

Fighting a different war

NORTH AMERICAN STUDENTS HAVE led the struggle against apartheid on this continent by demanding universities sell stocks they hold in companies that do business with the South African government or have direct investments in the racially divided country. But university students in South Africa are waging a different, and more deadly, campaign against their country's racist regime.

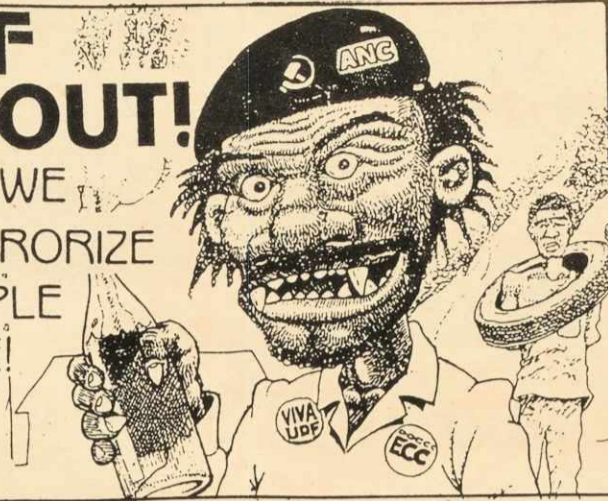
South African conscription law requires that all "white/males" serve two years in the South African Defense Force, and university students are leading the protest against the government's policy and police-enforced apartheid. Now, only religious objectors are exempt from the two years of defense service, and they must apply to the board of religious objection and prove that they are religious and universal pacifists.

The Gazette is reprinting the following article from *The Varsity*, the official student newspaper of the University of Cape Town in South Africa, as an example of the anti-conscription battle which is taking place there. *Compiled by Charles Spurr.*

SADF GET OUT!

SO THAT WE CAN TERRORIZE THE PEOPLE IN PEACE!

(Part of an anti-ECC slur campaign)



In December last year, a Board for Religious Objectors judge "passed sentence" on Harold Winkler's life. The judgement condemned the young conscientious objector to either: eternal study, exile, or jail. options available to Winkler since the Board refused his application for six years community service instead of two years "national service".

He rejected the Board's offer of "non-combatant" status. This refers to the alternative of two years of non-combat role in the

SADF offered to religious objectors. "I am not prepared to go to the army in any form" said the man who believes the SADF is nothing more than a central pillar of apartheid.

Winkler, who completed a BA in African Politics and Sociology at Wits last year, is a post-graduate student in Religious Studies at UCT. He will use the next few years to "grapple" with the options of living overseas or going to jail.

"Exile isn't really an option," he said. "I have very strong reser-

vations about leaving this country permanently. I want to be in South Africa. I want to be part of the struggle for freedom. I want to be part of the new South Africa in the construction phase." And a jail sentence is not a gratifying alternative. "Possibly something at some stage will lead me to accept one of those options" he said.

To Winkler, it was not the "reasonably sympathetic" Board that thrust him into this dilemma. That, he says, was the work of the government which he believes is using the military to set itself up as a Southern African "superpower" and to protect "sectarian white interests" within the country.

For three weeks in September last year, Winkler ate nothing and only drank water and herbal tea as part of the ECC's (End Conscription Campaign) "Troops Out" fast. He sees the fasting campaign as having popularized the military issue nationally and internationally.

Continued on page 8

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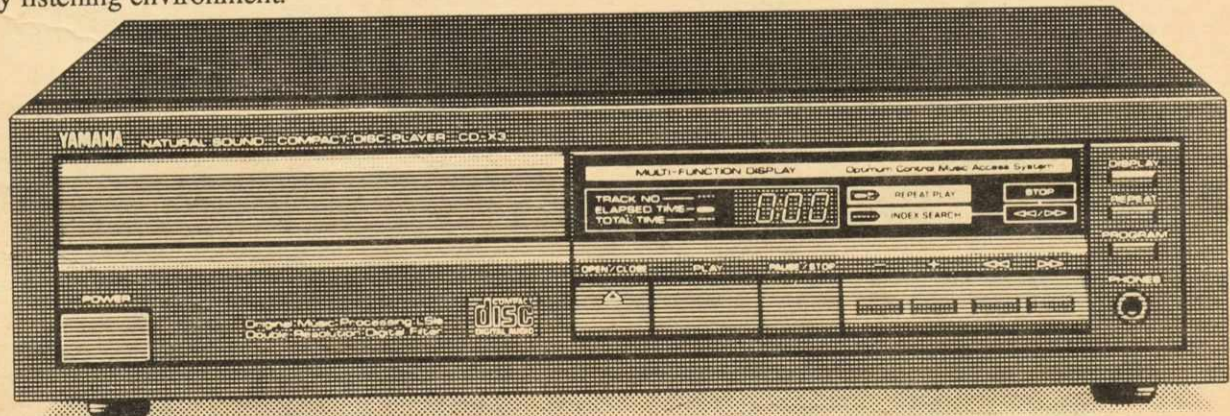
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