

Part IV

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMES OF COMMUNICATION  
AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

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NEWSPAPER - CREATOR OR MIRROR OF THE INDUSTRIAL REALITY<sup>1</sup>

The methodological concepts referring to analysis of content publicized by mass media, and especially the press, point out three main phases in exerting an influence on the receiver by this content:

- social determinants of propagated content with a special attention paid to those determinants which refer to an intention in which a given content is transmitted by a political disposer or creator;
- definite content of the press and possibility of material realization of a given content. Representatives of the critical school, among others (M. McLuhan) emphasize e.g. a fact of a distinct interrelationship between social communication and determinants of political-economic character, what causes that effects of mass communication depend mainly not on what content is being communicated but how it is done;
- reflection of transmitted content in social awareness of particular individuals and social aggregations.

Models of social values expressed verbally, by pictures, in an abstract or personified way may be also analyzed in three ways:

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<sup>1</sup> By "industrial reality" I understand all the main individual and group relationships connected with the process of work in an enterprise and generally conceived situation of work.

- we may treat the specific values as a testimony of divergence between "a real picture" propagated by definite mass media and the social reality;

- we may follow changes in content of propagated values over time, and we may search for a relationship between characteristics of transmission and social characteristics of receivers, addressees of given values [M c Q u a i l, 1969, p. 68].

In deliberations devoted to role of language in man's cognitive process, it is underlined that language is not only a mean helping us to build a picture of the reality surrounding us but that it also performs creative functions in relation to this reality. It is significant here in what context of associations definite words are involved. This is due to the fact that the meaning of transmitted content by mass media, also by the press, is contained not so much in words as in the receiver's conscience. Hence, taking into account e.g. effectiveness of propagated content it is more important what meaning is attached to a word by receivers than by the author, a sender of a definite message.

Differences in ways of describing the social reality do not remain without their impact both on choice of appropriate strategies of behaviour by an individual and on ways of controlling these behaviours by such propaganda entities as political parties, the state, specific social groups, professional or religious institutions. All this constitutes a premise for a statement that language is the main tool of intentional creation of the reality, with this intentional creativity of language being understood as "[...] endeavours on pictures of the social reality made, first of all, in order to change behaviours of particular individuals, social groups or entire societies" [M a r o d y, 1987, p. 254] surpassing purely propaganda-type actions.

We are interested here in one of propaganda entities<sup>2</sup> i.e. the political party, which by means of its organ "Trybuna Ludu"

<sup>2</sup> Understood here not in the etymological sense as all dissemination of thoughts but as a deliberate, persuasive, politically motivated impact on an aggregation aiming at generation of desirable behaviours through the shaping of human attitudes.

- a daily with national circulation - propagates definite content, including content referring to attitudes and behaviours of employees. An interesting question, which arises here, is to what extent "Trybuna Ludu" performs solely creative-postulative functions and to what extent it is a mirror of the industrial reality.

The language of propaganda used in the daily press performing its function of a medium of definite ideology applies ready-made terms, concepts, phrases and techniques of influencing the society. It also uses specific interpretation keys so that receivers would not have to search for others, often contradictory with the senders intention. After all, in the intentional impact on individuals and the society, of basic significance is the fact that changes in attitudes and behaviours may be achieved not only through "[...] introducing changes at the material level of reality but also changes may be affected at the level of its verbal description" [M a r o d y, 1987, p. 68].

The propaganda language is ruled by definite laws, with two among them appearing to be especially important i.e. the law of semantic synthesis and the law of linguistic stereotypization [T r a w i ń s k a, K u ś m i e r s k i, 1985]. The former is based on a mechanism of denotation and connotation of transmitted content. Of special importance here is enlargement of connotation scope of certain terms, appearance of new association relations, shift of meanings from some words to others and, thus, producing similar or the same responses to specific words, to which the law of synthesis refers.

In turn, the law of linguistic stereotypization is based on a mechanism of generalization, after all not always validated especially in the rapidly changing political situation. And although one can hardly imagine propaganda without use of language stereotypes, it calls for constant attention, because a dangerous situation is such in which signs and symbols generate new associations, wear out through their excessive exploitation and assume characteristics of "claptrap".

It is estimated that the ideological influencing of the Polish society was quite often assuming a purely postulative form, what would boil down in the propaganda sphere to creating a

peculiar "duty superstructure" organizing both the choice of presented content, among others in the press, and a set of arguments used to substantiate definite theses.

Distinctly normative character of the propaganda language was causing, simultaneously, that cognitive dissonances experienced by a receiver of content in confrontation with the actual situation in the social life could lead to a pronounced regress in the social awareness evaluated from the viewpoint of assumed social goals. It happened all the more so as in the mass propaganda, including the daily press, there dominated an apologetic trend, in which the term "should" was replaced by the term "is", what in relation to officially propagated content connected with work was assuming a form of a striking hiatus in confrontation with the descriptive vision of the social and, especially, industrial reality.

In the propagated endeavours predominating in creation of a vision of social and production relations in Polish work establishments during the analyzed period (1970-1982), there was used quite simple scheme either of metaphorical associations, a set of positively valuated concepts, or also euphemisms [Passent, 1987]<sup>3</sup>. Such terms as: betterment, improvement, deepening, strengthening, expanding, growth of role, growth of significance, constantly grows, constantly deepens, etc. were commonly met decorations of transmitted content referring to broadly understood problems of work. A statement could be ventured here that too strong concentration of the daily press, in this case of "Trybuna Ludu" on optative presentation of the social reality led to appearance of the so-called "boomerang effect" of propaganda and, thus, to obtaining effects contrary to those intended. Many propaganda moves, made especially within the framework of thematic series, resembled a director's activity who ruins his enterprise to implement a periodical plan as described by R. Likert [1958].

The occasional character of the critical trend in propaganda-

<sup>3</sup> It appears that propagandists resort to euphemisms. As it is quoted by D. Passent, one of anonymous authors of a text published in the weekly "Veto" (20th Sept. 1987) instead of the word "unemployed" uses the term "without employment".

-type activities and marginal occurrence of problems presented in the neutral trend caused that "Trybuna Ludu" was performing a predominantly creative function in relation to the shaping of labour relations in Polish enterprises. Descriptive visions of the workplace reality were presented mainly in letters from readers, what was remaining in a visible contrast with reports submitted by local correspondents of the newspaper.

In most cases, texts concerning problems of work were focussed on such slogans as: quality, productivity, discipline, worktime, responsibility, organization of work. Simultaneously, there found its confirmation a thesis that the worse the situation in Polish enterprises the more often could be found information dealing with principles of good, efficient, well organized and performed work. It can be stated with a great deal of probability that a similar trend of distinctly linguistic creation of the social reality regarding the process of work was followed by other newspapers and magazines.

"Trybuna Ludu" - organ of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party since 1972 was supposed to be playing a leading, inspirational role among mass media, both central and local. The analysis of texts contained in other Polish newspapers and magazines [C h r z a n o w s k i, 1980] has revealed that "Trybuna Ludu" was treated not only as an official medium presenting the party's stance, decisions or actions taken by it but also as some kind of a "mother copy" to be duplicated both as regards topics, formulated theses and in selection of arguments or statistical data. The distinct trend to duplicate propaganda forms and methods was accompanied by "collective poetics" of published texts, which could ultimately lead to "abhorrence of propaganda" [M e r t o n, 1982]<sup>4</sup>.

A commonly met thesis that "the press lies" is in many cases a peculiar form of the boomerang effect, which usually has its roots in erroneous exemplification of the published content. If in its creative role the press refers, to a too small degree, to

<sup>4</sup> The term is used by R. K. Merton to describe a phenomenon, in which each valuating statement, appearing in its propaganda dimension, is received as "ordinary propaganda".

everyday experience of individuals and groups or - in other words - if it plays, to a too small degree, the role of a mirror, the propaganda assumptions will be fulfilled to an insignificant degree. Examples of evaluation referred to in the press may be true but since they do not correspond to observations and experience they may be received as untrue.

In every society, including the Polish society, there functions a wide range of convictions of self-knowledge type being deeply rooted in the dimension of stereotypes, myths, simplifications, prejudices and extra-scientific explanations. Perception of the social reality is, after all, determined to a smaller or bigger extent, by the emotional system, which not only reduces the scope of accessible, potential standards of attitudes and behaviours but also compensates for a deficit of information about this reality. It can be presumed that the bigger the deficit the more often such compensation may assume a form of stereotype, idiosyncratic thinking based on nonvalidated generalizations. At the beginning of the eighties, the problem of self-knowledge as a reaction to simplified and frequently postulated vision of the social reality in Poland revealed itself with all its sharpness. That was not only a reaction to "official Marxism" but also against treating definite rules organizing the social life, including work, as normal only because they were common. It is quite obvious that normality understood as an object of evaluation and concerning situations, mechanisms, processes or phenomena is not always accepted.

The work situation perceived by an individual both from the viewpoint of norms of sensibleness (goals of activity, choice of means), credibility (agreement between description of desirable or actual states of things with the reality being an object of description) and comprehensibility (clearness of intentions, actions) may be seen by an employee as such in which propagated content of the work ideology does not have any bigger chances for realization.

It is not an exception that people point at absurdity of an effort they are undertaking, or which is forced by the situation of work, when "[...] there are being undermined not only broadly understood technical-organizational rationality but also the norm of common sense" [t u k a s i e w i c z, 1985].

Too big dissonance between the senders' experience (in this case of a newspaper oriented primarily at linguistic creation of the reality due to functions assigned to it) and the receivers' experience not only consolidates the boomerang reaction but also causes that it lends itself quite easily for generalizations. This dissonance begins to be perceived in relation to the whole text of a document or even a definite medium of mass communication. Accordingly, one could agree with a statement that sometimes "[...] the best propagandist is not to undertake it, and especially in the situation when a propagandist is not able to predict in what conditions attitudes shaped by him will be revealing themselves or when" [...] he does not possess any possibilities of modifying these conditions [H o l y y, 1980].

Performing its function of a leading organ among press mass media, "Trybuna Ludu" was not oriented at shaping the social awareness of its readers, especially as regards problems connected with the work situation but at promoting a specific model for other newspapers, at stimulating activities of particular institutions and work establishments.

Hence, the critical trend in the way of presenting its content by "Trybuna Ludu" referred mainly to various spheres of institutional activity, which as a result of press penetration were displaying their unwillingness or inability to undertake definite actions organized on the national scale. Consequently, it could be really stated without any hesitation that the party resolutions were followed by visible intensification of press hoopla in this field [G o b a n - K l a s, 1975].

However, estimating the way of propagating the press content (and its selection) referring to values connected with work and broadly understood work situation it must be said that it was highly ineffective, and especially if one takes into account results of confrontation of publicized content with the real situation in the process of work or with nature of relationships between employees.

Social attitudes and behaviours cannot be shaped mainly through propaganda-educational efforts or, generally speaking, by assigning to the language a significant, constituting role in creating the social reality. This is mainly due to the fact that

in such linguistically created reality there exist small chances for transition from the state of disposition to certain behaviours - actual behaviours.

The content of agreements concluded between employees and economic and state institutions (starting from the Government Presidium and ending with enterprises) in the years 1980-1981 was characterized by a distinct dissonance against the background of content referring to work. As it is stated by J. Szczepański, none of those agreements ever mentioned production, labour productivity, work intensity and, thus, working conditions; the postulates were concentrated on conditions of employment [Szczepański, 1987]. That dominance of values connected with employment, that virtually compulsive desire for socio-welfare security were a derivative not only of definite negligence but also of systems of social education, propaganda activities (underlining the state's protective function as the supreme employer), penetration of social values from the most developed capitalist countries, influence exerted by the Church or general developmental processes of the society.

That confrontation, conducted on a mass scale, between the propagated vision of the social reality in the sphere of work and the descriptive and normative vision (especially the latter) shows that all propaganda aggressiveness may be highly ineffective when, simultaneously, there are not evolved institutional-organizational, and legal solutions referring to relatively permanent, explicit and adequate rules and solutions of systemic character.

Otherwise, the institutional dimension in realization of values connected with work may lead to a peculiar motivational dissonance in the form of:

a) redundancy of motivations, when individuals and groups accept and internalize essential, basic and mobilizing values connected with work and wish to realize them while the system of work, in which they are involved, constitutes an insurmountable obstacle;

b) underdevelopment of motivations appearing in the situation of an employee's physical and psychic exertions; when individuals perceive that effects of their work are squandered and intensified

activity is out of proportion to achieved effect. Such a tendency may appear especially when an employee realizes that slogans of naive positivism are not a way allowing to improve his own material situation;

c) shift of motivations from the sphere of definite tasks and goals directly connected with work to other spheres, e.g. of interhuman relations, or from the sphere of moral obligations to the sphere of measurable material benefits.

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GAZETA JAKO TWÓRCA LUB ZWIERCIADŁO  
RZECZYWISTOŚCI PRZEMYSŁOWEJ

Niniejsze opracowanie dotyczy roli pracy w kształtowaniu rzeczywistości zakładowej, zwłaszcza postaw i zachowań pracowniczych. Wychodząc od analizy stadiów oddziaływania treści przekazywanych przez środki masowego przekazu na odbiorcę oraz możliwości prowadzenia analizy modelu wartości społecznych wyrażonych słownie, autorka przechodzi do analizy roli języka w procesie poznawczym. Ekspozuje przede wszystkim fakt, iż język jest nie tylko środkiem do budowy obrazu otaczającej rzeczywistości ale również pełni wobec niej rolę kreacyjną. Zasadniczą część opracowania dotyczy analizy treści prasowych, dotyczących ideologii pracy a zawartych w "Trybunie Ludu" w latach 1970-1982. W analizie tej chodziło przede wszystkim o wykazanie, iż omawiana gazeta pełniła nie tyle rolę odzwierciedlenia problemów dotyczących "życia w pracy", co rolę kreatora pożądanых "stanów rzeczy", wzorca dla innych gazet. Poza funkcją "pierwszego egzemplarza" "Trybuna Ludu" przyczyniała się do tworzenia "zbiorowej poetyki" tekstów dziennikarskich. Przyjęcie takiego modelu propagandy prowadziło do obserwowanego "propagandowstrętu". Przekonanie, iż prasa "kłamie" wynikało m. in. stąd, iż sytuacja pracy jakiej doświadczali pracownicy była bardzo często odmienna od tej, która była propagowana.

Oceniając sposób, w jaki ogólne treści ideologii pracy były propagowane na łamach "Trybuna Ludu" można stwierdzić, iż popełniono szereg klasycznych nieomal błędów. Widać to zwłaszcza na tle treści porozumień zawartych między pracownikami a instytucjami gospodarczymi w latach 1980-1981.

Stąd też ogólny wniosek opracowania sprowadza się do stwierdzenia, iż ofensywność propagandowa, związana z jakością, wydajnością pracy, wyzwalaniem przedsiębiorczości itd. połączona być musi z rozwiązaniami systemowymi. W przeciwnym razie w sferze pracy możemy obserwować występowanie swoistego dysonansu motywacyjnego: przerostu motywacji, niedorozwoju motywacji i przemieszczenia motywacji.