Ideology/Culture/Hegemony and Mass Media in South Africa : A Literature Survey

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The South African press has been the subject of numerous books and articles in recent years, couched within a wide range of paradigms (1). In contrast, studies of broadcasting are less plentiful and much more frag- mented (2). Journalism has been taught at the University of South Africa and four Afrikaans language universities, the first of which launched a course in 1960, and at only one English language university since 1970. Until recently, little progress has been made academically because most com- mentaries identified their academic principles with the dominant Nationalist interests of the time. Other than the published work of Elaine Potter (3), Les Switzer (4) and Belinda Bozzoli (5), remaining studies, which form the bulk of the work done, evidence little or no understanding of the complexi- ties of historical, social, economic or political relationships which have given rise to the existing structure of the South African press and broadcasting media.

The increasing interest shown by radical social scientists in the role of the media and its relationship to class formation and maintenance in South Africa has been identified in a new generation of radical journals - *Critical Arts, Africa Perspective, Perspectives in Education* and *Work in Progress*. Most of this work has been firmly located within the Althusserian problematic, the limitations of which have become increasingly evident to those contributing to the debate. The present authors are seeking to broaden this approach by drawing on theoretical work emanating from sources which have hitherto been underutilized by South African analysis of the media. More specifically, the realization that *"neither culturalism nor structuralism will do"* (6) has led to the need to rethink the notion of ideology, drawing on other current materialist approaches in the process.

It would seem that three major strands need to be taken account of:

(1) Theories of ideology, science and epistemology associated with French structuralist Marxism as exemplified by Louis Althusser, Ettiene Balibar and Nicos Poulantzas;

(2) Allied tendencies in the analysis of socialist-humanist cultural studies, as evidenced in the work stimulated by Raymond Williams, Edward Thompson and others; and

(3) The rediscovery, among Anglo Saxon academics, of the work of second generation Marxist theorists, notably Antonio Gramsci who provides salient insights into the ideological/cultural question.

The programme of the Centre for Cultural Studies of the University of Birmingham, a pioneering force in media studies, has drawn on all three of

the above elements. Different theories have been assigned varying degrees of importance within the individual projects constituting this programme. While their more open ended formulations have come to grips with previously neglected areas, their solutions apply mainly to the narrow area of concern which demarcates the state/media inter-relationship. Our own approach, while being influenced by the Birmingham work, tends to place greater emphasis on both the economic and ideological aspects of the media than are reflected in the Centre's publications.

This survey aims:

1. To examine and offer tentative evaluations of the ideology/hegemony/culture debates;

2. In the light of these debates, to attempt to show how the reporter obscures actual conditions of existence and ignores social processes, by drawing on theories of consensual bias and gatekeeping; and

3. To situate the journalist in South Africa within the relevant strands of the current ideological/cultural/hegemonic matrix.

IDEOLOGY/CULTURE/HEGEMONY

Any discussion of the mass media would have to be rooted within the ideological/cultural/hegemonic matrix, as well as paying careful attention to the way in which the economic organization of the media affect their work. The literature is replete with examples of studies which, while providing empirical evidence, rarely couch an interpretation of this detail within a theoretical or contextual framework located within the fabric of society. As a consequence, only a minority of these studies are able to link their data with ongoing social, political and economic processes occurring within the social formation as a whole. Neither are they able to explain how the media actively contribute to the creation or maintenance of a particular class structure.

Structuralism and Ideology

Most of the work on ideology in the French structuralist school was undertaken by Louis Althusser, who defines ideology as:

> the 'lived' relation between men and their world ... In ideology men do indeed express, not the relation between themselves and their conditions of existence, but the way they live the relation between them and their conditions of existence (7).

The central question for Althusser's investigation is how class societies reproduce themselves. Although it is clear that the class structure is secured primarily through the relations of production within the places of employment, Althusser tends to emphasise the ideological and political conditions of reproduction. At all three levels within the social formation (the ideological, political and economic), the state intervenes in an attempt to secure the conditions for the working class to submit to the requirements of capital. Apart from the traditionally theorised Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA's), for instance, the police, the military and the civil service, Althusser postulates additional state mechanisms - the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA's), for example, the church, the institution of the family, schools, media and the like.

It is immaterial whether these ISA's juridically belong to the state or to private enterprise, since "What matters is how they function. 'Private'

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institutions can perfectly well 'function' as ideological 'state apparatuses'" (8). Through ideology these apparatuses function to reproduce submission to the rules of the established order, to give currency to the world view of the ruling classes and to make that dominant ideology the 'common sense' of all the classes within the social formation.

Expanding the concept of 'functioning by ideology', Althusser puts foreward three theses on ideology. In the first of these, he postulates that "ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (9). This imaginary relationship supercedes the Marxist notion of "false consciousness": it is 'lived', and therefore, in as far as the individual subject experiences it, a real and objective relationship. In his second thesis, he states that ideology has a "material existence" (10). Ideology can only exist within a set of actual practices, that is, within a state apparatus. It is in this sense that each ISA is the realization of an ideology, and that the unity of the various ISA's with one another is ensured by their mutual subjection to the same dominant ideology. It follows that each individual, through his 'lived relations' represented in his ideology, takes part in the practices and rituals which constitute a concrete ideological apparatus, thus recognizing himself as a subject of that ideological apparatus - be it a religious organization, a political party, or the reader of a particular newspaper. This introduces the central concept in the functioning of ideology: the subject. Thus, Althusser's third thesis is that "ideology interpellates (or constitutes) individuals as subjects" (11). Interpellation is the chief mechanism through which ideology is propogated. Every concrete ideological practice 'hails', that is, identifies individuals as particular subjects. The practice of Nationalism, for instance, constitutes individuals as 'good citizens'. The individuals who implicitly recognise themselves in this role, act out the ideological practices associated with it.

This recognition of what appears to be a natural fact, is in reality an ideological recognition of a seemingly self-evident situation imposed by ideology. Thus, paradoxically, when a subject believes him,or herself to be free of the determinations of ideology and to be motivated only by what he or she sees as 'common sense', it is precisely at that time that he/she is working by and through ideology.

In summary, the structuralists view ideology as:

> ... an objective structure of the social formation which is imposed upon them by a mechanism they do not understand, a mechanism which determines that structure as the objective mode of appearance of reality (12).

Ideology can only be manifested in material apparatuses and practices, and these apparatuses are determined and developed by the ruling class through the intervention of the state, and the dominant ideology.

Critique of Althusser

While not denying the importance of Althusser's contribution to our understanding of ideology, numerous deficiencies have been identified by various commentators, of which three are pertinent to our analysis:

The first difficulty lies in the application of his categories to concrete situations because of his insistence on the pre-emanance of theory and the lack of historical method in his work. Althusserianism renders the 'appropriation of the real in thought' particularly difficult by stressing

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only the rationalist side of historical materialism. Such a tendency to-
wards over-abstraction tends to confer an idealistic view of ideology which
makes it almost impossible to apply to any concrete practice, except through
his notions of the ISA's which are themselves inadequate.

One such anomaly pertains to whether the ISA should be considered as
"belong(ing) to the system of the state" (13), or be conceptualised separately.
As previously mentioned, proponents of the former thesis argue that it is
immaterial whether the ISA's "... are public or private - the distinction
having a purely juridical... character, which changes nothing fundamental"
(14). This argument tends to obscure the differences between the ideological
apparatuses of advanced capitalist societies and those of more monolithic
political systems which extend monopolistic control over ideological insti-
tutions. In the former, as Ralph Miliband has argued, ideological apparatu-
ses are more likely to "conceal the degree to which they belong to the
system of power of capitalist society" (15). The concealment makes these
apparatuses more effective in conveying the ideologies of 'free enterprise',
'personal choice' and 'non-state intervention', concepts which are funda-
mental to the reproduction of capitalist relations of production by collapsing
the distinction between the state and the private/public apparatuses.

A second defect concerns the regression into functionalism. For Althusser,
ideology seems to subsume contradictions by all too neatly preparing in-
dividuals to take up their places in the hierarchical division of labour:

> What is correctly understood as a condition or a contingency
> becomes, in the course of the argument, a continuously a-
> chieved outcome. Dominant ideology ... works with all the
> certainty usually ascribed to natural or biological processes
> (16).

Thirdly, a contradictory tendency leads him to produce an account of the prod-
uction of the relations of production in which the level of the economic is
entirely sublimated to the ideological. Ideology thus assumes the mantle of
autonomy. Despite his avowed historical materialist assumptions, Althusser
neglects the force of economic relations which provide the main impulse of
the relations of production.

The imperfections discussed under the latter two points tend to obscure the
importance of conflict, resistence and struggle in any social formation.
Although Althusser acknowledges many of these shortcomings in his *Essay on
Self Criticism*, it is difficult to see how his theory can be salvaged with-
out a radical reformulation of his basic propositions (17).

Theories of Culture

'Cultural Studies', as enunciated in Britain, has drawn on the classical
anthropological definition of 'culture' and invested the term with a much
broader range of concerns which have delved beyond the study of culture
through texts alone. The term 'culture' was assigned an historical dimen-
sion and its previously accepted connotation of universality was questioned
by the concepts of social formation, cultural power, domination, resistance
and struggle. No longer was culture confined to the mainstream of output
from literary and other humanities, but were seen as expressions of "a
constituitive social process, creating specific and different ways of life"
(18).

Two seminal writers of this tradition are Raymond Williams and Edward

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Thompson. Both consistently argue against the base/superstructure distinction, offering alternative formulations for their unification.

Williams refuses to infer any rigorous or systematic separation between culture and other processes. He insists on the importance of totalities which lie behind these differentiations. In place of what he sees as an essentially artificial distinction, he postulates the notion of 'experience', which it seems, embraces a universe of processes. These, he claims, are necessarily obscured by analytical categories (19).

The main weakness of Williams' formulation is the lack of a concrete specificity in his notion of culture. Cultural studies tend to cover a wide ambit of elements of thought, organization, work and leisure, all presented in an extremely heterogeneous and descriptive way. This makes it impossible to undertake any coherent analysis of the relationships between culture and other practices, and forces Williams to insist on their undifferentiated totality. Most seriously, this leads to a persistent neglect of the economic determinations.

EP Thompson, aware of the limitations posed by Williams' theory, and of the necessity to develop a dialectical unity between economics and culture, replaced Williams' earlier definition with a more rigorously materialist formulation: "the study of relationships in a whole way of conflict". Thompson's significance for us lies in his assertion of the centrality of 'values', a category which had been entirely neglected, both by the structuralists and previous economistically inclined Marxist historians. In his work, he stresses the categories of class, class struggle and class-as-relationship, concepts which are central to any analysis of the ways in which ideology works on a concrete level. These categories are, however, not seen in terms of their economic determinations, but rather in terms of the experiences of the individual actors. (20).

A pivotal concern is the quality of human relationships rather than the structuring effect of the economic/social relations of production. This has led to a dilution of his materialist accounts, making them (at one level) indistinguishable from the forms of idealism he so strongly critiqued. Furthermore, by ignoring the economic determinations of class, and relying instead on accounts "from the bottom", Thompson's writings, and those of socialist-humanist historians in his tradition, are only able to take account of class as "class consciousness" and "class organization". Thus, periods of widespread political social/social consensus, in which the ideological process of containment works most effectively, pose particular problems for this kind of analysis. Put differently, in periods of political hegemony when class conflict is sublimated, reliance on participant accounts limits the dynamic of historical materialist analysis.

③ The introduction of the notion of hegemony demands a brief reference to the seminal work of Antonio Gramsci, and more particularly, his notion of the organic intellectual. Gramsci uses three key terms in his cultural/ideological examination.

The first of these is 'common sense', by which he means "the uncritical and largely unconscious way of perceiving and understanding the world that has become "common' in any given epoch" (21).

The second is 'philosophy/ideology'. Gramsci distinguishes between "historically organic ideologies which are necessary to a given structure and ideologies that are arbitrary, rationalistic or 'willed' . The first of

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these has the ability to "'organize' human masses and create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle, etc " while the second "only creates individual 'movements', polemics and so on" (22). Thus, 'ideology' can be thought of as a coherent set of ideas which have a limited ability to transform the ways in which men live out their 'common sense'.

The third term is 'hegemony' which refers to a situation in which a ruling class, or more precisely, an alliance of fractions of the ruling classes, is able not only to coerce subordinate classes to conform to their interests, but to exert "total authority" over the classes. The composition of hegemony is determined by the interests of the various class fractions represented in the "hegemonic bloc". The power it exerts over subservient classes cannot rest solely on force and coercion - it needs to be attained "... without force predominating excessively over consent" (23). The granting of legitimacy to the dominant classes must appear not only spontaneous but also natural and inevitable.

Each class develops, as part of its own reproduction, a "strata of intellectuals ... which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function, not only in the economic, but also in the social and the political fields" (24). The function of these intellectuals, organically linked to their class of origin, is to direct the ideas and inspirations of the class to which they belong. The capitalist entrepeneur, for instance, creates "alongside himself" deputies whose function it is to discover and articulate the needs of the capitalist class and the translate these into more universalised symbolic and political imperatives. The working class too, is capable of developing organic intellectuals from within their own ranks who through the organization of work on the one hand, and a conscious political process on the other, are able to direct the working class away from their defensive stance against incorporation towards a more active pursuit of a counter ideology. It is important to note, however, that Gramsci makes a distinction between 'organic intellectuals', defined in terms of their function in articulating class aspirations, and 'traditional intellectuals', who derive their position through their professional and technical expertize. Generally, argues Gramsci, a member of a subordinate class who attains the status of a traditional intellectual (for example, a lawyer or a journalist), ceases to be organically linked to his class of origin.

Organic intellectuals can only operate when there is a crisis in the hegemonic control of the subordinate classes. This intellectual creates a new discursive site in which the possibilities of alternative social relations are identified. He breaches the contradictions exposed by the hiatus and articulates these before the hegemonic bloc is able to identify and close the gap through ideological or coersive means.

Ideology, Culture and Hegemony: Towards a Resolution

A fundamental problem of the structuralist theories of ideology is that they do not take account of change and resistance. Because they are rooted in a modes of production analysis in which the primary role of ideology is to foster the conditions of production and reproduction, the elements belonging to a particular ideological instance in a concrete situation are theoretically limited. While abstractions of ideology on the theoretical level are invaluable, it is also necessary to be able to apply these analyses empirically. Despite the commanding position of the 'ruling ideas' in any social formation, a diversity of cultural elements outside the mainstream of the dominant ideology do exist. Thus, in order to be fully utilized,

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any theory of ideology must make allowances for resistance, change and counter-ideologies. It is at this level that culturalist theories come into their own. By stressing the moment of self-creation, of active appropriation, they extend our notion of ideology to include the whole spectrum of ideological/cultural expression in a concrete social formation.

The concept of hegemony provides a tools with which to theorize the integration of diverse ideological/cultural strains, and to see the results of breaks and crises within the dominant consenses of society.

Armed with these premises, we will now turn our attention to the concretization of the ideological/cultural/hegemonic instances as they affect, and are exhibited in, the South African mass media.

Ideology and the South African Mass Media

Ideology as we have seen is not a system of ideas imposed from the outside. In the most exhaustive empirical study available on the sociology of news, Herbert Gans claims that journalists tend to identify ideology with political allegiances at the extreme ends of the political spectrum. That is, as "a deliberately thought-out, consistent, integrated and inflexible set of explicit political values, which is determinant on political decisions" (25).

Our use if the term also does not imply the idea commonly held by liberal opponents of apartheid, that is, of a system of ideas which is separate from, and superimposed on, the economic realities of Southern Africa. Liberal ideology argues, for example, that apartheid is an irrational and illogical system of semi-truths which are imposed on South African society by politicians (26). It contends further that this system is economically inefficient as it limits the freedom of the market and prevents economic growth and expansion. This is the view taken by the English and captive black presses in South Africa, as well as a number of social historians such as Adam and Giliomee who simplistically argue that the Afrikaans press emphasises ethnic interests while capitalist growth is the prime concern of the English language press (27).

Apartheid ideology, as articulated by Nationalist politicians and the Afrikaans press does, on the surface, postulate an ethnic rationale. This ideology argues that racial separation is a natural, moral and inevitable condition predicated on cultural and racial differences and moral attitudes. Around this rationale has evolved the entire system of apartheid with its myriad laws which ensure racial segregation. Apartheid theoreticians themselves saw separate development as an ideology which was not to be implemented literally, but rather as the basis of an organic system which could adapt to varying circumstances. According to Rhoodie and Venter:

> the basic elements if the (apartheid) idea do not have a
> detailed series of the practical equivalents in the form
> of concrete apartheid measures ... The *idea* represents the
> common synthesis of the Afrikaner's attitude towards colour.
> This synthesis is not a rigid structure which crystallised
> at a given moment and is incapable of further growth and
> movement (28).

These ideologues thus fulfilled Gramsci's criteria of the organic intellectual, articulating the needs of the classes they represent. Their position is paradoxically similar to that taken by Wolpe (29) and Johnstone (30), among others, who, arguing from a radical standpoint, postulate that apartheid is

not a literal ideology to be literally implemented, but rather a pragmatic system of organization for the maintenance of white prosperity and supremacy. Its key features are labour, educational and income differentials rather than job and movement colour bars. Johnstone, for example, states, "Capitalist business, far from being incompatible with the system, secures high profits through very cheap, unorganised and rightless labour" (31).

The resulting legislation is seen to contribute to cultural, social and racial survival, not only of the dominant group of whites who hold political and economic power, but also of the various other subordinate and tribal groups who reside in South Africa. This ideology explains to those who hold it that each group has a divine right to self-determination and cultural advancement in its 'historically assigned' geographical area. The contradiction which becomes immediately apparent relates to the question of which system of power assumes the right to determine which geographic area and what social structure is morally and inevitably suitable to particular subservient groups. This contradiction is partly resolved through the working of religion (Calvanism) which gives Afrikaners a God-given task to civilize the savage, Christianize him and put him to productive work, while denying him the fruits of full integration into white society because of his racial and cultural differences. This contention is amply illustrated in PW Botha's response to the charge that the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) is un-Christian. He bases his refutation on 'humane' Nationalist Party policies, for example, the provision of housing and education for blacks. Botha clearly sees the DRC and the National Party as being inter-changeable, both in terms of policy and practices (32).

Those scholars who argue that apartheid is an attempt to return blacks to tribalism (33) have clearly misunderstood the nature of the class system which allowed Verwoerd to repeatedly claim that the purpose of apartheid was to encourage full industrial development in the homeland areas but not at the expense of "Bantu national principles". This ideology has, for a long time been supported by the DRC which, through its literal and selective reading of the Scriptures has convinced itself and its adherents that apartheid ideology is a rational, moral and Christian system that is God ordained (34). The nature of this belief has been the subject of a number of different studies. The best known of these is offered by T Dunbar Moodie who explains Afrikanerdom through the postulates of a Weberian analysis which emphasises the notion of civil religion where "God imbues all history with ultimate meaning" (35).

Writing from the inside, De Klerk claims that the Afrikaner does not perceive of apartheid in terms of an oppressive tyranny but rather as the result of a divine task "to restructure the world according to a vision of justice" by means of a "separate nation called by God to create a new humanity" (36).

A different approach is adopted by Adam and Giliomee who espouse the classical sociological identity of race with class and reject the argument that what appears to be a struggle on the surface for ethnic recognition may, at a deeper level of analysis, very well be a manifestation of the class struggle. Developing Glazer and Moynihan's thesis that ethnicity is "a new social category as significant as that of social class itself", they agree that racial and ethnic antagonism should be seen in terms of "group competition for scarce resources" (37). The emphasis on ethnicity misunderstands the nature of the economic system. The essence of the radical position, in contrast, is that the existing social system in South Africa serves the interests of all dominant groups and that racism and

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Persons not politics in the next pew

ALMOST 20 years ago the satirical BBC programme, "That Was The Week That Was", showed a black woman on her knees scrubbing a church floor. A South African policeman rushes up, looks, and says, "All right then, so long as you're not praying."

Today it is not the police who obstruct mixed worship. Sadly, it is the churchgoers themselves.

Yet English-speaking congregations are no longer unaccustomed to black worshippers in their pews. Sometimes even the preacher is black. It is all the more deplorable, therefore, that a coloured domestic has lost her membership of the Gereformeerde Church in Linden, Johannesburg, only a week after it was approved by the church board, because of dissatisfaction among members of the congregation.

That this was the most convenient church for Miss Saartjie Pieterse to attend was not in doubt, nor was her devoutness questioned. The difficulty about accepting her as a member who could take communion was, obviously, her race. In other words, members of the church viewed her, not as a fellow-Christian or as an individual woman, but as a political problem and a racial threat.

It is an attitude which is symptomatic of the failure, not only of the Afrikaner churches, but of all the churches in South Africa, to treat people in the first instance as people.

In a recent article by Professor Johan Heyns in the Sunday Times, the Pretoria University theologian saw the deepest problem in South African society, and therefore also in its politics, as the problem of human relations. This was where he saw the churches, instead of speaking with different voices on every subject from Bonus Bonds to border duty, bringing a message to all South Africa about people, and so calming the mutual fears of black and white.

It is an interesting challenge.

In the meantime, the Linden churchgoers may yet have an opportunity to see themselves, and Saartjie Pieterse, as people. That will be when, if the young woman does not retreat to a church in a distant coloured area, they have to look her in the eye, and find it difficult.

ethnicity offer capital two highly effective instruments for class rule.

Ideology: The Interpellation of 'Subjects'

For those who hold them, liberal and apartheid ideologies are real and therefore objective in character. They are the individual's world view from the inside looking out: they are the sum of people's feelings about themselves as they go about their day-to-day behaviour. Individuals live out this ideology in their everyday lives: it governs one's relations with other people and the environment. It governs family behaviour, attitudes and the obligation to produce. It prescribes who we shall meet under what circumstances and those whom we may not meet, who we shall work with, play and pray with (see box opposite), and those with whom we may not. The ways in which we act and react to one another, the ways in which we work with one another, and the kinds of work we do, are all governed by ideology.

Ideology suggests social roles, class attitudes and religious beliefs. The practice of ideology may be argued to have succeeded when it has produced a 'natural attitude', when for example, the existing hegemonic relations are not only accepted, but perceived precisely as they way things ought to be and will be. Paradoxically, therefore, when the subject believes him or herself to be free of the determinations of ideology, and to be motivated only by what he or she sees as 'common sense', it is at this precise time that the individual is working through and by ideology.

Thus, journalists, by claiming that they are neutral or objective, are, in fact, merely locating themselves within a particular ideology, one that is not aware of itself or how it is deforming and shaping their view of the world. They are able to recognise ideology in others to the right and left of themselves in the political spectrum only because it differs from their own. English speaking journalists are, therefore, able to accuse their Afrikaans counterparts of being ideologues with axes to grind, and who are thereby committed to choosing and reporting stories and sources which advance Nationalist ideological interests. That they themselves are unconsciously doing the same thing is not immediately apparent to the English speaking journalists even when accused in turn by Afrikaans journalists of advancing their own liberal ideology.

It will be recalled that a central function of any ideology is to define the participant or individual as *subject*. This individual moves and lives his life within a particular system of attitudes, behaviour, beliefs, values, class and geographical area. He/she is unaware or intolerant of opposing ideologies or views of the world. Through ideology the subject reinforces his/her recognition of the 'natural' state, of what is moral and immoral, of what is right and wrong. Ideology becomes indiscernable from the way this subject experiences life. Thus perceptions of reality are ideologically determined. An unstylized or raw reality becomes impossible to perceive or comprehend. Although this reality involves people, once it is intercepted by individuals (sociologists, journalists etc) it becomes stylized and distorted through reporting it back to ourselves via the media (press, radio, TV).

It is clear that the journalist's observation of the world on which he must report is mediated through ideology. The way things are seen, what is considered important, believed or not believed are connected to the modes of living and working. All these factors affect interpretations of reality and constitute the imaginary relationships by which the external world is perceived. A single reality accessible to all does not exist. Every

journalist reports on reality from the confines of his/her ideology. Thus
Afrikaner journalists tend to see reality in terms of Nationalism and the
Afrikaner press performing an ethnic function, whereas English language
reporters paint a picture of the world derived from a more liberal and
humanist perspective drawn from the experience of British and American
libertarianism.

Ideology, Consensual Bias and Gatekeeping

Journalists are in the business of reporting news subject to what Gans calls
"considerations", factors which shape the availability of information and
suitability of news judgements. He comments that unlike sociologists, who
divide up external reality into social processes, and historians, who look
at these processes over longer periods, journalists see external reality
as a set of disparate and independent events, each of which is new and can
therefore be reported as news.

A definition of news is almost impossible to arrive at unless one traces
its origin to the process of commodity exchange whereby particular events
occurring in reality are reconceptualised as information and thought to be
of interest to a receiving population. That is, news has to be understood
within a capitalist framework whereby packages of ideologically treated
information can be sold to a consumer audience. Certain kinds of reality
are singled out, selected from the continually ongoing process of unstyli-
zed reality, highlighted and made more important than the mundane social
processes within which they repose and which the journalist does not always
decipher or which he may consider non-news.

McDonald exposes the tendency of the press to examine external reality in
terms of disparate events in his accusation that the most pernicious jour-
nalistic convention is the notion that a thing is not newsworthy until it
becomes an event; that is, until something 'happens' (38). Two conclusions
follow from this: first, significant phenomena that are not events, such
as situations, trends and conditions go largely unreported. In South Africa
for example, the continuous resettlement of blacks into shantycamps in the
homeland regions are seldom reported on because they have become 'conditions'.
Second, often the context which makes an event meaningful is either not
reported or is reported inadequately. One striking example of this is the
way the English press reported PW Botha's liberalization policies following
the Carleton Centre conference held with businessmen in November 1979.
Against a background of *apparent* large scale easing of racial restrictions,
the state's commitment to free enterprise and capitalist growth amongst
other things, the English press communicated an inability to grasp the
politico-economic significance of these changes. Instead of contextuali-
zing them within an ideological framework propelled by adjustment occurring
in the national economy as its basis was shifting from low productivity,
labour intensive industries to capital and skills-based productive processes,
the English press ignored these trends and declared that apartheid was
dead' and that a new 'dispensation' was around the corner. As such, they
located themselves firmly within the overarching hegemonic bloc and became,
more than ever, uncritical agents of the dominant ideology. The English
press did subsequently bitterly acknowledge after the 1980 Parliamentary
session, that no structural changes had taken place in the political economy
or were likely to. A study conducted by the Black Sash covering the period
from Mr Vorster's "Give us six months" plea in November 1974, to the an-
nouncement of a general election in January 1981 highlights the values
attributed by the English press to news. The Black Sash concludes:

This analysis shows up a disasterous pattern of hope and let down brought about by a combination of press wishful thinking and the government's indecision, inherent reluctance, or cynicism or fear of its right wing. Sometimes the very article in which change is announced carries its own negation ... the English press, at times of announcement of change, lean(t) over backwards to give the government the benefit of the doubt and not to emphasise negative comments even those made by government officials.

These reports reflect a desperate desire for change which is hardly reprehensible. But they seem to have had the unfortunate result of creating the impression ... that significant changes have occurred (39).

Extracts from *The Star's* response to this study will suffice to confirm much of the above thesis which argues, amongst other things, that the press has very little conception of the significance of what is going on around it (40). *The Star* acknowledges the problems of reporting process, arguing that "What the state represents as progress has to be reported at face value, at first sight at any rate". This response verifies McDonald's observations about the pernicious nature of 'the event'. Of its identification of what was news during this time, *The Star* comments with hindsight: "The English Press does hope for change; but in any case it is its duty to report what looks like change. The promise makes news after all - on the same principle as 'man bites dog' - after so many years of no change".

The Star further defends the English press by claiming that it is unable to delve instantly deeper than the event and that "In-depth analysis must come later":

    The legislation involved is often complex and it is asking
    too much of journalists that they should provide an in-depth
    analysis and verdicts on the probity of official announcements
    in 30 minutes or 3 hours where legal investigations may take
    30 days (41).

Thus, *The Star* absolves the English press of failure to report the news in context, fetishising processes behind juridical and political catagories.

The fragmentation and reduction of information is further reinforced by reporting the news under discrete headings such as "Political Commentaries", "Sports", "Business", "Crime" and so on. Very often news is further moulded or given a news angle (i.e. an ideological theme) to fit these categories or to make it newsworthy. An ability to understand social and economic processes and how these are mediated through ideology would have saved *The Star* and the English press in general the embarrassment of misinterpretation.

The Star's concluding comment that "The South African Press will reflect less of the current hope and letdown when the nation we mirror has a more normal society", again only serves to corroborate the general theory of newsroom organization which suggests that reporters respond most strongly to their immediate bureaucratic surroundings rather than to their social environments outside the newsroom (42). This lived relationship within the newsroom sees news as an objective in itself, a commodity which has to meet production schedules even if nothing has 'happened'. Breed identifies this process as social control in the newsroom which, together with

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other influences, ensures the journalist's conformity to company policy
since "Journalists are not rewarded for analysing the social structure but
for getting news" (43).

Occasionally conditions *are* reported, but this does not invalidate the
theory since such coverage is usually the result of an event which is
brought to light by a powerful news source, newsworthy person or an indivi-
dual Gans labels as a "Known". An example of this is the sudden interest
shown by the English press in Indian flower sellers in Johannesburg.
Since 1977, these street traders have been working under the constraints
of a pernicious tender system which gives them no security of tenure over
their flower stands and forces them to pay a higher rental per square metre
for unprotected pavement stalls than they would have to pay for an equiva-
lent sized area in a plush downtown shopping complex (44). Because these
people were Indians and because their plight did not affect the majority of
readers, this situation was not regarded as news.

In March 1980 a deputation of flower sellers' approached some prominent City
Councillers. Following this meeting, the flower sellers' grievances were
brought up for discussion in the Council Chambers. The issue had now be-
come newsworthy. During the period from 3 to 23 April no less than eleven
articles appeared in *The Star*, while other reports were published in the
Sunday Express (2), *Rand Daily Mail* (1).
Then, as suddenly as the interest had been aroused, so the issue was
dropped. A journalist working on *The Star* subsequently submitted an article
on the background to the present crisis in which she interviewed a number
of different flower sellers. The article was not published since the
editor of *The Star* claimed that the issue had already been sufficiently re-
ported and was no longer of general interest, despite the fact that no
resolution had been found to the problems existing between the flower
sellers and the Johannesburg City Council. The flower sellers' continued
battle with the Council has attracted no subsequent media coverage nor will
it until some notable figure once again intervenes in the dispute.

These two examples show that news is not a natural state of being: it has
no independent existence outside the newsroom. News is a consciously mani-
pulated commodity which is packaged in such a way that it earns its producer
an income. To be made acceptable to its consumers, news has to meet cer-
tain needs. News is value laden in that it assumes a consensus about
experience and the dominant ideology existing in the wider society.

The Filtration of Information in the News Organization

The methods by which news is processed through the news organization has
been the subject of a large number of studies. The filtration of infor-
mation is generally known as 'gatekeeping' and accounts for specific
points through which given news items may or may not be admitted. Dimmick
offers a particuluarly comprehensive model based on uncertainty theory and
shows how the journalist's initial uncertainty of what comprises news in
his social environment is reduced through various uncertainty reduction
modes. This theory has generally been applied to media which depend
largely on wire-service news rather than to those which search out their
own sources of news (45). For the latter, Gans proposes the concept of
'considerations', mentioned earlier.

The problem of gatekeeping theory, apart from its specific application, is
that it suggests a digitally based mode of choice. That is to say, an
editor who opens or closes the 'gate', choosing some news stories but

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rejecting others, may only make an 'either/or', 'yes/no' set of choices. Such a selection process emphasises discontinuity. In terms of this theory, the gatekeeper is thus faced with a number of separate and fully fledged versions of particular incidents drawn from reality. The theory does not give any idea of the processes which shape those accounts of reality.

Nearly all the gatekeeper studies point out that this shaping process is primarily a response to pressures placed on the journalist by the bureaucratic structure of the newsfirm and newsroom organization. However, they omit to account for the relationship between these newsfirms and the hegemonic capital interests which use the media to articulate and disseminate its ideology. These studies identify the contradictions surrounding the gatekeeper's decisions, attributing choice to the resolution of management and professional conflicts: pressures of bureaucratic structure and of getting the copy into the newspaper. Omnipresent deadlines inevitably force a choice, as do mechanical pressures, budget constraints, personal experience, ethical controls, company policy, and so on (46).

While Gans' concept of 'considerations' is far more sophisticated, it still does not go far enough. All studies of gatekeeping refer to consensus within the newsroom and how conformity is promoted through socialization of the staffer with regard to the norms of the job (47). This offers a starting point for a more comprehensive theory of gatekeeping. If one were to evaluate how consensus was arrived at and establish its relationship with the dominant ideology which feeds it, definite connections could be made between what Dimmick calls the 'gate-keeping institution' and the environment which surrounds it. That environment is defined by Buckly as "...a set or ensemble of more or less distinguishable elements, states or events" (48). While suitable for for gatekeeping theory which seeks to avoid questions of ideology, this definition is inadequate at the deeper level which sees perceptions of the environment as *dependent* on ideology.

The more integrated notion of consensual bias, instead of being calculated in terms of digital communication, would rather explain the gatekeeping process in terms of analogical communication. That is, where existing gatekeeping theory refers to 'either/or' sets and operates in terms of a binary code, analogical communication makes use of 'both/and' sets which emphasise continuity. In such a schema, individual components (or events) cannot be isolated without reference to context which, in our terms, must include ideology. In other words, the notion of consensual bias accounts for the entire process of news selection from its sources and collection, through to the way in which it is structured by the journalist, re-written by the sub-editors and arranged hierarchically within the entire body of other news items (newswhole) making up the newspaper or broadcast. This analogical view of communication accounts for the shaping of news in its entirety rather than in terms of the immediate choice options described in gatekeeper studies, and brings us closer to understanding the relationship between consensual bias and the hegemonic ideology.

Gatekeeping theory *per se* should be reserved for those situations where journalists consciously refuse to accept the consensual bias of the newsfirm and who fall outside the hegemonic ideology operating in the wider society. Such individuals can be viewed as organic intellectuals in as far as they provide (or attempt to provide) an alternative view of the 'accepted reality'.

In such instances, gatekeeping policy is directly influenced by ideology/philosophy in the strict sense in which Gramsci uses the term and is thus

perceived by dissident staffers. The resulting digital 'either/or' choices made by deliberately appointed gatekeepers who are conscious of their function, are a response and a defence against the 'both/and' demands of staffers who have rejected the dominant ideology and who are trying to apply the analogic options suggested to them by their counter-ideology which is often informed by cultural considerations. Thus only when consensual bias can no longer be expected to work, do the gatekeeper's functions become overt.

The next section will demonstrate how these postulates can be applied to the broadcast media in South Africa.

Company Policy, Ideology and Consensual Bias

Through the lived relationship which occurs in the newsroom, the staffer comes quickly to learn what the prevailing ideology is and how company policy supports it, although it is never verbally articulated. Policy is learned through *osmosis* (48), but often reporters complain about a *lack* of policy or ill-defined guidelines (49).

One local instance concerned the complaints by producers of the English Documentary Department of SABC-TV. Objecting to middle and upper management interference with programmes even after scripts had been approved, and often cutting copies as well, Kevin Harris writes: "A major cause of discontent ... was the absence of clear and definite SABC guidelines regarding editorial policy on controversial and socially relevant issues"(50). Harris charged that the SABC's actions "compromised the producer's integrity and credibility". Petitions were submitted to upper management, but even after the matter had been minuted at every staff meeting over the period of a year, no directives were forthcoming. These producers refused to acknowledge the prevailing consensual bias or infer policy through ideology and developed instead a counter ideology to that evidenced by other departments. They constantly sought ways of circumnavigating the internal gatekeeping processes in operation at the SABC. Since the normal rewards and punishments meeted out by the Corporation (and found in all newsrooms) proved ineffectual, it was necessary for the SABC management to relocate these non-conformists within the organization to non-controversial departments such as Sport, Variety and Final Control where it would be more difficult to transgress policy and ideology because of the tighter control and less controversial nature of the material dealt with in these departments.

Where ethical and professional reasons were given by a transgressor for disobeying a direct order, the ultimate sanction, depending on the nature of the deviant action, was the immediate termination of his/her employment. A case in point was that of Kevin Harris after he refused to bow to pressure from upper management to delete certain references in his production on Baragwaneth Hospital. This programme was surruptitiously broadcast as originally edited. Despite universal praise from both the Afrikaans and English press alike, Harris was given 12 hours notice. He subsequently had to take court action to secure his pension which was withheld by the SABC as punishment for talking to the press about his dismissal. Clearly, the ideology mediated by the SABC and its unstated policy, which could be directly influenced by external sources (in this case the Superintendant of Baragwaneth Hospital), had been transgressed and the unusual step of dismissal was taken to establish the parameters of SABC policy, which continues unstated.

Media policy, which both serves ideology and is determined by it, is

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further circumscribed by the structure of production within the medium.
Newspapers, television or radio reports occur on a regular basis: hourly,
daily, weekly or monthly. This schedule of production encourages the media
to relate mainly to those events which, time-wise, are reportable. Ongoing
social processes and social conditions do not happen at regular or report-
able intervals. Events which draw attention to themselves and which stand
out from everyday experience do. The criteria whereby these events are
interpreted and reported on by the press lock into the demands of the
hegemonic ideology of a society.

The whole concept of newsworthiness is thus an ideological one which func-
tions to reproduce the criteria of what constitutes news and what does not.
'News sense' and 'news judgement' are not innate talents brought by the
recruit to the newsroom but are determined by ideology and as such they
become a self perpetuating set of value judgements. As Christo Doherty
reminds us in his article, these practices are an unconscious process which
seem the 'common sense' way of understanding reality to those who are part
of the hegemonic ideology. *Work in Progress* offers the example of *The
Star's* survey of the Silverton siege which shows that despite the screaming
headlines of 'Killer Terrorists' and 'Innocent Victims of Terror', about
90% of Sowetans actually responded positively to the ANC guerilla action.
Yet, despite this, and despite the availability of alternative nouns such
as 'guerillas' and 'freedom fighters', the South African media, with the
exception of *Post* (who used 'gunmen'), persisted in describing this event
in terms of a siege, of a challenge to law and order, of a violation of
accepted means of communicating opposition, and saw it as a threat to the
cohesion of nation and society (51).

This schizophrenic characterization of those involved in the Silverton trial
as 'freedom fighters' by the majority of Sowetans and as 'terrorists' by
the media should be seen against notions of 'folk heroes' and 'folk devils'.
Stan Cohen suggests that the popular press view those who transgress or
who threaten dominant social norms (eg. drug users, criminals, soccer
hooligans, homosexuals, political extremists etc) as 'outsiders' (52).
Cohen contends that by casting such groups in the unlikely role of 'folk
devils', the media serve to strengthen our degree of commitment to dominant
social norms and to create a climate of opinion that supports the operations
of society's legal agencies. The activities of such groups are so amplified
as to transform the maintenance of law and order into a primary social goal.

'Law and order' can only be maintained in a society where there is a strong
degree of consensus about social norms and when those failing to obey the
norms are indeed seen as 'outsiders'. In the initial reporting of the
Silverton siege, the media dramatically reported graphic details and photo-
graphs of the event and police allowed press photographers to take pictures
of the dead 'terrorists'. The result of these reports was to arouse public
antagonism and a sense of repulsion. Subsequent to the Silverton trial, the
government's policy with regard to the disclosure of facts on 'terrorist
activity' was considerably tightened as is witnessed by the statements made
by various Police and Defence Force personnel. On August 14 of this year
the Minister of Defence said, "The primary aim of the enemy is to unnerve
through maximum publicity. In this regard we will have to obtain the co-
operation of the South African media in not giving excessive and unjusti-
fied publicity to terrorists and thus playing into their hands" (53).
Another Defence Force General was less subtle: "The media will be used
and abused" (54).

This adjustment of policy arises from the recognition that public outrage

at 'deviant' acts will only be sustained when there is a large measure of consensus about what constitutes social norms and values. In a society in which there is a crisis of hegemony, where a substantial proportion of the population do not subscribe to the same social/political norms, then the portrayal of these folk devils may, in fact, have an opposite effect: they become folk heroes whose patterns and modes of behaviour may well be emulated, or at the very least serve as a source of inspiration for those classes/ groups outside the consensus. It is precisely in conjunctures of hegemonic crisis that alternative forms of expression, that is, resistance to the dominant ideology, can be articulated. The South African government intuitively recognizes this and refuses to allow the established media (which it is in a position to control) to publicize and promulgate these alternative modes of conduct.

The need to portray deviants as folk devils finds a parallel in Gans' contention that social order and the national leadership maintaining that that order are over-riding values in the news. Building on Park, he concludes that news functions as a barometer or order, informing readers of the emergence of disorder but simultaneously reassuring them through order restoration stories (55).

The order that is dominant in the South African political economy at any one time will reflect the balance of power within the hegemonic bloc. What concerns us here is to assess how ideology works through the different classes which make up the social formation. Ideology is not a monolithic entity which envelops the whole nation uniformly. Any society is composed of different social classes, the workers, the petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie. Each of these classes has elements of its own ideology which either conform or conflict with the dominant ideology.

Ideology and Social Classes

Social classes are defined in terms of the relations of production, both economic and ideological. On the economic level they are defined in terms of the ownership or non-ownership of the means of production. In ideological terms they are defined in the way in which agents or individual subjects are prepared to take their place in the relations of production.

In all societies, ideology has, as one of its main functions, the reinforcement of an economically determined relation of people with each other and with their conditions of existence, adapting individuals to take up their class designated positions in the labour process. Concretely, this means that there are different class ideologies or what Harnecker refers to as "ideological tendencies" (56). For the working class the main element of ideology *as it is presented to them* is to persuade them to accept their conditions of exploitation as if they were the natural order of things. At the same time, particularly in conjunctures of hegemonic crisis, counter ideologies as articulated by organic intellectuals do arise from within the working class and form a spearhead of resistance against total incorporation. These counter ideologies are, on the whole, confined to the dominated classes since, although it is conceivable that such opposing tendencies should arise within the petty bourgeoisie, these are more likely to be on the intellectual rather than the practical level.

For the bourgeoisie, the dominant ideology serves to reassure its members that their place within the structure of society has been 'appointed by nature' or that it is the 'will of God' and that they have a 'moral duty' in the domination they exercise over the workers.

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For the petty bourgeoisie, a dominant element of their ideology is that they should do their duty both towards their employer and their country. They are thus reconciled to the task of supervising the workers on behalf of the bourgeoisie and of keeping the necessary administrative functions running smoothly. Journalists fall into this category and have often contributed to perpetuating the dominant ideology in both what and how they write, as well in the productive-distributive process *per se*. For example, during times when black newsvendors and delivery men have been on strike, journalists have been coopted into this function, actually selling papers on street corners.

Equally significant is Belinda Bozzoli's contention that certain journals belonging to specific fractions of capital (eg. *South African Mining Journal, South African Commerce* etc) catalysed a particular ideology which brought about a specific class structure in South Africa between 1890 and 1933. Until about 1920, the media concerned with the mining industry revealed a profound concern with political and social issues which affected the growth of mining capital. As with all organic intellectuals, these men functioned only during crucial periods, periods of crisis, of uncertainty, when capitalists were struggling not only to establish themselves economically, but to embed themselves firmly in the social formation itself (57). Once the mining bourgeoisie was entrenched (after 1920), ideologies were no longer created as much as regurgitated, while established social structures were lubricated rather than 'engineered'. The same pattern is evident in the commercial and manufacturing journals, but with a significantly different periodization.

In setting up communications systems of a specific and directed kind, argues Bozzoli, the emerging capitalist class established a system of interest-translation, its own ideology and policy-making network which intercepted particular historically specific processes. Bozzoli asserts that the media of capital were run by journalists who played an important intellectual role in guiding and leading certain of the processes of class formation themselves. They were thinkers, strategists, ideologues and policy makers who were organically linked to the newly forming class whose interests they expressed because they communicated directly to members of that class rather than to a wider audience. It was the task of the organic intellectual to bridge the gap between economic interests and political and ideological realities; and to translate the abstract needs of capital into real social needs. Bozzoli concludes that these journalists not only created a world view for the bourgeoisie, but alluded to its ideal world as well.

As was pointed out in the beginning of this paper, ideology may be transmitted through cultural elements or value systems, for example, religious, moral or nationalistic sentiments. These sentiments are viewed and expressed in specifically class or community bound ways which conform to the traditions, habits and customs of a particular society.

Apartheid ideology, for example, is designed to intercept existing social structures in such a way that the subordinate communities accept as natural the world view provided for them by the hegemonic bloc. Hence, the emphasis on tradition in its attempts to bring about a renaissance of selected tribal institutions in the homeland regions. This revitalization, however, occurs only in so far as it serves the material needs of the dominant classes and to forestall the emergence of militant counter-ideologies. Radio Bantu's stated aim in its schools programmes, for example, is to socialise black school children into accepting their roles as labour units in the South

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African economy. This service aims to equip the black pupil with a
"theoretical knowledge" which should be applied "in the practical situation"
and to "understand how this theory was formed in everyday life". Future
black labourers are ideologically conditioned to take their place within
the South African social formation as "economically dynamic" persons who
must learn to "earn his daily bread by performing labour" (58). It is clear
that ideology in any society, at any point in history, while it is deter-
minant on the economic in the last instance, is the result of a complex,
structural determination drawing on many sources, both past and present,
within that society.

Ideology, Ethnicity and Class

Such a class based analysis is not acceptable to all scholars. Adam and
Giliomee, for example, contend that the neo-Marxist paradigm fails to ad-
equately grasp the psychological aspects of ethnicity versus class (59).
They argue that the proponents of exclusive class analysis tend to view
apartheid "narrowly as a mere manipulative device for the oppression and
control of labour" (60) and conclude that the "role of ideology is
frequently underestimated, if not altogether rejected" (61).

While these criticisms do hold for a body of rather functionalist work con-
ducted during the mid-1970s (62), Adam and Giliomee conveniently ignore the
implicit ideological underpinnings found in both earlier and later studies
which draw on structuralist propositions. The content of the later studies,
in particular, assume, not a vulgar Marxist base-superstructure set of one-
way relations but a definition of ideology which subsumes the very elements
of status, esteem, comfort, security and so forth which Adam and Giliomee
argue to lie outside a strictly historical materialist analysis. These
components, as we have argued, are adequately contained within the ideo-
logical/cultural couplet.
Often they are elevated by ideology to assume an equivalent status with
the natural order.

The new "ideology of survival" which Adam and Giliomee identify as a quasi-
biological formula for Afrikaner survival (63), is nothing more than a
further attempt on behalf of the hegemonic bloc to justify the existing or
shifting relations of production by mystifying these relations. These
authors then unwittingly feed the neo-Marxist cause by quoting "advocates
(eg. the Nationalist press) of the new ideology" who argue that "'Joint
survival' calls for an alliance of white and 'moderate blacks' against
'militant, radical Marxists'" (64). Such statements clearly reflect class
connections and linkages which are the basis of the formation of alliances
within the hegemonic bloc.

That the Afrikaans press is at the forefront in developing this "new
ideology" seems logical, but to assert that this press educated the Afri-
kaner public and combatted racist beliefs and crude racist practices is to
misconstrue the ideological functions of the press. The implication that
the Afrikaans press assumed a humanist function, as having some kind of
liberal imperative, is to ignore the role of this agent in its ideological
task of preparing and adapting individuals to the social and economic roles
set for them during times of adjustment and crisis. Newspapers do not
simply act independently of economic interests. This applies equally to
Afrikaans newspapers which, as initially the PR arm of the National Party,
and more recently as internal opposition, are ideologically and culturally
tied to the economic objectives of Afrikanerdom. As Giliomee himself
points out, the aim of the Afrikaner Broedebond was to "mobilize the *Volk*

to conquer the capitalist system and to transform it so that it fits our ethnic nature" (65). Thus, they set about attacking the structure of the South African capitalism with the aim of transforming it into a *Volkskapita-lisme* (66), an objective which has largely been accomplished. The Afrikaans press was at the vanguard of this attack and continues to be, articulating new sets of social relations to meet the changed circumstances in which the economy now finds itself. The current tendential class alliance which is a direct result of changes in the economy as communicated by the Riekert and Wiehahn proposals can only occur with a reduction of racist beliefs, at least in the urban areas. Thus the 'humanistic' response of the Afrikaans press has less to do with "combatting racial beliefs" than it has in guiding these beliefs in such a way that they best serve the interests of capital, particularly as far as Afrikaner business is concerned. The so-called 'survival ideology' is, in essence, a manifestation of extant economic pressures being filtered through shifting internal and external processes - it is a response to an economic crisis within the hegemonic bloc.

'Freedom' of the Press: The Contradictions Within Capitalist Society

While it is clear that the various legal restraints and pressures to which the South African media is subject does limit its degree of independence from state dictation and control, it cannot be said to nullify it. In South Africa the opposition English press, and to some extent the Nationa-list supporting Afrikaans press, do express views which are offensive to the various 'establishments' - be they in the field of politics, culture, crime, religion or morals. While such 'controversial' views have resulted in the banning of a number of newspapers, and the harrassment of even more, there remains, nevertheless, a substantial degree of tolerance and latitude with-in the media. Even the directly state-controlled broadcasting media have islands of critical expression - such as *Radio Today*, some of the earlier broadcasts of *Spectrum* on television and, more recently, on *Midweek* and even *Verslag*.

The importance of dissent should not be minimized. Nor should it mislead anyone into an uncritical acceptance of the mythology that 'the freedom of the press', and the 'opportunity of expression' provides a channel for the articulation of alternative view points which have the potential of seriously challenging the existing social and political system - which in the South African context is based on apartheid.

The mass media in all advanced capitalist countries - and South Africa is no exception - act consistantly and predominantly as agencies of conserva-tive indoctrination which serves to innoculate their recipients against dissident thought. This does not mean that readers, viewers and listeners are not exposed to contrary views, it simply implies that the bias of the media is firmly on the other side. In South Africa (as no doubt in other countries) this condition is amply met. Ralph Miliband, with the British experience in mind, observes that:

> ... the agencies of communication and notably the mass media are, in reality, and the expression of dissenting views not-withstanding, a crucial element in the legitimization of capitalist society. Freedom of expression is not thereby rendered meaningless. But that freedom has to be set in the real economic and political context of these societies; and in that context the free expression of ideas and opinions *mainly* means the free expression of ideas and opinions which are helpful to the prevailing system of power and privilege (67).

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Fissures in the Hegemonic Bloc and the Need for Ideological Control

We must now turn to our earlier discussion where we argued that each class exhibits elements of its own ideology which may either conform or conflict with the dominant ideology. Ideology, it will be remembered, is not a totally pervasive influence which automatically conforms every member of the social formation to the hegemonic demands. Unlike feudal societies where everyone knew and unconditionally accepted his or her place in the relations of production, modern capitalist societies are far more complex. Counter-ideologies supported by their distinct cultural forms frequently occur making it impossible for all groups to be subsumed into the hegemonic bloc.

In apartheid society, for example, strains and tensions occur continuously which threaten the stability of the status quo (eg. boycotts by black school schildren, illegal worker strikes, bomb attacks on strategic installations, subversive publication of dissident literature). These disturbances have to be controlled if the system of power is to reproduce itself.

Apartheid suffers from extreme ideological fragility and is consequently unable to withstand critical disturbances either from within or without the system. To minimize the impact of such infringements, the state, which can be regarded as the coersive arm of society, has had to strengthen its mechanisms of control through increasingly stringent application of state ideological machinery (as well as in terms of brute force in the wider society). However, as we have pointed out elsewhere, state opposition to English language newspapers has to be seen as a *secondary* consequence of the suppression of black opposition to apartheid. The coincidence of laws curtailing the freedom of the press should be seen as a secondary extension of the legislation curbing black dissident activity. Such legislation is not aimed at silencing the English press *per se*, but rather at the elimination of oppositon, particularly black opposition. In so far as the English press is prepared to articulate such sentiments, it will be subject to these laws (68).

These arguments point to a major contradiction in the state's relationship with the press. It seems paradoxical that the state should attempt to silence or control the press when, as we have shown, all sectors of the media, in fact, work to the government's advantage in supporting variants of the status quo and the maintenance of the capitalist relations of production. One explanation for this contradiction lies in the possibility that the government misunderstands the socially stabilizing role of the press and has tripped up on its own ideology which has become so opaque that those who rule are unable to see the implications of their actions.

A second possibility is that the government has latched onto the English press as the cause of South Africa's negative overseas image. By inadvertantly turning folk devils into folk heroes, the English press communicates incidents of instability for, though supporting tough state counter action, it simultaneously provides the fuel for further instability.

CONCLUSION

We have tried to show that the media in South Africa not only reflect the political economy of this country but also contribute to the shaping of its ideological and political form. (See review on Bozzoli in this issue). We have not attempted to give a comprehensive statement on the relationship between ideology and the mass media, but rather to provide the foundation for

a more fruitful debate than has characterised writings on the South African media thus far. Much work still needs to be done on both theoretical and empirical levels to flesh out what the dominant ideological strands in the South African political economy are and the way in which the various sectors of the media (English, Afrikaans and captive black presses, broadcasting etc) work within the dominant ideology for the maintenance of the status quo.

Notes and References

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29. Wolpe, H. 1970: "Capitalism and Cheap Labour Power: From Segregation to Apartheid", *Economy and Society*. Vol. 1, No. 4

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32. See *Rand Daily Mail* report 14 October, 1981

33. See, eg., Hellman, E. 1957: "Tribalism in a Modern Society", *Race Relations Journal*, No. 24, pp. 1-11. Welsh, *op. cit.* uses this argument to a lesser extent.

34. At the Cottesloe conference convened by the World Council of Churches in 1960, the DRC associated themselves with a number of anti-apartheid resolutions. However, Verwoerd appealed over their heads to the church at large that National Party policy be accepted and the resolutions of the Cottesloe delegates rejected. A short time later the Church leadership repudiated the Cottesloe resolutions. See Luckhoff, A.H. 1978: *Cottesloe*. Tafelberg, Cape Town

35. Moodie, T. Dunbar. 1975: *The Rise of Afrikanerdom*. Univ. of Calif. Press, Berkeley, p. 1

36. De Klerk, W.A. 1975: *The Puritans in Africa*. Penguin, Harmondsworth, pp. 233 and 241

37. Adam and Giliomee, *op. cit.* p. 34

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40. *The Star* 17 March 1981

41. Ibid

42. See, eg., Gieber, W. 1964: "News is What Newspaper Men Make It" in Dexter, L.A. and White, D.M. (eds.): *People, Society and Mass Communication*. Free Press, pp. 177-182

43. Breed, W. 1955: "Social Control in the Newsroom", *Social Forces*, No. 33, pp. 326-335

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45. Dimmick, T. 1974: "The Gatekeeper: An Uncertainty Theory". *Journalism Monograph*, No. 37, 37pp.

46. See, eg., Gieber, *op. cit.*, Breed, *op. cit.* and White, D.M. 1964: "The 'Gatekeeper': A Case Study: The Selection of News" in Dexter and White, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-172

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50. *Financial Mail* (letter) 7 December, 1979

51. *Work in Progress.* 1980: "The Press", No. 12, pp. 30-33

52. Cohen, S. 1972: *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*. MacGibbon and Kee, p. 28

53. *The Journalist*, Sept. 1981, p. 3

54. This was said during a TV news broadcast. See also *The Star* 24 August, 1981

55. Gans, *op. cit.* p. 295. Also see Park, R. 1944: "News as a Form of Knowledge", *American Journal of Sociology*. No. 45, pp. 669-86

56. Harnecker, M. 1971: *The Elementary Concepts of Historical Materialsm.*
     Translated by E. Sadler an cW. Suchtung, University of Sydney, p. 79

57. Bozzoli, *op. cit.,* especially pp. 1-25

58. Strydom, G.S. 1976: *The Establishment and Expansion of the School
     Radio Service of Radio Bantu.* HSRC, Report No. 0-53, especially pp.
     24-28. This document is quite clear as to the material basis of Bantu
     Education

59. Adam and Giliomee, *op. cit.* pp. 46-50

60. Ibid. p. 46

61. Ibid. p. 49

62. Ibid. p. 47. They quote as examples, Legassick, M. and Innes, D. 1977:
     "Capital Restructuring and Apartheid: A Critique of Constructive En-
     gagement", *African Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 305; and a special issue on South
     Africa in *The Journal* (sic) *of African Political Economy*, No. 7, 1977.
     Adam and Giliomee appear to have got their journals confused. The journal
     one assumes they are actually referring to is, in fact, *Review of
     African Political Economy*

63. Ibid. pp. 133-134

64. Ibid. p. 136

65. Ibid. p. 157. Of significance is that Giliomee seems to have been adopted
     by the English press, notably SAAN, as an important figure in the Afrikaans
     academic establishment. He has written extensively for the *Sunday Times*
     and may be classified as a Known whose advice is solicited on historical
     and political matters

66. *Koers,* 2 August 1934

67. Miliband, R. 1973: *The State in Capitalist Society.* Quartet, London,
     p. 197

68. Tomaselli, K.G. and Tomaselli, R.E. 1981: "The South African Mass Media
     and the Dissemination of Apartheid Ideology". Journalism I Reader, Dept.
     of Journalism and Media Studies: *The Sociology of News*, Rhodes University,
     Grahamstown

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