

in an unacceptable way ... Russia must be defended against ...

I see the enemy as terrorism and the communist forces backing it ... I know there is an enemy on the border; I have seen dead and injured South African soldiers."

### 3. Role of SADF

Group A and Group B responses retain their division intact on this issue. The Group B perceptions are once again clear and simple. These subjects have reported a clear image of an external enemy and see the SADF's role as no more complicated than defending South Africa against that enemy. To a large extent subjects in this group agree that military presence is at least half of the defence force's means of defending South Africa. Quotations are hardly necessary, so these three will suffice: "SADF protects our country from hostile enemies ... Without SADF you wouldn't be here ... SADF's main function is to deter terrorist activities through military presence." Group A exhibited a far more diverse range of perceptions on the role of the SADF. The general feeling, however, is that the defence force serves to uphold the present system of government in South Africa and most of these subjects feel that it is not justified in doing it.

"The SADF retards political change by providing military solutions to the country's problems ... SADF upholds the apartheid system of government and is unjustified in view of the ideology that they serve ... The SADF is fighting against liberation and holding back the masses through military presence ... SADF is trying to maintain a crumbling system by force ... SADF is state security and its main function is to quell the white minority's anxieties ... SADF is used by a highly frightened albino minority to displace their fears in the form of an attacking policy."

### 4. Townships

All the interviewed subjects are eligible for 'camps' at some time in the

future and with the present political crisis in South Africa not appearing to abate, all have considered the possibility that they may be forced to serve the SADF in a South African township. The overwhelming feeling emerging from the interviews is that these subjects would not like to serve SADF in the townships. Subjects were questioned as to their willingness to do so despite their dislike of the idea. The majority of the subjects felt that they would go into the townships with the defence force if ordered to do so and if no easy way out of the situation could be found. The punishment threatened for refusing to do so was the reason most often cited: "The alternative is harrowing ... I'm not a racist, but I'd hate getting locked up even more ... They impose harsh punishment in order to deter potential objectors (to fighting in townships)." Seven subjects, however, stated that they would refuse under all circumstances to serve the SADF in the townships. These subjects were all part of the Group A mentioned in previous sections although they did not make up the entire group. Reasons given by these subjects mainly concerned the state of mental dilemma they would undergo in such circumstances: "I can identify more easily with rioters than soldiers ... I may be forced to point a gun at a friend, even kill him ... I would rather fight with an AK47 in my hands; it would entail much less confusion."

##### 5. Attitudes to the government

Only four subjects gave their outright support to the government. These subjects, all members of the Group B mentioned previously, supported the government largely on the grounds that it is not really different to any other government throughout the world: "Australia practises racism ... South Africa is as democratic as any other country in Africa, more so than most ... Whatever problems South Africa has now, it is not nearly as bad as any of the communist countries." The remainder of group B were opposed to the government. They were also, however, opposed to the marxist forces which they perceive to be threatening South Africa. Thus they consider their role in the SADF to be

one of fighting against the enemy but not for the government. The members of group A all expressed their complete opposition to the government; but generally the consensus was that they are fighting for the government in the SADF. This provides most of these subjects with a dilemma. They feel they are contradicting their own values and moral beliefs by fighting for the SADF: "The Government is a dictatorship ... It represents an unjust minority ... I would prefer to fight against the oppressive government ... My worst fear was being killed on the border and being brought back in a South African flag."

6. Changes in opinion and comparison of groups

A number of subjects referred to the confusion which they experienced concerning their beliefs, either during their period of military service or since its completion. Some of these subjects had undergone changes in their opinions of the military in South Africa, of their own roles in the military, of the propagated image of the enemy and of the government. These changes and this uncertainty were expressed in terms such as:

"I saw myself as quite a leftist student when I went in but I realised that issues in SA aren't as clear as I had believed. I'm still confused about these issues today ... I had always believed that the SADF's idea of an enemy was false, but I experienced great confusion when we were attacked by mortars ... I had always just accepted what the officers told me without giving it too much thought. But since I left the army and have been exposed to other viewpoints I have become strongly opposed to the SADF. It's as if I felt something was wrong all along but never faced up to it while I was in the army."

The other subjects expressed their opinions quite firmly and claimed to have held much the same opinions since before commencing their military service. Once again it was possible to divide the subjects into two roughly equivalent

groups on this matter. Further exploration showed these groups to be quite closely parallel to groups X and Y mentioned in section B(1), with the subjects who expressed confusion being more or less the same subjects who found it difficult to adjust at the commencement of their military training. On this basis it was hypothesized that coping easily with basic training was significantly related to the holding of firm beliefs and opinions concerning the defence force, whether these beliefs be positive or negative. A Chi-square test was conducted with the significance level set at 0.1. (See Appendix C).

$\chi^2 = 5,06$  Critical value = 3,841 at  $p=0.05$  (for 2 tailed test).

Thus the relationship was found to be significant for the two-tailed test, which was used because the direction of causality was unknown.

Further comparisons were made between groups A and B and groups X and Y. No ostensible relationship was found between the two pairs of groups. In addition, the biographical data subjects in group A were compared with those of subjects in group B. No ostensible differences were found.

The essential difference between a volunteer army and one which relies on conscripts is that the latter type is faced with the task of motivating servicemen who do not wish to be part of that defence force. In the South African situation this task involves coercing national servicemen to comply with a system that is based on a particular ideology. Throughout the present document this has been referred to as SADF ideology. In very broad terms this ideology appears to be a coagulation of fears and counter-strategies aimed at uniting a population to confront a perceived threat based outside the country. Within the SADF various techniques would appear to be employed to induce conscripts to accept or at least tolerate this ideology. From what has emerged in this study it would appear that these methods can be classed in two broad categories. These are, firstly, incorporation into the system and, secondly, repetitive didactic indoctrination.

The first category includes all legal and disciplinary measures used by the authorities to ensure that conscripts report for duty and abide by the rules of the institution once they have reported. Most subjects of this research saw themselves as having no choice but to report for military service. Considering the harsh penalties for failing to report this is hardly surprising. What is surprising, however, is that very few subjects mentioned pre-conscription propaganda as an influencing factor in their decision to commence military service.<sup>1</sup> It is possible that the harsh conscription laws shift the decision away from one of whether or not to report and on to the alternative question of when to report. Thus subjects largely saw themselves as taking an active role in deciding to commence military service immediately after completing school in order to get it over with. Thus subjects do not seem to be troubled by the fact that they are obliged to perform a further 720 days of military service over the years following completion of preliminary service and are

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1. All subjects felt that the only knowledge they had of defence force life came from former conscripts. None mentioned media or schooling as sources of information.

liable for call-up at short notice any time until the age of 65. In the face of such laws the possibility of getting military service behind one seems remote. Of course subjects are referring to their two years which appears to them a particularly large obstacle, but the likelihood must be considered that they have based their decisions on a popular myth. Such a myth should be exposed.

Incorporation into the system would also include allocation of jobs and promotions; the subjects' perceptions of their jobs are particularly striking. Soldiers with rank such as corporal and jobs such as storeman perceive their work to be extremely important to the overall functioning of the defence force. This finding has potential significance if seen in terms of the subjects' perceptions of the defence force as a whole. An unwilling conscript may begin to feel less hostile towards an institution in whose functioning he perceives himself to play an important role.<sup>1</sup> Such a connection is purely speculative, however, since this finding only began to emerge once it was too late to question subjects further on the issue.

Especially important in this category are the defence force's internal disciplinary measures. Subjects overwhelmingly agreed that certain activities which are illegal in official terms are widely practised as they are easy to carry out without being caught and punished. It is possible that these activities are impossible to contain in any large institution, as pointed out by one subject, and that they pose a problem for the authorities who must surely be aware of the extent to which these are practised. On the other hand it is equally possible that such activities as avoiding work and leaving camp unofficially for a few hours are seen as providing an important outlet for rebellious urges;<sup>2</sup> as one subject perceived them to be providing for himself. Such activities may be viewed as non-detrimental to the functioning of the

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1. This would apply also to the "ou-manne" system.
2. The English-Afrikaans conflict could be viewed in a similar light; perhaps it provides a safe outlet for aggression.

defence force, especially if more noticeable and serious digressions are severely clamped down upon. Judging by the present study such digressions are certainly punished severely enough to make life miserable for the offending conscript and to deter other conscripts from attempting similar deviations. For example, both of the subjects who were AWOL for substantial periods of time were harshly disciplined and all other subjects felt that this offense was not worth the risk of harsh disciplinary measures. It must be noted that these measures do not only appear to include official punishment but also unofficial victimization by certain officers. This unofficial victimization is particularly important because it can be used as a means of punishing people who have not transgressed any official laws. Transgressions of such unwritten laws are referred to by several subjects. These subjects felt alienated and isolated for holding their particular viewpoints and talked of their reluctance to express these views for fear of further victimization. The one subject who proclaimed his pacifist beliefs felt himself to have been victimized to a great extent.

This leads me to the second category of techniques used by the defence force in attempting to gain the compliance of conscripts. I have referred to this category as repetitive didactic indoctrination. As mentioned in the findings only approximately half of the subjects were aware of the defence force using indoctrination. The remainder of the subjects referred to the supplying of educational information. I have taken this to imply indoctrination since this term refers to the supplying of information of a particular doctrine and the information these subjects were aware of receiving did not appear to deviate from the mainstream SADF doctrine.<sup>1</sup> This indoctrination has been referred to as repetitive since most subjects were aware of a perennial supply of such information. Constant repetition is widely thought to be an effective means of indoctrination (Robinson, 1967, 420). In fact many advertising campaigns

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1. In addition, the one subject who conducted indoctrination himself is a positive indication that this does occur.

are based on such an assumption. Finally, it has been referred to as didactic since it has generally been supplied by authority figures taking the instructor position. An interesting finding in this regard is the general awareness amongst the subjects of a relaxation of discipline after early training which appeared to have led to friendlier relations between officers and conscripts. Subjects tended to refer to this change in terms of learning to "respect rather than fear" their officers. This leads me to speculate that such a change could possibly result in greater acceptance of the doctrine offered by these authority figures.

It would be impossible to comment definitively on the effectiveness of SADF indoctrination techniques since that would require comparisons with control groups who have not been in the SADF. In addition the SADF ideology has spread throughout the country as a whole and there would always be the problem of deciding whether members of such control groups had been indirectly indoctrinated through SADF processes. The findings have, however, revealed two distinct attitudes to SADF ideology. Groups A and B differ in their subjects' opinions on a number of issues; these include their perceptions of the role of the SADF in Southern Africa, their conceptions of South Africa's enemies and, to some extent, their willingness to fight in South African townships. The groups were similar, however, in terms of their feelings about war in general and, for the most part, their opposition to the South African government. It is suggested that both the latter similarity implies a possible contradiction in the opinions of subjects in group B. Many of these subjects make a distinction between the government and the defence force of this country. Thus, they seem to feel that in supporting the defence force they are not necessarily supporting the government. The evidence cited in the literature review would seem to belie such a belief. This belief, however, that the propagation of SADF ideology in general goes beyond that of government ideology and may even be more widely accepted than the latter. The general acceptance



of the inevitability of war may be an indication of the extent to which liberal white youth in South Africa has a catastrophic view of the future as found by Danziger ( ).

The findings of this study revealed two more distinct groups. The first, group X, found their basic training far easier than they had expected, especially once they had overcome the physical difficulties while group Y experienced emotional difficulties even after the physical stress had been overcome. Through the use of a chi-square test it was found that coping easily with basic training (group X) was significantly related to possessing firm beliefs (positive or negative) about the defence force and the subjects' own role in it. Because of the "accidental" nature of the sampling technique used, this finding cannot be generalised, but it does allow for some speculation. For instance it is possible that deciding that one either supports or opposes the SADF wholeheartedly and that one is not going to be adversely affected by its system of discipline allows one an easier passage through the primary training phases. Providing some support for this speculation is the subject who recalled deciding to discipline himself rather than allowing the defence force to impose its discipline upon him, and found basic training quite easy.

## CONCLUSION

It would appear that indoctrination not only does take place in the SADF, but seems to form an integral part of the system of military training. It seems also that a conscript's rejection of the propagated doctrine is linked to his awareness of it as being such, whereas acceptance of it is related to perceiving it as being an educational provision of information. In practical terms this would imply that by increasing conscripts' awareness of indoctrination techniques employed by the defence force one can also increase their resilience to such techniques. In addition, it appears that conscripts who hold firm negative beliefs regarding the defence force are mostly able to transcend the indoctrination attempts and retain their beliefs throughout military service. Those whose beliefs are less clearly defined, however, tend to experience more confusion during their military training and are thus more vulnerable to indoctrination. This of course raises the question of how one defines a firm belief and distinguishes it from more mutable one. An interesting study might compare conscripts' attitudes before and after military service and observe which attitudes are more easily changed. Such a study could also investigate the effectiveness of indoctrination techniques employed by the defence force. More specific comparisons could be made between controlled groups of subjects who differ with regard to their exposure to specific possible techniques. For instance conscripts who felt their jobs were important could be compared in terms of attitudes with those who didn't feel so. Other differences to be compared could be: perception of a relaxation in discipline, experience of token forms of rebellion and choice of army or university first.

Another interesting study might focus on the formation of pre-conscription attitudes. This would examine the question of whether certain types of schooling, family and peer group as well as certain forms of media can predispose conscripts to be more or less susceptible to defence force indoctrination. A limitation of the present study is certainly the lack

of sufficient biographical details to allow such patterns to emerge. Other flaws in the present study are obviously the sampling method which allows for little generalisation to be made in a credible manner. A random sample would, however, have been extremely difficult to obtain from a group as large as ex-conscripts. In addition this study is limited in its conclusions, largely because of a lack of clear hypotheses. This was to be expected, however, considering the deficiency of prior research into this area. Finally, it is felt that the study may have been adversely affected by the interviewer's bias. All subjects were aware that the researcher was examining SADF indoctrination which would be sufficient information to enlighten them as to the critical nature of his stance. This fault may have led to some of the contradictions found in several interviews. Where this effect was obvious certain statements were not included in the results. It would not be possible, however, to control for this effect completely.

This study should be seen in the context of its exploratory nature. None of its conclusions can be taken as definitive but rather as indications of possible trends and patterns. It is hoped that some of these will be more fully explored in further research. Such research is important in these and other areas of this largely unexplored topic.

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APPENDIX. A

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

<u>Category</u>	<u>Group A &amp; B</u>	<u>Group A (N=9)</u>	<u>Group B (N=11)</u>
Age now:	$\bar{x} = 23$ yrs	$\bar{x} = 22,7$ yrs	$\bar{x} = 23,27$ yrs
Age at commencement of military service:	$\bar{x} = 18,85$ yrs	$\bar{x} = 18,8$ yrs	$\bar{x} = 18,9$ yrs
No. who took part in cadets at school:	17 (85%)	9 (100%)	8 (72,7%)
No. who commenced service immediately after school:	15 (75%)	6 (66,7%)	9 (81,8%)
No. who have done any camps for SADF:	6 (30%)	3 (33,3%)	3 (27,3%)
<u>Placement:-</u>			
Army:	17 (85%)	7 (77,7%)	10 (90,9%)
Navy:	3 (15%)	2 (22,2%)	1 (9,1%)
<u>Rank:-</u>			
Private:	11 (55%)	6 (66,7%)	5 (45,4%)
Non-commissioned officer:	7 (35%)	2 (22,2%)	5 (45,4%)
Commissioned officer:	2 (10%)	1 (11,1%)	1 (9,1%)
No. involved in fighting on the border:	6 (30%)	3 (33,3%)	3 (27,3%)
No. who served in the townships:	2 (10%)	-	2 (18,2%)
No. who view their service as positive overall:	4 (20%)	-	4 (36,4%)

<u>Category</u>	<u>Group A &amp; B</u>	<u>Group A (N=9)</u>	<u>Group B (N=11)</u>
No. who studied at university before military service:	5 (25%)	4 (44,4%)	1 (9,1%)
No. who have studied at university since military service:	10 (50%)	4 (44,4%)	6 (54,5%)
Total no. who have studied at university:	15 (75%)	8 (88,9%)	7 (63,6%) <sup>1</sup>
Faculty of study:-			
Arts:	5 (25%)	3 (33,3%)	2 (18,2%)
Science:	3 (15%)	2 (22,2%)	1 (9,1%)
Social Science:	3 ( " )	1 (11,1%)	2 (18,2%)
Commerce:	4 (20%)	2 (22,2%)	2 (18,2%)

1. 2 Members of this group have recently completed military service and intend to study at a later date.



APPENDIX B

Interview Schedule

Subjects were questioned on the following issues:

1. Biographical data  
See Appendix A
2. Reasons for choosing SADF before studying
  - not applicable to all subjects
  - questioned on influences in making their decision:  
family, friends, school, etc.
3. Expectations
  - of the SADF
  - of basic training in particular
  - where these had originated
4. Basic training
  - in comparison to expectations
  - ability to cope
  - impressions of officers
  - relaxation of discipline at end of basics
5. Hierarchy and conflict
  - "oumanne" system
  - permanent force members
  - English -- Afrikaner conflict
6. Deviant and illegal activity
  - "gippo-ing"
  - stealing
  - AWOL
  - other?

7. The Enemy

- as seen by SADF
- awareness of indoctrination on this issue/types of indoctrination
- as seen by subject

8. Functions of Defense Force

- outside/inside South Africa
- military/non-military functions
- in relation to the government

9. General Attitudes

- willingness to serve in townships
  - attitudes to war in general
  - positive vs. negative attitudes to one's own military service
  - gains/losses during military service
-

APPENDIX C

Chi - square test of independence

Group X = subjects who coped well with basic training.

Group Y = subjects who found basic training difficult.

Group C = subjects who held firm attitudes on SADF throughout military service.

Group D = subjects whose attitudes on SADF were less clear.

Frequencies (O - observed; E - expected)

	Group C	Group D	
Group X	O - 8	O - 2	10
	E - 5,5	E - 4,5	
Group Y	O - 3	O - 7	10
	E - 5,5	E - 4,5	
	11	9	

$$\begin{aligned} \chi^2 &= \frac{(O-E)^2}{E} \\ &= \frac{6,25}{5,5} + \frac{6,25}{4,5} + \frac{6,25}{5,5} + \frac{6,25}{4,5} \\ &= 1,14 + 1,39 + 1,14 + 1,39 \\ &= 5,06 \end{aligned}$$

df = 1

p = 0,1 (0,05 for two-tailed test)

Critical value = 3,841

Therefore  $\chi^2$  is significant

Psychology Honours Project: An exploratory phenomenological study of conscripts attitudes towards and perceptions of, the SADF

Karl Berg 1987

Aims:

- 1) What does conscription mean to conscripts?
- 2) What are the perceptions of SADF indoctrination?
- 3) How does the SADF indoctrinate conscripts?

Method:

- \* Phenomenological framework used
- \* in-depth interviews

Sample:

20 conscripts who had served in the SADF. 2 of the sample were still in the army. 15 went into the SADF straight after school. 6 had fought on the "border". 2 had served in townships.

Results.

It was found that despite all subjects being unfavourably disposed towards their own conscription, a number of quite diverse opinions were expressed on issues relating to conscription in general and the role of the SADF. In fact two distinct groups of subjects began to emerge. The first, Group A, were generally opposed to the SADF's role in southern Africa and particularly inside South Africa's townships. On the whole these subjects were aware of the defence force's indoctrination attempts and rejected the propagated image of "the enemy". The second group, Group B, tended to accept the role of the defence force inside and outside the country and were largely unaware of indoctrination as such in the defence force. A number of this group's subjects became more tolerant of SADF ideology while doing their military service and have retained this ideology since that period. On the whole this group tended to experience less confusion with regard to their own beliefs than did those in Group A. An interesting finding was that acceptance of SADF ideology does not imply acceptance of government policy as a whole since most of the subjects felt themselves to be opposed to the government. A more complete description and comparison of the two groups and their biographical backgrounds will be provided after the description of findings.

Since the interviews had no rigid structure the content of the responses differed from person to person in terms of areas of focus. What follows is a description of generally recurring themes which emerged from the interviews. There were no inflexible criteria for selecting the themes described beneath. Two general rules-of-thumb were applied. Firstly, the theme should be of possible relevance to the focus of the research; and secondly, the theme should have occurred in at least half of the interviews. Cases in which a described theme does not meet one of the above criteria will be pointed out. The possible significance of the various themes and responses contained therein will be discussed at the end of the descriptions. The headings given

to the different themes were formulated during the analysis phase of research and thus do not necessarily bear any relation to the questions which were asked in the interviews. The themes were divided into three categories: those which express the meaning that the defence force has for subjects before they commence national service; those which express their experience of national service itself; and, thirdly, those which reveal their present attitudes to issues surrounding the SADF.

A. BEFORE COMMENCING MILITARY SERVICE

1. Expectations

All subjects emphasized that they did not want to do their military service. They had accepted that the law gave them no viable alternatives and that they would be joining the SADF. Most subjects recollected experiencing fear during the months leading up to the commencement of their service. This fear was related to three issues. The first and most common of these was the immediate fear of the physical hardships of basic training. In addition many subjects recollected a fear of the loneliness which they expected to result from their separation from family and friends. Thirdly, subjects spoke of the fear of experiencing guilt and self-doubt. This latter fear resulted from the moral reservations which a number of subjects had experienced in relation to the army. All the subjects claimed that their fears were based largely on stories which they had heard from former conscripts.

2. Ostensible reason for joining SADF before studying

Although all subjects had access, both financially and academically, to tertiary education only five had decided to study before joining the defence force. The remainder were questioned on this issue. The overwhelming response was that these subjects had been unsure of what to study and had joined the SADF first to remove what they saw as an obstacle to their future careers: "I wanted to get it over with and then decide what to study" was

a common response. Those who had received navy call-ups saw this factor as an important influence in their decisions to complete their military service before studying. They feared that if they chose to study first they might receive army call-ups in future years; they all saw navy call-ups as a far easier prospect than army call-ups. Several subjects also mentioned the fact that many of their friends were going into the defence force at the same time; they saw this as being influential in that they expected to receive comfort in the knowledge that friends would be undergoing similar hardships at the same time as themselves.

B. DURING MILITARY SERVICE

1. Coping with basic training

All subjects experienced basic training as an extremely difficult period of military service. This issue, however, elucidated two distinct types of experience. A more or less equal number of subjects recollected each of the two types of experience. The first group, to whom I shall refer as group X, emphasized the physical difficulties of basic training. They felt that 'basics' were not as bad as they had expected: "The stories make it out to be far worse than it actually is." On the whole this group found that once the physical hardship had been transcended, basic training became much easier. "Once you're fit they can't touch you" is the kind of comment which sums up this attitude. The second group, group Y, saw mental difficulties as being at least as important, if not more important, than physical ones. Group Y emphasized psychological factors such as isolation, their own emotional responses to the defence force's disciplinary measures, the erosion of their self-confidence and inner turmoil.

"The army don't motivate people, they think using a stick is good enough. This was totally alien to me and I felt a great need to act against it ... I followed all commands unquestioningly, but it all seemed so purposeless to me ... They break down your individuality ...

I found it an extremely emotional experience." Statements such as these sum up this point of view. Group Y also experienced a transcending of the physical strain, but for the most part they did not see their difficulties as ending there. "I found myself obeying orders just because everyone else was and even though I found most commands totally futile ... I asked myself time and again what I was doing there and what I had let myself in for." Most subjects in Group Y found 'basics' much worse than they had expected it to be. Once they had overcome the physical hardships, the psychological ones became more prominent: "During the first few weeks I was too tired to give any thought to the social consequences of my actions (joining the defence force). Later on I began to renew my self-questioning."

Group X made little reference to psychological factors; when they did make such references it was usually in terms of how officer-soldier relations influenced their comfort/discomfort:

"I couldn't stand the raw, uneducated non-commissioned officers, but commissioned officers were far more reasonable ... I feared officers at first, but once I came to respect them life was far more bearable ... I was mentally prepared for it and I was sure that if I disciplined myself instead of letting them discipline me I would have a relatively easy time of it. I was right".

Group X also tended to acknowledge a purpose underlying basic training:

"Without basics the army would be undisciplined ... Basics is important, because it puts people in the right frame of mind to get through their two years."

## 2. Relaxation of discipline

Nearly all subjects were aware of a relaxation of discipline. In some cases this occurred immediately after basic training, in others only after second phase training, and in still others only once the time drew near to their

departure from the border. This relaxation of discipline entailed a decrease in "petty commands to enforce discipline" and smoother relationships between officers and recruits. Some subjects experienced this change in attitude as a tactic employed by the authorities in order to unify companies in preparation for possible fighting in the operational area: "

"The closer border-time comes the nicer they are to you ... they have to go with you (to the border) and they need to become one of your group rather than an outsider ... they stop trying to break you because they want to lift your morale."

In general, however, the different treatment by officers was viewed without too much suspicion and brought with it better perceptions of these officers on the part of the subjects:

"I became quite good buddies with my corporal ... You learn to trust in your officers ... I related better to officers outside the training context ... You respect an officer for his rank and what he has done."

These quotations represent the general trend of the sample.

Three subjects, however, experienced no such relaxation in discipline. I mention these three in particular, because they also differed distinctly in attitude from the sample as a whole. Two of them rebelled constantly against authority figures and were frequently absent without leave (AWOL). Their perceptions of the officers reflected their attitudes:

"I found it hard to respect people merely because they had special markings on their shoulders and hats. I have vivid memories of my drunk sergeant-major vomiting on my shoes and instructing me to clean it up ... I remember a colonel praying to God for victory and getting smashed out of his mind in the pub a few hours later."

The third subject applied for non-combatant status on the grounds that he was

a pacifist. In such ways these subjects were clearly different from the rest of the sample. Their experiences were also quite different. Apart from the fact that the first two received a total of three months extra days for AWOL and the third underwent frequent psychiatric examinations, all these subjects felt themselves to have been victimized by officers in general:

"I was always being picked on even when it seemed that there was no particular reason for it' ... One sergeant-major would start screaming every time he laid eyes on me, no matter where I was or what I was doing ... I seemed to get in trouble with every corporal in the camp for the pettiest of things."

### 3. Deviant and illegal activities

The experiences of the three subjects mentioned above provide an extreme example of the types of deviances or illegal activities referred to by the sample as a whole. Various types of such activities came to light in the interviews. These can be divided into two broad categories. The first category consists of those deviant activities that are socially sanctioned. This category includes "gippo-ing" (getting out of doing work), getting drunk and short-term AWOL. In this case a deviant activity is some action taken by a defence force member, whereby that action is officially illegal but is never actually punished.

Nearly every single subject had experienced AWOL to the extent of a few hours in town one night; certainly every subject had experienced both "gippo-ing" and getting drunk. The subjects held no strong attitudes on these activities and did not perceive them as serious offences. The general feeling was that they represent the norm:

"Everyone gippo's in the army ... The first thing I learnt was how to gippo... You can manipulate the system so easily ... I revelled in small ways to show I wasn't submitting passively to a harsh authority ... most PF's are drunkards ... Gippo-ing is actually quite a status symbol ... Even while I was an MP I used to rave

in town with guys who were on AWOL for the night (MP: military policement) ... All the officers in one camp used to AWOL."

The second category appears to consist of those activities which are neither legal nor socially sanctioned. This includes stealing, smoking dagga and long periods of AWOL. No subjects admitted any stealing except small quantities of food from the kitchens. In general stealing of one another's possessions was perceived to be widespread, uncontrollable and irritating: "You have to lock your clothing to the washing line ... One person has no bush jackets and the next person has four, and there's no proof unless you catch the person red-handed ... any large bureaucracy experiences stealing." Three subjects admitted to smoking dagga and experienced it as an important, but secretive form of rebellion as well as an escape from boredom: "Smoking dope reminded me that I was different from the whole system ... quite a few people start smoking dope because there's so little else to do." Only two subjects admitted experience of long term AWOL (as mentioned in the previous section). All the other subjects who referred to this activity perceived it as too large a risk: "If they catch you AWOL you get thrown in the 'kas' (cell) with the dope-smokers and other rubbish ... AWOL is more noticeable and treated more seriously than gippo-ing ... the army can't afford to be soft on deserters."

### 4. Position in the SADF

One clear trend which emerged from the study was the pride with which subjects perceived their position in the SADF. Of the ten subjects who referred to their specific jobs, nine displayed feelings of importance:

"Chef has the highest rank in the army ... I work in a store, supplying the army with goods; it's like running the whole army ... I had a heavy job; it shouldn't be given to a CF (civilian force member) ... as a corporal I gained more authority

and people looked up to me ... I worked directly with a kommandant and had a lot of authority vested in me."

A number of subjects also referred to the broader hierarchical structures present in the defence force. It was generally felt that permanent force members (PF's) and "ou-manne" (servicemen of at least one year's active duty) have greater status than inexperienced civilian force members. These soldiers appear to take advantage of their extra status and also appear to exploit inexperienced newcomers: "I saw PF's and 'ou-manne" as my biggest enemies ... I hated "ou-manne" most of all ... "ou-manne" treat the "rowe" (newcomers) like shit ... you respect "ou-manne" out of fear." There is, however, a tendency for this hierarchical structure to perpetuate itself and a number of interviewees mentioned that they also took advantage of this system: "When my turn came I also treated the "rowe" like shit ... you can mess the newcomer around, because they're scared of you ... I expected respect from the newcomers."

The antagonism which occurs between newcomers and "ou-manne" and between PF's and CF's appears to have a third source - the division between English and Afrikaans. As this study includes only English conscripts it is difficult to elicit the complete situation, but the general feeling among the sample is that English national servicemen receive unfair treatment and that the language division is a definite source of conflict: "There is a natural sorting process, mainly according to language ... my Anti-Afrikaner prejudice was reinforced ... the mainly Afrikaans PF's picked on English national servicemen ... drilling was meant to alternate daily between English and Afrikaans commands, but never does ... the Afrikaans officers were the worst of all."

It was also generally felt that all conflicts, such as this one were ignored when co-operation was required, and that such co-operation was often necessary, especially during basic training: "The group is singled out in the army ... You don't do anything to jeopardize your platoon even if there is conflict ... Teamwork is vital for survival".

5. Out indoctrination in the SADF

Each subject was aware that the focus of the research was their experience of indoctrination attempts by the defence force. Thus each subject mentioned the issue one way or another during the interviews and the general feeling which emerged was that the SADF spends a lot of effort on propagating their policies onto the conscripts and the civilian population at large. When the topic arose during the interviews, subjects were asked to comment in particular upon their experiences of an enemy-image as propagated by the defence force; they were usually asked further questions which will be discussed under sections following. According to their experiences and attitudes surrounding this and the following issues, the subjects can again be divided into two almost-equivalent groups. These groups I will refer to as Group A and Group B in order to emphasize their distinction from the two groups referred to earlier. Group A consisted of 9 subjects and Group B 11.

On the whole Group A experienced indoctrination as a force, of which they were aware and by which they did not allow themselves to be moved. These indoctrination attempts included the propagation of an enemy-image which was for the most part identical with that of official policy, as mentioned in the Defence White Paper (1986). Thus this group were aware that the SADF wants its conscripts to perceive SWAPO and the ANC as the enemy in the short term; and the SADF also wants Russia to be seen as the power behind these enemies and thus the long term enemy. The more abstract "enemy", communism, is also widely propagated by the defence force. In addition this group tended to view the lectures and film-shows on these issues to be largely propaganda techniques.

The army sees SWAPO and the ANC as fronts for the Soviets ... They try to indoctrinate you ... They drum the threat of SWAPO into ... Lectures always include mention of the Soviet Union ... SADF uses videos and lectures to justify itself ... Even the



internal uprising is seen as Soviet-induced ... I was never indoctrinated ... The Afrikaans soldiers accept this standard propaganda, but the English guys want more proof ... I had a pre-conceived rejection of SADF propaganda."

Amongst this group, however, there was a slight tendency to view some indoctrination attempts as being effective, even if one was aware of, and rejected these attempts as 'propaganda' in the first place. These subjects were concerned with the idea that indoctrination occurs very gradually and subtly, through continual exposure to only one point of view. They felt that those who held different points of view were in an extreme minority and were afraid to express such viewpoints:

"I'm sure their indoctrination is effective in the long term ... Their ideas slowly become ingrained in you ... They break your confidence and all your diverse views down, and then feed you their ideology while gradually raising your confidence ... I felt totally alienated because of my viewpoints ... I never openly questioned their point of view; I would have been called a communist ... The blatant propaganda was laughable, but I feared the more subtle forms."

The second group of subjects, Group B, tended to respond to the SADF's propagation of their policies not so much as indoctrination attempts, but rather as an education. To a large extent this 'education' is seen as being necessary to the army's functioning. Some of these subjects claimed to have had little or no understanding of the SADF's role before they received this 'education'. Thus such an education provided them with clarity and understanding:

"They do inform you about SWAPO and the ANC ... They didn't try to indoctrinate me; Lectures on the enemy are necessary for any military force ... First-hand experience gave me more understanding of the army's ideology ... I had access to information on an officer's level which made me more receptive to

what the army was doing ... I came to identify with their view of the enemy ... It gave me more insight into why we were fighting ... I don't know anything about politics."

Some of the subjects in group B had come to the army with a very negative view of the SADF's role in southern Africa, and began to develop a more positive stance. Thus these subjects also saw their SADF 'education' as providing them with a broader understanding of the situation and tended to perceive their previous viewpoints as simplistic by comparison;

"I was quite a leftist student when I went in; I came to realise that there are two sides to every story ... The army was my enemy when I had to join it, but I became aware of the complexity of the South African situation ... I came to realise that both sides are capable of putting out propaganda and one mustn't take either side too seriously ... I had heard so many bad stories about the SADF and I wanted to know what it was like on the inside; I gained a far more complete conception of their role and realised that those stories were largely exaggeration."

One subject, whom I have included in Group A, has a particularly interesting perspective on SADF 'education'. I have singled this subject out because he taught at an adult education course in the operational area. His students were members of the local population and SWAPO prisoners-of-war, and his job was to promote the SADF, christianity and national pride while disparaging SWAPO, the Soviet Union and communism in general. This subject had no complaints with SADF policy when he joined the army, but his beliefs began to change through his involvement in the education course:

"At first I was vehemently anti-SWAPO, seeing them as no better than vicious killers. I became involved in the indoctrination process myself and came to realise that SADF policy is promoted at the expense of repressing all other ideologies. Thus no ideological alternatives are permitted to be presented to South Africans

and Namibians. We (at the education centre) all had to run around shouting: "Ons veg vir vryheid! Ons veg vir vryheid! This made me aware of the farcical nature of SADF ideology."

C. AFTER MILITARY SERVICE

Having expressed their feelings about the indoctrination (or 'educational') mechanisms within the SADF, the subjects were all questioned further in order to elicit some of their present attitudes concerning the defence force. The specific areas of focus were attitudes to war in general, present conception of an 'enemy', perceived functions of the SADF (in general and in the townships), and attitudes to the South African government.

1. War in General:

Perceived from a personal point of view, most subjects expressed opposition to war. Reasons for this opposition varied from religious, pacifist ideals through to a criticism of the discrepancy between who is responsible for the wars and who suffers in the war:

"I am totally opposed to war ... I am anti-military as a result of my christianity ... War is mostly wrong ... Things should be sorted out in better ways than fighting ... Fucked-up politicians make the decisions and young people face the reality ... Governments exploit the masses ... Peace is bliss ... There are very few causes for which I am willing to kill and certainly none for which I am willing to die."

A lot of these comments were made in quite a cynical manner and for the most part subjects seemed to perceive their own feelings as idealistic and unrealistic. The general feeling appeared to be that although subjects opposed war on a personal level, human conflict on a large scale is almost inevitable: "It's shit that people have to kill each other, but quite idealistic to expect them to break such an old habit ... War has no constructive purpose, but people have aggressive tendencies and countries defend themselves for

this reason." This leads to the concept of a "just war" which was put forward by a number of subjects. The feeling among these subjects was that a country is justified in using violence to protect itself against the threat of violence from other countries: "I can see the logic behind war ... Any country needs to defend itself ... War is often necessary for survival ... I believe in a just war as the lesser of two evils."

2. Personal conceptions of an "enemy"

On this issue the elicited responses can also be divided into Group A and Group B. These groups are identical in terms of subjects to those groups mentioned in section 5 of experiences during military service: In this case the division is quite straightforward. The subjects in Group A could not align themselves with the mainstream SADF conception of an 'enemy': "My own moral convictions told me that SWAPO was less unjust than the SADF ... I don't really see SWAPO as the enemy ... I don't agree with SADF perceptions of the enemy ... I have no real conceptions of an enemy." What does emerge from the quotations is that these subjects are uncertain as to whom they do visualize as the enemy. When questioned further on this issue, subjects admitted to being confused, but most of them claimed to perceive the SADF and its right wing supporters as far greater threats to themselves than any of the 'enemies' propagated by the defence force: "I saw the army as my enemy for forcing me to become part of them ... I would rather fight against the HNP and other right wing groups like the AWB ... I see the SADF as my enemy for political reasons."

Group B's responses to this issue were far more simple. These basically agree with SADF policy on the "external threat":

"The enemy was undoubtedly SWAPO and the ANC ... They are backed by totalitarian powers such as USSR and Uganda ... I see SWAPO and the ANC as vicious and dangerous, and even unjustified ... ANC might have an acceptable cause, but they're going about it

in an unacceptable way ... Russia must be defended against ...  
I see the enemy as terrorism and the communist forces backing it  
... I know there is an enemy on the border; I have seen dead and  
injured South African soldiers."

### 3. Role of SADF

Group A and Group B responses retain their division intact on this issue. The Group B perceptions are once again clear and simple. These subjects have reported a clear image of an external enemy and see the SADF's role as no more complicated than defending South Africa against that enemy. To a large extent subjects in this group agree that military presence is at least half of the defence force's means of defending South Africa. Quotations are hardly necessary, so these three will suffice: "SADF protects our country from hostile enemies ... Without SADF you wouldn't be here ... SADF's main function is to deter terrorist activities through military presence." Group A exhibited a far more diverse range of perceptions on the role of the SADF. The general feeling, however, is that the defence force serves to uphold the present system of government in South Africa and most of these subjects feel that it is not justified in doing it.

"The SADF retards political change by providing military solutions to the country's problems ... SADF upholds the apartheid system of government and is unjustified in view of the ideology that they serve ... The SADF is fighting against liberation and holding back the masses through military presence ... SADF is trying to maintain a crumbling system by force ... SADF is state security and its main function is to quell the white minority's anxieties ... SADF is used by a highly frightened albino minority to displace their fears in the form of an attacking policy."

### 4. Townships

All the interviewed subjects are eligible for 'camps' at some time in the

future and with the present political crisis in South Africa not appearing to abate, all have considered the possibility that they may be forced to serve the SADF in a South African township. The overwhelming feeling emerging from the interviews is that these subjects would not like to serve SADF in the townships. Subjects were questioned as to their willingness to do so despite their dislike of the idea. The majority of the subjects felt that they would go into the townships with the defence force if ordered to do so and if no easy way out of the situation could be found. The punishment threatened for refusing to do so was the reason most often cited: "The alternative is harrowing ... I'm not a racist, but I'd hate getting locked up even more ... They impose harsh punishment in order to deter potential objectors (to fighting in townships)." Seven subjects, however, stated that they would refuse under all circumstances to serve the SADF in the townships. These subjects were all part of the Group A mentioned in previous sections although they did not make up the entire group. Reasons given by these subjects mainly concerned the state of mental dilemma they would undergo in such circumstances: "I can identify more easily with rioters than soldiers ... I may be forced to point a gun at a friend, even kill him ... I would rather fight with an AK47 in my hands; it would entail much less confusion."

### 5. Attitudes to the government

Only four subjects gave their outright support to the government. These subjects, all members of the Group B mentioned previously, supported the government largely on the grounds that it is not really different to any other government throughout the world: "Australia practises racism ... South Africa is as democratic as any other country in Africa, more so than most ... Whatever problems South Africa has now, it is not nearly as bad as any of the communist countries." The remainder of group B were opposed to the government. They were also, however, opposed to the marxist forces which they perceive to be threatening South Africa. Thus they consider their role in the SADF to be

one of fighting against the enemy but not for the government. The members of group A all expressed their complete opposition to the government; but generally the consensus was that they are fighting for the government in the SADF. This provides most of these subjects with a dilemma. They feel they are contradicting their own values and moral beliefs by fighting for the SADF: "The Government is a dictatorship ... It represents an unjust minority ... I would prefer to fight against the oppressive government ... My worst fear was being killed on the border and being brought back in a South African flag."

#### 6. Changes in opinion and comparison of groups

A number of subjects referred to the confusion which they experienced concerning their beliefs, either during their period of military service or since its completion. Some of these subjects had undergone changes in their opinions of the military in South Africa, of their own roles in the military, of the propagated image of the enemy and of the government. These changes and this uncertainty were expressed in terms such as:

"I saw myself as quite a leftist student when I went in but I realised that issues in SA aren't as clear as I had believed. I'm still confused about these issues today ... I had always believed that the SADF's idea of an enemy was false, but I experienced great confusion when we were attacked by mortars ... I had always just accepted what the officers told me without giving it too much thought. But since I left the army and have been exposed to other viewpoints I have become strongly opposed to the SADF. It's as if I felt something was wrong all along but never faced up to it while I was in the army."

The other subjects expressed their opinions quite firmly and claimed to have held much the same opinions since before commencing their military service. Once again it was possible to divide the subjects into two roughly equivalent

groups on this matter. Further exploration showed these groups to be quite closely parallel to groups X and Y mentioned in section B(1), with the subjects who expressed confusion being more or less the same subjects who found it difficult to adjust at the commencement of their military training. On this basis it was hypothesized that coping easily with basic training was significantly related to the holding of firm beliefs and opinions concerning the defence force, whether these beliefs be positive or negative. A Chi-square test was conducted with the significance level set at 0.1. (See Appendix C).

$\chi^2 = 5,06$  Critical value = 3,841 at  $p=0.05$  (for 2 tailed test).

Thus the relationship was found to be significant for the two-tailed test, which was used because the direction of causality was unknown.

Further comparisons were made between groups A and B and groups X and Y. No ostensible relationship was found between the two pairs of groups. In addition, the biographical data subjects in group A were compared with those of subjects in group B. No ostensible differences were found.

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