

**PROBING THE DEGREE OF ACCURACY, BIAS AND FAIRNESS  
IN CERTAIN DAILY NEWSPAPERS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

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for the degree of Master of Philosophy  
at the University of Stellenbosch**



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SUBSTANTIVE

## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work and I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature:

Date:

## SUMMARY

Principles and standards in journalism warrant attention and this assignment attempted to offer some ethical concepts as a framework from which to evaluate journalistic conduct. The proposal was to investigate the level of moral integrity in journalism as practiced in daily newspapers using concepts proposed by specialists in the journalistic field such as accuracy, bias, and fairness. The newspapers examined in the research process were the *Cape Argus*, the *Cape Times*, *Die Burger* and *Beeld*.

As a means of probing the dailies, case studies were made of reports on dr. Allan Boesak, the former anti-apartheid cleric accused and later convicted of theft and fraud, and Hansie Cronjé, the former cricket captain of South Africa, who found himself in a similar position regarding money and the trust placed in him.

The research comprised a comparative analysis of articles related to dr. Boesak in the period from 4 March 1997 to 27 March 1997, and Hansie Cronjé from 8 April 2000 to 24 April 2000. These personalities were used as case studies to establish whether the four dailies differed in their portrayal of these figures as events unfolded in the public arena. The intention was to find out if there were differences in the approach to the topics covered, and if so, if it amounted to bias, inaccuracy and unfairness.

The results of the study showed that in the final analysis, dr. Boesak primarily enjoyed favourable coverage in the *Cape Argus* and *Cape Times*, while Hansie Cronjé primarily enjoyed the same in *Die Burger* and *Beeld*. While these predispositions were rather obvious, the quality of reportage was not impaired to the extent that one could regard its news as distorted, inferior or of doubtful quality. The papers were still able to perform a high standard of professionalism in giving equal and just coverage to the topics covered, and were adept at providing a successful forum for the exchange of ideas while keeping the public informed.

## OPSOMMING

Beginsels en standaarde in die joernalistiek vereis aandag en hierdie werkstuk het probeer om enkele etiese konsepte voor te stel waarvolgens joernalistiese optrede beoordeel kan word. Die doel was om die standaard van morele integriteit in die joernalistiek van streekkoerante te bestudeer deur middel van gespesialiseerde joernalistiese begrippe, onder meer akkuraatheid, partydigheid en regverdigheid. Die koerante wat deel gevorm het van die ondersoek sluit die *Cape Argus*, *Cape Times*, *Die Burger* en *Beeld* in.

Die dagblaai is deur middel van gevallestudies bestudeer. Hierdie het bestaan uit berigte oor dr. Allan Boesak, die voormalige anti-apartheid aktivis wat eerstens aangekla en later skuldig bevind is aan diefstal en bedrog, en oor Hansie Cronjé, die voormalige Suid-Afrikaanse krieketkaptein, wat in 'n soortgelyke posisie verkeer het weens beweerde bedrog.

Die studie bestaan uit 'n vergelykende ontleding van berigte oor dr. Boesak wat verskyn het in die tydperk tussen 4 Maart 1997 en 27 Maart 1997, asook berigte oor Hansie Cronjé wat verskyn het tussen 8 April 2000 en 24 April 2000. Die omstredeheid rondom hierdie persoonlikhede word gebruik as gevallestudies om vas te stel of hierdie spesifieke dagblaai verskil het in hul uitbeelding van dié persone terwyl hierdie gebeure in die openbare arena afgespeel het. Die doel was om vas te stel of daar verskille was in die manier waarop die onderwerpe benader is, en indien wel, of dit tot onjuistheid, partydigheid en onregverdigheid gelei het.

Die uitslae van die studie het bewys dat dr. Boesak hoofsaaklik gunstige dekking gekry het in die *Cape Argus* en *Cape Times*, terwyl Hansie Cronjé grootliks dieselfde behandeling ontvang het in *Die Burger* en *Beeld*. Alhoewel hierdie neigings in die verskillende dagblaai klaarblyklik was, het dit nie daarop neergekom dat die gehalte van die berigte verlaag is tot so 'n mate dat 'n mens dit as verdraaid, minderwaardig of twyfelagtig kon bestempel nie.

Die dagblaai het nog steeds daarin geslaag om 'n taamlik hoë mate van professionele vaardigheid te vertoon deur middel van egalige en eweredige beriggewing met

betrekking tot die aangeleenthede van belang in hierdie studie. Die koerante het bepaald daarin geslaag om 'n forum vir die uitruiling van idees te verskaf terwyl hulle voortdurend sorg dat hulle die publiek inlig.

*for the abundant blessings in my life, including the ability to pursue higher studies.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Truth is at the heart of the journalistic enterprise and it is therefore the moral obligation of journalists to deliver correct and reliable information to the public. In a democracy journalists are expected to provide the public with the information it requires to be free and informed, as well as offer a platform for the flow of diverse ideas and opinions. These objectives are achieved when journalists learn to weigh and balance competing moral factors in their work, and the press assumes the responsibility of exercising a sense of moral evaluation and restraint where necessary.

It is important that the public's right to be informed about an important matter is balanced with a keen sensitivity towards the topic being discussed. The special privileges enjoyed by the press, as the fourth estate, demands an increased awareness and principled commitment to the public.

The themes of interest to this research paper are philosophical in nature and encompass values such as good quality, good work, high merit, high calibre, and also integrity, honesty, morality and righteousness. The writer does not assume the moral high ground by engaging in a discussion of these ideals but recognizes the importance of reviewing journalism in practice.

Principles and standards in journalism warrant attention and this paper offers some ethical concepts as a framework from which to evaluate journalistic conduct. The proposal is to investigate the level of moral integrity in journalism as practiced in daily newspapers using concepts proposed by specialists in the journalistic field such as accuracy, bias, and fairness.

As a means of probing the dailies to ascertain the level of ethics practised, case studies will be made of reports on dr. Allan Boesak, the former anti-apartheid cleric accused and later convicted of theft and fraud, and Hansie Cronjé, the former cricket captain of South Africa, who found himself in a similar position regarding money and the trust placed in him.

The newspapers used as a basis for the study are those published by Independent Newspapers, including the *Cape Argus* and *Cape Times*, and those published by Naspers including *Die Burger* and *Beeld*.

## 2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this paper is to produce a fairly detailed research report on the concepts of accuracy, bias and fairness in journalism with specific relevance to selected daily newspapers in South Africa. The paper will discuss these concepts in an effort to determine its qualities and define its characteristics. This will be followed by an exposition of its techniques and the methods of analysing these phenomena in the press so that the newspapers may be effectively examined.

The reason for engaging in this research is so as to determine the level of integrity in the reporting of the selected newspapers. The papers of relevance to this assignment are the *Cape Argus*, *Cape Times*, *Die Burger* and *Beeld*. Articles from each of these papers will be scrutinised comparatively to assess the coverage of the certain topical issues. The aim is to ascertain the level of accuracy, bias and fairness practised by the four different papers selected for study.

The research will comprise a comparative analysis of articles related to dr. Allan Boesak in the period from 4 March 1997 to 27 March 1997, and Hansie Cronjé from 8 April 2000 to 24 April 2000. Reports about these personalities will be used as case studies to establish whether the four dailies differed in their portrayal of these figures as events unfolded in the public arena. The intention is to find out if there were differences in the approach to the topics covered, and if so, if it amounted to bias, inaccuracy and unfairness.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The first step in the research process is to acquire an understanding of the terms accuracy, bias, and fairness within the broader field of Media Ethics. This incorporates the reading and study of pertinent material by the experts in this specialised domain. The definitions provide a backdrop against which to investigate the output of the selected dailies.

The second step in the research process is to collate the articles of interest to this research paper from four daily newspapers aimed at the broader community and distributed in different regions in the country, namely, the *Cape Argus*, *Cape Times*, *Die Burger*, and *Beeld*. These dailies have been chosen because of their varied backgrounds and philosophies, which will presumably enhance the potential for an interesting comparison of the relevant articles.

The selected articles include those relating to dr. Allan Boesak on his return to South Africa from the United States of America to face charges of fraud and theft against him and the subsequent responses in the media regarding the issue. The scope of the articles ranges from 4 March 1997 to 27 March 1997. It will also include articles on Hansie Cronjé, comprising the initial allegations of fraud against him and the general responses that occurred in the media as a result. These articles range from 8 April 2000 to 24 April 2000.

Thirdly, the research will involve an analysis of the selected articles on dr. Allan Boesak and Hansie Cronjé, which will serve as case studies. The empirical investigation will be qualitative rather than quantitative in nature and will constitute an analysis of the content of newspaper articles. Though it is qualitative, the frequency of articles will not be a determining factor in the study as both these public figures were extensively covered in the local media. The analysis will be done chronologically as events unfolded in the media regarding the case studies selected.

The analysis will include a comprehensive study of the language used to portray the two individuals and their related circumstances to ascertain the attitude of the publications towards their subjects, if indeed there are differences in them. Issues and events will be compared in the different papers to observe the methods of reporting implemented.

The aim of the analysis is to establish whether the newspapers differ in their depiction of identical issues, and whether in fact, there are differences in their approach towards the topics covered. The findings will allow one to discern the level of integrity of the

papers and will clarify whether there are instances of unfairness, bias and inaccuracy in journalism in practice in the four selected South African newspapers.

Finally, the theory acquired in the initial stages of the research will be employed so as to compare the philosophical ideals of journalism with the practical implementation of journalism. The idea is to ascertain whether the two notions are inclusive or exclusive of one another.

#### 4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

##### 4.1 FAIRNESS

The concept of fairness in journalism is fairly broad and its practice fairly challenging. It could probably best be defined as presenting the most accurate possible portrayal of events within their proper context (Hausman, 1992:75). Certainly, it is very difficult to find a plateau from which all things and all consequences can be viewed and presented fairly, but it remains the journalist's duty to aspire to it as far as possible.

Effectively any writing in journalism can be examined regarding its fairness. Questions that could be posed under this topic of discussion are those of fairness<sup>①</sup> to sources, fairness to the<sup>②</sup> general public, fairness to the<sup>③</sup> facts, fairness to the<sup>④</sup> subject matter, and so on. In order to address these questions, concepts such as truth, balance, bias, and impartiality need to be explored (Klaidman and Beauchamp, 1987:23). These issues, discussed below, indicate the comprehensive moral character of fairness.

Concepts such as impartiality, balanced coverage and bias all incorporate the idea of providing a balance in reporting conflicting interests and claims in society. The idea advanced in academic journalism circles is that the public should be made aware of both sides in a conflict situation amounting to complete and equitable coverage. There are of course those who disagree and have protested that the balance mentality would compel writers to give Judas equal space for his side of the story (Hausman, 1992:55).

The question regarding fairness is always whether the indicted party has been given ample opportunity to respond in the media (Pippert, 1989:75). An accepted practice in

many news organisations is that reporters obtain responses to unofficial charges in an effort to be fair to the subject. The use of the recurring refrain that someone was “unavailable for comment” implies a measure of guilt on that party, which may not be always entirely just. The person may have valid reasons for not being available. \*

Hausman, quotes Rome *News Tribune* editor John L. Perry who makes an interesting contribution to the discussion declaring that effectively people do not want to experience fairness in the media. According to Perry, “They want, favour, exemption, protection from public notice...they only want the good news published.” (1992:55). It is important that reporters observe their watchdog role bearing in mind their duty to be accurate, timely, incisive and pertinent. “good news”?

Fairness is also influenced by perspective. Media that claim to have a fair and objective perspective allege that they are free from political bias from the left or right. This does not, however, automatically ensure that reports are fair and objective. Journalists have realised that complete objectivity is an illusion, and that a more realistic approach is to keep personal preferences and opinions out of the news in order to give more balanced coverage (Day, 1997:35).

A criterion of competence is therefore that reporters dissociate their personal beliefs from what is being reported so that the story gets expert and independent coverage as far as possible. More than merely avoiding predispositions, fairness differs slightly from objectivity in that it requires the added intention of reporting those views that will enhance the readers understanding of an issue (Day, 1997:78). \*

Word choice plays a comparatively significant role in the fairness aspect of news coverage. Evaluative terms could evoke either pejorative connotations, on the one hand, or favouritism towards individuals, organisations or issues on the other. The use of these terms is inclined to be subtle and can therefore be employed without being too obvious. Reporters are able to create perceptions in readers by manipulating words to create the meanings they want to impart.

It is important that reporters do not abuse the position of power they enjoy as the sources of popular information. Newspapers need to maintain the confidence of

readers and the public in the knowledge that they are striving to be ethical, responsible, fair, reasonable and accessible.

#### 4.2 ACCURACY

Journalists need to assign top priority to accuracy (Klaidman and Beauchamp, 1987:50). This essentially means that all information must be verified before using it in print (Hamilton and Krinsky, 1996:10). The practice becomes more complicated in complex stories where accuracy depends on selecting from the numerous available facts and presenting those facts in a suitable manner.

Accuracy implies both exactitude and diligence. Exactitude does not simply indicate correctness but rather indicates continuing from a platform of sound evidence. If doubt exists about information, this should be mentioned in the story. Inaccuracies may result from negligence or incompetence.

Furthermore, Thomas Jefferson, often quoted in media circles evidently urged journalists to report “true facts,” but more than that, to dedicate themselves to “sound principles” in journalism (Reeb, 1998:2). It was therefore not enough for reporters to simply to get their facts straight, but there was the matter of employing a principled approach in the reporting of the actual facts.

To be reasonable, the output in journalism cannot always be entirely complete, perfectly balanced, and totally objective. At the same time, not all stories or types of writing require the same standards of completeness, accuracy, balance and objectivity. But for a news report, feature or opinion piece to be truthful, it must satisfy a reasonable standard under each of these categories.

An area where accuracy is essential is in the use of quotations. <sup>\*</sup>Quotes are understood to be the exact words used by a person and therefore they lend weight to a story. They also serve to indicate that writers are not imposing their own thoughts on readers, but that they allow the players in a story to speak for themselves. These words are often distinctive and worthy of note, more so than any words writers could have employed to describe the situation neutrally.

It is not always easy to quote people accurately, though the introduction of tape recorders in the interviewing process has vastly facilitated matters. Tampering with quotes is regarded as a professional transgression and sometimes grammatical and syntactical errors are printed to capture the flavour of a rich expression. But <sup>exception</sup> smoothing out inevitable slips that occur in the spoken phrase to avoid embarrassing the speakers seems to be generally acceptable (Pippert, 1989:22). Newspapers have to be meticulous in accurately ascribing quotes especially in the light of frequent complaints of misquotations in the media.

A traditional standard of accurate reporting is proper attribution. This should give some indication of the reliability of the source, especially if the source cannot be identified by name or position. The main criteria need not be impossible or beyond reach, as long as the standards set for accuracy are both desirable and attainable. If particularly difficult conditions prevail, news reports should be appropriately qualified. Concern for accuracy may also require enough restraint to withhold information until it can be verified.

A basic requirement for competence is that journalists must possess the ability to use language well enough to convey the story adequately to readers. Spelling errors are definitely not acceptable. Reporters must check facts such as the correct spelling of names, the proper dates, figures, and so on, and must weigh the various elements of a story so that they are fairly represented in the final piece.

Accuracy falls within the ambit of truthfulness. However, journalists are reportedly prepared to say their stories are true, rather than that it is "the truth." (Ettema and Glasser, 1998:156). The distinction lies in the notion of factual accuracy. This means that reports printed must be accurate as far as the reported sequence of events, people involved, and quotes are concerned. Hausman maintains, "Anyone who has worked as a journalist knows that 'truth' is not an exact quantity" (1992:37). Rather, the "truth" is perceived as something ultimate, something to always strive towards, and something perhaps unattainable.

### 4.3 BIAS

Bias comprises a value-directed departure from accuracy, objectivity and balance (Klaidman and Beauchamp, 1987:60). Charges of bias in journalism are often based on the assumption that a reporter or newspaper holds partisan views, which affect the reportage. The preferential treatment, misrepresentation or unfair judgements that occur as a result, are typically based on the positions held by the editor and writers.

Intentional partiality or bias in reporting can take the form of blatant lies, misinformation or omissions and can be revealed by the degree of attention or prominence given to an issue (Hofstetter, 1976:7). Such reporting, obviously slanted in favour of one or the other grouping, is considered unacceptable and goes against the traditional journalistic ethic.

Bias is not expected to appear frequently in professional journalism. Considerable selectivity might occur where one side receives favourable coverage over another in disputes, or one theme is preferred over other possible themes. Reporters select facts they deem important and relevant from a large pool of information, and dispense with information presumed to be of less value to readers.

News is therefore necessarily selective and value-driven in the sense that it is selected from a multitude of options in order to report what is considered important (Pippert, 1989:26). This does not necessarily present a problem. Selectivity could, however, lead to bias when the writing and the attitudes of writers serve to influence the public. One finds particularly in the coverage of politics that certain political actors, political stories and political issues are reported frequently and receive more sympathetic exposure than others.

In a democratic society, a newspaper comprises news as well as opinion. News reports constitute straightforward reporting while editorials present obvious interpretation. It is essential that attitudes and opinions be proclaimed in the appropriate columns rather than tarnishing news reports with observations disguised as fact. The two types of writing should be distinguishable and readers should be able to turn to the one for information and the other for direction. Where commentary and news are confused

NB

eg politics

bias can flourish without check jeopardising the integrity of journalism. Though bias is unavoidable its occurrence should be negligible.

Judgements of bias and fairness require objective standards of balance and truthfulness. Although reporters cannot be totally neutral and objective in their reporting, it is unethical and against the norms of journalistic practice to disregard fairness and truthfulness. Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that there are degrees of deviation from these standards and therefore degrees of bias, fairness and accuracy. The aim is to curb bias and to strive for an appreciable level of accuracy and fairness as far as possible.

## NB 5. MOTIVATION FOR SELECTION OF PRINT MEDIA: *CAPE ARGUS, CAPE TIMES, DIE BURGER AND BEELD*

Hamilton and Krimsky proclaim, "Like the people who run them, newspapers have personalities with quirks, foibles, and preferences" (1996:81). The background of a paper, including its origin and development as well as the philosophies of those administering it, will often mould its peculiarities and motivations. Though subtle and less obvious, the little indulgences of newspapers sometimes allow readers to discern the idiosyncrasies of a paper. It is rare that a paper will explain why it has given prominence to a story or why it covers a topic extensively. Discerning readers will be aware of these nuances and traits and generally it can be traced to the broader philosophy of the paper.

The four papers in question have been chosen for examination in this paper because of their different backgrounds and philosophies. The *Cape Argus* and *Cape Times* may be grouped together and are publications of Independent Newspapers while *Die Burger* and *Beeld* are Naspers publications. The papers emanate from diverse ownership associations and represent two diametrically opposed ideological and linguistic factions. Independent Newspaper's dailies are likely to be more lenient in its coverage of the new, liberal South African government while Naspers' dailies are likely to be more critical of the ANC-lead democratic regime (Breytenbach, 1991:10-11; Rakate, 1999:15-19). The policy of each newspaper differs therefore showing the potential for interesting comparison.

This study is an attempt to investigate the suppositions that the ideologies and philosophies of these publications differ and, more importantly, whether they affect the papers to the extent that unfairness, inaccuracy and bias may be detected in their reporting. The coverage that will be analysed in detail relates to those articles on dr. Allan Boesak, previously a member of the ANC as well as former cricket captain of South Africa, Hansie Cronjé, who comes from an Afrikaner background.

If the prior hypothesis is correct, dr. Allan Boesak will enjoy favourable coverage in the Independent Newspapers publications and Hansie Cronjé will enjoy the same in the Naspers publications. If, however, the papers are practising a high level of moral integrity and responsibility to the public, these should not be perceived to the extent that they impair the quality of news delivered to the public. It is expected that the results emanating from the research done in this paper will conclude the level of accuracy, fairness and bias that exists in the four selected daily newspapers.

The following section comprises the case studies, which includes a section detailing the biographical data of the two individuals selected for study. The sections following the background information will encompass a detailed examination and analysis of the articles appearing in the regional newspapers relating to the individuals for the specific periods mentioned.

## **6. CASE STUDY: ALLAN BOESAK**

This section will commence with a summary of dr. Boesak's biography. It was deemed necessary to include his biographical details so that readers may understand the implications of the articles that followed in the four daily newspapers when they are later discussed. The coverage dr. Boesak received in the different papers hinged on his earlier life and his participation in the struggle for democracy in South Africa.

### **6.1 BACKGROUND**

Allan Aubrey Boesak, holder of a doctorate degree in theology, came to be recognised as one of the icons of the anti-apartheid movement in the 80s. This charismatic orator moved thousands, if not millions, to rebel against the inequitable apartheid government. His influence gained international repute in 1982 when he was elected

president of the Geneva-based World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), an organisation boasting a constituency of 50 million. His accomplishments were the result of his uncompromising will to overcome the overwhelming challenges he faced as a young coloured child growing up in South Africa at the time.

He was born into a devout Christian home in Canarvon, northern Cape, on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1946 (Scholtz, 1989:9). At 5 years the young Boesak already began 'preaching' to his sisters in their home, pretending to be a minister in church. His father died when he was six years old, and his mother left the Boland with her eight children to settle in Somerset West where she could earn a livelihood to sustain her offspring (*Beeld*, 28 August 82). The young boy worked on the farms to supplement the family income and also spent time working at the community church. The family experienced particularly harsh conditions and at a tender age already, he learned from his mother that God held special consideration for the poor, weak and oppressed in society (Mutloatse, 1982:104). Impoverished, she taught her offspring the value of solidarity and sensitivity towards indigence.

The young Boesak fared well at school and finished his matriculation examinations in 1962 - before the age of 17 - at Gordon High School in Somerset West. At that time, the suburb they were living in was declared White, which meant the Boesak family had to relocate, along with scores of other families, under very trying circumstances. The family experienced the neglect and discrimination of the state against them.

After school, Boesak embarked on studies at the University of Western Cape, graduating in 1967 with a degree in theology (Mutloatse, 1982:104). At the same time, he enrolled at the Theological School of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (NGSK) to pursue the goal of becoming a minister. The Church granted financial assistance towards his studies and he completed the course in the prescribed five years. He was ordained as a minister at the end of 1967. A few months later he was authorized as minister of the Immanuel congregation at Noorder-Paarl (*Die Burger*, 27 November 1976). Here he met and later married Dorothy Martin.

While in service in this parish, the church was declared for whites only. An elderly churchgoer, whilst praising his lecturing skills, criticised him for not highlighting the

inequalities the oppressed were experiencing in the community. This incident touched him profoundly and he realised that as an evangelist, he dared not keep silent about the effects of apartheid on the people of South Africa (*Beeld*, 28 August 1982).

In 1970, he received a bursary from the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands to expand his theological studies, abroad. He therefore left South Africa with his family to settle in Kampen for the next six years. In the course of 1974 he visited South Africa and it was apparent that he had become an important personage amongst his peers as many of the coloured ministers sought his advice on questions of concern (Scholtz, 1989:16). While in South Africa, he was asked to address the congregation at the Immanuel parish in Paarl. The building would be demolished soon after and the Reverend Boesak strongly condemned apartheid on the occasion.

In June 1976, he was awarded his doctorate at Kampen, on the completion of his dissertation entitled *Farwell to Innocence, A Social-Ethical Study on Black Theology and Power*. The work drew a broad readership. Dr. Boesak had started out as a writer from a relatively young age. Part of his early theological research culminated in a relatively small publication called *Coming In and Out of the Wilderness*.

When Soweto erupted on 16 June 1976, the unrest spread throughout the rest of the country. It was at this juncture that the outspoken Dr. Boesak was invited to the UWC to address the student body on "The meaning of Soweto." He was noted as an outstanding speaker who had the ability to convey a powerful message with simple clarity. He was said to favour the "soft but penetrating approach in spreading the Gospel" (Mutloatse, 1982:105).

Soon after, he was appointed campus chaplain at the UWC, where he was available to members of all the churches as well as to the general student body. He held that apartheid denied the fact that all people are equal before God and was uncompromising in his stance against this philosophy.

In 1977 he gave vent publicly to his hatred toward apartheid saying that, for the oppressed, it denoted "bad housing, substandard pay, pass laws, influx control,

migrant labour, group areas, resettlement, inequality, fear, intimidation and condescension”(Scholtz, 1989:11). The pain and suffering he had seen among his people, the struggle in being uprooted and relocated to remote and poorly-developed areas, the lack of educational and recreational facilities and the numerous other glaring injustices and evils of apartheid led dr. Allan Boesak to see his life’s vocation as the struggle against it at all costs.

Dr. Boesak was the first president of the WARC from a third world country in its 107-year history. He was also one of the youngest. Of his powerful position, he modestly declared, “It is a recognition by a world body of our cause in South Africa” (Mutloatse, 1982: 105). Being the president of the WARC opened many doors for dr. Boesak. He met with numerous leaders of countries and was able to inform the world of the plight of the South African masses. Dr. Boesak travelled the globe with the object of opposing apartheid. Besides collecting money for the underprivileged in South Africa, he appealed to several foreign leaders to enforce sanctions on South Africa as well as promoting the idea of disinvestments so as to pressure the apartheid regime.

From 1983 onwards, dr. Boesak became increasingly involved in organisations with political aims and was instrumental in the establishment of the United Democratic Front (UDF), an umbrella body with 400 member organisations. At the inaugural meeting of the UDF in 1983, dr. Boesak expressed his vision for the future, “We are here to say that what we are working for is one, undivided South Africa that shall belong to all of its people, an open democracy, from which no single South African shall be excluded, a society in which the human dignity of its people shall be respected” (Boesak, 1987:36).

Dr. Boesak’s immaculate image was first tainted when it came to light that he was engaged in an extra-marital relationship with Di Scott, a white, divorced youth worker with the South African Council of Churches. The dominant position in media circles was that the event had jeopardized his position as an eminent leader (Ostling, 1985:49). Dr. Boesak’s only comment at the time was that a "unique and special relationship" existed with the woman concerned. In the end, he was absolved by the church and continued preaching.

In 1985 the Foundation for Peace and Justice (FPJ) was founded under the auspices of the NGSK of Belville. This organisation controlled substantial sums of money received from abroad, including the USA and Europe. The money was donated to aid the impoverished and oppressed people of South Africa. Dr. Boesak had access to millions of rands to promote his political ends.

In 1985 dr. Boesak was arrested when he led an illegal march to Pollsmoor prison to deliver a message to the imprisoned ANC leader, Nelson Mandela. He was held on charges of arranging an illegal gathering, encouraging disinvestments by foreign countries and organising school and consumer boycotts. The charges carried a possible sentence of 20 years, but he was eventually released three weeks later on R20 000 bail. The FJP paid the bail but the conditions of the bail stipulated that he was restricted to the magisterial district of Wynberg and his passport was withdrawn. At the time, he had been awarded the John F. Kennedy award for civil rights and his wife had to travel to the USA to accept the award and \$50 000 on his behalf (Scholtz, 1989: 64).

In 1990, it emerged that dr. Boesak was having an affair with a married, white executive producer at the South African Broadcasting Corporation. A scandal ensued that compelled his resignation from the church as well as from his position as head of the WARC. He later divorced Dorothy, his wife of 21 years with whom he had had four children, and married the SABC producer, Elna Botha. They had a daughter a year later.

In 1991 dr. Boesak joined the ANC, was elected Minister of Economic Affairs and ANC leader in the Western Cape. He was held responsible for securing an increase in the coloured support for the ANC in the 1994 general election. However, the ANC lost the Western Cape to the former apartheid National Party in the elections but the ANC was successful enough nationally to secure dr. Boesak a position in the political arena. He was South Africa's ambassador-designate to the United Nations in Geneva.

Two weeks before he was due to leave for Geneva, though, his hopes of a diplomatic career were shattered. After dissatisfaction with reports sent to them, the Danish aid

agency, DanChurch Aid, started an investigation into funds donated to dr. Boesak's FPJ. It appeared that a large portion of a \$1 million donation was unaccounted for in the record books of the foundation. The donors therefore commissioned the Johannesburg legal firm, Bell, Dewar & Hall, to investigate the matter.

Its principal verdict was that dr. Boesak had “enriched himself substantially” at the expense of the foundation. The report stated that the FPJ had diverted in excess of \$500 000 and that dr. Boesak had attempted to justify a monthly income “far in excess of what can reasonably be expected” (Laurence, 1999:1). Consequently enquiries arose regarding a \$50 000 donation from Coca-Cola for a community project in the Cape, as well as the alleged mishandling of money from the Children's Trust initiated by a donation from American singer Paul Simon after his 1992 tour of South Africa.

While the country was steeped in amazement and disbelief at the allegations, dr. Boesak departed with his family to the United States, where he proceeded to lecture in theology once again. In 1997, he returned to South Africa with his family, to appear before the Cape High Court on 32 charges of theft and fraud.

The following section examines the content of the articles that appeared in the daily newspapers relating to events after dr. Boesak's return to South Africa. Each newspaper will be examined individually starting with the *Cape Argus* reports followed by the *Cape Times*, *Die Burger* and *Beeld* articles, respectively.

## **6.2 SYNOPSIS OF ARTICLES: DR. BOESAK RETURNS TO SOUTH AFRICA ON CHARGES OF THEFT AND FRAUD**

The articles analysed and interpreted are those relating to dr. Allan Boesak's return to South Africa from the United States to face charges of theft and fraud against him. His daughter Bélen returned home before him and went on a campaign to generate support and funds for him on his return.

When dr. Boesak arrived in Cape Town, he was welcomed by a number of people at the Cape Town International Airport, including the Minister of Justice, Dullah Omar. This public action on the part of the Justice Minister provoked a number of responses

in the various newspapers, as especially opposition parties including the NP and DP felt that Omar had overstepped his boundaries in his capacity as Justice Minister by his overt support of dr. Boesak.

A great deal was said in the reported in the news about dr. Allan Boesak's return as well the public conduct of the Minister of Justice. A large section of the discussion below is related to the reactions to Omar as a result of his open support of Boesak. This aspect of Boesak's return to South Africa gained the most coverage in the papers, which therefore warranted the attention given to it in this assignment. The period under review commences 4 March 1999 and ends 27 March 1999.

### 6.2.1 CAPE ARGUS REPORTS

On 14 March 1997, the *Cape Argus* reported, "Allan Boesak is back in South Africa to face the music." The headline, "Boesak flies in for court ordeal," set the trend for the sympathetic stance adopted towards dr. Boesak, as "ordeal," a rather strong word, implied the difficulties he would experience in the process ahead.

word  
choice  
↓

The paper also reported that Justice Minister, Dullah Omar had pledged support for dr. Boesak "in a controversial move," and qualified that he had done so in his capacity "as leader of the Western Cape ANC." The paper thus distinguished between Omar's role as Justice Minister and leader of the ANC, of their own accord perhaps an indication of their defensive stance towards the party or the Minister of Justice.

The article also reported that the ANC had "hit back" at criticism of its support, saying it believed dr. Boesak, "deserved the respect of all South Africans for the manner in which he had co-operated in investigations."

On 18 March 1997, the *Cape Argus* editorial informed that dr. Boesak had, "Returned to south africa [sic] to a tumultuous welcome." This was a reference to the controversy in government circles regarding the welcome extended to dr. Boesak by the ANC. It mentioned the fact that South Africa was still in a very new phase, "the past is still closely with us," and said critically that those now in power could exploit the situation with relative ease causing widespread confusion.

The editorial held that this was the case with dr. Boesak, described as “the controversial cleric” as well as the “important figure in the resistance movement of the 1980s,” a fairly balanced description. It picked up on the statement by dr. Boesak at the CTI airport that the struggle against apartheid was on trial with him. The *Cape Argus* editorial argued that this stance was untrue saying, “He is on trial, and not for his politics.”

The editorial further criticised the statements made by the Justice Minister Dullah Omar averring the innocence of dr. Boesak. It held that they were “problematic” because he “has at the very least given the impression to the public that he – and by implication the party he represents – has concluded that Boesak is innocent.” The editorial stated that it would be “one thing” if Omar had, “expressed the hope [of Boesak’s innocence] in his personal capacity,” suggesting that it would have been acceptable.

The editorial further acknowledged the support offered to an earlier “comrade” as being noble, but recognised the “need for limits.” The article also stated emphatically, “It is quite wrong for the media, or anyone else, to try someone in public before due process has taken place,” and stated, “This newspaper has studiously avoided stroking hysteria in its coverage of the Boesak case.” It asked that the people’s court be allowed to do its work, and then the media could discuss its findings.

It disapproved of the fact that the Minister of Justice seemed to pre-empt the findings of the court and that “major public figures,” in all probability a reference to Omar and other ANC leaders, seemed to “prematurely declare innocence” without adding the stipulation that they would abide by the eventual decision of the court. It must be remembered that at that time, other newspapers were being extremely critical of Omar’s actions and public statements, so the *Cape Argus* criticism came in conjunction with other voices of disapproval.

Also on 18 March 1997, another article affirmed that the “storm” over Justice Minister Dullah Omar “was building.” The paper reported that Omar had protested, claiming he was backing dr. Boesak in his capacity as provincial leader of the ANC rather than as Minister of Justice, an explanation the *Cape Argus* had already printed

four days prior to this. The paper reported that this notion was “rejected” by the opposition parties.

*Cape Argus* voiced the opinions of the various political parties regarding the matter. The Democratic Party spokesperson, Doug Gibson, was quoted saying, “Has Mr. Omar taken leave of his senses?” He also said that instead of addressing the charges against him, “Mr Boesak has chosen to present himself as a political martyr.”

National Party spokesperson, Patrick McKenzie asserted that, “South Africa risked being called a banana republic” because of the direct interference of the Minister of Justice in the legal process. The NP criticised the ANC and the minister for having already found dr. Boesak innocent regardless of the law. A further criticism was that this precedent meant that in future anyone could be exempted for crime in South Africa by blaming it on the struggle.

These sentiments were echoed on 22 March 1997, when *Cape Argus* quoted “leading” ANC figure and member of the Human Rights Commission, Rhoda Kadalie, who believed the Minister of Justice “should not be seen to be influencing the course of justice.” Kadalie said she “outraged” by the statement by dr. Boesak that if he were found guilty, the anti-apartheid struggle would stand condemned for what it had done. She contended that the statement was “highly arrogant” and further questioned the “sudden resurgence of support” for dr. Boesak, saying it was, “extremely curious.” She wondered if it was, “About votes,” a question that was raised in the Afrikaans press as well.

The article stated that the controversy over Omar’s support for dr. Boesak included dissent from prominent figures in the legal profession. A quote by an advocate who asked to remain anonymous stated, “It is inappropriate for the minister in charge of prosecutions to be commenting on a case that is pending.”

The report also contained a statement by the Western Cape Attorney-General Frank Kahn, who had thus far “remained guarded” concerning the case. His response followed the public pledge by Omar that the ANC would not “turn its back” on

comrade-in-arms, dr. Boesak. Kahn said he wanted to, “Assure the public that the controversy would not affect the professionalism of his prosecutors in the matter.”

On 27 March, *Cape Argus* reported that aside from criticism received from the NP and DP, Omar was “widely attacked in newspapers throughout the country and by leading academics and lawyers.” In an article entitled “Omar defiant as furore over Boesak grows,” the paper also reported, however, that Omar expressed “dismay, regret and disappointment” at the way the NP and DP chose to respond to the “Boesak issue.” Omar claimed that the parties had “distorted” what he had said. He said, “We never commented on the case against Boesak at all. We have not interfered in the prosecution.”

An interesting and lengthy article followed all the controversy on 25 March 1997, in the *Cape Argus*. Wilmot James, executive director of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa, wrote an article under the headline “Boesak case a test of the system,” which exposed “a fundamental problem in South Africa’s new political system.” James explained how challenging it must be for Dullah Omar to wear “two hats” at the same time. He was referring to his role as Minister of Justice while at the same time being provincial leader of the ANC.

He believed that the system abandoned those individuals to “make the judgement as to how to conduct themselves,” without providing any guidance on how to represent the government on the one hand, and the party they were affiliated to, on the other. He affirmed that because of this problem, Ministers were “subject to contradictory imperatives,” thereby demonstrating that the problem Omar experienced was a “system problem, not a personal one.” This was clearly an attempt to exempt Omar from blame as he apparently found himself in a position of not knowing which “hat” to “wear,” that of Minister of Justice, or, ANC leader of the Western Cape.

### **6.2.2 CAPE TIMES REPORTS**

On 4 March 1997, the *Cape Times* printed an editorial entitled, “Ironies of the Boesak trial.” It read, “There are those who will argue, probably with some merit,” that, “Maybe Boesak should also be granted amnesty [from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission],” because “many of South Africa’s most vicious killers are applying for

amnesty from the TRC.” The paper stated further that it was important that the trial continued, “for his own sake,” implying that he could thereby prove his innocence, and “for the sake of the people on whose behalf he used to fight.”

On 7 March 1997, an article entitled, “ANC supports Boesak,” quoted MP Tony Yengeni as saying, “In the ANC we always subscribed to the idea of an injury to one being an injury to all... we can only make Allan feel we have not deserted him as colleagues and comrades, but we support him at this difficult time.” Dullah Omar was quoted as pledging support and solidarity for dr. Boesak and appealed that he be “fairly treated and not victimised on his return.”

Like the *Cape Argus*, the *Cape Times* also provided a platform for other parties to voice their opinions. In “NP hits out at Omar’s support for Allan Boesak,” on 7 March 1997, the paper referred to the statement by the NP spokesperson, Patrick McKenzie, that it was not acceptable for the Justice Minister to go around embracing people who were facing serious allegations “as it was the minister’s court which would try them.” He continued, “It creates the impression that certain people will be treated with kid gloves and charges will be swept under the carpet by the courts because they have the support of the minister.”

An editorial by Dr. Anthony Holiday, a lecturer at the UWC’s School of Government, appeared on the 12 March 1997 under the telling headline, “ANC subverting the rule of law?” The writer penned a somewhat light-hearted response to the events at the time, asking whether “those once in the forefront of the fight to transform this country into a constitutional democracy,” had inadvertently, “Become the subvertors of the rule of law.” While playful, the article still levelled some criticism against the ANC.

Dr. Holiday said that Omar, “sometimes appears to suffer amnesia,” in respect of being Minister of Justice, a reference to Omar’s conflicting actions despite his prominent position in the legal domain. In keeping with the humorous attitude, dr. Holiday pronounced that the former cleric, “May or may not have God on his side,” in this matter.

The writer found the actions of political leaders “subversive” because they could be putting pressure on the courts with their public behaviour and comments in the media, conveying the impression that people with acceptable political profiles and holders of high office were above the law. The actions were also deemed subversive because personal loyalties seemed to be confused with public duties.

The extent to which Omar showed his support was criticised. Besides verbally pledging solidarity with and support for dr. Boesak, dr. Holiday felt that Omar overstepped boundaries by allowing *Cape Times* photojournalists to photograph him with his arm around Bélen Boesak’s shoulders. This photograph later appeared on the front page of the paper.

On 17 March 1997, the *Cape Times* published three lengthy articles relating to dr. Boesak with the headlines, “Out of ANC character to deny old comrade moral support,” “Rousing welcome for Boesak,” and “Survivor Boesak walks long road to freedom.”

Zubeida Jaffer penned the nostalgic, “Out of character to deny old comrade moral support,” in which she empathised with the ANC’s public support of dr. Boesak. Her article depicted the obvious support of the crowd for dr. Boesak, “their former leader.”

She held that denying dr. Boesak moral support would be like denying the fact that South Africa has come through a period of great turbulence in which dr. Boesak played “no small part.” Jaffer said that she comprehended the emotions and espousal shown for dr. Boesak and she wondered why her colleagues could not.

In “Rousing welcome for Boesak,” the *Cape Times* reported that dr. Boesak had an “exuberant welcoming ceremony” at which the Minister of Justice “assured him of President Mandela’s support when he goes on trial.” The paper quoted dr. Boesak, “When I go on trial the struggle for justice will be on trial, the struggle for freedom will be on trial and all of my people will be on trial. If I am guilty then the struggle will stand condemned.”

The paper wrote that Omar had been criticised “in some quarters” for publicly supporting someone about to be tried in a court falling under his jurisdiction. In response, Omar made the statement that the ANC had been “forced to manage some of its affairs in a clandestine manner,” during the apartheid era and, “some of its dealings would have been unacceptable in a democratic environment.” He also said the ANC had, “Not meddled in the process leading to charges” but it had also, “Not forgotten Boesak’s contribution to the struggle.” Omar acknowledged Boesak for his vital role in destroying the tri-cameral parliament.

A lengthy description ensued, “Boesak, as in the old days, was the star. He was carried shoulder-high from the airport’s VIP lounge to the marquee by the toyi-toying supporters, to chants of Boesak, Boesak, Boesak...” Then “Boesak took the stand, the familiar pitch of his voice sending elements of the crowd into a frenzy.”

Boesak had not lost the ability to transport a crowd with his voice and eloquence. The rest of the article was devoted to dr. Boesak’s speech and his grievances about being recalled to South Africa, to “still continue the fight against the same people.” Boesak was quoted to have said, “Why is it that I have come home to face criminal charges when those who destroyed our children and murdered our people sit in Parliament today?”

Another sympathetic article ran under the headline, “Survivor Boesak walks long road to justice.” The “long walk” in the headline was a reference to the suffering and endurance borne by Nelson Mandela, hence the title to his biography, *Long Walk to Freedom*. The article described dr. Boesak as “veteran anti-apartheid fighter,” survivor of a number of political and marital tribulations, who was “fighting for what remains of his political life.” This was a strange comment considering that dr. Boesak had withdrawn completely from politics and had been preaching in the United States for at least two years already.

The article asserted, “Whatever the outcome of the trial, Boesak will be remembered as a poor child of the Kalahari who worked his way to a top position in the church and became a leading voice in denouncing apartheid.” Most of the article outlined dr. Boesak’s career as preacher-activist and politician and ended with the statement that,

when the allegations against dr. Boesak were made, Deputy-President Thabo Mbeki had appointed an investigation into the scandal and that it had, “Cleared Boesak of any involvement.”

In “Fallout mounts at ANC backing,” on 18 March 1997, Roger Friedman added a new dimension to the ANC support enjoyed by dr. Boesak. He stated that, “sources in the party,” said, “by supporting Boesak during the early stages of his return, the party was trying to limit possible long-term damage resulting from the criminal trial.”

Friedman reported, “Certain prominent members of the ANC in the Western Cape expressed disquiet, too, but on condition of anonymity only.” He said, “They pointed to Boesak’s relative popularity in the region in the coloured community as a possible plus factor in having him back in the region.”

“By maintaining and restoring its relationship with Boesak, the ANC was counting on him to keep embarrassing revelations to a minimum,” sources said, adding that, “Boesak might not have settled for less than a show of solidarity from national ANC structures.” They thought the ANC was acting out of political expediency above all other considerations by giving him public support. It was necessary for Friedman to concede the anonymity of the ANC sources in this case else the dissenting voices may not have been heard. It served to make clear to the public that the entire ANC did not share the controversial and indiscreet backing of dr. Boesak.

Like the *Cape Times*, the *Cape Argus* also referred to Kadalie’s statements, in which she stated, “Boesak makes himself synonymous with the struggle, which is the height of arrogance.” Friedman reported that Kadalie thought the ANC was undermining the efforts to halt corruption in government departments and she pleaded that the legal system be allowed to take its course.

An editorial entitled, “Compromising the judiciary,” followed on 18 March 1997. The article asserted, “No one could object to the ANC’s right to give Allan Boesak a hero’s reception” on his return to Cape Town from the United States. Furthermore it reminded its readers that Boesak was, “One of the most charismatic leaders,” and, “A

central figure in fighting apartheid from within the country and in the establishment of the United Democratic Front.”

The article questioned the role played by Dullah Omar in dr. Boesak’s reception. The sentiment expressed was, “By expressing himself so publicly on Boesak’s behalf, he has compromised himself, the neutrality of his department, and the judiciary.” It stated, as it had some days before, that the struggle was not on trial with dr. Boesak and concluded emphatically, “If he is found guilty, the struggle will remain unscathed.” The editorial closed with the fact that personal guilt or innocence could only be decided by the courts, “and that is best done without ministerial involvement.”

Some astonishing spelling errors found their way into the *Cape Times* publications, the strangest being the spelling of Allan as ‘Alan’, in “ANC subverting the rule of law,” by dr. Holiday. Dr. Boesak’s daughter’s name, Bélen, seemed to present a problem and was distorted in various articles, occurring occasionally as Beln, curiously also in “ANC subverting the rule of law,” and “ANC supports Boesak.”

### 6.2.3 *DIE BURGER* REPORTS

In “ANC prys Boesak voor sy terugkeer,” on 7 March 1997, *Die Burger* reported that the ANC was praising the role dr. Boesak played in the struggle against apartheid. As seen in the discussion above, the English papers, particularly the *Cape Times*, took to praising dr. Boesak, while in contrast, *Die Burger* reported about the adoration conferred on dr. Boesak by the ANC.

In the same article, the paper informed that Bélen Boesak made accusations that, in the past two years, dr. Boesak’s comrades had treated him like an outcast (“soos ‘n verstoteling”). With this statement, the article pointed subtly to the inconsistency of the ANC in the dealing with dr. Boesak.

Dullah Omar was quoted making an announcement of sympathy on behalf of the ANC for the pain and trauma the Boesak family had experienced over the past two years, (“Die organisasie het simpatie met die pyn en trauma wat die Boesak gesin die afgelope twee jaar deurgemaak het”). He continued to gain coverage in the paper, and on 11 March 1997, in an article headed, “Omar sê hoekom hy Boesak steun,” the

paper informed that Omar was attempting to appease his critics with regard to the hearty support that he had shown for dr. Allan Boesak, (“Omar...het sy kritici probeer paaï oor die hartelike steun wat hy dr. Allan Boesak toegesê het”).

The use of the word attempted (“probeer”) showed that these were mere attempts on his part, and that they probably would not succeed. The other word that amplified the support given to dr. Boesak was “hartelike,” indicating the hearty and enthusiastic support shown for him.

\* choice of words

The paper reported that according to Omar, he had made the statements in his private capacity and not in his capacity as Minister of Justice, (“het hy dié uitlatings in sy private hoedanigheid gemaak, en nie as Minister van Justisie nie”). This contradicted the above-mentioned quote attributed to Omar, on 7 March 1997, in which he said that the organisation (meaning the ANC) had sympathy for dr. Boesak. But the statement was probably reported by *Die Burger* to show the Minister contradicting his earlier statement, rather than being a misquotation on the part of the paper. If the paper had erred in quoting Omar, or it would presumably have apologised for the error.

On 15 March 1997, in an article entitled, “Wil Boesak O.J. sirkus skep, vra DP man,” the DP questioned whether the political fuss (“politieke bohaai”) about Boesak’s return meant that he would attempt to transform his court case into an O.J. Simpson trial in South Africa. Hennie Bester of the DP reacted to the public support of dr. Boesak by the ANC and requested that the ANC allow the law to take its course (“die reg sy gang laat gang [sic]”).

The apparent support of the ANC added hype to the trial, which the DP and NP felt was inappropriate. To justify his position, Bester referred to the fact that dr. Boesak himself had said that he was leaving the political arena to return to preaching and objected to the surge of political activity that preceded his return, (“Self gesê het hy verlaat die politiek om na die preekstoel terug te keer, maar nou word sy terugkeer na die land voorafgegaan deur ‘n vlag van politieke bedrywighede”).

The DP was clearly not impressed by the blatant ANC support for Boesak. Also on 15 March 1997, in “ANC wil Boesak soos ‘n held ontvang,” the paper reported that the opposition wondered whether the ANC wanted to convert the case into an O.J. Simpson trial, (“In opposisiekringe is gister gevra of die ANC ‘n O.J. Simpson verhoor van die saak probeer maak”). One assumes they were referring to the DP and NP as the opposition to the ANC. opposisie

An interesting letter was published by *Die Burger* entitled, “Die reg en ANC steun vir Boesak,” on 15 March 1997. The writer, Johan Spies, commented on a prior letter published in *Die Burger* in which an ANC representative, Randall van den Heever, made disapproving comments regarding the NP. From his perspective, the NP condemnation was expected (“Die verwagte aanval van die Nasionale Party op die steun vir Allan Boesak), and it demonstrated the venom (“venyn”) with which the party wanted to attack dr. Boesak.

Van den Heever believed that the current hatred of the NP towards Boesak resulted from the hostility the party had built up as a result of his phenomenal contribution towards the destruction of NP racism in South Africa. (“Die NP se haat vir Boesak ontspruit derhalwe nie uit die party se skielike ‘hoogheilige’ respek vir die instansies van die reg nie, maar uit sy wrewel vir die fenomenale bydrae wat Boesak tot die vernietiging van die NP se rassitiese bestel gelewer het”).

The reason this letter is interesting is because one initially gets the impression that *Die Burger* published some glaring criticism levelled at the NP, especially when Spies wrote almost dejectedly, “‘Sjoe’, sê ek vir myself, ‘Nou het hy ons Natte darem bitter sleg gesê!’” This apparent criticism against the NP was, however, almost immediately negated by support from the *Cape Times* in the form of the article “ANC subverting the rule of law?” by dr. Anthony Holiday, which appeared on 12 March 1997. In the article, mentioned above, the writer had written somewhat critically but also humorously about the ANC, saying that it was ironic that those who were once in the forefront of the fight for democracy had, “However unwittingly now have become subvertors of the rule of law.”

It is noteworthy that *Die Burger* reader picked up on the article in the *Cape Times*, which had been uncharacteristically critical of the ANC. The reader seized the rare opportunity of using the criticism, levelled by a traditionally pro-ANC publication, as support for his argument against the ANC. The initial, harsh criticism of the NP was therefore almost invalidated by the latter criticism of the ANC.

On 17 March 1997, in “Boesak soos ‘n held in Kaap ontvang,” the paper reported that a storm was erupting as a result of the mood created by the ANC in the public sphere regarding dr. Boesak, (“’n Uitkringende storm oor stemmingmakery voor die hofsaak”). The newspaper informed that dr. Boesak enjoyed a hero’s welcome amidst numerous ANC leaders, (“honderde ANC lede”). It also spoke about a carnival atmosphere (“’n karnaval-atmosfeer”) that prevailed at the CTI Airport on dr. Boesak’s return.

Like the *Cape Argus* and the *Cape Times*, *Die Burger* repeated the quote by dr. Boesak that a charge against him was a charge against the struggle. The paper also quoted Omar on the unconventional methods used by the ANC during the apartheid years. In response to this, the report stated that the DP and NP had found the statement beyond belief, (“Die Nasionale Party en die Demokratiese Party het die uitlating as ‘verstommend’ bestempel”).

Omar was quoted saying that he was commissioned to represent the ANC by president Mandela, (“Op opdrag van pres. Nelson Mandela en as verteenwoordiger van die hele ANC”), something that was not reported in the English press. Commenting on the criticism of his support for Boesak, Omar brushed it aside saying that the criticism was being made by members of the former apartheid establishment and that he had not heard any blacks being critical of his support, (“Dit is net die ou apartheid-establishment wat daardie bewerings maak. Ek het nog nie ’n enkele swart mens dit hoor sê nie”).

A comment followed by the ANC leader in Elsie’s River, John Vass, who was quoted in *Die Burger* as saying that if Boesak had taken the money from the Danes, it was because it was due to him, (“As Boesak die Dene se geld gevat het, het dit hom

toegekom”). This strange logic of the ANC leader was probably *Die Burger*’s way of showing the blind following that Boesak enjoyed in some circles.

Elna Boesak, who addressed the crowd at the airport, was also quoted. She thanked the audience and asked them for their support and prayers because her spouse was only human, (“Is net ‘n mens”). The Minister of Justice again warranted some space in the paper when he urged the crowds to chant Boesak’s name and proposed a toast to him, (“Omar het die teenwoordiges aangespoor om Boesak se naam te dreunings en ‘n heildronk ingestel op hom”). This indicated the huge support for Boesak in the ANC ranks, following the lead of Omar.

In the letters section on 20 March 1997, a reader asked, “Hoekom is Boesak dan uitgesonder?” It was felt that the public support of Boesak by Dullah Omar and the ANC was not good for the legal system in the new South Africa at all, (“Is geensins goed vir die regstelsel in die nuwe Suid-Afrika nie”). That dr. Boesak was selected as the only person to enjoy the support of ANC members, (“As die enigste persoon wat die ondersteuning uit ANC geledere regverdig”) was problematic as it reduced to a farce (“klug”), the principle of equality towards which the ANC was supposedly striving, (“beginsel van gelykheid waarna die ANC glo strewende”).

Also on 20 March 1997, the NP’s Peter Marais held that Omar’s poor judgement in the Boesak case rendered him incompetent in his position as Justice Minister, (“Omar se gebrek aan oordeelsvermoë oor die Boesak kwessie maak hom onbevoeg om langer sy amp te beklee”). He also said that if it was true that President Mandela had assigned him the task of welcoming dr. Boesak on behalf of the ANC, then it suggested very poor judgement by the President, (“Indien dit waar is dat hy Boesak in opdrag van pres. Nelson Mandela gaan verwelkom het, dui dit ook op baie swak oordeelsvermoë van die President”).

He remarked that it was remarkable that there was only a small group of people to welcome dr. Boesak, (“Dit was opmerklik dat daar maar ‘n klein groepie mense was... om Boesak te verwelkom”), continuing that it was in contrast to the huge crowds that dr. Boesak could muster in years gone by, (“Dit is in teenstelling met die duisende mense wat Boesak jare gelede kon lok”). Marais held that besides Omar,

there were not really any significant ANC leaders present, (“Benewens Omar was daar ook nie eintlik swaargewigte van die ANC nie”). The *Cape Times*’ “Rousing welcome for Boesak,” 17 March 1997, differed saying, “Most of the Western Cape ANC leadership was there [to welcome Boesak].”

difference  
between 2  
papers

On 21 March 1997, a heading stated, “Mandela nie getuie vir Allan,” in which the spokesperson for the president had denied fervently (“ten sterkste”) that the president would be a witness in favour of Boesak in the trial. It stated that the president’s office was shocked regarding the bizarre allegations, (“Die kantoor van die President is geskok oor dié verregaande bewerings”). The article stated that the possibility that Mandela would be a witness in the trial never surfaced, (“Die moontlikheid dat Mandela as getuie in die hofsaak kan optree, het nooit ter sprake gekom nie”). This article essentially thwarted the perception that the president would appear as a witness for dr. Boesak.

On 24 March 1997, the Attorney-General Frank Kahn was quoted saying that some of the state witnesses were intimidated by the apparent ANC support for dr. Boesak and that they were afraid to testify against him, (“Sommige staatsgetuies in die Allan Boesak saak voel geïntimideer deur die openbare steun vir die gewese Wes-Kaapse ANC leier en is te bang om teen hom in die hof te getuig”). Incidentally, these statements by Kahn never surfaced in the English press.

Kahn asked, rhetorically, how an ordinary person would feel to testify against Boesak, knowing that the authoritative powers were in support of the accused, (“Hoe sal jy as gewone mens voel om te getuig wanneer die magte wat aan die bewind is, agter die beskuldigde staan?”) He feared that the objectivity of the witnesses would be affected by the circumstances, (“My vrees is dat die objektiwiteit van die getuies aangetas kan word”).

Another problem Kahn considered was the fact that the aggrieved in the case were American and Scandinavian donors, which meant that the international legal community, and the world, would be watching to see how the new democracy handled the matter. Kahn stated that a further concern for South Africa, arising from the issue, was the fact that people would not invest in a country where their legal interests

would not be served, (“Niemand wil belê in ‘n land waar die regstelsel nie hul belange kan beskerm nie”).

#### 6.2.4 *BEELD* REPORTS

Many of the articles that appeared in *Die Burger* were simultaneously printed in *Beeld*. Other articles, in *Beeld*, however, appeared to be bolder in their reportage, making unequivocal statements regarding the Boesak case. They seemed to use stronger words to express the responses around the state of affairs.

In “DP, NP kritiseer Omar,” on 17 March 1997, the paper reported the NP and DP expressed their incredulity (“ongeloof”) regarding the latest statements (“jongste uitlatings”) of Dullah Omar. They found it astonishing that Omar continued in his attempts to exonerate Boesak, (“Verstommend dat Omar volhou met pogings om Boesak te verontskuldig”)

The paper stated that Omar was the key individual responsible for maintaining the integrity of the courts and legal domain, and that it was not his task to seek absolution for those who were accused, (“Die Minister van Justisie het ‘n bepaalde plek in die samelewing as dié persoon wat die aansien van die howe en regspraak hoog hou. Dit is nie sy taak om verskonings te soek vir mense wat tereg moet staan nie”). He had no cause in making excuses for dr. Boesak.

NP spokesperson, Sheila Camerer, said that the NP, like all opposition parties, found it unacceptable and untenable, (“onaanvaarbaar en ongeregverdigbaar”), that the Justice Minister could comment on the case on behalf of the guilty party. The words, “onaanvaarbaar,” and “ongeregverdigbaar,” illustrate the extent to which Omar’s behaviour as Minister of Justice was found objectionable.

The article made mention of Omar’s latest statements, (“Omar se jongste uitlatings”), indicating that this was not the first time Omar has overstepped his position, saying it was plainly implausible, (“...is net ongelooflik”). This indicated their astonishment regarding the situation. Camerer also stated that almost every newspaper editorial in the country had criticised Omar’s conduct, (“Bykans elke koeranthoofartikel in die land het Omar oor sy optrede gekritiseer”). It is true that all the papers examined

carried criticism of Omar's conduct, though the English press seemed more gracious about the issue than its Afrikaans counterparts.

A letter to *Beeld*, entitled, "Met watter gesag loop Omar die reg vooruit?" on 19 March 1997, questioned Omar's right to be making the statements he did. The writer stated that Omar was wholeheartedly supporting all criminals, who happened to have been part of the struggle, "Hy is mos besig om elke skelm wat 'gestruggle' het, met woord en daad by te staan"). This was a strong censure against Omar's predisposition to those who were in the struggle. In the article, "Kerkblad se Boesak-uitsprake klop nie," on 20 March 1997, *Beeld* quoted *Die Kerkbode*, which held, "Omar behoort te besef dat sy optrede onverskoonbaar is," yet again amplifying the unacceptability of Omar's conduct.

The humorous column, "Lood se Praatjies," ran an article entitled, "Dit was nou dom van Allan," in which it picked up Boesak's claims that the entire struggle was on trial with him saying the idea was more than idiotic, ("onnosel verby"). More light-hearted criticism of dr. Boesak followed in "Allan en Sol, albei Robin Hood," a letter to *Beeld* on 20 March 1997.

The reader observed that it was all very well that dr. Boesak was blaming apartheid for everything, but that there was just one slight problem, that being that South Africans were beyond doing that now. He said that the trend to blame everything on apartheid was a fad that had almost disappeared already, ("Ek sien Allan pak nou 'die skuld' op apartheid. Alles goed en wel, daar is net een probleem: One doen dit nie meer so hier by ons nie. Dit is 'n mode wat amper al verdwyn het die ding van apartheid die skuld vir alles gee").

The editorial, "Skrale troos," on 25 March 1997, referred to the scant consolation Omar's comments offered in the light of his inappropriate behaviour and actions. His latest comment was the ludicrous suggestion that state witnesses who feared for their own safety should join the witness protection programme. Omar said he could not fathom how people could be intimidated by the ANC's moral support of dr. Boesak, ("Hy kan nie insien hoe mense geïntimideer kan word deur die ANC se 'morele steun' vir Boesak nie").

The editorial stated that if Omar had restricted his support of dr. Boesak to the moral plane and had not become embroiled in the legal domain, (“As Omar hom maar liefes tot morele steun vir Boesak beperk het en hom nie skaamteloos in die regspleging ingemeng het nie”), then it would not be necessary to deal with terrified (“vreesbevange”) witnesses. A closing remark by the editorial was that it would serve Omar well to confess that he had handled the Boesak affair completely inappropriately, “Omar moet eerder so gou moontlik erken dat hy die Boesak-kwessie heeltemal verkeerd gehanteer het”).

On 26 March 1997, an article entitled, “Optrede van Omar partydig,” appeared based on statements made by the Faculty of Law at UNISA. The assessment was that the slightest inkling of partiality towards dr. Boesak on Omar’s behalf was unacceptable, (“Selfs net ‘n sweem van partydigheid deur Omar,” was “onaanvaarbaar”).

It continued that Omar was expected to be impartial in the interest of the constitutional democracy, and free and just legal administration in the country, “Daar word van Omar verwag om in die belang van konstitusionele demokrasie, oop en regverdig regsadministrasie, en die onafhanklikheid van die howe nie in te meng nie.”

Certainly, Omar’s conduct gained enormous coverage and criticism in *Beeld* and *Die Burger* articles. The English newspapers tended to highlight the role played by dr. Boesak in the struggle against apartheid in its coverage of the Boesak case.

### **6.3 THE VERDICT**

At the conclusion of the trial, which ended in March 1999, dr. Boesak had been absolved of 28 charges and found guilty of 4. The verdict pronounced by Judge Foxcroft sentenced him to six years in prison for the offences.

## **7. CASE STUDY: HANSIE CRONJÉ**

This section will commence with a discussion of the life of Hansie Cronjé. It was deemed necessary to outline his biography so that readers may understand the role he

had played prior to his involvement in the cricketing controversy. It is also a means of understanding his portrayal in the selected papers, as a result of the impact he had made in his capacity as leader of the South African national squad.

## **7.1 BACKGROUND**

As leader of the South African team, Hansie Cronjé came to be one of the most revered and respected cricket captains in the world. What set him apart was that he displayed the keen ability to deal with all aspects of the modern game including fans, journalists, opponents, team members and even supervisors, with great aplomb.

His distinct and adamant stance was that his team should play a natural game, and that they should enjoy the game as they proceeded, even under the most trying conditions. As captain, he set high standards and remained a firm disciplinarian moulding the Proteas into a professional outfit, both on and off the field (Rice, 1998: 40). Over the five years that he served as captain, he garnered a squeaky-clean, honest and pleasant image in the media.

Wessel Johannes Cronjé was born to San-Marie and Ewie Cronjé on 25 September 1969 in Bloemfontein. His was a sport-loving family, with his father boasting a ten-year record of playing cricket for Orange Free State, followed by the presidency of the Orange Free State Cricket Union. He had also been director of sport at the University of Orange Free State. It was therefore not surprising that Cronjé and his brother displayed an aptitude for sport from an early age.

At 12, Hansie led his under-13 team in the cricket field. His love and enthusiasm for the game ensured him further leadership roles in cricket at the prominent Grey College in Bloemfontein, acknowledged as one of the top sports nurseries in South Africa. Kepler Wessels and Morné du Plessis, both well-known South African sporting leaders had been groomed in the finer qualities of sport at this prestigious institution.

Cronjé also played rugby and represented Orange Free State Schools on occasion. However, his first love was cricket, and at 16, when he was selected for the South African Schools team, it seemed like a dream come true (Hartman, 1997: 28). A year

later, he was appointed captain of the team. Later, as a student at the University of Orange Free State, he played for the university team. In 1987, at 18, he made his first class début, as a promising batsman, for the Orange Free State provincial team against Transvaal.

When he was eventually appointed captain of the provincial team at 21, he occupied the position as the youngest Free State captain ever. In 1991, he obtained a place in the international squad as the 12<sup>th</sup> man in the team under the captaincy of Kepler Wessels. It was with this team that he went to the World Cup in 1992 at the age of 22. His cricketing experience afforded him opportunities of playing abroad for teams such as Ireland and Leicestershire.

At the end of 1993, during a series in Australia, Kepler Wessels was injured and could not finish the match resulting in the appointment of Cronjé as captain of the national squad. At the time, Cronjé was the youngest player in the team, leading them in a challenging situation. This was the Nelson Mandela era and a diplomat was sought who would understand the importance of nation building and the political sensitivities of the time. Cronjé, who had by that time shown himself to be a commendable leader, was deemed a suitable candidate for the demanding position.

His role as captain of the South African team conferred an immense amount of pressure on him (Woolmer, 1997:20). In spite of this, he displayed resilience and a strong resolve to constantly succeed. He came to be valued for his motivational powers and tactical acumen and composure under enormous demands, both on the field and off. For the benefit of those in his team, he assumed the role of guide and mentor.

Says his team mate Jonty Rhodes, "The reason Hansie earned so much respect, on and off the field, in cricketing circles, is because he appreciates that it is an honour, and not a right, to represent your country in your chosen profession, so he approaches every aspect of the game with a great deal of humility. Not only does he give 120 percent for his team and country, but he also has that unique ability of being able to get the best out of all his players, especially when an individual, or the whole team, is under pressure." (Rhodes, 1998: 41)

He seemed to have an instinctive understanding of human nature and was able to get the best out of his players. According to Bryden, "inspiring a Daryll Cullinan is vastly different to finding the sort of words that kept Herschelle Gibbs focussed while scoring a maiden international century against the West Indies at George's Park" (1999:19). In the end, he boasted a tougher, more competent team that developed the ability to tap into its vast resources both physically and mentally (Rhodes, 1998:41).

Dealing with the media formed an important part of the role Cronjé played as a professional cricketer leading an international team. He realised the importance of selling the sport essentially through dealings with the media (Bryden, 1999:20). His pleasant disposition, lucidity and intelligence earned the respect and approval of journalists around the world.

South African spectators, sports commentators and other news media in South Africa continually demanded that the national team win all their matches. Cronjé displayed diplomacy and grace in the face of harsh criticism when things did not go South Africa's way in the field. Though petulant in defeat, he managed to remain candid and forthcoming in his dealings with the media, commanding the respect of those he encountered (Gouws, 2000:11-13).

Cronjé captained the team for more than five years, a reasonably long time in a high-pressure job. He was the longest serving South African captain, and compared to the other major captains on the world scene, only Arjuna Ranatunga remained in charge for longer (Bryden, 1999:18; Kirsten, 1998:39). With his years of experience in the field, he gained remarkable knowledge of the game and seemed to thrive on the success of fellow team members, celebrating boisterously when members of his team reached milestones in the field (Hayward, 1999:23; Kirsten, 1998:40).

He also gained recognition as a fitness fanatic who led by example (Rhodes, 1998:41). With characteristic determination and dexterity, he batted, bowled and played himself into the cricket annals. In spite of the demands on his body, family and free time, he displayed superlative athletic prowess, dedication and competitive spirit in the

cricketing domain (Hayward, 1999:23). He was widely lauded as one of the most honest men in the game (Gouws, 2000:13).

On 7 April 2000, Cronjé was charged with match fixing by Indian police after a one-day series in India. The allegations were met with shock and bewilderment from all corners. On 11 April, Cronjé was dismissed from his position as captain after he admitted to not being entirely honest in his earlier denials of match fixing.

This following section will constitute an examination of the content of the articles that ensued in the dailies regarding the allegations of match-fixing against Hansie Cronjé. The articles are those that appeared in the regional papers from approximately 8 April 2000 to 24 April 2000.

## **7.2 SYNOPSIS OF ARTICLES: HANSIE CRONJÉ ACCUSED OF MATCH-FIXING**

### **7.2.1 CAPE ARGUS REPORTS**

On 11 April 2000, the *Cape Argus* reported that in a “shock” development, Hansie Cronjé had withdrawn from the approaching series against Australia. The news was revealed in an article entitled, “Hansie withdraws from Aussie Series.” It went on optimistically, “It is not known whether the latest development has anything to do with the allegations of match-fixing levelled at Cronjé and three team-mates.”

Deputy Foreign Minister, Aziz Pahad was quoted, “Though we may be surprised at the allegations, the matter is not closed.” There was also a paragraph reporting on an article which had appeared in the *Times of India* on the day, in which the former president of the Indian Board of Control for Cricket, Inderjit Singh Badra criticised the board secretary Jayawant Lele for “reportedly absolving South African players of the match-fixing charges.” Overall the tenor of the article was one of restraint coupled with hope for a turn of events.

On the 12 April 2000, in “Balfour fields flak for silent Cronjé,” the paper remarked that Cronjé looked, “remarkably fresh,” at a press conference with Sports Minister Ngconde Balfour and Deputy Foreign Minister Azaz Pahad. The tone was generally

sympathetic to Cronjé focussing on his emotional state in places, “But the haunted, sad expression in his eyes... bore testimony to the unbearable load he was carrying,” and reference to the, “Anguished look on his face, “and also, “At one point, as a barrage of cameras clicked in unison, he wiped an eye with his thumb, but whether from emotion or tiredness it was impossible to say.”

At this point Cronjé had already been discharged from his captaincy role, but Balfour was quoted to say, “I called him, and I still do, until proven guilty, ‘Captain, my Captain.’” At the press conference Balfour protectively answered questions on Cronjé’s behalf, and did not allow Cronjé to speak for himself though the press would have liked to hear from him. In another article on the same day, when asked about the money, Balfour stated, “I have searched every pocket of Hansie and his bank book and everything. Rev. McCauley took the bank book and went to check on that – there is absolutely nothing,” showing Balfour’s odd handling of the situation. At that point, no investigation had been done into the allegations, and the statements on Balfour’s part came across as untenable, unprofessional and lacking credibility. He seemed to be dismissing the issue with his flippant attitude.

At the same time that Balfour was firmly denying Cronjé’s guilt in Cape Town, Ali Bacher was acknowledging at a press conference in Durban that Cronjé had taken between \$10 000 and \$15 000 (*Cape Argus*, 12 April 2000). The *Cape Argus* commented on the matter saying it was, “One of the most bizarre and controversial events in South Africa’s history.” The *Cape Argus* was initially very cautious in reporting about the Cronjé issue. In the article mentioned, “Two sides to Hansie’s Tale” on 12 April 2000, the paper asserted that until the formal inquiry got under way the discrepancy between the statements of Balfour and Bacher appeared, “Unlikely to be resolved.”

The article reported Cronjé’s life was in “ruins,” and Bacher said the South African cricketing authorities had been “shattered” by the revelation. Another article on the 12 April 2000, entitled, “Cronjé won’t play for South Africa again – Wessels,” quoted Kepler Wessels as saying, “It is absolutely devastating and it just seems to get worse and worse since the allegations first came to light.” The paper also referred to the

“colossal impact of Hansie Cronjé’s revelations” in “Hansie’s axing has Proteas in disarray,” on the same day.

This article talked about the Australian team as the “side acknowledged to be the best in the world,” something the Afrikaans papers would not necessarily have stated in print. The Afrikaans media stance was typically one of unreserved support for the South African team. This was revealed in statements printed at the same time as the English papers with reference to the upcoming series, for example, *Beeld* wrote that if South Africa prevents Australia from taking wickets, the home team would unquestionably win all three matches against Australia, (“Verhinder Suid-Afrika hom om paaltjies te neem, sal die tuisspan definitief die drie wedstryde in Standard Bank se tuisreeks teen Australië wen”) (11 April 2000).

An editorial by Adrian Hadland on the 12 April 2000, “Can South Africa recover from Hansie heartbreak?” wondered, “Is this the cricket heartbreak that can never be healed?” This was a reference to the ‘heartbreak’ of the World Cup when South Africa lost to Australia in a heart-stopping finish. The defeat dashed the country’s hopes of winning a place in the final match to vie for the World Cup award. The notably melodramatic question implied that the disappointment this time was much more intolerable.

It continued to laud Cronjé in glowing terms, “He was a fighter who never gave up,” “He was a man of principle who was inspired rather than subdued by heavy odds, he was a leader,” “Like our rainbow nation, he persevered in the face of adversity,” “He was gracious in victory and noble in defeat, he was well-spoken and amiable,” and so on. And then, “That he is rotten is devastating news,” and “It is as if Archbishop Desmond Tutu has been convicted of money laundering or Nelson Mandela of paedophilia,” and “The notion of his fallibility is almost unfathomable.”

The disenchantment was heightened by the realisation that, “South Africa is indeed in dire need of moral regeneration,” and that “Corruption is so ingrained it is going to require a massive national effort to pull us out of the mire.” The article continued, “If Hansie is crooked, what chance is there for the minor civil servant, the unpaid cop, the debt-ridden politician?” And then a bit of optimism, “We can only hope that the South

African spirit that filled Hansie is more indomitable than the man himself, that others will feel its strength and carry its light.”

The disappointment continued to be underscored in “That familiar hollow feeling,” on 12 April 2000, in which Mark Etheridge wrote of, “The numbing sense of disappointment,” and, “The blow to your faith in humanity.” He ended his column with the sentiment that there had not yet been proof of match-fixing, a bit hopeful, and then thoughtfully added, “If the allegations are true, it would be a serious crime against fellow citizens and the game itself.”

In a slightly more audacious article on the 12 April 2000, entitled “The shame of our fallen hero,” by Patrick Compton, the writer vented some of his disappointment at the turn of events. He started with, “Hansie Cronjé appeared to represent everything that was good, not only about cricket, but about our rapidly-changing society.” He was, “Intensely proud of his country,” “A natural leader,” “Commanded the respect of his troops,” “Inspired his team,” “One of the most visible and highly regarded sporting leaders in our history,” and, “Hundreds of thousands of little boys and girls throughout the length and breadth of the land looked at him through shining, hero-worshipping eyes.” And then, “In an instant,” it all changed. “All that good spiritual capital went up in smoke when South Africa’s captain admitted ... that he had lied.”

Compton referred to the events as a “tragedy,” and wondered how it all came to pass. He looks at some of the problems Cronjé encountered in his role as captain and how it irked him when the affirmative action policies came into effect. It meant that the team would no longer be selected purely on merit. “It was the beginning of a tumultuous year for Cronjé.”

The discussion that followed was protracted and speculative. For example, Compton made the unsubstantiated statement, “It is no secret that Cronjé has been a deeply unhappy man for the last six months.” He also said, “There are many who believe that his decision to take money from a bookmaker... was the foolish action of a desperate man who wanted to get out of South African cricket with one last big payout.” He did not say who the “many” were, and he did not attribute the statements to anybody, rendering his arguments pure conjecture.

He ended, “Cronjé, a deeply Christian man... has on one stroke destroyed his career, wiped out the professional achievements of a lifetime, relegated himself to the dark annals of sporting cheats, and shamed his country.” “His only consolation in the bleak days ahead will be the support of his family, his friends and his faith,” notably, not his fans whom Compton believed he has lost due to his actions.

In an article on 14 April 2000, “I didn’t shop Hansie- Zulu,” it was reported, “Despite the confusion... residents of Bloemfontein ... pledged their full support to the embattled former skipper.” Apparently they said, “He was only human and should be forgiven for his faults,” and that, “The whole debacle did not affect the high esteem in which they held one of Bloemfontein’s best-known export products.” The paper also quoted the very sympathetic principal of Cronjé’s *alma mater* Grey College, Johan Volsteedt.

Rather more assertive articles followed under the headlines, “Sponsors pull the plug on Hansie,” “Hansie scandal: more damning evidence,” and a reprint of an article written for the London Sunday Times by Simon Wilde, “Proof, not religion, prompted confession,” on 13, 14 and 15 April 2000, respectively.

On 15 April 2000, in an article entitled, “How not to handle scandal,” the writer Gavin Rich launched an attack on the UCB’s reaction to the allegations of match fixing, saying it handled the whole situation incompetently. The whole argument was after the fact. In “Time for ICC to show some muscle,” on 28 April 2000, the ICC was described as, “an unwieldy, toothless organisation,” that needed to take some positive steps to rid the cricket game of corruption.

The writer, Michael Doman made the point that Cronjé, “may have done little worse than Warne and Mark Waugh,” and went on to say that in spite of the disappointment in losing icons, the game could survive if players found guilty of match fixing were “rooted out.” He concluded that athletics had survived the loss of Ben Johnson who was banned after testing positive for a drug test, and so would cricket.

### 7.2.1 CAPE TIMES REPORTS

In “Match-fixing affair ‘makes no sense,’” on 10 April 2000, Michael Owen-Smith held that the only conclusion he could come to in the wake of the match-fixing scandal was, “The whole sorry affair makes no sense.” He said, “Forget about the fact that Hansie Cronjé is one of the most respected figures on the world circuit,” but mentioned it nevertheless.

He went on to explain why it was improbable that the allegations would be true because, “Cronjé’s own performance in that series was outstanding and he did not take any tactical decisions as captain which were queried” by the expert commentators of the game at the time. He felt the “biggest irony,” was that Cronjé finished the season, “strongly with the bat.” His form in India, “Hardly suggested somebody who was trying to help the opposition win.” Owen-Smith’s crowning proof, “He also won the man-of-the-match award.”

He also considered other co-accused, Nicky Boje and Strydom, who were according to him, “South Africa’s most economical bowlers,” and said Herschelle Gibbs was, “Also clearly disappointed,” when he was given out by the umpire. Owen-Smith’s conclusions were that there was a serious gambling problem on the Asian subcontinent that would have to be investigated because, “There is a lot of smoke here and the fire is clearly threatening to get out of hand.” But he ended optimistically, “What has happened...will hopefully be proven without foundation in the days ahead.”

On 11 April 2000, under “Free State ready to take their son back,” overwhelming support was shown for Cronjé in statements by the Free State Cricket Union president, Charlie Robinson, who stated that the organisation would welcome him back into provincial cricket if he wished to continue playing. Robinson said that Cronjé’s admission to receiving cash, “Could not be condoned,” but believed the, “Pending judicial enquiry would fully establish reasons.” He concluded very dramatically, “As far as Hansie is concerned, the Free State Cricket Union – and I am certain the whole sporting public of the Free State – will stand by him and support him.”

On 11 April 2000, in an article entitled, “Cronjé’s a ‘genetic rogue’ – Noakes,” by Craig Urquhart in which he quoted Tim Noakes, head of the Sports Science Institute, who was exceptionally critical of Hansie Cronjé. He said Cronjé, “Had it all,” “Had notched up every success the game had to offer,” “Earned in the region of R2m annually,” “Was one of the game’s fiercest competitors,” and “Would never be poor.” But he held that, “The warning signs were clear for all to see as far back as the 1996 World Cup in Pakistan,” when Cronjé, “Came across as an incompetent leader.” These negative assertions had not surfaced in any publications prior to this.

He said, “Lucas Radebe deserved the respect he got from the public. Gary Teichmann deserved the same respect, but Cronjé never inspired as much. Instead it was left to the press to build him up.” This was never the impression the media gave of Cronjé in the time preceding the allegations. The reports were always favourable towards Cronjé.

Urquhart wrote, “Noakes painted a picture of a paranoid and headstrong cricketer,” and believed the public, “Were hoodwinked by the media into believing that he was a demi-god.” He said that Cronjé had undermined Bob Woolmer in his position as coach and that South Africa had lost the World Cup as a result.

Dr. Helgo Schomer, a sport psychologist at the University of Cape Town was quoted as saying that Cronjé’s behaviour was not particularly abnormal but that the, “Power, respect and influence he held,” had added to the shock and surprise of the week’s events. Schomer also added, “We are all human, after all.” Dr. Schomer’s first name was inaccurately rendered as ‘Helo’ in the article.

In “Hansie ‘thrilled by team’s win,’” by Michael Owen-Smith, there was still an optimistic tone when Allan Donald was quoted, “Hansie is missing being part of the team... his signature is as good as on a new contract the United Cricket Board is about to offer him.” South Africa had just won their first match against Australia in Cronjé’s absence, and Jacques Kallis held that the team had been boosted by, “The support from Hansie... among others.”

Kallis said, “It is a bit of a tradition for those who are not playing ... to let the guys playing know they are giving them all their support... we were under huge mental pressure and the guys handled it brilliantly.” He also said, “The important thing we managed to do was to put out of our minds what was happening off the field,” an obvious reference to the events surrounding Cronjé.

Bacher was reported to have, “Heaped praise on new captain Shaun Pollock and his team,” and Craig Matthews, former vice-captain under Cronjé, “Voiced similar sentiments.” He said to win under normal circumstances would have been magnificent, but, “To do it in the situation in which they found themselves bordered on the unbelievable” inspiring hope in the South African team.

Owen-Smith had maintained an optimistic attitude in spite of the widespread negativity surrounding the issue, and by 16 April 2000, in “Suspicious minds abound in cricket,” he voiced scepticism in current cricket matches following the Hansie Cronjé saga. He still did not say anything negative about Cronjé himself, but spoke about the game generally. He concluded that in order to change doubts regarding the recent image of cricket, “The game needs a major clean-up.”

### **7.2.2 DIE BURGER REPORTS**

*Die Burger* ran a lengthy article entitled, “Groot geld in sport laat etiek uitvlieg by venster,” on 12 April 2000. The article did not focus on entirely Cronjé but incorporated other sports in which unethical fiscal interactions occurred. It stated that sports scandals were nothing new, (“Skandale in sport...soos om die Suid Afrikaanse krieket-held Hansie Cronjé, is niks nuuts nie”) playing down the erupting scandal in the cricketing arena. The paper still referred to Cronjé as a hero, (“krieket-held”).

Peet Bothma quoted athletic legend and director of the South African Olympic Academy, Gert Potgieter saying that money had come to play a huge role in sports, and that sporting personalities were increasingly being targeted in betting circles, (“Die groter wordende rol wat geld in professionele sport speel, het egter die laaste jare van sportsterre teikens gemaak en hulle by wedstrydknoeiery betrek”), blaming it on the role money had come to play in sport rather than focussing on the weakness of the individuals involved in betting and the like.

Greyling Viljoen, clinical psychologist and Springbok canoeist mentioned additional positive qualities of Cronjé that made matters even more difficult to accept. He said that the fact the Cronjé had openly practised his religion made him a more valued role model, (“Deurdad Cronjé sy Christenskap openbaar gemaak het, het hy as rolmodel nog ‘n waardestelsel aan sy persoon gekoppel.” Bruce Grobbelaar, current coach of the Supersport United team said, compassionately, that few could appreciate the gruelling challenges presented to sportspersons facing such allegations, (“Min mense besef deur watter hel ‘n sportman gaan wat hom teen sulke beskuldigings moet verweer”).

He declared that the media was quick to find one guilty, (“Jy word summier in die media skuldig bevind”), which could be interpreted as candid plea that Cronjé not be found guilty by the media before charges had been investigated via proper channels. He also added that Cronjé had the ability to overcome the difficulties, (“Cronjé het egter die vermoë om ... die gebeure te bowe te kom”). Bothma declared that bribery and corruption in sport had blemished the domain of sports for many years already, (“Wedstrydknoeiery en omkoopgeld het jare al die sportwêreld begin besmet”).

He went on to inform readers that the Australian cricketers Shane Warne and Steve Waugh had confessed to accepting approximately R43 000 in return for information about the game. They were each fined R74 000 for the involvement with bookies for another incident involving two Pakistani players. The impression created was that the world’s leading players were involved in taking money from bookies and that somehow it was a little bit more palatable than it seemed at a first glance, as a result. The writer also blamed the international cricket body, the International Cricket Council, saying that it had undertaken to punish those involved in deception yet there was concern about its commitment to eliminate corruption, (“Kommer oor sy toegewydheid”).

The article mentioned that England and New Zealand players were offered R10 million and R3 million to lose matches - huge amounts of money compared to what Cronjé had allegedly received. The article also mentioned deception in horse racing, the Comrades Marathon, soccer and even boxing, in an effort to substantiate the

argument that monetary deception in sporting circles was nothing new, (“niks nuuts nie”).

Another lengthy article, “Hansie sal waarskynlik nie soos in die verlede opstaan,” on 12 April 2000, was in a tribute to the achievements of Hansie Cronjé as captain of South Africa. The article compared him to all the current cricketing stars and captains and lauded the fact that he had remained captain for more than five years, a long time compared to the likes of Tendulkar, Lara, Akram, Fleming and Ranatunga. His name and surname were incidentally inaccurately spelt as Arunja Rannatunga, instead of Arjuna Ranatunga, a relatively rare occurrence in the Afrikaans publications.

The article reported that Cronjé had seen a number of captains come and go since 1994, “Cronjé het sedert 1994 menige ander internasionale kaptein sien kom en gaan”. Most of them had resigned as a result of controversy or were simply dismissed without further ado, “Die meeste het `of onder `n wolk van omstredenheid bedank `of is summier in die pad gesteeek.” Christo Lemmer went on to say that the role of first-class captaincy was an art, (“Kapteinskap in eersterangse krieket ... is `n kunsvorm”). He added that one had to be born a leader, and one had to have the ability to handle immense pressure coupled with the need to be an excellent public speaker who was prepared to address the media at all times, “Jy moet eerstens `n gebore leier wees `en die druk kan verwerk. Boonop moet jy `n goeie openbare spreker wees en die media te alle tye te woord staan.” And then he added that Cronjé was someone who fitted the bill, (“Cronjé is só iemand”).

Lemmer continued to praise Cronjé’s achievements, saying that if one were to compare the multi-talented Cronjé to his predecessors in the cricket arena in South Africa, it became very interesting, (“Vergelyk `n mens die uiters veelsydige Cronjé as kaptein met sy voorgangers in Suid Afrika, is dit interessant”). He went on to enumerate eight previous South African captains including Dudley Nourse, Graeme Pollock, Barry Richards and Lee Irvine, comparing their skills in terms of bowling, batting and captaining their teams. In each case, the individual did not match up to the talented and resourceful Cronjé (“veelsydige Cronjé”), who achieved success in each of the areas under scrutiny.

His conclusion was that a new era was dawning in Kingsmead, where South Africa would face the Australians without Cronjé, (“Vandag op Kingsmead in Durban breek ‘n nuwe tydvak as’t ware aan. Cronjé sal nie daar wees wanneer die Suid-Afrikaners teen die Aussies te staan kom nie.”) He adds almost wistfully that until yesterday the idea of playing without Cronjé was unimaginable, “Tot gister nog was dié gedagte vir sy bewonderaars ondenkbaar...” Lemmer was extremely sympathetic to Cronjé and appeared to be somewhat of an admirer himself.

In “Dis so erg, ek weet nie wat om the sê – Donald,” on 12 April 2000, Allan Donald, was quoted to express his enormous disappointment, (“enorme teleurstelling”). He was reported to have reacted with disbelief saying that the turn of events was an indescribable shock, (“’n onbeskryflike skok.”) According to Donald, match fixing was something alien to the South African team.

On 13 April 2000, in “Hansie: laat dié sonder sonde nou die eerste klip gooi,” Neels Jackson approached people in the religious domain about the Cronjé crisis. He said that a fall from a self-confessed Christian in a leadership position was a huge blow to those in the church, (“Vir die gelowiges ‘n geweldige skok”). The pastor Ron Steele of the Rhema Church indicated that nobody was perfect, holding that if one were to look at history, one would find numerous examples of religious heroes that fall from grace, (“Kyk ‘n mens na die geskiedenis, is daar talle voorbeelde van geloofshelde wat tot ‘n val gekom het”).

He alluded to the famous American spiritual leader and preacher, Jimmy Swaggart, who had also experienced a dramatic fall from grace in the public sphere. He continued his argument stating that here in South Africa, dr. Boesak, who had enjoyed global respect in church circles, had firstly erred in his matrimonial affairs, and later his mishandling of monetary affairs had led to a verdict of guilt in court, (“Hier in Suid Afrika het dr. Allan Boesak, wat wêreldwye aansien in kerklike kringe geniet het, eers in sy huwelikslewe gefaal en later het sy hantering van geldsake tot die skuldigbevinding in die hof gelei”) Jackson believed that one could continue enumerating examples such as this, (“So kan ‘n mens voortgaan”).

Dr. André van Niekerk, another leader in church circles, said that many people regarded Cronjé as Captain Integrity, (“Cronjé was in baie mense se oë Kaptein Integriteit”). He referred to the problem of leadership amongst Afrikaners, reminding readers of F.W. De Klerk and what his divorce had done to their community, (“Kyk maar wat het F.W. de Klerk aan ons mense gedoen met sy egskeiding”). He said that people should also benefit from the errors of their leaders, (“Mense moet ook uit hul leiers se foute leer”). He pointed out the various characters in the Bible, including David, Jacob and Paul, who were weak and had succumbed to their weaknesses in some measure or the other.

Steele concurred that Cronjé was still a role model even in the circumstances he found himself. He had taught ordinary Christians that one must have courage to admit when one has erred, to confess to one's guilt and to shoulder the responsibility of the consequences thereof, (“Hy het vir die gewone Christene gewys dat jy die moed moet hê om te erken as jy 'n fout gemaak het, om jou skuld te bely en die gevolge te dra”). Steele pleaded that Cronjé be forgiven and that he not be abandoned in his time of need, (“Dat mense moet vergewe en Cronjé nie moet skop nou dat hy plat is nie”). He asked readers not to forget all the good that Cronjé had effected, (“Dat mense nie al die goeie dinge moet vergeet wat Cronjé gedoen het nie”)

Van Niekerk reiterated that people should not forget the abundant good that Cronjé had brought about because of one bad decision on his part, (“Ons moenie nou die duisend goeie dinge wat Cronjé gedoen het, vergeet omdat sy enkele oordeelsfoute geboemerang het nie”). He believed that one had to sympathise with Cronjé and continue to admire his leadership abilities, (“Ons moet hom jammer kry en steeds bewonder vir sy leierskap”).

The writer was of the opinion that it was easy to criticise, (“Dis immers maklik om te kritiseer”), but that one had to bear in mind that the authority and reputation possessed by Cronjé was not easy to handle, (“Maar om die mag en aansien wat Cronjé gehad het, te hanteer, is nie maklik nie”). The last line of the article argued that from a religious perspective, it was imperative for fellow-believers to forgive Cronjé, (“Godsdienstig gesproke behoort Cronjé egter deur sy mede-gelowiges vergewe te word”) hereby instructing readers to pardon Cronjé.

#### 7.2.4 BEELD REPORTS

*Beeld* published a number of articles identical to those that appeared in *Die Burger*, including, “As kaptein het Hansie bo sy teenstanders uitgestyg,” published by *Die Burger* as, “Hansie sal waarskynlik nie soos in die verlede opstaan nie,” as well as the article quoting Donald, which was basically repeated in *Beeld*.

In “Ek het nooit ‘n wedstryd met opset verloor nie,” on 12 April 2000, Cronjé admitted that he had made an error in judgement and that he had not realised the serious implications thereof, (“Ek erken dat ek het ‘n oordeelsfout gemaak het, maar het nooit gedink dat dit sulke ernstige implikasies sou he nie”)

On 13 April, the paper published an article under the telling heading, “‘Volk is in oproer’ maar hy bly held,” in which it was mentioned that the telephones at the UCBSA had been ringing continually with calls from across the country with messages of support for their fallen hero, (“Van dwarsoor die land ...met boodskappe van ondersteuning vir hulle gevalle held”).

The article mentioned one man who called to say he wanted his money refunded as he was annoyed by the scandal, but, the article assured readers that it was a handful who felt that way, but that the majority still supported Cronjé, (“Dit is egter die minderheid wat so voel dit is duidelik uit die oorgrote meerderheid oproepe dat mense hom steeds ondersteun”). The last quote was written as one sentence, as is appears in this paper. Two sentences would have been correct grammatically.

The article also informed that Cronjé was receiving a number of faxes pledging support to him and indicating that people were praying for him. The Cronjé family had apparently issued a statement in which it indicated that they were in spite of everything, they were still proud of him, (“Steeds trots op hom”). His brother, Frans Cronjé, told the paper that Cronjé had received overwhelming support from all corners of the globe, (“Oorweldigende steun van dwarsoor die wêreld”). The article painted an image of global support and understanding towards Cronjé.

In a letter to *Beeld* on 13 April 2000, a reader wanted to know why Cronjé was not receiving the same support Ntini had received when incriminated on charges of rape. The writer thanked Balfour saying he saluted him as his support had brought some order to the whole issue, (“Ek salueer u. U steun het ‘n bietjie gesonde verstand na hierdie hele saak gebring”) and made an appeal to South Africans to ardently support Cronjé, and not to pronounce him guilty prematurely. The line of reasoning was that if God could forgive our sins, why was it so difficult for man to follow suit, (“As God ons sondes kan vergewe, hoekom kan die mens dit nie ook doen nie?”)

“Lood se praatjies” also picked up on the Cronjé story in an article entitled, “Hansie toe nie slim nie,” on 13 April 2000. He started, mockingly empathising with Cronjé about his shattered career (“Sjym, die arme Hansie. ‘n Pragtige loopbaan in skerwe”). He went on in his typically humorous style to present critical observations against Ngconde Balfour and also Patricia de Lille, who he felt were trying to benefit politically from the whole affair, “het ook gister op die wa probeer klim.”

On a more sober note, he pointed out that when Shane Warne and Mark Waugh were in the same position as Cronjé now, the shock was not nearly as huge, (“was die skok nie naastenby so groot nie”). He believed that this was because Cronjé had been known as Mr. Clean and Mr. Honest, (“Juis omdat Hansie die sportwêreld se Mnr. Skoon en Eerlik is”), and that the shock and insult was all the more serious because of it, (“is die skok en verguising dubbel so groot”). The column expressed greater criticism than *Die Burger* towards Balfour and the manner in which he protested Cronjé’s innocence while Bacher was declaring his statement of guilt, simultaneously. Lood was critical of Cronjé’s silence at the press conference where he listened while the Minister lied on his behalf, (“Die minister namens hom lieg”). Cronjé was deplorably silent, “Tjoepstil.”

Nevertheless, continued Lood, (“Ja-nee. Sjym”), he first allowed himself to be twisted by the bookmakers and then allowed the Minister to rescue him by distorting the truth, (“Eers verdraai hy onder die beroepswedders, en toe laat hy hom ‘red’ deur ‘n minister wat die waarheid probeer verdraai”). Clearly an indication of an ill-advised Hansie, (“Duidelik ‘n geval van Hansie nie so slim”), is the final verdict from Lood.

To end, Lood came up with an idea of how Cronjé could amass money in the light of the fact that he so loved wealth, saying that he had come up with a plan whereby Cronjé could still earn money from sponsors, (“na ‘n bietjie kopkrap oor hoe hy voortaan geld kan verdien, het Lood met die volgende plan vorendag gekom”). He could earn money by agreeing not to wear their clothing, (“Hy kan geld van borge vra om nie hul klere te dra nie”).

This was a humorous jab at the sponsors, including Spur Steak Ranches and Adidas South Africa, who withdrew their support from Cronjé when the news of the allegations broke. Other sponsors like MTN and Standard Bank had decided to reserve judgment until after the inquiry. Lood held that Cronjé could already have earned a lot of money from Adidas by acceding not to wear the clothes he had worn to the news conference, (“Reeds met gister se nuuskonferensie kon hy baie geld van Adidas gekry het om nie daardie wit T-hemp met die blou Adidas-kenteken op die bors te dra nie”). Adidas had sponsored Cronjé since his school days.

Criticism was levelled against the frailty of South African supporters in, “Duiwel behoorlik los op 702 oor Hansie Cronjé,” on 13 April 2000 in which Phillippa Breytenbach wrote that John Berkes was exactly right about how quickly South Africans were able to strike at their heroes and rip them apart, (“En daar slaan John Berkes die spyker op die kop oor hoe gou en maklik Suid-Afrikaners hul helde en heldinne kan aftakel en in repies kan skeur”). She acknowledged John Berkes on 702, who found it necessary to express his loyalty towards Cronjé, (“om sy lojaliteit teenoor Cronjé te betoon”). She added that Berkes did not hesitate to tackle negative callers, (“Hy het ook nie geskroom om negatiewe inbellers te takel nie”).

In “Morele kleivoete Hansie was so nodig as rolmodel,” by Charles Naude on 13 April 2000, *Beeld* adopted a similar approach to that of *Die Burger* in reporting the subject surrounding Cronjé. He was praised as a hero and role model, (“‘n held en rolmodel”), not only for Afrikaners, but for many South Africans, (“... nie net vir Afrikaners nie, maar vir baie Suid-Afrikaners”).

It rang that from an Afrikaner perspective he had performed exceptionally in a sport formerly led only by English players, (“uit Afrikaanse oogpunt het hy gepresteer in ‘n

sport wat voorheen in Suid Afrika deur Engelssprekendes oorheers is”). The praise continued, hailing Cronjé as a charming and inspiring captain that had led his team, by example, to unprecedented success in cricket, (“Hy was ‘n sjarmante en inspirerende kaptein wat sy span met sy voorbeeld gelei het tot ongekende welslae op die kriektveld”).

The article went on to mention, nostalgically, that the entire South African team had previously enjoyed the image of being gentlemen who were playing an honest game, “Die hele Suid-Afrikaanse krieketspan het die beeld gehad van skoon jong manne wat ‘n gentleman-spel en volgens die reëls speel”). It held that they had been exemplars and role models for young people, (“Hulle was toonbeelde van sportmanskap, rolmodelle vir jongmense”), ending with, “En toe dit.”

It stated further that Cronjé was certainly not the first Afrikaner to get clay feet, (“Hansie is lank nie die eerste Afrikaner na wie mense opgesien het wat geblyk het morele voete van klei te he nie”). A number of people are then mentioned, including the perpetrators in the Information Scandal, like Connie Mulder and dr. Eschel Rhoodie, and even John Vorster, who had to stand down from his position as Prime Minister as a result. Other Afrikaans leaders mentioned as amongst those who disappointed their constituencies are dr. Allan Boesak and Eugene Terre’Blanche.

Grouped with them were Naas Botha, Steve Hofmeyr and the late Bles Bridges who had all apparently been involved in extra-marital affairs. Naude stated that Cronjé admission of guilt had been painful and tragic, as had been all the other cases in point, (“Soos Hansie se erkende ontvangs van geld is al hierdie gevalle in mindere of meerder mate hartseer en tragies”).

But, he continued, that it was necessary to remind people that heroes and leaders were also people with weaknesses, (“Maar dit is nodig dat mense van tyd tot tyd herinner word dat helde- en leiersfigure ook mense met swakhede is,”) making the idea that Cronjé had overstepped boundaries somehow more palatable to readers, as many before him had been in the same predicament.

In another letter to *Beeld*, “Is ons korrupsie só gewoond?” published on 14 April 2000, a reader asked whether South Africans were so needy of heroes that when they had erred, people empathised with them because they had been found out, (“Ai tog, is ons arme Suid Afrikaners so uitgehonger vir helde en so gewoond aan korrupsie dat wanneer iets gebeur soos met Hansie Cronjé hy eintlik ‘n klop op die skouer kry en die meeste mense jammer voel dat hy uitgevang is?”)

The reader paints a picture of a dejected Cronjé, whose pathetic image evoked the empathy of the public, (“Daar sit hy toe en dit lyk of die hond sy kos afgevat het en almal se harte bloei vir hom”). A letter as critical of Cronjé as this would probably not have been published by *Die Burger*, which was much more careful in handling the situation.

The reader ended stating emphatically that bribery and corruption was wrong and that it could not be justified under any circumstances, (“Korrupsie en omkoperij is verkeerd en mag onder geen omstandighede goedgepraat of ondersteun word nie”), a very strong, clear and different stance published by the newspaper, fulfilling its role as forum for an exchange of diverse views and opinions. Around the same time, a number of letters in the vein of, “Jy’s ‘n held, Oom Hansie,” were printed in which children’s letters conveyed their sympathy, support and adoration for him.

Also on 14 April 2000, Cronjé was quoted in the sympathetic title, “Dwaasheid en naïwiteit my ondergang.” He was reported to appreciate all the support (“waardeer al die ondersteuning”) he was receiving. The article narrated that Cronjé had stated that he was not involved in the corruption of the game and that he had always played to win, (“Hy sê hy was nie by die westrydknoeiery betrokke nie. Ek het nog altyd gespeel om te wen.”)

It is surprising that the paper was still printing this kind of statements on the 14 April, after Cronjé had admitted to not being entirely honest about his role in the match-fixing allegations. Another statement evoking sympathy for Cronjé was when it quoted him, saying that the hurt and disappointment of his wife, family, cricket supporters throughout South Africa, the UCB and his colleagues distressed him the most, “Wat hom die meeste pla, is die seerkry en teleurstelling van sy vrou en familie,

krieketondersteuners dwarsoor Suid-Afrika, die Verenigde Krieketraad van Suid-Afrika en sy spanmaats.”

On 17 April 2000, Shaun Pollock’s statement made headlines in, “Oorwinning ook aan Hansie te danke, se Pollock.” The new captain was quoted saying that Cronjé had been with them for the greater part of the preparation for the game and that he was still respected by his colleagues, (“Cronjé was vir ‘n groot deel van ons voorbereiding saam met ons en ons het steeds baie respek vir hom.”

These statements were made after South Africa beat Australia in the first match after Cronjé had been dismissed as captain. Pollock held that at least some of the praise for the victory belonged to Cronjé, (“Minstens ‘n deel van die lof vir die oorwinning kom Hansie toe.” Sports Minister, Ngconde Balfour was quoted again, this time expressing his exhilaration at their victory. He was ecstatic that the team could triumph in spite of all the difficulties they faced, and saw it as proof of their resolve to endure, (“Dat julle só kon presteer ondanks die struikelblokke, bewys aan die wêreld dat ons nie gereed is om te gaan lê en te verkrummel nie”).

Another letter on 24 April 2000 entitled, “*Beeld* oorskry perke te dikwels,” the reader wrote supportively of Cronjé. The reader held that Cronjé was still relatively young and that had not yet realised the ability to avoid moral potholes, “Hy is maar ‘n jong man wat baie goed geprester het, wat nie noodwendig aan hom die vermoëns verskaf om morele slaggate te vermy nie.” The reader felt *Beeld* was too critical of Cronjé, saying that it dishonoured Cronjé without knowing the facts behind the allegations, (“*Beeld* skreeu ‘skande’ teen Hansie Cronjé sonder dat *Beeld* die feite van die aanklagte teen Cronjé het”).

### 7.3 THE VERDICT

In June 2000 the King Commission under Judge Edwin King, authorized by the government to investigate the Indian allegations of match fixing against Hansie Cronjé, got underway. Cronjé admitted to the Commission that he had accepted nearly \$100 000 over a four-year period, but denied ever losing a match deliberately. Hansie Cronjé was subsequently banned for life from all aspects of cricket including administration, coaching and playing, by the United Cricket Board of South Africa.

## 8. APPRAISAL OF REPORTS

### 8.1. DR. ALLAN BOESAK

#### 8.1.1 CAPE ARGUS REPORTS

The *Cape Argus* was generally balanced in its coverage of dr. Boesak. The articles focussing on his return to South Africa tended to be factual, relating facts about the pending trial and, if anything, concentrated on the uproar in political circles concerning the public support of dr. Boesak by the Justice Minister, Dullah Omar. An editorial stated that the newspaper had, “studiously avoided stroking hysteria in its coverage of the Boesak case.”

The paper expressed some criticism of dr. Boesak via their editorials, for example, when he equated himself with the struggle saying that the struggle was on trial with him, the paper emphatically negated these statements affirming that Boesak was on trial, rather than the struggle or the system. It is likely that the editor considered some comments on the matter necessary, especially in the light of earlier reports in the *Cape Times* quoting dr. Boesak to the effect that the struggle was on trial with him.

The paper revealed a subtle bias in favour of the ANC, which was discerned by the tendency to give the ANC great scope in relating their perspectives. On occasion, the other political parties were given a platform to voice their opinions, but Omar, for example, was frequently given the opportunity to articulate his stance.

Perhaps this was an attempt on the part of the *Cape Argus* to be fair, by giving the accused an opportunity to voice his opinions, but the statements were often totally contradictory to former statements made by the Minister. A quote by Omar, for example, was, “We never commented on the case against Boesak at all” (27 March 1997), in spite of the fact that all the newspapers at the time were reporting on Omar’s public statements and support relating to dr. Boesak’s trial. The *Cape Times*, in fact, reported about a written statement by Omar, in which he wrote the ANC appreciated, “the trauma to which Boesak and his family have been subjected over the past few years” (7 March 1997).

One wonders about the intent behind giving Omar so much scope. Was it an attempt on the part of the *Cape Argus* to be fair to the subject? Or were the statements printed to highlight the contradictions in his statements? Or, on the other hand, was it perhaps preferential treatment granted to the Minister because of his role in the ANC?

The article by dr. Wilmot James illuminating the difficulties Omar experienced as Justice Minister and ANC Western Cape leader also gave the impression that the *Cape Argus* endeavoured to be considerate towards the ANC and its members. The article clearly backed Omar and attempted to justify his public behaviour vis-à-vis dr. Boesak.

### 8.1.2 CAPE TIMES REPORTS

The *Cape Times* was found to be very sympathetic towards dr. Boesak in its coverage. This was gauged by the frequent positive portrayal of the subject in lengthy articles devoted, for example, to his role in the struggle as an anti-apartheid activist and cleric, the support and admiration shown to him by the crowds and the ANC at the airport on his return, the difficulties he would endure in the forthcoming trial, and so on.

The positive image of Dr. Boesak was further fostered by the choice of evaluative words employed to describe him, for example, he was referred to as a “survivor,” a “poor child of the Kalahari,” a “hero,” and so on. These types of words could serve to evoke some sense of compassion and liking for the subject in the reader. The paper also often made reference to the members of the Boesak family, including Elna and Bélen and Sarah Len, youngest daughter of dr. Boesak, reminding readers that dr. Boesak was a family man who enjoyed the support and love of those close to him.

The *Cape Times* quoted dr. Boesak extensively - more so than the *Cape Argus* - giving comprehensive coverage to the statements he made on his return, at the airport, outside the courthouse, et cetera. The sometimes-problematic statements were however also criticised by the *Cape Times*, as it had been by the other publications. The *Cape Times* asserted in an editorial that the struggle was, “decidedly NOT on trial,” with dr. Boesak” (*Cape Times*’ emphasis)

The *Cape Times* displayed favouritism towards the ANC revealed by the extensive coverage and space allocated to its statements of support via Omar and Yengeni, as well as articles, like the lengthy column by Zubeida Jaffer explaining the ANC support of dr. Boesak. These served to indicate clearly the positive *Cape Times* stance towards the ANC, which came across largely in columns and editorials devoted to the prominence of dr. Boesak as a leader via his role in the struggle, and so forth. The paper made mention of the dissatisfaction of the NP and DP in the light of Omar's behaviour, but Omar was always given ample opportunity to defend himself in the face of accusations and allegations of incompetence as Justice Minister.

Headlines in the *Cape Times* like "ANC supports Boesak," were clearly intended as affirmations rather than something offensive to the paper and its readers. The same heading in *Die Burger* or *Beeld* may in all probability have been followed by some negative or critical remarks regarding the support offered.

### **8.1.3 DIE BURGER REPORTS**

*Die Burger* articles reporting on the Boesak affair focussed on the controversies related to the Justice Minister, Dullah Omar and the ANC, as well as criticism from NP and DP circles, rather than calling attention to the role dr. Boesak had played in the struggle as was done by the English papers.

The DP stance was given a great deal of coverage. The party questioned the political fuss ("politieke bohaai") surrounding dr. Boesak's return to South Africa and the question often surfaced about whether dr. Boesak was attempting to transform his case into an O.J. Simpson trial in South Africa. The party also reminded readers that dr. Boesak had, by his own admission, left the political arena to return to preaching. There were also repeated calls for justice to be served and for Omar to allow the legal process to continue without interference. In reporting about Omar, the paper referred to his poor judgement ("swak oordeel") in showing public support for dr. Boesak. This point was never made in so many words in the English papers.

Dr. Boesak's comments at the airport were related fully in *Die Burger* without comment or criticism. Indirect criticism of him only surfaced via statements made by NP and DP leaders, for example, when Peter Marais made the statement that there

was just a small group of people at the airport to welcome dr. Boesak, and that he could not attract the thousands as he could in earlier years. He also mentioned that dr. Boesak had failed as leader of the ANC in the Western Cape when he filled the position.

The approach in reporting the ANC's support was vastly different to that of the *Cape Argus* and *Cape Times*. In the Afrikaans press, the ANC support was questioned and fervently criticised.

#### **8.1.4 BEELD REPORTS**

A large number of the articles that appeared in *Die Burger* appeared in *Beeld* simultaneously. Their approach and stance was very similar, however, the *Beeld* articles tended to be more candid in its general reportage of the Boesak issue, making very clear statements regarding the Boesak case.

The paper used stronger words to express the responses around events, for example, it made the statement that Omar involved himself shamelessly in what was supposed to be the legal sphere, ("Hy het hom, skaamteloos in die regspleging ingemeng"). An editorial also suggested that, to clear the air, Omar should rather acknowledge that he had mismanaged the Boesak affair completely, as soon as possible, ("Omar moet eerder so gou moontlik erken dat hy die Boesak-kwessie heetemat verkeerd gehanteer het"). *Beeld* appeared to be less conservative and cautious than *Die Burger*.

#### **8.1.5 OVERALL COVERAGE OF DR. ALLAN BOESAK**

The English and Afrikaans papers differed in their approach to reporting on dr. Boesak and his return to South Africa on charges of theft and fraud. For the purpose of this discussion, the English papers, the *Cape Argus* and *Cape Times* will be grouped together because their approaches were very similar and the differences almost insignificant. The *Cape Times* was slightly more overt in its support of both dr. Boesak and the ANC, whereas the *Cape Argus* tended to be more cautious in revealing its stance. On occasion the papers published articles simultaneously in both newspapers.

Both the papers in question revealed a bias in favour of dr. Boesak, often relating his role in the struggle and as an activist hero and empathising with his current situation. The papers also showed a preference for the ANC, giving a great deal of coverage to the party and its leaders, in this instance mainly, Dullah Omar.

In spite of the obvious biases, the paper still expressed criticism against statements made by dr. Boesak equating him to the struggle and claiming that the struggle was on trial with him. It also distanced itself from the inappropriate public behaviour of Omar, though it gave him ample space within which to explain himself. The opposition parties were given a platform from which to voice their opinions, but these were often very brief, whereas the ANC was always given more prominence and greater coverage.

Though the two newspapers were similar in their coverage of dr. Boesak, the difference that emerged was that the *Cape Argus* was more guarded in its portrayal of dr. Boesak compared to the *Cape Times*, which threw all caution to the wind in writing about the former cleric. Even so, the coverage was deemed generally fair to the subject.

Though apparently favourable towards dr. Boesak, Dullah Omar and the ANC, the papers were not extreme in its coverage to the extent that one could define it as being unduly biased. Both papers displayed an obvious bias in favour of these subjects, but that could be related to the history of the papers as part of the liberal English press. The positive stance was clearly detected in the columns and editorial writing, whereas it is fair to say that the news was not clouded to the extent that one could label it unethical. The reporting was not distorted or slanted to the extent that it breached the journalistic ethic of fairness and impartiality.

There were a number of spelling and typing errors found in the *Cape Argus* articles. This detracted from the quality of the writing and coverage of the paper, as it was somewhat unexpected in the well-established daily. It is unacceptable to make allowances for these types of inaccuracies in the reports, which could merely be attributed to negligence and pointed to incompetence.

*Die Burger* and *Beeld* often ran the same articles simultaneously. These two Afrikaans newspapers could also be grouped as they also often displayed the same approach in their reporting. Though similar in their coverage of the Boesak affair, *Beeld* articles were more outspoken in its criticism.

These papers did not depict dr. Boesak as a leader of the people and a hero who had returned to South Africa in very difficult circumstances, as the English papers did. They, however, focussed on the ANC support and the criticism it evoked in opposition circles. The Afrikaans papers gave the DP and NP comprehensive coverage in its criticism of the ANC and particularly Dullah Omar.

Omar was given ample opportunity to voice his perspective, but again, in this instance, the DP and NP were given more prominence. Also, more criticism was levelled against the ANC for their public support of dr. Boesak than ever mentioned in the English papers. These papers also questioned the motives behind the support.

In spite of the selectivity displayed in printing articles, that is, these papers chose not to highlight, for example, Boesak's role in the struggle, the coverage was still deemed generally fair to the subject. The number of spelling and typing errors found in the *Die Burger* and *Beeld* articles were negligible. In fact, the papers were very impressive in this regard.

## **8.2. HANSIE CRONJÉ**

### **8.2.1 CAPE ARGUS REPORTS**

The initial articles in the *Cape Argus* relating to Hansie Cronjé's allegations of match fixing were sympathetic and expressed incredulity at the turn of events. The words used to describe the Hansie allegations were mostly related to disappointment on the one hand, and distress on the other. For example, the paper referred to the allegations as a "shock" new development, the UCB was "shattered" by the revelation and "unequivocally deceived," the team was "devastated", the event cast as a "tragedy, and so on.

The paper spoke about Cronjé's talent, praising him for his achievements in cricket on the world scene, and at the same time, he was criticised for being "rotten" and "corrupt" (12 April 2000). The paper also carried articles on the general issue of match fixing and how other international captains had been caught up in the corruption.

The headlines were rather sensational, for instance, "Cricket caught in a web of corruption," "Cronjé won't play for South Africa again- Wessels," "Can SA recover from Hansie Heartbreak?" and "Hansie's axing has Proteas in disarray," presumably to catch the attention of prospective readers of the paper, but were not overtly critical of Cronjé. Again, the Cape Argus approach seemed to be one of caution in writing about the issue.

### **8.2.2 CAPE TIMES REPORTS**

The paper ran generally very positive articles on Hansie Cronjé. A principal writer for the sports column, Michael Owen-Smith emerged as an obvious Cronjé fan, praising him for his mastery of the game. His articles were generally pro-Cronjé and painted the ex-captain in glowing terms.

The paper also published articles that were exceptionally critical of Cronjé, notable amongst these was the one quoting Tim Noakes, which contained scathing remarks about the ineptitude of Cronjé as a captain, and the fact that the media assisted in painting a positive image of the him. Neither the *Cape Argus* nor the Afrikaans papers would ever have printed this type of article on Cronjé.

### **8.2.3 DIE BURGER REPORTS**

*Die Burger* articles were far more sympathetic towards Cronjé than its English counterpart. The articles continually praised Cronjé as sportsperson, ambassador, leader, and so on. In the initial phase when the allegations were starting, the paper tended to concentrate on articles related to corruption in sports, in which other leading sportspeople had faltered. The articles made it clear that this was not a new phenomenon in the sports world and that there was hope for Cronjé.

There were also statements of compassion for the difficult position Cronjé must have experienced as a captain in a profession with huge pressures. It also compared Cronjé to the other captains demonstrating his excellence in the position. The articles continually quoted people in the community like Allan Donald, Ewie Cronjé (father of Hansie Cronjé), and also church leaders, like pastor Ron Steele and Ray McCauley, who expressed their disappointment but also their support for Cronjé.

#### 8.2.4 *BEELD* REPORTS

*Beeld* often printed the same articles or almost identical articles as *Die Burger*. The paper was again more outspoken than *Die Burger* and often spoke directly to the Afrikaans community asking it to forgive Cronjé for his oversights. A typical *Beeld* headline was, “‘Volk in oproer’ oor Hansie, maar hy bly held” reflecting the obvious support Cronjé enjoyed in the paper. His father and brother were quoted as members of the community, probably in an effort to evoke empathy for the family who were suffering as a result of the turn the events. The paper quoted Frans Cronjé relating how difficult it was for the family and the majority of South Africans, (“die paar dae was regtig moeilik vir die familie en vir die meeste Suid-Afrikaners”).

The general stance adopted by *Beeld* was one of support and compassion for Cronjé. There were some slight criticisms levelled at Cronjé, via, for example, the humour column, “Lood se praatjies,” and the “Perspektief” column. The criticisms were however immediately negated by statements that others too have stumbled and that Cronjé was not alone in making erroneous choices, or statements to that effect. Even so, this was much more critical than *Die Burger*, which steered clear of criticism.

#### 8.2.5 OVERALL COVERAGE OF HANSIE CRONJÉ

Both the English papers were sympathetic towards Cronjé and depicted the disappointment and, initially, the hope that the allegations would be unfounded. The stance of both papers was very similar and could therefore be grouped together for discussion here. The *Cape Times* was slightly more favourable towards Cronjé than the *Cape Argus*. Once again, the *Cape Argus* was found to be more cautious in its reportage, whereas the *Cape Times* was slightly more outspoken.

The *Cape Times* published reports praising Cronjé and balanced those with articles criticising his actions. Neither of the papers was extremely biased in favour of Cronjé. Though it did bestow a certain amount of praise on him, it also published a fair amount of criticism on his choices. The papers achieved a measure of fairness in its coverage of Hansie Cronjé.

The two Afrikaans papers often printed articles simultaneously in both papers. Both *Die Burger* and *Beeld* made reference to the Afrikaners and the importance of Cronjé as a member of that community, as well as the responsibility he had towards people of all ages as a role model. The paper also stated its disappointment yet ongoing support for the fallen hero. Often pleas were made to the readers to overlook and forgive the errors in judgement that he had incurred.

Headings referring to Cronjé seldom used his surname and rather opted to use his first name, for example, “As kaptein het Hansie bo sy teenstanders uitgestyg,” and “Hansie bly steeds ons kind.” The rationale may have been that “Hansie” was a household name, and that it would evoke a sense of compassion for the skipper rather than the cold and formal use of “Cronjé.”

## 9. CONCLUSION

This section will conclude with the issues that emerged as a result of the research, investigation and analysis of the newspapers in conjunction with the themes of accuracy, bias, and fairness. It will disclose the findings with regard to the professional and ethical practices of the different publications.

The synopsis and appraisals above showed that in the final analysis, dr. Boesak primarily enjoyed favourable coverage in the *Cape Argus* and *Cape Times*, while Hansie Cronjé primarily enjoyed the same in *Die Burger* and *Beeld*. While these predispositions were rather obvious, the quality of reportage was not impaired to the extent that one could regard its news as distorted, inferior or of doubtful quality. The papers were still able to perform a high standard of professionalism in giving equal and just coverage to the topics covered.

The description of fairness proffered earlier in the paper, was that reporters should strive to render “the most accurate portrayal of events within their proper context” (Hausman, 1992:75). The coverage of dr. Boesak within the four different newspapers was taken into consideration and the following became apparent.

The *Cape Argus* and *Cape Times* wrote about the activist and painted an image of a hero who had returned to South Africa under very trying conditions. In their estimation, this was a fairly accurate depiction. On the other hand, *Die Burger* and *Beeld*, being pro-NP rather than pro-ANC, barely mentioned his role as an activist but chose to highlight the uproar in political circles at the time of his return. They obviously deemed that aspect of events more important at the time and one cannot deny that people have different opinions and perspectives on matters.

It is important to note that the Afrikaans newspapers did not unduly criticise dr. Boesak, nor did it print distortions or lies about him to disparage his person. Basically it provided information on the matter from a different but still truthful perspective. The papers practiced selectivity, a necessary and acceptable action in professional circles for practical reasons.

An aspect that gave the newspapers greater value was the fact that a host of diverse opinions were available in them via the news, opinion columns, editorials and the readers' letters. Although individual perspectives were published in the papers, for example, the very positive and supportive article by Zubeida Jaffer on Allan Boesak and the extremely sympathetic reports by Michael Owen-Smith on Hansie Cronjé, this did not present a problem in terms of fairness or bias. The inclusion of varying opinions in all four newspapers counteracted the potential impediment of bias and unfairness in the papers.

With regard to quotations, Dullah Omar could be used as a subject who was quoted in all four papers rather extensively. Each of the papers gave him fair opportunity to voice his viewpoints fully, and they also reported on more than one occasion that Omar proclaimed that he had been misquoted. This occurred in the English and Afrikaans publications. Perhaps John L. Perry had a point when he stated that people do not want fairness, they want favour and exemption, and only want the good news published (Hausman, 1992:55). The benefit in allowing Omar so much space and freedom within which to articulate his opinions resulted in clear contradictions in his own statements that came to light in the papers.

Attribution also formed an important aspect of accuracy. There were instances in which sources preferred to remain anonymous and this was suitably explained by the papers, for example, when team members of Cronjé decided to issue some statements but did not want to go on record because of the unpleasant circumstances. Likewise, officials in the legal and academic sphere raised objections to Omar's public behaviour and preferred to remain anonymous. These types of attributions occurred in both the English and Afrikaans papers, and were quite acceptable.

Attention and prominence was given to the one or the other political party in the different papers, but provision was always made for statements by the opposition party, even though brief at times. The fact that the papers became a forum for the exchange of ideas by allowing the different political parties and social groups to voice their opinions and ideas, showed that the papers were not overtly partial and did not contravene the journalistic ethic of impartiality and bias.

The coverage afforded to the two public figures in question was in accordance with the political and historical background of the newspapers, resulting in the different perspectives discerned. Although the newspapers differed in their approaches to the topical issues examined, one can say with complete assurance that each paper was true to its moral conviction and did not compromise its integrity at any stage. Finally, the philosophical and practical aspects of journalism were seen to function together in the daily papers to provide a successful forum for the exchange of ideas as well keeping the public informed.

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