

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC FEDERATION OF STUDENTS :
A STUDY OF POLITICAL IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES
WITHIN A CHRISTIAN STUDENT MOVEMENT, 1960 - 1987

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ABSTRACT

This is a study of the National Catholic Federation of Students (NCFS), an organisation that sought to bring together Catholic students on South African university campuses, examining specifically NCFS' political ideas and activities from 1960 to 1987. The underlying supposition of this thesis is that church history ought to be an integral part of the discipline of history, and that there is a need to write church history from "below" - from the perspectives of the "people's church", the church that comprises the religious experience of the majority of its members rather than its hierarchy.

In the INTRODUCTION, I consider the forces acting upon NCFS and examine briefly its activities until 1960. Two forces acted upon NCFS in South Africa; both encouraged NCFS to take seriously the issue of social justice. The Catholic Church in the Twentieth Century (both internationally and in South Africa) became deeply committed to social justice and opposed to racism and social inequality. Similarly, the South African student movement, particularly the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), strongly opposed the imposition and extension of apartheid. Thus, in both church and university contexts NCFS was influenced by commitments to non-racism and justice. NCFS' early history was closely linked to both Church and University : its founders in the 1940s were committed lay Catholic ex-servicemen students, who were themselves deeply involved in NUSAS. Though black Catholic students were involved in NCFS from the start, they remained a

minority in a predominantly white middle-class organisation. Their presence undoubtedly influenced the tone of NCFS, but could not sway the Federation from its white liberal political base.

NCFS in the 1960s is examined in CHAPTER ONE. It is suggested that the period saw a growing tension between the liberal leadership of NCFS and conservative white Catholics on Afrikaans-speaking campuses, as well as in the late 1960s a growing disillusionment among black NCFS members. Liberal NCFS politics largely paralleled those of NUSAS and created tension among conservatives, who felt that the Federation was "too political". Various incidents highlighted this tension. Black NCFS members grew increasingly frustrated with the cautious liberalism that resulted from these tensions. Feeling unable to express themselves within the liberal-dominated NCFS structures, and under the influence of the nascent black consciousness movement, black campuses disaffiliated from NCFS in the period between July 1970 and June 1971.

CHAPTER TWO considers NCFS' response to this "Split". The nett result was that NCFS in the 1970s sought to radicalise itself. This was achieved by placing a firmer emphasis on justice than before, and by adapting the theology of liberation as an ideological discourse. With its publication Katutura NCFS sought to become a mouthpiece of the Christian Left. In reaction, segments of NCFS rejected this as "communist infiltration" and advocated prayer-centredness, particularly the Charismatic Renewal Movement, as an alternative to politics.

Noting that this tension between the "Action Faction" (the Christian Left) and "God Squad" (the Charismatics) almost caused another organizational split, the primary project of the 1980s (the subject of CHAPTER THREE) was reuniting NCFS under a broad, populist, anti-apartheid Catholic ideology less overtly socialist than the 1970s. Another issue needing attention was the creation of a working-relationship with the more militant black Catholic Students' Association (CASA), formed in 1976. Finally, the 1980s saw NCFS seeking a practical yet populist political activity representing the interests of its white middle-class base but of value to the wider anti-apartheid struggle. The Federation found it largely in its support for the End Conscription Campaign, an anti-conscription project rooted in white youth but having political implications for black community and trade union organizations.

My CONCLUSION ties together the problems dealt with in the body of the thesis and suggests that the politics of NCFS can be seen as a mixture of inherent and derived ideologies, the primary ideological discourse of NCFS being theology. NCFS, I conclude, was also to a certain extent limited by its predominantly ruling-class social make-up, a make-up that resulted often in high ideals but sometimes less-than-ideal action.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work relies heavily on primary sources. Though the National office of the National Catholic Federation of Students in Johannesburg gave me virtually unlimited access to their collection of minutes, correspondence and publications, the material was incomplete. I had to seek out important documents from other sources to stop up the "gaps". I did this by consulting the papers of the Kolbe Society (University of Cape Town Catholic Society) and the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), both housed in the Manuscripts and Archives Section of Jagger Library, University of Cape Town. I also consulted the University Christian Movement (UCM) Papers and Anglican Students' Federation (ASF) Papers in the William Cullen Library of the University of the Witwatersrand. My deepest thanks go to the NCFS and CASA full-time workers, to Leonie Twentyman-Jones and Etaine Eberhard (UCT) and to Anna Cunningham and Michele Pickover (Witwatersrand University), for their assistance in helping me trace important documents.

The search for documentary sources also took me as far as Harare, Zimbabwe, in person and, by mail, to Washington DC and Brisbane, Australia. My thanks to Paul Edwards SJ, H Warren Willis and Dr Colin B Collins. Thanks, too, to the many NCFS "veterans" (chaplains and lay members) who so enthusiastically consented to being interviewed and/or loaned me their personal papers for my research. The interviews, including one with a close NUSAS colleague of NCFS leaders from the 1940s, covered a collective involvement in the Federation from the late 1940s to the mid-1980s.

Thanks too are due to many other people who assisted, advised or encouraged me during this project. Theologians of the Jesuit, Dominican and Franciscan Orders helped me with theological concepts I encountered during my research. The staff of the Southern Cross newspaper were most helpful and encouraging to me during my three-week search through the paper's archives to build a data-base of NCFS news-clippings. Family, friends and fellow graduate students were a constant source of moral support. My typist deserves praise for her patience in the face of seemingly endless revisions. Finally, but certainly not least, thanks are due to my supervisor, Professor Basil Le Cordeur, who has been a constant source of advice and constructive criticism.

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ABBREVIATIONS

of manuscript sources used in the text

- A1985 : Papers of Helen Joseph.
- AB1626 : Papers of the Anglican Students' Federation.
- AD1126 : Papers of the University Christian Movement.
- AFSTDS : Papers housed in the African Studies Library, University of Cape Town.
- BC586 : Papers of the National Union of South African Students.
- BC927 : Papers of the Kolbe Society, University of Cape Town.
- C : Papers found by Mr John Clarke.
- CASA : Papers of the Catholic Students' Association.
- CUA : Papers of the National Federation of Catholic College Students (USA).
- Ennis : Papers of Fr Hyacinth Ennis OFM.
- Fr Matthew : Papers of Fr Matthew Macdonald OFM.
- Haen : Papers of Fr Jan Haen CSsR.
- Hin : Papers of Fr Bonaventure Hinwood OFM.
- Hof : Papers of Fr Julien Hofman SJ.
- KH : Papers of the Kolbe Society, Cape Town (current).
- McNally : Papers of Mr Justice N. J. McNally.
- MD : Personal Papers of Michael Deeb.
- NCFS : Papers of National Catholic Federation of Students.
- OP : Papers housed in the Dominican House, Johannesburg.

- PVT : Papers of Professor Phillip V. Tobias.
- SJV : Papers housed in St John Vianney
Seminary, Pretoria.
- TD : Papers of Dr Tim Dunne.
- UZ : Papers of University of Zimbabwe
Catholic Society.

For fuller details of these sources, see the Bibliography.

University of Cape Town

FOREWORD

Perhaps more than in any country Marx's dictum that "[t]he religious world is but the reflex of the real world"¹ holds true for South Africa. South African religion, specifically South African Christianity, is riddled with the very divisions and contradictions that permeate the country. White Dutch Reformed Churches legitimated centuries of Dutch rule and in the 20th Century gave its blessing to the National Party's apartheid policies. Similarly, 19th Century Cape Anglicanism often gave moral support to British colonial rule. Other churches, either by advocating obedience to the state, quietism or pietism, have served as the "first and foremost of all moral means of action [working] upon the masses",² subverting the material and political aspirations of the poor into "pie-in-the-sky" aspirations of a good life after death. Inevitably both forms of church practice have been designated by theorists like Gramsci as "ideological State apparatus[es]".³ Yet despite the fact that - as Latin American revolutionary Ernesto "Ché" Guevara put it - "Christians have allowed their doctrine to be instrumentalised by reactionaries",⁴ some churches (more often sections of churches or individual personalities within them) have developed a "utopian" vision : revealing the limitations of the social order,

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1. Karl Marx, Capital Volume I [Lawrence and Wishart edition] (London, 1983), p. 83.
 2. Friedrich Engels, in "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific", quoted in Bryan S. Turner, Religion and Social Theory : A Materialist Perspective (London and New Jersey, 1983), p. 49.
 3. Otto Maduro, "New Marxist Approaches to the Relative Autonomy of Religion", Sociological Analysis, 1977, 4, p. 362.
 4. Quoted in José Miguez Bonino, Christians and Marxists (London, 1976), p. 27.

questioning its values, challenging authorities (in church and state) and seeking to improve or overthrow the existing unjust structures of society. ⁵

In most South African churches, there are elements of all these forms of religion. The Catholic Church has been no exception in the last half-century. The Hierarchy, the Catholic Bishops of South Africa, have consistently opposed apartheid in their statements and have since the 1970s made a genuine attempt to eradicate all traces of racism in the Church itself. On the political left of the Bishops there have been numerous small groups of Catholics actively engaged in anti-apartheid politics within both the Church and wider South African society. Catholic involvement in anti-apartheid organisations has included priest-activists from Louis du Manoir ⁶ to Smangaliso Mkhathshwa, lay activists in groups as varied as the Liberal Party, African National Congress to Black Consciousness Movement. Groups within the Church have most closely expressed this in the Young Christian Students (YCS) and Young Christian Workers (YCW), who made often explicit options for the "National democratic struggle". ⁷ To

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5. Gregory Baum, Religion and Alienation (New York, 1975), (New York, 1975), pp. 102-103; on such groups see : John W. de Gruchy, The Church Struggle in South Africa 2nd Edition (Cape Town, 1987), Charles Villa-Vicencio, Trapped in Apartheid: A Socio-Theological History of the English-Speaking Churches (Cape Town and Maryknoll, New York, 1989), Darryl M. Balia, Christian Resistance to Apartheid : Ecumenism in South Africa, 1960-1987 (Johannesburg, 1989).
 6. Helen Joseph, Side by Side (London, 1986), p. 38.
 7. See : Young Christian Students (YCS), Action Towards a People's Church (Johannesburg : YCS [n.d., circa 1988]) for an exposition of its ideology.

the right of the Bishops there have been Catholics (almost exclusively white) who have supported the National Party (even Catholic Nationalist Members of Parliament or Senators). At least one Bishop, William Patrick Whelan, argued that apartheid was not contrary to Catholic teaching. In the late 1970s, as the Church shifted to a far more explicitly anti-apartheid position, conservative Catholic groups were formed, including the questionably-named Catholic Defence League and (in the 1980s) the Tradition Family Property Bureau (TFP), an organisation "imported" from Brazil. ⁸

The politics of the National Catholic Federation of Students (NCFS) is perhaps unique in that, though it was mostly outspokenly opposed to apartheid, it contained elements within it that were far to the left, and a few to the right, of the Catholic Bishops. It is important to note in this regard that although NCFS was primarily a Church organisation - the Catholic Church's presence on the South African university campus - it was also a student organisation. Moreover, it was a student organisation closely

8. Canon Law, the rules governing the institutions of the Catholic Church, prohibits any organisation from calling itself "Catholic" without episcopal permission. No such permission was granted to the Defence League; in 1977 it was denounced by the SACBC. It still, however, enjoyed the patronage of the State's media. "Tradition, Family, Property" was created by a Brazilian lawyer and professor, Plinio Correa D'Oliveira, to combat the perceived threats of Communism and Liberation Theology. Its ideology is a mix of Medievalism, pre-Vatican II Catholicism, rabid McCarthyism and occasional doses of machismo (information based on the TFP Newsletters, irregularly produced glossy pamphlets and various TFP booklets). On rightwing religion in South Africa see : Paul Gifford The Religious Right in Southern Africa (Harare, 1988).

linked to the liberal National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), particularly sharing its predominantly white, middle-class base.⁹ This study, of the politics of NCFs, is thus also, to some extent, a contribution to the study of South African student politics. Primarily, however, it is a study of the church movement, its political activities and its ideology.

To facilitate a clearer understanding of the contexts in which this work is set, the introduction of this dissertation serves simply to set out the social and intellectual contexts in which NCFs operated, as well as the earlier history of NCFs particularly as it related to the question of political ideas and activities. The first chapter describes the internal crises it underwent in the 1960s and reveals its close relationship with NUSAS in terms of political commitments, seeking to show the inherent weakness of organisations like both NCFs and NUSAS when faced with

9. Regrettably little empirical information can be found fully to validate the claim I make about the class base of NCFs. I have based my argument on the following observations:
(i) that South African tertiary education has been such that only members of the middle class (or a few students of working-class origin who have the ability to obtain bursaries) can afford university fees;
(ii) that those people I contacted for my research were middle-class professionals, usually with backgrounds and families in the middle-class; and
(iii) that, when informally asked about the class base of NCFs members, they answered - vaguely - that the middle-class predominated.

One method I attempted to find empirically an NCFs class-base was to consult the address lists of NCFs members recorded in Conference Minutes and Catholic Society record-books. Not all such records are extant. Many of those available that I consulted were so vague (often just names of residences or cities) that nothing conclusive could be reached by examining home suburbs. What little that I could ascertain does not contradict my assumption.

criticism and dissent from either the right or left. The second chapter, covering NCF's experience of the 1970s, shows the radicalisation of NCF's, as both church and student movement. It also shows the "coming of age", so to speak, of NCF's as a pressure group within the Catholic Church for radical Christian social involvement, but also its underestimation of the middle-class conservative interests of a significant segment of its constituency. Finally, a tentative effort is made to give an account of the restructuring of NCF's around a broadly populist, overtly Church-oriented, but unmistakably anti-apartheid ideology in the 1980s.

Any dissertation that examines the social dimension of religion must have certain presuppositions. It is presumed in this work that "(w)hatever theology and religion is about (and it is shot through with internal contradictions), it is related to the quest by people to rise above the limitations of their captivity whether understood psychologically, socially or theologically, it is articulated in relation to the need to transcend the real or imaginary limits imposed on the human condition".¹⁰ Moreover "(t)he dominant political passions that propel people to their particular behavioural patterns originate from other (non-ecclesial) and more material interests".¹¹ Faced with their search for transcendence and their struggle for a transformed society "Christians cannot evade the necessity of inserting something to fill the void between their faith and their options

10. Charles Villa-Vicencio, "Liberation and Political Theology : Why Politics Cannot be Left to the Politicians", Inaugural Lecture, University of Cape Town, October 4, 1989, p. 5.

11. Darryl M. Balia, Christian Resistance to Apartheid, pp. 96-97.

in history. In short, they cannot avoid the risk of ideologies".¹² The inevitable result of this is that religions articulate this ideology through their primary mode of discourse, theology. Theological discourse, whether ascetically pietist, submissively otherworldly, blessing authority or espousing resistance to the status quo, therefore is a variable, based on the interests - political, cultural and economic - of those who "theologise", referring directly to Christian social activism. Marx rather astutely pointed out that the early Christians "lost their chance of the kingdom of heaven on earth because they rejected and neglected engagement in overt political action".¹³ Christians involved in political activism - often at terrible cost to themselves as the lives and deaths of persons like Thomas a' Becket, Thomas More, Thomas Müntzer, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Oscar Romero and Ignacio Ellacuria have demonstrated¹⁴ - have tried to rectify this tactical oversight.

12. Juan Luis Segundo, The Liberation of Theology, (Maryknoll, NY, 1976), p. 109.

13. Karl Marx, The First International and After : Political Writings III (New York, 1974), p. 324.

14. Thomas a' Becket - Archbishop of Canterbury, murdered in Canterbury Cathedral on December 29, 1170, subsequent to a political dispute with King Henry II.

Thomas More - English statesman; executed on July 6, 1535 by King Henry VIII for refusing to recognise Henry's leadership of the Church of England.

Thomas Müntzer - German Radical Reformer, leader of the Peasants' Revolt (1524-1525), executed after capture on May 27, 1525.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer - Lutheran theologian, leader of the Confessing Church movement, opponent of Nazism, hanged in prison on April 9, 1945 for his resistance.

Oscar Romero - Catholic Archbishop of San Salvador, El Salvador, human rights activist; assassinated in a hospital chapel March 24, 1980.

Ignacio Ellacuria - Spanish Jesuit priest, rector of José Simeon Canas University, San Salvador, El Salvador; a human rights activist and liberation theologian, he was murdered with 5 other Jesuits and 2 lay persons on November 16, 1989.

Although much has been written about the Church in South Africa little of it adequately addresses the role of the Church in the political and social conflicts of the last hundred years. Though a number of institutional histories (eg. those of Hinchliff, Brown, Hudson-Reed, Kruger and Moorrees) ¹⁵ have been written, few have attempted to any great extent to set their subjects in their political, social or economic contexts. Secondly, many church histories have been written by theologians. Though some, like de Gruchy, ¹⁶ Cochrane, ¹⁷ Villa-Vicencio ¹⁸ and Balia ¹⁹, provide valuable outlines and propose useful approaches to the study of the Church in South Africa that could shake church history out of its parochialism (often in both senses of the word), greater historical analytical sophistication is required. De Gruchy, for example, perceived "the church struggle in South Africa" to be one of race. Even in his revised version of the book, little has been done to examine systematically the primary question posed by revisionist historians since the 1970s, that of the role of class in society. Though Cochrane, Villa-Vicencio

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15. Peter Hinchliff, The Anglican Church in South Africa (London, 1963); William E. Brown, The Catholic Church in South Africa, from its Origin to the Present Day (London, 1960); Sydney Hudson-Reed, et al, Together For a Century : The History of the Baptist Union of South Africa, 1877-1977 (Roodepoort, 1983); Bernhard Kruger, The Pear Tree Blossoms : The History of the Moravian Church in South Africa, 1837-1869 (Genadendal, 1967); A. Moorrees, Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid Afrika, 1652-1873 (Cape Town, 1937).
 16. John W. de Gruchy, The Church Struggle in South Africa (Revised Edition) [original edition : 1977].
 17. James R. Cochrane, Servants of Power : The Role of the English-speaking Churches in South Africa, 1903-1930 (Johannesburg, 1986).
 18. Charles Villa-Vicencio, Trapped in Apartheid.
 19. Darryl M Balia, Christian Resistance to Apartheid : Ecumenism in South Africa.

and Balia deal with class, their approach remains far too general and places far too much emphasis on theological issues than on historical problems. Even Cochrane, whose book is the closest to a systematic and revisionist historical study of the roles played by early twentieth century Anglicanism and Methodism in promoting colonial capitalism, falls into the "trap" of turning his work into a theological statement. No doubt, when writing church history it is somewhat inevitable that one's theological sympathies will come to the fore. It should not however suddenly leap into a sermon.

Histories of aspects of the Catholic Church are relatively few in number. There are a few theses: McMorran's account of the Church in the Transvaal, J. B. Brain's two published theses on predominantly missionary activity in Natal, David Bixby's excellent thesis on the Catholic response to the 1953 Bantu Education Act, and Kathleen Boner's theses on Catholic nuns and education and the life and work of Monsignor F C Kolbe.²⁰ There

20. A. L. McMorran, "Pro Deo et Ecclesia : The Formation of the Catholic Church in the Transvaal, 1886-1922", (M.A. dissertation, Witwatersrand University, 1986); J. B. Brain, Catholic Beginnings in Natal and Beyond, (Durban, 1975), Catholics in Natal II, (Durban, 1982) [based on theses submitted to University of South Africa, 1974 and 1980], David M. Bixby, "The Roman Catholic Church and Apartheid in Education : A Study of the African Catholic School System, 1953-1973", (B. A. Honours Research Essay, University of Cape Town, 1977); Kathleen Boner, "The Irish Dominicans and Education in the Western Cape (1863 - 1892)" (M.A. dissertation, University of South Africa, 1976); Boner, "Dr. F. C. Kolbe : Priest, Patriot and Educationist" (D. Litt. et Phil. Thesis, University of South Africa, 1980).

is also Theron's thesis on the Catholic Church in South Africa, which is an anti-Catholic polemic rather than a serious academic study.²¹ Published works number even less. William E. Brown's history of the Church is largely anecdotal and severely dated - its final chapter covering most of the first half of the Twentieth Century, written by the book's editor, Michael Derrick, after Father Brown died, is also sketchy.²² Andrew Prior's collection of essays on aspects of the Church after 1948 is more useful to this study.²³ Garth Abraham's book on the Church in the first decade of National Party rule is extremely readable and confirmed most of my conclusions about the lack of clear Catholic political direction in the period,²⁴ but regrettably was published too late to incorporate much of its detail into the early parts of this thesis. For the most part, I have therefore had to rely on my primary sources, interviews and such secondary material as published by the Bishops' Conference, by individual dioceses or small Catholic or ecumenical newspapers.

In at least one respect this study of NCFS is the first of its kind. No comparative research has yet been completed on other Christian student movements in South Africa. To compound the

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21. Edwin Theron, "Die Geskiedenis en Aksie van die Rooms-Katolieke Kerk, veral in die Unie van Suid-Afrika". (M. Th. dissertation, University of Stellenbosch, 1958).
 22. William E. Brown, The Catholic Church in South Africa from its Origins to the Present Day, edited by Michael Derrick, (London, 1960).
 23. Andrew Prior (ed), Catholics in Apartheid Society (Cape Town, 1982).
 24. Garth Abraham, The Catholic Church and Apartheid : The response of the Catholic Church in South Africa to the first decade of National Party rule 1948-1957 (Johannesburg, 1989).

problem, very little has even been published on secular student movements in South Africa. Apart from a book by Legassick, a collection of essays edited by Van der Merwe and Welsh, and a few articles and theses,²⁵ the study of students and student politics, whether of NUSAS or any other student movement - black or white, English or Afrikaans-medium, middle-class or working-class, remains to a large extent an open area of research for historians and sociologists. The following pages are thus also exploratory steps into a section of a whole new area of South African history, the history of youth, an area that in the light of the increasing importance of youth in movements for social transformation (particularly since 1976) deserves the serious attention of scholars.

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25. Martin Legassick. The National Union of South African Students : Ethnic Cleavage and Ethnic Integration in the Universities (Los Angeles, 1967); Hendrick W. van der Merwe and David Welsh (eds), Student Perspectives on South Africa (Cape Town, 1972) ; Benjamin Kline, "The National Union of South African Students : a Case-study of the Plight of Liberalism, 1924-1977", Journal of Modern African Studies 23.1.1985, pp. 139-145; Linda Chisholm, "The Early History of NUSAS : Leo Marquard's Presidency, 1924-1930", (B. A. Honours Research Essay, University of Cape Town, 1976).

INTRODUCTION

This essay is a study of changing political attitudes within the National Catholic Federation of Students (NCFS). As such it reflects the ideological shifts both within South African Catholicism and within the broader Catholic Church, particularly between the 1960s and the 1980s. This introduction will address a number of general themes which need examination in order to provide a clarification of the subject. Firstly, it will survey the ideological shifts within 20th Century Catholicism and then the specific ideological shifts within South African Catholic thinking on race. Next, an account of the ideological divisions within South African student movements will be sketched. These sections shall serve as explanatory background to the central focus of our account of the NCFS from the 1960s to the late 1980s. The final, and longest, section describes the growth of NCFS between 1937 and 1960 and its adoption of an anti-racist, basically liberal, political ideology.

1. IDEOLOGICAL SHIFTS IN 20TH CENTURY CATHOLICISM

Joe Holland suggests that the Catholic Church has in the 20th Century undergone a shift to the left, a move that has transformed the church from a hierarchical traditionalism, through liberalism and Marxism to a post-Marxist and post-modern vision.¹ The early 20th Century had been a period of Catholic isolationism : liberalism, socialism and democracy had been condemned by the 19th Century popes, largely because these movements eroded the political influence of the Papacy in Europe, and new ideas in theology were condemned as "modernist heresy".² After the Second World War, Pope Pius XII took a strongly anti-communist political line, one that "fit(ted) perfectly into the Cold War mentality of the West",³ but saw the need for "an accommodation of Catholic thought and liberalism (which) had become the ideology of a bourgeois establishment".⁴ Pius XII and the Curia encouraged the proliferation of parties and lay Catholic

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1. Joe Holland, "The Post-Modern Paradigm Implicit in the Church's Shift to the Left", in M.J.Leddy and M A Hinsdale (eds), Faith that Transforms : Essays in Honor of Gregory Baum. (New York, 1987), pp 39 - 61.
 2. Peter Hebblethwaite, In the Vatican (Oxford, 1987), p. 27, suggests this concept of "modernism" was an invention of conservative popes; Theo Kneifel, in a theological talk given at the University of Cape Town, 27 February 1985 convincingly suggests that "modernists" were accused of things they neither wrote nor taught: (tape recording housed at Kolbe House, Rondebosch).
 3. Eric O. Hanson, The Catholic Church in World Politics (Princeton, N.J., 1987), p. 44; also Carlo Falconi, The Popes in the Twentieth Century : From Pius X to John XXIII (London, 1967), pp 267 - 269.
 4. Rosemary Radford Ruether, Contemporary Roman Catholicism : Crises and Challenges (Kansas City, Mo., 1987), p. 13.

organisations in "strategic secular spheres"⁵ that promoted Christian Democracy, a "middle way" between fascism and communism, guided by Catholic social teachings. Theologically, however, the Church remained conservative, though in countries like France in the period after 1945 some groups of theologians started experimenting with questions, considered almost heretical, about the role of the laity, the need for religion to address social issues and the problems of intellectual, personal and social freedom. These daring new thinkers "sought to build a new society in which religion and life were integrated".⁶

The 1960s saw a radical shift : the Second Vatican Council was "a turning point in the life of the Catholic Church".⁷ Structurally, it replaced absolute papal authority with the collegial authority of bishops, and promoted dialogue between hierarchy and laity. It encouraged ecumenism at a more official level. Since the Reformation the Church had been "a closed society",⁸ but in the 1950s it had tentatively engaged with Protestantism and by the time of the Council it had established a Secretariat for Christian Unity. By the late 1960s, after the

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5. John A. Coleman SJ, The Evolution of Dutch Catholicism, 1958 - 1974 (Berkeley, 1978), p. 15
 6. Jay P. Dolan, The American Catholic Experience : A History from the Colonial Period to the Present (Garden City, NY : 1987), p. 352.
 7. Gregory Baum, Theology and Society (New York, 1987), p. 3.
 8. Sister Henry Angela Cora Keane OP, "The Dynamics of a Changing Church with Special Reference to Lumen Gentium, the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church of Vatican Council II" (M.Th. dissertation, University of South Africa, 1979, p. 48.

Council, attitudes had so improved that a joint Catholic - World Council of Churches working-group on ecumenism was formed.⁹ Justice also became a priority issue for the Church : by 1971 the Synod of Bishops (in their document Justice in the World) concluded that political action for justice, specifically liberation of people from all oppression, was a constituent element of Christian life.¹⁰ In the Third World, particularly Latin America, the 1960s and early 1970s saw a radical "shift to the left".¹¹ Originating in the Christian student movements, many of whom started drawing on Marxist social analysis,¹² the shift subsequently took place in the institutional Church after the 1968 meeting of Latin American bishops at Medellin, Colombia; the Church took an "option for the poor".

This process involved a strategic realignment of the Church with marginalised groups and those who sided with them. Within the Church, clergy and religious orders moved from places of power to the ghettos and rural villages of the Third World, in a commitment

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9. Lukas Vischer, "The Ecumenical Movement and the Roman Catholic Church" in Harold E Fey (ed) The Ecumenical Advance : A History of the Ecumenical Movement, Volume 2 : 1948 - 1986, (Geneva, 1986), pp 319-342.
 10. Justice and Peace Commission, Our Best Kept Secret : The Church's Social Teaching (Johannesburg, 1988), pp. 37-47.
 11. Gregory Baum, The Social Imperative : Essays on the Critical Issues that Confront the Christian Churches (New York, 1979), p. 174.
 12. G. Lewy, Religion and Revolution (New York, 1974), pp 512-514; E. Dussel, A History of the Church in Latin America : Colonisation to Liberation (1492-1979) (Grand Rapids, 1981), p 219; for an Asian example see I.M.C.S., Christian Students and the Asian Revolution : Report of the Pan-Asian Catholic Students' Seminar, Colombo 1967 (Colombo, 1967)

to struggle for the social and political upliftment of the poor. ¹³

As part of the process of collaboration with those helping the poor, Catholics entered into dialogue with Marxists in many areas. ¹⁴ Some even became "Christian Marxists", believing they could be "Marxists in economics and Christians in their faith". ¹⁵ In 1972 some of these Christian Marxists formed "Christians for Socialism" in Santiago, Chile, and argued that revolutionary commitment to socialism was the only possible means of ending a class-based society. ¹⁶ In short, a new radical Christianity emerged, one that " (made) possible its rapprochement with non-religious radicalism and even non-Christian traditions and political activism", ¹⁷ the theology of liberation.

The post-Marxist phase in Catholic ideology began in the early 1980s during the papacy of John Paul II, a pope whose life experience included the struggle against Nazism and Stalinism in his native Poland. His 1981 encyclical Laborem Exercens argued

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13. Phillip Berryman, The Religious Roots of Rebellion : Christians in the Central American Revolutions (London, 1984), pp 25-32; Penny Lernoux, Cry of the People (Harmondsworth, 1982), pp 37-47.
 14. See : Peter Hebblethwaite, The Christian-Marxist Dialogue and Beyond (London, 1977); Arthur F McGovern SJ, Marxism - An American Christian Perspective (Maryknoll, NY,1980), especially pp. 90-131.
 15. E Dussel, History and the Theology of Liberation (New York, 1976), p. 133.
 16. "Final Document of the Convention", in J. Eagleson (ed), Christians for Socialism : Documents of the Christians for Socialism Movement in Latin America (Maryknoll, NY, 1979), pp. 160-175.
 17. Nigel Young, An Infantile Disorder? The Crisis and Decline of the New Left (London, 1977) p 365 ; on Christian protest see : Lernoux, Ibid (passim), Phillip Berryman, Liberation Theology (London, 1987), Edicio de la Torre, Touching Ground, Taking Root (London 1986).

for the priority of labour over capital, the need for the solidarity of workers and all peoples' solidarity with workers.¹⁸ This, and other church writings demonstrated a distinct shift from alignment with capitalism and from alignment with any Marxist orthodoxy. Priority in post Marxist thought was given to a holistic social vision that incorporated democracy, socialism, and growing ecological consciousness. However, this phase in Catholic ideology has also been one of neo-conservatism. The theology of liberation has been attacked by forces in the Vatican, especially Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Leading theologians of liberation like Leonardo Boff,¹⁹ Gustavo Gutierrez²⁰ and Jon Sobrino²¹ have been "investigated" for alleged heresy. New rightwing religious groups, like the Tradition Family Property Bureau (TFP), have emerged worldwide,²² and the participation of Catholic priests in the socialist government of Nicaragua has been criticised.²³

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18. Gregory Baum, The Priority of Labour : A Commentary on Laborem Exercens (New York, 1982) (includes copy of encyclical as appendix).
 19. Brazilian Franciscan friar. Specialist on Church structures. His book Church, Charism and Power (London 1986) was reputedly the main cause for the investigation into his work and ideas.
 20. Peruvian diocesan priest. Lives in Rimac, a slum near Lima, the capital. Author of A Theology of Liberation : History Politics and Salvation (London, 1974) and many others.
 21. Spanish Jesuit, works in El Salvador. Author of Christology at the Crossroads (Maryknoll, NY, 1978) and many other books and articles.
 22. Eric O Hanson, Catholic Church in World Politics, pp 104-105.
 23. For various perspectives see : Hanson, ibid, pp 95-97; Teofilio Cabestrero, Ministers of God, Ministers of the People (Maryknoll, NY, 1983); Andrew Bradstock, Saints and Sandinistas (London 1987).

Nevertheless, the 1980s have seen considerable ecclesiastical confrontation with political injustice, most spectacular being the Church's extensive participation in the mobilization of nonviolent protest that led to the deposition of the Fillipino dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986. ²⁴

2. SHIFTS IN RACIAL ATTITUDES IN SOUTH AFRICAN CATHOLICISM

The single most important ideological stimulus for the NCFS probably came from the Catholic hierarchy in South Africa. For most of the period until the 1970s, the official, hierarchical, Catholic position on racism was cautiously critical. Until the 1830s, Catholicism was proscribed in South Africa. ²⁵ Catholic missionary activity was characterised by a distinct split, a "dual and conflicting role", ²⁶ between ministry to white, urban parishes and black, rural "missions". In some areas like the Transvaal, the Church "ranked ministry to immigrant white Catholics higher in priority than proselytism among the black population". ²⁷ Opposition to racism was limited. Bishop Jean-Francois Allard of Natal said that "(a)s to colour, the Church

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24. Ronald Sider, Exploring the limits of Non-violence (London, 1988), pp. 55-71; Monica Allaray Mercado (ed), An Eyewitness History : People Power, the Philippine Revolution of 1986 (Manila, 1986) passim. ; untaped conversation with Fr David Rowan SJ, c.1987.
 25. William E. Brown, The Catholic Church in South Africa, (London 1959) pp 5-10.
 26. Joy Blundell Brain, "The Early History of the Roman Catholic Church in the Natal Vicariate, 1846-1885" (MA dissertation, University of South Africa, 1974), p. 292.
 27. Alison Louise McMorran, "Pro Deo et Ecclesia : the formation of the Catholic Church in the Transvaal, 1886-1922" (M.A. dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1986), p. 189.

does not pay attention to it".²⁸ Other clergy said similar things, but this was simply a feature of "a consistent anti-apartheid record on paper coupled with a generally manifest powerlessness to translate that record into practical policy, except at the least threatening levels."²⁹

Why did this happen? Firstly, Catholicism - despite its "emancipation" in the 1830s - was still disliked by the predominantly Calvinist or Anglican colonists. It was regarded with suspicion. To take up the cause of blacks - as some Protestant missionaries did - would be courting even greater ill-favour. Catholics first had to gain the acceptance of white Protestantism.³⁰ The fact that Catholic missionaries owned land at an early date and became engaged in rural production is another (far from widely researched) possibility : some missionaries made it their policy to inculcate a colonial work ethic into blacks, i.e. "show them how great and rich could be the fruits of their toil and sweat"³¹ and a racism in practice became part of the mission Catholic consciousness. It is also true that many white Catholics seemed extremely conservative, well into the 1960s. And there was a continuing fear that, since the Hierarchy and clergy were until the 1970s predominantly expatriates, any serious Catholic hierarchical resistance to apartheid could lead to the deportation of prominent leaders of the Catholic Church

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28. Brain, "The History of the Roman Catholic Church in Natal, 1886-1925, with special reference to the work of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate" (D. Litt et Phil. thesis, University of South Africa, 1978), p 41.
29. James R. Cochrane, Servants of Power : The Role of English Speaking Churches, 1903-1930 (Johannesburg, 1987), p. 2.
30. Brain, "Early History of the Roman Catholic Church", p. 296.
31. B. Hoffmann, The Founder of Marianhill (Marianhill 1947) p. 40.

in South Africa, and the virtual collapse of Catholicism in the country.³²

The earliest Hierarchical attempts to oppose apartheid came in the 1950s. These were primarily exercises in "theoretical liberalism"³³ and certainly "no clarion call(s) to revolution".

³⁴ The first, the 1952 Statement on Race Relations³⁵ was extremely cautious, but the 1957 Statement was stronger and called apartheid "intrinsically evil",³⁶ making the Church the first in South Africa "theologically [to] reject apartheid in its entirety".³⁷ In practice, however, the Church failed to resist the extension of the Bantu Education Act (1953) to its mission schools.³⁸ The 1960s were not much better : a whole array of Bishops' statements were issued, each of them a little more daring than the last, but in practice a failure to act upon principles. If anything, racial conservatism remained : a prominent ex-priest of the time commented that many black Catholics told him how they

32. M. Henry Keane OP, "Church Growth and development in South Africa : The Catholic Experience", in G. M. Setiloane and I. H. M. Peden (eds) Pangs of Growth (Johannesburg, 1988), p. 187.

33. David Bixby, "The Roman Catholic Church and Apartheid in Education : A Study of the African Catholic School System, 1953-1973" (B.A. Honours research essay, University of Cape Town, 1977), p. 5.

34. Trevor Verryn, "Catholic Bishops and Apartheid", in A. Prior (ed), Catholics in Apartheid Society (Cape Town, 1982), p. 54.

35. The Bishops Speak, Volume 1 : 1952-1956, [Collected statements no author stated], (Pretoria, n.d.), pp. 5-8.

36. *Ibid*, p. 14.

37. Charles Villa-Vicencio, Trapped in Apartheid : A Socio-Theological History of English-Speaking Churches (Cape Town and Maryknoll, NY, 1988), p. 37.

38. See : Bixby, *ibid*, *passim* ; Brigid Flanagan, "Education : Policy and Practice" in A. Prior (ed), *ibid*, pp. 86-87, for details.

were warned by white priests of excommunication if they became involved in active politics.³⁹ In 1964 Archbishop Whelan of Bloemfontein suggested that apartheid as separate development could, if properly implemented, solve South Africa's political crisis; this was denounced by black Catholics and the Bishop's Conference officially distanced itself from the statement.⁴⁰ These incidents, and the failure by the Hierarchy to address the needs of the majority of Catholics in South Africa, who were black, led quite a few black Catholics, clergy in particular, to reflect that the Church was "a foreigner's club".⁴¹

The Synod of Bishops' statement Justice in the World, the growth of liberation theology in the Third World, the growth of Black Consciousness and black theology, as well as the deepening crisis in South Africa in the mid-1970s (and continuing into the 1980s) were forces acting on the Catholic Hierarchy in the 1970s and 1980s. Black Catholics started to gain a voice, largely through the Youth Department and through a handful of new, black bishops, the most outspoken being Mandlenkosi Zwane, the Archbishop of Manzini, Swaziland, who became the most articulate exponent of black theology in the Bishops' Conference.⁴² A national Justice and Peace Commission grew from humble beginnings in the early 1970s to an influential place in the Church's structure, as did

39. Colin B. Collins, interviewed on radio, Adelaide, Australia, c October 1977 (tape recording in possession of author).

40. AD 1126, M 10 : Clippings from Southern Cross (19 February 1964), The World (21 February 1964); "Press Statement" (27 February 1964) in Bishops' Speak Volume I, p. 41.

41. Francois Houtart and André Rousseau, The Church and Revolution (Maryknoll, NY, 1971), p. 241.

42. For his life and work, see : A Man for All the People : The message of Bishop Mandelkosi Zwane (essays and brief biography, no editor cited) (London, 1983).

the Young Christian Workers, which shed its white middle-class background to become a strong presence in the black working class.

⁴³ Statements became more outspoken : the 1980 Inter-diocesan Pastoral Consultation called on all Catholics to "identify (them)selves with the poor, the oppressed and the suffering and to do all in (their) power to remove the obstacles they experience(d) in striving for full humanity". ⁴⁴ The 1980s saw forthright statements on numerous political and social issues : Namibia, police action in townships, conscription, relocations, elections and even a statement giving guarded support to the idea of limited economic pressure for political change. ⁴⁵

3. SOCIAL CONTEXT : STUDENT MOVEMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Because NCFs, though a Catholic organisation, operated in the student milieu, it is important to set out briefly the context in which it operated. Most important of all student organisations during this period was the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), founded in 1924 by Leo Marquard to unite English and Afrikaans-speaking students. ⁴⁶ It soon adopted a liberal

43. Sr. Margaret Kelly OP, "Justice and Peace at the Inter-diocesan Level", Transformation of the Church : Justice and Peace Conference 1987 (Johannesburg, 1987), p. 23; M Hope and J. Young, South African Churches in a Revolutionary Situation (Maryknoll, NY, 1981), p. 157, 166; J. M. Dumortier, et al, Many in this City are my People (Durban 1983), especially pp. 5-79 (interviews with YCW members).

44. SACBA, Inter-diocesan Pastoral Consultation 1980 (Pretoria, 1981), p. 50.

45. Various leaflets and pamphlets in possession of the author, e.g. "Report on Namibia" (1981), "Report on Police Conduct in the Townships" (1985), all published by the SACBC, Pretoria.

46. On NUSAS' early history : see Linda Chisholm, "The Early History of NUSAS : Leo Marquard's Presidency, 1924-1930", (B.A. Honours Research Essay, University of Cape Town, 1976).

political approach that led in 1933 to a split within it and the creation of the Afrikaner Nasionale Studentebond (ANSB), which operated on the campuses of the Universities of the Orange Free State, Potchefstroom, Pretoria and later (1936) Stellenbosch.⁴⁷ NUSAS members were generally anti-Nazi at the beginning of World War II, while ANSB became increasingly pro-Nazi.⁴⁸ The latter declined during the war and ceased to exist, a new Afrikaner Studente Bond (ASB) reconstituting itself in 1948.⁴⁸ In the post-war period NUSAS was ideologically divided between a conservative, a liberal and a Marxist faction, the latter two being predominant particularly after the affiliation of the Fort Hare University College Campus in 1945.⁴⁹ The period until 1960 was one of internal conflict with attempts by both conservatives and radicals to take over the liberals' control of NUSAS.⁵⁰ Black students, the white left and later the liberals tried too to give NUSAS a more clearly political image. By the mid-1950s NUSAS had responded strongly against the Bantu Education Act (1953) and was particularly condemnatory of State plans to segregate university education.⁵¹

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47. Benjamin Kline, "The National Union of South African Students : a Case-study of the Plight of Liberalism, 1924-77", Journal of Modern African Studies 23, 1 (1985), p. 139.
 48. John Daniel, "A History of NUSAS in Action" South African Outlook, Vol. 104, No. 1232, January 1974, pp. 3-4.
 49. Ibid, p. 4; Professor Phillip V Tobias, interviewed Witwatersrand University Medical School, Johannesburg, 2 June 1988.
 50. Martin Legassick, The National Union of South African Students : Ethnic Cleavage and ethnic integration in the Universities (Los Angeles, 1967), pp. 19-23, 25-31.
 51. Ibid, pp. 32-38.

NUSAS entered the 1960s under the effective control of the liberals. However, black NUSAS members, who in the 1950s had formed a bloc with the NUSAS left, felt discontented with the direction the organisation was taking. White apathy on campuses was growing, as was black militancy.⁵² NUSAS was "(b)older at the verbal level than either the Liberals or Progressives (two anti-Nationalist political parties opposed, in the first one's case, to apartheid totally and, in the second case, advocating a qualified franchise)". They identified strongly "with the black cause, and were in turn seen by many blacks as important spokesmen for that cause";⁵³ despite this, they experienced a crisis. NUSAS President Jonty Driver's May 1964 suggestion that it should increase black membership and decrease conservative membership, and that they take seriously the issue of African liberation, led to internal conflicts and a white conservative backlash,⁵⁴ a situation worsened by the revelation that a number of NUSAS members and ex-members had participated in the African Resistance Movement (ARM).⁵⁵ The resultant more conservative liberal policy led to frustration among black students; this reached a crisis point at the 1967 NUSAS Congress at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, where university authorities enforced racial segregation. The next year, after the NUSAS Congress, a group of black members attended the University Christian Movement (UCM) Congress in Stutterheim, Eastern Cape, where Steven Biko, a

52. Kline, "National Union of South African Students", p. 143.

53. Gail M Gerhart, Black Power in South Africa : The Evolution of an Ideology (Berkeley, 1978) pp 257-258.

54. Legassick, National Union of South African Students , p. 47.

55. Kline, "National Union of South African Students", p. 143; Hugh Lewin, Bandiet (Cape Town, 1989).

medical student, began to canvass for the idea of an all-black movement that would do away with an illusory non-racism that was really a front for white liberal-controlled agenda and help to develop self-pride, leadership and a political awareness for blacks. By 1969, the South African Students' Organisation (SASO) had been formed to serve this purpose.⁵⁶

The 1970s, following the SASO disaffiliations, were a period of protest politics for NUSAS. Numerous NUSAS members were banned, detained and even deported.⁵⁷ The State reacted through its Schibusch - Le Grange "Commission of Enquiry into Certain Organisations", which recommended the banning of eight NUSAS leaders and later under the simultaneously enacted Affected Organisations Bill of 1974, declared NUSAS a threat to the state and prohibited it from receiving foreign funds.⁵⁸ To survive, NUSAS opted to change its direction; between 1975 and 1977 they developed the idea of "Africanisation", making a commitment as white Africans to South Africa⁵⁹ and maintaining a clear opposition to apartheid. In the 1980s, with the re-emergence of non-racial populist politics of the United Democratic Front (UDF), as well as the growth of a strong anti-conscription lobby, NUSAS became more explicitly part of the student political struggle again.

56. Gerhart, Black Power, pp, 260-262; Donald Woods, Biko (Harmondsworth 1987), pp. 152-157.

57. Daniel, "History of NUSAS", pp. 8-9.

58. Kline, "National Union of South African Students", p. 144.

59. Ibid, p. 145.

4. THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC FEDERATION OF STUDENTS 1937 - 1960

This section surveys the early history of NCFS and highlights the trends as well as the contradictions within its political activities.

So far as can be gauged Catholic Societies had been active on South African university campuses since the 1920s and 1930s.⁶⁰ The Cape Town University Chaplaincy Centre, Kolbe House,⁶¹ became operative in the 1930s. The first attempt to unite these Societies came, with the somewhat exaggerated claim of "a new landmark" in Catholic South Africa,⁶² in 1937; by 1939 a Students' Catholic Federation of South Africa had been formed⁶³ but the Second World War intervened and the Federation collapsed. After the war, a group of Catholic ex-servicemen active in NUSAS, particularly a convert from Trotskyism, James E (Jimmy) Stewart, and a student, Robin Savory, started rebuilding the Federation.⁶⁴ Savory travelled to Europe after the first meeting of the re-named

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60. Wits Society started in the early 1930s: vide Bruce K. Murray, Wits : The Early Years (Johannesburg, 1982), p. 354; Rhodes's Society could well date from the 1920s : Crossfire Fourth Quarter 1987, p. 13. (in author's possession).
61. Kolbe Student, April 1989, pp. 1-2 (in author's possession); on life of the chaplaincy's chief sponsor, Fr Kolbe, see : Kathleen Boner, "Dr F C Kolbe : Priest, Patriot and Educationist" (D. Litt. et Phil. thesis, University of South Africa 1980).
62. The Southern Cross, 28 July 1937.
63. The Southern Cross, 19 July 1939.
64. Professor Phillip V. Tobias, interviewed Witwatersrand University Medical School, 2 June 1988; Professor Peter Hunter, interviewed Johannesburg, 28 July 1988; Obituary of "Jimmy Stewart" in Grace and Truth, Vol. 5 No. 3 1984, pp. 106-107, 127.

National Catholic Federation of Students, made contact with Pax Romana, the International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS), and attended their Inter-Federal Assembly of national federations, which welcomed NCFs into their organisation. ⁶⁵

NCFs inherited much of NUSAS' structure - extremely formal business sessions, voting on issues according to constituent societies' numerical size (not the number of conference delegates), joint conference venues with NUSAS as well as NUSAS' concern for political and social justice in South Africa. It also took a supportive, but often critical, part in the politics of NUSAS itself.

Many white members of NCFs, South Africans and Southern Rhodesians, had never questioned segregation before attending university; some never knew apartheid existed. Through meeting black students on the politically "neutral" ground of their faith, they were able to form friendships, gain insights into apartheid's indignities and become its staunch opponents. John Deary, ⁶⁶ growing up in Salisbury, had once asked his religious education teacher "Who is my neighbour?" but had received no answer. As a result of meeting fellow Zimbabweans Robert Mugabe, Bernard Chidzero and Leopold Takawira ⁶⁷ and other black South Africans,

65. BC 927 : Pax Romana : IMCS Circular No. 1, 26 April 1948.

66. John Deary, interviewed Harare, Zimbabwe, 27 September 1988. Deary later became a vocal opponent of white domination and was a leading member of the Rhodesian Catholic Justice and Peace Commission in the 1970s, see : Ian Linden, The Catholic Church in the Struggle for Zimbabwe (London, 1980), pp. 163, 253, 268.

67. Robert Mugabe, now President of Zimbabwe; Bernard Chidzero, Zimbabwe's Minister of Finance; Leopold Takawira, died in detention in a diabetic coma, 15 June 1970. He was refused medical attention by the Rhodesian authorities.

he was able to start working towards an answer. From being a youth in Bathurst and Grahamstown, Eastern Cape, Nick McNally⁶⁸ arrived at the University of Cape Town ignorant of the fact that a racial problem existed. Donovan Lowry,⁶⁹ coming from the Transkei, also arrived at UCT - but with fairly strong views of how to "deal" with the "Native Problem".

Contact with black Catholic students led to radical modifications in the views of white Catholic students. On an intellectual level some NCFS affiliates ran African Affairs Study Groups, which discussed contemporary political issues and had a wide following.⁷⁰ Less explicitly, anti-racism emerged in essentially theological terms, demonstrating the "church" nature of NCFS : though NCFS President Jimmy Stewart could informally label apartheid as "nonsense"⁷¹ publicly he expressed the same view in religious terms, viz. that people "should at last learn to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness that we may learn to know those things which are the source of our peace".⁷² A concept that was also appropriated since it "readily (lent) itself to a political reading"⁷³ was the concept of a Mystical Body, "the metaphor of the human body of which Christ is the head and (the Church is) the members".⁷⁴

68. Nick McNally, interviewed Harare, Zimbabwe, 24 September 1988. He was active as a lawyer and politician in the anti-Smith opposition and is now one of the five Chief Justices in Zimbabwe

69. Donovan Lowry, interviewed Johannesburg, 14 October 1988.

70. Donovan Lowry, 14 October 1988.

71. NCFS : Jimmy Stewart to Executive Members, 5 September 1948.

72. NCFS : "To Catholic Students" (from Stewart), early 1949.

73. Alfred Fierro, The Militant Gospel : An Analysis of Contemporary Political Theologies (London, 1977), p. 63.

74. William E. Addis and Thomas Arnold, A Catholic Dictionary, Fifteenth Edition (London, 1954), pp. 583-584.

Apartheid's apologetics that saw its implementation as the preservation of Western European civilization was rejected, with the suggestion that there were no advanced or primitive cultures, "only good ones leading towards God and bad ones leading away from him".⁷⁵ Notions of biological inferiority of some races were denounced⁷⁶ and the 1940s and 1950s saw a quite uncompromising assertion from NCFCS that "discrimination on racial grounds [was] INADMISSABLE (sic)".⁷⁷ Attempts were made to oppose apartheid in practice as well. This led to a strong Catholic opposition to social segregation at a time in the late 1940s and early 1950s when even a liberal organisation like NUSAS practised a social colour bar; opposing such a colour bar meant the real or threatened disaffiliation of conservative campuses from NUSAS. When Cape Town temporarily disaffiliated,⁷⁸ NCFCS opposed the motion and encouraged Catholics to become involved in student political activity.⁷⁹ The early 1950s saw considerable Catholic political activity on campuses like Cape Town and the Witwatersrand. At Cape Town a group of Italian missionaries, who were studying there, helped teach Catholic students how to mobilize the "Catholic vote" (never large) and canvass widely and relentlessly for their candidates for the Student Representatives' Council (SRC).⁸⁰ On a few occasions, only Catholic and

75. The Southern Cross, 8 July 1953.

76. Fr Matthew : NCFCS Newsletter Vol. II, No.1 August 1959 (n.p.)

77. BC 927 : NCFCS Executive Newsletter, No. 3 (1953), p. 1.

78. Clare Larkin, "Student Politics at the University of Cape Town, 1939-1959" (B.A. Honours Research Essay, University of Cape Town, 1986), pp. 39-41.

79. NCFCS : President's Half-yearly Report, December 1948.

80. John Deary, 27 September 1988; NCFCS : J. D. to Frank, 23 September 1952; McNally : Kolbe Society Journal, March 1952, p. 4.

socialist students stood on opposition to social segregation "tickets", but without much success.⁸¹ In addition NCF5 held numerous "open" gatherings : on one occasion an NCF5 picnic was held that was blamed on NUSAS by conservative newspapers.⁸² Often, too, white female NCF5 members found their sense of liberal commitment to non-racialism tested by the thought of being invited to dance at a social by black male students.⁸³ Many resolved these dilemmas with a determination not to compromise their liberal values.

One of the manifestations of NCF5 anti-apartheid activity was expressed in the area of welfare work, called in the NCF5 - NUSAS and IMCS parlance "Relief". Relief was part of Catholicism's response to the devastation of post-War society : persons displaced by the war, by the rise of communist states and "assigned" to IMCS and its affiliates, the plight of students uprooted from their homes and studies by the turmoil. Local federations were encouraged to aid exiled and impoverished students as well as to engage in charitable works in their own countries.⁸⁴ The NCF5 Executive encouraged local societies to take part in charitable activities.⁸⁵ Attempts were made at Cape Town - with very mixed results - to get Catholic students

81. Donovan Lowry, 14 October 1988.

82. BC 586/58 : President of NUSAS to John Bishop, 17 July 1956.

83. Lucienne Hunter, Etheen Lowry, Donovan Lowry, 14 October 1988.

84. BC 927 : Pax Romana - I.M.C.S. : Report of the Commission on Relief adopted by the Interfederal Assembly of Spa (c. 1948), p. 1.

85. NCF5 : Circular to local Catholic Societies and their communities, 5 August 1948.

involved in an adult Night School at Langa,⁸⁶ and later the idea spread to the Witwatersrand and Pietermaritzburg Universities.⁸⁷ Of a much more lasting nature was NCF's commitment to raise funds for a bursary for a black student at Pius XII Catholic University College in Roma, Basutoland (now the National University of Lesotho). This was seen as an especially important project since Pius XII was not only a Catholic college but also an institution in southern Africa that was not subject to the restrictions of the Bantu Education Department.⁸⁸

During this period (1948 - 1960) NUSAS also became deeply involved in relief work. In 1951 NUSAS called a meeting with delegates from NCF and the Students' Christian Association (SCA) to see if the three organisations could form a South African branch of the international welfare agency, the World University Service (WUS).⁸⁹ NCF was from the start keen to work with NUSAS in developing WUS,⁹⁰ with mutually beneficial results for both organisations. As the 1950s progressed the State legislated to establish apartheid in the universities; the first casualty of this policy was the State medical bursary scheme for black

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86. BC 927 : Report of the Nyanga Night School (Pat O'Connor), 14 September 1950; McNally : Kolbe Society Journal, Vol. 2, No. 2, October 1951, p. 8; McNally : Kolbe Society Journal, March 1952, pp. 13-14.
87. NCF : Director of Relief to O'Connor, Dir. of Night Schools, Kolbe, UCT, June 1952.
88. Agreed upon by Peter Hunter, Lucienne Hunter, Donovan Lowry, Etheen Lowry, Colin Gardner and Jo Liefeldt, Johannesburg, 14 October 1988.
89. PVT : Minutes of a Joint Meeting between NUSAS, SCA and NCF, Johannesburg, July 1, 1951.
90. NCF : Resolutions 1951 : No. XXXIX (n.p.)

students at Witwatersrand University.⁹¹ NUSAS, in response, formed the African Medical Students' Trust Fund (AMSTF) and sought funding from overseas, through the World University Service.⁹² While fundraising in the United States, NUSAS Vice-President Neville Rubin made contact with the National Federation of Catholic College Students (NFCCS) and facilitated contact between the two Catholic federations that resulted in a medical bursary for a "Catholic African medical student" at Witwatersrand Medical School,⁹³ a bursary that in no way affected the already concerted effort of NCFS to raise funds for the "Pius XII Bursary".

An examination of co-operation with NUSAS on relief matters leads inevitably to an examination of student politics and NCFS. This, in turn, means almost exclusively NCFS's relationship with NUSAS. Though NCFS, unlike NUSAS (in this period), had significant numbers of affiliates at Afrikaans-speaking and politically-conservative campuses, no ties and certainly no sympathies were shown for the Afrikaanse Studentebond (ASB).⁹⁴ Structurally, NCFS shared joint venues - and sometimes joint speakers - with NUSAS for conferences, and the NCFS-NUSAS leadership were normally close (at times interchangeable).⁹⁵ NCFS supported and

91. Martin Legassick, The National Union of South African Students : Ethnic Cleavage and Ethnic Integration in the Universities (Los Angeles, 1967) p. 33.

92. NCFS : NUSAS Pamphlet : "African Medical Scholarship's Trust Fund" (c. 1958).

93. BC 586/58 : Magnus Gunther to Gerard Boulle, 15 January 1958;
BC 586/58 : Neville Rubin to Gerard Boulle, 25 February 1958;
NCFS : Mary F Somers (Vice-President NFCCS) to Boulle,
8 May 1958.

94. On one occasion, NCFS even rebuked the ASB for its anti-Catholic attitudes, viz. The Southern Cross, 11 April 1956.

95. Professor Phillip V Tobias, 2 June 1988.

encouraged the political goals of NUSAS and defended NUSAS wherever possible from public and State slurs that it was "communistic (sic)";⁹⁶ they also became a valued ally of the liberal majority in NUSAS, often in polite opposition to Marxist groupings within the Union.⁹⁷ All of this was done with great tact and diplomacy, never letting differences become a source of angry rhetoric.

NCFS' anti-Marxism was a reflection of the broader Catholic anti-communism of the times (qv). Some saw Marxism as "anti-humane".⁹⁸ Others were more willing to engage in dialogue with Marxists in NUSAS, perhaps the first (and only) intelligent Catholic-Marxist dialogue in South Africa.⁹⁹ NCFS members suggested that they were not anti-Marxist out of any sense of support for capitalism; on the contrary they regarded the Church's collaboration with capital over the centuries as scandalous. Nor were they anti-Marxist because most Marxists tended to be atheists, but rather because of the "destructive philosophies"¹⁰⁰ seen as inherent in Stalinism's placing the state above the right of people. A direct result of this position was tension with NUSAS over its membership of the International Union of Students (IUS). This organization had been founded after the Second World War and was based in Prague, Czechoslovakia. It incorporated student organisations from the First, Second and Third World, but became increasingly loyal to

96. For example : NCFS : "Exec. Statement" 11 August 1948; published in The Southern Cross, 1 September 1948.

97. Phillip V. Tobias, 2 June 1988.

98. AFSTDS : The Hart, Vol 1, No. 1, October 1950, pp. 1-2.

99. Professor Phillip V. Tobias, 2 June 1988; Donovan Lowry, 14 October 1988.

100. AFSTDS : The Hart, July 1952, p. 5.

the Soviet Union's political line. This led many national student federations to debate whether to remain within it or to disaffiliate. ¹⁰¹

Debate raged in South African circles over what to do regarding NUSAS' affiliation to IUS. While NCFS took the same position as the British National Union of Students that IUS was "Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist the student branch of Cominform" ¹⁰² and that NUSAS should quit IUS, NUSAS leaders, including liberals like Phillip Tobias, consistently argued that no good could come from leaving it without trying to influence it in a more liberal direction. ¹⁰³ NCFS used its contacts with Pax Romana to gain more information on the IUS to use for its attempt to persuade the NUSAS leadership to disaffiliate and began to contemplate strategies as to how this could be accomplished. One tactic, to induce affiliates of NUSAS like the University of Cape Town SRC to secede from NUSAS, was mooted but found to be counter-productive. It was felt that such an action would make NCFS and the "anti-communist league" within NUSAS seem petty, and such disaffiliations would only weaken their influence in the student movement. ¹⁰⁴ It is also far from clear how NCFS could actually have managed to carry out such a plan.

101. Phillip G. Altbach, "The International Student Movement", Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. 5, No. 1, 1970, pp. 161-163.

102. AFSTDS : The Hart, Vol. 1, No. 2, May 1951, p. 9.

103. Phillip V. Tobias, 2 June 1988; PVT : NUSAS Minutes of the 24th Annual Student Assembly held at Pietermaritzburg 5-12 July 1954, p. 19.

104. NCFS : President (NCFS) to Mr B Ducret (Secretary General, Pax Romana IMCS), 8 August 1951; NCFS : John (?) to Frank (?), 25 August 1951; NCFS : President to Exec., 4 September 1951.

NUSAS eventually quit IUS in 1955. It had remained in IUS largely through pressure from the white left (particularly at Witwatersrand University) and the strong support for IUS from black NUSAS students who approve IUS's virulent anti-colonialist policy. They regarded the rival international student movement the International Students' Conference (ISC), with its Coordinating Secretariat (COSEC) as too pro-Western, pro-colonial and "reactionary".¹⁰⁵ However, by the time of the 1955 Conference of NUSAS, three black campuses (Fort Hare, the black medical campus of Natal and Hewat Training College) had disaffiliated. Similarly, the NUSAS left's hold on Witwatersrand University was broken by the victory at the SRC polls of a coalition of liberals and conservatives, after some help from the university's administration.¹⁰⁶ The Administration decided to make the SRC a statutory body elected by proportional representation. The Left protested against this, threatening to convene an SRC off-campus, but also set about grooming candidates for the "official" SRC election. Magnus Gunther, the NUSAS member who edited Wits Student and a member of the Catholic Society, exposed this duplicity and NUSAS, together with its liberal allies in NCFS and some conservatives, mobilised against the leftwingers, preventing the Left from controlling the new SRC. With this political victory came the ability of NUSAS to quit IUS.

105. M. Legassick, The National Union of South African Students, pp. 24-25. Elsewhere (p. 18n) Legassick shows that ISC was CIA-funded. See also : Philip Agee, Inside the Company : CIA Diary (Harmondsworth, 1975), pp. 626-627, which confirms this.

106. M. Legassick, Ibid, pp. 24-25.

So effective was this activity that an NCFs national chaplain, Fr Didacus "Diego" Connery (qv) suggested that NCFs, if it desired, could take over NUSAS.¹⁰⁷ He exaggerated, perhaps, but it was an exaggeration that articulated NCFs' growing self-confidence.

An area where liberal anti-racism, relief work and a certain degree of anti-Marxism interacted was the "work camp". A scheme popular among student organisations other than NCFs, this entailed groups of students going into the countryside and working with people on development projects. NCFs leaders were particularly keen to involve first year students in these projects because they would involve promoting better relations between black and white. They were also aware of the need to "work with instead (of) for them",¹⁰⁸ rather than simply becoming sources of charity. At the same time these camps often became the sites of ideological conflicts between liberals and Catholics (on one side) and Marxists on the other. On occasion, NCFs was specifically asked to send people to "work camps" to provide a fairly radical-liberal non-Marxist counterbalance.¹⁰⁹ How they did this is

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107. M. Legassick, The National Union of South African Students, pp. 24-25. Elsewhere (p. 18n) Legassick shows that ISC was CIA-funded. See also : Philip Agee, Inside the Company : CIA Diary (Harmondsworth, 1975), pp. 24-25; Donovan Lowry, Etheen Lowry, Jo Liefeldt, 14 October 1988.
108. BC 586/S8 : NCFs Minutes of the 1958 Conference held at Roma, Basutoland, p 15; NCFs : Paul (?) to Gerald (?), 16 April 1958.
109. BC 927 : Mary Buckley to John (?), 3 November 1954; NCFs : Ian (?) to Colin (?), n.d.; BC 927 : NCFs Newsletter No. 3, November 1954 (n.p.).

unclear; one may only assume that they came well-prepared with "answers" from the corpus of Catholic Social Teaching. ¹¹⁰

Less divisive in student politics was the issue of the State's moves towards introducing apartheid in the universities. When in 1953 the Bantu Education Act was passed, the State introduced school syllabi "geared to what the Government considered African educational needs to be", ¹¹¹ much protest but little collective resistance was shown; ¹¹² throughout the 1950s the State tried to extend its educational power over black tertiary education and in 1959 introduced the ironically-titled Extension of University Education Act which provided for segregated "tribal" colleges under the direct control of the Ministry of Bantu Education and effectively purged existing black institutions of "undesirable ideological developments", as one Minister put it. ¹¹³ Both NUSAS and NCFs protested strongly throughout the period leading up to its implementation : NCFs commentators questioned the

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110. Catholic Social Teaching (CST) had existed throughout the centuries but became important in the late 19th Century as the Hierarchy's "alternative" to ideologies like Marxism. Interestingly, its roots in the pre-Constantinian Church is not too far removed from Socialism, viz. John C. Cort, Christian Socialism : An Informal History (Maryknoll, NY, 1988) and Rafael Avila, Ownership : Early Christian Teaching (Maryknoll, NY and London 1983). Recent (post-1960s) social teaching often recalls this earlier socialist vision.
111. T R H Davenport, South Africa : A Modern History 3rd Edition (Johannesburg, 1987), p. 374.
112. Trevor Huddleston, Naught for your Comfort (London, 1957), p. 127, suggested, perhaps optimistically, that if the Churches had opted for civil disobedience, some degree of independence of mission education might have been achieved.
113. Quoted in : Nkosinathi Gwala (pseudonym), "State Control, Student Politics and the Crisis in Black Universities", in William Cobbett and Robin Cohen (eds) Popular Struggles in South Africa (London, 1988), p. 165.

commitment of the Government to the idea of university freedom; with its implementation one NCFs member suggested that "Roma University (was) the only university which (was) worth attending".¹¹⁴ NCFs devised a slogan and a symbol, the Latin "Ut Omnes Unum Sint" ("That all may be one") and a cross-design that was half-white and half-black,¹¹⁵ which was then used on stationery in a similar way to the jackboot design adopted by NUSAS.

With this emphasis on political liberalism, anti-racism and commitment to what was essentially a small-scale form of "development" (work camps, bursaries and relief work), one might expect that the intellectual tone of NCFs, as expressed through its conferences, would be "political" in a theological sense. On the contrary, no clear political theology - no critical reflection on the practices of the Catholic faith in the context of the 1940s and 1950s - was forthcoming. The model of the church that existed in this period was "serene, medieval, triumphalist" and not particularly concerned with reflecting theologically on the events of the day.¹¹⁶ What was perhaps remarkable was that the intellectual tone - and this was predominantly theological - was so far in advance of its times. The force behind this was the National Chaplain of the early to mid-1950s, Didacus "Diego" Connery, an Irish Franciscan trained in France and the subject of

114. NCFs : Bren Hughes (Vice-President NCFs) to Robert (Ekinu, Pax Romana African Secretary), 8 August 1959.

115. Fr Matthew : NCFs Newsletter, March 1960 (n.p.);
Fr Matthew : NCFs Newsletter Vol 3, No. 1, August 1960 (n.p.)

116. Bill McSweeney, Roman Catholicism : The Search for Relevance (Oxford, 1980), p. 88.

many legends. Some held that he had been a worker-priest in France,¹¹⁷ others suggested that he had earned no less than three doctorates, been an education advisor to UNESCO and that he'd never attended a school in his youth.¹¹⁸

Diego, whatever the truth behind the legend was, was unconventional : he insisted on being called simply "Diego" by students and priests alike, and was deeply knowledgeable in the areas of modern theology, poetry, literature, history and perhaps even psychology. He instituted mini-conferences, called formation schools, to develop deeper theological thinking in NCFS as well as the building up of community spirit,¹¹⁹ but being a foreigner felt unwilling to busy himself with political issues.

The chief intellectual stimulus for NCFS each year was the National Conference, which included a number of sessions addressing themes and issues of interest from a Catholic perspective. During most of the 1940s and 1950s these papers were prepared and delivered by delegates from each affiliated campus. Most of the papers were preoccupied with subjects such as education, professional careers and the duty of student

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117. Colin B. Collins, tape-recording of a radio-broadcast, Adelaide, Australia, October 1977 (copy in possession of author).
118. Colin Gardner, Peter Hunter, Lucienne Hunter, Donovan Lowry, Etheen Lowry, Jo Liefeldt, 14 October 1988.
119. The Southern Cross, 2 March 1955; Copy of a manuscript "Formation Schools" (1 page, written c 1964) from Dr Colin B. Collins, who often assisted Diego at these conferences (document in possession of author); Mrs Sarah McNally (néé Forder), interviewed in Harare, Zimbabwe, 24 September 1988; Gardner, Hunter et al, 14 October 1988.

Catholics - the preoccupations that the institutional Church saw as the "strategic sphere" of young Catholic intellectuals. As the 1950s, and the influence of Diego, progressed, themes became a little more daring : liturgical reform, an understanding of humanity and Christian obligations, and responses to existentialism, ethics and psychology. ¹²⁰ Throughout all this, NCFS remained obedient to the definite limits imposed by the Hierarchy of South Africa, though often they were trying to go as far as possible to the limits of orthodoxy. ¹²¹

Occasionally during the 1950s, however, political concerns and intellectual themes at national conferences intersected explicitly e.g. the 1953 Conference on "Inter-racial Justice" and in dramatic fashion in 1957 as a preparation for the Africa Seminar held in newly-independent Ghana. The NCFS conference served as a preliminary preparation, particularly since NCFS had been called upon to present a paper "The role of the Catholic Student" as part of the Seminar's theme "The University in Africa". ¹²² The preparation, and the widespread fundraising that made it possible for no less than 20 NCFS delegates to attend, ¹²³ proved worthwhile : the meeting itself was a great success as was the "work camp" held afterwards in the little Ghanaian village of Kwaso. ¹²⁴

120. The Southern Cross, 26 July 1950, 6 August 1952, 25 July 1956, 20 July 1960.

121. Professor Peter Hunter, 28 July 1988.

122. The Southern Cross, 24 July 1957.

123. NCFS : "To Whom it May Concern" (a letter to companies asking for sponsorship), 19 September 1957.

124. Colin Gardner, 14 October 1988; The Southern Cross, 8 January 1958, 26 February 1958.

The late 1950s saw the growth of an articulate, politically-conscious black NCFS constituency. Some started to produce papers on political issues for conferences, formation schools and publications. A student from Pius XII College, Dennis Madide, wrote a series of critical essays on aspects of South Africa Society. One criticised censorship in general, and in particular the then common practice of banning works that reflected equality of status and relations between black and white.¹²⁵ He also wrote an article, based on a talk given by him to a joint session at an NCFS and NUSAS Conference, on African nationalism. He attacked Prime Minister Verwoerd's vision of a republic as "a childish illusion" and asked whites not to equate black nationalism with Marxism or anti-whitism.¹²⁶ From such inauspicious beginnings a new dynamic was starting to emerge in NCFS, the tension between radicalised black members and the cosily liberal white majority.

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The chapters that follow will examine the development of political ideas and activity within NCFS; and the role of intellectual input in the broad ideological development of NCFS, especially the question of theological discourse. They will also explore the question of black student participation in a predominantly white, middle-class organisation and, after 1971, the impact of black non-participation in NCFS. These studies, it is hoped, will develop an insight into the contradictory nature and role of religion in Twentieth Century South Africa.

125. Fr Matthew : NCFS Newsletter Vol. II No. 2, September 1959 (n.p.).

126. Fr Matthew : Unitas 1960 (n.d.), p. 19.

CHAPTER ONE
THE CRISIS AND COLLAPSE OF A MULTI-RACIAL
CHURCH MOVEMENT : NCF5, 1960 - 1971

"The old is dying and the new cannot be born

In this interregnum, there arises a great diversity of morbid symptoms."

Antonio Gramsci

The 1960s was a time of contradictions between a rigid, hierarchical inward-looking Church that was irrevocably changed during the Second Vatican Council, and the slow often tortuous rise of a Church that was open to the world, committed with greater practical and theoretical vigour to justice and human development. This experience is echoed in NCF5' experience. The chapter covers a number of themes : the growth of NCF5 intellectual themes as a site of conflict between liberal and radical members on one side and a growing and highly articulate conservative group; the role of welfare ("relief") work in the NCF5 internal conflicts; more explicit political tensions between the "left" and "right", particularly in relation to student and church politics in South Africa; the role of ecumenism, in particular the University Christian Movement (UCM), in deepening these political tensions; and, finally, the course of events that led to the 1970-1971 "split", the disaffiliation of black NCF5 affiliates from the Federation.

NCFS INTELLECTUAL TRENDS

The intellectual tone of the 1960s was described by former NCFS Chaplain Colin Collins as "very exciting".¹ Theologically NCFS had been from the 1950s onwards in advance of Vatican II, the South African Bishops and the rest of the Catholic Church in the Country. Increasingly in the 1960s, issues addressed at Conferences and in NCFS meetings and media took on much stronger political overtones, particularly as black students at the newly created 'Bantu Universities' became more deeply involved in the Federation.² Conference themes in the early sixties seemed to reflect the many intellectual questions raised by the Second Vatican Council and the particular problems of the church in South Africa. Thus themes like "The Church" (1962),³ 'Moral Conflict in South Africa' (1963)⁴ and the desire 'Ut Omnes Unum Sit' ('That All May be One') in South Africa (1961) became subjects for discussion.⁵ Attempts were made in these conferences to have distinguished speakers (clergy, laity and sometimes even non-Catholics) delivering talks on prearranged subjects.

Looking at political issues, usually from the standpoint of the Church, was a common occurrence. Speakers were chosen either to give general, empirical descriptions of social conditions in South

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1. Dr Colin B. Collins, tape recording sent to me from Brisbane, Australia in April 1989.
 2. Ibid ; C.B. Collins, unpublished manuscript "Autobiography" (1972), pp. 74-76 (in possession of the author).
 3. Fr Matthew: NCFS Conference 1961 (Silver Jubilee 1937 - 62) (13-21 July 1963) (Conference Programme).
 4. Fr Matthew: NCFS 16th Annual Conference "Moral Conflict and the Christian in South Africa" Witwatersrand University 1-8 July 1963 (Conference Programme).
 5. Fr Matthew: "Ut Omnes Unum Sit" 4-10 July 1961 (Durban) (Programme).

Africa or to suggest ways in which Catholics (particularly young Catholics) could work for justice in the country. Most of the talks still tended to start from abstract principles and finally be applied, tentatively, to the South African situation. A clear example of this can be seen in the 1963 Conference on "Moral Conflict in South Africa". Most of the talks tended to start with abstract religious or philosophical principles, be these question of 'Conscience and the Law' (Ian Thompson), 'Christian Teaching and the Communal Life of Man' (Jerome Smith OP), or they were not infrequently empirical descriptions of social controls or the crisis of education in the country. All tended to be cautious. Only one, on social justice, was particularly hard-hitting in its outright condemnation of racism, paternalism and a form of law and order described as essentially fascist in nature. ⁶

The Second Vatican Council, the most important event in the life of the Catholic Church since the Reformation, was undoubtedly the most important issue in the minds of most Catholic university students. In many respects it pushed into the background the political issues affecting students in South Africa during the Sixties. ⁷ Thus many of the Conferences (and most NCFS journals

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6. NCFS: Moral Conflict in South Africa, NCFS July '63 (photocopies of some of the talks given at the 1963 Conference). Though conservative by the standards of the NCFS of the 1970s and 1980s, it was regarded as an intellectual highlight and copies of the talks were distributed worldwide by Pax Romana.
 7. Opinion expressed by Mr John Greene, interviewed at UCT, 27 October 1988; Sister Brigid Rose Tiernan SND (letter to author, 29 April 1988) remembered many evenings of discussion at Rhodes on the Vatican II changes in the Church, suggesting that in this period "Catholic Society concerned itself with changes in the Church, NUSAS with the wider society."

of the time) had themes directly or indirectly influenced by the Conciliar Documents and the post-Vatican II statements of Pope Paul VI and the Bishops. One conference, for example, examined the findings of the Council from the perspective of contemporary Afrikaner academics.⁸ Another investigated freedom of speech in Church and society. The 1967 Conference, assessing Society and the Church, Development and Christian Action⁹ seems to have had as its intellectual influence an amalgam of Vatican II's "Gaudium et Spes" and Paul VI's "Populorum Progressio", both of which addressed the question of human development and justice. Conferences, and conference-planning, could even become a site of conflict between different theological and political opinions. The 1968 conference on 'God' was a case in point. One group wanted a conference that would be rooted in the traditional ways of proving God's existence, God in the Bible, an assessment of the 'death of God' theology and a modern view of the doctrine of the Trinity. Another group wanted a conference that questioned the relevance of God in modern society and the student community, the case for agnosticism, as well as modern understandings of the meaning of God and religious belief.¹⁰ This crisis of interpretation of the topic was resolved in the time-honoured NCFs way : compromise. The agnosticism and relevance questions were retained, an affirmation of God was included, together with theological talks on the meaning of God and Trinity. An addition

8. Letter to author from Mr Martin Welz, 25 May 1988.

9. Hin: Pamphlet : 1967 Conference 2-8 July 1967 Programme.

10. AD1126, J4: NCFs (SA): Minutes of the National Executive Meeting held at Rosettenville Priory, Johannesburg, February 1968, pp. 6-8.

to this was a section on African traditional views of God, an afterthought that one might perhaps interpret as a sop to the black Catholic Societies in NCFS.

Strongly reminiscent of the themes and values expressed in conference topics, the NCFS intellectual journal Unitas covered a range of subjects. Many were Conference talks; others originated from talks given at a local Catholic Society level on biblical studies, related matters,¹¹ the idea of a "religionless Christianity" and numerous questions relating to justice, peace and the role of the Church in social transformation.¹² Popular secular subjects included such things as psychiatry, psychology, art and literature. On some occasions the editorials hinted at an attempt on the part of the journal to take part in wider intellectual Christian debates, viz. the editorial support for New Blackfriars editor, Herbert McCabe OP, who was suspended for stating in an editorial that the Catholic Church was corrupt.¹³ Yet, ultimately, Unitas had little lasting impact on South African Catholic circles: it lacked the sophistication of a New

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11. SJV: Unitas: NCFS Journal May 1966: "Love and Sex in the Scriptures" (T. McDermott OP); Unitas: NCFS Journal June 1966. "Knowledge and the Bible" (D. McGrail OFM); Unitas: NCFS Journal May 1967: "The Devil and his Angels" (T. McDermott OP). (no page numbering used).
 12. Inter alia: SJV: Unitas 4: NCFS Journal July 1967: "Christian Transformation of Society" (B. F. Connor OP), "Development is new name for Peace" (C. B. Collins); Unitas March 1964: "Christianity Without Religion" (C. Velecky OP) (a look at the secularisation/death of God theology of J.A.T. Robinson.) (no pages numbered).
 13. Fr Matthew: Unitas 2 NCFS Journal (sic) March 1967: Editorial; see also the McCabe editorial in New Blackfriars, Vol. 48, No. 561, February 1967, pp. 226-229.

Blackfriars or the leftwing political commitment of a Catholic student journal like Slant.¹⁴ It failed even to gain a strong NCFS audience and was eventually amalgamated into the UCM journal One For The Road (qv).

WELFARE

One of the projects characteristic of the 1940s and 1950s had been the NCFS Bursary for African Catholic students attending Pius XII University College, Roma, Basutoland. Year after year during the 1960s the NCFS Treasurer made appeals for affiliated societies to give generously to the fund. Occasionally, individuals questioned the importance of the bursary and, characteristically, the Treasurer tried to re-emphasize the desperate need for the bursary.¹⁵ On some occasions innovative schemes were introduced to raise funds, e.g. a play-reading at Witwatersrand University that netted R189 in 1965.¹⁶ Attempts were also made

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14. Slant was a British Journal of Catholic socialists, centred upon Oxbridge, and including figures such as the renowned literary critic Terry Eagleton. An outgrowth of this was the 'Slant manifesto', published in 1966, in which it was suggested that socialism was the only system that could create a type of community compatible with Christianity. The movement and its journal failed to gain a following, either among Catholics or among the New Left (See: Arthur F. McGovern SJ, Marxism: An American Christian Perspective (Maryknoll, New York, 1980) p. 120; Adrian Cunningham, et al, Catholics and the Left: Slant Manifesto (London: 1969).
 15. UZ: Circus (UCT CathSoc Newsletter) 11 August 1964, contains a letter from the Treasurer, Bryan Tennant, rebuking an earlier correspondent who felt fundraising for the Bursary was a waste of time.
 16. BC927 : NCFS (SA) : Minutes of the Council Sessions - July 1965, Treasurer's Report (Bryan Tennant). 1964-65 was in fact the best year for finances in years: instead of being in the red (as was common) the Treasury had a R500 credit.

at making international contacts with other Catholic federations, contacts that included requesting financial assistance in funding NCFCS projects. One such contact from the 1950s was with the United States' National Federation of Catholic College Students (NFCCS), a federation of students at Catholic-owned colleges. NFCCS had a section named CURA, the Colleges and Universities Relief Administration, which had as its purpose the task of "giv[ing] direct aid to Pax Romana and other emerging projects; campuses and regions should be encouraged to undertake projects suggested by Pax Romana".¹⁷ One of the projects of 1961-62, carried out by the College of New Rochelle, was aid to Pius XII College,¹⁸ though it appears that this was directly to the College and not through the NCFCS Fund.¹⁹ The NCFCS National Chaplain, Colin Collins, also approached North American Catholic Relief agencies for funds to aid black University students in financial need (particularly those who were expelled by university authorities as the Black Consciousness movement grew stronger on the 'Bantu' campuses) and to help finance black students' attending NCFCS Conferences.²⁰

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17. CUA: National Federation of Catholic College Students: Reports Third Session XIX National Council August, 1962, Chicago Illinois, Section VIII D: National Cura Committee (no page numbering).
 18. CUA: Ibid, Cura Projects 1961-2, College of New Rochelle (no page numbering).
 19. Letter to author from H Warren Willis, Archivist working for the United States Catholic Conference at the Catholic University of America (CUA), 11 October 1988. After consulting the transfiles containing NFCCS papers, Mr Willis concluded that NFCCS never funded scholarships as such.
 20. Dr C.B. Collins, tape recording sent to author, circa April 1989.

Other forms of welfare work were also undertaken at local levels. After a visit by Witwatersrand Catholic Society members to the schools of Orlando township an attempt was made to help alleviate the "(s)hocking" ²¹ conditions found there. Appeals were made, both locally and nationally, for books, maps and other basic equipment. Another form of charity work still popular in some areas during the 1960s was the work camp. Pretoria Catholic Society was particularly involved in this form of activity, seeing it as a practical way of engaging in Christian service. The most detailed account of such activity extant, from 1969, shows that it involved going into the countryside - chaplain included - and engaging in manual labour, usually at the service of rural missions. These activities included such tasks as building fences around mission school playgrounds, doing alterations to the chapel's sanctuary, painting buildings, clearing ground to prepare lawns as well as visiting local people, hiking, visiting sites of historical interest and holding informal group gatherings and discussion groups. ²²

INTERNAL POLITICAL TENSIONS

Most white NCFS members adhered to varying degrees of Liberalism as a political 'line' - most of them were supporters of either the Liberal or Progressive Parties. ²³ Black NCFS members, particularly by the end of the 1960s, were more radical - particularly those who adopted the Black Consciousness Ideology.

21. BC927: NCFS (SA) : Minutes of the Council Sessions - July 1968, Director of Education Report, p. 6.

22. Southern Cross, 19 February 1969.

23. John Greene, interviewed at UCT, 27 October 1988.

This section looks at various events in the 1960s which made NCFS take a political stand - either on their own accord or with NUSAS. It will be suggested that these events demonstrate also the emergence - and growth - of a highly articulate conservative faction within NCFS.

THE CRAIGHEAD INCIDENT

The banning of Liberal Party member and prominent Catholic layperson David Craighead created a controversy in NCFS. The issue of banning people under the Suppression of Communism Act was raised at the council sessions in July 1965 and the action by the state was condemned, both specifically and in general regarding the principle of banning without due recourse to law.²⁴

A decision to publish this decision was reached, but controversy erupted when the Publications Officer referred the issue to a right-wing advocate who approached the Minister of Justice for a reason for the banning, which was never given. The Publications Officer was later censured for his actions which had been beyond his delegated responsibility,²⁵ but the incident served to set the scene for further controversies that would split NCFS ideologically into conservative and liberal factions.

24. BC927: Minutes of the Council Sessions - July 1965, Motions 29/65, 30/65, 37/65 (n.p.).

25. AD1126, J4: NCFS (SA) : Minutes of the National Executive Meeting, held at the Grail House, Johannesburg, November 28, 1966, pp. 9-10.

THE BOCHUM INCIDENT

Catholic youth and student movements throughout the world had been radicalized by the later 1960s, particularly in Third World countries.

The late Fifties had seen the emergence of the Black Civil Rights movement in the United States, movements against the French War in Algeria, early rumblings of protest in the mid-Sixties against the escalating 'police action' in South Vietnam, as well as the wave of independence sweeping through former colonial Africa.²⁶

But in South Africa radical protest was dormant. The 1950s had been the decade of mass protest, but in the wake of the banning of the two major Black political movements, the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress, in 1960 and the intensification of security legislation and repression (bannings, detentions, trials et al) the 1960s were less openly militant. NUSAS, as one of the few multiracial movements left in South Africa, became increasingly the most radical internal critic of the State. Despite the Botha's Hill speech of Jonty Driver (calling for participation in the liberation movements) and much anti-NUSAS propaganda by the State, it maintained its basic liberal direction though it "undoubtedly retreated from the limb on which it found itself" in mid-1964 (the Botha's Hill speech).²⁷ The Catholic Church in South Africa was also caught in a socio-political rut: though one of its leaders, Archbishop

26. For an excellent examination of these, and other events, see R Fraser, 1968 (London, 1988), pp. 29-120.

27. M Legassick, The National Union of South African Students : Ethnic Cleavage and ethnic integration in the Universities (Los Angeles, 1967), p. 49.

Denis Hurley of Durban was an acknowledged leader of the African bloc of Bishops at the Second Vatican Council, and though it applied the new decisions of the Council, it did not develop its social policy about apartheid much further than it had in the late Fifties and early Sixties. NCFS, as a organization linked to the Church and to the student movement, suffered from such division, particularly the division along political lines.

Due to shortages in funding that necessitated that their delegate be able to support himself in travelling to the Inter-Federal Assembly (IFA) of the International Movement of Catholic Students, the NCFS Council in July 1967 elected Wim Van Kets, a member of the Pretoria delegation to represent them at the Assembly. The Assembly was an important place for sharing ideas and experiences and its subject matter reflected to a great extent the interests of Catholic Student movements in the developing world. The focus was on the disparity of wealth between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots', the role of the student in developing societies, the roles of science, the university and the socio-political order in terms of developing a theology of Christian community. The value of Marxism as a tool for analysis, as well as the similarities and differences between Christianity and Marxism, were examined. In the spirit of renewal ushered in by Vatican II liturgical experiments were popular, including a Eucharistic service accompanied by traditional Indian music and lessons in meditation from a Vietnamese Buddhist monk.²⁸ However, during the business sessions, a problem arose.

28. AD1126, J4: NCFS : Minutes of the Conference - July 1968, Report to NCFS on the 26th Interfederal Assembly, held in Bochum, Germany, during August 1967, pp. 36-38.

The delegate, Van Kets, was known to believe in the acceptability of separate development, contrary to the policy of NCFS. However it was hoped that he would "rise above his ideas and represent the Federation as such".²⁹ This he did, in fact introducing a motion at the Council Session of the IFA condemning apartheid (supported by Venezuela and Senegal).³⁰ However his personal views caused tension within the Conference, with the issue being raised by Ethiopia, France, Venezuela and Holland over whether it was possible for Van Kets to represent adequately NCFS.³¹ The other issue at stake was whether the IFA could judge the personal attitude of a delegate. Rather than expulsion, it was decided to remove the South African delegate's right to vote on Council matters. Van Kets accepted this graciously, participating fully in further discussions and at the end of the Assembly was complimented by all the delegates on the way in which he had handled the incident.³²

The event had some far-reaching consequences. One former NCFS member and sociologist asked whether NCFS was "coddling" the Pretoria branch in order that it remain in the Federation.³³

29. AD1126, L3: Collins to P. T. Kuriakose, 20 July 1967

30. AD1126, L3: "Putting the Record Straight" P.R.J. (Pax Romana Journal) No. 5, 1967, p. 12; Southern Cross 27 September 1967 ; Letter from P.T. Kuriakose; Southern Cross 13 September 1967.

31. Southern Cross 13 September 1967; Southern Cross 27 September 1967; AD1126, L3: "The South African Representation : Putting the Record Straight" P.R.J. No. 5 1967, p. 12.

32. Southern Cross 13 September 1967; Southern Cross 27 September 1967; AD1126, L3: "The South African Representation : Putting the Record Straight" P.R.J. No. 5 1967, p. 12.

33. Southern Cross 27 September 1967 : Letter from Edward Higgins.

NCFS was angry , feeling that the IFA had no right whatsoever to treat their delegate in such a manner. They condemned the incident as an infringement of NCFS autonomy, called for an apology and asked that the proceedings be declared invalid so as to avoid a dangerous precedent.³⁴ IMCS too responded: in a publication on students and the churches in South Africa they quoted a section of the Preamble of the NCFS Constitution:

"We therefore, affirm, both in theory and practice, our opposition to all forms of racial discrimination. NCFS commends the existence of non-racial organisations and accordingly disapproves of societies which encourage racism."³⁵

and added that they were concerned to notice that "a growing element of conservatism",³⁶ namely individuals and groups supporting separate development, had emerged within the Federation. The whole 'Bochum Incident', in short, damaged the international image of NCFS in the latter Sixties.

34. AD1126, J4: NCFS Minutes of Council Meetings - Conference (1968) Resolution 21/66 (n.p.).

35. AD1126, L3: IMCS PR: Students in South Africa : Some Aspects of the effects of Apartheid in South African universities, with specific references to the role of Christian Student organizations (including the University Christian Movement) and the position of the church in South Africa (Fribourg, Switzerland, 1969) pp. 9-10.

36. AD1126, L3: IMCS PR: Students in South Africa : Some Aspects of the effects of Apartheid in South African universities, with specific references to the role of Christian Student organizations (including the University Christian Movement) and the position of the church in South Africa (Fribourg, Switzerland, 1969) p. 10.

THE PRETORIA DEMONSTRATION INCIDENT

In 1968, six Africans were sentenced to death by the Rhodesian Supreme Court for murder. Pope Paul VI appealed to the Rhodesian Government for clemency for the men awaiting execution. Members of Pretoria Catholic Society staged a demonstration against the Pope's plea on 11 March 1968 outside the residence of Monsignor De Andrea, the Vatican's Apostolic Delegate. Placards bore the slogans like 'Catholics and the Pope can Differ' and a spokesman complained 'We feel he [Pope Paul VI] is taking sides in this matter.'³⁷ Though unsurprised, Father Colin Collins reported to Archbishop Garner, prelate of Pretoria, that "extremist qualities of the Pretoria Catholic student group have been more and more manifest".³⁸ In letters to IMCS associates Jurgen Nikolai and (ex-NCFS Exec member) Barbara Newmarch, he described the incident as 'fascist' and expressed his frustration at the lack of action taken by NCFS on the matter.³⁹ Another commentator bitterly commented "... the Archbishop of Pretoria had to defend the Pope's right to protest (he) was protecting the Pope's right to protest to a protesting group of Roman Catholic students. Got it?"⁴⁰

A former Pretoria University and NCFS National Chaplain, Father Matthew MacDonald, reflected:

37. Southern Cross, 13 March 1968.

38. AD1126, L3: Collins to Archbishop Garner, 12 March 1968.

39. AD1126, L3: Collins to J. Nikolai, 15 March 1968;
Collins to Newmarch, 17 March 1968.

40. Malcolm Magee, White Christianity (London & Sydney 1968)
p. 36.

"One concedes the students' right to protest in general. One must concede their criticism. But what precisely are we to understand from this protest in this instance? That they do not like the idea of clemency being extended to the condemned men? Or that any appeal that seems to cast a shadow on the fair face of government in Southern Africa is automatically to be regarded as an intrusion into domestic affairs?"⁴¹

There was also the question of whether it was an official Pretoria Catholic Society protest. A spokesman for the society reported that it was an ad hoc decision of a group of 12 members. The Chaplain, Bonaventure Hinwood, also reported that it was not a challenge to papal authority, but merely an objection to a papal opinion on a political matter. It had, he commented, grown out of a meeting of 15 to 20 members after a Sunday Mass. The decision to protest was reached, at which point some decided against such action and withdrew. Hinwood felt that he did not have the power to prevent such an action, since it was a matter of conscience.⁴² He, too, then withdrew from the gathering.

Finally, at its National Conference in July 1968, NCFS decided to call upon Pretoria Catholic Society to give an account of the incident.⁴³

41. Southern Cross, 20 March 1968, Letter from Fr Matthew McDonald OFM.

42. Southern Cross, 20 March 1968. In an interview with the author, Fr Bonaventure recalled that he was opposed to the demonstration from the start: Interview, St John Vianney Seminary, 9 June 1988.

43. AD1126, J4: NCFS : Minutes of Council Meetings held during the Twentyfirst (sic) Annual Conference, St Peter's Seminary, Hammanskraal, July 1968, Motion 26/68 (n.p.).

proportions, tacit supporters of NUSAS and its liberal principles".⁴⁷

However, in line with the swing to the right that appeared in the mid-1960s among some small groups on Witwatersrand, Durban and Cape Town University campuses who formed conservative clubs which tried - with varying success - to have conservatives take over the Students' Representatives Council, sections of NCFS, particularly those on Afrikaans campuses like Pretoria, tried to challenge the NCFS/NUSAS relationship. Attempts were made to distance NCFS from NUSAS. Strategies included conference motions, publications and general attempts to make NCFS less politically outspoken. These, it will be shown, failed to alienate completely the two organisations; however, some ground was gained by the conservatives.

The first round of the conflict between liberals and conservatives in the 1960s manifested itself at the 1964 Conference where a resolution was passed by the narrow margin of 16 votes to 11, with 2 abstentions that:

"noting the polarisation of South African society into isolated racial groups and the disastrous lack of communication between the groups of people, (NCFS) believes this to be a contradiction of the Christian ideal for which we stand. NCFS hopes that NUSAS as the sole remaining non-sectarian National Student

47. John Daniel, "NUSAS 1963-1973: Ten Years of Conflict", South African Outlook 104, January 1974, pp. 10-11.

The Pretoria delegation reported that before the incident there had been an informal talk on the role of the Pope, after which some individuals decided to protest. Conference then passed a motion affirming and endorsing the papal statement regarding clemency "as most human and befitting to a man of his (Pope Paul VI's) stature", ⁴⁴ as well as a motion accepting the Pretoria delegation's clarification of the circumstances surrounding the demonstration. This too was carried, albeit 18 to 3 with no less than 11 abstentions. ⁴⁵ Justice Moloto of the Fort Hare delegation then remarked, "I would please like to have it on record that the Fort Hare delegation expressed its profound regret on the apparent insincerity of certain members of Council in their official capacity" (adding in a private note containing this statement passed to NCFs President Therese Faller that it did not refer to her, or to the Executive itself). ⁴⁶

RELATIONS WITH NUSAS IN THE 1960s

The relationship between NCFs and NUSAS presents another clear example of the liberal-conservative division in NCFs' ranks. On one level relations between NUSAS and NCFs leadership was good. Most NCFs members seemed to have typified John Daniel's view of the majority of English Language University (ELU) students:

" the 'silent majority' of students at ELU's are not ipso facto conservative, but, in sizable

44. AD1126, J4: NCFs: Minutes - July 1968, Report in terms of Motion 26/68, p 36; Motion 32a/68. (n.p.).

45. AD1126, J4: NCFs: Minutes - July 1968, Motion 32b/68 (n.p.).

46. NCFs : Penned note to "Jen and Therese" from "Justice" (Moloto), sent during the 1968 Conference (loose leaf).

Organisation will continue to provide an open forum for the opinions of students of all racial groups".⁴⁸

Dissension over the association with NUSAS also arose in a debate over whether to retain the phrase "in association with the National Union of South Africa Students" on NCF5 letterheads. It was finally decided to retain the letterhead as it stood.⁴⁹

At the same time a desire was expressed to hear more about NUSAS activities from NUSAS itself, so as to keep NCF5 well informed.⁵⁰ Good relations between the two organisations were guaranteed, at least for a year.

The good relations between NCF5 and NUSAS were reflected in mutual interests and activity over two incidents in late 1964; the detention under Clause 17 of the General Laws Amendment Act of four Fort Hare University students, including Sam Nolutshungu, chairman of the Catholic Society, and the arrest of a number of University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland students outside the Rhodesian Parliament, among whom were Martin Rice, chairman of

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48. AD1126, M2: NCF5: Minutes of the Council Meetings held during the Seventeenth Annual Conference, Pietermaritzburg, July 1964, Resolution 46/64. Significantly, Resolution 47/64 was an attempt to reverse the previous decision. It was lost : 6 For, 18 Against, 11 Abstentions.
49. BC586, S8: Jenny Horn (NCF5 Permanent Secretary) to Roslyn Traub (NUSAS Permanent Secretary), 3 August 1964.
50. BC586, S8: Tim Conroy (NCF5 President) to "Jonty" (C.J. Driver), 13 September 1964: Conroy complained that NCF5 relied on "heresay" (sic) as far as news about NUSAS was concerned and asked for regular circulars to him himself informed.

UCRN's Catholic Society and Chris Magadza, the NCFS Publications Officer for the year.⁵¹ Since one of the Fort Hare detainees, Stephen Gawe, was a member of the Anglican Students' Federation, the Presidents of NCFS (Tim Conroy) and the ASF (Mike Stevenson) sent a telegram to the Minister of Justice, stating that the detentions were viewed with grave concern and petitioned that they be either charged or released.⁵² NUSAS President Maeder Osler sent his personal support to Conroy, indicating that he would have contacted him earlier had he known of the NCFS and ASF connection.⁵³

The 1965 Conference saw once again an attempt to have the letterhead logo "in association with the National Union of South African Students" removed, and once again it was defeated.⁵⁴ However another motion, calling for a special commission to investigate the NUSAS Constitution and past Resolutions, as well as all other aspects of NUSAS, was passed with only one abstention.⁵⁵ The reason for this apparent contradiction in motions is unclear. It must however be recognised that a number of former NUSAS members had been convicted of sabotage in November 1964, and 1965 had seen a wave of bannings of academics and students with NUSAS connections. Some of the arguments for and

51. BC586, S8: (NUSAS) Extraordinary Circular No. 1/64.

52. Ibid.

53. BC586, S8: M. Osler to T. Conroy, 1 October 1964;
T. Conroy to M. Osler, 12 October 1964.

54. BC927: NCFS: Minutes of the Council Meetings held during the Eighteenth Annual Conference, Cape Town, July 1965, Resolution 134/65, defeated 18-12, 3 abstentions, and acclaim. (n.p.).

55. BC927: NCFS: Minutes - July 1965, Resolution 15/65, carried nem. con., 1 abstention.

against closer links, viz. the idea of a joint conference, were as follows: positively, NUSAS was acknowledged as a representative of all South African students and ties with it could strengthen NCFS structurally; against closer ties, it was suggested that NCFS had "something different ... more important" to offer, specifically religious values. Moreover, it was mooted that close ties with NUSAS "coloured" NCFS in the "public eyes".⁵⁶ These rather vague comments - it is unclear from the notes how representative these were of the NCFS members at the Conference - suggest an appeal to pietism and a concern for the public (specifically white public) image of the Federation. However, except for these brief comments no clear decision was reached and the commission was given until the 1966 Conference to produce its findings.

An example of blatant anti-NUSAS feeling emerged in the October 1965 issue of NCFS' journal Unitas. An article purportedly about student movements contained accusations that NUSAS was a leftwing political organisation more concerned about Black Power than about student issues. The enthusiastic comments on the Afrikaner Studentebond (ASB) - including a statement to the effect that the ASB wanted to maintain relations with non-Communist universities - implied that NUSAS was a communist front.⁵⁷ This comment came as a shock to NCFS and NUSAS leaders alike; a month prior to the article's publication, NCFS President Bryan Tennant had confided to his NUSAS counterpart that "the Catholic Societies are hardly

56. BC927: NCFS: Minutes - July 1965, p. 29.

57. SJV: Unitas October 1965, pp. 2-4.

ever sympathetic towards the ASB as it is regarded by some as being akin to a sort of Hitler Youth".⁵⁸ Aware that the NCFS president was upset by the article, the NUSAS leadership attended the next National Executive of NCFS to set matters straight. Tennant himself condemned the issue of Unitas for publishing such an article. In the following issue of Unitas (May 1966), NUSAS Vice President Margaret Marshall challenged the offending article, pointing out that most of the 469 resolutions of the 1965 NUSAS Conference were non-political and that the article had been based on "(e)motive language and an appeal to contemporary political emotional feelings [which was] not enough"⁵⁹ to justify such harsh, unfounded accusations. The incident did not destroy the good relations between NUSAS and NCFS.

The banning on May 11, 1966, of Ian Robertson, President of NUSAS, on the eve of Senator Robert Kennedy's visit to South Africa, organised by NUSAS, sparked vigorous protests and anti-government demonstrations. If as John Daniel theorises, this was a ploy by the then Minister of Justice B J Vorster to crush NUSAS,⁶⁰ it went horribly wrong : protest continued through May into June. Numerous groups issued condemnations. Protests came from the

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58. BC586, S8: Bryan Tennant to Maeder Osler, 4 September 1965.
59. SJV: Unitas May 1966, p 13; on the earlier response see: BC586, S8: Acting President of NUSAS (Mansfield) to 'Margie' (Marshall?), 19 November 1965; AD1126, J4: NCFS Minutes of the National Executive Meeting, held at the Grail House, Johannesburg, 28 November 1966 (sic?) p. 9.
60. John Daniel, "NUSAS 1963-1973: Ten years of Conflict", S.A. Outlook, Vol. 104, No. 1232, January 1974, p. 12.

Association of Medical Students of South Africa, the Federation of Student Jewish Associations and from NCFS.⁶¹ For NCFS, however, the incident created yet another incident that articulated the deep political divisions within the Federation.

In his statement on the banning, NCFS President Bryan Tennant expressed his "abhorrence" of the recent banning, commenting:

"We feel it to be directly contrary to the precepts of Christian Morality, which the Nationalist Government claims to be 'upholding', arbitrarily to condemn any person to virtual isolation when no charges have been laid against him, and when he has been deprived of the basic Right of Appeal to the Law Courts. Every Christian man and woman must surely recoil in horror from the implications of such Banning Orders."⁶²

Tennant's approach was to condemn both the particular incident and the principle behind it, basing his argument on the decisions of the David Craighead incident of the previous year.

A guest speaker at Pretoria Catholic Society argued that the relationship between NUSAS and NCFS over the past twenty or so years was purely economic in nature (one presumes he was referring to the sharing of conference venues and partial NUSAS subsidisation of transport costs in the earlier period in NCFS's history) and that it was not a matter of identification of certain

61. John Daniel, "A History of NUSAS in Action", S.A. Outlook, Vol. 104, No. 1232, p. 7; BC586, A3.9: Typescript, no title, no date (circa 1966).

62. Southern Cross, 25 May 1966.

NUSAS ideals that might happen to be "the same, or taken to be, the same as those of Catholicism (sic)"⁶³ Furthermore, it was argued that the Robertson incident had nothing to do with specifically Catholic affairs and that any moral matter was up to the Bishops, who had said nothing so far. Thus, it was concluded, the NCFS Council was not competent to comment on the matter.

A flurry of correspondence was exchanged both in the Catholic newspaper The Southern Cross and in the NCFS journal Unitas. Wim van Kets put forward the conservative argument; in his opinion the President had acted beyond his authority in issuing the statement on behalf of the Federation because he had not consulted the Executive or the local societies. Furthermore, he pointed out that it was a government's duty to protect the "general peace and public order", arguing that at the time South Africa was being disturbed by "disruptive elements". He concluded by saying that the Church had not decided the limits of government authority, that NCFS's language was "far too strong and categorical for a matter of which the moral rights and wrongs have not been settled by the Church".⁶⁴ Tennant replied that, on the point of procedure, the NCFS Council was (theoretically) in permanent session, represented by the Executive Committee, which in turn was represented by its President. He justified his action arguing that a Prime Minister frequently made a statement on behalf of his Cabinet and Parliament. Secondly, he recalled that the 1965

63. Hin: Transcript of talk by Mr George Abraham, Pretoria (n.d.).

64. Southern Cross, 8 June 1966; SJV: Unitas: NCFS Journal, June 1966, p. 26.

Conference had been overwhelmingly in favour of protesting against the banning of David Craighead; thus "it was merely the execution of existing policies as determined by the majority vote of Council on which each and every local society has representation".⁶⁵

The debate spread wider. The Pretoria branch of the Kolbe Association (the Catholic graduates association) publicly disagreed with the Pretoria Catholic Society position, citing Pope Pius XII's 1942 Christmas message which had condemned the utilitarian use of law to serve the interests of particular groups.⁶⁶ A Rhodesian correspondent, Peter Sanders, commented that if NCFS had not reacted as it did "there would be no justification for its continued existence", suggesting that in the light of the Second Vatican Council "Catholics are sometimes on their own and hence must take decisions that will seem scandalous to other Catholics who are less mature in the faith".⁶⁷ The Council of NCFS finally vindicated Tennant's statement by voting to support his position. The Pretoria delegates, acting on a previously decided pre-Conference vote by their society, opposed the motion.⁶⁸ The Conference also found that, in terms of their understanding of the social teachings of Popes Pius XII, John XXIII and Paul VI, banning was an immoral action for a government to take.⁶⁹ Perhaps as a compromise to those who

65. Southern Cross, 8 June 1966; SJV: Unitas: NCFS Journal June 1966, p. 27.

66. Southern Cross, 22 June 1966.

67. Southern Cross, 22 June 1966.

68. Haen: NCFS: Minutes of the Council Meetings held during the Nineteenth Annual Conference, Durban, July 1966, Motion 22/66 (n.p.).

69. Southern Cross, 20 July 1966

remained uneasy, a motion was passed asking the SACBC to clarify the Church's position on the matter.⁷⁰ It is perhaps ironic to note that it was one of the Pretoria delegation who later reported to NUSAS's President (Margaret Marshall) that NCFS Council had supported the contents of Tennant's statement.⁷¹

The conference of NCFS at Durban in July 1966 saw the climax of this political confrontation over NUSAS. The Commission to investigate NUSAS found that the aims and objectives of NUSAS were essentially the same as NCFS, that NUSAS principles were in accord with the social teachings of Popes Pius XII, John XXIII and Paul VI as well as the teachings of the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference. Their survey found that whites who knew more about NUSAS than the average white citizen were generally positive about it. Blacks, with the exception of those who collaborated with the Nationalist Government, were generally very positively inclined towards the organisation. They therefore recommended that NCFS should continue to associate with, and indeed show support for, NUSAS. A resolution was then passed accepting the Commission's report, albeit by a close margin.⁷²

Pretoria Catholic Society then complained that NCFS' close affiliation to NUSAS could jeopardise their position on Pretoria campus. NCFS, in their opinion, should sever all relations with

70. Haen: Minutes - July 1966, Motion 23/66.

71. BC586, S8: Martin Welz to President, NUSAS, 25 June 1967.

72. Haen: NCFS: Minutes of the Council Meetings held during the Nineteenth Annual Conference, Durban, July 1966, Report of the NUSAS Commission, pp. 31-35; Conference Resolutions Motion 17/66, 18 For, 2 Against, 13 Abstentions with acclaim 8 n.p.); Southern Cross 20 July 1966.

NUSAS. After strong suggestions that Pretoria would disaffiliate from NCFS if public association was maintained, it was agreed to change the letterheads to "National Catholic Federation of Students (S.A.), Member of Pax Romana International Movement of Catholic Students". Constitutional links would only be with local Catholic Societies and Pax Romana, while there could be links with other student movements.⁷³ One reporter, noting this compromise with the conservatives, commented:

"But many thought this was a poor compromise; and thought that if they really believed in something they should not be afraid of making their beliefs known - whatever the consequences."⁷⁴

The decision taken, the rest of the Sixties saw cordial relations maintained between NCFS and NUSAS. NCFS executive members would have informal contact with NUSAS executive members. NCFS presidents would express their support, continued goodwill and a desire for mutual co-operation between the organisations.⁷⁵ Conferences were frequently held, as in the years prior to 1966, at the same venues. But it seemed to many members that the spark had gone out of NCFS. Colin Collins, the National Chaplain, grew increasingly disillusioned with NCFS, while an official NCFS delegate to the NUSAS Conference in 1969 complained that although

73. Haen: NCFS: Minutes - July 1966, Conference Resolutions, Motion 18/66, 18 For, 7 Against, 8 Abstentions - significantly, there was no acclaim for this resolution; Southern Cross 20 July 1966.

74. Southern Cross 20 July 1966.

75. BC586, 58: Jan D'Olivera (NCFS President) to Neville Curtis (NUSAS President), 31 July 1969.

NUSAS was similar to NCFS in many respects, NUSAS's motions were "just one bit broader and stronger". While NCFS challenged people to think, NUSAS challenged them to "think big".⁷⁶ In short, NCFS was declining.

ECUMENISM, POLITICS AND THE UNIVERSITY CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT

The 1960s saw an outburst of ecumenical activity in the Catholic Church. The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) was, as Keane puts it, a "crystallization" of a process of renewal within the Church: "the Council simply intensified and gave official recognition to a renewal which had already begun".⁷⁷ When John XXIII called the Council to Rome, representatives from the World Council of Churches were also invited to observe the proceedings. Dialogue rather than polemic was encouraged between Catholics and Protestants (and subsequently people of other or no faiths).

The Conciliar Decree on Ecumenism has been understood to mean that

"(t)he Christian world is seen as a multitude of churches and communities, each of which is in full communion with certain Christian groups and in an imperfect or partial communion with others. The ecumenical task, then, is to strive for the mutual understanding and accommodation that will make it

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76. BC586, S8: NCFS Newsletter September 1969: "Attending NUSAS Conference" (by Barbara Hurley), p. 7.
77. Sister Henry Angela Cora Keane OP, "The Dynamics of a Changing Church with special Reference to Lumen Gentium, the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church of Vatican Council II", (M. Th. dissertation, University of South Africa, 1979), p. 8.

possible for the separated Christian bodies to pass from partial to full communion with one another".⁷⁸

A Protestant scholar has seen Roman Catholic ecumenism as "an ecumenism of aggiornamento (updating)," ⁷⁹ examining structures, doctrines and liturgy, and placing emphasis on the role of the laity. Another key area of ecumenism, one of particular significance to lay ecumenism, was joint Christian action for justice.

South African ecumenism had been spearheaded by the Christian Council of South Africa (later renamed the South African Council of Churches), established in 1936, renamed in 1968. This body started with an essentially liberal ideological system, in the 1940s and 1950s almost completely unaware of the more radical developments within black nationalism.⁸⁰ Though against apartheid, they were Eurocentric. This neo-liberalism reached a "crystallization" in the "Message to the People of South Africa" in 1969, and in the federalist ideas proposed by the SPROCAS Report.⁸¹ Whatever its limitations ecumenism in South Africa had a political dimension and was not (entirely) what the

78. Avery Dulles SJ, The Resilient Church: The Necessity and Limits of Adaptation (Dublin, 1978), p. 146.

79. David L. Edwards, "Signs of Radicalism in the Ecumenical Movement", in Harold E. Fey (ed), The Ecumenical Advance: A History of the Ecumenical Movement, Volume 2: 1948-1986 2nd Edition (Geneva, 1986), p. 408.

80. J W de Gruchy, The Church Struggle in South Africa (Cape Town and Grand Rapids, 1986), passim; David Gervase Thomas, "Ecumenism and Indigenisation in the Churches of South Africa, 1904-1975", (M. A. dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1984), passim.

81. D.G. Thomas, "Ecumenism and Indigenisation in the Churches of South Africa, 1904-1975", pp. 191-192, 206, 209-213.

theologian George Casalis calls dismissively "... a marriage between two senior citizens ... a consortium for the defense of 'spiritual' interests threatened by a rising tide of atheism".⁸²

The University Christian Movement of South Africa (UCM) was a product of both the worldwide ecumenical movement, the spirit of Vatican II, and conditions unique to South Africa. For many years there had been discussions among various circles about forming a multiracial ecumenical movement that would address the questions of interchurch dialogue, racial justice and effective ministry among the student community. In 1961, the President of NUSAS, Adrian Leftwich, had corresponded with John Greene, President of NCFS, discussing the idea of forming a 'Radical Christian Student Movement'.⁸³ Between 1964 and 1966, The Christian Council and the Students' Christian Association had held discussions on the matter. At the end of 1966 a group of churchmen met in Cape Town and decided to form the UCM. This was exactly the same name used by a North American group - one, significantly, that had very active Catholic participation⁸⁴ - but was not a carbon copy of its transatlantic namesake; it was, as one of its chaplains remarked, far closer to the churches than

82. George Casalis, Correct Ideas Don't Fall From the Sky: Elements For An Inductive Theology, (Maryknoll, New York, 1984), p. 149.

83. BC586, S8: Correspondence between A. Leftwich and J. Greene: 16 August 1962, 30 August 1962, 2 October 1962, 30 October 1962 (those still extant).

84. D. L. Edwards, "Signs of Radicalism in the Ecumenical Movement", in H. E. Fey (ed), The Ecumenical Advance: A History of the Ecumenical Movement, Volume 2, (Geneva, 1986), p. 402. It should also be noted that NCFS Chaplain Colin Collins had attended the American UCM's conference during a 1966 visit to the United States.

the American one. It was also less explicitly 'student' in nature, preferring to be seen as active within the whole academic community. ⁸⁵

UCM saw itself as a movement dedicated to re-examine Christianity in terms that were relevant to the times without forming their own kind of 'super-church'. At another level they wished to promote the unity of races in South Africa on social levels, as well as look at contemporary social and political issues. They tried to adopt a status confessionis of personal responsibility for the state the country was in. ⁸⁶ By their first conference in Grahamstown in July 1967, 30 institutions of higher learning (including universities, colleges and seminaries) had affiliated. Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational and Catholic Churches were involved, as well as some Lutherans. Black Catholic and Anglican students were particularly supportive of this new organization, seeing it as the only really radical multiracial student group of the 1960s. ⁸⁷

In 1965 NCFS decided that the ecumenical movement in South Africa deserved encouragement. ⁸⁸ In February 1967 the Executive debated membership of the UCM, decided to affiliate, and set about having the decision ratified at the July Conference.

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85. Untitled article by Rev John Davies, One for the Road Vol. 1, No. 1, n.p.
86. Colin B. Collins "Where we stand", One for the Road Vol. 1, No. 1, n.p. n.d.; Peter Walshe, Church Versus State in South Africa : The Case of the Christian Institute (London & Maryknoll, New York, 1983), p. 81.
87. Dr Colin B. Collins, tape, Australia, c April 1989.
88. BC 927 : NCFS : Minutes of the Council Meetings held during the Eighteenth Annual Conference, Cape Town, July 1965, p. 33.

In the meantime representatives of UCM visited most campuses in South Africa. Catholic Societies were generally favourable towards UCM; in one case, Witwatersrand Catholic Society's chairman was elected Wits UCM representative. The Executive decision was ratified by a sizeable majority as it was felt that NCFS should contribute a Catholic perspective to the new movement.⁸⁹ This was based on the presupposition that while NCFS was a constituent member of UCM, it was, as the Bishops Board had commented in its approval of UCM-NCFS links, permitted to dissociate itself from any UCM activity should the need arise.⁹⁰ Such an attitude was accepted by UCM's General Secretary Dr Basil Moore (who also approached the Bishops for financial assistance through his UCM colleague and NCFS National Chaplain, Fr Colin Collins),⁹¹ and it seemed that the new NCFS presence in UCM was off to a good start. But tensions, particularly on the Afrikaans-speaking campuses, were manifest even in 1967 and grew steadily.

One of the first areas where UCM and NCFS worked together was in publishing a joint journal. Basil Manning, the UCM Travelling

89. Haen: Minutes of the National Executive Meeting held at the Rosettenville Anglican Priory in February 1967, p. 5; Southern Cross, 15 February 1967; Hin: NCFS (SA): Minutes of the Council Meetings held during the Twentieth Annual Conference, Grahamstown, July 1967, pp. 13, 14, 19, 25, 28, 29-30, Motions: 1/67: carried, 26 For, 3 Against, 4 Abstentions: Southern Cross, 19 July 1967.

90. AD1126, H5: "Annexure IV: The University Christian Movement and the Catholic Church" (Untitled Manuscript), p. 4.

91. AD1126, H5: Two letters, same date: Basil Moore to Colin B. Collins, 16 August 1967.

Secretary, and Stephen Withers, then a student at the Dominican House of Studies in Stellenbosch,⁹² the UCM Publications Officer, approached the NCFS Executive and Chaplains and proposed that Unitas amalgamate with One For the Road, the planned UCM journal. The idea was to produce a high-quality, radical journal which reflected the changes in church and wider student movement. Conservative chaplains expressed their concern that it could be politically radical or become a mouthpiece for "death of God" theology.⁹³ Student feelings were varied: some felt that it should not be too political, while others felt politics was unavoidable. It was decided, provisionally, to amalgamate Unitas with One for the Road,⁹⁴ at least until the NCFS Council could decide what action was to be taken. The first issue of One for the Road was a glossy production. Its format was notably different from Unitas: many illustrations and graphics, combined with its articles on pages that were not numbered at all. Its articles were radical by Unitas standards. The Editorial was a condemnation of the new Prohibition of Political Interference Bill, which barred multiracial parties and spelt the end of the

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92. The Dominican scholastics at St Nicholas Prior, Stellenbosch, had long had ties with the wider student movement. NUSAS President Maeder Osler had made contact with them (BC586, S8: Osler to B. Tennant, 26.8.65) and the students had even had a NUSAS representative, Bernard Connor (Conversations with Fr B Connor OP, St Joseph's Scholasticate, Natal, 8 October 1968; Dr. Augustine Schutte, UCT).
93. This theology, as epitomised by i.a. J. A. T. Robinson's Honest to God and H Cox's The Secular City, argued that traditional concepts of God were redundant in the modern secular age and that Christians ought to live 'as if God did not exist any longer. It was a theology that provided considerable controversy when it was first presented.
94. AD1126, J4: Minutes of the National Executive Meeting held at Rosettenville Priory, Johannesburg, February 1968, pp. 11-13.

Liberal Party. Another examined the meaning of "shalom" (peace). Another was a report of a UCM Conference in the United States. What created the greatest trouble, however, was a piece titled "Student power". In it, the author, argued that the only truly revolutionary class left in the Western world was the student community, that South African students should make contact with each other, indulge in "radical, searing criticism" of both themselves and their society and that UCM's role ought to be a commitment to the cause of student revolution.⁹⁵ The article was later criticised.⁹⁶ It was condemned as being symptomatic of the kind of leftist ideology posing as Christian values in a student group (allegedly) dominated by Catholics.⁹⁷ With hindsight it was perhaps no more than a reflection of the times: 1968 was the year of international student protests, from Berkeley, California, to Prague, Czechoslovakia, and for a time - particularly in Paris - it did seem that students were the new vanguard of revolution.⁹⁸ But events such as these were not the norm in South Africa and conservative members of NCFS objected to the idea of letting UCM's controversial (later banned) journal act as their mouthpiece.

95. One for the Road Vol. 0, Number 0, June 1968.

96. C. Collins "Student Power? Assertions Were Made", One for The Road, Vol. 1, Number 1 n.d. Fr Collins' criticism was generally mild, warning that student power, though creative, could also be simply destructive if not handled carefully.

97. Antikom Nuusbrieff/Newsletter Vol. II, No. 24, Augustus 1968, pp. 305.

98. See: Ronald Fraser, 1968: A Student Generation in Revolt (London, 1988); David Cate, Sixty-Eight: The Year Of The Barricades, (London, 1988); Helene Hanf, The Movers And The Shakers: The Young Activists of the Sixties (New York, 1970).

While Unitas was shelved, it was decided to produce an NCFS Newsletter as well. ⁹⁹

Practical and ideological problems over membership of UCM soon emerged for NCFS. The Bishops' Conference refused to permit intercommunion for Catholics in UCM: the Vatican II decree on ecumenism did not allow Catholics to receive communion in Protestant services, or for non-Catholics to receive the Eucharist except under certain special circumstances ¹⁰⁰ and UCM was not seen as a special circumstance. A few of the bishops were concerned about the orthodoxy of UCM. One chaplain reported that an attempt had been made by an individual member of the Rhodes University Catholic Society to break its ties with UCM. ¹⁰¹ Another conflict arose between the National Chaplain, Colin Collins, and the Pretoria Chaplain, Bonaventure Hinwood: Collins felt that Hinwood was trying to sabotage Pretoria's involvement in UCM, preferring conservative Dutch Reformed theologians. Hinwood responded that he felt UCM had too narrow a horizon, and that in his interpretation of the Vatican documents, ecumenism ought to be practised between churches and not little groups. ¹⁰²

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99. AD1126, J4: NCFS: Minutes - July 1968, pp. 7-8 (Director of Publications expressed feeling that UCM journal had little appeal and at same time 'Unitas' has small popularity); Motions: 29/68: that NCFS amalgamate 'Unitas' with 'One For The Road' and produce an NCFS Newsletter. Carried: 18 For, 6 Against, 6 Abstentions.
100. AD1126, H5: Fr D. Scholtern to Dr Basil Moore, 22 April 1968.
101. AD1126, H5: Fr 'Rob' Edmondstone SJ to Fr C. B. Collins, 22 May 1968;
AD1126, M2: 'Rob' (Edmondstone) to Collins, 20 April 1968.
102. AD1126, L3: Collins to Mrs Maire Pompe, 18 June 1968;
AD1126, M2: Collins to Hinwood, 24 July 1968; Hinwood to Collins, 29 July 1968.

Nevertheless, many found contact with the "intellectual elite (potential at least) (sic) of the members of other denominations" ¹⁰³ positive and full of hope for dialogue and communion.

The growing interest shown in UCM by the South African Security Branch created further tension with NCFS. NCFS had reserved the right for it to distance itself from any UCM action or policy.¹⁰⁴

The President of NCFS alleged that he was under security surveillance and resigned from UCM. Debate raged over NCFS' continued participation in UCM: politically NCFS incorporated radical, conservative and middle-roaders. The conservative presence admittedly slowed down its movement as an organization, but could that not also mean that while UCM would burn itself out after a few years, NCFS could last? Martyrdom for a cause was fine, but "(was) it the right moment (original emphasis) for martyrdom?" ¹⁰⁵ NCFS did not disaffiliate but on many campuses it did not take part in UCM activities though individuals remained active in UCM seeing it as "the only real non-racial organization in South Africa". ¹⁰⁶ Black Catholic Societies were almost universally supportive of UCM however.

103. AD1126, J4: NCFS (SA): Minutes of the Council Meeting - July 1968, Report of the Director of Ecumenism, p. 5.

104. BC927: UCM President (J. Moulder) to Peter Dormehl, n.d., noting the distance clause decided by Resolution 22/67.

105. AD1126, J4: Letter on UCM, not dated, no author stated (possibly by Peter Dormehl in circa August/November 1968). Also see: AD1126, J4: Colin Collins to Fr G. Edmondstone SJ, 1 November 1968.

106. AD1126, H5: Colin B. Collins to Monsignor (Joseph) Gremillion, 25 November 1968.

Tensions emerged along black-white lines within UCM. Walshe suggests that "(g)iven the racial polarisation, police informers, police intimidation and the military draft for White students, it became apparent that the old liberal model of non-racial student organizations could not withstand the pressures of disillusioned and outspoken Black undergraduates."¹⁰⁷ Within the wider black student community, NUSAS and UCM, black students were questioning their position within white-dominated movements.

Within UCM grew a South African Black Theology. The "theology dimension of Black Consciousness",¹⁰⁸ it demonstrated that the religious thought of black South Africans "had shifted away from the fatalism of a superimposed 'colonial Christianity', as well as from the millenarianism of Zionism and Ethiopianism".¹⁰⁹

After the 1968 UCM Conference a caucus of Black UCM students met to discuss forming a black student organisation. A group of students who had pro-NUSAS tendencies opposed the idea but were later won over. A caucus of black UCM students, together with former members of the pro-PAC African Students' Union of South Africa (ASUSA), formed the South African Students' Organisation (SASO).¹¹⁰

107. P. Walshe, Church Versus State in South Africa: The Case of the Christian Institute (London & New York, 1983), p. 149.

108. Louise Kretzschmar, The Voice of Black Theology in South Africa (Johannesburg: 1986), p. 61.

109. Robert Fatton Jr, Black Consciousness in South Africa: The Dialectics of Ideological Resistance To White Supremacy (New York: 1986), p. 119.

110. Gail M Gerhart, Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology (Berkely: 1978), p. 261.

1969 saw an intensification of debate over participation in UCM. There was negative feedback over the controversial Volume 0 of One For the Road, objection to the radical liturgical practices used at some UCM services - a feature that was prevalent in the North American UCM and some student communities throughout Europe and North America, in the wake of the Second Vatican Council's liturgical reforms. ¹¹¹ Colin Collins, loyal supporter of UCM defended the experimental liturgies, arguing that UCM forced no-one to participate in their services if they objected to them. ¹¹² Others complained about the UCM's attitudes to revolution and Black Power (Black Consciousness). ¹¹³ Clearly, by early 1969, attitudes to UCM divided NCFS, a division which was increasingly along racial lines leading also to black and more radical white Catholic students placing much greater emphasis on their role in UCM.

The Catholic Bishops were also divided over UCM. They were asked to give their approval to the Movement and, if possible, to help it financially. While some wished to be dissociated from it completely, as a body the Bishops found no serious objection to Catholic participation in it, subject once again to the principle that "the Movement is not in conflict with accepted principles and practices, particularly in regard to Eucharistic services; and

111. Basil Moore, "Wide, Wonderful USA" One for the Road Vol. 0, No. 0, n.p.; Peter Hebblethwaite, The Runaway Church (London; 1978), pp. 39-41.

112. Hin: Minutes of the Executive Meeting held from 1-2 February 1969 at La Verna, Transvaal, pp. 8-9.

113. Ibid, p. 9.

that due regard is paid to the requirements of the local ordinary". 114

The division in NCFS over UCM became clearer in 1969. The Fort Hare Catholic Society representative (and later UCM President) Justice Moloto commented in 1968 that "the entire Catholic Association and remarkable numbers of students of other denominations lend their full support to UCM and the fight for recognition (of UCM on the campus) will continue as soon as we re-open". 115 Ironically a month later, after a student demonstration against the new Rector of Fort Hare, the UCM was completely banned on campus. Other black campuses reported strong support for UCM, the University College of Zululand Catholic Society indicating that they helped form the organisation on campus. 116 On white campuses relations varied: Durban indicated that together with the Anglican Society, they constituted UCM, while Cape Town found a lack of interest in general for UCM prayer meetings. Rhodes indicated that some earlier differences with UCM had been cleared up, while Witwatersrand Catholic Society reported that owing to some unfavourable publicity, participation in UCM was not that earnest. 117 Next to no interest came from the Afrikaans campuses. University authorities on black campuses, who were - in fact - in the employ of the Bantu Education Department, banned the

114. Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, Minutes of the Ordinary Plenary Session of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference held at St John Vianney Seminary, Pretoria, 6-11 February 1969, p. 32, also p. 16.

115. AD1126, J4: NCFS: Minutes of the Council Meetings - July 1968, p. 15.

116. Ibid, pp. 21-22.

117. Ibid, pp. 12 (Durban), p. 25 (UCT), 18-19 (Rhodes), 27 (Wits).

UCM from their campuses. It was alleged that members of UCM - mostly black students - were interrogated by the Security Branch, and in some cases even approached to become police informants. It was alleged too that St Francis' College, Mariannhill, was persuaded not to allow UCM to hold its annual conference there. Father Collins commented, angrily:

"I am angry, shocked and sickened by this blatant intimidation of UCM members - young students, who in all earnestness believe that it is right to belong to a non-racial, Christian movement in which they can worship God in a free and contemporary manner and fulfil what they believe to be their Christian duty." 118

The black Catholic Societies re-emphasized their support for UCM despite its banning on Fort Hare, Turfloop (the North) and Zululand (Ngoye) campuses. At Turfloop and Zululand UCM activities continued to be supported and activity was carried on off-campus. 119 On the 'liberal' white campuses, Catholic membership of UCM continued though with little group participation, although a successful conference motion was passed condemning the banning of UCM on the three campuses. 120

THE 'SPLIT'

The most explicit and structurally devastating articulation of the tensions racking NCFs in the 1960s emerged with a fundamental and radical critique of the liberal assumptions that NCFs had

118. Southern Cross, 7 May 1969.

119. BC927: NCFs: Minutes of Council Sessions - July 1969, pp. 21, 30.

120. Ibid, Conference Motions 10/69. Carried: 25 For, 6 Against, 9 Abstentions. (n.p.).

cherished, not from the conservative campuses, but from its black affiliates. Adopting the discourse of Black Consciousness, black Catholics reassessed their role in NCFs (as blacks had done in NUSAS). Their analysis highlighted the internal contradictions in NCFs between conservative and progressive (in the ideological, not party political sense) factions in the light of the political, intellectual and theological tensions already covered in this chapter.

Black Consciousness was a product of the crisis of the 1960s. In the wake of the Sharpeville shootings and the bannings of the African National Congress and Pan Africanist Congress, black political activities were strictly curtailed. Organisations like the African Students' Association (ASA) - ideologically in the ANC's camp - and African Students' Union of South Africa (ASUSA) (which had PAC loyalties) soon declined. This "time of silence and defeat"¹²¹ was somewhat enlivened by Black participation in NUSAS, which was in the early Sixties "(b)older at the verbal level than either the Liberals or the Progressives,"¹²² but which - after dissension in their ranks over greater active participation in liberation politics and the scandal caused by ex-NUSAS members' participation in the African Resistance Movement (ARM) - started to become more conservative, reacting only to events and emphasising such values particular to white campuses as

121. G. Bloch, "Sounds in the Silence : Painting a picture of the 1960s", Africa Perspective No 25, 1984, p. 3.

122. Gail M. Gerhart, Black Power in South Africa : The Evolution of an Ideology (Berkeley, 1978), pp. 257-258; also A. Stubbs CR, "Martyr of Hope: A Personal Memoir" Steve Biko: I Write What I Like edited by A. Stubbs (London, 1978), p. 156.

academic freedom (something almost unknown on black campuses run by the Bantu Education Department). NUSAS was, in addition, dominated by white leadership; at its 1967 Conference at Rhodes University the university administration prohibited mixed accommodation or eating facilities. This angered black delegates and led a number of student thinkers - particularly Steve Biko - to question whether student politics in NUSAS and liberal thought in general were not artificial. By December 1968 a caucus of black student groups had emerged and after much debate between pro-NUSAS and anti-NUSAS lobbies, a decision was reached to form a separate Black South African Students' Organisation (SASO).¹²³ This was the genesis of the Black Consciousness movement in South Africa.

Combined with the frustration of black students with white liberal groups came an inflow of new ideas from various sources: from the United States' black struggle for civil rights, particularly the more militant thinkers like Stokely Carmichael, George Jackson, Malcolm X, James Cone and Albert Cleage; from African anti-colonialist theorists like Kwame Nkrumah, Kenneth Kaunda, Leopold Senghor, Amilcar Cabral and Frantz Fanon; and from other Third

123. On NUSAS: M. Legassick, The National Union of South African Students: Ethnic cleavage and ethnic integration in the universities (Los Angeles, 1967), pp. 39-51; T. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa since 1945 (Johannesburg, 1983) pp. 322; S. Biko, "SASO - its role, its significance and its Future" in Stubbs (ed), Steve Biko: I Write What I Like (London, 1978), pp. 5-6.
On Rhodes Incident: Lodge, op cit, p. 323; S. Biko, "Letter to SRC Presidents" in Stubbs, op cit, pp. 10-11; M.O. Nkomo, Student Culture and Activism in Black South African Universities: The Roots of Resistance (Westport, Connecticut, 1984), p. 94.

World figures like Mao Zedong, Fidel Castro and Brazilian educationist Paulo Freire.¹²⁴ In the analysis of the Black Consciousness theorists "the biggest stumbling block towards the attainment of freedom for Blacks lay in the attitudes and mental slavery of the oppressed Blacks themselves. After many years of manipulation and control by the oppressors, this (made) it difficult for Blacks to feel positive and proud of themselves and to believe in their ability and power to transform their environment".¹²⁵ Black Consciousness was "the realisation by the Black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their oppression - the blackness of their skin - and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them in perpetual servitude".¹²⁶ BC, as it has frequently been called for short, thus emphasised the need to break ties with multiracial liberal organizations so as to build up the black community, demolish the myths of inferiority of culture or dependency on Whites and work for the end to all racial servitude and domination. BC spread soon into the black community and it has been suggested split into two distinct groupings: the pragmatists (homeland leaders and black bourgeoisie trying to come to terms with the realities of separate development) and ideologists (the group of particular interest to this study, namely students, middle class black radicals and workers, all committed to the destruction of apartheid).¹²⁷

124. J. Leatt, T. Kneifel & K. Nünberger, Contending Ideologies in South Africa, (Cape Town, 1986), p. 106.

125. S. Maimela, Proclaim Freedom to my People, (Johannesburg, 1987), p. 67.

126. S. Biko, "The Definition of Black Consciousness" in A. Stubbs (ed), Steve Biko: I Write What I Like (London, 1978), p. 49.

127. D. A. Kotzé, "Black Consciousness in South Africa" Politikon 1, 1 June 1974, p. 44.

Religion played an important part in black South African life and thus religion was an important subject within Black Consciousness. Basically there were two areas that involved BC: firstly a critique of white religion and, secondly, the development of a South African Black theology of liberation. White religion - and in most cases this meant Christianity - was seen by BC theorists as an important form of social control. To be liberated "..... Blacks must turn their backs on all the Western churches".¹²⁸ Biko summed up the BC critique of white (denominational) churches: (i) they were too willing to preach "turning the other cheek" to the destitute; (ii) they were riddled with bureaucracy and institutionalism; (iii) they tacitly accepted the South African situation; (iv) they were over-specialised (i.e. the structure of roles for clergy, laity, etc).¹²⁹ Attempts were therefore made to distance BC adherents from such church organisations and conservative ecumenical groups;¹³⁰ from the University Christian Movement, among others, came news of a militant new liberation-orientated theology from the United States: Black Theology, a theology that grew over the

128. N. Ndebele, "Black Development", B.S. Biko (ed) Black Viewpoints (Durban, 1972) p. 27.

129. S. Biko, "The Church as seen by a Young Layman", in Stubbs (ed) Steve Biko: I Write What I Like, p. 58.

130. For example Frank Chikane, a member of the Turfloop SCA and adherent of BC, had trouble at first getting accepted by BC adherents at Turf: F. Chikane, No Life of My Own (Johannesburg, 1988), pp. 36-37. This little incident in Chikane's autobiography could suggest that some Black Catholic BC adherents - and the Catholic Society - could have left a White-dominated NCFs to gain lost credibility.

centuries out of slave religion, through ghetto churches into a politically militant set of beliefs in the 1960s (and 1970s).¹³¹ Soon a South African version emerged.

South African Black Theology grew in groups like the UCM (who published the banned 1971 publication Essays in Black Theology), SASO, ministers caucuses like the Inter-denominational African Ministers' Association of South Africa (IDAMASA) and the Catholic Black Priests' Solidarity Group.¹³² At the heart of this new theology was a rejection of colonial Christianity and the millenarian Zionist and Ethiopian Churches popular among blacks. Allan Boesak's comment "Blacks ask: what does it mean to believe in Jesus Christ when one is black and living in a world controlled by white racists? And what if these racists call themselves Christians too?"¹³³ gets to the essence of Black Theology: a systematic attempt at reformulating the Christian Gospel in terms of the black experience of oppression.¹³⁴ Black Theology lent a religious dimension to Black Consciousness; more recently, it has also given a religious sanction to the non-racialism of the Charterist movement of the 1980s.¹³⁵ Whatever the case, the

131. For a concise history of US Black theology, see Gayraud S. Wilmore, Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of Afro-American People 2nd Edition (Maryknoll, New York, 1983).

132. M. Motlhabi, "The Historical Origins of Black Theology" in I. J. Mosala & B. Tlhagale (eds) The Unquestionable Right To Be Free: Essays in Black Theology (Johannesburg, 1986) pp. 37-56.

133. In Leatt, Kneifel & Nürnberger, Contending Ideologies in South Africa, p. 118.

134. Albert Nolan, God in South Africa: The Challenge of the Gospel (Cape Town, London, Gweru & Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1988), p. 25.

135. Albert Nolan, God in South Africa: The Challenge of the Gospel, (Cape Town, London, Gweru & Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1988), p. 4; see also the section on religion in R. Suttner & J. Cronin, Thirty Years of the Freedom Charter (Johannesburg, 1986) pp. 221-246.

theology affirmed the divine right of black people to dignity, justice and the freedom to democratically govern themselves.

A product of the conservatism/liberalism tension within NCFs was black frustration with the organisation. As early as 1960 there were hints of black dissatisfaction. Responding to a decision by NCFs Council not to put a motion condemning apartheid, the Pius XII Pax Romana Group called on NCFs "not to hide behind the South African Bishops' Statement on apartheid but while supporting the Bishops' statement, to declare apartheid an outrageous policy designed to trample on human rights and dignity", adding that, should NCFs not take such action "continued friendly intercourse between NCFs (SA) and this Group would be made difficult".¹³⁶ On this occasion their call worked: in March the following year a statement was released that found "no excuse for the preservation and promotion of the interests of one group of people to the detriment of the common good of the whole population " and called on students to make a "deliberate effort to become well-informed on the affairs of South Africa, to resist and deliberately break down barriers of prejudice, hatred and injustice".¹³⁷ Five years later another Roma student, Julius Nqosa, commented that while the NCFs Constitution opposed discrimination "too few people realise(d) the full meaning of the stand which we in the

136. UZ: NCFs Newsletter, Vol. 3, No. 3, October 1960.

137. BC927: Statement of the views of the National Catholic Federation of Students (SA) on Apartheid (Peter McKay) (March 1961).

National Federation have taken. It really needs courage but above all sincerity if NCFS is to live up to its pledges".¹³⁸ By 1968 many black delegates felt this sincerity was lacking, particularly after the Council accepted the Pretoria delegation's interpretation of the events surrounding the anti-papal demonstration (qv).

The other severe problem black students in NCFS suffered was structural. On a local level, black Catholic Societies suffered from shortages: shortages of funds, a chronic lack of chaplains and often anti-Catholic feelings from the University administrations. Frequently the Catholic Societies had no money to attend Conferences, or to afford the accommodation and relied on financial assistance to attend these gatherings.¹³⁹ Some Catholic Societies had only temporary chaplains who might "drop in" every two weeks.¹⁴⁰ Occasionally they had windfalls, e.g. visits from prominent Catholics like the American priest-activist Daniel Berrigan, who visited the University of Zululand Catholic Society's Formation School and spoke about race relations in the United States in 1964.¹⁴¹ By the late 1960s there was also increased anti-Catholic feeling on black campuses, largely because

138. SJV: Unitas 1: NCFS Journal September 1966, p. 21: Letter from Julius Nqosa.

139. See, for example: AD1126, M2: Elizabeth Ngopila to Colin Collins, 4 June 1964; Colin B. Collins, tape-recording, Brisbane, Australia (in author's possession).

140. Eg, BC927: Minutes of Council - July 1965, p. 18; Fort Hare delegate's report; BC927: Minutes of Council - July 1969, pp. 31 (University of North representative), p. 26 (Fort Hare representative).

141. AD1126; M2: Minutes of the Council Sessions - July 1964: Bryant Catholic Society, University College of Zululand, n.p.

of their participation in a multi-racial student movement. The University of the North's representative reported in 1969 that they had refused to submit a programme of their activities to the University Religious Affairs Committee because they felt "it was none of their business whether we intended to invite the Pope or Mr Kosygin to come and address us" and kept a "cold silence".¹⁴² On another level - that of the NCFS Executive - there were problems too. The Executive was generally white-dominated, most of the portfolios going to white students with the frequent exception of the Vice Presidency. To make matters worse the Vice President had very little of significance to do: as one commented there was "so little to report about the portfolio of Vice-President as it stands".¹⁴³

Thus it was not surprising to find black members of NCFS deeply frustrated with the direction the organisation was taking, particularly during the time of the conservative ascendancy.

Black delegates to the NCFS conferences became increasingly challenging and critical of the way matters were handled during conferences. A white delegate who was also active in NUSAS at Pietermaritzburg, Tim Dunne, recalled that council sessions were often "a white game of motion-passing".¹⁴⁴ Though the atmosphere was friendly, it was often also quite tense. He recalled how many of the black delegates had "provocative" (in the challenging sense of the word) intellects that cut through the

142. BC927: Minutes of Council - July 1969; University College of the North Catholic Society, p. 31.

143. BC927: Minutes of Council - July 1969: Vice-President's Report, p. 6.

144. Tim Dunne, interviewed Cape Town, 25 November 1988.

facades of formality of the sessions and deeply challenged liberal white preconceptions. He remembered their radical critiques, the image he used to describe one such individual (Justice Moloto) as one who "threw intellectual handgrenades".¹⁴⁵ Other blacks he met rejected anything vaguely reminiscent of patronisation and told him - as they told other NCFS and NUSAS members - that they intended to gain their freedom themselves. Some whites like Dunne accepted this stance in a positive manner, recognising the need for such a standpoint and looked for a white role in such a struggle that did not seem to be "hijacking" the blacks' own struggle for their rights.

Dunne, the Conference Organiser for 1970, sincerely hoped that all would go well and that the tenuous unity of NCFS would be maintained. He hoped that the "commonality of our Catholic tradition"¹⁴⁶ would be strong enough to prevent a NUSAS-SASO type of split. At first everything went well "... and then all hell was breaking loose".¹⁴⁷ Motions considered very important to the black delegations, and supported by the more liberal white delegates, were proposed and then relentlessly opposed by the conservative faction, led by Pretoria's Jan D'Oliviera. Two motions put forward by black delegates - the one being a condemnation of alleged discrimination by the Bishops as brought to public notice by black priests in Soweto; the other a call to the Executive to contact the South African Institute of Race Relations and find information on detentions without trial and

145. Ibid.

146. Ibid.

147. Tim Dunne, Cape Town, 25 November 1988.

other human rights violations and pass them on to local Catholic Societies - were, one assumes after debate, withdrawn.¹⁴⁸ A motion that was put expressed alarm at the failure of the Catholic Bishops to take a stronger stand against "the erosion of human rights in South Africa and the atrocities perpetrated in the name of separate development"¹⁴⁹ and called on the President to convey the contents of this motion to them. D'Oliveira, without any tactics other than a brilliantly marshalled, finely delivered counter-argument managed to sway the majority white council to vote against the motions. At this point the black delegates walked out, en masse, returning a few minutes later. Another desperate attempt was made to maintain NCFS unity by nominating a black delegate, Victor Mafungu, for President. This was unheard of in the history of NCFS; though individual blacks had held every other position on the executive there had never been a black president. But Mafungu's nomination, despite support from many of the liberal white and fellow black delegates, was defeated and D'Oliveira won his second term of office as President of NCFS.¹⁵⁰ From the second half of 1970 to July 1971, one black Catholic Society after another disaffiliated from NCFS. Some gave reasons, many did not even bother. One observer from the time felt that many black Catholic Societies didn't even feel they had to justify their actions.¹⁵¹

148. NCFS: Two looseleaf Conference motion forms in envelope of original Conference 1970 notes.

149. NCFS: Two of similar forms as above stapled together AND recorded in NCFS Annual Conference Minutes, Marianhill (sic) 1970, p. 36. Motion 4/70: 11 For, 22 Against, 9 Abstentions, LOST.

150. Tim Dunne, Cape Town, 25 November 1988.

151. Kalie Hanekom, interviewed Harare, Zimbabwe, 26 September 1988.

Those that sent reasons were direct and uncompromising. Turfloop felt that they:

"derived nothing meaningful, purposeful or practical from their contact and communication except friendship, which could be established at any other level"

and they believed that NCFS was

"in no way in a position to solve the problems that are usually discussed at NCFS Conferences and formation schools". 152

The University of Zululand (Ngoye) affiliate felt:

"that the White members of NCFS exhibit a dual personality which is unacceptable to us and in conflict with Christian principles, by (i) meeting us on an equal level at Conference, but (ii) withdrawing thereafter into the practices of their corrupt society which preaches inequality". 153

The University of Natal (Wentworth) Catholic Society noted that NCFS displayed a "marked dichotomy" between theory and practice in that they failed to take a strong enough stand against "racism and fascism" in South Africa and, in particular:

152. Quoted in J. P. Franzidis, "A Call For Reconciliation" Katutura Oct/Nov 1974 pp. 14-15. Also NCFS: Typescript: "National Catholic Federation of Students, Southern Africa. June 1971, letter (sic) of disaffiliation".

153. Quoted in J. P. Franzidis, "A Call For Reconciliation" Katutura Oct/Nov 1974 pp. 14-15. Also NCFS: "National Catholic Federation of Students, Southern Africa, June 1971: Letter (sic) of disaffiliation".

"failed to act as a pressure group within the Catholic Church, and guide the direction within the Church away from its previous compromising stand towards militancy." 154

Taking a different stand point completely, Fort Hare stated that they:

"... as Black Catholic students must struggle to unite Black students both physically and ideologically. By voluntarily opting for segregation or exclusiveness we can collectively as Black students consolidate our forces and reorientate the standards that be" 155

Fort Hare added that:

"The church is White and hence deprived of the truth and radicalism.

We maintain that the Church is White because (sic)

(a) because its whole administration is White: but the majority of its members are Black,

(b) because it is based on a White economy,

(c) because the interpretation attached to the Gospel is White

It is a myth for any oppressed people to believe that an oppressor can work hand in glove with them for their redemption." 156

154. Ibid.

155. Ibid.

156. NCFs: "National Catholic Federation of Students, Southern Africa, June 1971: Letter (sic) of disaffiliation".

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that throughout the Sixties a clear division occurred between conservative and liberal factions within NCFs. On some occasions however unanimity was reached. The 1967 Conference had seen Black delegates housed in very inadequate conditions segregated from the main body of White delegates at Rhodes University; the condemnation of this situation was unanimous. There was also consensus about the segregation of the Durban Passion Play and NCFs recommended that no further performances be held unless they were opened to all races.¹⁵⁷ There seems thus to have been a general disapproval of what was later to be called "petty apartheid", but when NCFs reacted to events in which the government was involved, e.g. protesting against the 90-day detention laws,¹⁵⁸ or deploring the deportation of Anglican Bishop Crowther of Kimberley,¹⁵⁹ the conservatives disagreed sharply, complaining that it would "smear the name" of NCFs.¹⁶⁰ It is ironical to note that while a Rhodesian delegate to an NCFs Conference at Rhodes (1967), commenting of the tensions between English and Afrikaans-speaking campuses, noted that some delegates felt that the latter were trying to bring NCFs into the Nationalist Party orbit,¹⁶¹ an SABC broadcast attacked the Federation for being too liberal.¹⁶²

157. Southern Cross, 19 July 1967.

158. Southern Cross, 22 July 1964.

159. Southern Cross, 26 July 1967.

160. Ibid.

161. UZ: Catholic Society Newsletter (not dated, circa 1967), p.7.

162. AD1126, L3: Fr William T. Anderson SM to Monsignor Kaiser (Nairobi, Kenya), 24 July 1967. (Fr Anderson, the IMCS Pax Romana Africa Chaplain, had been visiting South Africa at the time).

The disaffiliations of the black campuses from NCFS was, at bottom, a class issue. It was not that white members of NCFS were racist. Rather it was because of the class they represented: like the Catholic Church itself, white-dominated and "orientated towards evangelising and converting Black people to the ideals and values of the Western world and a belief in a system that cherishes capitalism".¹⁶³ Throughout the Sixties, and often despite the rising influence of conservatives, NCFS had challenged violations of human rights, but never had they questioned the capitalist system. The Hierarchy too, had failed to examine this issue: when they attacked such matters as migrant labour they had done so because of its effect on family life, never looking at the fact that the migrant labour system was devised to make mining and industry cheap.¹⁶⁴ South African liberals, too, had largely failed to examine the limits to their own ideology which was rooted in capitalism,¹⁶⁵ so by the 1960s people, including NCFS members, could be politically liberal without even questioning capitalism as an ideology.¹⁶⁶

163. Advance (Publication of Catholic Students Association), September 1988, p. 5 ('The origin of CASA') [in possession of the author].

164. See, for example, L Callinicos: Gold and Workers 1886-1924 (Johannesburg, 1986).

165. One of the few exceptions to this 'rule' being Leo Marquard, whose 1944 book The Black Man's Burden (London, 1944) took a look at the economic roots of the crisis in South Africa. See: P. B. Rich, White Power and the Liberal Conscience: Racial Segregation and South African Liberalism, (Johannesburg, 1984), p. 89.

166. A former NCFS President of the Sixties, John Greene, recalls that the question of capitalism did not even come into the NCFS idea of liberalism. Liberalism meant simply political justice, academic freedom and the rule of law, as opposed to state restrictions on political activity, on academia, and the growth of arbitrary security legislation. (Interview with Greene, UCT, 27 October 1988).

Though, undoubtedly the growing conservatism in some sections of NCFS played a role in making black Catholic Societies frustrated, as did their frequent economic need and lack of resources (like chaplains), as did the lukewarm responses of white NCFS affiliates to the UCM, the crucial fact was that black Catholics (in NCFS and in the wider Church) started to question their state of domination in the Catholic Church. They questioned the fact that it was dominated by whites who had their own agenda and was thus not representative of the majority of its members. They saw too how the Church accepted without question the dominant capitalist ideology, an ideology that kept them landless, poor and exploited for their labour, and how it half-heartedly resisted the political power of the state, offering vague moral condemnations or carefully-worded protests against specific incidents. The theories of Black Consciousness and Black Theology emerged in consequence, as the intellectual and theological responses to the situation. These tools conscientized black NCFS affiliates into realizing that the white-dominated, politically liberal, unquestioningly capitalist, relatively institutional Catholic mode of organization that was NCFS was hopelessly inadequate to articulate their need for a radical, non-capitalist Catholicism that was directed towards their prime need: socio-economic and political liberation.

CHAPTER TWO

"MORAL RADICALISM" : NCFS IN THE 1970s

"The refusal with which the opposition confronts the existing society is affirmative in that it envisages a new culture which fulfils the humanistic promises betrayed by the old culture. Political radicalism thus implies moral radicalism : the emergence of a morality which might precondition man for freedom."¹

After the 1971 black disaffiliations, the membership of NCFS became almost exclusively white and middle-class in nature. The response to these events, it will be shown, was to try to radicalise the Federation. Leading members, noting black criticisms of the Federation, set about critically reassessing themselves, the Church and South African society, developing a new ideological perspective, transforming from a middle-class liberal organisation to one that espoused both Black Consciousness and socialism. This socialism it shall be shown was articulated not so much in terms of Marxist theory as in terms of religion : the theology of liberation. Yet the limitations of a middle-class radicalism such as that adopted by NCFS was evident both in the activities and ideological discourse of the Federation, and finally in the conservative rebellion against the dominant NCFS ideology in the later 1970s. The chapter will be divided as follows: Firstly, a brief setting of the political and religious context; secondly, an account of early 1970s NCFS activity, including the eventual swing to the left that occurred mainly in the mid-1970s; finally there will be account of the swing rightwards on some campus affiliates.

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1. Herbert Marcuse, An Essay of Liberation (Harmondsworth, 1969) p. 19 (Marcuse was a popular thinker among the leadership of NCFS: Tim Dunne interviewed at University of Cape Town, 25 November 1988 ; Kalie Hanekom, interviewed Harare, Zimbabwe, 26 September 1988).

THE CHURCH IN THE 1970s

Greg Cuthbertson has argued that a more radicalised and articulate "church in opposition" to apartheid emerged in South Africa in the 1970s.² He shows how political tensions often created tensions within the churches in the country : conscientious objection to service in the South African Defence Force (SADF) was hotly debated - and to varying degrees opposed - by most Protestant and Catholic churches in the country;³ the radicalisation of churches saw the spread of the Liberation Theology movement, promoted by groups like the Christian Institute and in the Catholic Church by NCFS and other youth organisations; the South African Council of Churches began to play a vital role in assisting victims of apartheid.⁴ In short, as the crisis in South Africa in the 1970s deepened with the emergence of a new, more militant trade union movement, with the student and youth protests that have been called in historical shorthand "Soweto",

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2. Greg C. Cuthbertson, "Christians and Structural Violence in South Africa in the 1970s", in W.S. Vorster (ed), Views on Violence (Pretoria, 1985), p. 43.
 3. See: South African Council of Churches, "Conscientious Objection : A Resolution of the SACC National Conference, 31 July-August 2, 1974", in C. Villa-Vicencio (ed), Between Christ and Caesar (Cape Town, 1986), pp. 225-226; Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC), "Statement on Conscientious Objection (February 1977)", in The Bishops Speak Volume II, (Pretoria, 1980), pp. 47-49; SACBC, Minutes of the Ordinary Plenary Session - February 1977, pp. 44-46, 63-64.
 4. See for example, Jonathan Eugene Klaaren, "A Contextual History of Christian Institutional Involvement in Legal Assistance to the Victims of Apartheid, 1960-1982" (M.A. dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1988), which focuses on SACC aid to political trialists.

with the re-emergence of the African National Congress and the political-cultural movement called Black Consciousness,⁵ Christians in the multi-racial (often called "English-speaking") churches were "forced into a less diffuse and more focused rejection of South Africa's apartheid system".⁶ Catholics in South Africa benefitted too from a general shift leftwards in the politics of the Catholic Church throughout the world in the 1970s.

THE SHIFT TO THE LEFT : FROM LIBERAL PROTEST
TO SOCIALIST IDEOLOGY

The immediate impact of the "split", the occasion when Black Catholic societies disaffiliated from NCFS owing to feelings of political frustration, was confusion. Delegates arrived at the July 1971 conference to find only one black delegate whose purpose was to inform them of the last black affiliate's decision to disaffiliate. For those who thought that what had happened to NUSAS could never happen to NCFS it was a disappointment and a shock.⁷ Part of the conference was suspended and the issue of the disaffiliations was discussed. Finally it was recognised that the Black critique of NCFS was justified and that steps had

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5. Material on these subjects are voluminous. Some good surveys include: Steven Friedman, Building Tomorrow Today: African Workers in Unions 1970-1984 (Johannesburg 1987), Tom Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945 (Johannesburg 1983), pp. 295-362.
 6. Cuthbertson, "Christians and Structural Violence", p. 57 Conversely, Villa Vicencio feels that though such resistance may have occurred in small groups the institutional churches in which they operate remain trapped in a 'liberal-conservative' ideological pattern. C. Villa-Vicencio Trapped in Apartheid : A Socio-Theological History of the English-speaking Churches (Cape Town and Maryknoll, New York, 1988).
 7. eg Tim Dunne, 25 November 1988.

to be taken to rectify the situation: there ought to be a stronger, more vigorous criticism by NCFS of society, of the Church and particularly of NCFS's own activity. Protest became the leitmotif of NCFS in the early 1970s. Individual members of NCFS, often in collaboration with the remnant of the University Christian Movement took to active forms of protest : tableaux of crucifixion were presented outside a church to protest injustice and, on one occasion, there were marches into church services, the participants chaining themselves to altar rails and reading out statements. However, the most common form of protest was the letter or press statement. ⁸

One of the first institutions to come under critical scrutiny was the Catholic Church itself. An incident that led NCFS to launch a sharp attack on the Church was the banning of Cosmas Desmond, a Franciscan friar who had informed the international media of the forced relocation of blacks. ⁹ NCFS protested against Desmond's house arrest, which they argued violated the South African legal principle of innocence presumed until proven guilty: "It is our right and indeed our duty to assume, until the courts find otherwise, that Cosmas Desmond, and those who suffer like him, are innocent until proven guilty". ¹⁰ They attacked the Catholic

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8. Ibid; Albert Nolan, interviewed Johannesburg, 22 July 1988, concurs.
 9. Cosmas Desmond, The Discarded People (Harmondsworth, 1971); "Discarded Person : Outlook on the Month", South African Outlook, Vol. 101, No. 1202, July 1971, p. 97.
 10. BC 586/S8 Katutura August/September (1971), p. 2.

hierarchy's handling of the situation, pointing to Brazilian bishops like Paulo Arns and Waldyr Calheiros¹¹ who denounced the torture of political prisoners fearlessly, and compared it (unfavourably) to Cardinal McCann's request for reasons for the banning of Desmond. They stated: "(W)e have a right to expect a clear and unequivocal leadership from you (Cardinal McCann) and the Hierarchy of the Catholic Church in the difficult task of ensuring Christian virtues in this unjust society".¹² For their criticism the first issue of Katutura, the journal in which this criticism was to be published, was barred from being printed on Catholic presses. The issue was typed onto a stencil and roneoed for distribution. The criticism deepened as the year passed. The Church was likened to "a ponderous, bureaucratic, prehistoric dinosaur, unconcerned with the world around it a pious joke at the expense of human beings" but in fairness it was also pointed out by the speaker that the Church's malaise was a reflection of their own attitudes "(f)or the church is only that way because we allow it to be so, by doing nothing about it".¹³ Indeed "the church may not speak out unless it is involved in the process of liberation, and it is not involved unless we are".¹⁴ Thus, the critique of the institutional church was in effect self-criticism by NCF5 of its own inadequacies.

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11. Paulo Arns : Bishop, now Cardinal, of Sao Paulo, Brazil. Outspoken human rights activist. Outspoken opponent of military regime.
Waldyr Calheiros : Bishop from Brazil; human rights activist.
 12. BC 586/58 Katutura August/September (1971), p. 11 (full article pp. 10-11).
 13. BC 927 : Minutes of the Council Meetings - July 1972, President's Report, n.p.
 14. Ibid.

One of the decisions reached at the 1971 Conference was that NCFCS ought to work for justice, specifically in the white community to promote some kind of white consciousness of oppression and the need for a more equitable dispensation for all.

In July 1971, the Justice and Peace Commission of NCFCS was formed, centred upon Pietermaritzburg, with a mandate to distribute information about conditions in South Africa.¹⁵ Soon it started to articulate its own ideological position in theological terms and a few "Study Papers" were produced by Commission members. These theological writings indicated the first signs of the move to the left in NCFCS. They addressed questions of poverty and the political order in biblical times with an eye firmly rooted on the authors' present. One denounced the accumulation of personal wealth, arguing that Jesus sided with the materially and socially poor, and warned the rich of the dire consequences of their greed. The critique of the institutional Church re-emerged with a caustic remark about the Church's apparent lack of commitment to the poor: "the de-materialised good news which we do preach (sic) today is hardly good news for the poor man in his poverty and suffering".¹⁶ Another publication attacked the Church image "of an apolitical Jesus, untouched by all the conflicts of his day" as "completely illusory".¹⁷ The image of the historical Jesus that was presented was one of a radical non-violent activist who worked for an earthly utopian kingdom. In addition to their own

15. Haen: Minutes of the Council Session - July 1971, Motion VI (n.p.).

16. BC586/58: NCFCS Peace and Justice Study Paper 1 : "Good News to the Poor" (nd), p. 5.

17. BC 586/58: NCFCS Justice and Peace Study Paper No. 2 : Jesus and the Political Order, (n.d.) p. 1.

publications, the Commission distributed and promoted the study guides and reports of the Christian Institute, and encouraged the development of local NCFS Justice and Peace Commissions, the support of any improvements to the socio-political situation¹⁸ and subscription to overseas publications where possible, particularly the Catholic Worker from the United States and pamphlets of the British Students' Christian Movement (SCM).¹⁹

Problems ensued for the Commission as the decade progressed. Some members complained that NCFS and the Church as a whole were not taking the "struggle" seriously.²⁰ They tried to promote the "Call of Conscience" of the Bishops Conference²¹ but found that the majority of students in most local Catholic Societies were apathetic.²² Though some campus groups tried to take Justice and Peace seriously - significantly in strongest regions

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18. Tim Dunne (28 November 1988) recalled how he formally complimented a Cabinet Minister (Mr G B A Gerdener) for his recognising that poverty, particularly among blacks, was a serious social problem. This perhaps indicates the strong liberal sense of "fair play" that remained fundamental to NCFS values and attitudes at the time.
 19. BD 927: Minutes of the 24th Annual Conference - July 1972 : Report of the Justice and Peace Commission; Motions 4, 6, 21 (n.p.); MD : Minutes of the Executive held at St Augustines Priory, Modderpoort, OFS, 1 - 2 September 1973, p. 2.
 20. MD : NCFS Minutes of the 1973 Conference : Report of the Director of Justice and Peace Commission, (n.p.).
 21. "A Call to Conscience" was a letter issued by the Southern African Bishops' Conference in February 1972. It was an acknowledgment of the need by the Church to act justly, to commit itself to the poor and to promote justice. It explicitly expressed support for those who were detained or banned. In some respects, then, it articulated many of the values that NCFS had called for, but had few concrete proposals for ending injustice. Copy of the text in The Bishops Speak, Volume II, pp. 9-15.
 22. MD : Minutes of the executive Meeting held at St Peter's Priory, Rosettenville, Johannesburg 19-20 January 1974 : Justice and Peace Commission Report (n.p.).

where a strong NUSAS presence was evident - and occasionally even became involved in work like literacy training,²³ the most that the national Commission could do was produce the occasional synopsis of other organisations' publications.²⁴ Ultimately the Justice and Peace Commission served its best purpose in the early 1970s during an era where a group of deeply committed individuals put a considerable amount of effort into making the enterprise work, at a time when the very notion of such a commission was new to the Church in South Africa.

During the early 1970s, a crisis occurred within the leadership of NCFS. Tim Dunne, speaking in early 1973 against the banning of eight NUSAS and eight SASO activists, quoted one of them, Phillippe Le Roux. Dunne was no stranger to political harassment: his home had been raided before²⁵ and as a prominent member of the Pietermaritzburg University branch of NUSAS believed that he was under surveillance.²⁶ By quoting a banned person he had laid himself open to charges under the Suppression of Communism Act. This led to the vice-president of NCFS, Mick du Toit, assuming the function of President for the remainder of Dunne's second term of office. Du Toit issued a statement to the press in which he

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23. MD : Minutes of the Executive held at Rhodes University (Grahamstown), 30-31 August 1975 : UCT Chairman's Report, p.5.
 24. BC 586/58 : Minutes of the Conference - July 1977 : Report of the Justice and Peace Commission (n.p.).
 25. NUSAS Newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 41, 29 October 1971.
 26. BC 927 : A letter to 'NCFS' (presumably the Executive) from Dunne, not dated (though circa 1972) indicating his change of address remarked that his was being re-directed from various places, possibly "including S(ecurity) B(ranch) offices PMB". This seems to suggest that Dunne felt he was under some kind of surveillance.

suggested that Dunne's act was an act of Christian protest against injustice ²⁷ and later stated that the whole incident gave Christians, particularly members of NCFS, "a greater realisation of the possible consequences of acting out one's Christian confictions (sic) in an inherently (sic) corrupt social system". ²⁸ What frustrated many NCFS members was how seventy prominent church people to whom copies of Du Toit's statement had been sent reacted, "from the cautious, to the indifferent, to the outright hostile". ²⁹ Particularly galling was a Catholic Bishop's complaint that he had not been consulted. It was wryly remarked that, at a time when the Bishops had been encouraging responsible lay leadership, NCFS was being treated like "a bunch of naughty irresponsible kids playing with fire". ³⁰ The whole incident spoke with insight about the state of NCFS. Its leadership were becoming increasingly outspoken both in Church and society.

How does liberalism fit into the protest politics of NCFS in the 1970s? The first thing to be noted is that liberalism is not - necessarily - synonymous with capitalism, ³¹ particularly not

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27. AB 1626/G (Anglican Students' Federation papers) "NCFS Press Statement 1st May 1973" (n.p.).
 28. MD : Minutes of the 1973 Conference : Report of the Vice-President (n.p.).
 29. MD : 'Southern Tick' (Scandal sheet of Elgin 1973 Conference, in a serious Editorial) n.d., n.p. It must be noted here that the State opted not to pursue the case any further : Dome 16 August 1973.
 30. MD : 'The Southern Tick', op cit.
 31. Though it can be, and often is associated with capitalism.

when dealing with the liberalism of NCFS. Alan Paton once defined liberalism as:

".... a generosity of spirit, a tolerance of others, an attempt to comprehend otherness, a commitment to the rule of law, a high ideal of the worth and dignity of man, a repugnance for authoritarianism and a love of freedom".³²

The notion of liberalism - as an ethical system, a commitment to justice and a tolerance for diversity - could sum up NCFS activity in the early 1970s. Nor should the strongly socialist vision of many NCFS members be seen as a negation of this liberal vision, for as Tom Lodge has shown, secular South African liberalism moved from a welfare-orientated vision in the 1920s and 1930s (seen by Marxists as "a means of minimising the friction caused by the politics of White oppression and Black reaction to it"³³ to a trend in the early 1960s within the Liberal Party itself towards a socialist vision.³⁴ Liberal political thinking - in line implicitly with either the Liberal Party or most conservatively with the Progressive Party³⁵ - had been a tradition within most of NCFS, and this tradition largely continued, adopting a strong social protest element and showing a high degree of respect for the Black Consciousness ideology, which disturbed and confused

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32. Alan Paton, "What Does Liberalism Mean for Me", paper presented to the Liberal Party Workshop, Rhodes University, July 1985, pp. 5-6.
 33. Tom Lodge, "Patrick Duncan and Radical Liberalism" UCT Africa Seminar Paper, 24 May 1977, p. 1.
 34. Ibid, p. 11.
 35. John Greene, 27 October 1988.

most white liberals many of whom had to undergo a process of conversion from the belief that Black Consciousness was anti-whitism.³⁶ The growth of a strong socialist theme in NCFs grew out of the theology of liberation, a Latin American-based theology that emphasized the rights of the poor, both in theory and practice ("praxis"). This theology developed on two levels : as an intellectual discipline in the 1960s amongst students and academics, and as an examination by the poor and oppressed of the meaning of their faith in the contest of resistance to oppression. Liberation Theology emphasized the need for careful analysis of classes and class struggles and finds (usually) Marxist social analysis as the most effective form of analysis that can be applied. At its extreme, Liberation Theology affirms the "Just War" theory in terms of social (and usually socialist) revolution.³⁷

Loud voices of protest were raised by NCFs when the Christian Institute was threatened. Formed in 1963 the Institute had been outspokenly critical of apartheid and had opposed racist ideology in the churches.³⁸ NCFs had long had a good working relationship with the Institute. Its members often spoke at

36. For example of a liberal who went through this process, see Donald Woods, Asking for Trouble : The Education of a White African (New York 1982).

37. Juan Luis Segundo : "The Shift within Latin American Liberation Theology" Journal of Theology for Southern Africa, 52, 1985, pp. 17-29; Paul A. Germond, "Liberation Theology : Theology in the Service of Justice", in C. Villa-Vicencio (ed) Theology and Violence : The South African Debate (Johannesburg, 1987), pp. 215-232.

38. For its history see Peter Walshe, Church Versus State in South Africa : The Case of the Christian Institute (London and Maryknoll, New York, 1983).

local or regional Catholic conferences. In addition, the Institute had a number of former NCFs members, like Colin Gardner and Anne Hope, acting in various portfolio capacities.³⁹ Individual NCFs members were encouraged to join the Institute,⁴⁰ and it was with concern and anger that NCFs noted how the Schlebusch - Le Grange "Commission of Inquiry into Certain Organisations" declared it an "affected organisation"⁴¹ and blocked all foreign funding to the organisation, effectively stripping it of 75% of its R200 000 annual budget. NCFs condemned the Commission as "biased and unchristian" and voted to donate R600 towards aiding the Institute.⁴² To little avail, however : on October 19, 1977, the Christian Institute was banned.⁴³

While these events can be seen as a sign of the protest that was the leitmotif of NCFs in the early 1970s, the radicalisation of NCFs - through its acceptance of Black Consciousness, Black Theology, liberation theology and the notion that South Africa was as much suffering as a result of economic exploitation as from the

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39. Walshe, Church vs State, pp. 176, 93, 137. Gardner and Hope were both NCFs members in the 1950s. Gardner is currently Professor of English at Pietermaritzburg University, while Ann Hope works for the Center (sic) of Concern, a Catholic-based organisation that promotes Justice and Peace issues in Washington D.C., United States of America.
40. BC 297 : NCFs Minutes of the 24th Annual Conference - 1972, Motion 8 (n.p.).
41. Walshe, op cit, p. 165 ; RP44/1975 : Final Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Certain Organisations : Christian Institute of South Africa, pp. 164-165.
42. MD : NCFs Conference Minutes 1975 Motion 4 (n.p.); MD : Minutes of the NCFs Executive held at Forest Sanctuary, Stutterheim, 6 July 1975 (n.p.); Walshe, op cit; Ecu-news 16 July 1975; NCFs : Press Statement on the C.I. 75/07/14 (sic).
43. Walshe, op cit, p. 202.

lack of broad-based political rights - was growing. This shift is most apparent in the federation's developing attitudes to the NCFS bursary, conscription and its ideological discourse, viz. its theology.

Fund-raising had been an important tradition in NCFS from its inception. The aim of the NCFS was to create a Bursary for a black Catholic student studying at one of the "tribal" universities ⁴⁴ and was seen in the early 1970s as a major, perhaps the major, form of "social action" that NCFS could participate in; it was particularly popular with more conservative university Catholic societies, who felt that it was "practical" as opposed to the "theory" about justice they heard from their colleagues on NUSAS-orientated campuses, ⁴⁵ and the conservatives proved to be very industrious in their work. ⁴⁶ The growth of Black Consciousness led to some serious questions being asked; according to Black Consciousness "the liberation of the self in the first instance" ⁴⁷ was paramount and the notion of self-reliance among blacks was pre-eminent. For activists like Steve Biko" the attitude taken by people (who) say

44. At one time before the creation of these colleges it was limited to Pius XII University College at Roma, Lesotho.

45. Kalie Hanekom, 26 September 1988.

46. E.g., BC 927 : Minutes of the Council Sessions - July 1973: KSV Stellenbosch Report reports on the role - disproportionate for its size - played by the Catholic Society in campus social welfare and legal aid groups.

47. Thomas K Ranuga, "Marxism and Black Nationalism in South Africa (Azania): A Comparative and Critical Analysis of the Ideological Conflict and Consensus between Marxism and Nationalism in the ANC, the PAC and the BCM, 1920-1980" PhD thesis, Brandeis University 1983, p. 253.

that they are going to be involved in the future problems of the Black man (sic) by donating part of their profits [Biko was referring in this speech to a company] to welfare programs (sic) is patern(al)istic".⁴⁸ Ideas like white charity to blacks were becoming anathema.

Questions were raised by the NCFS leadership. Noting that they had (theoretically at least) accepted the idea of Black Consciousness - as had members of the Bishops' Conference⁴⁹ - they questioned whether they could continue to administer a bursary scheme that, to them, reeked of tokenism and patronisation: a few white students awarding even fewer black students sums of money for university fees. A commission set up to investigate the Bursary came out strongly against it. They argued that Christian teachings demanded the sharing of resources, and that anything more than was needed for survival ought to be redistributed among the poor. The bursary, it was suggested, was not serving this purpose, but rather comprised whatever individuals felt willing to spare. It was felt too that if money was collected for blacks, it was not the task of whites to decide the appropriate way of using it.⁵⁰ The growing disapproval of capitalism was also evident in the Commission's discussions: it was asked how an anti-capitalist organisation like NCFS could invest funds raised for the Bursary in a capitalist institution like a bank!

48. Biko, quoted in Millard W. Arnold (ed), The Testimony of Steve Biko (London, 1978), p. 37.

49. Most notable among Bishops at that stage was the short, somewhat vague statement of Bloemfontein's Bishop Peter Butelezi, The Bishops Speak Vol. II, pp. 115-118.

50. MD : Manuscript : "The Future of the NCFS Bursary Scheme" n.d./circa 1975, n.p.

The desire was expressed to hand over the Bursary in toto to a black community organisation that would then administer it as it saw fit. A few felt that NCFCS could be prosecuted for collecting funds under false pretences. A resolution mooted was to inform all donors and give them the opportunity to reclaim their donations. After much debate it was decided by the NCFCS Council meeting at the Conference to transfer the full amount to the South African Committee for Higher Education (SACHED) ⁵¹ to administer as they saw fit.

The significance of this incident cannot be overemphasized: the Bursary was one of the oldest traditions in NCFCS. The abolition and the speed with which this was done symbolised the extent of the support given by NCFCS "militants" to the ideas of Black Consciousness and to opposing capitalism.

The early 1970s saw the emergence of the first signs of resistance to compulsory military service. At this stage the individuals most affected were peace churches and Jehovah's Witnesses whose teachings forbade their participation in any armed forces. ⁵² Principled opposition to military service was at first cautious -

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51. MD : "The Failure of the NCFCS Bursary Scheme", n.d. (c 1975)
MD : Minutes of the Executive/Council Meeting held at St (Els)gars Mission, Roodepoort on (sic) week ending 31 January 1975, n.p.; Haen: NCFCS (SA) Minutes of the Twenty-Eighth Conference, p. 2; MD : Letter : Mike Deeb to Fr Derck, 23 June 1976.
52. War and Conscience in South Africa : The churches and Conscientious Objection (Gweru, 1983), pp. 26-27 : D Cleminshaw, Sprocas 2 Background Paper : Conscientious Objection pamphlet, n.d., n.p.

and among the first of these "anxious radicals"⁵³ was NCFS President Tim Dunne's letter to the then Minister of Defence P. W. Botha, calling for some form of alternative community service, for those who felt impelled to object to military service, performed among the poor,⁵⁴ suggesting that a South African Peace Corps be established.⁵⁵ A Defence Ministry spokesperson responded that:

"National Service was never intended to be a type of Peace Corps. It is a system whereby the Republic maintains a military force wherewith to counter possible aggression."⁵⁶

Dunne's suggestion was summarily dismissed.

Though this suggestion was rejected, NCFS continued to oppose conscription. In many respects the anti-conscription "campaign" (if it can be called that) is a prime example of the non-violent protest method that characterised the period from 1971 to about 1976. Pamphleteering became an integral element in this campaign for conscientious objection rights. NCFS, together with NUSAS and the Anglican Students' Federation produced some of the earliest examples of this genre. In tone they were very mild and tended to approach the issue less from a socio-political

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53. To use a phrase coined by Alf Stadler in his article on Sprocas, "Anxious Radicals : SPRO-CAS and the Apartheid Society" Journal of Southern African Studies Vol. 2, No. 1, October 1975, pp. 102-108.
 54. NCFS : Katutura March/April 1972, p. 3 : BC 297 : Minutes of the Twentyfourth - 1972 : President's Report (n.p.).
 55. NUSAS Newsletter Vol 2 No. 39, 15 October 1971, pp. 3-4.
 56. NCFS : Katutura March/April 1972, p. 4

angle than from that of an individual's right to freedom of conscience. They attempted, for example to "give a factual account of the legal position of conscientious objectors in South Africa".⁵⁷ Later pamphlets included church teachings on conscientious objection, the just war and pacifist options, a comparative look at objectors and their status in other countries, and, even more, some of the specific problems related to resistance to war in South Africa.⁵⁸ Concerted attempts were made to distribute these pamphlets as widely as possible. 20 000 were distributed by NCFCS and the Anglican Students' Federation, particularly to church schools and in places like Stellenbosch where, in a twist of superby irony two officers in the South African Navy, who were both members of the Catholic Society, helped their civilian colleagues in the distribution of the literature.⁵⁹

A boost was given to the anti-conscription activists in NCFCS and other youth organisations by the South African Council of Churches' resolution of 1974 suggesting that the "just war" theory (the theo-ideological rationale developed by Augustine of Hippo and others in the medieval church to justify Christian

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57. Haen : "Conscientious Objection" (pamphlet by NCFCS and ASF, not dated).
58. BC 586/S8 : "Conscientious Objection to Military Service" (pamphlet by Western Province Council of Churches, with NUSAS, Aquarius, NCFCS etc, not dated).
59. NUSAS Newsletter Vol 3, No. 40, 20 October 1972, p. 4; Fr Albert Nolan OP, 22 July 1988, then Catholic chaplain at Stellenbosch University. It must be added however that some NCFCS members felt that the pamphlets were not as widely distributed as they should have been: viz. BC 297 : Minutes of the Executive Meeting : Southfort, 10-11 February 1973; MD : Minutes of the 1973 Conference : Report of the Justice & Peace Commission, n.p.

participation in violent conflict) did not apply in the case of defending White South Africa, and that Christians should seriously consider conscientious objection as a strong moral option.⁶⁰ While all white political parties and all white-owned newspapers - with the exception of the Rand Daily Mail - condemned the resolution, NCFS debated the issue locally and nationally, commenting that NCFS "ha(d) traditionally recognised the validity of Conscientious Objection".⁶¹ In customary fashion the publication that it released on the issue tried to be as comprehensive and as objective as possible.

The debate within NCFS remained polite until the mid-1970s. But, as the 1976 student uprisings and the war in Angola intensified, so too did the political polarisation in NCFS. Some NCFS members at Stellenbosch University, together with their ASF colleagues, suffered the censure of the wider student community for refusing to do guard duties around the residences during the time of the protests in the black townships near Stellenbosch.⁶²

At the same time the issue of military service was debated in an NCFS group and it was concluded that they, as Catholics, should not serve in the SADF,⁶³ a position which the Bishops Conference

60. War and Conscience in South Africa, pp. 28, 78-79; document printed in Villa-Vicencio (ed) Between Christ and Caesar, pp. 225-226.

61. MD : NCFS Study Paper on the South African Council of Churches' Resolution on Conscientious Objection c.late 1974; see, too, MD : Incensed (Wits Cathsoc Newsletter) circa September 1974 (talk on the C.O. issue scheduled, speaker to be Rev. Peter Storey).

62. Kalie Hanekom, 26 September 1988.

63. Mike Deeb 7 October 1988; A1985.010.5 (Helen Joseph Papers): clippings from Rand Daily Mail 4 February 1977; SACBC, Minutes of the Ordinary Plenary Session - February 1977, p. 64.

moderated in 1977 by arguing that all people should follow their consciences in the matter.⁶⁴ Although their sympathies were strongest for those who opted to object to military service, they felt that a categorical stand against conscription at that stage could drive white Catholics out of the church.⁶⁵

Viewed retrospectively, it is clear that the issue of conscientious objection was far from the dominant theme in NCFS in the 1970s. Though it was discussed, though speakers were invited to discuss the issue at local and national levels, and although significant amounts of material were published on the matter, its "time hadn't come yet".⁶⁶ The 1980s would see it re-emerge and become, perhaps, one of the key issues facing NCFS (and white South African youth) in that decade. It did show however how NCFS members could mobilise behind what was to them an essential matter of justice : the freedom of conscience to choose military service or refuse it, and, particularly after 1976, the injustice of using military force to keep people fighting for their political rights under state control.⁶⁷

64. "Statement of Conscientious Objection", in The Bishops Speak Volume II, pp. 47-49, Southern Cross, 20 February 1977.

65. SACBC, Minutes of the Ordinary Plenary Session - February 1977, pp. 45-46.

66. Tim Dunne, interviewed UCT, 25 November 1988.

67. Mike Deeb, interviewed Cedara, 7 October 1988.

GROWTH OF A "LEFT" IDEOLOGY

One of the distinctive features of the 1970s was the growth of a more explicitly "radical" ⁶⁸ ideology, something that developed parallel to liberal protest politics, but in many respects outstripped them. Suggestions of this ideology have occurred in an earlier section which deals with the debate over, and eventual cancellation of, the NCFS Bursary Fund. The debate was essentially over whether whites had the right to practise "charity" on blacks and whether it was moral to compromise with capitalism by investment of such funds as they had in banks. Particularly important was the idea of participatory democracy, the democratic control of enterprises by workers. In addition the popularisation of the idea of communes, the passion for individual freedom and self-management, combined with a loathing for private property and a strong anti-authoritarian streak suggested a strong anarchist socialist tendency. ⁶⁹ This thought, giving a theoretical tone to the protests, emerged from the need felt by some NCFS members for a stronger theological input into the Federation ⁷⁰ as well as from the desire for a publication to replace the defunct UCM/NCFS publication One For The Road.

68. My understanding of radical here, as elsewhere, draws on the original Latin meaning : radix - radicis - root. Radicals are therefore people who seek the root cause of problems. To most NCFS members of the 1970s, the root of the problem in the S.A. context was economic.

69. J Leatt, T Kneifel and K Nürnbergger (eds) Contending Ideologies in South Africa (Cape Town, 1986), pp. 186, 245-247.

70. Tim Dunne, interviewed 25 November 1988; but not everyone saw this as important: cf evidence of Kalie Hanekom, 26 September 1988.

Central to this desire for a new theology was the need to create a "White theology", "a positive theology of sacrifice for all who are in a position of privilege".⁷¹ An analysis of this decision seems to suggest a far more explicit awareness of what Nolutshungu calls "the economic structure underlying racism loss of land, low wages, pass laws, burdensome taxation, job colour-bars and commercial and financial discrimination".⁷² Catholic students were becoming aware that the radical cause for inequality in South Africa was a skewed economy, one in which a privileged few controlled the wealth and used the racist ideologies of apartheid to preserve their economic power. To this understanding was added the Black Consciousness movement's view that the role of the true white liberal or radical was to educate other whites to prepare them for a future non-racial society⁷³ and the growing feeling among blacks that capitalism as practised in South Africa was wholly unacceptable and needed to be replaced by a socialist system that accorded with African communal values.⁷⁴

The NCFS Conferences of the early 1970s set the intellectual tone of the decade and were instrumental, together with the new NCFS publication, in building up the Catholic Left within NCFS.

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71. Haen/NCFS : NCFS (SA) : Minutes of the Council Meetings - July 1971, Resolution XXVIII (28) (n.p.).
 72. Sam C Nolutshungu, Changing South Africa : Political Considerations, (Cape Town, 1983), p. 1.
 73. G M Gerhart, Black Power in South Africa, p. 267.
 74. Steve Biko, "Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity" in A. Stubbs (ed) Steve Biko - I Write What I Like, p. 97; Mokgethi B.G. Motlhabi, "The Theory and Practice of Black Resistance to Apartheid : A Social-Ethical Analysis of the Internal Struggle for Political and Social Change in South Africa, 1948-1978" PhD thesis, Boston University 1980, pp. 224-226.

Theological discourse, specifically Christology and Soteriology - the study of the nature and works respectively of Jesus Christ ⁷⁵ - formed the basis of the 1972 Conference and to some extent of the conferences that followed. Dominican Father Albert Nolan, building upon the work of modern biblical and theological scholars and upon some of the emerging theologians of liberation from the Third World, presented delegates with a picture of a Jesus who was a rebel - even a revolutionary - who consciously broke all the class and religious taboos of his society, challenged the whole first century Palestinian establishment, including Roman occupiers, Jewish collaborators and particularly what he perceived to be the morally and spiritually bankrupt Judaism of his day, and called for a totally new social and spiritual order. This called for the love of the poor; particularly the materially destitute who had previously been seen as poor owing to either their own, or their forebears', sin. Nolan argued that Jesus opted for the poor and oppressed, condemned wealth and privilege and called on the rich to abandon their wealth and join in solidarity with the poor. ⁷⁶ Based on this intellectual input, which was furiously debated, the Conference, noting the disparity in lifestyles in South Africa between the rich and those who lived on or below the bread-line, voted to adopt simpler lifestyles and to donate surplus income (i.e. money retained once the (undefined)

75. John A. Hardon SJ, Modern Catholic Dictionary (London, 1980), pp. 104, 513.

76. BC 927 : Minutes of the 24th Annual Conference - July 1972 : various typescripts of 4 talks (general title "That Man Jesus") given by Fr Albert Nolan OP; these talks, together with others, were published as Jesus Before Christianity : The Gospel of Liberation (Cape Town, 1976) and translated into 7 languages, becoming a worldwide bestseller among theological texts.

essentials necessary to survival had been spent) either to the NCFS Bursary Scheme⁷⁷ or to other organisations "helping the less-privileged help themselves".⁷⁸

The Conference themes developed more along the lines of social ethics and politics. Wealth, poverty and power became central concerns. One conference asked the question "HOWMUCHISENUFF?" (sic) and consisted of basic economic theory and a theological critique of economic systems, particularly capitalism, with socialism being regarded as a theologically more just system.⁷⁹ The problem of political justice also became an important subject for debate. the 1974 Conference on "Reconciliation" decided that "it was meaningless for Whites to consider reconciliation without prior liberation on both sides, and that it was necessary to have contact with Blacks, before Whites can (sic) realise just how they are 'oppressors' ".⁸⁰ This statement indicated two issues pertinent to NCFS in the 1970s: on one level there was a deep desire for more contact with blacks, particularly students, to learn from them rather than dictate terms of unity; on another level the NCFS recognised that the priority for any reconciliation between black and white was political liberation, a sign that

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77. At this stage there had been no serious debate over the correctness of keeping the fund going.
78. Southern Cross, 13 September 1972; BC 197 : Minutes of the 24th Annual Conference - July 1972, Motion 17 (n.p.).
79. BC 586/S8 : Publicity Pamphlet : NCFS Conference : HOWMUCHISENUFF? Elgin 1973; speakers included Dr Philip Stohr (Economic history and theory), Fr Albert Nolan OP, and Fr Paul Nadal (who focussed on the relationship between Christianity and Socialism).
80. Southern Cross, 21 July 1974.

their analysis of the situation avoided what Nürnberger and years later the Kairos Document called "cheap reconciliation",⁸¹ a reconciliation based on sentiment. Liberation became a central theme and a keyword in the NCFS lexicon. The concept was analysed within NCFS particularly from the point of view of the Latin American Theology of Liberation with necessary adaptations being made to relocate the key themes in a South African context.⁸² The result was the emergence over a period of a few years of small Catholic reflection groups examining their experiences and faith in the light of changing socio-political events.

Another pedagogical source closely used by NCFS lay theologians was the simulated game, particularly "Star Power", a game that taught players the links between political and economic power, the dynamics of class alliances and class struggle, revolutions and the redistribution of wealth.⁸³ A shortage of accommodation at a Conference venue in Stutterheim (Eastern Cape) even led to a new game, Reds and Blues. Delegates were divided into "haves" and "have nots" (unofficially, but this later became evident as the days passed): the "haves" deliberately included all black delegates from NCFS-affiliated campuses and some white students,

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81. Klaus Nürnberger, "Appendix: 'Cheap' versus 'Authentic' Reconciliation", in The Encounter of the Church with Movements of Social Change in Various Cultural Contexts. Part II: Papers from a Consultation in Glion, Switzerland 4-11 July 1976 (Geneva, 1977), pp. 132-136; Challenge To The Church : The Kairos Document (Johannesburg, 1985).
82. Fr Albert Nolan, Johannesburg 22 July 1988.
83. For brief rules of this game see Thomas R Fenton (ed), Education for Justice : A Resource Manual (Maryknoll, New York, 1975, pp. 379-380; Anne Hope & Sally Timmel, Community Workers' Handbook Volume I (Gweru, 1984), p. 142.

while the "have nots" comprised most of the chaplains, the NCF5 leadership and the rest of the white delegates. For roughly three days the "haves" enjoyed luxuries like better sleeping accommodation, larger helpings of food and less cleaning-up duties. Just as the "have nots" rebelled, the deception was revealed. It was explained that the purpose of the exercise was to give the rich an experience of the frustration of being poor and exploited, while giving the poor an understanding of wealth and why ruling classes resisted the redistribution of their wealth.⁸⁴ The same year, prominent NCF5 chaplain Albert Nolan attended the International Movement of Catholic Students' (IMCS) Inter-Feder Assembly (IFA) in Lima, Peru, where issues pertaining to liberation were high on the agenda. The keynote speaker was one of the intellectual gurus of liberation theology, Gustavo Gutierrez,⁸⁵ a diocesan priest whose experience as pastor in Rimac (a slum in Lima) combined with post-graduate study at Louvain University in Belgium, had led him to see the unequal distribution of wealth in Latin America and the repressive political machinery used to keep the poor poor as "structural violence". His re-reading of the Bible and Catholic Social Teaching from the point of view of the poor and oppressed led him to conclude that God was on the side of the poor and that the Church should side with those who struggled for liberation, even

84. Kalie Hanekom, interviewed Harare, 26 September 1988, was one of the prime movers behind this game; MD : Maties Cathsoc Newsletter, August 1975 "Conference 1975, or how to change the world"; not surprisingly at this conference there was a motion that resolutely condemned capitalism: Ecu-News 16 July 1975, p. 3.

85. Albert Nolan, 22 July 1988; Gutierrez's most famous book is titled, appropriately, A Theology of Liberation : History, Politics and Salvation (London, 1972).

understand those who opted for "revolutionary counter-violence" in pursuit of justice.⁸⁶ These ideas, for white middle class South Africans going through a crisis of religious and political direction, were challenging and, for some, frightening.⁸⁷

The 1975 NCFs Conference saw Christian liberation as "Christ's predilection (sic) for the poor and oppressed and his proclamation of the Kingdom of God as a kingdom on this earth in which the paramount values were material sharing, human dignity, solidarity with the human race, and power seen as service".⁸⁸ In terms of this the Church was criticised for legalism and dictatorial attitudes, and accused of collaborating with the dominant classes of society. It needed liberating from itself, they declared, as did women from their "traditional and inferior roles".⁸⁹ But at the root of oppression, the conference declared, was the economic oppression of the capitalist system with its dedication to personal gain, exploitation of workers and driving ambition for success. South African capitalism, it was felt, created the cheap labour system and migrancy, forcing Blacks off their land.⁹⁰ Thus they rejected capitalism as manifested in South Africa "as being in conflict with the values of the kingdom of God".⁹¹ They proposed alternatives: students, they believed,

86. Paul A. Germond, "Liberation Theology : Theology in the Service of Justice", Theology and Violence, pp. 224-225; G. Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, pp. 103, 108 ff.

87. Some NCFs members, like Tim Dunne (25 November 1988) and Kalie Hanekom (26 September 1988), saw liberation theology as challenging. Others, as evidenced by the later crises in the Federation, felt threatened by the new orientation.

88. Southern Cross, 27 July 1975.

89. MD : NCFs Conference Minutes 1975 "Womens Liberation" (typescript, n.p.).

90. *Ibid*, various typescripts.

91. Southern Cross, 27 July 1975; Ecu-News, 16 July 1975, p. 3.

should actively challenge the Church's role in society; self-taxation and the redistribution of excess wealth was encouraged; they pleaded for the conscientization of people to an alternative lifestyle based on values like sharing, compassion, service and solidarity.⁹² Some NCFS members instituted communes in this period in most university centres. They became known by key names - "Oak Street" (the Cape town commune in Oak Street, Observatory) and "Joceto" (literally : 'Johannesburg Central township', in Johannesburg)⁹³ - and lasted for varying lengths of time during the 1970s.

Though the NCFS was ideologically closer to socialism than any other economic system, its ideological discourse - the "actually occurring instances of expression"⁹⁴ - was rooted firmly in religious language. Political concepts like revolution and liberation were seen both secularly on their own terms and theologically in terms of "transformed humanity",⁹⁵ "spiritual revolution" and the "kingdom of God". This was not because secular ideological terms were treated with disdain or fear, but because NCFS saw political activity as rooted in moral and religious responsibility.⁹⁶ Violence was carefully categorised

92. These became known in NCFS, and later wider Catholic parlance as 'Kingdom values', see Albert Nolan, Biblical Spirituality (Springs, 1986) pp. 61-72; Nolan, Jesus Before Christianity, pp. 50-72.

93. Kalie Hanekom, 26 September 1988; Mike Deeb, 7 October 1988.

94. John B. Thompson, Studies in the Theory of Ideology (Cambridge, 1984), p. 8.

95. Haen: NCFS (SA) : Minutes of the 28th Annual Conference, SSM Conference Centre, Modderpoort, OFS, 2-8 July 1976, "The Death and Resurrection of Jesus" (typescript, n.p.).

96. Ibid, "Our Moral Responsibility" (typescript, n.p.).

into institutional violence - specifically apartheid, capitalism and the force used to maintain them - and the revolutionary violence that reacted against it. While revolutionary violence was felt to be understandable, the violence of the powerful was considered wholly immoral, indefensible and anti-Christian.⁹⁷ By July 1977 socialism was seen as integral to Christianity,⁹⁸ a systematic expression of Christianity on earth. These ideological positions, reached in the period following the Soweto uprising and just prior to the State's banning of most Black opposition organisations in South Africa, proved to be zenith of the Left in NCFS.

The other feature of the ideological shift to the left - one that was perhaps more radical than the Conference theology, and certainly one that had a much wider impact on church and university - was the NCFS publication Katutura. The title, a Herero word meaning "We have no permanent resting place",⁹⁹ sets the tone of the publication : a socio-religious journal that strove for political, social and economic justice within a Christian context. It served as a magazine of criticism - of the Catholic Hierarchy's policy vis-à-vis the house arrest of Cosmas Desmond,¹⁰⁰ of the imprisonment without alternative service of

97. MD : Some Material Relating to Oakford Conference, July 1977; "Workshop on Violence" (typed notes).

98. MD : Some Material Relating to Oakford Conference, July 1977; "Workshop on Violence" (typed notes).
"Christianity and Socialism" (typed notes).

99. Also the name of the Black township outside of Windhoek, Namibia.

100. BC 586/58 : Katutura, August/September (1971), pp. 2, 10-11.

conscientious objectors,¹⁰¹ and as the years passed of capitalism.

Katutura took a strongly positive view of Black Consciousness, particularly Black Consciousness' criticisms of the Church in South Africa. A number of the leading exponents of Black Consciousness in South Africa had had religious backgrounds - some were even ministers, priests and seminarians¹⁰² - and had expressed their frustration with the "Whiteness" of South African Christianity: appallingly irrelevant scriptural exegesis, bureaucratisation of the Church, tacit acceptance of the notion of "White (European) equals value"; and far too much emphasis on blacks turning the other cheek.¹⁰³ The criticisms levelled by Black Consciousness exponents like Steve Biko have certain grounds for complaint. Unequal wage scales for black and white priests and ministers were common in most Churches in the early 1970s,¹⁰⁴ It was true, too, that the Bible was "a ruling class document (that) represent(ed) the ideological and political interests of the ruling class"¹⁰⁵ used in South African history to enforce

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101. NCFS : Katutura, March/April 1971, pp. 3-4;
NCFS : Katutura, October/November (1972), pp. 2-4.
102. S. C. Nolutshungu, Changing South Africa, p. 157;
G. M. Gerhart, Black Power in South Africa, pp. 294-295;
Bonganjalo Goba, "The Black Consciousness Movement : Its Impact on Black Theology", in I. J. Mosala and B. Tlhagale (eds), The Unquestionable Right to be Free : Essays on Black Theology (Johannesburg 1986), pp. 61-63.
103. S. Biko, "The Church as seen by a Young Layman", Steve Biko - I Write What I Like, pp. 56-58; also M. Mothlabi, "Theory and Practice of Black resistance to Apartheid" (Boston PhD, 1980), pp. 43-55.
104. G. Gerhart, Black Power in South Africa, p. 294;
Colin B. Collins gives Catholic examples : Radio interview with Colin B. Collins, Australia c. October 1977 (tape-recording in the possession of the author).
105. Itumeleng J. Mosala, "The Use of the Bible in Black Theology", in I. J. Mosala and B. Tlhagale (eds), The Unquestionable Right to be Free (Johannesburg, 1986), p. 196.

obedience and service to authority on the one hand and to satisfy apartheid on the other. Black Consciousness and Black Theology sought - and continued to seek - to remind blacks that they were made Christians "at gun point" and that religion was used to dominate them. ¹⁰⁶

A prominent and controversial black Catholic layperson who had led a demonstration at a meeting of the Bishops' Conference in 1971 and called for the consecration of a black Bishop of Johannesburg, a black Cardinal and for an end to what he perceived to be institutional racism in the Catholic Church ¹⁰⁷ was interviewed by Katutura reporters; he (Drake Coka) expressed his frustration with the way the Catholic Church in South Africa was run by a white clerical elite while the majority of South Africa's Catholics were black. ¹⁰⁸ On another occasion, the journal reprinted an article originally published in the Catholic newspaper the Southern Cross; its author, a black correspondent, charged that the Hierarchy lacked serious concern about the state of the country and the conditions under which blacks lived, placing too much emphasis on its own "innumerable and superfluous material comforts" without taking heed of, and acting on, the poverty of many citizens. ¹⁰⁹

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106. Takatso Mofokeng, "The Evolution of the Black struggle and the Role of Black Theology", Conference Report : Black Theology and the Black Struggle (Johannesburg : n.d. c. 1984), p. 125 (also in Mosala and Ilhagale (eds), The Unquestionable Right, p. 114); voluminous work has appeared on the role of religion, specifically missionaries, in colonial domination of Black South Africans, for example - Nosipho Majeke, The Rôle of the Missionaries in Conquest, (Cumbernaed, n.d.).
107. P. Walshe, Church Versus State in South Africa, p. 135.
108. NCFS : Katutura March/April 1972.
109. NCFS : Katutura October/November 1972.

Katutura also published articles on the historical and cultural foundations of Black Consciousness and the influence of North American Black Theology, and included a transcription of American civil rights activist Dr Martin Luther King Jr's "I have a dream" speech.¹¹⁰ The result was that while many white Catholics were confused, or overtly hostile to Black Consciousness, NCFS members acquired a greater understanding of the movement and its ideology. Among the leadership there were even those who strongly supported it.¹¹¹

In the early 1970s the publication also started to ask pointed questions about the socio-economic condition of South Africa. The early 1970s had seen the emergency of the Wages Commissions on some (NUSAS-affiliated) campuses, particularly in Natal. Many members of NCFS affiliates in Natal took part in the Wages Commissions.¹¹² In line with the strong emphasis that was being placed at conferences on the economic dimensions to religious faith, and indeed in the belief that Katutura ought to "understand the conflicting opinions which are prevalent today and which influence our lives"¹¹³ and "create an awareness of progressive Christian thought, especially in Catholic circles",¹¹⁴ critical studies of both South African and

110. NCFS : Katutura August/September 1972, pp. 3-4; Katutura February/March 1973, pp. 12; Katutura April/May 1973, pp. 9-10.

111. Kalie Hanekom, Harare, 26 September 1988.

112. Tim Dunne (interviewed UCT 25 November 1988) believes that, particularly at Pietermaritzburg University, the Wages Commission was NCFS (who also were, like Dunne himself, NUSAS members) or at least people in, or on the fringe of, the Catholic Society.

113. NCFS/MD : Katutura August/September 1972, p. 2.

114. BC 297 : NCFS : Minutes of the Council Meetings - July 1973 : Director of Publications Report (n.p.).

international capitalism began to be published. Durban Catholic Society member Peter Manning produced an exposé of conditions of black mineworkers, based on his experience of vacation work at a mine. ¹¹⁵ Migrant labour was attacked because it was "...tearing husband and wife apart (It) flaunts the command of our Lord : 'What God has joined together, let no man put asunder'." ¹¹⁶ Gradually a socialist vision emerged, inspired not so much by orthodox Marxism as by the utopian socialism of the American Catholic Worker Movement. This Movement had been founded in New York City in 1931 by Dorothy Day, a journalist and former Communist, and by Peter Maurin, a Frenchman who had the talent to reduce complex theology (which he'd learnt during nine years spent as a Christian Brother) to understandable terms. Ideologically, it rejected capitalism, state control and militarism. The Movement espoused a completely decentralised society, communal economic relations particularly based in a "back to nature" agrarian context, commitment to voluntary poverty and non-violent protest (including conscientious objection, non-co-operation with unjust laws, marches, vigils and even refusal to pay taxes). ¹¹⁷

The growth of a socialist consciousness in Katutura can be seen to be explicitly emerging in late 1973 and early 1974, reaching its peak of influence in 1976-1977. An editorial, based on an

115. NCFS : Katutura March/April 1972, pp. 23-26.

116. NCFS/MD : Katutura February/March 1973, p.3.

117. "Aims and Means of the Catholic Worker", in J. Fahey and R. Armstrong (ed), A Peace Reader : Essential Readings on War, Justice, Non-violence and World Order, (New York 1987), pp. 201-205; for a biography of Dorothy Day, see : Jim Forest, Love is the Measure : A Biography of Dorothy Day, (New York, 1986).

address given by the controversial Catholic Bishop of Umtali, Rhodesia, ¹¹⁸ Donal Lamont - charged that wealthy Christians were to blame for complicity in the underdevelopment and exploitation of the world's poor. Catholic radical, and co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement in the United States, Peter Maurin, was quoted as having said in a poem:

" I want a change,
and a radical change
I want a change from acquisitive society
to a functional society
from a society of go-getters
to a society of go-givers", ¹¹⁹

and in another issue Maurin became the subject of a potted biography within an essay attacking capitalist acquisitiveness. It praised Maurin's establishment of communal houses of hospitality, and of self-employment schemes and for practising non-violence (among other things), in short his commitment to a "new social order to take the place of capitalism and communism". ¹²⁰ There were also traces of the democratic "human model" of socialism advocated by the then banned Durban University political scientist Rick Turner. Turner stated that "(a) grossly unequal society is immoral at any time ... it is also stupid. We can no longer afford the waste of resources involved. We can no longer afford to stifle creativity, inhibit

118. Now Mutare, Zimbabwe.

119. NCF5/MD : Katutura April/May 1973, pp. 2, 5.

120. NCF5/MD : Katutura August/September 1973, pp. 3-4.

co-operation, and foster fierce and destructive competition for scarce goods", ¹²¹ Earlier he had argued that "the rejection of the materialistic human model characteristic of capitalism in favour of a more open model (i.e. democratic socialism) ... is much closer to the Christian ideal". ¹²² This resoundingly echoed the NCF's criticism of capitalism, and NCF's advocacy of democratic socialism in the 1970s.

The synthesis of New Left sympathies and theology was most apparent in the way Katutura popularised the theology of liberation, becoming the Christian journal that did the most to foster this new way of "doing theology" ¹²³ in South Africa after the Christian Institute's Pro Veritate. The editors reprinted articles by prominent overseas theologians of liberation, particularly Latin Americans like Gustavo Gutierrez and Leonardo Boff, progressive Christian educationists like Paulo Freire, as well as European "political theologians" such as

121. Richard Turner, The Eye of the Needle : Towards Participatory Democracy in South Africa (Johannesburg, 1980), p. 98.

122. Richard Turner, "The Relevance of Contemporary Radical Thought", in Peter Randall (ed) Directions of Change in South African Politics (SPROCAS Publication No. 3) (Johannesburg, 1971), p. 82.

123. Literally "doing theology", Leonardo and Clodovis Boff indicate that it is practised at popular, pastoral and professional levels, but its roots "are the practical living and thinking - though submerged and anonymous - going on in terms of thousands of base communities living out their faith and thinking it in a liberating way", Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, Introducing Liberation Theology (London, 1987), pp. 12-13.

Alistair Kee and Jurgen Moltmann.¹²⁴ They tried to broaden their distribution and to build wider contacts: some visited South African seminaries and began to distribute Katutura and other publications to seminarians, as well as to give talks to seminarians on liberation theology. In some cases these were the first that these students had ever heard.¹²⁵ It became NCFs policy to distribute Katutura among clergy and the broader laity, particularly on university campuses for wider student readership.¹²⁶

Much interest was shown in it. The Hierarchy displayed sympathy for it, contributed funds towards its production and individual bishops became subscribers.¹²⁷ Within the remaining years of

124. Gustavo Gutierrez : q.v.

Leonardo Boff : Brazilian Franciscan friar, professor of theology at Petropolis Seminary. Author of numerous books and articles.

Paulo Freire : Brazilian educationalist, employed by the World Council of Churches. Specialist in conscientization, education that creates a critical political awareness while building literacy skills.

Alistair Kee : Scottish theologian; worked at University of Rhodesia in 1960s, writer and populariser of Liberation Theology in First World.

Jurgen Moltmann : West German political theologian.

Influenced by Ernst Bloch, a Marxist philosopher who developed a utopian vision of society; Moltmann is seen by many Third World theologians as one of the major European theological influences on liberation theology.

125. Kalie Hanekom, Harare, 26 September 1988.

126. BC 586/S8 : NCFs Minutes of the Council Meetings - Hekpoort, July 1974, Motion 17 (n.p.); MD : Minutes of the Executive/Council Meeting held at St (?)gar's Mission, Roodepoort on the weekend ending January 31, 1975, "Katutura" (n.p.); MD : NCFs Conference Minutes 1975 (Report of Editor of Katutura) (n.p.) : MD : Minutes of the Executive held at St Aidan's Grahamstown - August 31 to September 1, 1974, (Katutura Editor) (n.p.) ; NCFs : Circular letter (to various theologians, clergy, etc), 28 July 1975.

127. NCFs : Secretary of Bishop Naidoo (name illegible) to 'Dear Sir', 13 November 1975; Archbishop Denis E. Hurley to 'Dear Friends', 1 August 1977.

its existence a small but diverse readership grew : Catholic and Protestant clergy; ¹²⁸ lay people, Catholic and Protestant, including a significant number of black readers; ¹²⁹ and particularly secular student movements. ¹³⁰ There was even a limited international interest : a Canadian studying "mission problems" asked whether he could subscribe to it; a Zimbabwean nun studying in Rome expressed interest, and the managing editor of the United States' Catholic Worker newspaper, which reprinted an article first published in Katutura, congratulated them on "speaking with such courage and compassion". ¹³¹ By July 1977, distribution had reached the 1500 mark. ¹³² However by 1977, tensions had arisen - tensions which were to lead eventually to the demise of Katutura and to the polarisation of NCFS into two political camps.

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128. NCFS : Letters from: Fr B. Thorne OSM (n.d.); Bishop Naidoo's secretary, 13 November 1975; Archbishop Hurley 1 August 1977; J. W. Biemann (from Roma, Lesotho), 1 June 1975; Rev John Aitcheson, n.d.
129. NCFS : S. Levendal, 29 July 1977; P. Napier, 29 August 1976; L. Maphisa (n.d.); G. A. Solomon (n.d.); W. Rakubu, January 1977; G. Gurirab (n.d.).
130. NCFS : Andre Kraak, editor of 'Z' (Students for Social Democracy publication) to Dear Sir/Madam, 26 September 1977; D. Yach (Vice-president UCT SRC) to Katutura, 21 September 1977.
131. NCFS : Letter from Yvon Bourret (Sherbrooke, Qué , Canada) 7 August 1976; Letter from Sister Teresita (Rome) 2 September 1970; letter from Robert Ellsberg, managing editor of Catholic Worker, New York, April 12 (1977 ?); also Catholic Worker, October/November 1977, pp. 3, 6.
132. MD : Minutes of the 29th Annual Conference - July 1977, p. 4.

THE CRISIS OF THE LEFT

During the 1970s conservative tendencies had always been present in NCFs, but there had never been deep animosity between the NCFs "left" and those who occupied a "centre" position. If anything, there were cases where individuals started out as fairly conservative ideologically but as their religious and social horizons were broadened by their involvement in NCFs they swung to far more liberal, or even radical, positions.¹³³ However, the mid-1970s saw a hardening of the political arteries brought on by the deepening political crisis in the country: by the 1976 student uprisings, by the strategic withdrawal of South African forces from Angola and, Kalie Hanekom suggests, by the infiltration of agents provocateurs into NCFs.¹³⁴ Internal problems, particularly the differing realities experienced on different campus affiliates, were crucial to the crisis.

For white South Africans the widening spiral of protest and violence that was the unsophisticated view of the 1976 black student uprising was traumatic. Rumours and near-hysteria were rampant.¹³⁵ Because it started within a few weeks of the 1976

133. Individuals who experienced this to varying degrees included Mike Deeb (interviewed at St Joseph's Scholasticate, Natal, 7 October 1988) and Kalie Hanekom (interviewed in Harare, 26 September 1988). This phenomenon, it should be noted was not unique to the 1970s, but was a feature of the whole period of NCFs' existence.

134. Kalie Hanekom, Harare, 26 September 1988.

135. To use a Capetonian example, the 'Fact Not Rumour' telephone service was introduced to dispel rumours and spread accurate evidence of the situation in the Cape Town region. See : E. van Heyningen, H. Phillips and D. Killick, "The Cape of Storms Again" History Workshop : University of Cape Town 1977, p. 34. The author recalls, as a 10-year old, hearing all kinds of 'blood and thunder' myths of the time.

NCFS Conference, which had been planned months before, nothing about it was on the Conference agenda. Opinion was so confused about exactly what was happening that no statement was issued on the matter.¹³⁶ Though the Federation itself did not react, some local affiliates actively responded to the events. Individual Stellenbosch University Catholic and Anglican society members refused to do guard duty outside residences which were seen, in the confusion surrounding the spread of the resistance to black townships outside Stellenbosch, as potential targets for "mobs".¹³⁷ At the University of Cape Town, the Kolbe Society, which at the time enjoyed a high political profile with a presence on the Students' Representatives Council, helped the SRC in its initiatives to hold class boycotts and solidarity meetings. Their chaplain, Brian Gaybba, spoke at one student meeting and argued that, though many whites were afraid of the course of events occurring at the time, the only way to peace in South Africa was giving people freedom from all forms of racial oppression.¹³⁸ Another speaker at the meeting was the Catholic Archbishop of Cape Town, Cardinal Owen McCann, who saw the unrest as "a symptom of feelings about wrongs much deeper than the apparent cause"¹³⁹ and pointed, like Gaybba, to the need for justice.

The influence of NCFS on parts of the hierarchy was strongest within the Youth Department of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC). NCFS members, particularly

136. Mike Deeb, St Joseph's Scholasticate, 7 October 1988.

137. Kalie Hanekom, Harare, 26 September 1988.

138. NCFS : Kolbe Newsletter Vol. 1, No. 2 (1976) n.p.

139. The Bishops Speak Volume II, pp. 78-79; NCFS : Kolbe Newsletter Vol. 1, No. 2 (1976), n.p., includes photographs of Cardinal McCann addressing the students.

Mike Deeb, were asked to produce the Youth Department's analysis of the 1976 student uprising and NCFS and former NCFS members featured prominently - together with the representatives of the Young Christian Workers (YCW) - at the 1977 Bishops' Plenary session, specifically attempting to give the Bishops a more radical, class-based, analysis of the South African situation. The main YCW representative was asked by other Youth Department delegates to express his feelings. These were examined and re-formulated into a clear statement.¹⁴⁰ The statement, informed strongly by Black consciousness and anti-capitalist feeling, attacked any attempts by the South African ruling class to co-opt some blacks into a middle class, stating:

"We reject the whole system which is based on materialism, productivity and individual gain. This is a western system which is foreign to African culture. It is based on the exploitation of labour, and is dominated by the rich investors"¹⁴¹

and mooted that:

"(t)he leaders of the Church have made statements against racism but have they made statements about the unjust distribution of wealth and opportunity?"¹⁴²

The Youth Delegates also prepared posters and montages of townships and bishops' houses and posed the question : where would

140. Evidence of Mike Deeb, 7 October 1988; Kalie Hanekom, 26 September 1988, and Fr Albert Nolan OP, 22 July 1988.

141. NCFS : Katutura May 1977, p. 6.

142. Ibid, p. 7.

the bishops live in the future, with the people or the rich? ¹⁴³
NCFS delegates specifically raised the question of the presence of
Catholic priests in the military chaplaining of the SADF,
particularly those who were seen to be "full-time military
personnel", ¹⁴⁴ and the moral question of conscientious
objection.

While the final statement of the Bishops, the Declaration of
Commitment on Social Justice and Race Relations within the Church,
never went so far as to condemn capitalism outright but affirmed
opposition to racial discrimination, it went much further than
previous statements by criticising the Church's own practices, and
affirming a commitment to a simpler lifestyle. ¹⁴⁵ The Bishops
promised to re-evaluate the use and distribution of the Church's
funds, to promote development work, and support Black
Consciousness "in regard both to those who promote it and those
who suffer for it". ¹⁴⁶ It is impossible to show that NCFS were
the prime movers behind the Bishops' stronger stand on matter of
justice. During the Plenary session there were other sources of
radical criticism : a letter from black priests was tabled and

143. Mike Deeb, 7 October 1988.

144. NCFS : Katutura May 1977, p. 7; The extent to which
military chaplains are used to bolster the dominant ideology
of the SADF, the issues for churches raised by their ex-
istence as military personnel, particularly the question
of obedience to two authorities (church and SADF) and their
use by the SADF is discussed in : Peter Graham Moll, "A
Theological Critique of the Military Chaplaincy of the
English-speaking Churches" (M.A. dissertation, University
of Cape Town, 1984).

145. The "simple lifestyle" reference is resonant of an NCFS
concern of the period, a concern for simpler living and
communal lifestyle, though one cannot therefore establish
a direct link between these two facts.

146. The Bishops Speak Volume II, p. 45; also C.Villa-Vicencio
(ed), Between Christ and Caesar, p. 233.

Mandlenkhosi Zwane, the Bishop of Manzini (Swaziland) spoke up strongly for Black consciousness and against the "middle road" attitude taken to the issue of Military service.¹⁴⁷ Many NCFS delegates, who were white, felt inhibited about adopting too strong a stand because of their support of the principle of Black Consciousness,¹⁴⁸ except on the military issue, where they were vocal in their opposition to conscription and encouraged the Bishops to take their position on the right of freedom of conscience. Yet, retrospectively, it was a success for NCFS, particularly the "left"; it was also the last success the NCFS "left" were to enjoy for some years.

Yet 1977 saw perhaps the first articulate emergence of the rising conservative grouping in NCFS. Owing to conservative complaints about the political content of conferences in the previous few years, the themes of the talks and group discussions ("workshops") at the Conference were diverse. One theme, unmistakably relevant in the post-1976 period, was political violence. At the workshop on violence the suggestion was made that South Africa was divided between two kinds of violence: structural violence of the state (i.e. apartheid, capitalism, and the coercive force needed to maintain both) and revolutionary violence that resulted from resistance to the system; it was considered by the majority

147. SACBC, Minutes of the Ordinary Plenary Session of the SACBC, held at St John Vianney Seminary, Pretoria, 2-9 February 1977, pp. 44, 45-46, 61; (Mandlenkhosi Zwane), A Man for All People : The message of Bishop Mandlenkhosi Zwane, "Human Relations in South Africa", pp. 42-45.

148. Kalie Hanekom, interviewed 26 September 1988.

present that it was unacceptable to support, let alone defend, the former. ¹⁴⁹ In another workshop, capitalism was condemned. Earlier in the year, it had even been suggested that "a state of Western Capitalist imperialism", ¹⁵⁰ akin to the "Colonialism of a Special Type or internal colonialism" ¹⁵¹ existed in South Africa. Socialism was regarded as an integral part of Christianity. ¹⁵² These expressions of overt support for socialism and implicit support for South African liberation movements drew fierce opposition from some circles; one Durban delegate later complained bitterly about the workshop on violence.

He asked whether he was:

" therefore not allowed to defend my country, my people, my family, friends and anything else but I must be prepared to let myself be (sic) murdered so that someone else can take from me and destroy them (sic)". ¹⁵³

149. MD : Some material Relating to Oakford Conference July 1977, "Workshop on Violence", notes - (n.p.).

150. MD : NCFCS Executive Meeting January 1977, "The South African Situation" (document was a draft of a report by Mike Deeb on the 1976 Soweto Uprising), (n.p.).

151. Leo Marquard, a liberal writer, first described South Africa as an internal colonialism based on a racial, political and ideological approach. It is now seen more as a relationship between Black and White in the contest of a capitalist society : the colonial structure is embodied in the "extra-economic devices" that keep Blacks subordinated. Though there are classes and class-stratifications within each "group", the controlling power of capitalism is vested in the hands of the White ruling-class elite. See: Harold Wolpe, Race, Class and the Apartheid State (London, 1988), pp. 28-35; Anonymous, "Colonialism of a special kind and the South African state", Africa Perspective, 23, 1983, pp. 75-94; Leo Marquard, South Africa's Colonial Policy (Johannesburg 1957).

152. MD : Some material - Conference July 1977, "Christianity and Socialism" (n.p.).

153. MD : Cathsoc Newsletter (Durban) August 1977, (n.p.).

This rather tortuous grammatical statement summed up what had crept into some sections of NCFS : fear.

Katutura had long been the ideological mouthpiece of the NCFS left. But with the growth of the conservative grouping, opposition to it started to grow. Many of the campuses on which NCFS operated were conservative : socialism and Black consciousness were largely taboo.¹⁵⁴ The Port Elizabeth Catholic Society complained, for example, that distributing Katutura even to Christian groups on campus would be "doing harm to CATHSOC (his capitals) by asking them to read KATUTURA (his capitals)".¹⁵⁵ Others complained that it was "too political", too "social gospel" and needed variation in subject matter.¹⁵⁶

This disapproval took on a dramatic turn when the Durban Catholic Society - much to the ire of Durban's secular student newspaper Dome - decided to ban the February 1977 issue on the grounds that they felt the magazine's portrayal of the historical Jesus did not match up to their image of Jesus as "Lord and Saviour",¹⁵⁷ a term loaded with the Charismatic Renewal Movement's terminology.

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154. Helen Joseph's 2-vote victory at a Pietermaritzburg University debate in which she defended socialism was seen by her, with wry humour, as a chance event. In 1975, the year she won the debate, Pietermaritzburg was regarded as one of the traditional sites of the NCFS left (See : H. Joseph, Side by Side (London, 1986), pp. 199-200.
155. NCFS : Mike Hagan (UPE) to Mike (Deeb), 21 July 1977.
156. NCFS : Tony (UPE) to Mike (Deeb) 23 January 1977; Michelle (Stellenbosch) to Mike (Deeb) 26 March 1977.
157. NCFS : Mike (Hyam) (Durban) to Mike (Deeb) 9 March 1977; Dome 5 May 1977, p. 2.

Other campuses, particularly Cape Town, rallied to Katutura's support. A correspondent from Cape Town felt that, if necessary, NCFS might have to "lose (the conservative groups) for the cause. Katutura must be radical" adding that :

"Our aim must be to convert the radicals on our campus to the Church. I've spoken to so many radicals who believe Freire and Illich are communists. They've never heard of Camara, Assman (sic) or Camillo Torres. ¹⁵⁸ The Church must become identifiable with real change Katutura must side with the oppressed Liberation for the oppressed in SA must be our message " ¹⁵⁹

An attempt to abandon Katutura failed early in 1977, because its supporters argued that it played a significant role in promoting justice and peace issues. ¹⁶⁰ However, its days were numbered, for all three of its 1977 issues were banned in terms of Section 47 (2) (d) or (e) of the Publications Act of 1974, for allegedly harming race relations or posing a threat to the "safety of the State, the general welfare or the peace and good order". ¹⁶¹

158. See Ref 130 p. 41.

Ivan Illich - Austrian-born priest, historian, educationist; established at Cuernavaca, Mexico, the Center for Inter-cultural Documentation (CIDOOC).

Archbishop Helder Camara - Archbishop of Recife y Olinda, N. E. Brazil. Outspoken champion of poor and oppressed of Latin America (now retired).

Hugo Assmann - Brazilian theologian of liberation; author of A Practical Theology of Liberation. Exiled to Costa Rica.

Camillo Torres - Colombian Catholic priest and sociologist. Laicised and joined marxist guerilla organisation. Killed in action : 15 February 1966.

159. NCFS : Rory (UCT) to Mike (Deeb) 23 March 1977.

160. MD : NCFS Executive Meeting January 1977, n.p.

161. S. Kahanowitz and N. Manoim, Radically Undesirable (Johannesburg, n.d.), p. 23.

The 1977 issues of Katutura were banned for their uncompromising criticisms of post-Soweto South Africa, and their support for socialism. One issue commented on the apparent bleakness of the South African future : "We are experiencing the birth pangs of the future through riots, a depression, indoctrination which is hardening attitudes to change, and a growing bitterness and hatred which is polarising the country", ¹⁶² adding that many were leaving either for guerilla training or to avoid service in the South African Defence Force.

Articles included pieces on the futility of counter-insurgency warfare, the moral case for Christian participation in the armed struggle, the compatibility between socialism - even orthodox Marxism - and Christianity, attacks on capitalism, and support for the 'struggle' in South Africa. ¹⁶³ Such articles not only shocked the more conservative sections of NCFS - although most of them were drawn from sources freely available in books or academic journals in the country - but they also shocked the Publications Board, who banned all three issues, firmly believing that the editors of Katutura were militant black Catholics. ¹⁶⁴

1977 also saw the arrest of two NCFS members, the former NCFS President for 1976-77 Tom Waspe, and Kalie Hanekom, the Bishops' Conference full time student worker. Waspe was arrested in his Johannesburg home and detained incommunicado under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act at John Vorster Square Police Headquarters in central Johannesburg. Hanekom's Cape Town home was raided on

162. NCFS : Katutura February 1977, p. 1.

163. NCFS : Katutura February 1977, May 1977, October 1977.

164: NCFS : Director of Publication to Michael Deeb,
1 December 1977.

1 March 1977, and he was formally charged on the 9th on seven counts of illegal possession of banned publications, then released on bail. ¹⁶⁵ Support for Waspé came from the Witwatersrand University Students Representative Council - who remarked that, having dealt with the swart gevaar (Black peril), the Government was attacking the Christelike gevaar (Christian peril). NCFS expressed support for Waspé, as did the International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS), Pax Romana, and the International Young Christian Students (IYCS). ¹⁶⁶ IMCS also expressed their support for Hanekom, ¹⁶⁷ as did NCFS and his friends. At Christmas 1977, a gathering of Tom Waspé's supporters, which had assembled outside John Vorster Square to sing folk songs and carols to Waspé, was arrested by police and detained overnight ¹⁶⁸ but later released without charges being formally laid. Hanekom was convicted of having been in possession of banned publications. He appealed against the conviction, and won his appeal case in 1979. ¹⁶⁹

To an outsider looking in at NCFS, it seemed that in the late 1970s the Federation had moved to the left of NUSAS politically. ¹⁷⁰ But within NCFS, it has been shown, tensions had increased, crises were widespread and divisions were deepening. Anti-socialist feelings were strong. Fear of

165. Southern Cross 20 November 1977.

166. Southern Cross 4 December 1977.

167. NCFS : IMCS Newsletter/MIEC Bulletin d'Information 7 (circa 1978), (n.p.).

168. Albert Nolan OP, 22 July 1988.

169. Southern Cross 12 February 1978; Southern Cross 8 April 1979

170. David Schmidt, interviewed Cape Town 19 November 1988. (Later, as described in the next chapter, he was to be a key figure in rebuilding NCFS).

violent revolution was strong, and there was confusion over why and how an apparently inevitable SADF victory in Angola suddenly changed to a South African withdrawal. The left and right in NCFs became strongly polarised; the old sense of love and mutual support that had existed despite political differences in the early 1970s disappeared and were replaced by feelings of suspicion.¹⁷¹ The bastion of the NCFs left in the 1970s - the Kolbe Society - threatened to disaffiliate because it felt that NCFs was too conservative,¹⁷² while more conservative groups like Stellenbosch threatened to quit because the Federation was perceived as being too radical.¹⁷³ In the event, neither disaffiliated.

The tensions in the Federation crystallised into two sections, the "God Squad" and the "Action Faction" and remained so well into the 1980s. The "God Squad", centred in Natal and Pretoria, objected to the high political profile of NCFs and mobilised themselves around a call for more prayer. Some appropriated the Charismatic Renewal Movement that was sweeping through South African English-speaking churches at the time and encouraging introspective and theologically-conservative thinking.¹⁷⁴ A few

171. Kalie Hanekom, 26 September 1988. Hanekom felt that much of the tension was caused by 'dirty tricks' caused by agents provocateurs. In the absence of empirical evidence, this can be regarded only as supposition.

172. Patricia Hanekom (née Murray), interviewed Harare, Zimbabwe, 25 September 1988.

173. MD : Matie Cathsoc Newsletter (not dated, but circa late 1978), (n.p.).

174. For an analysis of Catholic Charismatic Renewal - from a British context, but nonetheless theologically close to the South African variety - see John Moor, "The Catholic Pentecostal Movement" in Michael Hill (ed), A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain (London 1973), pp. 73-90.

went so far in the late 1970s as to accuse the "Action Faction" (i.e. the socially-committed Catholic students) of not praying. This angered and hurt the Faction, a number of whom were close to the Charismatic Renewal Movement themselves.¹⁷⁵ The most militant of the conservatives were based in Durban and tried to gain political influence within the national Executive. On one occasion, all but one of the presidential candidates withdrew because of conservative pressure, and the NCFS President was elected unopposed.¹⁷⁶ On most other occasions either the "Action Faction" candidate won by a close margin (in one case by a single vote)¹⁷⁷ or an alternative candidate, who was neither of the "Faction" nor of the conservative camp, was chosen as a compromise.

To add further to the discord, the emergence on some campuses of what were at first called "See-Judge-Act" Groups for Catholics who were more deeply committed to the social aspects of their faith contributed further tensions to an already deeply strained NCFS, this time at the local levels. The See-Judge-Act or Review of Life Method involved examining the experience of life of individuals (or small groups), reflection upon experience in the light of the Bible or Catholic Social Teaching, and finally the initiation of some form of action.¹⁷⁸ The method had been used

175. Mike Deeb, 7 October 1988; Kalie Hanekom, 26 September 1988.

176. Mike Deeb, 7 October 1988.

177. Mike Deeb, 7 October 1988.

178. TD : Albert Nolan OP, "First draft of a Booklet on the Methodology of Christian Action Groups" (Manuscript, n.d.); A. Nolan, "See-Judge-Act : A Method for Christian Social Action", South African Outlook, Vol. 103, No. 1281, March 1978, pp. 42-45.

with great success by the International Young Christian Workers (IYCW) and their movement in South Africa.¹⁷⁹ Until the 1970s, YCW had operated a schools movement (mainly in white middle-class schools) which was called Young Christian Students (YCS), though it was not affiliated to the IYCS Movement. When the black labour movement re-emerged in the 1970s (with YCW playing a role in the formation of unions in the East Rand area)¹⁸⁰ the South African YCW decided to become a working-class movement and abandoned its YCS groups, who joined IYCS. When the 1976 student uprisings in Soweto erupted, to the surprise of everyone, including the church, it was felt that the Catholic Church needed a presence among Soweto youth. YCS thus extended its activities into the townships. The See-Judge-Act groups on university campuses, particularly the University of the Witwatersrand and to a lesser extent at Cape Town, affiliated to South African YCS. Tension arose within the Catholic Societies between the YCS and non-YCS members. Non-YCS members accused the YCS members, who were usually the mature students with leadership skills, of trying to manipulate or dominate the Societies.¹⁸¹ The result was a sorry

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179. J.M.Durmortier, Many in this City are my People (Durban, 1983) pp. 7-79, is a rather uneven oral account of the YCW in South Africa; see also Eric Tyacke, "Young Christian Workers", Catholic Life (Monthly Magazine of the Diocese of Johannesburg) Vol. 2, No. 4, April 1959, pp. 18-19; Thrust, YCW's irregular journal of the early 1970s; on its role in labour, Church and South Africa, see : Ian David Stevens, "The Role of the Church in Industry and Industrial Relations, focussing on the supportive role with worker organisations especially the Independent Trade Unions in South Africa", (B. A. Honours Research Essay, University of Cape Town, 1985), especially pp. 22-37.
180. Conversation (not taped) with Fr Joe Falkiner OP, Mayfair, Johannesburg, 1988.
181. Mike Deeb, 7 October 1988; Albert Nolan OP, 22 July 1988; Chris Langefeldt OMI, 8 October 1988; Steve Lowry, 14 October 1988.

situation : internal conflict and in many cases the waste of valuable resources.

Finally, it should be noted that the disaffiliated black Catholic societies had opted not to reaffiliate to NCFS. After considerable debate they chose to form the Catholic Students' Association (CASA). It was first formed at Turfloop, the University of the North, in 1975, but after a conference held in Mariarthill, Natal, it was constituted at national level with branches at Turfloop, the University of Zululand (Ngoye), University of Fort Hare and University of the Western Cape.¹⁸² CASA adopted a largely Black consciousness-orientated constitution ironically at a time when the Black Consciousness movement in South Africa was in the process of decline. Former Bishops' Conference youth worker Kalie Hanekom believes that, in many respects, many young black Catholics, including a number of the CASA Branches, were moving ideologically in the direction of what would be called in the 1980s the "Charterist" or Mass Democratic Movement position.¹⁸³ NCFS, who were in no position - owing to their internal crisis - to advocate reunification of the Catholic Student Societies, opted to promote as far as possible closer ties with CASA.¹⁸⁴ The question of the reunification of the Catholic Societies at all tertiary educational institutions would be high on the agenda both of NCFS and of CASA in the 1980s.

182. Southern Cross 13 July 1975, in effect this statement by CASA Turfloop heralded the inauguration of CASA; Kalie Hanekom, 26 September 1988.

183. Kalie Hanekom, 26 September 1988.

184. OP : Minutes of the NCFS Executive, held 15 September 1979 at Katberg, p.3.

In their bid to reunite their organisation, the National Catholic Federation of Students had attempted to radicalise their Catholic Society affiliates. Ideologically, and to some extent in practice, they succeeded. The problem was that they went too far, too quickly. By the end of the decade, the NCFS leadership had succeeded in alienating considerable sections of their constituency. Even the traditionally "radical" Catholic Societies reported internal conflicts, declining attendance at Sunday Masses ¹⁸⁵ and in some areas a deliberate aloofness to socio-political issues. ¹⁸⁶

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185. C : NCFS Minutes of the September 1978 National Executive Meeting, pp. 1-2; One former chaplain, in an off-the-record conversation, remarked that on his particular campus, the Catholic Society had dwindled from a fairly large group to "a small elite clique" who were ideologically "pure".
186. Ibid, pp. 2-3.

CHAPTER THREE

AN ORGANISATION - ONE AND DIVIDED :

NCFS IN THE 1980s

The radical heyday of the 1970s "fractured" the National Catholic Federation of Students. The 1980s saw NCFS trying to rebuild internal unity, develop relations with its black counterpart, the Catholic Students' Association (CASA), and engage in student political activity that, while fairly radical, would not alienate sectors of its organization. This chapter thus focusses on three areas. Firstly, it looks at the attempts to reunite the divided factions within the Federation, highlighting the rather mixed result of this attempt. Secondly it describes the development of closer working relations with CASA. Finally, it surveys the NCFS opposition to conscription into the South African Defence Force (SADF), specifically because it was the single most important practical political issue in which the Federation became involved for an extended period of time. It is also an important area because it highlighted the strengths and the limitations of a white, middle-class student organisation within the church.

CONFLICT AND RESTORATION : REBUILDING NCFS

As the 1970s drew to a close, NCFS was at one of its lowest ebbs since 1945. So sharply polarised between Left and Right was the Federation that the first thing that a conservative Durban Catholic Society delegate said at the 1979 National Conference to David Schmidt, then a newcomer to the University of Cape Town and NCFS, was "Are you also a Marxist?"¹ A commonly-held view of the NCFS Right was that the Left were non-praying non-Catholic communist infiltrators.² To add to the problem, at one of the traditional bastions of the Left, Witwatersrand University Catholic Society, the growth of the Young Christian Students (YCS) within the society led to tensions and accusations that YCS was trying to "subvert Cathsoc" for its own ends,³ while YCS insisted that it was trying to build up a stronger, more socially-committed Society and Federation.⁴ Unsurprisingly perhaps, the struggle to reunite and rebuild NCFS became the priority of the early 1980s.

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1. David Schmidt, interviewed Cape Town, 29 November 1988.
 2. Mike Deeb, interviewed St Joseph's Scholasticate, Natal, 7 October 1988.
 3. Steve Lowry, interviewed Johannesburg, 14 October 1988.
 4. Mike Deeb, 7 October 1988; during the 1980s this aggressive YCS policy moderated and calm returned to Wits and NCFS. YCS began after 1983 to see the importance of NCFS as a source of social-political formation and a part of the ruling-class middle-ground that had the potential at least of winning sectors of the white middle-class to the cause of non-racial democracy (see : YCS Perspectives, n.d. pp. 19-30 [in author's possession]).

The strength of the conservative "God Squad" faction in 1980 was apparent in the election of a Durban representative to the vice-presidency of NCFS in July of that year.⁵ It also happened in 1980 that Rhodes University's Society - normally part of the "non-aligned" centre of NCFS, but at the time shifting rightwards - disaffiliated, ostensibly owing to lack of funds to pay affiliation fees and the failure of the NCFS executive to acknowledge their letter explaining the situation. A number of the members, however, indicated later that their leaving had made no real change to the functioning of their society. They also seemed disapproving of the political outlook of NCFS.⁶ An attempt was mooted, half-heartedly, by the "God Squad" bloc, particularly Durban and Pretoria, to form a splinter Catholic federation. No interest was shown, however. Pretoria found a lack of either spiritual or political interest, while Durban stuck to its assertion that "NCFS [had] failed in the fundamental mission of evangelization".⁷ Even at *University of Natal, Durban*, however, there was dissent : some members were committed to political justice issues. One even tried, and failed, to invite a visiting Brazilian theologian of liberation to speak at a meeting. When this was blocked by the conservative chair and chaplain, he attacked the charismatic-renewal focus appropriated by the right in his society, saying:

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5. C : Minutes of the NCFS Executive Meeting, July 1980 (n.p.).
 6. NCFS : John (?) to Marianne (?) 23 July 1980; NCFS : Gill (?) to Marianne [?], n.d.; Steve Lowry, 14 October 1988.
 7. C : Proceedings of the NCFS Executive Meeting held at Grahamstown 30-31 August 1980, pp. 2-5.

"Cathsoc bends the knee to idols - the idols of certain forms of emotional experience, individualistic society, and finally the idol of forms - bending the knee to bending the knee." ⁸

The ideological conflict of the period (between 1979 and 1981) was reflected in the conflicting theological discourses of the time and responses to current events. Thus the "God Squad" emphasised prayer, dogma and clericalism, ⁹ while the "Action Faction" continued to encourage simple lifestyles, communalism, social action and even "assisting in bringing down those structures which cause the hunger and poverty in our midst". ¹⁰ The Left re-emphasized their concept of the Kingdom of God as a "heaven" on earth and not one after death. ¹¹ Political activity also reflected this distinction between left and right. In 1981 the Witwatersrand Catholic Society and the NCFS Resident both encouraged boycotting all Republic Day festivities (in line, it might be added, with the Catholic Bishops at the time). ¹² Being a federation of Catholic Societies such calls were not binding on NCFS members; though no clear evidence of a rightwing reaction is evident, it can readily be assumed that the Right probably ignored such calls.

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8. NCFS : Robert (?) to Marianne (?), 11 October 1980.
 9. C : Minutes of the Executive Meeting 2-3 February 1980, Katberg (n.p.)
 10. NCFS : UCT Catholic Society September 1980, n.p.; also : NCFS : Talk "What does Christ demand of his disciples in the Gospels?" (1980 Conference Talk); OP : NCFS Newsletter August 1980, pp. 3-22.
 11. OP : NCFS National Conference 1981 : "Kingdom of God" (talk by T. Bailey).
 12. NCFS : "No Support from Bishops for Republic Day Celebrations" (pamphlet : Student Catholic Society, Wits); NCFS : Circular letter to "Cathsoc'ers" 15 May 1981.

Between 1981 and 1983 the ideological conflict between Left and Right in NCFS cooled. Akin in many respects to the moves in the wider South African society towards broad-based populist anti-apartheid opposition - as opposed to the more exclusivist Black Consciousness - that crystallised in the 1983 formation of the United Democratic Front, a new generation of leaders within NCFS saw the need to make the Federation a broad Catholic anti-apartheid organisation, one that recognised the limitations of being a white organisation which included Catholics who were from diverse theological-ideological backgrounds : socialist and activist "liberationists", charismatics and more explicit "middle-roaders".¹³ The 1981 Conference saw four affiliates not represented at all : Rhodes had quit; Port Elizabeth's Society had all but collapsed; two others did not send delegates. A call went out for "a more pluralist vision"¹⁴ and a new more directly democratic constitution. It was decided that all delegates to Conferences had votes, as opposed to bloc voting by constituent Society; that a broader national executive (including Publications, Projects Portfolios and all Society chairpersons) be constituted; and that individuals could also directly affiliate to NCFS.¹⁵ NCFS President David Schmidt visited disaffected Societies, accompanied by Executive member (and later President)

13. Steve Lowry, 14 October 1988; David Schmidt, 29 November 1988.

14. OP : Minutes of the NCFS Executive Meeting, 11-13 September 1981, p.2.

15. BC 927 : NCFS - Western Cape : Discussions on the Constitution, March 1982; Lowry (14 October 1988) suggests that individual affiliations was mooted as a strategy to incorporate possible members of disaffiliated societies who wanted to be part of NCFS.

Steve Lowry, and slowly coaxed Rhodes and Port Elizabeth back into the Federation. ¹⁶ So successful was this new policy and Schmidt's diplomacy that by the 1982 Conference all societies had delegates representing them, and by September 1982 Rhodes had reaffiliated. ¹⁷

Conservatism reared up again with the publication of a sequence of (mostly anonymous) letters in the Catholic newspaper The Southern Cross. An anonymous mother of a student accused both the Witwatersrand Catholic Society and the Federation of "a form of Christian Marxism of the most puerile kind [that] move(d) into more serious involvements with mainstream revolutionary movements totally devoid of any real Christian content". ¹⁸ Another accused the Society of being "a social club whose main interest was radical politics". ¹⁹ The anonymity of these letters was particularly galling to NCFS for it was the first time in living memory that the paper had adopted this practice. ²⁰ Defence of NCFS came from its members, chaplains and former members. The chaplain to the Witwatersrand University Catholic Society, Michael Austin SJ, described the allegations as "a caricature". ²¹

16. Steve Lowry, 14 October 1988.

17. NCFS : NCFS Exec. Meeting 10-12 September 1982 (Johannesburg), p. 6; Steve Lowry, 14 October 1988.

18. The Southern Cross, 24 January 1982.

19. The Southern Cross, 7 February 1982.

20. David Schmidt, 29 November 1988; Steve Lowry, 14 October 1988.

21. The Southern Cross, 21 February 1982.

NCFs member John O'Leary and former NCFs President Dr Peter Hunter both pointed to the Church's renewed commitment to justice,²² while another former NCFs member, Donovan Lowry, praised the Federation's commitment to justice and peace as "authentic Christianity", adding

"... when I remember the Imam [Haroun?], Aggett, Biko and others,²³ I cannot help but think how much safer they would be if theirs was a religion of the Pharisees."²⁴

David Schmidt took this opportunity to articulate his feelings about the nature and role of the broad-based alliance he and the Executive were trying to promote in the Federation. He argued in the Southern Cross that within a large Catholic student body one could find "traditionalist Catholics, charismatics, Catholics emphasising social justice, people in it for the parties, people of the political right, left and centre" and that NCFs should provide challenges to all Catholic students since "faith involve(d) a search for the truth and [had to] be opened to the challenge of opposing values and beliefs".²⁵ NCFs as an organization also learned much from this incident, particularly the need - nearly universally recognised at the 1983 Conference - to improve its public image.²⁶

22. The Southern Cross, 14 February 1982.

23. Imam Haron, Neil Aggett and Steve Biko were all anti-apartheid activists who died, under suspicious circumstances, in police detention .

24. The Southern Cross, 7 March 1982.

25. The Southern Cross, 21 February 1982.

26. BC 927 : Conference Motions 1983, No. 2 - For : 60, Against : 0, Abstentions : 4.

The unanimity of NCF5 in 1982 and 1983 on social and political issues was perhaps a measure of the success of the new "populist" policy. A call on the Bishops to provide detailed moral teaching on the question of political violence was unanimously approved.²⁷ More controversial, but still not opposed, was the acceptance of the Bishops' Report on Namibia, in which the South African government was accused of being an illegal occupying force. This put NCF5 well to the "left" of most white Catholics.²⁸ On a national level, NCF5 members actively opposed the institution of the New Constitution both in theory²⁹ and in practice - some Witwatersrand Catholic Society members were sjambokked during demonstrations against the Constitution, and one or two were detained overnight by police.³⁰ Most surprising of all events at this time was the traditionally conservative Durban Catholic Society's active participation with young United Democratic Front activists in door-to-door township visits calling on people not to vote in the Tricameral election.³¹ In September 1983, an NCF5 Executive meeting rejected the New Constitution and effectively aligned itself with the United Democratic Front (UDF) Declaration. Only one person dissented, for the rather eccentric reason that the Declaration made no direct reference to God.³² At the National Conference the

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27. BC 927 : Conference Resolutions 1982 : No. 4, UNAM (n.p.).
 28. BC 927 : Conference Resolutions 1982 : No. 5, For : 58, Against : 0, Abstentions : 1 (98.3% in favour); on other Catholic responses see : Lois Law, "The Bishops Speak - Do the People Listen?", Grace and Truth Vol. 4, No. 1, 1983, pp. 32-38.
 29. BC 927 : Conference Resolutions 1983 : No. 1, For : 58, Against : 0, Abstentions : 8 (87.88% favour).
 30. NCF5 : NCF5 Response to the Elections (collection of copies).
 31. Steve Lowry, 14 October 1988.
 32. Crossfire, December 1983, pp. 3-4, 9 [in author's possession]; Steve Lowry, 14 October 1988.

following year, a sizeable majority ratified the Executive's decision. ³³

With this higher level of political commitment came greater risks including harassment. In November 1983 the Security Branch interrogated 11 delegates to the July Conference in connection with a banned pamphlet, Marching Orders, that was allegedly distributed. Hyacinth Ennis, the chaplain to Pretoria University's Catholics, was questioned at his office in St John Vianney Seminary about the publication. He could not recall seeing it at the conference. ³⁴ The rest, mostly female firstyear students, similarly denied having seen it previously. ³⁵ From this event, it became clear that the Security Branch had in their possession a copy of the list of Conference delegates. The Bishops' Conference was informed immediately ³⁶ and instructions were sent out, firstly, to Executive members and, secondly, to all other members about how to respond to questioning. ³⁷ Most frustrating for those involved in this incident was the fact that they were called in for questioning in the middle of university examinations. ³⁸ The fact that such actions did not force NCFS

33. BC 927 : Resolutions 1984 : No. 84/2, For : 47, Against 4, Abstentions : 14 (72.3% favoured).

34. Hyacinth Ennis OFM, interviewed Franciscan House of Studies, Pretoria, 7 June 1988.

35. Crossfire, December 1983, p. 1 (in author's possession); Hyacinth Ennis, 7 June 1988.

36. Ennis : Hy Ennis to Archbishop George Daniel, 15 November 1983; Crossfire, December 1983, p. 1.

37. BC 927 : "Circulation : NCFS Executive and chaplains only. What to do if you are approached by the Security Police for Questioning."; Crossfire, December 1983.

38. Hyacinth Ennis, 7 June 1988; Crossfire, December 1983, p. 1.

into quietism (if indeed that was the intention) can be ascribed to the dramatic developments in NCFS' dominant ideological discourse, the theology of liberation.

Catholic societies had long tried to cater to the needs of the whole person - doctrinal, prayer, political, intellectual and social.³⁹ The theology of liberation had placed a considerable emphasis on the political; this, as the 1970s showed, had troubling effects. With the broad populism that NCFS tried to promote in the 1980s, there was a need to adapt the theology of liberation to a broad-based white middle-class organisation that still perceived a dichotomy between prayer and politics. It became apparent to increasing numbers of NCFS members that prayer and action were often complementary, rather than divisive, elements in a theological reflection upon justice in South Africa. 1983 saw a conference where considerable unity of the traditional NCFS factions was experienced and where students struggled with the idea of the challenge to serve the poor, which was seen as central to the Christian message. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, they "came to see it as essential to respond both to the national and spiritual poverty in the world".⁴⁰ Year themes, and conference themes were chosen to inspire local and national NCFS activity in the areas of justice and peace : "Formation : Towards a Church of the Poor", "Youth Committed to the Poor through Prayer and Action", "Reading the Signs of the Times : Doing Theology in Context" and "Prophetic Witness for a Just Peace" all

39. Hyacinth Ennis, 7 June 1988.

40. Crossfire (circa early 1984) (n.p.) (in author's possession).

articulated this striving towards justice, but somehow never reaching a point of total identification with the struggle for political and economic transformation in South Africa.

Attempts were made to conscientize white middle-class Catholics. Such actions were far from easy and often involved varieties of methods. Exposure programmes - similar to those done in countries like the Philippines⁴¹ - were attempted by the National Projects Team. The most effective of these was the visit of NCFS members to the Winterveld, an extremely poor area of BophuthaTswana 40 km from Pretoria, though the overall effect was to almost overwhelm the visitors with the sense of desperation generated by extreme poverty, inadequate facilities and internal tensions within the community.⁴² Conferences, both the national conferences and the special leadership conferences held jointly with the Catholic Students' Association, served the role of providing intellectual stimuli about how to reflect upon issues of social and economic justice and how to integrate action with personal piety. In this regard the most important person of the 1980s was Theo Kneifel, a German priest whose vibrant personality bridged the gap between charismatic and activist,⁴³ and whose

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41. Chris Langefeldt OMI, "The Philippines : A Theological Perspective", Grace and Truth Vol. 8, No. 2, 1987, pp. 81-90.
 42. BC 927 : NCFS Projects Report : Winterveld, 24-26 January 1984; Mark James, interviewed St Joseph's Scholasticate, Natal, 8 October 1988.
 43. Chris Langefeldt OMI, interviewed St Joseph's Scholasticate, Natal, 8 October 1988; for a brief biography of Theo Kneifel see : Between the Lines (Publication of Student Union for Christian Action), Vol. 2, No. 2, November 1985, p. 3.

academic training had (reputedly) included some study during the 1960s at the famous Frankfurt School of critical Marxist thought.

Innovativeness was everywhere apparent in 1985, where the NCFS National Conference was organised not so much around guest speakers as around the delegates themselves. Conference organiser Mark James believed that NCFS needed "an ACTION-BASED THEOLOGY".⁴⁴ With assistance from a number of clergy and church-workers, he structured the conference around workshops and discussion groups of students. Numerous methodologies for analysis were introduced, many based either on the Cardijn "See-Judge-Act" method or on elementary (and always implicit) Marxist analysis. The one intellectual feature that was prominent was the theology of liberation, which Theo Kneifel defended in a mock trial.⁴⁵ Central to the conference was the idea of developing social analysis and commitment to justice without becoming either too intellectual or ideologically dogmatic. Much more work was needed, however, to set these new skills in the South African context. Perhaps with this in mind, the July 1986 conference was prepared under the working title "Catholics in Crisis". Through its guest speakers rather than through its delegates, it hoped to present NCFS with a sociological and theological picture of contemporary South Africa.

44. Hof : Letter to NCFS (From Mark James), 18 February 1985; Mark James, 8 October 1988.

45. Hof : 1985 NCFS Conference, Stutterheim, Eastern Cape, 5-12 July, "Reading the Signs of the Times, Doing Theology in Context" (n.p.).

On 12 June 1986 a nationwide State of Emergency was declared. Hundreds of opposition members in community organisations, trade unions, youth groups and churches were detained. Among them was Theo Kneifel, who was deported to West Germany on the 17th.⁴⁶ Waves of shock and anger rippled through NCFs, who felt that they had lost a dear friend : though some found him outspoken, at times even abrasive, his warmth of personality had made him a virtual cult figure. After debate, it was decided to continue with the July Conference - but without its keynote speaker (Kneifel) or the other guests who found that circumstances forced them to bow out of their engagements. In addition numerous workshops were cancelled out of fear of arrest for infringing the Emergency regulations. : they included one on conscription, militarisation and war resistance, and a number of sessions on the recently produced Kairos Document, a controversial publication written by an ecumenical team of theologians and township church-people who saw the Christian Church's duty in South Africa as identification with the struggle against apartheid.⁴⁷ Suddenly the conference theme "Catholics in Crisis" took on a whole new, deeply menacing dimension : "This was the Church under straightforward repression".⁴⁸

46. The Southern Cross, 13 July 1986; Crossfire, February 1987, p.3; on the State of Emergency see : Glen Moss and Ingrid Obery (eds), South African Review 4 (Johannesburg, 1987), pp. 137-214; Alex Callinicos, South Africa Between Reform and Revolution (London, 1988), pp. 127-196; Martin Murray, South Africa : Time of Agony, Time of Destiny (London, 1987), pp. 307-439.

47. On the Kairos Document see : Challenge to the Church : The Kairos Document (Johannesburg, 1985) - the original edition of the document.

48. Rosemary Hunter, interviewed Witwatersrand University, Johannesburg, 26 July 1988; personal recollections of the 1986 Conference.

Though the national state of emergency did paralyse NCFs thought and activity, its effect was only temporary. This is not to say that it did not harm the Federation. The loss of Theo Kneifel as a resource person (and as a chaplain to Catholics at Pietermaritzburg University) was particularly damaging since he had not, by June 1986, passed on his leadership skills to the students whom he left behind and NCFs, in turn, had relied too heavily on him.⁴⁹ Noticeable in the post-1986 era was the resurgence of theological conservatism among sectors of the Federation, particularly among those campuses normally associated in the late 1970s and early 1980s with the "God Squad". Though on the level of South African politics they remained solidly within a liberal camp, their theological discourse shifted away from liberation theology towards more conservative doctrinal positions. The more leftwing members of NCFs, though no longer speaking quite so vociferously, began to promote the ideas of the Freedom Charter,⁵⁰ thus aligning itself more solidly behind a South African political tradition, that stretched from the Congress Movement in the 1950s to the United Democratic Front in the 1980s.

A clear ideological line was far from readily available in the late 1980s. Often one would find in any local or national journal of NCFs deeply contradictory positions : an article attacking the male dominated structure of the Church could be

49. Chris Langeveldt OMI, 8 October 1988.

50. Crossfire, 50th Anniversary Edition (June 1987), 14-15 (in author's possession).
Crossfire, April 1988, pp. 3-4 (in author's possession);
Kolbe Student, Orientation Edition (February) 1987, pp. 8-9 (in author's possession), Crossfire, Fourth Quarter, 1987, p.5.

followed immediately afterwards in the same publication by another arguing the solidly traditional (male) hierarchical teaching on the immorality of abortion; ⁵¹ a basically feminist theological standpoint (which, in all likelihood, would have been in favour of a woman's choice whether to have a baby or not) was followed by solid traditionalist hierarchalism. Similarly, the Charterist grouping within NCFS were themselves part of a much broader resurgence in Church and Society that drew its inspiration from the Freedom Charter. By 1988 the Catholic Students Association (CASA), the South African Council of Catholic Laity and the Young Christian Students (YCS) had, inter alia, adopted it as a guideline, and a Theological Advisory Commission to the Catholic Bishops' Conference had found that "the document represent(ed) an important step on the path towards juridico-political organization of the whole human community in South Africa" and was to be welcomed for its total opposition to racism. ⁵² The progressive wing within NCFS started to agitate, too, for the Freedom Charter's adoption and, in doing so, made considerable use of the theology of liberation.

51. Crossfire, Fourth Quarter 1987, pp. 6-11 (in author's possession).

52. Document reprinted in Grace and Truth, Vol. 8, No. 3, May 1988, pp. 146-149; Kumi Naidoo, "Internal Resistance in South Africa : the Political Movements", in Shaun Johnson (ed), South Africa : No Turning Back (London, 1988), p. 201, (on CASA); Inter Nos. No. 5, October-November 1987, pp. 4-5.

DIALOGUE AND ACTION : NCF'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CASA

By the early 1980s many NCF'S members had no idea why national Catholic university student organisations existed. While internal conflict raged within NCF'S very little concrete effort could be put into effecting a working relationship with the Catholic Students' Association (CASA), let alone considering reunification. As the 1980s progressed and as the internal turbulence in NCF'S subsided (to some extent) attempts were made at effecting reconciliation, but with the clear knowledge that the reasons for the 1971 disaffiliations "had not been eradicated, and that NCF'S still [had] to react to the challenge that CASA's disaffiliation [represented]." ⁵³ NCF'S leaders were all too aware that CASA tried "to relate their faith in a very direct way to the social and political reality of South Africa" and felt that "(r)real unity with CASA [could] only be achieved if we [worked] together to create a new society in South Africa". ⁵⁴

The first attempts at improving relations with CASA occurred in the early 1980s with "joint conferences", essentially separate conferences with occasions for the organizations to meet, exchange views and worship together. In this period (before about 1983), CASA's constitution was strongly influenced by Black Consciousness and many of its members adhered to it devotedly. ⁵⁵

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53. C : Minutes of the Executive Meeting, 2-3 February 1980, Katberg, p. 2. The wording of this statement seems to suggest that perceived CASA to have been a splinter faction that broke away in 1971, similar to the NUSAS-SASO break.
54. C : Proceedings of the NCF'S Executive Meeting held at Grahamstown, 30-31 August 1980, p. 14.
55. David Schmidt, 29 November 1988.

1982 saw the emergency of a common issue affecting both CASA and NCFS - militarisation - and the two organizations pooled their resources and organised a conference on that theme to conscientize both their movements and the wider Church [see below, pp.163-164]. It was a success, and NCFS experienced the desire for much greater contact between CASA and NCFS affiliates. The Transvaal Region - and particularly Pretoria University Catholic Society and the CASA Branch at Medunsa (the black Medical University of South Africa) - took the lead in regional contacts. In addition the Leadership Conferences were instituted primarily to develop skills - leadership, organisational, theological and social analysis in particular - and, less explicitly but of equal importance, to build up contacts between NCFS and CASA members.⁵⁶

1982 also saw the Inter-federal Assembly (IFA) of the International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS) held in Montreal, Canada, in August. The Assembly represented Catholic Federations from around the globe, with political convictions ranging from fairly conservative North Americans to explicitly socialist Filipinos. NCFS Resident David Schmidt and CASA National Chaplain Fr Stephen Xulu attended it (the CASA delegates being refused passports) with the intention of affiliating CASA to IMCS. CASA, represented at the sessions by Schmidt, argued for its membership, pointing out that the "apparently racial division should be viewed in the light of the South African history

56. Mark James, 8 October 1988; Ennis : Conference Resolutions 1982 : No. 9, For : 54, Against : 0, Abstentions : 5; Hyacinth Ennis, 7 June 1988.

57. CASA : IMCS Statutory Sessions Report, Montreal, 1982 (30th Interfederal Assembly), p. 41.

and reality. We, as CASA, are working hand in hand with NCFS and regard ourselves, together with NCFS, the YCS and other Catholic Youth Movements as the integral parts of one Catholic youth movement in the country".⁵⁷ Some IMCS delegates were critical, at first, of the divisions in the South African movements, but received Schmidt's arguments well, particularly when he likened the NCFS-CASA split to the NUSAS -AZASO situation of two student organisations sharing goals but working in two different contexts, with the result that CASA was accepted as a member into IMCS,⁵⁸ one of only two situations in the world where two national Catholic federations were affiliates (the other being Spain, with its separate Basque Catholic federation).

Relations between NCFS and CASA improved considerably in the mid-1980s, so much so that on 24 April 1983, at a joint meeting of the Executives, a document, the "Principles for a Closer Working Relationship between the Catholic Students' Association (CASA) and the National Catholic Federation of Students (NCFS)" was produced expressing common principles : of Catholic identity; of renewing and encouraging the Church; to opt for the poor; to be committed to a free, non-racial democratic South Africa; openness and democracy within each organization; and, finally, a confession of faith of being guilty of apathy, disinterest, arrogance and a lack of commitment in the past.⁵⁹ Soon afterwards, from

58. KH : Crossfire, March 1983, p. 9; Rosemary Hunter, 26 July 1988; David Schmidt, 29 November 1988; CASA : IMCS Statutory Sessions Report, Montreal, 1982 (30th Interfederal Assembly), p. 3.

59. NCFS : Single type-script : "Principles for a Closer Working Relationship between the Catholic Students' Association (CASA) and the National Catholic Federation of Students (NCFS).

5 - 15 September 1983, the African Secretariat of IMCS held a regional conference in Harare, Zimbabwe. NCFS prepared a document describing developments in the organisation. CASA sent a report, being unable to get passports for any of its delegates. As in 1982, Fr Stephen Xulu attended the Conference with the former NCFS delegates. When the CASA report was read it created a furore since it was "rather a critique of NCFS [than] a report".⁶⁰ At a time when NCFS and CASA had recently prepared joint working principles and had organised a militarisation Conference for the Church,⁶¹ it came as a shock to both the NCFS delegates and Xulu.

The CASA report charged that NCFS still had "objectionable membership" within its ranks, stated that CASA rejected unity because some white students did military service, that there were NCFS members in military uniform at a Conference (in fact the brother of an NCFS delegate visited him briefly during the Conference) and that CASA condemned all Church connections with the SADF.⁶² The NCFS delegates quickly refuted the document's claims, supported by Stephen Xulu, and convinced the conference that the document did not truly reflect the opinions of CASA. To their embarrassment, they found during the course of the conference that their skills at social analysis and criticism of

60. NCFS : Steve Lowry to Dolly [CASA exec.], 22 October 1983.

61. BC 927 : Report of the National Catholic Federation of Students (South Africa) to the IMCS Africa Co-ordination Meeting 5-15th September 1983, Harare, Zimbabwe. (n.p.).

62. NCFS : CASA (South Africa) National Report 1982-1983 by Full-time Worker to IMCS Sub-Regional Study Session, Harare. (n.p.).

both Church and State were far ahead of any of the other African federations represented.⁶³ On returning, after a thorough investigation, NCFs and CASA found that the CASA report had been the work of a "maverick" member of the CASA National Team, who had acted without the authority of the rest of the executive.⁶⁴ What the event did show was that, despite the improved CASA-NCFs relations, which led even to NCFs sharing a national office in Johannesburg,⁶⁵ tension remained with some sections of CASA where suspicion of white motives for more contact was still strong.⁶⁶

Although on a national level, no reunification occurred in the period of the mid- to late- 1980s, ties with CASA grew. One source of closer ties was the annual Leadership Conference, a period of 10 days or more, usually held in December or January, aimed at training skilled leaders who could act as resource persons to local societies and branches, as well as the national organizations. A case in point was the Leadership Conference held from the 4th to 12th December 1984 in Ga-Rankuwa which used the Christian Development and Education course, "a programme aiming to make people critically aware of their society by

63. Rosemary Hunter, 26 July 1988; Steve Lowry, 14 October 1988; David Schmidt, 19 November 1988; Claudine Souchon, interviewed Cape Town, 29 November 1988.

64. Steve Lowry, 14 October 1988.

65. BC 927 : Minutes of the NCFs Executive Meeting held at Red Cross Youth Centre, Port Elizabeth, 2-4 September, 1983, pp. 6-7; BC 927 : Letter to Exec. Members, 27 August 1984 (from Steve Lowry).

66. BC 927 : Minutes of the NCFs Executive Meeting held at the weekend 15-16 September 1984, Yzerfontein, Western Cape, p. 5 : reports tensions with the CASA - Medunsa chairperson over NCFs contacts.

analysis of its economic and power structures and their effects".⁶⁷ Theo Kneifel spoke on the need for a "theology of history", by which he meant the need to examine history and see the political and socio-religious implications of events and social forces for individuals and societies.⁶⁸ Kneifel also led a critical examination of capitalism and proposed three positions for social transformation : Conservative ("status quo"), Liberal (tinkering at "reform") and Radical ("total structural change").⁶⁹ These analyses, and the simple experience of contact with CASA, made NCFS delegates deeply aware of their need for even greater education about social conditions in South Africa and to work for a new South Africa that was not structurally oppressive.⁷⁰

CASA and NCFS leadership often shared in joint public statements or activity. They jointly supported students protesting at the education crisis caused by the apartheid education system, supported the students of universities like Ngoye when their leaders (including a few CASA members) were banned from campus, and they were unhesitating in their support for the advocacy of justice and peace by a bishop or by the Bishops' Conference.⁷¹

67. KH : Crossfire March 1985, p. 5.

68. CASA : NCFS and CASA Leadership Conference Daily Minutes 4-12 December, 1984, p. 1

69. Ibid, pp. 7-14.

70. KH : Crossfire, March 1985, p. 4

71. CASA : Pamphlet "282 Students Barred from Campus" (1985 : produced by both CASA and NCFS); BC 927 : "Letter to Exec. Members (from Steve Lowry, NCFS), 27 August 1984; Ennis : Archbishop Denis Hurley to NCFS/CASA, 1 December 1983.

NCFS, CASA, and other representatives of youth movements in the Church were also instrumental in drafting a letter to the Bishop in charge of the South African Council for Catholic Laity (SACCL), charging that the SACCL was patronising and did not adequately reflect the opinions of the majority of the laity in the Church in South Africa, i.e. it largely overlooked black people, working-class people and youth.⁷² The subsequent investigation led to a radical restructuring of the Council. Perhaps the most controversial action in this period was the August 25, 1985 demonstration by University of Cape Town and Western Cape students outside a church in Cape Town where Cardinal McCann and 30 priests offered a Mass for Reconciliation after the declaration of a partial State of Emergency by the State. NCFS members, who had condemned the Emergency on August 2nd,⁷³ demonstrated not against the Cardinal's gesture, but as a challenge to the Church to act more strongly and decisively in the matter.⁷⁴

By the time of the 50th Anniversary of NCFS in 1987 no sign of the reunification of CASA and NCFS was apparent. Some NCFS members saw the split, quite rightly, as a product of "the structural reality of Apartheid" that divided even the Church.⁷⁵ Quite a few desired immediate reunification as a sign of unity despite apartheid, but most NCFS leadership and all CASA leaders recognised that unity was still but an ideal to be struggled for painstakingly and as part of a broader struggle for non-racialism,

72. NCFS : Letter to "Your Grace" (the Bishop for Laity) from various signatories, 11 August 1985.

73. The Southern Cross, 18 August 1985.

74. The Southern Cross, 8 September 1985.

75. Hof : 1985 NCFS Conference Stutterheim, Eastern Cape, 5-12 July [1985], "Motion/Statement on apartheid in the Church."

rather than some kind of quick and superficial unification of opposites. CASA argued that "(b)lack Catholic students identified themselves as structural members of a community that is oppressed, exploited, dispossessed and poor [which] happen(ed) to be made up of black people" while "white Catholics belong(ed) to a white community that (was) structurally oppressive and committed to maintaining exploitation". Furthermore CASA, despite dissent from a minority within the ranks still adhering to Black Consciousness, formally adopted the Freedom Charter "as a basis for a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa" because they believed "the church (could not) remain neutral [because] to remain neutral within a system that (was) unjust, oppressive and exploitative (was) tantamount to sustaining and perpetuating the interests of a minority and ruling class".⁷⁶ Class contradictions, rather than race, were perceived to be at the root of CASA's objections to a quick and easy unity. This reflected the growing perception by anti-apartheid/^{groups} of the role of the working-class as the leading force in the "National Democratic Struggle."⁷⁷

Years of experience trying to reconcile divergent opinions within NCFS - from liberationist to traditionalist, Marxist to virtual Nationalist - made it quite clear that NCFS was not ready to merge with CASA, which saw itself as so unmistakably part of the "struggle". Too much was against it : NCFS' ideological "mix"

76. Advance (publication of CASA), September 1988, p. 5 (in author's possession).

77. There are numerous journals published by movements in South Africa today committed to the National Democratic Struggle who express such a view. Among those that have published articles expressing such opinions are Isizwe and New Era.

of liberation theology, liberal-to-radical politics and dashes of conservatism lacked the coherence of CASA's class analysis, liberation theology and Charterism. There were, however, signs of hope. Factions of NCFS were starting to examine the Freedom Charter, NCFS in the 1980s took a strong position on the issue of conscientious objection and both organizations were in the process of critically examining the role of women in society, the Church and the struggle for non-racialism.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION : NCFS AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST
CONSCRIPTION

The late 1970s and early 1980s, saw "an astonishing upsurge in South Africa's military preparedness", ⁷⁸ the growing political power of the military and security structures in local and national government, foreign policy and particularly in regional conflicts in southern Africa. Unsurprisingly, the South African Churches challenged the increased military activity of the state on moral grounds, as did a growing number of young white men. For the first time non-"peace church" conscientious objectors - individuals like Richard Steele, Peter Moll, Anton Eberhard, and others - were tried and convicted for their refusal to do military service. Support groups for these individuals sprang up, first on an ad hoc basis and later more formally as the Conscientious Objectors' Support Group (COSG) in 1980 and in 1983 as the End Conscription Campaign. ⁷⁹

78. Robert Scott Jaster, The Defence of White Power : South African Foreign Policy Under Pressure (London, 1988), p. 80.

79. Laurie Nathan, "Resistance to Militarisation : Three years of the End Conscription Campaign", in G. Moss and I. Obery (eds), South African Review 4 (Johannesburg, 1987), pp. 106-109.

Despite continuing internal tensions in the early 1980s, NCFS showed support for conscientious objection. David Schmidt recalled how conscientious objector Peter Moll had attended an NCFS Western Cape regional conference at an experimental farm near Kuils River and had spoken, very nervously, about why he had opted to resist service in the SADF.⁸⁰ An NCFS contemporary, a law student named Andy Smail produced a booklet about the legal implications of objection. At Witwatersrand University, Catholics committed to resistance to militarisation formed a discussion group, the Tuesday Knights of Franz Jaegerstaetter. This group's name was part-parody of conservative Catholic lay organisations like the Knights of Da Gama or Knights of Columbus, but also in honour of an Austrian Catholic peasant who was beheaded by the Nazis in 1943 for refusing to do military service for the Third Reich.⁸¹ Even at fairly conservative campuses there was tacit support for the principle of conscientious objection. An article published in 1981 in a Stellenbosch University Catholic Society magazine concluded that South Africa's conscientious objectors "have an example to give us all".⁸² Workshops in the early 1980s on this issue generally followed the line of thought articulated by the Stellenbosch article - looking at the problems of conscience, pacifism and the just war theory - but grew to look at wider issues, like the relationship between

80. David Schmidt, 29 November 1988.

81. David Schmidt, talk given at an Anti-Militarisation Cultural Evening, Kolbe House, Rondebosch, 14 May 1989 attended by the author on Jaegerstatter, see Ronald G. Musto, The Catholic Peace Tradition (Maryknoll, NY, 1986), pp. 182-184.

82. NCFS : Cathsoc Crier (Stellenbosch), June 1981, pp. 6-7.

the military, apartheid and capitalism, and advocated judging the problem in terms of a belief in a "faith that does justice".⁸³

1982 was perhaps a crucial year for NCFS' resistance to conscription. In that year Neil Mitchell, the NCFS National Secretary, became the first Catholic objector to be imprisoned for refusal to serve in the SADF. Mitchell, who was a pacifist, made extensive use of biblical quotations and Catholic social teachings to argue his case for nonviolent civil disobedience and concluded:

"Obedience to my call-up instructions is incompatible with the nature of my relationship with God To obey my call-up instructions and go to the army would, for me, constitute a betrayal of my covenant relationship with God which I have entered through my baptism I cannot go against it in good conscience."⁸⁴

He made it clear that he wished "to be a peace-maker, to work actively to promote peace and justice, which the world in general, and South Africa in particular, sorely needs".⁸⁵ Though clearly a religious pacifist who a few years later would have been sentenced to alternative service, Mitchell was imprisoned for 9 months of a 12 month sentence.

83. OP : NCFS National Conference 1981 : Peace and Justice Workshop, (n.p.).

84. Ennis : Pamphlet "Why I am a Universal Pacifist Conscientious Objector, a Statement of Belief" by Neil Mitchell [Typed sheet, n.d.].

85. KH : Leaflet "Neil Mitchell : Prisoner of Conscience".

Neil Mitchell's imprisonment stunned the 1982 National Conference, with which his imprisonment coincided. Steve Lowry recalled that many people from right across the political spectrum (including himself) were moved to tears when they heard, on the second day of the conference, that Mitchell had been imprisoned.⁸⁶ The Conference resolved, near unanimously (no mean feat considering the tensions that had existed in the Federation), to support Mitchell through letters and prayers and to call on the state to release him and institute alternative service for all conscientious objectors.⁸⁷ Mitchell's imprisonment was reported internationally to all Catholic societies through the International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS).⁸⁸ Updates on his refusal to wear military overalls while in Voortrekkerhoogte Military Detention Barracks (resulting in three spells in solitary confinement), his transfer to Pretoria Central Prison, and his release after serving nine months of the sentence on 11 April 1983 were provided regularly by NCFS publications.⁸⁹

Support for Neil Mitchell did not mean that the issue of conscription and conscientious objection was a closed subject. At the very conference where Neil Mitchell's imprisonment was announced, the issue was hotly debated. A video documentary about Namibia was the source of serious debate. The more

86. Steve Lowry, 14 October 1988.

87. Ennis/BC927 : Conference July 1982 Motions, No. 3, For : 56, Against : 0, Abstentions : 3 (Passed).

88. CASA : Claude Akpokavie (IMCS International Team) to "Friends", 18 March 1983.

89. Ennis : Pretoria Cathsoc News August 1982 (n.p.); KH : Crossfire March 1983, p.5 and inserted leaflet titled "Stop Press : Neil is released."

conservative delegates tried to defend the State's position despite the fact that the Bishops' Conference had expressed their view quite clearly that they regarded South Africa's military presence in Namibia as illegitimate and akin to foreign military occupation.⁹⁰ A workshop on conscription at the conference found that :

"(A) Christian's emphasis should be placed on peace, that is, peace in place of war, because the ideal should be to create a world where peace exists. However, this depends also on the creation of a society where justice prevails."⁹¹

clearly indicating that the NCFS concept of peace "[f]ar from being a passive principle[was] an active principle that [sought] to liberate all people."⁹²

To examine more deeply the issue of peace-making in the South African context NCFS organised with CASA a Conference on Militarisation later that year. The role of the SADF in Namibia was a focus for debate. Speakers included Archbishop George Daniel of Pretoria (who, because he occupied the See of Pretoria, was designated Military Ordinary), Monsignor Louis Banks, Father Theo Kneiffel (a philosophy professor at St Joseph's Scholasticate in Natal) and Father Meinsing, a priest from Namibia. The relationship between the Church and the South African authorities,

90. Steve Lowry, 14 October 1988; Mark James, 8 October 1988.

91. NCFS : Papers (incomplete) of the 1982 Conference : Conscientious Objection. (n.p.)

92. Ronald G. Musto, The Catholic Peace Tradition, p. 14

particularly the SADF, in Namibia was highlighted.⁹³ The conference found that the controversial Bishops' Report on Namibia⁹⁴ was "just a start" and that much deeper analysis of militarisation in southern Africa was needed.⁹⁵

Many members of NCFCS grew increasingly impatient with the official stand taken by the Bishops Conference over the matter of conscription and conscientious objection. Debate within NCFCS remained "volatile and contentious",⁹⁶ with a rearguard still holding to the view that the SADF was needed to promote evolutionary change,⁹⁷ while more and more members saw it as an aggressor. Some even called the SADF and the state it served illegitimate. What was general (but not unanimous) was a commitment to conscientising Catholics on the issue and the desire that the Bishops "make a clear stand".⁹⁸

93. For details of Church versus State in Namibia, see : The Green and the Dry Wood. Documentation : The Roman Catholic Church (Vicariate of Windhoek) and the Namibian Socio-Political Situation, 1971-1981, (Windhoek, 1983).

94. For details of less-than enthusiastic white Catholic responses to the Report see : Lois Law, "The Bishops Speak - Do the People Listen?", Grace and Truth, Vol. 4 No. 1, April 1983, pp. 32-38.

95. Mark James, 8 October 1988; Ennis : Pretoria Cathsoc News, September 1982 (n.p.).

96. OP : 1983 NCFCS Conference : The Militarization and Conscience Workshop (n.p.).

97. An echo of the "Huntingdon thesis", much loved by the grand strategists of the State Security Council. For comment on it, see : Joseph Lelyveld, Move your Shadow : South Africa, Black and White, (London, 1987), pp. 68-69.

98. BC 927 : Conference 1983 Motions No. 9 , For : 43, Against : 10, Abstentions : 7.

In 1983, the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) was formed, "a coalition of human rights, religious, women's and student groups [that] spanned a diverse range of perspectives: liberal and radical, religious and secular, pacifist and 'just war' [but] agreed to unite around their common opposition to conscription and militarisation." ⁹⁹ Rosemary Hunter suggested that NCFS was able to identify with ECC's values and ideas specifically because it was an experience of state repression that affected NCFS' constituency directly which ECC was opposing. ¹⁰⁰ CASA and township organisations were strongly supportive of the ECC. They wore ECC T-shirts more than any other white progressive organisations and regarded conscientious objectors as "true patriots". ¹⁰¹ NCFS leadership were keen to show their practical support for ECC, and thereby for the wider "struggle", but had to proceed cautiously. Because the consequences of refusal to serve in the SADF were so grave, headlong involvement in ECC by NCFS was never fully possible; it was "a threatening issue". ¹⁰² NCFS never formally affiliated to ECC. Neither did NUSAS. Some NCFS affiliates, e.g. Witwatersrand University Catholic Society, affiliated to ECC, and numerous individual NCFS members and former members became deeply involved in it. ¹⁰³

99. Laurie Nathan, "Marching to a different beat" : the history of the End Conscription Campaign", in Jacklyn Cock and Laurie Nathan (eds) War and Society : The Militarisation of South Africa (Cape Town, 1989), p. 311.

100. Rosemary Hunter, 26 July 1988.

101. Ibid.

102. Ibid.

103. Steve Lowry, 14 October 1988; David Schmidt, 29 November 1988; Mark James, 8 October 1988.

In the meantime, NCFS continued to focus on aspects of conscription which they perceived to be important. An Article published in the NCFS journal Crossfire suggested a causal link between the "New Constitution" and the desire expressed by some ministers of state to conscript "Coloureds" and "Indians" into the South African Defence Force. ¹⁰⁴ The debate entered the realm of theology with analyses of the problem of obedience to the state as expressed in the contradictory New Testament passages of Romans 13 and Revelations 13, and the Old Testament book of Daniel. ¹⁰⁵

The ECC Declaration was released in October 1984. It summed up its argument that conscription :

- " * is used to implement and defend apartheid policies;
- * maintains South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia;
- * destabilises neighbouring states;
- * increases the financial costs of the war;
- * conditions people to accept militarisation; and
- * violates the internationally recognised right to freedom of conscience in relation to military service." ¹⁰⁶

NCFS welcomed the ECC Declaration, and formally endorsed it. ¹⁰⁷

104. Crossfire, December 1983, p.22 (in author's possession).

105. BC927 : "Formation : Towards a Church of the Poor". Annual National Conference of the National Catholic Federation of Students, 5-12 July 1984, Magaliesberg, Transvaal, pp 16-19.

106. Laurie Nathan, "Resistance to Militarisation", South African Review 4, p. 111; for a copy of ECC Declaration see : Human Awareness Project (HAP) Militarisation Dossier, document C1(d) [loose collection of documents].

107. BC927 : Resolutions of NCFS Passed at the Annual General Meeting, held on 11-12 July 1984 at Mountain Lodge, Transvaal, No. 84/4, For : 50, Against : 0, Abstentions : 10.

This formal endorsement is important in many respects : firstly, it aligned the Federation politically - while not formally affiliating to ECC - with the broad anti-conscription movement. Secondly, the act of endorsing the Declaration is an indication that the attempts to build a broad Catholic anti-apartheid alliance had substantially succeeded. Practical realism, of the limitations perhaps of movements like the ECC, made NCFS also support the growing calls within the Catholic Church, and other churches, for a new kind of military chaplaincy "under the jurisdiction of the Bishops' Conference and not under that of the military".¹⁰⁸ This problem had arisen in the 1970s within the Catholic Church and the churches within the South African Council of Churches over uniformed military chaplains in the SADF. By the early 1980s all the mainline churches had undertaken to institute "demilitarized chaplains"¹⁰⁹ and were in the process of trying to pressure the state into acceding to their demands.

Anti-conscription activity within NCFS affiliates was varied, often depending on the campus environment, the nature of the leadership and, at times, even the chaplain. The Pietermaritzburg University Catholic Society enjoyed a renaissance under the leadership of socially-committed students and a chaplain, Theo Kneifel, who had both a vibrant personality and a firm commitment to justice in South Africa. The Society affiliated to the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social

108. BC 927 : Resolutions Transvaal, No. 84/6 - For : 28, Against : 23, Abstentions : 13.

109. Harold E. Winkler and Laurie Nathan, "Waging Peace : church resistance to militarisation", in J. Cock and L. Nathan (eds), War and Society, pp. 335-336.

Awareness (PACSA), worked closely with the Student Representatives Council, and participated in "co-ordinating the ECC on campus", ¹¹⁰ while their Durban compatriots declared their support for the ECC Declaration, but found they had firstly to "show people the importance of integrating faith and politics" ¹¹¹ before taking any concrete steps towards political action. The Witwatersrand Catholic Society affiliated itself to the Johannesburg ECC and became a highly influential part of Johannesburg's anti-militarisation movement. Former members of the Wits Catholic Society, together with the Society itself, played a considerable part in activities like the preparations for the 1985 ECC Peace Festival. Steve Lowry attempted to invite prominent Catholic peace activists like Cardinal Paulo Arns of Sao Paulo, Brazil, and Monsignor Bruce Kent, the head of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. ¹¹² Neither could attend, Arns being refused a visa by South Africa at the last minute. Dominican Father Albert Nolan, NCFS chaplain in the 1970s, presented a religious workshop on the issue of conscription, and presided at an ecumenical service at the end of the Festival. Both were well-attended, the workshop being overbooked by delegates. ¹¹³

NCFS also provided a conduit for messages of international solidarity with ECC, both for the Festival and for the ongoing

110. NCFS : Minutes of the Joint Durban-Pietermaritzburg Committee Meeting, 10 August 1984, p. 2.

111. Ibid.

112. Mark James, 8 October 1988; Steve Lowry, 14 October 1988.

113. Mark James, 8 October 1988; Steve Lowry, 14 October 1988; David Schmidt, 29 November 1988; Diakonia News, Vol. 10, No. 4, September 1985, p. 17.

anti-war work. CASA was highly supportive of ECC, declaring that they saw it "as part of the broader struggle of the masses for liberation".¹¹⁴ Letters of solidarity were sent in from Catholic student organisations in Australia, Indonesia, Europe, and particularly the Philippines.¹¹⁵ The National Vice-Chairperson of the Students' Christian Movement of the Philippines, Clarissa Balan, even wrote directly to the Minister of Defence, General Magnus Malan, and called upon him to end compulsory conscription.¹¹⁶ Support was also received from the International Young Christian Students (IYCS) European Secretariat.¹¹⁷ This contact demonstrated the very good working relationship that had been established with other Catholic movements, particularly in Asia.¹¹⁸

Many NCFs members reacted directly to conscription in this period. An NCFs Executive member in the early to mid-1980s was refused study deferments and informed the Defence Force that he had decided to object; for a while it seemed that he might be arrested for draft refusal while serving out his executive position. He felt that this could perhaps be more of a benefit than a burden for the Federation; his arrest would have

114. CASA : "Message of Support to End Conscription Campaign Peace Festival" (by P. Mashiane), 1 June 1985.

115. NCFs : Paulus Janner and Chrispinus Boro Tokan of P.M.K.R.I. (Indonesian Catholic Federation of Students) to NCFs, 30 May 1985; Anne Maree Farrel (T.C.F.A. [Tertiary Catholic Federation of Australia]) to Rosemary Hunter, 11 June 1985; NCFs : Tingoy Kabatan-Orian : Official Quarterly of the MIPC-Youth Desk at the Integrated Youth Development Programme (IYDP), Vol III, No. 2, April-July 1985, p. 2.

116. NCFs : Clarissa Balan (Students' Christian Movement of the Philippines) to Minister of Defence, General Magnus Malan, 26 May 1985 (copy of original).

117. NCFs : IYCS European Secretariat to NCFs, 12 June 1985.

118. Rosemary Hunter, 26 July 1985.

provided both NCFS and the Catholic Bishops' Conference with a challenge to take sides more clearly. Fortunately for him he was not arrested.¹¹⁹ David Schmidt, the NCFS President who had worked hard at making NCFS a broad, pluralist organisation, was not so lucky. He was called up for military service, refused, went before the Board for Religious Objection and, after some difficulty, was sentenced to six years' alternative service.¹²⁰

He was the first of a number of NCFS Presidents and Executive members to refuse to do military service.

As mass resistance in South Africa's black townships grew in the mid-1980s, the SADF was deployed in "seal and search" operations in places like Sebokeng (October 1984). These operations escalated to the point where in 1985 some 35 000 troops were on township duty.¹²¹ Events like the "Trojan Horse" incident where police in a Railways truck shot and killed three youths in an Athlone (Cape Town) street,¹²² the assassinations of United Democratic Front activists Matthew Goniwe and three others,¹²³ and the general political culture "that articulated the principles

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119. Names of person concerned and source of information withheld at their request.
120. NCFS : Kolbe (UCT) Catholic Newsletter, September 1984 (n.p).
121. J E Spence, "The Military in South African Politics", in Shaun Johnson (ed) South Africa : No Turning Back, (London, 1988), p. 248; Martin Murray, South Africa : Time of Agony, Time of Destiny (London, 1987), pp. 332-352.
122. Hans Pienaar and Hein Willemse, Die Trojaanse Perd : Onderhoude oor die Noodtoestand in die Kaap - 1985, (Johannesburg 1986); Murray, South Africa, p. 347.
123. Murray, South Africa, p. 300; Alex Callinicos, South Africa Between Reform and Revolution (London, 1988), pp. 64, 141.

of non-collaborationism with government institutions, non-racialism, democracy and mass-based direct action aimed at transforming urban living conditions and challenging white minority rule", ¹²⁴ deepened the moral crisis of many young white men. Particularly affected by this crisis of conscience were white students who had contact with blacks, and whose experiences had led them to believe in the need for non-racial democracy.

The Catholic Hierarchy responded to the deepening crisis, both of society and of conscience, but were still prone to "(c)onstrictive theological traditions and oversensitivity to reactionary white congregations". ¹²⁵ They produced a Report on Police Conduct that criticised the police and SADF township actions, but on the question of militarisation were far less explicit. To take a strong anti-conscription position was dangerous, since it was prone to wreak havoc among white Catholics, but the Bishops nevertheless called in early 1985 for an end to conscription, saying :

"We call on the Government to amend the Defence Act to make this [ending conscription] possible. We also encourage Catholics to help promote peace by working for the end to conscription in whatever ways lie open for them." ¹²⁶

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124. Mark Swilling, "The United Democratic Front and Township Revolt", in William Cobbett and Robin Cohen (eds), Popular Struggles in South Africa, (London, 1988), p. 91.
125. Catholic Institute for International Relations, South Africa in the 1980s. Update No. 3, June 1985 (London, 1985), p. 43.
126. S.A.C.B.C., "Call for an end to Conscription", in Charles Villa-Vicencio (ed), Between Christ and Caesar (Cape Town and Grand Rapids, 1986), p. 246.

They were not forbidding Catholic participation, but indicating their full support for conscientious objectors and for movements like the ECC in their struggle against conscription.

The Archbishop of Durban, Denis Hurley, while giving evidence at the trial of objector Phillip Wilkinson, said that :

"Personally, I think we are in a situation of an unjust war, promoted by the SADF as the armed force of the South African Government, against the oppressed people of South Africa",¹²⁷

a view which, if read according to traditional Catholic "just war" theology meant that Christian participation in the South African conflict was in contravention of the moral teachings of the Church.¹²⁸

The broader issue of Catholic priests serving as military chaplains in the SADF became a source of debate. The 1985 NCFS Conference, held within days of the murder of four prominent UDF activists in the region (the Eastern Cape), had a special "ECC Group" (actually a Militarisation Focus Group) that challenged the role of the Church in the SADF. Finally, two proposals were put forward to delegates. The first called for non-uniformed chaplains in the SADF, expressed support for the Inter-Church Committee for Chaplaincy to the Military (which had called for

127. Further Evidence from the Trial of Phillip Wilkinson, (Pretoria, n.d.) (n.p.) [pamphlet in possession of author].

128. Theological Advisory Commission (to the S.A.C.B.C.), The Things that Make for Peace (Pretoria, 1985), pp. 117-126.

non-military-controlled chaplains), suggested that local parish priests be used (where possible) as chaplains, called for more counselling services for persons facing call-ups, and asked that certain pro-Government and pro-SADF material being produced in some Catholic circles should not be distributed.

The second motion called for the retention of the existing structures of military chaplaincy because some felt that it was more effective, insofar as accessibility to conscripts was concerned.

Though the first motion was carried (49 For, 10 Against, 16 Abstentions) and the second defeated (13 For, 49 Against, 14 Abstentions), both motions were forwarded to the Bishops' Conference.¹²⁹ The conference also linked the deaths of the four UDF members, the deaths of seven KwaThema residents, and the continued presence of troops in the townships to the idea of impending civil war; the delegates condemned the murders and the general militarisation of the country and restated the NCFS call to end conscription.¹³⁰

A few months later the NCFS Executive examined booklets produced for Catholic conscripts by the conservative, white-dominated Catholic Women's League and the Knights of Da Gama. They queried

129. Hof : 1985 NCFS Conference Stutterheim, Eastern Cape, 5-12 July : "Reading the Signs of the Times - Doing Theology in Context", (n.p.)

130. Ibid. : Motion on Militarisation, For : 58, Against : 0, Abstentions : 4.

the theological soundness of the booklet in the light of the Bishops Conference position vis-á-vis conscription. ¹³¹

CASA, too, addressed the question of conscription at their national conference. They saw it in terms of a social context which they described as "near civil war". ¹³² Jointly, at the December 1985 Leadership Conference, NCFCS and CASA examined the military chaplaincy problem. They examined the Bishops' statements on conscription of 1977 and 1985, the 1982 Report on Namibia, and the 1984 Report on Police Conduct in the Townships and concluded that, in the light of the Bishops' position vis-á-vis the SADF, there were "serious contradictions" in having military chaplains at all. They felt that it was "vital in South Africa today that the Church in no ways [sic] identifies itself with the military", ¹³³ and called on the Bishops to make their position on young Catholics serving in the SADF explicit. But by the time NCFCS had the opportunity as a national organisation to make further decisions or to strategise on how to involve Catholics in anti-militarisation work - the July 1986 National Conference - a nationwide state of emergency had been imposed. Shortly before the conference started one of the keynote speakers, Father Theo Kneifel, was deported from South Africa after a brief spell in detention and other speakers backed

131. Hof : Second Meeting of the 1985/6 Executive, 6-8 September, 1985, at Christ, the New Man Conference Centre, Ga-Rankuwa, p. 6. Regrettably, no copy of the offending booklet could be found to assess their complaint.

132. CASA : CASA National Conference : "Developing Action for Liberation" 1-7 July 1985, Christ, the New Man Conference Centre, Ga-Rankuwa, p. 23.

133. CASA : "CASA-NCFCS Students on Military Chaplaincy, 15 December 1985.

down at the last minute. Some, fearing detention, went into hiding. Many delegates were pressurised by parents into not attending. Fear of possible spies or a police swoop led to the cancellation of the workshops on militarisation and the Kairos Document. Despite the chaos that ensued at the conference itself, local societies reported a high level of practical support for the ECC and for anti-conscription activities. The priority of this issue was reiterated by the 1986 conference delegates,¹³⁴ and support for the ECC continued within NCFs right up to its banning in August 1988.

By 1988 the End Conscription Campaign had engaged in numerous campaigns against compulsory conscription, opposed the SADF involvement in Namibia, protested against troop deployment in black townships and engaged in various creative activities highlighting opposition to conscription which "allowed the broadest range of people to express their unhappiness with conscription in whatever ways they wanted, and gave rise to a popular culture of war-resistance".¹³⁵ Members of NCFs and its affiliates participated in the ECC activities largely as individuals, or as local groups engaging in local activity. Within the Societies, too, committees and militarisation groups developed special liturgies and para-liturgies (taking seriously the Kairos Document's call that "Church activities [be]

134. Hof : "Catholics in Crisis" : Annual National Conference of the National Catholic Federation of Students, 1-7 July 1986, Verulam, Natal, pp. 20-22.

135. Laurie Nathan, " 'Marching to a different beat' : the history of the End Conscription Campaign", in Nathan and Cock (eds), War and Society, p. 312.

reappropriated to serve the real religious needs of all the people and to further the liberating mission" of the Church in South Africa) ¹³⁶ and organised guest speakers and cultural events to conscientise Catholic students.

The level of State repression of conscientious objectors and the anti-conscription movement reached a new peak on 3 March 1988 when Dr Ivan Toms was sentenced to 630 days' imprisonment for refusal to do further service in the SADF. ¹³⁷ Within a few months this unprecedentedly severe prison sentence was raised to six years' imprisonment for a young graduate of Witwatersrand University, David Bruce. ¹³⁸

If these harsh sentences were meant to force the anti-conscription movement into submission or silence, the state miscalculated. On August 3rd, 1988, on the day thousands of young white South Africans reported for national service, 143 men in Johannesburg, Durban, Grahamstown and Cape Town publicly announced their refusal to serve in the South African Defence Force. Among them were three former NCFs Presidents - David Schmidt, Stephen Lowry and the 1987/1988 president, Paul Teeton. Teeton stated that what he called "Kingdom values" (i.e. commitment to justice, freedom, solidarity and peace - values which NCFs had long extolled in its brand of the theology of liberation) were not present in any form of military service, and called on the state to allow objectors to

136. Challenge to the Church : the Kairos Document (Johannesburg, 1985), p. 23.

137. Natal Witness, 3 March 1988; Daily Dispatch, 4 March 1988; Sunday Tribune, 6 March 1988.

138. Weekly Mail, 29 July to 4 August 1988; Argus, 26 July 1988; Star, 26 July 1988; Sunday Star, 31 July 1988.

do worthwhile alternative service, specifically service that would liberate people "from the oppression of ignorance, ill-health, loneliness, poverty, shame and hate".¹³⁹ Lowry's response was differently phrased, but had a similar tone : although state law compelled him to do military service "the law of God", he argued, "compels me to witness to the peace of justice, non-racialism and democracy".¹⁴⁰

Many other NCF5 members and ex-members were signatories to the statement. A rough guess, based on the list published in the Weekly Mail (week ending 5 August 1988), puts the number at between ten and twenty. The Federation itself praised the 143, particularly in the light of the fact that NCF5 had in May of 1988 embarked on participation - albeit to an extent limited by its constituency - in the Churches' Alternative National Service Programme (CANSP). The Executive set about distributing CANSP information sheets to local affiliates.¹⁴¹ Though the state was to ban ECC in August 1988, the struggle against conscription - among South African youth and within NCF5 - continued.

By the late 1980s it appeared that structural unity within NCF5 was restored - in fact, it even gained (more correctly re-gained) another affiliate, the Johannesburg College of Education (J.C.E.)

139. "Crossfire Supplement", c August 1988 [in author's possession].

140. Ibid.

141. Five NCF5/CANSP Information Sheets, in author's possession.

in 1988. Yet ideological unity and unity of practical activities were not fully regained. Radicals, liberals and conservatives co-existed, with a predominance of fairly radical discourse, liberal political actions (like public statements and support for groups like the ECC) and occasional loud mumbles of conservative discontent.

University of Cape Town

CONCLUSION

In the introduction to this dissertation three themes were outlined for the examination of the political activity and ideology of the National Catholic Federation of Students: firstly, the development of political ideas and activities within NCFS itself; secondly, the role of intellectual input in the ideological development of NCFS, specifically the role of theological discourse; and finally, the question of black student participation in a predominantly white, middle-class organisation and, after 1971, the impact of black non-participation in NCFS. The findings on each of these themes will now be examined.

To an almost uncanny degree, the political ideas and activities of the National Catholic Federation of Students mirrored the politics of what Davies, O'Meara and Dlamini call the "Democratic White Opposition" to apartheid.¹ Specifically, parallels can be drawn between NCFS and its secular counterpart, NUSAS. From roughly 1948 to the mid-1950s NCFS tended to reflect the worldwide Catholic drift towards Christian Democracy - the pursuit by "above all White, urban, masculine, educated and upwardly mobile middle-class lay people"² of liberal politics espousing personal human rights and liberal capitalist economics (including in the Third World the notion of "development"). Increasingly in the

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1. Robert Davies, Dan O'Meara and Sipho Dlamini, The Struggle for South Africa - Reference Guide (Revised Edition), Volume 2, (London 1988), pp. 375 ff.
 2. Otto Maduro, "Christian Democracy and the Liberating Option for the Oppressed in Latin American Catholicism", in Gregory Baum and John Coleman (eds), Concilium : The Church and Christian Democracy (London 1987), p. 109.

late 1950s and 1960s NCFS' politics was in form and content virtually identical with that of NUSAS - deeply opposed to racism, firmly supportive of academic freedom, the rule of law and other human rights advocated by groups like NUSAS, the Liberal Party and (to a qualified degree) the Progressive Party.³

Unlike NUSAS, however, NCFS' social composition included members coming from the conservative, often explicitly pro-apartheid Afrikaans-language campuses. During the 1960s a highly articulate core of conservatives emerged, particularly at Pretoria. Though they never apparently endorsed "petty apartheid"⁴ they tried to "depoliticize" NCFS, particularly to break up its close working relationship with NUSAS, which at the time was being called a "cancer in the life of the nation"⁵ by the ruling National Party. Some members were quite openly pro-Government and favoured the Verwoerdian "grand apartheid"

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3. Qualifications must be expressed regarding the Progressive Party (in the 1960s specifically) because while NUSAS and the Liberal Party included a fair number of radical or socialist members in the 1960s, the Progressives - as Brian Hackland shows - were closely allied to ruling-class capital, particularly Anglo American Corporation, and were motivated more by a desire to promote economic interests than a sense of justice with human rights; see : Brian Hackland, "Incorporationist Ideology as a Response to political struggle : the Progressive Party of South Africa, 1960-1980" in Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido (eds), The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century South Africa (London, 1987), pp. 366-388.
 4. This assertion is based on the fact that there were never incidents of conservatives calling for "segregated" conferences or endorsing petty apartheid; on the contrary, most motions condemning "petty apartheid" were endorsed by all campuses (often unanimously). But when "political" issues, such as house arrests, or criticisms of broad state policy were tabled, the conservatives objected, complaining that NCFS was "not qualified" to act on it or "could bring NCFS into disfavour" etc.
 5. B. J. Vorster (later Prime Minister of South Africa 1966-1978), quoted in Gail M. Gerhart, Black Power in South Africa : The Evolution of an Ideology (Berkeley, 1978), p. 258.

homelands scheme. Whether out of a fear of victimisation on their own campuses (for NCFs' anti-apartheid stance and support of NUSAS) or out of support for apartheid, this segment of NCFs engaged in various activities in the 1960s to "tone down" the politics of NCFs, with at least one long-term effect : the alienation of black NCFs-affiliated Catholic Societies.

The late 1960s also saw the emergence of an increasingly militant black segment of NCFs. In the 1950s, black Catholic students had had little structural political influence in NCFs apart from conscientizing by their presence numerous white students. Though some blacks (like Robert Mugabe) were taking increasing interest in anti-colonial nationalism, the white liberal hegemony of the period remained largely intact. The black NCFs members of the 1960s became increasingly critical of the limited political activity of NCFs, the Federation's half-hearted response to the politically radical new University Christian Movement (UCM) and the growing influence of the conservatives. While NUSAS experienced the disaffiliations of its black members in the period 1968-1969, NCFs found between June 1970 and July 1971 that all "tribal" colleges' Catholic Societies had seceded, like their NUSAS and UCM counterparts (and, in many cases, black Catholic students were active in all three organisations) black Catholic students played important roles in the new Black Consciousness organisations like the South African Students' Organisation (SASO) and Black Consciousness Movement (BCM).⁶ Significantly,

6. Mosibudi Mangena, On Your Own : Evolution of Black Consciousness in South Africa/Azania (Johannesburg, 1989), refers to at least two persons, Mthuli Nicodemus Shezi (pp. 11, 32, 33) and Chris Mokoditso (pp. 34, 36, 37), whose names are recorded as delegates to NCFs Conferences in the late 1960s to early 1970s.

perhaps, one of the primary projects of these organisations was the production of some of the earliest black theology ever written in South Africa. ⁷

The disaffiliations led to dramatic changes within NCFCS in the 1970s. NCFCS leaders recognised that they had drifted into political apathy and vowed to rectify the situation. Many whites, radicalised by Black Consciousness, became involved in supporting and advising the emergent black trade unions of the 1970s. ⁸ NUSAS established Wages Commissions and Advice Offices to unions. NCFCS took a similar direction, actively working on the NUSAS Wages Commissions, set up some of the earliest Catholic Justice and Peace Commissions, began (together with NUSAS and the Anglican Students' Federation) to address the issue of conscription, and tried to publicize new ideological and theological directions through its journal Katutura. NCFCS shifted further to the left than it ever had, becoming socialist - at times even Marxist - in tone and developed a brand of Latin American liberation theology for the South African context as its

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7. See : Basil Moore (ed) Black Theology : the South African Voice (London, 1973); Mokgethi Motlhabi (ed), Essays on Black Theology (Johannesburg, 1972). Moore expanded Motlhabi's original connection for overseas publication after the volume was banned. Both Moore and former NCFCS chaplain Colin B.Collins had been veterans of UCM, and were among a handful of whites close to the Black Consciousness activists : see : Colin B.Collins, radio interview, Adelaide, Australia, c.October 1977 (recording in author's possession).
 8. See : Steven Friedman, Building Tomorrow Today : African Workers in Trade Unions 1970-1984 (Johannesburg, 1987), and Johan Maree (ed), The Independent Trade Unions, 1974-1984 (Johannesburg, 1987).

primary ideological discourse. At least one NCFs member of the period, Michael Murphy became an active trade unionist;⁹ some others drifted into nationalist movements like the ANC and SWAPO. The shift to the left in turn precipitated after 1976 a structural crisis in NCFs, with the re-emergence of a conservative "apolitical" tendency (called, derisively, the "God Squad") who attempted to wrest control of NCFs from the left, failing which to create a splinter organization. Both attempts failed, though in the 1980s there was a tendency to downplay explicitly Marxist terminology and promote an image of a populist anti-apartheid Catholic organisation.

Mirroring the growth of broad-based anti-apartheid organisations organising under the banner of the United Democratic Front, but often addressing local, township or shopfloor issues within a context of national political activity, Catholic student politics in the 1980s was categorised by involvement primarily in issues that directly affected NCFs' white middle-class constituency (but which had broader implications in South African society) or in political initiatives of the churches. The primary activity lay in the support of the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) and supporting conscientious objectors. As throughout its history, NCFs also responded, with public statements and resolutions, to events of the time. At the same time it tried to prioritise working at healing the divisions within its organisation and

9. Friedman, Building Tomorrow Today, p. 139 notes that Murphy was banned in 1976 and escaped to Britain, where he became a representative in exile for FOSATU (Federation of South African Trade Unions).

developing a closer working relationship with the Catholic Students' Association (CASA).

It is necessary now to consider theology as the primary intellectual and ideological discourse within NCF5. Stuart Hall points out that though "the term ideology used to mean a clear-cut political doctrine or creed, whose concepts were logically linked to form a 'system' which had achieved internal consistency and been subject to rigorous philosophical elaborations (n)owadays, the term ideology includes the whole range of concepts, ideas and images which provide the frameworks of interpretation and meaning for social and political thought in society".¹⁰ All discourse, be it oral, visual or printed, is ideological because it provides frameworks of interpretation and meaning. Theology, the "(r)eflection in the light of faith" which "must constantly accompany the pastoral action of the Church",¹¹ is no exception to this, for "in a class society every religious activity is an activity by no means outside or above class conflicts ... [but] is an activity carried out within class conflicts".¹² Inevitably, too, theological conflicts arise out of different class interests conflicting over what Maduro calls "religious production".¹³ Similarly,

10. Stuart Hall, "Variants of Liberalism", in James Donald and Stuart Hall (eds) Politics and Ideology (Milton Keynes, 1986), pp. 35-36.

11. Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation : History, Politics and Salvation (London, 1974), p. 12.

12. Otto Maduro, Religion and Social Conflicts (Maryknoll, New York, 1982), p. 67.

13. Otto Maduro, Religion and Social Conflicts pp. 89-91.

theological developments in NCFS (and in the wider Church) tended to build on each other, reminiscent of Rudé's suggestion that all ideology is a "mix" of inherent traditional elements (like direct experience, oral tradition and folk memory) and derived sets of ideas and beliefs. He suggests that:

" ... with each generation a new set of derived ideas become superimposed on those of the generation before ..." ¹⁴

with the result that shifts occur in the balance of inherent and derived ideas.

NCFS can be seen to have operated according to this idea of inherent and derived ideologies. As Catholics, their theological discourse in the 1950s was the primary inherent component, while liberal and radical political ideas were the derived. In this period little attempt was made to synthesize the two forms of ideology : the result was a dualist situation of a sophisticated Vatican II form of Catholicism (10 years before Vatican II) not combined to any significant degree with strong liberal anti-racism, with the result that the theology often seemed to distract attention from the politics and vice versa. The 1960s and the Second Vatican Council's espousal of liberal values such as freedom of persons and conscience and promotion of human rights improved matters somewhat, though at this stage theology seems to

14. George Rudé, "Ideology and Popular Protest", Historical Reflections, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1976, p. 76. This article is reproduced in George Rudé, The Face of the Crowd : Studies in Revolution, Ideology and Popular Protest, edited by Harvey J. Kaye (New York, 1988), pp. 197-204.

have been used as an ideological "checklist" to legitimate liberal stands on human rights issues like house arrests and academic freedom. At the same time, this approach made NCF5 vulnerable. With the right quotations, conservatives could use theology to try to promote pietism, quietism and conservatism. As theology itself became explicitly political in the late 1960s, it became a "site of struggle" between conservatives and liberals, with conservatives trying desperately to have politically "neutral" theological themes proposed for national and regional conferences. The 1970s saw the emergence, perhaps, of the most synthesized form of theological discourse in NCF5, the theology of liberation, because it incorporated into it developments in political thought - black consciousness, labour activism, democratic socialism et al - and expressly opted to throw off any theologies "of domination, introduced by religious power structures in the service of the dominant classes [and] the religious component or aspect of dominant ideas".¹⁵ In reaction, conservatives tried to break up this synthesis by denouncing political commitments as "Communist infiltration" and latching onto the Charismatic Renewal Movement in the Church, at the time a deeply personalised and "apolitical" (read : quietist) manifestation of religious consciousness.

The 1980s saw a shift away in tone, but not in content, from the liberation theology of the 1970s : in the spirit of broad populist thinking the ideologically-divisive Marxist or quasi-Marxist

15. George Casalis, Correct Ideas Don't Fall From the Skies : Towards an Inductive Theology (Maryknoll, New York, 1984), p. 16.

language was removed but the commitment to concepts such as non-racialism, democracy (and to some extent even democratic socialism) was retained. Such a shift tended to align NCFS more closely with the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) than it had in the 1970s; since the 1970s the SACBC had become more practically committed to activism for justice as well as the customary issue of public statements. Many former NCFS and CASA members became lay workers in the SACBC's many departments, as well as in the departments of dioceses in South Africa. The inherent ideology of NCFS in the period to a very great degree became liberation theology, with derived elements arising out of the issues that the Federation addressed, particularly anti-militarism and feminism. By the late 1980s both issues had become fairly established, though in the case of feminism not fully integrated into the theological discourse of NCFS. Militarism, because of the immediacy of the issue in broader South African circles, was better integrated, though no coherent theology of war and peace had been evolved. Though by the end of 1987 it was emerging as an important issue, feminism and the production of a feminist theological discourse was in a primary stage : addressing problems such as sexism in Catholic liturgies and the issue of ordination of women, but without a broad feminist theology.

Black Catholic students, it has been suggested elsewhere, were active in NCFS from the 1940s until 1971. In this period they presented an increasingly radical critique of apartheid, influencing many fellow NCFS members, but never gaining the political upperhand. Though many black students were elected to

the NCFS National Executive, none were ever elected President. Faced with a conservative backlash, many liberal whites though sympathetic to their more militant black NCFS colleagues felt unable to radicalise the Federation. Caught between liberals and conservatives, the black NCFS affiliates did the only thing they felt was left open to them : disaffiliate. Some black students, at the "white" campuses where NCFS was constituted, remained in the organisation after 1971. Particularly in the 1980s they tried to encourage it to take more radical political directions. The Catholic Societies that disaffiliated in 1971 formed a new organisation, the Catholic Students' Association (CASA) in 1976. CASA shifted ideologically from Black Consciousness in the late 1970s to the United Democratic Front - Freedom Charterist position in the 1980s, though in some regions retaining a residue of Black Consciousness ideology. Because CASA's constituency came to a large degree from the townships that were the focus of the anti-apartheid struggles of the 1980s, CASA was more readily able to show solidarity with, and participate in the specific political campaigns eg, Education Charter Campaign, of the period. Relations with NCFS improved considerably in the early 1980s, with CASA welcoming NCFS' participation in such campaigns, particularly those - like the End Conscription Campaign - that affected NCFS white members directly (and CASA's black members indirectly through the increased role of the military in suppressing township protest). Politically, CASA saw NCFS as working towards the same non-racial goals, but from a different starting-point, one with a uniquely problematic social base that militated against NCFS taking certain political "lines" and making NCFS continually "pace itself", so as not to alienate parts of its constituency.

One way of judging the lasting effect of political ideas and particularly the influence of blacks in (and out of) the Federation is to consider what happened to NCFS members after they left university. This in itself could be the subject of a whole thesis, but the evidence - based to a large extent on the more than 20 interviews conducted in the course of this research - seems to indicate that the majority of NCFS members retained the political convictions they had developed or consolidated in the Federation. Most people interviewed had stories of NCFS members shifting various stages to the left : some were conservatives who became more liberal; some who entered NCFS fairly liberal shifted sharply leftwards, as did a few conservatives. In political terms this meant, variously, understanding, supporting, and in a few cases actively participating in the politics of liberation. In religious terms this meant developing a critical support for the social actions and teachings of the Catholic Church, and the development of lay leadership in the church. Black NCFS members of the 1950s produced activists who were involved in nationalist movements of South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Lesotho. Many of the 1960s and 1970s generation were active in the Black Consciousness movements. White NCFS members were also deeply affected and former NCFS activists later moved into as diverse organisations as the Torch Commando, Liberal Party, African National Congress, South West African People's Organisation, United Democratic Front, Cape Democrats, Lawyers for Human Rights, various departments of the SACBC, and diocesan Justice and Peace Commissions. The other way of judging the Federation's effectiveness and importance for the wider Catholic Church is to

note that from 1960 to 1987, the social base of NCFS - white, middle-class background - was to a fairly large degree identical with that of most of the Catholic Bishops of South Africa. Like NCFS, the Bishops though they came from a predominantly white middle-class background were politically to the left - in most respects - of the rest of their class, while at the same time were to a certain degree constrained by the "fear" of shifting too far to the "left" and totally alienating their base. In some respects NCFS, because it was not a high-profile section of the Church, was able to be more radical than the Bishops and helped to create a small white, middle-class Catholic progressive lobby who could give black Catholics and the Bishops moral support when taking "risky" political steps. At times (particularly the 1970s) they used this advantage; at other times internal contradictions held them back.

Total identification with the struggle against a set of economic, political and racial inequalities which most NCFS members had never personally experienced was well-nigh impossible. With a religious education background that emphasized, both before and after Vatican II, a privatized, domesticated and personalized faith, conscientization before engaging in action was a necessity. The result, for NCFS, was that throughout its history the noble-minded anti-apartheid "spirit" was ever-willing; all too often, however, the white middle-class "flesh" was weak.

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Manuscript sources are abbreviated in this dissertation's footnotes. Asterisks after an abbreviation indicates that it is the author's own abbreviation. Those without asterisks are the officially designated reference numbers in the Archive concerned.

Abbreviation

1.1 Institutional

These sources are ordered in terms of National and Regional Christian Organizations, Secular student organizations, and Foreign student/religious organizations.

National Catholic Federation of Students Papers, housed at the NCFS-CASA National Office, Johannesburg. Incomplete sets of minutes, correspondence and publications. NCFS *

Catholic Students Association Papers, housed at the NCFS-CASA National Office, Johannesburg. Includes NCFS-CASA relations material and other documentation. CASA *

University Christian Movement Papers, housed in Historical and Literary Papers Department, William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. AD1126

Materials on NCFS and Catholic Church:

H5 : Relations with the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference.

J4 : Relations with the National Catholic Federation of Students.

L3 : External Relations with Pax Romana, the International Movement of Catholic Students.

M2 : Colin B. Collins Papers : Correspondence on National Catholic Federation of Students.

M10 : Colin B. Collins Papers : Correspondence with the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference.

Abbreviation

Anglican Students' Federation Papers, housed in Church of the Province of South Africa Archives, Historical and Literary Papers Department, William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. NCFCS material in :

AB1626

AB1626/G : Relations with Cathsoc [sic].

Kolbe Society (University of Cape Town Catholic Society) Papers, housed in Manuscripts and Archives Department, Jagger Library, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch. Minutes, correspondence and some publications.

BC927

Kolbe Society Papers, still housed at Kolbe House, Rondebosch. Most recent NCFCS and Kolbe publications.

KH *

National Union of South African Students Papers, housed in Manuscripts and Archives Department, Jagger Library, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch. NCFCS material in :

BC586

S8 : NUSAS-NCFCS Relations
A3 : Presidential Correspondence.

University of Zimbabwe Catholic Society Papers, in possession of Fr Paul Edwards SJ, Prestage House, Mount Pleasant, Harare, Zimbabwe. Material from the 1960s, including some publications.

UZ *

National Federation of Catholic College Students (USA) Papers, housed in the Archives of the United States Catholic Conference, Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., United States of America. Photocopies of documents sent to the author by H. Warren Willis, Assistant Archivist.

CUA *

1.2 Private Papers

1.2.1 Private Papers of Individuals

Papers of Michael Deeb, in his possession, St. Joseph's Scholasticate, Cedara, Natal.

MD *

Papers of Father Hyacinth Ennis, OFM, in his possession, St. Francis House of Studies, Pretoria.

Ennis *

Abbreviation

<u>Papers of Father Jan Haen, CSsR</u> , in possession of Fr Hyacinth Ennis OFM, St. Francis House of Studies, Pretoria.	Haen *
<u>Papers of Father Bonaventure Hinwood, OFM</u> , in his possession, St. John Vianney Seminary, Pretoria.	Hin *
<u>Papers of Father Julien Hofman, SJ</u> , in his possession, Cape Town.	Hof *
<u>Papers of Mrs Helen Joseph</u> , housed in Historical and Literary Papers Department, William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Of use were the numerous newspaper clippings on, <u>inter alia</u> , Church-State relations.	A1985
<u>Papers of Father Matthew Macdonald, OFM</u> , in his possession, St. John Vianney Seminary, Pretoria.	Fr Matthew *
<u>Papers of Mr Justice Nicholas J. McNally</u> , in his possession, Mount Pleasant, Harare, Zimbabwe.	McNally *
<u>Papers of Professor Phillip V. Tobias</u> , housed in the University Archives, Senate House, University of the Witwatersrand. Professor Tobias, a former NUSA5 president, was on very good terms with the founders of NCFS in the late 1940s. His papers include NUSAS-NCFS relations and Presidential correspondence with NCFS leaders.	PVT *
1.2.2 <u>Documentation in the author's Possession</u>	
<u>Papers</u> passed on to the author by Mr John Clarke.	C *
<u>Photocopies of documents</u> of Dr Colin B. Collins, Brisbane, Australia.	in possession of author *
<u>Papers of Dr Tim Dunne</u> , passed on to the author.	TD *
<u>Papers</u> collected by the author.	in possession of author *

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of NCFS in other Libraries.

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2. ORAL EVIDENCE

2.1 Interviews (taped)

Colin B. Collins : cassette sent to author from Brisbane, Australia, not dated, but circa April 1989.

John Deary : interviewed Harare, Zimbabwe, 27 September 1988.

Michael Deeb : interviewed St. Joseph's Scholasticate [Seminary], Cedara, Natal, 7 October 1988.

Tim Dunne : interviewed University of Cape Town, 25 November 1988.

Fr. Hyacinth Ennis OFM : interviewed St. Francis House of Studies, Pretoria, 7 June 1988.

Colin Gardner : interviewed at a party given by Peter and Lucienne Hunter, Johannesburg, 14 October 1988.

John Greene : interviewed University of Cape Town, 27 October 1988.

Karel "Kalie" Hanekom : interviewed Harare, Zimbabwe, 25 September 1988.

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Fr. Bonaventure Hinwood OFM : interviewed St. John Viannery Seminary, Pretoria, 9 June 1988.

Peter Hunter : interviewed Johannesburg, 28 July 1988 and 14 October 1988.

Lucienne Hunter : interviewed Johannesburg, 14 October 1988.

Rosemary Hunter : interviewed University of the Witwatersrand SRC Offices, 26 July 1988.

Mark James : interviewed St. Joseph's Scholasticate, Cedara, Natal, 8 October 1988.

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Jo Liefeldt : interviewed at Hunter party 14 October 1988

Donovan Lowry : ditto

Etheen Lowry : ditto

Stephen Lowry : interviewed Mayfair, Johannesburg, 14 October 1988.

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