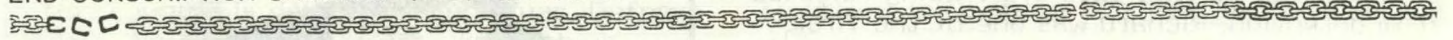


# ECC FOCUS

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END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (TVL) OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

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## Fasting for Peace

Harald Winkler, Richard Steele and Ivan Toms are fasting for three weeks in protest against the presence of the troops in the townships. They are also fasting for soldiers to be granted the right to refuse to fight in the townships, or to participate in the illegal occupation of Namibia.

Harald's decision not to serve in the SADF began when he was still at school. In his matric year he applied for a non-combatant status in the SADF. Until he received his call-up papers for January 13, 1986, Harald has been deferred from military service for academic reasons.

"I do not believe that I can go to the army and remain sincere in my understanding of my Christian faith", he told ECC Focus.

"I have decided to fast for three weeks in support of the ECC's demands. Having grown up in a Christian family, I have come to know fasting as an effective means of purification and protest. I have chosen to fast as a way of expressing my deep horror at what is happening in the townships.

"The deployment of the SADF in South Africa's townships, and reports of troops beating township residents, raping women, looting houses, conducting house-to-house searches and sjambokking, shooting and teargassing people makes it impossible for me to participate in the SADF.

"A friend of mine has also told me of his experiences in Angola and Namibia. His description of the trauma he suffered, particularly when a friend was shot - and left lying where he fell by fellow soldiers - was an eye-opener for me at an early stage.

"Another experience which strengthened my conviction happened in Tembisa. A group of us attended a youth meeting in the township earlier this year. We were stopped by the police for not having permits. When we arrived at the police station we were shocked to find it garrisoned off by police, army and reservists - it was virtually impossible to tell them apart.

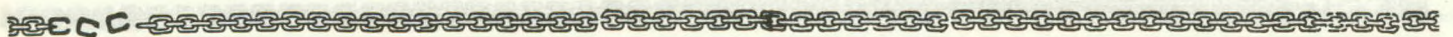


Harald: "This is my small contribution towards initiating a just peace in a non-racial and democratic South Africa".

"I hope that the fast will have an effect on a wide group of people. My particular concern is that the churches urgently consider their position in the growing conflict in South Africa. This fast is my small contribution towards initiating a just peace in a non-racial and democratic South Africa", he said.

### Ivan Toms

Dr. Ivan Toms, doctor for the clinic at Crossroads has settled into St. Georges Cathedral in Cape Town where he will remain for the duration of his three week fast. Ivan served his initial two year period in the SADF, but decided that he was unable to "reconcile the Christian injunction to love my enemy and the demand of the SADF to shoot him". He said that through his work at Crossroads he had learnt at first hand of "the viciousness of apartheid, and the extreme oppression of the blacks".



Prominent members of the Cape Town community have pledged to fast with him, with Rabbi Selwyn Franklin and Mary Burton of the Black Sash joining him on Tuesday September 17.

## Richard Steele

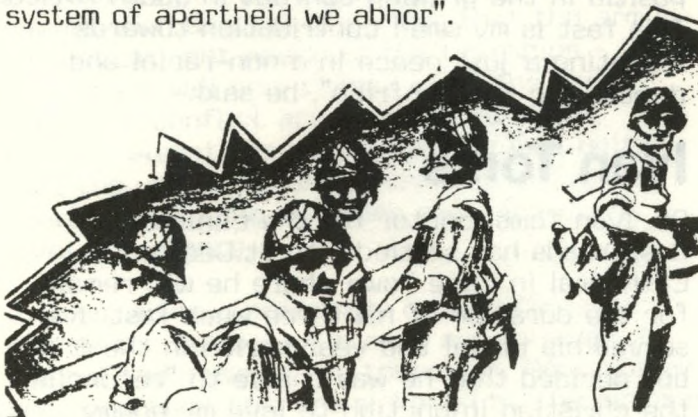
Richard Steele of Durban ECC began his fast on September 22, two days after being released from detention. Richard was one of the first conscientious objectors in South Africa and served a one year sentence in 1980. In D.B. he fasted in protest against being placed in solitary confinement for refusing to wear military overalls. A universal pacifist, Richard has consistently worked for the rights of conscientious objectors, and the bringing about of a just peace in South Africa. He was until recently the caretaker of the Gandhi settlement in Phoenix, Natal. ECC has organised a campaign around the fast, with Durban organisations taking responsibility for the events of each day of the two week period.

## Pietermaritzburg

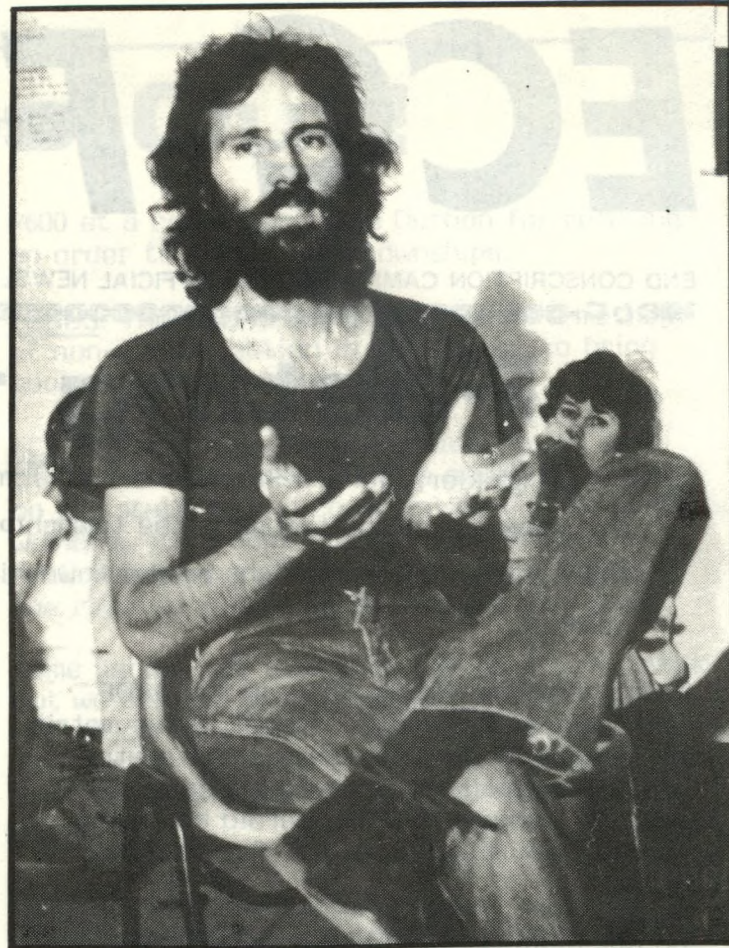
In Pietermaritzburg a two week relay fast started on September 22, with three or four people, or whole organisations committed to fasting on each day of this period. The fast, based in the Holy Nativity Cathedral, is supported by local organisations such as YCS, Nusas, Neusa, Black Sash, Pacsa, Cathsoc, Suca and Jasa.

## Port Elizabeth

In Port Elizabeth, 16 ECC members are fasting in shifts of up to 48 hours over the period of the campaign. Janet Cherry, ECC Chairperson said that the motivation for the fast was that "We want an equal and non-racial society... we are not willing to defend and kill for this system of apartheid we abhor".



ECC FOCUS is the official newsletter of the End Conscription Committee (Tvl). Anyone interested in subscribing can write to:  
The End Conscription Campaign,  
P.O. Box 93118 Yeoville, 2193.



Richard: "As a non-violent action it presents an alternative to the violence of apartheid".

## Offsides, but no complaints...

Politics and sport should never mix, is an often heard comment from government sources, yet the SADF seems to believe the black townships are a rugby field. This evokes vivid images of military personnel armed with loaded rifles and teargas cannisters in armoured vehicles attempting to play ball with barefoot children and township residents under the benevolent umpireship of Malan and co.

"We are not stupid. When you play rugby, injuries should be expected," Brigadier A.C. Chemaly, director of manpower liaison said (The Star 19/9). He also said the SADF is worried by the fact that its 28 complaints bureaux in the Transvaal and Eastern and Western Cape for complaints about alleged misconduct by army personnel in the state of emergency are not being used.

"We don't really know what is going on," despite the fact that people who fear intimidation have been advised to approach the army through their employers, he said.

But, as a township resident said: "How can we complain to the very people who do these things to us?"

GUNNING FOR ECC

That the South African government is not only afraid of, but opposed to a just peace in this country is daily becoming clear. Defense leaders, Malan and Vlok, with various high level defence spokesmen have launched into verbal attacks targetted at undermining the growing public support for a campaign whose primary aim is the ending of an internal civil war.

Not content with misinformation and false press statements, the South African Police has also been deployed against the ECC. The Security Police raided the homes of ECC members in Durban, Cape Town, Pietermaritzburg and Johannesburg on Monday, September 9. Port Elizabeth's ECC was raided the following week. Richard Steele, Michael Evans, Anita Kromberg and Sue Britton were detained under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act. The Natal Supreme Court ordered the release of Richard, Anita and Sue on September 20 - because the police refused to give valid reasons for their detention.

ECC is a legal, single-issue campaign against compulsory military conscription into the SADF. Prominent South Africans, including Sheena Duncan of the Black Sash, Dr Beyers Naude of the South African Council of Churches and the membership of over 50 organisations have endorsed the call for an end to conscription and a just peace in our land. Our campaigns, such as the present "Troops out of the townships" focus and the Peace Festival in June have attracted public support nationally and internationally. The government has alleged that ECC is "being used by the ANC to further its evil actions". The ANC is a banned organisation and the ECC has never had, nor will have, links with it.

ECC believes it is the moral right of South Africans to exercise freedom of conscience and to choose not to serve in the SADF or in black townships. General Magnus Malan, in a direct attack on ECC, stated that there are no moral grounds on which a national serviceman can refuse to do service in a black township, "We must see the ECC for what it is. It is an organisation which aims to break down law and order by weakening the states' machinery", he said (The Star 21/9). The power of peace and freedom of conscience must indeed be strong and devastating weapons!

As the crisis deepens in our land and the SADF is increasingly involved in the harassment

and repression of ordinary people in Namibia, Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Lesotho and South Africa, more and more conscripts will be unwilling to participate in such an army.

The ECC believes the road to peace lies not in banning or harassing organisations that are working for justice. ECC can never be crushed - opposition to conscription will continue to grow - until there is a just peace in Southern Africa.

ANGOLA AGAIN...AND AGAIN...AND AGAIN

Observers here and overseas see the SADF's invasion into Angola as an attempt to save UNITA's Jamba headquarters threatened by a pincer attack by the Angolan force. According to the SADF the move was done to "pre-empt" SWAPO attacks on towns in Namibia and the Angolan government was warned not to interfere.

Shortly after the Angolan Defence Ministry said South African troops had penetrated 250 km into south eastern Angola, and a direct clash with their own troops was imminent - General Viljoen announced that the SADF and SWA forces had succeeded in their objective and had been ordered to withdraw.

Western diplomatic sources, however, fear that a large-scale invasion of Southern Angola, reminiscent of the 1975 campaign, is imminent following Malan's open declaration of support for UNITA: "Now it is on record that South Africa supports UNITA. We will do it again if it is necessary, and on condition that it is in our own interest," (Sunday Star 22/9).

The repeated raids by the apartheid forces into neighbouring states has evoked world wide condemnation of South Africa, time and again.

80 percent of the people of Namibia support SWAPO, a movement which has over the years campaigned non-violently for the emancipation of Namibia from South African occupation. SWAPO declared war against this government only after years of peaceful attempts were thwarted. The SADF clearly does not protect the inhabitants of Namibia, no, it defends the illegal occupation (a breach of international law) of the territory by South Africa.

The ECC calls for the SADF to withdraw from Angola and Namibia completely. We reject the attempt by the SA government to bring to power a puppet UNITA government in Angola. We call for the implementing of United Nations Resolution 435, which calls for free and fair elections in Namibia. The only way to peace in Southern Africa is through restoring justice.

# ECC Focus on ... **Troops Out!**

"Troops out of the Townships" is the call reverberating through South Africa as people from all walks of life support the End Conscription Committee's campaign, launched on Tuesday September 17.

ECC FOCUS interviewed the Johannesburg region executive:

**FOCUS:** The state has severely harassed the ECC. The homes of Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth ECC members were searched and members questioned by the Security Police. The Cape Town chairperson, Michael Evans has been detained under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act as were Anita Kromberg, Sue Britton and Richard Steele of the Durban ECC. What does this mean for the future of ECC?

**ECC:** The ECC is a legal campaign working for a change in the law of conscription in South Africa. The campaign is premised on the fundamental belief that individuals should have the freedom to choose whether or not to participate in the SADF.

At a time when South Africa is desperately in need of peace, the state is attempting to crush a campaign calling for a just peace in our land.

**FOCUS:** Included in the ECC's demands is the call for an end to apartheid wars and a call for a just peace in our land.

**ECC:** Yes, our declaration states: "We call for an end to conscription, we call for a just peace in our land." The campaign takes place at a time when troops are being used more extensively and are provided with greater powers than before. It is clear that the army has not brought peace to the townships - true peace will only prevail when the root causes of conflict are removed. Recently church delegations pointed out to P.W. Botha that the use of security forces is in fact exacerbating the situation and raising the level of violence.

It is becoming increasingly urgent for us to expose the actions of troops and to protest against their use in the townships. Many soldiers and conscripts who are sickened by the actions of the troops have approached us. They are experiencing an acute crisis of conscience.

In the first case of its kind, Rifleman Alan Dodson was recently sentenced to a fine of

R600 at a court martial in Durban for refusing an order to go into the townships.

**FOCUS:** The ECC is using the fast as a method of non-violent action in an attempt to bring about a just peace?

**ECC:** Through non-violent action - such as the three week fast - ECC is applying pressure on the state to end conscription and immediately withdraw its troops from the townships, or, until this happens, to at least give soldiers the right to refuse to go into the townships.

Some people may interpret this as a compromise, but we believe that if basic individual rights are recognised, then it is a step forward towards the ultimate withdrawal of troops from the townships, Namibia and neighbouring states.

**FOCUS:** Prominent church leaders, including Dr Beyers Naude, state that South Africa is in the grips of a civil war. Do you agree?

**ECC:** There is a civil war in South Africa. The unrest in the townships is intensified by the presence of the SADF. Over the last year, the unrest was sparked by the harsh reaction to the people's protests against high rents, corrupt community councils, poor schooling and repression. In a racist and highly militarised society, it is not surprising that many soldiers are not questioning their role in the townships. But the township residents, who have long seen the SADF as their enemy, are now beginning to see all whites as their enemy.

**FOCUS:** What prompted ECC to use a fast in its "Troops out of the townships" campaign?

**ECC:** The fast is a powerful form of protest and an act of solidarity with township residents. It has built non-racialism by showing the extent of opposition in the white community to apartheid and the role of the army in defending it. At the same time, fasting involves an individual acknowledgement of moral responsibility for one's actions and while the state of emergency has curtailed political activity, no-one can stop anyone from not eating.

As a non-violent action it presents an alternative to the violence of apartheid.

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