

OBJECTOR

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PFP Defence Policy

Civil war debate

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Anglicans grasp chaplaincy nettle

Far reaching changes in the stand of the Church of the Province of South Africa on military issues emerged from the Provincial Synod held in July.

The Synods uncompromising stance on the "unjust war" being waged by the SADF, sparked fears that many whites would leave the Anglican Church.

Whites constitute less than 20 percent of the church's 2 million members, yet provide approximately 80 percent of its income.

The most contentious motion, attempting to amend the church canons to require military chaplains to be licensed by the bishops of the diocese in which they are practising, was defeated at its third reading.

Resolutions passed were that:

- Chaplains should be seen as representatives of Christ and His church, not the military. This should be reflected in their dress which should

avoid identification with the military.

- Chaplains should be paid by the church.
- Chaplains should carry arms.
- Anglican chaplain, the Revd John Daines should be removed from his position as a permanent member of the Board for Religious Objection.

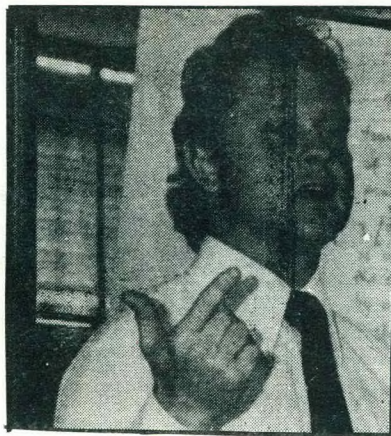
Muslims say 'no'

Muslims could not join the armed forces until the Government came to terms with black aspirations, the Islamic Council of South Africa said in a recent policy statement.

"Force in itself is not an absolute evil to be avoided in all circumstances in Islam. It is obligatory, for instance, on Muslims to defend his person, family, property and the divine system of life. What is outlawed is a war of aggression against other nations or countries..

"If South Africa's system of Government was based on justice it would no doubt be legitimate for Muslims to be in the armed forces and to take part in the defence of the country and in the maintenance of law and order," the statement read.

Troops out fast



Dr Ivan Toms - 3 weeks on water

The End Conscription Committee (ECC) is launching a national campaign calling for the withdrawal of troops from the townships.

The focus of the campaign will be a national 'Fast for a Just Peace' on October 7 - the day last year on which the SADF were first sent into the townships.

As an act of personal commitment to peace and of support for the objectives of the 'Troops Out' campaign, individual objectors in the different centres will fast from September 17 - the International Day of Peace - through to October 7. Prominent individuals and church leaders will fast in relays alongside the objectors.

Newsbriefs ■ ■ ■ Newsbriefs ■ ■ ■ News

Of the 438 applications received by the Board for Religious Objection from January 1984 to June 1985, 353 men had been classified as religious objectors, four were refused and 81 were awaiting classification. Of these, 239 Jehovah's Witnesses refuse to do any task relating to military service or connected with the armed forces

In the Cape Province 226 schools had cadet detachments in June. According to the Provincial MEC for education, 46 808 male students are undergoing school cadet training.

By June 982 immigrant men have refused to take out South African citizenship on the grounds that they do not want to be conscripted into the SADF. Of these 982, 80 have so far been refused residence permits.

One hundred and twenty five conscripts were in the SADF detention barracks (DB) in MAY this year for failing to report for duty. A total of 254 people were in DB, 96 of these for being absent without leave.

South Africa is in a state of civil war, the national president of the Black Sash, Ms Sheena Duncan, said recently.

"Military presence in the townships has become a permanent feature of our society," she said at the Edgar Brooks Academic Freedom Lecture on the University of Natal's Pietermaritzburg campus.

The students of Mangosuthu Technikon in Umlazi have strongly and successfully opposed the presence of the SADF, in all its forms, on campus.

At a student body meeting recently, the SRC reported that the rector wanted to know how the students felt about a lecturer doing the SADF's civic actions at Mangosuthu Technikon as an alternative to normal military training. The students resolved that they were not going to compromise and allow the SADF to "patrol" on their campus. They also expressed their vehement opposition to the presence of the SADF on the premises of hospitals, campuses and schools.

The failure of Cape municipalities to create "effective" civil defence structures is causing official concern according to the Provincial Administrator. Only 16 of the Cape's 215 municipalities have acquired A-grade preparedness.

The SADF does not keep records of South African citizens who evaded military service by obtaining citizenship or permanent residence in the "newly independent states".

The SADF has been using herbicides since 1981 "to facilitate the location of enemy crossings."

The Cape Corps base at Faure, outside Cape Town, is to be moved to the Atlantis-Mamre region on the West Coast. The move is to be made when funds are available and a nature conservation impact-study is completed. It will enable a larger intake to the Cape Corps, which, because of increased unemployment during the current recession, has received growing numbers of applications.

Methodists say 'troops out of townships'

After holding "crisis synods" around the country, the Methodist Church has called for the withdrawal of conscripts from the townships immediately.

The church would "stand in solidarity" with any of its young men who refused to do such duty because it conflicted with their Christian convictions, said the president of the Church, the Reverend Peter Storey.

The synods, attended by more than 1 500 ministers and laity, were called "to examine the present crisis in our land, and to fashion an appropriate response."

In a telex sent to the State President, the Minister of Defence and the Minister of Law and Order, the church called for the withdrawal of national servicemen from the townships.

"A situation has now arisen in which white and black Methodists are facing each other in armed confrontation. We know that this situation is leading to a crisis of faith among many of our young Methodists whose loyalty to their country is unquestioned, but who cannot accept that that requires them to take up arms against their fellow South Africans," the Church said in the telex.



Church leaders after meeting P.W.Botha. From left are Archbishop Denis Hurley, Rev. Peter Storey, Rev. Allan Maker, Archbishop Philip Russell.

Brink: 'I will not serve'

Internationally acclaimed author, Professor André Brink has announced that he will refuse to serve in the SADF if he is called up.

Prof. Brink, Professor of Afrikaans at Rhodes University, said in a recent article in Die Suid-Afrikaan that he would not serve in the army "because it is not the South Africa for which I want to live or die."

"To fight today for South Africa - on the Namibian border against Swapo among others; on the old Eastern border, against who? - does not mean the defence of a South African 'civilisation' against an aggressor who has no understanding or have a share, of the significant spiritual, moral, cultural and other values of it," Prof. Brink said.

Military call-up has been extended to all

white male citizens up to 55. One of the first areas for this call-up was the Eastern Cape, where police action in the townships has been openly supported on a large scale by the army.

The situation there had placed the call-up of the 'old guard' in a completely different light, "precisely because in the Eastern Cape there has been the bloodiest suppression of protest so far. It forces a direct and immediate moral choice on every man who is called up for service," Prof. Brink said.

He emphasised his decision not to serve in the SADF involved only himself.

"But by making such a decision and being responsible for it, I am also demonstrating my conviction that a person has a choice in every situation."

Dodson defies

A Cape Town articled clerk on a one-month camp who refused to go on a township patrol, was recently fined R600 by a court martial in Durban.

Alan Dodson, 25, had explained his opposition to the use of conscripts to quell township anti-apartheid resistance at the start of the camp, and was recommended for an administrative or guard-duty position by a welfare officer. He was nevertheless ordered to go on patrol, and refused.

Passing sentence, the presiding officer described Dodson as a "fine young man of unquestionable integrity with hitherto unblemished service."

"But irrespective of the political views of other citizens on the use of the SADF in suppressing unrest, the force has a duty imposed by the legislature, and as a soldier it is your duty to obey all commands in this respect."

"We are fighting for our survival, and standing with our backs to the wall," he concluded.

ECC appears before Geldenhuys

The End Conscription Campaign has repeated its call for an end to compulsory military service in evidence to the Geldenhuys committee in Cape Town recently.

The ECC, which represents 50 organisations throughout the country, said individuals should be free to choose whether to participate in the SADF, arguing that it was wrong to "force a young man to be part of the SADF and commit acts which violate his conscience".

The ECC, represented by Michael Evans and Richard Steele, said that it was apartheid and the role of the SADF in the upholding of the system which had caused so many organisations and individuals to support the campaign.

"Our organisations are opposed to

apartheid. They believe the denial of basic human rights is the cause of violence in our society and this should change."

The delegation added that "the use of security forces to contain those who are resisting injustice and inequality is no solution but only contributes to the continuing spiral of violence".

In a memorandum the ECC proposed:

- a volunteer army
- that alternatives to military service should not be limited to religious pacifists, "but to all who in good conscience cannot serve in the SADF".
- The length of community service be made equal to the length of military service and not, as at present, one and a half times longer.

Civil war, insurgent insti-

Each day has seen at least 4 deaths and 54 deaths in the month since the state of emergency was declared in 36 magisterial districts. The SAP and SADF have been active in townships outside declared emergency areas, bristling with armaments and we-are-your-friend pamphlets. The size of funerals has been limited in large parts of the country, and 10p.m. to 4a.m. curfews are enforced in Soweto and the Eastern Cape. Does this conflict represent a civil war and spiralling violence, or is it only a temporary turbulence and the restoration of law and order?

OBJECTOR asked for responses to these questions to raise them for debate. Our contributors were (alphabetically): Keith Gottschalk, a University of the Western Cape lecturer and chairperson of the Civil Rights League in Cape Town; Chrispian Olver, a medical student who works in the Cape Town ECC; and Willem Steenkamp, defence correspondent and columnist for the Cape Times, and author of a number of military-related and children's books.

Gottschalk

Two months ago, the largest circulation newspaper in the country launched an extraordinary smear on Dr Beyers Naude, head of the SACC.

Dr Naude, its editorial insinuated, both wanted civil war and encouraged it - by saying that the intensity of conflict in South Africa had reached the level of civil war!

Yet the same paper made no such protests over the past decade when General Magnus Malan and military White Papers routinely refer to "the low-intensity civil war in South Africa".

Presumably this newspaper's abusive polemics against Dr Naude are merely part of its campaigning against radical politics.

Even an ex-Special Branch policeman, who was a double-agent on the UCT campus, agrees. Michael Morris (not to be confused with the marxist academic of the same name!) claims that more people were killed by political violence in South Africa than in Lebanon during 1985.

"Acknowledgement of the state of civil war is the prerequisite for reversing the escalation of violence."

He claims that South Africa has had five times more instances involving bombs or explosives than Northern Ireland, and more than Lebanon, during the most recent period. (Cape Times, August 10) And nobody would deny these countries suffer from civil war.

This view, of course, ignores other aspects. South Africa, unlike Lebanon, is not yet divided between five fiefdoms of war-lords and their armies. Unlike the IRA, ANC campaigns do not focus on bombing crowded pubs, and concentrations of tourists.

But South Africans of government and opposition, and of different political movements, are killing each other with weapons of war. These are scenes reminiscent of resistance movements killing collaborators, and rivals, in newly liberated Europe.

I argue the opposite case to the weekly newspaper referred to above.

To acknowledge that the current cycle of rebellion and repression has the characteristics and dimensions of a civil war is the prerequisite for reversing the escalation of violence.



To the extent that the South African army's main role becomes killing South Africans and planning such killings, to that measure it gradually loses its claim to be the South African army.

It becomes merely a government army fighting against an insurgent army. Whether it kills the South African opponents of the Government in Gaborone or Graaff-Reinet, in Cabinda or Cradock.

And it highlights the extent to which the Nationalist Government's rule rests increasingly on force alone, bereft of any legitimacy.

The minimum reforms necessary to reverse this escalation of armed conflict are not even especially radical or new. They are to create the institutions ensuring government by consent of the governed, and to redress the extremes of unemployment and inequality in our country

Olver

Civil war, broadly defined, is the conflict between two sides, each calling the other "the enemy". More narrowly defined: the opposing sided, to merit the description, must be large enough to be identifiable as parts of the civil realm, the struggle must be a basic one, there must be unity of consciousness in opposition and there should be violence to the point of war.

In South Africa the transition to civil war has been gradual: beginning with peaceful protest in the quest for political and economic emancipation, and developing - when such protest failed - into an armed struggle.

The question as to whether the use of the term "civil war" applies to violent action in South Africa today, belongs to the ideological battle over words and ideas through which reality is presented to us.

The South African media's use of "violence" and "unrest" and its avoidance of "civil war" is symptomatic of the ideological distortion of reality, the masking of the real struggle in the attempt to keep whites in ignorance of what is happening in the townships.

The ideology of violence both preserves and expresses the structural violence of our society. The SADF and the SAP contribute to and maintain the violence of the apartheid society. Since 1960 this violence has escalated. There have been forced resettlements, arrests for pass law offences, deaths in detention and in custody.

In recent years, in spite of the state's attempts to mask the evidence, there has been an increased politicisation of black communities and the emergence of a strong middle-level leadership.

"the use, or otherwise, of the term 'civil war' ... belongs to the ideological battle over words and ideas."

The last two decades have been decisive for the military's leadership. While previous Nationalist governments relied heavily on police action, there seems to be an increasing recognition of the need of the military if the South African state is to be preserved - hence the military inspired "total strategy". And hence also the increased expenditure on the military, and the growing role played by the SADF.

● This is a paraphrase of a workshop paper presented at the ECC Peace Festival.

gation or Sunday sports?

Steenkamp

There is an unfortunate tendency in some circles to describe South Africa as being in a state of civil war. I use the word 'unfortunate' because our situation is too serious to admit of the use of an expression which, to my mind, does not accurately describe the state of affairs in this country.

I would prefer to describe the situation as a low-level insurgency rather than civil war, not in an attempt to gloss over what is happening in this country but because I think terminological inexactitude is something we must try to avoid.

I say this not in hostility, but with understanding of the difficulty many people have of defining exactly what is going on in this country.

For the layperson, it is not always an easy thing to distinguish between civil war and an insurgency. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, both types of conflict are power struggles. Secondly, both are internal rather than external conflicts - ordinary wars being essentially an extension of foreign policy, as Von Clausewitz remarked.

However, this does not mean that a subtle but significant difference does not exist, and to determine what we are seeking we should look at circumstances.

Let us start with some definitions.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines insurgency as rebellion or 'a rising in active revolt'.

Again according to the COD, civil war is fighting 'between parts of one nation for supremacy'.

One of my own definitions would be that civil war is one in which two or more contenders of roughly equivalent armed strength struggle openly to assume power, whereas an insurgency is a conflict in which a specific movement or coalition of movements is trying to overthrow the governing group and/or the entire system of government (although it is dangerous to be too dogmatic about definitions, since wars come in a surprising variety of forms).

Using my definition, however, true civil wars are surprisingly rare phenomena, particularly in Southern Africa. Historically I do not think we have had a true civil war (barring some tribal wars of succession), and in modern times I can think of only one conflict I could classify as such.

That is the situation which arose in Angola just before and after the precipitate and irresponsible Portuguese withdrawal in late 1975.

The immediate result of the Portuguese pull-out was, to put it crudely, that Angola was up for grabs. For practical purposes there was no government; the power vacuum at the top had to be filled.

Three contenders - the MPLA, the FNLA and UNITA, none of whom could offer convincing proof that the majority of the people supported them - then set about one another in an attempt to occupy the governmental vacuum.



The result: True civil war 'between parts of one nation for supremacy'. After a long struggle, featuring much hypocritical hand-wringing and posturing by the rest of the world - not to mention considerable semi-clandestine skulduggery by the Cubans and South Africans - the MPLA came out on top.

Yet nine years later the civil war continues, you might say, Right and wrong. The fighting continues; but the civil war ended early in 1976, when the Unita and FNLA resistance to the MPLA crumbled away and they went back to the bush. What happened then was they resumed their insurgency against the established order, except that this was now the MPLA instead of Portugal.

In other words, Unita and the FNLA had actually taken a step backwards instead of forwards in the classical 'liberation war' progression.

That remains the situation at present. The fact that the MPLA cannot eliminate Unita, and Unita cannot topple the MPLA is not relevant. Unita is fighting against the established order. Dr Jonas Savimbi is an insurgent or a revolutionary, if you prefer the latter term; he is not President Eduardo dos Santos's co-belligerent in a civil war.

Virtually the same situation applies in Mozambique today, except that Frelimo did not have to knock out another contender to take power; it was running the only game in town when the Portuguese got out. Renamo is an insurgent or terrorist movement, fighting the established order.

In the same way the bush war in Zimbabwe was not a civil war but a successful insurgency. The low-intensity struggle in Lesotho is also an insurgency, as is the more serious border war in South West Africa /Namibia.

End of Angolan civil war. The power vacuum had been filled; the MPLA was in control, rightly or wrongly.

The present troubles in Uganda might well escalate into a civil war because the military officers who toppled Dr Milton Obote constitute only a tribal faction and a section of the armed forces, and did not achieve as significant a take-over as did the MPLA in Angola.

There are other tribal factions with significant military strength in the country and the time of testing is sure to come - and that will be a true civil war.

So much for examples elsewhere, What about South Africa?

A power vacuum does not exist. Rightly or wrongly, for better or worse, the country is being governed and remains largely governable, albeit with the help of emergency regulations and tough security legislation.

There is some armed violence, but no reputable military observer would categorize the occasional contacts between the SAP and the ANC as warfare, civil or otherwise.

The ANC, to put it bluntly, is not capable of fighting civil war or wresting power by force of arms at this stage, and will not be so in foreseeable future. It does not hold any territory, it does not dispose of fighting formations of any kind except the smallest and most basic, and indeed at this stage of the game it would be stupid to do so.

The above is not said to denigrate the ANC but to place the facts on record. And these facts make it plain that the ANC - correctly, given the circumstances - is engaged in a classic insurgency rather than a civil war.

Much has been made of the shooting of demonstrators or rioters, but politics aside, this sort of action flows from the SAP's internal-security function and not a civil war situation. One might quarrel with the actions taken, and the manner in which they are carried out, but not with the basic premise.

Much has also been made of the South African government's legitimacy or lack thereof, and the majority of its actions and institutions. None is relevant to this discussion unless we are to turn from reason to rhetoric.

If we do not, I cannot see what other conclusion can be reached but the one I have sketched above.

Actually, of course, it is probably frivolous in one sense to argue the toss about whether we are involved in a civil war or an insurgency. People are dying and being wounded, and that tragedy makes all fine-shaded semantic arguments rather petty.

Pre-empting the Pretorian Praetorians

Q: What prompted your decision to enter parliamentary politics?

A: I was teaching at UCT in 1972, at the time of the clash between students and police in St Georges. That incident cowed a lot of people, and it certainly had a very profound effect on me.

It was then that I decided that we had to explore not only extra-parliamentary strategies for change, but that we had to get in and engage the system.

I think what we are going to see now is a return to the kind of repression we saw in the early 1960's, where dissent was almost forced back into institutional channels. I think the debate that is going to have to be explored more and more now, and it's not a popular debate, is how do you use institutional means to bring about change.

Q: Could you outline the debates and changes in the PFP defence policy over the past few years.

A: The debates are the familiar ones: to what extent has the SADF become politicised, to what extent is it subject to parliament, and so on. Then there is the question that was raised in the Johannesburg ECC debate, about whether the army is a "shield for reform" or "a defender of apartheid".

The point I tried to make there is that it is both. As in any society, it should be a shield to reform - a neutral arbiter while other democratic forces work out the options. Yet, being the defence force, it inevitably provides the stability in which government can pursue its policies, and; to the extent that government pursues policies of apartheid, there is a real danger that the defence force becomes embroiled as a contaminated "shield".

What do you do under these circumstances? While you could withdraw completely from institutional and constitutional processes, I believe you must try and confront government and parliament and the SADF with your concerns and objections to what is taking place. That is where the debate lies - and I am not for a moment trying to belittle the moral difficulties the individual must experience in deciding whether he is going to subject himself to the defence force. But that lies on a different level to deciding the political position we are going to adopt, and trying to ascertain the best role the defence force should be playing.

Q: Could you give us some background to the debates that led to your assuming the position of PFP spokesperson?

A: There are a number of strands of argument one could pursue. Firstly, there was the coming into being of the PFP, out of the old Progressive Party and the fragmentation of the United Party. Not coming from any of factions arising out of this, I could say I was not trying to preserve any vested interest.

Another factor was that our opponents seized upon this as an issue to distract attention from what we should be doing - confronting the question of citizenship and constitutional issues - by saying that we were unpatriotic.



Dr. B. Naudé: 'S.A. in civil war'

Of more immediate consequence were the debates we had at our Provincial Congresses, culminating in the resolution adopted about ending conscription, and the reaction that followed from it - the resignation of my defence spokesman and the heat that was generated.

I felt defence issues were increasingly spilling over into other areas of government, and being in a leadership position I had to be in on them. With raids, and the SADF being used in a policing capacity, we anticipated defence matters becoming increasingly controversial.

Further, I personally feel that the racially selective form of conscription which we have is going to be an extremely divisive issue, and is going to become a polarizing factor precisely when you need a balanced approach to defence policy.

Q: Are you referring to polarization specifically in the white community?

A: Yes. But I think it is important to stress that conscription - as a moral issue in the white community, and I do not say this with any pleasure - is an insignificant factor as far as the defence force is concerned.

This is where I think I was misunderstood at the ECC debate. I said that if you got rid of conscription tomorrow, it would not be a mortal blow for the defence force. Should they recruit on a non-racial basis and give competitive salaries, they could have an enormous black army.

When I said that the arguments put forward for ending conscription were naive and romantic, I was referring to the arguments put forward in the debate by Dr Webster. One of them was that a reason for introducing the tricameral parliament was to extend conscription to coloureds and asians. That's nonsense. In the past the army has only been able to cope with 50% of the volunteers coming in from these communities.

So, I have always felt that to seize upon conscription as a means to weaken the SADF is just batting on the wrong wicket.

Q: What is your view on ECC, and would you see any possibility of joint action with them in the white community?

A: An important difference lies in the nature of the two organisations. ECC is a single issue campaign and we are a political party, having to adopt positions on a whole range of issues.

In a single issue campaign, you will find a whole range of people looking into it for different reasons. So there is no way I can be hijacked into the hidden agenda of other groups involved in ECC - they have to work out their own battle there.

I am against compulsory conscription, and willing to talk against it. But if they say, as happened at the ECC debate, you cannot really be against conscription because you are in the tri-cameral system, well, that's their theory of change. They are talking about ideology, view of change, and there we can differ. That's the difficulty one faces.

Q: To what extent does the Youth wing differ, with the rest of the party on defence policy?

A: It is quite possible that the youth wing will come to the party congress with a resolution that we must end conscription now, and I will say it must be as soon as possible. What we will be doing is staking out different strategic positions that have very little to do with how effective we can be in bringing an end to conscription.

To end conscription as soon as possible, you have to persuade Gen. Geldenhuys and others that it's in their interest to do so. I have a lot of confidence that conscription is going to go.

My big problem is not with conscription, but with what kind of civil control we can maintain over the defence force. Read Phillip Frankel's, 'Pretoria's Pretorians'. If the military start defining themselves as a modernising oligarchy, and try to capture control in the name of reform, you will find a lot of people backing them. I think that's the most dangerous thing that can happen to this country.

Q: How do you feel about the use of the army in situations of civil unrest?

A: I don't like it. I said it from the start. They are politicising the defence force by the day, and in the minds of ordinary South Africans, the roles of the police and army are going to become blurred.

Q: Dr Beyers Naudé and others have said that the polarization in black communities has reached the level of civil war. Would you agree?

A: I tend to avoid words like "revolutionary", "pre-revolutionary" and "civil war", because they have a very clear content for me. You are in a civil war when you have a polarised situation with both sides self-sustainable and depending on violence to attain their goals. In Naudé's sense we are not in a civil war because of the imbalance of power. The governments ability to coerce has not even been extended, and the township communities are extraordinarily vulnerable.

I would say that we are in the beginning of a state of siege, that is a period of inconclusive violence waged from both sides. If you put yourself in those communities and you see the Caspiers outside, you are unquestionably experiencing a siege.



There is no doubt in my mind that within those communities there is a level of brutalisation. That makes negotiation politics extremely difficult.

In the short-term I can see a lot of highly angry and irrational people lashing out. But the lashing out has been confined to the black communities.

The level of brutalisation on the white side has been limited to the front-line, involving only those who have to administer violence - be they young conscripts or men who do it for a living.

I accept the warnings that people like Dr Naudé are giving us - They are saying that while you talk about reform, this is what is happening in the townships. And I have never made any secret of the fact that if we pass a certain threshold, then you can forget about Naudé's talk of constitutional change and reform. Then we move into a different kind of politics.

I must then in all honesty say that there is no role that a party such as mine can even hope to play, and we might as well get out of it.

I do not believe we are there yet, and I feel that perhaps we can play a role in preventing that separate situation coming about.

It's not easy. While I am grateful for the efforts of people such as Molly Blackburn and Di Bishop who have maintained links in the black communities ... I am operating at the other end of the pole, that is, talking with the government.

Q: Could you outline the PFP representations to the Geldenhuys Committee.

A: We argued that from military, political and economic points of view, the

sooner we get rid of conscription the better. In political terms, racially selective conscription is going to increase polarization between white and black, with the uniform becoming a symbol of white domination.

Militarily, there is the question of morale, you are infusing the defence force with all the political conflict operating in our society. Economically, with a declining pool of white expertise, in a situation hopelessly unprepared to increase the productive base of our economy because of apartheid education, conscription is debilitating the economy by drawing manpower away from where it is most productive.

These are the kind of hard arguments that these people listen to. I also made the point that any person who feels morally constrained against doing military service should be exempt from it. The 1 or 2 percent involved simply create a whole range of debates and emotional issues which are not related to the central problem - whether there is a role the defence force can play in bringing about evolutionary change.

Q: We have just had the 40th anniversary of Hiroshima. What are your feelings about nuclear armaments and the international peace movements?

A: I am horrified by Hiroshima, and get cold shivers down my back when I hear Reagan say that it was good because it taught the world a lesson. We must be a bunch of yahoo's if that is the kind of lesson we need to be taught. In principle I am against massive armaments and the arms race, but to be quite honest, I simply do not know enough to move beyond posture on these issues.

Don Quixote or conscientious critic?

O: Some observers suggested that the emotive imagery used in your much-publicised criticism of General Malan gave him the opportunity to avoid the real issues. Do you agree with this view?

GM: My technicolour language gave Magnus Malan a red herring but he is a disaster as a parliamentarian and a minister, and would not have debated the issues anyway. His political supporters would have found other issues to deflect debate from the real public concern.

O: You appeared as a defence witness at Peter Hathorn's trial in 1983. Where does your interest in conscientious objection and military-related issues stem from?

GM: I believe that a civilised society should respect the sincerely held views of individuals - whether those be vegetarian, religious or feminist - and furthermore seek to accommodate them. I also have a warm affection for Peter and his family.

Although I find the principle of National Service acceptable, I believe there should be non-military alternative. It would also take the best off the SADF over the CO issue.

O: As a Christian and as a white male South African, how do you view the dilemma faced by conscripted such as Peter Hathorn or Roalnd Hunter?

GM: Each individual is unique, and each one has ultimately to live with his or her conscience and God. That often involves a



Mr Graham McIntosh

compromise, which need not mean a failure. The final decision may take into account many factors, but no civilisation of compassion and quality has been built without sacrifice and suffering - Jesus Christ Himself is the supreme example. People with sincere, honest convictions are a great asset to any society

O: Could you comment on the debate over defence policy in the PFP?

GM: There is always debate within the PFP on issues and Defence is no exception. It is, however, fair to say that the PFP is now prepared to be much more critical of the SADF, particularly since lies have been told to us over the invasion of Angola and support for Renamo.

The PFP has also adopted a policy opposed to conscription and although a tiny minority exercised their democratic rights and vigorously objected, they do not represent the mainstream of PFP thinking.

The use of the SADF in the townships, not in a declared emergency but "as a matter of course" (Minister of Defence), greatly alarmed PFP supporters and gave enormous impetus to the move against conscription at the various provincial congresses.

O: Do you feel that the PFP has given an adequate lead on these questions of conscription, CO and so on?

GM: In terms of setting a political pace - including on the sensitive Defence issue - I believe the PFP has given a sensitive, national, realistic and often courageous lead. On the issue of conscription, the ECC and PFP oppose it but for different reasons.

O: How do you view the ECC? Has it generated debate on conscription in the Party Caucus?

GM: The ECC has not generated any debate in the PFP at Parliamentary level, and I suspect this is because the PFP already opposes the principle of conscription.

What I don't like is the ECC's rationale, which appears to be a 'civil war' theory. I find that an unconvincing argument at present. A civil war situation is more like wishful thinking than reality - but it may be a reality in the future if conscription is not abolished.

O: How do you think the conflict besetting South Africa can be resolved?

GM: Resolving South Africa's conflict can only be done by giving all South Africans full citizenship within a political system worked out by all South Africans.

Editorial

Since the last issue of OBJECTOR, our country has slipped further into bloodshed and turmoil. A state of emergency has been declared in 36 magisterial districts, and the presence of troops and police has become part of daily township life all around South Africa.

Reportage on security forces' activities is limited by both Section 118 of the Defence Act ("offence to report troop movements"), and the reliance on police "situation reports" (use of which requires official permission). This leads to both an ill-informed public, and the circulation of rumours - neither of which assists in resolving the conflict.

Does this situation constitute a civil war as some have argued, or is it only a state of siege which will be lifted at some point. Or is it, as the chief of the SAP's riot-squad suggested, "only the usual Sunday sports" of the black communities.

OBJECTOR believes that South Africa is indeed in a civil war situation. The fundamental point is that South Africans are being set in violent opposition against South Africans, and that the polarisation of our country is growing rather than diminishing. In this issue there are a range of arguments - both far and against the idea of a civil war - and

we welcome the contribution of further perspectives.

Also in this issue is a focus on PFP defence policy. This takes the form of a number interviews, with: Dr van Zyl Slabbert, party leader; Graham Mc Intosh, Pietermaritzburg South MP; and Vernon Bell, chairperson of the Young Progressives Western Cape branch. The debates within the party have been ongoing for some years, and this time centre around the issue of conscription. These will, no doubt, be resolved at the forthcoming Federal Congress in Durban.

Bell rings the changes

OBJECTOR interviewed **Vernon Bell**, chairperson of the **Western Cape PFP Youth**. This branch is bringing a resolution calling for "an immediate end to conscription" to the Federal Congress this month.

O: What is the state of PFP youth organisation nationally - in schools, in schools, on campuses etc?

VB: We are active on a national level in all nine major regions of the Party. Each youth formation is represented on a National Committee that meets a number of times a year to monitor activities.

Our active membership is drawn from the Party membership in each region. The level of activity and size of the youth organisation normally depends on the size of the Party formation and the political climate in a region.

Generally, because of University council policy, we are not able to operate under the PFP banner. However Progressive student societies have been formed at several universities. We are presently active at Wits, U.C.T., Natal, R.A.U., Pretoria, Free State, Rhodes and more recently made a breakthrough at U.P.E.

Our policy has always been to operate largely away from campus politics in order to be more than just another student organisation.

O: How do you view the debates in the PFP, do you think these pose a serious threat to unity, or are the other debates (over black recruitment and candidates, relations with extra-parliamentary groupings etc) more the lines of cleavage?

VB: I do not sense a serious threat to Party unity over any of these issues, although I do believe that these debates will arouse very strong opinions over strategies and interpretations among many Party members. Possible tricameral participation is naturally the central and most agonising debate at present, and this will in turn have to include any views that exist regarding extra-parliamentary groupings.

O: What are your views on the ECC?

VB: I believe the formation of the E.C.C. is one of the most significant developments on the political scene in recent years. The strong desire by a growing number of South Africans to organise against what has essentially become an extension of the Nationalist's

Apartheid system - the SADF - has clearly brought about the need for such an organisation to articulate this message.

O: Does your organisation have any formal contact with the ECC, and do you see any possibility of joint action between the ECC and PFP around the issue of conscription in the white community?

VB: The Young Progs in the Western Cape have contact on an informal basis with the E.C.C. However in other regions, for example the Eastern Cape, Young Progs have affiliated to their local E.C.C.'s.

There are definitely no obstacles regarding joint action between the Young Progs and E.C.C. as it is an issue which we have already decided upon.

I feel it is important that large numbers of liberals involve themselves in the broader struggle, and the issue of conscription - especially in the light of recent SADF involvement in the townships - is an obvious issue to be involved in.

O: How is the PFP youth wing taking up issues of militarisation, both generally, and in the party?

VB: The Young Progs have incorporated the end conscription message into all our literature. It must also be remembered that the debate concerning militarisation etc was started many years ago within the P.F.P.

The Young Progs have since then been instrumental in raising the debate in all forms within the Party. Last year it was the Western Cape Young Progs who initiated the End Conscription resolutions at our Provincial Congresses, and we will be doing so again this month at our Federal Congress in Durban.

O: Could you explain the divergence between the PFP and its youth wing over questions of conscription, Namibia and so on?

VB: There are those individuals in the Party who differ quite strongly with the Young Progs stand on conscription; Namibia etc. I do believe however, that the vast majority agree in principle with our stand, and that the differences are merely those of semantics.

O: Do you expect any major shifts in policy (defence or other) at the Federal Congress later this month?

VB: I don't believe that there will be any major policy shifts at Federal Congress. What we are likely to see will be the development of new strategies within the Party.

From the Young Prog side we would be hopeful for a firm and clear stand on the issue of the SADF actions and conscription.

The nature of the political climate in the country has certainly set the mood for a most important Congress for the P.F.P.

Advice Bureau on Military Conscription

If you are worried about your call-up, contact us for advice and information on alternatives.

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If I can't dance I don't want to be part of your revolution

by Anita Kromberg & Richard Steele

Emma Goldmann, the Russian/American activist, summed up the feminist, non-sexist approach to peacemaking with her comment "If I can't dance I don't want to be part of your revolution". Dancing, laughing, and celebrating are an integral part of feminist peacemaking, which is the antithesis of the traditionally "male" way of resolving conflict with violence and domination.

Peacemaking means beginning to live the new society here and now. It means learning new ways of being, which recognise the dignity of the individual and respect group integrity and liberty. How can we put these ideas into practice, given the hostile and unpeaceful environment in which we live?

We can start on an inter-personal level: developing relationships that are not dominating, unequal, or characterised by sex-role stereo-typing. When we are familiar and comfortable in one-to-one relationships that are respectful of the other person and liberating for both individuals, we will be able to work like this in our organising and group work.

In groups, we could develop simple ways of controlling personal sexism and dominance: by rotating facilitators rather than having chair-people, each person round a circle sharing in an allotted number of minutes, consensus decision-making, rotating of functions within a group, and the sharing of skills and child-care. When our relationships and organising style reflect these new ways of being, then our call for society to change will have that much more credibility.



Greenham Common women - dancing at dawn.

These are all important steps. But we also need to identify and confront the attitudes which are at the root of relationships based on dominance and submission. Unless we develop new ways of thought and action, we will simply be playing around with the old system.

One important area is that of symbols and language. If we continue to use the language of war ("my room looks as if it had been hit by a bomb", or "X is a walking minefield of problems") we continue to give legitimacy to the methods used by armies and governments to control and dominate ordinary people like ourselves.

Language which recognises that maleness is the norm for humanity (eg. using "mankind" where "people" are meant) needs also to be changed, to demonstrate our belief that all human beings are created with equal beauty and potential. "We can best help you prevent war not by repeating your words and following your methods but by finding new words and creating new methods". (Virginia Woolf)

Feminist, non-sexist peacemaking takes very seriously the threat of nuclear annihilation, wars between nations, civil war within a nation-state, and oppression in its many forms precisely because feminists know the effects of domination and oppression at first hand. But, in opposing all that is destructive, peacemakers want to create and live the new order.

It is not enough just to pull down old structures - we should be building the new as we go along. And so peacemaking can be creative, spontaneous, and fun. It can involve all who wish to be part of building the new society - it does not discriminate against women, children, the aged, the handicapped, etc.

The peace camps at US Cruise missile bases in Britain are an example of the commitment of peace activists: "I've been accused of being cruel and hard-hearted for leaving my children behind, but it's exactly for my children that I'm doing this. In the past, men have left home to go to war. Now women are leaving home for peace". (Sarah Greenham Common Peace Camp)

ECC Fast for a JUST PEACE
September 17 - - Objectors begin 3-week Fast
October 07 - ECC National Fast

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END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)

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