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# DIGGER UPDATE #1



- AN INFORMAL REPORT ON  
OBJECTOR ACTIVITIES IN  
BLOEMFONTEIN -

## BOARD FOR RELIGIOUS OBJECTION - SITTING

26/27 FEB '86

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE HISTORY OF THE BOARD FOR RELIGIOUS OBJECTION, THE APPLICANT DR LESLEY LONDON (MAITLAND, CAPE) PRESENTED HIS PACIFIST CONVICTIONS BASED ON CERTAIN FOUNDATION PRINCIPLES OF THE JEWISH FAITH. DR LONDON, WHO IS PRESENTLY DOING HIS MILITARY SERVICE, STATED THAT ALTHOUGH THE MAINSTREAM JEWISH TEACHINGS ARE NOT PACIFIST, HE UNDERSTOOD THE MAIN PRINCIPLE OF HIS FAITH TO BE THE COMMANDMENT TO LOVE HIS NEIGHBOUR. THE BOARD ASKED LESLEY THREE SIMPLE QUESTIONS, AND CLASSIFIED HIM AS A CATEGORY ONE OBJECTOR, WHICH IS WHAT HE APPLIED FOR. THE FACT THAT DR LONDON WAS GRANTED HIS APPLICATION IS GOOD NEWS FOR FUTURE JEWISH APPLICANTS AS A PRECEDENT HAS BEEN SET.

PHILIP WILKINSON (ROMAN CATHOLIC) FROM PORT ELIZABETH, APPLIED FOR CATEGORY THREE. HIS HEARING TOOK VERY LONG AND RAN FROM LATE WEDNESDAY THROUGH UNTIL THE MIDDLE OF THURSDAY MORNING. THE BOARD FOUND HIS CASE A PROBLEM BECAUSE OF HIS SPORADIC ATTENDANCE OF MASS. PHILIP SAID THAT HE COULD NOT RELATE TO MANY OF THE ISSUES (LIKE DIVORCE OR ABORTION) DEALT WITH IN THE SERVICE. ALSO, HE SAID HE FOUND NO FULFILLMENT IN THE COMMUNION (SYMBOLIZING UNITY) BECAUSE OF THE APARTHEID IN THE CHURCH. MR WILKINSON STATED THAT HE HAD HAD PACIFIST CONVICTIONS ALL HIS LIFE. THE BOARD FOUND HIS RELIGIOUS - POLITICAL TIE A PROBLEM, BUT GRANTED HIM CAT. ONE STATUS. JUDGE EDELING MENTIONED THAT NOT ALL THE BOARD MEMBERS WERE CONVINCED OF HIS RELIGIOUS BASIS.

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DAWIE BOSCH (N.G. SENDINKERK) OF MONTAGU, CAPE, APPEARED BEFORE THE BOARD FOR TWO GRUELING HOURS AS HE WAS QUESTIONED ABOUT HIS POLITICAL CONVICTIONS AND ACTIVITIES. POLITICAL CONVICTIONS SEEM TO BE SOMETHING WHICH THE BOARD IS ALWAYS VERY SCEPTICAL ABOUT. AS JUDGE EDELING SAID IN AN EARLIER HEARING, THEY ARE CONCERNED THAT POLITICAL BELIEFS MAY BE 'RELIGIRED' (OR THAT RELIGIOUS BELIEFS MAY BE POLITICISED.) DAWIE CONVINCED THE BOARD OF HIS UNIVERSAL CHRISTIAN PACIFIST CONVICTIONS AND WAS GRANTED CAT. THREE. MR BOSCH HOPES TO

THEY AGREE TO THIS ~~FORM~~ -- SOME FORMS ARE SIGNED AND OF THEM GO, TO BE ALLOCATED TO APPROPRIATE SERVICE IN THEIR HOME AREA IN DUE TIME. ~~FORM~~

BEFORE AND DURING THIS WHOLE PROCESS THE YOUNG MEN ARE ADVISED THOROUGHLY BY THEIR ELDERS, AS WELL AS MANPOWER OFFICIALS.

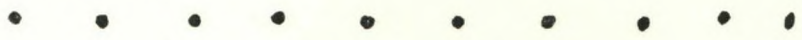
THIS ALL MEANS THAT YOUNG JW'S NO LONGER HAVE TO BE ARRESTED OR KEPT IN DETENTION BARRACKS, SO THAT THE SITUATION IS MORE AGREEABLE TO BOTH THE STATE AND THE JW'S. THE JW'S SEEM TO BE WILLING TO DO COMMUNITY SERVICE AS 'PUNISHMENT', AN ALTERNATIVE TO PRISON RATHER THAN TO MILITARY SERVICE.

IN RELATION TO THIS I MIGHT MENTION THAT THERE HAVE BEEN A COUPLE OF HEARINGS OF PEOPLE ON THE FRINGES OF THE JW'S, WHO DO NOT RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM THEM AND ARE VIEWED VERY NEGATIVELY BY THE BOARD, ONE OF THESE CURRENTLY SERVING A JAIL SENTENCE. I DO NOT KNOW WHAT, IF ANY, SUPPORT THESE PEOPLE ARE RECEIVING.

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CONSCRIPTS UNAWARE!

IT WOULD SEEM FROM A COUPLE OF RECENT CASES, NOTABLY THOSE OF M.A. FRANCIS (A JW BORDERLINE CASE) AT THE 27 FEB. SITTING AND JOHN RADLOFF (ASSEMBLIES OF GOD) AT A SITTING BEFORE NOV 1985, THAT CONSCRIPTS IN GENERAL ARE NOT AWARE OF THEIR RIGHTS OR DUTIES SHOULD THEY HAVE RELIGIOUS OBJECTIONS. BOTH THESE MEN FILLED IN FORMS EARLY AFTER THEY STARTED THEIR NATIONAL (MILITARY) SERVICE, INDICATING AT SOME POINT THAT THEY DID NOT HAVE RELIGIOUS OBJECTIONS. NEITHER OF THEM COULD IMMEDIATELY RECALL THIS WHEN CONFRONTED BY THE BOARD, AND DID NOT SEEM TO HAVE UNDERSTOOD THE IMPLICATIONS OF IT. NEITHER WERE GIVEN APPROPRIATE COUNSEL BY THE ARMY CHAPLAINS, AND BOTH WERE AT SOME STAGE ASSURED BY LOW-RANKING OFFICERS THAT THEY NEED NOT APPLY FOR ALTERNATIVE SERVICE AS THEY WOULD NOT BE ASSIGNED TO COMBATANT DUTIES. BOTH WERE, AT WHICH POINT THEY APPLIED. AS FAR AS WE KNOW, NEITHER OF THEM WERE CLASSIFIED. OF AT LEAST JOHN, WE CAN SAY THAT HE IS INDEED A SINCERE, CONVINCED AND DEVOUT CHRISTIAN PACIFIST, HAVING COME TO KNOW HIM BETTER AFTERWARDS DUE TO HIS BEING IN THE LOCAL HOSPITAL AFTER A SERIOUS MOTOR CAR ACCIDENT. THERE IS A GREAT NEED FOR GREATER CONSCIENTIZING OF CONSCRIPTS ABOUT THESE ISSUES, ESPECIALLY OF THOSE NOT LINKED TO SOME KIND OF PACIFIST NETWORK.



CONTINUE HIS PRESENT OCCUPATION OF GIVING LEGAL ADVICE IN THE MONTAGU - ALTON - GEMEENSCHAPDIENS (MAG). HE IS THE SON OF PROF. DAVID BOSCH, A PROMINENT DUTCH REFORMED THEOLOGIAN.

IN THE HEARING OF DS. G. THOM, AN EX-MISSIONARY AND PRESENT LECTURER IN CHURCH HISTORY AT PORT HARBOR UNIVERSITY, THE BOARD WAS VERY ACCOMMODATING. THIS WAS MAINLY IN VIEW OF HIS ADVANCED AGE (53?!) AND BECAUSE OF HIS PREVIOUS MISSIONARY WORK. DS THOM WAS CALLED UP TO THE 'DAD'S ARMY' AND SAID THAT HE BELIEVED THAT HIS ROLE IN THE ARMY (COMBATANT) RISKED HIS CREDIBILITY IN THE MISSIONARY AREAS HE HAD WORKED IN. DS THOM HAS ALSO PREVIOUSLY EXPRESSED HIS OBJECTION TO THE INTIMATE LINKS BETWEEN THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH AND MILITARY CHAPLAINCY. THE BOARD CLASSIFIED HIM AS A CAT. TWO OBJECTOR. DS THOM WILL WORK IN AMBULANCE SERVICE, SHOULD AN EMERGENCY ARISE.

SAREL POLGIETER (NG KERK) FROM BLOEMFONTEIN, APPLIED FOR CAT. THREE ON CHRISTIAN PACIFIST GROUNDS AND WAS GRANTED HIS APPLICATION.

A RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE TREATMENT  
OF JEHOVA'S WITNESSES

AT THE RECENT MEETING OF THE BOARD FOR RELIGIOUS OBJECTION IN BLOEMFONTEIN (26, 27 FEBRUARY 1986) INTERESTING DEVELOPMENTS TOOK PLACE CONCERNING THE TREATMENT OF JW'S. IN A LONG INFORMAL SPEECH BEFOREHAND, JUDGE EDELING SAID THAT THE CHANGES ARE AIMED AT DECRIMINALIZING JW'S, WHO ARE TECHNICALLY SPEAKING CRIMINALS, DUE TO THEIR REFUSAL TO DO COMMUNITY SERVICE AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO MILITARY SERVICE.

THE BOARDROOM WAS PACKED, BECAUSE ALL THE YOUNG JW OBJECTORS HAD TO APPEAR IN PERSON, ACCOMPANIED BY A FLOCK OF ELDERS AND FAMILY. THE NEW PROCEDURE IS QUITE SWIFT - SIMPLE CASES ARE DEALT WITH FIRST, IN BATCHES OF TEN OR SO. JUDGE EDELING TELLS THEM THAT THEIR CASES HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED AND THAT THEY'VE BEEN CLASSIFIED AS CATEGORY 3 - OBJECTORS. ~~THEY~~ THEY ARE THEN SWEEPED OUT OF THE BOARDROOM - DOWN THE CORRIDOR TO TWO OFFICES TEMPORARILY ALLOCATED TO MANPOWER OFFICIALS. THEY ARE ASSIGNED TO COMMUNITY SERVICE IN THE BLOEMFONTEIN DISTRICT, STARTING AS OF THAT DAY. ~~THEY~~ THEY THEN REFUSE TO DO THIS SERVICE AND ARE PROMPTLY ESCORTED TO THE MAGISTRATE'S COURT ROUND THE CORNER, HAVING COMMITTED A CRIME. ~~THEY~~

AFTER BEING CHARGED AND SENTENCED TO SIX YEARS OF PRISON ~~THEY~~ THEY ARE TAKEN TO YET ANOTHER ROOM ~~AT THE COURT~~ AT THE COURT, TEMPORARILY ALLOCATED TO THE ARMY. HERE SOME BRIGADIER AND A MAJOR LETS THEM FREE ON PAROLE, ON CONDITION THEY DO SIX YEARS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE.

## THE ACCOUNT OF THE SEARCH FOR D. HAY

DAVID HAY, A MEMBER OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, HAS BEEN SCHEDULED TO APPEAR BEFORE THE BOARD IN JANUARY AND AGAIN IN FEBRUARY. DUE TO SOMEONE'S FOUL-UP, THE ARMY HAS NOT NOTIFIED HIM OF EITHER OF THESE SITTINGS. HE WAS ALSO SHUFFLED AROUND FROM ONE UNIT TO ANOTHER, AT ONE STAGE WORKING WITH THE DOGS. AT THE TIME OF THE FEBRUARY SITTING, BOARD OFFICIALS WERE NOT IN THE KNOW ABOUT HIS WHEREABOUTS, BUT WERE DOING THEIR SINCERE MOST TO TRACK HIM DOWN. IS THIS A CASE OF BAD ATTITUDE ON THE BEHALF OF THE ARMY, OR MORE BUREAUCRATIC INEFFICIENCY? DAVID'S CAUSE HAS BEEN TAKEN UP BY STEPHEN LOWRY OF THE S.A. BISHOPS' CONFERENCE. THIRD TIME LUCKY?

THE BLOEMFONTEIN PEACE LIBRARY HAS A USEFUL COLLECTION OF BOOK ON PEACE-RELATED ISSUES. IT IS CURRENTLY IN CUSTODY OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL, 1 GREEN STREET, BEN 9301, AND OPEN TO USE BY THE PUBLIC. A CATALOGUE OF THE BOOKS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE FROM US AT SOME TIME IN THE FUTURE.

A RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE TREATMENT

OF JEROME WITNESSES

AT THE RECENT MEETING OF THE BOARD

RELIGIOUS OBJECTION IN SUPERSTITION

INTERESTING DEVELOPMENTS TOOK

PLACE IN THE TREATMENT OF THIS

IN A LOCAL JUDICIAL PROCEEDING

DEBARRING THIS AND ALL TENDERS

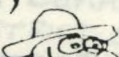
TO DR. CONNOR'S SERVICES AS AN ALTERNATIVE

TO MILITARY SERVICE

THE BOARD HAS ALSO

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THE BOARD HAS ALSO

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APRECIATE SOME ASSISTANCE 

'THE DIGGERS' IS A LOCAL CHRISTIAN PEACE  
GROUP IN BLOEMFONTEIN. THIS ISSUE OF THE  
UPDATE WAS MANAGED BY ANGELA AND GIDEON.  
CONTRIBUTIONS AND ENQUIRIES ARE VERY WELCOME  
AND CAN BE SENT TO - DIGGER UPDATE,  
23A WHITES ROAD, WAVERLEY, BLOEMFONTEIN,  
9301. TEL: (051)-312747 (ASK FOR ANGELA)

PAROLE, ON CONDITION THEY DO SIX YEARS OF  
COMMUNITY SERVICE.



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