

able by means of a negotiated settlement, and those which do not. In wars where a negotiated settlement is clearly not possible, I would be prepared to serve as a non-combatant in the medical corps. In this capacity and in such a war it would be possible to identify with Christ's healing ministry without fear that one was directly contributing to the suffering of war.

- 2.2 In South Africa it appears possible to avert war by involving representative Black leaders in a political settlement. My pledge to renounce all preparation

to wage war must in this instance cause me to refuse a non-combatant posting in the Defence Force. This refusal is in my view consistent with working towards the construction of Christian peace in South Africa.

3. NON-MILITARY NATIONAL SERVICE:

- 3.1 Rather than languish idly in detention barracks, which is the penalty for refusal, conscientious objectors should be employed in alternative service. I therefore request a non-military national service. □

LAWYERS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

BY E.M. Wentzel (a member of the Public Relations Committee of Lawyers for Human Rights)

Only in a very strange society could a lawyers' organisation have such a title. Can there be lawyers who, publicly at any rate, would declare themselves against?

Law and the concept of rights are really tweedledum and tweedledee. The object of law is to define and protect rights: those of the individual against the state (and vice versa), and individual against individual. 'Against' is deliberately chosen; our whole system is adversary and the law is an essential aspect of it, a mechanism to enforce and secure these rights.

'Human Rights' has, however, a particular emphasis. These are those individual rights which assure a man of his dignity and esteem within society. Apartheid makes these an especial concern in South Africa for those who seek life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Of course, lawyers had been concerned with human rights before this new society was launched. South African lawyers have a deservedly good reputation in this field. The credit however for the idea of a society of lawyers to act specifically in this field is firstly due to Professor John Dugard. His work 'Human Rights and the South African

Legal Order' (1978) was provocative and a sign leading us away from complacency to self-criticism.

Then the 1979 conference at the University of Cape Town and the excellent publication with which the University followed it, stimulated action. An association of those with similar concerns was an obvious path; but it took particularly Professor van der Vyfer (formerly of Potchefstroom and now at Wits) to put it together into an organised society.

The first chairman is Advocate Johan Kriegler, at one time chairman of the Johannesburg Bar. A constitution has been adopted and membership is growing. A newsletter is being published. Gradually the new Society is taking shape.

These are early days; the scope for activity seems unlimited. No doubt the society will shape itself to the particular needs its personalities and resources determine.

Meanwhile those interested should write to :- Lawyers for Human Rights, Centre for Applied Legal Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, 1, Jan Smuts Avenue, Johannesburg 2001. □