

RESEARCH PROJECT

MILITARY CONSCRIPTION AND POSSIBILITIES FOR ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF NATIONAL SERVICE

Overview

The project will consider two broad areas:

The first aims to examine the extent and costs of the "brain drain", as well as attitudes to the current system of conscription and potential alternatives amongst conscripts, employers and the professions in key sectors of the economy.

The second will examine the possibilities for a system of alternative non-military community service, models in other countries, and attitudes towards such a system.

Research of this nature is being called for from a range of public interest groups, and appears all the more urgent in the light of recent public discussion about the need for alternatives to military service. This discussion has come in the wake of a growing concern at the "brain drain" of skilled manpower from the country. Attention has focussed on the fact that many males have cited conscription as a factor in their decision to leave. Debate has also centered on the controversial role played by conscription in a highly polarised society.

Outline

The project is broken down into the following areas:

1) The cost of the "brain drain" to the South African economy. This would include:

- a) an analysis of the extent of manpower shortages in key economic sectors, both present and projected;
- b) an assesment of the extent of the "brain drain", and its contribution to manpower shortages;
- c) an analysis of the financial cost of the "brain drain" to the South African economy.

Data for this aspect of the project will in part be collected in the surveys outlined below.

Staff Requirements:

One full-time researcher for two months. One part-time research assistant for one month.

2) Composite surveys to gather figures on manpower shortages, the brain drain, and attitudes to conscription and alternative service. These would include:

- a) a survey of key professional and employer bodies to gauge:
  - \* the extent of emigration of high- and middle-level skilled manpower;
  - \* current shortages and expected demand in these categories;
  - \* their attitudes to conscription and alternative service.

Staff Requirements:

One full-time researcher for two months.

- b) a survey of training institutions from which the above categories of manpower are drawn to gauge:
  - \* the extent of emigration of graduates;
  - \* their attitudes to the "brain drain", conscription and alternative service.

Staff Requirements:

One full-time researcher for two months.

- c) a survey of male final year students, articled clerks, interns etc. to gauge:
  - \* numbers considering emigrating;
  - \* attitudes to conscription and alternative service.

A research survey agency is to be commissioned for this aspect of the research.

3) Report on international models of alternative service in selected countries, covering such detail as the nature of service, how such systems are institutionalised and managed, as well as detailed data on the forms of service, financing, working conditions, etc.

Staff Requirements:

One full-time researcher for two months.

4) Case study of a potential alternative service project/s which would be part of a broader alternative national service system. The study would seek to determine:

- \* the practical working and viability of an alternative national service project;
- \* the costs and financial considerations of such a project;
- \* the requirements of, and possibilities for, an alternative national service system;

The study may consist of a single community/private sector project already underway; or it may look at more than one to consider eg. urban and rural work projects for conscripts doing alternative service. It may also consider potential projects within the state sector.

Staff Requirements:

One full-time researcher for 2 months.

5) An expert opinion on a potential alternative national service system and the South African economy. The paper would consider:

- \* potential areas in the public and private sectors of the South African economy where alternative service schemes could be workable;
- \* an estimation of the potential benefits, economically and socially, of such a system.

Staff Requirements:

A commissioned expert at the rate of R2000,00, the work to be supplied within a two month period.

6) A survey of welfare, service, community and other private sector organisation, as well as state services to gauge:

- \* their attitudes to a system of alternative national service;
- \* whether they would be in a position to accomodate alternative servers, if the law allowed for it.

Staff Requirements:

Two full-time researchers for three months.

7) An expert opinion on the legal considerations of an alternative service system. It would seek to provide an overview of the legal and institutional framework within which an alternative service system could be operated. It would aim to lay a basis for debate around the details of potential alternative service legislation.

Staff Requirements:

A commissioned expert at the rate of R2000,00, the work to be supplied within a month.

#### Procedure

The Centre for Policy Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand is to undertake the research and employ the staff.

A part-time administrative assistant is to be appointed.

An academic reference group is to be established to evaluate the progress of the project on a continuing basis. Closer co-ordination of the project on a week by week basis will be conducted by a management committee.

**Collection Number: AG1977**

**END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)**

**PUBLISHER:**

*Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive*

*Location:- Johannesburg*

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