

TROOPS OUT

A Conscript
Special Edition

A year ago, SADF troops entered the townships of Soweto and Joza near Grahamstown. Today the SADF is present in townships all over South Africa. The shock that greeted their intervention has died away. Newspapers merely note their presence.

It has been said that that day marked the beginning of a true civil war.

While political parties debate the true meaning of "civil war", those involved in the conflict have no such doubts. The police and army have occupied the townships, the Cape Times' articles read like reports on police violence. The enemy is clear, the targets are casspirs and policemen. On the other side, power-mad policemen or scared troops are being trained to identify their enemy: children standing on street corners, protesting students and scared bus drivers

As the conflict intensifies so does the polarization, the soldiers and policemen are predominantly white, the people living in the townships are black. We are moving frighteningly towards a racial war.

The "TROOPS OUT" campaign launched by the ECC is more than sloganeering. It is a desperate cry from the troops themselves, it is a cry from the people in the townships, it is a cry from all South Africans who wish to build a new society free from racism.

The focus of the "Troops out Campaign" has been the "fast for a just peace". From one day relay fasts to the three-week fast of

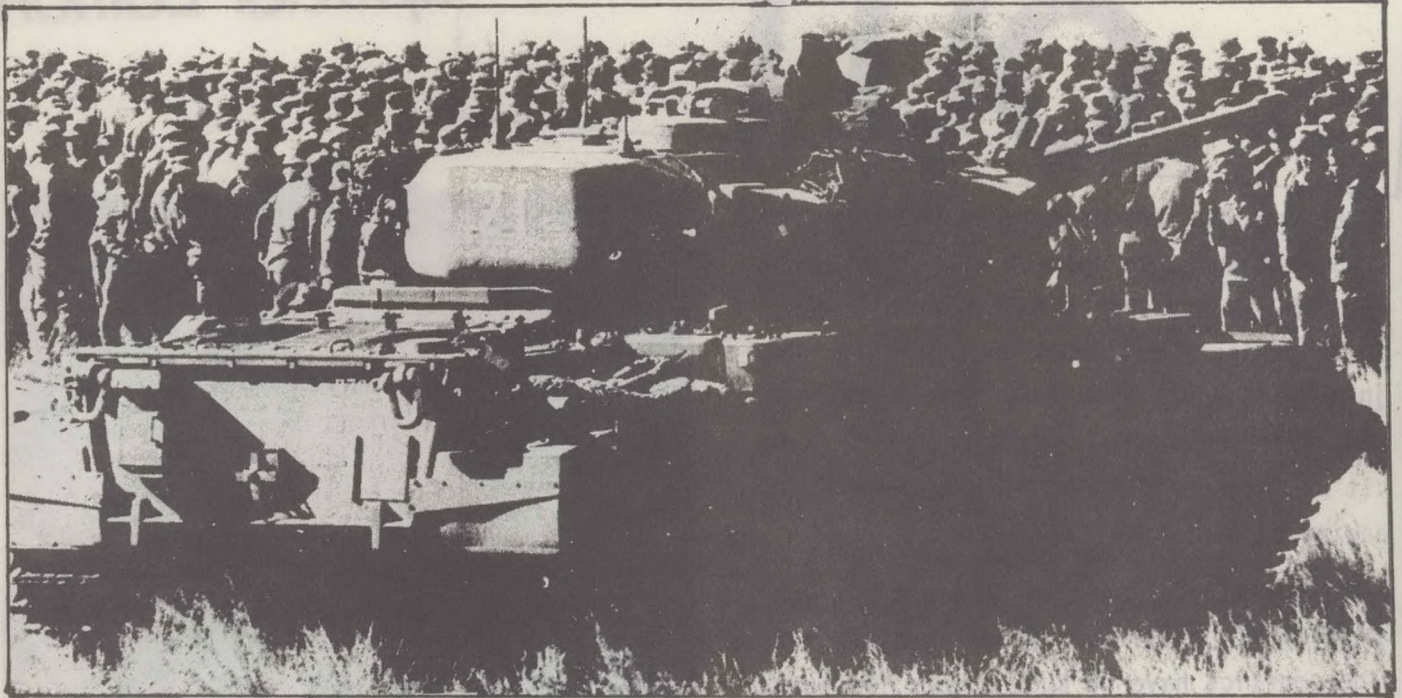


Ivan Toms, people committed to the ideal of a just peace have been making this personal statement.

As the vacation approaches many students face camps. Are these students going to be used in the townships. Many have already been told that this where they will be deployed. The dilemma they face is frightening, Alan Dodson a Cape Town lawyer refused to enter the townships he received a R600 fine.

The "Troops out Campaign" has hit South Africa, hopefully we'll never forget that troops are not indigenous to the townships. That conscription need not be a fact of South African life and that peace is an attainable ideal.

INVASION!



The recent incursion into Angola, reportedly involving some 500 SADF and SWATF troops, has been the subject of widespread international debate. The SADF has attempted to justify the raid by claiming that it was intended to disrupt a SWAPO battalion of 400 to 800 guerrillas. Angola, on the other hand, claims that the invasion was a South African attempt to save UNITA forces fighting a rear-guard action near Jamba, about 16km from the Namibian border.

Amidst these claims and counter-claims it is difficult, if not impossible, to work out what really happened (or is happening?) in southern Angola. However, a short history of SADF involvement with UNITA, might show why South Africa would intervene to prevent an Angolan victory.

During the '75/'76 civil war in Angola, SADF units openly supported UNITA, a small, tribally-based resistance movement whose maximum strength was estimated at 4000 guerrillas. After being threatened with military defeat by combined Angolan/Cuban forces, the SADF withdrew from Angola, but continued to provide widespread military support to UNITA, in the form of weapons, supplies, training facilities and personnel. The widely-publicised displays of UNITA 'strength' in Jamba are only made possible by air support from SAAF bases in Caprivi.

Proof of direct SADF support is the recent death of a South African medic fighting with UNITA against Angolan forces. Another indication is the statement by Gen. Malan on Friday Sept. 20 that the South African

government would not allow UNITA to be defeated, coming three days after claims of a large air attack on Angolan forces 140km north of Jamba. SADF sources claim that all South African troops were withdrawn on Sunday 22 Sept., while the Angolan government states that 32 battalion is still operating in the Cuando Cubango province. After previous SADF invasions the SADF also claimed that all forces had been withdrawn, only to admit several months later that 32 battalion was still in Angola. Deja Vu?

A further South African justification of the raid is the presence in Angola of Cuban and Soviet military personnel. Personnel who were invited into Angola by its government in the face of a combined SADF/UNITA threat to the country. The SADF certainly wasn't invited by either the Namibian or the Angolan people.

ECC chair free and fighting

Interview with Mike Evans, ECC Cape Town Chair

scribble



scribble

CAG: Mike, you were detained in your capacity as Cape Town chair of ECC which is currently focussing on troops in the townships. Can you tell us about the circumstances of your detention?

MIKE: One morning at 5.30am, 5 security policemen arrived breaking into the house, not waiting until the door was answered. They arrested me under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act and then spent 3 hours searching my room, confiscating hundreds of documents, articles and other ECC material. Afterwards they took me to Caledon Square and finally to Pollsmoor.

CAG: What does Section 29 imply?

MIKE: It essentially means that you are kept in solitary confinement, have no access to other people or even a lawyer and are not allowed to read newspapers, listen to the radio, etc. The biggest hardship is your complete isolation from the outside world and the indefiniteness of your detention. The only news I heard was that Transvaal beat Western Province.

CAG: What about interrogations?

MIKE: Altogether, I was interrogated 8 times. Although I was never physically threatened the psychological threat of continued confinement was imminent. It became clear to me that investigations into ECC were nationally instructed and that interrogators were acting on direct orders from Pretoria. Interrogators tried to expose ECC-ANC links which obviously do not exist.

CAG: How do you feel after two weeks in Pollsmoor?

MIKE: In retrospect this experience was a strengthening one. My commitment to ECC in specific and meaningful change in South Africa has never been deeper than now.

CAG: What about the other ECC detainees?

MIKE: Three ECC activists in Durban, including conscientious objector Richard Steele were detained but have been released as well.

CAG: Can the clampdown be seen as an indication of the effectiveness of ECC and especially the Troops out of Townships campaign. Is the State concerned?

MIKE: Yes, definitely, that was my impression. I've heard from security police that Magnus is jumping 6ft into the air on the success of ECC. My interrogation would certainly confirm this from the State's side. They seem particularly worried about the campaign's impact on schoolchildren and serving conscripts.

CAG: Do you think the State is likely to harrass ECC in the future?

MIKE: Coming out of detention I find it difficult to say what the State's future intentions are but security police made clear they are not going to sit back to let ECC grow at the rate it is growing presently. The State seems to try to eradicate all peaceful extra-parliamentary opposition. ECC clearly falls into this camp.

CAG: Can you tell us more about the Troops Out Campaign?

MIKE: 'Troops-Out' actually got more support than ECC anticipated. During the first 13 days of Ivan's fast in St George's Cathedral about 1000 people popped in, chatted to Ivan and signed the visitor's book. All other ECC centres show similar results. At St George's there is a different programme every day. On Friday 4 October, at 8.00pm there will be a BBC video covering the current unrest, and on Saturday, CAP presents a play.

CAG: What about ECC's future plans?

MIKE: After the Troops-Out Campaign we'll focus on the January call-up. A major concert is also planned.

NEWS BRIEFS

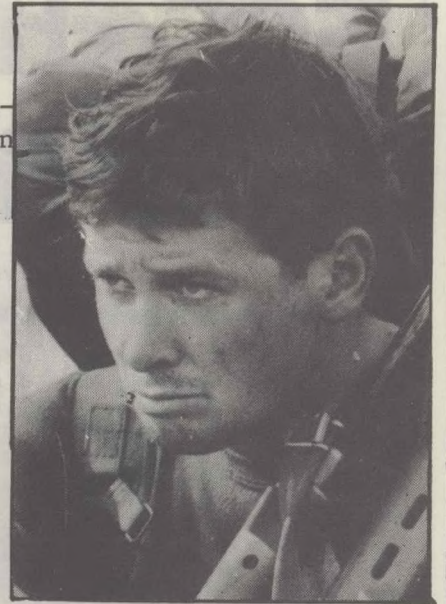
One hundred and twenty-five conscripts were in the SADF detention barracks (DB) in May this year for failing to report for duty. A total of 254 people were in DB, 96 of these for being absent without leave.

The SADF does not keep records of South African citizens who evaded military service by obtaining citizenship or permanent residence in the "newly independent states".

Of the 438 applications received by the Board for Religious Objection from January 1984 to June 1985, 353 men had been classified as religious objectors, four were refused and 81 were awaiting classification.

Of these, 239 Jehovah's Witnesses refuse to do any task relating to military service or connected with the armed forces.

982 immigrant men have refused to take out South African citizenship on the grounds that they do not want to be conscripted into the SADF. Of these 982, 80



have so far been refused residence permits.

CATHEDRAL PROGRAMME

Thur 3 OCT

1.15: Justice and Peace Prayer service
8.00 pm: Detentions workshop (ADAC)

Fri 4 OCT

1.00 pm: Latin America, David Fig, Socio dept.
8.00 pm: ECC Open Forum "what SABC hasn't shown us". Overseas tv coverage + short informal talk.

Sat 5 Oct

1.00 pm: Womens Writers workshop
2.30 pm; British Miners Strike video.
8.00 pm; "the Trial of Dedan Kimathi" - play by CAP.

Sun 6 Oct

National Fast Day begins, You are invited to spend this day with Ivan Toms in the Cathedral.

Mon 7 Oct

Programme throughout the day, including songs, films and art.
8.00PM : PEACE RALLY, BEYERS NAUDE, ARCHBISHOP RUSSELL, MOLLY BLACKBURN, MIKE EVANS----CITY HALL.

CHURCH NEWS...

Far-reaching changes in the stand of the Church of the Province of South Africa on military issues emerged from the Provincial Synod held in July.

The Synod's uncompromising stance on the "unjust war" being waged by the SADF, sparked fears that many whites would leave the Anglican Church. Whites constitute less than 20% of the

church's 2 million members, yet provide approximately 80% of its income.

The most contentious motion, attempting to amend the church canons to require military chaplains to be licensed by the bishops of the diocese in which they are practising, was defeated at its third reading.

Resolutions passed were that: Chaplains should be seen as

representatives of Christ and His church, not the military. This should be reflected in their dress which should avoid identification with the military. Chaplains should be paid by the church.

Anglican chaplain, the Revd John Daines should be removed from his position as a permanent member of the Board for Religious Objection.

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END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)

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