

55031

Mingalo Bay  
Bass Road  
Zeekoewlei  
7945  
5/6/85

The leader of the Opposition  
Dr F van Zyl Slabbert  
House of Assembly  
Cape Town  
8000 (?)

Sir,

As a ~~reside~~ ~~former resident~~ of your constituency and ~~one~~ supporter of your ~~Party~~ Party, and one who has voted for it in the past in the belief that it would take your constituents' opposition to apartheid into ~~par~~ Parliament, I was most perturbed to read in the Cape Times of 30/5/1985 your comments on opponents of military conscription. The PFPI's standpoint, you are alleged to have said, "had absolutely nothing to do with cheap, sensational propaganda aimed at evading or undermining military service." If the quote is correct I would like to make the following points.

1. Apart from your ~~party~~ <sup>Party</sup>, the organization that is doing the most to oppose military conscription is the ECC.

2. There can therefore be little doubt, in the minds of any reasonable reader, that your comments were intended as a slur on the name of that organization.

3. If this was your intention, does this signal a permanent shift in PFP rhetoric and policy; i.e. will it henceforth become common to have principled men and women of the stature of Sir Richard Huys, Oscar Wollheim, Bishop Desmond Tutu, Sheera Duncan, Margaret Nash and even members of your own party such as Molly Blackburn and Di Bishop - all of whom have, to my knowledge, endorsed the ECC's Declaration - disparaged in similar fashion by you and the representatives of your Party in Parliament?

4. If this is not true, who then were you referring to as being the purveyors of such "cheap, sensational propaganda" and who is it, in your opinion, who aims to "evade and undermine military service"?

3 Though I personally am not in any way involved with the ECC, I have read their Declaration and attended its most impressive launch at the Claremont Civic Centre in September last year. I found their arguments and the sensitivity with which they were raised at a meeting enthusiastically attended

one thousand  
by over ~~1000~~<sup>1</sup> of your constituents to be the  
very antithesis of cheap and sensational  
propaganda. What I can however have  
little respect for is the making of  
unconsidered and derogatory accusations  
under the protection of parliamentary  
privilege. This, Sir, is what should more  
properly be termed cheap, sensational  
propaganda.

I await your reply with interest, and trust  
that my concern over compulsory conscription,  
and the concern of my many friends - and  
their sons - who are similarly confronted  
by the threat of conscription into a white  
army, will in future be more honourably  
and honestly carried into ~~the~~ Parliament.

I remain,

Yours Sincerely

(Mr) Dunston Runciman.



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF SOUTH AFRICA

12 June 1985

Mr. D. Runciman  
Mingalo Bay  
Bass Road  
ZEEKOEVLEI  
7945

Dear Mr. Runciman,

I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 5th June, 1985, and wish to respond as follows.

I did not specifically refer to the ECC when I talked about "cheap and sensational propaganda aimed at undermining or evading military service" simply because there are aspects of that campaign and attitudes adopted with which I have no difficulty in associating myself. But, I have read statements and in fact heard, personally, again after I had made that statement, from people who speak at meetings or conventions organised by the ECC in which extraordinary views are propogated.

For myself, I find it totally illogical to use the issue of Conscription in order to in fact attack the SADF, and the role which it plays in South Africa. The Defence Force can do away with conscription tomorrow completely (which no doubt would help a great many morally anguished and privileged White South Africans), but would in no way affect the negative and counter productive role that the Defence Force can play if not called to account or controlled in society.

I have not the slightest doubt that should the Defence Force embark on a voluntary recruiting campaign offering competitive wages, it would easily recruit manpower from the Black, Coloured and Indian communities far in excess of its needs. Should such a Defence Force be used for doubtful ends, it would be far less accountable if there was no conscription.

That is why I believe to seize upon the issue of conscription in isolation and to make sensational and melodramatic statements about why it is deemed to be necessary and used by the Government or the Defence Force is in fact counter productive.

I might also add that at such occasions when presumably the issue is the role of the Defence Force and Conscription, the debate inevitably tends to move into the political arena and I myself and others like me have been referred to as collaborators and sell-outs, etc.

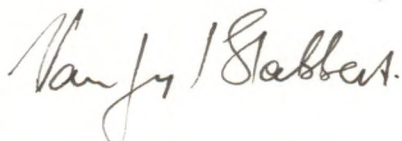
Again I find it difficult to understand how what I am trying to do in Parliament necessarily is linked up with a particular view on conscription.

Let me again assure you that I am in favour of phasing out compulsory racial conscription as soon as possible precisely because I think it politicizes the role of the Defence Force. It is a drain on our economy and I believe it is counter productive to any constructive role that a Defence Force can play in a period of social transition.

Again, let me assure you that I have no axe to grind with any organisation and am quite willing to debate this position wherever and whenever possible.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



DR. F. VAN ZYL SLABBERT MP  
LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION



Telegramadres  
Telegraphic address FILCEN

Tel. No. 45-6518

**Direktoraat van Publikasies  
Directorate of Publications**

Privaatsak/Private Bag X9069  
8000 KAAPSTAD/CAPE TOWN

The Editor  
E.C.C.  
P.O. Box 208  
WOODSTOCK  
7915

Verw. No. P85/6/52  
Ref.

22 July 1985

Dear Sir

PUBLICATIONS ACT, 1974 : PUBLICATION "ARE YOU  
PREPARED - CALL UP JANUARY 1986" (PAMPHLET)

In response to your telephonic request of 19 July 1985, I have to inform you that the committee's reasons for declaring that the above-mentioned publication is undesirable within the meaning of section 47(2)(e) of the above-mentioned Act were as follows:

The pamphlet is aimed against military service in several of its aspects. In itself, this is not contrary to the Act, but the way in which it is presented, makes it harmful under Section 47(2)(e).

It is directed mainly at children still at school. Many of them lack the maturity to evaluate the arguments for and against military service. The latter are presented in a blatantly one-sided manner. The impression is created that military service in the South African Army is wrong. Military service is a patriotic duty of every citizen and the fact that one does not agree with all aspects thereof, does not mean that such service could be refused at will. What would have happened if, during the last war, Catholics in certain Western Armies had refused the call-up merely on account of the monastery of Monte Cassino having been destroyed by the Allied Forces?

Although the pamphlet ostensibly urges young scholars to make up their own minds about the Army, they are in fact told to approach the E.C.C. Advice Bureau. The E.C.C. has as its main aim opposition to conscription and the evasion of military service.

2/...

By interfering in the system of school cadet training, the pamphlet is also interfering in the running of the country's schools. The evil of pressures on teachers in, for instance, non-White schools, has been amply demonstrated in recent history. At its worst, teaching staff have been assaulted and schools burnt down.

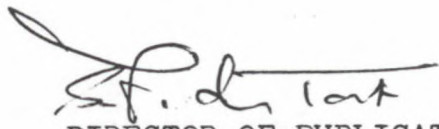
The pamphlet asks the youngsters why they should owe the Army four years of their life. The implied answer is obvious that they do not owe it. This, if generally accepted, would mean the undermining of the defence effort, the destruction of the State and the triumph of SWAPO and the ANC.

The pamphlet asks why 7 589 people failed to report for their army training in January 1984. The Committee in its turn, is entitled to ask - why ask such a question? The answer is obvious and the untutored minds of the readers are not told of the criminal aspects of evasion of military service.

The pamphlet next asks whether cadet training is preparation for going into black townships, presumably to assist the police in quelling riots, preventing arson and saving lives. This question evades the fact that the Army's primary purpose is to defend South Africa against aggression. The latter may be mainly from an exterior source, but internal aggression is also a distinct possibility. Must the Army be denied the right to destroy armed SWAPO units and military caches in Black townships? The use of the Army to assist the police in maintaining law and order is an accepted tradition in Western countries. The activities of the National Guard in the USA and the British Army in Northern Ireland are two of many examples. This may be clear to many adults, but immature minds of school children could be brainwashed by the subtle propaganda in the pamphlet.

This pamphlet serves the interests of the enemies of South Africa and is, for the reasons set out above, harmful to the safety of the State. Only a person who is unaccountably (or deliberately) blind to the terrible dangers facing South Africa, would regard this evil pamphlet as an innocent little tract on the pro's and con's of military and cadet training. It is, in the Committee's view, undesirable within the meaning of section 47(2)(e) of the Act.

Yours faithfully

  
 S. de la Tour  
 DIRECTOR OF PUBLICATIONS

**Collection Number: AG1977**

**END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)**

**PUBLISHER:**

*Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive*

*Location:- Johannesburg*

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