

November 1978

Action Alert: "Don't Feed the Wild Geese"

"The British Army paid me five shillings a week to shoot Chinamen. Now (in the Congo) I was being paid 500 pounds to shoot Black men..."

Ian Yule, mercenary in the Congo and actor in "The Wild Geese"

"The Wild Geese", a film fictionalizing the role of mercenaries in the Congo during the 1960's, opened in the United States November 10th after runs in Britain and South Africa this spring. The film stars actors Richard Burton, Roger Moore and Richard Harris.

"The Wild Geese" is based on a novel of the same name by author Daniel Carney. According to the mercenary magazine, Soldier of Fortune, Carney "lives and works in Rhodesia where he is at present writing a new novel, while serving with Rhodesian security forces for six weeks out of every twelve". The plot revolves around actual events surrounding the CIA-financed adventures of Col. "Mad Mike" Hoare on behalf of Moise Tshombe's attempted secession from the Congo. The film climaxes as a plane from the Congo, believed to carry Tshombe, arrives in Rhodesia with mercenaries in the middle of the night. Hoare, a mercenary with an unrivaled, infamous reputation, served as a paid "technical advisor" to the film.

To this day, Hoare is involved in running the Wild Geese Club in Johannesburg, formed in 1975 ostensibly as an ex-servicemens social club. In fact the club serves as the base for perhaps the largest recruiting network of mercenaries in southern Africa. Hoare keeps in regular contact with persons such as Robert Brown, editor of Soldier of Fortune, where advertisements openly solicit mercenary opportunities.

"The Wild Geese" was shot in the Northern Transvaal area of South Africa. The South African government, specifically the Defence Force and the Police directly collaborated in its production. Proceeds from its world premier, held in Johannesburg, were contributed to the South African Defense Fund. The Fund devotes the bulk of its money towards improving base facilities in illegally occupied Namibia. The film has also been widely used among white audiences in South Africa to boost sales of South African Defence bonds. The producer of the film, Euan Lloyd placed a large advertisement in the Johannesburg Sunday Times, to publicly thank the South African government for its cooperation.

"If I shot a Black in Australia or New Zealand or anywhere else in the world, they'd put me in jail for twenty years. Here I can do it legally".

Walter Compton, Australian mercenary serving in Rhodesia

The effect of "The Wild Geese" is to glorify the sordid history of mercenaries in Africa. Whether it is the Congo (Zaire), Benin, Angola, the Comoros or Rhodesia, paid soldiers of fortune have been allowed to commit countless atrocities on the side of colonialism, neo-colonialism and white minority rule. Today, for example, an estimated 50% of whites in Ian Smith's army in Rhodesia are foreign mercenaries. We encourage groups to leaflet and picket the showing of this film. For more information on the "Don't feed the Wild Geese" campaign, contact:

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