

### 3. THE SADF AS FOREIGN AGGRESSOR

#### i. NAMIBIA

In terms of international law, South Africa's presence in Namibia is clearly illegal. South Africa's mandate over Namibia was terminated by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1966. In 1970 the Security Council declared South Africa's presence in Namibia illegal. The following year the International Court of Justice upheld both these decisions.

The SADF is also regarded as a force of foreign occupation by most Namibians. This is a common theme running through the reports of four independent church studies in Namibia.

On the other hand, support for SWAPO is widespread. It seems virtually certain that it would win any independent UN-supervised election with a large majority.

In the South African Council of Churches report on Namibia one reads:

"All the church leaders both black and white with one exception had no doubt that SWAPO had the support of the large majority of the people of the country and they knew this support was growing almost everywhere with the continued presence of the South African security forces."

#### ii. DESTABILISATION

Since the time of the Angolan invasion of 1975, South Africa seems to have claimed the right to invade neighbouring states at will and destabilise foreign economies. The objective of destabilisation is to pre-occupy countries with defence and internal security, and prevent economic growth that might lessen dependence on South Africa. A second goal is to discourage support for the ANC, PAC and SWAPO.

The most important aspect of destabilisation is the support given to armed rebel groups operating in neighbouring countries. Unita, MNR, and (according to Chief Jonathan) the Lesotho Liberation Army all receive South African support and training. These groups disrupt vital rail and oil links, mine roads and bridges, and try to prevent any normal life or economic activity.

The advantages to South Africa are that the impression is generated that the independent states are unstable, foreign aid is discouraged, and their economic difficulties are accentuated.

#### CONCLUSION

My objections to service in the SADF revolve around three points.

Firstly, since the conflict in this country is a civil rather than an external war, participation in the SADF cannot be regarded as an action which serves the interest of all the people of this country. By going into the army one is taking sides in the conflict - one is actively contributing to the continued domination of one group of South Africans over another.

Secondly, the guerillas cannot simply be dismissed as terrorists. They have behind them a long history of non-violent resistance, and the violence now employed seems designed to avoid civilian casualties. Their standing is further enhanced by the fact that they appear to have the support of a large proportion of the population.

Thirdly, the SADF does not restrict its activities to defence. It operates primarily in Namibia where it acts as a force of foreign occupation. The SADF also occupies a large part of Southern Angola and strikes at will into Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. There is also virtually incontrovertible evidence that South Africa is actively destabilising the economies of neighbouring states.

Given these three factors, given the 'profoundly unjust and immoral' nature of South African society, I cannot see that the question of how one ought to respond to conscription raises any profound moral dilemma. For me, going into the SADF would involve a complete denial of the ideals I value most highly, of standards I have held throughout my life.

The only way I can do my duty to the people of this country is by taking an uncompromising stand against the call to fight, and to accept the consequences of that action.

STATEMENT ON CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION -  
MICHEAL VIVEIROS

As a Christian having experienced the love of God in my life, I feel compelled to express this love towards my fellow man in every sphere of my life. Not only does the Bible encourage us to do everything possible to live at peace with others (Romans 12:18) but also Jesus Christ has explicitly told us that we, as his followers, ought to love our enemies and ought to work towards peace (Matthew 5:9+44). It would, therefore be contrary to my faith for me to take up arms and to kill a fellow human being even if he in the secular sense, be seen as an enemy of mine.

On the thorough examination of my conscience and faith and after much prayer, I have decided to become a conscientious objector and to refuse to heed the call-up of the South African Defence Force. Because by being a part of the S.A. Defence Force I would be compromising my Christian principles and would be untrue to myself.

I must concede, however, that there would be circumstances wherein I could see myself clear to participating in an army in a non-combatant capacity (which would not be supportive of military action). This, however, could only occur when I would be satisfied in my own mind that the conflict the army be involved in be unavoidable and that all reasonable steps have been taken to avoid it. In the South African context this has not happened and in my opinion, the conflict in this Country can still be peacefully resolved if a national convention of all representative leaders be held. Thus far the South African Government has only sought to solve the country's problems in terms of the interests of the white electorate. Negotiations have only taken place on the Government's terms with black leaders who have little or no grassroots support. If the Government had to negotiate on an equal basis with the country's recognized leaders, I'm sure that conflict could be avoided. Therefore, I find that I cannot be any part of the S.A. Defence Force as it is involved in a conflict which can be avoided.

It must be noted however, that I see a definite distinction between an army and it's functions and a state and it's people. While I am adverse to military national service I am more than willing to serve my country, and all it's people, in a non-military capacity - even if this means receiving less remuneration and serving for a period longer than military service.

HOW I BECAME A CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR -  
MICHEAL VIVEIROS

I was brought up in an average English speaking white family in which neither religion nor politics played a large role. However, from the age of about 13 years I became very interested in politics and was an ardent supporter of the National Party. While my family were nominal Roman Catholics we had little contact with the Church and my thoughts on religion were undefined. It was only at the age of 14 that I committed my life to Jesus Christ and became a "born again" Christian. Even at that young age my life was changed and my experience had given me a completely new outlook on life. God had put a love in my heart that washed away my prejudices and self-centredness.

While I was still interested in politics, I began to realise the un-Christian nature of the National Party's policies and my eyes were opened to the injustices and misery caused by those policies. So while still at school, I realised that the only Christian answer to South Africa's problem would be the creation of a shared society.

While in Matric, my parents were divorced and I emigrated to Australia with my mother, brother and sister in the following year (1976). I was, however, unable to settle down there and longed to return to South Africa. When unrest broke out in Soweto and in the rest of the Country, I felt it was my duty to my Country to return and to work to build a better society rather than desert it. I realised that I would be called up for national service but, not realising the full implications of the call-up, I thought it a small price to pay to live in South Africa.

In choosing my career, I decided on Social work as I felt that this would be an ideal career in which I could work towards a just Country. I, therefore, enrolled in 1977 into the University of Cape Town where I began to read for a Bachelor of Social Science degree.

When I had returned from Australia, I found that I no longer felt in agreement with the Church I attended before my immigration. It was then when I began to visit Sheppard Street Baptist in District Six, Cape Town where I immediately felt at home and officially joined the church in August, 1978. However, it wasn't long before the church in District Six was demolished and the congregation moved to Hanover Park where the Church became known as the Blomvlei Road Baptist Church.

During the course of my studies and my membership at my new Church, I became more and more convinced that I should commit myself to working towards a just society. It therefore, became clear to me that if I did not want to do military service I had either to leave the country or become a conscientious objector. Because of my previously unsuccessful experience in emigrating to Australia, and my commitment to my Country and it's people, it became clear that the only way open for me was conscientious objection.

STATEMENT BY BRETT MYRDAL TO THE COURT  
MARTIAL AS A CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

I address this court as a South African, as one of the thousands of young South Africans who have been morally and physically prepared for war in defence of the South African government. Why then have I refused to serve in the South African Defence Force?

For reasons of sincere moral beliefs:

- 1) I cannot serve in the SADF in defence of apartheid;
- 2) I cannot serve in the SADF in war against fellow South Africans;
- 3) I cannot serve in the SADF which is a force of illegal occupation in Namibia

Living in apartheid in South Africa has forced me to refuse to serve in the SADF. Yet before I came to this decision, I, along with all white South African schoolchildren, had been prepared for war. I was taught to stand and sing Die Stem with pride, to respect the South African flag and the leaders of our government. At Grey High School in Port Elizabeth, I attended school camps, at which we played "Nats versus Terrorists", instead of cowboys and Indians. But our game was more than a game. It presented us with a picture of our government, justly defending itself against violent terrorists.

Cadets was important in training us for the army - training us to be leaders amongst men. We were taught to shoot, to drill with RI's, 600 boys parading in uniform for our parents and the Eastern Province Command. We saluted uniformed teachers, and on cadet camps, were trained in "counter insurgency warfare" and "attacks on mock terrorist bases". Nor were girls unaffected. While we route marched to our sister school, Collegiate, they performed fire drills, coming out proudly to watch us drill: a rehearsal with us playing future war heroes, and them, the girlfriends, sisters, or wives, keeping the homefires burning.

But at home, I learnt from my family and their Christian valued, to love others as we loved each other. Living together as a family, we enjoyed support and love - a right denied to millions of black South Africans divided by apartheid laws.

While I was at first proud to go on cadet parades, my mother did not attend these parades. She spoke instead of war: that there was nothing romantic nor right in killing or being killed. She lived through World War II, through bombings in London. She knew the waste of war, that war was not to be glorified: especially a war in defence of apartheid.

In 1976 I was in Std.9 and was compelled to register for military service. 1976 was the year of the Soweto student uprising, which swept the country. The students' peaceful protest was met with a hail of bullets fired by the South African Police. Hundreds of young schoolchildren were shot as the South African Defence Force cordoned off the townships. When I sat down to write matric in 1977, the schoolchildren were still on the streets in protest against gutter education. While I was studying for my exams, schoolchildren were shot in the townships of Port Elizabeth. I was shocked too, by the death in detention of Steve Biko, after being brutally assaulted. Then, after the horrific violence of 1976 and 1977, the newspapers and organisations which had spoken out against these injustices (like The Soweto Students Representatives Council, the World, the Christian Institute) were silenced by banning on October 19, 1977.

With the memory of this violence etched vividly on my mind, I received my first call-up papers. I was fortunate to be able to defer my call-up by attending university. Many of my friends did not have this choice. For them there was no alternative to conscription. Although many opposed apartheid, they went to the South African Defence Force, "to get it done with": they are still trying to get it done. When they came back, many from the border, they carried with them forever the scars of what they had been forced to do.

At university I realised that I had escaped neither the dilemma of conscription nor the reality of war. Rhodesian students who were closed to me, spoke of the futility of the sacrifices they had made in an unwinnable war. I recognised in them the horrors of war I had seen in old school friends. I was also deeply saddened by the loss of many friends who chose to go into exile rather than serve in the SADF. I realised too that the burden of conscription weighed heavily over the lives of all white men who faced 2 years of military service and annual camps.

During my years since school, my rejection of apartheid grew. I saw how the government dealt with resistance. Student leaders, friends of mine, were banned and detained for voicing their opposition to government policies. I realised that as a South African, I had to choose where I stood in the struggle against apartheid. I could best do this by working in the student movement, in this way joining the struggle for a free South Africa.

Each year at university I applied for deferment. At the end of my studies, I knew that I could not go into the SADF. I knew that this was a war in defence of apartheid.

#### 1) THE NATURE OF APARTHEID SOCIETY

As a soldier in the SADF I would be called on to defend a system based on the violence of apartheid. On the one hand, the denial of political rights to the majority of South Africans; the mass removals of unwanted people to the homelands; the poverty of wages and health and housing facilities - are violent acts against our people. On the other, we see the violent repression of those seeking an end to these injustices, by the South African Police, the South African Defence Force and the vast network of security legislation.

- \* I cannot defend a system which has forcibly relocated 3 million people
- \* I cannot defend a system which through it's homeland policy has deprived more than 8 million South Africans of their citizenship.

- \* I cannot defend a system which has divided and destroyed family life for millions through the policy migrant labour.
- \* I cannot defend a system which denies access to health, housing and education facilities on the grounds of race

#### 2) THE CIVIL WAR - WHO WOULD I BE FIGHTING AGAINST?

Throughout my school years I was taught that South Africa was fighting a war against an external enemy of communist-backed terrorists, intent on destroying our "Christian" and "civilised" society. I was told that it was my duty to fight in the SADF, which provides the shield behind which South Africa could progress along a path of peaceful change.

But South Africa is not a peaceful society. The SADF is there to defend the status quo of a system based on violence.

Throughout our history, people have resisted attempts to deprive them of their political rights and to exploit their cheap labour. This century, until 1961, people organised and resisted peacefully. The turning point was Sharpeville. In 1961, 69 people were shot dead by the police at a pass law protest. In the state of emergency which followed, organisations like the African National Congress and Pan African Congress were banned. Many decided that they could no longer resist a violent system by purely peaceful means. They left the country to be trained a guerillas.

Years later, the crushing of the peaceful protest by Soweto schoolchildren in 1976, leaving more than 1 000 dead, led many young South Africans to leave the country and take up arms.

I cannot participate in the SADF in a war against fellow South Africans, who have been forced, as a result of the violence of apartheid, to take up arms as a last resort.

\*I cannot kill people regarded by millions of South Africans as heroes and martyrs.

When I was compelled to register in 1976, the SADF had only the year before been forced to withdraw from Angola. Over the following years, many of my friends had served, and even to lose their lives, not in South Africa, but in Namibia and Angola. It was obvious that I was not being called on to fight in a defence force, but in an army of occupation in Namibia, and which also engaged in raids into neighbouring states.

South Africa's occupation of Namibia is recognised as illegal by both the United Nations and the International Court of Justice. The SADF is in Namibia to enforce this illegal occupation, thereby blocking moves towards independence. The demand for independence has been strongly asserted by SWAPO, which is recognised internationally and locally, by major South African and Namibian churches, as enjoying the support of the overwhelming majority of Namibians.

I am not prepared to serve in the SADF, which actively upholds the colonisation of Namibia and the unjust denial of freedom and independence to the Namibian people.

South Africa not only occupies Namibia, but through the SADF, permanently occupies a major part of Southern Angola, frequently conducting raids into Angola and backing the rebel Unita forces. This offensive strategy has been used in other parts of Southern Africa, most notably in Lesotho and Mozambique. I am not prepared to participate in the SADF which shows no regard for the sovereignty of these countries, for the lives of their civilians and of South African refugees in exile.

Within South Africa the SADF is engaged in a two pronged strategy. On the one hand, it engages in active repression of resistance to maintain apartheid. Alongside the police it conducts pass raids, mans road blocks, cordons off townships in periods of unrest, and assists it the task of relocating black South Africans. On the other hand, through it's 'hearts and minds' campaign, it has attempted to win support for the SADF and for government policy. Through it's civic action programme, the SADF places teachers in black schools, runs career guidance programmes and community events, in order to present itself as benevolent. In the white schools it coordinates cadet programmes, ensuring their training begins early.

I believe that whatever position I occupy in the SADF, I am part of an institution which protects and furthers injustice. This I cannot do.

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As the conflict intensifies, more and more South Africans are refusing to do military service. Already more than 4000 conscriptees annually fail to report for their call up. Some have already objected, others evade their military service and many more have left the country. From next year, conscientious objectors will face a prison sentence of up to six years. Only those accepted as religious pacifists will be able to render 'community service'. This not only divides all those who object to military service, but will also lead many more to leave the country and go into exile. This wasteful drain on the country's resources will be exacerbated with the extension of conscription.

I fully support the call to end conscription made recently by the Black Sash, and demand that there should be adequate alternatives to military national service. I would be prepared to render non military service which would benefit the people as a whole. This must be no longer than the present period of military service and must in no way contribute actively to the maintenance of apartheid. Until these demands have been met, I see my decision to conscientiously object as the best way in which I can serve South Africa and it's people.

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION - A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION

Throughout my life, one of my fundamental principles has been a desire to serve South Africa and it's people. Going into the SADF would so blatantly contradict my ideals, that I could not reconcile this with my conscience and continue my committment to me fellow South Africans.

My ideals have led me to strive with many other South Africans for a new South Africa, free from the hatred of apartheid. The Freedom Charter, drawn up in 1955 by the representatives of millions of South Africans, best reflects these ideals: of a non-racial and democratic South Africa in which the people shall govern.

My committment to a free South Africa has led me to oppose the government's new racist constitution, which can only strengthen apartheid, and to support actively the United Democratic Front in it's opposition to the constitution and the Koornhof Bills. If the new constitution is implemented, the militarised state of our society will not be lessened; if anything the situation will worsen, with the inevitable conscription of 'Coloureds' and 'Indians', and the formal incorporation of the military into government structures.

I see conscientious objection as the best way I can serve the people of my country, in the face of compulsory conscription. The consequences of my stand are but a small price to pay, when compared with the suffering endured daily by the majority of South Africans.

WHY I SAY "NO" TO COLLABORATION  
WITH THE SADF.- BILLY PADDOCK

MY ATTITUDE TOWARDS VIOLENCE

Violence has many faces and it is difficult to find a single integrative definition. However, Johan Goltang's definition:

"Violence is present wherever people are influenced in such a way that their actual physical and spiritual actualizations are below their potential actualizations."

is wide enough to cover both personal violence and structural violence (most obvious being unequal distribution of power)

Goltang distinguishes between six dimensions of violence with the most important distinction being between personal violence and structural violence. If an acting person is involved we have personal or direct violence. Whereas violence without a personal agent is structural violence - 'systematic' violence or 'social injustice'. For example when one husband beats his wife we have a clear case of personal violence, but when one million husbands subordinate one million wives there is structural violence.

Correspondingly, in a society where life expectancy is twice as high in the upper as in the lower classes, violence is exercised even if there are no concrete instances that one can point to of direct attacks.

As Christians, can we discuss this from a neutral standpoint, above or outside a situation of violence? We are actively involved in a system which is violent to the degree that it denies, through it's laws and social structure, to the majority of the population a large amount of it's actualization. This could be avoided if the system was different. We are all involved as oppressors or oppressed by paying taxes, acting as marriage officers and doing military service. Who stands behind the policeman who fires into the crowd?

Violence can have structural forms built into the apparently peaceful operations of society as well as overt physical expressions. The failure to provide educational opportunities, or the manipulation of sources of information, can do violence to those affected. The existence in society of intellectual repression in any form is psychological violence. The condescension and whole forms of discrimination with which age sometimes treats youth or men treat women, or one race or religious group may treat another, are a part of it. We live in a society in which the drive for security, self-esteem or power, and the failure to share responsibility and decision making often do violence to other persons. Violence is therefore a condition of which all of us are guilty in some degree.

What options do I, as a Christian, have within this society in which I live, I recognise that we are all already involved as participants in violence. Bonino formulates one option for Christians in the following way:

"Seen in this perspective, the question of non-violence assumes a different meaning. It ceases to be a question of 'personal purity' Strictly speaking, it is not a question of non-violence but of the kinds, forms and limits of violence present in a conflict involving liberation and oppression. The Christian legitimately asks how it may be possible to humanize this struggle as much as possible".

(Violence: a Theological Reflection).

Jurgen Noltman expresses a similar view: "The problem of violence and non-violence is an illusory problem. There is only the question of the justified and unjustified use of force and the question of whether the means are proportionate to the ends." (God in Revolution, 1969).

For many Christians who find themselves in acute situations of social injustice non-violence mean a total withdrawal from the struggle in S.A. A relatively just order must be established before violence can cease.

I believe it is hypocrisy when Christians in positions of privilege endorse violence (in all its masks) on behalf of a biased law and order but invoke moral denunciations against violence that threatens the unjust order. I see similarities here with the Jews in the time of Jesus. We certainly also have Christians Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes and Zealots.

There are eight criteria by reference to which a war might be declared "Just" (In the light of this) let us apply the criteria of the Just War Doctrine to the war the SADF is presently waging in SA and Namibia.

THE WAR JUST BE DECLARED BY A LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY

With respect to the war being conducted in Namibia the war was not only not declared but South Africa has no legitimate authority in that country and the SADF is in fact an illegal occupying force in another country.

In SA it can also be argued that the government is not the legitimate authority. According to Thomas Aquinas a legitimate authority is that government constituted for the common good to administer and distribute justice. Aquinas states that when a government stops doing this it loses its legitimacy. This is based on Natural Law.

The Preamble to the SA Constitution recognises the Supremacy of God and the responsibility of the administrators to administer for the good of all. This slots into Aquinas' framework. However with the plethora of unjust and exploitative laws and the method of implementing these the SA Government has stopped administering for the common good and has never fully distributed justice. Therefore it has lost its legitimacy.

The early Christian church believed in the imminent coming of God's Kingdom and held onto the belief that soon judgement would come and that justice will be done. They therefore took up a pacifists stance. As time progressed and the Kingdom 'in all its glory' did not come the Church was faced with a dilemma with regard to war.

St. Augustine drew up a series of criteria for war which later became the Just War Theory. All the mainstream churches have held to this theory/doctrine up to the present day. It is one of the official articles of the Anglican Church of which I am a member. I am obliged therefore to translate or interpret the doctrines of this Church in my life. I do not purely accept the Just War Theory for myself because it is one of the thirty-nine articles. I believe that it still has validity today.

The Just War Doctrine has validity only when it is applied within the context of a socio-economic and political analysis which then gives the criteria meaning. In the absence of such an analysis it is merely a set of unconnected phrases.

I cannot enter the SADF because of the role it plays in defending the structural violence of the SA system. I

believe I have a role to play in liberating the peoples of this country from oppression and exploitation. I believe I can do this best by remaining in the country and committing myself to this struggle and having an obligation to resistance. I chose to object because once I have sided with the oppressed and exploited it becomes virtually impossible to speak of strategic involvement in the military because I would then be siding with the oppressor.

I do not believe there is such a status as a non-combatant in the SA situation. Magnus Malan has stated that it takes 6 to 7 "non-combatants" to keep one combatant in the field.

I believe objection is a very valid option today because whites need to take sides and need to be seen to be taking sides. I believe this is one clear way of joining the struggle for democratic SA.

THE WAR MUST BE WAGED FOR A JUST CAUSE

The South African government states that there is a 'total onslaught' against the state from the 'communists of Moscow'. The SA Government propaganda together with the 'official opposition' the PFP persist in their 'anti-communist' rhetoric.

The SADF is engaged in a war against Blacks who have fled this country's oppressive and exploitative system, many of them school pupils who fled after clashes with the police in 1976 and 1977. (Both the Steyn Commission and the Rabie Commission attest to this fact.) Thus the war is a civil war and not a war of defense against some external faceless oppressor.

South Africa's generals often talk of a 'Total Onslaught' on SA. There is a total onslaught - not by a faceless Russian Bear - but by the forces of democracy in SA in the schools, in the universities, in the factories and in the communities.

THE WAR MUST BE CARRIED OUT WITH A RIGHT OR GOOD INTENTION

South African society has been regarded as unjust and oppressive for a long time now. A lot of the critics have held to the myth that racial segregation in SA began with the coming to power of the NP in 1948.

As P.W. Botha has said with regard to the restructuring: the goal is "to achieve the national aims within the framework of the specific policies" (Defence White Paper 1977:5) which in essence is the same as his 'adapt or die' statement, i.e. adapting apartheid not dismantling it. Essentially we have a more sophisticated and better looking form of oppression and exploitation. We continue to have the Nyangas, the Limehills, the Dimbazas, the Kwa Pitelas, the totally preventable cholera and malnutrition, detention without trial and deaths in detention etc.

This is the policy General Magnus Malan has stated that the SADF supports, when in 1979 he said:

"The Defence Force supports government policy.... This policy is the same as that laid down by Dr. H.F. Verwoerd, namely multinationalism and self-determination of nations".

4. THE WAR MUST HAVE A REASONABLE CHANCE OF SUCCESS:

The war has been described by the military leaders as being -

"80% socio-economic and only 20% military. If we lose the socio-economic struggle then we need not even bother to fight the military one" (Gen. G.J.J. Boshoff in PRP Journal Progress June 1976)

Gen. Malan put it rather differently: "Bullets kill bodies, not beliefs. I would like to remind you that the Portuguese did not lose the military battle in Angola and Mozambique (sic), but they lost the faith and trust of the inhabitants of these countries." (Daily News 13.6.1979).

The SADF has embarked on a campaign to win the 'hearts and minds' of the oppressed people through their Civic Action Programme (CAP).

However, the hostility to the SADF in Northern Namibia, which comprises approximately half of the population, suggests that this strategy is not successful. In the SACBC's report on Namibia we can see why it is failing:

"Reports of what occurs in the operational area indicate that it is commonly accepted that in searching out SWAPO guerillas the Security Forces stop at nothing to force information out of people. They break into homes, beat up residents, shoot people, steal and kill cattle and often pillage stores and tea rooms. When the tracks of SWAPO guerillas are discovered by the security forces the local people are in danger. Harsh measures are intensified. People are blindfolded, taken from their houses and left beaten up and even dead by the roadside. Women are often raped."

5. THE WAR MUST BE UNDERTAKEN ONLY AS A  
LAST RESORT.

In Namibia, SA has shown its reluctance to negotiate a settlement. In the discussion of "Legitimate Authority" I demonstrated that SA has consistently ignored even the ICJ and the UN with regard to its withdrawal from Namibia. SA's efforts to impose a constitution and "self-government" on Namibia took place while negotiations were taking place with the Contact Group. SA went ahead, and using the military, held an election. This election was totally farcical and has been ridiculed widely. SA seems to want to avoid having to negotiate a settlement with SWAPO. SA concedes that a settlement in Namibia must be approved by the UN in the end but its continued intransigence lends credence to the view that SA keeps stalling because it is afraid of right wing backlash on the grounds that it has sold out the whites of Namibia.

In SA the government has also shown that it will not negotiate with the true leaders of the majority of the people of this country. Rather it bans and imprisons these leaders. Earlier I demonstrated that SA tries to set up dummy bodies which are consistently being rejected by the majority. The SA government ignored blacks' protest to the forming of the Republic which unwanted and excluded them. The SA government has repeatedly ignored and refused first the All-in-Africa conferences' call for a National Convention and subsequently other groups who have called for a national convention. I have also demonstrated earlier that the SA government is intent on carrying out the policy of apartheid and the mass rejection of this and the new constitutional proposals by the majority of the people has been ignored. The SA regime is not interested in negotiation with blacks in SA and prefers repression, with violence to put down any opposition.

CONCLUSION

My objections to service in the SADF revolve around three points.

Firstly, since the conflict in this country is a vicil rather than an external war, participation in the SADF cannot be regarded as an action which serves the interest of all the people of this country. By going into the army one is taking sides in the conflict - one is actively contributing to the continued domination of one group of South Africans over another.

Secondly, the guerillas cannot simply be dismissed as terrorists. They have behind them a long history of non-violent resistance, and the violence now employed seems designed to avoid civilian casualties. Their standing is further enhanced by the fact that they appear to have the support of a large proportion of the population.

Thirdly, the SADF does not restrict it's activities to defence. It operates primarily in Namibia where it acts as a force of foreign occupation. The SADF also occupies a large part of Southern Angola and strikes at will into Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. There is also virually incontrovertable evidence that South Africa is actively destabilising the economies of neighbouring states.

Given these three factors, given the 'profoundly unjust and immoral' nature of South African society, I cannot see that the question of how one ought to respond to conscription raises any profound moral dilemma. For me, going into the SADF would involve a complete denial of the ideals I value most highly, of standards I have held throughout my life.

The only way I can do my duty to the people of this country is by taking an uncompromising stand against the call to fight, and to accept the consequences of that action.

W H Y I A M A

S E L E C T I V E C O N S C I E N T I O U S O B J E C T O R

Peter Moll

December 1978

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"People give nonviolence two weeks to solve  
their problems and then decide it has 'failed'.  
Then they go on with violence for the next  
hundred years ... and it seems never to  
'fail' and be rejected"

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My motivation for selective conscientious objection can be summarized in three basic propositions.

First Proposition: South African society is fundamentally unjust.

Second Proposition: The definition of a just war excludes war in defence of a basically unjust society.

Third Proposition: Selective conscientious objection is a Christian response to the injunctions of Romans chapter thirteen.

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FIRST PROPOSITION: SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY IS FUNDAMENTALLY UNJUST.

I believe that there are sufficient non-religious grounds for selective conscientious objection (meaning the refusal to participate in a particular war while making no assertion about war in general). The addition of Christian morality makes my own duty to objection more binding.

Every country has built into its operations a measure of injustice. This much is inescapable on account of the fallen nature of man. While one should certainly strive to eliminate the remaining vestiges of injustice, these do not of themselves constitute sufficient grounds for selective conscientious objection. Only when the society is shot through with injustice does one have sufficient grounds for such objection.

#### Justice in the Bible: Old Testament

In the Old Testament Israelite theocracy, God demanded justice of his people. Their justice was to be a reflection of the divine righteousness. "Be holy as I am holy" was a command that extended beyond men's private lives to their societal relationships as well. There was to be equality before the courts; there was to be compassion by the rich and strong for the poor and weak; merchants were not to weight their scales to their own advantage; all debts were considered scrapped each Jubilee year. Not least among the sins Israel committed when she was unfaithful was that of depriving the poor of their means of income, the land, thus bringing about an unequal distribution of income where justice could not possibly prevail.

"Hate what is evil, love what is right, and see that justice prevails in the courts", Amos urges upon his hearers. Prophetically, Amos said "You people that hate anyone who challenges injustice and speaks the whole truth in court, have oppressed the poor and robbed them of their grain". Obviously there are no simplistic conclusions to be drawn. These men's ideas are not a model for our society. Yet they can serve as the raw material for each subsequent generation to process in order to come to a better understanding of the weaknesses of the society of the time. Nowhere does the Old Testament speak of egalitarianism, but there is a strong emphasis on fairness and equity, i.e. while the Bible does not teach a primitive socialism where equality is the norm, it does insist on fair dealing, a principle which must be applied in every society.

### Justice in the Bible: New Testament

In the New Testament, Jesus spoke of going the second mile and giving the coat as well as the cloak. To James, true and undefiled religion is to visit the fatherless and the widow. Jesus spoke at great length about the evils of hypocrisy, calling the Pharisees 'whited sepulchres'. John Howard Yoder has advanced convincing arguments for a literal understanding of the words that Jesus quoted from Isaiah:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and  
recovery of sight to the blind,  
to set free the oppressed and announce that the time has come  
when the Lord will save his people" (Luke 4:18f).

Paul insists that government is ordained of God and that a good government will reward the good man and punish the evildoer. He urges that prayers be made for all in authority, so that we will be able to live peaceable and quiet lives. The vineyard owner in Jesus' parable pays his labourers one denarius for their work (equivalent to a fair day's wage) whether they have worked for one hour or the whole day -- clearly their financial need is the criterion by which payment should be made; given the situation of unemployment in Israel at that time, the needs of their families would all have been the same (Matthew 20). There is a sense in which we can say that love in the New Testament is the same as justice in the Old Testament.

The Christian norm of law has never been embodied in any historical system of law. Nevertheless, it is the Christian's concern that the overall direction which his society is taking should not, at least, be away from the Kingdom of God.

### Justice in South Africa

The motive of separate development is the political and social, though not necessarily the economic, separation of distinct nations, followed by self-rule or self-determination for each. There is no biblical teaching against this fine ideal, in principle; indeed there are many who find theological justification for it; but careful examination of the South African reality reveals its moral barrenness. When the partitioning is complete, the white race will have a share of the land area and the country's natural wealth which is out of all proportion to its population size. The total homeland area will be 13% of South Africa's land area; the homelands have low labour retention abilities, which show little sign of improvement. Therefore there will always be approximately nine million Africans or more working in so-called White South Africa, unable to take an effective part in decisions which affect them, except in their own homelands -- their connection with which, admittedly, is becoming increasingly tenuous.

Separate development politics makes lofty ethnical appeals to "spiritual" values like language and culture, but whites still dominate the economy and the society is rife with racism. Separate development may be the ideal, but white racial domination is the reality. The proposed new constitution does not alter the position materially. By its own confession, the African is left out of its reckoning, and it will fit in with the separate development scheme, hence it will not embody power-sharing.

### Incipient totalitarianism?

To achieve the separate development ideal, radical methods have been applied. The word 'radical' may be taken to mean that which reaches down to the existential roots of a man's being. To assume, as the National Party has done, that the most precious thing to a man is his sense of national pride and national security, is radical. Nic Diederichs wrote: "Without the uplifting, ennobling and enriching influence of this highest inclusive (ethnic) unity which we call a nation, mankind cannot reach the fullest heights of his human existence ... Only in a nation as the most total, most inclusive human community can man realize himself to the full. The nation is the fulfilment of the individual life". (Nasionalisme as lewensbeskouing)

Criticism of the state totalitarianism to which this belief in the nation leads was the gist of the South African Council of Churches' publication "A Message to the Peoples of South Africa". State totalitarianism occurs when the state seeks to absorb non-political spheres of society into the structure of the state in such a way that the state obtains determining control over areas which are non-political. Paradoxically, this is exactly the official criticism of leftism and of socialism: that these doctrines are too idealistic, utopian, and omnivorous; therefore it is in the name of conservatism, a "limited style of politics", that I experience difficulties with the official preoccupation with ethnicity.

One example of a radical method is the application of the Immorality Act and the Mixed Marriages Act, with the insistence that ethnicity, as opposed to the Christian formulation of the 'equal yoke' (common belief) must determine who one may and who one may not marry. Another is the pass law system, restricting the movements of blacks and doing little to encourage interracial contact and hence promote goodwill.

Laws concerning trade unions are discriminatory. Whites can have trade unions, Africans cannot. The Government's objections to granting trade union rights to Blacks are that Blacks would wield their new-found power to overthrow the government; but that is precisely the point: the overarching aim of any government should be to create a society free from tensions like that which require the repression of worker grievances.

Education funds are distributed unequally. While more than R500 is spent each year on a white child, less than R50, on average, is spent on each black. And thwarted ambition is made more galling by the social snub of what has become known as 'petty apartheid'.

The practice of prolonged detention without trial, without subsequent judicial examination, is without justification, as is the unbridled power currently granted to the Security Branch. Small wonder, then, that Lucas Mangope, and more so Gatsha Buthelezi, have indicated their dissatisfaction with the white government -- to say nothing of the unrecognized leaders, who distressingly often are incarcerated. Urban blacks have registered their non-compliance with the system by showing little interest in the Community Council elections -- the total Soweto vote was 6%, but erstwhile minister Mulder made the brilliant observation that in some of the Soweto wards it was a higher percentage. Which shows how lamentably far the government is from the opinions of the average black.

What about the Communist threat?

During the 1950's, the A.N.C. tried non-violent means (e.g. the pass-book burnings) to achieve change. The Government responded with arrests, bannings, detention and the time-honoured method of shooting. Can we be surprized, then, that blacks are leaving the country and are working for change by armed insurgence? Like all decent people, we deplore the use of violence. Yet when the African realizes that he has precious little means of bringing about change by constitutional processes, and then turns to unlawful means, we are the first to respond with the threat of armed force.

The doctrine of populism, in China, consists of the elimination of the isolated 'foreign capitalist devil'. The South African variant consists of the elimination of the isolated communist 'agitator'. The intellectual content may differ, but the essential idea is eternally the same: the populist sees the people as a body of virtuous toilers constructively working, but confronted by a handful of infiltrators, and if these uitlanders -- whose ghostly presence has haunted every populist since Robespierre first denounced them as corrupters of the Revolution and enemies of the General Will -- could be purged, all would be well.

However, things are never so simple. The application of pressure may stop a wound from bleeding outwardly, but then it bleeds inwardly. Far better is a sincere search for the causes of discontent. Quite possibly many of the so-called agitators would disappear if the legitimate causes of dissatisfaction were removed. It has been argued that present government policy is creating the conditions under which the Soviet brand of communism, with its blandishments and false promises, becomes attractive to a disillusioned African intelligentsia. Those who make pacific revolution impossible make violent revolution inevitable.

SECOND PROPOSITION: THE DEFINITION OF A JUST WAR EXCLUDES WAR IN DEFENCE OF A BASICALLY UNJUST SOCIETY

Minimum conditions for a just war

Centuries of church history have yielded seven criteria by which to judge whether a war is just.

- i The cause fought for must be just
- ii The purpose of the warring power must remain just while hostilities go on
- iii The war must be truly the last resort, all peaceful means having been exhausted
- iv The methods employed during the war to vanquish the foe must be just
- v The benefits the war can reasonably be expected to bring for humanity must be greater than the evils provoked by the war itself
- vi Victory must be assured
- vii The peace concluded at the end of the war must be just and of such nature as to prevent a new war

Karl Barth insisted that the only criterion should be 'ultima ratio' --

whether the war is truly the last resort. Now, without asserting the universal validity of the just war argument (modern theologians, e.g. Moulder, Ellul, question both the traditional and the Barthian formulations) we can assert that the above conditions are the minimum which must be satisfied if a war is to be declared just. And even these conditions are not met by the South African guerilla war. The SADF part of it is not a last resort -- peaceful means like gradual enfranchisement, removal of objectionable laws, and consultation with popular black leaders have rarely been tried, let alone exhausted. If proposition one above is correct, then we cannot even start thinking of a just war, i.e. condition 1 above is not met.

### Who is the enemy?

Then there is the further question of the identity of the enemy. The life situation of Whites leads them to perceive the guerilla as a foreign aggressor; as a Soviet catspaw. However, the life situation of the Black leads him to think in naked terms of civil war. The longstanding injustice of apartheid is the cause; terrorism (he would say, self-defence) is merely the result. When the South African Council of Churches turned its thoughts to conscientious objection at Hammanskraal in 1974, the majority of the delegates present were black. The Roman Catholic Church conference of bishops, whose constituency is 80% black, has indicated its firm support for selective conscientious objectors.

Jacques Ellul refers in his book "Violence" to the "sameness of violence". Whether the violence is military, economic, or psychological, by a recognized government or by the guerilla movement, it remains violence. Violence has been defined as "the destructive imposition of power". Helder Camara, a Latin American bishop, develops this theme. The state engages in "violence no. 1", the primary violence of suppression of freedoms, corruption in high places and exploitation of the weak. The people react with "violence no. 2", the provoked violence of guerilla warfare and urban terrorism, whereupon the state replies with "violence no. 3", repressory violence of police crackdowns and yet further suppression of freedoms. This argument cannot be applied in South Africa without qualification. Like all liberation theologies and theories, it tends to idolize the particular group one stands for. Nevertheless it does form part of a cumulative case for objection in a turbid situation where it is difficult to tell which side is more wrong.

Ultimately South Africa's problems do not admit of a military solution. The long-term solution must be a political-economic one. It would appear that the authorities are not sufficiently aware of this. The idea of "winning the war" is playing a disastrous part in the popular mind, but, in my opinion, it has no place in South African reality. The inculcation of a war psychosis through the aggressive marketing of Defence Bonds, the enormous increases in the military budget in recent years, the use of civilian troops to suppress riots in 1976, the fact that the Defence force comprises almost exclusively white troops, and statements of threatened apocalypticism by South Africa's top soldiers, reveal, as far as I can see, the myopia of their vision.

The 1977 end-of-year message of the Minister of Defence, Mr PW Botha, included the following:

"We will, in increasing measure, be subjected to coercion, persuasion and even seduction, to submit to the will of the aggressor. This cannot, and shall not happen, in South Africa. We shall not waiver and we shall not succumb".

General Magnus Malan, the Chief of the Defence Force, said

"Hand in hand, white, brown and black citizens of South Africa warded off the enemy, once again showing the world that we are a nation united against all foreign ideologies".

Are they tilting at imaginary windmills? Significantly, I think, the "enemy" and the "aggressor" remain anonymous. Perhaps closer definition of the enemy would reveal him to be a Soweto civilian — which could be embarrassing. Human kind cannot bear very much reality. Their intemperate fulminating against the nameless "enemy" seems to me like the rage of Caliban seeing his own face in a glass.

THIRD PROPOSITION: SELECTIVE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION IS A CHRISTIAN  
RESPONSE TO THE INJUNCTIONS OF ROMANS CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The theory of civil disobedience

Civil disobedience is the non-violent violation of a public norm, generally regarded as legally binding, as a means of social or political protest. For instance, an action of civil disobedience occurred in 1957 in South African religious life when the proposed Native Law Amendment Bill would have required the organisers of multiracial services to apply for permits, had it been passed. The heads of most of the denominations informed the government that this would amount to a denial of their hard-won freedom of worship, and the bill was dropped soon afterwards. The three necessary motifs

- i strict nonviolence
- ii ready acceptance of all penalties
- iii persuasion of the majority

were included.

To qualify for civil disobedience, one must first have rendered a willing and respectful obedience to the State laws. Only then does the right accrue to one of the civil disobedience of certain laws in well-defined circumstances. It is intended as a limited, non-revolutionary form of protest. It is intended to encourage a deeper realization of the values which law must embody in a democracy if it is to maintain a durable legitimacy in the minds of the large majority of its citizens. Ultimately the act of civil disobedience may lead to a greater respect for law by bringing law and justice together. There is little evidence that civil disobedience has encouraged widespread disrespect for law. Of course the action is not generalizable, i.e. the civil disobedient recognizes that it would be chaotic if everyone copied him; but the important fact is that

civil disobedience is permissible under only certain carefully defined conditions, i.e. it is intended to be limited and to uphold public security.

This method was often used, and with reasonable success, during the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's in the United States. Henry David Thoreau was imprisoned in 1848 for refusing to pay his Massachusetts poll tax as a protest against slavery and the federal government's imperialist war against Mexico. In his widely read statement of the subject, entitled "Civil Disobedience", he wrote:

"No man must ever allow himself to be an agent of injustice to another .. he must never lend his support to a wrong which his conscience condemns".

#### Law and Order versus Freedom

I think that traditional Christians sometimes equate law and order with Christianity too readily. In so doing, they are seeking to attain a false security and so to avoid the anxiety and complexity of moral choice. Order should not be regarded as the presupposition and condition of freedom; rather freedom is the presupposition and condition of order. Once it is acknowledged that freedom is necessary for good order, and that justice is the proper foundation and criterion of law, then it is possible to perceive that law and order may have to be opposed in the interests of freedom and justice. Order qua order is nothing — the question is whether it is or is not just, whether it does or does not allow freedom, and whether, if it favours both injustice and oppression, it can be changed without an increase in either.

All this is not to say that law and order are not valuable; it is to point out that they cannot be regarded as the supreme value before which all other moral considerations have to give way. Man is ultimately accountable to God and not to man-made institutions. The Koinonia Declaration of 1977 has the right balance when it says

"We as Christians are convinced that we must continue to practise love towards those people in authority ... we declare our complete willingness to submit to the order of the civil establishment as such, to be obedient to those in authority, provided that their exercise of authority is in accordance with the precepts of God's Word, and to show love toward them ... It is our conviction that the maintenance of justice rather than the maintenance of law and order and state security is the prime God-given task of the government and the governed, and if they strive with all earnestness for justice, then law and order will be added as a blessing."

This does not mean that it is possible to frame a universally valid statement which would indicate exactly when a person may legitimately disobey the laws of a state. We simply have to recognize that there are occasions when the Christian may have to act illegally if God is to be obeyed rather than men. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, known for his resistance to the Nazi government, said

"In the course of historical life there comes a point where the exact

observance of the formal law of the state, of a commercial undertaking, of a family, or for that matter of a scientific discovery, suddenly finds itself in violent conflict with the ineluctable necessities of the lives of men; at this point responsible and pertinent action leaves behind it the domain of the normal and regular, and is confronted by the extraordinary situation of ultimate necessities, a situation which no law can control".

### Biblical examples of disobedience to authority

So much for the theory of civil disobedience. But aren't there verses in the New Testament which expressly forbid such action for Christians? Passages like I Timothy 2:1-3, I Peter 2:13f and especially the classic statement of the duty of the Christian to the state in Romans 13:1-7 have often been taken by Christians to require passive submission to the state. Certainly they do demand obedience; but they do not demand unquestioning obedience independent of social ethics taught elsewhere in the Bible. Paul must have known that not all of God's people have always adopted an attitude of unconditional submission. Jesus once referred to King Herod as "that fox". In Acts 5 we read of Peter breaking out of prison. Moses defied Pharaoh and led Israel out of Egypt, Samuel rebuked King Saul, Daniel and his friends opposed King Nebuchadnezzar, Jeremiah and other prophets exposed the injustice of the civil authorities. Jonathan was saved from Saul's wrath by his countrymen. Doeg's compliance with an unjust sentence made him a murderer (I Samuel 22:17-23). Elisha told Jehu to kill Ahab (2 Kings 9:1-10). Elijah remonstrated with Ahab and Jezebel for their killing of Naboth. Jehoida the priest ordered the killing of Queen Athaliah (2 Kings 11:1-16). Hebrews 11 numbers Rahab among the faithful for the allegiance to Israel and treason to Jericho which she showed.

Paul's teaching could not have been at variance with their example. Nor could it have been at variance with his own example -- James Moulder (Journal of Theology for Southern Africa no. 21) points out that Paul disobeyed his prison warders, refusing to leave the prison; he insisted that the magistrates had to acknowledge their unjust treatment of Paul. This act of disobedience is important because it shows that violation of the right to worship is not the only instance when Christians are called upon to disobey the authorities.

Many South African Christians who incline to the 'passive submission' view would have no serious objection to the critical stance the Anglican bishops of Uganda adopted to their President in 1977, or to the letter two Russian Orthodox priests addressed to the 1975 WCC assembly, accusing their government of the denial of religious freedom. Christian Missions International encourages the smuggling of bibles into communist lands -- a form of civil disobedience which exceeds the bounds normally accorded it, in that it does not seek to persuade the majority and it does not willingly submit to the punishment consequent upon the action. The influential Underground Evangelism performs a similar task. Apparently conservative churchmen do distinguish between what they consider to be good governments and bad governments, even if they pretend to accept that Romans 13 teaches submission to all governments.

What does Romans 13 teach?

Paul's observations follow from the previous remarks in chapter twelve. There he had declared that the Christian must not return evil for evil; the state, on the other hand, does the opposite; it does take vengeance on those who do wrong. What then are we to think of those civil authorities whose function it is to control and repress evil actions? In so far as they execute vengeance, says Paul, they do so as the "servant of God"; their function is not therefore outside God's providential will. So Christians should adopt an attitude of obedience as long as the authorities observe the claim implicit in their role. The logical corollary of this, although it is not explicit but implied, is that if they cease to serve the good, Christians would no longer have the same reason to accept their authority. It is important to remember that Paul was not concerned to provide a theological interpretation of the state's essence and meaning. Indeed his concern is not with civil government per se, but with the Christian and his conduct.

The state is God's servant "for your own good" (vs. 4). The state is, therefore, not only God's servant, but also man's. It can lay claim to respect and obedience only insofar as it stands under God's authority and insofar as it serves its subjects. If, therefore, it acts contrary to the welfare of its citizens, it is not God's servant "for your own good".

We are reminded here of Thielicke's concept of 'derived authority'. The state derives its authority from God, but if it practises wickedness it ceases to derive that authority.

We must juxtapose our understanding of Romans 13 with that of Revelation 13. The first was written in the period of transition from Claudius to Nero, under a reasonably just government, in a time of relative political calm. The latter was written in the period when Emperor Domitian oppressed his subjects, persecuted Christians, and usurped for himself divine characteristics. The state in Romans 13 is regarded as God's servant for the good of its citizens; in Revelation 13 it is portrayed as the beast that has to be resisted. The conscience which submits to the state when the well-being of the people is promoted, is the same as the conscience which opposes the state when it acts contrary to the good of the people.

Oscar Cullman sums up his survey of the state in the New Testament with the words:

"according as the State remains within its limits or transgresses these, the Christian will describe it as the servant of God or the instrument of the Devil". (The State in the New Testament. SCM Press, 1957, p86).

We should guard against identifying the orthodox state morality with Christian morality. This is often done, and it is done in order to avoid the anxiety and complexity of moral choice. When you obey traffic regulations, for instance, you are really pursuing your own interests. It can be argued that the state morality expresses our self-interest. Whereas Christian morality is love, altruism; it is not self-interest; therefore it must be carefully distinguished from the state morality.

Since Constantine united Church and State in the fourth century, the church has lost sight of the moral cynicism of the apostle John who wrote "The world lies under the dominance of the wicked one" (I John 5:19) and "Do not be surprised if the world hates you" (i.e. for the very love which you espouse). The almost universal pacifist stance of the church in its first two centuries of existence has been forgotten. It is heartening to see contemporary theologians reexamining the role of the Anabaptists in the Reformation. They held no brief for the moral grandeurs of the temporal powers, and, for their trouble, were massacred in their thousands -- at Luther's behest. Add to these the Dissenters and Nonconformists, the Bonhoeffers and Niemollers of wartime Germany, the civil rights movement of Martin Luther King and the persecuted church of Uganda and the USSR and we see that civil disobedience is in the finest church tradition.

All this is not to deny that the state has the right to self-defence. To deny, on ethical grounds, the elementary right of the State to defend itself is to deny the existence of the State. Whoever affirms the State as a necessity must also affirm war as a contingent necessity; the force which each state possesses alone protects it against the force exercised by other states.

Selective conscientious objection: a special case of civil disobedience

Selective conscientious objection is in fact civil disobedience of a military command. I contend that it ought to be civil disobedience of the direct, and not of the indirect, type. Mahatma Gandhi supported both kinds of disobedience. The former is disobedience of a law which is itself regarded as morally wanting; the latter is deliberate disobedience of a law unrelated to the evil being protested. It is rather a symbolic action -- obstruction of traffic while bearing placards, etc. Because selective conscientious objection is more directly related to the issue of public security, it is desirable that the military itself be involved in the perceived wrong, and that symbolic protest, if contemplated at all, be limited to 'safe' and non-military areas. An ethical right to selective conscientious objection which can be expressed in general terms does not exist, but the issue does arise of making a responsible choice in a specific situation.

The United States, Canada, Australia, Sweden, Norway, Belgium, Italy, Holland, France and West Germany provide conscientious objectors with alternatives outside the military framework. Usually the period of civilian service is longer than the original military call-up, to compensate for the rigours of military life. The number of objectors in West Germany has now risen to 22 000. This in fact constitutes only 1,5% of the total number liable for military service. Objectors registered in Britain under the National Service Act of 1941 during the war years represented 0,77% of the total number of men registered. It would appear that a relaxation of the laws in South Africa would not result in a dangerous number of men turning to conscientious objection.

It must be borne in mind that the selective conscientious objector does not act paradigmatically, as an example. He does not confer a universal value upon his action. He does not do it in the hope that all other conscripts will do the same. South Africa's solution is obviously not



## A D D E N D U M

## WHY I REQUEST A NONMILITARY ALTERNATIVE

If it is the Christian's duty to discern and pursue the truth, it is also his duty to be a witness to the truth. For instance, the apostle Peter, at great risk to himself, stated that he could not but speak about the things he had seen and heard. One of the best known examples from church history is that of Martin Luther, who nailed his 95 Theses to the church door of the Wittenburg castle. A less known one is that of Franz Jägerstätter the German martyr. It would surely not have 'hurt' him to take the military oath of loyalty to Hitler in 1943, and to return to his family, but he refused both army service and the oath. He was jailed and executed and is remembered today for his humble witness.

It is for the witness value of the action that I am a selective conscientious objector and demand a nonmilitary alternative, as opposed to accepting a noncombatant position. Hopefully the outcome would be a serious examination of the war in terms of the Christian principles outlined above.

.oOo.

Peter Moll

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