

Politics OK but ... says Board

Strong political views do not disqualify a person from being recognised by the Board for Religious Objection, as long as they can show that they have a 'religious motivation' and that there is a universal aspect to their objection, said Board chairperson Mr. Justice M.T. Steyn, in accepting the application of Cape Town objector, Neil Myburgh, in Bloemfontein on 9 August and granting him alternative service

Dr. Myburgh, a dentist at the SACLA clinic in Crossroads, had expressed strong feelings about the South African political situation in explaining his objection.

'I felt angry that I was now called to defend a policy that had led to the forced removal of millions, economic repression of as many, illegal occupation and harass-

ment of Namibian and Angolan peoples, and a frightening increase in the militarisation of our society,' he said, while admitting that his Christian principles led him to oppose all forms of violence by anybody.

Justice Steyn thanked him for his honesty and for 'digressing' into his personal feelings about South Africa, but advised applicants to avoid getting carried away with their political opinions, that the 'violence of the colours they painted' obscure the main part of their application

He added that a letter Dr. Myburgh had written to the army in 1981 saying he was a pacifist and would not report for duty when he finished his studies, counted strongly in his favour, especially since

at this stage it was not necessary for him to do so.

Dr. Myburgh will have to do about three years alternative service, one and a half times the number of days service he still owes the SADF.

COUNSELLING SERVICES ARE BEING SET UP IN JOHANNESBURG (Advisory Board for Conscientious Objection - ABCO), CAPE TOWN (Counselling Service for Conscriptees) and DURBAN.

If you are considering going before the Board, would like advice about drawing up your application, or are wondering what category you are eligible for, do contact the c.o.s.g. in your area. You can do this through OBJECTOR newspaper.

Letters to Objector



We invite constructive comment, criticism and contribution; please write to us.



Dear Objector

I was interested to read the interview with a German c.o. in your last issue. I recently met a German objector who had just finished his period of alternative service after objecting on moral (not religious) grounds.

He worked on what he called a social project, looking after handicapped people. He mentioned that other people he knew worked on other projects according to their specific skills - like teaching- or in government institutions like the post office.

Considering that there are so many social needs and deprived people in this country would it not be more productive and meaningful for the government to introduce this kind of alternative service for all conscriptees, instead of forcing co's to go to prison or leave the country.

Waste not want not.

cannot enjoy full citizenship rights without accepting full responsibility.' Apparently Marais thinks we can have full citizenship rights while still living under the Group Areas Act, the Separate Amenities Act, etc. ...

It is clear that the more thoughtful of the 'Labour' Party leadership, such as Curry, have already accepted the inevitability of conscription. On the other hand the blind are fooling themselves that 'Coloured' and 'Indian' parliaments will be able to stop the plan of the all powerful military block in P.W. Botha's new parliament.

C.G. Oliver

10 Belmont Rd.
Mowbray.

LP Duplicity

Dear 'Objector',

I find Alan Hendrickse's denial that participation in the new constitution will mean conscription for coloureds and Indians somewhat unbelievable. I wish to bring to your readers' attention the nature of these denials, and ask what worth they may contain.

Hendrickse declared that conscription for 'coloured' people would be "non-negotiable" as far as his party was concerned until all South Africans - blacks included - are full participants in government. Hendrickse based this assertion on the belief that "if we become part of the tricameral system, then no decision about us can be taken without our consent."

This great leader thus revealed that he had not the slightest knowledge of the new constitution and what it involves. Under the new constitution the military would be a "general affair" and not an "own affair". If the coloured

chamber rejected a law introducing conscription for 'coloureds', the matter would be referred to the President's Council where the Nationalist Party dominates. The law would thus quite easily be passed without the support of the 'coloured' and 'Indian' chambers.

In addition, the constitution gives the President (who will be none other than P.W. Botha), the power to pass a law without the support of the President's Council. What power will A. Hendrickse have to stop him? Even if he had the power, can we trust Hendrickse? Will he not simply say that 'coloureds' and 'Indians' are citizens now and should defend the government they are supposed to have elected.

David Curry apparently does not suffer from the same shortsightedness. Curry observed that the new deal would inevitably lead to the introduction of conscription. He even went so far as to demand a referendum on the constitution terms.

Even more frank was Peter Marais of the 'People's Congress Party'. He and his party support the immediate introduction of conscription because "you

Cape Corps soldier interviewed

Objector approached 'Willie', a private in the Cape Corps, and asked him why he had joined the defence force :

Objector: Hoekom het jy by die Cape Corps aangesluit ?

Willie: Ek was vyftien toe ek aangesluit het by die Cape Corps; my ma het gese ek was sestien. Ek het nie meer skool gegaan nie - daar was nie meer skool nie, ek het standerd twee klaar gemaak, en daar was niks werk nie. (The farm school which he attended only went up to Std. 2). Toe het my ma vir my Cape Corps toe geneem, want sy was bang dat ek sal rondloop met die gangsters. Toe se sy vir my day ek army toe moet gaan.

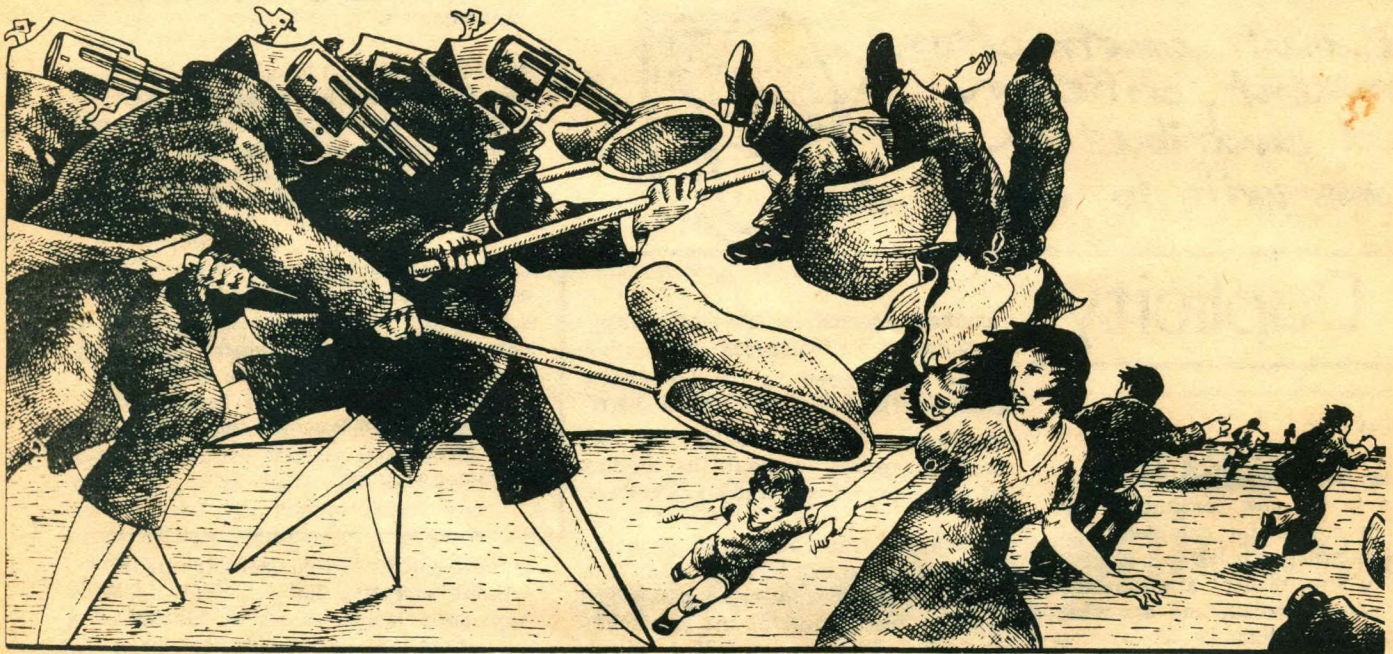
Objector: Hoe het jy daarvoor gevoel?

Willie: Ek was baie hartseer want ek kan nie meer my vrinne gesien het nie, en ek was weg van my ma hulle gewees. Maar die lewe is hard daar binne en ek het gou hard geraak, en gou gewoend daaraan. sMaar ek hou nie daarvan nie, dis alright.

Objector: Voordat jy die Cape Corps gejoin het, het jy ooit daaraan gedink?

Willie: Daar is baie mense wat om ons bly wat hulle seuns al gestuur het, want meeste van hulle het nie werk nie en hulle gaan nie skool nie en so aan, tyds kom die polisie en dan maak hulle jou bang en die beste ding om jou uit die moeilikheid te bly is om maar daar te gaan - want waar anderste kan jy gaan - as jy Kaap toe gaan dan kry jy

nie werk nie, en dan hang jy maar net rond en dan land jy maar net in die tronk. Ek meen daar is baie geld wat ons kry daarso. Ek meen ek kry nie soveel geld in 'n job nie, waar gaan ek R300.00 per maand kry, ek meen as jy Std. 2 het, niemand kry daaie sort geld nie. sBaie van die ander laities wat saam met my opgegroeï het is ook maar daar. Dis maar hoekom ons daar is. Dis baie 'alright', - kyk, hulle se vir 'n mens day jy gaan kommuniste veg, en Sondag kerk toe daar op die baas se plaas en daar word ons geleer dat die kommuniste probeer die wereld oorneem. Daais een rede hoekom ons die Army gejoin het hy weet. Kyk ons kan nie verstaan nie, ons hoor daar in Rusland is 'n mens nie eers toegelaat om te bid nie en nou wil hulle dieselfde ding hier kom doen, dis hoekom ons Army toe gaan.



IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE OBJECTOR. IN THE POST, FILL IN THIS FORM AND SEND IT TO US AT THE ADDRESS BELOW.

WE WOULD APPRECIATE A MINIMUM DONATION OF R2 FOR 6 MONTHS SUBSCRIPTION AND R4 FOR A YEAR [INSIDE S.A.], R5 AND R10 FOR OVERSEAS.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

I ENCLOSE FOR A 6 MONTHS SUBSCRIPTION.

I ENCLOSE FOR 1 YEAR'S SUBSCRIPTION.

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.