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February 1983

AS.62.6

## 1. THE MILITARISATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY<sup>1</sup>

### The SADF and the State

The military has played a central role in the process of political restructuring in South Africa, particularly in the four years since P.W. Botha became prime minister. Already From <sup>1977</sup> 1977, the SADF began to intervene directly in political struggles over state policy, It was the first state organ to proclaim a programme of 'total strategy' as an attempt to meet the growing political and economic crisis which the South African state was facing.<sup>2</sup> From then onwards, military leaders were at the forefront in calling for a strategy which would provide 'a guarantee for the system of free enterprise.'<sup>3</sup> More and more, in speeches and statements, they stressed that free enterprise and economic growth - not 'Afrikanerdom' and racial hegemony - were at the core of the system to be defended. They continually emphasised the need for a co-ordinated strategy, aimed at the '80% of the war' which involved 'winning the hearts and minds of the people'.<sup>4</sup>

The military has been able to play an increasing political role through its direct presence on the six non-parliamentary cabinet committees. These have come to replace parliament, and even the parliamentary caucus of the National Party, as <sup>key</sup> ~~the~~ decision-making bodies. They are dominated by a non-parliamentary group, which includes many prominent businessmen and senior military officers.<sup>5</sup>

Top military personnel, including the minister of defence, Magnus Malan, and the head of the SADF, Constand Viljoen, also sit on the State Security Council (SSC), which has emerged as the most influential decision-making institution in the country. The SSC was initiated as an advisory body, but by 1979 it was playing a more active role, giving directives to, and co-ordinating the

activities of the 15 inter-departmental committees.<sup>6</sup> Military advisors participate in all interdepartmental meetings regardless of whether direct SADF interests are involved.<sup>7</sup>

~~This growing influence of the military within the State indicates the extent to which the SADF is actively involved in formulating, planning and even ensuring the implementation of initiatives designed to defend minority rule in South Africa. This influence will increase when the new constitutional proposals are passed. The proposals confirm the shift of power away from parliament to the non-parliamentary executive. They will consequently ensure that the military will be even less bound by National Party decision-making. They will also allow military personnel to be directly represented at cabinet level, and within the revamped Presidents Council.~~

#### A War Economy.

At one level, South Africa's war efforts cause a massive drain on the economy. The defence budget for 1982/3 was an effective R3 068 million (over R8 million per day). ~~This staggering figure is more than ten times what it was 12 years ago, and nearly 100 times the figure for 1958/9. It is also more than 20 times the amount budgetted for housing.~~<sup>8</sup>

At another level, however, the ongoing civil war and the growth of the arms industry has directly benefited South African business. Many Western countries have defied the United Nations arms embargo and assisted South Africa with military technology. ~~In this way South Africa has developed~~ <sup>in developing</sup> a highly advanced local arms industry. Today Armscor, which co-ordinates the purchase and production of all armaments, is the third largest financial undertaking in South Africa. In 1982 it delivered arms worth R1 400 million, including advanced combat aircraft, <sup>G-6</sup> guided missiles, heavy artillery and communications systems.<sup>9</sup> ~~The most recent addition was the long-~~

~~range 155mm mobile canon, which can travel at 90 kph and has a firing range of 40 km. Built with technology supplied by the USA-based Space Research Corporation, it was released in South Africa as the locally produced 66.~~<sup>10</sup>

By 1976, 75% of the arms budget was spent inside South Africa. Of this amount, nearly 90% went directly or indirectly to private industry.<sup>11</sup> Today, nearly 2 000 companies are involved either as contractors, subcontractors, or merely supplying the 'nuts and bolts'. Together they employ 100 000 workers.<sup>12</sup> ~~And even~~ Beyond the production of arms, the private sector benefits through providing a host of products including transport facilities, buildings, food, clothing, and equipment for South Africa's 200 000-strong operational force. *They also serve on the 13-person Defence Advisory Council, which advises the Minister on the arms industry.*<sup>14</sup> It is clear that the growth of the defence industry has boosted certain sectors of private industry. ~~With growing international isolation, a relative decrease in foreign investment and a severe economic recession,~~ the SADF is an extremely secure client for the private sector. However much the recession deepens, ~~the needs of the SADF~~<sup>needs</sup> will increase as long as the war continues.

Two parliamentary acts have ensured that almost the entire economy can potentially be drawn under the control of the SADF. In terms of the National Supplies and Procurement Act, any person or company producing 'vital goods' can be ordered to supply them to the SADF (~~this power was first used in 1975, when companies were ordered to produce tents for troops in Angola~~<sup>13</sup>). ~~And~~ The National Key Points Act allows the defence minister to declare any building a 'key point', and to order the owners to meet certain strict security requirements.

~~The private sector/SADF relationship has been consolidated through~~

individual involvement in defence force structures. The most notable example is the seconding in mid-1979 of one of Barlow Rand's top men, John Maree, by Armscor, where he now serves as executive vice-chairperson. Furthermore, top industrialists now serve on the 13-<sup>person</sup> Defence Advisory Council, which examines the internal operations of the SADF, and advises the minister about the arms industry, and the best business methods to be applied within the SADF.<sup>14</sup>

But the relationship has not always been entirely harmonious. The SADF has often complained that it can't always succeed in competing with the private sector for skilled labour. Many skilled personnel, vital to the maintenance of sophisticated weapons systems are drawn towards more attractive prospects in private industry.<sup>15</sup>

The private sector, too, has complained about increased individual and company taxation caused by high defence expenditure. The lengthy and frequent call-up of national servicemen has also given rise to dissatisfaction, with the private sector and the PFP frequently calling for a larger permanent force and less time for national service.

#### The SADF: Expanded Activities

~~The SADF's presence in Namibia, the frequent attempts at destabilising neighbouring countries, the many allegations of torture, misconduct and even genocide<sup>16</sup>, and its increasing role of propping up apartheid by manning roadblocks, curbing 'unrest', and generally assisting the police, are all examples of the repressive role of the SADF.~~

However, a large proportion of the SADF's work is not directly repressive, but is concerned with winning the 'hearts and minds' of the people. One of the ways this is attempted is through the Civic Action Programme (CAP) which aims, according to Major General

"to secure through administrative and socio-economic action the goodwill, support and co-operation of the local population."<sup>17</sup>

The CAP uses military servicemen in non-military forms of service. Seconded to other government departments or to bantustan governments, the men work as teachers, engineers, doctors, legal, financial and agricultural advisors, and even as traders and directors of tourism. Soldiers are required to wear uniforms, and often to carry weapons. According to Lloyd, the idea behind this is

"to project an image of the soldier as a man of action but who is nonetheless a friend of the Black man and who is prepared to defend him. We want the national servicemen to teach the Black man whilst his rifle is standing in the corner of the classroom."<sup>18</sup>

~~The CAP has been condemned by a wide range of observers, with only bantustan leaders such as Catchesa Buthelezi and Hudson Ntsanwisi having anything positive to say about it.~~<sup>19</sup> There has been much resistance from those who are supposed to benefit from the programme; for example, in Soweto there have been school boycotts calling for the removal of soldier teachers, and in northern Namibia there have been frequent clashes between students and SADF teachers.<sup>20</sup> Already in two areas in Namibia, Ovambo and Kavango, the CAP appears to have been abandoned altogether, as it has met with little success in reducing the wide-spread support for SWAPO.<sup>21</sup>

The SADF does not only concentrate its 'hearts and minds' effort on the black community. In white education, youth preparedness programmes have been used to propagate SADF ideology, while the Cadet system, which by early 1985 involved 210 000 students, has involved intense, and at times highly sophisticated military

training. In tertiary education, too, the military is becoming increasingly involved. The most obvious example is the establishment of military units at all Afrikaans-language campuses, and the (unsuccessful) attempts to set up similar units at English-language universities.<sup>22</sup>

~~The SADF may have succeeded in convincing most white South Africans that it is a neutral body defending the country's interests. But to the majority of South Africans, who daily suffer the oppression and exploitation of the apartheid system, the SADF is a repressive force which has neither their confidence nor their support, despite the efforts of the 'hearts and minds' campaign.~~

## 2. SADF 1982: MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

### Extended call-up

The major development in 1982 was the passing of the Defence Amendment Act, ~~Very briefly,~~ The new act allows the SADF to put into service large numbers of men at short notice. It lengthens the time period for annual camps from 240 to 720 days, and it makes provision for all white males to serve in the commando force up to the age of 55. The act will make available an extra 800 000 men, nearly double the present number of potentially conscripted people.<sup>23</sup>

The new act emphasises the need for "area protection", with a view to an intensified area-based war. During 1982 it became increasingly clear that the ANC was preparing for a sustained guerilla war, rather than merely a campaign of limited sabotage.<sup>24</sup> ~~Guerilla attacks consequently increased in both intensity and sophistication.~~ This necessitated that more attention be paid to the commando system. By 1982, local commando units were so understaffed that in some key areas (e.g. Thabazimbi on the Botswana Border) they had only 5% of the required number of volunteers.<sup>25</sup> The act provides for urban, rural and industrial commandos with wide-ranging duties, including protection of key points, intelligence, counter-insurgency

and patrol work.<sup>26</sup> Already in Paulpietersburg, Utrecht and Vryheid (areas in Northern Natal in which the ANC has been particularly active) all White males between the ages of 17 and 55 have been required to register with their commando units. Training begins in April, when five-day training camps will be conducted.<sup>27</sup>

~~The new defence act also suggests heightened defence force activity in Southern Africa, and continued attempts to destabilise the region. In the course of the debates, the possibility of full-scale conventional war was frequently discussed. The emphasis on the production of heavy arms (e.g. the new Olifant battle tank, and the G6) suggests that the SADF is planning to unleash a major war against the front-line states. Certainly such sophisticated weapons would not be required for the guerilla war against SWAPO and the ANC. Nor do the defence forces of South Africa's neighbouring states pose a threat in conventional military terms. One can therefore only conclude that the SADF will prefer continued conventional attacks into the frontline states to a long drawn out counter-insurgency war.~~

Extending conscription : call-up of coloureds, indians and women?

After certain leaks to the press when the new defence bill was introduced in March 1982, much debate centred on the possible call-up of white women and coloured and indian men.

Since 1971 women have been recruited into the SADF as volunteers, and by 1982 there were over 3 000 women in the permanent force. Most are employed in "traditionally feminine" roles, as nurses, caterers or in administrative and clerical capacities. Recently, however, a second, more operational role for women has emerged: intelligence work, radio and telex operations, cartography, engineering and military police.<sup>28</sup> ~~As the war intensifies, and as more and more men need to be released for border duty, women will have to fulfill these operational duties.~~

~~Even prior to the introduction of the Defence Amendment Act, there were indications that the government was anticipating the future conscription of women. For example, in 1981, P-W Botha said he supported the introduction of compulsory national service for women in non-combatant units.<sup>29</sup> However, in the short term, it would~~

~~appear that the SADF's priority will be the conscription of Coloureds and Indians.~~

In 1963, coloureds were recruited into the SADF for the first time since the Second World War, when the Cape Corps was established. A decade later, Indians were first recruited to serve at Salisbury Island Naval Base. At the same time (1974), the SADF began to adopt a two-pronged strategy for the training of Africans: the recruitment of Africans into the SADF and the creation of Bantustan units.<sup>30</sup> Within five years 12 000 Black troops were being trained and deployed, with coloureds and Indians making up 10% of the permanent force.<sup>31</sup> By 1982, 40% of the forces in the operational area were black, the majority having been conscripted by the South West African Territorial Force.<sup>32</sup>

~~From the point of view of the SADF, the Black population provides a potentially large number of conscriptees, and at wages lower than those paid to white servicemen of similar rank.<sup>33</sup> And for the recruits, the SADF offers secure employment, housing and a pension at a time of economic recession and high unemployment, especially in the rural areas, where most blacks are recruited.~~

The possibility of full conscription of coloured and Indian men was given much attention in the 1982 defence debates. According to defence minister, Magnus Malan, the establishment of a ballot system was strongly considered, but was decided against in the short term due to lack of finances, facilities and manpower.<sup>34</sup>

Malan's comment raises important limitations on the possibility of conscription. An already fairly saturated defence force would face major logistical problems were it suddenly to be confronted with thousands of new recruits. According to Labour Party national chairperson, David Curry, the SADF is already turning away many potential recruits - mainly unemployed coloured men.<sup>35</sup> The government will also be wary of likely widespread opposition from the coloured and Indian communities.

Despite these arguments against possible conscription, there are

important / ....

important political and ideological considerations which need to be taken into account. The government is presently attempting, through its new constitutional dispensation, to sell the idea that it is committed to genuine power-sharing. ~~Now~~ If power is to be "genuinely" shared coloureds and Indians must be seen to be defending their newly-acquired rights. As Transvaal National Party leader, F W de Klerk, recently said:

"You can't ask a man to fight for his country if he can't vote. Among the terms of the new dispensation is the guarantee that Coloureds and Indians will get full voting rights. It follows that their responsibilities will increase accordingly, which means they will hold obligations to defend these rights."<sup>36</sup>

~~Other Cabinet ministers (particularly P W Botha and Heunis) have expressed similar sentiments on numerous occasions over the past year.~~

The second consideration concerns the nature of the war in South Africa. For the SADF, it is important that the guerilla activity is not perceived by the international community as being directed against the apartheid system, for it then gives the cause of the liberation movements (SWAPO and the ANC) a definite <sup>O O O O O</sup> legitimacy. ~~The war must be seen as one of "black vs black".~~ Large-scale black participation in the SADF reinforces the idea that the guerillas are not inspired by anti-racist sentiments, but by a "Marxist, imperialist" doctrine.

Thirdly, as the civil war intensifies, whites will become too thinly spread to effectively counter guerilla insurgency. Already whites are serving two years national service, a further two years on camps, and then (possibly) a limited period each year in commando units. There is thus little or no room for extending the call-up within the white male population, making the call-up of Coloureds and Indians both militarily and politically important. ~~In this context the "hearts and minds" campaign must be seen at least partly as an attempt to "soften up" the coloured and Indian communities.~~

Given these considerations, it would be naive to argue that conscription of coloureds and Indians is not high on the government's agenda. Certainly, they are likely to prefer a gradual process, beginning with enforcement of registration for coloureds and Indians (made compulsory in 1971, but never enforced). When conscription was first extended to Whites it was done on a ballot basis. If a similar system were applied to coloureds and Indians (as Malan suggested it would), some of the logistical and even political problems would be minimised. An initially small percentage could be called up and drawn into some of the expanded work of the SADF. In the rural areas the commando system could be strengthened, while nationally the C.A.P. could take on a new form, with black conscriptees engaging in an extensive "hearts and minds" campaign.

#### Alternative service

The final area in which a process of restructuring has been embarked on by the SADF concerns alternative service for conscientious objectors (C.O.'s).

Events of the past decade - in particular, the invasion of and subsequent raids into Angola, and the crushing of the Soweto uprising in 1976/7 - have led many conscripts to refuse to undergo military training. During this period, between 3 000 and 4 000 people have annually failed to report for service.<sup>37</sup> Most have left South Africa; however, a small number - about 300 each year - have chosen to object within South Africa. Almost all of these have been Jehovah's Witnesses, who, as C.O.'s recognised by the SADF, receive sentences of three years in detention barracks. Other objectors receive maximum sentences of two years or R2 000,00 or both. This group is not recognised by the SADF and can be called up subsequent to serving their sentence. By January 1983 there had been ten such objectors, six in the past year. None had received the maximum sentence.

Largely as a result of pressure from churches for alternative forms of non-military service for C.O.'s, the SADF set up a commission under Brigadier Naudé to look into the issue. While the commission

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consisted entirely of military personnel, it did draw on individuals outside the SADF; for example, people with expert knowledge of the Koran and Hindu scriptures. (This would appear to indicate that the SADF is anticipating future C.O's whose religious base is either Muslim or Hindu; i.e. coloured or Indian objectors).

In early January 1983 the Naudé recommendations were presented to church leaders. While they are only recommendations they do provide an indication of SADF thinking. In short, the commission recommended that:

- . pacifist objectors who are prepared to do certain maintenance tasks within the SADF, but in non-military dress, do 1½ times the length of service of regular conscriptees.
- . religious objectors who refuse to render any service in any armed force do community service outside the SADF for a single period of up to eight years.
- . all other objectors (including religious and non-religious C.O's who have a political basis to their objection) receive a civilian sentence of between two and eight years.

According to Naudé, only the first two categories of objectors will be recognised by the SADF. Their cases will be heard by a judge, three theologians and two members of the SADF, one of whom will be a chaplain. All will be appointed by the minister of manpower. The hearing will be in camera, and no publicity will be allowed. Furthermore, Naudé has recommended that the publication of documents written by the C.O. about his objection be prohibited. ~~The last category of objector will not be recognised by the SADF and, as at present, will be tried under Section 126A of the Defence Act.~~

Naudé's recommendations are designed to tighten up existing legislation and curtail widespread objection. For all objectors - but particularly for those unrecognised C.O's who up till now have generally been receiving one year sentences and a dishonourable discharge from the SADF<sup>39</sup> - this is no concession whatsoever. But, more than tightening up the existing repressive legislation, Naudé is attempting to divide

"universal pacifist" from "political" objectors, by granting only the former the option of alternative service. Most of the major English-language churches have already rejected this attempt at division. They have also criticised the length of time that Naudé recommends objectors should serve. It remains to be seen whether the government will move ahead without the support of this important constituency..

~~To many potential C.O.s, alternative service would only be acceptable if, firstly, it were open to everyone and, secondly, it were no lengthier than the service required of national servicemen. It would also have to be service completely outside the SADF. If the government chooses to reject these very basic demands, it will be shutting off the last legal option within the country for those who are not prepared to fight for the SADF.~~

## NOTES

1. This subject is more comprehensively and thoroughly covered in NUSAS Total War in South Africa: Militarisation and the Apartheid state (Cape Town: NUSAS 1982)
2. White Paper on Defence and Armaments Supply, 1977
3. Paratus, July 1979, p 36 (the official SADF journal)
4. General G. J. J. Boshoff was one of the first military figures to state that 80% of the war was not military, but socio-economic. Quoted in Progress, Jan 1976.
5. Moss, G "Total Strategy" in WIP 11 (1980)  
O'Meara, D "Muldergate and the Politics of Afrikaner Nationalism" in WIP 22 (1982)
6. White Paper, 1979
7. F.M. 2.4.1982
8. Figures drawn from SAIRR Annual Surveys
9. F.M. 11.9.1981
10. Nato's Fifteen Nations, Oct - Nov 1982  
Africa Now, Feb 1983
11. F.M. 26.11.1976
12. Star 13.3.1982
13. F.M. 26.11.1976
14. SAIRR Annual survey 1980, p 201
15. See, for eg, P.W. Botha in Hansard 244.1979 col 48
16. See recent Church reports, including Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference Report on Namibia (Pretoria: SACBC 1982)
17. Lloyd, C The importance of rural development the defence strategy of South Africa and the need for private sector involvement (Urban Foundation, 1979)
18. See also A South African law and the Conscientious Objectors

- Paratus, July 1978 ; RDM 21. 1. 1978
- 20 Citizen 3.12.1979 ; W.A. 1.9.1978
- 21 Financial Times 12.2.1981 ; S.T. 7.3.1982
- 22 For full coverage of this issue, see Evans, G  
The Role of the military in education in South Africa  
 Honours, Faculty of Arts, UCT. 1983
- 23 C.T. 19.4.1982
- 24 ~~W.A.~~ Star 23.6.1982
- 25 C.T. 19.4.1982
- 26 Star 10.11.1982
- 27 C.T. 10.2.1983
- 28 Star 25.3.1982
- 29 SAIRR Annual survey 1981, p 59
- 30 Enloe, C "Ethnic factors in the evolution of the  
 South African military" in Issue 5,4 (1975)
- Grundy K "A black foreign legion in South Africa  
 in African Affairs 80, 318 (1981)
- 31 SAIRR Annual Survey 1979, p 53
- 32 S.E. 30.5.1982. See also Curran's article in this sec.
- 33 White Paper, 1982
- 34 Hansard 25.3.1982 cols 3535-3536
- 35 C.T. 27.1.1983
- 36 C.T. 24.8.1982
- 37 SAIRR Annual Surveys
- 38 Minutes of meeting between religious leaders and  
 Brigadier Krupel, director of military law, 5.1.19
- 39 A dishonourable discharge makes future call-  
 extremely unlikely.

**Collection Number: AG1977**

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**PUBLISHER:**

*Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive*

*Location:- Johannesburg*

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