

CONSCRIPTION ADVICE SERVICE
P.O. BOX 2861
DURBAN
4000

February 26, 1992

The Chairperson
Working Group Number 1
CODESA

Dear Sir/Madam

re: TERMINATION OF CONSCRIPTION

We recommend that conscription be terminated as soon as possible. We believe that compulsory military service is not conducive to the creation of a climate of peace and democracy in the emerging New South Africa.

The CONSCRIPTION ADVICE SERVICE is an independent counselling and advice service for anyone experiencing difficulties or problems regarding military service - either the conscript or relatives or friends of the conscript.


This counselling service has been in operation since 1981. It now operates in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Grahamstown, East London, Durban and Pietermaritzburg, and is staffed by volunteers. In recent months, we have handled around 500 cases per month

Based on our experience, we believe that compulsory military service has a negative effect on the conscripts involved, and on society. Our perception is that military training in the SADF tends to reinforce damaging racial stereotypes ("blacks are bad, whites are good"), and tends to reinforce violent rather than non-violent ways of dealing with conflict. These negative effects spill over into the civilian lives of conscripts, and so into society as a whole.

Besides the stress of military service itself, interruption of careers and family life due to periodic camps is highly stressful for conscripts. Stress often leads to violence, as evidenced by the high level of family violence in South Africa.

We believe that the security needs of South Africa would be sufficiently catered for by well-trained, all-volunteer, military and police forces.

Yours faithfully



RICHARD STEELE

ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE