

SADF's new stance on conscientious objectors

The Star 3/10/89

PATRICK LAURENCE examines the question of the refusal of many young South Africans to serve in the armed forces.

dismissing it — by inference — as bravado of little significance.

An investigation had shown, the SADF said, that only nine men had failed to report for service; the remaining 134 men, it added, had either obtained deferment of their service, or had moved without informing the authorities of their addresses, or had been classified as religious objectors (meaning that they were already exempt from military service).

The unstated postulate was that the register of objectors would prove to be similarly lacking in substance.

The SADF's new, outwardly nonchalant stance towards conscientious objectors was in marked contrast to its reaction at the time to the statement of the 143 men.

An angry Minister of Defence, General Magnus Malan said: "Those who support and propagate campaigns against national service have overplayed their hands."

Two weeks later the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) — the main anti-conscription organisation — was prohibited under the state of emergency from "carrying on or performing any activities or acts whatsoever".

Indeed, as Mr Laurie Nathan, a former national organiser of the ECC, argued in "War and Society, The Militarisation of South Africa", the growth of resistance to conscription over the years has been marked by vigorous counter-action from the SADF and the Defence Ministry.

These developments highlighted, on the face of it, a reluctance by the SADF to come to terms with conscientious objection. There has, however, been movement over the years.

In the early 1960s the Defence Act



Taking a stand . . . young men who say the SADF is an obstacle to reform in South Africa and refuse to do military service.

recognised the religious objections of members of the "peace churches", offering them non-combatant service in the SADF.

Jehovah's Witnesses were especially prominent in their opposition to conscription. Their stand helped pave the way for the next concession: the 1983 amendment to the Defence Act.

It accommodated, as noted already, religious objectors of all churches — provided they satisfied the Board for Religious Objection — offering them alternative service in government departments.

Prohibitive

But as Mr Nathan observed pertinently: "(It) represented an attempt to defuse and minimise conscientious objection as a political issue by offering a significant concession to religious pacifists, while making objection by non-religious or non-pacifist objectors prohibitively costly."

The SADF, the 1986 Defence White Paper noted, was heavily dependent on conscriptees; they constituted 70 percent of its manpower. Small wonder, then, that resistance to conscription has generally been dealt with severely.

In the past few months thousands of South African troops have been withdrawn from Namibia in terms of the UN peace plan.

Theoretically that has relieved the SADF of responsibility for protecting — or, as Swapo would put it, occupying — Namibia; and perhaps this may in the future make it possible for SADF generals to adopt a slightly more accommodating attitudes to non-religious conscientious objection.

But white hegemony in South Africa itself has come under greater threat in the corresponding period, increasing the potential demand on the SADF at home where it has been used to bolster the overstretched police force against the increasingly restless black majority.

It was in that knowledge that the signatories to the Register of Conscientious Objectors signed up, hoping for the best but bracing themselves for the worst.

At best it could result in the SADF meeting — or partially meeting — their demand for alternative service in non-government agencies for religious objectors; at worst it could mean imprisonment for six years, a fate already suffered by David Bruce and Charles Bester.

South Africa's powerful military establishment was surprisingly cool in face of the public refusal of more than 750 white men to serve in the South African Defence Force (SADF) on grounds of conscience.

But, observers suspected, its calm exterior, suggesting that the conscientious objectors were beneath contempt, masked anxiety and anger.

Judging from the SADF's past responses to conscientious objection, it saw the men as the harbingers of wider resistance to conscription or as malingerers parading cowardice as principle.

Pledged

The declaration by the conscientious objectors came in the form of a "Register of Conscientious Objectors"; the register was initially signed by 756 men who thereby pledged themselves to defy conscription into what their slogans called "the apartheid army".

In its first reaction, the SADF noted that a stated intention to break the law did not necessarily constitute a crime but warned, however, that objectors who failed to report for military service would be prosecuted.

It then referred to a similar public declaration by 143 men last year,

Bus. Day 1/2/89

Security 'is not superfluous'

Dear Sir,
IT WAS not so long ago that the entire country (including your newspaper) was holding its breath, whispering of war. "Why were the Cubans so close to the border? What was Castro doing? Was the South African Air Force really so outclassed? Had we been beaten at Cuito Cuanavale?"

We all saw how quickly and easily a proxy army with sophisticated weapons could be assembled in Africa. Imagine what might have happened had a ceasefire not been agreed. Imagine that Castro declared his intention to "liberate Namibia", called in his markers from North Korea and highly skilled East German — perhaps even Russian — pilots were drafted to fly the sophisticated MiGs.

A terrible nightmare certainly,

but it could have happened and had it happened, SA would have had two options. We could have rolled over on our backs, or we could have fought.

It's regrettable but true that a nation needs to be strong if it is to decide its own destiny. This is particularly valid in our precarious case. If we are to come to a just and peaceful settlement, in our own time, on our own terms, we need to be free of threats from the Castros and the Gaddafis, as well as those who seek violent change from within.

In 1984, SA spent 4% of GNP on defence. In 1986 we spent 3,8%. By

LETTERS

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comparison, in 1986 Israel spent 18,9%, Chile spent 4,7% (8,5% in 1984), Taiwan spent 5,8%, South Korea spent 5,2%, the USA, with its massive GNP, spent 6,7% and the UK 4,9%. (Figures from The Military Balance '88-89.)

Criticise, by all means the rampant corruption in the homelands and the civil service. Castigate the bloated bureaucracy, the gross in-

competence of public management, the crass stupidity of socialist fiscal policies, the Byzantine complexity and selfish resource-waste of the control boards. These are all legitimate targets.

Military expenditure, on the other hand, always a popular target for liberals, is far less vulnerable to criticism and when Swapo declares that it demands Walvis Bay as part of a "unified" Namibia and when the Cubans postpone their departure "until Namibia is 'totally' liberated", then ask: "Where are our new fighter planes? Why do we not have "Stinger"-type missiles? Why must our

boys face modern Soviet tanks in obsolete armoured cars? Why do we not have a decent long-range anti-tank missile? Why do we have only 250 ancient Centurion tanks, the newest of which is older than most of its drivers? Why so few G-6 guns? What about a modern "Rapier"-type air defence against the MiGs? Why so many dead young South Africans?

Why wasn't "something done" earlier?

Hammer away at the looters, the mandarins, the bloated ticks on the body of the fiscus. Most of them are superfluous anyway. What is not superfluous is security, which is always expensive and can be paid for either in treasure or in blood.

Rather the former.

GRANTLAND GRAY
Houghton

REVIEW

Objectors plan to register protest

Sunday Star
29-07-90

Paula Fray

EXILED war resisters will join anti-apartheid fighter Archbishop Trevor Huddleston at the South African Embassy in London tomorrow morning to hand in a register of objectors now living abroad.

The move comes as the South African Defence Forces prepares for thousands of national servicemen to sign up for the August intake, and as Anglican priest Douglas Torr awaits a landmark decision on whether or not he will be sentenced to jail for refusing to serve.

Only one conscientious objector, Charles Bester, is still in jail. He is serving a six-year sentence pending an appeal.

Bishop Huddleston, the founder and president of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, is the sponsor of the Huddleston International Register of South African War Resisters.

The list includes conscientious objectors in exile in countries as far afield as New Zealand, Denmark and Mauritius.

The majority of the signatories live in Britain where the Committee on South African War Resistance (Cosawr) has traditionally organised exiled war resisters.

The group is expected to present itself at the Embassy in Trafalgar Square at 11.30 am.

Cosawr has, for the first time, forged official links with the End Conscription Campaign in South Africa this year.

MORNING STAR Tuesday July 31 1990

No joy at Pretoria's London outpost

UNWELCOME VISIT: In the next few weeks, more than 10,000 young white South African men will be reporting for compulsory military service, while about the same number will have fled the country rather than face the long jail sentence that awaits them for refusing to fall in.

Archbishop Trevor Huddleston sponsors an international register of those war resisters who have been driven out of their country for their beliefs.

As the Archbishop tried to present the register to the apartheid embassy in London yesterday he was confronted by a sour-faced employee who told him that the embassy was unable to accept such deliveries because of a change in its procedures - and slammed the door in his face.

By Janey Huime

Bus. Day 31/7/90



Staff at the SA Embassy in London yesterday thwarted attempts by Anti-Apartheid Movement president Archbishop Trevor Huddleston, centre, to hand over a memorandum signed by SA conscientious objectors. The petition contains the names of 198 men living in about 12 countries who "refuse to serve in the SADF because of its role in upholding the apartheid system". The list, destined for President F W de Klerk, was later sent to the Embassy by registered mail.

is Secretary of State

ment as secretary of state came ending 40 hours on Capitol Hill, working out a bipartisan accord had been the most contentious American foreign policy in the last Nicaragua. The effect of that access to allow the United States to itself from a failed policy of supporting Nicaraguan rebels while at the same time fostering the democratic process.

approach has not been repeated. is very adept at cultivating key constituencies like Congress and foreign policy issues that are on Capitol Hill have accounted for "greatest success," said Michael J. Harvard University political

shortcoming, however, is that he does not appreciate that as secretary of state he has to deal with a broader audience. That means he can't just avoid doing something 'dumb,' but has to articulate the ideals of American foreign policy and the impact finally stirring in Eastern

Indeed, it is Mr. Baker's performance as spokesman that has drawn some of the sharpest criticism. The secretary of state went on vacation early in August. Shortly after he left Washington, Solidarity came to power in Poland, a development that symbolized one of the highest objectives of American foreign policy for the last 40 years.

But Mr. Baker did not publicly discuss the development until his news conference this week. At times he still behaves like the White House chief of staff, accustomed to working through political levers behind the scenes.

Foreign policy, many diplomats say, is not just about money or decisions, it is also about giving voice to the deepest feelings and aspirations of the American people.

"Would there have been a Camp David treaty if Jimmy Carter had calculated the odds?" asked Charles William Maynes, editor of Foreign Policy magazine. "Would there have been an INF Treaty had Reagan not had a larger vision of what was possible? More to the point, is there going to be an effective Western response to events in Eastern Europe without American leadership?"



Arthur Tsang/Reuters

...odia talking to the press Thursday after his return from Thailand.

WORLD BRIEFS

Shamir Says Arabs Won't Allow Peace

JERUSALEM (Reuters) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, rejecting the appeal of President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt to trade occupied land for peace, said Thursday that Arabs were not willing to give Israel peace.

Mr. Shamir, the leader of the rightist Likud bloc, said, "There is no element in the Arab world willing to give us peace." Mr. Mubarak criticized Israel's policy of trying to deal only with Palestinians from the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip while ignoring other Palestinians. Mr. Shamir's aides said that Mr. Mubarak should "stop preaching" and stop trying to lure Israel into talks with the Palestine Liberation Organization, which it regards as a terrorist group.

Yasser Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, withheld a direct, public endorsement of Egypt's newest Middle East initiative Thursday but said he was ready for a dialogue with Israel. "We are always open and ready for a dialogue that takes us to a comprehensive peace," he said after a two-hour meeting with Mr. Mubarak in Cairo.

780 White South Africans Defy Draft

JOHANNESBURG (NYT) — More than 780 whites of military age pledged Thursday to refuse to serve in South Africa's armed forces, in the largest concerted campaign so far to resist conscription.

The announcement was made at simultaneous news conferences in six South African cities. Those coming forward were not only young men awaiting military conscription but also reservists, including 49 commissioned and noncommissioned officers, who said they would ignore their annual call-up.

South Africa requires all white males to serve two years in its armed forces, followed by annual reserve training. The country's black majority is not subject to the draft. There is a provision for alternate service in civilian institutions by conscientious objectors, but only on religious grounds. Refusal to go into the armed forces is punishable by six years in prison and some young men are now in prison for resistance.

China Assails Dissidents Overseas

BEIJING (Reuters) — China lashed out at dissidents overseas and countries that harbor them on Thursday, the eve of the launching of a movement opposed to the Chinese Communists.

The Front for Democratic China, to be inaugurated in Paris on Friday, is aimed at overthrowing the Chinese government, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said. A group of 150 exiled Chinese will gather for a founding congress of the front, headed by Yan Jiaqi, a political scientist who was an adviser to Zhao Ziyang, the Communist Party leader who was removed by hard-liners in June.

"China firmly opposes any foreign countries that have diplomatic relations with China allowing Yan Jiaqi and other Chinese criminals to conduct activities aimed at overthrowing the Chinese government," said the Foreign Ministry spokesman, Li Zhaoxing. Mr. Yan fled China after the army suppressed the pro-democracy movement there in June.

Sunni Legislator Slain in West Beirut

BEIRUT (AP) — Gunmen killed a Sunni Moslem member of parliament and his driver in Syrian-controlled West Beirut on Thursday.

The police said Nazim Kadri, 74, died instantly from bullet wounds in the head and chest. No group claimed responsibility for the assassination of Mr. Kadri, the third Sunni figure slain in 27 months. He represented the central Bekaa Valley in parliament since 1972.

The police said three men got out of a car and fired AK-47 assault rifles at Mr. Kadri's sedan Thursday morning a few meters from the apartment building where he lived. Mr. Kadri's police driver also was killed in the attack, and a bystander, Samir Itani, was slightly wounded.

Judge Awards Woman Her Embryos

MARYVILLE, Tennessee (AP) — A judge ruled Thursday that seven frozen embryos caught up in a divorce battle are children and should go to the woman who hopes to carry them to term, not the estranged husband who does not want to be a father.

Circuit Court Judge W. Dale Young ruled in favor of Mary Sue Davis over Junior Davis. He declared that the embryos produced by the couple last December through in-vitro fertilization were not property.

"From fertilization, the cells of a human embryo are differentiated, unique and specialized to the highest degree of distinction," the judge ruled. Thus, he said, "Human life begins at conception." He said Mrs. Davis could have temporary custody for the purpose of having the eggs implanted in her womb in the hope of becoming pregnant. Child support, visitation and final custody will be decided if one of the embryos results in a birth, he ruled.

ague Conversion

1945, in the meeting of Soviet and American forces on the Elbe River in Germany.

"I remember the embraces, the salutes, the toasts," he said. "We exchanged gifts and we thought it was a simple soldierly act. After-

soon as we crossed the border, we saw it was not true.

"There were no people to greet us. On the contrary, the roads were spread with oil to stop our tanks. Every road sign was destroyed, removed or turned in the

Nation-wide register against conscription

Sus. Day 22/9/89

ANTI-CONSCRIPTION activists around the country yesterday launched a national register to facilitate contact amongst themselves and keep the spotlight focused on action against those refusing to do national service.

Sapa reports that the convener of yesterday's meeting in Johannesburg, lawyer Chris de Villiers, said more than 780 people in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Pretoria, Grahamstown, Durban and Bloemfontein had stood up at simultaneous Press conferences.

About 75 objectors attended the Johannesburg conference, attended by a wide range of international and local media.

"We have decided in good conscience and of our own accord that we cannot serve in the defence force," said a statement on behalf of the objectors.

Asked whether their status might change in view of the reconciliatory gesture by President F W de Klerk, De Villiers said they held out little hope.

He added that most objectors supported alternative, non-military, non-punitive methods of serving in the army. He rejected accusations that they were "a bunch of communists",

saying he had been a lieutenant in the air force when he made his decision.

Earlier in the day, four marshalls co-ordinating the gathering of the objectors were detained by police.

It had not been established whether they would face charges. Among them was Bettina von Lieres, a former president of the student representative council at Wits University.

In Grahamstown, a further 48 objectors publicly added their names to the register. Included among the Grahamstown objectors is the city's Anglican Bishop, the Rt Rev David Russell.

Chancery

At a Press conference in Grahamstown yesterday, Russell said it was a "tremendous privilege" to be part of the group of objectors.

Thirty conscientious objectors in Stellenbosch, including Matie student leaders and one lecturer, also joined the register. The group includes 22 Stellenbosch students.

In Durban, the register was announced at a Press conference at the Diocesan Chancery of Roman Catholic Archbishop of Durban Denis Hurley, who said he was "proud and honoured" the group of objectors had

chosen his premises to make their statement.

About 86 of the men on the register are from Durban, approximately 40 of whom were present at the launch.

Custodians of the register include Bishop Reg Orsmond of the Roman Catholic Church, Bishop Peter Storey of the Methodist Church, Franz Auerbach of Jews for Social Justice, and Prof Lourens du Plessis of the University of Stellenbosch.

The register will be delivered to Defence Minister Magnus Malan by a national delegation next week.

EDYTH BULBRING reports that the Five Freedoms Forum said in a statement yesterday that it saw it as an encouraging sign that so many SA men were prepared to state their opposition to upholding apartheid.

MANDY JEAN WOODS reports that the SADF refused to comment on the announcement of the register.

It said a "stated intention to break the law in the future does not necessarily constitute a crime. In fact, it normally does not constitute an offence".

The SADF said only seven conscientious objectors of 142 who last year publicly announced they would not do their two-year compulsory military service actually failed to report for duty.



Conscientious objectors stage their demonstration in Johannesburg yesterday in protest against compulsory military service. Picture: REUTERS.

Nee vir diensplig: 780 staan op

Urge Weeblad 22/9/89

Jacques Pauw en Anton Steenkamp

DIE weermag het gister voor een van sy grootste krisisse nog te staan gekom toe honderde jong wit Suid-Afrikaners aangekondig het dat hulle weier om in die SAW te dien. Tientalle staan langtermyn-tronkstraf in die gesig.

Teen gistermiddag druktyd het 780 dienspligbare mans uit alle vlakke van die samelewing 'n nuwe nasionale register van dienspligbeswaardes onderteken. Onder hulle is dokters, ingenieurs, regsgeleerdes, onderwysers, predikante, joernaliste, akademiëci en studente.

Sowat 'n derde van die beswaardes het reeds hul oproepvorms ontvang om vroeg volgende jaar met nasionale diensplig van twee jaar te begin. Indien hul sou weier, kan hul ses jaar tronk toe gestuur word.

Die nuwe vlag van gewetensbeswaardes volg net 'n jaar nadat 143 beswaardes in Augustus verlede jaar in die openbaar aangekondig het dat hulle weier om in die weermag te dien.

Internasionale televisienetwerke, buitlandse joernaliste en uitgesoekte plaaslike koerant-mense het gisteroggend by 'n huis in Johannesburg vergader waar sowat sewentig beswaardes aan die media voorgestel is.

Die hele veldtog en die insameling van verklarings deur beswaardes het die afgelope maande in die grootste geheimhouding plaasgevind uit vrees vir moontlike polisie- en weermagoptrede.

Twee van die organiseerders van die veldtog, Wilhelm Liebenberg en Mike Avidan, word ingevolge die noodmaatreëls aangehou. Nog vier van die organiseerders is gisteroggend vroeg in hegtenis geneem.

Die beswaardes sê in 'n gesamentlike verklaring: "Sommige van ons sal tronk toe gaan. Ander sal probeer om as godsdienstbeswaardes geklassifiseer te word. Ons staan vandag hier as gewetensbeswaardes en is bewus van die moontlike gevolg van ons daede.

"Ons is verbind daartoe om ons land op 'n positiewe en konstruktiewe wyse te dien.

"Namibia sal binnekort onafhanklik wees ná 'n oorlog van twee dekades waarin duisende mense dood is. Duisende mense het ook al in Suid-Afrika gesterf. Daar is geen rede hoekom die slagting in Suid-Afrika moet voortduur voor 'n onderhandelde skikking bereik kan word nie," sê die beswaardes.

Verskeie beswaardes het hulle redes aangevoer oor waarom hulle weier om te dien en vertel van oorlogsondervindings in Namibia en Angola. Weens die noodmaatreëls mag dit nie gepubliseer word nie. Die berig is ook ingevolge die noodmaatreëls ná regsadvies gesensor.

Byna 300 van die beswaardes het reeds gedeeltes van hulle nasionale diensplig voltooi. Tussen hulle is daar onder meer twee kapteins, 20 luitenant en 'n gewese sersant van die gevreesde 32 Bataljon.

Die organiseerders kon nie die veldtog adverteer of aankondig nie en die boodskap is mondelings versprei.

Dit was gister nog onduidelik of die veldtog wettig is. De Villiers sê die Verdedigingswet bepaal dat mense nie aangemoedig mag word om diensplig te weier nie. Onder die noodmaatreëls mag diensplig ook nie ondermyn word nie.

De Villiers sê dit is moontlik dat die staatsappeal teen die organiseerders mag doen, hoewel hulle nooit enigiemand aangemoedig het om diensplig te weier nie. Terwyl die perskonferensie gister gehou is, het polisiemanne in private klere in 'n geel polisiemotor voor die huis heen en weer gery.

Die nuwe vlag van gewetensbeswaardes volg na hoogs emosionele hofsake die afgelope jaar waartydens vier weieraars vir tydperke van tussen agtien maande en ses jaar tronk toe gestuur is. Dié sake het baie publisiteit in die buiteland geniet en uit talle oorde is die regering hewig gekritiseer.

De Villiers het gister daarop gewys dat die ses jaar tronkstraf wat weieraars in Suid-Afrika opgelê kan word, die swaarste straf vir diensweiering ter wêreld is. Talle drukgroepe het die afgelope tyd druk op die regering uitgeoefen om alternatiewe diens vir gewetensbeswaardes

Vervolg op bladsy 2



'n Groep van die weieraars in Johannesburg

Foto: Steve Hilton-Barber - Afrapix

Nee vir diensplig



Beyers Naudé

in te stel.

'n Situasié kan nouliks voorgestel word waar die "nuwe" regering, wat sê hy beywer hom vir versoening, tientalle jong wit Suid-Afrikaners tronk toe stuur omdat hulle weier om in 'n weermag te dien wat onder meer gebruik word om die noodtoestand in stand te hou.

Die organiseerders het gister ook aangekondig dat beskermhere landwyd aangestel is om die register te bewaar en op datum te hou. Prominente geestelikes soos dr Beyers Naudé, eerw Peter Storey, biskop Denis Hurley, prof Dawid Bosch en biskop Reg Ormond is as beskermhere aangestel.

Twee bekende regsgeleerdes, prof Lourens du Plessis van die Universiteit van Stellenbosch, en prof James Lund van die Universiteit van Natal sal ook as beskermhere optree.

Sowat 'n derde van die beswaardes is Afrikaanssprekend. De Villiers, 'n oud-Tukkie en gewese Weermagoffisier, sê: "Ons is trots daarop om Afrikaners te wees, maar ons weier om apartheid te dien. Ons is nie kommuniste nie."

Bekende Afrikaanssprekendes wie se name in die register voorkom, is onder meer André P Brink, die Johannesburgse advokaat Wim Trengove en prof Willem Saayman van die teologiese departement aan Unisa. Verskeie Afrikaanse teoloë se name is in die register gelys.

Op Stellenbosch het 31 gewetensbeswaardes hul weiering om in die SAW te dien, bekend gemaak.

Hulle sê in 'n verklaring: "Ons as Suid-Afrikaners wat 'n vreedsame toekoms vir almal in ons gemeenskap en hierdie land wil verseker, verklaar hiermee dat ons stry vir die beëindiging van onderdrukking en uitbuiting, en dat ons op onder andere hierdie wyse besig is om 'n positiewe en opbouende bydrae te lewer tot die bou van 'n regverdige Suid-Afrika."

WE REFUSE TO SERVE
IN THE SADF



Cape Times 22/9/89
**SADF warns against
'failure to report'**

PRETORIA. — The SA Defence Force last night warned that legal action would be taken against military objectors who failed to report for service.

The SADF was responding to the launch of a national register earlier today at which more than 780 objectors nationwide simultaneously rejected military conscription.

"Earlier this year, similar reports were published that 142 men were going to refuse to render military service."

But an investigation into the claims, the SADF said, revealed that only nine of these had failed to turn up for national service or camps. — Sapa

MAKING A STAND
... Pioneering objector Dr Anton Eberhard, an energy researcher at UCT, speaks at the Rondebosch meeting of 152 conscientious objectors yesterday. Similar meetings were held throughout SA in a national campaign against conscription.

Picture: RICHARD BELL

**Objectors
in public
protest
against
draft**

A GROUP of 152 Cape Town conscientious objectors yesterday made a public stand in Rondebosch as part of a national campaign against conscription. The oldest objector present was 52.

They formed part of a group of 771 objectors countrywide, 241 of them from Cape Town.

At Stellenbosch 30 conscientious objectors announced their refusal to serve in the South African Defence Force.

The annual SADF intake stands at over 40 000 young men, it was reliably learnt yesterday.

The chairman of the Rondebosch meeting, Mr David Schmidt, said the banning of the End Conscription Campaign by the Minister of Law and Order, Mr Adriaan Vlok, had done nothing to reduce the "intense moral pressure" felt by objectors.

Mr Schmidt said similar meetings were held yesterday in Port Elizabeth, East London and Grahamstown.

He said that of the national figure of 771 objectors, 294 people had completed their initial service and 79 had also completed some of their camp liabilities. Many had done active service in Angola, Namibia and local townships, while 87 held rank. Another 397 people had done no military service, while 68 were doing or had done "community service" as

The paper for a changing South Africa

THE WEEKLY MAIL

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**CHIEFS' COACH,
JEFF BUTLER,
EXPLAINS WHY
HE WON'T BACK
DOWN
PAGE 32**



Objectors say 'No' at yesterday's Jo'burg press conference

*771 conscientious objectors tell
the South African Defence Force ...*

'We will not serve'

By PHIL MOLEFE and
THANDEKA GQUBULE

A TOTAL of 771 men yesterday publicly declared — at the launch of a national register of conscientious objectors — that they would not serve in the South African Defence Force.

The event was the biggest-ever demonstration of anti-conscription sentiment in South Africa. It comes a year after the banning of the End Conscription Campaign, and after three years of Emergency regulations which make it illegal to undermine the system of military conscription.

Thus part of what was said at the various press conferences around the country cannot be reported in terms of Emergency regulations.

The objectors — who made their declaration simultaneously in seven cities — include 30 Stellenbosch University students, a veteran of the crucial battle for Cuito Cuanavale in southern Angola, a lieutenant in military intelligence, businessmen, clerics, senior advocate Wim Trengove, author Andre Brink, and 33 members of the National Jewish Conscientious Objectors.

The 771 cited religious, moral and political grounds for refusing to do any SADF service, saying "the Defence Force is used to uphold the system of apartheid". Some of them cited disturbing experiences during their national service as reasons.

"We have decided in good conscience and of our own accord that we cannot serve in the defence force despite possible prosecution and imprisonment.

"We object to serving in the racist defence force that upholds a racist government and we are not prepared to defend apartheid," ECC branch chairman Chris de Villiers said.

Conscientious objectors face up to six years' imprisonment, depending on the service they owe.

The objectors called for non-punitive and constructive community service as an alternative to military service.

The national co-ordinating committee of yesterday's event plan to hand the national register to Defence Minister Magnus Malan at a meeting next week.

Durban committee member Steve Collins said it was hoped that if they saw him to hand over the names it would prevent the "panic and confusion" of the state response to last year's action in which 143 conscripts declared they would not serve in the SADF. The ECC was blamed and banned soon afterwards.

In Johannesburg, about 70 conscientious objectors gathered at a secret press conference yesterday morning to announce their refusal to

● To PAGE 3

'We will not serve,' say 771

● From PAGE 1

go to the army. More than 280 conscripts from Johannesburg and Pretoria have signed the register.

Four marshals co-ordinating the Johannesburg meeting were detained by security police in an early raid on their homes. They are former University of the Witwatersrand SRC president Bettina von Lieres and fellow students Judy and Sarah Klipin and Ginger Payne.

Three of them were later released. Payne is expected to appear in court this morning on charges of possession of banned literature.

Addressing the Johannesburg press conference, De Villiers said (cut to comply with Emergency regulations)

He challenged Minister of Defence General Magnus Malan to hold a referendum and test how many young South Africans object to doing any service in his army.

He said many of the objectors would face intense pressure both in their communities and work places for yesterday's public stance.

De Villiers announced there will be custodians of the register in each region for people who wanted to add their names to the objection list.

The register for the Johannesburg region will be administered by Reverend Peter Storey of the Methodist Church, former South African Council of Churches general secretary Dr Beyers Naude, Bishop Reg Orsmond of the Catholic Church and Professor Philip Tobias of the Wits University Medical School.

Some of the objectors, who had already done the two-year initial service, described their experiences in the army which led to their disenchantment with the SADF.

The National Jewish Conscientious Objectors cited the SADF's ongoing destabilisation of the frontline states and role in the townships as well as the general militarisation of South African society as their concerns.

"We see our objection to serving in the SADF as an expression of our Jewish faith and heritage, and as loyal to the majority of South Africans," they said in a statement.

The Durban news conference was attended by dozens of the 86 Durban objectors, one of them a Benedictine monk wearing long black robes. It was addressed by Archbishop Denis Hurley, Catholic archbishop of Durban, who said it was a moving experience to be present at an expression of courage, especially when it was "the outcome of very noble motives".

In Port Elizabeth, 19 objectors, who included three ministers of religion and three businessmen, publicly stated they would not serve in the SADF.

"We will respond to the call-up in different ways. Some will go to jail, others will opt for religious objection status (cut to comply with Emergency regulations)," said the objectors.

'We will not serve in the SADF'

By CONNIE MOLUSI



Many of the 772 white men who this week publicly refused to serve in the SADF face six years in prison – or a life of exile. Three men are already serving jail sentences for refusing to serve.

■ Pic: BONGANI MNGUNI

Stellenbosch joins anti-military protest

WHEN Timothy Patrick died, he was 17 months into his two-years' national service and 300km inside Angola. His body was painted black; he was wearing a Unita uniform and carrying a Portuguese Bible.

This was said yesterday by his brother, Mark Patrick, a 29-year-old Cape Town doctor who cited the death of his brother, who was awarded the *Pro Patria* medal posthumously, as one reason why he added his voice to that of 240 other Cape Town men who yesterday announced they would not serve in the SA Defence Force.

Hours before they took their stand, 31 conscientious objectors had done the same thing in Stellenbosch, 60km away, their action dovetailing with similar actions countrywide in the biggest protest yet against compulsory conscription.

The Stellenbosch objectors include 23 students and one lecturer. They made their announcement on the campus of Stellenbosch University, which in 1986 effectively banned the then yet-to-be restricted End Conscription Campaign from operating on campus.

In a statement, the group had other things to say about the university and its ties with the SADF.

"The Stellenbosch University Military Unit has full access to university facilities and student records; the Military Academy of Saldanha Bay

BY GAYE DAVIS in Cape Town

forms an integral part of the university and its activities. SADF-subsidised research into military technology is promoted among students."

The SADF "played an oppressive role in maintaining an unjust and exploitative system", they said.

"We find this involvement of the SADF in our community unacceptable and symptomatic of the militarisation of our environment," the statement said.

In Cape Town, Patrick described his becoming a national serviceman in 1978 as a "natural progression from 12 years of Christian National Education.

"I did not question why I should be so brutalised for two years. I did not question why I should brutalise others."

Later, he kept on being confronted by questions for which he had no answer.

"Ultimately, I came up with a startlingly simple realisation: that South Africa should be governed according to the fundamental principle that all South Africans should be able to participate freely in making the decisions that affect their lives.

"This is the principle on which I base my vision for a future South Africa ... this is why I can never again serve in the SADF."

Another Cape Town objector was

Dr Anton Eberhard, 37, an energy researcher who in 1977 was the first to be imprisoned for refusing to do military service on political grounds.

"Today I am more convinced than ever that to obey a call-up is to accept a call to defend apartheid," he said.

Military obligations had increased "more than five-fold" from when he was first called up from nine months' national service to the current two years, "plus 720 days of camps plus a further 12 days a year commando service until the age of 55."

By refusing to serve, he could face another jail sentence.

"Conscription is one issue which I as a white South African cannot ignore, for it forces me to make a choice," he said.

"Will I defend apartheid, or will I pay the price for refusing to do so?"

"I do not wish these choices for my son and am committed to helping to fight for an end to conscription and an end to apartheid."

Martin Duys, 23, a fourth-year architecture student at the University of Cape Town, described his difficulty in deciding to break the law and his parents' unhappiness and concern about his decision.

"I do not want them to be angry with me," Duys said. "But at the same time I am relieved to be making this stand. My conscience is clear, although my future is very uncertain."

'We will not serve in the SADF'

By CONNIE MOLUSI



Many of the 772 white men who this week publicly refused to serve in the SADF face six years in prison — or a life of exile. Three men are already serving jail sentences for refusing to serve. ■ Pic: BONGANI MNGUNI

HUNDREDS of young white South African men have publicly refused to serve in the SADF.

Launching a Register of Conscientious Objectors in Johannesburg this week, 772 men liable for call up announced their decision to refuse to serve.

The men said they will respond to the call up in different ways. Some will go to jail, others will opt for religious objector status, while many will choose between a life in exile or constant evasion of the call up.

Of the 772 conscripts, 130 have completed no military service and are liable for six years' imprisonment, 134 have completed some of their initial service, 40 have completed some of their camp allotments and 10 are liable for reserve duties.

They could all face between 18 months' and three years' imprisonment for refusing to serve.

A total of 49 of the 134 who have completed some service were officers or non-commissioned officers.

Many are professionals. Among the 772 were bishops, doctors, lawyers, teachers, dentists, computer scientists, university lecturers and professors, engineers, journalists, musicians, actors, and a company director.

A group statement said: "The solutions to the problems of South Africa are political and not military. We are committed to using our skills to serve our country in a positive and constructive way.

"We believe this cannot be achieved by participation in the SADF which has consistently been used to uphold apartheid.

"Many thousands have already died in South Africa. There is no reason why the killing should continue before a negotiated settlement can be achieved. We are not prepared to be part of the government's war."

The conscripts declared their solidarity with jailed objectors David Bruce, Charles Bester and Saul Batzofin, and called for their immediate release.

Chairman of the Johannesburg-Pretoria region of the register, Chris de Villiers, said Group Rights — on which the next government's constitutional dispensation is based — is simply apartheid under another label.

De Villiers, an Afrikaans speaking lawyer who studied at Pretoria university, said the objectors are drawn from both the English and Afrikaans speaking communities.

A statement from church worker Michael Dominic Pothier, said: "The SADF is involved in a range of unchristian and unjustifiable activities.

"My understanding of the teachings and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, to which I adhere, have made it clear to me that I can have no part in the SADF or its activities."

A statement from the National Jewish Conscientious Objectors called for alternatives to conscription to be made available.

"We believe that non-punitive, constructive community service provides such a concrete alternative to military service. In this way national service will become beneficial to the entire South African community," said the statement.

Trade unionist Jeremy Baskin said: "I cannot support an army which is used to stifle protest and legitimate opposition by the black majority in our country."

Vrye Weekblad editor Max Du Preez said: "I believe in a non-racial democracy and will object to any service in the SADF until it becomes the defence force of a new apartheid-free South Africa, where everybody is free and has equal rights and voting power."

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