

with an object that felt like a broad plank. The beating went on for a long time, it was incredibly sore and I cried. They stopped beating and told me to sit. My hands were then tied together behind my back. After this they fastened one wire around my left ear, and another to my right thumb. I felt a little prick on my thumb and on my ear, which suddenly shock my whole body. I could not breathe and I thought I was dying."

Adam Kabono's alleged treatment is almost identical to that contained in many other sworn statements. One Security Police detainee and two Koevoet detainees could not make sworn statements. Johannes Kakuva, Jona Hamukwaya and Kadimu Katanga all died while in detention. The Supreme Court found that Kakuva had been beaten by the Security Police, had been kept in a small cubicle for gas bottles where he could only crouch, and although Kakuva's body was never found, the Court ruled he had died at the hand of the Security Police. In the Hamukwaya and Katanga cases, an inquest court found the two men had died because of criminal action or liability on behalf of a member or members of Koevoet. Evidence was that Hamukwaya was beaten to death on the banks of the Kavango River, while Katanga was forced to run in front of a Koevoet Casspir in 40°C heat while a squad of men took it in turns beating him.

Finally, one of the most chilling accounts of alleged torture comes from Mrs Milka Nauyoma, a 41-year-old mother of eight from Tsumeb. She was detained on September 11, 1981, and released on November 19, 1981. She recounts, in a sworn statement, some of her experiences at the hands of the people who claim to be the "pro-

ectors" of the people against "Swapo atrocities."

"They asked me whether I had given accommodation to alleged Swapo guerillas. When I denied their allegations, I was placed over a surface which was higher than the floor. (she was blindfolded throughout) My wrists were gripped by one or more persons, so too my ankles. I was then beaten violently on my buttocks and upper arms with a flexible instrument. My body twisted with pain and I tried to free myself. The beating continued for about five minutes . . . the two Afrikaans-speaking voices continually urged me during the beating: 'you must tell the truth, we know everything' . . . When I refused to admit the allegations made against me, I was beaten, while standing, on the top of my feet. I was wearing sandals, the interrogators concentrated the blows on my toes.

"My head was then covered with a close-fitting elastic cloth which was pulled down as far as my neck. I could not see through this material. The material pushed against my nose, it was difficult to breathe and I was terrified that I would suffocate. Something which I thought to be a chain was then put around my neck. I heard the noise of a chain, then I was suddenly hoisted off the ground. At the same time, I heard the noise of the chain being pulled. The chain gripped at my throat. I started to choke. The chain tightened around my neck. I was hoisted momentarily and then dropped onto the ground. I called upon them to show mercy, but the cloth pressed against my lips and mouth . . . the hoisting and dropping procedure was then repeated on three or four more occasions. I am a heavily-built, woman, and thought that they could break my neck. I called out to them that I would talk. I said 'leave me leave me, I will talk as you want me to talk' . . . on numerous occasions I heard the voices of other persons, both men and women, screaming and begging for mercy and shouting 'please stop' . . . I went through many periods where my

thoughts were not controllable. On one occasion, I thought that I should take my life. I looked around my cell, but could think of no way how I could do so."

The Security Police have responded by stating that allegations of torture against the service are nothing more than a plot by radicals to break down the good name of the police. According to Lieutenant Colonel Gerrit Badenhorst, deputy chief of the South African Security Police in Namibia;

"Over the past two years, there has been a concerted effort to bring the Security Branch of the Police under suspicion as regards detentions of persons helping terrorists, to disrupt the activities of the Security Branch, and to make them ineffective in the revolutionary struggle. It is denied in the strongest possible terms that any of the detainees are being assaulted, molested, tortured, shocked, or that irregular pressure is being placed on them . . . There are clear instructions which are given to all members of the Police, to ensure that the physical and spiritual welfare of any detainee is cared for, and detainees are also regularly visited by doctors and given a medical examination. As a result of the regular, half-baked allegations of assaults and atrocities made against the Security Police, strict instructions are given to all members of the Security Police that no assaults whatsoever may be carried out on a detainee."

Perhaps, Colonel Badenhorst, perhaps. The evidence indicates the opposite, it indicates an institutionalised system of violence torture and terror as a means of keeping an uncontrollable population under control, of maintaining South Africa's occupation of Namibia of breeding a new, merciless class of policemen and soldiers who will tomorrow be called upon to use their Namibian training in the townships of South Africa.

## THE 'INTERNAL ENEMY' — CIVIL WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA

"The RSA must be protected with all the force at the disposal of the security forces against any form of internal or external revolutionary action, whatever its nature or origin. If demanded by circumstances, this will also include offensive action. In this way the S.A. Defence Force helps to maintain an orderly society and to ensure evolutionary development . . . As a result of present circumstances the S.A. Defence Force is becoming increasingly involved in assisting other security forces. . . ." 1982 Defence White Paper. . . .

The military influence is symbolic of a society unable to solve its problems." Annette Seegers: Dimensions of Militarism.

This article seeks to examine the SADF's role in burgeoning civil conflict, in the light of the rise of the military to a new position of political and economic predominance in the country since the 1976 uprisings. The current phase of political unrest sweeping

South Africa, dating back to confrontations around the elections early in 1984, has been described from many quarters as civil war. The involvement of the SADF in putting down unrest has been a prominent feature of this period. The implications for these young South Africans conscripted into the armed forces are grave. They are unwittingly being drawn onto a side of this highly polarised conflict that they may well consider to be immoral, unjust and indefensible.

### Part 1: The rise of the military

The last two decades of SA's history have been decisive for the military leadership, boosting them from a position of relative unimportance into the highest levels of state power. In 1961 the Defence Force was, in the words of the 1969 Defence White paper, 'practically obsolete'. By 1978 the military had become the centre-piece of state se-

curity, projecting its leaders to the top of the Nationalist government, and simultaneously advancing their policy of a 'total strategy' to preserve the SA state.

Much of the advance in military thinking stemmed from the Defence College and Military Academy, through which a new generation of sophisticated military leaders had been developed. Since the early 1970's debate had been ranging around the nature of a 'militarily defensible' policy. The implication was that the apartheid state under Vorster, with its heavy reliance on police action, required major structural modifications to survive.

The crisis in which Vorster's government found itself stemmed from many sources. Regional security policy had always relied on the 'buffer states' to stem the tide of African nationalism, and their relentless col-

lapse and take over by liberation movements was cause for growing alarm. Under conditions of a world-wide recession, SA needed a secure regional market for its industrial products, and Vorster was prompted into his detente exercise, wooing friends across Africa. Inside S.A. the 1970's were ruptured by the consequences of the structural impoverishment of black labourers, upon which the boom of the 1960's had been built. Between 1972 and 1975 S.A. mining and manufacturing industries were hit by successive waves of strike action, pushing up real wages significantly, and encouraging the growth of the labour movement. There was further a rapid growth in mass struggle against apartheid, and in 1976 the country was set aflame by what have become known as the Soweto riots. Stability could only be maintained through enormous political repression. Consequently a large outflow of foreign capital occurred, and Vorster's detente exercise was reduced to nought. In conjunction with the severe balance of payments deficit, and the growing shortage of skilled manpower, the country's economy was plunged into deep recession. The time was certainly right for the military to make their move. Their increasingly prominent role in the Namibian war corresponded to the broadening of their power-base. The final conditions were provided by the Information scandal, which undermined significant sectors of the old ruling elite. With strong backing from sections of Afrikaner capital, notably the Cape-based Sanlam, P. W. Botha rose from Minister of Defence to the leadership of the National party. His rallying cry was that of a 'total onslaught' on SA society, masterminded by the USSR, with the intention of "the overthrow of the present constitutional order and its replacement by a subject communist-orientated. black government."

The switch from 'Swart-gevaar' to 'rooi-gevaar' tactics was successful in diverting attention away from the internal political situation, where the real threat facing the Nationalists clearly lies. 'Total strategy' is survival strategy, and is intended to preserve the central privileges of capital accumulation under white supremacy. To this end defence policy has been carefully interwoven with internal and foreign policy to produce the twin thrusts of total strategy – on the one hand a series of 'enlightened' labour, constitutional and petty apartheid reforms, designed to defuse opposition, increase control over the urban work-force, and foster a class of collaborative middle-class blacks: – on the other hand, an enormous increase in repressive state action, using an expanded defence force and a well co-ordinated security network; this is obviously the 'big stick', to be employed if the political reforms fail.

The significance of the military is clearly demonstrated by its growing consumption of central government spending. In the decade 1972 to 1982 official figures indicate that defence spending rose by some 860%.

In terms of GNP this represents an increase from 2.2 to 5.1 percent; defence now comprises over 20 % of state spending. These figures are underestimations. Further defence spending is distributed amongst various civil service departments. Military camps and bases e.g., are constructed by the Dept. of Public Works, intelligence finding comes under the Dept. of the Treasury, the administration of national service and religious objection under the Dept. of Manpower. Such financial commitments have been paralleled by an enormous increase in the numbers of national servicemen – from 10 000 in 1960 to over 65 250 at any one time. The Active Citizen Force and Commanders, numbering 56 500 in 1960 had by 1981 risen to 265 000. This represents a considerable percentage of the approximately 1 million eligible white males between the ages of 18 and 65 years. An important feature has been the extension of military activity beyond conventional forms of defence; 33 % of the 1984 military budget was allocated to 'area defence', whereby the whole country can be activated at a local level in countering insurgency or popular unrest. These developments have taken place alongside a major restructuring of intra-governmental power relations. Total strategy implies a co-ordination of all state networks in national defence. Perhaps the most important body in this regard has been the State Security Council, an exclusive body often described as the 'inner cabinet'. Its membership includes the State President as chair, the Senior Minister in Cabinet ranking, the Ministers of Defence, Foreign Affairs, Justice and Law and Order, and further members that the President may wish to co-opt – the Director of the National Intelligence Service, the Commandant-General of the SADF, the Secretaries of Foreign Affairs and Justice, the Commissioner of the SAP, plus heads of other departments. The SSC has its own Working Committee, and a Secretariat with four major branches – National Intelligence, National Strategy, Strategic Communications . . . (i.e. cultural action and psychological warfare) and Administration. The workings of the SSC, and its current role in power politics, are shrouded in secrecy. It has been suggested that a 'silent coup' has occurred and the country is now governed by a 'civil-military' bureaucracy. The traditional boundaries between civilian concerns and those of the military have become fluid, and are overshadowed by the close co-operation and identity which exists between them. The SSC is particularly expressive of this civil – military interpretation, which has further been symbolised in the terms used to capture the essence of the 'new' state. In the society at large a situation of paramilitarism has developed, both in respect of the public visibility of the SADF, and in the extended influence of the military through a revamped network of police, area defence and civic-action structure. This has a long-term stabilising effect on the military's hegemony.

## Part 2: The growth of civil conflict.

The executive dominance of the military represents a particular choice of the current state – the military option. In the context of popular demands for a more just society, and the inability of the state to generate viable governmental alternatives through 'normal' political processes, instability becomes institutionalised. Meanwhile more and more black South Africans, confronted by the sharp end of military directed violence in the townships, are coming to feel that the rule of the military-apartheid state cannot be successfully countered, without increasing counter-violence. This spiral of violence and counter-violence appears to be the direction in which S.A. is presently headed. Apartheid has often been described as institutionalised violence. As the economy slides ever deeper into recession, and the ranks of the unemployed grow by the day, there can be little doubt of the hardships experienced by township residents. A climate of frustration and desperation has been created, without recourse to adequate forms of political expression. The establishment of the urban black community councils was intended to provide some measure of control over the situation. By isolating the black working class in their peri-urban townships, at the same time promoting a co-operative sector of the middle class into the council leadership, the state has hoped to shift the conflict and contain it. While this strategy was partly successful, the system of community councils is close to collapse. Not only were they inadequate avenues for urban black political aspirations, they were also further viewed as oppressive institutions designed to manipulate the communities they supposedly served. It is hardly surprising that they, and the co-opted bureaucrats manning them, have been the targets of much of the township violence.

The intensification of the struggle against Apartheid both inside the country and internationally has led to a limited and cynical 'engagement' with demands expressed through mass struggles (for example an attempt to turn COSAS'S demands for SRC's, into a new state imposed body to control students). These engagements reflect the state's current quest to survive through establishing a new stability, while retaining as much of their power-hold and affluence as possible. The problem for the state in South Africa is that white society's lifestyle and survival as an exclusive entity rest so directly on the mechanisms which produce the most bitter grievances among Africans.

P.W. Botha's concerted effort to restructure the conditions of ruling class supremacy as a response to the 1970s crisis has therefore foundered on opposition from opposing sides.

The less affluent and secure sections of the white middle class, and their rural counterparts having felt that their interests have been cast adrift by political reform, retain a 'braking' effect on that reform. Meanwhile,

the weight of the military and police security networks marshalled to control and order the reform process, is increasingly provoking in African society the very response it was designed to inhibit.

The spectre of 'progressive, evolutionary change' seems even more ephemeral as South Africa coalesces into two increasingly distinct blocks. On the one hand the state, intransigent on the issues of fundamental and essential charges demanded by the black majority, or negotiation with its recognized leaders, relies increasingly on the exercise of offensive state violence in maintaining the status quo. On the other, those who bear the brunt of this violence are taking up progressively more militant forms of struggle to achieve their demands. South Africa can be said to be sliding into a period of prolonged civil war.

September 1984 marked a distinct turning in SA's history. On the one hand it showed the spontaneous unity of township residents in challenging the structures of their domination. This challenge has become the daily experience of hundreds of thousands of South Africans country wide. It has demonstrated the bankruptcy of the government's claims to be implementing meaningful political reform, and has marked the failure of the more 'enlightened' aspects of 'total strategy'.

On the other hand September '84 marked the involvement of the SADF in a more direct ongoing role in suppressing township unrest. This in itself is not a entirely new phenomenon. In 1976, 1980 and 1981 the military played a back-up role to police action, assisting in 'seal and search' in the townships, strike - breaking and patrols. It is since September of last year however, that the full 'internal role' of the SADF has become manifest. While official military spokesmen still maintain that the SADF's role is 'supportive' and on a regional basis, it is becoming clear that its role is in fact more integral and direct than this. Both the Ministers of Defence and Law and Order have announced 'close co-operation' between their departments in maintaining and controlling the unrest, and present this as a part of a rationalisation programme for optional use of manpower in the security field. It is clearly in their interests to down play the role of the military and preserve any area of political neutrality it may still have. In effect the townships of the Transvaal and Eastern Cape have become operational areas. (Some of them have received press-coverage. They are not the sole areas of SADF operation). The SADF has been in charge of overall maintaining of situations, and has established a permanent presence, in the form of tanks and ratel and camps and army patrols, in the townships. They

have further been involved in massive seal and search operations on an unprecedented scale. This is the beginning of the destined role of the military in South Africa. The SADF and SAP are viewed as the enemy by township residents, and treated as such. April 1985 for the first reported time, saw SADF township patrols opening fire on residents, killing and wounding some.

These then are the polarised sides across which the civil war in South Africa is occurring. As the crisis of the state deepens, control will only be maintained through further military commitments. The central areas of contention underpinning the 'macro-apartheid' state - race classification, influx control, denial of full citizenship for blacks in a democratic and military state - are non-negotiables for the present government. Nevertheless the black population of SA will not be placated with a refashioning of the terms of the struggle, or a redrawing of the opposition. SA is in a state of civil war to the extent that the terms upon which the state can survive, and the terms upon which the grievances of the country's people can be resolved, are mutually incompatible. Where the two confront one another, there stands an army of conscripted white youth, drafted to perpetuate a civil war.

## WAR PSYCHOSIS IN SOUTH AFRICA

In 1977, together with the legislation increasing compulsory National Service to an effective four years, the South African government embarked upon a concerted media drive to legitimize and glorify the South African Defence Force in the hearts and minds of the South African population. The twin concepts of "Total Onslaught" and "Total Strategy" were injected into the South African psyche, as blatant pointers to war and militarisation.

In an address to business leaders, SADF and government officials in 1977, General Magnus Malan said: "This war involves so many different fronts, unknown to the South African experience, that it has gained the telling but horrifying name of total war. This different all encompassing war has brought with it new methods and new techniques which in turn have to be met by total countermeasures".

Total countermeasures include, as P.W. Botha said: "...interdependent and co-ordinated action in all fields - military, psychological, economic, political, sociological, technological, diplomatic, ideological, cul-

tural etc... The striving for specific aims... must be co-ordinated with all means available to the state."

Psychological warfare normally fulfils a dual role. Primarily, it is used as a means of undermining enemy forces, but it also serves a domestic morale-boosting function. The SADF's psychological war machine, however, is aimed not so much at people or nations beyond its borders but at the population within, which it claims to be defending.

The SADF appears to have isolated three major areas at which to direct its psychological action: the linking of "patriotism" to service in the SADF, amongst the white population; the maintenance of the loyalty of all troops, black and white, within the SADF; and the winning of the "hearts and minds" of the black population in the rural areas.

The State's most powerful propaganda tool is the South African Broadcasting Corporation, especially since the introduction of a television network in 1976. Almost daily, the South African public is bombarded

with a steady barrage of military propaganda. From "Forces Favourites" and women's magazine programmes on radio, to documentaries and dramas on television the South African public is conditioned and prepared for a militarized future. Careful selection and presentation of facts and images allows for a highly specific view of our society. The SABC does this both overtly and semi-covertly. In 1978 the English Documentaries Department was instructed to cease all current projects and to concentrate on a top priority documentary that would portray South Africa's invincible military machine and its secure state of preparedness. In 1980 the SADF called upon the SABC to "nullify" the Opposition attack on the Defence Budget during the parliamentary session. More subtly, the SABC slips in military propaganda in the form of dramas. In January 1985 the SABC screened its first drama production featuring an all-coloured cast. The film, "Jantjie kom Huistoe" was billed as a love story. The plot involved a young unemployed coloured youth who joins the army and saves a white family from a terrorist attack in the opera-

tional area. For this he is awarded the highest medal for bravery. He returns home hero and wins his bride.

The SABC is willingly aided in its propaganda efforts by the commercial media, both in the form of advertisements broadcast by the corporation and the commercial media in general.

The banks and building societies were amongst the first commercial concerns to aim their advertising at National servicemen. Car manufacturers also boarded the military bandwagon, a light truck being advertised as a little tank. Many advertisers offer discounts to National Servicemen, creating the atmosphere and attitude that National servicemen must be awarded and respected, because it is them who keep us "safe" and "secure" in our homes. It is not uncommon for a whole town to turn out and welcome a local detachment of "troopies" on their return from the operational area. Many regiments have been given the "Freedom" of the cities or towns in which they are based. This usually involves a mass military civil ceremony, with march pasts and military displays.

This spreading military mentality is nurtured amongst young white people through the education system. It is estimated that approximately 300 000 school children undergo cadet training and P. W. Botha is on record as saying "our education system must train people for war".

The process of conditioning is aided by the media in all its forms. On the one hand the strict censorship laws forbid the press to

voice alternative ideas on sensitive issues, particularly the question of military service. On the other hand the media is instrumental in bombarding its audience with the government's ideas on "communism" "terrorism", "swartgevaar" and "patriotism". A typical photo-comic entitled "Grensvegter" portrays a muscular white hero, Rocco de Wet, singlehandedly fighting and always defeating black terrorists and white communists in the operational zones of Southern Africa. In the process he wins each month a hapless white female who, rescued from the grip of communism, is transported with him from the horrors of the African bush into the alluring clutches of Durban's beachfront culture. Other popular magazines carry regular articles on the 'boys on the border'. The recent "Operation Thunderchariot" received extensive coverage in magazines, in the press and on radio and television. In 1978 two new organisations were established to aid and maintain this growing war psychosis. The SADF announced the formation of a "National Institute for Survival" aimed at training both civilians and soldiers in the "art of survival" (RDM 30/3/78). In April the "South Africa First" campaign was launched. According to its chairman "a definite need for a non-political organisation to ward off psychological attacks." (Citizen 21/4/78)

A number of cities now allow soldiers to travel free on all public transport and a scheme called "Operation Ride Safe" has been instituted whereby civilian motorists are encouraged to give lifts to their homes to soldiers on leave from their bases. Over

300 special pick-up points have been constructed around the country. The Southern Cross Fund provides "home comfort" parcels to all troops serving in the operational areas. This operation receives intensified coverage on television around the Christmas period when the heart strings of the public are plucked to generate sympathy for the "brave young men" on the border.

The "Boetie gaan border toe" mentality is specifically aimed at male sexuality and encourages a feeling of inadequacy amongst national servicemen who do not serve on the border. The adage "The army makes a man of you" accurately depicts the macho stereotyping in which the SADF indulges.

The rapid and extensive militarisation of South African society and the concomitant generation of a war psychosis is, it could be concluded, in large part due to the devoted propagation of symbols, doctrine and selective information by South Africa's mass media. A war does exist on three fronts – the 'covert' war in neighbouring countries and a civil war within SA's borders. It is however, necessary to make an attempt to cut through the war psychosis generated around these wars of aggression and establish in its place an analysis of the reason for and nature of the war that the SADF is fighting. It is the task of alternative media forms to work at providing this analysis and information so that an objective assessment of the possibilities and preconditions of peace in Southern Africa can be arrived at.

## HOW FREE IS THE PRESS?

The right to a free and independent press implies the prerogative to inform, comment and criticise. This right has been systematically eroded since the Nationalist Party first took power in 1948 and gradually introduced manipulative controls to suppress the publication of unfavourable information and to promote a positive image both at home and abroad.

The press in South Africa has consequently, as the Times of London put it, had to "work daily under the shadow of the axe". The state has long campaigned for a reasonable and disciplined press and has increasingly introduced legislation to ensure a compliant and acquiescing press. The liberal press has been variously accused of sensationalism, of misrepresenting South African affairs and creating an unfavourable impression, of misleading people by false and biased reporting, and of inciting public opinion

overseas against against South Africa. Prime minister Strijdom even went so far as to accuse the English Language Press of being South Africa's greatest enemy.

The government has replaced the notion of a free and independent press with the notion of a responsible and disciplined press. Discipline and responsibility implying as Jimmy Kruger one-time minister of justice once put it, that "anything contrary to good morale or dangerous to peace and order in the republic" should not be published. The apartheid state propounded the doctrine of national security and the press was called upon to act in the national interest.

Concomitant to the systematic implementation of apartheid policies it was increasingly felt in the echelons of power that the press by reporting news events, were provoking opposition and violence and

playing a subversive role. Hachten and Gilford point out that "the press, reflecting as it does the clashing views and political differences within the republic becomes enmeshed in the news and comments it reports and, in so doing, becomes the target of repression". The government was painfully aware that the press' conception of itself as being an obligation to report *all* news did not coincide with their objectives. The press had to be controlled and if necessary this would involve both coercive and manipulative measures.

A vast machinery of 'voluntary' and legislative controls have evolved – including legislation determining what may and may not be published, the suppression unfavourable information (what is, what is not perceived as being in the national interest), and open intimidation that has frequently forced the press into self-censorship.

Legislation has been passed which closes off from the press and thus from society large areas of important information, especially those concerning the activities of the military, the police and related security matters. Furthermore there was the continual threat of greater statutory control should the press fail to exercise self-discipline. The support of a conforming press was a vital factor in the 'total strategy' demanded to combat the 'total onslaught' facing South Africa.

During the 1960 state of emergency following Sharpeville, the emergency regulations enacted included restrictions on reporting so far reaching that the consequence was a vital ban on the publication of anything related to the crisis. In response the National Press Union (NPU), the newspaper proprietors organization, announced a 'code of conduct' and 'the formation of board of control for the press, saying that "while the Press retains its traditional right of criticism, comment should take cognizance of the complex social problems of South Africa and should also take into account the general good and the safety of the country and its peoples". Self censorship was seen as the means of staving off the menace of 'real' censorship, self discipline being seen as preferable to state discipline. But this system of compromise in practice had a very similar result - selective reporting.

The increasing militarization of South African society and more especially the invasion of Angola by the South African Defence Force revealed as one journalist has pointed out, "official information practices and the impotence of the press to inform the public about a matter as momentous as the invasion of a neighbouring country by South African forces." the public was kept in ignorance until after the SADF had withdrawn from Angola. Information to the press concerning cross border incursions and the war in Namibia was carefully controlled; no independent reporting of military activities was permitted. Furthermore the press was given an ultimatum to get 'its house in order' or face legislation providing for the suspension of newspapers.

The NPU revised its code of conduct adding an amendment requiring editors to exercise "due care and responsibility" in the publication of reports which might endanger "the safety and defence of the country and its people". The NPU took more and more responsibility for the increased censorship of the Press, contributing to the myth that because the controls on the press were voluntary, the press was not controlled.

In 1980 the government announced the establishment of the Steyn Commission of Inquiry into the mass media, to report on the question of whether the conduct and the handling of matters by the mass media met the present needs and interests of the South African community and if not, how they could be improved. A representative from the military, Brigadier Wassenaar, gave evidence before the commission.

Meanwhile journalists were harassed, detained for questioning, and charged with various offences. Further press conformity was sought through legislation, some of which was passed, some just threatened. Regarding the issues of defence police and prisons the principle was established that the press would not print anything unless it had been cleared by a government authority. The Protection of Information act, provided for jail sentences of up to 20 years for the unauthorized disclosure of information about security matters involving 'terrorists'.

There is an array of legislation hampering the reporting of news. Amongst other things it is designed, to close off from public scrutiny and criticism the increased activities of the military forces and the police. The Internal security act provides for the banning of newspapers under particular conditions. The Sabotage act requires that care must be taken to ensure that a report cannot be construed as incitement, instigation or aid to endanger the maintenance of public law and order. The Terrorism act, which although designed to deal with terrorism, places an unusually wide interpretation on the meaning of terrorism which includes press comment and reporting. The Unlawful Organizations act prevents newspapers from publishing ANC and PAC views whether spoken abroad or printed in

underground pamphlets. The Riotous assemblies act prohibits the publication of anything regarded by the government as engendering hostility between whites and blacks - the definition of provoking hostility being subject to the governments ad hoc interpretation. The Official Secrets act prevents the communication of anything relating to munitions of war or any military, police or security matter to any persons for any purpose prejudicial to the safety or interests of the Republic. In practice this act places severe restraint in reporting anything to do with security. The Defence act restricts reportage of military matters. Newspapers also cannot publish stories which might "alarm or depress the public". The Protection of Information act provides for widespread restrictions on the public's right to information. Under the National Key Points act provision is made for the government to designate certain crisis areas as off limits to the press. The Atomic Energy act prevents unauthorized publication of information about uranium or nuclear research and any activities of the atomic energy board.

Severe penalties including fines imprisonment and even banning can be imposed for infringement of these acts.

Through this plethora of restrictive legislation and the exercise of self-censorship whereby the press is involved in silencing itself, tight control is exercised over the communication of information. In the words of the Steyn commission report, "a professional and sophisticated communications system is vital for South Africa, and if it is tuned to its fullest account then all concerned-government, opposition, press broadcasting, media and private enterprise all serve to co-operate in conveying, the true and authoritative story to the world. This story, which creates perceptions on South Africa, primarily has to be pre-emptive and anticipatory not reactive and defensive . . .

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## BLACK SASH RESOLUTION, 1983 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

'During World War II the South African government respected the conscience of individuals and there was no conscription. The country is even more seriously divided now than it was then.

South Africa is illegally occupying Namibia and this is cause for many in conscience to refuse military service. When South Africa withdraws from Namibia there would be no need for a massive military establishment unless there has been a political failure

to respond to the desires of the citizens.

If a conscripted army is necessary it will be because of the political failure to respond to the desires of the citizens, and that army will be engaged in a civil war, which is good cause for many to refuse military service. In such a civil war, if the state has to rely on conscription to man its army the war is already lost.

Therefore the Black Sash demands that the

South African government abolish all conscription for military service. We maintain that there is no total onslaught against the people of South Africa and the total strategy demanded of us is not the military defence of a minority government but the total all-out effort of all South Africa's people to bring about democratic government and the relief of the poverty and deprivation suffered by the majority.' Black Sash resolution, 1983 National Conference.

# TOWARDS A JUST PEACE IN OUR LAND

## A Declaration to End Conscription

We live in an unjust society where basic human rights are denied to the majority of the people.

We live in an unequal society where the land and wealth are owned by the minority.

We live in a society in a state of civil war, where brother is called on to fight brother.

We call for an end to conscription.

Young men are conscripted to maintain the illegal occupation of Namibia, and to wage unjust war against foreign countries.

Young men are conscripted to assist in the implementation and defence of apartheid policies.

Young men who refuse to serve are faced with the choice of a life of exile or a possible six years in prison.

We call for an end to conscription.

We believe that the financial cost of the war increases the poverty of our country, and that money should rather be used in the interests of peace.

We believe that the extension of conscription to coloured and Indian citizens will increase conflict and further divide our country.

**WE BELIEVE THAT IT IS THE MORAL RIGHT OF SOUTH AFRICANS TO EXERCISE FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE AND TO CHOOSE NOT TO SERVE IN THE SADF.**

**WE CALL FOR AN END TO CONSCRIPTION**

**WE CALL FOR A JUST PEACE IN OUR LAND**

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**PUBLISHER:**

*Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive*

*Location:- Johannesburg*

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