

# MY SMALL CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

*Piercarlo Racca - Italy*

In 1968, when I was 22 years old, I decided to object to military service. I had participated in the Milan-Vicenza anti-militarist march and was convinced of the need to oppose the military institution. It was also the year in which the communist armies of the Warsaw Pact occupied Prague, putting an end to the "socialism with a human face".

With other friends we had already organized a demonstration in favour of a conscientious objector tried by the military court of Turin and made anti-militarist initiatives.

In October (1968) I was called up for military service and at the barracks I declared myself a conscientious objector, explained my reasons and refused to wear the uniform, and was put in a cell... in the following days I saw my parents crying and suffering because of this gesture of mine, which was unexpected for them since I had not informed them beforehand. When I saw other people suffering because of me, it was a situation that I had not taken into account, a situation that had become a burden for me and that induced me to withdraw and accept military service. Therefore my objection was reduced to a simple testimony "a small objection of conscience".

In February 1969 I was tried and sentenced to one month's imprisonment with the benefit of a suspended sentence.

This lack of objection has remained with me as a sense of guilt and it is perhaps for this reason that from that moment onwards, antimilitarist and nonviolent commitment became my priority.

I have promoted and participated in countless demonstrations, I have taken several complaints and defended myself in many trials.

I have taken on roles of responsibility and engagement in the Nonviolent Movement, a commitment I still have today. I am also a member of MIR Italy and I am active in the local MIR-MN group in Turin.

If today in Italy conscientious objection to military service has been recognized (1985) as a "right", the credit for a very small infinitesimal part is certainly mine and I am happy about that.