

(prepared for discussion only.)

To the State President.

Sir

During the days since the declaration of the State of Emergency on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1986 it seems that large numbers of people who have worked for an end to military conscription in South Africa have been detained.

As persons who have supported the End Conscription Campaign since its inception we wish to state once more that compulsory conscription to military service is a violation of the individual conscience.

In the christian faith conscience is seen as an essential part of a person's religion. It is the faculty of mind and spirit which enables one to perceive the difference between right and wrong. All the uses of the word conscience (sunderesis) in the New Testament indicate the role conscience is seen as playing in the life of religious people and in their obedience to God.

Even where people are taken to be outside the true religion of Israel, the Bible still recognises that their conscience, as a God-given faculty, guides them as to what is right ~~and~~ and wrong (eg Romans 2: 14, 15). So were those who profess to be atheists have this God-instilled perception and are under its compulsion. It is not something they merely invented, and even though people (including christians) can smother their conscience, this does not mean that conscience is under their control to change it at will.

If we believe that God speaks also to those who do not<sup>2</sup> acknowledge his existence, then we must respect the human conscience as we respect the voice of God.

In the matter of military conscription in South Africa it is therefore the duty of those whose consciences lead them to believe that <sup>compulsory</sup> military service is wrong to work to persuade the government to end the system.

~~We do not intend to~~ ~~\*incite the public~~

We have no intention of "inciting the public or any person or category of persons to --- discredit or undermine the system of compulsory military service" but we ourselves have a duty in conscience to restate our views in this regard to you and to the public.

We are opposed to compulsory military conscription in South Africa and we will continue to work for its repeal.

The State of Emergency regulations promulgated on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1986 are in all respects a fundamental denial of the Christian gospel.

We would remind you, Sir, of your own words spoken on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1986 when you affirmed your government's faith in the sovereignty of law as the basis for the protection of fundamental rights. You said that peace, freedom and democracy could not exist without law and that any future system had to conform to the requirements of civilised legal order and to ensure access to the Courts.

We call upon you, Sir, to act in accordance with your statement. You must not smother your own conscience by continuing to deny the sovereignty of the rule of law.

We call upon you to lift the State of Emergency, to release all whom your government is holding in detention without access to the Courts, and to repeal all legislation which allows such detention in this country.

ENDS.

3 Lava Dice.

786 0381  
282-8195

Maive 786-7480

**Collection Number: AG1977**

**END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)**

**PUBLISHER:**

*Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive*

*Location:- Johannesburg*

©2013

**LEGAL NOTICES:**

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

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

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

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