

Propaganda posters as visual rhetoric: an exploration and case study

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I (Jacqueline Deirdre Pretorius student number: 21330256) declare that this study is my own, original work. Where someone else's work was used (whether from a printed source, the internet or any other source) due acknowledgement was given and reference was made according to departmental requirements.



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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 ORIENTATION

All forms of material practice, including design, overtly or covertly manifest and reflect an inescapable ideological grounding. The overt display of an ideological point of view in design is defined as propaganda, the purpose of which is to create, uphold, or confront, ideological hegemony. Propaganda argues from values, which raises the question, how are people persuaded in argumentation that certain values are preferable? The purpose of this study is to explore propaganda posters as visual rhetoric. This introduction provides the necessary background to the problem, defines the problem and outlines the purpose, method and structure of the study, as well as the assumptions on which the study is based.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM DEFINITION

Gramsci (2002:63) considers the word ideology when used in its “highest sense” as a “conception of the world that is implicitly manifest in art, in law, in economic activity and all manifestations of collective and individual life”. Flowing from this definition of ideology, Gramsci’s “dominant-ideology thesis”, implies that the class that is economically dominant will attempt to impress its world-view on the entire society. Gramsci (in Hawkes 1996:117) uses the term “hegemony” to refer to the “nexus of material and ideological instruments through which the ruling class maintains its power”.

Althusser (in Hawkes 1996:122) provides both a reason for the appearance of hegemony in society, and an explanation of the instruments that enable the ruling class to retain power. He contends that any economic system needs to reproduce its own conditions of production, and this involves reproducing the types of people who will be capable of participating in the process of production. Two types of institutions namely the “Repressive State Apparatuses” (such as the police, law courts and army), and the “Ideological State Apparatuses”, (including the Church, the family, political parties, media, and the education system) enable the modern capitalist state to do this. The difference between the two types of institutions is that the Repressive State Apparatuses function “by violence” whereas the Ideological State Apparatuses function

“by ideology”. Althusser further claims that an ideology always exists in an apparatus and its practices and therefore ideology is embodied in material practice.

Althusser's description of the Repressive State Apparatuses and the Ideological State Apparatuses demonstrates that in an effort to implement an ideology many things may be purposefully used. This includes physical force, arguably one of the least desirable, as well as material practice, for example the design of products, printed and electronic communication, and built environments, one of the most ubiquitous. Even when design is seemingly not being used deliberately and overtly to entrench ideological values, it is based within the framework of an ideological system, or as Sauthoff (1999:123) explains, design can never be neutral, it is intrinsically rhetorical and ideologically grounded.

The importance of acknowledging that all design is ideologically based becomes clear when considering Althusser's concept of “interpellation”. Althusser (in Hawkes 1996:123) believes that ideology exists before the individual. Ideology has “always already” determined a particular subjectivity, a set of specific roles, into which the individual will be inserted. The person is forced into this pre-allocated “subject position” through “interpellation”, which refers to the way in which an individual will be systematically addressed or “hailed”. Lemon (1991:31-32) comments that the process of interpellation employs visual or verbal language to construct social relations and constitute the individual as subject.

Due to the influence of semiotics it has become acceptable to extend the use of the concept of language from its traditional written and spoken form to also designate other forms of communication. It is therefore not surprising that the operation of ideology within various fields of discourse, including design, has received serious critical attention. Many critics, writers and commentators have revealed the covert ideological grounding of design, both specifically and within broader considerations of cultural manifestations.

Barthes (1993:9) offers an ideological critique of the workings of the language of “so-called mass-culture” by way of semiotic analysis. His analyses include many examples from mass-culture, such as wrestling matches and stripteases, as well as examples from print communication. Barthes (1993:9) states his intention clearly as to “go further than the pious show of unmasking them and account in detail for the mystification that transforms petit-bourgeois culture into a universal nature”.

Barthes (1993:116), for example, demonstrates how a seemingly innocuous cover of *Paris-Match* magazine, can be unmasked as promoting colonialism and sustaining French bourgeois hegemony. Barthes (1993:116) explains that:

[o]n the cover, a young Negro in a French uniform is saluting, with his eyes uplifted, probably fixed on a fold of the tricolour. All this is the *meaning* of the picture. But whether naively or not, I see very well what it signifies to me: that France is a great Empire, that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called oppressors.

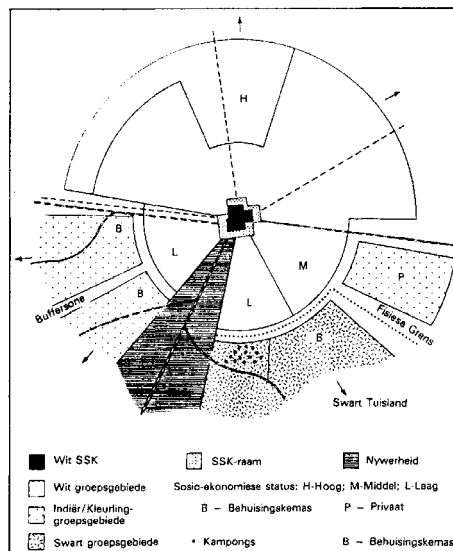
Barthes' (1993:9) analysis is aimed at contesting what he calls the "essential enemy, the bourgeois norm". By creating an awareness of the ideological underpinnings of the apparently "natural" phenomena that construct society, he highlights the danger of involuntarily accepting and integrating ideologies that are not necessarily in the best interest of all. Similar to Barthes, Williamson (1985) offers a Marxist critique of capitalist ideology through a structural analysis of printed advertisements. Williamson (1985:179) warns that:

[a]s long as the structures of these realities remains, so will the structure which I have tried to analyse, that of the images that mediate material exchanges, and conceal them, while also suggesting that we create ourselves through them ... We re-create ourselves every day, in accordance with an ideology based on property – where we are defined by our relationship to things, possessions, rather than to each other.

Related to the methods of Barthes and Williamson, Wolfaardt (1997:10-13) employs semiotic analysis to expose how concepts of "entertainment" derived from Disneyland are infiltrating the South African cultural arena. Drawing on examples from South African advertising campaigns, she notes that "South African audiences are beginning to see the manifestations of myth in advertising campaigns" and that "South Africans are subliminally being educated towards a process of cultural tolerance". While cultural tolerance is a just cause, Wolfaardt advises "the danger is that the spectator-consumers will forget the past and accept its reproduction in various prepackaged forms of nostalgia, implying a passive compliance with the ideas propagated by a dominant ideology". Moving to the built environment, Wolfaardt (1997:14) draws attention to the "fabricated reality" of the casino and entertainment complex The Lost City, situated in the Northwest province in South Africa. By drawing a comparison between the environment of the Lost City and Disneyland, she uncovers the operation of postmodern capitalist American ideology and the perpetuation of "romantic interpretations of cultural difference".

Contrary to the examples analysed by Barthes, Williamson, and Wolfaardt, to expose their covert ideological underpinnings, there are many examples of design that overtly reflect and propagate ideology. This was the case in the design of cities in South Africa during the reign of the apartheid government. A textbook (Van der Merwe 1983:146) used for the training of South African city planners, states that social and residential segregation is strongly built into the South African city structure, or “apartheidstad” (apartheid city). Van der Merwe (1983:146) explains that the law called the Group Areas Act (passed in 1950 and revoked in 1991) regulates the spatial organisation of residential areas by constraining ethnic groups to specific areas. Van der Merwe (1983:146) offers a model of the apartheidstad (figure 1), which clearly shows segregated residential areas, separated from each other with buffer zones.

**FIGURE 1 Model of the apartheidstad.
(Van der Merwe 1983:146)**



The model of the apartheidstad offers a concrete example of the overt way in which an ideology harnessed design as a means to exert power, by controlling and restricting the movement of people. According to Perelman (1979:143) the necessary role of an ideology is to aspire to the legitimacy of power. In order to exercise power it is essential that such power is recognised as legitimate and that it enjoys an authority that brings about the consent of those who are subject to it. The apartheid government attempted to legitimise the apartheidstad through conflict theory, which shaped the political opinion that cultural and ethnic differences could lead to friction, and therefore contact between these groups should be minimised (Van der Merwe 1983:146-147).

Attempts at legitimising the apartheidstad and a law such as the Group Areas Act inevitably failed, as such legitimising could never obtain the consent of the majority of the South African population. Du Pré (1994:82) singles out the Group Areas Act as the one law which “caused the most suffering, the most humiliation and the most deprivation” during the apartheid years. Williams (1997:241) identifies the Group Areas Act as the keystone of the apartheid system, noting that; “the forcible relocation of people under its provisions formed one of the most oppressive aspects of the system”.

Further examples of the overt use of design for legitimising power and exerting control abound. This is not unexpected, and as Doordan (1997:39) asserts, political and cultural leaders, in exploring ways to articulate new political beliefs and promote new patterns of behaviour, have used design in the modern era as a powerful tool. Sauthoff (1999:57), writing on graphic design, notes that design as a visual language has in the past supported the introduction of far-reaching social changes. She indicates that the distinctive visual languages employed by powerful political movements in the first half of the previous century (i.e. Fascism, National Socialism, Revolutionary Communism) were used to engender, promote and sustain political values and goals.

Doordan (1997:41-43) explains that design promoting Fascism drew on both the familiar, such as themes, images and myths from the country’s past, to the celebration of the modern and contemporary, for example the technological achievements of aviation. The fasces, an ancient Roman symbol of authority, was adopted as the official symbol of the Fascist party in 1926. The overt reference to ancient authority, combined with the modern connotation of strong political organisation, made it a powerful symbol that was eagerly incorporated by designers into everything from letterheads to architecture.

As the fasces came to signify Italian Fascism, so the swastika represents Nazism. Heller (1997:202) notes that the graphics of the Nazi party have been referred to as the most effective identity system in history. Although the swastika was prohibited from being commercially applied, it was integrated into vast numbers of official logos, emblems and insignia thereby contributing to the broad legitimisation of Nazi power in Germany before and during the Second World War.

The strategies employed by Fascism and Nazism to establish and legitimise their respective ideologies are described as propaganda by both De Wet (1988:45) and Larson (1989:359). Larson (1989:360) defines propaganda as first and foremost

ideological in that it tries to sell a belief system or dogma, and secondly that propaganda uses some form of mass communication (such as television, radio or posters) to “sell” ideology. According to Larson (1989:360), propaganda aims at uniformity in the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of its receivers. Propaganda is therefore an instrument through which ideological values are promoted, entrenched and sustained in society by the ruling class in an effort to maintain power. Althusser, however, holds that resistance constantly confronts ideological hegemony (Lemon 1991:30).

McQuiston (1993:6) identifies the upholding of, and resistance to, ideological hegemony by means of graphic communication in her distinction between the “official graphic voice” of the “Establishment”, and the “unofficial voice of dissenters and agitators”. Linking with McQuiston’s view of “official and unofficial voices”, De Wet (1988:44) remarks that throughout history, propaganda techniques were not only practised by rulers, but also used by “ordinary” people to hit back at rulers whom they considered in any way objectionable. Larson (1989:359) states that propaganda is always against something while it is for something else. In line with Larson’s (1989:360) definition of propaganda as first and foremost ideological, it stands to reason that when counter propaganda is employed to contest an ideology, the counter propaganda is embedded in an alternative ideology.

This assumption finds support in Gramsci’s view that part of any revolutionary project is to create a counterhegemonic culture, and if this culture is to have real power it cannot be imposed from above, but must come from the experience and consciousness of the people (Duncombe 2002:58). Or in the words of Perelman (1979:143-144):

[r]evolutionary partisans ... must, in addition, become the apologists of a new order which will be more just and human, which will save man from all kinds of alienation and give him back his lost freedom. A new ideology will have to be created to show the superiority of the new order over the established order...

The dominant ideology in South Africa from 1948–1993/1994 was that of apartheid (Bullock & Trombley 2000:41, Johnson 2000), which is described as a “legally-enforced policy of racial segregation and discrimination” (The Posterbook Collective 1991:14). A counter to apartheid ideology was offered through the quest for a democratic society¹

1 Democracy was not the only post-apartheid vision held for South Africa. Van Zyl Slabbert (1997) identifies nine key actors and organisations at the time of transition in South Africa. The ideological ideals

as embodied in the *Freedom Charter*². In the 1950s a strong and continuous defiance against apartheid began. The African National Congress Youth League initiated the first defiance campaign, which involved thousands of people refusing to abide by apartheid laws. This defiance campaign led to the establishment of the Congress of the People³ and on 26 June 1955, delegates from all over the country put forward their demands in the document known as the *Freedom Charter*. The *Freedom Charter* embodied a vision of a united, non-racial, democratic South Africa and became the blueprint for everyone supporting the ideal of a democratic and peaceful South Africa (Marcus 1985:41, The Posterbook Collective 1991:14).

Opposition to apartheid from various groups⁴ increased in the coming decades, eventually contributing to the end of institutionalised apartheid. With the coming into power of the African National Congress (ANC) in April 1994 came the opportunity for realising the democratic ideals as set forth in the *Freedom Charter*.

Under apartheid there was virtually no room for what McQuiston (1993:6) calls the “unofficial voice of dissenters and agitators”. The apartheid government controlled television, dominated radio, severely limited what the domestic media could publish, seized offending issues, banned books, and punished publication and ownership with fines and prison terms (Abel 1995:2). In this way the apartheid government ensured that mass communication played a pivotal role in upholding and legitimising apartheid ideology, while suppressing dissident voices.

of some of these groupings such as the Pan-Africanist Congress, the Black Consciousness Movement and the White Right cannot be described as democratic.

2 The full *Freedom Charter* is included in Addendum A.

3 According to Seekings (2000:5) the Congress of the People was organised by the African National Congress (ANC), together with its allies among Indian, coloured and white South Africans. Williams (1997:282) acknowledges that all races were represented, but indicates that the Congress of Democrats (a mainly white organisation formed after the banning and dissolution of the Communist party), dominated.

4 Seekings (2000:24-25) identifies three general anti-apartheid groupings during the 1980s. The first grouping was the rapidly growing independent trade unions that promoted a broadly socialist vision and played down racial factors. Secondly there were the “Charterists”, known as such because the *Freedom Charter* served as their manifesto for the national democratic vision. Their allegiance to the ANC and its allies in the Congress Alliance united the broad range of Charterist activities. The third group was increasingly more defined by their criticism of the Charterist movement, which they felt was not radical enough. This grouping included activists who were adherents of Black Consciousness, notably the Azanian People’s Organisation, and others.

Chaffee (1993:3) argues that the idea of mass communication should not be restricted only to “major high technology and professionalism” and identifies “politicised street art or graphics⁵” as significant in the flow of political information. With access to mass media, such as television and the press, denied to those not in agreement with apartheid, dissident voices turned to forms of mass communication that could escape government control, including posters.

The propaganda poster has historically proven its effectiveness, as is noted by numerous writers (McQuiston 1993, Jobling & Crowley 1996, Crowley 1998, Meggs 1998, Walton 1998, Timmers 1998b, Hollis 2001). McQuiston (1993:28) believes that the “resistance” posters of South Africa played a direct and confrontational role during the decade of mass resistance in the 1980s. Screenprinting workshops and activists produced these posters, and the posters acted as important tools for motivation, consciousness-raising and solidarity in the popular democratic struggle (McQuiston 1993:37). The Posterbook Collective (1991:3) contends that although posters were used in a variety of ways before the 1980s⁶ “the real era of South African posters began in the 1980s”. During the 1980s a range of anti-apartheid organisations, such as the United Democratic Front (UDF), and the End Conscription Campaign (ECC), used posters to make their voices heard.

Currently there is a strong movement to record the period of apartheid in South African history. This movement extends into the collection and exhibition of materials and artefacts. Some of these materials, for example propaganda posters and apartheid signage, are displayed in public spaces such as the Apartheid Museum⁷. An initiative is being spearheaded to build a cultural archive centred on the “resistance culture” of the

5 Chaffee (1993:4) includes posters, wallpaintings, graffiti, murals, political stickers, T-shirts, lapel buttons, billboards, placards and banners in his conception of “street art”. These items are forms of visual communication that may be created by professional designers, or alternatively, individuals producing outside the profession of design.

6 The Posterbook Collective (1991:3) states that posters were used since the beginning of the twentieth century in South Africa for political propaganda. The degree in which posters were used as part of the anti-apartheid struggles of the 1950s is not clear. After the suppression of the ANC and Pan-Africanist Congress in 1960, public mass protest and the use of graphics declined, and by the end of the 1960s most poster production was confined to university campuses. Trade unions re-emerged as a major force in South Africa in the 1970s and began to increasingly use posters in the latter part of the decade.

1980s with the focus on Cape Town (Pissarra 2003:18). The South African History Archive (SAHA)⁸ located at the William Cullen Library at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa, houses a growing number of political ephemera (t-shirts, banners, buttons) and propaganda posters. An exhibition of posters from this archive opened on 26 April 2004 at Museum Africa in Johannesburg entitled *Images of defiance*.

The exhibition derives its name from the title of the book *Images of defiance; South African resistance posters of the 1980s* (The Posterbook Collective 1991). This book is the only source published to date dealing exclusively with South African resistance posters of the 1980s. This publication provides a sample of approximately 320 posters, drawn from the SAHA that are broadly associated with the Congress movement⁹. The posters are presented under the categories politics, labour, community, education, militarisation and repression, and culture, and offer a description of the South African political situation at the time (The Posterbook Collective 1991:viii). In the preface, the authors (1991:viii) clearly state their intention as “[w]e have made no attempt to analyse or offer a critique of the posters. We present the collection to the reader as part of the process of recording the history of various elements of the struggle”. It succeeds in this aim, offering a valuable visual document of posters from the Congress Movement and a description of the South African political context in which these posters were created. Yet, due to the method of visual documentation and historical description, the engagement with the posters themselves is limited, leaving many questions unanswered.

Propaganda posters argue from an ideological base, and ideology as a “conception of the world”, is embedded not in facts, but based on ideas, ideals, beliefs, passions and

7 The Apartheid Museum opened to the public at the end of November 2001, with a theme revolving around: “the story of the overcoming of apartheid in our country and the achievements of a constitutional democracy which is held up internationally as one of the most progressive in the world” (Till 2002).

8 The SAHA collects materials from all groupings regardless of political persuasion (The Posterbook Collective 1991) and consists of nearly 4000 South African posters from the twentieth century, with the earliest dated poster 1921 and the latest 1995. A total of 3420 posters are currently archived by way of the DB/Textworks database into the fields; record number, source - issued by, physical description (production methods and colours), caption on poster, date of issue, keyword, references, and slide number if available.

9 The Congress movement was a banned organisation led by the African National Congress (The Posterbook Collective 1991:15) and further included the South African Indian Congress, the South African Coloured People’s Organisation and the (white) Congress of Democrats (Seekings 2000:8).

values (Bullock & Trombley 2000:414). For example, democracy as an ideology is based on a belief in the value of the individual human being (Bullock & Trombley 2000:209).

Perelman (1986:3-4) considers values to be purely subjective expressions of emotions, and asks: how do we reason about values, what kinds of structures do people use when reasoning about values and are these structures empirical in nature? He argues that logical value judgements do not exist, but what does exist is “only a study of the ways by which one presents all kinds of arguments, or good reasons, designed to persuade people that this or that is preferable or reasonable”.

1.3 PURPOSE, METHOD AND STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

This study explores propaganda posters as visual rhetoric, both in general, by considering design, rhetoric and propaganda posters, and specifically, by means of a case study consisting of a comparative examination of a sample of UDF and ECC posters.

The first objective of this study is to situate propaganda posters within the discourse on rhetoric and to provide an operational framework for a comparative examination of the UDF and ECC poster sample. This objective is accomplished in Chapter 2 through a literature review with two specific intentions. These are firstly to review some design studies based on rhetoric, and secondly to explicate the theory of rhetoric, specifically the theses of the new rhetoric, in relation to propaganda posters in general.

The review of design studies based in rhetoric briefly highlights the research done by Buchanan (1989), Bonsiepe (1999), Ehses (1989), and Tyler (1996, 1998) and serves a dual purpose. Firstly it reinforces the validity of applying rhetorical theory in the examination of visual argumentation. Secondly it informs the operational framework by showing the varied approaches taken by researchers in considering the construction, analysis and interpretation of visual argumentation. These approaches range from a concern with identifying or constructing visual counterparts for verbal rhetorical figures, to a more in-depth analysis and interpretation of design products from the viewpoint of design as visual argumentation.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971) in *The New Rhetoric; A Treatise on Argumentation* (originally published in 1958) jointly developed the theory of

argumentation termed the new rhetoric. Perelman (1982) later independently pursued the refinement of this theory in *The Realm of Rhetoric*. The description of the premises and characteristics of the new rhetoric in relation to examples of propaganda posters draws on both these sources to determine the implication that this theory holds as a method of analysis and interpretation of propaganda posters. As the new rhetoric does not refer to visual argumentation per se, Barthes' (1990) observations on the rhetoric of the image are drawn on to provide further terminological and operational direction.

In situating the propaganda poster within the discourse on rhetoric, a number of key points are identified with regard to design, the new rhetoric and propaganda posters. Informed by these points, Chapter 2 concludes by proposing an operational framework comprised of three sections, namely context, components and construction of meaning, as a means to examine and compare a sample of UDF and ECC propaganda posters.

Many voices challenged apartheid, and argued for change in South Africa during the 1980s (refer to footnote 4 on page 7). The decision to focus on the UDF and the ECC is embedded in the fact that they were prominent voices that have many points of similarity, but also important points of difference, that offer the possibility for a constructive comparison. The UDF and ECC both came into being in 1983, stayed active during the decade of mass resistance in the 1980s, and disbanded by the early 1990s. During the 1980s both organisations opposed apartheid by partaking in the struggle for freedom and a non-racial democracy in South Africa, used posters as a means to set forth their arguments, and endured extensive harassment and periods of being banned. Although the overall aim of their arguments was framed within the quest for democracy, the focus of their argumentation and the audiences they addressed differed considerably. It is expected that the examination of the context, components and construction of meaning in their posters will reveal how these differences and similarities manifest.

The second objective of this study is to apply the framework devised in Chapter 2 to identify, describe and compare the manner in which a sample of UDF and ECC posters drawn from the collection of the SAHA construct and present visual arguments for democratic change. This objective is achieved in Chapter 3 through a literature review, a content analysis and a visual and verbal reading.

The literature review provides information on the external context that influenced and directed the construction of the poster arguments and includes reference to the

ideology and values adhered to by the UDF and ECC, the actual speakers and their stated audiences. Seekings (2000:25) comments that there are “surprisingly few existing studies of the UDF” and that the few written articles hardly examine the UDF as an organisation and are based on a narrow range of secondary sources, such as press reports. The description of the external context of the UDF in Chapter 3 relies mostly on the comprehensive history of the UDF by Seekings (2000). That of the ECC is primarily indebted to the only available comprehensive source on the topic, *Out of Step; war resistance in South Africa*, published by the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR) in 1989. The context section concludes with a comparison between the UDF and ECC, and states the expectations created with regard to the visual articulation of their posters.

Having established the context from which the UDF and ECC posters flowed, the study turns to the examination of the poster sample. The components section provides a first denotative analysis of the posters by means of a content analysis. The sampling method is explained, followed by the identification, description and comparison of the posters’ production and reproduction methods, the language preference of the slogans, and the objects depicted in the images. This section determines whether the components align with the visual expectations created by the context description, and identifies a set of connotators used by each of the organisations.

The construction of meaning section employs a visual and verbal reading to examine and compare selected poster sets which are comprised of one UDF and one ECC poster. In each set a poster’s slogan is identified and described via the language selected, production methods, and resultant authorial voice. The image is reviewed through objects depicted, and the methods of representation. A comparison of the communication aims, values propagated, authorial voices and audiences constructed into the poster sets through the interplay of slogan and image concludes the examination.

1.4 ASSUMPTIONS

This study is based on the assumption that propaganda posters are an effective means to persuade an audience to accept ideological values, and to act on what these values demand. Speaking of resistance posters Mandela (1991:vii) comments that the posters issued by the democratic movement were very effective and he acknowledges the

important contribution they made to the struggle. McQuiston (1993:74) feels that South African “resistance” posters from the 1980s “provided the visual bonding and solidarity that carried the democratic popular movement ... and achieved the beginning of the dismantling of apartheid”. No attempt is made to explain the causal link between propaganda posters and the response by their audiences. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971:6) indicate that a study connected with the structure of argumentation need not “insist on the way in which communication with the audience takes place”. The assumption inherent to this study then, is that posters can affect change, and that certain South African posters can be credited with contributing to the appearance of democracy in South Africa.

Although it is assumed that posters can convince an audience to accept the arguments contained within them, it is further accepted that posters are part of a wider milieu of factors that bring about change. Althusser uses the term “overdetermination” to explain that every situation has more than one determining force (in Hawkes 1996:128). It would be naïve to believe that propaganda posters alone were responsible for bringing about a democracy in South Africa.

Buchanan (1989:105) asks whether design arguments accomplish the same as rhetorical arguments delivered in words? This question addresses the view of visual rhetoric, held in this study, that visual communication is a language. It is assumed that visual rhetoric is constructed in a similar fashion to verbal rhetoric and it is viable to employ rhetorical theory to examine visual arguments. Perelman (1982:5) observes “the general study of argumentation can be augmented by specialized methodologies according to the type of audience and the nature of the discipline”. If, as Perelman (1982:5) suggests, it is possible to conceive a juridical or a philosophical logic by specific application of the new rhetoric to law or philosophy, the same must be valid for design in the form of visual communication. It is assumed that propaganda posters contain an inherent logic that this study can identify and articulate.

CHAPTER 2 RHETORIC AND PROPAGANDA POSTERS

2.1 ORIENTATION

The objective of this chapter is to situate propaganda posters within the discourse on rhetoric and to propose an operational framework with which to examine the UDF and ECC poster sample. To reach this objective the research done by Buchanan (1989), Bonsiepe (1999), Ehse (1989), and Tyler (1996, 1998) on design and rhetoric are reviewed, and the new rhetoric, of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971) and Perelman (1982), is explicated in relation to propaganda posters. The aspects of signification and interpretation, identified by the new rhetoric, are further clarified by drawing on Barthes' (1990) observations on the rhetoric of the image. The chapter concludes by extracting the key points that enable the formulation of a framework for the examination of the UDF and ECC poster sample.

2.2 RHETORIC AND DESIGN

Rhetoric is an ancient tradition associated with writers such as Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, and St. Augustine. Rhetoric for the ancients was the theory of persuasive discourse and included the five parts of *inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*, *memoria*, and *actio*. *Inventio* was concerned with finding the materials of discourse by using common or specific topics. *Dispositio* gave advice on the purposive arrangement of the discourse. *Elocutio* was mostly concerned with style, *memoria* with memorising the speech and *actio*, concerned the art of delivery (Perelman 1979:2).

Traditionally rhetoric was orientated toward words and verbal arguments (Buchanan 1995:44, Ehse 1989:188). However, since the 1960s studies have emerged that apply the concepts of rhetoric as a method of construction, analysis and interpretation to design (Buchanan 1989:91). This includes studies of design types such as products (Buchanan 1989), advertisements (Bonsiepe 1999), information design (Kinross 1989), posters (Ehse 1989), political cartoons (Morris 1993), magazines and other printed communication materials (Tyler 1996, 1998).

Early explorations into applying rhetorical theory to analyse design products include Bonsiepe's (1999) focus on stylistic methods (*elocutio*) in an analysis of advertising messages, undertaken in 1965. Bonsiepe (1999:71) considers the purpose of rhetoric

to be the efficient use of language in order to shape attitudes in others and influence their behaviour. His analysis, which is based in a semiotic framework, consists of identifying visual counterparts for verbal figures of speech, such as analogy and metaphor, in print advertisements.

Following in this tradition, Ehses (1989) employs semiotic and rhetorical theory to establish a method with which to facilitate the construction of design solutions for visual communication problems. Ehses (1989:187) asserts that the object of rhetoric is effective speech. He singles out the stylistic features of design arguments, such as antithesis, irony and metaphor, and from this develops a method of employing rhetorical figures¹⁰ as a tool to enable design students to find solutions to visual problems. To this end, Ehses (1989:190-191) develops a classification with which to identify rhetorical figures in visual communication. The classification separates figures into four main divisions: figures of contrast (antithesis and irony), figures of resemblance (metaphor and personification), figures of contiguity (metonymy, synecdoche, periphrasis and puns) and figures of gradation (amplification and hyperbole). He believes that in using rhetorical figures a “lower literal order is transformed into a higher rhetorical order, giving the expression more vitality”.

In proposing a method for the analysis and construction of visual arguments, Ehses (1989:192-194) starts by describing visual communication, in relation to semiotic theory, as rhetorical coding. He outlines the basic conditions of graphic signification, identifies the visual concept that corresponds to the “meaning nucleus” of a graphic image, and lastly explores the designer’s method of arriving at this concept.

With regard to visual communication as rhetorical coding, Ehses (1989:192) explains that visual communication results from signs belonging to codes of different kinds of “disparate languages”. The designer assumes and activates codes by associating graphic devices with culturally sanctioned meanings and in the process binds “something present with something absent”. This binding process is called signification and the product thereof is a sign. Signification operates on a denotative as well as connotative level (Ehses 1989:191-192).

¹⁰ Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971:167) speculate that from the moment man first reflected on language, certain modes of expression that differ from the ordinary have been noticeable. These modes of expression have generally been studied in the treatises on rhetoric and therefore the name, rhetorical figures, is used to denote them.

Ehse (1989) draws on theatre posters to explain graphic signification, meaning nucleus and concept formation. Concerning the conditions of graphic signification, Ehse (1989:193) notes that a theatre poster may be viewed as the “result of the interplay of two sign systems – title of play and graphic image – that elucidate and complement each other”. Theatre posters typically combine a set of possible graphic forms, which correspond to a level of expression, with a set of plays to be announced, which correspond to a level of content.

A theatre poster for Macbeth (figure 2) is utilised by Ehse (1989:193-194) to explain the “meaning nucleus”, or the decoding of a graphic image on the basis of “ideas conveyed, or suggested and feelings expressed and connoted”.

**FIGURE 2 Theatre poster for Macbeth.
(Ehse 1989:194)**



The meaning nucleus of this poster may be summarised in the statement that reads “King Macbeth, a human beast” and is expressed visually in an image that combines a human portrait, topped by a crown, with animalistic features. The designer’s method of arriving at such a concept is explained by Ehse (1989:194-195) through the observation that the signifying process in visual communication involves two major operations. These operations are concept formation and graphic encoding, both of which are governed by rhetorical figures. Concept formation relates to finding an idea that expresses the play, and graphic encoding is the visual translation of the concept.

Bonsiepe and Ehse offer practical methods, based on a focus on rhetorical figures, for analysing and constructing visual arguments. Although Ehse (1989:189) believes that the view of stylistic devices as merely ornamental, the “dress of thought”, needs to be eliminated, it may be argued that a focus on rhetorical figures alone in an analysis of design as visual rhetoric is reductive. Buchanan (1989) and Tyler (1996, 1998) follow a method strongly indebted to Aristotelian rhetoric and this approach allows them to move beyond a concern with stylistic features to a concern with the broader social and philosophical implications of various design types.

Aristotelian rhetoric maintains that there are three kinds of persuasion. The first resides in the ethos, or character, of the speaker and it is instrumental in winning the confidence of the listener. Pathos consists of producing the right attitude in the listener by engaging the emotions, and logos refers to the power of logical reasoning in proving a real or apparent truth (Cooper 1988). Buchanan (1989) considers logos, pathos and ethos to be the three elements of design argument, and he employs these divisions to examine product designs. According to Buchanan (1989:93) a product design tries to provide the audience with the reasons for adopting a new attitude or taking a new course of action. Seen in this way, design as rhetoric is an art of shaping society, changing the course of individuals and communities, and setting patterns for new action. Buchanan (1989:109) asserts that designers interested in rhetoric can “benefit even more from studying how design continues to influence and shape society by its persuasive assertions”.

Tyler (1996:61) maintains that it is very important that attempts to use design as a means of social change receive close and serious criticism as:

[c]riticism can, hopefully be one means of evaluating the implications and ramifications of particular strategies in the hope that design can become a vehicle for understanding a complex world...

Working from this premise Tyler (1996) formulates a critical framework with which to examine design. She suggests that “communication / design” can be regarded as an argument comprised of a subject, the implications based on that subject, an authorial voice, and an implied audience. With this in mind, Tyler (1996) examines a number of issues of *Colors: A Magazine about the Rest of the World*, funded by the clothing manufacturer Benetton, and uncovers how the magazine subverts, instead of reinforces, its own stated aim of arguing “diversity is good”.

According to Tyler (1996:61-62), representation in communication reinforces, creates and transforms an audience's view on the world. For example *Colors*, in an effort to be a "voice for change", represents individuals and topics that are seldom seen in the mass media, such as drag queens, gay and lesbian police, and interracial, mixed gender groups. In presenting such groups, an effort is made to communicate the acceptability of difference. However, it is not only what is shown that is important, but the manner in which the selected subject is represented, that shapes the perception of the audience. For example, Tyler (1996:61-62) notes that the preferred method of representation in *Colors* is photographic, which is used to present "recordings of the world", supported by short "caption-like" text. Both text and photography emphasise the positive, "naturalize the shocking" and reduce threatening aspects. Differences between subjects, and between the subject and the audience are reduced to that of surface variations such as styles of clothing. This approach does not represent the anger and pain of selected groups. It ignores, and thereby eliminates, the context and belief systems of the subjects in an effort to "normalize" what is commonly perceived as shocking or threatening. Thus, although marginalised groups are offered representation, the manner in which this representation is done is deeply problematic.

Tyler (1996:67-68) maintains that in communication it is not only the subjects that are defined but audiences and authors as well. She argues that in *Colors* the audience is positioned to view the subject as the camera does, which is also the eye of the implied author. As the audience and author share the same point of view, the argument assumes that the audience takes on the ideological perspective of the author. Furthermore Tyler postulates that actual audiences and actual authors are often very different from the implied audience and implied author. The identity of the implied author is defined through the authorial voice and this in turn defines the audience's identity because the audience looks "upon the subject as the authorial voice looks upon the subject". For example, Tyler identifies the authorial voice used to describe members of the Gay Officers Action League as heterosexual, thereby implying that the identity of the audience is also heterosexual. Tyler concludes that her identity as a lesbian is denied by this strategy, which by implying she is heterosexual, folds her into the dominant culture. Thus *Colors* in attempting to show diversity in the subject, denies diversity in the audience through the choice of strategy of argument.

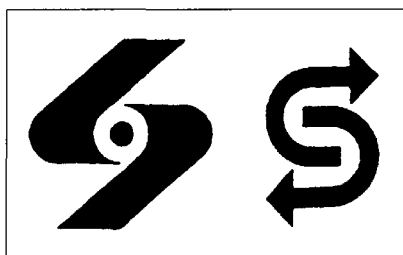
Tyler (1998:104) places great emphasis on the role of the audience in visual communication. She claims that during the process of visual communication, the

designer aims to “persuade the audience to adopt a belief demonstrated or suggested through the two-dimensional object”. The purpose of this is to induce the audience to take some action, educate the audience, or provide the audience “with an experience of the display or exhibition of a value for approval or disapproval”. Tyler (1998) elucidates this claim by referring to the design of selected posters and logos.

A poster aiming to persuade the audience to visit the New York aquarium employs formal devices to describe the audience’s future experience at the aquarium as “an emotional experience based on a friendly, intimate relationship with members of the animal kingdom”. The poster shows the frontal part of a whale emerging from the left and filling the picture plane. Intimacy between the audience and animal is created by an illusion of physical proximity, established through scale as the whale fills up the picture plane; personal contact as the whale seems to make eye contact with the viewer; and avoidance of confrontation, the whale is positioned in profile, has a friendly expression and is depicted in a “dreamy, soft quality”. Beliefs about the relationship between individuals and nature, specifically “nature is friendly toward human beings and animals enjoy being the object of our attention”, are referenced and reinforced through these formal devices (Tyler 1998:106).

Tyler (1998:109-110) asserts that corporate logos attempt to educate an audience about the corporate institution by equating the qualities of the logo to the qualities of the institution represented. The simplified, geometric logos that dominated corporate design during the 1960s and 1970s represented the “modern corporation” as a “large, anonymous entity driven by technology and the values attributed to science – rationality and objectivity” (figure 3).

FIGURE 3 Left: Screen Gems Inc. logo. Right: Seatrain Lines Inc. logo. (Tyler 1998:109)



These corporate logos reference science with formal devices such as “diagrammatic imagery, an efficient use of line and shape, and an emphasis on positive and negative space”. The removal of individuality and emotion imply the presentation of fact and an

omniscient voice. In contrast with these modernist logos, formally intricate and “naive” icons began to emerge during the 1980s. In referencing “handmade” qualities such logos (figure 4) eschewed reference to values associated with science, opting instead to communicate a more “emotional relationship with the audience”. The company is represented as humanistic, consisting of individuals like the audience, and therefore the audience's existence, and the belief in the individual is recognised.

FIGURE 4 Left: Blackdog logo. Right: CHIASSO logo.
 (Tyler 1998:110)



In developing an argument, Tyler (1998:112) asserts that the designer does not have a choice of referencing, or not referencing beliefs, but rather the choice lies in what beliefs are referenced. In making this choice, existing beliefs will be affected (maintained, rejected or transformed) and a new belief will be shaped. Thus the audience is an active participant in the argument and the designer must find an appropriate argument that will persuade a particular audience.

Tyler presents a useful approach for critically examining visual communication by revealing the strategies of argumentation contained within the representation of the subject, the implications of the representation, the authorial voice and implied audience. Her description of the aim of design arguments, her focus on audience, and the importance of referencing the existing beliefs of audiences strongly echo the claims made by the new rhetoric of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971) and Perelman (1982). The new rhetoric offers a more expansive and in depth approach to rhetorical theory than the analyses provided by Tyler, Ehses, Bonsiepe and Buchanan. Although the new rhetoric sets out to provide a theoretical basis for the examination of linguistic communication, it is feasible to propose that the new rhetoric may also be used to examine visual communication.

2.3 THE NEW RHETORIC AND PROPAGANDA POSTERS

Perelman (1986:5-7) states that rhetoric aims at persuasion, and persuasion is concerned with opinions. He differentiates between two types of reasoning: the domain of the immutable and unchangeable as represented by “mathematics, formal logic and metaphysics where opinions are of less concern; and the domain of practical reasoning where it is necessary, as in the case of politics, to decide, to choose, or to deliberate with others or ourselves”.

Perelman (1982:162) observes that “not so long ago” rhetoric was disdained in Europe, and hardly held in esteem by the academic community in the United States, but that rhetoric is now “rehabilitated”. The reason why rhetoric was not considered a serious area of study, until relatively recently, is embedded in the perception that it mainly dealt with figures of style, or flowery language (Perelman 1979:1). Perelman (1982:3) challenges this perception, maintaining that this view of rhetoric was the result of an error made by Peter Ramus in 1576 that involved the severing of the link between rhetoric and dialectic.

It is worthwhile considering the original view, held by Aristotle, of rhetoric as the counterpart of dialectic (Cooper 1988:1), the separation of the two concepts by Ramus, and the eventual unification of rhetoric and dialectic into one concept by the new rhetoric. This consideration serves to support the validity of rhetoric, and furthermore prevents the danger of conducting an examination of visual rhetoric drawing on stylistic methods alone.

Aristotle drew a distinction between analytical and dialectical reasoning (Cooper 1988:xxxvii). Analytical reasoning is demonstrative and impersonal, while dialectical reasoning aspires to persuade or convince the person to whom it is addressed. A dialectical argument gains its value from its action on the mind of a person, and thus it cannot be impersonal like the process of analytical reasoning. Because analytical reasoning deals with truth, and dialectical reasoning with justifiable opinion, it is necessary that the two types of reasoning be clearly distinguished (Perelman 1982:2-3). Different fields consequently need different types of discourse, or as Perelman (1982:3) concludes, “it is as inappropriate to be satisfied with merely reasonable arguments from a mathematician as it would be to require scientific proofs from an orator”.

Perelman (1982:3) blames Peter Ramus for introducing an innovation that proved to be an error that was fatal to rhetoric. In defining grammar as the art of speaking correctly, dialectic as the art of reasoning well and rhetoric as the eloquent and ornate use of language, Ramus dismissed Aristotle's distinction between analytical and dialectical judgements. The range now given to dialectic deprived Aristotle's rhetoric of the essential elements of invention and disposition, leaving only elocution, the study of ornate forms of language.

Perelman (1982:2-4) pinpoints the birth of "classical" rhetoric, as opposed to "ancient" rhetoric, in 1572 when Ramus' friend, Omer Talon, published the first systematic rhetoric limited to the study of figures. Classical rhetoric developed as a rhetoric of figures, which led "progressively from the degeneration to the death of rhetoric". Rhetoric became conceived as meaningless, an art of deception, and as promoting the use of figures of speech for ornamental purposes. Perelman (1986:2) reiterates that rhetoric was mostly "dead at the end of the nineteenth century in Europe", observing that it was removed from the curriculum in Belgium schools and universities from 1929.

The new rhetoric; a treatise on argumentation (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971) not only re-establishes the link between rhetoric and dialectic, but unites rhetoric and dialectic into a single concept. In this way a theory of argumentation is provided that acknowledges the use of reason in directing human actions and influencing others. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971:5) acknowledge that the new rhetoric relates to Aristotle's study of dialectical reasoning, but breaks with the ancient tradition in its conception of the form of the discourse and the gathering addressed.

According to Perelman (1982:5) ancient rhetoric was mainly involved with the art of public speaking in a persuasive way, and thus concerned with using the spoken word to address a crowd gathered in a public square. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971:6) see no reason to limit their study only to arguments presented through the spoken word, acknowledging that "in view of the importance of and the role played by the modern printing press, our analyses will primarily be concerned with printed texts"¹¹. The new rhetoric also does not restrict the kind of audience addressed to a

11 Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971:10) examine numerous types of discourses, such as arguments put forward by advertisers in newspapers, politicians in speeches, lawyers in pleadings, judges in decisions, and philosophers in treatises, in their effort to construct a theory of argumentation.

“crowd gathered in a public square” and is instead “concerned with discourse addressed to any sort of audience” (Perelman 1982:5).

The efforts of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca contributed to the renewed acceptance of rhetoric as a serious and meaningful area of study. *The Realm of Rhetoric* (Perelman 1982) adds to and further develops the analyses of argumentation initially shaped by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (Arnold 1982:vii). Perelman (1982:4) in turn acknowledges that *The Realm of Rhetoric* (1982) amplifies and extends Aristotle’s work. Aristotle’s dialectical reasoning seeks through argumentation the acceptance or rejection of a debatable thesis. The object of the new rhetoric is to study these arguments and the conditions of their presentation (Perelman 1982:4). In developing the new rhetoric Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca start with the question “by what processes do we reason about values?” (Arnold 1982:vii-viii).

In exploring the ways rational justification is given to claims in argument, Perelman (1982) considers aspects such as the aim of argumentation, speaker and audience, the premises of argumentation, choice, presence and presentation, signification and interpretation of data. The following sections in this chapter illustrate how these elements relate to propaganda posters and their visual articulation.

2.3.1 The aim of poster arguments

The aim of argumentation, according to Perelman (1982:9), is to “elicit or increase the adherence of the members of an audience to theses that are presented for their consent”. This view links with Timmers’ (1998b:7) definition of the function of a poster as a message, sent by a sender, to a target audience, with the aim of persuading the target audience to accept the message.

In the case of the propaganda poster the message revolves around the primary intention of propagating an ideology. As such, propaganda posters can be conceived as instruments that exist with the main aim of creating, sustaining or countering ideological hegemony. Perelman (1982:12) acknowledges that argumentation often aims to incite action or create a disposition to act, and does not aim only at gaining an intellectual adherence from the audience. The specific aims of propaganda posters may therefore be identified as the attempt to gain the audience’s intellectual adherence and / or to incite the audience to act. The poster’s effectiveness in realising its aims is acknowledged by Timmers (1998b:8), who considers the poster to be most effective as

a dynamic force for change, and Walton (1998:171), who credits the power of the poster with undoubtedly contributing to the crumbling, and eventual fall of the Communist regime in Hungary by 1989. Crowley (1998:144), in considering the role of the propaganda posters in recent years, contends that:

...a speech is one way of delivering a political message through the television screen, but a speech delivered in front of a graphic symbol and slogan is more likely to register in the mind of the inattentive viewer. Our encounters with political posters are mediated but it seems as if the task of influencing public opinion through the combination of pithy slogan and graphic image – the basic elements of the propaganda poster – endures.

To realise its aims, the propaganda poster relies firstly on public accessibility, followed by the audiences' ability to notice, comprehend and accept the argument it contains. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971:18) propose that for argumentation to develop, it is necessary that the audience pay attention to the argument. They identify the main concern of propaganda as drawing the attention of an indifferent public, as this is the "indispensable condition for carrying on any sort of argumentation". Perelman (1982:9-10) reiterates that adherence to a thesis presupposes a "meeting of minds" between speaker and audience, as a speech must be heard, or a book read in order to have an effect.

A poster must be seen and understood to have an effect. This meeting of minds is facilitated by virtue of the placement of the poster in the public domain, and the poster's inherent character that draws attention and encourages engagement. Timmers (1998b:8) ascribes the continued power and appeal of the poster to its accessibility by being placed in public spaces such as streets, trains, buses, shops, factories and cinemas. McQuiston (1993:7) sees "the street" as a symbol of the public domain, a forum for the "masses" and their graphic statements.

Posters are well suited for propaganda purposes as they can be distributed rapidly, changed often, are noticed amongst large quantities of information, may be read quickly in public spaces and communicate to a non-literate audience, or an audience not accustomed to reading (McQuiston 1993:10). Effective posters achieve their aim through the posters innate ability to seize and then retain, often for a brief but intense period, the attention of the viewer. It is during that moment of attention that the poster is able to elicit a response from the audience. The response of the audience is the part of the process by which the message is conveyed, and ultimately acted upon, if the poster is successful (Timmers 1998b:8).

Perelman (1982:44) suggests that since words alone don't guarantee complete understanding of a message, we must also look to knowledge of the speaker and the audience. These elements provide additional information, which diminish misunderstanding and facilitate comprehension of the message according to the intention of the speaker. Any discussion of the propaganda poster therefore requires identification and description of the speaker and audience.

2.3.2 Speaker and audience

Perelman (1982:14) defines the audience as "the gathering of those whom the speaker wants to influence by his or her arguments". In other words, audiences are almost infinite in their variety (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971:26). Perelman (1982:14) conceives the scope of the potential audience as narrowly as an individual's private reflection, or as broad as all of humanity, the "universal audience". The concept of the universal audience may be distinguished from the particular audience. Of the latter, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971:66) maintain:

...all that pertains to the preferable, that which determines our choices and does not conform to a preexistent reality, will be connected with a specific viewpoint which is necessarily identified with some particular audience.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971:19) consider the audience to be a construction of the speaker: "[t]he audience, as visualized by one undertaking to argue, is always a more or less systematized construction". Establishing the identity of the speaker therefore necessarily precedes identification of the audience.

Broadly speaking two kinds of speakers may be identified in the case of the propaganda poster. McQuiston (1993:28) explains that the national politics of virtually any country comprises a mass of internal power struggles. The graphic voice that stems from those struggles takes two forms: the official voice, which belongs to the establishment, governments, leaders and institutions, operate systems of control (political, economic or social) and define social values and priorities. The unofficial voice belongs to those who question, criticise or reject the systems and structures of the official voice and the motives of the people behind them. All of these struggles relate to power and both voices rely on propaganda techniques to accomplish their goals.

In line with McQuiston's (1993:6) distinction between the official and the unofficial voice, Crowley (1998:101) speaks of "two political traditions" in poster design. At the

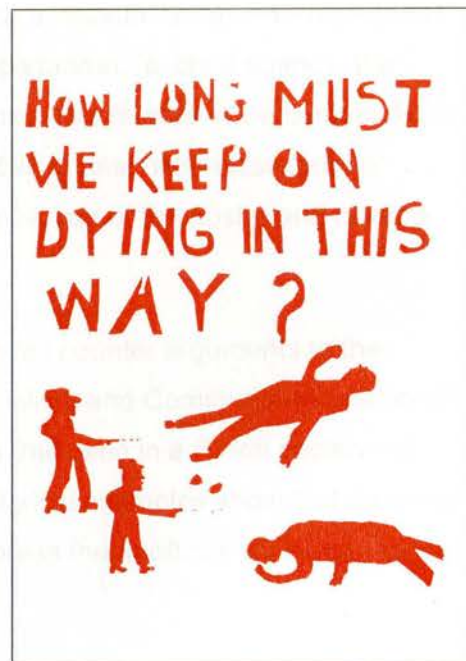
extremes, the one tradition produces celebratory images usually designed by official artists and produced by state printers, while the other tradition creates agitational images often designed by untrained persons and printed by any available means. These two traditions lie at opposite ends of a spectrum that encompasses the history of the propaganda poster in the twentieth century.

For example, the content and high production values of the German poster from 1937, which commands “Students to work!” (figure 5), indicate that it emanates from an official source. Clearly funds were available to contract a skilled illustrator, typographer and printer to create a slick, authoritarian poster. In contrast, the South African resistance poster from 1986 (figure 6) reflects an unskilled hand. The unofficial voice asks the urgent question “How long must we keep on dying this way?” in crude letters. This question is accompanied by a raw, literal illustration of soldiers gunning down civilians.

FIGURE 5 *Students to work!*
 (Aynsley 2000:191)



FIGURE 6 *How long must we keep on dying this way?*
 (The Posterbook Collective 1991:149)



Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971:55) provide further support for the idea of the official and the unofficial voice, albeit indirectly. They note that any society respecting its own values is bound to create regular occasions for epideictic speeches to be delivered, such as ceremonies commemorating past events of national concern,

religious services, and eulogies of the dead, which encourage a “communion of minds”.

They continue:

[t]he group leaders will regard any attack on the officially recognized values as a revolutionary act, and by the use of such measures as censorship, an index, and control over all means of communicating ideas, they will try to make it difficult, if not impossible, for their opponents to achieve the conditions preliminary to any argumentation.

Thus political or social institutions can prevent or aid the meeting of minds that every argument presupposes; a case in point being the control of the means of communication in totalitarian states (Perelman 1982:11). The socialist graphics of the former Soviet Union and the Iron Curtain countries of Europe are held up by McQuiston (1993:31) as a prime example of propaganda exercised by one official voice in countries with centralised power. She notes that for many years propaganda strategies, such as media censorship, “imposed authoritarian doctrines with complete intolerance of opposing views”.

A further example is found in Germany before and during the Second World War where Joseph Goebbels formed the Reichministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda (Ministry for the People’s Enlightenment and Propaganda). Its chief agency, the Reichskulturkammer (National Chamber of Culture), was formed in September 1933 and extended complete state control over the public media, nationalising radio broadcasting and the press and making unequivocal use of the poster and cinema (Crowley 1998:121).

It is evident that under such restricted circumstances counter arguments to the ideological premises propagated by National Socialism and Communism could in effect not be heard. Perelman (1982:11) acknowledges that even in a liberal society not everyone can speak and be heard. However, historical examples show that the extent to which the official voice can dominate and suppress the unofficial voice may take on terrifying proportions.

McQuiston (1993:9) notes the death penalties and disappearances experienced in some areas of the world, for example as in Ceausescu’s Romania, where any critical comment against government or leader was confined to a scribble or graffiti on the wall. Chaffee (1993:30-31) considers the fierceness with which some governments respond to the appearance of opposition posters, as a sign of the effectiveness of the medium. He provides many examples from countries including China, East Germany,

the Soviet Union, Sri Lanka, Spain, Haiti, and San Salvador where creating or pasting up posters in opposition to the regime resulted in punishments ranging from arrest and long prison terms, to psychiatric treatment, torture and executions.

As the speaker is either official or unofficial, the audience by implication must be particular, not universal. In identifying the particular audience as a construction of the speaker it is useful to turn to Tyler's (1996) observation that the audience's identity is defined through the viewing position of the author and the authorial voice. The examples of a Suffragist movement¹² (1860-1930) poster and a First World War (1914-1918) poster serve to illustrate the construction of the identity of the particular audience.

Figure 7 created by the Suffrage Atelier in 1913 argues for the right of women to vote by contrasting and amplifying the achievements of women in relation to the "weaknesses" of men.

FIGURE 7 *What a woman may be, and yet not have the vote.*
(Timmers 1998a:108)



The audience is confronted with a row of framed depictions of women in responsible positions, such as mayor and doctor, placed above a similar row showing men negatively labelled as convict, drunkard and so forth. All the figures are shown full-length and fill the frame in the same manner. The audience is invited to look on both women and men as equals, but also to recognise their unequal treatment despite the blatant discrepancies in character. The facts are stated clearly, and in this manner the audience members are constructed as rational beings. Surely, the authorial viewing

¹² Women who were members of the Suffragist movement were known as Suffragettes and advocated votes for women (Bullock & Trombley 2000:840).

position and voice suggests patiently, any rational and moral male or female must acknowledge the need to extend the vote to women, despite the prevailing consensus, which clearly is irrational?

Alfred Leete's recruiting poster (figure 8) from c1915 is judged by Meggs (1998:252) as "perhaps the most effective" British poster of the First World War. The audience is engaged by the direct gaze and pointing finger of Lord Kitchener and the message that declares "Britons Lord Kitchener wants you, join your country's army, God Save the King". Although only men were enlisted in the army, this is an urgent address to an entire nation of "Britons". The authoritarian and commanding voice constructs the audience members as patriotic, dutiful, and brave, and to comprise not only the men who voluntarily enlist, but also the family members and loved ones that support and encourage their decision to do so.

**FIGURE 8 Britons Lord Kitchener wants you.
(Meggs 1998:252)**



Crowley (1998:114) notes "much of the literature on the British posters of World War I claims that they scored a great victory". For example, posters were responsible for obtaining the recruitment of 24% of available men in the first 18 months of the

conflict¹³. Undoubtedly Leete's poster contributed greatly to these numbers. How then is it possible for a speaker's argument to have such a great effect on an audience? In this regard Perelman (1982) identifies the premises of argumentation to be of extreme importance.

2.3.3 The premises of argumentation

Perelman (1982:13) ventures "the only general advice that a theory of argumentation can give is to ask speakers to adapt themselves to their audience". To adapt to the audience essentially means that the "speaker can choose as his point of departure only the theses accepted by those he addresses" (Perelman 1982:21). Perelman (1982:23-25) identifies two broad points of agreement from which the speaker may draw the starting point for the argument. Firstly there are points of agreement that bear upon reality, that is facts, truths, and presumptions, and secondly there are points of agreement that bear on the preferable, namely values, hierarchies, and loci of the preferable. Facts and truths designate "objective elements", which force themselves upon everyone, and can be counted on as stable data, unless they are contested by a member of the audience. Presumptions are associated with "what normally happens and with what can be reasonably counted upon". Facts may contradict presumptions, and therefore presumptions are susceptible to varied interpretations.

Values apply to instances where one thing must be put before, or above another. Positive or negative values show an approving or adverse attitude to what is respected or denigrated. That which is described by terms such as "good", "just", "beautiful", "true", or "real" is valued, while what is described as "bad", unjust", "ugly", "false", or "apparent" is devalued. Hierarchies can be concrete (man is superior to animals) or abstract (the superiority of the just over the useful), homogenous (based on quantity) or heterogeneous (based on quality). Loci of the preferable play a role analogous to presumptions and are distinguished into general loci (affirmations about what is presumed to be of higher value in any circumstances) and special loci (concerns for what is preferable in specific situations). General loci of quantity (what is good for most

13 Crowley (1998:109) contributes the strategy employed for British conscription posters to the fact that Britain only introduced conscription in January 1916 when faced with difficulties in attracting volunteers. The War Office established the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (PRC) in August 1914 and the PRC used posters issued by its Publications Sub-Department as one way to encourage recruitment.

is preferable to what is good for the few) may be differentiated into loci of quality (preferring something that is unique, rare, irreplaceable), and loci of order (confirming the superiority of the anterior over the posterior, of cause over consequence) (Perelman 1982:26-30).

It would be unwieldy at this point to illustrate comprehensively all the premises of argumentation, as identified by Perelman and summarised above, in relation to propaganda posters. Indeed it would be unnecessary to explicate argumentation based on the real (facts, truths, presumptions) as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971:66) maintain that such argumentation is typified by “a claim to validity vis-à-vis the universal audience”. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971:74-75) identify objects of agreement in regard to which the adherence of particular groups are claimed, as values, hierarchies, and loci of the preferable. Although values enter at some point or other into every argument, in the fields of law, politics and philosophy, values “intervene as a basis for argument at all stages of the developments”. The following examples concentrate on values as the starting point of argumentation, as argumentation from values is possibly the most pertinent within discussions of ideology and propaganda.

According to Perelman (1982:27-28), analysis of argumentation concerning values must distinguish between abstract values and concrete values. Concrete values are attached to a specific object, group, being or institution in its uniqueness, such as “France” or “the Church”. By emphasising the uniqueness of a being, its value is emphasised. Perelman (1982:28) maintains that “certain forms of conduct and certain virtues can be defined and comprehended only in relation to concrete values such as fidelity, loyalty, solidarity and honor”. He speculates that reasoning based on concrete values seems characteristic of conservative societies. On the other hand, abstract values concern “rules that are valid for everyone and for all occasions, such as justice, truthfulness, love of humanity”. Abstract values are more easily used as a “basis for critiques of society, and can be tied to a justification for change, to a revolutionary spirit” (Perelman 1982:28), while concrete values are useful when the speaker wishes to preserve, rather than to “renovate” (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971:79).

Perelman (1982:28) contends that, although abstract and concrete values are indispensable to argumentation, given the situation a speaker will subordinate one type of value over another. Indeed, it is sometimes difficult to perceive the role played by

each (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971:77). To complicate matters further, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971:78) assert:

...that which is, under certain circumstances, a concrete value is not always such: for a value to be concrete it must be envisaged in its aspect of unique reality; to say that a particular value, is once and for all, a concrete value is to take an arbitrary stand.

The following examples show how propaganda posters reason from concrete values to safeguard the current state of affairs, and from abstract values to criticise society and argue for change.

Savile Lumley's poster (figure 9) from 1915 speaks through the voice of a child addressing her father "Daddy what did YOU do in the Great War?" What will the father answer? Was he an honourable man, or a coward? The poster, seemingly naïve by current standards, gained its effectiveness by directly addressing concrete values instilled in British men at the time. Crowley (1998:110-111) interprets the success of this poster through its reliance on codes and ideologies current in Edwardian and wartime Britain which "uncomfortably feminized" male viewers who had not volunteered.

FIGURE 9 *Daddy what did YOU do in the Great War?*
 (Crowley 1998:111)



The earliest British conscription posters of the First World War were typographical appeals usually invoking “King and Country” (Crowley 1998:109). While British posters often employed scare tactics or attempted to shame men into volunteering with implications of cowardice and loss of honour, German posters expressed the patriotic idealism of heroics and sacrifice (McQuiston 1993:20).

Crowley (1998:114) points out that Hitler in *Mein Kampf* (1926) described British propaganda as being as “ruthless as it was brilliant”. Hitler acknowledged that many of the typical strategies of Nazi propaganda, such as the use of emotional blackmail, originated in British practices. A recruitment poster (figure 10) by Ludwig Hohlwein from the early 1940s, reminiscent of Leete’s recruiting poster (figure 8), portrays a serious soldier facing the audience and asking the stark question “and you?” In directly addressing the young man who has yet to enlist, the poster induces guilt and implies that he is not honourable and brave, not a real man, unless he enlists.

**FIGURE 10 And you?
(Meggs 1998:255)**



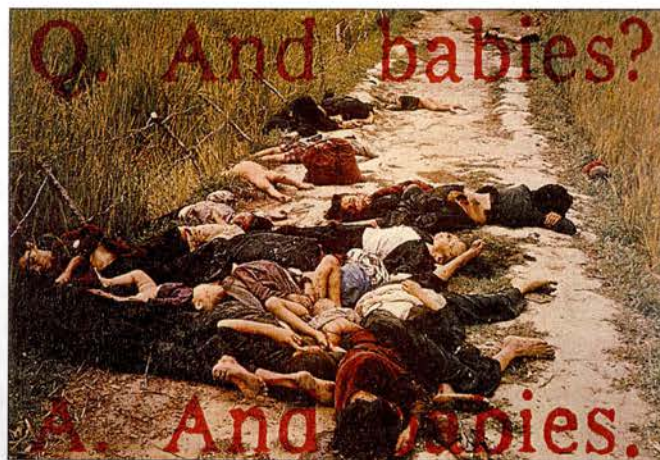
According to Crowley (1998:134-136), in the West the state’s interest in the propaganda poster, with a few exceptions, began to decline in the 1950s¹⁴. During this

14 After 1945 the United States and her allies campaigned to promote the expansion of democracy in Europe. It appears that during the Cold War, Western democratic states halted the production of overt

time a new kind of politics, concerned with moral and ethical issues, and the extension of civil rights, emerged. Issues such as civil rights for ethnic minorities and woman, atomic weapons, and from the mid-1960s, the war in Vietnam became the focus of left-wing dissent. A culture of activism by individuals developed and became known as the “counter-culture”.

Propaganda posters created by the counter-culture increasingly served to challenge the prevailing order, criticise society and demand change. The American anti-Vietnam poster “Q. And babies? A. And babies” created by the Art Worker’s Coalition (figure 11) in 1970 was a charge against America’s claims to be fighting for freedom and democracy (Crowley 1998:138). Superimposed over a shocking photograph of Vietnamese citizens, including babies, massacred by American soldiers, this hard-hitting poster asks the question “And babies?” answering in the affirmative “And babies”. This poster argues that if Americans really value democracy, how then could such a slaughter occur?

FIGURE 11 Q. And babies? A. And babies.
(Crowley 1998:137)



As the above examples start to indicate, the values held by the audience and selected for reference in the poster argument are communicated through the choice and presentation of the poster’s slogan and image.

graphic propaganda, as upholding free speech and peoples right to self-determination did not sit well with overt campaigns to shape public opinion (Crowley 1998:128-129).

2.3.4 Choice, presence, and presentation

By choosing to single out certain values and presenting them as objects or ideas, the attention of the audience is drawn to them and they are given a presence that precludes them from being overlooked. Presence acts directly upon emotional response; for example “Caesar’s bloody tunic as brandished by Anthony...can effectively move the audience” (Perelman 1982:35).

Creating presence, by singling out certain values, objects and ideas, is a very powerful rhetorical device. This is seen in the poster propaganda of the Nazi’s after March 1933, which became progressively more focused within a narrow range of themes. These themes included the image of the Führer as a singular genius; the racial stereotype of the Aryan and the mythical German community of the volk; and the threat posed by the “Jewish-Bolshevik conspiracy” (Crowley 1998:121).

Hohlwein’s poster created in 1933 (figure 12) makes claims to racial superiority in the representation of the ideal Aryan body (Crowley 1998:122). This ideal Aryan body again appears in Hohlwein’s poster for the Deutsche Lufthansa from 1936 (figure 13) as a “mythological winged being “ which symbolises simultaneously “the airline, German victory in the Berlin Olympics, and the triumph of the Nazi movement” (Meggs 1998:254). Meggs (1998:255) remarks that “Hitler’s ideas gained a visual presence as the repetition of Hohlwein’s images reinforced Nazi propaganda”.

FIGURE 12 *Give in the struggle against hunger and cold. Winter relief work of the German nation 1933-34.* (Timmers 1998a:122)



FIGURE 13 *Deutsche Lufthansa.* (Meggs 1998:254)



The concept of choice is strongly tied into the idea of presence, or as Perelman (1982:34) explains:

[e]very argument implies a preliminary selection of facts and values, their specific description in a given language, and an emphasis, which varies with the importance given them. Choice of elements, of a mode of description and presentation, judgements of value or importance – all these elements are considered all the more justifiably as exhibiting a partiality when one sees more clearly what other choice, what other presentation, what other value judgement could oppose them.

According to Ehses (1989:188) choice is a key term not only in rhetoric, but also in design as both relate to the making of appropriate “selections of means to achieve desired ends”. Crowley (1998:144) identifies the basic elements of the propaganda poster as the slogan and graphic image. Timmers (1998b:8) notes that although posters typically communicate through a combination of text and imagery, either text or image may be used alone. Consequently, within the context of the propaganda poster choices need to be made concerning the presentation of values by means of the slogan and image. This involves selecting verbal language to voice the slogan, choosing the objects for depiction in the image and the manner of their representation, deciding on the production methods with which to create the slogan and image, and opting for a reproduction method with which to multiply the posters.

The presentation of the image and slogan establish a rapport with the audience that can be compared to the ethos of the speaker. Does the speaker gain the confidence of the audience by speaking in a sophisticated voice, or in the vernacular with which they can better identify? Consider for example the presentation of the slogan and image in the following examples. A poster created in 1960 (figure 14), employs a vernacular term acceptable to angry young people. The strong language is emphasised through the large and stark typeset sans serif typography. The photographic image of a young man burning, what is supposedly, his call-up paper, documents that “real” action is being taken and thus urges others to follow suit by example.

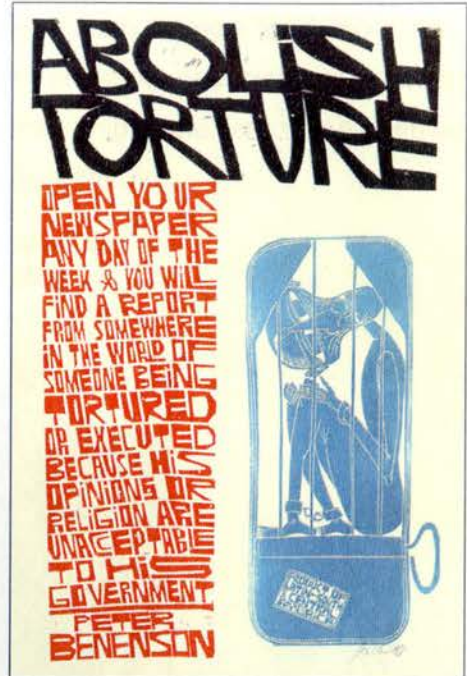
In the poster (figure 15) from 1987, commissioned by Amnesty International, the image and slogan are produced autographically with linocut. The hand-lettered typography enters into a semantic relationship with the slogan, as the letters themselves appear to be tortured. The stylised illustration of a person behind bars crammed into a sardine tin cannot be mistaken for a “real” depiction. Despite eschewing a literal representation in

favour of a rhetorical figure, the image is as powerful as figure 14 in conveying the message.

FIGURE 14 *Fuck the draft.*
 (McQuiston 1993:42)



FIGURE 15 *Abolish torture.*
 (British Council South Africa 2003:34)



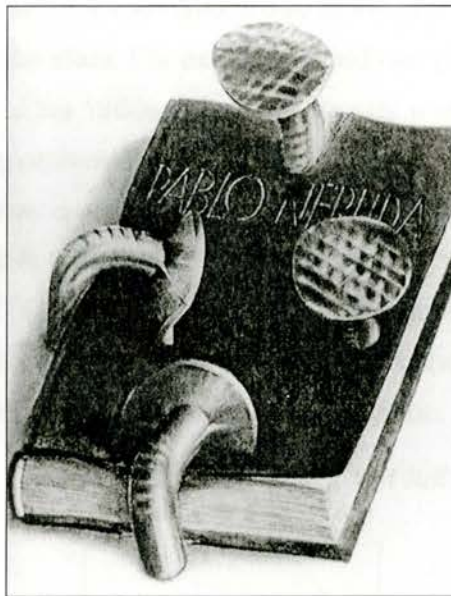
Propaganda posters often choose to represent objects as rhetorical figures. In fact, Timmers (1998b:8) points out one of the posters' strengths as the ability to "embody complicated thoughts and messages with a concentration of imagery akin to poetry". McQuiston (1993:9) believes that "graphic symbolism" plays an important role in communicating the ideals and aspirations of struggles because "events or entire causes may be reduced to a simple graphic shape, or collection of objects, which embodies their essence or meaning".

The problem regarding the view of rhetoric as mere *elocutio*, or flowery, empty language, has been pointed out and discussed. However, Perelman (1986:9) believes that if perceived and used properly, figures become arguments. He states that, for example, a metaphor is an argument as well as an ornament. Perelman (1982:39) further observes:

[i]f we think of figures as ornaments added onto the content of a discourse we see only the rhetorical technique of style – flowery, empty, ridiculous ostentation. But since a single and perfectly adequate way to describe reality does not exist, any other way cannot be seen only as a falsification or deformity; the separation between the form and content of discourse cannot be realized in as simple a way as classical thought imagined it.

Poster artists have skilfully used rhetorical figures such as visual metaphor to bypass censorship (McQuiston 1993:34). The 1979 poster by Marian Nowinski (figure 16) shows a book closed by oversized nails to lament censorship and the suppression of Chilean poet Pablo Neruda. However, for viewers it goes further than the plight of Pablo Neruda, articulating not only solidarity for the Chilean struggle for democracy and independence, but becoming a universal statement about censorship everywhere. The poster was the result of Polish government censorship at the time that prevented the direct address of internal political issues (Meggs 1998:393).

FIGURE 16 Pablo Neruda.
(Meggs 1998:393)



Timmers (1998b:8) feels that crucial in explaining the ongoing popular appeal of the poster is the availability of the means of reproduction. Posters can be reproduced using any printing process, from state-of-the-art technology to simple duplication. Today the majority of posters are printed by colour offset lithography, but the fact that they can also be reproduced with printing processes such as screenprinting, linocut, letterpress and woodcut, is important to individuals and organisations where money is not available for sophisticated, expensive production. McQuiston (1993:9) observes that the more direct, or cruder, methods of image making and duplicating such as handwriting, stencilling, photocopying and hand stamping can provide immediacy and emotional impact. She observes that silkscreen remains the medium of choice for low print runs and is still difficult to rival for boldness, economy and low-tech convenience.

The level of reproduction and distribution differs greatly for the official and unofficial voice. The official voice usually has considerable funds and institutionalised methods of production and distribution, while the unofficial voice is often forced to resort to less extravagant, potentially less effective, methods such as handing out home-made pamphlets, or sticking up illegal posters at night (McQuiston 1993:28). It seems as if unofficial voices often, although not necessarily always, rely on low-technology reproduction methods. While this is often due to financial constraints, in certain instances it is a calculated decision to gain integrity.

Chaffee (1993:162) maintains that low-technology communication modes have a high level of respect and credibility in some nations due to the fact that high-technology systems are controlled by the state. For example, Friedman (1984:13) observes that during the political turmoil of the 1960s, the printed poster was considered as a weapon of the power elite by young protesters, and challenged by handmade posters whose “fervent call to action and raw crudity distinguished it from the establishment’s product”. This approach is illustrated in the simple one-colour poster (figure 17) created by the Atelier Populaire in 1968¹⁵. As the examples in the above section indicate, the consideration of the choice and presentation of the slogan and image cannot easily be separated from the aspects of signification and interpretation.

FIGURE 17 *La Chienlit c'est lui!*
(Barnicoat 1988:245)



¹⁵ In 1968 Paris students took to the streets in strikes and civil disorder. These revolutionaries believed that in alliance with the workers a new society could be fashioned which was not based on capitalism or consumerism. A result of this utopianism was the founding of an Atelier Populaire at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts during the occupation of Paris’s Quartier Latin in May. This studio produced posters, wall newspapers and happenings for the city streets. The Atelier’s posters performed as counter-propaganda to challenge the antagonistic reports in the media and President de Gaulle’s attempts to discredit the students (Crowley 1998:138).

2.3.5 Signification and interpretation

Perelman (1982:41-44) stresses that in a discourse, the elements that the speaker conveys can only be described through a language, which the audience must understand. In natural languages, the possibility of multiple interpretations is the rule. As a result signification and interpretation are complicated by the problem of ambiguity in language, and textual clarity is relative to the interpreters of a given text. It can therefore not be assumed that a fixed meaning exists in a discourse. Here Perelman moves into the territory of semiotics, the “science of signs” (Hawkes 1978:124).

Perelman (1982:42-43) explains that:

The problem of signification and interpretation are posed in connection with signs and indices. A sign is a phenomenon which is capable of evoking what it designates, to the extent that it is utilized in a communication designated for this evocation. Indices, on the contrary, refer to things other than themselves, after a fashion that can be called “objective”, independently of all [subjective] intention of communication. The markings on trees to guide hikers are signs; traces left by a wild boar in the snow are indices.

In this connection it is useful to turn to certain observations made by Barthes (1990) with regard to persuasive messages and the reading thereof. Barthes (1990) draws a distinction between the linguistic message and iconic message asserting that both operate on denotative as well as connotative levels. The denotative or literal meaning, of the linguistic message is decoded through knowledge of writing and language, and that of the iconic message through perception.

Barthes (1990:38-40) identifies the most common function of the linguistic message with regard to the iconic message as “anchorage”. Barthes considers all images to be “polysemous”, and therefore the text serves to anchor all the possible meanings of the image. At the level of literal message, the text provides a denoted description of the image, providing an answer to the question: what is it? With regard to the symbolic message, the linguistic message guides interpretation, not identification, it “remote-controls” the reader towards a “meaning chosen in advance”. The main function of this anchorage is ideological as the text acts repressively and “directs the reader through the signifieds of the image; causing him to avoid some and receive others”.

The iconic message is the “pure image” that is left if the linguistic message is disregarded and it exists in the form of photographs or drawings. The iconic message is separated into the non-coded iconic message, which refers to the denotative, literal,

perceptual message, and the coded iconic message, that is the cultural or symbolic message. To read the literal message of the image only perceptual knowledge is needed. This requires the ability to know what an image is and to identify the objects that it contains. The difference between the photograph and the drawing rests in the photograph's ability to transmit literal information; it "records" mechanically, while the drawing is always a coded message; it "transforms" and captures the scene humanly. Therefore the "denotation of the drawing is less pure than that of the photograph, for there is no drawing without style". Connotation is prepared and facilitated by the coding of the literal, and even the "execution" of the drawing constitutes a connotation (Barthes 1990:42-44).

Barthes (1990:46) asserts that the signs of the connoted message are drawn from a cultural code. Thus the possible number of readings of the iconic sign varies according to individuals and depends on different kinds of knowledge such as practical, national, cultural, and aesthetic. Barthes (1990:49) continues:

...if connotation has typical signifiers dependent on the different substances utilized (image, language, objects, mode of behaviour) it holds all its signifieds in common: the same signifieds are to be found in the written press, the image or the actor's gestures... This common domain of the signifieds of connotation is that of ideology, which cannot but be single for a given society and history, no matter what signifiers of connotations it may use.

Barthes (1990:49-50) believes that to any ideology there "corresponds signifiers of connotation which are specified according to the chosen substance", and these signifiers he calls "connotators", a set of which make up a rhetoric. Therefore rhetoric is the "signifying aspect of ideology" and rhetorical figures constitute one way in which rhetoric is created. Nazi ideology, for example, is connoted through a visual rhetoric consisting of connotators such as the swastika, the colour combination of red, black and white, images of Hitler, Hohlwein's posters, the cinematography of Leni Riefenstahl, and as Kinross (1992:102) notes, particular letterforms.

The observations made by Barthes summon a number of expectations concerning the signification and interpretation of propaganda posters on a denotative and connotative level. On a denotative level the slogan must be coded in comprehensible verbal language and the depiction of objects in the image must be recognisable to ensure decoding. Propaganda posters therefore assume a level of linguistic literacy and perceptual facility on the part of the audience. Having grasped the literal meaning of

the poster, ideological connotation is achieved through the presentation and interplay of the slogan and image. The presentation of the slogan and image is drawn from a cultural code, which must be familiar and persuasive to the audience.

The expectations with regard to the interpretation of the poster on a denotative level is confirmed by Timmers (1998b:8), who maintains that posters communicate through the accessibility of their graphic vocabulary in that they speak with everyday, contemporary language, and appeal through directly compelling imagery to their audience.

Furthermore, Crowley (1998:106) identifies the use of widely understood common symbols and popular imagery as a significant feature of graphic propaganda, commenting that:

[i]n circumstances contorted by common fears and popular prejudices, producers of graphic propaganda have tended not to overestimate the intellectual capacity of their audiences. In fact, one might claim that the singular intelligibility of the propaganda poster has been one of its distinctive features.

A vocabulary of common symbols has developed over the last century that is instantly understood by audiences on a denotative and connotative level. These include party symbols, such as the swastika, described by Heller and Pomeroy (1997:200) as “the single most charged symbol of the twentieth century”. Other popular symbols include Uncle Sam (McQuiston 1993:20), the logo for the Polish Solidarity labour union which became an international symbol of struggle against oppression (Meggs 1998:393), and the clenched fist and banner as an international symbol for struggle (The Posterbook Collective 1991:8).

Posters from the campaign against “Careless talk”, launched by the British government during the Second World War (Walton 1998), illustrate how the presentation and interplay of the slogan and image direct ideological connotation. The Ministry of Information commissioned a detailed study to determine why their initial campaign against “Careless talk” was so ineffective. By measuring the response of individuals to posters it was found that the pompous language of posters with copy such as “Warning. Do not discuss anything which might be of national importance. The consequence of any such indiscretion may be the loss of many lives” left audiences feeling alienated. The study further indicated that instead of text-based posters the audience preferred posters that included images.

Fougasse, the art editor of *Punch* at the time, created the posters that proved to be the most effective in achieving the awareness required of the issue of careless talk. Fougasse's humorous approach, employing illustrations in cartoon style combined with the slogan "Careless talk costs lives" (figure 18), was couched in a popular idiom which rendered it "ideal for persuasion without causing resentment". The audience identified with the everyday situations in which the cartoon characters were depicted and felt that the messages were directed to them personally. The use of humour "cheered" the audience up, and the "lack of realism" of cartoons enabled the communication of strong ideas in a non-threatening manner (Walton 1998:154-158).

FIGURE 18 Careless talk costs lives.
(Timmers 1998a:154)



The denoted messages in the careless talk posters are essentially the same. However, it is the connoted message in the Fougasse posters, as evoked by the presentation of the image and slogan through the choice of language, illustrative medium and hand lettering, which creates a persuasive argument. The audience is won over by the positive connotations that humour brings; connotations of everyday life, shared jokes, good cheer, and the foolishness of the chattering characters. Fougasse justified his humorous approach to such a serious subject by placing it within a British cultural context (Walton 1998:158).

The Fougasse posters were successful because the presentation of the image and slogan drew on a familiar cultural code, which served not only to eliminate ambiguity but also achieved the connotations necessary for effective persuasion. Propaganda

posters need to communicate as unequivocally as possible to be effective and they are heavily reliant on codes that are understandable and recognisable to the audience. The difficulties faced by an audience in interpreting new codes becomes evident when taking into account some of the posters created after the lifting of restrictions through glasnost and perestroika in the Soviet Union during the 1980s.

The lifting of restrictions brought about a flood of posters, many of which were critical of society and its leaders, and which gave vent to years of suppressed anger and criticism (McQuiston 1993:33). Heller and Pomeroy (1997:21) note that elements that defined the social realist¹⁶ poster were rejected and posters became intellectually demanding, confronting the viewer with unfamiliar images and codes. They quote “one Russian observer” as saying that “the poster nowadays is contradictory; it’s not always precise and understandable for everyone”. For example, compare the literal, instantly understandable social realist poster (figure 19) dated 1952, with the far more ambiguous glasnost poster (figure 20) from the mid 1980s.

FIGURE 19 *Glory to the great Stalin, the architect of Communism. (Lapides & Foss 1998)*



FIGURE 20 *Glasnost poster. (Heller & Pomeroy 1997:20)*



2.4 KEY POINTS

The above sections reviewed some research done on design and rhetoric, and explicated the new rhetoric in relation to propaganda posters. As a result, it now becomes possible to propose an operational framework with which to examine the UDF and ECC poster sample. Before presenting this operational framework, the key points

¹⁶ Atkins (1990:150) describes social realism as “banal, realist images of the working class meant to be accessible to every viewer, of any age or IQ”. It is mostly associated with communist countries such as the Soviet Union.

that have emerged pertaining to design, the new rhetoric, and propaganda posters, which inform the operational framework, are summarised

In reviewing the diverse approaches taken by writers in considering design as visual rhetoric, four key points become apparent. The first is that rhetoric, although traditionally associated only with verbal arguments, extends and links practically into the construction, interpretation and analyses of visual design arguments. Secondly, that design aims at being effective persuasive speech and that this persuasion can potentially act as an agent for social change. Thirdly, that for signification to take place, communication design relies on the interplay of both visual and verbal sign systems. Lastly, that communication design as an argument can be analysed using a critical framework consisting of four cardinal factors, namely the subject, the implications based on that subject, an authorial voice, and an implied audience.

With regard to the new rhetoric the first key point that emerges is that the new rhetoric is a form of practical reasoning that acknowledges that due consideration must be given to six cardinal factors. These are; the aim and premises of argumentation, the speaker, audience, choice, presence and presentation, and signification and interpretation. Secondly it appears that although it is feasible to employ the new rhetoric to examine propaganda posters in terms of the six cardinal factors, the addition of semiotic theory enables insight into the denotative and connotative levels of meaning of the slogan and image.

With regard to propaganda posters specifically, it was established that propaganda posters are a powerful and practical form of communication located in the public domain, directed by one of two kinds of speakers, the official or unofficial voice, to a particular audience with the aim of propagating an ideology and / or inciting action. The arguments in propaganda posters draw on concrete or abstract values, which are historically, culturally and ideologically rooted.

Each type of speaker traditionally plays a specific role and shows certain characteristics. The official voice tends to rely on concrete values to maintain ideological hegemony and secure a position of power and often employs professional designers and printers to create celebratory and ceremonial posters. The aim of such posters is conservation not change, as opposed to unofficial voices that encourage change and challenge the official voice through agitational posters that reference abstract values. The agitational posters put forth by the unofficial voice are often

created by untrained persons and printed by any available means. Repressive regimes view any criticism, attack or non-adherence to officially recognised values as a revolutionary act, deeming it necessary to suppress such arguments. The unofficial voice, which questions, criticises or outright rejects the systems and structures of the official voice and the values they are based on therefore mostly struggles to be heard.

The aim, ideological values, speaker and audience are constructed into the propaganda posters by means of the presentation and interplay of the slogan and image. This presentation includes the selection of the verbal language for the slogan, the choice of objects depicted in the image and the manner of their representation, the production methods with which the slogan and image are created, and the reproduction method with which the posters are multiplied. The meaning of the slogan and image is understood on a denotative and connotative level and consequently their presentation and interplay must be appropriate to the audience's decoding capacity and draw on existing cultural codes. The choices made concerning the slogan, image and their presentation contributes to the emergence of a set of connotators that signify an ideology. As a set of connotators constitute a rhetoric it is therefore possible to identify, for example, a rhetoric of Nazism.

From the above key points it is possible to arrive at a meaningful configuration with which to examine and compare the selected sample of UDF and ECC posters. This configuration is divided into three sections, named context, components, and construction of meaning.

2.5 OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

2.5.1 Context

A number of key points extracted in this chapter indicate the necessity of not only examining the poster itself, but the importance of situating it within a broader context. These key points are that the propaganda poster functions with the aim of propagating an ideology, and that the argumentation is directed by an official or unofficial speaker to a particular audience who holds a specific viewpoint embedded in a system of values. Communication aims, ideologies, values, speakers and audiences, although implied and visually manifested in a poster, firstly exist outside of it. To avoid misinterpretation it is therefore essential to identify and describe each of these.

The context section relies on a literature review to identify, describe and compare the ideology held and values propagated, the actual speaker and the stated audience in the case of the UDF and ECC. The context section provides the background for a meaningful examination of the poster sample, and creates certain expectations with regard to the visual articulation of each organisation's posters, which are explored in the components and construction of meaning sections.

2.5.2. Components

Having established the context from which the posters must be considered the components section provides a first denotative analysis of the poster sample by way of a content analysis. This firstly necessitates an explanation of the sampling method, which is based on the identification of the various communication aims of the UDF and ECC posters in the SAHA collection. By identifying the various communication aims of the posters a purposive sample is identified that overtly contains arguments for change. Secondly the production and reproduction methods, the verbal language preferred for the slogans, and the objects depicted in the images are identified, described and compared with regard to the purposive poster sample. The components section serves to establish whether the selected components align with or divert from the visual expectations created by the context description, and to determine whether a possible set of connotators constituting a rhetoric for change is established by each organisation.

2.5.3 Construction of meaning

Based on the knowledge gained from the context and components sections, this final section employs a visual and verbal reading to closely examine and compare how the communication aims, ideological values, speakers and audiences are constructed into selected sets of posters through the presentation and interplay of the slogan and image. This requires the identification and description of the slogan via the language selected, production methods, and resultant authorial voice; and of the image through objects depicted, and the methods employed for their representation. Methods of representation include production methods, formal devices, for example colour choices and the use of scale, and the viewing position of the audience. The examination concludes with a comparison of the communication aims, values propagated, authorial voices and audiences constructed in the poster sets.

CHAPTER 3 UDF AND ECC PROPAGANDA POSTERS

3.1 ORIENTATION

Chapter 1 stated that the creation of a counterhegemonic culture is part of any revolutionary project, and for such a culture to have real power it must come from the experience and consciousness of the people and cannot be imposed from above (Duncombe 2002:58). The quest for a united, non-racial, democratic South Africa, as a counter to apartheid, was such a revolutionary project. During the 1980s both the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) participated in this quest and made use of posters to counter apartheid and argue for change.

The aim of this chapter is to come to an understanding of the manner in which visual arguments for change are constructed and presented in the UDF and ECC poster sample. To this end the sections of context, components and construction of meaning, as outlined in the previous chapter, are examined.

3.2 CONTEXT

This section relies on a literature review to identify and describe the ideology held and values propagated, the actual speaker and the stated audience of the UDF and ECC. In conclusion the contexts of the UDF and ECC are compared, and the expectations created with regard to the visual articulation of their posters are stated.

3.2.1 The United Democratic Front (UDF)

The UDF is considered to have been pivotal to the transformation of South African politics (Seekings 2000:3). Seekings (2000:3) summarises the role played by the UDF throughout the 1980s in South Africa as follows:

[t]he UDF played a central role in the transformation of South African politics from its launch in 1983 until its disbanding on its eighth anniversary in August 1991. The UDF inspired and mobilised people across South Africa to resist the state's institutions and policies; it helped to build an unprecedented organisational structure from the local to the national levels; it co-ordinated diverse protests and campaigns; it promoted the profile and underground structures of the ANC; and it nurtured a political culture that emphasized democratic rights and claims indivisibly by race.

According to Van Kessel (2000:56) the UDF was very aware of the significance of propaganda and media and produced a “massive outpouring of newspapers, pamphlets, periodicals, T-shirts, banners, buttons, posters, songs”. Seekings (2000:22) speculates that should the ANC’s armed struggle be viewed as “armed propaganda”, then one part of the UDF’s own work may be described as “unarmed propaganda”¹⁷. UDF propaganda had the ability to inspire, mobilise and educate large numbers of people into a “broadly coherent structure against apartheid”. The UDF helped to transform people’s understanding of the issues and their roles in them, shaped and reshaped the collective identities of followers and participants, helping to construct “a sense of we”.

3.2.1.1 *Ideology and values*

The question on what the UDF was and what it stood for is one that repeatedly appeared throughout the movement’s existence. Even at its national launch there had been “no clear understanding” of this question (Seekings 2000:115) and the history of the UDF was “one of chronic diversity and disagreement” (Seekings 2000:323).

Seekings (2000:298) concludes that:

...in so far as the UDF was integral to a broader movement, that movement was primarily a ‘people’s movement’ standing for freedom and democracy, and proclaiming a message of hope and freedom, more than for radical economic or social change.

Van Kessel (2000:69) remarks that it is not an easy task to pin down the basic tenets of the UDF’s ideology, but under it’s “wide anti-apartheid umbrella” three broad objectives can be recognised:

...the establishment of Charterist hegemony, the building of democratic organisations that ought to be prefigurative for a system of majority rule characterized by popular participation, and a more egalitarian society in socio-economic terms.

¹⁷ Seekings (2000: 26) comments that throughout its existence the UDF produced a “remarkable volume of documents”. In 1983 Zac Jacob was appointed interim publicity secretary with the task of co-ordinating the production of posters, stickers and pamphlets with the title of *UDF News*. It was claimed that over 400 000 copies of the *UDF News* and over 15 000 stickers and over 5000 posters had been distributed (Seekings 2000:53).

Three main sources may be identified which guided the UDF in their quest and embody the values held by the organisation, namely the *UDF Declaration*¹⁸ and *UDF Working Principles*¹⁹, and the *Freedom Charter*.

The *UDF Declaration* and *UDF Working Principles* were finalised in preparation for the UDF national launch on 20 August 1983. The *UDF Declaration* was “not a statement of either lofty ideals or far-reaching demands, as was the *Freedom Charter*, but a statement of common purpose”. The *UDF Declaration* proclaimed a collective opposition to the Tricameral Parliament and Koornhof Bills and went “no further than committing members to a non-racial, democratic and unitary South Africa, the particulars which they are free to fill in for themselves” (Seekings 2000:54).

The *UDF Working Principles* also broadly confirmed the belief in democracy and in creating a non-racial, unitary state in South Africa. The *UDF Working Principles* further stated an adherence to the need for unity in struggle and the recognition of the necessity to work with, and reflect accurately the demands of democratic people (Seekings 2000:50). In April 1985 at the UDF National General Council (NGC) the statement of objectives in the *UDF Working Principles* were revised²⁰ but remained essentially the same. The NGC also declared that the “UDF continues to represent and articulate the genuine needs and interests of all democratic South Africans”, but also emphasised that the UDF should not be seen as “the spearhead of the liberation struggle”²¹ (Seekings 2000:137-138).

Despite the fact that successive speeches at the UDF’s founding celebrated the Charterist tradition and drew on Charterist symbolism (Seekings 2000:57), the UDF decided at the time of its inception not to pledge itself to the *Freedom Charter*, and instead drafted an own declaration. Seekings (2000:133) observes that the *UDF Declaration* and the *Freedom Charter* were not considered to be incompatible, but that the Charter was considered to be a “document of far greater stature”. The UDF aimed at drawing in organisations that were cautious of, or even opposed to, the *Freedom Charter* and its perceived link to the ANC. Seekings (2000:290) posits that although the

18 The UDF Declaration is included in Addendum A.

19 The UDF Working Principles are included in Addendum A.

20 The UDF revised Working Principles are included in Addendum A.

21 Liberation in South Africa “generally meant rights and representation for all, decentralised power, and a redistributive economic alternative”. Only when democratisation became imminent, did a more exact picture of social and institutional arrangements develop (Seekings 2000:297).

UDF did not seek explicitly to construct a Charterist movement it did help to secure the construction of Charterist near-hegemony. Adoption of the *Freedom Charter* by the UDF increasingly became an issue and eventually the Charter was adopted in August 1987 (Van Kessel 2000:16).

A reading of the *UDF Declaration*, *UDF Working Principles*, and the *Freedom Charter* confirm that these three documents jointly embody an ideology of democracy, which originates in the collective will of “the people”. This view of democracy is based in the positive values of non-racialism, justice, peace, friendship, human rights, equality, freedom, unity, prosperity, brotherhood, non-discrimination, sharing, learning, culture, and work, while negating the negative values of injustice and inequality perpetuated by apartheid.

The apartheid government viewed such an ideological position as a serious threat and consequently repressed the UDF throughout its existence, this, despite the fact that the UDF mostly refrained from direct challenges, and avoided violence²². For example, in August 1984 and February 1985 the UDF leadership was decimated by detentions, top leaders were prosecuted in treason trials and members and activists were assassinated. In July 1985 a countrywide State of Emergency was imposed and an estimated 20 000 people had been detained by the end of the year (some remained in detention until 1989). In June 1987 the Emergency was reimposed and included repression in the form of detentions, tight control over public meetings, restriction of foreign funding and heavy censorship of the media. The Minister of Law and Order banned the UDF and sixteen other organisations in terms of the new Emergency regulation in February 1988 (Seekings 2000).

3.2.1.2 Actual speaker

The call for the formation of a united front to oppose the State’s constitutional reforms was made in January 1983 and developed into the UDF eight months later. Although

22 It did not appear as if UDF leaders turned to thinkers who advocated violence, even at the height of the township revolt. “Martin Luther King remained an inspiration; Fanon and the American Black Power leadership did not” and notably South Africa’s transition up to 1990 was not particularly violent, with the exception of Natal (Seekings 2000:315). As an alternative to insurrection nearly all UDF leaders sought to promote change through ways that were non-violent and were prepared to enter into talks, even with the state (Seekings 2000:158-159).

the prospective Tricameral Parliament²³ was the immediate impetus for the formation of the UDF, the UDF was the culmination of many years of development in extra-parliamentary politics in South Africa (Seekings 2000:29).

Before 1983 extra-parliamentary resistance inside South Africa had been “fragile and fragmented”. By proclaiming the slogan “UDF Unites, Apartheid Divides”, the formation of the UDF showed an open defiance of the government’s attempts to segregate South Africans. Almost six hundred organisations²⁴ attended the UDF’s national launch on 20 August 1983, bringing together coloured, Indian, African, and white activists (Seekings 2000:71). The UDF was thus conceived as a broad front seeking to involve any organisation willing to accept a non-racial, non-collaborationist approach (Seekings 2000:49).

Although the UDF was not a party, did not have branches, and never allowed individual or personal membership, it did have its own distinct structures at national, regional and sub-regional levels. It was these structures that organised events and campaigns, produced media, helped to build affiliates at both the local level and in the different “sectors” (such as student, youth, women, and civic associations), channelled funds, and played a general co-ordinating role for the UDF’s affiliates. At the national level the UDF comprised a federation of regional UDF bodies. The regional bodies were an umbrella structure for highly diverse affiliates that ranged from student groups to civic associations, overtly political organisations to sports clubs. These bodies existed independently of the UDF and remained autonomous from the UDF (Seekings 2000:15).

Three aspects of its structure shaped the relationship between the Front and its affiliates. Firstly, the character of the UDF in different regions varied according to the composition of its affiliates in each region. Secondly, since structures and objectives were only loosely specified, the Front could be almost whatever its leaders wanted it to be. Instead of a constitution the Front adopted the vaguely worded *UDF Declaration*

23 The Tricameral Parliament provided racially segregated representation in central government for coloured, Indian, and white South Africans while completely excluding the African majority (Seekings 2000:2).

24 According to Houston (1999:89-90) five hundred and sixty-five organisations with a total of 1.5 million supporters registered delegates at the inaugural conference of the UDF. He divides these organisations into student/youth organisations, trade unions, civic organisations, women’s organisations and other organisations, including political, religious and sports organisations.

and *UDF Working Principles*. This proved to generally be a source of strength as it enabled the UDF to “build and encompass unprecedented nation-wide political networks and alliances”, but would eventually lead to ongoing dispute. Lastly the Front was to play roles beyond those already played by affiliates in their particular areas, such as the academic, political, and sport sectors. Therefore there was not one, but rather many different UDF's, which varied according to time, place and the vantage point of the observer (Seekings 2000:15-16).

3.2.1.3 *Stated audience*

The description of the UDF as speaker implies the broad and diverse nature of the audiences addressed by the organisation. Although the UDF claimed a membership of close to two million, Houston (1999:90) argues that it is almost impossible to settle on a final number.

Seekings (2000:316) comments on the complexity of, and the difficulty in being precise in discussing the UDF's support base. He ascribes this to the fact that the UDF did not have formal membership, and operated in part as a front for autonomous organisations. He points out the lack of research on the social bases of the organisations that were affiliated to the UDF, but speculates that it seems likely that their active membership was drawn mostly from the upwardly mobile members of working-class families. In other words, people already in white-collar occupations or studying to enter such occupations, and generally not blue-collar workers, and “certainly not” farm workers, the rural poor, domestic workers or mine-workers.

The dominant view during 1983-5 was that the UDF should draw as many people and groups as possible into an anti-apartheid alliance. The one difference between the initial and post-1988 periods was that before 1985 the Front sought to “compete with the National Party government for the loyalties of the coloured and Indian South Africans”, while after 1987 it “sought to pull disaffected white economic and other elites away from the government” (Seekings 2000:314). Seekings (2000:224) perceives that during 1985 and early 1986, the UDF's work among white voters accelerated. Up until then, “activity among white South Africans had been concentrated on the issue of conscription into the army, with the lead being taken by the highly effective ECC”. The UDF now aimed to appeal to a wider range of white groups. The UDF recognised difficulties in drawing anti-apartheid white people into the struggle, and as a UDF position paper noted:

...the challenge that faces us to provide both a political direction and home to this grouping. To take up this challenge we have to embark on a process which begins with where they are at. We need to address their fears and their concerns and provide direction in a language and style to which they can relate (Seekings 2000:225).

It seems not to be an overstatement when Seekings (2000:216) states that the UDF attempted to broaden “political and moral influence over the widest possible range of South Africans”.

3.2.2 The End Conscription Campaign (ECC)

Seekings (2000:4) comments that the UDF alone cannot be credited with South Africa’s political transformation as important roles were also played by Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the ANC and to a lesser extent by other anti-apartheid groupings. An example of such an anti-apartheid grouping is the ECC, which according to the CIIR (1989:10) was a significant, although “relatively small part of the broad and multi-faceted struggle against apartheid”.

The CIIR (1989:11) points out “[a] system in which a small white minority holds power and privilege at the expense of a large majority can only be maintained through the use of force”. During the apartheid years, the government relied on the South African Defence Force (SADF) and the security forces to “crush and subdue black resistance to apartheid” (CIIR 1989:11). The foundation for the SADF was created by an army of white conscripts as by the 1980s all South African white men were conscripted to serve in the military on turning eighteen. The ECC was formed in opposition to conscription and militarisation in South Africa and became “one of the biggest and the most significant anti-apartheid groups working amongst white South Africans” (CIIR 1989:10).

At its inception the ECC defined its objectives as follows; to build pressure on the government to end conscription, to raise awareness and opposition to militarisation and the SADF’s role in South Africa, Namibia and Southern Africa, to win support for non-military and non-governmental forms of alternative service for all conscientious objectors, and to work for a just peace in South Africa (CIIR 1989:36). The ECC never encouraged conscripts not to go to the SADF as not only was this equivalent to advising them to go to jail, or into exile, it would also have been a serious contravention of the Defence Act. Instead, the aim was to provide “accurate information about SADF

activities and allow people to make independent decisions about their call-ups” (CIIR 1989:88).

3.2.2.1 Ideology and values

In line with the ANC and the UDF, the ECC saw the struggle against apartheid as being a non-racial struggle. The ECC demonstrated that there were whites prepared to get involved in the struggle against apartheid and the stand of objectors who were sent to jail for six years were viewed as symbolic of the commitment of some white South Africans to work towards a non-racial and democratic South Africa (CIIR 1989:11). The war resistance movement viewed itself as “part of the broader democratic movement challenging apartheid”. Although a small percentage of the movement was pacifist, most were opposed to fighting in the “unjust war”, of defending apartheid against the peoples of South and Southern Africa (CIIR 1989:15). ECC activists encompassed diverse political and theological perspectives; liberal and radical, religious and secular, opposition to the participation in all wars and opposition to service specifically in the SADF (CIIR 1989:89).

Opposition to conscription by the ECC was based on three broad arguments that related to the “individual’s right of freedom of conscience, the army’s role in defending apartheid inside and outside the country, and the effects of military service on the conscript and the broader community”. The arguments were summarised in the *ECC Declaration*²⁵, which called for a “just peace in our land”. The dismantling of apartheid, the unbanning of organisations and the release of political prisoners and detainees were included as the necessary preconditions (CIIR 1989:88). A closer reading of the ECC declaration indicates the organisations’ adherence to a democratic ideology based in the positive values of a just peace, basic human and moral rights, freedom of conscience and choice, and their rejection of the negative values of unjustness and inequality. It must be noted that the ECC’s strong stand against one of the cornerstones of apartheid put it well outside the mainstream of white thinking (CIIR 1989:90).

The CIIR (1989:10-11) identifies the strong reaction of the government to the ECC, which seemed disproportionate to the size or effectiveness of the organisation, as indicative of the significance of the ECC. By focusing on the SADF and articulating the grievances of conscripts, the ECC was “effectively striking at the very heart of the white

25 The ECC Declaration is included in Addendum A.

power system". In response, the government tried to isolate the ECC from the white community through a smear campaign²⁶. Other attempts to contain the organisation included the state of emergency, the detention and harassment of ECC activists, and the eventual banning of the organisation in August 1988 (the first "white" organisation to have been banned in over twenty years).

3.2.2.2 *Actual speaker*

The formation of the ECC in 1983 was preceded by the major English churches taking a stand on conscientious objection for the first time in 1974, and the emergence of organised resistance with the formation of the Conscientious Objectors Support Group (COSG) in 1980. By 1982 the war resistance movement was becoming increasingly active. To counter this trend, the government altered the law relating to conscientious objection (CIIR 1989).

The Defence Amendment Act (1983) created the possibility for objectors to do community service in government departments, on the provision that they satisfy a Board for Religious Objection that they would not serve in any armed force because of their religious convictions. Simultaneously the act also increased the term of imprisonment for objectors to a maximum of six years²⁷. The most significant result of the Defence Amendment Act was that it prompted the war resistance movement to re-assess its direction, leading to the formation of the ECC. The war resistance movement had to establish a new focus and an independent programme of action; it could no longer depend on raising awareness about militarisation through the stands of individual objectors. The motivation for the new focus came from the 1983 conference of the Black Sash, a human rights organisation of white women, who made the first call for an end to compulsory military service (CIIR 1989:82-86).

A few months later at the fourth national COSG conference the delegates supported the Black Sash stand, decided to launch a national campaign against conscription, and thus the ECC was born. ECC branches were established in three major cities by the

26 By accentuating the necessity of military service and trying to discredit those who hold contrary views, the government and military endeavoured to counter the arguments against conscription. War resisters were depicted as "unpatriotic, cowardly and defeatist" and part of the "onslaught against South Africa consciously or unconsciously manipulated by Moscow" (CIIR 1989:56).

27 This legislation initially appeared to have successfully frightened off political objectors, as over the next three years there were no such objectors. However, under the emergency and with the ECC severely harassed, political objection re-emerged towards the end of 1986 (CIIR 1989:124)

end of 1983, and countrywide over the next three years. United around the single issue of opposing conscription into the SADF, ECC branches were formed as coalitions of human rights, religious and political organisations. The broad range of fifty member organisations proved to be one of its greatest strengths, and was the first successful attempt at building unity between different anti-apartheid organisations in the white community. International support for the organisation was attained after the ECC initiated contact with overseas organisations in 1985 with the aim of informing them, promoting the ECC, and learning about conditions and anti-conscription struggles in other countries (CIIR 1989).

3.2.2.3 *Stated audience*

The CIIR (1989:10) notes that because only white men were liable for military service, conscription widely affected white families providing the opportunity for organisations such as the ECC to “inform and challenge whites about the role of the SADF and its use of conscripts to enforce and defend the policies of apartheid”. The audience addressed by the ECC was the white community, partly because conscription only applied to white men and was not of general concern to the black community, but also because apartheid had created real divisions between people. Although the ECC sought to break down these divisions it also recognised the necessity of targeting separately, and working differently in the black and white communities (CIIR 1989:88).

ECC activists were mostly “middle-class English-speaking²⁸ young people who had been politicised in church or student organisations”²⁹. The ECC expanded to include parents, professionals, school pupils³⁰, teachers, and Afrikaans speaking people as the

28 Until the mid-1980s the war resistance movement was almost exclusively English, but the ECC’s long-term goal was to become a fully bilingual organisation. An important breakthrough was made in 1986, when the ECC formed branches in Pretoria and Stellenbosch University. An Afrikaans wing of the Johannesburg ECC was set up with the name Eindig Nasionale Dienspelig (End National Service) (CIIR 1989:100-101).

29 The National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) was one of the first groups to take up the issues of conscientious objection and militarisation in the late 1970s and its members were instrumental in the formation of the COSG and the ECC (CIIR 1989:104).

30 The ECC identified white schools as a priority from the outset. Schools had been increasingly militarised since the late 1970s when the then Defence Minister P.W. Botha declared “Our education system must train people for war”. The SADF was preparing pupils physically and psychologically to “combat total onslaught” through Youth Preparedness programmes, veldschools and the cadet system. ECC branches formed school sub-committees, whose members included pupils and teachers (CIIR 1989:97).

campaign developed. Half of the ECC's membership was female. As a result of the military experiences of young conscripts the ECC Parents and Supporter Group was formed in mid-1986 and expanded rapidly when the call-up was extended to older white men (CIIR 1989:89).

3.2.3 Comparison and expectations

Broadly speaking the ECC and the UDF argued for a democratic ideology and in doing so they collectively opposed the ideology of apartheid. The UDF and ECC argued that apartheid was based on unjust and unequal values and must be replaced by a non-racial, democracy based on values of equality, freedom, human rights, justice and peace. These are abstract values as they address beliefs that are valid for everyone and for all occasions. In promoting these values the apartheid system is criticised and justification found for change. It is expected that the organisation's shared anti-apartheid stance and promotion of democracy are identifiable in the construction of the meaning of individual posters, as well as in the emergence of a set of mutual objects depicted in their posters.

Although couched in an anti-apartheid sentiment, the aims of the UDF and ECC were quite distinct. While the ECC held very specific aims throughout its existence, the aims of the UDF were more broadly articulated and the specifics shifted as the political landscape changed. It is foreseen that the varied aims of the organisations will be matched in the communication aims of the posters, the objects selected for depiction, and the construction of meaning in the posters. UDF posters most probably aim at inspiring, mobilising and educating people to collectively resist apartheid institutions and policies. The objects selected for depiction in UDF posters are thus highly likely to embody the idea of resistance, protest, defiance, unity and collective identity.

ECC posters most likely aim at ending conscription into the SADF by pressurising the government to end conscription, raising awareness and opposition to militarisation and the role of the SADF, winning support for alternative service for conscientious objectors, and promoting a just peace. It is likely that the ECC posters aim at providing information, challenging the audience to question the role of the SADF and encouraging conscripts to make their own decisions about their call-ups. Therefore it is possible that the objects shown in ECC posters embody ideas on the military, war, peace, and moral responsibility.

With regard to the speaker, both organisations share a similarity in structural organisation. In serving as fronts for numerous organisations they advanced a common goal, while allowing affiliates to retain their individual characteristics, which often differed considerably. It is highly probable that the identity of affiliates will not emerge in the posters, instead the speaker will be clearly identified as the UDF and the ECC. Because the impetus for the formation of the UDF and ECC came from the need to articulate a discourse that challenged and ran counter to the ideology of the time, both embody the concept of being an unofficial voice. The inevitable result was severe harassment and repression by the state. It is likely that their status as unofficial voice will be confirmed by a reliance on accessible and cost-effective production and reproduction methods. Hence it is expected that silkscreening, hand lettering and illustrated images will predominate in both UDF and ECC posters.

Concerning their stated audiences, the UDF claimed a position as the “only body representing all sections of the population” (Seekings 2000:290), while the ECC primarily addressed the white community. Hence, the UDF audience is more likely to be constructed as a collective, “we the people”, while the ECC audience will probably be constructed as individual members from the white community. The language preference and selection of objects in both organisations’ posters will indicate the assumed linguistic and perceptual facility of the audience. It is feasible to expect that both organisations assume a literate audience.

3.3 COMPONENTS

This section employs a content analysis to provide a first denotative analysis of the poster sample. The section opens with an explanation of the sampling method, which is based on identification of the various communication aims of the posters. This is followed by the identification, description and comparison in the purposive sample of “demand” posters of the choice of production and reproduction methods, the language preference of the slogans, and the objects selected for depiction in the images. The purpose of this section is to ascertain whether or not the selected components align with the expectations created by the context description, to resolve whether a set of connotators constituting the rhetoric for change is established and if so, how they differ between the two organisations.

3.3.1 Sampling and communication aims

To determine the purposive sample for the current study a three-step process was used. Firstly the SAHA poster archive database was searched in the field “source - issued by” with the keywords UDF, United Democratic Front, ECC, and End Conscription Campaign. This search resulted in 216 hits for the ECC and 127 for the UDF bringing the total number of posters to 343. Of this sample, 20 records for the ECC and 27 records for the UDF were excluded on the basis that they were listed as being issued in collaboration with other organisations, or classified as calendars.

The second step involved identifying the specific communication aims of the posters, to consequently allow identification of a purposive sample of posters that overtly contain arguments for change. An analysis of the captions in the database of the remaining 296 posters revealed that they function as announcements, calls, demands and declarations, and serve educational and ceremonial purposes.

The communication aims were classified as an announcement if the slogan simply acts as an announcement, for example for an upcoming event or campaign, as a call when some action is required of the audience, as a demand when the demands of the organisations are voiced, and as a declaration when an explicit proclamation is made of what the organisation is for or against. An educational aim refers to posters that provide more lengthy information, but also includes posters that express an apparent intent towards educating. Ceremonial posters were classified as such if the poster celebrates, praises or commemorates the organisation, a specific individual, or event.

Although all the listed functions could potentially promote change, it is in the voicing of demands that the strongest arguments for change are found. In line with the second objective of this study to examine arguments for change, the decision was made to focus on posters that function as demands, of which there are 23 UDF and 57 ECC examples.

The last step was to draw the demand posters and document them visually³¹. On visiting the archive it was found that of these demand posters, 7 UDF and 17 ECC

31 An apologetic comment must be made on the low image quality of the posters reproduced from the SAHA archive. This is due to the fact that the posters are encapsulated in plastic, from which they may not be removed, which caused reflections when photographed. Furthermore, the posters had to be

posters were missing, 1 UDF and 2 ECC posters were misfiled, and one UDF poster was filed in 2 locations. Three of the missing UDF posters were identified in *Images of defiance; South African resistance posters of the 1980s* (The Posterbook Collective 1991) and included in the sample. The total number of posters drawn for further analysis thus consists of 17 UDF and 38 ECC posters. These 55 posters constitute 19% of the entire sample of UDF and ECC posters available in the SAHA archive.

Table 1 Communication aims of UDF and ECC posters

Communication aims	UDF		ECC	
	N=157	%	N=287	%
Announcement	40	25	84	29
Declaration	35	22	74	26
Call	34	22	33	11
Ceremonial	24	15	19	7
Demand	23	15	57	20
Educational	1	1	20	7

Table 1 shows the distribution of the communication aims of the posters as revealed by the second step of the sampling procedure. The posters function either in a single capacity, for example an announcement only, or combine more than one purpose, for example an announcement combined with a demand. In total 444 communication aims were identified, 157 for the UDF and 287 for the ECC, in the sample of 296 posters.

Posters functioning as announcements and declarations are similarly distributed for both organisations. The announcements that are made in UDF posters are mostly for rallies and commemorative, mass and protest meetings. Announcements are also made for specific UDF campaigns, church services, celebrations, and to a lesser extent for concerts, and one “fun party”.

In comparison to the UDF, the ECC include more announcements for “fun”³² and recreational activities and opportunities to gain information. Many announcements are made in ECC posters for concerts, peace festivals, and meetings. Meetings are mostly

photographed under less than ideal lighting conditions in the basement of the William Cullen library. Where possible some image corrections and enhancements were made digitally in an effort to improve the quality.

32 The CIIR (1989:90) comments that the ECC campaigns reflected a “level of creativity and dynamism unique in white politics”. The Posterbook Collective (1991:127) ascribes this to the fact that the ECC had a different constituency from most anti-apartheid groups and therefore used new tactics. Cultural events such as art exhibitions, film festivals, rock concerts and cabaret, and fun runs, kite flying and street theatre complemented conventional political activities such as mass meetings, press conferences, and seminars.

described as information and public meetings, although two protest meetings and four rallies are also announced. ECC posters include announcements for advice bureaux on conscription, campaigns launched, special days, such as days of concern, and days to fast for peace, church services, debates, a public lectures series, cultural evening, exhibitions, fairs, film festivals, launches, a picnic and cabaret.

Although declarations are similarly distributed, the distinct aims of the organisations are reflected in the proclamations of what they are for or against. UDF posters make declarations for democracy and against apartheid. ECC posters declare that they are against conscription into the SADF, apartheid militarism, civil war, and SADF involvement in neighbouring countries and for the right to choose not to serve in the SADF, for a just peace, and alternative military service.

A first widening of the gap between the communication aims becomes visible with demand posters, which appear in a smaller number for the UDF. Demand captions for the UDF indicate the broad demand for a democracy, and for the end of apartheid. More specific demands relate to the current political situation and include a demand for an end to the emergency, to free all detainees and political prisoners, for the SADF and police to get out of the townships, an end to violence, allowing leaders to speak, to unban the ANC and the UDF, and even for higher wages.

The demands of the ECC mainly include that conscription be ended, that conscripts be provided with alternatives (“construction not conscription”), for peace, and the end to “apartheid war”. Specific demands are made for the SADF to stay out of townships, schools and neighbouring countries, and that objectors are released and the ECC be allowed to speak.

The biggest disparity between the communication aims is found in posters operating as calls, and in an educational and ceremonial capacity. The UDF posters functioning as calls are twice as much as the ECC. Calls that are made in UDF posters include calls to action, and calls for unity, solidarity and support. The primary call in ECC captions is to end conscription and to this end calls are made to join the ECC and participate in its activities, for an alternative national service, and for the support of conscientious objectors.

The UDF ceremonial posters are more than double the number for the ECC. UDF ceremonial posters celebrate, praise and commemorate the UDF, its members and

important events, while ECC ceremonial posters mostly celebrate the stand of conscientious objectors. Educational posters are far more prevalent for the ECC than the UDF. Only one UDF poster can be described as aiming purely at education, by giving extended information on the UDF.

The high incidence of posters containing calls and acting in a ceremonial capacity reflects the focus of the UDF to mobilise and inspire people to collectively resist apartheid, while the prevalence of ECC posters with an educational aim confirms the expectation that ECC posters would aim at providing information. Seen as a whole, the content analysis confirms the expectations that the varied aims of the organisations will be matched in the communication aims of the posters. The only exception is the low number of UDF posters with an educational aim.

3.3.2 Production and reproduction

Table 2 Production and reproduction methods of UDF and ECC posters

	UDF		ECC	
Production: image	N=17	%	N=38	%
No image	5	29	5	13
Illustration	11	65	23	61
Photograph	1	6	5	13
Photograph and illustration	0	0	5	13
Production: text				
Typeset	6	35	20	53
Hand lettered	7	41	12	32
Typeset and hand-lettered	4	24	6	16
Reproduction				
Silkscreening	9	53	17	45
Offset lithography	8	47	21	55

In table 2 the selected production and reproduction methods and the incidence of their appearance in the posters are shown. During the 1980s two methods were available with which to produce the image and text elements of the poster; either mechanically by means of typesetting and photography, or autographically, by way of hand lettering and illustration. Mechanical production methods involved costly equipment and trained specialists, and therefore were more expensive than autographical methods, which require only very basic tools and skill.

As expected, both organisations prefer illustrations, but the expectation that hand lettering and silkscreening would predominate is not fully confirmed. The relatively high

percentage of typeset text and lithographic printing is unexpected. Of the two organisations, the UDF employs hand lettering in far more posters than the ECC. It might be that the UDF audience expected a cruder approach, and would be suspicious of anything that evoked the establishment through high production values. On the other hand, the ECC might have been wary of alienating their white audience by employing low technology methods. This audience was accustomed to professionally produced printed media, and therefore typesetting and offset lithography might have been utilised in an attempt to gain the audience's confidence.

3.3.3 Language preference

Table 3 Language preference for slogans in UDF and ECC posters

Language preference	UDF		ECC	
	N=17	%	N=38	%
English	17	100	36	95
English and Afrikaans	0	0	1	3
Afrikaans	0	0	1	3

As indicated in table 3 most of the slogans are phrased in English, with the exception of two ECC posters that draw on Afrikaans. A cursory glance at the slogans shows that the slogans are short and understandable to anyone with a basic understanding of English. The posters therefore generally assume a basic level of English literacy on the part of the audience.

South Africans speak many languages, but despite this only two posters deviate from English and acknowledge a South African vernacular language spoken by the audience. The reason for this is probably because English is most often used when communicating to South African audiences composed of many different first language speakers. In considering that the UDF hoped to reach as many people as possible they probably had little choice but to select English for their slogans. The bias towards English slogans in the ECC posters can be interpreted as indicative that it was mostly the English-speaking members of the white community that were being addressed.

3.3.4 Objects depicted

Table 4 Objects depicted in the images in UDF and ECC posters

Object	UDF		ECC	
	N=17	%	N=38	%
Logo	10	59	29	76
Physical constraint	6	35	6	16
Raised fist	5	29	3	8
Discrete individual	4	24	4	11
People in defiant attitude	3	18	2	5
Gun	3	18	11	29
Outline of South Africa	2	12	0	0
House	2	12	6	16
Soldier	2	12	11	29
Blood	1	6	2	5
Military vehicle	1	6	13	34
Geometric shape and pattern	0	0	2	5
Dove	0	0	7	18
Pleading figure	0	0	3	8
Dancing figure	0	0	4	11
Grave	0	0	2	5
Radiating Sun	0	0	2	5

Table 4 lists the objects that appear repeatedly in the posters of the purposive UDF and ECC poster sample. Only objects that appear more than once have been listed, unless an object finds a match. Objects were identified according to whether they appear in a poster, and not counted by the number of times they appeared in a single poster. On the whole the objects are depicted in a highly recognisable fashion. Both organisations draw on a limited repertoire of objects which overlap, thereby confirming the existence of a set of connotators that are both shared, and specific to each organisation.

The organisations are generally identified by their logos or in the absence of their logos by incorporating their names into the posters. Only one UDF and two ECC posters contain no logo or name. The UDF logo depicts, enclosed in a circle, a crowd of people led by a man bearing the UDF flag marching across a map of South Africa. In certain reproductions details become visible such as the flagbearer's pair of dungarees and the headscarf of the women next to him. The ECC logo consists of a chain, which breaks to form the letters ECC from the broken links. The appearance of the logos not only identifies the speakers, thereby conferring legitimacy, but also repeatedly states certain core values of the organisations. The UDF logo reinforces the value of unity and collective action in attaining democracy for South Africa, while the ECC logo equates the end to conscription with attaining freedom.

The organisations share an overlap of objects and barring the appearance of the outline of South Africa, all the UDF objects find a match in the ECC objects. The shared objects are physical constraints (such as handcuffs, gags, prison bars, chains, barbed wire), raised fists, discrete individuals (so called because their identities are made known through either physical resemblance or accompanying text), people in defiant attitudes (signified through fists thrusting upward and confrontational figures), guns, houses, soldiers, blood and military vehicles. With the exception of individuals and houses, these objects may be viewed as agitational objects, pointing towards a more prevailing concern with resisting and protesting apartheid, than advancing democracy per se.

Although a shared set of objects are found, the variance in the percentages in which they appear, and the fact that the ECC draws on a broader set, corroborate the expectation that the objects selected for depiction will reflect the different communication aims of the two organisations. The shared objects in the form of physical constraints, raised fists, discrete individuals and people in defiant attitudes predominate in the UDF posters and embody the ideas of resistance, protest, and defiance. The concepts of unity and a collective identity are encapsulated in the UDF logo, which gains presence by appearing in many of the posters.

Military vehicles, guns and soldiers, appear in far more ECC posters, and verify the expected appearance of objects depicting the military and war. In addition the appearance of doves in ECC posters indicate a prevailing concern with peace, while the appearance of pleading figures, graves and radiating suns can be interpreted as indicating the ECC's concern with awakening the audience to their moral responsibility. The connotations of resistance, protest, defiance, unity and collective identity embodied by the selected UDF objects are thus distinct from the ECC objects, which connote the military, war, peace and moral responsibility.

3.4 CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING

In the light of the above context and components sections, this section aims to examine and compare the manner in which the communication aims, ideological values, speakers and audiences are constructed into posters via the presentation and interplay of the slogan and image. Five sets of posters are examined. A poster set is comprised of one UDF and one ECC poster selected from the sample of "demand posters" on the

basis of immediate similarities of the content, or manner of presentation of the slogan or image.

A visual and verbal reading allows for the examination of the presentation and interplay of the slogan and image. The slogan is examined by considering the language selected, production methods, and authorial voice, and the image by identifying the objects depicted and describing their representation through production methods, formal devices, and the viewing position of the audience. The examination of the poster sets concludes with a comparison of the communication aims, values propagated, authorial voice and audiences constructed in the posters.

3.4.1 Poster set 1

FIGURE 21 *We demand: SADF & Police out of the townships!*
(The Posterbook Collective 1991:31)

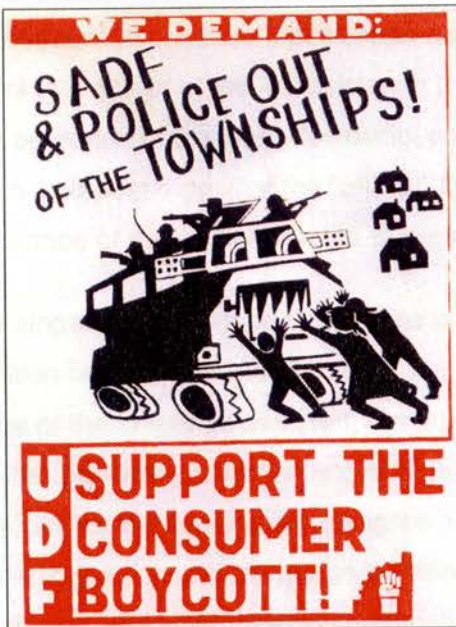


FIGURE 22 *No apartheid war.*
(SAHA record number 2496)

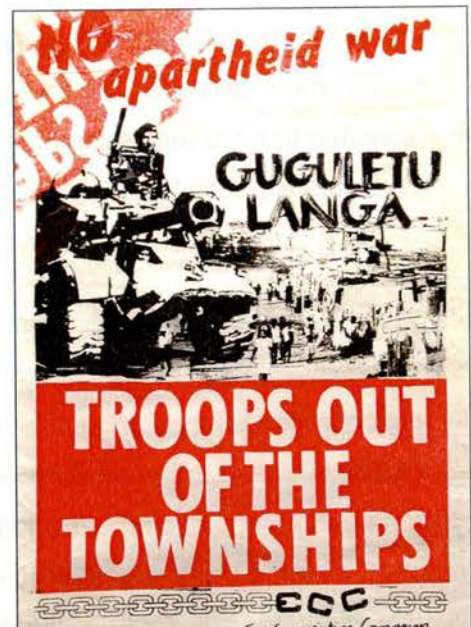


Figure 21 UDF: *We demand: SADF & Police out of the townships!*

The two slogans in this poster indicate that the poster functions as both a demand and a call. The first slogan voices the demand and is separated visually into two parts; the first part “we demand” appears in a band at the top of the poster and below this the second part “SADF & police out of the townships” is placed diagonally within the image. The call to action, “UDF support the consumer boycott!”, is enclosed in a frame in the lower third part of the poster. The illustrated image shows a man, woman and child

leaning in with outstretched arms towards a military vehicle manned by soldiers with guns. A group of four small houses is visible in the background. A symbol of a small fist appears in the lower right hand corner. The poster adopts a restricted colour palette consisting only of black and red.

The slogan “we demand: SADF & police out of the townships” indicates the speaker as a collective with the right to make demands, while “UDF support the consumer boycott!” identifies the speaker directly and contains the call to participate in non-violent protest. The specific selection of the word “township” in this slogan is quite significant. This ideologically loaded term came into use during apartheid to denote the residential areas assigned to black people.

As the model of the apartheidstad (figure 1) shows, black residential areas were assigned to the furthest outskirts of the city. People were forced to live in these areas under the law called the Group Areas Act. The “official” word used by the apartheid government to describe these areas was “location”, a dehumanising word that simply refers to a site or place. In resistance to this term the word “township” came into use. The presence of the word, township, consequently connotes protest and defiance, and when juxtaposed against the “official” terms “SADF and Police” clearly states the resistance of the authorial voice to the apartheid system.

The slogans are produced by means of linoleum relief print, which draws on an artistic tradition familiar to South Africans. The authorial voice is consequently familiar, and by virtue of the language selected, the quality of the relief print, and the potent colour palette, powerful, assertive and straightforward. Furthermore, the authorial voice leaves no room for the audience to disagree and accordingly the tone becomes authoritarian. The slogans link into the image by being likewise produced in a rough-hewn linoleum relief print, and when read in combination with the selected objects and their representation directs the image to communicate that collective action is required to fight apartheid.

The military vehicle overwhelms the scene through its size, which contrasts with the group of small houses. The soldiers are rendered anonymous, as no facial features are evident, and threatening, as their weapons point towards the township. The military vehicle becomes a “monster” as human features, in the form of “eyes, teeth and ears” are assigned to its front. It is against this monster that the man, woman and child take

up the struggle, leaning in with great power to stop its approach. The power of this group of people is so great that the wheels of the vehicle are forced rearward.

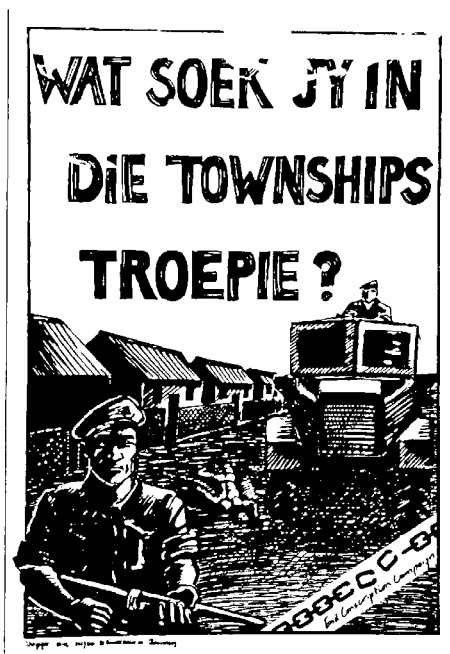
The houses represent the entire township, the single military vehicle and soldiers the bigger armed force, and the group of three people, all the township residents. The representation of these objects serves to construct the audience as powerful and brave. It illustrates that “we”, the township residents, children and adults alike, are powerful enough to gain our demands and drive the entire SADF out of the townships if we resist together. This message of collective struggle is affirmed by the presence of the small clenched fist.

Figure 22 ECC: No apartheid war.

This poster functions as a demand and contains two slogans. The first slogan demands “no apartheid war” and is placed diagonally across the top of the poster. Below this the words “Guguletu Langa” are superimposed over the image, providing an identity to the areas affected by the military presence. The second slogan demanding “troops out of the townships” is reversed from a block filling the lower third section of the poster. The ECC logo runs under the image across the base of the poster. The image is produced by superimposing an illustration of a tank manned by one soldier, over a photograph depicting a township with people walking in the street. The colour choice is identical to figure 21.

As in figure 21, this poster employs the word “townships”, thereby articulating solidarity with the black struggle against apartheid. However, the ECC notably opts for the word “troops”, instead of SADF. Troops is a softer term that was routinely used by the white community to refer endearingly to “our boys” in the military, especially when used in the form of “troepie”, a diminutive of the word in Afrikaans (refer to figure 23).

FIGURE 23 *Wat soek jy in die townships troepie?*
 (SAHA record number 1352)



The authorial voice thus addresses the white community and soldiers directly by stating that “troops” must get out. The message is emphasised by the large, reversed out, starkly typeset text, which contrasts with the hand lettering of the two township names. Despite using the omnipresent voice, the authorial voice becomes firm, direct and challenging through the typographic presentation of the slogan, direct address of the audience and colour choice.

In combination with the image, the slogan centres the attention of the white audience on the injustice of the military presence in the townships. This meaning is achieved by placing the figures in the street far removed, undefined and therefore non-threatening to the audience. The township residents peacefully go about their daily lives despite the disruption of the military presence. On the other hand, the soldier and tank are clearly defined and face the viewer. The soldier is not a stranger to the viewer, he is a family member, friend or even the viewer themselves.

The identity of the audience as white is further confirmed by the representation of the township. At first glance it is difficult to separate the various elements in the background due to the painterly illustrative style which renders the township houses and figures as an amorphous confusion. This representation corresponds with the perspective that soldiers coming from neat structured white suburbs would have of the disorder of townships (the result of the informal way in which townships developed).

Both posters argue for change by pointing out the aggression and injustice of the apartheid system. The UDF poster calls for direct action to protest the injustice of deploying the military in the residential areas of the audience. The ECC poster challenges the audience to consider the injustice of deploying South Africans soldiers against fellow citizens, and encourages them to accept responsibility and take a stand against the role of the military.

3.4.2 Poster set 2

FIGURE 24 *We demand: end the emergency.*
(The Posterbook Collective 1991:31)

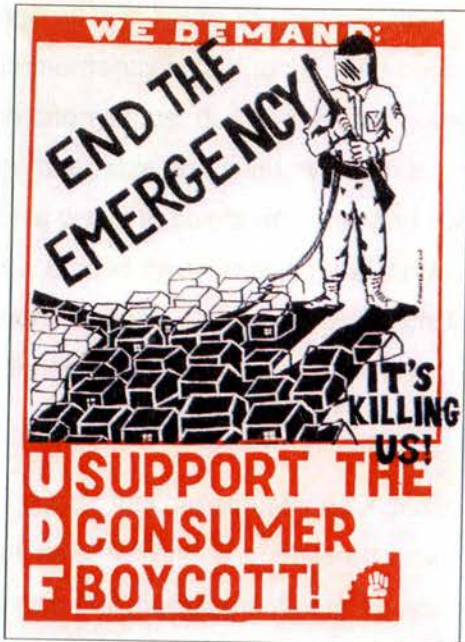


FIGURE 25 *Stop the call-up.*
(SAHA record number 1452)

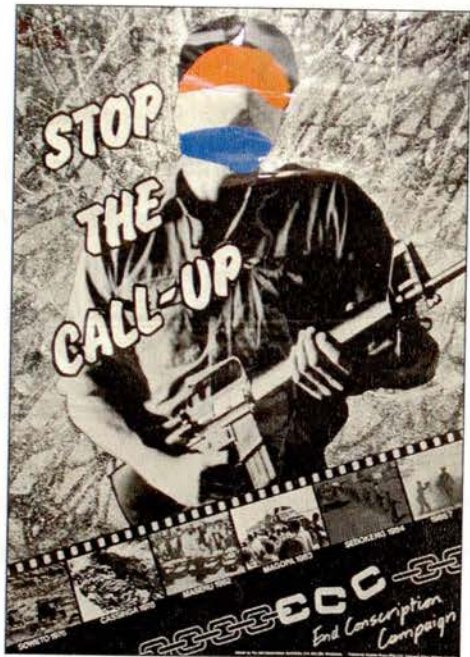


Figure 24 UDF: We demand: end the emergency.

This poster shows many similarities with the poster depicted in figure 21 thus indicating the emergence of a template, which allows a variety of demands to be made and images to be slotted in, while the call to action remains constant. The slogans contained in this poster show that it acts as a call, declaration and demand. The first slogan, which makes the demand, is visually separated into two parts; “we demand” is placed in a band at the top of the poster, and “end the emergency” appears diagonally across the upper left part of the image. The second slogan and call to action, “UDF support the consumer boycott!”, is framed in the lower third part of the poster. The declaration “it’s killing us” is situated underneath an image of a policeman. The

illustrated image depicts a riot policeman with his face covered by a visor. The policeman holds a gun, a sjambok is tucked into his belt and his figure casts a shadow over numerous small houses. As in figure 21 an image of a small fist appears in the lower right hand corner and the colour scheme consists of red and black.

With the exception of “end the emergency” and “it’s killing us”, the choice and presentation of the slogan is the same as in figure 21. Correspondingly the authorial voice is identified, and defined as collective, familiar, powerful, assertive, straightforward and authoritarian.

The slogan’s call for collective action to protest the emergency is not referenced in the image as is in figure 21. Instead, the image employs a metaphor to visually depict that the emergency is “killing us”. The policeman connotes the emergency and appears both anonymous, due to the visor covering his face, and menacing, through his hyperbolic size and shadow which is cast over most of the township. It is his shadow, not his gun that points upwards and away from the viewer, or his sjambok, which is safely placed away, that is most threatening. The shadow creeping over the small vulnerable homes connotes death chillingly in an ominous message that urges the audience to take action.

Figure 25 ECC: Stop the call-up.

This poster functions purely as a demand. The central image is a close-up photograph of a soldier with his face covered, holding a gun. Running diagonally below the soldier is a strip of film with six photographic images depicting SADF involvement in South Africa and neighbouring countries. Read from left to right the photographs are captioned as follows: “Soweto 1976, Cassinga 1978, Maseru 1982, Magopa 1983, Sebokeng 1984, 1985?”. The slogan “stop the call-up” is hand lettered and superimposed over the left-hand side of the soldier and the ECC logo is placed diagonally across the bottom right hand corner of the poster. The poster is monochromatic barring the appearance of blue and orange over the soldier’s face.

Although the demand is framed as a statement and spoken in an omnipresent voice, the large letters, and interplay of the slogan with the image create a firm, challenging authorial voice. The representation of the soldier provides a persuasive argument for the need to end conscription. The image of the soldier is photographic but the face has been illustratively altered to give it the appearance of being “bandaged”, blindfolded and gagged in the colours of apartheid South Africa’s flag. This has the effect of

connoting the soldier, who is placed in a close-up looming position over the audience, as anonymous and threatening, but paradoxically, also as vulnerable and powerless. The treatment of the face connotes the effects that the apartheid military system had on an individual; robbing a person of choice, individuality, freedom of speech, and the ability to see beyond what is taught in military training. The brutality of the military, and therefore by implication the soldier's personal involvement, is repeatedly pointed out by the row of photographs, which realistically depict violent SADF operations.

In pointing out the negative aspects of conscription the image subverts the heroic imagery traditionally employed in recruitment posters. This method of representation was an important strategy with which to break down the continuous positive reinforcement and normalisation of the military experience that was endemic in white society during the time. The audience is confronted by the soldier, and challenged to identify with him. However, no person of sound mind would aspire to be this faceless, mute, blind and brutal soldier.

The threatening, faceless, anonymous soldier and policeman connote the cruel effects of apartheid on both the individual and society at large. The overriding arguments presented in these posters are against the physical and psychological injustices perpetuated by the apartheid system against human beings.

3.4.3 Poster set 3

FIGURE 26 *Let Mbeki speak!*
(SAHA record number 1141)



FIGURE 27 *Stop the call up.*
(SAHA record number 2866)

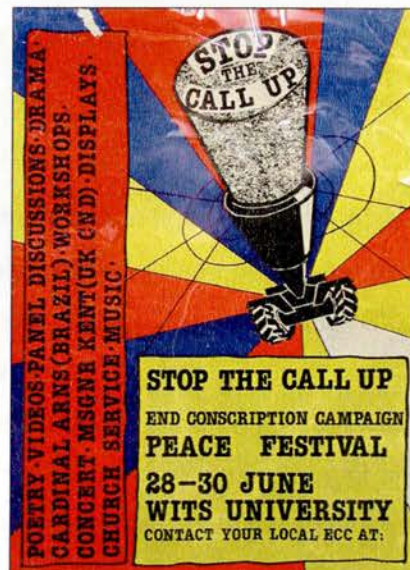


Figure 26 UDF: Let Mbeki speak!

The illustrated image in this demand poster depicts the head of a man with his mouth gagged. The UDF logo is placed below the head, and from the logo an oversized megaphone protrudes. The slogan “Let Mbeki Speak!” is hand lettered to appear as if it emerges from the megaphone.

The slogan identifies (Govan) Mbeki and states the demand that he be allowed to speak. Enlarging the slogan to dominate the poster, placing the type in perspective, using an exclamation mark, and including echoing lines amplify the demanding tone of the slogan. The typographic presentation of the slogan creates a powerful, loud, protesting and authoritarian, authorial voice. Although the slogan does not use “we” to identify the speaker, it is clear that it is “the people” speaking, as the slogan “blasts” from the large megaphone pointing out from the UDF logo, thereby constructing the audience as powerful, collective and enraged.

The hyperbolic megaphone acts as an antithesis to the gag, connoting the power of people to defy the apartheid government’s attempts at suppressing dissident voices. The illustration of Mbeki is realistically executed and he appears dignified and calm, despite being gagged. He does not make eye contact with the audience and instead stares ahead into a distant space. This representation indicates that he has previously gained the audience’s support and there is no need to appeal directly to them now. Moreover that he is a brave, visionary man, notwithstanding his dire circumstances, and therefore someone to look up to and whose example needs to be followed. By implication this constructs the audience as capable of bravery, like Mbeki, they too can be heroes in the struggle.

Figure 27 ECC: Stop the call up.

This poster performs as an announcement and demand. As in figure 26 a gagging device is employed to emphasize the demand. The illustrated image portrays a tank with a corked barrel, superimposed over an abstracted target. The demand to “Stop the call up” is contained on the base of the cork. Below the tank, a framed block contains a repeat of the slogan, the name of the ECC, an announcement for a peace festival, and details of the venue and date. To the left a large rectangle runs along the height of the poster listing further details of the event such as poetry, videos, panel discussions,

drama, workshops, concert, displays, church service, and music. The poster is coloured in bright primary colours.

The slogan is identical to that of figure 25, but due to the typographic treatment conveys a contained authorial voice that is less firm and challenging. The “typewriter” style font in which the slogan and text is typeset support the authorial voice and connotes the “official” style of military documents, thereby turning the authority of the military voice into a vehicle for voicing the “unofficial” demand of the ECC. A reading of the details of the peace festival indicates the ECC’s focus on educating their audience, as well as their strategy of using “fun” activities to draw young people into becoming involved in their cause.

The slogan plays an important role in assisting the viewer to identify the objects in the image, as the extreme perspective in which the tank is depicted, combined with the hyperbolic cork, is difficult to decode without some assistance. These objects are a visual translation of the slogan, with the cork representing “stop”, and the tank the call up to armed service. By rendering the tank impotent, through corking its barrel, and placing it on the centre of target, the image is alluding that the audience has the ability to attack and conquer the military system and attain the ideal of peace. The presentation of the image connotes comic books, an effect heightened by the framing of the text and the primary colour palette. The playful representation serves to trivialise and subvert the “seriousness” of the military. This visual approach, in combination with the details and venue of the peace festival, constructs a youthful, most probably a student audience.

The argument for change in the UDF poster is entrenched in the belief that it is through both the stand of individuals and the collective effort of people, that claims to democratic rights such as freedom of speech may be realised. The strength of the ECC poster argument rests on empowering the viewer by reducing the might of the military to the level of a child’s game. Peace is held up as a positive value that may be attained through education and involvement.

3.4.4 Poster set 4

**FIGURE 28 Support Sharpville Six.
(SAHA record number 187)**



**FIGURE 29 Conscripts need alternatives.
(SAHA record number 1473)**



Figure 28 UDF: Support Sharpville Six.

This poster contains five slogans, two of which are grouped at the topmost part of the poster, and the remaining three are situated on the bottom edge of the poster. The slogans reveal that the poster functions as a call to “support Sharpville Six”, strongly declares “we will not allow them to hang!” and demands, “down with puppets; away with apartheid; forward to people’s power”. The image portrays six figures lined up in the foreground identified by labels stating their name and details such as their occupations, marital status and number of children. Behind them five figures reach up towards six gallows nooses hanging down from the top of the picture plane. The background is partially covered by a roughly painted red area with splatters around the edges. The colour palette consists of black and red.

The slogans, set in a combination of typeset and hand lettering, create an authorial voice that is powerful, urgent, angry and collectively opposed to apartheid. The lettering on the labels, and of the second part of the slogan echoes the fluid, expressive drawing style of the image, which in combination with the objects depicted, and the colour choice, create a highly emotive argument.

The Sharpville Six are expressed literally with six figures whose individual identities are revealed by means of poignant hand lettered labels. The labels are necessary, as the figures do not show recognisable characteristics. The lined up figures face the viewer directly, their tortured gazes cannot be avoided. The immediate threat to their lives is illustrated by the menacing figures preparing the nooses, and the background connoting blood splatters. The reality is that these individuals are facing death and therefore in urgent need of the audiences' support. The horror of the situation and the emotional appeal constructs the audience as involved, enraged and determined.

Figure 29 ECC: Conscripts need alternatives.

In this poster the demanding slogan "conscripts need alternatives" is placed at the top of the poster, and the call "support Ivan Toms conscientious objector", is enclosed inside a banner running diagonally across the poster. The remainder of the text announces an ECC public meeting and provides the date, time and place of the meeting. The image consists of a black and white photograph showing the head and shoulders of a male. The colour choice is black and red.

The sans serif typeset text ensures legibility and visibility, while the script font connotes Ivan Toms as individual and human. In comparison to the urgent slogan in figure 28 the omnipresent authorial voice in the ECC poster seems straightforward, measured, and earnest, indicating a rational audience that base their decisions on factual information.

The poster shows one individual in need of the audience's support, to visually voice the demand that all conscripts need alternatives. In comparison to the illustration in figure 28, the photograph of Ivan Toms seems far less emotive. However, the emotional connotations that this image holds for a white audience, renders it very authoritative. The photographic code is that of a studio portrait. White South Africans treasure photographs of this kind, a style often used to freeze moments such as "my child in grade one", or "my son, the graduate".

Ivan Toms looks the audience squarely in the eye, although unsmiling he does not appear antagonistic, but rather serious. He is clean-shaven, with short hair and dressed in a manly chequered shirt. At the time, Ivan Toms promoted values that differed radically from the values accepted by the majority of whites, however, the photographic depiction renders him normal, "like us". He could be the husband, brother, uncle, son or friend of any white South African. He is an individual who needs support, but he also stands for every conscript, and every conscript needs alternatives.

The right of individuals to choose, and the right to life are basic human rights that would be recognised in a democracy. At the time apartheid was denying these rights to the individuals represented in the posters. Hence both these UDF and ECC posters argue for democratic values and against apartheid values.

3.4.5 Poster set 5

FIGURE 30 *We demand: the people shall govern.*
(The Posterbook Collective 1991:30)

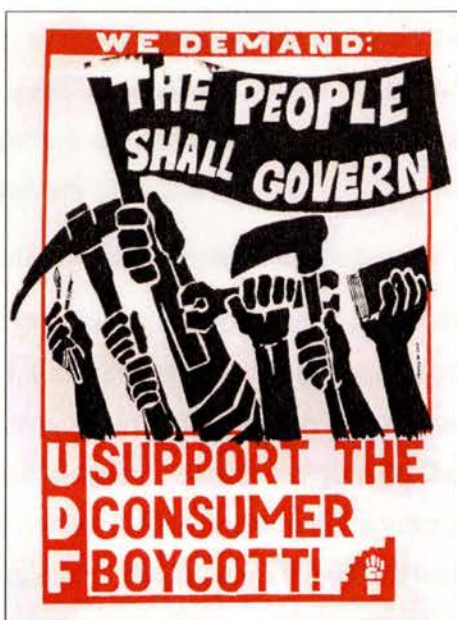


FIGURE 31 *Towards a just peace.*
(SAHA record number 1040)

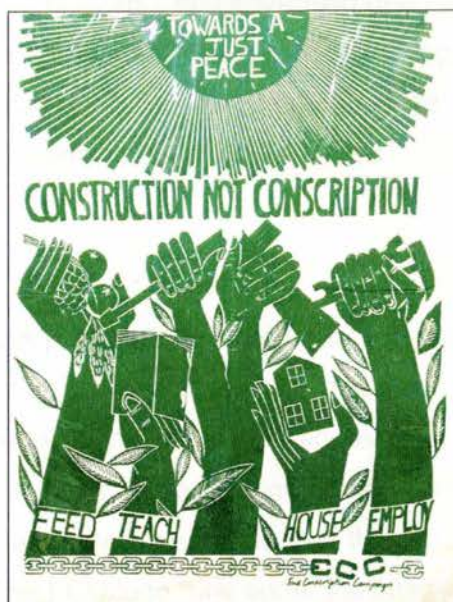


Figure 30 UDF: we demand: the people shall govern.

The two slogans selected indicate that this poster functions as a call, declaration and demand. The demand, "we demand", appears in a band at the top of the poster, below it the declaration "the people shall govern", which is a direct quote from the Freedom Charter, is contained within the shape of the flag, and the call to action "UDF support the consumer boycott!", is framed in the lower third part of the poster. The illustrated image depicts six arms pushing in from the bottom of the picture plane holding tools, books, artists' materials and a flag aloft. A symbol of a small clenched fist appears in the lower right hand corner. The poster adopts a restricted colour palette consisting of black and red.

The choice and presentation of the slogan is in line with the template identified in figures 21 and 24, and so the authorial voice is likewise defined as collective, familiar,

powerful, protesting and authoritarian. As in figure 21 and 24 the slogans and images are visually linked since they are carved from linoleum in a similar style.

Viewed in conjunction with the slogans, the image expresses the value of collective action in working towards the ideal of a democracy based in the values of the Freedom Charter. The objects selected for depiction in the image reference the Freedom Charter by visually quoting from the Charter. The group of upraised arms connote fighting side by side for freedom, the clenched fists the struggle to attain this ideal, the symbols of learning (book), work (spanner, hoe) culture (artist's brushes), and governing (the flag), refer to specific democratic changes demanded in the Charter. The close up framing of the objects places the viewer in the midst of the crowd and as a result the audience members are constructed as fearless, active participants in the struggle, not as observers or outsiders.

Figure 31 ECC: towards a just peace.

Comparable to figure 30 the illustrated image in this poster depicts six arms grasping food, tools and a house. But, these arms have leaves growing from them, reach towards a sun with radiating sunrays, and are labelled with the call to “feed, teach, house, employ”. Similar to figure 30 the poster acts as a call, declaration and demand. The demand, “construction not conscription” appears above the hands, and the sun contains the declaration “towards a just peace”. The ECC logo runs under the image across the foot of the poster. The entire poster is printed in green.

The phrase “towards a just peace” quotes from the opening of the ECC Declaration, the demand is framed in the form of a statement, “construction not conscription”, and a call is made to “feed, teach, house, employ”. The speaker is not identified in the slogans, but indicated by the presence of the ECC logo. The slogans are delicately carved from linoleum and printed in green, and the authorial voice is couched in the omnipresent voice. The result is a much milder authorial voice in comparison to the authorial voice employed in figure 30. This mild voice is transferred into the image, which as the slogan, is produced by linoleum relief print.

The slogans direct the image to be read as both a statement of the need to work together towards the ideal of a just peace, and an illustration of the constructive work that can be done as an alternative to conscription. The raised arms connote working together, the leaves indicate growth, the sun is used as a metaphor for a just peace, and the objects held by the hands are a visual translation of the calls made for

constructive service. By stating the requirements for a just peace, the authorial voice emerges as factual and instructional and thus the audience is constructed as rational decision-makers. However, the inclusion of the leaves and sun simultaneously show them to be idealists. The close-up viewing position draws the audience into the midst of the activity and in so doing the audience members are constructed as being actively involved in the quest of the ECC.

The arguments for change in both posters in this set revolve around the need to work collectively to see specific values prevail in the future. The UDF poster argues for democratic values and the ECC poster for a just peace. By promoting these values both organisations imply their opposition to apartheid.

3.4.6 Comparison of the poster sets

As anticipated the communication aims articulated in the posters link directly back to the distinct and varied aims of the organisations. The UDF posters aim to inspire and mobilise the audience to collectively protest apartheid systems and structures, and demand democratic changes. Four of the five posters examined include the word “we” in their slogans and employ images showing collective action. The audience is inspired to partake in collective protest through the examples of others; a family fighting a military vehicle, the bravery of the Sharpsville Six, and the collective action taken by the people.

The foreseen communication aims of the ECC are all clearly discernible in the sample of five posters examined in the poster sets. Opposition to militarisation and the role of the SADF emerge in slogans demanding that troops withdraw from the townships and that the call up must be stopped. Support for alternative service and conscientious objectors are expressed in slogans demanding construction not conscription and calling for the support of Ivan Toms. One slogan directly states the intent of the organisations to work towards a just peace. In contrast to the UDF, the posters do not attempt to inspire the collective, but rather announce events where information may be gained, for example the peace festival and public meeting, and challenges the audience to question the role of the SADF in the townships.

The posters of both organisations do argue for change, albeit in their respective areas of focus. At the heart of the argument for change is the quest for democracy, which is promoted by the organisations with two main strategies. The one strategy highlights the

negative values of apartheid; the aggression, injustice and cruel effects of the apartheid system, the other promotes democratic values by showing that it is through the stand of individuals and the collective effort of people that claims to democratic rights may be realised.

The interplay between the slogan and image in both organisations' posters serve to assist the audience with identifying the objects contained in the image, for example the identities of individuals. Mostly, however, it guides the interpretation of the image to an ideological meaning, for example a book and artist's materials connotes the Freedom Charter's call that "the doors of learning and of culture shall be opened". The ideological meaning in the UDF posters revolves around the value of collective action in working towards democratic ideals based in justice, human rights, and unity. Only one poster overtly speaks out against apartheid and on the whole the posters protest apartheid by pointing out the effects apartheid institutions and policies have on ordinary people. The ECC posters employ the demand to end conscription and the call for a just peace to protest apartheid and argue for democratic changes. These democratic changes are embedded in human and moral rights, and freedom of conscience and choice.

The ideological meaning of the posters are embodied in the objects selected for depiction. In selecting images for the posters the organisations draw on the limited set of objects previously identified. The UDF posters include reference to all the objects in the identified set, with the exception of the outline of South Africa, while the ECC posters make reference to most of the objects save people in defiant attitudes, blood, doves, and pleading and dancing figures. The UDF posters embody the ideas of resistance, protest, defiance, unity and a collective identity, which is distinct from the ECC emphasis on the military, war, peace, and moral responsibility.

In all except one UDF poster, the speaker is identified, either directly by name in the slogan, or by including the organisation's logo. On the whole the authorial voice in the UDF posters is shaped as collective, powerful, protesting and autocratic through the choice of language, and the mainly autographic lettering. The UDF posters select and manipulate typography potently to support the message and authorial voice.

In contrast, the ECC speaker is not identified overtly in the slogans, but by the presence of the ECC logo. The authorial voice in all the ECC slogans is omnipresent, and when compared to that of the UDF, gentler and more measured. Overall the tone

can be described as firm, challenging, rational and earnest. This tone is the result of the language selected and the presentation of the slogans in both mechanical and autographic letters. In comparison to the use of typography in the UDF posters, there is less manipulation of the letterforms and more of an adherence to “professional” typographic conventions.

With the exception of two ECC posters that employ photographs, all the posters examined in the poster sets utilise illustrated images. The objects in the UDF posters are illustrated in a far more emotive and expressive way in comparison to the contained and controlled depictions of the ECC objects. The manner in which the objects are illustrated, the viewing position, and authorial voices construct two very distinct audiences. The UDF audience is constructed as an involved, collective, brave and powerful force, while the ECC audience is in certain instances constructed as involved or white, but mostly as rational and moral.

The expectations created in the context section with regard to the visual articulation of the posters are mostly confirmed in the construction of meaning section. However, the expectation of the ECC audience members as constructed as individuals from the white community, could not be completely confirmed. The repeated selection of specific objects, production and representation methods, slogans and authorial voices, indicate how the organisations establish their visual rhetoric for democratic change.

CHAPTER 4 CONCLUSION

4.1 ORIENTATION

The main aim of this study was to explore propaganda posters as visual rhetoric both in general and specifically by means of a case study. Two objectives were outlined with which to attain this aim. The first objective revolved around a general examination of design as rhetoric, and the new rhetoric and propaganda posters, and prepared the way for reaching the second objective, which dealt with the context, components and construction of meaning in selected UDF and ECC propaganda posters. This chapter concludes the study by consolidating the findings, stating the broader implications of the study and indicating areas for further research.

4.2 VISUAL RHETORIC

Sauthoff (1999:111) comments that the systematic investigation of visual rhetoric is still in its infancy. This study contributes to the investigation of visual rhetoric by drawing together some important contributions made on design and rhetoric, relating the thesis of the new rhetoric to visual argumentation, and providing and applying an operational framework for the examination of propaganda posters as visual rhetoric.

The explication of the new rhetoric in conjunction with propaganda posters offered an enhanced understanding of the operation of visual rhetoric. By systematically addressing six cardinal factors the new rhetoric allowed for a fuller understanding of rhetorical theory than the existing studies on rhetoric and design reviewed in Chapter 2. These studies tend to focus only on certain elements from rhetoric, such as rhetorical figures. Of the studies reviewed, Tyler (1996, 1998) offers the most comprehensive approach by considering the aim of design arguments, the subject, author and audience, as well as acknowledging the importance of referencing the existing beliefs of audiences. Tyler's approach, in combination with the new rhetoric and the views of Barthes, proved to eventually inform the operational framework most heavily.

The processes used to reason about values that the new rhetoric discusses were elucidated and illustrated with a selected range of propaganda posters. These historical examples demonstrated how an ideology is visually propagated and an ideological rhetoric is established. The examples showed that ideas and values obtain a strong

visual presence through the selection, representation, interrelationship and repetition of the slogan and image. In addition the examples confirmed that the visual rhetoric of a poster is a powerful source for embodying complicated ideas and messages in a concentrated form.

In examining the inherent structure and logic of propaganda posters as visual rhetoric, it emerged that many aspects need to be considered, and these were configured into an operational framework consisting of context, components and construction of meaning. This framework proved to be appropriate and effective for examining the manner in which the purposive sample of ECC and UDF posters constructed and presented visual arguments for democratic change during apartheid.

4.3 APPLICATION OF RHETORICAL FRAMEWORK

At the outset the framework provided a mechanism for sampling. In considering the UDF and ECC posters, a number of communication aims were identified which allowed the sample of “demand” posters to be drawn. Next the framework allowed the internal logic of the visual argumentation to be revealed. It was explained that the poster’s visual argumentation is informed by the context from which it flows, presented by clearly identifiable components, and constructed based on the coherence between the written and visual, the consistent selection and repetition of an appropriate set of connotators, and the suitable presentation of the slogan and image.

The framework enabled the nuances in visual argumentation between the two organisations to emerge, particularly the differences in authorial voice and audiences. The UDF authorial voice was identified as collective, powerful, protesting and autocratic, and the audience as involved, collective, brave and powerful, while the authorial voice of the ECC was described as firm, challenging, rational and earnest, and the audience as rational and moral.

A direct link was identified between the verbal rhetoric of both organisations, as embodied in selected written documents, and the visual rhetoric of their posters. Thus, to return to the question posed at the outset of this study, “how do posters argue about values?” it seems to be as Perelman (1982:13) suggested, by starting off by telling the audience what they already value and believe.

The importance of acknowledging the direct connection between values and the audience and the influence of contextual factors on visual communication, confirms the crucial role that research plays in the design process. Designers need to understand the context from which they must draw their arguments, and this includes knowledge of the value systems of their audience, as this is the first step to creating effective visual arguments.

At the outset it was stated that this study does not endeavour to examine audience response or the effectiveness of the poster sample, and the framework correspondingly does not allow for such examination. However, research into audience response and the effectiveness of visual communication may yield findings that are very beneficial for both the teaching and practice of visual communication.

As the framework was effective in the examination of the visual rhetoric of propaganda posters, it provides a tool that may extend to the examination, and even construction, of other visual communication types, such as advertisements, information graphics, corporate identity design and magazine design.

4.4 DESIGN AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Buchanan (1995:24) argues for a new conception of design as a “humanistic enterprise, recognizing the inherently rhetorical dimension of all design thinking”. He (1995:55) finds the “essential humanism” of design in the fact that humans decide on the subject matter, processes and purposes of design. An example of how these choices manifest in visual communication design is found in the UDF and ECC posters examined in this study.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971:54) consider all argumentation as a substitute for physical force. It may be maintained that the visual arguments in the South African posters examined in this study were employed as such a substitute. For example, the creators of UDF posters could choose to instigate the audience to violence, with the possibility of terrible results, but instead they chose another approach.

Compare the choice of this approach with the chilling use of propaganda posters during the Bosnian War (April 1992-1995). Rohde (2001:7) is of the opinion that the Bosnian War was not the product of “ancient ethnic hatreds”, but came after considerable propaganda campaigns that deliberately attempted to incite fear and hatred,

campaigns that included the extensive use of posters. Viewed in this light, it is clearly significant to recognise the impact of design arguments on society, and to understand how this argumentation is influenced through the choices made by designers.

Designers need to recognise the inescapable ideological grounding and political dimension of their design work, and with this also admit their social responsibility. Howard (1997:200) contends that graphic design has a part to play in creating a visual culture that empowers and enlightens, and that “[m]any designers may argue that their job is not politics, and they would be right. But this does not prevent us from developing ideas about cultural democracy”.

The nature of design and the social responsibility of the designer have been examined eloquently by writers, notably Van Toorn (1998a) and Buchanan (1989, 1995, 1998a, 1998b, 2001) but research into these areas, specifically within the South African design arena, can be very insightful.

4.5 THE RHETORIC OF IDEOLOGY

The examination of the components of the South African poster sample identified a set of objects in the UDF posters that embody the ideas of resistance, protest, defiance, unity and collective identity. In the ECC posters a set of objects emerged that give shape to ideas on the military, war, peace and moral responsibility. In the construction of meaning section it became evident that along with the objects selected, the repeated use of specific production methods, representational strategies, slogans and authorial voices, establish a distinct visual rhetoric for each organisation.

This visual rhetoric of the UDF and ECC directly related back to the verbal documents of the organisations, which contain their ideological values. Many possibilities exist to further the study of the visual rhetoric of ideology by commencing with the verbal documents of an organisation, movement, political party or even a commercial enterprise, and critically examining how their verbal rhetoric manifest in the design they commission.

Constructive comparisons can also be made between the visual rhetoric of the unofficial voice versus the official voice. For example it would be interesting to compare the visual arguments put forth by the apartheid government and its institutions, such as the SADF, with that of the ECC, which countered their arguments.

Related to this, another area for research includes the study of the change that occurs in the visual rhetoric of the unofficial voice when it comes into power. An example of such research could be a comparison of the 2004 ANC election posters, the current hegemonic power in South Africa, with the same party's election posters of 1994.

4.6 LEARNING FROM SOUTH AFRICAN VISUAL COMMUNICATION

Visual communication is ephemeral; it is not created with permanence in mind. The posters in the SAHA survived because of their perceived political value, not because of their visual communication value. The ephemeral quality of visual communication indicates that if South African visual communication is not collected, documented and commented on, its achievements and importance remain invisible and undervalued. To date South African visual communication has received little critical attention and unless a more concerted research effort is made in this area, the possibility of understanding South African design history and visual culture will not only remain locked, but may even disappear altogether. This study builds on the research started by The Posterbook Collective into South African posters, but adds a deeper understanding of the manner in which selected UDF and ECC posters construct arguments for change. This adds to the study of South African graphic design, hopeful that interest in this area will expand.

ADDENDUM A

THE FREEDOM CHARTER

We, the People of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know:

that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people;

that our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality;

that our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities;

that only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people, can secure to all their birthright without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief;

And therefore, we, the people of South Africa, black and white together equals, countrymen and brothers adopt this Freedom Charter;

And we pledge ourselves to strive together, sparing neither strength nor courage, until the democratic changes here set out have been won.

The People Shall Govern!

Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and to stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws;

All people shall be entitled to take part in the administration of the country;

The rights of the people shall be the same, regardless of race, colour or sex;

All bodies of minority rule, advisory boards, councils and authorities shall be replaced by democratic organs of self-government .

All National Groups Shall have Equal Rights!

There shall be equal status in the bodies of state, in the courts and in the schools for all national groups and races;

All people shall have equal right to use their own languages, and to develop their own folk culture and customs;

All national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride;

The preaching and practice of national, race or colour discrimination and contempt shall be a punishable crime;

All apartheid laws and practices shall be set aside.

The People Shall Share in the Country's Wealth!

The national wealth of our country, the heritage of South Africans, shall be restored to the people;

The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the Banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole;

All other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the wellbeing of the people;

All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions.

The Land Shall be Shared Among Those Who Work It!

Restrictions of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land re-divided amongst those who work it to banish famine and land hunger;

The state shall help the peasants with implements, seed, tractors and dams to save the soil and assist the tillers;

Freedom of movement shall be guaranteed to all who work on the land;

All shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose;

People shall not be robbed of their cattle, and forced labour and farm prisons shall be abolished.

All Shall be Equal Before the Law!

No-one shall be imprisoned, deported or restricted without a fair trial; No-one shall be condemned by the order of any Government official;

The courts shall be representative of all the people;

Imprisonment shall be only for serious crimes against the people, and shall aim at re-education, not vengeance;

The police force and army shall be open to all on an equal basis and shall be the helpers and protectors of the people;

All laws which discriminate on grounds of race, colour or belief shall be repealed.

All Shall Enjoy Equal Human Rights!

The law shall guarantee to all their right to speak, to organise, to meet together, to publish, to preach, to worship and to educate their children;

The privacy of the house from police raids shall be protected by law;

All shall be free to travel without restriction from countryside to town, from province to province, and from South Africa abroad;

Pass Laws, permits and all other laws restricting these freedoms shall be abolished.

There Shall be Work and Security!

All who work shall be free to form trade unions, to elect their officers and to make wage agreements with their employers;

The state shall recognise the right and duty of all to work, and to draw full unemployment benefits;

Men and women of all races shall receive equal pay for equal work;

There shall be a forty-hour working week, a national minimum wage, paid annual leave, and sick leave for all workers, and maternity leave on full pay for all working mothers;

Miners, domestic workers, farm workers and civil servants shall have the same rights as all others who work;

Child labour, compound labour, the tot system and contract labour shall be abolished.

The Doors of Learning and Culture Shall be Opened!

The government shall discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement of our cultural life;

All the cultural treasures of mankind shall be open to all, by free exchange of books, ideas and contact with other lands;

The aim of education shall be to teach the youth to love their people and their culture, to honour human brotherhood, liberty and peace;

Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children; Higher education and technical training shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit;

Adult illiteracy shall be ended by a mass state education plan;

Teachers shall have all the rights of other citizens;

The colour bar in cultural life, in sport and in education shall be abolished.

There Shall be Houses, Security and Comfort!

All people shall have the right to live where they choose, be decently housed, and to bring up their families in comfort and security;

Unused housing space to be made available to the people;

Rent and prices shall be lowered, food plentiful and no-one shall go hungry;

A preventive health scheme shall be run by the state;

Free medical care and hospitalisation shall be provided for all, with special care for mothers and young children;

Slums shall be demolished, and new suburbs built where all have transport, roads, lighting, playing fields, creches and social centres;

The aged, the orphans, the disabled and the sick shall be cared for by the state;

Rest, leisure and recreation shall be the right of all:

Fenced locations and ghettos shall be abolished, and laws which break up families shall be repealed.

There Shall be Peace and Friendship!

South Africa shall be a fully independent state which respects the rights and sovereignty of all nations;

South Africa shall strive to maintain world peace and the settlement of all international disputes by negotiation - not war;

Peace and friendship amongst all our people shall be secured by upholding the equal rights, opportunities and status of all;

The people of the protectorates Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland shall be free to decide for themselves their own future;

The right of all peoples of Africa to independence and self-government shall be recognised, and shall be the basis of close co-operation.

Let all people who love their people and their country no say, as we say here:

THESE FREEDOMS WE WILL FIGHT FOR, SIDE BY SIDE, THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES, UNTIL WE HAVE WON OUR LIBERTY

(The Congress of the People 1955)

THE UDF DECLARATION

We commit ourselves to unifying all our people, wherever they may be, in the cities and countryside, the factories and mines, schools, colleges and universities, houses and sports fields, churches, mosques and temples, to fight for our freedom...We pledge to stand together in this United Democratic Front and fight side by side against the government's constitutional proposals and the Koornhof Bills.

(Seekings 2000:55)

THE UDF WORKING PRINCIPLES

A belief in democracy, an unshakeable belief in the creation of a non-racial, unitary state in South Africa undiluted by racial or ethnic considerations. As formulated in the Bantustan policy, an adherence to the need for unity in struggle through which all democrats, regardless of race, religion or colour, shall take part, a recognition of the necessity to work in consultation with, and reflect accurately the demands of, democratic people wherever they may be in progressive worker, community and student organisations.

(Seekings 2000:50)

THE UDF REVISED WORKING PRINCIPLES

The UDF shall strive towards the realisation of a non-racial, democratic and unfragmented South Africa, and to this end shall:

Articulate opposition to the legislative programme of government in so far as such a programme conflicts with democratic principles.

Act as coordinating body for the progressive community, social, educational and other such organisations which subscribe to democratic principles.

Articulate the social and political aspirations of the affiliates of the UDF and their members.

The NGC issued a set of “immediate demands” to match its broadened role. These included:

The abolition of the Tricameral Parliament, segregated local government and Bantustans;

The scrapping of the Land Acts, Group Areas Act, passes laws, and so-called security laws;

An end to forced removals;

The release of political prisoners and unbanning of political organisations;

The disbanding of the security forces; and

A unified education system

(Seekings 2000:137-138)

THE ECC DECLARATION

TOWARDS A JUST PEACE IN OUR LAND

A Declaration to End Conscription

We live in an unjust society where basic human rights are denied to the majority of the people.

We live in an unequal society where land and wealth are owned by the minority.

We live in a society in a state of civil war, where brother is called on to fight brother.

We call for an end to conscription.

Young men are conscripted to maintain the illegal occupation of Namibia, and to wage unjust war against foreign countries.

Young men are conscripted to assist in the implementation and defence of apartheid policies.

Young men who refuse to serve are faced with the choice of a life of exile or a possible six years in prison.

We call for an end to conscription.

We believe that the financial cost of war increases the poverty of our country, and that money should rather be used in the interests of peace.

We believe that the extension of conscription to coloured and Indian youths will increase conflict and further divide our country.

WE BELIEVE THAT IT IS THE MORAL RIGHT OF SOUTH AFRICANS TO EXERCISE FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE AND TO CHOOSE NOT TO SERVE IN THE SADF.

WE CALL FOR AN END TO CONSCRIPTION.

WE CALL FOR A JUST PEACE IN OUR LAND.

(CIIR 1989:91)

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