

comment

JUSTICE WILL END THE WAR

The general elections are over. The white electorate has made a clear choice - it voted while the dust had hardly settled after the SADF's invasion into Zambia, and it voted for war. Across South Africa, National Security is now an almost inescapable totem - from the covert actions of the Joint Management Centres to the rapidly growing civilian security industry. Militarisation has become an end in itself.

All this is nothing new, however. The militaristic nature of our society and the SADF's oppression of South African people goes back a long way - it has always been seen to serve the interests of the ruling elite at the cost of the majority of South Africans. But as the situation worsens, the militarisation of our society intensifies.

The ECC firmly believes that war is not compulsory - there are other alternatives other than total militarisation and we demand that South Africans be given the right to choose, particularly conscripts, who must be given viable alternatives. These demands form part of ECC's "War is not Compulsory - Let's Choose a Just Peace" campaign.

South Africa's problems cannot be solved by turning our country into a garrison state, at war with itself and its neighbours. We must instead work for a peace based on justice.

Janet Cherry still inside

Janet Cherry, the chairperson of Port Elizabeth ECC and a founder member, has been in detention the longest of all ECC activists. She has been in detention for almost 10 months. Janet is no stranger to detention and police harassment.

She was briefly detained in August 1984 and spent 3 weeks in solitary confinement in July 1985. Her house and office has been frequently raided by the security police.

Since 1983, she has lived in Port Elizabeth, and been subjected to a series of right wing attacks. She has been assaulted in the street, has received death threats and has been hospitalised after a brick was thrown through the window of the car that she was driving. The tyres of her car have often been tampered with and her car has been fire-bombed twice.

Janet has played an active, sometimes leading role, in a range of organisations apart from the ECC, including the Nusas executive, the UDF (she was chairperson of the Port Elizabeth area committee in 1983) and the Black Sash. From 1983 to 1986, she worked as a literacy teacher for the Adult Learning Project in Port Elizabeth.

Janet was initially held for several months in Louis le Grange Square in Port Elizabeth, but was later moved to North End prison. She has spent a great deal of her time in solitary confinement as the only white woman detainee.

Security industry Battening down

There are always people who profit from the fear, suffering and horror of war.

Months of continuing unrest has put local security under the spotlight. White South Africa is battening down the hatches and gearing up for battle.

The escalating war in our country has had a stimulating effect on the security services and equipment industry. The growing demands from the business sector, as well as sections of the public, have produced a wide range of new locally made security products, many with export potential.

But the vultures do not only breed at home. Manufacturers worldwide are also rushing to bring their security products to South Africa.

The range of local and imported products now available is mind-boggling. You can buy screens to protect windows against stone throwing, see-through polycarbon riot shields, and body armour ranging from concealable bullet-proof vests to custom riot-squad jackets. Heavy-duty torches are available which double as batons and have a light equaling the brightest car headlamp. You can install a wall-top system made of revolving metal vanes with razor-sharp edges to keep out intruders. There are many more, but the piece d' resistance must surely be a Star Wars-type stun gun packing a 40 000 volt punch.

The security industry seems eager to grab new opportunities, and with violence in South Africa on the upswing, it seems to be standing ready to meet the 'onslaught'.

access control

Walking around the shops and buildings of Cape Town, one can-

Braaivleis, rugby, sunny skies and bag searches - the S.A. way of life.



not fail to notice the heightened security awareness. Office blocks and shopping centres have all stepped up security precautions.

"Access control" is the name given to this increasingly popular safety measure. It includes everything from aerial photographs of the 'site', fences around the perimeter, allowing only authorized vehicles into the grounds and,

of course, security checks at entrances. Handbag searches at supermarkets have become a South African way of life.

"Access control" was first developed when the Admissions to Premises Bill was passed four years ago. It reserved the right of admission and allowed a visitor to be searched.

What kind of char

People tend to blame the militarization of South African society on P.W Botha. Total strategy and the troops in the townships are seen as a mistake and the army should be 'apolitical', as it was before. But the Defence Force never was apolitical. The history of the Defence Force is littered with fragments of an unseen civil war.

The very first Defence Act, which set up the Union Defence Force (UDF) in 1912, led to massive militarization. It provided for conscription, cadets and a 5-regiment Permanent Force. The government discovered how much they needed this when, in January 1914, they called out the army to smash a miner's strike.

In October of the same year, 30 000 troops were called up to suppress a pro-German rebellion in which much of the UDF (including the Commandant-General) took part. (A modern comparison would be General Geldenhuys defecting to Maputo with the entire Parachute Battalion.) Eventually, the UDF sent 250 000 troops to World War I - a quarter of them black.

After the war, a scaled-down army was unable to contain the anti-capitalist revolt which erupted on the Rand in March 1922. Once martial law was declared on the 10th, the newly-formed South African Airforce bombed the Rand into surrender.

The SAAF won similar laurels



Still champions

against the Bondelswart and Owambo tribesmen in South-West Africa that June, and again against the Rehoboth in SWA in 1925. In 1932 the UDF was again used against the Owambos. South-West Africa seemed ideal for military exercises - but since 1966 the Namibians have been shooting back.

n the hatches



Private security - preparing to meet the 'onslaught'.

the service," notes the Financial Mail in their survey of the industry.

It has been reported, however, that conflict has arisen between the team and the South African Police. It now has to leave bomb defusions to the police. "A security consultant said the SAP is concerned that there could be encroachment of civilian services on its territory", reports the Financial Mail.

firearm sales escalate

Fifty-one percent of white households have a fire-arm and more than one million South Africans have fire-arm licenses, reports the Markinor research group from the results of a nationwide poll.

Executive director of the Security Academy (SA), Colonel Roy Jackson, reports that many of his clients such as industrial companies have been unable to meet their normal arms requirements over the past months because supplies have been snapped up by a weapon-hungry public. The level of arms training of many of these fire-arm owners is thought to be very low and this leads to dangerous and careless accidents. A total of 1 860 fire-arms were reported lost or stolen during 1985 in South Africa. More than 200 of these were issued to SADF personnel, according to the Hansard reports of the House of Assembly.

a 'secure' future

The results of the recent election show in no uncertain terms the overwhelming concern of most white South Africans - national security. Their preoccupation with their own security and protection is only likely to increase - good news for the security industry no doubt!



Failing to report for duty: According to figures released in parliament by the Minister of Defence, General Magnus Malan, the following numbers of conscripts failed to report for their national service:-

1984 - 1 596

1985 - 7589 (Just January call-up)

(Malan later stressed that over 6000 of those who failed to report for the call-up were students, most of whom were later deferred.)

In 1986 Malan refused to release the figures of those failing to report for national service, claiming that in the past these figures had been misused "by those campaigning for the termination of compulsory military conscription." Since then no such figures have been released.

According to the Commanding officers of several units in the Witwatersrand, in 1986 an average of twenty-five percent of conscripts failed to turn up for their SADF camps. This figure was released in the trials of five conscripts, all from different units, by their commanding officers, in the Johannesburg Magistrates Court in April 1985.

Permission not to do township duty: According to the Minister of Defence, three national servicemen who asked not to do duty in the townships were employed in "infrastructural posts" in 1986. The Minister did not say how many such requests were made by national servicemen.

SADF detention barracks: The SADF has five detention barracks capable of accomodating 429 offenders as at February 9 1987, the Minister of Defence said in parliament. He said it was not possible to give the average number of offenders held in military detention last year.

Size of the SADF and other security forces in S.A: According to the 1986 report of the Institute for Strategic Studies, South Africa has 106 400 people in its armed forces, including 64 000 national servicemen. In addition it has a further 167 000 active reserves and 150 000 people serving in its national reserve, meaning that South Africa has a total of 423 000 people in its armed forces or reserves. In addition, by the end of this year the South African Police will have 94 000 people (including the Railway Police which now fall under the SAP) and according to the Minister of Law and Order, 1 750 "special" constables were trained last year.

mpions?

Among the 400 000 UDF volunteers for World War 2, were many blacks trained for combat. Though they were not meant to be deployed, they fought alongside whites. This was to contribute to the formation of the non-racial Torch Commando, an ex-serviceman's organisation fighting against fascism.

But instead, the wartime South African fascists became Cabinet Ministers. The newly reformed UDF fought 'Communism' in Berlin and Korea as firmly as the SAP fought it at home - and for much the same reasons.

A new Defence Act of 1957 formed the SADF, increased the status of the Commandos and provided for ballot conscription.

This much increased militarization had just begun to take effect when the SADF moved into Pondoland in 1960, helping the South African Police quell a rebellion which flared there after the banning of the ANC and PAC.

It can be seen that the SADF has traditionally been used to suppress the resistance of the South African people to white minority rule. The invasion of Sebokeng in October 1984 only restored the old role of the armed forces, one of which the SADF's leaders are thoroughly proud. As General Earp, Chief of the Air Force, said at the Air Force's 67th birthday parade: "Soon after its formation the SAAF was already involved in maintaining law and order. It is strange that some people do not agree with this role".



Union Defence Force troops prepare to attack striking miners on the Rand in 1922.

South African frontline



Crossroads devastated after the battles of May 1986.

Township women speak

Since September 1984, there has been a constant presence of South African Security Forces in townships around South Africa. Lives for their inhabitants has been very different ever since.

OUT OF STEP spoke to two women living in Crossroads. Due to their fear of reprisals, we have not published their names. This is their personal account of life in a South African township today.

Mrs X: "I'll start from when the army started to destroy - to violently remove Old Crossroads. Since the forced removals they have become very strong. They have taken people like animals - shooting people, assaulting people, beating people.

After beating a person, shooting a person, to pull a person as a bag of coal and to throw a person into a casspir or a van as if they are throwing a bag of potatoes. I don't know how - because even if you throw a bag of maize you cannot just throw it. You will think about how much you've spent on it. So that's the way they have treated people: to beat a person and after they have assaulted a person - the worst thing of all is to double-shoot a person. If they've shot a person, they must shoot him again whilst the person is on the ground. After they've done that, they haven't any faith that that one is dead, they just pull him and throw the person.

And now they've got a new style - of arresting a person, hitting a person and taking him into a van or a casspir and tramp on a person whilst he's in a casspir or a van. And then they all stand - as you see them standing looking through the windows, there's

someone that they are standing on - as if they are standing on a box.

I think in South Africa a person is being charged so many times. Because they assault him, keep him in cells, and even in cells it's not that you've been arrested and they're keeping you quietly in the cells. They are passing you from one to another until you have just been condemned - you cannot do anything. And still you've got to be charged in front of the magistrate."

Mrs Z: "As I see now, there's a big difference between these years and earlier years. Earlier they were just on the streets - they weren't so rude like this. Even the army was there earlier but they were really good. Even if somebody tried to attack you, you could run to a white police and say 'Help me' and then he'd treat you with respect and try to solve that problem, but today! Today's army is lions! They hate a person. If one of the police or army come towards you, you are so scared. You know that the first thing they may do is beat you up, and then shoot you. And if they take you to a cell, they may beat you up. You are not safe in a cell.

If they come into your house, they just come like lions - they don't come with respect. When you ask with respect, you won't get a right answer from them. They shout at you. If they look in your house, they will scratch and scratch. They will just throw everything down. They won't take it back again and put it nicely. When you ask them 'But what do you want?', they shout 'You just keep quiet!'

We don't accept what's going on today. We don't accept the army. And I think they think they are trying to solve the problems - it

seems to me they make the problem worse. It's not going to solve the problem, the actions they are doing.

Mrs X: My family are police - my cousins - most of my mother's side, are police. What I always knew is that any person who is joining a force firstly has got to be disciplined. Secondly, he has got to be educated, and thirdly, he can't have any (criminal) records. That's what I always knew before. If you have a criminal record you are not allowed to join a force. But these days you'll find that there are people who have been killers have joined the force. People who are drinking have joined. You'll see that person is not disciplined at all. He is a skollie. These are the people that today have joined the force. We've got pickpockets in the kitskonstabels, people who've been stabbing people, people who've been smoking dagga. We've got witdoeke - people who've just killed last year - have joined the force.

They call them police. And another funny thing - well-trained police are not allowed to go home with their guns. When they are off duty they're not allowed to have their guns. But these kitskonstabels - you'll see them with these rifles when they are off duty. You'll see them in the shebeens, whilst they are on duty. You'll find them in the men's hostels, drunk, flat on the ground, with the rifle next to him. Drunk while he is on duty. Is this the way to act?

The police are more dangerous than criminals. And the way they talk when they are on those casspirs - the way they swear and the language they use with load-hailers.

People are saying that the white police are using kitskonstabels.

There are 2 or 3 of them and in front they put the kitskonstabels. People say they are using them as they did when they burnt the whole world using those people - the witdoeke - and they were behind, helping those people to burn. So they are still doing the same thing.

The other day some children were singing slogans inside K.T.C. The casspir followed them while they were singing and the first words from them were "All you blooming shits - you all get into your blooming houses and go to sleep and stop this nonsense!" You know, in such rude words, swearing at the children from a load-hailer. They were just doing their toyi-toyi in KTC and they followed them until they intimidated them and then after that it was a second casspir, and after that it was a helicopter, and after that it was teargas. They are starting to make the children wild. They always start and then after that the children had to use stones. That's how it always starts."

Mrs Z: "Even at funerals, they tell the people what they must do and what they must sing. If the people don't listen to them they throw teargas. After the teargas, the people have to just leave the boxes (coffins) in the open veld trying to save their lives and they come and throw teargas on top of these boxes. On top of the boxes! While the people are running up and down. At a funeral! They don't respect a funeral. Old people, young people, are going to the graveyard but they will interfere and throw teargas and the people just have to leave the boxes and run away. They throw teargas into the boxes!"

Question: How are the children specifically affected by the security forces?

Mrs X: "Children are affected. Because if they see 3 or 4 children walking they often swear. They must say something. Look at how often they've beaten the children. Now people who have children don't know what to do because if you tell the children not to run because they are going to shoot you - now the children don't run and they sometimes get beaten with quirts and sjamboks.

So before, we were always telling them not to run because once they run, they will want to know why they're running and then they'll arrest them. Now they don't run, and they are beating them with quirts and sjamboks."

Question: Do the SAP and SADF control crime at all?

I think police are after organisations. That is all. If anyone is being stabbed by someone in front of this house and you phone them to come quickly and help, they don't seem to come. They'll come after 2 or 3 hours. But if you just say there is one comrade here, they'll leave the police station empty. They'll all come to that one comrade, with all the casspirs, vans, buffels, and surround that place.

Things are happening in our township. People are being killed, assaulted, raped, but they seem to be slow in coming. They'll come to your place to ask you for a statement and then you'll have to accompany them to that place. But if it's a comrade, that police station will be empty! They seem to be after comrades. That's all.

An experience beyond doubt

The boys' hostel was abuzz with anticipation. Call-up papers for the matric class had eventually arrived at Erasmus High, Bronkhorstspuit. "All the guys were running around shouting. We were very keen on going, very excited. There was this whole thing: 'Ons gaan kaffirs skiet', says Ben Schoeman.

Although now the chairperson of the Stellenbosch branch of the End Conscription Campaign, Ben did not always hold anti-conscription views. Growing up in the shadow of his illustrious grandfather and namesake - the former Minister of Transport and leader of the Transvaal National Party - his ideas were moulded to fit the stereotype of a racist and militaristic young white South African.

But the army took him on a most profound journey. With the SADF he was taken deep into Southern Africa. It was a voyage of discovery. He was forced to turn his back on a youth which had prepared him to be among the next generation of white South African rulers.

Basic training was fairly eventful, if not enjoyable. And then came the seminal nine months of active service in Northern Namibia and Angola. "For me that was when things changed," says Ben.

On patrols and invasions with a troop of infantrymen giving specialised support to an armoured corps, he was confronted by one profound experience after another.

At first he saw the rules he had learned in basic training consistently broken. Permanent Force soldiers would never follow the

official SADF line of treating the local Owambos with respect. And on approaching a sergeant to explain the often cruel behaviour, he was told, "Yes, but that was what you learned in the 'states'. Here we know it doesn't work that way."

"My response at that stage was humanitarian," says Ben. "I wasn't happy seeing people getting beaten up for doing absolutely nothing."

His initial revulsion developed through a four month stint in Angola. He saw the SADF run amuck - with the encouragement of those in authority. He recalls the words of an officer briefing his squadron on the eve of their entry into Angola. "Listen guys, you're going into Angola now," he barked. Remember it's another man's country. You can do what you want. It's not our country. Nobody can do anything to us."

He saw in Angola the fulfillment of that briefing. It was common for the SADF troops to ransack the local beer shops. He saw Angolans being tortured - "a standard practice up there." He remembers seeing his captain torturing a woman by electrocuting her; and hearing a lieutenant, one of the 'tough guys', boasting that he could get a prisoner to admit he was a crocodile due to his special torture.

"It was this big joke. They would get people to make confessions that were nowhere near the truth."

He tells of many other acts of brutality. "You know a buffel, at the back it has this metal box where you put your ammo and so on. They would lock a man in

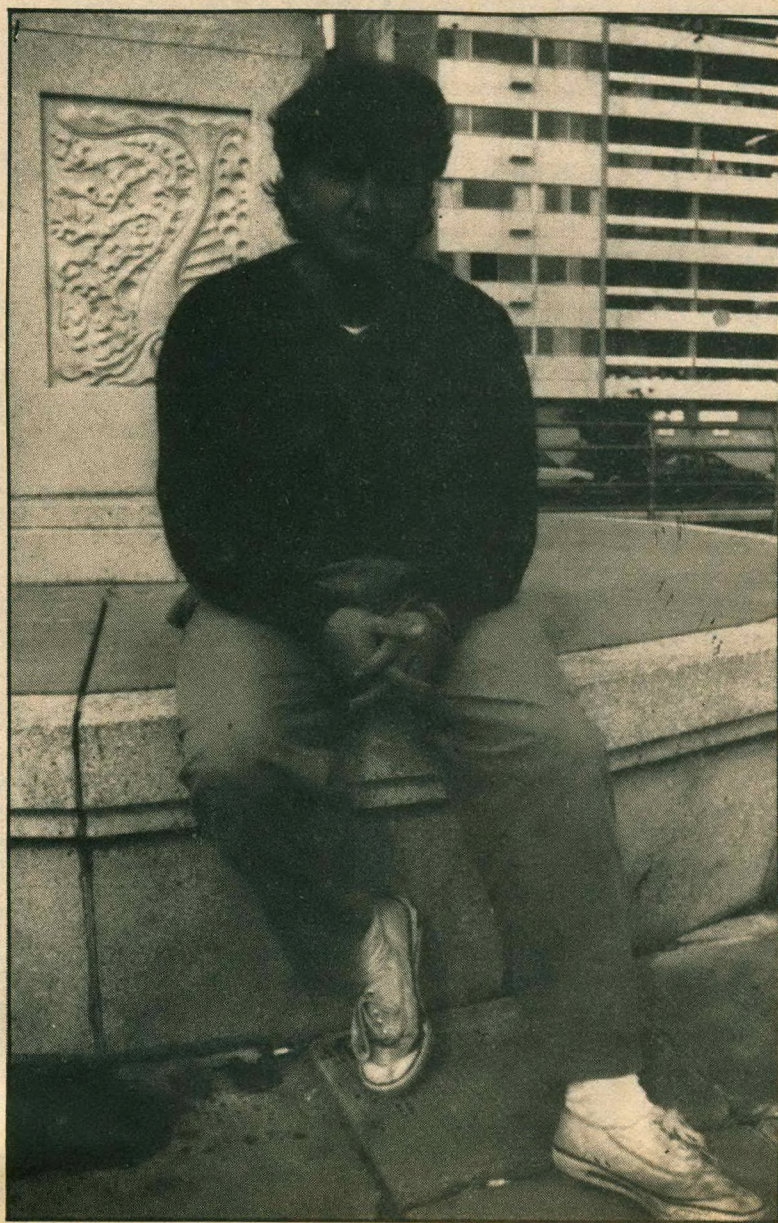
there and 'bundu bash' with him the whole day. By the night, when they took him out, his whole body was broken like pulp. And they would just leave him.

Ben's feelings of humanitarian revulsion became more intense as the days would pass. "It wasn't the way to win a war, because I believed in the war at that stage."

Then one afternoon while in Angola, he and his comrades were listening to the SABC news on the army radio. They heard that Magnus Malan had stated that there were no South African troops in Angola. "My corporal and I started chatting about why this man was lying. Quite jokingly, but after a while becoming serious. And we thought, 'What are we doing wrong?' We believed in this war. Why was it necessary to lie?"

Officers could not provide the answers except to repeat the stock phrase that the statement was in the interest of 'national security'. And on returning to Namibia, Ben sought further answers. The SADF publications in the local library didn't help. A local worker at his camp brought him several SWAPO publications to read. And while not agreeing with all that was written in them, he started to realise that "there was a bigger political role that we were playing. And it was unjust."

He was not alone in being affected by his experience. Many of the men felt "the same sort of unhappiness, frustration and confusion about the army. But they interpreted it totally differently. Some of them could never get that political content, and they reacted in different ways: becoming insubordinate, actually going to D.B. A lot of the arm-



Ben Schoeman

oured car people would sabotage their cars so that they wouldn't have to go on patrol."

After completing his initial service, and in his second year at Stellenbosch University, he got involved in ECC. "I always tell people I was ready for ECC long before it came to Stellenbosch,"

he jokes.

He says he will never serve in the SADF again. "But that was already like that the moment I came out of the army. There's no way I'm going back into the army, especially with the role it is playing now in the townships."

To Livingstone, with bullets



According to South African reports, the SADF raid into Zambia on April 25 succeeded. Members of the elite Reconnaissance Commando went by helicopter to Zambia, then rode motorcycles to Livingstone to observe a house suspected of being an ANC camp. Five 'terrorists' were killed with no South African losses.

According to Zambian and international reports, it was a first-magnitude disaster. The commandoes were seen by unarmed security guards outside a Livingstone bank. Whether they panicked or were given those

orders, they proceeded to gun down the guards and blow up the house, apparently a vegetable co-op, which they were meant to be watching. They

killed two people and wounded one, all Zambians.

Perhaps they were preparing for a larger attack on Zambia? Pik

Botha had certainly warned the Frontline states against harbouring 'terrorists', almost promising an attack. If that was the intention the raid was a blunder,

since it focussed attention on the area - and saved Zambia from further invasion.

So what was the raid for? Supposedly, to keep the ANC from disrupting the election. But there hasn't been any disruption - unless the police who shot the striking workers in Braamfontein and invaded campuses nationwide were ANC agents.

It seems that the raid was an election publicity stunt, trading corpses for votes. If South Africans have once again massacred unarmed civilians for little or no reason, is this any less than what we have come to expect over the last thirty years?

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