

From apartheid to democracy: Shifting news values of journalists at the Sunday Times newspaper

BY

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## **From apartheid to democracy: Shifting news values of journalists at *The Sunday Times* newspaper**

### **Abstract**

This study explores the news values of journalists at the *Sunday Times* newspaper in South Africa. Of particular interest are the values espoused under the apartheid era and whether these values changed with the resultant transformation to democracy in 1994.

Using a qualitative method of inquiry, the study shows the pursuit of capital and the newspaper's watchdog role emerge as enduring values in a new dispensation. Contrasting views are held on whether the newspaper was a staunch critic of the apartheid government, but what is clear is that values not only shifted due to the country's political transition, but through the personality of an editor who embraced change.

## INTRODUCTION

### **Apartheid Enacted**

Apartheid<sup>1</sup> was a system characterized by institutionalized racism that pervaded every facet of daily life in the country, from where you lived, worshipped and worked to where you were buried. It's generally been accepted that this racist ideology began when the National Party swept to power as the Herenigde Nasionale Party in the 1948 elections, defeating the United Party, under General Jan C. Smuts (Tiryakian, 1960).

Brookes (1968), Lemon (1987) and Giliomee (2003) say the term apartheid first gained acceptance in the 1940s when it was mentioned by Afrikaans newspaper, *Die Burger*. Apartheid's chief architect, Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd, who was the prime minister from 1958 to 1966, sought to maintain a physical gulf between blacks and whites through a policy of separate development, the intention being to relegate blacks to an inferior status according to law (Butler, 2004; Davenport, 1991 and Meredith, 1988).

One of the most notorious pieces of legislation that served to advance the interests of the apartheid government was the Group Areas Act, which regulated, among

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<sup>1</sup> From the Afrikaans language for "apartness".



other things, where blacks could live and for how long they could be present in the country's cities (Price, 1991). Other discriminatory laws enacted included the Population Registration Act No 30 of 1950, which classified people according to different races such as White, Coloured<sup>2</sup> (mixed descent), Indian and African; the Immorality Act, No 23 of 1957, which forbade sexual relations between the races and the Mixed Marriages Act, No 55 of 1949, which declared that mixed couples could not marry (Dugard & Dean, 1981).

Recognizing that it “represented a minority of the electorate,” the Afrikaans-led government sought to maintain political control throughout the apartheid era by depriving the majority of the population the right to vote and enacting laws which increased its representation in parliament. (Bunting, 1986, p.132).

Bunting argues that the birth rate among Afrikaners was higher than English-speaking whites in the immediate years after 1948, resulting in Afrikaners asserting their political dominance for decades to come.

The rise of African nationalism in the 1950s was in direct response to the system of oppression experienced by blacks. But events of March 21, 1960, illustrated the ruthlessness of the apartheid regime in curbing internal dissent. A peaceful protest, orchestrated by the Pan African Congress, in which African protesters would voluntarily present themselves for arrest at police stations across the country by defying the pass laws, turned particularly violent in Sharpeville, south of Johannesburg. A scuffle ensued and, in the melee, 69 demonstrators were killed and 186 wounded. Most of the dead had been shot in the back (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report, 1998a, p.528).

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<sup>2</sup> Coloured and colored are used interchangeably, and unlike the derogatory connotations in the United States, its usage has been generally accepted in pre and post-apartheid eras.

More than a week later, a state of emergency was imposed, anti-apartheid organizations were banned and protesters arrested. As internal defiance grew, so did action abroad as international companies began to divest their operations, boycotts of South African products were given added momentum and calls for tougher sanctions gained prominence. The tragedy also prompted the United Nations to issue its first call to member states for “separate and collective action” against the South African government. (Price, op.cit., p.21).

It was only 20 years later when constitutional negotiations between the National Party (NP) and the African National Congress (ANC), led by the imprisoned Nelson Mandela, paved the way for political reforms. Former President F. W. de Klerk’s surprise announcement in 1990, of the unbanning of liberation movements, the release of Mandela and other political leaders and the easing of harsh apartheid restrictions, showed the government’s commitment to forging a new chapter in the country’s history. And when South Africans of all races went to the polls for the first time on April 27, 1994, to elect Mandela as their president, it signaled the dawn of a new era of democracy and the country’s emergence from a “pariah state to the community of nations” (Sparks, 1995, p.228).

## Press History

Dutch settlers arrived in the Cape in 1652, but it was only in 1800 that the first newspaper emerged. Why it took that long for the settlers to launch a publication in their adopted country is a question that has puzzled academics.<sup>3</sup>

Barton (1979) suggests the mystery is compounded by Holland's technologically advanced status where newspapers were the norm. The first newspaper was established on August 16, 1800. It was called the *Capetown Gazette and African Advertiser*. It not only had it the honor of being the first English and Dutch publication in the country, but was also the first newspaper on the African continent (Ibid). It was considered more of a government entity since it published government proclamations.

The *South African Commercial Advertiser* followed on January 7, 1824, as a bilingual publication. The newspaper's coverage of a court case involving allegations of corruption in the governor's office resulted in it being censored. Its influence in the Cape is evidenced by the fact that readers rallied to its aid by raising money for the editor to travel to London in order to plead for the newspaper's right to continue publishing (Potter, 1975). More than a year later, the newspaper not only carried the colonial secretary's approval to continue publishing, but the protection of a press law, based on

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<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, Frank Barton, *The press of Africa: Persecution and perseverance*. (London, Macmillan, 1979, p. 187) & Willam A. Hachten, *Muffled drums: The news media in Africa*, (Iowa State University, 1971, p. 209).

English law. It's widely believed that this law provided the basis upon which future publications emerged, and were afforded the protection necessary for a free press to operate (Barton, 1979; Cutten, 1935; Hachten, 1971; Hachten & Giffard, 1984; Potter, 1975; de Kock 1982).

In 1830, the Dutch community of the Eastern Cape set up its own newspaper *De Zuid Afrikaan* to counter the influence of the *Commercial Advertiser*. During the Great Trek when Dutch farmers fled from English rule in the Cape to other parts of the country, *De Mediator* was established to preserve the Dutch way of life. Another Dutch publication, *Het Voksblad* sprung up in 1849, and although it favored harmonious relations between the English and Dutch communities, saw its goal to “separate racial identities” (Potter, op.cit.). The Dutch language was undergoing change and soon newspapers were being established in the Afrikaans language, which became a simplified version of Dutch<sup>4</sup> (Ibid).

English publications also sprung up in Natal<sup>5</sup>, on the eastern seaboard of the country and in the Cape. The discovery of diamonds and gold in the interior led to an economic boom, and with it more publications emerged. Johannesburg's growth spurred by the discovery of gold, led to a flurry of publications, chief among them being *The Star*.

Another turning point in press history was in 1902 when a daily newspaper to rival the *Star* was established in Johannesburg. The *Rand Daily Mail*, would go on to become one of the most respected newspapers in the country because of its bold stance

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<sup>4</sup> As the Dutch language was evolving into Afrikaans, Dutch farmers were adapting as settlers in their adopted country where they became known as “Boer's.”

<sup>5</sup> Now KwaZulu-Natal.

against the apartheid government and a champion of the oppressed. But it will also sadly be remembered for the mysterious circumstances surrounding its demise.

On February 4, 1906, *The Sunday Times* newspaper was launched and along with the *Rand Daily Mail* became “the founder of popular journalism in South Africa” (Ibid, 1975, p.42).

### **Evolution of *The Sunday Times***

*The Sunday Times* celebrated its centennial anniversary in 2006, but there are few historical records devoted to one of the most successful English-language publications in South African press history. This study has to rely largely on the memoirs of former editor Joel Mervis, who chronicles more than 80 years of the newspaper’s existence.

The years leading up the launch of the newspaper were characterized by great turmoil. It was “a time of great depression on the goldfields, following upon the disastrous effects of the Boer War” (Cutten, op.cit.,p.70). British methods of achieving victory in the two Boer republics were deeply unpopular. The scorched earth policy of burning farms and starving out the Boer guerillas into submission was as controversial as its concentration camps in which thousands of Boer women and children and blacks perished.

Attention then shifted to Johannesburg’s mines and how to harness its vast gold deposits. Under British rule, mine owners sought to divert the supply of labor away from commercial farms to the mines, albeit under tightly controlled conditions.

Sir Alfred Milner, the British high commissioner in South Africa, “tightened pass laws to restrict the mobility of African laborers, while the mining companies cut Africans’ wages and stopped competing for their labor” (Thompson, 1990, pp.140-144).

It was under these circumstances that a New Zealander, George Herbert Kingswell, was making his way to South Africa from England. A chance meeting en route with mining magnate and financier Sir Abe Bailey proved the catalyst for whatever managerial ambitions the journalist might have cherished.<sup>6</sup> Whether Kingswell sought to be an editor before his encounter with Bailey is not clear, but certainly the offer to be editor of the Bailey-owned *Rand Daily Mail* was not one to be spurned. Far from Kingswell to question the risky impulsiveness of Bailey in appointing an untested editor of his two-year old newspaper – it was started on September 22, 1902 – he readily agreed to take advantage of his good fortune.

As it turned out, Kingswell had designs on forming his own newspaper and would have to count on Bailey and his resources to realize his goal. Why Kingswell didn’t see merit in building on an established newspaper like the *Rand Daily Mail*, which was a relatively young publication, but well financed and which showed promise as the popular read it eventually became, is a question that is rarely canvassed by press historians. One of the reasons given for Kingswell starting his own newspaper though, was to “protect the *Rand Daily Mail* which, standing alone, faced a dangerous rival in the *Transvaal Leader* [newspaper] ...” (Mervis, 1989, p.36). The logic of launching one newspaper to save another seems incomprehensible in any era, but those were pioneering years and the stark reality of taking risks were the difference between success and failure.

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<sup>6</sup> See Joel Mervis, *The Fourth Estate*, especially chapter three for a profile of Kingswell.

Bailey was generous enough to grant Kingswell his wish. Not only that, he allowed the visionary journalist the use of the *Rand Daily Mail* presses to print his newspaper. Along with Ralph Ward Jackson, who managed the *Rand Daily Mail* and Albert Victor Lindbergh, who oversaw its distribution, the trio launched *The Sunday Times* on February 4, 1906. (See Appendix A for the layout of page one of its first edition.)

Kingswell was made editor of the newspaper, while Ward Jackson and Lindbergh appointed as directors. They served as board members on the Sunday Times Syndicate Ltd., the company which owned the newspaper. The newspaper's close association with the *Rand Daily Mail* meant that they also served on the board of the South African Mails Ltd., which owned the latter publication. And in an intricate, if not complicated interconnected corporate structure, the *Sunday Times* paid a separate company, the Rand Daily Mails Ltd., for use of the *Rand Daily Mail's* printing services (Ibid).

More than 10,000 copies of the first newspaper were printed and demand was such that an extra order for 5,000 more copies were printed, all of which sold out (Ibid).

The tone of the *Sunday Times* was described variously as, "cheerful and lighthearted" (Cutten, op.cit.,p70), "humorous and bombastic; laboured yet often exquisitely crafted" (Dreyer, 2006, p.5) and "less serious" than other newspapers of its time (Potter, op.cit.,p.42).

At the time the *Sunday Times* began its first edition, African mine workers had been protesting against wage cuts and restrictions limiting the supply of black labor to the mines. The government responded with brute force and, when that didn't work, imported thousands of Chinese laborers to work on the mines (Thompson, op.cit.).

The presence of the Chinese led to a hostile reaction from some quarters of the Johannesburg populace. The following extract, on the front page of the first edition in the *Sunday Times*, shows how Kingswell sought to capture sentiment towards the Chinese.

Ten little Chinamen, working in a mine,  
One tasted dynamite, and then there were nine.  
Nine little Chinamen sat up rather late,  
One swallowed opium, and then there were eight.  
Eight little Chinamen tried to go to Heaven,  
One met with some success, and then there were seven.  
Seven little Chinamen strolled around with picks,  
One met with the S.A.C. and then there were six (*Sunday Times*, 1906,  
p.1).

Church groups were outraged, but not because the article was offensive to the Chinese, but because a newspaper could be disseminated and read on the Sabbath. The clergy led the charge with “blistering condemnation of this blasphemous newcomer, lashing it from the pulpits and damning it in notices nailed to church doors” (Dreyer, 2006, p.2). Kingswell didn’t set out to be controversial for the sake of generating publicity for the newspaper. Indeed, the syndicate tried to pacify church interests by replacing advertisements on the front page with news, given that trade on Sunday was frowned upon by the Church.

It wasn’t just the Chinese who were treated with hostility. Indentured Indian laborers who were brought from India between 1860 and 1911 to work in the agricultural sector were also given an icy reception.



Blacks on the other hand, were typically represented with all the stereotypes of a primitive nation. They were often referred to in news reports in derogatory terms. During Kingswell reign, a graphic on a front page of its June 1908 edition illustrates the newspaper's attitude towards black people. In the crude image, blacks in animal skins are portrayed as cannibals, dancing excitedly around a cooking pot with spears, shields and knobkerries<sup>7</sup> as their hapless white victim meets an agonizing death. (See Appendix B.)

Further on page one, in what was to become a familiar part of the newspaper, "The Passing Show" column, in reference to the effects of vegetables on the human body, advises homeowners to:

Give your household Kaffir<sup>8</sup> all the spinach you can cram into his system and you will soon be justified in reducing his wages because his restless activity has worn great holes in your carpets and linoleums.

In the same June 1908 edition, the "Black Peril" headline became a common way of describing the menace of black men attacking white women, even though many accounts were unsubstantiated. (See Appendix C.)

Over the years, the newspaper continued to play on the fears of its white readers. White women were presented as particularly vulnerable with numerous accounts of "houseboys hiding under beds," "walking into women's bedrooms" or posing a general threat to their safety. (See Appendix D, for a graphic representation illustrating the account of a woman defending her family against an intruder.)

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<sup>7</sup> A wooden club, with the top end usually in the form of a knob. It was used as a weapon by some indigenous groups.

<sup>8</sup> An ethnic slur for a black person.

Such sensational, unfounded and untested reports marked the standard of journalism at the time. The exploration of racist themes, was usually presented in the context of spreading fear of black men, whose principal intent it seems, was to attack white women. Mervis says the newspaper never construed its actions as amounting to racism. He suggests the ideology of “racialism” was interpreted differently – that it was only applicable in instances where hostilities between the English and Boers surfaced.

If the English insulted or hated the Boers, or if the Boers felt the same about the English – that was racialism (Mervis, op.cit, p.31).

After Kingswell, Lewis Rose Macleod took over the reigns as editor. During his tenure from 1908 to 1910, Macleod distinguished himself by commenting on the other big issue of the early press years – entrenching the color franchise in the Cape in order for non-Europeans to have the vote. Following on from the Boer War, it was an attempt to chart a new and unified future for the country by merging the four British colonies – the Cape, Natal, Orange River and Transvaal and creating a single state. Members of these colonial parliaments came together to draft a new constitution, to the exclusion of the majority black population. One of the sticking points in 1909 was entrenching the Cape’s color franchise in order to achieve limited voting rights for blacks. There was intense opposition by the other colonies to such moves, a view the *Sunday Times* under Macleod shared.

The provision that the franchise vote shall continue at the Cape ought to be opposed tooth and nail (Ibid, 1989, p.62).

South Africa negotiated its way to a union in 1910 and with it came a new Constitution, which included the controversial entrenchment of the color franchise. The

year also saw the *Sunday Times* appoint its third editor, Joseph Langley Levy. Yet another immigrant – Levy was born in England, he quickly established that he was no different from his predecessors in voicing opinions about race relations. In 1912, he wrote an article expressing outrage that the Johannesburg horseracing fraternity could feature a horse by a non-white.

It is all very well for the knights and baronets and millionaires who enjoy their racing from the seclusion of the members' stand and enclosure. But what about those followers of the sport who pay a sovereign to enter the paddock? Are they to have to rub shoulders with natives and coloured people in the future? If so the attendance at Turffontein will rapidly diminish (Ibid, 1989: 113).

In 1919, another issue prompted him to express his views in print. This time he objected to coloreds being employed as chauffeurs. Levy considered this a threat to the existence of whites in the country and felt many were betraying their own kind by giving employment to coloreds.

Once more we ask the white people of South Africa to consider seriously whither this thoughtlessness will lead them. The European population in the sub-continent is small. Even now it has not been finally decided whether South Africa will be a white man's land or a coloured man's land. And all those who, simply because they never think about the matter, give work and trade to coloured men which they could give to white men, are hastening the latter fate for their country (Ibid, 1989: 115).

It was during Levy's tenure that Kingswell's goal of protecting the *Rand Daily Mail* from its competitor, the *Transvaal Leader* was finally achieved. The owners of the *Rand Daily Mail* and the *Sunday Times* undertook concerted efforts to "assert their dominance by absorbing rival newspapers," and one such move involved the takeover of the *Transvaal Leader* by the *Rand Daily Mail*'s owners in 1915 (Potter, op.cit.,p.42).

When a rival Sunday newspaper, The *Sunday Express* started in 1934, it was bought out by the *Sunday Times* and the *Rand Daily Mail* five years later. Rather than opt for an established brand, a new company called the Sunday Express Limited, became the corporate name of the three publications. It wasn't until 1955 when a single company – the South African Associated Newspapers (SAAN) was formed, making it the second largest newspaper group after the Argus Printing and Publishing Company.

Kingswell went on to become the managing director of the *Sunday Times* and, under Levy, the newspaper's circulation grew from 35,000 to 150,000 nationally, "an operation that has few equals among modern newspapers" (Mervis, op. cit., p.108). Mervis credits Levy with transforming the *Sunday Times* into a truly national newspaper and praises his journalistic integrity and news judgment.

Levy might well have been responsible for the newspaper's runaway success, but for 32 years he used the publication as an expression of his own prejudices. Where reform was needed, Levy chose to be petty by opposing moves for a black-owned racehorse to compete at a racetrack. Where the Union sought to introduce legislation removing the color franchise, Levy derided black opposition to removing the only limited voting rights they had. When colored men became employed as chauffeurs, he foresaw whites being overrun, perhaps literally, by a rising disenfranchised populace.

Below the newspaper's masthead, the motto proclaimed "A paper for the people," but the impressive circulation figures Levy chalked up, meant a select few, since millions of voices never found expression in the pages of the *Sunday Times*. Thus any plaudits must be tainted by less than professional journalism standards and questionable principles.

When World War II broke out, South Africa was obliged to come to Britain's aid, a stance which caused deep political divisions within the country. Nationalist leaders and some Afrikaner extremists led the charge in opposing military intervention, yet openly sided with the Germans. Pro-British supporters felt historical ties meant South Africa had a duty to side with Britain. It wasn't as if South Africa possessed the military might to be a formidable force on the battlefield, but refusing to do so was politically disastrous as a self-governing dominion of the British Empire. Yet siding with the allies presented a real problem of dealing with hostility on the domestic front (Mervis, op.cit).

Insurrection spread across the country and the *Sunday Times* and the *Rand Daily Mail* found themselves in a bitter war of words with nationalists in the form of radical Afrikaners, the Ossewa Brandwag (Oxwagon Sentinel). The group conducted sabotage attacks by blowing up post offices, railway lines and other infrastructure in protest against the war. They were supported by elements of the Afrikaans press, which only fuelled outrage among their English counterparts (Ibid). (See Appendix E for a *Sunday Times* editorial which harshly criticizes the Afrikaans media.)

Mervis says the actions of the *Sunday Times* and the *Rand Daily Mail* in covering the war were arguably "their finest hour" (p.224). If that were the case, the former didn't exactly cover itself in glory when it needed to wage another war in its news pages,

against an enemy who would plunge the country into the darkest years of its political history. The personalities and pronouncements of Kingswell, Macleod, Levy and Levy's successor E.B. Dawson did not endow the *Sunday Times* a proud legacy to build upon, especially at a time when fundamental press and human rights were under threat. That ominous pointer was, of course, to the system of apartheid, through which the ruling National Party (NP) legitimated its racist ideology when it came to power in 1948.

Under its fifth editor Neville Caley, the *Sunday Times* began shifting its focus from the standard "black peril" stories to news challenging the political dominance posed by the Afrikaner-led government. The *Sunday Times* was disappointed by the defeat of General Jan Smuts' United Party to the Nats, led by Dr Daniel Malan in 1948. Smuts was perceived as a key figure in trying to bridge the gap between English and Afrikaner race relations. Caley views on the National Party's policies were summed up in an editorial.

The Nationalist Party manifesto, which Dr. Malan outlined in a speech at Paarl last week, contained nothing of importance. It was anti-this and anti-that, and pro-nothing in particular except Apartheid. Not one new idea stood out from it. It was not in fact built to last (*Sunday Times*, 1948a, p.14).

Last it did, and for more than 40 years. Caley, however, continued his attack on the Malan government.

Every argument and warning we advanced before the election against the Nationalists and their intentions still holds good. The root of that argument is that the Nationalist Party is now – as it always has been – a racialist party. Its policy is dictated by the Broederbond, a society whose sole

purpose is to further the interests of its members, if necessary at the expense of the rest of the community (*Sunday Times*, 1948b, p.16).

It's doubtful that Caley's criticism of the National Party government was founded on the newspaper's genuine opposition to apartheid. The newspaper's endorsement of Smuts, pointed to a man who introduced segregation policies when he served two terms in office, and whose political life was committed to advancing white supremacy.<sup>9</sup>

Mervis says the English-language press remained loyal to Smuts throughout his political career, and when support for the United Party waned, the *Sunday Times* in particular "... praised and commended the United Party as vigorously as it denounced and censured the Nationalists" (p.411).

This unwavering support for the United Party continued under the editorship of Joel Mervis, who succeeded Caley in 1959. By then, the newspaper was the biggest selling publication in the country and in the British Commonwealth, boasting a circulation of 300,000 (Barron, 2006). Its commercial success was built on the newspaper's appeal among various ethnic groups. In order not to change a winning formula, Mervis also felt that it was in the newspaper's interest to maintain strong relations with the United Party. For the next 10 years, it went on to provide "near-hysterical support" for the party (p.412).

What this in effect meant was that the newspaper was tied to politicians whose political objectives were in keeping with those of the National Party, since the United

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<sup>9</sup> For a useful exploration of the political life of Smuts, who is exposed as a hypocrite by a South African-born historian, see Saul Dubow, (2008) "Smuts, the United Nations and the Rhetoric of Race and Riots," in *Journal of Contemporary History* (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore: SAGE Publications), Vol 43; 45.

Party provided no viable alternative to apartheid and essentially entrenched the “basic doctrine of ‘white supremacy’” (Bunting, op.cit., p.151).

Mervis sought to bolster political coverage in the newspaper with a team of reporters focusing on lively stories uncovered within the portals of government. Even though the newspaper supported the United Party, Mervis claims the publication “opposed apartheid because of the way race discrimination was being institutionalized ...” (p.363).

Potter argues that there were vested interests at stake in opposing apartheid. She suggests the English-language press made the case for rejecting the status quo due to the enormous expense of propping up the policies of the Nats. In expressing the vision of political change by challenging the policies of government, Potter argues that the English-language press were waging a futile battle, one which ultimately was meant to safeguard their own agenda.

It was unable to stop the advance of repression in the society and was virtually impotent in respect of influencing Government policy and the functioning of the State apparatus. It was an extra-Parliamentary opposition but also part of the English-speaking establishment with vested interests in maintaining law and order and a stable economic system (Potter, op.cit.,p.170).

Such interests revolved around profit-driven goals. The *Sunday Times* had grown enormously and central to keeping shareholders in SAAN content was ensuring that the newspaper keep on a steady course to advance its commercial goals.



It is our argument, however, that this opposition to apartheid is structurally limited, since the English press is owned by white capital and therefore has vested interests in maintaining the conditions conducive to the continued accumulation of capital, based on an exploitative division of labour (Tomaselli & Tomaselli, 2001, p.61).

### **Press restrictions**

Maintaining the rule of law meant the press was also forced to comply with many restrictions placed upon it by the establishment. Chief among these was the Suppression of Communism Act 44 of 1950, later repealed by the Internal Security Act 74 of 1982. The law defined “communism,” what constituted “communist” activity and how offences could be committed by journalists and editors for quoting speeches or press statements, which, in the opinion of the statute books, furthered the aims and objectives of “communism.” The law gained notoriety for its broad provisions, since it allowed the government to arrest activists and ban political parties for falling foul of its various offences.

In 1952, the left-leaning *Guardian* newspaper was banned under the Act and when it resurfaced as *Advance*, the authorities reacted once again in 1954 with a banning order. When it occurred a third time as *New Age*, it too was prohibited, prompting authorities to amend the law to make it economically unfeasible for newspapers to change their names when faced with a banning order. The law also impacted on the ability of journalists to perform their duties since they could be detained without trial or banned (Jackson, 1993).

The law was used frequently and to good effect by the National Party government to, in what Sachs termed a concerted drive to “wipe out all human liberties, to destroy the free trade unions, to intimidate and terrorize all opponents of the Nationalist [*sic*] Party, and to inflict arbitrary punishment upon those who stand up for a truly democratic South Africa” (as cited in Merrett, 1994, p.22).

In the June 14, 1964 edition of the *Sunday Times*, the Act is cited in three separate instances, the most prominent case being the Rivonia Trial involving Nelson Mandela and others accused of overthrowing the apartheid state. It’s worth exploring how the story is treated, since it offers a glimpse of how such a historic case, the outcome of which generated international pressure on South Africa, showed the newspaper’s intolerance of the struggles of the anti-apartheid movement. (See Appendix F.)

The page one lead proclaimed the prowess of a reporter getting the “inside story” of how the Rivonia trialists were caught. The reporter’s main source was a high-ranking police detective, who at the outset, is quoted as saying police didn’t believe the communist threat to be over. The interviewee is lauded for his “brilliant detective work” in a “fantastic tale of detection.” The other major source is the chief prosecutor in the matter (*Sunday Times*, 1964a, p.1).

It’s noteworthy that the content of the story projected a positive image of the state and endorses the Suppression of Communism Act, used to prosecute the trialists. The editorial on the other hand, adopted a condescending tone towards the trialists, proclaiming that citizens of the country have little or no regard for violence to achieve a just, political goal. It argued further that Mandela and his co-accused were given a fair

hearing and that the law took its course in convicting them of their crimes (*Sunday Times*, 1964b, p.16).

The editorial doesn't say that the case was condemned by the United Nations Security Council as being "instituted within the framework of the arbitrary laws of *apartheid*" (Security Council Resolution 190 of 1964; their italics). The editorial argues further that although blacks have reason to be unhappy about the slow progress of political reform, they could find comfort in the fact that "their economic levels and living standards are rising all the time."

Among some of the other laws affecting press freedoms were:

- The Criminal Procedure Act, which compelled journalists to reveal their sources;
- The broad scope of the Internal Security Act. *Cape Times* editor Anthony Heard was charged under this law for publishing an interview with banned ANC president Oliver Tambo in 1985. Explaining why he chose to publish the interview, the editor simply said in his memoirs, "it had to do with journalism" (Heard, 1990: p.196);
- The Indecent or Obscene Photographic Matter Act, which prohibited possession or dissemination of indecent or obscene materials;
- The Prisons Act, which placed restrictions on the coverage of prisons, prisoners and conditions within the country's jails and;
- The National Key Points Act, which prohibited photographs or reports on strategic locations.

The Public Safety Act on the other hand, was used by the apartheid government to introduce the first State of Emergency in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre in 1960.

The legislation, which conferred wide powers upon security forces to arrest and detain political activists without trial, was aimed at suppressing growing dissent at the government's policies. It outlawed the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress and banned two publications, *New Age* and *Torch*. The emergency regulations were to be reintroduced during the turbulent period of the 1980s when a number of alternative publications were to face the same fate as *New Age* and *Torch*.

The *Sunday Times* was not immune from effects of some of the prohibitions. One of the biggest stories in its history – the uncovering of the secretive Broederbond organization in 1963 – showed an influential network of politicians committed to furthering the aims of the Afrikaner. Police raided the newspaper's offices and confiscated material relating to the scandal. A few years later, police tried to stop the newspaper publishing a report critical of the security police.

### **The Sunday Times 50 years on**

The *Sunday Times* thrived under Mervis. When he succeeded Caley, Mervis said the newspaper needed to “stay put and do no more than keep its options open” (Mervis op.cit., p.411). In exercising his “options” Mervis dispensed with the over-reliance on editorial staff from the *Rand Daily Mail* by making various changes. These included the introduction of pictures of scantily-clad models accompanied by stories of illicit sex in British social circles on the back page. A business supplement was also launched. Full-time personnel were hired to complement the newspaper’s growth. These are noteworthy changes given Mervis’ praise of the diverse racial makeup of the newspapers readers. Since capitalism favored whites, the business supplement tended to reflect a skewed economic environment, whilst the addition of white personnel points to the lack of racial integration in the newsroom and a disregard for articulating the sentiments of an ethnically diverse readership.

It was a time of technological innovation and the newspaper capitalized on the ease with which facsimile transmission meant the newspaper could be printed simultaneously in different regional hubs. Under Mervis, it was a time of the Beatles, Muhammad Ali, Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley. When South Africa was battling for heroes of its own because of isolation by the world community, golfer Gary Player was winning international tournaments and a little-known Dr. Christiaan Barnard was to be celebrated by performing the world’s first heart transplant in December 1967.

But the gloomy years of segregation eclipsed all. Eventually, the newspaper turned its attention to some of the petty apartheid laws in place. One such case in March 1969 involved a mixed couple charged under the Immorality Act with sex across the color line. Part of the trial

involved court officials peering through a bedroom window of a house in order to determine whether policemen had proved their case of illicit sex.<sup>10</sup> (See Appendix G.)

The SAAN board was unhappy that the newspaper criticized such instances of petty apartheid. When Mervis didn't come around to heeding calls for maintaining positive relations with the establishment, he was hounded out of office, until he eventually left (Barron, op.cit.).

Tertius Myburgh, the former editor of the *Pretoria News*, joined the *Sunday Times* as the newspaper's seventh editor in 1975. Under Myburgh, the second installment of the Broederbond saga began to fill the pages of the *Sunday Times* in 1978, and in a way that was "bigger and better" than the exposé 15 years earlier (Mervis, op.cit., p.491). It was Myburgh who supported his reporters in exposing details of the secretive organization, which served to advance Afrikaner interests.

Myburgh added to the changes brought about by his predecessor, by hiring the services of an expert from London's Fleet Street<sup>11</sup> press to brighten the look of the newspaper. Apart from the cosmetic changes, Myburgh sought to bolster the editorial content with a team of political reporters, bureau reporters across the country and as broad a political base of commentators on the newspaper's opinion pages that he would allow (Ibid).

Myburgh's former subordinate Fleur de Villiers, in reflecting on his 15 years at the helm of the newspaper, says her former boss knew the publication's high circulation counted for naught if he didn't use its appeal to convince politicians and the public that apartheid had to be scrapped. She describes Myburgh as a man who "loathed the sins of apartheid," who was

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<sup>10</sup> Professor John Blacking and Dr Zureena Desai were convicted under the Act. They were given suspended four-month sentences. The couple married and emigrated to Northern Ireland.

<sup>11</sup> A metonym for the British press, which had as their base, London's Fleet Street.

“dedicated to building bridges in a deeply divided society,” and one who used the power of his newspaper to educate and convince reluctant whites why embracing reform was better than coveting apartheid (de Villiers, 1996).

The test of Myburgh’s conviction didn’t come too long into his tenure. Within months, the township of Soweto was simmering with student discontent over the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in secondary schools courses. Subjects like mathematics and social studies were to be taught in Afrikaans, with the rest in English, regardless of whether teachers were proficient in the former. Students were also unwilling to learn a language that was unfamiliar to them, and which symbolized white oppression.

Matters came to a head on June 16, 1976, when thousands of frustrated students, who had gathered to protest their grievances, were fired upon by police. The riots soon spread across Soweto where angry youths set fire to government buildings and engaged in running battles with police. Within days, protests engulfed the country as demonstrators acted in solidarity with the Soweto students. By the following year, 575 people had been reported dead (Thompson, op.cit).

The *Sunday Times* reflected on the aftermath of the tragedy in the headline of its next issue. The lead story described scenes of relative calm in Soweto and how the township had run short of foodstuffs because of the riots (*Sunday Times*, 1976). (See Appendix H for page one depiction of the riots.) The cause of the outbreak of violence was not mentioned. In an online heritage special marking its centenary celebrations, the newspaper is critical of how it treated coverage of the uprising.

The *Sunday Times*’s coverage of the June 16, 1976 student uprising, which started in Soweto in Johannesburg and quickly spread to other townships throughout the country, gave the distinct impression that there

was no political context for what was happening in the country. Instead, it published stories about the suffering the riots had caused for black people . . . . (*Sunday Times*, 2006a).

Unlike de Villiers, award-winning investigative journalist Max du Preez, who served as the newspaper's political correspondent under Myburgh in the 1980s, is openly critical of his former boss. Du Preez publicly discloses a rumor whispered in newsrooms across the country – that Myburgh was an agent of the apartheid government, a charge which the latter denied. When a tape recording was provided to the newspaper's managing director as proof that Myburgh had secret dealings with organs of the establishment, management opted to keep him on. Du Preez suggests the affair destroyed Myburgh's credibility as an editor. The scandal led to claims of Myburgh being a government ideologue, but du Preez considers him to be "Machiavellian" (du Preez, 2003: p.138).

John Horak, the former spy who worked at the *Sunday Times* when rumors of Myburgh's close association with the government became public, was ordered by his handler to shield the editor from the fallout. When the two met in Myburgh's office, the editor reassured the spy that the situation was "under control" (Pogrund, 2000, p.303).

Such damning revelations were confirmed in public when Horak later went on to testify before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings into the media's role under apartheid, that Myburgh knew he was a spy and knowingly co-operated with him in the course of his undercover work.

During the TRC hearings in September 1997, du Preez told the commission that the *Sunday Times* was contacted by the head of a police death squad unit, one Captain



Dirk Coetzee. Coetzee intended to come clean about the activities of the unit, which had been involved in counterinsurgency operations, including assassinating anti-apartheid activists and destabilizing liberation movements. Du Preez, said not only did the *Sunday Times* dismiss Coetzee's claims, but informed the security police of details of the conversation. Du Preez later went on to establish the left-leaning Afrikaans newspaper *Vrye Weekblad*, which verified Coetzee's claims and published exclusive accounts of murder, torture and kidnappings by members of the elite squad.

For all of Myburgh's contacts within the top echelons of government, and for his supposed hatred of the "sins of apartheid," he didn't appear to be matching rhetoric with duty. Such a cozy relationship with the government was bound to backfire and its no wonder his peers rounded on him when a tape recording of his alleged collusion with an organ of government lent credence to the rumors.

When news of one of the biggest scandals in South African political history began to emerge a year after the riots, the *Sunday Times* was left trailing behind its SAAN stablemates, the *Rand Daily Mail* and the *Sunday Express*, in exposing one of the most audacious exploits by the Nats.

It was dubbed the Information Scandal, since it involved the government's Department of Information. The ambitious plan was to generate a more positive image of the country and its racist policies following years of international condemnation. The outcry over the killing of hundreds of people in the Soweto uprising added urgency to the government's objective, part of which was a plot to silence one of its most vocal domestic critics, the *Rand Daily Mail*.

It began when the *Sunday Express* revealed details of a free-spending, luxury trip by the then secretary of Information, Dr. Eschel Rhoodie, to the Seychelles archipelago, northeast of Madagascar. Tempted by details of extravagance by an entourage of 10 at an exotic island, the *Sunday Times* felt compelled to reprint the *Sunday Express* story in its own newspaper, with an acknowledgement to the reporter Kitt Katzin.

From there on, further details began to emerge of how a newspaper, *The Citizen*, was started with secret funds provided by the government using millions of dollars of taxpayer money to generate a positive image of the establishment. With the same objective in mind, but on an international scale, a plot was also hatched to give millions of dollars to an American newspaper publisher for the clandestine purchase of the *Washington Star*, perceived to have been favorable to the Nats.<sup>12</sup>

Of interest in the unfolding saga is the role of the *Sunday Times*. Mervis concedes the newspaper didn't lead the way, but was "not far behind" (p.439). Mervyn Day, who was one of the lead investigative reporters exposing much of the scandal on behalf of the *Rand Daily Mail*, says the *Sunday Times* was a pacesetter, "but at some stage, the *Sunday Times* backed off" (Tyson, 1993, p.238).

To his credit, Myburgh continued the trend started by Mervis of reporting on the follies of petty apartheid. When black consciousness leader Steve Biko died in police custody on September 12, 1977, an editorial showered praise on his devotion to the liberation struggle, whilst lashing out against the controversial detention without trial legislation.

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<sup>12</sup> For a more comprehensive overview of the Info scandal, see Mervyn Rees & Chris Day, "Muldergate: The story of the Info scandal" (Johannesburg: Macmillan).

It is a rotten system, one which would erode public faith in officials and police even if every one of them was a registered saint (*Sunday Times*, 1977, p.16).

If coverage of anti-apartheid issues restored hope among progressive readers that the publication cherished the vision of a non-racial society, Myburgh's other lapses were sure to confound many. When prominent academic and anti-apartheid campaigner Ruth First was assassinated by apartheid security forces in neighboring Mozambique in 1982, the newspaper ignored her death on the front page of its August edition. This prompted the publication in its heritage special to remark that the newspaper under Myburgh's tenure "was in the grip of a 15-year-long flirtation with the apartheid government" (*Sunday Times*, 2006b, ¶2).

Myburgh's reputation was further undermined in the whites-only referendum a year later when he was given the opportunity to guide his readers in making a crucial political decision that would affect the destiny of the country's oppressed masses. The referendum was to gauge white attitudes to a newly proposed constitution which sought to include colored and Indian representatives in a limited "power sharing" form of government with whites. Blacks were excluded from the process.

The *Rand Daily Mail* and the *Sunday Express* urged the white electorate to vote in the negative, while the *Sunday Times* supported a yes vote for the Constitution Bill. Myburgh believed his decision was based on government attempts at power sharing, albeit in a process that was deeply flawed. Colored and Indian representatives would have limited autonomy over their respective constituencies, and they would be housed in separate chambers in a tri-cameral parliament. Combined, their numbers were such that they would be at a numerical disadvantage to their white counterparts. There was no

place for blacks in the system as the Nats believed the homelands, much like the Indian reservations in the United States, were self-governing territories where blacks could exercise their political independence.

The yes votes won and, despite the mass action campaign waged by hundreds of anti-apartheid organizations across the country resulting in a low voter turnout among colored and Indian voters, the tri-cameral parliament went ahead regardless.

Myburgh's stance showed he was out of step with the aspirations of the majority of the populace. His support for a system which offered a token measure of political power-sharing only served to entrench racial polarization. A political correspondent for the *Sunday Times* later reflected on Myburgh's decision.

However noble Myburgh's intentions may have been, the decision to back a political system based on race and excluding blacks placed the *Sunday Times* firmly in the white political laager<sup>13</sup> (Hartley, 1996, p.3).

In 1984, Jeanette Schoon and her six-year-old daughter Katryn were sent a parcel bomb by apartheid assassins. The *Sunday Times* depicted the story as the result of a conflict within the ANC, as Schoon's husband was a banned member of the party. The newspaper accepted without question the police version of events. Once again, the *Sunday Times* is critical of Myburgh's actions in a commissioned heritage supplement.

The newspaper swallowed whole the security police's lies about the parcel-bomb murders of Jeanette and Katryn Schoon. Craig Williamson – to

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<sup>13</sup> A term originally used to describe the way Boers would arrange their ox wagons in a circle to ward off attacks. It later assumed political connotations as Afrikaners asserting the need for their survival among other cultures.

whom the *Sunday Times* once glowingly referred as South Africa's own James Bond – confessed to the murders before the truth commission, as well as the 1982 slaying of activist Ruth First by letter bomb (Dreyer, op.cit.,p.302).

A year later, the newspaper again allowed itself to be used by security agents in a propaganda offensive against its enemies. The “Guns of Gaborone”<sup>14</sup> was a headline describing a victory for the South African military and police in a cross border raid into the Botswana capital, Gaborone, where African National Congress guerilla fighters were killed (*Sunday Times*, 1985, p.1). The newspaper said the 12 dead were killed to ward off attacks on South African soil. It detailed a carefully planned mission which struck at the heart of a terrorist threat to South Africa. (See Appendix I.) It was later established that the 12 killed were civilians, one of whom included a six-year-old child (Dreyer, op.cit.)

Such was the legacy of Myburgh who resigned from the newspaper in 1990. He was due to take up an ambassadorship in London, confirming suspicion of a fitting reward for service to the Nats. He died before he could take up the position. When Myburgh left, circulation was in excess of 500,000, which meant generous profits for shareholders.

When Ken Owen became the newspaper's eighth editor in 1990, it was a period of remarkable political change, both domestically and on the international stage. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's commitment to the policies of glasnost and perestroika led to the fall of communism in 1989. It was also the year in which the Berlin Wall came

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<sup>14</sup> An obvious play on the 1957 novel and 1961 film, “The Guns of Navarone,” about a World War II plot by Allied commandoes intent on destroying a German fortress.

crumbling down and Chinese protesters voiced their calls for democratic reform in Tiananmen Square. Waves of protest and South Africa's continued international isolation had also put pressure on the Nats to follow global trends and dispense with an outdated philosophy. F.W. de Klerk had replaced the stubborn P.W. Botha as president and immediately signaled his intent by releasing ANC stalwart Walter Sisulu and other high-profile political prisoners (Sparks, op.cit.)

For Owen, it went without saying that the newspaper had to abandon its white, conservative ideals and rise to future challenges. Owen says the newspaper under Myburgh's tenure had also come to rely on a standard mix of sport, politics and the scantily-clad back page model.

The Myburgh formula became, in my view, increasingly inappropriate as tensions erupted into civil commotion in the '80s, and market research showed the newspaper to be losing credibility. That research also showed, alarmingly, that the product's image could be summed up in a single phrase: sex and scandal (Owen, 1996, p.1)

Owen says his first year was spent effecting change in terms of policy and staffing decisions, no easy feat since the gloom from the demise of the newspaper's former stablemates and the general malaise in the profession, pervaded the newsroom.

Lack of training, exploitative salaries, disdainful treatment of journalists, crumbling infrastructure, ageing plant and equipment, excessive profits, and a total lack of democratic vision explain, in very large measure, the sorry state of the English-language press (Owen, 1998, p.182).

To compound matters, Owen felt his goals were at odds with the values of the newspaper's owners.

... managers who were themselves incapable of either producing or judging a good newspaper escaped into the mere pursuit of profit. In this pursuit, editorial considerations were deemed marginal or irrelevant, and journalists were seen as flighty creatures to be humoured and stroked lest they raise awkward obstacles to profit-making. I usually sum up my own experience by recalling that, at the end, I helped make a crude trading profit of more than R80 million in a year<sup>15</sup> – out of only a hundred-odd journalists – but I could not get budget approval for three extra training positions (Ibid, p.180).

Owen, however, was determined in his goals and began recruiting journalists who were familiar with the struggles of the anti-apartheid movement. He also set about addressing equity imbalances by hiring black reporters in accordance with affirmative action policies (Owen, 1996, op.cit). The restructuring process wasn't cosmetic either, since Owen expected his new team would begin to reflect more of the demographics of the country by covering stories in the black townships that had previously been ignored.

Owen's stewardship on the publication has been marked by initiatives that were an attempt to break with the ways of the past. On the eve of the country's transformation, prospects for peace appeared grim as a series of violent killings sought to undermine negotiations towards a new dispensation. It's often said that newspapers thrive on stories

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<sup>15</sup> The Rand/Dollar exchange rate in the mid to late 1990's averaged around \$1: R3.50. In relative dollar terms, Owen helped the company clear over \$22 million in profits. The exchange rate at the time of writing this thesis is \$1: R9,04.

of disaster and tragedy, and in the wake of the killing of South African Communist Party leader Chris Hani in April 1993, the *Sunday Times* reached new heights in terms of copies ever sold by a South African publication – 630,000 (Ibid). The circulation figures suggest a high approval rating for the values followed by Owen. After six years at the helm of the *Sunday Times*, he retired in 1996, two years after the transition to a new political dispensation. Despite the relative success he's had, Owen regards his decision to take on the job as a mistake, not least because of his run-ins with the Times Media Limited board (*Financial Mail*, 1999).

Owen says his scorn for the board was such that he steadfastly refused social invitations where they were likely to meet. After initially giving his support to his successor, Brian Pottinger, and the newspaper's first black deputy editor Mike Robertson (*Sunday Times*, 1996, p.1), Owen later had misgivings about their leadership abilities.

When I left three years ago it fell back (under Pottinger) into Myburgh's formula, which I think is anachronistic<sup>16</sup>. So I didn't really make a dent. To change an institution is no light work. I set the paper's highest ABC circulation (567,934 for the first half of 1993) and it made a lot of money. The managers were actively hostile to good journalism because it cost money. They wanted an advertising medium, not a newspaper. And they sabotaged any attempt to change what was for them a comfortable

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<sup>16</sup> Owen bemoans the fact that since Pottinger was a caretaker editor, he sought to follow the wishes of the board, which had as its prime objective the pursuit of profits. Owen says management undermined all the positive changes he introduced by reverting to practices under the Myburgh era in which economic considerations were considered ahead of providing a quality newspaper.



situation: status, company cars, first-class air tickets, glamour, the chance to hobnob with the great. And not too much work (Financial Mail, op.cit.).

Owen's criticism of his successor is that Pottinger did little to assert his editorial independence by challenging the board's economic motives above investing in a product that upheld high standards of journalism excellence.

During Pottinger's brief reign from 1996 to 1998, another sobering reflection on the English-language press was provided in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's hearings on the media's role under apartheid.

The commission's conclusions showed black journalists experienced racism in many of the newsrooms of the mainstream press, in large part because of apartheid legislation which regulated workplace practices. Black journalists also felt that aside from the many laws affecting the media, racism was inherent, and that contrary to the belief that the English press opposed apartheid, the fact that they operated within its confines meant they "validated the apartheid state" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report, 1998b, p.186).

The management of the mainstream English language media often adopted a policy of appeasement towards the state, ensuring that a large measure of self-censorship occurred (Ibid).

The commission further stated in its findings that most employers discriminated against blacks in their employment practices and that little was done to create conditions conducive for blacks, either in terms of training or promotion opportunities to management.

In the post-apartheid period however, newsrooms began to diversify and not only did the *Sunday Times* see the appointment of its first black editor in 1998, but became a black owned entity after a consortium of businessmen gained control of Johnnic, the parent company of Times Media Limited. Johnnic has since changed its brand name to Avusa.

### **NEWS VALUES**

News values differ from culture to culture. They're often vague and unstated. In searching for a definition, "news values are journalists' rules of thumb about what does and does not make a good story. Rarely written down, they have to be learnt on the job" (Critchler, 2003, p.132).

Galtung and Ruge (1965) provide the seminal work in exploring factors which lead to the determination of recurring news values. Their pioneering work, cited by many scholars (Cohen and Young, 1973; Harcup and O'Neill, 2001; Hartley, 1982; Machin and Niblock, 2006; Perry, 2002; Peterson, 1981), is premised on a framework of how international events are filtered through the news process in order to eventually be consumed by readers. This construction of news from its inception to dissemination is influenced by various criteria. Among other things, news is judged on a threshold level, the point at which an event becomes significant enough to be recorded; on continuity in that it occupies media attention for a period of time and on being unambiguous, meaning the more clear cut the event the more likely its chances will be of being recorded. These have applicability in the South African context, but more discernible are the following:

- Elite people: Well-known personalities will garner more coverage than ordinary citizens;
- Negative news: Events which have negative outcomes will be chosen as news items above those which might be more positive.

These conditions are by no means universal, nor complete. Newsrooms though, have a basic structure, a written or unwritten formula of how news content is selected and what would be palatable for consumers. News selection is not a neutral process, but one in which “the news agenda is driven by a set of cultural values, by decision-makers operating according to unseen historically formed codes” (Machin and Niblock, op.cit.,p.26). Over time, news priorities change, others remain the same and yet new ones added, and as cultures evolve, so do factors which influence the way news is recorded.

Harcup and O’Neill (2001), who adapted Galtung and Ruge’s taxonomy in their study of news content in three British newspapers, update the list of values to include the category of “culturally familiar” traditions. An example of this could be that in a country like South Africa, the bond with its former colonizer Great Britain, could persuade editors or sub editors to select stories they feel relevant to readers within the Commonwealth. Harcup and O’Neil introduce a list of added values and revise interpretations of existing ones, like Galtung and Ruge’s elites, which they’ve changed to a “power elite” group of influential organizations, institutions and famous people.

Gans (1979) recognizes the multitude of news values, but limits himself to whittling these down into two categories – topical values which, as the name suggests, relates to current events, and enduring values which last over time. Under the latter, he

details a list of factors which conform to the determinants of enduring values. Among these are altruistic democracy and responsible capitalism.

The former is rooted in the idea that in a democracy, news is determined by government serving the public good. Within this framework is the principle that if the public good is not being served by authorities, then attention is brought to its shortcomings. In the case of apartheid South Africa, the government considered itself a democracy and implemented policies which it believed served to advance the interests of all South Africans. Gans doesn't distinguish between separate benefits accruing to citizens in a democracy and consequently news treats the public good being served to all regardless of race or class. Where this detracts from the norm, as in the case of a lack of racial integration, "the violations of the legal and political rights of blacks," become news (Gans, 1979, p.44).

Responsible capitalism on the other hand holds that news is determined on the basis of economic conditions being created for wealth accumulation. Gans however, cautions that prosperity should not be at the expense of the exploitation of the rights of workers or customers, or that "unreasonable profits" are made (Ibid, p.46). Socialism and communism are viewed as wrong since they affect private property rights and hamper economic productivity.

Former editor of a Johannesburg daily newspaper, Harvey Tyson (1993), lists four values he believes were key in South African journalism - truth, tolerance, fairness and freedom. Tyson's notion of truth is made in response to criticisms about the role of the press, like control being in the hands of a few conglomerates or newspaper editors being responsible to no-one.

In response to various “truth” assertions that the press indirectly supported apartheid and deprived black voices from access to the mass media, Tyson argues that most English language newspapers took an anti-apartheid line, but admits that the press was “hugely ‘white oriented’” (p.111). Tyson also refutes allegations that blacks were overlooked in the English press.<sup>17</sup>

Tolerance, he says take the form of, among other things, the need for a free press which would “heal the wounds inflicted by violence and oppression and counter-violence” (Ibid, p.114).

Tyson devotes considerable attention to the need for the mainstream press to help restore fairness as far as creating the means necessary for disadvantaged black presses to succeed. He says this could be done through a sharing of resources or skills training. He also suggests blacks be given more of a voice within the mainstream media.

Freedom on the other hand, is the attainment of democracy. Tyson says discriminatory laws should be abolished, free expression guaranteed and the need for laws restricting the press to be scrapped in their entirety.

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<sup>17</sup> This was an issue which later emerged in the public domain via the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings into the role of the media under apartheid. Critics of the English mainstream press, which included the ANC, charged that black voices were suppressed in the majority of their publications under apartheid.

## **Research Question**

On the basis of the literature presented and current analysis of trends, this study asks:

RQ: How did the news values of journalists change to reflect the radical change in the political status of a government in transition from a system of apartheid to a democratic dispensation?

## **Method**

The researcher has conducted a historical narrative as an important qualitative research method in journalism. This study is analyzed around a particular political era – the change from apartheid to democracy in South Africa. The reason for selecting the *Sunday Times* newspaper is that, since the demise of the *Rand Daily Mail* in 1985, the publication is the remaining founder of popular journalism in South Africa. Owned by the Uvusa company, it is also the biggest-selling national newspaper in the country, with a readership of over three-and-a-half million people and a circulation of just over half-a-million average sales (Avusa, 2008).

The sample selection involved 13 interviews, conducted with former and current staff members and media experts, the latter encompassing both scholars in the discipline of journalism and those who have spent a significant amount of time in their careers as reporters and editors.

Attempts were made to contact 33 others journalists for their assistance in this study. Many gave their undertaking to co-operate and even asked for questions in

advance in order to prepare their responses. Such requests were conceded to, but for some inexplicable reason, the prospective interviewees terminated contact with the researcher. With the passage of time, many reporters who worked under the apartheid era, have left the profession altogether and proved difficult to locate. Indeed some of the interviewees for this study repeatedly ignored appeals for assistance, and it was only through dogged persistence that they were persuaded to cooperate. The researcher is cognizant of the fact that the opinions of 13 people represent a low response rate and that the findings of this paper can be faulted for such limitations. Nevertheless, the researcher is grateful to the following people for their assistance:

- Victor Khupiso, a black journalist who has worked as a general news reporter on the *Sunday Times* for almost 20 years;
- Andrew Donaldson, is a feature writer at the *Sunday Times*, where he has worked for more than 11 years;
- Graeme Addison, has 35 years experience as a journalist and is a published author and popular science writer. Addison helped recruit and train black journalists to work at the *Sunday Times*;
- Ray Hartley has held various senior positions including that of political correspondent and deputy editor since 1993. He is presently the editor of the newspaper's daily offshoot, *The Times*;
- Raymond Louw has been involved in journalism for the past 62 years. He worked at the *Sunday Times* as a news editor in 1959 and was editor of the *Rand Daily Mail* from 1966 to 1977. He is the editor and publisher of *Southern Africa Report*;

- Sven Lunsche, started at the *Sunday Times* in April, 1994 as the deputy editor of the newspaper's Business Times section. He also served as editor of the Business Times before his departure in 1999;
- P. Eric Louw is a former anti-apartheid activist, journalist and media academic based at the University of Queensland, Australia;
- Raymond Preston, started out with the *Sunday Times*' sister newspaper, the *Rand Daily Mail* in 1978. He moved to the *Financial Mail* and later the *Sunday Times* where he has worked as a photographer ever since;
- Cobus Bodenstein, also worked in the newspaper's photographic department. He joined the *Sunday Times* in 1989 and worked at the publication until 1996 before his departure;
- Bonny Schoonakker, has worked on and off for 19 years at the newspaper. He first started at the *Sunday Times* in 1980 as a sub editor. He left three years later and returned in 1989, working as a sub editor and senior writer until 2005 when joined the *South China Morning Post* in Hong Kong.
- Clifford Fram, started at the *Sunday Times* in 1989 as a sub editor and has been with the newspaper ever since;
- Charlotte Bauer, joined the *Sunday Times* in 1995 where she worked for a few years before rejoining the *Mail and Guardian*, which she co-founded;
- Andrew Trench, worked as a reporter and correspondent for the *Sunday Times* between 1995 to 2005. He is the current editor of a daily newspaper, the *Daily Dispatch*.



Interviewees were identified on the basis of whether they worked in the years preceding the demise of apartheid and/or in the immediate years after the political transition.

Although a period of four years was identified on either side of transitional phase, the research has been flexible in accommodating processes which took place beyond the scope of the review period, particularly the early experiences of respondents under the Tertius Myburgh era. To have excluded them would not have offered a suitable comparison with the change of values articulated by Ken Owen in 1990.

The study employed an open-end interview format, because of the breadth of insights it affords into the exploration of newsroom values and the context and environment in which news is formulated. The questions revolve around, but were not limited to:

- What were the news values espoused by the *Sunday Times* during the era of apartheid?;
- What were the news values espoused by the *Sunday Times* following the dawn of democracy?
- Has there been a shift in news values from the apartheid era, and would you ascribe any possible changes to the advent of democracy?
- If you believe the values have remained the same, would you say the advent of democracy has had little or no impact on values?

Since most of the interviewees are based in South Africa, initial contact was solicited through telephone calls and emails. Once co-operation had been obtained, the respondents were asked to state their preferences. The researcher urged interviewees to consider telephone interviews since the preference was for a discursive form of inquiry.

Most favored this approach, with several opting to write email responses. At this point, the researcher admits another shortcoming - the explication of news values. Journalists were unsure of the concept and its applicability, resulting in fairly broad interpretations of values ranging from abstract notions to personal anecdotes. Such varied responses have a bearing on the overall findings, but the researcher has endeavored to coalesce the results in a structured approach (See Appendix K for full texts of interviews).

### **Data Analysis**

By Gans' own admission, the plethora of news values is so diverse that it would be nearly impossible to identify each one, let alone find consensus on established criteria of news selection. In this study, there are few recurring indicators which show certain values are common to respondents.

Former South African journalist and academic at the University of Queensland in Australia, P. Eric Louw says the *Sunday Times* positioned itself in the liberal camp because it was opposed to government interference in the economy, in the media and in society (P.E. Louw, personal interview, November 30, 2008).

He sets out the key values which the newspaper followed under apartheid.

- A liberal capitalist South Africa. Louw says this was the core value articulated by the newspaper and was based on the desire for English-speaking, white South Africans to “make money and live in their nice suburbs”;
- Belief in the fourth estate and the watchdog role of the media. Louw says this was the second core value as the newspaper saw itself as being critical of the abuse of power by the National Party;
- Opposition to government censorship because it conflicted with liberal values;
- Opposition to apartheid because it was seen as a type of socialism. Louw adds that government interference in the economy restricted the free movement of black labor resulting in a clash with the newspaper’s liberal views;
- The newspaper was opposed to terrorism;
- It was against socialism and communism;
- Black nationalists were considered as potential allies of liberalism, but only if the alliance between black nationalists and communists could be broken.

In the post-apartheid era, Louw says the core values of maintaining a liberal capitalist South Africa remained, as did the role of the newspaper maintaining its watchdog duty. The other enduring value is opposition to government censorship. Louw believes it still is

a consideration even though most of the laws limiting the rights of the media under apartheid have since been scrapped from the statute books. The one new addition to post-apartheid values is the newspaper's approval of the creation of a black middle class since this is in keeping with its views on capitalism. Although the values have largely remained the same, the political change has some bearing on values to the extent that the composition of the newsroom has shifted with more reporters exhibiting "left values" says Louw.

Journalist Victor Khupiso, who grew up in Soweto, discusses news values in terms of his own experiences as a junior reporter working in the *Sunday Times* newsroom in the late 1980s. As a black student, with a minimal grasp of the English language and culture, the odds of race and an inferior education were stacked against him in contemplating a future career as a professional. Armed with a camera that was given to him by his domestic worker mother, he was able to convince the newspaper to publish photographs he had taken of conflict between students and police at a funeral in the township. And so began his introduction to journalism.

During those days, black reporters like me were not even allowed to report on political issues of the country. Political reporting was only reserved for white reporters. We were not writing for the main section of the paper. They decided we should write for a black supplement that was basically for black people. Black reporters were assigned to do stories about witchcraft and crime stories in the black townships. We were not allowed to interview white people. This was done only by white reporters, whilst they were allowed to interview black people.

There was no relationship between white and black. Even if one was doing the very same story with a white reporter, we were not allowed to travel together on assignment. We'd use different cars (V. Khupiso, personal interview, March 14, 2009).

Khupiso, who worked at the newspaper during the editorship of Tertius Myburgh, says the newsroom was divided along racial lines and that merely sitting on a chair which belonged to a white reporter was tantamount to a dismissal. Pay scales and grades were unequal and any representations to the editor regarding grievances or complaints of inequality were not likely to find a sympathetic ear. His views of Myburgh is that he was a racist.

Khupiso reiterates the editor's emphasis on stories from the townships revolving around issues of witchcraft and crime. These were stories usually done by blacks, and where the victims of crime were white, they were given prominence.

Khupiso says noticeable change came when Ken Owen took over as editor in 1990. More black staff were hired and the drive to depict stories about the struggles of the liberation movement against apartheid gained momentum. Equally important, says Khupiso, is that Owen sought to heal the racial divide in the newsroom.

He did a lot because when he took over, we could use one car with a white reporter to go together. There was one time when there was shooting in Soweto between the soldiers and police who were mistaking each other for guerilla terrorists, so I went there with a white reporter. We were together. He was driving. I was sitting on the front seat, for the first time in my life

after Ken Owen took over. In the office things were just moderate. He was trying his best to make things better for everyone.

Ray Hartley, who has held various job descriptions at the newspaper including that of political correspondent, political editor and deputy editor, also credits Ken Owen for introducing values which he suggests, the newspaper could at last be proud of.

In the 1980s, it had quite a bad track record. It had supported the tricameral parliament. It [the newspaper] was quite, sort of at times under Tertius Myburgh, in favor of some of the security clampdowns and stuff like the state of emergency. There was a general sense that it was operating within that kind of, you know, on the apartheid government's side of the equation somehow. And then the paper was taken over by Ken Owen. Essentially I mean he shifted it quite substantially. He achieved quite a remarkable transformation because the paper had a majority white readership. By the time he left, it had a majority black readership. And he achieved that without losing readers. There was no shrinkage in the total readership side of it on the paper. And he did that essentially by being fiercely outspoken. I think the paper took a fiercely, kind of liberal position at the time. He actively recruited people who had anti-apartheid backgrounds ... he actively positioned the paper to serve a new majority in the country (R. Hartley, personal interview, February 10, 2009).

A brief point of departure, Owen stayed on with the publication for only two years after the country's political transformation and expressed regret that successive editors have undid all his hard work, adding that they're responsible for returning it to its

“anachronistic” ways under Myburgh. Asked to describe what new news values might be at play after 1994, Hartley says he believes a lot of the emphasis has been to “get public institutions to serve the people,” such as the challenges faced by the education and health departments to speed up service delivery.

Journalist Charlotte Bauer says it would have been unthinkable for her to have worked at the *Sunday Times* during the apartheid era. As a white South African, her left-leaning political views found expression in the *Mail and Guardian*, which owed its origins to opposing the apartheid government.

I was working at this newspaper, the *Mail and Guardian*, which used to be called the *Weekly Mail* in the 1980s and early 90s. *The Weekly Mail* was then a sort of a left-wing, stragglista newspaper, very sort of pro-ANC, even though the ANC was banned then. From that point of view, I guess people who joined the *Weekly Mail* and I’m a founder member, would have had a problem with the mainstream South African media then, which was entirely white-owned, white-run, white-point-of-view. *The Sunday Times* would have been the biggest, most powerful, most tangible example of mainstream print media. It wouldn’t have crossed people like mine’s mind to go and work there (C. Bauer, personal interview, February 9, 2009).

Her vehement opposition to working at the *Sunday Times* under apartheid suggests the newspaper’s liberal values were far-removed from her notion of a publication critical of the establishment. She views the newspaper’s values in negative terms – being owned and run by whites, offering white viewpoints to readers. Bauer was offered a job at the

newspaper in 1995, by which time the newspaper under Ken Owen's editorship was undergoing a transformation.

And at that point, the *Sunday Times* was reinventing itself quite, without a sense of humor, as 'no, no we're still going to be a paper for the people, it's just different people' and indeed they made a seamless and unblushing transition.

Post-apartheid South Africa has brought freedom for the press to exercise its new-found freedoms, says Bauer, adding that since the transition the newspaper has reported critically on the government.

I think that tension between government and media is good, it's natural, it's normal. We keep them on their toes, they keep us on our toes. That pressure's good. I do remember the days before when you did have security police coming into your newspaper office on deadline and saying 'take that out'. I just don't think that is debatable. Do we have more freedom in our jobs now? Yes. Are we doing them as well as we could, should, would? Probably not, but I think different newspapers, different strokes.

Andrew Trench worked at the *Sunday Times* from 1995 to 2005. His early experiences in the immediate years after democracy are defined by the values introduced by Ken Owen. Trench says the key values were modeled along liberal Western traditions. These included fulfilling the newspaper's watchdog role and its support for a multi-party government based on a universal franchise (A. Trench, personal interview, November 3, 2008).



Trench suggests the newspaper did not live up to its liberal credentials before Owen's tenure since the publication "wasn't an aggressive critic of authority". He says the values under Owen were consistent with the newspaper's role as a "critical watchdog."

The independent watchdog value has been at the heart of it. From 1995 to 2005, there was a lot more of an attempt to understand government's agenda and to be receptive to critique from the ANC, but not to surrender the watchdog role, but to remain critical. I won't say the values mitigated, but more of an overt effort to open our ears to their voices because there was a lot of criticism of the press at the time, such as are we reporting fairly? There has been a shift in the value system. The agenda of government has filtered through, like reporting on poverty had fallen outside of the mainstream press and now they have filtered in.

The core values haven't changed, probably become more textured and broader. The press, following criticism has listened to government, but its not forsaking its watchdog role.

Asked whether the advent of democracy has had any impact on changing values, Trench reiterated that while some values remained the same, those that "filtered in", and which exhibit a social responsibility element, were the consequence of a democratic dispensation. Trench mentions how reporting on poverty became a feature of the newspaper. This was partly in response to requests by the authorities for the press to focus more on government's developmental priorities rather than being overly critical of the policies of a nascent democracy still coming to grips with redressing many of the past imbalances perpetrated under apartheid. Trench maintains however, that this social

responsibility aspect to news reporting was never at the expense of the newspaper sacrificing its watchdog duty.

Graeme Addison, has worked as a reporter for 35 years at various publications. His experience on the *Sunday Times*, was helping the newspaper in its recruitment and training drive of black journalists. He maintains that the *Sunday Times* in exposing numerous instances of government corruption and mismanagement under apartheid, reflected liberal news values.

Joel Mervis, Tertius Myburgh, Ken Owen and finally Brian Pottinger were white South African editors who naturally reflected the news values of their own backgrounds, training, and suburban milieus. But at the same time they were hotly opposed, except maybe Tertius, who has been accused of being an apartheid mole, to apartheid in principle and in practice - and indeed a lot of space was devoted to the "bad news" about apartheid's effects on people's lives (G. Addison, personal interview, February 12, 2009).

He says the editors stamped their personalities on the newspaper and drove the news agenda according to ideas of what would drive up circulation. Since higher circulation boosted income, each editor was compelled to ensure a second core value was met – making profit.

The *Sunday Times* was the biggest money spinner in the TML (Times Media Limited) stable, so it was not surprising that anyone appointed to a senior position knew that readership was everything.

Addison argues that in the late 1980s and early 1990s, attitudes to blacks began to change both within the newsroom and in government. With black staff being hired and providing much more comprehensive coverage of black issues than before, the news agenda began to broaden. He concedes however, that such changes didn't necessarily mean blacks were regarded as equals, but were being more socially accepted than in the past.

What was going on in the early '90s was a change in the attitudes of people of the ruling establishment and they began to treat black people as real people with their own concerns, their own lives, their own culture and everything. And this was partly driven by the need to expand circulation amongst black communities, black being a catch-all term for everybody that was not white. Previously the *Sunday Times* had its Extra editions<sup>18</sup> to get as much circulation as possible out of the various group areas. But it began to dawn on a lot of the editors and their circulation managers that we were moving towards a common society and it was time to maybe integrate the views and involve our news editors and reporters in a much more balanced coverage so with the circulation goals in mind, the agenda for news certainly began to change quite markedly in the late 1980s, early 1990s.

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<sup>18</sup> Extra editions were regional supplements to the main paper, which depending upon location, had a particular ethnic focus, so for instance Durban had the "Extra" supplement wrapped around the main paper and its news was primarily geared towards the city's large Indian population. It was viewed by some as a shallow and racist attempt to include the various ethnic groups in the news coverage of the newspaper.

Under the new dispensation, Addison says there was an attempt to give everyone equal access to news, but what occurred was a class of elites who garnered the bulk of the news coverage.

We had this whole rainbow nation<sup>19</sup> ideology that came in and suddenly we moved to this position in the press where everyone was saying, okay well now we must treat everybody equally, but of course it didn't happen because you have your elites, you have your business elites, you have your political elites and particularly under the Mbeki government, and with the black empowerment policies, it was the elites who got the lions share of the coverage whether they were white or black elites. And I think we still have a situation where the press and the *Sunday Times*, which is a very middle class newspaper, aims at the interests of the middle class and does tend to neglect the interests of the poor.

Addison says this an enduring value, except under apartheid it was the white elites commanding the media spotlight.

Sven Lunsche was at the *Sunday Times* at a turning point in the country's history – from 1994 to 1999. He has held senior positions in the newspaper's *Business Times* section, including that of deputy editor and editor. He served under Ken Owen, whose values he describes thus.

I think maybe in the late 1980s, there were some commercial media who didn't support fully enfranchised elections. But I think by the time of the elections, there was fundamental support among the *Sunday Times* for the

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<sup>19</sup> Coined by Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, it refers to South Africa's racial and cultural diversity after the country's political transformation.

concept of a non-racial, democratic election. So I think the commercial media, certainly from the late 1980s onwards swung around to the idea that it had to be, there had to be no restrictions on who could vote. So that is number one. I also think that the debate that was quite strong, was in terms of the ANC and its very rudimentary economic policy. I still think there was a lot of support for socialism among its rank and file, even Mandela's first speech talked about nationalization. So in that sense, they (the ANC) were still seen as a fairly socialist movement in terms of economic policy. Although, I think at that stage, I think people like Tito Mboweni<sup>20</sup>, Trevor Manuel<sup>21</sup> and so on, were in favor of a more social-democratic model combining free market elements with social welfare elements. I think the perception out there was a very left-leaning economic policy, and that's where certainly the news values of the *Sunday Times* concerted with those of the ANC. We were very much a pro free market paper (S. Lunsche, personal interview, February 28, 2009).

Lunsche says concerns were allayed when the ANC reverted from the rhetoric of socialism to embrace capitalism. Key appointments by former President Mandela of business-minded people who were fiscally conservative, gave assurances to the market that no nationalization would take place. Asked though about any other news values which came into play after 1994, Lunsche replied.

Presenting both sides of the story and sticking to the facts, that was part and parcel of any journalists worth his or her salt, so I don't think that

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<sup>20</sup> South African Reserve Bank governor

<sup>21</sup> South African Minister of Finance from 1996 to present

would change. Was there a bias in favor of the new ANC? Certainly among journalists, the sentiment was very much in their favor. That didn't mean from the beginning that we weren't critical of what they did, like we should be. There was a lot of emotional and ideological sympathy for the ANC government among the rank and file newsroom staff. Journalists are by nature more left leaning and so on. There was always this sympathy, but it didn't mean that the *Sunday Times* would go soft on when they (government) didn't perform. I don't think they did no.

Maybe there was the feeling that it's a new government, let's give them a bit of leeway. But certainly if the honeymoon, if there was a honeymoon, and I don't think there was a honeymoon, it didn't last very long. And very soon I think it was, for the majority of the media anyway, they were as critical of the government's performance, if not more so because they had much bigger tasks to fulfill. They looked after the interests of 40 million South Africans not just four million white South Africans, so in a way their task was far more significant than anything the National Party had ever attempted. But the watchdog role was crucial and I think the ANC was the one that supported it. They said the freedom of the media is entrenched in the constitution.

Cobus Bodenstein started at the *Sunday Times* in 1989 and worked there until 1996.

I remember when I first got my job there, I had to do a story on a white farmer who had apparently assaulted a young black boy that he had

accused of stealing something. And I had to get court pictures of this guy in court. It was in a town called Louis Trichardt. I managed to get pictures of him walking into the courtroom. And that's how I got fully employed, how I got the job (C. Bodenstein, personal interview, February 28, 2009).

Bodenstein recounts this story because he says when he joined the publication, the then editor Ken Owen insisted on the newspaper covering any hardships Africans endured, whether at the hands of government or their superiors. Bodenstein says journalists were urged to actively capture such sentiment. One of his most recognizable photographs is an image of three right-wing members of the Afrikaanse Weerstand Beweging, the AWB being executed by a soldier in Mmabatho<sup>22</sup>. (See Appendix J.)

At the time, it was very much a part of what was happening and what we were told to do in keeping with Owen's values. It was just good to be able to know that I could do [shoot the picture]. There were probably 30 or 40 people and when the firing started, everybody starting running away. It was me, Kevin Carter, James Nachtwey and a CBS crew left. In some ways, it was personally satisfying to know that I could actually not run away. We did that kind of thing. We were in the townships a lot, often under fire or under some or other form of danger. There was quite a group

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<sup>22</sup> The Afrikaanse Weerstandbeweging (AWB) was a right-wing paramilitary outfit in South Africa. Armed members had entered the homeland of Bophuthatswana to support unpopular leader Lucas Mangope, who was facing a coup. During the raid on March 11, 1994, right-wingers allegedly fired randomly at civilians as they traveled in convoy. One vehicle was fired on by a Bophuthatswana policeman, and as one of the passengers pleaded for his life, the policeman shot him and another survivor in full view of a press contingent.

of us, working very hard to just be better than each other. The work was just what we were doing.

Bodenstein says there were many stories relating to the consequences of apartheid, stories which he suggests, were not covered in the past, but which marked Owen's signature on the newspaper.

We started searching for stuff like that and also going to towns where demonstrations occurred. We also did all the normal stuff. It was all because Owen wanted it that way. He was very disliked by the apartheid government.

Bodenstein says these values have changed somewhat, not because apartheid is dead, but the newspaper redefining its priorities. An obvious value under successive editors is exposing corruption he says.

When Ken left, the paper was not really all that well edited anymore. They had ... Brian Pottinger. He was more concerned with keeping the board happy, whereas Ken was a wildly- strong principled person. Brian I don't think. He was more concerned with the management of the paper than anything and he also wasn't around for terribly long. Before Ken Owen it was Tertius Myburgh, and he was also strongly principled and it was really under him that it became more of a commercial entity, whereas under Ken, he was the main driving force morally in the paper.

Bodenstein's former colleague Raymond Preston has been working as a photographer for more than 30 years, his first job being on the *Rand Daily Mail*. He now works at the *Sunday Times*, where he has been since the late 1980s. He says news values were defined



by restrictive press laws which hampered journalists and photographers in the course of their work. He describes the publication's news values through a typical assignment.

I arrived in Soweto and the police were beating up young black kids. I arrived and started taking photographs and basically I was also beaten up. I was actually fired upon, a teargas canister with a rifle that the police used to fit at the end of a rifle. And I got into a Volkswagen and it bounced off the back window. Thank God, because if it penetrated the window it would have taken my head off. So it was very difficult to cover events in those days (R. Preston, personal interview, February 25, 2009).

Preston, articulates the values of the newspaper, through his experiences of working under Ken Owen, whom he describes as a pragmatist urging his staff to “get out and get a story”. He suggests that such stories needed to reflect the daily reality of living in townships where state repression was rife. He says it was at Owen's urging that the newspaper showed more of the plight of blacks under apartheid.

He was transforming ... . Any black journalists coming on board, getting the color grouping code right. You had to have a certain amount of black people and whites and coloreds and that kind of thing. So it was part of the transformation.

Preston says there have been noticeable changes in news values since 1994. He says it's much “easier” than before, referring to an easing of press regulations. Citing a number of upcoming international sporting events, Preston considers that since the demise of apartheid, South Africa is emerging from decades of international isolation and that such global exposure, fits in with new news priorities.

Andrew Donaldson, also started at the *Sunday Times* in the late 1980s. Like Preston, he describes the newspaper's news values in terms of some of the memorable stories of his era. Donaldson though, recounts a story that was published before he joined the publication, but which had lasting repercussions.

There was an enduring damage if you know. I don't know if you've ever come across it, that headline, "The Guns of Gaborone," which was a notorious headline after the SADF [South African Defence Force] raid on ANC bases, or what were supposed to have been ANC bases, but weren't. They were civilians, in Botswana. And they [the *Sunday Times*] came up with this very gung-ho headline for this raid, "The Guns of Gaborone," which alienated a lot of people and it was something that the *Sunday Times* fought very hard to live down. When I joined, I think it was still in the process of finally getting over that hurdle, that episode in the paper's history is now forgotten (A. Donaldson, personal interview, February 23, 2009).

Asked to expand on how the headline could represent news values and how it could "alienate" people, Donaldson replied that the newspaper had a significant black readership. He said the ratio to white readers was 40:60 and their unhappiness stemmed from the fact that the headline and the contents of the story were false, if not alarmist.

It was seen as a very gung-ho, very pro-SADF, very much supporting the Nationalist government at the time, and its aggressive sorties against sovereign states, like illegal actions. It alienated our black readers and did anger the left-wing countries, those people who were anti-apartheid

activists against apartheid. It was seen as bold during the status quo at the time.

Donaldson says the newspaper was phenomenally successful indicating its liberal capitalist objective. He says reporters were often reminded how much money the newspaper generated, but when asked if this was based on an appeal to a black and white middle class demographic, Donaldson says this is not the case, adding that newspapers are sold to ordinary readers in the townships.

Asked whether there have been any change in values in the post-apartheid era, Donaldson says there has been a shift in priorities. Referring to another headline, he says priorities revolve around exposing government corruption and ineptness.

I would suggest the *Times* has sort of emerged as a very strong world and quite vibrant paper, and has surprised people on a Sunday morning when you see headlines like, “Health minister is a drunk and a thief.”<sup>23</sup>

Bonny Schoonakker who started at the *Sunday Times* in 1980, left three years later and rejoined the publication from 1989 to 2005. In his 19 years as a sub editor and senior writer, he determines news values as a process of ongoing change.

As for the *Sunday Times*, the newsroom zeitgeist in 1980 was very different in some ways from what it was when I left just over three years ago. In many ways, it was just the same. Back then, under the editorship of Tertius Myburgh, the prevailing cultural assumptions could tempt you into

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<sup>23</sup> “Manto: A drunk and a thief,” *Sunday Times*, August 19, 2007. An exclusive report by a team of *Sunday Times* reporters stated that the Health Minister at the time Dr Manto Tshabalala-Msimang was suffering from chronic alcoholism. The story also detailed theft charges against the minister arising from her tenure as a medical superintendent at a hospital in Botswana.

believing that we were a province of England. The newsroom and subs desk were heavily populated by émigrés from Fleet Street. In those days, perspectives other than white were corralled into our Extra supplements – one each for coloreds, Indians and blacks. Politically, the newspaper occupied territory somewhere in a space where the verligte<sup>24</sup> side of the National Party and pro-military side of the Progs<sup>25</sup> (as they then were) overlapped. Myburgh was well-connected with the government, and was often accused by his staff (out of earshot) of being a secret Nat, which was something of a heresy in the white English-language media, and a departure if not betrayal of the paper’s earlier traditions. But Myburgh sort of confirmed his true allegiances when he resigned his editorship in late 1990 to take up an appointment as ambassador in London (B. Schoonakker, personal interview, March 16, 2009).

Schoonakker said the tone of the newspaper was also set by Leslie Sellers, a former Fleet Street sub editor whom Myburgh hired. Schoonakker says Sellers was influential in selecting many stories based on their origins in England. Schoonakker says Myburgh’s influence as far as values are concerned was helping the newspaper build a large circulation base and politically exercising opposition to the ANC.

The Myburgh era was resolutely anti-ANC, as was made clear by a notorious headline hailing “The Guns of Gaborone”, above a front-page

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<sup>24</sup> “verligte,” an Afrikaans term for describing liberal whites under apartheid.

<sup>25</sup> An opposition party to the Nats, the Progressive Party or “Progs” started in 1959 and over the years evolved as an opposition party, albeit under various names.

report on a cross-border raid by the SA Defence Force. That headline had the fingerprints of Sellers all over it.

Schoonakker says a major change in news values was to emerge with the change in editorship from Myburgh to Owen. He says the latter sought about ridding the newspaper of its Fleet Street legacies and values “with a large, sharp knife”.

This, I think, has had a profound effect on news values, as the final reference point for these were defined by favored personalities. There were those who stayed on under Owen’s editorship who felt the benefit of his attempts at re-education. Well I remember Owen castigating the news editor for ignoring a story out of Laudium<sup>26</sup> the previous week, about a psychiatrist’s wife who had been tortured and murdered. The story broke on a Saturday evening, but was ignored by the news editor – like me, a survivor from the Myburgh era - for the next day’s newspaper. At conference on Tuesday, Owen angrily, snidely, sarcastically, accused him of racism. The news editor had ignored the story because it involved an Indian woman, rather than a white one, Owen said, and quite rightly so. It was in ways like these that you knew news values were changing, because in the Myburgh era that story would have been confined only to the Indian Extra supplement. Owen was furious that these sort of preconceptions were still prevalent on the shop room floor, and he would be ruthless in

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<sup>26</sup> Laudium, was an area designated under apartheid as reserved for the Indian community.

eradicating them from the hearts and minds of his staff, if not the staff themselves.

Schoonakker says that when Owen left, it was decided that his incumbent would usher the way for a black editor. That task fell to Owen's deputy, Brian Pottinger, "who did what was expected," and eventually made way for Mike Robertson, the newspaper's first black editor in 1998.

Schoonakker says Robertson's vision was seen as serving a new middle class, a vision he would often articulate. These tended to revolve around former political activists who were moving up the corporate ranks of business and becoming millionaires in the process. He says Robertson's values, which came under criticism from Owen, though Schoonakker is unsure why, were neither particularly focused on democracy or patriotic virtues. Schoonakker says his insights suggest he doesn't agree that the emergence of democracy in South Africa necessarily had some kind of transforming power over the news values of the *Sunday Times*.

Had South Africa not headed for democracy in its current form, but adopted some other post-apartheid model, I cannot think that the basic news values would be any different than what they are now.

Clifford Fram has worked for nearly 20 years as a sub editor on various publications. His stint on the *Sunday Times* began in 1989 and he has been there since. He has served under both Myburgh and Owen. Fram says the two men followed distinctly different values.

Under Myburgh, the newspaper very much reflected apartheid. The main paper covered white South Africa to a large extent, apart from a bit of politics and the Extra, which is the section I worked on, covered black

South Africa. On the Extra section, all the staff were black. People who worked on the Extra section, tended to camp out on the one side of the newsroom, so it resembled an apartheid environment because you had all the black staff on one side of the newsroom and all the white staff on the other side of the newsroom. The non-political news in the main paper, very much focused on the white community. In general, you probably wouldn't see very many black people in the paper, unless they were criminals to be quite frank. So you wouldn't see stories about successful black people.

Ken was a true liberal in every sense of the word. He slowly, and not so slowly, depending from whose side you're looking at it, but he transformed the paper quite quickly. He made it into quite a serious ... . It always was a political animal, but he made it into quite a serious liberal voice. He gave a lot of people a voice in the *Sunday Times* that previously didn't have a voice. He also tried to change the news values. In some cases he might have done it too fast for the white market. He also made the paper quite boring. Where Tertius had a philosophy of, what he had termed "quali-pop", which was a mixture of a typical British quality paper and a typical British tabloid, Ken Owen tried to go more for the quality type of British paper, which had shed quite a lot of readers (C. Fram, personal interview, February 24, 2009).

Fram says successive editors in the years after apartheid made their mark in different ways. Brian Pottinger was considered a caretaker editor whose task it was to prepare the

way for the newspaper's first black editor in Mike Robertson in 1998. Fram says Robertson looked to the best of what Mervis and Myburgh had to offer, resulting in, what he (Fram) says was a type of "non-racial" type of reporting, since it was under Robertson that the Extra was combined into the main newspaper, rather than being treated as an ethnic supplement.

Raymond Louw, former editor of the *Rand Daily Mail* from 1966 to 1977 and former news editor of the *Sunday Times* in 1959, prefaces his views on news values through an analysis of the impact of apartheid press restrictions. He says against the background of journalists self-censoring themselves, for fear that officials might do it for them, journalists tried to follow the principles of professional conduct, like seeking truth and fairness. He says this applied mostly to the English-language newspapers, which tested official prohibition as far as they possibly could.

The English-language papers supported the opposition parties but that did not mean they diligently followed the party line. Rather they supported it but were sometimes critical. Some English language papers sought to avoid confrontation with the government while a few notables were confrontational in their views and reporting. But while the confrontational ones like the *Rand Daily Mail*, *Sunday Times* etc., expressed their opposition to apartheid forcefully, they abided by the general apartheid laws. The reason was that they knew that if they breached laws not dealing with media and publication, the government would close them down and proclaim that its action had nothing to do with interference with media freedom. So our attitude was to oppose apartheid but in a way



where we could not be accused of inciting insurrection, rebellion or revolution (R. Louw, personal interview, February 15, 2009).

Louw agrees that the *Sunday Times* carried a preponderance of white news, but doesn't necessarily see this as being at odds with the newspaper's stated opposition to apartheid. In answering questions about values, he refers interchangeably to principles of truth and accuracy exercised through fair reporting.

Under the press restrictions, journalists attempted to follow the principles of professional conduct, like seeking truth and fairness. I say attempted because if a story was run with certain pieces of information removed, the end result would probably not be the truth in the sense of the whole truth. But you strived to do it. That policy was followed by some English-language newspapers which constantly pushed at the barricades of censorship by seeking out information that the government did not want disclosed but could not ban because there was no law related to it. One must bear in mind that ours was a peculiar case where the government proclaimed that South Africa had a free press and that the only bars on the media related to the preservation of state security. Thus it prohibited certain types of information related to revolutionary thoughts, violent opposition or what they thought could be violent opposition, but not curbing political opposition from recognized political parties and their members and supporters.

He says that after 1994, it took a few years before newspapers like the *Sunday Times* started reporting critically on government. Various scandals caused embarrassment and

this was balanced to some extent with positive sentiment on the notable achievements made by the new dispensation in terms of social service delivery to the poor.

As the years have gone by, a new phenomenon has developed, the rise of black writers and columnists, many acutely observant and with gifted pens. Like all columnists they attracted readers by being critical and avoiding praise except in small nodules here and there. Also, in the last few years there has been a steady increase in strong criticism and protest over the failure of service delivery and corruption, especially among local authorities. This has led to ANC complaints that newspapers are acting like an opposition party and being unpatriotic or counter revolutionary.

Louw says the advent of democracy has had a bearing on changing values, such as the removal of restrictive press laws. Reporters have more leeway to report critically and are exercising their rights to do so.

## Conclusion and discussion

This study asked how the news values of journalists might have changed with the resultant political transformation. The substance of the interviews, shows the *Sunday Times* under apartheid was committed to:

- Maintaining a liberal capitalist course and opposing communism and socialism as threats to wealth accumulation;
- Advocating a multi-party system of government based on universal franchise;
- Adhering to the watchdog role of journalists;
- Opposing apartheid, although this is contradicted by some journalists who argue that not only was racism entrenched in the newsroom, but the newspaper under Tertius Myburgh in particular, supported government and its divisive legislation;
- Opposing censorship;
- Considering the aspirations of white, middle-class readers. Where blacks were mentioned it was usually associated with crime, whilst the views of blacks were ignored, although this changed with the arrival of Ken Owen and;
- Selecting stories with British influences. This was primarily evident on the sub editors desk where expatriate English staff chose stories about developments in England;

After the transition to democracy, the overriding values which emerged included the following:

- The continued pursuit of capital;
- An independent press taking advantage of its freedoms through critical reporting;
- The continued role of the *Sunday Times* as a watchdog on government;
- The views of previously disadvantaged blacks given greater expression;
- A focus on whether public institutions are meeting their service delivery obligations;
- Support for an emerging black middle class and the spotlight on a class of elites
- Initial sympathy for the newly-formed ANC government, but the watchdog role being reinforced with time and;
- Black writers with left-leaning views emerging.

This study asked how values shifted to reflect the change in the political status of a government in transition.

The *Sunday Times*' core value of the pursuit of capital has remained in force, unimpeded by political change. Its other core value of maintaining its watchdog role has not only been enduring but bolstered by the scrapping of restrictive press laws which have allowed the newspaper greater freedom to reflect critically on alleged abuses of power in government.

The change to democracy has had the most obvious effect in opposition to apartheid being replaced as a news priority, if the study is to consider the view of some that it was a core value under apartheid.

The new values that have emerged are partly the result of a change in the political system. This is principally evident in the scrapping of apartheid-era laws relating to restrictions on the press, which have allowed the *Sunday Times* greater leeway in terms of exercising the rights guaranteed of a free and independent press. It is also evident in the support for a black middle class and the focus on a class of black elites.

But the shifting values are not due to apartheid alone. Two-thirds of the interviewees laud the contribution of one person in particular. Ken Owen emerges as an editor who has influenced change through reorganizing news content and hiring staff who reflect the country's diversity and whose values conform to liberal traditions.

Under apartheid, Tertius Myburgh illustrated the newspaper's hypocrisy by offering criticism of the government, yet also endorsing its racist policies. There is much evidence of his integrity as an editor being called into question through dubious relations with the state, allowing his publication to be used as a propaganda tool of the security establishment and his treatment of stories which reflected negatively on the establishment.

Ken Owen on the other hand is shown to be a visionary leader who instituted change in the years before apartheid. His transformation initiatives have been lauded by former staff, both black and white. And his desire to impress upon personnel the need for stories which were ignored or neglected in the past, show a break with Myburgh's values.

Owen was also critical of his successors in reinforcing management's status quo of putting economic imperatives before editorial substance.

Gans' (1979) studies on altruistic democracy support the initiatives instituted by Owen in serving the public good through the free expression of racially diverse viewpoints. It's also demonstrated in balancing equity in the newsroom before the post-1994 directive of government for companies to introduce affirmative action policies in the workplace. In also urging reporters, photographers, news and sub editors to publish stories depicting black lives, he was readying the newspaper for the inevitable political transition to democracy. On a newspaper's watchdog role Gans argues that when deviations from democratic ideals occur, stories about "corruption, conflict, protest and bureaucratic malfunctioning," tend to make the news (p.43). In the case of the *Sunday Times*, this role has become more discernible under democracy.

Owen's criticism of the newspaper's owners introduces the other aspect of Gans' enduring values – responsible capitalism. Owen is on record as expressing dismay for his part in contributing to the newspaper's impressive economic fortunes. His concern stemmed from the publication's reluctance to hire additional staff and improve the quality of its reporting. Gans' notion of responsible capitalism posits that the *Sunday Times'* other enduring value of capital accumulation is a worthy goal, but the tacit undertaking is that companies reinvest in training and development opportunities and do all they can to improve the quality of their products.

Galtung and Ruge's (1965) assertion of elite people and negative news being significant factors in the recording of events is supported in the findings in both pre and post-apartheid periods. Interviewees have referred to the rising middle class and elite

people, like black businessmen and women and politicians commanding media attention in the new dispensation. As far as negative news is concerned, this is found more under apartheid where the government's policies earned it a pariah status on the world stage, while domestically depictions of petty apartheid and blacks being associated with crime reinforced Galtung and Ruge's contention of how such values are constructed.

Harcup and O'Neil's (2001) "culturally familiar" values are supported by the preponderance of many stories about England through the influence of the Fleet Street sub editors.

Tyson (1993), who advanced various "truths" in response to criticism of the role of the press, argued that the mainstream media was "emphatically anti-apartheid" (p.111). There is some support in the literature and findings for his sentiments, but this contrasts with assertions to the contrary because Tyson's "truths" refer to the mainstream press in general and is not specific to the *Sunday Times*. His views should thus be interpreted in the context of a general observation of the English-language press.

Tyson's argument about freedom and tolerance of a free press playing a constructive role in healing divisions of the past, has been borne out by the onset of democracy. The support given by the *Sunday Times* to the rise of a black middle class and the empathy shown by Owen in attempting redress, also addresses Tyson's value about the need for fairness.

One of the main limitations in the study has been the difficulty in reaching many journalists who worked at the publication under apartheid, but have since moved on. The researcher also endeavored to gather information from more black reporters, but these proved futile.

Respective governments under apartheid and democracy have berated the media for their critical opposition. Future research could explore whether the *Sunday Times* in particular or the media in general were more critical of the apartheid government than they were of the government under a democracy. It would also be useful to analyze values espoused by black, Afrikaans newspapers and the alternative press under apartheid in order to determine how political change impacted on news selection. Further, comparisons between the role of the South African media under apartheid and the US media during the segregation era could prove useful.



Appendix A:

First edition of the *Sunday Times*, February 4, 1906, p.1



FACSIMILE REPRODUCTION, PRINTED ON FEBRUARY 4th 1981, OF THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE SUNDAY TIMES



Appendix B:

Typical racial stereotype of blacks. *Sunday Times*, June 21, 1908, p1.

**STUTTFORD'S STORES**  
MARKET DEPARTMENT  
SUNDAY SUPPLY  
SUNDAY SUPPLY  
SUNDAY SUPPLY

# Sunday Times

A PAPER FOR THE PEOPLE

STUTTFORD'S STORES  
MARKET DEPARTMENT  
SUNDAY SUPPLY  
SUNDAY SUPPLY  
SUNDAY SUPPLY

18 JUN 21 1908 [EIGHTEEN PAGES] JOHANNESBURG, TRANSVAAL, JUNE 21, 1908 [EIGHTEEN PAGES] [Price Threepence]

## RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT IN DAMARALAND.

"A meeting of the Damaraland Cabinet was held yesterday, at which Ministers discussed the subject of the Pot. It is believed that the matter has now been finally disposed of and will not be brought up again."  
—(Damaraland Sentinel, June, 1908)

[Dear Secretary, the German Colonial Minister, who arrived in Johannesburg yesterday, is studying British methods of Administration, with a view to adopting similar institutions in the German Colonies.]

**SUNDAY'S**  
A full edition is always published on Sunday, and is sent to all subscribers free of charge. The paper is published by the Proprietor, Messrs. J. & F. Smith, Ltd., 10, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C. 4.

**Passing Paper**  
Every man, a word with you, that you have got to give your mind to an important question. Do not let your mind be taken up with the things of the world, but let it be taken up with the things of the spirit. Let it be taken up with the things of the future, and you will find that the things of the present will be of no account to you.

When the sun is shining out, and the birds are singing in the trees, and the flowers are blooming in the fields, and the children are playing in the streets, and the old people are sitting on the benches, and the young people are walking in the parks, and the whole world is full of life and joy, and the heart is glad, and the soul is at peace, and the mind is clear, and the spirit is free, and the whole world is a garden of Eden, and the whole world is a city of God, and the whole world is a kingdom of heaven, and the whole world is a land of milk and honey, and the whole world is a land of peace and love, and the whole world is a land of righteousness and truth, and the whole world is a land of life and hope, and the whole world is a land of glory and honor, and the whole world is a land of power and majesty, and the whole world is a land of wisdom and knowledge, and the whole world is a land of beauty and grace, and the whole world is a land of goodness and kindness, and the whole world is a land of mercy and compassion, and the whole world is a land of forgiveness and pardon, and the whole world is a land of redemption and salvation, and the whole world is a land of eternal life and happiness, and the whole world is a land of glory and honor, and the whole world is a land of power and majesty, and the whole world is a land of wisdom and knowledge, and the whole world is a land of beauty and grace, and the whole world is a land of goodness and kindness, and the whole world is a land of mercy and compassion, and the whole world is a land of forgiveness and pardon, and the whole world is a land of redemption and salvation, and the whole world is a land of eternal life and happiness.

## Appendix C:

The threat of blacks on white women was often presented in terms of the "black peril," *Sunday Times*, June 21, 1908, p.7

He was sentenced by Mr. Justice Smith to eight years' hard labour for attempted assault and robbery, the charge of attempted murder being mitigated.

During the period of his imprisonment, McCallum has been in poor health, and has spent the greater portion of his time in the hospital.

The other day he was warned that his mind was approaching. He expressed a desire to make a confession. Speaking with great earnestness in spite of his weakness, he declared that he and Razors had been the culprits in the Denver bank robbery. He was able to give many details which proved the truth of his statement.

We understand that it is not the intention of the authorities that this statement should be published. Perhaps their decision is in the public interest. It is not exactly desirable that potential criminals should learn how easily they may evade arrest in this country.

### Civil Servant's Windfall,

#### Lucky Potchefstroom Resident

(From Our Own Correspondent).

Potchefstroom, Saturday.

## The Black Peril.

### Deputation to Pretoria.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

Pretoria, Saturday.

A deputation of Reef Mayors, Mr. Councillor Lane of Johannesburg, and Colonel Bettington, of the Rand Pioneers, waited on the Attorney-General today, and had an important conversation in regard to the taking of measures to reduce the number of assaults by natives on white women. The views set forward were that all cases of this nature should be tried by a jury, that the cat should be re-instituted as the instrument of punishment in place of the cane, in the case of attempts, and that capital punishment for serious offences should be awarded.

The Attorney-General appeared to be in agreement with the deputation to a great extent, and promised that the matter would receive the serious attention of the Government.

Another point raised by Col. Bettington was that the C.I.D. should do their utmost to prevent the employment of natives in houses of doubtful repute, where they would be likely to lose their respect for white women.

living in the same buildings, that Smith had insulted the girl, and refused to marry her.

So you have been listening to tales?—No, you have been listening to tales. (Laughter.)

As a matter of fact the accused asked your consent to the marriage?—No, he did not.

What subterfuge did you use to get the accused in from Germiston?—None at all.

Did not you give them to understand that if they would come into town you would consent to their marriage?—No.

How long have you known the accused?—Eight months.

When your daughter came back to town you told her to clear out again?—No, she suggested herself that she would go to Joppes because she was afraid I would

#### GIVE HER A GOOD HIDING.

The Magistrate: Was there any cause for her to be afraid?—No.

Where is she now?—She's here.

Living at your house?—Yes.

Did your wife not tell you of your daughter's whereabouts when she received the letter from her?—Yes, the letter gave us to understand that she was working at Hospital Hill. Florence has since confessed that at the time she wrote the letter she was in Pretoria. The letter was sent to a friend of hers in town to post.

Florence Fisher was the next witness. She stated that she had left home entirely of her own accord. She went to Pretoria quite alone, and met Smith by appointment on the station platform. Smith took her to the Roma Hotel, and



**Appendix D:** Graphic representation to illustrate the story of a woman defending her family against an alleged intruder, whom readers are informed, was shot dead. In his left pocket is a bottle of "dop" or alcohol, reinforcing the notion of a character of ill repute. The actual story (attached at bottom of page) amounted to just over one paragraph. *Sunday Times*, February 5, 1911, p.1

# Sunday Times

A PAPER FOR THE PEOPLE

Vol. V.—No. 202.      [THIRTY PAGES]      JOHANNESBURG, TRANSVAAL, FEBRUARY 5, 1911.      [THIRTY PAGES]      [Price 1/6]

**ADVERTISING**

By day and night "Sunday Times" is the best medium for advertising in Johannesburg and the Transvaal.

Apply to the Editor, "Sunday Times," Johannesburg.



**THE CHURCH DOES A GOLDEN DEED**

What a glorious deed it is that the church has done in Johannesburg, in the person of Mrs. Thomson, who has saved her family from the hands of a native intruder. The church has done a golden deed in the person of Mrs. Thomson, who has saved her family from the hands of a native intruder.

**THE ONLY WAY.**

Mrs. Thomson, of Rhodesia, as will be seen on page seven, shot a native dead who attempted to lay violent hands upon her.

Bulawayo, Saturday.

The "Chronicle" this morning received a wire from Mr. V. R. Jameson, manager of the Penhalonga Mine, stating that Mrs. Thomson, a resident there, was the victim of an attempted rape last night by a native.

The assailant was shot dead by her hand.

## Appendix E:

Editorial condemning Afrikaans newspapers for supporting Germany during World War II, whilst supporting extremist groups fomenting domestic violence in support of the Nazis. *Sunday Times*, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 1942

### ***Cowardly Attacks on the British Soldier***

**O**PPPOSITION newspapers and politicians who only a few weeks ago were prophesying Russia's crushing defeat and stating that General Smuts had rushed in a panic to London to prevent peace have found it hard to accommodate themselves to the dramatic events in North Africa.

*Die Volksblad* vainly hopes that, if Rommel gets reinforcements from Russia and the Balkans, "he can turn the whole position in Libya against the Allies as he has repeatedly done in the past," but it admits the "far-reaching significance" of the American invasion. *Die Vaderland* describes the Anglo-American move as "the establishment of a crescent of iron round the iron bloc which Hitler has brought into being in Europe." *Die Transvaler's* review is a scathing criticism of Italy, "the weakest link in the Axis." This paper, which once sheltered the Ossewa-Brandwag but now attacks "Commandant-General" van Rensburg, hopefully remarks that Japan "might launch a big offensive, under pressure of its partners, to ease the strain on Germany and Italy."

*Nowhere in the columns which once praised Rommel does one find a tribute to the Eighth Army or the First Springbok Division which is largely composed of Afrikaners.*



That omission does not surprise us very much, since fair-mindedness and the sporting spirit have long been conspicuous by their absence from the Opposition newspapers. What does concern us is the despicable attacks which some of these newspapers are making on the British soldier. They are, of course, taking their cue from the guttersnipes of Zeesen who have picked on one isolated incident to defame the British soldier.

*Tommy Atkins shares with the Springbok and the New Zealander the distinction of being the most modest and best-behaved soldier in the world. His chivalry matches his courage. South Africa has had the privilege of entertaining thousands of them—and it is a privilege, because the British soldier whom the Nationalist Press is maligning goes north to fight for our homeland as well as his own—and keenly resents the foul attacks which are made on them by Nazi-worshipping writers in the Opposition Press.*

Major van der Byl expressed this strong resentment in a speech at Nigel last night. As he remarked, "it ill becomes those who are not doing a hand's turn to defend their own country to insult and throw mud at gallant men who, with our own fine sons, are in the forefront of our battles."

The Opposition Press should heed the Minister's warning. South Africans do not mind how the Opposition newspapers worm themselves out of the morass of their own political prejudice, but they are not in the mood to tolerate cowardly calumnies against our guests, the British soldiers.

Appendix F:

Coverage of the Rivonia trial involving Nelson Mandela. Sunday Times, June 14, 1964, p.1

**SPECIAL CLEARANCE OF ODDMENTS**  
 Men's FLORESHEIM Shoes  
 SPECIAL PRICE: **£9 95** PAIR  
 ONLY AT **Catberb's** OF BLOF STREET

# Sunday Times

Price 6d  
 Published daily except on public holidays  
 THE PAPER FOR THE PEOPLE

**NEW STOCKS ARRIVED**  
 Men's Genuine **MUSH RUPPIES**  
 SEE THEM AT **Catberb's** OF BLOF STREET

Lieut. Van Wyk's moment of decision at Lillieleaf Farm... then... "Ons slaan toe!" (Let's get cracking!)

## RIVONIA: THE INSIDE STORY

**Gen. Van den Bergh and Dr. Yutar comment on S.A.'s historic trial**

RIVONIA WIFE



**SOUTH AFRICA'S** most historic trial since the Jameson Raid ended on Friday when eight plotters were sent to jail for life at the end of the sensational Rivonia affair.

The sentencing of Nelson Mandela and his collaborators was the climax in a story of intrigue, treason, muddle, money-fiddling, betrayal and brilliant detective work.

The SUNDAY TIMES tells the inside story, gathered by its Chief Reporter, Corel Birky, in exclusive interviews with Major-General R. J. van den Bergh, Deputy Commissioner of Police in command of the country's entire detective force, Dr. Percy Yutar, Deputy Attorney-General of the Transvaal, who prosecuted in the trial, and many others who were concerned in the investigation.

By **CAROL BIRKY**  
 SUNDAY TIMES CHIEF REPORTER

**THE** Rivonia trial, the last chapter in a fantastic tale of detection, is officially regarded as the smashing of organised subversion in South Africa—but Major-General R. J. van den Bergh, Deputy Commissioner of Police in command of the C.I.D., though gratified, still strikes a warning note.

In an exclusive interview in Pretoria after the trial, General Van den Bergh told me: "The police have not taken up the view that these communists—for that is what they all are—can be looked on as finished."

"Should remnants try to regroup, we will try to adopt suitable countermeasures."

"It is as though you arrested a gang of burglars... There must be some possibility of their being reformed."

"The Rivonia raid took place on July 11 last year, and I myself led the forces on July 12 in connection with the investigation into the case."

"Personally I am on the conservative side and don't want to make extravagant claims. But I can say that they have been dealt a severe blow."

"The case in its final shape was in charge of the detailed work of the men, and a big job. But a large number of detectives were involved, and of excellent quality."

"The big moment in the investigation was when Lieut. Van Wyk's moment of decision at Lillieleaf Farm... then... 'Ons slaan toe!' (Let's get cracking!)"



A smiling Lieut. Bernstein on his honeymoon—with his wife, daughter Toni and son-in-law Isaac Strassberg.

**Bernstein, on R2,000 bail, back under house arrest**

**SUNDAY TIMES REPORTER**

**RELEASED** on bail of R2,000 yesterday after 11 months in prison, Lieut. "Rusty" Bernstein yesterday greeted his wife and eldest daughter, Toni, at the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court—and then, his bail paid left for a "bliss-disturb" family reunion.

Bernstein, who was acquitted on all charges in the Rivonia trial, was in court yesterday to be understood that Mrs Bernstein had brought R2,000 with her to court to pay towards the bail if it were granted. The other R2,000 was raised "where about in prison."

Conditions of house arrest still proved.

After the court adjourned Bernstein stayed on the veranda outside the court room with his daughter, son-in-law and brother-in-law wife Heidi, and daughter-in-law Mrs. V. C. Berman, with his son, Isaac Strassberg, and Mrs. Toni Strassberg, appeared for the first time in the public.

**Rivonia Q.C.'s wife killed in crash**

**Braam Fischer shaken, unhurt**

**SUNDAY TIMES REPORTERS**

**MRS. MOLLY FISCHER**, wife of Mr. Abraham Fischer, Q.C., senior Defence Counsel in the Rivonia Trial which ended in Pretoria on Friday, was killed in a car accident on the Sand River Bridge near Winburg in the Free State last night.

Mr. Fischer was very badly shaken, but not seriously hurt.

Mrs. Elizabeth Levin, also a friend of the Fischer's daughter, was also in the car, but she escaped serious injury.

Mr. and Mrs. Fischer were travelling to Cape Town for the first anniversary of their daughter's death, who is a student at the University of London.



An accident on Sand River Bridge, near Winburg, killed Mrs. Toni Strassberg.

**U.P. OPPOSES**

**Police guard S.A. House**

**SUNDAY TIMES Correspondent**

**LONDON**, Saturday.—PARLIAMENTARIANS against the 100-anniversary for Nelson Mandela.





Appendix H:

Coverage of the riots in Soweto, was criticized in the newspaper's centenary edition 30 years later. *Sunday Times*, June 20, 1976, p.1

# Sunday Times

11000  
**COUNTDOWN TO CHAOS**

JUNE 20, 1976

THE PAPER FOR THE PEOPLE

PRICE 25c

# NOW THE CALM

Photo by WHELAN/REUTERS

## R20 000 FOR RIOT VICTIMS

**MR. JAMES BIYEMBA**, one of the 1000 victims of the riots, is seen in a hospital ward. He is one of the many who have been injured in the riots.

## THERE WAS a blanket of calm over the Reef's rich townships yesterday.

And for the first time since the riots, there was a sense of calm over the Reef's rich townships yesterday. The blanket of calm was broken only by the sound of gunfire from the townships.

## But the threat of famine is looming

But the threat of famine is looming. The supply of food is running low in the townships. The supply of food is running low in the townships.

As the riots spread, the Minister of Justice, Mr. J. G. Kruger, called for peace in both sides. He said the message was "Accept the good faith of whites".

## Appendix I:

“Guns of Gaborone,” a sensational headline depicting a cross-border raid on the ANC, but in actuality civilians were killed. *Sunday Times*, June 16, 1985

**ANC was ready to strike today ... so Army struck first**

# THE GUNS OF GABORONE!



**DRAMATIC REPORTS AND PICTURES: PAGES 2 and 3**

**Our black-and-white wedding!**



**By STEPHAN TERBLANCHE**  
**THE SADF'S lightning raid on Gaborone was a pre-emptive strike to head off a series of ANC terror attacks scheduled to start in South Africa today.**  
 The terror campaign was planned to coincide with a 10-day international conference of the ANC at a secret venue somewhere in Africa.  
 The Government was alerted by painstaking undercover surveillance, interception of communications and infiltration of the ANC by South African intelligence agencies.  
 The grenade attacks this week on Mr Luwellyn Landers, deputy Minister-designate, and another coloured MP in Cape Town, were the first shots in the ANC campaign.

**Meticulous**  
 The Government acted swiftly to implement meticulous plans which had been prepared for just such an eventuality.  
 And so, in the early hours of Friday morning, they unleashed the guns of Gaborone.  
 The raid — which had no specific code name — was executed as a joint operation between the South African Defence Force and the Security Police soon after midnight.  
 Twelve people were killed and six wounded as SADF commandos blasted 10 targets in the swift, precisely-executed operation.  
 South African intelligence agencies have acquired what one source has described as “a treasure trove” of documents as a result of the raid. Already the documents have enabled the Security



**R75 000 bail for Levine and son**  
**By NEIL HOOPER**  
 MR Eli Levine, proof Kruggerand dealer and former head of the provisionally sequestered South African Gold Coin Exchange, and his son, Len, have been released on bail of R75 000 each.  
 They were arrested on Friday for the alleged theft of gold coins worth R248 000, and appeared in court briefly where they were granted bail on condition that they surrendered their passports.  
 “We considered it prudent to arrest them so that we could get hold of their passports,” the head of the Witwatersrand Commercial Branch, Colonel Nolke Hulme, said yesterday.

**Fight**  
 He said that Mr Levine and his son, also a SAGCE director, would appear in court again tomorrow.  
 Mr Levine said: “Obviously we will fight the charges. Colonel Hulme said that the theft charges were part of a ‘far larger police investigation.’”  
 The SAGCE, the world's biggest dealer in proof Kruggerands, was placed un-

**U.S. hit squad set to ‘punish’ Iran**  
**By IAN HOBBS and RAY JOSEPH: London**

Wreckage after the raid ... a Gaborone house

### LEAD STORY EXERT:

By STEPHAN TERBLANCHE

THE SADF'S lightning raid on Gaborone was a pre-emptive strike to head off a series of ANC terror attacks scheduled to start in South Africa today. The terror campaign was planned to coincide with a 10-day international conference of the ANC at a secret venue somewhere in Africa. The Government was alerted by painstaking undercover surveillance, interception of communications and infiltration of the ANC by South African intelligence agencies. The grenade attacks this week on Mr Luwellyn Landers, deputy Minister-designate, and another coloured MP in Cape Town, were the first shots in the ANC campaign. The Government acted swiftly to implement meticulous plans which had been prepared for just such an eventuality. And so, in the early hours of Friday morning, they unleashed the guns of Gaborone. The raid — which had no specific code name — was executed as a joint operation between the South African Defence Force and the Security Police soon after midnight. Twelve people were killed and six wounded as SADF commandos blasted 10 targets in the swift, precisely-executed operation.

## Appendix J

Right-wing members of the AWB, who traveled in convoy to the homeland of Bophuthatswana in 1994. They hoped to help homeland leader Lucas Mangope quell an uprising by protestors. Three AWB supporters were shot by the Bop soldier holding the rifle. He resented their interference in the homeland's affairs.



*Picture courtesy of Cobus Bodenstein*

## Appendix K:

### Interviews with respondents

1. Interview with Victor Khupiso, March 14, 2009 (Age 48 and worked at ST for 20 years)

Q: How did you come to work at the Sunday Times?

A: It was in 1987 and I was still a matric<sup>27</sup> student in Soweto. I was still in matric and my mother who was a domestic worker bought me a camera. My camera turned out to be very handy. In many respects, the camera was my visor through which I managed to land this opportunity to work for the Sunday Times. I would say that I was very much fortunate because from the townships no one could understand that something could come out from the townships. Because you know townships, crime and there are no opportunities. Those days being black and the big breakthrough came during my time at school when there were student protests. One of those protests turned violent and the police responded by firing live shots at protesting students, killing one of them. Fearing further violence protests, police issued an order stating that only 10 people could attend the funeral but students decided to defy the order. Police arrived at the funeral and were met by angry students who protested their (incomprehensible) with stones. I was in the middle of the scene and fortunately I had brought my camera along. As the violence erupted, I captured the moment. The images were so good I decided to take them to the Sunday Times. I entered the Sunday Times offices that day. I managed to convince the paper to publish my pictures. This was the time that I started visiting the Sunday Times, checking and seeing how they write stories. I decided to start writing stories instead of taking pictures because I felt that interested in writing.

During my time there, I witness the newspaper evolve. During those days of which I visited the Sunday Times, the paper was, like the country itself – racist in many respects. During those days, black reporters like me were not even allowed to report on political issues of the country. Political reporting was only reserved for white reporters. We were not writing for the main section of the paper. They decided we should write for a black supplement that was basically for black people. Black reporters were assigned to do stories about witchcraft and crime stories in the black townships. We were not allowed to interview white people. This was done only by white reporters, whilst they were allowed to interview black people. White reporters were allowed to interview black people, but black reporters were not allowed to interview white people.

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<sup>27</sup> A final year of high school



The environment in the newsroom was not welcoming because we were divided according to class or race. Everything was based on race. In the office, we were banned from, we were barred from sitting together. There was no relationship between white and black. Even if one was doing the very same story with a white reporter, we were not allowed to travel together on assignment. We'd use different cars. There were also chairs for black and white reporters. It was considered do be a serious offence if one was found sitting on a chair designated for a white reporter. Black journalists were also not given positions of responsibility. Black journalists who complained were fired or forced to resign. Also what I've discovered those days was that white reporters were also paid much more than their black counterparts regardless of skills and qualification. The situation remained for much of the time as I was at the Sunday Times, however things started to show some improvement in the early 90's. In 1994, following the dawn of democracy in South Africa, a lot change of change [took place] in the newsroom, but there were still those challenges. The issue of color is still yet to be resolved completely. Most stories now, what I'm thinking about now, most stories from the townships are still being done by black reporters. Stories about crime in the townships are still being done black. For example, if a white person becomes a victim of crime, the story will make headlines, while a similar story involving black people, is not given, is not sometimes even used in the paper. Even if it is used, it will be used [in] brief, it won't be given the space of a white person. This in my view creates a wrong impression that black life is worthless than that of white people. We've come a long way, but black people, we've come a long way as a nation. Some of our black people have got higher positions at work, but they don't have responsibility of uplifting one another. What is happening, they could even be stabbing each other in the back. I think that they are in that position, they must also contribute to help those people, you know the poor, but instead they are reluctant to assist fellow blacks.

Q: When did you joined the newspaper and who was your editor?

A: My editor was Tertius Myburgh. He was the one who was the chief editor of the Sunday Times. Well, he was a racist but he had that soft, you know. If you respect him, you give him that space, he would want to prove you wrong. So I think that helped a lot because I was also, I didn't question him. I never questioned him. He would tell us to do this, we'd just do it. He was a racist. He was a racist.

Q: When you were at the newspaper, you were talking about all those issues of racism in the office. Was that still in 1987?

A: 1987, different years, 87, 89 somewhere there.

Q: Do you think he could have changed the system to make things equal in the newsroom for everyone?

A: I don't think that he would do that, because it was apartheid. It was the law of the land to segregate people according to race.

Q: He hired you though?

A: I was the last person he hired before he died. I was the last person before he resigned and shortly after he passed on.

Q: After him it was Ken Owen?

A: After him Ken Owen took over.

Q: What was he like?

A: He wasn't like Tertius Myburgh. I'd say he was moderate. I remember one time we were together, he'd ask how is life in the township. He'd ask me about my family. Tertius never did that. It was impossible for a white person to ask you about your family and how's things at home, your life in general.

Q: Now when Ken Owen came in, did he change things in the office? Did he not change things? Did he do anything to do away with racism in the office or in the reporting of issues?

A: Ja, he did a lot. He did a lot because when he took over, we could use one car with a white reporter to go together. There was one time when there was shooting in Soweto between the soldiers and police who were mistaking each other for guerilla terrorists, so I went there with a white reporter. We were together. He was driving. I was sitting on the front seat. For the first time in my life after Ken Owen took over. In the office things were just moderate. He was trying his best to make things better for everyone.

Q: So he made a difference?

A: Ja, its true. And also what he did, he tried to do away with the supplement of "Extra." It was designed for black people. He also tried that. He was a moderate. He wasn't a racist as his predecessor.

Q: And then after Ken, there was a temporary change?

A: After Ken, Brian Pottinger took over. He was another character. It's difficult to know that guy because he was always quiet and he had a funny way of doing his things. Now that Ken Owen had paved the way for him, he just followed Ken Owen footsteps. What he did Ken Owen, he used to fit together black and white and when Brian Pottinger took over, he found that the situation was already there, but the plane was already landed. So it wasn't difficult for him to take over.

Q: And then he left, and Matatha?

A: It was Mike Robertson. Mike Robertson who is now the CEO of Avusa.

Q: What was it like under Mike?

A: Well that man, he was full of hatred because during the apartheid. He is now our CEO, but during the apartheid, that man was white. He only became black after 1994. All along he elected people. Even now, he doesn't like black people. He doesn't greet people. People have complained about his attitude. He doesn't greet people. He's white. He doesn't have time for black people.

He was white. We considered him white. All along we knew him as a white person. We were surprised to hear him say that he was the first black editor. We were all shocked and surprised. How come. All along during the apartheid, he was enjoying the benefits. He was white. Even now, he is also the same. He plays white. He doesn't care about other people.

Q: Did he bring any change in terms of approaches?

A: No he never. He suppressed black people stories from the townships. As it is now, he is in charge of the paper. He is now the CEO of paper. His sister is the deputy editor. So they don't want anything from the townships. Anything that is from the townships, they don't want it. In fact, the boss he doesn't care about the welfare of the people on the ground.

Q: I heard somebody else, whom I interviewed that when Mike came in, he brought more a case of stories of identifying with the people etc?

A: I totally disagree. I totally disagree. It's not true. Truth of the matter is that that man was a white person during the apartheid and he changes just because black power, so that he can benefit in the democracy now he's white. If this country can be taken by white people, he would change now he's white.

Q: What was it like working under Matatha?

A: When he came in there, what he did first thing was that he changed our salaries and equaled them to a white person. People didn't like him for that. He changed our salaries and I would say he was a good editor because he was the one who came with these issues, bread and butter issues. Black people were given prominence. It's Matatha who brought that in.

Q: Some people would say that he's a racist, that he didn't like white people, that he was trying to change the paper and bring more of an Africanist approach?

A: No they didn't like him because it was a political thing. Mathata belonged to this organization, hard-line organization the PAC<sup>28</sup> – all those people who don't like white people. He didn't like white people. That was his downfall, but he was a good editor.

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<sup>28</sup> Pan Africanist Congress, a black consciousness organization

Q: My study is about news values. What would you say were the news values the newspapers followed under apartheid.

A: I would say, nothing much has changed because crime is still crime. But the approach now is totally different because we no longer hear about witchcraft. What is newsworthy now is about xenophobia because shortly after the incident of Mozambicans being attacked on the East Rand, I'm the only guy who identified that guy from Ramaphosa squatter camp. He was the biggest guy burnt alive whose pictures appeared all over the world. I'm the only reporter who went and traced his brother, his brother-in-law who was attacked but survived the incident. He was in hospital hiding. I managed to get through that hospital and after that I interviewed a group of youngsters from the same area who were raiding foreigners. I'm the one who interviewed those boys, I spent the night with them. They were raiding shebeens and shacks searching out foreigners. I'm the one who went around and that story was published around the world. I think the issue here in South Africa is xenophobia.

Q: How long did you spend at the paper?

A: In January 2010, I'll be 20 years at the Sunday Times. I'm 48.

I don't have a problem with white people, because they are the ones who made me what I am today. I prefer them more than my black brothers.

Q: Tell me about those values again.

A: Witchcraft. Crime in townships. Under Tertius.

Q: After 1994, what kind of stories were being followed?

A: We had stories following the top guys in the ANC. That was the main focus now. Corruption, all those kinds of stories. They shifted from apartheid to target individual ministers in government, brutalize them, like corruption. That was never done before. You never questioned Pik Botha of P.W. Botha about his private life, but after democracy the ministers are the main focus.

Q: Is that a good thing or bad thing?

A: I think it's a bad thing. Your private life is your private life. I have no problem with [exposing] corruption, but private life is your private life

Q: What did you think of that inquiry of racism in Sunday Times?

A: The very same people who were there during apartheid, they're still in charge. They were enjoying the fruits of apartheid. The very same white people, so they were definitely targeting black people.



2. Interview with Charlotte Bauer by telephone Feb 9, 2009 (21 mins)

Q: You made a concerted decision not to join the Sunday Times before 1994, when apartheid was still in force? Why was that?

A: I was working at this newspaper, the Mail and Guardian, which used to be called the Weekly Mail in the 1980s and early 90s it was called the Weekly Mail. The Weekly Mail was then a sort of a left-wing, strugglista newspaper, very sort of pro-ANC, even though the ANC was banned then. From that point of view, I guess people who joined the Weekly Mail and I'm a founder member would have had a problem with the mainstream South African media then, which was entirely white-owned, white-run, white-point-of-view. The Sunday Times would have been the biggest, most powerful, most tangible example of mainstream print media. It would't have crossed people like mine's mind to go and work there.

Q: And that obviously goes to your own political beliefs, which are?

A: That I believe in justice and non-racism. You know I'm really not a great big political head or thinker. I would be arts editor at the Weekly Mail, but in those days, everything was political. A piece of theatre that meant anything that would get banned, was something political, so I just have this sense of injustice about what was going down in this country as probably most reasonable people did.

Q: But you did join the Sunday Times, just tell me in what year was that and why?

A: That was 1995, so the year after the transition to democracy. Why? Because by 1995 if you weren't an über-activists person, which I never was and am not, freedom that 1994 brought, brought freedom in unexpected ways to previously advantaged white middle-class people like me, and that was freedom to make more personal choices, choices based on ordinary personal desires and values. You know the grand stage of good and evil era had shifted. So one could go back to being an ordinary small cameo, walk-on, walk-off, bit-part person and just make choices and decisions about your life, obviously with some informing integrity and ethics as one does. So I had been at the Weekly Mail, as it was then called, for 10 years, it proved long enough. Not because anything went bad, just because you know I needed to leave home. I made a decision to change jobs. I was at that time offered an amazing job at The Sunday Times for three times my salary. And at that point, The Sunday Times was reinventing itself quite, without a sense of humor, as "no, no we still going to be a paper for the people, it's just different people and indeed they made a seamless and unblushing transition.

Q: In the time that you worked there, would you say the values they espoused, I know The Sunday Times at one point, was sort-of really racist when it first started out.

A: I'm not a person who thinks in the abstract. I'm sure they were and I actually did a project for the Sunday Times for the last two years there and it was fascinating and it was to mark their centenary. So me and my team went into the history of the paper quite extensively in order to come up with a heritage project which both spoke to the past and some of the stellar newsmakers and news moments in our past – political, artistic, sporting etc., and we found a very interesting thing. We did quite deep research on the stories and the characters over a hundred years of Sunday Times history that we wanted to memorialize. And The Sunday Times was our least helpful primary source. We were looking back on a 100 years of history from the point of view of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Sunday Times. So a lot of characters we identified as wanting to memorialize, wouldn't have been written about by The Sunday Times, or only in the most scathing terms. George Pemba, the painter. He was part of this heritage project we did. I mean The Sunday Times wouldn't have given him house room in 1947. In 1947 their art critic wrote there is a disturbing trend to take black art seriously.

Q: I think the Sunday Times changed since then and that was probably informed by your decision to join them when you did.

A: In 1995, everything was up for grabs and everything was open and every space was an opportunity to change and transform and the same rules of non-engagement no longer applied. What did you do before 1994 if your talents and ambitions lay in broadcast TV journalism in South Africa? There was too many places to go right? After that you could respond as a normal professional.

Q: You're back at the Mail and Guardian, was there any change of heart from working at The Sunday Times? Was there anything in particular, the values you hoped they followed weren't what you thought?

A: No, I wouldn't actually be able to say that about The Sunday Times in particular. As I say by my last tranche of work at The Sunday Times was this particular project for them which took two-and-a-half years and I was contracted to do, so basically the project ended, the project ended. So no, I didn't leave there because I had issues or they did with news values or anything else.

Q: The values of freedom of expression, opposition to government  
You don't believe the ST or the Mail and Guardian had a racist agenda in terms of how they portrayed blacks in private and public life?

No I don't. I'm very wary of making up other people's minds for them in terms of perceptions. It would be difficult for me to perceive subliminal racism as a white person in the way that it's meant, but I wouldn't deny that somebody else isn't entitled to that perception. What I can say and what I do feel is that say the Sunday Times for example, were a newspaper, is essentially published, run, edited by black people if we're going to be that crude about it and that direct, I mean there's racism everywhere in this country as in the world. What goes on in people's heads doesn't necessarily come out of their mouths, so that's like a woo-woo area that you can debate forever, but I'm not sure if

you'll ever know, because I don't think there's a truth. But I do find that generally in media, there's the same old, same old blame the legacy of racism, blame the legacy of apartheid when there is real change and transformation in ownership and editorship of major news organizations, cannot hold in the same way as it was meant or held 20 years ago or 50 years ago.

Q: Are you happy with either The Sunday Times or the Mail and Guardian in a post-apartheid scenario that they're fulfilling the role they ought to be or that there should be more things they should be looking at?.

A: The changing news values that I noticed having been a journalist, a columnist, and an editor for 20-plus years here ... is not so much about race, politics or kind of that sort of political transformation, or lack of it which you're talking about although I'm sure that always come into the picture. But news values – The Sunday Times or M & G, I noticed the news values are slipping in terms of, yeah, getting journalists calling me and asking for information on a text message. That bothers me. The Sunday Times heritage project that I worked, it caused a lot of interest in other journalistic worlds and academic worlds and I often get sent a one-line email from wherever saying “tell me all about this project, and I'm like saying sorry, excuse me, you got to do better than that.” And I find that quite a lot on ... go and get off your arse and out the office and go and talk to people and try and do it on the telephone and even just an email. I find an abstraction and a disengagement from the kind of gritty, coal-fed of real life and real people and real issues among journalists now.

Q: Harvey Tyson once spoke about truth, tolerance, freedom and fairness as values journalists should strive towards and freedom I think in terms of ensuring a free press and a free society and a new government might be saying can the press move along with us and report on more developmental issues rather than being so critical. And so I'm trying to figure out if there is this new change and if the media are in fact meeting it or it might well be that the values haven't changed.

A: I'm just not a person who takes a very broad view. I think journalists do have more freedom than we've ever had. I think that tension between government and media is good, it's natural, it's normal. We keep them on their toes, they keep us on our toes. That pressure's good. I do remember the days before when you did have security police coming into your newspaper office on deadline and saying taking that out. I just don't think that is debatable. Do we have more freedom in our jobs now? Yes. Are we doing them as well as we could, should, would? Probably not, but I think different newspapers, different strokes. The Mail and Guardian is quite a serious newspaper often got the tag of being an ngo-type newspaper. We run a lot of development stories. The Sunday Times is a mass-market, popular newspaper. I think the Sunday Times often deals with very interesting, very serious and profound issues, but they tend to do it in a sort of poppy, bullet-point styled way, so people don't generally buy newspapers on a Sunday morning in order to read through, sort of, footnotes. We are the popular media. I'm not saying we always get it right or we're always fair. In fact today, I'm feeling quite ashamed of being a journalist because you may or may not know, the so-called, young, 24-year-old

pregnant mistress of the president Kgamaela Motlanthe turned out to be either some sad, sick person or a hoax or a conspiracy and we all jumped onto that story as if it was gospel, as if it was true, as if it was proved. And it wasn't.

Q: And I guess it adds to the Land Bank scandals that the Sunday Times has gotten wrong.

A: They've been proved wanting. And I think going back to what I was saying not interrogating stories properly, not showing requisite enthusiasm and dedication to, you know don't ask five people, ask 25 people. Make sure, make triple sure and I think this is a really good example of a failed news value and I would not say oh that's a post-apartheid thing or a pre-apartheid thing. I actually have no idea. I'm sure it's not unprecedented in the history of the media that that kind of fast and loose stuff has happened, but that thing like oh if The Star newspaper ran it and said it's true, then we'll just all assume it's true and we'll run a comment and analysis column and say this is outrageous in an editorial. I mean like we all just assumed it was true. So the newspaper that started the ball rolling by not checking their facts, are they anymore to blame than we are who may not have run it as a news story ... but hey we had fun with it in the comments section. That's lazy, that's bad. So next time we go kind of hell for leather to take down some corrupt kind of leader or politician, in a way it's like well, when the ANC comes back and says you guys just want to bring us down, well you can sort of hear where they're coming from because we shucked up. Thirty years ago, we wouldn't have got away with it. Men with guns would have been sent in to stop it. From my point of view, the government is pretty tolerant and it's a shame that some of their defensiveness is possibly our fault.

### 3. Interview with Eric Louw via email 30 November 2008

First of all you have to define your terms. In apartheid South Africa there were three different sets of journalistic values = (1) (Centrist) liberal (Argus and SAAN) (2) (Conservative) social responsibility (NasPERS & Perskor) and (3) Left (influenced by Marxist activism idea) (Alternative press). One might see Weekly Mail as a fourth category = Social democrat (hybridizing liberal and activists approaches).

Sunday Times was in the liberal camp.

Liberal camp = opposed to government interference in economy, society and media. This is why they opposed National Party (NP) i.e. apartheid was illiberal because it represented government interference into economy, society and media. Liberal camp wanted an uncensored media that could act as a fourth estate watchdog (to monitor and check up on government).

However, Sunday Times newsroom was dominated by English-speaking white liberals.

English-speaking white liberals had a tendency to see themselves as ethnically superior

to all other South Africans (better than non-whites and better than Afrikaners) and politically superior because liberalism was seen as better than afrikaner nationalism, black nationalism, socialism and communism (the other main positions in SA politics).

So liberal press had a tone of superiority, a sort of haughty frustrated tone of why can't all these other people be sensible like we white liberals?

But during the 1980s these white liberals began to fear the communists (ANC total onslaught, terrorists, etcetera) more than they disliked the NP (especially once the NP began to liberalize itself. I think this generated some self censorship when it came to reporting ANC/UDF/the struggle because these were seen to be part of the total onslaught/terrorism.

The Sunday Times wanted what English-speaking white SAfricans wanted = i.e. a liberal-capitalist South Africa (and liberal press) in which white-Anglos could continue to make money and live in their nice suburbs. By the 1980s the total onslaught was seen to be threatening this, and the Boere (who they did not really like ethnically) and NP were seen to be protecting them from total onslaught. Of course this produced self-censorship that clashed with their liberal press freedom ideals (because they reported the terrorists the struggle as bad guys. So although they always criticized NP censorship, their critique of other aspects of NP began to moderate.

Q: In your book, *South African Media Policy: Debates of the 1990s*, former South African newspaper editor Harvey Tyson once listed truth, tolerance, fairness and freedom as values journalists should strive towards. This was obviously taken in a South African context as some Western news groups commonly include negativity (bad news is good news), conflict, timeliness among their prime news values.

What would you say were some of the news values that The Sunday Times subscribed to under apartheid?

A: Their core value = wanting a liberal capitalist South Africa. Anything helping to achieve that was deemed good. Anything detracting from that was deemed bad.

Their second core value = belief in the fourth estate & watchdog notion of the media so they saw themselves as checking up on NP abuse of power.

They opposed government censorship (because it was not liberal).

They opposed apartheid because it was seen as a type of socialism (government interference in the economy, e.g. restricting free movement of black labour).

They opposed terrorism.

They opposed socialism and communism.

They saw black nationalists as potential ALLIES of liberalism if only the alliance

between black nationalists and communists could be broken. (They blamed the NP for this alliance).

So they supported initiatives like the Urban Foundation = creating a black middle class who could become allies with the liberals.

(By the way, let me admit my own biases here. Although I worked for English-liberal press in SA I never really subscribed to liberal watchdog press model. If you want to read my critique of liberal watchdog press model, ask your library to get PE Louw, *The Media and Political Process*, London: Sage).

Q: Do these values still apply in the post-apartheid news environment?

A: Sunday Times are still basically Libs.

They STILL believe in the basic core liberal values of

(1) wanting a liberal capitalist South Africa. Anything helping to achieve that is deemed good. Anything detracting is deemed bad.

(2) belief in the fourth estate & watchdog notion of the media so they see themselves as checking up on ANC abuse of power.

(3) Oppose any government censorship (because it is not liberal).

(4) approve of creating a black middle class.

(This is why they liked the ANC's creation of a patriotic black bourgeoisie.

When the ANC abandoned socialism and became moderate they saw this as a victory for liberalism. However, because they believed in the watchdog idea they saw it as their duty to continue to check up on ANC government.

However, I do think there was a NEW kind of self-censorship in early post-apartheid SA.

Libs came to see the post-socialist ANC as good for liberalism. They recognized the difficulties the ANC faced in stabilizing & governing a very fragile state. Hence I think for a number of years they pulled their punches and almost acted like the old Afrikaans socially responsible press in helping to stabilize the government.

However, once they came to believe the ANC were not governing very well (i.e. not securing conditions for liberalism) they grew more critical of ANC.

Q: If you believe the same values under apartheid still apply in a democratic dispensation, would you agree with the statement that the advent of democracy has had no bearing whatsoever in shifting the news values of journalists at the newspaper?

A: Basically the same liberal & watchdog values apply under apartheid and post-1994. However, the composition of the newsroom has changed and I think this has introduced more journalists with left values. The result has been a move away from (traditional, liberalism (of white-English journos) to a more social democrat liberalism.

Q: If you believe the values have changed, would you ascribe that change to the

transformation to democracy?

A: Yes this has brought about demographic changes to newsrooms which has introduced more lefty views so state interventionism into the economy (not a very liberal position) is now more mainstream.

Q: My first question dealt with whether restrictions under apartheid conflicted with the values of journalists. Under a new dispensation, do you see any conflict arising from government's agenda and the values of journalists post 1994?

A: In broad terms the Mandela and Mbeki governments behaved in ways liberals found OK. The libs even supported quite a lot of government interference into the economy to create the patriotic black bourgeoisie. However, when ANC government started to sound too much like the old NP (i.e. pushing race-nationalism) then the libs started criticizing them (for being illiberal).

However the backlash (being accused of being racists) produced fear which has led to a new kind of self-censorship (political correctness).

Q: The Sunday Times was one of two newspapers accused by the Black Lawyer's Association and the Association of Black Accountants of South Africa for "subliminal racism" in 1998, following perceived negative coverage of blacks in public office and the private sector. Perhaps the paper would argue that criticism of government is a value they've upheld even under apartheid. But, do you agree that negative coverage amounted to racism?

A: I think the Sunday times was more motivated by pushing liberal values in both apartheid-SA and post-1994.

However, I agree subliminal racism existed.

But I would argue it exists right across the board in SA including with the Black Lawyer's Association and the Association of Black Accountants of South Africa.

The Sunday times in apartheid-SA was dominated by white English journos. If you look at their reporting you see subliminal racism against afrikaners, blacks and coloureds. I think that is still in evidence. But of course the newsroom demographics have shifted, so white-Anglos now have less of an impact on the overall tone of the newspaper.

Interestingly, I think in post-1994 SA it is much easier to ethnically abuse Afrikaners, while being racist towards black guys now carries greater penalties. But, yip, subliminal racism remains a feature of all South Africans.

Q: The South African Human Rights Commission's final report based on the initial complaints by the two black professional bodies states, among other things, that racism exists in the media. Do you subscribe to the belief that The Sunday Times has a "racist

agenda” in its reporting of blacks in public office and the private sector?

No, I don,t think the Sunday times had a racist AGENDA. I do think they had a liberal agenda.

However, I have to say that every time I go home I feel racism has grown (in ALL communities). Black guys think white guys haven,t given enough, and white guys think blacks guys have taken too much. And because it is SA, this sense of being pissed off translates into racism.

And I think English whites have grown increasingly despondent (Afropessimism??) over the years because their dreams of a happy liberal SA have not come to pass. This Afropessimism is evident in SAfrica,s liberal media. But I don,t think it is a planned agenda or conscious blatant racism. It is just frustration that things have not gone according to liberal plans.

Q: Mindful of such criticism against the newspaper, do you believe that this has had any impact on the way the publication covers blacks in the public and private sector?

A: Yes.

I think white South Africans are learning to have a public and a private discourse. They are now fearful of being accused of racism because black guys, after all, have political power. So in public they are careful about what they say. However, their private (in-house „white speak%o) is becoming much more racist than it was under apartheid. Because they are careful about what they say publically, yes this does imply self-censorship which clearly is going to damage the liberal-watchdog model and allow black politicians, black bureaucrats and the Gucci comrades (business-crew) to get away with much more.

In short political correctness will become a new form of self-censorship, which will serve to undermine to liberal watchdog ideals.  
eric

4. Interview with Graeme Addison by email and telephone February 12, 2009

Joined the Sunday Times in 1996 to 1998 as a person doing selections, recruitment and some training.

Q: Talk about the news values at the time – during the time of your training?

EMAIL RESPONSE 1

On balance my view of the Sunday Times during the transition period is that things did change in terms of both recruitment and training, and news values. Brian Pottinger was



the editor as I joined up to run a recruitment drive. I was instructed to find 6-8 black candidates at the top of the journalism school rankings - so I visited about 13 institutions countrywide and interviewed the 10 best in each department of journalism and/or PR and/or marketing & media. This gave me a short list of about 20 from which I selected only half a dozen. I am pleased to say that all of them have gone on to become successful journalists. I could try to find their names and contact details because I am a bit hazy about who and where they are now, but I have come across all of them over the years. The recruitment policy was driven by early black empowerment imperatives. At that time, Cyril Ramaphosa had just become a director of the company – in fact, I think, the Chairman of Natal and thus very powerful within the Sunday Times. I met him on the newsroom floor one day and he looked at me in a funny way as if he had seen me in a former life. He had - I once interviewed him as a freelance writer during the Codesa talks. Pottinger and the Sunday Times insisted the candidates must be black. They were indeed, at least 5 of them, but I made one mistake - a young lady I recruited from Natal Tech turned out to be white after all although she had an Indian-seeming name and looked quite swarthy! I was not about to ask people their race! Pottinger winced, smiled, and accepted it.

The news agenda at the times definitely did change, driven by the same newfound black awareness and feel-good rainbow ideology. If I sound a bit cynical, I am. The fact is that the Sunday Times needed to penetrate the black marketplace and they could see that other papers would do so if they did not. This was before the days of the Daily Sun, but I think City Press was already in the marketplace and pushing hard. So circulation and advertising were strong dynamics for a change in news agendas. The Sunday Times simply adapted its existing popular journalism fare to include more black faces, black lives, black business people and black sportsmen. The shadow of the apartheid press still hung over the Sunday Times in the form of its EXTRA editions for blacks and Indians, and I remember editorial briefings at which it was explained that these were not racial at all, just regional. Everyone took that with the proverbial large dollop of salt because it was obvious that the extras had sprung from Group Areas circulation patterns and that the content of each edition was meant to appeal to ethnic sensibilities. I think this apartheid format still hangs over the Sunday Times although successive editors have done much to integrate news coverage racially. I hope that gives you some insights. Somewhere or other I have a report on my training scheme which I can dig out and perhaps post to you because it was not in electronic format.

Graeme

## EMAIL RESPONSE 2

The conventional answer to this question would be to say the Sunday Times (ST) accepted apartheid censorship and managed the news accordingly. But that is simply not true. The ST carried out numerous investigations into government corruption and mismanagement, and it reflected liberal news values. It also sailed as close to the wind as it could in areas like military and security coverage, where censorship was strict. It highlighted the Angola war fiasco and the 1976-1987 riots and emergencies, with photos

and vivid reports. This was not just "bad news" it was news that South Africans needed to hear. One can't make a comparison with the "bad news" about Africa (Afropessimism) that critics of Western media have made much of. Bad news it may have been, but it was vital to print it.

I don't think much priority was given by the ST to what is today called "developmental journalism" but there were certainly elements of the paper that stepped beyond the boundaries of Western-style news coverage to offer educational and service journalism to readers. I think I can remember educational and literacy supplements being published for schoolgoers who were missing school due to riots, but this was also done by The World so I am not sure if the ST did the same. I personally would have to go back and check through the paper and its supplements to find evidence both of the investigative news and the developmental content. Both were definitely there.

The editors of the time stamped their very different personalities on the paper and drove the news agenda according to their ideas of what would push up circulation. The Sunday Times was the biggest money spinner in the TML stable so it was not surprising that anyone appointed to a senior position knew that readership was everything. This is probably why the editors and their editorial middle management accepted the notion of the "extra" editions for non-white readers, rationalising the strategy as one of "circulation areas" rather than apartheid style coverage. In a sense, the extra editions did provide some developmental impetus to communities because, being in English and targeted specifically at different ethnic groups, these newspapers probably (I speak under correction - would need to check) boosted newspaper circulation amongst previously non-newspaper readers. Joel Mervis, Tertius Myburgh, Ken Owen and finally Brian Pottinger were white South African editors who naturally reflected the news values of their own backgrounds, training, and suburban milieus. But at the same time they were hotly opposed (except maybe Tertius who has been accused of being an apartheid mole) to apartheid in principle and in practice - an indeed a lot of space was devoted to the "bad news" about apartheid's effects on people's lives.

The little girl who was born to a white family but ousted by the white community because she did not pass the "pencil test" was an example of a ST story that had human interest, embarrassed the government politically, and drew attention to the deepset racial attitudes of whites. I don't think you can say the ST failed as a newspaper to reveal both the good and the bad in South African life under apartheid. It had severe limits and was not high-minded in the sense that Harvey Tyson ascribed to The Star. But it mixed the human interest formula with opposition political ideas to mirror society at the level of middle class life. It also contributed to mass awareness and literacy. In some ways it was the forerunner of more popular tabloids today but, unlike them, it had reasonably good quality leader page and op-ed journalism, columnists and editorials, which the modern mass tabloid press lacks.

TELEPHONE RESPONSE TO THE SAME:

I wasn't on the staff of the Sunday Times during the apartheid era. I only joined them in 1996 and I went through 1998 as a person that was doing selections, recruitment and then a bit of training.

During the apartheid era, of course I was a lecturer at Rhodes University and then later on at Technikon Natal. I think it was the late 70s I was at Natal and the early 90s after Mandela's release I was at Technikon Natal. Then I went on to the University of North West, just at the time democracy started in 1994. All through that time, I'd obviously been reading the Sunday Times and I had been training journalists, some of whom went to the Sunday Times. And of course in the apartheid era as I've said to you ... the newspapers in general although they weren't terribly happy with self censorship, more or less accepted – they had to – military censorship. For example during the Angolan War and then also this kind of security censorship that came in with the emergencies and the police control over news because the police had control over areas that journalists wanted to get into. And throughout this era, I think that the values of the press were very much shaped by two things.

First of all by the system of censorship which was a self censorship system where editors were afraid that they might offend the government and that would lead to official censorship so the Newspaper Press Union at that time had imposed its own forms of self censorship. And the second thing I think was basically gate keeping by white sub editors, white editors, people who were generally not themselves victims of apartheid although there were increasing numbers of black journalists on the papers as the 80s went by. So you had these two factors, one was really censorship, the other was social attitudes and I think those two things combined set an agenda for news for most of the press that simply meant that the problems of the country were treated as problems of the black people and that obviously while the government's racial policies were to blame for everything, it wasn't really the fault of capitalism or the fault of business or the way people looked at black people that was causing all the country's problems.

What you had there was a situation where even liberal newspaper editors like The Sunday Times editors said well, you know we'd like to see blacks come up, but it was very patronizing, its was a set of attitudes about the need for education, about the need for civilized standards and so on and I think all of that influenced the agenda for news coverage and that began to change during the mid to late 80s especially I think with the Sullivan Principles<sup>29</sup> that came in and the awareness that South Africa really was a pariah in the world and that liberal standards in the world at large, in the western world certainly didn't fit the liberal standards that were being applied in this country which were really quite restricted to the kind of attitudes I've been talking about.

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<sup>29</sup> Named after the late Rev. Leon. H. Sullivan who developed a framework for guiding US companies with business interests in South Africa to make meaningful contributions towards ending apartheid and promoting human rights and social justices outcomes in the country.

So what happened in the 80s was more and more recruitment and training of black journalists and that resulted in much better coverage and much more awareness of what was going on in black communities, so the agenda began to broaden and instead of seeing black people really as a problem, they began to be seen as people which was actually a refreshing change. They weren't necessarily regarded as equal people, but they certainly now were beginning to come forward as personalities and they had sports clubs and they had choirs and they had events in their communities that everybody else also had in their white communities, so suddenly there was this growing appreciation that these too were South Africans, they were citizens of ours and with the release of Mandela, the dam broke. [telephone reception fades]

What was going on then in the early 90s was a change in the attitudes of people of the ruling establishment and they began to treat black people as real people with their own concerns, their own lives, their own culture and everything. And this was partly driven by the need to expand circulation amongst black communities, black being a catch-all term for everybody that was not white. Previously the Sunday Times had its Extra to get as much circulation as possible out of the various group areas. But it began to dawn on a lot of the editors and their circulation managers that we were moving towards a common society and it was time to maybe integrate the views and involve our news editors and reporters in a much more balanced coverage so with the circulation goals in mind, the agenda for news certainly began to change quite markedly in the late 80s, early 90s. We had this whole rainbow nation<sup>30</sup> ideology that came in and suddenly we moved to this position in the press where everyone was saying, okay well now we must treat everybody equally, but of course it didn't happen because you have your elites, you have your business elites, you have your political elites and particularly under the Mbeki government and with the black empowerment policies, it was the elites who got the lions share of the coverage whether they were white or black elites. And I think we still have a situation where the press and The Sunday Times, which is a very middle class newspaper aims at the interests of the middle class and does tend to neglect the interests of the poor.

Now I'm not telling you any of this as highly critical of The Sunday Times per se because actually in many respects, The Sunday Times was pretty good. It had a lot of investigative journalism that reveals stories like the famous toilets in the veld<sup>31</sup>, which was an incident, well not just an incident, but an example of how a construction company which was receiving state money, had put up a whole lot of toilets in the veld, but there was no community and there was no sign of what was going to happen. Where were the people coming from? And this was apparently pure corruption that occurred under the Nationalist government and that kind of coverage carried on under the new ANC government. And The Sunday Times was pretty good with all of that stuff.

Q: From the transition to democracy, do you believe the values have changed under a new dispensation?

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<sup>30</sup> Coined by Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, it refers to South Africa's racial and cultural diversity after the country's political transformation.

<sup>31</sup> Afrikaans term for field

A: I think that journalistic news values in general in the press in South Africa and also in the western world tend to favor those whose got disposable income because those are the people the advertisers are after and so even though race and race ideology may have declined and I'm not saying that it's dropped out of the picture but it has certainly declined, the whole class basis upon which news is produced and manufactured has remained and even strengthened under the Mbeki government, which pushed black empowerment to the point where a whole bunch of new fat cats were enriched. Now the advertising fraternity in general is not really interested in people with lower living standards measures. The living standards measures from one, to four, to five are poor to lower middle class and those people don't have a lot of disposable income so the result is that newspapers in general tend to be filled with news that suits the middle class and certainly suits those who have plenty of disposable income because they are the targets of the advertisers. So while race ideology may have begun to drop out of the picture, class ideology and as embodied in news coverage probably strengthened under the new dispensation.

Q: So there would be a definite shift then because more people would have disposable income whether they're black or white?

A: Ja, I think there has been a gradual drift upwards of black middle class and I don't have the figures in front of me, but certainly broad-based black empowerment and affirmative action are resulting in the drift of income amongst the black middle class and so therefore their interests are increasingly served by the news agenda of the different media. I think also that there has been a marked change in the way news is covered because a lot of the news is now much more racially integrated in the news columns of papers like The Star and Business Day and The Sunday Times and other papers. But you still have your segment of black and white press. I mean The Sunday Times for whatever it may proclaim itself to be is still perceived, maybe unfairly, as a white newspaper whereas City Press, which is its main competitor, or one of its main competitors on a Sunday, is perceived as a black newspaper, albeit owned by an Afrikaner newspaper group. The Sunday Independent is perceived as a largely elitist white newspaper. And much as these newspapers would like to escape these racial stereotypes, they seem to be stuck with them and that is actually still partly due to the way that newspapers serve their advertisers because I'm sure that the socio-economic profile of the country, although it's changing, has not changed all that much and that the bulk of wealthy people who've got disposable income are still white. And that's reflected in the news agendas and I believe that the structure of the industry as a commercial venture leaves them no real options but to try to serve those audiences who've got good money to spend on advertised products. I work a lot in the black community media, in the grassroots press and there newspapers which are pro-poor, which serve those lower living standards measures from one to four, to five, those newspapers battle to get any kind of commercial advertising and its largely because the advertisers, whether they be chain stores or the sellers of cellphones can see that there is a market out there, but it isn't a lucrative market like it is amongst the middle class and the upper class. So there is not a lot of disposable advertising to go to those

grassroots newspapers. The bulk of advertising is picked up by the major established press.

If you compare The Sunday Times' news agenda with that of grassroots media, you can see that the grassroots media are covering in great deal more detail some of the issues of education, HIV/AIDS, even agricultural growth and development that the commercial and established media, simply don't cover, not in that sort of detail. The orientation is quite different. The orientation in the grassroots press is towards mobilization and education, crusading on issues that are of great interest to the poor. The orientation of The Sunday Times and other big established commercial papers, is towards covering the news, entertaining the people, providing business coverage and to some extent providing education through their education supplements, but certainly not the kind of activist mobilization that you find in grassroots media.

5. Interview with Ray Hartley, Feb 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Q: When did you start working at the Sunday Times?

A: Started in 1993.

Q: How did apartheid restrictions like the Internal Security Act and the Criminal Procedure Act affected you?

A: In 1993, I think the writing was very much on the wall, so those restrictions were there on paper. But by then, I don't think they were being taken very seriously. I think prior to that in the late 80/s, they still were, very much affecting things. There were a lot of limitations, statutory limitations on reportage Key Points Act<sup>32</sup> and stuff like that. By 1993, you had this negotiated settlement underway, the constitution was taking shape and the Bill of Rights and it just moved on and the attitude being taken was very much to fly in the face of that legislation and just to take it on and I don't think they ever really implemented any of the stuff that they could have. And also the state of emergency had been lifted long before then so those particular restrictions didn't apply.

Q: How would you characterize your political beliefs?

A: I came out of the National Union of South African Students<sup>33</sup>, which was quite strongly progressive.

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<sup>32</sup> Known as the National Key Points Act of 1980. It was introduced by the National Party government under apartheid in order to protect strategic locations like some government buildings, airports and refineries from possible terrorist attacks. The public and journalists in particular were prohibited from taking pictures or filming such "key points."

<sup>33</sup> More commonly known as NUSAS. Its membership was drawn largely from white university students who actively campaigned against apartheid.

Q: News values. What were you say were the news values which the newspaper followed under apartheid?

A: [Incomprehensible] Sunday Times, it was already substantially shifted from where it had been in the 80s. Because in the 1980s, by then it had quite a bad track record. It had supported the tri-cameral parliament. It was quite, sort of at times under Tertius Myburgh in favor of some of the security clampdowns and stuff like that, state of emergency. Although it had a fig-leaf of kind of [incomprehensible]... . There was a general sense that it was operating within that kind of, you know, on the apartheid government's side of the equation somehow. And then the paper was taken over by Ken Owen. Essentially I mean he shifted it quite substantially. He achieved quite a remarkable transformation because the paper had a majority white readership. By the time he left, it had a majority black readership. And he achieved that without losing readers. There was no shrinkage in the total readership side of it on the paper. And he did that essentially by being fiercely outspoken. I think the paper took a fiercely, kind of liberal position at the time. He actively recruited people who had anti-apartheid backgrounds, precisely because he wanted, and I know I can't speak for him, in fact, God help anyone who does speak for him, you'd get into serious kak.<sup>34</sup> You know you don't allow him to be quoted. He's always misquoted, but anyway ... he actively positioned the paper to serve a new majority in the country. It was a very interesting thing to watch the coverage of the ANC and the UDF and taking it up to a completely new level. This was a government in waiting, you got to be taken very seriously, treated properly, policies are to be explored. There was very extensive focus on exploring the policy, kind of vision and then through 1994, 1995 when the ANC was in government on policy implementation there was a whole swathe of legislation that went through parliament. So there was a shift, a conscious shift to reposition the paper as a paper for a non-racial majority in a post-apartheid era.

Q: If you didn't have Tertius at the helm you probably would have had different values. With Ken coming in things changed as you said. Would you say that with different editors that the paper has taken a different direction for each successive editor?

A: I think through it all, the paper has developed with the editors. I would say it's followed a similar notion of some kind of independence, political independence, not endorsing parties at election times, but rather spelling out these are the kinds of things that should be looked for on party platforms. I think that the fighter for the underdog type of position was really strong under Mike Robertson.

Q: I'm trying to measure how these values might have changed. Using the transformation to democracy. Obviously it's a big political event, do you think there are new values that have come into place with the political changeover? Is there a refocus of values?

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<sup>34</sup> From the Afrikaans language, "kak" meaning "shit." Literally it would mean "getting into serious 'shit' or trouble"

A: I think there's a lot of focus on getting public institutions to serve the people. So education and health became big focuses for the Sunday Times. It was post ideological thing about apartheid or free enterprise or capital. You know that was very loaded into the equation. Previously it became much more focused on what's wrong with the education system, what's making it not work etc.

Q: Would you say exploring more of developmental issues as was the wish of the new government?

A: No I don't think so. That was just politicians ... not to criticize them by hook or by crook. I think it was very much of let's make this a democracy, let's serve everyone. One of their growing concerns that they have is that you've got private education, private education on a different level to government education, government schools that work in the previously white suburbs, but don't work in the townships and still don't work in the townships. Not to generalize, but that problem of education, that problem of health care, you know it's all good and well for the middle classes to go to their Netcare Hospitals and pay with their medical aid, but the fact is there's a decline in state services. That kind of thing and then later on the focus on corruption I think very much came to the fore. But again, the public service serving purpose.

Q: You said with corruption, the age old watchdog role, being critical of government. You agree that was something reinforced.

A: I think it was more of we became a normal society. Every loaded ideological issues fell away and newspapers start doing what newspapers do all over the world which is report on those in power and when you abuse power you bring it to public attention. I think it was a normalization of adoption of a particular direction. The issues we have today are those of a normal society. It's like anywhere else in the world.

Q: Are they fulfilling the role they set out to be? I know there's a credibility crisis with reporting on Land Bank fat cats, the Transnet sale of sea areas and the president's so-called mistress.

A: I can't really speak for the Sunday Times. You'll have to speak to (current editor) Mondli Makhanya, but the paper's grown hugely, it's got 3.8 million readers now, close to 4 (million). You know, we're showing a huge growth in readership. And yes, people in power like to pick out occasions when the paper has made mistakes. I think readers recognize that those are exceptions and the support for the paper is incredible. I think it's developed into a normal paper now, it's a normal paper that looks at society in all its glory. It's critical, it's independent but it's got a lot of scope and it recognizes what's working and it's reflecting the lifestyle of post-apartheid South Africa much more than it used to.



Worked at the Sunday Times from April 1, 1994 to August 1999. Joined as deputy editor of the Business Times section. Then was acting editor and a year later was editor of Business Times until he left. Before 1994 was at The Star

Q: What was it like as far as newsroom dynamics in 1994?

A: There was quite a bit of separation between the various business units. We had Ken Owen as editor at the time and he was fairly cautious about the new dispensation, about the new election coming in. Obviously he was a liberal so there was no issue of him being opposed to it on a racial basis. I think when he was a liberal, he was very worried the ANC stood for in terms of economic policies. So in that sense, from the top there was a bit of caution and I think among the average journalists and journalists being very left, including myself, all of us supported the ANC and many of us were members of the UDF at the time so I think there was huge euphoria about the event. Obviously covering it was *the* life-changing event in our time in South Africa. I think for South Africa it meant more than Obama meant for Americans now. So there was huge euphoria and then a very pro-ANC sentiment in the newsroom at the time. Obviously Mandela was an icon to all of us.

Q: You're aware my study concerns news. What were the news values then?

A: I think The Sunday Times at the time and I think by that time, the commercial media generally had accepted that universal franchise, non-racial democratic elections were an absolute must. I think probably because they all supported that. I think in the late 1980s there were some commercial media who didn't support fully enfranchised elections. But I think by the time of the election, there was fundamental support among The Sunday Times for the concept of a non-racial, democratic election. So I think the commercial media, certainly from the late 80's onwards swung around to the idea that it had to be, there had to be no restrictions on who could vote. So that is number one.

I also think that the debate that was quite strong was in terms of the ANC at that stage had a very rudimentary economic policy. I still think there was a lot of support for socialism among its rank and file, even Mandela's first speech talked about nationalization. So in that sense, they were still seen as a fairly socialist movement in terms of economic policy. Although, I think at that stage, I think people like Tito Mboweni<sup>35</sup>, Trevor Manuel<sup>36</sup> and so on, were in favor of a more social-democratic model combining free market elements with social welfare elements. I think the perception out there, there was very left-leaning economic policy and that's where certainly the news values of The Sunday Times concerted with those of the ANC. We were very much a pro free market paper.

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<sup>35</sup> South African Reserve Bank governor

<sup>36</sup> South African Minister of Finance from 1996 to present

And with time as we then saw, Mandela was pretty convinced that that's the way to go. I think with the appointment of Derek Keys<sup>37</sup> and Chris Liebenberg<sup>38</sup>, some senior high-flying businessman and finance minister they very quickly gave assurances to the markets that they're not going to be nationalizing things, that they're not going to be radically overhauling government finances. And while the appointment of both Tito Mboweni and Trevor Manuel were initially greeted with skepticism. I think they very quickly convinced the markets that they were far better finance ministers and reserve bank governors than any of the National Party ones were before them.

I think initially, the news values – there was concern on the economic front, but I think generally the ANC government did extremely well economically and the people they appointed very quickly persuaded the markets and liberal papers such as ours that they're on the right track and they're doing the right thing. They're reforming the budget, they're reforming the previous government's very bad fiscal policy that had stuck to fundamental monetary policy principles and they were actually more free trade oriented than the previous government ever was.

Q: The feelings at The Sunday Times for the kind of model you've outlined, was that the kind of economic order they envisaged during the time of apartheid?

A: To some extent. One can never separate economic and business policies at the time from apartheid. There's absolutely no doubt that businesses benefited to some extent from the apartheid model. Certainly in the 60's, 70's. It was only in the 80's that sanctions and internal protests hit home to business leaders that it's not a sustainable model. [telephone connection breaks]

I think there was a perception that the commercial media was beholden to [signal breaks]

The basis of a future economic model that The Sunday Times and certainly the other media sought was that it should be based on free market enterprise system. They knew that individuals should be able to form companies that they would then trade. Nationalization was certainly viewed as the last way and the state involvement should be limited in terms of how the market should be regulated. Those are the kind of fundamental principles that I think most newspapers at the time supported so it was unfettered capitalism that everyone called for, but certainly it was an economic system that was based on free market enterprise system. On the other hand, I think it became very obvious very quickly for example that the bulk of state spending had to be spent on socio-economic services for the poor, that you'd even have to create a safety net for many of the unemployed and really poor that would not be able to find their feet quickly. And that there'd be deliberate intervention to boost the black population who had been excluded from the economy previously. So I think very quickly the idea, the news values changed to an understanding that oh absolutely we're going to have a free enterprise system, but there are going to have to be interventions in terms of black economic

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<sup>37</sup> South African Minister of Finance from 1992 to 1994

<sup>38</sup> South African Minister of Finance from 1994 to 1996

empowerment, in terms of building a safety net and in terms of spending the majority of our budget on socio-economic services. When we talk about newspapers reporting those principles, free enterprise principles, they were very quickly adjusted to include those provisos.

Q: The changeover to 1994, were the same values followed?

A: Presenting both sides of the story, sticking to the facts, that was part of parcel of any journalists worth his or her salt, so I don't think that would change. Was there a bias in favor of the new ANC? Certainly among journalists, the sentiment was very much in favor. That didn't mean from the beginning that we weren't critical of what they did, like we should be. There was a lot of emotional and ideological sympathy for the ANC government among the rank and file newsroom staff. Journalist are by nature more left leaning and so on. There was always this sympathy, but it didn't mean that The Sunday Times would go soft on when they (government) didn't perform. I don't think they did no.

Q: So the same watchdog role under apartheid continued?

A: Maybe there was the feeling that it's a new government, let's give them a bit of leeway. But certainly if the honeymoon, if there was a honeymoon and I don't think there was a honeymoon, it didn't last very long. And very soon I think it was, for the majority of the media anyway, they were as critical of the government's performance if not more so because they had much bigger tasks to fulfill. They looked after the interests of 40 million South Africans not just four million white South Africans, so in a way their task was far more significant than anything the National Party had ever attempted. But the watchdog role was crucial and I think the ANC was the one that supported it. They said the freedom of the media is entrenched in the constitution.

Q: Would you say that the success of The Sunday Times is built on catering to political and business elites?

A: I think at the time, it was always a commercially-based, successful paper. In the 1990s it had a white readership, there's no doubt about it. Only now the majority of its readers are not white anymore, only in the last five years. But certainly in the 1990s ... its core was white, middle class readers I would say. And it appealed to them I would say both in the coverage, the sports section was very good. It wasn't that politics which drove the readers at the time, you still had that stupid back page of a bikini clad. I think generally they had a right mix for middle class, and they won a lot of the Indian and colored readers over very quickly from the late 80's onwards so it was more middle class readership and the content was based, was targeted towards that, but gradually, it's always been the most influential newspaper in the country and I still think it is. So in that sense, it would be read by political, business and civic leadership. That goes without saying. But it's broad call was in the early 1990s, white middle-class readers and to some extent they still are, but it's transgressed the race division very quickly and from the early 90s onwards it became far more of a non-racial paper. And now I think it's a broad mass

of black, white, colored, Indian middle-class readers who read it. The majority of them are no longer white now. The latest figures show its now black. But certainly in the 1990s you could say there was a core middle-class, white readership that slowly then transgressed the color barrier.

#### 7. Interview with Raymond Louw via email on February 15 2009

I'll try to answer your questions but let me first give a broad response.

Most journalists in free societies strive for the maximum exercise of freedom, the ability to gather the truth and disseminate it through their publications and while striving for both those objectives exercising fairness. Added to that are the attributes of inquiring and searching diligently and energetically, defining where stories lay and going out to seek them. I am not sure what Harvey means by tolerance. Does he mean tolerance towards minor foibles among ordinary people and does he therefore mean he will not publish stories about them? To me it could mean to tolerate and not report on an issue and, of course, that would be wrong.

In some closed societies there is certainly no tolerance of a free and independent media, the media being expected to convey the ``news" (or propaganda) that the authorities want to have placed before people with critical thought and views being prohibited. This is achieved by the media taking and obeying instructions, the withholding or banning of information and sometimes by actual censorship with censors making use of red pens, etc.

There are semi-free societies which is perhaps an apt description for South Africa under the Nationalists. Before 1948 SA's media freedoms were similar to those existing in Britain and other free Commonwealth countries such as Australia and Canada, which meant considerable freedom with, however, censorship being exercised over official secrets, certain court cases involving children or sex crime victims, income tax inquiries, magisterial inquiries into insolvency and maintenance to mention a few. Certain defense matters fell under the official secrets legislation.

From 1948 onwards until 1994 the Nationalists tightened up on information and forbade publication over a range of issues. Eventually there were some 100 laws (including those previously in existence) which applied to media coverage. In reality the restrictions related mainly to the Press because the SABC was a state broadcaster taking orders from the government. The state did not employ censors in the classic form of an official sitting in on a newspaper's publishing activities and saying yea or nay to what could be published. It was what I have described before as ``do it yourself censorship" where a law was laid down and journalists forced to abide by it by exercising self-censorship. There was direct censorship when dealing with an official secret or defense information when one had to call the Defense department or whatever department claimed authority over the official secret to get approval to publish and the approval would be couched in the form of allowing certain pieces of information to be published with others excluded.

Under the press restrictions, journalists attempted to follow the principles of professional conduct, like seeking truth and fairness. I say attempted because if a story was run with certain pieces of information removed, the end result would probably not be the truth in the sense of the whole truth. But you strived to do it. That policy was followed by some English language newspapers which constantly pushed at the barricades of censorship by seeking out information that the government did not want disclosed but could not ban because there was no law related to it.

One must bear in mind that ours was a peculiar case where the government proclaimed that SA had a free press and that the only bars on the media related to the preservation of state security. Thus it prohibited certain types of information related to revolutionary thoughts, violent opposition or what they thought could be violent opposition but not curbing political opposition from recognized political parties and their members and supporters.

So there was a striving among a number of papers to achieve truth and accuracy and to push the envelope and the issue of fairness related to doing a critical commentary on a new law or utterance by a government official and then giving the government's version of the issue. No such considerations applied to the Afrikaans language newspapers who with only very limited exceptions (which occurred only later on during the Nat period) slavishly followed the party line.

The English language papers supported the opposition parties but that did not mean they diligently followed the party line. Rather they supported it but were sometimes critical. Some English language papers sought to avoid confrontation with the government while a few notables were confrontational in their views and reporting.

But while the confrontational ones like the Rand Daily Mail, Sunday Times, etc, expressed their opposition to apartheid forcefully, they abided by the general apartheid laws relating to Group Areas, labour, separate amenities (such as toilets) for blacks and whites, etc. The reason was that they knew that if they breached laws not dealing with media and publication, the government would close them down and proclaim that its action had nothing to do with interference with media freedom.

So our attitude was to oppose apartheid but in a way where we could not be accused of inciting insurrection, rebellion or revolution.

Post 1994, the environment changed dramatically in the repeal of many of the censorship laws (and others relating to freedom of movement, group areas, labor, etc). So immediately, the society opened up and it became possible to speak more openly and to deal with issues more bluntly. But the concentration after Codesa and the elections of 1994 was on issues like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, what retribution would be extracted from those involved in torture and killing of anti-apartheid activists. The media - and by now a change had been wrought at the SABC which was trying to become a public broadcaster - gave the new government time to settle in during which the ANC were trying to find their feet rather than introduce controversial legislation. The

ANC's attitude changed after a couple of years and started to introduce transformation and black economic empowerment and affirmative action on a wide scale.

These policies were tempered by the sunset clause which enabled people, particularly Afrikaners in the civil service, to spend some time in their jobs before they were retrenched and found themselves in many instances out in the cold, the factor that with the huge crime problem caused large numbers of whites to emigrate to Australia, Britain, the USA, etc.

There was no much public criticism of the ANC at this time, the other factor being probably that the ANC had stated that it wouldn't seek retribution and was abiding by that. Indeed, reconciliation was the buzz word, but people accepted that blacks had to have jobs and opportunity. So the public did not complain (except some blacks who thought the process was too slow) and the newspapers which were slowly transforming with more blacks gaining positions of authority were not overly critical.

The papers were still seeking out information and publishing it but it took a few years before the scandals started to break and papers began reporting critically about what was happening. There was also the government's embarking on the huge arms deal which raised huge controversy in the papers, most of which were critical. Meanwhile, there was a change in the papers in this sense that those who had been sharply critical of government and apartheid now had to contend with a democratically elected government and thus the approach was different. There were some good things that the government was doing as well as some questionable ones so papers were much less overtly anti-government, though critical at times. As the years have gone by, a new phenomenon has developed, the rise of black writers and columnists, many acutely observant and with gifted pens. Like all columnists they attracted readers by being critical and avoiding praise except in small nodules here and there. Also, in the last few years there has been a steady increase in strong criticism and protest over the failure of service delivery and corruption, especially among local authorities. This has led to ANC complaints that newspapers are acting like an opposition party and being unpatriotic or counter revolutionary.

Another factor which is affecting the conduct of newspapers is the loss of circulation (some papers' circulations are below those of 30/40 years ago) and the battle by owners to retain viability which has led to cost cutting and laying off of editorial staff. This has reduced the comprehensiveness of coverage - which had grown over the years quite substantially especially in business journalism - which, in turn, has impacted on the quality of coverage, the ability to undertake investigative reporting and the delving more deeply into issues. So in some senses the thrust of newspapers is being blunted. There is a greater reliance on agency, pr, syndicated copy which tends to reduce the forcefulness of newspapers.

But despite that there is still a strong search for news with the principles of independence, truth, accuracy and fairness. Fairness is even more important now so that one is not accused of unfair attacks which can rapidly be expanded into accusations of racialism

(even though it may be a black reporter involved -- despite transformation and the employment of black journalists and editors being quite substantial there is a strong perception in the ANC that the established papers are white owned. Independence is strong and illustrated by the resignation of Tyrone August from the Cape Times because he felt his independence was being reduced by an Independent Newspapers scheme to have a centralized subbing operation for all the groups papers.

While the government harps on developmental issues, it is not clear what it means and newspapers are wary of the terms and certainly of the pressures. The appearance of COPE as a splinter group from the ANC has made newspapers even more articulate in their criticism of government. There is indeed a large measure of disillusion in the government and displeasure at its conduct and that of MPs and officials.

Now to answer your questions

Q: What would you say were the news values The Sunday Times subscribed to under apartheid?

A: The news values I would say are much the same; the same overarching principles apply very strongly (though they have got some exposes badly wrong which means their attention to detail and checking facts is somewhat lacking). Pre-1994, there was a preponderance of white news (though the paper ran a township edition with purely black news in it) but now the paper has a multiracial flavor. It still tries to expose scandal. In one respect it is different. The old STimes ran regular news of the secrets of the Nat cabinet. The current ST does not seem to have that ability to get stories from the cabinet. Parliamentary news was a feature; now with parliament being a rubber stamp and the Press Gallery removed to offices outside the building, there are not the same contacts with MPs or the stories emanating from the chamber.

Q: Do you think these values still apply in the post-apartheid news environment?

A: I think I have given the impression that the values are there but the subject matter has changed from white to multi-racial. It is interesting to note that City Press which was circumspect because it had a black audience and the police were watching it carefully, is more open ('Distinctly African' on its masthead) and robust in its news which of course is distinctly African with the only reference to whites being those accused of assaulting farm laborers or doing something equally obnoxious.

Q: If not, what would you say are the new news values the publication follows?

Q: If you believe the values have not changed, would you agree with the statement that the advent of democracy has had no bearing whatsoever in shifting the news values of journalists at the newspaper?

A: No that would not be correct. The removal of the restrictive laws has opened up a wide field of open and unrestricted reporting. My impression is that under apartheid, despite efforts to prevent it, some news values became dulled. For instance, reporters would say there is no point in chasing such and such a story because the law would prevent it from being published. In that way some facets of stories which could be published were missed. But now it's an open house and reporters go for everything. But remember, the subject matter may be different in that it is more multiracial, but the values of truth, fairness and accuracy are still striven for.

Q: If you believe the values have changed, would you ascribe that change to the transformation to democracy? How? Please expand?

A: We may be at cross purposes when you use the term values. The values you ascribed to Harvey and which I have dealt on are what I regard as principles underlying journalism. News values relate, in my mind, to subject matter and as I have outlined, there have been changes in that because the audience is multiracial rather than compartmentalized whites and blacks.

Indeed, the coverage is much more open and wider and that is due to the change to democracy. The biggest change that has taken place is the advent of a democratic constitution which provides wide protection for the media. We did not have that before -- indeed we had the opposite - and that has enabled newspapers (and the Sunday Times) to be more critical, outspoken and even rough on people.

Audio interview, February 16, 2009

Q: When were you at Sunday Times?

A: I worked twice at the Sunday Times. Once from 1946 to 1950 as a reporter on a Saturday for The Sunday Times. The way they worked in those days was for the Sunday Times to have a very small staff and then be populated on a Saturday by a lot of Rand Daily Mail reporters and I was one of those who used to work Saturdays for the Sunday Times as a reporter. And then I went back to the Sunday Times in 1958 after I'd spent something like six years in Britain to be news editor and was news editor from '58 to 1960, then transferred back to the Rand Daily Mail as news editor.

Q: How many years have you been in journalism?

A: From 1946 to 2008, that makes 62 years.

Q: What would you say were the main values The Sunday Times espoused?

A: I would talk about anti-apartheid being a political interpretation rather than a news value and a support for capitalism being an economic orientation and partly political,



partly economic orientation. The Sunday Times was an anti-apartheid paper and it was also a capitalist paper. It supported the free market system. And was against some of the socialist activities that were associated with apartheid, such as state control of certain parts of the economy, but it wasn't strongly opposed. The state wasn't overly socialist, but there were socialist features in the state's activities, particularly in relation to the upliftment of Afrikaners, but I don't think they intruded a great deal into the Sunday Times' thinking because broadly the state was in favor of a free market economy and pursued that. The political orientation was quite strongly anti-apartheid. I would say news values relate to the content of news stories which were much wider than apartheid or economic questions. There was a great deal of questions relating to crime, police activities, all that sort of stuff which wasn't necessarily political questions and the conduct of The Sunday Times in that area was that of an ordinary newspaper seeking out information and publishing it.

Q: I'm trying to measure how values might have changed. Would you say there's noticeable change in terms of news values after the transition to democracy?

A: The change here was accompanied by a substantial change in the background. We were a circumscribed society, a circumscribed profession or calling with a 100 laws imposed on us, which prevented us from giving information and we were fighting as hard as we could to get information and avoid those laws, but still trying to get information to the public. When 1994 came, we came with a constitution which embedded free media and freedom of expression which meant that the whole background, the whole aura of society changed from a society under restriction to a society with freedom and substantial freedom. And of course that meant that reporters who had been under restriction and felt restricted and felt it difficult for them to gather news or when they did gather news to publish it. They certainly found themselves free to do what they liked.

From a restricted society, we suddenly became an unrestricted society and therefore able to gather and write and report without feeling are we breaking the law, are we in danger of going to jail, are we in danger of the paper being closed down if we write this, if we publish that? That was the feeling which existed before 1994. It was pretty intense in the 1980s when they had states of emergency, which for instance said that television cameras couldn't be within range, photographic range of demonstrations by protestors and that radio reporters couldn't be within sound range of the noise made by protestors. That was the extent of the restrictions we faced. All that went and suddenly the world was opened, it was a dramatic transformation.

Q: With different editors who've come in, their personalities have been stamped on the paper, taking in a different direction. Would you say there's a pattern of how the newspaper has taken shape based on the personalities of editors.

A: The editor that I worked for was Joel Mervis and Joel Mervis was what I used to call a ringmaster editor in the way that he was larger than life. He had an enormous curiosity and he infected his staff with that curiosity. He loved to sort of grandstand. He held conferences on a Tuesday morning after the paper had come out to explain how

magnificent the paper had been and which reporters had been magnificent. It was a grand *tour de force* every Tuesday. He was very proud of his paper and very proud of staff and he let them know it. When Tertius Myburgh came in ... I'm not altogether sure he was pro-apartheid as pro the Nationalist continuing in power. He had very serious reservations about the application of apartheid. The one area of apartheid that he didn't have reservations about was the fact that control should continue in white hands, but other aspects of it, it had a fair amount of criticism and he would deny that he was in favor of apartheid if ever asked the question. But he was playing a very curious role. It's my view, though I have nothing to support it except my hunch, is that he was a very high level operator for the government in terms of making contacts with overseas diplomats like Chester Crocker and I suppose people in the foreign office in Britain, where he used to explain the difficulties that the Afrikaners had, the Nationalists had in changing their policies to be more liberal, more progressive and he in fact indicated that while the government may want to change, it was very difficult to change because there was the right wing breathing down its neck. I think it was the kind of role that he played as a person from the alleged liberal English press. By alleged I mean, he suffered from the liberal English press therefore alleged to have the same sort of feelings whereas there was a strong feeling among us that he in fact was a pro-government operator and tried to spin out the pressures to bring about change that were emanating from overseas countries like America, like Britain and Europe. He operated I would call rather deviously and also he tampered with the news. You can say Joel Mervis tampered with the news in that he rewrote copy, but he rewrote copy to make the news better whereas in some instances, Myburgh rewrote copy or had the copy rewritten to have it dumbed down so that it wouldn't be too aggressively anti-government, but he ran anti-government stuff. It was a very curious role he played. He was a very curious character.

Ken Owen was quite an enigma. He wasn't same sort of character as Joel Mervis in terms of his expansiveness with his staff. He withheld himself from his staff. One had difficulty in assessing his political outlook because in some senses it was comedian like. He had one week and have another one the next week, not all at the steadfast performer as some people like to portray him as, but he had one good facet and that was he had a good pen. He could write very well and if he tackled a subject, it was certainly well done and that of course was the thing which lifted him above just being a rather, middle-of-the-road editor in a way.

I don't know much about the others that followed because I was then right out of the company for that matter. Brian Pottinger, I thought ran a competent newspaper. I didn't see great shakes in it. I think they were a little careful, cautious about attacking the ANC or if they did attack the ANC being careful not to be too condemnatory. The tone was, while critical, wasn't rigorous. It was sometimes stiff criticism, but I always had the feeling that it was taking into account that the ANC was a new government, with little experience of governance. One had to take account of that. In fact, not only was the Sunday Times doing that, but most of the newspapers in South Africa, I'm talking from about 1994 to about 1996, 1997, during the period of Nelson Mandela's presidency.

Q: What were your perceptions of how the paper has evolved over the years and whether you see whether 1994 shaped that change?

A: It was a major political event and it did shape that change. The change was of course that whereas the paper had been catering for a white audience, it rapidly changed to cater for a multi-racial audience. The stories were more multi-racial, the subject matter that was discussed was certainly more aligned to the problems that Africans were having. Some of that hadn't appeared before, it was all on the theme of apartheid depriving people whereas now the problems were a wider range of issues, which were not really a part of the editorial that was written about black people before 1994. The view about black people before 1994, as I was saying, was more oriented to the politics of the situation, of the anti-apartheid, the view that apartheid was wrong.

The other big difference was that during the pre-1994 days, the space for the African editions in papers like the Sunday Times and the Rand Daily Mail The white editions had ordinary news, sports news and political news etc., and then they had a section devoted to business. And on those pages, because Africans didn't have shares to any large extent, they didn't have any ability to conduct business to any large extent either. They were in fact excluded from the economy. Those pages were taken out of the newspaper and replaced by news of a more, certainly black news in the case of Soweto, but it wasn't just political, it was news of what was going on around them, their particular problems. But it was in the black edition and therefore didn't flow into the wider areas of the newspaper's circulation. Then the other big change before 1994, in the sports pages, the main concentration was on whites sports of rugby, cricket, golf and whatever else. After 1994, of course football<sup>39</sup>, which is largely a black sport overtook a lot of the acreage in the white sports pages and so they became multi-racial with a greater degree of concentration.

#### 8. Interview with Andrew Donaldson, February 23, 2009

I was a feature writer for a magazine when approached in October 1998 as a deputy editor of the review section, analysis, opinion pieces and features. I was approached as a writer/deputy editor of that section.

Before that, I was at Caxton magazines for 10 years and before that was in newspapers. Was at the Cape Times. I began my career in 1982 as a cadet internship with South African Associated Newspapers. I did six months at the Evening Post in Port Elizabeth, six months at the Cape Times, six months at the Sunday Express and then I went to the Cape Times, which I left in 1987. Then in 1993, I got employment with Caxton magazines, then left at the end of October 1998 to join The Sunday Times.

Q: What were the news values of journalists at The Sunday Times?

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<sup>39</sup> soccer

A: There was a perception for a long time. There was an enduring damage if you know. I don't know if you've ever come across it, that headline: "The Guns of Gaborone," which was a notorious headline after the SADF<sup>40</sup> raid on ANC bases, or what were supposed to have been ANC bases, but weren't. They were civilians, in Botswana. And they [Sunday Times] came up with this very gung-ho headline for this raid, "The Guns of Gaborone," which alienated a lot of people and it was something that The Sunday Times fought very hard to live down. When I joined, I think it was still in the process of finally getting over that hurdle, that episode in the paper's history is now forgotten. When I joined, the racial component could have been about 40 percent black, 60 percent white and that was roughly the readership as well. The readership was 60 percent white, 40 percent black. The 10 or more years that I've been here is now 70 percent black readership, 30 percent white and the staff have changed that way as well.

Q: Expand on the controversy over the "Guns of Gaborone" headline?

A: It was seen as a very gung-ho, very pro-SADF, very much supporting the Nationalist government at the time and its aggressive sorties against sovereign states, like illegal actions. It alienated our black readers and did anger the left-wing countries, those people who were anti-apartheid activists against apartheid. It was seen as bold during the status quo at the time.

Q: Values, what did they mean for you at the time?

A: One of the things about The Sunday Times is that it is in South African journalism, a phenomenally successful paper, so we were always reminded of that, that's never far from your mind. We were always mindful of that. And, like speaking to the truth, speaking the truth to power etc., so that was alright provided it didn't really mess with bottom-line, getting away with the bottom-line. Having said that, there's never really been a moment I can think of where that was really tested, but employers are constantly reminded how much money it does bring in. The reader is obviously our target market, that's who we're talking to. There is like a huge middle brow lump of citizens out there, they determine our news values in a sense more than anyone else.

Q: So that would be your middle class income people who have disposable income?

A: No, its very much these are people who have an eye on the suburbs. We are selling in the townships. We are managing to get subscription sales in the townships which is quite good, but they're very much a readership that has got their eye on what to get out of the townships into the suburbs.

Q: Change in values, post 1994?

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<sup>40</sup> South African Defence Force was the old South African armed forces from 1957 until 1994. It was superseded by the South African National Defence Force in 1994.

A: I would suggest the Times has sort of emerged as a very strong world and quite vibrant paper and has surprised people on a Sunday morning when you see headlines like a “Health minister is a drunk and a thief.” You often wonder what kind of effect it will have in the long run. It seems to work for people who love the feistiness of the paper for that and that is basically come under Mondli Makhanya’s editorship more than anyone else I would say.

Q: Some people have said with different editors, they bring different personalities.

A: Mondli Makhanya, he came after Matatha Tsedu and Mathata had a very uncomfortable time at the Sunday Times. He wasn’t very liked, because he disliked white journalists. Because like he had an Africanist stance if you could call it that. It was very aggressive. I remember he shut down New York [bureau] and opened up two in its place, one in Lagos and one in Nairobi and these bureaus didn’t really produce anything, but he was insistent on an agenda which kind of drove traditional readers away and that was the case of upstairs having to step in and saying bottom line is you’re alienating our readers, hence placing the paper in a dangerous position. We can’t have that. When Mondli came in after that, he was seen as being like a very popular appointment in the sense of bringing the paper back into a sort of, a more news oriented agenda rather than a more political agenda. Matatha’s agenda was definitely political. There was a sense, to put it crudely, that he was going after white people and it didn’t really matter how long you had been there, or what your record was. It was time for a change and change is going to come, come hell or high water type of thing. So when Mondli came on board, many people thought he should have been there all along. He should have been there rather than Mathata. It’s unfortunate, but that was the feeling amongst staff at the time.

9. Interview with Cobus Bodenstein, Feb 28, 2009

Q: When did you start and what were your duties?

A: I started as a freelancer and after about a year of freelancing, I got a staff job there. [incomprehensible]

Q: When was that?

A: That was ’89, until early 1996, January 1996. The last bit of time I did the picture desk, but as a rule my duties were general photography ... sports, news, social the whole lot. Anything that came up into the diary.

Q: You must have been there on some of the biggest stories of your career. Can you share what you thought was important for the Sunday Times to cover, in terms of what mattered to them?

A: I don’t know if you remember an editor there. I was the first photographer appointed by him and as it became, the last one appointed by him before his resignation was a guy

called Ken Owen. And he was quite politically aware. He did a lot of anti-apartheid type stuff. [incomprehensible]

I remember when I first got my job there, I had to do a story on a farmer who had apparently assaulted a young black boy that he had accused of stealing something. And I had to get court pictures of this guy in court. It was in a town called Louis Trichardt. I managed to get pictures of him walking into the courtroom. And that's how I got employed, how I got the job.

We started searching for stuff like that and also going to towns where demonstrations occurred. We also did all the normal stuff. It was all because Owen wanted it that way. He was very disliked by the apartheid government.

Q: How do you see that change after 1994. There might have been newer sets of values?

A: Newspaper influence has been a lot more, how can I put it, populist. People magazine type thing. There is a lot more, especially as it progressed it seemed to spend a lot more time going after corruption.

Q: Share some of the big stories you did and what it meant for journalism?

A: That's where the Afrikaanse Weerstand Beweging, the AWB got executed. At the time, it was very much a part of what was happening and what we were told to do in keeping with Owen's values. It was just good to be able to know that I could do. There were probably 30 or 40 people and when the firing started, everybody starting running away. It was me, Kevin Carter, James Nachtwey and a CBS crew left. In some ways, it was personally satisfying to know that I could actually not run away. We did that kind of thing. We were in the townships a lot, often under fire or under some or other form of danger. There was quite a group of us working very hard to just, be better than each other. The work was just what we were doing.

Q: After Ken Owen left, did you notice a change with the new editor coming in?

A: When Ken left, the paper was not really all that well edited anymore. They had sort of a management puppet, called what's his name again. Brian Pottinger. He was just concerned with keeping the, although I was gone by then, so its more from the outside. He was more concerned with keeping [incomprehensible] happy. Whereas Ken was a wildly strong principled person. Brian I don't think. He did confess to me briefly once that he didn't have that kind of principle. He was more concerned with the management of the paper than anything and he also wasn't around for terribly long. They appointed a black editor. Before Ken Owen it was Tertius Myburgh and he was also strongly principled and it was really after him it became more of a commercial entity, whereas under Ken, he was the main driving force morally in the paper. Things have changed and the things that we used to take a strong stance on, they don't exist anymore. They do make some attempt to expose corruption, but I suppose the country's biggest problem now is corruption and paid politicians and the general form of malaise and absence of any form of moral values in government. I suppose they do make some attempt at countering that, but it's not the same world anymore.

10. Interview with Raymond Preston ITV, February 25, 2009

I started working in newspapers from 1978. I started with the group in 1978 at a newspaper called the Rand Daily Mail, which was a fantastic paper. When the Rand Daily Mail closed I moved to the Sunday Times. It was a very political paper, and it was at the height of the apartheid period. And it was renowned. I went to work for the Financial Mail which is part of the group and then I got transferred to the Sunday Times. So this is my 28<sup>th</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup> year. I was there for 10 years before I joined Sunday Times.

Q: What were the values at the newspaper at the Sunday Times under apartheid?

A: We had a whole lot of press laws, emergency laws, like we weren't allowed to photograph Key Points like police station. There were emergency rules, state of emergency regulations and Key Points you couldn't photograph. You couldn't photograph any police action, you couldn't photograph police people. You weren't allowed to be there. If you were there, you'd be beaten or shot at and those kind of protected the governing forces, state bashing you and everything. You couldn't document, you had to do it on the sly.

Q: And that limited you in your work?

A: Obviously. I mean I was shot at. I arrived in Soweto and the police were beating up young black kids. I arrived and started taking photographs and basically I was also beaten up. I was actually fired upon, a teargas canister with a rifle, that the police used to fit at the end of a rifle. And I got into a Volkswagen and it bounced off the back window, Thank God, because if it penetrated the window it would have taken my head off. So it was very difficult to cover events in those days. You weren't allowed there, there were restrictions.

Q: What were the most definitive moments in your experiences being a photographer, either at the Sunday Times or elsewhere?

A: Errh, we had an incident in town where the Zulus and the ANC were fighting and there were snipers in the buildings, in the CBD in Johannesburg and I was covering. A lot of people died that day.

Q: Was it the Shell House massacre?<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The Shell House killings took place on March 28, 1994 when thousands of Zulus marched in Johannesburg to protest at what they argued was the undermining of the power of traditional authorities and the rights of traditional leaders. The protestors, who were aligned to the Inkatha Freedom Party came into conflict with security guards from

A: Yes, the Shell House. And the guy somewhere up there in the building, [incomprehensible] the magazine in front of me. I don't know if it was an AK-47, or an R1 or R5. He was playing around with it and bullets were ricocheting off the tarmac and into shop windows. I stood there and said well, if you want to shoot me, shoot me. I mean that was just a silly person. I don't know if he was trying to test my thoughts. He was just toying around.

Q: You were under under first Tertius Myburgh?

A: I worked under Ken Owen. I didn't work under Tertius and I enjoyed Ken Owen's running of the paper. Very good. Some people hated him. I loved him. He asked me to be his picture editor. I was picture editor at the time.

Q: What was his style?

A: Ken Owen was a very good journalist. He didn't like people sitting in the office, get out and get a story. Nowadays people just sit in the offices, Google and use phones. There's none of that get out and finding the story.

He was transforming ... . Any black journalists coming on board, getting the color grouping code right. You had to have a certain amount of black people and whites and coloreds and that kind of thing. So it was part of the transformation. I then worked with the caretaker editor, Pottinger, which I had no time for really. He was just a transitional editor. I worked under Mike Robertson which I liked. But he moved on and now I'm under Mondli Makhanya, which is a fantastic editor.

Q: If you were to notice any change from 1994, what would you say it is?

A: Ah, it's easy now. You know in South Africa with news, with breaking news. I think if you living in a first world country, Europe or America, you wait years and years for some big thing to happen. You know. In South Africa, there's always something happening. It's fantastic to work in this environment. We have elections coming up and we have the Confederations Cup<sup>42</sup> and we've got the World Cup. There's always something to look forward to. There's not this everything is in order, kind of First World approach.

11. Interview with ITV Clifford Fram, February 24, 2009

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the rival African National Congress. The ANC had its headquarters at Shell House where guards fired upon protestors, killing an estimated 19 people.

<sup>42</sup> An international soccer tournament, which will be prelude to the World Cup soccer tournament in 2010.



Clifford Fram, started at the Sunday Times in 1989 and before that was chief sub editor at City Press and before that at the Daily Dispatch (85). Worked as a sub editor on the Times.

Q: What were the news values espoused under apartheid?

A: Under Mybrugh, it very much reflected apartheid. The main paper covered white South Africa to a large extent, apart from a bit of politics and the Extra, which is the section I worked on, covered black South Africa. On the extra section, all the staff were black. People who worked on the Extra section, tended to camp out on the one side of the newsroom, so it resembled an apartheid environment because you had all the black staff on one side of the newsroom and all the white staff on the one side of the newsroom. The non-political news was very focused on the white community. In general, you probably wouldn't see very many black people in the paper unless they were criminals to be quite frank. So you wouldn't see stories about successful black people.

Q: Tertius being an agent of the government, did it have an impact on relations in the office?

Not at my level that I knew of.

Q: Owen came with a different style? What kind of values did he espouse?

A: Ken was a true liberal in every sense of the word. He slowly and not so slowly depending from whose side you're looking at, but he transformed the paper quite quickly. He made it into quite a serious. It always was a political animal, but he made it into quite a serious liberal voice. He gave a lot of people a voice in the Sunday Times that previously didn't have a voice. He also tried to change the news values. In some cases he might have done it too fast for the white market. He also made the paper quite boring. Where Tertius had a philosophy of, what he had termed "quali-pop", which was a mixture of a typical British quality paper and a typical British tabloid. Ken Owen tried to go more for the quality type of British paper, which had shed quite a lot of readers.

Q: Can you talk about values under Pottinger?

He was really a caretaker editor. He a very strong deputy in Mike Robertson. Brian sort of smoothed the way between Ken and Mike.

Mike was the first black editor of the Sunday Times. Mike was quite academic in his approach. He took the paper back to basics in many respects. He took the good parts of what Joel Mervis and Tertius had done from a quail pop point of view and combined that with a coming close to a non-racial type of reporting. Under him that we closed down the Extra, the Extra got combined into the normal paper and the Extra staff got absorbed into the normal paper. And he found that balance between popular reporting and serious political stories.

Q: Am trying to measure with the dawn of democracy, I'm trying to ascertain whether such a major political bearing probably has no real bearing on changing values?

I think Tertius was very blinkered. I don't think Tertius could ever have believed apartheid could end peacefully. Tertius probably believed that apartheid was wrong, but he didn't have the answer. Ken knew the answer was democracy. Ken would have gone out of his way to show a black person is successful, showing a black teacher teaching in school. He would have gone out of his way to show abuse of power and criticize abuse of power, from any quarter whether it be from a trade union, an anti-apartheid coalition or from government. As democracy came about,

## 12. Interview with Bonny Schoonakker on March 16, 2009

As I (re-)joined the newspaper in mid-1989, I have some idea of what the news values were/may have been pre 1994. Also, I first joined the Sunday Times in 1980, immediately after graduating from university, and so along the way have been part of some pretty major upheavals, and realignments on the newspaper itself.

To begin with though, let me say that my view of what news values are is pretty basic, if not overly so. To me news is simply about change: the bigger the change, the bigger the story. Nelson Mandela walking out of jail was sign that the world (not just South Africa) was embarking on a new stage, a profound break with the past. But even trivial stories tells us that today is not like yesterday, for example a report which provides salacious details about a rugby hero's fall from grace will tell us how yesterday's hero can become today's cad, and so in itself provide lessons for private reflection. The world changes hour by hour, day by day, year by year; 2009 is not like 1999, and this for me has been the overriding news value. Fiddle with the details as you may, but any news medium is beholden to this priority. Some interpret the change differently from others, some may welcome the change, some may lament it, none can ignore it.

The way we know how the world has changed in the public sphere is to a large extent influenced by what the media tell us about the world we live in. In our private lives we mark change by attending rites of passage such as birthdays, weddings, funerals, dinner parties, graduations, court appearances, sojourns in hospital, whatever – occasions big and small that mark another stage in the progression from the past to the present while always looking ahead to the future. These occasions are all influenced – profoundly and each uniquely, in its own way, – by what happens in public life. I cannot imagine trying to figure out the bearing the public world has on the (my) private world without the help of news media, imperfect and as compromised as media usually are in fulfilling this role. As for the Sunday Times, the newsroom zeitgeist in 1980 was very different in some ways from what it was when I left just over three years ago. In many ways, it was just the same. Back then, under the editorship of Tertius Myburgh, the prevailing cultural assumptions could tempt you into believing that we were a province of England. The newsroom and subs desk were heavily populated by émigrés from Fleet Street. This not entirely true, though. Myburgh became enthusiastic about Boer War history as a way of indigenizing the newspaper (thanks at least in part to Thomas Pakenham's taking an

interest in researching his history of the conflict – Myburgh got a mention in the resultant book’s acknowledgements, as I recall), but obviously from a white perspective. In those days, perspectives other than white were corralled into our Extra supplements – one each for coloureds, Indians and blacks. These supplements nevertheless continued to be published long after 1994. Politically, the newspaper occupied territory somewhere in a space where the verligte side of the National Party and pro-military side of the Progs (as they then were) overlapped. Myburgh was well-connected with the government, and was often accused by his staff (out of earshot) of being a secret Nat, which was something of a heresy in the white English-language media, and a departure if not betrayal of the paper’s earlier traditions. But Myburgh sort of confirmed his true allegiances when he resigned his editorship in late 1990 to take up an appointment as ambassador in London (which illness then prevented him from carrying out). Myburgh’s principal lieutenant in those days, as far as political coverage was concerned, was the formidably intelligent Fleur de Villiers (of whom I have fond memories playing poker on the subs desk late on Saturday nights long after the week’s work had been done). De Villiers’s next job, too, gave you an inkling of her thinking during her time on the newspaper, in case you had any doubt – she went off to London to be a political adviser for the Central Selling Organisation, the De Beers-led cartel devoted to keeping the price of diamonds as high as humanly possible. Much of the tabloid tone of those days was also set by Leslie Sellers, a former colossus of Fleet Street, where he had become famous for his work on the Daily Express and his authorship of a useful book (for sub-editors) called *The Simple Sub’s Book*. Sellers’s values were solidly Fleet Street and to this day I marvel at how stories featured in the Sunday Times simply because they referred to incidents that happened in England. Sellers had a lot to do with that, but he was immensely talented. The Sunday Times owes its influence in South Africa to its large circulation, and that in turn was created by talented people like Myburgh, De Villiers and Sellers, to name but a few, who continued the work of Joel Mervis (before my time), probably the founding father of the Sunday Times in the form we know it to be today. The Myburgh era was resolutely anti-ANC, though, as was made clear by a notorious headline hailing “The Guns of Gaborone”, above a front-page report on a cross-border raid by the SA Defence Force. That headline had the fingerprints of Sellers all over it. I was not working for the newspaper at the time, even though I was on its staff – I had been given leave of absence on quarter pay to do my two years’ national service, with the aforementioned SADF.

Among the luminaries on the newspaper in Myburgh’s time was the self-same Ken Owen, yet another formidable intellect. He left to help get *Business Day* up and running, which he did brilliantly. When Myburgh left in expectation of becoming ambassador in London, Owen was the natural choice to take over, and he set about ridding the newspaper of its Fleet Street legacies and values with a large, sharp knife. Some senior people were no longer welcome, including Richard O’Neill (who fancied himself as a deputy editor) and Peter Godson, its production editor. The methods Owen used to get rid of what he called the “Fleet Street” element established a *modus operandi* for dealing with staff who were no longer welcome which outlasted his editorship. This, I think, has had a profound effect on news values, as the final reference point for these were defined by favoured personalities. There were those who stayed on under Owen’s editorship who felt the benefit of his attempts at re-education. Well I remember Owen castigating the news editor for ignoring a story out of *Laudium* the previous week, about a psychiatrist’s

wife who had been tortured and murdered. The story broke on a Saturday evening, but was ignored by the news editor – like me, a survivor from the Myburgh era -- for the next day's newspaper. At conference on Tuesday, Owen angrily, snide-ly, sarcastically, accused him of racism. The news editor had ignored the story because it involved an Indian woman, rather than a white one, Owen said, and quite rightly so. It was in ways like these that you knew news values were changing, because in the Myburgh era that story would have been confined only to the Indian Extra supplement. Owen was furious that these sort of preconceptions were still prevalent on the shop room floor, and he would be ruthless in eradicating them from the hearts and minds of his staff, if not the staff themselves.

Owen, however, was within range of pensionable age, and had a brief to hand over the newspaper to someone who would guide it towards a so-called black editor. That duty fell on Owen's deputy, Brian Pottinger, who did what was expected, and eventually made way for Mike Robertson after only a year or two or three. Pottinger lacked Owen's – rudeness? aggression? – but he was likeable enough, and pleasant to work with. He was hard-working, diligent and fair, a prodigy of Fleur de Villiers, as I recall, and his intellectual reputation was enhanced by a biography he had written of PW Botha. But he seemed to be there mainly to hold the fort until something/someone else came along. Pottinger, as Owen's deputy and heir apparent, proclaimed his forthcoming editorship by organizing South Africa's first expedition to the summit of Mount Everest in 1996. No South Africans had been allowed there before, and as much as anything else this expedition was an attempt by Pottinger to proclaim the Sunday Times' new news values. This project somewhat backfired, though, because Pottinger had not done enough background checks on those to whom he was entrusting the expedition. The expedition did, however, include "black" participants – it would have been unthinkable that it should not – so we can take that as another small example of the newspaper's evolving news values. The story did not quite pan out as expected and ended rather tragically. In the end, though, it did become a "good story," in the sense that journalists use the term, but certainly not in the way Pottinger intended. This just goes to show how news values can acquire a life of their own, sometimes.

Robertson had a vision of the Sunday Times as serving a new middle class, and would often articulate his desire to see stories illustrating this, fairly explicitly. Black people moving up into the ranks, the so-called black diamonds, were now the prize targets, the Patrick Motsepes and Tokyo Sexwales of South Africa's new order. Robertson was also keen on pursuing the CEO of South African Airways, Khaya Ngqula, for Ngqula's high-living ways and a house in the south of France. I always found this amusing because Robertson, after his appointment as editor, was himself able to afford a house in the south of France. The attraction of Ngqula was not so much his impropriety but the pretext this gave for fulfilling the Sunday Times' long-standing fascination with lifestyles of the rich and famous. It has served the newspaper well, from the Mervis era to the current one. I was no longer in the Johannesburg office when Robertson's time to go upstairs (ie, promoted as publisher) came along, so am not entirely sure what brought this about. I know that he was criticized – particularly by Owen – for being a poor editor, but am not sure exactly why, only in a general sense perhaps. However, insofar as values are concerned, Robertson's ones were neither particularly focused on democracy or patriotic virtues. As he himself said, his priority was to change the racial composition of the

newspaper, but it was a process that has handled in spectacularly bad fashion, leading to the debacle over Mathata Tsedu's demise as the newspaper's editor. That whole episode was pretty much an example of how the editor's personal news values were unacceptable to the publisher's. I don't think the newspaper has really recovered from this episode. Not enough is invested in journalism, and far too much on keeping chosen people close and loyal to the publisher. Even those still in control of the newspaper acknowledge that the paper is in trouble, and is something that this report, by the Institute for Advancement of Journalism deals with:

[http://www.journalism.co.za/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1933&Itemid=51](http://www.journalism.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1933&Itemid=51)

However, this report is inadequate, largely because its authors interviewed only Sunday Times people still working there, and not those who had left in recent years. Many of those now exiled would give a far more perceptive account of the newspaper's demise, and would not be afraid of offending the current editor, Mondli Makhanya, who himself is terrified of offending the publisher (Robertson), lest what befell Tsedu should befall him too. The whole upheaval over Tsedu's editorship (between Robertson's and Makhanya's) brought home that the dominant values on the Sunday Times had less to do with news than they did with its staffing. Tsedu had some pretty strong ideas about what he wanted to do with the newspaper, after he took over from Robertson, but they would have destroyed the newspaper had Tsedu been allowed free rein. I doubt he would have been able to rebuild it into something stable, so he had to go, and the revolt against his editorship was led and waged by those loyal to Robertson. Tsedu wanted a black African identity for the newspaper which would have made a profound break with its tradition of and devotion to middle-class aspiration, a priority to which the Sunday Times has remained consistently devoted. In any case, Tsedu had not thought out his priorities thoroughly enough. For someone who wanted to revolutionise the newspaper he did not do enough politicking and homework, building up allies and alliances, as all his predecessors had done before him, from the Myburgh era onwards at least.

The above should suggest to you to that I probably do not agree that the emergence of democracy in South Africa necessarily had some kind of transforming power over the news values of the Sunday Times. Had South Africa not headed for democracy in its current form, but adopted some other post-apartheid model, I cannot think that the basic news values would be any different than what they are now. Much in the way that Myburgh's Sunday Times was beholden to the late-apartheid government, the new version of the newspaper has allowed itself to be aligned too, particularly in relation to the rise and fall and rise of Jacob Zuma (watch that space). The demonization of Zuma in the Sunday Times (and elsewhere) probably provided the single biggest contribution to the general sense of disbelief when Zuma was elected president of the ANC, after all. If ever you want to consider a case of misplaced values, the coverage of Zuma's political career is replete with examples. Furthermore, that South Africa's next president is almost certain to be someone as compromised as Zuma, solely by virtue of the fact that he has been chosen the ANC's president, raises profound questions about the nature of South Africa's democracy. At the very least you have to say it is flawed. Unless Zuma directly targets the media (which he may well do) if and when he becomes president (which he may not) I can only guess what effect this might have on the news values of the South African media.

Ends

### 13. Interview with Andrew Trench

Andrew Trench ITV November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008

Worked at the Sunday Times between 1995 to 2005 as a local government reporter and held various positions including London correspondent, a correspondent in Pretoria and ran a couple of bureaus in Cape Town and Durban.

Political beliefs: Like any journalists, liberal left of centre.

In the early 90's, I worked in the Eastern Cape where two homelands were located – Transkei and Ciskei and it was under military dictatorship, so it was a minefield to navigate – two banana republics on either side of the South African strip. A lot of South African consensus legislation was in full effect.

Q: What were the values at the time?

A: Under Ken Owen, the newspaper followed the liberal Western tradition. The general values were consistent like of course the newspaper being a critical watchdog, to support a multi-party universal franchise, but it wasn't an aggressive critic of authority. The independent watchdog value has been at the heart of it. From 1995 to 2005, there was a lot more of an attempt to understand government's agenda and to be receptive to critique from the ANC, but not to surrender the watchdog role, but to remain critical. I won't say the values mitigated, but more of an overt effort to open our ears to their voices because there was a lot of criticism of the press at the time, such as are we reporting fairly? There has been a shift in the value system. The agenda of government has filtered through, like reporting on poverty had fallen outside of the mainstream press and now they have filtered in.

The core values haven't changed, probably become more textured and broader. The press, following criticism has listened to government, but its not forsaking its watchdog role

Q: If you believe the same values under apartheid still apply, would you agree with the statement that the advent of democracy has had no bearing in shifting the news values of journalists at the paper?

A: I partly agree. There has been a shifting in the value system. The agenda of government has filtered through, like reporting on poverty had fallen outside of the mainstream press and now they have filtered in.

The core values haven't changed, probably become more textured and broader. The press following criticism has listened to government, but its not forsaking its watchdog role.

Q: The perception is that The Sunday Times was a staunch critic of the apartheid establishment. Do you agree?

A Yes, in the era I was in yes.

Q: Do you believe that its role as a critic of the establishment continues today?

A: Yes without a doubt.

Q: Subliminal racism charge. Do you believe that negative coverage amounted to racism?

A: I don't. There was vigorous debate. The Braude report was not regarded with a great deal of debate. It did elicit a lot of debate, like drafting a code. It provoked some soul searching.

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