

**DAILY STRUGGLES: PRIVATE PRINT MEDIA, THE STATE,
AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN ZIMBABWE IN THE
CASE OF THE *AFRICAN DAILY NEWS* (1956-1964) AND THE
DAILY NEWS (1999-2003)**

BY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis employs Jurgen Habermas' theory of public sphere as an analytical tool to consider the role played by two popular private newspapers in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe, one case from colonial Rhodesia and the other from the post-colonial era. It argues that, functioning under repressive political regimes and in the absence of credible opposition political parties or as a platform for opposition political parties, the *African Daily News*, between 1956-1964 and the *Daily News*, between 1999-2003, played a fundamental role in opening up spaces for political freedom in the country. Each was ultimately shut down by the respective government of the time. The newspapers allowed reading publics the opportunity to participate in politics by providing a daily analytical alternative, to that offered by the government and the state media, in relation to the respective political crises that unfolded in each of these periods. The thesis examines both the information policies pursued by the different governments and the way these affected the functioning of private media in their quest to provide an 'ideal' public sphere. It explores issues of ownership, funding and editorial policies in reference to each case and how these affected the production of news and issue coverage. It considers issues of class and geography in shaping public response. The thesis also focuses on state reactions to the activities of these newspapers and how these, in turn, affected the activities of private media actors. Finally, it considers the cases together to consider the meanings of the closing down of these newspapers during the two eras under discussion and contributes to the debates about print media vis-a-vis the new forms of media that have come to the fore.

PREFACE

The research findings presented in thesis were carried out in the School of Social Sciences, Howard Campus, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, from March 2011 to March 2014 under the supervision of Dr. Thembisa Waetjen. This study is a product of my original research and has not been submitted to any other tertiary institution.

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DECLARATION

This research has not been previously accepted for any degree and is not being currently considered for any other degree at any other university. I declare that this thesis contains my own work except where specifically acknowledged.

Signed: Sylvester Dombo

Date 11 March 2014

Signed Thembisa Waetjen

Date

DEDICATION

In memory of my loving mother Angeline Dombo

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
ANC	African National Congress
BSAC	British South Africa Company
CAP	Central African Party
CFU	Commercial Farmers Union
CNC	Chief Native Commissioner
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
LOMA	Law and Order Maintenance Act
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MMPZ	Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe
MP	Member of Parliament
NAD	Native Affairs Department
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
NDP	National Democratic Party
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
RF	Rhodesia Front
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UFP	United Federal Party
UNIP	National Independence Party
URP	United Rhodesia Party
UZ	University of Zimbabwe
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
ZNP	Zimbabwe National Party

INTRODUCTION:

PRINT MEDIA AND POLITICS IN ZIMBABWE

Introduction

This thesis compares and charts the lives and times of two privately owned daily newspapers in a southern African country to consider the relationship between the state and the private press in two different periods of political crisis. It focuses on the interface between the state and the private owned newspapers in colonial Rhodesia and post-independence Zimbabwe: the *African Daily News* (1956-1964) and the *Daily News* (1999-2003) respectively. The historical account presented here helps to explain the lack of trust and a continued enmity between the state and the independent press, especially in situations where state legitimacy is questioned. The title, ‘daily struggle’, refers to the daily newspapers’ difficult operating environment under both colonial and post-colonial regimes. Such struggles are, in the case of the *African Daily News* and the *Daily News*, closely related to the democratic aspirations of the majority of the country’s citizens. Broadly, this thesis analyses what happens to a newspaper when it resists and opposes state power, as well as the reasons behind such opposition, and also what happens to state power when it suppresses the voice of the fourth estate. Such a study helps to round out historical understandings of the struggle for democracy in Southern Rhodesia and/Zimbabwe before and after independence respectively, and helps our understanding of how the media shapes and is shaped by the struggle. The two dailies, belonging to two distinct historical epochs, with seemingly differing aspirations, and operating with different business models and ownership structures, share the same fate: they got into serious troubles with the state.

In pre-independence Zimbabwe the *African Daily News* ran afoul of the colonial government, particularly under the premiership of Ian Smith. Then in independent Zimbabwe, the *Daily News* was forced to close by Smith’s one-time nemesis and new head of state, Robert Mugabe. Through comparing the experiences of these newspapers, this thesis looks at the political debates that took centre-stage during the so called ‘multiple crisis’ in Zimbabwean history.¹ Though in different periods, the crises experienced and presented by the two

¹ Amanda Hammer and Brian Raftopoulos, *Zimbabwe’s Unfinished Business: Rethinking land, state and nation in the context of crisis*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2003.

newspapers were commonly centred around constitutionalism, the land issue, multi-partyism, segregation, popular actions by trade union organisations and, most importantly, political leadership in the country. Focusing on these issues extends our understanding of how democracy is negotiated during the two epochs.

Media and Democracy in Africa

Quite a number of authors have pioneered studies of media in the colonial period in Africa. Collectively, they have shown that freedoms of expression and access to media were not universal rights and that the politics of anti-colonial nationalism was, in part, a struggle by previously excluded people to benefit from liberal democracy and the rights associated with it. In a 1979 study of the press in Africa, Frank Barton captured the rise and the fate of the press in Africa from colonial times up to early independence. He argued that whilst nationalist leaders were keen to deploy the press for their agendas, they were quick to silence the very same press at independence. For him the paradox of the press in Africa was that as ‘political freedom came to the Continent, so did press freedom disappear’.² Two decades later, Gunilla Farringer captured the important political roles played by nationalist-owned media in ideological mobilization and advocating national unity in Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya during the struggle for independence.³ After the attainment of independence, Farringer argues that nationalist leaders sought to deploy the press to promote social, cultural and economic development. This he termed ‘developmental journalism’.⁴ Like Barton, Farringer points out that attempts to deploy the press for developmental purposes was in conflict with independent, objective and critical news reporting and as such the press in Africa became heavily censored by the leaders in spite of promises to guarantee press freedom. Such observation by the two scholars has to be tested within the Zimbabwean context, to determine what kind of journalism the new independent government expected, how it affected the practice of journalism in the country, and more importantly, how the journalists responded to such state expectation.

Comparing press developments in Francophone and Anglophone Africa, Francis Nyamnjoh argues that in Francophone Africa, colonial administrative control, censorship and other restrictions severely hampered the birth and growth of a vibrant press of the type remarkable

² Frank Barton, *The Press of Africa*, McMillan, London, 1979, p. ix.

³ Gunilla L. Farringer, *Press Freedom in Africa*, Praeger, New York, 1991.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. x-xi.

in Anglophone Africa.⁵ In Nigeria, the privately owned press provided nationalists like Nnamdi Azikwe with a formidable platform to articulate claims for independence to such an extent that the colonial government likened this press to a plague.⁶ William A. Hachten, in a book published in the early 1990s, which analysed the press in Anglophone Africa, argues that although the independent press had played a crucial role in the struggle for independence, it collapsed due to two factors; political control and economic performance of African countries. His study is also a comparison of the growth of the media in Africa with that in Asia, and the author stresses that, in Africa, the press lagged behind in its growth because new independent governments did not want independent and critical newspapers.⁷ Thus, as Goran Hyden and M. Leslie⁸ observe, the print media acted as mouthpieces of democratic reform, yet they were silenced at independence. Can this pattern of events be discernible in the Zimbabwean context?

The colonies and republics that would merge as unified South Africa in 1910 laid the foundation of the birth and growth of the media in southern Africa region. Les Switzer and Donna Switzer situate the origins of the 'black press' in mission and religious concerns that were increasingly politicized as a 'black voice' over time.⁹ Detailed and case studies were taken up in key works by Irwin Stanley Manoim¹⁰, Tim Couzens¹¹, Les Switzer¹², Mohamed Adhikari and Les Switzer¹³ and Keyan Tomaselli & Eric Louw¹⁴, providing a more theoretical and conceptual basis for the study of the press in southern Africa. Manoim examined ways in which big Afrikaans capital affected the development of black newspapers

⁵ F. B. Nyamnjoh, *Africa's Media: Democracy and the Politics of Belonging*, Zed Books, London, 2005, p. 40.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ William A. Hachten, *The Growth of the Media in the Third world: African Failures, Asian Successes*, Iowa State University Press, Iowa, 1993, p. ix.

⁸ Hyden, G., Leslie, M. & Ogundimu, F. F. (eds.), *Media and Democracy Africa*, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala, 2002.

⁹ L. Switzer and D. Switzer, *The Black Press in South Africa and Lesotho: A Descriptive bibliographic guide to African, Coloured and Indian Newspapers, newsletters and magazines, 1836-1976*, G. H. Hall & Co., Boston, 1979.

¹⁰ I. S. Manoim, 'The Black Press 1945-1963: The growth of the black mass media and their role as ideological disseminators', Unpublished Master of Arts, University of Witwatersrand, 1983.

¹¹ T. Couzens, 'History Black Press in South Africa', seminar paper presented at the University of Witwatersrand Institute for Advanced Social Science Research, September 1984.

¹² L. Switzer (ed.), *South Africa's Alternative Press: Voices of Protest and Resistance, 1880-1960*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997.

¹³ L. Switzer and M. Adhikari, *South Africa's Resistance Press: Alternative Voices in the last Generation under Apartheid*, Ohio University Center for International Studies, Ohio, 2000.

¹⁴ K. Tomaselli & E. P. Louw (eds.), *The alternative Press in South Africa*, Athropos Publishers, Bellville, 1991.

and magazines like *Drum* and the *Post*.¹⁵ Couzens, Switzer and Adhikari demonstrate the transformative impact that the African/Independent press had on South Africa.

With a focus further north, Francis P. Kasoma's article on the role played the media in Zambia's transformation from a one-party state to multi-party politics is also important for this study as it shows how alternative newspapers like the *National Mirror* publicized news, views and events of marginalized political actors, thereby creating conditions necessary for the triumph of democracy.¹⁶ Juma Nyirenda, also writing on the Zambian transformation to multi-party politics, discusses the impact of media ownership, control and freedom in covering multi-party politics. He shows that during one-party state rule, various newspapers like the *Zambian Daily Mail* and the *Times of Zambia* acted as a mouthpiece for the Kaunda government since it was the main shareholder but that after his fall, the press reported more boldly on government performance, public criticism of it and denunciation of its abuses of power.¹⁷ The same ideas were raised by Kenny Mukungu who argued that the Zambian media at independence had been shaped and moulded to pander to the whims of the United National Independence Party (UNIP) and its government under Kenneth Kaunda.¹⁸ With regards to Namibia, William Heuva discusses the labour of the media in resistance against South Africa's rule between 1960 and 1990.¹⁹ Heuva focused on how Namibians used the alternative press to disseminate alternative images of life under apartheid.²⁰ Heuva's study provides an account of the emergence and use of the alternative means of communication such as the nationalist, community, labour, church and student press to provide a counter-narrative to the propaganda provided by the colonizers to justify the apartheid system. The essence of the present study is to look at two alternative newspapers in the history of

¹⁵I. S. Manóim, *The black press 1945-1963*, p. 6.

¹⁶Francis P. Kasoma, 'Zambian Media and the Change to Multi-Party Politics: Lessons for Africa', in R. Zhuwarara, K. Gecau & M. Drag (eds.), *Media, Democratization and Identity*, English Department, University of Zimbabwe, 1997, p. 117.

¹⁷Juma Nyirenda, 'Media ownership, control and freedom in the coverage of Multi-Party politics in Zambia', in R. Zhuwarara, K. Gecau & M. Drag (eds.), *Media, Democratization and Identity*, English Department, University of Zimbabwe, 1997, p. 129.

¹⁸ Kenny Mukungu, 'The Media Struggles in Zambia: The need for a unified policy on Press Freedom', *Africa Media Review*, Vol. 12, no. 1, 2004, p. 14.

¹⁹W. Heuva, *Media and Resistance Politics: The Alternative Press in Namibia, 1960-1990*, P. Schlettwein Publishing, Basel, 2001.

²⁰*Ibid.*

Zimbabwe and examine how they have provided counter-narratives to first the colonial government and later the ZANU PF government.

In 2001, J. M. Barker discussed the Windhoek Declaration on ‘Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press’, arguing that the region lacks policies for the promotion of comprehensive, in-depth and impartial news and information coverage at the local level.²¹ The Declaration signed on the 3rd of May 1991 provides principles for free, independent and pluralistic media in both the public and private sectors Southern Africa. It acknowledges that a free media is essential to the development and maintenance of democracy in a nation. The Declaration defines an independent press as free from governmental, political or economic control, or from controls of materials and infrastructure essential for the production and dissemination of newspapers, magazines and periodicals. The Declaration also championed a pluralistic society where a number of newspapers, magazines and periodicals reflected a wide range of opinions within a community. With Zimbabwe being a signatory to the Windhoek Declaration, my study on the *Daily News* is therefore an evaluation of how committed the country has been to the principles of having a free, independent and pluralistic society. Regionally, therefore, there exist numerous studies that focus primarily on media and how it has contributed to progressive change, despite draconian government restrictions.

The Concept of Democracy in Africa

The notion of democracy, especially in diverse African contexts, has been contested by scholars, civics and politicians alike. According to Lloyd Sachikonye, democracy in contemporary discourse has ‘become associated with a political system in which multi-partyism exists, periodic free and fair elections based on universal suffrage are conducted, and press freedom, human rights and the rule of law guaranteed’.²² This is usually construed as political democracy. This democracy in its most basic sense entails political pluralism, based on constitutional arrangements. Under such a political set up freedoms of speech, assembly, religion are guaranteed as well as the right to private property, equality before the law and the observation of the rule of law.

²¹J. M. Barker, ‘Is no policy a Policy Goal?’, in K. Tomaselli & H. Dunn (eds.), *Media, Democracy and Renewal in Southern Africa*, International Academic Publishers, Colorado, 2001, p. 16.

²² Lloyd M. Sachikonye, ‘Democracy, Civil Society and Social Movements: An Analytical Framework’, in Lloyd Sachikonye (ed.), *Democracy, Civil Society and the State: Social Movements in Southern Africa*, SAPES, Harare, 1994, p. 1.

Liberal democracy, an ideal with a Western origin, has generated criticism by scholars, who debate its appropriateness and difficulties of implementation in Africa. One critique of the western liberal democracy that resonates with the African situation in general and Zimbabwe in particular, has been raised by Gills and Rocamora. As quoted in Sachikonye, these authors argue that

Democracy requires more than the maintenance of formal liberties...without substantial reforms and redistribution of economic assets, representative institutions – no matter how ‘democratic’ in form – will simply mirror undemocratic power relations of society. Democracy requires a change in the balance of forces in society.²³

Considering that most African nations are products of colonialism, which entrenched many kinds of inequalities, such criticisms of western liberal democracy are pertinent. Writing on the Zimbabwean context, Ibbo Mandaza and Lloyd Sachikonye point out the fact that since colonialism was imposed over much of Asia and Africa, this exposes the limitations of the democratic model touted by the Western powers. Colonialism entailed the expropriation of land, the forcible extraction of taxes and labour power and the exclusion of the colonised peoples from political and decision-making processes.²⁴ Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja points out that in fighting colonialism, African nationalists expected that independence would usher in a new era of freedom and material prosperity.²⁵ Colonialism was inherently undemocratic in wealth distribution and on issues of the fundamental freedoms. By fighting the colonialists, African people were hoping to establish a society that respects both political and economic rights. However, in independent Africa, failures to address political and economic rights of the formerly oppressed and marginalised have exposed the weaknesses of these ideals. For many, democracy should include provisions for redistribution of the means of production, such as land and industry.

Many African scholars have without reservations argued that liberal democracy have failed in Africa.²⁶ Archie Mafeje has asserted that in some independent African countries like Kenya and South Africa that have implemented liberal democracy there is neither participatory

²³ *Ibid*, p. 3.

²⁴ I. Mandaza and L. M. Sachikonye, ‘Introduction: The Zimbabwe debate on the one-party state and democracy’, in I. Mandaza and L. Sachikonye (eds.), *The One Party State and Democracy*, SAPES Books, Harare, 1991, p. 4.

²⁵ Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, ‘The State and Democracy in Africa’ in Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja and Margaret C. Lee (eds.), *The State and Democracy in Africa*, Africa World Press, Inc., Asmara, 1997, p. 1.

²⁶ See Lloyd Sachikonye (eds.), *Democracy, Civil Society and the State: Social Movements in Southern Africa*, SAPES Books, Harare, 1995; Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo (eds.), *Liberal Democracy and its critiques in Africa: Political Dysfunction and the Struggle for Social Progress*, CODESRIA, Dakar, 2005.

democracy nor better access to means of livelihood. This has led to a rise in advocacy for the adoption of what Ernest Wamba-dia-Wamba calls an Afro-centric democracy that relies on traditional mechanism such as village palavers and lineage assemblies. Scholars like Claude Ake, Archie Mafeje Lloyd Sachikonye and Wamba-dia-Wamba, among others, have attacked liberal democracy for being too elitist in character. Besides being elitist, Abdul Raufu Mustapha and Lindsay Whitfield have also attacked the use of liberal democracy as a yardstick for normative comparison to determine whether a state is democratic or not. This they argue does not work as some of the so-called mature democracies sometimes fall short of the same standards they prescribe to African countries.²⁷ Pointing out that liberal democracy focuses narrowly on abstract rights, and that it is inimical to the idea of the people having effective decision making power, Ake lobbied for what he termed a 'social democracy' that places emphasis on concrete political, social and economic rights.²⁸ In the same vein, Sachikonye believes in substantive forms of democracy which allow for popular participation in political and economic control and decision-making.²⁹ What is emerging from such an articulation of democracy by Sachikonye and Ake is that focus should be on the ordinary people and their daily quest for survival in addition to them exercising their political rights. Thus, there is the need to replace liberal democracy with social democracy. According to Mafeje, social democracy refers to equitable distribution of power and means of livelihood among all members of the society.³⁰ Mafeje argues that this kind of democracy has as its referent people and their well being as citizens.

Harry Englund also argues that liberal democracy cannot work in Africa since the majority of Africa's population remain excluded from opportunities for economic advancement, and the fact that when multi-party elections are held, they are easily manipulated to legitimise oppressive power.³¹ Englund further asks whether it is enough or even necessary to tie the definition of democracy to the holding of periodic multi-party elections and to basic freedoms such as of association and worship.³² Such questions are pertinent if one looks at the

²⁷ Abdul Raufu Mustapha and Lindsay Whitfield, 'African Democracy: The Journey so far', in Abdul Raufu Mustapha and Lindsay Whitfield, *Turning Points in African Democracy*, James Currey, London, 2009, p. 4.

²⁸ Claude Ake, *Democracy and Development in Africa*, The Brooking Institution, Washington, D. C, 1996, p. 132.

²⁹ Lloyd Sachikonye, 'Introduction', in Lloyd Sachikonye (eds.), *Democracy, Civil Society and the State: Social Movements in Southern Africa*, SAPES, Harare, 1994, p. 1.

³⁰ Archie Mafeje, *Democracy, Civil Society and Good Governance in Africa*, p. 8.

³¹ Harri Englund, 'Introduction: Recognising Identities, Imagining alternatives', in Harri Englund and Francis B. Nymanjoh (eds.), *Rights and the Politics of Recognition in Africa*, Zed Books, London, 2004, p. 15.

³² *Ibid.*

Zimbabwean setting during and after the colonial period where inequalities exist(ed) and elections were held for expediency. It is within this context that Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo has attacked liberal democracy and offered what he thought should be an ideal democracy:

Democracy should be a struggle against social inequalities, injustices, exploitation and social miseries. Democracy is more than formal political pluralism or the process of producing an electoral code or an electoral commission.³³

The above paragraphs have shown that liberal democracy is problematic to implement in Africa and that Afro-centric scholars are advocating for social democracy that recognises the rights of the people to substantive political and economic rights. In this thesis, I make use of this social democracy as my working definition as it combines political and civil rights with economic and social empowerment. Case studies of elections, referendum, workers' struggle for economic benefits and the need to redistribute wealth and the means of production are pursued in this thesis. I believe that these issues combine the major tenets of both liberal and social democracy. The Southern Rhodesian society was for all intents and purposes a racial society that had wealth and political power concentrated in the hands of the minority settlers. When independence was won, political power shifted to the black majority whilst the means of production remained in the hands of the settlers. For example, one overarching theme of the colonial and post-colonial era was the land issue. For the marginalised, there was need to redistribute this resource whilst for the settlers there was talk of the respect of private property. When democracy is perceived from the need to redistribute wealth, it resonates well with the poor in society who argue that for democracy to make sense, it must facilitate the attainment of the population's basic needs.³⁴ According to Wamba-dia-Wamba, the democratisation process must involve the emancipation of the people, and Horace Campbell is of the opinion that 'this position on democracy is a tremendous advance over the limited Western notions of monitoring elections'³⁵, which is usually invoked in Africa as democracy'.³⁶ According to Brian Raftopoulos, attempts to carry redistributive projects in post-colonial Zimbabwe have been construed by the state media as historical redress whilst

³³ Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo (ed.), *Liberal Democracy and its Critics in Africa: Political Dysfunction and the Struggle for Social Progress*, CODESRIA, Dakar, 2005, p.

³⁴ Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The State and Democracy in Africa*, p. 12

³⁵ Ernest Wamba-dia-Wamba, 'Beyond Elite Politics of Democracy in Africa', *Quest*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1992, p. 30.

³⁶ Horace Campbell, 'Democracy, Human Rights, and Peace in Africa', in Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja and Margaret C. Lee, *The State and Democracy in Africa*, Africa World Press, Inc., Asmara, 1997, p. 204.

the opposition have seen these as machinations of an authoritarian political figure.³⁷ It is in issues like these that debate on the role of the media in promoting democracy is discussed. In what ways would the private media cover such issues in the two different epochs under study? For the purposes of this study, I look at democracy beyond the dictates of liberal democracy. Looking at democracy from the standpoint of liberals and their critiques allows me the opportunity to have a balanced assessment of its implementation and the way the media helps or impinges the goals. It offers an opportunity to look at the concepts of civil society and how it helps us understand the role of the media in promoting democracy.

The debate on democracy has been studied recently in light of the rise of new media. The key questions have been, “to what extent does the mushrooming of new media contribute to the opening of the public sphere and the quality of democracy? What is the relationship between the old media and the new media?” F. Banda, O. Mudhai and W. Tettey in their work on *African Media and the Digital Public Sphere* have argued that new media have supplanted but by no means supplanted old media.³⁸ They further argue that the value of new media lie in the extent to which they enmesh with old media to provide multimedia platforms that allow for greater democratic participation, inclusion and expression.³⁹ Other scholars have contributed a great deal to evaluating the place of new media in the struggle for democracy. Herman Wasserman examines the role that popular media such as radio, television, the Internet, mobile phones, street posters and music can play in encouraging political debate as well as providing critical information for development.⁴⁰ Last Moyo has also focused on how news media, institutions, civic organisations and ordinary citizens in Zimbabwe are employing the Internet and cell phones in information-gathering, dissemination and presentation to promote democracy and human rights.⁴¹ In the same vein, Dumisani Moyo has also focused on what he terms citizen journalism. Moyo focused on how Zimbabweans made use of SMS and web logs to exchange information during the controversial delay in releasing the 2008 general election results. He argues that this new media contributed a great deal to the circulation of public opinion and to some extent influenced the way mainstream media covered the post

³⁷ Brian Raftopoulos, ‘The Zimbabwean crisis and the Challenges of the Left’, Public Lecture Presented at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, 23 June 2005.

³⁸ F. Banda, O. Mudhai and W. Tettey, ‘Introduction: New Media and Democracy in Africa – A Critical Interjection’, in F. Banda, O. Mudhai and W. Tettey (eds.), *African Media and the Digital Public Sphere*, Palgrave, London, 2009, p. 2.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Herman Wasserman, *Popular Media, Democracy and Development in Africa*, Taylor and Francis, 2010.

⁴¹ Last Moyo, ‘Repression, Propaganda and Digital Resistance: New Media and Democracy in Zimbabwe’, in F. Banda, O. Mudhai and W. Tettey (eds.), *African Media and the Digital Public Sphere*, Palgrave, London, 2009.

election period.⁴² What emerges from these studies is the importance of the new media as a medium of resistance against the rulers. However, whilst it has broadened the scope of the fight for democracy, it very much still works in tandem with the so-called old media.

Media, Civil Society, Democratisation and the State in Africa

One of the major drivers of the democratisation agenda in Africa has been the civil society. The contemporary role of African media in promoting civil society and the conceptualisation of civil society in the African context has both been unclear and problematic.⁴³ A brief look at civil society allows us to go further in our analysis of democracy besides focusing on the question of regular free and fair elections as well as the role of political parties. A study of civil society roles allows us to focus on other processes whereby democratically relevant politics are practised. The first question that demands our attention is whether the private media can be treated as part of the civil society and the extent to which the same civil society promotes democratisation. In the study of Ghana, Isaac Abeku Blankson shows how the independent media has positioned itself at the centre of the emerging Ghanaian civil society and has developed into an alternative power centre to the state.⁴⁴ In this way the private media is said to have encouraged and empowered other civil society groups to shed off the 'culture of silence' that has characterized them from decades of state control and suppression of press freedom and free speech.

Lloyd Sachikonye defines civil society as an aggregate of institutions whose members are engaged primarily in a complex of non-state activities – economic and cultural production, voluntary associations and household life – and who in this way preserve and transform their identity by exercising all sorts of pressures or controls upon state institutions.⁴⁵ Sachikonye further points out that civil society include such organisations as independent communications media among others.⁴⁶ Ronning also sees the media as part of civil society with the responsibility of facilitating a genuine commonwealth of forms life, tastes and

⁴² Dumisani Moyo, 'Citizen Journalism and Parallel Market of Information in Zimbabwe's 2008 Election', in *Journalism Studies*, 10, 4, 2009, p. 551.

⁴³ Isaac Abeku Blankson, 'Re-examining the Civil Society in emerging Sub-Sahara African Democracies: The State, the Media and the Public in Ghana', *Global Media Journal*, Vol. 1, Issue 1, 2002. <http://lass.purduecal.edu/cca/gmj/fa02/gmj-fa02-blankson.htm>. Accessed on 5 July 2013.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Sachikonye, 1995, p. 7

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

opinions to empower the citizens.⁴⁷ However, the characterisation of the media as part of the civil society has, according to Guy Berger, led to the romanticisation of the role of the civil society as good while that of the state as bad. Berger argues that the private media as part of the civil society may be part of the problem as journalists often engage in ‘journalism for sale’ or ‘cheque book journalism’ as well as sensationalistic disinformation.⁴⁸ Such a view had been raised by Lloyd Sachikonye in 1995 when he argued that some civil society organisations like the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) were obstructive to the democratic processes as was the case, under colonial rule, with the minority white settlers.⁴⁹

The question of legality and the advancement of human rights, in various contexts of news production, has also haunted the role of civil society organisations. Berger points out that

In Africa as elsewhere, the media as a civil society agent is often faced with the question of whether illegal actions (like stealing documents, misrepresenting identities, refusing to disclose sources) constitute a contribution to democracy or not. Pirate and rebel broadcasters, likewise, may sometimes be a democratic factor (as with the ANC’s Radio Freedom during Apartheid), and at other times undermine legitimate processes set up under a democratic state (as with UNITA’s radio Vorgan, Voice of the Resistance of the Black Cockerel). Difficult normative issues therefore come into play in assessing the role of civil society media. In the case of Rwandan hate radio, it is even questionable whether one would categorize it as qualified to be part of civil society.⁵⁰

These points are important for my study, both in reference to the colonial and post-colonial eras. As my study will show, during the colonial period after the banning of newspapers like the *African Daily News* and *Moto*, there was a rise in clandestine publications and radios sponsored by the nationalists that played a crucial role in the country’s quest for democracy. In the same vein, this happened after the banning of the *Daily News* in 2003 as there was a marked rise in clandestine papers and radios which again contributed as part of the civil society in checking state power. Classifying the media as part of civil society is interesting in the Zimbabwean case, especially when one is studying the post independent era. This is due to the fact that the major threat to the ZANU PF government has been civil society groups like the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) both of which led to the birth of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). These

⁴⁷ Helge Ronning, *Media and Democracy: Theories and Principles with Reference to an African context*, SAPES Books, Harare

⁴⁸ Guy Berger, ‘Theorizing the Democracy-Media relationship in Southern Africa’, *Gazette: The International Journal for Communication Studies*, vol. 64, 1, 2002, p. 26.

⁴⁹ Lloyd Sachikonye, ‘Civil Society, Social Movements and Democracy in Southern Africa’, *Innovation*, 8, 4, 1995, p. 401.

⁵⁰ Berger, 2002, p. 28.

three would find ready space to spread their message in private newspapers and as a result they were all labelled enemies of the state which received foreign funds to remove the ZANU PF government. Issues of regime change have always been deployed by authorities to justify their heavy handed crush of the private press in Africa. Alternatively, the incumbents have monopolised public media to curtail the democratisation process by deliberately misinforming, creating confusion thereby disadvantaging the opposition. There is therefore no clear way of defining 'the media' in a nation in which the state controls large segments of news making. But since we have alternative forms of news production, it implies the agency of the non-state actors outside of the civil society. This brings us to the issue of the role of the media in the quest for democracy in Zimbabwe.

State of Media Research in Zimbabwe

There is a corpus of literature that addresses the history of the Rhodesian press prior to the period my study is concerned with, but which is important for me as a background. Elaine Windrich, for example, wrote a number of articles on the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) period, focusing on censorship, propaganda and the making of a one party state in Rhodesia.⁵¹ While her work exposes the importance of the media in the curtailment of democracy, Windrich did not address how the same media was used by the Africans and other actors to further the goals of self-determination. The media used by the Africans include the missionary press, clandestine radios and nationalist papers as instruments for fighting colonial repression. Peter Godwin and Ian Hancock's *Rhodesians Never Die* also look at the control of the flow of information by the Rhodesian Front through the use of various legislations like Law and Order Maintenance Act, Official Secrets Act and the Censorship and Entertainment Control Act.⁵² These measures were used to alter news, stifle information and intimidate journalists. Julie Frederikse's work evaluates the role of white propaganda during the war of liberation, between 1972 and 1980. She argues that the colonial government aimed to control the minds of Africans through propaganda mass

⁵¹See E. Windrich, 'Controlling the media: Rhodesian style', in *Journal of Southern African Affairs*, Jan. 1980 and E. Windrich, 'Rhodesian Censorship: The role of the media in the making of a one-party state', *African Affairs*, vol. 78, no. 313, 1979.

⁵²P. Godwin & I. Hancock, *'Rhodesians never die': The impact of the war and political change on white Rhodesia*, Baobab Books, 1993.

media.⁵³ However, she says, the technologically superior mass media used by the whites could not defeat the Chimurenga⁵⁴ songs and clandestine mass meetings together with alternative information from opposition press that acted as a mouthpiece to the nationalists. In the same vein James Zaffiro's study on the media and democratisation in Zimbabwe is useful, as the author focussed on the motives, strategies and experiences of the different regimes that ruled the country since the 1930s.⁵⁵ My thesis takes these insights into account and assesses how the private print media fits into, or contradicts, these histories and findings.

With a focus on the time period my study is concerned with, another useful contribution to the literature on the media in Zimbabwe is Cecilia Chinembiri's masters' dissertation, focusing on the emergence of an African Press, which lays the foundation for a study of the press in Zimbabwean history.⁵⁶ Chinembiri argues that during the late 1930s and 1940s, the African press was dominated by the missionaries, who complemented the colonialists in their attack on the African culture at the expense of politics. My study tests this assertion, since it was the very same missionary papers that were transformed from 'collaborators' to 'enemies-of-the-state' in the early 1960s, when Africans began to clamour for self-rule. Non-print mediums have been important in Zimbabwean politics. Zaffiro's research was concerned with the use of broadcasting as a tool to build legitimacy in the face of challenges to the regimes concerned. Kudakwashe Manganga focused on the role of the internet as a form of media to articulate political views without fear of reprisals from an increasingly authoritarian state Manganga⁵⁷. He noted that, since 1999, government has been trying to articulate and sustain a 'grand' and 'dominant' narrative, resulting in the shrinking of the democratic space. Ragnar Waldahl's *Politics and Persuasion*⁵⁸, which focused on the media's coverage of the 2000

⁵³Frederikse, J., *None but ourselves masses vs. media in the making of Zimbabwe*, Heinemann, London, 1982.

⁵⁴ The word Chimurenga as used here means the struggle against colonial domination.

⁵⁵J. Zaffiro, *Media and Democracy in Zimbabwe, 1931-2002*, International Academic Publishers Ltd, Colorado Springs, 2002.

⁵⁶C. Chinembiri, 'The emergence of an African Press in colonial Rhodesia 1920-1940', M. A. African History, University of Zimbabwe, 1988.

⁵⁷Manganga, K., 'The Internet as Public Sphere: A Zimbabwean Case Study, 1999-2008', Paper Presented at the CODESRIA 12th General Assembly Governing the African Public Sphere, Yaoundé, Cameroon, 07-11/12/2008.

⁵⁸R. Waldahl, *Politics and Persuasion: Media coverage of Zimbabwe's 2000 election*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2004.

elections in Zimbabwe, is also important for this study in that it compares the role of the private media and the state media during election times.

Since the late 1980s, research in media and development and democratisation processes in Zimbabwe and Southern Africa have had a central place in the activities of the Department of Media and Communication at the University of Oslo. In 1993, a symposium was held at the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) jointly organised by the English Department at UZ and this Media department at Oslo. The symposium was held against the background of the end of the Cold War, the impending demise of the apartheid regime in South Africa, the liberalization trend taking place in the world and the winds of change blowing across Africa. This culminated in a research project in 1994 entitled, *Media and Democracy – Cultural and Political Change in Southern Africa*, funded by the Norwegian Research Council under the programme State and Society, Democracy and Political Change in the Third World.⁵⁹ This research project has produced quite a number of works on the media and democracy in Zimbabwe, particularly on the first two decades of independence. Claude Mararike focussed on the genesis and political use of the media in Southern Rhodesia where he argued that the role of the media in the early colonial period was to support the political ambition of Rhodes and the British interests. Mararike's work is of importance to my study as it charts the birth of opposition press, such as the *African Daily News* and the Catholic-run *Moto* as alternative media giving voice to the Africans. It provides grounding for my investigation of the impact and agency of this opposition press on the political landscape.

Some of the most interesting work to emerge from the UZ-OSLO partnership comes from Sarah Helen Chiumbu on democracy, human rights and the media. Locating her study within the broader context of what was happening in the region; Chiumbu argues that the end of apartheid in South Africa and the independence of Namibia generated debate over the freedom of the press and the role of the media.⁶⁰ She observes that the need for media freedom in the region was buttressed by the formation of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) in 1992. MISA was born as a result of the Windhoek Declaration on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press. The Declaration stresses that the 'establishment, maintenance and fostering of an independent, pluralistic and free press is

⁵⁹Preface', in Susan Manhando, *Broadcasting in a deregulated Southern Africa: Zimbabwe's Efforts to engage with Technological Changes in Electronic Media*, INK-report no.21, University of Oslo, 1997.

⁶⁰S. H. Chiumbu, 'Democracy, Human Rights and the Media', INK-report no. 23, University of Oslo, 1997, p. 49.

essential to the development and maintenance of democracy in a nation, and for economic development'.⁶¹ Another contribution, from Susan Manhando, looks at the role of radio broadcasting in southern Africa, focusing primarily on Zimbabwe.⁶² Whilst the work is primarily on broadcasting, it offers an interesting background on the control of the media by the state from the colonial period, which extended right into the late 1990s. The significance of these and other UZ-OSLO contributions lie in the fact that they give an account of the role of the media in the processes of democratisation in Africa, with special emphasis on Southern Africa, and also discusses the relevance of theories of media and democracy, the role of the civil society, and the divide between the rural and the urban in relation to theories of media and development. These texts help to build and strengthen a foundation for my own investigation, and allow me to situate my comparative study, and my investigation both of the earlier newspaper, and more particularly the conflict between the state and the media and civil society that has taken place since the UZ-Oslo project was completed. Thus, besides being comparative, my thesis also explores the period that followed that of the UZ-OSLO project.

There has been a rise in literature on media laws in Zimbabwe and how these have affected the quality of democracy in Zimbabwe after 1999. One such author is Geoffrey Feltoe, whose 2003 work looks at the origins of media laws in Zimbabwe and traces them to the colonial period.⁶³ He discusses the various laws passed from the colonial period up to 2003. Such laws include the Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA) (1960) and the Official Secrets Act passed in 1970 by Ian Smith's government and maintained by the Mugabe government.⁶⁴ The main argument proffered by Feltoe is that although the press cannot be afforded unlimited freedom it should not be restricted in a manner that destroys or entirely negates it.⁶⁵ By tracing the historical aspects of media law in Zimbabwe, Feltoe's work assists my research in that it provides a background that is indispensable in understanding the origins of laws that have been instrumental in limiting the media space in Zimbabwe. In a similar vein, Wallace Chuma's study has mapped out the media policy pursued by the Mugabe government up to

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Susan Manhando, *Broadcasting in a deregulated Southern Africa*, INK-report no.21, University of Oslo, 1997.

⁶³ Geoffrey Feltoe, *A Guide to Press Law in Zimbabwe*, Legal Resources Foundation, Harare, 2002.

⁶⁴ Geoffrey Feltoe, 'Media Laws in Zimbabwe', in G. Mudzongo et al, *Human Rights and the Media*, Human Rights Trust of Southern Africa, Harare, 2002, p. 91.

⁶⁵ Geoffrey Feltoe, 'Removing legal barriers to press freedom', in Rino Zhuwarara, Kimani Gecau and Mariana Drag (eds.), *Media, Democratisation and Identity*, Department of English, University of Zimbabwe, 1997, p. 76.

2004.⁶⁶ Chuma traces state developments in Zimbabwe and its relationship with the press from independence, arguing that the relationship has always been problematic, turning on factors located in both state and media. Chuma argues that at independence, although both the president and the minister of information claimed to be for press freedom, the government nonetheless maintained a litany of repressive legislations dealing with access to public information.⁶⁷

Wallace Chuma and Dumisani Moyo's recent book of essays focusing on policy-making in various media sectors outlines the context of media reform in the southern African region. The book contains two articles on Zimbabwe that are of special interest to my thesis. Focusing on reporting by the privately owned *The Standard* and *Short Wave Radio Africa* and the state owned *Sunday Mail* and *Newsnet*, Last Moyo argues that these media houses reflect positional and unbalanced reporting of Zimbabwe's crisis.⁶⁸ The result of such reporting, Moyo argues, makes Zimbabwean journalism propagandistic, boring, uninformative and predictable. He characterises reporting by the state media as patriotic journalism and that of the private media as anti-establishment and that these two made the media in Zimbabwe an active participant in the crisis. Wallace Chuma's chapter dwelt on media reforms in the post 2000 period when the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe became pronounced. He focuses on the passage of such draconian legislations as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) (2002), Broadcasting Services Act (2001) and Public Order and Security Act (POSA) (2002). Chuma further argues that the post 2000 media and communication policies in Zimbabwe coupled with power was skewed in favour of the owners of the newspapers (state and private) led to the decline and fall of professionalism within the journalism sector. This contributed to propaganda, hate language and a general disregard for journalistic ethics at the behest of the media owners.⁶⁹ Following the ideas and findings by Chuma and Moyo, my study applies their analytical framework to study both the

⁶⁶ Wallace Chuma, 'Liberating or Limiting the Public Sphere? Media Policy and the Zimbabwean Transition, 1980-2004', B. Raftopoulos and T. Savage (eds.), *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*, Zimbabwe Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, Cape Town, 2004.

⁶⁷ Wallace Chuma, 2004, p. 125.

⁶⁸ Last Moyo, 'The dearth of public debate: Policy, polarities and positional reporting in Zimbabwe's news media', in Wallace Chuma and Dumisani Moyo, *Media policy in a changing Southern Africa: Critical Reflections on media reforms in the global age*, UNISA Press, Pretoria, 2010.

⁶⁹ Wallace Chuma, 'Reforming the Media in Zimbabwe', in Wallace Chuma and Dumisani Moyo, *Media policy in a changing Southern Africa: Critical Reflections on media reforms in the global age*, UNISA Press, Pretoria, 2010.

African Daily News and the *Daily News* within the context of the crisis in the country and the draconian legislations the newspapers operated under.

Stanford Mukasa also looked at the development of the media in Zimbabwe since colonial times where he categorises such development into three eras; namely, the colonial/nationalist (pre-1980), the transitional (1980-1990) and the post-transitional since 1990.⁷⁰ In all the three eras, Mukasa investigates the relationship between, and the impact of, the ideological and socio-political environment of the country on the editorial policies and practices of the press.⁷¹ He also argues that despite the fact that the ZANU PF led government has always argued that the press was free after independence, it soon became clear that the government regarded the media as an important apparatus in extending and maintaining its political legitimacy.⁷² Though important for this study, the work was published before new dimensions in state-media relations manifested as the political and economic history of the country took a dramatic turn after 2000. The period after 2000 offers new dynamics for students of the media as the state was becoming increasingly reactionary while the private media was becoming more radical. The same is also true of Richard Saunders' study entitled, *Dancing out of Tune: A History of the Media in Zimbabwe*.⁷³ Saunders make a lot of interesting observations on the operations of the press in Zimbabwe after independence and the changes brought about by the economic downturn of the 1990s. He focuses on instances after independence where journalists in the state media managed to expose the shortcomings of the government in spite of the media controls that existed at the time.

Biographical and autobiographical works by media personalities and practitioners have been on the rise recently. These have focused on the personal experiences of journalists concerned within the broader political environments in which they operated. The most common and popular is entitled, *Against the Grain: Memoirs of a Zimbabwean Journalist*.⁷⁴ The book traces the life story of Geoff Nyarota, who was to become the founder of the *Daily News*. It highlights his experience at the paper and the challenges he and his staff faced. Another work by Zimbabwean journalists is *Journalists or 'Enemies of the State': Onslaught on the*

⁷⁰ Mukasa, Stanford, 'Press and Politics in Zimbabwe', *African Studies Quarterly* 7, nos 1 & 2: [online] URL: <http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v7/v7i2a9.htm>: Accessed 10 January 2013.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Richard Saunders, *Dancing out of tune: A History of the Media in Zimbabwe*, R. Saunders, 1999.

⁷⁴ Geoffrey Nyarota, *Against the Grain: Memoirs of a Zimbabwean Newsman*, Zebra Press, Cape Town, 2006.

Zimbabwean Media, 2000-2005.⁷⁵ As the name suggests, the book captures the trauma and pain endured by Zimbabwean journalists who were affected by the systematic media onslaught orchestrated by the ZANU-PF government between 2000 and 2005. Other trade books and personal accounts have been produced by foreign journalists who have tended to write on the personality of Zimbabwean president, Robert Mugabe. The most prominent of these is David Blair's *Degrees in violence* whose title was derived from Mugabe's boasting that ZANU PF had degrees in political violence.⁷⁶ A book produced by Martin Meredith (deported from Zimbabwe for working without a licence) comprised a 'biography' on Mugabe, his rise to power and the way he deployed violence to stay in power.⁷⁷ Another important book was by Heidi Holland whose account is of Mugabe's transmogrification from freedom fighter to tyrant.⁷⁸

Other studies in Zimbabwe have focused exclusively on the discipline of democracy without any reference to the media. The most important of these is a collection of essays in an edited book by Ibbo Mandaza and Lloyd Sachikonye.⁷⁹ The book deals specifically with the one-party state debate in Zimbabwe and looks at the pros and cons of having such a political system in Zimbabwe. The collection has allowed my study to get to grips with the perceptions of democracy in an African setting as well as the key players in the democratisation struggle in Zimbabwe. Alfred G. Nhema's comprehensive *Democracy in Zimbabwe from Liberation to Liberalization*⁸⁰ also examines the government-civil society relations from the colonial period right up to 2000. He argues that both colonial and post-colonial governments have been trying to co-opt civil societies in order to cripple them. His treatment of the role of the media is peripheral, yet he asserts that 'where political parties fail to provide an effective opposition to the ruling party, whether through fragmentation or inexperience, such opposition may need to come from the media'. With a specific focus on

⁷⁵ Bornwell Chakaodza and ZUJ, *Journalists or 'Enemies of the state: Onslaught on the Zimbabwean Media, 2000-2005*, Zimbabwe Union of Journalists, Harare, 2009.

⁷⁶ D. Blair, *Degrees in Violence: Robert Mugabe and the struggle for power in Zimbabwe*, Continuum International Publishing Group, London, 2002.

⁷⁷ M. Meredith, *Mugabe: Power, Plunder and Tyranny in Zimbabwe*, Jonathan Ball, 2002.

⁷⁸ H. Holland, *Dinner with Mugabe: The untold story of a freedom fighter who became a tyrant*, Penguin books, 2010.

⁷⁹ I. Mandaza and L. M. Sachikonye, 'Introduction: The Zimbabwe debate on the one-party state and democracy', in I. Mandaza and L. Sachikonye (eds.), *The One Party State and Democracy*, SAPES Books, Harare, 1991.

⁸⁰ A. G. Nhema, *Democracy in Zimbabwe: From Liberation to Liberalization*, University of Zimbabwe Publications, Harare, 2002.

media, my thesis makes an attempt to fill the gap he leaves open. Lloyd. Sachikonye's⁸¹ work on social movements in Southern Africa is also relevant to this study though it fails to contextualise the role of the media within social movements.

Studies on post-2000 Zimbabwe have also been on the rise, contributing to the understanding of the crisis and how it came about. An edited book by Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo attempted to present a history of Zimbabwe in one volume from the pre-colonial period to 2008⁸². Whilst the book covers the significant aspects of the history of the country and the factors that shaped it, it does not discuss how the media, especially the independent press, has shaped the history of the country. The contention of this thesis is that the processes that helped shape the history of Zimbabwe were multiple and the alternative media deserves to be investigated for the part it played. Blessing-Miles Tendi's impressive work on what has been termed 'patriotic history' by Ranger (2004) is also valuable for my own study.⁸³ Tendi discusses the role of public intellectuals aligned to ZANU PF who commented on politics in television discussion shows, prime time news, and in the government-owned press. These public intellectuals, according to Tendi, formulated conspiracy theories to explain local politics to delegitimize human rights and democracy claims by the people.⁸⁴ In the same vein, there were also public intellectuals who also used the independent press to counter the claims made by those intellectuals on government side. It is the contribution of these intellectuals that my thesis highlights, especially those who contributed to *The Daily News*.

In what ways have the private media in Zimbabwe played a role in creating new communicative spaces for people and organizations that have been previously intimidated or silent? How did these newspapers emerge and with what measurable impact? Who were the key players and what can we learn from their struggles and contributions? My historical exploration of the media in the politics of Zimbabwe will complement histories that focus on other aspects of civil society (e.g. trade unions), the judiciary, the church and the reform of institutions responsible for governance in the democratisation debate. And it will provide useful context to media studies approaches.

⁸¹ L. M. Sachikonye, 'State and Social Movements in Zimbabwe', in L. M. Sachikonye (ed.), *Democracy, Civil Society and the State: Social Movements in Southern Africa*, SAPES Books, Harare, 1995.

⁸² B. Raftopoulos & A. Mlambo (eds.), *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Pre-colonial Period to 2008*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2009.

⁸³ Blessing-Miles Tendi, *Making History in Mugabe's Zimbabwe: Politics, intellectuals, and the media*, Peter Lang A. G, International Academic Publishers, 2010.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

Theoretical Approaches

Various theories have been put forward to explain how the media behave in different political settings. One key theory has been advanced by Jurgen Habermas, whose seminal work relates to media and politics, focusing on the struggles for space between the powerful and the less powerful sections of the society. Jurgen Habermas, in his book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989), defines the public sphere as a discursive space in which individuals and groups congregate to discuss matters of mutual interest and, where possible, reach a common judgment by way of rational-critical debate. The bourgeois public sphere of 18th century Europe was, according to Habermas, a neutral social space independent of the public authority, made up of private people gathering together as a public to articulate the needs of society with the state.⁸⁵ The private citizens debated matters of common interest in a free, rational and disinterested way.⁸⁶ Habermas developed a normative model of the public sphere as a 'realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed.'⁸⁷ In his discussion of the public sphere, Habermas talks of the literary public sphere which contributed to the development of institutional bases which ranged from meeting places, to journals and to webs of social relationships. In Britain, there were coffee houses where businessmen met to discuss matters of trade and 'news' which was coming into ever-wider circulation.⁸⁸ In France, salons and public institutions located in private homes played a crucial role bridging a literary public sphere dominated by aristocrats with the emergent bourgeois political sphere. On the other hand, in Germany table societies drew together especially academics and other sorts of people.⁸⁹ In all these instances, Habermas identifies four special features of the public sphere. Firstly, there was a kind of social intercourse that far from presupposing the equality of status, disregarded status altogether.⁹⁰ Secondly, there was the notion that rational argument was the sole arbiter of any issue. In addition, discussions within such a public presupposed the problematisation of areas that until then had not been questioned.⁹¹ Finally, the emerging public established itself as inclusive in

⁸⁵ Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Cambridge, Polity, 1989, p. 104.

⁸⁶ J. Curran, 'Rethinking Media and Democracy', in J. Curran and M. Gurevitch (eds.), *Mass Media and Society*, London, Arnold, 2000, p. 134.

⁸⁷ Jurgen Habermas, 'The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article', *New German Critique*, 1974, 1, 3, p. 49.

⁸⁸ Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 36.

⁸⁹ Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 34.

⁹⁰ Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 36.

⁹¹ Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 36.

principle as access to citizens was guaranteed with the assurance of freedom of assembly, association and the freedom to express and publish their opinions about matters of general interest.⁹²

Some scholars have criticised and expanded on the concept of the public sphere with Calhoun arguing that a proper public sphere depends upon the quality of discourse, that is, rational-critical debate on an issue.⁹³ As well, others like Schudson posit that 'the more people participate as citizens in politics, the closer one comes to the ideal of a public sphere'.⁹⁴ The bourgeois public sphere as envisaged by Habermas was attacked for its exclusionary tendencies since it was reserved mainly for educated and propertied men at the expense of the proletarians. Nancy Fraser argues that women of all classes were excluded from political participation on the basis of gender status, while plebeian men were formally excluded by property qualification.⁹⁵ She further castigates Habermas of not only idealising the liberal public sphere but also failing to examine other non-liberal, non-bourgeois, competing public sphere.⁹⁶ Be that as it may, Habermas insisted that the inclusion of other social groups contributing to the openness of the public sphere led to the 'degeneration in the quality of discourse'.⁹⁷

For Habermas, what was of concern was not only how the state and its citizens engage, but how the public space is shaped by the state through its various institutions. So what is interesting is how the struggles for interaction between the state and the citizens unfold. Habermas argued that the public sphere constituted the nation's citizenry and that the newspaper played a crucial role in developing the language of public debate about what constituted the public issues of the day as it became an institution of the public itself, operating to provide and intensify public discussion.⁹⁸ The Habermasian concept has however been challenged in the Zimbabwean setting by scholars such as Helge Ronning who argues that populations in different African nations are often split between the traditional and the modern, the rural and the urban. This, he argues, presents a problem when expecting the main

⁹² Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 49.

⁹³ Craig Calhoun, 'Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere', in Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 2.

⁹⁴ M. Schudson, 'Was There Ever a Public Sphere? If So, When? Reflections on the American Case', in: C. Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1992, p. 147.

⁹⁵ Nancy Fraser, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy', in Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 118.

⁹⁶ Nancy Fraser, *Rethinking the Public Sphere*, p. 115.

⁹⁷ Craig Calhoun, Introduction, p. 3.

⁹⁸ L. Switzer (ed.), *South Africa's Alternative press*, p. 11.

stream media to provide an adequate and public sphere in which ideas are generated and debated as part of a rational discourse articulating the common needs and interests of citizens.⁹⁹ Nonetheless, it seems to me that Ronning misinterpreted Habermas' theory of public sphere, because Habermas was not speaking about a homogeneous public sphere even in the Germany context, but acknowledges the heterogeneous contexts of their formation. The differences in social, political and economic settings does not mean that the Habermas theory does not work, but it can be applied and repurposed to suit particular contexts, even non-European. The weakness of Habermas' theory is located in the argument that print media and electronic media in Africa have often expressed the interests and preoccupations of the urban elite and post-colonial governments in Africa.¹⁰⁰ In essence, the argument about the media in both colonial and post-colonial Africa is that it has failed to act as an ideal public sphere as it echoes the voices of those in power as it is dominated by the elites. Habermas has also bemoaned the extent the press has been manipulated primarily due to commercialisation. Consequently, he argues that commercialisation has rendered the press an institution of certain participants in the public sphere in their capacity as private individuals thereby making it a gate through which privileged private interests invaded the public sphere.¹⁰¹ Situations like this calls into question on the quality of the public sphere offered by the press. However, what needs to be understood about Habermas is that, he did not say that the public sphere is the same and their consumption is the same, it is not about the binaries between the urban and the rural, but even individuals within the same setting can consume and understand the media differently. That is why there continues to be debates about the nature of the public sphere.

In borrowing from Habermas, I take into account his critics' views. In Zimbabwe, the public sphere is a space that is contested, heterogeneous, and does not rely on a liberal conception of rationalist individualism. We have state media on the one hand and the private media on the other. Therefore, to talk of one public sphere is to miss the point on the evolution of the public sphere in Africa. It therefore makes sense to talk of many public spheres which are also at the same time counter-public spheres provided by the private media. Thus, the *African Daily News* and the *Daily News* can be seen on the one hand as providing a counter-public

⁹⁹H. Ronning, 'Institutions and Repressions', in R. Zhuwarara, K. Gecau & M. Drag, *Media, Democratization and Identity*, Department of English, Harare, 1997.

¹⁰⁰ H. Ronning, 'Institutions and repression', p. 4.

¹⁰¹ Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 185.

sphere to that provided by the state media whilst on the other they are a public sphere on their own. Ronning argues that the embryo of critical and debating public sphere in many African societies is limited to, among others, a weak independent press.¹⁰² This thesis shows that although the spaces of private newspapers were unevenly 'public', they are still critical in the shaping alternatives to the directives of state power. The bias towards urban dwellers, the majority of Zimbabwe's reading public, does not differ substantially from the contexts of public sphere formation in Europe where it was also exclusionary in character.

In tandem with the Habermas theory, this thesis also employs the agenda-setting theory of the media developed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in the 1970s. The authors argue that the media are persuasive in focusing the attention of the public on issues, events and personalities and in determining the importance people attach to public matters. The agenda-setting theory assumes that because of the media, people are aware or not aware, pay attention or neglect, play up or neglect specific features of the public scene.¹⁰³ As further applied by Christopher Green-Pederson and Rune Stubager, agenda-setting theory assumes that the mediatisation of politics is due to the fact that the media has the power to generate interests on particular issues for political groups.¹⁰⁴ It is believed that politicians depend on media exposure and have an incentive to attempt to frame the public debate and are therefore likely to respond to the media agenda. This theory has been challenged at various levels and one such argument is that it focuses more on the elite agendas whilst ignoring the public agendas. Walgrave and van Aelst suggest that the mass media impact on macro-political agendas is conditional on a number of factors relating to the mass media input as well as the political context, such as whether election times or routine politics are studied.¹⁰⁵ However, Newton further intimates that as far as the political impact of the mass media is concerned, they are generally a weak force in politics and government.¹⁰⁶ He contends that even if they can and do exercise some direct and independent influence over some aspects of political life, and can even exercise a strong or crucial one under certain circumstances, normally their

¹⁰² H. Ronning, 'Institutions and repression', p. 4.

¹⁰³ Eugene F. Shaw, 'Agenda-Setting and Communication Theory', in *International Communication Gazette*, 25, 96, 1979

¹⁰⁴ R. Stubager & C. Green-Pederson, 'The political conditionality of mass media influence: When do parties follow mass media attention?' in *British Journal of Political Science*, 40, p. 663.

¹⁰⁵ S. Walgrave and P. van Aelst, 'The Contingency of the Mass Media's Political Agenda Setting Power: Towards a Preliminary Theory', *Journal of Communication*, 56 (2006), 88.

¹⁰⁶ Kenneth Newton, 'May the Weak Forces Be With You: The Power of the Mass Media in Modern Politics', *European Journal of Political Research*, 45 (2006), 209.

impact is mediated and conditioned by a variety of other and more powerful forces.¹⁰⁷ While Newton's work is relevant for the European and American political environment, this research tests the theory within a Zimbabwean context where political leaders have been making a lot of noise clamouring for access to the media especially during election seasons, whilst others have been resisting calls for media reforms. The agenda-setting theory, though it has been challenged will be tested on the Zimbabwean setting where a number of constituencies have always been challenging the government.

Because this project is on the struggle to democratise Zimbabwe, specifically interrogating the role of the press in this venture, it was developed along the lines of the various theories that were propounded by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm.¹⁰⁸ In the middle of the 20th century, during the Cold War, they developed four models for considering the role of the press in various types of political societies: Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility and Soviet Communist. Under Authoritarian states, the press functioned under the orders of the rulers who believed that the main purpose of the press was to inform the people of what they thought was important.¹⁰⁹ The media was to remain under state control as media professionals were not allowed to have any independence within the media organization. The Libertarian theory, developed during the enlightenment, conceived of human individuals as rational beings, capable of making a distinction between truth and falsehood when faced with conflicting evidence and alternative choices. In this scenario, the press was conceived as a partner in the search for the truth so that individuals could check on government and make informed decisions in their own interests. Thus, the press was meant to be free from government control and influence.¹¹⁰ The other model I will draw upon as espoused by Siebert et al is the Social Responsibility theory. Under this theory, society expects the media to play a particular role in getting rid of social evils, educating people, criticizing government policies and exposing other wrong doings in a society. The sense of responsibility has been emphasised more in this theory as compared to any other. Such societal expectations of the press will be investigated based on the two newspapers that will be used as case studies in this thesis. Siebert et al also discuss what they term the Soviet Communist theory of the press

¹⁰⁷ Kenneth Newton, 'May the Weak Forces be with you', p. 209.

¹⁰⁸ F. S. Siebert, T. Peterson & W. Schramm, *Four theories of the Press: The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility and Soviet Communist Concepts of what the press should be and do*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1956, pp. 1-5.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, p. 1.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 2.

where the media is collective agitator, propagandist and educator in the building of communism.¹¹¹ The relevance of these models for the present study is limited to using them as springboards for considering the extent to which the Rhodesian Front (RF) and ZANU PF governments respectively fit such designations or whether the theories can be repurposed for my own uses to fit the Rhodesian-Zimbabwean situations.

D. McQuail has also theorized the media in ways useful for developing my study. He discusses the Normative Media Theory, which is concerned with examining or prescribing how media ought to operate if certain social values are to be observed or attained.¹¹² He argues that the theory is important because it plays a part in shaping and legitimating media institutions and has considerable influence on the expectations of the media by the general population and by the media itself. These normative theories concerning the media are found in laws, regulations, media policies, codes of ethics and the substance of public debate.¹¹³ In addition to the Normative Media Theory, McQuail also advances Operational Theory, which refers to practical ideas assembled and applied by media practitioners in the conduct of their own work. This serves to guide the media in executing fundamental tasks like how to select news, please audiences, keep within the limits of what society permits, and relate effectively to sources and society.¹¹⁴ In addition, there is also the ‘everyday’ or ‘common sense’ position from which people make uncritical sense of what is going on, and allows them to understand the spirit in which media content is to be ‘read’.¹¹⁵

Marxist ideas about ruling ideologies and class can be relevant here, since state control of the press can affect the dissemination of ruling class views and perspectives on political, social and economic realities. Though Marx himself never completed a comprehensive study of the role of the communication and media industries, his work locates the role of mass media in the context of the operation of the capitalist economy. Marx argues that the capitalist class control the production and distribution of ideas so that at the end of the day the ideology of the bourgeoisie becomes the dominant ideology of the society. Thus, Marxists generally believe that the media is the agency for the dissemination of ideas and values which affirm

¹¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹²D. McQuail, *Mass Communication Theory*, 6th edition, Sage Publications, London, 2010, p. 4.

¹¹³*Ibid.*

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*

rather than challenge existing patterns of power and privilege.¹¹⁶ To Marxists therefore, the media is basically seen as weapons in the arsenal of class struggle. Marx's original works were re-evaluated by prominent scholars, among them Antonio Gramsci, who argued that the ruling or dominant class rules more through consent than coercion.¹¹⁷ For Gramsci, people did not passively and unquestioningly accept ideas and beliefs imposed on them by the ruling class and, conversely, the ruling class could not expect automatically to impose its ideas, values and beliefs on the rest of the society through its control of the means of production. Thus the ruling classes had to win control of the hearts and minds through a process of negotiation, mediation and compromise. The concept of hegemony was applied by Keyan Tomaselli, Ruth Tomaselli and Johan Muller in their study of South Africa during the apartheid period.¹¹⁸

Development of the Research

Historical methods can rely on archival sources and/or oral interviews and testimonies to generate a picture of the past. In this study, I have employed a combination of archival methods and interviews to generate empirical data. For my archival sources, newspapers have been incorporated both as primary and secondary sources. Although I am specifically focusing on two private newspapers, *The African Daily News* and the *Daily News*, these two publications housed at the National Archives of Zimbabwe in Harare were consulted in tandem with state newspapers like and the *Rhodesia Herald* and *The Herald*. Studying these publications allowed me to gauge the differences and nature of coverage of key issues of the day by the press and to determine what issues had special coverage. The selection of stories revolved around issues such as, in the case of the *African Daily News*, nationalism, discrimination, one-man one-vote, the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) and democracy, political party activism, elections, violence, election laws and so on in the case of the latter *Daily News*. These issues were selected because of their political importance, the controversy they generated and the impact they had on the Rhodesian/Zimbabwean society. I also investigated the ways in which oppositional political parties and civil society groups

¹¹⁶K. Williams, *Understanding media theory*, Hodder and Arnold, London, 2003, p. 38.

¹¹⁷Quoted in K. Williams, *Understanding media theory*, p. 54.

¹¹⁸K. Tomaselli, R. Tomaselli & J. Muller, *Narrating the Crisis: Hegemony and the South African Press*, Richard Lyon, Johannesburg, 2000.

were represented, how these representations developed over time as well as how they related to the entrenchment of inequalities in the society.

The research drew from archival material from the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ). Here I tracked various communications from the Ministry of Information and various files that dealt with propaganda censorship, primarily for the colonial period. I also had the privilege of accessing oral interviews at NAZ which were conducted by archivists. Such interviews were important and crucial for my study as I was able to tap into the ‘minds’ of prominent journalist for the *African Daily News* such as Lawrence Vambe and Jasper Savanhu. The two informants could not be interviewed by the author as the former now stays in the United Kingdom whilst the latter is dead. I also benefitted from primary material in the form of a court case against the *Daily News* when it was fighting closure after 2003. I found the court case to be enlightening as they gave the official government view and attitude towards the *Daily News*, the reasons for closure and the general debate on media freedom in Zimbabwe. The *Daily News* court saga actually allowed me the opportunity to judge for myself, among other things, its impact on the Zimbabwe society as well as important insights into who or what led to its closure as well as the debate on the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary.

The thesis also benefitted extensively from Parliamentary debates of both the pre and post-independence eras to capture the voices of legislators as they debated the various legislations that affected the press, primarily the independent press. On the colonial period, I had the privilege of accessing debates on the Information policy in Southern Rhodesia, the closure of the *African Daily News*, as well as *Moto* (a Catholic-run paper). For the post independence period, I made use of the debates on legislation affecting the operations of the media in Zimbabwe, especially the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA). In the same vein, private archives of media institutions in Zimbabwe such as the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA-Zimbabwe) and the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ) were consulted in order to gauge their perceptions of the media-state relations. The MMPZ was particularly useful for its weekly media update that captured how the media reported on certain issues. That information was important for my study of the *Daily News* on how it covered, for example, the violence associated with the land reform and the elections. Such reports also allowed me to detect biases by newspapers and the distribution of voice in Zimbabwean papers during the period under study.

Finally, the research made use of in-depth interviews with people who worked for these newspapers as editors and journalists and in other capacities. I employed the snowball sampling method to grow a pool of informants to interview. Some interviews took a life history approach. The life history approach was particularly useful during my interviews with Nathan Shamuyarira, former editor-in-chief of the *African Daily News* and first Minister of Information at independence, Bill Saidi, former reporter with the *African Daily News* and Assistant Editor of the *Daily News* and Geoffrey Nyarota editor-in-chief and founder of the *Daily News*. From these interviews, I managed to amass valuable information on the origins and development of the newspapers they worked for, the challenges they faced and what they thought was their achievements and failures within the context of the environment in which they operated. I also had the opportunity to interview former and current employees of the *Daily News* and these provided important insights of their stay at the newspaper as well as perspectives on the closure of the paper and its role in the country's politics. I also managed to interview important journalists and publishers like Ibbo Mandaza and Kindness Paradza (whose newspapers were closed down by the government). Whilst I had indicated that I would have wanted to interview Tafataona Mahoso of the then Zimbabwe Media Commission as well as Webster Shamu, the then Minister of Information, I was unable to do so. Tafataona Mahoso refused to have an interview with me whilst Webster Shamu, who is also the Political Commissar of ZANU-PF, was always out of town 're-organising' party structures in anticipation of elections which were eventually held on the 31st of July 2013 and won by ZANU PF. This indicated the paranoia held by some ZANU PF politicians around the media and questions around pluralism. Interviews were also conducted with publics—those who were consumers of news from these papers.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis is divided into eight chapters which are organised chronologically and thematically. Chapter one focuses on the development of the private press in colonial Rhodesia paying particular attention to the activities of African Newspapers Ltd., a South African company that started newspapers for Africans in Southern Rhodesia. The chapter argues that newspapers for Africans were produced to help the colonial government to get the best out of the Africans. In chapter two, I focus on the formative years of the *African Daily News*. This chapter discusses the political and economic environment in which the newspaper

was formed, its financiers, organisational set up and the stance it took during the period 1956-1958. The chapter argues that during this early stage, the newspaper was closely associated with capital and this got the paper into trouble with African trade union leaders who questioned the paper's claim to be 'by Africans and for Africans'.

Chapter three looks at the political radicalisation of the *African Daily News*. It argues that the change in ownership of the newspaper as well as the defeat of the white liberals informed the newspaper's stance to fully back African nationalists. This decision would eventually lead to the newspaper's closure in 1964 by Ian Smith's government. In chapter four, I focus on the period between 1980 and 1999 and discuss how the media policy evolved in the immediate independence era. It argues that although the government maintained some controls that were characteristic of the colonial period, it was also flexible, so much that there were state editors who used that flexibility to expose the government. The chapter also traces ZANU PF's loss of popularity, which culminated in the birth of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and how this in the long run affected state-media relations.

Chapter five focuses on the *Daily News* in independent Zimbabwe. It begins by a look at the socio-economic and political environment that led to the formation of this paper as well as the financiers and employees of the paper. I argue that from the onset the newspaper was destined to collide with the government due to ownership issues as well as the political stance taken by the paper. The issues I study during this era are the February 2000 referendum and the land reform. In chapter six I continue the analysis of the *Daily News* where I dwell on elections and the crisis that befell Zimbabwe between 1999 and 2003 when the paper was closed. I argue that the *Daily News* was pro-opposition as it played a watchdog role when elections were held by exposing electoral fraud and irregularities.

Chapter seven is a comparison of the closures as well as the impact of the two newspapers in Zimbabwean politics. I argue that political parties always mistrust the independent press and they will do all they can to stop them as evidenced by the challenges faced by these two newspapers. The chapter also looks at the rise of alternative media in the aftermath of the closures and their impact in the country. I conclude with an eighth chapter, which summarizes my analytical observations of the two newspapers' impact on Rhodesian and Zimbabwean politics. Here I argue that although the newspapers had their inherent weaknesses which curtailed their democratic impact on the country, they greatly shaped the

historical trajectory of the nation, particularly its struggles for democracy and in negotiation for space and relevance between the state and the media.

CHAPTER ONE

AFRICAN NEWSPAPERS LIMITED AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRIVATE PRESS IN RHODESIA

Introduction

This chapter maps out a history of the private press in colonial Rhodesia. It does this by identifying and elaborating four different phases and domains of activity in the development of the African press. The first phase was dominated by missionary press and a few newspapers established by the colonial government. The second phase is contextualized by events in South Africa and was shaped by how major benefactors, Bertram and Cedric Paver, became involved in the press in Rhodesia by buying off government stake in early newspapers for Africans. I discuss their ideological groundings and modus operandi in South Africa, and how this influenced the organisation they were to run in Southern Rhodesia. Phase three focuses on the birth of African Newspapers in Rhodesia in 1936, when the Paver Brothers purchased the weekly *Native Mirror* and renamed it the *Bantu Mirror*. This phase is important as it offers a rich background to the financiers of the newspapers, the political temperatures obtaining in the country which in the long run had a bearing on the performance of the *Central African Daily News*. Finally, phase four identifies key personalities who helped transform African newspapers into a force to be reckoned. Prominent figures include the Paver brothers, journalists and editors like Lawrence Vambe, Jaspar Savanhu, Nathan Shamuyarira and Bill Saidi. These African journalists would, in a later period, also be vital agents in the country's struggle for independence. How they shaped and were themselves shaped by African newspapers, is a significant part of my account. Phase four was a period of consolidation and preparation towards the launch a daily newspaper.

In all these phases I am interested in mapping out an overall understanding of how the private media shaped politics and how politics in turn shaped the media. I argue that the missionaries laid a strong foundation for the birth of an African press by encouraging Africans to attend schools which they had founded. This saw the emergence of Africans who were eager to read and write, and to consume and disseminate information about what was happening in a racially divided but nationalising geographical space. It was the missionaries in collaboration

with the government in the late 1920s who started a newspaper specifically for Africans. The government offered an annual subsidy that contributed to expenses met by the missionaries in producing the newspaper. It was from these humble beginnings that African newspapers became prominent and an important feature of African politics up to the mid-1960s. In my account, I also outline the transformation of a missionary press to an autonomous press owned by private, white capital in a colony that backed white interests. This chapter therefore explores the emergence of a newspaper that spoke to African interests with African voices. Colonial state efforts to gain economic and political domination, and promote Eurocentric cultural, religious and social influences, set the parameters for press development in the region. The colonial press in southern Africa almost exclusively represented the interests of governments, missionary societies and settler communities. Yet I question the observation by Nyamnjoh that press production for settler communities necessarily left black readership at the mercy of an irrelevant content and/or in search of alternative channels of communication.¹¹⁹ In Southern Rhodesia, the key player in the development of the press was a private white-owned company called African Newspapers Limited, formed in South Africa and owned by the Paver Brothers with the aim of producing a newspaper for the Africans. The fact that it was supported by capital from South Africa, operating in Southern Rhodesia with the tacit approval of the colonial government during a period when African nationalism was rising, put African Newspapers Limited in an ambiguous position. In this environment, the major question for the Paver Brothers was: what kind of policy was the company to pursue without arousing the wrath of both the colonial government and African nationalist organisations? In addition, being associated with South Africa, where communist party membership was growing, put its newspaper production under the scrutiny of the Rhodesian colonial government. As is shown later, the result was that the company would try to take a middle of the road approach and often failed to avoid antagonising both ‘natives’ and ‘settlers’. This left space open for alternative political voices to emerge.

Phase One: The Missionary Enterprise

The emergence of African newspapers in Rhodesia can be traced to the second decade of the 20th century and owes much to the role played by the missionaries, in promoting literacy and cultural notions of public participation. Schools were established in the first years of the 20th

¹¹⁹ F. Nyamnjoh, *Africa's Media, Democracy and the Politics of Belonging*, Zed Books, 2005

century and by the second decade, the first generation of literate Africans was emerging, and missionary and colonial world views were disseminated through tracts and newsletters. The main 'news' published by the newspapers was predominantly Christian teachings and moral instruction aimed at 'civilising' Africans. As Cecelia Chinembiri writes, the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) missionaries at Morgenster Mission near Fort Victoria (now Masvingo) were probably the first to produce newssheets for their black converts in 1913.¹²⁰ Their bi-monthly newsletter, *Munyai Washe*, is still published today. In 1918 the American Methodist Church in Old Umtali followed the example of the DRC by publishing a regular newsletter entitled, *Umbowo Hwe Ukristo* edited by Rev. E. H. Greeley. These missionary publications, wholly funded by the missions, were seen to extend the evangelical work, and most pages of the newspapers contained sermons by priests. These two publications filled a vacuum created by the lack of reading material amongst Africans. The most important features were on the evil of beer drinking, strengthening the faith and general education for the Africans, paying tithes, world events, events at the missions and their outposts and articles on the relations between the missions and the government. They did not focus on national politics and the most glaring omission was any kind of reference to the 1922 referendum, a key event in the history of the country.

In the middle 1920s, concerted efforts were made to review the educational needs of the Africans. This had positive spin-offs as far as the growth of newspapers for Africans were concerned. The 1925 Phelps Stokes Commission called for more government-missionary cooperation in the field of education, as the government wanted educated Africans who could perform clerical work, oversee labour recruitment and act as agents.¹²¹ The Commission's brief was to undertake extensive studies of educational facilities for blacks in Southern Rhodesia and to establish official cooperation between the government and missionary organisations. Ranger and Weller argue that as a result of the findings of the commission, it was seen necessary to appoint a Director of Native Education and an Advisory Committee on which the missionaries would be strongly represented.¹²² R.J. Challiss argues that the commission recommended that all Africans should receive an education based on the notion

¹²⁰ Cecelia Chinembiri, 'The Emergence of an African Press in Colonial Rhodesia 1920-1940', MA, History, 1988, p. 42.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, p. 7.

¹²² T. O. Ranger and J. C. Weller, *Themes in the Christian History of Central Africa*, p. 202.

that European rule was essential for the promotion of African progress, with little or no room for independent African initiative. He further points out that,

Only Europeans knew what was in the 'best interests' of Africans, and so it was essential that Europeans should monitor gradual African progress based on a racially differentiated educational policy which placed 'emphasis' on what Europeans felt was most suitable for a 'primitive people'.¹²³

It is within this context that the drive to provide newspapers for Africans was made. It also allowed the government in cahoots with the missionaries to determine what content was suitable for the Africans. Following the recommendations of the Phelps-Stokes Commission, the DRC in 1926 formed a semi-secular press called the *Rhodesia Native Quarterly*, then *Mashonaland Quarterly* and later *Rhodesia Quarterly*. According to Diana Jeater, the main purpose of the Quarterly was to provide reading material for converts, but more importantly, to help missions move toward a standardisation of the vernaculars.¹²⁴ The government, through the Department of Native Education, commissioned the DRC to produce this newspaper for Africans. Under the arrangement the government paid a grant of 25 pounds which would cover the total costs of publishing each issue, while mission personnel carried on the business of editing and printing the paper.¹²⁵

As far as the content of the *Quarterly* was concerned, Jeater notes that the newspaper represented an alliance between missionaries and government officials as a means of communicating state policy to literate Africans.¹²⁶ Contributors were therefore predominantly of European descent whilst the voice allowed to African contributors was very limited. Thus, the newspaper served its instrumental role of making things easier for employers and administrators. For example, many pieces were contributed by Alvord, the agricultural editor of the *Quarterly*, who made regular contributions in English and *chiNdau*, providing detailed information about ploughing and other farming techniques. Alvord, as Jeater notes, regarded the publication as a useful means of disseminating vernacular teaching materials to support his agricultural demonstration program.¹²⁷

¹²³ R. J. Challiss, 'Phelps-Stokes and Education in Zimbabwe', Paper presented on the Conference on Zimbabwe History: Progress and Development, University of Zimbabwe, 1982.

¹²⁴ Diana Jeater, *Law, Language, and Science: The Invention of the "Native Mind" in southern Rhodesia, 1890-1930*, Heinemann, Portsmouth, 2007, p. 173.

¹²⁵ NAZ S179/12680/89: From Director of Native Development to Colonial Secretary, 13 August 1930.

¹²⁶ Diana Jeater, *Law, Language and Science*, p. 171.

¹²⁷ Diana Jeater, *Law, Language and Science*, p. 172.

Further motivation to have a newspaper for Africans can be seen in the correspondences between the Native Department, leaders of the DRC church, the Colonial Secretary and the Southern Rhodesia Advisory Board between 1928 and 1930. This correspondence also shows the alliance, though a fraught one, between the state and the missionaries in this endeavour, especially in the aspect of sharing costs and more importantly spreading what was deemed to be the acceptable content to Africans. By 1928, during the time of the global economic depression, the DRC raised concerns that it would be unable to continue printing the paper unless the government increased its annual subsidy to cushion the church against the rising printing expenses. However, the Director of the Native Department, H. Jowitt, believed that the paper was still relevant to the needs of the country then. In a letter to the Secretary, Department of the Colonial Secretary in Salisbury, Jowitt advised:

I suggest that since the paper has obviously served a very useful purpose; since there is a distinct need for its retention; and since the mission concerned can only proceed with its issue if relieved of the financial burden, such burden should be borne as far as necessary by the Administration. That the paper should also be regarded as a semi-official organ for the dissemination of Government news or policy, it would therefore be necessary to increase the size of the paper and I would suggest the inclusion of the following sections for which the respective departments concerned would be responsible: Legislation affecting natives, native agriculture, native education, the Native Affairs Department and its work, native medical needs.¹²⁸

Jowitt suggested that the paper should be open to topical news, inspirational articles and to items of general interest affecting natives. Noting that the periodical was to be issued to all native schools, missionary superintendents, Native Commissioners and Inspectors of Native Schools, Jowitt suggested that it was imperative that the cost of this newspaper be borne by the government. This, in his opinion, would raise the circulation from an unspecified number of copies to 2000 copies.¹²⁹

In making these suggestions, Jowitt was convinced that with adequate government support the *Mashonaland Quarterly* would be of inestimable value in ‘uplifting’ the African people, and in spreading among them sound doctrine rather than treacherous propaganda from private publishers. The Zionists were considered to have subversive influences among the Africans and in 1936, a Sedition Act was introduced to combat the Watch Tower movement, a religious sect that was deemed to be subversive. Also communist party literature was finding

¹²⁸ NAZ S179/12680/89: From H. Jowitt, Director of Native Department, to the Secretary, Department of the Colonial Secretary, Salisbury.....*Mashonaland Quarterly* 12 March 1928.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

its way into the country and this greatly alarmed the authorities to act. In these debates, Rhodesian colonial authorities compared notes to other African colonial administrations. Drawing parallels with the Kenyan British colony, Jowitt added that the newspaper, *Habari*, for the 'natives' of Kenya, was published by government authority, and was a bilingual paper of a scope not very dissimilar to that of the *Mashonaland Quarterly*.¹³⁰ As a result, the government continued to support the publication of this newspaper. This set up continued to 1930 when the issue of publication capacity by the DRC was raised in light of the demand for the paper.

The increasing demand for the paper by the Africans led the DRC to approach the Citadel Press of Cape Town so that they would publish the newspaper as their printing press could no longer cope. By then, the name of the periodical had changed and was now called the *Rhodesia Native Quarterly*, reflecting its national character and circulation. A misunderstanding ensued between the government and the DRC and the matter was taken to the Southern Rhodesia Advisory Board of the Native Development Department. The government thought that the DRC wanted to inflate costs so as to appropriate some of the funds for their own use. Rev. H. W. Murray from Morgenster, who was responsible for printing the newspaper, wrote to the government with an attachment showing a quotation from Citadel Press charging them £36 per issue to which it was necessary to add postage and incidental expenses making a total approximately of £42 per issue.¹³¹ Rev. Murray stated clearly that the DRC 'is unable to finance the newspaper in any way, and the amount received from subscriptions is a negligible quantity'.¹³² Rev. Murray was intimating that his board was entirely dependent upon the Government grant for the further publication of the newspaper.

The Board recommended that the government ask Mr. Murray to submit a definite statement regarding the cost involved, and that this then be considered on its merits, rather than that government should undertake in a general way to meet the total expense of production when this remained undefined. However, this recommendation did not stop the Director of Native Development to castigate the DRC for the complications that had arisen. He said:

¹³⁰ NAZ S179/12680/89: From H. Jowitt, Director of Native Department, to the Secretary, Department of the Colonial Secretary, Salisbury.....*Mashonaland Quarterly* 12 March 1928.

¹³¹ NAZ S 179/12680/89 from Rev. H. M. Murray to the Native Department, 10.March 1930.

¹³² NAZ S 179/12680/89 from Rev. H. M. Murray to the Native Department, 10.March 1930.

I cannot help feeling that the DRC is somewhat at fault here, since the sum of money granted in support by the Government was based upon their own estimated cost and upon local production at Morgenster. From this they are now departing, apparently, because of the local labour entailed, the additional cost being the result. This means that the mission concerned becomes responsible for editing and circulation of the paper, but that the Government becomes responsible for its cost, and that it is produced by a third party. This would appear to be unsatisfactory arrangement, but it may be necessary pending our own production of a journal to replace the 'Quarterly'.¹³³

The statement by the Director 'that the government becomes responsible for its costs' in essence shows how reluctant the government was to bear the costs of newspaper production for the Africans on its own. It would seem that the conflict was solely on costs as there was no mention of conflicts over the content of the newspaper. However, since the director intimated that the government was prepared to launch its own journal, one assumes that its relationship with the DRC had broken down.

In some sense one could say the Southern Rhodesia Advisory Board was pressuring the government to continue financing the production of the *Rhodesian Quarterly*. In recommending that the government be urged to meet the expenses of the newspaper production, the Board noted that the newspaper had played a fundamental role in propagating the recently unified Mashona language. Jeater notes that there was increasing interest at state level in a unified *chiShona* vernacular in the late 1920s.¹³⁴ The recommendation, Jowitt suggested, was to last for a year and would be revised based on the performance of the Citadel Press as well as any decision which government would make regarding the publication of its own periodical.¹³⁵ In spite of these recommendations, the government refused to increase its annual subsidy to cushion the DRC. The Colonial Secretary wrote to Jowitt, saying:

I think a government subsidy of 25 pounds per issue is all that we can do for this publication. If the DRC Mission ceases the production of the *Rhodesian Native Quarterly*, the subsidy might be given to some other mission who may produce such a publication, and failing another Mission doing this, the Native Development

¹³³NAZ S 179/12680/89: *Director of Native Development to Secretary, Department of Colonial Secretary: Resolutions from Southern Rhodesia Advisory Board: Native Development Department, 9 January 1930*

¹³⁴ Diana Jeater, *Law, Language and Science*, p. 171.

¹³⁵NAZ S179/12680/89: Director of Native Development, to Sec, The Department of Colonial Secretary...24 March 1930.

Department might consider bringing out one themselves, in conjunction with the Native Department.¹³⁶

The subsequent collapse of the *Rhodesia Native Quarterly* signalled the birth, in 1931, of another publication called the *Native Mirror*, also known as *Chiringiro* in Shona or *Isibuko* in Ndebele. This *Native Mirror* was neither produced by another mission nor the Native Development Department as suggested by the Colonial Secretary. The man who was responsible for compiling content material for this newspaper was ex-missionary turned parliamentarian and housing agent, F. L. Hadfield.¹³⁷ It was printed and distributed by the Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Company at the *Chronicle* offices in Bulawayo.¹³⁸ The paper was printed in *Karanga*, *Zezuru* and *Sindebele*, together with English. Important government notices and reports continued to be translated into all three languages up to the time it was replaced (under new ownership) by the *Bantu Mirror*. The *Native Mirror* was a quarterly and, also like the *Native Quarterly*, it was supported by the Native Education Department which bought copies for African schools.¹³⁹

The idea to launch the *Native Mirror* was to inculcate a kind of education 'suitable' for the Africans. The Chief Native Commissioner, C. L. Carbutt, in a message to welcome the newspaper, expressed the hope that it would 'take an important place in the education and general advancement of the people [Africans] for whose benefit it is published'.¹⁴⁰ The *Rhodesia Herald* saw the coming of the *Native Mirror* as significant as it bore 'testimony to the spread of education among the natives' and that it ensured the commencement of a native press on the right lines.¹⁴¹ It would seem that the newspaper was targeted at those who had attained a certain level of education that was deemed to be not so advanced. At the launch of the *Native Mirror*, it was stated that, 'all advanced natives and others interested in native affairs should read the *Native Affairs Department Annual* (NADA), a journal which was

¹³⁶ NAZ S179/12680/89: *Secretary Department of the Colonial Secretary, to The Director of Native Development*, 22 Aug 1930.

¹³⁷ Cecelia Chinembiri, 'The Emergence of an African Press in Colonial Rhodesia 1920-1940', MA, History, 1988, p. 42.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 5.

¹³⁹ C. A. G. Paver, 'The African Press', *National Affairs*, Vo. 11, Vol. 1, 1951. (no pages).

¹⁴⁰ *The Native Mirror*, February 1931.

¹⁴¹ *The Rhodesia Herald* 8 January 1931.

founded by the department in 1923.¹⁴² Since it was for the less advanced Africans, it was not uncommon to find fables in almost every copy of the newspaper. It also carried stories and competitions on culture, for example, in 1931 it sponsored a 'lobolo' competition for 'native girls'. Another competition was on how to rear a baby. Through these writing competitions as observed by Newell in the West African setting, African readers actively helped to set the agenda in their local newspapers, responding eagerly to the invitation of editors to 'freely express their views and intelligent opinion' in the letters pages of the press.¹⁴³ However, it is important to note as argued by Jeater that the voice allowed to African contributors was very limited.¹⁴⁴ Contributions on seemingly important topics on agricultural demonstration work in the reserves were penned by Alvord, in which he encouraged Africans to abandon traditional farming methods so as to increase their yields.

The *Native Mirror* on the whole represented that alliance between the government and the missionaries that had started from the days of the *Rhodesia Native Quarterly*. However, that alliance was not without its troubles as the missionaries sometimes attacked the government for allowing the publication of letters from Africans that 'discouraged' other Africans from going to church. In July 1933, the *Native Mirror* carried a letter from an African who was expressing his disappointments over the mushrooming of church denominations in the country. The writer pointed out that due to the 'disorder' in the churches founded by Europeans, he would never become a Christian. The missionaries deemed this letter offensive and that it should not have been published. One missionary is reported to have refused to distribute the copy of the newspaper because of the presence of the so-called offensive letter.¹⁴⁵

What can be learnt from the era of the missionary influence is that there was strong, though conflict-burdened, collaboration between the church and the state in the production of reading materials for the Africans. Though their short term interests were different, their broader goal of making informed and 'civilised' subjects featured prominently. This is evidenced by the stories, news and announcements carried by the papers. Church news featured more often,

¹⁴² See the *Native Mirror* April 1931.

¹⁴³ Stephanie Newell, 'Articulating Empire: Newspaper Readership in Colonial West Africa', *New Formations*, Issue 73, 2011, p. 28.

¹⁴⁴ Diana Jeater, *Law, Language and Science*, p. 172.

¹⁴⁵ *The Native Mirror* October 1933.

carrying moralizing campaigns against beer-drinking, laziness and polygamy. From the side of the government, legislations affecting Africans were disseminated, messages from the Native Commissioners in the interest of maintaining law and order. Newspapers for Africans in this period were not representative of African voices or interests. In spite of a plethora of public grievances that Africans had, none of them found their way into the newspapers. When criticism from Africans found its way into the newspaper, it was solely directed towards the missionaries.

Phase Two: South African Influences

The lacklustre performance of the missionary press, coupled with rising costs mainly as a result of the great depression, opened the doors for foreign investors to come into the newspaper industry of Southern Rhodesia. This phase in the development of the African-oriented press was heavily dominated by the South African influence. It began in 1936 with the influx of South African investors, buying off the *Native Mirror* and renaming it the *Bantu Mirror*. However, as Gale has explained, South African involvement in the Rhodesian press had started almost together with colonialism when, in the 1890s, the Argus Group from Cape Town sent its representative to produce newspapers for the English-speaking settlers north of their border. The Rhodesian press was directly an outpost of the South African white press, just as the colony of Rhodesia itself was largely a product of one of South Africa's prominent politicians, Cecil John Rhodes, who himself had links with the Argus Press. The press established a branch in Salisbury in 1891 and its representative, William Fairbridge, began to produce news for the settlers on 27 June 1891 when he launched the *Mashonaland Herald* and *Zambezi Times*. These newspapers enjoyed wide readership among their target settler public. In October 1892, the *Rhodesia Herald* was formed and this was followed two years later by the *Bulawayo Chronicle* in 1894. These two Argus Group newspapers were to enjoy a monopoly as opinion makers for the European population in Southern Rhodesia. The *Rhodesia Herald* stated that its policy was 'to advance to the fullest of their powers the mining and agricultural interests, to discuss and criticise moderately, but without fear or

favour, the topics of the day or hour, and to promote fellowship and unity amongst all classes and sections of the white community'.¹⁴⁶ The *Chronicle* described its

wholesome and independent policy pursued by its elder sister, the *Rhodesia Herald*. That is not by any means a policy of opposition or of captious criticism of Powers that be. On the contrary, it will be the aim of the *Chronicle* to promote the rule and the success of the wonderful organisation which was born of the genius of Mr. Cecil Rhodes.¹⁴⁷

These two papers are the excellent chronicles of settler history in the country as they gave considerable coverage to white social, political and economic life. They were accused by some sectors of white Rhodesian society, especially the farmers, of being pro-government (British South Africa Company) when the issue for responsible government in the early 1920s was being debated. Mararike notes that both the *Chronicle* and the *Rhodesian Herald* strongly supported joining the union as a result of the links between the Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Company and the parent company, the *Argus*.¹⁴⁸ However, with Southern Rhodesia attaining Responsible Government status in 1923, these two newspapers had to painfully readjust their policies and voice in support the new government.

The Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Company enjoyed a monopoly over the publication of newspapers for African publics for many decades, but this monopoly was to be challenged by the African Newspapers Limited when it launched the *African Daily News* in 1956. From their founding, in contrast to the *Argus* papers which represented white, colonial interests, African Newspapers Limited would come in to champion African interests. This reflected the polarisation accompanying racial state projects of separate development that were taking root in every sphere of life in Rhodesia. It was separate development, especially in regards to the press that was to inform the state's treatment of the African press. By the 1960s, Rhodesia had two monopoly newspaper groups, one for 'whites' and the other for 'blacks'. This was to have significant political ramifications because one appealed to the powerful but minority group, whilst the other to the disadvantaged and restless majority.

¹⁴⁶ W. D. Gale, *The Rhodesian Press: The History of the Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Company Ltd.*, Salisbury, Rhodesia Printing and Publishing Company, 1962, p. 19.

¹⁴⁷ W. D. Gale, *The Rhodesian Press*, p. 25.

¹⁴⁸ Claude Mararike, 'A Historical Overview of Media and Political Change in Rhodesia', in Rino Zhuwarara, Kimani Gicau and Mariana Drag (eds.), *Media and Democratization and Identity*, Department of English, University of Zimbabwe, 1993, p. 54.

Factors shaping the development of the African press in Rhodesia took place far away across its borders in South Africa. The men who were to become the main actors in the development of the African press in Rhodesia were the Pavers, Bertram F. G. Paver and Cedric Paver. According to Les Switzer, B. G. Paver was a failed farmer and advertising salesman, who founded Bantu Press (Pty) Ltd., and launched its national newspaper, *Bantu World*, in April 1932.¹⁴⁹ Paver was a racial segregationist with liberal leanings, a progressivist, who, like many of his ilk, believed that different classifications of humanity were at different stages on a pre-determined cultural evolutionary path. He wanted to "provide the Native people with a platform for fair comment and the presentation of their needs and aspirations." He tried to attract black investors, and by the end of 1932 more than half of the 38 shareholders in the company were Africans.¹⁵⁰ Richard V. Selope Thema, a veteran journalist, and I. J. le Grange, a Johannesburg businessman and the company's first major shareholder, were on the board of directors along with Paver. The problem of capital led Paver to approach the Argus Press seeking for help and this eventually led to the takeover of the Bantu Press, making the Argus Printing and Publishing Company the biggest press monopoly in Africa.¹⁵¹ Bantu Press, the first monopoly in the history of the black press, had interests in South Africa, the High Commission Territories (now Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland), the two Rhodesias (now Zimbabwe and Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi). More significantly for the future of the black press, however, was *Bantu World's* status as a centre for training black aspirants in the new skills and to fill occupations needed to run a successful business—including printers and truck drivers, typist/clerks, salesmen and advertising personnel. *Bantu World* became a kind of training ground for fledgling African journalists who were trained the art of separating news and opinion. However, white editors and journalists were defining the agendas of black news. A variety both of white liberal organizations and of governmental agencies—including the South African Institute of Race Relations and the Department of Native Affairs—began to supply Bantu Press with news deemed suitable for a black audiences.¹⁵² However, Paver's *Bantu World* strove to become a newspaper of record for

¹⁴⁹ Les Switzer, 'Bantu World and the origins of a captive African commercial Press', p. 189.

¹⁵⁰ Les and Donna Switzer, *The Black Press in South Africa and Lesotho: A descriptive bibliographic guide to African, Coloured and Indian newspapers, newsletters and magazines 1836-1976*, G. K. Hall & Co. Boston, 1979, p. 7.

¹⁵¹ Les and Donna Switzer, *The Black Press in South Africa and Lesotho*, p. 7.

¹⁵² Les and Donna Switzer, *The Black Press in South Africa and Lesotho*, p. 9.

literate Africans.¹⁵³ As such, it was first and foremost a news medium covering a hitherto unprecedented range of activities affecting Africans under white rule.

Bertram Paver had a grand vision of buying out African owned newspapers and in July 1934, he bought a majority shareholding in *Mochochonono*, (The Comet), one of the earliest black-owned, black-edited newspapers in Lesotho, founded by the Tlale family of Maseru in 1911.¹⁵⁴ In January 1935, Paver bought the well-known black newspaper in South Africa called *Imvo Zabantsundu*, which had been founded by John Tengo Jabavu in the late 19th century, as well as buying into the Zulu-language Natal newspaper *Ilanga Lase Natal*, founded by John Dube¹⁵⁵ As part of this buying trend, in 1936, Paver bought the *Native Mirror*, published by the Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Company, for £900 and changed the name to *Bantu Mirror*.¹⁵⁶

In the 1950s, Bantu Press began to experience profit challenges as a result of other black-audience papers that had come to the fore. Whilst Paver believed that the best way to beat the new competitors was to join them, other directors thought otherwise. They believed that salvation lay in launching a daily newspaper. Paver reflected on his convictions thus:

I didn't believe that the time was ripe to start a daily. I didn't feel the African had got to the stage where sufficient news could be generated to produce a balanced daily and that pressure on reader interest would change the whole structure, the whole nature of the newspapers, which were gradually growing with the people. It would introduce a lot of disturbing factors too soon – they would have to inevitably compete for news, would have to carry all sorts of articles which would have been counterproductive.¹⁵⁷

But conflict with other board members signalled that Paver's time at the *Bantu World* in Johannesburg was over. His leadership came to an end at a board meeting in March 1956, when the post of managing director was dismantled and the board committed itself to the project of a daily newspaper, to be called the *World*. Paver resigned as managing director to take up full-time duty as chairman of African Newspapers Limited in Salisbury, although he

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 122.

¹⁵⁴ Irwin Stanley Manoim, 'The Black Press 1945-1963: The growth of the black mass media and their role as ideological disseminators', Unpublished MA Thesis, Witwatersrand University, 1983, p. 46.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 47.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*. Irwin Stanley Manoim, 'The Black Press', p. 47.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 60.

remained a director of the Press and was granted a pension of £500 per annum for a period of three years.¹⁵⁸

Phase Three: African Newspapers in Salisbury

B. G. Paver bought the *Native Mirror* in 1936 and renamed it the *Bantu Mirror* in line with the parent company's name, *Bantu World*. It was still published in Bulawayo by Hadfield but now as a weekly. It was published in English, Shona, Ndebele and Chinyanja. News covered was from regional countries, including as Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia, Barotseland, Nyasaland and Bechuanaland.¹⁵⁹ Though not clearly stated, it seems likely that Paver had friends in the Rhodesian government who organised the purchase of the newspaper. The man who seems likely to have been the friend of Paver was none other than the Prime Minister and Minister of Natives, G. Martin Huggins, (later Lord Malvern). In his letter to the editor of the *Bantu Mirror*, Huggins wrote,

I have great pleasure in acceding to your request to send a word of welcome to the *Bantu Mirror*. I would like to congratulate you on the change of title. The educational value of such a paper cannot be exaggerated; it will provide sound, healthy reading matter for that very increasing number of the Bantu race who are able to read and will stimulate others to learn to read so that they may be able to find out what is going on in their own country and in the rest of the world.¹⁶⁰

Huggins would later write a foreword in Paver's book, *His own Oppressor*. In it, he acknowledges the key role played by Paver in the newspaper industry, both in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia where he is said to have founded and directed 15 newspapers produced by Africans for Africans.¹⁶¹ It can therefore be surmised that there was a strong business, if not political, relationship between these two gentlemen.

On a political level, Huggins sought to use Pavers' newspapers for propaganda during the Second World War. The manager of the *Bantu Mirror* wrote to all agents of the *Bantu Mirror* stating that they were compelled from time to time to produce special issues during the progress of the war, because 'when things of unusual importance happen we do not wish to

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 61.

¹⁵⁹ The *Bantu Mirror*, 15 February 1935.

¹⁶⁰ The *Bantu Mirror*, February 29 1936.

¹⁶¹ The Viscount Malvern, 'Foreword', in B. G. Paver, *His own Oppressor*, Peter Davies, London, 1958.

keep our readers waiting from week to week for news'.¹⁶² In a statement suggesting a strong relationship between the African Newspapers Limited and the Southern Rhodesia government, C. A. G. Paver stated that during the Second World War, an illustrated war bulletin was produced at the request of Mr. Godfrey Huggins which served not only the African troops of Southern Rhodesia, but of neighbouring territories.¹⁶³ From June 1940, a war bulletin was inserted into each issue to add to the war diary. When the Southern Rhodesia government began recruiting for the Rhodesian African Rifles, details about their conditions of life were published to attract more recruits.

After the war, this bulletin was converted to an educational supplement, '*The Home Teacher*', and, to serve Mashonaland and the Northern territories, '*the African Weekly*' was initiated. Despite his brother Cedric's account, however, it is not clear if this set up was not actually masterminded by Bertram Paver, who was said to have had friends in high places. For example, in South Africa, B. G. Paver is said to have approached General Smuts before the war started suggesting that the government should make use of the *Bantu World* in its campaign to get support for the war from the Africans. Soon afterwards, an arrangement was made allowing the Department of Native Affairs to make use of space in any Bantu Press paper, in return for payment of a regular grant of £400.¹⁶⁴ Concerning the coverage of the war, Manoim asserts that:

not only did the Bantu press present the war news in its own columns with a balance, sanity and commonsense which gave its readers confidence in their leaders, but it undertook to print and distribute on behalf of the Union Government a vast supply of weekly War News bulletins in all Bantu languages.¹⁶⁵

But the Bantu Press' relationship with the South African government would come to an end in 1950 when Dr Hendrik Verwoerd, who had been appointed Minister of Native Affairs, called in Paver and gave him an option either to support apartheid or to lose the government subsidy.¹⁶⁶ As would be the case in Rhodesia when the newspaper would denounce the drive towards dominion status, Paver rejected the government's proposal and lost the funds.

¹⁶² S1542/L11/3 Native Education-Literature, 1933-1940.

¹⁶³ Cedric Paver, 'The African Press'

¹⁶⁴ Irwin Stanley Manoim, 'The Black Press, 1945-1963', p. 50.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ Irwin Stanley Manoim, 'The Black Press, 1945-1963', p. 52.

For their operations in Southern Rhodesia, the *Bantu Mirror* managed to raise funds in a number of ways. In the first instance they got a capital injection from the parent company in Johannesburg. However, as a subsidiary, they were supposed to raise their own funds for survival and one way to secure sponsorship was through charging for newspaper advertisements placed by the government. By December 1935, the *Bantu Mirror* was quoting 2 shillings per single column inch for single insertions of digests of native legislations.¹⁶⁷ As a result of the symbiotic relationship between the *Bantu Mirror* and the government, the manager, Hadfield, wrote to the Chief Native Commissioner requesting that since the CNC was putting Acts and notices in the *Bantu Mirror*, they place under the title of the newspaper the phrase “Authorised to publish Government Notices of the Native Department for Southern Rhodesia”.¹⁶⁸ In asking for this privilege, he pointed out that the other four papers of the Associated Bantu Press all enjoyed this honour from the Union Government which was a guarantee of their good standing. It seems he obtained this idea from Paver who had struck this deal with the Union Government of South Africa.

In 1936 the *Bantu Mirror* became a weekly. In reviewing their experience as a weekly, after the first year had past, Hadfield acknowledged that its production had been a big struggle. However, he pointed out that the government’s continued support of the *Bantu Mirror*, by taking it to the schools, had made a significant and positive difference. He even boasted that the production of the paper now gave employment to ‘nine Africans of a better class, receiving much higher wages than the ordinary Africans’.¹⁶⁹ He went on to point out that ‘the help of your department has been of the greatest assistance to us from the inception of the paper seven years ago, it is safe to say that had it not been for the encouragement and practical sympathy shown, the natives would still have been without a paper today’.¹⁷⁰

But what kind of news did this paper publish, which allowed it to get such favour from the government? The answer to this question is to be found in the statement by the Governor of Salisbury, Sir Herbert Stanley G. L., who noted that the power of the printed word was more potent for good and evil than the spoken word. Sir Stanley hoped that those who would write letters or articles or stories would never forget that the things they wrote had the potential to

¹⁶⁷ S1542/L11/3 Native Education-Literature, 1933-1940 Hadfield to CNC: Advertising Native Legislations, 17 December 1935.

¹⁶⁸ NAZ S1542/L/3: Hadfield to CNC 11 February 1936.

¹⁶⁹ NAZ S1542/L/3: Hadfield to the Director of Native Education, 13 January 1937.

¹⁷⁰ NAZ S1542/L/3: Hadfield to the Director of Native Education, 13 January 1937.

be both helpful and harmful in equal measure. He went on to say that if the *Bantu Mirror* helped the Bantu to look into their own minds and to express what they saw, it would become in fact a mirror of their thoughts. He believed the newspaper would guide and lead them forward on the path of progress and widen their interests as it also contained news of the great world.¹⁷¹

The newspaper would receive letters from the literate Africans but before publishing they would seek confirmation from the authorities concerned and only then make a decision. In these cases, the political control of the majority population appears a criterion for determining how issues were presented. In one instance, the Managing Director of the newspaper wrote to the CNC after receiving a letter documenting abuse by the Native Constables. The letter read: “the attached letter is not going to be published, but I feel your attention should be drawn to it. It is obvious that such a thing should not be allowed to happen, but if the statement is true, a word from you will do more good than publishing the article which might do harm”.¹⁷² In another instance, a villager wrote to the newspaper claiming that young girls were being forced into marriage and the newspaper passed the information to the police who went on to question the villager and forced him to sign an affidavit claiming that no such thing was happening, but that he had sent his letter so that his name would appear in the newspaper. The policy of the *Bantu Mirror* was to inform the Africans on public affairs and any other matters of public interest, to provide a channel for African views; and to promote Christianity among Africans. However, despite welcoming all news, it seems apparent that content was steered away from what was considered injurious to state stability, and to direct ‘Bantu thought and life’.¹⁷³ This was in sync with the words of the Governor of Salisbury who stated that, ‘it is necessary that they write with a sense of responsibility for the effect which their writings may produce on the minds of their readers’.¹⁷⁴ The *Bantu Mirror* was therefore described by one of its critical African readers, who would later launch a prominent newspaper in Bulawayo, as ‘pro-government and only echoes His Master’s Voice and wishes’.¹⁷⁵ In spite of the censorship by missionaries and government officials, the *Bantu Mirror* remained valuable as it recounted intriguing stories on urban culture in the 1940s in Southern Rhodesia.

¹⁷¹ *Bantu Mirror* 29 February 1936.

¹⁷² NAZ S1542/L/3: Hadfield to CNC, 1 March 1938.

¹⁷³ *Bantu Mirror*, 4 July 1936.

¹⁷⁴ *Bantu Mirror*, 29 February 1936.

¹⁷⁵ Wendy Willems, Reporting and Recording Zimbabwe: The Britain Zimbabwe Society 2008 Research Day

The newspaper's importance as a tool of rule in Southern Rhodesia was to catch the attention of another British colony that was at that time also pursuing a similar policy of separate development, namely Kenya. In 1939, the Chief Secretary from Nairobi wrote to the Secretary for Native Affairs in Rhodesia enquiring whether newspapers for the Africans were either subsidized or run directly by the Government.¹⁷⁶ On the 1st of July 1939, the Secretary for Native Affairs gave a detailed response to the issue raised by their Kenyan counterpart. The Secretary stated that there was only one 'native' newspaper in Southern Rhodesia, viz, the *Bantu Mirror*, with a weekly circulation of 1500 and a circulation of approximately 4000 for monthly issues.¹⁷⁷ It was published in Bulawayo in English, as well as in Shona, Sindebele and Chinyanja. He stated that the government paid an annual subsidy of £180 on condition that a copy of the newspaper would be supplied to each mission and kraal school once a month.¹⁷⁸ He noted that the government used the newspaper to disseminate information regarding laws and regulations affecting 'natives'. Such advertisements were paid for at advertisement rates. The Secretary described the manager of the newspaper, Mr. F. L. Hadfield, who was once a member of parliament, as having great experience as missionary and social worker. Under him there was a 'native' editor, Rev. Oliver Somkence, from the minority Fingo (who came as part of the pioneer column), 'fairly educated with standard 6 qualifications'.¹⁷⁹ The *Bantu Mirror* thus had on its own staff men capable of supplying interesting articles. The newspaper also encouraged correspondence from the Africans, and occasionally members of the secretariat staff supplied technical articles on agriculture and other issues. As described to a fellow colonial officer in another part of Africa, the newspaper was clearly a point of pride for the Rhodesian Native Affairs Secretary.

Besides the *Bantu Mirror*, the next project of African Newspapers was another weekly, the *African Weekly*, launched in 1943 when B. G. Paver sent his brother, Cedric to Salisbury.¹⁸⁰ The first issue of the paper available at the National Archives of Zimbabwe is that of the 19th of April 1944 and major issues covered were religious and educational messages for the Africans as well as stories of the Second World War.¹⁸¹ Unlike the *Bantu Mirror*, its editorials

¹⁷⁶ NAZ S1542/L/3: Chief Secretary, Nairobi to Secretary for Native Affairs, 26 June 1939.

¹⁷⁷ NAZ S1542/L/3: Secretary for Native Affairs to Chief Secretary, Nairobi, 1 July 1939.

¹⁷⁸ NAZ S1542/L/3: Secretary for Native Affairs to Chief Secretary, Nairobi, 1 July 1939.

¹⁷⁹ Cecelia Chinembiri, 'The Emergence of an African Press in Colonial Rhodesia 1920-1940', p. 42.

¹⁸⁰ Lawrence Vambe, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, Heinemann, London, 1986, p. 224.

¹⁸¹ *African Weekly*, 19 April 1944.

were more progressive, as they encouraged that Africans should be educated politically to ensure peace, happiness and commitment as loyal citizens.¹⁸² The Editor of the *African Weekly* in 1946 was Elias Mtepuka who came from the Likoma Island of Nyasaland. Mtepuka was described by Lawrence Vambe as one of the most able editors of his time for his ‘florid, but strongly critical editorials, for which Cedric Paver was often rapped on the knuckles by the Chief Native Commissioner’.¹⁸³ Nathan Shamuyarira believes that the *African Weekly* should be regarded as the first political newspaper for the Africans and was unlike the *Bantu Mirror*, which concentrated on social, cultural and missionary activities.¹⁸⁴ According to Vambe, Mtepuka’s highly political editorials were a source of great discomfort particularly to municipal and central government administrators, who frequently regarded them as a form of incitement of the majority against their system of rule.¹⁸⁵ However, Mtepuka and other black reporters had a strong ally in the form of Paver, who defended them before officials who believed them to be members of the Rhodesian Industrial Commercial Union and the African Congress. Vambe argues that, in spite of his talents, Mtepuka would get the copy of the *Rhodesia Herald*, white Salisbury’s main daily, which he would then mutilate by cutting all the articles which he wished to reproduce in the *African Weekly*. By this procedure, the finished product made the *African Weekly* just a poor copycat of the *Rhodesia Herald* as the *Bantu Mirror* was described by the then editor of the Bulawayo *Chronicle* as a bad digest of his paper.¹⁸⁶ With support from Paver, Vambe managed to alter the cut and paste journalism by gathering original news from the African community. On news gathering in the Salisbury locations, Vambe argues that he soon discovered that ‘good human stories were easy to find as the evenings and weekends produced enough topics and events to occupy all the available reporters in Salisbury’.¹⁸⁷

The transformation of the *African Weekly* into a newspaper that was interesting to African readers continued as reporters flocked into the townships where they gathered information and covered incidents that affected their everyday lives. In this way, slowly but surely, the *African Weekly* ceased to be dependent on the *Rhodesia Herald* and acquired a distinct image of its own, while the Harare location emerged into the open as the pulse of African social and

¹⁸² *African Weekly*, 19 April 1944.

¹⁸³ Lawrence Vambe, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, p. 226.

¹⁸⁴ Interview with Nathan Shamuyarira, former editor of the *African Daily News* and first Minister of Information at Independence, Harare (his home), 10 June 2012.

¹⁸⁵ NAZ ORAL/233, Lawrence Vambe, Interviewed by I. J. Johnstone, 1, 8, 13 June 1983.

¹⁸⁶ Lawrence Vambe, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, p. 226.

¹⁸⁷ Lawrence Vambe, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, p. 227.

political life. Vambe also created special comic features, the one in ChiZezuru was called *Magaisa IBenzi*, that is to say, 'The Eccentric Magaisa', a character through whom unpleasant truths about Africans were told, which they would otherwise have not stomach. It proved to be the most popular for the readers, both in the town and the country, some believing that Magaisa was real. The character Magaisa went on to feature prominently in the *African Daily News* even after Vambe had left the organization. In English Vambe also created *Zinwambanje*, the 'Opium Drinker', which also, but in a more sophisticated way, tried to poke fun at Rhodesian society.¹⁸⁸ Through such comical features, African Newspapers not only retained its readership, but it also attracted new readers.

As evidence of their growth, African Newspapers Limited launched their own magazine called *African Parade* with Vambe as its inaugural editor. *Parade* was the first of its kind in Central Africa and it was meant to be the 'Drum' of the Federation. The magazine had the unique history of being the only magazine in the whole of Southern Africa which was produced and printed by Africans for Africans. The reason behind launching the *African Parade* was succinctly stated in their issue of November 1953 when the editor stated that:

The *African Parade* makes its appearance and comes to fulfil a function which is very much in keeping with the march of progress in this part of Africa. There is no doubt that socially the African has made rapid advance that there can be no misgivings in launching a magazine such as the *African Parade*...the African music, his art, his sense of assimilating the hundred and one aspects of Western humour, his rich gift for drama and his desire to civilisation need full expression and there can be no better medium to achieve this than this magazine, which will attempt to put on record that aspect of African life which is as yet known and inadequately portrayed in word and in picture. While it is true that at the present stage the African man is a man of two worlds, it is equally true to say that his choice to graft himself into the western political, social, economic system is an unwavering one and it is important that he finds the fullest opportunity to express himself in every way. If the *African Parade* can help the African in this direction and can at the same time assist him to maintain balance in the midst of a rapidly changing environment, to discover himself and his talents and to take a pride in his culture and his contribution to western civilisation, then it will have achieved its aims and objectives, for in this lies the reason for its coming into being. Also need to contribute to harmony and understanding between the various communities as Central Africa is the home of a multi-racial community.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ *African Parade*, November 1953.

Phase Four: African journalists and internal political dynamics at African Newspapers

Just like any organisation, African Newspapers Limited had its internal political dynamics and contradictions between management and employees. However, far from pulling the organisation down, these contradictions pushed it to the next level of productivity, whereby the company was able to launch a daily newspaper, the first of its kind in the country. Furthermore, these internal contradictions shaped the type of news produced and the relationship the company had with both European and African leaders. The African press and its policy was described by Paver who said that its Johannesburg parent, the Bantu Press, was the work of an idealist whose main aim was to try to make reasonable citizens of the thousands of Africans who were taught to read and write each year, to provide a fair and unbiased news service, to equip Africans for the responsibilities of freedom and democracy.¹⁹⁰ Thus, African Newspapers Limited in Rhodesia was basically created to perform the same function as that of its South African counterpart. Paver pointed out that African Newspapers Limited owed allegiance to no party, aimed at guarding the African's interests and making reasonable and constructive criticism. For African Newspapers Limited to perform its mandate to the full, it had to hire the talented African candidates. Thus, Paver also took on Jasper Zengeza Savanhu and Michael Masotsha Hove who were soon to be lured into politics by Godfrey Huggins. According to Savanhu, African Newspapers Limited were attracted to Hove when they saw his contributions to the *Bantu Mirror* between 1938 and 1940.¹⁹¹ With the passage of time, the editor of the *Bantu Mirror*, Nophas Kwenje, invited Savanhu to join African Newspapers Limited as an assistant editor. Savanhu had begun his public life as a 'troublemaker', who during the Second World War stirred the Africans and frightened the Europeans, with his cutting indictment of the system, and called for strong Congress movement. Joining African Newspapers Limited however meant toning down his political fervour, which he did, so that in the end he was so changed as to be the object of some antagonism from radical African constituencies.¹⁹² After a year at African Newspapers Limited, Savanhu was appointed editor of the *Bantu Mirror* at a salary of £9 pounds a month in 1942. In September 1944, Savanhu left the company because the tone of his editorials did

¹⁹⁰ Cedric Paver, 'The African Press'.

¹⁹¹ NAZ AOH/5 Savanhu, Jasper Zengeza, Interviewed by Dawson Munjeri, 28 February 1977.

¹⁹² NAZ ORAL/ 233, Lawrence Vambe interviewed by I. J. Johnstone, 13 June 1983.

not please the management. The Manager, Mr. Hadfield, had to write in their newspaper that ‘our African editor has left because he felt he could not subscribe to the newspaper’s policy of moderation, he writes his editorials in a critical vein against the government and the Europeans in general and therefore felt he could not continue as an employee of the *Bantu Mirror*’.¹⁹³ Towards the end of 1947, C.A. G. Paver asked Savanhu to write articles for the *African Weekly* and this culminated in his rehiring as editor of a new periodical, which they were publishing for African farmers, called the *Harvester*. Bearing in mind that he had left his employment because of a difference in political views, Savanhu accepted this offer in May 1948 because it did not involve politics. Savanhu became the editor of the *Recorder*, a newspaper for the schools and the *Harvester* for the African farmers. He testified that,

As editor of the *Recorder* I wrote articles and editorials for the paper as well as in the case of the *Harvester* where I also wrote two features...one was Talk at the court of *Magwaza*, (Hurukuro padare ra Magwaza). He was a headman and was co-operating with the agriculture officers in improving the farming methods. The *Harvester* started with a circulation of 2000 and by 1950 the circulation had risen to 6000 a week to 7000 which was comparable to the circulation of the main newspaper the *African Weekly*.¹⁹⁴

In 1951, Savanhu was appointed senior editor of the whole group of newspapers, and three months later he became chief editor. This did not go down well with other editors as they thought Savanhu was less educated having only a standard six. Vambe was a matriculate whilst Mtepuka had a junior certificate.¹⁹⁵ When the Federation was formed in 1953, Savanhu was elected Member of Parliament and eventually became Junior Minister in the Federal Government; the first black man in Rhodesia to rise to such a position.¹⁹⁶

Other prominent Africans at African Newspapers Limited included Mike Masotsha Hove, who came to African Newspapers via the teaching profession, to become the editor of the *Bantu Mirror*. According to Vambe, Hove and Savanhu brought new talents and dimension to African journalism so that in the course of a few years, African Newspapers Limited became a voice to be respected. Hove then became the Federal Member of Parliament for Matabeleland after he won the December 1953 elections and served until 1962.¹⁹⁷ In this election, Hove soundly defeated Joshua Nkomo by obtaining about 30 000 votes against

¹⁹³ NAZ AOH/5 Savanhu Jaspar Zengeza.

¹⁹⁴ NAZ AOH/5 Savanhu Jaspar Zengeza.

¹⁹⁵ NAZ AOH/5 Savanhu Jaspar Zengeza.

¹⁹⁶ Lawrence Vambe, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, p. 227.

¹⁹⁷ *The Herald*, Saturday 30 June 2012.

15 000 for Nkomo.¹⁹⁸ Hove would later become the Federal High Commissioner in Nigeria.¹⁹⁹ Another writer to join African Newspapers Limited was Philip Mbofana, who was trained as an agricultural demonstrator to teach Africans in a practical way how to farm and use their land efficiently. Paver appreciated the vital importance of the food-growing industry and the vast productive capacity of the black people of Southern Rhodesia in such crops as maize and small grains. Thus was born the idea of launching a special agricultural journal for the Africans, which was christened the *Harvester* or *Mukohwi*, to which Mbofana contributed frequently. Eventually, Paver prevailed upon Mbofana to join the African Newspapers Limited.

Vambe was to become the editor-in-chief after the departure of Savanhu, although he had a fair share of problems with the management. Vambe recalled two instances when he was almost fired by Paver. The first time was in 1947, when he decided not join the Africans who congregated to greet King George VI and his family when they visited Rhodesia because 'I was extremely angry at the misuse of his power and justice by his white citizens in Rhodesia'.²⁰⁰ Mtepuka also boycotted the event and since they were the most qualified at the time, Paver found it difficult to fire them. Vambe also had problems with both his employers and the CNC after he had spoken on behalf of striking Africans in 1948.²⁰¹ The issue of strikes then was sensitive, as one could easily be labelled a communist as indeed Vambe was.

From the perspective of the employees, there was a problem of interference, especially from Cedric, young brother of Bertram. Savanhu pointed out that Cedric would go to him after every thirty minutes to give instructions on how to do his job. Things only changed after Cedric fell ill and Bertram said to Savanhu, 'look you said you don't want too much supervision, my brother is sick now see what you can do, don't come to me and ask, come to me only if you want something otherwise I am not going to disturb you'.²⁰² Conflicts would also occur between African colleagues, and one such conflict was between Vambe and Shamuyarira. Shamuyarira was a teacher before he joined African Newspapers Limited and

¹⁹⁸ Joshua Nkomo, *The Story of my Life*, Methuen, London, 1984, p. 65.

¹⁹⁹ I was unable to interview Mr. Hove because he was sick and he eventually died on the 25th of June 2012 at the age of 97. The state-owned *Herald* newspaper, in its report stated that 'veteran journalist and politician, Mr. Hove has died' in recognition to the role he played in politics and journalism in the country. The report suggested that his exposure to the print media kindled an interest in socio-political affairs which made his move into politics inevitable.

²⁰⁰ Lawrence Vambe, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, p. 228.

²⁰¹ Lawrence Vambe, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, p. 228.

²⁰² NAZ AOH/5 Savanhu Jaspar Zengeza.

he enhanced greatly the quality and reputation of these papers with his meticulous regard to facts and detail. Shamuyarira resented the moderate stance taken by African Newspapers Limited against the colonial system, whilst Vambe preferred to attack the system within certain limits without driving its manipulators to resort to the complete destruction of the press. Though the two worked together, Vambe concedes that he often 'exasperated Nathan from time to time by this difference of approach and especially by the use of executive power to overrule him on many occasions'.²⁰³ When Vambe left in 1959 and Shamuyarira became his successor, he was fated to witness the confrontation that came about later between the Rhodesian Front and the *Daily News*, at a time when both realities and pretences of racial partnerships were no longer tenable.

The period after the Second World War saw the fortunes of African Newspapers change considerably. With capital provided by the 'Bantu Press' of Johannesburg, the *African Weekly* and the *Bantu Mirror* were now printed in Salisbury and copies were sent by air to Bulawayo. Paver stressed that African Newspapers Limited was a commercial undertaking receiving no subsidy and paying its way. When the Paver brothers came in, African Newspapers Limited had an original staff complement, including translators and printers, of 15, and by the 1950s there were 5 Europeans and 15 Africans serving approximately 100,000 regular readers responsible for the publicity aroused by African Newspapers Limited; the *African Weekly* and the *Bantu Mirror*, and also the *Harvester* (farming) and the *Home Teacher* (educational) produced for the Native Affairs Department, and a Bulletin for the Natural Resources Board.²⁰⁴ Paver believed that as journalists, they were supposed to be impartial chroniclers of events rather than their initiators. This however made their job slightly difficult since the parent company came from South Africa, and Paver had an unenviable task in the face of the attitudes of white officials, who suspected that these papers constituted the biggest nest of black subversion in the country. Such fears, as will be seen later, had a greatest impact on the performance of African newspapers, especially with the rise in nationalism. Besides having problems with the authorities, African Newspapers Limited would run into ugly encounters with the very same people it was meant to serve; the African public. Indeed, African journalists, working for a white owned institution were soon to be labelled 'stooges'. As noted before, Vambe had gotten himself into problems for speaking on behalf of striking workers. Savanhu added that, as a journalist, one had to

²⁰³ Lawrence Vambe, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, p. 229.

²⁰⁴ Cedric Paver, 'The African Press'.

maintain a very low profile on the political side because it would lead to bias the handling of news items about various organisations. Savanhu stated that,

while I was still with the *Recorder* in 1949 I was chairman of the Southern Rhodesia Bantu Congress, Harari Branch but by the time I became Chief Editor I relinquished this position, in the best interest of journalism and the national movement. In April 1952, Mr. Paver said that the government wanted me to attend the conference on Federation in England. In the Bulawayo region Nkomo was asked to accompany the delegation. We were branded stooges of the white man because we had not been chosen by our people.²⁰⁵

In spite of these challenges, however, Vambe believes that in comparative terms to what latter transpired in Rhodesia and the rest of Africa, the Press in the 1950s enjoyed a freedom that looks positively utopian today as he noted that ‘the very conditions of discrimination and racial injustice under which we lived made Rhodesia rich in opportunities for any ambitious, but diplomatic reporter, especially a black one’.²⁰⁶ However, unlike in the South African setting where black journalists were denied access to conventional news sources and harassed even in their search for "black" news in an increasingly hostile urban environment²⁰⁷, black journalists in Rhodesia found it easy as they targeted black personalities who were eager for publicity.

Besides politics, there were other problems that were faced by African Newspapers Limited in its effort to give Southern Rhodesian Africans a sound background of knowledge of national affairs. One such problem was how to strike a balance between the classes of readers who expected their interests to be catered for, without necessarily excluding the uneducated masses. There was also the language difficulty. African teachers and African government servants were available as the editors, sub-editors, proof-readers and translators, but knowledge of six different languages was required, and very few Africans could write more than one even if they could speak several. Keeping staff was not a problem. Wages ranged from £5-35 with two weeks annual leave, and most of their staff had stayed for years. Savanhu argued that Africans employed by African Newspapers Limited were generally well paid, compared with people doing similar work in other Industrial or Commercial undertakings. Concerning his salary, Savanhu noted that, ‘I think it was the highest paid to

²⁰⁵ NAZ AOH/5, Jaspar Savanhu.

²⁰⁶ Lawrence Vambe, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, p. 228.

²⁰⁷ Les and Donna Switzer, *The Black Press in South Africa and Lesotho*, p. 6.

any Central African at the time as I was getting £32 per month and by January 1952 it was raised to £50 a month'.²⁰⁸

Paver noted that an ever pressing problem was to find out what readers wanted other than dwelling on grievances and disabilities. He found it difficult to understand the rapidly changing sensibilities of African publics. He discovered that his readers were interested in short story competitions (over 600 entrants) and crossword and picture puzzles. His objective was to try to rouse interests in other things besides politics. He noted that the main difficulty was that there were limited funds available for news service since manufacturers and tradesmen did not realise the spending power of the African which warranted extensive advertising. The result was a low standard of the vernacular press all over Africa as there was a temptation to concentrate on local political controversy which tended to foster unrest.²⁰⁹ The avoidance of politics would in later decades arouse the wrath of African readers, the sole buyers of the newspapers from African Newspapers Limited.

Bantu Press sold its Rhodesian interests in 1953 for £14 000.²¹⁰ It seems likely then that a considerable stake of African Newspapers Limited remained in the hands of the Paver brothers, who with the help of Sir Roy Welensky, got cash from a consortium of copper companies from Lusaka to keep the company going.²¹¹ By this time African Newspapers had interests all over Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia, Nyasaland then had its own newspaper, the *Bwalo la Nyasaland*, which was printed in Southern Rhodesia and posted to Nyasaland whilst Northern Rhodesia had the *African Eagle*.²¹² The African press employed scores of part-time stingers and correspondents living and working in faraway places as Cape Town in South Africa, Mbeya in Tanganyika and Nairobi in Kenya.²¹³ These people made the organization, with its many papers, a fairly comprehensive mirror of the revolution that was taking place in Southern, Central and East Africa between the late 1940s and the 1960s. Thus by 1956, the time was ripe for the organisation to launch its daily newspaper, the first of such kind owned by a private player. The newspaper was a result of the merger of the *African Weekly*, *Bantu Mirror*, *Recorder* and *Harvester* and it was named the *Central African Daily News*.

²⁰⁸ NAZ AOH/5 Savanhu Jaspar Zengeza.

²⁰⁹ Cedric A. G. Paver, 'The African Press', *National Affairs*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1951.

²¹⁰ Irwin Stanley Manojim, *The Black Press, 1945-1960*, p. 47.

²¹¹ John Parker, *Rhodesia: Little White Island*, Pitman Publishing, London, 1971, p. 112.

²¹² NAZ AOH/5 Savanhu, Jaspar Zengeza, interview with Dawson Munjeri, 28 February 1977.

²¹³ Lawrence Vambe, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, p. 225.

By the time the Federation came to being in 1953, African Newspapers Limited had managed to have black and white employees working together in harmony, something which Southern Rhodesia was trying to come to terms with. Vambe notes that African Newspapers Limited ‘also offered full-time employment to a lot of printers, machine-minders and local writers who would otherwise have remained anonymous; they were taken on irrespective of their tribal origins, provided they were capable journalists. There were people in the staff room from the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland and the effect of this structure was to make this group of newspapers, when the Federation came, the one institution in Central Africa where there were concrete signs of interracial co-operation as opposed to the paternalism and master-and-servant cult which prevailed practically everywhere in colonial Africa. Vambe argues that the racial participation, and the fact that the majority of its readers were black, were reasons the establishment was called African Newspapers Limited.²¹⁴ Otherwise the capital, ownership and management of these papers, were entirely white.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the development of newspapers for Africans is located within the early 20th century initiatives of the missionaries, in collaboration with the colonial government who wanted a better educated ‘native’ who would submit and carry out labour on behalf of settler authority. In this way, these two institutions launched newspapers that would act as a medium of communication to disseminate information. The activities of the missionaries laid the foundation for the eventual take-over of the African press by private players, namely the Paver Brothers who formed African Newspapers Limited, an organisation that would later hold a monopoly on African news. The organisation was African in name, but capital and management was white. Still, this mid-century phase trained black journalists and transformed them into editors. Contradictions within the organisation would lead it to receive mixed reactions from both the colonial government and the African populace. The growth of African newspapers with a number of weeklies and other papers eventually led to the formation of the country’s first privately owned daily newspaper, which forms the subject of the next chapter.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER TWO

‘FOR AFRICANS, BY AFRICANS?’ THE *AFRICAN DAILY NEWS* AND ‘ACCEPTABLE’ POLITICS IN SOUTHERN RHODESIA: THE FORMATIVE YEARS 1956-1958.

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the involvement of African Newspapers Private Limited in the newspaper industry in Southern Rhodesia. It argued that this South African company played a fundamental role in providing news for Africans in the form of the *Bantu Mirror* and the *African Weekly*. It also established that this company had close ties with the government and as such it provided news that did not radicalise Africans, but that promoted inter-racial harmony and co-operation in a white-led Southern Rhodesia. By 1956, however, the influence of African Newspapers Limited broadened tremendously when they launched, on the 18th of September, a daily newspaper, the *African Daily News* specifically for Africans. The *African Daily News* was to become a flagship paper for African Newspapers Private Limited. It was born after the amalgamation of the *Bantu Mirror*, *African Weekly*, the *Harvester* and the *Recorder*. The newspaper appeared in September 1956²¹⁵ and ran from Monday to Friday, whilst the weekend editions came out as special editions of either the *Bantu Mirror* or the *African Weekly*. In challenging the monopoly of the state-owned dailies, the *African Daily News* was to become a thorn in the flesh of colonial authorities. In 1964, their solution to the ‘excesses’ of the newspaper was to ban it, with Ian Smith warning that ‘the ills of the country come from Southern Rhodesia having a monopoly press’.²¹⁶

This chapter discusses the changing impact of the newspaper on politics in Southern Rhodesia between 1956 and 1958 through an examination of its content: news coverage, editorials, and letters to the editor. The *African Daily News* did not begin its life as a revolutionary or even progressively ‘left-leaning’ periodical. It is the subject of this chapter to trace the trajectory taken by the *African Daily News* leading to its radicalisation. This chapter focuses on its formative years. I intend to answer a number of specific questions: What was

²¹⁵The very first issue of the *African Daily News* is missing in the archives.

²¹⁶*African Daily News*, 1 July 1964.

the aim of this newspaper? Who were the proprietors of the newspaper? Whose voice did it project? What political stance did the newspaper take and how did the various stakeholders react to this? How and in what ways did the newspaper shape or was shaped by politics during the federation? These questions help to account for the manner in which the *African Daily News* covered key events in the country during this period.

The role played by the *African Daily News* can be considered in relation to three time-periods, which—although separated by a fine line-- I demarcate for the sake of analysis. The first phase includes the newspaper's formative years (the subject of this chapter), when it was soundly against African trade unions. The relationship between the private press and the trade unions is important in informing our understanding of the direction the *African Daily News* took in this period. Although privately owned, could the paper have been a government mouthpiece? How was the paper perceived by different publics within Southern Rhodesia? A second phase was tied to the notion of 'acceptable politics'. The press towed a moderate line towards the future of both Southern Rhodesia and the Federation, looking to the capable hands of moderate white political parties, such as the United Federal Party (UFP), and rejecting the Dominion Party and the so-called extreme African political organisations. In this second phase, battles were waged over which European party promoted a policy that the *African Daily News* considered acceptable. In the third period of its political life, the newspaper became a mouthpiece for nationalist African leaders, radicalising its political stand. At issue here is why the newspaper decided to support one African political party over another. With the radicalisation of politics and leadership, state intervention increased, climaxing in the banishment of the *African Daily News*, as well as the African political parties that existed at the time. This third phase will, however, be discussed in the next chapter.

Before examining the abovementioned trajectory, the chapter will first chronicle the birth of this daily newspaper and also offer an overview of how it was viewed by ordinary readers, from its inception to its closure. This latter discussion is meant to act as a counterpoint to the perspective of African political elites and social movement leaders who, for all intents and purposes, believed they monopolised public opinion during this era. The African elites needed the press as an ally (they were weak politically and ideologically), and not a competitor, to buttress their position in society in controlling fellow Africans. What the owners of the *Daily News* believed they represented, within the dispensation *vis-à-vis* the

expectations of the African elites, is also important to consider here. In capturing these class dynamics, this chapter lays a foundation for an analysis of the performance of the newspaper, and how it was perceived by the major political actors.

The Rise of the *African Daily News*: An Overview

The *African Daily News*, published under the title *Daily News* was published in Salisbury by African Newspapers Limited from the 10th of September 1956.²¹⁷ On the 11th of May 1960 the newspaper was registered as the *Central African Daily News*, though it continued to be published under the title *Daily News*.²¹⁸ As noted in the previous chapter, African Newspapers was acquired by certain locally registered companies, although it maintained Bertram and Cedric Paver as its nominal director and manager, respectively. However, the fact that Bertram Paver was now the director of African Newspapers presents us with a unique problem in trying to explain the birth of a daily newspaper in Southern Rhodesia. In the last chapter, I quoted Bertram Paver at length registering his great misgiving over launching a daily newspaper in South Africa, a view which eventually led to his sacking. In March 1956, Paver announced his belief that launching a daily newspaper was counterproductive²¹⁹, but barely six months later, he launched the *African Daily News*. What could have happened to drastically change Paver's strong opinion that had apparently cost him his place in the Bantu Press of South Africa? Economically speaking, populous South Africa, with its lucrative advertising possibilities, seemed a better bet for a daily newspaper, compared to Southern Rhodesia. Something had happened in Salisbury that dramatically changed Paver's stance.

Looking at the social climate in the 1950s, there are possibly two or three reasons that pushed Paver to begin a daily newspaper. The first reason was that in 1953 a Federation of Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland was formed on the premise that there would be equal partnership between black and white stakeholders. In addition, the architect of the Federation was Godfrey Huggins who, as we saw in the last chapter, was close to Paver. Thus the *African Daily News* was very likely formed to market the idea of Federation to African subjects who had opposed it. A second reason may be speculated: this was that the colonial

²¹⁷ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates, 26 August 1964.

²¹⁸ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates, 26 August 1964.

²¹⁹ Irwin Stanley Manóim, *The Black Press*, p. 60.

authorities must have made an undertaking that they would covertly give Paver the funds for the endeavour, with the understanding that African Newspapers would project the voice of the government in support of Federation. This seems plausible since the Federal Government's propaganda newspaper, called *FACT*, had failed to alleviate the African public's misgivings over Federation. In addition, the popularity of African Newspapers meant that it was likely to be a more successful channel for state propaganda. In this vein, Michael West argues that the idea of a federation had been backed by a propaganda offensive, including advertisements in Southern Rhodesia's African-oriented press.²²⁰

A third reason Paver may have decided to launch a daily newspaper has to be located in the context of the events of 1956, when Africans in the major towns of Harare and Bulawayo initiated boycotts of buses and railways, claiming they were becoming more expensive whilst their wages were low. As the boycotts spread, violence accompanied them, becoming increasingly political in nature. This directly threatened the colonial political establishment. It was agreed in parliament that Africans had reacted in such a way because they lacked information on a daily basis. Prime Minister Garfield Todd, a liberal like Bertram Paver, thought of starting a daily newspaper.

In a debate in the Legislative Assembly, Todd showed that the year 1956 presented numerous problems for the government as they could not agree with workers on issues to do with wages. The most vocal group of the time were the Rhodesia Railways who kept demanding higher wages. Railway union leaders kept referring to 1956 as a brother to 1948.²²¹ Fearing a repeat of 1948, the government decided to open negotiations with railway workers. However, these negotiations, according to Todd yielded nothing as 'union leaders had pitched the demands so high that it was going to be very difficult for them to draw back without losing a great deal of prestige'.²²² Todd went on to point out that:

When the government realised that there was going to be a strike action, we began to make arrangements to contact with the African people....made arrangements with the Federal Government to begin broadcasts on the Federal Broadcasting Station specifically for the Africans. The idea simply in opening up channels of communication was to get the real news, the facts of the situation, across to as many Africans as possible. Also arrangements were made to purchase space in the African Newspapers

²²⁰ Michael O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965*, Indiana Press, Bloomington, 2002, p. 183.

²²¹ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates, 4 October 1956. In 1948 there was a general strike in Southern Rhodesia that was radical and it had united the African workers to collectively demand better wages.

²²² Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates, 4 October 1956.

and when events began to happen quickly, the African Newspapers themselves decided to issue a daily paper. We were very grateful for that from our point of view because it meant that the ordinary news service was available to the African papers, and any news which came through Government sources, and it was available both to European and African Newspapers and it would be able to put across daily and available to African readers. These two things, the broadcasts and the daily newspapers, were actually functioning by Tuesday, the 18th of September, which was the day after the riots at Harari [bus boycott].²²³

It seems from the perspective of Todd that the birth of a daily newspaper for the Africans was necessary to keep them informed and to counter the increasing threat of workers unions. But the statement by Todd infers that it was the initiative of African Newspapers to start a daily newspaper. However, Nathan Shamuyarira points out that the project of starting a daily newspaper for Africans was funded by Todd's government and that this was kept a secret. Cognisant of the fact that the colonial administration would not agree to such a project, Todd is said to have secretly called Paver in and asked him to start a daily newspaper which the government funded for a few years.²²⁴

The *African Daily Newspaper* was named such because it was born to inform the Africans as they were hitherto not catered for by state aligned newspapers for white settler publics like the *Rhodesia Herald*, the *Bulawayo Chronicle* and the *Sunday Mail*. The *African Daily News* announced that its duty was to promote the political, economic and spiritual advancement of the African people.²²⁵ The newspaper also sought to 'put forward the rights and wrongs of our multi-racial system so that the public can judge for themselves and to present the African point of view in the best manner possible'.²²⁶ The Editor-in-Chief of African Newspapers, Lawrence Vambe noted that 'their policy was to promote an understanding and mutual respect between the Europeans and Africans in this country, and to emphasize the positive efforts of the African people.'²²⁷ In elaborating on this point, Vambe said that this did 'not mean that we must paint the African as an angel, but whenever possible we endeavour to inspire the African with confidence in himself so that he can make maximum use of any opportunity that comes his way and thereby earn respect and recognition in the country of his

²²³ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates, 4 October 1956.

²²⁴ Interview with Nathan Shamuyarira. This information was confirmed in an Interview I had with Bill Saidi who argued, with the benefit of hindsight, that the only reason why the *African Daily News* front paged Garfield Todd's 1958 elections was because his government funded the paper.

²²⁵ *African Daily News*, 'About ourselves: Comment', 14 February 1958.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ *African Daily News*, Journalist speaks on the responsibility of the press, 9 November 1956.

birth'.²²⁸ Patrick Keatley described the newspaper as a professional, well-edited paper which accurately transmits the various currents of African opinion'.²²⁹

Besides catering mainly for an African audience, James Coltart, the Managing Director, claimed that the *African Daily News* was not a racial publication as it sought to appeal to the other communities besides Africans. In spite of this, white Rhodesians, according to Keatley were not interested in buying the paper. Keatley argues that various attempts were made to set up vendors at street corners in Central (white man's) Salisbury without success. However, by the time the newspaper was closed it had a readership of about 20 000 of which 5 000 were white readers. In spite of the close relationship with the Government and the fact that it was primarily a paper for the Africans, the *African Daily News* claimed it had the ability to uphold journalistic principles of an independent press by refusing 'to pander to anyone, officials or otherwise'.²³⁰

At the beginning, African Newspapers Limited was owned by the Paver Brothers. Possibly in 1956 with the birth of a daily paper, African Newspapers Limited was sold to a consortium of companies operating within the federation. Thus African Newspapers Limited was now funded by four wealthy companies namely "Anglo American Co-operation (with copper mines in Northern Rhodesia and gold mines in South Africa) and Rhodesia Selection Trust (with mines on the copper belt), the British South Africa Company which owned mineral rights in Northern Rhodesia and the Imperial Tobacco Company. These big industrial concerns operating in Central Africa provided financial assistance to African Newspapers Limited through an organisation known as Kacholo la Company. Its directors were B. G. Paver; F. L. Hadfield; A. F. Pearce whilst C. A. G. Paver was the Managing Director.

By 1957, these companies attempted to sell African Newspapers to the Westminster Press of Britain. However, the sale could not go through as the federal Prime Minister, Sir Roy Welensky is reported to have blocked an attempt by the Westminster Press to purchase the African Newspapers after he had consulted European Politicians.²³¹ The reason, as noted by *Chapupu* was that Welensky felt that 'newspapers read by Africans should not be controlled by too liberal people overseas'. The object of keeping out 'liberal people' was to combat

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ Patrick Keatley, *The Politics of Partnership*, p. 304.

²³⁰ *African Daily News*, 'About ourselves', 14 February 1958.

²³¹ *Chapupu*, 'The Cat is Out of the Bag', 8 June 1957.

communism and the 'subversive' influence of 'African nationalism'.²³² The Prime Minister dissuaded management of African Newspapers Limited from 'entertaining the idea of selling out to an overseas newspaper group who have not an experience of African journalism required for dealing with present day African Nationalism'.²³³

It is also interesting to note that the BSAC and the Imperial Tobacco Company had insisted during the negotiations that in the event of African Newspapers being sold to the Westminster Press a local board was to be appointed to control the newspaper's policy. This was rejected by the Westminster Press. It is reported that the Westminster Press had offered about 90 000 pounds, an amount which represented the money that the other proprietors had already sunk in the venture.²³⁴ Whilst the deal seemed close, negotiations collapsed due to the demands by the Westminster to have their representative in a superior position to that of C. A. G. Paver.²³⁵ Analysing the reasons behind failed sale, *Chapupu* pontificated that 'African Newspapers are published to achieve a specific purpose namely to counteract African Nationalism and to confuse the African public with propaganda aimed at attempts by them to unite and demand their rights'.²³⁶ The foregoing is necessary in the final analysis of how the newspaper performed and whose interests it represented. It seems that although the newspaper was supposedly for the Africans, its editorial policy was indeed dictated by the benefactors of African Newspapers. Thus in its formative years, the *African Daily News* supported the establishment although it claimed to be for the Africans.

In 1961 however, Thomson Newspapers, Rhodesia (Private) Limited purchased the whole of the share capital of Kachalola Limited, giving Roy Thomson controlling interests in African Newspapers Limited and the Blantyre Printing and Publishing Company Limited.²³⁷ Roy Thomson owned the Thomson Newspaper Group which was reported to own about 100 newspapers in Canada, Britain, the United States of America, Trinidad and Nigeria.²³⁸ The deal to buy papers in Southern Rhodesia was described as 'the biggest newspaper deal ever in

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ NAZ S3269/60/30 The Prime Minister: African Press, 3 May 1957.

²³⁴ NAZ S3269/60/30 Betram Paver: African Press, 9 June 1957.

²³⁵ NAZ S3269/60/30 African Press, 9 June 1957 .

²³⁶ *Chapupu*, 8 June 1957.

²³⁷ Thomson takes over African Newspapers, 20 October 1961.

²³⁸ *The Montreal Gazette*, 'Thomson buys into Africa', 20 October 1961. <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1946&dat=19611020&id=U44tAAAAIBAJ&sjid=k50FAAAAIBAJ&pg=3787,3654347> accessed 7 September 2012.

Central Africa²³⁹ and African Newspapers Limited was described as the largest publishing house for newspapers aimed at African readers. By this time African Newspapers Limited was not only printing and publishing the *African Daily News* but also some thirteen weekly, fortnightly and monthly newspapers and magazines, which circulated throughout the Federation. Following the purchase, the Board of Kachalola resigned and Roy Thomson became the new Chairman with James Coltart and Gordon C. Brunton joining the Boards of African Newspapers and Blantyre Printing and Publishing Company respectively. The agreement covering the purchase of Kachalola Limited ensured that very substantial additional cash resources would be available from the United Kingdom for both the re-equipment and the development of African Newspapers Limited and the Blantyre Printing and Publishing Company. There was also an added incentive of being closely associated with a well-known newspaper and Publishing Group. It was hoped that the purchase by the Thomsons would greatly improve both the welfare of the staff and the future progress of the newspapers and periodicals as capital resources and technical experience would be injected. By 1961, the Thomsons had invested over £300 000, and were employing close to 131 Africans and 21 Europeans. In addition, the Thomsons also bought a new printing machine worth £100 000. However, the coming of the Thomsons at first had a destabilising effect on the running of the *African Daily News*. It is argued that the new Managing Director, Deryk James began a massive recruitment of British journalists and this led to divergence of opinion on what the editorial policy was supposed to be. This led to the resignation of Nathan Shamuyarira, who felt that the recruitment of white editors to the editorial staff was contrary to the original set up under the Paver Brothers.²⁴⁰

Roy Thomson expressed the view that his paper in Rhodesia would develop ‘an awareness among Africans of the security, enlightenment and understanding which was their heritage as citizens of democratic countries’. In the same vein, James Coltart argued that their role at African Newspapers was to ‘educate, inform and create an understanding of community objectives and civic consciousness as the basis of democracy and social progress’.²⁴¹ It is not

²³⁹Seven African papers sold to Thomson, *The Montreal Gazette*, 19 October 1961. <http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=Uo4tAAAIBAJ&sjid=k50FAAAAIBAJ&pg=4851,3363347&hl=en> accessed 7 September 2012.

²⁴⁰ Interview with Nathan Shamuyarira. See also Eugene Wason who argues that the coming of the Thomsons at first led to confusion on the editorial policy as the ‘African editor was pulled first one way and then the other’.

²⁴¹ J. M. Coltart, ‘The influence of Newspaper and Television in Africa’, Address at a Joint meeting of the Royal African Society and the Royal Commonwealth Society, 7 March 1963, p. 203.

clear how the democracy mentioned by Roy Thomson and James Coltart articulated with that imagined by the Africans at this time. In Rhodesia, this period is commonly conceptualized as the proto-nationalist phase whereby Africans were generally thinking in terms of improving their conditions under white rule. For example, Bill Saidi argued that Africans seemed more vocally concerned with being allowed to drink European beer and light wines than being independent.²⁴² Thus one would assume that the democracy referred to was that which merely entailed the removal of segregationary laws that crushed the social esteem of Africans.

In a comment, the *African Daily News* stated that the coming in of Thomson complemented a policy which they had pursued since the inception of the paper in 1956. The commentary further stated that

whilst we are not ashamed of our record, and acknowledge the assistance and backing which we have had from our shareholders in the past, we do admit freely that we have a long way to go before the quality of production will reach the standard which we require. Now that the resources we lacked will be made available, nothing but the best will be acceptable. We are on the threshold of a new era and we enter it fully confident that as a member of the Thomson Organisation, our many weaknesses and shortcomings will disappear, and we will set ourselves a task of not only providing our readers with a better newspaper, but a striving to establish standards which are second to none.²⁴³

The impact of the take-over by the Thomson Group will be discussed in the next chapter.

What the *African Daily News* lacked in terms of reporters was adequately covered by their main editorial team. The newspaper employed African editors who were highly educated, and all but one were Africans from Southern Rhodesia. The first African Editor-in-Chief at African Newspapers was Jasper Savanhu. He was replaced by Lawrence Vambe who had obtained his matriculation certificate at Saint Francis, Marianhill in Natal in 1943. Vambe was Editor-in-Chief from 1956 to 1959 when he became the first African to be appointed Information Assistant in London.²⁴⁴ Vambe was later knighted by the Queen for his services to journalism in Southern Rhodesia and the Federation. When he left African Newspapers, Vambe was succeeded by another highly educated editor, Nathan Shamuyarira, a trained teacher who was described by one Harvey Greenville Ward as ‘an opportunist who was very

²⁴² Interview with Bill Saidi, 15 April 2013.

²⁴³ We enter a new era, *African Daily News*, 20 October 1961

²⁴⁴ See Lawrence Vambe interview with I. J. Johnstone, and the *African Daily News*, 9 January 1961.

much influenced by white organisations and white women'.²⁴⁵ In 1953 Shamuyarira joined the Inter-Racial Association, an organisation that sought to promote tolerance and co-existence in Southern Rhodesia. Shamuyarira and other fellow educated Africans in such associations as these were seen as the best hope for a mixed society like Rhodesia. On 5 May 1953 he joined African Newspapers Limited as a cub reporter and he rose steadily in the company, becoming the first editor of the *African Daily News* in 1956.²⁴⁶ From July 1959 until September 1962 he was Editor-in-Chief of African Newspapers Ltd., a post from which he resigned over various policy issues. Between 1961 and 1963, the newspaper was edited by Philip Mbofana who was succeeded by Willie Musarurwa, the last African editor of the *African Daily News*. Like most editors, Willie was a highly educated teacher who had obtained a journalism degree from the University of South Africa. He became the editor of the *African Weekly* in 1958 and of the *Bantu Mirror* in 1959. In 1960 he was editor of the *African Parade* and from 1961 he became the editor of the *African Daily News*. The last editor of the *African Daily News* was a British trained journalist by the name of Eugene Wason who worked with other British journalists like Mark Davidson and Bill Mclean from Dundee. It was these editors who shaped the trajectory taken by the *African Daily News*. However, other factors like management, ownership of the paper and the changing politics in the country also played a fundamental role.

The *African Daily News* was published in four languages: Shona, Ndebele, and Nyanja with English as the main language. In terms of its operations, it followed closely the lines taken by its predecessors, the *Bantu Mirror* and *African Weekly*. Concerning these early newspapers, Savanhu noted that:

Most of the news edited was freely contributed and we selected some who received a small payment for their contribution. We of course had a lot to do correcting English, presentation and omitting numerous libellous statements. Most of the news was contributed freely by the reading public from all parts of the country, some sent along with their news 20c to pay for its publication and we had to take this money and return it all and ask them whether it should be part of their subscription to the *Bantu Mirror*, we had to educate our public of the duties of newspapers. Some would write the editor to thank him for presenting the news.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ Oral/246, Harvey Greenville Ward, interviewed by I. J. Johnstone, 17 October 1984.

²⁴⁶ Diana Mitchell, *African Nationalist Leaders in Zimbabwe: Who is Who 1980*, Canon Press, Salisbury, 1980, p. 59.

²⁴⁷ AOH/5 Savanhu

Perhaps what marks out the *African Daily News* from the earlier papers was its use of the ordinary citizens in the gathering of the news—what has been termed recently as citizen journalism. It would use ordinary correspondences for a pay of about £5 for a good story. In an editorial, the newspaper stated that:

We rely heavily on Africans in the professions and those engaged in responsible positions to supply us with factual information of events in their districts. We instruct them to regularly and strictly not make any comments of their own, if they do, they know their comments will not be published and may themselves be removed from our list of correspondents. We cannot employ staff men in the smaller centres, no newspaper can afford that, even 'The London Times' has to rely on what are called 'stingers' in the smaller centres.²⁴⁸

This way of getting news from the people seems to have been popular with contributors, as some would write to register their disappointments when their stories were published late or were not published at all. For example, a reader wrote to the editor complaining that his story appeared in the press several weeks after sending it. He argued that 'many people do not buy newspapers because of this reason as they are being discouraged by not seeing their news items published in papers. When we come to views, we only read those views sent in by leaders of various organisations'.²⁴⁹

In spite of such disgruntlements, the *African Daily News* appears to have been received with pleasure by the majority of the reading African public and African organisations, and to be claimed as an emblem of African cultural 'advancement'. Mr. A. Mwamuka, Chairman of the Southern Rhodesia Chamber of Commerce said,

the *Daily News Bulletin* which came into existence during the disturbances meets a need which has long been felt, for an African paper which could give fresh news of the events occurring in Central Africa. It would seem advisable to the Press now to switch its services off from a weekly to a daily paper. Both from the point of view of literacy among the Africans, information and encouragement of a daily paper seems most necessary at this stage of our development, what is important is to develop a reading culture in the African people. From the point of view of advertisers, instead of waiting for a whole week, daily adverts would become a feature.²⁵⁰

The Reverend Canon Chipunza, priest-in-charge of the Methodist Church, concurred with Mwamuka as he also believed that there was no need to continue producing the other weekly papers. He held that consideration should be given to the possibility of dropping the *African*

²⁴⁸ *African Daily News*, Editorial Comment: Part-time Pressmen, 16 October 1961.

²⁴⁹ S. W. Kanengoni, 'News that comes first should be published first', Letter to the Editor, 19 December 1956.

²⁵⁰ Favourable comments on *African Daily News Bulletin*: Readers suggest improvements, *African Daily News*: Special Weekend Edition of the *African Weekly*, 4 October 1956.

Weekly, which according to him was publishing very stale news. He however suggested that the *Bantu Mirror* be retained to continue to cater for people from Matabeleland, whilst the *Daily News Bulletin* would continue publishing in Shona and Nyanja'.²⁵¹ Some readers suggested that the new newspaper should carry short educational news items. Due to financial constraints faced by Africans, some readers suggested that the *African Weekly* should remain, as there were people who could not afford to buy a daily paper. Others were of the view that the use of vernacular language was important in African papers, arguing that there was a tendency to get a more 'honest' view from a translated vernacular news item than from an English one. Some prominent personalities, such as Mr. J. M. N. Nkomo, believed that it was a good thing that African Newspapers had started a daily newspaper, which kept Africans informed of the latest news. He was convinced that it would get more support from the Africans with time.²⁵² However, other readers, like Mr. A. Kachikoti, a clerk at the Native Affairs Department, did not like the *African Daily News* because he felt that the *Weekly City Late Editions (African Weekly and Bantu Mirror)* were the best at giving a wider coverage of news of the week.²⁵³

By 1957, the *African Daily News* was hugely popular throughout the major centres and some reserves in Southern Rhodesia. Reverend Mayoba of the Methodist Church in Gwelo was impressed by the developments that took place at African Newspapers, that is, Africans printing their own papers for consumption of their fellow Africans.²⁵⁴ One reader in a letter to the editor viewed the *African Daily News* as a 'mother' who gave the 'children' their daily food, while the *African Weekly* was a 'father' who feeds on a weekly basis. To him the *African Daily News* was 'Our Paper...Bepa Redu'.²⁵⁵ The writer noted that the country was immense and that, had it not been for the *African Daily News*, people would be ignorant of what was happening throughout the territory. Another letter to the editor responded to a fellow reader's proposal for the expansion of the paper's pages. This letter argued that the *African Daily News* should not extend its pages beyond four, as he (quite reasonably) feared that the more pages a paper had the more expensive it would become. By 1958, the newspaper ceased to publish the weeklies and the sole language was now English, with vernacular used in its weekend editions. From the 1st of March 1958, the *African Daily News*

²⁵¹ Favourable comments on *African Daily News Bulletin*: Readers suggest improvements, 4 October 1956.

²⁵² *African Daily News*, 'Bulawayo Africans want the *Daily News*', 18 October 1956.

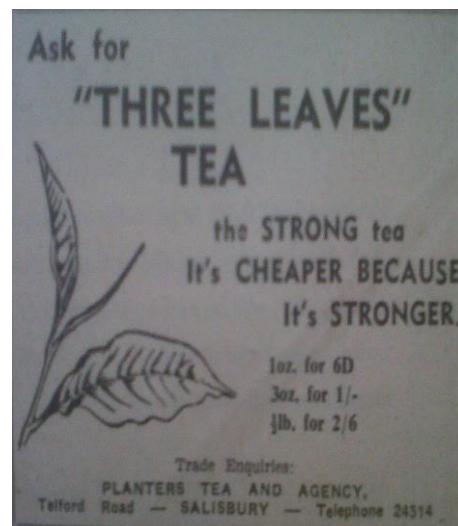
²⁵³ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁴ *African Daily News*, 'Impressed by the African Press', 19 April 1957.

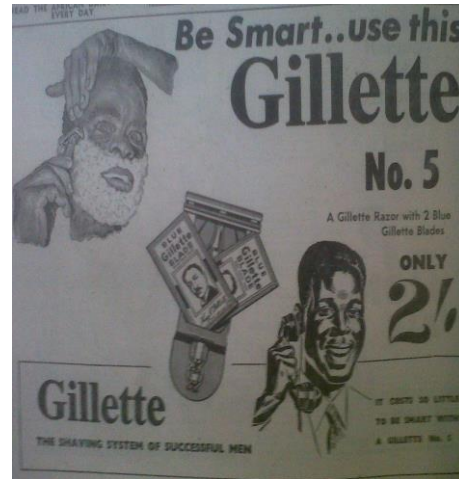
²⁵⁵ Letter to the editor, *African Daily News*, 3 April 1957.

Monday to Friday editions increased its pages from four to six whilst the Weekend Edition rose from six to eight pages. Confirming the fears expressed by other readers this increase resulted in the cost of the newspapers to 2d. The increase in the pages 'made it possible for the *African Daily News* to increase its news coverage for its readers in the whole Federation and cater for their widely varying interests'.²⁵⁶

For the whole of 1957 and 1958 the price of the newspaper was one penny (1d) and by the time it was banned in 1964 it was three pence (3d). The newspaper also carried numerous advertisements both for financial gain and social responsibility. The adverts below show a number of commodities that were popular and on demand from the emerging African middle class. Through support from companies producing such commodities, the *African Daily News* managed to remain in business.

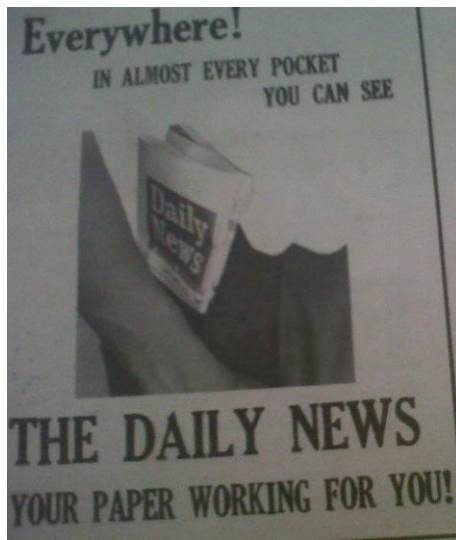


²⁵⁶ *African Daily News*, 'Bigger Daily News', 24 February 1957.



Besides fighting adverts for financial gains, the newspaper also carried adverts for the benefits of unemployed Africans, church notices and some leisure notices. MP Nicholson, in a debate that proposed the closure of the newspaper noted that ‘the *African Daily News* has published regularly, for free, a page of job applications from unemployed Africans and this space could have been used for paid advertisements’.²⁵⁷ He noted that the newspaper carried in its columns details of desperate Africans’ qualifications for employment and such people were unlikely to buy the newspaper regularly. This policy indicates that the *African Daily News* wanted to be closely identified with its readers, despite the financial uncertainty. The newspaper however took the opportunity to advertise itself to the readers as the images below depict. The adverts show both the popularity of the newspaper and the growing African spending power.

²⁵⁷Southern Rhodesia Legislative Assembly, 1296.



Transforming socio-economic and cultural leverages among urban Africans are evident in the newspaper content. These photographs which appeared in a number of copies show new pastime for the middle class Africans, such as ballroom dance competitions.

By 1959, the *African Daily News* had begun appropriating new technologies to enhance their news gathering capacities. African Newspapers became the first news organisation to install a Radio Telephone system in Southern Rhodesia. The newspaper viewed this achievement as a milestone because it saved time between news gathering by journalists and making articles ready for publication.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁸ *African Daily News*, 'Newspaper Firm Installs first Radio Telephone System', 8 January 1959.

In 1956, the *African Daily News* started the Daily News 'WHO IS HE?' competition which carried prize money of £20. Personalities such as Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda, Garfield Todd, Joshua Nkomo, Benjamin Burombo, and Kenneth Kaunda among others were cryptically described. The first prize was £10; the second was £5, and five consolation prizes of £1. This was another way of encouraging the people to buy the newspaper and help the general public to become familiar with key individuals in the society. These rising stars were important for their role in the fight for African advancement in the three territories. After the first competition, the *African Daily News* stated that the competition would get harder 'as the organisers introduce less known personalities'. In addition, African Newspapers through their daily newspaper also launched 'A Grand Poetry Competition' in 1957. The aim of this poetry competition, the paper argued, was 'to develop African poets' talent and win an honoured place amongst literary figures of their country'. Competitors were expected to write two poems in any one of the country's indigenous languages.

Besides politics, the *African Daily News* showcased prominent African personalities who had 'made it' despite a racial infrastructure that militated against the social advancement of Africans. Such portraits included Herbert Chitepo, who became the first black barrister in Southern Rhodesia in 1954; Joshua Nkomo, the first African to be appointed on a government commission in 1956; and Samuel Tichafa Parirenyatwa who became the first African medical doctor in 1956. According to Bill Saidi, the *African Daily News* was the first newspaper in Rhodesia to address male Africans by formal titles such as 'Mr' in place of words such as 'native', 'boy' or other demeaning appellations.

In addition to reporting news stories in real time, occurring throughout the country and the Federation, the *African Daily News* also covered events in Africa and the Middle East and provided analysis on how these events impacted the Africans. One columnist stated that the *African Daily News* was popular with Africans because they 'want to know what is happening in the United Nations Organisation, regarding the Suez Crisis, Cyprus, Algeria, Kenya and South Africa and other troubled spots of the world'.²⁵⁹ The *African Daily News* reported on the trial and eventual death sentence of Dedan Kimathi in Kenya in 1957. The 1957 issues focused keenly on what was happening in Ghana, and how things were changing globally. For the editors of the *African Daily News*, this meant that minority rule was slowly approaching its end. Commenting on Ghana's independence the *African Daily News* stated in

²⁵⁹*African Daily News*, 8 October 1956.

their editorial of 6 March 1957 that ‘the old argument that Africans cannot effectively take part in local and central government has been disapproved by the Ghana experiment’.²⁶⁰ To the NDP nationalists, events in Congo served to show that some Africans would sell out the struggle for national unity in the same lines as did Moise Tshombe, who fought for the secession of the province of Katanga from the territory that would a few years later be named Zaire. For example, when the Zimbabwe National Party broke away from the NDP in 1961, its leaders were beaten up by the NDP supporters holding placards denouncing the ZNP leader Patrick Matimba. The placards read ‘Tshombe sell outs, that is Matimba, go back to Europe now’.²⁶¹ Nationalist leaders like Ndabaningi Sithole and Joseph Msika were on the fore front of labelling the ZNP leaders as ‘Tshombes’ while at the grassroots level party supporters of NDP would do the same to the supporters of the ZNP.

Having looked briefly at the brief history of the *African Daily News* and how it was received, I now turn to the political context and the key players that dominated Southern Rhodesia during this era. This is important as it gives the important background and context to the case studies that will follow.

Background: Contextualising Politics in Rhodesia during the Federation

In order to understand the way in which the press, particularly the *African Daily News*, covered important issues of the day, there is a need to understand the forces that shaped politics in the country. There are two key things to note. Firstly, there was federal politics which involved the administration of the three territories (Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland) with its capital in Salisbury. Secondly, there was also territorial politics, which oversaw administration of the individual territories within the Federation. What is important to note is that both federal and territorial politics affected the Africans on issues like franchise, segregation, taxation, native affairs, education, land, and health, among other things. Unlike Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, which were British Protectorates, Southern Rhodesia had achieved responsible government status in 1923. European settlers in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia saw the Federation as the best route to freedom from the

²⁶⁰ *African Daily News*, ‘Ghana Day’, 6 March 1957

²⁶¹ *African Daily News*, 10 June 1961

British government.²⁶² The Federation was, therefore, chiefly a plan to safeguard white rule and to keep Britain out of the politics in Central Africa. However, in the event of the collapse of the Federation, the two protectorates would become independent whilst Southern Rhodesia would continue to be administered by the white settlers. One of the key themes in federal politics was the quest to attain dominion status, either for Southern Rhodesia or the Federation as a whole, under minority rule. Africans in the two northern territories had resisted Federation because they feared it would import to their own countries Southern Rhodesia's segregationist policies. Federation was implemented at the promise of a 'partnership' between 'the races' in all three territories. To Southern Rhodesia Africans, 'partnership' represented a step forward from the old segregationist approach, whilst for Africans in the north, it represented a step backward, as it challenged the doctrine of the paramountcy of African interests.²⁶³ Opposition to the Federation also came from a minority of white settlers who felt threatened by the doctrine of 'partnership' which they feared would increase African influence.²⁶⁴ In this context, the *African Daily News* acted as a government mouthpiece as it hoped to see the survival of the Federation in line with its policy of promoting an understanding and mutual respect between the races in Central Africa.

However, the idea of 'partnership' was brought into play by Godfrey Huggins to hoodwink the British to accept the Federation. In 1956, Godfrey Huggins described the actual state policy in relation to Africans in the Federation in paternalistic and repressive terms:

We want to indicate to the Africans that provision is made for them to have a place in the sun, as things go along. But we have not the least intention of letting them control things until they have proved themselves, and perhaps not even then. That will depend on our grandchildren.²⁶⁵

It was envisaged that through this partnership the white man being the senior partner would foster the advancement of the junior partner.²⁶⁶ However, as Joshua Nkomo notes, the actual partnership that Huggins wanted to create between Europeans and Africans was one of a horse and a rider, the white settler being the rider.²⁶⁷ The deception at the heart of the

²⁶² Martin Loney, *Rhodesia: White Racism and Imperial Response*, Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1975, p. 83.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

²⁶⁴ Martin Loney, *Rhodesia*, 1975, 88.

²⁶⁵ Keatley Patrick, *The Politics of Partnership*, Penguin, 1963, p. 224.

²⁶⁶ Kenneth Young, *Rhodesia and Independence: A study in British Colonial Policy*, Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, p. 40.

²⁶⁷ Joshua Nkomo, *The Story of my Life*, p. 59.

Federation's formation would give rise to the discontent among Africans, denied meaningful power as 'junior partners' and would fan the fires of nationalism in the three territories.

There were contradictions within colonial politics from the inception of white rule. At one end there were those that were pro-business urbanites who supported the British South Africa Company; at another end were white farmers. The pro-business faction wanted union with South Africa whilst the farmers wanted self-government. The 1923 referendum granted Southern Rhodesia responsible government status. But these divisions internal to white colonial society meant that, by the time the Federation was consummated in 1953, they manifested themselves in bitter debates about African advancement. Those white settlers who had remained in the country for the long haul wanted to maintain the status quo of exclusive white domination whilst the post war immigrants tended to have liberal political views and attitudes towards the Africans. According to Ian Hancock,

there were the avowed supremacists who opposed any extension of political rights to the blacks and any tempering of with discriminatory laws as they believed in rigid segregation of society under white rule. Then there were those who followed the middle-of-the-road approach by advocating for minor amendments to discriminatory laws but wanted to retain political control in white hands. Finally there were those who were broadly sympathetic to African aspirations and had accepted the inevitability of majority rule.²⁶⁸

Key white political figures in Rhodesian politics were Godfrey Huggins, Garfield Todd, Edgar Whitehead, Winston Field and later Ian Smith. Huggins assumed the Premiership of Southern Rhodesia in 1933 and resigned in 1954 to become the federal Prime Minister. Huggins' political party was called the Reform Party, which was later renamed the United Party in 1934. Garfield Todd became Southern Rhodesia Prime Minister under the United Rhodesia Party (URP) ticket after it had merged with Huggins' United Party in 1954. The opposition party was the Federal party that was led by Edgar Whitehead which later became the United Federal Party (UFP) after it merged with the URP in 1958 just before Todd was ousted from power. Then the opposition party was the Dominion Party which was formed in 1956 was led by Winston Field and which later became the Rhodesia Front in 1962. Just what political stance did these parties represent in Rhodesian politics? For the purposes of this study I will briefly look at the URP, UFP and the Rhodesia Front as they are the parties that dominated the Rhodesian political landscape between 1956 and 1964. The press (both private

²⁶⁸ Ian Hancock, *White liberals, moderates and radicals in Rhodesia 1953-1980*, St Martin's Press, New York, 1984, p. 2.

and state) during this period was unequivocally against the Dominion Party, which later became the Rhodesian Front, supposedly for its racist policies. The *African Daily News* would align itself at first with the URP and later on the UFP with a number of factors that informed these preferences by the press.

Critics of Todd point to 1957 as the year in which he became a 'true liberal'. Ian Hancock argues that Todd's election manifesto in 1954 did not make any specific commitment on African affairs. He summarised the URP stance as follows: 'although it wanted racial harmony it did not take action contrary to the maintenance of white rule'.²⁶⁹ It is in this vein that Todd's early years were characterised by intolerance towards dissent as evidenced by the crushing the Wankie Colliery mine strike in 1954 by the military and declaring a state of emergency. A year later, Todd's government would pass a piece of legislation, a Public Order Act, which is still being used in Zimbabwe today to crush the political enemies of those in power. In 1956 as will be shown later, Todd defeated the Railway strike and declared a state of emergency under the Public Order Act. This legislation led to the formation of a faction to protest against the Act as it 'gave wide discretionary powers to the executive as well as infringing the rights of parliament and individuals'.²⁷⁰ This, among other factors, would lead to Todd's ouster in 1958 after the URP had just merged with the Federal Party to form the UFP. Although Todd had joined the cabinet of Edgar Whitehead, conflicts within the UFP would lead him to reconstitute the URP. However, the policies of the URP and the UFP were not very different as both were considered liberal parties. The only difference was the pace with which the liberal reforms were to be implemented -- with Todd advocating for an accelerated pace while Whitehead was comfortable with a gradual pace.

After the removal of Todd from the UFP, white politics in Rhodesia changed drastically as the newly formed Dominion Party began winning seats in Southern Rhodesia that were formerly held by the UFP. The Dominion Party and its leaders were conservative as they aimed to entrench white minority rule and even attain dominion status with political and economic power exclusively in the hands of the whites. It is within this context that the *African Daily News* would attempt to neutralise the Dominion Party by supporting UFP. The *African Daily News* conveyed opinion suggesting that the Dominion Party was frustrating the goals of partnership and inclusion of Africans in the white political party set up. An editorial

²⁶⁹*Ibid*, p. 60.

²⁷⁰*Ibid*.

appearing on the 7th of November 1956 entitled 'The Dominion Party and the Africans' declared that

we as a journal have no axe to grind and it is the last thing we would wish to do to involve ourselves in party political affairs, except in so far as we think that the interests of the Africans and the country are jeopardised. The Dominion Party should come out in the open as far as the African people are concerned. Except for the advert which appeared in our journals, the party has not been very interested in making a direct approach to the African people and it seems to us that either the Party regards the African as being of no consequence or as an embarrassment. These actions have strengthened Africans belief that the Dominion Party has little to offer in meeting their political aspirations.

African political participation was closely tied to European politics because as yet there were no African-run political parties. When there were attempts to organise Africans, there were serious divisions between the rural and urban masses, and the African professional bourgeoisie (teachers, nurses, clerks, and entrepreneurs). The concerns and aspirations of literate Africans initially tended to run counter to those of the ordinary people and so they sought to obtain the best terms from the government for themselves. It is therefore not surprising that, during the federation, this group of elites joined the United Federal Party, a white political organisation they believed would advance their peculiar interests. In the same vein the *African Daily News* spent its energies trying to encourage Africans to join the already established political parties, preferably the UFP. As noted previously, two key journalists from African Newspapers had been recruited into the structures of the UFP and had contested and won legislative seats. One such personality was Jasper Savanhu who in October 1956, addressed meetings encouraging Africans in Mashonaland to form a branch of the UFP 'because the party was liberal and could achieve much for the Africans in the Federation'.²⁷¹ In Matabeleland it was Mike Hove, and later on Charlton Ngcebetsha who claimed to have joined the UFP because 'I want to come much nearer to European leaders and members of the European parties and see what I can achieve for my African people from within the party system'.²⁷² Ngcebetsha even suggested that Africans in Southern Rhodesia did not aspire to rule the country but just wanted some of their people to speak for them in

²⁷¹ *African Daily News*, 'Form Federal Party Branches', 30 October 1956.

²⁷² *African Daily News*, 'Ngcebetsha hits at critics: Boasts of growing support for the UFP, 4 April 1958.

parliament. He argued that the fact that Africans were joining European political parties meant that they supported the Federation.²⁷³

Besides the European political parties, the idea of federation also found ready support in the form of multiracial organisations, chiefly the Capricorn African Society and the Inter Racial Society of Southern Rhodesia (IRA). These associations were led by white liberals whose idea of racial cooperation was meant to forestall the rise of African nationalism by encouraging cooperation between the Europeans and the emerging African middle class. A number of prominent African men joined these associations such as Mike Masotsha Hove, Lawrence Vambe, Nathan Shamuyarira (notably former African Newspapers employees), Enoch Dumbutshena, Stanlake Samkange, Charles Mzingeli, Chad Chipunza and Herbert Chitepo. However, like similar organizations throughout the colonial African world, far from representing the wishes and aspirations of the African masses, these associations and their African members were concerned with integrating petty-bourgeois blacks within the colonial set up. What would culminate in the formation of purely African organisation was the failure of these organisations, as well as European political parties, to alleviate the racial oppression of the majority of Africans. The *African Daily News* would be caught in the crossfire because it also supported the federation and the idea of a gradual political advancement of Africans.

The newspaper was thus mediating African politics by echoing the government idea that Africans were supposed to join European political parties. However, it has to be noted that in Southern Rhodesia Africans and Europeans were on a common franchise and whatever African wanted to stand for Federal Parliament would have to submit himself to this electoral body of white and blacks although the Africans were very few on the common voters roll.²⁷⁴ Very few Africans qualified because the conditions were too stringent: most did not earn enough to acquire property. Under these terms, it was the white elite who had the voting power and it was clear whoever won the support of the Europeans was the one to win power regardless of the interests of the African people. In the perspective of those at the *African Daily News*, it did not make political sense to have an all-African political party when its members did not qualify to make enough votes to assume political office. The solution lay in Africans joining European led political parties.

²⁷³ *African Daily News*, 'The African in Southern Rhodesia does not want to rule: Ngcebetssha', 3 February, 1960.

²⁷⁴ AOH/5 Jasper Savanhu.

However, some educated Africans felt that the mirage of cooperation was not bringing development to Africans and as a result started the formation of political parties to articulate the grievances of the ordinary Africans. The issues that Africans wanted addressed include low wages, the pass system, racial segregation both at work and in towns, the franchise laws and more importantly the white seizure of land under the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 and the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951. By the time the *African Daily News* was formed in 1956, two African organisations were already in existence: the City Youth League (CYL) and the Bulawayo-based African National Congress (ANC). The CYL was led by James Chikerema, George Nyandoro, and Jason Moyo among others. The ANC which was formed in the 1940s had proved to be inadequate 'as a channel for mass resentment' against the colonial establishment because it had spent most of its time debating whether its members were allowed to join other political parties or organisations. The *African Daily News* supported the stance that had been taken by Joshua Nkomo that there was need for freedom of association as 'restricting ANC members from joining other political groups was virtually dictating in its own house and was very anti-democracy'.²⁷⁵ In its commentary on the 13th of April 1957, the newspaper stated that

if a European party or political organisation closed its doors to Africans as the Nationalists do, it will be heavily criticised here and abroad, for being discriminatory and unethical. We strongly feel that Africans should not lay themselves open to such criticism. Even if these political parties have disappointed them heavily in the past, and are still doing so, the principle of freedom of association should be maintained as Mr. Nkomo so ably pointed out.²⁷⁶

On 12 September 1957, the CYL and the ANC came together to form the country's first national political party, the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress (SRANC, later simply called the ANC) under the leadership of Joshua Nkomo. The ANC was formed on the understanding that it would be a radical organisation that would attempt to marry the grievances of both the urban (high unemployment in the urban areas) and the rural (crowding that had been brought about by the NLHA) masses.²⁷⁷ In advocating for black rule, the ANC attacked those who subscribed to multiracial politics like Charlton Ngcebetsha. This alienated itself from the support of the *African Daily News* which believed in the idea of multiracial politics under the leadership of the UFP.

²⁷⁵ *African Daily News*, 'Mr. Nkomo and Congress', 13 April 1957.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁷ Terrence Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning: The social history of a Southern African City, 1893-1960*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2010, p. 207.

It is within this context that the changing politics of the *African Daily News* becomes evident. From its formation the newspaper was supportive of white capital. For example, it did not condone actions like stay-aways and boycotts by African workers. It then took a middle-of-the-road approach, sympathetic to the plight of Africans but still remaining avowed critics of majority rule. However, a process of radicalisation in African politics generally provoked a similar radicalisation by the *Daily News*, with support for majority rule.

Class, Press Politics and Contested Notions of the Public

Two events in 1956 plunged the *African Daily News* into the politics of Southern Rhodesia. The first event was a bus boycott in Harare; the second, a railway strike in Bulawayo. The Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, Garfield Todd, responded to these two events by declaring a state of emergency. During this period, the *African Daily News* depended on some form of funds from the government, as well as a consortium of local companies. This affected the way in which the newspaper handled the bus boycott and later the railway strike of September 1956.

Why were these events such a turning point? How were they covered by the *African Daily News* and how did affected organizations respond to that coverage? On the 17th of September 1956, the African people of Harare which was also known as (Mbare) and Highfield undertook a boycott of the bus transport operated by a monopoly company called the United Transport Company. This boycott was organised by the City Youth League under the banner of an organisation called the Action Committee. According to Loney, the formation of the CYL and the Action Committee came as a challenge to the African elite who had adhered to the politics of partnership by responding to the strategy of the white political leadership to foster the emergence of an African middle class.²⁷⁸ West argues that—except for its leadership—the CYL was dominated by the lower middle class with most of its members only educated to the upper primary school level. There were few rank and file white-collar professionals and university educated Africans, as many had opted to join the pro-partnership organisations such as the Capricorn Africa Society (CAS) and the Inter-Racial-Association of Southern Rhodesia (IRA). The CYL was anti-federation and it attacked the idea of partnership as well as CAS and IRA for seeking to ‘control, suppress and keep down the

²⁷⁸Martin Loney, *Rhodesia*, p. 101.

Africans forever'.²⁷⁹ In 1956, the CYL organised a protest against the two pence increase in bus fares.²⁸⁰ The bus boycott was led by educated professionals, including James Chikerema (an insurance salesman), George Nyandoro (a bookkeeper) and Edson Sithole (a clerk). These leaders of the bus boycott also belonged to the City Youth League. The Action Committee was responsible for organising the boycott. The Action Committee justified the boycott strategy by pointing out that bus fares had become excessive and beyond the earning capacity of the ordinary workers. The plight of Africans was described by the Action Committee in their memorandum to the Minister responsible for transport. They said;

The minimum unavoidable transport expense for the people living in Highfields is £4/month and about £3 for those in Harare and Mabvuku. In our opinion, this unavoidable expenditure is too high when compared with the average wage of £7 to £10. It becomes impossible to maintain a family as the cost of education, living and everything has gone up at a faster rate than the rise of African wages.²⁸¹

According to reports in the *African Daily News*, the bus boycott was ninety (90) per cent effective in the African locations of Harare and 75 per cent in Highfields.²⁸² Highfields and Harare were the first two locations that were set aside for all Africans working in Salisbury. The geography meant that Africans had to commute to work. The locations had become the home of all groups of Africans: the unemployed and the employed, the old and the young, as well as single women. The bus boycott degenerated into lawlessness when waiting rooms were destroyed; cars stoned and there was looting in the townships. The *African Daily News* reported that a number of girls were raped when the rioters broke into a girls' hostel near Salisbury. This gender-based violence was embroiled in the nexus of class-war and patriarchy: young women who stayed at female hostels situated between the two locations and the city centre had ignored the boycott by opting to pay higher fares. According to West, the sexual violence associated with the bus boycott is best explained within the CYL's undisguised masculinist demeanour, which created a socio-political context that had no tolerance for defiance by women.²⁸³ Timothy Scarnecchia saw the rape as a form of punishment on the women for disobeying calls to support the boycott²⁸⁴, whilst Nathan

²⁷⁹ M. O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*, p. 205.

²⁸⁰ J. R. T. Wood, *So far and no further: Rhodesia's bid for Independence*, p. 12

²⁸¹ *African Daily News*, 'Action Committee submits Memorandum to Minister', 18 September 1956.

²⁸² *African Daily News Bulletin*, 18 September 1956.

²⁸³ Michael O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965*, Indiana Press, Bloomington, 2002, p. 205.

²⁸⁴ Timothy Scarnecchia, *Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe: Harare and Highfields, 1940-1964*, University of Rochester Press, p. 79.

Shamuyarira argues that the women were raped because they had acted as sell outs in disobeying calls for the boycott.²⁸⁵ Although there is no evidence to support the culpability of the CYL in the rapes, the CYL is blamed by West for espousing politics that reinforced masculine dominance in the public domain, which in a way helped to create as well as maintain, a political climate in which such acts would occur.²⁸⁶ Timothy Scarnecchia also points to the fact that although the bus boycott was originally planned as a peaceful protest against high bus fares and rising prices of other consumer items, it got out of hand as young men became violent as they broke into the girls' hostels where they stole money and personal belongings before proceeding to rape about sixteen ladies.²⁸⁷

As Joshua Nkomo recalled in his autobiography, the events of 1956 greatly demonstrated the power of the African people and took Europeans by surprise, as they had apparently believed Africans were incapable of organising a rebellion.²⁸⁸ In reference to the boycott and the resultant violence, which was labelled as 'riots', Wood observed that 'this was the first civil commotion to be experienced in Salisbury in 55 years'.²⁸⁹ The bus boycott lasted for three days. In an attempt to separate this consumer-based action from politics, the organisers of the boycott refused to meet the Chief Native Commissioner for Salisbury arguing that boycott was not against the government but purely grievances against the United Transport Company. In a report by the *African Daily News* of 20 September, the CNC condemned the leaders of the Action Committee for failing to stop the riots and for 'refusing to broadcast an appeal to the rioters to disperse'.²⁹⁰ However, the *African Daily News* of the previous day had quoted Chikerema discouraging people from engaging in any form of looting and rioting. In reporting on the boycott and the rioting that ensued, many ordinary residents blamed the leaders of the Action Committee for the looting and rioting by unemployed youths—evidence of broader tensions between generations. For example the *African Daily News* quoted one resident of Mbare saying that he blamed the leaders for organising 'these open air meetings where many of the audience are spivs and loafers means that people who hardly understand what the speakers are driving at become restless which results in lawlessness and

²⁸⁵ Nathan Shamuyarira, *Crisis in Rhodesia*, p. 70.

²⁸⁶ M. O. West, p. 206. See also Timothy Scarnecchia, 'Poor Women and Nationalist Politics: Alliances and Fissures in the Formation of a Nationalist Political Movement in Salisbury, 1950-56', *Journal of African History*, 27, 2, 1996: pp. 283-310.

²⁸⁷ Timothy Scarnecchia, *Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe: Harare and Highfields, 1940-1964*, University of Rochester Press, p. 79.

²⁸⁸ Joshua Nkomo, *The story of my life*, London, Methuen, p. 70.

²⁸⁹ J. R. T. Wood, *So far and no further*, p. 12.

²⁹⁰ *African Daily News*, 'CNC Condemns Action Committee', 20 September 1956.

hooliganism'.²⁹¹ Another resident was quoted asking, 'raping my daughter, is that the bus boycott?' whilst another resident equated the hooliganism that characterised the boycott to acts of savagery.²⁹² Others pursued a xenophobic logic, trying to lay the blame at the feet of the migrant labourers from Nyasaland for the violence because 'people heard Nyanja language from the shouting when people passed through the locations'.²⁹³

The boycott ended when the government, through the CNC and the ministry of transport, agreed to appoint a commission to 'investigate a number of problems affecting the urban African, including transport difficulties'.²⁹⁴ The government also promised that an African would be appointed to serve in the commission (that African was Joshua Nkomo). The leaders of the Action Committee agreed to call off the boycott pending the outcome of the deliberation by the commission. Just as the Harare bus boycott was being resolved, other tensions were brewing in Bulawayo, where African Railway workers were striking for higher wages.

The railway strike brought the railway system in both Southern and Northern Rhodesia to a standstill. This strike was organised by Knight Maripe, General Secretary of the Amalgamated African Railway Workers Union, which had about 22 000 African workers in both Rhodesias who were expected to go on strike for a period of five days. Other trade union organisations involved in the railway strike were the Railways African Workers Union (RAWU) led by Maripe and the Reformed Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union led by Charles Mzingeli. The Prime Minister stated that railway workers were demanding 150 percent increases on their basic wages; in money increases this was ranging from £2.10s./month; £3.10s./month and as high as £6 depending on the general grades running from 10s. through 12s.6d to 15s./month.²⁹⁵ The railways refused to increase the ration allowances but agreed to raise the family allowances from 27s.6d. to 30s./month, and the African labour representatives agreed only to go against their word the following meeting.²⁹⁶

After the railways had failed to strike a deal with the workers union, the government decided to step in and appointed a formal committee to deal with this issue. The Harragin Committee

²⁹¹ *African Daily News*, 'Where do leaders go when the Riots starts: Action Committee refuse to negotiate', 18 September 1956.

²⁹² *African Daily News*, 'Residents criticise looting', 20 September 1956.

²⁹³ *African Daily News*, 'Residents criticise looting', 20 September 1956.

²⁹⁴ *African Daily News*, 'CNC Condemns Action Committee', 20 September 1956.

²⁹⁵ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Assembly Debates, 4 October 1956.

²⁹⁶ *African Daily News*, 23 September 1956. See also the Debates, 4 October 1956.

approved an increase of £12s.6d./month on the commencing wage to all employees in the lower ranges, and the starting wage of the middle range was to be increased by 15s./month whilst senior staff got an increase of £2 5s./month.²⁹⁷ However, Knight Maripe is said to have demanded that the government add a further 5s. to all the workers so as to stop the strike action. The railway leaders rejected the Harragin award because ‘it was not acceptable to the union’. In response, the government threatened the workers with prosecution, dismissal, loss of benefits as well as rations for heeding the call to strike. The government quickly declared a state of emergency ostensibly to maintain law and order in the country. The same happened in Northern Rhodesia. Gatherings of any sort were banned and Todd’s government quickly sent out the police to disperse the railway workers with tear gas when their leaders attempted to address them. The police raided the headquarters of the African Railway Workers Union as well as the house of Maripe where they confiscated union papers, letters, and telegrams from other branches.²⁹⁸

In reporting on the railway strike, the *African Daily News* focused on the confusion surrounding the Harragin award and what it meant as far as the strike was concerned. It offered the view that Maripe and his ‘henchmen’ in Bulawayo had taken a hasty step in calling for a strike barely forty-eight hours after the award had been announced. The newspaper quoted several African leaders disproving of the strike action. One such leader interviewed was Chingattie, who argued that the ‘railway union should accept the award as a temporary measure and focus on getting the administration to offer more advanced jobs to Africans’.²⁹⁹ Another individual called Chigwida noted that while the award could have been made slightly higher, he still believed that negotiations and striking would bring the best results to the Africans.³⁰⁰ The newspaper also interviewed the ordinary workers concerning the award and what they thought in relation the strike. The paper reported that in Gwelo people had ‘turned a deaf ear to the Secretary General of the union when he addressed us about the strike’, while in Salisbury the *African Daily News* reported that African Railway men ‘were really satisfied about the Harragin award’. Even the Prime Minister stated that “generally speaking, right down the length and breadth of the rail, the African people were

²⁹⁷ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Assembly Debates, 4 October 1956.

²⁹⁸ *African Daily News*, ‘Maripe’s House Raided’, 23 September 1956.

²⁹⁹ *African Daily News* Leaders criticise Railway Union Decision, 23 September 1956.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

satisfied with the award”.³⁰¹ The fore-going wrongly assumes that the railway strike was a non-event yet that was not the case.

The *African Daily News* offered its own analysis of the bus boycott and the railway strike. In the first instance, the newspaper pointed out to its disapproval of strikes as a weapon by the workers. In their editorial of the 17th of September the editor pointed out that:

It will be a sorry day if the people of this country resort to boycotts and strikes as the only way to put things right. Such a method is costly economically, politically and racially -- for these reasons we call upon all those concerned to get down to constructive thinking and action.³⁰²

The above statement touches on key issues that affected the Africans during this period. Economically, there was the thinking that the better the economy performed, the more the benefits accrued to the Africans which would in the long run improve their standards of living. Therefore strikes were seen as retrogressive to the economy. Politically, strikes were also seen as backward ways of addressing worker grievances and that the country would be better off in the ‘civilised’ hands of the whites. Strikes meant that Africans were not yet ready to govern own their own. Racially, it has been pointed out that the federation was formed on the false idea of racial cooperation. The fact that such strikes were organised by the Africans suggested that they were not prepared to work with the whites in the economic development of the country.

The *African Daily News* in this vein laid the blame for violence on the ordinary people who supposedly were not educated enough to make independent decisions. In another editorial on the 24th of September entitled “Wild Rumours”, the newspaper blamed the new arrivals by rural migrants in the urban areas for being manipulated into doing things they didn’t understand. They concluded that ‘unless these Africans can be taught to read books, newspapers and magazines intelligently, the twin problem of disseminating true information and checking wild, unfounded and ill-informed rumours assumes large proportions’.³⁰³

Concerning the railway strike, the *African Daily News* commented that the decision of the Union to go on strike would have far-flung repercussions.³⁰⁴ The newspaper editor believed that, by striking, African workers were negatively affecting the ‘healthy’ relationship the

³⁰¹ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates, 4 October 1956.

³⁰² *African Daily News Bulletin*, 17 September 1956.

³⁰³ *African Daily News*, ‘Comment: The Wild Rumours’, 24 September 1956.

³⁰⁴ *African Daily News*, ‘Comment: The Railway Strike’, 22 September 1956.

workers had with the government. This claim by the newspaper was premised on the promise by the government to include Africans in future commissions to look into the plight of urban Africans in general and transport workers in particular. It would seem that the editors at the newspapers (Shamuyarira and Vambe) were afraid that if the strike went ahead, the government would reconsider its position on including Africans in such commissions. It may also be speculated that the editors at the African Newspapers feared that such strike actions and boycotts would be construed as anti-colonial thereby leading to violent crackdown by the colonial authorities. The African professionals at African Newspapers clearly harboured the belief, similar to the white liberals, that it was not yet time for the Africans to launch for independence. But one trade union leader, Charles Mzingeli accused the government of ‘encouraging Africans to act unconstitutionally’ by turning a deaf ear to the genuine grievances by the Africans.

The *African Daily News* picked up the arguments raised by educated Africans like Chingattie who argued that instead of clamouring for better wages, African unions were supposed to concentrate on getting Africans advanced jobs, which would bring with them higher salaries. This assessment was challenged by evidence which showed that black Rhodesians were paid lesser wages than white Rhodesians, even if they had similar advanced jobs. Although it was not mentioned what the Africans were earning and what they wanted³⁰⁵, Joshua Nkomo in his autobiography gives us an insight into how low the African wages were. He pointed out that with his degree; he was paid about £12, whilst a white welfare officer without a degree was paid £100.³⁰⁶ Therefore the problem was much deeper than merely the issue of job advancement proffered by some Africans and supported by African Newspapers. Mzingeli noted that besides the issue of wages, Africans had deep-seated grievances emanating from discriminatory treatment at post offices and other public offices, yet the government was not taking any action. There was now a growing belief amongst the Africans that the only language that the government understood was that of boycotts and strikes.

The railway strike also resulted in the muzzling of the press as the government was eager to control the transmission of information. Although there were spirited efforts to deny this, it took the efforts of legislator Mr. A. D. H. Lloyd who accused the government of muzzling the

³⁰⁵The Action Committee seems to suggest in their memorandum to the Minister of transport that the average wage for unskilled Africans ranged between £7 and £10 per month.

³⁰⁶Joshua Nkomo, *The Story of my Life*, p. 42.

press as they attempted to cover the strike. In supporting his allegations, the legislator stated that:

The Public Order Bill was used to muzzle the press. A Press representative who was sent to No. 5 compound with the specific purpose of reporting on the proceedings there was denied admittance. I can see no democratic reason why the Press representative should have been so prevented and I understand that the press representative has resigned from his paper because a stand was not made on his behalf. I support my statement that the Press was muzzled because all the news of the strike in Bulawayo was released by the Public Relations Officer in Salisbury and these reports came through from the security officials in Bulawayo, and he was responsible for deciding what he would hand to the Press.³⁰⁷

The statement above by Mr. A. D. H. Lloyd contradicts the words of the Prime Minister, who argued that ‘great care was taken to hand over at every possible occasion, the fullest news that came our way to the press. We have had no complaints from the press regarding the difficulty of getting news’.³⁰⁸ Lawrence Vambe, who covered the strike as a representative of the African Press (generic term for all newspapers for Africans) said that although he and two other members of the staff of African Newspapers Limited encountered certain difficulties in reporting events in Bulawayo, he however could not explicitly say that the government had put certain restrictions on the press.³⁰⁹ He noted that the police had tried to stop them from covering mass meetings and demanded press cards, of which failure to produce one resulted in being sent away. The police also requested written permission from the Commissioner of Police, whilst almost all photographers were turned away.³¹⁰ Whilst the title of the news suggested that Vambe was commenting on Mr. Lloyd’s remarks, he however could not deny that the press had been muzzled. It can be speculated that Vambe knew that the press had indeed been muzzled but faced with the choice of contradicting the Prime Minister and the legislator, Vambe decided to remain ambiguous. Although it is not known which company the journalist who resigned represented as a result of the treatment by the police, the fact that the legislator was from Bulawayo makes it highly probable that he had first hand information on the muzzling of the press by the government. In addition, Todd never denied that information that was sent to the press came from the security officials in Bulawayo through the Public Relations office in Salisbury. Chances for that information to be distorted by

³⁰⁷ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates, 4 October 1956.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁹ *African Daily News*, ‘The Press and the Railway strike: Mr. Vambe comments on Mr. Lloyd’s remarks’, 5 October 1956.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*

governmental biases were very high. Whilst Todd and the *African Daily News* reported that African workers were ignoring the trade union leaders, they did not account for the fact that the strike action was successful.

Besides having problems with the colonial state, the way in which the *African Daily News* covered and commented on both the bus boycott and the railway strike was met with anger and disillusionment from the Action Committee leaders as well as the Trade Union Congress. The Action Committee called for a public meeting at the Luna Park in Harare on Sunday 7 October to discuss the boycott and its aftermath. At the meeting, James Chikerema, the Chairman of the Action Committee alleged that much of what was given prominence by the press was not true, while the truth was either distorted or suppressed. For example, Chikerema argued that the claim by the *African Daily News*, that the bus boycott had faltered on its own was not true, as it was the Action Committee that encouraged the people to stop the boycott. He also claimed that his statement calling for an end to the boycott should have appeared in the Friday edition, but was not published until Saturday when the boycott was already over.³¹¹ The most outspoken person at the meeting was George Nyandoro, a founding member of both the City Youth League and the Action Committee which was responsible for organising the bus boycott was reported by the *African Daily News* to have 'used the most derisive, derogative and belittling Shona terms' in his diatribe against the African Press. Labelling the African Press a mouthpiece of the Government, Nyandoro moved a resolution to boycott the papers if the African Press did not change its policy.³¹² According to a report in the *African Daily News* of 8 October, the mass meeting passed three resolutions and one resolution 'which received greatest acclamation was one warning the Management of the African Press (publishers of the *African Daily News*) that unless they modify their policy whereby they conducted themselves in a manner prejudicial to African interests the African people would be compelled to alienate their support which they have hitherto given'.³¹³

The belief that African Newspapers in general and the *African Daily News* in particular was a government mouthpiece was also raised by Federal Legislator from Nyasaland, Mr. Chirwa. He pointed out that because the *African Daily Newspaper* was owned by Europeans, opinions expressed in the leading articles of the newspaper were not necessarily those of the African

³¹¹ *African Daily News*, 'Action Committee attacks African Press', 8 October 1956.

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ *Ibid.*

editor, but those of the proprietors.³¹⁴ To buttress his argument, legislator Chirwa stated that he had worked for African Newspapers Limited as a clerk in the circulation department for about thirteen years and as such he knew ‘what orders are received from the proprietors’.³¹⁵ The *African Daily News* however rejected these allegations pointing out that such accusations were an insult to African journalists as they suggested that they could not write what they believed in.

Another African group that was politically suspicious of the conduct of the African Press was the Trade Union Congress, a grouping of African trade unions. Unions reflected critically on the policy of the African Newspapers Limited at their inaugural congress of the all-African Trade Union Congress which was held in Gwelo in 1957 (a year after the railway strike) when Mr. Reuben Jamela, General Secretary of the Southern Rhodesia Trade Union Congress, accused the African press of not representing the interests of Africans. The *African Daily News* quoted him saying that the African press

was African press by word, but in deeds it was not because it did not ventilate truly and correctly the opinions of African people. It is working to a certain direction -- a direction I do not know, but am sure it is not working for the interests of the African people. It is anti-African people in its approach to important problems facing Africans and distorts news items. I think it is our duty to bring in a new press that can work for and with Africans. I would have suggested to boycott its publications, but I realise this is impossible.³¹⁶

The above quotation raises a number of points worth interrogating in as far as the issue of representations of the African people was concerned. Jamela suggested that the *African Daily News* was anti-African in both the coverage and analysis of the railway strike as it was biased towards the government. In other words, Jamela was questioning the claim by the newspaper that it was a newspaper for African majority. If the *African Daily News* furthered the interests of Africans, as it claimed, then the trade unions expected it to echo their own political views. The clash between the newspaper and the trade unions has also to be seen in light of the emerging competition between the two middle class contingents for a monopoly of influence over African workers. The question at the end of the day was one of representation: who is the true spokesperson of the African worker? The *African Daily News* answered this question

³¹⁴ Federal Legislative Debates, 12 July 1958.

³¹⁵ *African Daily News*, ‘Chirwa says ‘Daily News’ follows Boss’s Orders’, July 12 1958

³¹⁶ *African Daily News*, ‘African Press criticised at TUC Congress’, 9 April 1957.

by noting that the resolution which received the ‘greatest acclamation’ from the African workers was one which called for the boycott of African newspapers.

Although Mr. K. T. T. Maripe, the General Secretary of Rhodesian African Workers Union (RAWU) thanked the African Press for publicising the Trade Union Congress and conveying the necessary information to all the delegates, he yet criticised it for the way it handled news reporting during the Railway Strike of 1956. He claimed without giving evidence that the *African Daily News* gave a wrong picture of what was happening by leaving out news that was of benefit to the Africans. Another delegate, Mr. Maluleka said, ‘the government must be having a hand in this Press, hence the refusal of Sir Roy Welensky that an overseas company buy the African Press’.³¹⁷ He said methods and ways must be found to establish a press that would give the ‘correct slant’ to the news pointing out that ‘the African Press has and is doing us harm’. The trade union congress therefore suggested that the Trade Union Congress send a delegation to interview the Management of the African Press. It is not clear whether such a delegation was sent and, if so, what was agreed upon.

Unions threatened to boycott African Newspapers Limited. But was it really possible to boycott the only newspaper that provided the Africans with relevant news? Did they have an alternative in the event of the boycott? Or it was just a threat to force the Management of African Newspapers Limited to change their editorial slant? How then did other Africans and the owners of the newspaper react to such threats? What was the result of such threats?

The call to boycott African Newspapers got mixed reactions from some professionals. Whilst partially acknowledging that the *African Daily News* was biased against the trade unions, Canon Chipunza of the Methodist Church blamed the Action Committee for the way the newspaper reported on the bus boycott, as they failed to furnish the newspaper with correct information for disseminating to the public regarding the bus boycott. He stressed that since this part was not played it was unfair for the Action Committee to blame the African press for publishing what it took for granted during the boycott. Chipunza however went on to suggest that ‘since the African press exists for African people it would be a very good thing if it does not take sides in matters of this nature’.³¹⁸ He argued that the press in any society should always be impartial and that the reason why the African press appeared biased was that the

³¹⁷ African Press criticised at TUC Congress, 9 April 1957. It has been claimed by John Parker that a number of mining companies were funding the *African Daily News* at the instigation of Roy Welensky, thus it seems plausible that he would refuse to have an overseas company buy African Press.

³¹⁸ *African Daily News*, Chipunza and Samkange: Comment on Press Boycott’, 10 October 1956.

government had kept it informed and the Action Committee should have done likewise. He suggested that instead of boycotting the paper ‘which would do nobody good’ it was wise to rather ‘purge’ it and see that it publishes what the people want’.³¹⁹ Although what he meant by ‘purge’ is not clear, it may be assumed that he was referring to the African editor although there is no evidence to support this proposition. Chipunza’s arguments are also worth noting in that he brought a new dimension to the whole debate of the impartiality of the press. However, because of the prevalence of inequality and segregation in Rhodesia, Chipunza noted that the liberal argument advocating for neutrality was untenable.

Even more scathing in analysis were the views raised by Samkange who once worked for the *Bantu Mirror*. He claimed that the *African Daily News Bulletin* enjoyed a great deal of goodwill from the Africans but that goodwill had been squandered by ‘attempts to show in news report the bias of the management’.³²⁰ Samkange’s accusations have to be seen in light of the fact that the *African Daily News* was white-managed but black-edited, and as such management (Paver Brothers) may have prevailed upon the editors to cover and report the boycott and the strike in a way that did not glorify the trade unions. Samkange went on to observe that even the paper written for and read by white Rhodesians had handled the coverage in more equal terms:

Many Africans believe the *Rhodesian Herald* was much fairer than the African Press in its handling of the boycott. If the African Press adhered to the policy of describing with religious accuracy the events which took place in their news columns and then criticise as pungently as they like the actions of the people in their editorials much of the dissatisfaction with the African press would not be in existence. One does not like to be unfair to the African press, for it has a difficult task. But I do not believe that they are doing everything to make their task less difficult. They seem to be courting trouble and criticism even when they could easily avoid it.³²¹

Whilst Samkange noted that reporting such issues was always difficult as the interests of the trade union leaders, the government and capital were always different; he still believed that the newspaper should have been able to separate news from opinion.

However, other prominent Africans civil servants were against the boycott of the press. For example Mr. Jerry Vera, a Welfare Officer in Bulawayo, pointed out that Africans were sufficiently educated enough to be able to make an informed choice. According to Terrence

³¹⁹*Ibid.*

³²⁰*Ibid.*

³²¹*Ibid.*

Ranger, Jerry Vera took no part in trade union activities including the bus boycott and the railway strike and when the new and more militant Southern Rhodesia ANC was founded in September 1957 he left nationalist politics.³²² He supported the idea of an independent press operating without interference, stating that the African press and every other press had the right to publish anything it likes or dislikes, whatever the case may be, and it was not the business of Nyandoro to stop the press from publishing what he himself did not like.

All Mr. Nyandoro can do is to stop buying the African Press instead of going around inciting people to stop the means of keeping the Africans in touch with his own affairs and the only organ which he can express his opinion. We cannot boycott the African Press without any substitute. I would like to make it abundantly clear that we shall continue to enjoy reading a copy of the *African Daily News*, *African Weekly* and the *Bantu Mirror*. As a matter of fact, the African Press should be congratulated for their recent establishment of a daily paper for Africans: 'Masiye Pambili' African Press. Pay little attention to these wild statements and continue to advance with our paper.³²³

For its part, the *African Daily News* responded to criticisms with defensiveness. It asserted the principles of press independence, flatly refusing to change their policy. It stated, moreover, that any newspaper 'can be pro-government, pro-communism, pro-African, pro-anything it likes'.³²⁴ Their policy, the editor claimed, was approved by 'thousands of Europeans and Africans who read our papers'.³²⁵ It was up to readers to consume those newspapers they wanted and to leave on the shelves those they didn't. The leadership at African Newspapers Limited suggested that it was wrong for aggrieved individuals to dictate how newspapers reported news. The implication was also that claims, by the likes of George Nyandoro, to represent the interests and views Africans were manipulative and heavy handed and that the reading public were sufficiently 'mature' in making up their own minds about news and its content. Suggesting that their position of putative 'neutrality' was a complex but important feature of civilized society, they claimed that they had a responsibility to the uneducated majority of African readers who were exposed to the manipulation of the trade union leaders.

Should we present many disabilities and grievances of the African people regardless of our responsibilities to a community which has many people who through no fault of their own are unable to judge the pros and cons of the many vexing problems which

³²² Terrence Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 191.

³²³ *African Daily News*, 'Nyandoro severely criticised', 12 October 1956.

³²⁴ *African Daily News*, 'Boycott progress: Comment', 8 October 1956.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*

civilisation has brought about? Would we be acting in their best interests if we fostered discontent and bitterness among a section of the population who so badly need help and guidance to a better way of life. Some of our readers forget that making ourselves as popular as possible with the large majority of the Africans people would be very easy and profitable as our circulation would increase and advertisers would pay us much more. To our way of thinking, this would be nothing short of exploiting the ignorance of the masses that are not in any way to blame for their ignorance.³²⁶

The newspaper continued to defend itself by reminding its detractors that in the past it had also received severe criticism from the European officials and politicians who accused them 'of teaching Africans, and making them politically conscious'.³²⁷ The *African Daily News*, in a way, believed that there would be no 'sacred cows' in their reporting and analysis as they would attack both the Africans and the Europeans.

But what can be made of the newspapers' publication of the critical voices that were attacking it, especially from the African trade unions? The *African Daily News* may have wanted to portray these African as harbouring anti-press attitude which could be extended to all facets of political life. In advancing this view they got the support of other educated Africans, like Jerry Vera, a Welfare Officer in Makokoba, Bulawayo whom the newspaper described in their editorial of 13 October 1956 as a leader who 'really understands the basic requirements for a truly democratic society'. The newspaper further noted that the ability to criticise such leaders as Nyandoro represented a shift in the thinking of the educated Africans as they no longer feared to be labelled 'Capricorns, stooges and sell-outs'. The name 'capricorn' was used in derogatory meaning to those Africans who were members of the Capricorn Africa Society, an inter-racial group formed by Colonel David Stirling. Africans who joined this inter-racial group of the Capricorn society were seen to be promoting the maintenance of white rule in Southern Rhodesia. According to Nathan Shamuyarira, the phrase 'capricorn' was commonly used to mean a sell-out, a collaborator with colonialism or settlers.³²⁸ For the *African Daily News*, there was nothing to be ashamed of in being labelled a 'capricorn' as it's ideal of promoting inter-racial relationship was seen as noble during the federation years.

³²⁶ *African Daily News*, 'The Price we have to pay: Comment', 2 October 1956.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*

³²⁸ Nathan Shamuyarira, *Crisis in Rhodesia*, Andre Deutsch, London, 1965, p. 20.

Todd's Attempts to Reform

This section in general looks at the attempts by Todd to reform and how the *African Daily News* responded to these reforms. I have decided to merge Todd's position with that of the *African Daily News* as it is known that the newspaper supported Todd during its formative years. It is important again to note that the changes Todd hoped to make fell in line with the policies of the *African Daily News* of improving cooperation between the races in Southern Rhodesia. The militant response by Garfield Todd to the bus boycott and especially the Railway strike portrayed him in bad light in the eyes of many Africans and fellow white Rhodesians in government, including those in his cabinet. Todd decided to institute a number of liberal reforms to appease both of these constituencies. The enactment of the draconian Public Order Act in 1955 resulted in fissures within the URP, with a third of its caucus against the Act. The year 1957 marked serious attempts by Todd to make some reforms that would reward the emergent African middle class. The Land Apportionment had to be amended in order to accommodate the Federal African Members of Parliament and new African professionals like Herbert Chitepo in racially segregated Salisbury. Todd also moved to abolish the Immorality Act which forbade sexual relations between black males and white females only. Besides this Todd began to oppose racial discrimination and openly supported African political, economic and social development.

The greatest change that Todd wanted to see during his premiership was the election of African legislators for the Southern Rhodesia Legislative Assembly. In the spirit of supporting the doctrine of partnership, Todd pointed out that the territorial government of Southern Rhodesia had to emulate the federal government which had two African legislators. To this end, he appointed a Commission of Inquiry led by the Federal Chief Justice, Sir Robert Tredgold to look at ways of increasing the number of Africans in the common voters' roll. In the long run, the work of the commission further strengthened the notion that the *African Daily News* advocated a gradual transfer of power from whites to blacks.

Several African groups raised their opinion on the commission and what they hoped it would achieve. The CYL took advantage of the Commission to begin campaigning for universal adult suffrage leading to majority rule. At one of its meetings attended by about 2 500 people in Harare, the CYL supported the adoption of the universal adult suffrage as the only means

to address the plight of the Africans. The CYL mobilised its members to participate in the Tredgold Franchise Commission hearing set up by Garfield Todd. The Bulawayo Branch of the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress also advocated the adoption of the universal adult suffrage pointing out that the present electoral system had encouraged the minority to use the vote as an instrument to maintain white supremacy and the political, economic and social subordination of the indigenous inhabitants.³²⁹ The Trade Union Congress (TUC) also pointed out that the present system was not democratic and urged the commission to introduce universal adult suffrage for everyone including women, irrespective of race and colour.³³⁰

However, the idea of universal suffrage was dismissed by some individual Africans and multi-racial organisations. One African clerk is said to have remarked that advocating for universal suffrage was tantamount to ‘putting the clock back’ as it would create a chaotic situation as the government would be in the hands of people who would walk in parliament not because they were right but because of the misused overwhelming vote of the masses’.³³¹ The Capricorn Society submitted that only master farmers (those owning 5 head of cattle or 6 acres of land) should be eligible for the vote.³³² The Dominion Party totally refused to participate in the commission arguing that it was set up to erode white power.

The *African Daily News* publicised the activities of the Tredgold Commission and encouraged Africans to give oral evidence to the commission. When its report came out, the newspaper reported on its various sections and tried to analyse it on behalf of the readers. This contribution by the press (both African and European) was acknowledged by the Commission which noted that the press had publicised the report to the majority of the people though some critical information had been left out.³³³ In spite of this exhortation, the *African Daily News* noted that there was lack of interest in the ordinary Africans compared to the interest by the Europeans. This apathy in vital matters affecting the country, according to the newspaper, would leave a heavy debt for future generations to pay.

But before the commission’s report was out, the *African Daily News* took time to respond to the views by the CYL, arguing that while universal suffrage was the ultimate goal of all

³²⁹ *African Daily News*, ‘Universal Suffrage Advocated by Congress’, 5 February 1957.

³³⁰ *African Daily News*, ‘T. U. C. Wants Universal Adult Suffrage’, 22 February 1957.

³³¹ *African Daily News*, ‘Opposed to universal suffrage’, 6 February 1957.

³³² *African Daily News*, ‘Harare leaders on the Franchise’, 6 February 1957.

³³³ *African Daily News*, ‘Sir Robert speaks on Franchise Report’, 29 March 1957.

franchise proposals, the pertinent question was whether the time was ripe for such a move. Looking at the set up of the Rhodesia society, the newspaper proposed that the country had two races; the whites, who were the minority and yet economically strong; and the blacks, who were the majority but 'economically weak, very weak and culturally backward'.³³⁴ Exhibiting lack of faith in the Africans to rule, the newspaper further stated that

Universal suffrage advocated by the CYL would put power at once in the hands of the Africans...this would be premature in that Europeans still have a lot of prejudice and will react adversely to such a proposal, neither have the African learnt the western electoral system sufficiently to know how to exercise their votes in their own interests.³³⁵

Clearly, the position of the *African Daily News* was that the time for majority rule had not yet arrived in Southern Rhodesia. It advocated a gradual approach and practical politics to the attainment of majority rule. This 'gradual approach' meant that more Africans had to be brought into the voters roll, albeit gradually, so that with time the 'gap' between the two races would close. There was no need to rush for majority rule. An editorial in 1957 stated that 'any rapid change from white domination to black domination as envisaged by the backers of adult suffrage would do the Africans themselves incalculable harm'.³³⁶ Their argument was that black domination was as objectionable to all forward-looking people as white domination.

The *African Daily News* portrayed the future of Rhodesia in strong multi-racial political parties. It is therefore not surprising that just like the *World* in South Africa, which gave voice to the South African Institute of Race Relations; the *African Daily News* would give space to such multi-racial liberal organisations as Capricorn Africa Society and the Inter-racial Society of Rhodesia. Nkomo argues that organisations such as the Capricorn Africa Society aimed at grooming African elites so that they would take over government in collaboration with the rich white property owners.³³⁷ A reader of the *African Daily News* wrote in a letter to the editor that the Capricorn Africa Society was a wolf in sheep's skin and depicted its black members as mere stooges.³³⁸ The CYL attacked these organisations for 'stupefying Africans and making them perennial underdogs' as well as middle class Africans like Jasper Savanhu and Mike Masotsha Hove (former editors at African Newspapers) for being bought off by the

³³⁴ *African Daily News*, 'Universal Adult Suffrage: Editorial', 10 April 1957.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

³³⁷ Joshua Nkomo, *The story of my Life*, p. 111.

³³⁸ *African Daily News*, 'Capricorn Society is a wolf in a sheep's skin, Letter to the Editor', 26 February 1957.

Europeans.³³⁹ James Chikerema argued that it was just impossible for ‘a man who was over 21 years of age who is capable of working and supporting himself to be unable to cast his vote intelligently as he was capable of choosing good and bad leaders’.³⁴⁰

The *African Daily News* strengthened its argument by suggesting that the solution lay in rapidly extending academic, technical, civic and political education to all the people in the country so as to avoid ‘rule of the enlightened people by the unenlightened masses’.³⁴¹ Sir Robert Tredgold, Chairman of the Commission feared that owing to insufficient education and the poor economic positions of the Africans, they would not exercise the vote intelligently without the risk of being liable to bribery.

The proposals of the commission brought turmoil and conflict within the URP. It set the following three categories of qualification for the ordinary vote: an income of £720 per annum, or occupation of property valued at £1,500, plus literacy; an income of £480 or the ownership of property worth at least £1,000, plus primary education and an income of £300 per annum or ownership of property valued at £500, plus ten years of completed education.³⁴² Since many Africans didn’t have the required qualifications, a forth category was added which required an income of £180 per annum, plus literacy. The forth category raised the wrath of the URP right led by Stumbles who argued that the recommendations would allow ‘the cook-boys who worked together with their wives to obtain a vote’.³⁴³ Other URP right legislators like Mr Aitken Cade attacked the proposal for £15 (per month) voters as intended to lower the standards of the electorate and was an attempt integrate and appease Africans. Ironically, some middle-class Africans also attacked the £15 proposal for ‘lowering the status of the Africans’, and they wanted it to be raised to £20 instead.³⁴⁴ At a party caucus, the conservatives within the URP voted against these proposals and won.

However, Todd began working on a proposal to give the ‘special’ vote to anyone who had completed ten years of education. This special roll intended to enfranchise the middle class Africans (teachers, clerks, nurses, agricultural demonstrators and medical orderlies) was created although the number of voters registered on this roll could never exceed 20 per cent

³³⁹ *African Daily News*, ‘Africans throughout the Federation urged to unite’, 15 April 1957.

³⁴⁰ *African Daily News*, ‘Harare Leaders on the Franchise’, 6 February 1957.

³⁴¹ *African Daily News*, ‘Congress speaks: Comment’, 7 February 1957.

³⁴² Martin Loney, *Rhodesia: White racism and Imperial response*, p. 121.

³⁴³ *African Daily News*, ‘In Parliament this Week: Franchise Report’, 3 May 1957.

³⁴⁴ *African Daily News*, ‘Salisbury men wants present franchise law’, 22 March 1957.

of those registered on the ordinary roll.³⁴⁵ Fearing that his latest proposals would be rejected, Garfield Todd threatened to resign unless the special roll was accepted. According to Hancock, Todd and the URP right accepted a compromise scheme which availed a special vote for an income of £24 per annum, plus literacy, or an income of £120 per annum, plus ten years of completed education.

Many African politicians and political organisations condemned the recommendations of the commission. To the Africans, the recommendations brought to the fore the attitude of the Europeans towards the Africans. The ANC noted that

the recommendations of the Franchise Commission are a true reflection of the attitude of the government of a frightened man. They are designed to give the African people a false sense of participation in the affairs of the country and yet the fundamental idea is to maintain white supremacy for all the time. Experience has shown us that a vote in the hands of the settler community is as harmful as a machine gun.³⁴⁶

Others believed that the main object of the Commission was to satisfy white voters at the expense of the Africans and was a serious indictment on the doctrine of partnership as Rhodesia was practicing a form of 'apartheid'. The 'special' vote was seen as valueless as it had no capacity to democratise the electoral system. But the *African Daily News* came out in full support of the report. Commenting on the franchise report, the newspaper stated that

if the Africans are really interested in participating in the government of their country, under this system literally hundreds should get into the voters roll and that should for all times eliminate racial politics, for a parliament candidate, black or white, will not as in the past indulge in racial politics when he knows that his success depends on the votes of both sections of the community. The recommendations are reasonable and so ingeniously adapted to the particular conditions of this multiracial colony.³⁴⁷

One can deduce that the support rendered to the report by the newspaper emanated from the desire to get rid of extremists both whites and blacks in Rhodesian politics. By extension, this indirectly meant pre-empting the anticipated rise in African nationalism. In defence of the franchise changes, Todd stated that something had to be done to the emerging African discontent or else they would become communists engulfing the country with nationalism.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁵ Martin Loney, *Rhodesia: White racism and Imperial response*, p. 121.

³⁴⁶ *African Daily News*, 'Bulawayo leaders oppose it', 6 March 1957

³⁴⁷ *African Daily News*, 'Franchise Report: Comment', 15 March 1957.

³⁴⁸ *African Daily News*, 'In Parliament this Week: Franchise Report', 3 May 1957.

He summarised this fear by stating that it was ‘not wise to wait for black nationalism to arise first, then it might be too late’.³⁴⁹

By forcing the URP to accept the 1957 Tredgold proposals on the 19th of June, and making them a law on the 18th of October, Todd’s days as the prime minister drew to a close. Soon after the passage of these proposals, members of the URP right began moves to merge the party with the Federal Party ostensibly to counter the new right-wing Dominion Party led by Winston Field. However, the truth of the matter was that the merger was meant to arrest the slide into liberalism by neutralising the URP with the middle-of-the road Federal Party to form the UFP. But Todd’s open association with the nationalists became unbearable for the newly formed UFP and this culminated in the removal of Todd in 1958. He was replaced by Edgar Whitehead, also a liberal. What impact did the removal of Todd have on politics, both white and black in Southern Rhodesia? How did the *African Daily News* respond to the changing politics in the country? And how did the state react to the changing stance of the *African Daily News* and the way it represented political parties in the country? These issues will form the subject of the following chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the events of 1956 brought class conflict amongst Africans, particularly within the African middle class about who could speak ‘for the Africans’. The view that the *African Daily News* was betraying mass interests was borne out of political circumstances that showcased the newspaper’s ideology of ‘gradualist’ democratic transition and its beholdenness to capital and the colonial state. Many African leaders felt that the newspaper had betrayed the majority of Africans by attacking their consumer and worker actions, in demonstrating against the costs of services as well as low wages. As a result, these leaders not only clamoured for the boycott of the *African Daily News*, but wanted the company to change its editorial policy. The aftermath of the bus boycott and the stance taken by the *African Daily News* also brings to the fore issues of media bias and press freedom in volatile political contexts. It shows that the press is always under pressure in such political environments as many organisations and groupings feel that they are entitled to support from

³⁴⁹*Ibid.*

the press. Issues of press freedom and bias always predominate as the media becomes a site of struggle between political players. The struggle to control public opinion during the railway strike in particular brings to the fore the issues of class tensions that were emerging. The middle class elites at the *African Daily News* tried to monopolise opinion, as did the trade union leaders. These two players moved into conflict with each other as they sought to buttress their legitimacy as authentic representatives of the 'ordinary Africans'.

Whilst the bus boycott and the railway strike of 1956 did not have much noticeable impact on the *African Daily News*, it had huge repercussions on the political landscape. The chapter has shown that in an attempt to appease Africans, Todd ended up upsetting his own political party, resulting in his being ousted. Todd's franchise proposals also helped to bring into the open the conflict of ideas between African organisations and some African middle class, the press as well as other multi-racial organisations. Whilst African political organisations cultivating mass appeal agitated for universal suffrage, the African petite bourgeoisie argued that it was too early for such a move. The argument was that Africans were not sufficiently educated to assume positions of responsibility in the country. The *African Daily News* continued to advocate that middle of the road approach whereby it refused to support immediate universal suffrage whilst at the same time rejecting calls from extremists who hoped to maintain white rule. The *African Daily News* would also be affected by the ouster of Todd. It forced them to question the feasibility of partnership and the place of the African in such a set up.

CHAPTER THREE

DAILY NUISANCE! THE RADICALISATION OF THE AFRICAN DAILY NEWS, 1958-1964

Introduction

This chapter tracks the factors and rapidly changing political context in Southern Rhodesia that led to the transformation in the *African Daily News* from its moderate leanings to being targeted and shut down as an ‘enemy of the state’. In the previous chapter, I argued that in the emerging restlessness of the political climate of the mid-1950s, the *African Daily News* – advertising itself as ‘by Africans, for Africans’ was shown to have elite class aspirations and to be in opposition to African trade unions, with a strong association with the government of Garfield Todd. This led to an uneasy relationship with segments of the African middle class represented by the City Youth League (CYL) and with the trade unions that led the bus boycott and railway strike in 1956. I argued that after the events of 1956 and the formation of the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress ([SR]ANC) in 1957, Todd began reforming the erstwhile segregational laws to accommodate the African middle class. His liberal policies got him into trouble with fellow United Federal Party (UFP) members as well as the opposition Dominion Party. Todd’s attempts to liberalise Rhodesia led to his removal in 1958. In the same vein, the removal of Todd had ripple effects on the Rhodesia political landscape as Africans and the *African Daily News* interpreted it as a failure to achieve harmonious racial politics in the country. This resulted not only in the radicalisation of the political parties on both sides of the ANC and the Dominion Party, but it began to radicalise the press as well.

This chapter deepens analysis of the debates on the political impact of Todd’s removal and how his removal in turn impacted on the press. Following the removal of Todd, the *African Daily News*—like many Africans more generally—went through a period of political and ideological confusion as to the course of action to take. Initially, an attempt was made to follow Todd and his newly reconstituted United Rhodesia Party (URP). However, the defeat

of the URP at the 1958 polls by both the UFP and the Dominion Party alarmed most Africans, prompting them rather to rally behind African-led political parties, with the clarion call of universal suffrage. Within this dispensation, the *African Daily News* unequivocally declared its hatred towards the Dominion Party and later began to openly support the African nationalists, much to the chagrin of the colonial establishment. Later, as schisms within African nationalists' movements emerged, the *African Daily News* was put in a complicated position of choosing a political party that best represented its erstwhile position with regards to racial partnership as described in the last chapter.

In this chapter, I consider how the *African Daily News* transformed itself from a moderate newspaper to a radical, nationalistic one. It argues that this transformation was not sudden, but can be located within a process of the polarisation between white politics and African politics. In the end this would set the newspaper on a collision course with state authorities, who closed it down in 1964 for supporting African nationalist agenda. However, the closure of the paper because of the support it rendered to the African nationalist parties should be looked at in context. I argue that the newspaper, whilst solidifying against white rule, sought to support a seemingly moderate African political organisation. More than anything, the radicalisation of the *African Daily News* can also be located within the change of ownership of the journal from the 20th of October 1961, into the hands of Lord Thomson, whose newspapers had a reputation throughout the world of being liberal. How was the newspaper's stance on politics shaped by its association with the Thomson Group? The chapter explores factors that led the *African Daily News* to render its support to Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) at the expense of Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), the way readers reacted to this and the impact this choice had on violence that engulfed the country in the late 1960s.

Whither the *African Daily News*? The radicalisation of Politics in Rhodesia and Press Coverage, 1958-1961

The period after the removal of Garfield Todd was immediately followed by what can best be described as confusion both within the politics of the country and the stance taken by the *African Daily News*. Within the ranks of the ruling UFP, there was intense factionalism which led to the formation of breakaway political parties that sought to obtain power. On the other

hand, there was a steady rise in African political expression as groups sought to assert themselves more boldly, with demands becoming increasingly radical. In fact, what might be described in retrospect as proto-nationalism was fast mutating into a phase of mass nationalism. How did the *African Daily News* respond to such political changes?

Attempts at reform post-1956 that were instituted by Todd had made him a darling of the *African Daily News*. Yet, they created divisions and problems within the UFP government as evidenced by the resignation of four cabinet ministers in protest. In apparent support for Todd, the *African Daily News* conveyed opinion suggesting that the resignation by the ministers ‘was surrounded by an element of anti-liberalism and anti-African advancement’.³⁵⁰ The newspaper stated that ‘all races had come to a parting of ways and that there was now little hope for partnership’³⁵¹ and, characterising it as an unfortunate action, proclaimed that the country would suffer as a result of the conspiracy against Todd.³⁵² The newspaper saw the removal of Todd as a potential incitement on the Africans to be more radical in their demands for reforms. Such a scenario, the newspaper pontificated, threatened to undermine its notion of ‘acceptable politics’ whereby the whites and the blacks worked together in the spirit of partnership as espoused by the federation under the leadership of the so-called moderate whites.

Schisms within the UFP culminated in the removal of Todd as the prime minister of Southern Rhodesia, although he at first remained in government under the new leadership of Sir Edgar Whitehead as a minister. The 1958 merger between the URP and the Federal Party to form the UFP was a shaky one: those who belonged to the URP continued to support Todd whilst those of the Federal Party rallied behind Whitehead. Todd resigned from the UFP government to reconstitute the URP. Patrick Fletcher, one of rebel ministers responsible for Todd’s removal and also Minister of Native Affairs, argued that Todd was removed because he had ‘stirred up the natives to want more than they can be given’.³⁵³ Loney argues that the removal of Todd inevitably increased African doubts about the possibility of working through the white political system.³⁵⁴ Expressing the views of the press, Vambe argues that, more than anything else, the removal of Todd for his liberal speeches that so frightened whites

³⁵⁰ *African Daily News*, ‘Resignation of Ministers’, 13 January 1958.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

³⁵² *African Daily News*, ‘A most unfortunate action: commentary’, 13 January 1958.

³⁵³ Nathan Shamuyarira, *Crisis in Rhodesia*

³⁵⁴ Martin Loney, *Rhodesia, White Racism and Imperial response*, Penguin Books, London, 1975, p. 90.

horrified the African Press to such an extent that they had to 'discard our casual action and lash out'.³⁵⁵ The *African Daily News* at the time commented:

... there will be deep disappointment that Mr. Todd the man whom they trusted more than any other white politician is on his way out of office. Todd was to many African people a symbol of honesty, of purpose, sincerity of intentions and their welfare on all fronts as full citizens of the country. In his term of office there was great political co-operation between Africans and Europeans than there has ever been in Rhodesian history.³⁵⁶

Not wanting to alienate themselves from the *African Daily News*, the rebel members of the Rhodesian cabinet organized a special meeting with senior staff at African Newspapers. According to Vambe, these members tried unsuccessfully to convince them that their action against Todd did not indicate the government's move to the right as far as African affairs were concerned. This meeting shows how important the *African Daily News* was deemed to be as a shaper of black opinion, as well as a surety against the development of a radical African press could contribute to the radicalisation of the black majority. Vambe saw the overtures by the rebel ministers as a tacit acceptance of the impact of the *African Daily News* in the Rhodesian political landscape.

Problems within the UFP contributed to the gaining of ground by the Dominion Party and this was demonstrated in the Hillside by-election of early 1958. Sir Edgar Whitehead had to win a legislative seat in order for him to remain as prime minister according to the rules of the country. He thus contested in a Hillside by-election in April and was defeated by Pain of the Dominion Party. This election was important in many ways. Firstly, it became a yardstick to measure white opinion on racial affairs. In this sense the *African Daily News* interpreted the defeat of Whitehead as marking a definite swing of opinion against the UFP government, because the Hillside seat was considered one the 'safest' seats for the UFP candidate in Southern Rhodesia as Federally the seat was occupied by a UFP member.³⁵⁷ Secondly, the defeat of the Prime Minister resulted in calls to elect a new government in Southern Rhodesia. This worried many UFP Africans who believed that a defeat for the UFP would 'set back the cause of race relations by at least ten years'.³⁵⁸ This election would also put the

³⁵⁵ Lawrence Vambe, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, p. 215.

³⁵⁶ *African Daily News*, 'Wait and see: Commentary', 10 February 1958.

³⁵⁷ *African Daily News*, 'Hillside results: Commentary', 17 April 1958.

³⁵⁸ *African Daily News*, 'Comments on Hillside results: Mr Pains' victory worries UFP Africans', 17 April 1958.

African Daily News in an unenviable position of having to choose a party that best represented the interests of the Africans and of the country as a whole.

Unsurprisingly, due to the close relations between the *African Daily News* and Todd, the newspaper ended up supporting the reconstituted URP, whilst at the same time being more adamant in its stand against the Dominion Party. As a former reporter, Bill Saidi remembers the *African Daily News* made positive headlines about the campaigns and policies of the URP. But a cursory look at front page news archived for this period also demonstrates the newspaper's general support for the URP. For example, on May 2 1958 the headline was: 'Todd given ovation by 1400 in Salisbury'; the following day it read: 'Two URP Branches formed in Gwelo and Election prospects of URP said to be good'. The way of framing events was different from the way other parties were covered and presented to the public. For example, with reference to the Dominion Party, the headlines emphasize a lack of popular support: 'Dominion Party Candidate Heckled and Booed by Arcadia Audience' (May 15 1958), 'Hararians Declare: We do not want the Dominion Party'. The UFP received similar headlines: 'UFP Candidate speaks to Critical Audience' and 'Critical Rusape audience for UFP Speakers'. A closer look at headlines suggests that the *African Daily News* was hoping the URP to form the next government in Southern Rhodesia. In a leading story on the 24th of April 1958 entitled 'Liberals' Support the URP' the newspaper published opinion suggesting that the removal of Todd and the impending elections had put Southern Rhodesia at a political crisis that threatened the life of the Federation. The commentary warned that only the URP was the solution. The editorial more specifically stated:

We are at a political crossroad, one leading to the destruction of Southern Rhodesia in particular and the Federation in general—represented by the Dominion Party and the other leading to the building up not only of this country but also the Federation—this is the URP. All liberal minded people in the country are urged to support the resuscitated URP in the best interests of the country and the generations to come.³⁵⁹

Whilst the URP and the UFP seemed to pursue the same policy on African advancement, the *African Daily News* sought to clarify the differences between the two parties for the interests of the voters. Besides addressing the pace with which African advancement was to be pursued the newspaper examined the past performances of the URP whilst in government. It noted that in the eyes of the Africans, the URP had a good record of progressive legislation, better housing, a wider franchise, improved education facilities and a less vexatious pass

³⁵⁹ *African Daily News*, 'Liberals' support the URP', 24 April 1958.

system.³⁶⁰ This had bettered the spirit of good will between ‘the races’. Focusing on the UFP, the newspaper pointed out that ‘it could not commit itself to a policy of substantial advancement as the views in the party ranged from conservative to those as reactionary as the Dominion Party’.³⁶¹ By likening the UFP to the Dominion Party and its political tendencies, the newspaper inferred that the party was not worthy to be voted into office.

However, in spite of the spirited campaign, albeit to non-voting Africans by the *African Daily News*, Whitehead’s UFP was voted into power by obtaining 17 seats to the Dominion Party’s 13. The URP failed to obtain a single seat. The main headline on the 6th of June read: ‘Narrow Victory for the UFP: Todd loses own seat’. This result caught the newspaper staff by surprise if not shock. Realising that the majority of Africans were disappointed by the election result, the *African Daily News* moved to advise its readers ‘not to give up the fight as a hopeless one’, noting that the ‘UFP is after all not a reactionary government’.³⁶² The newspaper consoled that it would have been a serious retrogressive step had the Dominion Party formed the government.³⁶³ In their editorial of 7 June the results were analysed thus:

We would like to think that the returning to power of the Federal Party, in spite of its reactionaries within its ranks, has been a lucky thing for us. We have all the hope that all the liberal forces in this country will re-unite in the not-so-distant future and the reactionary forces which seem now to have gained tremendous ground will be defeated in the next general election.³⁶⁴

In reference to Todd and the URP, the *Rhodesia Herald* mocked him as a man who was removed from being a Prime Minister ‘to become a man who had led a party that was unacceptable to the voters and was thus defeated with every other candidate he had chosen’.³⁶⁵ Thus the state-aligned *Rhodesia Herald* would be sympathetic to the UFP in spite of its wavering support, whilst the *African Daily News* looked forward to the day when Todd would return to politics.

It didn’t take long for Todd to return, this time with a new political party—the Central African Party (CAP) in July 1958. The *African Daily News* lost no time in welcoming the formation of this new liberal formation, and its architects Todd and John Moffat, further demonstrating its lack of faith in the UFP. Somehow the newspaper’s intellectuals still

³⁶⁰ *African Daily News*, ‘Commentary: Complex Election’, 24 February 1958.

³⁶¹ *African Daily News*, ‘Differences between UFP and URP Explained’, May 13 1958.

³⁶² *African Daily News*, ‘Election Result: Comment’, 6 June 1958.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁴ *African Daily News*, ‘The Impression it gives: Comment’, 7 June 1958.

³⁶⁵ *The Rhodesia Herald* 29 July 1960.

entertained thoughts of salvaging the federation and incorporating the Africans within this set up. Another reason why the newspaper wanted the Africans to support this new party was to forestall the flocking of Africans to the ANC. Mlambo shows that the defeat of Todd had made it clear to a growing number of Africans that their future could no longer be entrusted to the whims of benevolent white liberals and that the time was ripe for the Africans to take matters into their own hands.³⁶⁶ On the 11th of February an editorial welcomed the formation of the new party arguing that its principles and aims were the best solution to the problems faced by Southern Rhodesia, a country that ‘needed neither a black saviour nor that of the white man, but one for our people’.³⁶⁷ The newspaper pointed out now that the CAP was more realistic than the UFP in its endeavour to provide a true political home for both blacks and whites in the country.

Whilst the *African Daily News* was attempting to find white political champions and flip-flopping from the UFP to CAP, a more ambitious politics of African aspiration was increasingly becoming more militant. As shown earlier, the first steps towards the radicalisation of African political parties had started to show on 12 September 1957 when the CYL and the ANC joined to form the first national new political party, the revamped ANC. The formation of this party signalled the death of racial cooperation as many Africans now felt, in contrast to what the *African Daily News* had been preaching, that ‘it was erroneous to assume that political salvation of the Africans was to be found in joining European political parties’³⁶⁸. By choosing 12 September, which was celebrated by Europeans as Occupation Day, as the date to launch their party the African nationalists were eager to make use of confrontation as a route to improve the lives of the Africans. Although the *African Daily News* did not agree with the stance taken by the ANC, it yet supported some of its arguments, especially on the need to redistribute land. From 1958, the ANC had started sabotage campaigns in the reserves, beating up officials of the Native Department who wanted to implement the Native Land Husbandry Act passed in 1951. The ANC articulated the grievances of many rural Africans when it began challenging such discriminatory legislations as the Native Land Husbandry Act, de-stocking, and the unpopular government-sponsored soil conservation. By 1958 it had established branches in most parts of the country and had a membership of about 6 000. However, the ANC, as described by Mlambo, was rather

³⁶⁶ A. S. Mlambo, ‘From Second World War to UDI, 1940-1965’, p. 107.

³⁶⁷ *African Daily News*, ‘The Central African Party: Comment’, 11, February 1959.

³⁶⁸ *African Daily News*, ‘Bulawayo leaders happy about new congress’, 12 June 1957.

ambiguous on the issue of African self-determination as it demanded self-government for all the inhabitants of Rhodesia.³⁶⁹ Although popular with the masses, the ANC was distrusted and thus rejected by the Africans with voting power who hoped that the Federation would deliver on its partnership promise. On the other hand, the white moderates were also becoming suspicious of African voters who increasingly demanded self-determination. The dilemma of the African middle class was expressed by Bernard Chidzero, an Economic Affairs Officer in the United Nations Economic Commission who, as reported in the paper, had argued that 'they were half-trusted and half-suspected by the African masses and half-feared and half-accepted by the European society'.³⁷⁰

While expressing a moderate position, *African Daily News* had begun to sympathise with the plight of the Africans which drove them to becoming 'extremists'. In February 1958, the newspaper was receiving favourable reports from the Director of Native Administration for the way in which it was disseminating news of educational value by focusing on teaching Africans on the need to use water and electricity sparingly in the townships.³⁷¹ However, by May the newspaper was beginning to see problems in the Rhodesian society differently from the way the government did, and certainly the way the newspaper itself had viewed them a couple of months back. It now argued that the inter-racial tensions which had become rife between 1958 and 1959 were a result of separate development implemented by the state. Unlike in early years when it interpreted racial tensions on the supposed lack of civilisation on the part of the Africans, the newspaper now acknowledged the role of European authorities in inciting African people. On the 10th of July 1958, the *African Daily News* carried an editorial on what they termed 'profitable extremism' in which they exonerated the so-called African extremists.

In our view if the officials continue ignoring the voice of the moderate Africans because they do not constitute a danger they are actually building, without realising it the position and prestige of the extremist Africans. It appears it is only when the extremists act that the Government begins to move. And who is to blame the African masses for looking at them and not the moderates or the properly constituted bodies for redress of their grievances. The Government and City Council officials do not take notice of the moderate voice, putting forward a sound, reasonable argument. They seem to understand only the language of extremism.³⁷²

³⁶⁹ E. E. M. Mlambo, *Rhodesia: Struggle for a Birthright*, C. Hurst, 1972. p. 118.

³⁷⁰ *African Daily News*, 'Chidzero talks of dilemma of the African Middle Class', 10 July 1959.

³⁷¹ *African Daily News*, 'The Influence of the African Press is acknowledged', 13 February 1958.

³⁷² *African Daily News*, 'Profitable Extremism', 10 July 1958.

Contrary to the opinion raised by the newspaper, Roy Welensky laid the problems squarely on the feet of the ANC which he accused of intimidating moderate Africans.³⁷³ As a result of ignoring such advice from the newspaper, inter-racial conflicts spread throughout the federation and escalated in 1959. This led to the imposition of a state of emergency in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. In Southern Rhodesia, the Whitehead administration launched an operation code-named Operation Dawn where leaders of the ANC were raided and sent to restriction camps in Gokwe. A state of emergency was declared in February 1959 which also led to the banning of the ANC under the Unlawful Organisations Act. Whilst the newspaper sympathised with the African majority, it however did not take the ANC seriously as a political force. When the ANC was banned, the newspaper never looked at the implications and neither did it have an editorial on the banning.

The banning of the ANC did not solve the problem as faced by the Whitehead government. On January 1 1960, the National Democratic Party (NDP) was formed to replace the banned ANC. Although its founding policies were similar to those of the ANC, the major difference was that the NDP was explicit in its demand for a one man one vote leading to majority rule. One columnist in the *African Daily News* saw the formation of the NDP as one of the greatest events of 1960. This was so because 'right from the minute it was proclaimed it has kept up political pressure to this minute'.³⁷⁴ In July 1960, the NDP made its presence on the Rhodesian political landscape by leading riots that broke out in Harare and Bulawayo. On July 19 Michael Mawema, Sketchley Samkange and Leopold Takawira were arrested for telling a British newspaper that the Africans wanted to get control of the government.³⁷⁵ After the arrest of these leaders, the members of the NDP marched to the police station demanding to be arrested also. The protesters then decided to march to government offices demanding to see the Prime Minister. They were blocked by the police. They then moved to Stodart Hall, a community hall for Africans, refusing to vacate the place for two nights until the police dispersed them with teargas. This sparked the riots and the government had to call the Rhodesia African Rifles to stop the looting. This was also the first time the army was called to deal with protests using live ammunitions and in the process injuring three Africans.³⁷⁶ But in spite of such unrest, Whitehead stated that 'Southern Rhodesia is just the happiest part of

³⁷³ *African Daily News*, 'Sir Roy denounces ANC Policy on Violence', 4 March 1959.

³⁷⁴ *African Daily News*, January 1961

³⁷⁵ Alan Megahey, *Humphrey Gibbs: Beleaguered Governor, Southern Rhodesia, 1929-1969*, MacMillan Press Ltd., London, 1998, p. 72.

³⁷⁶ *African Daily News*, 21 July 1960

the continent'. After crushing the riots, Whitehead banned all public meetings in Highfields in terms of Section 4 of the Subversive Activities Act of 1950.

However, this did not stop events unfolding. Further riots broke out in Bulawayo, again led by the NDP. Protests started after the government had banned an NDP rally. The people reacted angrily by looting shops, burning buildings and destroying cars. According to the *African Daily News*, the Bulawayo riots were led by an African gang called Section 17 which was armed with clubs, sticks, machetes and axes. The group is said to have been responsible for the looting and violence that took place.³⁷⁷ However, the newspaper also went on to glorify the group for its role in grabbing cars from people which they used as ambulances. The *African Daily News* described this particular action as follows:

To keep the emergency ambulances safe from stone throwers, the Section 17 youths tied rags soaked with the blood of injured persons to the bonnets of the cars. The rags were the 'peace flags' to allow the cars to move to hospitals safely.³⁷⁸

Twelve people, all African, were killed, the majority by the police and a few by shop owners. The analysis of these events by the *African Daily News* is interesting. Firstly they laid the blame squarely on the leaders of the NDP for supposedly encouraging the people to loot and riot. They argued that such actions provided ammunition to the reactionary elements in the Dominion Party, who were already arguing that all NDP officials and anyone who didn't work had to be rounded up and sent to their tribal areas and never allowed to return to town again. After attacking the NDP, the newspaper went on to attack the Rhodesian government, especially Edgar Whitehead for refusing to meet the leaders of the NDP just because 'he didn't want to be seen to give the party too much official recognition'. The way the government handled the riots was also scrutinised by the *Rhodesia Herald* which accused Edgar Whitehead of belittling the problem when he claimed that he couldn't meet the NDP leaders because 'he was too busy dealing with the Congo refugees'.³⁷⁹ In addition to attacking the government, both newspapers called for a commission of inquiry to uncover the causes of the riots. The *African Daily News* went further to make its case for a commission by arguing that the causes of what happened were far deeper than what appeared on the surface. It noted that 'nothing short of a high-powered commission to investigate the underlying

³⁷⁷ For more on the riots see Francis Nehwati, 'The Social and Communal Background to 'Zhi': The African Riots in Bulawayo Southern Rhodesia in 1961', in *African Affairs*, vol. 69, no. 276, 1970.

³⁷⁸ *African Daily News*, 'Section 17', 25 July 1960. The group was named Section 17 because it consisted of 17 youths and young men.

³⁷⁹ *Rhodesia Herald*, 'Belittling the Problem', 25 July 1960.

causes, and make relevant recommendations, will bring the true realities of the situation to the government, the country and the people'.³⁸⁰ These causes seemed clear, however. In the first instance, the ban on an NDP meeting was cited as having sparked the riots. They also pointed out that Bulawayo had a huge population of unemployed people as well as the 'tsotsi' element, and such people were easily incited to start rioting. Moreover, political changes taking place all over Africa, especially in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, were contiguous to Southern Rhodesia.³⁸¹

The above analysis is interesting in trying to understand the position of the newspaper as far as this episode of conflict was concerned. Apparent is an attempt to attack both parties to the conflict. There is a certain degree of contradiction and tension as far as the *African Daily News* flip flopped on response to the riots. It was symptomatic of a newspaper at crossroads, unsure of whether to attack the government or sympathise with the Africans or both. The newspaper had started by attacking the leadership of the NDP for their part in the riots. Then the government's actions were scrutinized in even more scathing terms. They laid the blame on the government for failing to provide adequate employment for the Africans in Bulawayo. By advocating for a commission of enquiry, the newspaper's staff had hoped that by officialising the structural problems faced by Africans, the government would be compelled to rectify the situation. Finally, by looking at the forces of nationalism that were spreading from the surrounding countries, the *African Daily News* was looking at the problem with an open mind, acknowledging the legitimate demands of African nationalism. In return, Whitehead labelled the demand for one man one vote a 'parrot cry'. But the nationalists firmly believed that the call for one man one vote 'was not a hollow tempest but one pregnant with the will of the African people'.³⁸²

The activities of the NDP threatened the core of white society in Southern Rhodesia. Like Todd before him, Whitehead, a staunch conservative, began to recognise the wind of change and the logic of his predecessor's purpose and made plans to meet the situation. In fact, he pursued precisely the same policy as Garfield, albeit slowly. Whitehead attempted to repeal the Land Apportionment Act, as well as the Masters and Servants Act among other repressive legislations but was stopped by members of his own cabinet. On 8 April 1961, the UFP allowed the Africans to carry with them the 'situpa' as the only identification document

³⁸⁰ *African Daily News*, 'Let the Causes be Uncovered: Comment', 27 July 1960.

³⁸¹ *African Daily News*, 27 July 1960.

³⁸² *African Daily News*, 27 July 1960.

instead of the passes. The *African Daily News* noted that history was on course to repeating itself since the reforms put forth by Sir Edgar were similar to those initiated by Todd, which had led to his downfall in 1958. As if in agreement with the *African Daily News*, the *Central African Intelligence Report* predicted that:

If an election were held today the UFP would lose the traditional support of the Establishment, merely because of the suspicion that it seeks to compromise with African political interests. Nothing can be further from the truth. The pace towards African rule favoured by Whitehead is considerably slower than the recognised process of political gradualism.³⁸³

The Whitehead government decided to carry out a constitutional revision programme to effect some reforms they thought would curtail the spread of nationalism. On the other hand it had to allay the fears of the Europeans that the UFP was not in fact about to give the Africans majority rule. Such reforms were seen by white citizens to be too liberal and threatened the minority rule. Thus the 1961 constitutional talks were held under a cloud of pressure from the African nationalists who had taken the path of violence to obtain their goals. In the same vein, the reactionary Dominion Party was getting stronger each day and was waiting in the wings to grab power should the UFP make any mistake.

A Historic Conference? *African Daily News*, the National Democratic Party and the Constitutional Talks of 1961

The successor to the ANC was the National Democratic Party (NDP) formed in 1960 with Michael Mawema as the leader.³⁸⁴ The party was formed at a time when Edgar Whitehead, eager to keep the British out of the Rhodesian affairs started a series of constitutional talks with the British. In fact, the idea was for Southern Rhodesia to become independent so that Britain's influence over legislations concerning the Africans would be extirpated. Thus for the talks to be representative, and bearing in mind the problems the government faced in 1960, the NDP was formally recognised as a properly constituted body with a mandate to represent African interests. It should be appreciated however, that the major aim of Whitehead was to

³⁸³ *Central African Intelligence Report*, 'The Dilemma of the UFP', 8 September 1962

³⁸⁴ I agree with Terence Ranger that Joshua Nkomo has either given himself or by others the unnecessary agency in the formation of the NDP and his leadership of this new party. Terence Ranger in *Bulawayo Burning* rightly shows that Michael Mawema was the founding president of the NDP and this is also confirmed by the *African Daily News* of the months of January and February 1960 which addressed Mawema as the president of the NDP. Mawema was succeeded by Leopold Takawira on an acting basis. Joshua Nkomo became the leader of the NDP on the 31st of October 1961.

attempt to integrate the African middle class into the existing political system.³⁸⁵ The Dominion Party saw the 1961 constitutional talks as the opportunity to attain dominion status. The constitutional talks of 1961 were seen as important by all the stake-holders. Whilst Europeans saw the opportunity to completely break away from British interference, Africans saw them as a chance to obtain important concessions such as universal suffrage. Such were the expectations of the Africans for the year that Robert Mugabe, Publicity Secretary of the NDP, in 1960 saw the year 1961 as Zimbabwe's year.³⁸⁶ It was a period when the NDP had spread its influence around large sections of the country, including the reserves, and this frightened white Rhodesians to such an extent that NDP meetings were banned in the reserves and some small urban areas. In one weird incident, the Town Management Board of Marandellas demanded £10 000 from the NDP to hold a rally.³⁸⁷ There was also an increase in violence perpetrated by radical African activists on those who were perceived to be moderates. According to Ndabaningi Sithole, then Treasurer General of the NDP, a 'moderate African was one who says the European should always be up and the African down'.³⁸⁸ Elsewhere in Africa, independence had proved to be fraught for Africans. For example, an African columnist for the *African Daily News* noted that 'the sad story of independence in the Congo must never be allowed to repeat itself anywhere in Africa'.³⁸⁹ The *African Daily News* operated within this dispensation and it is the focus of this section to analyse how the paper covered and interpreted the events of this era.

In the eyes of many 'ordinary' Africans, the 1961 constitution represented an opportunity that was to be grabbed with both hands. One writer to the *African Daily News* argued that the destiny of the country lay in these talks. There was a general feeling that the violence of 1959-1960 was a result of African resentment to the form of government that existed in Rhodesia at the time, thus the constitutional talks presented a great opportunity to change things.

When the constitutional conference started, the *African Daily News* labelled it 'historic'. It now believed that 'since the Africans have reached a stage of 'political maturity' they ought to have their own representatives' but not yet ready for majority rule.³⁹⁰ For the *African Daily News*, the 1961 constitutional talks represented a minor shift in its political stance, for

³⁸⁵ Martin Loney, Rhodesia: White racism and Imperial response

³⁸⁶ *African Daily News*, January 3 1960.

³⁸⁷ *African Daily News*, January 3 1960.

³⁸⁸ *African Daily News*, 'Sithole on moderates', 9 January 1961.

³⁸⁹ *African Daily News*, January 5 1961.

³⁹⁰ *African Daily News*, 'A Historic Conference', January 16 1961.

previously the newspaper had campaigned for an interracial society led by the whites. The only difference during this era was that the *African Daily News* recognised that African political organisations had the mandate to represent the blacks, but without taking political control. In some sense one can say that the newspaper still represented that gradualist perspective as far as majority rule is concerned. At the conference therefore battle lines were drawn on the franchise issue with the NDP campaigning for one-man-one-vote whilst other protagonists advocating for a qualitative franchise. The *African Daily News* on its part, even though it portrayed Africans as ‘mature’, it argued that the ‘franchise should be widened in such a way that it becomes possible for many Africans to be elected to parliament on an ordinary common roll’.³⁹¹ By ‘many’ it meant only those with the requisite qualifications, not all Africans. African members of the UFP — reflecting the class and cultural biases of their relative privilege – did not support the idea of a one-man-one-vote as giving the vote to ‘every Tom and Jack will be suicidal’.³⁹² Thus it can be seen that some Africans in the UFP and the *African Daily News* were advocating for a gradual advance towards independence in contrast to the sudden approach of the NDP. These UFP Africans were seen as sell-outs and traitors by the NDP. At the constitutional talks, a number of issues were agreed upon by the NDP and the UFP, which at first seemed to have satisfied both parties. Sir Edgar Whitehead noted the choices that were at hand during the talks. He said,

we have three choices before us, either an attempt to maintain white supremacy by force, or an attempt to introduce black supremacy which could only end in bloody civil war, or a genuine attempt by the races to work together within the same political framework.³⁹³

It was agreed that the new constitution would outlaw discrimination and include a declaration of rights. This provisional agreement was seen as satisfactory and the *African Daily News* even congratulated the NDP for its exploits during the constitutional conference. The newspaper paid tribute to the secretary for Commonwealth relations from London, Mr. Duncan Sandys who chaired the meetings.

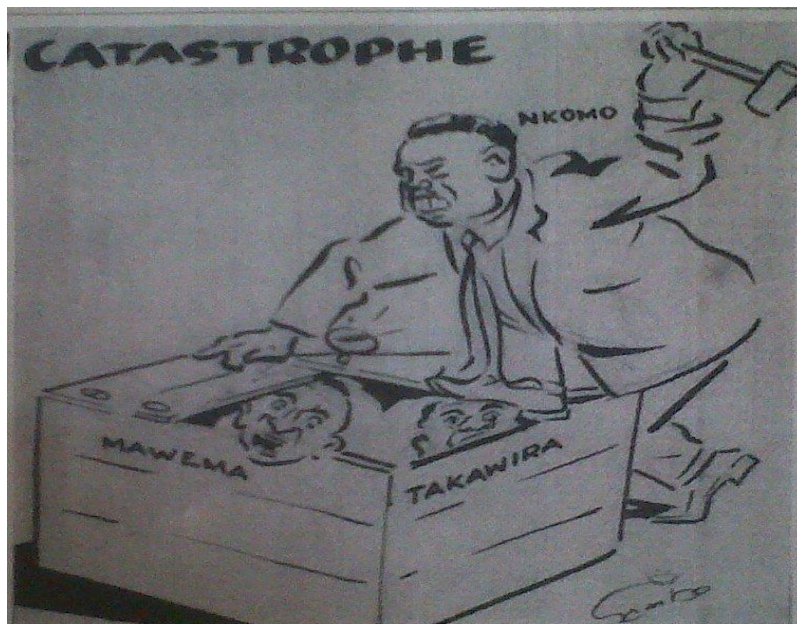
But just as the dust began to settle on the initial agreements of the first meeting, the NDP began to face internal criticism for ‘accepting’ the outcome of the conference. This came from members like Michael Mawema (now NDP’s Vice President) and Leopold Takawira (NDP’s

³⁹¹ *African Daily News*, ‘A Historic Conference’, 16 January 1961.

³⁹² *African Daily News*, ‘A Historic Conference’, 16 January 1961.

³⁹³ *African Daily News*, ‘Strong appeal for unity by Premier’, 9 February 1961.

Director of International Relations based in London) who attacked Joshua Nkomo (now President of the NDP) and other leaders for what they denounced as compromises, and ‘selling out’. Takawira stated that, ‘we totally reject Southern Rhodesia Constitutional arrangements as treacherous to the future of 3 million Africans. The Agreement is diabolical and disastrous. The outside world is shocked by the NDP docile agreement’.³⁹⁴ On the other hand Mawema complained that the NDP ‘compromised when there was no reason for compromise on the franchise proposals’.³⁹⁵ Nkomo in his biography rejects the claim that he and his delegation had accepted the conclusions of the conference.³⁹⁶ However, this incident began a series of tensions within the NDP. In an authoritarian move, Nkomo suspended Mawema and Takawira for criticising his leadership. The *African Daily News* criticized the silencing of dissent within the NDP as undemocratic. Indeed, the suspension of Mawema and Takawira was portrayed as ‘catastrophic’, as depicted by the cartoon below.



In May, when constitutional talks were resumed, the NDP took a harder stand. For example, they staged a walk-out when Sir Edgar Whitehead had refused to discuss the issue of land reform, the ban on meetings in the reserves, and other key grievances. The *African Daily News* in this instance supported the NDP, particularly on the land issue. In a comment, it

³⁹⁴ *African Daily News*, ‘Mounting criticism of NDP delegation’, 11 February 1961

³⁹⁵ *African Daily News*, ‘Mounting criticism of NDP delegation’, 11 February 1961

³⁹⁶ Joshua Nkomo, *The story of my life*, p. 93. According to Nkomo, Sandys lied because he didn’t want to be seen to have presided over an unsuccessful conference as that would damage his political career.

declared that there was not sufficient land for African people and advocated the removal of restrictions imposed by the Land Apportionment Act. 'A system of owning land on a rigid, racial basis' it proclaimed, 'is totally against the principles of partnership and provides a sensitive issue for political agitation in the rural areas'.³⁹⁷ Along with the walk-out, the NDP refused to further participate in the constitutional talks. The agreement between Sandys and the ruling UFP meant that a referendum and elections thereafter would be held in Southern Rhodesia in 1962.

The decision by the NDP in discontinuing the talks was interpreted by some Africans, and primarily by the *African Daily News* as wrong and dangerous, believing once again it was opening doors for extremists in the Dominion Party. S. J. T. Samkange, a columnist in the newspaper postulated that Africans had reached a stage where they were ready to opt for the Dominion Party to rule so that 'everyone would realise how impractical its policies were and throw it out'. He compared the situation to events in South Africa in 1948 where:

... the Africans had said 'to hell with Smuts, let him go we want to come face to face with the Nationalists. We do not want any liberals because they cloud the issue. When we face the Nationalists we shall disorganise them to such an extent that they will be proved, once and for all, incapable of forming a government in South Africa'.³⁹⁸

This, Samkange implied, had been self-defeating and self-deceptive for Africans in South Africa and would similarly be disastrous for Africans in Rhodesia:

Whatever may be the motive, let us not fool ourselves by thinking that we will be able to handle the Dominion Party better in power and crush it. This is a huge fallacy. Even if we do not like the UFP, let us keep the Dominion Party out at all costs.³⁹⁹

Editors at the *African Daily News* declared the non-participation stance taken by the NDP as 'prejudicing' the interests of Africans. The newspaper argued that participation in the referendum and the subsequent elections would serve to give the NDP a foothold in parliament, a platform they could use to gain political strength to press for greater concessions.⁴⁰⁰ The newspaper encouraged the NDP to participate and to fight 'from within'.

But the NDP flatly refused to take part in the elections because they regarded the 1961 Constitutional agreement as a white men's pact. Further fragmentation of African anti-

³⁹⁷ *African Daily News*, 'Comment: Land Issue', 15 May 1961.

³⁹⁸ S. J. T. Samkange, 'Let us keep the Dominion Party out by all means', *African Daily News*, 12 May 1961.

³⁹⁹ S.J.T. Samkange, 'Let us keep the Dominion Party out by all means', *African Daily News*, 12 May 1961.

⁴⁰⁰ *African Daily News*, 'Mainly for the NDP: Comment', 29 May 1961.

colonial opposition contributed to the context in which political decisions were being made. The NDP was experiencing pressure towards a stand of non-co-operation by the formation of a new black political organization called the Zimbabwe National Party, which had accused the NDP of selling out during the talks.⁴⁰¹ The NDP, following a two-day Special Congress held in June, rejected Sandys' White Paper on constitutional change and declared that they would submit their own proposals to the British government, and carry out their own referendum to assess African opinion on the country's future.⁴⁰²

Meanwhile, at the other end of the political spectrum, the Dominion Party rejected the White Paper for giving additional seats (15) to African delegates.⁴⁰³ The Dominion Party declared that the constitutional proposals 'were a capitulation to majority rule, a sell-out of the heritage we must hand to our children'.⁴⁰⁴ In disagreement with the proposals, Ian Smith resigned his UFP territorial seat and crossed the floor to become a member of the Dominion Party.

The constitutional proposals were supported by the UFP and the Central African Party and the result of the referendum saw them winning by a large margin, accepted by 41 949 votes and rejected by 21 846.⁴⁰⁵ In its editorial of 27 July 1961, the *African Daily News* expressed naïve optimism, concluding that 'victory is proof that both conservatism and racial extremism are outmoded and should give way to constructive multi-racialism'. After the referendum, the government banned political meetings throughout the country.

The NDP was banned under the terms of the Unlawful Organisations Act on 9 December 1961. Eight days later, the banned NDP was replaced by a new organisation, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), again under the leadership of Joshua Nkomo. Commenting on the banning of the NDP and the formation of ZAPU, the *African Daily News* noted that 'there is no doubt that if Sir Edgar Whitehead decides to ban ZAPU, another party, with precisely the same aims and objectives will rise from the ashes of the ZAPU'. The newspaper observed that banning nationalist parties would not solve the problems of the colonial

⁴⁰¹ At the launch of this party, its leaders were beaten up by members of the NDP who labelled them as sell outs. See *African Daily News* of 10 June 1961.

⁴⁰² *African Daily News*, 19 January 1961. In this referendum the NDP members voted No. A new African political party called the Zimbabwe National Party described NDP's referendum as politically useless (*African Daily News* 11 September 1961).

⁴⁰³ *African Daily News*, 'Ndoro-Vote No: Dominion Party says', July 4 1961.

⁴⁰⁴ Martin Loney, Rhodesia: White racism and Imperial response, p. 123.

⁴⁰⁵ *African Daily News*, 'Day of Referendum', 26 July 1961.

government, as new parties would continually arise. As predicted, on 20 September of 1962, ZAPU was banned.

White party politics, too, was changing. In March of 1962, the radicalized Dominion Party was reborn as the Rhodesian Front (RF). Too late to regain the trust of the white electorate, the UFP was defeated by the Rhodesian Front on 14 December by a margin of 35 to 29. The Rhodesian Front, under the leadership of Winston Field came to power with the mandate of bringing dominion status to Rhodesia. The coming in of the Rhodesian Front would radically alter the trajectory taken by the *African Daily News* in shaping politics in Southern Rhodesia. In turn, the RF would bring also a new dimension to state media relations.

Party Politics and New Ownership: The making of a radical *African Daily News*.

Whilst Lawrence Vambe argued that it was the removal of Todd in 1958 that made the *African Daily News* radical, my reading of the evidence shows that the change of ownership of the *African Daily News*, coupled with the defeat of the UFP in 1962 had a stronger bearing on the editorial and political stance of the newspaper. My argument is that the defeat of the UFP signaled the death of the Federation, which meant that the project of racial co-operation, advocated by the newspaper since its birth, had also collapsed. In addition, the newspaper had always been at odds with the Dominion Party, which later became the Rhodesian Front, and so its rise to power meant that African political moderation had failed in their quest of seeking to promote what they termed 'acceptable or practical politics'. The *African Daily News* had always been open about its lack of support for extremism, white and black, and so a Rhodesian Front in power meant that the newspaper would challenge its rule from the onset. Whereas the UFP had strongly advocated an end to racial discrimination and an increase in African representatives in government, the Rhodesian Front aimed for racial segregation and unchallenged white political supremacy. As Vambe argued it was white intransigence that gave the African press no choice but to move closer and closer to militant nationalism. The collapse of the CAP and, later, the defeat of the UFP thus played a fundamental role in radicalizing the anti-colonial politics of the *African Daily News*. This, in addition to the change in ownership as the new owners had projects elsewhere that supported majority rule.

However, the radicalisation of the *African Daily News* can also be explained by the growing pressures from African nationalist organisations both internally and externally. Pressure for the *African Daily News* to ‘reform’ its editorial slant came specifically from the federal quarters of the ANC. In one instance, African Newspapers was castigated by officials from the Nyasaland ANC (NANC), who accused it of acting as UFP’s recruiting agents for Africans. Such Africans, the NANC argued, would then be used to proclaim the UFP government benefited Africans, who would not advance without their championing of black rights. ANC members only identified as Mayanda and Lungu claimed that it was only from those Africans in the employ of African Newspapers who had been converted into ‘selling out’ their constituency.⁴⁰⁶ “There is a corrupting influence that Africans get in the African Newspapers. The company is training Africans to betray their own people. It is a college where they turn out ‘sell outs’ graduates’.⁴⁰⁷ ANC officials named the likes of Vambe, Savanhu and Hove as among these ‘graduates’ who were tasked to declare African nationalism as wrong.

Internally, the growing relevance of the NDP in Rhodesian politics also put undue pressure on the *African Daily News* to change its slant on the coverage of political issues in the country. As earlier mentioned, in 1960, the *African Daily News* ran into serious problems with the NDP. Arguing that the major problem hindering progress in Southern Rhodesia was the dissemination of information, Joshua Nkomo had announced that the NDP would start its own newspaper.⁴⁰⁸ He emphasised that the idea of starting a newspaper was ‘to counter the harm done by the television, radio and the press as they misreported and distorted or by deliberately refused to report that which did not represent their interests’.⁴⁰⁹ In essence Nkomo was intimating that the press, including the *African Daily News* was not representing the interests of Africans. With the souring of relations between the NDP and the *African Daily News* around constitutional talks in 1961, the *African Daily News* had carried a leading article in which it argued that NDP elections had been influenced principally by ‘tribal feeling’. NDP President, Secretary General and Financial Secretary all hailed from Matabeleland, home to Ndebele ethnic communities. After the NDP had pulled out of the constitutional conference, the *African Daily News* proclaimed that ‘the NDP was a house

⁴⁰⁶ *African Daily News*, ‘African Newspapers Attacked’, 3 July 1959.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁸ The NDP eventually formed the *Democratic Voice* in 1961 to act as a party mouthpiece.

⁴⁰⁹ *African Daily News*, ‘NDP to start a paper’, 21 October 1961.

divided against itself' and that it was inevitable (and would be advantageous) for a new party to emerge.⁴¹⁰ The NDP had responded to this insinuation with a scathing editorial carried by its mouthpiece, the *Democratic Voice*

... there must be a joint attempt to destroy our party; for we fail to realise the nature of the benefit that the *Daily News* would derive from the formation of another African-led party. One strange feature we have noticed about this capitalist mouthpiece is that when it criticises African politicians it is most bitter and scathing even to the extent of being recklessly irresponsible. But when it is Sir Edgar or Roy who is the object of criticism, the *Daily News* first goes down on its knees before him and after saying the necessary prayer, it then proceeds gently to gloss over the unpopular measure or action even if such measure or action requires utmost condemnation.⁴¹¹

The editorial accused the *African Daily News* of being owned by government sympathisers and therefore devoid of independent thought. It suggested that the:

... *Daily News* has no choice but to dance to the tune of its imperialist masters. As a puppet, therefore, its role is certainly to perform and not to reason why. If this '*Daily Nonsense*' continues to assume proportions and becomes a '*Daily Nuisance*' it will find itself wrecked by the forces of fair play and justice. If it has ears to hear, let it hear for the Voice that now speaks is the people's voice.⁴¹²

The 1960s began with Southern Rhodesia entering a phase of full blown—racially polarized—nationalism. As white citizens gravitated towards exclusion and supremacist platforms, African subjects were becoming more aligned to black politicians as their best hope. Readers of the *African Daily News* were increasingly sympathetic with the NDP and this meant that threats issued at the paper were not empty. Towards the end of 1961, at a rally attended by an estimated 30 000 people, NDP leaders including Joshua Nkomo attacked the press of Southern Rhodesia both European and African, accusing it of being biased against the NDP. The delegates called for a boycott of all newspapers and, later in the evening, rioting mobs set fire to the African Newspapers building in Makokoba Township.⁴¹³ Again, this constitutes further evidence that the change in the stance taken by the *African Daily News* in the early 1960s cannot be explained by the removal of Todd, as noted by Vambe.

The attack on the *African Daily News* by the NDP/ZAPU coincided with a change of ownership of the newspaper in October 1962. The newspaper was bought by Lord Thomson of Fleet, a Canadian newspaper proprietor based in the United Kingdom, whose newspapers

⁴¹⁰ *African Daily News*, 'Freedom of the Press', 24 October 1961.

⁴¹¹ *Democratic Voice*, 'Open letter to the Editor of the 'Daily News'', 19 November 1960.

⁴¹² *Democratic Voice*, 'Open letter to the Editor of the 'Daily News'', 19 November 1960.

⁴¹³ *African Daily News*, 'Congress attacks press', 23 October 1961.

in Nigeria and other third world countries were deemed to be anti-imperialist and so his political leanings were transferred to his new holding in Southern Rhodesia. The Minister of Law and Order in 1964 argued that ‘soon after the Thomson take-over there was a most noticeable change in the editorial policy of the *African Daily News*; a policy of fair and sober reporting being replaced by sensationalist journalism in the familiar “tabloid” form’.⁴¹⁴ There is also the claim that the newspaper radicalized for financial purposes. Patrick Keatley contends that the more the *African Daily News* expressed radical nationalist position, the more its sales rose.⁴¹⁵ Keatley further argues that the circulation of the newspaper increased at an annual rate of 8-10%, which was far much greater than that of population growth.⁴¹⁶ By the time the newspaper was closed in 1964, it had a circulation of 15 000⁴¹⁷, which figure was seen to be far ahead of the times.

Whether improved financial viability was a cause for or effect of its radicalisation, the coming of Lord Roy Thomson dramatically changed the fortunes of the *African Daily News* in many respects. Prior to their coming, John Parker had described the newspaper as ‘a poor publication, full of technical and journalistic errors, which never had the money to pay for the proper training of its staff, or to pay them the right money after training them’.⁴¹⁸ Besides a remarkable improvement in the quality of the paper, its stance towards the welfare of Africans and organisations became more substantially sympathetic and radical. The man who is credited for growing the appeal of the *African Daily News* to the Africans and some whites was Eugene Wason. Under him the newspaper began to make use of columnists who more or less had *carte blanche* to write what they wanted. One such columnist was M. A. Wakatama who wrote under the tag-line ‘I write what I please’. The newspaper also started columns for women, the most popular being the ‘Dear Rosemary’ advice page, where women would write asking Rosemary for help on issues supposedly the special concern of women.

John Parker argues that, prior to the coming of Lord Thomson; the newspaper was ‘propped up for some years by a consortium of copper companies at the instigation of Sir Roy Welensky’.⁴¹⁹ The consortium, together with the Paver Brothers, Parker argues, had refused

⁴¹⁴Legislative Assembly, *The Daily News*, col. 1280.

⁴¹⁵ Patrick Keatley, p. 58.

⁴¹⁶Patrick Keatley, p. 58.

⁴¹⁷*The Rhodesia Herald*, ‘Ban on the *Daily News* Proposed: Parliament’s Approval Sought Today’, 26 August 1964.

⁴¹⁸John Parker, *Rhodesia: Little White Island*, Pitman Publishing, London, 1972, p. 113.

⁴¹⁹John Parker, *Rhodesia: Little white Island*, p. 113.

‘to recognise that African nationalism was a force to be reckoned with or that the African public opinion demanded a quality product’.⁴²⁰ Bill Saidi reinforces this argument by intimating that although the Paver Brothers had liberal tendencies, they were never ‘bleeding heart liberals’ as they tended to support a gradualist approach to the idea of freedom for the Africans. But this changed with the coming of Lord Thomson.

The *African Daily News* now lent its support to Joshua Nkomo and ZAPU, openly vouching for majority rule. When ZAPU was banned in 1962, the leadership decided to form a new informal body called the People’s Caretaker Council (PCC) and the *Daily News* expressed support. The Minister of Law and Order registered his displeasure at the stance taken by the newspaper stating that:

After the banning of ZAPU in 1962, the paper went out of its way to keep the image of the banned party and its erstwhile leaders constantly before its reading public, which is mostly African. Various former party officials were described in laudatory terms and accorded the status of responsible and legitimate politicians who had been ill used by an oppressive government. Extreme views expressed by nationalist leaders were accorded a degree of publicity entirely disproportionate to their ordinary news value, and the paper has ever since, allowed its pages to be used as a medium for propaganda of the most blatant kind. Its editorial policy has been designed to promote dissatisfaction and hostility towards the European in the minds of a largely unsophisticated reading public, contrary to the safety and security of the entire population.⁴²¹

The *Daily News* confirmed its new position in continued sympathetic reports about the PCC. On the 16th of April 1964 Joshua Nkomo and other leaders were restricted to Gonakudzingwa by Ian Smith, the *African Daily News* published a mid-day special featuring Nkomo. John Parker notes:

Even when Nkomo was sent to Gonakudzingwa, 450 miles away from Salisbury in the bush, Wason spotted a loophole in the law and sent his news editor and a team in a Land Rover to find the detainees. They came back with news and pictures that made the government’s measures a laughing stock. This type of irreverent journalism was unacceptable to the Front’.⁴²²

Nkomo’s letters to his wife found their way into the newspaper. The Minister of Law and Order again attacked the *African Daily News* for wilfully defying the intentions and purposes of restricting African politicians. In reference to the continued coverage of

⁴²⁰John Parker, Rhodesia: Little white Island, p. 113.

⁴²¹Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates: Banning The *Daily News*, 26 August 1964, col 1279.

⁴²²John Parker, Rhodesia: Little White Island, p. 125.

Joshua Nkomo and the PCC, the Minister lamented that their intentions were being diluted by the activities of the newspaper. The Minister pointed out:

When the government had restricted Nkomo it might have been reasonably expected that his harmful influence would be severely restricted, but the *Daily News* has largely defeated this action, taken in the interests of maintaining law and order, by supplying the nationalist leaders concerned with another kind of platform in the form of an incessant campaign of press agitation, reinforced with interviews, articles and photographs. The *Daily News* has thus largely supplanted the public meeting as a channel for agitation and subversion.⁴²³

Conflicts within ZAPU/PCC led to the split in the movement culminating in the formation of yet a new political party, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) led by Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole in August 1963. What ensued after this split was a period of sustained political violence, which lasted until 1964 as ZAPU and ZANU jockeyed for control of the liberation struggle. The *African Daily News* was caught up in this struggle. Its reporters and former editors were split amongst themselves, aligned with both groupings. Two of their former editors, who still had influence with the newspaper, had sympathies with competing parties; Nathan Shamuyarira now belonged to ZANU whilst Willie Musarurwa belonged to ZAPU/PCC.⁴²⁴ So at first the newspaper attempted to balance support for the two nationalist parties before it settled for the PCC. The reasons for this are not hard to find. Firstly, former Prime Minister of Rhodesia Garfield Todd came out in 1960 in the open in endorsing Joshua Nkomo and ZAPU after the collapse of his Central African Party, which had succeeded the URP. This meant that most liberal whites, who saw the inevitability of black rule in Rhodesia, felt compelled to support ZAPU. Another reason is that Zambian leader, Kenneth Kaunda also supported Joshua Nkomo and so it seemed that independence was close at hand and that ZAPU was likely to lead the country to the promised land. Furthermore, the split from ZAPU by ZANU secessionists was seen as the work of extremists who advocated violence as the solution to the problems in Rhodesia. The *African Daily News* had always advocated non-violence, another putative reason for supporting ZAPU. In supporting Nkomo, Eugene Wason, former editor of the *African Daily News*, had this to say:

I think that reconciliation between the races would be easier under Nkomo than under Sithole. Nkomo understood Europeans. He had got on well with Lord Malvern and Sir Edgar Whitehead. He was in no sense a racialist⁴²⁵

⁴²³Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates, col 1282.

⁴²⁴Eugene Wason states that Nathan Shamuyarira had been named by Nkomo as one of his enemies.

⁴²⁵Eugene Wason, Banned, p. 46.

The violence that engulfed the African townships, particularly in Highfield, exposed the bias of the *African Daily News* towards ZAPU/PCC. Eugene Wason, in his account of the 8 months he worked at the newspaper states that ‘the intimidation by ZAPU became so strong that many ZANU supporters were disclaiming that they ever had anything to do with Sithole, or if they had, then they had changed their minds and wanted to rejoin the people’.⁴²⁶ Yet the paper still supported the PCC. One letter to the editor registered disappointment in the way the *African Daily News* was supporting PCC. The letter read:

Sir, - your paper has become propaganda publication of PCC and it has deceived the true sons and daughters of Zimbabwe to believe that ZANU has no support, which is disgraceful. It only publishes things said by Nkomo and not by the Reverend Sithole, the true leader. Your paper harms the people because it gives them a picture of one side of their leadership, ignoring the other side. I hope you will publish things said by both sides.⁴²⁷

The radicalisation of the *African Daily News* and its support for the ZAPU contributed in a great way to the response by Ian Smith’s government. With ZAPU banned and the PCC operating as an underground movement, the *African Daily News* became a *de facto* political party as it actively clamoured for independence under African rule. The activities of the *African Daily News* therefore supports the contention that in a society where the opposition is weak or non-existent, a vibrant press often assumes the role of an opposition party. The newspaper assumed roles of journalists-cum-activists and this inevitably led to problems with the Rhodesian Front government who sought to curtail the freedom of the press arguing that newspapers should ‘not be allowed to use this powerful instrument entirely as they please, even to use it as an instrument of subversion within the state’.⁴²⁸

Negotiating for Space: *African Daily News* and its challenges

In 1964, the state closed down the *African Daily News*, labelling it as an enemy of the state. The *African Daily News* had operated for about nine years and over this period the operating environment had been challenging. These challenges, which changed over time, affected how the newspaper operated and its relationship with both the Africans and the Europeans.

⁴²⁶Eugene Wason, *Banned: The Story of the African Daily News, Southern Rhodesia*, 1964, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1976, p. 57.

⁴²⁷*African Daily News*, ‘Disgraceful’, 2 April 1964.

⁴²⁸Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates, col. 1279.

One of the challenges, important to mention here, was the loss of its senior staff recruited into the Federal government. As noted before, the Federation was formed on the basis of a perceived partnership between the Africans and the Europeans. As a sign of good faith with educated Africans, the Federal colonial government employed most of its key personnel from African Newspapers. Most of these junior civil servants had to have knowledge and support of the Federation and be in a position to put forth cases with conviction.⁴²⁹ Therefore, in employing African Information Officers, there was a deliberate ploy to target Africans who were already in the information sector, who needed little or no training to be able to deal with a hostile press. As a result, the *African Daily News* lost Lawrence Vambe who was posted to London in 1959 and Kingsley Dube who was posted to Lagos in May 1960.⁴³⁰ Dube was later transferred to Washington DC as the first secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs. African Information Officers were also expected to act as public relations officers in defence of the Federation. The duties of such African Information officers were ‘to attempt by writing, broadcasting and talking to influence African opinion in the territory towards favouring the Federation’.⁴³¹ In Nyasaland, for example, where anti-federal feeling was high, the use of such Africans as information officers was so important that the Director of Information had offered an employee of African Newspapers higher wages of up to £360 a year from £300 a year to lure him to this job.⁴³² There is no doubt that this pattern of advancement, and the high stakes prestige and remuneration it offered, greatly affected the loyalties of the *African Daily News* itself. Being an institutional ‘pool’ for African political and class mobility within the colonial infrastructure, helps explain its reputation for pushing an accommodationist line. It also explains why Nathan Shamuyarira stated that the first line of attack by the nationalist was directed at these officers and why they were labelled ‘stooges’.

Another challenge faced by the *African Daily News* was in dealing with African politicians, who demanded uncritical support on the basis of race. Lawrence Vambe argued that

... the attitude of African leaders simply amounted to this: if you claim to be a Press for black people, then you ought to speak for and back us without any reservations. This was a tall order. Not only were we employed by an organization whose money and management were European. We were also at one time confronted by a multiplicity of

⁴²⁹NAZ, F121/H3, African Information Officers, 1954-1962.

⁴³⁰*Ibid.*

⁴³¹NAZ, F121/H3, Director of Information, 23rd July 1957.

⁴³²*Ibid.*

black groups and black leaders who, while professing the same cause-African freedom-were fiercely antagonistic to one another.⁴³³

This made the task of African reporters all the more difficult. Any story that portrayed such leaders in negative light would result in threats or in being labelled a sell-out. Vambe noted that 'when we backed them all the way, we were hailed as comrades in arms, but when we criticised them, they were quick to brand us as imperialist dogs'.⁴³⁴ Vambe recounts an instance when he was sent an anonymous letter labelling him a 'stooge' and threatening to deal with him 'the way all stooges were dealt with'. Shamuyarira further contends that the word stooge, by extension, also came to be associated with African Newspapers. The nationalists argued that it was formed to hoodwink the Europeans and Africans to support the federation, as well as creating a small class of blacks that represented white interests through the press.⁴³⁵ The thinking therefore was (and continues to be by some analysts of this period) that the office of a reporter was so powerful that the office holders should use it tirelessly in the fight against oppression and misrule.

But were these people stooges, as some nationalists have implied, or did they genuinely and independently believe in the so-called multi-racial project that the Federation supposedly attempted to build? To answer this question one has to look at what happened to the first Africans to join the Federal government. Jasper Savanhu was the first African member of Sir Roy Welensky's Federal government as deputy minister of housing. According to Joshua Nkomo 'he was not allowed to build a home for himself in a white area and after a while he admitted that collaboration did not work because the whites would not let it'.⁴³⁶ Savanhu, also, subsequently reflected that he had resigned from Federation because it had failed to implement the policy of partnership and he believed that it was now time to identify with the people.⁴³⁷ Lawrence Vambe and Mike Masotsha Hove similarly resigned from the Federation citing the failure of the racial partnership experiment. The experiences of these three gentlemen seem to imply that they genuinely believed in the project and were willing to depart from prestigious and lucrative posts when finally disillusioned. The possibility that those who castigated the Africans who joined the Federation may have been driven by jealousy also must be considered. For example, Joshua Nkomo had been defeated by Mike

⁴³³ Lawrence Vambe, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, p. 253.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁵ Interview with Nathan Shamuyarira, 10 March 2013.

⁴³⁶ Joshua Nkomo, *The Story of my Life*, p. 55.

⁴³⁷ AOH/5, Jasper Savanhu

Hove in his quest to represent the UFP in Federal legislation. The assumption is that, had he won, he would have inevitably been promoted to either an ambassadorial post or deputy minister. Thus any critical representation of anti-colonial politics at this time must engage in the racialized complexity of the dilemmas afforded by class-based and gendered opportunities and barriers.

The Managing Director of African Newspapers aptly summarised the experiences of the *African Daily News* when in responding to a question about the touchiness of African nationalist leaders and their reactionary posture to a principled 'free press', J. M. Coltart had this to say:

There are certainly quite a few things which I find difficult to understand. For instance, we have assisted in setting up certain [news]papers with avowed purpose to give a platform to the Africans. After this followed a period of great gratitude from the Africans and suddenly we find ourselves in trouble with a section of our African friends. Enquiry usually discloses that we have possibly criticised a political party and this some of our African friends find difficult to understand. But this is bound to happen with young countries who are undertaking tremendous task of introducing democratic systems into their countries.⁴³⁸

It is therefore satisfactory to suggest that a stooge was one in the eyes of the beholder. From the nationalists' point of view, the journalists at African Newspapers being members of the Inter-Racial Association and the Capricorn Africa Society meant that they didn't believe in the capability of Africans to lead themselves. This indeed made them stooges of the white men. That these African journalists later turned and supported African nationalism again buttress and justify the claim that they were stooges of the minority rulers who used the press to forestall the move towards independence.

Besides riding a fine line with the nationalist leaders, the *African Daily News* also had to contend with the colonial government. The first major problem was that the newspaper was at times denied access to information by the government. The Rhodesian Guild of Journalists complained about the way in which legitimate sources of news were closed and information denied to the Press before the declaration of a State of Emergency in Southern Rhodesia in 1956. This left newspaper houses with less to work with and this tended to lead to speculation as no information was forthcoming from the authorities. The *African Daily News* accused the Federal Information Department of favouritism as it had the habit of releasing important

⁴³⁸J. M. Coltart, *The Influence of Newspapers, Television in Africa*, 1963.

statements for publication to other newspapers and by the time they released them to them it would be too late to publish.⁴³⁹ The Information Department had the practice of attacking the *African Daily News* for ‘deliberately’ writing falsehoods, but the newspaper felt that the criticism was unwarranted as the parties concerned ‘deliberately side-trapped them’.⁴⁴⁰ The UFP also accused the newspaper for not giving it enough coverage by favouring the NDP and the Central African Party led by Todd. However, Nathan Shamuyarira argues that during this era, the *African Daily News* strove to cover all parties including the Dominion Party. Although it was known that the newspaper was for Africans, under the editorship of Shamuyarira there was an attempt to uphold journalistic balance as he believed that ‘our enemies should be covered as well as our friends’.⁴⁴¹

The newspaper made use of correspondents throughout the country to get the news since it couldn’t afford to employ so many journalists to cover all centres. Most of these people were Africans in responsible positions. However, this became problematic as the government began ordering such correspondents to be fired from their work for sending stories to the *African Daily News*. The issue became rife, such that the newspaper devoted one of their editorial pages to it. On the 14th of October 1961, the editor wrote:

Several incidents have been reported in recent months when correspondents of this newspaper have been dismissed from employment in government or private industry because they have sent a factual news report to us. One correspondent has just been dismissed from the Meteorological Department and another from the Gatooma African Administration Department. We think government information policy should enable us to continue using these men on a part-time basis. If it does not we will be compelled to employ ‘stingers’ of a lower calibre whose appreciation for facts may not be comparable to professional men.⁴⁴²

The *African Daily News* believed that the treatment of such part-time pressmen was tantamount to breach of freedom of expression. It was also reported that unemployed Africans were alerting certain employers to the existence of signed articles in the hope that the authors would lose their jobs, which might then fall to themselves.

The employees of the *African Daily News* sometimes fell victim to police coercion and brutality in the course of their duties. As noted earlier, during the Railway strike of 1956 the police prevented reporters from taking pictures at gatherings organised by the trade unions.

⁴³⁹ *African Daily News*, ‘Information Department’, 9 March 1961.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴¹ Interview with Nathan Shamuyarira, 10 June 2012.

⁴⁴² *African Daily News*, ‘Part-time pressmen: Comment’, 14 October 1961.

Furthermore, the police demanded pictures taken by reporters at rallies so that they might use them in the event that the photographed subjects were charged in future. In response, the *African Daily News* advised its camera men to photograph the speaker at most meetings and to refrain from photographing close-ups of the crowds wherever possible.⁴⁴³ It reported that several photographs taken at African rallies were being used as examples in the series of Law and Order Maintenance cases that were before the courts. As a result of the fear of being photographed, a *Rhodesia Herald* photographer was threatened by members at a meeting of the Women's League of the NDP whilst a *Chronicle* photographer was beaten in the riots in Bulawayo.⁴⁴⁴

According to Vambe, the *African Daily News* and African Newspapers in general was the only forum for black points of view and was regarded with suspicion not only by the colonial government but by the general white population. In 1964, just before it was closed down, police officers brandishing revolvers confiscated a camera belonging to journalists from the *African Daily News* and destroyed the pictures. The journalists were photographing the police with guns and dogs chasing crowds at Machipisa Shopping Centre in Highfields. The police officers are said to have threatened the journalists stating that, 'If you take pictures of this kind of thing you will be in more trouble'.⁴⁴⁵ Although the authorities denied ever using undue force, the Managing Director of African Newspapers (Pvt.) Limited said:

I am most surprised that the minister has seen it fit to issue a statement without first interviewing the three members of our staff concerned. I can see no justification for the film being taken from the photographer's camera. He was engaged in lawful pursuit of his profession and the production of the Press cards to this effect was ignored. Was there something on the film that the police did not want to get into the newspaper? This appears to be a form of Press Censorship.⁴⁴⁶

The actions of the police were condemned by H. D. M. Munangatire, Secretary General of the Rhodesian Journalists Union who in his letter to the Minister of Justice, Law and Order stated that:

Our attention has been drawn to the incident during which two African journalists employed by the *Daily News* complain that one of them was beaten with a gun butt and led to Machipisa Police Station at gun point. Our Executive Committee while appreciating the interest shown by the Minister in the case and especially the fact that

⁴⁴³ *African Daily News*, 'Pictures at meetings', 27 November 1961.

⁴⁴⁴ *African Daily News*, 'Pictures at meetings', 27 November 1961.

⁴⁴⁵ *African Daily News*, 'Incident at Highfields: Police and Press', 30 June 1964.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

the Minister made personal appearance at the police station on the afternoon the incident occurred, feels that the explanation given to the Minister by the Police and which formed the basis of the Minister's Statement is both unsatisfactory and misleading. It is tantamount to a complete rejection of the charges brought by the journalists. Both journalists, Mr. Masi and Mr. Philby are men of experience and integrity - Mr. Mwasi has 25 years experience and Philby 7 years. The RJU takes the strongest exception to this incident, which we regard as an infringement on the personal liberties of the African journalist in the exercise of his duties. We urge the minister to institute an immediate inquiry into the incident so that the full facts of the story can be established.⁴⁴⁷

The squeeze on the press started with in the twilight days of the UFP government, when it saw that the *African Daily News* was now fully supporting African nationalist parties, particularly ZAPU/PCC. This claim is contrary to studies that portray Ian Smith's government as being the author of onslaught against the press, which characterises the historiography of this country. While the Smith government was of course to blame for unparalleled propaganda, censorship and closure of private newspapers under his rule, as early as June 1962 the Whitehead Government had started debating the best way to control the flow of information and the so-called African nationalist propaganda. It is important to note that during this era Africans had become regular newspaper readers and contributors, and that African Newspapers as well as other clandestine pamphlets were being circulated even in the rural areas. These developments contributed to the panic within the government. As a result legislators wanted to know what steps government was taking to counter African nationalist propaganda, which was spreading in the reserves, and what practical effects government counter-measures were having. The Prime Minister's response is telling:

The Southern Rhodesia Information Services, which have been recently transferred to my own portfolio, have been responsible, in conjunction with the administration, for seeing that the people are informed of the true facts about Government policy in distinction to the deliberate lies and half-truths which some African Nationalist politicians have been spreading in the Reserves.⁴⁴⁸

The Prime Minister went further to state that:

This service is in process of being rapidly expanded at the present time. The present number of nine mobile cinema units will have been expanded to 26 by next month, and additional staff have been recruited and trained to man the additional units. Many thousands of pamphlets, broadsheets, fact papers, notices and picture posters have been distributed. Factual material is being supplied to the Federal Broadcasting Corporation for both their Shona and Sindebele programmes, and discussions have been initiated

⁴⁴⁷*African Daily News*, 'Rhodesia Journalists Union: Statement by H. M. D. Munangatire', 30 June 1964.

⁴⁴⁸Southern Rhodesia Legislative Assembly Debates, Vol. 50, 19 June – 3 August 1963, col. 357.

with the Federal Government for the more effective use of mass-media for the dissemination of accurate information.⁴⁴⁹

The above statement shows that the government was not leaving anything to chance as they launched what then became known as the 'Information Campaign'. Whitehead proclaimed that a new monthly government controlled newspaper called the *Rhodesia Digest*, produced in English, Ndebele and Shona was being circulated widely in the country.⁴⁵⁰ In reply to the second part of the question, the Prime Minister argued that because Government counter-measures ought to have a cumulative rather than immediate effect; it was always difficult to assess their practical effects accurately. He however pointed out that 'true facts must be made known to the great mass of the people so that lying statements will come to be derided by the people'.⁴⁵¹

One legislator, Mr. Aitken-Cade registered his disappointment with what he believed to be government's soft propaganda. He argued that he wanted see something aggressive as he was now 'sick and tired of seeing these pamphlets going out: 'I want the Government to act, and they have indicated that perhaps they can do something, because the present set-up is good, very good, but it is inadequate. We want something stronger in this country'.⁴⁵²

As a sign of desperation and probably tacit acceptance of defeat in the print media sector, Whitehead, amidst heckling from some legislators, went on to request that Government be given free access to the Radio and Television for the purposes of supplying information and counter ZAPU's 'Do Not Claim Your Vote' campaign, a campaign launched after the 1961 constitution to persuade Africans who now qualified to vote not to register. Whitehead highlighted the problems the government faced in getting air space from the radio and television:

If I want to broadcast in the ordinary way to the public, short of declaring a state of emergency first, the only way I can do it is to submit a script in advance, and then if I say you ought to claim your vote I am told that ZAPU says 'Do not claim your vote', it is not allowed on the Radio. This is the sort of thing which is beautiful by B. B. C. Standards, but we are in Africa in 1962 and not in Britain in peace time, and I am convinced that it is utterly, essentially, and immediately necessary that these mass media aids are made available so that essential information can reach the people at those times when the Government feel it is essential to do so. If it is not possible to do

⁴⁴⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁰ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Assembly Debates, Vol. 50, 19 June – 3 August 1963, col. 358.

⁴⁵¹ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Assembly Debates, col. 358.

⁴⁵² Southern Rhodesia Legislative Assembly Debates, col. 495.

it under the auspices of the F. B. C., I would be quite prepared to see if I could get a licence for a transmitter so that we could use it ourselves.⁴⁵³

In response, some legislators accused Whitehead of wanting to brainwash the African public. One legislator argued that whilst he didn't have objection to the Government disseminating information to counteract the type of propaganda put out by African Nationalists, he stated that he would object most strongly if the Government was going to insist on using public money to publish policy and advocate UFP positions. He would only support the use of public money in the event that all other opposition parties would be given the opportunity to put across their party policies in the same way.⁴⁵⁴ In sync with the reality that Africans were fed up with government propaganda, the legislator pointed out that unless the government was prepared to put out factual information to counteract their propaganda, their policy was not going to assist Africans.⁴⁵⁵

As the government failed to put to an end to the *African Daily News*' support of ZAPU, they decided to ban the nationalist party. However, owing to the support the party got from the *African Daily News*, ZAPU continued to function, albeit underground. In the end, other government measures had to be deployed, such as the use of laws and the police to try and make the newspaper conform to government demands. In apparent reference to the continued support of ZAPU by the *African Daily News*, the police during the first week of October 1962 issued a warning making it an offence liable to prosecution for a journalist to publish anything 'tending to be in the direct or indirect interests of an unlawful organisation'.⁴⁵⁶ This was meant to deter the *African Daily News* from continuing to support the banned ZAPU, its leadership as well as its activities and policies. The police aimed at using Section 39 of Law and Order Maintenance Act for the purposes of controlling what could be disseminated to the public.

Ennocent Msindo, in his 2009 study of propaganda in Rhodesia between 1962 and 1970, argues that when the RF came to power, the information division was already undergoing transformation. The UFP had already made overtures to get an experienced Director-General for information. Msindo cites Whitehead who argued that the UFP government had also engaged a consultant he described as '... one of the greatest world experts' to help develop a

⁴⁵³ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates, col. 495.

⁴⁵⁴ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates, col. 513.

⁴⁵⁵ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates, col. 513.

⁴⁵⁶ Central African Intelligence Report, 'Squeeze on the Press', 13 October 1962.

vibrant information service.⁴⁵⁷ These UFP efforts, he argues, were cut short when the RF came to power in December 1962. Upon their election, they hastily enacted laws which, according to the *Central African Intelligence Report*, made 'journalism a dangerous vocation' in Southern Rhodesia. The Rhodesian Front quickly passed the Preservation of Constitutional Government Bill. Under this Act any resident journalist in Southern Rhodesia could be imprisoned for 20 years for assisting, passively or actively, in resistance to any Southern Rhodesia Law, or for taking part in the 'coercion' of the government. Every political reporter or columnist became liable to prosecution under regulations which were all-embracing. However, whilst Mr. Dupont, Field's Law Minister, acknowledged the difficulties under which the press operated under this legislation, he did nothing to address it. According to the *Central African Intelligence Report* the regulations were more severe to the Pressmen in Southern Rhodesia than they were in the Republic of South Africa, where the authorities there were deemed to be 'surprisingly tolerant of the considerable activities of an active and critical liberal press'.⁴⁵⁸

In addition to the laws, the Rhodesia Front government officials made public the subtle but coercive warning that press co-operation amounting to support was expected, and that change of heart should come 'quickly and voluntarily'.⁴⁵⁹ John Gaunt, the Minister of Law and Order described opposition to Southern Rhodesia's quest for independence as sabotage. This referred to individuals, political parties and as well as the media. The treatment of the press reveals great mistrust and suspicion between the government and the media. The suspicion regarding the press by the Rhodesian Front government has to be understood on account of the non-existence of a newspaper which gave the administration support when it was still an opposition party. From its days as the Dominion Party, it regarded the press as an ally of the establishment. The preceding pages have shown that the *African Daily News* was unequivocal in its hatred of the Dominion Party. The state media was also accused of being pro-establishment. Thus when the Rhodesian Front came to power, it felt it had scores to settle with its opponents, particularly the press. This has to be understood in light of the party's goal unilaterally to declare independence, a move that attracted criticism by the UFP, African

⁴⁵⁷Ennocent Msindo, 'Winning Hearts and Minds': Crisis and Propaganda in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1962-1970', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 3, September 2009, p. 666.

⁴⁵⁸*Central African Intelligence Report*, 'Journalism: A Dangerous Vocation', April 1963, Vol. 11, No. 4.

⁴⁵⁹*Central African Intelligence Report*, 'The Southern Rhodesia Government and the Country's Press', June 1963, Vol. 11, No. 6.

political parties and the media, especially the *African Daily News*. The logical step to do was to close the *African Daily News* which will be discussed in Chapter 7

Conclusion

This chapter argued that the *African Daily News* had by 1964 in the eyes of the state become an enemy of the state, a threat to public safety and security. It was deemed as such because it had transformed itself into a fully-fledged pro-African nationalist organisation. This transformation of the newspaper came about as a result of the changes in African nationalist organisations especially with growing relevance of the NDP. The NDP and its leadership attacked the *African Daily News* for its erstwhile support of the UFP. At one point the NDP had encouraged its supporters to boycott the *African Daily News*, whilst at the same time forming their own newspaper, the *Democratic Voice*. Its support for ZAPU/PCC after events in 1962 set it on collision path with the emerging power of the Rhodesian Front.

Rather than changing the policy of the newspaper, political developments within the country had transformed its outlook and the way that state power perceived it. The more parties like the Dominion Party and later the Rhodesian Front gained stranglehold over Rhodesian politics, the more the *African Daily News* supported the drive towards majority rule. It would seem plausible to argue that had the UFP had stayed in power, the *African Daily News* might have been more hesitant in its support of African nationalism in the way it did after 1962. Its radicalisation requires historical explanation and cannot be subsumed either under evolutionary or racialised conceptions of political sympathy. A crucial fact in support of this argument is that, during the 1961 constitutional talks, the *African Daily News* never supported universal adult suffrage as a basic demand.

The change in ownership of the newspaper also contributed tremendously to the hardening stance taken by the *African Daily News*. In 1962 the *African Daily News* was bought by Lord Thomson, whose papers in Nigeria and other third world countries had a reputation of being anti-establishment. Consequently, the *African Daily News* began to support African nationalist organisations, especially ZAPU led by Joshua Nkomo. The coming to power of the Dominion Party accelerated the transition of the *African Daily News* to a fully-fledged pro-African nationalist publication and this set it on a collision course with the government of the day.

CHAPTER FOUR

INDEPENDENT MEDIA AND POLITICS IN ZIMBABWE TO 1999

Well, that is the contradiction of African nationalism. It fights hard against the oppressor using the need for a system change as a rallying cry, only to embrace the oppressor's governance template.⁴⁶⁰

Introduction

This chapter explores the developments in media in post-colonial Zimbabwe until the establishment of the *Daily News* in 1999. I emphasize the impact of the colonial legacy on media in Zimbabwe and how this helped inform media policy in the country. I argue that as far as media reforms at independence were concerned, the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriot Front (ZANU PF), the party that gained power under the leadership of Robert Mugabe, were reluctant revolutionaries. Attempts were made, albeit piecemeal, to separate and guarantee the independence of the media from the state, but in practice leaders never demonstrated the desire for a truly impartial or independent press. Thus while the government policy purported to cultivate an enabling environment for the growth of a separate fourth estate, attempts were also made to curtail its independence through legislation inherited from the colonial era and through undue interference primarily in the state-owned media.

This chapter starts by discussing the state of the media at independence in Zimbabwe and its relationship with the colonial media. It moves on to examine the growth and role of the state media in the early years of independence. It focuses on the media policies and the operating environment that hindered the growth of a vibrant independent media in the first two decades of independence. The final section of the chapter looks at the political and economic state of Zimbabwe that finally led to the birth of the post-colonial *Daily News*. This chapter draws much from already published works as well as interviews. It lays a contextual foundation for

⁴⁶⁰ William Bango, 'Introspection into media sector in a changing Zimbabwe', Paper presented at the Bornwell Chakaodza Memorial Lecture, 2 May 2012.

Chapter five, which will introduce the second case study central to my thesis, i.e., the *Daily News* that was formed in 1999.

In the first two decades of Zimbabwe's independent nationhood, although the print media operated well below its capacity, this chapter shows that in spite of restrictions it still managed to generate a public sphere where issues were discussed. In that environment the media also played a key role in setting the agenda for politics in the country during election times, as well as exposing government corruption. It provided an arena for public debate on issues affecting the country.

The Political Economy of the Media in Zimbabwe at Independence

The media institutions, traditions and legislation in Zimbabwe, both electronic (radio and television) and print, at independence had been bequeathed to the independent government by the Rhodesia Front of Ian Smith. Ian Smith had closed independent media houses that were against his government like the *African Daily News* and *Moto*. Furthermore, he had instituted censorship so much that state-owned newspapers like *The Rhodesia Herald* would leave blank pages as a sign that a story had been censored while the *Central African Examiner* had to close as most of its stories were banned. That media had been tamed by the Smith regime to support the government of the day, whilst non-conformists were banned and silenced, as the previous chapters have discussed. Thus, in 1980, there was an urgent need to re-orient the media to meet the demands of a new state with democratic institutions. A media now catering to an African majority rather than a racial minority also entailed a cultural reorientation or 'Africanisation' of the media. Undeniably, as Mark Chavunduka has pointed out, the liberation movements had waged their war with the aim of establishing a more just, democratic society in which all Zimbabweans would be able to work and live without racial and other forms of discrimination.⁴⁶¹ Having witnessed the way newspapers had been compelled to operate under colonial rule, navigating a labyrinth of circumstances and restrictive laws, it was expected that such laws would be repealed once a new society was realised. In clamouring for media reforms at independence, the Minister of Information

⁴⁶¹ Mark Chavunduka, 'The Role of the Media in Zimbabwe', in Roumeen Islam (ed.), *The Right to tell: The Role of the Mass Media in economic development*, World Bank Publications, Washington, 2002, p. 281.

accepted that under colonial rule the wishes of the Africans were never accommodated in the press, and as such, the press had to be reorganized. Minister Shamuyarira said:

Prior to independence the mass media here were owned and controlled by South African Companies whose interests they served and backed. The news coming from the Rhodesian press, radio and television was gathered, prepared and doctored by South African news agencies to support apartheid and to present a racist South African point of view. Secondly the mass media then, catered for and served the interests of the white minority in Rhodesia especially the entrenchment and consolidation of settler rule, power and privilege. Thirdly the politics, culture and history of the majority African population were totally ignored thus denying them a channel of expression and silencing them... Neither news media with this kind of orientation could not be accommodated in nor serve a free, democratic and independent Zimbabwe whose goal is the establishment of an egalitarian socialist society.⁴⁶²

Cited often as injurious to the operation of the free press in the colonial period were a wide set of laws: the Defence Act, the Official Secrets Act, the Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament Act, the Prisons Act and the Law and Order Maintenance Act of 1960. Censorship was also rife during the colonial period and newspapers resorted to putting blank spaces in their publications to make readers aware that information had been censored. The most restrictive law, passed in 1960, was the Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA). This law affected media freedoms by criminalising reporting on issues that could potentially cause alarm and despondence among the people. According to Chavunduka, it was:

an all-embracing omnibus law that could cater to every conceivable possibility where the state wanted to take action against individuals. It carried a twenty year imprisonment sentence.⁴⁶³

Chavunduka argues that despite promising to remove such pieces of legislation from the statute books at independence, the new government [ZANU PF] soon realized that these laws existed to uphold power and could be useful for their own control. The promise to repeal them was quietly shelved. William Bango also discusses what he thinks the revolution stood for vis-a-vis the perceived failure by the ZANU PF government to honour its pledge to overhaul the media environment:

At independence in 1980, our revolutionaries promised us a society where all can take part as equals in politics and in political debates; and where all were assured a voice and an audience without the Rhodesian-type spooks and snoopers listening in for wicked purposes. At independence, our revolutionaries promised us a nation that

⁴⁶² Richard Saunders, 'Information in the Interregnum: The Press, State and Civil Society in the struggles for hegemony, Zimbabwe 1980-1990', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Clareton University, 1991, p. 54.

⁴⁶³ Mark Chavunduka, 'The Role of the Media in Zimbabwe', 2005, p. 282.

guaranteed personal growth, the right of all citizens ... to fashion our arguments; a nation that pledged to help us to grow our skills and equal opportunities; and a nation poised to expose our real personalities. The promise was to be premised on free speech, before and after delivery, as a way to build, to be happy, to shun narrow-mindedness and injustice; and fight corruption.⁴⁶⁴

These expectations of the new government were unfulfilled. However, one notable achievement of the independent government was to remove censorship. But the removal of censorship alone could not entirely open up the media space in the newly independent country. Elin Andersen and Ragnhild argue that, the pursuit of a socialist programme and ideology by the ZANU PF government meant that free market, capitalist media was considered suspect and the state regarded as a protector from its influences. Within that context, though also attempting to maintain a semblance of openness, the government mooted a situation characterised by three kinds of media ownership in independent Zimbabwe: state-owned, partly state-owned or privately-owned media. The then state-owned Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation remained under the control of the state. Under the Ministry of Information, Posts and Telecommunication it was renamed the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, with one television station and four radio channels.

Mainstream newspapers had been under the control of the Rhodesian Printing and Publication Company, a subsidiary of the South African based Argus Group. It produced dailies like the *Rhodesia Herald* printed in Salisbury (later Harare) and the *Bulawayo Chronicle* published in Bulawayo, as well as weekly *Sunday Mail*. After Independence, the *Rhodesia Herald* was renamed *The Herald*, whilst the other two maintained their titles. These newspapers had been directed to white readers and the emerging black middle class, and at independence there was an attempt to tamper with its editorials to make them suitable for the black majority readers. Despite this, these papers remained limited in their reach, and continued to be bought largely by Africans in the urban areas. The ownership of these newspapers fell under the category of partly state-owned media. In 1981, a year after independence, the government of Zimbabwe, with the help of a grant from the Nigerian government, purchased 43 per cent of Argus stock held by South African investors and converted the Argus Company into Zimbabwe Newspapers Limited (Zimpapers).

⁴⁶⁴ William Bango, 'Introspection into media sector in a changing Zimbabwe', Paper presented at the Bornwell Chakaodza Memorial Lecture, 2 May 2012.

After buying Zimpapers, and in the process becoming the majority shareholder, the government of Zimbabwe decided to form a trust, the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust (ZMMT), ostensibly to guarantee media independence from the state. As Tim Nyahunzvi pointed out, the ZMMT inherited an infrastructure built over nearly a century of colonial and settler rule that had enabled it convincingly to beat competition for popular newspaper readership. It took over control of two dailies, two weeklies and a provincial weekly.⁴⁶⁵ As outlined by Andersen and Olsen, the whole idea of a trustee ownership was initiated as a democratic experiment aimed at supposedly protecting the press from state power and business interests as an assurance of autonomy to the print media.⁴⁶⁶ As cited by Geoff Nyarota, Nathan Shamuyarira pointed out in 1981 that ‘government remains committed to the freedom of the press as stated in its election manifesto, and we will neither publish nor edit any of the newspapers’.⁴⁶⁷ However, the secretary of the Mass Media Trust, Mtungadzimwe Marere, observed that the Government wanted papers ‘to retain some independence, but not total independence’⁴⁶⁸, thereby suggesting that newspapers were expected to strike a balance between support of national objectives as defined by the government and outright partisanship.

In the first instance, a board of the ZMMT was formed in order to spearhead Zimpapers in the direction that would satisfy both the politicians and the reading publics. The original ZMMT board consisted of seven leading Zimbabweans from different walks of life, including wife of former Prime Minister Garfield Todd, Grace Todd, - all appointed by the government - and a full-time executive secretary. A company leaflet described the ZMMT as ‘a unique experiment and a wholly Zimbabwean solution to a Zimbabwean problem’. It was established ‘with the idea of facilitating the development of the media in a free and independent manner and of altering its orientation to bring it into line with the democratic political system brought about by Zimbabwe’s independence.’⁴⁶⁹ In relation to its funding, the pamphlet describes the

⁴⁶⁵ <http://www.waccglobal.org/en/20012-media-scenarios-in-southern-africa/742-The-Zimbabwe-Mass-Media-Trust-An-experiment-that-failed.html> Accessed 15 September 2013.

⁴⁶⁶ Elin W. Andersen and Ragnhild K. Olsen, *Press Freedom and Democracy in Zimbabwe*, IMK-report no. 22, University of Oslo, 1997.

⁴⁶⁷ Nathan Shamuyarira cited in Geoff Nyarota, p. 60.

⁴⁶⁸ Joseph Lelyveld, ‘Twilight world of Zimbabwe’s press’, *New York Times*, 16 October 1981. <http://www.nytimes.com/1981/10/16/world/twilight-world-of-zimbabwe-s-press.html>.

⁴⁶⁹ Tim Nyahunzvi, ‘The Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust’: <http://www.waccglobal.org/en/20012-media-scenarios-in-southern-africa/742-The-Zimbabwe-Mass-Media-Trust-An-experiment-that-failed.html>. Accessed on 6 August 2013.

Nigerian donation as ‘a practical demonstration of pan-African solidarity in the struggle to free Africa’s media from external control’.⁴⁷⁰

Whilst it was theoretically envisaged that the ZMMT would be independent, the reality on the ground was that it over time became an appendage of the government without the independence to make decisions concerning the nation’s newspapers. The fact that the government appointed Trustees for the ZMMT meant that it would retain control over the trust on issues to do with personnel appointments as well as the editorial policies pursued by newspapers under the Zimpapers stable. Also bearing in mind the way ZANU PF had been treated by the media prior to independence; it was possible that the party had a hidden agenda in its dealings with the press.

Whilst at independence the main newspapers maintained an overwhelmingly white editorial staff, there was now a deliberate attempt to replace them with black editors. According to Martin Meredith, ‘white editors were summarily sacked and replaced by government appointees.’⁴⁷¹ Enos Nkala, a senior government minister claimed that white editors were incapable of articulating and supporting a black government. Recounted by Meredith is the fate of one white editor of the *Manica Post*, a weekly newspaper in Mutare, who was fired for questioning the logic behind the government’s decision to have North Korean military personnel train Zimbabwean soldiers in the eastern highlands.⁴⁷² The dismissal of this editor was meant to ensure a compliant press and this surety of compliance was to be complimented by party affiliated editors. This analysis is supported by Tendai Kumbula’s research, which demonstrates that only those black editors with a strong background in African politics would be seconded to lead newspapers under the Zimpapers stable.⁴⁷³ Farayi Munyuki became the first black editor of *The Herald*; Tommy Sithole, *The Chronicle*; the late Willy Musarurwa, the first black editor of the *Sunday Mail*; and Bill Saidi *The Sunday News*. Willy Musarurwa and Bill Saidi had both worked for the *African Daily News* albeit at different periods. Munyuki had worked in Zambia at the Times of Zambia with Bill Saidi using the pseudonym Albert Mvula. According to Saidi, whilst at Zimpapers, Munyuki ‘would not adjust to the

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷¹ Martin Meredith, *Robert Mugabe: Power Plunder, Tyranny in Zimbabwe*, Jonathan Ball Publishers, Johannesburg, 2002, p. 81.

⁴⁷² Meredith 2002, p. 81. It has to be remembered that the Zimbabwean army trained by the North Koreans (5th Brigade) was responsible for the massacre of civilians in Matabeleland during the 1980s disturbances.

⁴⁷³ Tendayi S. Kumbula, ‘Press Freedom in Zimbabwe’, in Festus Eribo and William Jong-Ebot (eds.), *Press freedom and communication in Africa*, p. 167.

‘edict’ that government papers were ‘state praise singers’ and this got him into trouble with his employers who transferred him to the government news agency, ZIANA as editor.⁴⁷⁴

In spite of these arguably cosmetic measures to safeguard the independence of the state media there is evidence of increased government interference with the running of the press just after independence. There was enough, indeed to prompt Judith Todd, Garfield Todd’s daughter, to label the ZMMT a tool or arm of the government. This characterisation was vindicated by the dismissal of a number of editors from these state newspapers under unclear circumstances or on trumped up charges. For the purposes of this thesis I will analyse the cases of three prominent journalists who played a fundamental role in shaping both the state and private media. Two of the three had worked for the *African Daily News* during the colonial period whilst the other one would later launch the *Daily News*. The cases of the three is important as it helps me to properly compare the fate of journalists who dared to defy the status quo and what this meant for the information policy of the government concerned. It also helps me to come up with empirically sound conclusions on the relationship between firstly the state media and the state, and later on the state and the private media. In essence, the cases help in answering questions on how the state reacts when dealing with non-conformist editors and journalists. The three cases brings to the fore the justification by the state on why it enacted new media policies and laws and how these affected the state-*Daily News* relations that the latter chapters deals with.

The first case is that of Willy Musarurwa, the last black editor of the *African Daily News* before he resigned in 1962 to join the liberation struggle as a member of ZAPU. After independence, Musarurwa was appointed the first black editor of the *Sunday Mail* in 1981. According to Nyarota, Musarurwa had run into collision course with his employers due to his radical columns in the *Sunday Mail* that were said to be overly critical of the ZANU PF government.⁴⁷⁵ According to Andy Moyse, a former journalist at the *Sunday Mail*, Willie Musarurwa always told his staff that he didn’t want ‘sunshine journalism’ at his paper.⁴⁷⁶ As a member of ZAPU, Musarurwa’s position as head of the newspaper became untenable after the ZANU PF government accused the ZAPU members of master-minding a rebellion and sponsoring dissidents in the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces. In apparent disregard of the purposes and intents of the ZMMT, the Minister of Information ordered the Chairman of

⁴⁷⁴ Bill Saidi, ‘The Defiant Crusaders 11’, *The Daily News*, 31 January 2004.

⁴⁷⁵ Geoff Nyarota, *Against the grain*, p. 120.

⁴⁷⁶ Interview with Andy Moyse, 15 January 2012.

Zimpapers to dismiss Willy Musarurwa in 1985. According to Stanford Mukasa, Musarurwa had tried to be less partisan and more professional.⁴⁷⁷ He had plans for regular coverage and analysis of rural issues and events. His editorial policy was that the greatest service the press could render to the government was to report, both the positive and the negative.⁴⁷⁸ In advocating reportage on the negative and unfavourable conditions, Musarurwa hoped the press would draw the government's attention to problems that needed to be resolved. This gesture only succeeded in creating, for Musarurwa, enemies in high offices who believed that his critical reporting gave political mileage to ZAPU at the expense of ZANU PF. Indeed as Mukasa portrays it, Musarurwa's editorial policy was a lone voice in the wilderness⁴⁷⁹; Moyse suggests that this sowed the seeds of his downfall.⁴⁸⁰ In reporting on Musarurwa's dismissal, the *New York Times* described him as a veteran journalist who spent ten years in jail for his political activities against white rule and had been dismissed by Mugabe for being overly critical of the government.⁴⁸¹ Musarurwa died in 1990 and was declared a national liberation war hero and was buried at the national shrine to the accompaniment of eulogies by Mugabe extolling his intrinsic worth as a shrewd politician and outstanding journalist. Mugabe did not mention the humiliation and malign Musarurwa had received from his government during his tenure as editor of the *Sunday Mail*.

Another journalist who bore the brunt of government interference was Bill Saidi who at independence was appointed editor of the *Sunday News*. Elias Rusike, then Chairman of Zimpapers recalls what happened to Bill Saidi:

When management recommended that Bill Saidi, one of the most experienced black journalists in Zimbabwe be promoted to the post of managing editor of the *Herald*, we were told by the Minister that he was not politically acceptable and therefore we could not entrust him to edit the *Herald*. When I pointed out that Saidi was editor of the *Sunday News* in Bulawayo and that he had for the editors of the *Chronicle* and the *Manica Post* before, the reply was that these were not important newspapers. So the post of group features editor was created for him. But before long the department was abolished because the editor of the *Herald*, Tommy Sithole, refused to have anything to do with him. In fact, Saidi was not even allowed to edit or vet the features for the publication. Saidi's title was then changed to that of the group's foreign stories and

⁴⁷⁷ Stanford Mukasa, 'Press and politics in Zimbabwe', *African Studies Quarterly*, 7, nos 1 & 2: [online] URL: <http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v7/v7i2a9.htm> Accessed 20 August 2013.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁰ Interview with Andy Moyse. Moyse argues that Musarurwa was fired after his newspaper reported on the deportation of Zimbabwean student because they were HIV positive.

⁴⁸¹ Willie Musarurwa, Journalist, 62. <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/04/05/obituaries/willie-musarurwa-journalist-62.html>. Accessed on 23 September 2013.

features editor. Again, the editor of the *Herald* refused to have anything to do with him with the support of the Minister of Information...Saidi is one of the senior editors who was most frustrated because of political interference from the Ministry of Information.⁴⁸²

Other encounters that frustrated Saidi at Zimpapers are captured in his blogspot. In one post, Saidi remembers an incident in which *The Herald*, when he was acting editor, was publicly rebuked by the Minister of Information for being critical to the government.⁴⁸³ The Musarurwa and Saidi episodes indicate that the Ministry was heavily involved in the daily affairs at Zimpapers. The 'informal' information policy then was to curtail the independence of the journalists who were seen to be disloyal. The options were either to fire them outright or to frustrate them, and move them to appointments in newspapers of less consequence. The treatment of Musarurwa and Saidi further gives credence to the view that the colonial press had not been transformed from serving the interests of power. Rather, it had survived superficial changes and was now obedient both to a newly-emergent coalition of black politicians who held political power and, arguably, to white capital.

The fallacy of consigning the talented but often critical journalists to the so-called unimportant newspapers backfired when Geoff Nyarota was appointed editor of the *Chronicle* in 1983. Nyarota replaced Farayi Munyuki, who had been promoted to edit the *Herald*. Nyarota had joined the *Chronicle* during the time of the Matabeleland crisis which resulted in the death of an estimated 20 000 mostly Ndebele speakers at the hands of the state military. There was a state of emergency imposed in Matabeleland which made it impossible for journalists to cover the conflict in the region. Nyarota argues in his book *Against the Grain* that the *Chronicle* together with other government media supported the deployment of security forces against the dissidents although the *Chronicle* 'never shied away from voicing concern about the atrocities perpetrated against civilians, and opposed the ongoing state of emergency'.⁴⁸⁴ Without first hand information from the field, it was almost impossible for the press to give detailed accounts of the atrocities as they took place. In addition to the emergency, control by Zimpapers as well as the Ministry of Information, interfered with press coverage. Nyarota argues that the appointment of Elias Rusike, a self-proclaimed ZANU PF activist, hamstrung the operations of editors. The tight control over the press

⁴⁸² Elias Rusike, *The Politics of the Mass Media: A Personal Experience*, Harare, Roblaw Publishers, 1990, p. 78.

⁴⁸³ www.billsaidi.blogspot.com Zimpapers: Ten years of turbulence, Sunday 25 July 2010. Visited 6 March 2014.

⁴⁸⁴ Geoff Nyarota, *Against the Grain*, p. 135.

meant that the only detailed account of the Gukurahundi massacres were only finally made public twenty years later by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace. This demonstrates the significant levels of state control on the media in the first decade of independence. Nyarota would later admit that although there were tight controls over the dissemination of information, he accepted ‘full responsibility for the performance of the *Chronicle* under my watch’.⁴⁸⁵ Tim Nyahunzvi points out that the challenge for the journalists was the extent to which they could exercise the freedom of the press to cover, among other things, the military conflicts in the region. The dissident problem, coupled with ongoing political conflict with rival ZAPU, and apartheid South Africa’s programme of destabilizing neighbouring black states, led the ruling ZANU party to consolidate its stranglehold on the press.⁴⁸⁶

Whilst the Gukurahundi was not covered in the state media, a new corruption scandal that broke out in the late 1980s was well covered by the *Chronicle* with Nyarota as the editor. The scandal would have far-reaching implications for not only the state media, but the private media as well and also the personal implications on Nyarota as the editor of the *Chronicle*. The Willowgate scandal would inform governmental response to the media and its personnel. The Willowgate scandal was well covered by Geoff Nyarota in his book, but I will provide a brief overview of its coverage and the resultant state response. This will allow me an opportunity to discuss how this impacted on the broader media policy in Zimbabwe.

The Willowgate scandal took place at a time when Zimbabwe was facing shortages in new motor vehicles as a result of shortages in foreign currency. The transport industry was heavily affected by such shortages since new kits for both passenger and commercial use could not be imported. Because of the demand for new vehicles, there was a long waiting list and customers could wait for as long as two years before they could secure their vehicles. Willowvale Motor Industries, a government owned assembly plant was only producing 10 per cent of the country’s motor vehicle demand. It was under these circumstances that the country’s politicians devised a plan that saw them benefit from the vehicles assembled by the Willowvale Motor Industries. Nyarota describes the scam:

⁴⁸⁵ Geoff Nyarota, *Against the Grain*, p. 141.

⁴⁸⁶ Tim Nyahunzvi, ‘The Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust’: <http://www.waccglobal.org/en/20012-media-scenarios-in-southern-africa/742-The-Zimbabwe-Mass-Media-Trust-An-experiment-that-failed.html>. Accessed on 6 August 2013.

After obtaining the one vehicle to which they were entitled, the politicians and some top civil servants instructed or directed management at Willowvale Motor Industries to allocate motor vehicles to other individuals. Some of these third parties served as fronts. The government held controlling stake in Willowvale through its Industrial Development Corporation. In most cases, the politicians' instructions were conveyed through officials at the ministry of Industry and Technology.⁴⁸⁷

Through this way, the few cars and trucks that came through the assembly line were hijacked at source by top government ministers and officials. These vehicles were being sold to desperate individuals and companies as well at highly inflated prices.⁴⁸⁸

The *Chronicle* reported the story in December 1988. The leadership at the ZMMT and Zimpapers were evidently shaken. They even attempted to stop the publications of the allegations and suggested that Nyarota should have informed the president first to save him the shock and embarrassment of reading about this corruption at the same time as the rest of the nation. Within a short space of time, the President would invite the state editors to express his dismay over how the Willowgate scandal was handled by the press. This, however, did not make the *Chronicle* stop its investigations and a number of high-ranking officials were exposed. This was despite a number of obstacles that were placed in Team Nyarota's path, including the failure and refusal by the nation's main newspapers, the *Herald* and the *Sunday Mail*, to cover the Willowgate scandal. In addition, implicated politicians took every opportunity to threaten the journalists with physical harm for exposing them. According to Rønning and Kupe, the coverage by the *Chronicle* of the Willowgate scandal 'illustrates what limits exist to independent and professional journalism in a press that is part of an authoritarian political structure'.⁴⁸⁹

The results of the Willowvale scandal were far-reaching. Firstly, in tacit acknowledgement of the role played by the *Chronicle* in unravelling the scandal, President Mugabe appointed a judicial commission of inquiry to investigate the allegations published by the *Chronicle*. The inquiry was led by Judge President Wilson Sandura who, in his findings, praised the editor of the *Chronicle* and his staff for a job well done.⁴⁹⁰ This however did not save Nyarota's job as he was promptly 'promoted' to Zimpapers head office as group public relations executive.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁷ Geoff Nyarota, *Against the Grain*, p. 151.

⁴⁸⁸ Mark G. Chavunduka, *The Role of the Media in Zimbabwe*, 2002, p. 287.

⁴⁸⁹ Rønning, Helge & Kupe, Tawana, 'The Dual Legacy of Democracy and Authoritarianism: The Media and State in Zimbabwe', in Curran, J. & Park, M.J. (eds.) *De-Westernising Media Studies*, London: Routledge, 2000, p.141.

⁴⁹⁰ Elias Rusike, *The Politics of the Mass Media*, 1990, p. 78.

⁴⁹¹ See Geoff Nyarota, *Against the Grain*..., p. 179.

Interpretations of this ‘promotion’, put forth respectively by Nyarota and his former boss at Zimpapers, Elias Rusike, greatly differ. Rusike believes that the Willowgate scandal put the whole Zimpapers in the firing line and they were pressured to fire Nyarota. He claims that his and Nyarota’s careers were saved by the then Minister of Information, Witness Mangwende, who rejected the dismissal of Nyarota and instead masterminded his promotion on an increased salary.⁴⁹² Nyarota disagrees. He argues that the Zimpapers Board had given in to external pressure when it sanctioned his removal as editor of the *Chronicle*. On the supposed promotion, Nyarota argues:

My promotion was a thinly disguised punishment for my role in Willowgate. Long before the Sandura Commission called its first witness, I became the victim of government retribution. The tiny office allocated to me was totally inconsistent with the grandeur of my new title. A position had been manufactured specifically to keep me out of active journalism.⁴⁹³

The period leading to the Willowgate represented a temporary drift in the influence of the ruling party in the media, but it also gave ZANU PF the impetus to fight back by making certain that, in the future, command over information would be exercised even more directly by the ruling party and its government.⁴⁹⁴ For some, however, the Willowgate scandal represented a pyrrhic victory for the press in its struggle for freedom in Zimbabwe. For others it was just indefinite, as it represented a minor victory in a battle of a war that was far from over. This uncertainty was aptly captured two years after the scandal by a scholar Richard Saunders in an interview with one Zimbabwean editor:

Willowgate has had an ambiguous impact on the national media. On the one hand, it really demoralised journalists — *The Chronicle* team under Nyarota did great work in the face of bad odds, and undertook its task with considerable courage, only to be victimised and silenced for its success. The real culprits got away with it, pardoned or not charged with the offences they committed; while Nyarota and his colleagues were shipped off to dead-end jobs, kept under watchful eyes, as punishment. On the other hand, Willowgate demonstrated that there is a space for a free Press here ... Overall, I think Willowgate contributed a lot to the defensiveness of the government in its relations with the national press. Paradoxically, it also contributed to the growth of serious, responsible journalism in this country, since reporters and editors have been forced to be rigorous in the accuracy of their news coverage. This in fact represents a very healthy step forward for the local media.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹² Elias Rusike, *The Politics of the Mass Media*, 1990, p. 79.

⁴⁹³ Geoff Nyarota, *Against the Grain*, p. 179.

⁴⁹⁴ Richard Saunders, ‘Information in the Interregnum’, 1991, p. 208.

⁴⁹⁵ Cited in Richard Saunders, p. 208; Interview with Andy Moyse, 4 December 1990.

Yet, the effect was to generate a more reactionary response by government both to state-owned and private media. The treatment of Musarurwa, Saidi and Nyarota suggest that when under threat of criticism, the government was prepared to throw out the principles of press freedom and non-interference. In principle, this represented little change from the way the colonial government dealt with the non-conformist press. Although ZANU PF did not, like the colonial government, employ censors to whip the newspapers into line, the similarity between the two regimes is their interference in appointing editors. It is not particularly surprising that the new government borrowed a leaf from their predecessors in curtailing press freedom. Yet the early period, in which the idealism of editors like Musarurwa challenged the new state, is remembered with nostalgia today. Prominent human rights lawyer Beatrice Mtetwa, who has defended journalists from state harassment, suggests that there were spaces for comparatively independent reporting at that time:

Those of you who read the *Sunday Mail* in the early 1980s under the editorship of Willie Musarurwa will know that the *Sunday Mail* you read today is not a *Sunday Mail* that is produced by journalists. The same applies to the *Chronicle* when it was being edited by Geoffrey Nyarota.⁴⁹⁶

It is therefore plausible that the government felt that its earlier laissez faire policy on the editors had contributed to the editors exercising excessive freedom. This they felt had to be stopped not only by firing the editors, but by changing the whole operating environment which left all authority with the Ministry of Information. The treatment of the state media and its editors by the government raises a number of questions on the role of the media in Zimbabwe. It also brings to the fore the place of the independent media and its relations with the state. Having examined how the government treated the state media and its practitioners in ways that curtailed press freedom, the next section looks at the development of the private media in an environment where state media was subjected to a number of controls.

The Fledgling Independent Media to 1999

From independence to circa 1999, the Zimbabwe government tolerated the small independent media that existed in the form of weekly and monthly magazines. There was, in any case, never a real danger of the private media ‘rocking the boat’, as the new government was hugely popular during the early independence days. The majority of the electorate resided in

⁴⁹⁶ Ntando Ncube, ‘Obama condemns jailing of journalists’, <http://www.thezimbabwetimes.com>, 6 May 2009. Accessed 3 August 2013.

the rural areas where newspaper circulation was almost non-existent and the new government was not inclined to give a largely English language private media, catering to a narrow urban readership, much notice.

The most popular independent magazine following liberation was *Moto* magazine which had been banned by the Smith regime in 1974. As shown earlier, *Moto* had played a significant role during the national struggle and after the end of colonial rule continued its quest for social justice and political freedom. Although it was a Catholic magazine, *Moto* had become a truly national paper as its readership liked its political tone. Thus when it resurfaced in February 1980, it was readily available and received by the readers. It is telling that, in 1981, *Moto* was bombed by radical white groups who were bitter for the way the newspaper had sympathetically addressed African grievances prior to independence. The post-independent *Moto* resumed from where the colonial one left off, as a Church-funded forum for educated black opinion, built around a target readership comprised largely of the same black petty bourgeoisie as in earlier times. Its stories, the vast majority of them in English, were comprised of a dynamic assortment of politics, news from different towns and communal areas around the country, music, sports and other light entertainment.

Moto was to immediately face financial problems resulting in it suspending publication for a while. The lack of funds may have been a result of the fact that in spite of its popularity, *Moto* never considered taking advertisements to raise revenue, but rather continued from the goodwill of the church donations. Despite the long break in publication and the intermittent financial challenges, there is evidence to suggest that *Moto* retained its appeal and, indeed, was making its presence felt in the national political community at large.⁴⁹⁷ When it reappeared again, it came out fortnightly. In addition, it also criticized corruption and human rights violations perpetrated by the state.

However, *Moto*'s position was unenviable, as there was need to clearly define its role in the newly independent Zimbabwe. It had to make the difficult choice of whether to constructively support the fragile new order or be independently and objectively critical of government and ruling party policies and officials. *Moto*'s clear position came out during the Matabeleland disturbances, when it became the first and probably the only newspaper that covered the problems in the country. Because the state media, in its entirety, had been

⁴⁹⁷ Interview with Father Oscar Wermter, 28 June 2012

blackened out from publishing these events, *Moto*'s reporting was notable. Saunders ponders its impact.

It was in this context that *Moto*'s modest and carefully-worded reportage on the Matabeleland disturbances and the ZAPU treason trial, first offered in its issue of March 1983, represented a significant break with the rest of the Zimbabwean media, and sent shock waves through the upper echelons of the ruling party.⁴⁹⁸

After the Matabeleland crisis, *Moto* began to focus more on Catholic issues at the expense of politics. This was as a result of the restructuring at the magazine which left it with two full-time employees and this made it impossible for it to carry out investigative and research-based reports.⁴⁹⁹ The Matabeleland crisis and the failure of coverage by the mainstream press in Zimbabwe pointed to an obvious niche that a daily private newspaper might fill. It shows that although weekly magazines like *Moto* attempted to fill the void, there were serious information gaps and lags, with people waiting for at least two weeks to receive alternative views to those churned out by state controlled media.

During the period in which the *Moto* magazine was being published, there were a number of attempts to form other newspaper publications. In the early 1990s a new newspaper was launched called the *Sunday Times*. This newspaper died after a few months in circulation. The 1990s were the era in which the Zimbabwean economy began to collapse and this affected the disposable incomes of reading publics. The economic slump meant that advertisers slashed their budgets, and confined the remainder of their adverts to the traditional government-owned press which had a captured market with high circulation. Complementing *Moto* were two magazines namely *Parade* and *Horizon*. As noted in the previous chapters, *Parade* was owned by the Thomson Organisation, the publishers of the *African Daily News*. After the closure of the *African Daily News*, the Thomson Organisation diverted its resources to the magazine, but *Parade* didn't focus on politics.⁵⁰⁰ In 1984, Andy Moyse was appointed as editor at a time when its circulation was about 30 000 monthly copies. Moyse points out that when he took over; he tried to make *Parade* a news-consumer magazine that focused on hard and investigative news.⁵⁰¹ In addition, the magazine also carried insightful material on music and entertainment and the arts, focusing on issues that were not adequately covered by

⁴⁹⁸ Richard Saunders, 1990, p. 181.

⁴⁹⁹ Richard Saunders, 1990, p. 182.

⁵⁰⁰ *Parade* was a monthly flagship magazine for Thomson Publications. Other magazines under their stable were CZi, Commerce, Motor Trader and Fleet Operator, Mining and Engineering (all monthly publications) and Zimbabwe – A Tourist Paradise (bi-monthly).

⁵⁰¹ Interview with Andy Moyse, 15 January 2013.

mainstream newspapers. With the passage of time, as Moyse explains, *Parade* began to involve itself in political news and, in the process, became critical of the government.⁵⁰² The government lobbied for Moyse's dismissal, which was effected in 1990. But by the time of his sacking, the circulation of *Parade* had jumped slightly to above 100 000 monthly copies.

After his dismissal from *Parade*, Moyse formed another monthly magazine, *Horizon*, in 1990. *Parade* had attracted advertisers from big organisations as the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries and Tobacco Associations; the new periodical, *Horizon*, didn't have such an advantage. As such, its run never exceeded 50 000. Since it made profits mainly from magazine sales, *Horizon* wandered into politics often, especially during election times. *Horizon* is best remembered for its coverage of the 1995 general elections and the case of Margaret Dongo, a former ZANU PF Member of Parliament who had been dismissed from the party for her criticism of the leadership. Dongo decided to contest the election as an independent and lost the election by 1000 votes to Vivian Mwashita. Dongo then approached the courts citing serious gerrymandering, as well as the fact that people from other constituencies had voted in her constituency. The courts ordered a re-run of the election in August 1995 and Dongo won by over 2000 votes. This was well-reported by the *Horizon*, more than even in the state owned daily and weekly newspapers. For a monthly magazine such coverage endeared it to the readers, although it still failed to gain much in terms of advertising revenue. The marginal profits by *Horizon* were undermined in 1999 with the devaluation of the Zimbabwe dollar and the resultant 100 per cent increase in paper costs culminating in the closure of the magazine.⁵⁰³ Other scholars point to the heavy defamation charges the magazine faced from ZANU-PF big men as responsible for the magazine's closure.⁵⁰⁴ But what can be learnt from the reportage and activities of the monthly magazines, especially *Moto*, *Parade* and *Horizon* is that ZANU-PF was relatively lax in its controlling of the media. As the next chapter will demonstrate, by 1999 when the *Daily News* was formed, it had learnt its lesson.

The first attempt to launch an independent daily newspaper was spearheaded by Elias Rusike, who, as mentioned, had been the group managing director of Zimpapers who resigned from his post as a result of what he saw as political interference from the Ministry of Information.

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁴ Daniel Compagnon, *A Predictable Tragedy: Robert Mugabe and the Collapse of Zimbabwe*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2011, p. 127.

After his resignation, in 1990 Elias Rusike joined forces with Eric Kahari (then Managing Director of Lion Zimbabwe Insurance) and Fanuel Muhwati (former Managing Director of Flexible Packaging) to buy Modus Publications (Private) Limited from local white media entrepreneurs Clive Wilson, Clive Murphy and Nigel Butler.⁵⁰⁵ Rusike became the major shareholder with 60 per cent, whereas Kahari and Muhwati held 20 per cent each. Modus' prime publication became the *Financial Gazette*, and it quickly became the only alternative to the Zimpapers press. The *Financial Gazette* had existed as a financial weekly since 1969. The *Financial Gazette*, as a weekly financial newspaper, wandered into politics to criticise the government and its economic policies. Its readership consisted mainly of the few whites who had remained in the country at independence, as well as the affluent black middle class. As pointed out by Saunders, at the outset of independence, the *Gazette* was a small circulation weekly published by Modus Publications, with a print run of about 4,000 and a readership comprised largely of subscribers in the white business community.⁵⁰⁶

When Rusike bought the *Financial Gazette*, he had plans to expand its readership by appealing more to the black readers. To do this, he hired two prominent journalists, namely Geoff Nyarota, whom he recruited as the editor, and Bill Saidi, who became a columnist for the newspaper. These two, as we have seen, hailed from an unpleasant stay at state owned newspapers where they were hounded out of office. Trevor Ncube, who formed the *Independent* in 1996, followed by *The Standard*, a weekly newspaper, was Nyarota's deputy. According to Andersen, the hiring of Nyarota transformed the *Financial Gazette* as it became more and more involved in political news reporting, relegating financial news to the middle pages.⁵⁰⁷ Newspaper sales began to escalate so much that in one year circulation had doubled to 19 000 copies a week. Elaborating on the issues they covered and the reaction the newspaper got from both the readers and the politicians, Nyarota recalls:

We published articles that the *Herald* and the *Sunday Mail* did not dare touch. We investigated corruption. We published daring editorial comments. We printed cartoons that were witty and made poignant comment on topical issues. We tested the limits of press freedom. Whilst the readers were ecstatic, the politicians were up in arms. Columnist Bill Saidi waxed lyrical, pounding away at ZANU-PF every week. At a time when there was no viable opposition party, the *Financial Gazette*, *Zimbabwe's only independent newspaper*, virtually assumed that role. (my emphasis).⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁵ Ragnar Waldahl, *Politics and Persuasion*, 49.

⁵⁰⁶ Richard Saunders, 'Information in the Interregnum', 1991, p. 172.

⁵⁰⁷ Michael Bruun Andersen, *Media and Democracy*, IMK-report no. 17, University of Oslo, 1996.

⁵⁰⁸ Nyarota, *Against the Grain*, p. 224.

Saunders supports this claim by Nyarota, pointing out that efforts by editorial staff to broaden the scope and appeal of the weekly's content increased the appeal of the newspaper to the readers by moving beyond the coverage of purely financial and business matters to include items on national and international political and social affairs.⁵⁰⁹ Thus, in addition to the columns by Saidi, the *Financial Gazette* also incorporated Professor Jonathan Moyo, then a political scientist at the University of Zimbabwe to contribute a regular column under his name. Moyo's favourite topics were on the dangers of a one party state as well as on press freedom. In the late 1980s through the writings of Moyo and others, the *Gazette* was to stand as the single most vocal antagonist of ZANU PF's one-party state aspirations, and of all activities aimed at the entrenchment of the party as the sole political authority in the country. It was through these articles that Moyo became popular as a government critic. However, he would later transform himself into a government defender with strong hatred for both the opposition political parties as well as independent newspapers. It is interesting to note that all private newspapers that were closed by the government of Zimbabwe after 2000 were closed under the instigation of Jonathan Moyo.

With the success of the *Financial Gazette* under the leadership of Nyarota, plans were underway to launch a daily newspaper, the *Daily Gazette*. However, before its launch, Nyarota was dismissed as editor and replaced by Trevor Ncube. It is not clear why Rusike decided to fire Nyarota, but speculation is rife that the government of Zimbabwe had a hand in the firing. Nyarota remembers one incident in which Rusike had asked if 'Saidi can't write on any topic other than ZANU-PF' because 'we have friends in ZANU-PF and they tell me they sometimes think we don't seem to know what is good for us'.⁵¹⁰ Daniel Compagnon also questions how Rusike was able to secure a huge loan from a state-owned bank, Zimbank in 1989 without political patronage. The general consensus is that Rusike got the funds with strings attached to it, one of which was to fire Nyarota. The *Daily Gazette* was launched on the 5th of October 1992. Another point to consider here in conjunction with the firing of Nyarota is the fact that Rusike appointed a farmer, Mike Hamilton, as the editor of the *Daily Gazette*, overlooking Bill Saidi who had many years experience as a journalist and editor in his own right. Could it be that the very same people who had frustrated Saidi at Zimpapers were in control of the goings on at Modus Publications? In spite of these controversies, the

⁵⁰⁹ Richard Saunders, *Information in the Interregnum*, 1991, p. 172.

⁵¹⁰ Geoff Nyarota, *Against the Grain*, p. 224.

Daily Gazette was well received by the readers, so much so that at its peak it sold about 55 000 copies. Though impressive, the figure was modest compared to those of the *Herald*, the newspaper which it hoped to challenge, which stood at 160 000 copies.

The *Daily Gazette* had a tabloid format, unlike the broadsheet of the *Herald*. Compagnon posits that the newspaper had a taste of sensationalism as a way of attracting new readers. Even though it lacked sufficient resources to undertake investigative journalism, it offered a breathing space to civil society and the opposition parties. It also in the long run offended the state so much that in the run-up to the 1995 elections, state and private companies were cautioned against advertising in the newspaper. Just as in the colonial period, when the Federal Prime Minister Roy Welensky blocked the sale of the *African Daily News* to a British buyer, it is alleged that the Mugabe government actively dissuaded a British investor from rescuing the paper financially.⁵¹¹ As a result of financial challenges, the *Daily Gazette* ceased publishing on 24 December 1994, with all resources being diverted to the *Financial Gazette*. Be that as it may, Andersen and Olsen acknowledge the importance of the *Daily Gazette* in Zimbabwe's history when they argue that by challenging the dominance of the government's traditional loyal press, the newspaper 'spurred a political and theoretical debate on the role of the Zimbabwean press which has outlived the alternative press itself.'⁵¹²

The *Financial Gazette* also had its brush with the law which in the long run informed government policy on the media. Although known as a card-carrying member of ZANU-PF, Rusike would later dump the party and use his paper to investigate and publish stories on the members of the party. The straw that broke the camel's back came with the publication of a story alleging that that President Robert Mugabe had wedded Grace Marufu at a secret ceremony presided over by then High Court Judge Paddington Garwe and witnessed by the then Minister of Public Construction and National Housing, Enos Chikowore (now late). Garwe and Chikowore rebutted the article leading to Rusike's arrest, alongside executive editor Trevor Ncube and deputy editor Simba Makunike, for defaming the president. The trio were hauled before the courts and later convicted. Modus Publication was fined \$2 500 in 1996 whilst Ncube and Makunike were fined \$3 000 and \$6 000 respectively.⁵¹³ Although the President later married Grace Marufu, the treatment of the

⁵¹¹ Daniel Compagnon, *A Predictable Tragedy*, p. 125.

⁵¹² Elin, W. Andersen and Ragnhild K. Olsen, *Press Freedom and Democracy in Zimbabwe*, IMK-report no. 22, University of Oslo, 1997, p. 1.

⁵¹³ Obituary: 'Rusike: A man who upheld professionalism', *Financial Gazette*, 24 July 2009.

Financial Gazette pointed to a bleaker future for the Zimbabwean independent press. Rusike sold the *Financial Gazette* in 2003 to a consortium of black business people who presently own the publication. It is believed that the consortium is led by people who are close to President Mugabe, especially Gideon Gono, the Reserve Bank Governor and personal banker to the President.

The challenges at Modus Publications (especially the arrests and convictions of 1995 and 1996), however, had positive spin-offs for the private media in Zimbabwe. In mooted the idea to form the *Zimbabwe Independent*, Clive Murphy and Clive Wilson felt that the content of the *Financial Gazette* had deteriorated since the newspaper had become susceptible to government pressure. Thus on 10 May 1996 a new weekly, the *Zimbabwe Independent*, was launched to compete directly with the *Financial Gazette*. It hired Trevor Ncube as the editor and Iden Wetherell as deputy editor. Wetherell's column 'Muckraker' in *Financial Gazette* had been scrapped by Rusike for its anti-government stance. A year later the *Zimbabwe Standard*, later the *Standard* was launched by the publishers of the *Zimbabwe Independent* to compete directly with the state-owned *Sunday Mail*. Ncube eventually took over the papers and later became the publisher of the *Mail and Guardian*. He is now the owner of Alpha Media Holdings (AMH), publishers of the *Zimbabwe Independent*, the *Standard* and a daily newspaper called *Newsday* together with the *Mail and Guardian*.

The inaugural editor of the *Standard* was Mark Chavunduka and he is credited for making the newspaper popular both locally and internationally. In 1999, The *Standard's* chief reporter, Ray Choto reported on a Zimbabwean army mutiny over the deployment of up to 14 000 troops in the civil war then raging in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). He went on to allege that 23 disgruntled soldiers had been detained for inciting a mutiny against Mugabe. Chavunduka and Choto were illegally arrested by the military police for publishing the story that was 'likely to cause alarm and despondency' under Section 50 (2) of the Law and Order Maintenance Act of 1960. This was the same draconian legislation that led to the closure of the *African Daily News*. Recounting his experience, Chavunduka had this to say:

The military arrested me and tortured me for nine days, not because the story was false, but because they wanted to learn my sources within the army. I refused to tell them, despite savage beatings and the application of live electric wires to my body.⁵¹⁴

⁵¹⁴ Mark Chavunduka, 'The Role of the Media in Zimbabwe', p. 283.

Although the Supreme Court had ordered their release, the military continued to detain them until they were released on bail of approximately US\$250.⁵¹⁵ The release came after three Supreme Court Judges had written to President Mugabe asking him to ‘confirm that the rule of law is accepted as a necessary ingredient of a democratic Zimbabwe’.⁵¹⁶ President Mugabe responded to this by suggesting that the judges could resign if they wanted and that ‘those who interfere with the military should experience a military response’.⁵¹⁷

Following the alleged coup story, Mugabe went on the offensive against the independent press, threatening to tighten media laws dealing with journalists. In justifying the impending media laws, Mugabe said:

Filthy journalism is to them a daily hobby and of course they will always, in the event of arrest, seek to invoke the law and hackneyed defence of human rights, freedom of expression, freedom of the press under whose cover they are perpetrating subversive stories.⁵¹⁸

This marked the heightening of tensions between the state and the independent press and this escalated after 1999 with the launch the *Daily News*. The developments within the media sector were symptomatic of what was happening in the social, political and economic sectors of the country. The euphoria that existed at the time of independence was fast evaporating and people were looking for explanations and solutions to the emerging crisis. But how did this socio-political and economic crisis come about? The next section gives a chronological account of that.

Political, Social and Economic Environment: an Overview

In this section I summarise the major developments that took place in Zimbabwe from independence up to 1999. I do this because it gives me the leverage to contextualise the loss of popularity by the ZANU PF as well as the roots of its reactionary tendencies to criticism and the desire to close the democratic space. This, in the long run, will help me locate the government’s changing attitudes towards the press in general and the independent press in particular.

⁵¹⁵ Bornwell Chakaodza et al., *Journalists or ‘Enemies of the state’: Onslaught on the Zimbabwean Media 2000-2005*, p. 11.

⁵¹⁶ Bornwell Chakaodza et al., *Journalists or ‘Enemies of the state*, 2008, p. 11.

⁵¹⁷ *The Daily News* 31 March 2000.

⁵¹⁸ *The Daily News* 31 March 2000.

The politics of Zimbabwe at independence was dominated by President Mugabe's ZANU-PF party. It had won the 1980 elections with 57 seats defeating PF-ZAPU which won 20 seats in Matabeleland while twenty seats were reserved for the whites and these were won by Ian Smith's party the RF (later the Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe).⁵¹⁹ Mugabe, after winning the elections had invited members of PF-ZAPU to join his government. In 1982 however, the discovery of arms caches in PF-ZAPU-owned properties led to the arrest of a number of PF-ZAPU leaders and ZIPRA commanders whilst those in the coalition government were dismissed. This resulted in an armed conflict with the government sending the Fifth Brigade trained by North Koreans in Nyanga fighting a few rebels sponsored by South Africa. However, the Fifth Brigade engaged in acts of brutality against civilians resulting in the death of about 20 000 people.⁵²⁰ The conflict was ended by the consummation of a Unity Accord in 1987 between PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF. In absorbing PF-ZAPU, ZANU PF was fulfilling its long term dream of having one party in Zimbabwe. Mugabe pointed out that:

A united ZANU PF has the potential...to develop into that sole party to which all Zimbabweans can and should lend their support and membership...any attempt to form any new political parties for the future is a long step backwards.⁵²¹

The crushing of PF-ZAPU and the abolition of the twenty reserved seats for the whites meant that there was no credible opposition to talk about.

In 1989 Edgar Tekere formed the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) after he was expelled from ZANU PF in 1988. ZUM was formed during the period when the Willowgate scandal was a topical issue. Thus ZUM was well received by many people at the time, as it threatened to unseat ZANU PF from power. Resultantly, ZANU PF began to employ dirty tactics to decampaign ZUM, including violence perpetrated by state institutions. For example, the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) and ZANU PF militants shot and seriously injured a prominent ZUM candidate, Patrick Kombayi, who was contesting against the then Vice President Simon Muzenda in Gweru. According to Masunungure, the culprits were arrested, prosecuted, and convicted, but the President soon pardoned them, further entrenching a

⁵¹⁹ Eldred Masunungure, 'Travails of opposition politics in Zimbabwe since independence', in David Harold-Barry, *Zimbabwe: The Past is the Future*, p. 155.

⁵²⁰ For more information on this conflict see Jocelyn Alexander et al., *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the 'Dark Forests' of Matabeleland*, Harare, Weaver Press; Jocelyn Alexander, 'Dissident perspectives on Zimbabwe's post-independent war', in *Africa: Journal of International African Institute*, 68, 2, 1998

⁵²¹ Robert Gabriel Mugabe, 'The Unity Accord: Its Promise for the Future', in Canaan Banana (ed.), *Turmoil and Tenacity: Zimbabwe 1980-1990*, Harare, The College Press, 1989, p. 354.

culture of impunity dating back to the Gukurahundi excesses.⁵²² Although ZUM did not make much of an impact in terms of seats in parliament, it posed a decent and solid challenge to the ruling party albeit it operated in an unequal playing field. ZUM would later depart from Zimbabwe's political landscape in 1990, but by then ZANU PF had abandoned its attempt to have a one party state in Zimbabwe.

After the ZUM era, Zimbabwean politics was dominated by the ZANU PF ruling party although a number of candidates would appear on the eve of elections. Independents also became prominent and one example is Margaret Dongo, who challenged ZANU PF after breaking away from the party. In the mid 1990s, opposition to ZANU PF manifested in the form of civil society groups such as the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights) and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP). I will deal with the formation of the NCA in the next chapter as it played a fundamental role in the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) as well as in the constitutional debate that culminated in a referendum in 2000. For now it suffices to point out that as a result of the political and economic problems faced by Zimbabwe, the civil society groups coalesced into a political party with its roots in labour. This party was to challenge the hegemony of ZANU PF in the new millennium with the support of the *Daily News*.

On the economic front, the government of Zimbabwe inherited an economy that had been damaged by the war of liberation as well as the sanctions imposed on Ian Smith's government. In spite of this, Zimbabwe had a relatively stable economy whose currency was almost as strong as the United States Dollar. The government pursued socialist economic policies that aimed at redressing the historic imbalances inherited from colonial rule. The major sectors targeted by the new government were education and health. James Muzondidya argues that soon after independence, the government expanded the provision of health and educational facilities to areas previously ignored by the colonial state.⁵²³ He further argues that the state specifically built roads, schools, clinics and boreholes in communal rural lands which lagged behind urban areas in terms of infrastructural development. Thus there is a general perception that the new government was partially successful in addressing the inherited problems and the country achieved some notable economic and social gains. Such

⁵²² Eldred Masunungure, 'Travails of opposition politics in Zimbabwe', p. 161.

⁵²³ James Muzondidya, 'From buoyancy to Crisis, 1990-1997', in Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo (eds.), *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the pre-colonial period to 2008*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2009.

gains included infrastructural development, job creation, education and health delivery. This period is generally known as the honey-moon or euphoria period, when everyone one was celebrating the gains of independence.

The economic gains were, however, short-lived. Employment creation began to contract so much that the number of new jobs did not soak up the number of graduates churned out of the successful education programme. According to Fay Chung, only 10, 000 new jobs were created in the first decade of independence and this did not keep pace with either the population increase or with the large numbers of school leavers who by then numbered approximately 100, 000 by the mid-1980s.⁵²⁴

The poor performance of the economy became glaring in the second decade of independence. To nip the collapse in the bud, the Zimbabwean government, at the behest of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, implemented the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) with its conditions such as currency devaluation, privatisation of state run parastatals, and the general opening up of the country's industries to foreign competition. The result was an overall reversal of the gains made at independence especially in the social services sector like education and health. In addition, instead of increasing the performance of the economy, average economic growth declined from 4 per cent to 0.9 per cent by 1991 before it recovered to only 2.9 per cent in 1998/99⁵²⁵, whilst unemployment rose from 32.2 per cent in 1990 to 44 per cent in 1993.⁵²⁶ Thus as a result of ESAP, the deregulation of prices and the removal of subsidies on basic consumer goods resulted in severe hardships for everyone as prices of basic commodities skyrocketed whilst real wages declined.

The hardship faced by the workers increasingly alienated the government from the labour bodies that it had helped form in the 1980s. In 1981, the government had formed the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) as an arm of the ruling party to co-opt the workers.⁵²⁷ With the worsening economy, the ZCTU gradually distanced itself from the state, asserted its autonomy and became radicalised in the process. From 1996 onwards, labour unions under the banner of the ZCTU organised a series of strikes against both private-sector employers and the government and such strikes were also joined by other urban social

⁵²⁴ Fay Chung, 'Education: Revolution or reform', in C. Stoneman (ed.), *Zimbabwe's prospects*, p. 129.

⁵²⁵ James Muzondidya, 'From buoyancy to Crisis', 2008, p. 188.

⁵²⁶ Alois Mlambo, *The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme*, p. 91.

⁵²⁷ Brian Raftopoulos, 'Current politics in Zimbabwe: Confronting the Crisis', in David Harold-Barry, *Zimbabwe: The Past is the future*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2004, p. 5.

groups, the unemployed, students as well as civil society groups working for human rights and democratisation.⁵²⁸ The leaders of the ZCTU would later help form and lead the country's most important and truly national opposition party.

Further problems were noticeable on the issue of land redistribution which was enshrined in the Lancaster House constitution which protected minority rights on land as well as white representation in parliament. According to this constitution, the new government would only acquire the land that the white farmers were willing to sell. Thus the constitution was an obstacle to land reform as it protected the interests of white, large-scale commercial farmers.⁵²⁹ By 1990, as Sam Moyo shows, the government had acquired only 3.5 million hectares of land to resettle only 52, 000 households of the targeted 162,000 families on 9 million hectares. Of the land acquired by the government the majority was in marginal rainfall areas and unsuitable for agriculture. The slow pace of the land reform would culminate in the land invasions by the war veterans in the year 2000.

Besides the land issue, corruption within the government became so rife and it manifested itself through suspension of benefits to the war veterans. A fund set aside for the war veterans had been looted by government officials leaving veterans with nothing. The war veterans began demonstrating, not only for the resumption of their payments from the Compensation Fund, but also gratuities of \$50,000 and monthly pensions of \$2,000. They also demanded that all war veterans in need of land be resettled by December 1998. The war veterans would later be awarded each a hefty gratuity of ZW\$ 50 000 (USD 4000) in addition to monthly allowances which were not catered for in the country's fiscus.⁵³⁰ The settlement with the war veterans led to a surge in imports in anticipation of increased demand and a huge increase in the budget deficit and hence, inflation. On November 14, 1997 the value of the Zimbabwe dollar fell by 74%, as international investors panicked.

To raise money to cater for the war veterans, Mugabe tried to impose taxes and levies. This was met with stiff resistance from Morgan Tsvangirai and his ZCTU, as they organised a stay-away. In the mean time, prices of basic commodities rose beyond the reach of many people in January 1998. The price of maize meal had risen by 36 per cent in October and 24

⁵²⁸ James Muzondidya, 'From Buoyancy to Crisis', 2008, p. 195.

⁵²⁹ See Sam Moyo, 'The political economy of land acquisition'. L. Tshuma, *A matter of Injustice: Law, State and the agrarian question in Zimbabwe*, Harare, SAPES Books, 1997.

⁵³⁰ See Patrick Bond and Munyaradzi Manyanya, *Zimbabwe's plunge: Exhausted Nationalism, Neo-liberalism and the search for Social Justice*, University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 2003.

per cent in December 1997, whilst in January the price of rice and cooking oil more than doubled and the prices of other commodities rose by 20 per cent. The result of these hikes was spontaneous food riots in Harare and other towns. The government blamed the inflation and shortage of food on the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, white industrialists and farmers. In response, the riots were brutally crushed by the state when it called out the army,⁵³¹ resulting in at least 10 people losing their lives whilst over a hundred were arrested.⁵³² Following the riots, Chikuhwa argued that the media, although it had been ‘forced’ to be a faithful ally of Zimbabwe’s entrenched political establishment, nevertheless adopted an unusually critical tone.⁵³³ For example Gerry Jackson, a Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation freelancer was promptly dismissed for taking phone-calls from an irate public protesting the violent crushing of the 1998 food riots.⁵³⁴ Gerry Jackson and other former ZBC employees would later in 2000 launch a local independent station *Capital Radio*. The station did not last long as it was bombed and shut down by the state and as a result it ended up broadcasting from London as Short Wave Radio Africa. A similar response was meted out to *The Herald* newspaper when its editor was instantly dismissed for running a mildly critical editorial comment blaming the government for the food riots. Part of the comment read:

If the demonstrations were spontaneous as seems certain, then both the ruling party and the government are in trouble...anyone wanting to wag a finger at the ZCTU or hurl abuse at ethnic groupings in the mistaken belief that the problem will go away is deluding himself.⁵³⁵

Further worsening the situation was the country’s decision to participate in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) civil war in 1998. What particularly irked the people was that no approval for such participation was sought in parliament and that every day an unspecified amount of the country’s financial and human resources were diverted to the DRC with no prospect of benefitting the country. The cost of involvement in the DRC added to the failures of the structural adjustment programmes and the financial pressures as a result of the war veterans’ compensation scheme. This put further strain on the nation’s budget and its

⁵³¹ Martin Meredith, 2002, p. 141. See also Brian Raftopoulos, ‘Crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008’, 2008, p. 203.

⁵³² Wallace Chuma, ‘Reforming the Media in Zimbabwe: Critical reflections’, in Dumisani Moyo and Wallace Chuma (eds.), *Media Policy: Changing Southern Africa Critical Reflection on Media Reforms in the global age*, UNISA Press, Pretoria, 2010, p. 93.

⁵³³ Jacob Wilson Chikuhwa, *Crisis of Governance: Zimbabwe*, Algora Publishing, New York, 2004, p. 61.

⁵³⁴ Sylvester Dombo, ‘Alternative or Subversive? ‘Pirate’ radio stations and the opening up of spaces of freedom and alternative politics in Zimbabwe, 2000-2010’. Paper presented to the New Media/Alternative Politics: Communication technologies and political change in the Middle East and Africa, University of Cambridge, 14-16 October 2010.

⁵³⁵ Jacob Wilson Chikuhwa, *Crisis of Governance: Zimbabwe*, p. 61

currency continued a downward spiral as a result of devaluation. Pressure began to mount on the ZANU PF government and to contain this; the government intensified its control over the law, the media and the security services.

By this time civil society groups and other non-state actors coalesced and began to take a political view to the crisis in Zimbabwe. According to Geoff Nyarota, editor of the *Daily News*, there was a general perception that the government of the day was no longer serving the general interests of the people.⁵³⁶ The state media had been controlled and muzzled by the government so much that government criticism only appeared in privately owned weekly newspapers that were in circulation. Thus at this time though economically bad, the time was ripe politically for Zimbabwe to have a new daily independent newspaper. This appeared in the form of the *Daily News* that was launched in March 1999.

Conclusion

This chapter looked at the political economy of the mass media in Zimbabwe from the time of independence up to 1999. It argued that although the government had inherited a media that had supported its nemesis during the liberation war, in principle that media was given a small degree of independence. That independence was ‘guaranteed’ paradoxically through the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust which also allowed the government to exercise some form of control over the content of the media. Thus although they formed the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust to ostensibly safeguard the press from government interference, the government as the majority shareholder of ZMMT still had undue interference through its funding and the appointment of editors. The chapter also showed that intervention in the appointment of editors was also meant to insulate the government from press scrutiny. However, it didn’t work out as planned, as some editors of state controlled newspapers were ‘writing against the grain’ and exposing corruption in the country. I argued that, in this period, the laxity in government controls in fact allowed the small but vibrant media, dominated by monthly magazines and weekly newspapers, to act as the fourth estate by providing meaningful checks and balances to state power. Such freedom often resulted in government embarrassment, so much so that by 1999 the government was threatening to tighten media laws to control the activities of the press. I also pointed out that the increasing rate in which the press, both

⁵³⁶ Interview with Geoff Nyarota, 23 December 2012

private and independent, was attacking the government has to be located within the broader context of the deterioration of the country's economy accompanied by the increasing authoritarianism of the ruling party ZANU PF. Therefore, the argument of this chapter as well as the thesis as a whole is that it was generally an attempt by the press to safeguard democracy that drove it into a collision course with the government.

CHAPTER FIVE

A BATTLE FOR THE HEARTS AND MINDS: THE *DAILY NEWS*, THE STATE, CONSTITUTIONAL AND LAND REFORM IN ZIMBABWE, 1999-2000

Introduction

On 31 March 1999, the *Daily News* hit the streets of Zimbabwe becoming the country's second independent daily newspaper after independence, and the only private daily at that time. Overcoming initial financial problems, the *Daily News* became the largest selling independent newspaper in the country, surpassing at its peak the 200 000 barrier which its main competitor, the *Herald* had failed to go beyond since independence. Complimenting other independent weeklies such as the *Financial Gazette*, the *Zimbabwe Independent* and the *Standard*, the *Daily News* became a thorn in the flesh of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) government that had ruled the country since independence from Britain in 1980.

On 11 September 1999, some six months after the launch of the *Daily News*, a new political party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was formed out of the labour movement to challenge the uninterrupted rule of ZANU PF. ZANU PF had presided over an economy that was fast collapsing, as evidenced by the devaluation of the local currency and ongoing labour strikes instigated through the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions. Politically, there was a massive erosion of fundamental rights by a regime that desired to stay in power at all costs. Formed in succession, the view among the ruling elite was that the new daily newspaper and the MDC party were formed to spearhead the removal of ZANU PF from power. Both were labelled as foreign-funded, with the newspaper being seen as a mouth-piece for the MDC. The respective rise of the two institutions should however be looked at in the context of the growing climate of criticism towards the government for the way it had handled the economy. Separately, although in complimentary ways, these two institutions would indeed comprise a formidable threat to the authority of ZANU PF, almost knocking it off its perch. As a result of the MDC's alleged close financial relations with the British

government and the fact that the *Daily News* was backed by British funders, the two were often portrayed by ZANU PF as evil twins ganging up to return the country to its former colonisers. As a result, the *Daily News* would be closed in 2003, but not before it had done real damage to the stability of the regime and had exposed ZANU PF's weaknesses. The *Daily News* returned in March 2011, under new ownership.

This chapter examines the political impact of the *Daily News* and how it shaped events in the country during the political and economic crisis that unfolded between 1999 and 2000. Declaring that there was a crisis and indeed providing a non-State view to the crisis, the *Daily News* was designated a subversive and an unpatriotic publication that worked in cahoots with opposition parties to effect 'regime change'. This chapter takes a case study approach to the main events that shaped the history of the country. It focuses on two moments: the referendum of 2000 and the resultant fast track land reform programme that was launched thereafter. Before narrowing down on these cases, however, I first discuss the formation of the *Daily News* and posit reasons why it was likely to be in confrontation with the government from the onset.

The establishment the *Daily News*

Building from the last chapter, it is easily discernible that the poor performance of the economy and the increasingly heavy-handedness of the ZANU PF government to dissent galvanised social and civil society groups against the government. It is within this context that the *Daily News* was launched in 1999, by the Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ). The *Daily News* was launched at a time when the government was tightening its grip on the state media following the lackadaisical and often indifferent control policies of the 1990s. According to Winston Mano, the state media was given a new mandate to defend Zimbabwe so that the country would not be returned to the former colonisers.⁵³⁷ By the time the *Daily News* was selling, the state media had been so successfully tamed that it was singing praises to the government at a time when its popularity had drastically crashed. The taming of the press ushered in what Terrence Ranger has controversially termed 'Patriotic Journalism', which he sees as a narrow and divisive brand of journalism that classified

⁵³⁷ Winston Mano, 'Press and Politics in Zimbabwe: Turning left while indicating right', in *International Journal of Press/Politics*, 13, 4, 2008, p. 512.

Zimbabweans into either sell-outs or patriots.⁵³⁸ The *Daily News* was seen as an unpatriotic newspaper that was anti-government. In short, the Zimbabwean society was now heavily polarised between those who supported ZANU PF with the state media as their mouth piece on the one hand, and, on the other, the MDC and civil society groups using the space of the private media, especially the *Daily News*. Thus the *Daily News* was formed within a struggle to not only interpret the crisis bedevilling the country, but also to win the hearts and minds of the people of Zimbabwe. One was either MDC or ZANU PF. According to a survey conducted by Q-Mulative Research, by 1998 readers of newspapers in Zimbabwe had the following complaints towards the press: newspapers were biased towards ZANU PF, they were far too political, lacked depth and offered only government news.⁵³⁹ In welcoming the launch of a new daily newspaper, readers were hoping that the newspaper would correct the weaknesses that had characterised the Zimbabwean press industry.

The ownership structure of the ANZ facilitated a voice independent from the Zimbabwe state. Africa Media Investment (AMI), a conglomeration of foreign investors of mostly commonwealth publishing companies owned 60% of the shares in ANZ. AMI had 6 shareholders. They were Tindale Newspapers Ltd, one of Britain's largest independently-owned groups of local and regional newspapers; Cross Graphics, Britain's leading supplier of used printing presses; Allied Press Ltd, New Zealand's largest private media group; Commonwealth Publishing Ltd, publisher of a range of publications in the United Kingdom, Australia and Asia; the Bank of Scotland (through Uberio Investments plc, its investment arm); and Michael Stent, AMI's chief executive.⁵⁴⁰ Africa Media Investment held 52 per cent of Africa Media Investments (Zimbabwe), the investment vehicle which, in turn, owned 60 per cent of ANZ. According to the *Daily News*, all AMI shareholders promised to provide technical assistance as well as guaranteeing editorial independence and integrity of all ANZ titles. Association with these international publishers was welcomed by Geoff Nyarota as it guaranteed training opportunities for ANZ staff which, by extension, would lead to the production of newspapers of a high standard. However, the presence of British investors also betrayed a profit motive. Nyarota, in his biography, later pointed out that it was envisaged

⁵³⁸ Terrence Ranger, 'The Rise of Patriotic Journalism in Zimbabwe and its possible implications', in *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, Special Issue, November 2005.

⁵³⁹ The *Daily News*, 31 March 1999.

⁵⁴⁰ The *Daily News* 31 March 1999.

that the British investors would rake in millions through targeted investments also in other SADC countries like Swaziland, Zambia and Botswana.⁵⁴¹

After some restructuring of the shareholding configuration, communications entrepreneur Strive Masiyiwa, the owner of Econet Wireless, one of Zimbabwe's largest cell phone communication service providers, bought 50 per cent stake of ANZ in 2002 through his company Meditation Investments. This left AMI with 32 per cent whilst 1 per cent was owned by Diamond Insurance Company of Zimbabwe. The rest of the shareholding of 17% was spread among Southern Life Association, Intermarket Life Assurance, NDM Investments (Pvt) Ltd, Batanai Capital Finance (Pvt.) Ltd, Dr Ali Mohamed and Judith Todd (daughter of former Rhodesian Prime-Minister Garfield Todd).⁵⁴²

Formed within a polarised political environment and with a shareholding that was predominantly foreign, the ANZ had a high-sounding editorial charter that presented the *Daily News* as an independent paper free of any political, commercial or sectional obligations or commitments. The charter claimed that the *Daily News* would be a medium for vibrant discourse among the divergent political, social, religious and other groups of Zimbabwe. The *Daily News* promised to carry reports that were fair, balanced and accurate which encouraged diversity of opinion. The editorial charter also stated that fact and opinion would be clearly separated and identified. The editorial charter was captured in the newspaper's motto 'Telling it like it is'. In short the *Daily News* was introduced to the market as an editorially independent newspaper 'that will set new standards of journalism in the country'.⁵⁴³

The ANZ began its involvement in print media in Zimbabwe in ways reminiscent of the trajectory of African Newspapers Limited during the middle 20th century colonial Rhodesian period. ANZ started off by launching five regional newspapers namely the *Dispatch* (Matabeleland), the *Eastern Star* (Manicaland), the *Express* (Chitungwiza), the *Mercury* (Gweru) and the *Tribune* (Masvingo). Of these five, only the *Dispatch* and the *Easter Star* were capable of attracting a sizeable number of readers, as well as advertisers, and as such the two survived up to 2002. The idea of starting regional papers was explained by Godwin Mangudya, who was the founding editor of the *Express*:

⁵⁴¹ Geoff Nyarota, *Against the grain*, 2006, p. 232.

⁵⁴² Guthrie Munyuki and MISA-Zimbabwe, 'Media ownership in Zimbabwe', International Media Support (et al.), International Conference on Media Support Strategies in Zimbabwe, Johannesburg, November 28-30, 2005, p. 40.

⁵⁴³ The *Daily News*, 31 March 1999.

The provincial papers came out as a realisation that people in the provinces were not getting a voice and space in the national papers like the *Herald*. These papers were then set up to cover specific areas on issues like politics, development, sports and such coverage was done in detail because as provincial newspapers reporters would go into the districts and outlying areas covering issues.⁵⁴⁴

Although these were provincial papers with province-oriented news, they had a national page which covered stories that were of broader interest.

These provincial newspapers were enthusiastically received by the readers especially those in Bulawayo and Manicaland. The editor of the *Eastern Star* recounted the formation and impact of the paper:

The desire for an alternative newspaper serving the eastern border was demonstrated during the establishment of the offices of the *Eastern Star*, one of the three titles in the stable grouping the *Daily News*. While sign-writers were busy putting up notices announcing the arrival of the *Eastern Star* in the windows of the offices in Manica Chambers, scores of Mutare residents – both black and white – would walk in and enquire about subscribing to the newspaper. That people were prepared to try an alternative, even when they did not know its charter, was indicative of the extent to which people in Manicaland had been starved of information on developments taking place in their midst. When the paper was launched on 20 November 1998, it had orders of more than 20 000 copies by customers from as far away places as Nyanga and Chipinge. It was a phenomenal response, confirming a huge void or the extent of under-reporting of events in Manicaland. In June 1999 when three other titles for Masvingo, the Midlands and Chitungwiza were suspended, the *Eastern Star* and the *Despatch* were allowed to continue publishing.⁵⁴⁵

The same impact can also be seen when one looks at the *Dispatch*'s reception in Bulawayo. Like the *Eastern Star*, the *Dispatch* was launched on 25 September 1998 and operated from Bulawayo. It was printed in Harare and was then transported by road to Bulawayo every Friday morning. Before it folded, its circulation stood at 15 000 which was a phenomenal figure considering that it was competing with other weekly newspapers in Zimbabwe as well as the *Chronicle* and *The Herald*. According to Herbert Moyo, *The Dispatch* was considered "The Voice of Bulawayo", as it helped to promote unfettered expression of opinions, hopes and aspirations of the people in the western part of Zimbabwe, without fear'.⁵⁴⁶ Since Matabeleland region has a history of political repression and underdevelopment, Lawrence Chikwira, editor of the paper pointed out:

⁵⁴⁴ Interview with Godwin Mangudya

⁵⁴⁵ *The Daily News* 31 March 2000.

⁵⁴⁶ Interview with Herbert Moyo 20 December 2012.

We sought to bring together people of this city, regardless of race, colour, creed, tribe or political affiliation. The horrors of the war of liberation and the subsequent ‘dissident’ conflict with its infamous Gukurahundi atrocities are still fresh in the eyes of many. This created a culture of fear in which certain issues even pertinent ones on development – or rather lack of it – were discussed only in hushed tones. The *Dispatch* is proud of having contributed to this end of fear and giving a voice to the multitudes that would never have been allowed in a situation where the government-controlled media was left to its own devices. Issues are being debated and opinions expressed that would have been unthinkable not so long ago.⁵⁴⁷

The ANZ’s flagship paper, *The Daily News* was launched on the 31st of March 1999 and it was enthusiastically received by the reading public. Probably as a sign of its stance on the politics of the country, founding editor Nyarota claims that they named it after the *African Daily News*, the most significant independent newspaper that had carried the flag of the revolution in the 1960s.⁵⁴⁸ There was an initial scramble for the newspaper and the 50 000 daily printed copies during the first weeks were easily sold out. However, in spite of being in association with prominent investors, the money they had promised didn’t come and the paper struggled.⁵⁴⁹ Within a few months, especially after the referendum of February 2000, the *Daily News* had reached a circulation of 100 000 far ahead of the 87 647 of the *Herald*. By the time the *Daily News* was shut down in 2003, it was selling around 120 000 copies daily and, according to Dumisani Moyo, this represented 30.6 percent of the total readership (about 2 million), with the *Herald* trailing hard behind with 28.9 percent (about 1.9 million readers) whilst that of the *Chronicle* readership stood at 13.7 percent.⁵⁵⁰ By 2003 the *Daily News* had become the most widely circulated daily newspaper in Zimbabwe.

The launching of the *Daily News* in 1999 was seen by media practitioners as a positive development in the history of the media in Zimbabwe. Such a view was reinforced by Dr. Rino Zhuwarara, then head of the Media and Communication studies at the University of Zimbabwe, who argued that:

The *Daily News* came at an opportune time when there was need for alternative sources of information in a rapidly changing society. It is a positive development that enhances the diversity of opinions and views that are likely to benefit the production and

⁵⁴⁷ The *Daily News*, 31 March 2000.

⁵⁴⁸ Geoff Nyarota, *Against the Grain*, p. 91

⁵⁴⁹ A more detailed story of the paper’s financial struggles and its impact on circulation and advertisers can be found in Nyarota’s biography. However, Nyarota doesn’t specify why the promised funds didn’t come as promised.

⁵⁵⁰ Dumisani Moyo, ‘The ‘independent’ press and the fight for democracy in Zimbabwe: A critical analysis of the banned *Daily News*’, in *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, Special Issue, November 2005, p. 113.

circulation of ideas. As a source of alternative information, the paper has, in a way promoted the democratisation process.⁵⁵¹

Other readers optimistically saw the coming of the *Daily News* as a necessary corrective measure to the propaganda and parochial reporting by the state media. Sarah Chiumbu, Executive Director of Media Institute of Southern Africa pointed out that before the *Daily News* came on the scene, Zimbabweans were used to a situation where the media was polarised and she saw the coming of the *Daily News* as a major step in balancing views. It is within this light that the head of Journalism and Communication at Christian College of Southern Africa Crimson Tazvinzwa argued that, for the first time in the history of the media, ‘Zimbabwe had a paper that was fairly balanced’.⁵⁵²

Owing to its close association with foreign funders, Dumisani Moyo argues that the *Daily News* became the most well resourced media house in the country, with state of the art equipment in its newsrooms, complete with the latest Apple computers, digital cameras and mobile phones at a time when most media houses in the country were still grappling with antiquated technology that had long been forgotten in other parts of the world.⁵⁵³ Nyarota supports this assessment, pointing out that by offering an unfettered professional atmosphere coupled with salaries that were above the norm, the *Daily News*’s newsroom became a who’s who of Zimbabwe’s journalism in 1999.⁵⁵⁴ Its editorial team was headed by two of Zimbabwe’s most decorated journalists: Geoff Nyarota and Davison Maruziva, who as editor and deputy editor of the state-owned *Chronicle* had helped to break the Willowgate scandal in 1988. The two were the only state employed journalists who had had the courage to expose the shortcomings of the government at such high levels. During their tenure at the *Chronicle*, circulation rose from 45 000 to about 89 000. For exposing the Willowgate scandal, Nyarota won a number of awards, namely, the Commonwealth Press Union’s Terry-Pierce Goulding Memorial Award which was accompanied by a graduate scholarship to the University of Western Ontario, Canada to study journalism; Percy Qoboza Foreign Journalist Award from the National Association of Black Journalists in Washington DC and Communicator of the Year Award from the Zimbabwe Institute of Public Relations. After leaving the *Chronicle*, Nyarota later in 1990 worked as editor for the weekly *Financial Gazette* where—as discussed in the last chapter—he was dismissed over what he saw as a ‘misunderstanding with the

⁵⁵¹ The *Daily News* 31 March 2000.

⁵⁵² The *Daily News* 31 March 2000.

⁵⁵³ Dumisani Moyo, ‘The ‘independent’ press and the fight for democracy in Zimbabwe, p. 112.

⁵⁵⁴ Geoff Nyarota, *Against the Grain*, p. 241.

publishers on matters of editorial independence'.⁵⁵⁵ By the time he joined the *Daily News* as its founding editor, Nyarota had accumulated enough experience to become an editor of a big newspaper. He appointed Maruziva as his deputy.

Veteran journalist Bill Saidi who, as highlighted earlier, had worked for the *African Daily News* between 1957 and 1961 now complemented Nyarota and Maruziva at the *Daily News*. After leaving the *African Daily News*, Saidi had gone to Zambia where he worked for 9 years at the *Times of Zambia*. There, however, he had fallen into disfavour with Kenneth Kaunda for attacking the Zambian government's take-over of the *Times of Zambia*. He also clashed with both ZAPU and ZANU as they claimed he was not performing his national duty of supporting the nationalist struggle for constantly attacking them for their failure to resolve the differences that had led to their split.⁵⁵⁶ Although he later joined Zimpapers at independence in 1980, two events suggested that he had enemies in the newly independent government. Firstly, he was unceremoniously struck off the list of journalists who were to accompany the Prime Minister Mugabe on his tour of the Democratic Republic of Korea in 1982. Secondly, when the Zimpapers board wanted to make him editor of the *Herald*, the Minister of Information and Publicity, who had been the editor and later editor-in-chief of African Newspapers in the 1960s, threatened Zimpapers with withdrawal of government funding if they made Saidi editor.⁵⁵⁷ In addition to the editorials he did with Nyarota and Maruziva, Saidi also had a weekly column entitled "Bill Saidi on Wednesday".

In addition to its veterans, the *Daily News* also attracted young journalists from established newspapers like *The Herald* and other weeklies. Other journalists were recent graduates from the University of Zimbabwe, and some of them behaved more like activists who saw the newspaper as a proper and radical platform to attack the policies of the government.⁵⁵⁸ They saw the paper as their mouthpiece in expressing issues of civil and political liberties in Zimbabwe. They were eager to help the ordinary people who were marginalised, the economically downtrodden, the fate of the farm workers and farm owners. In joining the

⁵⁵⁵ The *Daily News* 31 March 2000.

⁵⁵⁶ Interview with Bill Saidi, 10 December 2012.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁸ Interview with Pedzisai Ruhanya. Ruhanya joined the *Daily News* after completing his studies at the University of Zimbabwe where he was a student activist together with prominent MDC cadres like the late Learnmore Jongwe who became the party's spokesperson.

Daily News as a political correspondent in 1999, Sandra Nyaira explained what the new paper stood for by highlighting the shortcomings of the state media:

Things in the media had started changing by this time (1999) and it was clear for all to see that the Zimbabwe government had made serious mistakes that were bleeding the country. There was massive corruption that went unreported in the absence of an independent daily newspaper. Inept government policies, the use of archaic legislation to oppress the people and related issues all saw the downward spiralling of the people's standard of living. Everything was changing for the worse and the state media largely told one side of the story.⁵⁵⁹

If we juxtapose what Nyaira said above and an editorial by a state newspaper following the 1998 food riots, one easily understands the pressure the government was facing from the media. The editorial in the *Herald* read

Now is the time for Zimbabwe to stop reacting to crises as we have been doing for the past months...we all know that things cannot go on the way they are. Inflation is killing us...yesterday [the day of the riots] was the end of the era of business as usual. Today we must start fixing the underlying problems facing our country or watch disaster unfold.⁵⁶⁰

Instead of being heeded, the editor of the *Herald* was summarily dismissed and, true to his word, the country watched as disaster unfolded in Zimbabwe. More controls were instituted at the state media to tightly monitor the flow of information and to insulate the government from its critics.

The coming of the *Daily News* as an alternative to the state media was critical for information dissemination since the state media provided one side of the story. However, its appearance as an alternative to the state media meant, by extension, that it would also provide a different explanation to the problems facing Zimbabwe. In the newspaper's inaugural editorial, the editor summarised the political and economic context in which the newspaper was launched and how this was both a challenge and a great opportunity for the newspaper. He said:

We are launching the *Daily News* at a time of great excitement. Politically, this is a period of challenge and excitement. Zimbabwe is faced with what should prove to be the most significant general election after independence. New parties have been launched or are in the process of being formed. There is a clamour for constitutional reform. We believe the emergence of a daily newspaper at this particular juncture is timely. We believe that common sense will prevail sufficiently for our country to be

⁵⁵⁹ Sandra Nyaira, 'How times have changed', *The Daily News in Exile*, 3 May 2007.

⁵⁶⁰ *The Herald* 21 January 1998.

delivered from the current economic quagmire. We are committed to providing a platform for the necessary debate.⁵⁶¹

Further putting this new newspaper on the spotlight was the evolving state-media relations. The editor acknowledged these changing dynamics as he further pointed out in his editorial that:

The launch of the *Daily News* coincided with the period of confrontation between the government and the private press. This was highlighted by the arrest, abduction in one case, and the alleged torture of journalists. These events will not detract us from our commitment to playing a meaningful role in the political, economic and social development of our country.⁵⁶²

According to Pedzisai Ruhanya, by attempting to play a meaningful role in the country's affairs, the *Daily News* crossed paths with the ZANU PF, now accused by many of being at the fore-front of human rights violations and of destroying the economy. As such, the *Daily News* was inevitably positioned as being an ally of the MDC. This has led some to characterise the *Daily News* as an oppositional press due to the way it sought to undermine and blame the ZANU PF government for the political and economic situation the country was in by 1999.

Ibbo Mandaza, an academic and former publisher of the *Zimbabwe Mirror* argued that there was polarisation within the media as the state media became more and more defensive of the regime whilst the so-called independent press was on the attack.⁵⁶³ According to John Makumbe, an academic and opposition media commentator, this polarisation was bad for the reading publics in Zimbabwe as newspapers became tools for propaganda representing competing political stakes.⁵⁶⁴ He further pointed out that only those who could afford to buy two newspapers were better placed to read between the lines and come up with a better understanding of what was transpiring in the country. The same views were expressed by Phathisa Nyathi another media commentator with the *Zimbabwe Mirror* when he said:

The polarization in our society today is best depicted in the press. Basically the press is either pro-government or anti-government. Sometimes objectivity is sacrificed on the

⁵⁶¹ Editorial Comment, *The Daily News*, 31 March 1999.

⁵⁶² Editorial Comment, *The Daily News*, 31 March 1999.

⁵⁶³ Interview with Ibbo Mandaza, 20 February 2013.

⁵⁶⁴ Interview with John Makumbe 30 March 2013.

altar of expediency in order to be true to their chosen position...if you buy newspapers from one divide, you will get half the story.⁵⁶⁵

The above observation by Pathisa Nyathi is more in line with that of Nhlanhla Ngwenya of the Media Institute of Southern Africa, Zimbabwe Chapter who blamed politicians for the polarisation of the media:

Polarity in the media occurs due to the fact that while the other media tries to totally obliterate the truth or trying to honestly cover issues around us, the other one is then forced to cover extreme positions so as to expose the other extreme. This reflects the way which we Zimbabweans interact amongst ourselves and it also emanates from the leadership of the country as well. If the leaders would fight for political space and power harmoniously without stripping opponents of their citizenship by such names as traitors, sell outs and so on, I think the media would also act alike. Politicians have to lead the way to show that we can be divided along policy lines yet remain united as a people/nation, but the problem with our political contests is that you are either with us or against us and so the media is also following along those lines, and that is why we see political activism rather than journalism, as they are fighting from the trenches of their political view points.⁵⁶⁶

Thus polarity within a society leaves little room for those newspapers that attempted to plough what has been termed as the middle ground. Mandaza, in apparent reference to his newspaper, the *Zimbabwe Mirror*, which was closed in 2004, pointed out that under the Mugabe regime, even those newspapers that sought to be objective ended up being perceived to be threats. Mandaza's view was that, for a regime that is always on the defensive, the media becomes the last bastion for them to both attack their enemies and defend their policies.⁵⁶⁷ This is confirmed by the way in which ZANU PF was now in control of both the print and electronic media.

The *Daily News* and the 2000 Constitutional Referendum

The constitutional debate that was kick-started by the National Constitutional Assembly in the late 1990s plunged the *Daily News* into Zimbabwean politics. The Lancaster House Constitution which ushered the country to independence had been amended several times. The amendments had largely worked in ZANU PF's favour. Thus when pressure for a new constitution reached its crescendo, Mugabe gave in but sought to manipulate the whole

⁵⁶⁵ Phathisa Nyathi cited in MMPZ, *Media under siege: Report on media coverage of the 2002 Presidential and Mayoral elections in Zimbabwe*, MMPZ, Harare, 2002, p. 87.

⁵⁶⁶ Interview with Nhlanhla Ngwenya, Executive Director MISA-Zimbabwe, 20 February 2012.

⁵⁶⁷ Interview with Ibbo Mandaza

process to his favour. This led to the politicisation of the whole constitution making process in Zimbabwe which often found expression in the media.

The drive for a new constitution in Zimbabwe was initially spearheaded by the National Constitutional Assembly, an organisation that was made up of disparate groups and individuals who argued that the 1979 Lancaster House Constitution was flawed and had outlived its relevance. It comprised a diversity of civic organisations, professional associations, churches, trade unions, student organisations, human rights groups, individuals, lawyers and journalists. When it was launched in January 1998, the NCA was formed as an appendage of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches with Morgan Tsvangirai as its chairman. The idea to have it under the umbrella of the ZCC was, according to Sarah Rich Dorman, due to the fact that the church was considered apolitical and impartial.⁵⁶⁸ At the core of the NCA's argument was that a bad constitution led to bad governance and bad governance led to people's suffering. As the NCA put it 'we strongly believe that the current socio-economic problems we face as a nation are a result of a constitutional crisis arising out of the shortcomings of our present constitution'.⁵⁶⁹ The Zimbabwean government at first dismissed the NCA but at the ZANU PF annual conference in 1997 calls for a new constitution were expressed.

In an attempt to counter the activities of the NCA, Mugabe initiated his own exercise for constitutional reform. In April 1999 he set up a Constitutional Commission with the task of drawing up a new constitution to be put before the electorate in a national referendum. The Constitutional Commission was dominated by ZANU PF, with 400 members being nominated by ZANU PF including all 147 members of parliament.⁵⁷⁰ About one-quarter were considered to be independents. At this juncture conflict with the NCA became inevitable. Disagreeing with both the membership and the process of the government-initiated-constitution-making process, the NCA put in motion its own parallel process. The press became involved with the government media being sceptical about the NCA activities whilst giving unlimited coverage to the Constitutional Commission. It is within this context that the *Daily News*, barely a month old, immersed itself in the politics of constitution making in Zimbabwe.

⁵⁶⁸ Sarah Rich Dorman, 'Rocking the boat', p. 14.

⁵⁶⁹ Eldred Masunungure, *Travails of opposition politics in Zimbabwe*, 174.

⁵⁷⁰ Martin Meredith, *Power, Plunder and Tyranny in Zimbabwe*, 2002, p. 163.

At first the *Daily News* took a moderate stance as it attempted to bring together the key stakeholders in the constitution making process. In its editorial of the 6th of April 1999 the *Daily News* prophetically pointed out that, unless the climate of mutual suspicion between ZANU PF and the NCA was removed, efforts to draw up a new constitution acceptable to all would come to nought. It exhorted both parties to work together for the good of the constitution project:

The NCA must accept that ZANU PF is in power and must inevitably have a say in what kind of constitution emerges from any national debate. ZANU PF must accept that the NCA is a legitimate organisation representing the views of a very large constituency which is as vital to the success of the debate as the party itself. By letting 150 MPs form part of the 300-member commission, the party is packing it with its loyalists, creating an in-built advantage for itself. Only two MPs belong to the opposition; the rest are ZANU-PF.

The newspaper suggested that it would be prudent for both the government and the NCA to step aside for neutral chairperson(s) to lead the constitutional revision exercise.

To kick start the whole process, a constitutional commission was set up by the president to carryout outreach meetings led by High Court Judge Godfrey Chidyausiku. However, the commissioners were primarily ZANU PF apologists and this cast a huge shadow on its findings. The few non-ZANU PF commissioners unilaterally appointed by Mugabe rejected the offer to sit in the commission. The government differed in procedure from the NCA, which argued that constitution-making was supposed to be ‘people-driven’ and not led by politicians. However, it can also be seen that the NCA was advocating for a key role, if not the central role, which they knew the government would not accept due to the fact that ZANU PF felt that civil society organisations were receiving foreign funds to effect regime change in Zimbabwe. Thus battle lines were drawn between the government and the civil society, and the *Daily News* took the side of civil society organisations. The *Daily News* prophetically commented that the stance by the government to exclude the NCA meant that it had excluded ‘a very large constituency from participating in this crucial exercise and it would not be too pessimistic to predict that it will reap the whirlwind’.⁵⁷¹

In response to being excluded, the NCA ran a parallel outreach programme to gather views for the constitution and to draft its own constitution. In all this they found space in the country’s private newspapers especially the *Daily News* which published all the activities of

⁵⁷¹ The *Daily News*, ‘Bad start for commissioners’, 1 May 1999.

the NCA. In fact, all NCA adverts found space in the private newspapers as state-owned papers focused more on the activities of the commission. In addition, opinion articles by NCA members like Lovemore Madhuku and Morgan Tsvangirai readily found space in private newspapers, especially in the *Daily News*. These were the opinion-makers of the day. The government accused the *Daily News* and other pro-democracy groups of ganging against it. However, in an interview, Geoff Nyarota, editor-in-chief of the *Daily News* denied the existence of any tacit agreement between the newspaper and civil society groups:

The *Daily News* did not deliberately define the nature of the relationship between itself and pro-democracy groups. Our role was to keep the population, our readers as fully informed as possible about the issues of governance that pertained to their lives. If in doing so we gave voice to Madhuku...because it was important that people know what Madhuku was saying...that was not necessarily because we had a tacit agreement with Madhuku...he was just a source of news....Any press that seeks to professionally fulfil its mandate of informing people on important issues will inevitably highlight issues relating to the pro-democracy movement.⁵⁷²

However, the government accused the independent media of being mouth pieces of donor agencies and western countries that were seen to be hostile to Zimbabwe. According to Nyarota, the government saw press not as an ally in nation-building, but as an enemy.

In spite of such perceptions, the *Daily News* continued to scrutinise the constitution-making process by reporting on the activities of the commission although most of its reports were negative. For example on 19 June 2000 it had a leading story entitled 'Bulawayo students turn tables on commissioners' and on the 21st of the same month the leading story was 'Tough time for commissioners'. This was followed by an equally damning editorial on the 24th which attacked the whole outreach process and the draft that came out of it.

After wasting enormous amounts of money travelling around the country collecting people's inputs for the proposed new constitution, the leaders of the exercise, who made no attempt whatsoever to hide their partisanship, on realising that what the people wanted was at variance with the ruling party's designs for the country's governance, decided to base their final draft on the wishes of ZANU PF at the expense of the people. Consequently, what those who put together the draft constitution did was not only dangerously unpatriotic, but, a lot worse than that; it was a shameless betrayal of all the people of Zimbabwe.⁵⁷³

The *Daily News'* attack on the work of the commission was motivated by the perception that issues that were of importance to the majority were not included in the constitution whilst

⁵⁷² Interview with Geoff Nyarota, 23 December 2012.

⁵⁷³ The *Daily News*, 'Commission overstepping its mandate', 24 January 2000.

ZANU PF inserted its own issues. For example, most people who contributed during the commission's outreach programme didn't want an executive president and they wanted a two term limit for the president which was to apply retrospectively. This, in essence, meant that the people were looking for Mugabe to finally retire.

In addition to the controversial issue of when Mugabe was to retire, the constitutional drafters also fraudulently inserted a clause that empowered the government to seize commercial farms from the whites without compensation. The *Daily News*, to its credit, and unlike the state media managed to pick up and expose this anomaly to its readers. Resultantly, the *Daily News* resolved that it would lobby for a No vote when the draft constitution was put to the referendum test. Besides the *Daily News*, civil society organisations like the NCA also came out stating that they would campaign for a No vote. In response the Constitutional Commission went out of its way to make sure that the Yes vote would prevail:

We think it is important for the people, especially those who can vote, to have a copy in their hands and we are distributing these free of charge. We will have public meetings to explain the contents of the draft constitution and explain the difference between the current Lancaster House constitution and the draft. We will hire resource persons in each province who will work with civic groups that see the merit of the document.⁵⁷⁴

To further boost its chances of getting the draft constitution accepted, the commission appointed Professor Jonathan Moyo, an erstwhile government critic as its spokesperson. This was seen as an act of desperation by the *Daily News* which also attacked the decision by the commission to campaign for a Yes vote. It pointed out that the vote Yes campaign was testimony to the fact that the commissioners did not faithfully produce a document which articulated the people's aspirations. Even Eddison Zvobgo, one of the commissioners and ZANU PF's Secretary for Legal Affairs accepted that the draft constitution ignored the wishes of the people.⁵⁷⁵

The referendum was held from the 12-13th of February. On the voting day, a number of NCA activists and leaders were arrested and detained without charge. The *Daily News* reported widespread voter apathy and suggested that many people did not vote because they were not informed on the meanings of the two choices, Yes and No. Of the 5 million people eligible to vote, only 697 754 voted No, 578 210 voted Yes, whilst the rest abstained.⁵⁷⁶ The state media

⁵⁷⁴ The *Daily News*, 'Commission to Campaign Yes in referendum', 14 February 2000.

⁵⁷⁵ The *Daily News* 9 February 2000.

⁵⁷⁶ The *Daily News* 14 February 2000

blamed the defeat on white farmers whom it accused of lobbying for a No vote to protect their land from compulsory acquisition without compensation. This was partly confirmed by one farmer; although he went on to argue that land was not the only issue:

I voted mostly because of the land issue. You cannot just take land without some form of payment, but it is much more than that. Whites are suffering just as much as blacks in this country and its time for change.⁵⁷⁷

The interpretation of the referendum results was particularly interesting and prophetic to some extent. The *Daily News* reported that the outcome was a sign that people were fed up with ZANU PF, and it went a step further to call for its resignation. The *Daily News* went on to show that the voting patterns during the referendum suggested that ZANU PF would lose at least 58 seats in the event of an election.⁵⁷⁸ The *Daily News*' prediction just fell short by one seat as the MDC took 57 seats during the June 2000 Parliamentary elections.

Following the referendum results, readers of the *Daily News*, through letters to the editor, acknowledged the role the newspaper had played from the onset of the constitution making process to the voting days. The readers expressed gratitude to the *Daily News* 'for accurate information regarding the draft constitution and its real contents which helped Zimbabweans make a realistic choice based on facts'. However, this did not please the ruling party. One columnist in the *Daily News* predicted that ZANU PF was now on the prowl for scapegoats, especially members of the white community. He warned:

If last week's referendum is anything to go by, we are likely to experience predatory tactics masked in vitriolic verbal camouflage from some members of the ruling party as we approach the general elections. The main diet of choice will be members of the white community.⁵⁷⁹

The same fears were expressed by Brian Raftopoulos who said '...we should celebrate the No vote victory cautiously. We should take a moment to enjoy the moment; the moment is also one of danger...'⁵⁸⁰ Indeed, the danger would appear as the country geared itself for the general elections of June 2000. ZANU PF would take opportunity of this election to settle scores with the various actors it saw as responsible for its defeat.

⁵⁷⁷ The *Daily News* 17 February 2000.

⁵⁷⁸ The *Daily News*, 'Referendum result rock ZANU PF foundation', 17 February 2000.

⁵⁷⁹ T. C. Bassoppo-Moyo, 'Ruling party on the prowl for scapegoats', The *Daily News* 19 February 2000.

⁵⁸⁰ The *Daily News* 19 February 2000.

The *Daily News* and the Land Reform

Directly linked to the referendum were the farm invasions, a ZANU PF election gimmick that was fronted by the war veterans and rural communities just after the defeat of the referendum. As shown earlier, the popularity of ZANU PF had reached an all time low in the eyes of the electorate. In fact, the referendum defeat suffered by ZANU PF is seen by David Moore as the straw that finally broke the ZANU PF camel's back.⁵⁸¹ As noted in the previous section, the rejected new constitution had promised to ignore the 'willing buyer willing seller' arrangements that had been agreed at the 1979 Lancaster House constitutional talks. The rejection of the new constitution, ostensibly to safeguard land in the hands of the white farmers made the government condone the farm invasions which peaked in the year 2000. In addition, as Moore shows, ZANU PF's slogan for that year's parliamentary elections centered on land and was aptly named 'The land is the economy and the economy is the land'. According to Ezra Chitando, ZANU PF repackaged the land question and made it the central issue of the June 2000 and March 2002 elections and coining a number of slogans portraying the land as the key issue in Zimbabwean politics.⁵⁸² The treatment of the land as the key issue in the Zimbabwean crisis was not easily saleable to some constituencies and for ZANU PF to drive the message home they had to depend on the media to get its message across. Antagonists of the party also had their own interpretation and they had to look for the available media to counter the claims raised by ZANU PF. Thus, from March 2000, land was at the centre of a propaganda war in Zimbabwe with the state media supporting the land invasions whilst the private media was standing against the invasions. I now turn to how the land issue was covered by the *Daily News* and why they covered it in such a way. I am particularly going to explore the language the press deployed and how it differed from that of the state and its media and how this further engendered hostility between ZANU PF and MDC.

One of the immediate and probably retributive results of the rejection of the draft constitution was the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) whereby the war veterans and some landless peasants invaded and resettled themselves on land occupied by white farmers. The FTLRP attracted interests and coverage from both the local and international media and civil

⁵⁸¹ David Moore, 'Is the Land is the economy and the economy the land? Private Accumulation in Zimbabwe', in *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 19, 2, p. 255.

⁵⁸² Ezra Chitando, 'In the beginning was the Land!', *Appropriation of Religious Themes in Political Discourses in Zimbabwe*, *Africa: Journal of the International Africa Institute*, vol. 75, no. 2, 2005, p. 227.

society groups. Much of the coverage, however, tended to ignore the historical context of the land issue in Zimbabwe. Attention was only given to the fact that during the drafting of the constitution, ZANU PF had inserted a clause that would give the state the right to take land without compensation. But the land issue was more complicated than that.

At independence in 1980, some 6,000 white farmers owned 15.5 million hectares; 8,500 black farmers operated on a small scale held about 1.4 million hectares; and approximately 4.5 million communal farmers eked out subsistence livelihoods on 16.4 million hectares.⁵⁸³ Prior to 2000, land reform in Zimbabwe had focussed on the willing buyer willing seller policy instituted at the Lancaster House Conference, and enshrined in the constitution. However, not much land changed hands, as white farmers were either not willing to sell or peasants and the government didn't have (or, in the latter case, prioritize) the money to buy the land. This slow pace frustrated the former liberation fighters as well as the landless rural who launched a new style of land reform programme which was chaotic and marked by violent displacement of white farmers through the spontaneous occupation of farms.⁵⁸⁴ The opportunist political discourse was emphasizing the 'taking back' of land from the white farmers and its redistribution to the land hungry peasants and, to a smaller extent, to unemployed farm workers. Promoting access to land for the majority of the indigenous people was expected by the government to create stability in land property rights. With about 11 million hectares changing hands within a three-year period, it was the largest property transfer ever to occur in the region in peacetime.⁵⁸⁵ The FTLRP resulted in the displacement of nearly 4,000 white commercial farmers whose land had been transferred by the state to 7,200 black commercial farmers and 127,000 black recipients of small farms by October 2003.⁵⁸⁶

In spite of the need for land reform, the FTLRP had enemies from its inception for the manner in which the land take-over was carried out. Thus from the onset, the language used by the *Daily News* to describe the land reform conveyed their hostility towards the process.

⁵⁸³ Lloyd Sachikonye, 'The land is the economy: Revisiting the land question', *African Security Review*, 14, 3, 2005.

⁵⁸⁴ See J. Chaumba, Ian Scoones and Wolmer, E., 'From jambanja to planning: the reassertion of technocracy in land reform in south-eastern Zimbabwe?' *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 2003, 41, 4. Sam Moyo, 'The political economy of land acquisition and redistribution in Zimbabwe, 1990-1999', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 26, 1, 2000. Lloyd Sachikonye, 'Land Reform and Farm workers', in D. Harold-Barry (ed.), *Zimbabwe: The Past is the Future*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2004.

⁵⁸⁵ Lloyd Sachikonye, 'The land is the economy', 2005.

⁵⁸⁶ Joseph Mujere and Sylvester Dombo, 'Large scale investment projects and land grabs in Zimbabwe: The case of the Nuanetsi Ranch Ethanol Project', Paper presented at the International Conference on Global Land Grabbing, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, 6-8 April 2011.

The *Daily News* characterised the process in both news reporting and commentary as illegal and misguided. Describing the land reform and the violence that characterised it, the *Daily News* in a commentary of the 17th of March expressed the view that the government was ‘continuing on its trail of revenge against the people for saying No in the referendum, and seemed determined to let the country go to the dogs for the sake of ensuring that it wins the next elections’.⁵⁸⁷ In justifying the land invasions the authorities countered they were forced to act by the NO vote during the referendum.

We were betrayed by the urban dwellers who voted against the draft constitution. The draft addressed land issue and that is why we have moved in after its rejection. We have come to stay because this is our land.⁵⁸⁸

Although the government was quick to apportion blame for its referendum defeat to the white farmers, it has to be noted that 4000 whites, a tiny minority, were too few in numbers to have influenced the vote.⁵⁸⁹ This did not stop the war veterans from targeting white farmers and a number of them were murdered, whilst some farm workers were beaten, tortured and displaced. This happened in the presence of the police officers who refused to intervene, arguing that the matter was political and therefore out of their hands. The *Daily News* would carry reports of the invasions and sometimes the looting of goods from the white farms, even by the police officers.

After the invasions of 2000, Zimbabwe faced serious food shortages, especially in 2001. According to the *Daily News* and the commercial farmers, the land invasions were responsible for the downfall in production. In 2000, the government announced that it was going to import approximately 600 000 tonnes of maize to avert starvation among the people.⁵⁹⁰ The *Daily News* reported on the story with the following headline: ‘CFU boss breaks down over food’. The actual story featured the head of the Commercial Farmers Union saying:

While there are several reasons for reduced output, the major factor has been without doubt, the state of lawlessness prevailing in the commercial areas. Farmers have been prevented from planning and carrying out their business operations in the face of

⁵⁸⁷ The *Daily News* 17 March 2000.

⁵⁸⁸ The *Daily News* 17 March 2000.

⁵⁸⁹ The *Daily News*, 17 March 2000.

⁵⁹⁰ The *Daily News*, 2 August 2001.

violence, threats and abuse on their farms which has resulted in a great deal of uncertainty and loss of business confidence.⁵⁹¹

The private press, especially the *Daily News* also dwelt much on the effects of the violence on farms. The privately owned newspapers continued to give an analysis of the impact of farm invasion on the economy. The *Daily News* focused on the effects of the farm occupations on the tobacco selling season in an article, “Tobacco sales start slowly: Few farmers book space to sell crop at auction floors owing to the recent farm invasions” (*Daily News*, 17 April). The *Daily News* also addressed the issue: “Zimbabwe may face shortage of wheat” (2 May) and “Farm invasions: huge wheat imports expected” (5 May). All these stories were meant to capture the disruptive impact of the invasions and were meant to appeal to the government to restore law and order as well as security at the farms. The *Daily News* reported on the intended move by some commercial farmers to leave Zimbabwe for Mozambique. The newspaper suggested that ‘the move would enhance the socio-economic development of Mozambique’.⁵⁹² Thus the commercial farmers were one of the biggest subjects of news for the *Daily News*.

Critics who argue that the *Daily News* did not support the land reform are not wrong. This is evidenced by the fact that most of its headline stories criticised the process. It carried reports also from Africans and African organisations criticising the fast track land reform. The harshest criticism carried by the *Daily News* was from the opposition parties which accused ZANU PF of sponsoring the fast track land reform for political mileage.⁵⁹³ The view by opposition parties were echoed by scholars such as Martin Meredith, who argued that the land reform, for Mugabe, was a political weapon⁵⁹⁴ whilst for Sarah Chiumbu the land question presented ZANU PF with a chance to regain its credibility and legitimacy.⁵⁹⁵ While the opposition appreciated the need for fair land distribution, they however did not condone the party’s attempts to politicise the issue to its advantage and the manner in which the process was conducted. However, there have been suggestions that the *Daily News* deliberately and conveniently ignored the historical context to the land problem in Zimbabwe.

⁵⁹¹ The *Daily News*, ‘CFU boss breaks down over food’, 2 August 2001.

⁵⁹² The *Daily News*, ‘Commercial farmers want to leave for Mozambique’, 1 March 2001.

⁵⁹³ The *Daily News*, ‘Opposition parties condemn farm invasions’, 1 March 2000.

⁵⁹⁴ Martin Meredith, *Power, Plunder and Tyranny in Zimbabwe*, 2002, p. 144.

⁵⁹⁵ Sarah Chiumbu, ‘Re-defining the national agenda: Media and Identity-Challenges of building a new Zimbabwe’, p. 29.

The *Daily News*' coverage and comment roundly condemned the invasions. The paper illustrated the unlawfulness of the situation with a series of pictures from KweKwe showing war veterans and police "relaxing" in the farmhouse and "inspecting their 'new' computer and fax machine." While the *Daily News* along with the rest of the privately owned press (with the exception of *The Zimbabwe Mirror*) agreed that there was an urgent need for land distribution, they viewed the action by the war veterans as a misguided election gimmick by ZANU (PF). Of particular concern in the private press was the negative effect the invasions would have on investment, the upholding of the rule of law, the economy and Zimbabwe's international image. In one of the views by the newspapers' columnist Pius Wakatama, the *Daily News* commented on the necessity of the land reform and condemned the manner in which the whole process was done. Wakatama particularly condemned the action by the government to unilaterally amend the constitution by inserting a clause that allowed the government to take land without compensation. He fumed:

The decision to amend the draft constitution to allow the government to seize privately owned commercial farms, without compensation is ill conceived and fraught with danger. It will effectively squander any credibility this country might still have in the international community as a rational state worthy of support. Nobody in his right mind questions the need for land reform to correct the imbalances of the colonial past...⁵⁹⁶

On the whole, the *Daily News* focused on the negatives associated with the way the land reform was conducted. But there is absolutely no evidence to suggest that the newspaper was against the resettlement of the majority black Zimbabweans. In fact, it is again the polarity within the media that led to the spread of the theory that the *Daily News* was anti-land reform. These were falsehoods perpetuated by the state media which failed to critique the whole process. For its part the *Daily News* reported and even exposed multi-ownership of farms by the ZANU PF elite. For example the *Daily News* of the 19th of July 1999 carried a headline: 'Top Officials grabbing best farms'. In the story, one can see that the newspaper was sympathetic to the plight of ordinary farmers who in spite of being in need of land were not considered when that land was available.

Such reporting by the *Daily News* generated a vicious response from the government. Through its spokespersons and leaders, the government responded with carefully worded responses and language that reinforced the government's unforgiving stance to the white

⁵⁹⁶ Pius Wakatama, 'Zimbabwe needs an equitable land redistribution programme', *The Daily News*, 19 July 1999.

farmers who were not only losing their land, but were being victimised, beaten and even murdered. The most vitriol came from the Minister of Information and Publicity who accused the white farmers of sponsoring the *Daily News* to write against the land reform:

After all, white farmer capital equipped the paper's newsroom and this is pay back time! Clearly the foreign ownership and white patronage arrangements have had a direct bearing on the editorial out-look and control of ANZ. For how else can we explain the editorial behaviour of a peasant-born African editor playing a willing host to such racial stereotypes, while denying the immediate interests of his own people defined by land?⁵⁹⁷

The same language used by Jonathan Moyo was also used by the war veterans when they routinely attacked *Daily News* reporters. In one instance a *Daily News* photographer was attacked for covering the farm invasions, a war veteran beat her up accusing her and her colleagues for being misguided for siding with white capitalists and colonialists who had stolen land from the Africans. Making reference to white farmers as 'colonialists' and 'thieves', some of whom were born in Zimbabwe was meant to arouse and incite the war veterans to be steadfast in the quest to reclaim the land. It specifically justified the violence associated with the land reform.

The violence that characterised the farm invasions in Zimbabwe seemed to have been sanctioned from above. Statements from President Mugabe and senior government officials betrayed their claim that the land reform was peaceful. Jonathan Moyo is said to have stated that 'white infiltration' and British counter intelligence ploys were responsible for the beatings of white farmers and the war veterans whom he characterised as disciplined.⁵⁹⁸ In an interview with Reuters Television, President Mugabe refused to act against the ex-combatants but he went on to threaten violence against the white farmers:

There have been very few cases of violence, but if the farmers start to be angry and start to be violent, then of course they will get that medicine delivered to them. And it can be very, very, very severe, but we don't want to get there.⁵⁹⁹

The above statements imply that the farmers were responsible for the violence. These sentiments were also supported by Joyce Mujuru, then Minister of Lands and Agriculture, now Vice President of Zimbabwe. Mujuru argued that rather than the war veterans starting the violence, they were merely retaliating after being attacked by farm workers. By deploying

⁵⁹⁷ Zimbabwe Parliamentary Debates, Second reading AIPPA, vol. 28, No. 48, 31 January 2002

⁵⁹⁸ The *Daily News* 1 May 2000.

⁵⁹⁹ The *Daily News*, 'Mugabe threatens violence', 29 March 2000.

words such as ‘retaliating’, Vice President Mujuru was exonerating the farm invaders from the blame and in essence condoning violence perpetrated by the war veterans.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the social, political and economic environment that gave rise to the birth of the *Daily News*, a newspaper which went on to challenge the authority of both ZANU PF and the state-owned media. Operating under the motto ‘telling it as it is’, the *Daily News* was regarded by many as an alternative media to the propaganda churned out by the state media. The *Daily News* went on to play a pivotal role in the 2000 referendum and the elections of 2000 and 2002. Inevitably, and for the way in which it exposed the shortcomings of the ruling ZANU PF and its association with foreign investors, the *Daily News* was variously labelled as the opposition press and the enemy of the state. In the eyes of the government, the *Daily News* had become a subversive publication that had to be silenced at all costs. The chapter has discussed the difficult operating environment its reporters faced as well as the harassment by the law enforcement agencies. As a result, the *Daily News* would be bombed, its journalists arrested, and a law crafted to silence the paper.

The chapter also discussed the paper’s association with the MDC and other pro-democracy groups that were in existence at the time. Personnel at the newspaper flatly denied the existence of any alliance with such organisations. They however pointed out that the political polarisation in the country was reflected on the country’s media as well. As such it meant that ZANU PF obtained space in the state media which was closed to the MDC, which in turn made use of the private media. Analysts also pointed to the fact that with the state media fully behind ZANU PF, the *Daily News* and other private media had little choice but to be anti-government in outlook. They point to the fact that ZANU PF was responsible for the economic and political collapse and as a result they deserved the scrutiny they got from the media. More importantly, however, they point to the fact that the press could only perform its watchdog role by focusing on the activities of the ruling party. On the whole, I believe that the *Daily News* took an anti-government stance from the referendum to the fast track land reform. This was informed by the political environment in which the newspaper was born, for it did not allow it to be neutral. Story coverage, commentaries and analysis by various

contributors points to the rhetoric preached by the *Daily News* that it told it as it is without fear or favour.

CHAPTER SIX

‘TELLING IT LIKE IT IS’? THE *DAILY NEWS* AND THE POLITICAL CRISIS IN ZIMBABWE 1999-2003

Introduction

The turn of the last century saw Zimbabwe plunging into an economic and political crisis, a crisis in which battle lines were drawn ideologically and through civil and state violence. This battle was waged, in part, through the media, both private and state-owned as well as the public spaces in which competing interpretations of the crises were articulated. Formed at a time when political opposition parties were almost non-existent, the *Daily News* came to the fore as the most articulate voice against Mugabe’s almost 20 years rule. Later it would become the main medium of expression that was available to the newly formed Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). To pro-democracy groups critical of the Mugabe regime, the *Daily News* was seen as an alternative media whilst to the government and ZANU PF it was a subversive publication that sought to undermine the government.

This chapter focuses on the relationship between the *Daily News* and the state. It does this through a content analysis of the way the newspaper reported and interpreted the political crisis that befell Zimbabwe during this time. This political crisis manifested itself through electoral violence and contested election results. As an independent newspaper, the *Daily News* provided a counter-narrative to the state media’s reporting of the crisis, and gave voice and space to the opposition and civil society in an effort to understand the crisis. In the process the *Daily News* was labelled an opposition press and this in the long run informed the way the state responded to its reporting. In the end, the operating environment of the *Daily News* became dangerous due to legal and extra-legal measures imposed on the newspaper, its editors and journalists. This chapter is organised into three sections. The first section addresses the newspaper’s reporting and representation of violence. Section two focuses on the coverage of the 2000 parliamentary and 2002 presidential elections, whilst the third section zeroes in on state responses.

The *Daily News*' coverage of electoral violence

Part of the crisis that befell Zimbabwe manifested itself through election-related violence as well as violence during the farm invasions. I have dealt with the farm invasions in the previous chapter. Zimbabwean elections since independence have always been characterised by politically motivated violence. This violence escalated in 2000 just after the ZANU PF government had lost the referendum to the MDC and its allies in the civil society like the National Constitutional Assembly. These bodies had campaigned for a No vote on the basis that ZANU PF wanted Mugabe to remain in power with executive powers. If accepted, the draft constitution would have given ZANU PF the right to redistribute land held by white commercial farmers without compensation. Violence escalated from 2000 onwards owing to the fact that unlike other political parties, the MDC under highly extra ordinary circumstances had managed to establish itself as the party of the opposition.⁶⁰⁰ Whilst ZANU PF had managed to dismiss earlier opposition parties, basic conditions had changed dramatically towards the end of the 1990s as the economy began to collapse owing to the failure of the structural adjustment programmes and mismanagement by ZANU PF. The conflicts that ensued between the government and the workers over remuneration and other benefits created the necessary space for the formation of a labour-backed MDC in 1999.⁶⁰¹ To Geoff Nyarota the crisis in Zimbabwe manifested itself through rampant corruption, a decline in the standards of living, a breakdown in the rule of law, political violence, and widespread abuse of basic human rights and shortages of basic commodities.⁶⁰² The crisis on the one hand gave the MDC support whilst on the other hand it undermined the public standing and image of the ruling ZANU PF.⁶⁰³

The formation of the MDC at such a time when the popularity of ZANU PF was waning prompted a violent response from the ruling party. Brian Raftopoulos argues that as a multi-class, cross racial alliance, the MDC confronted the state with a language of democratisation which resonated with large sections of the population and had turned the constitutional

⁶⁰⁰ Sylvester Dombo, 'Politics of Exclusion: Public Party Funding and Electoral Corruption in Zimbabwe', in Jonathan Mendilow (ed.) *Money, Corruption, and Political Competition in Established and Emerging Democracies*, Lexington Books, p. 169.

⁶⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

⁶⁰² Geoff Nyarota, p. 255.

⁶⁰³ *Ibid.*

referendum into a plebiscite on ZANU PF's rule.⁶⁰⁴ In spite of its popularity, ZANU PF viewed the MDC contemptuously as Raftopoulos argues elsewhere:

For the Mugabe regime the emergence of the opposition MDC in 1999, was a manifestation of foreign British and White influence in Zimbabwean politics. This construction of the opposition thus placed them outside of a legitimate national narrative, and thrust it into the territory of an alien, Un-African and treasonous force that 'justified' the coercive use of the state in order to contain and destroy such a force.⁶⁰⁵

By white influence reference was made to white commercial farmers. They became a target of ZANU PF vitriol for according to Angus Selby, they had urged 'farm workers to reject the constitution, and by printing T-shirts and leaflets calling for a No vote'.⁶⁰⁶ Thus the 2000 referendum was soon followed by well-orchestrated, party-driven and government assisted violent land invasions and on a national scale targeting white commercial farmers who had actively worked for the No vote. Also targeted was the MDC and its supporters for being regarded as counter-revolutionary, illegitimate and 'puppets' of the western countries.⁶⁰⁷ Deploying elements of the police, intelligence service, army, the war veterans, party supporters and the youth militia, the ruling party inflicted enormous damage on the personnel and structures of the opposition MDC. According to Eldred Masunungure, in the face of real danger to its twenty-year hold on power, the ruling party crafted a total counter-strategy with violence as the chief weapon,⁶⁰⁸ whilst for Elaine Windrich the government's response to the crisis was to proclaim the 'Third Chimurenga', which was intended to divert attention from ZANU PF's economic mismanagement and corruption and to bolster its waning popularity.⁶⁰⁹

Besides physical violence, other forms of violence were of a psychological nature including intimidation of members of opposition parties, use of abusive language and generally instilling fear and despondency in them.⁶¹⁰ According to the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) the independent media covered incidences of politically motivated violence

⁶⁰⁴ Brian Raftopoulos, 'The Crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2000', p. 211.

⁶⁰⁵ Brian Raftopoulos, "We are really sleepwalking, corpses, zombies.....we are carrying other people's world view." *Nation, Race and History in Zimbabwean Politics*, Unpublished Paper, Institute of Development Studies, University of Zimbabwe, 2004.

⁶⁰⁶ Angus Selby, 'Commercial Farmers and the State: Interest Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe', D. Phil. Thesis, Oxford University, 2006, p. 277.

⁶⁰⁷ Blessing Miles-Tendi, 'Making History in Mugabe's Zimbabwe: Politics, Intellectuals and the Media', http://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/programmes/africaProgramme/events/conferences/africaCWMay2829/papers_pdfs/tendi.pdf. Accessed 21 October 2013.

⁶⁰⁸ Eldred Masunungure, 'Travails of opposition politics in Zimbabwe since Independence', in , p. 177.

⁶⁰⁹ Elaine Windrich, 'Broadcasting in Zimbabwe: An Historical Perspective', p. 85.

⁶¹⁰ ZESN, 2000 Parliamentary Election Report, ZESN, Harare, 2002, 21.

ranging from beatings to killings. In this section I analyse the *Daily News*' coverage of that violence, the language it deployed and with what effect. Important to note here is that the violence was selectively covered by the state media. In most cases the state media totally ignored it and when they covered it, it was blamed on the opposition MDC. In this context, the private press became the only source of alternative explanations for the violence.

The perpetrators of violence targeted the MDC and those deemed to be sympathetic to it such as teachers, nurses, white farmers and their black workers. In addition, this violence was meant to isolate and alienate the MDC from its supporters and prospective followers. This was aptly explained by Learnmore Jongwe, the party's spokesperson when he said: 'violence is escalating and is preventing us from accessing the electorate. We have been sealed off from farming areas but ZANU PF is free to hold rallies and cheat the farm workers'.⁶¹¹ In addition, violence was also rife in the rural areas where the MDC was trying to make major inroads into what were originally ZANU PF strongholds. The urban areas were spared because they were deemed to have already converted to the MDC and it was believed that no amount of intimidation could persuade urbanites to vote for ZANU PF.

Civil servants such as teachers and nurses were accused of campaigning for the opposition MDC. According to a report by the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, over 550 rural schools were disrupted in the second term (from April), as teachers, pupils and rural opposition members fled violence, intimidation and 'political re-education'.⁶¹²

In its reports, the *Daily News* characterised the attack on teachers as resembling a war. Such words as 'bloodshed', 'mayhem' were used to describe the violent activities of the war veterans and the youths. In one of its commentaries the editor rhetorically asked: 'is this just an election campaign or a civil war?'⁶¹³ It can be noted that the *Daily News* reported on electoral violence within the broader discourses of the breakdown of law and order in the country culminating in the violations of basic human rights.

On the 1st of April 2002, the *Daily News* carried the following headline: 1 000 flee ZANU PF terror in Zaka, Gutu. The report indicated that the ZANU PF 'militia' had unleashed a reign of terror that targeted MDC supporters and that about '500 teachers and MDC activists including

⁶¹¹ The *Daily News*, 'Violence on the increase despite presence of observers', 16 June 2000.

⁶¹² Human Rights NGO Forum, Human Rights and Zimbabwe's June election: A Report by the Research Unit of the Human Rights NGO Forum, Special Report 1, January 2001, p. 27.

⁶¹³ See The *Daily News* 11 February 2002.

polling agents have so far fled the district fearing for their lives'.⁶¹⁴ In addition an almost similar report appeared on the 1st of June 2002, the newspaper gave gory details of the brutality of the war veterans which culminated in the closure of about seven schools in Mberengwa district. One teacher explained what was happening in Mberengwa:

The roadblock is manned by youths and ex-combatants wearing ZANU PF T-shirts. Their aim is to cordon off the area to any MDC influence. Passengers are ordered out of the buses and then searched to find out if they hold ZANU PF cards. Those found without these cards are assaulted with iron bars and forced to buy the cards. Several houses belonging to known or suspected MDC supporters have been burnt and villagers taken to nearby invaded farms for "political re-education".⁶¹⁵

In most cases, the war veterans just intimidated the teachers to extort them. For example, the *Daily News* of the 5th of June 2000 carried a story about the war veterans blackmailing rural teachers. In the story the war veterans were said to have demanded about ZW\$6 000 in 'protection fees' from the teachers.⁶¹⁶

The *Daily News* in its coverage of the political violence especially during election times contradicted reports by election observers whom the *Daily News* accused of enjoying the comfort of hotels in the towns yet people in the rural areas and farms were being attacked. In a report headlined 'Terror Spreads', of the 1st of March 2002, the *Daily News* reported that 'several people were injured or displaced in gruesome cases of violence and torture throughout the country. This report was meant to discredit Kaire Mbuende, the head of the Namibian election observer mission who had accused the independent press in Zimbabwe of exaggerating incidences of violence which to him was on the decline'.⁶¹⁷ To further discredit him, the *Daily News* further solicited comments from two organisations whose members had been at the receiving end of politically motivated violence. The MDC described Mbuende's statement as most 'unfortunate and uncalled for'; while the ZCTU said they were 'nauseating and irritating'.⁶¹⁸ The ZCTU leader, Lovemore Matombo further attacked the Mbuende and other SADC observers: 'we are sick and tired of these people. We, Zimbabweans, are being beaten, raped, tortured and killed. We know the situation better than they do'.⁶¹⁹

⁶¹⁴ The *Daily News* 1 April 2002.

⁶¹⁵ The *Daily News* 1 June 2000.

⁶¹⁶ The *Daily News* 5 June 2000.

⁶¹⁷ The *Daily News* 1 March 2002.

⁶¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁹ *Ibid.*

As electoral violence continued unabated, the *Daily News* continued its coverage and in some instances invited columnists to castigate such violence. One such columnist was Pius Wakatama. Writing in his column on Monday 19 June 2000, Wakatama characterised the impending election as a struggle between good and evil. He lamented that the parliamentary election had been turned into a 'virtual war with the ruling party treating its opponents as enemies to be physically eliminated'.⁶²⁰ Such a view was reinforced by one reader of the *Daily News* in a letter to the editor who drew parallels between Zimbabwe under Mugabe and Uganda under Idi Amin:

If Mugabe is permitted to continue with his grabbing tactics along with his more severe methods in crushing any opposition, then Zimbabweans of every colour, race and religion will be forced to endure the same fate Ugandans suffered under Idi Amin's dictatorship.⁶²¹

Electoral violence led to the displacement and deaths of many opposition supporters. However, there is no agreement on the number of victims and who was responsible, although the *Daily News* apportioned the blame to ZANU PF. The following story taken from the *Daily News* of the 31st of May 2000 reflects such conflicts:

Police said 11 people had been killed in political violence despite overwhelming evidence of at least 26 people who have perished in the disturbances. Chief Superintendent Wayne Bvudzijena said as of 24 May, their figures show 10 people who have perished in disturbances. The latest murder was of a ZANU PF official in Beatrice. But officials of MDC said Tedius Rukuni, a member of the party, was killed by suspected ZANU PF militants in Bikita on Monday night. All along the police had maintained that only 10 people were killed in political violence. Yet human rights organisations have recorded at least 26 deaths, mostly MDC supporters. But Bvudzijena said the MDC was responsible for 115 of the reported 220 political disturbances since January. Again, this is contrary to known information that ZANU PF was behind most of the clashes and the violence country-wide. The Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights) and the Non-Governmental Organisation Forum, in a report on violence since February, concluded ZANU PF supporters were the main culprits. Amani Trust, an experienced violence monitoring group, has contradicted the police statistics, holding ZANU PF as the major offenders.⁶²²

The above is just one example of the differing representations of violence between the NGOs and the police. As can be seen, state institutions such as the police were quick to assign responsibility for violence and murders to the MDC whilst non-governmental organisations and the *Daily News* ascribed the violence to ZANU PF.

⁶²⁰ The *Daily News* 19 June 2000.

⁶²¹ The *Daily News* 23 June 2000.

⁶²² The *Daily News*, 31 May 2000.

The private media saw its role as that of reporting the reality of political violence being experienced by ordinary Zimbabweans. One informant pointed out that the *Daily News* offices resembled a police station as many victims of political violence lodged their complaints to the press.⁶²³ This was so because the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) would arrest all those MDC supporters who reported on political violence. The victims of political violence saw the private press as a means of getting justice in the absence of a neutral police. The public media on the other hand downplayed or largely ignored incidents that showed ZANU PF supporters in a bad light. Had it not been for the private press in general and the *Daily News* in particular, our knowledge of electoral violence would be very limited. The activities of the *Daily News* in exposing state-driven violence in conjunction with electoral coverage generated a mixed bag of responses from the government.

The *Daily News*' Coverage of the 2000 and 2002 Elections

Towards the end of 1999, the *Daily News* carried a modest but controversial survey urging people to complete a questionnaire indicating which political party and candidate they would vote for in the 2000 elections. The survey was designed along the lines of the Gallup poll, a statistical sampling of public opinion by the US Institute of Public Opinion.⁶²⁴ Only 164 people responded to this newspaper poll. Based on the sample, the results of the poll were that Mugabe would lose the presidential elections by a margin of 80% had elections been held on the given day. The responses to the survey on the 2000 elections were analysed and interpreted with the help of statisticians at University of Zimbabwe. In this voluntary poll, 60 people indicated that they were going vote for the Movement for Democratic Change, 55 for Zimbabwe Union of Democrats, 11 for ZANU PF, 8 for ZAPU, 3 for the United Parties, 14 said they would not vote for any party while 11 were undecided as to which party they would vote for. The story aroused ZANU PF's wrath and they dismissed the poll survey as scientifically invalid. The *Herald* also attacked the poll and reported that a local company affiliated with Gallup International had written to the *Daily News* demanding clarification on a number of issues and also stated that they would seek legal opinion if it found the *Daily News* survey not consistent with Gallup poll ethics and requirements. However, it was

⁶²³ Interview with Francis Harahwa, 4 February 2012

⁶²⁴ The *Daily News*, 'ZANU PF loses in poll survey', 14 January 2000

revealed later that, apparently the *Herald* had cooked up the story to discredit the *Daily News*.⁶²⁵ The editor of the *Daily News* wrote:

If the *Daily News* wanted to manipulate the results of the survey the paper would have inflated the figures and claimed that, say, 20 000 people had responded. In the circumstances, a total of 164 people responded and the experts analysed the available responses. We were shocked by the anti-ZANU PF sentiment expressed. We knew we would stir a hornet's nest by publishing the results of the survey. But we could not have swept them under the carpet to please ZANU PF and the *Herald*. We are certain that if the outcome of the survey had been in favour of ZANU PF and Mugabe, we would be heroes and comrades today.⁶²⁶

Even organisations that were seen to be anti-ZANU PF condemned the survey. One such organisation was the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ), which pointed out that the number of respondents (164) was problematic. The reservations on the survey by organisations that were seemingly pro-MDC is understandable due to the fact that the numbers of those who participated were too few to draw conclusions from in a country of around six million voters. It would seem the *Daily News* was sensationalising these findings with the desired objective to influence the voting during the actual election as well as to increase the sales of the newspaper.

To Ibbo Mandaza, it seemed likely that, in an effort to capitalise on the popular mood during election, the *Daily News* was using the survey to increase its sales and stir things up.⁶²⁷ Whatever the motive, it did generate the interest of the reading public. In publishing a poll that predicted victory for a new political party, the *Daily News* set the tone for the 2000 parliamentary election. The *Daily News* also educated people on the need to register to vote. In one of its editorials, the newspaper stated that those people who voted No during the constitutional referendum were also implicitly voting No to ZANU PF. Such inferences betrayed the *Daily News*' motto of 'telling it as it is without fear or favour'. What is apparent from the newspapers' reportage and analysis is a carefully planned agenda that aimed, on the one hand, to spruce the image of the opposition and, on the other, vilifying ZANU PF. The newspaper appeared to be trying to set the agenda of the elections in this way by indicating that the incumbent had lost support to the opposition thereby influencing the electorate to vote in a particular manner.

⁶²⁵ The *Daily News*, 'Herald cooked up story on the *Daily News*', 20 January 2000.

⁶²⁶ The *Daily News* 20 January 2000.

⁶²⁷ Interview with Ibbo Mandaza, 20 February 2013.

Whilst the *Daily News* was tacitly encouraging the people to vote for the MDC, the war veterans were threatening to go to war if ZANU PF lost the polls to a party that was being viewed as a front for Zimbabwe's former colonisers. This thinking was aptly represented by President Robert Mugabe when he said:

The MDC should never be judged or characterised by its black trade union face; by its youthful student face; by its salaried black suburban junior professionals; never by its rough and violent high-density lumpen elements. It is immovably and implacably moored in the colonial yesteryear and embraces wittingly or unwittingly the repulsive ideology of return to white settler rule. MDC is as old and as strong as the forces that control it; that converges on it and control it; that drive and direct; indeed that support, sponsor and spot it. It is a counter revolutionary Trojan horse contrived and nurtured by the very inimical forces that enslaved and oppressed our people yesterday.⁶²⁸

This demonisation of the MDC found expression in the state controlled media. It also gave rise to the use of hate language against the MDC as they were seen as 'stooges', 'sell-outs' who wanted to return the country to its former colonisers. The MDC was further ostracised for being anti-national as it sought to advance imperialism.⁶²⁹ It was left to the private dailies and weeklies to counter such myths and propaganda from the state media.

The *Daily News* also paid particular attention to the pre-election period. It sought to portray the Registrar-General as partisan and incompetent to manage elections in Zimbabwe. The *Daily News* exposed the bad state of the voters' roll and how such a scenario was ideal for the incumbent whilst disadvantaging the opposition. The *Daily News* articles, "Voters' roll in shambles, says MDC" (29 May), "Voters roll in a mess" (31 May), "Candidate missing from register" (2 June) and "Voters not amused" (2 June) stated that the voters' roll had many omissions. Such articles mainly quoted the MDC and its president as the source of the news with the Registrar-General only responding to these accusations.

In the elections held on 24 and 25 June 2000, ZANU PF won 62 seats, the MDC 57 and ZANU NDONGA 1. ZANU PF would increase its legislators through a provision for president to appoint 20 non-constituency legislators. At least 30 people, most of them opposition supporters, were killed in pre-election violence. Even a pro-ZANU PF African-Caribbean and Pacific election observer group urged the government to probe the pre-

⁶²⁸ Robert Mugabe, *Inside the Third Chimurenga*, Government of Zimbabwe, Harare, 2001, p. 88.

⁶²⁹ Last Moyo, 'The dearth of public debate: Policy, polarities and positional reporting in Zimbabwe's news media', in Wallace Chuma and Dumisani Moyo, *Media policy in a changing Southern Africa: Critical Reflections on media reforms in the global age*, UNISA Press, Pretoria, 2010, p. 117.

election violence, including deaths and reports of voter intimidation and the attack on opposition candidates.⁶³⁰ The European Union (EU) blamed ZANU PF, arguing that the party was sanctioning violence. Although the MDC failed to win the overall majority, the *Daily News* in their editorial saw the parliamentary results as a ‘wholesale rejection of 20 years of ZANU PF’s arrogance and misrule, especially when it is recalled the people preferred a party barely a year old’.⁶³¹ Such editorials reveal that the newspaper was hoping for an MDC win. Nyarota in his book unashamedly maintains that the *Daily News* had consistently campaigned for political change and that the election result notwithstanding the MDC loss, had given the *Daily News* a major boost.⁶³² Testimony to this was the fact that during the election campaign, the *Daily News*’ sales rose phenomenally from 30 000 daily copies to 127 000 copies.⁶³³

The framing of the 2002 presidential elections by the *Daily News* was not dissimilar to the one it took during the parliamentary elections. In this instance it focused more on state security institutions, primarily the armed forces and the police. It accused these security forces of being partisan and working in cohorts with ZANU PF. On the 9th of January 2002, the Commander of the armed forces, General Vitalis Zvinavashe, was quoted in the state media saying that the country’s security organizations would only support political leaders who:

... pursue Zimbabwean values, traditions (and) beliefs for which thousands of lives were lost in pursuit of Zimbabwe’s hard-won independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and national interest. To this end, let it be known that the highest office on (sic) the land is a ‘straightjacket’ whose occupant is expected to observe the objectives of the liberation struggle. “We will, therefore, not accept, let alone support or salute anyone with a different agenda that threatens (the) very existence of our sovereignty, our country and our people.”⁶³⁴

This was in apparent reference to Morgan Tsvangirai who did not fight in the war of liberation. According to Ranger, Tsvangirai was regularly mocked for having failed to take part in the liberation struggle.⁶³⁵ There were indications from senior ZANU PF officials including president Mugabe that there would be a coup if the MDC won the elections.

⁶³⁰ The *Daily News*, ‘Probe pre-election violence’, 29 June 2000.

⁶³¹ The *Daily News*, ‘Politicians must never take voters for granted’, 29 June 2000.

⁶³² Geoff Nyarota, *Against the Grain*, p. 248.

⁶³³ *Ibid.*

⁶³⁴ Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation Television, News@8, Wednesday 9 January 2002.

⁶³⁵ Terrence Ranger, p. 220.

The *Daily News* was seen to be pro-MDC and anti-ZANU PF in its coverage of election issues between 2000 and its closure in 2003. For example, the MMPZ in its report of the period leading to the 2002 Presidential elections observed that:

The Daily News had the highest number of articles, most of these criticising the government's intention to amend the Electoral Act with 20 stories out of 33 stories criticizing the amendments. The paper seemed to be biased as its sources and quotations were mainly MDC officials, the NCA officials as well as ZESN officials without giving much room for ZANU PF or government voices. For instance, 18 voices were either MDC, NCA and other alternative voices while only 9 ZANU PF voices were quoted.⁶³⁶

However, its chief editor Geoff Nyarota denies that the *Daily News* was biased towards the MDC. He says the problem was structural and emerged from the policies of the state itself. In fact Nyarota in his biography claims that 'whereas the *Herald* denied all parties except ZANU PF a platform, we provided one for all political organisations including the opposition.'⁶³⁷ In addition, the ZANU PF government refused to flight adverts in the *Daily News*, because they accused the paper of supporting the MDC. The state media was barred from carrying MDC's campaign messages. The MDC diverted all its adverts to the *Daily News* and other private media whilst ZANU PF used state media. Furthermore, government officials and civil servants were barred from giving interviews to the *Daily News*.

If the *Daily News* argued through its editor that accepting MDC political adverts did not in anyway reflect the newspaper's support for the MDC, then the editorials soon after the elections contradicted this. Following the elections held from the 9th to the 11th of March in which President Mugabe was declared the winner with 1 685 212 votes compared to Morgan Tsvangirai's 1 258 401 the following headlines appeared on the 14th of March: 'SADC observers condemn poll'; 'US says election was fundamentally flawed'; 'Harare feels robbed and Bulawayo residents declare Mugabe's win null and void'. In its editorial of the same day titled 'The Tragic reality of a Mugabe election victory', the editor expressed disbelief to Mugabe's victory:

The economy is in tatters largely because his [Mugabe's] government has stubbornly clung to Stone Age economic policies, where profligacy and corruption go hand in

⁶³⁶ MMPZ, Public Information and Electoral Process, October 2001- December 2001, MMPZ, 2001, p. 6.

⁶³⁷ Geoff Nyarota, *Against the grain*, p. 256.

hand. There are massive food shortages, because his government's policies are not rooted in reality but political expediency.⁶³⁸

The MDC was absolved of the blame for the electoral loss. Instead the newspaper pointed to extenuating circumstances beyond the party's control:

There are many constituencies where many eligible voters could not vote, either because ZANU PF thugs prevented them doing so, or because their names had mysteriously disappeared from the rolls. All this, taken in tandem with state-sponsored violence against all critics of the Government, including the independent press, made for an election which could not unreservedly be endorsed as free and fair. Legislation passed by the government before the election...was deliberately designed to sabotage the chances of the opposition. The General Laws Amendment Act, under which the Electoral Act was amended, banned voter education by anyone other than the government, among other restrictive provisions. The Public Order and Security Act made it well-nigh impossible for the opposition to hold political meetings. In fact there were so many impediments placed in the path of the opposition it is a tribute to their courage, patriotism and dedication that they gave ZANU PF such a scare.⁶³⁹

On the 15th, the *Daily News* carried another editorial in which the editor decried the tactics of ZANU PF during the polls which intimidated a sizeable number of 'unsophisticated' rural folks to vote for it. It characterised ZANU PF's victory as victory against the people. No attempts were however made by the *Daily News* to look at faults within the opposition MDC that could have possibly contributed to its defeat.

The coverage of the 2000 and 2002 elections has brought to the fore debate on the role of newspapers in Zimbabwe during election times. Wallace Chuma has studied the political roles of newspapers on the 2000 parliamentary elections in Zimbabwe whereby he identified three different ways in which this election was framed. These approaches, he contends, were 'patriotic', 'oppositional' and 'independent nationalists'.⁶⁴⁰ I have briefly mentioned Ranger's use of the term patriotic journalism in the previous chapter, and Chuma's work illustrates its meaning with regard to the *Herald*, which laboured to delegitimize the opposition and sections of civil society ahead of the polls, playing into a politics of loyalty by presenting the elections as moments of struggle between patriots and traitors.⁶⁴¹ In the context of the Zimbabwean crisis, the state media articulated who the enemy of Zimbabwe was and their agenda. In this case, the enemy included the white minority, the MDC, non-

⁶³⁸ The *Daily News* 14 March 2002.

⁶³⁹ The *Daily News* 14 March 2002.

⁶⁴⁰ Wallace Chuma, 'Mediating the 2000 Elections in Zimbabwe: Competing Journalisms in a Society at the Crossroads', *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism*, 29, 1, 2008, p. 26.

⁶⁴¹ Wallace Chuma, 'Mediating the 2000 Elections in Zimbabwe', 2008, p. 27.

governmental organisations, the independent press, and externally Britain, European Union, Commonwealth and the United States.⁶⁴² These were said to have formed an unholy alliance which caused the country's economic misfortunes and were eager to bring about 'regime change' in Zimbabwe.⁶⁴³

The next category depicting the way newspapers have covered issues in Zimbabwe is known as independent nationalists. Chuma classifies the *Zimbabwe Mirror*, which was owned by Ibbo Mandaza, as independent nationalists. This newspaper stated that its editorial line was nationalist and that it was not partisan in its reporting. According to Chuma, it attempted with some success to provide nuanced and fairly balanced news coverage to the 2000 elections.⁶⁴⁴ There was also an effort to cover smaller parties unlike the case in the *Herald* and *Daily News* that largely focused on either the MDC or ZANU PF. To this model I should also add the *Tribune* Newspaper which was established in 2002 and owned by Kindness Paradza. According to Paradza, 'after discovering the polarisation of the political environment leading to the 2000 election, we launched the *Tribune* and I gave my editors the brief to take a middle-of-the-road approach whereby they would criticise both the MDC and ZANU PF'.⁶⁴⁵ It should also be noted that although Kindness Paradza was and is a Member of Parliament for ZANU PF, this did not stop the then Minister of Information and Publicity, Jonathan Moyo, from closing his paper after appearing to have supported freedom of expression in his address in parliament.

The *Daily News* falls into the third category identified by Chuma as the 'oppositional'. With its roots in the late 1990s, oppositional journalism, as Chuma posits, became strong after 2000 in response to the closure of democratic space for the press and civil society by an increasingly paranoid and authoritarian state.⁶⁴⁶ It is named as such because it championed the cause of the opposition during the elections. Oppositional journalism laid the problems bedevilling Zimbabwe at the feet of ZANU PF and saw the salvation of the country coming with the MDC. Edison Madondo's view is that reporters working for the *Daily News* never acknowledged that ZANU PF could do something good or that the opposition deserved to be

⁶⁴² Elaine Windrich, 'Broadcasting in Zimbabwe: An Historical Perspective', in Dumisani Moyo and Wallace Chuma (eds.), *Media Policy in changing Southern Africa: Critical Reflections on Media Reforms in a global age*, UNISA Press, Pretoria, p. 85.

⁶⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁴ Chuma, 'Mediating the 2000 elections in Zimbabwe', 2008, p. 27.

⁶⁴⁵ Interview with Kindness Paradza, 20 January 2013.

⁶⁴⁶ Chuma, 'Mediating the 2000 elections in Zimbabwe', 2008, p. 27.

criticised even if they were not yet in power.⁶⁴⁷ In that polarised context the *Daily News* was seen by some observers, primarily the government, as a mouthpiece for the MDC, just as others regarded the *Herald* as the mouthpiece of the state. In sync with Chuma, Ragnar Waldahl has also identified the *Daily News* and other weeklies as pro-opposition press due to the fact that they contributed to the election agenda although they focused on incidences of politically motivated violence and on the question of whether the elections were properly conducted.⁶⁴⁸ Unlike Chuma, Waldahl however qualifies the extent to which the *Daily News* focused on the MDC and its leading politicians, maintaining that ‘it was impossible for it to neglect the country’s ruling party to the same extent as the pro-government media neglected the opposition’.⁶⁴⁹

The three competing journalisms in Zimbabwe as identified by Chuma led to the polarisation of the media. William Bango, a former journalist with the *Daily News* and later spokesperson of MDC President Morgan Tsvangirai recently commented on this polarisation:

... a visitor to Zimbabwe can easily be excused upon reading local newspapers or listening to any radio or television bulletin, to assume that the country has two or more governments on the verge of a war. There appears to be a general portrayal of two societies baying for each other’s demise, and led by two different national leaders with separate governments...a lot of this confusion appears deliberate as message conflicts take centre stage. What stands out of this potpourri of discordant voices are intolerance; open bias and sloppy editing; inadequate news sourcing; a weak ethical string; and a strong reliance on a select, heavily soiled and desperate coterie of partisan ‘analysts’.⁶⁵⁰

According to Tendai Chari, it was rare to find news reports that disparaged government policies in the public media while the private media avoided stories that portrayed the opposition in bad light.⁶⁵¹ The dichotomy between the patriotic press and the oppositional press has raised questions about media ethics in Zimbabwe. Ibbo Mandaza declares that in such an environment, a lot of truth gets lost and the reading public is confused as newspapers try to score points against each other.⁶⁵² In his view, ‘the so-called independent media ceases

⁶⁴⁷ Interview with Edison Madondo, 15 January 2013.

⁶⁴⁸ Ragnar Waldahl, ‘Political Journalism the Zimbabwean way: Experiences from the 2000 Election Campaign’, in *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, Special Issue, November 2005, p. 21.

⁶⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁰ William T. Bango, ‘Introspection into the media sector in a changing Zimbabwe’, The Bornwell Chakaodza Memorial Lecture, 2 May 2012.

⁶⁵¹ Tendai Chari, ‘Rethinking ethical issues in Zimbabwean media’, in *African Identities*, Vol. 5, no. 1, 2007, p. 41.

⁶⁵² Interview with Ibbo Mandaza, 20 February 2013.

to be truly independent as it panders to certain positions without being objective'.⁶⁵³ The polarisation in the media was escalated by rising political tensions created by the appearance of the MDC on the Zimbabwean political landscape. And, as Chari points out, polarity within the media peaks during election times, when the media resorts to distortion, sensationalism and propaganda.⁶⁵⁴ As in so many cases, real issues became clouded; depriving voters the chance of making informed decisions. As Chuma argues, 'the gap between journalist observer and political activist/commissariat officer have all but vanished; the proverbial two sides of the story have long given way to outright propaganda on behalf of political or other clients'.⁶⁵⁵ This was the state of news reporting in Zimbabwe in 1999, with the *Daily News* seeking to out-compete the *Herald* and other state media.

Writing on the Zambian media, Francis Kasoma characterises oppositional reporting by the private press as 'vendetta journalism', which is based on dislike or hatred for those about whom the journalists are reporting.⁶⁵⁶ Such kind of reporting in the first instance clouds issues as what readers get is information on the personalities rather than on issues. Usually, such information is insulting or derogatory and it exacerbates enmity between the state and/or state officials and the independent press. It also affects the newspaper's support for democracy. But can we say the *Daily News* was indeed oppositional? Such state of affairs could be seen in the *Daily News*' coverage of electoral laws where they attacked the person and office of the Registrar-General for being incompetent in running the elections. Other personalities that the paper seemed to have a vendetta with include the state President and the Minister of Information among others. Other state institutions like the police, army and the intelligence were labelled as ZANU PF functionaries that were bent on thwarting the will of the people. The newspapers' relationship with the war veterans further bears testimony to the fact that it was an oppositional newspaper. It described the organisation unpleasantly as rowdy, riotous, lawless and violent. As Ray Moyo postulates, this kind of journalism creates a sitting duck scenario where newspapers invite the wrath of the authorities upon themselves.⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁴ Tendai Chari, 'Rethinking ethical issues in Zimbabwean media', 2007, p. 42.

⁶⁵⁵ Wallace Chuma, *The state of journalism ethics in Zimbabwe*, Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe, Harare, July 2013.

⁶⁵⁶ Francis P. Kasoma, 'The Press and Multiparty Politics in Africa', PhD Thesis, University of Tampere, Tampere, 2000, p. 46.

⁶⁵⁷ Interview with Ray Moyo, 19 February 2013.

The coverage of the parliamentary and presidential elections to a large degree exposed the *Daily News* of its biases towards the opposition MDC. The characterisation of ZANU PF's electoral victory by the *Daily News* as victory against the people shows the extent to which the *Daily News* loathed the ruling party. In spite of ZANU PF's perceived faults, the *Daily News* failed to appreciate that Zimbabwe as a country had diversified opinions on politics and that ZANU PF could win just like they had expected the MDC to win. In addition, failure to criticise or even blame the MDC for its failure to topple ZANU PF suggests that the *Daily News* was on balance in support of the opposition. From the foregoing, it is perhaps fair to label the *Daily News*' reporting oppositional as Chuma argues. Due to such reportage, conflict with the ZANU PF government was inevitable.

Responses to *Daily News* reporting

Just before the closure of the *Daily News*, Iden Wetherell, then Chairperson of the Zimbabwe National Editor's Forum said the following concerning the *Daily News*: 'it is hardly surprising then that the *Daily News* should have borne the brunt of the government's vicious assault on the independent media that followed President Mugabe's electoral setbacks in 2000.⁶⁵⁸ He further argued that the *Daily News* had proved a courageous fighter in the battle for a democratic society.⁶⁵⁹ The same thinking was highlighted by Dumisani Moyo who argued that the *Daily News* had 'become the most strident critic of the Mugabe government, exposing corruption and holding the government accountable to its actions'.⁶⁶⁰ Whilst the exploits of the *Daily News* in the Zimbabwean society was being celebrated in some quarters, the government's animosity and anger was kindled. President Mugabe labelled it a mouthpiece for the MDC. In 2001 Mugabe was named one of the ten worst enemies of the press by the United States based Committee to Protect Journalists. This section examines the extra-legal measures adopted by the government to silence the *Daily News*. Such extra-legal measures were employed in order for the government to deploy the concept of plausible deniability when accused of curtailing press freedom.

⁶⁵⁸ Iden Wetherell, 'Geoff Nyarota, Zimbabwe's Independent Press, and Mugabe', *The Zimbabwe Independent*, 3 January 2003.

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶⁰ Dumisani Moyo, 'The Independent press and the fight for democracy in Zimbabwe: A critical analysis of the banned *Daily News*', in *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, Special Issue, November 2005, p. 113.

There were attempts to completely silence the *Daily News*. On April 22, 2000, a bomb was thrown into the *Daily News*' offices. Though no one was hurt, the main target of this bomb was believed to be Geoff Nyarota who, on the 19th of April, had received a death threat in a letter from an organisation called the Revival of African Conscience. Part of the letter read:

We are tired of your daily news about the farm invasions and your lack of respect to our dear president. All your efforts are to embarrass the President and make him the object useless and harmful to the nation. The photograph of President Mugabe on your front page of April 14, 2000 sought nothing but to cartoon the president [it was a picture of President Mugabe snoozing during the opening session of the G77 summit in Havana on Wednesday 12 April 2000].⁶⁶¹

A South African Associated Press photographer was arrested for the attack, although the *Daily News* strongly believed it was Mugabe's security forces that had thrown the bomb. Obert Zilwa was released without charges 48 hours later. In January 2001, the *Daily News* offices were bombed again, this time destroying the Printing Press. This took place hours after Jonathan Moyo had described the paper as 'a threat to national security which had to be silenced once and for all'.⁶⁶² In spite of issuing these threats, ZANU PF was quick to apportion the blame to the MDC because just after the bombing a car with one white person and one black person were seen leaving the place and this, to ZANU PF, meant it had to be the MDC as they were seen to be friends with the whites.

In its rebuttal, the MDC pointed that it was unfair to link them with the bombing as it was ZANU PF which had openly showed its hatred towards the independent press.⁶⁶³ The MMPZ however saw the bombing of the *Daily News* as emanating from the fact that the newspaper 'had done its job in relaying alternative, well researched news about the political crisis in Zimbabwe'.⁶⁶⁴ The attack on the *Daily News* premises therefore represented a frontal attack on media freedom meant to intimidate journalists and prevent them from doing their business without fear.

The paper also came into conflict with the war veterans who were staunch supporters of ZANU PF. On 6 June 2000 the then leader of the War Veterans Association Chenjerai Hunzvi who referred to himself as 'Hitler' threatened the newspaper for its continued attack on Mugabe. The war veterans declared certain areas as no-go areas for the *Daily News*,

⁶⁶¹ The *Daily News* 22 April 2000.

⁶⁶² Geoff Nyarota, 'Press Freedom, Safety of Journalists and Impunity in Zimbabwe', *The Daily News in Exile*, 3 May 2007, p. 1.

⁶⁶³ The *Daily News*, 'MDC denies link to *Daily News* attack', 25 April 2000.

⁶⁶⁴ MMPZ weekly monitor, 17-23 April 2000.

especially in the rural areas where ZANU PF had the majority supporters. Together with the ZANU PF youths, the war veterans stopped the *Daily News* deliveries in Shurugwi and Murehwa. The circulation manager explained:

At Murehwa Centre the vendors were told to leave after they had sold only two copies out of 500. The wave of political violence is affecting our circulation and we are failing to deliver about 2000 copies because some of the areas have become impossible to access.⁶⁶⁵

Besides impeding the sales of the newspaper, concerted efforts were put into trying to stop *Daily News* journalists from gathering the news. In a bizarre incident, when they were covering the farm invasions, a team comprising features editor Nyasha Nyakuni, photographer Tsvangirai Mukwazhi and driver Shadreck Mukwecheni were detained by the war veterans and ordered to chant pro-ZANU PF slogans for two hours in Mvurwi.⁶⁶⁶ The youths confiscated the journalists' two cameras.⁶⁶⁷ These actions were meant to dissuade the paper from continuing its coverage of the farm occupations. The MMPZ warned:

The *Daily News* is the only Zimbabwean news organisation attempting to carry out professional and accurate reporting of the farm occupations on a daily basis. Attempts to prevent the paper from operating have implications that reverberate far beyond the rights of the journalists themselves.⁶⁶⁸

Violence directed at the *Daily News* staff became a daily occurrence. Sandra Nyaira recounts her memories of such experiences of violence targeting the *Daily News*:

I remember one day when ZANU PF supporters and war veterans beat up my late colleague, Julius Zava on the streets, simply because he worked for a newspaper the government said was an enemy of the state being 'used' by the British to push for regime change in the country. I also remember how on a number of times we had to leave the newsroom after receiving bomb threats - all meant to disturb the smooth production of the country's most popular newspaper. I remember so many times that colleagues like Urgania Mauluka came back into the newsroom with swollen faces after being attacked by war veterans and ZANU PF supporters on invaded farms.⁶⁶⁹

More often than not, government officials and the police would refuse to grant the *Daily News* interviews to confirm news. This resulted in an incident which embarrassed the *Daily News* on the 23rd of April 2002 when a sensational headline entitled 'Young girls see their

⁶⁶⁵ The *Daily News*, 'War Vets, ZANU PF youths stop Daily News deliveries', 24 May 2000.

⁶⁶⁶ The *Daily News*, 'Daily News crew detained', 7 April 2000.

⁶⁶⁷ The *Daily News* 7 April 2000.

⁶⁶⁸ MMPZ weekly media report, 3-9 April 2000.

⁶⁶⁹ Sandra Nyaira, 'How times have changed', in *The Daily News in Exile*, 3 May 2007, p. 3.

mother's head cut off' hit the streets. The story later turned out to be false. The opening paragraph of the story provides a horror account of what was purported to have happened:

Two young girls aged 10 and 17 watched in horror as their mother was brutally murdered by having her head chopped off at the neck. Brandina Tadyenemhandu, 53, was butchered inside her hut by about 20 youths, suspected to be ZANU PF supporters in Magunje on Sunday. The reason for Tadyenemhandu's grisly murder was the accusation by the youths that the deceased was a supporter of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change. Tadyenemhandu will be buried today at Magororo village in Magunje, Hurungwe East...⁶⁷⁰

The *Daily News* had obtained the story from Tadyenemhandu, the husband of the supposedly murdered wife and all attempts to verify the story with the police had come to nothing. Nyarota believes that it was a set up to discredit the newspaper and probably shut it down under the new section 80 of AIPPA that made it an offence for journalists to 'abuse journalistic privilege by writing falsehoods'.⁶⁷¹ The MDC was also targeted in the plan as Tadyenemhandu also asked for financial help to bury his wife from the MDC. Whilst the police were quick to deny the murder, they also refused to investigate Tadyenemhandu for extorting money from the MDC. However, it is also true that reporting such a huge story without evidence shows that the *Daily News* was eager to report cases of violence that demonised ZANU PF. But the story had far-reaching implications as far as ethics within the media fraternity were concerned. Chari accuses the *Daily News* of dereliction of duty for failing to verify the authenticity of such a sensitive story.⁶⁷² He went on to speculate that the major motivation of the story was to portray the government in bad light and to prove that the elections were not free and fair.⁶⁷³ This story supports the view that the Zimbabwean press was polarized along political lines, with the *Daily News* evidently and sometimes blindly supporting the MDC whilst at the same time tarnishing the image of ZANU PF.

The government also created special hardships that appeared to target only the *Daily News*. One obstacle which was thrown at the *Daily News* was in the form of being starved of printing paper. Francis Harahwa argued that the government stopped the only company that produced printing paper from selling paper to the *Daily News*.⁶⁷⁴ When the *Daily News* approached the company, they were told that due to the poor performance of the economy the

⁶⁷⁰ The *Daily News*, 23 April 2002.

⁶⁷¹ Geoff Nyarota, *Against the Grain*, 2006, p. 282.

⁶⁷² Tendai Chari, 'Rethinking ethical issues in Zimbabwean media', 2007, p. 48.

⁶⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷⁴ Interview with Francis Harahwa, 4 February 2013.

company could no longer continue to supply the *Daily News* with paper but could only supply *The Herald*.⁶⁷⁵ As a result, the ANZ incurred more expenses by buying paper from outside the country to which the government responded by increasing import duty. All this was meant to stop the *Daily News* from publishing. Since most newspaper revenues are generated from advertisement rather than newspaper sales, the government changed its tactic by threatening private companies that advertised with the *Daily News* whilst state-owned parastatals were barred from advertising in the *Daily News*. As a result, the *Daily News* lost revenue as other advertisers pulled out. Having attempted all these coterie of measures in a bid to silence the *Daily News*, the ZANU PF government decided to take the legal route. This was meant to absolve the government of having solely targeted the *Daily News* as some measures above have shown.

In Pursuit of the *Daily News*: Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act

As highlighted earlier, state paranoia about the press started well before the *Daily News* was formed in 1999 as evidenced by the dismissal of public media journalists who dared challenge the state. By the time the *Daily News* was formed, President Mugabe was already lumping the independent press together with the so-called racist Rhodesians who had set up bases in South Africa to resist the land reform. Mugabe went on to question the notion of ‘independent press’ by suggesting that these newspapers were fronted by black young editors who were merely puppets of these Rhodesians.⁶⁷⁶ A year after the establishment of the *Daily News*, the Minister of Information, Chenhamo Chimutengwende was already pointing to the fact that the media was bent on destroying the government because of the foreign elements within its ownership structures. It was therefore logical under such circumstances to enact a legislation that would give locals a controlling stake in media houses in the country. In justifying the move, Chimutengwende noted that ‘we are not living in normal times. We therefore have to make such measures. There is a fierce battle for the hearts and minds in Zimbabwe and we just have to win it.’⁶⁷⁷

⁶⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷⁶ *The Daily News* 31 March 2000.

⁶⁷⁷ Quoted in Wallace Chuma, ‘Reforming the media in Zimbabwe: Critical reflections’, p. 95.

In this context, the government passed legislation to control the media. In 2002 it passed the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) in an effort to control the vibrant independent media. Events leading to the passing of AIPPA betrayed ZANU PF's intentions in crafting this legislation. The AIPPA Bill was published by an *Extraordinary Government Gazette* on 30 November 2001 and was sponsored by Jonathan Moyo, then Minister of Information and Publicity. On the 29th of January 2002, a ZANU PF dominated parliament received an adverse report on the bill from the parliamentary legal committee headed by Dr. Eddison Zvobgo, a ZANU PF legislator. In summarising the report, the chairman warned:

I can say without equivocation that this Bill, in its original form was the most calculated and determined assault on our liberties guaranteed by the Constitution, in the 20 years I have served as a Cabinet Minister and as a member of the Cabinet Committee on Legislation for 16 of those years.⁶⁷⁸

In his critique, Dr. Zvobgo identified about 15 clauses that were unconstitutional as some of their provisions were contrary to Section 20 of the Zimbabwean constitution which guarantees fundamental freedom expression.

Whilst 15 clauses were deemed unconstitutional, for the purposes of this study I only look at two sections that significantly affected the functioning of the private press. The Bill through clause 38 sought to create the Media and Information Commission (MIC) whose duty was to regulate the press and journalists in Zimbabwe. The MIC was to become the institution responsible for the closure of a number of newspapers in Zimbabwe like the *Daily News*, the *Tribune* and the *Zimbabwe Mirror* among others. Paul Mangwana the then Deputy Minister of Information in 2001-2002 defended the role of the MIC in regulating the press and the journalists. He maintained that it was constitutional to regulate how professions regulated their work or how businesses conduct their business. He was however promptly shot down by Tendai Biti of the MDC who argued that:

It is true that professional bodies exist for accountants, lawyers, engineers and for doctors but the distinctive thing of all the professional bodies that look for accountants, lawyers, they are self-regulating bodies by lawyers, doctors and accountants themselves. The accountants are not run by a commission appointed by executives. None of these bodies has a specific constitutional right that protects that which they are doing. To try and compare lawyers, doctors, accountants, fishermen to journalists is a

⁶⁷⁸ Zimbabwe Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 28, no. 46, 29 January 2002, col. 4169-4170.

misnomer and betrays the quality and quantity of the learned gentleman hon. Mangwana.⁶⁷⁹

Another problematic requisite of the Bill which was maintained in spite of heavy criticism by legislators and pro-democracy groups was the requirement that ‘a mass media owner shall carry on the activities of a mass media service only after registering and receiving a certificate of registration in terms of this Act’. The Act stated that all local and foreign media houses were obliged to apply for registration with the MIC by 31 December 2002. This requirement was to culminate in the closure of the *Daily News* as they refused to register with the MIC. The parliamentary legal committee also attacked this provision noting that the ‘only possible reason for this provision is to impose control by the government over mass media owners and their products as they cannot operate without registration’. To that extent, this provision restricted the freedom of expression of mass media owners as enshrined in the Zimbabwean constitution.

The Bill through Clause 83 focused on journalists – their rights, accreditation and abuse of journalistic privileges. It stated that no journalist could do his work without being accredited by the MIC. The parliamentary legal committee however noted that it was wrong for the commission to claim to have the power to confer rights on journalists yet their existence does not require legislation as freedom of expression is enshrined in Section 20(1) and (2) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe. Professor Welshman Ncube of the MDC attacked the Bill for its wrong use of the rule of accreditation:

This is not the usual rule of accreditation...the usual rule will exclude an unaccredited journalist from having access to certain premises or functions in his capacity as a journalist. That is why you carry a press card to access certain events and places. The right to freedom of expression is not conditional upon satisfying some registration requirement.⁶⁸⁰

Legislator David Coltart observed that contrary to the claims by the Minister of Information that AIPPA was being passed to protect the country from irresponsible and sensational journalism, it was actually the emergence of a strong vibrant independent print media that exposed corruption.⁶⁸¹ Coltart went further to attack the Bill for its intended purpose which was far from giving journalists access to information. He pointed out:

⁶⁷⁹ Zimbabwe Parliamentary Debates, col. 4217.

⁶⁸⁰ Zimbabwe Parliamentary Debate, col. 4219.

⁶⁸¹ Zimbabwe Parliamentary Debates, col. 4464.

This Bill is one huge smokescreen. It is described as Access to information and Protection of Privacy Bill and it does just the opposite. The nub of this legislation is not the access to information provisions but is a mere cover for the setting up of an institution which will be biased and which will be used to shut down the private media.⁶⁸²

Coltart saw AIPPA as being enacted solely to shut the private media especially the *Daily News*. As a result of these reservations and condemnation by legislators and the Parliamentary Legal Committee, the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs promised to introduce amendments to make it align with the constitution. However, the final version of the Bill that was signed into law by President Mugabe differed slightly with the one rejected by parliament. Attempts to amend AIPPA in 2003 resulted in only cosmetic changes which did not allay the fears of the journalists and media houses. As will be highlighted in chapter seven, the government used AIPPA to close the *Daily News* and other newspapers which were accused of violating the Act.

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the way in which the *Daily News* covered the elections of 2000 and 2002. Following the analytical framework used by Wallace Chuma in his study of Zimbabwean newspapers and their coverage of the 2000 elections, this chapter has argued that the *Daily News* can be seen as a pro-opposition newspaper. Evidence presented suggests that the newspaper effectively campaigned for a ZANU PF defeat. It has argued that the newspaper focused solely on the shortcomings of the electoral process and this resulted in it condemning the results. One reason why it expressed disapproval of the elections was the pre-election and post-election violence in Zimbabwe. From the standpoint of the *Daily News*, only one party was responsible for this violence and that party was ZANU PF. The chapter also examined the extra-legal as well as the legal measures that were employed by the state and its allies in an endeavour to silence the *Daily News*. It has been shown that the ZANU PF government created special hardships for the *Daily News* so that it either failed to produce for the market or failed to gather information for publication. The chapter argued that laws such as AIPPA were specifically enacted with the aim of closing the *Daily News*. The political role played by the *Daily News* during the period of the crisis when it provided a counter narrative

⁶⁸² Zimbabwe Parliamentary Debates, col. 4466.

to the grand propaganda provided by the ZANU PF government through the state media led to the closure of the paper.

CHAPTER SEVEN

“EVERY PARTY HAS A GROUCH AGAINST THE PRESS”: THE CLOSURE OF THE *AFRICAN DAILY NEWS* AND THE *DAILY NEWS* AND THE RISE OF THE ALTERNATIVE MEDIA.

Introduction

‘That a respectable paper like the African Daily News should be banned in Southern Rhodesia is to me a sure sign that the situation there has reached the point of no return’,
Northern Rhodesia Prime Minister Kenneth Kaunda, 29 August 1964

‘...The Daily News and the government have never been good bedfellows because of its criticism of Mugabe’s rule. We are seen as a threat’, Simba Chabarika, Features Editor,
Daily News 18 September 2003

On the 29th of August 1964 the *African Daily News* was declared a banned publication in terms of the Law and Order Maintenance Act. The Rhodesian Front government with a majority in parliament managed to silence the only daily newspaper that gave voice to Africans. On 12 September 2003, almost four decades later, the ZANU PF government led by Robert Mugabe closed down the *Daily News* for failure to register under the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA). As in the Smith banning, the closure of the *Daily News* silenced the only daily newspaper that gave the majority of Zimbabweans alternative news to that of state-owned newspapers. This chapter discusses the closure of two important newspapers that have in many ways shaped the political history of this country. In this chapter I compare and contrast the banning of newspapers by two seemingly different regimes; one colonial and the other post-colonial. Even the international reaction to these closures was quite striking.

The previous chapters have discussed the importance of the two newspapers in the politics and governance of the country. It has been shown that two newspapers known by almost the very same name, though they operated in different epochs, acted as a check to state power and propaganda in the interests of a civic majority. This chapter compares the closure of these two daily newspapers, and how they have shaped contemporary inter-party debates. I begin by looking at the circumstances, causes of and reactions to the closures and consider the

impact of such closures on struggles for democracy and press freedom. Finally, I conclude this chapter by looking at how new and alternative forms of media have filled the gap left by the dismantling of the independent press. In both these different epochs the loss of independent news correlated with a rise in under-ground publications that sought to inform the people on abuses by the state.

‘The grass played too close to the fire’: The closure of the *African Daily News* and the *Daily News*

The closure of the two newspapers under discussion has been interpreted differently by various observers and affected individuals as well as by the state authorities. In this section I compare the events leading to the closure of the respective newspapers and how they were finally closed. Pius Wakatama, formerly a vendor of the *African Daily News* and later journalist and writer characterised the closure of the two newspapers as disastrous:

The closure of the *African Daily News* was disastrous as it left people without their source of information; it was a setback for nationalism as it was accompanied by the arrests of the nationalists. There was a lull. The *Daily News* played a key role in informing the people. It was a disaster also when it was bombed and closed. It took our political development backward.⁶⁸³

Claude Mararike, a scholar argues that the closure of these newspapers was predictable and unavoidable. To him it was a consequence of, as he puts it the ‘grass playing too close to the fire’.⁶⁸⁴ There were calculated steps taken by both the Rhodesian Front and the ZANU PF governments in their respective efforts to close the *African Daily News* and the *Daily News*. On Friday 13 March 1964, the Minister of Mines and Tourism, John Gaunt in Parliament uttered the following words concerning the *African Daily News*:

We have certainly had a press which has done its best to undermine the government of this country. If I was a backbencher I would get up and say that the *African Daily News* was a subversive document, I think every issue of that paper proves it.⁶⁸⁵

Three decades later, in a televised interview in January 2001, Jonathan Moyo vowed angrily that ‘the *Daily News* has become a threat to our national security and it must be silenced’.⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸³ Interview with Pius Wakatama, 16 November 2012

⁶⁸⁴ Interview with Claude Mararike 10 January 2013

⁶⁸⁵ *African Daily News*, ‘Gaunt Attacks Press’, 13 March 1964.

⁶⁸⁶ Geoff Nyarota, ‘How the ANZ played into Moyo’s hands’, *The Zimbabwe Independent* 10 December 2004

The following year, during a debate in parliament to pass the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Bill, the Minister of Information and Publicity spoke the following words concerning the *Daily News*:

The phenomenon of crusading journalism, campaign journalism, of advocacy journalism and of cheque book journalism is at the heart of the ethical dilemma that has engulfed this industry in our country today [...] this Bill is meant to put an end to media excesses.⁶⁸⁷

The statements uttered by senior ministers of these different governments were threats directed at the private press. Neither Prime Minister Smith nor President Mugabe had kind words for the private newspapers. Contextualizing each event allows us to raise questions about change and continuity in Zimbabwean state power.

In the earlier case, the final step that led to the eventual closure of the *African Daily News* on the 26th of August occurred when the Minister of Law and Order, Lardner-Burke, moved a motion proposing the shutting down of the paper. In proposing this closure, the Minister deployed Subsection 1 of section 18 of Law and Order Maintenance Act (Chapter 39) which

provides that if the Government is of the opinion that the printing, publication, dissemination or possession of any publication or series of publications is likely to be contrary to the interests of public safety or security he may by order published in Government gazette and in such newspapers as he may consider necessary declare that printed publication or series of publications, or all publications published by any person or association of persons, to be a prohibited publication or prohibited publications.⁶⁸⁸

In his presentation, Minister D. W. Lardner-Burke claimed that his motion was moved after ‘careful consideration’ as the country was waging a war on two fronts; one front represented by the pressure and psychological warfare from abroad and the other being the internal campaign of subversion, destruction and sabotage.⁶⁸⁹

Thirty nine years later, we can see a similar line of thought prevailing when the *Daily News* was banned. In January 2002, during a press conference, the commander of the Zimbabwe National Army, General Vitalis Zvinvashe indicated that statements in the local private media and foreign media were causing insecurity, uncertainty, confusion and that they were

⁶⁸⁷ Parliamentary Debate, Access to Information Bill, Vol. 28, No. 48, 31 January 2002.

⁶⁸⁸ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates, col. 1277.

⁶⁸⁹ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates, col. 1278.

tarnishing the credibility of the country's security arms.⁶⁹⁰ In the same vein, whilst addressing members of the Zimbabwe National Army on 18 November 2002, the Minister of Information attacked the *Daily News* as "anti-nation" and as a tool used by Western powers to undermine the government and Zimbabwe's values and traditions.⁶⁹¹ These and other leaders claimed that the state of Zimbabwe was engaged in a "third Chimurenga war" to redistribute wealth. The country, they declared, was being targeted by its former colonisers as well as by the European Union and the Americans who had imposed sanctions on ZANU PF leaders.

In their respective contexts, both regimes had been generating bad publicity for their governments, which was felt both locally and internationally. Smith was eager to impose the Unilateral Declaration of Independence; Mugabe's desperate aim was to stay in power and so he used the violent land reform and got entangled in the DRC as a means to retain power. However, in both cases, public dissensions over the policies and activities of these two leaders were echoed through the media. Both governments identified the independent press, both foreign and local, that scrutinised their every move, as constituting an unwanted distraction to their success.

In trying to silence the press, both the ZANU PF and the Rhodesian Front governments each purported to have the interests of the public at heart. Lardner-Burke had questioned the benefit of press freedom in serving the interests of the 'people':

The question that may arise when it is considered necessary to curtail the activities of a portion of the Press is this: precisely whose freedom is at stake? Is it the absolute freedom of any individual or Group that happens to possess a newspaper or a chain of newspapers to use this powerful instrument entirely as they please, even to use it as an instrument of subversion within the state? It is the duty of the Government to ensure that Press freedom, like all other freedom, is not abused and is not permitted to degenerate into dangerous licence. The government cannot permit the much prized ideal of press freedom to be used for spreading subversion. It is the duty of the government to distinguish clearly between a freedom which the community needs, and a Press licence that threatens the very foundation of Law and Order.⁶⁹²

⁶⁹⁰ The press conference was called after the *Daily News* had carried numerous reports alleging that the army had organised 'illegal' farm seizures whilst the police did nothing.

⁶⁹¹ Media Institute of Southern Africa, 'Information Minister attacks private press', 19 November 2002.

⁶⁹² Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates, col. 1279-1280.

Jonathan Moyo, too, championed the idea of trying to strike a balance between press freedom and the interests of the public. He declared that the private media, particularly the *Daily News* had failed to draw a line between the two and, as a result, the public had been hurt:

Public faith and belief and faith in the integrity of the media have virtually collapsed with a frightening built-up of public bitterness and frustration with certain sections of the media. Incidents of public physical anger and confrontation with the media have been on the rise and show every sign of escalating in the future, in the absence of mechanism for redress.⁶⁹³

Each of these politicians, however, failed to identify the ‘people’ whose interests were supposedly being trampled down by the newspapers under consideration. Populist arguments and the deployment of the politically powerful conception of ‘the people’ were clearly levelled to advance state agendas of curtailing press freedom in the face of the popularity of these news sources. President Mugabe argued that the media in Zimbabwe had been assaulting the integrity of citizens and that ‘an assault on one’s integrity is even worse than an assault in physical terms’.⁶⁹⁴

These discourses informed the termination of both daily newspapers. In each instance, it can be seen that the politicians were wearing the cloak of public protectors yet acting in defence of their own political careers, power and lives. In order to sanitise what might be construed as dirty politics in the censure of alternative voices, each government regime waded into the controversial subject of proprietorship of the newspapers vis-a-viz their editorial policies. The authorities contended that the media ownership structures which heavily influenced these newspapers were both anti-establishment and irresponsible. In the Rhodesian case, authorities denounced the take-over of the *African Daily News* by the Thomson organisation:

Soon after the Thomson take over there was a most noticeable change in editorial policy of the *African Daily News*; a policy of fair and sober reporting being replaced by highly sensational journalism in the familiar ‘tabloid’ form. I deny that this newspaper can be said to provide a voice for the African people as a whole. It is, of course, the voice of its proprietor, and whatever policy the proprietor adopts in particular.⁶⁹⁵

Almost as if taking his cue from Lardner-Burke, Jonathan Moyo also attacked ownership structures. In his defence of Zimbabwean state initiatives, he adopted a xenophobic and tired anti-colonial line, blaming the foreign ownership of the *Daily News* and its ‘malignant’

⁶⁹³ Zimbabwe Legislative Debates.

⁶⁹⁴ *The Herald* 18 December 2001.

⁶⁹⁵ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates.

impact on post-colonial society. Like Lardner-Burke, he believed that the *Daily News* of his own time had no independent editorial policy and by extension saw its readers as docile and gullible, in need of the state paternalist guidance

In 1998, the persistent British media interests organised as African Media Investments succeeded in getting a controlling share - 60% - in Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe, the publishers of *The Daily News*. This investment was of particular interest to the British establishment, especially the foreign and Commonwealth office and the British intelligence, which to this day exhibit an inordinate interest in the venture. The British have relied on the *Daily News* to project their view point and defend their interests here, whether pursued directly or indirectly through proxy politics. More significantly, the paper has provided platform to Rhodesian ideologues like John Robertson, Norman Reynolds and R. W. Johnson of the Helen Suzman Foundation who use the *Daily News* as a platform for re-issuing colonial myths, stereotypes, slurs, bigotry and prejudices against black Zimbabweans.⁶⁹⁶

All these allegations were levelled against the respective newspapers in spite of the fact that the governments in question had at their disposal state media which was effectively out of reach as vehicles of expression of or debate with oppositional view points. Underscoring these ironic parallels of strategy, an opposition legislator in 2002, David Coltart, pointed out that ZANU PF and the Rhodesian Front were similar in that they both believed in their own propaganda.

Although both newspapers were closed down suddenly by government, the earlier case of the *African Daily News* was played out in Parliament, whilst that of the *Daily News* came from the office of the Media and Information Commission at the behest of the Minister of Information and Publicity. However, both instances reveal the calculative nature of the governments concerned: the Rhodesian Front government made use of its majority in Parliament whilst the ZANU PF government deployed a legislation in which they had used their majority to bulldoze through parliament.

In advocating the closure of the *African Daily News* in the early 1960s, the Minister argued that it supported 'terrorist' violence in Southern Rhodesia. To prove his case, he gave the example of two headlines that had appeared on the 18th of September 1962 which read: 'Violence: ZAPU Blames Southern Rhodesia Political System'; and 'Africans have become bitter and frustrated'. In an attempt to showcase the universality of his views, the minister received support from an African legislator, Mr. Rubatika who accused the *African Daily*

⁶⁹⁶ Zimbabwe Legislative Debates, col. 4412.

News of furthering strife within the country and who claimed that he had been ‘intimidated’ because of bad reporting by the newspaper (during the speech Mr. Rubatika was heckled by other African MPs who questioned if the government had prepared him the speech).⁶⁹⁷

The claim that the *African Daily News* advocated violence, however, was shot down by Mr. Nicholson of the UFP. He pointed out that on the 21st August 1964, the *African Daily News* carried a leading article ‘End this violence’ which was ‘headed in big, bold black type which no one could fail to understand’. Concerning the article, Mr. Nicholson revealed that the *African Daily News* had quoted a number of letters which it had received from readers in the African townships expressing how fed-up they were with the violence and intimidation taking place in the townships. After presenting the views of its readers, Mr. Nicholson pointed out that the newspaper then carried a commentary which expressed the following views:

We say, as our readers do - end the violence. There are many wrongs to be righted in this country; they must be righted, but making the townships hell upon earth does nothing- repeat nothing - to advance the cause of majority rule and for ending indignities which so many have to suffer, it increases them.⁶⁹⁸

The views by Mr. Nicholson were echoed by Judith Todd when she was arrested for demonstrating against the closure of the *African Daily News*. Todd pointed out that although she was not an avid reader of the *African Daily News*, she had been impressed by how ‘it had consistently come out against violence in any form and consistently maintained this position’.⁶⁹⁹ During the demonstration, Todd and other students were carrying placards with the headline page of the 26th of August of the *African Daily News* which was headed: “Chikerema calls for an end to violence”.⁷⁰⁰ Chikerema was the remaining senior member of the PCC (others were in detention) and was in Lusaka at the time and the *African Daily News* had sought his views in its concern about the deterioration in the townships. It seemed fairly clear the newspaper campaigned for majority rule but did so on the premise that independence was to be achieved by constitutional means, and without intimidation and violence.

The parliamentary debate to close the *African Daily News* also brought to the fore the issues to do with procedure. How could a paper be formally shut down and under what justification?

⁶⁹⁷ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates, col. 1293.

⁶⁹⁸ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates, col. 1293.

⁶⁹⁹ NAZ MS 1093/1/1 Judith Todd, 24 April 1964 – 9 February 1966.

⁷⁰⁰ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates, col. 1296.

The Minister of Law and Order pointed out that there had been one prosecution against a reporter, but not the *African Daily News*. The reporter had been charged under a 1927 Act on the grounds that he had tended to bring ridicule and contempt on African chiefs by adversely attacking their world tour sponsored by the Minister of Internal Affairs. (A clear irony of this was that if an identical comment had been made in the columns of the paper for which the Editor happened to be a European, there would have been no prosecution at all.) The argument presented by the legislators was that the prosecution of a single reporter did not warrant a closure of the paper as a whole. Many legislators pointed out that the Minister wanted to ban the newspaper not because it had violated any law but because it supported the attainment of majority rule. In a lengthy speech, Mr. Nicholson argued that

if the *Daily News* has been culpable in respect of printing, over a long period, subversive articles, then the Minister has a panoply of legislation available to him under which he could act...the correct procedure. The gravamen of our case is that the *Daily News*, if it in fact has been guilty of misdemeanours which collectively add up to its being a subversive publication, ought to have been charged specifically on these misdemeanours. If and when the Minister had built an impressive portfolio of successful prosecutions, successful convictions against the paper, this would have been the time for him to consider a blanket ban for the publication. But not, I suggest, on the present record of two prosecutions, one withdrawn and one under an archaic piece of legislation dating back to 1927 which no one seriously could define in this House or elsewhere as being relevant to the conditions in Southern Rhodesia in 1964. The case put up by the Minister to justify the banning of the *Daily News* is so weak, full of holes that one is bound to consider what the other reasons may be for Government deciding to move against the *Daily News* in this manner.⁷⁰¹

Several legislators were able to see behind the smokescreen that the *African Daily News* was being closed supposedly for printing subversive material that threatened law and order. Mr. Chanetsa, an independent legislator argued that the move to close the paper was a deliberate ploy by the government to suppress African opinion in the event of the impending UDI.⁷⁰² The state-aligned *Herald* also saw through this charade and argued that 'if the government is contemplating a UDI it makes perfect sense as a preliminary step to remove from the scene one of the opponents of such a move before it happens'.⁷⁰³ Whilst the government believed that the *African Daily News*, in collusion with the nationalists, were frustrating the move towards Unilateral Declaration of Independence, Mr. Nicholson pointed out that on this point it was by no means giving support to many of the senior members of PCC and ZANU who

⁷⁰¹ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates, cols. 1299-1301.

⁷⁰² Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates, col. 1351.

⁷⁰³ *The Rhodesia Herald*, 'Mystery of the timing', 27 August 1964.

believed that after UDI they would launch their struggle for majority rule. According to Dr. Palley the truth of the matter was that the *African Daily News* was being closed for being ‘a vigorous critic of the government that had frequently hit Government on the raw, but with the punch of vigorous and legitimate journalism’.⁷⁰⁴

The debate on the closure of the *African Daily News* also brought to the fore a controversial question that has haunted Zimbabwean politicians and the media since: should newspapers support political parties? The Minister of Law and Order had pointed out that the *African Daily News* was now running a recruiting campaign for the PCC as evidenced by the appearance of pages regularly indicating how people had defected from ZANU to PCC and the benefits attached to such transfer of political loyalty. But in response Sir Edgar Whitehead, leader of the opposition UFP in the legislative assembly pointed out that although the *African Daily News* had become a party political journal it was nothing unusual in the newspaper world.⁷⁰⁵ Mr. Gondo supported the stance taken by Whitehead by arguing that ‘it is not strange at all in many countries for papers to comment or take a line with any particular paper through which they think their views could be easily represented’. Mr. Chanetsa pointed out that if the *African Daily News* was to be closed for this crime, then *Newsfront* and the *Citizen* had to be closed because they had campaigned for the Rhodesia Front legislators and these newspapers were deemed more subversive than the *African Daily News*.⁷⁰⁶

The saga leading to the closure of the *African Daily News* clearly show that the government was determined to shut down the newspaper. Most legislators blamed the Minister of being biased and of ignoring stories by the newspaper that attacked violence. This by extension meant that the government had failed to prove how the paper was subversive. At the end, the matter was put to a vote. It was far from unanimous. Twenty-four legislators voted in favour of the motion to close down the *African Daily News* whilst eighteen voted against. Although a third (21) of the legislators was absent, the fact that there was a quorum on a matter that did not require a two-thirds majority meant that the vote went ahead. Furthermore, the majority of those absent belonged to the RF. Thus the vote to ban the *African Daily News* was passed and an order was signed, sealing its fate.

⁷⁰⁴ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates, col. 1387.

⁷⁰⁵ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Assembly Debates, col. 1387.

⁷⁰⁶ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Assembly Debates, col. 1352.

The closure of the *Daily News* in post-colonial Zimbabwe did not take place as a result of debate in parliament. However, court challenges by the *Daily News* provide us with details of what happened behind the scenes revealing how determined the ZANU PF government, like the RF government, was to shut down the newspaper. It was pointed out in the previous chapter that after the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) was passed and signed into law, the Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ), publishers of the *Daily News* refused to register with the Media and Information Commission believing that the both AIPPA and the Media and Information Commission were unconstitutional. It was the only independent newspaper that refused to register with the directive to register with the Media and Information Commission. The *Daily News*, after refusing to register decided to take the matter to the Supreme Court, which also acts as a constitutional court. The ANZ particularly challenged Section 72 which prohibited “mass media services” from operating until they were registered with the Media and Information Commission (MIC).

The ANZ declined to register until the question of the constitutionality of the AIPPA provisions it was challenging had been determined by the Supreme Court. In its judgement of 11 September 2003, the Supreme Court ruled that by not registering with the MIC, the ANZ had openly defied the law and as such was operating outside the law. In his ruling Chief Justice Chidyausiku argued that

A citizen who disputes the validity of a law must obey it first and argue afterwards...the applicant's contention that it is not bound by a law it considers unconstitutional is simply untenable. A situation where citizens are bound by only those laws they consider constitutional is a recipe for chaos and a total breakdown of the rule of law.⁷⁰⁷

The Supreme Court in fact declined to rule on whether or not the challenged provisions of the AIPPA were consistent with the Constitution but instead maintained that every law enacted in Zimbabwe remains valid and should be complied with until it is either repealed by an Act of Parliament or—in a twist of circular logic—declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. In its ruling on the 11th of September, the Supreme Court noted of the *Daily News* that ‘the applicant is operating outside the law and this Court will only hear the applicant on the merits once the applicant has submitted itself to the law’. In other words the Supreme Court wanted the *Daily News* to register first so as to clear the path for its constitutional challenge to be heard.

⁷⁰⁷ Judgement No. S. C. 20/03, ANZ (Pvt.) Ltd V (1) Minister of State for Information and Publicity in the President's Office (2) Media and Information Commission (3) Attorney General of Zimbabwe.

Following the ruling, the *Daily News* was forcibly closed on 12th September 2003 and the ANZ assets were seized and several ANZ officials arrested, while others were threatened with arrest and criminal charges. Three days later, the ANZ submitted its application for registration with the MIC and on September 18, the High Court pending determination of the matter by MIC granted permission to the ANZ to publish the *Daily News* and the return of all the equipment seized and an end to police interference with ANZ business activities. Yet, on 19 September, the MIC refused ANZ's application based on the Supreme Court finding that ANZ had been unlawfully operating its media business. The refusal by the MIC to register the ANZ reveals the vendetta the commission had with the *Daily News*. MIC Chairman Tafataona Mahoso rejected the application arguing that 'arriving at the doorsteps of the Commission does not mean that they will be registered. It was them who went to the court to report their crime and not us'.

The ANZ appealed against the MIC's decision to the Administrative Court and on 24th October 2003, the Administrative Court unanimously set aside MIC's decision and held that the MIC was biased and improperly constituted. The Administrative Court also ordered the Board of the MIC to issue ANZ with a certificate of registration by 30 November 2003 failing which, ANZ would be deemed registered as from that date. Following the Administrative Court judgement, the ANZ published the *Daily News* the very next day. Following this, the police immediately moved back into the ANZ offices to prevent further publication. Further disregarding the court order, the authorities refused to return the computers and other equipment of the company. The Complainants argued that the closure of the paper was causing irreparable harm to the freedom of expression and information and many other associative rights as delineated in the African Charter. Furthermore, the company argued that they were losing 38 million Zimbabwean dollars per day in lost sales and advertising.

With regard to its closure, many observers and primarily ZANU PF apologists argue that 'rather than being closed, the *Daily News* closed itself'.⁷⁰⁸ Alexander Kanengoni premised his observation on the fact that the *Daily News* refused to comply with a law that every other media house in Zimbabwe complied with. Even Edison Madondo of the MMPZ, an organisation seen as anti-ZANU PF argued that the *Daily News* may have been misinformed

⁷⁰⁸ Interview with Alexander Kanengoni, editor, *The Patriot*, 17 January 2013.

by their lawyers in deciding not to register with the MIC.⁷⁰⁹ Sam Sipepa Nkomo, then Chief Executive Officer of ANZ to this day believes that he was right not to register as they maintained that the law they were being forced to comply with was unjust.⁷¹⁰ Among the journalists working at the *Daily News*, there was no agreement as to the way forward. Simba Chabarika, then Features Editor, aptly captures the divergent views:

Initially, meetings were held between the *Daily News* and other organisations. The decision was made for the *Daily News* not to register with the government, but it was not a unanimous decision. Some journalists agreed that it was right to defy the government but others argued that the newspaper should register, but under protest. Nobody thought that it would come to this, that the government would try to close the paper. If this had been foreseen, I am sure no one would have backed the decision.⁷¹¹

Former Editor, Geoff Nyarota in an opinion article in the *Zimbabwe Independent* of 10 December 2004 lays the blame squarely on Sam Sipepa Nkomo, then Chief Executive Officer of ANZ. Nyarota believes that it was ‘suicidal’ for management not to register with the MIC in the politically polarised climate. Quoting Trevor Ncube, the owner of the *Zimbabwe Independent*, Nyarota stated that ‘the *Daily News* has basically given the government a legitimate reason to shut the paper down. The decision not to register when it was obvious that the government hated the *Daily News* with a passion and wanted to close down the newspaper was tactless and played right into the hands of Moyo and Mahoso’.⁷¹²

The above views seem to imply that the *Daily News* would have survived the closure if it had complied with the AIPPA regulations. However, the current editor of the *Daily News on Sunday*, Francis Harahwa alleges that sometime after the closure, he had an encounter with a member of the intelligence who pointed out to him that whether or not they had registered, the *Daily News* had to be silenced one way or the other.⁷¹³ Juxtaposing this hindsight view together with the way the MIC refused to register the *Daily News* one may be forgiven to think that the closure of the *Daily News* was inevitable. It is also interesting to note that after his firing by ZANU PF, Jonathan Moyo was quick to characterise the

⁷⁰⁹ Interview with Eddison Madondo, MMPZ, 15 January 2013.

⁷¹⁰ Interview with Sam Sipepa Nkomo, former Chief Executive Officer of the ANZ, MDC MP and former Minister of Water Resources, 24 February 2013.

⁷¹¹ www.bbcnews.com, No alternative voice for Zimbabwe, 18 September 2003.

⁷¹² Geoff Nyarota, ‘How the *Daily News* played into Moyo’s hands’, *The Zimbabwe Independent* 10 December 2004.

⁷¹³ Interview with Francis Harahwa, editor *Daily News on Sunday*, 4 February 2013.

refusal by the MIC as scandalous noting that ‘they have no legal basis whatsoever. The contraventions alleged by the MIC are factually and legally simply not there. The MIC had no option but to register the ANZ as a matter of law’.⁷¹⁴ This gives credence to the argument that the closure of the *Daily News* was a decision which the paper could not have averted.

Some observers conclude that in spite of not registering, the ANZ was right to challenge AIPPA and that the Supreme Court was wrong in not hearing the matter on the constitutionality of AIPPA. Alex Magaisa, a constitutional law expert, offered the following analysis to the Supreme Court ruling

The decision has the implication of undermining the supremacy of the constitution by relegating constitutional rights below the dictates of parliamentary legislation. It makes a mockery of the constitution and subjects citizens to the whims of the ruling party with a parliamentary majority. The constitution is the fundamental law of the country with which all legislation must comply. If legislation contravenes the constitution citizens are entitled to approach the Supreme Court to strike out the offensive sections. This is what ANZ did but the court accepted the State's argument that since the ANZ had not complied with the registration requirements of the law that they were challenging they had "unclean hands" and the court could not assist them. The implication is that citizens must first comply with a law even if that law violates their fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitution before challenging it in court. The ruling party can, at any time exercise its parliamentary majority to infringe people's rights knowing fully well that they will be forced to comply as they cannot approach the court unless they have done so lest they be tainted with dirt for refusing to obey the law. It raises the question of whether it is the constitution or an oppressive piece of legislation that they ought to obey. It makes a mockery of constitutional guarantees of protection and enjoyment of human rights to expect citizens to comply with infringing laws first before challenging them.⁷¹⁵

The analysis by Magaisa can be brought to bear also on the closure of the *African Daily News*. The comparison that can be drawn is that both governments were sufficiently eager to close these papers that they circumvented procedure. In the case of the *African Daily News*, it has been noted that the government used its majority in parliament to bulldoze the close in spite of opposition whilst in the case of the *Daily News* the government made use of the recently purged Supreme Court bench to effect closure. Worse still, court judgements were wantonly ignored by the MIC and even the police refused to vacate the

⁷¹⁴ The *Zimbabwe Independent* 10 December 2004.

⁷¹⁵ Alex Magaisa, ‘Clean hands? Thou hath blood on your hands’, A Critique of the Supreme Court Judgement in the ANZ case, 2003.

ANZ premises and would not return the company's equipment. Even when the ANZ's hands were now 'clean', the MIC still refused to register the *Daily News*.

In their respective historical contexts, the banning of the *African Daily News* and the *Daily News* had a similar impact on the Rhodesian and Zimbabwean media landscape. In both cases it silenced the only daily alternative media available and returned the country to the monopoly of the Argus Press and Zimpapers respectively. During the colonial era, the Argus Press had a degree of freedom, but still Ahrn Palley noted that the banning of the *African Daily News* meant that it would be difficult for the Argus Press to be critical of the government without fear of being prosecuted or banned. However for the post-colonial era, the situation was arguably dire as the government had closed the only daily paper that offered, on a daily basis, alternative news to the *Herald*, which by then had come out in the open acknowledging its support of the government. That being the case, it is interesting then to see how the closure of these newspapers was received both locally and internationally.

Reactions to the closures

The reactions generated by the closures, respectively, of the *African Daily News* and the *Daily News* are interesting to compare. What is similar between the two epochs is that both regimes were faced by numerous political legitimacy crises. Because each newspaper was viewed as the voice of opposition, the banning of the newspapers in each case was deemed by observers to be politically motivated.

In both cases, there were local demonstrations of protest. When the motion to ban the *African Daily News* was initially tabled in parliament, a group of students from the University College of Rhodesia led by Judith Todd gathered around the parliament house to demonstrate against the impending closure. The protesters were arrested by the police. But the sworn affidavit by Judith Todd is revealing of widespread attitudes about the banning of the paper. In it she highlighted that

A lot of people like me were disgusted that any person could seriously consider that banning the *Daily News* was either necessary or desirable. The people demonstrated holding placards affirming their belief in the necessity for freedom of the press. We distributed copies of the *Daily News* in order to suggest to the public that the paper was not a subversive broadsheet aiming at revolution or violence. A legal demonstration

would require 7 days. The demonstration is a form of solidarity by the students. I demonstrated because the parties I support have all been banned, the people I recognize as my political leaders have been restricted or jailed, and the only newspaper in the country courageous enough to effectively oppose the government has been silenced. My wish was to protest peacefully and in silence. If an unjust system exists, I cannot be content to obey it. For this reason I feel that I cannot be associated with the present Government, or a system of government without disgrace. If I cease to protest, I begin to identify myself with the system. I plead not guilty.⁷¹⁶

Judith Todd was found guilty in 1964 of contravening the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act.⁷¹⁷ However, nothing was ever heard of what happened to Todd and her fellow protesters after the sentencing but the affidavit testifies to the grievances of her fellow critics. Firstly the contradiction between the notion of press freedom and the banning of the *African Daily News* together with that of political parties created fears that there was no more opposition to the government. The demonstration by the university students was seen to be important by legislators like Mr. Grey of the UFP, who valued press freedom.

During the banning of political parties and during emergencies on all occasions we have had some form of demonstrations outside this House, but I believe the demonstrations I saw today was one of the most disturbing. We saw young people of both races, Africans and Europeans, being carried away by the police because they believe in freedom of expression and of the individual.⁷¹⁸

In the case of the *Daily News* almost four decades later, the popular response was similar, except that the demonstration was organised by civil society groups under the banner of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA). On the day the newspaper was forcibly closed, about 100 NCA activists led a protest against the Mugabe government. They had planned to march to the parliament house in solidarity with the *Daily News* when riot police broke their gathering.

The closure of the two independent daily newspapers generated diverse and sometimes heated responses from the region and the world at large. Such responses were captured in both local and foreign newspapers. The closure of the *African Daily News* was contested locally by the Rhodesian Guild of Journalists, which submitted a petition to the Rhodesian Governor urging him not to sign the papers that would close the newspaper. The petition read

⁷¹⁶ NAZ MS 1093/1/1 Judith Todd, Sworn Affidavit, 24 April 1964 – 9 February 1966.

⁷¹⁷ Judith Todd, *Through the Darkness: A Life in Zimbabwe*, Zebra Press, Cape Town, 2007, p.3.

⁷¹⁸ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Debates, cols. 1346.

We are of the opinion that the action of this nature is contrary to the principles of democracy and freedom of speech by which this country has been governed in the past. If the government considers a newspaper has transgressed the laws of the country, then we are of the opinion that there are many processes with those laws to which the government has recourse before punitive action of this nature should be contemplated.⁷¹⁹

The statement by the Guild was in line with what various legislators pointed out during the debates, i.e., that it was wrong for the government to suddenly close the paper without properly warning it or taking it to court. Even the state-aligned *Rhodesian Herald* in its editorial castigated the government for ‘the grave step to take in closing the newspaper’.⁷²⁰ The newspaper characterised the muzzling of press rights as a forerunner to the loss of individual rights of expression. The *Herald* in its editorial further attacked the legislators for being too easily satisfied by accepting the request by the cabinet to ban the *African Daily News* ‘in the interests of public safety and security’. It asked why,

if the government believed that the Editor of the *African Daily News* broke the law, did it not bring him before a court? Why has the government used its extreme powers, apparently without warning, to crush the newspaper? Why did the government not use the comprehensive machine of the law appropriately to punish the transgressor?⁷²¹

The editors of the *Herald* thus saw the closure of the newspaper as purely political, a view expressed in the paper’s cartoon of 28 August 1964.

⁷¹⁹ Statement by the Rhodesian Guild of Journalists, *Rhodesian Herald* 27 August 1964.

⁷²⁰ *The Rhodesia Herald*, 28 August 1964

⁷²¹ *The Rhodesia Herald* Commentary, Too easily satisfied, 28 August 1964.



Following the manner of the closure of the *African Daily News*, international condemnation came from international papers as well. The newly independent Ghana was the first nation to express its displeasure at the closure of the *African Daily News*. As the *Herald* reported, a Ghanaian independent daily newspaper called the *Daily Graphic* appealed to the press to condemn the closure. It argued that

The press has seen persecution in the past, but to embark on such persecution in the 20th century is a regrettable affair indeed, and must be condemned with all the venom of the inky fraternity.⁷²²

The National Union of Journalists (NUJ) in Britain also heavily condemned the closure of the *African Daily News*, sending a solidarity cable to the Rhodesia Guild of Journalists in support of its protests to the closure of the paper. NUJ also wrote to the Southern Rhodesia High Commissioner and the Commonwealth Relations Secretary, Mr. Sandys protesting the closure of the paper. Another British organisation, the Institute of Journalists also sent

⁷²² 'Accra Appeal to Press', *The Rhodesia Herald* 29 August 1964.

messages to Rhodesian Governor and to the Prime Minister Ian Smith urging them to intervene and prevent the ban.⁷²³

The same expressions of concern can be seen when one looks at the reactions to the closure of the *Daily News*. A weekly newspaper, the *Financial Gazette*, mourned the closure of the *Daily News*, leaving Zimbabweans with no free daily paper. It expressed concern over the possibility that Zimbabwe would be cut off from the outside world. Such a scenario, the *Financial Gazette* argued, would suit ZANU PF as it would give them the freedom ‘to carry out their acts without fear of exposure’. Another weekly, the *Standard*, saw the ruling by the Supreme Court against the *Daily News* as setting a dangerous precedent. In its editorial headline ‘Travesty of Justice’, the *Standard* noted bitterly that ‘it had not taken long for the enemies of the free press to pounce on the *Daily News*’. The Zimbabwe chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) lamented that the ‘closure robs the country of one of the few alternative voices in an increasingly restricted space where Zimbabweans can freely express themselves’.⁷²⁴

In a rejoinder to the accusations that the government unfairly closed the newspaper, the *Herald* argued that the *Daily News* was guilty of wanton disregard for the laws of the country and thus it got exactly what it deserved.⁷²⁵

It boggles the mind to think that a newspaper which purports to ‘tell it like it is’ does not live up to its motto but instead opts to paint a gory picture of a repressed people cowering before an omnipotent dictator who does not even allow people to speak their minds.⁷²⁶

Thus, there were no solidarity messages extended from the state-owned *Herald* of 2003 as there had been by the *Rhodesian Herald* when the *African Daily News* was banned. Maybe this was due also to the fact that the 21st century *Herald* regarded the *Daily News* as a competitor, whereas the colonial *Herald* was confident in its cultivation of a discrete and racially-based public readership for itself. The 21st century *Herald* sought to argue that the closure of the *Daily News* had nothing to do with its political support of opposition parties. The crime of the *Daily News*, according to the *Herald*, had been its choice to flout media laws that had been respected by all other papers operating in Zimbabwe. The same argument

⁷²³ Protest against ban gets support from Britain, *The Herald*, 27 August 1964.

⁷²⁴ www.bbcnews.com, Zimbabwe paper closure condemned, 13 September 2003.

⁷²⁵ *The Herald* 14 September 2003.

⁷²⁶ *The Herald* 14 September 2003.

was elaborated by the Media and Information Commission Chairperson Tafataona Mahoso who said that while there was press freedom in Zimbabwe, ‘there was no freedom to act as an outlaw’.⁷²⁷

The closure of the *Daily News* in 2003 also generated a harsh response from South African newspapers directed towards the government of Zimbabwe and its media laws. For example, the *Business Day* argued that AIPPA was formulated to muzzle the private media in Zimbabwe. Unlike newspapers in Zimbabwe, it was able to link the closure of the *Daily News* and the purging of the Supreme Court bench as Chief Justice Anthony Gubbay was replaced with Godfrey Chidyausiku, a Mugabe ally.⁷²⁸ It argued that the independent press, together with the judiciary and the opposition, had borne the full brunt of Mugabe’s tyranny. The *Beeld* for its part attacked Mugabe for signing the draconian media legislation with the sole purpose of targeting the *Daily News*. The *Beeld* also attacked the South African government, led by Thabo Mbeki, for failing to rein in Mugabe.

What is it about this blatant undemocratic media legislation that the government does not understand? Mbeki after all, personally asked Mugabe to review the legislation. All he has to show for his effort is another violation.⁷²⁹

The *Star* also accused Mbeki’s quiet diplomacy as having failed, as Mugabe had not honoured his pledges to Mbeki. It argued that Mugabe had lost honour and should be engaged differently. Kenya’s *Daily Nation* also went on the offensive attacking both Mbeki and Mugabe, but in the context of Zimbabwe’s membership in the Commonwealth. In 2002, Zimbabwe had been suspended for one year from the Commonwealth for human rights abuses and the suspension had been renewed for another year till December 2003. By the time the *Daily News* was closed, it was time to review the state of Zimbabwe’s suspension amid indications that President Mbeki was lobbying for its lifting. It is in this context that the *Daily Nation* argued that

President Mbeki seemed determined to split the Commonwealth along racist lines by insisting that President Mugabe be invited to the club’s summit in Nigeria. If anything, the recent assaults on media freedom and all the other oppressive behaviour of the Mugabe regime plainly show that things have actually taken a turn for the worse.⁷³⁰

⁷²⁷ www.bbcnews.com, Zimbabwe paper closure condemned, 13 September 2003.

⁷²⁸ www.bbcnews.com, Fury at Zimbabwe paper closure, 19 September 2003.

⁷²⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁰ *Ibid.*

In Zambia, the response by *The Post* was equally damning as it saw the closure of the *Daily News* as just another entry in Zimbabwe's sorry record of media oppression. The newspaper accused the Zimbabwe government of failing to show commitment to the defence of a free, independent and robustly critical press.⁷³¹

Further strong reactions were voiced from abroad by international organisations such as the Reporters without Borders and the Committee to Protect Journalists. Ann Cooper, director of the US-based Committee to Protect Journalists attacked the closure 'as an affront not only to the brave journalists who put out this paper each day but also to the people of Zimbabwe'. The Paris-based media watchdog Reporters without Borders also strongly condemned the closure of the *Daily News* saying it was clearly aimed at silencing the country's only independent daily because of its criticism of President Mugabe's government.⁷³²

The reaction by these different media organisations was premised on the fear that there would be an information black-out in Zimbabwe just as had been the case during the colonial period. Yet although the closure of these two newspapers was a setback, other strategies for disseminating information and views filled the vacuum. In the next section, I examine what happened after the closures of the papers in these two epochs. I discuss the forms of media that came to the fore and the impact on politics and governance in the country.

Alternative Press

Debating on the move to close the *African Daily News* in the Rhodesian parliament, Mr. Hlabangana pointed out that 'if no new measures are in place to replace the *Daily News*, then we are in a sorry plight'.⁷³³ The same fears were expressed almost four decades later when the *Daily News* was closed.

We think it is unlikely that the government will allow the newspaper to begin operating again, certainly not in the short term. Perhaps after a long time we may be allowed to re-open, but we are not optimistic. It is a very sad development for the country's independent journalism.⁷³⁴

⁷³¹ *Ibid.*

⁷³² www.afrol.com/articles/10512, Protests against closure of Zimbabwe's 'Daily News'. Accessed 12 October 2013.

⁷³³ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Assembly Debates, col. 1342.

⁷³⁴ www.bbcnews.com, fury at Zimbabwe paper closure, 19 September 2003.

The closure of the two newspapers coincided with the tightening of control at the state-owned newspapers by respective governmental regimes. The RF government employed full-time censors to control what the public could read, whilst the ZANU PF government with Jonathan Moyo as the Minister of Information removed all editors who refused to toe party line. Whilst the *African Daily News* never appealed the banning of the paper, the ZANU PF government shut all avenues through which the *Daily News* could publish again. It is in this context that I offer a brief overview of what happened on the media scene in the country and the response by the media practitioners to such controls. What has to be appreciated is that the closures were—in both cases—followed by the worsening of the political situation in the country in terms of political and economic viability. After the banning of the *African Daily News*, the struggle for national independence and majority rule was transformed into an armed struggle. Following the banning of the *Daily News*, the Zimbabwean economy further deteriorated, opposition forces became stronger and there was heightened international pressure on the ZANU PF government to which it reacted with defiance.

Following the closure of the *African Daily News*, church owned newspapers came back to the fore and attempted to fill the void left by the *African Daily News*. One newspaper that was prominent was *Moto*. In May 1960 *Moto* had become a national newspaper, carrying news and articles in both English and the vernacular and was distributed for free. It was under the editorship of a European priest, Father Albert Planger and had a circulation of 22 000 readers, mainly Africans. As discussed in an earlier chapter, from its humble beginnings as a paper solely for the Catholics, *Moto* began to print the views of African people, and in particular those of the nationalist leaders while at the same time promoting the social teachings of the Church. *Moto's* involvement in the political affairs of the country became prominent ironically after August 1964 when the newspaper commented on the detention of nationalist leaders and the banning of their parties. According to Diana Auret, *Moto* viewed the detention and banning of the parties as an indication that 'the struggle for freedom, justice and equality in this land had moved into a new and decisive phase'.⁷³⁵ As noted before, the banning of the *African Daily News* and the consummation of UDI later in 1965 was

⁷³⁵ Diana Auret, *Reaching for Justice: The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, 1972-1992*, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1992, p. 17.

accompanied by rigorous censorship, and consequently the November editorial of *Moto* was censored and appeared blank.⁷³⁶

Because of its critical comments concerning UDI, *Moto* became a targeted newspaper by the RF regime. In November of 1974 the newspaper was placed under a three month suspension by the police for ‘fomenting hatred of white people’. Before the suspension could be lifted, the newspaper was totally banned by the government supposedly for undermining the moral of the country. According to Lardner-Burke, the Minister of Law and Order:

Moto has shown an unmistakeable sympathy for terrorists who were invariably called ‘guerrillas’, or ‘freedom fighters’. Since the coup in Portugal, *Moto* has given most prominent coverage to the events in the Portuguese colonies, with the emphasis on the achievements of the so-called African freedom movements. The overall style of reporting is such that it must inevitably suggest to the Rhodesian African that similar events are more than possible, and in fact could be a natural progression in this country. It was in fact a statement about the events in Mozambique published in the issue of September 21 which resulted in the ban imposed by the Commissioner of Police. This particular statement congratulated the people of Mozambique for their success, and went on to incite our own people to adopt similar methods of violent revolution. This statement was subversive and no newspaper prepared to publish material of that sort could be allowed to continue in circulation.⁷³⁷

In 1974, in apparent reference to the nationalists and just like the *African Daily News* before it, *Moto* was closed for spreading ‘subversion at a time when we are fighting a relentless and cruel enemy’.⁷³⁸ For two hours, African legislators contested the banning of *Moto* describing the move as ‘desperate action by desperate people’. Some legislators even pointed to the fact that *Moto* was banned when most Africans were remembering the tenth anniversary since the banning of the *African Daily News*. The banning of *Moto* confirmed the ‘laager mentality’ of the Smith regime as they moved quickly to silence any dissenting voices. The government also went on to ban another paper prepared by the Catholics: *Mambo Magazine*, even though it hadn’t been condemned like *Moto*.

The period following the banning of the *African Daily News* has been characterised as one in which there was the struggle for the hearts and minds of both white and African citizens. In power, the RF was never secure. Censorship and propaganda indicate the insecurities of the Rhodesian regime. Where censorship failed, newspapers with ideas that ran counter to those of the RF were promptly shut down. Ennoccnt Msindo’s study of propaganda between 1962

⁷³⁶ Diana Aurret, 1992, 17.

⁷³⁷ NAZ MS 308/58/2 Rhodesia security: *Moto*, July-December 1974.

⁷³⁸ *Ibid.*

and 1970 show how the government deployed information to win the hearts and minds of white Rhodesians some of whom were contemplating emigrating from the country. Elaine Windrich devoted her attention to censorship at the state-owned press and how some newspapers like the *Rhodesian Herald* resorted to printing copies with blank spaces as a way of informing its readership that some information had been struck out. In the same vein, Anthony King's work on the *Central African Examiner* offers us a lens through which we can see the challenges faced by a private paper during this period.⁷³⁹ This newspaper started out a year after the formation of the *African Daily News* and it was pro-government, pro-Federation and was fronted by the intelligentsia of the day. However, with the collapse of the federation and the coming to power of the RF, the paper rapidly changed its stance on Rhodesian politics by attacking the new government and lending its support to the nationalists. Eileen Haddon, its editor pointed out that 'after the banning of the *African Daily News*, we were the only publication that tried to do analysis in depth to expose black-white inequities. Of course anything that expressed what was regarded as real African opinion was anathema with the government'. According to King, the *Examiner* challenged censorship in court and lost the case. As a result the paper closed down. Haddon explains the how they ended up folding the newspaper

Eighty per cent of our copy was blue-pencilled and we could not go on printing nothing. Once we were censored out of existence, there was no point. If you go on printing only what government allows, there is just no point. At least that is how we saw it.⁷⁴⁰

The censorship was so severe that King argues that in its last issue, the *Examiner* urged people to edit on their own by filling the blanks themselves. But viability at the end of the day meant that the newspaper could no longer have the luxury of printing blank spaces thus it had to shut down.

The nationalists on their part worked extremely hard to maintain their presence in the country even though they were operating from outside. They devised strategies of countering the Rhodesian propaganda and were to some extent way ahead of the government. At their disposal were the radio and the newspaper both of which were clandestine as a result of government controls. From 1964 up to independence in 1980, two prominent newspapers by the nationalists were distributed clandestinely into the country and these were the *Zimbabwe*

⁷³⁹ Anthony King, 'The *Central African Examiner*, 1957-1965', *Zambezia*, 1996, xiii, ii.

⁷⁴⁰ Cited in Julie Frederikse, *None but ourselves*, p. 27.

Review produced by ZAPU and the *Zimbabwe News* by ZANU.⁷⁴¹ The *Zimbabwe News* carried mostly speeches by their leader, Robert Mugabe. The newspaper also carried lessons prepared by ZANU political commissariat in Mozambique for use in *pungwes* (night vigils) by guerrillas inside Zimbabwe. Topics included *The People's War*, and *Colonialism*. These were termed Political Commissariat lecture series. This paper also worked as an alternative media for the African people as it challenged propaganda churned out by the RF through their newspaper for the Africans called the *African Times*. The *Zimbabwe Review* was manned by former *African Daily News* editor Lawrence Vambe and *Bantu Mirror* journalist Nelson Samkange. It was produced at ZAPU offices in Zambia and the United Kingdom. Vambe had this to say concerning the paper:

It had about 13–14 pages and we made sure that it came out regularly. It was hard-hitting in its comments and contained news of the latest developments in Rhodesia and Britain on our situation. And we built up a substantial circulation although it was hard work as the newspaper was produced by two people only and with very meagre resources. We did the London edition which was not exactly a duplication of the Lusaka edition, except that we reprinted major statements by Nkomo and a few other items of wider significance.⁷⁴²

What can be seen from the brief on the two nationalists' publications is the fact that they were responsible for building the personalities of the two leaders of the struggle for national independence, namely Mugabe and Nkomo. More often than not, the two newspapers increased the polarisation in the Rhodesian society amongst African citizens. Both papers and particularly the *Zimbabwe News* continued with labelling as 'sell-outs' people who didn't support the liberation struggle. It even went to extremes by publishing names of Africans accused of being in cahoots with the Rhodesian government and later the Rhodesia-Zimbabwe government of 1979, explicitly suggesting they should be killed. The chief targets were identified as 'traitors', 'puppets' and 'sell-outs' and their leaders were Ndabaningi Sithole, Abel Muzorewa, Jeremiah Chirau, Olivia Muchena among others. The *Zimbabwe News* reported on 10 May 1978:

Any person whose name has been announced tonight who does not resign as required during the required period automatically becomes a priority military target. You are liable to be arrested or shot on sight. There is no hiding place in Zimbabwe. The hand

⁷⁴¹ No academic works have been produced on clandestine nationalists' papers in Zimbabwe. This can be a rich area of study for future scholars. For the purposes of this thesis I am only interested in identifying such papers and briefly outline their goals vis-a-viz the need to fill in the void left by the *African Daily News*.

⁷⁴² NAZ ORAL/ 233: Lawrence Vambe Interview by I. J. Johnstone, 13 June 1983.

of revolution is long, very long indeed. Let those with ears to hear, now hear. So it has been written, so let it be done.⁷⁴³

Turning now to the period of the 21st century, after the banning of the *Daily News*, we can determine how similar or how different the situation was. Whilst it has been noted that after its banning, the *African Daily News* disappeared forever, the situation was somewhat different for the *Daily News*. After the banning, the *Daily News* took its case to the courts of law and won a number of judgements although they were ignored by the ZANU PF government. On the 25th of October 2003 a day after the Administrative Court had ruled that the MIC was biased against the *Daily News* and improperly constituted, the *Daily News* returned for a day before the police stopped its publication once again.

The refusal by the MIC to grant the *Daily News* registration licence effectively meant that the newspaper became a banned publication in the country and the only way the newspaper could be published was through clandestine means. Due to the advances in technology, the *Daily News* decided to launch an internet edition-based in Johannesburg. According to one senior reporter of the *Daily News*, the decision was made that 15 people would oversee this edition after others had been retrenched. The idea behind the web edition was to maintain the *Daily News*'s presence in the minds of the readers so that in the event of its re-launch it would find a ready market.

We wanted to continue to be in touch with our readership after the paper was shut...but we do know that our paper is read by the general mass of our population, and our Web site will only be accessed by a few people. We thought that it was better to keep a few informed than everybody be uninformed.⁷⁴⁴

According to Gugulethu Moyo, the *Daily News*' legal advisor and director of corporate affairs, the launch of the web edition was meant to circumvent the draconian media laws in Zimbabwe. She explained the basic idea behind the web edition and how difficult it would be for the government to police it:

Although we cannot publish in Zimbabwe, we can publish everywhere else in the world. We are having to go through jurisdictions where there are no draconian laws, not because we wanted to but because we have to. Any government that wants to regulate

⁷⁴³ The *Zimbabwe News* 10 May 1978.

⁷⁴⁴ Mark Glasser, 'Zimbabwe *Daily News* fights closure with online publication', <http://www.ojr.org/ojr/glaser/1066860746.php>, Accessed on 22 October 2013.

information will have a very difficult time due to technology. We are living in what they call the information age.⁷⁴⁵

The web edition was managed like this:

Fifteen of us remained, and a team of four (three journalists and one sub-editor and I was team leader) went to Johannesburg to act as back-up in the event that guys from Zimbabwe are arrested, and we worked there for five months before the funds were abused leading to the collapse of the program.⁷⁴⁶

The web edition before its collapse in March 2003 due to misappropriation of funds⁷⁴⁷ was seen as a success as it maintained the presence of the *Daily News*. However, it is difficult to measure the success of this web edition as there were few internet users by 2003. After the ban of the *Daily News* a number of websites reporting on and about Zimbabwe came to the fore. Such websites, housed outside Zimbabwe include the *Zimbabwe Situation*, *Zimdaily*, *Sokwanele/Zvakwana* among others. The most popular of these websites is *NewZimbabwe.com*. These websites have significantly shaped political discourses at home although they are housed abroad. They played a very important role by keeping people informed the generality of Zimbabweans both in the country and in the diaspora on political developments in the country. Their main problem was however that they could only reach a limited number of people due to lack of connectivity to the net and the prohibitive costs associated with the internet.

One key result of the closure of the *Daily News* was that it led to the birth of a clandestine newspaper called *The Zimbabwean*, formed and edited by one of the founders of the *Daily News*, Wilf Mbanga in 2005. With its motto 'A voice for the voiceless', *The Zimbabwean* was published twice a week, one issue on Thursday and another on Sunday. Reminiscent of what had transpired during the anti-colonial liberation struggle, *The Zimbabwean* was printed in the United Kingdom and shipped through South Africa into the country.⁷⁴⁸ The newspaper has had enemies in the government and, in 2008, a truck full of newspapers was hijacked and burnt on its way to Zimbabwe from South Africa. The newspaper's contents have a heavy emphasis on politics and human rights and its online version is updated hourly to carry breaking news as well as those articles carried in its print version.⁷⁴⁹ Although the newspaper

⁷⁴⁵ Zimbabwe's *Daily News* owner launches SA-based website.

⁷⁴⁶ Interview with former senior reporter of the *Daily News*.

⁷⁴⁷ Interview with Godwin Mangudya, 27 January 2012

⁷⁴⁸ The *Zimbabwean* was recently licensed by the Zimbabwe Media Council in 2012 and it now publishes from Harare.

⁷⁴⁹ Interview with Pius Wakatama, Chairman of the *Zimbabwean*, 16 November 2012.

has been accused of sensationalising stories, Edison Madondo of the MMPZ argues that it has more often than not carried breaking news that turned out to be true and has exposed the ZANU PF government's human rights violations.⁷⁵⁰ The newspaper has since been registered by the Zimbabwe Media Council under the tenure of the recently expired Government of National Unity. It is now published in Zimbabwe.

Another important phenomenon following the closure of the *Daily News* was the rise in the so-called pirate radio stations such as Voice of the People, Short Wave Radio Africa (SWRA) and Voice of America Studio Seven. According to Dumisani Moyo, these so-called pirate radios are foreign funded and they operate outside Zimbabwe to provide alternative discourse to the propaganda churned out by the long-discredited state-owned media.⁷⁵¹ These clandestine radios broadcast in the country's main languages of English, Shona and Ndebele. In their daily broadcasts, these clandestine radios have employed new media technologies to reach audiences and expand programming.⁷⁵² For example, from the 8th of December 2006, SWRA began sending news headlines via SMS to mobile phones.⁷⁵³ It even encouraged listeners with friends and relatives with cell phones to email their details to them so that they would receive newsletters as well as the opportunity to participate in their phone-in programme called *Callback*.⁷⁵⁴ These clandestine have opened up the public sphere in Zimbabwe as they allow both the elite and the ordinary people to give their opinion on political developments in the country.

Conclusion

This chapter has addressed three issues: the closure of the *African Daily News* and the *Daily News*, the reactions to these respective closures and the responsive rise of new alternative

⁷⁵⁰ Interview with Eddison Madondo, MMPZ, 15 January 2013

⁷⁵¹ Dumisani Moyo, 'Contesting mainstream Media Power: Mediating the Zimbabwe Crisis through Clandestine Radio', in Liz Gunner, Dina Ligaga and Dumisani Moyo (eds.), *Radio in Africa: Public Cultures, Communities*, Wits University Press, Johannesburg, 2001, p. 52.

⁷⁵² Danielle Batist, 'SW Radio Africa and the challenges of operating a Zimbabwean exile radio station in London', in *Journal of African Media Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2010, p. 164.

⁷⁵³ Sylvester Dombo, 'Alternative or Subversive? 'Pirate Radio Stations and the opening up of spaces of freedom and alternative politics in Zimbabwe, 2000-2010', Paper presented to the New Media/Alternative Politics: Communication technologies and political change in the Middle East and Africa, University of Cambridge, 14-16 October 2010, p. 8.

⁷⁵⁴ Personal Communication with Gerry Jackson over the email, 26 August 2010.

news media. In the first instance, I argued that even before they were closed, there were telltale signs that the two newspapers were marked by the governments concerned. I argued that speeches by the ministers and the leaders of the country indicated that the newspapers were deemed to be anti-establishment and dangerous to public interest, and so deserved to be closed. Due to the fact that these were the only independent dailies at the time they were closed, the media landscape was once again turned into a near-monopoly of the state-aligned media. This informed the strong response from both the local and external media observers.

The response to the closure in a way gives us the opportunity to compare the state governments of ZANU PF and the Rhodesian Front. These events, four decades apart, point to a common strategy of silencing freedom of press expression to secure undemocratic rule. In both cases, an alternative media filled the void left by the banned newspapers. The common response was the rise of clandestine newspapers that kept the people informed and offered alternative and corrective news to the ones churned out by the state media. There was also a rise of diaspora online publications and the so-called pirate radios. These tremendously shaped the political discourse in Zimbabwe even though they were housed abroad. This however should not make us gloss over the fact that the closure of the two dailies, in both epochs of Zimbabwean history, had a devastating impact on the media of the country, the reputations of the governments concerned, as well as the lives of the individuals who made a living out of working for these media houses.

CHAPTER EIGHT

PRESS AND POLITICS IN ZIMBABWE: CONCLUDING ANALYSIS

We should not make the mistake of lamenting the death of the Daily News...it is the loss of what the paper represented that we should really be shedding tears for. Andy Moyse, 3 May 2009.

Introduction

The *African Daily News* and the *Daily News* occupies a significant place in the history of the country during the colonial and post-colonial periods. By examining these newspapers, a greater insight of the events that shaped the political history of Southern Rhodesia and Zimbabwe emerges. But what hasn't been completely addressed here is the impact the newspapers had on the nation's politics or factors that diluted that impact. Can it be claimed that the *African Daily News* and the *Daily News* shaped the agenda of politics in the country? To what extent did they provide an ideal public sphere for the reading publics to debate issues? How can their impact on politics be evaluated? I attempt to answer these questions by analysing one newspaper at a time. I start with the *African Daily News*.

To answer these and other questions, there is need to first look at the political parties and their relationship with the press in Central Africa during the period under review. The *Central African Intelligence Report* (CAIR) carried an analysis of political parties and the press in Central African and produced interesting results, which in some sense served to buttress their hypothesis that political parties are able to gain political power without the support of the press. Can this analysis be applicable to the Southern Rhodesia situation? In their study, they looked first at Nyasaland where the Malawi Congress Party won an overwhelming victory with only the support of the *Malawi News*, the party organ, a weekly with limited circulation. Next they looked at Northern Rhodesia where the UFP was wholeheartedly supported by the newspapers of the Argus Press (the *Northern Echo* and the

Northern News), both European edited and owned dailies. UNIP had the support of the *Central African Mail* but won the election.⁷⁵⁵

In Southern Rhodesia the situation was deemed even more remarkable. They argued that the Rhodesia Front was opposed by the Newspapers of the Argus Group (*Rhodesia Herald*, *Bulawayo Chronicle* and the *Sunday Mail*) and the *African Daily News*. The Rhodesia Front had only the support of the *Citizen*, a privately owned extreme right-wing weekly.⁷⁵⁶ As a result, the *CAIR* argues that RF managers become convinced that the party and the government could survive successfully without a press.⁷⁵⁷ However, contrary to facts presented by the *CAIR*, the Rhodesia Front also had the support of its own radical newspaper called the *Newsfront*, which later collapsed as soon as it became clear that a number of aggrieved people were planning to sue it for defamation. Whilst the facts presented by the *CAIR* are true at face value, a closer look at other factors will help us debate the impact of the press in its proper context. Whilst the UFP had ruled Southern Rhodesia from the time of the Federation until their defeat in 1962, it is not clear whether their continued stay in power can be attributed to the press. It is undeniable that they had the support of almost all newspapers in the country. The Dominion Party was formed only in 1957 and it is plausible to argue that, although hated by the press, it just needed time to market itself through its party mouthpiece to the white electorate such that by December 1962 it had become the ruling party. I contend that the rise of the Dominion Party and which later became the Rhodesian Front in March 1962 had little to do with the press but generally the crystallising attitudes of the white electorate at the time. As the UFP sought to reform, the RF hardened its conservative lines that majority rule would erode the gains of the whites. The RF was elected, despite lack of press support, because it capitalised on the fears of the white electorate who were witnessing the sweeping continental change brought about by anti-colonial nationalism.

As discussed, towards the end of its rule, the UFP became increasingly reactionary in its attitude towards the press. They would not have gone out of their way to enact laws and implement propaganda measures if the media was a weak force in Rhodesian politics. Indeed

⁷⁵⁵ *Central African Intelligence Report*, 'Political Parties and the Press', March 1963, Vol. 11, No. 3.

⁷⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁷ *Ibid.* It is not entirely true that the RF was convinced that they could survive without a Press. Firstly, Ian Smith is reported to have once remarked that the problems faced by Southern Rhodesia were due to the fact that it had a monopoly press (Argus Press and African Newspapers). Thus when the RF came to power their main objective was to break this monopoly. In addition, Wason argues that the RF newspaper, *Newsfront*, preached hatred against Africans and white liberals, but also failed to impress influential sections of the public and was discontinued after the threat of litigation (p. 73).

the treatment of the press in the early 1960s indicates how the ruling elites feared a hostile and powerful press. In addition, when the RF came to power, the first important decision they made was to close the *African Daily News*. The arguments they proffered for the closing of the newspaper which I addressed in earlier chapters, reveal the government's fear of the press. It is in this light that I argue that the press in general and the *African Daily News* more specifically, had a significant impact on politics in the country. Furthermore, the hostile reception the paper got from Africans, especially the elite after the events of 1956 discussed in chapter two, is a clear testament to its impact. Complaints made by the NDP against the *African Daily News* in the 1960s suggests that the party felt that its fortunes would have changed for the better had they had a newspaper on their side (hence their attempt to start their own newspaper, the *Democratic Voice*.)

Yet, a different conclusion can be drawn when one looks at the Todd situation, his removal from office and the failure to obtain seats with the URP, and the eventual collapse of the CAP. Todd had enjoyed the support of the *African Daily News* since its inception in 1956. Although the newspaper was sympathetic towards the way he was treated by his party, it didn't prevent his ouster. When he reconstituted the URP, the *African Daily News* predicted good fortunes for the party but he still failed to win any seat in the legislative debate. What caused his downfall in spite of the support he obtained from the *African Daily News*? Could it be because the mainstream newspapers like the *Rhodesia Herald*, the *Sunday Mail* and the *Bulawayo Chronicle* supported the UFP? If this is accepted, then one has to look at the target population of the *African Daily News*. It was a paper for the Africans and only a few of these were eligible to vote. In a nation with reading publics that are partitioned by access to rights, power and privilege, the relationship between press and power is further complicated. Backing by a newspaper does not guarantee victory as other factors, like readership, have to be taken into consideration. Whitehead managed to beat Todd because he had the backing of newspapers that spoke to the majority of the voting (white) electorate.

But can the defeat of Todd be used as a yard stick to measure the performance of the *African Daily News*? After all, it has to be remembered that the era of Todd was the formative years of the paper when its main message was cooperation between races, with the whites at the helm. The *African Daily News* initially found it easy to divert its support to the UFP under Whitehead. However, when the RF came to power, the paper went all out in supporting the African nationalist, an endeavour that was noticed by the rulers of the day. Msindo cites

Eugene Wason who pointed out that when the RF took over; it lacked a supportive relationship with the media. The RF labelled it 'unsympathetic' and 'unpatriotic', accused it of abusing press freedom, and of trying to prepare Europeans for surrender to African nationalists.⁷⁵⁸ This suggests that indeed the *African Daily News* had tremendous impact on politics in Rhodesia.

Looking at the readership of the *African Daily News*, one can conclude that it had a great influence in the country. The *African Daily News* had a significant readership amongst Africans and liberal whites (with a circulation of 20,000, of which about 5,000 were readers of European ancestry). The newspaper published the voice of the nationalists, especially during the 1961 constitutional talks. The defeat of Whitehead's Build Your Nation campaign ('Claim Your Vote') was attributed to ZAPU's campaign 'Do Not Claim Your Vote' which found itself in the *African Daily News*. It is probable that, had Whitehead's campaign been successful, the RF would not have obtained power in 1962. But there are other factors that explain why the RF got into power in 1962.

ZAPU had urged all those Africans who were eligible to vote to abstain from voting. It is important to note that besides the rallies, ZAPU managed to make use of the *African Daily News* to get the message to the readers. It is worth remembering that unlike Todd who was supported by those Africans who did not qualify to vote, ZAPU appealed directly to the Africans who qualified to vote. Thus in this instance, the impact of the *African Daily News* can be measured as it appealed to a constituency that now had a leverage on the politics of the country.

Whilst it is difficult to come up with an exact formula for measuring the impact of a newspaper, the issue of circulation is often discussed. Following the onslaught on the press by the RF Government in 1964, the UFP legislators initiated debate on the government's information policy. Mr. Nicholson of the UFP argued that newspapers and the size of its circulation rarely had a bearing politically. He argued that

In terms of political influence it is not necessarily the circulation or the size of the headline type which goes to determine the effect the Press has on Public opinion. I would like to be inclined to think that weeklies in Britain like the *New Statesman*, *The Economist* and the *Spectator*-collectively I suspect that the circulation does not exceed 250,000 a week, compared to with the great national dailies which have more than

⁷⁵⁸ Eugene Wason, Cited in Ennoccnt Msindo, 'Winning Hearts and Minds', p. 672.

4,000,000 copies sold daily, yet I should say that collectively these three publications have far more impact, far more weight, far more influence on the development of political opinion in Great Britain than certain of the dailies, if not all of them lumped together. The general point I am seeking to develop is that Government supporters who are critical of the news media in the country tend to over-estimate the extent to which these media may have influence on public political thinking.⁷⁵⁹

He explicitly denounced attempts by the government to persuade people to change their views by ‘brandishing big sticks and threatening news media, both internally and externally, with certain action if they do not tend to conform to government policy’.⁷⁶⁰ Following from this argument is the assumption that the press did not have a malignant effect on politics. However, with the argument coming from the UFP, now an opposition party, one can assume that the party was seeking to portray itself as the vanguard of press freedom in a country that was limiting media freedoms and closing the media space every day.

In supporting the arguments raised by Mr. Nicholson, Mr. Brelsford opined that in any society, public opinion was not shaped by the majority but by a select few influential members of the society whom he defined as moulders of public opinion. He identified these influential public opinion moulders as editors, politicians, university graduates, leading in finance, commerce and industry-the middle class of the day. He stated that any influence on these people would have massive spin-offs on the whole mass of the people. In reference to the *African Daily News*, Brelsford argued that it didn’t have much influence as it focused on the ordinary people instead of aiming at a restrictive, highly selective readership of influential Africans.⁷⁶¹ In the end, the legislators suggested that for government propaganda to work, they needed not to be heavy-handed in their response to the press, but that a government owned newspaper directed at influential Africans be launched. In response, the government in the very same year launched a newspaper called the *African Times*, whilst at the same time closing the *African Daily News* and implementing stricter controls on state-owned media. This in a way bears testimony to the effect that the RF government did not subscribe to the opinion raised by UFP legislators on the impact of the press. The activities of the African political parties and their followers created fear in the government, so much so that they felt they had no option but to first muzzle the press and then, eventually, close the independent press. The very opinion makers were being given daily coverage by the *African Daily News* whose readership was increasing to all parts of the country. The so-called opinion makers

⁷⁵⁹ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Assembly Debates: Information Policy, 1 April 1964, Cols 1504-1505.

⁷⁶⁰ Southern Rhodesia Assembly Debates, col. 1506.

⁷⁶¹ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Assembly Debates, 1 April 1964, col. 1515.

were now detached from the government and its paternal politics of partnership. The die had been cast; the struggle for African independence had begun. With the drive to recruit the masses in full swing, the very opinion makers who had been influential for the government in the late 1950s were now sworn enemies of the government. The *African Daily News* now became a mouth-piece for these opinion makers, especially the likes of Joshua Nkomo, James Chikerema, Enos Nkala, Ndabaningi Sithole, among others. These people were all regarded as rabble rousers by the government and their organisations were proscribed. In my view, the claim by UFP legislators that the impact of press in Rhodesia was being over-stated missed the point. The very fact that the *African Daily News* would be closed by the Smith government, supposedly for endangering public safety and security, points to its revolutionary impact on Rhodesia politics in that context.

Finally and probably obvious is the conclusion that the *African Daily News*' major weakness was its failure to appeal to the white electorate, who at the end of the day had the power to install or remove one from office. The *African Daily News* failed to broaden its readership to include progressive white electorate of Judith Todd's calibre. There were no laws that restricted the sell of the newspaper to the Europeans and as such I think more could have been done aggressively to market the newspaper to new readers other than the Africans. Yet, of course, in the racial climate of the day, representation as an authentic voice of the African majority perhaps precluded other marketing strategies. Another factor that deserved discussion is the arrogance and power-seeking of African nationalists. It is quite plausible to argue that had nationalists taken heed of the suggestions by the newspaper, specifically to support and take part in the elections after the 1961 constitution, the Rhodesia Front would never have obtained the majority to form a government. Maybe it can be argued that it was the *African Daily News* who failed to influence and persuade black voters. Instances can be pointed which support this view. For example, whilst the *African Daily News* wanted ZAPU to contest the 1962 elections, it failed in this endeavour, and when it realised that ZAPU wasn't going to vote, they tried to influence individual voters to register and vote on their own. This again was not successful and it seems to suggest that—on the whole—Africans were more loyal to their political leaders than to a newspaper. Another instance, which again shows the limitations of the *African Daily News*, was when violence broke out in the suburbs of Mbare and Highfields. Contrary to claims by the RF ministers that the newspaper encouraged violence, evidence abounds which shows how it clamoured for peace. When it

failed in its quest to stop the violence, the *African Daily News* had to track down James Chikerema in Zambia to appeal for calm. In essence, this suggests that the newspaper was aware of its limits and was trying to make use of leading nationalist personalities to get the message to the people.

Turning attention now to the post-colonial *Daily News*, one is struck to find that things didn't really change from what they had been in the 1960s. Just like the *African Daily News*, the *Daily News* can still be considered an elite publication in the sense that its readership was exclusively urban. Whilst the setting had changed, since Africans were now the majority of the electorate, the *Daily News*, for several reasons, was only read by urbanites who in the eyes of many were too few to effect change in Zimbabwe. Be that as it may, its impact within the urban setting can certainly be assessed. Coming to the scene as an alternative to the state media that had been tamed to support the government, the *Daily News* provided an option for the readers to understand the other 'side' of the Zimbabwean story. In a democracy there is meant to be the promotion of plural ideas and the *Daily News* came to do that. Takura Zhangazha aptly summarises the influence of the *Daily News* when it was formed:

It was phenomenal; it was the first alternative daily after the *Daily Gazette*. It assisted in access to alternative voice outside of government. It assisted in setting the democratisation agenda in the country, that is qualifying what a democratic election is, democratic opposition and also setting a tone for constitutional reforms, focusing on elections themselves, it increased the capacity of Zimbabweans to enjoy the right to express themselves either by accessing information by reading stories or by writing letters to the editor or opinion columns. It extremely threatened the government due to its impact on the Zimbabwean urban sphere.⁷⁶²

The *Daily News*' first impact which I analysed in this thesis was on the constitutional debate, which began in earnest in 1999 and culminated in the referendum of 2000. I argued that the newspaper carried views mainly of the MDC and the NCA who opposed the draft constitution. The ZANU PF government noted that they had been defeated partly because of the mobilising effect of the *Daily News*, which managed to highlight how the government was manipulating the draft constitution to safeguard their selfish interests especially on land. Furthermore, the fact that there was voter apathy and that the majority of those who voted were in the urban areas tilted the balance in favour of those who voted NO. Thus, it can be concluded that the *Daily News* did indeed contribute to the NO vote in a significant way.

⁷⁶² Interview with Takura Zhangazha, 24 March 2012.

In spite of its popularity, there still remain questions as to why at the end of the day the *Daily News* had minimal impact in Zimbabwean politics. The answer is accessibility. Whilst the owners of the of the newspapers wanted to make it a truly national paper that could be read by everyone in Zimbabwe, the state and its allies were determined to make sure that its impact won't extend beyond the urban areas. According to many observers, the *Herald*, due to its support of the ZANU PF regime, had been reduced to a mere party paper whose sales were dwindling with each passing day. Thus extra-legal measures had to be put in place to curtail the sales of the *Daily News*. In explaining the political environment in Zimbabwe at the time, Godwin Mangudya who worked for Zimbabwe Inter Africa News Agency (ZIANA) during the referendum noted that

When covering the referendum, I was working for ZIANA, a pro-government media. I was deployed in Mash East, and our stance was to write stories campaigning for the yes vote during the referendum. When moving around, we could see that it was not conducive for those perceived to be anti-government. We were protected by the war veterans since we were state journalists.⁷⁶³

The fact that workers at the state media needed the protection of the war veterans to go about their lawful duties bears testimony to the dangers associated with being a journalist in Zimbabwe and this got worse as the political stakes were raised. As chapter 5 has shown it was impossible for the *Daily News* to cover the farm invasions without incurring the wrath of the war veterans who either beat them up or confiscated their cameras and sometimes illegally detained them. The *Daily News* was not capable of extending its readership to the farms and rural areas and this inevitably diluted its impact on Zimbabwean politics. According to Brian Paradza, the *Daily News* was reduced to a clandestine publication in the rural areas since no one could read it freely without being harassed by ZANU PF youths and war veterans.⁷⁶⁴ Junior civil servants like teachers, nurses and to some extent police officers as the opinion makers in most rural areas of Zimbabwe were also not permitted to read the *Daily News*. Such scenarios therefore contributed to the dilution of the impact of the *Daily News* in Zimbabwe.

Structural weaknesses within the Zimbabwean politics also contributed to the reasons the *Daily News* failed to effect profound political change. Zimbabwean politics from colonisation to the present have been premised on the deployment of violence with impunity and this has

⁷⁶³ Interview with Godwin Mangudya, 27 January 2012.

⁷⁶⁴ Interview with Brian Paradza, 15 January 2013.

affected and thwarted attempts at progressive reform and democratic growth. Further complicating the issue is the personality cult surrounding Robert Mugabe, who has ruled the country for over thirty four years, from independence to this writing. When criticised by the press, the state media and even his supporters construe this as a sign of ‘lack of proper respect’ due to a head of state. This has resulted in numerous arrests of journalists under archaic laws for ‘undermining the office of the president’ whilst others have been subjected to violence by Mugabe’s supporters. In the case of the *Daily News*, as has been seen, its circulation was severely curtailed by the so-called gatekeepers of certain communities on behalf of ZANU PF. As Wallace Chuma observed in 2007, the *Daily News* stopped circulating in several rural centres after vendors were soundly beaten, their copies confiscated and torched.⁷⁶⁵

One of the worst contributors to the negative functions of the press in Zimbabwe, as has been previously argued, is the political polarisation within the Zimbabwean society. This has surfaced in the form of extreme political bias by the press towards one or other political parties. The *Daily News* was accused of being biased towards the MDC. Although Geoff Nyarota disputes this claim, Takura Zhangazha of the Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe argues that this bias existed and, more, that it an inevitable feature of a press critical of a long-ruling, one party state. Bias, he states

affects the nature and quality of the news. It also affects the public judgement of a certain political party. But in the case of the *Daily News* it was OK to be biased towards the opposition and pro-democracy groups because Zimbabwe was coming from a dictatorship where alternative views were next to non-existent...the bias was in the public interests. It covered these because they were not being covered, and there were attempts to seek balance.⁷⁶⁶

The role of the media in a polarised society becomes ambiguous and its intentions are frequently and often wilfully misconstrued, especially when it is the independent press trying to perform its ‘watchdog’ role. Minabere Ibelema has observed, in relation to the experience on the continent, that

much of the [mainstream press] was subservient to political interests and, as such, could neither be a credible watchdog of the government nor an effective champion of social

⁷⁶⁵ Wallace Chuma, ‘The anomaly of the Zimbabwean Press’, *Mail and Guardian*, 1 July 2007.

⁷⁶⁶ Interview with Takura Zhangazha, 24 March 2012.

reform. For, with regard to coverage of government, such a press is usually a fawning mouthpiece or a polemical agent.⁷⁶⁷

Wallace Chuma characterises the Zimbabwean contexts thus:

In the heat of the fierce political contest pitching ruling ZANU PF against the opposition MDC, newspapers have unashamedly joined the fray. The private *Daily News* hardly veils its support for the MDC, while the state press has gone into overdrive behind the ruling party and government. During election time, the reportage often becomes so partisan a reader needs both papers to have a remote semblance of what might have transpired.⁷⁶⁸

Analysing the role played by the *Daily News* in campaigning for democracy is often challenged by sceptics, who believe that it contributed to the hard-line stance taken by ZANU PF in its dealings with pro-democracy groups and especially the media. At the end of the day the government seemed to be at war with the press and in return the press fought back, reducing the quality of debate as each defended an entrenched position. The *Daily News* has been accused of being confrontational and contributing to sour relations with the state. Others, like, Earnest Mudzengi, believe that it was the attitude towards the press by ZANU PF that drew it more and more to the MDC.⁷⁶⁹

Whilst ZANU PF has been quick to label newspapers like the *Daily News* an opposition press, they themselves have been accused of turning a blind eye to the support they got from the government funded press. The *Herald*, in the run-up to the 2000 Parliamentary elections came out in the open notifying its readership that it had decided to support ZANU PF in its quest to fend off political interest from the MDC. Whilst the *Herald* and the ZANU PF leadership felt that there was nothing unusual in this stance, they couldn't comprehend it when the *Daily News* showed political support to the MDC. However, many have pointed that it was unethical for the *Herald* to come out in support of the government as this compromised its watchdog role in society thereby ceasing to be the fourth estate. In addition, it was often cited that the *Herald* wasn't truly owned by the government per se, it was just a shareholder, and thus the people of Zimbabwe were the true owners of the newspapers under the Zimpapers stable. On the other hand, the *Daily News* being a private newspaper had a democratic right to choose who to support although a degree of impartiality was expected from it. Pius Wakatama explains what he expects from the press:

⁷⁶⁷ Minabere Ibelema, *The African Press, Civic Cynicism and Democracy*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2008, p. 11.

⁷⁶⁸ Wallace Chuma, 'The anomaly of the Zimbabwean Press'.

⁷⁶⁹ Interview with Earnest Mudzengi, 20 February 2013.

The media should be a playing field for all kinds of players. But the press should be free to take sides. The press should give information and let people decide what to do with the information. The only thing that we don't want is for the press that is funded by the people for example *The Herald* to take sides politically. It should just give information and inform about what the political parties are doing. If it takes sides it should be on the moral and ethical side, but as far as ideology and policies the press should take a hands off approach unless they are commenting. Here they should give the platform to both sides of the story.⁷⁷⁰

It has also been noted that legislations and state institutions responsible for the operations of the media have negatively contributed to the poor performance by the media in Zimbabwe. The issue is that the state media has often lied without being subjected to punishments that are quickly meted out to the private press when they print unverified or false information. An example will suffice to demonstrate the dynamic. I have shown in the previous chapters that the *Daily News* on one occasion had printed a false story in which it claimed that a woman had been beheaded in front of her children. The reporter responsible for the story was promptly arrested. On 22 April 2002, *The Chronicle* published a story claiming that the MDC was planning massive terrorist attacks on tall buildings in Harare and Bulawayo. Following this unsubstantiated story, no reprimand was meted out to *The Chronicle* and its reporters. This has generated debate on the efficacy of strict laws governing the operations of the media in Zimbabwe. William Bango had this to say concerning regulations in the media sector

The essence of good journalism is, and has always been, unfettered publicity. If the stimulus for professional growth through journalism is right, and I believe Zimbabwe is still a huge story, official media regulation and subtle censorship are the main impediments to professional advancement and quality service.⁷⁷¹

Andy Moyse has also mourned the scourge of these media laws and regulations which he claims are there to control, and not to regulate, freedom of expression. He argues that these controls have resulted in the emasculation of the independent media and the suffocation of freedom of thought.⁷⁷² It is in this vein that Ibbo Mandaza also has castigated the government's involvement in the media sector through its promulgating laws which are selectively applied. His view is that 'there is no reason why the government should be

⁷⁷⁰ Interview with Pius Wakatama, 16 November 2012

⁷⁷¹ William Bango, *Introspection into the Media Sector in a changing Zimbabwe*

⁷⁷² Andy Moyse, 'Media, Law Reform and the Media we want', Paper presented at the Media Law Reform Conference, Harare, 4 December 2008.

running the media. They should privatise all newspapers. You can't be a watchdog and a player at the same time'.⁷⁷³

During the first tenure of the *Daily News*, Zimbabwe had three elections: the referendum of 2000, the parliamentary elections of 2000 and the presidential elections of 2002. Only in the case of the referendum did a cause with the support of the *Daily News* win. Both election results favoured the ZANU PF and its media. Can we then say that the *Daily News* was responsible for these defeats, in as much as we are ascribing to it the referendum victory? The issue becomes tricky to call once again, due to the number and distribution of the newspapers' readership. In urban areas where the paper was being read freely, the opposition MDC managed to win, whilst in the rural areas perceived to be ZANU PF strongholds the MDC lost. A number of reasons for this may be speculated. Firstly, the fact that its circulation was minimal in the rural areas meant that its message did not spread far enough to the majority of the rural people to make meaningful impact. Again, we have to remember that the newspaper was banned in these areas, whilst the state media easily circulated there. In addition, these rural areas were also a no go area for the MDC and all the political space was easily filled by ZANU PF. More importantly, other factors like violence easily explains why ZANU PF won as it deployed intimidation. It becomes a challenge to measure the impact of the press in a society with so many variables.

On another point, what does our tale of two newspapers tell us concerning the theories deployed in this study, viz, the public sphere and the agenda setting theory of the press? As far as the public sphere is concerned, both the *African Daily News* and the *Daily News* provided alternative public spaces for the circulation of news, information and opinion. During the respective eras in which they operated, they competed directly with state media which were addressed to supporting the ruling parties of the day. The coming of these private newspapers meant a creation of more complicated and multi-dimensional public sphere, giving voice to those who had been previously sidelined. The use of letters to the editor in these newspapers meant that there was dialogue on the issues of the day. Whether this can be termed an ideal public sphere remains a controversial question, but the fact that the papers generated interest among the readers is sufficient to consider its contribution valuable. Some have talked of private newspapers providing counter-public spheres to the ones provided by the state media. The argument is that the public sphere provided by the state media was not

⁷⁷³ Interview with Ibbo Mandaza, 20 February 2013.

open to dissenting voices and therefore not an ideal public sphere. Thus the coming in of the private media was meant to open other alternative public spheres that not only competed with the one provided by the state media, but that was independent of state controls. Thus the main reason why these private newspapers were closed by the two regimes was mainly due to the fact that they had liberalised the public sphere to include a lot of people who tended to be government critics.

The thesis has argued that during the eras under study, the media played a pivotal role of setting the agenda of politics by bringing to the fore the key national issues at hand. It was mainly in the media that significant social problems bearing on elections were articulated. These were framed differently by the state media and the private media. But whose agenda was being promoted? For the colonial period it was always argued that the *African Daily News* either propagated the agenda of its proprietors or the agenda of the nationalists. For the *Daily News*, it was claimed that the agenda of the MDC and its Western funders was being fed to the people daily. Whilst such influences may be demonstrated, such an analysis falls short as it denies the agency from the press and its editors to determine its own politics. Furthermore, readers, too, are not powerless dupes of the media but active (unless physically prohibited) in the decision-making about what they want to read. Andy Moyse argues that a society which allows for free circulation of ideas empowers readers to shape that market:

the whole point about freedom of speech that we are all entitled to express ourselves freely in a market place of ideas, and have the freedom to choose what we read, watch and listen to. The public themselves will decide which ideas will prevail and which news services are the most credible.⁷⁷⁴

If a society like this existed in Zimbabwe, argues Moyse, then there would be no need to close and ban newspapers because the surest regulation would come from the readers and their consumer power.

Another area to look at when evaluating the impact of the press in the context of political struggle is to look at it through the issues of bias, subjectivity and notions of press freedom. It has already been established that the period in which the two newspapers operated under were periods of volatile political temperatures. For the *African Daily News* it was faced with the growth of African trade unions, a period when the African middle class sought to assert themselves as the voice of other Africans. It was also a period of the rise in African

⁷⁷⁴ Andy Moyse, 'Zimbabwe's Lost Voices', Press Freedom Day Commemoration, May 3 2009.

nationalism on the one hand and the rise of reactionary forces on the other. In these instances, it becomes inevitable to discuss the role of the press focusing on how certain issues are framed and the stance taken by the newspaper. Whatever stance the newspaper take, some quarters in society interpret it as bias. An example was when the *African Daily News* covered the 1956 bus boycott and the railway strike. It took a slant that attacked African trade unions that in return attacked the newspaper for being biased against the trade unions. Later, when the newspaper turned and supported African nationalists it was once again accused by the Rhodesian Front government of being biased against the government. In fact the government accused the newspaper of abusing press freedom by siding with the nationalists, a crime that the newspaper paid by being closed. The same conundrum was faced by the *Daily News*. Formed in a climate of political uncertainty, and fronted by people who had been frustrated by the government, the *Daily News* was inevitably seen as anti-government and oppositional. This was also reflected in the coverage of the constitutional referendum, the land reform as well as the general analysis of the poor performance by the economy. In all these instances, the newspaper was pro-opposition and the government saw this as an abuse on freedom of the press. Consequently, the newspaper faced hardships specially created for it by the government so that it would not circulate freely. In addition, legislations such as AIPPA were created to curtail the activities of the private press. This legislation resulted in the closure of the *Daily News*, in the same way the Law and Order Maintenance Act was responsible for the proscription of the *African Daily News*.

As the thesis has shown, these were not the only papers that were closed by the state authorities. A host of other papers that refused to toe the line were silenced. The closure of newspapers in a way is a tacit indicator of their power to impact political change and the democratisation process in Zimbabwe. Because the governments concerned had failed to sell their agenda to the electorate, the only way they saw to ensure their continued narrow seat of power was to silence the alternative press.

Conclusion

This chapter is a concluding analysis of the impact of the *African Daily News* and the *Daily News* in, respectively, their colonial and post-colonial settings. I have argued that although the newspapers concerned had their own inherent weaknesses which affected their message

and audience, they remain the most important political newspapers in the history of the country. I have showed that there were obstacles placed on the path of the two newspapers by the state authorities, which greatly affected the reach of these newspapers. Despite these road blocks, they played a fundamental role in opening spaces of freedom and emancipation that increased the power of their reading publics to make informed decisions on daily political affairs that affected their lives.

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