

“CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION: A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE”

A lecture delivered at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg

by Paddy Kearney.

“Any outright rejection of violence is an untenable alternative for African Christians In accepting the violence of the Cross, God, in Jesus Christ, sanctified violence into a redemptive instrument for bringing into being a fuller human life.”

CANNON BURGESS CARR
All-Africa Council of Churches

“South Africa and the Church of Christ are continually under the attack of the world powers of revolution and Marxism, which try to make everyone equal. There is proof that the soldier who has faith is always better.”

PRIME MINISTER P.W. BOTHA

“After much prayer, reading and discussion, I have come to the conclusion that, for me at any rate, military service is incompatible with my Christian convictions.”

RICHARD STEELE
A South African Conscientious
Objector

“Unless we can claim that a strenuous effort has been made to reach understanding between Blacks and Whites, including liberation movements, conscientious objection seems the only possible Christian stand.”

ARCHBISHOP HURLEY

These four quotations will illustrate very clearly that there is no one Christian perspective on conscientious objection. So it was wise of the University Lecture Committee to choose the title “Conscientious Objection: A Christian Perspective”.

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION – A TIMELY TOPIC!

I think the Committee should be congratulated on choosing a very timely topic. It's a timely topic for a number of reasons:

1. There is evidence that an increasing number of young men are not reporting for military service. For example, in a written reply to Mr Harry Schwartz, MP the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence said that the cases of 1 589 people who had failed to report for military service in 1978 were still being investigated. It is likely that many of these are overseas; many too are thought to be graduates who are badly needed for the development of the country. So while the Prime Minister has declared that there is no “trouble between the Defence Force and conscientious objectors”, there is some reason

for believing that there is such conflict, and that it is escalating! Church leaders have also declared that “Through the pastoral ministry of the church and through other sources it is well known to us that there are many young men facing the same dilemma, . . . that is, whether to undertake military service in conflict with their conscience or whether to suffer the harsh penalty of refusal”.

2. During the last year there have also been a number of significant developments which have kept the issue of conscientious objection constantly in the limelight:
 - a) NUSAS has mounted an energetic campaign for the recognition of alternative national service, a campaign which is thought to have had a lot to do with the banning of several student newspapers.
 - b) A prominent Quaker in Cape Town, Professor Paul Hare, has tried to demonstrate the viability of alternative national service, by taking a number of preparatory steps for the establishment of an ambulance unit in Namibia. His efforts have unfortunately met with very firm rejection from the Prime Minister himself, though at an earlier stage there seemed to be positive interest on the part of certain high-ranking defence officials.
 - c) For the first time since the famous 1974 South African Council of Churches' debate at Hammanskraal, and the subsequent passing of the Defence Amendment Act which makes the encouragement of conscientious objection a criminal offence, the churches have once again been speaking up much more boldly about the issue. All the so-called 'main line' English-speaking churches have passed resolutions on conscientious objection and called for alternative national service to be recognised and established.
 - d) Increasingly during this past year, the topic of C.O. has been seen by the churches within the wider context of civil disobedience to any laws which cannot be reconciled with the Christian faith.
 - e) 1979 ended with the conviction of a Baptist, Peter Moll – who had made a very clear declaration of the reasons for his refusal to do military service. A second Baptist was tried in February for the same reason—he is Richard Steele whom I quoted at the beginning of this lecture. Both Peter Moll and Richard Steele, in refusing to do military service, asked to be allowed to do an alternative form of

national service, and indicated their willingness rather to go to prison than to compromise. Both are now in detention barracks.

For all these reasons, then, conscientious objection is a very appropriate subject for the first University Lecture of 1980!

DEFINITION OF CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

The topic is of course immensely emotional and controversial—it seems to touch on a very raw nerve ending. The controversy starts even with the definition of the C.O! Some insist that only those who make a clear declaration of their objection can be regarded as C.O.'s, while all others should be classified as 'draft dodgers'.

Others prefer to include all who refuse to do military service whether they stay in South Africa or not, whether they make a clear declaration or not. The problem with the latter definition is that it leaves one in the realm of speculation. How can we be certain that a person who doesn't report for military service is not simply afraid of the dangers involved? The problem with the former definition, is that only very few of the South African conscientious objectors would have the courage to make declarations such as those made by Peter Moll and Richard Steele.

VARIOUS TYPES OF OBJECTORS

What are the various categories of objectors?

1. Some C.O.'s refuse to be conscripted for any form of national service, whether military or otherwise. These are called CONSCIENTIOUS NONCONSCRIPTIVISTS.
2. Other C.O.'s refuse to be conscripted for military forms of national service. This group are called CONSCIENTIOUS NONMILITARISTS.
3. A third group, are those who refuse to do their military service in a combat capacity—that is, they refuse to carry arms. These are referred to as CONSCIENTIOUS NONCOMBATANTS.

The focus of this Lecture will be on the second group, those who refuse to do any form of military service, but would be willing to do an alternative form of national service not controlled by the Defence Force. There are very few CONSCIENTIOUS NONCONSCRIPTIVISTS here, or anywhere in the world. The Jehovah's Witnesses are in this category but no other religious group. A much bigger group are the CONSCIENTIOUS NONCOMBATANTS, but as they enjoy a very grudging recognition and some provision in South Africa, I have decided not to deal with them at any length.

All three groups further divide themselves into two types—those who are selective and those who are universal in their objection. Thus there are people who would refuse to do any form of national service for any country in the world (universal nonconscriptivists) and those who would only refuse to do it for a particular country or countries (selective conscriptivists). If we look at group two, i.e. the CONSCIENTIOUS NONMILITARISTS — in South Africa, the great majority of them are selective in their objection. They refuse to do any form of military service for South Africa because they reject apartheid, and see the Defence Force as propping up that system. However they make no statement about war in general. A much smaller group are the universal nonmilitarists or pacifists, those who would refuse to do any form of military service, any where, at any time.

I'll need to say quite a lot more about each of these groups i.e., the selective and the universal nonmilitarists, but that will be sufficient for an introduction.

CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS VIOLENCE

The emphasis in the title of this lecture is on the words 'A Christian Perspective' and this leads me to deal in a general way with Christian attitudes towards violence. The church and Christians need to approach the topic of violence in a spirit of repentance—it's actually difficult for us Christians to be very convincing in upholding non-violence or the right to conscientious objection. For the great part of its history the church has itself used violence. Cross and sword have frequently advanced together. Church history is stained with brutality and cruelty, often brutality and cruelty against other Christians.

FIRST THREE CENTURIES

But there was a time when the Church could hold its head high on the subject of violence—a time when she did not allow herself to be embroiled in violence. For the first three centuries after the death of Christ, as the church contemplated his words and actions, they decided that Christians could not be involved in war. They reached this decision not by looking at particular statements made by Jesus. There certainly are statements that indicate a rejection of violence ('Those who live by the sword, shall perish by the sword' Mt. 26: 52) but also others that seem to support the use of violence ('I have not come to bring peace, but a sword'). They did not reach their conclusion on the basis of one or two chosen texts, but rather by looking at the overall content of Jesus' ministry which was very largely directed at healing, giving life, and winning people by instruction rather than destruction.

At this stage the Church was so confident of its attitude towards violence that it rejected any of its members who became soldiers, and many Christians were martyred by the state because they refused to do military service.

CONSTANTINIAN AGE

With the conversion of the Emperor Constantine, this attitude was to change very dramatically. Through its alliance with the state, the Church had discovered what it regarded as a much easier way to spread the Gospel. Very soon the Church realised that its fortunes stood or fell with the fortunes of the Roman Empire. The Roman army inevitably gained in respectability, and gradually attitudes towards military service changed to such an extent that the church virtually took on mutual responsibility for the violent conflicts embarked on by its political ally.

JUST WAR THEORY

But even then, the Church did not give blanket approval to war and military service. Over several centuries it developed certain criteria for assessing whether Christians should be involved in particular wars. In the Middle Ages this was very clearly formulated in Thomas Aquinas' doctrine of the 'Just War' a doctrine which had secular origins in the writings of Aristotle and Cicero, and which can be summed up as follows:

- a) A war can only be just if it is declared by a legitimate authority.
- b) If the cause is just.
- c) If the war is undertaken only as a last resort.
- d) And if the means employed are just.
- e) Finally, it must have a reasonable chance of success.

It is clear that those who accepted this doctrine perceived war as evil and the doctrine was meant to be a brake on participation in war. Unfortunately the church frequently found itself having to justify more or less any war that the state undertook, even when the state was seriously in the wrong.

WARS OF LIBERATION

A fourth Christian perspective on violence is very current today, particularly in Third World countries, but it too has a long tradition behind it. It is a form of the holy war concept. The doctrine is that wars of liberation or revolution should be supported by Christians because in no other way (so it is held) can God fix exploitation, etc.

Those who hold this theory perceive God as very much on the side of the poor and dispossessed and Christians have an obligation to make their support visible, by their involvement in wars of liberation. For some Christians of course involvement in such wars is less enthusiastic and would be founded on the Just War rather than upon the Holy War theory.

SUMMARY OF CHRISTIAN VIEWS ON VIOLENCE

Those then are the four basic Christian attitudes towards war and violence:

- a) The early Christian view which has survived as the pacifist tradition—
- b) The post-Constantinian or just war theory.
- c) The concept of the Holy War;
- d) Religious sanctification for wars of liberation (a sanctification derived either from the Holy War or the Just War theory).

This lecture began with a quotation which represented each of these views. Each of these views takes for granted that God and his will come first for the Christian, though the cynic might argue with some justification that God's will appears to be very much in the eye of the beholder!

The debate between representatives of the four views is centuries old, and shows less sign of resolution than ever. Protagonists of each view can quote from the Bible and Church history to support their view—and claim that all the others are using those sources selectively.

The international debate, amongst Christians particularly in the Third World, tends to focus on justification for wars of liberation—whereas in South Africa the debate amongst white Christians focuses on the issue of C.O. If Black Christians here were free to speak their minds quite openly there is little doubt that they would be much more involved in the international debate about liberation wars.

HOW IS SOUTH AFRICA'S WAR EFFORT PERCEIVED?

How is South Africa's war effort perceived? The Government and the Defence Force, I think, generally see it as a Holy War to defend Christianity against the communist onslaught. As a result they have no doubt about the justice of their cause, and no doubt too that all Christians should be willing to take up arms to defend the country. Nevertheless, every now and then, they seem to leave all religious justification behind, especially in relation to C.O. Thus Mr P.W. Botha said in 1970, as Minister of Defence, "The honour and duty to defend one's country should not be made subservient to one's religious convictions"—a statement which puts him right outside the debate I referred to above—of which as I said all the participants see God and his will coming first for the Christian!

While the white Dutch Reformed Churches have generally agreed with the Government in regarding South Africa's defence cause as a holy one, most English-speaking white Christians have taken a more moderate line. Those who support the war, tend to regard it as a just war, because they would say: "The country must be defended". They might agree that big changes need to be made, but while these are being made internally, the borders must be safe.

Or from the comfort of a white perspective, they would hold that the present injustices in S.A. are a much lesser evil than the one that threatens to engulf us.

HAMMANSKRAAL RESOLUTION

The view of the multiracial assemblies and synods of these same English-speaking churches has been strikingly different. This was especially so in 1974 at the South African Council of Churches' annual conference in Hammanskraal, when the official representatives of these churches passed a resolution reminding Christians that they were not obliged to fight when they considered a war to be unjust, declaring also that the present war is unjust because South African society is fundamentally unjust and discriminatory, and challenging their members to consider whether "Christ's call to take up the cross and follow him in identifying with the oppressed, does not in our situation, involve becoming conscientious objectors".

Note the very sound Calvinist conclusion—that each person was to decide in his own conscience, though pretty clear guidance had been given! Of course all hell broke loose, especially from the Government, and from the White community, even from many white sections of the churches whose representatives had passed the resolution!

The Minister of Defence made ominous noises about handing the whole resolution to the Governments' lawyers, no idle threat as subsequent legislation was to show.

Not very long after the Hammanskraal resolution, Archbishop Hurley took the debate a step further. With something of the pre-Vatican II propensity to decide issues for the faithful, he made the following statement to the Sunday Times: "In the South African situation, conscientious objection should be adopted as a principle by the churches. I believe", he continued, "that the churches should adopt this view even at the risk of open confrontation with the government."

That is, by contrast, a very Catholic statement, because it does not leave the decision to individual conscience. It is like the SACC statement in that it is also based on the Just War theory.

DEFENCE AMENDMENT ACT AND CONSEQUENCES

With indecent haste, Parliament passed the Defence Amendment Act, and it became a punishable offence (penalty 5 years in prison and/or a fine of R1 000) to give any form of encouragement to people to become conscientious objectors. This is a very extraordinary piece of legislation which could make not only a discussion of the Gospel, but proclamation of the very words of Christ, a criminal act!

The threat of these penalties seemed to have been sufficient to get the churches back into line for at least the next five years. During the years 1974–1978 remarkably little was heard about C.O. from the churches, and when the issue was discussed at synods and assemblies there was frequently a lawyer present to ensure that no-one overstepped the mark, not only of the Defence Amendment Act but also of the Terrorism and Internal Security Acts.

Of course this reluctance to discuss the topic was understandable—Christians could argue that it was best not to debate this issue because only those who supported the war would be free to speak, while those who were opposed or proposed universal pacifism stood the risk of very heavy penalties. Sadly, it looked as though the State now had the power to limit Church agendas, and the church seemed unable to do anything about it.

STATEMENTS OF 1979

But the Church's courage seemed to revive in 1979, when the top decision-making bodies of the Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational and Baptist Churches all made statements in support of their own right to discuss the issue freely, and the right of individuals to be conscientious objectors. In addition they called upon the Government to allow C.O.'s to do alternative forms of national service, and several of them set up counselling services for C.O.'s within their own churches. Several of these Churches, and the S.A.C.C. also passed resolutions in 1979 in which they urged civil disobedience to all unjust laws.

AWARENESS OF CIVIL WAR

The deep uneasiness of the Churches about South Africa's war involvement relates not only to their awareness of all the injustices practised in South Africa, injustices which are buttressed by the Defence Force, but also to an awareness that we are involved in a civil war. This awareness was powerfully present in the S.A.C.C. 1974 Conference when Black and White ministers informed their fellow delegates that they had sons involved in the war but on opposite sides of the fighting. Ten Black delegates stood up to say that their sons had left the country to fight for guerilla forces.

The eyes of many other Christians were opened to the civil nature of the conflict in 1976 and 1977 when the army was called out to quell disturbances which began in Soweto and spread all over the country. Putting the dilemma for the young white person called up by the Defence Force as graphically as possible, some commentators noted that it was now possible for two Christians to join together in worshipping the same God at a Sunday service, even to receive Holy Communion together and then to leave the church and find themselves—the one taking part in a march or protest in a township, and the other in camouflage uniform at the end of a rifle in the same township. The Defence Force role in upholding the status quo was now undeniable. The crisis faced by many young men even more intense.

In the statements of conscientious objectors who are now in exile, this awareness is identified as an important influence. Said one "What is really taking place in South Africa is a civil war—South Africans fighting South Africans, and I was not going to be part of that".

WEAKNESS OF THE CHURCH STATEMENTS

The great weakness of the church statements is that they can easily be attacked because the churches appear to be publicly allied with one side of the civil struggle through for example their provision of uniformed chaplains paid by the state rather than by the church, with no equivalent effort to minister to the needs of the guerilla forces, through allowing obligatory cadets at church schools, through regimental flags prominently displayed in churches, and through events such as the recent opening of a Catholic church at Voortrekkerhoogte—in the presence of the Archbishop of Pretoria and the Prime Minister.

At a much more fundamental level, the church statements on violence are sapped of much of their force by the relationship between Christianity and militarism which goes very much deeper than the superficial indicators I have referred to. In summarizing his research on this topic, Wolfgang Huber states:

"... the tighter a person binds himself or herself to the traditional doctrines and patterns of behaviour of his or her church, the greater is the probability that he or she has developed militaristic attitudes and patterns of behaviour."

This has happened because the church has either relied upon State power or has imitated such power in its own life-style, rather than totally renouncing secular power. The dominant image of God in such orthodox Christianity has been of an authoritarian figure who punishes and rewards, very much a reflection of the power hierarchies of this world. But this is not a Christian image of God, "God is rather", says Huber, "he who delivers himself up for the benefit of mankind, who takes the powerlessness of the cross upon himself in order to give mankind its freedom".

TWO CASES

More compelling than the statements of church councils and synods, have been the declarations made by two conscientious objectors over the last 12 months—the one a selective conscientious objector—Peter Moll, the other a universal pacifist—Richard Steele, both of whom are in detention barracks for their beliefs. Their statements are more compelling because they are more personal, and because they have been willing to undergo suffering rather than compromise with their consciences.

Peter Moll:

Moll, a committed Baptist, in a letter to the Defence Force explaining why to obey the call up would have been 'a grave moral compromise' of his faith, lists the most glaring injustices that he sees in South African society: vast inequalities in wealth, land, power and education, the system of migrant labour (condemned by all the churches, including the Dutch Reformed), and the pass laws designed to keep the whole structure intact. "This," he says, "is a situation of fundamental injustice. Until it is the Government's express intention to remove it, I will be unable to defend it."

He goes on to say that blacks have been totally frustrated in their efforts to change the situation by constitutional and peaceful means, and we should therefore not be surprised that some of them have turned to violence and left the country.

Many young white people who are called up for border duty, he says, are already asking: "Just what are we fighting for, just what are we being required to die for? Are we going to die for a better society? Are we really defending the last bastion of Christianity as we are so often told? Is what we are defending really 'civilisation' in contrast to 'barbarism'? How civilised are those left cold by the extraordinarily barbaric death of Steve Biko?"

His conclusion then is "In my opinion the war the South African Defence Force is fighting at this moment in history, is not for a just cause, is not the last resort, and does not have a reasonable hope of success", a conclusion which he supports by referring to various statements from the churches.

So he now finds himself in detention barracks—regularly in and out of solitary confinement.

Richard Steele:

Richard Steele, in his declaration of C.O. concentrates on the scriptural reasons for his total rejection of violence. He first sets out fully how he has considered the matter of military service very carefully, and concluded that "violence is the antithesis of love, and love as taught and practised by Jesus Christ is at the very centre of the Christian way of life."

He makes clear that he too has a specific reason for objecting in the South African situation. "... as far as I can see, the military is one of the central features of apartheid and what is maintaining its power, and so I see my stand as non-cooperation with the apartheid structure."

He commits himself to be a peacemaker. I want to be used by God in the process of reconciliation between the peoples of our land so that we may live together in true peace—a peace undergirded by justice and righteousness I am striving to cultivate a non-violent lifestyle: non-violence is the refusal, ever, to leave out of consideration the affirmation of the dignity of the other person, because he/she bears the image of God." He rejects the theory that war can ever be justified—whether to maintain the status quo or to overthrow it.

The nine-page letter ends with the statement that he is "perfectly willing to do National Service as long as it is in a non-military capacity. I do not want to avoid my responsibility to serve my country's people. If there were an officially recognised non-military alternative to military service I would definitely go into it. For instance, if I am able to finish this year of studies I will graduate as a qualified high school teacher and would be more than willing to do my service somewhere in the field of education."

OTHER ASPECTS OF THEORY OF NON-VIOLENCE

Some important aspects of the theory of non-violence are not dealt with in Steele's letter, and deserve elaboration here. The use of non-violent strategies has been described as "an active, highly political, often controversial, and sometimes very dangerous form of engagement in social conflict." I quote those words because non-violence is so often perceived as a soft option—cowardly passivity. The S.A.C.C. decision to urge civil disobedience is of course the logical consequence of their support for non-violence.

The person who commits himself or herself to use non-violent methods of bringing about change, while refusing to use violence, does not seek to avoid violence and in fact has little hope of doing so.

Those who favour the use of non-violence concentrate their attention upon the injustices which lie at the root of all violent conflicts. They call upon the state to stop spending vast amounts of time, energy, human life and money on military defence and rather to devote these resources to eradicating the basic causes of violence. Their concern is with very disturbing statistics such as the fact that every day approximately R1 billion is spent on defence by all the governments of the world combined, and despite such expenditures wars and insecurities multiply.

WHAT DOES THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR ASK OF THE GOVERNMENT?

In conclusion, I want to make a plea on behalf of South African conscientious objectors both non-combatants and non-militarists. What are they in fact asking of the Government and the Defence Force? To those who claim to have a Divine mandate to uphold Christian civilization against Godless Marxism, they say: Yes, by all means uphold Christianity, but be aware that the central tenet of that religion is that each individual is of infinite worth, and therefore, as the churches have made clear, should be entitled to decide on his/her own conscience whether he or she will be involved in military activities or not. To a basically Calvinist Government the conscientious objectors point out that the right of individual conscience is especially characteristic of Calvinist Christianity!

As 17 very prominent Church leaders said in defence of Peter Moll's stand: "if the Prime Minister himself is convinced that change is necessary before injustice drives people to revolution, surely others have the right to claim that their perception of the injustice around them gives them the right to conscientious objection."

While the Government has steadily maintained that it has no problem with C.O.'s and that it is actually making very adequate provision for them, there are in fact very severe limitations to those provisions and indeed in their attitude towards C.O.'s. The principal limitations can be summarised as follows:

Limitations of Present Provisions:

1. Government spokesmen like to blur the distinction between military service and national service to suit their own purposes. They claim that C.O.'s who refuse to do any form of military service, are refusing to do any form of national service, seeking in this way to lump selective and universal non-militarists together with conscientious nonconscriptivists—as much more easy to ridicule as either unpatriotic, lazy or very odd!
2. The second limitation is that they recognise that there are certain religious groups such as the Seventh Day Adventists, Quakers and Mennonites which forbid their members to take part in war, but only the members of such churches can enjoy any certainty (note I do not say total certainty) of being assigned to non-combatant duties. No account is taken of the fact that other churches, though they do not forbid their members to do military service, recognise their right to object.
3. The third limitation relates to those who do not belong to churches which forbid their members to carry arms but who nevertheless apply for non-combatant status. A few years ago the Minister of Defence stated that no C.O. would be compelled to carry arms but the S.A.D.F. legal authorities have been refusing exemption on the grounds that the Minister's statement has no force in law. In fact it appears that non-combatant status depends rather more on the army's need for skills than upon the individual's request to be accorded such status.

There are a number of popular misconceptions about alternatives provided by the Government. These misconceptions lead many to think that there are already quite adequate provisions made for C.O.'s and they therefore cannot understand the campaign to have alternative national service recognised.

1. Many people, not a few of them members of the clergy, believe that the Medical Corps is an adequate alternative for C.O.'s. It is important to note that the Medical Corps in South Africa regard themselves as combatant, and do not want C.O.'s to be assigned to their ranks.
2. Other people talk about the Civic Action Programme, in which servicemen work e.g. in schools and hospitals in the homelands, as if this should satisfy any conscientious non-militarist. They seem not to know:
 - a) that before going into the Civic Action Programme, servicemen must first do basic training which is of a military nature.
 - b) that it is compulsory for those involved in this programme to wear uniform.
 - c) that though they do not carry FN Rifles, they are obliged to carry 9 mm pistols.

All of these factors would make service in such a programme unacceptable to conscientious non-militarists. But quite apart from these considerations, the Civic Action Programme is not an option for C.O.'s because this programme aims to give Black people a positive image of South Africa's Defence Forces. Indeed the Defence Force has made it clear that they do not want C.O.'s in the Civic Action Programme.

3. Some people also think that service in the S.A. Police, S.A. Railway Police, Dept. of Prisons and S.A. Merchant Navy are alternatives for C.O.'s. This is simply not so. First of all very few posts are available each year in these services (apart from the Police) and all of them (other than the Merchant Navy) are of a para-military nature, and therefore completely alien to the conscientious non-militarist. Moreover it would take 13 years in any one of these services to complete all obligations to the Defence Force, and then one could still be called up for military service if there was a general mobilisation!

In the light of all these severe limitations there is a very great need for the Government to recognise conscientious objection

by making it a legal right which can be contested in the courts and by creating alternative forms of national service not under the control of the Defence Force.

CONCLUSION:

All the indications are however that the Government is very unlikely to change the law for moral or religious reasons, especially when one recalls Mr P.W. Botha's claim that 'The honour and duty to serve one's country should not be made subservient to one's religious convictions'. Perhaps the Government will only yield for pragmatic reasons, when it realises that the very harsh penalties it imposes are not succeeding in lessening the number of those who object—but rather the opposite. Also as it sees that pacifists and conscientious objectors become bolder in setting out the reasons for their objection—as we have seen in the cases of Peter Moll and Richard Steele.

But the road ahead for conscientious objectors in South Africa certainly does not appear to be a smooth or easy one.

FOOTNOTE:

Since this lecture was given representations have been made to the authorities on behalf of Peter Moll and Richard Steele in respect of

1. Relief by means of a new "rule" in Detention Barracks to stop the repetitive sentences upon Richard and Peter in solitary confinement because they will not wear the military type punishment overall issued to military detainees.
2. The urgent need to enhance the law to accommodate men who on religious or moral grounds will not participate in war, to put an end to the threat of recurring sentences once this initial period in Detention Barracks has been served . . . as the law stands at present, technically Richard and Peter could be incarcerated for 42 years!
3. The urgent need to identify and provide opportunities for approved alternative service which could form the whole (or part if necessary) of an extended time, serving the country, but which would win exemption at the end of the "Sentence".

Early in August the authorities responded to the first of these representations and recognised Peter Moll and Richard Steele as conscientious objectors to the extent that they will no longer be subjected to terms of solitary confinement for refusing to wear the detention uniform. (Editor) □

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