the Objector

SEPTEMBER 1993

JANUARY CALL-UP CANCELLED!

See story on p3



"...we salute you."

-ANC president Nelson Mandela, keynote speaker at the ECC National Peace Festival, acknowledges more than a decade of grassroots struggle within the "white" population against apartheid and militarisation. See article within.

EDITORIAL

As the newsletter of COSG (the Conscientious Objector Support Group), this publication reflects the life of the organisation not only in its content, but in its production process. We are now at the end of the era of apartheid conscription, and are redefining our roles as activists in a changing South Africa and as of the world peace movement, and have lost two of the three members of the editorial collective. Hence the gap in publication.

When COSG decided to affiliate to War Resisters' International, it also decided in principle to continue after the end of racial conscription (in contrast to the End Conscription Campaign, which will disband). The broad outlines of COSG's future activities were seen as (a) opposing militarisation. especially in South Africa; (b) supporting COs wherever we

materialise COSG would have to suggestions back home. consider whether to maintain an mean pursued, resources.

The above paragraphs were written before the anticlimactic announcement that racial conscription would be ended, and they still seem to suffice. It only remains to add that the articles in this issue on "Women the Overcomina Violence" conference conscription... assuming, that is, that the generals aren't cooking up a new scheme...



WRI Conference: Women Overcoming Violence

Bangkok, November 1992

A personal account by Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge

could, even though there will This experience made a profound impact on me. What it is I can't probably (hopefully) be no more really say - maybe it was the opportunity to meet women from in our own country, and (c) such diverse experiences. Although our needs and experiences contributing generally to the were different, we were able to enrich each other. Our diversity international peace movement. was evident in the stories we told. Some wanted theoretical now appears that a analysis to help them understand the nature and source of broad-based peace movement women's oppression and of violence in our society. Others just is necessary and possible in wanted to share their suffering and hear about others' South Africa, and should this experiences in order to develop strategies and practical

Diversity was therefore a resource rather than an obstacle. The independent identity. At the organisers' sensitivity to our needs helped build a spirit of unity and same time, the reduced sisterhood among participants. For example, the organisers took availability of external funding seriously the input and suggestions made at the half-way whatever evaluation. The Talking Circles were a great success in that they are provided support and were a forum for the women to discuss and sustainable primarily by local further explore themes from the conference.

These were some of the highlights for me:

- * Thailand the venue of the conference was very well chosen. rather Apart from the beauty of the country itself and the warmth of its people, Thailand gave me the opportunity to meet and interact with people from countries, which in my limited experience, I did not know existed; countries in Asia and the Pacific islands. Thailand provided a relaxed and peaceful atmosphere for the interaction.
- * The people I did not get a chance to speak to all the are participants, yet I felt that each womAn I spoke to was a rich welcome hints of some of the resource. We talked, laughed and sang together. Every evening, flavour of peace activism after after supper, we gathered on the front steps and sang. We even stopped worrying about the mosquitos!

There was a lot to learn from the women. One of the women I (CONTD on p4)

No further intakes - but camps continue

there will not be "the normal intake of white non-racial national servicemen in 1994."

The press release went on to say: "The present Citizen Force and Commando service obligations military threat, the Ministry's emphasis on the are however not initially in any way affected by need for a new system which will guarantee the announcement."

that it is only the racial nature of the present continued commitment to the role of the military conscription system that is being renounced,

On the 25th of August, the South African Ministry rather than the principle of conscription. It would of "Defence" announced that, pending an appear that if the state is not satisfied with the "amended and more representative system", number of "suitable" volunteers available, a ballot system (probably educational qualifications) will be introduced.

In the absence of any plausible external "trained manpower for the part-time forces of the The wording of the announcement indicates country" can only be interpreted to mean a as the means of ultimate social control.

...so, what'e up with the Call-p?

soldiers called up for part-time service) and 40% usually a fine of not more than R600 for privates, of "national servicemen" (new recruits) were R1200 for NCOs, and R5000 for officers. A first reporting for duty.

A new government will almost certainly scrap conscription, mainly for economic and logistical

Once the Transitional Executive Council is in place, the ANC and other parties will have a direct say in military deployment policies, and would not want to be associated with prosecutions of objectors. At the recent Peace Festival, I asked Albie Sachs of the ANC negotiating team what would happen to the conscription system under transitional government, but he gave no definite answer other than to state that his movement was opposed to retaining conscription in a new South Africa, and that the ANC is the only party in the end) the sentence would probably be to current negotiations to recognise conscientious part-time objection in its Bill of Rights.

Despite the above, the SADF is vigourously following up conscripts who did not report for this January's call-up. To my knowledge, only one has been summonsed to appear in court (in the Transvaal), but many hundreds have been visited by Military Police in the course of investigations.

What are the prospects for conscription in South The charge non-reporters face is "Failure to Africa? Prior to this month's announcement, racial Report", which has a maximum penalty of 4 conscription was definitely on its last legs. Only months' imprisonment, but nobody has ever been about 20% of "campers" (previously trained imprisoned under this section. The penalty is offender will never be fined the maximum. Thus, a private who is eventually traced, charged and brought to trial is likely to be fined between R300 Recently, however, a Durban magistrate sentenced a camper to 3 months imprisonment, suspended for 4 years. He has lodged an appeal against the severity of the sentence.

> In my experience people who write to the military when they receive callups, explaining that they refuse to serve on political or moral grounds, are generally left alone. Even if such people were tried for "Refusal to Render Service", (which is inconceivable after announcement that racial conscription would community service, spare-time work for non-profit organisations, perhaps up to a total of 800 hours in the case of someone who has never served in the military.

> Thus, the moral of the story is: the SADF BARK IS WORSE THAN ITS BITE: DON'T INTIMIDATED. The system is collapsing and will soon be gone. (Richard Steele)

WOMEN OVERCOMING VIOLENCE - continued

spent a lot of time with was Vivien Sharples from They prepared the tastiest meals, making us feel Seattle. She works for the War Resisters' League, loved and cared for, Patty and I spent the last She helped me think more deeply about evening having dinner with some WRI women at oppression, by making me aware that we need a street restaurant in Bangkok - very good and to keep ourselves in check in whatever ways we very cheap! have privilege. She made me realise that despite our best intentions we find, more often than not, that we duplicate the patterns of power we find so abhorrent in dominant culture. And that, to create a context which embraces diversity, in which no-one is marginalised, a conscious effort is required.

Women from Africa: Among the participants preservation of culture and personkind. there were women from Senegal, Morocco, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Uganda and South Africa. It wes quite a challenge when we were asked to present a cultural item that was African. We managed to come up with a kind of blend of our various cultures! Patty and Adele looked stunning in their Afro outfits!

- other. We had lots of fun together: we rode are united in their fight against militarism. motor bikes, tuk-tuks, and even on an elephant. After the conference we spent three days up North in Ching Mai. We stayed in a small motel, in an old part of the city, surrounded by a moat and remains of the old walls. That was wonderful.
- were wonderful: very helpful and patient with us. movement on peace and emvironmental issues.

* Some insights - On Consumerism: Women and the poor as consumers have a powerful tool at their disposal. They can use their consumer power positively, to influence decisions about the kind of goods that are produced. An awareness of this power is needed, together with an awareness of conservation of nature, and the

On Crossing the Line - It is possible. "Women in Black" brought together Israeli and PLO women in a campaign to end the occupation. Palestinian and Israeli women work together and learn from one another. Turkish and Greek Cypriots are campaigning for their people to be re-united. Women from all walks of life have marched * Being with Patty Geerdts - Although Patty together. For the march, they carried no and I had met and talked in South Africa, it was emblems and no symbols. They broke and in Thailand that we got to know and like each crossed the military line that divided them. They

To summarise: I came back refreshed and revitalised. The conference affirmed commitment to working for peace and justice for all. The challenge is to make sure that the message of peace reaches everyone. One way * The food - you have to experience Thai food could be through the various organisations we to really know what it is like! During the belong to. I am excited, for example, that the conference I learnt to appreciate vegetarian Strategy Conference of the SACP has adopted a food. Our hosts at We-Train Conference Centre resolution to work with the world peace

Another perspective By Adele Kirsten

The conference was attended by approximately 150 women from 51 countries. It brought together women from grassroots movements in both the South and the North, women activists coming from many diverse backgrounds and cultures. It was exhausting, overwhelming, exciting and frustrating being with so many women from so many different countries with so many different issues.

outside Europe, it took 5 years to plan - the last towards women's role in determining a way was held in Ireland (just outside Dublin) in 1987. forward. Small group discussions or workshops The conference focus, "Women Overcoming discussed specific issues around the broad Violence", arose out of "an awareness of the themes. For example, in Women Overcoming escalation of violence and displacement in the Violence, the plenary focussed on domestic world, in the form of wars, militarist oppression, violence and its relationship to the other two poverty, maldevelopment, social oppression, themes and the workshops then looked at issues economic exploitation, ecological abuses and such as: Working with rape survivors; Women's physical violence. More often than not women Rights as Human Rights; Nonviolent and Nonsexist bear the brunt of these oppressions."

The conference's three main themes were:

- * Women overcoming Violence;
- * Women and Militarism;
- * Women Redefining Development.

A panel of 4 to 5 women introduced each day's theme with an overview of the key issues during a plenary session. The aim of the plenary session was to set the tone for the day - to give an idea The first WRI Women's conference to be held of the issues around the theme and to point Education for Children, etc. Workshop options on

Another perspective on Women Overcoming Violence - contd.

the second theme included topics such as: This is a familiar picture for South Africans - the intervention and Neocolonialism and Militarisation; War trauma of the conference included women workers.

happened over meals, in the passages and late the same assertion. at night in the dormitories.

a lack of focus on the theme of the day by the relationship to the other themes. The inputs and panelists. They failed in their inputs to provide discussion around this theme were perhaps the participants with direction, challenge and most powerful and useful for many of us. Many content to discuss further in the smaller speakers highlighted that economic power and workshops. Most speakers focused on women as development based on domination by a few with stories of women overcoming oppression rich telling to helping answer the question "how do we development which ensures the physical and change this?" Clearly, many had an incredible material well-being of all. Many spoke with a need just to talk - to tell our stories.

spent drawing up resolutions which were existence. "The current world situation cannot discussed in the talking circles. The resolutions continue," said Nelsa Curbelo, of SER-PAJ, Latin were generally quite broad - more policy America. "it is moving to destruction. But there statements than clear, concise suggestions for are alternatives coming up from the poor, the action. Some resolutions were: condemnation marginalised - like the noise of the sea before a of the abuse of Cambodian women by members storm, the noise of the earth before an of UN "peacekeeping" forces; that WRI recognise earthquake." exploitation of women workers as a form of violence; suggested topic for 1993 on the central role in development planning. However, International Day to End Violence Against we are often not consulted at all. Elaine Hewitt of Women (25 Nov) - "Solidarity with Migrant Women Barbados said:"There are so many cases where Refugees"; and Women for co-ordinated activities on International Women's their Day (9 March), such as "Cross the Line" activities - consulted." eg meetings of women from Serbia and Croatia.

was incredibly exciting and energising being their situations. education budgets combined, and that once in you a peculiar strength. again women suffer most from skewed priorities.

invasion; inequitable distribution of resources.

After the second day, pieces began to fit and children; Women as refugees of war. The together. The links between domestic violence and war go deeper than just the phenomenon of workshops such as: Responses to state and soldiers, brutalised by war, coming home to beat industrial encroachment on indigenous land; their wives, deeper than just a general "culture of Women gaining economic independence; violence". It is the psychological equivalence of Nonviolent decision making; Trade unions and war and domestic violence, the intricate between the constructions relationship The organisers had also planned regular masculinity and patriotism and violence that can Talking Circle meetings - groups of 7 to 8 women make abusing your wife into a part of the war, an got together to talk about the issues of the day, alternative way of "being on the front". Women to how we were feeling about the proceedings, from Cambodia and former Yugoslavia assert etc. The same women remained in these groups that the United Nations "peacekeeping" troops throughout the conference. Of course, some of are implicated in rape and sexual harassment. the most interesting and rivetting discussion Not too far from home - Namibia - we have heard

As well as domestic violence and militarism, One of the frustrations of the conference was the conference focused on development, and its victims without combining stories of exploitation major powers have increased the gap between and poor, encouraging through innovative and positive actions. Similar dependence and exploitation - in particular of problems occured in workshops with some women. However, delogates felt that it was participants not being able to move from story possible and desirable to create a model of sense of urgency about the fragility of the world The last two days of the conference were and anxiety about the quality of its continued

> In a sensible world women would play a concurrent, government and funding agencies have failed in projects because women were

Women were strengthened by each other's Despite the conference's structural failings, it accounts of how they had survived and changed Maggie Helwig, a Canadian together. It became clear that as women, we are journalist, had this to say: "There are no reasons to more often the casualties of war; and all the think that women are naturally less violent than effects of war - hunger, disease, displacement - men. But there are reasons to suppose that our affect us most. Siriporn Sakrobanek of Thailand peculiar relationship to violence can - if we said 70 to 80% of the world's refugees are women, choose - be the basis for a different perspective. and pointed out that in most Asian and Pacific Living with everyday terror until fear is almost countries, military budgets exceed health and tediously familiar can destroy you; or it can build

We are surviving, and we are not going away."

GOING OUT IN STYLE: THE ECC PEACE FESTIVAL

July saw what was probably the last major event National Peace Accord, workshops dealt with of the decade-old End Conscription Campaign, "Intervening to Prevent Violence", "Community before racial conscription was abolished as part Initiatives Against Violence", "A National Peace of the transition to a "New South Africa". Hundreds Keeping Force" and "After Elections in Angola of people from all over the country attended the What Can We Learn?"; National Peace Festival, held at the University of the Witwatersrand.

In keeping with the ECC tradition of diversity, Armed the organisers catered for those who'd like to see Organisations", "Police as Peace Keepers" and a new integrated defence force, as well as those "The Right Wing"; this was followed by a special who'd rather see disintegration of armed session on Bosnia addressed by award-winning forces...here's a summary of the programme:

- * the festival opened with a cheese & wine function, against the backdrop of an exhibition of Elite Swingsters, Bush Culture and Tananas; anti-conscription media, followed by some musical events, and then Nelson Mandela's the theme "Developing a Peaceful Society" keynote address. He praised the work of the Campaign and its allies - but went on to say, as Policy", "Healing the Wounds of the Past in South an intended compliment, that there will be a Africa", "Peace Education in Schools", "A Voluntary place for it in the future South Africa!
- history, the first theme session dealt with "Peace ongoing process of consultation about which Keeping in South Africa"; after an input on the more will (hopefully) soon be heard.

- * the next theme session was "Armed Forces in Transition", with workshops on "Integration of Forces", "Disclosure and Intelligence Guardian journalist Maggie O'Kane;
- * supper was accompanied by a music by the
- * after interfaith prayers to start the final day, connected workshops on "A Future Defence Civilian Service" and "A New Anti-Militarisation * after a review of the ECC's origins and Movement" - this last session resulting in an

UPDATE ON S.A. MILITARISM AND RESISTANCE

October 92:

(these two items were accidentally ommitted from the violence, last Objector)

- disbanded CCB (Civil negotiations urgently; Co-operation Bureau - a covert SADF unit) indicated at the government accuses the SA inquest into assassination of activist and support UNITA fighters, and Webster the chief suspect is academic David Webster:
- * a draft Bill published in the Botha persona non grata; Government Gazette which, if made law, would "restriction" of products and SADF plot, codenamed "Project government and the ANC begin technology related to mass Echoes", to discredit the ANC; it in earnest, and Inkatha leader destruction, eq. weapons.

November 92:

Army announces additional troop call-ups to help combat the increased violence in Natal. Defence Minister Gene Louw accuses Transkei

the Reef:

- SA Council Churches' Frank Chikane calls * Involvement of members of on political leaders to re-open appointed by President de Klerk
 - * in Luanda the Angolan activities; 1989 government of continuing to the 1989 assassination of David declares Foreign Minister Pik Ferdi Barnard, one-time CCB
 - * the inquest of ANC lawyer employed by the DCC; allow Bheki Mlangeni discloses an nuclear was linked to members of a Buthelezi responds with a threat militant Ulster loyalist group;
- Judge (commissioned to investigate political violence) Collection), apparently successor to the disbanded responsibility; of CCB; documents relating to an training and housing MK cadres. anti-ANC smear campaign are show, the "Defence Exposition of

further powers to investigate the * in view of the increasing security forces is turned down by of President de Klerk;

- * General Pierre Stevn is to investigate SADF Intelligence
- * at the judicial enquiry into member subsequently
- * bilateral talks between the to turn Natal/Kwazulu into an Goldstone independent state;
- * the endemic violence uncovers begins to impact on whites: four another secret MI project, the are shot dead at a golf club in DCC (Directorate of Covert Kingwilliamstown, and the PAC's the armed wing, APLA, claims
- Train violence erupts again on seized. Goldstone's request for South Africa", in Johannesburg.

UPDATE (contd)

ECC, Black Sash and MOP (Methodist Order Peacemakers) distribute leaflets protesting at services. the social cost of the arms industry.

December:

- Justice for leave to appeal halt the sale of 60 Pilatus training September aircraft: the against iudaement of the Transvaal Supreme Court (which upheld valued at R134000 stolen from stands at R4,4 billion, of which the validity of continued racial conscription) is refused;
- reports of air space far-Right violations by the SA Air Force Weerstandsbeweging over Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe Mozambique raise states;
- * the SADF announces a new Voluntary Period Short Service 4000 failed to obey the January system to replace some of its "National Service" callup, and Permanent Force members by that large-scale prosecutions volunteers ("of all population would be a logistical nightmare, on contracts between two and six years. Cuts ruthless crackdown; in the "defence" budget have reduced permanent posts by Africa has an advanced nuclear more than 6000.
- in Cape Town, 21 men facing Pelindaba; "National Service" call-ups publicly state their refusal to serve;
- alleged informal training bases are found in the the Transkei, near the white-owned Pretoria/Witwatersrand/Vaal having such bases;
- * an investigatio by the police been declared "unrest areas". into corruption in the arms industry reveals a possible connection between Armscor employee and the CCB, with Armscor funds being channeled to the CCB through a front firm;
- SADF are placed on compulsory government's leave or early retirement and a prosecute all "draft dodgers"; further seven are being investigated for "criminal or Those unauthorised activities".

include the Officer of Commanding the DCC, and ANC confirms that five are ANC members other members of Intelligence members, and claims that one

January 1993:

- * In terms of the 1977 arms embargo of South Africa, the UN * ECC's petition to the Chief puts pressure on Switzerland to
- an army weapons store at R4.2 billion is for arms purchases, Welkom. Seven members of the Afrikaner (AWB) Botswana, arrested. Two South Africans are and reported to have attempted to fears of buy 20 million pounds' worth of destabilisation of neighbouring arms from an international syndicate in London;
 - * the ECC claims that about of although the SADF promises a
 - weapons program and a * at an ECC press conference stockpile of such weapons at impartial.
- the Human Rights Commission reports that 3499 the Pilatus training aircraft being people died in political violence sold to South Africa to be APLA last year, of these, 1822 were in incapable of being armed (the farms of the north-east Cape area and 1430 in Natal. By the trainers); province. The PAC later denies end of December, 29 magisterial districts and five townships had appears in court again; charges

February:

- University of Pretoria military unit confirms threat
- arms cache the Natal/Swaziland border, eight

men are arrested: the was severely tortured after arrest;

- * Admiral Paul Murray, Chief of Defence Staff (Finance) announces that the "defence" budget is to be further slashed; the current year's allocation is R9.7 billion: the (unaudited) * weapons and ammunition Special Defence Account still and R200 million for "special projects";
 - * the army plans to reduce (part-time) force obligations from April if the situation in the country is stable;
 - * rumours abound of arms being illegally flown to UNITA in Angola from Mmabatho in the Bophutatswana "homeland", and of the MPLA recruiting mercenaries from disbanded SADF units:
- * ANC leaders in Natal call for * the CIA claims that South an international peacekeeping force; neither the ANC nor Inkatha considers the police

March:

- * The Swiss government orders the SA Air Force intends them to replace current Harvard
 - religious objector Luis Mitras dropped;
- * at the reopened inquest of * 22 conscripts from the four activists, a Col. du Plessis that are court-martialled for failing to authorised by Brig. van der report for a camp over the Westhuizen was a death order Christmas/New Year period, and for the four (v.d.Westhuizen is are fined R200 or less. ECC calls now chief of Military Intelligence * nine senior officers of the this a show trial to bolster the and was also the mastermind of to a secret plan in 1986 to counter the ANC and UDF in the eastern * as a result of the seizure of Cape and to depose the then president of "homeland", Lennox Sebe);

UPDATE (contd)

- the controversial Battalion, comprising former Angolans, is disbanded:
- * President de Klerk admits forum; South Africa's nuclear capability, claiming that the six weapons the produced in the 80's are launched dismantled;
- Citizen Force and Commando claim to have the support of 500 Peace Festival held see article justified bv referring to "crime and terrorism": the PAC interprets this as a members; threat to invade the Transkei "homeland".

April:

- the portfolio of "Defence" from clandestine arms imports. Gene Louw, while simultaneously holding that of "Justice";
- veteran, assassinated. immigrant Janus arrested. Days before his death Voluntary Short Service System; called for the transformation of controversial jailed for an effective three years armed vehicles; township "Self Defence Units" into on Peace Corps-type formations to confidential documents relating rehabilitate communities:
- * memorial services, marches, at Mtubatuba; and Hani's funeral bring the comprising 20 000 troops and 1994. police. A week later veteran ANC leader Oliver Tambo dies aged 79:
- John Downie and John Kelley, Government to purchase arms strategy" appear in court on charges of to fight UNITA, and to intensify counterrevolutionary warfare by refusing to serve in the SADF; the both cases remanded to June UNITA, after having voted for the and destabilisation; 28:
- * in support of Kelley and encourage Downie, 50 other campers state technical assistance to the MPLA prison camps outside their refusal to do further camps; government; thirteen of them publicly return kit to Witwatersrand Command after a press conference at which the ECC calls suspension of prosecutions.

May:

32 combined armed force of about head of the army: mainly 5000 to safeguard the run-up to finally elections could be on the "National Servicemen" only 2600 agenda of the negotiations of the 12000 called up report for

- Afrikaner Volksfront, by four generals, including ex-Chief of will be prosecuted; * emergency callups of 20 000 the SADF Constand Viljoen. They 000 trained soldiers, ie Citizen in this issue; Force and Commando
- * the ex-chairman of Armscor discloses that a former Armscor agent absconded with R2.3 million by falsifying signatures of * Kobie Coetzee takes over foreign-based officials handling

June:

- * The SADF announces that * Chris Hani, Communist Party

 * The SADF announces that leader and Umkhonto weSizwe

 * One of all races and leader and Umkhonto weSizwe Polish both sexes had applied for Walusz employment in the SADF's
 - charges of stealina destabilised to radio frequencies and the Durban to protest against lack of layout of 121 Battalion barracks
- * John Downie and John Kelly army; country to a stop. A massive in court again at Vanderbijlpark; security operation is mounted, cases postponed to January government departments were

- * Russia, Portugal and the USA on the international * two Citizen Force campers, community to allow the Angolan UN Security Council economic
- for October, and "Defence" minister abuses; Kobie Coetzee announces that * The ANC's proposal for a by General George Meiring, the see articles in this issue.

- at the July intake of duty; Genl. Liebenberg confirms * a new rightwing alliance, that the SADF is looking at a new is recruitment system, but states retired that those who ignored call-ups
 - * End Conscription Campaign
 - * some eight men are due to appear in johannesburg and Pretoria magistrates' courts on charges of failing to report for the January call-up; most of them pay admission of quilt fines of R300, a precedent apparently established in the case of international rugby player Robert du Preez.

August:

- * In response to the high death toll in East Rand township violence, troops are deployed to * army signaller Zalani Sikokoyi support police by patrolling in
 - Umkhonto weSizwe soldiers occupy ANC branch offices in support by the ANC and failure to incorporate them in a new
 - * the Weekly Mail reports that ordered to destroy classified documents especially those relating to the National Security Management System, instrument of P.W.Botha's "total which arms embargo against covert operations, disinformation
- * allegations to torture and and solitary confinement in ANC Africa in the past are confirtmed * General Kat Liebenberg in the report of the Motsuenyane announces his retirement as Commission appointed by the head of the SADF at the end of ANC to probe human rights
- * Kobie Coetzee announces Liebenberg will be succeeded the end of racial conscription -

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END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)

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