

# OUT OF STEP

PUBLICATION OF THE END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN CAPE TOWN

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## Hell no, we won't go!



On the 3rd of August this year, 23 young men publicly refused to serve in the SADF. They have since received widespread support both from within and outside South Africa. Below is their statement.

The 23 are: (back, l to r) Peter Hope, Michael Briggs, David Green, Mark Behr, Glenn Goosen, Michael Rautenbach, Jean du Plessis, Luke Cornell, Timothy Honey, Pieter van der Riet and David Waddilove. (front, l to r) Crispian Olver, Jaco Malan, Andrew Merrifield, Bernard Le Roux, Dr Ivan Toms, Jonathan Melunsky, Jonathan Shapiro, Nathan Honey, Andries du Toit and Ben Schoeman. Absent: Robert Schnetlager and David Schmidt.

We are a group of South Africans compelled by law to serve in the South African Defence Force. We believe our country is best served if we refuse to fight in the SADF. The laws of this country make this a serious step to take. Yet, we feel there comes a time when moral choices, no matter how difficult, cannot be avoided.

We believe our country is experiencing civil war. We, as whites, are conscripted to serve on one side of the conflict. Yet this war is not of our making, nor is it of our choice.

We believe that the root cause of the war is Apartheid. It is indefensible. It poisons relations between our people and with our neighbouring countries. It creates poverty and inequality. Its bitter fruits are hatred and violence.

We believe that the State of Emergency is a declaration of war against the people of South Africa. The SADF is deployed against township youth and members of the liberation movement. These people are not our enemies. They are fellow South Africans and we will not take up arms against them.

We believe that South Africans have nothing to fear from a non-racial democratic society where all have equal rights. It will bring stability, peace and progress. Until Apartheid is abolished, the civil war that is tearing our country apart can only intensify.

We believe that the SADF is not a shield behind which peaceful change can occur, but an instrument for defending the privileges of a minority. The SADF continually contravenes international law. It illegally occupies Namibia. It violates the sovereignty of neighbouring states and commits acts of aggression against the citizens of these countries.

The SADF consumes the country's resources, resources that are so desperately needed for health, housing and education.

It is against our moral principles to participate in such an institution.

We believe there is a future where all South Africans can live in peace and harmony with each other. We pledge ourselves to build and be part of that future. To serve in the SADF would contradict such a pledge.

**WE REFUSE TO SERVE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENCE FORCE**

*The contents of this publication have been restricted in terms of the emergency regulations*

# Parents support ECC

\* Peter: "I went into the army straight from school with a positive attitude, determined to make the best of it. After six months, I realised I was being turned into a killing machine. I suffered a complete mental breakdown."

\* Hugh could not in conscience serve in the SADF. Now he finds himself in a strange country, experiencing difficulty integrating into a foreign society, alienated and lonely, unable to get a job, yet knowing that he cannot return home.

\* Paul grew up in a liberal family. His army experiences so traumatised him that he applied for non-combatant status for the remainder of his two years service. This status was ignored, however, when he reported for a camp in the winter of 1986 and was forced into Crossroads. Although he did not have to carry a gun, he was forced to hand out ammunition and was

thus directly involved in the killing. On completing his camp, he left South Africa for good.

These represent the experiences of conscripts whose parents eventually came together to form the ECC Parents and Supporters Group (PSG). Formed in mid-1986, the group expanded rapidly later in the year when the "Dad's Army" call-up was extended to Cape Town's older white men. It now includes a range of people, from young parents in their early thirties, to grandparents in their 70's; with occupations ranging from professionals and academics to community workers, technicians and retired people.

Motivations for joining the PSG vary. For many it has been the experience of their children who have been affected by conscription; for some it has been the conflicts in the family that have resulted from conscription; for others it has been the prospect of their young sons facing conscription in the not-too-distant future; for still others it has been their own prospect of a "Dad's Army" call-up; for many, it has been their opposition to war in general, or, more specifically, to the civil war being

waged in our own country.

Yet this broad range of people, with differing motivations are all united by their opposition to the system of compulsory conscription and their full support for the ECC.

The roles that the PSG plays include:

- \* mutual support through sharing experiences with like-minded people
- \* offering advice and assistance to people beyond the group who have similarly experienced the harsh impact of conscription and by referring such people to the Conscription Advice Service
- \* participation in general ECC campaigns and activities
- \* spreading the campaign to end conscription through the holding of house meetings
- \* coming to terms with working democratically in an organisation which places much stress on participation and accountability
- \* self-education through discussion, internal educational programmes and sharing of resources.

Anyone interested in knowing more about the PSG or in hosting or attending a house meeting, should contact us through the ECC Office at 47-9170 (between 11.00 am and 2.00 pm).



Janet Cherry

## Janet released

On the 30th of July, Janet Cherry, chairperson of Port Elizabeth ECC, was released from detention after 11 months in prison, 3 weeks of which had been spent in solitary confinement. Restriction orders have been placed on Janet, forbidding her from participation in any activities of ECC and the Black Sash, and she is forbidden to continue her work with the Eastern Cape Adult Literacy Project. Meanwhile, Sue Lund, founder member of Grahamstown ECC, remains in jail, the only white woman detainee in North End prison.

# Conscripts seek choices

Conscript-laden trains shunt out of stations twice a year headed for military bases around South Africa. And all year round veterans, or "ou-manne" in troopie parlance, are called up for one or two month-long camps. Many go reluctantly, forced by circumstances to be part of the SADF. Others choose evasion or leaving the country as options. Many of these would have consulted the Conscription Advice Service (CAS) for information regarding their rights.

Anton Eberhard, a counsellor in the service, explains that in periods leading up to intakes, there is a substantial increase in their work. This has become more so since troops were first used in the townships in 1984. And it is the "ou-manne" called up for camps who are expressing their doubts most.

Eberhard served two months in military detention barracks in 1977 for refusing to serve on a camp he had been called up for. He objected on the basis of his religious, pacifist and political beliefs. He was the first man who objected on these grounds in South Africa.

He says the CAS is dealing with many who would not previously have had "serious qualms about the military".

"The situation has changed quite radically in the last few years," he says. "Many of our enquiries are from people who face really serious moral dilemmas about a camp call-up."

Unfortunately for many of these men, there are no legal alternatives. Many are faced with the difficult decision of leaving the country, evading the call-up, or "going in and trying to negotiate some non-combatant alternative. But there is no guarantee that they will be granted such an alternative."

He explains that trying to help men deal with their problems can be "terribly frustrating and tragic."

"All we can do is lay out the options facing people. The consequences of these choices are all



Anton Eberhardt very, very hard."

Many who approach the Service have been through very traumatic experiences while doing military service. Many of these are referred to clinical psychologists for assistance.

In addition, the Service has a panel of lawyers, priests and previous conscientious objectors to whom cases can be referred for special attention.

The Advice Service has some 50 counsellors operating in Cape Town, Johannesburg, Durban and the Eastern Cape. It was established by the Conscientious Objector's Support Group in 1983.

Eberhard explains that alternatives are becoming harsher. "The recent change in the law has been to tighten up the period of alternative service (for religious objectors). There is little indication of an easing of the options. There is certainly no widening of the scope for conscientious objection."

Despite this the CAS is dealing with increasing requests. Eberhard believes this is linked to the explicit role the SADF is playing in defending apartheid.

A significant trend is that very few qualify for the only alternative

permitted by the law - to be declared a religious pacifist and so qualify for up to 6 years of alternative service.

The remaining options according to Eberhard, range from the "pretty difficult" life of exile, to the "transient, twilight existence" of evading military service while staying in the country; or ultimately objecting and facing a jail term of up to six years.

Older men, called-up to commando duty in the "Dad's Army" have also approached the CAS, says Eberhard. He has, amongst others, dealt with a number of calls for help from conservative men in country towns.

"The reality of the military playing a political role in the platteland is that much more stark, with door-to-door raids, picking up community leaders and so on," he says.

He tells the story of a local lawyer in a country town who, while on commando duty, was involved in arresting people who, the following day, he was asked to act for.

There are many personal stories that Eberhard and the other counsellors tell. And there are more tales by the day as the stream of men opposed to serving in the SADF grows.

# "Old before their time"

Soldiers feel that they become emotionally changed, distorted and battered as a result of forms of duty in townships. This is one of the conclusions drawn from a recent psychological study conducted at Wits University on troops who have done township duty.

The path-breaking study, which formed part of a post-graduate degree, was based on an extensive set of interviews with conscripts. This is the first study of this nature conducted in South Africa.

Death and violence dominate the soldier's experience, according to the research paper. Violent dreams in which the soldier dies, and feelings of tremendous loss because he has used violence, are ways in which this is expressed.

"The soldier experiences depression and guilt after observing the death of another human being," writes the researcher.

He furthermore "feels surrounded by uncontrollable violence - aggressive, violent sounds fill his head, and he feels engulfed by the strength and potential violence of the structure he is in."

The soldier responds in two ways. By trying to distance himself from the "engulfing brutality", he "expresses resignation at knowing he has changed in some way."

A more frightening response is where the soldier "intellectualises and dehumanises" death. He starts to equate feeling with dying - to avoid dying he must stop feeling, his logic tells him.

It often follows that the soldier feels that he is part of an "abnormal, chaotic, unreal world."

"He experiences a sense of unreality and confusion in relation to his existence. He experiences

great distance between himself and what is defined by others as reality around him," says the report.

Consequently, the soldier feels "extremely lonely, isolated and sad. A sense of loss is all-pervasive."

The fact that white soldiers are being sent into apartheid townships adds to the psychological damage of township duty. It is a strange, harsh and unexpected environment for the young man from the white suburbs. In many cases, this has further distanced him from the black community. It has added to the racial polarisation in South African society.

The soldier feels he has changed in many ways due to his service. "He is aware of feeling strange and different - previously adaptable, he now cannot cope; previously enjoying life, he now no longer can."

"He is aware of being excessively and indiscriminately aggressive and brutal toward people around him. He experiences anger, hatred and resentment toward loved ones at home who are isolated from his experience. He experiences resentment and anger towards authority. He feels disdain and mistrust toward loving, intimate relationships. He experiences a great sense of desolation, misery and depression. He experiences a sense of regret but also resignation at the changes he sees in himself." He also becomes uncertain about his future.

The researcher concludes by expressing concern for the "psychological casualties of the current, intensifying civil war, from both sides of the battle line."

She writes that her research is concerned with the white soldiers - "young men, grown old before their time, in a racist, war-torn country."

# Viet Vets for Victory

Laurie Nathan, past ECC National Organiser, recently returned from an intense speaking tour of the United States of America where he represented the End Conscription Campaign.

In eight weeks, he travelled to 30 cities, addressing about 60 forums and doing over 70 interviews. The focus of the tour was the current situation in South Africa and ECC campaigns under the emergency.

Nathan says the response to the tour was overwhelmingly positive, mainly because of the strength of opposition to apartheid. He describes how throughout the United States, students, legislators, community activists and church people are committed to ending their government's support for minority rule in South Africa.

"As one leading activist put it, they see this country as 'the Nazi Germany of the post-war period', and they were galvanised into action by the nightly TV coverage of Security Force actions in the townships during 1985," explains Nathan.

Anti-apartheid coalitions exist in every city he visited. "Their main objective is comprehensive sanctions and disinvestment at state and college levels. According to the American Committee on Africa, a leading anti-apartheid organisation, 'these measures will raise the costs of apartheid for white South Africans, and add to the pressure on white business to withdraw its support for the Nationalist govern-

ment.' Furthermore, 'the US Administration is more likely to abandon "constructive engagement" as the country's economic interest in South Africa is reduced,'" quotes Nathan.

As Nathan sees it, the anti-apartheid movement, together with the Central American solidarity movement and other peace and justice groups, is working more broadly to change US foreign policy in a fundamental way. According to these groups, they see their government as "one of the main obstacles to peace and stability in so many countries around the world."

These groupings support the view that for decades the United States has intervened in third world countries to maintain its political influence and economic interests. The interventions are well documented and include military invasions (Granada), full-scale occupations (Vietnam), assassinating popular leaders (Chile), backing military dictatorships (El Salvador), arming terrorist groups (the "contras" in Nicaragua) and trafficking in drugs to pay for rebel arms (Central America).

"As a visitor to America, I was astonished at the brazenness of this 'foreign policy'. The US treats almost the entire third world with the same arrogance and disregard for human life that South Africa metes out in Southern Africa. Both governments feel it sufficient to justify their foreign actions in the name of 'anti-communism'. There is then apparently no need

to consider whether the local people support the action, or what its consequences are for their lives. And the consequences are all too often tragic," says Nathan.

One of the most interesting organisations Nathan encountered was a grouping opposed to US foreign policy called Vietnam Veterans Against War (VVAW). VVAW is made up of men and women who, through their involvement as soldiers and administrators in Vietnam, learnt the lessons of the futility of waging a war that they feel is neither just nor winnable.

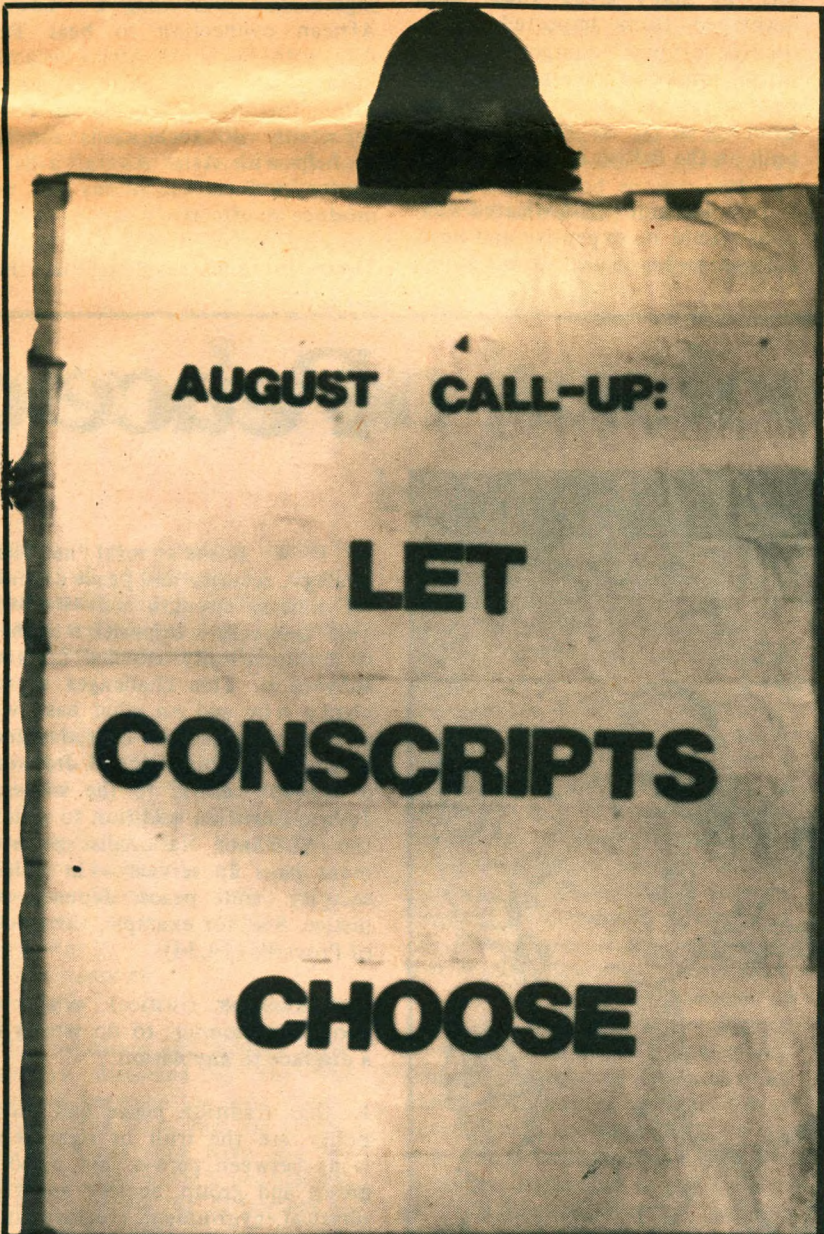
One of the VVAW's main concerns is counselling veterans still suffering the psychological effects of their experience, and doing research into "post traumatic stress syndrome". "Post traumatic stress" describes the great difficulty that soldiers who have seen combat have in adjusting to civilian life. The organisation cites examples of how more veterans have committed suicide since the end of the war (55 000) than died in combat (50 000); about half a million "vets" have attempted suicide and roughly 50 percent of Vietnam veterans are in need of professional psychological support.

Nathan feels there is much to be learnt from the counselling work and research of VVAW. "SADF psychiatrists have admitted concern over post traumatic stress amongst SADF soldiers, and all of us have friends who have come out of the army with heightened violent and aggressive tendencies."



1959

Vietnam Veterans at Washington War Memorial



An ECC campaigner during a recent picket. Nationally, ECC had a focus on the August call-up.

## Namibian war gets dirtier

Brigadier Badenhorst, then commander of Sector 10 (Ovamboland), was asked in 1982 about SADF atrocities. His reply: "Ja, in any family you get naughty children..."

But these children carry R-4s, and some of them (Koevoet) used to wear T-shirts saying Our Business is Killing and Business is Good! Koevoet changed its name to COIN, but its business hasn't changed much.

On the 11th of March 1987, the Ovambo Administration officially complained to the Administrator-General and the South West African Police about security force atrocities, citing cases of men, women and children who had allegedly been assaulted by COIN or by the SADF, and fearing that these atrocities were increasing.

Many cases have come to light (perhaps many have not). The head of Oshigambo High School claimed to have been assaulted by SADF troops on the 14th of March - and dozens of others, including Angolan civilians, have since made similar claims.

Three women were said to have

been "murdered" by COIN in late March. A kraal was said to have been destroyed by helicopters and troops on May 12th, killing at least one civilian. A man and child were allegedly crushed to death by COIN Casspirs on the 10th of June.

On April 13th, Namibian church leaders begged to see President Botha, fearing escalation of the war - the SADF comment was that the war was "winding down".

These atrocities were all denied by the SADF/SWAPOL. As THE NAMIBIAN's editorial remarked, only the word "alleged" saves newspapers from prosecution. But "dirty tricks" abound in Namibia: in late February a SWAPOL warrant officer admitted that assaults on detainees were routine. Colonel Radmore of the SWATF bomb squad runs an anti-SWAPO smear organisation called Christian Action. This suggests that the reports are at least possible; if so, what do they mean?

The Aida Parker Newsletter, which reflects official opinion, said in February that "SWAPO has lost its bid for control... Present levels of terror activity... are not high". In contrast to such claims, 1987 has

seen a major resurgence of activity by the People's Liberation Army of Namibia. By June, PLAN had lost 3/4 as many guerrillas as in all of 1986 - an indication of increased activity also covered by greater SADF/SWAPT casualties and a large increase in mining and mortaring. Clearly, the war is far from over, and this would wound the morale of troops who thought that they had won. Desperation to strike back at SWAPO could account for assaults on civilians accused of SWAPO sympathies. It may also be that the "security forces" are under more pressure after the SAP's withdrawal in 1985; can they ever win?

Atrocities only stiffen the resolve of the population against the SADF and its Namibian allies. (South Africa forced conscription on central and southern Namibia in 1980; Namibians do 60 percent of the fighting although they have never been given a choice between war or peace.) Only a political solution can end Namibia's anguish; the framework exists under UN Security Council Resolution 435. But South Africa seems determined to oppose such a solution to the last drop of Namibian blood.

**End Conscription Campaign Cape Town Office Open.**  
**Visit us between 12.00pm and 2.00pm**  
**or give us a call at 47-9170**

2 Rhodes View, 435 Main Road, Observatory

# comment

The 26th of August is Namibia Day, the 21st anniversary of the launch of the armed struggle against South Africa's occupation of Namibia. While that war rages, the SADF is celebrating its 75th anniversary—ignoring the ANC's celebration of its own 75th birthday. This celebration of military might and this rejection of the most important force in black politics casts a grim shadow across our nation.

Meanwhile, the August call-up has come and gone, and on call-up day, 23 young men have publicly announced their refusal to serve in the SADF. They are not isolated cases, but rather they epitomise the increasing doubts felt by many conscripts about service in the SADF. The Conscript Advice Service deals with frequent calls from conscripts demanding to know their rights and seeking viable alternatives to participation in a war against both their fellow South Africans and South Africa's neighbours.

We admire the courage with which the 23 objectors have taken their stand. We look forward to a day when the sacrifices that they will have to make will no longer be necessary.

## SADF and sanctions

# Slow strangulation

The South African arms industry has grown in the wake of the international arms boycott.

OUT OF STEP takes a look at developments.

Whenever Armscor produces a new instrument of destruction commentators claim that the arms boycott has been foiled. This claim is used to hide the critical question: does the arms boycott hurt the SADF?

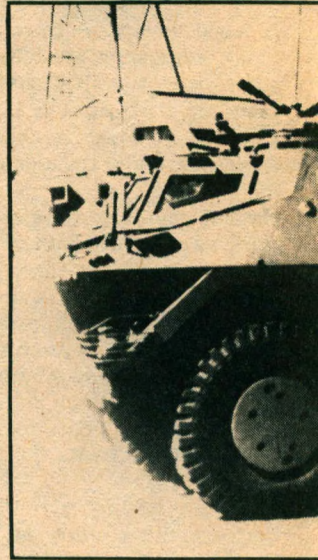
The arms boycott became mandatory in 1977, but the UN first called for a boycott in 1963. Around that time, South Africa began buying licenses to produce weapons rather than buying the weapons themselves. Licensing means that a country is told how to make a weapon (saving the cost of developing one itself) and pays the parent company for every weapon delivered. This is cheaper than buying the weapons, but setting up the factories means a big capital investment. To co-ordinate the new huge arms industry, Armscor was set up in 1968; since 1977 it has been the supreme authority on South Africa's procurement of weapons.

Buying rights worked: FN of Bel-

gium provided the R1 rifle, Panhard of France the Eland armoured car and Aeromacchi of Italy the Impala light bomber. When European nations developed qualms, South Africa turned to Israel, buying rights for the Galil rifle and the Reshef missile boat (respectively the R-4 and the Minister class) in the 1970s. In 1977, all licensing agreements were supposedly terminated; however, production continued.

South Africa's needs weren't identical to those of foreign buyers. The SADF often needed special weapons. In many areas, these were developed from imported, supposedly "civilian" components; the Buffel armoured troop carrier was built on the chassis of the German Unimog truck, as the Casspir is built on the British Bedford.

Developing more sophisticated weapons would be expensive and need a huge technological base. South



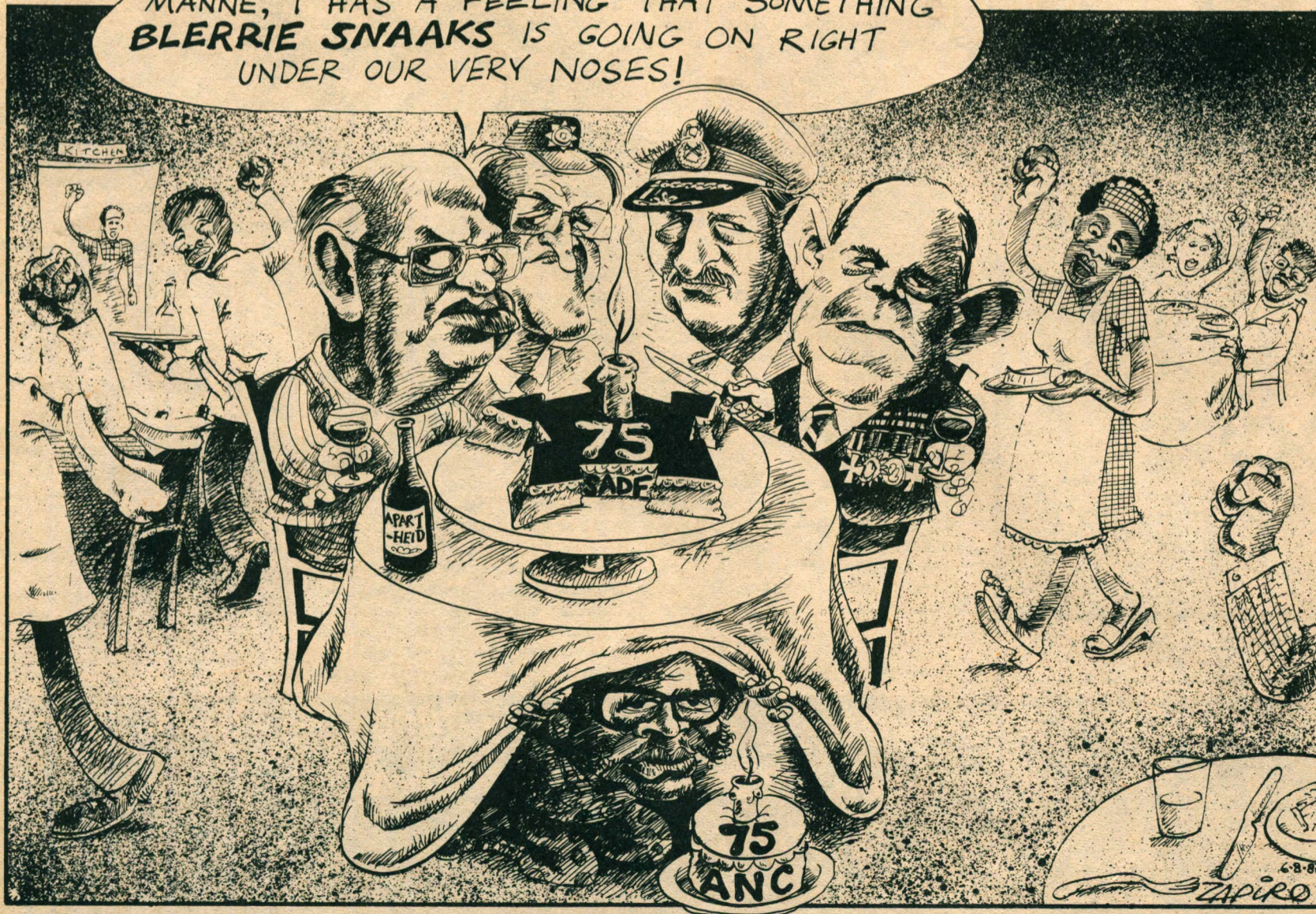
Ratel-Log support vehicle - C

Africa took over a Canadian-American company, Space Industries Inc., and used American technology to produce the G-5 cannon. But the US State Department closed down Space Industries, and in the present international climate, this tactic isn't likely to work again.

Israel provided technological aid with the Cheetah fighter and the Olifant tank, but she was growing shy — partly because the world was enforcing sterner sanctions against South Africa, but also because the US was outraged at Israeli spying activities in Washington and was using the South African connection to beat Tel Aviv with. So South Africa became more isolated, and had to pay large sums for foreign technicians — reportedly 40 technicians simply to help with Atlas Aircraft's helicopter project which has yet to produce an effective weapon.

There is much evidence of the

MANNE, I HAS A FEELING THAT SOMETHING BLERRIE SNAAKS IS GOING ON RIGHT UNDER OUR VERY NOSES!



## Peace d

In P W Botha's total national strategy, security and peace depend on military strength and assertiveness. Democratic opposition to that is automatically labelled marxist subversion. This challenges us to clarify why and on what basis we pursue anti-militarist attitudes and activities. In this article, I draw on a concept central to the western Judaeo-Christian tradition to which the Afrikaner Nationalist government pays lip service — in which security and peace depend on justice. See, for example, the Book of Proverbs (14.34):

Righteousness (justice) exalts a people to honour; to do wrong is a disgrace to any nation.

In that tradition peace and prosperity are the fruit of right relations between person and person, group and group, society and the physical environment, creatures and creator. If you have to work with a tool in one hand and a sword in the other, or with half the labour force working while the other half stand guard, you cannot prosper.

Unfortunately we live in a world of "government by bayonet" carried to the extremes of nuclear overkill. Three governments in five spend more to guard their citizens against military attack than on health. We live in a country with gross income disparity — whites being the highest motor car owning

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