

A1.7.6.13

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EMIGRATION, CONSCRIPTION AND ALTERNATIVE SERVICE - A SURVEY  
OF TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

CLIVE GLASER

## EMIGRATION, CONSCRIPTION AND ALTERNATIVE SERVICE: A SURVEY OF TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

### Introduction

The paper examines the issues of emigration, conscription and alternative service from the perspective of South Africa's key training institutions. 315 administrative officials, deans, and heads of departments at all major English and Afrikaans universities and technikons were surveyed through a postal questionnaire/and or personal interviews. Departments and faculties were selected on the basis of the key professional categories affected by the brain drain. There was a 39,9% response rate.

The survey sought to ascertain both quantitative and qualitative information on the impact of emigration and conscription, as well as attitudes on alternative service. A note of caution on quantitative detail has to be made. In most cases respondents estimated figures roughly and did not have exact detail on, e.g. emigration rates amongst graduates of their departments. They were however in a position to provide qualitative assessments of the issues under investigation.

### Emigration

There was a marked distinction in the responses of English and Afrikaans academics. While the Afrikaans respondents did not experience a high rate of emigration amongst their students, their English counterparts were of the general opinion that the problem was severe, and even of crisis proportions at their campuses. The Afrikaans academics acknowledged that there was a national problem in this respect, though.

The hardest hit faculties were medicine, accountancy and engineering.

The impact of the emigration of graduates is felt in a number of ways:

- \* through departments being deprived of teaching staff;
- \* through difficulties in paying competitive salaries for staff who are able to command inflated incomes in the private sector due to shortages;
- \* through the demoralisation that is associated with the lack of confidence expressed by emigrants;

## Conscription

A figure of 75% of English academics consider conscription to be a contributing factor encouraging emigration. Most note, however, that there are other factors such as political insecurity and career issues which also play a role. Afrikaans academics are less inclined to see conscription as a factor with only 18% being of this opinion.

English academics point to the disproportionately greater numbers of male graduates emigrating when compared to females. They suggest that this is due to conscription affecting men only. Women graduates are also known to emigrate on account of being indirectly affected by conscription in cases where they join men who emigrate for this reason.

Grounds for opposing conscription include personal as well as political/moral reasons. Personal factors identified are that conscription is a waste of time, it is inconveniencing and disruptive, especially camp call-ups. Afrikaans academics say that their students see National Service as a nuisance but are accepting of it. Political opposition to conscription at English campuses increased following the deployment of troops in the townships.

Conscription was identified as disruptive to young professional graduates by both English and Afrikaans respondents. Reasons were:

- \* employers are hesitant to employ men who have not completed their two years of initial service;
- \* men doing National Service experience a two year delay in the commencement of their careers. This is a particular problem in fast developing fields;
- \* the two year delay also disadvantages conscripts in the job market.

Both sets of respondents felt that conscription created problems especially in respect of the disruptiveness of camps and on account of the underutilisation of skills within the SADF.

## Alternative National Service

There was a widespread belief that a system of alternative national service could be beneficial to the country. This

was the view of 92% of English academics, 46% of those at the Afrikaans universities and 60% of technikon teachers.

Two thirds of English academics believe that alternative service should not be punitive in nature. Roughly half of their Afrikaans counterparts are of the same view. Those who believe that it should be punitive see it as necessary that alternative service is not seen as a "soft option".

On the issue of whether alternative servers should wear uniforms, 84% of English academics feel they should not as this would identify them too closely with the SADF. A figure of 33% of Afrikaans academics believe they shouldn't, while 28% felt that they should.

As many as 71% of English academics believe that a system of alternative service could contribute to reversing the brain drain. This view is shared by only 18% of their Afrikaans counterparts.

A majority of all academics believe that alternative service can fill a positive need within the community. It is seen as a means of providing manpower for developmental and service needs.

There was a common view expressed that alternative service should be extended to blacks and women.

**Collection Number: AG1977**

**END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)**

**PUBLISHER:**

*Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive*

*Location:- Johannesburg*

©2013

**LEGAL NOTICES:**

**Copyright Notice:** All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

**Disclaimer and Terms of Use:** Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document is part of a collection held at the Historical Papers Research Archive at The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.