

THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA.

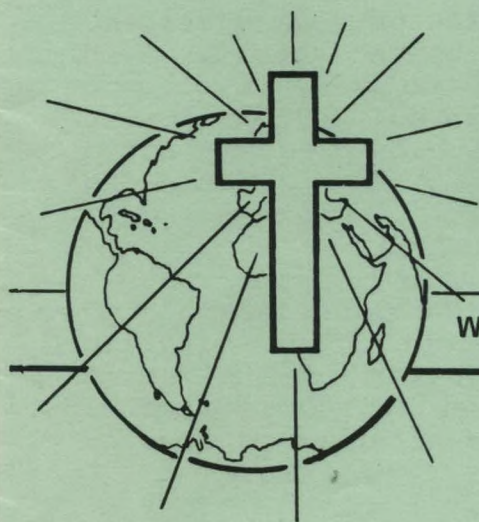
CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP DEPARTMENT

STUDY DOCUMENT

On the Issue of

C O N S C R I P T I O N

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WITH CHRIST IN THE MODERN WORLD.

REQUEST:

District Chairmen and Circuit Superintendents are requested to send to the General Secretary of the Christian Citizenship Department, their District and Circuit response to the issue of whether the Church should support a call for an end to conscription? Voting figures in District Synods and Circuit Quarterly Meetings will be appreciated. This information should reach the Department not later than 31st July 1985.

Rev. Austen Massey,
General Secretary,
P.O. Box 27615,
BERTSHAM, 2013.
Transvaal.

SHOULD THE METHODIST CHURCH CALL FOR AN END TO
CONSCRIPTION?

Minutes of Conference 1984 p 288 para 29.9.21.

Conscription: This Conference refers to Circuit Quarterly Meetings and Synods the question of calling for an end to conscription on the grounds that it is the moral right of South Africans to choose whether or not to serve in the SADF.

CONSCRIPTION: The compulsory calling up of citizens by the State for military service. In South Africa, all white males between the ages of 17 and 55 are liable for military service.

Each Quarterly Meeting has been asked to decide whether the Conference should make a call to end conscription. The guidance given by each local leader in our Church will help to determine the policy of the whole Church. This simple pamphlet has been prepared to introduce some of the questions which the Quarterly Meeting will have to face. Some QM's have already asked small study groups to prepare in advance of the meeting. For these groups and for leaders wanting to read further there is a reading list at the end of the pamphlet.

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

The Christian Church forsook the use of military force to solve conflicts for the first three centuries of its existence. Individual Christians were martyred for their refusal to serve in the armies of Rome.

As the Church became an influential part of society, theologians began to develop a theory by which Christian participation in some wars could be justified. The theory of the "Just War" was an attempt to limit and control war and not to encourage or justify it.

In this century, revolutions, counter revolutions, the 'World Wars', and nuclear weapons have caused Christians to look again at participation in wars.

All Christians seek peace. In the complex world in which we live, they often differ on the ways to achieve this peace. There are at least two ways of looking at peace.

IF YOU WANT PEACE, PREPARE FOR WAR
(Vegetius)

Human beings are sinful people, who rebel against the love of God, and so war is an ever present reality. Within, this sinful reality, ways of avoiding, or minimising war must be found.

This has best been done by encouraging a strong military force so that the costs to any aggressor are higher than they can bear. A 'balance of power' curbs the sinful nature of people.

But more than this, as Christians we face moments when our love for others demands that we defend them against aggression or oppression. A military force enables this love for people to be exercised.

IF YOU WANT PEACE, WORK FOR JUSTICE
(Pope Paul VI)

The Biblical concept of Shalom (translated by us as peace) is a vision of inner and outer well being. It tells of whole people in a wholesome society. This is a society characterised by love and justice in which all can achieve their full potential, a potential which is made complete by Christ.

As Christians following Jesus, we seek this shalom especially as we follow his example. It is an example of healing, attending to the needs of people in order to make people friends with one another and with God. His model is that of the humble servant, the one who loves the enemy. The Kingdom which he inaugurates is ushered in by his riding in to Jerusalem on an ass and not on a warrior's stallion.

When Pope Paul VI made his statement, he was reminding people that taking away the reasons for war is in the long run the only true guarantee of peace. Does war and preparation for war guarantee peace or do they increase the fears, ambitions, prejudices and deprivations which encourage war?

A MATTER OF CHRISTIAN DECISION

Individual Christians must make choices about their participation or non participation in military service. As Methodists we are being asked to decide only about conscription into a particular military force - the SADF - within a particular conflict.

Our decision will be based on what we read in the Bible, but also on what we understand about South Africa. For this reason we want to share with you two opposing views on conscription.

CONSCRIPTION INTO THE SADF

1. In Support of Conscription.

"The rôle of the SA Defence Force is to defend the Republic of South Africa and to maintain stability within which the political and economic policies of our government can evolve in a peaceful and orderly manner. The current threat demands that the Force is fully trained in the techniques of conventional and counter insurgency warfare.

It may be argued that the threat of conventional war is minimal, but the massive build up of Soviet armaments in some of our regional States is a major cause for concern. More over, the presence of large Soviet proxy forces and Eastern bloc technicians and military advisers in our sub continent contains the potential for a wider confrontation. It is the strength, resolve, professionalism and military prowess of the SA Defence Force that keeps the threat of conventional war at a low level.

In respect of counter insurgency operations, there is an ongoing war in South West Africa. The vigilance and efficiency of the SA Defence Force, in concert with the South African Police, ensures that terrorist activities are kept in check within the Republic itself. It is the power and effectiveness of the Security Forces that acts as a prime deterrent and has blunted the terrorists military effort.

It is traditional in virtually every nation for the Armed Forces to back up the Police during times of civil unrest. Where agents opposed to the government stir up communal violence by playing upon real or manufactured grievances, the authorities have a responsibility to protect the life, liberty and property of every law abiding citizen.

In such circumstances, it is both legitimate and prudent to employ the Defence Force in support of Police operations in order to restore law and order in the most prompt and human manner. In these cases, the accepted principle is one of minimum force.

There is no doubt that in this form of warfare, political and psychological factors predominate. Nevertheless, the correct initiatives cannot be applied in an atmosphere of instability and it is incumbent upon the Security Forces as a whole to provide the platform from which progress can be made.

In this physical and psychological battle, the enemy seeks to subvert our resolve, to overthrow the established order and to destroy the fabric of our society. It is imperative in this situation that every eligible citizen is fully trained and motivated to assume his share of the burden.

This is the basic reason why National Service was introduced and is being sustained.

In this connection, it could be said that national service prepares and matures a young man for his future rôle in the life of the nation. It helps to shape and strengthen the

character of each individual, emphasises the importance of teamwork and self discipline and inspires a spirit of comradeship that enriches the quality of life.

It has been suggested that an enlarged and wholly professional regular Defence Force could be substituted for the current system of conscription. The cost of implementing such a proposal at the manpower level required would be extremely high, for the salaries and conditions of service would have to compete favourably with the private sector. It is arguable but the permanent withdrawal of such a large body of skilled manpower would cause even more disruption of the economy than the existing system. Moreover, there would be a dangerous lack of depth in our trained reserves if conscription were to be abolished.

2. In opposition to conscription.

Stability and peace in Southern Africa are threatened not by external forces but by apartheid. Guerilla attacks from beyond our borders are launched by those who have left this country believing that war is the only way to achieve their freedom from an oppressive system. The neighbouring States, with whom South Africa regularly trades, and with whom non aggression pacts have been signed, pose no real threat. Their own problems ensure that their primary focus is internal. Nevertheless, it is their abhorrence of apartheid (rather than any imperialist aim) which leads to their support for exiled South Africans. Indeed the only acts of aggression caused by regular troops on foreign soil in the sub continent have been those committed by the SADF in raids into Angola, Lesotho and Mocambique.

A large security force and tendency to rule by coercion have encouraged us to believe that there are military solutions to our problems. However, our Church has regularly pointed out that there must be a serious search for a just society if peace is to be found.

As Christians, we believe that following Christ is a true test and guarantee of character. The disciple finds a calling in serving others and does not need to be coerced into service.

South Africa needs solutions to apartheid which are political, not military. At present, resources that could be building up a stable society are used to maintain a war in Namibia (at a cost of more than R2 million a day) and a large citizen force and area force. Calling for an end to conscription is not a call to replace the present force with another permanent force. It is a call to reduce the conflicts in Southern Africa, and reduce the need for an over powerful and costly SADF.

CONCLUSION:

Should people be compelled to do national military service, or should they be allowed to make a free choice? Will preparation for war ensure peace or prolong the present conflicts? In the Methodist Church, we have made our commitment to a "South Africa free from violence, oppression and war" clear. Now we are being asked to decide on ways to move towards this commitment.

Reading List

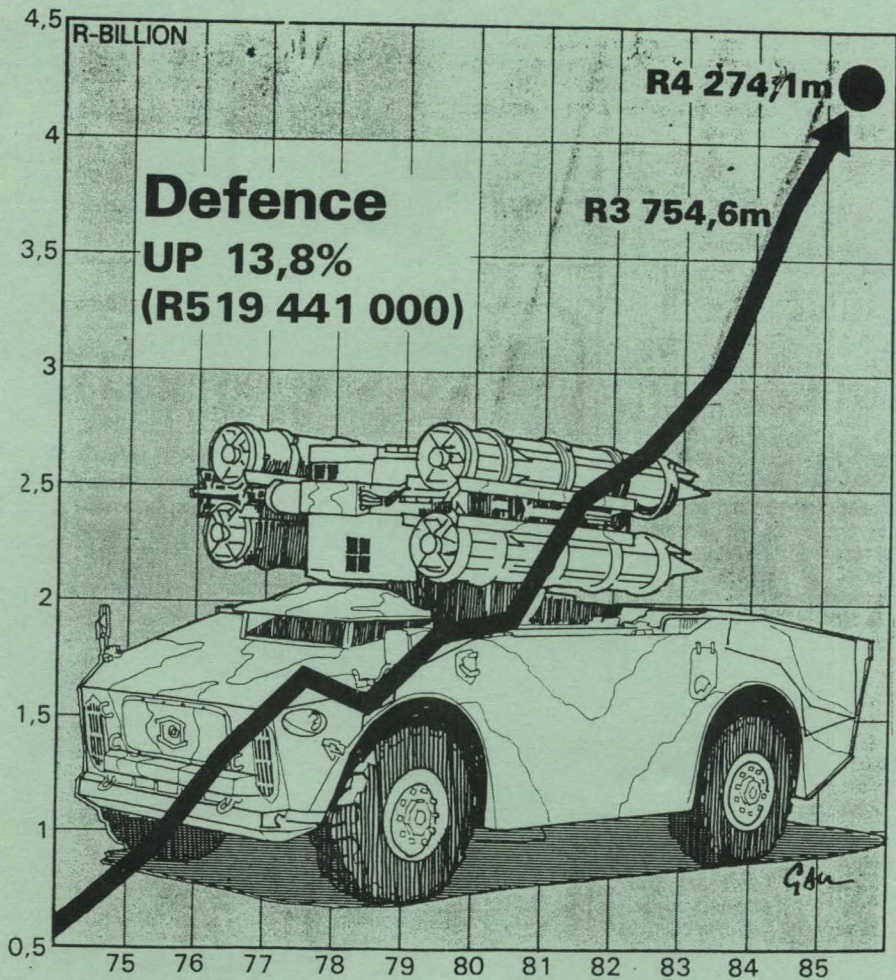
Peace on Earth	A CCD Bible Study Series
Must I fight the SADF	A pamphlet on alternative service.
Victory over Violence	M. Hengel (Jesus and violence)
War, Peace and the Bible.	J.C. Swain (A survey of the whole Bible)
It is not lawful for me to fight	J. Hornus (A history of the early church's Attitude to war.)
4 Christians views of war	(A debate between proponents of 'pacifist', 'Just War', 'crusade' and 'sinful necessity' theories.)
Minutes of Conference 1984	The Methodist Church's stand on issues of war and peace.

Books available from Methodist Bookroom or on Library Loan from the Christian Education and Youth Department.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

The Christian Citizenship Department is deeply indebted to Mr. Paul M. Graham from the Christian Education and Youth Department for his invaluable skills in compiling this Study Document.

25.03.1985.



Acknowledgment: Rand Daily Mail 19th March, 1985.

INFORMATION FOR MEN AND WOMEN IN THE ARMED FORCES

There's no difficulty in "joining up".

You probably did so when you were young and there was little chance of civilian employment, and you simply responded to advertisements in the media.

Perhaps you now regret it, and realise you cannot change your job like a civilian. Nevertheless you may have the right to end your engagement in any of a number of ways.

But, perhaps you don't merely regret it. Perhaps, because you have thought more, or experienced more, you feel you just can't stay in the Armed Forces and that you can no longer undertake with a clear conscience to do what you promised when you joined up; that you are, in fact, a conscientious objector to military service.

If this is so, you can apply for discharge in the way explained overleaf.

You can obtain further information from the Central Board for Conscientious Objectors. The C.B.C.O. is not a propaganda organisation and will not attempt to influence you in any way. Its function is simply to give advice as to their rights to those who claim to have a conscientious objection to military service.

For further information: write to the Secretary, C.B.C.O. 6 Apollo Place, London SW10 (mail only) or telephone (01) 352 7906 (night) (01) 703 7189 (day).

CENTRAL BOARD FOR CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS

PROCEDURE FOR APPLICATION FOR A DISCHARGE ON CONSCIENCE GROUNDS

All Services

- 1 Initial applications are made to the Commanding Officer, who, with the assistance of the Chaplain, should investigate the Applicant's sincerity. (*DCI 3/75 Refers*)
- 2 On completion of his investigation the Commanding Officer reports to the Personnel Board of the Ministry of Defence on the merits of the application.
- 3 The decision of the Board is conveyed verbally to the Applicant by the Commanding Officer. If discharge is approved, the Applicant will be released from the Services.
- 4 If the application is refused, the Applicant has a right to appeal to an Advisory Committee which has been set up to advise the Ministry of Defence in such cases.
- 5 The appropriate form for applying to the Advisory Committee can be obtained from and is returnable to the Commanding Officer. Its most important part is a concise statement of the reasons for the Applicant's conscientious objection.
- 6 The Advisory Committee, whose members are appointed directly by the Lord Chancellor, normally sits in London but does not hold its sessions at Ministry of Defence premises. This Committee usually has an observer present. The Public is admitted. The Applicant must be present and may be represented by Solicitor, Counsel, or a friend. He can give evidence himself, and will be cross-examined thereon by the three members appointed to sit on the Advisory Committee. He may call witnesses who should be able to speak to his sincerity. In general the procedure is intended to follow that of the Appellate Tribunal that used to sit for conscientious objectors.
- 7 The decision, although in the form of "advice", will be accepted by the Ministry of Defence.
- 8 If the Applicant is successful, he will be discharged from the Services.
- 9 If the Applicant is unsuccessful, he remains in the Services, but on obtaining fresh evidence it is open to him to make a further application to his Commanding Officer, and subsequently to the Tribunal. There is no limit to the number of applications and appeals that can be made subject to the introduction of fresh evidence on each occasion.

1980?

**CHURCH
AND
CONSCIENCE**

**A Collection of Church and Other Statements on
Conscientious Objection in South Africa**

Published for the Methodist Church of Southern Africa
Christian Citizenship Department

The statements collected here should not be taken to represent the views of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa nor its Christian Citizenship Department.

The exception to this is the Methodist Statement on pages 10, 11 and 12

CHURCH STATEMENTS ON CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

Below follow a number of the more important statements made by Christian churches on the subject of conscientious objection. On the whole the statements appear in chronological order. However, in some instances this order has been deviated from in order to include the statements of a particular denomination under one heading. The list is not exhaustive.

AFRIKAANS COUNCIL OF REFORMED CHURCHES

Although it did not specifically mention conscientious objection, during the 1914 rebellion this council declared that—

“no one may revolt against lawful authority other than for carefully considered and well grounded reasons based on the word of God and a conscience enlightened by the word of God.”

SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (SACC)

At its meeting at Hammanskraal in 1974 the National Conference of the SACC accepted the following resolution:

Preamble:

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 evil and for oppression (Acts 5:29; Romans 13:4).

In the light of this 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 or 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-violence 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.

SOME REACTIONS TO THE SACC RESOLUTION

National Party Government

The government introduced the Defence Further Amendment Bill which subsequently became law. (1) This legislation provided, inter alia, that any person who:

“uses any language or does any act or thing with intent to recommend 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 to a fine not exceeding five thousand rand or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding six years or to both such fine and such imprisonment. (2)

During the Parliamentary debate on this legislation, Minister of Defence, P.W. Botha, stated that he had received many messages which strongly disapproved of the SACC resolution. These messages had come from chaplains in the SADF, theologians outside the chaplains service, chaplains from the English-language churches, chaplains from the Afrikaans churches, chaplains from the Pentecostal churches and from a great many Defence Force units. On this basis Botha declared:

“I think that I am justified in saying that the insertion of this (the above-mentioned) clause is in accordance with the feeling of the majority in South Africa.” (3)

Catholic

The Administrative Board of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) declared in September 1974 that should the Defence Further Amendment

Bill become law in its present form, it would be bound in conscience to disobey it, and would likewise expect clergy and people of their own and other churches to do the same. (4)

Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK)

Dr. Koot Vorster said that the NGK rejected the SACC resolution entirely. (5) In October 1974 the NGK unanimously rejected the resolution. It saw the latter as encouraging people to nurture conscientious objection, in conflict with Romans 13. (6) The Synod also recognised the right and privilege of every citizen to defend his people and fatherland and to protect the life and freedom of its citizens.

Presbyterian

The Executive Commission of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa dissociated their church from the resolution. Two or more Presbyterian congregations followed suit. (7) But the Tsonga Presbyterian church passed a resolution supporting the SACC resolution. (8)

Baptist

The Baptist Union of South Africa passed a resolution dissociating itself from the SACC resolution. It objected that "conscientious objection was advocated as a means of registering disapproval of the political and social status quo in South Africa." (9)

Anglican

In September 1974 the Diocesan Council of the Anglican Diocese in Johannesburg passed a resolution supporting the SACC resolution. (10) Thereafter the Provincial Standing Committee of the Church of the Province of South Africa endorsed the SACC resolution. (11)

Lutheran

In October 1974 the 115 000 strong Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC) of Namibia voiced full support for the SACC resolution. This emerged in a statement issued after a conference of church workers. The conference also called on the peoples of the country—particularly the youth—to deal with the proposed Defence Further Amendment Bill according to their beliefs and religious convictions. (12) In addition, a convention of the Pastors of the ELC (Transvaal Region) announced its support for the SACC resolution. (13)

SADF Chaplains from the English-language Churches

This group issued the following statement in response to the SACC resolution:

“We, the chaplains of the English-language churches serving in the SADF, are dismayed by the decision of the SACC, taken at Hammanskraal, which appeared to encourage South Africans to refuse to serve in the defence of the country. We recognise injustices at all levels of our society but believe that the statement that this society is so different from others that it warrants being described as basically unjust and violent, is unfounded and ill-considered. We therefore dissociate ourselves from this resolution. The SADF has never demanded anything else from us but the proclamation of the Word of God and the pastoral care of the members of our various denominations in the SADF. We, as chaplains in the SADF, who are familiar with the aims, objects and methods of the communistically inspired terrorists who by murder and force attempt to gain access to our land, urge every member of our churches and especially the young men to make their personal contribution in the defence of the country.” (14)

CATHOLIC

The Second Vatican Council made the following statements on military service and conscientious objection:

“Those who are pledged to the service of their country as members of its armed forces, should regard themselves as agents of security and freedom on behalf of their people. As long as they fulfil this role properly, they are making a genuine contribution to the establishment of peace.” (15)

“Moreover, it seems right that laws make human provisions for the case of those, who for reasons of conscience, refuse to bear arms provided however, that they accept some other form of service to the human community.” (16)

Two years later in 1967 Pope Paul VI wrote:

“We are pleased to learn that in certain nations ‘military service’ can be partially accomplished by doing ‘social service’, a ‘service pure and simple’. We bless these undertakings and the good will which inspires them. May all those who wish to belong to Christ hear His appeal: ‘I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was in prison and you came to me’.” (17)

Four years later the Roman Synod of Bishops had this to say on the matter:

“We therefore urge Catholics to consider well the following propositions: It is absolutely necessary that international conflicts should not be settled by war, but that other methods better befitting human nature should be found.

Let a strategy of non-violence be fostered also, and let conscientious objection be recognised and regulated by law in each nation." (18)

It was not until 1977 that the local church made any comprehensive statement on conscientious objection. In February of that year the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) became the first major establishment church body in South Africa to publicly declare its support for the right of every individual to conscientiously object to military service. The full text of the statement reads as follows:

In the armed struggle that is developing on our borders and could easily spread internally a grievous situation arises for all who are concerned about the use of violence. On the one side the conviction grows in a significant sector of the oppressed majority that only violence will bring liberation. On the other, the minority in power sees itself threatened by indiscriminate violence supported by international Communism.

In these agonising circumstances we can only promise with God's help to give leadership in an ongoing Christian examination of this tragic situation. We intend to publish reflections from time to time as incentives to Christian prayer, thought and commitment and we hope to be able to do this with the representatives of other Christian churches and organisations. In the meantime we have resolved to say something about conscientious objection.

According to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, "it seems just that laws should make humane provision for the case of conscientious objectors who refuse to carry arms, provided they accept some other form of community service" (Constitution: "The Church in the Modern World" No. 79).

In order to understand the issue of conscientious objection, a careful distinction should be made between universal conscientious objection (the pacifist) and selective conscientious objection (e.g. on the grounds that a particular war is unjust); between combatant military service (carrying arms) and non-combatant military service (e.g. in the medical corps) and between military service (combatant or non-combatant) and national service (which could include services to the community, like social welfare, education, housing.)

In South Africa the Defence Force (sic) Act (section 67(3)) —

- (a) makes no provision for any conscientious objector (universal or selective) to do non-military national service;
- (b) provides for universal conscientious objectors (those who belong to pacifist denominations) to do non-combatant military service;
- (c) makes no provision for selective conscientious objectors even to do non-combatant military service.

Such provisions are made in some way or another by almost every other non-communist country in the world which has conscription.

It should also be noted that objectors are sometimes accommodated, despite the lack

of legal provisions for it, by being given non-combatant tasks but never by being given non-military national service.

Consequently in South Africa the selective objector and the universal objector refusing to do non-combatant military service are liable to a fine and/or imprisonment (Section 126, 127(c)).

In this matter of conscientious objection we defend the right of every individual to follow his own conscience, the right therefore to conscientious objection both on the grounds of universal pacifism and on the grounds that he seriously believes the war to be unjust. In this, as in every other matter, the individual is obliged to make a moral judgment in terms of the facts at his disposal after trying to ascertain these facts to the best of his ability. While we recognise that the conscientious objector will have to suffer the consequences of his own decision and the penalties imposed by the State, we uphold his right to do this and we urge the State to make provision for alternative forms of non-military national service as is done in other countries in the world.

ANGLICAN

The 1978 Lambeth Conference passed an important resolution, which, while it did not specifically deal with the issue of conscientious objection, nevertheless made a thought provoking statement on war and violence. The resolution reads as follows:

1. Affirming again the statement of the Lambeth Conferences of 1930 (resolution 25), 1948, and 1968 that 'war as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of Our Lord Jesus Christ', the Conference expresses its deep grief at the great suffering being endured in many parts of the world because of violence and oppression. We further declare that the use of the modern technology of war is the most striking example of corporate sin and the prostitution of God's gifts.
2. We recognise that violence has many faces. There are some countries where the prevailing social order is so brutal, exploiting the poor for the sake of the privileged and trampling on people's human rights, that it must be termed 'violent'. There are others where a social order that appears relatively benevolent nevertheless exacts a high price in human misery from some sections of the population. There is the use of armed force by governments, employed or held in threat against other nations or even against their own citizens. There is the worldwide misdirection of scarce resources to armaments rather than human need. There is the military action of victims of oppression who despair in achieving social justice by any other means. There is the mindless violence that erupts in some countries with what seems to be increasing frequency, to say nothing of organised crime and terrorism, and the resorting to violence as a form of entertainment on films and television.

3. Jesus, through his death and resurrection, has already won the victory over all evil. He made evident that self-giving love, obedience to the way of the Cross, is the way to reconciliation in all relationships and conflicts. Therefore the use of violence is ultimately contradictory to the Gospel. Yet we acknowledge that Christians in the past have differed in their understanding of limits to the rightful use of force in human affairs, and that questions of national relationships and social justice are often complex ones. But in the face of the mounting incidence of violence today and its acceptance as a normal element in human affairs, we condemn the subjection, intimidation, and manipulation of people by the use of violence and the threat of violence and call Christian people everywhere:
- (a) to re-examine as a matter of urgency their own attitude towards, and their complicity with, violence in its many forms;
 - (b) to take with the utmost seriousness the questions which the teaching of Jesus places against violence in human relationships and the use of armed force by those who would follow him, and the example of redemptive love which the Cross holds before all people;
 - (c) to engage themselves in non-violent action for justice and peace and to support others so engaged, recognising that such action will be controversial and may be personally very costly;
 - (d) to commit themselves to informed, disciplined prayer not only for all victims of violence, especially for those who suffer for their obedience to the Man of the Cross, but also for those who inflict violence on others;
 - (e) to protest in whatever way possible at the escalation of the sale of armaments of war by the producing nations to the developing and dependent nations, and to support with every effort all international proposals and conferences designed to place limitations on, or arrange reductions in, the armaments of war of the nations of the world.

In South Africa a number of Anglican diocesan synods have voiced their stands on the issue of conscientious objection. In September 1976 the Anglican Diocesan Synod in Natal called on the government to investigate and establish alternatives to military service in the form of a community service. It also encouraged all Christians to consider Christian alternatives to the use of violence for maintaining the status quo or for achieving change. (19) The following year in October the Cape Town Diocesan Synod passed the following resolution:

1. We endorse the words of our Archbishop in his statement to the press (on 16th February, 1977) that "the society we have created for ourselves is morally indefensible. This is very serious at a time when we are being asked to defend it." We sympathise with those who in conscience believe that it is an act of disobedience to God to be part of the military structures of this country, because they are convinced that by doing so they would be defending what is morally indefensible.

2. We uphold the right of such people to be conscientious objectors and we urge the State to make provision for alternative forms of non-military service.
We accept that we, as a Church, have a positive duty to make all people aware of what is involved in being used to defend the morally indefensible and to challenge each other in the cost of discipleship, putting first the claims of Christ over all our being and doing.
3. We request the Board of Social Responsibility, in co-operation with parish priests, to ensure that the contents of this resolution are conveyed to every parishioner and that efforts be made to see that opportunities be created for full discussion of the issues involved, both in the parishes and at schools and universities.
We further ask our Archbishop, assisted by the Board of Social Responsibility, to communicate with other Dioceses in the Province, inviting their support in this matter.

Finally in November 1979 the Provincial Synod of the Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA) passed the following resolution:

That this Synod, while regretting the circumstances which make military service necessary,

(1) Notes

- (a) that some people cannot render any form of combatant military service with a good conscience;
- (b) that some cannot render any form of military service with a good conscience;
- (c) that in April, 1977, the Synod of Bishops of the CPSA supported a statement of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference which urged the State "to make provision for alternative forms of non-military service as is done in other parts of the world";
- (d) that the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa and the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa have all urged the State to provide conscientious objectors with non-military forms of national service;
- (e) that in May, 1979, the Synod of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Durban requested the Southern African Catholic Bishop's Conference to establish a Committee on Military Service;

(2) Requests

- (a) the Minister of Defence of the Republic of South Africa to create a committee (or some other appropriate procedure) that will enable the Department of Defence to discuss specific proposals and problems which are raised

- (i) by the request for non-combatant forms of military service that a conscientious non-combatant can render with a good conscience and
 - (ii) by the request for non-military forms of national service that a conscientious non-militarist can render with a good conscience
 - (b) the Synod of Bishops of the CPSA to co-operate with any Committee on Military Service which may be established by the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference.
- (3) Commends to the prayers and pastoral care of the Church
- (a) those men of whatsoever denomination who for conscience sake are paying the penalty for non-compliance with the military duties imposed on them by the State and
 - (b) the families of the above men.

METHODIST

The first comprehensive statement on conscientious objection to emerge from the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA), was made at the latter's Annual Conference held shortly after the furore of the SACC resolution in 1974. The statement issued by this Conference reads as follows:

This Conference

- (a) Resolves that Christian opinion has always been divided on the question of how Christians ought to respond to the call to bear arms in times of war or national crisis, and that this division still exists.
- (b) Affirms that the position of the conscientious objector has a legitimate place within the Christian tradition and that the right to discuss, question or advocate this position must be regarded as an integral part of the religious liberty fundamental to the health of our society.
- (c) Acknowledges that the South African government has made provision for certain categories of conscientious objectors either through
 - (i) the option of "non-combatant" duties, or
 - (ii) in the case of refusal to wear military uniform at all, a single prison sentence.
- (d) Seeks a reconsideration of the latter position (ii), suggesting that there are creative and useful ways whereby such conscientious objectors might serve their country.
- (e) Points out that conscientious objection is not always based on purely pacifist convictions, but has sometimes arisen through the peculiar circumstances of a specific conflict, leading a person to refuse service because of his inability to share or accept the relative "rightness" of the cause for which he is called to fight, and that the present conflict on our borders provides no exception.

Five years later at its Conference held in October 1979, the MCSA proposed a procedure for ascertaining whether a person can be classified as a conscientious objector. The full text of the resolution embodying this procedure is as follows:

The Conference resolves that representations be made to the Minister of Defence in terms of the following lines:

- (a) That the trainee notify the authorities of his intentions and reasons at the time of call up or at any time thereafter should he come to such a conviction and that he request classification as non-combatant in the light of the fact that he is a conscientious objector.
- (b) Naturally this conviction must be tested. This should be done by a Commission of Enquiry interviewing the trainee concerned. This Commission would have to investigate thoroughly and decide whether his case is justified. The Commission should be balanced and comprise a fair cross-section representative both of the Church and the Department of Defence: e.g. two civilian ministers from the trainee's church: two military chaplains: a psychologist, etc. Such a Commission could be negotiable with the Chaplain General.
- (c) That the church proposes the following criteria as a basis for the Commission's deliberations:
 - (i) An attested statement that the trainee is a bona fide member of the said church;
 - (ii) Should the trainee not have been received into full membership of the said church but is in fellowship with the said church, this should be stated;
 - (iii) That an attested statement be submitted by the resident minister of the church or society within which the trainee resides. This statement should indicate whether the trainee has discussed the question of conscientious objection with the minister concerned and whether the minister is convinced that the trainee is, in fact, a bona fide conscientious objector;
 - (iv) That the trainee submit to the Commission of Enquiry a statement indicating that he understands the implications of the decision he has made and that should he be classified as a non-combatant, he would accept the tasks assigned to him;
- (d) That the trainee accepts that the principle of no privilege will apply if he is so classified.

That the church cannot accept the suggestion of an obligatory extended period of service nor the denial of normal privileges.

The church is further not prepared to accept any suggestion of a lower rate of pay for persons so classified nor is it prepared to accept no living out privileges.
- (e) Non-combatants should be offered the option of service outside the structure of the SADF, such as teacher, firemen, ambulance workers, welfare officers, etc.

The church is convinced that these alternative forms of National Service are viable options.

- (f) It is accepted that non-combatants do some type of basic training. The church can however, only accept this position should this be without the use of fire-arms. Physical training need not be debarred. There is consensus that an equally strenuous basic training without a rifle can be scheduled because other strenuous work such as gardening, painting and digging can be equally exacting.
- (g) The church is emphatic that the classification of such trainees as conscientious objectors be in no way liable to penalisation. It is further believed that it would be right and fitting that non-combatants do basic training together and then be posted to their respective service.

CONGREGATIONAL

Already in October 1977 the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA) declared that:

“Those who object to war on the grounds of Christian or moral principle should be entitled to fulfil their obligations to society in areas of national service outside the armed forces.” (20)

Then in 1979 the General Assembly of the UCCSA passed the following resolution:

The Assembly of the UCCSA expresses its concern about the legislation on conscientious objection. It notes that this grants the right to be exempt from military service on religious grounds only to members of religious organisations with a pacifist tradition or confession. A basic tenet of Congregational tradition, however, is the liberty of individual conscience under God and his Word. Therefore, though we do not legislate to our members on such issues as military service, we strongly support those who do object to military service on religious or moral grounds.

The Assembly also passed the following related resolutions:

This Assembly recommends that appropriate representations be made, in consultation with other Churches, to the Secretary for Defence, requesting an extension of the provisions for conscientious objection in terms of Section 67(3) of the Defence Act of S.A., to permit (a) non-combatant forms of service for all sincere conscientious objectors, and (b) alternative forms of non-military national service for all sincere conscientious objectors who refuse to serve in the SADF.

The Assembly urges all ministers and leaders of congregations to encourage groups in their congregations to discuss the ethical issues involved in military service in South Africa and to use for this purpose such material as the PCSA (Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa) document on Military Service and Conscientious Objection to be published in the *Christian Leader*.

PRESBYTERIAN

In September 1979 the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (PCSA) adopted the most comprehensive resolution on conscientious objection since the SACC resolution of 1974. The full text of this resolution (numbered 29-35 in its original form) appears below:

1. The Assembly reasserts that God's will is sovereign over all men and over every area of man's life and that the Church and all Christians therefore have the right and the duty to proclaim what they understand to be the will of God with regard to military service, conscientious objection or anything else in our country, whether or not this conflicts with the policy and will of the Government.
2. The Assembly reasserts the right of the Church to debate freely, pro and con, whether it is God's will for the citizens of our country to do military service in the South African Defence Force. It therefore calls on the Minister of Defence to repeal Section 121 of the Defence Act which inhibits such free debate and relies on threats and force instead of rational argument.
3. The Assembly instructs every Presbytery to appoint one of its members to be a Counsellor in War and Peace issues who will be specially concerned to promote discussion about war and peace in congregations within its bounds and to provide counsel and information about the options and penalties they face to those contemplating conscientious objection, when they request it.
4. The Assembly reaffirms its support of the right of young men to be conscientious objectors in South Africa, provided their motives are sincere.
5. The Assembly assures any member of our Church who refuses to do military service and suffers a consequent penalty of the continuing solidarity of its fellowship with him. It calls on all ministers and members of our Church to give moral and pastoral support to sincere conscientious objectors, wherever they can.
6. The Assembly requests the *Christian Leader* to publish the section of the report on Military Service and Conscientious Objection and calls on ministers and Sessions to encourage its discussion in their congregations.
7. The Assembly deplores the practice of sentencing conscientious objectors to a period or recurring periods in prison or detention barracks. It appeals to the Minister of Defence to amend the law so as to provide an alternative form of national service to military service.

BAPTIST

The only full statement on conscientious objection made by the Baptist Union of South Africa emerged in the following resolution adopted by the Assembly of the Baptist Union in 1979:

This Assembly of the Baptist Union:

1. reaffirms that the State has the right to call on its citizens to share in the defence of the country but also recognises the right of individuals to express their genuine and sincere objection to taking up arms on the ground of conscience or religious convictions;
2. recognises that partial provision for such conscientious objection has been made in the Defence Act Section 67(3) which accords to bona fide members of certain religious denominations, whose tenets forbid members to participate in war, the privilege of being allowed to render service in a non-combatant capacity;
3. points out that, while the majority of religious denominations do not forbid their members to take part in war, there are individuals who have a conscientious objection to carrying arms but not to rendering service in a non-combatant capacity;
4. regrets that as the Law now stands, these persons are denied the right which is accorded to members of the so-called peace churches mentioned in 2 above;
5. earnestly requests the Government to end the present anomaly and to amend the Conscientious Objection Clause to cover persons who, regardless of religious denomination, have a sincere objection to carrying arms and to allow them to fulfil the service required of them in a non-combatant capacity;
6. asks that, in addition to the above, the Government should recognise that there are those individuals who, on religious grounds, cannot conscientiously serve in any armed forces and that provision should be made for these persons to serve the community in some civilian capacity for at least an equivalent period of time and in circumstances as similar as possible to those under which service in the armed forces is performed.

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

This church declined to make any copy of its statement on conscientious objection available.

CHRISTADELPHIAN

This church also declined to make any copy of its statement on conscientious objection available.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

According to an elder of the Jehovah's Witnesses his church has not made any statement on conscientious objection. The question of participation in the military is left entirely to individual decision. However, Jehovah's Witnesses have a strong tradition of service to God rather than to man. Consequently, many members of this Church who do decide to conscientiously object, do so as part of a wider objection to any form of conscription.

OTHER RELEVANT STATEMENTS

In addition to the formal church resolutions a number of prominent leaders and organisations have expressed their views on conscientious objection and related matters. Some of these statements are recorded below.

ARCHBISHOP HURLEY

Shortly after the SACC resolution was adopted in 1974, the Catholic Archbishop of Durban, Denis Hurley, declared:

"My conclusion is that the people of South Africa should avoid at all costs getting involved in a border war, and that there should be conscientious objection to getting involved in such a war. Yet I know that there are people who cannot or will not agree to do this.

"In the South African situation, conscientious objection should be adopted as a principle by the churches. I believe that the churches should adopt this view, even at the risk of open confrontation with the Government. Confrontation has to occur sometime."

Archbishop Hurley said that his view could be summed up in four brief statements and a conclusion:

- (a) If South Africa gets involved in a border war, this war will have been provoked by the policy of apartheid.
- (b) To defend White South African society by force of arms is to defend the policy of apartheid.
- (c) To defend apartheid is to defend an unjust cause.
- (d) It is not permissible for Christians to fight an unjust war.

He concluded that:

“Unless we can claim that a strenuous effort has been made to reach understanding between Blacks and Whites, including liberation movements, conscientious objection seems the only possible Christian stand.”

The Archbishop added that:

“In my view any conflict arising in the near future on our borders will be in the nature of civil conflict, with people of the same country fighting each other. I believe it is our duty to discourage people from getting involved in this military conflict because of the realities of the South African situation — a situation of oppression.

“We must recognise the right of liberation movements to react to the situation in this country. We must look for a peaceful resolution to the question and face it with Christian conscience.”

He ended by saying that:

“The final conclusion is that we should start negotiating with Black leaders at home and abroad for a new understanding in South Africa before the armed conflict really starts.”

SADF CHAPLAINS FROM THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE CHURCHES

It was reported in March 1978 that the SADF's Permanent Force chaplains from the English-language churches recommended that provision be made for conscientious objectors not belonging to pacifist denominations. Among them were chaplains from the Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian and Baptist churches. They recommended that the SADF should make provision for a conscientious objector who is a member of a non-pacifist denomination, to render non-combatant military service if he so wishes. The chaplains also recommended that the State introduce a form of non-military national service. (21)

ARCHBISHOP BURNETT

In January 1979 the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Bill Burnett, warned that unless Whites “transmute” the root of apartheid for a more equitable feeding of the branches of the tree of the State. . . “this will be a time of killing”. In the face of this “dreadful possibility” the role of Christians would vary. Some would try to transform apartheid by organising pressure for change in the social structures and some would seek transformation through the written word. Still other Christians may conclude that every possible peaceful means to achieve change have been tried. He continued that since passive resistance is virtually impossible in South Africa they may well de-

cide, as some have, that they should join guerilla movements beyond our borders.

The Archbishop went on to state that as South Africa gravitated in the direction of bloodshed, he believed an increasing number of Whites would find that unless the apartheid structure was changed or eradicated, they would be unable in conscience to defend a system of government which, in spite of many good features, had a basis which was indefensible. He added, "Unless things change significantly, I would be in this category." (22)

NATIONAL UNION OF SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS

At its 56th National Congress in 1978 the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) called on the Government to:

- (a) lift the restrictions imposed on the individual's right to debate conscientious objection, and
- (b) recognise the right of the individual to decide for himself whether or not to engage in military service, or to engage in community service."

At its 57th National Congress the following year NUSAS again passed a resolution on conscientious objection. It resolved inter alia "to condemn the government's continued persecution of conscientious objectors" and "to call on the government to introduce alternative forms of national service of equal severity to military service."

CHAPLAIN GENERAL, SADF

The Chaplain General of the SADF, Major-General J.A. van Zyl, has very definite views on conscientious objection. These views are clearly expressed in this extract taken from the Chaplain General's Christmas Message:

"Dit is hierdie boodskap van die man van Kersfees wat S.A. en in besonder ons Weermag in hierdie tyd nodig het. Karl Marx het hierdie Man van Kersfees uitgedaag met 'n onderneming om Hom van sy troon te stoot en dit is presies wat hulle doen in Angola en Mosambiek en Zimbabwe Rhodesië met moord op sending-werkers en verbranding van Bybels en toesluit van kerke. Maar ons Weermag dien die Christus van Kersfees en gryp na die wapens om hierdie Kersfeespatroon op die troon te hou — daarvoor gaan dit alles, want daarvoor veg ons. Hierteen kan geen Kersfeesganger beswaar hê nie, want die persoon en boodskap van die Man van Kersfees word nou geweeg teen die moordaan-slag van Marx wat Christus om sy troon uitgedaag het. Daarom kan geen gewetensbeswaarder en geen pasifis in hierdie tyd met 'n skoon gewete by die krip van Bethlehem gaan neerkniel nie. Hoe kan hy Christelike vryheid geniet sonder om daarvoor te veg; hoe kan hy Christus volg sonder om Hom en sy boodskap te verdedig?" (23)

W. VAUSE RAW, MP: LEADER, NEW REPUBLIC PARTY

Writing in PARATUS (24), the official periodical of the SADF, in March 1980, Vause Raw stated:

“Finally, I want to express my total contempt for those ‘fifth columnists’ who subtly attempt to undermine the motivation of our young men defending, and about to defend, our country with emotive slogans like: ‘Not fighting for an unjust cause’ and ‘offensive to moral beliefs and conscience’. Decent and sincere people have sometimes unwittingly become their tools. Can there be anything more immoral or unjust than to condemn future generations, Black and White, to a ruthless Communist dictatorship under the Russian yoke as in Hungary, Angola and Afghanistan?”

However, Mr. Raw has, on a number of occasions in the past, made some attempt to obtain relief for conscientious objectors.

J.W.E. WILEY, MP: LEADER, SOUTH AFRICAN PARTY

In the same issue of PARATUS John Wiley passed the following comment which sums up his views on conscientious objection:

“Legislation providing for National Service (i.e. military service) is binding on us all, therefore there should be no exceptions to it. Why should some be protected because of their ‘consciences’ and others have to do the fighting? I believe everyone in the Republic should be made to do National Service without exception.”

QUOTES FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND THE MILITARY

As the attitude of the National Party government and the SADF towards conscientious objection have been extensively dealt with elsewhere (25) no attempt is made here to present a comprehensive survey of government and military opinion. What follows are a few important statements which have a direct bearing on military service and conscientious objection.

MINISTER OF DEFENCE, P.W. BOTHA

Commenting directly on the issue of conscientious objection, the Minister of Defence, P.W. Botha made the following statement in August 1980:

“The honour and duty to defend one’s country should not be made subservient to one’s religious convictions.” (26)

Six years later Botha addressed himself to the question of selective conscientious objection against participation in the SADF on the basis that service in the latter was tantamount to defence of an unjust system. The Minister advanced the following argument:

“But in recent times there have been cunning attempts to discredit the S.A. Defence Force. One of the arguments advanced is the following one: ‘How can you expect people to fight for an unjust society like South Africa?’ However, when we examine the matter closely, the question arises: Where in the world is there a more just society today than South Africa?” (27)

In February 1980 it was reported (28) that Mr. Botha hit out strongly at what he described as attempts to discourage young people from doing military service and not to fight for South Africa as it was an unjust society. He asked what sort of just society would there be if the “communists” succeeded in their aim to take over the country. “That is what we are fighting against,” said Mr. Botha. He also asked as to where in the world there was greater freedom of religion, a more independent judiciary, greater press freedom and more “free” enterprise than in South Africa.

DR. G. DE V. MORRISON, MP: NATIONAL PARTY

Dr. Morrison has made a number of very controversial statements in the past. These are his more noteworthy remarks on conscientious objection, and come from the 1972 Parliamentary debates on the Defence Amendment Bill:

“If we... want to make provision for ‘basic human rights’ or ‘freedom of conscience’ we are most certainly heading for a situation that borders on anarchy.” (29)

And a little further on in the same debate:

“Conscience is not, nor was it every, the highest authority... To speak of ‘basic human rights’ or of ‘freedom of conscience’ in times such as these, in which we are being threatened by the aggressive communism of both the Peking and Moscow varieties, where our security and survival are virtually being threatened every day, displays a recklessness in the face of reality which is not only astounding, but also extremely reprehensible.” (30)

CHIEF OF THE SADF, GENERAL MAGNUS MALAN

Although not directly related to conscientious objection, the following quotes from SADF Chief, General Magnus Malan, have an immediate bearing on the question of selective conscientious objection:

"There is a conflicting requirement between that of total strategy and the democratic system of government." (31)

"The Defence Force supports government policy and is responsible for peace, law and order in this country. This policy is the same as that laid down by Dr. H.F. Verwoerd, namely multinationalism and self-determination of nations. With the advent of the homelands the different nations must be given the chance to defend themselves." (32)

NOTES

1. Defence Further Amendment Act, No. 83 of 1974, specifically section 10.
2. Now section 121(c), Defence Act, No. 44 of 1957.
3. Hansard, 15 August 1974, Col. 804.
4. EcuNews Bulletin 29/74, 4 September 1974. This Bulletin is cited hereinafter as EcuNews.
5. EcuNews 25/74, 5 August 1974.
6. EcuNews 36/74, 30 October 1974.
7. EcuNews 25/74, 5 August 1974.
8. EcuNews 40/74, 27 November 1974.
9. EcuNews 29/74, 4 September 1974.
10. EcuNews 30/74, 11 September 1974.
11. EcuNews 38/74, 13 November 1974.
12. EcuNews 39/74, 20 November 1974.
13. Pro Veritate, December 1974.
14. Quoted by P.W. Botha in Hansard, 15 August 1974, Col. 803-804.
15. *Gaudium et Spes*: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (1965), para. 79.
16. *ibid.*
17. *Populorum Progressio*, para. 74.

18. *Justice in the World* (1971), para. 63-65.
19. EcuNews 29/76, 10 September 1976.
20. EcuNews 38/77, 27 October 1977.
21. EcuNews 7/78, 31 March 1978.
22. *THE ARGUS*, 31 January 1979, in an article entitled "Archbishop warns on 'time of killing'."
23. PARATUS, Vol. 30, No. 12, December 1979, p. 3.
24. PARATUS, Vol. 31, No. 3, March 1980, p. 23.
25. See Smail A, *The State's Arguments against the Provision of Alternative National Service*, Unpublished paper, Durban, January 1980.
26. Hansard, August 1970, Col. 2851.
27. Hansard, 6 May 1976, Col. 6206.
28. *NATAL MERCURY*, 7 February 1980, in an article entitled "P.W. gets tough".
29. Hansard, 1 March 1972, Col. 2246.
30. op. cit., Col. 2247.
31. Quoted by C.W. Eglin, MP, Hansard, 22 April 1977, Col. 5897.
32. Quoted in *CAPE TIMES* editorial, 25 October 1979.

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1

WHAT IS CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION?

* Write to the Revd. James Moulder, P.O. Box 4019, Durham, N.C.

PAMPHLETS ON PEACE AND WAR

Published by the C.P.S.A.

No. 1

A conscientious objector is someone who refuses to submit to combat training and service in his country's defence force because of his moral, political or religious convictions.

Conscientious objectors do not agree on what this refusal involves. And so it is necessary to distinguish three kinds of conscientious objector:

- the nonconscriptivist
- the nonmilitarist
- the noncombatant

A CONSCIENTIOUS NONCONSCRIPTIVIST is

opposed to all forms of conscripted National Service. Many Jehovah's Witnesses, for example, are conscientious nonconscriptivists.

A CONSCIENTIOUS NONMILITARIST is

opposed to all military forms of National Service.

- Some conscientious nonmilitarists are prepared to do nonmilitary forms of National Service that are controlled by the Department of Defence.
- Most conscientious nonmilitarists are prepared to do only nonmilitary forms of National Service that are controlled by other government departments or by nongovernment agencies such as the churches.

A CONSCIENTIOUS NONCOMBATANT

is

prepared to do his National Service in the Defence Force — but only if he is exempted from having to carry a gun and from having to learn how to use it.

- Some conscientious noncombatants are prepared to serve in any noncombat unit or in any noncombat capacity.
- Some conscientious noncombatants are prepared to serve only in units that are recognised as noncombat units by the Geneva Conventions on War. And so they are prepared to do their National Service only in the Medical Corps or in the Chaplains' Corps.

WHY ARE THESE DISTINCTIONS IMPORTANT?

- The Department of Defence interprets section 67 (3) of the Defence Act more broadly than the letter of the law allows.
- Anyone who has **bona fide** religious convictions which do not allow him to submit to combat training and service may apply for permission to be recognised as a **conscientious noncombatant**. Sincere applicants are seldom refused.
- But the law does not allow one to be a conscientious nonmilitarist; nor does it allow one to be a conscientious nonconscriptivist.

FOR FURTHER READING

Roland H Bainton, **Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace**, Abingdon Press, 1960. This is an excellent survey of the different ways in which Christians have responded to war and to conscription for military service.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- * Speak to your Priest or Bishop.
- * Write to the Revd. James Moulder, P O Box 4019, Durban, 4000.

This is one in a series of pamphlets on
Peace and War.

- 1. What is Conscientious Objection?
2. Does South African Law Allow Conscientious Objection?
3. What Does the Department of Defence Believe About Conscientious Objection?
4. Is it Illegal to Refuse to do National Service?
5. Is it Illegal to Discuss Conscientious Objection?
6. What Do Anglicans Believe About Conscientious Objection and War?
7. An Anglican Statement on Violence and War.
8. Why are Some Christians Conscientious non-Combatants?
9. In Defence of Conscientious Non-Combatants.
10. Are Some Wars Just?
11. Romans 13 and Conscientious Disobedience.
12. How to Counsel a Conscientious Objector.

2

DOES SOUTH AFRICAN LAW ALLOW CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION?

PAMPHLETS ON PEACE AND WAR

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This question does not have a straightforward answer because there are three kinds of conscientious objection:

A CONSCIENTIOUS NONCONSCRIPTIVIST

is

opposed to all forms of conscripted National Service.

A CONSCIENTIOUS NONMILITARIST

is

opposed to all military forms of National Service.

A CONSCIENTIOUS NONCOMBATANT

is

prepared to do his National Service in the Defence Force — but only if he is exempted from having to carry a gun and from having to learn how to use it.

PAMPHLETS ON PEACE AND WAR

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