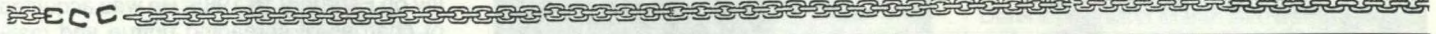


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ECC FOCUS

END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (TVL) OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

Vol. 1 No. 1 MAY 1985



The SADF moving in to occupy East Cape townships

And the army moved in

At 4 am on Monday, May 6, 10 000 troops of soldiers, Riot police and Railway police moved in to occupy Kwanobuhle township. Mr. Adriaan de Vlok, Deputy Minister of Law and Order, and of Defence, said that it was at the request of "law-abiding citizens" who wanted the restoration of normal living conditions.

The incident raised no great protests. The Eastern Cape townships have been 'occupied' for months. There is no other way the government can operate in the area if it refuses to talk to the people.

There is a freeway between Uitenhage and Port Elizabeth. Drive along it at any time and you will pass convoys of SADF armoured Buffels or SADF troop carriers.

There are only a few entrances to PE's townships. The convoys of troop carrying armoured vehicles can be seen going in and out of the townships at all times of the day.

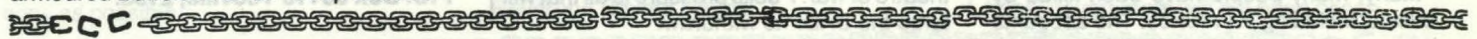
Inside the townships, residents say their long and unpleasant relationship with the Counter Insurgency and Terrorism Squad - the riot cops is coming to an end.

Instead they now have convoys of SADF soldiers to contend with. Recently, the size of these convoys increased dramatically. On May 1, at sunrise such a convoy entered. Workers and school children watched as the two kilometer long display of military might wound its way through the shacks and matchbox houses.

These processions consist of armoured tanks, field ambulances and a sprinkling of riot police Casspirs. The Buffels drive with their sides down, revealing complements of young soldiers dressed in full battle and riot gear. They hold their R1 rifles in front of them and look out at the residents. They say nothing.

The army have pitched tents at the "Unrest" unit at Algoa Park police station. The unit is next to the freeway. You can see the soldiers milling around ice-cream vendors. The soldiers are performing hard work and the ice-creams cool them down.

Over the weekend the soldiers relax in the bars in town. They say: "two guys have been hit with stones. One guy cracked his



Hurley exposes Koevoet



Speaking out against Koevoet

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ribs, the other lost an eye."

The police release bulletins from Pretoria. They say with monotonous regularity: "radicals stoned a police patrol and police were forced to open fire...A man was found dead after the crowd was dispersed with tear-gas".

But the facts and the residents tell a different story. According to the Minister of Police, Louis le Grange, of the 120 people said to have died in the ongoing civil conflict in the Eastern Cape, more than 90 were shot by the police.

"On Monday the SADF was in full force in Uitenhage. In Kwanobuhle it shot Mr Ringo Mguku in the forehead. Soldiers were kicking women and putting them in hippos. This thing really dissappointed me. Because I think the army is not for peace. Army is for war," said a Uitenhage civic leader speaking of an incident three days before the Langa massacre.

The townships are abuzz with such accounts of SADF and police action in which someone is shot.

Children of two and three years old have been hit by tear gas cannisters, or have inhaled the gas and been seriously ill.

Two people have died from the effects of teargas.

Many, many people have been killed by bullets, including R1 rounds. The accounts

from people all over the sprawling townships are stikingly similar. "Police and soldiers kicked down the door and then shot my son, my daughter, my mother, my grandmother." This is a commonly told story.

And recently, with reports that the SADF is taking over the role of patrolling the townships, stories have begun to emerge from residents of soldiers going to she-beens and getting drunk and assaulting people or even asking the people for money in a bizarre effort to present themselves as the "peoples' friend".

Shortly after the Langa massacre, the SADF attempted to set up a camp inside Kwanobuhle township. Masses of people gathered asking what the army was trying to do. Urgent appeals from around the country, including PFP parliamentarians, eventually persuaded the SADF to withdraw. It was a sign of the times.

The only sign of dissent from whites in PE itself comes from the End Conscription Committee. The Committee has the support of the churches, the PE UDF area committee, the PFP Youth, the Black Sash, a sprinkling of students from the PE Technicon, and UPE, and concerned individuals.

The occupation of the towns of the East Cape will continue, and the bloodletting will go on. National servicemen are being used to bring "law and order" to the townships. The East Cape is being turned into a theatre of war. Public pressure is all that will force the SADF to withdraw.

Spontaneous applause from a packed courtroom greeted Archbishop Denis Hurley on February 18 1985. He was acquitted of charges of spreading untrue and malicious stories about Koevoet atrocities in Namibia.

The state said, that because its case had been based on hearsay alone, it would not continue the prosecution under the Police Act. This was an anti-climax: the Counsel for Defence pointed out that it had prepared its case for nearly two years only to be told at the last minute that the state's case was to be dropped.

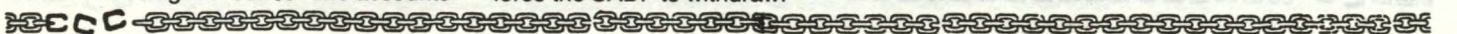
At a press conference after the trial, Archbishop Hurley said he was relieved that the "waste of time and money" was over. He strongly regretted that he had not had the opportunity to present to the court the "devastating" evidence of Koevoet atrocities which his legal team collected in Namibia.

He also commented on the nature of Koevoet as a "police" unit: "Koevoet is a commando unit of the SADF, trained to be ruthless hunters and killers. It is called a police unit because under Resolution 435 of the U.N. Security Council the army must withdraw from Namibia but the police can remain."

The Catholic Bishops' magazine 'Inter-nos', stated after the trial that it seemed clear that the State had dropped the prosecution for fear of having Koevoet atrocities publicly exposed in a trial which had attracted much international publicity. Many prominent bishops and priests from Britain, America, Ireland, Srilanka and Australia expressed their support by attending the trial of the Archbishop.

"We know that brutalities are perpetrated by both sides and we accept that this has happened in Namibia. But we are aghast that accusations and charges of brutality have been made in such numbers and to such an extent against the South African security forces" the Archbishop said. He went on: "I pray that this abortive trial will be used by God to hasten the day when the horror of Namibia will come to an end and when freedom and peace will come to a country subjected to the distress and cruelty of an army for which, unfortunately, South Africa is mainly responsible." He is now suing the state for malicious prosecution.

ECC FOCUS is the official newsletter of the End Conscription Committee (Tvl). Anyone interested in subscribing can write to:
The End Conscription Campaign,
P.O. Box 93118 Yeoville, 2193.





Laurie Nathan: organising for peace

ECC: on the move

"WE CALL for an end to conscription, we call for a just peace in our land," demands the Declaration of the End Conscription Campaign.

This urgent call has united 50 diverse organisations throughout South Africa.

Established regional End Conscription Campaign committees (ECC) exist in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. Additional regions are constantly emerging, the newest being in Port Elizabeth, while keen interest for the issue has been expressed in Pietermaritzburg where a new committee was launched on May 7.

Last year the Johannesburg region took up the demand by approaching organisations and asking them to send representatives to the committee which meets weekly. This request prompted organisations to discuss the issue of militarisation.

The region used the second half of the year to highlight the illegal occupation of Namibia by the SADF. ECC strongly objects to an army which legitimises its existence by sending young conscripts to occupy by force a foreign neighbouring country.

The launch of the End Conscription Declaration at a spring fair last year popularised the campaign. The declaration was discussed with a wide range of individuals and organisations, who then endorsed it. The document expresses and clarifies the reason for ECC's existence, and is an ongoing campaign. Its aim is to gain overall support from as many people and organisations as possible.

The first national gathering of ECC took place in January this year, and evaluated the front's achievements over the year as well as set the goals for 1985.

The illegal occupation of Namibia, the civil war being waged in our country, the call-up and the International Year of the Youth, are the campaigns which will be taken up this year. By focussing on these four areas, ECC will raise a questioning awareness in many people.

At the conference, Laurie Nathan was appointed as the ECC National Organiser. His role is to facilitate co-ordination between the ECC's nationally. He will spend time in each region working with the committee's and affiliates of the front. He will also help prepare the ECC festival in July.

The chairperson of the Johannesburg region, Ms Benita Pavlicevic said "I think ECC is the most significant recent development in white politics. For the first time whites are organising around an issue which directly affects them. They are the ones being conscripted. They are called to bear arms in defense of apartheid. The existence of ECC shows that more and more people are saying no to civil war."

The national conference also emphasised the need for ECC to be prepared to respond to any issues as they occur. Thus, when the brutal events in Uitenhage became known, ECC's in all regions protested. The Johannesburg region organised a protest meeting with Stone Sizane of Uitenhage, Sheena Duncan of the Black Sash and Reverend Beyers Naude.

War in the townships

Defence Minister Malan said that in trying to make South Africa 'ungovernable' the "ANC, the SACP and the UDF" were promoting the Anti-Conscription Campaign. He also said that if township unrest continued it would be necessary to increase the Defence Budget so that the SADF could be employed in "the prevention and suppression of terrorism".

ECC believes South Africa is in a state of civil war. The majority of South Africans refuse to accept the conditions that the apartheid system imposes on them. The unrest in the townships over the last year has been sparked off by the authorities' harsh reaction to the people's protests against high rents, corrupt community councils, poor schooling and repression. The violent response of the government has led to more and more violence.

We believe that peace can only come about in a South Africa free of apartheid. The use of the SADF in the townships is aggravating the conflict. The people do not see the SADF as a protector, but rather as an aggressive force maintaining apartheid.

Public reaction to this situation has led to increasing support for the End Conscription Campaign from organisations and individuals concerned about the civil war.

We believe that in a civil war it is the moral right of young South Africans to exercise freedom of conscience in choosing whether or not to fight in the SADF. The real solution to South Africa's problems lies in building a just and democratic society - not in increasing militarisation and repression.

MPC: Bypassing 435

After more than 25 years of Namibian resistance to South Africa's occupation, P.W. Botha has given the go-ahead to the 'transitional government of national unity' proposed by the Multi-Party Conference.

The ECC believes this move is an attempt by the South African government to bypass United Nations Resolution 435. The resolution calls for the withdrawal of the SADF from Namibian soil, and provides for the holding of free and fair elections.

The transitional government will exclude the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) which is supported by the majority of the Namibian people. This 'reform' will merely serve to perpetuate South Africa's rule. Without SWAPO, the transitional government will not bring peace.

Angola: Has anything changed?

THE PRESS carried banner headlines on the mass withdrawal of South African troops from Angola on April 17. ECC FOCUS interviewed Max du Preez, the political editor of the Financial Mail, on the implications of this move.

ECC: Why did the South African troops withdraw from Angola?

It was at the Luanda conference of February 17 last year that South Africa agreed to pull out. It was supposed to pull out a couple of weeks after that date, but kept saying that the security position was such that they couldn't.

And then late last year they had a meeting with the Angolans and said that the Angolans asked for a ministerial meeting between Pretoria and Luanda before the final withdrawal. That meeting did not take place.

A few weeks ago South Africa announced that it was prepared to withdraw "unilaterally" in other words without that ministerial meeting. I think the rationale behind this move was to let it coincide with the announcement of the Multi Party Conference and its transitional government. This was done to please the Americans, particularly Chester Crocker; the MPC is a negative thing, so give them something positive.

ECC: Is this a significant step forward to a genuine solution according to U.N. Resolution 435?

No, it is not a significant step. It ends a decade of South African occupation of Angola, but the withdrawal was agreed upon more than a year ago. You know the government has this unique ability to do something totally outrageous and then to undo it - collecting praise along the way. It happened with the Immorality Act - people think the government is wonderful to scrap it - same with going into Angola and withdrawing. "Look at these nice South Africans, they are withdrawing from Angola." But they should never have been there. That was pure aggression.

ECC: What were they doing in Angola in the first place?

They went in in 1976 on what they called Operation Survive. They fought on the side of Unita and the FNLA before independence, then withdrew. From 1978 they occupied the whole Cunene province.

At stages they went north as far as Cuvelai and on May 1 of that year the Cassinga



Namibia: waiting for peace

Massacre took place. That's well into central Angola.

ECC: The operational area was closed to non-residents and the non-military. A lot of people have been getting four month border camps. Church contacts in Namibia believe this is an indication that further moves by South Africa into Angola might take place. Do you think so?

I would be surprised if that did happen. They have made a big thing of this withdrawal. Remember there is a history to this. In November 1983 the State Security Council decided to invade Angola and to take Lubango. According to reliable sources the Soviet Union heard of this plan and called Kurt von Shirndig, South Africa's ambassador at the United Nations in.

They met in a New York hotel and warned him that if South Africa did invade Angola they would step up their campaign. The government took fright and decided against the manoeuvre.

Instead they launched Operation Askari in December of that year. They walked into things they did not know Fapla had, and lost over 40 men, though this was never acknowledged.

All indications are that South Africa then decided that things were getting too expen-

sive in terms of lives, money and equipment. As they withdrew from Askari, P.W. Botha made the peace offer to Angola and a month later, on April 17, they agreed on the Joint Monitoring Commission.

ECC: Are they really disbanding Koevoet?

They are disbanding it. It is a trick - they are now using the South West African Police Force instead. The task force has acted with or as Koevoet for the last year or two.

It is only a change in name. Katjuonga, leader of Swanu, is unhappy with what Koevoet is doing and they know it's counterproductive for the MPC. So I suppose you will see a bit of control of Koevoet, but you won't see them disappear.

ECC: Now that South Africa is out of Angola, what does it mean for Swapo bases. How much of a military loss is it to South Africa?

No I don't believe it makes any change. The agreement is that Swapo will not use the area cleared by the JMC. There is evidence that the MPLA is serious about keeping their end of the bargain.

For South Africa it is nothing because they sit with a massive air base at Ondanwa and all their troops massed in Ovambo. They know that area, every inch of it - it would only take 24 hours for them to retake the land.

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