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Ex editor of Resister.

15/8/91

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Phone 614-7846 (until Sunday)

a Number 20.8265 - next week

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PROPOSAL FOR A PUBLICATION

WAR AND RESISTANCE: THE STRUGGLE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AS SEEN BY
"RESISTER" MAGAZINE (WORKING TITLE)

For eleven years, between 1979 and the end of 1990, "Resister" was the only journal dedicated to covering the wars in Southern Africa from an anti-apartheid perspective. It provides a unique insight into the militarisation of South African society; it documents the spread of armed conflict in Angola, Namibia and South Africa itself - wars which have cost thousands of lives and devastated much of the region but which have led to Namibia's independence and contributed to the crisis which has forced the South African government to begin negotiations.

"Resister" was written by and for conscripts in the South African Defence Force (SADF) and, from its base in London the journal was able to draw on information from Angola, Mozambique and other Front Line States that was suppressed in South Africa. Unrestricted by censorship, it was able to interview conscripts and deserters, expose information about operations and training and document the destabilisation of Southern Africa.

The period covered by "Resister" was roughly that of P.W. Botha's premiership - a time of unprecedented militarisation prompted by rising internal opposition to apartheid. Incursions into Angola escalated into conventional conflict involving tens of thousands of troops, the battle for Namibia was at its most intense and the army was sent into South Africa's townships.

It was also the period in which opposition to conscription became a major political factor in South Africa, with the imprisonment of individual objectors for periods of up to six years and the rise of the End Conscription Campaign.

Written from a strongly anti-apartheid perspective and combining the analytical, agitational and anecdotal styles reflective of the many conscripts who contributed to it, the articles in "Resister" provide a fascinating account of the slide into regional war, the effects this had on South African society and on conscripts in particular. The campaign against conscription is also documented.

"Resister" was banned in South Africa but circulated clandestinely, influencing the strategies of anti-conscription groups. It was also distributed internationally in over 50 countries to governments, human rights organisations, research institutes, and to anti-war organisations.

The remaining members of the editorial board in London propose producing a selection of "Resister" articles which will reflect the concerns of the journal and provide an insight into the conflict in Southern Africa. The collection, which will include interviews, anecdotal and illustrative material and analysis, will be contextualised and held together by an editorial commentary and introduced by an article commissioned from a prominent expert in the field which will situate the concerns of

"Resister" in the wider context. Some of the original graphic material in the journal could also be reproduced.

Although the campaign against conscription has been fairly well documented and the war in Angola and Namibia written up from the perspective of the SADF, very little has been published on the conflict from the point of view of South African conscripts and those who resisted the war. As Southern Africa moves towards peace, we believe that our proposed publication will fill a gap in recent history and contribute to understanding the processes that have led to the current changes in the region.

The proposed length of the publication is 120, 000 to 150, 000 words: A breakdown of chapters is attached.

CHAPTER BREAKDOWN

The themes in each chapter will be covered by "Resister" articles, and extracts and gaps filled by editorial comment. The emphasis will be on personal accounts, interviews, and material published in "Resister" that was not widely available elsewhere, or that comes from the particular perspective of South African conscripts and conscientious objectors. The two parts will be roughly equal in length.

PART ONE:

1) Background

A brief background placing the chapters which follow in context and situating the "war resistance" movement in the broader political dynamic: (to be commissioned from a South African expert)

2) The militarisation of South African society

- a) Resistance to apartheid, the armed struggle and the increasing militarisation of South African society
- b) The system of compulsory conscription
- c) The nature of the South African Defence Force (SADF)
- d) The character and operations of the South Africa Police (including security police and auxiliary forces)
- e) Military training in white schools
- f) The involvement of white women
- g) African and "Coloured" troops/the growth of bantustan armies
- h) "Area Defence", the "commando" system and the militarisation of the countryside
- i) The armaments industry and South Africa's nuclear capacity

3) The occupation of Namibia

- a) A chronological and analytical record of the occupation
- b) Opposition to conscription in Namibia

4) The war in Angola

A chronological and analytical overview of South Africa's incursions into Angola

5) South Africa's destabilisation of its neighbouring states

- a) Mozambique
- b) Zimbabwe
- c) Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland

6) The occupation of the townships

- a) A record of police and military deployment in South Africa's townships after October 1984

7) "Informal" Repression

- a) Military and police involvement in the formation of death squads
- b) Military and police links with right wing terrorist groups
- c) The rise of "vigilantes"

PART TWO:

8) The "lived" experience of conscripts

- a) First-hand accounts of combat
- b) Conditions and experiences in the barracks
- c) Personal consequences of military service
- d) Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome
- e) Anti-militarist organisation within the military

9) Resistance to conscription

- a) Opposition to conscription by individuals
- b) The stand of the churches
- c) The formation of the End Conscription Campaign
- d) The position of the "official opposition"
- e) The conscription of foreign nationals into the SADF
- f) Exile: the role of the Committee on South African War Resistance (COSAWR)
- g) Making links: COSAWR perspectives on peace, conscientious objector groups and soldiers' organisations in other parts of the world

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END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)

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