics have] blamed the media for very poor reporting of the CODESA talks. To a large extent, this is right, but it's not entirely the media's fault. There are the political parties. There is also the management of the CODESA. There are no means of obtaining information about what goes on at CODESA in a manner which can be regarded as open, free or fair. There is no formal mechanism of reporting the CODESA talks in the way one would report Parliament. Therefore, the media have been trying to report those events, which are momentous and important for the future of the country, on a catch-as-catch-can basis. One of the first things that should be done is to press for the opening of that forum so that it can be reported properly. The other challenge is to cut through the misinformation, the

disinformation and the propaganda attendant on these talks, which has been occurring with singular regularity.

So the media needs to be critical; it needs to be perceptive, and it needs to be informed about what's going on, and to reflect that in its pages.

Then there's the wider issues of unbundling the large concentrations of newspaper ownership. There is an over-concentration of ownership in the English press. Mostly, the Anglo American press are in the control of the Anglo American Corporation. Whether they exercise the control is another matter, but the point is that they are under that control and there should be more diversity there. How it's done is not all that easy to decide, because if one had to unbundle those papers to, shall we say, the logical extent of making them each separate entities, a lot of them would collapse.

There's the alternative press, which is struggling to survive, and I think it's major challenge is to obtain the funds and the support to enable it to survive. It's got a very good record of having produced the kind of stories and the kind of information that this country sorely needs. I'm talking particularly about the disclosures that have appeared in papers like *Vrye Weekblad*, *The Weekly Mail*, *New Nation*, etc. and which one would have liked to have seen in the mainstream press. It is very important that those papers should be allowed to find a way or to be helped to continue.

AMEEN AKHALWAYA

WHEN RAY MENTIONED about the Foreign Correspondents Association having written to the liberation movements about the threats, a similar thing has been happening to black journalists for a long time. An organization called the Black Editors Forum was formed, an informal organization whose aim was to take up with liberation movements and all political parties the question of intimidation. Interestingly, all the organizations said they believe in total media freedom, that they did not support intimidation, but they could not have control



Hennie van Deventer

over rogue elements within their ranks. Unfortunately, the only time we get publicity of this kind of harassment is if it happens to white people. All this time it has been happening to black journalists.

HENNIE VAN DEVENTER

I REMEMBER A HIT SONG from the fabulous Fifties in which the singer puts on record his longing for freedom in the following exclamation. "I wanna be free, oh yes, free oh yes, free oh yes. I wanna be free like a bird in a tree." For many years, this golden oldie invited a predictable reaction from this journalist. That was to want to turn to a South African colleague, any South African colleague, and remark, listen, they're playing our song again.

But how things have changed since the F.W. de Klerk era.

Since 1989, even the extremely irritating Police Act, as well as the Criminal Procedures Act, and others, have come under scrutiny with commendable alacrity. In cooperation with the Media Council, and the team of editors, these unpopular acts have been or are in the process of being changed. Bob Steyn, the registrar of the Media Council, who has been closely involved in this opening operation, regards results as well above expectations. He regards the

present situation as absolutely wonderful. Or so he told me, and he consented to be quoted on that, in this company.

Not all restrictive measures found their way to the graveyard just yet. A few, too many really, obstacles to full press freedom remain. Ray Louw mentioned a few of the acts, the Internal Security Act, the Petroleum Act and others. But the fact is that the South African media today enjoys freedom it could not dare to expect a mere four or five years ago. As a result, it is able to play a vigorous role in the process of changing the face of South Africa. It also does its bit to keep the participating political groupings within hearing distance of each other, even when things threaten to go horribly wrong, as they threaten at the moment.

The South African public can rest assured that it is getting more and more dependable information than ever before, also through the sterling endeavors of some of the adventurous new players on the media scene. The benefits of this commendable new media order are many. One was illustrated in the referendum of 17 March when constructive mass action by all major newspapers helped to crush the much-feared no factor spectacularly.

Long-standing divisions in the structures of the organized press in South Africa have since been removed. First, the Conference of Editors opened its doors to allow all editors membership. Secondly, the Conference of [Newspaper] Editors joined the NPU. The NPU now represents the broad spectrum of South African newspapers, from far left to far right. Yes, not only the likes of *The Weekly Mail*, *The New Nation*, *Vrye Weekblad*, *South*, *The New African*, *The Indicator*, have found a home under the NPU roof, but also the right-wing weekly *Die Patriot*, which supports the conservative party. What all this means is that after a long period of division and tensions, one can now begin to talk of a truly unified South African press. This unified press has as a common goal the promotion and retention of a free, unfettered, and independent publishing industry in the new South Africa.

A united stand on the remaining laws and regulations still inhibiting press freedom and a collective commitment to a new South African constitution entrenching freedom of speech and publishing, so that whatever government gets into power, will be unable to shift this fundamental cornerstone, will surely add weight to the promotion of these worthy causes.

The linking of media hands will hopefully also strengthen resistance to intimidation, and harassment of journalists and newspapers, which is especially severe in the black community, but also not unknown to Afrikaans editors. Many of them, including this ex-one, can relate chilling stories about all kinds of threats by supporters of the AWB. There is also a common interest in maintaining press diversity in the face of severe economic pressures. Some established members of the NPU are known to be investigating ways to assist newcomers. In a move that not so very long ago hardly would seem possible, my company, *Nasionale Pers*, although stating its preference for what it called a more orthodox approach to funding, recently associated itself with support for continued outside assistance from a commission of the European Community to two newcomers to the NPU.

Nasionale, which also came about to serve a people's liberation, fully understands the ANC's desperate wish for a loyal supporting press and fully understands that organization's evident fear of serious harm for itself if such a press should remain lacking. We support that ideal, but with one important proviso. That is that the press must be built, it must be developed. It cannot be hijacked. This is a lesson taught by our own proud history as a small Afrikaner act of faith and idealism that blossomed. *Nasionale* is not only prepared to give moral support, it is also keen to examine avenues of cooperation and assistance in different forms, thereby to demonstrate its strong support for the broad principle of free expression and a plurality of ownership.

Unfortunately, our hands are not as free as we would wish them to be, to be able to tackle these complicated issues of democratization, because of our

own struggle, the Afrikaans's press's own struggle for survival, mainly against the false perceptions of advertising yuppies that Afrikaans is a spent force. It requires ingenuity and energy and lots of money to fight this nonsense in South Africa. Be that as it may, believe me when I say that in our ranks, we look forward to an exciting new era also for the media. In that era, we wish to continue to play a constructive role. We are steadying ourselves for the challenges of democratization and we are prepared to look good and hard at all opportunities that present themselves to demonstrate our attitude of live and let live.

TREVOR NCUBE

I WILL [BEGIN] by outlining briefly what The Financial Gazette is, what it stands for, who owns The Gazette and its position within the Zimbabwe media scene and then outline a few practical problems that we as an independent newspaper experience.

The Financial Gazette is owned by Modus Publications, which itself is owned by three black businessmen. The Financial Gazette is by and large a financial newspaper but it has taken on very critical social, political, and economic issues within the country, particularly political issues. The Zimbabwean media scene is dominated by the government-owned press. There are three dailies, one in Bulawayo, one in Harare and one in Mutare, all government-owned. They are by and large propaganda vehicles. There are two Sunday papers, also government owned. There are a number of weekly publications which are also government owned. Television is government owned, radio stations are all government owned. So that leaves very little room for the independent press, and indeed, we haven't had a long tradition of the existence of an independent press in Zimbabwe.

Side by side with the existence of an official press, we have what one would term perhaps "party papers" with one weekly party newspaper, which is called The People's Voice. Not that it speaks on behalf of the people, but it's called The People's Voice. We have a monthly

which is called Zimbabwe News; it's not representative of Zimbabwean views, but still it carries the name Zimbabwe News. Those are two party vehicles which were set up precisely for the purpose of propagating the views and opinions of the party that is currently in power.

Then we have had over the past few years the emergence of the independent press. The Financial Gazette has been in existence since 1969, in various forms. But I think the notable form is the one which I preside over at the moment, which has been quite vocal since 1980.

Modus Publications has other newspapers. The Weekend Gazette, which is a weekly newspaper, is by and large a socio-political newspaper. The attempt here was to try to divide politics from the finance world, to leave The Financial Gazette to concentrate on financial



Trevor Ncube

issues. Still, The Financial Gazette continues to be seen as an outspoken political newspaper. Still on the independent newspapers, we have The Horizon, which has been in existence for about a year now, quite a vibrant magazine, quite critical, quite constructive in a way. We have Parade, which has been in existence for quite a long time and we have Moto, which has been in existence also for a very long time, a newspaper that was critical of the Smith regime, that is still critical of the current establishment.

Initially, the government's position was to deny that the official press was representative of its views, [to insist] that it was independent, that they had nothing to do with the running of those newspapers. But with the increasing vibrancy of the independent press, The Financial Gazette included, the government has now taken a position that there is nothing wrong with controlling the so-called official press. [They said] it's our right, we must have somebody to speak on our behalf. On the other hand, the party's also saying, we ought to have somebody to represent our views and those of the party newspapers. And we, the independent press, have been labeled the opposition press, because we are seen as supporting opposition political parties. We've been labeled of late by the president, the "yellow press," whatever that means.

From there, perhaps let me move into specific areas, which will help to assess the kind of position that we've taken on political issues, particularly being a financial newspaper. We pride ourselves at the moment for having taken a central role in persuading the government to drop the issue of the one-party state. In 1989, the government had made up its mind that they were going to legislate for a one-party state, and we were the only newspaper which stood very solidly against this idea. We exposed ZANU-PF's plans to legislate for a one-party state. It was telling the public lies—that this was a popularly suggested view within the Central Committee. But people came to us and told us that that wasn't the case. The only people that wanted a one-party state in ZANU-PF were the president and the minister of foreign affairs. We publicized those views. In so doing, we realized that we were not the only ones against the one-party state. We developed a tremendous groundswell of support. It's a miracle that we survived, because the government made up its mind that they were going to ban us. We were happy to see, as time went on, a lot of people within the party and government falling by our side and the president and a few of his henchmen becoming isolated and coming under pressure to justify why they

wanted to legislate. That subject, as far as we're concerned, has been put to rest. Today, we live happily ever after. The so-called opposition press and the official press—everybody—seems to enjoy a multiparty state.

Then, we come to the issue of socialism, communism and free market liberalized economy. I'm sure a lot of you are aware of the views of the president of Zimbabwe. He was a staunch Marxist-Leninist, and he wouldn't listen to liberal views, or the opening up of the economy. We took a position as a newspaper that what would serve Zimbabwe well was a mixed economy. It irritated the government and we were labeled as speaking on behalf of the white communities. No black person could speak in support of a capitalist set-up. But we took a position that the most reasonable socio-economic setup as far as we're concerned was a mixed economy, where private initiative would be recognized and rewarded. We maintain that position up to the present moment and we celebrate again, because we again clinched a victory on that front. We're now a mixed economy.

The government has adopted a structural adjustment program, and we said to ourselves that our mandate is to make sure that the government sticks to the program that it has adopted. It mustn't be allowed to drag its feet. It must observe the targets that it has set. In pushing the government it's as if the program is ours and we're forcing them to implement it, when it's their program, and what we're saying is, please, let's observe the targets. And we've been irritating the government quite a lot.

Only five weeks ago, we picked up a Cabinet discussion. The Cabinet wanted to ban the opposition press. If not banning they wanted to make our operations very difficult, and they would do that by cutting down our newsprint allocation, cutting down our foreign currency allocation, banning all parastatals from advertising in the independent press, making sure that we would have problems in sourcing any machinery from abroad. One of our sources within the Cabinet told us what was happening, and we ran the story. A week afterwards, I was approached by



the Criminal Investigation Department who wanted to know my source in the Cabinet. They wanted to get that source because he had breached what we call the Official Secrets Act. If I didn't, I would be held in contempt of court. I'm still waiting to appear in court, because there's no way that we are going to disclose the source of that information, because as a newspaper, we will stand discredited.

The other issue was the appointment of the university vice chancellor. The university council carried out interviews as [was] the procedure and came to a conclusion that the appropriate candidate was a certain Mr. X. They quickly dispatched the name to the president, who is the chancellor of the university, to make a formal appointment. Because the candidate was not the one that the president wanted, the president wanted to push this thing under the carpet. We got to know what had happened and we publicized that. For political reasons, and for tribal and ethnic reasons, the president did not want the person that had been recommended. You can imagine what happened afterwards. But we are happy today that our public disclosure forced the president to announce the appointment of the candidate recommended by council. ■

Q. & A.

Lewis—What position has The Financial Gazette taken on the issue of land acquisition, which from a foreign point of view is a very hot issue, with recent legislation providing for acquisition of land without access to courts?

Ncube—We were a black-owned organization, with a black editor like myself. And when it comes to an issue as emotive as land, one would have expected us to take an emotive stance. But we didn't, and that irritated the government quite a lot. We're very outspoken. We said we don't disagree with the fact that land needs to be redistributed. But one area that we disagreed quite strongly with the government was the fact that land was going to be expropriated from owners without appropriate compensation, without giving the right to the previous owner to contest the monies that were going to be given to him. The courts were being taken away from this entire very crucial exercise. It was simply going to be done at the whims of ZANU-PF. I think we wrote to the extent of boring our readers—about three editorials, very strong ones. One we titled "Cry Our Beloved Country" because we said, government was taking an emotive stance on a n issue of central importance to the well-being of the nation. It hadn't properly planned for this. Who was going to be resettled? What is going to be done to the people who are resettled, are they going to be given the proper education, the proper backup facilities? Is the infrastructure there? How are they going to be selected, and we said, look the commercial section is quite vibrant. We recognize the importance that land ought to be redistributed. But let's go about it the slow, gradual way, that won't jeopardize the agricultural sector of the country, which is quite important in the economic performance of Zimbabwe.

So we didn't from the outset disagree that land ought to be redistributed. But we disagreed with the government quite strongly on the modalities of effecting that redistribution, on compensation, on the exclusion of the courts in the determination of whose land was going to be expropriated, and how much was going to be taken away from them. Again, we were called all sorts of names and people were surprised that a black editor could take such a stance. I remember a white friend walking into my office, and saying, "It must be very difficult for you justifying this." I say, it's not difficult at all. It's something that I think is of crucial importance, and if someone doesn't stand up and speak out, we will all find ourselves down the drain one of these days, and we will have nobody to blame but ourselves.

Pillay—I am led to believe that the crisis with the drought was partly induced by the IMF recommendations, particularly the selling off of maize stocks. To what

extent did your newspapers try to alert the country about such policies?

Ncube—We started as early as April last year, in showing the government that our maize stocks were fast running down, that we might have to import. We were again called all sorts of names, that we didn't know what we were talking about, that the government would not import at all, that we had adequate maize supplies.

Two-three weeks before importing, we again drew the attention of the public to the fact that our maize stocks were running down. Urgent measures would have to be taken. Again, the minister of agriculture called us all sorts of names, and said we didn't need to import, we had adequate maize supplies. A week later he was on television telling everybody that we would have to import.

I think the sale of maize to Zambia when our food stocks were running down has nothing to do with the IMF. It's got a lot to do with government's failure to plan and government's greed for foreign currency. They wanted foreign currency for whatever reason. In some quarters, the rumor is that that foreign currency never even reached the exchequer, that it went somewhere else, you see. So it was greed for foreign currency, at a time when the dangers for starvation to the entire population were looming all over the place.

Berger—Mr. van Deventer said that the ANC shouldn't hijack a newspaper, but form its own and he cited the history of the Afrikaans press as an example. If one looks a little closer at the the Afrikaans press it clearly became a viable industry because it hitched its star to a particular political party and that party managed to empower Afrikaans-speaking people. It also had good relations with the government of the day. Thus the Afrikaans press was very close and in harmony with the government, maybe too close. What route would you suggest for the ANC to develop its press?

Van Deventer—Yes, I think we run the risk in the Afrikaans press of not enjoying such a very close relationship with the government of the future. It is not really for me to spell out the way, but I don't want to be cynical and say that the ANC must follow the same way as the Afrikaans press. We live in a different country, and circumstances have changed. They can't begin small by selling shares to black people in the streets, where the Afrikaners started 50, 60 years ago with their press. Surely there must be other ways. What I tried to say is that the establishment press

I think that the South African press itself has got to show more so than since 1990, that it wants to grab more freedom for itself.

There's been very little protest among the South African press against the laws that remain on the statute book. The attitude has been expressed by Mr. van Deventer, and the secretary of the Media Council, that in fact, South Africa is in a most delightful position, whereas it in fact is not.

has a responsibility in this. We want to be constructively involved. We appreciate the fact that there is a need, and we want to cooperate. But it must be done constructively, orderly, it cannot be done by just expropriating, or deciding by government decree, that the ownership has to be unbundled. It has to be a close relationship, and a working relationship, with the press companies of the day. I'm talking on behalf of Nasionale, but I know that all the other establishment groups are keen to get involved in getting a better press situation in South Africa, in which there is a more represented situation than we have now.

Sithole—What is the position of your publication on the fact that when the land was taken from the indigenous people, there was no compensation?

Ncube—We ought to start from the premise that expropriation in Zimbabwe in 1892 was an injustice on the black people. But I think it is my considered view that it would be a wrong decision to say that to redress that injustice, we have to inflict another injustice. Certainly two wrongs will never make a right. I think our choice ought to be the choice of social stability, the choice of economic stability. It appeals to emotions to say that land was grabbed from the natives, therefore it must be grabbed from the settlers who are now, the majority of them, white Zimbabweans. They have nowhere to go. They are Zimbabweans; they have a right to be there. We had a disastrous land resettlement exercise where the government grabbed thousands of acres on a willing-seller, willing-buyer basis, and resettled selected people for resettlement. If you went to those areas at the moment, you'd be amazed at the way the land has been run down in 10 years. Land is a finite resource, and we cannot use it in that manner. Because there won't be land for a growing population. So emotions aside, let's be pragmatic, let's look at what we want for the future. Do we want

chaos, do we want starvation? I don't disagree at any moment that there ought to be redistribution. But let it be done in a pragmatic manner, in a systematic manner. The person that ought to have access to land must be someone that can work the land for the benefit of the entire community, and not for his own selfish gains. With the majority of the people, the issue becomes emotional. But a nation cannot be run on emotions. At some time someone ought to be able to use their heads, and not their hearts, particularly when it comes to issues of this importance. I want to say cynically that when the Land Acquisition Act was passed, the only jubilation was in Parliament. Nobody danced anywhere outside. Jubilation was in Parliament, because those are the people that will benefit, not the people out there in the street. If you look at the kind of people that own land in Zimbabwe, people who bought land after independence, you'll find it's the black politicians. Are they going to be expropriated too? Is their land going to be redistributed? If that happens, then we will take them very seriously.

Louw—How prevalent is your view in Zimbabwe?

Ncube—It's not a very big percentage, but I must say, within the black intelligentsia, within the white community, obviously it's a strongly held view. But with the majority of the people, the issue is emotional. A nation cannot be run on emotions. At some time someone ought to stop and be able to use their heads, and not their hearts, particularly when it comes to issues of this importance. I've always said that the land-acquisition bill was a political gimmick on the part of the government.

Khumalo—What was the state of the media before independence in Zimbabwe? This is important to advise us how to conduct ourselves so that the new government won't see us as a threat to it.

What are the things that made the Mugabe government want to grab the media, so we can avoid it in South Africa?

Ncube—The situation was by and large the one that existed here, let's say, prior to the de Klerk regime, where there was heavy press censorship on the part of the Smith regime. It was not unusual for instance to open the pages and find empty space—this story was not published because government refused [to let] us publish it. At independence the papers that I have talked about were owned by Argus Press and government took over those newspapers with the assistance of \$4 million from the Nigerian government. The idea obviously on the part of government was to make sure that

you're dealing with a different government in Zimbabwe to the government that exists here. You're dealing with a different cultural background and value systems.

On the other hand, I think that the South African press itself has got to show more so than since 1990, that it wants to grab more freedom for itself. There's been very little protest among the South African press against the laws that remain on the statute book. The attitude has been expressed by Mr. van Deventer, and the secretary of the Media Council, that in fact, South Africa is in a most delightful position, whereas it in fact is not. I think the press here are faced with a government that has every intention of persisting with as many controls as it possibly can. Only the other day it introduced legislation which called for telephone tapping and interception of mail, which was in the style of the old days of apartheid.

Ncube—There is need for cooperation between the independent media in South Africa and in Zimbabwe. I've very little sympathy for government-controlled press and I would find it very difficult for starting any links with them. But I think there is room for cooperation between the independent press in both countries. It's when the government is pushed against the wall that it becomes a very dangerous government to the press. Once there is the kind of network that provides political protection, it ought to be developed, it ought to be cultivated.

Van Deventer—I feel a bit misrepresented by Ray Louw's remark that I tried to convey the picture of everything being very delightful as far as press freedom is concerned. I specifically made the point that not all the restrictive measures have found their way to the graveyard. But I think one must commend the South African media and the South African Media Council and also the government that in close cooperation they have really succeeded since 1989 in removing from the statute book many of the restrictive measures. I can't see any editor in South Africa disagreeing with me that being an editor in S.A. in 1992 is much different than four years ago. There is much more freedom and the quality of the information that gets through to the public is much, much better and more dependable than it was.

Q.—One of the things that made [the media in Zimbabwe] succeed was the support they got from advertising agencies and big business and also on television. They don't put money in social

issues, issues that affect women or social stability, never where the problems are. I think that in Zimbabwe there was a rapprochement between big business and government. How do we persuade big business to support the independent media in southern Africa?

Ncube—I think you raise a very important point, and that is the relationship between big business and government. I think we saw that in Zimbabwe, like you point out, where the independent press like ourselves at one time were having problems securing advertising from big companies, because they didn't want to be associated with our views critical toward government. Placing an ad with *The Financial Gazette* as far as they were concerned was an endorsement of our views and they would rather place ads within the official press. That went on for some time, but as soon as discontent began to emerge with the political system, our outspokenness actually became a selling point as far as advertising was concerned. We got advertising because of our stance vis a vis the government.

Q.—As a point of info, a question arose about regional cooperation. Argus recently assisted with training and development programs in Namibia in news editing, reporting and photographic programs, where we sent some of our people to Windhoek. We would like to expand those sorts of contacts. The other

I can't see any editor in South Africa disagreeing with me that being an editor in S.A. in 1992 is much different than 4 years ago.

point is in relation to the assault on journalists at Boipatong. You, Mr. Chairman, said it was only news when white journalists were attacked. I don't think that is correct and is an unfortunate statement. Pressures on black journalists have been written about extensively in our papers. Our concern for people incarcerated, black or white journalists, over the years, has been well known, so for the record we ought to say so. As for the observation from Ray that we are not concerned enough with challenging the government on restrictive measures, that, too, is incorrect. Editorials have been written, and through various agencies, we have indeed protested against those laws.

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...the South African press itself has got to show more so than since 1990, that it wants to grab more freedom for itself.

they had a vehicle through which they could propagate their views and opinion. They did not set up their own press. They decided to buy what was existing, because it's easier to do so. As time went on, they then set up the party papers. They now have a stronghold on the daily press because they have a say who's appointed, who's not, and who gets fired. It's good for the government, but it's not good for the entire nation.

Ferrari—Ray Louw, what would you see as the relationship between the South African media and the independent media in the region? Trevor, what do you think your relationship would be with the South African media?

Louw—I would think the regional media would be able to gain quite substantially from the South African media. In fact, at a conference I attended a couple of years ago Zimbabweans asked South African journalists how they had managed to survive with the restrictions imposed by the apartheid regime and yet retain a high degree of independence. I gather from Mr. Ncube that the situation in Zimbabwe is still a large degree of a press which carries out the government's wishes. Well it was these people who were asking the South Africans how they could possibly improve their own situation and get a higher degree of press freedom. I think that the South Africans can supply that kind of expertise and knowledge. But

Limits on Media Freedom

Moderator—ANTHONY LEWIS, Columnist, The New York Times

Panelists

FERNANDO LIMA—Director, Mozambique Media Co-operative

KEN OWEN—Editor, The Sunday Times

JOE THOLOLOE—Managing Editor, The Soweran

DRIES VAN HEERDEN—Freelancer

ANTHONY LEWIS

WE'RE READY FOR OUR second panel. I'll simply call on our participants beginning with Fernando Lima, who's here from Mozambique, and in a position to talk to us about a situation where the idea of an independent press is being born under his inspiration, in very difficult political, economic and security situations.

FERNANDO LIMA

I'M THE VICE PRESIDENT of Media Coop, which is a journalist cooperative formed this year in Mozambique, and an elected member of the journalists' union of Mozambique, which became an independent union last year. We are trying to develop some kind of political agenda within the cooperative, dealing with the freedom of the press issues and also trying to set up a weekly newspaper. Last month, we started Media Facts, which covers events that we think are not covered by other mainstream media, or what we call more often, state-controlled media.

I think I should give you some background information. Since November, 1990, we have a new constitution, that has enshrined all the individual freedoms that you will have in most of the Western liberal constitutions. The first draft of this constitution [was] released in January, 1990, and to our surprise, freedom of the press was not present in this draft. All the provisions in terms of market economy were there. This led us to write a document called the

People's Right to Information. It was signed by 165 journalists, to demand that freedom of the press also be part of the constitution. At the end, freedom of the press was part of the constitution. But it took quite a fight.

A year later, during the conference of our journalists association, for the first time in Mozambique, a leadership body was elected by secret ballot. Since then, a number of organizations adopted this kind of electoral procedure including the ruling party, Frelimo. ONJ is a trade union, but it's also mainly concerned with freedom of the press, and that's one of the problems, because some sectors in Mozambique are suggesting that we should concentrate in dealing with salaries and training programs for journalists and not be related to freedom of the press issues. We think the other way around. We think that despite this mention in the

constitution, unless we try to prove that it's something to benefit society, the journalists will just have this nice statement in the constitution. So last year, Parliament approved a press law that regulates freedom of the press.

Some of our members would say that the best thing would be to not have any law regulating press freedom. Others have a much more moderate approach, and say, well okay, it's not good, it's not bad, at least we have some written regulation, and that frames our freedoms.

At this point, our main obstacle in terms of the press law is that almost all the institutions tend to not know about the principles in this law or try to ignore the principles of that law. This includes even the journalists that don't know about what their benefits are in the law. The other thing we consider very bad in this law is in relation to the directors of radio, TV, the news agency. They are



Fernando Lima talking with Andrea Taylor of the Ford Foundation

appointed by the government but there are no screening bodies to give opinions about these directors. There is no control of the public in these appointments. The main idea is that the government of the day should be the one in control of appointing these directors. We're saying that this is very bad.

Another bad point in this law is the fact that the directors and the editors are not liable in terms of the articles that appear in the newspaper or on the radio. They are only liable if they knew previously the content of these articles. Since the press is mainly state controlled, this prevents the directors in these state corporations to be sent to court about something that has been written. So the burden is always on the reporters. This also provides power for the editors, and news editors to say, well I will not approve this article, because I don't want to be sent to the court. This is a way that the government can control these publications. Our law also doesn't provide for the creation of private radio and TV stations. A new law is being prepared.

Due to all the economic constraints ethics are running pretty low. Almost every ordinary citizen gets two jobs to survive. Journalists work in the newsroom and at the same time are press attachés in ministries, or working as media consultants for other institutions, or writing the articles, and at the same time, appearing on TV commercials, which is very bad.

What is being done to prevent these abuses? Apart from the journalist organization, not much has been done, and we have a real problem here. We have a multiparty constitution. We have about 15 opposition parties, but most of them don't understand what freedom of the press is all about and the role of the independent press. So they are very critical about the press. They are critical, because they say the press carries the views of Frelimo, not their views. They are busy trying to recruit journalists as members, distributing cards, and all this stuff. So their concern is not press freedom, but how to control a particular newsroom, or a particular problem.

In some countries, the church is quite a progressive voice on these kinds of issues. In Mozambique, the Catholic Church unfortunately, is very busy trying to set up their own radio station, their own publications, so they don't care about freedom of the press.

I would say that the participation of civil society in this particular issue is very bad. Which also singles out the journalist union for criticism, as an opposition party. We're not an opposition party, we're a journalist organization. This situation is leading an increasing number of professionals to come to the conclusion that we cannot fight within the system, meaning, fight within the state radio, or the news agency, or other publications, that we should start our own publications. There are six independent organizations, but no newspapers yet.

When you go the bank, you face a 42 percent interest rate on bank loans. It's completely impossible for you as an independent organization to get bank loans. On the international or foreign front, we are also confronted with a big problem. Some small organizations think it's too risky and too big a business to support an independent newspaper. For bilateral donors, they think also that it's too risky to support an independent paper that can be critical of the government. Their main agenda is to boost market economy, which they want the government to improve and implement in the country. Market economy comes first, human rights and democracy comes afterwards.



Mozambique



Ken Owen

KEN OWEN

I DON'T WANT TO BE trite, but I can't escape the fact that we're in a transitional situation of some kind. So I hope to make a broad distinction first of all between governments which have legitimacy and those which do not. I'll deal first with legitimate governments. And then say that my hope would be for something similar to the First Amendment to the American Constitution, which says that Congress shall make no law abridging freedom of speech, with the recognition that even that absolute language can't bring about an ideal situation. There are various examples in the American experience where the First Amendment didn't prove to be a complete guarantee of freedom of expression. I think the classic question is, do you publish the sailing times of ships during war? The point I'm making is the fact that there are restraints on the press in the freest of societies. The reason for that is quite obvious. There is a hierarchy of rights. For that reason, I rather prefer the German formulation, which says that you have freedom of expression limited by the provisions of the general law which lay down the rights of individuals and by such exceptions as laws to protect the welfare of children.

I would throw into that, defamation. I think a law against defamation is a legitimate and proper provision in a well-ordered society. I would also differ from many people, in this country especially, in admitting that something in the nature of Section 205 is a necessity. I don't see how newspapermen can be exempted from the general duty of citizens to uphold the law in a legitimate society. In any event, we all recognize that even in the States, people who have defied similar legislation have done what passive resisters always do. They paid the penalty. It seems to me that a lot of agitation against 205 derives from an unwillingness to pay the penalty. The situation is quite different where you have no legitimacy. We have had none in this country for quite a long time. Then obedience to the law becomes a tactical question.

The editors in this country in the last 20 years were faced with the problem of cooperating or defying the Media Council. The Media Council was the price we paid to avoid legislation and in doing so we submitted to the bluntest and the most obvious of blackmail. The same is true of the Defense Liaison Committee, in which most of us have participated. We were blackmailed into participation and we participated because it was a lesser evil, and finally, with the Police Liaison Committee, we participated there. In the purest world and, I would almost say, in an undergraduate world, that is reprehensible behavior. In fact, we had no choice. We were in control of major institutions which did not belong to us, in positions of trust. And it did no good to stand and die on a principle. Not everybody would agree with that. And I can see that there are people who would rather die than yield on principle. The fact is that we did yield, and we have survived, and now we are reversing the tide.

I don't see how, in the sort of society we've lived in, one could have behaved much differently. In the Soviet Union you had other tactical options. You produced newspapers in samizdat and that is an option. It's to me striking that especially in times of severe crisis, there tends to be a proliferation of alternative media. It's always an indication that the

mainstream media are not articulating the concerns at least of a minority of society, perhaps a very large minority, or even a majority. Exactly the same thing happened during the Vietnam War.

I think that we have an obligation now to lobby as hard as we can for the maximum of freedom of expression. I doubt we're going to get what we ask for. I don't see a sign that any political force in this country is willing to accept the American formulation that the Parliament shall make no law. Hardly anybody actually lobbies for that. I see little chance that we will get anything as good as the German Constitution. One accepts the idea that society has the right to make laws for its own good order, to preserve its own public mores, and that the press does not have any right which takes precedence over the rights of individuals.

If it turns out badly, we can go back to what we did before. We act tactically. You use the freedom such as you have in order to undermine the government. That is the value of the free press in an unfree society. I would in that case put an enormous premium on the preservation of the institution at almost any cost. Because even very, very tightly controlled institutions can be subversive. But that's not everybody's view.

I would say only one word about the other pressures on publishing as we experience them in this country now. That is that editorship as I see it is to be in a cockpit where conflicting pressures meet. It's a highly political appointment. People like me who tend to be rigid, have great difficulties surviving in that cockpit. One needs to know when to back down graciously, and when not to.

That brings me quite obviously to the question of ownership. It would be nice if the newspapers were differently owned. I think that if we could get a maximum shareholding, we might mitigate some of the pressures. I'm not sure that a practical result would be greatly different.

The long-term solution to the problem of ownership is the proliferation of publications, and I think they are proliferating. I think it's not true that the



Joe Thloloe

monopoly is either complete or closed. And I doubt it will last as a monopoly, so it doesn't seem to me to be as nearly as important a problem as fixing constitutional rights.

JOE THLOLOE

I WANT TO DIFFER slightly with Ken Owen. I'm a little more optimistic about the constitutional future. I'm a little more optimistic about a bill of rights that guarantees a free press. We will be listening over these two days to some of the political leaders. And they will all be telling us the same story. They believe in a free press, they believe in all sorts of good things that we would like to hear. I think our problems lie at a different point. We don't have a culture of freedom of speech. We don't have a culture of freedom of expression. We haven't had a completely independent media. And I think that is where our problems lie. I will talk about what's happened to one of our journalists. Ruth Bemu went to spend a night with a family in Soweto. Violence was raging around that home, and she wanted to know what it felt like to be in the center of this violence. The following day she wrote a very innocuous story about how they had had supper, using the television as their light. She mentioned that she had gone to a community meeting where the community had decided to collect money to buy guns for self defense. Now, this had absolutely noth-

ing to do with the woman she had gone to visit, but in a day or two, this woman was visited by comrades, youngsters who went to this woman and said, why do you give our secrets to the press? By some coincidence, the very same woman was shot in the street and she is in hospital today. She is convinced that she was shot because she had spoken to The Sowetan.

We've tried to show her that the two incidents have nothing in common. But she won't accept it. Then Ruth started getting telephone calls from people threatening her. She doesn't know if this is related to this specific story or to other stories that she has written. She ignored this until she found a note on her car door saying "we know your car, we know where you shop, we have been following you all along."

We have reached a very unhappy juncture. In the old days, it was very simple. White journalists were there to protect white interests. And we black journalists made our choice. We said, we are there to protect black interests. We justified it in so many ways. We believe in justice. But essentially it was sectional interests. Now we have reached a very difficult period where the liberation movement is no longer one liberation movement; there are parties within the liberation movement and loyalty is expected from black journalists.

To what extent do you criticize during the period of reconstruction? We will not get attacks coming from government. The international spotlight is too focused on South Africa to get a government that can go back to the bad old days. Whether it's an ANC government, a PAC government, an Inkatha government, we will not get that. But we will still get people getting petrol bombed in their homes because of the things they wrote. We will get cars exploding. I want to stress again, it is because we don't have a tradition, we don't have a culture of freedom of expression. And I want to suggest that the media in this country are not doing *anything* to create that culture.

When de Klerk had to flee Boipatong, amongst the leaders of the protest against [him] were prominent PAC

members, Barney Desai, Benny Alexander, the whole lot of them. But almost no publication mentioned the fact that they were at the forefront of this protest. It was all an ANC protest. Two of their bodyguards were shot, and ended up in hospital, and again, no publication mentioned the fact that their bodyguards were shot and were in hospital.

On the same day, SAPA issued a statement that they were starting a trust fund, and they were donating 20,000 rand to this trust fund, for the victims of Boipatong. Two days later, the ANC announced that it was also starting a trust fund. The PAC trust fund was not mentioned anywhere, but the ANC trust fund was publicized very well.

We are not giving the readers the impression that we are objective journalists. We are not giving the impression that we have to inform our readers completely. We probably need to do something about getting more competent journalists. I will leave that open. But what I will try to suggest at this point is that we are not anticipating the problems that we are going to face in the future. We are not allowing open debate in our publications.

Finally, I want to suggest that we need to go on a proactive campaign to get down to the grass roots, to make people understand, the ordinary man to understand, why it is important to have freedom of expression, why it is important to have an independent newspaper or radio station. We are not doing that, we are only looking at the big picture, at the constitutional issues. And yet, our problems do not lie in that area.

DRIES VAN HEERDEN

AS FAR AS LEGAL constraints on the South African media are concerned, my colleagues have pointed out that most of the hundreds of laws and regulations that directly affect the day-to-day activities of newspapermen and women have either been erased or are gathering cobwebs in the bottom drawer of a colonel at police headquarters. What has not yet come about that is much more difficult to

obtain, is to create a culture of openness and an accessibility to official sources in the so-called New South Africa. I say difficult, precisely because in the present transition, we are not only



South Africa

addressing the powers that be, but also the powers soon to be. Suffice to say that there is an urgent need for [a] freedom of information act as opposed

to the Protection of Information Act that we presently have and that has been part and parcel of our daily lives for so long.

It's trite to say that it's almost impossible to expect every individual newspaper to convey the views of all parties on the political spectrum with equal vigor. We are steeped in the tradition of newspapers' being the campaign managers of political ideologies, where white has always been white, and black had been black, and red beyond the pale.

The bare minimum one can hope for is to present the newspaper consumer with a wide variety of choices. In this sense, media freedom exists in the fact that I can buy both New Nation and the Conservative party's Patriot at the same newsstand. However, despite the fact that on the average Friday, I have a choice in Pretoria between seven dailies and seven weeklies, with four more titles added on a Sunday, I still contend that the diversity of political views in this country is not adequately reflected. There are political voices representative of significant sections of the population, which are simply not being heard because of the inability to gain access to capital and infrastructure which would enable them to establish publications. I believe it is a problem that will not be solved merely by chanting mantras of the power of the market.

Newspapers in this country are not only commercial enterprises, but are also, and should increasingly be, vehicles for democracy. If market principles were the only consideration, surely Afrikaans groups like Nasionale Pers should by now have established a right-wing daily to cater to the needs of

the growing segment of the white population. On the contrary, they run the real risk of alienating their readership, by confronting them with the often unpalatable message of reform and change.

The good news is that there is a gradual realization among all participants in the newspaper industry, owners, boards, editors of mainstream newspapers, alternatives, or as they now prefer to be called, the independents, and ordinary journalists that the greater diversity of voices would be of benefit to everybody.

It is clear to me that the existing mainstream media will have to be actively involved in the establishment and the nurturing of these new voices through a process of voluntary affirmative action. In essence, it means that the mainstream media should assist in the creation of their own opposition. This can be achieved through a number of methods which may include:

- Changes in the composition of newspaper boards.
- Opening up of newspaper ownership to public shareholders.
- Transfer of certain newspaper titles to independent trusts.
- Levies on advertising revenue to be channeled to such a trust.
- Special deals for the printing and distribution of papers.
- Joint ventures in the areas of training and the sharing of facilities, computers, equipment, [photographic] darkrooms, etc.

On a number of these issues, I know there has been considerable progress in recent months. No doubt the moguls and the magnates that follow us later today will fill in the detail. The big question is whether this goal can be obtained without resorting to that dreaded "S" word—subsidization. And moreover, to what extent can it be achieved without some form of government assistance?

The recommendation from the recent campaign for open media conference about establishing an independent communications development trust, to subsidize fledgling publications, should receive serious attention. Such

a trust funded by the major newspapers, perhaps through levies on advertising revenue, could assist publications that have either already proven their viability, or meet agreed requirements in terms of management, administration and possible market penetration.

But the maximum the newspaper industry should expect, and I believe accept, from any government would be matters like exemptions from VAT, reduction of telephone charges and selective tax exemptions to smaller players in the industry. Moreover, it is not possible to look at this question without reference to the advertising industry which in this country is 90 percent



Dries van Heerden

white, 85 percent English-oriented and geared toward consumers in the higher-income brackets—those that tend to read the mainstream papers.

A publication such as *New Nation* boasts a readership in excess of 400,000, and yet does not receive a fraction of the advertising revenue channeled to less viable mainstream publications. So much for the power of the market. There exists an obvious need for an agreed formula to transfer some advertising revenue from the market leaders to younger and alternative publications. At the same time, the alternative media are now starting to realize that the days of the fat foreign subsidies are over. Already this has resulted in much leaner operations, investments in the latest innovations in desktop publishing, the

pooling of resources, and the establishment of joint ventures between hitherto competing publications.

On the question of possible political interference and limits on media freedom by a future government, I must once again confess to being a born-again pessimist. Unfortunately, there has yet been very little evidence to suggest that any future regime would be less inclined to expect complete obedience from a state-controlled SABC and fawning newspapers than the present one. The ANC's recently released media charter and the subsequent media policy adopted at its conference in May, do indeed contain noble and commendable sentiments on the need for maximum openness on the part of government structures and the removal of all restrictions inhibiting the free flow of information.

However, to quote the policy document, the mere declarations of media freedoms on their own are not enough. These freedoms must be underpinned by an equitable distribution of media resources, development programs and—my emphasis—a deliberate effort to engender the culture of open debate. It is exactly on this latter issue that the actions of certain elements in the democratic movement raise a number of disturbing questions. Critics with far better credentials than my own have commented on the almost paranoiac reaction to *Vrye Weekblad's* recent expose of collusion between the ANC and AWB supporters to supposedly kill ANC dissidents, or the heavy breathing down the neck of the generally sympathetic *Work in Progress* over a few minor errors.

I consider mealy mouthed [the] reaction by an ANC official over the attacks on reporters and photographers at the Boipatong funeral. This was not an isolated incident as Ameen Akhalwaya has indicated. And as many journalists, particularly in the black community who have been victims of threats and attacks, can attest to. Inquiring minds want to know what political movements in this country are doing to educate their members on grassroots level on

the need for tolerance and acceptance of criticism, whether it can be labeled constructive or not.

My biggest fear remains the imposition of what I want to call a government of national repression, composed of two or three of the major parties presently involved in the on-again, off-again negotiating process. Frankly, neither the National Party nor the ANC can be labeled inherently democratic organizations, despite their public utterances. Neither have reassuring track records as far as the commitment to media freedom is concerned. The main thrust of such a government, I fear, will be to look after the vested interests of their elite supporters, and, if need be, they will resort to authoritarian methods to protect their own backsides. Pity the dissenting voice-to-be, the PAC or Conservative Party, who would dare to oppose such a new power block. Woe to the courageous editor or the enterprising reporter, daring to point out the absence of clothes on the new emperor.

To paint a possible scenario is quite easy. To come up with potential remedies is much more difficult. One obviously would be for the media to [join hands] at this early stage of the process, and insist on inclusion of clauses, both in the constitution, and in a bill of rights, protecting free speech and the right to disseminate information. And for the creation of a vigilant constitutional court that will enforce these issues. But even then the battle is only

half won. The most lofty of media charters or the noblest bill of rights can still be torn up or trampled underfoot by power-hungry politicians, most often in the guise of, and in the name of, democracy.

Moreover, I think the media should remain vigilant, and wary of government, any government, especially those that claim to represent the will of the people.

DAN AGABESE

NIGERIA, AS MOST OF YOU know, has the most vibrant, and the fastest growing media, both public and private, in Africa. Any visitors to Nigeria would wonder if there are laws guiding the conduct of the press. The answer is, there are no laws guiding the conduct of the press. There are no laws restricting the freedom of the press because we have a culture of irreverent freedom of speech.

Our problem as far as the press is concerned is not the presence of laws, but the absence of laws. Some of you may find that difficult to understand. In the Nigerian Constitution there is no specific provision for press freedom. The press derives its freedom to operate from a section of the constitution which guarantees all Nigerians the freedom of expression. Nigerian journalists generally have always found these inadequate, and on two occasions, attempts were made to try to provide some measure of legislation in our constitution, specifically guaranteeing the freedom of the press. The first attempt was made when the constitution for the Second Republic, which is the period when civilians returned to power in 1979 to the end of 1983, is referred to. At the Constituent Assembly, 1978, the press pressed for the constitutional provision similar perhaps to the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The attempt failed.

The second time was in 1988, at another constituent assembly, which was ratifying the constitution for the Third Republic, which is the period—hopefully from January 2, 1993, when civilians will take over power. Again,

that attempt failed. Both attempts did not fail because of government; they failed because many Nigerians were not persuaded, at least those of them serving in the constituent assembly were not persuaded, that the Nigerian press is responsible enough to be given any freedom over and above what other Nigerians are entitled to. Those serving in the constituent assemblies felt that they were the next leaders of Nigeria and that if they agreed to such a provision, it would amount to digging their own political graves.

The Nigerian press has been very lucky. Two attempts in the space of 20 years to write in the books restrictive laws have also failed. The first was in 1964, when Parliament enacted the Newspaper Act. Under that act, it was an offense for an editor to publish any stories about public officers, whether or not those stories were true, which embarrassed those public officers in some way or the other. It was up to the public officer to prove that he was embarrassed by this story; it was not up to the newspaper editor to prove that his target was not embarrassed. The law lasted for two years. When the military took over power in 1966 it was one of the first laws scrapped. Yet, in early 1984, the Buhari administration, a military regime, enacted Decree Number Four, which was similar in every respect to the Newspaper Act of 1964. That decree also stipulated that any editor who published a story that embarrassed a public officer would be liable on conviction to 12 months imprisonment and his newspaper fined 50,000 naira. In early 1984, two reporters of The Guardian newspaper ran afoul of this law. They were jailed by a special tribunal set up for this purpose, and their newspaper was fined. Twenty months later, happily, when the Babangida Administration took over power, Decree Number Four was the first law scrapped.

Since then we have not had any restrictive laws. So our problem has nothing to do with laws, but the absence of laws. If you find that difficult to understand, let us look at it this way. A law, no matter how bad, no matter how restrictive, is still a specific law. You understand it, it's up to you to obey it, it's up



Dan Agabese

to you to challenge it and it's up to you to be creative enough to skirt around it and make sure that you're not caught up in it.

When you do not have a law, you do not know the limits of your operation, and this has always been our experience, particularly under the military regimes in Nigeria. This has resulted in a number of closures of publications. In 1978, one of the most vibrant magazines in Nigeria, *New Breed*, was banned by the Obbasanjo Administration because it published a story that the government found offensive. It did not say that the story was false. It was merely offensive. As some of you know, in 1987, my own publication, *Newswatch*, was also proscribed for six months by the present administration, not because we published a false story, not because we broke a law, but because we published a story that the government felt alone had the right to release to the public. This was the report of the political bureau set up to examine the possibility of the country adopting a constitution that had not been adopted anywhere in the world.

Only two months ago, another magazine, *African Concord*, published a story on the running of the economy by the present administration. The government disagreed severely with it. It did not fault it, in terms of falsehood, but it felt embarrassed by it. The magazine was shut down for two weeks. It was saved by the fact that its proprietor was willing to apologize.

In all these cases, there was no breach of a standing law or regulation. There's no law in Nigeria which says a magazine or a newspaper cannot publish a report submitted to government. There is no law in Nigeria which says, if a government, or a government official disagrees, or is embarrassed by a publication, that publication ought to be shut down. That is why I said our problem is not the presence of laws, but the absence of laws. Because if we had them, we would know how to behave. Since we don't have them, we don't know how to behave. In a situation like this, therefore, the conduct of the press is subject to the whims and caprices of those in power,

and this is what we find so difficult to deal with. In spite of this, however, the press in Nigeria continues to grow.

The challenge facing us has always been, how do you perform in a situation where there are no laws, and yet a country which has had for the past 32 years of its independent life, to contend with growing cases of fraud and corruption. In Nigeria, there is always abundant evidence of corruption and fraud. You will see people who drive cars that cost 100 or 200 times their annual salary, you see people build houses that cost the same amount of money, and you see people do a lot of other things. You see that they have no other visible means of livelihood other than perhaps their salaries. There is no proof that these people are corrupt or fraudulent. There is no proof whatsoever because the mere evidence that the man is living above his means is no proof that he is employing fraudulent means to do so. This proof has always been the problem facing the Nigerian press. How do we establish the proof? Nigerians do not cooperate with the press when it comes to investigating, when it comes to finding proof to support evidence of corruption in public or private life. That's part of our problem.

I would also like to point out that since *Newswatch* was born seven years ago, it has given a fillip to the development of the magazine industry. Because of the unwillingness of Nigerians to cooperate with the press, there is another subsector, which we refer to as junk journalism. This is the soft press that doesn't address serious social and political problems, but concentrates on dealing with who is sleeping with who, and that kind of thing. Unfortunately, because of the prevailing economic situation, a lot of Nigerians are taking refuge in reading such stories and ignoring the hard-headed news that ought to contribute to our country's development. ■

Q. & A.

Owen—How do you make the ordinary man or woman understand the importance of freedom of expression?

Thloloe—We at *The Sowetan* started out very modestly. On October 19 each year, we remember the day *The World* was banned, and around that period we run articles showing why it is important to have a free press, why it is important to have freedom of expression, and why nobody will ever be free in this country until there is a free press. It's a very modest start.

Ncube—You mentioned the problem of the bias in coverage when it comes to the ANC and PAC. What can your paper do about it? Are you part of the bias?

Thloloe—That's very strange. The *Sowetan* has been accused of being a PAC or AZAPO publication, which is not true. What in fact happens on *The Sowetan* is we give voice to every political party. Just because we happen to be the only ones who allow the other organizations to speak, we're accused of being biased towards them. But if we do an objective analysis of our content you will realize that we give as much space to the ANC and other organizations, as other publications do. As far as *Boipatong* was concerned, we're just as guilty as everyone else.

Derryck—What have you done, Joe, to protect Ruth from the harassment she is getting? While I agree that there is a lack of climate of freedom of expression, aren't we as black journalists guilty of perpetuating those myths, that level of expression? I am saying that this because you mentioned that Ruth is being harassed by a particular group and you don't mention them, but we all know who they are. Yet when you mention Swanieville, you said it is Inkatha. Are we not guilty of being comfortable to mention Inkatha, but uncomfortable when it is the other groups? Are we not perpetuating that culture as black journalists?

Thloloe—We had a meeting with the ANC and they are going to try to talk to the members of the defense unit and get them to understand that Ruth was doing her job. It is a whole process that we are going through. But in the end, it doesn't solve the problem because we will go out there and talk with them and these youngsters will say, yes we hear you. But there is no guarantee that they will not go out the next day and do exactly the opposite of what they said. That is a problem. But we are doing something about it. Now, as far as mentioning ANC and Inkatha, it must be a subconscious slip of the mind. But thanks for bringing it up. ■

The Government's Position

Chair—JOE LATAKGOMO

Speaker—LEON WESSELS, Minister of Manpower, Local Government,
National Housing and Public Works

JOE LATAKGOMO

ON FEBRUARY 2, 1990, President F.W. de Klerk made the dramatic turn away from apartheid and apartheid rule that his predecessors had been afraid to make over all those years. He unbanned the major black political organizations, and set the scene for the release of political leaders like Mr. Nelson Mandela. From that moment, South Africa has been on a political roller coaster. But we must remember that the National Party is still in power, and still has its hand firmly on the handle of government. We must remember, too, that it was this government which introduced in the name of national interest, strict controls over

the free flow of information. Luckily, [many controls have been] swept away by the tide of de Klerkism.

This year, we have seen the beginning of the end of section 27 1-B of the Police Act. Section

205 of the Criminal Procedures Act, which a colleague of ours earlier suggested is a necessary piece of legislation, still remains available to the police to use if and when they so desire. In the past year only, there were at least six recorded cases of the police trying to use Section 205 of the Criminal Procedures Act to extract information from journalists.

There are many more laws still on our statute books which regulate the press—the Defense Act, the Internal Security Act, the Prisons Act, Key Points Act, among others. The press can only

really be free once all those restrictions are removed from our statute books. That is part of our challenge.

What have the major political players to say about the future of the media in a post-apartheid South Africa? What visions have they on democracy, on the free press, on the electronic media? Walter Lippmann once said, a free press is not a privilege, but an organic necessity in any great society. Joseph Pulitzer's view was that a free press should always fight for progress and reform, never tolerate injustice or corruption, always fight demagogues of all parties, never belong to any party, always oppose privileged classes and public plunderers, never lack sympathy with the poor, always remain devoted to the public welfare. That, I believe, is the ideal which we as the media have to pursue.

We are honored to have Minister Leon Wessels with us this afternoon, to talk about the National Party's vision for a free press in the new South Africa.

MINISTER WESSELS READING ROELF MEYER'S SPEECH

WHAT I'M OFFERING is the speech prepared for the Minister of Constitutional Development, Roelf Meyer. The questions unfortunately, I will field from my own account.

The liberation of the media has given us conclusive proof of the counterproductive nature of any restrictions. We have discovered that the marketplace of ideas is much the same as any other marketplace. We have learned that any artificial restrictions on this market lead to distortions. It is only in a free market that ideas can find their appropriate

level. As a result, we have experienced a far more vigorous debate in the media. There are by and large no longer any sacred cows which the media by convention do not criticize.

The result has been entirely beneficial. It has certainly helped to inform South Africans about the national debate and the options for the future. It has also served the public by exposing shortcomings and malpractices on all sides. It has placed much greater pressure on all participants in national debate to communicate more effectively with the media, and therefore, also with the public. But it has done more than this. It has affected the behavior and policies of all the major players, now increasingly aware that certain practices and positions are unacceptable in the harsh light of public opinion.

The glare of publicity has a moderating effect and we have seen how open national debate has led to more realistic policies on all sides. For all these reasons, the maintenance of vigorous and unrestricted media will be a key factor for the new South Africa. In the coming months and years, the media in South Africa will have to play a particularly important role in the following areas:

- They must inform the public openly and effectively on the issues of the day.
- They must present their audiences with information on the constitutional processes which are under way and on the constitutional and economic options which are available to them.
- They must continue to act as a watchdog, they must expose the unacceptable behavior, whatever the source from which it emanates.
- They must encourage open and vigorous debate.



Joe Latakomo

In this process, it is unreasonable to expect the media to be objective. It is right that certain newspapers should forthrightly espouse differing positions and set up their respective stalls in the marketplace of ideas. The important thing is that the marketplace should be open to the purveyors of all ideas, and that the public should have the right to browse and buy as they please. At the same time, while we cannot and should not expect the media to be objective, we should demand of them that they apply their own codes of journalistic ethics strictly. In any marketplace, there must still be basic rules. But these rules should be determined and applied whenever possible by the media themselves.

The freedom of the media must obviously be catered to in a new constitution. Everyone who is interested in promoting a democratic future for South Africa should, however, also insure that press freedom is entrenched in reality, and will not simply be a cosmetic gesture. We must remember that even during the darkest days of Communism, the Soviet Union and its satellites solemnly protested that they observed press freedom although they usually added something like, "within the framework of scientific socialism." (I listened to what Mr. Latakomo had to say about events in our country, and therefore I hasten on to read the next paragraph.)

We must insure that in the new South Africa, more than lip service is paid to the freedom of the media. This might sound ironic, coming from a representative of a government which does not have the happiest of records in this regard. I believe, however, that this places us in a particularly strong position to warn of the dangers and counterproductivity of any media restrictions. A new and even more dangerous form of censorship, a new breed of censors, has, however, appeared. These are the township activists who resort to naked intimidation and violence in their efforts to cow the media and prevent unfavorable publicity for their organizations. Examples of this type of behavior are legion—from a photographer hacked to death in Crossroads in 1988, reporters being man-



Leon Wessels

handled at demonstrations and funerals, to political journalists being threatened with death for critical comments about policy.

Until leaders at both local and national levels take firm measures to put an end to intimidation of reporters, their commitment to free speech remains open to question. I believe that an in-depth look needs to be taken at the possible creation of a publishing environment in which opposing forces can, amongst other things, engage in their activities in a constructive fashion. The government should not do this by itself. The media professionals must come forward to give the government some professional advice on their craft. We must particularly be careful to ensure that future governments do not make the same mistakes that we ourselves have made. The media must especially be on the watch for any attempt by any party to place restrictions on its freedoms.

The ANC's draft media charter contains many provisions which are quite acceptable and indeed praiseworthy. But lurking beneath the apparently clear and sparkling waters of its surface, there are a couple of sharks which might threaten media independence. For example, there is a proposal that (I quote), "an accord of journalistic practice and the necessary mechanisms to ensure

minimum bias and distortion in the information process be established through negotiations in which journalists, the operators of the media, and their representatives of society at large, including political formations, should take part. And that such negotiations take account of the fact that to ensure confidence in the information process and in the media, the accord and mechanisms enjoy the broadest possible trust of society at large. And do not in any way restrict the freedom of expression."

This sounds very much like an attempt to create some form of national journalistic consensus to which all journalists must conform, despite the nice little admonition not to restrict freedom of expression. Then there is another shark fin emerging from the surface of the draft media charter on the question of documentaries and drama. The charter resolves that public broadcasting services must be obliged to broadcast a substantial number of existing drama and documentary programs on South Africa which have never been widely distributed. There was also perhaps a questionable statement recently, when somebody remarked that concerning the unrepresentative nature of the owners of most of our national newspapers the implication was clearly that this situation should be changed. The price of freedom is indeed eternal vigilance. The media are facing one of the most challenging phases in their history. I think that it can be stated without fear of exaggeration, that the next few years will see the development of techniques for making news available to the public that at this stage exists only in science fiction.

Coupled with this is the fact that in our country today, more books, magazines, and newspapers are being printed than ever before. The electronic media as well are only beginning to discover the enormous market that is available in South Africa. The specific challenge lies in catering to the needs of the many millions of half educated or poorly education people. Are we not publishing and producing over the heads of the mass of the people, instead of creating means which will guide them towards a

better life, and better developed tastes in terms of reading and viewing requirements?

We are indeed living in a rapidly changing South Africa. These changes encompass every aspect of the daily life of every South African. More than that, the results of these changes and the forces they release will affect the people of our neighboring countries as well. It stands to reason therefore, that the way in which the transitional period in South Africa is managed, as well as the way it is reported, will both play crucial and interwoven roles. I say interwoven because while the management of the process of change is obviously the responsibility of the government and the other parties involved in the reform process, the role of the media in keeping South Africans and the rest of the world informed is of equal importance.

Even more important than that is the role the media will play in shaping the opinions and perceptions of people. The media will play an extremely vital role in keeping the people of South Africa informed on decisions reached, as well as developments in the negotiation process. This is the only way in which what is termed the "re-entry" process can be facilitated. Here I am referring to the absolute necessity for the various parties and organizations to take their respective constituencies along with them, to inform them and retain their support during the transitional phase. Furthermore, by conveying their ideas and information to people, the media can present the various options to them so that they will be able to exercise the right to democratic choice. A last and less obvious role the media will have to perform is that of reminding any future government not to repeat past mistakes. By that I mean that no one should try to diminish the role of the media. Freedom of the press depends in the end on whether or not the media have the support of the public. In order to retain their support, you have to be worthy of it.

Media freedom is a protection, not a panacea to cure all evils. It is, however the final guarantee of the people's security, because without it, no truly democratic dispensation is possible. Our view

is that the best guarantee of media freedom may be to ensure that the media are as decentralized as possible. The approach should perhaps be to encourage a thousand flowers to blossom and to be wary of anyone who peddles the attractions of large bouquets.

In the meantime, let the marketplace of ideas flourish. You can rest assured that the government of the day and the National Party will also have their stalls there. It is up to us to ensure that our wares are as attractive as possible. It is up to you to ensure the continuation of a vigorous and healthy market. ■

Q. & A.

Pakendorf—I heard Mr. Meyer saying there should be no restrictions on the press. About two months ago there were reports that at CODESA there was an agreement between the ANC and the National Party as to rules and regulations which the press must abide by in the coming elections to a constituent assembly. Accurate report? Is there an agreement on how coming elections should be reported?

Wessel—If you and I are speaking English to one another, I think there is concern that we may not understand one another properly, but the way I understand the English Language, it means CODESA's dead. The fact of the matter is that those agreements that we reached at CODESA and are now lying dormant out there need to be implemented, and the only way to do that is through the process of negotiation. I certainly would still like to label myself as an optimist, but I don't shut my eyes to reality. So therefore I'm saying that I believe that the negotiating process is the only process to move forward to, it is the only process where we could reach agreements on the issues as you've raised them, how the media should conduct themselves. I was not a part of that particular working group. And I would therefore be hesitant to comment on how the i's were dotted and the t's were crossed. in that particular working group.

Pakendorf—I'm a little concerned that there would be regulations about how we do our job.

Wessels—I heard you say that even though you spoke in English. But I'm not

reacting to that simply because I don't know it. The thrust of your message is if I claim, as I did, in the speech I delivered, that the press should be free, they actually have to be free.

Berger—Is it not the case that the government has to play ball with the press? The press comes up with exposé after exposé about corruption in the government or police misbehavior. We are knocking our heads against a brick wall. You also urged us to inform the public about negotiations, but at the same time CODESA is closed to the press. If the press is to play its role in society, the government must also play its part. It takes two to tango. There's not much point to our being watchdogs if there's no response to our barking.

Wessels—It certainly takes two to tango, but I still believe that you don't actually negotiate in public. Finally and ultimately, the test and the fruits of negotiation must stand the test of public scrutiny. But the bridges are built and the process of people reaching out to one another simply happens in private. The fact of the matter is that you have to assist a politician to change his stance gracefully, and in a negotiating process, ultimately, he most likely will change his stance on more than one particular issue. Therefore, I think it is justified that at certain moments, the politicians, the negotiators do meet in public and in private to establish that rapport between one another. If your argument is that the fruits of the negotiation must ultimately stand the test of daylight and public scrutiny, I go along with you, wholeheartedly.

May I say to you on the matter of corruption, I think this is beyond doubt or question that the way in which the press have handled this particular matter—that issue is very much alive in the hearts and minds of South Africans. You just speak to my constituents. Where did they hear all about this—they read it in the press. And that is the issue, more than anything else that we are explaining in the circles we move in, as politicians. So I cannot go along with your statement wholeheartedly if you are saying albeit that you had written all this, it had been in vain. I would not go along with that, because certainly the public is very much aware of what you write.

Akhalwaya—We find it difficult to accept your commitment to press freedom in South Africa. We still have a long list up to today of questions that we sent to minis-

ters and got no response. Despite the fact that you claim to be a nonracial party, you are not accountable to the black press. Re the ANC proposals, at least they have proposals; the government doesn't. If you're talking about press freedom, why have you continued to keep the monopoly of public broadcasting with SABC? We as South African citizens cannot break the monopoly.

Wessels—Well, I think what you are really saying is that we are found lacking, because we are saying one thing and yet we have not delivered the goods in all aspects of what we say. You are of course absolutely right. But, in all fairness, many of the issues that you have mentioned have been the subject of negotiations at various forums, amongst others, at CODESA. And many of those agreements are at the moment not being implemented and the process of negotiations not continued because of the political dilemma we find ourselves in today. So the fact that I am aspiring to live up to the expectations of a true democracy and true freedom of the press does not necessarily mean because I have not delivered in terms of those aspirations that my aspiration is not a genuine one. We have come a long way. As Abraham Lincoln once said, I may be moving slowly, but at least I'm not moving backwards.

Tyson—Why wasn't this speech made 19 years ago?

Wessels—Roelf Meyer was not a member of Parliament 19 years ago. But in all seriousness, and latching on to the previous statement, I don't think that South Africans really appreciate the depth of emotions and the depth of rethinking the government and the National Party has gone through when it said, we believe in an undivided South Africa with one citizenship and everything flows from there. Because once you moved on to the next step when you said you believe in a democracy, a nonracial democracy, once you started in all seriousness looking at the universal declaration of human rights and matters such as that, you became acutely aware of all your shortcomings. I think that must be one of the reasons why this speech was not delivered 19 years ago.

There is, from our perspective, no alternative to negotiations. We believe what is happening at the moment in our country is not constructive and is not in the best interest of all South Africans, regardless of their political persuasion,

regardless of where they reside, what their political affiliations may be. So I believe we will try and react in a constructive, positive manner, and solve the matter amongst others, in eyeball to eyeball discussions.

Lewis—The negotiations were broken off over the issue of violence. To an outsider, it appears that the government has been singularly insensitive to that question in the last two years. Two years ago there was a massacre at Sebokeng. Two policemen were charged but as of today they remain on duty and haven't been tried. A document has been published linking the chief of security to an assassination of a leading member of the opposition, and he remains on duty. Two examples out of many. Why has the government been so slow to act on that subject?

Wessels—I'm not accusing you and saying your statement is not justified. But I do say—it will be said—if the government of the day is unsympathetic towards the death of its citizens, and I in all sincerity can say that is not the way we go about our business when we are deliberating, and debating these issues. I don't want to apportion blame this afternoon. I think that will not be constructive. I do, however, believe there is reason for misunderstanding and many of us are laboring under the wrong perceptions.

Harber—You tell us that you strive to meet the aspirations of democracy, which means public accountability. You tell us that we need a watchdog press to ensure that the next government doesn't repeat the mistakes of the past. You tell us that you need us to draw attention to areas so that you can act on them. All of us have pointed out that you have a minister who ran a department that was found to be riddled in corruption and his excuse was that in 1985 he was too busy to deal with it. If you do believe in public accountability, what is he still doing in the cabinet?

Wessels—Well, you certainly do not mince your words. I'm sure you'll understand that I am not in charge to react to your question to your satisfaction this afternoon. But may I say to you, being accountable for what I will be saying now and not reading Mr. Meyer's speech, I personally believe that this government and the party that I represent here have liberated ourselves from our racial prejudices. I do believe that flowing from that, we will live up to the expectation, and the expectations of all South Africans with regard to fair and representative democ-

racy. As we are doing that, in that process, we will also liberate ourselves from the accusations and labels and tags of corruption. I cannot take the matter further than that.

Q.—Is the government now prepared to move away from constitutionally entrenched power sharing to something more like an informal arrangement, like a government of national unity?

Wessels—That matter is not addressed in the terms that you are posing the question to me. But certainly we do believe that in the process of negotiation, as we are engaging in a process of enlightening one another, of understanding each other's position with greater clarity, it simply means a process of give and take. And in that respect, certainly once we get negotiations on track again, all options are options that have to be considered seriously by all role players, most definitely the government as well. The words that rang true to my ears were the words when you said an informal arrangement for national unity. Certainly those are the words that did appeal to me when you phrased them. The words that did not appeal to me were the words, have we moved away from our constitutional proposals. I am merely stating, we have a set of proposals, we are prepared to discuss them, to debate them, to negotiate them.

Q.—I commend you for the liberalization of the press, but why does government find the need to enact a new law now about bugging telephones?

Wessels—Well, you are absolutely right. As you know, we certainly want to relinquish power and see a new government in place. But we are still politicians. Therefore, we still aspire to be in government and to influence procedures that relate to government. What has eased my mind on that matter was in the final days of Parliament. It was contrary to previous actions [and] stated that outsiders with judicial standing will be involved to scrutinize those particular processes. In the olden days, it was a matter where officials and the government could act unilaterally to the exclusion of outsiders. Well, I tell you, being a lawyer, if my actions are scrutinized with a justification and the interaction of judges and people with judicial standing, I would definitely feel more comfortable. ■

Is Democracy Possible Without an Independent Media?

Chair—RICHARD STEYN, Editor-in-Chief, The Star

Panelists

BILL KOVACH—Curator, Nieman Foundation

GWEN LISTER—Editor, The Namibian

JOE LATAGOMO—Assistant Editor, The Star

ENOCH SITHOLE—Political Editor, The New Nation

RICHARD STEYN

AFRICA MAY BE MOVING gradually towards more democratic forms of government but the ideal of free and equal communication by citizens through their media both private and public, remains an elusive ideal. Not only in Africa. All over the world, we've seen the emergence in recent years of new, sophisticated forms of communication, and indeed of state censorship. We've seen the growth of multinational media conglomerates and the development of satellite technology, which crosses international boundaries. Each of these developments will impact on Africa, and of course on South Africa.

We in this country are adept at contemplating our own navels, and I hope in this session, in which we have as panelists two distinguished outsiders, as well as two South Africans, we won't focus overmuch on this country, but we'll look at the broader picture on the subcontinent. The rest of Africa is as much in need of genuine democracy and democratic media as we are in South Africa. I believe there are great opportunities for African journalists in all countries to band together now in the drive to democracy.



Richard Steyn



Bill Kovach

BILL KOVACH

I FEEL IT'S A TRICK question to ask a group of journalists, is democracy possible without an independent media? I presume there's no doubt about the answer any of us would give to that. I think Gitobu Imanyara said it was well as anybody I know last night when he said democracy and a free press are the same thing.

I suspect, maybe because I'm now ensconced in an academic community, I was asked to put it in a more philosophical framework, I'm not sure I can do that. But I can make a stab at it. Theoretically, if a community is small enough for all its citizens to engage in a discussion of the characters and the measures before them, yes you can have a democratic society without an independent press. But obviously, only in the most general sense, for our societ-

ies are far too large and too complex for any people to educate themselves without some meditation on the characters and measures that present themselves for their consideration.

That's true because of the inherent nature of democracy. It may not be the most efficient and the most effective form of government—probably one of the least efficient. But it is the most inclusive, and the most educational form of government in that it constantly seeks to expand the circle of power and to engage the people in a debate among themselves, a debate in which all of the citizens are invited to express their views and to cultivate the art of logical argument and judgment in support of their positions and of their ideas. James Madison, the father of the First Amendment to protect the press in the United States, saw clearly that a democracy is not possible without a means of popular information of the characters and the measures on which citizens are asked to judge themselves. The instrument that he saw to fulfill this need, the press, was a press free of government coercion or control. Because democracy is a form of government based on the constant education and involvement of the people, there's a critical need for an ongoing system. In every society of which I know, once the public system or the private system, or the organized system of education, has done with you, and turns you out to the world, the only instrument whereby you have access constantly to the daily change and shift in characters and measures is through the

daily press. The citizen called on to decide those issues can only function with an independent and a vigorous press.

The underlying role which the independent press is serving by encouraging and expanding the debate of the people is perhaps the most important of all, and that is creating a process for managing conflict. Unlike dictatorial or authoritarian governments, which suppress conflict, democracy is built on the notion that conflict is inevitable, that it's the role of the government and the society to manage that conflict. It is the management built on the two-way street of a people's respect for the government, and a government's respect for the people.

This mutual respect can grow only from experience. While that experience can only come from the actions of the people, and of the authority, that experience has to be recorded, catalogued, critiqued, analyzed and shared through a press. Here's how the process of the developing work of self government has been described in Ghana, for example, by Anthony Appiah, a professor of African American studies at Harvard University:

"The governments which seized power after the colonial masters left have done little to legitimize their rule. Too busy collecting wealth and power, they have done little to govern. So government has developed at the grass roots. In Ghana, for example, popular organizations based in the church, sports clubs, civics clubs like the Masons or the Rotaries, or unions and traditional chiefdoms, have provided the services of government. Road work, school books, medical facilities, all of these are organized and funded by local groups. Once the power of these dictators is broken by the multiparty drives, this essentially democratic system is already ready to move into the void. Even under dictatorial governments these institutions spring up, and in many ways, moderate the behavior of government in the interest of the community welfare. And here is the crucial role of the press—to locate and to identify these groups, and to disseminate informa-

tion about their work, of their goals, of their agendas. In many ways, this was what the underground press was doing in Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia in the months immediately preceding the collapse of the Soviet Union and its empire."

In the case of Poland, Andrzej Wroblewski, a former Nieman Fellow who has been a participant in and a recorder of the new government in Poland, explains the role there of the press this way:

"The most difficult task we have had is to help the people who have never had to make decisions about self-government understand not only that they can, that they must, make decisions. More importantly, to help them understand that they have to live with the consequences of those decisions."

Another basic instinct of people in an organized society is the instinct for power—sometimes for the community welfare, sometimes only for personal gain. All systems in transition are involved in the redistribution of power. Eric Chenje, an African journalist studying at the Center for International Affairs at Harvard this year, recently completed a study of the shifting centers of power in Africa as a result of the spread of movements toward multiparty elections. He places the press at the center of this development. As the legitimacy of the sitting government comes under greater and greater challenge, power begins to dissipate through the society. It is a period, he says, marked by an increasing absence of consensus in government, and a steady flow of power to the press. During these early stages, power is flowing to the press because it is the key institution for defining the issues and by raising public awareness of the new or growing threats to free expression, helps protect and shape

the agenda for change. Much of the work of the press in these circumstances is to monitor the trends and tendencies of power and ex-

pose abuses and distortion. As the experience with the samizdat press in Eastern Europe and the Russian Republics has shown, this work is even more fundamental.

After generations in which the most powerful words in the vocabulary, words like "freedom," or "fair trial," or "workers' rights", were debased by years of service to the needs of government propaganda, a free press had to first begin by freeing the corrupted language. This was the role of the philosopher-journalist Vaclav Havel in Czechoslovakia, whose essays like "The Power of the Powerless" were spread by carbon copies throughout the country by a jerry-built independent press and helped to restore a new value to the language, without which democratic debate is impossible.

Or it was the role assumed by Lech Walesa and the Solidarity press in Poland, which firmly fixed the right of the people to observe and to report on the behavior of government by recording human rights abuses and the mockery of government investigations. In each of these cases, the work of the press not only exposed and challenged abuses of power, but they weakened them. They helped break the control of the party apparatus by creating a new route through which leadership could emerge. Unionists like Walesa, essayists like Havel, emerged as popular national leaders, became active figures in the work of an independent press.

Recent history has made it clear that the communications revolution can undermine centralized political authority over people. What is not yet clear is the extent to which this same proliferation of outlets for diverse voices can protect democracy from economic control. The ultimate danger is that both political control and economic control tend to value stability more than freedom. And democracy is not, as I have said, and as events in the United States today make graphically clear, the most efficient form of government.

In order that the people choose, and that their ideas compete for acceptance, a certain tolerance for disorder and instability is an absolute necessity. That is, after all, what independence is all



about in the function of an independent press. I'd just like to add one quote by Justice Souter in connection with the United States Supreme Court [ruling on abortion]:

"Like the character of an individual, the legitimacy of the court (and there I would substitute the press) must be earned over time."

I think Justice Souter's comment should be the words on the masthead of any newspaper in this or any other society

GWEN LISTER

THE PRESS HAS NOT always been an advocate of freedom or democracy. In many cases in Africa and elsewhere, it has often given in and accepted brutal regimes. But there have always been exceptions.

Independent newspapers and courageous journalists have stood up for liberty and often faced harassment, intimidation, jail, torture and even death in the process. It is to these brave newspapers and journalists worldwide, and in Africa in particular, to whom I would like to pay tribute.

We have many examples in this region alone of those who put the truth above all else, and who have suffered as a consequence. It is one thing to be an independent newspaper, operating in an atmosphere of press freedom, but quite another to be an independent newspaper in an unfree environment. And credit must be given to all those so-called alternative newspapers and those journalists who have fought the fight against injustice, sometimes against very heavy odds, while the mainstream press often complacently went along with the status quo, changing only when it became expedient to do so.

There are several of what a Tanzanian colleague of mine referred to as the guerrilla typewriters—those who try to maintain a free flow of information in societies where other media were happy, if not to participate in, then to merely observe the repression. When we started *The Namibian* in August 1985, at the height of South African occupation, we committed ourselves to



Gwen Lister

the principles of resistance journalism, and our reporters considered themselves as activists. We felt we were morally right in our fight against South African occupation, and we believed firmly in the people's right to know.

We were defined as an alternative newspaper, one with a cause. The newspaper went on to reveal large-scale atrocities committed by so-called security forces against the civilian population and which seriously dented the South African defense force hearts-and-minds campaign. We covered Swapo rallies which were broken up by tear gas and rubber bullets, followed by mass detentions. Worst of all, in the eyes of the authorities, we revealed the human face of what was then termed "the terrorist movement." Our reporters were jailed, harassed, threatened, denied passports, and the offices were bombed, burned out, and shot at. The Namibian unashamedly opposed South African occupation and said it was up to the people to choose.

Looking back today, we can perhaps claim to have made a contribution to achieving a peaceful settlement for our country, and in bringing about democratic change. Now, our role has changed, and we believe that the elected government must be constantly accountable to its electorate and we hold them to that. But even a multiparty democracy such as Namibia, with constitutional guarantees, does not necessarily ensure a sustainment of democracy. The basic demands of people are

the same everywhere, if only you are ready to listen to them, and people can make their voices heard. I feel the independent press has a very important role to play in this regard. Party and even government newspapers can perhaps claim to have their own constituencies, but none could represent the will of the people as powerfully or as effectively as the independent press. It is essential for effective and meaningful participatory democracy and to equitable socio-economic development.

Freedom of the press and freedom of information are the cornerstones of any democracy. Namibia, in particular, and Namibians themselves, who only two years ago emerged from the dark days of colonialism, are only now learning to bury their fears and become conscious of their newfound rights. They would be the losers if the independent press were to die. Our democracy will not flourish without an informed electorate. Many of us who believe the independent press is an essential pillar of any democracy were encouraged by the outcome of the UNESCO seminar in Windhoek last year. In the declaration adopted by journalists at the conclusion of the conference, it was declared that, and I quote, "the establishment, maintenance, and fostering of an independent, pluralistic and free press, is essential to the development and maintenance of democracy in a nation, and for economic development." It added,



and I quote again, "by independent press, we mean a press independent from governmental, political or economic control."

We hope, and in many cases it still remains to be seen, whether the conscience of the international community has been sufficiently sparked to assist the independent press, both in Africa and Eastern Europe and wherever it is struggling either to gain democratic rights or merely to maintain them. In the words of Namibia's information minister, Hidipo Hamutenya:

"Namibia's media practitioners have the unrestricted right to publish or put forth ideas and to protect their sources of information. The policy of the incoming government is to give the press, which is largely privately owned, wide

to press freedom have come not from government, but from vested-interest monopoly, which can be as destructive of free debate as state censorship and oppression. The opposition Democratic Turnhalle Alliance threatens a stranglehold on the print media, with at least five newspapers and the only two commercial printing presses as well. The DTA monopoly, which was certainly seen as a threat by Swapo, which shortly after coming into government, decided to publish a weekly government newspaper, known as New Era, in the face of widespread opposition. We on The Namibian also opposed the launch of this government newspaper, feeling that the young Namibia has many more urgent priorities for its spending, and we felt also that New Era would threaten

independent press often stands alone. Government has without doubt at times reacted with irritation to criticism by a very critical opposition press in Namibia. And the prime minister himself shortly after independence expressed disappointment with newspapers, claiming that freedom of speech had been stretched to absurd proportions. Government officials felt that the attempts at belittling and embarrassing the government, finding fault with everything, were aimed at creating an impression of chaos, corruption and mismanagement. They undoubtedly felt that the creation of a government newspaper would help to redress those imbalances they perceived.

Minister Hamutenya also felt that the state as a major and decisive actor in nation-building should have a mouthpiece in promoting this ideal. We do not agree with government justification for starting its own newspaper, but it must be emphasized that at no stage has the government tried to limit the freedoms of newspapers in Namibia.

In summary, it must be said that the state of the news media in Namibia is generally good, and by African standards, even remarkable. Despite The Namibian's having grown to a daily, and the largest selling newspaper in the country, we are now engaged in the battle for self-sufficiency, a difficult enough task in the face of opposition party monopoly of the presses, exorbitantly high printing costs, stiff competition from several newspapers for a chunk of the small advertising market, and distribution problems in a large and sparsely populated country. But we cannot afford to lull ourselves into complacency in the belief that our constitution guarantees democracy. Without a vigorous and independent press, it will be more difficult to guard against excesses if and when they do occur.

We on The Namibian strive to represent the will and the conscience of the people, and reflect their fears, grievances, hope and frustrations. We have, against most expectations, made the transition from a society under siege to a democratic dispensation. But we believe that our task has not diminished in importance. Apart from insuring an in-

It is not only governments which can threaten free speech. In Namibia, threats to press freedom have come not from government, but from vested-interest monopoly, which can be as destructive of free debate as state censorship and oppression.

freedom to advance the public interest by serving as agencies of social change and indeed as a source of entertainment, education and information. We expect the media to serve as watchdog over the policies and actions of the incoming government."

From the outset, the Namibian government has made it clear that constructive and informed criticism of their actions is a healthy pursuit, which is an integral part of nation-building. It is an undeniable fact however, that most governments which tolerate criticism don't necessarily like it, and there have been several occasions where The Namibian, too, has been rapped over the knuckles by the Swapo government, because ultimately they don't like the criticism. But still, that rapping over the knuckles has been a damn sight better than the days when we were firebombed merely for reporting Koevoet atrocities.

But while Namibia has a diversity of media, the independent press is small and battling for financial survival. It is not only governments which can threaten free speech. In Namibia, threats

to press freedom have come not from government, but from vested-interest monopoly, which can be as destructive of free debate as state censorship and oppression. The other media in the region in economic terms, primarily because the business community still is an opportunistic one. Those same companies which refused to advertise in The Namibian as an independent paper before independence now advertise in the government newspaper simply because they are keeping government business or government tender.

Apart from the DTA-owned media, Swapo also runs a weekly newspaper and a government press agency has also been launched. But other agencies such as SAPA still operate in Namibia. These, in addition to The Namibian, make up Namibia's print media.

I do not deny party mouthpieces the right to exist, and neither would I completely negate their role. But the independent media is undoubtedly the most valuable in the sustainment of the democratic ideal, with its journalists in the forefront of the struggle for freedom of information. But it is also the most vulnerable. While other newspapers have a government, a party, or a powerful economic interest behind them, the



Joe Latakomo

formation flow between people and government, government and people and contributing to the task of nation-building and education, it is also up to us to see that democracy lives. And that the independent press does not die.

JOE LATAKOMO

FOR YEARS, THE MEDIA in South Africa has been fighting for liberty, knowing that if we gave up, we'd be allowing our country to sink into the depths of slavery. Not just slavery of the body, but also, and even more importantly, slavery of the mind.

We knew that once we allowed the press to be fettered by government, and our newspapers become nothing but an investigating apparatus for the police and those in authority, neither the press nor the people could be free. What we sought was free thought, not for those who agree with us, but for those we hate. History abounds with examples of the totalitarian form of government emerging from the ashes of a once-free press. It is therefore with a sense of achievement that I noticed from the world-wide survey by the Committee to Protect Journalists that South Africa did not for once feature among the countries with journalists in detention, or journalists killed or missing, presumed dead.

But a chilling reminder is reflected within this report. Journalists covering the escalating violence in the black townships have come under increasing threat. Their reporting is often seen as biased by those parties, including Inkatha, and the African National Congress, who have frequently subjected those journalists to violent verbal and sometimes physical abuse.

Only this week, at the Boipatong funeral, we saw an example of this kind of physical abuse. The history of the world is full of examples of attacks on journalists and press freedom. In Africa, there were in the past year attacks on journalism:

- In Sierra Leone, where the Ministry of Information announced censorship.
- On the Ivory Coast, where a repressive press law was enacted.
- In Cameroon, where all newspapers are censored before publication.
- In the Congo, the radio stations were barred from reporting on political opposition.
- In Zaire, where soldiers took over the television station.
- In Swaziland, where all information about government has to be cleared by a review committee.
- In Malawi, the first independent daily in the country was closed down.
- In Madagascar, press censorship has been introduced.
- In Kenya, six foreign journalists were detained and eight local journalists physically attacked.
- In Uganda, six journalists were charged with criminal offenses.
- And in Sudan, probably one of the worst cases, 450 journalists have lost their jobs since the military coup.

South Africa goes into transition from apartheid to democracy hopefully against this background in the rest of Africa. Clearly, in any country where a person cannot go to the end of his thoughts, or write about those thoughts, people cannot consider themselves to be free. In the last two years, much has been said about the need for an inde-

pendent press in South Africa. Indeed, it would be one of the greatest developments for the media in this country.

There can never be freedom nor independence on any party newspaper. To argue that the Afrikaners—their press—when they took power, is to argue that because the press was once abused and manipulated, it should be forever so manipulated.

We are presently under so many threats, some subtle, some not so subtle. We are under attack. We must however resist this chipping away at our freedoms.

It may be wise to consider at this point what is meant by independent. If at first we mean a press not owned by the government, then most of the media in this country is indeed independent. As democracy sweeps through Africa, and efforts are made to introduce multipartyism into the political scene, the need for such independent media becomes all the more critical.

Democracy, unfortunately, has never been known to be built on a level playing field. Therefore, there will be those who will be *more equal* than others. For only authoritarian dictators can so engineer matters as to arrive at some relative equality. However, the need for a variety of media to express a variety of opinions politically, always will be the great equalizer. In South Africa, it may be argued that capital is concentrated in a few white hands which would naturally control matters such as advertising, which is an instrument which can be used to bleed independent newspapers which fearlessly criticize the status quo to death.

The African National Congress Media Charter states that all people shall have the right to freely publish, broadcast and otherwise disseminate information and opinion. This is a lofty ideal indeed. But if it means also that those who publish newspapers in whatever form, will be criticized if they happen to disagree with the organization, then that ideal would not be worth the paper it's written on. For as Gilbert Murray says, if we lose all our liberties, the liberty of the press would bring them all back again. The liberty of the press, and the liberty of a country, must stand or



Enoch Sithole

fall together. An independent press would not tolerate government secrecy, would not tolerate abuses of human rights. It is one leg of democracy without which all our free institutions cannot survive.

ENOCH SITHOLE

I MUST SAY THAT I am a bit disturbed by the remarks that have been made from this morning. We all know that most laws that restrict the freedom of the press still remain in the statute book. If the Nationalist Party government, as it told the whole world, is committed to democracy and freedom of the press why is it that these laws are kept? I am awaiting trial following a Section 205 subpoena which was issued against me and my editor, Zwelakhe Sisulu, for our alleged refusal to reveal [to the police] the identities of our sources in certain articles. I perhaps would agree with Ken Owen who said that under normal circumstances, you would condone laws like Section 205. But as he also made clear, we are in a different situation here. Not to leave you in the dark, we have taken all reasonable steps to ensure that the judiciary will have access to our sources. A few weeks ago, *The Sunday Times* ran a story in which it gave examples of eight people who were killed after testifying against the police. Now, who would escape death in one of these attacks and then tomorrow call himself a hero and say I want to go and testify after such

number of people have been killed? That is the reason why our sources will never be revealed to the police.

We need a strong, diversified and independent media in order to expose governments, like Mr. de Klerk's, that profess democracy and freedom on the one hand and wage war against champions of democracy on the other. Unfortunately, true independence and freedom are never given, but seized. Therefore, we media workers will have to seize our freedom from governments like Mr. de Klerk's, and any other government, future or present, that will attempt to transform us into their press officers.

As Mr. Lewis said last night, every government will always attempt to have its way in order to ensure that the media is under its control. We have to resist this. We also have to resist any attempts to be told by anybody, what and how to perform our jobs, particularly, if you are still faced with regimes like Mr. de Klerk's and several others in our subcontinent.

Not so long ago, we were being called media terrorists. Now, in the new South Africa, the language has become a bit motivated, and we're simply being called campaigners. We are campaigners, just as we're media terrorists, because we have exposed the activities of a government that stands accused, not by us, but by its victims, of waging war against innocent women, men and children. Unfortunately, we are not only being accused by this government, but also by the so-called liberals and moderates of this country. We are being accused by the same people who have had no problem with the sections of the media which over the decades one way or another, have been promoting the status quo, which is nothing more than the humiliation of our people and the denial of fundamental rights for the majority.

What we have been told to do, as far as I can conclude, is to be neutral between democratic values and tyranny. We are called upon for example, to condemn and criticize mass action being called by the liberation movement. Yet, less than three years ago, our big-

gest newspapers in this country ran front-page articles relating how successful mass demonstrations were in Eastern Europe, Zambia and elsewhere. When such a path is to be tried here at home, then the big story in town is that it will hurt the economy, it will result in violence.

Yes, we will choose sides, particularly so long as we still have oppressed and oppressors in this country. In a future democratic order, we would like to remain critical to injustice and will remain watchdogs on behalf of ordinary women, men and children. Our hope is that the future democratic government will make it easier for existing organs of information to grow, and new ones to be established.

There are other priorities, like education and housing, the next government will have to consider. But communication, which is our area, cannot be regarded as a non-priority. It is the media that plays an important role in inculcating cultures among people. In this context, a strong media will be necessary to inculcate the culture of democracy and tolerance among all people.

I therefore suggest that any government that professes seriousness about democracy will have to ensure that the media is kept intact and strong. This is also the duty of all citizens, including business leaders who share democratic values. I would also suggest that it is also the duty of the established media to ensure that in the interest of diversity, smaller publications not only survive, but grow, and new ones established. I'm not here submitting an application for handouts. I am merely saying that the strength of the strong should not be used to kill the weaker, but to help them become strong as well.

Steyn—I think also it needs to be said that the mainstream papers, whatever their faults, have engaged in many actions through the courts, challenging government edicts, emergency and whatever. I don't think that the impression should be created that the mainstream press has been totally acquiescent. ■

Q. & A.

Sparks—I am not persuaded that independence per se is enough, because a country can have an independent press that is nonetheless a very lopsided press, and that is the issue. In a capitalist country, anywhere, it is the moneyed classes that can afford to own and run newspapers and broadcasting stations. Poor people can't. It follows that the deeper the class divisions and the larger the underclass in a society, the more lopsided the press is going to be.

If that majority underclass is also providing the government, this becomes a powerful grievance on the part of such a government, particularly right after a transition. The new government feels insecure and vulnerable and if they feel that the media is stacked against it, that becomes a huge temptation for them to intervene and that is when you get the beginnings of movements to control the press. The more lopsided the press is the more the temptation to intervene.

Lewis—There is a great deal in what Allister says. [But] I wouldn't want it to be left as though class were the total determination of the outlook of a newspaper; that is not so in the United States. The New York Times, which is about as representative of the establishment class as any media organ in the U.S., published the Pentagon Papers in bitter conflict with the people who were running the country. There is room even in a capitalist ownership system for companies that own newspapers to let editors be editors.

Kovach—I don't think conferences are needed to discuss the need for a vital press to challenge government. I do think there is a question now, as the world is becoming more driven by an economic system that's increasingly integrated as one great world economic system, that the press also has to learn how to deal with that power.

Economic institutions in America wield arguably more power over the lives of its citizens than the government does, and yet the press in America does not cover economic systems very well. I've had experience as an editor, and I had very little opposition from my ownership, or from my superiors when we investigated government. I had a hell of a lot of opposition from the ownership when we began to look at banks and economic systems in our society. I worry about that lack of a sense of independence. I accept independence as independence from economic strength as well, not just political

strength. I think an independent press expresses what I believe in. And what I think we should be striving toward. I don't think it's just a matter of ownership, but a matter of understanding what stake and what right the broad public has in a free press. I don't know this society well enough to make any comment on that that has any validity. But I do know my society. And I do know that we do not understand or accept the notion that every time I buy an item in a grocery store, or buy an item in the great marketplace of America, I'm paying a subsidy to newspapers I never read, radio stations and television stations I never see or listen to, because in the price of that product is their advertising agency and the newspaper and the radio stations reduction of their tax bill in order to advertise that product to me. That cost is mine as a consumer. That seems to me to underlie an economic argument in America at least, that the people have a direct stake in a free press that's free of both political and economic pressure, and have a right to ask that the system help subsidize their voices.

Bruce—I represent a small independent newspaper so I like what Mr. Sithole had to say about additional succor for small independent newspapers. I just wondered what he had in mind.

Sithole—What I've said, and what I have in mind, is what is being practiced in several countries in the world. In France, it is what we call direct and indirect subsidization of newspapers. I however would like to mention that subsidization, either direct or indirect, should not mean that the state or the government would have some formal editorial stake in what we do. I think there are criteria which can be discussed by the media workers in a given country, including ours. One criterion would be based on needs and perhaps the financial strength of a particular publication.

Latakomo—It seems to me that there's a suggestion that the only newspapers that are independent are the so-called alternative publications. Now, if we would take the argument that because JCI or whoever else owns The Financial Mail, therefore The Financial Mail isn't independent, I think one can take the argument further about any of the other publications. Whoever owns them will probably have some kind of influence in that publication.

If the ANC for whatever reason believes that coverage of their activities is not properly reflected and therefore would

feel inclined to act against the media, then I would actually wonder what would actually happen if by some sheer magical act, the PAC went into power. They'd have to close down all the newspapers in the country, because there is no newspaper which actually reflects that particular view. At least the ANC's lucky in that most of the publications that do exist have been giving the ANC the publicity that they actually deserve. But at the same time, isn't there a bit of truth in the view that those publications give the ANC that kind of publicity, because in a lot of cases, when people went abroad to seek funding for particularly the alternative press, they had to carry along a little letter from the ANC which said that those publications are kosher. If you were not in fact seen to be kosher, you were simply not given funding. Now, if that is the case, can those publications consider themselves as being independent?

Lister—[Advertising] is a tremendous problem for the independent media, and I think it particularly in the case of The Namibian. Pre-independence it simply had to receive funds from the European community. The reason being that although we tried to recruit advertising (we had a viable medium, which was then the largest selling in Namibia and is still today) the SADF went from one business to the next business, and said, if you advertise in that newspaper, we are not going to buy [y]our stock. So even those few companies that were sympathetic couldn't advertise for political reasons.

I'd also like to add to what was earlier said by Allister, that is on the lopsided nature of the media, and yes perhaps that is true, particularly in the South African context. But I think here we're looking in general terms at whether an independent media or whether a democracy can exist without an independent media. And I think we shouldn't be selfish about this. We've got countries around us here which hopefully are emergent democracies, such as Angola. Let us not forget that there's probably one newspaper in the whole of Angola. But the Angolan people really don't know a tradition of newspapers at all, and in the changing atmosphere now, I think there's a crying need, as there is in Mozambique, in Angola, too, for an independent press. Yes, some of these papers certainly can probably make themselves financially viable. This is something we're trying to do, we have to do at the moment, or die completely. But I don't think there should be a complacency on the part of the mainstream media. ■

Media Ownership and The Flow of Information

Chair—BRIAN POTTINGER, Chief Assistant Editor, Sunday Times

Panelists

DOUG BAND—Chairman, Argus Newspapers Ltd.

FRED M'MEMBE—Editor Weekly Post, Zambia

TON VOSLOO—Chairman, Nasionale Pers

ROY PAULSON—Deputy Managing Director, Times Media Ltd.

BRIAN POTTINGER

THERE ARE MANY ISSUES that we should be looking at on the question of whether ownership actually applies control, whether the question of overconcentration of ownership in newspapers is in itself an undemocratic manifestation, how one moves away from that manifestation, and in what can one do without reliance on other forms of subvention, other state or other interest groups. How do we deal with what I think is a central challenge for the country, and that is to increase the accessibility of newspapers, reading material for the mass of people.

DOUG BAND

IT IS A MAJOR disappointment to note that some of the leaders of the liberation movements, which now operate freely in this country, appear to be taking the tack that the mainstream English-language press was a compliant collaborator with the Nationalist government during the apartheid years. This is far from the case. And in my own opinion, and in the opinion of many others, the consistent barrage of criticisms and warnings about the immorality and blatant inhumanity and insanity of the apartheid system on the part of the mainstream English language opposition press were one of the single most important factors in changing

people's attitudes—including the attitudes of the very misguided characters who have for so long populated the Nationalist Party and the government.

I say this without in any way wishing to derogate the important role which the so-called alternative press carved for itself from the mid-1980's onwards. However, the brunt of the burden of opposition was for most of the apartheid era carried by the mainstream English-language opposition press.

Managements played their roles, too, in supporting journalists through their periods of travail, both by way of moral and material support. From a material point of view, from 1976 onward, Argus had a policy of retaining journalists on full pay while they were banned or in detention. In this process, we paid out over 24 man-years of salaries to journalists who were not able to perform their duties due to banning or incarceration.

The years of struggle against the government also had a significant bottom line impact on shareholders, which were shouldered without qualm. Astronomic legal bills stretched to huge sums. Possibly the single greatest financial burden arose from the tragic saga of the bannings of World, subsequently Post, and the very difficult start-up phase of The Sowetan. In 1977, when World was banned, it had just attained a stage of modest profitability, and seemed set for a prosperous future. The travails of closing the paper, restarting it under the guise of Post, closing Post, and then taking the risk of starting up The

Sowetan, endured through to 1984 and cost, over that period, over 2.7 million rand. I need hardly remind you that those were the days when rand were rand. On average, during that period, the rand had an equivalence of 1 to 1 with the dollar, and two rand could buy you a British pound sterling.

There has been continuous speculation and comment, a lot of which have been bandied about here today, about the need and desirability for the so-called media monopolies to be unscrambled, with a great deal of the emphasis being focused on the need for this to occur in the English-language area. General experience has proved that unbundling or deconcentrating corporate structures is never easy. It is particularly more difficult, in fact, in the case of media entities. We start from the



Doug Band

South Africa's Main Newspapers

Publication	City	Language	Circulation*	Owner	Major shareholder
The Argus	Cape Town	English	102,060	Argus	Argus
Beeld	Johannesburg	Afrikaans	100,213	Nasionale Pers	Nasionale Pers
Die Burger	Cape Town	Afrikaans	77,801	Nasionale Pers	Nasionale Pers
Business Day	Johannesburg	English	32,000	Times Media	Times Media
Cape Times	Cape Town	English	56,338	Times Media	Times Media
The Citizen	Johannesburg	English	139,420	Perskor	Perskor
City Press	Johannesburg	English	250,000	Nasionale Pers	Nasionale Pers
Daily Dispatch	East London	English	33,907	Dispatch Media	Dispatch Media
Daily News	Durban	English	100,000	Natal Newspapers	Argus
Dia. Flds. Adv.	Kimberely	English	8,099	Argus	Argus
E. Prov. Herald	Port Elizabeth	English	26,309	Times Media	Times Media
Evening Post	Port Elizabeth	English	20,234	Times Media	Times Media
Illanga	Durban	Zulu	105,968	Natal Newspapers	Argus
Imvo Zabants.	King Wms. Tn.	Xhosa	51,000	Perskor	Perskor
Natal Mercury	Durban	English	64,000	Natal Newspapers	Argus
Natal Witness	Pietermaritburg	English	23,000	The Natal Witness	The Natal Witness
New Nation	Johannesburg	English	NA	The New Nation	The New Nation
Oosterlig	Port Elizabeth	Afrikaans	8,878	Nasionale Pers	Nasionale Pers
Post Natal	Durban	English	42,581	Natal Newspapers	Argus
Pretoria News	Pretoria	English	25,124	Argus	Argus
Rapport	Johannesburg	Afrikaans	253,316	Rapport Uitgewers	Rapport Uitgewers
The Sowetan	Johannesburg	English	200,000	Argus	Argus
The Star	Johannesburg	English	209,351	Argus	Argus
Sunday Star	Johannesburg	English	88,704	Argus	Argus
Sunday Times	Johannesburg	English	530,000	Times Media	Times Media
Sunday Tribune	Durban	English	124,249	Natal Newspapers	Argus
Transvaler	Johannesburg	Afrikaans	41,375	Perskor	Perskor
Volksblad	Bloemfontein	Afrikaans	27,268	Nasionale Pers	Nasionale Pers
Vrye Weekblad	Johannesburg	Afrikaans	NA	Vrye Weekblad	Vrye Weekblad
Weekly Mail	Johannesburg	English	30,968	Weekly Mail	Weekly Mail

Full names of publication owners:

Argus Printing and Publishing Company
 The Citizen (Pty) Limited
 Dispatch Media (Pty) Limited
 Times Media Limited
 Natal Newspapers Limited
 Perskorporasie van Suid-Afrika Bpk.
 Rapport Uitgewers Bpk.

*The circulation figures are estimates and not audited.

With the exception of three, all the above newspapers are owned by four major newspaper companies—Argus, Times Media, Nasionale Pers and Perskor. The Argus company also owns a block of shares in Times Media Ltd. while Nasionale Pers owns shares in Perskor. Nasionale Pers and Perskor jointly own the Afrikaans Sunday paper Rapport. Among the above papers The Natal Witness, The New Nation, Vrye Weekblad and The Weekly Mail are the only independently owned newspapers.

platform in the case of the English-language press which are capitalized at very large sums. In any restructure, shareholders' interests need to be protected, and fair value has to be realized. The perception that we're only talking about the interests of rich fat-cat mining companies is false. The majority of Argus shareholders' interests belong to pension funds, to insurance companies and to private individual interests.

Given the criticism that exists about the general concentration of power in the wider South African economy, I'd agree with the point that Allister Sparks made earlier today. And that is that there's clearly no point in simply transferring ownership to one or the other of the very large conglomerates which dominate the South African business environment.

It would also be common cause that there is an element of overtrading in the local newspaper market. Clearly, the industry faces continuous erosion of its marketplace from the electronic media, and will, in fact, face erosion from international companies coming into South Africa. We've had international papers, a good example being the international Express, which is not published in South Africa. We also face the prospect of South Africa being penetrated by international satellite cable operators. We also have the reality that there is bound to be a very healthy development, frankly a proliferation, of new electronic broadcast units in this country. So the press, in the long term and the medium term, certainly does not have an easy road ahead.

Accordingly, newspapers need to be very well capitalized. In the process of any restructure, it would be necessary to insure corporate viability and strength.

Of prime consideration, from our point of view, is also the issue of editorial integrity and independence, which we are determined to protect in the process of any unbundling program. We have a particular loyalty, too, to our very loyal reader spread. These people, who have supported our newspapers for so long, do not expect the papers that are part of their daily lives to be upended, and drastically changed in

character. That should not be allowed to happen, if for no other reason than that process might quickly lead to their economic failure.

Clearly, our staff also rank very highly in our consideration. They deserve the highest respect and consideration and need assurances that any new dispensations will not be detrimental to their careers and their loyalty and dedication.

In essence, this means that any transfer of ownership cannot, from our standpoint, be effected to political parties or parties with political agendas. It is a holy and sacred cow which we stand by. We don't have any problem per se with the concept of political parties owning their own newspapers, starting their own newspapers. We in fact have made it quite clear to the new range of parties

In essence, this means that any transfer of ownership cannot, from our standpoint, be effected to political parties or parties with political agendas. It is a holy and sacred cow which we stand by.

operating in this country that we would offer them material support, assistance, by way of allowing them access to our presses, our distribution system, etc., if they wish to start their own papers. But it simply, bluntly, is a question of the fact that we are not about to sell our papers to any political parties or parties with political agendas.

Before you all rise to grab my jugular, let me say that there are areas of give and of movement, which we believe are necessary, and which we continue to explore and to investigate, some of which we've commenced implementing and others we would hope to implement at an appropriate time, hopefully not too far in the future. These are, firstly, we do believe it is important to increase the spread of shareholders in the Argus Group. In percentage terms, the absolute quantum of shareholders is rather small, in fact, it's about 400-, 500-odd. We believe that we need a program that will introduce a significantly greater quantum of shareholders.

We also believe that in that process, we should be bringing in wide-based staff participation in the equity of the company. Desirably, we would like to see all members of staff own shares. I hasten to add these would be shares in the company and not phantom shares. The intention would hopefully be that most shareholders would be long-term holders. We also believe that it would be very appropriate to introduce black participation either into the equity of the holding company, or possibly into the equity of some of its subsidiary units. We are investigating that issue at the present moment.

Flowing from that, we believe that other interests in the community need to be represented on the board. We have nothing to hide. We'd be quite happy to have other parties share with

us in understanding how the culture of the Argus Company works and learning the frustrations of being a board director and seeing an editor write something that you don't particularly personally agree with. We think it's very fundamental. We have certainly commenced down this track and we need ever greater emphasis on it. We also want to hasten the program of skills training, to equip especially our underprivileged members of staff for promotion to editorial and management positions.

We also believe that the time is rapidly arriving where the link of ownership between Argus and TML must cease. We understand the sensitivities of it, and frankly, it is pointless having that link of ownership and in due course that issue will be addressed.

A further point in our platform is that we accept and endorse the desire and need to have diversity in the printed media in South Africa. For that reason, we accept the role of so-called alternative papers. We have, during the past couple of years, extended support on a

broad range of fronts to various publications. We would intend to continue those programs. We also believe that it's very necessary, and hopefully it will be possible, to arrange for international funding to allow the alternative papers to find their niches in the marketplaces and to become viable. We will be prepared to support such an initiative, both by way of cash and in kind contributions. We certainly believe that it has to be done on the basis of agreeing on a desirable timeframe under which papers must become viable, provided they stick to their commitments. We think that the investment from our part and from the international community would be highly desirable.

[Finding] a market niche which is appealing to advertisers is the fundamental problem [that] has to be addressed by all the alternative papers. We believe once you can actually deliver relevant readers to advertisers, you get advertising. We found that with our publications. If you can't deliver relevant readers—and to be quite candid about it, the problem with the old Sunday Star was that we weren't delivering relevant readers—we don't believe that you can be successful. If you want to be more general and not deliver relevant readers, frankly, you have to recoup and make money out of cover price. I don't think there's a compromise in the middle of it.

We also believe, as the final point of our program, that it is very necessary for our management and our corporation to support everybody concerned in the effort to make sure that there will be freedom of information legislation in the new South Africa that will ensure that we never, ever, fall back into the dark days which have existed for so long.

If you allow yourselves to be rushed into finding instant answers to such complex matters [as media ownership, codes of practice, complaint procedures, the right of reply], which have defied easy solution over many years in Asia, Europe and the United States, you may live to repent them at your leisure. We endorse that view. We are working on these proposals and hope to imple-

ment them just as soon as we're sure that they will not come back to haunt us later.

Argus's mission statement incorporates the commitment to produce newspapers which tell it like it is without fear or favor and to protect their independence by ensuring, continuing, and improving viability. We remain committed to the belief that a free press and a free flow of information will be a key factor in ensuring a democratic future for South Africa. We aim to play our important part in making South Africa the democracy that its people deserve.

FRED M'EMBE

LISTENING TO THE HONORABLE minister this afternoon, I felt a bit uncomfortable. I felt that one should be careful in how far one trusts politicians. For a member of a party, which has for more than five decades stifled all forms of freedom, including press freedom, to be seen as a champion of press freedom and other freedoms is unbelievable.

I do appreciate that sometimes when people are in difficulties, even though they never prayed all their lives, they will go to a church or a synagogue to pray for the last few days of their lives in order to be saved. Well, people can be born again. But never trust born again because they change, they go back again.

Coming back to the ownership structure—in 1964 when Zambia became independent, the British Government, the colonial government of that time, had no control over the media. It did not own the media directly. But by the mid-Seventies all the media was under state control, including those which



Fred M'embe

were owned by multinational corporations like Lonrho. Mr. Dan Roland surrendered his newspaper to UNIP, the ruling party at that time. We thought maybe this was necessary for a socialist-oriented government to control information and propaganda. We have now in Zambia a government which is on the extreme of capitalism and free market. It, too, wants to control the media the same way a pro-socialist government controlled the media.

We have two daily newspapers, both under government control and ownership. The government also owns three weeklies, one monthly political magazine. It owns all the electronic media, television and radio. We have one weekly independent to which I belong. There is one fortnightly newspaper, owned by the Christian Council, which I don't consider independent. It's a Christian organization and is partisan to Christian views. It cannot claim to be representative of all views. Then we have one irregular newspaper which is owned by an MMD supporter. It has serious financial problems and may have to fold soon. That's all the media in Zambia. The government also owns the only news agency there, Zana.

I was one of the founders of MMD. We face serious problems. We had huge rallies, which the country had never seen before. They were never reported in the media. Or what we did was never reported. People did not know the political situation in their own country.



At the MMD we tried to organize a fortnightly newspaper but it was shunned by our own supporters. Despite the fact that we had the biggest pool of supporters, they are not interested in buying the paper. We're the cheapest paper in the country, but even when it was distributed free, people were reluctant to grab a copy.

By November 1990, we realized that it was necessary to set up an independent newspaper. You can see, this was from a strong political consciousness. It was not to make money. We didn't know about money maybe we are naive. But now we have to make money; we want to make money to survive, not to become millionaires.

We knew we needed to participate in the governance of the country. A democratic society has three pillars of government: we've got the legislature, which is called Parliament in other places; we've got the executive, which is headed by the president, and we've got the judiciary. And we've got the media. All these institutions help in the governance of the country. So we have a political role which we cannot hide. We are not in business per se; we're in the system of governance. And that's what the media is about. We are politicians of a different sort.

If you look at organized democracy, you will find that these pillars of democracy are independent. In a situation like Zambia where the government controlled over 90 percent of the media, we can see the merge of two pillars of democracy—the executive and the fourth estate. How do you run a country like that? How do you run an accountable democracy on that basis? When institutions of democracy are emerging, and if you look at these emerging democracies, even the judiciary and parliament are still too weak in terms of power.

When we started *The Weekly Post*, we were very much concerned about the independence of the paper, not necessarily from the government, but from its own shareholders. We formed a structure which made it impossible for any shareholder to have more than 15 percent. Last month we had problems. One of our shareholders, a direc-



Ton Vosloo

tor, started a political battle of his own. We had a very nice commentary and he was not happy. He complained. How could he put up money to pay people to criticize him, to degrade him in public? I was a bit sarcastic. I told him, sell your shares, I'll buy them. Imagine if we had given him 70 percent. He would have thrown me out even though I started the paper.

TON VOSLOO

IF WE SPEAK ON principle, I submit there is need of little debate. There is a fundamental divide, a clash of ideology between free and independent papers run by private enterprise, and papers aided and abetted by state assistance. If we accept that the state has a duty to support newspapers, as it has been suggested earlier, then we have various models to use as an example. In France, the state subsidizes communications tariffs for media. In Britain no VAT is charged on newspapers. In Sweden, there is an elaborate system of assistance by the state to second-running newspapers. A part of the TV license fee is paid over to a newspaper fund. In the Seventies, the South African government even tried its own form of subsidy by starting up *The Citizen*.

The point is, if the state comes to the aid of newspapers, there will be a price to pay in terms of loss of freedom and independence. The only real freedom

for newspapers lies in financial independence. The question of large or small groups is fairly unimportant. In a financially viable community, one will find viable small media as well as large, all prospering to degrees, or at least making a living. If the market rejects them, they go to the wall.

I am obviously aware that this whole debate ranges about the disadvantaged community's wish to have a say in the media, to put its point of view across. Now are you, we, or they, really interested in a state aiding and abetting on equal terms right-wing newspapers or opposition newspapers? That is what a fair state policy would imply. We're living in a dream world if we accept that, and we just heard confirmation of that from our colleague from Zambia.

For the sake of constructiveness, I would wish to make five suggestions. The newspapers' press union, the NPU, comparable to America's ANPA, with or without all its members participating, can come forward with proposals to assist in the publishing of smaller media, in the sense that one believes in disparate voices in journalism. A first step was taken earlier this year when the NPU sat down with CINE, the Conference of Independent Newspaper Editors of this country. The upshot was that they became members of the NPU and are now part of the international media community.

Secondly, a trust fund could well be set up to assist in "leveling the playing field" when it comes to the practicalities of journalism, i.e., training of potential journalists, shaping of cub reporters, managerial talent, etc. Speaking on behalf of my own company, I'd be willing to participate in such a venture. I think one would be very thick skinned if you did not realize the need for something constructive having to be done in the media scene in South Africa to not only have more voices, but to have stronger voices, to stand up to whatever government.

Why don't like-minded people who insisted on having a slice of the newspaper pie, club together, put in their one rand or 10 rands if they believe in their cause? There are quite a few examples

in our history where small beginnings led to the formation of powerful companies.

One idea that could well be entertained by a government of national unity is to pay over say 5 per cent of the VAT which they levy on daily newspapers to a trust fund which would be used to further the cause of fledgling newspapers. Then I submit the taxpayer will at least know that he is involved in a scheme which will further the cause of literacy.

Fifthly, I suggest breaking up the monopoly of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, and issuing radio licenses to a dozen or more local stations. To my mind, that is the most cost-effective way to participate in the media by the have-nots.

Let me finally add, to break up successful publishers and dole out parts will not only destroy the whole, but will not satisfy the media ambition of those that now threaten to do the breaking up.

ROY PAULSON

THERE ARE SOME TRUTHS that you people should understand. In a perfect world, all newspapers would like to be independent and row their own boats and do their own thing. But South Africa is not a perfect world. Any newspaper attempting to tread on its own in this country would inevitably go under.

In advertising terms, South Africa is a small market and it's heavily overtraded. In Johannesburg on an average day, there are seven daily newspapers, more than most major cities in the world. We can't afford to have that. Before the advent of television, the print medium's share of advertising budgets was 76 percent of the market. Today print's share has declined to 48 percent of the total advertising market. There are now more newspapers than there were in 1976. By print, I mean all newspapers and magazines. So we're all scrabbling out there to fight for a smaller market. Television's eroding the market very rapidly.

Newspapers are labor- and capital-intensive. For instance, a new six-unit Goss press, which is mainly used by the bigger newspapers in South Africa, will cost a minimum of 60 million rand, and The Sunday Times would require three of these presses. We also need similar presses in Durban, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. The Sunday Times is the biggest circulating newspaper in South Africa, and even it could not afford to pay for the capital repayments on presses of this nature. It's too much for one newspaper.

It is for these and various other reasons that successful newspaper groups are generally made up of a mixture of newspapers and magazines. A profitable newspaper is one that can be free of outside influences, particularly from political parties. Much has been said about the influence of Anglo-American's shareholding of Argus and TML, and when I make this comment, I must make the point that I'm a manager, not an editor. But in my long experience with the South African newspaper industry, I've yet to come across one instance of Anglo-American using their position to directly influence our newspapers to their benefit. In fact, as Doug Band made the point, they possibly take more criticism in the newspapers than most other organizations.

Some of the independents have been and are doing great good for the country. But none of these publications are really viable in their own right. I came in halfway through the last session, and I was really appalled to listen to some of the comments. It worries me that a lot of people sitting in this audience don't understand the real world out there. It's nonsense to talk about Anglo-American owning large holdings in the JFC and therefore controlling companies which input advertising to major newspaper groups. That's total rubbish. Advertising agencies and their clients use advertising because they want the biggest possible audience to get their products across to their market. They don't do it for benevolent reasons. And I'll tell you now that the fighting out in the

marketplace is enormous. If we can cut Argus's or Nasionale's throat, we'll do it. Because we've got to survive.

I've made the point that the market has shrunk enormously. It's ridiculous to think that there's a big plot out there, we're getting all the gravy and the poor little fellows out there are not getting anything in return—that's rubbish. Agencies will buy your newspaper and will give you advertising if you deliver the audiences that they want. You've got to have the right audience. If you want to indulge yourself and you can't deliver a decent number of readers, you're not going to get advertising—and that's the truth. It's not a question of advertising agencies or clients being anti-small newspapers. So be very clear on that one.

On the question of subsidized newspapers, I believe that subsidized newspapers are subservient newspapers. The last thing that the free press in South Africa requires is state assistance. Politicians would always want their pound of flesh, and any case it is unhealthy to expect normal commercial newspapers to compete with subsidized newspapers. All you get is a subsidized newspaper going to the marketplace and cutting rates, because they're got a nice basis to keep themselves alive. In the real world that can't happen. It's just not realistic. What I'm saying is that if a small newspapers want to survive, and if they want to be commercially viable, they must find the right market and deliver the right audience. If they do that, they'll make a lot of money. ■

Q. & A.

Q.—Why can't a newspaper like New Nation, with 130,000 readers, get advertising?

Paulson—Possibly because they don't do the right job in trying to sell it. We've actually been to some extent involved with New Nation to try to help them, and it's very much a question of if you're going to get in the marketplace, you've got to be able to make sure that people are aware of your publication, and that it can in fact do the job for them.

I'm not sure what New Nation's audience is, but any audience with 130,000 is a market. It's a question of getting out there and selling it. I'm darn sure that if we took over the selling for New Nation, we would get them a lot of advertising. In fact we've offered to do that for them.

Harber—The Weekly Mail distributes in Cape Town through a subsidiary of the Argus Company. It is bad enough that we are in the hands of a rival newspaper for our distribution; it is worse when you are in the hands of an operation that is not only incompetent but doesn't give a damn because it knows you don't have any other option. The effect is tantamount to sabotage. We heard from Mr. Band a lot of reasons why unbundling is difficult. But one place one could start is in allowing the free market in areas such as distribution.

Band—Yes, we've had problems down in Cape Town. Bruce Cohen spoke with me on a couple of occasions. Each time that he's raised these issues with me, to my knowledge they were fixed. The last time I met with Bruce was prior to the team going off to Prague. I actually asked them to arrange to meet with our management, to discuss distribution as a whole topic. Not only in Cape Town. I hadn't heard a peep out of nobody.

The second thing is, to actually suggest that there's a viable way in which you can free up the distribution end of the business is pie in the sky. I think that between ourselves and the other three press groups, we've probably got something like a thousand trucks doing distribution floating around the Johannesburg area. It's a major capital-intensive business. It's beset by a whole lot of unusual problems which we face at the moment, like the alarming level of hijackings. Now, we are ourselves looking at developing alternative distribution methods. We've had a team in Australia looking at developing much more privatized zoned area bases where we could introduce single entrepreneurs to do distribution. If that comes about, that may in fact free up the distribution system. The reason is not to free up the distribution system, but to be able to save something like \$16 million off our costs. In the process, it will have that very healthy side effect. But if we're talking about the distribution system that exists in South Africa at the present moment, that, in fact, is got to be financial suicide for the alternative press to be involved there. Where would you see the capital coming from, for this? You know what the

cost of a truck is today. The cost of insurance. Very, very staff intensive. Frankly, if we could lay off sections of that cost, terrific. And I just don't even begin to see that that is a viable option.

Paulson—Newspapers are the most democratic instruments in the world. They face a vote every day or every week and if readers don't like what you have to say, they won't buy the paper.

Pakendorf—The people who decide the news and the point of view whence it comes are not the majority of the people. The people who work for you have a particular cultural point of view. We write about the masses, but we are not with them.

Band—The largest daily circulating newspaper in the Argus Group is in fact edited and produced by people who are black, and that's The Sowetan. That, I think, is the biggest single indication of exactly our bona fides as management and the fact that we don't dictate the pace out there.

Raphaely—Most of you are falling back on the argument that big is beautiful and what we should be talking about is how to encourage a more diverse media and means of communication in this country and to do it in a way that is profitable, viable and creates jobs for more people. You've been ducking it. A certain amount of commitment has come forth in a reluctant way to say you will help people to get going, to the smaller people. There is no doubt whatsoever that if we can increase the number of media owners in South Africa, the public will be better off.

Sparks—We don't know who is going to win a one-person, one-vote election because we've never had one, but we can assume from CODESA II's deadlocked debate [that] the government believes that it is possible that the ANC could win two-thirds of the vote. It must consider that a possibility; otherwise it wouldn't have held out so hard [for] a requirement for a 75 per cent majority to take decisions on the constitution. I would suggest that if you have a party that wins two-thirds of the vote and then finds itself almost voiceless in the media, its case not being put in any significant way by a major publication, I believe that such a government will do something about it.

This is the source of the problem in Zimbabwe, because Robert Mugabe came to power and inherited a media situation manifestly unacceptable to him, so intervened and effectively nationalized the

press. Now I am anxious about a future government coming into power here and inheriting a situation that it regards as manifestly unacceptable. I think that something needs to be done about that.

We just had a referendum. It was an overwhelmingly one-sided referendum as far as the media was concerned. I happened to applaud the results but I was also anxious watching the way it went because this was an overwhelming media job for a yes vote. The only peep that came out for no vote was Die Patriot of 10,000 circulation once a week. The rest was a universal chorus for the first time in our history—the Afrikaans press, English press and indeed the SABC all on one side, massively. Okay, what I'm suggesting is that if we have a repeat of that, with an establishment press very locked into the business community, deciding it's a very bad thing for a socialist ANC to win an election, and we have that kind of massive chorus in one direction in our first one-person, one-vote election, we could again have action against the press.

I propose unbundling.

Band—The ANC is concerned that there won't be a paper that supports them. How can they say that at this stage? There's a very real possibility that there will be one, two, three, four, maybe half a dozen, papers that will support them. I also think it will be a great tragedy if they don't get any support, but a lot of responsibility lies in their own hands to make sure they go out and sell sensible policies to editors.

Ncube—Are the big guns serious about wanting to help the independent press and does the independent press want to live on the benevolence of the big guys?

Lister—If there is a showdown between principle and profit, which way will you go?

Band—We have spent more on legal fees when magazines were closed down. That was principle.

M'membe—Our motivation is not money, but taking part in the whole governance process. We need to make money to survive, but principle is more important.

Paulson—We will help as we can but we have to be profitable to help.

Vosloo—We have a history of standing up for principle. We published City Press at a loss. Now it's turning a corner. Principle comes first. ■

The Inkatha Position

Chair—HARALD PAKENDORF, Nieman Fellow

Speaker—CHIEF MINISTER MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI

MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI

THE HISTORY OF THE PRESS in South Africa has been one battle against tremendous odds. The media as we know it operates in spite of, not because of, the restrictions they have been forced to operate under. But censorship has always been synonymous with oppression, of course. The previous South African government had a lot to hide from the eyes of the world. Yet strangely, in the past, in spite of all these handicaps and in spite of the government's curbs, the South African press was in another sense almost the freest in Africa.

It suited a racist government for people to remain ignorant of their fellow citizens, as happened in our country. Racism would have difficulty surviving if people were enlightened by the media about the circumstances surrounding their particular prejudices. The sheltered lives of the majority of the white population has distanced this group from their disadvantaged neighbors. The black man to them is something alien, people who live on the periphery of their towns and cities. They are seen in the morning, but disappear back to their unknown abodes in the evening. Likewise, the black man sees all their white fellow citizens as objects of oppression. The haves in the society that gives so little to those of need.

South Africa is a society of division and dissent. The South African people have locked themselves behind the banners and sloganeering of various political parties and pressure groups. What our country needs in my view is a greater scope for fluidity and movement and

changes in attitude. People must begin to question their leadership, question their dogmatic adherence to undemocratic norms and principles, question their inbred racism and prejudices. This all centers around the issue of the availability of information, how it is used and the uses to which it is put.

The role of the media is to expose the propaganda warfare of opposing political factions. The ethos of our present reality is largely a result of the skillful and sustained propaganda campaign of the National Party and its success is seen in the ease with which this party was able to forge ahead with its racist policies of apartheid in the past.

But the government is not alone in the sophisticated propaganda campaign. What of the censorship in our own community? The censorship of intimidation? Today journalists, particularly black journalists, have much greater freedom and are far less affected by government action in terms of arrests and detentions, but now they face new

restraints. These are the very real threats coming from radical elements in our society, forcing local journalists to only publicize their line of political thinking.

I believe that one only has to look back to events recently as Boipatong to realize that there's a desperate need for informed reporting. How many of you are aware that at least 10 IFP members were killed in the Boipatong violence? How many of you know that at least six IFP members were buried as ANC members in Monday's mass burial? How many of you know that legal proceedings had to be instituted to seek urgent interdicts from the Supreme Court to ensure that no persons arrested for the Boipatong massacre were tortured?

I can also ask how many of you know that 25 IFP members were butchered in Crossroads only as recently as April this year? How many of you know that over 200 IFP officers have been assassinated in the last couple of years? And I'm not talking about IFP people who were caught up in the general violence, or in skirmishes generally; I'm talking about IFP office bearers—branch chairmen, treasurers, secretaries, organizers, who were marked for death, hunted down and assassinated. The media has not given you these facts, and there's never been an outcry against the IFP assassinations that there was for Boipatong victims. I'm not minimizing the seriousness or the horror of the Boipatong massacres. I'm just talking about sanctity of human life.

The media has not conquered the ANC's propaganda that it has abandoned CODESA because the South African government is not serious about negotiations which would lead to having to



Mangosuthu Buthelezi

share power through the course of negotiations, and to be prepared to lose power in the elections. The ANC abandoned CODESA and the negotiation process, because it was defeated democratically in Working Group 2 and in the CODESA II plenary session. On both occasions at least half of the delegates concerned voted against the ANC's proposal. There would not even have been sufficient consensus to carry the ANC's proposals had the government voted with the ANC.

The media has not kept the public properly informed. Instead, the IFP is tried, found guilty and sentenced by the media without giving it a fair hearing.

Only half of what we read and hear in the media is accurate. The rest is made up of specific political posturings, distortions and attempts to sway the public based on advocacy journalism.

The credibility of the local media is seriously undermined by this process. The public in South Africa is not allowed to make up its own mind. Without recourse our thinking is shaped therefore for us. People need to be exposed to information not getting into the press.

Once again industry shuddered to a halt as a result of the ANC's and COSATU's mass action campaign. Millions of workers stayed at home. How much of this was due to intimidation? How much of the large-scale absenteeism is because workers fear for the safety of their homes? Houses of people who had tried to go to work were destroyed and people actually killed. How many newspapers investigated the coercion used by these organizations to ensure that workers heeded the call for a massive stayaway? What pressure is brought to bear on those courageous journalists or newspapers who dare to expose the truth?

The peace accord which we all signed [Sept. 14, 1991] states that no political party or organization or any official or representative of any such party shall kill, injure, apply violence to, intimidate or threaten any other person in connection with that person's political beliefs, words, writing and actions. Yet all these things, which should be taboo, in terms of the accord, are happening, on all sides.

We are very concerned about the restrictions imposed by the South African government, but how much is said about the restrictions on our freedom from elements on the left, which destroy the very culture of political tolerance and democracy? Democracy after all is a system which is set up for the peaceful resolution of conflicts in society. I think it is acknowledged by most of the political parties and organizations that there is a need to create a new political culture and a new national consensus in place of strife and conflict.

We in the Inkatha Freedom Party believe democracy is government by all the people in the country, and unless society is exposed to all the information available, and the information they require, and there is free flow of information, that society will never be in a position to identify and positively and constructively respond to the issues

must serve the public in such a way that the ideals of a democratic nonracial, nonsexist, and prosperous society are pursued and advanced to the fullest.

This of course will require a fundamental change in the structure and the performance of broadcasting in our country and reassessment of the present restrictions imposed on media in general, rather than the pragmatic fine tuning of the existing system. Changes must be far reaching and deeply felt.

If freedom of speech and expression are to be guaranteed, not only must there be an entrenched law in a future bill of rights concerning this popular issue, but many of the present statutes will need to be repealed in their entirety, while others may need to be amended or have sections removed. This will dramatically affect legislation which provides for the direct imposition of censorship by outright banning,

Only half of what we read and hear in the media is accurate. The rest is made up of specific political posturings, distortions and attempts to sway the public based on advocacy journalism.

facing it. Media must communicate across all divides in these challenging times.

The media functions as the watchdog, not only of government, but of society at large, to expose ills as they threaten the very moral fiber of society. To expose ills of administration in public office, to expose injustices as they occur. To expose pressure and intimidation from various political factions. If the media is restricted in any way in these vital areas of information dissemination, then it cannot hope to fulfill its function in society.

South Africa is a changing society. Freedom in whatever form seems more attainable than ever it did in the past. While the process at CODESA has been far from smooth, consensus in various areas has been reached. The future of CODESA is in balance, but I sincerely hope that the progress made in the areas of broadcasting and media will not be lost. The broadcasting and media functions in a future South Africa

such as the Publications Act and the Internal Security Act, as well as legislation which inhibits and restricts what may be published.

As part of this reconstruction process the IFP believes the goals for the media and broadcasting in the new South Africa must be kept in mind. Briefly, these goals should be to allow for a much greater access to media in South Africa.

- All groups, no matter how remote their homes or poor their resources, should have access to information.
- Information is the right of all people, not a privilege. Direct assistance from government and private enterprise will no doubt be needed to achieve this goal, but if one looks to the advantages media has to offer in terms of education and in terms of destroying prejudice and in promoting peace in this country, it is well worth the cost.

- To allow for greater participation of all South Africans and to stimulate competition in the media industry. This follows from the Inkatha Freedom Party's fundamental belief in free enterprise democracy.
- For media to be beneficial to the public it must be profitable and viable, promoting competition between various newspapers, radio stations, television, etc.
- To establish media functions in South Africa free of political control.
- Finally there is a general consensus within CODESA and supported by Inkatha that an independent media commission, made up of a suitable body of experts, must be established to oversee the democratization of media in South Africa.
- A future nonracial South Africa must meet the demands of our society. Television and radio broadcasting in particular should be culturally diverse, reflecting and responding to the needs and interests of all audiences. Language is also an issue. Accommodating South Africa's 11 languages in future broadcasting is a major problem to be resolved.

Education is one of the greatest priorities in South Africa, and the media is a vital resource in reaching out to the disadvantaged masses. The importance of educational upliftment through the media could be greatly enhanced if the media was more accessible to the people who most need it. Unfortunately, they are the very ones who are least able to afford it.

The media is a catalyst of change. It is the gateway to freedom of thought and expression. It must free the thinking of our people, which has been conditioned to our country's long enslavement to thought constriction through censorship and the many other constraints which are endemic in our society.

How difficult the task is that lies ahead is evident when I say that as tarnished as the media may be in South Africa, it will be difficult to find any country in Africa in which there is more

press freedom and in which the press uses what freedom it has to criticize the government as freely as the press does in this country. This is a remnant of some of the few good things that were bequeathed to us by the British when this country was a colony.

Freedom must, however, go hand in hand with responsibility. The IFP will always champion the freedom of the press. Any defect in the media will, we believe, have to be corrected by market forces which allow people to choose to read lies if they wish to do so. It is up to the buying public to support or reject particular newspapers or TV programs.

In the final analysis, however, the media will only be as free as society and in the transitional stages through which we are going, it will have to be the media itself which earns the place it should have in an open democratic society. ■

Q. & A.

Q.—Do you think it is correct for the Inkatha Freedom Party to own and control a newspaper, *Ilanga*?

Buthelezi—What do you mean by control? *Ilanga* is run by a company. We don't interfere with it. The central committee doesn't give any directives to it. In this country there are papers that are owned by companies whose political affiliations are very well known, but they never interfere with those newspapers.

Q.—As leader of Inkatha, have you ever had cause to discipline your followers who may have intimidated journalists?

Buthelezi—I'm not aware personally of any journalist who's ever been intimidated at our meetings, functions or funerals. But if it was drawn to my attention, we would definitely discipline them because as politicians we wouldn't operate without the press.

Rikard—Do you support the view that the minister expressed to us at lunch today that [CODESA working groups] have to be closed [to the media] so that real negotiations can take place?

Buthelezi—I honestly believe that one cannot really negotiate in front of the glare of the media. Because then there is

no honest expression of opinion, because people would then start posturing again, and they cannot be honest unless they know that they're speaking freely without fearing that what I say may offend A, B or C who may not be in CODESA.

Q.—Do you not think it would be appropriate to ask members of the IFP to lay down their cultural weapons?

Buthelezi—You have to define what you mean by that. I always said that I don't support the carrying of dangerous weapons. The journalists at the funeral were not injured with traditional weapons. The police did see some of the so-called Zulu accouterments from some of the people that were going to a rally on the 14th. In fact, they had to return some of them because they did not fall within the definitions of dangerous weapons. I do accept that in places of unrest, where there is volatility, it is clear that one must adhere to that very strictly. It's not the hostels as you say. It's not the carrying of weapons. It's not those things that cause violence. It is the culture of violence that should be addressed. In a military parade soldiers carry their swords and I don't think we have any Zulu cultural weapon as dangerous as swords.

Q.—You [have expressed] your commitment to press freedom but you, more than any other political leader, have pursued legal action against the press.

Buthelezi—Oh yes. I will do that any day. It is my legal right, my human right. If you think you are going to slander me because you say that is part of freedom of the press, then of course I'll go for protection to the law. That has nothing to do with restricting the press. In the cases where I sued, I had every justification in all of them. In fact, I won most of those cases; some were settled out of court. Where people indulge in advocacy journalism, acting for certain political organizations to vilify me, denigrate—not criticize me, criticism can be robust; any public man must expect that. But then you go on to slander, to vilify, then I only have protection of the law. And if you do that tomorrow, and say that therefore I'm going to be afraid that you will accuse me of not believing in freedom of the press, you can forget it because I'll sue you. ■

The Pan Africanist Position

Chair—JOE THLOLOE, Managing Editor, The Sowetan

Speaker—DIKGANG MOSENEKE, Deputy President, Pan Africanist Congress

JOE THLOLOE

DIKGANG MOSENEKE HAS BEEN involved in the struggle for liberation since he was a youngster. At the age of 15, he was sent to Robben Island, sentenced to 10 years in prison in 1963. He went through the

ten years, came back in 1973, but the government wasn't satisfied that they had robbed him of his youth. They continued to ban him, and he couldn't

be in the company of more than 10 people. He studied law—a law he actually despised—but today, he's one of the most brilliant advocates on the bar. He is at the moment Deputy President of the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania.

DIKGANG MOSENEKE

THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND political misery of our people is as old as the occupation of our country (which began) in 1652. We, the PAC, never lose any moment to remind all of us that the most devastating consequence of colonization of our people was certainly racist political domination. In the land of their birth, our people were, and indeed still are, excluded from exercising political power and participation in the economic mainstream of our country. This has led to large scale social degradation.

The single most beneficial thing that we hope to contribute to this country is to restore the humanity of the African people, and to gear them to fall back on themselves and recreate their own lives

from the shambles of colonialism and racism that has prevailed for the last 300 years. The current reform stands of the de Klerk regime, in our view, resulted from three factors.

First and foremost is the decades-long struggle of our people against racist domination and economic exploitation. At this point, unremitting and continued repression is simply impossible, because it will be resisted. The present situation must be seen for what it is—a certain gain for the struggling masses of our people.

The second factor is international pressure such as sanctions.

The third factor which has led to the present reform mode is its desire and strategy to adapt rather than die. The reform process is an obvious attempt, albeit late, to salvage whatever power is possible. The timing in this regard is equally significant. The present government sought to do so while the balance of forces favors it. The present violence in our country is both sad and unnecessary. Approximately 12,000 people have died in political violence recently. The usual victims of the violence are ordinary men and women who walk the streets. The so-called black-on-black violence is a sinful distortion of the truth.

We in the PAC believe that a major part of the violence emanates primarily from organs of the state and its intent is to show the liberation movements as weak, incapable of controlling their supporters and prone to senseless and public violence. That's however just part of the truth. There is, of course, hegemonistic violence, caused by the battle for political space and domination.

The more difficult question is really how to achieve the goals that we have spelled out now, which is to form a



Dikgang Moseneke

common political alliance in this country. Save for a few enclaves of racist and fascist groupings, there is today an overall consensus that the time has come for the creation of a new democratic constitution for our country.

A new constitution will have to be a matter of popular participation. It must result from the activities of duly elected representatives mandated to create a new constitution. The creation of such a constitution cannot be a matter of agreement only among leaders of various liberation movements and political parties. Besides being representative, the constitution-making process must have legitimacy. Its authors must therefore be accountable to those they represent. A constituent assembly, predictably, would satisfy this cardinal requirement.

Our stand on and criticism of CODESA is fairly well known. At its inception, we contended, as we still do, that CODESA is unrepresentative and undemocratic. Save for the ANC and some of its allies, the forum is prepacked with government-created puppets with no support on the ground. We say

CODESA has no mandate to create a new constitution, whether interim or final.

In South Africa, we are only now emerging from a harsh regime which has enforced severe restrictions on the flow and availability of information. Only some of the restrictions were actually statutory and thus emanating from the government. The rest of the restrictions are attributable to a monopoly of ownership of media resources, limited skills among our people and the significance of economic deprivation.

Each of these constitute a very severe curtailment in a free flow of information. Curtailment of freedom and independence of the media, and a free flow of information, emanating from legislation, socio-economic deprivation and political powerlessness are matters which in our view may be readily cured by the advent of democracy in our country.

The more difficult question relates to the monopolistic ownership of media resources in this country. Ownership of media in South Africa is concentrated in the hands of four conglomerates.

The Argus group produces more than 60 percent of the 1.5 million newspapers sold in the streets every day. They are controlled by the Anglo American Corporation.

Times Media Limited which owns Business Day, Pretoria News, Financial Mail, Cape Times, Eastern Province Newspapers, is controlled by Anglo American Corporation.

Perskor [Afrikaans dailies and weeklies] is controlled by the Rembrandt Group Limited.

Volkskas Naspers [National Pers Bpk] is controlled by Sanlam.

The "Big Four" control almost 90 percent of all dailies and weeklies sold in the country. They also own a third of the country's registered press, an estimated 70 percent of the free sheets and half of the registered magazines. They, together with the SABC, control the country's only wire service, SAPA. Anglo and Sanlam also control the Mondi-Sappi paper production cartel. Anglo has a 33 percent share in CNA/Gallo [a major retail outlet for the printed me-

dia] and a controlling interest in Allied, a major newspaper distributor through its holdings in CNA/Gallo. Anglo controls a 72 percent interest in Video Lab Holdings, the major sound and editing facilities in the country.

Anglo via Argus owns 40.4 percent of the Times Media which has a 23 percent in M-Net. A similar picture emerges from the Afrikaans print media.

The "Big Four" own 90 percent of M-Net. With the white minority regime controlling the electronic media—SABC, TV and Radio—the picture is one of complete control over the right of free speech, freedom of the press and guaranteed free debate.

Democratic debate, reliable information and consequent informed political action is the essence of democracy. Ignorance and false propaganda does not

The PAC therefore also proposes that we should have a press council which would ensure proper standards in news dissemination and safeguard the privacy of the individual against unwarranted interferences. In like manner, the council should have a right to take action against any person responsible for inciting harassment of journalists while they are performing their duties.

At this point I would like to express my, and indeed the PAC's, utter disgust and disapproval of the conduct of persons [wearing] PAC t-shirts who went on what appeared to be a racial attack on journalists at the Boipatong mass funeral rally. I would like to assure you here that that does not and would never carry the approval of our organization. And secondly, that steps have been taken to seek to identify the culprits. The ray

Democratic debate, reliable information and consequent informed political action is the essence of democracy. Ignorance and false propaganda does not bode well for creating a caring and sharing society.

bode well for creating a caring and sharing society. We profer a few suggestions on what must be done.

The PAC believes the freedom of the press must be enshrined in a bill of rights. Minority control of mass media is the very antithesis of freedom of expression and the control of the media must be freed somewhat from the absolute monopoly. In its place, or side by side with it, an independent trust must be created to ensure the influence of people in the co-ownership of these enterprises. PAC believes that there should be a limit to the number of newspapers owned by single companies to minimize the monopoly of news management. In addition, in the new constitution, we must make provision for the right of minority alternative newspapers to exist.

To ensure this right, the state must afford these publication subsidies to ensure their survival. The political party in power ought not to be permitted to interfere with such subsidies. This would certainly ensure the right of dissent.

of hope is that the persons who saved the journalists from further attack also had PAC t-shirts.

Finally, the PAC advocates establishment of a broadcasting corporation, independent of the state, financed directly by license fees paid by users. We propose that the corporation shall decide whether it wants to engage in commercial advertising to augment their income.

The PAC notes that only 20 percent of African people are conversant with either English or Afrikaans languages and we are aware [that] some 12 million of our people are regular listeners of the vernacular language radio stations. It must surely be the party's objective to encourage the use of electronic media extensively to educate and mobilize our people and to play an active role in the creation of a just society free of racism and oppression.

As a liberation movement the PAC has often been treated by the media with preconceptions, often ill founded. The familiar descriptions are "radical,

black racist PAC," "the ultra leftist, revolutionary PAC," "the white-hating hordes." These phrases are the standard parlance of most of the journalists who write here. And it's totally—to say the very least—intolerable. ■

Q. & A.

Bruce—I came here this morning to hear what the PAC had to say about the media, but two-thirds of your speech was not on that. An organization that stands up and claims it is being badly treated by the media must surely look to its own resources and wonder whether its own conduct toward the media really isn't at the heart of the problem.

Secondly, the media is made up of all sorts of newspapers and broadcast organizations. There is no common view among us here. For the PAC therefore to stand up and castigate us all without being specific makes me wonder if you thought very carefully about what you were saying. You were certainly inaccurate.

Moseneke—One of the end products of a repressive society at a political and economic level is that it has led to a concentration of resources in a particular way. That has, therefore, given the media bosses a particular edge over everybody else in the community. That places them in a position where they can virtually impose their views. If not impose, repeat them with such regularity that they tend to form norms. I'm saying that right is a right that must be readily available to the rest of the community, within the limits of possibilities. It is quite true that the media are not homogeneous. When you talk, you look at broad trends. Otherwise, you get lost in detail. With the time available to me, I can only identify broad trends and similarly express concerns in broad terms.

Harber—Your General Secretary Benny Alexander was quoted in the latest edition of *Work in Progress* speaking in favor of certain kinds of censorship. If I remember correctly, he said that censorship can be justified in cases where free expression threatens the established cultural norms or dominant majority norm.

Moseneke—We're evolving positions around these issues. I would imagine that in the whole debate about whether people who propagate racism should be allowed to propagate it openly and freely

in a democratic society, whether there should be restriction on any views at all, in any matters of public concern, my answer would be no.

I would understand his concern about a violation of what some people might hold dear. But the fact that they constitute a majority or a large interest group is hardly good reason for seeking to limit free expression. Of course, there's a deeper more philosophical and much more difficult question underlying all this. Which really is, should there be control at all at levels of morality of religion, sex, indeed the whole problematic area in organized society, and you know that views vary right around the world. Up to this day in this country blasphemy is still an offense. You could be properly charged in a court of law for blasphemy. In another part of the world, it might look to be totally mad, and people say whatever they want about religion. I understand that my colleague and comrade Alexander would have grappled with a

I would understand [a] concern about a violation of what some people might hold dear. But the fact that they constitute a majority or a large interest group is hardly good reason for seeking to limit free expression.

fairly difficult problem. But for my part, I think there should be no restrictions.

Du Plessis—At the Boipatong funeral you changed the PAC position on mass action and said you are throwing the weight of the PAC behind the ANC campaign for mass action. Must we look forward to a convergence between the ANC and the PAC?

Moseneke—I'm sure they would have converged at some point because they are amply reasonable demands—transparency, neutrality, international monitoring and fair play in negotiations.

Tyson—First, the media has great difficulty working with the PAC. Secondly, all parties complain that the press gives them a bad time. Have you however not underestimated the sympathy that the PAC gets from sections of the media nevertheless?

Moseneke—I think we fall in the first category of everybody complaining about the press giving them a raw deal. Sec-

ondly, I have found that many media people do understand what we are saying and that there is a level of sympathy. But the third thing I have also found is that there is a third category that almost would wish us away, and who would therefore seek to place us in the worst light. So there are those three categories. I suppose they will always be there but the only caution that one should [express] is that we represent a significant and fairly strong feeling amongst our people. It's something much more fundamental, that goes way beyond the present impasse, and in that sense, Pan Africanism will be with us as long as there are problems on the African continent.

Sparks—[The PAC's] slogan is "One settler, one bullet." Your party has a sophisticated ideology and you have a sophisticated explanation of the slogan, but you talked here about perceptions and of people reacting in a heated moment in a crowd, committing violence. Do you not think that slogan invites perceptions of racism, and racist violence can actually incite it?

Moseneke—You know it is a difficult question and you have seen me grapple with it in many forums. Yes, perceptions could emerge therefrom that could be negative and people would find that objectionable. But it is irrelevant [what the PAC's official] explanation is or what your own attitude toward it is.

Young people have a greater and stronger urge to want to take on the world.. In the PAC they are the same, and in other structures they are the same. The things you hear them say as they dance in rallies could not possibly accord with the official positions their parties take.

I don't think you would hear a Mr. Buthelezi say that he would sanction people with *kiris* [clubs] and *pangas* [machetes] taking [violent] acts. I don't think you hear any other leader saying that they think "necklacing" is in order, or for that matter that the conduct of the security forces is in order. There is always a duality that you will find in an attempt by a political organization to state its own position, and how its membership would seek to deal with and trivialize that very same position. ■

The Impact of the Electronic Media

Chair—STAN KATZ, Director Radio 702

Panelists

MOELETSI MBEKI—Director of Publications, COSATU

JOHAN PRETORIUS—Director of News, SABC

GARY STRIKER—SABC, Nairobi Bureau Chief, CNN

STAN KATZ

IN A SOCIETY WHERE many are still illiterate, and those who can read are often too lazy to do so, television and radio are prime gateways of information. We who manage such media are the gatekeepers and we carry upon our shoulders a heavy responsibility.

In the first place, the information we convey provides to a great extent the foundations upon which the people will base its political decisions. Sec-

ondly, the manner in which we gather and convey this information is in itself a political process. If our information system is open and democratic, it

demonstrates democracy in action and inculcates the values of democracy. If it is closed, it acts to counter democracy.

There can be no doubt that the primary news responsibility of the media is to deliver the facts to empower and inform the populace to make informed decisions. But beyond this, the media must also do all they can to promote freedom of expression, the input into the gateway, and freedom of information, the output of the gateway. It is our general duty to the public to open ourselves to all shades of opinion, across the wide and challenging spectrum that exists in our society. Then it is our general duty to make these ideas available for public consumption and analysis. What we cannot afford to do, I must stress, is surrender our editorial judg-

ment. The decision as to what is or is not newsworthy must remain in our hands, and not be placed under the aegis of government, or for that matter, anti-government groupings.

Like all other media, the electronic media must furthermore be granted the right to editorialize, to take a view and express it, and within the clearly delineated area of opinion. This is a right we share with every other citizen, individual or corporate.

It is a right we should demand for every South African. While it may be but part of a total democracy, it is a part that need not wait for a new constitution for one person, one vote. It is democracy here and now, a simple democracy that sets the stage for the complexity of legislation. The fourth estate does not merely keep the estate, but can and should also shape it, and that is the electronic media's contribution, I believe, to the process of democratization.



Stan Katz

MOELETSI MBEKI

THE PROBLEM WITH TALKING about South Africa is [that] we have something in common with the Irish.

Whenever the Irish speak, they always start with what is called the Battle of Bogside. This is the situation in South Africa. Whatever we speak, we always have to start with history.

We have two starting points. One is the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck in 1652 and the other one is the arrival of the National Party into power in 1948. I won't go back to 1652, or to the National Party. But I will go back to one of the great visionaries of South Africa, because he's the man really who has brought us to where we are today. His name is Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd. When you talk about present-day, post-World War II South Africa, you really are talking about the vision of Dr. Verwoerd. When you talk about the electronic media in particular, you are talking about the vision of Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd.

One of his great achievements is what we know as the Bantu education system of South Africa. The Bantu education system was part of the broader vision, which is known as apartheid. Now, one of the cutting edges of that vision of apartheid was the electronic media.

We have a large country, we have a large population, I think it is now put at 40 million. We have a multilingual country, with, I am told, 11 languages. The problem we have is that one person in one part of one corner of the country doesn't speak the language that's spoke in another corner. With those characteristics, the electronic media is in many



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ways the most ideal medium to reach the whole country. It can reach you in your own language, it reaches you in every corner.

I think we have one of the most comprehensive FM coverage, certainly than any other country in the Third World and as comprehensive as any other country in the first world.

The reason we have this comprehensive FM signal coverage is because of Dr. Verwoerd's grand scheme of apartheid, which was to divide the African population into tribes, to make them speak their language, to make them communicate to each other in only their tribal language so that if you speak Tswana, then you cannot speak Zulu. If you speak Sotho, then you cannot speak Xhosa. And above all else, you hopefully shouldn't speak English. Because, according to Dr. Verwoerd, English was seen as the language of modernity, and if we, the black South Africans, became modern, then we were going to look at what he described as the green pastures over the other side of the hill, the pastures of skills, the pastures of development. Dr. Verwoerd's scheme was that we should be the unskilled laborers for the industry, the mines, and so on of South Africa.

So the electronic media was one of the major vehicles which he was going to use to keep us in that state of servitude.

Now, 45 years after the National Party came into power, and after the formulation of this grand scheme, the question



Moeletsi Mbeki

we are trying to answer this morning is, what impact did Dr. Verwoerd's scheme have?

I work for the South African Congress of Trade Unions (COSATU), the largest secular organization in this country. I think the largest organization in this country must be the South African Council of Churches, in terms of its membership. But in terms of secular organizations COSATU is the largest organization. We [members of the ANC] have nearly a million and a half members, who every month pay subscriptions to 14 trade unions in this country, which cover practically the entire spectrum of the South African economy.

To find out where our members are, and how to communicate with such a large membership, we carried out a study at the end of last year which culminated in this book, titled "Beyond

the Factory Floor." It was published last week by Raven Press. It essentially looked at the shop-floor leadership of our unions to find out what is it that they need, what is it that they listen to, why do they listen to what they listen to, what political parties they support. A whole range of questions. We found that this particular section of our leadership, 78 percent of them are less than 40 years old, which means they were all born during the regime of the National Party, at a time of division, of the implementation of the grand vision of Dr. Verwoerd. We also found that they are the very large consumers of the electronic media. Seventy-eight percent of them own television sets, 89 percent of them own radio sets. They are also large consumers of the print media. Sixty-two percent of them read daily newspapers and the largest paper they read is The Sowetan, followed by the Star.

Sixty-five percent of them read the Sunday press, and the largest paper they read is City press, followed by The Sunday Times. Sixty-eight percent of them read weekly papers and the largest paper they read is The New Nation, followed by The Weekly Mail. So you can see that the shop stewards in South Africa are very modern people. These are the leaders of the trade-union movement in this country.

However, we found that despite their enormous exposure to the electronic and print media, that nearly all of them, support the liberation movement.

When you look at this group of people, given their huge exposure both to the electronic and the print media, you would have expected them, if the electronic media had in fact any impact at all, to be reactionaries or tribalists of one sort or another. What we found when we asked them who they will vote for if there is a democratic election, 94 percent of them said they will vote for the ANC. Three percent of them said they will vote for the South African Communist Party. It was interesting that there were some who said they would vote for the National Party—that was only 2 percent, and 1 percent said they would vote for the IFP.

Radio and TV Stations

There are twenty four radio stations in South Africa broadcasting in sixteen languages. Seven stations are broadcast nationwide, six are community stations, nine are broadcast for Ngoni and Sotho-speaking peoples, and one for Indian listeners. Radio RSA, the Voice of South Africa, is broadcast to Africa and the Indian Ocean islands in seven languages.

There are four television channels broadcasting in seven languages. TV1 broadcasts in English and Afrikaans, TV2 in Zulu and Xhosa, TV3 in South Sotho, North Sotho and Tswana and TV4 in English and Afrikaans.

All, except for two radio stations, are owned by the SABC.

Additionally, viewers may subscribe to M-Net, a pay television channel owned by a consortium of newspaper companies.



Johan Pretorius

I'm trying to see if the vice president of PAC is here, before I give the figure of the PAC. I notice he is not here, so now I can divulge the figure; 0.4 percent said they would vote for the PAC, and 0.2 percent said they will vote for AZAPO. Now, these are the shop stewards of COSATU. We also asked them whether they consider themselves to be members of some tribe or racial group or whether they consider themselves to be South Africans. And 86 percent of them said they are first and foremost South Africans, 9 percent said that they are South Africans and members of ethnic and racial groups. Only 5 percent defined themselves in ethnic terms.

The reason I have given this information is to show that the electronic media is important, people spend huge amounts of money to acquire the electronic media, but our evidence shows that the electronic media, certainly the South African Broadcasting Corporation, has had next to no impact whatsoever on the consciousness of the black population in this country.

JOHAN PRETORIUS

FIRST, CONCERNING THE SUBJECT under discussion, should the electronic media play a role, could they and should they play a role in the democratization of South Africa? The SABC's official standpoint is yes. People don't always agree on how we do it, but we have certain ways in which we think we should do it.

Now, it's very, very, difficult for the SABC. Number one, because we live in the divided society that we are, and it's also difficult because of the baggage that we are carrying. And we admit that we are carrying baggage from a historical point of view that Moeletsi also touched on concerning credibility, etc. It's also difficult for us at this stage, because of the accusations concerning our institutional bias. Firstly, there is the content bias, and then our institutional bias, and then our accessibility to all the different groups.

For what it's worth, we have honestly tried to address these problems. We have taken action in various fields. We have, for instance, adopted a code, the basis of which is fair reporting, and playing it down the middle. Just to state our case in public, I'd like to quote a few paragraphs from the code of conduct and values of the SABC.

"The SABC accepts that democracy is characterized by a competition of ideas and viewpoints, and shall therefore reflect and stimulate debates of the day fairly on condition that the individuals and organizations that promote violence will not be given a platform. And statements and incidents that could lead to violence and conflict will be subject to strict editorial control.

"The SABC rejects discrimination on the ground of race, color, religion, or sex. Political misuse of religion will not be tolerated."

The SABC understands the fear and doubts in many minds about the SABC's policy, and I had a look at the Campaign for Open Media's report on our handling of Boipatong and the Goniwe incident. It's clear from there that there is a big, big divide, between people looking at us as journalists and our viewpoint on what we are doing. We



Gary Striker

realize that and we have an understanding of that.

We also understand the need for increasing access to the media and we are doing our best to cope with that. Therefore, we say number one, we intend to make our infrastructure and time on the airwaves available to the interested parties in the interest of promoting the democratic process. Number two, we also accept the fact that we will be monitored. There are various methods and options in this regard, which will probably eventually flow from CODESA, but we accept that reality. And then three, to change our structures from the inside to make them more representative and to cope with the problem of institutional bias.

GARY STRIKER

I JUST HAVE A FEW POINTS to make about the impact of television, especially in African countries north of here, to put what is happening in South Africa somehow in the context of what's happening on the continent as a whole.

I think you're all aware that virtually all of Africa's television services have always been under direct government control. Outside of South Africa, the same applies to radio. Television has been regarded as a powerful instrument of propaganda that should be under the exclusive ownership and direction of the government. Even though television does not reach many people beyond the capital cities in most African countries, it nevertheless does reach

...if you're a government in Africa, or anywhere, for that matter, with little or no legitimacy, you don't want a medium as powerful as television in anyone's hands but your own. So television in every African nation has been a government monopoly, kept under strict censorship, with programming that carries the government's message of discipline and obedience and ample evidence to show that the masses of people love the head of state and that government policies are divinely inspired..

the masses of people in those cities. And it's in the cities after all, where riots occur and governments are overthrown.

Governments are very sensitive to public opinion in the cities. So if you're a government in Africa, or anywhere, for that matter, with little or no legitimacy, you don't want a medium as powerful as television in anyone's hands but your own. So television in every African nation has been a government monopoly, kept under strict censorship, with programming that carries the government's message of discipline and obedience and ample evidence to show that the masses of people love the head of state and that government policies are divinely inspired.

Against that background a foreign television crew comes into the country, and poses a direct threat to that image. That television crew can produce television material that will deny the government's propaganda. You all remember the international impact of television images during the township rebellions here, before press restrictions were imposed. From a government's viewpoint, foreign print journalists are bad enough, but their reports can always be denied. Television is something else. To many governments in Africa, foreign television crews represent high-tech gunboat journalism, commando squads sent by those seeking to impose their imperialist concepts of human rights, democracy and moral rectitude.

But fortunately for governments, foreign television crews are easily thwarted. Much more easily harassed than print journalists, who can sneak into the country on tourist visas with nothing more sinister than a notebook and a pen. You can spot a TV crew at the airport, or at the border, before they even get into

the country. They can't hide their equipment. You can see them on the streets when they're shooting. You can always confiscate their tapes and you can prevent them from transmitting their images abroad.

So until recently, television, although it's a very powerful medium, has been kept under very tight control by African governments, by direct ownership and management of local television services and by restricting the entry and movements of foreign television crews in their countries.

That has been the case in the past. Now there are signs that private television and radio networks may soon be allowed in some African countries, in particular, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Kenya. This comes on the coattails, of course, of economic liberalization, and multiparty democracy.

In more than a dozen African countries, CNN is received and used in government television programming now or directly by those who can afford their own satellite dishes. The BBC World Service television is now also available by satellite. Suddenly, Africa is opening up to television signals from overseas. This is having a profound effect on how Africans view themselves and their place in the world.

By showing Africans the reality of politics, and the culture of tolerance elsewhere in other nations, television has opened their eyes to their own potential. In the future, think about what kind of impact television will have in Africa when local television stations can counter the propaganda of government, if that indeed is ever allowed to happen. Think about how effectively governments will be able to control a foreign television crew that carries a camera the size of a home video re-

order, just like those carried by tourists. If it's a digital camera, the story will be transmitted by telephone from the hotel room. How's the government going to stop that? What if those stories can be broadcast back to Africa by satellite and watched by viewers who have on the top of their roof a satellite dish the size of a salad bowl? Africans will be able to watch BBC television as easily as they now listen to BBC World Service radio. I think the full impact of television in Africa is nothing today compared to what it will be in the future.■

Q. & A.

Thloloe—COSATU is an ANC structure, what did you expect your shop stewards would say on how they would vote?

Q.—And how was the survey conducted, and how reliable do you think its results were?

Mbeki—The survey was conducted by an NGO called Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE), which is a very respected social research organization. We commissioned it and paid for it. So we are fairly happy that the work was scientific and objective.

Coming to the question of given our affiliations or the affiliations of COSATU, what did we expect. It's actually not so much the question of PAC that was of interest to us. We had expected that most of the shopstewards would say they support the Communist Party, because the top leadership of COSATU is more inclined that way than the top leadership of several of our strong affiliates who are members of the Communist Party as well. So in fact, what surprised us was that the shop stewards said 94 percent of them would vote for the ANC, and only 2 percent said they would vote for the Communist Party.

The second part that surprised us, given that again we are allies of both the Communist Party and the ANC, was the strong showing of the National Party. Two percent of them said that they would vote for the National Party. So it's a question of alliances.

In fact, one of the things the survey showed was that there is a strong disagreement with some of the COSATU policies from the shop stewards. I'll give you one example, 46 percent of the shop stewards said that they feel that minority

rights should be protected by law in the constitution. COSATU's position, as you know, is totally against the protection of minority rights, and those kinds of things.

As to the question of how the future of the electronic media in South Africa should be in terms of the unions, COSATU is part of the Film and Allied Workers Organization, it's part of an ANC initiative called the Jabulani Network. In general, we support the opening up of the airwaves to private broadcasters. COSATU itself has applied for an FM station to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

We don't have blueprints, but what we do think is that there must be democratization of ownership. By democratization, I don't mean what the print media moguls told us yesterday, that democratization as far as they are concerned adds up to what they themselves do.

Gibson—I have noticed a radical change for the better in the SABC, but in your speech certain code words began to appear which made me nervous, words like constructive and responsible. We've had 40 years of the government telling us it prefers press freedom if only we would be a little more responsible and constructive.

You say you want to promote vigorous debate, but at the same time you say you will not give a platform to violent groups. Is there any group or individual in this country which has not committed one kind of violence or another or which does not meet your requirements and therefore you would not allow to appear on SABC?

Pretorius—When we say that we mean whichever political group has at some stage in its existence advocated violence, we won't hold that against that group. If for instance the group takes part in a debate and we know it won't promote violence during that debate that is all right. But we will not give somebody, whoever it may be, the opportunity to use our medium to incite people to commit violence.

Lima—Governments' control is not uniform in all countries. To the credit of my colleagues on Mozambican TV and despite the appetite of the government for pressure, with the recent political liberalizations journalists on state TV and radio have a lot more independence and do some objective reporting.

Secondly, I'm one of the lucky few who can afford to watch CNN. I'm aware of the extensive coverage CNN gave the drought in Mozambique and Ted Turner's efforts

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to open up the then] Soviet Union. I however do not think CNN and BBC Television do a lot to teach us tolerance. Often they just promote certain Western cultural values, which have nothing to do with tolerance. At a time when even the UN is becoming unidimensional, it is not clear that Western media is really promoting diversity. I just wanted that to be on the record.

Akhalwya—After 1976 when television was introduced, people saw SABC as lying on behalf of the National Party. This was taken further in 1980 when the colored and Indian schools started boycotting, SABC started reporting one side. But people saw their children being beaten up and the boycott was fueled by the way SABC reported it.

Whatever the SABC has been pushing over the years has been counterproductive in terms of Nationalist ideology, in fact one-third of the whites do not support the National Party. It is in the interests of the liberation movement in terms of gaining support, to let the SABC continue. Aren't we overestimating the propaganda value of television?

Mbeki—If I can respond to what Ameen is saying [before Pretorius answers], sometimes I go along with what you're saying—that it's better we leave the SABC in the hands of the National Party, because it is actually shooting the National Party in the foot by doing what it's doing.

Whoever owns the medium, the point is that the more out-and-out propaganda you put out on behalf of your leader, the more you destroy his or her case. Kenneth Kaunda [former president of Zambia] was defeated specifically because the mass media in Zambia was spending so much time in getting everybody so fed up with always having to see Kaunda and his wife, his children, whatever, on television. Always having to see their pictures on the front page. So I agree with you, that an overbearing mass media actually does the opposite of what it's aiming to achieve.

Pretorius—I think there are only two possible answers to your question. One is that we haven't been promoting the National Party, or if we have, we've been lousy propagandists. We say we haven't been promoting the National Party, but what we will admit to, especially before February 2, 1990, is that we might have done some promotion for it but February 1990 would be the liberating date for us as well. Before that we were following a stricter government line, and there's no use denying that. But we are trying to change that, as far as we can.

Steyn—I would like Pretorius to comment on SABC's practice, highlighted in the Campaign for Open Media's report, of carrying denials about incidents, like with the recent Amnesty International report on police brutalities, without first carrying the report itself. Surely this kind of journalism is not defensible.

Pretorius—If it's done in such a way, it's wrong. But you mustn't forget, what sometimes happens, the original story is carried in a previous bulletin, either on radio or on television.

The initial announcement could have been carried on the 6 o'clock bulletin. Or even in the morning. And then you pick it up, there's the latest angle, which is the reaction. But if it starts off by giving government reaction, we are journalists and are not supposed to do that.

Berger—There seems to be increasing pressure from the society for members of the Broederbond to resign from their public positions or from the organisation. What was and is the influence of the Broederbond in the white media and the SABC?

Pretorius—Not being a member of the Broederbond I don't know what influence it had in the past. But as a journalist, I say that each and every journalistic organization and its members should be free of such control from the Broederbond or any political party. And I'm not saying this now with a halo around my head.

We have already admitted in the past that that was not always possible. But at least now the intention is there and the principle is there, and we honestly try to be unaffected by organizations such as the Broederbond.■

Future Media Participants

Chair—CARMEL RICKARD, Columnist, Natal Witness and Weekly Mail

Panelists

GUY BERGER—Editor, South

BOB HAIMAN—Director, Poynter Institute

ANTON HARBER—Editor, Weekly Mail

ALLISTER SPARKS—Director, Institute for the Advancement of Journalism

GABU TUGWANA—Deputy Editor, New Nation

CARMEL RICKARD

FIRST, I MUST EXPLAIN the title of this session, Future Media Participants. Our speakers will be talking about training for people working in the media.

GUY BERGER

SOUTH, THE PAPER THAT I'm editor of is a paper with a proud history. It was set up in 1987 largely by activists-cum-journalists that worked in highly successful grass-roots community newspapers. But it also included some professional journalists that have been made redundant when the Argus company closed down the Cape Herald newspaper. South proved its worth by defying press curbs during the state of emergency. And it's incurred a three month banning as a result. When the government denied at the time holding child detainees, South exposed the lie. When the outlook for South Africa looked absolutely bleak, it was South that first published Nelson Mandela's manifesto from his prison cell proposing a political settlement with the government.

Those early days were the days of activist journalism, times when South [was] absolutely absorbed by the need to gather and publish crucial political information in extremely difficult circumstances. Joining South in the 1980s



Carmel Rickard



Guy Berger

wasn't a career choice. The political imperatives at the time outweighed and eclipsed motivations such as seeing journalism as a vocation. An attention in the 1980's to journalistic practice and to newspaper management was well nigh impossible in that environment.

Nonetheless, the paper in that decade proved a valuable stepping stone for a large number of people, especially black South Africans, to become professional journalists today. However, it's still clear that South and South African journalism sorely lacks qualified South African journalists.

To give quite a graphic example of this, when the paper's second editor, after feeling the pressure of two years in a very demanding position, called a day to his term in office in June, 1991, the post of editor was advertised. Two former South staffers were approached to apply, but neither felt confident enough. The same went for the existing

staff. Myself, a former political prisoner and recently returned exile, was subsequently approached and asked to apply for the job. Two other people also applied, one being a white woman, the other being a colored male. They had also been exiles. The character of this pool graphically highlights just how limited and small the pool of skilled journalistic personnel is in South Africa. As it turned out, I got the job. This posed a problem to some people in that South was generally seen as a paper catering to people of color. So The Cape Times hesitated a little bit, before eventually deciding to resume quoting South editorials in its column "From the Black Press."

More seriously, one angry South reader phoned in and demanded to know of our senior reporter, who is classified colored, how South could have a white editor. The reporter responded that South had an editor, not a white editor. That kind of response was extremely encouraging and heartening



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for me. But it would also be completely wrong to think that dispenses with the issue. It does actually matter that I come from a white background, while my newspaper reaches audiences far beyond my own life experience, my culture and my language. I think nonracialism is a noble outlook but ought not to obscure the real differences in background experience and perspectives that do arise in this divided society. I'd argue that aware-

ness of one's limits and actions to transcend these limits is essential for South African journalists, and I will argue that this is not only an issue for white English language south African journalists. Xhosa and Afrikaans speakers in the Cape often find it difficult to express themselves in English. Afrikaans and English speakers often know zero in the way of Xhosa.

When one comes to questions of perspectives, values, interests, senses of humor, style, again most journalists operate in the shadow of their upbringing. To improve journalistic capacity in the 1990's cannot therefore be seen only as a question of technical writing skills and the like. Instead, what is needed is a program to broaden the linguistic and community experience of South African journalists, all of them. Concretely, it would be a good idea for me to learn Xhosa, and get a better understanding of township life.

But that of course is only part of the picture. It's also crucial that township residents should be empowered to compete for the editorship of South next time it becomes vacant and that individuals from township backgrounds have the opportunity to acquire both the technical skill needed and the insight into non-township walks of life to enter the world of journalism.

Moving on to the specifically technical journalistic skill differentials and their relation to community backgrounds in South Africa, it goes without saying that different races have experienced different education systems, and this is impactive of people's capabilities. Class background, familiarity with modern urban environments, exposure to world cultures, this is also often tied in with racial status in the society.

To improve journalism in South Africa requires major training initiatives to even up the imbalance. And yet, I must qualify this, because at the same time it would be a huge mistake to regard the issue purely as raising the levels of disadvantaged people to a level of that sector of society which has been privileged under apartheid. As I have already indicated it is necessary to broaden the perspectives and linguistic base of those from the oppressed

stratum. But going further it would be completely wrong to regard existing standards as the ideal.

Nobody is more aware than myself about how underskilled I've been to take the running of a newspaper and what a struggle it has been to swim in the deep end. Then there's too a highly problematic situation in this country that many experienced journalists, black and white, regard themselves as being at the pinnacle of journalistic standards. For them, newcomers must be trained to fit into a pre-existing mold. Thus, a senior black colleague in the industry recently bewailed the fact that graduates of Rhodes University's journalism

The argument is that South Africa needs viable chicken cooperatives rather than a vibrant press. Or that it needs black journeymen rather than black journalists. ...there's much talk today about leveling the political playing field. What good, though, is any field, whether referring to politics, or to production, if it's inadequately lit? Media spotlights are absolutely essential to a new order in South Africa.

school came up with quite ridiculous ideas—like wanting to look at the psychological damage to families who are victims of massacres instead of these trainees reporting the simple facts as delivered at a police briefing.

Prejudices and stagnant traditions at the top need to be challenged if journalism is to develop in this country.

For many people in the mainstream industry also, it may be unpleasant for them, but I believe that it's important that they do acknowledge that there are lessons to be learned about journalistic practice both ranging from investigation to questions of design and desktop publishing from the alternative sector. And certainly if print journalism is to survive in competition with an improved

broadcast media, it is the rank at the top that will need re-training and re-education.

And I could also add that the alternative independent sector has a lot to learn in terms of management from the mainstream. If training therefore is desirable for all South Africa's existing and also aspiring journalists, it's still very clear to me that the major focus must be on training black South Africans, and particularly black women. A more representative journalistic community in this country would lead to better publications for the wider reach. But what's well worth noting is that training can also serve to strengthen press freedom in this country.

The press as an institution and press freedom as a cherished principle can only survive in a future South Africa if these concepts become meaningful and relevant to the greater majority of the country's citizens. This is not going to happen as long as there is a marginalization of black South Africans and media owners, practitioners and consumers. It's imperative therefore, for training to enable black personnel to gain access to editorial management at all levels, including the highest levels.

The question is, will resources be available for this? In 1990, South's directors passed a resolution, urging the editor to investigate ways of attracting African employees to the staff. A committee found that there were no skilled African journalists in Cape Town available to work on the newspaper. We discovered that The Peninsula Technikon, which offers a three-year diploma in journalism, didn't have a single African student in 1989 or 1990.

South then set up a training program. Six trainees enrolled for a year-long course last year. Despite the tough job market, five of them are now working full time in the media. Under the guidance of a full-time tutor, they spent the year receiving formal lectures on topics ranging from press law and feature writing to visiting courts and finding their own hand at journalism. They spend six weeks on mainstream newspapers and three months in South's

own newsroom, where they have access to mentoring from the more senior staff on the paper.

Other publications in South Africa, small publications, also offer training schemes. New Nation also has it and some of the alternative magazines. None of these small-scale ventures compete with other forms of journalism training nor do they duplicate them. They represent the rational use of the potential for decentralized, intensive, specialized training on each publication. They are real contributions to a tremendous task.

The question which I come back to is, who will foot the bill? Apartheid in South Africa is of course far from dead and gone. Its legacy has hardly even been scratched. With the days of press censorship over, at least temporarily, funding journalism is no longer the flavor of the moment. Inadequate finance for our own training scheme forced us to delay it several months this year. The future beyond 1993 is uncertain.

There is an argument in funding circles, that it's more important these days to fund development than media. The argument is that South Africa needs viable chicken cooperatives rather than a vibrant press. Or that it needs black journeymen rather than black journalists. In my view, development is anything but a technical question. If the public is to debate and help decide upon development priorities, for example, whether the emphasis should be on housing, schooling or Armscor and what kind of housing and schooling, then the media is sorely needed. Not just any media, but media produced at least in part by black journalists. If development policies are to be implemented under public scrutiny, again journalists are needed.

Regarding political democracy, political development, there's much talk today about leveling the political playing field. What good, though, is any field, whether referring to politics, or to production, if it's inadequately lit? Media spotlights are absolutely essential to a new order in South Africa. But they will need to be representative of the whole society, and professional in all respects, if they are to have the neces-

sary credibility in the society. Which brings me back to journalism training, and the need to place the focus on this key endeavor.

BOB HAIMAN

I'M AWARE THAT ONE of the joys of being a South African is that you get to live in a country for which everyone else in the world has all the answers. So my South African friends tell me, for example, that there's a constant stream of North Americans and Western Europeans flying here to tell the South Africans precisely how they should solve all their problems. The Europeans, I'm told by the way, usually have the good grace to wait at least two days before they pronounce themselves experts on South Africa. The Americans usually reach that state of expertise about halfway between the airport and downtown Johannesburg.

In my own case, I've been in South Africa for five days; I leave Johannesburg tomorrow morning. So I'm going to resist the natural American urge to tell you all of our notions on how you must train your journalists. Let me instead tell you a little bit about how we have been training journalists in the U.S. for 15 years, and let you see if maybe some of what we're doing might be responsive to some of your needs.

[The Poynter] Institute is committed to excellence, committed to the notion that journalists should not be just minimally acceptable, or okay, or not bad, or fairly good, or quite good, or even first class. But excellent. We believe that only when the press, and all those who work in it are excellent can the press really do its job of informing the public by holding those white hot spotlights of truth and fact and analysis and comment. Not only on the government, but on all the institutions of society. Business, the church, education, medicine, the military, parties and all aspects of culture.

I'll tell you a little bit about how we teach. We teach in four areas at our institute. Those areas are reporting, writing and editing, graphics and design, media management and media



Bob Haiman

ethics. We think those four areas are the most important. Not the only important, but the most important areas for journalists.

We teach some other things too. If you come to the institute, we will teach you such things as the courage to do your best and the power to shape your own career. A desire to continue to grow as an individual and as a journalist well past your original schooling days and all through the days of your career, so that you continue to grow even in the last week before you retire. The courage to take risks and to see the limits of conventional thinking, which we think are handcuffs which bind many journalists. We teach a missionary zeal that leads people who've been to the institute to go out of there like a football team going out of a locker room after hearing an inspirational speech by a coach, and to take the field, not only to do their best, but inspire others around them to also do their best.

I'm just going to say a few words about ethics. As important as I and the members of our faculty think all of our teaching areas are, I share the notion of many of our faculty members that our ethics center may be where we do our most important work. As most journalism schools, we have always taught ethics, but for the first 12 years of our existence, we taught the standard ethics of restraint and control. The ethics which say be honest, be fair, be accurate, be on your own, don't let the people who you report buy you lunch, give you free tickets to football games

and movie theaters, send you flowers, etc. Don't write about people with whom you have personal connections, at least certainly not without disclosing them. Don't write about your friends, don't write about organizations in which you or your spouse holds office. Those ethics of restraint are important and we will continue to teach those at the institute in the future. We call those red-light ethics.

For the last three years, we have been teaching something a little different, which we call green-light ethics. A red-light ethic emphasizes caution and restraint. The green-light ethic emphasizes power and duty. The red-light ethic emphasizes adherence to rules; green-light ethics emphasize the application of craft. The red-light ethic sets democratic limits; the green-light ethic sees new democratic opportunities. The red-light ethic prescribes what journalists ought not to do. The green-light ethic prescribes what journalists ought to do.

The red-light ethic often sees journalists as being too aggressive. The green-light ethic often sees journalists as being too timid. The red-light ethic cautions against vices and villains; the green-light ethic celebrates virtue and heroes. The red-light ethic exists to keep things out of the paper. The green-light ethic seeks new ways to get more stuff into the paper. We believe that those are useful notions and we intend to continue to teach those at the institute. As you know, we are going to, very shortly, in fact we have already begun for us what's an extremely exciting new relationship with the school which Allister Sparks has organized

ANTON HARBER

IT HAS BEEN A CONSISTENT theme of this conference in the last two days that the South African media need some form of nongovernmental restructuring if it is to play their appropriate roles in the new South Africa. My sense is that two issues have emerged as dominant—the need for greater diversity, and the need to transform the current domination of the media industry by a minority



Anton Harber

of what was defined as like-thinking, like-drinking, like-dressing people.

The Weekly Mail training project was started in 1986 as a modest contribution to dealing with these very issues. It was felt that if the tradition of an independent, outspoken media, that The Weekly Mail, then just six months old, was trying to foster, was to gain any strength and set down roots of any firmness, then it could only be done if active steps were taken to produce a wider range of individuals skilled, trained, and steeped in the tradition of quality, independent, outspoken journalism.

We set out to address a need—training opportunities for aspirant newspaper personnel, particularly for black people. Diversity will remain an idealistic hope unless we have the individuals, the people who can create new media voices and make them viable and of a quality that will sustain that media. Since then, the project has grown significantly in scale, and I hope in quality, as we've gained experience ourselves in the educational arena.

The project works as follows. Every year we advertise training posts, and brace ourselves for 300-400 applications. They come from a range of people, some employed in other professions, such as taxi driving, to those with post-graduate degrees in journalism. They come from the cities, the rural areas and from as far afield as the U.S. and Germany. Those are easy to deal with. We throw them out. We set about testing and interviewing the rest in an exhaust-

ing and exhaustive process that attempts to identify anything between three and eight individuals who show the potential to be journalists. Some preference is given to those who would not otherwise have access to such opportunities. This year, for example, we selected four candidates. We then put them in a classroom for three months for theoretical and practical training by skilled media educationists and extensive input from our own editorial staff.

After anything between six and 18 months of this training, these candidates leave us with some basic skills and knowledge of newspaper production and journalism, a little newsroom or sound room experience, and a portfolio of published work. Some of them naturally become, invariably become, invaluable elements of our newspaper, and where possible, are offered jobs. Others go on into the marketplace to make use of the opportunities this training has given them.

Our project is aimed first and foremost at those who do not normally have access to such opportunities. It is intended not just to produce more journalists, but to try and pass on our experience as an outspoken freedom-loving newspaper, and develop this tradition of journalism.

From this year our training is taking on a new dimension. Responding to demands from the growing number of independent papers in neighboring countries, we're putting together special courses to try to pass on some of our experience and skills to sister publications in Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia and other front-line states. In September this year, in conjunction with the Fredreich Ebert Foundation, we're running a special three-month module for journalists from the region, focusing on investigative journalism. I think this raises an important element, which is not being developed sufficiently at this conference, and that's the need for regional cooperation, to develop and support the subcontinent-wide range of independent media. We're hoping to use this program as a springboard for further activities in southern Africa, working hand and glove with other newspapers in these countries.

There is at the moment a proliferation of training initiatives. On one level, this is a good and extremely healthy development. And each of these projects must be judged on its merits. But there is also a danger that instead of supporting and developing existing working structures, we create endless new parallel ones that duplicate their work and engender an ugly competition for a limited pool of funds. If we have learned nothing else in the alternative media, it is that the easiest thing to do is to throw money at problems and create structures with that money, create structures and institutions that fall apart as soon as funding stops. We need new training ventures, but we also need to look for synergy and sharing resources rather than to encourage a wasteful duplication of parallel initiatives.

ALLISTER SPARKS

IT SURELY GOES WITHOUT saying that effective training is quite fundamental to the securing of a free and independent press. South Africa in this time of political and social transition has got special vulnerabilities, special problems, in this respect. And this is why I have decided to devote what career years I have left to the task of journalism training focused primarily on the working journalists who are already in our newspapers and broadcasting services.



Allister Sparks

To upgrade standards I have founded [The Institute for the Advancement of Journalism] modeled largely on Bob Haiman's Poynter Institute, which I have looked at closely and which I found very inspiring. It filled me with the kind of missionary zeal he talks about.

Our journalism for some years has suffered from an attrition of standards. This is not a new thing, it's been going on for a long time. I think there are a number of reasons for it, one of which, is that journalists are underpaid. But we've had a particular brain drain, especially in the English-language press, since the closure of The Rand Daily Mail, which sent large number of especially young journalists out of the country and out of journalism.

At this moment, I think old Rand Daily Mail staffers staff the entire public relations department of the Chamber of Mines. Former staffers occupy key positions in newspapers like The Melbourne Age, The Western Australian, The Independent in London and beyond. That coincided, I think, with the violence of the 1980's which caused many young people of that age to decide to leave the country and build their lives and careers elsewhere. We had a flight of talent from many, many professions, not just journalism.

So that I think one way or another, we have an attrition, almost a missing generation of really competent people—our best journalists aged between 30 and 40. It's a critical loss. Because we take our tradition more from Britain than the United States, we're less oriented toward journalism schools and more oriented toward the old-fashioned system of training on the job. Skills get passed down generationally that way. If you have a missing generation, I think it interrupts that flow quite seriously.

Coinciding with that, in a transition, like the one we're going into, there is inevitably going to be pressure for black advancement within the newsrooms into editorial decision-making positions. Because of the legacy of apartheid, there is a lack of experience in those kinds of positions in our newsrooms. All of that we see against the backdrop of the huge

damage done over many, many years by the systematic crippling of people through the educational system that took place in this country over a long period. We have that combination of a general brain drain and attrition of standards, a small pool, and now we face the position where there is going to be, and quite rightly, pressure for black advancement.

Let us superimpose that need against what is going to be happening politically. Somewhere along the line if CODESA gets revived, or if it dies totally and something else replaces it, we are going to enter a period of transition. Any transitional period, as East Europe demonstrates so vividly and Spain and Portugal before that, are times of uncertainty and a degree of insecurity. Transitional governments are almost by definition uncertain, insecure and jumpy.

Just to illustrate my concern about falling standards—I was down in Durban the other day for the presentation of the Pringle Award. This is South Africa's premier journalism award. There was a six-inch story in a major Durban newspaper on this award.

The name of every single participant in that ceremony, including the recipient, the man who made the presentation speech, and the name of the award itself, was misspelled. The name of the recipient was misspelled two ways, including the headline. I thought, my God, if we can't get it right about ourselves, what the heck are we doing with other peoples' business, and how tolerant are they going to be of that level and that degree of inaccuracy? Coinciding with this, we've heard a lot these past few days about the importance of an independent free press in the new South Africa. I believe that the one guarantee, if there is such a thing as a guarantee, is to strengthen and institutionalize a sense of professionalism and integrity.

We can have constitutional protections, yes, and I shall do all I can to encourage people engaged in the negotiations to give us a First Amendment. But I don't think that any constitutional guarantee is total. We had an entrenched clause in the South African Constitution which was pulverized very easily

within my lifetime. Constitutions are vulnerable. Yes, let us have the constitutional protection, but let us not naively believe that that's going to be enough.

We heard the Deputy President of the Pan-Africanist Congress this morning tell us that his organization believes in press freedom, but then we also heard him go on to say that he believed

It's fine, of course, to support a liberation movement when the liberation struggle is on, but when that liberation movement becomes a government, then you're in danger of becoming a ventriloquist journalist.

in a press council. And we've heard other vague references from spokespeople for that party about things that don't sound altogether like a commitment to press freedom. Joe Thlooe has warned us. On day one, he said each and every one of these political leaders will come through this conference and reassure us that they believe emphatically in press freedom, and Joe said, "don't believe any of them." I underscore that.

We heard Minister Leon Wessels yesterday deliver his pledge that because of the evil behavior of his government in the past, they could now be regarded as the proven specialists in evil behavior, and therefore were the best qualified to protect against it in the future.

In the last resort, I say a strongly entrenched professional culture among the journalists themselves is the last trench of protection. Only journalists themselves can finally protect the free press. Only by fighting for it doggedly, fiercely, all the time. That is how we preserved what little we had through the years of nationalist rule.

We all come from a past of advocacy journalism. We've had Afrikaans newspapers totally committed to supporting the National Party. We've had English papers which supported the United Party. Some supported the Progressive Party. Then we had black journalists who were enjoined by the black political movement to become part of the political struggles, part of the liberation struggle. They were often faced with appalling physical risks if they didn't

follow that. That's our background. It's fine, of course, to support a liberation movement when the liberation struggle is on, but when that liberation movement becomes a government, then you're in danger of becoming a ventriloquist journalist.

I guess we'll all continue to have our ideological preferences and identities. But over and above that, we must have

a shared culture of professionalism. We must realize that that work is absolutely fundamental to a democracy, and whosoever tries to impinge upon that, and threaten it, we must be sure that it would draw the defense of all of us, regardless of our political preferences and identities.

Finally, I think there is another thing that is crucial in this transition phase, and that's what I call perceptions of news. We all come out of backgrounds of what I call a cellular society. We've all grown up in our little cells, we're all victims of apartheid. We all grew up in ghettos, from the hospitals we were born to the schools we went to and the universities. We have lived our lives in these apartheid cells, these ethnic cells with ghetto attitudes of us vs. them. Psychologically, we really live in different countries and we see the news events of South Africa through our particular cultural prisms.

Empathy is a sadly lacking commodity in this country—the ability to put ourselves in the other guy's shoes. That has got to be part of our training, that ability to see events from the other guy's point of view.

GABU TUGWANA

SINCE JOURNALISTS, PARTICULARLY in the alternative media, were central to the process of social transformation in the 1980s and 1990s, the empowerment of journalists by way of skills cannot be overemphasised.

Quite frankly, training schemes run by some of the establishment media organizations in this country are not providing enough skills for this mammoth task. The thrust of the mainstream media has been to try and maximize [their use of] the interns. Often, there are no follow-up programs and this hampers the further development of young journalists. Let me illustrate my point.

When I joined journalism in 1973, I had just been from school. I worked for The Rand Daily Mail. My immediate tasks there were with the sports department. I didn't have any direct training, I learned on the job. I had tremendous difficulties most of the time in trying to put my stories through. Half the time I had to give my story to other people who had to interpret it. Not that I never wrote them. I had the opportunity of writing. But when the stories were verified, most of the time they kept on losing the original meaning I wanted to express.

Another weakness in the programs of the mainstream media, has been lack of upgrading of skills for the practicing journalists. Many practicing journalists, particularly in black publications, lack analytical skills despite many years of working as journalists. If you, for instance, try and give them the features department, most of the time you find that there is no depth in what they end up writing. One must, however, point out that this problem is compounded by the education system that was designed in the 50's with a stated aim of educating blacks to be no more than



Gabu Tugwana

laborers. Even the majority of the people who taught them were, until recently, without matriculation certificates. Considering that English is not used as a first language at many of our black homes, black journalists have had to pull very hard to produce a basic story.

To correct some of these problems, the alternative media have been able to design unique in-house training programs to complement the standard approach of the mainstream media. These extra aspects include English-language skills and literature, sociology, the history of the media in the country—both mainstream and alternative, as well as community models. There was also training in the history of the South African struggle for democracy. To broaden the scope of the trainees, leading journalists from various publications, including the mainstream, as well as political leaders of different persuasions, were invited to discuss their policies. The scheme has been so successful that some of our trainees have been approached by the mainstream media.

This year, we advertised. We received about 5,000 applications, though I must add that there is also [the] aspect of unemployment. The only difference I think with previous applications was that this year, people who applied are people with basic university degrees, which was quite surprising. That accounted for 80 percent of them.

Although training is sponsored by overseas funds, all of you know how scarce these are becoming now. The mainstream media however have the resources to finance this scheme, and they have already made a commitment

to assist the struggling alternatives, and perhaps this would provide a chance for this mainstream group to start a media training fund for all of us.

To further support the long-term survival of the alternatives, and to cut their dependence on overseas funding, serious consideration should be given to opening the share holding of M-Net pay station, which is owned by the mainstream media. As you may well know, one of the main principles of the establishment of the station was to help them survive after the state owned SABC had taken most of their advertising.

One of the things which I heard from one person close to M-Net is that a certain paper in East London is basically run by the [proceeds from its] shareholding in M-Net. We want to believe that the mainstream media has accepted the principle of the more the merrier; in other words in order to have democracy in this country, we have to have more voices and it is for that reason that we should be given an opportunity to continue operating. ■

Q. & A.

Q. What are the main differences between the university journalism training programs and the programs offered by the newspapers?

Harber—I think there are essentially three differences between the training we do and the training you're talking about. One, our training is hands on, getting people to become working journalists as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

The second is that our project is aimed at those who would not necessarily have access to university education. The third is—I highly emphasize—that we're not just training journalists, we're trying to train them in a tradition of vigorous independent outspoken freedom-loving journalism.

Neavoll—You mentioned the large field of applicants including taxi drivers. Have any of your trainees included those real people.

Harber—We have somebody at the moment who was a taxi driver and is just finishing the 18 month course.

Van Heerden—To what extent [does the New Nation] reflect what is happening in

the white community to its readers? How do you see your reporters belonging to political parties, supporting a particular line?

Tugwana—On our side, there is no restriction on where a journalist should belong, ANC or PAC, you know, that's fine—even the National Party—as long as they reflect objective journalism.

We used not to give attention to the government's view, because our attitude was generally that they had enough media. The SABC, the mainstream media, everyone, was putting emphasis on what the government was doing. [But recently] we've had various interviews with even with the state president [de Klerk], so we now judge news in terms of how it will affect the entire society. But also, we must remember that we come from the majority of the community, [but] we should try obviously try to put emphasis on issues which are affecting all communities. I believe I'm first a human being before I become a professional. But I do accept that I have to try to strike a balance between my personal beliefs and professionalism. It doesn't prevent me from being objective.

Berger—I don't think any newspaper in this country can be completely even-handed even if it tried to be. [South] is trying to complement and compensate for what happens in the other papers. It is a struggle for us to try and overcome the prejudices that exist in [the alternative media] and not duplicate the prejudices that exist in the mainstream press.

Q. How does your institute intend to address media theories?

Sparks—I don't want our institute to go too deeply into theoretical aspects of the communication business. I believe that side of it belongs more properly in the nine universities that are running journalism courses. We are dealing with hands on training or upgrading.

Our institute is not going to be training new journalists. But I do believe we have aspects where there are distortions arising from our apartheid past, where we were all separated from each other. This is the kind of perception that Guy has just been talking about. Pejorative terms that come easily to one sector of a community about another, and the same of course applies in terms of cultural activities, the arts, everywhere. We have to try and inculcate a sensitivity toward that. It is not going to be easy to design courses that do that but we have to try. ■

THIS HOLIDAY

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The African National Congress Position

Chair—FRANK FERRARI, Senior Vice President, African-American Institute

Speaker—CYRIL RAMAPHOSA

FRANK FERRARI

IN OUR DISCUSSIONS we have emphasized vigorously the role of an independent media in a changing South and southern Africa. Also, throughout these two days, there has been on occasion both questions asked and implied as to what would be the policy of a future ANC government with regard to the media. Would it be the policy vigorously stated by Mr. Mandela at the International Federation of Journalists Conference in Prague, of a press that would safeguard the rights of all? Or would it be a policy as articulated by our participant editor from Zimbabwe, which would be an interventionist policy which is taking place in Zimbabwe, with regard to the role of the media?

CYRIL RAMAPHOSA

LET ME [SPEAK] TO WHAT I believe is the theme of this conference—the role of an independent media in a changing South and southern Africa. The ANC has always believed in the need for a vigorous and independent media. This was a position the ANC upheld and fought for during the long years when we were banned and in exile. I don't mean myself, because I was never in exile. And from inside the country, during the years of our underground activities and during also the years of our illegal existence. Perhaps more than most, the



Frank Ferrari

ANC knows what it is like to be stifled. It also knows what it is like to be repressed as an organization.

The ANC is not alone in suffering a history of oppression and repression. It is no exaggeration to say that the media, particularly certain sections of the press in South Africa, have been part of the struggle for democracy in our country and have suffered the consequences thereof like most of us. The bannings, the constant harassment, the repression, and so forth. In this regard, one has to pay tribute to great newspapers like *The World* and *The Rand Daily Mail*. They are no longer with us. But together with others, they have gone down in history as champions of the voice of democracy in our country. One must also pay tribute to that crop of newspapers which emerged during the 1980's and became known as the alternative press. These papers too often at great personal cost to the journalists involved, ensured that the press, or at least a section of it, was seen as the bulwark of freedom of expression and freedom of opinion at a time when South Africa experienced very dark days indeed. What these papers, and journalists who worked for them, proved beyond any shadow of doubt, is that there is no substitute for democracy. Because this is surely what media independence is about in the end. As a great statesman once said, freedom is indivisible.

There can be no democracy, at least not in the modern world, without an independent media, a media that is free to inform, to criticize, to probe, and to expose. For the basic truth of this point, one needs to look no further than South Africa today, and the truly courageous



Cyril Ramaphosa

and uplifting role, some sections of the media are playing in exposing crimes against our people and scandals, which may never otherwise have seen the light of day. Perhaps as never before, there are at last people, a very few, in government, in the security forces and elsewhere, who are now willing to talk about the practices and dark secrets of apartheid rule in this country. However, without the professionalism and energy of a small group of committed journalists, the public would never have known of some of the government malpractices and mismanagement.

The ongoing violence demands even more from such investigative journalists. Revelations made to date clearly indicate covert financial and other support for surrogate forces. But in order for us to make a clean break with the past, to end secret warfare against the people and prevent further carnage, there needs to be a concerted effort by the media to uncover such operations.

We expressed our real concern when the response from sections of the mass media to revelations in newspapers such as *The Weekly Mail* and *The New Nation* was to doubt whether this was appropriate in the New South Africa. The continuing massacres (and there have been at least 49 in the past two years), answer that question. I say this not simply because the ANC is in opposition to the government of the day. Yes, indeed, we do oppose the government of F.W. de Klerk, and believe that neither he nor his government are fit to rule for one more single day.

Cynics would perhaps say that while the ANC supports an independent media now, this will change as soon as the ANC gets into government. I want to state quite categorically that this would not be so. The notion of an independent media, of press freedom we uphold now and will continue to do so especially when the ANC is in government. When we are in government, the ANC will fight for the cause of press freedom and an independent media with just as much passion as we do now. Our guarantee for freedom of speech and expression will be enshrined in a bill of rights that we believe should be in a new constitution. The ANC unequivocally condemns any attack from any quarter on journalists when trying to do their work. And there have been quite a few attacks on journalists which the ANC deplores. Nelson Mandela has personally communicated with all our structures, and we will take concrete steps to ensure that media workers are welcome and safe within our communities.

The media in South Africa and the world have not always been kind to the ANC. For years we were vilified and placed at tremendous disadvantage. Our views were misrepresented over and over again, sometimes by default, but often quite purposely. However, the lesson we learned through all this is that there can be no substitute for an independent and truly free media.

Democracy in our view is a two-way process and no government which is serious about democracy can afford to muzzle the press or, even worse, silence them as successive National Party

governments have done in this country. However, because of the prevailing situation of the media in South Africa today, it is not enough to simply say one is in favor of media independence. The reality in this country, unfortunately, still is that the media is by and large a white-owned and white-controlled business. Moreover, large sections of the media are in the hands of a few very powerful monopolies. This situation cannot lend itself to a truly independent media. The declaration of media freedom has to be

Were negotiations to be open to the media, it might encourage the various parties to be more practical, to be more realistic in their style of negotiating. By opening ourselves to the public eye, one might indeed have had less politicking, and more honest and fruitful negotiating.

underpinned by an equitable distribution of media resources, development programs and a deliberate effort to engender the culture of open debate.

The most critical issue, as far as media independence is concerned in South Africa at the present moment is the matter of broadcasting and in particular of the SABC. It has been amply demonstrated time and time again what an enormous weapon broadcasting can be in the hands of the government, which is unscrupulous enough to use it as a private propaganda organ. I'm afraid that that is how the SABC continues to function in this country, despite the changes that have been made and despite the views of individual journalists on the SABC itself who may, and I am sure do, hold very different views from the government of the day. In this regard, the ANC believes the most urgent issue is to reach agreement on a completely reconstituted, impartial and nonpartisan management and board of directors for the SABC. In order to level the playing field, the principle of an independent media commission has been generally accepted. Such a media

commission should be key to establishing the already agreed upon independent communications authority. It is these bodies that should ensure the reconstitution of such an SABC board and management through public nominations and hearings. The extent of state manipulation which we continue to see in the SABC only serves to confirm how urgent and necessary it is to ensure that a public broadcaster in this country is nonpartisan.

Given that the government in no way represents the disenfranchised millions in our country, the ANC insists on equal time to put our views on both the impasse and in response to the scurrilous attacks on the ANC and its integrity [by the government].

We need to dwell a little on the practices of the SABC and how it is structured along racial lines. TV1 is run by whites for white people. News and information is disgracefully distorted and manipulated. They are not even ashamed in the way that TV1 is run. When you go for an Agenda interview, you are made up and dressed up and everything else is done by a white person. When you go for a program on TV2, you are made up and dressed up by a black person. That is how blatantly racist they are. It is no small [wonder] that white South Africans have little understanding or knowledge of the tragedy that is the daily experience of black South Africans.

As presently constituted, the SABC does not reflect the true character of South African society. This is a matter that requires urgent resolution if there is to be any hope of reconciliation in our country. The ANC believes that a public broadcaster should be used to promote and strengthen democracy. We are talking about a full-blooded democracy, not the democracy of a special type that allows for veto powers and weighted voting.

Our country has had no experience of democracy. It knows nothing about good government or even political tolerance that is being preached every day. The National Party cannot even boast to know anything about political tolerance because over the years they have ensured that they marginalize and sup-

press political parties and organizations that have held different views from theirs.

In the future, an ANC government would maintain a public broadcasting service to serve society as a whole and give a voice to all sectors of the population. However, if this is to happen, such a public broadcasting service will have to be independent of party political influence, particularly that of the ruling party. It should be governed by structures representative of all sectors of society.

Let me take this opportunity to restate the position first put forward by Joe Slovo, the Chairman of the South

also be made public as ours was made public. We are learning by the day, and they are learning, too. Much of the present confusion about the ANC's motivation in suspending negotiations could perhaps have been avoided if the public had had the kind of direct access to CODESA that we are talking about.

Were negotiations to be open to the media, it might encourage the various parties to be more practical, to be more realistic in their style of negotiating. By opening ourselves to the public eye, one might indeed have had less politicking, and more honest and fruitful negotiating. This has only served to discredit the entire negotiations pro-

by members of the political parties on the ground. What is the ANC doing to stop this?

Ramaphosa—The National Working Committee of the ANC had a thorough evaluation of the events that were reported in the press and the events that some of our people, leaders in the ANC, witnessed at the funeral of the Boitpatong victims—how the press was harassed, and some of them were almost shot, and guns were pointed at their faces and they were assaulted. We took quite a sober look at all this and realized that the ANC needs to take immediate steps to ensure that we nip this in the bud immediately so that it does not become a culture that will start growing in our country.

We'll be setting out clear guidelines that press people who are covering news stories, be it unrest situations, or normal situations, should not be harassed, and I must say that one should not say that it is black journalists only who are exposed to this. I think white journalists are exposed to much more risk because they happen to be white. What is very disturbing at this point in time is that there is a violent anti-racism also beginning to come forth because of events that keep coming up in our country. It is the responsibility of organizations and their leaders to ensure that this type of activity and culture is stopped with immediate effect.

Maliphani—I want to talk about black empowerment and control of the electronic media, because the blacks control less than one percent of that. What support can black initiatives that want to have joint ventures in the media count on from the ANC now and as a future government.

Ramaphosa—I think you can count on the support of the ANC in insuring that there is affirmative action in as far as ownership of media is concerned, to enable black people, black businesses also to enter that field effectively. With regard to the entry of foreign companies, I would say that that would need to be read in line with our policy on sanctions. We've always said that when the interim government is installed, it should be that government which should be able to declare how we'll open all doors for investment and that would also include the assistance that would be given to undertakings or enterprises such as yours, and indeed many others. At this point we say there is nothing that should stop black ventures from beginning the process of exploring what is possible.

An ignorant society cannot be democratic. It is only a society in which the free flow of information and open debate are guaranteed which will finally be a society at peace with itself...

African Communist Party, which President de Klerk alleges controls the ANC, that negotiations ought to take place in public. The ANC strongly supports this position. Negotiations are not the province only of those delegates who take part, and who make decisions affecting the lives of everyone, behind closed doors. Although the future of CODESA as a specific negotiating forum still hangs in the balance, negotiations should, through whatever forum, be open to the media and to public scrutiny.

When we informed the government that we would be communicating our national executive committee decisions to them in a memorandum, they sought to know whether we would make that memorandum public. There was an expression of dissatisfaction [on the government's side] and unhappiness over our approach to make a memorandum like that public. It was even suggested that this could be regarded as private communication between ourselves and the government. We said anything that affects the future of our country should never be done in secret. We have had enough secrecy in this country.

We are pleased to note that when they replied, they actually learned the lesson that their memorandum should

cess, and we have reached a point now where our people are saying that CODESA has no credibility whatsoever anymore.

It is worth mentioning that this position was anticipated in our draft media charter, adopted at the end of 1991, in which we stated that the outcome of negotiation depends on the assertion of media freedom and associated rights. It is precisely because these freedoms and media independence are so crucial in the period of transition that we state it as necessary to strive for these freedoms, way ahead of the advent of democracy in our country. ■

Q. & A.

Q.—I think it is true to say that of all the parties today, the ANC is the one that has gone furthest in advocating freedom of expression, for example in its media charter. The rest of the parties at this conference have also advocated similar freedoms and said these should be entrenched in the new constitution. However, there are structures that could undermine these freedoms even if they are constitutionally entrenched. We know for example that journalists, particularly black journalists, have been intimidated

Sparks—Your recognition that there is an intolerance in the community and a vulnerability there. I would like to refer to the Boipatong funeral. At that funeral four speakers and yourself made attacks on the press. Statements like that can be dangerous. I must tell you that I myself felt that the press badge I was wearing at Boipatong made me vulnerable. I would like you to comment on that and to hear that they will never attack journalists again.

Ramaphosa—Oh, Allister, I never thought you could be a schoolmaster, to hold the whip and say, "Say you'll never do it again!" I think your comments and concerns are quite valid, but I would not connect the criticism that was leveled at the press—and I admit to having been one of the speakers who criticized the press—to what happened afterwards.

I think you need to look at what happened afterward in the proper context. My information, from eyewitnesses who are in the leadership of the ANC, is that people responded rather unhappily when photographers started photographing a man brandishing an AK-47 and wearing a uniform. I'm not saying that is the only type of incident that took place.

I would say that the press should expect that it, too, can be criticized, just as it has the right to criticize. I often find that when the press is criticized, it cries out much louder than we do when we respond to press criticism. It seems like the press says, you can never criticize us. If you criticize us, you are against freedom of expression and freedom of the press. If we don't like what, say, Allister Sparks writes, or Ken Owen writes, I should be able to say, no, I don't like it.

But I take the concerns you raise, perhaps the forum may not have been the appropriate one. And seen in hindsight, in terms of the events that took place, you could have a point.

Rickard—One of the papers I work for is in the Natal Midlands and the question I have relates to your saying that you are going to draft a statement about how the media should be treated and will be circulated. The concern that people in the Midlands feel is that the very people who will be given this information are the very people responsible for the incitement against the press. In fact there very little difference in the anti-media rhetoric between the ANC and Inkatha in that area. What can be done in situations where it is actually the officials of the organizations who are responsible? Secondly, what

plans does the ANC have to create broader climate of political tolerance not just of the media, but in the country as a whole?

Ramaphosa—Yes, we agree that the problem of the Midlands is a special problem and it is being addressed within the structures of the ANC. I will give you an assurance that the concerns you raised will be communicated to our leadership in that area, and thank you for raising that.

With regard to the broader question that you asked, we see the government's intransigence in ensuring that we walk down the road toward achieving democracy as being a drawback because it is very difficult to achieve total peace and full tolerance if you do not have a democratic system. That is why we want to move with great speed toward the installation of a democratic government in this country.

M'membe—From your days as a trade unionist you have been involved in negotiations. I don't know how you could negotiate with all the miners coming to your office and the shareholders of the mining conglomerate turning up to listen to the debates between you and the chairman of the mining company. I think we have to differentiate between political negotiation and the trade-union process. In the political negotiations there will be many things one has to give up in order to reach a compromise, even foolish compromises, so I do not think having the political negotiation out in the open is a good one. It will just lead to a bit more anarchy.

Ramaphosa—When we started negotiating with the Chamber of Mines, they sought to prescribe to us as a union on how many people we could bring to the negotiation table. They limited it to five, and then later said 10. One day, the Chamber of Mines said we should bring 10. We decided that what was more important was the views of our members, and we brought 55 people. I can tell you those negotiations were successful, because even the compromises that we made were well understood by the 55 members of the negotiating team. They were there, they were able to follow everything and at some stages we even gave them interpretation from English to Sotho and to Xhosa. Through that experience we came to the understanding that people, particularly people who've been deprived of information for so long, are fully entitled to get more information and be part of the process. With the CODESA,

our own structures raised concerns and complaints about the way CODESA was actually going on. They felt that everything was being done in secret. At our policy conference, they raised this matter, and it was decided that we should push for CODESA to be more open. In the end, we found that if we had to reach compromises the media would then project all this for our people to read and to get to understand. It would be a lot better than for Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk to be locked in discussions on their own and then come out and say, we have reached a compromise, and alienate themselves from the people.

The other important thing one needs to understand is the thinking of our people in South Africa. They have yearned for this moment all their lives, and when the moment comes for them to know what is happening, we think it is utterly wrong to deny them the right to know how their future is being determined.

Maliani—I would like to say something on behalf of those black journalists like myself who have been harassed in the townships. I understand it is the young people in the townships who do not understand how journalists really operate and how we have to go through a myriad of laws. It makes us angry to find 16 year olds telling us that we have to go through people like them to tell us how to do our stories. Until such a time that the ANC inculcates a spirit of respect for people like me, I will fight to my last breath that those young upstarts do come into my way again. We need to have an agreement here on how to operate. We took it from the Boers, we are not going to take it from anyone else.

Ramaphosa—Well that sounds like a declaration of war. It looks like you are also getting into this terrain that de Klerk doesn't like. The politics of ultimatums. But I take your point. I think black journalists have been actually exposed to quite a bit of harassment. The message you put across [is] that the ANC needs to inculcate the culture of tolerance. People should respect you because of what you are, not so much because you are going to be a journalist. And old, yes, of course. But the message is well taken. ■

Summary—Twelve Challenges

Chair—BRIAN POTTINGER, Chief Assistant Editor, The Sunday Times

Speakers

BILL KOVACH—Curator, Nieman Foundation

VIVIAN LOWERY DERRYCK—President, African-American Institute

BRIAN POTTINGER

IF YOU LOOK AT THE CONFERENCE, I think it's important for two things. One is the context, and one is the content.

The context very simply is that what was debated here wasn't taking place in a vacuum, and that was most clearly represented by Cabinet ministers, by leaders of the resistance groups and resistance movements [and by] the ANC opposition groups that took time off from terribly busy schedules to come and speak to us.

There is a reality to what we were doing here, which was beyond simple academic discussion, that went to the heart of the media, and the media's operation in South Africa. A situation in



Brian Pottinger

which decisions made about the media and responsibilities for words and their consequences are measured not in terms of academic

thinking, but in terms of real lives of people and prospects for change. So the context is crucial, I think.

The second thing that I hope we did achieve, was the content. We wanted this really to be conference of practitioners. Of people who are newspaper people, who are involved in publishing, who are the doers rather than simply the observers. I think the fact that we managed to get a wide range of journalists, from the independent press to the establishment press, media owners, and media bosses, I think it was in a way unique in South Africa.

BILL KOVACH

I'M GOING TO PRESUME YOUR indulgence for a minute or two to make a few personal remarks. I'm moved to do it because of what I've seen and heard over the last day and a half. In all senses of the word, I'm proud as an individual, and proud as curator of the Nieman Foundation to be part of having helped put this conference together. There is a strong and a tight cord that binds the Nieman Foundation at Harvard and South Africa of which we're very proud and through that network, which has built up since 1960, there has come to be an understanding of the vitality and the pain and the possibilities of this country and this society that we all feel very deeply.

Without presuming at all to use my personal experience to tell you anything, I would just like to share a few observations, based on 30 years of reporting, beginning as a white Southerner for a white-owned newspaper in the South, covering Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights movement. I would echo what Joe Thloloe said at this conference. You can listen to politicians, but if you hear even the best of them, and I think we've heard one of the best just now at lunch, political power believes in freedom of the press. Ownership, economic power, believes in freedom of the press. But—there's always the but—constitutional protection is vital to any free society and any free press. A diverse ownership and a diverse involvement in a free press is vital. But, as Allister said, the only real protection that the journalist in the end has, is a strong and vital sense of journalistic community.

I'll take it just one step further, and that is that the protection is in the streets, the protection is from the people. Only to the extent that a free press is identified by the people as their voice, as helping them express their needs and their desires, and helping them understand those things and those people who are controlling their lives. Only when the press achieves that position is it safe. The people will protect that press. No constitution and no ownership can provide the same protection. We've seen it time and again. Nor can any ownership, or any political force destroy it as we've seen with the *samizdat* press and as we've seen in societies like this. So I would only add to the record of the conference my hopes that while you're struggling with all these questions, you never, ever, lose sight of that relationship.

One step on that road—Ray Louw mentioned it—one of the challenges was the need to press the CODESA process for more openness, which was just repeated by Cyril Ramaphosa. Were I a journalist in this society, I would push on that door for all it was worth. If the press is going to help bring a society along as it changes, there's no place for the press to be except in the middle of that process—seeing that process, and reporting to that public what accommodations are being made, what changes are being considered, and why the changes are coming about. Otherwise, the press can only report the posturing of the groups after they've made their agreement. There is no power on this earth, political or economic, that is not serving its own interest first. The press's role is to assure that people have an insight into that interest and an access to influencing that interest.

The other hope we had was that we could help build the bridges between this newly emerging South Africa and other countries in this region that are also emerging in stronger forms, but in every case with the press trying to find its way in a new society.

I heard some extraordinary voices at this table. I think, when the record of this conference is read, we'll all discover that we have solved nothing. But I firmly believe we'll all see some new possibilities for action, for cooperation, and for mutual help that we did not quite recognize before.

VIVIAN LOWERY DERRYCK

IT'S USUALLY MY TASK TO TRY TO sum up, but it's simply too daunting a challenge in this particular instance, so I can't do that. What I thought I would do was talk about some of the challenges that I have heard in our two days of discussion. I take off from Ray Louw, who began by giving us three challenges.

First there was a call for journalists to unite across racial lines.

Secondly, there were many calls for journalists to help create a culture of tolerance. We talked about the fact that problems that journalists are facing now will be faced even in a new government.

Thirdly, we talked about creating a culture and a politics of inclusion. Peripherally to that, inclusion should include women.

Women who are professionals, but also women in the broader political changes and change mechanisms taking place here. We talked about creating voluntary affirmative action. We talked about that in terms of the SABC. We talked about black advancement into decision-making positions, and here, too, we have to think about not only blacks, but also about women.

We were told that we shouldn't degenerate into junk journalism—that's what Dan said about what had hap-

pened in Nigeria. We talked about the fact that it was necessary to maintain standards and to maintain a culture of professionalism. He also talked about the need for diversity and greater access in terms of media and media ownership. Indeed, that was really the heart of the conversation.

Allister Sparks talked about the lopsided nature of ownership. That can be expanded to the lopsided nature of access and the nature of coverage. We talked about the need for training, particularly for blacks. We heard this morning about the need for excellence, and the need for missionary zeal. Then Anton talked about the need for regional outreach and cooperation. We're looking at the media in South Africa, it goes beyond the country to the region.

Another challenge that you're going to face is the fight for a First Amendment-like guarantee in the constitution. There were a variety of points of view that came up. But there was clear unanimity on the fact that there has to be something enshrined in the constitution that offers protections to journalists and the rights and guarantees of freedom of the press.

There are other challenges. One of them is incorporating young persons. As Cyril was speaking, the thought was going through several persons' heads about the challenge that each of you face to somehow be a voice for these young people. It's one thing for leadership to speak, but it's another thing for that to be carried out and heard by young people, whether it's through the print or the electronic media. That the challenge is to make sure that the words of their leaders gets to their ears. And then you have the big, big challenge of determining a position on coverage of CODESA and whatever follows CODESA.

Those are twelve challenges that each of you faces. The only thing that we at the African-American Institute can do is pledge that we will try to be helpful.

I was heartened by the comment of one of the non-South African but non-American participants. He said, after listening to Cyril Ramaphosa and to the other political speakers, "You know, we get a different impression of these

people in Africa." To me, that's the heart of this meeting. We have changed some person's impression. If this conference does nothing else, it has achieved a goal of changing perceptions. ■

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAI	African-American Institute
ANC	African National Congress
AWB	Afrikaner Resistance Movement
AZAPO	Azanian People's Org.
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CASE	Community Agency for Social Enquiries
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DDA	Detriot Diesel Allison (Division)
EEC	European Economic Community
FCC	Federal Communications Commission (US)
FIEJ	International Federation of Newspaper Publishers
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KK	Kenneth Kaunda
KTN	Kenya Television Network
MMD	Movement for Multiparty Democracy
M-Net	Subscription television channel
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPU	Newspaper Press Union
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SADCC	Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference
SADF	South African Defense Force
SAPA	South African Press Assn.
SRC	Student's Rep. Council
TML	Times Media Limited
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
VAT	Value-added tax
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front



Vivian Lowery Derryck

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