



Editorial Comment

Preaching Peace While Preparing for War

The racist regime's soaring military budget and the increased militarisation of the South African society fall sharply in contrast to Botha's so-called peace drive. Plans including the purchase of new helicopters and the building of new sub-marines to revamp the regime's obsolete war material, and the improvement of the service of SADF members, are underway. Botha preaches peace outside South Africa but breeds hell inside our country. His approach to "peace" and "reform" is "If you want peace, prepare for war."

HEARTS AND MINDS

Youth "adventure camps" is one of the instruments for furthering Botha's »hearts and minds» campaign.

Wild sprees are arranged by the SADF where children are taken for indoctrination. The non-existent »Soviet threat», »terrorist onslaught», »swart gevaar», etc, are used to whip up a war psychosis.

That Botha is mobilising for war is evident in all aspects of the socio-economic life and in all sectors of the population. Conscription, long enforced on whites, is to be extended to so-called Coloureds and Indians in reciprocation for »power sharing» in the president's council.

There has been the creation of organisations like the Voluntary Civil Defence. These organisations also act as reserve commandos and police units. The aim behind all this is to prepare every white man, woman,

and child for war. There is also the Civic Action Programme, whereby National Servicemen become teachers, health workers, agricultural and administrative workers in the homelands and in the rural areas. These national servicemen teach the black man whilst the rifle is in the corner of the classroom.

In so-called Coloured communities the regime erects tents during school holidays and show SADF films free of charge to children. Leadership courses are conducted countrywide in the black schools to solicit mental and physical support for the SADF. The cadet system which is organised as part of the SADF's «area defence» system, has close ties with the local army units. Military officers are being seconded to schools and teachers are encouraged to develop military skills with special training for art teachers in camouflage techniques. Pupils are taught subjects like «terrorist hunting» and are given lectures on the «communist threat» as well as being subjected to vigorous discipline and taught how to handle arms.

But the «hearts and minds» campaign is not having things its own way. There is staunch resistance against Botha's sinister plans. When a hundred children at the Belmore Primary school in Hanover Park were to be taken without their parents' consent on a SADF camp at Faure a month ago, their parents were up in arms with the school's physical teacher for collaborating in the planning of the outing. The trip which the teacher described as including soccer, tennis, cricket, and swimming was intended to include a series of lectures on civil defence. To crown it all, the children were to be transported to their destination in army trucks.

It is not surprising why the SADF

does not show children free films about its actions in Crossroads, Langa, KTC, Mogopa, etc where they have demolished houses, shacks and plastic shelters, rendering thousands of children with their parents homeless, exposed to die from cold.

This shows us how far fascism can go to impose itself even on toddlers for the sole purpose of keeping itself alive. It uses all dirty manoeuvres and lies in the book to justify its brutal actions of exploitation and the spilling of the blood of the oppressed struggling masses. These excursions also bite deep in the huge budget set aside for Pretoria's military adventure, — while — millions of our people suffer from extreme poverty, homelessness, disease, forced removals and brutal exploitation.

SADF's desperate efforts of trying to twist and turn our minds and conceal the true face of apartheid, making it look abstract to children's tender minds is just a pipedream and a big illusion. We still remember with bitterness how they murdered Hector Peterson on June 16, 1976, and still continue shooting many of his age wherever we demand the scrapping of the abominable system of bantu education. We have not known peace in South Africa, the racists are bullying everyone and everywhere.

It is our prime duty to ensure that this regime of terror and genocide is destroyed from the face of the earth. We must turn all they teach us against them. We must resist all its sinister intentions for it is apartheid that breeds all this conflict in our country. It is apartheid that denies us the right to exist, to live in peace and harmony in a democratic South Africa free from racism and oppression.