

**THE APPLICATION OF THE 'JUST WAR' ETHIC,  
AS TAUGHT BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH,  
TO THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CRISIS IN SOUTH AFRICA  
DURING THE PERIOD 1960-1989**

**BY**

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## PREFACE

I hereby express the fact that the entire thesis belongs to me. It originates entirely from my own efforts to try to apply the Just War ethic as taught by the Second Vatican Council to the South African context of the period 1960-1989.

I also wish to thank Dr Neville Richardson who kindly provided me with the critique of each and every chapter of my thesis, together with the correct grammatical expressions of most of my phrases.

## ABSTRACT

I focus on the Just War ethic as taught by the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church teaches, among other things, that as long as there is no competent international arbitrary body to prevent the danger of war, individual nations cannot be denied the right to self-defence. This Catholic teaching emphasizes that this decision to fight a war of self-defence should, however, be taken only after every means of peaceful negotiation has been exhausted.

My aim is to apply the Catholic Church's teaching on the Just War ethic to the 1960-1989 historical period of South Africa. During this period the South African government subjected black people to a very repressive legislation, thereby depriving them of their political and economic rights. Concerted efforts on the part of black people to protest against this apartheid legislation were always ruthlessly thwarted by the government. Statistics reveal, among other things, a very large number of blacks who were shot dead by the police, and another large number who were detained without trial, for protesting against abject conditions of poverty, chronic illness, illiteracy, and unemployment, brought about by apartheid.

During the same period, the United Nations (UN) organization proved to be impotent: dominated by Western powers who acquired colossal amounts of profit through their trade-links with South Africa, the UN could not impose economic sanctions against South Africa. It is this impotence of the UN together with the intransigence of the South African government which led many militant black people to the decision of liberating South Africa through an armed struggle.

This obduracy of the South African government together with the inability of the UN to annihilate apartheid through harmful measures also meant the Just War conditions as stipulated by Vatican II above, were fulfilled in South Africa. At this stage, those few radical Catholic priests in South Africa should have jointly announced that the official teaching of the Catholic Church unambiguously supports the question of the armed struggle which is undertaken in the event of the total failure of long periods of peaceful resistance.

This doctrine of the Catholic Church would have been welcomed as a surprise to black people, the majority of whom were used to a pacifist interpretation of Christianity.

The implementation of the Catholic Church's doctrine would have possibly resulted, among other things, in black families encouraging their children to train themselves militarily across the borders of South Africa, with the aim of eventually combating apartheid through revolutionary violence. Furthermore, this doctrine of Vatican II would have possibly prevented a massive exodus of militant blacks from the churches. The disillusionment of these blacks with Christianity resulted from the pacifist interpretation of Christianity.

Such an implementation did not take place. Does that mean that my thesis is obsolete? On the contrary, it is valid for any present or future context of despotism.

## INTRODUCTION

From the early Middle Ages right up to the 1960s when the Second Vatican Council was convoked, the Roman Catholic Church adopted the following criteria to explain what constitutes a Just War:

- (a) *War must be declared by and conducted by a legitimate authority.*
- (b) *The cause must be just, which means that the other party must have broken a just peaceful order.*
- (c) *The purpose of the war must be just, which means it must aim at a restoration of a just and peaceful order.*
- (d) *War can only be justified as a last resort, when all other attempts to bring about peace and justice have failed.*
- (e) *The peace concluded must be just, so that the defeated party is not tempted to start another war.*
- (f) *There must be a reasonable chance of success.*
- (g) *The means employed must be just, meaning that they may not surpass what is absolutely necessary to achieve the envisaged ends. Put differently the harm done by the war must not be greater than the harm by the injustices it tries to eradicate.<sup>1</sup>*

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1. Nürnberg, K. 'The just war and Holy War theories', *Conflict and the quest for Justice*, ed. K. Nürnberg, J. Tooke and W. Dömeris (Encounter Publications, Pietermaritzburg: 1989), p.131.

I argue that through the instrumentality of these criteria, most especially criterion (d), which was endorsed by the Second Vatican Council in 1965, the Catholic Church in South Africa stood a good chance to contribute substantially towards liberation of black people who during the period 1960-1989 were subjected to the very repressive apartheid legislation. At the beginning of this period the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) had just been banned and their leaders thrown into police cells for attempting a coup d'etat of the South African government. This decision to overthrow the apartheid regime was arrived at after a failure of numerous peaceful efforts of asking the government to recognize and respect the economic and political rights of black people in South Africa.

Implementing the doctrine of Vatican II in South Africa means that the Catholic Church should have sounded a clarion that it was both Christian and morally legitimate to eradicate social injustice through force in the event of a dismal failure to do so through peaceful means. In other words the Catholic Church in South Africa should have announced that its official teaching supports the idea of a violent revolution which is undertaken after lengthy periods of unsuccessful peaceful negotiations.<sup>2</sup>

The context of South Africa would have served as fertile ground for the seeds of this doctrine of the Catholic Church. What this means is that many militant Christians, the majority of whom have been used to a pacifist view of

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2. See also Nolan, A. and Armour, M. 'Armed Struggle as a Last resort: the Catholic Position', *Theology and Violence*, ed. C. Villa-Vicencio (Skotaville Publishers, Johannesburg: 1987), p.2110.

See also Peschke, K. *Christian Ethics: Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II*, (Theological Publications in India, Bangalore: 1992), p.594-595.

Christianity,<sup>3</sup> would have possibly welcomed this teaching of the Second Vatican Council.

Pacifism teaches that under no circumstances whatsoever may violence be employed as a means to redress social conflicts. Thousands of young black people, disillusioned with this fatalistic interpretation of Christianity, left the church in order to seek out relevant ways of bringing about liberation to themselves and to the country as a whole.<sup>4</sup> The implementation of this doctrine would have prevented this massive exodus of young people and some militant adults from the churches.

The Catholic Church in South Africa has failed to implement the doctrine of in question, and South Africa is now a free country from the 27 April 1994 in spite of this failure. This fact of the freedom of South Africa does not however render my thesis obsolete: while this thesis is valid for the South African past period under study, it is at the same time valid for any present context of tyranny, be it in South Africa, Nigeria, or any other country.

The method that I employ is that of Latin-American Liberation theology. The common feature among proponents of this theology is that of analysing the historical context of the economic poverty within which they situate this theology. Secondly, they inquire critically from the Bible how God judges and remedies a situation of economic poverty.

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3. See Wink, W. *Jesus Third Way*, (South African Council of Churches (SACC): Johannesburg: 1987), p.4 and p.43.

4. Nolan, A. *God in South Africa*, (David Philip, Cape Town: 1988), p.5.

Finally, they establish a programme of action which should be followed in accordance with the scriptures in order to do away with the situation of political oppression and economic exploitation. The Boff brothers, namely Clodovis and Leonardo, jointly use the term 'mediation' to explain the three steps involved in the method of liberation theology. They list these mediations as follows:

*Socio-analytical (or historico-analytical) mediation operates in the sphere of the world of the oppressed. It tries to find out why the oppressed are oppressed.*

*Hermeneutical mediation operates in the sphere of God's world. It tries to discern what God's plan is for the poor.*

*Practical mediation operates in the sphere of action. It tries to discover the courses of action that need to be followed so as to overcome oppression in accordance with God's plan.<sup>5</sup>*

Similarly, Gustavo Gutierrez includes the three stages discussed above in one of his many definitions of liberation theology. He maintains that liberation theology:

*... is a process of reflection which starts out from historical praxis. It attempts to ponder the faith from the standpoint of this historical praxis and the way that faith is actually lived in a commitment to liberation.<sup>6</sup>*

The three authors thus explain in their respective ways the method described above. In Chapter 1, I am already making use of the first mediation of this

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5. Boff, Clodovis and Leonardo. *Introducing Liberation Theology*, (Burns and Oaths, Kent: 1987), p.24.

6. Gutierrez, G. 'Liberation Praxis and Christian Faith'. *Frontiers of Theology in Latin America*, ed. R. Giberllini (SCM Press Ltd, London: 1975), p.22.

method in the sense that I am focusing on the description and the analysis of the political and economic crisis in South Africa during the period 1960-1989. I wish to situate my thesis within this historical period of South Africa. Furthermore the chapter deals with the various peaceful ways which the black people used to resolve the crisis in question. Each time they used these peaceful means, blacks were met with a ruthless response on the part on the government throughout this period. Statistics are given in this chapter, of people who were shot dead by the police while demonstrating peacefully and unarmed that they were in demand of economic and political justice. The chapter also provides the statistics of those blacks who were detained without trial and those who died in police cells for the same reason of demanding their fundamental rights from the apartheid regime.

The Catholic Church stipulates that the decision to wage war in order to uproot injustice can be justified only after all means short of force have been exhausted. The question which is a source of debate at the end of this chapter reads: "Did the oppressed of South Africa really exhaust every means of peaceful settlement during this period?" If they did not, were they really justified to resort to arms each time the few peaceful methods they utilized failed? Put in another way, of Gene Sharp's 198 methods of non-violent tactics, how many were utilized by the oppressed of South Africa? If they did not use all of them, can one objectively say that it was legitimate for them to decide to uproot apartheid structures through revolutionary violence? The chapter attempts critically to give tentative answers which in themselves are open to further debate.

Chapter 2 pays attention to the historical evolution of the Just War theory. The founders of this theory are the Greeks of antiquity especially Aristotle and

Plato. Aristotle coined the term 'Just War' while Plato gave it its real content, or what later came to be known as the criteria for a Just War.

The chapter further discusses the contributions of St. Augustine, St Thomas Aquinas, Francisco de Vittoria and Francisco de Suarez towards the formation and the Christianization of the Just War ethic. The contribution of these medieval authors lies, to a large extent, in providing theological foundations to an ethic formerly known to be pagan (Greek).

Taparelli d'Azeglio's findings on the Just War serve as a bridge between the medieval and modern discourses on the Just War ethic, Richard McBrien claims.<sup>7</sup> d'Azeglio's ideas on the Just War ethic made a considerable impact on most of twentieth century papal teachings.

The twentieth century saw the birth of nuclear warfare which rendered the whole Just War discussion outdated: in the context of an uncontrollable nuclear war no soul in the offended nation's camp would be spared to retaliate once the aggressor nation unleashes its first strike.<sup>8</sup>

Against this background of a problem or confusion created by nuclear weaponry for a Just War discussion, Pope Pius XII (d.1958) maintained that the criterion of self-defence against aggression or injustice was still valid, while his immediate successor, Pope John XIII (d.1962) totally dismissed war as a means to restore justice and peace.

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7. McBrien, R. *Catholicism Vol. 2*, (Winston Press, New York: 1980), p.1036.

8. Peschke, K., *op cit.*, p.598.

The contrasting views of the two popes on the Just War had an impact on the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) which took place from 1962 - 1965. I argue that the Council is in continuity with the long standing Catholic tradition which highlights the importance of self-defence against aggression. The Council however expresses this continuity in self-contradictory statements: on the one hand the Council gives an impression that it is against all kinds of warfare,<sup>9</sup> while on the other hand it wholeheartedly supports the idea of wars fought for defence purposes.<sup>10</sup>

The question which still remains unanswered is how does a nation defend itself against a nuclear-wielding nation, or how does an offended nation which possesses nuclear power defend itself without killing those that are non-combatants on the aggressor nation's side. Through controlled nuclear warfare? Maybe. But is it not likely that this controlled nuclear warfare will develop into an uncontrollable one which is capable of destroying whole cities? In other words does the Just War ethic have any relevance in a nuclear situation?

A patently honest voice is that which openly acknowledges that the Just War ethic has no relevance in a nuclear context: it is an ethic which was designed and tailored for a situation of a conventional warfare.

However, I further argue that deterrence can be regarded as a modern manifestation of the Just War ethic: it is a twentieth century mode of self-defence, and hence it is tolerated by contemporary Just War exponents such

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9. *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. W. Abbott (Geoffrey Chapman, London: 1966), p.294.

10. *Ibid.* p.293.

as Paul Ramsey and Reinold Niebühr, while it is condemned by the Council, mainly because of the exorbitant amounts of money spent on it.

The Council situates the criterion of self-defence within the context of its attempts to help the world become a place of peace, which peace can be attained only if all of people's fundamental rights are respected.

The Council is however aware that the peace it preaches might fall on deaf ears, because of the sinfulness of humanity. Consequently even international peace accords may be contravened because of this sinful folly.

It is at this point of the international disorder and at the absence of a competent international arbitrary body that the Council emphasizes the importance of the self-defence of the offended nation by force of arms if a peaceful negotiation shows no signs of success.

As I mentioned earlier, this teaching of self-defence as articulated by Vatican II is relevant in a situation of conventional warfare, that explains why I intend applying it on the situation of South Africa during the period under study because at that time South Africa had no nuclear power.

Chapter 3, which is the main chapter, deals with the application of the Just War ethic as taught by Vatican II, to the South African situation during the period 1960-1989.

The chapter starts off by giving two preliminary notes. In the first preliminary note I explain why I chose the period 1960-1989. In the second I explain that, unlike in other discussions based on the Just War ethic I am not dealing with

two countries that are at war with each other, rather I am writing about people of the same country namely blacks and whites. The one group namely, the whites were at this time denying the other group, namely the blacks, all their economic and political rights. The Just War would be employed to resolve this social crisis which existed in South Africa during this period.

In this chapter, I am in dialogue with pacifism which as I have explained earlier, is a position in morality which is totally opposed to violence as a means of resolving social conflicts. The dangers and impracticality of the theology which underlies this position of morality are brought to the surface by Edward Schillebeeckx. The critique of Schillebeeckx is specifically directed against a serious misunderstanding and abuse of the crucifixion of Jesus which he claims is caused by a pacifist neglect of the historical circumstances which led up to the suffering and death of Jesus on the cross.

As Sheena Duncan, a South African pacifist explains, through the State of Emergency of 1986 the government treated non-violence as an equivalent of violence. Faced with such government intransigence blacks had no choice I argue but to resort to violence for the attainment of their liberation.

Also discussed in this chapter is the fact that history knows no blanket condemnation of violence. As a matter of fact the West together with its church clubbed together to oust the menace of Hitler. The complaint here is that when it came to helping blacks militarily to overthrow the apartheid structures the West began to show pacifist tendencies.

I argue that underlying these pacifist tendencies was an economic interest which the West had in South Africa at that time. Evidence is given of how

much they thrived economically from the status quo in South Africa. Consequently it was difficult if not impossible for them to impose economic sanctions against South Africa, let alone help blacks destroy apartheid through military means.

Neither was the UN able to impose any economic sanctions against South Africa because dominating this international body were Western powers who acquired colossal amounts of profit through their trade with South Africa. The oppressed of South Africa thus found themselves faced with the state of international disorder whereby the UN proved its incompetence to help them for the reason explained above. The conditions for a Just War as taught by Vatican II were thus fulfilled in South Africa.

The line of thinking which I follow in connection with how this war was going to be waged is that of Nelson Mandela. In short it was going to be a war aimed at the destruction of government institutions especially those institutions which served as sources of income for the government. It was going to be a war not aimed the destruction of life and private property.

This teaching of the Second Vatican Council on the right of a nation to self-defence against aggression in the face of international disorder was supposed to have been passed on to the lay people by those few members of the Catholic clergy in South Africa who were sincerely concerned about the plight of the oppressed. These concerned priests would have clubbed together with the militant clergy of the other denominations in South Africa for a rapid dissemination of the Council's teaching. In particular these Catholic priests should have got together with the clergy of those member churches of the

World Council of Churches (WCC) who backed up the WCC's decision to fund the liberation movements of South Africa.

One of their tasks would be to create a kind of synthesis between the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and the above-mentioned decision of the WCC and then present this synthetic work to the people at the ground.

By way of further legitimating the synthesis discussed above, they would have to unravel the double-standards of the West and its church discussed above thereby showing the people that pacifism has not been the only Christian response to injustice.

This team of ministers would have to back up their synthetic work with a biblical theology thereby showing the oppressed people that they were not only mandated by Vatican II and the WCC but they were also mandated by God.

What I am discussing above did not take place: The Catholic Church failed to implement the teaching of Vatican II in South Africa. Yes, South Africa is now a free country from the 27 April 1994, but many young people, intellectuals and other militant adults, left the church during the process of the struggle for freedom, and this was partly because of this sad failure of the Catholic Church in South Africa to implement Vatican II's teaching. Is my thesis therefore of no use? On the contrary, it is valid for any present or future situation of incorrigible autocracy.

Chapter 4 deals with the implication which my thesis has for the theology of revolution. This theology critically justifies revolution in as far as it is

instrumental in transforming abject conditions of poverty and oppression into those of justice, freedom and economic prosperity.

I discuss one implication of this theology namely that any theology of revolution, if it seeks to be defined as such in every sense of the word, will have to incorporate some measure of violence into its programme. I mention the question of violence because some revolution theologians reject violence as a means to bring about peace. For these theologians revolution does not necessarily entail violence. The limitations of this trend of theologians becomes most pronounced in their inability to provide an alternative solution at a practical level in the event of a failure of a peaceful resistance to social injustice.

The alternative solution in question is given by another trend among revolution theologians who openly speak out that violence should be seriously considered as a solution in the face of a massive and endless exploitation. The inadequacy of these theologians, however lies in the fact that the majority of them justify violence from a purely moral point of view: they do not provide any theological foundations for this legitimization of revolutionary violence. A notable exception among these theologians is J.G. Davies who boldly gives a comprehensive theological justification of revolutionary force, and this he does in dialogue with pacifism whose scriptural interpretation he critiques very meticulously.

Finally I challenge the theologians who serve oppressed societies in South Africa to follow the example of Davies who clearly shows that we cannot theologize in the same manner precisely because the historical situations from which we emerge are markedly diverse.

The position of Davies is much stronger when linked to the exegetical concurrence of the three South African scholars, namely P.G.R. de Villiers, A. Nolan and K. Mosothoane on the text of Luke 22:35-38. In my opinion these three scholars, through this text, indirectly offer further scriptural foundations for a theology of revolution.

A combination of the findings of Davies on the one hand, and those of de Villiers, Mosothoane and Nolan on the other, made known to the oppressed of South Africa, would possibly have added more fuel to the already existing revolutionary fire of that period.

The concluding chapter contains some reflections or remarks which indicate the need to conduct research on certain themes that are related to my thesis. For example, I raise the question that I feel there is a need for some investigation as to whether or not South African black people did have their own version of the Just War ethic.

Another area which needs some research is the question of whether or not there can be a possible unification of both pacifism and the Just War tradition. True, the study on the US Bishops' pastoral letter shows this task to be very difficult.<sup>11</sup> However, I still entertain the idea that some neutral scholar might find a way to get the two camps of morality to be open to each other and finally work out together a truly synthetic response to the question of social conflict.

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11. See *Catholics and Nuclear War*, ed. P.J. Murnion (Geoffrey Chapman, London: 1983), pp.143-144.

The similarities between ancient Greek mythology and morality on the one hand and the New Testament morality on the other, also raises new questions to be answered through further research.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE 1960-1989 POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CRISIS IN SOUTH AFRICA, TOGETHER WITH PEACEFUL ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE IT

This chapter will be divided into two sections. The first section deals with the description of the economic and the political crisis in South Africa, during the period 1960-1989. The second section deals with the various peaceful ways which were employed to eradicate the crisis mentioned above.

#### 1.1 A short description of the economic and political crisis in South Africa during the period 1960-1989

Characteristic of this political and economic crisis was a situation whereby, on the one hand, white people even though they formed only 16% of the total population, nevertheless dominated all other race groups economically, politically and socially.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, among other important posts, 90% of all electrical engineers in the country were whites.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, there were black people who although they constituted 80% of the total population and contributed 70% of the total labour,<sup>3</sup> were nonetheless completely excluded from all major economic and political matters of decision. The

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1. Nürnbergger, K., 'Analysis of the South African Conflict Situation', *Conflict and the Quest for Justice*, ed. W. Domeris, K. Nürnbergger and J. Tooke (Encounter Publication Pietermaritzburg: 1989) p.38.

2. *Ibid.*, p.38.

3. Kneifel, T., Leatt, J. and Nürnbergger, K. *Contending Ideologies in South Africa*, (David Philip, Cape Town: 1986) p.89.

seriousness of this situation was best highlighted by Renfrew Christie who claimed:

*Capitalists in other countries can claim that they accumulated wealth by the sweat of their brow, by technical innovation or daring entrepreneurship. Although they might also have had these attributes, South African capitalists were able to accumulate wealth for another reason: their skins were white, and therefore they could own the means of production.*

*In general the South African rich got that way by the whiteness of their bellies. South African capital is illegitimate. Ethically the money is not theirs.<sup>4</sup>*

I interpret Christie to be maintaining that blacks were denied all their economic rights by their white counterparts because of their (blacks) skin pigmentation. This racial practice, to interpret Christie further, is totally opposed to free enterprise capitalism which aims at the economic prosperity of all regardless of the colour of the skin. Elsewhere several authors write about historical epochs prior to the year 1960 during which structural means were used by white people to deprive black people of their land so as to force them into labour market, either in the mines or on white people's farms.<sup>5</sup> My task in this chapter, however, is to deal with the period 1960-1989, which is the period during which this structural economic deprivation and political oppression were being acutely heightened. At the beginning of this period Prime Minister

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4. Christie, R.A. 'Critique of Contemporary Business Strategy', This is a paper which was delivered at the Theology, Work and Labour Conference. (Pietermaritzburg 1989) pages are not numbered.

5. See for example Kendal, F. and Louw, L. *The Solution*, (Amagi Publications, Bisho: 1986) pp.7-27.

Verwoerd basing his policies on the law called the Land Act of 1913, according to which 87% of South African land was allotted to whites, while the remaining 13% (termed 'reserves') was given to blacks, clearly stated that South Africa was,

*... a white man's country ... In the reserves we are prepared to allow the Natives to be the masters, we are not masters there. But within the European areas, we, the white people in South Africa, are and we shall remain masters.*<sup>6</sup>

And even stating it more emphatically that all black people were perpetual strangers, with no rights whatsoever in this 87% of South African land and, which he termed 'European areas', Verwoerd held:

*The bantu in the cities are not distinct from those in the Native Reserves. They belong to one another and as I have often said, the urban Bantu are visitors in white areas who are there for their economic benefit. Their roots are in the Native Reserves. The opportunities for them to enjoy rights, whether they be social or political, are available in their home areas.*<sup>7</sup>

In order to institutionalize this alienation of black people from the 'European areas', which formerly belonged to blacks, but they were snatched away from them through conquest by people of European descent,<sup>8</sup> hence the name

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6. Kenney, H. *Architect of Apartheid*, (Jonathan Ball Publishers; Johannesburg: 1980) p.79.

7. *Ibid.*, p.98.

8. Sebidi, L. 'The dynamic of the Black struggle and its implication for Black theology', *The Unquestionable Right to be Free*, ed. B. Tihagale and I. Mosala (Skotaville, Johannesburg: 1986), pp.1-12.

'European areas', Verwoerd successfully passed a law called 'Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act'. The specific purpose of this law according to Verwoerd was to identify each of the black communities, and to ensure that blacks entered the 'European areas' as migrant workers only.<sup>9</sup> Through this law Verwoerd was actually strengthening earlier economic policies, according to which reserves were treated as:

*... the sponge that absorbs, and returns when required, the reserve army of [cheap] labour.*<sup>10</sup>

On account of the pressure of landlessness and congestion imposed on black people by giving them only 13% of South African land, a large majority of them found themselves to have no choice but to enter 'European' areas in search for employment in order to survive. To prevent this massive inflow of blacks into 'European areas' of South Africa, various legislative measures were introduced by the government.

These legislative measures also ensured that those blacks who happened to be already settled in 'European' areas were treated as visitors who came to minister to the economic needs of the white people.<sup>11</sup>

One of these laws was a Physical Planning Act of 1967 which was passed by B.J. Vorster, the immediate successor of Verwoerd, to prohibit an increase in the number of employees.<sup>12</sup> Black people, who on account of being victimised

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9. Boyce, A.N. *Europe and South Africa Part 2*, (Juta and Company Johannesburg : 1986) p.280.

10. Cochrane, J. *Servants of power*, (Ravan Press, Johannesburg: 1987), p.71.

11. Kenney, H. *op cit.*, pp.84.

12. *Ibid.*, pp.305.

by this law, found themselves unemployed in the European areas, had to go back to the reserves as they were of no economic benefit to white people.<sup>13</sup> Research studies revealed in 1968 by the South African Medical Journal indicated that the most severe nutritional diseases in the country were kwashiorkor, and marasmus pellagra.<sup>14</sup> Hardest hit by these diseases were the reserves, where doctors regrettably reported that:

*It is not unusual to see pellagrous skin lesions in 50% or more of the patients attending clinics.*<sup>15</sup>

Some other research studies on the economic injustice in South Africa, which were conducted during the period 1961 to 1968 certainly lead to the conclusion that the exploitation of migrant blacks by whites in 'European' areas, and the landlessness of the former in the reserves, were the major causes of the above-mentioned diseases. These studies report that in the gold mines, where a large majority of blacks from the reserves were working,

*The cash earnings of the average white man on the mines in 1948 were twelve times as much as the cash earnings of the average Black worker: by 1968 they were twenty times larger.*<sup>16</sup>

As a direct consequence of the injustice discussed above, the black migrant worker sent very little, if anything at all, to his family in the Reserves, and indeed there are studies which revealed that,

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13. Kenney, H. *op cit.*, p.84.

14. See Perrot, D. and Wilson, F. *Outlook on a Century: South Africa 1870 to 1970*, (Lovedale Press; Lovedale and Spro-cas, Braamfontein [Johannesburg]: 1973) p.435.

15. *Ibid.*, 435.

16. *Ibid.*, p.435.

*About 80% of the people in the homelands are living below the urban breadline. The number of people without any income in the homelands rose from 250,000 in 1960 to 1,43 million in 1980.*<sup>17</sup>

Although they concentrate on only one homeland, namely Ciskei, Perrot and Wilson provide some factual illustration of how inadequate the little land and the income from migrant workers were as means to alleviate the poverty and starvation in the homelands. They write:

*In 1961 the median per capita in the village they investigated was R1,75 a month from all sources including remittances sent home by migrant workers and the value of vegetables grown for home consumption. And the cost of providing each person with the minimum food required for healthy life was calculated, at the prices then ruling, to be R5,00 a month.*<sup>18</sup>

Insensitive to the stark realities of poverty and starvation mentioned above, the government continued callously to create legislation which would make the economic life of a black person unbearable. In 1971 the B.J. Vorster regime passed a law termed the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act, in terms of which,

*... every Black South African is a citizen of the Homelands. Citizenship is decided by the language spoken, and not by residence. If you speak Tswana you are citizen of Bophuthatswana even if you have never been to the area. When homelands started to be 'independent', citizens of the*

17. Human Awareness Programme (HAP) 'Homelands', *Info '85*, (HAP, Johannesburg: 1985) p.5.

18. D. Perrot and F. Wilson *op cit.*, p.438.

*'independent' homelands lost their South Africans citizenship and became foreigners. Eight million Africans lost their South African citizenship between October 1976 and December 1981. The same thing will happen to the citizens of any other homeland that takes 'independence'. Once a person is a foreigner, he or she cannot claim a share in the political power, nor in the land and wealth of South Africa. He or she has no right to a South African passport and can be deported from white South Africa at any time.*<sup>19</sup>

My suspicion about the legislation promulgated above is that it aimed explicitly at an outright debasement of a black person in South Africa. Confirming my suspicion is Connie Mulder, a spokesman for the Vorster regime, who made it undoubtedly clear that it was not at all in the interest of this regime to incorporate blacks, politically, into 'white' South Africa thereby alleviating the economic poverty they were suffering from: He asserted,

*If our policy is taken to its logical conclusion as far as black people are concerned, there will be not one black man with South African citizenship... Every black man in South Africa will eventually be accommodated in some independent new state in this honourable way and there will be no longer a moral obligation in this Parliament to accommodate these people politically.*<sup>20</sup>

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19. 'Homelands' *Info '85*, p.5.

20. Kenney, H. *op cit.*, p.86.

Taking the above-mentioned policy to its logical conclusion was P.W. Botha, the immediate successor of Vorster, who in 1981,

*... committed himself to the principle that Blacks in South Africa would have to exercise their political rights in the homelands.*

*He indeed insisted that there was not a single black man in South Africa who is not in one way or another connected to one or other national state.<sup>21</sup>*

Thus P.W. Botha, like Verwoerd and Vorster, was determined to promote the political and economic interests of whites at the expense of the blacks.

During his time many black people were relocated from 'white' South Africa to poverty-stricken homelands.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps something good, which was done for black people during Botha's rule in 1979, was to extend the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924 to cover some of the rights of a black worker. As a result of this extension a black worker, for the first time after a period of fifty-five years, a black worker was recognized as an employee with legal rights. This Industrial Conciliation Act also extended recognition to black trade unions.<sup>23</sup>

Underlying this legal recognition of black workers together with their trade unions was however, the intention on the part of the government, to have a

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21. See Kneifel, T., Leatt, J., and Nürnberger, K. *Contending Ideologies in South Africa*, (David Philip Cape Town: 1986), p.124.

22. *Ibid.*, p.125; See also B. Tihagale, 'Christian Soldiers', *Theology and Violence*, ed. C. Villa-Vicencio (Skotaville Publishers, Johannesburg: 1987), p.85.

23. See Tihagale B, 'Christian Soldiers', *Theology and Violence*, ed. C. Villa-Vicencio (Skotaville Publishers Johannesburg: 1987), p.79.

stricter control of black labour, thereby subjugating it perpetually to the dominance of the ruling power.<sup>24</sup>

As a direct consequence of this stricter control, some black workers could not find work as they were blacklisted at the Labour Bureau for their trade-union activities.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, even though they are mouthpiece of workers, there were limits as to what unions could achieve, even after 1979. And this limitation in achievement was most pronounced in the excruciating area of unemployment or retrenchment. Statistical research reveals that,

*Some 23 000 jobs were lost in the general manufacturing sector alone between 1981 to 1989. About 7 000 jobs were lost in the clothing industry during 1983 to 1984.*

*Twelve hundred garment workers lost their jobs in February and March 1985. The Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa estimates that 7 000 jobs in its sector were lost in 1984 (ST 10. 05. 1985) with a further 10 000 lost between the end of 1984 and the first quarter of 1985 (BD 17.06.85). The building industry estimated that 6 000 general workers lost their jobs between September 1984 and January 1985 (ST 10.03.85).<sup>26</sup>*

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24. Davies, R., 'Class, Character of South Africa's Industrial Conciliation legislation', *Essays in South African Labour History*, ed. E. Webster (Ravan Press, Johannesburg: 1978), p.80.
25. Jaffe, G. and Jochelson, K. 'The Fight to Save Jobs: Union Initiatives on Retrenchment and Unemployment', *South African Review*, vol. 3, ed. South African Research Service (SARS) (Ravan Press, Johannesburg: 1987), p.64.
26. HAP, *Info '87*, p.9.

The South African government's statistics reveal that

*Unemployment figures for Africa released in 1987 were 1,05 million with 71,9% in the age group 15 to 34.<sup>27</sup>*

Academic researchers however are very sceptical about the government statistics, as they estimate that there could be as many as six million Africans unemployed. These academics criticize the government figures for being based on the registered unemployed: they maintain that,

*... only a small number of African unemployed register as unemployed. Also the 'independent' homelands are not included in the official figures.<sup>28</sup>*

Explaining the cause of this growing unemployment is Duncan Innes who claims that the monopoly capitalism which has been adopted by the companies operating in South Africa demands a very highly mechanized process of labour with the result that,

*As output expands under the impact of mechanization so the proportion of the labour-force employed in production decreases while concomitantly the proportion of the labour-force which is unemployed rises.<sup>29</sup>*

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27. *Ibid.*, p.9.

28. *Ibid.*, p.9.

29. Innes, D. 'Monopoly Capitalism in South Africa', *South African Review*, vol 1, ed. SARS (Ravan Press Johannesburg: 1983), p.180.

From the findings of Innes, I learn that in order to save the situation in South Africa during this period, there was an urgent need either to modify the existent capitalist economic system or to introduce an altogether different economic system which would benefit the whole populace. Modification in this context would have consisted mainly in the liberation of capitalism from the racial legislation discussed above thereby opening up opportunities for technical and skilful development and competence for all people regardless of their colour or race at all levels of the economy. This step however, would not have solved the problem of unemployment altogether. This is because of the process of automation which is constantly in demand for the maximum production of goods and services. The rate of unemployment is fairly high in capitalist countries of the West,<sup>30</sup> and this is mainly on account of this automation or mechanization.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) during this period opted for an altogether new economic system, namely socialism. Socialism, like capitalism, is not without critics who see its inadequacy as lying mainly in its failure to acknowledge that the means of production put in the hands of individuals, generate wealth on a unprecedented scale. In socialism these means of production are owned and controlled by the state which in this context is a small group of people who determine on behalf of the whole society which goods and services are to be produced and sold on the market<sup>31</sup>. This is often in contrast with the wishes of the large majority of individuals on the ground who want to determine for their personal benefit,

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30. The United Nations (UN) organization, *The Statistical Yearbook*, (UNO Publications, New York: 1988), pp.85-88.

31. John Paul II, '*Laborem Exercens*', *Proclaiming Justice and Peace*, ed. M. Walsh and B. Davies (Collins Liturgical Publications, London: 1984), p.294.

both the prices and products they want to sell on the market, as happens in capitalist countries.

Consequently, a lot of people have managed to flee from socialist countries in order to pursue their individual economic goals in neighbouring capitalist states<sup>32</sup>. And those who remained in socialist countries often practised capitalism when some limited space to do so was given to them by the government. For example Milton and Rose Friedman report that in Soviet Russia,

*... full-time workers on government farms are permitted to grow food and raise animals on small private plots in their spare time, for their own use or to sell in relatively free markets. These plots account for less than 1 percent of the agricultural land in the country, yet they are said to provide a third of the total farm output in the Soviet Union.*<sup>33</sup>

There is no doubt that the individual gain or profit which is often overlooked in a socialist economic system, was the main motivating factor behind the dramatic agricultural output emerging from the private plots discussed above.

What shape socialism, as adapted by COSATU to the South African situation, was going to take, remained to be seen. While COSATU was fashioning this alternative economic system, the suffering of the black masses continued. The

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32. O'Dowd, M. 'Capitalism in South Africa: A White Entrepreneur's Point of View', *Ideologies of Change in South Africa*, ed. K. Nürnberger, (Lutheran Publishing House, Durban: 1979), pp.161-162.

33. Friedman, Rose and Milton. *Free to Choose*, (Penguin Books: 1980), p.28.

lack of substantial income as discussed above led among other things to illiteracy. Indeed it was reported during this period that,

*Some 84% economically active Blacks have no education or no more than primary education, and only two percent have reached standard 10.*<sup>34</sup>

Because of this shortage of income some mothers even sold their bodies so that they together with their children may survive.<sup>35</sup> This extreme suffering brings me to the next point of this chapter, namely to discuss the peaceful means which black people employed to resist the exploitation and oppression imposed on them by white people, as described above.

## **1.2 Black peaceful resistance to apartheid**

The year 1960 saw the banning of both the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) by the South African regime under the leadership of H.F. Verwoerd. This banning resulted from the decision, on the part of the two organizations to resort to an armed struggle. Before 1961, it had never been the aim of the ANC to topple the South African regime by violent means: right from its inception in 1912 the African National Congress applied constant resistance in the form of peaceful protests, lectures and education of the black masses, distribution of relevant literature, passive resistance, deputations, inquiries, resolutions and defiance campaigns.<sup>36</sup>

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34. *South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) News*, March 1985 (SAIRR: 1985).

35. Nolan, A. *God in South Africa*, (David Philip, Cape Town: 1988), p.55.

36. Motlhabi, M. *Black Resistance to Apartheid*, (Skotaville Publishers, Johannesburg: 1984), p.39.

This form of resistance was met with ruthless repression on the part of the government: between 1912 and 1960, 300 people were shot dead and 1 580 wounded by the police in the maintenance of the political and economic *status quo*<sup>37</sup>.

By the year 1960 the brutal repression mentioned above led many people within the ranks of ANC to the conviction that nonviolent tactics had been exhausted and that they achieved absolutely nothing by way of persuading the government to go to the table of negotiation.<sup>38</sup>

It is at this point that Nelson Mandela - not without opposition from ANC executive members, who still upheld the validity of non-violent forms of political activity<sup>39</sup> - successfully founded *Umkhonto Wesizwe* (Spear of the Nation), which eventually became the military wing of ANC.<sup>40</sup> *Umkhonto Wesizwe* committed itself to a violent struggle which consisted mainly in the sabotage of the government's economic installations and targets of symbolic political significance.<sup>41</sup>

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37. Lodge, T. *Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945* (Longman, London: 1983), pp.20-59).

38. Motlhabi, M., *op cit.*, p.66.

39. Lodge, T. *op cit.*, p.233.

40. *Ibid.*, p.233.

41. *Ibid.*, p.234.

PAC broke away from the ANC in 1959.<sup>42</sup> This, among other things, means that its founder-members' history of peaceful protest - until 1959 - is exactly the same as that of ANC.<sup>43</sup>

In 1961 PAC also became disillusioned with the politics of peaceful protest most especially after 76 people died and 186 others were wounded by the police while they were marching to the Sharpeville police station in protest against pass laws.<sup>44</sup> This march was organized and led by the PAC.<sup>45</sup>

In spite of the apparent futility of the exercise of peaceful negotiation which was exhausted between 1912 and 1961, the black people, under the leadership of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) continued to be convinced that a non-violent struggle was ideal for the achievement of their total liberation. Indeed, the BCM maintained among other things,

*... that through the process of organized bargaining we can penetrate even the deafest of ears and get the message to register that no lie can live for ever.*<sup>46</sup>

In other words BCM throughout the 1970s until 1977 when it was outlawed remained adamantly non-violent.<sup>47</sup> However, the government was not making

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42. Motlhabi, *op cit.*, p.75.

43. *Ibid.*, p.99.

44. Boesak, A. and Brews A, 'The Black Struggle for Liberation: A Reluctant Road to Revolution', *Theology and Violence*, ed. C. Villa-Vicencio (Skotaville Publishers, Johannesburg: 1987), p.56.

45. *Ibid.*, p.55.

46. Motlhabi, M., *op cit.*, p.133.

47. *Ibid.*, p.135.

it easy for black people to remain non-violent during this period.<sup>48</sup> During 1976 about 1 000 black people (students and adults) were shot dead by the police while marching peacefully and unarmed against the injustices imposed on them by the South African government.<sup>49</sup> Even after the banning of BCM, blacks still continued to organize themselves 'illegally' in protest against the apartheid system.

In 1977 (soon after the banning) 260 people were shot dead and 671 wounded by the police.<sup>50</sup> And in 1978, for the same reason of protesting unarmed, a further 343 people were killed, and 882 wounded by the police.<sup>51</sup> Because of so much life which continued to be lost and wounded in peaceful protest, so much life detained without trial,<sup>52</sup> it became evident to the BCM that a violent struggle was inevitable.

Consequently as many as 4 000 black people left the country during the years 1977 and 1978 for military training.<sup>53</sup>

The United Democratic Front (UDF) also sought to solve South African economic and political problems through peaceful means. And indeed at its major policy-revise meeting of 1987, the Front decided to include,

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48. Kneifel, T., Leatt, J., Nürnberger, K., *op cit.*, p.107.
49. June: 'The Past is With Us', A Report on 1976 School Boycotts (South African Students Press (SASPU), Johannesburg: 1980), p.2.
50. *Survey of Race Relations in South Africa*, vol. 32, (SAIRR, Johannesburg: 1979), p.74.
51. *Survey of Race Relations in South Africa*, vol. 33, (SAIRR, Johannesburg: 1980), p.109.
52. *Administration of Security Legislation in South Africa, 1976-1977*, (SAIRR, Johannesburg: 1977), p.1-74.
53. Kneifel, T., Leatt, J., Nürnberger, K., *op cit.*, p.116.

... the rejection of the option of going underground. A press statement in August said that the UDF recognized that there was very little 'legal space' in which to operate, but added, the question of going underground like the African National Congress is not on the agenda, as the Front's primary role was still to organize legal, mass-based opposition of apartheid.<sup>54</sup>

Throughout the 1980s the UDF successfully organized rent boycotts, consumer boycotts and stayaways.<sup>55</sup> The government ruthlessly suppressed all these non-violent means, among other ways, by the declaration of the state of emergency in 1984.<sup>56</sup> This declaration of the state of emergency renewed every year, gave absolute powers to the police to arrest without trial all anti-apartheid activists and suspects<sup>57</sup>.

Consequently from 1984 to 1987, about 10 309 people were detained under the state of emergency,<sup>58</sup> and during the same period about 60 political activists died in police custody.<sup>59</sup>

The South African government also used some black people - the so-called vigilantes - to wipe out anti-apartheid activists.<sup>60</sup> In Natal alone, from

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54. Davies, R., Dlamini, S. and O'Meara, S., *The Struggle for South Africa*, (Zed Books Ltd, London: 1984), p.453.
55. Collinge, J-A. 'The United Democratic Front', *South African Review*, vol. 4, ed. SARS (Ravan Press, Johannesburg: 1986), pp.248-257.
56. Webster, D. 'Repression and the State of Emergency', *South African Review*, vol. 4, ed. SARS (Ravan Press, Johannesburg: 1987), p.41.
57. Coleman, M. and Webster, S. 'Repression and Detention in South Africa', *South African Review*, vol. 3, ed. SARS (Ravan Press, Johannesburg: 1986), p.114.
58. Webster, D. *op cit.*, pp.141-142.
59. *Ibid.*, pp.163-169.
60. *NUX*, 1987 (Natal University, Pietermaritzburg students' newspaper).

1984-1989, about 3 000 lives were lost, as a result of skirmishes between vigilantes fighting under the auspices of Inkatha on the one hand, and anti-apartheid activists fighting under the auspices of the UDF, on the other hand.<sup>61</sup>

Some members of the South African Police Force and some members of the South African Army, have come out with clear and sworn evidence of how the South African government employed both the police and the army clandestinely, to kill all people who are actively involved in peaceful protests.<sup>62</sup>

The persistence of the apparently futile exercises of peace protests, on the part of black people despite the government's brutal repression, shows clearly that black people always wanted the sociopolitical and economic problems of the country to be solved in a peaceful manner. This manner of solving this problems being an impossibility, as evidence is being given above, it appears that there was no choice but to pursue the way of the armed struggle, which armed struggle, is clearly backed by the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, as I shall explain below.

The question at this stage is, can one honestly say that black people during this historical period did try to exhaust every means of peaceful settlement before they took the decision in favour of an armed struggle? Walter Wink recommends the use of Gene Sharp's 198 different kinds of non-violent

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61. *Ibid.*, p.4.

62. *Ibid.*

actions.<sup>63</sup> Of these 198 different kinds of non-violent tactics, how many were utilized by the oppressed people of South Africa? If they did not make use of all of them, was it legitimate for them to flee the country for military training with a specific purpose of coming back to overthrow their oppressors by means of revolutionary violence? Surely non-violence is preferable because in it casualties are not as numerous as those which are experienced in a situation of war. Non-violence, Wink explains,

*... will mean casualties. But they will be nowhere near the scale that would result from violent revolution.*<sup>64</sup>

Nelson Mandela mentions that in 1961 he and his colleagues took a decision in favour of an armed struggle after realizing that long periods of non-violent tactics achieved absolutely nothing for black people<sup>65</sup>. In 1962 after being charged for inciting the people not to go to work, Mandela still held the same convictions. Fifty years of non-violent struggle, he claimed,

*... had brought the African people nothing but more and more repressive legislation.*<sup>66</sup>

When Mandela and his colleagues got disillusioned with no-violence as an effective strategy, Sharp's non-violent methods were not yet published<sup>67</sup>.

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63. Wink, W. *Jesus' Third Way*, (South African Council of Churches, Johannesburg: 1987), p.5.

64. *Ibid.*, p.41.

65. Chikane, F. 'Where the Debate Ends', *Theology and Violence*, ed. C. Villa-Vicencio (Skotaville Publisher, Johannesburg: 1987), p.301.

66. Motlhabi M., *op cit.*, p.67.

67. Sharp, G. *The Methods of Non-Violent Action*, (Horizons Books, Boston: 1973). (As can be seen, this book was published in 1973, long after Mandela's imprisonment).

If Sharp's non-violent means had been published before Mandela's imprisonment, perhaps Mandela and his colleagues would have made use of them. But would the then South African government have listened to those ideas of Sharp? I doubt it. On the contrary, the government would have probably banned Sharp's methods as subversive literature.<sup>68</sup>

After Mandela's imprisonment, the South African repressive legislation continued to gain momentum, so much so that the space for a peaceful settlement was very minimal. Expounding on this lack of space for a non-violent solution is Frank Chikane who, critically studying the reign of Prime Minister P.W. Botha during this period (under study), argued:

*P.W. Botha, for instance, occupies this 'created space'. It is the space created by his brutal and violent apartheid forces that enables him to condemn what he calls the violence of the ANC while he prohibits the victims of violence from engaging from this or any other debate. The debate on violence or non-violence is a debate in which only one party in the conflict can participate. The other party is deprived of the necessary space.*<sup>69</sup>

The victims of violence together with the party which is deprived of the space to debate are all terms referring to blacks who were denied the opportunity to discuss that the root causes of the violence of the ANC was the government repression<sup>70</sup>. And the only one party allowed to participate in the debate, to interpret Chikane further, are the whites who were made to believe by the

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68. Motlhabi M. *op cit.*, p.269.

69. Chikane, F., *op cit.*, p.303.

70. *Ibid.*, p.303.

government that the ANC and the blacks in the township were to blame for the violence in the country.<sup>71</sup>

In a situation of racial conflict such as described by Chikane above there would be no way in which Sharp's methods of non-violence could be discussed, let alone implemented.

The worst repression took place during the two states of emergency namely in 1984 and 1986 as discussed above. It is at this stage that the government literally decided to treat non-violence as an equivalent of violence. This means that a person who criticized the government or those who urged support for boycotts would be fined very heavily or sent to prison for ten years.<sup>72</sup>

The atmosphere being thus uncondusive for a peaceful negotiation, Sharp's methods of peaceful protest, like those of Mandela and other black people discussed above, would have failed dismally during this period.

Even if there would have been some limited space for a non-violent solution, some of the methods of Sharp would have been very difficult to implement, because they are of a nature which should be executed by a rich government. One of these methods is called Preclusive Purchasing which Sharp defines as an,

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71. *Ibid.*, p.303.

72. Wink, W., *op cit.*, pp.79-80.

*... intervention which involves buying strategic commodities in world markets for the purpose of making them unavailable to the enemy.*<sup>73</sup>

By way of explaining what Sharp means here a state is intervening in the world markets so as to deny the enemy state some of the most vital commodities.

To be carried out effectively this measure has to be in the hands of a country which is economically strong: As a matter of fact Sharp cites the example of the United States, a very wealthy country which bought various minerals in Spain, Portugal and Turkey so as to make them unavailable for Axis countries<sup>74</sup>.

A Third World country cannot afford this luxury,<sup>75</sup> let alone a liberation movement which is totally dependent on foreign sponsors for its survival.<sup>76</sup>

The Seizure of Economic Assets is another non-violent measure which, for the same reasons as mentioned above, can be effectively implemented by a wealthy government. This method, Sharp explains,

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73. Sharp, G., *op cit.*, p.410.

74. *Ibid.*, p.410.

75. Brown, D. *The Christian Revolutionary* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Michigan: 1971), p.19.

76. Dugard, J. 'Sanctions against South Africa: An International Law perspective', *Sanctions Against Apartheid*, ed. M. Orkin (David Philip, Cape Town and Johannesburg: 1989), p.117. Here I am giving as an example the ANC which as a liberation movement, depended on the Soviet Union and Communist China for its survival before 1991 when it was unbanned in South Africa.

*... involves the impounding or confiscating of assets, including blocking the use of bank accounts or of securities in brokerage accounts; preventing the payment of interest or dividends to enemy countries.*<sup>77</sup>

But why are we supposed to bother about Sharp's methods? Are his methods considered as an international standard by which the oppressed are judged as to whether or not they exhausted every peaceful effort before they resorted to violence? In other words, are we not supposed to believe when Mandela and generations after him tell us that they tried every possible peaceful means they could reach at and they never worked?

Wink enumerates some of these peaceful methods as follows:

*labour strikes, slow-downs, sit-downs, stoppages, and stay-aways; bus boycotts, consumer boycotts, and school boycotts; funeral demonstrations; non-cooperation with government appointed functionaries; non-payment of rent; violation of government bans on peaceful meetings; defiance of segregation orders on beaches and in restaurants, theatres and hotels; and the shunning of black police and soldiers.*<sup>78</sup>

Wink, however, had a problem with the majority of students who refused to identify these tactics as non-violent. The reason for their refusal in my opinion, is that these students rated these tactics second to the armed struggle. All they urgently wanted during this period when the government thwarted every peaceful effort by means of a State of Emergency, was to topple the South

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77. Sharp, G. *op cit.*, pp.410-411.

78. Wink, W., *op cit.*, p.4.

African government by revolutionary force. It is only in the event of a failure to acquire arms for this revolutionary purpose that they would consider as an effective alternative, the list which Wink discusses above.

To interpret the students further, the use of arms would inflict the most severe pain on their oppressors thereby pressurizing them (oppressors) in no uncertain terms to accelerate the process of liberation. Whereas the pain inflicted on the oppressors by the measures listed by Wink would be less acute and it could even be more lessened by the ruthless intervention of the police as discussed above, that explains why it was considered second by the students in question.

Let me come back to the question of whether or not it was necessary to add Sharp's methods to those which were employed by Mandela and generations which continued the struggle after his imprisonment.

The validity of the response to the question posed above would have to be weighed in terms of which side of the divide is the person who speaks. In other words is the person in question supporting the cause of the oppressor or that of the oppressed? The person who is on the side of the oppressor will certainly speak in favour of the implementation of the tactics of Sharp in addition to those of Nelson Mandela and subsequent generations of South Africa. Underlying this implementation of Sharp's tactics may subconsciously be the intention to prolong the liberation process, because the more the prolongation the more this person thrives from the economic benefits generated by the status quo. Sharp's peaceful methods in this context would serve to delay the attainment of liberation. It is precisely at this point that I totally agree with Malusi Mpumlwana when maintains that,

*... we need to look out for the bias of ethicists who makes [sic] pronouncements on questions of violence, in determining what constitutes illegitimate force and what is legitimate violence.*<sup>79</sup>

I interpret Mpumlwana to be saying that some of the condemnations pronounced by ethicists on violence may be found to be fraught with deceit: An ethicist may possibly condemn an armed struggle as amounting to illegitimate violence precisely because this armed struggle may seriously disturb the comfort and wealth offered to him by the status quo. In the context of my discussion Sharp's peaceful methods may be given as a hidden reason for the condemnation of the armed struggle in South Africa. In other words, as a disguised reason for the condemnation of the decision by Mandela and the oppressed discussed above to resort to violence, the ethicist in question may mention that not all peaceful methods were exhausted before this decision, because many of those espoused by Sharp were never employed. Ethical statements or condemnations which perpetuate the status quo at the severe economic and political injury of the oppressed are in my opinion invalid.

A person who supports the cause of the oppressed would at this stage of the South African history mention candidly that while he or she admires the methods of non-violence articulated by Sharp, nevertheless he/she thinks those peaceful methods of resistance discussed by Mandela and generations of blacks after his imprisonment were enough on their own. And this is because of the endless lengths of periods spent on them together with a very cruel response they generated from the part of the South African government. To add another load of non-violent tactics, be they from Sharp or any other

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79. Mpumlwana, M. 'War, Violence and Revolution', *Doing Ethics in Context*, ed. C. Villa-Vicencio and J. de Gruchy (David Philip, Cape Town and Johannesburg: 1994), p.190.

strategist of non-violence, would seriously undermine the efforts of peaceful resistance already employed in South Africa up to that time.

Secondly this additional load of non-violent strategies propagated by Sharp were in all likelihood going to be totally fruitless anyway, because of the intransigence of the then South African government discussed above. As early as in 1963, before publishing the methods discussed above, Sharp wrote an article in which he was investigating whether or not non-violence was possible as a solution in South Africa. He observed:

*Every means of change has been damned up. The flood waters are rapidly rising.*<sup>80</sup>

The flood waters which Sharp mentions are symbolic, in my opinion, to the intransigence of the then South African government which was gaining momentum very rapidly. I learn from Sharp's statement above, that although he is an exponent of politics of non-violence he nevertheless took serious cognizance that South Africa was no fertile ground for seeds non-violence. It was therefore valid for Mandela at this hour to resort to violence. This validity of the decision to resort to violence also applies to generations who continued the peaceful methods of protest after Mandela's imprisonment, as the floods mentioned Sharp above never subsided after Mandela's imprisonment. On the contrary they rose even higher than before.<sup>81</sup>

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80. See M. Motlhabi, *op cit.*, p.264.

81. I am referring here to the repressive laws discussed in this chapter. These laws became more and more repressive during the period under study.

## CHAPTER 2

### A BRIEF HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE 'JUST WAR' THEORY

This chapter is divided into four sections, namely, the classical period, the Middle Ages, the Vatican II period and the post Vatican II period.

#### 2.1 The understanding of the Just War in the classical period

The context within which the ethic of the Just War can be best understood during the classical period, according to Roland Bainton is that of peace. Limiting himself to three groups of people who lived during the classical period - namely, the Hebrews, the Greeks and the Romans - Bainton explains what peace meant for each of these three groups.

For the Hebrews peace, which they term *Shalom*, meant more than an absence of war:

*Shalom signified well-being and was almost synonymous with prosperity, "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces".<sup>1</sup>*

The Greek term for peace is '*Eirene*' and it signifies a state of order and coherence. This Greek concept of peace does not differ much from 'Shalom' because:

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1. Bainton, R. *Christian Attitudes towards War and Peace*, (Abingdon Press, Nashville: 1960), p.17.

*... if peace were not identical with prosperity, at any rate, peace begot prosperity and was commonly accompanied in artistic representation by the cornucopia.<sup>2</sup>*

The Romans' concept of peace which they termed 'Pax' simply meant the absence of war:

*The word 'pax' is derived from the same root as pact - an agreement not to fight.<sup>3</sup>*

Common among all three groups of the classical period was the fact that peace was always conceived as a religious reality. The Hebrews understood peace to be the gift from Yahweh, while the Greeks and Romans fashioned gods whom they understood to be bestowers of peace, and altars were even erected in honour of these gods.<sup>4</sup>

Also common among these people of antiquity (classical period) is that they all had the myth of a warless world which once existed and got lost, and one of their important objects in life was to recover this world of peace. They called this warless period, the 'Age of Gold'. They all believed that in the age of gold:

*... the earth freely yielded her increase without the toil of man hence, there was no need for private property, no temptation to introduce slavery, and no reason for recourse to war .... War resulted from the fall of man.<sup>5</sup>*

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2. *Ibid.* p.17.

3. *Ibid.*, p.18.

4. *Ibid.*, p.18.

5. *Ibid.*, p.18.

A number of ways were employed by these people of antiquity to attain this peace which disappeared from the earth as a result of the fall of man. The idea of the fall, although expressed differently by each people of antiquity, did nonetheless explicitly exist among them and was always explained through various myths which they respectively possessed.<sup>6</sup>

The Greeks saw the elimination of the economic causes of war as instrumental in restoring peace. This meant that if each city in Greece had an economic system which was beneficial to all citizens, peace would prevail.<sup>7</sup>

Although the Romans were notorious for achieving their peace (Pax Romana) through conquest, they nevertheless had as part of the pax Romana what they had called achieving peace by concession.

This meant, for example, that barbarians were not always repelled, but they were received into the Roman Empire through a policy of controlled immigration, so that they could serve as buffers for the empire against further invasion by more remote tribes.<sup>8</sup>

With regard to the Hebrews, Bainton reveals a school which as opposed to the one dealing in detail with the extermination of Canaanites by Hebrews, portrays Hebrew patriarchs sojourning peacefully among their neighbours. An example of this school is Abraham who, for the sake of preserving this

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6. *Ibid.*, p.20.

7. *Ibid.*, pp.26-27.

8. *Ibid.*, p.27.

peaceful cohabitation prefers to part ways with his brother Lot, rather than fighting with the latter for pastures.<sup>9</sup>

So highly valued was peace among these people of antiquity, that war was looked at with contempt and vexation. And although the war waged by Greeks under Alexander brought about cosmopolitanism, it was however, berated by the conquered. And similarly the conquests of Rome were scathed by the vanquished.

War was condemned as irrational because it struck those most entitled to live namely the young, on whose strength the future of the city relied. War was also condemned as costly. Bainton quotes a writer of antiquity as saying,

*Even by the feeble, a city may be shaken to its foundation, but to set it up again is a sore struggle.*<sup>10</sup>

Another reason why war was seriously condemned in antiquity was that it went against universal laws whereby all the heavenly bodies, namely, the stars, the sun and moon move harmoniously, none colliding with the other. Lower down on earth, most of the animals of the same species obey the same laws in the sense that they seldom attack one another.

The most fortunate exception in this case is a human being because, although they are endowed with reasoning faculties, nevertheless kill one another ruthlessly.<sup>11</sup>

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9. *Ibid.*, p.27.

10. *Ibid.*, p.24.

11. *Ibid.*, p.26.

The only time when war was tolerated, even justified - among the people of antiquity - was when it was waged with the specific purpose to wipe out injustice thereby restoring peace.

*The restoration of peace was indeed the object of the just war, but it was called just primarily because its first object was the vindication of justice. Only thereafter would peace be proper.*<sup>12</sup>

As it is explained above, a war was seen as just only if it was in defence of justice. This means that justice was the necessary foundation for the maintenance of peace. In other words, there could be no lasting peace without justice in society. This view of the Just War actually belongs to Plato. Although he never coined the expression 'Just War' - as I shall explain below - he nevertheless was the first to formulate the code of what later on came to be termed as 'Just War'.

The definition of justice, an absolute prerequisite of peace, which Plato gave was that each person must be given his/her due. At the time of Plato it was generally accepted that some people were born superior to others: the issue of social inequalities, in other words, was very seldom questioned. There was a hierarchy in social status. For Aristotle, who also lived during this period for example, it was clear that,

*... some men are by nature free, and others slaves, and that for these slavery is both expedient and right.*<sup>13</sup>

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12. *Ibid.*, p.38.

13. Stumpf, S.E. *Socrates to Sartre*, (McGraw-Hill, New York: 1966), p.110.

Giving a person her/his due in this context meant giving a person all of what belongs in the ambit of his/her social status.

It is within this same context that Aristotle coined the expression 'Just War', and for him it was,

*... a war whose object was to enslave those designed by nature for servitude but who resisted their proper assignment in the social scale.*<sup>14</sup>

Even though Aristotle coined the expression 'Just War', nevertheless, Plato, as explained earlier, is the one who first fashioned the formulation of the Just War.

Remarkable among Greeks of his time was a track record of peaceful negotiations. About eighty-one cases of conflict between 798 BC and 740 BC were settled peacefully. Plato suggested that if all means of peaceful settlement failed, then the war which ensued, "should be waged with an eye to the restoration of peace".<sup>15</sup> In other words, Plato held that the object of war should be the restoration and the maintenance of peace.

Secondly, since the purpose of war was to restore peace, the violence inflicted by the offended party must be restricted to the necessary minimum. He held that for example:

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14. *Ibid.*, 41; See also D. Bax, 'From Constantine to Calvin: The Doctrine of the Just War', *Theology and Violence*, ed. C. Villa-Vicencio (Skotaville Publishers, Johannesburg: 1987), p.151.

15. Bainton, R., *op cit.*, p.38.

*The houses of the Greeks should not be burnt. The land should not be scorched. Only the annual harvest might be confiscated. The sensibilities of the foe were not to be outraged by despoiling the dead of anything but weapons, nor by erecting trophies of victory in temples.*<sup>16</sup>

In other words Plato meant that the means of war employed should be proportionate to the peace envisaged.

Lastly, while not suggesting that the non-combatants should be separated from the combatants, Plato warned against indiscriminate violence which would bring about suffering to all citizens irrespective of whether they are involved in the combat or not.<sup>17</sup>

The conditions for Just War as outlined by Plato above were later on termed 'criteria for a just war'. Various Christian writers adopted and adapted them for their respective historical situations. As for Plato himself, he never even wanted to use the word 'war' because the conflicts which occasionally existed among Greek-States were not as serious as to be designated 'wars': They were just ordinary feuds or factions, he claimed.<sup>18</sup>

The most influential Roman author who helped the Roman Empire adopt the Just War theory from the Greeks with some modifications because of its different historical circumstances was Cicero.<sup>19</sup> He converted the Just War

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16. *Ibid.*, p.38.

17. *Ibid.*, p.38.

18. Bainton, R., *op cit.*, p.37.

19. *Ibid.*, p.41.

theory into an ethical code for the empire.<sup>20</sup> He held that a war had to be declared by the state, so as to be designated 'just'. He also held that a state was not to wage war against another without giving an ultimatum of at least thirty days. The intention of this measure was that during these thirty days whatever dispute which existed between the two states would be settled peacefully, failing which a declaration of hostilities would follow. He further maintained that in all dealings, especially during the period of a truce, oaths should be sworn by both parties, so as to maintain trustful relationships between themselves.<sup>21</sup>

Unlike Plato, Cicero did not specify that the noncombatants among the enemy state were to be spared. He did however, mention that the vanquished should be well treated as this good treatment guaranteed peace and stability within the empire.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, in this ethical code of war, he stipulated that - in war and peace - people should be guided by *humanitas*. *Humanitas* is a principle which is congruous with the nature of a human being. This principle inspired a human being to exhibit benevolence, magnanimity, and mercy in dealings with others.<sup>23</sup>

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20. *Ibid.*, p.41; See also D. Bax, 'From Constantine to Calvin: The Doctrine of the Just War', *Theology and Violence*, ed. C. Villa-Vicencio (Skotaville Publishers, Johannesburg: 1987), p.151.

21. Bainton, R., *op cit.*, p.41.

22. *Ibid.*, pp.41-42; See also Häring, B., *op cit.*, p.401.

23. Bainton, R., *op cit.*, p.42.

## 2.2 The understanding of the Just War during the middle ages

During this period various Christian writers made an effort in their respective historical backgrounds to accommodate the question of the Just War theory into the Christian life. One of these Christian writers was St Ambrose who was the Catholic bishop of Milan (339-397 AD).<sup>24</sup> He was the first one to write a Christian ethic of the Just War,<sup>25</sup> and this he did under the heavy influence of Cicero.<sup>26</sup> According to Douglas Bax what this influence entailed was that Ambrose,

*... took over and introduced into Christian thinking Cicero's ideas about the just war.*<sup>27</sup>

I understand Bax to be saying that through the instrumentality of Ambrose, what formerly used to be a purely pagan ethic of the Just War was then transformed into a Christian ethic.

Ambrose never had problems in adapting the Just War theory into Christianity because he was one of the highest officials of the Roman empire.<sup>28</sup> For him the empire was one of the priorities high up on the agenda to be attended to by every citizen including Christians in spite of its evil wars of conquest discussed above. Indeed Bax observes:

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24. Bax, D., *op cit.*, p.150.

25. *Ibid.*, p.25; See also Bainton, R., *op cit.*, p.89; Häring, B., *op cit.*, p.401.

26. *Ibid.*, p.401; See also Bainton, R., *op cit.*, p.90.

27. Bax, D., *op cit.*, p.151.

28. *Ibid.*, p.150.

*In his eyes the empire was an order of justice and peace in the world that should be preserved.*<sup>29</sup>

In other words Ambrose entertained no idea of a church which is supposed to relate prophetically or critically to the empire as does Augustine below. Ambrose held that it was imperative for all males in the empire, except monks and priests, to participate actively in wars that were waged by the empire, more so because the invaders during this period were Arian heretics.<sup>30</sup> Taking an active part in imperial wars in this context meant safeguarding both the political stability of the empire and the orthodoxy of the Christian faith against Arian marauders. Häring interestingly observes that even though Ambrose had no scruples against Christian participation in war, he nevertheless did acknowledge implicitly that war is evil, otherwise he would not have exempted his monks and priests from being actively involved in it.<sup>31</sup>

The following are the criteria for a Just War which Ambrose fashioned:

1. The cause of the war had to be just. This was constituted by a state's right to defend itself.
2. The conduct of the war should be just in the sense that respect for the enemies' rights must be maintained.
3. The clergy should abstain.<sup>32</sup>

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29. Bax, D., *op cit.*, p.150.

30. *Ibid.*, p.152; See also Bainton, R., *op cit.*, p.90.

31. Häring, B., *op cit.*, p.401.

32. Bax, D., *op cit.*, p.151; See also Häring, B., *op cit.*, p.401; Bainton, R., *op cit.*, pp.90-91.

In the second criterion Ambrose is influenced by Plato and the Stoics who believed that,

*... all men were really brothers, because all shared in the cosmic Logos (Reason). This implied that if people were engaged in a war, they should treat their opponents, even those of different nations or races with justice and respect.*<sup>33</sup>

Finally, to further justify his adoption of the Just War ethic, Ambrose cited the Old Testament which contained accounts of wars fought by the Israelites under different leaders at God's command.<sup>34</sup> How God empirically commands a nation to exterminate another, was not a problem during Ambrose's time: The Bible at this stage of history was interpreted literally.<sup>35</sup>

St Augustine elaborated to a very large extent the ethic of the Just War as initiated by Ambrose.<sup>36</sup> This extensive elaboration means that Augustine provided further theological or Christian foundations for a Just War ethic.<sup>37</sup> Several writers attest that St Augustine had an extreme hatred for war.<sup>38</sup> Even when some people in the Roman Empire boasted of the *tranquillitas* (tranquillity) and *securitas* (security) and the unity of culture and language

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33. Bax, D., *op cit.*, p.150.

34. *Ibid.*, pp.151-152; See also Bainton, R., *op cit.*, p.90.

35. Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, (First Vintage Books, New York: 1981), p.65.

36. Bainton, R., *op cit.*, p.91.

37. Bax, A., *op cit.*, p.152; See also Nolan, A. and Armour, M. 'Armed Struggle as a last Resort', *Theology and Violence*, ed. C. Villa-Vicencio (Skotaville Publishers, Johannesburg: 1987), p.209.

38. Bax, D., *op cit.*, p.153; See also *Things that Make for Peace*, ed. The Theological Advisory Commission of the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC), (SACBC, Pretoria: 1985), p.68.

which were offered by the Pax Romana (Roman peace), Augustine reproached them by pointing out that all those benefits of the Pax Romana were achieved through the ruthless slaughter of other nations by the Romans. Indeed, he is quoted to have scornfully asked,

*Why glory in the greatness of an empire built up by dark, fear, cruel lust and blood, which, whether shed in civil or foreign war, still is human blood?*<sup>39</sup>

The historical circumstances, however, forced Augustine to change his position on warfare quite considerably. During the fourth century, the Roman empire - of which his diocese, Hippo in North Africa, was part - was being assailed by a tribe called Germans or Goths or Visigoths. The latter were themselves being pushed from the east by hordes. It is at this point that he despaired that there could ever be peace on earth.<sup>40</sup> He began to focus attention on whether or not, Christian generals could apply military resistance to the invasion of the Goths.

Augustine turned to both the Old and New Testament biblical texts, so as to legitimate the counter-attack on the Germans by the Christian generals. Like Ambrose, after learning from the Old Testament that there were wars which were waged by the patriarchs at God's command, Augustine concluded that war cannot be inherently evil in all historical circumstances. Some wars were used by God through the instrumentality of patriarchs, by these wars He was

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39. See Bainton, R., *op cit.*, p.94.

40. *Ibid.*, p.96; See also Nolan, A. and Armour, M., *op cit.*, p.209.

working also through wicked people to punish, even those sins that were unrelated to war.<sup>41</sup>

Augustine further held that the Sermon on the Mount found in the New Testament (Mt. 5:1-49); Luke 6:1-48 should be interpreted as referring to the inward disposition of the heart rather than to the outward deeds. For example, he claims that,

*The precept 'resist no evil' (5:39) did not prohibit wars for the real danger in soldiering was no military service itself but the malice that so often accompanied it.*<sup>42</sup>

The foregoing quotation serves as a prelude to what constitutes Augustine's specific contribution to the Just War theory, namely that the war must be just in its disposition, and this disposition should be Christian love. This meant that war must be conducted in the spirit of loving enemies (Lk. 6:27-31).<sup>43</sup> Put in another way this meant that Christian soldiers were to spare those people from the side of the enemies who were non-combatants.

Secondly Augustine held that to be justifiable war had to vindicate justice. He explains this criterion by asserting that,

*Just wars are customarily determined as those which avenge injuries, if a nation or state which is to be warred upon has*

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41. Bax, D., *op cit.*, p.154; See also Bainton, R., *op cit.*, p.94.

42. Bax D., *op cit.*, p.154; See also Bainton, R., *op cit.*, p.96.

43. *Ibid.*, p.154.

*neglected to punish crimes committed by its people or to restore what has been unjustly taken away.*<sup>44</sup>

This criterion was meant to rule out wars which were waged for the sake of mere aggression or selfish conquest.

Thirdly, a war is just, according to Augustine, if it is fought with the intention of restoring peace. Even though Augustine despaired that there would ever be perfect peace on earth, he nevertheless still strongly maintained that an approximate peace, without which even robber bands would cease to exist could be achieved.<sup>45</sup> Consequently, he justified any war which aimed at the achievement of this great goal of humanity, namely, peace which he understood as living in harmony and concord.

Fourthly a war is justly waged, if it has been declared by a legitimate authority. The authority to bear the sword has been given to supreme rulers in society, by God (Rom. 13:4): they are the only ones exempted from the words, 'All who take up the sword would perish by the sword (Mt. 26:52)<sup>46</sup> This means that a soldier or a private person may not kill another or go to war, except at the command of the rightful leader. According to Augustine, a soldier had to go to war, even if the king's decisions for war were wrong.<sup>47</sup> Here Augustine appears to have been totally against the idea of conscientious objection.

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44. Bax, D., *op cit.*, p.155.

45. Bainton, R., *op cit.*, p.96.

46. *Ibid.*, p.97; See also Bax, D., *op cit.*, p.155; Häring, B., *op cit.*, p.401; Nolan, A. and Amour, M., *op cit.*, p.210.

47. Bainton, R., *op cit.*, p.97.

The fifth criterion which justifies a war is that its conduct must be just. Here Augustine meant that whichever oaths were sworn by the two warring parties to each other, should not be violated. Faithfulness to these oaths prevented wanton violence, looting, massacres, and the profanation of temples.<sup>48</sup>

And finally, Augustine emphasized that a war, to be rightly engaged in must be the last resort. This means that every peaceful means should be exhausted before the decision to declare war is arrived at.

As it can be observed criteria 1-3 and criteria 5-6 do not originate from Augustine: they originate from Plato and the Stoics as discussed above.<sup>49</sup> What Augustine did was to provide some scriptural basis to one of them namely criterion 1. In the fifth criterion he added Cicero's idea of getting the warring parties to swear oaths to one another thereby preventing further hostilities from the defeated party.<sup>50</sup>

Original to Augustine however is criterion 4 which he also backed up with biblical texts in order to make it Christian in outlook.

The point I am making through my observations discussed above is that even though Augustine's ideas on the Just War ethic dominated Christian thinking from his time up to the present,<sup>51</sup> however very little of these ideas belong to him in their original form. His main contribution lies in providing a New Testament legitimation of a pagan ethic which remarkably, long before the birth of Christianity, already taught that all men and women are brothers and

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48. *Ibid.*, p.97; See also Bax, D., *op cit.*, 156; Häring, B., *op cit.*, p.401.

49. See notes footnote 15 to 17.

50. See footnote 21.

51. Bax. D., *op cit.*, p.152.

sisters irrespective of their race or nation, as a result even in times of war they had to treat one another with justice and respect.<sup>52</sup>

It is indeed his successful Christianization of the Just War ethic which elevated Augustine's works to be a continual point of reference and approval for many Christian generations after him who thought that it is licit for Christians to actively participate in a war in defence of their country.

St Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) was another important writer of the Middle ages. His novelty lies in the classical form into which he shaped the Just War ethic. This classical nature of the Just War consisted in a combination of Aristotelian theory of politics on the one hand and the Augustinian understanding of the Just War on the other.<sup>53</sup> In other words Aquinas cannot claim any originality in the context of a Just War discussion. This explains why some authors say very little about him whenever they write about the historical evolution of the Just War. Häring for example writes only one sentence about Aquinas in this context namely that,

*Thomas Aquinas took up this [Augustinian] vision and granted it his authority.*<sup>54</sup>

In the same way Richard McBrien, also tracing the history of the Just War, says very little about Aquinas. He reports

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52. *Ibid.*, p.150.

53. Russell, F.H. *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, (University Press, Cambridge:1977) p.262.

54. Häring, B., *op cit.*, p.401.

*Thomas Aquinas carried forward the Augustinian position but was more specific about criteria for the just war: (1) The cause must be just; (2) it must be undertaken by a legitimate authority; and (3) the intention must be right.*<sup>55</sup>

The authors cited above mention only a few words about Aquinas exactly because very little content originates from him in this context.

It is true that Frederick Russell and Douglas Bax respectively write extensively about Aquinas's works in connection with the Just War.<sup>56</sup> But these two authors respectively provide details of what I am arguing above namely that Aquinas offers nothing else new in this discussion except his systematic fusion of Aristotelianism and Augustinianism. How exactly he blends the two, is not the point of this chapter: the point of this chapter is to investigate how much belongs to him and how much does not belong to him originally.

Two other Middle Ages authors on the Just War were Francisco de Vittoria (d.1546) and Francisco de Suarez (d.1617). Both of them were Spaniards. Vittoria directed his Just War ethic against the American Indians who firmly resisted domination by Spanish colonizers together with missionaries accompanying them.<sup>57</sup> Initially Vittoria insisted that the American Indians were not to be punished for their refusal to be Christians. But at a later stage Vittoria changed his mind, Häring notices

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55. McBrien, R. *Catholicism* vol. 2, (Geoffrey Chapman, London: 1980), p.1035.

56. Russell, F., *op cit.*, pp.258-287; Bax, D., *op cit.*, pp.160-162.

57. Häring, B., *op cit.*, p.405.

*when he allowed the just war theory to apply against them [American Indians] when they hindered travel through their territories or refused to permit the preaching of the gospel. Indeed the natives had good reasons to refuse both, since practically, these activities were connected with the intention to subject them.*<sup>58</sup>

What I learn from the findings of Häring is that Vittoria utilized the Just War principles to suit the evil intentions of his countrymen who wanted to impose Christianity on the American Indians. Doing justice to the Just War ethic in this context would among other things, have entailed inciting the American Indians to defend their country jealously against the Spanish aggressors. Vittoria did the opposite by siding with his fellow-Spaniards who were provoking hostilities against American Indians who were determined to fight this Spanish invasion.

According to Bax, most important to Vittoria was the Just War criterion which he (Vittoria) expressed as follows:

*There is one and only one just cause for waging war, viz., an injury received.*<sup>59</sup>

Acknowledging that he was not saying anything new in the history of the Just War ethic he claimed:

*This is the opinion of all doctors in the tradition.*<sup>60</sup>

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58. *Ibid.*, p.405.

59. Bax, D., *op cit.*, p.162.

60. *Ibid.*, p.162.

However Vittoria emphasized this criterion out of context because the injury he was referring to was the injury inflicted on the Spanish intruders by the American Indians' firm resistance against all forms of colonization by the former. This interpretation I hold - under correction - against the background of a serious abuse of the Just War theory by Vittoria as discussed by Häring above.

In addition to the controversial criterion discussed above, Vittoria held the following criteria in high esteem:

*War must be undertaken as a last resort, after all other means of redress have been exhausted. War must be undertaken if one's side has a reasonable chance of success. There must be a due proportion between the amount of violence incurred in the war and the benefits it aims to accomplish.*<sup>61</sup>

Original to Vittoria is the second criterion because from antiquity right up to his time this criterion never existed. One of the possible interpretations of this criterion is that sometimes the offended nation may not be able to wage a Just War against the aggressor nation precisely because the latter might be stronger than the former. It is exactly at this point that the international community in the form of the United Nations is required in order to help the weaker party militarily. As a matter of fact there is some consensus among certain authors that the Just War as articulated by Vittoria and Suarez, whom I am discussing below, laid foundations for modern international law on warfare.<sup>62</sup> How Vittoria and Suarez did this is not explained. But for me this

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61. The Theological Advisory Commission of the SACBC, *op cit.*, pp.71-72.

62. *Ibid.*, p.72.

criterion of Vittoria would serve as a source for any Just War discussion conducted at an international level.

The other two criteria discussed by Vittoria above belong to Plato originally. Augustine was the first Christian to employ them.<sup>63</sup>

Suarez formulated the Just War criteria within the context of bitter wars caused by religious rivalries during his time. He added something new in the Just War discussion by dividing the injury discussed by Vittoria above into three categories. He claimed that a war is justly waged,

*... if a ruler appropriates some else's goods and will not return them; if he denies the common rights of nations without reasonable cause (e.g. the right to passage or trade); severe harm to reputation or honour.*<sup>64</sup>

The injuries discussed by Suarez lead Bax to observe that:

*Strict self-defence against attack was therefore not a necessary condition for a Just War; in certain circumstances a Just War could be an aggressive one.*<sup>65</sup>

But wars of aggression were condemned in no uncertain terms by almost all proponents of the Just War ethic.<sup>66</sup> Therefore this section of Suarez's contribution marks a serious deviation or a break with the tradition of the Just

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63. See Bainton, R., *op cit.*, p.38; See also Bax, D., *op cit.*, p.156.

64. *Ibid.*, p.162.

65. *Ibid.*, p.162.

66. *Ibid.*, pp.150, 155, 161 and 163; See also Bainton, R., *op cit.*, pp 91, 95, 96.

War ethic which up to his time was always meant for self defence. McBrien claims that between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries the writings of Taparelli d'Azeglio (d.1862) contributed considerably to the understanding of the Just War in modern times. McBrien further explains:

*His efforts to reflect on the international community as a subject of moral law provided the conceptual foundations for some of the major themes in twentieth century papal teaching, especially that of Pope Pius XII.<sup>67</sup>*

McBrien does not give any contents of d'Azeglio's findings, neither does he refer us to any book which contains the research of this author who provides an important link between the medieval and the twentieth century periods, in the historical evolution of the Just War theory. It is however important to note, from the glimpse McBrien is giving us, that d'Azeglio influenced one of the champions of the Just War ethic in modern times namely Pope Pius XII whose impact became prominent on the Just War ethic as taught respectively by the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II), and the American (US) bishops below.

### **2.3 The understanding of the Just War theory during the twentieth century**

Belonging to this century is Pope Pius XII whose ascension to the papacy in 1939 coincided with the outbreak of the Second World War.<sup>68</sup> Circumstances of immense loss of life during this period led him to the conviction that it is

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67. McBrien, R., *op cit.*, p.1036.

68. Bickers, B. and Holmes, D. *A Short History of the Catholic Church*, (Burns and Oates, Kent:1983), p.271.

legitimate for a nation to defend itself through force of arms.<sup>69</sup> The destructive nature of modern artillery was rapidly being intensified during his pontificate. Consequently, McBrien contends that:

*... he [Pius XII] reduced the legitimate causes of war from three (self-defence, avenging and evil, and restoring violated rights) to one, i.e., the defence of one's own nation or that of another. At the same time the pope rejected pacifism.*<sup>70</sup>

The novelty about Pius XII is that he spoke not only of the defence of one's own country, but he challenged the international community to rescue a country which is unjustly attacked.

In his outright condemnation of pacifism Pius XII argued that taken seriously pacifism would bring about, although unintentionally, international chaos: international criminals would take advantage of the situation and deprive whole nations of fundamental rights, given that there would be no armed resistance impeding them in their malicious activities.<sup>71</sup>

Pius XII died in 1958 and was succeeded by John XXIII who is another pope who had a tremendous influence on Vatican II's position on the morality of warfare. He showed no signs of being in favour of the idea of self-defence as espoused by his immediate predecessor. On the contrary, in his encyclical titled *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth) he asserts:

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69. McBrien, *op cit.*, p.1037.

70. *Ibid.*, p.1037.

71. See footnote 114.

*Therefore in this age of ours, which prides itself on its atomic power, it is irrational to think that war is a proper way to obtain justice for violated rights.*<sup>72</sup>

McBrien discovered that this teaching of John XIII creates confusion in the minds of some Catholics as it seems to have pacifist connotations. He further explains that,

*Later official documents of the Catholic Church, however continue to assert the right of legitimate defense for states and yet make no attempt to reform, correct or re-interpret Pacem in Terris.*<sup>73</sup>

The reason why the documents discussed above seem to ignore Pacem in Terris is because this encyclical is not in continuity with the Catholic tradition of the Just War ethic which legitimates the self-defence of a nation in the face of a massive attack by an aggressor nation. However this document (encyclical) signalled a new approach in matters of warfare morality in the Catholic Church, as it was adopted by Vatican II.<sup>74</sup>

## **2.4 The Second Vatican Council (Vatican II)**

The Second Vatican Council took place during the period 11 October 1962 and 8 December 1965.<sup>75</sup> At the end of this period the council promulgated sixteen

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72. John XXIII, 'Pacem in Terris', *Proclaim Justice and Peace*, ed. B. Davies and M. Walsh (Collins Liturgical Publications, London: 1984), p.67.

73. McBrien, *op cit.*, p.1037.

74. *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. W. Abbott (Geoffrey Chapman, London: 1966), p.293.

75. *Ibid.* p.740.

documents which were recognized by all members of the Roman Catholic Church to be binding.<sup>76</sup>

Paul Ramsey complains of the misunderstanding which many people had about the Second Vatican Council's position on the morality of warfare. He claims that the teaching of the Council which was of most interest to the media was the one which read as follows:

*With these truths in mind, this most holy Synod makes its own the condemnations of total war already pronounced by recent Popes, and issues the following declaration:*

*Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or of extensive areas along with their population is a crime against God and man himself. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation.*<sup>77</sup>

Ramsey argues that this teaching misled people to think that Vatican II was condemning any and all forms of war. Demolishing these misconceptions, Ramsey brought it to the cognizance of the media and everybody else who was misled, that at the same time the Council strongly held:

*As long as the danger of war remains and there is no competent and sufficiently powerful authority at the international level, governments cannot be denied the right to legitimate defense once every means of peaceful settlement has been exhausted.*<sup>78</sup>

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76. Abbott, W., *op cit.*, p.IX.

77. Ramsey, P. *The Just War*, (University Press of America, New York: 1983), p.372.

78. *Ibid.*, pp.372-373; See also Abbott, W., *op cit.*, p.293; McBrien, R., *op cit.*, p.1038.

Ramsey thus brings it to the awareness of everybody that the Council is in continuity with the Catholic traditional teaching of the Just War ethic in the sense that while it pronounced a resounding condemnation of all forms of aggressive wars in the first statement above, it (Council) also emphasized the validity of the question of self-defence wars in the second statement. Still focusing on the first statement of the Council, Ramsey contends:

*The reference to 'recent popes' immediately preceding the Council's declaration prohibiting indiscriminate acts of war is more than a little misleading.*<sup>79</sup>

Ramsey thus notices some discrepancies between what the council teaches and what the recent popes taught, especially Pope Pius XII, in connection with the morality of warfare.<sup>80</sup> In other words the Council is partly to blame for the misconception of the media observed by Ramsey above.

Even though the Council phrases its teaching in self-contradictory statements as Ramsey reveals above, it does nevertheless express its willingness to uphold the traditional teaching of the Just War ethic which legitimates the question of wars fought for defence purposes. This legitimation is clearly expressed through the Council's explanatory note which is attached to its doctrine (above), which justifies the right of an individual nation to defend itself against aggression in the absence of international mediation.<sup>81</sup> The explanatory note reads:

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79. Ramsey, P, *op cit.*, p.373.

80. See footnote 70; See also the Theological Advisory Commission of the SACBC, *op cit.*, p.73.

81. See footnote 78.

*Here the Constitution makes it clear that the right of self-defense on the part of government is also to be acknowledged. The text recalls the traditional moral demand that all means short of force be employed first, but it refuses to call for total renouncement of force by individual nations until an adequate international security force actually exists.*<sup>82</sup>

The traditional moral demand mentioned above is the Just War ethic as taught by Christian writers from the Middle Ages up to the present. Special mention should be made at this point of Augustine and Vittoria because they did explicitly stipulate that a war of self-defence is justly waged only after every effort of peaceful redress has failed.<sup>83</sup>

The Council therefore derives this teaching from these scholars of the medieval period and from Pius XII who reduced all criteria of the Just War into one, namely, that of the right of a nation to self-defense.<sup>84</sup>

(The focus of my study is on this criterion of self-defence as taught by Vatican II. In the next chapter I shall try to apply this criterion to the South African political and economic crisis which existed during the period 1960-1989).

Vatican II situated the criterion in question within the context of helping the international community attain the goal of peace. The Council described this peace as follows:

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82. See Abbott, W., *op cit.*, p.293.

83. Bax, D., *op cit.*, p.156; See also The Theological Advisory Commission of the SACBC. *op cit.*, p.71.

84. See footnote 70.

*Peace is not merely the absence of war. Nor can it be reduced to the maintenance of a balance of power between enemies. Nor is it brought about by dictatorship. Instead it is rightly and appropriately called an 'enterprise of justice' (Is. 32:7). Peace results from that harmony built into human society by its divine founder, and actualized by men [sic] as they thirst after ever greater justice.*<sup>85</sup>

Following the Council's teaching above, the true foundation of peace is justice. In other words it is only when people's fundamental rights are recognized and respected that peace can be secured.

However the Council was aware that the peace it was preaching might sometimes fall on deaf ears because of the sinful folly of humanity. Indeed the Council declared:

*As far as men [sic] are sinful, the threat of war hangs over them, and hang over them it will until the return of Christ.*<sup>86</sup>

I interpret the Council to be saying that sin manifests itself, among other ways, in the form of injustice. And so long as injustice prevails, war will never come to an end because war in spite of the brutalities it incurs, happens nonetheless to be one of the means humanity employs to combat injustice.

In the event of international chaos whereby governments, because of the sinful folly mentioned above, fail to abide by international accords of preserving

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85. Abbott, W., *op cit.*, p.290.

86. *Ibid.*, p.291.

peace, the Council emphasizes the importance of the self-defence of an individual nation in its Just War doctrine as discussed above.

Herbert Vorgrimler defends the doctrine of self-defence as taught by the Council against those who dismiss it as obsolete and solving no problem in modern times because belligerents often maintain (sometimes in good faith) that they are in a situation of legitimate defence.<sup>87</sup> Vorgrimler replied by saying:

*The only answer to this is that the false applications of a concept which is correct in itself, prove nothing against its correctness, just as mistakes in calculation are no reason for doubting mathematical principles.*<sup>88</sup>

What Vorgrimler means here is that the contravention of a norm, a maxim or a moral standard does not necessarily mean that there is something wrong with that maxim or standard of morality. In the context the Just War ethic taught by Vatican II above, an aggressor nation may contravene the criterion of this doctrine by falsely claiming legitimate defence. This false claim in no way invalidates the Just War. In 1963, American Defence Secretary, R. McNamara, estimated that 300 million people would be killed in the first phase of a nuclear world war between the United States of America and the Soviet Union.<sup>89</sup> This statement led many people, including Vatican II member, to question the doctrine of the Just War. Indeed, some of them asked:

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87. Vorgrimler, H. *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol 15, (Burns and Oates, London: 1969), p.355.

88. *Ibid.*, p.355.

89. *Ibid.*, p.357.

*Must we not agree with John XXIII: "It is hardly possible to imagine that in the atomic era war could be used as instrument of justice"?*<sup>90</sup>

The nuclear destructive power has since 1963 been intensified and made more sophisticated and expensive, hence the Council's complaint about the arms race.<sup>91</sup> To rephrase the question asked above: How does an offended nation which possesses nuclear power defend itself against the aggressor nation without destroying everybody in the latter nation? Maybe the question should have been phrased in the following way: Will the offended get any chance at all to retaliate? I do not believe so, following the insurmountable nuclear potential to annihilate discussed by military experts.<sup>92</sup>

At this stage Vorgrimler should have frankly agreed that like any other phenomenon produced by human beings, the Just War has got its limitations. From the time of its inception it has always been relevant for a situation of a conventional warfare. It is therefore to a very large extent irrelevant to a nuclear period because a nuclear strike is capable of destroying the whole populace so much so that the nation which receives the first nuclear blow would not be able to retaliate.

However the controversial question of deterrence can in a way be recognized as a modern version of the Just War ethic.

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90. *Ibid.*, p.357.

91. Abbott, W., *op cit.*, p.294-295.

92. See the Theological Advisory Commission of the SACBC, *op cit.*, p.182.

Deterrence is controversial in the sense that it is a very expensive, even extravagant mode of self-defence: a nation or a group of nations jointly spend colossal amounts of money in manufacturing both conventional and nuclear arms every year, not so much for fighting but for scaring off a possible aggressor nation. In my opinion this is a new mode of self-defence which is advocated by the Just War ethic in spite of its extravagance, which is totally denounced by the Council while it is tolerated by ethicists like Ramsey and Reinhold Niebühr. Ramsey holds that:

*However merely permissible the just works of deterrence may be, sons of the church and other men of good will working in military and political sectors are certainly making a genuine contribution of sorts to the establishment of peace and the security and freedoms of people. They are, in fact, doing the will of God ....<sup>93</sup>*

Similarly Reinold Niebuhr maintains that:

*... to serve peace, we must threaten war without blinking the fact that the threat may be a factor in precipitating war.<sup>94</sup>*

The two authors speak in favour of the question of deterrence in their respective way. It is however not my intention to furnish the details of the debate on deterrence. Suffice it to say that even though it is a controversial issue, for me nonetheless deterrence is a modern manifestation of self-defence as propagated by the Just War ethic.

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93. Ramsey, P, *op cit.*, p.379.

94. See Ramsay, *op cit.*, p.379.

Instead of addressing the inadequacy of the Just War ethic in a nuclear context Vorgrimler contends that the condemnation of the Just War in the modern era stem from misunderstanding of the essential point of this doctrine which is the collective armed resistance to aggression which he claims tradition allowed under the following conditions:

1. *when a manifest and extreme grave injustice is done which indubitably creates a situation of legitimate defence,*
2. *if all concretely feasible pacific solutions have failed, although they have been attempted in accordance with the norm of obligatory pacific settlement of international conflicts;*
3. *when the evil which arises from armed conflict is less serious than the injustice which provokes it - which also presupposes a well founded probability of success.*<sup>95</sup>

How a nation collectively resists a nuclear blow, is not discussed by Vorgrimler. A mere repetition of outdated conditions for a Just War helps no contemporary person who seeks to know the relevancy of Vatican II's Just War ethic in a world which possesses a nuclear power.

South Africa is not yet a nuclear superpower that explains why I attempt to discuss the Just War ethic in the country's context in a bid to solve its economic and political conflict.

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95. Vorgrimler, H., *op cit.*, p.354.

### CHAPTER 3

#### THE APPLICATION OF THE 'JUST WAR' THEORY TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATION

Before I delve into details of how the Just War ethic, as taught by the Catholic Church, could be applied to the South African situation, I wish to discuss two preliminary points.

First, I need to explain why I chose to situate my thesis within the period 1960-1989 of the South African history.

In the 1970s, when missionaries from the West were accused in Addis Ababa of several injustices which they imposed on the indigenous African people, Bishop Blomjous of Tanzania, a Dutch missionary launching a counter-accusation, said,

*We all were, and we remain always, children of our time. True, enough, one can in retrospect judge the attitudes of earlier generations but one cannot simply condemn them without much ado. One cannot blame any Christian for not thinking before the Second Vatican Council and before the World Conference of the World Council of Churches at Uppsala in the same way that people began to think and to act after these events.<sup>1</sup>*

I interpret Blomjous to be saying that the level of consciousness to uproot any form of injustice was low among Christians before the Second Vatican Council

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1. See Bühlmann, W. *The Missions on Trial* (St Paul Publications, Slough: 1978), p.72.

which took place between 1962-1965, and before the Uppsala Conference which met in 1968.<sup>2</sup>

Missionaries working in Africa prior to the advent of the Second Vatican Council and the Uppsala Conference are therefore not to blame for any injustices, to interpret Blomjous further, because the Second Vatican Council was not yet in existence to teach that it is imperative for Christians to strive for economic and political rights.<sup>3</sup> Neither was the Uppsala Conference in existence to teach that racism is a sin which has to be eliminated by all Christians.<sup>4</sup>

The position of Blomjous is certainly debatable in the sense that long before the advent of both the Second Vatican Council and the Uppsala Conference there had been prophetic voices in Christianity, denouncing injustice as incompatible with the gospel.<sup>5</sup> I can, however, agree with Blomjous if he says that those prophetic voices didn't make an impact on their listeners because the atmosphere was not yet conducive for those voices to be heard and understood. The mentality or the consciousness was not yet as rigorously and systematically informed as it is now, after the Second Vatican Council and the Uppsala Conference. The consciousness or mentality I am referring to, is that

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2. This footnote does not indicate the source of my interpretation, rather this footnote indicates the material from which I found the dates of the Second Vatican Council and the Uppsala Conference respectively. For the former's date *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. A. Gallagher (Geoffrey Chapman Publisher, London: 1966), p.740. For the latter's date, A. Bühlmann, *op cit.*, p.72.
  3. Abbott, W., *op cit.*, pp.274-275 and also p.288.
  4. Villa-Vicencio, C. *Trapped in Apartheid* (David Philip Publishers, Cape Town: 1988), p.109.
  5. See Kretzschmar, L. *The Voices of Black Theology in South Africa* (Ravan Press Johannesburg: 1986), p.19.

of the Christian leaders, who are always instrumental in the transformation of the accepted norms, even the blindly-accepted norms of society.<sup>6</sup>

What I am saying is that the dominant mentality or consciousness of a particular time is something indubitably existent, and that mentality or consciousness is often fostered and nurtured by the elite or leadership of that particular time.

Whether or not that particular consciousness is false, is not the point at this stage: the point is that the consciousness of a particular era is a reality which can be corroborated through historical inquiry.<sup>7</sup>

I write at a time when missionaries and all other Christian leaders have been heavily instructed in their seminary or university education about what both the Second Vatican Council and the Uppsala Conference have taught in connection with the plight of the oppressed and the exploited. In other words I am writing at a time when the consciousness of the missionaries and Christian leaders who are working among the oppressed, had been vigorously and systematically informed that it is imperative for Christians to liberate the exploited and the oppressed.<sup>8</sup>

The aim of writing at this time is to make a small contribution towards rallying various Christian leaders around an often overlooked Christian tradition of

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6. See Nürnberger, K. *Socio-Economic Ideologies in Christian Perspective* (Lutheran Publishing House, Durban: 1979), pp.5-7.

7. For example, see the Greek anthropology during the time of Plato and Aristotle, in Chapter 2 of my thesis, p.5-6.

8. Abbott, W., *op cit.*, pp.274-275, also p.288.

encouraging the exploited and oppressed to liberate themselves by force of arms, in the event of a failure to do so by peaceful negotiation.

Secondly I wish to indicate that I am not dealing with two countries which are at war with each other as is the case in any discussion which is based on the Just War tradition.

I am applying a criterion of the Just War to the people of the same country - South Africa. A very large majority of these people, namely, the blacks, were oppressed and exploited by a small minority of whites, who are also citizens of the country. Articulating much better what I am trying to formulate at this stage, is Buti Tlhagale who mentions that,

*The complexity of the South African situation defies the neatly worked out moral principles of classical Christian tradition. The assumption is that violent struggles are waged by one state against another. The classical tradition does not envisage an unjust aggressor emerging from within the boundaries of a single state.*<sup>9</sup>

The classical Christian tradition which Tlhagale is writing about is the Just War theory as adopted and formulated by Christian authors down the ages. The aggressor in the South African situation was the small minority of whites, while those that were provoked and victimized by this aggressor were the majority of blacks.<sup>10</sup>

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9. Tlhagale, B. 'Christian Soldiers'. *Theology and Violence*, ed. C. Villa-Vicencio (Skotaville Publishers, Johannesburg: 1987), p.85.

10. See chapter 1 of my thesis under subheading *Black Peaceful Resistance to Apartheid*, p.27 ff.

Following Tlhagale's analysis, the South African case, during the period under study, was an exception in the history of the Just War ethic in the sense that the aggressor was not a foreign nation: the aggressor was the then South African oppressive government. This government was illegitimate because a very large majority of South African citizens, namely the blacks, never elected it into power. For decades these blacks had been deprived of their economic and political rights by this unlawful government.<sup>11</sup>

Another reason why the South African context could be regarded as an exception in the history of the Just War theory is that, although they had their own legitimate leaders, black people did not have a government of their own. A war is justly waged, according to principles of the Just War theory, if it is declared by a rightful government. An exception to the rule in this historical context implied practically that the legitimate liberation movement leaders of black people were entitled to declare war against the then oppressive and illegitimate government of South Africa.

As is the case in all situations of the Just War, however, this war would have been waged in self-defence by black people against the then South African government which continued callously to kill, and to detain without trial, all citizens who protested against its repressive policies.

The application of a Just War moral principle or criterion to the South African situation was meant to resolve the conflict which exists between the blacks and whites.

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11. *Ibid.*, pp.12-15.

I am in dialogue with pacifism which is a position of morality that is totally opposed to all forms of violent activities. Pacifism maintains that,

*Force or violence should never be used, for any reason or in any circumstances.*<sup>12</sup>

Pacifism thus understood, meant that even in the situation of South Africa, black people were not allowed to resort to a violent struggle against their oppressors no matter how much of a failure non-violent means proved to be.

Sheena Duncan, a South African pacifist, expressing the theological background of pacifism, strongly maintained that:

*The pacifist position cannot be abandoned, whatever the circumstances, when it has been arrived at out of the conviction that in the crucifixion Christians have been shown how they must act when confronted by injustice and violence. None of the arguments about 'just war' or 'just revolution' or 'justified use of violence', however persuasive and rational, can shake a deeply-held belief that the sacrificial death of Jesus is the way we are commanded to go.*<sup>13</sup>

According to Duncan, Jesus left his disciples with a blueprint as to how to act when confronted with a situation of social injustice: They are supposed to stay as defenceless as possible in the face of massive exploitation and oppression.

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12. See Nolan, A. *Jesus Before Christianity* (Darton Longman and Todd Ltd, London: 1977), p.110.

13. Duncan, S. 'Radical Pacifism - An Option for Peace', *Theology and Violence* (Skotaville Publishers, Johannesburg).

Ridiculous! Edward Schillebeeckx traces Duncan's type of argumentation back to the Middle Ages when too much emphasis on the suffering Jesus as the model of the suffering masses of the Middle Ages was a dominating Christian experience. Looking at the sufferings and the crucifixion of Jesus, people began interpreting the sufferings of other people and those of their own as correct channels through which to attain salvation. Schillebeeckx claims:

*However authentic this experience may be, here the Christian interpretation of suffering enters a phase in which the symbol of the cross becomes a disguised legitimation of social abuses, albeit to begin with still unconsciously.<sup>14</sup>*

The cause of this deterioration of the symbolism of the cross, Schillebeeckx explains, has been the isolation of the death of Christ from the cause for which he died: He maintains that,

*The suffering and death of Jesus were at the same time detached from the historical circumstances which brought him suffering and death. 'Suffering in itself', no longer suffering through and for others took on a mystical and positive significance.<sup>15</sup>*

My interpretation of Schillebeeckx is that Jesus never intended to be subjected to any cruel death. His death on the cross was actually accidental in the sense that he would not have been murdered had the Jewish authorities of his time

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14. Schillebeeckx, E. *Christ* (SCM Press Ltd, London: 1980), p.699.

15. *Ibid.*, p.699.

agreed with his cause. (His cause was to bring a total transformation in religion in politics and in everything else).<sup>16</sup>

Of course, according to the synoptic gospels (e.g. Mt. 20:28; Mk. 10:45), Jesus came to die for the ransom of many people. Therefore, the death of Jesus was not accidental: it was something intended by him. But the synoptics are neither biographies nor autobiographies of Jesus. They should be understood as means through which the first group of Christians was trying to make sense out of the life and death of Jesus. Indeed Hans Küng affirms that,

*The Gospels cannot be regarded as stenographic reports. They are not meant to give a historical account of Jesus nor describe his development.*<sup>17</sup>

Küng continues to explain that the synoptics,

*... are therefore accounts which, in one form or another, also counted as testimony and were strongly coloured by the attitude of the author behind them.*<sup>18</sup>

Having thus explained the nature of the synoptics, I wish to make a further comment on the findings of Schillebeeckx.

The conclusion I draw from these findings is that the crucifixion has never been an original idea of Jesus as Duncan vehemently claims. Jesus never intended subjecting himself to such a cruel death, neither did he wish that his

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16. Nolan, A. *Jesus Before Christianity* (Darton Longman and Todd, London: 1977), p.100.

17. Küng H, *On Being a Christian* (Fount Paperbacks, Suffolk: 1974), p.153.

18. *Ibid.*, p.153.

followers be victims of any cruelty. The crucifixion was the original idea of his opponents who aimed at a dismal failure of his cause.

The pacifist interpretation of the crucifixion as articulated by Duncan is indeed deadly as it implicitly encourages a tolerance of social abuses: the afflicted, be they individuals or groups are encouraged to carry their crosses faithfully as Christ did. Meaning that they should endure their sufferings for the attainment of their salvation.

Reviewing pacifism in an effort to make it relevant for South Africa in the 1980s, Duncan states,

*Pacifism has too often presented itself as being only non-violent protest about, or resistance to injustice and violent acts. It is imperative that pacifists in South Africa try to find ways in which protest and resistance can be transformed into action which will change things, end injustice and create a just and peaceful society.*<sup>19</sup>

The volatile situation in South Africa in the 1980s did not however allow the transformation in pacifism which Duncan discusses above. This transformation of pacifist resistance and protest into action seemed, she claims,

*...impossibly idealistic in our present situation. The violence used by the state to enforce its will on the people is now being answered with counter-violence and many of the campaigns of non-violent action such as rent, school and consumer boycotts are now being enforced by violent intimidation. As violent conflict*

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19. S. Duncan, *op cit.*, p.274.

*engulfs people in many communities and violence escalates throughout South Africa it seems ridiculous to talk of non-violence.*<sup>20</sup>

What I learn from Duncan's words is that although she felt strongly about pacifism, she was however conscious that it did not make sense at all to the oppressed who had to defend themselves vigorously against a government which was waging a war against them.

Another pacifist who though is American nevertheless showed deep concern about the South African social conflict is Walter Wink. He visited South Africa in March 1986. He maintains that there are three general responses to an evil social system, namely,

*(1) passivity, (2) violent opposition, and (3) the third way of militant non-violence articulated by Jesus,*<sup>21</sup>

Wink focuses on the third way of Jesus mentioned above. When I examine the exegesis on which he builds this third way of Jesus, I discover that it gives the oppressor an upper hand over the oppressed. The latter is completely at the mercy of the former who might be converted when he realizes that his blows do not achieve the humiliation intended. Each time the oppressor strikes a blow, according to Wink's interpretation of Matthew 5:39, the oppressed has to respond by saying,

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20. *Ibid.*, p.274.

21. Wink W. *Jesus' Third Way* (SACC, Johannesburg: 1987), p.13.

*Try again. Your first blow failed to achieve its intended effect, I deny you the power to humiliate me. Your status [gender, race, age, wealth] does not alter that fact. You cannot demean me.*<sup>22</sup>

The interpretation of Matthew 5:39 offered by Wink does not take into serious consideration the pain which is suffered by the person on the receiving end. I am definitely sure that Wink would seriously amend his position if he were to be on the receiving side. Fortunately or unfortunately he is part of the delivering side: Indeed he asserts:

*I am painfully aware that I am an outsider, that I speak rather glibly of sufferings I will not be required to bear, that I am a white American not a little complicity in an international system that generally benefits whites at the expense of blacks, and that I do not have an adequate grasp of your situation.*<sup>23</sup>

A person of Wink's calibre does not qualify to speak on behalf of the oppressed in the manner he does above because of the wealth which he enjoys as a result of his academic career.<sup>24</sup> In translating his interpretation of Matthew 5:39 into concrete action Wink claims:

*We need to be very clear that it is in the government's interest to make people believe that non-violence does not work. The security forces chafe at few restraints still imposed on them. They long for occasions to use the full force of their massive power in*

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22. Wink W. *Jesus' Third Way* (SACC, Johannesburg: 1987), p.13.

23. *Ibid.*, p.VII.

24. *Ibid.*, p.VI.

*knock out blows. Non-violent actions do not supply them with that pretext and are thus a source of endless frustration.*<sup>25</sup>

Non-violent actions may have been a source of frustration to oppressive governments enumerated by Wink,<sup>26</sup> but in South Africa these non-violent actions never frustrated any oppressive regime, hence Nelson Mandela's disillusionment with these same non-violent actions in 1961. In the speech which he made just before his imprisonment he declared,

*At the beginning of June 1961, after a long and anxious assessment of the South African situation, I and some colleagues came to the conclusion that as violence in this country is inevitable, it would be unrealistic and wrong for African leaders to continue preaching peace and non-violence at a time when the government met our peaceful demands with force. This conclusion was not easily arrived at. It was only when all else had failed, when all channels of peaceful protest had been barred to us, that the decision was made to embark upon violent forms of political struggle. We did so not because we desired such a course, but solely because the government had left us with no other choice.*<sup>27</sup>

This decision taken by Mandela and his colleagues to resort to an armed struggle was in a way reiterated by a large majority of blacks who were

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25. *Ibid.*, p.43.

26. *Ibid.*, pp.2-3 and pp.41-43.

27. See C. Villa-Vicencio, *Theology and Violence* (Skotaville Publishers, Johannesburg: 1987), p.301.

interviewed by Wink during his visit. When he asked them what they thought about the third way of Jesus they responded by saying:

*We tried that for fifty years and it didn't work, Sharpeville in 1960 proved to us that violence is the only way left.*<sup>28</sup>

Trying to analyze what the interviewed people are saying, I discover that they did not deny that non-violence was one of the ways to resolve social conflicts. As a result they tried it, and it never worked. That explains why they wanted to resort to a violent struggle.

Wink reduces the period of fifty years of non-violent struggle, to eight years namely from 1952 to 1960<sup>29</sup>.

In other words he disregards all the peaceful attempts which went on before 1952, which black people utilized to have themselves recognized as full citizens of this country.

Be that as it may, Wink is apparently not conscious that after those 'eight years', that is through the 1960s, the 1970s and the 1980s, black people continued in vain to wage a non-violent struggle against the South African government.<sup>30</sup> Indeed it is Sheena Duncan who, soon after the 1986 State of Emergency, gave witness to the intransigence of the South African government.<sup>31</sup>

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28. W. Wink, *op cit.*, p.43.

29. W. Wink, *op cit.*, p.43.

30. Motlahabi, M. *Black Resistance to Apartheid* (Skotaville Publishers Johannesburg: 1984), p.67.

31. See chapter 1 of my thesis, under the subheading *Black Peaceful Resistance to Apartheid*, p.27 ff.

She is cited to have said,

*The emergency had created a qualitatively new situation with restrictions so complete and penalties so exorbitant that non-violent actions had come to a complete halt. In an eloquent tribute to the power of non-violence, the government had decided, in effect, to treat non-violence as the equivalent of violence. Merely to make a statement that calls for an end to conscription, to engage in any form of demonstration, to criticize the government or any of its officers or to urge support of boycotts, has become sedition punishable by ten years in prison and/or a 20 000 rand fine.<sup>32</sup>*

What Duncan is reported to be saying above should serve as enough evidence to convince even the most adamant or conservative pacifist that a non-violent struggle was a futile exercise in the context of South Africa.

In another volume Sheena Duncan suggests that in the event of a failure to produce a fruitful dialogue between the oppressed and the oppressor, the former should resort to refusal and withdrawal of co-operation, or civic disobedience.<sup>33</sup>

In the face of such exorbitant amounts of money for a fine or long periods of imprisonment for a non-violent cause, no normal black person in South Africa, I hold, should have been expected to adhere to a pacifist stance: First of all, none of them could afford to pay a fine of R20 000 because the majority of

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32. Wink, W., *op cit.*, pp.79-80.

33. Duncan, S. 'Radical Pacifism - An Option for Peace', *Theology and Violence*, ed. C. Villa-Vicencio Skotaville Publishers Johannesburg: 1987), p.275.

them were unemployed.<sup>34</sup> Even those that were employed would not have afforded to pay this heavy fine because of being underpaid.

Secondly, the peaceful protester, as it has happened to many others in the past<sup>35</sup> might be tortured to death by the police during those long periods of imprisonment.

It is at this point, when the South African government was making it a absolutely impossible for blacks to attain their liberation through peaceful negotiation, that I concur with Gustavo Gutierrez who protests that,

*We cannot say that violence is all right when the oppressor uses it to maintain or preserve 'order', but wrong when the oppressed use it to overthrow this same 'order'.<sup>36</sup>*

To agree further with Gutierrez I strongly argue that history knows no blanket condemnation of violent struggles to overthrow illegitimate governments or rulers. Desmond Tutu pinpoints some of the events of history to illustrate the validity of an armed struggle. He writes,

*The allies argued it was justifiable, indeed obligatory to go to war to stop Hitler's madness, and the Church concurred with that decision. Most people (apart from the purest of pacifists) knew in their bones that it was right to fight against Naziism.<sup>37</sup>*

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34. See chapter 1 of my thesis under subheading 1.1 (pp.15-16).

35. *Ibid.*, p.15.

36. See Germond, A., 'Liberation Theology in the Service of Justice', *Theology and Violence*, ed. C. Villa-Vicencio (Skotaville Publishers, Johannesburg: 1987), pp.222.

37. Tutu, D. 'Freedom Fighters or Terrorists?' *Theology and Violence*, ed. C. Villa-Vicencio (Skotaville Publishers, Johannesburg: 1987), p.76.

While still enumerating some historical events to illustrate the validity of an armed struggle, Tutu notices some double standards displayed by the West when it comes to helping the South African blacks overthrow their oppressors by military means. He continues as follows,

*Not only did the allies go to war against Hitler, with the approval of the church, but the church aided underground resistance movements which operated in Nazi-occupied countries. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who plotted to murder Hitler came to be regarded as a modern-day Christian martyr and saint. More than this, most Western countries have their independence written in blood. The USA became independent after the thirteen colonies had fought the American War of Independence. But when it comes to the matter of black liberation [in South Africa] the West and most of its church suddenly begins to show pacifist tendencies.<sup>38</sup>*

Underlying these double-standards displayed by the Western countries were their well established economic interests in South Africa, hence their reluctance to apply meaningful and comprehensive economic sanctions against South Africa.<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, Duncan Innes indicates that those countries of the West, who showed some signs of being in favour of economic sanctions against South Africa, never cut off their trade links with South Africa. What they actually did was to sell the South African branch of the company to the local personnel, who in turn would change the local name of the company. These changes in ownership

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38. *Ibid.*, p.76.

39. Thlagale, B., *op cit.*, p.84.

*... were intended to maintain the flow of goods and services from the foreign-owned parent to the South African market. Although they would no longer directly own the local subsidiary companies, the foreign companies were not withdrawing from South Africa, but changing the form of involvement.<sup>40</sup>*

Innes further maintains that the ingenious shifts of Western companies from making profits directly to making them indirectly, were a clear indication that:

*They see the South African market as having good potential. Indeed the Washington-based Investor Responsibility Research Centre (IRRC) found that almost half of the 96 American companies to have disinvested from South Africa since 1 January 1986 had retained licensing, distribution or other agreements with the next owners in South Africa, Basically the companies are still making money in the country.<sup>41</sup>*

Through the research of Innes I learn that the reluctance of the Western countries to impose economic sanctions against South Africa was not so much motivated by the worse economic effect these same sanctions were going to impact on the black people, as they (Western countries) always claimed.<sup>42</sup>

Their reluctance was rather motivated by their unwillingness to lose colossal amounts of profit which they would make through trading with South Africa.

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40. Innes, D. 'Multinational Companies and disinvestment', *Sanctions Against Apartheid*, ed. M. Orkin (David Philip Publishers, Johannesburg: 1989), p.229.

41. *Ibid.*, p.231.

42. See C.Villa-Vicencio, *Trapped in Apartheid* (David Philip Publishers, Cape Town: 1988), p.117.

The United Nations Organization could not impose economic sanctions against South Africa either, because the power to implement the former's decisions lay with the five permanent members, namely China, France, Soviet Union, United Kingdom and the United States.<sup>43</sup> Each of these countries had absolute power to veto any resolution arrived at by the Security Council of the United Nations Organization.

Consequently some of the formidable powers granted to this Council by the United Nations namely to order enforcement actions against a state which threatens international peace, are often frustrated by this veto. And indeed it is John Dugard who sadly observes that,

*Numerous incidents of aggression and serious instances of human rights violations threatening international peace have gone unremedied because of this veto. The South African situation is no exception.*<sup>44</sup>

Countries which were strongly and persistently opposing the Security Council's resolution to impose mandatory economic sanctions against South Africa were Britain and the United States of America, as they were among major trading partners of South Africa.<sup>45</sup> The reasons put forward by both Britain and the United States for their veto was that:

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43. Dugard, J. 'Sanctions against South Africa - An International Law Perspective', *Sanctions Against Apartheid*, ed. M. Orkin (David Philip Publishers, Johannesburg: 1989), p.115.

44. *Ibid.*, p.115.

45. See D. Innes, *op cit.*, p.228.

*Firstly these two states oppose sanctions as a means of bringing about political change in South Africa. (Although the US legislature now supports sanctions, the executive does not).*

*Secondly they fear that once sanctions have been imposed by the Security Council it will be difficult to terminate them in that the Soviet Union and China might then use their vetoes to block any resolution to lift sanctions before there had been a complete transfer of political power to an approved political movement.<sup>46</sup>*

What I suspect from the reasons given above, is that both Britain and the United States did have elements of racial prejudice against the black people of South Africa. If they were not prejudiced then they would push for an alternative means to bring about political change in South Africa. My suspicion is confirmed by the second reason they put forward to veto the idea of economic sanctions: They were opposed to a complete transfer of power to an approved political movement. The political movement they had in mind is the African National Congress (ANC) because that is the liberation movement which was allied to the Soviet Union.<sup>47</sup>

My suspicion is further confirmed by some of the awful things which the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had to pronounce about the ANC: in addition to describing the ANC as a terrorist movement in 1987 at the Vancouver Commonwealth Conference, she went on to say that,

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46. Dugard, J., *op cit.*, p.117.

47. See P. Vale, 'The Soviet Union, Southern Africa and Sanctions', *Sanctions Against Apartheid*, ed. M. Orkin (David Philip Publishers, Johannesburg: 1989), p.162.

*Anyone who thinks that the ANC is going to run the government in South Africa is living in a cloud-cuckoo land.*<sup>48</sup>

Equally disturbing were reports about the United States President Ronald Reagan whose policy on Southern African issues was guided, among other things by,

*A preference for people of his own skin colour. As Chester Crocker [Reagan's Secretary of State for African Affairs] confessed in an October 1980 interview, "All Reagan knows about Southern Africa is that he is on the side of the whites".*<sup>49</sup>

Danaher deplored this racist attitude of the United States and its allies, towards the black people of South Africa by openly asserting that,

*Part of the explanation for US reluctance to act against white minority rule is racism. If a black minority regime were savaging white neighbouring countries and shooting white South African children dead in the streets, it would not have taken long for Western gunboats to appear off the coast of South Africa.*<sup>50</sup>

Dominated by the Western countries who had vested economic interests in South Africa, and who openly connive with the evils of apartheid, as discussed above, the United Nations could not impose economic sanctions which would

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48. See L. Freeman, 'All but one: Britain, the Commonwealth and Sanctions', *Sanctions Against Apartheid*, ed. M. Orkin (David Philip Publishers, Johannesburg), p.144.

49. See K. Danaher, 'The US struggle over sanctions against South Africa', *Sanctions Against Apartheid*, ed. M. Orkin (David Philip Publishers, Johannesburg), p.134.

50. *Ibid.*, p.133.

substantially speed up the process of the liberation of the black masses in South Africa.<sup>51</sup>

There is no doubt that the United Nations succeeded in imposing some less harmful measures against South Africa,<sup>52</sup> but when it came to imposing the most harmful measures namely the economic sanctions, the United Nations was rendered impotent by the western powers veto.

This impotence of the United Nations brings me to concurrence with Buti Tlhagale who strongly maintained that,

*Against the background of the powerlessness of the United Nations and the connivance of the major western powers [namely Britain, US and West Germany, which Tlhagale specifically mentions], black South Africans are left to fall back on their own limited resources to abolish the unjust political order.<sup>53</sup>*

What I deduce from the findings of Tlhagale, Danaher, Dugard Innes and Freeman is that the black people of South Africa were not supposed to pin their hopes on the West and the United Nations for their economic and political liberation. The West had its economic interest in South Africa and it would never sacrifice these interests for the sake of South African blacks. The Second Vatican Council's teaching on which I focus reads:

*As long as the danger of war remains and there is no competent and sufficiently powerful authority at international level,*

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51. See D. Tutu, *op cit.*, p.77.

52. Dugard, J., *op cit.*, p.119.

53. Tlhagale, B., *op cit.*, pp.84-85.

*governments cannot be denied the right to self-defence, once after every means of peaceful settlement has been exhausted.*<sup>54</sup>

In his commentary on this teaching, Vorgrimler explains that,

*The prime obligation is that of genuinely seeking a peaceful solution of every conflict; and the conviction that armed conflict can only be justified, if it is justified, in a situation of real international disorder.*<sup>55</sup>

According to my opinion, the obligation to look for a peaceful solution of the South African conflict, was fulfilled. In the introductory chapter, I discussed the various peaceful ways through which black people protested against distressing conditions of exploitation and oppression imposed on them by white people of this country. These peaceful solutions were met with ruthless suppression on the part of the South African government.

From the findings of the scholars I have quoted above discover that the blacks of South Africa were faced with a situation of international disorder: the South African blacks could not count on the United Nations, as a competent international body, to resolve the South African conflict, because the United Nations was dominated by western powers who economically benefited from the then apartheid structures of the South African government.

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54. 'The Church Today', *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. A. Gallagher (Geoffrey Chapman Publishers, London: 1966), p.293.

55. Vorgrimler, H. 'Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World', *A Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, Part II, chapter V. (Geoffrey Chapman Publishers, London: 1967), pp.354-355.

The Second Vatican Council's conditions for a Just War having thus been satisfied in the South African context, I now discuss briefly how this war should have been waged.

The line of thinking I follow here is that of the military wing of the African National Congress namely *Umkhonto Wesizwe*, whose armed struggle aimed not at bloodshed but at the sabotage of government economic and political institutions. In 1963 Nelson Mandela, emphasizing that *Umkhonto Wesizwe's* insurgencies were not aimed at the destruction of lives, said,

*Sabotage did not involve loss of life, and it offered the best hope for future race relations. Bitterness would be kept to the minimum and if the policy bore fruit, democratic government could become a reality.*<sup>56</sup>

The *Umkhonto's* campaign of sabotage did not succeed substantially partly because of the South African government spies who infiltrated the movement,<sup>57</sup> and brought about the detention of many of the leaders.<sup>58</sup>

This means that the first step would be to train people to be trustworthy, if the sabotage were to succeed. As in the case of *Umkhonto* in the 1960s,<sup>59</sup> even then targets to be bombed should be institutions utilized for the government's generation of income, for example, administrative offices, like the receiver of revenue offices, rent payment offices, post offices, parliament buildings. The

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56. Motlhabi, M., *op cit.*, p.67.

57. Lodge, T., *Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945* (Longman group Ltd, London 1983), p.237.

58. *Ibid.*, p.237.

59. *Ibid.*, p.234.

government-owned transport services would also be destroyed, as they also served as source of income for the apartheid structures. Among these I mention in particular the aeroplanes, the airports, the ships, buses and trains. Lastly police and army means of transport would also be reduced to rubble. Care would however be taken that there would not be a single soul in these vehicles and buildings at the time of the explosion.

The main aim of these acts of sabotage would be to bring the then South African government finally to accept the truth that,

*South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all people.*<sup>60</sup>

South African blacks failed to drive the message home in a peaceful manner to convince the government that they were also full citizens of this country, and that they needed to have all their economic and political rights fully recognized.<sup>61</sup> Having thus failed, the only choice was to turn to an armed struggle.

But the aim of this struggle would not be the destruction of human life. Neither would this struggle be aimed at the annihilation of private property, for reasons put forward by Mandela above, namely to avoid bitterness among different peoples of South Africa, thereby paving the way for the sincere acceptance of a democratic society.<sup>62</sup>

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60. See A. Nolan *God in South Africa* (David Philip, Johannesburg 1988), p.221.

61. See Chapter 1 under subheading, *Black Peaceful Resistance to Apartheid*, pp.12-15.

62. See M. Motlhabi, *op cit.*, p.67.

The theological framework within which the Second Vatican Council places the Just War criterion under study is that of peace which is not brought about by dictatorship:

*Instead it is rightly and appropriately called an enterprise of justice (Isaiah 32.7). Peace results from that harmony built into human society by its divine Founder, and actualized by men [sic] as they thirst after ever greater justice.*<sup>63</sup>

I interpret the council to be saying that peace can come to being only if justice is given a chance to be the foundation of that peace.

The quenching of this thirst for justice brings about this peace which has been implanted by God in people's hearts. The council further teaches that this peace should be based on Christ's law that we should love our neighbour as we love ourselves. The council maintains that,

*A firm determination to respect other men and peoples and their dignity, as well as the studied practice of brotherhood, are absolutely necessary for the establishment of peace.*<sup>64</sup>

The members of the Second Vatican Council were however well aware that the sinfulness of humanity might impede the actualization of this peace. And indeed the council holds that,

*In so far as men [sic] are sinful the threat of war hangs over them, and hang over them it will until the return of Christ.*<sup>65</sup>

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63. See W. Abbott, *op cit.*, p.290.

64. *Ibid.*, p.290.

65. *Ibid.*, p.291.

I understand the council to be saying that sinfulness shatters the two pillars of peace namely justice and love, thereby bringing about relationships of injustice and hatred among people.

The Second Vatican Council is at pains to teach that this sinfulness should be rooted out by force of arms, if persistent efforts to do so peacefully, fail.

The leadership of the Catholic Church in South Africa during this period was supposed to sincerely pass on this teaching of the Church, which is endorsed by the Second Vatican Council to the black masses who were desperately yearning for their political and economic liberation. It was imperative for this leadership to reveal to black people that it is legitimate and morally Christian, according to Vatican II, to uproot injustice through revolutionary violence in the event of total failure to do so through peaceful negotiation.

In other words this leadership was supposed to have announced to the man in the street that the official teaching of the Catholic Church was in full support of Mandela's stance for armed struggle as articulated above. This leadership was supposed to bring awareness to the black people that, fully supported by the Catholic Church, were generations of militant blacks who, after Nelson Mandela's imprisonment, also resorted to violence in an attempt to achieve a peaceful settlement, but without any signs of success.

Of course, I would not expect every Catholic leader in South Africa to be in solidarity with the oppressed. Some would not be interested in helping lay people establish a harmonious relationship between the gospel and matters of justice. It was, indeed, Bishop Zwane of the Catholic Church who in 1970 complained that:

*If you take the statements that the bishops have been making for the last twenty years and see the reaction or how much those statements have achieved, it is discouraging. The bishops have failed to make priests convey what they say to their parishioners. What the priests normally will do is to keep to the letter of the law: a pastoral letter must be read on a Sunday and it is read on a Sunday and the person who reads that pastoral letter makes it very clear, by the way he reads it, that he himself is not interested.*<sup>66</sup>

I interpret Bishop Zwane to be saying that the failure of the Catholic Church to uproot social injustice in South Africa can be partly attributed to the indifference of many Catholic priests. Had the priests been faithful in helping their parishioners implement the decisions of the local bishops and those of Vatican II, the Catholic Church would have contributed quite substantially towards the liberation of blacks in South Africa.

Bishop Zwane does however mention that not every priest was indifferent to the plight of the economically exploited in South Africa. He points out that there was a group of black priests who wanted to see a radical change in the structures of the Catholic Church and in those of the government.<sup>67</sup> My point here is that these few concerned priests irrespective of their colour or race, should have clubbed together to form a team whose major responsibility would be to pass on the social teachings of the local bishops and those of the Catholic Church as a whole.

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66. See *A Man for All People*, ed. Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR), (CIIR, London: 1983), p.39.

67. *Ibid.*, p.39. See also Jubber, K. 'Black and White Priests', *Catholics in Apartheid Society*, ed. A. Prior (David Philip, Cape Town), pp.131-133.

Part of their major responsibility would involve a specific focus on the legitimization of war by the Catholic Church, in the event of a failure of peaceful negotiation. In other words this team of priests would emphasize sincerely and courageously that according to the Catholic Church, the oppressed of South Africa were justified to wage a war against their oppressors because the latter always responded with a ruthless repression to any appeal for peaceful negotiation on the part of the oppressed.

For a rapid implementation of this teaching of Catholic Church, these Catholic priests would have had to work together with the militant clergy of the other denominations. John de Gruchy gives an account of the debate which erupted within the World Council of Churches (WCC) following the decision by its authorities to give financial support to liberation movements in South Africa. This WCC meeting was convoked in 1970 at Geneva in Switzerland. In South Africa this decision of the WCC divided people belonging to the member Churches into two groups, namely the group which subscribed to this decision of the WCC, and the group which wanted the member Churches to withdraw their membership in protest of the very same decision. Indeed John de Gruchy recounts that:

*In one Synod in 1970, during a heated moment in the debate on membership in the WCC, a white pastor spoke out against continued membership on the grounds that his son was at that time in the army defending the borders of South Africa against attacks by terrorists funded and supported by the WCC. In response a black pastor spoke for continued support because his*

*nephew was fighting on the other side of the border as a member of the liberation army.*<sup>68</sup>

It is true that de Gruchy does not enumerate the pastors who spoke in favour of continued membership, but the fact that he mentions that the debate was very much heated and that a black pastor spoke in favour of continued membership, does give a glimpse that there were people, including pastors who subscribed to the decision of the WCC to finance liberation movements in South Africa. It is these pastors who would have had to be contacted by militant priests of the Catholic Church for the building up of a bigger team which would conscientize the oppressed about both the teaching of the Catholic Church and the above-mentioned decision of the WCC. This bigger team would work together to form a combination of both the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and the decision of the WCC. Facilitating this combination would be the common ground shared by both Vatican II and WCC in the context of South Africa, namely to overthrow an oppressive and sinful government.

The members of this team would have had to tell Christians on the ground that they (members) were mandated by the highest authorities of both the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC to teach that it is morally legitimate to resort to arms if peaceful settlement fails.

Christians on the ground would be further taught by the team that for the same reason of a failure of peaceful negotiation, it is morally just to finance liberation

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68. de Gruchy, J. *The Church Struggle in South Africa* (David Philip, Cape Town: 1977), p.137. See also C. Villa-Vicencio, *Trapped in Apartheid* (Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York: 1988), p.111.

movements who would then accelerate the process of liberation through force of arms, as the WCC held.<sup>69</sup>

Part of this team's major task would be to unmask the hypocrisy of the Church of the West about which Desmond Tutu is talking above.<sup>70</sup> This Church, Tutu writes, not only approved of the West's decision to wage war against Hitler, but the same church helped underground movements which fought against Hitler's armies. Tutu further complains that when it comes to helping blacks in South Africa to liberate themselves through military means, the West and most of its church members begin to show signs of pacifism. The economic interests underlying this hypocrisy would have had to be revealed to the Church in South Africa by the team. The revelation of this hypocrisy together with the economic motives behind it would serve to motivate those church members in South Africa who bear the brunt of exploitation and oppression to give moral, financial and spiritual support to liberation movements.

This historical data revealed by Tutu would further indicate to the oppressed of South Africa that in the face of massive exploitation, pacifism was not the only possible solution: an armed struggle was also an acceptable solution as demonstrated by the church of the West whose case is discussed by Tutu above.

By way of further encouraging the oppressed of South Africa to take arms against their oppressors the team of priests in question would have had to back up the stances of both the Catholic Church and the WCC with a biblical theology.

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69. Villa-Vicencio, C. *op cit.*, pp.109-110.

70. See footnote 38.

This biblical theology would have served as a means to convince the oppressed of South Africa that both the Catholic Church and the WCC were mandated by God to take their respective stances. Itumeleng Mosala reports that:

*The Bible plays a crucial role in the lives of black working class people in South Africa. It has such a grip of minds and hearts of the majority of them that they do not have the luxury, like members of other classes and races, of choosing to be or not to be a Christian. For many of them to believe in the Bible and thus to be a Christian, is natural.*<sup>71</sup>

Explaining what this strong belief in the Bible means, Mosala stresses that the Bible has a canonical authority in the black working class.<sup>72</sup> My interpretation of what Mosala is saying is that the Bible is a valuable standard by means of which the black working class judges whether or not a moral position is legitimate.

Mosala's research study is limited in the sense that it deals only with the black working class. But what he is saying about the value of the Bible is also true of other categories of black Christians who together with these black workers comprise 88% of people identifying themselves as Christians in South Africa.<sup>73</sup> To all of these black Christians: workers and unemployed, young and old, a biblical theology is of absolute necessity for the moral legitimation

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71. Mosala, I. 'Race, Class and Gender as Hermeneutical Factors in the African Independent Churches' Appropriation of the Bible.' This paper was written in Cape Town for the Human Sciences Research Council. Date not indicated and pages are not numbered.

72. *Ibid.*, See subheading 'The use of the Bible in the African Independent Churches'.

73. Nolan, A., *God in South Africa* (David Philip, Cape Town: 1988), p xi.

of the position of both Vatican II and the WCC. The biblical theology in question would be similar to that of the Kairos theologians who held that:

*Throughout the Bible the word violence is used to describe everything that is done by a wicked oppressor (e.g. Ps. 72:12-14; Is. 9:1-8; Gen. 22:13-17; Amos 3:9-10, Mica 2:2; 3:1-3; 6:12). It is never used to describe the activities of Israel's armies in attempting to liberate themselves or to resist aggression. When Jesus says we should turn the other cheek he is telling us that we must not revenge: he is not saying that we should never defend ourselves.<sup>74</sup>*

The moral positions of both the Catholic Church and the WCC, supported by a biblical theology similar to the one cited above, were going to surprise black people, the majority of whom are used to a pacifist interpretation of the scriptures which is totally opposed to violence as a means to solve social conflicts. Condemning this interpretation as narrow is Buti Thlagale who maintains that:

*That the gospel or life-history of Christ makes no room for the use of violence to right the wrongs of society remains a massive scandal among the oppressed. And yet the story of this Christ is a story of a series of subversions.<sup>75</sup>*

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74. See *Between Christ and Caesar*, ed. C. Villa-Vicencio (David Philip, Cape Town: 1986), p.259.

75. Thlagale, B. 'Christian Soldiers', *Theology and Violence* (Skotaville Publishers, Braamfontein: 1987), p.88.

More serious than Tihagale's condemnation was Steve Biko's attack on the negative role the gospel played at the time the whites were depriving blacks of their land. He said,

*At first we had the land and the white men had the gospel. Then the missionaries came and taught to us close our eyes and say our prayers while the white men were stealing our land from us. And now we have the gospel and they have the land.*<sup>76</sup>

There is no doubt that what Biko implicitly meant here was that the kind of interpretation of the gospel given to blacks at the time of the appropriation of their land by whites was the one which discouraged violent resistance and encouraged blacks to act like muzzled dogs in the face of injustice. Biko further mentions that resulting from this deadly interpretation has been a rejection of Christianity by militant blacks.<sup>77</sup> Concurring with Biko is Albert Nolan who asserted that:

*The youth of the townships has lost patience with the Churches and with all the confused and contorted interpretations of the gospel. They are leaving the church in their thousands. To them the gospel seems to be at best an irrelevant distraction and at worst an obstacle in the way of genuine liberation and peace.*<sup>78</sup>

The Catholic Church, helped by the WCC, could have redeemed this situation of a massive exodus of the youth from the churches as a result of this confused interpretation of the gospel. Helped by the WCC, the Catholic Church

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76. See W. Bühlmann, *The Missions on Trial* (St Paul Publications, Slough: 1978), p.45.

77. *Ibid.*, p 46.

78. Nolan, A., 1 *op cit.*, p.5.

could have helped a lot of young blacks to discover that there is an unknown aspect of the gospel which encourages violent resistance if peaceful resistance fails.

But all of what I have been discussing thus far is now history. The leadership of the Catholic Church in South Africa has failed to implement Vatican II's teaching on the Just War theory at the time the oppressed of South Africa needed it most desperately. Nelson Mandela who first encouraged peaceful negotiation and then proceeded to armed struggle when he saw peaceful resistance failing, is now president of South Africa after being voted into power by the majority of blacks who voted for the first time in their lives on the 27 April 1994. (*Natal Mercury* 27.04.1994).

Is my thesis therefore obsolete? I do not believe so. To explain myself I wish to reiterate one of the reasons why the Second Vatican Council deemed it fitting to pronounce its teaching on the Just War. The Council held that:

*In so far as men are sinful the threat of war hangs over them,  
and hang over them it will until the return of Christ.*<sup>79</sup>

What the Council meant here is that all people irrespective of their colour, race or creed are sinful. Nelson Mandela is no exception to this statement. He together with members of his cabinet have their own weaknesses and shortcomings. Already now after hardly one year in power people are already complaining of the gravy train they are enjoying (*Natal Mercury*, 12.12.1994). This means that they are accused of extravagance while millions of people who voted them in power are homeless, jobless and without proper security

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79. See footnote 49.

for their lives. These are some of the results of the sinfulness which the Second Vatican Council is talking about.

In Africa after decolonisation, the assassination of the rightful leaders and their replacement by indigenous despots has been the order of the day. These despots would rule with an iron hand.<sup>80</sup> President Mandela might not be a tyrant. He even promised on the first anniversary of his rule that it would take about five years to fulfil promises which he made when he was campaigning for elections (*The Nation*, 30.04.1995).

Of course a promise does not necessarily guarantee its fulfilment. As a human with his weaknesses and shortcomings Mandela might not fulfil what he promises. He or his successors may turn out to be the worst tyrants the world has ever seen.

If a South African tyrant refuses to turn away from his or her sinful and brutal ways, in spite of incessant peaceful appeals, then according to the Catholic Church, this tyrant should be removed through armed struggle by the citizens.

My thesis is therefore not obsolete. On the contrary it is valid for any situation of incorrigible denial of the populace's fundamental rights.

Having thus applied the Catholic Church's teaching on the Just War to the South African situation, I now discuss in the next chapter the implications which this teaching may have on the theology of revolution.

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80. See F.S. Malan, M.S. Appelgryn and B.M. Theron, *New History to the Point* (Educum Publishers, Johannesburg: 1987), p.140.

## CHAPTER 4

### IMPLICATIONS FOR THE THEOLOGY OF REVOLUTION

Before I discuss the implications of the Just War ethic, as taught by the Catholic Church, for the theology of revolution, I want to give a brief description of this same theology. The theology of revolution is a theology which emerges out of a praxis of revolution. Camilo Torres, a Catholic guerilla priest in Colombia describes this praxis of revolution as:

*The way to obtain a government that will feed the hungry, clothe the naked and teach the unschooled, revolution will produce a government that carries out works of charity, of love for one's fellows - not only a few but for the majority of our fellow-men<sup>1</sup>*

According to my interpretation, Torres is describing revolution from the Christian point of view in the sense that he is alluding to Christ's words found in Matthew 25. In this text Christ gives the core of his moral teaching which consists in serving God through works of charity such as feeding the hungry and clothing the naked,<sup>2</sup> I further interpret this process of feeding the starving and clothing the needy as symbolic of providing fundamental rights to all citizens of a country.

Following the description of revolution given above, the theology of revolution will therefore be a theology which critically legitimates revolution in so far as

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1. Torres C, 'Message to Christians', *A Reader in Political Theology*, ed. A. Kee (SCM Press, London: 1974), p.146.
  2. McKenzie, J.L. 'The Gospel According to Matthew', *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, eds R. Brown, J. Fitzmyer and R. Murphy (Geoffrey Chapman, London: 1968), p.107.

it is a means through which all fundamental rights of humanity are fully recognized. Put in another way, the theology of revolution critically justifies any revolution in so far as it totally transforms abject conditions of oppression and exploitation into those of economic and political prosperity, Indeed Dale Brown affirms that,

*The advent of theologies of revolution means that Christians do respond to historical situations.*<sup>3</sup>

The particular historical situations which Brown has in mind are those of rich people who become richer in different countries at the expense of the poor. He also discusses that,

*The amount of money spent on armaments by a few major powers is equal to the total national income of the combined continents of Central South America, Africa and Asia.*<sup>4</sup>

Brown further explains that the theology of revolution does not only serve as a Christian response to occasions presented by history, but it is also an attempt to look for revolutionary themes of the biblical witness. For example, he maintains that,

*The prophetic theme of promise and fulfilment does not depict the movement of history so much in terms of a neat evolutionary course as in terms of judgement and tearing down, salvation and building up. The central Exodus motif is one of a deliverance*

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3. Brown, D., *The Christian Revolutionary* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan: 1971), p.21.

4. *Ibid.*, p.19.

*from political enslavement and the sending forth of a pilgrim people into a new history.*<sup>5</sup>

The various interventions of God in the history of the Hebrews implicitly discussed by Brown above, bring me to highlight one of the pillars of revolution theology. This pillar is the dynamic view of history which the proponents of this theology give, namely that,

*History has a direction and that God is working in history. The biblical message shows us that this direction is toward greater justice, love and freedom. In working out this direction God encounters human intransigence especially as found in human social structures which are oppressive and unjust and ultimately constitute a form of violence.*<sup>6</sup>

If the human intransigence mentioned in the foregoing quotation continues unabated, it is then legitimate, according to some theologians of revolution, to eradicate it through revolutionary violence. It is indeed Dom Jorge, the Bishop of Santo Andres in Brazil who maintained that,

*Armed revolution by the people is justified when oppression rules and famine wages obtain.*<sup>7</sup>

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5. *Ibid.*, pp.21-22.

6. McCormick, R., *Notes on Moral Theology: 1965 through 1980* (University Press, Georgetown: 1981), p.178. See also R. Shaull, 'Christian Faith as Scandal in a Technocratic World', *New Theology No. 6*, ed. M.E. Marty and D.G. Peerman (McMillan Company, London: 1969), p.127.

7. See R. McCormick, *op cit.*, p.182.

In the same breath, Bishop Marcos McGrath of Santiago de Veraguas in Panama, although not without reservations,<sup>8</sup> asserted that,

*Where the few are established in power and this power is systematically used to augment their own interests and block efforts at improving the situation of the majority who are in need, then these Christians say, violence is already present. To strike out against this violence requires no further ethical argument. It is merely self defense.*<sup>9</sup>

Having thus described briefly, the theology of revolution, I now discuss the implications which my thesis may have for the theology of revolution. I am actually focusing on only one implication, namely that the theology of revolution, if it is to be defined as such in every sense of the word, will have to consider the incorporation of the question of armed struggle into its agenda. It is not every theology of revolution which seriously reflects on the issue of violence: there is a trend in this theology which actually condemns an armed struggle as a means to achieve justice, and freedom.<sup>10</sup> Revolution, according to this trend, does not necessarily entail armed struggle. The position of this trend, according to Richard McCormick, is summarized in the statement of the Third World Bishops who declared that,

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8. *Ibid.*, p.183. In principle, however, Bishop McGrath is opposed to violence as a possible Christian position.

9. *Ibid.*, p.183.

10. See J.M. Lochman, 'Ecumenical Theology of Revolution', *New Theology No. 6*, ed. M.E. Marty and D.G. Peerman (McMillan Company, London: 1969), pp.105-106. See also R.F. Smith, 'A Theology of Rebellion', *New Theology No. 6*, ed. M.E. Marty and D.G. Peerman (McMillan Company, London: 1969), p.142. See also G.M. Gingerich, *The Christian and Revolution* (Herald Press, Scottdale, Pennsylvania: 1968), pp.182-184. See also J. Moltmann, 'God in Revolution', *A Reader in Political Theology*, ed. A. Kee (SCM Press Ltd, London: 1974). See also J. Ellul, *Violence: Reflections from a Christian Perspective* (Seabury Press, New York: 1969), p.60.

*As soon as a system ceases to ensure the common good to the profit of some party involved, the Church must not merely condemn such injustice, but dissociate herself from the system of privilege, ready to collaborate with another that is better adapted to the needs of the time, and more just.<sup>11</sup>*

I interpret the statement of the Bishops to be a true reflection of a theology of revolution at a practical or grassroots level. Revolution in this statement consists in the Church's condemnation and dissociating from an unjust system on the one hand, and her collaboration with a just system which looks after the basic needs of the populace on the other. Apparently what is taken for granted in this understanding of revolution is that the unjust ruler will repent, when he sees that the Church is no more supporting his party. But the process of transformation of injustice into economic and political prosperity for all is not that simple. The Bishops' statement, in other words, does not indicate the steps to be taken if a system or ruler continues stubbornly to oppress and exploit the people in spite of repeated condemnations and dissociation of the Church from such a ruler or system of government.

J.G. Davies, in my opinion, seems to solve the problem which is discussed in the foregoing paragraph. He emerges from a different trend of revolution theology, namely that which critically incorporates the question of violence into its programme.

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11. McCormick R., *op cit.*, p.181. See also M.E. Marty and D.G. Peerman, *op cit.*, p.246.

Unlike the other revolution theologians mentioned above,<sup>12</sup> Davies seriously analyses the issue of a violent struggle from the theological point of view. It is for this reason that I have chosen him to help me discuss the implication of my thesis for the theology of revolution.

Davies argues that Christians live in a world where law and order are maintained by governmental machinery of force. In this same world the obduracy of sin necessitates resistance and war. As a result of this situation, a very large majority of Christians have finally accepted, not without reluctance, that the use of arms, even to the measure of putting others to death may be correct, even ethically necessary. Explaining his argument further he says,

*Indeed there is little reason to doubt that if tomorrow, without provocation the United States were to be attacked by Communist China or England were to be attacked by fascist Spain, the majority of sincere believers would consider it their duty to fight in defence of their country. Why then should many of these same Christians, if a revolution is in question, then begin to talk of Christ the Prince of Peace and argue that in a situation of grave injustice passive obedience, or at the most non-violent resistance, is the only way? Of course not every war can be regarded as just and the selective conscientious objection of*

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12. There are other theologians too, who write positively about the question of violence, for example G. Celestin, 'A Christian looks at Revolution', *New Theology No. 6*, ed. M.E. Marty and D.G. Peerman (McMillan Company, London: 1969), p.100-101. See also K. Rahner, *Theological Investigations vol. IV* (Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, London: 1966), pp.401-402. See also J. Cone *Black Theology and Black Power* (Seabury Press New York: 1969), p.138-143. But all these theologians, according to my judgement, defend the question of violence from an ethical point of view, and not so much from the theological view point. I have therefore chosen J.G. Davies as he is the one who delves deeply into the defense of violence from the theological viewpoint.

*many Americans to the Vietnam engagement was testimony to this.*<sup>13</sup>

Davies challenges Christians to be consistent in thought and action: if they believe that it is possible to consider some wars as legitimate, then they must consider that the use of violence in a revolutionary situation may be considered just. He totally agrees with John Milton who declares that,

*If it is right to resist a foreign monarch who invades a country with the intention of enslaving its people, it is equally right to resist one's own Government if it is intent upon tyrannizing the populace: the Law of civil defensive war differs nothing from the Law of foreign hostility.*<sup>14</sup>

Giving theological grounds for his position Davies makes no secret of fact that God does at times encourage revolutionary force in so far as it is a force which breaks the old violent structures in order to usher in new social structures which accommodate justice and freedom. He affirms that,

*God is the one who breaks the rod of the oppressor (Is.9-4). A revolution indeed may be a sign of the Kingdom, that God is at work putting down the mighty from their seat. This God is the one who wields power. The Assyrians - not remarkable for their restraint in battle - are the rod of His anger (Is. 10-15), while the*

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13. Davies, J.G., *Christians, Politics and Violent Revolution* (SCM Press Ltd, London: 1976), p.148; see also J. Cone, *op cit.*, pp.138-139.

14. See Davies J.G., *op cit.*, p.149.

*Babylonians represent the divine outstretched hand and strong arm (Jer. 21.5).<sup>15</sup>*

And to the Christians who believe that the vindication of the oppressed should be left entirely in the hands of God, Davies responds by pointing out that,

*I know of no action attributed to God in history that is not at the same time the action of human beings believed to be His agents.<sup>16</sup>*

Emphasizing this human mediation of God's action in the history of humanity, Davies reminds Christians that,

*God does not call people simply to have a people, but that through them, if they are obedient, he may actualize His will in history.<sup>17</sup>*

Concurring with Davies is James Cone who strongly believes that:

*Christianity has to do with fighting with God against the evils of human life. One does not sit and wait on God to do all the fighting, but joins him in the fight against slavery.<sup>18</sup>*

Davies is also aware of the absolute pacifists who, basing themselves on faulty biblical exegesis try to absolutize their position as the only one which is Christian, in the sense that it condemns the question of war as un-Christian.

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15. *Ibid.*, p.159.

16. *Ibid.*, p.160.

17. *Ibid.*, p.119.

18. See J.G. Davies, *op cit.*, p.120.

The pacifists often base their position on Matthew 5:21 which reads, 'Do not kill'. Davies repudiates this pacifist argumentation as it confuses personal ethics with social ethics. He claims that in the context of Matthew 5:21 Jesus,

*... was clearly thinking of interpersonal relations and not of the phenomenon of war, to which, in any case, there is no direct reference in any of the teaching ascribed to him, neither to the appropriate behaviour of a political community threatened by aggression nor to the conduct of the oppressed in conditions of structural violence.*<sup>19</sup>

In Matthew 5:21, Jesus is actually alluding to the sixth commandment found in the Old Testament (Exodus 20:13). Davies further explains that,

*The sixth commandment is concerned with murder and cannot be held to condemn killing in general, since the Old Testament explicitly sanctions war and capital punishment. To suppose otherwise is to be guilty of a naive biblicism which itself conceals a legalistic approach. A verse is used to deduce from it a rule of action. Little account is taken of the context and there is no recognition that certain statements relate to specific circumstances.*<sup>20</sup>

Also often interpreted out of context, Davies complains, is the text, 'all who take the sword will perish by the sword' (Mt. 26:52). Davies claims that if thorough research is conducted as to what the intention of Jesus was at the

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19. *Ibid.*, p.149.

20. *Ibid.*, 150.

time he uttered the quoted words, and in what setting he was talking, it will be discovered that he was by no means giving an injunction to absolute pacifism:

*He [Jesus] was simply saying that at that hour he had no need of armed support. In no sense were these words uttered in a political situation which is constitutive for the problem of war but in relation to the prevention of Jesus from pursuing his path of suffering.<sup>21</sup>*

'Turning the other cheek' (Mt. 5:40) Davies complains further, is another text which is often interpreted literalistically by pacifists. He claims that correctly interpreted, this text

*... is to be understood as a rejection of **lex talionis**. It is primarily concerned with asserting that Christians in their conduct must not be motivated by a spirit of revenge. As such it has no bearing upon an overt act of defence.<sup>22</sup>*

Davies is also aware of the objection presented in terms of means and ends, by those who are opposed to the use of arms in a revolution.<sup>23</sup> The objection is that the good ends namely freedom and justice cannot legitimate violence which is understood to be an evil means. The exponents of this argument even claim that their position is supported by the apostle Paul (Rom. 3:8).<sup>24</sup>

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21. *Ibid.*, p.150.

22. *Ibid.*, p.150.

23. *Ibid.*, 162.

24. *Ibid.*, p.162.

Davies responds by arguing that it is false to say that evil means cannot lead to good ends. To explain his case, he gives two examples. In the first example he claims that:

*Few Christians would deny that the crucifixion of Christ was an evil act, but equally they would not question that out of this came immense good.*<sup>25</sup>

In the second example, Davies argues that it is an armed revolution which led to the liberation of Portugal and subsequently to the independence of Portugal's colonies. Had the oppressive government in Portugal not been ousted by force, Davies holds, repression would have continued in that country. Further, the guerilla war in Portugal's African colonies, which had already cost many lives, would also have continued, says Davies.<sup>26</sup>

Davies further argues that the apostle Paul is cited out of context. In this verse (Rom. 3:8) Paul was defending his position against those who, misunderstanding his theology of grace, claimed that people are free to commit sins, because sinful occasions serve as a means to demonstrate God's endless mercy and forgiveness.<sup>27</sup> In his evaluation of the question of means and ends, Davies points out that the pacifist often maintains an extremely erroneous position of absolutizing the means. According to this position it is never right to steal, kill or lie. Condemning this position, Davies argues that the means are always dictated by a situation. He says for example,

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25. *Ibid.*, p.162. My interpretation of Davies is that the question of the good end produced by the crucifixion is certainly not the idea of the agents of the crucifixion: It is purely and entirely a Christian reflection on the crucifixion of Christ.

26. *Ibid.*, p.163.

27. *Ibid.*, p.163

*When massive oppression obtains, non-violence may not be an effective means to achieve liberation.*<sup>28</sup>

In the opinion of Davies, the pacifists' view is ahistorical as it fails to acknowledge the specific circumstances leading to the so-called evil means. The condemnation of this ahistorical point of view is also raised by Hugo Assmann who declares that anyone,

*Who always knows a priori how to act in a situation which does not yet exist takes an immoral decision precisely because it is abstract and non-historical.*<sup>29</sup>

Davies concludes his reflections by stating that he is by no means romanticizing violence. All he is saying is that the complexity of moral issues leaves no room for clear-cut solutions. Having no infallible guides dropped down from heaven, Christians will therefore differ in their approaches to questions of a moral nature. And indeed, Davies maintains that,

*Just as the Church has accepted the validity of the pacifist witness, while refusing to hold that it is incumbent on all, so it is time that it accepted the possible validity of the witness of the revolutionary Christian, while equally refusing to universalize this form of discipleship.*<sup>30</sup>

Before I evaluate the works of Davies, let me quickly mention that it has not been my intention in this chapter to give a full-scale comparative study of

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28. *Ibid.*, p.164.

29. *Ibid.*, p.164.

30. *Ibid.*, p.161.

different trends of revolution theology. My intention has been to single out a theologian or theologians of revolution who would neither romanticize nor demonize the question of violence, but who would analyze it from a tentatively fine theological point of view. And for me this theologian is Davies who displays a great independence of thought in connection with the question of violence.

The point of departure in my brief analysis is this independence of thought which is commendable but unfortunately very rare among South African theologians serving oppressed societies.<sup>31</sup> \*\*\*Encouraging this independence of thought to his fellow African scholars is Appiah-Kubi who claims that,

*Our question must not be what Karl Barth, Rahner or any other Karl has to say, but what God would have us do in our living concrete condition. For too long African Christian theologians and scholars have been preoccupied with what missionary A or theologian B or scholar C has told us about the Lord Jesus Christ.*<sup>32</sup>

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31. 1987). From a volume of this kind I expected theologians (contributors), who are resident in townships and in bantustans to come up with a revolutionary theology which would cause the exploited black masses with whom they stay, to combat the racism under which they suffer, by means of revolutionary force. This book was edited during the 1986 State of Emergency. It is during this excruciating period of black oppression that Sheena Duncan, one of the most adamant pacifists in South Africa (p.271), attests to the absolute intransigence of the South African government (see footnote No. 31 in Chapter 3 of my thesis). It is this absolute impossibility to negotiate with the South African government, which should have motivated contributors such as Allan Boesak, Seqibo Dwane, Desmond Tutu, Frank Chikane, and Buti Tihagale to carry out a theology of revolutionary violence which would ferment the revolutionary climate which already existed among blacks during this period (see p.93 in Chapter 3 of my thesis). Each one of the above-mentioned authors gives a very good analysis of the economic and political situation in South Africa. But it is not so much the analysis of the situation in South Africa which I expected from these authors: I expected a revolutionary theology based on the analysis they respectively made.
32. Appiah-Kubi, K. 'Preface', *African Theology en Route*, eds K. Appiah-Kubi and S. Torres (Maryknoll, New York: 1979), p.viii.

Following the example of Davies, and taking Appiah-Kubi seriously, a South African theologian serving the exploited has to cease to be a slavish follower of any Western scholar. Instead he should critically and boldly make mention that in the face of massive oppression an armed resistance may be legitimized as an effective instrument of liberation. Taken seriously, the divergent living conditions often dictate to us how we should theologize.<sup>33</sup> This was clearly demonstrated at the conference on Church and Society which took place in Geneva in 1966. Part of the conference was devoted to a very controversial question of whether or not it is permissible for Christians to uproot injustice through revolutionary violence.<sup>34</sup>

Representatives from the Third World in the above-mentioned conference, approved of revolutionary force in order to bring about justice and freedom. And indeed Gonzalo Castillo-Cardenas, a spokesman from the Third World strongly maintained that

*Revolution is not only permitted, but is obligatory for those Christians who see it as the only effective way of fulfilling love to one's neighbour.*<sup>35</sup>

On the other hand, delegates from the highly industrialized countries showed a more reserved attitude towards the problem of revolutionary violence. Helmet Gollwitzer, a spokesperson from one of these countries complained that,

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33. Boesak, A., 'Liberation in South Africa', *African Theology en Route*, eds K. Appiah-Kubi and S. Torres (Maryknoll, New York: 1979), pp.171-172.

34. Lochman, J.M., 'Ecumenical Theology of Revolution', *New Theology No. 6*, eds M.E. Marty and D.E. Peerman (McMillan Company, London: 1969), pp.110-111.

35. *Ibid.*, p.112.

*Just this moment, when we ... are inclined to regard as mistaken the traditional approval of Christian participation in the use of military force and to hoist the flag of pacifism .... we hear from our brethren in the under-developed countries (where the situation is a revolutionary one) that they consider it incumbent upon them to participate in national and social revolutionary struggles which involve the use of force.*<sup>36</sup>

A theologian serving oppressed masses in South Africa should learn from this international conference of Geneva that we cannot theologize in the same manner precisely because the situations from which we emerge are markedly different. Like Castillo-Cardenas, he or she should not be scared to legitimate revolutionary force as a possible solution in the face of massive exploitation. Performing this task of legitimating revolutionary force, even more elaborately is J. G. Davies even though he is not a Third World theologian.<sup>37</sup>

Strikingly peculiar to Davies is the way he builds his argument on violence, on a very firm biblical foundation. He makes no secret of the fact that the Old Testament explicitly sanctions war and capital punishment. He further mentions that some of the wars in the Old Testament are actually waged by God through human agents who should always be at his service to crush the stubborn and evil structures that oppress mankind.

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36. *Ibid.*, p.113.

37. At the time his book was published, Davies was a theologian teaching at the University of Birmingham. This volume is, in my opinion, an adequate reply to the question: How would you theologize if you found yourself in a situation of massive economic exploitation suffered by a very large majority of people in the Third World?

The scriptures interpreted in the manner of Davies in South Africa, would have contributed quite substantially to the liberation of black people who have been used to oppressive interpretations which encourage them to be obedient to their white masters.<sup>38</sup>

James Cochrane mentions that underlying this distorted interpretation of the scriptures is the Hegelian ideological relationship between the master and the slave. He claims that this,

*... [Hegelian] master/slave view of reality leads to an interpretation of Biblical morality as encouraging obedience to the employer and mutual respect between employers and workers. A paternalistic sense of the employer's responsibility to the worker commonly accompanies this ethic, while no critique of power or of structures of power enters into the equation.*<sup>39</sup>

Davies's counter-interpretation made known to the oppressed, would have possibly helped many black workers demolish deadly interpretation of the scriptures as discussed by Cochrane above.

The case of Davies would have been much stronger had he included in his theological discourse, the findings of K. Mosothoane, A. Nolan and P.G.R. de Villiers on the text of Luke 22:35-38. These three South African scholars concur that,

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38. Cochrane, J., 'Workers, the Church and the Alienation of Religious Life'. (This is a paper delivered at the *Theology, Work and Labour Conference* which was held in Pietermaritzburg on the 28th of March 1989), p.80.

39. Cochrane, J., *op cit.*, p.23.

*This text must be understood in the context of a very well known custom at the time of Jesus. Travellers usually took a sword with them as protection against thieves and wild animals.*<sup>40</sup>

I find it extremely difficult to exclude the Roman colonizers of the time of Jesus, from among the thieves mentioned in the foregoing quotation. Usurping the land and extracting exorbitant amounts of tax from the inhabitants as the Romans were doing to the Jews during the time of Jesus,<sup>41</sup> is tantamount to stealing.

In the context of South Africa, the National Party government which was still ruling the country during the period 1960-1989,<sup>42</sup> cannot be excluded from among the thieves mentioned by the theologians above. This government, through its apartheid legislation, has deprived black people of their land.<sup>43</sup> \*\*

To use the sword or armed struggle against this oppressive government, especially after long periods of fruitless negotiation, would be absolutely legitimate, following the exegesis of Luke 22:35-38 given by the three scholars mentioned above.

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40. Mosothoane, K., 'Violence in the Gospel Tradition', *Theology and Violence*, ed. C. Villa-Vicencio (Skotaville Publishers, Johannesburg: 1987), p.130. See also de Villiers, P.G.R., *Liberation Theology and the Bible* (University of South Africa, Pretoria: 1987), p.66. See also Nolan, A., *Jesus Before Christianity* (Darton Longman and Tood, London: 1977), p.110.

41. Waetjen, H.C. *A Re-Ordering of Power* (Fortress, Minnesota: 1989), pp.7-12.

42. 1960-1989 is the period on which I focus. The socio-economic and political analysis of this period given in Chapter 1.

43. See Chapter 1 of my thesis, pp.

Finally, I maintain that a theology of revolution, if it is meant to inspire the oppressed to liberate themselves from incorrigible political structures, will have to reveal the truth that it is both biblical and Christian to resort to arms in the face of massive exploitation. The research studies conducted by Davies on the question of violence in the Old Testament on the one hand, and the analysis of Luke 22:35-38 by Mosothoane, Nolan and de Villiers on the other hand, clearly bear testimony that God does approve of violence used for defence purposes. A theology of revolution wishing to identify fully with the cause of the oppressed, will have to present the research data of the scholars mentioned above in all honesty to the same oppressed, thereby creating a conducive atmosphere of a true revolution against all unrepentant and oppressive social structures.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter consists of some concluding remarks. These remarks partly indicate that there are areas, related to my study, in which some research is of utmost importance.

In Chapter 1, I tried to outline the economic and political conflict in South Africa within which I am discussing the Just War ethic as articulated by Vatican II.

What I learned from this chapter is that economic and political rights form a major part of those fundamental rights of humanity so much so that a regime risks instability if it does not recognize and grant these basic rights. The South African regime - during the period under study - suffered political and economic instability as it made concerted efforts to suppress the black people's thirst for the basic rights discussed above. So basic are these rights to humanity that people are prepared to die fighting for them, if a regime denies them the opportunity to exercise them. A regime's stable and peaceful rule is possible only if it promotes the fundamental rights of all citizens irrespective of their race or creed.

Chapter 2 dealt with the historical evolution of the Just War ethic. The point I tried to highlight in this chapter is the fact that even though Christian writers such as Augustine, Thomas and Vittoria are known to have contributed quite considerably toward the Christianizing the Just War ethic, little material however on this subject belongs to them in its original form. To a large extend

what these Christian authors did was to provide theological foundations to an ethic which originally belonged to a pagan world.

I found this chapter eye-opening: As early as in the classical period, that is, long before the birth of Christianity, pagan people like Plato and the Stoics already held that all people are brothers and sisters irrespective of race or nation, and therefore they should respect one another's rights even during excruciating periods of war. The position of these ancient Greeks is similar to the text of Matthew 25, on which Camillo Torres bases his discussion in Chapter 4 of my thesis.

The similarity between these ancient Greeks' and the Christian doctrine (Mt. 25) leads me to believe what some scholars claim namely that part of the New Testament has been heavily influenced by Greek mythology and morally. I no doubt these scholarly findings invite a further broadening or revisitation of the question of inspiration: does the incorporation of Greek mythology and morality into the New Testament form part of process of inspiration? I leave this question in the hands of biblical scholars. Suffice it at the moment to say the New Testament's adoption of pagan morality and mythology raises the need to redefine both inspiration and revelation.

In Chapter 3 I focused on the application of a Just War ethic as taught by Vatican II, to the situation in South Africa during the period 1960-1989. I argued in this chapter that the Catholic Church in South Africa failed to offer the oppressed of this country an ethic (Just War ethic) which they desperately needed during this period in order to attain their liberation.

But did the black people of this country not have their own version of the Just War? Did they have to wait for Vatican II to furnish them with one? At this stage I feel there is a need to be in dialogue with scholars of African Anthropology in this country: they might be in possession of research studies resulting from an investigation of what constitutes a Just War ethic in an African context. A comparative study of the African version and the Second Vatican Council's version of the Just War ethic would have probably facilitated much better the implementation of this ethic in South Africa. I am of the opinion that people understand a foreign phenomenon much better if they compare it with what they originally and traditionally had in possession.

In Chapter 4 I have discussed the implication of my study on the theology of revolution. In this chapter, J.G. Davies, a Just War proponent and theologian of revolution, is partly involved in a debate with pacifism. This debate indicates that the morality of warfare seriously divides Christians across the board. While pacifism condemns all form of violence as evil, the Just War tradition condones wars waged for purposes self-defence. Davies, trying to meet each of these moral positions halfway, contends that the church should approve of the witness of revolutionary violence without universalizing it just as it did in the case of pacifism.

Since I do not foresee any near future resolution between these two positions of morality I totally agree with Davies that the Church should recognize and respect the two positions without absolutizing any one of them. However this deadlock requires some neutral scholar, if there can be any, to conduct research into how the two positions can eventually be open to each other and then jointly work out a truly Christian response to a situation of social conflict.

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