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RESOLUTION ON CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION
(CAPE TOWN DIOCESAN SYNOD (ANGLICAN) 16/10/77)

I. Support for Anglican Bishops' endorsement of Statement from Catholic Bishops' Conference.

1. That this Synod wholeheartedly supports the Bishops of the Church of the Province of South Africa in expressing their appreciation of and identifying themselves with the Statement on Conscientious Objection made by the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference as set out below:

II. Full text of Catholic Bishops' Conference Statement.

1. Context - Armed struggle developing

In the armed struggle that is developing on our borders and could easily spread internally a grievous situation arises for all who are concerned about the use of violence. On one side the conviction grows in a significant sector of the oppressed majority that only violence will bring liberation. On the other the minority sees itself threatened by indiscriminate violence supported by international Communism.

2. Need for Christian Leadership.

In these agonising circumstances we can only promise with God's help to give leadership in an on-going Christian examination of this tragic situation. We intend to publish reflections from time to time as incentives to Christian prayer, thought and commitment and we hope to be able to do this with the representatives of other Christian Churches and organisations. In the meantime we have resolved to say something about conscientious objection.

3. Second Vatican Council on Conscientious Objection.

According to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, "it seems just that laws should make human provision for the case of conscientious objectors who refuse to carry arms, provided they accept some other form of community service." (Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, No. 79).

4. Different forms of Conscientious Objection.

In order to understand the issue of conscientious objection, a careful distinction should be made between universal conscientious objection (the pacifist) and selective conscientious objection (e.g. on the grounds that a particular war is unjust); between combatant military service (carrying arms) and non-combatant military service (e.g. in the medical corps) and between military service (combatant or non-combatant) and national service (which could include services to the community, like social welfare, education, housing).

5. Provisions of S.A. Defense Act.

In South Africa the Defence Force Act (section 67(3))

- a) makes no provision for any conscientious objector (universal or selective) to do non-military national service;
- b) provides for universal conscientious objectors (those who belong to pacifist denominations) to do non-combatant military service;
- c) makes no provision for selective conscientious objectors even to do non-combatant military service.

Such provisions are made in some way or another by almost every other non-communist country in the world which has conscription.

It should also be noted that objectors are sometimes accommodated, despite the lack of legal provision for it, by being given non-combatant tasks, but never by being given non-military service.

6. Certain Conscientious Objectors liable to fine or imprisonment.

Consequently, in South Africa the selective objector and the universal objector refusing to do non-combatant military service are liable to a fine and/or imprisonment (section 126, 127(c)).

7. Defend right to conscientious objection.

In this matter of conscientious objection we defend the right of every individual to follow his own conscience, and the right therefore to conscientious objection both on the grounds of universal pacifism and on the grounds that he seriously believes the war to be unjust. In this as in every other matter, the individual is obliged to make a moral judgement in terms of the facts at his disposal after trying to ascertain these facts to the best of his ability. While we recognise that the conscientious objector will have to suffer the consequences of his own decision and the penalties of the State, we uphold his right to do this and we urge the State to make provision for alternative forms of non-military service as is done in other countries in the world."

III.

1. Support for Archbishop's Statement - S.A. Society is "morally indefensible."

We endorse the words of our Archbishop in his statement to the press (on 16th February, 1977) that "the society we have created for ourselves is morally indefensible. This is very serious at a time when we are being asked to defend it."

We sympathise with those who in conscience believe that it is an act of disobedience to God to be part of the military structures of this country, because they are convinced that by doing so they would be defending what is morally indefensible.

2. Uphold right to be conscientious objector.

We uphold the right of such people to be conscientious objectors and we urge the state to make provision for alternative forms of non-military service.

3. Church has duty to make people aware and to challenge in cost of discipleship.

We accept that we, as a Church, have a positive duty to make all people aware of what is involved in being used to defend the morally indefensible, and to challenge each other in the cost of discipleship, putting first the claims of Christ over all our being and doing.

4. Implementation. Resolution to be conveyed to Church members and other Dioceses.

We request the Board of Social Responsibility, in co-operation with parish priests, to ensure that the contents of this resolution are conveyed to every parishoner, and that efforts be made to see that opportunities be created for full discussions of the issues involved, both in the parishes and at schools and universities.

We further ask our Archbishop, assisted by the Board of Social Responsibility, to communicate with other Dioceses in the Province, inviting their support in this matter.

Note: headings included subsequently for convenient reference.

Resolution on Conscientious Objection

CAPE TOWN DIOCESAN SYNOD (ANGLICAN) 16.10.77

1 SUPPORT FOR THE ANGLICAN BISHOPS' ENDORSEMENT OF STATEMENT FROM CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

1. That this Synod wholeheartedly supports the Bishops of the Church of the Province of South Africa in expressing their appreciation of and identifying themselves with the Statement on **Conscientious** Objection made by the Southern African Bishops' Conference as set out below:

2 FULL TEXT OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE STATEMENT

1. CONTEXT - ARMED STRUGGLE DEVELOPING

In the armed struggle that is developing on our borders and could easily spread internally a grievous situation arises for all who are concerned about the use of violence. On one side the conviction grows in a significant sector of the oppressed majority that only violence will bring liberation. On the other the minority sees itself threatened by indiscriminate violence supported by international Communism.

2. NEED FOR CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

In these agonising circumstances we can only promise with God's help to give leadership in an on-going Christian examination of this tragic situation. We intend to publish reflections from time to time as incentives to Christian prayer, thought and commitment and we hope to be able to do this with the representatives of other Christian Churches and organisations. In the meantime we have resolved to say something about conscientious objection.

3. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL ON CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

According to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, "it seems just that laws should make human provision for the case of conscientious objectors who refuse to carry arms, provided they accept some other form of community service." (Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, No. 79)

4. DIFFERENT FORMS OF CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

In order to understand the issue of conscientious objection, a careful distinction should be made between universal conscientious objection (the pacifist) and selective conscientious objection (e.g. on the grounds that a particular war is unjust); between combatant military service (carrying arms) and non-combatant military service (e.g. in the medical corps) and between military service (combatant or non-combatant) and national service (which could include services to the community, like social welfare, education, housing).

5. PROVISIONS OF S.A. DEFENCE ACT

In South Africa the Defence Act (section 67(3))

- a) makes no provision for any conscientious objector (universal or selective) to do non-military national service;
- b) provides for universal conscientious objectors (those who belong to pacifist denominations) to do non-combatant military service

Such provisions are made in some way or another by almost every other non-Communist country in the world which has conscription.

the lack of legal provision for it, by being given non-combatant tasks, but never by being given non-military service.

6. CERTAIN CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS LIABLE TO FINE OR IMPRISONMENT

Consequently, in South Africa the selective objector and the universal objector refusing to do non-combatant military service are liable to a fine and/or imprisonment (section 126, 127(c))

7. DEFEND RIGHT TO CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

In this matter of conscientious objection we defend the right of every individual to follow his own conscience, and the right therefore to conscientious objection both on the grounds of universal pacifism and on the grounds that he seriously believes the way to be unjust. In this as in every other matter, the individual is obliged to make a moral judgement in terms of the facts at his disposal after trying to ascertain these facts to the best of his ability. While we recognise that the conscientious objector will have to suffer the consequences of his own decision and the penalties of the State, we uphold his right to do this and we urge the State to make provision for alternative forms of non-military service as is done in other countries in the world."

3

1. SUPPORT FOR ARCHBISHOP'S STATEMENT - S.A. SOCIETY IS "MORALLY INDEFENSIBLE"

We endorse the words of our Archbishop in his statement to the press (on 16th February, 1977) that "the society we have created for ourselves is morally indefensible. This is very serious at a time when we are being asked to defend it."

We sympathise with those who in conscience believe that it is an act of disobedience to God to be part of the military structures of this country, because they are convinced that by doing so they would be defending what is morally indefensible.

2. UPHOLD RIGHT TO BE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

We uphold the right of such people to be conscientious objectors and we urge the State to make provision for alternative forms of non-military service.

3. CHURCH HAS DUTY TO MAKE PEOPLE AWARE AND TO CHALLENGE IN COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

We accept that we, as a Church, have a positive duty to make all people aware of what is involved in being used to defend the morally indefensible and to challenge each other in the cost of discipleship, putting first the claims of Christ over all our being and doing.

4. IMPLEMENTATION. RESOLUTION TO BE CONVEYED TO CHURCH MEMBERS AND OTHER DIOCESES

We request the Board of Social Responsibility, in co-operation with parish priests, to ensure that the contents of this resolution are conveyed to every parishioner and that efforts be made to see that opportunities be created for full discussions of the issues involved, both in the parishes and at schools and universities.

We further ask our Archbishop, assisted by the Board of Social Responsibility, to communicate with other Dioceses in the Province, inviting them to part in

The provincial synod of the Church of the Province of South Africa met recently in Pietermaritzburg. The gathering is most likely to be remembered for the searching debate that was conducted about a number of controversial resolutions on the Church and on S.A. Defence Force. We reprint here the text of a number of these resolutions as passed by Synod. We believe they mark an important step forward

in the Church's struggle for peace and justice.

RESOLUTIONS:

* Role of the SADF and the Crisis of Conscience (Carried: 147 for, 8 against)

That this Synod conscious of the escalating civil conflict in our land notes with grave concern;

1. The ongoing institutional violence perpetrated against the disenfranchised people of South Africa as manifested for example in the diabolical resettlement policy, the migratory labour system, the denationalization of the majority of this country's citizens, and laws which allow for indefinite detention and interrogation;
2. The increasingly central role which the SADF plays in upholding these unjust and cruel structures,
 - a) in the National Security Council which plays a vital part in evolving and furthering government policy,
 - b) in enforcing policy through its presence and activities in the black townships;
3. That the SADF is increasingly being used to support the cause of apartheid, declared by our church to be "totally unchristian, evil and a heresy" and hence unjust;
4. The crisis of conscience this poses young Anglicans conscripted to serve in the SADF and to fight for an unjust cause, and consequently requests our Synod of Bishops to give a pastoral lead and assistance to both parents and their sons as they seek God's will for them in this matter.

* Board for Religious Objection (Carried 147 for, 1 against)

That this Synod notes that the Defence Amendment Act of 1983 fails in important respects to fulfil the request of this Synod as expressed in Resolution 25 of the Provincial Synod of 1982.

Believes that this Act, while allowing for conscientious objection by a narrowly defined category of religious pacifists, is crucially at variance with the principles of the CPSA Resolution in the following ways:

1. Whereas the CPSA upholds the right of freedom of conscience and specifically the right of all people not to take up arms or be part of military structures on ethical as well as religious grounds; The Defence Amendment Act deliberately excluded the right of conscientious objection on ethical grounds. All bona-fide non-religious conscientious objectors are denied the right to freedom of conscience.
2. Whereas the CPSA in keeping with the mainline Christian tradition has never required of its members that they adopt a pacifist stance. While recognising pacifism as a vocation for some, the Church upholds the traditional just-war doctrine (Article 37). The Defence Amendment Act deliberately excludes the just-war tradition, as a valid basis for conscientious objection, and confines the grounds to a universal pacifist position. This excludes the vast majority of Anglicans.
3. Furthermore, contrary to the CPSA Resolution, the Defence Amendment Act fails to provide a form of non-military service acceptable to conscientious objectors in that 6 years service is punitive and the year prison sentence for objectors who are not accepted by the Board is extremely harsh.

This Synod notes further that an Anglican priest has been appointed to the Board. Therefore requests Episcopal Synod:

- i) To issue a statement clarifying the ethical principles of our Church as they apply to the Board for Religious Objection;
- ii) To approach as a matter of urgency the Ministers of Manpower and Defence requesting that legislation be changed to
 - a) comply with the ethical teaching of our Church;
 - b) make provision for alternative national service to be under the auspices of the Church and/or a welfare organisation;
- iii) To make it clear to the Minister of Manpower and to our Church members that the CPSA does not want a permanent representative on this Board, and to take steps to ensure that the Principal Anglican Chaplain to the SADF resigns from the Board.



Military chaplains (Proposed by the Dean of Pretoria) (Carried 133 for, 24 against)

Whereas this Synod is convinced that those serving in national defence forces within our Province, whether in operational areas or elsewhere should continue to have the spiritual ministrations and pastoral care of Chaplains of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa, and that the CPSA should endeavour to find means of extending its spiritual ministrations and pastoral care to those of its members who are also members of military forces opposing such national defence forces:

RESOLVES THAT:

1. Chaplains should be seen as representatives of Christ and his Church, and not of the military forces. This should be clearly reflected in their dress which should be mutually acceptable to both military and the Church, but should avoid any identification with the military.
2. Chaplains should not carry arms.
3. The remuneration paid to a Chaplain shall be a stipend plus appropriate allowances to be paid by the Church of the Province of Southern Africa.
4. The Bishops should take great care to appoint fit people truly called by Christ to, and gifted for, this particular ministry.
5. The Church should provide clear guidelines and adequate training for Chaplains in their role as Christ's ministers to members of military forces.
6. The Bishops should ensure that priests do not necessarily serve on a permanent basis in order to ensure that the chaplains remain free from undue influence by perceptions, policies and ethos of the military.
7. The Bishops should make clear to the military the role of Chaplains in ministering to Church members involved in armed forces.
8. Chaplains should be directly responsible to the Bishop of the diocese.

② CPSA (continued)

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End Conscription Campaign

(Carried 150 for, 6 against)

That this Synod noting that:

1. concerning the war in Namibia, the Statements made by our Church leaders confirm that the vast majority of the people of Namibia regard the South African Administration and the South African Defence Force as an unwanted oppressive occupying power in their land;
2. concerning the conflict in South Africa itself, our previous Provincial Synod has stated that "the essential nature of the conflict stems from the determination to maintain by force a structure of society in which the majority of the people of this land suffer gross oppression and exploitation". The continuing violence being done to people through the policy of forced removals and relocations serves to further confirm this view;

Believing that:

people should never be compelled against their consciences to participate in military structures

- a) Calls upon the Government in South Africa to widen the grounds for conscientious objectors by basing these on ethical, not only religious criteria and specifically to include selective objection.
- b) Gives its general support to the End Conscription Campaign.

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School cadets

(Carried 128 for, 11 against)

That this Synod noting:

1. That in a more normal society, the practice of cadets may be regarded by some as having positive value;
2. In our present situation of escalating civil conflict, there are profound objections to this practice:
 - a) Those involved are being indirectly prepared for service in the SADF.
 - b) It is part of the whole psychology of militarization, which is contrary to the Gospel of peace which we are called to proclaim and live.

Accordingly asks the Bishops:

1. To do all in their power to discourage the practice of cadets at our church schools.
2. To reconsider their position as chairpersons of school councils if there is an ongoing refusal to heed this call of our church.
3. To promote other forms of service to the community.
4. To draw the attention of Anglican parents to the fact that they are entitled to withdraw their children from involvement in cadets at any school.
5. To provide parents with theological and pastoral reasons for this response.

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END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)

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