

The conventional wisdom both of the capitalist and of the communist worlds assumes that the form of 'development' that has taken place in Western Europe and the United States or in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has some sort of universal validity. Accept these premises and the recent history of Ghana looks like a case of tragic decline. But suppose that African societies, at least those societies which have not been messed up, as is the case in South Africa, by excessive alien interference, are simply not adapted — for historical, politico-social and ecological reasons — to carry the burden (or should one not say the incubus?) of the urban-based bureaucratic state. Things may seem to be 'falling apart' in Ghana, local economies returning to a greater measure of self-sufficiency, communities, less closely in touch with the outside world as a result

of the breakdown in communication, finding themselves with no alternative but to run their own affairs without assistance, advice or interference from the agents of the centralizing state. These points must be made in a spirit of speculation. In Ghana, as in many other African countries, it is impossible for an outsider to find out what is really happening away from the capital and one or two other major towns. Ghanaians are a people of wit and intelligence. It may well be that they are now in the process of working out a system and a philosophy of life that is going to prove much more relevant to the strains of the 21st century than the easy nostrums of the development economists and the political scientists. So Ghana may well have some important lessons — and probably some pretty hard lessons — to teach the rest of us. □

by KEYAN G. TOMASELLI

'ADAPT OR DIE': MILITARIZATION AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN MEDIA 1976–1982

"Join the army, see the world, meet interesting people and kill them. Over and out ... "

Souvenir T-shirts, Omega Rest Camp, 'the Border', 1982.

"Study . . . animal, insect, and plantlife, handwork, mountain-climbing, court-cases, concerts, film-shows, tenniquoits, volleyball, *hunting terrorists*, swimming . . . (The camp will be conducted on a Christian basis).

Programme brochure, 34th Afrikaans Holiday Camp, 1983 (emphasis added).

The media are a prime site of ideological struggle in South Africa. Press, film and broadcasting have, since the turn of the century, provided the motor for the growth and acceptance of the Afrikaans language and its associated Nationalist spirit.

More recently, with the fall of white rule in Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe, increasing pressures on 'South West Africa', and a growing internal resistance, the media have been progressively co-opted by the South African Defence Force (SADF) both in terms of what they report and *how* they report. This co-option is not wholly coercive, for the commercial media, with their vested interest in economic and commercial stability, articulate the ideology of organised capitalist interests. These interests — whether national or international — and those of the SADF (and the state) began to converge after the Soweto uprising in June 1976.

'THE TOTAL STRATEGY'

THE SOCIALIZATION OF DANGER

To understand the relationship between the military and the media in South Africa, it is first necessary to discuss the ideological rhetoric of what the state terms the 'total strategy' and its related catch-phrases, 'total war', 'total onslaught' and 'total survival'. The aim of the 'total strategy' is to prepare South Africa militarily, economically, politically and psychologically to fight what is seen as a 'total war' against the 'total onslaught' waged on South Africa not only by communists, leftists and liberals, but America and the West as well. This strategy encompasses the state, the private sector, diplomacy and state-funded scientific research and armaments organizations. Paramilitary in posture, it has infiltrated all areas of life, including holiday camps and T-shirts.

The 'total strategy' is not a planned conspiracy but is the result of a new balance of forces deriving from changes in the political economy, South Africa's relationship to international monopoly capital, politico-military initiatives and the restructuring of the class alliance. These elements coalesced at more or less the same time (the mid-1970s) and led to the convergence and cooperation of previously conflicting interests. The emerging hegemony consists of the white bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie (as well as remnants of the white working class), the rural black bourgeoisie (the black homeland leaders and businessmen)

and the new urban black middle classes. At the bottom of the hierarchy is the rural proletariat, peasant farmers and the working classes who now face a doubly articulated repression: from the white-governed South African state and the apparently black-governed 'national' states which nestle within it.

As a military doctrine, the 'total strategy' is not the brain-child of the National Party, nor the SADF. Its origins can be traced to the 18th Century writings of the Prussian military philosopher, Karl van Clausewitz. The concept has been adapted by the PW Botha administration and punted under the guise of 'democracy' and 'survival'. The basic aim is to engender voluntary — as opposed to coerced — support for racial capitalism through the restructuring of fundamental economic and political relationships between and within classes, between classes and the state, between the state and the economy, and within the state itself.² Or, as the Prime Minister put it: "We must adapt or we will die".³

State manipulation of media agencies is thus merely one aspect of the 'total strategy'. Not only are the mass media to be co-opted in the 'national interest' to wage psychological war against a 'Marxist enemy', but they are also harnessed to prepare local citizens to accept the emerging re-alignment of social classes, the restructuring of the economy and a revised set of social relations in the workplace. Since 1977, white viewers have increasingly been exposed to black faces on TV1 (the so-called white channel) and black viewers of TV2/3 (the 'black' channels which have been broadcasting to urban areas since 1982) are being subtly persuaded to accept their new class positions in an urban, industrial economy. Simultaneously, they are persuaded of the 'fact' of the homelands and are continually reassured that the people 'back home' are being adequately cared for by the homeland governments. Radio Bantu caters primarily for this latter audience, as well as for schoolchildren, to persuade them to become 'economically dynamic persons' who must learn to earn their "daily bread by performing labour"⁴.

Recent years have witnessed a shift of power from the police to the military. This was inevitable given the growing intensity of the guerilla war on South Africa's borders, the extent of internal dissent, the arms boycott which stimulated the growth of a military-industrial complex, and the assumption of the Premiership by PW Botha, previously Minister of Defence. News manipulation — especially in police, military and security matters — is now a matter of course, enforced by draconian legislation and the threat of vicious penalties guaranteed to intimidate the most courageous newspaper or journalist.

Along with the militarization of South African society has occurred a quantitative increase in the mass media of images of the military and security forces. Three examples will be discussed: cinema, broadcasting and the press.

INTO BATTLE: THE BORDER WAR FILMS

Whereas it took the American film industry more than ten years to come to terms with the Vietnam War, the South African film industry followed the troops into action with no qualms at all. The first phase initiated by *Aanslag op Kariba* (Attack on Kariba — 1973) fully identified with the South African Police presence in the Rhodesian bush war. A second category portended the conflict that was to come in the mid-1970s: *Kaptein Caprivi* (1972) *Ses Soldate*

(*Six Soldiers* — 1975) and *Hank, Hennery and Friend* (1976). The second phase includes films like *Terrorist* (1978) and *Grensbasis 13* (Borderbase 13 — 1979) which reflect the bush war more accurately than previous films. The third phase relocates the struggle to the city. While the emphasis on the Border War is maintained, films like *40 Days* (1979) and *April '80* (1980) reflect the context of the 'total onslaught' from the perspectives of civilian life, and urban terrorism. This thematic line is developed in television.

Although reflecting different phases and categories of internal and external attacks on South Africa, all these films interpret reality through a simplistic reduction to binary opposites: good vs bad, war vs peace and blacks vs. whites. More specifically, the oppositions are terrorist (black) = bad; soldier/policeman/student informer (white) = good: and 'loyal' black (especially those on the side of the South African forces) = good + bad (a sort of reformed black). Indeed, scriptwriters find it necessary to include a few token blacks on the side of the South African forces to mask the racial character of the slaughter they perform. These themes are not restricted only to film. They recur in television series like *Taakmag* (Task Force), and the way the news and documentary material is presented on the broadcast media, the press, including the English language press, radio soap operas (particularly those in Afrikaans), and magazines. Literature has offered a fertile source for film scripts: *Whispering Death* (1977) and *Wild Geese* (1977) by Daniel Carney, and *Game for Vultures* (1979) by Michael Hartman⁵.

The military themes in cinema take for granted a number of basic assumptions which later permeated other media as well. First, as in *Terrorist*, for example, the guerilla war is unmotivated: it involves a mindless racial slaughter where black must kill white.

The second point concerns the ubiquitous references to 'the Border'. Like the 'total strategy', 'the Border' is a state of being. It is geographically locatable within the 'total strategy': it's there, omnipresent and continuous, a state to be expected, inevitable — like sleeping or death. The term, 'the Border' has seeped unconsciously into our quotidian linguistic patterns: it is found not only in the media, but in everyday conversation from radio broadcasts of *Forces' Favourites* to the assumption that anybody in the army is at the 'Border', irrespective of his actual location.

Thirdly, whites are, of course, dominant. While black soldiers are seen, they are rarely heard. Where they are cast in roles which command respect, they are still 'kaffirs', as in *Wild Geese*. Here, the African President to be rescued by the mercenaries, one of whom is an Afrikaner, is repeatedly labelled as "the best there is". But "the best there is" is shown as sick, tired and dying, literally carried on the backs of whites, and the Afrikaner mercenary in particular.

The relationship between the police/military and the ordinary population is the fourth point. Seen in *Grensbasis 13*, *40 Days* and *April '80*, it privileges Institutionalism over Individualism. The dialectic in *40 Days*, for example, is blatant: Police (good) vs disco sub-culture (bad); Defence Force (good) vs personal chaos (bad).

The police are portrayed as charming, friendly fellows, and with the SADF are seen as the only viable agents of stability, law and order. (This uncharacteristic image of the Police also surfaced in an incredibly amateurish television series called *Big City Beat*). In the cinema films and

documentary television series, the way the news of the troops in action is shot and the style of press coverage is a deification or, at least hero-building, of 'our brave young boys in action'. This romantic image is contrasted with the population back home who are untroubled by the Border War. They are shown merely getting on with their lives as if nothing serious — apart from inflation — is happening. The implication is that nothing is wrong. We are in the safe hands of the Police and Defence Forces.

Unlike television, the film industry does not have financial links with the state, although feature films do get a subsidy based on box office income. Only one film on the Border War, *Escape from Angola* (1977), was financed directly by the Department of Information in conjunction with an American company. It failed and was withdrawn. In any event, the relationship between the film industry and the state is a cooperative one. Film scripts, for example, are usually submitted to the police, security police and military for comments and suggestions and their sanction.

TELEVISION: SPEARHEAD FOR THE CO-OPTION OF ENGLISH SPEAKERS

Despite the gathering momentum of the 'total strategy', liberal English speaking South Africans remained sceptical of the 'total onslaught'. The massive mobilization which followed South Africa's invasion of Angola in 1975 did little to reassure them. Inept television propaganda re-enactments of the key battles of the war such as *Bridge 14/Brug 14* did not stem the growing incidence of draft dodging. The established media have been prevented from reporting on the thousands of male South Africans (mainly English speakers) who have fled the country. Most were students or graduates and it is not surprising therefore, that universities have become prime targets for SADF attention.

The introduction of a state-controlled television service as late as 1976 coincided with a crucial historical conjuncture: the invasion of Angola, the restructuring of capital and the class alliance, the adjustment of the political economy from competitive to monopoly capitalism, and the attempts by a clique of power-hungry elements within the National Party to secure control of the media through the secret acquisition of shares through front companies, led to a 'bloodless coup' with the military faction ascendant. Rhodesia became Zimbabwe in 1979 and the Namibian question retained a high profile as did the escalating war with the increased presence of Cuban troops in Angola.

According to General Magnus Malan, Minister of Defence, the 'total strategy' "means a national reorientation aimed at survival while at the same time ensuring the continued advancement of the well-being of all South Africans"⁶. English speakers, it appeared, were resisting the "national orientation". Hence, the SADF apparently decided to place pressure on the Television Service of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC-TV) to produce and relay propaganda programmes to English speakers to convince them of the economic basis of the 'total onslaught' as well as to glorify the various arms of the Defence Force. In 1978 the English Documentaries Department was instructed to cease production of current projects and to concentrate on "a top priority documentary that would portray South Africa's military preparedness in the face of 'events to the north' which would restore confidence and

build up 'the will of the people'⁷. Faced with the refusal of all seven producers, the SABC tried to legitimise its action by comparing the present South African situation with propaganda films which had been made by notable directors during the Second World War. The producers remained unmoved and fought back with demands to make "socially relevant" films. The SABC responded by shifting the producers sideways into non-contentious departments like Variety and Sport, banished one to a technical job, while another, Kevin Harris, was fired for surreptitiously broadcasting a programme on Soweto's Baragwanath Hospital which he had been instructed to censor.

During the next two years the SABC broadcast at least eight documentaries on different divisions of the armed forces, made by a private contractor. One Afrikaans drama series, *Opdrag* (Mandate), was set in an army barracks and *Taakmag* was described as an 'anti-terrorist' series. A beautifully romantic series by Al Venter purported to have been made with the troops in action. The actuality, however, was not supported by the measured photography and the cutting techniques evident to the more experienced eye. That Venter was wounded during one of the scenes added a spurious authenticity. Similar images recur in press reports and pictures, dealt with in the next section.

Further direct intervention by the SADF in 1980 calling on the SABC to "nullify" the Opposition attack on the Defence Force budget during the Parliamentary session merely confirmed SABC-SADF links. Images of the military and the police now recur constantly on magazine and news programmes and the viewer is only reminded of their subtle intrusion when confronted with the crude representation of these agencies by less experienced producers.

THE PRESS: THE FOLK HEROES OF BATTLE

Other than *The Citizen*, initially set up by the Department of Information, the press has no financial links with the state. Being liberal in orientation, apparently anti-apartheid and undeniably critical of the government, one might have expected the English language press to be against the war effort. Although critical of some general aspects of the war, it is uncritical of military action itself. This supportive stance occurs because the English press is as much part of the System as its Afrikaans counterpart. While it wishes to see the end of apartheid, it remains wedded to the class structure which underlies racial capitalism. Although scornful of the politics of 'total strategy', it is tied to it because the strategy is designed to ensure economic stability in the face of change.

The English press's attitude towards the war can be illustrated by means of a content analysis of *The Sunday Times* of 2 May 1982 (see opposite). The "ambush" story is clearly prominent. Underneath it is a seemingly less important story about the disappearance of an ex-detainee. The three war pictures are in colour, connoting realism which naturalises the war situation. These photographs are starkly contrasted with the monochrome shot of the missing ex-detainee, who is downgraded in terms of news value.

The photograph of the helicopter tails against the yellow-orange sunrise recalls the prime-time Venter documentary series and suggests a romantic, even poetic, interpretation. This picture is indexical of beauty, peace and tranquility and symbolic of a well-equipped 'ready' Defence Force. The romanticism is reinforced by the left photograph of the "hero" and the right one of a black "troopie" being attended to. The suggestion is one of racial cooperation

and a unified South Africa in the face of an external enemy. This unification is enhanced by the newspaper's identification of the wounded black soldier as a "troopie" — he is one of us — skillfully treated by his white comrades. The inference is that South Africa is fighting a 'just' war, not against anti-racist blacks, but against communists whose aim is to enslave both whites and blacks.

The main headline establishes a dual theme. The first is the legitimization of military action! "I'll get them for killing my mate" says the "hero", threatening the "deadly" SWAPO. The second theme is the affirmation of the superiority of the SADF: "The young lieutenant who defied Swapo bullets". The photograph of the wounded lieutenant is symbolic of 'the best of South Africa': 'young', 'brave' and strong, a "walking wounded". The affirmation of the SADF is further reinforced in the headline "49 Swapo raiders shot dead". Although these "Swapo guerillas" were not involved in the ambush, by placing this report under the main heading and right hand photograph, the newspaper emphasises retribution. The sub-headings "Armed", "Horrors" and "Wound" suggest a continuation of the "Hero" story. This terse report defends South Africa's presence in Namibia. Despite its more sober style, the much higher number of dead and wounded (68 in all) this news is given less prominence (even though in bolder typeface) than the relatively less important "ambush" story. The use of attributive words such as "guerilla" and "insurgent", however, clashes with the main story's description of Swapo as "terrorists" and "cowards". This inconsistency is because the shorter report was written by a different journalist and is indicative of the contradictions of journalism practice. It is, in any event, overshadowed by the sensationalism and prominence given the "ambush" story.

The credibility of the main report is emphasised by the bold type and mugshot of the news source — the military correspondent — a new beat on the South African press scene. This identification not only tells the reader that he is reporting on a 'proper war', but it also identifies him as 'one of us' who is 'out there' with the troops in the front line. He too is a hero. His use of "us" and "we" tells the reader that he was in the thick of battle. He knows. His report must be the 'truth'.

The various elements of the page cohere to suggest that the SADF is 'professional' and 'efficient', 'ready for action'. It is simultaneously 'humane', suggested by the romantification of the "Choppers at dawn — the craft used to evacuate the injured" and the tears that "welled into the lieutenant's battle-hardened eyes" when he looked "at the body of his dead friend and corporal".

Connotations of illegitimate violence are associated with SWAPO, who are seen as inefficient and cowardly. In contrast, the South African troops are courageous and well organized. Where SWAPO drag their dead and injured with them, the South African troops evacuate theirs. Emphasis is on quick, professional and reassuring medical care.

The theme of security is further evident in the story underneath the "ambush" report. The ex-detainee was allegedly poisoned while held in prison by the Security Police. The inference that he has skipped the country is clear.

This page of *The Sunday Times* is typical of news reporting on the Border War.

THE SILVERTON SIEGE: FROM FOLK DEVIL TO FOLK HERO

News relies on events which draw attention to themselves. News practice encodes these in a manner which reflects the dominant interests of society. Although the media are influential in naturalising a dominant ideology influence is not absolute.

One example is the media's response to the 1980 hostage drama when ANC gunmen occupied a Silverton bank. A poll conducted by *The Star* showed that despite screaming headlines of "Deadly Amateurs", "Terror Shootout", "Bank Siege" and "I'll avenge her", about 90% of Sowerans actually responded positively to the ANC action. Yet, despite this, and despite the availability of alternative nouns such as 'guerillas' and 'armed men', the South African media, (with the exceptions of the black-oriented *Post* and *The Star* which used the terms "gunmen" and "gang" respectively), painted the insurgents as folk devils and persisted in describing this event as a challenge to social stability and a violation of the accepted means of communicating opposition.

In contrast to the "terror" perpetrated by folk devils is the legitimate violence of folk heroes, like the lieutenant in the *Sunday Times* story. By venerating folk heroes and vilifying folk devils, the media have the effect of strengthening public commitment to dominant social norms and creating a climate of opinion which supports the actions of the repressive state apparatuses.

'Law and order', however, can only be maintained in a society where there is a strong degree of consensus about social norms and when those failing to obey them are seen as 'outsiders'. In the initial reporting of the Silverton incident, the media reported graphic details of the event and the police allowed press photographers to take pictures of the dead 'terrorists'. The result of these reports was to arouse *white* public antagonism and revulsion. Subsequent to the trial, however, the government realised that the folk devils characterised by the press had, in fact, been interpreted as folk heroes by Black South Africa. This is precisely the interpretation that the government was hoping to avoid. Realising that public outrage at deviant acts can only be sustained where there is a large measure of consensus about what constitutes social norms, it has moved to strengthen its censorship of the media.

As the Minister of Defence stated on 14 August 1981: "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 unjustified publicity to terrorists and thus playing into their hands".

Another Defence Force General was not so subtle: "The media will be used and abused". The "abuse" of the



media may not be necessary, however. As the Mazda advertisement in *Paratus*, the SADF sponsored journal, states:

Mazda is not alone. *Paratus* is not alone. The media have been captured through advertising interests. The images of militarism in the media are indicative of the alliance between the military and monopoly capitalism.

The 'total strategy' has unveiled the mask which blames apartheid on Afrikaners and not capitalism. The rule of capital depends on stability and limited reform. The military is a prime agent of that reform: it not only protects capital but aims to shape an ideologically conducive environment for a class alliance which would sanction that reform. □

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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5. These books have been disseminated worldwide by paperback publishers. The films are mentioned here because, although not produced by South African companies, they were partially financed by South African capital and used South African locations, Defence Force personnel and equipment.
6. *Rand Daily Mail*, 20 September 1979.
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by C.M. BRAND.

"THEY AREN'T READY FOR IT"

(Edited from a talk given to the Association for Sociology in Southern Africa, Hammanskraal, 1983).

My starting point is the great dread of whites before independence of Zimbabwe crumbling into ruins "like other African countries": of milk no longer being delivered, of telephones ceasing to work, of having to queue for everything . . . etc.

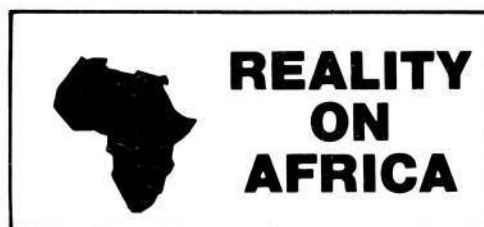
There is in fact more queueing in Zimbabwe now than before; and the telephone system is less efficient. In investigating the causes of this inefficiency, I want to focus particularly on manpower shortages (the so-called "skills crisis") and to a lesser extent on shortages of goods and equipment. I intend to suggest that the 'skills crisis' is partly the result of a self-fulfilling prophecy dating back to before independence.

MANPOWER DEMAND

Shortages — even of manpower — usually have their origins in changes in both demand and supply. Independence often brings with it a phenomenal increase in the demand for services (and hence for personnel) and for certain goods. In part the reason is demographic: the sheer number of people who previously had no, or very limited, access to these services and goods, and are now in a position to avail themselves of them.

The removal of past discrimination improves access for the less privileged (even if grave inequities remain). Attempts at integration often show up how grossly unequal the previously separate facilities were, and how great the financial cost is of bringing them on to a par with each other, since the pressure is usually to 'equalise up'. However, the opening of previously segregated facilities often means that they become severely crowded. In hospitals and public offices, for instance, queueing becomes the order of the day, since everyone prefers the better, formerly

segregated facilities, and staff and equipment are hard-pressed to cope. This is nothing new for blacks who have generally been accustomed to queueing at overcrowded and understaffed establishments. But whites, who previously



had more-or-less exclusive use of the best facilities, stand aghast! They attempt to create new expensive private facilities, which run counter to the government's wish to advance socialism. There are other reasons too for an increased 'popular' use of services and facilities. One is that the institution of certain free services leads to an explosion of demand which was not entirely foreseen. This has happened in health and educational services. The systems can hardly cope. In just over three years total school enrolment in Zimbabwe increased more than three-fold, from just over 800,000 to 2½ million. Pharmaceutical firms are not geared to provide for the increased demand for drugs. Facilities are hopelessly inadequate and shortages occur. Appropriations for departments or contingencies prove inadequate, and often cumulative cost-implications are not foreseen.

When the government over-commits itself, however, it is usually not staff who are cut (since with the pressures for employment this might have undesirable political implications) but allocations for goods and equipment. The increased staff find themselves without the necessary