

Political Advertising by Big Business after Rubicon

P J Vorster

IN South Africa political advertising as mode of political communication is now firmly established and even the Government used paid space to promote its post-Rubicon policy emphasis. While South Africa's political parties are strongly refraining from using political advertising (with the qualified exception of the Labour Party of South Africa and the Progressive Federal Party), Big Business emerged as the major political advertiser. This can be explained by the interdependence between politics and economics. However, without being truly accountable to the public, this is a somewhat controversial trend. Therefore, for the future of democracy, political parties as the primary political actors cannot refrain from using all available communication techniques. The effective use of communication techniques in no way diminishes the need for realistic appraisals of the circumstances, sound policies, organisational efficiency and interpersonal contact with the voters. Deeds still speak louder than words.

1. Introduction

Political advertising in some form is probably just as old as communication and politics itself since all political actors through the ages have found it expedient to 'advertise' their achievements and the failures of their opponents. It is, however, only after the Second World War that the techniques of the 'Boys from Madison Avenue' are systematically employed.

The Referendum campaign in 1983 for a new constitution saw the first significant use of ad-



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vertising as a mode of political communication. This trend was confirmed by the Government's "Rubicon"-advertisements and firmly established by the post-Rubicon political advertising that followed.

A current trend in political communication is for Big Business to take the lead with political advertising while political parties as such are taking a back seat. The inaction of political parties on this score is, to say the least, disappointing.

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ing because fewer and fewer people are reached through traditional, party channels.

It is accepted that "non-political" actors such as Big Business do have the right to express their opinions on political issues. This is based, *inter alia*, on the right of free speech in a democracy and on the interdependence of economics and politics. This not without some controversy, though. Big Business with its profit motive may pursue objectives contrary to public welfare and cannot be held accountable by the electorate for its political actions.

The environment in which multinational corporations operate have changed in recent years. These changes include the rise of the consumer movement, changing public perceptions of the corporate world, and the demands for corporate social responsibility and justice evidenced by boycotts of products made by firms which engage in questionable labour practices, contribute to pollution or invest in South Africa (Meadow 1981:70).

Another factor is that PR specialists have considered "goodwill" or "image" advertising (see 2.1.1.) to be essential to corporate economic health. Goodwill is described as the greatest asset possessed by a firm, but public relations specialists have taken a broad view of goodwill to include the development of political allies. Meadow (1981:71) says several corporations' goodwill goals may be considered to border on the political.

Against this background has come the explosion of "issue" advertising (see 2.1.2.) dealing with social and political matters as firms have sought to publicly defend their policies and persuade public opinion of their corporate responsibility.

Issue advertising has been partly an attempt simply to counterbalance media support of the "adversary" groups which often receive unproportional media publicity.

These political ads surely reflect a change in corporate public relations policies, and perhaps even a changing perception of the environment in which business is conducted.

This advertising may represent a new form of expression for ideological hegemony for which corporate planners had little use during a period of continual economic expansion. But as the limits to economic growth are reached, corporate survival may become a political and ideolo-

gical question, and huge expenditures will be made to lobby the public opinion.

By focussing on political advertising by Big Business, this study explores a new terrain of political advertising since most of the published literature deals with (American) campaign advertising and, especially, presidential elections.

Against this background this paper will briefly discuss the concept of political advertising, its origin in South Africa, and the emergence of Big Business as "non-political" advertiser. This is followed by brief recommendations.

2. Advertising as mode of political communication.

Advertising is not only an integral part of our social and economic system, but also implicitly and sometimes explicitly part of the political system.

For the purpose of this study, political advertising is defined as "that communication process by which a source (the political actor) purchases the opportunity to expose the receivers through mass channels of communication to political messages with the intended effect of influencing their political attitudes, beliefs, and/or behaviours" (Kaid, 1981:250).

By paying for this communications opportunity, the political advertiser obtains control over the *content*, *form* and *timing* of the message. The advantage of control has to be weighed up against the likely diminished credibility since the message reaches the audiences directly from an involved source without being scrutinised by the so-called gatekeepers and watchdogs as mediators and checks.

It is undoubtedly true that political advertising is the most controversial, and perhaps the most feared form of political communication. This is generally because the consumer frequently exaggerates its effectiveness or oversimplifies its complexity (Mandell, 1974:3).

Like propaganda, political advertising has been accused of many evils, including the creation of Hitler's Third Reich, the selling of candidates like soap, the creation of candidate images which bear no relation to reality, and the destruction of political systems by emphasising personalities over issues (cf Atkins & Heald, 1976; Boorstin, 1961; Elebask & Rosene, 1982; Garamone, 1983 and 1984; Latimer, 1984; Mc-

Ginnis, 1966; Meadow, 1980; Patterson & McClure, 1976; Rubin, 1977).

Mandell (1974:700-702) states that the fact that the advertising tool can be used for evil (propaganda) purposes does not, however, diminish its value for good. For the government to use advertising effectively for propaganda purposes, it would require effective control over all the mass media, which is seldom possible. Denying advertising privileges to political actors still exposes the electorate to the influence of the powerful few who control the mass communications media, the political nuances of the news analysts, the editorials of the press, the political machine, and the like.

On the other hand, political advertising opens a channel to those who would otherwise have difficulty in gaining access to channels of mass communication.

Political advertising is mostly done during campaigns in order to get a candidate elected. There are, however, also other forms of political advertising, e.g. institutional advertising which includes corporate image advertising and issue advertising.

2.1. Institutional advertising

The purpose is not to sell goods, but to win public support. It seeks to promote the good reputation of an industry, firm, business, or other commercial enterprise. The assumption is that people are more likely to deal with an institution they trust than with one they do not (Ulanoff, 1977:21). Hence, institutional advertising seeks to convince people a reputable firm is behind the brand name.

Institutional advertising, Nimmo (1978:111) argues quite correctly, bears some resemblance to public relations, but he points out some key differences between these two modes of persuasion.

Institutional advertising are promoting an idea to a mass audience *via* paid, sponsored, and controlled appeals. It is essentially an outward-looking activity that promotes an institution to an audience whose members are rarely members of the promoting organisation as well.

In contrast, public relations conducts both internal and external communication campaigns for an organisation. PR is a function of management concerned with communication to publics within an institution, to publics out-

side that institution, and between internal and external publics. The internal Public Relations program fosters morale, dedication, and a sense of purpose among an organisation's membership. Externally it provides information and builds goodwill among non-members.

Another key difference is that PR relies not so much on (overt and controlled) appeals, but rather on publicity, on free coverage through the editorial content of the mass media, *inter alia* through news releases, TV documentaries, magazine articles, and so on.

2.1.1. Image advertising

Image advertising is advertising that focuses on the reputation or image of the corporation, organisation or association because, according to Norris (1980:75), it is just as important for a company or political party to have a good character and a good reputation as it is for an individual.

Corporate image advertising is defined by the IAA (1977:32) as a kind of advertising which, by the use of signed, paid messages by a company in conventional advertising media, seeks to obtain a desired level of public awareness and a maximum favourable impression among selected audiences. To do so, this kind of advertising communicates a carefully chosen range of facts to create an understanding of the company's activities, moral standards, policies, management style, and expectations.

The objectives are usually financial, legal, and to a lesser extent governmental support. To facilitate the company's pursuit of its business objectives. Due to the interdependence of economics and politics, particularly in South Africa, the objectives are frequently overtly political.

2.1.2. Issue advertising

In addition to corporate image, institutional advertising also includes issue advertising.*

In recent years, argues Meadow (1981), corporate advertisers have turned away from sol-

* A survey of the literature indicates that terms such as advocacy advertising, image advertising, counter advertising, adversary advertising, and many others are used interchangeably. The term "issue advertising" seems preferable since politics deals with issues, and the use of advertising by Big Business itself is often a public issue.

ely selling their products, or even their corporate images. They have begun to advertise their point of view on social and political matters.

Issue advertising is used when a company or organisation wants to take a public stand on an issue. They, after all, have a right of free speech. It is used when an issue surfaces that is critical to the well-being of the company or organisation.

Moriarty (1986:311) argues that there are some built-in problems with issue advertising, particularly by corporations (and much more so in the case of government-sponsored advertising). The public automatically assumes bias and is less inclined to give the message a fair hearing. One way to overcome this problem is to try to make your message as unbiased and as factual as possible. That means you have to present both sides of the issue. If you do that, she writes, then there is less negative response when you state your view and support it with facts.

One of the advantages of political or issue advertising is that there is more of a chance that it will be read. Well-presented issue ads are seen as more interesting by the public and the copy tends to be better read than the copy in product advertising.

Political parties are falling short on both these measures — they are lagging behind in issue as well as image advertising. They fail to promote themselves as organisations and they fail to promote their policies to the broad public.

3. The emergence of political advertising in South Africa.

Political communication in South Africa traditionally relied mainly on party affiliation, the party organisation, press-party parallelism, interpersonal communication, townhall gatherings and posters to get its message across to the voters.

Many changes are, however, taking place in the traditional mode of political communication. Party affiliation is weakening, party organisations are no longer as strong or as effective as before, press-party parallelism is no longer guaranteed, interpersonal communication alone is no longer adequate, townhall gatherings draw only the party faithful, and posters fail to persuade. At the same time more and more

people are regarding themselves as politically "independent".

These changes stimulate the use of political advertising as a supplementary form of political communication (see Vorster, 1986:12-16).

3.1. Referendum 83

The first significant use of paid space for political advertising was during the Referendum campaign in 1983 when issue-dominated ads appeared in the major daily and regional newspapers.* These advertisements were sponsored by the political parties involved in the Referendum.

Before the so-called Rubicon-advertisement of the Government, the Labour Party of South Africa used this mode of political communication to put forward its views on education (Figure 1).

3.2. Rubicon

Shortly after President PW Botha's speech at the opening of Parliament on January 31, 1986, generally referred to as Rubicon (Two), a government-sponsored advertisement appeared publicising aspects of its new approach to South African realities. (This followed after the communication failure of the (first) Rubicon speech in Durban in August 1985.)

A number of similar advertisements, such as the PFP's "This is the TRUE Reality"-ad and supermarket chain Pick 'n Pay's "ABOLISH GST ON ALL FOOD"-ad appeared shortly afterwards capitalising on the publicity and interest generated by the Rubicon-ad.

One point of criticism against the Government ad was that a single advertisement, even if it appears in all the major urban and regional papers, hardly constitutes a campaign. This matters is raised because it is doubtful whether the objectives of promoting its new policies can be achieved with one or two single-shot ads. (Even if the second Rubicon-ad (discussed below) went a hesitant step in this direction.)

A campaign, writes Moriarty (1986:321), is more than just a series of ads. It is a way of thinking, a way of planning. It involves a long and serious process of analysing your situation,

* South African broadcast media do not carry political advertisements.

LABOUR PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA ON GUTTER EDUCATION

It is rather ironic that the term "GUTTER EDUCATION" should be freely used when reference is made to the EDUCATION OF THE "COLOURED" CHILD, especially if it is remembered that it is in the field of education where THE "COLOUREDS" HAVE MADE THE GREATEST STRIDES TOWARDS EQUALITY.

Let us examine to what extent our educationists, teacher organisations and political leaders have succeeded in the struggle for equality.

★★ THE COLOURED PUPIL

Do you know . . .

- * that THE "COLOURED" CHILD IS SUBJECT TO COMPULSORY EDUCATION up to and including his sixteenth birthday
- * that no "coloured" child is EVER REFUSED ADMISSION TO SCHOOLS
- * that EDUCATION IS FREE
- * that an INDIGENT CHILD in a state hostel is required to PAY ONLY R1 PER QUARTER FOR BOARDING

★★ THE CURRICULUM

Do you know . . .

- * that the syllabuses for SECONDARY SCHOOLS HAD NEVER BEEN DIFFERENT to those of white secondary schools throughout our whole history of secondary education
- * that our PRIMARY SCHOOL COURSE IS SIMILAR to that used in WHITE PRIMARY SCHOOLS
- * that our TEACHER TRAINING COURSES ARE BASED on those of white teacher training courses
- * that in TECHNICAL EDUCATION WE NEVER HAD SYLLABUSES OF OUR OWN. We need those of the Department of National Education.
- ★★ DO YOU KNOW THAT ALL EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS ARE REQUIRED BY LAW TO FOLLOW THE CORE SYLLABUSES DRAWN UP BY THE JOINT MATRICULATION BOARD?

★★ THE HISTORY SYLLABUSES

- * History is A SENSITIVE SUBJECT
- * History is the only SUBJECT where the Department of Education and Culture HAS A FREE HAND
- * History is NOT A COMPULSORY SUBJECT IN STD 7 as in white schools
- * The PRESENT HISTORY SYLLABUSES that are being used in our schools have been STRUCTURED BY THE DEPARTMENT TEACHERS AND TEACHER ORGANISATIONS

★★ RIGHTS OF PARENTS

Do you know . . .

- * that the "COLOURED" PARENT HAS A GREATER SAY in the education of his child than the white parent?
- * that a "coloured" parent CAN SEND HIS CHILD TO ANY SCHOOL
- * that a "coloured" parent DETERMINES THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION of his child. Whites have mother tongue instruction
- * that parents NOMINATE TEACHERS they prefer to teach their children

★★ THE "COLOURED" TEACHER

Do you know that . . . the "coloured" teacher HAS COMPLETE EQUALITY with the white teacher

- * they have EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK AND QUALIFICATIONS
- * they have EQUAL PENSIONS
- * all other SERVICE CONDITIONS ARE EQUAL
- * the "COLOURED" FEMALE TEACHER HAS A GREATER DEGREE OF PERMANENCY than white female teachers

There are, however, TWO MAIN DIFFERENCES between "coloured" and white teachers

- * the "coloured" teacher can ONLY TEACH IN "COLOURED" SCHOOLS whereas WHITES CAN TEACH IN ANY SCHOOL
- * the "coloured" teacher HAS GREATER PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES than his white colleague

★★ FACILITIES

Do you know . . .

- * that ALL TERTIARY EDUCATION IS EQUAL in regard to FACILITIES, STAFFING AND FINANCE
- * that NATIONAL NORMS FOR FACILITIES, STAFFING AND FINANCE are being drawn up for secondary and primary schools.

★★ WHAT IS EDUCATION

- * Education is NOT A CLASSROOM
 - * Education is NOT TEACHING AIDS
 - * Education is a TEACHER-PUPIL RELATIONSHIP
- What a teacher imparts to the pupil can be EDUCATION OR GUTTER EDUCATION
- * If what a teacher imparts to a pupil BENEFITS THE PUPIL then it is EDUCATION
 - * If a teacher teaches a child to make PETROL BOMBS, TO BOYCOTT CLASSES, TO DEFY AUTHORITY then it is GUTTER EDUCATION

★★ OUR CLAIM TO EQUALITY

- * If we gave our pupils GUTTER EDUCATION
- * If our teachers BELIEVE THAT THEIR EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS ARE INFERIOR
- * then we CANNOT LAY CLAIM TO EQUALITY
- * then our TEACHERS CANNOT CLAIM EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK AND QUALIFICATIONS
- * We lay claim to equality because OUR QUALIFICATIONS ARE EQUAL
- * We lay claim to equality because the EDUCATION OF OUR CHILDREN IS EQUAL
- ★★ WE HAVE MADE GREAT STRIDES IN EDUCATION AS A RESULT OF . . .
- * successful NEGOTIATION
- * the CONTROL "COLOURED" TEACHERS have gained in the educational system

★★ WE BELIEVE IN . . .

- * ONE education department
- * ONE certificate
- * ONE examination
- * ONE syllabus

identifying possible alternatives, deciding on the best approach, and testing your decisions. A campaign represents the ultimate in strategic thinking by marketing experts, copywriters, art directors, producers promotion specialists, researchers, and media buyers. It is a team effort and it pulls the best ideas from all different viewpoints and disciplines.

The essence of campaign planning, then, is theme and variation.

A second, and major, point of criticism is that Government's words should now be transformed into deeds since "It is pointless to market a product which does not exist, except in the imagination of its designers" (Phillips, 1985: 77-79). Some of the promises made in the ad have since been implemented, others not (cf the Sunday Times editorial headlined "Let deeds speak", Sunday Times, July, 27:28).

4. Political advertising after Rubicon

4.1. Bureau of Information

A second, follow-up advertisement was placed in April 1986 (Figure 2), quite similar in style and approach to the first Rubicon-ad.

The principal aim with this advertisement was probably to indicate the Government's sincerity and to signal its intention to continue with its apartheid-is-outdated-approach. For those members of the public that it did reach, and for the new communications initiative on the part of the Government normally known for its lack of willingness and competence in communications, it must probably be regarded as a success, subject to the qualification that promises must be changed into deeds.

On June 12, 1986 a nation-wide state of emergency was declared which changed the pattern of political communication in South Africa. Various media restrictions apply and the reform debate has, unfortunately, taken a back-seat to the law-and-order-debate. With the fledgling Bureau for Information entrusted to the hazardous task of controlling the release of information during the state of emergency, very little can be expected from them in the immediate future.*

4.2. Political parties

After its innovative use of political advertising during the 1983 Referendum campaign, the

National Party disappeared from the scene as far as employing advertising as mode of political communication is concerned. This is extremely disconcerting since the public is eagerly waiting for announcements regarding continued political reform.

Although the Progressive Federal Party has lately been more active in this field, it also is not yet fully exploiting the concept of political (issue) advertising. They responded with the "This is the TRUE Reality"-ad to the Government's Rubicon-ad. Their second ad (Figure 3) focused more on promoting the party organisationally than on political issues as such.

This inactivity of political parties in the field of political advertising is disconcerting. This is particularly so if it is indicative of:

- an unwillingness to promote itself as organisation;
- the inability to exploit modes of political communication apart from the traditional;
- lack of interest to reach out to non-party members; and
- the absence of a desire to communicate with the public regarding the issues.

In short, on examining the political advertisements that have appeared lately, it must be concluded that the political parties are lagging behind in this area compared both to Big Business and other "non-political" actors.

4.3. "Non-political" actors

"Non-political" actors are for the purpose of this paper seen as those communicators in the political arena that are not registered as political parties and that have their primary activity in other spheres, e.g. labour, commerce, or religion.

Although there are many parallels between ads placed by corporations and those placed by interest groups or political candidates, the main difference, of course, is that the latter groups identify themselves as political and clearly are espousing political goals, while issue or advocacy advertisers make no such admission, according to Meadow (1981:81).

Since Rubicon, South Africa's "non-political" actors have been much more active in the field

* Whether the Bureau will ever be able to establish credibility as communicator after having to play censor during the state of emergency, remains to be seen.

INFLUX CONTROL HAS BEEN ABOLISHED.

THE PASS LAWS HAVE GONE.

THE PRISONS ARE EMPTIED OF THE VICTIMS OF THIS UNHAPPY SYSTEM.

NO SOUTH AFRICAN WILL EVER SUFFER THE INDIGNITY OF ARREST FOR A PASS OFFENCE AGAIN.

A NEW ERA OF FREEDOM HAS BEGUN.

THAT IS THE REALITY.

When I made the promise to scrap the pass laws by July 1 a new spirit of optimism was felt throughout the land.

Now that promise has been fulfilled.

And the lies and accusations of those who said it would never happen have been proved as empty as the cruel and selfish ideologies they would force upon an unwilling nation.

[We are a land of many different groups. Each with a right to freedom. Each with a right to protection. Each with a right to share in the prosperity of the greatest nation in Africa.]

To those skulking criminals who sneak around at night, killing and maiming innocent people in the most cowardly way, I say beware.

The new South Africa will be a land where all decent people can sleep with their doors open. A land where we can look each other in the eye. Without fear or hatred.

NB. And it will come about. Not because I say so, but because my government and I have the power to make it happen.

That is the reality.

The time for retribution is over.

Yes, it is the time for all South Africans to act like men. Not lie snivelling with their heads under their pillows. It is time to stretch out our hands and look each other squarely in the eyes round the negotiating table.

You have heard my commitments.

You have seen that in my hands negotiation is the most powerful weapon of all.

But I will not suffer the slaughter of innocents. I will not contemplate any path towards change other than peaceful evolution.

This I can promise you: when the history of the new South Africa is written, it will not be in blood.

It will be written in the one thing our enemies fear the most - peace and goodwill.

P.W. Botha

P.W. Botha
State President

Figure 2: The second "Rubicon" advertisement.

The SABC won't let you see the movie, so read the book.

Everyone in South Africa knows what the Progressive Federal Party is against. We've fought the government's apartheid policies, economic mismanagement and general insensitivity long enough to be recognised as an active, effective opposition.

However, thanks largely to the blatant manipulation of the SABC, it hasn't always been easy to communicate what we are for. For 25 years we've stood by clear, unambiguous principles that point the way to a new South Africa we can all feel safe in and be proud of.

We have a vision for the future that will get South Africa out of the mess the Nat Government has created.

To explain that policy and persuade you to give the PFP your support, we've printed a small, easy-to-read booklet which we'll send you free of charge if you return the attached coupon.

What the PFP believes:

The PFP believes what most people hope: That a new and just South Africa is possible. It can be achieved by applying the fundamental principles of the PFP.

Structured around the concept of individual freedom and liberty, a new constitution will be negotiated and agreed upon by all our people.

Full and equal citizenship rights will be given to all South Africans, regardless of race, colour, religion or sex.

There will be a massive devolution of power, to strengthen the life of the people at local level.

Never again will one individual or group of individuals dominate another.

There is a way to save South Africa:

The PFP's concept of negotiation is very different to the way the Government is trying to do it.

It has to do with the spirit of the thing. With gaining trust, without which nothing will be achieved.



You have to show intent, by scrapping apartheid, and unshunning political parties and leaders so that people are free to negotiate.

Reforming apartheid or calling it new names isn't enough. Scrapping the pass laws is only a start.

And the time to start that negotiation is now.

The PFP's plan to save South Africa:

The PFP rejects the tricameral parliamentary system we have at present. It excludes the majority of the population and puts too much power in the hands of just one of the many political groupings we have in the country.

Democracy will come when South Africa is recognised as one country, with one constitution negotiated by genuine leaders

expressing the wishes of the people.

In that constitution:

- There will be a massive devolution of power, along federal lines, to regional and local governments.
- All citizens will have full and equal voting rights.
- Government structures at all levels will be non-racial.
- Proportional representation on both legislative and executive bodies will ensure an effective sharing of power.
- A bill of rights guarded by a strong and independent judiciary will protect both the individual and the minorities.

The PFP can make it happen:

The PFP is the only party with the resources, the people and the credibility to take the centre stage and form an alternative government. Support for the PFP has been growing at a rate that has surprised our critics, warmed the hearts of our friends and hastened the day when the PFP can actually form an alternative government.

But our success can only continue with your support.

The PFP vision of a prosperous, non-racial, democratic S.A. and our plan for achieving it are clearly explained in our booklet — "There is a way to save South Africa". You can get your free copy by returning this coupon. We suggest you do so immediately. You can help to create a South Africa we can all be proud of. And whether the Government likes it or not, that's the only South Africa that's worth fighting for.

Yes, I do want to know more about how the PFP can save South Africa.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Code: _____

Telephone: _____

Attached is my plan to save South Africa: _____

PPF

We fight to put things right.

PLEASE SEND TO: PFP P.O. BOX 1475 CAPE TOWN 8000

THIS AD WAS PRODUCED AND PAID FOR BY THE PFP AND THEIR SUPPORTERS

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Figure 3: Promoting the Progressive Federal Party.

of political advertising than either Government or political parties. This trend is reason for concern, not so much for the actions of “non-political” actors, as for the inaction of the primary political actors.

4.3.1. Labour, religious and community groups

Most of the labour unions representing workers are highly politicised. The same is true for many community organisations, special interest groups, pressure groups, and front organisations. This is also true for many churches, as *inter alia* indicated by actions of religious leaders and the open letter to President Botha from the Methodist Church (Figure 4) in reaction to the Rubicon-ad.

Some of the non-political groups are allied to radical groups and others are committed to the “armed struggle” and are therefore expected to reject conventional (establishment) media and to prefer alternative media or underground media. Nevertheless, the way in which the theory and practice of revolutionary warfare developed in South Africa, a link has emerged between revolutionary groups dedicated to the “armed struggle” and some extra-parliamentary groups with the know-how, means and opportunity to use “establishment” media as well.

Since much of the struggle is an effort to influence public opinion, no mode of communication can be expected to be excluded. Therefore, even radical groups such as the *Release Mandela Campaign* may use such techniques as paid space in “capitalist” media for political advertising.

4.3.2. Big businesses

Advocates of public causes have long used advertising space to carry their messages to the public. Similarly, writes the IAA (1977:15), business firms have found themselves engaged in controversy (or have chosen to engage in controversy) and have used advertising as one means to express a point of view, make factual corrections, enlist support, or even urge some kind of action.

Due to the Government's separatist policies, blacks are largely excluded from the central political processes. This is changing. As South Africans are struggling to expand the demo-

cracy to all its citizens, political communication must be adjusted as cause for, and effect of, the democratisation of politics. These changes go hand in hand with much uncertainty and various forms of conflict and pressure and violence and intimidation.

In order to allegedly speed up the process of reform in South Africa, some groups advocate economic pressures. Anti-South African groups are simultaneously calling for punitive sanctions, disinvestment and divestment. Severe pressure is placed on many companies operating here to divest and withdraw from South Africa.

Due to a variety of particularly economic, but also moral and social factors, as well as the far-reaching implications of political policies, Big Business is inescapably involved in the political arena.

Nashua was one of the first to use issue advertising and said “It's time business took a step in leading, not leaving South Africa.” The ad continues “The future of this country is our business too. And we at Nashua, the only major wholly South African owned copier company, do not rank alongside those companies that are pulling out” (Figure 5)

Rank Xerox followed a similar approach, though more cautiously worded. They said: “If the Government keeps its word there is no way that Xerox will pull out of South Africa.” It then continued: “The South African Government has committed itself to reform with the ultimate aim of making South Africa a peaceful land of opportunity for all South Africans. Rank Xerox supports this wholeheartedly, lauds the steps already taken, and encourages Government to act in an ever bolder way to implement further reforms. If Government does this, and they have publicly stated that they will, then Rank Xerox will be there all the way giving support wherever they can” (Figure 6).

Nashua countered with a second ad saying “Nashua does not rank with those copier companies thinking of leaving South Africa”, saying “There are no ifs, buts, or maybes about Nashua staying in South Africa.”

(They still managed to squeeze in some commercial information, saying: “Because the only thing we're pulling out, is all the stops — to tailor a Nashua package to replace your exist-

DEAR MR STATE PRESIDENT,

You said in Parliament "...we have outgrown the outdated concept of apartheid".

We want to believe you.

So much depends on what you mean.

● Apartheid is built on the labelling of people according to their skin colour. We pray that you will rid us of the Population Registration Act. So that all South Africans can at last be people. Nothing more or less.

Then South Africa can believe.

● We welcome your words on law and liberty but you must first convince people who have been bruised by apartheid that the law can be their friend. We pray that you will announce a Bill of Rights that guarantees protection under the law for us all.

Then South Africa can believe.

● We long to see negotiation rather than strife. The only negotiations likely to bring lasting peace will be with leaders who are trusted by their people. We pray that you will release leaders in prison and urban movements in exile. So they can share in the first fully representative negotiations in our history.

Then South Africa can believe.

● Please know that influx control is too deeply resented to be disguised under other laws. We pray that you will announce that any person may move, seek work and own property anywhere in our land. Without ever again needing a permit of any kind.

Then South Africa can believe.

● Education has been the flashpoint of so much violence. It can be the key to peace. We pray that by a "single education policy" you intend to scrap ethnic education departments. And guarantee the same educational opportunity for every one of our sons and daughters.

Then South Africa can believe.

● All of this boils down to one question: who is a South African? You said there will be one citizenship for all. We pray that you will honour that. By announcing the same kind of citizenship for us all. In one South Africa.

Do these things and apartheid will be gone at last. The world will be able to believe. The economic threats will end. Our children who have been driven to war will come home and live together in peace.

To share in the new South Africa.



E.N. Baartman
President of The Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

This response comes out of our urgent Christian concern for South Africa and its people.

Issued in association with the Secretary of the Conference of The Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Rev M.S. Mogoba, the Ex-President and Chairman of the South Western Transvaal District, Rev P.J. Storey, the President-Elect and Chairman of the Kimberley and Bloemfontein District, Rev J.B. Scholtz, and the Chairman of the Cape of Good Hope District, Rev A.E. Hendricks, Chairman of the Grahamstown District, Rev G. Irvine, Chairman of the Queenstown District, Rev E.N. Baartman, Chairman of the Namibia District, Rev D. Palco, Chairman of the Natal West District, Rev Dr K.E.M. Mgojo, Chairman of the Natal Coastal District, Rev Dr J. Borman, Chairman of the Northern Free State and Lesotho District, Rev E.W. Meaker, Chairman of the South Eastern Transvaal and Swaziland District, Rev V.W. Harris, Chairman of the Northern Transvaal and Sotswana District, Rev A.P. Learmonth, and Chairman of the Mozambique District, Rev I.D. Mahlalela, of The Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

Issued by T. Coggin, Information Officer of The Methodist Church of Southern Africa, 413 Main Street, Selgavia, Johannesburg, 2001.

It's time business took a step in leading, not leaving, South Africa.

The future of this country is our business too. And we at Nashua, the only major wholly South African owned copier company, do not run alongside those companies that are pulling out.

There are no ifs, buts, or maybes about Nashua staying in South Africa.

NASHUA
Putting you first.

Figure 5: Nashua taking their step.

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“If the Government keeps its word there is no way that Xerox will pull out of South Africa.”

Mr. D. English, MD, Rank Xerox (SA).



“Our position on the political situation in South Africa has not changed. It was stated some time ago and repeated again recently by Mr David Kearns, Chairman of the Xerox Corporation.

Xerox will remain in South Africa as long as real change continues to take place. Xerox is dedicated to reform in South Africa and will play as meaningful a role as possible.

The South African Government has committed

itself to reform with the ultimate aim of making South Africa a peaceful land of opportunity for all South

Africans. Rank Xerox supports this wholeheartedly, lauds the steps already taken, and encourages Government to act in an ever bolder way to implement further reforms. If Government does this, and they have publicly stated that they will, then Rank Xerox will be there all the way giving support wherever they can”.

RANK XEROX®
An equal opportunity company.

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Figure 6: Rank Xerox explaining their position.

ing contract, while maintaining the service and quality you've come to expect from Nashua.")

Mobil also entered into the "debate" through political issue advertising and said "Let's end violence and begin a meaningful dialogue". AECI moreover used paid space to issue a signed statement "expressing their grave concern regarding detentions of numerous trade unionists and community leaders with whom we have a working relationship" (Figure 7).



STATEMENT

The Management of the AECI Group express their grave concern regarding the detentions of numerous trade unionists and community leaders with whom we have a working relationship.

Our managers have had dealings with these leaders over many years and it is our experience that they and their organisations play a constructive role in resolving conflict in the community and in our factories.

The absence of trade union leaders who are actively involved in settling disputes between labour and management is already leading to serious problems in the industry.

We urge that formal charges be laid against these important members of the industrial community or that they are released.

M.A. SANDER
MANAGING DIRECTOR
AECI LIMITED

20 June 1988

Figure 7: Statement by AECI on detention.

The American Chamber of Commerce (Amcham) made its political opinions and demands known in two separate advertisements. The first was headlined "We **must** get it together" and the second "Let's declare a state of urgency" (Figure 8). The first of these ads were sponsored by 76 contributing companies and the second by 84.

The two Amcham ads must, however, be read together with the document it sent out suggesting civil disobedience.

On Wednesday, June 4, 1986, The Star carried a front page report that "The decision by the American Chamber of Commerce to back proposals for civil disobedience is part of its strategy to come out against injustices in South Africa, the president of Amcham, Mr Frank Lubke, said today."

"Mr Lubke confirmed that a two-page document, suggesting civil disobedience as part of a programme for helping black employees, had been circulated to Amcham's 300 members", wrote The Star.

On the same day Business Day reported that "Frank Lubke ... confirmed that Amcham was backing proposals for civil disobedience in SA."

On Thursday, June 5, 1986 Business Day reported: "A statement of support for civil disobedience by Amcham ended in a confusion of retractions and affirmations..."

"Amcham chairman Frank Lubke, who issued the original statement, said yesterday it was intended merely to supply information to its members without any specific endorsement or recommendation of the civil disobedience proposals."

But on Friday, June 6, 1986, The citizen reported "The Amcham civil disobedience document, which caused a great deal of controversy when it was sent to the US companies operating in South Africa, is soon to be sent to local companies."

The shadow which this type of action throws over the political advertising by Amcham in particular and Big Business in general, is that they are dabbling in (power) politics *per se*, and no longer in expressing their opinions on political matters that affect commerce and industry.

This adds to the concern that Big Business have objectives that may on occasion be in conflict with public welfare as compared to business welfare. As "non-political" actors they also cannot be held accountable by the electorate for their political actions. They are accountable often only to their shareholders whose primary concern is profits.

6. Conclusion

The implication of various socio-economic and political changes is that fewer and fewer people can still be reached through the traditional, party channels of communication. This de-



LET'S DECLARE A STATE OF URGENCY

Instead of a State of Emergency, let's declare a State of Urgency to remove all discriminatory legislation without delay. Let's rid ourselves of preconceived posture and position. Let us all reject violence from any quarter and condemn it for the evil that it is, irrespective of the perpetrator, doctrine or ideology. Let's restore normality and create a climate for acknowledged leaders to meet and explore the basis of a new South Africa.

In short, let's get it together.

Because we haven't the time to take our time.

Apartheid is totally contrary to the idea of free enterprise.

Economic freedom is no less important than political or social freedom. In fact, we can't have the latter without the former. Every South African deserves the right to succeed, or fail, according to his own abilities and willingness to work hard.

Yet, by being here, our offices around the world are labelled supporters of Apartheid. Nothing is further from the truth.

Apartheid is, by definition, the opposite of getting it together.

So let's get it off the statute book once and for all.

We believe in South Africa and all its peoples. We have an obligation to all those we employ and serve — millions of South Africans of all races. Together we have spent hundreds of millions of Rands in South Africa: on education, housing, small business development, health care, job creation and rural development.

We don't have all the answers and we fully respect the sovereignty of nations and their right to seek solutions to their problems by themselves, for themselves. But we also make a contribution to this country and its economy. We pay taxes. We employ South Africans of all races. And we care.

South Africa needs stability. Business can only be good for everyone when there is social and political stability. American companies are under increasing pressure from overseas. All of us face tremendous pressure and our long-term plans and investments in the future are taking a back seat. We're having to do business on a day by day basis.

Let's move faster. Let's contribute to the new South Africa so that all reasonable people can share in its future. And let's get moving towards it.

Let's start negotiating. Uncertainty about the new South Africa goes hand in hand with fear, suspicion and rumour. While a detailed blueprint for a new South Africa may not be possible now, we believe it is imperative for Government to create a proper climate for negotiation. Let us all help in getting there.

Time is ticking away. Expectations are mounting. The reality of what is said seldom matches what is done. Now is the time to focus on action.

Encouraging Steps. We are encouraged by the steps which have already been taken: dropping the Pass Laws, Mixed Marriages Acts and the granting of freehold rights for all.

Equally, we urge that the statements of intent be enacted without delay.

We must get it together. There is still much that needs to be done. These are urgent issues which need to be faced so that we can get it together.

FOCUS ON FUTURE ACTION

Free political detainees.

Urban political organisations.

Negotiate with acknowledged leaders about power sharing.

Political rights for all.

Repeal Population Registration Act.

Grant SA citizenship to all.

Repeal Group Areas Act.

Common Equal Education.

Equalise Health Services.

AMCHAM FOCUS

The American Chamber of Commerce in South Africa

HELPING TO BUILD A NEW SOUTH AFRICA

This advertisement is sponsored by the following companies:

AGENCELCO AIR PRODUCTS SOUTH AFRICA ARZO ENGINEERING AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL INSURANCE CO THE BAUGROUP BAUSCH LAMB LAMSON LARS & BLAKE THE KEES & BORN & BOROVANSKA BEULERIGKA PASHEN AARKEITZ
BOART BUCHS APRIA & BROSCHUS SACHSING & CE INTERNATIONAL INC COPE SOUTH AFRICA CATERPILLAR AFRICA CHESEBROUGH POND INTERNATIONAL CLEVERSON & THE CONCORD FINANCIAL CORPORATION CLARKE FALMETH
CENTRO DATA CENTRAL SPECIALISTS DIGITAL/SONAR/CI/LEASERS DE PONTY & SERRAVALLO INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY AND SYRBY & THOMPSON THE MONTECARS ESTABLISHMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA ASSON SWANSON & PEPPERELL
BUSBY PULTECH SERVICES & ENGINEERS & GENERAL SERVICES SOUTH AFRICA & A GILLES SOUTH AFRICA GILLETTE SOUTH AFRICA THE HARVEY & BROADBENT & ROBERTS GROUP SOUTH AFRICA HOLDING COMPANY THE HOOK MESSER
AFRICA HUNSWELL LTD IBA SOUTH AFRICA IBERIA RENDON SOUTH AFRICA INTERNATIONAL AVIATION ENTERPRISES J WATER THOMPSON CONSULTANTS JASSON SAUDI BARAK LTD & BUSINESS CONSULTANTS
KELLOGG COLE MANLY AFRICA KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKENS SOUTH AFRICA & KOSHER SOUTH AFRICA LAMARCO REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT AND CONSULTANTS LARSEN & TUBRO
CLINTON ENGINEERING & THE FREEMING MACHINE ROBEY ENGINEERING AFRICA RANK BROS & CO SOUTH AFRICA REFERRING INVESTORS & BROKERS & REGISTRARS SOUTH AFRICA REGISTERED MINERALS
S JORDAN & SONS SOUTH AFRICA & SOUTH AFRICAN MOTOR CORPORATION SCHOENHEIT GILBERTSON SORBY & PILOTTI SOUTH AFRICA SOUTHERN AFRICAN SINTER AND ROLLING MILL SOUTH AFRICA SOUTH AFRICAN STEEL & WIRE
PRESBYTERIAN STEEL & TUBERY CORP STALSAFFER/STALSAFFER GROUP STURULOUDING & TAMBRANDS SOUTH AFRICA THORNTON & THOMAS THOMPSON INTERNATIONAL TUNISON AMERICA SOUTH AFRICA VEDICONS INTERNATIONAL WENDEL LAMBERT

Reproduced by Sabimet Gateway under licence granted by the Publisher (dated 2010).

Figure 8: Amcham on the State of Emergency.

mands the skillfull use of other communication channels.

Apparently the public's demand for new modes of political communication is changing quicker than the ability, or the willingness, of political parties to adopt new communications strategies.

Big Business emerged after Rubicon as the major political advertiser, at least partly as a result of its frustration with the slow reform process and its negative influence on the economy.

This trend of political advertising by Big Business to explain its position and exert political influence is expected to continue and even increase with political parties playing second fiddle, largely as the result of the latter's inability to take the initiative, policy- and communication-wise.

This trend should be reversed. No democracy can afford that the primary political actors refrain from using all available modes of political communication and all possible communications channels in order to promote dialogue and negotiation.

In the current pre-revolutionary phase in South Africa care must be taken not to stimulate the use of political violence. If the Amcham ads are taken together with its document suggesting civil disobedience, then its contribution to negotiation rather than conflict is under suspicion.

The political parties need to resume their role as policy innovators and decision-makers regarding the political issues — or run the risk of becoming redundant with the ultimate effect detrimental to the democracy.

In addition, political parties have to realise

that they must promote themselves organisationally. They can no longer ignore their image and expect the public's support to be automatic.

Government should realise that with the Rubicon crossed, there is no turning back. Constitutional objectives must be clearly formulated and aggressively pursued. Credibility must be established as a priority and the deeds should be allowed to speak for themselves.

Since at least part of the problem lies in the field of public opinion, an unambiguous communications policy is a *sine qua non*. The purpose of such a communications policy is, above all, to facilitate the freest possible flow of information leading to a better informed public opinion.

A communications policy implies the setting of clear objectives (based on deeds worth communicating), allocation of the necessary resources, and a monitor/feedback system to guide future actions.

As part of this communications policy the appointment of a respected and capable person as ombudsman is strongly recommended. An ombudsman can help overcome the feeling of members of the public that government is some distant, unapproachable, unaccountable monolith.

The constructive and destructive conflict potential in Southern Africa must be recognised, and policies that address the real issues must be formulated and implemented. This must then be effectively communicated to the public.

In this there is no alternative for significant political reform. As the Walter Mondale political ad stated, nobody is interested in a hamburger without the beef.

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