

SOUTH AFRICA'S NUCLEAR CPACITY - John Weinberg

The workshop covered the following areas:

- 1 the history of the nuclear industry in Aouth Africa
- 2 South Africa's nuclear weapons capacity
- 3 the global proliferation of nuclear weapons
- 4 the international peace movement, and
- 5 the importance of including an anti-nuclear consciousness in the liberation struggle.

Nuclear energy was described as a "major patriarchal dominating force - the same as the army."

The paper may be obtained by writing to
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CIVIL WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA - Chrispian Olver

Civil war, broadly defined, is the conflict between two sides, each calling the other "the enemy". More narrowly defined: the opposing sides, to merit the description, must be large enough to be identifiable as parts of the civil realm, the struggle must be a basic one, there must be unity of consciousness in opposition and there should be violence to the point of war.

In South Africa the transition to civil war has been gradual, beginning with peaceful protest in the quest for political and economic emancipation and developing when such protest failed into armed struggle.

The question as to the legitimate use of the term "civil war" to apply to violent action in South Africa, today belongs to the ideological struggle over words and ideas through which reality is presented to us.

The South African media's use of "violence" and "unrest" and its avoidance of "civil war" is symptomatic of the ideological distortion of reality, the masking of the real struggle in the attempt to keep whites in ignorance of what is happening in the townships. The ideology of violence both preserves and expresses the structural violence of our society. The SADF and the SAP contribute to and maintain the violence of the apartheid society. Since 1960 this violence has escalated. There have been forced resettlements, arrests for pas law offences, deaths in detention and in custody. In recent years, in spite of the state's attempts to mask the evidence, there has been an increased politicisation of the oppressed and the state has not effectively destroyed black leadership. The last two decades have been decisive for military leadership. While previous nationalist governments relied heavily on police action, there was to be an increasing recognision of the need of the military if the South African state is to be preserved - hence the policy of "total strategy". And hence the increased expenditure on the military and the major role played by the SADF.

The heart of this year's End Conscription Campaign Peace Festival was contained in the programme of options provided, some of which tended towards participation and workshopping, others towards presentation and learning. So that everyone can benefit from what was discussed at each of the options, summaries of the discussions are included here. The full texts of papers delivered during the Festival will be published at a later date.

THE DEFENCE ACT, DETENTIONS AND YOU - DESCOM Johannesburg

Two DESCOM people, David and Barbara, delivered short papers. David dealt with the provisions of the Defence Act which prevent people from calling for conscientious objection. Furthermore he also dealt with the 'legal aspects' of detention, highlighting those rights which have been established through law and custom. Questions asked related by and large to the rights of police officers in the search and/or arrest situation. David stressed the need to be assertive in these types of situations. One should demand a warrant although this is not necessarily a requirement for a police search. One should also demand identification of the officer. Although in many instances, especially in the townships, these requests will often not be met, it is better to at least appear to be knowledgeable about one's rights.

Barbara highlighted the history and the work of DESCOM. She stressed the importance of support groups in the detention situation. She also said that the security police often used tactics which involved sowing the seeds of distrust within organisations. The only way of coping with this strategy was for people to be absolutely honest with each other. Also mentioned were the availability of sympathetic psychologists and psychiatrists on the competition of detention. Another point made was that one should not place too many demands on people who have just completed a spell in detention. The recovery process is often longer than we might think. Both speakers said that more often the state was tending to avoid the internal Security Act detention provisions and invoked instead breaches of common law or other less repugnant statutes in order to hold people as normal awaiting trial persons. This swing was partially the response to organisation around the issue of detention without trial.

INTERNATIONAL COLD WAR - Tony Karon and Max Ozinsky

The workshop examined the danger of nuclear war, and the political causes of the arms race. It was pointed out that enough nuclear devices were in existence to destroy the entire world population 690 times over. The constant increase in destructive potential of weapons from the A-bomb of 1945 through Hydrogen and Neutron weapons; the effects of their explosions; and the development of increasingly sophisticated delivery systems from the bombers of 1945 to the Inter-continental ballistic missiles.

In examining the causes of the escalation of this danger, it was argued that although the deployment of such weapons by both East and West was equally horrific, NATO had made the greater contribution by a) being the initiator and consistent pace setter of the arms race, b) insisting on the need for superiority over the Warsaw Pact by developing new weapons, as opposed to accepting the principle of 'parity', c) maintaining the notion of the 'winnability' of a nuclear war, and their right to launch the first nuclear strike, both of which have been renounced by the Warsaw Pact. The current drive for nuclear advantage by Reagan through the deployment of 'first strike' Cruise, Pershing and Trident missiles and the space wars programme was seen as contributing to an increasingly tense and dangerous world situation.

Military intervention, far from aiding progressive evolutionary changes, is leading to ever greater polarisation; a polarisation which has precipitated the state of civil war in the townships. Whereas before April 1985 the term "civil war" was only metaphorically apt, its usage, with the ever-deepening conflict - has ceased to be metaphorical.

EDUCATION AND MILITARISATION - Ian Moll

Although the military's role in education is obvious, well understood and extensively documented, campaigns to demilitarise education have been ineffective.

This is due largely to the fact that we have focussed on only obvious areas i.e preparing soldiers for war, rather than having a broader understanding of the role of the military in South Africa. This broader understanding embraces three concepts:

- 1 obvious was preparation i.e. teaching cadets, musketry etc
- 2 militarisation (the forces and practices which draw people into a particular type of conflict). This embraces the 'ideological inculcation' of the population in order that they have the 'correct attitude to serve the nation in times of conflict'.
- 3 militarism - or the authoritarian, hierarchical state structure in which military symbols are paramount. In South Africa there has been a definite shift in this regard - from parliamentary democracy to a centred form of government, and from an emphasis on culture to military power.

The speaker emphasised that we have neglected this broad understanding and focussed only on the first concept. This is inadequate since to prepare soldiers does not necessarily serve the state, except when linked into its ideological and political goals. So for example, to develop point 3 further: the split between CP and NP is manifested in education with some forces in the TLD reflecting an adherence to a culture-based Nationalism i.e. for vuk, taal (CP supporters), while other forces have moved to a military-based nationalism (NP supporters). This is reflected in tensions over the role of veldschools.

The speaker's contention was that the state will need to move to an even more militaristic form of government if it is to win the war which is developing. ECC needs to take this into account when developing strategies for countering militarisation in schools.

BOARD FOR RELIGIOUS OBJECTION - Rob Robertson, Richard Steele, Dave Hartman, Dave Schmidt.

Rob spoke on the growth of the C.O. movement in South Africa from the 1960's, culminating in the state's response to c.o. in the form of the Naude Commission which led to the creation of the Board for Religious Objections. He also looked at c.o. legislation in other countries, concluding that the system in South Africa is similar to most countries where conscription applies.

Richard Steele looked at emerging trends in the operation of the Board. The general approach seems to be to accept applicants if at all possible in its terms. However, this is done within a rather narrowly Calvinist conception of religion.

A point raised concerning applications is that arguments of personal convictions are more effective than intellectual/philosophical arguments.

Dave Hartman spoke as the first and only unsuccessful applicant to date. The terms of the Board couldn't cater for his Buddhist view of religion. This case is going on appeal to the Supreme Court. It is expected that the outcome will be a broadening of the Board's terms with the possible acceptance of morally based arguments.

Dave Schmidt spoke about his experiences before the Board. He emphasised the danger of getting caught up in philosophical arguments and the importance of using biblical quotes in convincing the Board of one's sincerity.

A point raised in discussion was that objectors who reject the Board can still have an important effect on the dispensation for c.o.'s. The concessions granted thus far have come through pressure. Any likelihood of changes to the Board's terms in the future will be importantly effected by pressure.

WOMEN AND THE MILITARY - Wits Women's Movement

The workshop began with a broad analysis of women's relation to the military. It was shown that women play an important ideological role in supporting and nurturing the image of 'our boys on the border' thereby emphasising the heroic image of the soldier. People were then asked to buzz on the question of what a South Africa without the military would be like. The feedback was that the military upholds a particular oppressive system and thus without the military it would be unlikely the present system would survive. This does not necessarily mean, however, that South Africa would be a free society although there would be more room to build a feminist society.

The next section was on socialisation and the question of whether women could potentially become liberated through their men being away. They might be forced out of the home into jobs, but it was felt that this was unlikely for white women. A suggestion emerging from a small discussion group was for ECU to attempt to bring women together to discuss their relationship with men in the army or in exile. This would give them support, help to bridge the gap between men and women, and give those women a strength in themselves.

The role of the media in defining the roles of women in relation to the army was outlined. The point was made that men in the army are provided with a negative view of women, and often feel denied power both in the army, and when they come home. This leads to an increase in domestic violence and rape.

It was pointed out that militarisation affects every aspect of our lives from the way our children are socialised to play war games, to the way it informs our language and clothes.

Within the army itself, women are a small proportion and occupy mainly supportive, secondary positions eg. clerks. In this way, the SADF upholds traditional sexist practices.

A number of sensitive contradictions which women face in relation to militarisation were discussed. Among these was how do we as women relate to men friends and family who decide to go to the army. Do we support them through their 2 years, or do we reject

what they are doing?

Other questions were discussed eg. should women be conscripted? And is there such a thing as a just war?

BLACK INVOLVEMENT IN THE SADF - Chris Gifford & Margot Lynn

The input started with a history of black involvement in the SADF. It showed how the army has continuously expanded its numbers of 'coloureds', Africans and Indians since the early 1960s, but especially throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The question was then asked of why this participation is being extended: firstly, the SADF needs extra manpower, and secondly, more important, the SADF needs to deracialise the conflict. The SADF has thus played an important part in the government's reform strategies. The various 'racial' and 'ethnic' divisions in the SADF were then explained. The Bantustan battalions are largely being trained by South African or ex-Rhodesian officers largely for use in counter-insurgency. The recruits volunteer largely because they can find no other jobs.

David Pijpers, an ex-Cape Corps member, spoke of his experiences in the SADF. He originally joined because of family tradition, but soon decided that he wanted to get out. After being on the border for some time, he decided that he wanted to get out. He was being DB nine times and was court-martialled. He is still eligible for a call-up.

There was a suggestion from the floor that the youth should be educated about the role of the SADF and that individuals who object should be strongly supported.

SOUTHERN AFRICA POST-NKOMATI - Keith Gottschalk

Aggressive assertion of what it calls its regional power is South Africa's scenario for Southern Africa post-Nkomati. According to the Economist, the South African military and state are looking towards a 'Lebanonisation' of the subcontinent.

South Africa is generally accepted to support local forces of reaction and terror in most Southern African countries. Hypocrisy is the order of the day. Any who are associated in any way with the National Liberation Movement or who happen to live near where it or its sympathisers live are considered justifiable targets. Yet counter violence directed at military and apartheid institutions is characterised as mindless terror.

Extensive military operations outside of a country's borders inevitably leads to military action against our own civilian population. The government itself refers to a 'low intensity civil war'.

We who are concerned at where the government is taking the country must continue to criticise and point what is actually being done. This involves lifting the veil of myths which the state has built around it. The ECC is making a crucial contribution and deserves widespread support for its call to end conscription and its vision of a just and lasting peace in Southern Africa.

NON-VIOLENT ACTION WORKSHOP - Durban C.O.S.G.

The co-ordinators made it clear at the start of the workshop that they are both totally committed to non-violence, and that this commitment included the way the workshop itself would run i.e. non-hierarchically and with maximum participation. There was some input on the nature of non-violent action with the emphasis that this is not a soft option, that it can be undertaken by anyone (the example of children joining the Bimba chips boycott was used); that it can be used on different levels - from protest up to non-violent intervention (eg. sit-ins and 'mill-ins' in government offices to disrupt the routine); and that it requires training, discipline and trust. It is a means by which people discover their social power.

Questions and points discussed included the use of 'coercion' to ensure co-operation in boycotts and strikes; is violence against property justifiable, is there still an option for non-violence in the superviolent atmosphere of the townships? A final point was made that non-violence is a philosophy of hope, which always sees the possibility for change in the 'opponent'.

PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP - Ezra Sigwele and Khehla Shubane

Ezra outlined his involvement with the South African Peace Council in the late 1950's, his activities while in exile in Lesotho with a peace group there, and his links with the World Peace Council.

He sees peace as being about personal relations and attitudes. He stressed that class stratification must be resolved if there is to be any basis for peace.

He referred people to Illana Korber's paper on the SAPC for more concrete information on the SAPC.

Khehla emphasised that this final clause of the Freedom Charter only finds meaning in the context of all the other demands of the Charter. He noted that in the last decade the Charter has emerged from relative obscurity to being the major document outside of parliament. He explained the democratic process by which the Charter was drawn up.

He noted the violence characterising South Africa - the troops in the townships, influx control, homelands plus raids into neighbouring states. This violence begets violence as those on the receiving end of this react. The peace clause addresses itself to the violence in South Africa, and that in the international sphere. He felt that the whole liberation movement needs to look more closely at the whole question of peace in South Africa. And thought that ECC could herald the beginning of a South African peace movement. Khehla stressed that the liberation struggle is neither purely class nor purely nationalist, but a combination of the two. He said the national democratic movement was trying to build a united front against apartheid, and he felt that this unity is the NDM's greatest weapon.

Basic to the Charter is the principle of non-racialism although African people are obviously the majority, and moreover the majority of the oppressed. He said our major task was to stop the violence of apartheid and that the Charter offered guidelines for a lasting solution. He saw the ECC as very important because township people see white conscripts as aggressors and tend to feel anti all whites as a result. It is important that whites be seen not to support such a violent approach in the interests of non-racialism and the national democratic struggle.

7

SADF IN NAMIBIA: PEOPLE'S AGONY - Moses Omeb

After a brief introduction by the speaker a video called "Africa's Last Colony" was shown. The video was narrated by Nora Chase, director of the education programme of the Namibian Council of Churches. The video gave a broad and informative overview of the situation in Namibia. It covered the following issues: health, housing and living conditions, land distribution, security legislation, education the Church and many others. It highlighted the maldistribution of resources and irregularities in all these issues brought about by South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia and its imposing apartheid policies.

Interviews with Namibians at the receiving end of discriminative legislation and Koevoet and SADF brutality clearly demonstrated the horrific conditions experienced by the people of Namibia. This video is highly recommended.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF MILITARISATION - OASSSA

The issue is complicated by the difficulty of access to resources. Partial definition of militarisation: "an attempt to impose military solutions to civil problems". This definition specified to the South African situation:

"Military propoganda seeks to entrench the belief that force is the solution to South Africa's problems"

The authorities maintain their power by:

- pointing to a threat in society
- implying a need for aggression to deal with the threat
- directing the aggression against an identified enemy.

This authority breaks down in certain instances:

- throguh dissipation - people are conditioned to deal with 'threat' via 'violence'. However, the threat which people must face is more than just the military enemy. Violence is thus dissipated to other threatening situations.

Failure to identify with the authority or breakdown of identification with the authority.

In response to a number of questions as to what can be done to counter the conditioning those subject to the military undergo and as to how these folk could be rehabilitated, the following should be noted:

There are some cases where rehabilitation cannot be executed by a lay person

Support groups should be established in which these folk could share feelings, experiences, etc.

A copy of the paper will be available from the Johannesburg ECC.

HEARTS AND MINDS - Gavin Evans and Paul Dobson

The SADF's 'Hearts and Minds' Campaign - i.e. the 80% of the 80 - 20 divide - is the issue Gavin addressed, while additional input was given by C.O. Paul Dobson on his experience as an ex-Civic Action teacher in KwaZulu.

The Civic Action Programme, Gavin explained, is the principle instrument of this 'hearts and minds' campaign.

The programme's motivation being, in essence, to win over the local black populace in whatever region of its operation, through actions designed, amongst others:

* to present the army as a ('friend' and 'protector'. (The very wide distribution of army 'literature' being only one of numerous means used.)

* to alleviate, as far as possible within the given parameters, the people's socio-economic circumstances, so

* giving this 'target' (the people) 'something to defend'.

* to identify South Africa's 'real enemy', namely the ANC and SWAPO, and the threat both organisations pose.

An important function of the civic action programme is, as Gavin further explained, the gathering of local information in which sense there is a very close link with military intelligence under whose 'wing' it has, since March 1980, covertly operated.

There is, of necessity, co-operation also with other, relevant government departments such as Coloured Affairs and Co-Operation and Development, although for reasons that should be self-evident, these efforts are not always 'successful'.

While the aims and objectives of this programme have remained constant since its inception in 1974, there have been certain tactical and strategic changes and overall, significant expansion. Resistance to this expansion has, however, likewise increased, due largely to the increase in state repression, and the resultant higher level of politicisation apparent in both rural and urban situations. And herein lies the basic contradiction between state repression and what one of its agents is attempting to achieve.

Paul's experience at a Commercial High School, 15kms from Ulundi, highlighted this very contradiction - even though, as Paul went on to describe - his involvement was only very 'peripheral' and 'an extreme case'. The latter has indeed been an exposure of army crudity and inefficiency.

TOTAL STRATEGY, TOTAL WAR: MILITARY, STATE AND ECONOMY - Graham Simpson

The speaker opened with introductory comments on foreign aggressors, civil war and the militarised society which sees the military as an acceptable and necessary solution to political problems.

He also briefly mentioned the military in relation to the economy and arms production.

History of Military Intervention and Growth of the SADF

The rise and growth of the military can be related directly to resistance. In the last 25 years, resistance has intensified, and so has military spending and the numbers of personnel.

Total War - Total Strategy

This strategy was a process of militarisation first mooted in the 1977 White Paper. It involved all spheres of government - education, training, housing etc.

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The speaker examined the 'Rise of the Generals' and the present involvement of SADF personnel in all spheres of government, and on all government advisory bodies. He examined the information scandal, 'the bloodless coup' - PW Botha's rise to power, and and subsequent reorganisation of executive functions and the forming of the State Security Council.

Military and Big Business Interaction

Graham examined this aspect with relation to the procurement and development of arms in South Africa, and the growth of ARMSCOR. The contacts being forged by the military between itself and the private sector was also mentioned.

Conclusion

The military has the primary task of maintaining the status quo in capitalist society. This is especially apparent in the unrest situation in South Africa. The speaker asserted that the South African government avoids military might if possible, and only uses it as a last resort when its reform initiatives break down.

MILITARISATION AND CONSCRIPTION: THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH - Father Albert Nolan and Steve Sadie

The workshop began with a talk by Father Albert Nolan on the dilemma facing the churches regarding conscription. He took us through the bible finding many examples supporting war and condemning war. He reached the conclusion that one needed to examine the context to determine whether a war was just or not. We then briefly heard the positions of various churches from their youth department reps. Most of the mainline churches have recognised conscientious objection, both on the grounds of pacifism and on the grounds of a particular war being unjust. Some churches have supported the call to end conscription. It was argued that the churches should not allow their chaplains to participate in military structures; cadets in church schools was also criticised. The training of those studying to be ministers also lacked sufficient clarity and discussion on the crises of conscience that the military posed in conscripting church members. It seemed that a priority for the churches was the education of the majority of church members around conscription and militarism. This was all the more urgent in view of the SADF going into the townships, which made the role of the SADF even more blatant. In calling for an end to conscription, we felt we needed to look more closely at an alternative of just peace. Possibly the next step the churches would be declare the war in South Africa as unjust. The dilemma facing the churches is becoming more acute as the conflict intensifies.

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