

B1.7.34



*End Conscription Campaign*



# It's time to **STOP** conscription

- \* The call-up is racially discriminatory and increases racial polarisation.
- \* Extending conscription to all races would be very expensive and would lead to further conflict.
- \* Camps in particular are disruptive to the economy and to people's lives. Military service is often a complete waste of time.
- \* People who have already done a period of military service, particularly those who did an initial 2 years, often feel that they have done their share.
- \* Due to widespread crime people are concerned about having to leave their families when conscripted.
- \* There is no external military threat to SA and a smaller volunteer defence force would be adequate.
- \* The SADF does not necessarily play the role of a neutral peace-keeping force. We need a defence force which is respected and trusted by all South Africans.
- \* Corrupt government officials go unpunished. Cabinet ministers refuse to take responsibility for the activities of their departments? How can they treat law-abiding citizens like criminals purely because they do not wish to serve in the SADF?
- \* We believe that we should have the right to refuse to serve in the SADF. We believe that there should be no conscription now, or in a future South Africa.

# *It's call-up time again!*

If you have received a call-up, here are some answers to questions you may have.

## ***"Do I have to report for my call-up?"***

The Supreme Court will decide, in the next few months, whether call-ups are legally valid. Our lawyers' argument is that call-ups are illegal due to the repeal of the Population Registration Act. If we win our case against the SADF, those who don't report can't be prosecuted. Professor Marius Wiechers (UNISA Law Faculty) says our chances of winning are fifty-fifty.

## ***"But what happens if ECC loses?"***

Then the call-up is "legal". And it will be possible for the SADF to continue prosecuting. However, bear in mind that of the thousands who did not report in January 1992, no-one has yet been prosecuted. In the past, the standard punishment for those failing to report was a maximum R600 fine. But the percentage of "draft dodgers" actually prosecuted is very small.

## ***"If I don't report, what are my chances of being prosecuted?"***

In a word, small. Every call-up, fewer and fewer people report. The average turnout for camps is less than 30%. It is logistically almost impossible for the SADF to track down and prosecute all those involved, even if it wanted to.

## ***"If I'm one of the unlucky few, will I get sent to jail?"***

Most unlikely! Even high-profile conscientious objectors who categorically refuse to do military service (as opposed to the lesser offence of simply failing to report) have not been jailed since 1990. The Supreme Court, in sentencing the Reverend Douglas Torr, said that those convicted of refusing to do military service should do community service rather than be imprisoned.

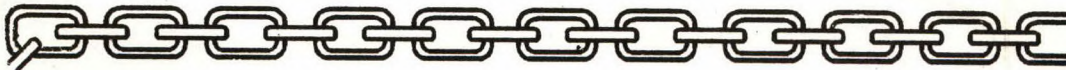
## ***"Is anyone currently being prosecuted for refusing?"***

Army camper Merrick Douglas has been charged with refusing to do military service. He appeared in the Randfontein Magistrates Court on the 15th May. His case was remanded until the 30th June. As far as we know, he is the only person who is being charged. Prior to Merrick Douglas, the last people to be charged with refusing had the charges against them withdrawn in June 1991.

## ***"Does the ECC encourage people to refuse to do military service?"***

We believe it's your moral right to choose whether or not to serve in the SADF. Here are some of the facts. Ultimately, however it's a choice YOU must make.





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## **Some Editors Comment**

"The Department of Defence would do itself and the country a great favour by urgently addressing the anomaly of a racially based call-up."

*(The Daily News, 7/1/92)*

"The military establishment has no logical option now but to build a volunteer army."

*(Pretoria News, 9/1/92)*

"The best answer would seem to be on the lines of a nonracial volunteer force."

*(The Star, 22/1/92)*

"It is patently unfair that the Defence Force should be manned overwhelmingly by white conscripts when the country is entering an era of racial equality."

*(Natal Mercury, 23/1/92)*

"The bold way out....is to suspend conscription...."

*(Business Day, 1/3/92)*

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## **Sign the ECC Petition!**

### **We, the undersigned, believe :**

- \* that South Africa's problems have to be solved through peaceful means rather than violence and force;
- \* that the present system of military service for white males is discriminatory;
- \* that this system is also severely disruptive to the economy and to people's lives;
- \* that extending conscription to South Africans of all races would place an enormous and unnecessary burden on the economy and would lead to further conflict;
- \* that, in particular, the present Citizen Force Camp and Commando systems place an unfair burden on people who have already performed a substantial period of military service.

### **We therefore call:**

- \* for the immediate scrapping of the existing Citizen Force Camp and Commando systems, and,
- \* for the entire system of conscription to be replaced by a system which is non-discriminatory and voluntary.

To get a petition form or further information phone us at (011) 836-8423 or the independent Conscription Advice Service at (011) 648-5887; or leave a message at (012) 322-7671.

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