





A411.1

DIE CHRISTELIKE INSTITUUT VAN SUIDER-AFRIKA
THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

Cape Office:

1 Long Street,
Mowbray, CAPE TOWN.
Telephone 6-8970
P.O. Box 245, RONDEBOSCH.

Regional Director: **The Rev. Theo Kotze**

Kaapse Kantoor:

Longstraat 1,
Mowbray, KAAPSTAD.
Telefoon 6-8970
Posbus 245, RONDEBOSCH.

Streekdirekteur: **Ds. Theo Kotze**

20th August, 1974.

Dear friends,

The Defence Further Amendment Bill has such serious implications for us all that I feel it important to provide you with the fullest possible information. Obviously this is going to be debated in most church Synods/Conferences etc and I hope also at parish level.

I am therefore enclosing what I deem to be important resources for your own participation in such discussions:

1. The full text of the SACC resolution.
2. The Defence Further Amendment Bill (from the Government Gazette - Section 10).
3. Violence in S.A. (a 1969 editorial from S.A. Outlook).
4. Conscientious Objection (a document issued by the Anglican Students' Federation and National Catholic Students' Federation's Justice and Peace Commission). A valuable part of this is the section on the Position of Conscientious Objectors in other countries.

The following are the issues at stake, as I see them:

1. The implications of the Act are terribly serious for the whole Church and are, in my view, just as crucial as the infamous Church clause. THIS MUST BE CONSIDERED QUITE APART FROM THE SACC STATEMENT.

This Bill restricts our pastoral duty, it inhibits the counselling role of ministers and others. We cannot under any circumstances surrender our duty to be pastors to the flock of Christ and we must make this known. We dare not surrender the right to encourage young people to face moral issues and there are serious moral issues at stake. The enormous penalties the Bill prescribes do not cancel the imperative of obedience to our Lord.

The Bill/.....

The Bill takes the matter even further. Careful examination shows that a father would not be able to advise his son. Peter Storey has pointed out that even a bible study on Christ's sayings on peace and war could be a crime under the proposed law.

2. Our ministry is to all. Naturally our counselling ministry must be exercised to everyone. We have to care equally for those who go to war and those who are conscientious objectors.

3. But let us look at the SACC statement. It asks member churches "to challenge all their members to consider in view of the above whether Christ's call to take up the Cross and follow Him in identifying the oppressed does not, in our situation, involve becoming conscientious objectors." It asks Christians to think about one of the most important issues of our time.

4. Violence is a fact of our situation. I do urge you to read carefully and objectively the excellent SA Outlook editorial.

5. Reaction to Violence. There are two basic Christian traditions. The commandment "Thou shalt not kill" and the example of Jesus, have led many to believe that they cannot under any circumstances participate in war - others have argued for the just war. Which in turn must lead to the whole question of when a war is just, which the Outlook article deals with very fully.

6. Civil War. Two recent statements show that the situation in which we now find ourselves is a civil war.

a) The Archbishop of Cape Town's enthronement sermon: "We need to grasp the significance of the fact that some Black South Africans, many of whom are Christians, are outside the country seeking to change our power structure by force".

b) The C.I. Johannesburg office: "The basic misunderstanding in all white reaction thus far is that the war on the borders of South Africa is a war against foreign aggression, an attack from "outside", whereas blacks see this basically as a civil war. South Africans who have fled from the country are mainly responsible for the conflict. The struggle on the borders is then seen as a struggle of South African against South African, of brother against brother.

Critics who do not take this into account are not capable of judging on its merits the resolution of the SACC at Hammanskraal where there was approximately a two-thirds black majority".

7. Conscientious objection. The Religious Society of Friends have for many years struggled with this dilemma and I can do no better than quote from their 1950 statement.

"By fighting for civilization and precious lives we may not save but destroy them, and would most probably destroy all moral and spiritual standards of our world through the use of the weapons of mass-destruction. And on the other hand refusal to fight need not be surrender. Nevertheless nothing can be harder than that choice."

Hence Friends have repeatedly reaffirmed the statement made originally in 1661 by its founder George Fox and Richard Hubberthorne on behalf of the Society. "We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretence whatsoever. And this is our testimony to the whole world. The spirit of Christ, by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil and again to move unto it; and we do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ, which leads us into all truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the Kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world."

These then are the questions the Church must face in the critical weeks ahead.

I pray that the Holy Spirit will come upon us all to give light and wisdom and power and courage. "And if it is the will of God that you should suffer, it is better to suffer for doing right than for doing wrong". (1 Peter 3:17 - Jerusalem Bible).

The Lord Bless you and keep you.

Theo Kofe

RESOLUTION

The National Conference of the SACC acknowledges as the one and only God Him who mightily delivered the people of Israel from their bondage in Egypt and who in Jesus Christ still proclaims that He will "set at liberty those who are oppressed" (Luke 4:18). He alone is supreme Lord and Saviour and to Him alone we owe ultimate obedience. Therefore "we must obey God rather than men" in those areas where the Government fails to fulfil its calling to be "God's servant for good" rather than for evil and for oppression (Acts 5:29; Romans 13:4).

In the light of this the Conference:

- 1) Maintains that Christians are called to strive for justice and the true peace which can be founded only on justice;
- 2) does not accept that it is automatically the duty of those who follow Christ the Prince of Peace, to engage in violence and war, or to prepare to engage in violence and war, whenever the State demands it;
- 3) reminds its member Churches that both Catholic and Reformation theology has regarded the taking up of arms as justifiable, if at all, only in order to fight a "just war".
- 4) points out that the theological definition of a "just war" excludes war in defence of a basically unjust and discriminatory society;
- 5) points out that the Republic of South Africa is at present a fundamentally unjust and discriminatory society and that this injustice and discrimination constitutes the primary, institutionalised violence which has provoked the counter-violence of the terrorists or freedom fighters;
- 6) Points out that the military forces of our country are being prepared to defend this unjust and discriminatory society and that the threat of military force is in fact already used to defend the status quo against moves for radical change from outside the white electorate;
- 7) maintains that it is hypocritical to deplore the violence of terrorists or freedom fighters while we ourselves prepare to defend our society with its primary, institutionalised violence by means of yet more violence;
- 8) points out further that the injustice and oppression under which the black peoples of South Africa labour is far worse than that against which Afrikaners waged their First and Second Wars of Independence and that if we have justified the Afrikaners' resort to violence (or the violence of the imperialism of the English) or claimed that God was on their side, it is hypocritical to deny that the same applies to the black people in their struggle today;

9) questions the basis upon which chaplains are seconded to the military forces lest their presence indicate moral support for the defence of our unjust and discriminatory society;

The Conference therefore:-

1. Deplores violence as a means to solve problems;
2. calls on its member Churches to challenge all their members to consider in view of the above whether Christ's call to take up the Cross and follow Him in identifying with the oppressed does not, in our situation, involve becoming conscientious objectors;
3. calls on those of its member Churches who have chaplains in the military forces to reconsider the basis on which they are appointed and to investigate the state of pastoral care available to the communicants at present in exile or under arms beyond our borders and to seek ways and means of ensuring that such pastoral care may be properly exercised;
4. commends the courage and witness of those who have been willing to go to jail in protest against unjust laws and policies in our land, and who challenge all of us by their example;
5. requests the SACC's task force on Violence and Non-violence to study methods of non-violent action for change which can be recommended to its member Churches;
6. prays for the Government and people of our land and urgently calls on them to make rapid strides towards radical and peaceful change in our society so that the violence and war to which our social, economic and political policies are leading us may be avoided.

Proposed: D. Bax

Seconded: C.F.B. Naudé.

DEFENCE FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL

(As read a First Time)

(Introduced by the MINISTER OF DEFENCE)

10. The following section is hereby substituted for section 121 of the principal Act:

50 "Prohibition of certain acts in connection with liability to render service.

55

60

5

10

15

20

121. Any person who—

- (a) agrees with or induces, or attempts to induce, any member of the South African Defence Force or any auxiliary service or voluntary nursing service established under this Act, to neglect or to act in conflict with his duty in that Force or service; or
- (b) is a party to or aids or abets or incites to the commission of any act whereby any lawful order given to any member of that Force or service or any law or regulation with which it is the duty of any member of that Force or service to comply, may be evaded or infringed;
- or
- (c) (i) in any manner whatsoever advises, encourages, aids, incites or instigates any

other person or any category of persons or persons in general; or

- (ii) uses any language or does any act or thing ~~calculated~~ to encourage, aid, incite, instigate, suggest to or otherwise cause any other person or any category of persons or persons in general,

to refuse or fail to render any service to which such other person or a person of such category or persons in general is or are liable or may become liable in terms of this Act,

shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction, in the case of an offence referred to in paragraph (a) or (b), to a fine not exceeding one thousand rand or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years or to both such fine and such imprisonment, and, in the case of an offence referred to in paragraph (c), to a fine not exceeding ten thousand rand or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding ten years or to both such fine and such imprisonment."

Substitution of section 121 of Act 44 of 1957, as amended by section 23 of Act 77 of 1963 and section 20 of Act 39 of 1966.

will be intent to recommend to

OUTLOOK ON THE MONTH

VIOLENCE IN S.A.

It is a responsibility of the churches to encourage young men to face thoughtfully and honestly the moral issues involved in modern war, while the State has a corresponding responsibility to do nothing to prevent this consideration of moral issues from taking place. Neither the public nor the private conscience should be allowed to become dull or inoperative. In a society that is truly free and in a Church that has the Spirit of Christ, men of conscience will be highly valued.

Report of a Special Committee of the Australian Council of Churches 1968.

* * * * *

In an important speech in the House of Assembly last month the Minister of Defence outlined the work of the Armed Forces in South Africa. The country's military establishment is made up partly of a permanent defence force and partly on a new system of national service (introduced last year) whereby all young white South African men when they reach the age of 18 are required to register and are liable for a total of 12 months training spread over a number of years. Despite this conscription, and despite the fact that almost one-sixth of the Government's General Expenditure is spent on defence and armaments the Minister was at great pains to stress that he was not simply building a war machine. 'We are not looking for a war, but we want as far as possible to avert war', he said. He pointed out that South Africa's defence budget as a proportion of the country's gross national product was one of the lowest in the world. And he went on to stress the positive contribution which the system of national service was making to the country. Besides providing young men with knowledge and dexterity which would serve them well in civilian life, it was, claimed the Minister, a process of making young men physically and spiritually mature. Mr. Botha clearly had no doubts that the money voted for defence would be money well spent.

Yet it seems to us that there are at least two levels on which the whole morality of South Africa's defence system needs to be critically examined. First of all the sheer size of the military

budget needs to be considered. It may well be a comparatively small proportion of the Gross National Product, but R300 million is a lot of money. We would suggest that in a society where there is acute poverty it is morally wrong for the expenditure on the military establishment to be nearly four times as great as the expenditure on housing; $4\frac{1}{2}$ times the expenditure on the Bantu Trust Fund; $5\frac{1}{2}$ times the expenditure on health; and $6\frac{1}{2}$ times the expenditure on education. The second matter is even more fundamental; it concerns the *raison d'être* of the military establishment itself.

The Christian conscience has long been troubled by the question of military service. For some, the commandment not to kill has made it impossible for them to participate in any war and they have chosen the unpopular position of pacifism rather than any compromise with Caesar. But for others the issue has not been so clear. In a sinful world policemen are necessary; and for policemen to be effective there must, ultimately, be the sanction of force behind them. But it is not at all easy to decide at what point a policeman becomes a soldier. And so, largely following the teachings of Aquinas, there has been a strong tradition in Christian thinking of the concept of the 'just war'. Theologians have held that, under certain conditions, the Christian chooses the lesser evil if he goes to war. These conditions are that:

- The war must be waged by a legitimate authority: i.e. a government rather than a gang of robbers.
- It must be waged for a just cause.
- There must be reasonable hope for rapid success so that the agony of war is not unduly prolonged.
- There must be reason to expect that a successful war will leave matters better than they were before the war.
- The violence must be as limited as possible: non-combatants may not be directly attacked nor may any unnecessary suffering be inflicted on enemy soldiers.
- All possible methods of resolving the dispute by peaceful means must have been tried first.

The trouble with these conditions, as history shows all too clearly, is not only that they may conflict but also that they leave much room for interpretation. Thus Christians have often marched into war against each other, each believing that God was on his side. The conditions are even more cloudy in the case of civil strife. Was George Washington a

terrorist leader against legitimate authority or a freedom fighter battling for a just cause?

Whilst many Christians have long been sensitive to the moral ambiguities of war, States have found it more difficult to accommodate the differences of individual consciences. Nevertheless there has been progress. During the first world war, pacifists, in Britain for example, were not only extremely unpopular but were also imprisoned for their refusal to take up arms. But by the second world war, the State, led by Churchill, was prepared to concede that the conscience of genuine pacifists must be respected; so they were not imprisoned. And in other countries there was a similar growth in willingness to tolerate the pacifist minority which was, in fact, no real threat to the security of the State.

No sooner had the State learnt to cope with pacifists however, than there was a new development in moral thinking which may yet threaten the ability of the State to wage war. It is the emergence, in large numbers, of the selective conscientious objector; the man who, unlike a Quaker, is not necessarily a pacifist in all situations. The theory of the 'just war', which, in the past tended to be used by the State in order to rally the powerful numerical support of Christian citizens, is now being used by the citizens to resist the policy of the State to wage war. The reasons for this are two. First of all the development of nuclear weapons. In a world where it is soberly estimated that the first nuclear attack would lead to the death of between seven and eight hundred million people, it is difficult for any State, possessing nuclear weapons, to justify war. The second reason has its roots in the increased awareness, arising out of the Nuremberg and Eichmann trials, that individuals may not abdicate their moral responsibility by obeying blindly, and without question, the orders of their political authorities.

The effect of these developments on man's thinking has been brought to a head in the U.S.A. in recent years by the war in Vietnam which challenges at least three of the just war conditions. For there are Americans who argue that the war, which has never been officially declared, is illegal; that there is more justice in the goals of the enemy than in their own; and that the means used to prosecute the war (particularly the napalm bombing) are unnecessarily cruel both to soldiers and civilians. And so men who would certainly have fought against Nazism have come out as selective conscientious objectors. But the State will not recognise the right of individual citizens to choose their war and, so there are today, thousands of young Americans living in exile in Canada and Western Europe who may not return home until there is a change in their Government's attitude. All this, combined with the civil unrest of the past decade, has given to the debate about violence and conscience an urgency, and a passion, that has not been seen before.

Nor has this debate been confined to the United States. In Australia, for example, the Council of Churches there felt impelled to deepen its own thinking about conscientious objection in order to guide young Australians wrestling with the problem. And, at Uppsala, official representatives of

churches from all over the world made clear that: 'Protection of conscience demands that the churches should give spiritual care and support not only to those serving in armed forces but also those who, especially in the light of the nature of modern warfare, object to participation in particular wars they feel bound in conscience to oppose, or who find themselves unable to bear arms or enter the military service of their nations for reasons of conscience'.

Within our own country too there are stirrings of conscience amongst young South Africans as to what their attitude to violent conflict should be. For some the issue is clear-cut. They see the threat of guerillas on the borders and feel that it is perfectly justifiable for Christians to participate in putting down such activity because, although they abhor war, they believe that in a society with as many conflicting interests as ours, the only way of preventing anarchy is to use force in maintaining order. For others however the situation is complicated by one or more nagging questions.

First of all there is the problem as to whether the distinction between defensive and offensive wars is justified in the modern world. Many Christian thinkers say it is not. In South Africa the issue is made more difficult by virtue of the fact that defence is not primarily against foreign powers who seek to invade us, but against fellow South Africans who seek to change the political order. Any discussion about the morality of participating in defence of the country must allow for the fact that, although waged on the borders, the battle is essentially a civil war.

Secondly there is the question of deciding whether the cause for which we are asked to fight is just or not. It seems to many people that the prime responsibility for the guerillas on our borders lies not so much on the shoulders of those South African politicians in exile who direct its course, as it does upon the shoulders of the politicians within South Africa who have banned virtually all forms of democratic political activity by Africans, and who have left those who wish to work for Constitutional change very very little legitimate means of doing so. Furthermore, when deciding upon this issue, it is necessary for one to be absolutely clear as to whether one is being called upon to fight for one's country or to defend the policy of apartheid. Patriotism, as has been argued before in these pages (July, 1968), is a noble concept: the philosophy of apartheid has been condemned as un-Christian in the Message from the S.A. Council of Churches.

The third problem concerns the deeper understanding of the meaning of violence. 'Violence', declared the Church representatives at Uppsala, 'is the destructive imposition of power'. Christians are coming more and more to realise that violence is not confined to those who seek to bring about revolution at the point of a gun. Violence can also be exerted in more subtle, but no less effective, ways. The fact that half of the African children born alive in the country die before the age of five implies that the way in which power is imposed within the society is destructive. In other words the society is being violent, by exercising power in another way it would be possible to eliminate the causes of this appalling infant mortality rate.

Such is the agony of our situation that Christians for whom South Africa is home find themselves in three totally different camps. There are those who, for the reasons outlined earlier, think that the right course of action is for them to join the army and strengthen the country's Defence Force. On the other hand there are those, equally sincere, who see the injustices in the society and feel that something must be done to eliminate this form of violence as quickly as possible. Faced with the refusal of the Government to allow normal political activity by the majority of the people, such South Africans leave the country to join the guerilla forces. And there is a group which, while not necessarily pacifist in all situations, believes that neither the violence of the guerillas nor the violence of the Defence Force will solve our problems. They do not believe it is right to try and defend apartheid by force; nor do they think that violent attempts to remove injustice will resolve our difficulties. Rather they seek to find a middle way; attempting to reconcile the warring factions.

In such a situation, what is required of the Christian Church? We would suggest three things. 1. The Church must, encourage young South Africans of all races to face thoughtfully and honestly the moral issues involved. It must help people to think responsibly and with theological understanding about the relationship between their faith and their actions in this sphere. 2. The Church must press for a change in the law of the land so as to allow all conscientious objectors, whether selective or not, the right to choose an alternative to military service. 3. The Church must become an active peace-maker. But how? Fifty years ago William James, the famous psychologist, published his essay on the *Moral Equivalent of War*. He suggested that if, instead of military conscription, there were 'a conscription of the whole youthful population to form for a certain number of years a part of the army enlisted against *Nature*, the injustice would tend to be evened out, and numerous other goods to the commonwealth would follow. The military ideals of hardihood and discipline would be wrought into the growing fibre of the people; no one would remain blind as the luxurious classes now are blind, to man's relations to the globe he lives on.....to coal and iron mines,.....to dish-washing,to road-building,and to the frames of skyscrapers, would our gilded youths be drafted off, according to their choice, to get the childishness knocked out of them, and to come back into society with healthier sympathies and soberer ideas. They would have paid their blood-tax, done their own part in the immemorial human warfare against nature; James was fully conscious of the ability of the army to teach such virtues as order, discipline, contempt of softness and a tradition of service, and he argued that men would not be content with peace unless some moral equivalent of war could be found which instilled these virtues and which helped as war so often does, to bind a nation together.

Linking this idea with the need to eliminate the causes of violence we would suggest that the churches could most effectively make peace first by pressing the Government to try all possible means of resolving the conflict by peaceful

negotiations and secondly by establishing voluntary Service Committees, as the Quakers have long since done. Such committees would undertake not only the kind of tasks outlined by William James but also such matters as literacy campaigns, technical training, the building of houses, the construction and staffing of hospitals, and the many other tasks which, if undertaken, could speedily rectify some of the most blatant forms of injustice in the society, reduce some of the more subtle manifestations of violence and help to remove the grievances which generate bloodshed. Once these voluntary Service Committees were established the Churches should then go on to press upon the State the moral necessity of changing the whole concept of national service, so that it was not merely military in nature.

One fundamental fallacy in Government thinking, as evidenced in the speech of the Minister of Defence, is the idea that South Africa's safety lies ultimately in our army. It does not. The security of the State in this part of the world depends primarily upon the creation of a just society, where each man respects his neighbour. To this end we would suggest that teaching young white South Africans how to shoot at moving targets is woefully inadequate. For the sake of white South Africans themselves the Church must expose this fallacy. Besides, as C. Wright Mills wrote in his famous *Pagan Sermon to the Christian Clergy*, 'In moral affairs you are supposed to be among the first of men. No moral affair today compares with the morality of warfare and the preparation for it, for in these preparations men usurp—as you might say—the prerogatives of God. By sitting down and by keeping quiet, by all too often echoing the claptrap of the higher immorality that now passes for political leadership—you are helping to enfeeble further in this time of cruel troubles the ideals of your Founder'. Dare the Church remain silent and inactive on this issue?

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

The Lord will wield authority over the nations and adjudicate between many peoples; these will hammer their swords into ploughshares, their spears into sickles.

Nation will not lift sword against nation, there will be no more training for war.

Isaiah 2.

Introduction.

Many people completely reject all forms of violence, especially war, because of deep religious or moral beliefs. They see violence and war as destructive and futile, incapable of building peace and understanding among men.

Many other people, also because of deep religious or moral beliefs, are convinced that it is a man's right and duty to defend what is his own, so that they see war and violence as justifiable in certain circumstances.

Without taking sides with either of these two groups, this pamphlet tries to give a factual account of the legal position of conscientious objections in South Africa. It outlines the legal position of conscientious objection in several other countries as a comparison, and concludes by posing some questions which we should ask ourselves.

The Law in South Africa.

The Defence Act of 1957 says that all male persons between 17 and 65 years of age can be called up to render service in the South African Defence Force. The matter of Conscientious Objection is handled in the following sections:

Section 67(3) Applicable in Peacetime

"The registering officer shall as far as may be practicable allot any persons who to his knowledge bona fide belongs and adheres to a recognised religious denomination by the tenets whereof its members may not participate in war, to a unit where such person will be able to render service in the defence of the Republic in a non-combatant capacity."

and Section 97(3) Applicable in Wartime

"a person who bona fide belongs and adheres to a religious denomination, by the tenets whereof its members may not participate in war, may be granted exemption from serving in any combatant capacity, but shall, if called upon to do so, serve in a non-combatant capacity."

Thus no allowance is made for the right of Conscientious Objectors not to serve in the Armed Service.

Section 70, the section dealing with complete exemption from military service, gives the following grounds for exemption :-

- a) In order to prevent the interruption of one's course of educational studies;
- b) - by reason of one's domestic or business or professional situation;
- c) physical defects, ill-health, mental incapacity;
- d) on any other grounds the Exemption Board may deem sufficient.

Hence it is conceivable that religious or moral grounds might fall under (d) but to date, no conscientious objector has been allowed exemption under this section.

The conscientious objector in South Africa who refuses to have anything to do with the military either by failing to report for duty or, on reporting for duty, by refusing to obey military commands, is guilty of an offence and may be sentenced to at least 12 but not more than 15 months in military detention.

Before the Amendment to the Defence Bill was passed by Parliament this year, a conscientious objector who refused military orders was liable to only a 6 month maximum sentence. However, after the 6 months sentence the conscientious objector was liable to call up again and could thus serve consecutive 6 month periods indefinitely. The Amendment includes the recommendation that once a Conscientious Objector has served the 12 or 15 month sentence, he is not liable to further call up or detention.

The Military Attitude

In a statement issued in October 1970 the Minister of Defence explained the Department of Defence's attitude to Section 67(3) of the Defence Act Conscientious Objectors are either (a) allotted to non-combatant units or (b) trained without weapons. The minister said, "This policy observes both the letter and the spirit of the law and should have removed any reasonable objection to military service and training." He added that, "the honour and duty to defend one's country should not be made subservient to one's religious convictions."

Convictions of Conscientious Objectors in South Africa

In May, 1971 there were 68 young men in military detention barracks for refusing to service in the armed forces, either in a combatant or non-combatant capacity. Some had been sentenced 3 times for refusing to report for service; and up to 10 times for refusing to obey military commands - they had, in effect been imprisoned for more than three years. Sixty-three of these youths served periods of solitary confinement during 1971.

In April this year, there were 65 young men in detention barracks for the same "offence". Answering a question in Parliament in March, the Minister of Defence revealed that 62 of these detainees had been sentenced to periods of solitary confinement since the beginning of the year.

Treatment of conscientious objectors in dentention

According to the military code, solitary confinement is imposed for breaches of detention barracks disciplinary rules and regulations. However, continuous periods of solitary confinement are not permitted. During this solitary confinement, the detainees are not permitted to have visitors or reading material. Neither were they initially permitted to retain their Bibles - this has now been changed.

Parents of Jehovah's Witnesses, however, claim that their sons are in fact being detained continuously in solitary confinement. It has also been reported that the Conscientious Objectors receive very harsh treatment from the warders, although this is against official policy. The treatment of Conscientious Objectors in military detention is at present the subject of a military inquiry.

Position of Conscientious Objectors in other Countries

U.S.A.

Two types of Conscientious Objectors are recognised:

- a) those who would accept non-combatant service, and
- b) those who are opposed to all forms of military service.

The latter group serve 2 years civilian work concerning national health, safety and other fields of national interest.

- Canada No compulsory military service.
However, even before compulsory military service was abolished, Conscientious Objectors were exempted from military service subject to decisions of tribunals of impartial persons appointed by the Minister of Labour and National Service.
- Australia Conscientious Objectors can obtain total exemption from military service outside the military framework. They have to satisfy a special court as to the sincerity of their conscientious beliefs.
- Rhodesia Conscientious Objectors may be granted exemption from military service.
- Sweden Allowance is made for alternative service by all persons who have deep personal conscientious beliefs against the use of arms. They may serve:
- a) in a civil defence fire department,
 - b) in the repair service of the railways, the state power board, or the board of telecommunications,
 - c) in the public health service,
 - d) in the national or municipal administration.
- Norway Conscientious Objectors perform compulsory civilian service and this lasts for the same period of time as military service, plus a longer period as determined by the King, but not exceeding 180 days. Legislation is at present being debated in Norway. The tendency of the proposed amendments is generally towards increasing the number and scope of reasons qualifying for exemption and increasing the range of meaningful alternative forms of national service (social work, peace corps activities etc.)
- Belgium The position is very similar to that in Sweden, but the length of civilian service is twice the period of military service.
- Italy The Minister of Defence can, in time of peace, grant temporary dispensation from military service to young men in possession of special qualifications who wish to work continuously for at least two years in a developing country outside Europe.
- Holland Persons whose moral or religious convictions forbid them to take part in war can be given alternative civilian service or non-combatant in the military framework. The civilian service is generally for a longer period than the military service. This work is carried out in Forestry, Water conservation, National health, the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work, Building services etc.
- West Germany The constitution provides that:
"No person shall be compelled against his conscience to do military service in the army."
Non-combatant service within the military and civilian service completely divorced from the military are offered as alternatives, Civilian services are offered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

NOTE: The Minister of Defence stated in Parliament that the number of conscientious objectors in West Germany has now risen to

22,000. This in fact constitutes only 1.8% of the total number liable for military service.

Peru

Peru is ruled by a military junta and "there is no question of conscientious objection to military service."

Questions we must ask ourselves

In the light of the above facts, we should all question where we stand, examine the issues involved and decide for ourselves whether we believe the present situation to be justifiable and correct.

- 1) Can any one person pass judgement on another's moral convictions?
- 2) What is it that allows a person to decide that at a certain time and place it is right to kill and that it is a crime to refuse to have anything to do with such killing?
- 3) Should "conscientious objection" be confined to those who belong to a religious denomination the whole of which is opposed to military service; should it include those with personal moral or religious convictions against war and violence; and should it include those against a particular war, or kind of war, believing that its particular conditions make it wrong or unjust?
- 4) Where is war and violence leading us to; has military power brought peace, brotherhood and freedom to mankind; and should we condemn others for searching for a new and perhaps better solution?
- 5) Are we justified in spending such relatively huge amounts on the military - an essentially negative investment?

1970/1 Defence budget R265,5 million

1971/2 " " R325,5 million

1972/3 " " R351,5 million

1971/2 Bantu Administration
and Development
budget

R197 million (for all African areas in the Republic)
R 70 million for education
R 40 million for health services

1972/3 Bantu Administration
and Development
budget:

R200 million

- 6) Why do whites, and no other section of our population, undergo compulsory military service in South Africa?
- 7) Why are conscientious objectors sentenced to terms of imprisonment at all?
- 8) Would a relaxation of the law lead to a dangerous number of conscientious objectors?
- 9) Is national service of any kind necessary?
- 10) If so, then why not have alternative forms of national service where conscientious objectors, instead of wasting their time (at the expense of society) in detention, can become involved in peace-making programme to the benefit of all South Africans?

It is indeed surprising that so little thought or discussion is devoted to these very pertinent questions in South Africa, and it is a great pity that such questioning is, in fact, frowned upon by the authorities. Every youth conscripted into the military should ask himself these questions and examine his own conscience.

No-one else can answer them for us - it is for each of us to come to our own decision on the facts available to us, and to act on that decision.

This pamphlet is issued jointly by the Anglican Student's Federation and the National Catholic Student's Federation's Justice and Peace Commission.
Enquiries to P.O. Box 3048, Stellenbosch.

Unity

Collection Number: AG1977

END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

©2013

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document is part of a collection held at the Historical Papers Research Archive at The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.