Hawks and Doves -

The pro- and anti-conscription press in South Africa

Edited by Michael Graaf
HAWKS AND DOVES -
THE PRO- AND ANTI-CONSCRIPTION PRESS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Written by: Michael Graaf (editor)
P. Eric Louw
Antonia Joosten
Andrew Murray
Anton Pestana
Jay Savage
Craig Sutherland
Keyan Tomaselli
Ruth Tomaselli
Michael Urbasch
PREFACE

This report is first and foremost a project undertaken by students. At the same time it is an attempt to make academic work relevant to issues and struggles in the community from which the students are drawn.

As students the authors were subject to the constraints of having to meet numerous deadlines, and frequently to sacrifice considerable private time in order to turn what was originally a series of individual essays, produced as part of a 'Theories of Media' course, into a presentable, coherent report - which we hope to be the case. Our Unit was in its second year of offering courses at the time the project commenced; it was and still is in the process of evolving a working style compatible with the interdisciplinary origins of its members and content of study. We also aim to promote a learning environment in which the student/teacher distinction becomes blurred - as much a necessity imposed by understaffing as a consequence of our commitment to democratising education.

It will be obvious that each chapter draws on the particular blend of theoretical tools chosen by its author; less obvious might be that an equally important source of guidance, in most cases, was organic contact with the 'client' organisation. Those who had not been active in the End Conscription Campaign prior to the project were thoroughly acquainted with it by the end, through interviews and informal interaction. A proper mandate was obtained from the client beforehand, and the project regularly came up for discussion in ECC regional meetings before its completion. Progress was reported on through the production period (April 1987–March 1988), and direct and indirect feedback from the ECC helped us determine research priorities.

It is hoped that the report will serve as a resource document in a number of ways: besides whatever guidance it can offer in the production of media (and in other activities), it stands as a record of a particular aspect of a struggle; it may well be of use in countering efforts to use the legal apparatus to stifle At Ease, and it might even usefully contribute to readers' general 'media literacy'.

The task of the editors has been primarily one of making material written (for the most part) under the pressure imposed by the norms of an essay at Honours level (yet in areas not dealt with in graduate years), accessible to a wider readership and useful to the client. We have tried to retain the substance of the researchers' work, and have supplemented it with such appendices as seemed helpful, as well as with linking passages between sections. The various chapters will not be of equal relevance or interest to different readers, but each stands on its own, so sections can be ignored without undue detriment to the appreciation of others.

All work done to produce the report and raise funds was voluntary, except the layout for which a freelance media worker was engaged.

There are gaps in the report's treatment of its subject; these are due to the withdrawal of some of the people present at the initial planning and allocation of areas of responsibility.

We hope that it will be obvious that this project is a stage in the process of developing our ability to respond to the contemporary community, and not just a final product.
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I. Militarisation, Hegemony and the South African Media, 1976-86

This section introduces the context in which the study is being performed, and highlights the importance of understanding the interconnection between economic and ideological aspects of militarisation.

A detailed account is given of the evolution of various structures of control and of the origins and propagation of the language and concepts which accompany these, with reference to parallels from other parts of the world. It should be noted that this passage, more than the other chapters, represents work which has been done accumulatively over some time, so that, for instance, examples used to illustrate points are not always as contemporary as they could be.
Two perspectives exist on the role the Military in South Africa. One argues that the military's direct influence is limited. This approach bases its argument on the percentage of state expenditure on defence and the number of people under arms in comparison to say, Israel (1). It tends to ignore the hidden expenditures and ideological links between the Military and other areas of the political economy (eg. education, industry, publishing, Public Works, Posts and Telecommunications etc). The 'Military', an all-embracing term, is elsewhere referred to as the "security establishment" involving a wide range of repressive apparatuses (2). While we agree that these all-embracing terms are problematic, given the diversity of institutions - SADF, NIS, SSC, JMC's and homeland security forces - we use the term 'Military' as a short-hand to refer to the composite security structure found in areas under the hegemony of the South African government. Where schisms between different agencies exist, these will be identified in the argument.

This paper will argue that the political power of the Military has grown extensively as a result of the extended crisis faced by the ruling class alliance since 1976. (This is not to say that South African only became militarized after 1976. White South Africa has traditionally used military violence as an means of rule). The view that the military influence has grown is difficult to prove empirically, mainly because of severe government restrictions on information. The first approach limits itself by working with verifiable statistics. The second relies almost exclusively on theoretical argument and infers trends from media reports, statements made by the Minister of Defence and Military publications.

We will argue that the militarization of the media in particular is occurring in a complex way through a series of realignments within the hegemonic bloc. We contend that

(a) The contents of the commercial media and the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) reflect the rise and decline of 'fractional' interests and of 'fractional' disputes within the ruling hegemonic alliance; and
(b) that some of the fractional conflicts will be fought out in the media itself. The ebb and flow of militaristic signification in the media (such as the terms 'total onslaught', 'total war', 'total strategy', 'preparedness', 'civil defence' and media military functions) reflect the growing influence of the military-police 'fractions' within the ruling alliance.

An understanding of the relationship between class fractions (3) and the media requires analysis and identification of:

(a) the various fractions of the South African ruling classes;

(b) 'fractional' disputes/conflicts and the growth and decline of 'fractional' power within the ruling alliance;

(c) the relationship between the various media and different 'fractions';

(d) the extent of control that any particular fraction(s) may have over any particular media institution and the effects thereof;

(e) the way 'fractional' disputes/conflicts are represented in media content; and

(f) the derivation of the militaristic rhetoric used in the media in terms of certain theories of military strategy.

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No, it's not too late to talk
And top Nat MP says war is not the only way

TALK: says top Nat MP
Mr Leon Wessels:
'the moment of violence with peace lobbying'

TALK: says top PFP MP
Mr Tjaan van der Merwe:
'we are now in a period of preparedness to take part.

NO: says top HRP MP
Mr Louw Stobberg: 'if
they kill our people we will kill more of them.'
Ebb and Flow of Fractions in the Ruling Classes

The nature of South Africa's ruling class alliance has undergone a restructuring over the last decade, mainly due to a crisis in capital accumulation and an intensification of class struggles (4). Core fractions of the former Afrikaner ruling alliance have been ejected or have themselves left the centre stage; while new fractions have coalesced at the centre of a realigned political struggle.

Fractions that have lost influence include: the Afrikaner Calvinist churches; (white) farm owners; and white working class miners. Fractions which have increased their influence are: Afrikaner-dominated capital (especially Cape-based capital); the military – police bureaucratic fraction(s) (primarily located in Pretoria); the urban petit-bourgeois fraction(s); and English-controlled capital's influence seems to be in a constant state of flux (5). The development of the tricameral parliamentary system since 1983 attempted to bring the Indian and coloured bourgeois and petit bourgeois classes and the black rural bourgeoisie (homeland) closer to the centre of power. The influence of multinational corporations on the hegemonic bloc, a strong factor following PW Botha's Carlton Centre conference in November 1979, waned after mid-1986 when the government declared a State of Emergency on June 12. English-dominated capital's influence within the hegemony seems to go through periods of cooperation and dissent depending on the nature of the crisis (6).

Disinvestment has altered the structure of capital within South Africa with a local capitalist class growing at the expense of multinational capital. This 'new' capital seems to have a close working relationship with the state (7). The gap between Afrikaans and English capital seems to be narrowing, with both now facing similar imperatives. English, Afrikaner and 'new' capitals are congealing around the PW Botha fraction of reformism.

Military and Police Fractions

The Military and Police are increasingly exerting their solutions within the state (8). This can be attributed to a number of factors:

• First, the dynamics of managing the South African hegemony changed following the 1976 uprising:

(a) the use of coercion has increased dramatically, especially since 1985;

(b) ideological appeals formulated by intellectuals have moved off centre stage (as coercion is increasingly substituted as a method of rule); and

(c) the role of the media (as conduits for intellectual leadership messages) has been redefined.
Between 1976 and 1985 the media were encouraged to generate a 'war psychosis' amongst whites, whilst trying to pacify blacks(9). Since the 1986 declaration of the State of Emergency, the media have been directly managed and controlled by the state's Bureau of Information(10) and all verbal, pictorial and written criticism of state action on containing the continuing 'unrest' have been declared 'subversive'(11). The definition of 'subversive' is constantly in flux as trade unions and media institutions challenge (sometimes successfully) the regulations through the Courts only to see the State immediately redraft the regulations. As the ruling alliance has found itself increasingly under attack both internally and externally, it has dramatically increased pressure on the press and journalists(12).

- Second, the South African military-police fraction(s) have apparently learnt from their Rhodesian and Namibian experiences(13). In the cases of Rhodesia and Namibia the white hegemonic forces built up their security infrastructure in response to guerrilla attacks. In South Africa itself, the situation is different:

(a) the ruling alliance built a military and communication infrastructure to counter potential guerilla warfare before the war even started(14);

(b) the military and police command hierarchies familiarised themselves in advance of the war with the theory and practice of revolutionary tactics(15);

(c) attempts were made to launch a (military) 'hearts-and-minds' exercise in the black-rule areas prior to the start of guerilla warfare(16);

(d) attempts were made to psychologically prepare whites for battle through the media, schools, and other civil institutions(17);

(e) Armscor has been built into the third-largest industry in the country(18) and the world's tenth largest arms exporter (19).*

The huge investment of resources that all this restructuring has entailed means that the military-police fractions are clearly getting their way in terms of the societal allocation of funds. The huge investments into the three Sasol petro-chemical plants, for example, appear to have more to do with military-strategic planning than with economic development.

- Third, the state has created a number of security institutions to help it deal with the crisis(19).
Each of these has taken on a life of its own: those manning each of these structures have undergone a different learning process, depending upon the problems with which they were entrusted (20). The SADF's task of destabilizing South Africa's neighbours has, for example, resulted in a particular perception within that institution which has later influenced its approach to internal problems. The vigilantes as a method of destabilizing the internal left could be seen as a result of tactics learned in Mozambique in Angola.

* Fourth, as resources (increasingly) flow into the military-police hierarchies, powerful individuals within these structures will be scrambling for more funds to expand their own little 'empires'.

As was the case in Rhodesia, the Police, Military and para-military (eg. Armscor) institutions are attempting to recruit the most talented youth (21) in preparation for the final defence of apartheid. This in turns means more people with vested interests in maintaining the existing order, to ensure their continued employment (22). The circulation of an annual 'State of Threat Document'(bedreigingsdokument) influences the distribution of funds (23). There are signs that the military-police infrastructures have already taken on a 'life of their own': they are now such powerful fraction(s) that they no longer (only) serve the other fractions in the ruling alliance; they strongly influence both foreign and domestic policy (24). The African Defence Journal went so far as to state that 'unlike other Western countries that have had to fight such wars -- most notably the French in Algeria and Vietnam, and the Portuguese in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau -- the SADF so far has not allowed politics to interfere with military policy ... This is due largely to the SADF's ability to work with and when necessary, manipulate the country's political system" (25).

The military-police fraction(s) do not rule South Africa. They are only one part of the hegemonic bloc, but do have a major capacity to influence government policy. This they do by exercising a veto over the civilian decision-makers(26) while the decisions taken within the wide range of military infrastructures are unlikely to be over-ruled by other government departments or the civilian decision-makers (27). A consensus exists on the need to preserve capitalism (or to use the preferred, less pejorative term used by the state and media, 'free enterprise'). Differences, however, remain. English big capital, for example, is against the government's increasing use of coercion.

Three different responses can be identified within the hegemonic bloc on the state's use of violence to restore 'law and order':

(a) The 'hard-liners' believe the military and police can win the war and restore the racial-capitalist hegemony. (The Conservative Party, the Herstigte Nasionale Party, the Afrikaner Weerstand Beweeging, and the right-wing of the National Party)

(b) Some seem to adopt the approach that the military and police cannot win in the long run, but must maintain the existing order for as long as possible. ( Afrikaner capital and the National Party).
(c) 'Moderates' argue that the Military and Police should maintain 'law and order' so that sufficient reform can be enacted to dismantle apartheid while preserving capitalism. (Progressive Federal Party, verligtes of the National Party; big English-dominated capital).

What is significant is that the military and police disagree on policing tactics (28) which is why we refer to them as factions, and not a fraction. The Police, under Louis Le Grange, are 'hard line' and undisciplined, while the Military under Magnus Malan, follow a more 'moderate' and disciplined path.

THE MILITARIZATION OF THE MEDIA

The media reflect the inter-fractional disputes within South Africa. Alignments within the ruling alliance are continually shifting. Different issues elicit different responses amongst the different factions at different times. These tensions are reflected in the media. If a degree of unanimity exists it is that the commercial press and SABC back (to a greater or lesser extent) the centre-to-verlig fraction of the National Party. The second State of Emergency has, however, increased tensions between the State and the liberal-commercial press.

Extent of Control of the Media

The commercial Press (Nasionale Pers, Perskor, Argus Company, South African Associated Newspapers) and the SABC are now backing - with slight differences - the same horse. This manifests itself in several ways:

(a) The neo-fascist right-wing (AWB, HNP and CP) are ignored, attacked or belittled;

(b) Conflicts between the different factions within the ruling hegemonic alliance are downplayed in the media;

(c) Certain 'hooray words' are uttered repetitively (though with different emphases in the different 'fractional' media). Those given positive treatment include: 'reform'; 'free enterprise'; 'moderate blacks'; 'the West'; 'civilised standards'; 'total strategy'; 'our boys on the border'; 'privatization'; 'Thatcher' and 'Reagan'. Those given negative treatment (boor words)(29) include: 'radicals'; 'communism'; 'socialism'; 'the Eastern Bloc'; 'the United Nations'; 'total onslaught'; and 'terrorists'; 'ANC' and 'UDP' and so on. Through a continual repetition of hooray and boor words the media present a unified image of South Africa as a reasonable and moderate society having to defend itself against an evil and malicious plot orchestrated from 'outside'. This deflects emphasis away from the massive internal opposition to apartheid. Since the Second State of Emergency declared in 1986, certain new 'boo' words have become apparent such as 'sanctions'; and 'Commonwealth'. The State even banned the use of certain descriptions, such as 'draconian measures' and 'minority white regime'.
(d) The massive internal support for the ANC, UDF and socialism is downplayed. Support for either the ANC, the UDF or for socialism is linked by the media to a deviant minority or is 'explained away' as being due to "intimidation".

(e) Overt racism is avoided. The English commercial press (excluding *The Citizen* and *Natal Mercury*) even avoids using racial designations, although its selection of 'newsworthy' items does reflect a clear white 'world view' (30). The Afrikaans Press and SABC continue to use racial classifications. However, this is done with a view to making race classifications appear 'natural'; 'hurtful' racism is now avoided and masked under identity numbers and other distortions of statistical data. For example the Afrikaans press claims the new form of identity document is to be 'non-racial' (31). However, the English liberal press is more sceptical about government intentions on deracialisation.

(f) A growing influence of the military strategists' definition of reality (i.e. an 'us-them' view) (32). This is frequently reflected on the SABC (33). Fractional differences are apparent here. The press owned by English capital, for example, tends to be more positive toward the military and overtly hostile toward the Police; while the press owned by Afrikaner interests is somewhat less antagonistic toward the Police. Conflict also occurs within the SABC. But all media are now popularizing the 'siege' mentality. Military correspondents cannot operate unless they maintain good relations with the SADF. Afrikaans newspaper editors have even called for the security forces to create 'positive' news for themselves, thereby cancelling the 'negative' news of 'terrorists, by becoming pro-active news makers by permitting a 'freer flow of information' (34).

The rhetoric of 'siege' has been popularised since the 1976 Soweto disturbances. Although this unrest was due entirely to the repressive nature of apartheid, the state sought to mystify the causes through the adoption of the internationally used discourse of 'national security' (35).

**Language, Legitimation and Militaristic Rhetoric**

South Africa woke up one morning in August 1979 to the discourse of 'total strategy', the 'total onslaught' and 'total war'. These phrases were not new. Part of SADF terminology as early as 1973, they were adopted by the Nazi war machine from the German Quarter-Master General, Ludendorf, a military strategist during World War I. He in turn had worked from the 18th century Prussian military writings of Clausewitz (36). Moving via Britain during World War II, the idea of 'total war' was transported to the Americas. There the terms were refined by the American military academies and the South American dictatorships during the 1960s (37).

The notion of 'total strategy' as used in South Africa's military academies has diverse roots of which the United States connection is only one. The most important source seems to be Beaufre's *An Introduction to Strategy* (38). Beaufre is read in conjunction with texts dealing with the French experience in Algeria, the American
experiences in the Philippines and Vietnam, and the British experience in Malaysia. 'Total war', which embraces every aspect of life, is conceived of as a defensive action in the preparation of the nation in advance of the perceived 'onslaught'. 'Total strategy', as used by the SADF, seems to have some roots in the notion of 'total war'. Both terms are intended to legitimise the pre-empive counter-attack by capitalism against socialism, and creates a sympathetic climate for the permanent arms economy(39). (In South Africa, this has manifested itself in the form of Armsgor). From the perspective of the military, 'total war' demands a total response, a notion the South African military have now sold to white civilians. General Golbery of Brazil talked about a 'national power'. In South Africa it has been called the 'total strategy'. It is 'total' because, according to Golbery, it does away with the previous distinction between civilian and military categories and the distinction between peace-time and war-time disappears(39) it is a war between the 'Christian-Western world and the 'Communist-Eastern world' (40).

This redefinition of war changes in the military institution's relations to the state. The discourse of 'total war' -- a war that is economic, financial, political, psychological, scientific in addition to being a war of armed forces -- does away with the distinction between civilian and military categories. As Armand Mattelart states: "All of society has become a battlefield and every individual is in the camp of the combatants, either for or against. It is a total war because the battlefields and the arms used pertain to all levels of individual and community life, and because this war does not allow the very slightest space to escape from the gravitational pull of the conflict"(41).

It is not co-incidental that the 'total war' terminology came into vogue at the time of PW Botha's assumption to power. Botha had previously been Minister of Defence and took control of the Premiership by means of a 'bloodless coup' facilitated by the political chaos left in the wake of the Information Scandal. The idea of 'total war' had been resisted by the Mulder fraction of the National Party, which preferred propaganda to military options(42).

The military became a very powerful fraction within the state and the private sector is integrated into military planning (43). The increased power of the Military is demonstrated by the fact that information and decisions of the SSC may even be withheld from the full Cabinet itself. The significance of this restructuring of policy-making lies in the extent to which it has shifted executive responsibility away from Parliament, even the NP caucus, into the hands of a non-parliamentary group which includes senior military and police officers. The SSC's Secretariat has four branches: Strategy, National Intelligence Interpretation, Strategic Communications (involving psychological warfare or 'cultural action'), and Administration. Only the Ministers of Defence, Foreign Affairs, Law and Order and the State President are statutory members. The moderating influence of the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Information, as well as that of the Financial and Economic Ministries which favour economic power and control of the communications system as a means of defence, was reduced (44). This strategy failed and coercive control of the media and the state prepared for sanctions in 1986. As the 'us/them' distinction shifted,
the multinational companies, and at times, even Reagan and Thatcher were excommunicated into the 'them' camp by the government, Afrikaans press and SABC.

The total strategy doctrine was made possible by forging an alliance with business and industry. In South America, the military state of the 1960s and 1970s answered the need to resolve the global retreat of capitalism. These regimes opened the door to the multinational companies which had penetrated the Third World on a massive scale just after the Korean War (1950-1953). The MNC's denationalised local economies and only those fractions of the bourgeoisie connected to foreign capital were able to adapt to the new dynamics.

Where popular resistance impedes the development of external markets through the MNC's, as occurred in Chile prior to and during the Allende administration, the military often act on behalf of international capital. This was not necessary in South Africa during or after the Vorster period because of a different set of historical and material conditions and because of the ascendency of the military in political and economic decision making within the state, although General Magnus Malan has said that he saw democracy as a "snag" which restricted the full realisation of total strategy as a theoretical ideal.

Botha's 'bloodless' coup was followed in quick succession by the 1979 Carlton Centre meeting between government and business, a state commitment towards a free enterprise economy, the selling of SASOL, shares to the public, followed by a number of other 'mini-Carlton' meetings.

By this means the state becomes little more than a surplus value producing factory for the MNC's. It guarantees the conditions necessary for the penetration of foreign capital and the establishment of an economy directed towards foreign markets either from the United States itself, or from its neocolonial industry to non-American markets.

The increasingly militarized state that has emerged under Botha also became more and more friendly towards multinational capitalist interests. This was partly due to the rapprochement between English and Afrikaner capitals marked by the period November 1979 to October 1984 and partly strategic. It seems likely that the 'total strategy' planners realized that they could not defend white privilege without substantial Western help. If they could 'sell off' a sufficiently large percentage of the economy to overseas capitalists, then presumably those same capitalists would, of necessity, bring pressure to bear on their own governments to defend the existing order in South Africa.

Between 1979 and end of 1985 South Africa permitted the unrestricted repatriation of profits and wages to the metropolitan countries, did nothing to prevent the massive devaluation of the rand. It continues to provide hefty tax incentives for firms locating in the 'border areas' next to the 'homelands'. In consequence, enormous amounts of capital have flowed out of South Africa. Of course, 'selling off' the South African economy to overseas capitalists requires that South Africa be seen as a stable and safe investment opportunity. For this reason internal opposition to capitalism and the existing order needs to be concealed and is suppressed by the military. Dependent countries
like South Africa thus become the military proxies of United States and European imperialism. This allows the imperialist states to avoid the dangers and costs of direct political and military intervention such as in Angola.

Militarization permits the over-exploitation of workers through facilitating higher profits than are normally earnable in capitalist democratic states. This is done through paying workers less than the costs of family reproduction -- as on the mines -- and through denying labourers access to generally accepted benefits, such as medical aid, pension and the like. In South Africa, the emphasis on unskilled labour keeps costs low. Paradoxically, in an economy which until the mid-1970s relied on cheap unskilled labour, and low productivity levels, it is the worker who is now blamed for his/her continued low wages. The state and business are thereby able to justify their low wages as the result of the low productivity of these same workers. This anomaly of course, works to the benefit of free enterprise, which lays the blame for poverty with individuals rather than the nature of the social formation. However, the eruption of nation-wide resistance after October 1984, resulting in a low level civil war, the state was forced to take additional measures to counteract MNC nervousness, disinvestment and international pressure. The government seems to have misread the signs as instead of ensuring the development of a non-racial and more stable class society, it has moved to entrenched the hierarchy of racial privilege but sought -- unsuccessfully -- to mystify the racist basis of the 'new dispensation' by re-coding apartheid discourse into liberal sounding terms which strike a sympathetic chord with Western democracies. The government now talks of 'protection of minorities' (i.e. Afrikaner privilege), 'democracy' (power-sharing but retaining control), 'negotiation' (recipients will be compelled to act in accordance with the wishes of the government), 'self-determination' (centralisation of control), 'reform' (reacting to specific capital imperatives to redesign and disguise exploitative conditions to ensure capital accumulation) and so on(49).

The state responded to disinvestment campaigns and criticism of the 1986 State of Emergency by declaring such discussions 'subversive' and by deploying the Military and Police to restore 'order' in the townships.

The military and police appear to be in agreement as to the handling of the media despite differences over other issues. The media have generally not been unwilling participants in the propagation of reassurances that threats to nation and society (and capital) can be countered. There are, of course, contradictions within the ruling hegemonic alliance which have an effect on media content. Certain elements of English capital and their media have been less co-operative than others due to their dislike of violent 'solutions'. The June 1986 declaration of the Emergency increased tensions within the ruling hegemonic alliance between the (militarist) hawks and the liberals (especially the liberal-capitalist fraction). Conflict between the military-police fraction(s) and the English liberal press intensified as measured by the number of editorials denouncing police behaviour, the government's suicidal attitude towards sanctions and restrictions on the press(50).
Legitimising Totalitarianism as Democracy

The central dilemma facing the state is how to legitimate and naturalise its authoritarian solution as the only democratic alternative available to South Africa? Their strategy is complex. Here we will consider only the role of the media.

The sustained attack by the government on the 'freedom of the press' in South Africa has often been explained in terms of the irrationality of Afrikaner politics(51). It is doubtful, however, that the government intends to control the press in a Nazi-style dictatorship. The ruling hegemony only acts -- or threatens to act -- against the press during periods of crisis. At such times it deploys the alarmist media determinist logic found in Clutterbuck(52) and restricts media coverage. This is consistent with the idealism of Beaufre's approach in which war is largely reduced to a psychological battle. Hence South Africa's total strategists, as Beaufrean idealists, stress the importance of the media and of public perceptions, and they pay less attention to economic and other material factors.

The media restrictions partly prevent black South Africans from realizing the extent of disinterest; partly to reassure domestic capital and white South Africans; and partly because the reporting of crises -- be they Sharpeville, Soweto '76, or the recent unrest -- by the English-language press finds its way into the international media. SAPA, Reuters, UPITN and other news agencies transmit images of disorder, of violence, and of brutal police action which have a negative effect on international investment in South Africa.

In order to 'sell' South Africa as a safe place for overseas capitalists to invest, the government realized the need to make it appear as if South Africa is ruled not by whites alone but by a multiracial alliance. This resulted in the attempt to engineer a facelift for apartheid. In the absence of a broad-based class alliance the state forged one in the form of the tricameral parliament.

To bring this about, the state and capital had to rally the white, Indian and coloured petty bourgeoisie into their 'national project' to win the 'hearts and minds' of this class and deploy it against the 'total onslaught'. The reality of total strategy was semantically engineered and bludgeoned into the consciousness of the nation -- specifically the petty bourgeoisie. By this means the state countered its lack of democratic support. Because of the nature of the SSC, however, real power still lies with the white (particularly military and police) factions of the state.

Since the early 1980s, the South African media have splashed the trappings of state pomp and ceremony. Newspapers, magazines, television and radio were full of Ministers handing out awards and medals at every opportunity. Military bands and red carpets cram state ceremonies with the purpose of (a) generating a common sense compliance with the necessity of total strategy; and (b) reassuring white South Africans that all is under control. Militaristic images were, however, not seen as sufficient in themselves to induce acceptance of the increasing authoritarianism by which the country was being governed. Semantic engineering and sloganeering filled the remaining gaps as the
state set about 'setting the climate' for the passage of a series of laws which, if and when applied, would ensure an ultra cautious press.

The prime salvo was fired by the Steyn Commission which reached new heights of jargonistic nonsense, irrational argument and metaphorical gobbledygook in 1982(53). Although the (then) Prime Minister claimed that the Report provided "irrefutable proof" of the onslaught against South Africa, conventional wisdom held that the Commission had 'gone over the top'. After much media fanfare, the Commission was forgotten. It's proposed legislation was unworkable, its proposals ridiculous. What then, was the function of this Commission?

If one locates the Commission within the context of the changing hegemonic alliance taking shape in South Africa at that time, its function was that of 'psychological warfare' to induce the media to consent to a further loss of autonomy. The South African Media Council set up in 1983 saw the realization of a self-censoring mechanism. Though the Council has proved to be less than a lap dog, the 'total strategy' planners had got their way.

The Steyn Commission effectively displaced attention from the passage of three Acts already in preparation. The Internal Security Act, the Protection of Information Act and the Registration of Newspapers Amendment Act each show evidence of a 'total strategy' perspective. As such they are evidence of the increasing influence of the military strategists within the ruling hegemonic alliance in the post-PW Botha take-over. By creating a straw man in Steyn, the government shifted the 'willed' ideological discourse in such a way that two of the Acts had a relatively muted passage through Parliament as far as press comment was concerned. (It is a debatable point if Steyn himself realized that he was being 'used' by the hawks within the National Party). The result was that the hawks within the ruling hegemony succeeded in increasing their structural capacity to manipulate the South African media and semantically engineer the way South Africans would be allowed to perceive their world.

Under the Internal Security Act the Minister may take action against an organization, publication or person who he deems may be engaged in advocating communism. This Act redefined the earlier definition of communism: the doctrine of Marxist socialism as espoused by Lenin and Trotsky, the Third Communist Comitern or the Communist Information Bureau. The new Act widens the old definition of communism by extending the list of forbidden authorities and by adding the vague phrase "any other recognised theorist". The Act is silent on what, in fact, constitutes "recognition". Where the previous act named the theorists, the new act left the names blank. The Steyn Report provides the background to who could be a recognised "name". By conveniently dividing up the world into good versus bad (capitalist versus communist, black versus white, Christianity versus Marxism etc.) any oppositional theorist, lecturer or reporter could be "named". Indeed, with the establishment of the Directorate of Media Relations in August 1987, a number of "revolution-supportive" newspapers have been accused of communist intentions: New Nation, South, Weekly Mail etc.

The new Act defined the 'enemy' in very wide terms. In the old Act, the propagator's action had to be directed at the establishment of a
despot system based on the dictatorship of the proletariat. The new
Act forbids the establishment of any form of socialism or collective
ownership. Most alarming, is that the accused organisations need not
even be aware of their alleged 'socialist tendencies'..

The second Act was the Protection of Information Act. This Act
deemed certain categories of information "protected". These include
"prohibited places" whereby it is an offence punishable by a maximum
of 20 years imprisonment to approach, inspect, pass over, be in the
neighbourhood of or enter any prohibited place for any purpose prejudici-
dial to the security or interests of the Republic. Such places are
not identified. While it is not an offence, say, to walk towards a
prohibited place, it is an offence to be accused of walking TOWARDS a
prohibited place. The onus is on the accused to persuade the judge of
the difference. Because of the nature of the reporter's job, it is
axiomatic that such individuals would always be considered
intentional.

Section 3 of the Act includes any matter which the communicator "knows
or reasonably should know may directly or indirectly be of use to any
foreign State or hostile organization " and which should not be
disclosed "for considerations of the security or other interests of the
Republic". The intent required for liability apparently consists not
of a constructive desire to benefit the recipient of the prohibited
information to the detriment of the state, but merely in the knowledge
that the action will lead to disclosure. Such disclosure need not be
to an official of the hostile state, but to any inhabitant thereof.
The use of "indirect use" casts the journalist into a state of complete
uncertainty about the use of any information whatsoever.

All three Acts were passed in 1982, just a year after the Steyn
Commission had reported. Whether these powers will be used to their
limit will depend on the extent of crises the ruling alliance will have
to face and the extent to which foreign investment is threatened. By
relaxing -- or appearing to relax -- the application of the laws in
periods of stability, the government is able to create a sense that
press freedom is not dead, and to still be able to surprise foreign
commentators on the extent of press 'freedom' in South Africa. In the
period of Emergency since 1985, these Acts have been superceded and
newspapers have been denied access to the courts to test the state
accusations against them.

The Steyn Commission might have 'gone over the top', but the climate
it set to enable the above and subsequent repressive legislation to be
passed was its most important function. The proposals set out by the
Steyn Commission have been achieved: The 'facts' officially sanctioned
by the SSC can now be enforced if necessary. In many ways, these Acts
have gone a lot further than the Commission. Steyn was right, a media
law was not necessary: the three other Acts did it all.

With the failure of the tricameral parliament to induce consent from
the subordinate classes, in 1986 the government attempted to co-opt
(so-called 'moderate') black 'leaders' onto a National Statutory
Council, which failed. The underlying motive was to find a mechanism
to incorporate into the hegemony class fractions irrespective of
race which support capitalism.
Changing the character of the ruling bloc (such that the military, English capital and 'non-white' middle class elements have had their influence increased) has coincided with a change in the semantic engineering being propagated in the media. A number of new themes are evident. Firstly there is the need to counter the Verwoerden racism that has been taught to a whole generation of white South Africans. The Military realize the need to co-opt so-called 'moderate non-whites' in order to bolster white privilege. The Afrikaans press and the SABC in particular are trying to 're-educate' neo-fascist whites, who are resisting such moves, into a realization of the need to broaden the ruling hegemony's power base.

Secondly, a harking back on SABC (emphasised by PW Botha's 'pilgrimage to the Delville Wood Monument') to South Africa's participation in the Second World War occurred in 1985. The State President's Guard even changed its dress to look like the Second World War South African uniform. The now ruling National Party had opposed fighting 'for the English' and against the Nazi's in that war. The Second World War theme is (a) linked to the broader aim of generating a war-psychosis amongst South African whites in preparation for war; (b) linked to a desire to incorporate English-speaking South Africans more closely into the ruling alliance; and (c) suggesting that the current conflict in South Africa is similar to the West's 1939-1945 democratic struggle against fascism.

If the Military is to have unfettered muscle in deciding the resolution of conflicts on the sub-continent -- especially if it is to be in the name of 'orderly' economic development -- then the ideological terrain has to be bulldozed to make such development feasible. The Steyn Commission offered the means, the multinationals and capital the motive.

The frightening aspect of developing a pervasive ideology is the state's inability to redefine this 'willed' ideology when conditions warrant it. Although the discourse of 'total strategy' disappeared from political speeches and SABC reporting within hours of the Nkomati Accord, certain state agencies continued as if nothing had changed.

Nkomati set up a series of contradictions which were indicated by struggles occurring within the state (between the Police and the SADF, and between the Dept of Foreign Affairs and Information and the state repressive agencies). This was seen in the arrest of 16 members of the UDF during mid-February 1985, barely days after the State President announced a conditional reprieve for Nelson Mandela and other long term prisoners convicted of treason, and in the continued clandestine support of Renamo by elements of the SADF and government in the face of Nkomati.

'Total strategy' does not work when consensus breaks down at Cabinet and populist levels. This results in the application of contradictory strategies by different government agencies. A comparison of the violent police action in the Crossroads Squatter Camp during the same week as the UDF arrests when residents pre-empted a state attempt at forced removal with the approach of the SABC and other government agencies, is illuminating. The Police had over-reacted and embarrassed
capital. In contrast, the SABC deflected images of confrontation and ill-advised police repression with those of 'negotiation' between the Chief Development Board Commissioner and the Crossroads Residents Committee. A spokesman for the Committee was allowed to address the camera. This was the first time that Television News transmitted interviews with the victims, rather than only authority. This was followed by the Minister of Cooperation and Development on the need for consultation between the state and the Crossroads residents on removals. Although the Minister of Law and Order was briefly quoted, he was not interviewed. The Development Board was also shown to be at fault. It had not 'set the climate' which would have persuaded the residents of Crossroads to consent to their removal. The problem was framed as a communication gap between authority and the squatters, and not the result of 'communist agitators' as the Police allege.

It would appear that fissures within the state resulted in the application of conflicting 'solutions.' While it is enormously complex and expensive attempts are made to create the impression of democracy through the tricameral parliament, 'reform' is nullified by precipitous police action. This may represent a carrot and stick policy, or more likely, the Security Police may be out of control. The declaration of a State of Emergency on 17 June 1985 resulted in troops being moved into the townships on a large scale, suggesting that aggressive Police action needed to be complemented by a more benign military presence. The subsequent banning of cameras in areas of unrest was designed not only to prevent alleged distorted reporting, but to protect the 'image' of South Africa by covering up often brutal Police violence.

The position of the military is somewhat different. The implication for South Africa's permanent arms economy is that even if a lasting peace does occur in terms of an enduring capitalist order, it may have a marginal effect on the militarized character of South African society. A 'free enterprise' economy could not easily afford to abandon this sector of production, even if the times were not recessionary. However, such a state has to rationalise its continued defence expenditure in the face of peace. It does this by expanding its arms exports and building up its military arsenal. The legitimation of the permanent arms economy is effected mainly through the media. Although the press is often critical of state and Police repression (as it was of continued post-Nkomati Renamo support by elements of the SADF and Cabinet), it is supportive of South Africa's beligerent stance against socialism and the Soviet Union. This beligerency has to be backed up with arms and forces.

After Nkomati, the abstract idea of 'total' war gave way to the traditional image of creeping communism. The 'total onslaught' idea has not been abandoned but, as Seegers notes, it has been de-emphasised and qualified (54). The shift in emphasis was necessary in the light of police statements that since Nkomati (until the end of 1985), the ANC terror and sabotage programme had significantly diminished. Following the Accord, charges of Russian expansionism reappeared in political and SADF discourse and Defence Force Generals warned of an impending conventional arms clash. These statements were made in the face of concrete evidence from a growing number of political scientists about the 'hands-off policy' of Russia at that time. Despite this, it was
not difficult for the state to persuade white South Africans of the 'truth' of the expected Soviet invasion.

The maintenance of this hawkish posture allowed the government to continue with its repressive legislation. However, the rift between the state repressive agencies about the nature of the current enemy continued to be a problem for government. The Defence Force tagged its continued need for high military expenditure on the threat of Soviet expansionism, while the police still chased the old enemy which they identified as agitators, trade unionists, community organisers boycotters and anybody belonging to the UDF and AZAPO. This fragmentation of the 'enemy' is problematical for the attempts by the reformists to explore new means of inducing consent with the willing cooperation of the subordinate classes.

The theoretical coherence of 'total strategy' no longer binds the state or capital (both local and international). The struggles going on within the Cabinet prior to the second State of Emergency were reflected at every level of the state, from the repressive agencies themselves to ideological apparatuses like the SABC. While the Police remain difficult to control, 'reform' will be sabotaged. If both the Police and the SADF are out of control, then no matter how much or what kind of reform is enacted -- it will be prevented from working in practice.

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Reform = Control at any cost
Privilege at any price

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Extract from the End Conscription Campaign's newsletter, At Ease [vol 2 no 4 July 1987]

Yanks like ECC

Laurie Nathan, last year’s ECC National Organiser, has just returned from an eight week tour of the United States, sponsored by the War Resisters League. Here he talks about his experiences.

"I've just returned from an intense and extremely worthwhile speaking tour of the United States. In eight weeks I travelled to 30 cities, addressing about 60 forums and doing 70 interviews on the current situation in South Africa and ECC campaigns under the emergency.

"The response to the tour was overwhelmingly positive......"

Burying the Truth
Notes and References

1. This position was taken by Herman Giliomee, Stan Greenberg and
Heribut Adam at the 1984 conference on Economic Development and
Racial Domination at the University of the Western Cape.
2. Seegers, A.n.d: "Extending the Security Network to the Local
Level". Unpublished paper, Dept of Political Studies, University
of Cape Town.
3. O'Meara, D. 1983: Volkskapitalisme: Class, Capital and Ideology
in the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1934-1948. Ravan,
Johannesburg, has demonstrated the value of applying a 'class
fraction' analysis to South African conditions. Thus, despite some
theoretical problems with 'class fraction analysis' the writers of
this paper believe the concept 'class fraction' remains a useful one
when analysing South African conditions.
O'Meara, op. cit.
5. English capital refers to capital controlled by English-speaking
South Africans.
6. The growing frustration felt by English capital with the State is
reflected in its intermittent periods of tentatively being
supportive of government (i.e. 1980-86) and periods when it is
extremely critical of state policies of repression.
8. See Sunday Tribune. 25.5.1986, p. 3.
Emergency in South Africa". Paper delivered at the Biennial
Conference of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and
Society, Chicago, October; Tomaselli, K.G. 1984: "'Adapt or Die':
215-218.
to Control", Die Suid-Afrikaan, Winter, pp. 53-55
12. The South African media are, of course, not the first to be
influenced in so negative a way by a war situation. If anything,
this sort of 'militarization' of the media is the norm in conflict
situations. See Knightly, P. 1982: The First Casualty. Quartet
15. Frankel, op. cit. Chapters 2 & 3. The South African military and
police academies teach what they call counter-insurgency warfare.
Those in command of the military and police are clearly familiar
with the theoretical texts of both revolutionary and counter-
revolutionary warfare. SADF actions, in particular, reveal the
influence of the following: Beaufre, A. 1965: An Introduction to
strategy. Faber, London; Clausewitz (see Rappoport, 1968:
Clausewitz on War. Penguin, Harmondsworth); McCuen, J.L. 1966:
The Art of Counter-Insurgency Warfare - The Strategy of Counter
Insurgency. Faber, London; Thompson, R. 1966: Defeating
Communist Insurgency - Experience from Malaya and Vietnam.
Chatto and Windus, London; and Trinquier, R. 1964: Modern Warfare - a

16. Frankel, ibid. pp. 92-94; NUSAS, 1984: In Whose defence? Conscription and the SADF. NUSAS, Cape Town. This is obviously a problematical strategy for those trying to defend the existing order because black South Africans are well aware they are exploited and so the SADF 'hearts-and-minds' exercise (called "Bursersake" in the SADF) does not really have a 'saleable' message.


18. Frankel, op. cit. pp. 82-91.


22. If one sees the white civil servants, military and police officials, as part of a 'patronage system' it becomes possible to understand why these factions are personally interested in the maintenance of the existing order. If the present government fails these groups presumably believe they will suffer personal financial loss because the patronage system that supports them will be starved of funds.


26. Shelton

27. Seegers op. cit. Extending the Security Network to the Local Level.


36. See Rapport, op. cit.


38. Beaufre, op. cit.
40. Mattelart, op. cit.
42. O'Meara, op. cit.
43. White Paper, 1979
45. See Daily News, 17.6.1986
46. Mattelart, op. cit. p. 417
48. Under military dictatorship, the state becomes a surplus value producing factory for the MNC's. It guarantees the conditions necessary for the penetration of foreign capital and the establishment of an economy directed towards foreign markets, either from the United States itself, or from its neo-colonial industry to non-American markets. See Mattelart, op. cit. p. 418.
49. See also F Van Zyl Slabbert in Daily News, 25.4.1986
50. See, eg. Sunday Tribune, 7.9.1986 which heads its editorial with "PW Botha a National Calamity".
54. Seegers, op. cit. Extending the Security Network to the Local Level.

From the White House

1987 is an important year in the history of the SADF as it is our 75th anniversary this year.

In 1912, two years after the union between the British colonies and the Boer republics, the Union Defence Force was formed. Since then South Africans of all races have acquitted themselves excellently in two world wars, Korea and the struggle against the communist-backed ANC and SWAPO.

The history of the SADF is a history any country can be proud of, and even though the world powers have seen fit to place an arms embargo on us in an attempt to keep us down, we have risen above this hurdle and built up a massive industry.

Now South Africa is self-sufficient as far as are our arms concerned and we are exporting some of our technology. More important than armaments is the support of the people and we as South Africans have every reason to be proud of our Defence Force which is still undefeated in any war.

1987 is also an important year for Natal Command as it is also our 50th anniversary.

There are a number of events to be held in Natal to commemorate both our anniversary and the SADF's. You will be informed of these events during the year. Our working slogan this year is "Efficiency and Effectiveness".

We must strive to be efficient in everything we do this year and we must also be effective as these are both streamlining processes.

Lastly, I wish you all everything of the best for 1987 may it be everything you wish it to be.
THE FACE OF THE ANC

The face of the ANC, as portrayed by The Sunday Star of Johannesburg of 12 January 1986, after the organisation marked its 74th anniversary with threats to step up its "people's war".

2. Social Construction of the Enemy

This chapter focusses on the awesome challenge to alternative media posed by the power of the state broadcasting monopoly; the example of how the 'terrorist' archetype is perpetuated illustrates the more general pattern of dominant ideological hegemony.

Although dealing with a kind of medium to which the ECC has no access, and analysing the portrayal by such media of an organisation very different from the ECC, this analysis is relevant to the concerns of this report in that it deals with a powerful conditioning process operating on the population amongst whom the campaign operates.
Social Construction of the 'Enemy':

SABC and the Demonisation of the ANC-Terrorist

Television (and radio, for that matter) has been accused of encouraging terrorism, civil disturbances and the escalation of copy-cat violence. It has been described as a potentially dangerous medium for the disruption of the 'reasonable society'. However, at the same time it is a highly effective medium of reassurance and the propagation of political and ideological conformity. Thus the South African government is fully aware of. Because of the structural control the state has over the SABC, and more importantly, because of the congruence in the ideological outlook and policy between the Corporation and the state as a whole, the government is able to rely on the SABC to put its point of view uncritically and effectively. Thus in the matter of the reporting on and the portrayal of the ANC, it comes as little surprise that the views of the government are the views of the SABC.

In an editorial Comment following Fredrick Van Zyl Slabbert's visit to Dakar in July this year, the SABC approvingly quoted The Times of London as opining that the ANC had "opted for a two-fold strategy of mustering international publicity against South Africa and promoting internal violence"(1). A corollary to the second is that the ANC is essentially a terrorist, rather than political organization. In response, it is around these two themes that the SABC has launched its counter-attack on the ANC.

Folk Devils - Stereotyping the 'Enemy'

The SABC has excelled in its stereotyping of the ANC as a demonic force. The ANC is almost invariably reported on in terms of violence and terrorism. The process of demonisation has been undertaken at all levels: in news reports both on radio and television, as well as in-depth current affairs programmes such as Network. However, the latitude for unsubstantiated 'opinion' offered by the editorial form of the five minute morning programme 'Comment', has provided the greatest scope for dehumanising organizations and fronts opposed to the South African state. The ANC has been a prime target for their vilification. They have been portrayed as folk devils - incarnations of evil and inhumanity who are without conscience in their single-minded determination to overthrow the norms of civilized society who "were still responsible for so much bloodshed within South Africa, and were still committed to a revolutionary takeover of power" (Comment, 17.8.87). They have "dealt with callous inhumanity against hundreds of Black South Africans whose crime was that they held different political views" (Comment, 22.12.86):

Over the years the ANC itself has admitted being responsible for bombing, shootings and landmine explosions in which dozens of civilians have been killed. Time and again its cadres have struck out

**PW says:**

'I regard (discussions with the ANC) as unwise and even disloyal to the young men who are sacrificing their lives in defending South Africa's safety.'
THEIR PARTNERS IN WHAT AFRICA CALLS 'THE WAR FOR THE FUTURE'...A PARTY IN AENOS -57971

ANC speaks for terrorism that consists largely in planting bombs and mines in public places and indiscriminately killing anyone who happen to be around when they go off. The movement refused even to condemn necklace murders and other such atrocities claiming that they were inevitable although they did not form part of the ANC (Comment, 14.7.87).

In the excerpt above we see a common (and usually effective) tactic of any propaganda campaign: the redefinition of contentious terms by the denigration and questioning of given meanings ('armed struggle'), and the supplanting and reinforcement of authorial meanings ('ANC-speak for terrorism'). Thus the SABC refers to the "ANC's ... terrorist violence - the so-called armed struggle" (Comment 31.7.87).

To complete the picture of the ANC as folk-devils, it is emphasised that their ruthlessness even extends to their own members who are treated with "casual indifference to life and elementary standards of human decency". In the television documentary seen on Network 17 December 1986, the purported conditions inside an ANC training camp 'eye-witness' accounts were given by 'former ANC members, concerning the 'atrocities' committed against 'dissident': members: "... young Black recruits (were) enticed with promises of further education, herded together in camps in which malaria, food poisoning and sexual diseases were commonplace."}

Diplomatic Sideswipes

In the international arena, it appears that propaganda and publicity are best fought with propaganda and publicity. Very little attention is given to the ANC's diplomatic initiatives. The so-called "Dakar delegations" of South African whites who met with ANC executives towards the end of 1986 - particularly those who were Afrikaans speaking, or part of the Dutch Reformed Church establishment - were 'excommunicated' from the fold as outcasts, traitors or as having sinister motives, and whose "purpose must be questioned" (Comment, 20.7.87). When all other methods of exclusion were applied, they were "useful idiots who allow themselves to be exploited to further its (ie. the ANC's) purposes (Comment, 14.7.87)."
In the international arena, it appears that propaganda and publicity are best fought with propaganda and publicity.

Faced with the problem of the growing acceptance of the ANC by the world's diplomatic community, the state needs to identify those who are on 'our side', and those who are not, and therefore need to be discredited. Generals, captains of sports teams and gang leaders are all aware of the mechanism whereby attack on one's own side is deflected by exploiting grievances and divisions among the enemy.

Foreign politicians who do recognise the ANC as a liberation movement are passed over as "opportunistically backing a possible winner" (Comment, 8.1.87). We are also left with no doubt that, left to the South African Government, the ANC will never be a winner! While diplomatic initiatives by the ANC are seldom acknowledged, any apparent division within foreign governments is given widespread broadcast coverage. The visit to Maputo (enemy territory) by Mr Michael Armacost, described as "a senior official of the American State Department" whose purpose it was "to speak to ANC leaders" was juxtaposed with a previous statement by one of his "colleagues" that "Any group that is supported by the Soviet Union does not have freedom as one of its objectives, so we would not agree that the ANC are freedom fighters" (Comment, 22.12.86).

Anti-ANC personalities (Mrs Jeane Kirkpatrick, Senator Jesse Helms) and conservative groupings such as the Coalition Against ANC-Terrorism in Washington, the Institute for Strategic Studies and the Institute for the Study of Terrorism in London, are well-known to the average radio-listener in South Africa, if not in America. It was with great satisfaction that the SABC's morning Comment (20.10.87) pointed out that Mrs Thatcher's denunciation of the ANC as 'another terrorist organization' effectively undermined the Congress' diplomatic recognition.

The theme of the ANC as a terrorist, rather than political movement is is important, since this is the rationale for the continued refusal of the Government to negotiate with the ANC as a party to the future of South Africa on the grounds of the "continuing commitment of the African National Congress and its leadership to violence, terrorism and revolution" (Comment, 12.2.87). It is also important, since through a semantic sleight-of-hand, the state's strategists are able to put the ANC on a par with other terrorist organizations throughout the world. This in turn acts firstly to taint the ANC with the violent actions of these organizations, and secondly, to justify any
PW says: 'I do not believe the Press should be muzzled.'

As Minister of Defence, NP Congress East London The Star 3 September 1975

Excesses of 'control' the government wishes to motor out to alleged or convicted members of the ANC. These range from the use of detention without trial (justified by the example of the British government faced with the IRA), the summary use of arms against ANC-suspects (compared to the Israeli control of the West Bank) and even the "reconnaissance action against ANC terrorist facilities in Zambia", which was rationalized by a comparison to the actions of the US against Libya in 1986. In the latter case, Robert McFarlane was quoted as saying that "it had to be understood that a country had both a moral and a legal right to move pre-emptively against terrorists" (Comment, 30.4.87).

A related strategy is the definition of the ANC as Soviet surrogates through "the ANC's close ties with the South African Communist Party" (Comment, 12.1.87; 20.1.87). Referring to the leadership changes within the ANC in early 1987, in which the SAPC wing was greatly weakened, Comment called on the authority of the Director of the Institute for the Study of Terrorism in London to tell us:

...that the changes are cosmetic, made in response to pressure from Western governments; that the Communists have taken over the ANC; that the Kremlin does not allow itself to shrugged off that easily; and that the African National Congress is not ready for negotiation because it has still not given up violence" (Comment, 12.2.87).

The importance of stressing the Communist/Soviet relationship is two-fold. Internally, it is a good scare tactic which plays on the inner-most apprehensions of the average middle/working class white South African. In this respect, it is part of the process of demonisation which defines the repugnant 'otherness' of the ANC, and welds a climate of public solidarity against them. Externally, it provides an easily graspable rallying point on which South Africa and conservative Western governments, particularly Thatcher's Britain and Reagan's America are able to

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EXPOSED: the 'V' in revolt

And it's all by courtesy of the SABC...

They are ordinary people, but from different walks of life, they are ordinary people as well. They are ordinary people who are being exploited, they are ordinary people who are being used to make money. They are ordinary people who are being used to make money and to sell weapons to (redacted). They are ordinary people who are being used to make money and to sell weapons to (redacted).

The SABC is a medium of communication, it is a tool of the government and it is used to propagate its message. They are ordinary people who are being used to make money and to sell weapons to (redacted). They are ordinary people who are being used to make money and to sell weapons to (redacted). They are ordinary people who are being used to make money and to sell weapons to (redacted).

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agree: a common international abhorrence towards the Red Threat. 
 Warns Comment: "...Americans have learned - in Nicaragua, 
 Cuba and elsewhere - what happens with broad coalitions in which 
 Leninists have control. They establish Marxist Governments" 
 (20.1.87).

Illustrating the Demon

Television News is the ideal place to illustrate the image of the 
 demon-terrorist. The central question in the relationship between 
 television and its portrayal of 'News' events is one of legit-
 imation. In this respect, the value of language as an instrument 
 of persuasion is paramount. The obvious corollary is that lan-
 guage should be controlled in ways that favour definitions 
 issuing from the state. Language in this sense is not confined 
 to the verbal level alone, but includes diverse para-linguistic 
 conventions which are the building blocks of electronic communica-
 tions. These sign systems are derived from pre-television 
 'real-life' linguistic codes, which work on a conventional and 
 unconscious level. This is why stereotyping works so well on 
 television. The codes reproduced here are those which are 
 commonly used in other social interactions, and in turn, 
 reinforce dominant readings of concepts and terms.

Consider for a moment an incident nearly two years ago, when the 
 'unrest' throughout the country was at its height. Under the 
 Chromakey title: POLICE/TERRS CLASH, Michael de Morgan reads 
 with a neutrality only proffered to newsreaders:

Two ANC terrorists were killed and two policemen wounded in 
 separate incidents near Port Elizabeth this morning. Another 
 terrorist was arrested.

Here we see immediately that by definition, armed members of the 
 ANC are terrorists. Chris Olkers' narration confirms this for us:

Chris Olkers:
0249: The drama started shortly 
 after midnight last night when 
 two policemen on routine patrol in 
 Zwede, the black township near 
 Port Elizabeth, stopped a suspect 
 in the street. The man suddenly 
 produced a Russian made firearm 
 and tried to shoot the police. 
 The firearm refused to fire and 
 the man was arrested.

0266: In his possession police 
 found a Russian-made AK 47. After 
 interrogation reinforcements were 
 called.

VISUALS
0247: Olkers in front of police 
 station building: Louis Le Grange 
 Square.

0266: White cars on mud/water 
 covered road lined with onlooking.

0269 Super: Courtesy 
 SAP video unit E 
 Cape 
 pulls forward to 1 yellow van with 
 10 policemen, some in pale blue 
 shirts / blue caps - some in khaki 
 / soft bush hats - 2 policemen 
 (blue) near house. 2 X armed SADF 
 with riot helmets stand behind 
 van.
0274: Police surrounded a house in New Brighton, another township near the city. A Russian trained ANC terrorist opened fire on the police with an AK 47 rifle.

0287: During a wild gun battle, Captain Sakkie du Plessis was shot 4 times. The terrorist was also killed by police fire.

0291: In the house police found Marxist propaganda material, placards and weapons and ammunition of Russian origin.

0302: Captain Du Plessis was rushed to the provincial hospital in the city where he underwent an emergency operation. He is in a satisfactory condition. A suspect in the house was also arrested. Police then went to a house in Soweto. After calling on the inhabitant to come out a Russian made hand grenade was thrown at the police.

0319: Constable Andre Strydom was wounded during the incident. During the ensuing battle the terrorist was shot dead.

0324: The Constable is in a satisfactory condition in hospital. Police confiscated a large number of Russian arms and ammunition.

0331: The Police investigation is continuing.

0274: police / SADF men mingle in front of wooden house.

0276: CU of front door - interior gloom - see outline of kitchen unit.

0280: clothing / bed linen / newspapers scattered all over floor camera moves L to bed - white policeman removes mattress

0285: CU man removes blood-splattered plank.

0291: CU of book "Marx and Lenin on Communication", pans to wall posters reading "Boycott Wilson-Raw Mountree"; "Remember Steve Biko"

0298: exterior of house, CU of (white) hands opening leather wallet, exposing wads of notes in R5 and R10 denominations.

0302: CU white policeman digs through ashes of fire - light (looks like a torch beam) focusses on uneaten mielie cobs.

0312: exterior of building CU on foreground 5 red shells (bullets) - pulls back to exterior of wooden house - police at doorway.

0319: 1W 1B white safari suited men with red rubber gloves carry out stretcher - body covered with blanket / green sheet over where (presumably) is the dead. Put stretcher down.

0331: stretcher dragged off by one man (disregard for human dignity) bare brown feet exposed. Head now covered with red covering.
Several themes raised above are evident in this piece. Most striking is the repeated insistence on the Russian origin of the weaponry: "Russian-made firearm", "AK47 rifle", "Russian made hand grenade", "Police confiscated a large quantity of Russian arms and ammunition".

The connection between the origin of the weaponry (which may simply have been expedient, since the Russians were probably the only ones prepared to sell to the ANC), is implied as an ideological connection: "In the house police found Marxist propaganda material, placards and weapons and ammunition of Russian origin". It is worth noting, that the visuals give a different reading here. A close-up of an academic book on Marxist theories of communication, published in Paris and freely available at academic bookstores throughout the country, is followed by wall posters supporting the boycott of Wilson-Rowntree sweet makers, and a memorial to Steve Biko. Hardly "Marxist propaganda", but it serves well enough to scare the average viewer with un-speakably dark fears on the RED Menace, especially when followed by (uncommented on) display of (unaccounted for) money.

More sinister however, is the systematic dehumanisation of the those involved in the 'incident'. Only the policemen are graced with names: Captain Sakkie du Plessis, and Constable Andre Strydom. The black men are nameless: "a man was arrested"; "a suspect was also arrested". Without any cause or reason being given (other than the presence of Russian weaponry), the next 'suspect' we came across is promoted to "a Russian trained ANC terrorist". Note here again, how the 'ANC' tag is linked immediately with the 'terrorist' tag. Later the former is dropped, and we are simply told that "the terrorist was shot dead". The ultimate dehumanization occurs when the body of the dead 'terrorist' is dragged, not carried, out of the yard, two bare brown feet showing from under the blanketed form. This is however in keeping with the general tenor of the visuals, in which the bloodspattered remains of clothing, bedding, fire ashes and uncooked mielies are exposed for the grisly voyeur. The visuals for this piece of 'crime reporting' were supplied to the SABC by the SAP video unit in the Eastern Cape. The earlier reference to the congruence of interests between the various state agencies, including the SABC, could not be

**THE REV. TRAN HUU THANH**

In a letter written to a South African bishop by two Vietnamese refugees in the USA, the following experience of a Catholic priest (Rev. Tran Huu thanh) was described in 1993: He organised an anti-government movement in Sai Gon, in an attempt to bring about reform. He helped to organise the masses to stage protest campaigns and to mobilise members of the defence force and public servants with feelings of hatred. These campaigns helped bring about the fall of the government and precipitated the communists' final onslaught.

After the communist victory the Rev. Tran Huu Thanh and his fellow workers were arrested and imprisoned. Many were killed.

(Excerpt from the State President's speech in Parliament, 17 April 1986)

**THE ANC IS A TERRORIST ORGANISATION**

The armament of the ANC is, inter alia, land mines, improvised mines, demolition mines, explosives, hand grenades and AK 47 rifles. When mine warfare and mortar barrages are used, the victim cannot be chosen and innocent civilians constitute the biggest percentage of the victims.

In this regard, the ANC is, therefore, not primarily aimed at the Security Forces — as in the case of guerilla action but, as in the case of other terrorist organisations, ANC actions are directed at unidentifiable victims, with the aim to scare the population, thereby intimidating them.

In this regard, the ANC does not differ at all from the PLO, IRA and the Red Brigade.
ANC POLICY ON...

* VIOLENCE

It is necessary to look at a few important policy statements by the ANC on key issues. (The policy of the South African Government on these key issues is also given).

On 18 February 1985 Radio Freedom broadcast the following appeal:

"Enemy property must be petrol bombed or attacked in any possible way. Enemy agents and collaborators must also be isolated and attacked".

Earlier, on 20 January 1985, Radio Freedom had been more explicit about ANC targets and objectives:

"Puppets" were killed, their houses burned, many were forced to resign and are still resigning today".

Later, on 7 October 1985 Voice of Freedom, broadcasting from Zimbabwe, expressed satisfaction with this policy as follows:

"The strategy of burning sell-outs of the system seems to have paid out well in the ultimate end".

During a meeting at California State University on 10 October 1985, ANC spokesman Atul Motil justified this policy of violence as follows:

"Among us we have people who have openly collaborated with the enemy. You have to eliminate one to save hundreds of others".

His colleague, Thabo Mbeki, told the same meeting that "We want to make the death of a collaborator so grotesque that people will never think of it".

And on 13 April 1985 Winnie Mandela shocked the world when she said:

"... with our boxes of matches and our necklaces, we shall liberate the country".

SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT POLICY ON...

* VIOLENCE

"I would however shirk my responsibility if I did not state clearly, that the Government is adamantly to maintain order. People who perpetrate violence must take note that if they do not renounce violence they will inevitably face the full power of the State which has not yet been applied to the full in the future there must be no misgivings about this.

It is my declared wish that senseless violence be abandoned now. I plead with the public to assist in this regard.

— State President PW Botha 15 May 1985"

From: "Talking to the ANC."

better illustrated.

Since this particular episode, the state, frightened by what it sees as the power of television in the propagation of dissent, banned all pictorial evidence of anything which may fall under the rubric of 'unrest'. Thus a similar incident to that of February, 1986, was reported in October, 1987, in more sober, but equally chilling terms:

Adrian Steed: There was a shootout with police over the weekend in a coloured township near Bloemfontein. The latest police unrest report says shots were fired at the security forces with an AK47 rifle, as they were approaching a house in the residential area. The police retaliated by throwing hand grenades, and a man was killed. A trained terrorist, three accomplices and another man were arrested. An AK47 rifle with three magazines and two Makarov pistols were found in the house.

VISUALS;

News reader; confiscated weapons on display table.

News reports of this nature help reinforce the SABC's editorial perception of the ANC as demonic figures.

The state, and the majority of the white community which supports it, when faced with what it perceived to be an attack on the basis of institutional arrangements, needs to find a scapegoat that will attack the public's imagination, and provide an ethos of common revolution. The folk devil portrayal of the ANC—terrorist, a blood thirsty, ruthless killer, backed by Soviet masters, is just the thing. The national broadcasting corporation, which is congruent with the state in both its policy, ideological mindset and political loyalty, is just the medium through which this stereotyping can be propagated, and become part of the National Consciousness.
3. Countermaning the Parade Ground:

This chapter gives the broadest overview of At Ease; it introduces our methodology and constitutes the context in which the following chapters will be presented.

The author has chosen to link comment and analysis by connecting them to a set of theoretical concepts which examine the topic from different angles. Attention is given to the content of At Ease in terms of subject matter, language and symbolism.
Countermanding the Parade Ground:
At Ease and Counter-Conscription

AT EASE is the newspaper of the Durban regional branch of the EGC. This analysis (1) will attempt to locate the paper in the South African socio-political context and examine the methods by which its content is determined, as well as showing how the language and logos used contribute to At Ease's message.

Because the state has set itself against opposition to compulsory military conscription, At Ease has to operate within narrow legal confines to survive. At the same time, the state's control over the commercial media and the SABC network enable it to establish the ideological parameters of public communication and to attack counter-ideologies. While the common sense within the white population may differ from current state discourse, the two are mutually supportive — after all white civil society provides the government's support and power base. At Ease's content can be analysed as a response to this context. This does not necessarily mean that At Ease's response is always consciously constructed. Since aspects of semiotic analysis tend to be inductive, semiotics refers to selected evidence which might not be accurately representative of processes beyond the text under consideration. Nonetheless, we can identify the textual ideology encoded in At Ease in terms of three definitions of ideology offered by Raymond Williams (2).

The first definition of ideology offered by Williams defines ideology as a system of beliefs characteristic of a particular class or group (3). This can be as easily applied to National Party discourse as to the contents of At Ease (4), for both reveal attitudes organised into a coherent pattern. The fundamental of state discourse, for At Ease's purposes, is the belief in the need for conscription. One need only glance through a military publication, whether state or commercially published, to be made aware of this. The official National Service booklet, for example, published by the Allied Building Society, tells conscripts that: "the onslaught against the Republic of South Africa is a continuing onslaught which the enemies of South Africa are waging with every means at their disposal" (5).
Conversely, the attitudes found in *At Ease* are based on a rejection of such state policy. *At Ease* argues that conscription is wrong, for instance by discussing the harmful consequences of pervasive militarism in white society. In a column headed "High Price" (Vol 2 No 2, 1987), "According to behavioural and clinical psychologists, the growing militarisation of our society tends to create people who are regimented, unquestioning of authority ... less tolerant of others' beliefs, are conditioned to respond to 'threats' with 'violence'... (be) moody, aggressive, withdrawn ... (and) prone to violence", in addition to a host of other problems(6). In addressing these social problems and blaming them on the state, *At Ease*’s writers seem to be aware that, in the words of Brockreide, "attitudes have homes in ideologies"(7).

Williams’ second definition of ideology is as a system of illusory beliefs - false ideas or consciousness which can be contrasted with true or scientific knowledge (8). The role of ideology in main training state dominance has already been referred to with respect to the function of media in legitimising state policy. *At Ease*, in line with ECC consensual policy, does not reject a country's right to militarily defend itself from outside attack. Instead, it specifically opposes the local role of the armed forces in oppression of citizens of the country who oppose the apartheid policy of the state, and in occupying and destabilising neighbouring states(9). "Hooliganism by certain township elements" maintains *At Ease* in an editorial campaign article, "should be dealt with by the South African police and not by the SADF, whose internal role has led to a severe crisis among conscripts for whom it is clear that the solution to this country’s problems are political not military ..."(10). It is thus argued that conscription is intolerable, specifically in the context of civil war and neo-colonialism(11).

**WHAT IS ECC?**

ECC is based on the fundamental belief that individuals should have the freedom to choose whether or not to participate in the SADF.

The main thrust of the Campaign is directed at government, in order to bring about a change in the law so that military service is no longer compulsory.

ECC is not an organisation as such but an umbrella body comprising a number of different organisations. It is not affiliated to any other organisation and is not aligned with any political grouping.

The organisations represented on the ECCs in the 9 regions include church, women's, student, political and human rights organisations e.g. Black Sash, the Catholic Justice and Reconciliation Commission, and NUSAS. Although these organisations have varying policies on a wide range of issues, they are united in their opposition to conscription.

From a work point of view, each region has a regional general meeting every week or second week at which all major practical and policy decisions are made. The bulk of campaign work is carried out by various subcommittees, namely, churches, schools, culture and media.

Until such time as conscription is ended, ECC calls for certain interim measures to be adopted:

1. The definition of conscientious objection to be broadened to include selective and universal, secular and religious conscientious objectors.
2. Alternative service to be available in non-state as well as state bodies.
3. The period of alternative service to be reduced to the length of military service.
4. Troops be allowed to choose whether to serve in the townships or not, or in Namibia or not.
The delegitimation of state policy by ECC has been met with implementation of more legal restraints, for example the definitions of subversive statements in the Emergency regulations (12). Constant attempts are also made to badger and smear the organisation, through parliamentary condemnation, the SABC, the Afrikaans-language press and publications like the right-wing Aida Parker Newsletter (which does not necessarily have connections with the state, but could merely be an initiative by conservative elements in civil society, reacting to a threat to dominant ideology). Because of such attacks, At Ease devotes much space to replying to accusations and condemnations. ECC laid a complaint against the Aida Parker Newsletter with the Media Council and At Ease published the Council’s findings in full and hailed them as a victory (13). Allegations made against the ECC in Parliament are also addressed, using the Official Opposition’s (FFP) replies in defence of the ECC (14). This type of content can be seen, in terms of the second definition of ideology, as countering state ideological efforts by drawing on 'actual' evidence. In October 1986, when after a few months of the second State of Emergency, forty-seven ECC activists were in detention, At Ease exploited a newly formed loophole in the regulations to publish their names and particulars, under a bold headline "ECC WILL BE HEARD"(15).

Similarly, basic facts are provided on how government policy is wrecking peoples' lives and the economy. In a column entitled "Apartheid 1987: A Few Facts", statistics and other facts reveal that an estimated four million blacks have been forcibly removed from their homes ... there is one doctor for every four hundred whites, and one doctor for every 90 000 blacks(20). In another article, defence spending is reported to have been R5 123 million in 1986. Expenditure for one day, it goes on to say, could build a hospital. These facts are extremely useful in providing an argument against the immorality of state spending (21).

This rivalry for 'truth' is also revealed in the prominence of articles pertaining to incidents for which the SADF or police were accused of, or charged with, committing unlawful acts against civilians. Statistics are again used to give credence to the reports, for example a total of one hundred civil actions had been instituted against the Minister of Defence or members of the SADF, for assaults, rape, unlawful arrests, humiliations, torture etc(22). This article received front cover status, perhaps
emphasising the importance At Ease attaches to news of wrong-
ful acts perpetrated by the SADF and Police, especially if they
result in convictions by the law courts. In a similar vein,
stories of atrocities committed by the SADF and Police are
included; "Soldiers cried in detainees tales of torture" reveals
how a young man was "arrested while watching a burning house and
repeatedly assaulted by soldiers and police officers ... (ordered
to) set himself alight ... instructed to climb into a drum of
burning refuse (and was) dragged around the office (at Westville
Prison) by his lips" (23).

Williams's third definition of ideology describes the concept as
the general process of the production of meaning (24). Within a
framework of analysis using this definition one would see con-
cepts such as 'conscription' being rhetorically constructed in
media and such social institutions as churches and schools, and
the SADF itself.

The dominant meaning given to conscription, indicated by the more
usual terms 'national service' as we have seen in the passage
quoted from the Allied National Service Handbook, is that
of something necessary in the face of revolutionary activity,
whilst peaceful solutions may be sought by politicians.
Opponents of conscription, within this framework or paradigm, are
misguided pacifists or revolutionaries - prime examples are the
Aida Parker Newsletter, Signposts, Frontline Fellowship
and so on(25).

The structure developed in such paradigms where social issues are
contested may be described as a binary opposition. An "Us/Them"
dichotomy is defined by devices like connotation, where evalu-
ative associations attach to words or signs according to the
contexts of their use. In this case, the opposition presented
may be characterised as being between 'loyal', 'responsible'
citizens and 'insane', 'bloodthirsty' revolutionaries. Readers,
viewers or consumers within the 'Us' category (mostly white) are
constantly invited to identify with, or affirm their identifica-
tion with, such abstractions as 'fatherland', while rejecting or
'demonising' the stereotyped 'Enemy' (mostly black, communi-
nist-inspired revolutionaries).

Exnomination, the purposeful neglect of certain aspects of an
issue, is also used. No hint is given that at least some pro-
ponents of conscription are motivated by a wish for the suppres-
sion of black political aspirations. Similarly, no mention is
made that many opponents of conscription seek to peacefully con-
tribute to the fundamental transformation of an unjust society
and avert the bloodbath which its coercive perpetuation neces-
sitates. That 'South Africa' is a legitimate country with a right
to 'defend itself' militarily is assumed, the very exclusion of the issue helps the conclusion seem natural, indisputable, commonsense.

At Ease may be similarly analysed. Its content is ideologically structured around two important oppositions: firstly, between the state/government/National Party establishment and a largely unidentified grouping of its opponents, who are 'democratic', 'progressive' etc, and secondly between the ECC and its opponents. The 'progressive' grouping in the first opposition is vaguely inclusive because so many otherwise diverse organisations and individuals fall within the consensus that conscription into the SADF is undesirable. This is, after all, the "single-issue" which forms the basis for ECC's existence. This tactic also accommodates uninvolved sympathisers, including potential members of ECC.

The second opposition, between ECC and its opponents, is manifested in two types of content. Firstly, articles dealing with the ECC, its aims, activities and victories, show vigorously positive attempts to oppose conscription into civil and colonial war. Secondly, articles devoted to the government, government-supporting civil society and militarist culture, show these as root causes of the country's problems. Some of the latter deal with atrocities committed by the SADF and police; others deal with the socio-economic and psychological effects of apartheid policy, especially its seemingly relentless march to a national bloodbath. Still more articles, concerned with the repressive nature of apartheid society, deal with government actions against the ECC, including seemingly ludicrous (and potentially blasphemous) attempts to tighten up the scope of religious objection by defining God in narrower terms by excluding non-anthropomorphic deities(26).

Language of At Ease

A smaller scale analysis of articles in At Ease reveals that ideological direction is framed by the selection and combination of words. For example, an article entitled "News Briefs" states that there has been a significant increase in the number of guerilla attacks in South Africa (27). Vagueness and neutrality are evident in that no organisation is linked to the attacks and the term 'guerilla', instead of 'freedom fighter' or 'terrorist' is used. Most South Africans reading the report would assume that the guerillas represented the ANC, so why did At Ease report so vaguely?

Cost effective

It costs the SA taxpayer $10 million a year to keep each guerilla according to figures released by Prof. Reginald Green of the Institute of Development Studies at Sussex University.
A bushed courtroom sat stunned, their minds transfixed as a former paratrooper described how he had volunteered for duty in the townships and later the chaos and disorder he found there shocked him into changing his mind.

72-year-old Wesley student, Steven Lance, last week in Pretoria, told the court on 22 December of the impact he experienced as he returned to the military experience of Angola, for which he volunteered to the South African townships on a Pretoria magistrate’s court.

Their tale was heard as evidence in mitigation of the trial of 72-year-old Pretoria con- viction in his application for leniency. What was found guilty of failing to heed a call-up for a military camp in April last year. The trial was one of the last he had ignored in the past 10 years.

Wishing to see his dem- dent, and that he had been beaten upon the need to report and upon the court record.

Steven Lance’s account of the beatings and insults he received in South Africa provided an insight into the murky world of the so-called “conscription” and led to further investigation.

He said he went into the army in 1942 being passive about the SADF which he believed was “protecting the people of South Africa”. He applied to join the “Resistance” during World War II and was later arrested.

Lance’s one year period offered up at least ten years in the trenches. His Kelmarsh, Uitenhage and Border ho- do it later they joined the SADF after leaving the army. Under duress or as a matter of being the Defence Force was “decommissioned”.

During this time:

He was told by his major to “be out of harm’s way” and to stop them from becoming the peace of the people of South Africa. He applied to join the “Resistance” after World War II and was later arrested.

Lance’s one year period offered up at least ten years in the trenches. His Kelmarsh, Uitenhage and Border households had rescued him into the SADF after leaving the army. Under duress or as a matter of being the Defence Force was “decommissioned”.

He also:

- Witnessed troops blacken a former enemy soldier’s face with liquid under the threat of arrest.
- Witnessed troops abuse of civilians and peddlers, even burning them alive.
- Tried to protest against the SADF.

In PW he witnessed:

- The assault of a resident who waved a flag of apartheid.
- The closure of a small farm at the back of a buffalo before being taken away.
- Swearing troops outside wooden fences around homes.

The SADF atmosphere was being used.

Volosinov refers to language as the most sensitive medium of social intercourse (28). Wherever a sign is present, ideology is too (in Volosinov’s own words, the domain of the sign coincides with the domain of ideology, for ideology is only to be embodied in the sign) — thus the written word, because of its purity and sensitivity is the ideological sign par excellence (29).

Understanding linguistic signs is an act of reference between the signs apprehended (the words read) and other known signs which make up an inventory of signs in one’s own mind. Volosinov calls this "new speech" (30). Language like all other sign systems is a product of the living interaction of social forces, so the formulation and interpretation of a piece of writing depends upon the social environment of both writers and readers (31). Bearing all this in mind we can locate At Ease, firstly, in its broad social environment (i.e. South African apartheid society), and then in the smaller scope of its areas of operation — for all these factors influence its language.

The fundamental question here is who reads At Ease, and who does At Ease want to attract/gain as readers and supporters? According to ECC national organiser, Nick Borain, the ECC has three major social roots: the church, conscientious objectors themselves, and the student led (32). People from these three groups constitute the core of ECC support, so At Ease has to cater for them, in terms of content and language. However, the degree to which they can be catered for is tempered by the ECC’s determination to extend its support base as far as possible, especially into the group which, crudely put, matters most — white males eligible for military service.

Whereas the student led (one of ECC’s original support groups) has generally reached a certain level of socio-political understanding and linguistic sophistication, other targeted members, in the army, at school etc cannot be expected to have reached such levels. As Bernstein maintains, language may be linked with

*We will fight to the last drop of blood to maintain an orderly country.*

Election meeting Stellenbosch 22 November 1977
social class through the educational system. In South Africa it is widely acknowledged that universities are mainly attended by students from the petty bourgeoisie or bourgeoisie (33). Thus, in order for At Ease to most clearly articulate its message to its educationally heterogeneous spectrum of readers, it has to balance its language between the use of exoteric broadcast codes and the more esoteric narrowcast codes (the latter being sometimes necessary for the articulation of the complexities of the South African situation), so that it can be accessible to as many as possible, whilst still retaining enough stimulation (in language, analysis and argument) for its more educated readership.

The question remains, however, whether At Ease achieves this balance. What has to be taken into consideration before this can be answered is the fact that writing style differs. Like that of any other publication, the staff of At Ease seems to have varying styles of writing. Writing staff are not always permanent, so it is sometimes difficult to ascertain whether shifts in style are due to the input of new staff writers, or the same staff who are merely changing. Also, the writers remain anonymous (for security reasons), so one never really knows who wrote what. It would seem though that At Ease does follow a conventional practice which strives for accessibility, whilst using jargon (narrowcast codes) mainly of the legal kind to heighten the impact of articles, reassure the readership of their knowledge of laws applicable to the ECC and its campaign, and to reinforce the image that the ECC is working within the law, (albeit sometimes in the loopholes of unjust laws).

Some examples of the differing use of legal jargon follow: of the 24 members of the South African Defence Force tried, seventeen had been convicted for "exceeding the bounds of duty" while serving in black townships (34). Also, "The ECC members were charged under section 10 (1) (b) of the regulations dealing with the production and dissemination of subversive statements" (35). Another article offering advice to national servicemen emphasises that soldiers are not completely at the mercy of their officers during basic training; it then quotes SADF laws, amongst which are these:

- Physical training as a form of punishment is forbidden (SADFO 1/6/81);
- foul language is forbidden (SADFO 1/6/81);
- threatening physical contact is forbidden (SADFO 1/6/81)(36).

Although these articles, amongst others, do make use of legal jargon, they still remain accessible. The only article (or type of article) that is not accessible to a wide range of readers was 'Grensvegter'. This was not because of the type of language; rather, it was because the article referred to the presence of conservative organisations in English speaking universities which promote themselves as being moderate (37). The column in question was a satirical attempt to ridicule them with esoteric references. Readers would have to know about the existence of such organisations and the nature of their politics to really understand the article. The article is an attempt at scathing humour by At Ease, but it fails because of its dependence on the reader having an idea of what is going on at Universities...
like UNIF where the ECC and the Durban Student Alliance (DSA) (which is satirised as the MSM - Moderately Stupid Movement) have entered into a propaganda conflict. At any rate, the article emphasises the danger At Ease faces estranging its wider readership when using or (maybe in the case of 'Gronsvuget') indulging in narrowcast content. When an article like 'Gronsvuget' is juxtaposed against others it becomes clear that At Ease mainly uses broadcast language codes with the realities of the South African situation being constantly elucidated. So, a profound knowledge of the situation is not required to understand the paper's content.

Logos

It would be useful now to examine the significant use of symbols in At Ease. These fall into the third order of signification, in that there is no necessary connection (or relationship) between signifier and signified, so that the meaning is determined by social convention and tradition (38).

We will refer to three symbolic signs (logos). The first of these was taken from At Ease (December 1986) and the other two from At Ease (April 1987). The latter two are far more artistically sophisticated, and profound in symbolism.

The first of these logos promotes the ECC's 'yellow ribbon campaign' (39). The logo is somewhat shakily hand-drawn, consisting of a rifle (a symbol of the army) whose barrel is clogged with a flower (a symbol of peace, and thus the ECC which strives for peace) which merges into two ribbons spelling out the words 'tie a yellow ribbon' with the statement then reverting to ordinary, but larger, printed letters to finish 'FOR A JUST PEACE'; whilst a chain hangs off the right hand side of the rifle to emphasise the SADF's role in preventing the majority of South Africans from enjoying freedom.

A more sophisticated logo promotes the ECC's more recent 'War is not compulsory, let's choose Peace' campaign (40). Here, upon a background outline of South Africa is superimposed the aforementioned campaign title connected by a circular chain, within which there is a dove soaring above what appears to be a rising sun. Barbed wire forms part of the geographic outline and is fused on each side with the tattered word WAR, which is placed opposite to the neatly inscribed word PEACE. The meaning of this logo would be apparent to most adults with a Western background. Barbed wire and chains symbolise war and bondage, the white dove is an old Judeo-Christian symbol of peace, and with the rising sun, it symbolises the optimistic future peace can bring.
A third logo pictures two cherubic children (cupids, in fact) brandishing rifles with flower-stuffed barrels, whilst holding up a valentine heart inscribed with the words 'Make love not war' (41). This logo borrows from the European tradition of Valentine's Day, which was used as a theme, because, in At Ease's own words it symbolises 'love, peace and understanding' (41). The presence of the flowers, stuffing the gun barrels and thus rendering them inoperative, seems more derivative of the pacifist American flower-power movements which contributed much in the way of the anti-war (and more specifically anti-Vietnam war) campaigns.

All in all, the symbolic signs, though somewhat eclectic in source, have Western origins. This would seem proper in that At Ease's projected or targeted audience are mostly whites whose social background gives significance to the symbols exploited by the ECC. It is probably also for this reason that the ECC and thus At Ease avoid using the more popular signs, with their socialist and revolutionary connotations. However, given the context of South Africa, perhaps when constructing symbolic signs or logos the ECC should attempt to produce something more universally South African.

To conclude, analysis shows At Ease as a countering response to the dominant discourses and the policy of military conscription, which is seen by At Ease as being used to violently defend an inherently unjust system. Viewing At Ease as the ideological vanguard of the Durban ECC we analysed its content by applying it to a set of definitions of ideology offered by Raymond Williams (42). This was useful in understanding the manner in which At Ease, the state/government, the dominant ideology and the At Ease's readership inter-relate; how the dominant ideology, the government and readership bear upon its content and style; and how At Ease frames its content to promote its aims and oppose conscription.

APARTHEID OUT - SADF OUT!

Defence Budget

1975 - 1986

Defence

UP 19,96
(KR49 000 000)

RS 1,427 74 7 m

RS 1,23 1 m


38
Notes and References

1. A near full set of At Ease issues was available
2. Williams, R Marxism and Literature, p 55.
3. Ibid, P 55.
4. Ibid p 55.
6. At Ease, April 1987 Vol 2 No 2 (p. 4).
9. At Ease, April 1987, vol2 no. 2 (p 5).
10. Ibid p. 5.
12. Taken from a speech given to VAG (Voluntary Action Group) by Mike Sutcliffe of the Town and Regional Planning Dept., UND.
13. Ibid. p. 3.
16. Ibid. p. 3.
18. At Ease, April 1987, vol2 no. 2 (p4).
20. Ibid. p. 4.
27. At Ease, October 1986, p.3.
30. Ibid, p.11.
32. Borain conveyed this during a meeting with CGSU members involved in the At Ease project.
33. Bernstein, B, Class, Codes and Control, p. 56.
36. At Ease, February 1987, vol2 no. 1. p. 3.
37. Ibid.
40. At Ease, April 1987, vol 2, no. 2 p.1.
41. Ibid, p.2.
42. Williams, R. Marxism and Literature, p.55.

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4. Objectors in Exile: Resister

This analysis highlights the contrast between media produced by war resisters outside the country and within it, and draws conclusions about the different situations faced by the two groups.
OBJECTORS IN EXILE: AN ANALYSIS OF RESISTER

Resister is the journal of the Committee on South African War Resistance (COSAWR), an organisation of young South Africans who are exiled in England and the Netherlands "as a result of their refusal to fight for apartheid" (back cover of Resister).

Published every two months, Resister researches and analyses the militarisation of South Africa and its effects on the sub-continent. As a result of censorship, the publication is inaccessible to South Africans; it is banned for importation/distribution and some issues are banned for possession.

The banning of Resister is a clear indication of its antimilitarist and anti-apartheid stance. All the articles, including reviews and newbriefs, overtly challenge the official discourse of the South African 'security forces' and expose "the atrocities carried out by the police and army". All references to the South African ruling forces are couched in terms that subsequently have been declared 'subversive statements'. The language used connects with the international rallying cries of anti-apartheid campaigners: for example, "Botha regime", "racist rule" and "apartheid atrocities" constantly recur. Descriptions of SADF military tactics are co-opted from the state's discursive construct of 'enemy' and turned against it: the textual strategies questioning "terrorist violence", "unlawful killings and assaults", "extremely brutal methods", are oppositionally restated in Resister.

Through this counter-hegemonic discourse which characterises 'alternative' media, "the audience ... identifies itself in a practice of resistance merely through the act of reading such a paper" (1). The aim of the alternative media is to transform society, not just to supplement existing media coverage. Alternative forms of production and channels of distribution are used which liberate the media from the constraints imposed on the commercial press. Some of these constraints are control by foreign wire agencies, the vested interests of the state-supporting owners, self-censorship as a result of media restrictions and the commercial interests of advertisers. The most insidious of these constraints is "the formula by which the commercial press gathers its news which atomises issues and prevents integrated assessment of slow-breaking historical developments"(2).

Each edition of Resister is twenty-four pages in length in A5 format. Each has its own theme which provides the title for that particular issue. Number 30 (1985), for example, is entitled "State of Emergency: The Shadow of Military Rule". Issue No. 34 is about "Nation in Revolt", while an undated issue is called "South African Townships: Battleground of Apartheid". Other themes are "ANGOLA: South Africa's Destruction" (No 16, 1981) and "Battleground of Apartheid". (The front cover of each issue bears a monochrome graphic, usually pencil drawn, which illustrates the theme. Graphics are otherwise kept to a minimum with
only one or two per issue. The items are illustrated primarily with photographs. Almost every page is illustrated, pages 10-11 and 16-17, consistently the most frugally, if at all.

The centre spread (pp. 12-13) begins the theme story with an appropriate photograph placed in the middle so that it stretches over both pages. All the photographs depict SADF-related incidents, particularly apartheid resistance, whether it be the effects of army action or opposition to the South African system, both within and outside South Africa.

In its efforts to conscientise and mobilise opinion, Resister uses expository journalism to reveal processes in contrast to the itemised reportage of the event-oriented daily press. The former method sets up a line of contact between the text and the reader. Resister's function of communicating information on social issues and conditions as opposed to transmitting isolated occurrences characteristic of the commercial press, is realised in the context of its production as well as its reception. To understand the social and organisational role of the alternative media, analysis must concentrate on the relationship between text and context. At the same time, a conception of the meaning which is established in the stages of its being written and read, will reveal its position and effect as an example of the alternative media. For the sake of brevity, this study concentrates on one issue of the publication. All issues of Resister manifest a similar design, layout and writing style, though early issues were typed rather than typeset.

Resister No. 37 contains thirteen articles, four of which are structurally prioritised by large headings, more space and sole inclusion in the Contents. These articles promote Resister as primarily a critical journal on South African militarisation. "Mozambique after Nkomati", "Namibia: Information Clampdown" and "Police: The Paramilitary Force" are well researched, analytic essays complete with references and footnotes. Two of these, "Mozambique" and "Police", are part of a series of investigations signifying the publication's concern with continuing situations and conditions. The fourth article, "Review: Detention Barracks", is ostensibly a book review but in fact records and comments on interviews with Detention Barracks (DB) prisoners which have been extracted from the booklet.

All four articles investigate reprehensible acts of the South African military force which suggests a preferred reading of disapprobation towards the SADF. To an extent this indicates not only the intended readership of potential SADF resisters, but also the producers of Resister in as much as the notion of:

preferring of one reading of a text rather than others by mechanisms within the text which weight possible interpretations in one direction... has led to ...the realisation of meanings through the complex negotiation of differing interpretative frames with textual devices ... Such textual 'work'... permits a tracing back to, and reconstruction of, the ideological formations ... within which the text was produced (3).
The preferred reading is the common language, the shared ideology, of the writers and readers of Resister. The medium becomes the mediator, connecting the producers and the receivers in their opposition to the South African military force. This line of communication is targeted with precision in the first article, "Sharpeville, Crossroads, Langa: Apartheid Must End", by directly addressing the intended readers. Excluded from, but preceding the index, it serves as an editorial and therefore an important article to examine. The first sentence broadly circumscribes a group of readers as "young South Africans": "This year the International Year of the Youth, young South Africans have a special responsibility to step up the struggle for the abolition of apartheid and the establishment of a new and democratic, non-racial and peaceful South Africa" (p. 2); and by the fourth sentence the target audience has been narrowed down to "those people facing conscription into the South African Defence Force" with the caveat, "the imperative to resist is now greater than before".

The layout of Resister is simple and unspectacular. The articles are evenly and symmetrically defined by the same bold lino-type that is used to border every page. The stark, solid layout, which may be considered unpretentious, bears a resemblance to the matter-of-fact tone of the writing. Both seem to be a part of an over-all effort to appear honest and accurate, which is apparent in the 'official' verification of every contentious statement that is made. Significantly, the iconic, visual material consists almost exclusively of photographs. On the other hand, the sparse layout may be a result of limited funds and lack of resources, which are the constraints facing all 'alternative' media.

The mobilising demands of the text concretise its connection into the real conditions of the readers' historical context which is elaborated on in the second paragraph (see appendix 2). A continuous relationship between the text and its context is thus established, realising Volosinov's dictum that every sign (here Resister) is a construct between socially organised persons in the process of their interaction. Therefore the forms of signs are conditioned above all by the social organisation of the participants involved and also by the immediate conditions of their interaction (4). In other words Resister not only mediates contexts but is part of those contexts.

Again the distinction between the progressive and the commercial press is clear: in contrast to the atomistic and fragmentary reporting methods of the latter, "editorials (of alternative media) frequently project an advocacy stance with an emphasis on the need for community organisation and joint strategies to oppose repression"(5). Yet within this article there are contradictions which exposed facilitates an understanding of the context of the text (and hence of the text itself) which is perhaps more revealing than the consciously imparted information within the text. For it is the inner dialectic quality of a text, the various orientations of its meaning, that is an index of the various social positions of its referents. As Janet Woollacott affirms,
these contradictions can be seen as part of the "wider ideological discourse... the realm of the signified". Volosinov appropriately calls it the "multi-accentuantity of the sign".

The contradictions pertain to the positions of the producers of Resister and the positions of its readers. The 'anchor' alongside the photograph, "from a poster circulating in Southern Africa", is an index of an overseas readership which is consolidated in the last paragraph of the article. Switching to the first person, it reads, "We all have a moral and political responsibility to join and support the mass movement, the freedom struggle of the ANC and SWAPO, the campaign to isolate the apartheid regime and to impose international sanctions" (p. 3). This and the policy of COSAWR (stated on the back cover) which "supports the international campaign to isolate the apartheid regime and campaigns in support of South African war resistance", distances the exiled producers of Resister more than their physical separation from the real struggle that is being waged in South Africa, by their roles, albeit involuntary, as supporters of external organisations, rather than as activists within the country. This ambivalence of position as insiders or outsiders, is exacerbated by non-South Africans' conceptions of apartheid as simply a political regime of the white minority holding power over the black majority. The white South African COSAWR members are thus perceived to stand tentatively between the perpetrators and the victims of the apartheid system, or, less sceptically, in support of someone else's struggle from the outset. It therefore seems that the attempt of Resister to mobilise its South African readers, to establish true communication, has two sources of motivation:

* firstly, the producers' needs to rationalise and make sense of the grief of separation and the longing for contact; and

secondly, their strong sense of injustice and consequent urge to validate and reclaim from European organisations such as anti-apartheid movements, their active commitment to the South African struggle - the very cause of their present estrangement.

Herein lies the second contradiction: Resister is banned in South Africa. So while its function of engaging its readers places the responsibility on the intended (South African) audience, the corollary is also at work in deferring responsibility from the majority of the actual (European) readers. Its restriction in South Africa certainly precludes mass distribution, confining it to a small, exclusive target readership. Nevertheless, the people who encounter Resister in South Africa would probably constitute its most probable readership, namely the converted (progressive) intellectuals and particularly the conscientised recipients of army call-up papers. These discrepancies within and surrounding Resister bespeak the conflicting situation of its producers who attempt to reach two distinct groups of people, one in Europe, the other in South Africa.
References

(2) Ibid.
(4) Volosinov, V.N.: Marxism and the Philosophy of Language. New York 1973
(5) Tomaselli and Pinnock, op. cit.
(7) It is interesting to compare members of COSAWR with activists in the End Conscription Campaign whose presence in South Africa places their work on a grassroots level.
(9) "The pain is unbearable at times ... I sometimes wonder if I shouldn't have done six years in prison and finished". (from a letter from a war resister in exile).
N.B. The status and opinion of the readers of Resister cannot be verified because of its unavailability in South Africa. Any interference drawn from this analysis is therefore not definitive.

'I am a democrat.'

As State President, election meeting Stellenbosch 22 April 1987

'It is possible that more lives will be placed on the altar of South African patriotism and freedom in the future.'

Repression or Resistance
Conscripts Must Choose
5. The ECC as 'Other': Veterans for Victory

(1) The First Wave - this section documents and analyses the appearance of an anti-ECC organisation as seen in its media.

Perhaps the most interesting side-issues raised by the form of struggle noted here are those linking certain gender ideologies and militarism. More attention could be directed here in future.

(2) The Second Wave - a drastic change in the Vets' media is studied with particular attention to the implications of the observed change.
The ECC as 'Other': for Victory

('First Wave')

VETERANS FOR VICTORY is an organisation which claims to speak on behalf of the "ex servicemen of South Africa"(1). Veterans for Victory or the "Vets" as they call themselves do not however substantiate the basis of their support or publish any information about themselves. Further information on their activities is limited to this free sheet published at indeterminate intervals. Veterans For Victory is not numbered or dated. Its authors (or author?) is never mentioned. Early issues were simply typed, but those published in 1987 are typeset. A Manifesto on the organisation's aims and beliefs is to be found on the back of its publication "Pursuing Peace"(2). ANC statements are quoted with impunity and individuals are attacked with zealous intensity.

In the Manifesto referred to Veterans for Victory announce themselves as an organisation which supports the present dispensation in South Africa, aligning themselves with what they see as the "present democratic order in South Africa"(3). They resist in the strongest possible terms what they see as the Soviet inspired attempt to bring disorder and revolution to South Africa by means of "subversive organisation" and specifically what they see as the total evil of liberation theology, the church, social groups and individuals which they understand as being its agents. The Vets Manifesto is a clear indication of their reactionary stance within present-day South Africa.

With its declared aim of supporting the present dispensation within South Africa, the Vets target all oppositional organisations as the 'enemy'. However, as might be expected the Vets place special emphasis on the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) and ANC. The ECC standing as it does as the very antithesis of the Vets is thus given primary place as the 'Great Other'. It is thus primarily in opposition to the ECC that the articles and publications of the Vets are directed.

The aim of this chapter is to examine and locate the methods by which the Vets combat and portray the ECC. We argue that the Vets' main strategy is to construct the ECC as the Other, to represent the organisation and its members as inimical to everything that is immediately recognisable as normal and natural. The Vets appropriate the common sense of white South African society, the official discourse of the state and the specific linguistic codes of the "troopie", to facilitate ideological closure which ensures the veracity of the Vets' own discourse which discredits the oppositional discourse of the ECC.

The Vets try to intercept the common sense of their projected readership by evoking the signs and codes of the 'troopie' to establish an immediate feeling of comradeship, a common response to shared experience and a purposeful survival. Indeed, the play on the word Vet gives added potency to these emotions by calling on the 'myth' of the Veteran'. The I of the "I was there"
connects individual Vets with the desert rat and even more recently with the powerful and evocative symbol of Vietnam and the returned veteran who finds a world which rejects him and does not understand what he has been fighting for. Thus the "Vet" becomes a Rambo, a crusader against the ignorance of those who did not go, who did not want to go, or who do not understand. The "Vet" is more than a soldier, he is a warrior, and the warrior unlike the soldier is a mysterious and poetic figure. The fighting man's creed is quoted by Vets:

"You have never lived until you have almost died, and for those who fight for it, life has a flavour the protected will never know" (unknown)(4)

Those who fight are thus awarded a warriors privilege. The myth of the warrior is given more mystical evocation by the careful use of quotes from Sun Tzu a Chinese philosopher who spoke eloquently and reverently about the art of war in 115BC. The warrior is the one who fights courageously but never unnecessarily; war is thus redeemed and the warrior redeeming. War it seems is an honourable, indeed a worthy practice and the only possible response to the warrior is one of praise. Through the style of writing in the Vets publication, the myths of 'veteran' and 'warrior' are slid into each other creating the composite myth: Vets (anti-communism) and warriors (nobility). The Vets motto, published on all their stationary and publications, is Sun Tzu's appeal:

Regard your soldiers as your children ... look on them as your own beloved sons, and they will stand by you even unto death(5).

The soldier, the warrior, the vet, the redeemer. Find his juxtaposition in the Other, in this case the Other is the ECC member who refuses to answer the call and take up arms: the marginalizing of this Other is given added emphasis by the threatening of "his" sexual identity. In stark contrast to the potency of the warrior the ECC member is stripped of his virility and manhood and made into a member. The ECC member is a Nerd, a moffie, a queer. "I was told by one young man (or was it a girl - ECC members all look strange to me)". (6)

Thus the virile potency of the Vet is contrasted with the 'perverted' sexuality and impotency of the ECC member. Thus the image of the moffie is evoked in the cartoon (white) which shows a young effete man who utters "Tch ooh just you wait till I see that nasty sergeant(7). I'll tell him deary". The young man is a metonym for all conscientious objectors and his discourse is thus that of the stereotyped gay. However some of the impact of the cartoon is lost by the ambiguity of the figure behind him: is the Sergeant behind him the Sergeant of the SADF or is he the folk devil of the communist threat? A preferred reading might be that of the young man who is outside the SADF being left exposed and unprotected. He is, it seems, his own worst fool and the Vets never tire of telling the reader how the common role of the ECC and all such organisations is to strip South Africa of protection so that it can be exploited.
Behind the Other of the effete "queer" lives the great world wide conspiracy of Soviet inspired communism. But the perceived threat of the communist folk devil is reinforced by its being signified as also a spiritual and metaphysical threat, indeed "communism" is seen as being the secular strategy of the anti-Christ.

The text mobilizes the myth of a world-wide secular-spiritual conspiracy by playing on the strong myths created by the Christian Church. The anti-Christ comes to fool the Godless and undermine God's people; the Bible repeatedly advised the Christian to be aware of those who come dressed as lambs but are really wolves. In this case the text picks up on the liberation theology which allies socialism (Marxism) with Christianity. By quoting the alleged words (unreferenced) of Lenin, as the Right do so often when their own arguments fail:

'We will find our most fertile ground for infiltration by communists within the field of religion', why? 'Because religious people will swallow anything - just so long as it is wrapped in religious language'(8).

The World Council of Churches is signified as the leader of this plot.

What we do know is that one of its (ECC's) main benefactors has been the South African Council of Churches, which works hand in glove with the World Council of Churches. In 1984 the WCC gave $400,000 to the ANC; Swapo and other groups, makes ye (sic) wonder don't it??(9)

The article places the contribution of the World Council of Churches outside of any historical or social context. But it seems clear to the Vets that the ECC is connected with this 'conspiracy'. In a later issue (circa October 1987), the ECC is connected to JODAC, itself connected to the UDF, claimed to be a puppet of the ANC. This, and other articles, discuss the UDF as it if were some sort of secretive, unknowable front which by foul and magical means 'controls' its affiliates on behalf of the ANC. These kinds of crudely reductive connections and the assumptions of the writers (writer?) of Veterans For Victory incorporate the magic thought to only be the tool of communists. Members of the UDF and the ECC are seen to be victims of forces beyond their control, of an evil invisible power which knows no bounds.

One of the myths of communism is that those who hold this political belief are not aware of the source of their 'infection' or that they are merely puppets in the hands of an international conspiracy which has as its aim the demise of decent society. This myth of the communist is, of course, a powerful folk devil amongst whites, and particularly 'troopies' who have sacrificed two years (and more) of their lives, if not their health, to protect those 'at home', including ECC 'moiffies'. The same semantic mechanisms of identifying the internal 'enemy' and casting them in the guise of folk devils have been used by a
variety of repressive governments in history to legitimate their own policies: the Romans targeted Christians; Jews were the fiends in Nazi Germany; Indians were the 'problem' in Uganda under Idi Amin; 'reds under the beds' caused witch hunts in the McCarthy era of the United States, and so on. The list is endless and very few governments have been above guilt. By focussing on folk devils, such governments and the interests which support them create moral panics, often nationwide. One such moral panic concerns communism, that anyone, anywhere, at any time, can fall prey to this insidious virus. The carriers of the virus are certain Christians and Christian organisations, and ECC members who have been emasculated as a side effect. Paradoxically, while the myth of the communist holds that infection can strike anytime, there is the contradictory belief that it is also the result of conscious plotting:

The concept of an anti-conscription campaign was first floated by the SA Council of Churches in 1974(10).

There then follows an attack against church bodies and church personalities. The usual unholy alien is picked on; Bishops Tutu, and Hurley who, with the Rev Allan Boesak, are cast as the three stooges: a sinister triumverate of Others. This triumverate knowingly or unknowingly works towards the global enforcement of communism and more ironically (for them) the world domination of the anti-Christ:

There are many in our churches today whose main ambition seems to be to transform SA into another destabilised third world state. Enough to bring tears to the eyes of the Lord Himself(11).

The Vets, of course, see themselves as the frontline standing in opposition to the Godless conspiracy of Christian marxism. They claim to stand for "the principles of a free and democratic South Africa based on civilised Christian ethics"(12). Which Christian ethics they don't say directly. One indication, however, is the constant reference in Veterans For Victory to right wing Christian pamphlets, such as Signposts and Frontline Fellowship. While these papers are clearly conservative, they don't even come close to the reactionary attitudes and vilifications of the 'Godless' found in Veterans For Victory.

Despite its claims to democratic Christian principles, Vets never queries any state action of repression in the townships or the clearly brutal and unnecessary acts of state force. The troops and police it seems only act to protect the innocent majority against the machinations of the few Godless enough to consider the present dispensation unfair:

To get (for obvious reasons) 'troops out of the townships'. How dumb, dumb, dumb, can those snivelling little reptiles (ECC and other church group and progressive organisations) who want to see the SADF/SAP broken up for scraps possibly be? Pull the army out of the townships and immediately you will have black revolutionaries inflicting a terror war on the blacks whose only "crime" is that they do not want to tear the country to pieces.
In a questionnaire circulated to the Vets readership circa October 1987, it stated:

The ECC calls for 'Troops out of Townships', yet ignore the fact that millions of lives have been saved through the gallant efforts of the security forces.

As we have noted, the Vets' representation of sexual abnormality and religious-political deviance of the ECC member finds its antithesis in the sexual political potency of the Veteran. The most overt symbol of this potency is expressed in the "Vets" logo: the sniper's gun sight that shatters the hammer and sickle of the Soviet threat. Yet behind the overt symbols which first hold the gaze of the reader, we find a deeper symbolic level, a level on which a firmness and strength, a resolute power is projected: the shattered symbol is enveloped by the counter symbol. The counter symbol of the gunsight both controls and dominates the communist threat. The rifle sight however invokes the chilling mythos of the assassin thriller genre: strength, accuracy, crystal clear purpose, both physical and technological dominance, and power. James Bond 007, licenced to kill, the ultimate symbol of phallic and male control, sexual potency coupled with utter resolve.

The logo exploits one level of symbolic interaction, but behind this lies a more subterranean power, a deeper and more spiritual level of significance. The rifle sight is transcended by the spiritual potency of the cross, the site and central theme of Christian myths and passion. Christ's death, eventual rebirth and victory over the Devil is invoked in one subtle symbolic logo. The power of Christ (the cross) stands in victory over the shattered power of the anti-Christ (the hammer and sickle).

By alternating between these symbolic realms the logo is able to invoke an interaction; an interaction which detaches the sign from any clear anchor in a determined pattern of meaning. The sign thus implodes directing the reader's gaze in a never ending interaction between all its effective symbolic and mythic coordinates.

To complete the interaction, the logo is juxtaposed beside the bold and stark lettering, which announces the Veterans. The V which announces the Vets allows interaction with the well-known Churchillian symbol of defiance, the V also reflects in more recent times the V of the TV programme series of the same name (13). A symbol of defiance and pride in the face of strong opposition, this symbol is effectually mirrored in the logos and in the symbolic moments it presents. The deepest level being the victory of Christ and it is, we would suggest, that it is in this moment that the profoundest moment of the symbol is realized.

A reading of Veterans For Victory, particularly in comparison with other conservative pamphlets it cites, shows up an aggression, a hatred, utter overstatement and vengeance which is totally alien to Christian philosophy and religion of whatever
ideological persuasion. If as Gramsci says, the ideological
function of religion is to bridge the gap between a philosophical
system (apartheid) and the people (in this case the perceived
ECC-UDF-ANC-Moscow conspirators), since it is here that the
weltanschaung is experienced as a belief and not as an
intellectual argument, Veterans, while trading on a matrix of
myths, offers no use of Christian discourse or understanding of
the coherent set of beliefs of Christianity that stand up in
their own terms. The sheet's appeal to 'Christians' is rather
one of pleading, of a belief on the part of its writers that
Christians, or at least their perception of Christians, should be
fighting the war that the Veterans are so bravely kindling.
It is our interpretation, then, that the appeal to Christianity is
merely a means to ideological mobilisation, rather than a belief
in Christianity itself.

The crudeness of the writing, the vicarious appeal to patriotism,
the vilification of the 'enemies of South Africa' and the vicious
personal attacks on named individuals can only place this
publication, particularly its earlier issues, in a category
beyond civilised values. Yet, despite this, the imagery and
metaphors used to discredit opponents of apartheid is not that
dissimilar to the ludicrous descriptions offered by the Steyn
Commission into the Mass Media, published in 1982. Clearly,
Veterans For Victory is part of this state-sanctioned discourse
designed to bring about an Us-Them view of the world. The
publication offers no clear argument, a distorted logic which
precariously slides along racist, sexist, fascist epithets, and
never substantiates its accusations. How can it? Having imaged
ECC members as 'queer', Veterans For Victory projects itself
with a Popeye characterisation (see press advert). Popeye is the
ultra tough individualist, a sailor man, who protects women and
the weak. A fighter when provoked, he rises to the occasion when
this is required. Just like the Vets!
Notes and References

As none of the Veterans for Victory publications is dated or numbered, we have attempted to identify individual issues in terms of the colour of paper on which they are printed.

1. Veterans for Victory publication: Pursuing Peace
2. Ibid
3. Pursuing Peace op. cit.
4. White, p.3
5. Pamphlet (Psychological War)
6. Blue, p.1
7. White, cartoon see index:
8. Green, p.2
9. White, p.2
10. Green, p.1
11. Green, p.2. See also the Veterans for Victory, 'Dear Brother in Christ' letter.
12. Pamphlet, Pursuing Peace
13. This TV programme, broadcast in 1986, was also used by anti-apartheid activists to object to press censorship caused by the state of emergency. Each episode was preceded by a dedication to all freedom fighters past, present and future. In the context of massive press curbs, it was not long before pamphlets appeared in red stating "They control the TV, now they've got the newspapers too". The latter was a direct reference to the state's control of 'unrest' news reporting. V signs were also painted on walls and streets. After only two episodes, the SABC deleted the dedication from future broadcasts and towards the end of the second series, broadcast each episode on sequential days at a late hour to save itself the further embarrassment of parallels being drawn between the state of emergency restrictions, the need for an organised resistance (against the aliens), and the co-optation of the V sign by anti-apartheid campaigners.

DECLARATION

"We, the ex-servicemen of South Africa, hereby pledge to uphold the principles of a free and democratic South Africa based on civilised Christian ethics.

We reject, without reservation any attempts, from any source, to undermine the Christian democratic foundations upon which South Africa is built.

We particularly reject the atheistic secular communist doctrines and its perpetrators who have sought to overthrow the existing Christian order in the Republic of South Africa and to replace it with a godless, one party state.

We further reject and condemn the African National Congress and other puppet supported organisations which are the tools of foreign masters in Moscow and Peking.

We reject all organisations and people who, willingly or otherwise, align themselves with the ulcerous campaign to undermine the defence capability of South Africa.

However, we, the ex-servicemen of South Africa, command and pledge our full support to:

Those young men and women of all races who at present or in the future will serve in the SANDF in defense of all the inhabitants of South Africa.

Those organisations and people who oppose the iniquitous threat of Communism. Those churches, organisations and people who condemn terrorism and the Liberation Theologians who oppose it."
The 'TRUTH' Card, the Special Report

And the Special Update

('Second Wave')

Compared to all previous 'Veterans for Victory' media we have encountered, these publications are indeed special - they are technically, conceptually and linguistically superior by several quantum leaps. It seems safe to assume that experienced media professionals have come into the service of the 'Vets'. Together with the extremely wasteful distribution of these publications on University of Natal, Durban campus(1), this indicates a massive increase in their access to financial resources. As if to preempt any questions which might enter their supporters' minds, a column headed 'Comment' on the front page of the 'Update' thanks the "numerous companies and individuals" who supplied the recent inflow of funds.

The 'Truth' Card

The choice of format for the message of 'truth' seems obscure - a stiff, glossy card of a size suitable when folded for insertion into an envelope. The persuasive value of the card is superior to those of the early Vets media we have examined, but not as refined as say, the Special Report.

The main graphic on the front of the card depicts the theme - solid monolithic objects in the shape of the letters TRUTH being entangled with the chain of the ECC logo, and bleeding. (What springs to mind is truth in the juridical sense - "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth"). What follows inside the card indicates that its message relies on exactly such a singular concept of objective Truth.

The gist of the message is that the ECC, more specifically the July 87 At Ease, has violated the noble Truth-concept by referring to Laurie Nathan's United States tour as having met an "overwhelmingly positive" response, when according to the Cedar Rapids Gazette he had an audience of two in Cedar Rapids. The technique used is to present, on facing inside pages of the card, extracts from At Ease and the Cedar Rapids Gazette, and to convey the intended judgement by accompanying the At Ease extract with a picture of an ostrich burying its head in the sand and the words "BURYING THE TRUTH", while next to the Cedar Rapids Gazette extract is a horse's mouth and the words "FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH". While the factual impact of the extracts is lessened by their being quoted rather than depicted, this suggestive technique makes much more out of the evidence than could a rational or quasi-rational discussion - where the absurdity of the generalisation, from a report of one incidence of low attendance among 60 addresses and 70 interviews, to a suggestion that the tour was unsuccessful, might be more obvious - and more disprovable.
At the level of inference, we learn from the use of the Gazette extract that the Vets have more than an amateurish network of informants.

The Update is more 'factually' biased than the card, but is more mundane than the 'Report', visually and textually. Its only graphic is the familiar 'sniper's view' logo of the shattering hammer and sickle. Besides the 'Comment' column the Update's content consists of two articles and the Vets' declaration. The first article, 'A Question of Credibility', raises 'concern' over Prof Andre Brink's alleged attack on the South African system of national service (made in Afrikaans over Radio Moscow, nogal!). The article's main point of relevance from the ECC's perspective is that it makes the factually incorrect claim that the ECC's aim is the dismantling of the SADF. It is also significant that the Vets have access to information presumably gained by a monitoring of Radio Moscow.

The other article in the Update is entitled 'A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing.' It contains a potentially actionable claim that the ECC is affiliated to the UDF, as well as a lot of fairly unremarkable 'revelations'. Using the technique of presenting a mass of 'facts' such as references to particular organisations, individuals and events, the appearance is generated of an authoritative, informed source (indeed it is clear that compared with previous Vets' publications this one is the result of increased research). The impression of authoritative ness is furthered by extracting quotes from the text, enlarging and underlining them, and mounting them alongside the text. Mere repetitions thus achieve the status of rhetorical proofs. Having established its credentials, the text is able to seem persuasive despite its lack of strict logical proof.

Also of note in this article is the use made of claims made by Roger Field, a COSAWR member (it is claimed that ECC has 'close links' with COSAWR among other organisations). The internal democratic function of ECC is excluded from the universe of possibility by reporting Field's claim that ECC and COSAWR have common goals; to people accustomed to decoding messages in the discourse of 'communism as disease' this alleged external link establishes the path of infection.

The 'Special Report'

This document is 'state of the art' rightwing propaganda. Previous attempts to mobilise homophobia against the ECC were impressionistic and clearly bigoted, but this one is based on research and uses suggestive methods which are all the more effective for being understated.

The front page of the Report is dominated by the huge, scaly, clawed legs of an ostrich, superimposed on an article seemingly entitled "Organising with lesbian and gay groups". Because of the size and position of the legs, one is frustratingly unable to read the article, but has to look to the single column of accompanying
text, which tells how "... ECC has been linked to LINX, an organisation composed of 'concerned' schoolchildren who have been active in school playgrounds around the country." We are then directed to page 2, but not before an emphatically underlined message: QUEER BIRDS THESE WAR RESISTERS. The effect of this page is almost tantalising - what kind of connection is going to be alleged on page 2, which will explain these enigmatically disparate elements? A classical advertising technique: grab the readers' attention, arouse their curiosity and offer a resolution.

Page 2 tells us how the ECC has associated with the War Resisters League (WRL) and sent Laurie Nathan on a tour - the Cedar Rapids debacle surfaces again - and, after briefly mentioning that the tour was originally intended to have been a joint UDF/ECC one, goes on to hint at the increased links established by the tour ... an example of which being that "The ECC is expected to adhere to the WRL's manual which gives a detailed memorandum of how to approach groups and use them when organising people such as lesbians and gays."

At this point, when a possible key has been given to the riddle of the first page, another red-clawed ostrich foot appears ... above a block which begins "In some ways there is nothing special about organising lesbians/gay men."

The rest of the pamphlet except for a block giving the Vets' "credentials" as a "non profit organisation committed to promoting a positive image and the truth about South Africa", is headed "Extracts from the War Resisters League Manual"; and consists of paragraphs which rarely follow one another and cannot therefore be read as a whole although they are laid out as if continuous, with headings such as "Organising around Gay Issues" and "Organising Gays in Other Movements". This presentation effectively prevents the extracts from collectively 'making sense' and tends to alienate even a sympathetic reader.

The cumulative effect of the various elements of the Report is not a direct allegation, but an insinuation which readers have to impose as the only explanation for the juxtaposition: "war resisters are queer birds/ECC is organising in the schools/ECC has links with the War Resisters League/WRL draws support from gays" - Therefore, to homophobic readers: "Red Alert - the commie poofers pacifists are after our kids!" The vulnerability of pupils has been suggested by referring to them as "schoolchildren" who are located on "playgrounds" - which obscures the fact that the males among them are expected to commence military training on those very playgrounds.

Sequel: The 'Special Appeal'

Some time after the distribution of the above-mentioned publications, members of the Vets' mailing list received an eight-page "Progress Report" with a covering letter urging companies to either take out "corporate membership" with a "nominal minimum of R1000 per annum", or to "subscribe", in which case "fees will be left to the discretion of individual companies concerned". The
quasi-anonymous author of the letter (an illegible signature is given) explains that the Vets' budget will treble as they become more active, and that employers supporting the Vets will gain by identifying with ex-servicemen on their staffs and by ensuring the survival of their companies in a free enterprise system.

The first page of the Appeal/Progress Report has an introductory column "Calling for support" in which the financial plight of the Vets is sketched, and a rendition of the Vets' Declaration. The rest of the publication is a digest of material previously published by the Vets; far from representing 'limited examples' (as claimed), all their 'new wave' media (i.e. everything since the first crude newsletters were replaced by professionally produced media) is reprinted, including a circular addressed to educationists, which had not previously been encountered in this study. This lengthy piece is characterised by more articulate language than were the first bigoted newsletters, and by reference to considerable research, yet it lacks the slick hardsell tactics of some of the recent works. This is probably in keeping with its more intellectual target group - although it could hardly be said to be rigorously argued. More than once mention is made of the concern of "the education department" and its deputy director is quoted - enough to send tremors down the spines of most career-conscious headmasters receiving the circular. The layout has been rearranged for inclusion in the digest, and any graphics or visuals have been omitted.

It seems that we need not fear another Info scandal, as latter-day Eschel Rhodoids reap the benefits of privatisation.
6. Co-opting the Discourse of Resistance: The DSA Freedom Fighter

Here a case study is done of another anti-ECC organisation and its publication – of special relevance to the operations of ECC on campuses.

It should be noted that, in this chapter more than any other, the work presented deals with a phase of history which is already past. At the time of going to press the DSA had adopted a radically different profile and media presence to that described here, presumably due to a successful public debate in which ECC speakers questioned the motives of an ostensibly liberal organisation in constantly attacking anti-apartheid activity. The new stance is inoffensive, charitable and legitimacy-seeking.
Co-Opting the Discourse of Resistance -

The DSA Freedom Fighter

"Semiotics is, in principle, the discipline studying everything which can be used in order to lie" (Umberto Eco, 1976)(1).

To gain an understanding of the Durban Student Alliance's (DSA) publication, Freedom Fighter, one must look at the historical, social and political conditions of its production and consumption. The DSA's Freedom Fighter is part of a national campaign coordinated by the National Student Federation (NSF) to "expose the authoritarian domination of South African campuses by left-wing radicals"(2). The purpose of Freedom Fighter is primarily negative: to destroy counter-hegemonic consciousness amongst students at the University of Natal, Durban. The Freedom Fighter co-opts radical terminology to subvert it, appropriating the meaning-potential of signs, and their potential for mobilising connotations and myths which discredit oppositional organisations and politics. The Freedom Fighter advocates conservative-liberal discourse, taking up the cause of the "free enterprise system"(3) in its fight against "international communism"(4). This essay places Freedom Fighter in its historical context and develops a theoretical framework to examine its discourse and likely effects on readers.

When analysing a publication it is important not to view it as an isolated product, but rather resulting from an historical, social, political and economic context. Thus, it is necessary to locate the DSA Freedom Fighter within the terrain of right-wing student organization on English language campuses.

Former Prime Minister, B.J. Vorster once called NUSAS "a cancer in the life of South Africa that must be cut out"(5). Even after NUSAS's overseas funding was cut off, its political activity curtailed, and its leaders detained and banned, NUSAS continued to grow in the English-speaking universities in South Africa, even gaining a foothold in some Afrikaans universities. In 1975, a new means of "cutting out the cancer" was conceptualized - right-wing organization on campuses. A national student movement, the South African Federation of English Speaking Students (SAFESS) was established at Wits, as was a weekly right-wing campus newspaper, Campus Independent. SAFESS attempted to mobilize the student body to disaffiliate from NUSAS. In spite of massive finance, this organization was not successful. Only ten years later was it revealed that SAFESS had been funded directly by the Bureau of State Security (BOSS). SAFESS lasted only a few years and quietly slid from view.

Why Mandela is still in prison

The D.S.A.

Freedom Fighter

YOUR ALTERNATIVE CAMPUS NEWSPAPER

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In 1980, the Student Moderate Alliance (SMA) was formed on the Wits campus. In 1981, the Sunday Express revealed that the SMA used the National Party's official printers for their publications. The SMA received funds from conservative capitalists, especially from Shlomo Peer, an employee of Anglo-American and National Party supporter. The Express also listed Mr. P.A. Clarke, managing director of The Citizen, as having given money to the SMA. It was further revealed that when appealing for funds, the SMA sent supporting letters of recommendation — including those from Pik Botha, Piet Koornhof and P.W. Botha.

In 1984 a national body of right-wing students was formed — the National Student Federation (NSF). This provided conservative capitalists with the alluring prospect of a co-ordinated nationwide campaign against left-wing students who were seen to be working towards a socialist democracy. Russel Crystal, NSF president, explained their aims as being to "expose the degree to which campus radicals have destroyed student rights..." (6), to "build up many overseas contacts, to get access to international experts on radical groups", and to "step up the process to democratise our campuses and to work at liberating them from radical elements" (7).

During 1985 the NSF organised the "Youth for Freedom" conference, which was attended by more than 100 delegates from 35 countries. The conference apparently cost R400 000 although the source of funding was never revealed. The conference received massive and sustained publicity from SABC-TV News. Apart from this coverage on television, the NSF and its affiliate bodies have featured on SABC-TV News and on radio. The DSA, with which we are primarily concerned, has twice received television News coverage. When it was formed at the beginning of 1986, Jonathan Poole, its president, was interviewed on the 8pm News, and given ample time to detail the aims and functions of the DSA. He also took the opportunity to criticise NUSAS and 'left-wing radicals' on the Durban campus. In contrast, neither NUSAS nor any so-called 'left-wing radicals' have ever been given the opportunity by the SABC to present their own views. Whenever NUSAS is mentioned on the airwaves, it is cast in a negative light by broadcasters.
The DSA was again featured on television when the Rag '87 procession was covered by SABC-TV. During the coverage, the ECC float was shown for a mere two seconds, followed by the DSA float with the prominent banner: "ECC Sucks".

Throughout 1987 the NSF continued to co-ordinate and act as a conduit for "donations" to its affiliate student groupings, namely the SMA (Wits), the Student Action Front on Natal University's Pietermaritzburg campus, the Moderate Students Movement (UCT) and the Durban Student Alliance (Durban). The NSF and its affiliates differ in strategy from previous conservative student organizations in that they no longer directly try to defend the government and apartheid, but rather call for "the establishment of a non-racial capitalism in a free South Africa"(8). The NSF is determined to "stamp out radicalism" and put an end to "international communism". The Federation is intended to undermine and discredit left-wing opposition to apartheid and capitalism in South Africa. However, for a more complete understanding as to how the DSA Freedom Fighter fulfills this function, a few brief theoretical concepts must first be worked through.

Let us consider Gramsci's notions of ideology and hegemony to try to understand the root of conflict in South Africa - how the working class struggles to transcend its subordination, and how the hegemonic bloc maintains its dominance. This involves ideological struggle on every front, making use of all hegemonic apparatuses. Whilst the dominant group seeks to win consent, through absorbing and neutralizing working class opposition, the working class seeks to create a "collective will" to bring about an expansive hegemony through exercising moral and intellectual leverage. It is the task of intellectuals, who belong either to the hegemonic bloc, or to the working class, to ensure that the ideology of their group is "...diffused throughout society in all its institutional and private manifestations"(9). Organic intellectuals of the working class must transform the ideological terrain so that a new ideological system is produced which forms the basis for unity and for the creation of a new collective will.

English-language universities in South Africa have become sites of struggle involving conflict between traditional and organic intellectuals representing the dominant and subordinate groups respectively. These universities have become important apparatuses for the creation of a counter-hegemonic consciousness. On Durban the campus, the DSA Freedom Fighter plays a crucial role in trying to discredit and destroy this consciousness. Before we can understand how the DSA goes about this process, we first need to discuss some semiotic concepts - the study of the social production and meaning of signs - and which Eco, an Italian semiotician, defined as being, "in principle, the discipline studying everything which can be used in order to lie"(10).
Language and Struggle

When we speak, we learn much more than words - we learn how to 'behave' - how to organize the world around us into some semblance of order. As we learn a language, we learn a whole set of terms, codes, and conventions which are the bearers of structures of meanings and values; and we learn to live within the frameworks given by these structures and relations. The 'reality' we observe depends upon how we look at it - 'reality' consists not in things, but in relationships which people construct and then perceive between them. In order to live in everyday situations, one must make sense of them through the meanings which discourses have established as the way things are and should be. Discourse can be seen to be analogous with a map of the world - it maintains a relationship which allows us to recognize the terrain through it, but to use it we have to understand its own distinctive codes, conventions, signs, and symbols. Let us now consider how signs are selected and combined to assist individuals, classes and groups to 'recognize the terrain' of what appears to them as concrete reality.

Signs are determined by the internal structure of the sign-system, and by the relationship which exists in use between the system and the 'reality' it 'maps'. Signs (made up of the signifier and signified) gain their capacity for meaning by the difference which they establish between one another - the value of signs is determined wholly by their relationship to others in a system. These values are social - their meaning derives not from the event or identity they refer to, but from the relation between that particular sign and other signs.

To comprehend how signs are selected and combined to create meaning potential, it is useful to understand any act of communication as involving relations in two dimensions - the paradigmatic axis of choice, and the syntagmatic axis of combination. Volosinov reminds us that signs do not have a fixed internal meaning, but rather an "inner dialectic quality"(11) which he calls their multi-accentuality. Signs have a meaning potential which are "accented" or directed towards a particular kind of meaning in use. Signs are inert until they are selected and combined in a 'live' social interaction. The meaning of signs is strictly a social, and hence ideological, phenomenon. Meanings of signs are multiplied through connotation and myth to provide multiple meanings. These meanings claim common recognition within a cultural group with a shared ideology.

All signs are necessarily multi-accentual; this multiaccentuality being a site of struggle. Contending social forces seek to 'fix' the meaning potential of each sign with an evaluative accent conducive to their particular interests. Different discourses seek to fill in the multi-accentual potential for meaning of signs, and their capacity for connotation and myth, until the signs are 'closed'. Signs are made uni-accentual - their meaning potential is closed such that there is a preferred reading of a sign: a particular way in which it is understood and made sense of. An understanding of these concepts that have been briefly outlined are crucial for the present analysis of Freedom Fighter.
The DSA Freedom Fighter - 'Your Alternative Campus Newspaper'

For an understanding of Freedom Fighter, it is essential to know the context in which it is being produced, and that in which it is being consumed. Freedom Fighter aims at a readership of primarily white petit-bourgeois university students. Outside of the university environment, these students are immersed within the terrain of dominant ideological meanings, namely through the media, family, education, religion, the law, the state, and capital. The hegemonic bloc seeks to neutralize antagonism and conflict, and to portray the lived reality of everyday life within the limits of acceptable thought and action.

The South African situation is a complex one, with the subaltern classes being oppressed both through race and class. Those who subscribe to a basically liberal ideology within the hegemonic bloc in South Africa, and indeed throughout the world, see conflict in South Africa in terms of racial oppression, and not related to the system of economic organisation. The University of Natal confirms liberal ideas, that is, it is critical of apartheid and the injustices of racial oppression (although to what extent is questionable), but rarely represents conflict in class terms. The DSA knows that the vast number of the people it distributes to (on campus) conform to a liberal ideology, and whilst being critical of racial oppression, are never critical of class oppression. The DSA exploits this to destroy attempts (usually by NUSAS or ECC) to establish a counter-hegemonic consciousness.

DSA - 'Restore Student Rights Now'

Let us now take a closer look at Freedom Fighter, and how it goes about winning legitimacy for the dominant power bloc, whilst at the same time 'neutralizing' and discrediting opposition to it. The most striking feature is the way its writers have co-opted and subverted radical terminology and discourses of resistance. Signs, and their capacity for connotation and myth, that counter-hegemonic forces had 'closed' and made uni-accentsual with a 'preferred reading' have been subverted, and made multi-accentsual.
The very name of the publication, Freedom Fighter is a perfect example of this. The term 'freedom fighter' in South Africa is what John Hartley calls a "hooray word", referring to a guerilla in counter-hegemonic discourse. Thus the usual ideological associations of the term 'freedom fighter' become confused. The meaning potential of the term 'freedom' becomes multiaccentualized. In left-wing discourse, the term "freedom" would refer to liberation from the oppressive racial-capitalist mode of production; whilst in right-wing 'free-enterprise' discourse, it might refer to freedom from state interference in the economy. For liberal university students, 'freedom' would refer to, at most, an ending to the apartheid regime, but not an end to capitalism. Thus it can be seen that the counter-hegemonic term 'freedom fighter', which in South Africa usually refers to those who fight against racial and class oppression, has been subverted to refer to those who strive for a "non-racial capitalism" in South Africa.

Freedom Fighter claims to be an 'alternative' newspaper. Again the DSA have co-opted a counter-hegemonic term, and subverted it, challenging the preferred reading that the term 'alternative newspaper' has come to take on in contemporary South Africa. There are numerous examples of such exploiting of radical terminology. Some examples are, "Liberate campus, away with Nusas oppression"(12), "Join the NSF revolution today"(13), and revitalizing the discourse of occupied countries during World War II, "Break free from Nusas, join the resistance"(14) It is important to note the way in which signs have been selected and combined to confuse their preferred dissident meaning. A clear example of this would be the term "Nusas oppression". The sign "Nusas" and the sign "oppression" belong to two opposing discourses, and have been combined to discredit the values that have become generally accepted from the usage of each of the signs. The selection of terms and their combination into phrases and sentences have been cleverly exploited to destroy the ideological value of counter-hegemonic signs. Further examples are, "Nusas compulsory membership" and "Karl Marx the racist"(15).

'Marx', a sign which in its adjectival form has come to represent a high value for the oppressed peoples of the world, has been combined with the sign 'racist'. A "hooray" word from counter-hegemonic discourse, i.e. 'Karl Marx', has been combined with a "boo" word from the same discourse, and has resulted in the discrediting of the value that each of these signs has taken on.

This method of exploiting radical terminology and subverting it, is not confined to written or verbal signs - Freedom Fighter uses it in its graphics as well. One such graphic uses the sign that has so much value in contemporary South Africa under the state of emergency for counter-hegemonic discourse. This is the sign that refers to detainees. The sign in "Freedom Fighter" shows a pair of hands clasping on to the bars on the window of a prison cell. Above is written, "Break Nusas-compulsory membership"(16). Another very similar, although more powerful sign which the DSA have co-opted, is of a hand tied with chains, breaking down the bars on the cell window. Next to this visual sign is written "Break Free from Nusas - join the Resistance". Another graphic shows soldiers marching through "Red Square". Above is written, "The Soviet Union Needs You", and below is written, "End Conscription". A potential "hooray" word for white university
students (that is, the sign "End Conscription") has been combined with a definite "boo" word (Soviet Union) amongst liberals. Also the visual sign of Russian soldiers marching in Red Square is a "boo" sign. This could have the effect of discrediting value that the sign "End Conscription" has amongst non-aligned students at UND.

The DSA also manages to distort the real essence of the political spectrum in South Africa. It does so by claiming to be a 'moderate' organization(17), and effectively confuses the meanings that the signs 'right-wing', 'moderate', and 'left-wing' usually provoke. South Africans have a unique way of perceiving positions on the political spectrum (HNP & CP being considered extreme right wing, and the PFP as being left of centre within the dominant discourse). The DSA capitalizes on this, and calls itself a "moderate" organization, when in fact, counter-hegemonic discourse would see it as being on the centre-right.

Content: 'Lenin Said It'

The content of Freedom Fighter consists mostly of articles criticizing and discrediting "radical elements" on campus (Nusas, Sensco, Dome, UND-SRC, ECC) which try to provide a counter-hegemonic discourse for students (although in varying degrees). Freedom Fighter also tries to discredit those counter-hegemonic off-campus organizations - UDF, ANC, COSATU, COSAS, not to mention the ANC and SACP etc. Freedom Fighter tries to draw links between, and connect the various campus organizations to the "ANC-SACP alliance"(18), to "Russia" and "the spread of international communism"(19). By linking those organizations that are directly familiar to university students (i.e. SANSO, DOME, NUSAS, ECC) with organizations such as the ANC and the SACP, and also by connecting those organizations to Russia, the DSA functions to alienate students (those who are not well familiar with radical discourse) from those campus organizations. The DSA tries to convey that counter-hegemonic organizations are undemocratic and authoritarian. This may reinforce what students are led to believe by the government and its ideological agencies. The myths of "die rooi gevaar", and of Soviet oppression, are well entrenched in the minds of numerous students. Similarly, there are the myths of 'Ethiopia' and of the poverty and low level of development of Third World 'socialist' systems, and the myths of 'America and Western Europe' and of their affluence and high level of development. Freedom Fighter capitalizes on the fact that these myths are part of the cultural knowledge that has been bestowed on South Africans by the agencies of capital and the state, and works from this firm footing.

THE GOVERNMENT

"... the government - consists of a gang of men exactly like you and me. They have, taking one with another, so special talent for the business of government; they have only a talent for getting and holding office. Their principal device to that end is to match out groups who peer and pick for something they can’t get, and to promise to give it to them. Nine times out of ten that promise is worth nothing. The tenth time it is a made good by looking to us to supply it. In other words, government is a broker in pilage, and every reliance is a sort of advance auction sale of stolen goods."

H.L. MENCKEN

A SINGLE DEATH IS A TRAGEDY, A MILLION DEATHS IS A STATISTIC. — JOSEPH STALIN
Let us briefly consider how Freedom Fighter specifically relates to the ECC, and how it tries to destroy the ECC’s credibility amongst University of Natal, Durban (UND) students. The Campaign is a crucial part of the counter-hegemonic bloc, especially as it mobilises ‘whites’ around the issue of conscription into the state’s most powerful apparatus, the SADF. The fact that conscription affects most ‘white’ men and their families and friends, together with the democratic, peace-oriented nature of the ECC, has enabled the Campaign to draw support from radical, liberal and ‘unpoliticed’ students alike. To break down this popularity, the DSA has dedicated much of the content of Freedom Fighter to the purpose of discrediting the ECC. In fact, every issue contains at least one article intended to smear the ECC.

The chief method of smearing has been drawing of links between the ECC and more radical organisations seen as connected to the ‘international communist conspiracy’ by liberal or less politicised students, who are thereby alienated from the ECC. A clear example of this is in Freedom Fighter no.4: “According to a United Nations press release, Gavin Evans represented the ECC of South Africa at a meeting in March 1986, where he, alongside representatives of the ANC, PAC, PLO, SWAPO, the League of Arab States, as well as the Soviet African Asian Solidarity Committee reviewed the situation in South Africa”(20).

The same article continues: “war resistance is, of course, a response to the all-round political and military struggle led by the ANC”(21). Another example reads: “In view of Ms Winnie Mandela’s ‘matches and tyres’ philosophy, as well as her message of militant greeting and gratitude for ‘brotherly solidarity to the Soviet Union’, the ECC press release issued in October 1986, stating that activist Winnie Mandela had been invited to protest “against the increasing militarisation in our society”, can only be frowned upon”(22).

The DSA cordially invites you to join in the struggle for true freedom.

ROOM 206 — STUDENTS UNION
Another method used by the DSA to undermine the ECC is to provide quotations either by ECC members or about the ECC or conscription, and to present them out of their intended context, thus distorting the essence of the statements. An example of this is "ECC is not a pacifist organisation" - apparently said by Meg Beresford of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament(23). Another example is a quote by Oliver Tambo calling on 'white' South Africans to "refuse to join the army" and to "build united resistance"(24). A further example is a statement by ECC member Richard Steele: "... the goal of our campaign is to end conscription"(25). All these quotations are used so as to lend legitimacy to the myths being promoted by the dominant discourse, which postulates that conscription is opposed not for pacifist motives, but to weaken the SADF so that "Soviet-backed terrorist organisations"(26) can attain power.

One article questions the funding of the ECC and concludes "Which foreign country (or countries) has an interest in the abolition of conscription in South Africa?"(27). Another Freedom Fighter asks why ECC members would not sign a petition "calling for the ANC to abandon its campaign of calculated terror against innocent civilians"(28). Freedom Fighter No.3 has an article criticising the ECC for "littering Durban" in its sticker campaign, and "breaking city by-laws"(29).

While undermining the ECC, Freedom Fighter openly supports the SADF. This is clearly evident in an article in No.5 titled "Why do we need a defence force and conscription"(30), which overflows with Bureau of Information rhetoric - "Peaceful reform can only take place in a society where terrorist violence is rejected and law and order is (sic) maintained"(31).
Freedom Fighter also functions to take up the cause of "the free enterprise system". Capitalism, according to the DSA, allows for "freedom, democracy and liberty" - these being "inextricably linked to three values - life, liberty and property" (32) and for this reason are firmly behind the vanguard of the multinational capitalist movement - Ronald Reagan and the CIA. The DSA are fully pledged "in solidarity with the liberation of Nicaragua, Mozambique, Angola and Afghanistan" (33). These "struggles" according to Freedom Fighter are "in support of western values and principles such as free enterprise, private property, and the full range of civil and religious liberties" (34). Freedom Fighter is strongly opposed to apartheid and its injustices, although no meaningful criticism of the government is ever put forward, apart from that it should perhaps play less of a role in the economy. No mention is made of the vast social and economic inequalities that are prevalent in South Africa. The most telling criticism that the Freedom Fighter levels at the government is that it demands too much taxes, although no mention is made concerning what is done with these taxes (like spending over R15 billion a year on a 'defence' budget). DSA is also mildly critical of the government's rejection of the Indaba - the proposals of which Freedom Fighter gives much attention and prominence. Freedom Fighter also features many of the ideas and viewpoints conveyed by Leon Louw and Francis Kendall in their book, South Africa - the Solution. It is clear that Freedom Fighter is not really opposed to the contemporary South African political economy, and in being mildly critical of the government, it actually serves to legitimize the current situation as one way of preserving free enterprise in South Africa.

'Strategy' Design

Freedom Fighter is a slick, expensive, and textually effective publication. It is obvious that the publication is not written and compiled by the DSA alone, as is claimed. Jonathan Poole, the editor, claims to do layout on his bed at home. The professional gloss and mobilisation of ideology through design and language, not to mention the extremely high quality of the paper used, makes it likely that professional advice and substantial external funding are freely available to the DSA.

Freedom Fighter uses design to its advantage with great effect. For example, on one page of Freedom Fighter Number 4 is an article on the Indaba proposals headed "Together we all win", with the logo of a black and a white hand clasped together above it. Alongside, is a shaded article headed "Apartheid" and which refers to SANSCO, and which began by stating, "Apartheid is alive and well at the University of Natal Durban". Underneath these two articles is one headed, "The ANC is 'soft' civilian targets". This article gives details of all the latest ANC bombings and concludes that "the ANC should be branded as terrorists". Next to this article is a cartoon which discredits the US State Department's view that "a range of voices" exist inside the ANC. Underneath in large bold white flanked by blue is the punchline: "FREEDOM NEEDS FREE ENTERPRISE". The newshole on this page is thus designed to elicit the composite idea that 'freedom' is antithetical to apartheid (now practiced by the University of Natal) and violence (practiced by the ANC).
and synonymous with 'free enterprise' and the DSA. Thus, through design Freedom Fighter discriminates against those counter-hegemonic forces that challenge the forces of repression.

Apart from the black writing on a white background, the Freedom Fighter uses the colour blue extensively. Blue is a cool colour, suggesting rationality and considered opinion. It is also the official colour of the Progressive Federal Party. By linking the idea of 'reasoned argument' with the PFP colour, the publishers of Freedom Fighter may be trying to cue subliminal responses from an essentially liberal student population. It is important also to see how the DSA uses the understanding they have of their readership - Freedom Fighter is written in a style that is appealing to students e.g. it is humorous and contains many graphics. Its A4 size is itself reminiscent of 'alternative journals' like Down the Line and other counter-culture magazines of the 1970s. We need to question why Freedom Fighter dedicates itself to "the free enterprise system" and yet contains no advertisements, no subscription address and no mention of who write, typesets, designs or pastes up the paper. All this is done under the anonymous name of "DSA Committee".

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### Gliberals and Fliberals

Gliberals and Fliberals

Pepsi here, virgin here: both are new and? Apart from that, please? You know, the pepsi cola... the virgin cola... the pepsi cola... the virgin cola...

Your thesis, please? Any good people? The pepsi cola... the virgin cola... the pepsi cola... the virgin cola...

Resistance here? Any good people? The pepsi cola... the virgin cola... the pepsi cola... the virgin cola...

\[ \text{Your thesis, please? Any good people? The pepsi cola... the virgin cola... the pepsi cola... the virgin cola...} \]

\[ \text{Resistance here? Any good people? The pepsi cola... the virgin cola... the pepsi cola... the virgin cola...} \]
Conclusions

It is hoped that a fuller comprehension of the process and dynamics behind Freedom Fighter has been provided. It can be seen that Freedom Fighter functions to serve the current dominant hegemonic bloc, in both conveying its ideology, and in discrediting and destroying attempts to build a counter-hegemonic consciousness amongst university students at UND. Freedom Fighter takes advantage of the cultural knowledge that has been bestowed upon white students throughout life, and is thus successfully able to engage in the 'struggle for the sign'. We must note however, as Sless reminds us, that we should take heed of our position of study as immersed in counter-hegemonic discourse - and perhaps realize that other students will not see the DSA and Freedom Fighter in this perspective.

Although numerous attempts were made by both staff and students to interview members of the DSA about Freedom Fighter during the first half of 1987, its members refused to discuss the publication either formally or informally with members of the research team.

FOOTNOTES
3. DSA Freedom Fighter No.4. This publication is undated, but all the copies referenced were probably published during 1987.
4. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. DSA Freedom Fighter No 2.
STREET WISE

"STREET COMMITTEE" is a fascinating phenomenon in our changing world. New concepts and ideas are emerging as the norm because of continuous innovation.

In a recent survey, ANC spokesperson Tom Sibinga revealed that 40 per cent of Negroes are being targeted for conscription. This is just part of the process to control a large people. We should not take them lightly.

ANC's new radio programme, PACRABA, is meant to help demystify the process as an effective instrument of the revolution.

Locally, many youths are working on similar projects. The youth and children's organizations are very active in this area, in order to stabilize the community.

At the heart of these structures is a local government. According to the local government, such "local government" is corrupt and ineffective. The result is that there is a "functional" failure of the system. The people are demanding better services, and there is a need for change. The ANC (African National Congress) is committed to this change.

Unmasking the Red Death

Compulsory Abortion in China

China's one-child policy has been the subject of controversy, with many people advocating for the rights of the mother and the child. However, the Chinese government continues to promote this policy as a means to control population growth.

In Beijing, a proposal to ban abortion was recently introduced. The Chinese government is trying to control population growth by implementing policies such as the one-child policy. The proposal, if passed, would make abortion a criminal offense.

In his speech, General Secretary Jiang Zemin emphasized the importance of balancing economic development with social and environmental needs. He also highlighted the role of education in fostering a culture of respect for life and economic development.

In conclusion, the Chinese government's efforts to control population growth through policies such as the one-child policy are commendable. However, the proposal to ban abortion raises ethical and moral concerns.

10. Sless, op. cit.
13. ibid.
14. DSA Freedom Fighter No 2.
15. DSA Freedom Fighter No 3.
16. ibid.
17. DSA Freedom Fighter No 2.
18. DSA Freedom Fighter No 4.
19. ibid.
20. DSA Freedom Fighter No 4.
21. ibid.
22. ibid.
23. ibid.
24. ibid.
25. ibid.
26. DSA Freedom Fighter No 5.
27. DSA Freedom Fighter No 2.
29. DSA Freedom Fighter No 3.
30. DSA Freedom Fighter No 5.
31. ibid.
32. DSA Freedom Fighter No 3.
33. ibid.
34. Freedom Fighter No 3.

FREEDOM NEEDS FREE ENTERPRISE
7. ECC & the Commercial Press in Natal

A study of the constraints faced by the campaign in attempting to get coverage for its activities and issues.

The recent history of relations between the ECC and local press is reviewed and future possibilities are considered.
The ECC and the Commercial Press in Natal

The status of the ECC vis-à-vis the commercial press is uncertain and, not surprisingly, no newspaper has been known to issue editorial policy with regard to the ECC. Questions put to a reporter on a Durban daily newspaper in June 1987 - a reporter who placed himself (and the younger staffers) considerably to the left of the discernible editorial policy of his paper - elicited responses that, in the main, conformed to the findings of Warren Breed about social control in the newsroom (1). At the time of the imposition of the state of emergency, in June 1986 and for months following, said the reporter, no ECC stories appeared in the Daily News. This was explained by the fear of state action for "undermining or bringing into disrepute the system of compulsory military conscription". The mere mention of the ECC, it was feared, might constitute a breach of emergency regulations. Only later, when the ECC made use of a legal advisor, was this misconception corrected.

The reporter's assertions are supported to an extent by actual figures from the Natal Mercury and Witness over the 12 month period from 12 June 1985 to 12 June 1986 during which time the ECC was mentioned in 52 stories. Incredibly, in the following 12 month period (to 12/6/87), the figure is again 52. In that the organisation is now a year older - and by that is meant larger and more politically significant - this does represent something of a falling off of coverage. More telling, however, are figures for the months before and after the declaration of the state of emergency (on 12 June 1986): in the month 12 May 1986 - 12 June 1986 the ECC appeared in 8 stories. Among these were reports on the information war between the ECC and the National Students Federation (31/5/86), on the ECC's acting against the Aida Parker Newsletter (3/6/86) and on a Natal University address by an ECC spokesperson (5/6/86). A quite different picture is presented in the month commencing 12/6/86, in which the ECC was mentioned only twice. On 14 June 1986 the Campaign was touched upon in a Mercury editorial and on 30 June the fact of the ECC offices being set alight in Durban was briefly mentioned in an unrest "wrap-up". Clearly the fear of breaching Emergency regulations held sway in this period.

Several ECC stories written by the reporter interviewed had been "spiked" but that (spiking) "happens all the time" and although he himself - like most reporters, he said - questioned the non-appearance of stories he felt "strongly" about, he had not done this with any ECC stories. "If the sub-editor on duty views the piece as politically contentious, that is really the end of the argument. Prejudice against the ECC, especially at the paper's senior level, runs high. This respondent felt that a preferable strategy would be to hope that the next time one submits potentially "contentious" copy a more accommodating sub would be on duty. The interviewee was quite clear on the point that a reputation for "hassling the subs" was quickly earned by those who repeatedly questioned the decision to spike stories, and such a reputation would quite likely retard prospects of career..."
Vlok says ANC using End Conscription Campaign

mobility.

In months following December 1986 news stories regarding the ECC appeared rather more frequently, but comment, or an attempt to draw out the Campaign's message was still, it seemed, not tolerated (although, perhaps due to the occasional "accomodating sub", these do sneak through). While projects such as "Peace Park" have been reported, this was allowed, stated the interviewee, because that same message is concealed by emphasis on the community or welfare factors (without, as shall be seen, providing any link between the projects and the ECC's concept of community service as an alternative to military service). The interviewee provided an illuminating example: "When the ECC sent out those pseudo call-up papers, one of the people they sent to was Arthur Morris of the Civic Action League who was suitably outraged. A story then appeared which was angled on Morris' outrage. To me this means that the angle was generated by the reporter and because of that angle the story easily found its way into the paper".

Reiterating the presence of prejudice that sometimes even takes the ECC to be "immoral and subversive", the interviewee said the prevailing perception amongst senior staff is that the ECC isn't to be taken seriously" and is not considered of great "news value" (a term he conceded could mean "just about anything"). The ECC's position is "difficult to state because the ECC's position is, of necessity, wishy-washy", the interviewee said.

It may be more realistic to say that the ECC's message, far from being "wissy-washy", is confrontational and strikes at the core of the apartheid state's stability/maintenance. Until the establishment of the ECC there was no national organisation that challenged the military service ethos. The threat to national confidence posed by the ECC has had to be suppressed by the state: the extensive regulations and restrictions imposed since 1985 have forced the ECC and other oppositional organisations to conceal their 'subversive' practices and policies. In their bid to remain beyond prosecution under present laws the ECC has had to adopt an inoffensive - or "wissy-washy" - profile and thus forgo a great deal of potential publicity. Moreover, editorial policy of a certain nature is evident in the fact that the ECC has been treated at one remove by the press: i.e., by the fact that an uncontentious (or 'hurray') news angle should exist (or be manufactured) in order for the organisation to be reliably and frequently reported in the commercial press. Whether it be news of a community project or news of detained ECC members, it is apparent that central ECC policies/issues are being either obscured or actively suppressed.

The Durban commercial newspaper most accommodating to the ECC is the Sunday Tribune. A senior staff member admitted an initial hesitancy on the Tribune's part towards the ECC but said this was essentially due to lack of information. Once representatives of the Campaign had met with and presented their case to members of the paper's editorial staff their sympathy to the ECC cause had grown. (Among those who had made representation to the Tribune, the interviewee emphasised, were ECC legal spokespersons who had allayed fears of the unlawfulness of the anti-conscription message). No policy regarding the ECC had ever formally been devised, our interviewee said, but conceded that
generally, "We are sympathetic to the ECC because their principles are grounded in individual choice. We believe people should have a free choice - our policy is the policy of the greatest freedom of choice. It's in that way that we might appear supportive of the ECC. Of course individual staff members may be overtly supportive while others may in fact be anti the campaign."

"Immorality and subversive" is the view of the ECC held by several senior newspaper people, said the reporter on the daily paper, and something approaching immoral and subversive is the perception of the ECC that manifests itself in an editorial published in the Natal Mercury (29/8/86). The redefinition of religious objection to conscription is the base from which the writer launches a fierce - and facetious - assault on the ECC. Fundamental to the comment presented is what Herbert Gans calls "The Nation as a Unit", by which he means that anything threatening the 'unit' is newsworthy. In this case such a threat is provided by the ECC, and the not-so-hidden agenda is to thoroughly discredit the organisation. Gans's notion of the newsworthiness of social disorder is also pertinent. "Peaceful demonstrations on college campuses, especially elite ones, are usually more newsworthy than those in factories or prisons"(2). In that much of the ECC's support is seen to come from the white, that is, petty bourgeois student population its threat to order is rarely identified by the Natal press.

The above mentioned editorial's writer assumes a patronising tone; and by situating the ECC in something like the context generally afforded student activists, what Roland Barthes(4) would call the 'myth of the student' -- naively hysterical (or 'trendy lefties' as common sense vernacular might have it), he attempts to legitimise his contempt and derision. The opening paragraph ("As was only to be expected reaction from the ECC was loud and long") and, more pointedly, the use of "pouted" in the second paragraph are directed to this end.

Lumping it

AS WAS only to be expected, reaction from the End Conscription Campaign to a move to tighten up the definition of religious objection to military service was loud and long.

Far from tightening anything up, its spokesperson pouted, the government should be broadening the scope of conscientious objection: many young men experience a 'severe moral dilemma' because of conscription.

For our part, we do not know about that.

We acknowledge there are those who have genuine objections to taking up arms. But we believe most of our youngsters willingly sacrifice the two years of their lives they have to serve in the forces because they realise that, given the times we're in, there is no alternative.

We all know the Permanent Force is not big enough; we all know we need a Citizen Force - and we all know that if together they are to form an adequate Defence Force, there has to be national service.

We might not like-it, but is there any real alternative to lumping it?

And we believe we're right when we say that's the attitude of those who have lumped it, are lumping it - and will lump it.
The writing is conversational - it suggests that the writer knows exactly who his reader is, and is confident of the authority he will have with that reader.

According to anthropologist Levi-Strauss, relations are expressed through the isolation of fundamental oppositions. The most effective propaganda will usually make use of the 'Us/Them' opposition, and that opposition emerges in the Mercury's editorial. Placing the ECC firmly in the 'Them' camp, the writer seems to sense the untenability of his position when he begins to speak of "our youngsters". His belief that "most of our youngsters willingly sacrifice the two years of their lives ... because they realise that, given the times we're in, there is no alternative") is delivered with the confidence that it will go unchallenged. But by stating it as he does his intention -- to discredit the ECC -- is made apparent. He falls short of stating that the ECC might encourage "our boys" to abandon their duty to their country (because of the faith articulated in the quote above). What is untenable, however, and what undermines his argument, is that he creates a site of conflict between the ECC - which argues for the freedom to choose - and the willing conscripts who, it is spuriously suggested, have that freedom and exercise it.

Implicit in this argument is a willingness to accept militarisation as a solution to the problems of the "times we're in". Also evident, however, is a sense of resignation that seems the product of an acceptance of the ineffectuality of liberal protest or resistance. ("We might not like it but is there any real alternative to lumping it?"). In this we can detect the operation of something resembling the myth of "Neither-Norism" (5) which Barthes describes:

the stating of two opposites and balancing the one by the other so as to reject them both. (I want neither this nor that.) It is on the whole a bourgeois figure, for it relates to a modern form of liberalism. We find here the figure of the scales: reality is first reduced to analogues: then it is weighed: finally, equality having been ascertained, it is got rid of.

The Mercury editorial writer acknowledges ultimately that compulsory conscription may be odious, but, it is explicit; even more odious is the institutional challenging of it by the ECC.

Beneath this, in fact at a subliminal level, sits the ultimate polarity or 'Us/Them' opposition. This is the polarity between (i) the apartheid state/capitalist relations of the present day (which allow for the 'press freedom' which - supposedly - exists in essence but is only, and necessarily, compromised by the emergency regulations, and is represented by the reasonable, responsible, authoritative figure of the independent commentator, the newspaper editor), and (ii) their assailant, the 'revolutionary onslaught' (embodied in the words, "given the times we're in there is no alternative") with its socialist orientation, which promises totalitarian press/speech control.

This editorial, which, as stated above, carries strong assumptions about its reader and so is in the form of a narrowcast code(6), is an unambiguous vilification of the ECC and the most direct (and extreme) articulation of commercial press attitudes to the organisation that could be found in the South African English press bar The Citizen.
At this point it is worth making mention of an editorial that appeared in the Mercury a year before the one under discussion and which illustrates the shift in sentiment and is indicative of the strengthening of hegemonic control achieved by the "Red under every bed"-type scare that accompanied the state of emergency. It also is suggestive of the wavering attitudes displayed by the commercial press in regard to areas or expressions of dissent that might at one time be construed as permissible within the universe of civil rights and free speech and at another time be seen as dangerously subversive and to be rightfully suppressed. Entitled, "The Question Remains" (10.9.85), the editorial deals directly with the conscription issue in a way that would seem unthinkable a year later. By no means supportive of the ECC, this editorial does not manifest the insinuence of the later one under discussion; the ECC in fact makes its presence felt here almost incidentally (the article begins by reporting the detention of ECC members "hours after the Deputy Minister of Defence had alleged that it (the ECC) was being 'used' by the African National Congress"). The writer bemoans the loss of freedoms of speech (implied by the detention of ECC members) but is in no doubt as to the need for an army: "The need to maintain a strong Defence Force at the foot of an unstable continent in a dangerous and cynical world is hardly in dispute", he writes in the third paragraph. And in the fifth paragraph the ECC is firmly challenged but without the acrimony that suffuses the later piece: "But simply to call for an end to conscription without first forging a shield for the nation is, to quote the leader of the opposition, Dr van Zyl Slabbert, "dangerously naive, romantic simplistic and counter-productive." The final paragraph, however, contrasts sharply with, that "the times we're in" tone which is the foundation of the later piece. The ECC's message is, as I have intimated, ultimately rebutted here but the sense of "the enemy within" is not so conclusively erected: "If political solutions are not found soon to bring peace to the townships and end the SADF's presence there, then the Government must expect that growing numbers of young white conscripts will question their role in being required to defend such a society."

The interviewed reporter's belief that he, and the younger reporters generally, stood to the left of discernible editorial policy is given credence by the fact that news stories dealing with the ECC, while few in number, are generally quite neutral and sometimes even overtly supportive. It would seem that the reporters who file stories on the ECC are those who have a predisposition to the Campaign's message, while others, in their indifference or hostility to the ECC, appear to choose to ignore it altogether.

In April 1986 the Natal Mercury published two decidedly sympathetic ECC stories. On 12 May 1986 a small feature on the ECC "community campaign" appeared. Sympathetically headlined "Youngsters Lend a Hand", the bulk of the story was taken up by comments by an ECC organiser, and the article ended with the provision of contact phone numbers for readers interested in helping in the project. Serving almost as an advertisement for the "community campaign" the story was edited so as not to be at all contentious. Whether this was in line with editorial conservatism or due to the fear of alienating readers who are antagonistic to the ECC is unclear, but certainly neither the headline nor the story's introductory blurb make any mention of the ECC. Further, the conscription issue is not touched on at all and the "community campaign's" official title ("Working for a Just Peace") is conspicuous by its absence.
The Cost of the War

More confrontational is a conventional news type story that appeared on 17 May 1986, with the headline "Tell Us How Many Refused Military Training, says ECC". In that this story is comprised totally of the reported words of the ECC National Secretary, it is undoubtedly slanted in the Campaign’s favour. When contrasted with the "Youngsters Lend A Hand" story -- which avoided the conscription issue in order to endorse the ECC and thereby attract a wider audience -- this story which includes three (out of a total of eight) paragraphs devoted to the "Just Peace" campaign and community service as an alternative to military service, is a startlingly direct presentation of the ECC message. (But we should note that the focus of the story -- a call to the Minister of Defence -- is deviated from in order to incorporate the community service content of the story).

In this story, as well as one published on 14 December 1986, comments from the ECC are the only ones that are presented. While the "Youngsters Lend A Hand" is a story in the conventional sense and therefore has no need for opposing or balancing viewpoints, the "Tell us How Many..." story and the December '86 story (neutrally headlined, "13 detained in swoop on ECC") both make use of comments from ECC spokespersons only. The latter story, unlike both of the others, is more obviously 'major' news and is published by the Mercury via the SAPA wire service. The paper itself is performing a relaying service only - none of its own staff play a part in the reporting of this news. The effect the story produces, however, is sympathy towards the ECC, and this is due mainly to the fact that although the facts are reported absolutely factually (with full details of the identities of those detained, and where and when the detentions took place etc) it is only the comments of an ECC spokesperson which are reproduced. Moreover, the final paragraph has the effect of turning the reader's attention to the unjustness of the emergency regulations (and displaying at a subliminal level the ease by which the regulations may be used to victimise oppositional groups): "He (ECC spokesperson) said more than 60 ECC members had been detained since the emergency but not one had been charged with any offence."

With the introduction of television in 1976, the South African press survived the consequent financial crisis with difficulty (7). This has resulted in the closure of some newspapers but more often in the streamlining of staff down to an absolute minimum. Because rationalisation generally takes place at the lower ranks first, it is the younger reporters - those more noticeably to the ideological left of the company - who are retrenched, necessarily resulting in a subtle swing to the right as the papers increasingly come to reflect the attitudes of senior staff. Thus the dissemination of the ECC message becomes ever more difficult, and the organisation has to rely increasingly on the wire services and major news, and the erratic 'sneaking through' of stories. The implications of this for the Campaign generally, but more specifically for its regional offices and regional projects, are, of course, severe.
Notes and References

1. Breed, W. 1955: "Social Control in the Newsroom: A Functional Analysis", Social Forces 33 1955 pp 326 - 335. "Ideally there would be no problem of either 'control' or 'policy' on the newspaper in a full democracy. The only controls would be the nature of the event and the reporter's effective ability to describe it. In practice we find the publisher does set news policy, and this policy is usually followed by members of his staff." (p. 326).


3. Ibid. p. 58


8. Strategy and the Future

A brief discussion of some of the implications for the client of the findings of the researchers.

The constraints imposed by the ECC's umbrella nature and internal democratic functioning mean that this piece can at most serve as a stimulus for debate, rather than a recommendation.
Strategy and the Future

The importance of the ECC's contribution to progress in South Africa depends on the strategies it chooses, and these depend upon the ways in which situations are analysed by the Campaign's members. Therefore it is important that the ECC's internal decision-making processes are informed not only by the perceptions and opinions of members whose primary political motivation is anti-apartheid, but also by wider anti-apartheid input. This can (and does) occur through overlapping membership with other progressive organisations, or through organised liaison with such organisations. From the interviews done for this study, it seems that generally, At Ease staff did not communicate much with other organisations.

Although the ECC's status as an autonomous, democratically organised body constituted within the 'white' population sector, and its vulnerability to repressive state action, make it difficult to associate with other progressive movements, it should still be possible to improve communication with members of such organisations. At Ease could be an important medium for such communication. However, this should be read in conjunction with the discussion of censorship policies (elsewhere in this Report).

A central issue to be confronted when considering the strategic position of the ECC is that of contradictions within its ranks. Not only do various sectors of membership hold conflicting views - for example the radical/liberal divide over whether (crudely stated) racial capitalism must be replaced by socialism or by non-racist capitalism - but the membership, as a whole, is drawn from sectors of the population which have been and are beneficiaries of apartheid and/or capitalism. No doubt this is one area where the diverse membership of the ECC cannot expect to reach consensus, but this does not mean it should not appear on the agenda. Members of the public will not easily trust an organisation they perceive as blindly acting against its (and their) self-interest, even if they recognise the moral superiority of its arguments. Thus it is important to communicate a coherent response or set of responses to this sort of "playing with fire" accusation.

A starting point for one such response is suggested by the popularity of ECC among students and youth. Although this is explained in part by the relatively liberal environment on the 'English' campuses, another important factor is the fact that young people are not yet firmly integrated into the economy. This means that many of them see themselves as having less to gain from short-term continuation of the status quo, and more to lose in the event of its violent demise than, say, their parents do. This is borne out by the high incidence of emigration amongst tertiary-educated people under 30. Of course the existence of conscription and low-intensity civil war contribute to this 'brain drain' problem, to an extent which is not yet properly studied, but is obvious to many ECC members and supporters, and potential ones.

An argument could be articulated from this basis, along the lines that
older generations of (middle and upper class, mostly white) South Africans, as well as foreign investors, are defending their immediate material interests by manipulating young white men not only at the expense of the exploited masses, but also to the detriment of the long-term chances of all young people to grow older in a peaceful, just society (whether one believes this will take the form of non-racial capitalism, socialism or a mixed economy). Such an argument need not depict the old as the 'enemies' of the young any more than the rich are 'enemies' of the poor. As a group, perhaps - but individuals can 'redeem' themselves (in this case, by supporting the ECCI).

In this way the Campaign can begin to do more than simply react defensively to state propaganda and dominant ideology. Without some strategy of this kind, it could well be forced into a relatively insignificant position as the country's people become more polarised and those who are reluctant to choose sides are forced into silence, hiding or exile. Already, tens of thousands of conscripts have chosen the non-solutions of exile and 'life on the run' - a form of internal exile involving frequent changes of address and of jobs, and often loss of contact with friends and family. Yet many such people have no idea of themselves as an oppressed group - rather, they tend to be ashamed of having joined the 'chicken run' or become 'draft dodgers'. If the Campaign let them feel that it spoke for them, a new sector of support would emerge.

Likewise, many conscripts who fall foul of military discipline are either forced into the role of criminals, often to the point of chronic destructive rage directed at themselves and those around them, or made to feel defective/inadequate ("Hulle kannie die punch vat nie"). Were such people offered a place in an honourable, constructive attempt to change the conditions which oppressed them and others, many would respond.

This poster of two Hippos is one of a series which have appeared recently in northern suburbs.
Distribution of At Ease

Present Situation

During 1986/7 7000 copies were usually been printed for each issue, of which about 4000 were mailed out at a cost of about R800. Most of the remainder were distributed arbitrarily on the campuses of University of Natal, Durban and the Natal Technikon. Remaining copies were handed out at ECC tables, at the amphitheater and on the windscreens of cars "parked in appropriate places, like outside a play that is about the military" (Gary Cullen). Distribution takes about 3 weeks after printing - quite an interval. A few copies are sent to other ECC regions.

Problems

No information is available on the efficacy of the distribution patterns as there is no feedback mechanism. This applies especially to the mailing which accounts for more than half of each edition and most of the cost of distribution, especially since the mailing list has been arrived at by merging of other (e.g. Durban Arts) lists. Thus we do not know which people or how many simply regard At Ease as 'junk mail'.

There are no defined distribution roles: "Generally it is a case of roping in everybody who can be gathered to do some of it, and then it's here and there and the thing starts going out" (Gary Cullen).

Suggestions

In the short term, something must be done to revise the mailing list. Some kind of survey (perhaps in the form of a competition with a prize as incentive to reply, or perhaps in the form of a phone-in, which takes less time/effort/expense than a written response) should be done to establish who reads At Ease, how much they read and what they think of it. In order to maintain a continued feedback mechanism, a letters page should be introduced.

Consideration should be given to the idea of charging a nominal price (e.g. 20c). This has its pros and cons and could be tested. People on the mailing list might be asked to subscribe.

In the longer term, attention should be given to the re-structuring of distribution methods. For a start, links should be established with other organisations, not only those strictly within the 'national democratic struggle' but also the social justice committees of churches, youth groups, and the like. Agreements should be sought such as exchange of mailing lists, mutual distribution of publications, and so on.

The other aspect of re-structuring the distribution network lies within ECC - the role of its members. (This recommendation should be seen as inseparable from the recommendation elsewhere in this Report that newsgathering be restructured.) Because of the importance of this process, we must look at similar situations faced by other progressive publications, and strategies they have adopted.
Unlike the commercial press, which is manipulative and consumerist, the progressive press is democratic and interactive. This means that community communicational skills are developed. Not only are community representatives involved in production, but "couriers who deliver the paper from door to door are asked to get to know their readers, listen to their responses, and find out what they would like to see in the paper. A relationship of trust is thus built up between publishers and readers"(1). Even simple things like greeting people in a friendly way while distributing can be important in gaining acceptance. Even experienced activists find distribution useful in keeping in touch with what people are thinking. Sometimes activists even read through publications with people and have seminars around them.

Of course it is realised that ECC activists come from, and work within, different communities from those which sustain most progressive publications. But the sorts of strategy mentioned above not only democratise (and thereby avoid the one-way 'commercial' model of communication) but can also spread the responsibility for distribution and increase its efficiency. ECC should, therefore, try to adapt such principles to its particular situation.

Attention should be given to the issue of wider distribution than just the Durban area.

Reference

Some Suggestions on Layout

In order to enlarge the readership At Ease must be as visually enticing and interesting as possible. The At Ease readership is surely of the under 35 age group and to achieve the optimum effect with regard to this group an upbeat, spirited and dynamic design is essential. Particular attention should be paid to the following:

1. TYPEFACE: Should be altered to the more readable TIMES NEW ROMAN, which is used by most commercial newspapers. The type should be standardised to 10 or 11 point size and the magazine should make use of 5 (or even better, 4) paragraphs per page.

2. HEADLINES: Size and type can vary. The headline should draw the reader in - a good idea is for it to have a twist or 'a good ring' and should not be too literal. Headlines and subheads should be in both upper and lower case (the first letter of the word being upper case). Stories should be broken up with sub-heads/quotes, etc; paragraphs must not be too lengthy - this makes it tedious for the reader who will be discouraged from persisting with the story. Also, the most important content of the story must be located within the first paragraph.

An important aspect of the visual thrust is a sense of continuity or journal identity. Effective methods of achieving this are: a regular cartoon; editorial comment in a regular slot and in a consistent format; a letters page.

3. GRAPHICS: Are of crucial importance. At least 30% of a page should be taken up by photos/graphics. If one colour is used - red has been used up to now - it should be exploited effectively, perhaps with shades of that colour being used to highlight an area, a box or a headline (a good example of this is the "GRENSVEGTER" headline on the 2nd last page of At Ease vol 2 no 2). Red, however, like yellow, does not stand out, so some other colour should be used. The reader's attention is drawn naturally to the right hand side of the paper rather than the left so the left page should be especially striking. Inside pages should offer a visual balance and 'dog's legs' style should be avoided as this breaks reading continuity.

4. PHOTOS: More good photographs should be used especially alongside an article on somebody. A means of ensuring good photographic reproduction at the printing stage should be devised.

5. Pages should be numbered.

6. There should be a maximum of 5 columns. The spacing should be standardised and not too wide.

7. At Ease generally should be more offensive, less defensive.

8. Technical errors like the omission of the address of At Ease, the writers of its columns and other credits place the paper in an unnecessarily vulnerable legal position. These should be avoided.
Content Analysis: Comment and Recommendations

Finding a method to measure the success (or readability) of the content of At Ease is the major problem faced by those who produce it. Although a letters column did once exist, there is currently no mechanism by which responses to the paper may be fed back. Consequently, it is impossible to say how much of the issue is favourably received, or indeed, even read.

At Ease is almost exclusively news based. News gathering operates in various, non-routine ways: commercial newspapers are, of course, a chief source of news, and many of the national stories that make their way into At Ease are forwarded to the Durban ECC office for publication.

Because At Ease has appeared on a quite irregular basis it seems inevitable that news will dominate. This, however, represents a problem: At Ease presents itself as a newspaper and not a newsletter (which comes with the connotations of a 'club' and is sent to members only) and, we believe, readers may refuse - at an unconscious level - to accept the authenticity of a newspaper that appears so infrequently. A newspaper needs to engage its readers (as opposed to a newsletter which serves quite different functions). The reader will, however, more easily accept a magazine on these different terms (i.e. less frequent publication than a newspaper), news being only one of several features of a magazine.

At Ease might be more successful if it acquired some of the characteristics of a magazine. More care needs to be taken on feature stories, and perhaps regular columns should be developed. Some of the At Ease workers interviewed expressed their willingness to see At Ease broaden its subject matter. Arts/culture (perhaps book/theatre/music/film reviews etc) would be the areas of most potential as they would serve the tastes of the people who are most likely to receive the publication. Conscription as the sole issue of At Ease could be strayed from here, which may help attract the reader who is unhappy with or regards as tedious the unceasing military related copy. As it stands, At Ease is simply not very interesting to any but the committed ECC-type and his opposite on the right-wing. By spreading the interest value of At Ease the ECC message will have a better opportunity for dissemination.
AN ANALYSIS OF THE RULING OF THE PUBLICATIONS APPEAL BOARD,
CASE 80/87 (AT EASE - APRIL '87)

A "Committee on Publications" found the April 1987 edition of At Ease undesirable giving the following reasons: that the publication reported inter alia on the trial of conscientious objector Philip Wilkinson, on a new campaign, and various ECC matters; that it contained material which (in the Committee's opinion) would weaken the will of young South Africans and therefore strengthen SWAPO; that (the humorous column) "Grensvechter" "put in a ludicrous light" the "forces fighting revolution and violence"; that (in the Committee's opinion) the publication would "sap the morale of those who must do military service" and was "prejudicial to the safety of the state and to peace and good order."

The Directorate of Publications judgement against this decision may be summarised as follows: the publication emphasises the injustice of conscription in contemporary South Africa, and calls for individual choice of whether to serve in the SADF. It seems aimed at young people including young men still having military obligations, and such people would be influenced by this publication so as to believe conscription to be morally wrong. Such publications will damage the morale of people who must serve or are serving in the SADF. The publication does not directly discourage rendering of military service. Nor does it encourage any violence or crime. Therefore it is not undesirable in terms of article 47 (z)(e).

THE APPEAL BOARD'S POSITION

The Appeal Board considers public debate on the issue of conscription permissible. It considers presenting the 'security forces' in a poor light and casting doubt on government policy regarding unrest to be permissible, even if accomplished by a "one-sided presentation of facts". The Board's position rests on the fact that legal provision is made for steps against anybody who persuades or attempts to persuade someone not to render service, or influences servicemen so that a significant number of them avoid service or so that their dedication/motivation is harmed such that the efficiency of the SADF is affected.

THE RULING

The Board found that although the publication contained material which could influence servicemen it would not have enough "impact" to harm the efficiency of the SADF. Some of the articles in it gave the impression of naivety and lack of balance. The one-sidedly presented facts were nonetheless common knowledge. The publication seemed not to be aimed at a wide readership and the chances were that those servicemen who would be 'detrimentally' influenced were those already not inclined to render service. The appeal was thus upheld, since the Board is mandated to concern itself with the content of the publication and not the possible long term effects of exposure to such material.
IMPLICATIONS

One of the main factors preventing At Ease from being acted against by the state is the belief of the Board that the publication has limited effectiveness. The possibility then, is that if at some stage At Ease appears to the members of the Board to have become more effective, even if by such apparently legitimate means as appealing to a wider readership, it could reverse its decision. In addition, it must be borne in mind that the Board's presence as an ultimate (though limited) restraint, does not reduce the effectiveness of such classical tactics as a ban by a Committee on Publications, followed by the halting of distribution and other harassment based on the ban, while the appeal to the Board is pending. Unlike the Board, the Committees are not publicly accountable and their membership is not publicised. Furthermore, of course, the State of Emergency empowers 'members of security forces' with what amounts to carte blanche in circumventing 'normal' procedures.

It would therefore seem that in strategising, At Ease and ECC members should not be too preoccupied with what state agents may legally do, but rather with what they actually are doing, since, in dealing with At Ease and ECC, they generally appear to act more 'tolerantly' than they are compelled to. This should not be accepted as mere good luck, since (a) it could be reversed in response to changes of the socio-political scene, and (b) by understanding the present rationale, state strategy can be more effectively countered. Unfortunately in the absence of any 'counter-intelligence' activities we are forced to resort to speculative interpretation in seeking such understanding.

A starting point in such speculation is the suggestion elsewhere in this report that in order to foster the impression amongst the white electorate that the State of Emergency is 'working', the emphasis in action against the ECC has shifted from legal repression to smear tactics, with the possibility of 'privatised'(ie. vigilante) repressive action as an option should the threat posed to dominant ideology become too great.