

A free ride to propaganda

There is a new trend in the PNG media. Along with the 'look north' policy of the Wingti Government there are signs of greater manipulation of the news media.



By SORARIBA NASH

Over the past decade, mass media Pacific-wide has thrived on Papua New Guinea's misfortune of making more news than other countries while gaining a reputation as a 'trouble spot', or, more positively, 'the land of the unexpected'. Papua New Guinea is a place 'where it happens' to the newsmen and newswomen.

Chapters of stories ranging from tribal fights, fights over pigs and land out in the rural areas to breaking and entering, stealing, armed holdup, rape and murder in towns and cities are comparable to many other countries in other parts of the world.¹

The Bougainville rebellion made more news for Papua New Guinea than any other event did for Pacific island states. Or perhaps it was equal to that of the shock of the Fiji military coups of the eighties.² Bougainville is still a running story, although it does not make headlines anymore.

The question, why does it happen? is equally important in understanding the pulse, the heartbeat and the mood of this society. Finding the 'whys' first of all and then accounting for them to right the wrongs is what the guardians of PNG are not doing. Their policies and the general attitude have been reactive. They react to a certain problem without considering the possible consequences, or long solutions.

Papua New Guineans are born, inheriting the land. Nobody can take that away from them. The troubles at the mine sites and other project areas, and thousands of kina compensation demands over the years for land use, should speak for themselves. When the masses therefore see their leaders getting into fast land deals and resource ownership or partnership with foreigners and becoming rich overnight, they rise against such arrange-

ments. This, however, makes news.

Ten years ago, some PNG politicians did not understand the power of the mass media. Today, both fortunately and unfortunately, they do. Former Prime Minister Paias Wingti and some former members of his cabinet vigorously opposed foreign ownership, but did not mind having a share in a Malaysian-owned newspaper as part of their propaganda machinery.

Looking north

PNG is starting to look north with the belief that it will diversify its borrowing sources and thus place its investment opportunities on a more open market, especially in the south-east Asian region.

When Wingti was Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea he said that PNG's growth level puts the country alongside the 'tiger economies' of East Asia. Whether this can be justified is yet to be seen, but this was one of those unfounded gimmicks to cover up PNG's efforts to piggyback on the tiger, and there is a danger that the tiger eventually may devour PNG's natural resources, especially forest resources.

Some of Papua New Guinea's politicians have established personal links with business houses from Singapore, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, Indonesia and even Hongkong for their own gain. The idea of the Asian business links was not a new move by the Wingti-Chan regime. Business interests are certainly there, but the decision to even allow such a powerful instrument as the newspaper company in from the north is a cause for great concern, especially when the company is connected to a business group that carries out extensive logging in PNG. The newspaper company, registered as Pacific Star Pty Ltd, publishes the daily paper, the *National*, which is sold alongside the Murdoch-owned *PNG Post-Courier* throughout Papua New Guinea.

The Papua New Guinea Government has been consistently pushing for competitiveness and localisation of mass media facilities in the country. It has never, however, encouraged or supported local entrepreneurs in the media industry, and the motive and interest of the former Wingti government is therefore questionable.

The motive of the new company is also questionable. If anything, here is a business venture that involves Papua New Guineans and is a front for the logging company's public relations, so that it remains in the good books of the Government while the exploitation of Papua New Guinea's forest resources continues. The Papua New Guineans involved in this scheme are those who are close to the Opposition Leader, Paias Wingti. They include businessmen from his own region, among them those who have newly acquired the Bank of South Pacific from the National Australia Bank.

BSP, immediately after its purchase by the Government, tried to make an impression by reducing its interest on housing loans, the lowest in comparison to all other banks in Papua New Guinea, so that it could win the

lucrative home ownership packages which were being organised by the country's public service and other statutory bodies at the time.

Wingti's look north policy did not go down well with many Papua New Guineans who feared that the flood gates are being thrown wide open for the influx of business-oriented and sem-skilled Asians who might overshadow the indigenous Papua New Guineans in terms of business and job opportunities.

Legal trends

Legally speaking, there has been an official clampdown on freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association following the enactment of a new law by the Parliament of Papua New Guinea on 5 May 1993.

Freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association have remained unchallenged by any government of PNG since independence 18 years ago. Sections 46 and 47 of the Papua New Guinea Constitution give unequivocal freedom to every person, the right to freedom of expression and publication, and the right to assembly. The Internal Security Act (ISA) since its enactment became the subject of question and debate, both nationally and internationally. However, this did not persuade the former Government to review the new law or introduce amendments, although Paias Wingti himself agreed to entertain amendments following pressure from some of his cabinet ministers.

The ISA either regulates or restricts five constitutional freedoms and three rights initially guaranteed by the PNG Constitution. The restricted freedoms in question are:

- (i) Freedom from arbitrary search and entry.
- (ii) Freedom of conscience, thought and religion.
- (iii) Freedom of expression.
- (iv) Freedom of assembly and association.
- (v) Freedom of employment.

The operation of the Act also affects the right to privacy, the right to freedom of information, and the right to freedom of movement. Critics and legal experts have described this new law as 'most formidable', 'draconian', 'a move towards dictatorial rule', 'stupid' and 'unconstitutional', and the most 'disturbing law since Independence'.

ISA obviously has a far reaching effect on Papua New Guinea's democracy. This is the biggest constitutional blunder any government of Papua New Guinea has ever committed since independence in 1975.

The embarrassing part of it all is the contradictions imposed on the existing provisions under the country's Constitution and the new National Information and Communication Policy (NICP). What can be argued here is that the former Wingti-Chan coalition had tried to resolve the long standing law and order problem and the ongoing Bougainville crisis by introducing tougher new legislation.

Speaking in support of the ISA bill in Parliament, Wingti said the law was designed to deal with problems like the Bougainville crisis. But the obvious question has been is, how come the contents of the Act are not only confined to acts of terrorism and rebellion?

Sinclair Dinnen, a criminologist at the National Research Institute (NRI) in Port Moresby, questioned the target group at which the new law was directed: 'Is it directed against terrorists who use violence for political ends, or is it against rascals (common criminals), grassroots landowners who dispute resource developments, rioting students and so on?'⁶

ISA was aimed at supporters of the Bougainville rebellion and those landowners from the mining regions who might engage in similar activities. Solving law and order problems, as well as ending the Bougainville crises, was one of several election promises by Wingti. However, Wingti consistently blamed the previous Namaliu Government over lack of initiative and drive to solve the law and order problems. But when Wingti replaced Rabbie Namaliu as Prime Minister in July 1992 he realised that things were not as easy as he thought.

One of the first remedies he thought of was to quickly restore investor confidence in Papua New Guinea, because the prolonged closure of the multi-million kina Panguna gold/copper mine was discouraging potential investors, especially in the mining sector. At the same time the Wingti Government badly wanted to project a positive image of Papua New Guinea to the outside world, even if this meant pulling journalists in the country in line to see things the Wingti way.

There was a strong belief then among some politicians that uncontrolled media reports during the Namaliu administration had created a negative image of Papua New Guinea in the eyes of the international community. Then Communications Minister Martin Thompson was assigned the task of quickly putting together a National Information and Communication Policy (NICP) for Papua New Guinea, with regulatory instruments to make all media personnel and organisations comply with government directives.

Thompson hurriedly organised a seminar at the end of January 1993. The NICP proposal was then launched, and immediately a 14-member working committee was announced. Ironically, no working journalists were included in the committee at the time. During the seminar one senior journalist revealed that a proposal to include an instrument to cater for a Journalists' Registration Board (JRB) was on the way. This claim not only caused alarm among journalists but also among some members of the committee and the public.

Immediate reaction from both the minister and the Secretary for Information and Communication was that there were no such schemes planned as part of the proposal. Information and Communications Department Secretary Lindsay Lailai (who was also chairman of NICP), however,

said there was 'a need to impose certain restrictions on journalists' in the country.⁷ On 14 May 1993, during the Papua New Guinea Journalists' Association convention in Port Moresby, Lailai told the participants that his committee was drafting a code of ethics for journalists in the country. Since then the new NICP has adopted a section on codes of ethics for all forms of mass media in the country.

The final outcome of the new policy was surprisingly assertive on the existing media and individual freedoms and the rights provided under the Constitution of Papua New Guinea. This, however, conflicted with the Internal Security Act which had been passed in Parliament a few months earlier. The contents of the ISA still has strong restrictive measures to contain the freedom of mass media.

For the sake of arguments in favour of free and independent media, the NICP or the Government for that matter should never have prescribed a detailed code of ethics for the mass media in Papua New Guinea. The very act of prescribing the operational terms and conditions of the mass media in the country implies control by the Government.

Papua New Guinea Journalists' Association (PNGJA), however, had its own code of ethics which was reaffirmed in 1990, ahead of codes in other Pacific Island states. Even before that, both the print and broadcast media in Papua New Guinea were operating under the old codes established by the pre-Independence Australian media personnel and eventually adopted by the Press Council of PNG, more than a decade before PNGJA was recognised by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ).⁸

How the ISA affects the media

What concerns the media under this new law is parts three and four of the Internal Security Act.

Part III: PROSCRIBED ORGANISATIONS, Section 6:

Membership, Support and Meetings of Proscribed Organisation;

Subsection 1 (d) arranges or assists in the arrangement of, or addresses, any meeting of three or more persons (whether or not it is a meeting to which the public are admitted) knowing that the meeting is

(i) to support; or

(ii) to further the activities of; or

(iii) to be addressed by a person belonging to or professing to belong to a proscribed organisation, is guilty of an offence.

Penalty: On summary conviction: a fine not exceeding K10,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years, or both.

Under (d) ii: *All a journalist has to do is write or broadcast a story recording certain activities, which can easily be inter-*

puted as 'furthering the activities' of a group.

Under (d) iii: All it takes is for a reporter to be present at a gathering or a meeting, and he or she is guilty of an offence.

PART IV: EXCLUSION ORDERS

The law provides the Government with powers to issue Exclusion Orders against a person who they believe is likely to commit an offence against the Act. This particular section can easily be applied to journalists, photographers and camera crew, apart from relief workers or human rights activists and researchers.

Offenders are detained and removed or deported.

Penalty: A fine not exceeding K10,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years, or both.

Declaration of Prohibited Areas is another feature of this new law which will affect the newsperson.

The penalty for breaking this particular section means: A fine not exceeding K1000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years, or both.

The law also gives power to the Government to stop lawyers, humanitarian relief agencies, human rights groups, and NGOs from entering restricted areas. Under the law those in authority could claim that such groups and individuals promote or assist 'terrorist' activities.

Decisions to ban organisations are made by the National Executive Council (NEC) or the cabinet, and appeals are also entertained by them.

Likewise, decisions to exclude a person from part of PNG or the entire country are also made by the cabinet.

From experience we know that the Government of Papua New Guinea banned journalists, the International Committee of the Red Cross, humanitarian and church groups from travelling to Bougainville during times of 'great need'.

On 18 November 1993, *Medicins Sans Frontières* (MSF), a French-based international medical aid group, withdrew from the country through sheer frustration, because the Government of Papua New Guinea and the military had continuously refused them access to the war torn island. 'You could say that Bougainville is run by a dictatorship of the defence force. We are so frustrated,' said MSF spokesman Roland Fourcaud.⁹

The MSF and the Government of Papua New Guinea had signed an MOU in 1992 for MSF to provide drugs and medical supplies to Bougainville islanders caught in the crossfire of the six-year-old conflict. In their letter to the Government upon their withdrawal, it said: 'Being the last independent witness to the crisis in Bougainville, we call upon the international community to deploy all possible means to ensure application of international humanitarian law in this situation and most particular with respect to access to the civilian population.'¹⁰

Entry into Bougainville in order to give an accurate coverage is still difficult — at least until the Peace Conference in October — because it is not easy to guarantee the safety of any reporter. Another difficulty stems from lack of adequate and independent transport facilities and even accommodation. Many parts of Bougainville or townships are still in shambles. The military has been in command of the overall situation.

Telephone and fax facilities, transport, and reasonable accommodation or hospitality can only be found among the people at the care centres looked after by Government security forces or military backed forces.

Most news about Bougainville that has come out has been from Government and military sources. Therefore what eventually gets into media reports comes either from the Office of the Minister for Bougainville Affairs, the military — either from the command centre on Bougainville or from the general's office back in Port Moresby — or from the Media Unit (MU) of the Prime Minister's Department located in the capital city. There is no independent journalist or media unit in the area to confirm or deny any claims made by either the official news sources or the Bougainville Revolutionary Army.

A move towards propaganda

Apart from supporting the establishment of another foreign sponsored daily newspaper to feed Government press releases to, the Prime Minister's Department set up a Media Unit in 1993 to handle official news sheets every day for media outlets. This unit was hastily put together to form the core of Wingti Government's public relations strategy, in an attempt to redress what Wingti regarded as the tarnished image of Papua New Guinea. The unit, including the stepped up publicity/public relations campaign by the Prime Minister's Department, received K6 million from the 1994 Budget. The money was being used for the recruitment of journalists for the unit and the purchase of equipment until the Wingti Government was ousted.

Peter Spencer, then Prime Minister Wingti's press secretary, spoke to me over the phone about recruiting journalism graduates from the University of PNG sometime in July 1993. He said the task of those recruited would be writing features, broadcast news items, and front page stories for the media in the country and overseas. 'Australian media' was mentioned as the specific target group. What appalled me was the fact that Spencer had used the term 'front page stories' and left me wondering whether those recruited journalists would have the conviction to write broadcast stories separate from print stories, which are normally done in respective newsrooms.

The mention of 'front page stories' implied that the Media Unit, even before starting its operations, had a preconceived idea that whatever news item it saw fitting for a front page would be carried accordingly. Although such a possibility seemed quite remote, the impression was that the Media Unit was going to attempt to dictate how the news items would be handled.

Another unit which existed over the years and could easily pass as the media unit for the Government is the Information Office of the Department of Information and Communication. The Information Office naturally is housed together with the Ministry of Communication and publishes the monthly newspaper *Hiri Nius* and the monthly colour magazine *PNG Today*. It was interesting to note that the first issue of the latter mostly promoted tourist destinations from the former Information and Communication Minister Martin Thompson's Manus province. *Hiri Nius* is published in three languages: English, Hiri Motu and Tok Pisin (PNG Pidgin). It basically publishes stories and pictures about Government activities, Government projects, ministerial visits and their long boring speeches. The Information Office has a history going as far back as the pre-Independence period.

Initially the Office of Information was a big setup on its own with print, radio, film and photographic units, equivalent to a department by today's standards. The main function of OI at the time was to produce and distribute educational and instructional materials on behalf of the Government of the day. The office went further to perform the task of educating, translating and informing. It recognised a need to educate the people over political developments, hygiene standards and also to maintain authority and order. After Independence, its purpose accomplished, the operations of the office became outdated and appeared to promote Government propaganda. It was abolished in the early 1980s but the concept still survived between the Prime Minister's Department and the Information and Communication Ministry.

After more than a decade the Prime Minister's Department has taken steps to resurrect the concept of having Government propaganda machinery in disguise. Hence the establishment of a Media Unit during the latter half of 1993. This unit compiles a daily newsletter called *Bougainville Today* and distributes it to all media outlets in the country.

However, according to some of the reporters who left the Media Unit, they said they 'were tired of too much political influence' over what they wrote about issues of the day, including the ongoing Bougainville saga. Their stories were often edited to look more like official media statements than simple and honest news stories.

Birth of a newspaper

The *National* is the second daily newspaper since the closure of *Niugini Nius* in 1990. The *National* was launched on 10 November 1993 with an attractively coloured front cover plus 48 pages of 'lots of nothing'.¹¹ The first two issues were circulated free of charge — more than 15,000 copies!

The paper reportedly materialised as a result of a 'handshake' between then Prime Minister Paias Wingti and a prominent Malaysian businessman, Datuk Tiong Hiew King. Datuk is also a senator in the Malaysian Government. Deputy editor of the *National*, Frank Kolma, revealed the

story behind the handshake in an article in the inaugural issue of 11 November 1993.¹² Kolma served briefly as Prime Minister Paias Wingti's Press Secretary before joining the new paper.

'We had always been looking for people to start newspapers. We talked to many people about it for years but nothing happened ...then we met Datuk. We shook hands and it was done,' a close aide to Prime Minister Wingti was quoted as saying.¹³

The above statement is simply a romantic view far from the truth. There had been interested individuals and groups who sought assistance from the banks immediately after *Niugini Nius* ceased operations, but such assistance wasn't forthcoming. A group of Papua New Guinean journalists had sought a Government guarantee to rescue *Niugini Nius* by changing ownership in their favour, but it turned out to be unsuccessful.

This was the moment when some Papua New Guineans became aware and saw a chance to get into the newspaper business. Many of us felt it was time for us to own a newspaper and at the same time run it to suit our people's needs without compromising professional standards and ethics.

About this time the PNG Government-owned printery, Government Printing, was forced to wind up its operations as a cost-cutting measure by the national Government. The printery actually outlived its usefulness. Gone was the Office of Information and other subsidiary Government owned units. Many commercially owned printers were serving both the Government and the private sector quite well.

The Secretary for the Department of Information and Communication, Lindsay Lailai, lobbied to drum up support and secure enough funds to launch a nationally owned newspaper from the old premises of Government Printing, although the ownership question was still in the dark. *Eastern Star*, the Alotau-based newspaper which publishes twice a week, was also making a bid to publish a daily newspaper. Sir Michael Somare, whose daughter Bertha Somare owns the *Madang Watcher*, a monthly provincial newspaper, expressed sentiments that a second daily should come from within the country. These are just a few of the interested people I was aware of at the time, but I'm sure there were others making such a bid.

Therefore claims by the Government at the time that there were no other interested parties, apart from Monarch Investments' Pacific Star Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of the logging syndicate Rimbunan Hijau, is *wrong*. The Government of Papua New Guinea deliberately opted for the foreign-owned Pacific Star ahead of other bidders within Papua New Guinea.

Datuk Tiong, a major shareholder in the Rimbunan Hijau group, is chairman of directors of Pacific Star Pty Ltd. The Rimbunan Hijau group, through Monarch Investments, claims to own the largest selling Chinese language daily newspaper in Malaysia, *Sin Chew Jit Poh* which reportedly has a circulation of about 150,000.

The question of whether the Rimbunan Hijau (PNG) Pty Ltd group has

media business experience to warrant its establishment of a newspaper in Papua New Guinea was never considered. Highly suspicious was the fact that the founding editor of the *National* did not come from the mother company, *Sin Chew Jit Poh*. Henry Chang was brought in from the *Straits Times* of Singapore. Rimbunan Hijau's executive officer George Yong says that although timber is their 'mainstream' business interest, they are also good in publishing.¹⁶

Given such a shaky background and the eventual launching of the new daily newspaper in Papua New Guinea, it is difficult to say that the *National* was established under normal commercial arrangements with offshore investors. It is my personal contention that the Government of Papua New Guinea has gone for a 'free ride' to promote its propaganda and in turn has allowed the foreign company to exploit the country's natural resources. The Government's involvement in this venture places it in a dangerously compromising position as the caretaker of Papua New Guinea's natural resources.

Interestingly, the establishment of this new foreign-owned newspaper raised serious doubts about then Prime Minister Wingti's continuous criticisms about the existence of and the way foreign-owned media operate. Why did Wingti back down on his philosophy of no foreign ownership in PNG's media industry? Why did he make this a special case? Does he have any interest in the *National*?

The equity percentage was hurriedly disbursed in the following manner upon formation of the company: 51 per cent of the shares went to Monarch Investments (part of the RH group), and 49 per cent was distributed with the backing of the newly acquired Bank of the South Pacific among some PNG businessmen who are close associates of the former Prime Minister Pias Wingti.¹⁷ It is understood that PNG's portion of the shares in the paper will increase over the next three years.

Incidentally, the Rimbunan Hijau group of companies dominates the logging and log export trade in Papua New Guinea. PNG's Forest Ministry says the company controls 86 per cent of the logging industry, but RH denies that it is that high. On the other hand, preliminary research conducted by the Pacific Heritage foundation (PHF) estimates that the Rimbunan Hijau group of companies control 70 to 85 per cent of logging interests in the country. Interpreted in monetary terms, the Malaysian company controls an estimated 30 billion kina plus worth of the country's forestry assets, out of the total 50 billion kina worth of forests currently being harvested.

At first the *National* was a disappointment. It failed to meet the expectations of Papua New Guinea readers. The paper did no better than the *PNG Post-Courier* in terms of giving in-depth coverage of the country.

A few months after its launching, the newspaper from time to time was splashing headlines and using pictures from events far away from Papua New Guinea on the front pages, despite its claims that it represented the

voice of Papua New Guineans. The only damage it did was simply attracting journalists and photographers from the *Post-Courier* and *The Times of PNG* by offering them better salary packages, but these talents have not been able to inject the strength of a highly competitive team to compete against the *Post-Courier*. Both papers often publish identical wire stories. Papua New Guinean readers have yet to see a sense of commitment and urgency to 'break' stories without the other paper printing the same story on its front page.

It is interesting to note that the *National* has done quite well covering its ties with Wingti. But there were times when certain stories and commentaries gave away that tone of pro-Wingti sentiments. A good example of this sort of writing appeared in the 30 August 1994 issue of the *National*. Deputy editor Frank Kolma got his story printed hours before the crucial parliamentary vote for the Prime Minister's post later that same day.

The tone of the story said it all (my interpretation on comparison with the *Post-Courier* writeup):

Here is the man who should not leave this post, because all those past decisions he has made, although radical and nationalistic, are beneficial for Papua New Guinea. His resignation and the reelection the next day was done only for the sake of stability. He is not guilty.

On page 16 of the same issue, the editorial entitled WINGTI'S DEPARTURE A NATIONAL LOSS¹⁹ was an emotional piece. Reading the front page and then page 16 gave me the impression that the paper was trying to honour Wingti before his inevitable downfall, keeping his dignity intact so that he was not disgraced in the eyes of the public after the vote. The editorial piece paid tribute to the former Prime Minister even before he was ruled out completely. It would have been a shameful journalistic bungle if Wingti had decided to nominate and ended up as the country's Prime Minister at the end of the day!

In the 1 September 1994 issue of the *National*, the deputy editor occupied page 17 — the FOCUS section — with his article entitled CHALLENGE CAME FROM WITHIN.²⁰ The article began by pointing out the wrongs of Wingti while he was Prime Minister but then ended up glorifying what he had done and why he had taken certain decisions or promoted such policies.

'In the end, Paias Wingti proved too clever by half.'²¹ This was how the first paragraph of the two-part so-called analysis began. The second part of the article, SOME WILL GO, SOME WILL STAY, was printed on page 23 in the 2 September 1994 issue of the *National*.²² The theme of the second part of the analysis was more an outline of what projects and policies the Wingti-led Government had undertaken and which the new Chan Government should not discard at face value. One of the first ones to be brought under the microscope was PNG Holdings.

The thinking in the new Government, and particularly in the

Prime Minister's People's Progress Party, is that the statutory body had taken on more than it was originally tasked to perform...

Disbanding PNG Holdings will affect the structure of the proposed PNG Stock Exchange as much of the work was being carried out by principles of that statutory body.

Ironically, why the subject of PNG Holdings is mentioned ahead of other Wingti projects makes one wonder. The article is full of prescriptions and somewhat subtle intonations by way of suggestions to the new Government. By nature of syllogism and structure, the write-up is not an honest analysis at all.

Regardless of argument on structure and form within the context of journalism, what entices my curiosity is the question of PNG Holdings. PNG Holdings immediately after its launching in 1993 began its privatisation program, supposedly on behalf of the 'little' people of Papua New Guinea. Most likely many Papua New Guineans will still be asking, who owns PNG Holdings and what is the purpose of its existence?

One of the business houses which PNG Holdings purchased upon launching was the Bank of South Pacific, a subsidiary of the National Australia Bank. The Bank of South Pacific is the guarantor of shares in the *National* for those lucky few Papua New Guineans who hold 49 per cent. This is why, with the change of Government and the question over the survival of PNG Holdings yet to be decided, the editorial staff of the *National* tend to have cause for concern

There is only one simple solution to this sort of problem. Papua New Guineans must be seen to use 'clean cash' to get into the media industry. This means no money from politicians, businessmen or organisations with vested interests should be used to set up newspapers and radio/TV stations in the country. Whether such individuals and companies are from within or offshore, Papua New Guineans must use their own capital to invest in order to protect their resources and interests.

If money and resources from politicians and people with dubious intentions are used, the media in Papua New Guinea will never be free and independent. They will merely become instruments of propaganda for those who pay the bill. Consequently, this is the period where the *National* is testing its place in both PNG's advertising and readership market. The newspaper came into existence amid controversy over the source of its initial funding. Whether the *National* will prove to be an independent voice for the people of Papua New Guinea depends on the judgment and actions of the editorial staff, plus those who invested their money in the newspaper.

Notes:

This is a revised version of a paper entitled, 'A new trend in the PNG media: A free ride to propaganda. "If you can't beat them, join them!";' presented at the

Journalism Educators Association conference, Queensland University of Technology, 1-3 December 1993.

¹ Sorariba, N. G. 'Papua New Guinea's Proposed Communication Policy and the New Internal Security Act: A Means to Media Control?', 1993 PINA Convention, Suva, Fiji, p 1.

² *Ibid.*, p 14.

³ 'Catholic bishops express reservations about the Internal Security Act.' *Times of PNG*, 1 July 1993, pp 18-19.

⁴ Momis, J, *PNG Post-Courier*, 6 May 1993, p 6.

⁵ Maino, C, *PNG Post-Courier*, 3 September 1993, p 1.

⁶ Dinen, S, 'Internal Security in Papua New Guinea,' Information paper, National Research Institute, Port Moresby, September 1993.

⁷ Lailai, Lindsay, PNGJA seminar, 28-29 May 1993, Port Moresby.

⁸ 'What is the Internal Security Act,' *Times of PNG*, 20 May 1993, pp 4, 11 & 15.

⁹ *PNG Post-Courier*, 19 November 1993, p 2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Sorariba, N. G., 'Official Threat to Freedom of Mass Media in Papua New Guinea,' 1992 JEA Conference, University of Newcastle.

¹² Kolma, F., 'Birth of a newspaper,' *The National*, 11 November 1993, p 2.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Robie, David, 'Media Ownership and Control in the Pacific: A Case for National Sovereignty,' seminar, University of Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby, 19 October 1993, p 7.

¹⁵ Telephone Interview with Philip Mathews of *New Straits Times* of Malaysia, November 1993.

¹⁶ Robie, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ Telephone interview with executive editor Sinclair Solomon of *The National*, November 1993.

¹⁸ Pacific Heritage Foundation, Pactok, November 1993.

¹⁹ 'Wingti's departure a national loss,' editorial in *The National*, 10 August 1994, p16.

²⁰ Kolma, 'Challenge came from within,' *The National*, 1 September 1994, p17.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Kolma, 'Some will go, some will stay,' *The National*, 2 September 1994, p 23.

²³ *Ibid.*

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