

Educating Youth About Their Human Right of Conscientious Objection

Panel Discussion at the Third Preparatory Committee
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Moderator: Rosa Packard, Conscience and Peace Tax International

Introduction: Marian Franz, Conscience and Peace Tax International

Panel:

Michael Hovey, Pax Christi USA, and Center on Conscience and War

Douglas Hostetter, The Historic Peace Churches, and The Bosnian Student
Project, Fellowship of Reconciliation

Ibrahim Ramey, The Muslim Peace Fellowship, and American Friends
Service Committee, Fellowship of Reconciliation

Janet Chisholm, The Episcopal Peace Fellowship, and The Decade for a
Culture of Peace, Fellowship of Reconciliation

Betty Reardon, Jewish Peace Fellowship and Global Campaign for Peace
Education

Packard:

My name is Rosa Packard. I will moderate this session and introduce our panel
members who bring diverse religious perspectives and extensive educational

background to our subject ; "Educating Youth about Their Right of Conscientious Objection." We look forward to your questions and comments after our panel members have spoken. I am one of the NGO representatives to the UN in New York for Conscience and Peace Tax International. Another is John Randall, who is in charge of our webpage. Another is Marian Franz who will now welcome you on behalf of Conscience and Peace Tax International.

Franz:

Thank you very much. I am vice chair of Conscience and Peace Tax International. Our organization works toward the legal recognition of the human right to conscientious objection to participation in war for taxpayers. We have members from sixteen countries who hold an international conference every two years. Our head office is in Brussels. I am also the Executive Director of the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund in the United States, which is one of the member countries of Conscience and Peace Tax International.

According to UNICEF, more than thirty thousand children die every single day from totally preventable diseases. These diseases arise from malnutrition or the lack inexpensive vaccines. At the same time, standing in their nation's silos are missiles with the names of gods: Triton and Poseidon. Even if those missiles are never fired, they kill merely by standing in their silos because they divert resources from the children. We face the haunting question: Are we sacrificing the children to the gods? The conscience deals with these very deep issues. Conscience objects.

Conscience and Peace Tax International asserts the right not to participate in war, whether that participation is physical or financial. For the individual it asserts: Not with my body! You will not use my body to maim and kill others! You will not use my dollars to destroy them and drain resources away from those who desperately, desperately need them!

At the Millennium Forum, in May 2000 we were able to provide language in the Millennium Forum Declaration:

"In the context of the right not to be complicit in killings, we call for full, legal recognition of the rights of conscientious objectors."

This year our representatives also made a statement at the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva: "The Human Right Not to Pay for War and the Human Duty to Pay for Peace."*

Some of our members are developing a learning unit on conscientious objection to military service and to military taxation. This unit for high school students will be available on the web and will have appropriate links for further research and study. The objectives of the learning unit are:

First: to be aware of widespread discrimination against those whose religion or beliefs don't allow them to participate in war and who attempt to live their lives consistently with a culture of peace.

Second: to understand the difference between a culture of war that seeks to kill the enemy and deter the enemy with threats of killing, and a culture of peace that seeks to care for both the oppressed and the oppressor while transforming and deterring the oppression by active nonviolence.

Third: to clarify one's personal beliefs and respect the beliefs of others. We are not likely to respect the beliefs of others until we are clear where we stand.

We hope to gather in the stories of conscientious objectors around the world,

- 1) to know what reprisals governments bring down on conscientious objectors,
- 2) to know the status of legal protections,
- 3) to learn what faith groups are doing, and
- 4) to learn what counseling and support groups are available.

This information linked on the web will be a rich resource for students.

Packard:

Thank you, Marian. Our first panelist is Michael Hovey, who is with Pax Christi International, and who teaches Peace Studies at Iona College. Michael Hovey has

made the efforts of non governmental organizations to further the recognition of the human right of conscientious objection at the United Nations the subject of his dissertation. We will ask Michael to explain how conscientious objection is understood in the context of the United Nations and to add whatever else he wishes from his own experience and faith perspective.

Hovey:

I am a conscientious objector. I spent five years in the United States Navy, four of those during the Vietnam War. The last four years of the Vietnam War, I was stationed in Japan, about thirty miles from Nagasaki. As a result of a series of visits to Nagasaki, I got back in touch with my religious roots, as a Roman Catholic.

I became a conscientious objector, and was discharged in February of 1976 with an honorable discharge as a conscientious objector. For twenty-five years now, half my life, I've been focusing on this particular issue in a variety of ways. As Rosa said, most recently, I am completing a Ph.D. at Syracuse University and writing on the role of NGOs in promoting recognition of the human right to be a conscientious objector.

The human right to be a conscientious objector to military service has been recognized by the United Nations on five different occasions. From the time of the founding of the UN, there were at least three occasions that the question was raised in the General Assembly and the Human Rights Commission, but it wasn't until 1971 that the question finally ended up on the agenda. At that time the Cold War made it almost impossible to get things done in the human rights field.

In 1982, the Human Rights Subcommission issued a report on conscientious objection to military service, which you can get at the bookstore right across the street at the UN. It explains the background of conscientious objection: what it is, how it is understood. The report serves as a common resource for the various countries to consider.

In 1987, for the first time, a vote was held on a resolution and it passed. There have been other resolutions that didn't pass or were tabled over the years; but in 1987 a resolution passed that recognized the right of people to hold conscientious objections to military service. At that time, the resolution was narrowly based on

religious or moral beliefs and concerned with people who were subject to conscription.

In 1989, another resolution was passed by consensus, and since then in 1989, in 1993, in 1995, and in 1998 all of them have passed without a vote, all by consensus. In each of those resolutions there has been some fine-tuning of the definition of conscientious objection. Copies of the most recent of these resolutions can be found in the appendices of this document or on the web at at <http://www.unhchr.ch>

What began as conscientious objection based on religious or moral beliefs, has expanded to include conscientious objection based on religious, moral, ethical, philosophical, and related beliefs. Also, it moved beyond including only people subject to mandatory conscription, to include people like myself, who were members of the military or the armed forces, but whose beliefs against war crystallized while they were in military service. There are also suggestions that countries should provide alternate civilian service, in place of military service, and that countries should welcome people seeking asylum because their own country does not permit or recognize conscientious objection.

You may have picked up that I keep stressing conscientious objection to military service. That right is well recognized by the UN. The remaining right, one that has not yet been recognized, is the right to conscientiously object to pay taxes for the military.

The last thing I would say is that in each of the five resolutions, just as in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, countries and NGOs are urged to spread the word to young people. When this issue first came up on the agenda, at the Human Rights Commission, in 1971, it was under the rubric of education of youth for human rights. Every young person in the world deserves to know that it is now universally recognized by the United Nations that everyone has a right to object, in conscience, to serving in the armed forces and to work for peace.

So a challenge for all of us is to get that word out to young people, regardless of the legal situation within their own country, in fact, especially in regard to that. If it is legally recognized, as it is in about forty countries, right now, to become a conscientious objector, great. But if not, young people can say in appeal to their own countries, "Look, the United Nations, the countries of this world have recognized this right. We need to be able to have that in our own nation."

Packard:

Thank you. Michael. Next Doug Hostetter is going to give you a glimpse of some of the experiences of the historic peace churches, which is his background, and also a glimpse of the Bosnian Student Project.

Hostetter:

Thank you.

I'm a Mennonite, but I have also worked for a Quaker organization. Currently, I'm the International and Interfaith Secretary of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, in Nyack, NY. My talk is going to be more practical and anecdotal than theoretical.

I was a conscientious objector during the Vietnam War. I spent my time in Vietnam coordinating a literacy program for Vietnamese children during the war. Many of the young Vietnamese with whom I worked are still my friends, thirty years later. I have just written a letter of recommendation for one of the Vietnamese high school students who worked with me in the literacy project in the late 60's. He now has his PhD from the University of Hanoi and has applied for a faculty position teaching Vietnamese language and culture at the University of Florida.

I want to read a couple of short passages from a pamphlet I wrote: The Bosnian Student Project, A Response to Genocide (Pendle Hill Publications, 1997, Wallingford, PA):

"I graduated from college in the middle of the Vietnam War. As many of my contemporaries were being drafted and sent to Vietnam to kill in the name of democracy, I volunteered to do my alternative service with the Mennonite Central Committee, helping refugees in the middle of the war zone in Tam Ky, Vietnam. In response to requests from refugee families, I organized schools where Vietnamese children whose homes and schools had been destroyed by the US. Air Force could learn to read and write their own language. More than ninety Vietnamese high school students taught over three thousand grade-school age children how to read and write Vietnamese through this program. I learned from that project that education, unlike most gifts, enhances human dignity, and will serve its recipient well regardless of who wins the war. Education is also a gift for survival -- the one thing you can take with you when all else is lost.

I was working in central Vietnam, about a hundred miles below the Demilitarized Zone. The village of Tam Ky was in the middle of a war zone. If you went a kilometer east or a kilometer west, you were in National Liberation Front territory. I started working in refugee camps in Tam Ky and gradually moved out to the fringe areas. When any village, refugee camp or community asked for me to set up

a school, I had two preconditions: they had to provide food and lodging for the teacher (a Vietnamese high school student) that came to their community, and they had to provide a room for the literacy class where the children could learn to read and write. I recruited my teachers from the local high school in Tam Ky, where I was teaching English, while I was learning Vietnamese. I soon ran out of teachers. There was a greater demand for teachers than I had high school students willing to teach.

Some of the area we were working was called xoi dao in Vietnamese. Xoi dao literally translated means "rice and beans" and in that region of the country it meant an area which was mixed politically. By day xoi dao regions were usually controlled by the Saigon government and the Americans, but by night those areas were under the control of the National Liberation Front and the communists. Those areas also had children who needed an education and wanted to attend school.

A village chief from a xoi dao area approached me once requesting a literacy program for his village. I apologized for the fact that I had no more high school students willing to teach in this project. The chief explained that teachers were more valuable to his village than soldiers, and he promised to guarantee that any high school student sent as a teacher to his village would not be drafted into either army while they are teaching in his community. It was a promise that he and a few other xoi dao village chiefs made and kept! When I returned to the high school and explained the guarantee of the village chief, I had an endless number of volunteers to teach in those schools. Although we lost students to the draft that were teaching in Saigon government controlled areas, and also in National Liberation Front areas, we never lost a single student from the xoi dao schools. Knowing the importance of education for their children, the village chiefs in those areas protected our teacher from the military recruiters of both armies.

When war broke out in Bosnia, I knew from my experience in Vietnam that education would offer positive opportunities even in the midst of a devastating war. I worked with others to establish the Bosnian Student Project, to assist endangered students in continuing their education in the United States. I had learned that Bosnian Muslim students in Croatia were being expelled from university dorms because they were Muslim. Before the war, Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia were all a part of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia. When Yugoslavia broke up into separate countries, Croatia declared itself Catholic, Serbia became an Orthodox Christian state while Bosnia committed itself to remaining multicultural. Many Muslim students from Bosnia were in Croatia at the University of Zagreb when the war broke out. Suddenly, they discovered that they were in a Catholic

country and, as Muslims, they were no longer welcome. They were kicked out of their dorm rooms, were not allowed in student dining halls, and were often arrested by the police.

We offered the challenge to American schools: if you don't believe that people should be killed or denied an education because of their ethnicity or religion, you have an opportunity to demonstrate your values by offering a scholarship to a qualified Bosnian student. We indicated that there was no need to compromise on academic standards, but because the students had no funds, the schools needed to offer full tuition scholarship to eligible Bosnian students. We helped one hundred and sixty students get out of the war zone and continue their education in some of the best universities in this country. Not a single student failed and each contributed significantly to the life of their universities. "

Allow me to read part of a letter from Dalia, one of our students who attended college in the New York area:

"I'm a Bosnian student now living in the United States, while studying at Sarah Lawrence College. When I graduate, I hope to take my education back to Bosnia, to help people there, if anyone is left to return to. What has happened in Bosnia makes it difficult to hope, but life without hope is no life at all. Now my hope is that people in other countries will save the lives of those of us who do not want to take part in the war. I'm a Bosnian Muslim, but I prefer just to be called a Bosnian because that is my identity.

There are many Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs, and they too prefer to just to be called Bosnians. I have a friend, a Bosnian Croat, who identifies himself as Bosnian, even though he has been granted Croatian citizenship, like all Catholics from Bosnia who have been refugees in Croatia. His name is Devor, and he was a university student. He felt the same pain when the Serbs burned his house as I did when my house was taken away. He felt the same tragedy as I did when he waited at the railway station, searching the thousands of faces, looking for someone familiar, a neighbor to tell him who was alive and who had been killed and who had been taken off to concentration camps. I was with Devor when a friend told him his father had died because of a lack of medical attention. We were together when our families, with a few bags of remaining possessions, came to Zagreb as refugees. He is a Bosnian and he mourned over what happened, just as all Bosnians do.

Now my friend is in the Croatian army, sent to the front in Bosnia, where he is ordered to shoot the same Bosnians he once cried for. He didn't choose that fate; others chose for him. They knocked on his door in the dorm, and one day he was gone. It didn't matter to them that he was a registered university student, that his widowed mother would be left alone, that he had been exempt from military service because he had contracted Hepatitis B while in the Yugoslavian army before the war. Nor did it matter to them that he was a Bosnian, and that he did not want to kill anyone.

There is something that you can do for people like my friend. You can try to arrange asylum in your own countries for Bosnians and all those other people from the former Yugoslavia who do not want to kill their neighbors. Many young people are killing and being killed in this war, simply because they have no other option. If the door of asylum in other countries would be open, many lives would be saved and the war would end quickly. "

We challenged the United States and the European Union to open their doors to Bosnians who did not want to fight. There was only one country in the entire West that offered to grant political asylum to military refugees during the war in Bosnia. Most of the people who were fighting, killing and being killed, would have taken another option were it available.

In the Bosnian Student Project, among the one hundred and sixty students, there is one who was on active duty in the Bosnian army when he was enrolled in an American college. I also have a Serbian student who, during the Kosovo war, was being called up for reserves from the University of Belgrade. His sister contacted me and said, "My brother does not want to go to Kosovo and kill Albanian Muslims in the name of Serbia. Please find him a scholarship." He is now studying in an American college. There are three Albanian young men from Kosovo, all of military age, who are also studying at three different colleges in this country.

For the cost of fighting the war, for two months, we could have offered a full tuition scholarship at the best universities throughout Europe and the United States to every one of the active duty military people in the Serbian army, military police and the Kosovo Liberation Army. It is a safe bet that although not everyone would have accepted the offer, the brightest and the best would have, and the armies would have fallen into disarray, leaving peace as the only viable option.

Packard:

Thank you, Doug. That was very clear.

Now we have the good fortune of hearing from Ibrahim Ramey, who is with the Muslim Peace Fellowship and has had much experience with a variety of US organizations around the issue of conscientious objection: including The Center for Conscience and War and The American Friends Service Committee. We are looking forward to your perspective.

Ramey:

Good Morning. . I am thinking about the human rights of children, because we are really here this week to talk about creating a dynamic that recognizes children as full human beings, children as enfranchised, full participants in human society. Not that children are mature or that they have the responsibilities of adults, but that children do have fundamental rights. They have the right to have a name, to have an identity, to be cared for, to be free from all forms of coercion, all forms of externalized violence. By gathering to talk about that issue here, we are part of what I think is an important global movement, and that is the movement that recognizes that children count, that children are people, that children are human beings, invested by God with the full rights of human beings.

I am also thinking about how we create soldiers. Without soldiers, without combatants, there could be no war. We need to analyze how education is constructed in every society of the world and we need to become part of the movement that deconstructs education and in doing so, deconstructs history. Let me give you a little anecdote to explain where I'm coming from:

I grew up in the segregated part of the United States of America, in the 1950s. I am of working-class poor background, and I remember very vividly that when I grew up, being less than ten years after the Second World War, the war system was very much a part of the ethos of the culture in which I grew up. There were military programs on television, there were war movies all the time. The favorite toys that we all got were tanks and soldiers. We lived in a culture where many of our fathers or grandfathers had been participants in the Second World War, and in my case,

because I had a very old father, I am the son of a World War I veteran. My dad ran away from home at the age of fifteen, lied about his age, joined the US Coast Guard, and therefore was a veteran of the First World War. He was fifty years old when I was born. I'm his first son.

What is interesting is that even in the context of racial segregation and racial oppression in the South, the war system was assumed to be justified, good, and a necessary part of our socialization. Where we grew up in the South, everyone was aware of Jim Crow, everyone was aware of the horror of racism on some internalized level, but we didn't have a construct that enabled us to look at the injustice of war and armed violence as part of what we would have to be part of when we got older or to resist when we got older. So there was no dialogue.

We got a lot of moral education in the Baptist Church when I grew up, a lot of good, solid "Love the Lord. Serve your neighbor." My family was a community service family. We were leaders in our little church in Virginia. But there was never any conversation about the morality of war except perhaps about the racial nature of the atomic bomb. I remember there was a conversation at the dinner table when I was about seven or eight in which my father, who was not a particularly politically conscious person, said that there was no way that bomb could have been dropped on the Germans, looking at the bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. That's when conscientious objection to participation in war began to form as a construct for me.

But the reason that there was no real discourse or dialogue about the war system was because we, like everybody in this society, grew up with a very convoluted and false sense of history. We were told that war was necessary, patriotic and good, When the United States went to war, they went to war for the right reasons. They killed people who were aggressors. They killed folk who were communists. They killed folk who wanted to take your democracy and liberty away from you. These thoughts trickled into the African-American community.

We bought into the notion of history that the dominant society presented. However, when I was about nineteen years old, I was well into my second year in the ROTC program at the University of Pennsylvania. I had graduated from a

private school when the Vietnam war was raging. I knew I was going to have to fight, so I wanted to do it as an officer.

But something happened that was not part of the program. I read two significant books that were not part of the way I was programmed to think. One book was **The Autobiography of Ho Chi Minh**, and the second book was **The Autobiography of Malcolm X**. After looking at the life of Ho Chi Minh, who was not a conscientious objector, by the way, I understood that waging war against the Vietnamese people was wrong. This man had written about lynching and about his experiences as a young man in the 1920s, being part of the rallies of the Gardy group in New York City and having some contact with the African-American community in New York. I could not wage war on Vietnamese people if he was saying that racism and lynching directed against African-Americans in the South were wrong.

When I read Malcolm's autobiography, I realized that there was a history of conscientious objection in the organization that was the formative organization that gave rise to Malcolm X. The Nation of Islam was not a pacifist group by any stretch of the imagination. But it had a policy and a moral stand against the Second World War. I read that Mr. Elijah Mohammed, the spiritual father of Malcolm, went to jail for a little less than four years in Michigan, even though he was too old to be drafted in the US. military in the Second World War. He chose the path of resistance. Ah ha! Another light bulb goes off. I began to see there were people, who seemed to be morally upstanding people, who said that war is wrong.

As I got older, I began to recognize that there were traditions in Christian thinking and possibly other faith communities that were telling the world that it was not necessary, and not desirable to pick up a weapon and kill another person. Because, after all, going back to Sunday school, didn't we all learn, at least all of us who are Judeo-Christian, or Muslim-Judeo-Christians, didn't we all learn that there was something revealed to Moses on the Mount that said "Thou shalt not kill"? Folks interpret that in different ways. But when I look at my early Christian upbringing, before I embraced Islam, and I looked at how I had been taught and programmed in my education, I realized that there was no space in the way that I was socialized and educated to allow me to think about war as being morally wrong.

In order to educate young people about the right of conscience, one must fundamentally transform what is being taught in every nation state. We have to reevaluate the content of education. We have to look at education from the perspective of a new value system, a new way of looking at conflict resolution, a new way of looking at race and ethnic relationships, a new way of looking at nuances of gender violence, because these are the primary roots of war.

We also have to educate young people to recognize their humanity. It is not cowardly, it is not wrong to say "I refuse to kill." In fact, it is the highest expression of one's identity as a moral and thinking person to do that. Those of us who are involved in education, in the academy or in primary education, or in the context of community service, must look at how to revolutionize education so that the right of nonviolent participation in society, and respect for human life, becomes central and not peripheral to both the content and context of education.

Packard:

Thank you. Ibrahim.

Our next speaker is Janet Chisholm, who is the vice chair of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship. She is also Interim Co-Executive Director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. In her work she promotes the UN Decade for the Culture of Peace For the Sake of Children of the World. Janet, we are looking forward to your thoughts on conscientious objection.

Chisholm:

I will talk about conscientious objection in three areas: the Episcopal Church, the Episcopal Peace Fellowship, and FOR's work on the Decade.

For thirty years I worked in various children's services as a teacher of student teachers, as a teacher of children, and as a community organizer of children's services. So I'm very committed to the health and the safety of our children.

In this country I saw children raised in a culture of violence, where there is little awareness about nonviolence and where children are overexposed to violence: personal violence through child abuse and neglect, domestic and community violence, and institutional violence through deficient health care, education, and social services and through discrimination and poverty.

For the Episcopal Peace Fellowship, I have designed peace curricula for children and youth, including one on vocational discernment for high school students. In this curriculum students are offered, as one of their options, conscientious objector status. I counseled COs during the Vietnam War.

As a child, I was well-schooled in violence, although I was not aware of this. I grew up in Las Vegas, Nevada, watching the nuclear bombs go off. We would drive out to the highway before dawn and get as close as we could to ground zero. Newspapers laid out the best routes. And there was great silence about the dangers. We were told it was safe. I wanted to be a nuclear physicist. I studied rockets and interviewed atomic scientists. I grew up in a culture of violence and a culture of silence.

The Episcopal Church is one of the few mainline Christian churches in this country that, in addition to supporting conscientious objection, has a registry of conscientious objectors. The Episcopal Church is not one of the historic peace churches but it has supported conscientious objection since 1934. It set up a formal process for conscientious objectors to register with the national Church office. It has passed resolutions urging all of the parishes to provide CO counseling. In 1968 it even passed a resolution on selective conscientious objection. Selective conscientious objection means objecting to a particular war, such as the Vietnam War, but not necessarily to all wars.

The Episcopal Peace Fellowship, EPF, is not part of the official Church structure but is an association of the Church members that pressure the Church to be a voice for peace and justice. It was formed to support conscientious objectors in 1939 and it established within the Church a formal process of registering as a C.O. It also worked on legislation protecting the rights of conscientious objectors.. EPF collected all the church's official statements on war, violence, justice, and peace and made them widely available in a booklet. That booklet is one of our most powerful tools for relating the Christian gospel and the Church's mission to the struggle for peace and justice. We continue to seek an understanding in the Church that conscientious objection is the normative response for a Christian. It should be the first response, the natural tendency of a Christian. Military service is not!

In the Fellowship of Reconciliation, we are promoting the UN Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence. That resolution was passed by the UN in November of 1998. It calls for nonviolence training and peace education at all levels of society. This resolution was the result of an appeal from all the living Nobel Laureates for Peace that children be taught to change the culture of violence in all our countries to a culture of peace.

Packard:

Thank you. Janet.

Betty Reardon is just returned from Israel. She has been in touch with New Profile, a group supporting conscientious objectors within the Israeli army.. She is coordinator of the Global Campaign for Peace Education, which is located in this country at Columbia University, where for years she has taught peace education. I have asked Betty to give us a glimpse of the kind of work she is doing in the Global Campaign, and a glimpse of what is happening in Israel. Then she will take a few extra minutes summarize the contributions of this panel.

Reardon:

I am extremely proud to be representing New Profile, which is a new peace organization in Israel. It is just about two years old. It is actively involved in the growing coalition of peace organizations and peace movements in Israel. It works very closely with organizations such as Women in Black and Bhoch Shalom. When I heard about New Profile, I thought "That is what I've been waiting for." They do everything that the women in the peace and resistance movement do, but they began their work with an analysis of the war system. They began to educate themselves about the culture and the politics that were controlling their lives. For many of them, the war has taken away their sons, and many of the sons would have been resisters. They see their practical work as resisting militarism and the war system.

One of the specific tasks New Profile has undertaken is the support of conscientious objection to military service, which is extremely difficult in Israel. They have arranged legal assistance from pro bono lawyers who take some of the cases, , through the courts, like the Yon Hiller case and now the Gaby Wolfe case.

They have enlisted moral support for young men who go to jail, rather than serve when they can not get their C.O. status. Some of the women are educators and they bring these issues to their professional work.

The reason that I was in Israel was to participate in a conference that was in two parts, one in Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and one at the University in Tel Aviv. The topic was militarism in education. They are analyzing how their children are socialized into the war system. They will try to get other countries to begin to do the same kind of analysis through the number of other countries that were represented there.

The initiatives to begin a worldwide movement to support the human right to conscientious objection and to educate about the human right to conscientious objection are significant parts of the Global Campaign for Peace Education. I see that everything that we are trying to achieve in that campaign is in large part dependent on many of the things we have talked and heard about in the panel this morning. Clearly, we have to focus not only on the right to conscientious objection; We also have to focus on the institution of war and the way the institution of war pervades our entire lives, as Ibrahim Raimey has reflected to us.

I think we have to transform education. In getting out the word, as Michael Hovey says, young people have to know that this right exists. They need to know about United Nations resolutions. But more importantly, they have to know how to exercise conscience. They need to be taught to reflect on the world in which they live and to make moral decisions according to standards and criteria that have been examined by themselves and their peers, with their teachers, with their parents, and in the larger society. That is especially important for those who are now seeking to claim conscientious objection not on the basis of a religious faith, but on the basis of a reflective, moral conscience.

Everyone, whether they are people of faith or not, have the right of conscience.. The learning unit that Rosa is working on, I hope, will enable us to introduce some in the Global Campaign. One of the things that we need to do in this learning unit is to highlight the issues that Doug Hostetter outlined for us: To explore possibilities of alternative service and to think of acquiring an education as a form of service. When he read the letter from the Bosnian student who was going to

return from asylum, using her education as a resource to help her own society, we heard an articulation of what many of us believe education should be. Education should help people to serve their countries, to serve their societies.

The notion of asylum is an important one, because it underlines the fact that we are in a global system. We are one people. If someone is hurting in another part of the world, we have to be able to offer some solidarity and healing. Establishing asylum on the basis of conscientious objection is one way to do that.

I think the most important thing we can do, all of us, but particularly for those us who are teaching the young, is to emphasize discernment. This raises the issue about silence, that Janet spoke about in her experience of watching the bomb tests. The culture of violence rests upon the culture of silence. As we reflect on the war system and discern its specific forms of violence we need to give voice to our outrage over that violence and to find ways of identifying alternatives. We need to put forward alternatives to war and the practical skills of working for peace.

I think that if there was one thing that I learned in my days with New Profile, it is that education for resistance is as important as education for reconciliation. I see those as twin learning objectives. The young need to understand as they reflect and make moral decisions and discern the violence, that there are ways to resist the violence, They are morally obligated to do so. We who are in charge of their education are morally responsible to provide them with education for resistance. If I can convince my colleagues in the Global Campaign for Peace Education that that is an important objective, then I think we can move forward. I would feel that I have kept faith with my sisters in New Profile, who resist day after day, under very difficult circumstances.

Packard:

Thank you, Betty. We have time left for questions. I

Question:

I was moved by what you said regarding the issue of resistance and I would like you to comment on the right to self-defense.

Reardon:

This is the kind of question that should be raised. and I think it would be raised, if we had education for resistance. to injustice and violence. We are talking about resisting impulses within ourselves to resort to violence or to tolerate injustice. This means that we have to entertain alternatives: alternative responses, alternative behaviors, alternative ways of thinking. If you are asking whether self-defense is ever the grounds for acting violently toward another, I think we have to educate people to come to their own decisions on that. I think that many of us in this room would say no, that you would have to find another way. But I don't think that we educate properly, unless we enable people to make that decision for themselves.

Ramey:

Here is how I would approach the answer . For Muslims, the right of self-defense is established in the Koran. We have a right to resist oppression. However, we also have the opportunity, the ability to make choices about the instruments of resistance that we use. So if someone is attacking you, you can defend yourself without necessarily using deadly force to kill your attacker. If someone is amassing an army against your border, you can use diplomacy and other skills, which are usually undervalued, to begin to create a situation in which your neighbor is less likely to become an antagonist and more likely to be an ally. So, I would say to you that people have the right to self-defense. It is a right. However, we also can construct a world and imagine a world where self-defense becomes far less dependent on the military, on violent action, and on war, and more dependent upon other means that are either nonviolent or less violent.

Question:

Is nonviolence effective?

Hostetter:

I spent most of my life working in conflict situations: Vietnam, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Iraq, Israel/Palestine, Cuba and Bosnia. There are situations of enormous injustice in these and other countries all over the world. You have to ask that same question of the armed services. How effective is military resistance? How many people are killed? What does it do to the economy, to society, and to future generations? At the time of our actions, we never know what will be effective and what will not. As conscientious objectors or as people who believe in active nonviolence, we are committed to struggle against oppression using the power of

love, truth and active nonviolence. If you are willing to put yourself into a conflict situation, you will discover that there are always creative things that can be done to lessen violence, alleviate suffering and combat injustice.

The wonderful thing about nonviolence is there is no collateral damage. I watched in Vietnam, where the Americans were fighting Vietnamese they labeled as Communists, using 500 and 1,000-pound bombs. Later on, they used defoliation. The collateral damage was enormous and had profound consequences both for the United States and Vietnam. For every civilian that they killed, for every farm that they defoliated, the US military made scores of enemies for the United States. When someone dumps a bomb on your home or defoliates your fields, you will hate that person, regardless of who they are, or what their ideology is.

With active nonviolence, the collateral effect is only positive. The children that were taught by Vietnamese high school students, to read and write their own language, are productive members of society thirty years later. They are still my friends today. Vietnamese students who went through our literacy program are better people today, regardless of which side they previously supported. Our literacy program did not harm the ecology, the family or the community in the area where I worked. We brought education, understanding and empowerment to children of Tam Ky in the middle of a disastrous war. These are the things that are the most effective, long-term weapons against oppression. Nonviolence may look ineffective in the short run, but guns and bombs are also often ineffective in the short run. War always brings enormous damage that lasts for generations on both sides. Nonviolent acts of love and compassion bring life and hope to both sides, leaving positive influence in the world which last for generations.

Question:

Would you say more about selective objection?

Chisholm:

During the Vietnam War there were many in this country who opposed the war but were not able to say they opposed all wars. Therefore, they did not consider themselves pacifists. They couldn't honestly say that in World War II, "I definitely would have refused to fight." The Selective Service system required opposition to all war to qualify as a CO. We wanted people to be able to say "No" to Vietnam.

Many of us are now educating the public about how our resources are prioritized to support the military. When I operated anti-poverty day-care systems in a city, I couldn't get the resources that I needed for those children and those instructors. Child caregivers were paid less than dog-pound caregivers, less than anyone else in the country. Health-care services, education services, and social services are inadequate. We need to compare the small amount of resources that support those services, that serve all of us, with the huge amount of resources going to the military. That isn't being done enough. It certainly isn't being done in the schools.

Hovey:

I just spent a week teaching a course in some of these areas, so I'll try not to be too professorial. Selective conscientious objection, is addressed in my classes as part of the Christian-Catholic tradition, which is embraced by mainstream Christian communities. It is known as the "Just War" tradition. The criteria for a just war allows some people a middle ground between total pacifism or the total crusade mentality of all out war. The Just War tradition looks at the purpose of the war and looks at the way the war is fought. So in Vietnam, or in the Gulf War, or in wars of liberation in different countries many people become convinced that the purpose of the war is right or just: But then the way the war is fought ends up being very questionable to people. It becomes very indiscriminate, civilians are killed, noncombatants killed.

Many American students cannot separate the idea that the United States was did the right thing in the Second World War against Hitler and Nazism. and the use of nuclear weapons at the end of the war? People are so stuck in the reason for the war being right that they can't see that the way it was being fought, especially toward the end, was very wrong.

I consider myself a Christian pacifist, a Catholic pacifist, which is almost an oxymoron. I understand that many friends of mine, within Pax Christi, and in many other peace organizations, would hesitate to say "I'm against all war at all times." I try to help them understand that position. But I think it is relevant to say "I'm still not aware of the alternatives to let me make that leap from "opposed to some wars" to "opposed to all wars." Selective objection is a step in the right

direction, and I think we should encourage this. It is better than saying that war is good because we know that that is not true.

Question:

I am Antonio Breda, I am the vice president of the Mexican Commission on Human Rights. I notice that the concept of conscientious objection here is always discussed within the scope of war. Fortunately, in Mexico, we have no war. And I wonder if this concept can be used also to resist compliance with certain regulations that are against your conscience. For example, in Mexico, it is becoming legal and mandatory for doctors working in public hospitals to practice abortion in certain circumstances. I wonder if there is a precedent that can be used by a doctor not to practice an abortion, if that act contradicts their own conscience or moral values.

Hovey:

The term "conscientious objection" originated back in the 1890s for people who opposed receiving vaccinations. It began in a medical setting, so I think there is precedent for that. We, peace people, took over the term, but it started with medical procedures. So there would certainly be room for that. One of the things that led to my own conscientious objection in the Navy was precisely this situation. The base where I was stationed in Japan was very small, about two hundred American sailors. We had a single doctor who was able and competent to perform abortions, but he refused to because of his religion. He was Catholic. And of course, this became a big debate on the base. He was the single person who could do it, and he refused to do it. Without being drawn into either side, I was impressed that someone went to that extreme to defend his conscience and to refuse to perform an act that was contrary to his conscience. I felt he should be supported, whether I agreed with him or not.

Question:

I am wondering prevents peace education from being in all schools in the country. Is it the authorities in the school system? In the state? Is it all those? Is it our need to prove that people can read and write and do math, which is preventing room for this teaching?

Ramey:

I'll start by saying that the war system is very deeply ingrained in public education. There are more than 2,500 military programs called Junior ROTC. in secondary schools in America. There are dozens of career academies that teach young people that war is good as a vocation. Military recruiters have access to schools. In fact, I heard a couple of weeks ago that there is a motion in front of the Hawaii legislature to enable the US. military to have an official seat on the statewide Hawaii school board, so that there will be a US. military representative as a sitting member. They don't have local school boards in Hawaii; they have a state school board. If this passes, the US. military will be officially represented as a member of the statewide school system of the state of Hawaii.

Part of the answer is that the political economy of the United States of America is a war economy. More than fifty percent of our tax dollars, scads and scads of money that should be going to public education, job formation, health care, etc., is invested in the military. The military is invested in getting new bodies every year, more than 400,000, to fill the ranks of its enlisted personnel. The way that they do that now is that they have an integral and incestuous relationship with public education, providing little bonuses for the school systems. The school systems open up their doors to recruiters and open up their doors to military programs in the schools. If we want to stop the war system, we have to stop the military access to our young people.

Chisholm:

Talking with many who want to teach about peace and nonviolence in schools, I hear that one has to be really persistent over many years. Colman McCarthy in Washington is a good example. One young woman who wanted to teach, and had graduated from American University in Peace Studies, said that she had to threaten to leave and not sign a contract before the school would let her teach one peace course as an elective. Teaching conflict resolution is threatening enough, and that is only about interpersonal conflict. But if you are going to teach how to organize and how to oppose oppressive structures, that is really threatening to schools. To teach resistance and the history and strategy of people's revolutions which have been successful could be going against the principal, too! So teaching how to organize and resist, even nonviolently, is very threatening. And I have heard it from teacher after teacher after teacher. One finally said that instead of teaching it

as a course, he decided to just practice it in the classroom and hope that the students and faculty would become interested.

A few years ago I designed a project for citizens to survey the level of military presence in their high schools. We learned how the military was presenting weapons shows on school grounds for holiday celebrations. They were providing sports uniforms; they were providing aptitude tests, as well as the career counseling. And so the school can become really dependent, especially the poorer schools.

Reardon:

I agree with all of the above. I also think that it is important to understand the way education is delivered and the culture of the school. In another incarnation, I was doing a seminar in Cuernavaca, where Ivan Illich used to hold sway. He came to my seminar and pronounced that all education is education for war. Children are taught from the very first when they enter the school that they come in categories. There are categories for smart to not-so-smart. They line them up in sizes. The whole thing is highly militaristic in that sense, without even mentioning war or the military. Then they are taught to compete with one another: for the teacher's attention, for this reward, that reward. And they are given grades on a competitive basis. The delivery of the learning is largely authoritarian. They are taught to remember what they are told, not to think for themselves. When Ibrahim Ramey talks about transforming education, that means not only looking at the militarism in education from the military-institutional perspective but looking at militarism as an ethos, in the way we socialize children and use the schools for that purpose.

Question:

In American schools, if you join the Army after you leave high school, then four years later you get to go to college for practically nothing. In an economy where the poor persons often are the ones to go to war, how can you help them make decisions that are right for them and still have them get the desired level of education?

Hovey:

All I can say is that we are not as far along in offering alternatives as we would like. Through the Center for Conscience and War, for at least ten years now, we

have funds for education and training (FEAT). And we try to provide loans to students who are otherwise opposed to registration for the draft and looking for alternatives, so that they do not have to accept money from the military. Many of the people I have spoken with, who are involved with ROTC, or those I have read about, say explicitly that is the reason they went. They are not going because they are gung-ho military or look forward to becoming soldiers. They are looking for a way to go to college in a time when it is incredibly expensive in this country. Some of the things we are talking about are ideas that have come to fruition; other things are things we still need to work on. . We must try to offer alternatives to young people so that they don't have to accept that kind of support for college.

Reardon:

Why, if it is palpably clear that militarism and war is not humanly productive or satisfying, it persists? One of the reasons it does, I think, is to hold in place an unjust economic system, which closes off choices to many people and pushes them into the arms of the military. There is this very close relationship, I think, between economic oppression and militarism, to say nothing of patriarchy.

Question:

I am wondering about the role of faith-based or religious or spiritual peace education and how a system of inner peace through faith-based or religious education can work effectively in the hearts and minds of young people.

Chisholm:

Even members of the historic peace churches struggle to do peace education, and they tell me that it is not easy. The national Episcopal Church has passed many resolutions about peace and justice. We in the Episcopal Peace Fellowship initiated a resolution on the Decade for Peace and Nonviolence two years ago. It passed, and we were quite surprised for it requires the national church to make peace education materials available in all parishes across the country. We will have to wait and see if the resolution is implemented. Peace education right now depends on the congregation and whoever is doing the teaching. It is really hit or miss, and it is not embraced everywhere. In addition, the Church's Registry for COs is not well known. I have had a number of Episcopal priests come to me when their sons turn eighteen and must register but they weren't interested about conscientious

objection and peace education before then. So information and teaching about peace isn't widespread in the Episcopal Church.

Hostetter:

The Historic Peace Churches: Mennonites, Quakers, and Church of the Brethren, are Christian churches that believe that central to the faith of Christianity, is a commitment to love and nonviolence. The Historic Peace Churches believe that it is incompatible to call oneself Christian and use violence or kill another human being. Within our congregations, it is taught that the way of love is the path of the Christian faith. This is our understanding of what it means to follow the life of Christ. Young men and women are expected to be conscientious objectors to military service. Women are encouraged to do a year or two of voluntary service, often after college, even though they are currently not eligible for the draft. The Mennonites Central Committee, American Friends Service Committee and Brethren Voluntary Service, are organizations within the Historic Peace Churches which were set up to help find creative avenues for alternative service for conscientious objectors. The negative aspect of conscientious objection is: "I will not allow myself to be used to kill on behalf of any nation, religion or ideology." But the positive side of this commitment is: "I will use love, truth and nonviolent action to alleviate suffering and strive to make the world a better place." There are a variety of ways in which a conscientious objector can contribute positively to this world, and it is not always in a war zone. Because I was draft age in the middle of the Vietnam War, I felt a moral compulsion to go to Vietnam as a pacifist to show my friends and detractors that my opposition to war was not because I was afraid of killing or being killed, but because I thought there was a better way to relate to the Vietnamese people than by carrying guns, dropping bombs or defoliating farms. I was pleased to be a part of a Historic Peace Church that holds as a part of our faith tradition that we will not go to war, but will use the power of love, truth and nonviolent action to make the world a better and safer place.

Question:

How do you promote peace education not as reactive but active? Which aspects are most productive? In my country war is heroic, enemy thinking predominates, and conscientious objection is subversive. It is not a voice at the public table.

Reardon:

I think that people on the ground have to determine what are the most relevant concepts for them. I think you know that for me, the core concept for this education is universal human dignity, the fundamental and equal value of all persons, which doesn't mean they're all the same. And even that is articulated, experienced, expressed in many different ways. So for me that is the positive conception. And the problem is violence. Violence in all forms. And if you have those two elements, the problematic and the vision of the positive, then I think you work out from there what is appropriate to your own context.

Chisholm:

You've mentioned the culture of the heroic. Some people question whether it takes courage to be nonviolent. A recent film and book that addresses this well is *A Force More Powerful*. As a woman, it is very important to me that nonviolence is about power. It is a different kind of power. It takes courage. It takes persistence. It takes analysis. The same skills and discipline that the military requires. As a woman, I want to be able to say no, while still holding onto but transforming a violent or oppressive relationship. I think nonviolence is effective in cases of individual violence and in cases of systemic violence. I would urge the use of that concept: "A force more powerful." Truth power and love power.

Packard

Thank you all so much for coming. And special thanks to this eloquent panel.

Appendices:

Resolutions by the Commission on Human Rights
concerning conscientious objection to military service

The Commission on Human Rights, Resolution 1998

Bearing in mind that it is recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person, as well as the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and the right not to be discriminated against,

Recalling its previous resolutions on the subject, most recently resolution 1995/83 of 8 March 1995, in which it recognized the right of everyone to have conscientious objections to military service as a legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as well as article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and General Comment No. 22 of the Human Rights Committee, adopted at its forty-eighth session in 1993,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.4/1997/99),

Recognizing that conscientious objection to military service derives from principles and reasons of conscience, including profound convictions, arising from religious, moral, ethical, humanitarian or similar motives,

Aware that persons performing military service may develop conscientious objections,

Recalling article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognizes the right of everyone to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution,

1. Draws attention to the right of everyone to have conscientious objections to military service as a legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as laid down in article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

2. Welcomes the fact that some States accept claims of conscientious objection as valid without inquiry;

3. Calls upon States that do not have such a system to establish independent and impartial decision-making bodies with the task of determining whether a conscientious objection is genuinely held in a specific case, taking account of the requirement not to discriminate between conscientious objectors on the basis of the nature of their particular beliefs;

4. Reminds States with a system of compulsory military service, where such provision has not already been made, of its recommendation that they provide for conscientious objectors various forms of alternative service which are compatible with the reasons for conscientious objection, of a non-combatant or civilian character, in the public interest and not of a punitive nature;

5. Emphasizes that States should take the necessary measures to refrain from subjecting conscientious objectors to imprisonment and to repeated punishment for failure to perform military service, and recalls that no one shall be liable or punished again for an offence for which he has already been finally convicted or acquitted in accordance with the law and penal procedure of each country;

6. Reiterates that States, in their law and practice, must not discriminate against conscientious objectors in relation to their terms or conditions of service, or any economic, social, cultural, civil or political rights;

7. Encourages States, subject to the circumstances of the individual case meeting the other requirements of the definition of a refugee as set out in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, to consider granting asylum to those conscientious objectors compelled to leave their country of origin because they fear persecution owing to their refusal to perform military service when there is no provision, or no adequate provision, for conscientious objection to military service;

8. Affirms the importance of the availability of information about the right to conscientious

objection to military service, and the means of acquiring conscientious objector status, to all persons affected by military service;

9. Requests the Secretary-General to transmit the text of the present resolutions to Governments, the specialized agencies and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and to include the right to conscientious objection to military service in the public information activities of the United Nations, including the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education;

10. Also requests the Secretary-General to collect information from Governments, the specialized agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations on recent developments in this field and to submit a report, within existing resources, to the Commission at its fifty-sixth session;

11. Decides to consider this matter further at its fifty-sixth session under the agenda item entitled "The question of conscientious objection to military service".

58th meeting

22 April 1998

[Adopted without a vote. See chap. XXII.]

The Commission on Human Rights Resolution 1995

Reaffirming that all Member States have an obligation to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms and to fulfil the

obligations they have undertaken under the various international human rights instruments, the Charter of the United Nations and humanitarian law,

Bearing in mind that it is recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person, as well as the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,

Recalling its resolution 1989/59 of 8 March 1989, in which it recognized the right of everyone to have conscientious objections to military service as a legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,

Recalling also its resolution 40 (XXXVII) of 12 March 1981, in which it pointed to the need for a better understanding of the circumstances under which military service might be objected to on grounds of conscience,

Recalling further the comprehensive report by Mr. Asbjørn Eide and Mr. Chama Mubanga-Chipoya entitled Conscientious Objection to Military Service (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.XIV.1) submitted to the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities at its thirty-sixth session,

Taking into consideration that some States provide for non-combatant service within the military

framework and sometimes for alternative civilian service, even though no provision is made in their domestic legislation concerning the recognition of conscientious objection to military service,

Recalling its resolution 1993/84 of 10 March 1993, in which it requested the Secretary-General to report to the Commission on the matter at its fifty-first session,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.4/1995/99), and thanking those Governments that provided comments to the Secretary-General,

Noting General Comment No. 22 (48) of the Human Rights Committee on article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in which the Committee inter alia expressed the view that a right of conscientious objection can be derived from article 18 and that, when this right is recognized by law or practice, there should be no differentiation between conscientious objectors on the basis of the nature of their particular beliefs and that, likewise, there should be no discrimination against conscientious objectors because they have failed to perform military service,

Aware that persons performing military service may develop conscientious objections,

Recognizing that conscientious objection to military service derives from principles and reasons of conscience, including profound convictions, arising from religious, ethical, humanitarian or similar motives,

Recalling article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which recognizes the right of everyone to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution,

1. Draws attention to the right of everyone to have conscientious objections to military service as a legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as laid down in article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
2. Affirms that persons performing military service should not be excluded from the right to have conscientious objections to military service;
3. Appeals to States, if they have not already done so, to enact legislation and to take measures aimed at exemption from military service on the basis of a genuinely held conscientious objection to armed service;
4. Urges States in their law and practice not to differentiate between conscientious objectors on the basis of the nature of their particular beliefs nor to discriminate against recognized conscientious objectors for failure to perform military service;
5. Reminds States with a system of compulsory military service, where such provision has not already been made, of its recommendation that they introduce for conscientious objectors various forms of alternative service which are compatible with the reasons for conscientious objection and that they refrain from subjecting conscientious objectors to imprisonment;

6. Emphasizes that such forms of alternative service should be of a non-combatant or civilian character, in the public interest and not of a punitive nature;
 7. Recognizes that some States accept claims of conscientious objection as valid without inquiry, and appeals to Member States that do not have such a system to establish, within the framework of their national legal system, independent and impartial decision-making bodies with the task of determining whether a conscientious objection is valid in a specific case;
 8. Affirms the importance of the availability of information about the right to conscientious objection to military service, and the means of acquiring conscientious objector status, to all relevant persons affected by military service;
 9. Requests the Secretary-General to transmit the text of the present resolution to all States Members of the United Nations and to include the right of conscientious objection to military service in the public information activities of the United Nations, including the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education;
 10. Also requests the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its fifty-third session an update of the information provided in the annexes to the report by Mr. Asbjørn Eide and Mr. Chama Mubanga-Chipoya, taking into account information from Governments and non-governmental organizations and any further information available to him;
 11. Decides to consider this matter further at its fifty-third session under an agenda item with a new title: "The question of conscientious objection to military service".
- 62nd meeting
8 March 1995
[Adopted without a vote. See chap. XXVI.]

Commission on Human Rights resolution 1993/84

Reaffirming that all Member States have an obligation to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms and to fulfil the obligations they have undertaken under the various international human rights instruments, the Charter of the United Nations and humanitarian law,

Mindful of articles 3 and 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaim the right to life, liberty and security of person and the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,

Bearing in mind that it is recognized in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,

Recalling its resolution 1989/59 of 8 March 1989, in which it recognized the right of everyone to have conscientious objections to military service as a legitimate exercise of the right of freedom of thought, conscience and religion,

Bearing in mind General Assembly resolutions 34/151 of 17 December 1979, in which the Assembly designated 1985 as "International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace",

2037 (XX) of 7 December 1965, in which the Assembly stated that young people should be brought up with an understanding, and in the spirit, of peace, justice and respect for all persons, and 2447 (XXIII) of 19 December 1968,

Recalling its own resolution 40 (XXXVII) of 12 March 1981, in which it pointed to the need for a better understanding of the circumstances under which military service might be objected to on grounds of conscience,

Noting the important role of youth in the promotion of international peace and cooperation as well as of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 33/165 of 20 December 1978, in which the Assembly recognized the right of all persons to refuse service in military or police forces used to enforce apartheid and called upon Member States to grant asylum or safe transit to another State, in the spirit of the Declaration on Territorial Asylum, to persons compelled to leave their country solely because of a conscientious objection to assisting in the enforcement of apartheid through service in military or police forces,

Recalling the comprehensive report on the question of conscientious objection to military service, containing conclusions and recommendations, submitted to the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities at its thirty-sixth session by Mr. Asbjorn Eide and Mr. C.L.C. Mubanga-Chipoya (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.XIV.1), which reflects the relevant international norms and standards embodied in various human rights instruments and describes State practice concerning voluntary or compulsory performance of military service, and the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.4/1985/25 and Add.1-4) containing the comments of Governments, United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations on that report,

Noting the developments concerning conscientious objection to military service on a regional level,

Taking into consideration that, although in some States no provision is made in the domestic legislation concerning the recognition of conscientious objection to military service, in practice such States provide for non-combatant service within the military framework and sometimes for alternative civilian service,

Recalling its resolution 1991/65 of 6 March 1991, in which it requested the Secretary-General to report to the Commission on the matter at its forty-ninth session,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.4/1993/68 and Add.1-3), and thanking those Governments that provided comments to the Secretary-General,

Noting the final report on human rights and youth submitted by the Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/36), which draws attention to the continuing need for provision for conscientious objection to military service in many countries,

Aware that persons performing military service may develop conscientious objections,

Recognizing that conscientious objection to military service derives from principles and reasons of conscience, including profound convictions, arising from religious, ethical or similar motives,

1. Draws attention to the right of everyone to have conscientious objections to military service as a legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion as laid down in article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
2. Affirms that persons performing compulsory military service should not be excluded from the right to have conscientious objections to military service;
3. Recognizes the fact that there exists various domestic legislation concerning conscientious objection to military service;
4. Appeals to States, if they have not already done so, to enact legislation and to take measures aimed at exemption from military service on the basis of a genuinely held conscientious objection to armed service;
5. Reminds States with a system of compulsory military service where such provision has not already been made of its recommendation that they introduce for conscientious objectors various forms of alternative service which are compatible with the reasons for conscientious objection, bearing in mind the experience of some States in this respect, and that they refrain from subjecting conscientious objectors to imprisonment;
6. Emphasizes that such forms of alternative service should be of a non-combatant or civilian character, in the public interest and not of a punitive nature;
7. Appeals to Member States, if they have not already done so, to establish within the framework of their national legal system independent and impartial decision-making bodies with the task of determining whether a conscientious objection is valid in a specific case;
8. Affirms the importance of the availability of information about the right to conscientious objection to military service and the means of acquiring conscientious objector status to all relevant persons affected by military service;
9. Requests the Secretary-General to transmit the text of the present resolution to all States Members of the United Nations and to include the right of conscientious objection to military service in the public information activities of the United Nations;
10. Also requests the Secretary-General to report to the Commission at its fifty-first session on the question of conscientious objection to military service, taking into account the comments provided by Governments and further information received by him;
11. Decides to consider this matter further at its fifty-first session under the agenda item "The role of youth in the promotion and protection of human rights, including the question of conscientious objection to military service".

67th meeting

10 March 1993

[Adopted without a vote. .]