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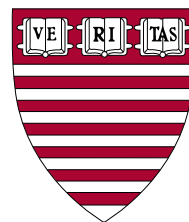
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by  
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Research Paper R-22  
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# TENSIONS OF A FREE PRESS: South Africa After Apartheid

by Sean Jacobs<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

South Africa has a history of partisan news media. Television and radio, long dominated by the state broadcaster, have a history of bias in favor of the apartheid government and the main newspaper titles, catering largely to the country's white minority, have historically sided with mining capital.<sup>2</sup> The first democratic elections in 1994 clearly pointed to the bias of the South African media and how far removed they were from the majority of ordinary South Africans in their news coverage and editorial stances. For example, in the 1994 elections the majority of mainstream newspapers endorsed a political party, the Democratic Party, which could only manage two percent of the vote.<sup>3</sup>

The South African media was forced to change in response to the fundamental political, economic and social transformations occurring following the demise of apartheid. The partisan press is declining, producing greater media independence, characterized by more critical coverage of the government.<sup>4</sup> This push towards greater media independence comes at a time of a major change in government—the coming to power of the country's first democratic government with its own expectations of the press.

This necessarily results in tensions over the role of the press. The fault-lines are clear. The government is overwhelmingly black-led; the media is still largely white despite recent attempts to change ownership, management and personnel patterns as well as news focuses. Government appeals to a set of media values informed by a "developmentalist" approach; the media (with few exceptions) harbor "liberal-humanist" notions of their role in the new democracy.

A vigorous debate has developed over what should be the role of journalists within the new post-apartheid political context. Questions are raised about the media and the "national interest" as well as the impact of racial patterns of ownership and editorial make-up of newspapers

on the structure and framing of news. This paper focuses on the tensions that arose out of the changes that developed after 1994, particularly in the print media, and how these changes affect the unfolding debate on the role of the press after apartheid.<sup>5</sup>

To examine these issues this study adopts a case-study approach, analyzing debate over the role of the press in the case of arms sales by a South African company, Denel, to Saudi Arabia in mid-summer 1997. The conflict over government secrecy and press freedom surrounding this case clearly illustrates the overtly racial content of the tension over the role of the press in South Africa's new democracy. It is mainly white journalists that appeal to traditional Western notions of journalism. Black editors and senior journalists are increasingly being pressured by government to defend the "gains" of April 1994 and to act in the "national interest" by supporting the current regime. Certain (black) senior editors and media also exhort their colleagues to be "patriotic" in supporting the government. The notion of 'patriotism' is equated with support for black political leaders. Criticism of the government from white media owners and even journalists is regarded by the ANC as reactionary. The conclusion considers the relationship between changes in ownership and control of South African mainstream newspapers and the debate within the media on press freedom.<sup>6</sup>

## The Context of the South African Press

Controversy about the role of the press and its interaction with government reflects broader debates about the nature of political and economic changes in South Africa and the country's future development path. In particular, debates about an "African Renaissance" started by South Africa Deputy President Thabo Mbeki<sup>7</sup> as well as notions of "black empowerment" among emerging black businesspeople<sup>8</sup> should be noted.

The tensions over the role of the press also take place within a context of the imminent end of the Mandela Presidency that emphasized reconciliation. After Mandela goes, it is expected that a more concerted debate about "race" and "resources" will take center stage and that debate will increasingly reflect the racial and class cleavages inherited from apartheid.<sup>9</sup>

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More importantly South Africa is currently going through a political and economic transition. One of the consequences of political transitions is that it throws existing institutions into turmoil. In South Africa newspapers across the political spectrum have experienced something of an identity crisis as the transition has reconfigured political relations and models of professional relationships.<sup>10</sup>

The African National Congress government enjoyed somewhat of a press honeymoon in the period immediately following the 1994 elections. Since then it has had to adjust to the rigors of governing and the criticism that comes with it. The government has also had to deal with criticism from a press bolstered by a formal (legal and constitutional) and informal political environment that facilitates vigorous democratic debate. In particular, government has been less than pleased with the kind of criticism it has had to face from the formerly “alternative press” or editors and journalists in the mainstream media it had considered as part of the liberation alliance before. Furthermore, South Africa is in the process of establishing institutions of democracy. It is a nation struggling to build itself into a democracy and in such a context debates about the nature of institutions are not surprising. South Africa is not unique in this respect. The country experiences many of the debates about the role of the news media common in societies in transition—newly democratized or decolonized societies—as well as in many Western democracies.<sup>11</sup>

South Africa has sixteen major newspaper titles of which eleven are daily newspapers and five are weekly newspapers (see Table 1). The major sectors of the South African media were until recently controlled by a white minority, with the English and Afrikaans language newspaper market run by duopolies, while radio and television were dominated by a state monopoly.<sup>12</sup>

Until the early 1990s, the print media was in control of an effective duopoly, split between an Afrikaans and English-language press. Two large press groups—the South African Associated Newspapers (SAAN) and Argus Holdings—controlled the English-language market. SAAN later became Times Media Limited. This relationship was also fairly incestuous since Argus Holdings was the single biggest shareholder in SAAN and these two groups in turn were both controlled by the same conglomerate, Anglo-American Corporation, through a complex pyramid system.<sup>13</sup> The Afrikaans press in turn was split between two companies—Naspers and Perskor. As a result,

the print media was the subject of a high concentration of ownership. Argus Holdings clearly dominated the market for English-language print news. Naspers also had a stake in the English market with a controlling stake in the Sunday paper, *City Press* aimed at a mass black readership. Perskor controlled the mass daily *Citizen*.<sup>14</sup> But overall, Argus held the biggest prize in the mainstream press market that mattered politically.

These four corporations collectively ran the Newspaper Press Union (NPU). Through the NPU these five companies controlled methods of distribution and regulated prices in the newspaper industry. They also negotiated with the apartheid government over press accreditation for journalists and in turn allowed military and police, under apartheid, to have substantial control over the dissemination of news.<sup>15</sup>

In such a context it was inevitable that the struggle to transform ownership and control patterns in the South Africa economy would include demands for change in the print sector. Increasingly the need was identified broadly within government and the ANC for increased black ownership and control of the media.<sup>16</sup> It is important to note that unlike broadcast media, where legislation and regulation were seen as central to broadening press ownership and breaking the SABC monopoly, a different approach was followed in the print sector, where the market was viewed to manage regulation.<sup>17</sup> This can probably be explained by the different traditions of regulation maintained for the different mediums: state regulation for broadcasting and market regulation for print.

For a variety of reasons—both political as well as economic—ownership patterns started to change dramatically after 1994. Political factors included the demands of the African National Congress in its media policy, demands by black editors and journalists and that of proponents of “black empowerment.”<sup>18</sup> At an economic level it made increasing business sense to diversify their interests as the new government was preparing an anti-monopoly competition policy.

The first steps towards broadening mainstream press ownership resulted only in a spread of ownership among existing media players. In 1994 Times Media Limited (TML) sold its stake in two regional daily newspapers—45 percent in *Pretoria News* as well as a 30 percent stake in the *Natal Mercury*—to Anglo American Newspapers. It also sold the struggling *Cape Times* to Argus Holdings. This gave Argus Holdings total control of the English-language

**Table 1: Profile of Newspapers**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Publication</b>	<b>Circulation*</b>	<b>Readers Profile</b>	<b>Political Orientation</b>
Times Media Limited	<i>Business Day</i>	38,989	Gauteng-based, white, high income	Liberal, free-market, limited government, white editor
	<i>Sunday Times</i>	458,964	National, lower middle income	Liberal, free-market, limited government
	<i>Evening Post**</i>	18,074	Eastern Cape, white/black	Liberal, free-market
Independent Newspapers	<i>Sunday Independent</i>	34,705	Gauteng, educated, white and black	Progressive Liberal
	<i>The Star</i>	156,358	Gauteng-based, mainly white, suburban	Liberal
Independent/ New Africa Investments	<i>Cape Times</i>	51,334	Cape Town, urban, white middle class	Left-Liberal, black editor
	<i>Cape Argus</i>	82,142	Cape Town, urban-suburban	Liberal
	<i>Mercury</i>	40,904	Kwazulu-Natal, white readership	Liberal
M&G Media	<i>Sowetan</i>	211,178	Gauteng-based, national black readership, townships	Populist left, black consciousness
	<i>Mail and Guardian</i>	32,510	National, educated, mostly white	Social democratic
Natal Witness Printing and Publishing	<i>Natal Witness</i>	26,732	Kwazulu-Natal, white readership	Liberal, regional politics
	<i>Die Burger</i>	102,691	Western Cape, Afrikaans-speaking white-'coloured'	Politically conservative/, center-right
Naspers/Perskor	<i>Beeld</i>	110,331	Gauteng-based, Afrikaans-speaking whites	Centrist, Liberal
	<i>City Press***</i>	114,999	Gauteng-based, national, black	Populist, black consciousness
Perskor/Kagiso	<i>Rapport</i>	392,085	National readership, white	Populist, white right-wing
	<i>Citizen</i>	134,261	Gauteng-based, black/white	Conservative editorial tone

\*Circulation figures for July–December 1996 from Audit Bureau Circulation in *Mail and Guardian*, 28 Feb–6 March, 1997.

\*\**Evening Post*, a Port-Elizabeth, Eastern Cape newspaper, is part-owned by TML.

\*\*\*At the time of this writing, *City Press* is 49% owned by Naspers and 51% owned by Dynamo Investments, a black empowerment group.

newspaper market in the key Western Cape and Kwazulu-Natal provinces as well as 72 percent of the Gauteng provincial market—the industrial heartland of South Africa.

But two further events—the introduction of foreign ownership onto the South African press market and the entry of black players—are seen as key developments.

The first was Anglo-American Corporation's sale of their majority share in the Argus Holdings Company to Irish Independent Newspapers PLC. The latter bought 35 percent of Argus Newspapers—a controlling stake—which translates into 40.8 percent of the South African newspaper industry. Argus Newspapers was renamed Independent Newspapers shortly thereafter.

Despite this major upheaval in the South African media—which in one sweep plunged South Africa into the politics of globalization and multi-national media corporations—there is virtually no serious public debate regarding the influence of foreign press ownership on the nature of political debate in South Africa.

In fact, debate about the implications of foreign ownership has fixated on questions about the role of the African National Congress government in vetting the sale by Anglo-American Corporation to Independent Newspapers.<sup>19</sup>

There are many reasons for this. One reason is that in a context of a newspaper market characterized by shrinking news markets and advertiser bases, declining circulation or decreased investments in newspaper businesses at the expense of higher profits, many observers see foreign ownership as a positive development. Even the editors of the formerly alternative *Weekly Mail and Guardian* noted in an editorial in August 1995, that “. . . the key to press freedom is not regulation, but proliferation.”<sup>20</sup> What has gone clearly unnoticed meanwhile is that Independent Newspapers' dominance has resulted in synergy (of opinion) and increasing cost cutting of operations as experienced elsewhere.

The second significant event was the introduction of black ownership. First there were a number of smaller but significant events. The first of these smaller sales was the decision of Anglo American in 1994 to sell the *Sowetan* newspaper to a black majority company, Prospect Africa, a subsidiary of the new black dominated investment consortium, New Africa Investments Limited (NAIL). The latter firm was an outgrowth of the “black empowerment” drive. This gave the company NAIL a 50 percent stake in the *Sowetan* in partnership with Argus

Holdings/Independent Newspapers. NAIL now owns the *Sowetan* completely.

However, the sale of the *Sowetan* had no major impact on the mainstream media configurations since the *Sowetan* had, since its inception, catered to an overwhelmingly black readership. Even under apartheid, the *Sowetan* focused more on the politics of largely black organizations such as the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress as well as internal black-led opposition groups, rather than that of “white mainstream” politics. Of interest, rather, would be the future political tone of the *Sowetan*. The newspaper had long been considered to be sympathetic to black organizations left of the ANC. Since the new *Sowetan* owners—the Board of Directors of NAIL—is dominated by former activists and politicians turned businesspeople who are close to the ANC government, there were questions as to whether the Board would interfere in editorial decisions at the *Sowetan*. There have been reports since the sale, of alleged pressure on editorial decisions by the Board on the paper's editors, but this has not been substantiated.

Soon after, the Afrikaans media group, Perskor, sold its majority shareholding in the *Citizen* newspaper to another black consortium, Kagiso Trust. The *Citizen* has a controversial past—it was started by the apartheid government to gain a direct foothold in the English language market—and has always acted as a “newspaper of record,” using wire service copy, and had acquired a steady black readership for its sports coverage. The paper, though, continued to maintain a conservative editorial tone towards the new government, and the new owners have indicated that they are in no hurry to change a “winning formula.”<sup>22</sup>

Naspers then divested itself of the *City Press* (a mass Sunday newspaper aimed at an urban black readership) into a 51 percent black owned group, Dynamo Investments, which is led by former Inkatha general secretary, Oscar Dhlomo. Like the *Sowetan*, *City Press* had always catered to a black readership and practiced a tabloid style of journalism, and the change in ownership did not drastically change the political slant of its editorial content.<sup>23</sup>

But the major change in racial ownership came with the sale by mining company Johnnic—also partly owned by Anglo American Corporation—of its majority share in Times Media Limited (TML) to the black-controlled investment group NAIL. The importance of this sale was that, as pointed out earlier, the leading



members of NAILE are either close to or are members of the governing party and many had been very active in the struggle against apartheid. And second, although sections of the black community had always been involved in the newspaper business, what was significant was that for the first time they now owned a significant portion of the South African mainstream newspaper industry. Times Media Limited publishes the influential *Business Day* and *Financial Mail* (a weekly business news-magazine) which is read by the country's political and economic elites. It also publishes the *Sunday Times*, the highest circulation newspaper in South Africa.<sup>25</sup>

Nothing much has changed in the editorial make-up (although some newspapers had appointed black editors) or advertiser base of these newspapers in the last three years or so, but their columns have been opened for a concerted debate about the future role of media and government.<sup>26</sup> The Denel Case is one such instance where a debate in such forthright language would have been impossible only a few years ago.

## The Denel Case Study

The two key events in the print media in the last four years have therefore been the introduction of foreign ownership and the entrance of black owners onto the newspaper market. How did these developments affect coverage of the government?

On 20 July 1997, three newspapers in the Independent Newspapers stable—the *Sunday Independent*, *Sunday Argus* and the *Sunday Tribune* reported that a state-owned arms manufacturing company, Denel, was involved in a deal to sell conventional arms to Saudi Arabia.<sup>27</sup>

To prevent publication of the name of the client country, Denel sought court interdicts against the newspapers preventing them from publishing the name of the client country in terms of secrecy legislation the day before the article was supposed to appear.

Denel also laid criminal charges against the three newspapers in terms of the 1968 Armaments Development and Production Act, which prohibits the disclosure of any information relating to the supply, marketing and export of armaments for the benefit of the former government arms manufacturer, Armscor. On conviction, the Act provides for a maximum fine of R15,000 or eight years imprisonment or both.<sup>28</sup>

Denel and the newspapers were involved in a court battle over a three-week period as to

whether the newspapers had breached secrecy laws or had jeopardized the sale.

Denel has a controversial history of arms sales—breaking sanctions against arms sales and for selling arms to a number of dictatorial regimes around the world. The arms sales to Saudi Arabia also occurred at a time that the new government was in the process of formulating a more “transparent and accountable” arms sales policy.

Part of the reason that Denel's case was weakened was that the information had become widely known through radio broadcasts (where it was not prohibited) and in newspapers published abroad. The *Sunday Independent* then named Saudi Arabia as the country involved, despite the court order against it.<sup>29</sup> On August 5, 1997, the interdicts were finally withdrawn in the High Court in Pretoria.

During the wrangle over interdicts and the right to publish it seems as if the dispute was clear-cut: that this was a debate over press freedom, the right of the public to know, national security and access to government information.<sup>30</sup>

But the Denel Case also became a public debate about the role of the press in post-apartheid South Africa. That is a debate that is essentially split along racial lines; the divisions coincide with divisions between notions of a “patriotic media” or a “liberal-humanist” media; in that debate it also clear that some journalists and editors side with the government.

The initial debate by journalists over the events focused on questions of press freedom, national security and access to government information.<sup>31</sup>

The main protagonists in the debate over government secrecy and the right to publish were obviously the *Sunday Independent* as well as the formerly alternative *Mail and Guardian*. The South African National Editors Forum (the umbrella body for South African editors) as well as organizations working on information issues, such as the Johannesburg Freedom of Expression Institute, were very prominent. Most of these participants criticized the behavior of Denel.

The debate changed however when the views of two prominent black journalists entered the fray. It became a debate over news values and the impact of race. The two black journalists whose views gained prominence, Thami Mazwai and John Qwelane, both had suffered detention and had faced harassment for their work as journalists under apartheid and have long held white press owners in contempt for their hypocritical obedience to press freedom under apartheid.

Mazwai was the publisher of Mafube Publishers, a company run mainly by black journalists who had formerly worked in the mainstream print media. Mafube's titles included *Enterprise*, an economics magazine, the franchise that is owned by an African-American group, *Black Enterprise* as well as *Tribute*, a news monthly magazine modeled on the U.S. *Emerge*. *Enterprise* is mainly aimed at a readership market of the new black political and economic elites and openly promotes "black empowerment." Mazwai is also former deputy editor of the *Sowetan* and has emerged as a vitriolic critic of the mainstream "white" press.

Qwelane is the editor-in-chief of *Enterprise* and a veteran black journalist who had worked in virtually every one of the five major press groups and had also served as editor-in-chief of *Tribute* magazine. These two black editors would feature prominently in the Denel Case.<sup>32</sup>

It is not as if Mazwai and Qwelane's views were that of all other black editors or journalists—whether those working for black-owned or white-owned newspapers. However, the latter were less vocal or outspoken in their participation in the debate.<sup>33</sup>

It became clear that two basic views appeared to develop in the debate: the traditional division between a "developmentalist" and a "liberal" view of the media.

Mazwai and Qwelane articulated a variant of the developmentalist approach to the role of the press. In their columns they appealed to a "patriotic media" that balanced the "public's right to know" with the "national interest." Mazwai never fully articulated the "national interest," but it was clear that this view was synonymous with that of government. Mazwai suggested that the "public good" always take precedence.

For example, according to Mazwai, "we do not have a patriotic media, and as far as it is concerned people can lose jobs so long as it has its scoops."<sup>34</sup>

Mazwai argued that the right to publish, like any other right, has limitations. "The public good always takes precedence." He continued, ". . . Europeans and Americans are not being hysterical about arms sales. What makes SA journalists and editors think ordinary South Africans do not want Denel to sell its products?"<sup>35</sup>

Mazwai stressed the role of race as central to understanding different conceptions among those in the press of their relationship to political actors and the public. An appeal to the public was essentially that of "privileged whites" that

did not care for jobs much needed in the black community. Mazwai for example suggested, "That no black editor has come out in support of the disclosure of Saudi Arabia as the destination for South African arms speaks volumes. It is not surprising that we are not caught in an identity crisis in which we must be South African, Irish, American and European all at the same time."<sup>36</sup>

He questioned the motives behind certain newspapers attacking the government on the crime issue in South Africa. The press' insistence in publicizing details of the arms sales was nothing but a "secret agenda," thereby repeating allegations made earlier by President Mandela. The increased focus on state corruption or alleged mismanagement or corruption in state-owned companies now managed by blacks was part of this "agenda," according to Mazwai.<sup>37</sup>

Mazwai referred to regular meetings between SANEF editors and President Nelson Mandela where the President complained about black journalists being forced to place a specific slant on stories, and suggested Mandela was telling the truth. "He (Mandela) told us which journalists said this, and those journalists confirmed it. You are not told straight out what to write or not, but the white news editors and their body language tell you what he or she likes or does not like. And what they like gets into the paper. This is the agenda we are talking about. The agenda that says objectivity is writing only stories that are critical of government and not giving the 'good' equal prominence."<sup>38</sup>

Mazwai and Qwelane's "patriotic media" involved a public siding with the government. At one point, Mazwai announced that he and Qwelane wanted to assure the Minister of Defense and the Minister at the head of a Cabinet Committee on Conventional Arms Sales that they would ". . . do everything we can to ensure that our profession realizes that press freedom serves the interests of South Africa rather than assuage the egos of some Euro-South Africans."<sup>39</sup>

But Mazwai is quick to underscore his support of press freedom: "We worship press freedom. Hence we even went to jail while some of our white colleagues damned us for being activists but did not see anything wrong with themselves donning the then South African Defense Force uniform. However, press freedom does not exist in a vacuum. It must serve South Africa and help us achieve national objectives. . . . Every freedom has limitations."<sup>40</sup>

The opposite of the "patriotic media," was that of a "liberal-humanist" view. Largely

championed by white editors and journalists, this view welcomed the decision to publish details of the sale and saw the issue as strictly about press freedom and access to government information.<sup>41</sup>

As Wyndham Hartley, political correspondent for *Business Day* would argue in an article on August 15, 1997 with reference to a parliamentary debate on arms sales,<sup>42</sup> "[It] begs the question of whether or not the press should determine if national interest should delay or halt publication. Some would argue that delaying publication would be co-option. Others might argue that the 'publish and be damned' attitude displayed by the media was inherited from the repression of old and was indeed irresponsible. But there seems to be insufficient evidence to demonstrate an orchestrated plan to harm the defense industry."<sup>43</sup>

Some of the proponents of a "liberal" media view did note the race criticism. *The Mail and Guardian* suggested, following repeated and open attacks from certain government leaders over their reports of growing government corruption, that there was an increase of "racial generalization, (and) claims of unpatriotic behavior."<sup>44</sup> *The Mail and Guardian*, while having an overwhelmingly white staff, had vigorously opposed apartheid even to the extent of being banned and closed down.

Finally, those who appealed to liberal press values saw no difference between accusations that they had a "secret agenda" to accusations they had to endure from successive apartheid governments. They also likened the state criticism and that of Qwelane and Mazwai as "outbursts of African dictators and despots."<sup>45</sup>

## Analysis

The first point we can make about the Denel Case is that as much as it involved values of press freedom, tensions over national security or questions of access by the media to government information, it is also a debate about tensions over the role of journalists and editors within a democratic South Africa.

Second and more importantly, it is a reflection of the debate over the impact of the apartheid past on the work of journalists and editors.

The events around Denel cannot be divorced from the broader political transition that is taking place in South Africa. That is a debate in various forms in South Africa about "representation" and "transformation" and the impact of race as the single most important factor.

The legacy of apartheid weighs heavily on the content and outcome of such debates. It is one of white ownership of the economy and the undoing of the legacy of 40 years of apartheid rule with its vast income and social disparities. These racial inequalities of apartheid are reflected in the press. Most editors at mainstream newspapers are white; so are most senior journalists.<sup>46</sup> As a result the press' internal failings become an easy target for a government who accuses the media of failing to transform.

One of the developments in South Africa in the last four years has been a more explicit articulation of this debate. President Mandela's Presidential Speech to the ANC National Convention in 1997 is the clearest articulation of these sentiments or views.<sup>47</sup> On that occasion, Mandela accused the media of being "counter-revolutionary" and "undermining" government's attempts to work at implementing the ANC's 1994 election platform of widespread reconstruction and development.

The reason for Mandela's criticism is rooted in the ANC government's perception of the role of the press. The ANC view the press as crucial to their project of implementing ambitious social and economic reforms. The government's macro-economic policy sees developing its third world segment (the blacks marginalized in the rural and urban areas) by means of its first world economy and its media. But the government does not have control over the scarce media resources available that operate in a competitive environment. As a result two things flow from this. First, the government sees certain private media as enemies of transformation, and second, it sees the black take-over of some mainstream press companies as a "breakthrough." Black editors and journalists are then assumed as allies.

Observers note that black editors are targeted to be pro-government or at least to include reports that are more positive about government's actions. As the case study shows, meetings of the South African National Editors Forum (SANEF) with President Mandela indicate a government that demands a certain kind of loyalty from the press.<sup>48</sup> Mandela in these meetings singled out black "senior reporters and editors" of white newspapers for doing their "conservative white bosses" dirty work.<sup>49</sup> But the Denel Case is also about a democratic press that is guarding its growing independence and wants to break with a past of partisanship—whether to particular political movements or business interests.

Such a press is being confronted with deficiencies in their own make-up on the one hand and pressures from a new government on the other. In such a context, different conceptions of news values for the press are bandied around. Notions of the “public’s right to know” are held up against that of the “national interest” or a “patriotic media.” An important development in this debate is the support that the new government gets from certain journalists and editors.

It is therefore not surprising that black editors—like Mazwai and Qwelane—would say that their white colleagues’ calls for press freedom and the public’s right to know are linked with alleged attempts to ensure institutions of power are still dominated by the latter. For example, in his second editorial on the Denel matter, Mazwai also suggested that those who published information about the Denel arms sales, were “privileged whites.”

On a visit to neighboring Zimbabwe, Mandela went further and suggested that the appointment of black editors is done to confuse government criticism of the media: “It’s easy for us, sometimes rightly, sometimes justifiably, to say ‘racism’ to criticism by white reporters. In order to overcome that, many proprietors use black journalists.”<sup>50</sup>

Observers note that while black editors and journalists who work for white-owned newspapers are criticized on the one hand, black-owned or operated newspapers are increasingly excluded from the same kind of criticism by government. In November 1996, Mandela repeated the allegation that some “senior black journalists” allow themselves to be used by white “conservative” employers to do the latter’s “dirty work” and also accused those black editors of undermining and trying to destroy the democratically elected government.<sup>51</sup>

At the time of Mandela’s outburst, media analyst Raymond Louw pointed out that it was significant that Mandela did not attack *City Press* and *New Nation* (which later closed down)—both newspapers that also have black editors but with black owners.<sup>52</sup> At a later date Mandela talked about this incident and publicly exonerated the editors of black-owned publications (*City Press* and *Tribute*), but not the black political editor of the (white) *Star* newspaper.<sup>53</sup>

Mandela and Mbeki (his deputy president) appeal to black journalists and put pressure on the latter to be less critical of government. There are already reported instances of editorial pressure by owners close to the ANC.<sup>54</sup> In September 1995, Deputy President Mbeki addressed black

editors and “. . . urged (them) to join his government in the task of black empowerment that must remain a central part of transformation.”<sup>55</sup>

That an ANC government in the future could place pressure on its allies who now own Times Media Limited cannot therefore be excluded.

Although Mazwai does not directly refer to this development, he implies it in his comments about the absence of a “patriotic media” among editors who insisted on publication. For example, this sentiment is implied in his argument that no black editor would support the challenge against the court interdict. It is also present in the assertion that there are limitations on the “public’s right to know” when this right is held up against the “national interest.” It is also assumed in Mazwai’s assurances to government ministers under whose responsibility arms sales fall that “. . . our profession realizes that press freedom serves the interests of South Africa rather than assuage the egos of some Euro-South Africans.”

If there is pressure from the government on black editors and senior journalists, it is also true that the leading members of the small, but emerging black middle class aid the leadership of the African National Congress, in the tensions over the role of the press.<sup>56</sup> The case study clearly shows that. For example, the mandate of mainstream media to fairly reflect the lives of the majority of South Africa is increasingly being questioned.<sup>57</sup> And a “black agenda” or the “black news” is insisted upon by elements in the ANC and government.<sup>58</sup>

But the relationship between government and black news producers is no different from the relationship between the press in general and government.

As early as September 1994—just five months after the April 1994 elections—the *Mail and Guardian* quoted Mandela as saying, “. . . relations between the government and sections of the media are at a relatively low ebb.”<sup>59</sup>

In January 1998, the *Mail and Guardian* noted in an editorial, the hostility of government and sections of the black press about a “black government on trial” from a white-owned and controlled press.<sup>60</sup>

The notion of patriotism is increasingly being equated with blacks. The government writes white media owners and even journalists off as reactionary or views them with suspicion at best. There is a discourse that Deputy President Mbeki uses (as do other government officials when it suits them), to silence opposition, which says that only blacks can be patriotic. The



“them” and “us” terminology is used to the government’s advantage. The second characteristic of the debate is the fact that the South African press displays the racial inequalities of apartheid—skewed personnel patterns in favor of whites. It is this skewed nature of the press that does not aid its defense of liberal press values.<sup>61</sup>

## Conclusions

How much can we generalize from the events of the Denel Case about the nature of press-government relations in South Africa? Do the events of Denel presuppose a predictable pattern? Is this an exceptional case influenced by the policy area?

In a number of ways Denel as a case study reflects the politics of the South African transition. That is a context of major changes in political institutions, whether the media or government. In 1994 the first democratic government was elected. The media has undergone a number of key changes in the last decade—most notably the end of state monopolies in broadcasting and in the press, the break-up of print monopolies.

Under apartheid, the press operated in a context of repression and censorship and of extreme partisanship. The post-apartheid context has presented the media with a context in which they can thrive. The media, in sync with developments around the world, has responded by insisting on greater independence, to report more informatively on the business of government. The new government has responded by suggesting the media is unfairly singling it out for criticism. Government has also found willing allies among journalists and editors for its criticisms. The reason is one major factor: race.

The South African media is still largely white in its ownership, management and editorial make-up. The media is still overwhelmingly racially and ideologically biased towards the ANC government. The more the media pleads independence and reporting “in the public interest,” the more government and its allies in the media respond by accusing the media of being racist and undermining the government.

This makes for an interesting tension ahead. This paper argues that the changes in media ownership will intensify these tensions over press-government relations and more importantly over the values of the press. This debate is set to intensify within the profession since South African political actors are, for the first time, confronted with a democratic context. That

context demands a new political culture or rules-of-the-game for democratic engagement between the press and government. As such the tension will be about finding those “rules of the game.”

What does Denel tell us about the nature of press-government relations in South Africa? Will the tension be different between sections of the press and the press and government on issues other than Denel?

It is interesting that at the time of this writing two professional organizations, the Black Lawyers Association and the Association of Black Accountants of South Africa had lodged a complaint with the country’s Human Rights Commission to institute an inquiry into racism in the media. The responses were predictable: Support for the inquiry from within government and from their allies in the media; opposition from the largely white-owned press.<sup>62</sup> It is too early to make conclusions from a process that is still unfolding, but already we can see that the media’s past divisions are central to determining how its place in the new democracy is determined.

There are also three key developments to monitor in the next few years as to where press-government relations go. The first is: What happens to Times Media Limited’s editorial content and structure of news as well as its relation to an ANC-government (that will certainly dominate South Africa’s electoral politics for the next decade) as the new owners take direct control? The second is TML’s decision to launch a Sunday newspaper, *Sunday World*, that will be aimed at a mass black readership and will be overtly pro-ANC. How will that affect the political balance? Third, the tension between “liberal” news values of reporting to please readers against a civic duty in the national interest will become more significant. Finally, what happens if current racially skewed newspaper ownership and control patterns remain essentially unchanged?

In conclusion, this paper deals with two other important contextual issues. The first concerns the real extent of changes in press ownership and control, and the second relates to how different these new tensions are from those under apartheid.

One of the major criticisms of the changes in ownership and control is that the broadening of ownership is insignificant or has not made any real dent in the existing print monopolies. This is primarily because the “unbundling” of press monopolies did not break the idea of five monopolies—it replaced only the color of one of the owners. And the new owners, as pointed out

earlier, share the same values of their white counterparts—news driven by market pressures.<sup>63</sup>

Market related factors may still be decisive in determining to what extent notions of different sets of press values on the one hand and pressure from the government on the other will impact the structure and framing of news. It should be recognized that South African newspapers, as elsewhere, are primarily dependent on advertising for their revenue. White South Africans who control most of the disposable income in the country are the main targets of advertisers. No newspaper can survive if it does not reflect the views of its readers.<sup>64</sup>

It has been shown that even where new or black oriented publications have succeeded, advertising revenue has remained low because of their relatively impoverished readership. As such, little changes in the editorial content of newspapers.<sup>65</sup>

Some argue that the racial nature of the readership and advertising market will force new owners to merely continue to cater to their existing readership—the first world constituency of South Africa: a modern, free-market economy, owned and run by the upper class and middle class whites.<sup>66</sup> For example, it would be interesting to see how many changes the new owners of Times Media Limited and Kagiso introduce as profit margins take increasing precedence.

There are also questions about how much control the new owners have over newspapers published by their companies that could impact any future developments. In a meeting with South African editors, President Nelson Mandela suggested: “. . . these black companies that are supposed to be in charge of enormous assets are a hollow claim at present—because they are heavily indebted to white companies. They don't own their assets.”<sup>67</sup> Transforming the daily operations of these newspapers will also not happen soon. In the majority of the cases, for example, they will have to retain the same editorial staff.<sup>68</sup>

But these processes around press-state relations are far from complete. They are ongoing, dynamic and unfolding. In fact, as this paper suggests, the sale of press corporations that ended single-race monopolies have only taken place over the last three years—major changes in such a short time.

What is clear also is that exclusive white control of the media, both in broadcasting—but more significantly for the purposes of this paper—the print news medium has been significantly altered in the last four years. Some observers have described this process as a “substantial erosion”

of white monopoly control of the press, while those in government have suggested white monopoly ownership has been “extensively diluted.”<sup>69</sup> What can not be disputed is that this development has important consequences for democratic discourse and that it will have significant impact on the trajectory of press-government relations.

How different are government-press tensions from those experienced under apartheid? It is true that the context for press-government relations is qualitatively different, and the democratic government has now publicly expressed its commitment to press freedom. But this has not prevented the ANC-led government from demanding partisan or less critical reporting from particular owners, editors or senior journalists that the ANC-government view as part of their allies in the struggle against apartheid.

Calls for a partisan press are not new in South Africa. Traditionally, South African media is highly partisan—in particular as it concerns the role of owners and their relation to the state or private economic interests. Previous white-minority governments in South Africa demanded and got a certain loyalty from some sectors of the press. The relationship of the Apartheid State to the Afrikaans press comes to mind; so too the relationship of the English mainstream press and mining capital.<sup>70</sup> On the other hand, there is nothing new in the demand on black journalists to be partisan. In fact Thami Mazwai, now a champion of “patriotic media,” used to be at the forefront of the fight against notions of journalists beholden to liberation movements and popular resistance organizations throughout the 1980s.<sup>71</sup>

This paper argues that these tensions are different from those under apartheid. For one, the institutional context of democracy is very different from that under apartheid (a police state, lack of formal censorship, police harassment or arbitrary imprisonment). The apartheid government, while favoring certain media, operated in a police state fashion with extensive censorship. With few exceptions, the views and actions of opposition groups (outside of legal, white mainstream politics) were distorted, underreported or ignored in the mainstream press.<sup>72</sup> The post-apartheid legal and constitutional context is qualitatively different from that under apartheid. South Africa now has a Constitution that guarantees media protection through a Bill of Rights and allows more freedom of expression than ever before. The 1996 Constitution's Bill of Rights guarantees freedom of the press and the media.<sup>73</sup>

## Endnotes

1. The comments of Pippa Norris, Lia Nijzink, Mikki Seligman, Kerry Cullinan, Peter Dwyer and William-Merwin Gumede were particularly useful in the writing of this paper. The arguments and conclusions are, however, my own.
2. Some historians of the South African press have even argued that the white-owned English and Afrikaans press monopolies supported the apartheid hegemonic bloc in different ways, emphasising different factions within it. See Ruth Tomaselli and Keyan Tomaselli, "The Political Economy of the South African Press," in *Narrating the Crisis: Hegemony and the South African Press*, edited by Keyan Tomaselli, Ruth Tomaselli and Johan Muller (Johannesburg: Richard Lyon and Co, 1987), p. 106.
3. Guy Berger, "Media scent disrupted," *MPD News*, June 1994, pp. 4-5.
4. David Swanson and Paolo Mancini, "Politics, Media, and Modern Democracy: Introduction," in Swanson and Mancini (Eds.) *Politics, Media, and Modern Democracy: An International Study of Innovations in Electoral Campaigning and Their Consequences*. (Westport: Praeger, 1996), pp. 11-12; Doris Graber, Denis McQuail and Pippa Norris (eds.), *The Politics of News: The News of Politics* (Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1998).
5. It is true that television and radio have much higher penetration in South Africa and that print commands a very small market share of the potential 40 million audience for news (see Table 1). But print enjoys a disproportionate influence on the formation of public policy given the nature of its ownership and readership—the white political and economic elites.
6. By mainstream press I mean that print news media stands at the center of the country's political debate. This media is also operated on commercial principles. The country has had a history of media aimed at the black population and had a flourishing "alternative" media in the 1980s. However, the latter media—black and alternative media—have not and do not command the same political importance as the media congregated in five major corporations in South Africa. In exceptional cases where alternative news sources existed, these newspapers openly supported mass-based political opposition [on the alternative press see Les Switzer, "Introduction: South Africa's Alternative Press in Perspective," in Switzer, *South Africa's Alternative Press: Voices of Protest and Resistance, 1880-1990* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 1-53].
7. The African Renaissance is a broad movement that advocates the rebirth of the African Continent with South Africa playing a leading role in that process. Deputy President Thabo Mbeki has made a number of speeches in this regard. An online archive of his speeches can be viewed at <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mbeki/>
8. The language of black empowerment is that of neo-liberalism. Its adherents argue that the access to economic power, property and privilege that an emerging black middle class is able to acquire will somehow trickle wealth down to those who were not the immediate beneficiaries of post-apartheid compensation. The idea of black empowerment is usually filtered through the prism of proprietorship and socio-economic improvement. For a discussion of the concept see Heribert Adam, Frederik van Zyl Slabbert and Kogila Moodley, *Comrades in Business: Post-Liberation Politics in South Africa* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1997).
9. Dumisah Hlophe, 1998, "Mandela's Civil Society: Implications for Democratic Consolidation in South Africa?" Paper Presented at the Centre for African Studies, Southern Africa in Comparative Perspective, Annual Spring Conference, University of California, April 25, 1998.
10. Adam Jones, "From Rightist to 'Brightest'? The Strange Tale of South Africa's 'Citizen'," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 24 (2), pp. 325-345.
11. See Louise Bourgault, *Mass Media in sub-Saharan Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); Herbert Schiller, *Information Inequality* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Peter Humphreys, *Mass Media and Media Policy in Western Europe* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1996); Pippa Norris (ed.), *Politics and the Press* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1997).
12. Radio and television were almost solely the preserve of the state broadcaster, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) under apartheid. The exceptions, M-Net, a subscription-based TV-service, and radio in the form of Radio 702 and Capital Radio did not significantly alter this fact. In the case of M-Net, established in 1986, since its subscription does not include broadcast news, its effect on the South African Broadcasting Corporation's monopoly on news information programming was minimal. As for Radio 702 and Capital Radio, its broadcasts were only available on medium wave frequencies in specific areas. One other TV-station, set up with South African taxpayers' money, was run from the Bophuthatswana homeland or "bantustan." It always catered more to Soweto, the large urban ghetto outside Johannesburg, than for people in the Bophuthatswana homeland. SABC radio and television

services have since been transformed in an ongoing process from a discredited government mouthpiece into public broadcaster. The monopoly of SABC has also been eroded to include the country's first private television service. In October 1997 a new free-to-air TV-station, E-TV, was launched. E-TV, which is owned partly by Time-Warner, was scheduled to start news broadcasts in January 1999. Another significant development is the licensing of at least 80 "community" radio stations and a number of commercial radio stations by an Independent Broadcasting Authority, established in 1993.

13. Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Final Report Presented to President Mandela on October 29, 1998. See Volume 4, Chapter 6, "The Institutional Hearing: The Media" (<http://www.truth.org.za/final/4chap6.htm>)

14. Keyan Tomaselli, 1995, "Political Economy and Public Sphere: Media in the Post-Apartheid Era," Unpublished Paper, Department of Media and Cultural Studies, University of Natal, Durban, September 1995.

15. See Clive Emdon, "Ownership and Control of Media in South Africa," in Jane Duncan and Mandla Seleokane, *Media and Democracy in South Africa*, (Pretoria, HSRI Publishers and Freedom of Expression Institute, 1996a), p. 142. Also see Submission by the African National Congress on "The Role of the Media under Apartheid" to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, September 1998 (<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/misc/mediasub.html>)

16. African National Congress, *The Reconstruction and Development Programme: A Policy Framework*, Section 5.14.3 (<http://www.anc.org.za/ancindex.html>); See also Ruth Teer-Tomaselli, "Militancy and Pragmatism: The Genesis of the ANC Media Policy," in P. Eric Louw (ed.), *South African Media Debates in the ANC Media Policy in the 1990s*, Chicago: Lake View Press, pp. 227-240.

17. The Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), which was legislated in 1993 to regulate the reform of the broadcast media, was deliberately designed to exclude print media from its jurisdiction on the advice of print media owners. The only statutory limitation on private media owners contained in the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act applies to cross-media ownership. Any person who controls more than 20 percent of newspaper circulation in any particular license area may not hold 15 percent or more of the equity in a broadcasting service in that licensing area. See Independent Broadcasting Authority, *Triple Inquiry Report: The Protection and Viability of Public Broadcasting Services* (1996). There has been talk especially from within government quarters and certain media practitioners of set-

ting up a regulating body similar to the Independent Broadcasting Authority for private print media; the idea has not received wide support thus far. In fact in the Comtask Report on government communications, the government charged: "The forces of foreign investment and black empowerment are not strong enough, nor sufficiently directed, to alter entrenched anti-competitive and restrictive patterns in the industry . . ." *Report of the Task Group on Government Communications to Deputy President Thabo Mbeki* (Comtask Report), October 1996 (web address: <http://www.polity.org.za/govdocs/commissions/com-task.html>), p. 29.

18. Comtask Report, p. 27.

19. Tomaselli, 1995, p. 7-8; "DP leader and Independent Boss in Spat over Mandela and the Press," *Sunday Independent*, August 3, 1997; "The New Voice of the Establishment," *Mail and Guardian* (Johannesburg), February 13, 1998.

20. "Editorial Fear of Foreigners," *Mail and Guardian*, August 25, 1995.

21. Emdon, p. 144.

22. Jones, *Ibid*, p. 344.

23. It should be noted though that Dhlomo, a former secretary general of Chief Buthelezi's Inkatha Movement, is now said to be close to the ruling African National Congress (*Mail and Guardian*, June 20, 1997).

24. Madi, *Black Empowerment in the New South Africa*; Adam et al, *Comrades in Business: Post-Liberation Politics in South Africa*.

25. NAIL has since entered into a 50/50-shareholding agreement with the British group, Pearsons, for the publications *Business Day* and *Financial Mail*. Pearsons publishes the *Financial Times* in London as well as the *Economist* (*Business Day*, September 30, 1996).

26. Although a politically inspired "alternative press" developed in the late 1980s—alternative to the status quo and the mainstream press—and thrived for a while, only one of these six regional and national alternative newspapers, the *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, survives to this day. Their position has also been diminished as the pressure on mainstream media to improve their coverage has intensified. It is also significant to note that where the alternative press has survived it has happened because of intervention of "stronger players"—in effect mainstream press companies—in "rescuing" these flailing operations. For example, New Africa Investments Limited (NAIL) that owns part of the



- Sowetan and later became the parent company of Times Media Limited, for a while sustained the alternative weekly *New Nation*. The alternative *Weekly Mail* was renamed the *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, after Guardian Media of London and Manchester, United Kingdom, took a controlling interest. See Comtask Report, Chapter 3, URL (consulted November 1998) <http://www.polity.org.za/govdocs/commissions/comtask.html>
27. "Denel tries to gag us over huge arms deal," *Sunday Independent*, July 20, 1997.
28. Freedom of Expression Institute Action Alert Online, 28 July 1997 (<http://fxi.org.za/alerts/1997/3updenel.htm>).
29. *Sunday Independent*, August 3, 1997.
30. For this kind of interpretation see the summary of the case by the Freedom of Expression, "Denel episode leaves many issues unresolved" (<http://fxi.org.za/update/augup.htm>).
31. For example, John Battersby, editor of the *Sunday Independent*, said at the time of the court interdict, "We will abide by the decisions of the court, but we will do everything in our power to defend the public's right to know" (*Sunday Independent*, July 27, 1997). See also "Editorial: Denel Arms and the Law," *Mail and Guardian*, July 25, 1997.
32. See William Finnegan, 1988, *Dateline Soweto: Travels with Black South African Reporters*, New York: Harper and Row, pp. 81–101, 111–112.
33. One other important development of the Denel Case was that the reporter who broke the story, Newton Kanhema, was later deported for filing "false" information on his application for a permanent residence permit. Kanhema, a Zimbabwean citizen, later won the CNN Africa Journalist of the Year Award for his reports on the Denel and other investigative pieces. Although the government withdrew the deportation order against Kanhema a few months later after foreign pressure, observers of a free press in South Africa saw the events as an attempt to chill freedom of the press, to deport Mr. Kanhema who had written a number of critical articles about the government. For Kanhema's own account of these events see his essay, "Africa's 'Journalist of the Year' Suffers a South African Nightmare," *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, Vol. 3, No 4, Fall 1998, pp. 126–130. Also see "A Reporter Who Irritated South Africa is Deported," *New York Times*, 6 February 1998; "South Africa Relents a Bit on Ousting Reporter," *New York Times*, May 27, 1998.
34. "Public's Right to Know Hides Racist Hypocrisy," *Business Day*, August 1, 1997.
35. Ibid.
36. "Press Freedom is There to Serve South Africa," *Business Day*, August 15, 1996.
37. Op. Cit. *Business Day*, August 1, 1997.
38. *Business Day*, August 15, 1996.
39. Ibid.
40. "Press Freedom is There to Serve South Africa," *Business Day*, August 15, 1997.
41. "Denel wins interdict; Independent will oppose it," *Sunday Independent*, July 27, 1997; "Editorial: Denel Arms and the Law," *Mail and Guardian*, July 25, 1997.
42. "Arms industry is not exempt from transparency policy," *Business Day*, August 15, 1997.
43. Ibid.
44. "Editorial: When getting it right is wrong," *Mail and Guardian*, October 1, 1997.
45. "Qwelane must get his facts right (first rule of journalists) before attacking *Independent*," *Saturday Star*, August 13, 1997.
46. See Kaizer Nyatumba, "The looking-glass war," *Leadership Magazine*, September 1998, p. 34. Of the many formerly "white" English newspapers, blacks edit six of these. Moegsien Williams at the *Cape Times*, Ryland Fisher at the *Cape Times*, Denis Pather at the *Daily News*, and Nyatumba at the *Saturday Paper*. They are all newspapers owned by Independent Newspapers. Mike Robertson edits the *Sunday Times*. However, the majority of the second layer of leadership below them is white.
47. Speech by President Nelson Mandela to the 50th National Conference of the African National Congress, Mafikeng, South Africa, December 16, 1997 (<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mandela/1997/sp971216.html>).
48. Transcripts of these meetings were published in the *Rhodes Journalism Review*, December 1996 ("Media on the Menu") and November 1997 ("Tough Talk from the President").
49. Ibid.
50. South African Press Association News Agency, Johannesburg, May 21, 1997.
51. "Mandela's Bizarre attack on journalists reflects ANC insecurity," *Business Day*, November 19, 1996.

52. Ibid.

53. *Rhodes Journalism Review*, November 1997

54. See for example the case of the *Sowetan* where there are allegations that the Director of New Africa Investments Limited, who is close to the ANC, had tried to influence editorial decisions of the newspapers.

55. "Giving the Media a Black Eye," *Mail and Guardian*, September 15, 1995

56. Some observers have argued that Thami Mazwai's and Deputy President Mbeki's agenda is one and the same. Deputy President Mbeki and Mazwai take up arms against the whiteness of the mainstream media because Mbeki on the one hand justifiably perceives that the media is hostile to the government's transformation agenda, while Mazwai believes it is thwarting black economic empowerment. "Perhaps it comes down to the same thing," suggested author Mark Gevisser. It is also argued that there are incentives for black publishers to support government's transformation agenda as it means access to lucrative state printing contracts currently held by companies who enjoyed close relations with the apartheid government (Mark Gevisser, *Mail and Guardian*, September 15, 1995).

57. At the height of the Denel case Academic Njabulo Ndebele suggested, "Clearly no less than a new relationship between the government and the media, between the media and the public is called for. Public trust in the media will not develop when most of us, serious observers of our society, who try to be dispassionate and believe in freedom of the press, have the impression that a self-righteous media environment is not only out to bash the government, but is also condescending toward the public . . . At best, some newspapers assume an alliance with the public, which in my view, has yet to be earned" (*Sunday Independent*, August 17, 1997).

58. "Black news should not be looked at with white eyes," *Business Day*, February 7, 1997.

59. "Behind the Rhetoric a Real Media Problem," *Mail and Guardian*, September 9, 1994.

60. "We are not the enemy," *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, January 23, 1998.

60. For example, in the case of Independent Newspapers, its two most important newspaper titles are still edited by white males and its news columns still filled with the experiences of white South Africans. It is this contradiction that provides an overwhelming black government with ammunition to criticize the media. The behavior of the mainstream press under apartheid does not help either.

The African National Congress accuses the media now of appealing for press freedom when it is "safe" to do so and there is some truth to this charge. For example, when it became clear that the largely black investment company, New Africa Investment Limited, would acquire a controlling stock of Times Media Limited, mainly white editors and senior journalists of TML's major titles aimed at the mainly white mainstream market suddenly appealed for an "editorial charter." Significantly these same editors and journalists had worked without such a charter for more than a century for their mining owners. It also does not pass the government unnoticed that mainstream media still seem to promote public policies protective of white privilege.

62. See "Pityana must turn a deaf ear to howls from our racist media" (Mathatha Tsedu, Editorial), *Sunday Independent*, November 22, 1998 (<http://www.sunday.co.za/>)

63. Lynette Steenveld, "The Transformation of the Media. From what, to what?," *Rhodes Journalism Review*, July 1998, pp. 4-7.

64. An example is a comparison in the advertising revenue of the Johannesburg daily newspaper, *The Star*, that has a lower readership that is mainly white and affluent, to that of the *Sowetan* (daily) and *City Press* (weekly) that has a higher readership but lower revenue. Even though the *Star* has experienced declining readership and a smaller share of the market in the last ten years, it still earns double the revenue of *City Press* and *Sowetan*. See Emdon, 1998a: p. 163.

65. Emdon, p. 163.

66. Emdon, "Civil Society and the Media" in *Media and Democracy in South Africa*, 1998b: p. 200.

67. *Rhodes Journalism Review*, November 1997.

68. Shortly after NAIL bought Times Media Limited, it faced resistance from editors and senior journalists who wanted to draw up an "editorial charter" to retain "standards" and the NAIL Board of Directors gave "certain undertakings" to Johnnie staff about their continued employment. See *Business Day*, August 29, 1998.

69. Emdon, p. 144; Comtask p. 28.

70. For example, under apartheid the Afrikaans press viewed the government as "our government." In the case of the English mainstream press and references to their acceptance of white mainstream politics as decreed by the apartheid state. Note for example journalist and editor Moegsien Williams' testimony before the TRC. "They [the English mainstream

press] did not support the ANC, never articulated ANC policies, never wrote about the aspirations of the vast majority of South Africans, about their views, what they wanted, their need for a vote. Nothing happened outside white parameters. They were under delusion—their real opposition sat on Robben Island” (see Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report, Volume 6, Chapter 4, <http://www.truth.org.za/final/4chap6.htm>). For a historical overview see also William Hachten, *The Press and Apartheid: Repression and Propaganda in South Africa* (London: MacMillan, 1987); Keyan Tomaselli, Ruth Teer-Tomaselli and Johan Muller (eds.),

*Narrating the Crisis: Hegemony and the South African Press*, (Johannesburg: R Lyon, c1987).

71. Thami Mazwai et al, *Mau-Mauing the Media* (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1991).

72. Keyan Tomaselli and Johan Muller, *The Alternative Press in South Africa*, (Chicago: Lake View Press, 1991).

73. Clause 16, Chapter 2, *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996.

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