

OBJECTOR UPDATE

24 January, 1990

There are currently five objectors who have been charged with failing to report for military service, and a number of others who are awaiting prosecution:

1. In August of last year Douglas Torr, an Anglican priest, informed the SADF of his refusal to do his initial period of military service. Doug was kept on tenter hooks for the next five months hearing nothing further from the military until January of this year, when he was informed that he would be prosecuted for refusing to serve. He appeared in the Johannesburg Magistrates Court on 15 January and his case was postponed until 14 May, for trial.

Doug is 25 years old and has just taken up a posting in the Anglican church in Coronationville, Johannesburg. His time will be divided between the parish and a children's home where he will be living and working.

Doug is an active member of Johannesburg COSG and has been part of Charles' and Saul's support groups.

His stand is based on his Christian beliefs and on his need as a priest, to be obedient to his church. For him this means refusing to serve in the SADF.

2. Andre Croucamp appeared in court with Doug, also charged with refusing to serve. Andre refused a camp call up on 18 December, 1989. His trial date has been set for 26 March, 1990.

Andre is a theologian by training. He recently completed his initial period of military service and has done no camps. He is not a member of COSG and at this stage does not want publicity about his stand. He sees his stand as a spiritual rather than a political stand.

3. Michael Graaf refused a camp call up on Friday 15 December and he appeared in court the following Monday. He is due to reappear in court on 13 February, at which stage a trial date will be set.

Mike was active in ECC and is an active member of COSG. He was one of those arrested in September last year for handing out ECC pamphlets and tying yellow ribbons around trees and poles in Durban. Mike completed his initial service 10 years ago, spending much of his service time in Namibia.

4. Richard Clacey has had a long and ongoing battle with the military personnel of his unit. Having been convicted in the past for failure to report, he is now being charged with refusal to serve. He is in his fourth cycle with only 26 days to go and his case has all the indications of harassment by local military personnel. For this reason he has decided to first pursue a low key lobbying strategy to try and get the charges withdrawn against him. He therefore does not want publicity at this stage, but should they proceed with the charges, will want

publicity around his stand and trial.

5. Brendan Moran, 24, returned from London in August 1989 to confront the issue of military service. He spent three years overseas before making this decision.

When Brendan returned to the country he worked in a Catholic community service project, in the Valley of a Thousand Hills. His work involved doing maintenance and building work for the community. He has now become the first volunteer for the Churches Alternative National Service Programme (CANSP). He has been placed working at a school for deaf children.

Brendan will be reporting and refusing to serve on 1 February, 1990. He will be supported by a delegation of people, amongst them Archbishop Hurley.

6. This morning Gary Rathbone was charged with refusing to serve. He will be appearing in court on Monday 29 January. Gary is 28 years old. He spent 4 years in the Permanent Force, from 1979 - 1982. He is now objecting to a camp on the basis that the SADF is a political organisation that is directly involved in upholding apartheid. He is registered for a masters degree in African Literature; he is the lead guitarist of the group Spectres and a freelance artist. He was a member of the 143 and the 771.

7. Cobus de Swardt reported for a camp on 27 December 1989 only to be told that the entire camp had been cancelled. Cobus de Swardt is a sociology lecturer at Univ of Western Cape. He comes from a top Nationalist party family.

7. PETER RULE refused a camp call up last year but as yet has not been charged. Peter would like to keep a low profile until it is clear whether or not he will be prosecuted. Peter is married and he and his wife Sarah live in Johannesburg.

8. Ivan Toms' and David Bruce's appeal is set down for the 27 February. It will be heard by the Appellate Division which sits in Bloemfontein. The case is vitally important because its findings will be binding on all other courts in future objector trials. The main issue before the court will be whether the Defence Act prescribes mandatory or maximum sentences for objectors. If the appeal is successful, this will mean in effect that courts will have a discretion in determining the length of sentences.

PLEASE NOTE : that Richard Clacey, Andre Croucamp, and Peter Rule do not at this stage want any publicity about their stands.

Doug Torr and Brendan Moran will be travelling around the country towards the end of February/beginning of March, so please consider how your region can best use them to publicise their own stands and the stands of other objectors.

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