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**MASCULINITY, CITIZENSHIP AND POLITICAL OBJECTION TO
COMPULSORY MILITARY SERVICE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENCE
FORCE 1978-1990**

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Abstract

This thesis conceptualises compulsory military service and objection to it as public performative acts that generate gendered and political identity. Conscription was the primary performance of citizenship and masculinity for white men in apartheid South Africa. Conscription was also a key governance strategy both in terms of upholding the authority of the state and in engendering discipline in the white population. Objection to military service was therefore a destabilising and transgressive public act. Competing conceptualisations of masculinity and citizenship are inherent in pro and anti-conscription discourses. The refusal to undertake military service places men outside the accepted means of graduating to 'real' manhood and patriotic citizenship. Although objection can be an iconic and transgressive act, objectors have an essentially ambivalent subjectivity in the public realm. Objectors are 'strangers' in a socially constructed and gendered binary of 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. This ambivalent status creates opportunities but also constraints for the performance of objection. The thesis analyses the effectiveness of objectors' performances and argues that there is a distinction between a radical challenge to hegemonic conceptions of militarised masculinity and citizenship and assimilatory challenges. The tension between radicalism and assimilation comes to the fore in response to the state's attacks on objectors. The militarised apartheid state is defined as not only masculine but heteronormative terms and it is the deployment of sexuality that is its most effective means of stigmatising and restricting the performance of objection. The thesis uses interview material, archival data and case studies and concludes that objectors (and their supporters) weaved multiple narratives into their performances but that as the 1980s progressed, the performance of objection to conscription became assimilatory and this demonstrates the heteronormativity of the state, military service and the public realm.

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Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
COSAWR	Committee on South African War Resistance
COSG	Conscientious Objectors Support Groups
CEPG	Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group
ECC	End Conscription Campaign
MK	uMkhonto we Sizwe [Spear of the Nation]
NP	National Party
PFP	Progressive Federal Party
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SADF	South African Defence Force
SCF	Southern Cross Fund
SWAPO	South West African People's Organisation
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UDF	United Democratic Front

Introduction

I have a huge problem that I cannot talk to anyone about. I tried talking to my father and he got so angry with me, I thought he might actually hit me. I do not want to go into the army...all my friends seem to be looking forward to going into the army. I certainly can't discuss it with them. I feel terribly isolated, like I don't belong anywhere. It's not because I'm a coward.

The Star replies: Cowardice has nothing to do with conscientious objection to doing military service. Contact the End Conscription Campaign at 011 337 6796 (12/09/1987).

Collective attempts to transform masculinity warrant the attention of pro-feminist men and women
Brian Donovan (1998: 817).

The refusal to be conscripted into the South African Defence Force (SADF) for political reasons was a striking and challenging public act taken by individual white men in South Africa. Why would men defy their 'duty' to the nation and resist expectations made of them in the home, school and wider society? This thesis conceptualises both conscription and objection to military service as a performance in the public realm and it is a performance that is generative of gendered political identities. These performances, understood in Butler's terms that "identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (1999: 33)¹, are generative not only of individual subjectivity, but also of wider societal norms. Conscription is a powerful institutional means for defining 'acceptable' practices of masculinity and citizenship and of the boundaries of the public realm itself. Compulsory military service was a critical aspect of the National Party's (NP) governing strategy in the 1980s and conscription underpinned and perpetuated gendered binaries: binaries that encouraged men and women to support the social preparation for and actual prosecution of military warfare. Conscription also

¹ Butler's concept of performativity has been critiqued for assuming "an abstracted subject (i.e. abstracted as a subject position in a given discourse) and thus provides no space for theorizing conscious reflexivity, negotiation or agency in the doing of identity" (Nelson, 1999; also, Eagleton, 1996). However, this thesis uses performativity in conjunction with Connell's typology of performative masculinities. Connell states that the creation of subjectivity occurs in lived social practices and that: "a personal life is a path through a field of practices which are following a range of collective logics, and responding to a range of structural conditions which routinely intersect and contradict each other" (Connell, 1987: 222). Performativity is therefore used herein not as an abstracted concept but as the result of an inter-relationship of structural and post-structural factors.

served as a disciplinary mechanism for a white elite whose unity was by no means assured and who had a history of division and dissent. Objecting to military service challenged not merely a specific practice, but the central and most important performance, of masculinity and citizenship.

What is at issue in this thesis is the nature and effectiveness of the challenge objectors posed to the tropes of masculinity and citizenship that legitimated compulsory military service. Were these challenges consistent, effective and radical? Did they expose and deconstruct the mechanisms of identity production that engendered the binaries of militarised apartheid? Or did objectors become complicit in certain shared assumptions and practices of masculinity and citizenship? This thesis will seek to define conscripts and objectors not as unitary actors, adopting homogenous subjectivities, but actors who draw from multiple discourses² present at multiple levels: in the home, school, workplace and at the national level. These multiple discourses created ambiguity and possibilities for contestation and dissent. In particular, the contention that objectors were an inherently ambivalent presence in the public realm (contesting practices of masculinity and citizenship, yet also claiming to embody the *true* constructions of them), created tension in the performance of objection. It is the nature of these performances, the identities that were included or excluded, the desire to be heard and yet to contest apartheid society in the 1980s, that made objection to military service a public act that was subject to many pressures. Analysing the state as an actor in defining tropes of masculinity and citizenship and as a disciplinary institution is also an aim of this study. Authoritarian states, in particular, wield disciplinary power in specifically gendered ways. Tropes of sexuality are also used to discipline and stifle dissent. It is the question of how objectors contest these disciplinary discourses: the aspects they openly defy, the practices and identities they avoid for fear of being provocative or counter-productive and the state attacks that are rendered ineffective, that enable the conceptualisation of military service and objection as a constitutive performance in the public realm.

The anti-conscription movement in apartheid South Africa has not been extensively analysed and the accounts written have been mainly authored by activists and objectors themselves (CIIR, 1989; Nathan, 1989; Toms, 1994). In analysing objection from a gendered perspective, this study is placed within a growing literature on masculinity from a southern African perspective (Lindsay and Meischer 2003; Ouzgane and Morrell, 2005; Morrell 1998, 2001a). Essentially, this literature

² Discourse is used in this thesis as “the social activity of making meanings with language and other symbolic systems in some particular kind of situation and setting” (Lemke, 1995: 6).

identifies masculinity as a socially defined and contextually based construct and that there are in fact a plurality of masculinities and subject positions in any given context (Morrell, 1998: 607). Using masculinities as a lens through which to interpret history has been effectively deployed in a British context (Bourke, 1996; Roper and Tosh, 1993) and there can be few more apt uses of masculinity and its interconnections with the political ties of citizenship, than when analysing militarisation and peace movements. Militarisation has been defined as “a set of attitudes and social practices which regards war and the preparation for war as a normal and desirable social activity” (Mann, 1987: 35). Apartheid South Africa’s militarisation was profound. As Cock wrote in 1989, “in South Africa the battlefield comprehends the entire society” (51) and numerous studies uphold this view (Cock and Nathan, 1989; Cawthra, 1986; Frankel, 1984; Frederickse, 1986; Grundy, 1986; Metten and Goodison, 1988). South Africa’s post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was unequivocal in its belief that militarisation permeated white society and perpetuated apartheid:

The mobilisation of members of the white community to uphold the system began when they were still children...many who are now seen as perpetrators viewed themselves as defenders of their nation and were, at the time, showered with praises and rewards for achieving their goals. Their actions appeared justified in what they viewed as a war context (1998a: 167).

The relationship between gender and militarisation has been described as “inseparable” (Enloe, 1989: 119) and has been well documented in South Africa and elsewhere (Cock, 1993; Elshtain, 1995; Enloe, 1988, 1993, 2000; Tickner, 1992; Woolf, 2000). This literature has focussed primarily on the role of women and constructs of femininity in enabling the wielding of specific male (and militarised) conceptions of power.

Focusing on male objectors (and male and female peace activists) who resisted male conscription in a defined social and historical context affords the opportunity for the destabilisation of militarisation and for the conceptualisation of dislocated masculinities that contest dominant or hegemonic tropes. The study of white masculinities and militarisation in apartheid South Africa reveals that controlling dominant constructs of gender and their supposed inherent bond with specific performances became a fundamental state project. “South Africa, until recently, was a man’s country”, concludes Morrell. “Power was exercised publicly and politically by men...the country’s history also produced brittle masculinities - defensive and prone to violence” (2001a: 18). The contention that South Africa was rigidly patriarchal and distinctive cultures of masculinity were characterised as violent and authoritarian is

reflected in other studies (Bozzoli, 1982; McClintock, 1993; Cock, 1993; TRC, 1998a: 251). The TRC considered white masculinities in particular to be, “a critical factor in the legitimization of apartheid rule and its brutal hold onto power”. (1998a: 251). Studying the politics of masculinities in apartheid South Africa offers a compelling case study of power relations and enables the analysis of the building blocks of militarised, racist and authoritarian rule. Furthermore, norms and performances of masculinity were the site at which contestations of apartheid within the ruling elite took place. Within the white community, Morrell believes that objectors and the ECC engaged in a process that did, “challenge violent masculinities and, in doing so, develop[ed] new models of how to be men...ECC offered a non-violent, anti-authoritarian vision of masculinity for young white men” (Morrell, 2001a: 31). In the pro and anti-conscription debates and activism, the politics of masculinity were indivisible from the political struggles for the transformation for a new South Africa.

The primary research method for this thesis was qualitative research. The means for this investigation were semi-structured interviews and archival research. My initial informant was former ECC activist Dr Janet Cherry and through a process of ‘snowballing’, I contacted other former objectors and ECC activists. These interviews were tape recorded, with the consent of the interviewees and fully transcribed. The South African Historical Archives (SAHA) housed in the University of the Witwatersrand, provided a rich source of material. At SAHA, I accessed the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) archives, the recently released Military Intelligence files on the activities of objectors and the ECC and the collection of papers relating to the objection of Dr Ivan Toms, held at the Gay and Lesbian Archives. The Cory Library at Rhodes University also houses papers relating to the ECC in the Eastern Cape and the activities of the United Democratic Front. I was particularly fortunate that a colleague at Rhodes University, Nicky Cattaneo, had a considerable personal collection of ECC literature, policy papers, internal papers and contemporary media reports. A key resource for establishing the state’s attitude towards military service, objectors and the wider political goals of South Africa was the SADF’s *Paratus* magazine. I read each month’s edition from 1978 to 1990. *Paratus* was the SADF’s only regular magazine on sale to the general public. Moll identified the magazine as “the most important organ for the dissemination of military propaganda” and by the 1980s it had become an influential ideological mouthpiece for the National Party (1981: 20-22). I also read the majority of the editions of the *South African Digest*, which was a government-produced review of South African media, current events and government policy.

The research uses a multi-method approach that treats methodological paradigms as a “toolbox” to select and interpret data and not to be wedded to one approach (Silverman, 2000: 828). Queer theory also advocates using a “scavenger method” that utilises methodologies that can adapt and deconstruct texts and truths (Kone, Mahoney and Plummer, 2003: 95). The research is, therefore, borrowed from both interpretive methods and grounded theory (Marshall and Rossman, 1999: 154; Martin and Turner, 1986; Yin, 1992). I sought to identify common themes emergent from the data collected and triangulate the sources. Given the fact that by the mid-1980s many thousands of men failed to report for military service, I had to decide to limit the sample. I therefore chose to conduct qualitative interviews using the “critical case study” approach (Kelly, 1999: 382). The use of ‘case studies’ draws from the understanding that there cannot be a definitive truth and that it is better to interview a small number of individuals connected with events central to the phenomena under investigation than a vast number of people more marginally connected (Blumer, 1979: pxxxiii). Case study research also allows for the investigation of the boundaries between individual actors and wider social and political contexts to be deconstructed and theorised (Clyde-Mitchell, 1983: 191; Halfpenny, 1979; Yin, 1992: 123).

I chose the ‘case study’ of white men who had been imprisoned for refusing to serve in the SADF for political reasons. I interviewed six men who had been imprisoned (three of them were interviewed twice). I also interviewed one man who had gone into exile shortly before his trial, one who had been an ECC activist and was not imprisoned and one who had gone into exile and had established the Committee on South African War Resistance (COSAWR) in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The research process itself generated interest from those who had been involved in the ECC and I conducted an e-mail correspondence with Mr Justice Edwin Cameron, who had been the advocate in a number of objectors’ trials. There were inevitable challenges in using qualitative methods for researching in an historical context. One former objector (Philip Wilkinson) could not be traced and another was no longer willing to give interviews. However, the aim of the project was not to provide a quantifiable and definitive history of objection and the ECC, but to offer an analysis and interpretation of objection. Indeed, the ability to provide a definitive historical account, particularly one based on qualitative methods, has been considered an illegitimate and unproductive aim by a number of authors (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000: 241; Fontana and Frey, 2000: 646; Mischler, 1986; Hertz, 1997). This study offers an analysis of the social politics of masculinity and

citizenship centred on compulsory military service and resistance to it, but does not claim to provide a definitive account or essential 'truth'.

The analytical focus on citizenship and masculinity also impacted on the research process and should be considered when reading the thesis. The objectors I interviewed much more readily identified the 'politicised' discourse of citizenship and its relationship with military service than with the discourse of masculinity. Douglas Torr considered his objection to embody the message that "to be a good citizen I am refusing to serve in this structure within South Africa and actually I don't recognise the legitimacy of the state in creating these laws and I will not be a part of that" (Interview with author, 19/3/2003). David Bruce also considered his imprisonment for objection to be "a very powerful political act...representing some kind of body blow to the political order" (Interview with author, 12/9/2002). However, as Karner writes, men's conscious reflection on their own masculinity and how this corresponds with wider social norms "is seldom articulated directly" (1998: 197). Two interviewees for the thesis in fact ended the interview, in which they had talked about their success or failure at sport, their relationships with their mothers, fathers and siblings and a whole range of other aspects that create a masculine sense of self (not least their attitude towards the military) by expressing that they were surprised that we had not talked about masculinity. This reinforces the notion that men and masculinity, as a relatively unexplored social norm in society, has become, "no gender because it is all genders" and not considered particularly unique, noteworthy or definable (in sharp contrast to femininity) (Heywood and Mac an Ghail, 2003: 103). This further emphasises the need to use masculinity as an analytical tool in analysing social power struggles, particularly those focussing on conscription and militarisation.

Although the focus of this study is a finite historical period, the context of contemporary South Africa influenced not only the research process but also the interpretation of the research findings. Steedman notes that in searching for the past, "the search is for a lost object, which really cannot be found, for the object is altered and changed by the very search for it, into something quite different and strange" (1996: 103). In conducting the research and in disseminating my conclusions, I quickly became aware that the narratives I was offered had as much to do with identity production in the present, as they did with the recollection of the past and that the controversy some of my conclusions generated also pointed to a need to represent objectors and the white peace movement in particular ways. As Jarvinen notes, "We speak of the past as final and irrevocable, but there is nothing less so...The past we choose, consciously or unconsciously, is a past significant to our present

undertakings” (2004: 47). Objection to military service and anti-conscription activism occupies an ambiguous and somewhat neglected location in the annals of the liberation struggle. One recent study singled out the ECC as the most remarkable white, extra-parliamentary anti-apartheid group (Phillips, 2002). Yet this conclusion was more muted in an earlier study of the ECC. Indeed, in Anderson’s study, the ECC was represented as declining amid bitter divisions and controversy (1990b). Collins notes that his study of objectors, who went into exile, was hampered because he was an American and conducting the research during the sensitive transition period (and was often suspected of being linked to the CIA) (1995: 13). My own research was conducted during a time in which white identity (and South African identities generally) remained dynamic and particularly insecure. It is important, therefore, to contextualise and analyse my research process before documenting the data collected.

White men who refused to serve in the apartheid army were challenging one of the fundamental bases of white identity formation and status accumulation. However, in contemporary South Africa these men are not immune from wider political, social and economic forces in contemporary white society and the political stance that they once upheld is not necessarily acknowledged in today’s South Africa. The positive impact of political change on the self-perception of objectors was recognised by former objector Saul Batzofin who said, “liberation was quite meaningful to me, because I’d fought and sacrificed something for it. So it really was a euphoric couple of years...I still have a sense of achievement about it” (Interview with author, 5/12/2002). Fellow objector, Charles Bester, concurred, “I feel vindicated” (Interview with author, 13/9/2003). However, Steyn writes that for white people in post-apartheid South Africa, “there is an acute sense of loss of the familiar, loss of certainty, loss of comfort, loss of privilege, loss of well known roles...a delusional home now collapsed” (2001: 150). ‘Affirmative action’ employment policies, high levels of crime and net emigration amongst whites to Europe, Australia and elsewhere have affected white men in particular (Morrell, 2001a). The TRC recognised the commitment that anti-apartheid whites had made to the liberation struggle. Indeed, a special hearing was held on conscription and this documented the experience and sacrifices of conscientious objectors. The TRC concluded that compulsory military service in apartheid South Africa was a crime against humanity (1998b: 239-241). However, the rationale and process of the TRC was itself contested in South African society. Some accused it of allowing perpetrators (and by implication whites) to escape justice and even the TRC noted that the “white community often seemed either indifferent or plainly hostile to the work of the Commission” (1998a: 196). Former objectors are white men in a highly dynamic

social context and one that does not necessarily celebrate the contribution they have made to the new South Africa.

All of the objectors I interviewed offered their opinions on contemporary South Africa and many expressed a sense of ambivalence about their status in a society they felt they had helped to bring about. Dr Ivan Toms had served eighteen months in prison in the late-1980s. Like many former objectors, he occupies an influential position in the new South Africa (Toms is Director of Health in the Cape Town Municipality). However, at the time of the interview, Toms's employer was engaged in litigation with a Coloured woman, who had also been a candidate for his post, and who claimed that she should have secured the post in accordance with affirmative action legislation. As Toms reflected, "you feel you've been hit. It's a double whammy. You've been hit by the apartheid system and you've been hammered because when it comes to the crunch you're a white male in the 'number-crunching'" (Interview with author, 27/1/2003). In the current South African political context, it is certainly possible for white men who objected to military service to be marginalised in the history of South Africa's liberation and for their commitment to the new South Africa to be forgotten. This has impacted on their self-narratives as they readjust from being whites who challenged the status quo and outraged many sections of white society, to South African citizens whose identity as white men is unstable and contested by many in the new hegemonic order. Within the context of white emigration, political instability and insecurity, I would suggest that it has become politically important to restate and emphasise that some whites did make sacrifices and were genuinely committed to the democratic struggle as a means of affirming their current political agency. This political imperative should not dictate the conclusions of academic study, however.

Other attitudes towards the new South Africa expressed by the objectors I interviewed caused me to reflect on their performance of objection and generate research questions. In particular, some of my interviewees' responses mirrored viewpoints held by those who had once opposed them. One objector recalled debates he had had whilst at school about apartheid and pondered what his opponents then would say now. He wondered if they would ask, "Has not the prophecy of what we said about things to the north of us [in the rest of Africa] being bad come true in our own country?", to which he continued "I do concede that whatever is good about our country since '94 there's a lot of which I am very critical of" (Interviewee requested anonymity). Saul Batzofin was struck with how many of his contemporaries were "upset that they were used and abused" when senior ECC activist, Gavin Evans,

revealed that he had been an agent of the African National Congress (ANC) and that there were a considerable number of such agents in the ECC (Interview with author, 9/1/2003). This was not the response of Batzofin, who had assumed that the peace movement was infiltrated by the ANC and that objectors were contributing to the ANC's liberation struggle. However, another objector considered that this demonstrated,

the extent to which there was a whole lot of pandering to things that we were not party too. I was not a member of the ANC, I never was and people often accused me of being a pawn, because I was being used by ANC people...I don't agree with much of what the ANC does...What's sad in our county is how isolated or how little our viewpoint really is taken in and that's either our fault or the fault of the new regime. I'm not sure (Interviewee requested anonymity).

The interplay between the past and present and of the narrator's interpretation of his past in light of his contemporary attitudes is clear. What is significant is not only the impact these attitudes had on the construction on the narrative the interviewees offered, but also on the nature of objection at the time. Did some objectors not realise their acts were contributing to ANC goals of liberation, or had they subsequently changed their minds? Or was there deficiency in the nature of the challenge objectors performed that allowed values and practices they felt they embodied to be sidelined and previous dominant norms to remain unchanged in the new South Africa?

As this thesis will argue, self-narratives were an important aspect of the performance of objection. Yet these narratives are themselves contingent on contemporary social and political context and on engendering individual identity (Lawler, 2002: 242; Tierney, 2000: 545; Riessmann, 2003: 334). Furthermore, through a process of "emplotment" narrators define a life history whose trajectory appears inevitable and coherent (Ricoeur, 1985: 8). The conscientious objectors I interviewed all framed their narratives around this sense of the inevitable. The objectors' "plots" (Riessman, 2003: 334) were logically arranged so that a progression of events led to an increased consciousness and commitment, creating a chain of causality which lead to the act of objection that was inevitable and logical. Rauch noted that a problem she faced in interviewing objectors to military service was that they are politically sophisticated activists and public figures. As such, the objectors were highly conscious of the reasons for and the significance of their actions. Rauch concluded:

A problem with the 'self-conscious' subject is that they have selected, analysed and edited their experience in order to present a coherent explanation or sequence of events. There is no doubt that some of the interviewees told me what they thought I wanted to hear. For some of them, it was the 'nth' time they had told their story, and it had possibly lost some of its personal meaning. Post-facto analysis, intellectualism and rationalisation were thus features of the data obtained (1989: 29).

This was also a factor in my research and in addition, a few of my interview subjects mentioned that they had been in psychotherapy to absorb and contextualise their objection and imprisonment. To introduce nuance or contest any part of these narratives can be threatening to the identity of the narrator. Given the context of white men in contemporary South Africa and the process of the narrative construction of the self, some of the conclusions I reached met with resistance and controversy. Indeed, the controversy surrounding Dr Ivan Toms's objection in 1988 (discussed in Chapter Five) remains a disputed issue between Toms and other former ECC activists. Yet these controversies are more prescient to the narrative construction of identity in the context of contemporary South Africa, than they are to the actual validity of presenting the ECC as entirely successful and objection as completely effective or coherent.

The thesis is arranged as follows. In *Chapter One - Soldiers, Citizens and Strangers* the theoretical framework of the study is established. The chapter argues that objectors are 'strangers' in the public realm being neither insiders nor outsiders and they therefore threaten the operation of militarised gendered binaries. This ambivalence is reflected in the performance of objection itself, which seeks to contest and deconstruct dominant narratives of citizenship and masculinity, but also to resist becoming 'exiles' from the public realm. The state aims to 'purge' objectors, as strangers, from the public realm and often struggles to do so. The Chapter also examines conscription as a heteronormative practice of citizenship: one that creates the conception of the citizen as a heterosexual man and defines the public realm as a heteronormative space. It is from this heteronormativity that the state draws its most effective strategy for stigmatising and restricting the performance of objection: that of homophobic discourse aimed at objectors and their supporters. The Chapter asks what would be a radical challenge to militarised constructs of citizenship and masculinity? It concludes that assimilatory strategies: the desire to appear 'respectable' and assimilate with heteronormativity, cannot be classified as a radical challenge and it is from this theoretical basis that objection in apartheid South Africa should be assessed.

Chapter Two – The Militarisation of South Africa and the Growth of War Resistance establishes the historical context of South Africa. The chapter argues that militarisation was a consistent feature of South African statehood throughout the twentieth century. However, this social, economic, political and institutional process was not consistent and changed with the circumstances of the apartheid state. Militarisation was also subject to the linguistic and political divisions in the white community. During the 1980s, the Nationalist elite used conscription as a disciplinary mechanism for the white population as well as an institutional and ideological means of forging and symbolising a new, unified white identity in the face of common threat. It was for this reason that objectors were perceived as a threat. The deepening militarisation of the Republic and the changing use of conscripts created fissures in white society and fractured the gendered legitimisation of conscription. It was for this reason that objection to military service and peace activism emerged. Objection and peace activism (under the auspices of the End Conscription Campaign) were subject to wider political pressures in the white community and especially subject to the influence of the liberation movement. Consequently, the ECC adopted a ‘strategic shift’ in 1987 that aimed to make the movement ‘respectable’ in the eyes of middle-class whites, serving conscripts and business interests. This had profound implications for the performance of objection as a transformative political act.

In *Chapter Three – Performing Citizenship, Engendering Consent: Constructing Hegemonic Masculinity and Citizenship in South Africa*, the focus is on conscription as a performative political and gendered act. The Chapter uses Connell and Messerschmidt’s typology of ‘local’, ‘regional’ and ‘global’ discourses of masculinity to analyse contextually based hegemonic discourses. The South African state is conceptualised as a powerful agent in mediating masculinity and citizenship and had institutional, legal, social and material advantages in doing so. The cultural claim that conscription as a rite of passage for white boys is analysed as being engendered in the home, at school and through rituals such as cadets and during military service. Practices such as sport, its effects on the male body and linkages with conscription are also analysed as demonstrating the interrelationship between practices and discourses of the local, regional and global level. The Chapter highlights how the performance of conscription was generative of wider political norms and of the public realm itself. Conscription rigidly defined the boundaries of the white public realm and the Chapter analyses the 1984 Citizenship Laws as evidence that conscription was a transformative political act for the men who undertook it. The Chapter concludes that although conscription was subjected to multiple discourses

and practices of legitimation, it was contingent on *all* white men performing it and could also be (and was) contested at the local, regional and global levels.

Chapter Four – ‘Going the Right Way’: Contesting Conscription conceptualises objectors as ‘breaking away’ from hegemonic norms in white South Africa either in the home, at school or in the army itself. This breach formed the basis for alternative narratives of self-empowerment and autonomy to that offered by the state and formed the basis for the public performance of objection. The wider peace movement is also analysed as a transgressive sub-cultural space where radical political subjectivities could be formulated. The Chapter highlights the porosity of these boundaries and thereby problematises objection as a radical political act: objectors contested the content and rationale of conscription as a generative act of masculinity and citizenship but did so within the boundaries of the same public realm that exalted militarisation. Objectors’ performances were also distinct from the ECC’s political message. The role of women in the ECC, the feminist activism within the movement and the ways in which constructs of white femininity were addressed are analysed and used to assess the radicalism of the ECC’s challenge to hegemonic norms of the state.

In *Chapter Five – ‘Every Coward’s Choice’?: Heteronormativity and the Limits of Objection*, the state is conceptualised as premising its response to objectors on a need to assert and reinforce the gendered binaries of militarisation. The Chapter analyses a number of discourses, as well as legal, institutional and material tactics to ‘purge’ the ‘strangers’ that objectors embodied from the public realm and concludes that the most effective means for doing so was the use of homophobic stigmatisation of objectors and peace activists. This discourse demonstrates the heteronormativity of the state and the use of sexuality to police gendered binaries. Conscription as a performative act engendered heteronormativity and the refusal to perform this act of masculinity and citizenship invited sexual stigma. The second half of the Chapter assesses the effect of this discourse on objection in South Africa and concludes that it had a limiting and restricting impact. The case of Dr Ivan Toms’s objection is analysed and it is concluded that objection in apartheid South Africa was ultimately not a radical challenge to the conflation of masculinity, citizenship and conscription and that the ECC was subject to other political imperatives that related to the stability of a future democratic South Africa.

Chapter One

Soldiers, Citizens and Strangers

The way people look at you on the bus, the fact that suddenly you are a soldier, that suddenly you are something Israeli conscript (cited in Kaplan and Ben-Ari, 2000: 408).

There are friends, enemies and there are *strangers* (Bauman, 1991: 53).

This chapter aims to conceptualise how compulsory military service and conscientious objection to conscription are political performances in the public realm that are constitutive of personal and political identity. Objectors, however, are an ambivalent presence in the public realm (and thus strangers) and threaten to deconstruct the gendered and political binaries that legitimate military service. It will be argued that objection to military service, although a dissident performance that opposes hegemonic understandings of masculinity and citizenship, does not always constitute a radical challenge to the status quo. Indeed, what will be termed 'assimilatory' practices can undermine the radical potential of conscientious objection as a performance and may in fact buttress hegemony. The temptation to 'assimilate' is understandable given that objectors are stigmatised as cowards, traitors and homosexuals in an effort to negate their political agency and expel them from the public realm. This discursive strategy reflects the gendered and sexualised nature of the state and public realm and the use of constructs of sexuality, in particular, to discipline individual men. Objectors and peace activists incorporate notions of 'respectability' into their performance of objection as a populist tactic to maximise their appeal, but it is doubtful whether they effectively counter stigmatising discourses and 'respectability' removes the opportunity to present radical democratic challenges to the construction of identity.

The chapter begins by investigating the social construction of masculinities and of how performances of identity can become tied to specific political projects such as military service. Gender binaries that define masculinity in relation to (and reaction against) femininity do exist, yet this should not obscure the reality that there are multiple performances individuals can assume and that hegemonic projects can 'rejuvenate' and legitimise certain practices by incorporating multiple, and sometimes conflicting, gender identities. The second half of the chapter investigates

conscientious objection as an alternative performance of masculinity and citizenship to that of the state's desired performance. As such, objectors are potentially transgressive and subject to considerable disciplinary pressures from the state's 'gender regime'. Objectors can incorporate a number of discourses and counter-discourses into their performance and assessing the effectiveness of their challenge is based on the extent to which they destabilise and reconfigure not only gendered and political values such as duty, honour, bravery and patriotism, but also the means by which these values are engendered and acknowledged in the political community. Objectors can choose to incorporate transgressive personal identities into their challenge (such as subordinated sexuality) or premiss their objection on shared ideological terrain (and thus attempt to be respectable). Respectability, it is concluded, leaves the basic premises of the production of identity unchallenged and thus ideologically compromises the performance of objection.

Recent scholarship has emphasised that there is not one but multiple masculinities in any given society (Brod and Kaufman, 1994; Connell, 1995; Cornwall and Lindisfarne, 1994; Hooper, 2001; Whitehead, 2002). However, there are dominant or hegemonic constructions of masculinity which men are encouraged to embody in order that they be acknowledged as 'real' men by wider society (Connell, 1995: 77). The majority of men will not correspond with all the attributes of the hegemonic construct, but they will become complicit with it by performing certain public activities such as sport (or military service) and will be culturally encouraged to admire and aspire to engage with hegemonic norms by wider society (Connell, 1995: 79). There are therefore multiple gendered performances that one can adopt in society. However, some will be publicly acknowledged as hegemonic whereas others will be considered subordinate or transgressive. Furthermore, the exact type of masculinity that is exalted as hegemonic is contingent on cultural and historical location.

The state itself has been conceptualised as a masculine entity and is therefore a significant (if not the dominant) actor in defining hegemonic tropes of masculinity (Connell, 1990; Hooper, 2001; Mackinnon, 1989; Pateman, 1988). Dandeker defines the emergence of the modern state as encompassing four main attributes:

the concentration of political authority, citizenship as the basis for the relationships between the rulers and the ruled; administration by public bureaucracy rather than by patronage; and administration of society

through bureaucratic surveillance. In this overall process, war and military organization were of central importance (Dandeker, 1990: 56).

However, the state is not a monolithic or static entity, perpetually coercing citizens into 'correct' behaviours. The state can be conceptualised as "a set of processes that play out in specific work sites" and it is therefore important to analyse the state's external and internal dynamics (Herbert, 2001: 55). This 'set of processes' is historically contingent and particularly when assessing the state's role in defining gender, one must consider that the state not only defines but is defined by a complex and ongoing set of gender dynamics (Pettman, 1996: 7; Connell, 1990: 512). The state seeks to not only define acceptable norms of masculinity (and femininity) for individuals to perform but also to police these constructions. The state can therefore be considered as encompassing a "gender regime" which is effectively a state of play in gender relations (Connell, 1987: 120). The state's institutions are often inconsistent in their articulation and regulation of gender and sexual norms and practices. For example, in defining militarised masculinities the state is "visibly constructing particular forms of masculinity and regulating relations between them" these ideologies and practices vary for soldiers in different units of the army and again for other agents of the state, such as the police (Connell, 1987: 127). The malleability of dominant forms of masculinity can be demonstrated when analysing the appeals made by the state to men who are compelled to serve in the military. In these circumstances the state articulates masculine subjectivities that will appeal to the maximum number of men. This creates the possibility for dominant tropes of masculinity to be adapted according to circumstance and also for hegemonic tropes of masculinity to be challenged and reformulated.

In militarised societies, where masculinities become intertwined with the performance of military service, the state's gender regime is constructed in ways that serve to legitimate conscription and to discipline men and women to support the status quo. Confortini notes that "the links between military service, citizenship and the modern state establish a connection between violence, citizenship, and hegemonic masculinity, so that all depend on each other for performance and recreation" (2006: 355). It is for this reason that conscription is articulated as part of a boy's natural life course and an event whereby he becomes a man. Morgan notes that, "Of all the sites where masculinities are constructed, reproduced, and deployed, those associated with

war and the military are some of the most direct” (1994: 165). The military is a gendered and a gendering institution, it revolves around notions of how ‘true men’ should behave and how this is constructed as synonymous with good soldiering (Barrett, 2001: 77). Militarism also emphasises that the legitimacy of the military as an institution is profoundly linked to the legitimacy and authority of the state. The right, ability and operation of the military is the pre-eminent means by which the state demands obedience from its citizens and thus derives its authority (Tickner, 1992: 43). It is for this reason that military service can become a prerequisite for one’s ability to participate in the public realm as a political actor. Military conscription must become a *ritual* and a *rite of passage* whereby boys develop into men if members of the political community are to endorse and perform their expected roles. Militarised subjectivities are tied to the individual, to the life course, but also become a shared experience and one that is communally acknowledged. Canning and Rose argue that the subject is not an isolated entity and that subjectivity is central to the concept of citizenship precisely because it positions the subject in relation to a society of other subjects (and engenders a sense of ‘belonging’ for the individual) (2001: 431). Militarisation and particularly war heighten this communal endeavour (particularly in republican societies, to be discussed below). The individual becomes part of a wider whole in times of war: “the interplay between self and society comes into sharp focus...when identity, affiliation and the will to sacrifice are tested” (Jabri, 1996: 8), militarised forms of masculinity therefore create individual and collective scripts of subjectivity by which men are acknowledged as loyal members of a community or threats to it.

The state plays a significant role in attempting to ritualise performances such as conscription. Althusser recognised the importance of ritual to the maintenance of the status quo and the role of the state in defining and policing these rituals (1971: 123 and 127). Althusser identified an elaborate “ideological state apparatus” that encompasses the education system, the army, the media and the legal system that not only inform the population of the means by which they can accede to the ruling ideology but ensure subjection to it (1971: 136-145). This is not a uniform, mechanistic process: there are contradictions and numerous sites for resistance, but it is an ideological process that is based on practices governed by “ritual” (Althusser, 1971: 155-157). Performing these practices or rituals creates subjectivity for the

individual: the individual, through a process of interpellation believes he or she has free will and therefore accedes to hegemonic ideological practices at school, in the family and in other institutions in society that uphold the status quo and reproduce it.

A system of oppression survives and prevails thanks to this ideological apparatus which both places individuals in subjection and at the very same time maintains and reproduces the system. Reproduction of the system and ideological repression of the individual are one and the same (Ricouer, 1994: 42).

There can be few practices more apt at demonstrating this, more infused with ritual and ideological practice designed to reproduce the established order, than military conscription. However, as Nelson cautions, subjects should be reduced to “compelled, unreflexive performers of dominant discourse(s)”, for this misses the “how and why of human subjects doing identity, a process directly tied to their lived personal history, intersubjective relationships, and their embeddedness in particular historical moments and places” (1999: 349). Men who object to military service do so because of the possibilities and spaces available to transgress the ideological norms of the state. This may be the result of inconsistencies and crisis tendencies in the state’s project to reproduce but also due to the life history or identity of the individual or a group of individuals. Men who object to military service are a transgressive presence in the public realm and they have the potential to destabilise the state’s gender regime as well as disrupt the smooth operation of the military.

One of the primary means by which the state seeks to uphold its ‘gender regime’ and discipline individuals who transgress it is to emphasise the iniquitous gender binaries that define social order. Although it is valid to focus on masculinities as a category, it is still well founded to argue that binaries exist in cultural constructions of gender and that masculinities are constructed in relation to (and often in reaction against) constructions of femininity. Men who do not conform to hegemonic tropes of masculinity, or who do not perform the accepted rituals or tasks expected of ‘real’ men, are interpreted as exhibiting “subordinated” or marginalised masculine identities (Connell, 1995: 80-81). It is in the definition of marginalised masculinities where the operation of a gendered binary can be most vividly discerned, because masculinities deemed to be subordinate are ‘feminised’ and it is the positing of certain ‘feminine’ attributes that identifies men as marginalised or subordinate. Sexual identity, in particular, is used to signify the difference between hegemonic and

subordinate masculinities, with heterosexuality being defined as hegemonic and homosexuality as subordinate (to be discussed below). The operation of this sexualised hierarchy of masculinities has direct implications for the state's disciplining of men in order that they perform military service. Objecting to compulsory military service resists the performance of hegemonic masculinity and therefore constitutes a potentially transgressive and destabilising public political act. It is no coincidence that men who object to military service are frequently portrayed by the state, the military and many cultural entities as cowardly, effeminate and homosexual. Nagel recognises that in militarised and Nationalist discourses of masculinity "only cowards shirk the call to duty; real men are not cowards" and it is this fear of being stigmatised as a coward (which would result in a man's masculine identity being visibly subordinated) that drives many men to perform military service (1998: 252).

Numerous accounts have pointed to the frequent contrasting of masculine and feminine qualities in the process of military training itself, with masculine qualities being privileged over feminine qualities in order to create an effective soldier (Barrett, 1994; Cock, 1993; Enloe, 1988; Morgan, 1994). Indeed, Tickner has claimed:

To be a soldier is to be a man, not a woman; more than any other social institution, the military separates the men from the women. Soldiering is a role into which boys are socialized in school and on the playing fields. A soldier must be a protector; he must show courage, strength, and responsibility to repress feelings of fear, vulnerability and compassion...it is an event in which boys become men, for combat is the ultimate test of masculinity (1992: 40).

In this reading, the hegemonic male soldier exhibits (and is premised on) a rejection of and mastery over a particular construction of femininity. Testimonies of soldiers' drill training are legion with tales of derogatory remarks about women and any feminine qualities the new intakes may be perceived to have: new recruits must overcome weakness, passivity and other 'feminine' attributes if they are to become good soldiers (Enloe, 1993: 253). Elshtain interprets this dichotomy in terms of the "Just Warrior and the Beautiful Soul" (1985: 45). The 'Just Warrior' is a man who fulfils his masculinity by defending the 'Beautiful Souls' of his feminine companions, who in turn admire his military service in their defence. Whilst Elshtain's understanding of militarised binaries does not consciously imply contempt for the feminine, it nevertheless implies the existence of an iniquitous gendered binary. Lloyd considers martial, republican forms of citizenship (to be discussed at greater length below) as constructing femininity as an identity to be overcome if one is to be a true

citizen: "Womankind is constructed so as to be what has to be transcended to be a citizen" (1986: 75). Insiders in the political community are defined as real men and soldiers. Men who refuse to perform military service threaten the operation of these binaries and invite attempts to 'feminise' such men and thereby negate their political and gendered identity.

Whilst it is useful for one to conceptualise the contestation between conscientious objectors and the state as being performed in the context of a political and social gendered binary, there is a danger that this "dichotomous thinking" oversimplifies the social operation of gender and reifies masculinity as stable and coherent (Hooper, 2001: 48). This is not only a danger for academic study, but also for actors involved in gendered struggles such as war resistance. Although the state may publicly seek to uphold a gender binary, this binary is the product of ongoing social and historical struggle and there are multiple identities on each side of the binary. As Hooper notes, hegemonic masculinity, "gets transformed, through constant challenges and struggles, to resemble whatever traits happen to be the most strategically useful for the getting and keeping of power" (2001: 61). Indeed, MacInnes characterises the concept of hegemonic masculinity as a vague and inconsistent set of traits that "co-exist in an uneasy and messy alliance" (1998: 14-15). It is this process of challenge and alliances that afford men such as objectors, the opportunity to contest the state's 'gender regime'. However, it also poses dangers for men who seek to contest hegemonic practices of gender and political identity formation. Hegemonic masculinity is a "pool of characteristics" that may be contradictory, but it can be reformulated and rejuvenated should there be challenges to the status quo. This 'rejuvenation' can even result in traits of subordinated masculinities "plundered" by hegemony in order to neutralise opponents and preserve the status quo (Hooper, 2001: 62). Demetriou has characterised this process of rejuvenation as engendering "hybrid" constructs of hegemonic masculinity that form a "hegemonic masculine bloc" (2001: 349). This "bloc" is created and sustained by the assimilation of previously subordinated or marginalised masculinities with hegemony.

Even within the military as an institution, where masculinity tends to emphasise relatively extreme tropes of gender identity, Higate argues that over-emphasis on these binaries obscure the range of masculinities found within the armed forces (2003: 25). Military masculinity should be viewed in the plural as "a range of models of gendered military behaviour, operating in relation to one another, rather than a single monolithic gendered identity" (Woodward, 2003: 44). Kaplan has characterised the military as a "fortress of masculinity", inside which a multiplicity of

masculinities exist (cited in Fisch: 2001). Indeed, Connell's point that "Generals, notoriously, die in bed", contains the truth that the army contains a range of masculine constructions many of which appear to be contradictory. These forms of masculinity can exist concomitantly in the army and need not overlap (1990: 198). In a society where compulsory conscription exists, all men must be made complicit by the performance of conscription. Therefore, it would be foolhardy for a state authority or military to articulate only a narrow, rigid militarised masculinity that would alienate the majority of men. The recognition that there are 'multiple masculinities', even within the state and its primary institutions, problematises the performance of objection: the state can rejuvenate hegemony by realigning the desired contents of masculinity and citizenship in an effort to engender consent and portray opponents as extremists.

The interconnections between citizenship, masculinity and military service have been well documented (Elshtain, 1995; Janowitz, 1976; Pitkin, 1987; Sasson-Levy, 2002; Snyder, 1999). Citizenship essentially signifies a person's inclusion or belonging in the political community and posits political agency onto an individual. As such, tropes of citizenship, like gender identity, can be constructed to mark boundaries and to include or exclude, empower or disempower (Canning and Rose, 2001: 427-431; Isin and Wood, 1999: 20; Lister, 1997: 38; Oldfield, 1990: 159). There is a major divide between liberal conceptions of citizenship, based on rights automatically gained by the individual and republican (or civic-republican) modes of citizenship based on obligations that the individual must perform in order to be publicly acknowledged as a citizen (Lister, 1997: 3). Republican citizenship, like gender identity, can be conceptualised as a performed identity in Butlerian terms (Butler, 1999; Carver, 1998: 15; Snyder, 1999: 142). Citizenship is a set of practices to be undertaken and publicly acknowledged as an "act of cultural work" that is attained and defined on a daily basis (Carver, 1998: 15). Military service, as a performative act of citizenship, not only posits political agency onto the individual but also serves to define the boundaries and create Anderson's (1990a) "imagined community" of the polity (Helman, 1999: 392; Helman, 1997: 306-307; Janowitz, 1976: 357; Klein, 2000: 163; Sasson-Levy, 2002: 259). The performance of military service is therefore the primary means by which men become political agents and by which the community acknowledges them as such. This inevitably privileges militarised masculinities as a political identity and moulds the public realm in masculine terms (Carver, 1996: 678).

Republican citizenship recognises that individuals will not automatically perform the duties expected of them and that citizens must be enticed, coerced and rewarded for the performance of citizenship (Oldfield, 1990: 159). Concomitantly, those who refuse to perform the accepted practices of citizenship must be censured. In most social and historical contexts, the masculinity and citizenship of a soldier is exalted as hegemonic. In a society where conscription exists this will not only be likely, but also essential if the population is to view the conscription of young men as legitimate and worthwhile. Participation in the military as a soldier transforms the personal and political identity of the man who performs that role: the soldier “has proved his willingness to risk his life for the collective good. Therefore, the masculinity of the combat soldier has achieved a hegemonic status and turned into a social ideal the emblem of both masculinity and full citizenship” (Sasson-Levy, 2002: 360). The conflation of citizenship, masculinity and military service is embedded in classical political philosophy: Snyder notes that,

Dating all the way back to ancient Greece, the civic republican tradition directly addresses the interconnections between gender, military service, and citizenship through its central ideal of the manly Citizen-Soldier. Standing at the very centre of civic republican tradition, this figure embodies the twin practices of civic republican citizenship: military service and civic participation. Citizen-soldiers serve in the military in order to protect their ability to govern themselves for the common good, and they participate in the process of deciding when to engage in war...The Citizen-soldier ideal fuses military service and participatory citizenship as well as citizenship and masculinity (1999: 1-2)

Republican norms were further developed by classical philosophers such as Machiavelli and Rousseau (1985; 1993). The gendered obsession that citizens are ‘manly’ and virile merged with a fear of feminine ‘passivity’ and weakness, centred on the performance of ‘heroic’ military service in Machiavelli’s writings (Pitkin, 1987). Rousseau’s gendered imagery of the ‘Spartan mother’ who urges her sons on to sacrifice for the sake of the nation also constructs citizenship around the masculine ‘glory’ and ‘heroism’ of war (Elshtain, 1995: 70).

As Rousseau’s metaphor suggests, women also have a role to play in the mediation and support of hegemonic masculinities and ideas of good womanhood and motherhood are often conflated with notions of ‘patriotism’, militarism and support of men as soldiers. Connell (1987: 187) identifies what he terms “emphasised femininity” as a culturally exalted form of women’s behaviour and feminine identity that is complicit with and supportive of hegemonic masculinity. Women and

'emphasised' constructs of femininity are an integral part of the process that binds together militarism, masculinity and citizenship. Enloe notes that,

In each country military strategists *need* women. They need women who will act and think as patriarchy expects women to act and think. And they need women who will be disguised, so that the military can remain the quintessentially 'masculine' institution, the bastion of 'manliness' (1988: 220).

As wives and mothers "the connection between masculinity and militarism is often mediated by women", for they socialise men "into a particular conception of masculinity that is violent" (Cock, 1993: 116). Just as men face censure and public rejection if they resist hegemonic performances of citizenship and masculinity, women can also be censured for being 'bad women', inadequate mothers and unpatriotic citizens if they try to disrupt their sons or husbands 'duty' to serve in the military. As Ruddick asks, in a militarised social context,

Would they [women] foster dissension within a family or community whose connectedness it has been their responsibility to sustain? Having applauded their children's efforts from the first to the last high school test, would they undermine their resolve when legal forces combine with community excitement to draft them for war? (1989: 87).

Women can actively contribute to the creation and sustenance of particular forms of hegemonic masculinity and they can also choose to challenge and disrupt it. The role of women as mothers, wives, lovers and friends of conscripts is therefore important when analysing the efficacy of a state's gender regime.

Men who refuse to be conscripted and who contest the rationale of military service threaten the very basis of the political community, but not on the same terms as those who are defined as the 'enemies' of the community. Objectors to military service are an ambivalent presence in society: objectors are 'strangers' who destabilise the social organisation of modernity, which is premised on a co-dependent binary of 'insiders' and 'outsiders'/'friends' and 'enemies' (Bauman, 1991). The ambivalence of 'strangers' threatens to undermine the binaries of modernity. The state faces a considerable dilemma when responding to this threat, because objectors, as 'strangers', are unlike enemies and are,

not kept at a secure distance, nor on the other side of the battle-line. Worse still, he [the stranger] claims the right to be an object of *responsibility* - the well known attribute of the *friend*...If we pressed on him [the stranger] the friend/enemy opposition, he would come out simultaneously under and over-determined. And thus, by proxy, he would

expose the failing of the opposition itself. He is a constant threat to the world's order (Bauman, 1991: 59 and 29)

The means by which the state seeks to buttress and reinforce its boundaries and normative foundations is to emphasise the gendered boundaries upon which social 'order' rests and to attempt to expel, or purge, the 'strangers' in their midst. This 'purging' means segregating or expelling strangers and in particular, delegitimising "all grounds of knowledge that are uncontrolled or uncontrollable" (Bauman, 1991: 24). In this way the state attempts to neutralise ambivalence and maintain the legitimacy and control of the ideological apparatus that reproduce the status quo.

Militarised states attempt to reinstate and police acceptable boundaries by resorting to gendered discourses of censure: stigmatisation, feminisation and homophobia are their tools (Phelan, 2001). Indeed, Bauman argues that "the national state is designed to deal with the problem of strangers, not enemies" (1991: 63). In this struggle objectors face dilemmas of how to perform their identity in the public realm and in particular, whether to embrace or try to overcome their ambivalence. This dilemma is often expressed in terms of 'respectability': whether the actor appears and is acknowledged to be 'respectable' by wider society or whether the actor rejects the normative foundations of respectability and thereby the ideological and discursive framework of the status quo. Conscientious objectors' performances of identity in the public realm is complex and fraught with possibilities of subversion and neutralisation by a militarised system of hegemony. These performances are seldom divorced from the life history of the actor, indeed objectors can draw from "hidden transcripts" (Cornwall and Lindisfarne, 1994: 24) gained from alternative practices of masculinity and citizenship that inevitably form a part of a state's 'gender regime' and from practices performed in spaces of the ideological apparatus. However, although these 'hidden scripts' enable objectors to perform transgressive identities, Foucault points out that there a system of discourse defines boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable speech and behaviour, indeed these "historical rules, always determined in the time and space that defined a given period, and [which determines] for a given social, economic, geographical and linguistic era the conditions of operation" (Foucault, 1969: 117). These 'conditions of operation' return us to the dilemma of appearing respectable and legitimate, or illegitimate and threatening, or illegitimate and irrelevant. Objectors have the potential to destabilise and reconfigure norms of gender and political identity: as Phelan notes, "the position of the stranger is not only difficult, it is rewarding" (1999: 7). However, the performance of objection takes place in a public realm that can perceive to be norm bound and restrictive. The decisions objectors take (or the availability of discursive options and performances

perceived to be available to objectors) in formulating their challenge to hegemonic norms have significant effects on the nature of that challenge and its success.

Objectors to military service have refused to perform the specific hegemonic practice of citizenship and masculine identity formation that soldiering constitutes (although some objectors may have previously served in the military). It is this refusal and alternative performance of citizenship and identity that makes them ‘strangers’ and threatens to expose the artificial “dominant narratives” (Phelan, 1999: 31) of citizenship and identity. The possibility for this challenge and for the breach with accepted norms and hegemonic practices of citizenship and gender identity is inherent in the socially constructed and artificial nature of political and personal identity. As Connell notes, “There is no Patriarch Headquarters, with flags and limousines, where all the strategies are worked out. It is common for different groups of men, each pursuing a project of hegemonic masculinity, to come into conflict with each other” (1995: 215). Brittan recognises that, “What constitutes the dominant form of masculinity in any context has to be imposed, negotiated and legitimated. This means that there is opposition to the dominant mode”, such contestations of dominant tropes of masculinity have usually come, however, from feminists and gay men (1989: 128). The instability and contextually bound nature of masculinity allows for opportunities for resistance and contestation: opportunities that conscientious objectors take. Objection to military service, like conscription, is therefore a gendered and political ‘performance’ in much the same terms in which Butler defines the construction of identity as a performance. That conscientious objectors have to engage with masculinity politics and perform a masculine identity that is both ‘manly’ and opposed to military service could be considered inevitable (Early, 1995: 27).

The challenge that conscientious objectors pose can be audacious and profound: “Conscientious objection is at the core of the individual’s relationship to the state because it challenges what is generally seen as one of the most basic of civic obligations – the duty to one’s country” (Moskos and Whiteclay Chambers, 1993: 3). A functionalist interpretation of conscientious objectors in a state could suggest that the state benefits from their presence as a demonstration of liberal debate and a means of highlighting the consequences of disobedience as a disciplinary tool. However, as Jabri notes, in times of war “control [by the state] requires that the whole is held together, that dissent is prevented or even punished” (1996: 132). A key tenet of the state’s claim to legitimacy is its right to organise for war and define the terms and content of national security discourse. Conscientious objectors to military service, especially those objecting for political reasons, engage with and potentially threaten

the operation of militarism in an institutional and ideological way. As Enloe notes, "If a state's military begins to lose its legitimacy, the tension between masculinity and military service can become acute" (1993: 54). If war is no longer "considered a collective effort" because conscientious objectors have appropriated the state's "hitherto exclusive prerogative" to define security and national duty the conscientious objector has "opened the door to challenging the state's demands of the individual" (Helman, 1999: 59). Objectors threaten the legitimacy of the military and the assumed duties and roles men must fulfil in order to assume hegemonic status. Helman observes in her study of conscientious objection in Israel:

The refusal of individuals to fulfil their prime duty towards the state struck at the heart of the institutional body (military service and the army), the practices (soldiering), and the meanings (participation in the defence of the political community) through which citizenship has been socially constructed for Israeli-Jewish males (1999: 46).

Above all, conscientious objection challenges "the halo of sanctity surrounding war and military service" (Helman, 1999: 46). The state must maintain the legitimacy to define control ideological apparatus and successfully stigmatise the 'strangeness' of objectors, for "when the spell is broken individuals re-examine the narratives that frame their identities and conceive the rules as breakable, as open to challenge and contestation" (Helman, 1999: 59). Conscientious objection involves an alternative practice of citizenship to the hegemonic discourse of citizenship articulated by the state.

Objection can also be characterised as a performance that creates a publicly acknowledgeable personal and political identity in similar terms to military service itself. The masculine identity performed in some objectors' performance can be uncompromising, moral and confrontational with the state. Elshtain notes that the conscientious objector, "often sees himself in mimetic terms as the *militant* analogue of the violent warrior" (1995: 202). The performance of objection creates the opportunity to offer an alternative 'narrative' of citizenship to that offered by the state and therefore to contest and destabilise the hegemonic constructs of masculinity and citizenship. By this alternative practice of citizenship objectors seek to renegotiate the performance of masculinity and citizenship, shorn of military service as a constitutive act. As Helman notes, when investigating objection to military service, one must ask:

How was political identity resisted in the course of its very production, and how was the constitutive norm turned into a source of performances that changed its very meaning? How was the public narrative constituting

and framing political identity turned into a source of resistance and contestation? (1999: 403).

It is during this process of resistance and contestation that gendered political identities such as honour, service, bravery, patriotism and loyalty become sites of struggle between objectors and the state (Nagel, 1998: 251). Changing the 'constitutive norm' by the performance of objection is heavily contested by the state and other hegemonic forces in society. Engaging with the norms of identity production and attempting to reformulate the hegemonic practices of citizenship is also a process that requires a number of strategic and ideological decisions to be taken on the part of the actor, decisions that can change the nature of the challenge. Objectors' threatening and ambivalent political subjectivity provokes a fierce response from the state which attempts to stigmatise them and thereby negate their right to political agency and expel or "purge" them from the public realm: as Bauman explains, "purging ambivalence means segregating or deporting strangers" (1991: 24). "When conscientious objectors refuse to obey the law", notes Burk, "questions are raised about their loyalty and commitment to larger society," and in times of war and crisis these questions are raised, "in the sharpest terms and make[s] it difficult for others to view them as responsible members of the community" (1995: 512). Being a 'responsible member of the community' (and thus a citizen) is a gendered privilege: notions of rationality, authority, responsibility, autonomy and reason are inherently bound with notions of masculinity (Brittan, 1989: 198-199; Brown, 1988: 152-162; Jones, 1996). If authority is masculinised, then those denied authority are feminised. Irrationality, emotionalism and naivety become 'feminine' traits to be surmounted and feared: "Ever since the Enlightenment, men have sought to silence the voices of others in the name of reason.", writes Seidler. "Men have taken control of the public world and sought to define the very meaning of humanity in terms of possession of reason" (Seidler, 1989: 14). The charge of deviance and marginality aims to deny objectors the right of authority and reason and are discursive tactics objectors must engage with and counter if their message is to be heard. It is inevitable then, that challenges to the status quo will provoke a gendered response from those who have a vested interest in upholding it. Brittan writes that "the state is at its most vicious when the gender order is questioned," and that peace movements which criticise military rituals and hegemonic practices of masculinity, such as conscription, provoke this vicious response (1989: 132).

The existence of individuals in the public realm who perform alternative modes of citizenship and identity constitute a crisis for the status quo. Yet the public perception of this crisis can actually aid the reproduction of hegemony and inhibit

strangers' performance of identity. Weldes notes that, "crises are social constructions that are forged by state officials in the cause of producing and reproducing state identity" (1999: 37). The articulation of crisis and of strangers as a product and cause of this crisis is a discursive process that is constitutive of national identity, which serves as a further disciplinary pressure on the citizenry to abide by the status quo. This production of insecurity, whereby an external enemy is identified and certain performances by citizens are deemed an appropriate antidote to this threat becomes a "mutually constitutive process" involving the production of identity and cultural norms (Weldes et. al., 1999: 11). The state, as a culturally constructed masculine institution in 'crisis', can assume a culturally constructed biological integrity and this itself can become a basis for engendering consent for militarisation and representing opponents of conscription as a dire threat. Conceptualising the polity in bodily form suggests that, like all bodies, there is the possibility of infection, disease and ultimately of death. Consequently, strangers in the public realm can be portrayed as witting or unwitting agents of infection: "the nation is represented as a body, the body politic. The body can be threatened from without, but also by pollution, contamination, by the enemy within" (Pettman, 1997: 50). Political contestations within society are thus interpreted, by hegemonic institutions, as attacks on society. In this context, "Stigmatized groups may become threats to "the public health" and the "moral fibre of the nation", imagined agents of disintegration" (Phelan, 1999: 60). This fear of chaos, infiltration and domination is central to the disciplinary practices of the body politic (Gatens, 1997: 83-84; Phelan, 2001: 31). Furthermore, militarisation can aid not only the perception of crisis but make direct links between the symbolism of the body of the soldier to that of the wider body politic (Morgan, 1994: 170). If a state perceives itself to be at war, ideas of social cohesion and unity can be militarised to an extent where the social phenomenon of "garrison statehood" can occur, whereby all social and political decisions are taken with a view to protecting the state's 'survival' (Lasswell, 1941). Conscientious objectors are therefore vulnerable to being stigmatised for attacking the military and thus the survival of the body politic itself. Objectors' performance in the public realm can thus, ironically, aid the state's disciplinary mechanisms for preserving the status quo as the wider citizenry rallies to the 'body politic's' defence and performs the tasks expected of them. In this context, objectors face a difficult choice of whether to contest the very basis of state production and social organisation, or whether to work within the ideological parameters of the status quo in an effort to avoid stigmatisation.

It has already been noted that sexuality is used as a marker between hegemonic and subordinated masculinities and attempts to stigmatise and purge objectors from

the public realm draws from a discourse of sexuality. Discourses of sexuality serve as a disciplinary mechanism on individuals and serve to define the parameters of the public realm and reveal that the state is not only gendered, but also a sexual state (Foucault, 1978, 1980; Evans, 1993; Phelan, 1999; Herbert, 2001; Connell, 1992). For objectors, the use of homophobic stigma by the state and its supporters aims to make objectors visible to their fellow citizens but deny them acknowledgement as political actors: objectors are made visible as stigmatised individuals who possess pathological flaws that encompass 'deviant' gendered and sexual attributes (Bauman, 1991: 67; Phelan, 1999). This has been a common tactic of regimes in dealing with objectors throughout history. In First World War Britain, conscientious objectors were vilified and derided by the state and 'patriotic' Britons:

Conscientious objectors who refused to be implicated in the war effort were perceived as wilfully excluding themselves from a great celebratory endeavour...the 'conchy' embodied a dominant conception of deviant, marginal masculinity; he was seen as the antithesis of the volunteer, as a complete anathema (Bibbings, 2003: 129).

Seidman views the effort to remove homosexuality from the public realm, in particular, as part of a process of "enforced heteronormativity": central to this process is the "cultural pollution and censorship" of homosexuality. This "pollution" is premised on the construction of the homosexual as "disgusting and evil", which "justifies her exclusion from public life", this is in contrast to heterosexuality, which becomes a "pure" identity (2001: 322). It is from this basis that an objector risks being expelled or 'exiled' from the political community and this threat can acutely challenge and inhibit the performance of objection.

The knowledge that this gendered and sexualised stigmatising discourse will be deployed by the state impacts on the political strategic and ideological decision making process for objectors. Burk recognises that, "One aim of conscientious objectors, in fact, is to avoid this stigma. They do not simply protest war; they also resist exclusion from the community. Their goal is simultaneously to protest *and* to maintain the respect of larger society" (1995: 511). They must avoid, in Burk's terms, becoming "exiles" from the political community (1995: 511). Bauman recognises that for 'strangers' in the public realm, there is a great temptation to "assimilate" with the values and identities of the hegemonic group in an effort to avoid stigmatisation (1991: 80). Sibley and Jacob characterise this dilemma in terms of adopting narratives of "service" and "resistance" to the political community in the performance of objection (1952: 43-44). The state's use of gendered and sexualised stigma against objectors can acutely bring these dilemmas to the fore. However, an assimilatory

strategy is bound to have ideological effects on the transgressive and oppositional potential of strangers' subjectivities. One can ask whether assimilating with certain hegemonic norms and aiming to be perceived as 'respectable' increases the impact and political efficacy of 'strangers' if they wish to critique and destabilise hegemonic norms, or does it blunt the potential challenge of their alternative performance of political and personal identity? Furthermore, is it possible for 'strangers' who adopt assimilatory identities to effectively counter stigmatising discourses in the first place? Alternatively, does assimilation afford the opportunity to renegotiate the dominant "narrative of citizenship" (Carver, 1998: 15) by being acknowledged by one's fellow citizens and from that basis reformulating the performance and rituals of citizenship? The dilemma, for strangers, of how to perform their identities in the public realm and respond to efforts to stigmatise those identities is a profound one. For objectors, this dilemma can become acute if the actor's gendered or sexual identity could be made visible as a 'stranger', i.e. if the objector is an openly gay man or women peace activists.

Being perceived as 'respectable' is a primary aim of strangers who adopt assimilatory strategies in their performance of identity. Aiming for respectability also means that attention is paid to the physical aspects of the strangers' performance of identity, such as style of dress, general appearance and who is chosen to speak for the group and what those spokespersons symbolise. 'Respectability' can give legitimacy to political campaigners, allowing them to be acknowledged and taken seriously in the public realm, even if their message and actions are oppositional. Aiming for respectability, however, can also arguably circumscribe actors' radicalism and ability to destabilise hegemonic norms. Helman found that objectors in Israel premised their performance of objection on the basis that they had already served in the Israeli army but were selectively objecting to the Intifada war in Lebanon (1999: 404). Political agency was engendered because objectors were acknowledged as respectable Israelis because of their previous participation in the military. However, the men's objection was selective and sought to oppose the Intifada war specifically rather than all previous and future Israeli conflicts. The objectors were also not questioning Israeli statehood. This conservative presentation of identity suited the focussed and limited aims of the objectors. For objectors who wish to make a more radical challenge to the status quo, however, assimilatory strategies can have destabilising effects on the nature of their challenge. 'Respectability' encompasses certain gendered and sexual attributes. Objectors who aim to be respectable have to consciously change the nature of their performance.

Bauman believes that assimilatory strategies are “self-defeating”, however, “it renders the strangeness of the stranger yet more obtrusive and vexing” (191: 80). Phelan is unequivocal in her belief that assimilation and aiming for respectability undermines the transgressive potential of strangers and strengthens the status quo: “rather than ameliorating inequality...assimilation reinforces and perpetuates it. Assimilatory projects strengthen the dominant group’s belief that they are desirable...assimilation is doomed to fail if strangeness exists” (1999: 87-88). Indeed, Bauman contends that assimilatory strategies are encouraged by the status quo as a means of dividing and stigmatising strangers: strangers who ‘assimilate’ with dominant norms inevitably define themselves against strangers who do not do so and endorse the hierarchy that stigmatises strangers (1991: 106). If strangers do not challenge the norms and practices of ‘respectability’, “their attempts at social change will operate only at the more superficial level of discursive consciousness without transforming the more basic structures of identity that shape our reactions to the world” (Phelan, 1999: 89). Phelan, who analyses gays and lesbians as strangers in the public realm, characterises strangers who aim for ‘respectability’ as remaining in the ‘closet’. Phelan argues that,

The closet never fully conceals; rather, it acts as a screen through which certain elements are partially visible, simultaneously serving as the surface for projections...the closet as screen does not simply hide or conceal “reality”; rather, it is the space within which and upon which hegemonic understandings are projected (1999: 98).

Strangers who adopt assimilatory strategies, therefore, aid hegemony by allowing hegemonic norms to be projected onto the nature of their performance in the public realm and for other political actors to acknowledge their identity on these terms. Furthermore, this projection never truly allows for full acknowledgement and merely serves to allow for the reproduction of the discriminatory binaries of modernity. Strangers, therefore, may avoid the immediate stigmatisation of their identity, but they may also forego the radical potential of their challenge to the status quo and hegemonic norms.

What would a radical performance of citizenship encompass and how could one assess objection as radical or assimilatory? Jabri contends that a truly radical and transformative discourse, particularly one that reformulates violent and militaristic identities into peaceable ones, “must seek to uncover processes which generate dominant identity formations of the self” (1996, 185). Therefore, the performance of identity must openly challenge and interrogate the conflation of sexuality, gender, citizenship and military service and in a way that does not seek to conform to

'respectable' norms in society. Emphasising commitment to the political community, service and respectability engages with republican norms and tropes of hegemonic masculinity in an attempt to deflect stigmatisation, but it is doubtful that objection from this premiss can ever be truly subversive and it is also questionable whether it counters the state's efforts to stigmatise objectors. Isin and Wood (1999) believe that, what they term, "radical democratic" challenges to hegemonic norms of citizenship should encompass a synthesis of different conceptions of political identity and that citizens should incorporate their personal identities into their public performance. This means that assimilatory strategies would be avoided and most importantly, citizens would incorporate their sexual as well as their gendered identities into their political subjectivity (Isin and Wood, 1999: 85). Radical democratic citizenship would therefore be embodied in a performance where "the individual is not to be sacrificed to the citizen" and the individual's multiple subjectivities were incorporated and expressed (Mouffe, 1992: 5). This would then fully engage with the 'gender regime' of the state and maximise the transgressive potential of the challenge. It would also, of course, increase the antagonism of the state if the sexual and gender identity of the subject was marginalised or subordinated. Phelan believes it essential that this transgressive identity be adopted if discriminatory and heteronormative constructions of citizenship are to be destabilised (Phelan, 1999: 156). The most revealing moments for objector and peace movements is when subjects who have the opportunity to embrace these identities, such as women and gay men, choose to do so, or conversely choose not to do so. It is at these moments that the rationale and ideological impact of the performance of objection can be judged and the oppositional aims of the objectors analysed. The decisions of how to perform objectors' identity in the public realm are often taken in terms of expedient political strategy, yet they have significant implications for the operation of identity formation and the means by which the populace is disciplined. Adopting a conservative, respectable strategy can maximise short-term gains but does little to engage with the operation of iniquitous gender binaries or the use of sexual stigma to isolate opponents of the status quo.

The gender regime of the state is complex and encompasses multiple performances available to actors in the public realm. Some of these performances will be considered hegemonic and others transgressive and open to censure. When militarisation becomes intertwined with the creation of social and political norms, military service can easily become the performance by which subjects become true citizens and real men. Therefore, the refusal to take up this performance introduces dissonance into the public realm and makes objectors 'strangers'. As Bauman contends, "The very awareness of such an outside point of view (a point of view

epitomized by the stranger's status) makes the natives feel uncomfortable, insecure in their home ways and truths" (1991: 78). It is for this reason that strangers must be 'purged' from the public realm and the means for this expulsion is the attachment of stigma to strangers' identities. The gendered nature of the state and the gendered binaries upon which modernity rests results in stigmatisation being gendered and sexual. Men who object are the subject of homophobia and feminisation from the state and its supporters. This disciplinary practice also seeks to maintain the state as the only authoritative and rational entity in the public realm. Furthermore, conceptualising the polity as a gendered bodily entity and one that is in crisis can further isolate objectors. It is little wonder that strangers, in an effort to avoid these disciplinary discourses, may wish to incorporate elements of hegemonic norms into their performance of identity, this assimilatory strategy attempting to avoid stigma and rejection from the wider political community. However, are these assimilatory strategies actually effective, or do they in fact strengthen the status quo? In an unjust society and one in which gender, sexual and militarised norms are intricately interconnected, will the quest for respectability on the part of objectors merely allow the state to 'plunder' gender norms in order to rejuvenate hegemonic forms of citizenship and do little to challenge the means by which identity is formed? As the following chapter will demonstrate the historical and social circumstances do much to frame the performance of objection and inhibit the radical potential of objectors.

Chapter Two

The Militarisation of South Africa and the Growth of War Resistance

Our enemies fear us and in this lays one of the greatest deterrents. This has made a direct contribution to peace...In order to ensure peace, however, we must prepare for war

General Malan, Minister of Defence, *Paratus*, July 1984.

You must not proceed from the standpoint that revolution cannot come to South Africa

Mr PW Botha, Prime Minister of South Africa (cited in Geldenhuys, 1981: 4).

The recognition that gender and citizenship identities are contextually contingent makes it important to explore the historical and social circumstances of South Africa. As this chapter will show, one of the most consistent features of South African society was progressive militarisation, both in terms of military preparedness and activity and in the social conditions necessary for war making. There was a clear relationship between progressive militarisation and the emergence of conscientious objection in South Africa. Furthermore, developments in the liberation struggle and social and political change in white society impacted on the direction of war resistance and the type of public political performance that was manifested by conscientious objectors. It will be argued that the social environment in white South Africa resulted in the oppositional message that objectors offered being treated with suspicion and often hostility. However, the continued imposition of military service on white families, the changing role and circumstances of the SADF and the deepening malaise of the South African state gave objectors an increasingly rich source from which to construct an alternative narrative of citizenship and masculinity. As the 1980s progressed, it became increasingly clear that the National Party's governing strategy was unsustainable and in crisis. Consequently, the liberation movement (particularly the African National Congress) concluded that the white population had to be appealed to and prepared for political change if a future democratic South Africa were to be successful. This political strategy had direct implications for the narratives available to the End Conscription Campaign and objectors; it effectively restricted the performance of objection in the public realm. In relation to the themes raised in the previous chapter, these political circumstances

encouraged assimilatory and 'respectable' performances in the public realm, as objectors aimed to fulfill the liberation movement's tactics of appealing to the widest number of white people in order that the prospect of a democratic, multi-racial transition become more palatable. This chapter is arranged around a descriptive narrative of the historical development of militarisation and war resistance.

At the height of South Africa's militarisation in the 1980s, the centrality of conscription to white South African life was vividly expressed by the report of a European Parliamentarian. In the report, the authors considered what the life-course of an average 18-year-old white man would look like entering the SADF in 1985. As the report explained,

In January 1985, he would begin two years full-time national service, during which time he would probably serve at least one six-month tour of duty in an "Operational Area", in northern Namibia/southern Angola or along South Africa's borders...Having survived his two years national service (which is increasingly by no means a foregone conclusion...), from January 1987, he would be a member of the Citizen Force for 12 more years during which time he would be expected to perform a full 720 days of service. This would be split between, in alternate years, camps of 90 days and 30 days duration, during which time he will once again see active service in an operational area, be it in Namibia or southern Angola, along the border or in the townships. In 1999, at the age of 32 he would be transferred for five years to the active Citizen Force Reserve, where he would be called up as required for a further 120 days service every two years. In 2004, at the age of 37 he would be transferred to the Commandoes, where he would provide 12 days service per year until he reached the age of 55. On January 1 2023, he would be transferred to the National Reserve, from which, if the situation warranted it, he could be called up once again to bear arms in defence of Apartheid. In 2033, he would finally find himself free from any commitment (Metten and Goodison, 1988: 23).

This considerable commitment had increased gradually since the 1950s and the role and rationale of conscription had changed significantly. For much of the twentieth century, South Africa, as a dominion in the British Commonwealth, had a nominal armed force and relied on Britain for its primary defence needs. During World War Two, the army had remained voluntary (Seegers, 1993: 127). In the post-war era decolonisation became a reality in much of Africa. In this changing context South Africa adopted a militarily defensive position. The economic and global decline of

Britain, coupled with an isolationist Afrikaner Nationalist government after 1948, made South African policy makers more intent on increasing the size and preparedness of the military (Dorning, 1987). In 1957, the Defence Act increased the South African Defence Force's budget and introduced the principle of peacetime conscription for white men, based on a selective ballot system (Seegers, 1993: 128). By 1960, the ballot system was conscripting around 7000 men each year for a period of 9 months. No provisions were made for conscientious objection and failure to report for duty was punishable by a term in Detention Barracks. Departure from the Commonwealth, the declaration of a Republic and the Sharpeville Massacre all occurred in quick succession in the early 1960s and dramatically underlined the government's sense of self-reliance and isolation in an increasingly hostile and unpredictable world. However, increased militarisation was not only represented in defensive terms: exit from the Commonwealth was portrayed by Prime Minister Verwoerd as a seminal and triumphant moment for South Africa. A strong military force would symbolise this new self-confidence and the graduation of South Africa as a nation (Barber and Barratt, 1990: 82-83).

The shock of the Sharpeville uprising in 1961 was quickly superseded by fifteen years of confidence and prosperity for the white regime, which had taken swift and effective action against the liberation movement (Beinart, 2001: 170; Price, 1991: 23). Yet the security and stability of white South Africa rested on a number of key tenets, primarily the existence of a *cordon sanitaire* of white-ruled states surrounding the Republic. The Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and Angola and the British colony of Rhodesia not only protected South Africa from the incursion of *uMkhonto weSizwe* (MK – the armed wing of the ANC) guerrillas, but it also served to engender a sense of psychological security and legitimacy for South African whites. The beginning of an insurrection in Portuguese colonies in the early 1960s was not deemed cause for undue concern in either Portugal or Pretoria, but the South African government recognised greater potential dangers when Rhodesia's white minority rebelled against British rule and declared a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965. The Portuguese coup of 1974 and the subsequent collapse of the Portuguese empire came as an enormous shock to South Africa and radically undermined apartheid's regional security policy (Barber and Barratt, 1990: 176; Price, 1991: 42; Sparks, 1990: 200). Rhodesia became terminally compromised in this new geopolitical landscape and the Rhodesian bush war escalated as guerrillas readily infiltrated the country's now exposed borders (Sesay, 1985: 21). For South Africa, this raised the spectre of not only guerrilla incursions through Rhodesian territory into the Republic, but also the likelihood of an escalation of the activities of the People's

Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) which had begun low level skirmishes on the Namibian/Angolan border in 1966 (South Africa had occupied and administered Namibia, or South West Africa, since World War I) (Dale, 1993: 2). Ultimately, it also became possible for policy makers to envisage the prospect of a land invasion by Soviet backed forces through Namibia, Mozambique or Rhodesia (Steenkamp, 1983: 56). No single institution was more vexed by this prospect than the South African Defence Force and the Minister of Defence himself, PW Botha. Botha immediately recognised the new threat to apartheid South Africa and believed southern Africa would be the battleground upon which the Cold War would be fought. Botha demanded that the military budget be radically increased and that conscription responsibilities be extended. In 1974, the SADF took over the responsibilities of defending the Namibian/Angolan border from the South African Police and between 1974 and 1976 'Operational Area' troop deployments on the border increased from 15,000 men to 60,000 (Dale, 1993: 3-4). In 1975, South African forces ambitiously and covertly invaded Angola in an attempt to prevent the Marxist *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (MPLA) from gaining power and planned to install the South African backed *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* (UNITA) in its place (Cawthra, 1986: 24). The invasion was reliant on covert US support and when the Soviet Union and Cuba rushed in supplies and troops in aid of the MPLA, the SADF's progress was stalled. The cessation of further US support (at the behest of an outraged Congress) resulted in the failure of the South African backed invasion (Barber and Barratt, 1990: 192). For Botha and the SADF, this heightened the urgency for increased militarisation.

The 1970s also witnessed a deterioration of South Africa's domestic situation from the buoyancy and stability of the 1960s. Oil prices rose rapidly, black trade union militancy emerged, economic stagnation developed and the Soweto Uprising in 1976 reinvigorated the liberation movement (Beinart, 2001: 228-229). It was also of little surprise to Botha and his entourage at the Department of Defence that Prime Minister B.J. Vorster's *Détente* or 'good neighbourliness' policy with the newly independent black states bore little reward for South Africa (Cawthra, 1986: 25-27). When Vorster's administration became mired in scandal relating to the 'Infogate' or 'Muldergate' affair of 1977 (which centred on the misuse of public funds for propaganda purposes by a close ally of Vorster, the Minister of Information, Dr Connie Mulder), Botha skilfully manoeuvred to become Vorster's successor in 1978. Botha's administration was popularly acclaimed as marking a decisive break from the problematic Vorster years. Botha had developed a "clear and almost dogmatic view of the world" by the time he became Prime Minister (Barber and Barratt, 1990: 248).

Indeed, the long serving British Foreign Secretary of the 1980s, Sir Geoffrey Howe, noted that Botha “showed no willingness to comprehend, let alone accept, any view of the world but his own” (1995: 490). However, despite Botha’s dogmatic and aggressive nature, from the outset his administration offered the promise of managerial competence, efficiency and a hard-headed pragmatism that would adapt apartheid governance to meet the challenges of the 1980s and beyond (Barber and Barratt, 1990: 248; Schrire, 1991: 35; Sparks, 1991: 318). One of Botha’s first pronouncements as Prime Minister was a warning to white South Africans that they must “adapt or die” and Botha pledged to succeed in the former (Schrire, 1991: 29).

Above all, the new administration sought to redefine South Africa’s security paradigm and dramatically increase the Republic’s militarisation. General Malan, hawkish chief of the SADF from 1975-1979, was brought in as Minister of Defence, and the equally hawkish General Viljoen became Malan’s successor at the helm of the military. The 1977 White Paper on Defence had set out in stark terms the government’s intentions. South Africa, stated the White Paper, faced a “total onslaught” from world communism that was military, economic and psychological in nature. This onslaught manifested itself in increased hostilities in the Namibian ‘Border War’³, a rise in liberation activism and ‘terrorist’ incidents within the Republic, as well as an increase in international hostility towards South Africa. In response to this multi-faceted ‘onslaught’ the government proposed a ‘Total Strategy’ (Cawthra, 1986: 29-30). As Mills reflects, the ‘Total Strategy’ and the rhetoric of ‘total onslaught’, “was devised to achieve the mobilisation and militarisation necessary to safeguard white South Africa’s interests” and also to blame South Africa’s problems on international and not domestic factors (Mills, 2000: 236). The ‘Total Strategy’ became a government mantra that encompassed all types of policy decisions. The rhetoric and rationale of the ‘Total Strategy’ resonated throughout white society and initially garnered considerable support (O’Meara, 1996: 265). The National Party secured a landslide election victory in 1977 in large part due to ‘total onslaught’ rhetoric (Barber and Barratt, 1990: 200).

The South African state’s perception of threat was informed by the experience of the Rhodesian and Portuguese unsuccessful counter-insurgency campaigns in Africa and by the concept of ‘Low Intensity Conflict’, developed by the French, British and Americans. As Enloe explains,

³ I will herein refer to the ‘Border War’ in quotation marks; I do so because references to ‘the Border’ and ‘Border War’ were culturally self-evident to white South Africans in the 1980s, ‘the Border’ was that of Namibia: a state that South Africa had effectively occupied illegally after its UN mandate to govern the territory had been revoked (Woods, 1991).

Low intensity conflict is a refurbished counter insurgency strategy intended to protect existing third world governments from urban poor people and landless peasants who have been organizing to improve their lives...even the myth of the dichotomy between 'homefront' and 'battlefront', a dichotomy which has been a pillar of military thinking about women and about men, disintegrates in a low intensity conflict sweep (1988: xxx-xxxi)

In this conception men and women as individuals become important sites of political struggle. Surveillance and the disciplining of dissent became a vital state project. A standard SADF lecture plan for newly recruited National Servicemen began by explaining:

The Rhodesian army never lost the Rhodesian War. It was lost through the psychological war. Equally, the ANC/PAC/SWAPO and their assorted sidekicks could not defeat the SADF in any bush or border war. Not, so long as the SADF stands in the way, could any revolutionary struggle succeed. Psychological war is another matter. (ECC Collection, File C6)

The deep fear of the psychological 'onslaught' that South Africa faced, coupled with the understanding of Rhodesia's and Portugal's fate in Africa, profoundly concerned military strategists and Nationalist politicians. The final years of Caetano's Portugal had witnessed high levels of emigration and draft dodging. The army suffered a high mortality rate and in 1973, half of the draft refused to report (Hamann, 2001: 2; Ferreira and Marshall, 1986: 13-14). The SADF also believed that,

Leftist lecturers both in metropolitan Portugal and in the Portuguese overseas provinces disparaged the conscription obligations of future trainees. Graduates automatically gained officer status. The result was that junior officers entered the defence force opposed to conscription. The eventual revolution in Portugal—"the revolution of the captains"—was led by junior officers (SADF Training Manual (Undated) [ECC Collection, File A21])

Officers tired of the country's relentless African war had indeed led Portugal's coup and this was an alarming analogy for South African authorities. Rhodesia's whites had been more compliant in the regime's military goals and dissent was largely absent. Indeed, Rhodesia had made it illegal to say or report anything "likely to cause alarm or despondency" even before UDI (Frederikse, 1982: 352). The South Africans concluded, however, that the Rhodesian regime had paid scant attention to the psychological aspects of the civil war, reforming too little and too late to win enough support among the indigenous population which may have made tenable political compromise possible, allowing whites to maintain *de facto* control. Furthermore,

although dissent had been controlled within the white population, the final years of Rhodesia witnessed debilitating levels of white emigration (Grundy, 1985: 215).

The state became increasingly concerned with the 'morale' of the white population (which was essentially a subterfuge for controlling dissent). As the Defence Minister observed in a letter to a correspondent critical of military service:

In this physical and psychological battle, the enemy seeks to subvert our resolve, to overthrow the established order and to destroy the fabric of our society... in the fierce climate of the psychological war, extreme caution must be exercised to ensure that the morale of our Defence Force, and indeed of the nation as a whole, is not placed in jeopardy (Malan, letter to Paul Graham, 28/1/1985 [ECC Collection, File A24.1]).

The conflation of morale with unquestioning consent for military service was a consistent theme in state rhetoric. Indeed, General Malan perpetually stressed the danger that low morale (and therefore criticism and dissent) could cost South Africa the 'war':

By disrupting our political and socio-economic set-up, undermining our culture and demoralising us spiritually, our enemies will also be able to undermine South Africa's military preparedness. The ultimate armed conflict which inevitably has to follow will be a mere formality, because, I assure you, the armies of a morally defeated people have never yet won a war (Malan cited by Fensham, *Cape Argus*: 1/7/1983).

The rationale of the Total Strategy made the South African government acutely sensitive to dissent and determined to advance militarisation deep into white society. It was essential for the government that whites accepted the need for conscription and supported the SADF in its activities in the Republic and beyond.

Many who were critical of conscription and of the SADF interpreted the 'Total Strategy' as a *de facto* military coup, whereby SADF strategists and military priorities dominated decision-making and the country (Cawthra, 1986; Evans and Phillips, 1988; Shaw and Leppan, 1985: 267). It was contended the State Security Council, a body chaired by Botha, but comprised of military and security chiefs, had replaced the Cabinet and Parliament in political importance. The use of the SADF in townships to quell protest, execute cross border raids, the "semi-permanent presence" of the SADF in Angola and, of course, conscription itself were further evidence of the military's predominance in South African life (Cawthra, 1986; Davies and O'Meara, 1985; Du Pisani, 1988)., Botha's governing strategy, however, was more nuanced than just

military repression. Botha had begun his term seeking to transform the tenets of apartheid and portray himself as a *verligte* (enlightened), liberal and reforming leader. Botha adopted a policy of “neo apartheid” (Sparks, 1991: 318) that aimed to reconfigure Nationalist rule by building a powerful constituency among white English-speaking South Africans, traditionally suspicious of the NP and even extend the foundations of the state into the Coloured and Indian population and new black elites in the ‘homelands’. Botha wished to represent South Africa to the world as a Western capitalist power, vulnerable to communist takeover and thus worthy of support and defence. A semiotic analysis of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) conducted in the 1980s discerned a dramatic change in the government’s rhetoric: overt racism was avoided and even openly rejected, apartheid was represented in Western, liberal terms and ‘reform’ became a perpetually repeated government phrase (Graaf et. al. 1988: 11). *Unitate et Vires* (Unity is Strength) had been South Africa’s motto since Union, yet it became a National Party mantra in the face of the ‘revolutionary warfare’ that South Africa supposedly faced. “The idea of Afrikaner unity at the expense of a united South Africa is out” explained Botha (*Leadership*, Spring 1983: 17). Botha’s package of economic and social reforms needed the consent of English-speakers, as did the deepening militarisation of the Republic. Botha initiated constitutional reform, establishing a Tricameral Parliament in which Indians and Coloureds had voting rights (although ultimately less power than whites). The government also pleased business interests by recognising black Trade Unions, increasing spending on black education and removed many of the regulations of ‘petty apartheid’ such as colour bars in hotels and resorts and even the Mixed Marriages Act, which was abolished in 1985 (Mann, 1988: 54). Military spending also benefited business because of increased access to government contracts and financial support (Frankel, 1984: 89). Botha enthusiastically promoted the ‘homelands’ policy as a solution to South Africa’s ethnic divisions and in 1984, secured a major diplomatic coup in the Nkomati Accord: a non-aggression pact signed with Mozambique (Barber and Barratt, 1990: 299; Davies and O’Meara, 1985: 207). These ‘reformist’ impulses were often in contradiction to the more aggressive policy stances and actions that the SADF took and their importance changed throughout the 1980s. The NP as an enlightened party of ‘reformists’ was an image that objectors had to debunk if their message was to be accepted by the wider white population. Despite the many contradictions of the ‘Total Strategy’, it proved to be a far from easy task.

The Total Strategy, as a low intensity conflict theory, recognised that support from key groups in the indigenous population was vital if the conflict was to be won. Indeed, General Malan regularly pointed out that he believed war to be 20% physical

and 80% psychological. Many senior SADF officers enthusiastically adopted what they termed the 'Hearts and Minds' strategy: General Meiring, the last apartheid-era Chief of the Defence Force, characterised the 'Hearts and Minds' operation as a "non-shooting war":

Our strategy was not to keep the lid on but rather to take the fires away from the pot. The major emphasis was on trying to win the hearts and minds of the people. We got involved in everything. For example, we had vets and doctors all over the show. We had teachers, we repaired windmills and waterholes. We looked after sick cattle and we built roads; you name it and we did it (cited in Hamman, 2001: 62).

The 'Hearts and Minds' strategy was premised on the contention that the SADF was a 'peace-keeping' force: "We in the Defence Force serve South Africa to the benefit of all its people.", wrote General Viljoen, "We will gain enough time and maintain the peace long enough for peaceful solutions to be found for our problems" (*Paratus*, November 1985: 2). "It is a tool for peace," said the opposition spokesman on Defence, "It has saved those in distress, it has brought relief to those in need... You, therefore, are not part of an instrument of war - you are in reality an instrument of peace" (Harry Schwartz cited in *Paratus* September 1984: 25). The SADF frequently trumpeted its constructive role in the region and country and aimed to present itself as a moderate, unifying force (Aarons, June 1984). The SADF presented changing and multiple public faces and did so in order to maximise consent for its activities.

Conscription was one of the greatest impositions on white individuals made by apartheid and was an essential facet of the government's counter-revolutionary strategy. The South African state's discourse about the necessity of military service can be grouped into a number of main themes relating to the perceived threat South Africa faced:

- 1) South Africa faced a 'Total Onslaught' from world communism, manifested in the 'Border War' in Namibia, orchestrated by the the African National Congress/South West Africa People's Organisation/World Council of Churches/United Nations and a number of other "front" organisations creating insurgency within the Republic trying to undermine the white population's 'morale'.
- 2) The Republic's 'survival' was at stake.
- 3) The SADF provided a 'shield' behind which the government could undertake 'evolutionary reform' at its own pace.
- 4) The SADF was apolitical and served the public good of all racial groups.
- 5) Anti-conscription groups were part of the 'total onslaught'.

Together, these created the conditions for “garrison statehood”, whereby whites’ perception of reality was profoundly influenced by militarisation and the above construction of threat (Frankel, 1984: 29). Changing circumstances led the government to stress different aspects from the above. For example, following the Nkomati Accord, the SABC temporarily dropped references to a ‘total onslaught’ from world communism, stressing rather the SADF’s peacekeeping roles and the possibilities of co-operation and reform (Graaf et. al. 1988: 15). However, the essential need for conscription was an aspect that was unchanging.

The obligations and role of conscripts had progressively increased as South Africa’s militarisation became more pronounced. In 1967, the ballot system of conscription was replaced by universal conscription. In 1972, the period of service was increased to twelve months, with an additional nineteen days in Citizen Force ‘camp duty’ for five years thereafter. In 1975, in response to South Africa’s invasion of Angola, ‘camp duty’ was increased to three months for twelve years following initial National Service. In 1977, the initial period of conscription was extended from one to two years (Cawthra, 1986: 64). In 1982, the Commando system was extended to compel older white men who had missed initial conscription to serve as reservists. In 1984, the South African government amended citizenship laws to coerce white male immigrants to serve. Unsurprisingly, the number of national servicemen rapidly increased from 27,000 in 1977 to 65,000 in 1987; the overall size of the SADF increased from 367,000 in 1977 to 908,000 in 1987 (Metten and Goodison, 1988: 18). As well as increasing the military commitments in terms of time for white men, the role performed by conscripts also changed from the 1970s onwards. Apart from the dramatic increase of armed conflict on the ‘Border’ between Namibia and Angola, conscripts were expected to play an increased role across the Republic, particularly after the general uprising, which began in 1984, and during the States of Emergency declared from 1985 onwards (Evans and Phillips, 1988). During the State of Emergency, troops were required to enter the townships in an effort to quell the unrest. This ‘township duty’ provoked ethical dilemmas for some and caused disquiet in the South African media (aside from fostering an infamous worldwide reputation for the South African regime). The cessation of township duty, or at least the right of conscripts to selectively object to serving in the townships, became a key and compelling tenet of ECC campaigning.

The SADF launched many operations in the ‘Border’ area and in Angola, as well as cross border raids into Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Mozambique and Zambia (Du Pisani, 1988; Davies and O’Meara, 1985: 198-200; Mills, 2000: 224-

249). The SADF and South African public deemed many of these raids successful (Dorning, 1987: 22). However, the SADF's hitherto much vaunted invincibility began to crumble as the 1980s progressed. In 1987, the SADF lost air superiority over southern Angola: a major military offensive to capture Cuito Cuanavale in Angola stalled and South African casualty rates increased (Wood, 1991: 750). Hostility from the white public emerged and even the once loyal Dutch Reformed Church (NGK) questioned South African forces' presence in a neighbouring country⁴ (Wood, 1991: 751). With the stalemate in Angola, senior SADF commanders urged a quick settlement of the Border conflict. Propitiously for South Africa, the US and Soviet Union were willing to broker a deal between South Africa, SWAPO, Angola and Cuba. A cease-fire was declared in 1988, followed by Namibian independence in 1990 (Beinart, 2001: 270; Wood, 1991: 752-754). In 1990, in tandem with the dramatic un-banning of the ANC and release of Nelson Mandela, conscription was decreased to one year's service. Conscription was abolished in 1994. South Africa's militarisation was pervasive, but it was not consistent and it was historically contingent. Ultimately, it was unsustainable.

The performance of conscription in any society is a disciplinary mechanism that aims to engender conformity and obedience. The apartheid state had considerable discursive and material advantages when justifying conscription and tackling objectors. White social order was arranged around a pervasive cultural mythology (Barthes, 1972) that created 'common sense' assumptions about the normality of militarisation and apartheid rule. Conscription in South Africa was a powerful social means for managing the white community by engendering and policing militarised, gendered norms. Existing opinion poll evidence suggests that the majority of the white population accepted the basic tenets of the government's security paradigm (Cawthra, 1986: 42; Gagiano cited in the TRC, 1998b: 222-223; Geldenhuys, 1982). Whites' perceptions of the security situation could be manipulated by the state. Seventy-percent of white South Africans relied on electronic media for news. The state-controlled SABC therefore had a monopoly on the majority of white South Africans' access to news and information (Posel, 1989; Welsh, 1987: 97). For example, TV coverage of township rioting over several months had a dramatic impact on the white population's confidence. The government banned any further coverage on the SABC and this inevitably helped to restore confidence in the security forces (Graaf et. al., 1988: 5). The potential was greater for the printed media to critique apartheid, but this was severely curtailed by the State of Emergency regulations. Even

⁴ Professor Johan Heyns, moderator of the NGK, said "While the government may have its reasons for maintaining a military presence in Angola, parents of national servicemen are entitled to ask whether this is necessary" (*Cape Argus* 7/7/1988).

without the regulations, the press's reputation for fearless reportage has been criticised (Frederickse, 1986: 90; Jackson, 1993; Omond, 1986: 230)⁵. As the Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons (CGEP) reported after visiting South Africa in 1986, "We came to a country in turmoil, but one in which whites were, in the main, insulated from what was going on around them" (1986: 55). Indeed, an international peace activist, on a visit to South Africa in the late 1980s, remarked that he had never encountered an elite more ignorant of the political realities surrounding them than white South Africans (Howard cited in Collins, 1995: 102). Frankel wrote in 1984,

Most whites hold the defence force in high esteem for its role in upholding the state in the face of internal revolution, in protecting the national frontiers against the apparent southwards march of international communism. Most, to use the metaphor employed by white parliamentarians, see it as a necessary 'shield' for the Republic behind which order is upheld and possible constitutional reform can take place. The majority of whites, if not the majority of South Africa's population, also wax enthusiastic about Defence Force actions conducted over national borders (132).

Conscientious objectors and the ECC operated in an environment that was, in the main, suspicious of them and their motives and often openly hostile to a message that was interpreted as a threat to South Africa's security.

Surveys conducted in the early 1980s found overwhelming support for the state's perception of threat and its proposed means for countering that threat (Geldenhuis, 1982). One opinion poll conducted found that 90% of soldiers engaged in operations in Namibia said they were fighting to defend their religion against 'atheistic communism' (Cawthra, 1986: 42). In 1982, the majority of whites (in both linguistic groups) accepted the government's perception of the communist threat, believed South Africa had the right to control Namibia, that black people had no reason to take up arms and were confident that the state had the means to counter the Republic's problems (Geldenhuis, 1982). Opinion poll data collected in the late 1980s found that support for the security services was considerable even among white English-speaking and Afrikaans university students: 57% of English-speaking students said they would emigrate if the ANC ever came to power, 45% of Afrikaans-speaking students responded they would 'physically resist' such a development and only 1.1% said they were happy about the prospect (Gagiano submission to TRC,

⁵ According to Jackson, the English-speaking press practiced "self-censorship" and offered whites "inoffensive, uncontroversial news...sunshine journalism" (1998: 12).

23/7/1997). Gagliano found that “sympathy towards the State and what it stood for and what it wanted to preserve and protect and stabilise in South Africa was rather high amongst white students”. This sympathy was especially high for the security services (TRC, 23/7/1997). Indeed Military Intelligence estimated in 1985, that less than 1% of University of Cape Town students were members of the ECC (Military Intelligence, File B1.1.2.3.1.1.21). The state had a considerable advantage, therefore, when dealing with objectors. It could mobilise a set of existing cultural myths easily recognisable to white people. The fear of the psychological onslaught against South Africa meant that the state certainly would not sanguinely assume the continuation of this reality.

It is unsurprising in such a highly militarised environment as white South Africa that the majority of white men “complied” with military service (Cock, 1989b: 9). However, compliance with national service should not be misinterpreted as widespread enthusiasm for duty. Indeed, even PW Botha estimated that only twenty to thirty percent of conscripts were positively enthusiastic soldiers and disciplinary problems amongst troops rose considerably during the 1980s (Cawthra, 1986: 45). Challenging militarisation in apartheid South Africa was possible. As Enloe notes, “militarisation is a potent set of processes. But it is not the well-oiled, unstoppable development that it is frequently portrayed as being.” (1988: 215). Conscription served to engender discipline and compliance to militarisation in white society, but it also exposed the South African regime and made Nationalist rule vulnerable to political and social shifts in white society. The South African government’s political manoeuvrability was limited by white social reaction to the state’s changing military fortunes, as was demonstrated by the rapid end of the Namibian conflict after an increase in conscript casualties. ECC activists Sue Britton and Paul Graham wrote in 1989:

Conscription appears to have had the following effects – entirely unintended and subversive of the rationale of those who govern. It confronts all white South Africans with a moral dilemma and a choice, ensuring that there can be no apathetic acceptance of reality; it provides white South Africans with an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to the oppressed majority without paternalism – conscription is the “cross” they alone bear; it forces the government to be sensitive to the public (78-79).

The existence of conscription confronted white South Africans with the realities of apartheid as in no other context. While conscription represented the pinnacle of South



Africa's militarisation, it could also be seen as introducing a fundamental weakness in apartheid governance. Phillips concludes,

Racially based conscription was...ultimately a self-limiting strategy, creating continuous manpower problems as well as fracturing white political consensus by the extent and nature of SADF deployment...as the burden of conscription grew it was increasingly difficult for the National Party to demonstrate sufficient benefits to offset the costs of its conscription demands on whites (2002: 22).

Although the majority of white men were conscripted, a minority chose to "challenge" and conscientiously object (Cock, 1989b: 9). The ECC was formed in 1983 because there was an increasing tendency for objectors to surface citing political reasons for their refusal to serve. This in itself was symptomatic of a rapidly increasing number of men who avoided conscription by emigration, deferment or by simply not providing the SADF with their current address (Cock, 1989b: 9). Even support for the extension of conscription to white immigrants, political calls for conscription to be widened to Coloured and Indian population groups and evidence that there was public support for white women to be conscripted, suggested the white population felt conscription was a burden that should be shared by others and not by white men alone (Geldenhuys 1982; Cawthra 1986; Gagiano cited in TRC 1998b). Conscription was an accepted part of white South African life but was not necessarily enthusiastically embraced. Eventually resentment grew.

Political objection to military service in South Africa has a long history. Ironically, objection to military service was a strong current in Afrikaner Nationalism in both World Wars. Indeed, the South African government did not introduce conscription in 1914 and 1939 because of Nationalist agitation about the prospect of a draft and the legitimacy of South Africa's participation in the conflicts (Cawthra, 1986: 8-9). Upon assuming power in 1948, the National Party successfully wrested control of the Union Defence Force from English-speaking whites and made Afrikaners and Nationalist sympathisers predominant in the senior ranks of the military (Frankel, 1984: 38). The Afrikaner population's antagonism towards conscription was conveniently forgotten by the National Party in government (although the ECC often sought to remind the South African public of the fact). Objection to service in apartheid's war became apparent from the late 1960s onwards as the call-up was extended. Objection was, however, confined to the 'peace churches' such as the Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists. There were other powerful shifts in South African culture that gave rise to political objection. In 1974, the South African Council of Churches (SACC) passed the 'Hammerskraal

Resolution'. The resolution branded apartheid a 'heresy', deemed South Africa an 'unjust society' and demanded that churches call for conscientious objection to military service (CIIR and Pax Christi, 1983: 28). Catholic Archbishop of Durban, Denis Hurley, explained his support for the resolution saying,

In my view any conflict arising in the near future on our borders will be in the nature of civil conflict, with people of the same country fighting each other. I believe it is our duty to discourage people from getting involved in this military conflict because of the realities of the South African situation – a situation of oppression...Conscientious objection should be adopted as principle by the churches (cited in CIIR and Pax Christi, 1983: 20 and 30).

The Prime Minister, B.J. Vorster, responded swiftly and furiously and outlawed the repetition of such a blatant call for men to object to military service. Minister of Defence PW Botha branded Hurley a liar in parliament. Even parliamentary opposition parties and the English-speaking press were shocked at the SACC's statement and were almost universally unsympathetic (Anderson, 1990b: 9).

A combination of factors: the advent of P.W. Botha as Prime Minister, South Africa's deteriorating regional security situation and the advancement of militarisation, made the issue of conscription politically prescient again after 1978. In 1978, the Defence Amendment Act tightened the regulations regarding objection and lengthened the punishments. In 1979, Richard Steele objected and was sentenced to Detention Barracks and in 1980 Peter Moll was sentenced (CIIR, 1989: 82-83). Both men's objections were overtly political but equally influenced by their Baptist faith. Objectors in the 1970s were supported by ad-hoc groups. Moll and Steele's stance was followed by Neil Mitchell and Billy Paddock in 1982 and Pete Hathorn and Paul Dobson in 1983 – all of whom were imprisoned. These public and highly politicised stances reflected a burgeoning trend of conscripts failing to report for duty. Estimates suggested that between 1975 and 1978 an average of 10% of the call-up failed to report; this rose to 50% by 1985 (over 7000 people) (CIIR, 1989: 61). In 1983, the conference of the Black Sash (a white women's anti-apartheid organisation that had been in existence since the 1950s), passed a motion that stated:

South Africa is illegally occupying Namibia and this is cause for many in conscience to refuse military service. When South Africa withdraws from Namibia there would be no need for a massive military establishment unless there has been a political failure to respond to the desires of the citizens, and that army will be engaged in civil war, which is a good cause for many to refuse military service. In such a civil war, if the state has to rely on conscription to man its army, the war is already lost...We

maintain there is no total onslaught against the people of South Africa and that the total strategy demanded of us is not the military defence of a minority government but the total all out effort of all South Africa's people to bring about democratic government (cited in Spink, 1991: 219).

As in 1974, the motion fell on deaf ears in parliament and was greeted with suspicion by the press. However, white liberal groups in civil society began to debate how to respond to the call. Conscientious Objector Support Groups (COSG) were already in existence in the English-speaking churches and the National Union of Students (NUSAS) had identified South Africa's militarisation as a site for contestation in the late 1970s (Dr Janet Cherry, interview with author, 13/6/2002). The decision was taken to form the End Conscription Campaign. Individual objectors were a mobilising catalyst for ECC activists, a good vehicle for creating press interest and allowed the ECC to develop themes of its campaign based on the personality, circumstances and reasoning of the objector himself. In 1987, 23 men publicly announced they would refuse to serve in the SADF for political reasons. Of these 23, Ivan Toms was charged and sentenced for objection. In 1988, 143 men took a public stand across South Africa. Of these, David Bruce and Saul Batzofin were prosecuted and imprisoned. Although it is difficult to discern the rationale of all the men who evaded military service, the rising emigration rate, deferment rate and avoidance rate did reflect the violent role the SADF played in South African society. A significant proportion of draft evaders emigrated. The more politically conscious of this group established the Committee of South African War Resisters (COSAWR) in London and Amsterdam. This group sought to campaign against conscription and highlight the role of the SADF in Southern Africa (Collins, 1995; Cawthra et. al., 1994).

The changing nature of South Africa's militarisation gave the ECC and the objector movement its impetus and also signified profound changes in white society. The End Conscription Campaign had an increasingly broad set of issues which it could use to highlight its case, issues which struck at the heart of white society and were of concern to whites who had never had reason to question apartheid before. Senior ECC activist, Janet Cherry, recognised the opportunity apartheid's crisis offered the ECC:

There is an incredible difference between South Africa and Rhodesia before independence. There you had an almost homogenous white population, with very few voices of dissent. The whites were prepared to just fight unquestioningly until the end, not actually knowing at any stage what was really happening and what the black community thought. Here it

is different because we have got that room to move and to change white people's attitudes (cited in Frederickse, 1990: 214).

As Phillips notes, "the oppositional force of the ECC did not lie in its ability to mobilise large sections of the white community to oppose conscription, but in its publicising the essential divisive issue of conscription": conscription was an issue for whites whether they were aware or supportive of the ECC or not and the ECC was able to use white self-interest as an oppositional tool (Phillips, 2002: 224). Objector trials in the late 1980s served as forums to highlight these issues: the imprisonment of professionals such as Dr Ivan Toms, Saul Batzofin and David Bruce appeared reckless and inexplicable in the face of emigration and an escalating war. However, the depth and efficacy of militarisation also served to isolate and stigmatise objectors and the ECC, restricting their manoeuvrability and strength.

The state viewed conscientious objection as a dangerous threat to its legitimacy and as a serious threat to the SADF's effectiveness. Objectors were invariably subject to vitriolic attacks from Nationalist politicians, particularly from Defence Minister Malan himself. In 1983, a new Defence Amendment Act was passed with the specific aim of dividing objectors between those with a religious pacifist motivation and those who objected for political reasons. Political objectors were to be much more severely punished. A new Board for Religious Objection was established to discern 'genuine' conscientious objection from those with 'political' motives (Steyn, 1985). The Board's legitimacy was questionable given that the Anglican and Catholic churches refused to participate. Furthermore, those deemed to be objectors on grounds of conscience would still face six years non-combatant, community service instead of two years military service. Nevertheless, between 1984 and 1989, 1890 people applied to the Board (Seegers, 1993: 132). In addition to establishing the Board, the 1983 Act increased the prison sentence for 'political' objectors from eighteen months to six years and encoded objection as a civilian crime, rather than a military offence. This sentence was the highest for objection anywhere in the world. The Act, published days before the trial of objector Brett Myrdal was due to commence, led to Myrdal's exile in Zimbabwe and effectively discouraged objection of this kind until the later 1980s. In 1988, David Bruce was the first objector to be sentenced to six years imprisonment, followed by the eighteen-year-old Charles Bester later in that year. The seriousness with which the state took the threat of objection was demonstrated in 1988, when the ECC became the only 'white' anti-apartheid movement to be banned outright. There was a second class of objector that formed the backbone of the ECC and could avoid the punitive six-year sentence. Conscription in the SADF was, of course, a lifelong commitment involving 'camp-

duty' after the initial two-year initial military service. After 1983, objecting to 'camp duty' carried an 18-month sentence. In 1987, Philip Wilkinson and Ivan Toms were tried and sentenced (although Wilkinson avoided a prison sentence) and in 1989, Saul Batzofin was sentenced. Douglas Torr was the last objector to be sentenced in 1990. He in fact served only one night in jail and was released on appeal. Neither David Bruce, Charles Bester nor Saul Batzofin served their full sentences and were released as South Africa's political climate changed.

Objection to military service was heavily influenced by wider glacial political shifts in white society and by the waning fortunes of the Nationalist government. From 1985 onwards, the ECC was subject to severe harassment, abuse and legal restrictions from the state, but also benefited from the rising chaos in the Republic, white political disunity and a liberation movement that began to cogently envisage the end of apartheid. The liberation movement, the ECC and the state adapted their strategies as the political, economic and military circumstances of South Africa changed. The NP government witnessed a collapse of its electoral support as the 1980s progressed (albeit assuaged by the 'First Past the Post' electoral system) (Schrire, 1991: 92; Bekker and Grobelaar, 1987: 88). On the left, the NP witnessed unprecedented dissent from English-speaking and Afrikaans business interests, particularly after the collapse in the value of the Rand in 1986 and criticism of apartheid emanated from such bastions of Nationalism as the Dutch Reformed Church, the *Broederbond* (a secretive and powerful Afrikaner men's group) and Stellenbosch University (Howe, 1995: 491; Villa-Vicencio, 1988: 45; Charney, 1987: 23). The growth of the ECC was also a cause for alarm among NP leaders. The NP experienced an even greater threat from the extreme right however: a split in the NP in 1982 led to the formation of the reactionary Conservative Party, who replaced the liberal Progressive Federal Party as official parliamentary opposition in 1987⁶ and neo-fascist paramilitary groups such as the *Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging* (AWB) gained up to 100,000 members by the late 1980s (Schrire, 1991: 92; Charney, 1987: 12). The liberation movement became concerned that South Africa could descend into racial civil war if the growth of the white right-wing was left unchecked (Seekings, 2000: 224; Davis, 1988: 87; Cory Library Document 262). The ANC and United Democratic Front sought to engage with the white population⁷ and the state's strategy

⁶ 1987 Election Results (as a percentage of votes cast): NP 52%, Conservative Party 26.3%, PFP 14.2%, Others 5.8% (*Daily Dispatch*, 8/5/1987).

⁷ The UDF had launched a "Call to Whites" campaign to "stay and contribute" to a future South Africa in 1986 (Davis, 1988; Frederickse, 1990; Seekings, 2000). In the wake of the 1987 election, the UDF concluded this campaign had been "defensive and weak" and that despite the NP's disintegration, the government had successfully garnered white support using "fear and greed". The UDF contended that they needed to "engage with the enemy camp, but not as a simple extension of the people's camp...It is

also shifted as the government and SADF became concerned at rising levels of deferment and draft avoidance, coupled with negative media reports about the SADF and the embarrassing spectacle of objector trials. Evidence exists that the SADF sought to accommodate men who were uncomfortable about the prospect of serving in the townships or uneasy about military service generally (Seegers, 1993: 133). The SADF sought to present a more amenable and caring face to the white public. The ECC and SADF hierarchy even met in 1988 to discuss the ECC's grievances (ECC Collection, File F3). Objectors and the ECC were afforded opportunities but also endured great constraints from the wider developments in South African politics and society.

In 1987, the ECC adopted a "strategic shift" that mirrored the new priorities of the liberation movement. The potential political power of objection to military service and the beneficial effects of the existence of a white peace movement that also articulated the vision of a democratic and multi-racial South Africa had been quickly recognised by the ANC. ANC Intelligence Chief, Ronnie Kasrils, wrote,

While we may not expect to convert large numbers of White soldiers, we can succeed in weakening the spirit and morale of a good proportion...The SADF is a largely conscript army, subject to all the pressures and tensions of South African society - political, moral and material (cited in Davis, 1988: 199).

The ANC instructed its agents, such as Janet Cherry, to help organise the nascent ECC (Interview with author, 13/6/2002). The covert involvement of the ANC in the ECC and the ECC's relation to other liberation movements was to have a significant influence on the priorities and style of the movement as the 1980s progressed. The ECC had experienced considerable organisational problems because of the effects of the State of Emergency and the rightward shift in the white community. The strategic shift was thus represented as a means by which the ECC could be reinvigorated (Anderson, 1990b: 55-61). The strategic shift, in effect, meant that the ECC would direct its message towards serving conscripts and white business interests. This "conscript focus" strategy was explained as changing the ECC's rationale so that,

ECC is now saying: let us talk directly to conscripts, soldiers and campers as constituencies in their own right, let us for the first time try to understand where they are at, let us discover how different types of

not just a case of 'toning down' our message because whites are not as militant as blacks. We have to develop a style and approach to politics which takes account of those objective conditions". The UDF stressed the familiarity whites had with "parliamentary language and the rule of law" and that the movement need to consider "going broad" by forming alliances, compromising and appealing to white business interests (National Working Committee Conference 29-30 May, 1987 [Cory Library Document 259]).

conscripts see things, and how best to reach them, and let us re-orientate our entire organisation to address conscripts and speak for them (ECC, Cape Town Conscripts Group, October 1987 [Catteneo Collection])

In order to ascertain what conscripts actually thought of them, the ECC convened conscript focus groups. The data gathered from these groups revealed the pervasiveness of the state's attacks and chastened ECC activists: "ECC has a very negative image amongst soldiers", concluded an internal ECC report. In particular, the ECC was perceived to have a very radical image and was seen as being part of the UDF/ANC/SACP alliance...ECC is seen as studenty, cliquish and elitist...A most serious factor undermining ECC is its "arrogance" in commenting on the army when so many of its publicly identified members have not done military service. This applies as much to men who haven't served as it does to women and older folk who don't face call ups. Those with most credibility in the ECC are the campers and the objectors who have been to jail. ECC needs to be represented publicly by a greater number of campers to avoid the perception amongst soldiers that "it doesn't know what the fuck it is talking about". Women and older folk who speak on ECC's behalf should talk about how they are affected by militarisation and conscription. Many soldiers believe that the ECC sees them as "the enemy" (ECC, Cape Town Conscripts Group, October 1987 [Catteneo Collection]).

The state's contention that ECC activists had no right to comment on its security function seemed to have been accepted by the conscripts the ECC interviewed, as did the belief that by serving in the SADF one could gain respectability and the authority to pass judgement and comment on military issues. The ECC told activists to avoid "alienating the constituency" and this had radical implications for the nature and style of the organisation. Members were told to wear respectable dress, cut their hair and shave and if possible, men who had already served in the SADF were to address public meetings. Women could speak as mothers and wives of conscripts (Rautenbach, interview with author, 13/3/2003; Anderson, 1990b: 67). As ECC activist, Janine Rauch, noted, "It was a controversial strategy...because...people saw it as a watering down of the anti-military position...that to start to address conscripts' needs, rights...meant the acceptance of the system of conscription" (cited Collins, 1995: 94). Other activists called it "immoral" and a "betrayal" of the people and groups who had previously been ECC's bedrock (cited in Anderson, 1990b: 67). Women in the ECC were also concerned that they would be sidelined as men, as conscriptees and 'campers', addressed public meetings in order to give the ECC 'authority' in the eyes of serving conscripts (ECC Collection, File A23.7). The

'conscript focus' strategy clearly mirrored the ANC and UDF's strategy of adapting the anti-apartheid movement's rhetoric and rationale to suit a white audience, which inevitably led to compromises over ideological challenges to apartheid. Many ECC members sensed that the 'strategic shift' had been 'imposed' from above and that the organisation's previous emphasis on participatory democracy had been circumscribed in the decision to adopt the conscript focus (Anderson, 1990b: 68). The 'strategic shift' clearly demonstrated that the ECC was embedded in the wider liberation movement and was subject to historical and strategic changes. As such, objection to military service and the style and message of the ECC was not consistent and changed throughout the 1980s.

This largely narrative account of the development of militarisation and counter-militarisation in South African history demonstrates that increased military preparedness and commitments was a progressive social and political process. It was, however, an inconsistent and sometimes contradictory process, with multiple discourses being used to justify the existence of conscription and the role of the SADF. Political conscientious objection emerged as the boundaries of militarisation pushed ever deeper into white society and the role of the SADF increased across the continent and in the Republic itself. Despite the fact objectors had an expanding set of issues from which to base their attack on conscription, the 'garrison statehood' conditions of white South Africa resulted in their criticisms being treated with suspicion and hostility by much of the white population. It was rightward shifts in white society and the liberation movement's concerns for the future stability of a democratic South Africa that had most impact on objectors and their supporters in the ECC. These historical shifts informed and controversially restricted the nature of the performance that objectors offered in the public realm.

Chapter Three

Performing Citizenship, Engendering Consent: Constructing Hegemonic Masculinity and Citizenship in South Africa

We had come to accept that it is the law. Your children get called up for two years and that's it. [My son] did not have time to learn that it was all lies. According to him, he died a hero because that's all he knew

Letter to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission from Mrs Ann-Marie Wallace, mother of a conscript killed in service (1998a: 312).

Is it possible to maintain stability if the burden, and the risks, of defence must be carried by some - while others escape the dangerous obligation simply on the grounds of philosophical stance?...And how does the pacifist justify his enjoyment of some of the services provided by the state - like education, healthcare or safety in his neighbourhood - while opting out of another, like military duty? In short, can one be selective in one's participation in society? We think not

Sunday Times Editorial commenting on the proposal for the establishment of a Board for Religious Objection (1/4/1983).

Apartheid South Africa's militarisation and its interrelationship with gender norms has been well documented (Cawthra, 1986; Cock, 1993; Cock and Nathan, 1989; Frederickse, 1986; TRC, 1998). Yet the relationship between masculinity, citizenship and conscription has not been extensively explored. Analysing the discourses and practices of white hegemonic masculinity and modes of citizenship is vital if individual and group attempts to contest those discourses are to be assessed. In terms of state discourse, military national service was the only acceptable and legitimate performance of masculinity and citizenship for white men to undertake. National servicemen were constructed as the ultimate insiders and 'friends' of South Africa. This chapter will analyse empirical discourses and performances of hegemonic South African masculinities and citizenship in the 1980s. Conscription was the critical means by which men attained acknowledgement as real men and patriotic citizens in the public sphere and the SADF was an important institution for symbolising unified social and political relations in the white community. Hegemonic masculinity in South Africa was defined and articulated by the state in ways that directly aided militarisation and the acceptance of conscription as a legitimate and essential act for men to perform. Indeed, as this chapter will argue, conscription was

defined as a rite of passage and a privilege for men who would supposedly discover and develop their essential masculine selves by performing military service. The interrelationship between military service as a positive constitutive act for oneself and the wider political community was profound. The boundaries between state discourse and personal agency became blurred as mothers and wives of conscripts were encouraged to support and affirm white men's militarised masculinity and the SADF defined itself as embodying a plethora of masculine identities that all white men could engage with and develop as a result. Performing conscription defined the boundaries of white South Africa and as this chapter will show, although the internal dynamics of militarised masculinity were broad and malleable, the importance of performing conscription was not. Indeed, the state came to literally exclude white men from the public realm if they refused the call-up. The multifaceted and pervasive nature of hegemonic discourse meant that objectors and ECC activists had to interrogate multiple and many seemingly 'depoliticised' everyday assumptions and practices in South African life.

Analysing constructions of hegemonic masculinity and citizenship in any given empirical context is complex, precisely because such identities are fluid, contestable and are created at multiple levels and performances. However, this thesis examines a finite historical period and this offers the advantage of exploring white South African identity in the 1980s as a defined case study. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) have defined a framework for analysis when investigating "empirically existing hegemonic masculinities" that fits well with the task of this chapter. Hegemonic masculinities, Connell and Messerschmidt argue, exist and are created in three interdependent levels: local, regional and global (see Figure 1). The local level encompasses the creation of hegemonic masculinity through and during interpersonal interactions between individuals, families and their immediate communities; the regional level exists at a national/state level and includes ideologies of nationalism and public political discourses; and the global level exists in international political discourses and global movements (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 349). The state itself must also be conceptualised as a collection of institutions and actors who have intra and inter-discourses of masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is the result of the interactions between and within these three levels and opportunities to contest constructs of masculinity can take place between or within these units of analysis. Performances of masculinity and citizenship, such as compulsory military service, are legitimated and sustained within each of these three levels and reinforced between them. Mapping out the content of the three levels and the interrelationship between them is important because it is only then that attempts to oppose and

destabilise hegemonic identity performances can be adequately assessed. This chapter will use the analytical framework shown in Figure 1 and focus on a number of cultural areas in which white hegemonic identities were constructed.

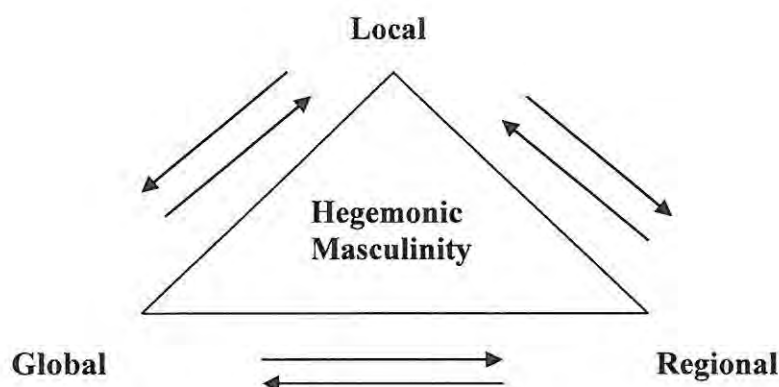


Figure 1: Analysing 'Empirically Existing Hegemonic Masculinities' (based on Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 349)

This chapter is structured with the inter-relationship between Connell and Messerschmidt's three levels in mind. The initial exploration of conscription as a transformative rite of passage whereby boys became men was articulated at a regional level by the state and the SADF, engendered at a local level at school, in the family and through the individual experience of military life itself. It was also espoused at a global level where Western ideals of masculinity were related to soldiering and the military. General Viljoen acknowledged this inter-relationship between the local and regional, in particular, when he wrote to each new national serviceman, "You stand at the threshold of service of the highest order, to yourself, your nation and your fatherland" (1984: 8). The chapter then analyses the creation and reproduction of hegemonic masculinity and citizenship (particularly in terms of the creation of a militarised national community) using the symbolism and performances of the male body, especially through everyday practices such as competitive sport. The local, regional and global came together powerfully in sport which militarised white South African culture deeply whilst exalting qualities, practises and communal ideals that directly benefited the prosecution of apartheid's war, reliant as it was on conscription. The regional discourse of hegemonic masculinity and citizenship was essentially disciplinary and coercive, yet it sought to engender a sense of agency for individuals at the local level: that men would positively wish to serve in the military and indeed choose to do so. Even if men were apprehensive about conscription, the knowledge that this was a communal endeavour lauded by the conscript's family and friends would hopefully, from the perspective of the state, be enough to ensure men's compliance. The state certainly did not automatically assume that conscripts' relatives

and friends would accede to this process. Indeed, the chapter will explore how the white community was reassured that the state was acting in the interests of all South Africans by the representation of militarised complicit black masculinities and in particular, the effort the state expended on encouraging white women to support their children and husbands as militarised mothers: a role that the state contended would benefit them individually, as much as it would the SADF. Finally, although multiple masculinities and political identities were present in the SADF and men were encouraged to approach conscription with positive anticipation regardless of their attributes, to not perform military service was to not be a citizen or a man. The chapter ends with the analysis of the 1984 Citizenship Act, a law that recognised the important role English-speaking whites played in militarisation, and compelled white male immigrants to serve in the SADF or face expulsion from South Africa.

The performance of military service was the single most important act of hegemonic masculinity and citizenship in South Africa. It was a transformative performance for the individual male, both in terms of his self-identity and in the recognition and acknowledgement gained from the white population. Conscription was a hegemonic performance of identity in terms of local discourses in the family and school, regional discourses articulated by the state and global discourses that exalted soldiering and the military as an institution that engendered manhood and patriotism (Dawson 1998: 1). Conscription was constructed as a performance that was a 'rite of passage' that positively changed the attitude, capabilities and prospects of the man who undertook it and essentially, military service was a rite of passage that turned boys into men. Price, commented that serving as a conscript in the SADF, was, symbolic of the transition from youth to adulthood. Within the context of a social world, which reinforces the importance of the army both as protector and as a vehicle for the attainment of manhood, it is possible that the individual would perceive it as a pivotal point in his life. In addition, young men preparing themselves for armed combat and the defence of their country reinforce the status quo (1989: 136).

General Malan openly acknowledged the contention that conscription had positive constitutive effects on the individual and the national political community, when he wrote (in response to a letter critical of conscription), "I would also suggest that national service prepares and matures a young man for his future role in the life of the nation (Malan, letter to Paul Graham, 28/1/1985 [ECC Collection, File A24.1]). Conscription, as a rite of passage, inevitably privileged the men who performed it in terms of social esteem and this was at the expense of those who did not serve in the army. If military service were a rite of passage, then refusal to serve as a conscript

would appear perverse and would also deny a man the acceptance and admiration of society as well as the beneficial experience of the army. Analysing the disciplinary discourses that were used to construct conscription as a rite of passage reveals the extent of the cultural beliefs and practices objectors had to critique and destabilise if they were to have any discursive impact.

Conscription, as a masculine rite of passage for white South African men, was inculcated at school. The use of education and schooling to “mould the upbringing and outlook” of the citizenry is common to many authoritarian states (Connell, 1987: 228). “Schooling plays a vital part in preparing the complete human being for what awaits him”, recognized the SADF’s official handbook and the primary mechanism for preparing white boys for conscription was school based Cadet service (Liebenberg, 1986: 1; Evans, 1989). Cadets aimed to instil the acceptance that a boy “realise that he has a duty to help protect his fatherland” (Weiner, February 1985: 44). In Cadet service, “the pupil can at an early stage be taught to take pride in himself, his section, school and country”, advised the President’s Council (Liebenberg 1986; President's Council, 1987: 68). Cadet service at school introduced white boys to the rituals of military service and its values. It was also an opportunity for school pupils to be exposed to the ‘Total Onslaught’ state discourse. Cadet service essentially sought to bind school-based masculinities to military service and create an excited expectation of what would follow in conscription. Cadets aimed to engender the belief that full-time national service would be a transformative rite of passage for white boys. As an SADF leaflet, distributed to schoolchildren and their parents, stated, “National Service may virtually be regarded as a modern initiation school. It is generally considered that the Defence Force makes a man out of boys.” (SADF Leaflet: Untitled [ECC Collection, File F12]). Although Cadet duty at school was clearly used as a conduit for Nationalist ideology, Cadets had been a longstanding feature in South Africa’s prestigious English-speaking boarding schools. As such, Cadet duty, the militarised rituals and Total Onslaught rhetoric were interwoven with historical British imperial discourses (Kanitkar, 1994; *Paratus*, November 1983; December 1987; *South African Digest*, March 1985; Braudy, 2003). The importance of Cadet duty to the formation of hegemonic masculinity and citizenship was recognised by many objectors and by the ECC. Indeed, many individual objectors developed their critique of the military whilst serving in school Cadets and the ECC focused a number of its campaigns on opposing Cadet duty at school (Evans, 1989; CIIR, 1989).

The public affirmation of conscripts as boys being transformed into men was a consistent theme of state discourse. In particular, the state sought to constantly remind white men and their families that conscription was indeed a benchmark of masculinity and one that the conscript and his family and friends should affirm and celebrate. Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, told a group of Pretoria families on 'Call-Up' day that, "they must expect to get back men - men who are not scared to tackle the future of South Africa" (Katz, June 1985: 18). Commenting on Call-Up day in 1987, *Paratus* magazine noted that for the new conscript, "after two years he will emerge a man, more confident and prepared to take command of himself in civvie street" (Prior, September 1987: 25). Call-Up days became increasingly celebratory occasions and the families of new conscripts would be invited. 'Pass-Out' days at the end of conscripts' initial period of duty would also help to define military service as a critical moment in a boy's development into a man. Many white families accepted the rite of passage discourse: "I'm pleased to see him go!", remarked one father of a new conscriptee, "I hope the army makes a man out of him!" (cited in *Paratus*, March 1989: 9). The constitutive impact of military service as a rite of passage also served as a disciplinary method to pressurise young men into accepting the inevitability of national service. The highly regarded military correspondent, Willem Steenkamp, advised the readers of the *Cape Times* and *Paratus* that the best attitude national servicemen should adopt was, "I didn't ask to go but when they sent me I behaved like a man and the son of men" (September 1985: 48). Resisting military service would also resist this conception of hegemonic masculinity tied to the performance of military service and exposed objectors to potential derision as 'unmanly' and feminine by those intent on upholding hegemonic constructions.

The experience of military service itself was designed to engender a sense of the performance being a rite of passage in which a number of ritualised stages had to be passed. The first stage was Basic Training (Basics). In all military contexts, successfully completing this stage is an essential part of becoming an esteemed soldier (Karen, 1998: 215). Basics, as a period of intensive physical training is, the first of a series of "trials of manhood" that conscripts face (Hockey, 2003: 16; Kaplan and Ben-Ari, 2000: 421). Basics was one of the essential aspects of the ritual of military service and helped men acknowledge the progression of the development of their masculine selves. Price found that the understanding of this 'graduation' at the end of Basics was present in the former South African conscripts she interviewed (1989: 137). The ritual of Basics was an important one for engendering hegemonic masculinity in men, for it was physically and psychologically challenging and often

led to a profound sense of disorientation and discomfort, out of which a new sense of self and identity would supposedly emerge. During Basics,

The conscript becomes dislocated from the familiarity of civilian society and enters an alien environment which operates according to a different system of values and norms. His sense of personal identity becomes eroded and he is forced to assimilate himself with the world of the military. In addition, he is issued with weapons and a license to kill, which can be perceived as symbolic of his attainment of manhood (Price, 1989: 137)

Having 'passed' this first test, men in the SADF would be given a greater degree of agency in their future occupation in the army: conscripts could apply to join an elite combat unit or move into a support role such as working in the SADF's administration (or indeed, writing for *Paratus* magazine) (Janssen, *Paratus* July 1988: 15). Ritualised tests within the military aimed to confirm to conscripts the nature of conscription as a rite of passage and as such, hegemonic masculinity in white South Africa was premised on individual white men actively performing (and successfully completing) these rituals, rather than just passively accepting the accolades and praise from wider white society.

A critical aspect for the construction of militarised hegemonic masculinity in apartheid South Africa was the contention that military service was an exciting and fulfilling experience for the men who undertook it and one that would develop the talents and abilities of the man who performed it. Essentially, state discourse defined military service as a means by which a man's supposed inner masculinity would be discovered, developed and affirmed. The SADF believed that a man in the army attained "self-knowledge" and this was a primary "benefit" of national service. As the SADF explained, during military training:

Various personality advantages emerge. The value of these can be appreciated if measured according to the development and experience of one who has never done National Service...Trying circumstances, tension and challenges - you get to know your true self - know your limitations and capabilities. There is no way in which to gain this knowledge, other than by experiencing extreme circumstances (SADF Leaflet: Undated [ECC Collection, File F12]).

It was supposedly through this process of challenge and attrition, expertly channelled and productively utilised in the SADF, by military drill and combat, that would enable a man to become a coherent whole. This transformative process of suffering, attrition, bonding and tenacity, allowed a man to take his eventual place in society. The

essential man was self-confident and mature. These qualities were a necessary component of the soldiering experience. Personality traits such as these may well be beneficial to an individual and society, it was the conflation with military service in the SADF that tied them to a political agenda that upheld apartheid. The front covers of *Paratus* magazine, displayed in newsagents, supermarkets, libraries and schools across South Africa, frequently depicted conscripts as men who were fulfilling their destiny and also having fun. In SADF discourse, conscription was an adventure where men could test themselves, discover their abilities, fulfil their potential and explore Africa at the same time. The front covers reproduced as Figures 2,3 and 4 demonstrate the imagery the SADF used to portray military service as a means whereby men could discover and develop their masculinity. The covers also show the multiple discourses the military used to engender soldiering as the ultimate symbol of manhood.⁸ *Paratus* magazine also ran a column entitled 'National Serviceman of the Month' each column emphasised that whatever the ability or talent of the man in the SADF, conscription was the means by which this ability could be developed (March, 1987: 62; April 1983; Davies, October 1987: 26; January 1986: 69; October 1985: 61; October 1983: 77). Anecdotal evidence supporting this contention was widely available in wider South African culture. Indeed, one example was given by the Head of Career Counselling at the University of the Witwatersrand, who explained, "If a prospective student is immature and unsure of himself, we may advise him to do his National Service first. The two years will give him time to get in touch with himself"(*Paratus*, January 1980: 47). The evidence that industry valued former conscripts as employees further aided the contention that conscription was a beneficial career development activity. This evidence was presented to serving conscripts at the end of their initial two year period of service in the form of a commercially sponsored SADF publication entitled *Civvy Street* which was filled with recruitment opportunities to major South African corporations and discount schemes for former national servicemen ranging from department store discounts to substantially reduced car purchases (1983). Conscription as a performance of masculinity and citizenship was premised on the contention that there was an essential masculinity within every man and the only means by which this identity would be realised was through military service.

⁸ Figures 2, 3 and 4 deploy multiple masculinities in order to militarise hegemonic masculinity and tie it to good, patriotic citizenship. Military service is presented as an 'adventure' in which men will discover themselves and unleash their true selves. Fig. 2 also draws on the 'Rambo' imagery of unrestrained, violent masculinity that finds expression in weapons and bush fighting. The terrain of Africa, specifically 'the Border' at 'the end of the earth' was a suitable place for this affirmation and celebration of militarised masculinity to take place. Military service was depicted as exciting and liberating in these images.

The iconic image of the South African soldier resonated throughout South African culture and encouraged many men and their families to relish the prospect of sharing in an esteemed masculine endeavour. Conscripts were popularly acclaimed as 'Troopies': 'Our Boys', the collective sons of South Africa. One could purchase Troopie cuddly toys (which came with the epithet – 'I'm a winner'). The 'Ride Safe' scheme for national servicemen wishing to travel across the country was publicised on radio with the following song which reinforced the 'troopie' construct:

He is just a troopie, standing near the road.
He's got a weekend pass and he wants to go home.
Pick him up, take him with.
He's still got a long way to go,
That troopie who stands by the 'Ride Safe' sign,
His hair is short, his shoulders broad and strong,
And his arms are tanned brown,
With pride he does his national service, respected wherever he goes,
he's more than just a number,
He's a man's man...(cited in Frederickse, 1986: 67)

The troopie was admirable and masculine, a 'man's man'. The Troopie's masculinity was not threatening or hyper-masculine, he was an object of affection. A more hardened construct of militarised masculinity that pervaded South Africa was that of the *Grensvegter* [Border fighter]: "*Grensvegter* n. Shrouded in myth and legend, a Rambo-type figure. Essentially one who has been in the Operational Area" explained *Paratus* (Delmar, February 1986: 23). The *grensvegter* had supposedly been at the heart of the action, had participated in dangerous guerrilla warfare and proved his steel. The symbolism of 'combat' as the ultimate performance of military hegemonic masculinity infused the *grensvegter* myth. *Grensvegter* was a popular picture book hero in Afrikaans culture (Cawthra, 1986: 51). A number of South African movies were made focusing on 'grensvegters' on the Border, the most popular of which were the '*Boetie Gaan Border Toe*' [Little Brother goes to the Border] series of films (JODAC News, 1988 [ECC Collection, File H12; *Uniform* 25/3/1985). The *grensvegter* image also drew from contemporary global discourses of militarized masculinity, namely Rambo, the famed anti-communist military hero in a series of Hollywood movies. The ECC noted the sexualised and hyper-masculinist basis of the *grensvegter* mythology: "The "*Boetie gaan border toe*" mentality is aimed at male sexuality and encourages a feeling of inadequacy amongst national servicemen who do not serve on the border" (*South African Outlook*, April 1985). The '*grensvegter*' myth served to create and police a hierarchy of masculinities within the SADF and even when troops were stationed on the 'Border', an internal politics of masculinity

developed: troops kept at the SADF bases on the 'Border' were derided as "base *moffies* [gays/effeminate men]" by troops deployed in active combat on the frontline (Price, 1989). The images of serving soldiers created cultural icons by which white men were judged by others in society. Troopies were the affectionately regarded sons and protectors of white South Africa and *grensvegters* were the revered warriors defending the Republic's borders against Communist takeover. The latter image also helped create an internal sexualised hierarchy within the SADF pressuring men to be seen to be involved in combat at the 'Border'.

Although military service was often articulated as a 'privilege' for men and was, according to General Malan, "a small price to pay for the privilege of living in South Africa" (cited in Metten and Goodison, 1988: 21), the state was aware that conscription could potentially be perceived as a burden and a needlessly dangerous activity. The need for sacrifice, in terms of time spent in the army, the deprivations of war and, of course, the possibility of death, all had to be directly addressed by state discourse. Sacrifice was premised on the awareness that the nation would not survive unless men were willing to sacrifice for the greater good. The appeal to sacrifice is common in all military contexts, a significant feature of global militarised hegemonic masculinities. The state was able to draw from a rich heritage of militarism in South Africa. Morrell notes that in British colonial discourse in South Africa,

Soldiers were also expected to risk their lives. Here the military requirement that one put one's life at risk dovetailed with the soldier's code of honour, for to refuse to risk the halo of death was a stain on one's honour... Militarism as an ideology thus fed hegemonic masculinity by promoting war and by creating men who believed that death in battle was the most glorious, the most manly, of ends (Morrell, 2001b: 161).

'Sacrifice' by death in battle has always been central to republican citizenship thought and has been interpreted as the ultimate test of manhood and citizenship: the means by which a man can prove he has overcome selfish concerns in order to contribute to the common good (Elshtain, 1992: 143-146; Tickner, 1992). The military itself is the vehicle for this sacrifice - "it allows the individual to prove his willingness to sacrifice himself for the good of the country" (Sasson-Levy, 2002: 359). State discourse had to address the prospect of sacrifice if individuals and their families were to accept performing active military service.

In South Africa, the state expressed the necessity of 'sacrifice' in a number of ways. "A lonely young man awaits his departure from civilian life to the Army, where

he will sacrifice two years of his life for the security of South Africa”, wrote *Uniform* (the newspaper for SADF personnel) about the Call-Up day of 1985. This young man like all other national servicemen would become “the pride of our country – the South African soldier. The sacrifices they make to perform their duty to this land, merits the highest respect and admiration of all true South Africans” (14/1/1985: 9). A real man and true citizen would be prepared to sacrifice himself for the common good: “The safety of our country and of the values we cherish demands a higher degree of sacrifice and a greater commitment from all our citizens to ensure that the burden of our defence is shared in fair measure by all” said General Malan (*Paratus*, April 1982: 29). Sacrifice was presented as an act that enabled the polity to survive and develop. The call to sacrifice could even be made in the bluntest terms, TV Newsreader Roelf Jacobs stated, “The defence of this country is a duty, a necessity...our children must realise that they must be prepared to sacrifice their lives, if necessary, in the struggle for survival” (*Paratus*, September 1980). General Viljoen frequently focused on the sacrifice expected of young men, his rhetoric repeating the necessity for sacrifice, dignity, courage, duty, vigilance, preparedness and pride. “Let us all remember that ‘Greater love hath no man than he who lays down his life for his brother’”, wrote Viljoen in his 1984 ‘Christmas Message’, “The ideals for which they died will never be forgotten. Their loved ones can be assured of this...we will continue to pursue the goals for which they sacrificed their lives” (*Paratus*, December 1984: 2). Writing after a major military offensive in Angola where the lives of twenty-one soldiers were lost, Viljoen explained,

Without men who are prepared to make the supreme sacrifice in defence of what they believe in, this world would be a sorrier place than it is. I am indeed proud of those men who were prepared to undertake this daring and challenging task. The military reputation of our forces was upheld with dignity (*Paratus*, February 1984: 2).

The discourse of ‘sacrifice’ for the good of the nation was powerful and served to discipline men into performing conscription, but it was not unassailable. As Chapter Two noted, the rising death rate in the Cuito Cuanavale offensive in 1987-1988 led to a swift backlash in the press and in white society and as Chapter Four will elucidate, the concept of sacrifice was a key value that objectors and the ECC sought to wrest from the state and claim for themselves. Militarised conceptions of ‘sacrifice’ were a critical means by which hegemonic masculinity and citizenship was defined.

The contention that conscription was a rite of passage: a means for discovering and developing essential masculinity and an essential sacrifice for the nation’s survival, served as a disciplinary discourse for individual white men. Conscription

was articulated by the SADF as an individual and a communal experience, yet the quality of both of these aspects was dependent on the attitude of the individual white man. The supposedly positive benefits of military service would only be engendered if the individual adopted a positive attitude towards conscription and accepted his duty to serve. As such, the state contended that conscription was compulsory, yet a performance that white men had the agency to choose to fulfil enthusiastically thereby gaining the benefits of military service. As an SADF psychologist concluded in *Paratus*, the serviceman could, “decide to be negative and henceforth consider whatever he has to do to be a burden OR he can be positive and accept the fact that he will be in the SADF for two years and that nothing can change that position. In this way he will in all respect make the most of it.” (Kuncewicz, August 1986: 23). In this discourse, the illusion of agency was held out to white men as conscripts: men could ‘choose’ to adopt a ‘positive attitude’ to conscription and garner all the benefits outlined above, or they could choose to adopt a negative attitude and not actively participate in this celebratory endeavour of masculinity and citizenship. ‘Making the most of it’ encapsulated this discursive approach and *Paratus* became increasingly willing to highlight new conscripts who were less than ecstatic about the prospect of national service but had ‘chosen’ to ‘make the most’ of the experience that lay before them: Fourie Kruger, “admitted he was not feeling “too good” about two years in the army “but I’ll make the best of it”” (March 1989: 9). “Two years – 730 days – 17520 hours. Don’t be mistaken, it is a long time and could seem even longer were you to approach your national service with trepidation. So you might as well try to make your national service enjoyable and interesting”, was the advice of a former serviceman in *Paratus* (Janssen, July 1988: 15). On explaining his attitude to national service, ‘NSM of the Month’ WA Brock explained, “I have always tried to make the best of all situations that have arisen” (February 1984: 33). Making ‘the most’ of national service was a strategy that acknowledged the potential divisions between national-state discourses that lauded conscription and individual anxieties white men may have had about the military. The agency men supposedly possessed did not exist in choosing whether they *could* serve but in choosing *how* they approach that service: a positive acceptance that they would serve would radically improve their chances of personal growth during national service and allow them fully to embrace hegemonic manhood. The discursive strategy sought to reconnect the local and regional discourses by constructing military service as a performance that individual white men had to actively ‘choose’ to undertake and ‘make the best of’. Individuals, who refused to be conscripted were, from the perspective of this discourse, men who had decided to be negative and had consequently disempowered themselves. White men’s agency was a critical point of contestation in the pro- and anti-conscription discourse

and Chapter Four will document how the ECC and objectors sought to portray conscripts as disempowered and objectors as active participants in their own destiny.

Another disciplinary discourse for white men who may potentially doubt the value of military service was the argument that 'everybody does it'. In this way the state emphasised conscription's role in creating Anderson's (1990a) "imagined community" of white South Africa and that the performance of military service connecting men with their peers and the wider community. Inevitably, this discourse defined men who refused to serve as isolated and removed from the wider white South African nation. As one new national serviceman told *Paratus*, "Everybody does it, so it must be all right" (September 1987). The argument that 'everybody does it' to justify national service is a common one in militarised contexts and it creates a disciplinary framework by which others are punitively judged by their failure to accede to the majority's actions. As such, it creates clear obligations for the individual:

The subject is able to identify himself with others through assumed engagement in the very same practices. The construction of the life cycle and of identity in such a way that subjects conceive of military service not only as the natural order of things, but also as enclosing everybody, points to the homogenisation of subjects, to the perception that "everybody" is of the same human nature (Helman, 1999: 396).

General Geldenhuys, then Chief of the Defence Force, used the argument that 'everybody does it', when he published a full-page open letter in a mass market English-speaking newspaper in 1987:

The hundreds of thousands of men who have gone before you felt the same way. And those coming after you will have the same experience...much depends on yourself. Accept that you have to go. Take a decision to make the best of it...decide for yourself how you are going to approach National Service. All the best and *Vasbyt* [stand firm/stick it out]. I hope and trust that all will go well. Go for it! (*Sunday Times* 11/1/1987: 12).

This discourse recognised the potential for doubt and anxiety about conscription (Geldenhuys had begun the open letter acknowledging "apprehension" was "understandable" for white men about to be conscripted). However, the fact was 'everybody' felt the same and still participated in the military. Men who refused to perform conscription would have presumably succumbed to their apprehension and excluded themselves from hegemonic masculinity. Geldenhuys clearly combined the

'make the best of it' discourse with the conception that military service was a communal endeavour that no man would wish to be excluded from.

There were other means by which conscription came to be the primary marker of hegemonic masculinity and citizenship in South Africa. One of the most pervasive and multifaceted means by which the practices and ideology of militarised hegemonic masculinity and citizenship became engendered was by the use of the male body, particularly in sport. This was an important means of both discursively and physically creating white male hegemonic masculinity. Using the male body and performances such as sport, to militarise white masculinity, also demonstrates the inter-relationship between local, regional and global levels of masculinity discourses. Connell and Messerschmidt note that the "interplay between bodies and social processes" has been a longstanding and central theme in any analysis of contextually based empirical study of masculinity (2005: 837). In militarised contexts the image of the male body and bodily performances such as sport assume particular significance in constructing hegemonic masculinity. Woodward notes that, "The body is the surface on which gender identities are inscribed, performed, and often resisted", and that for militarisation, "It is through the body that the transformation from civilian to soldier is experienced and expressed" (2003: 51). In South Africa, playing sport at school, in the army and supporting team sports at home was an important means by which individual white men's bodies were shaped and prepared for military service. Sport was a powerful social metaphor for white society and had been a persistent theme in Afrikaner Nationalist discourse. Furthermore, the conflation of sport and war was consciously articulated by the SADF and the state. Sport in South Africa was a "national obsession" and made "many of the features of masculinity that start wars and make their waging possible – dogmatism, belief in divine support, willingness to take risks, capacity to ignore danger and put up with discomfort, little regard for the rights of others, the worship of the body" (Morrell, 2001a: 15). Finally, the importance of sport in white society was recognised by the international community, who used sporting boycotts and sanctions as a means of isolating apartheid South Africa. The following empirical analysis vividly demonstrates the interconnections between sport, the body, war and masculinity and serves as a further basis for assessing the challenge objectors and the ECC faced when they sought to destabilise hegemonic white masculinity in South Africa.

Playing sport and physically developing the male body to be able to play sport was encouraged and celebrated by the SADF. Furthermore, the values needed to be a successful competitive sportsman were conflated with the values of a good soldier

(Petersen, 1998: 52). Sport and its effects on the body and values of a man were a vital aspect of hegemonic white masculine identity. Phillips notes that in the SADF the male body was “cherished and nurtured and you are encouraged to develop it in sport, in pushing yourself in survival and training” (2001). As an SADF publication, *Uniform*, explained:

Sporting activities and the goals they strive for cannot be divorced from the development of the soldier’s mind and body...teamwork, co-ordination and spirit are as essential to the fighting mould of the soldier as they are to the player on the field (Evans, 22/4/1985: 11).

The Director of Physical Training and Sport, Brigadier GJ Geyer, believed sport engendered the important qualities of “perseverance, solidarity, loyalty, discipline, good teamwork”. Geyer also contended sport aided the “development of the man as a whole for the purpose of equipping him to be able to defend his country”, and that sporting activity was a vital “influence on moulding the characters of young servicemen during a formative period in their lives” (cited in Evans, *Uniform*, 22/4/1985: 11). Participation in sport “can only aid in producing a well-balanced individual” concluded the SADF (cited in Evans, *Uniform*, 22/4/1985: 11). Participating in competitive sport was a performance that created the ideal soldier and a constitutive performance of hegemonic masculinity. Sporting and soldiering were thus mutually constitutive and reinforcing. Participation in sport in the SADF normalised soldiering for many men, because sport had been practiced and celebrated in the same terms at school and in wider white culture.

The male body, sport and military service were powerful discourses in white South African culture and an important component of Afrikaner Nationalism. This aspect of ‘regional’ masculinities discourse therefore directly informed the ‘local’ performances of masculinity. In any authoritarian and militarised culture, sporting culture and the symbol of the muscular male body is an important conceptual image around which Nationalist leaders can militarise concepts of hegemonic masculinity (Mangan, 2000: 1). Du Pisani notes that in white South African culture, “the physical prowess and moral strength of sporting heroes were celebrated and highlighted as examples for the youth of puritan masculinity” in Nationalist discourse (2001: 166). Rugby was especially political and socially important in white hegemonic discourse: “The game can be seen”, wrote Grundlingh, “as a powerful if informal, disseminator of nationalist sentiment and a source of identification with the *volk* at large” (1995a: 115). Rugby was symbolically and practically important to the SADF:

The significance of rugby in a beleaguered society was underlined by the involvement of the South African Defence Force in the game. The

Defence Force...did much to promote the game. Part of the reasoning was that rugby, as a disciplined team game, could help in the moulding of young men into soldiers (Grundlingh, 1995b: 103).

Indeed, General Malan believed the performance of rugby and soldiering to be synonymous: "You can take a rugby player and within half-an-hour make a soldier of him", he once remarked (cited in Grundlingh, 1995b: 103). Nationalist discourses of white masculinity constructed the performance of sport, especially rugby, in similar (and often the same) terms as the performance of military service. In consequence, both performances were mutually reinforcing and served to naturalise conscription as a positive good for the individual and for the nation.

Nationalist discourses of rugby and war were most powerful in the Afrikaans-speaking population, but the wider conflation of sport and war resonated throughout a much larger proportion of white society. The SADF was keen to emphasise that it recognised forty different sports (including even chess) and that all of these would benefit from military service (*Paratus*, January 1986: 59). The sport and war metaphor had a generally wide appeal in white society and both sides of the metaphor impacted on and reinforced the other, portraying each as a 'game' in which winning was paramount and achievable through practice, teamwork and the development of physical prowess (Karner, 1998: 223). Minister for Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, invoked the sport and war metaphor when he told the 1986 intake of servicemen in Pretoria, "You will be playing for this team, for South Africa" (*Paratus*, February 1986: 23). In August 1981, SABC TV openly conflated sport and war when it commented:

As over the weekend, South Africans rejoiced at the splendid victory of the Springboks in New Zealand, other of the country's representatives were returning from the battlefield in Angola. Their mission, too, was splendidly accomplished...There is good cause for pride in the performance of our men in New Zealand and Angola (cited in Frederickse, 1986: 137).

Celebratory appeals, such as this, sought to firmly entrench militarised masculinity in mainstream white culture and to engender an acceptance of the normality of war and military service on a par with enjoyment of sport, as a means of personal and national achievement. Global pressures also influenced the discursive use of sport and masculinity. International sports 'boycotts' on South African teams and individuals severely restricted the international events South Africa could participate in (Omond, 1986: 72). These boycotts aided the perception of the white community's isolation and embattlement and also encouraged celebratory nationalism when the country's

representatives did manage to compete abroad. Sport also served to distract, pacify and delude the white population about the actions of the government and the SADF. In 1986, the visiting Commonwealth Eminent Person's Group (CEPG) noticed that the white South African public was far more interested in the activities of the Springbok rugby team, then in New Zealand, than in the mounting chaos in the Republic itself. The CEPG took this to be a sign that whites needed sport to distract them from the harsh reality of their predicament (1986: 44). Hegemonic masculinity in white society was militarised at a regional and local level by the widespread support for and enjoyment of sport and sporting achievement. This directly aided the acceptance of conscription and war as a necessity and also helped to discipline the white population by both encouraging citizens to support 'team South Africa' fighting for victory and to distract many from the more unpalatable truths of the Republic's militarisation. It also created an ideal of the male body as militarised through competitive activity and muscularity.

There were significant implications for objectors to military service because of the conflation of the male body, sport and war. For example, objector Peter Hathorn arrived at his SADF Call-Up centre to register the fact he was refusing to serve and was told by the Commanding Officer that he was objecting because, "I didn't play rugby at school and therefore I didn't want to go into the army". Hathorn felt the Commanding Officer had concluded he was therefore "scared" of military service and that was his real motivation for objecting (Interview with the author, 13/3/2003). As shall be discussed in Chapter Five, the state specifically used the imagery associated with the male body to stigmatise and deride objectors and their motives. Furthermore, the performance of sport at school, especially rugby, was the first occasion that some objectors noticed their alienation from and opposition to white hegemonic masculinity and Nationalist culture. Objector Brett Myrdal opted to go rock climbing during rugby practice at school and identified choosing this alternative sport and his enjoyment of surfing⁹, as a transgressive political performance in terms of the school's culture and that of wider white society (Interview with the author, 28/1/2003). Conversely, sport could help to mediate the rejection of objectors by wider white society. Objector Ivan Toms' campaign literature stressed his captaincy of the school rugby team as proof he was an 'average white male' and yet was an objector to military service (ECC Collection, file E1.1.2). Charles Bester, when imprisoned for refusing to serve in the military, noticed that his fellow inmates hostility towards him lessened and turned

⁹ Thompson identifies surfing as a socially transgressive cultural space in South Africa: "Surfers evaded social discipline and ideological control...The politics of everyday life were rather directed towards the bodily pleasures of riding waves...Serving in the SADF...was specifically seen to close off the surfers world" (2001: 100).

into acceptance once they realised that he could play rugby and was good at it (Interview with the author, 13/9/2003). The use of the body in sport was militarised and used a key means by which hegemonic masculinity was created and affirmed, as such it was a critical factor in the performance of conscription and of objection.

Although conscription was constructed as a fundamental performance of masculinity and citizenship in South Africa and many aspects of white South African existence were interrelated to military service, the centrality of conscription to white identity formation and state legitimacy made South African elites particularly vulnerable to dissent. If men were to resist conscription or their families and friends failed to acclaim them, or interpreted the sacrifices made as needless, then the ability for the status quo to reproduce itself could come under threat. It was therefore essential that *all* white men were seen to perform military service and this made state discourse malleable and broad. Indeed, as the 1980s progressed, the SADF adopted a policy of “accommodation” whereby men who were extremely anxious about the prospect of military service were offered roles in the SADF that avoided ‘military’ duties (Seegers, 1993: 133). It has already been noted that the SADF sought to portray military service as beneficial to men regardless of their talents or abilities; *Paratus* magazine regularly highlighted national servicemen who demonstrated a range of masculinities, some of which could be interpreted as subordinate outside of a military context. The men’s masculinity was made complicit with hegemony, however, by their participation in the military. Among the ‘National Serviceman of the Month’ highlighted in *Paratus* was a surfer, a gay novelist, a fashion designer, a singer, an actor and photographer; all of whom were portrayed as having developed their skills whilst in the SADF and as performing a valuable role in the military (March, 1987: 62; April 1983; Davies, October 1987: 26; January 1986: 69; October 1985: 61; October 1983: 77).¹⁰ The fact that the men performed national service enabled them to engage with hegemonic norms and transmute and hone their skills to the needs of the SADF. Had a fashion designer, author and surfer not been conscripts, their masculinity would have been relegated to marginal status but the performance of military service transformed this. Marginalised masculine identities, such as homosexuality, were criminalized and deviant in state discourse. However, gay men

¹⁰ The article ‘Soldier by Day, Fashion Designer by Night’ [see Figure 5] epitomised the construction of the ‘National Servicemen of the Month’. As the article explained, the designer’s “talent for artistic décor was quickly recognized and in the nine months he spent in Oshakati [in Namibia] he was often called upon to design posters and plan décor for military functions”. However, the *Paratus* was keen to emphasise that he was “A strapping 1,92m tall, he looks more like a front-row forward than a fashion designer. But although his ‘huge talent’ may not earn him awards on the rugby field, he is certainly headed for the ‘big league’ in the world of fashion” (October 1987).

were not excluded from serving as conscripts. Indeed, Van Zyl et. al.'s study of gays and lesbians in the SADF found that in some conscript units homosexuality was openly tolerated (although members of the Permanent Force would be subject to harassment, abuse and dismissal if suspected to be gay) (1999; also, Krouse, 1994; Kraak, 2003). Performing military service was important to the ideological stability of Nationalist rule, therefore under no circumstance could groups of men be excluded or alienated from serving in the military. Indeed, the policy of 'accommodation' was applied to many political objectors in the later 1980s and was clearly designed to try and diffuse public objection. In Johannesburg, the Officer assigned to negotiate this with conscriptees was also carefully chosen. Objector David Bruce explained that,

They [the SADF] had this kind of thing where they got these people coming in for call-ups and some people who weren't the right kind of material for a war machine and so they had 'old uncle' Staff-Sergeant Flattery, you know, nice guy, and he would take you aside and say 'OK, you know, what's your problem?' and it was a quite deliberate thing. They would ask you 'Do you have any medical problems? Because we can use that to get you the kind of posting that will suit you'. So that was his job and he was supposed to be this kind of gentle uncle to deal with these young people who weren't kind of made out to be cannon fodder (Interview with the author 12/9/2003).

Staff-Sergeant Flattery dealt with the objectors David Bruce, Charles Bester, Saul Batzofin (although he had "given up already", so kept to formalities) and Douglas Torr. Conscription was an important means for creating white South African unity and sense of community. For this reason it was important all men be seen to be serving in the army and this made the state flexible in its desire to ensure all men did indeed become conscripts.

Compulsory military service defined the boundaries between insiders and outsiders in white South African society and the state sought to make these boundaries increasingly rigid and well-defined as the 1980s progressed. Indeed, after 1984, new citizenship laws compelled white male immigrants (comprising an average of 10% of the population) to serve or face losing the right to reside in South Africa (Mettan and Goodison, 1988: 10). This essentially proposed to literally expel from the public realm and from the state itself men who refused to perform military service. It also made a clear statement to potential white immigrants about the responsibilities they would be expected to perform if they wished to be resident in South Africa [see Figure 6]. Further analysis of the 1984 Citizenship Act also reveals the political and gendered effects military service had on individuals and the communities they came

from: conscription was a literal and powerful sign that one was a committed citizen of South Africa and a real man. The government had originally proposed a new Citizenship Act in 1978. This Act would offer all white male immigrants between the ages of 15 and 25 citizenship rights after two years of residence, in return for military service. The response to the legislation from government supporting press is revealing. *The Citizen*, an English language Nationalist newspaper declared, "Young settlers who have permanent residence here must accept the responsibilities of living and working in South Africa. These responsibilities include military service". Immigrants who refuse,

are fair weather residents, not committed citizens, and do not deserve to be treated in any way other than as temporary residents...as South African citizens they will want to do military service...if South Africa means so little to them that they do not wish to be citizens of this country, if they are so chicken hearted that they do not wish to defend their country of adoption, then they may as well go. South Africa has no place for draft-dodgers and the likes of them (*The Citizen* 3/3/1978).

Conscription, in this extract, is clearly defined as the only acceptable performance of South African citizenship and *The Citizen* also alluded to its gendered effects, accusing those did not "wish to defend their country" as "chicken hearted". The Afrikaans newspaper *Rapport* configured military service as a 'test' of citizenship and masculinity. Its editorial explained that for the male immigrant: "a difficult test is being put to him, but after this we will know where we stand with each other. Once a man has worn the uniform of a South African soldier, we shall be able to depend on him. The others – we can do without" (*Rapport* 26/2/1978). This test of citizenship was 'passed' by military service and allowed men to demonstrate that they were trustworthy and dedicated citizens. Both *The Citizen* and *Rapport* accurately reflected state discourse that military service was a basic and fundamental duty of South African citizenship and that those who refused to perform it should be not only censured but expelled from the public realm.

The 1978 proposals had not been legislated until 1984 because of considerable resistance from the English-speaking business community and sections of the English-speaking press, who were concerned about the potential negative impact on levels of white immigration to the Republic. When the legislation was finally enacted there was also dissent, but many in the English-speaking community accepted the legislation and the business community co-operated willingly with the new regulations (Metten

and Goodison, 1988: 24-28).¹¹ It was outlined in Chapter Two that military service was an important aspect of the National Party's *verligte* political project in the 1980s and, as such, it served as an institution to reformulate white identity, incorporating English-speakers and moderating intra-white political cleavages. The fact that conscription was a performative act that afforded the benefits of masculinity and citizenship is one reason the 1984 legislation was more palatable for English-speakers than in 1978. Military service had an important effect on how the English-speaking community were politically perceived in the Republic and increased militarisation also benefited English-speaking capital because of increased spending on research, weaponry and associated engineering projects (Frankel, 1984). *Paratus* magazine regularly highlighted the contribution of Jewish, Portuguese and Greek servicemen and stressed the SADF's British imperial heritage (*Paratus* September 1980; Kleyn, August 1988; Janssen June 1988; Wiener, September 1988 [see Figure 7]). This was a considerable departure from previous themes in Nationalist discourse. Pre-Second World War Afrikaner Nationalist propaganda was infused with hostility towards English-speakers and in particular, represented English-speaking capital in anti-Semitic terms, depicting English-speaking financiers and industrialists as a greedy and corrupt cartoon character called "Hoggenheimer" (referring to the Oppenheimer dynasty who controlled De Beers). Suspicion about English-speakers' loyalty and patriotism was widespread in white South African culture. English-speakers were nicknamed *soutpiel* (salt penis), because of their divided loyalty to the country (Branford and Thompson, 1994: 928). A national conference that discussed English-speaking identity in the 1970s lamented the group's political apathy and disempowerment (De Villiers, 1976). The press were equally pointed in their references to the divided loyalties and suspect patriotism of English-speakers: *The Star* sardonically concluded that the Grahamstown conference on English-speakers represented English-speaking white South Africans as "a fat, lazy, unpatriotic, uncompanionable lot. Their claims to be liberal and Christian are phoney. They are not pulling their weight in the mainstream of South African politics and government" (cited in *Comment & Opinion*: 26/7/1974). Performing military service supposedly transformed not only the individual's identity but that of specific groups in society: English-speakers could be masculinised by their participation in the SADF and discard their previously marginalised status.

Constructions of white hegemonic masculinity and citizenship were not created and maintained with the active participation of white men alone. The National Party's *verligte* political programme and the rationale of the Total Strategy meant that

¹¹ However, Metten and Goodison estimated that in the immediate aftermath of the 1984 legislation, there was a 20% increase in emigration of foreign white nationals and a 25% decrease in migration to South Africa (1988: 61).

key sections of the black population also had a role to play in legitimising conscription as a white social practice. Only white males were subject to conscription in South Africa, but by the mid 1980s 12% of the Permanent Force were black, 11% Coloured and 1% Indian (*SA Digest*, 25/4/1986: 361). The SADF began to admit black troops from the mid-1970s. The direct comparison between white and black soldiers reveals how black troops buttressed conceptions of white hegemonic masculinity and ensured that black soldiers would be subordinated. Black men in the SADF were represented to the white population as proof that all decent South Africans were united in fighting communist terrorism. As such, black participation was an inherent part of the state's message to white conscripts and their families that this was a just war worth fighting. "As a people...we have taken up arms together against our enemies", pronounced General Malan, "Our Brown and Black fellow citizens did not hesitate to come forward....Black, Brown and White soldiers are fighting side by side in the Operational Area against our common enemy" (*SA Digest*, 27/1/1978: 7). After an influx of ex-Rhodesian officers into the SADF the desire to recruit black men increased. In the Rhodesian bush war black troops had helped provide the justification for the war. It had long been a Rhodesian contention that 'their Blacks' were the 'happiest in Africa' and very willing to defend their country against a revolutionary minority (Frederickse, 1982: 16-18). In 1979, 121 Battalion was formed and recruited Zulus from the province of Natal. Zulu culture was deemed to have military traditions that were "equal to the best" and the Inkatha Freedom Party, which was the official spokes-piece for the Zulu population was pro-Capitalist, authoritarian and anti-ANC (*Paratus*, December 1986; Booysen, 1983; Hassim, 1993). However, although races may have fought side by side on the 'Border', black troops did disproportionately more fighting than their white counterparts: black men made up 20% of the forces in the Operational Area (*SA Digest*, 27/1/1978). The troops of 121 Battalion were "cheerful, gutsy and irrepressibly eager" according to *Paratus* and this was how black soldiers were universally portrayed by the government (Ash, December 1986: 11). This representation excluded them from the hegemonic masculinity and their complicity was subservient in relation to white men. A striking example of the contrast made between white and black men was in the depiction of 1982 Call-Up day, where white men were "confused and apprehensive"; on the opposite page was a story explaining, "Our Black soldiers are keen to go to the Border" (*Paratus*, March 1982: 31). The representation of black men was not designed to present them as possessing greater courage or loyalty than whites: it was that they were more malleable and naïve. White men were afforded the sophistication of apprehension and nerves, the experience of military service would transform this apprehension into maturity and resolve; black men would experience no such rite of

passage in the SADF. The purpose and representation of black troops was to make white hegemonic masculinity more honourable in intent: white men were helping to defend all South Africans regardless of race, to preserve the SADF's capacity to mould and develop masculinity for white males only and to reinforce the emotional and intellectual superiority of white men.

White women played a far more active role in the mediation of white masculinities than black men and the state sought to construct and police white constructs of femininity in order to aid militarisation. As Bunster, writing about Pinochet's Chile (a state also engaged in 'low intensity conflict' against 'communism'), argued it was "women who must hold back chaos by being guardians of moral values" and women were thus encouraged to enter the civil political space as militarised mothers whether they had family members directly involved in the military or not (1988: 487). A 1978 National Party pamphlet declared that white women "are indispensable 'soldiers' within our country's borders and their spiritual power is South Africa's secret weapon" (cited in Gaitskell and Unterhalter, 1989: 60). "In these times of crisis", warned SABC personality Verna Vels, "the woman must be ready to do her bit on the home front. For the women, this is the land in which she has her home, the land in which she brought up her children and in which she has her family. It is her place and she won't allow it to be taken from her." (*Paratus*, September 1980: 46). Actress, Monica Breed stated in the same article, "You can't separate the man from the woman as far as safety is concerned The one cannot be safe without the other...She mustn't think she's in "paradise" just because her husband or her relatives are fighting in the Operational Area, keeping her safe" (*Paratus*, September 1980: 47). White women were admitted to the Permanent Force (as non-combatants). PW Botha described the significance of women in the SADF as an "act of faith in the women of South Africa and a manifestation of faith that the civilian population was preparing for, in an organized way, a 'national wall' against military threats as well as emergencies" (cited in Unterhalter, 1987: 102). Women were a symbol of the militarisation of the civilian population and representations of the 'faith' the government had in white South Africans to rally and defend apartheid. Unterhalter believes that the inclusion of white women in the SADF had more racial than gender specific importance: "the ideological need to unify the white race around the military policy of the regime in support of minority rule has been of paramount importance in recruiting white women" (1987: 100). Essentially, white women in society were addressed as "mothers, sweethearts, wives and friends" of conscripts and the state articulated a militarised concept of femininity that white women were encouraged to perform and censured if they transgressed it [quotation taken from an advertisement for an armed forces supplement of *The Citizen* newspaper] (*To The*

Point, 28/7/1978). The political importance of white women supporting troops and affirming their masculinity and citizenship meant that it was not sufficient to automatically assume the support of mothers and wives who had sons and husbands in the military. Popular Afrikaans songs such as '*Troepie Doepie*', '*Daar's n man op die grens*' [There's a Man on the Border] and '*Soldier Seun*' [Soldier Son] helped to further celebrate the role of sons and husbands in the army and encouraged women to support and admire them (Drewett 2003; 2002). *Paratus* also ran a women's 'pen pal' page called 'Write to a soldier and make him happy'. The page featured a 'pen pal' of the month who was invariably a teenaged woman full of praise for SADF conscripts.

Militarising the concept of motherhood is essential if hegemonic masculinity is to be successfully militarised. Motherhood became a contested political battleground in many societies during the Cold War (Enloe, 1993: 11) and the SADF was well aware that women and tropes of feminine identity could be harnessed by the state or by their opponents. Motherhood had long been conceptually important to Nationalist ideology. McClintock, in her investigation of Nationalist discourse and gender, concludes that white women "were complicit in deploying the power of motherhood in the exercise and legitimation of white domination" (McClintock, 1993: 72). Indeed, the *Voortrekker* Monument in Pretoria (a seminal cultural icon in Afrikaner Nationalist history that documents the history of the Great Trek) depicts Afrikaner women urging their men to successfully repel an attack by an African tribal group. In the 1980s, the Total Strategy renewed National Party and SADF efforts to militarise motherhood in support of conscription. As Mrs Viljoen, wife of General Viljoen, explained, "the easiest way to break a nation is to break bonds. That is why a mother is so important" (cited in Cock, 1993: 56). SADF personnel set about establishing conscript mothers and wives groups and frequently encouraged visits to SADF bases, along with the regular family events of 'Call-Up' and 'Pass-Out' days: "Military Intelligence decided that it was safe to say that any group of people, whether it was a ladies' sewing circle, a book club...could be utilised to serve the enemy's ends...or one's own. It all depended on who got to them first" (Stiff, 2001: 283). The mothers and wives groups were often overt in their intention to bind motherhood to militarisation: a conscripts' mothers visit to Cape Town was addressed by the wife of the Commandant who said "I know that your sons have been brought up with loyalty and integrity. Therefore, I ask you to support them in their tasks here at the brigade" (Fried, October 1987: 26). Another such visit ended with a mother of a former conscript saying, "Our sons are also our protectors and defenders, and when they come back to us, we must realise they are no longer boys. We mustn't pick up where we left off two years ago...they are now adults" (Ingram, June 1987: 39). In this way,

wives and mothers of conscripts and tropes of white femininity were defined by the state to buttress white hegemonic masculinity; women were expected to affirm and support 'their men' in performing the rite of passage that was military service.

Tropes of complicit "emphasised" (Connell, 1987: 187) white femininity were militarised even if white women were not directly involved as mothers or wives of conscripts. Enloe recognises that militarisation can rely on "surrogate militarized motherhood": women, who are far removed from the theatre of conflict, but contribute to morale and gain prestige by their support and encouragement of soldiers from the confines of femininity (1989: 137). The South African example of 'surrogate militarised motherhood' was undoubtedly the Southern Cross Fund (SCF). The Fund was a women's group that boasted over fifteen thousand members and had over two hundred and fifty branches. The women of the SCF fulfilled the archetype of women's citizenship in South Africa and their activities did much to encourage other women to behave as 'responsible mothers' with regard to their friends' and relations' military duties. The Fund's motto was "They Are Our Security", and the women's 'Dial and Ride' scheme, which gave soldiers free car rides, used the slogan, "They keep us safe in our homes. Let's give them a safe ride to theirs". The slogans underlined the women's clear identification with their position as the 'protected' and the necessity of a large-scale military protector (Cock, 1983: 3). Foreign Minister, Pik Botha, described the women of the Fund as "memorable, inspiring and dignified" (cited in Cock 1989: 3). The Chairwoman of the SCF, Mrs Elizabeth Albrecht, was awarded the Star of South Africa, was an honorary Colonel in the police, was awarded a prestigious fellowship from the Rotary International Foundation and received an honour from Toastmasters International (the latter two accolades a reflection of the global Western discourses of surrogate militarised motherhood) (*Paratus*, April 1989: 13). Albrecht described the Fund as "the channel between the people and the forces, who receive in this way not only recreational equipment, but also the assurance of the gratitude and moral support of the people at home... As a nation we must all stand together in this conflict" (Nelson, *SA Digest* March 1979: 6). Albrecht was "a true woman," wrote the Chairman of the Defence Force Fund Rear Admiral RA Edwards, and,

has over the past ten years worked herself up to a level of absolute stability and has shown unshakeable solidarity. She maintains her principles according to strict discipline and demands respect from all who get into contact with her. In the best tradition of femininity the Southern Cross Fund bears her prestigious past with dignified pride

and a modesty characteristic of the remarkable woman she is (*Paratus*, August 1978: 40).

Albrecht had overcome the feminine passivity, weakness and irrationality that could endanger republican norms by 'working herself up' to a level of 'stability', she also demonstrated militarised values of 'strict discipline' and demanded 'respect': she was thus 'dignified' yet modest and a 'remarkable', 'true woman'. Albrecht and the women of the SCF symbolised white femininity that was complicit in and essential to the creation and reproduction of militarised hegemonic masculinity.

The creation of hegemonic masculinity and citizenship in South Africa was dependent upon the performance of compulsory military service in the South African Defence Force. Conscripts were the 'friends' and insiders of South Africa. Multiple discourses and practices were used to militarise masculinity and citizenship in South Africa. The performances ranged from state level discourses urging sacrifice and duty, to individual practises such as sport and cadet duty at school. A global discourse that celebrated the male soldier as the ultimate citizen and man helped buttress these regional and local practices. Militarising white masculinity and citizenship also relied on black men and white women, the latter serving an absolutely essential role in affirming and supporting men in their military tasks. Women's feminine identities as wives and mothers also became militarised in the process and in state discourse to be a good mother became synonymous with being a militarised mother. The complex inter-relationship between discourses and practices of masculinity and citizenship explains why the majority of white South Africans were complicit with militarisation, but it also alludes to the state's vulnerability to dissent. Just as there were multiple sites to construct and affirm masculinity and citizenship, there were multiple sites whereby it could be contested and the interplay between local, regional and global could be disrupted by challenges from any of the three spheres. The following Chapter will explore these challenges and assess their pervasiveness and effectiveness.

Chapter Four

'Going the Right Way': Contesting Conscription

All these conscripts were walking into Sturrock Park [the SADF Call-Up Centre] and I was walking out. I was walking against this long stream of people and someone said to me, 'You're going the wrong way' and I said, 'No. I'm going the right way!'

Conscientious Objector Charles Bester (Interview with the author, 13/9/2003).

We all go through a process, to some extent, of breaking away from our backgrounds and our parents and from our very sheltered upbringing, and we felt it was incredibly important that people make that break

ECC activist, Janet Cherry (cited in Frederickse, 1990: 214).

Resisting conscription, whether as a conscientious objector or as a peace activist in the ECC, was an alternative performance of citizenship and gender identity. Objectors were 'strangers' in the public realm whose contestation of conscription also contested the central performance of hegemonic of citizenship and masculinity. Although the refusal to perform conscription united objectors and ECC activists, this chapter will argue that despite this commonality of goals, there were multiple discourses of war resistance and that these discourses involved a complex inter-relationship of subjectivities that could transgress and destabilise militarised norms of identity, or conversely, borrow from and reinforce them. The tension between these multiple narratives of citizenship and masculinity could become acute, precisely because of the hostile public realm in which white objectors and their supporters had to perform their political identity. The chapter will analyse the different strategies and performances objectors and activists in the ECC used to contest hegemonic masculinity and citizenship in South Africa. In the anti-conscription discourse the interplay between personal attributes, values and experiences were deeply politicised and an integral part of objectors' performances in the public realm. As Nagel notes, in political discourses of militarisation and anti-militarisation, notions of "honour, patriotism, cowardice, bravery and duty are hard to distinguish as either nationalistic or masculinist" (1998: 251-252). The personalities, statements and lifestyles of objectors and their supporters were therefore an integral part of their political contestation with the state. The chapter will argue that contesting hegemonic

masculinity and citizenship was a multifaceted and sometimes contradictory phenomenon. Objection and war resistance was an individual and iconoclastic performance in the public realm when made by individual white men who faced criminal prosecution for refusing the draft, and a collective discourse that embraced multiple performances by the men and women in the ECC. The ECC itself was an organisation that sought to embody alternative and transgressive values to that of the state. Finally, objection and peace activism was a contingent performance: contingent on the political imperatives and strategies of the ECC.

‘Breaking away’ from hegemonic norms in white society, as Janet Cherry remarks in the opening quote, was an essential first step for objectors and peace activists. This breach could occur at school, in the family, at university, church or whilst in the military itself. The metaphor of a breach was evident in the self-narratives of all the objectors I interviewed and it framed their experience and performance of objection. Some of the ECC’s campaigns, to be discussed below, also emphasised the need for a breach from hegemonic white social norms. Connell contends that separating from hegemonic culture is essential if norms of hegemonic masculinity are to be contested and destabilised. Indeed, Connell believes men must undergo a “renunciation” of hegemonic masculine culture they are to develop new selves and effectively challenge hegemony (1995: 130). The fact that objection was a performance in the public realm and aimed to have effects on others in society meant that the ‘breach’ from white society was a porous one. The ECC, as an organisation, also symbolised and was premised on this breach from hegemonic white culture. The ECC, based mainly on university campuses, initially adopted participatory democracy in its internal structures, held sustained feminist debates and conducted many of its campaigns in an innovative and sub-cultural style. Hirsh considers it important that such social movements create detached “havens” from wider society and can enable the questioning of hegemonic structures and help members negotiate challenging interactions in the public sphere (Hirsch, 1999: 48). However, the ECC, like objectors, were not entirely detached from wider white society and in order to be politically effective had to participate in the public realm. The rationale of objection, resisting hegemonic social norms and performances yet also resisting exclusion and ‘exile’ from society, engendered the temptation to ‘assimilate’ with dominant social norms and to be ‘respectable’.

The act of objection was primarily an individual performance made by white men and as such, the public statements, actions and private rationale of white male objectors constituted the challenge posed to hegemonic tropes of masculinity and

citizenship. Individual objectors performed a political identity that was iconic, moral and powerful. Indeed, individual objection continued after the ECC was banned in 1988 and constituted the primary focus of anti-conscription campaigning. Objectors' contestation with the state was frequently confrontational and clearly sought to oppose the fundamental principles of the apartheid state, but objectors could also incorporate notions of service, sacrifice, patriotism and commitment to South Africa. Elshtain (1995: 202) notes that objection can often be a performance that is mimetic to soldiering and in South Africa individual objectors demonstrated this. David Bruce told the court during his trial (also published in full page press advertisements),

I am prepared to fight in defence of the people of South Africa. Going to jail is like reporting for service. By taking this stand I am trying to say I am prepared to shoulder the responsibility that falls on young men who sacrifice their lives, I have no contempt for the job that soldiers do. By being in the army it can mean death, but I am not trying to avoid this - I accept that we must defend our people but I cannot do this under this present system of government (*Weekly Mail* 10/6/1988).

Bruce invoked the militarised symbolism of 'manly' self-sacrifice for the greater good and yet sought to subvert and reconfigure the concept of sacrifice in anti-apartheid and anti-conscription terms. Objectors whose performance incorporated Judeo-Christian moral motives against military service, also invoked imagery of sacrifice and bravery. By incorporating themes of sacrifice, duty, honour and bravery, objectors sought to wrest the definition of their ideological content and the means by which these values would be performed and acknowledged from the state.

In the public realm, the iconography of the performance of individual objection, based on deeply held moral and religious beliefs, resembled that of martyrdom: of taking a stand for moral principle and knowingly accepting the punitive consequences, which itself reinforced the meaning of the political act. Martyrdom, as a sacrifice for the common good, invoked the sacrifice soldiers supposedly made for the sake of the nation. Ide writes of the medieval iconography of martyrdom, explaining that for martyrs, death at the hands of the state was not feared but even celebrated and viewed as, "a special and unique strength, a confession of loyalty that had lapsed among the masses" (1985: 1-2). Although objection to military service was not a capital offence, the same strength, purpose and determination, as well as a discourse expressing themes of commitment to a wider moral purpose, infused some objectors' performances. General Malan also identified this strand in objectors' performance, characterising objectors as engaged in "a sick attempt to try and create a martyr image" (*The Citizen*, 5/8/1988). Ivan Toms remarked upon the

individual resonance of ‘martyrdom’, serving as a symbol of morality that had ‘lapsed among the masses’ and symbolising a challenge to the state and the wider citizenry at the time of his objection:

Some people see me as a traitor, but some white men consider my stand a real challenge. I have often been told by young white men that they support what I have been doing and respect me, but that they could not do it themselves. At the same time they are thankful that I am doing it, almost on their behalf (*South* 10/3/1988).

Charles Bester recognised this, but felt uncomfortable with the concept and with the terminology. Bester accepted “fully that I wanted to take them [the SADF] on, in some ways one doesn’t like to admit it, because it smacks a bit of a martyr...There was a point I wanted to make. I was furious at the system” (Interview with author, 13/9/2003). David Bruce characterised the performance of his objection as having to “assume a certain type of persona which was that kind of martyr or whatever it was. I don’t like the term martyr” (Interview with author, 12/9/2002). Although objectors, who cited religious and moral motives, may have felt uncomfortable with the term ‘martyr’ and with the absolutist, egotistical symbolism associated with it, their acts and the religious, moral fervour that underlay those acts can be defined as a martyr-like performance. As such, it was brave and courageous and was capitalised on very effectively by the ECC. Even though the state characterised the ECC as embodying a mixture of naivety and malevolence, individual objectors citing religious and moral bases for their objection were culturally powerful and divisive symbols and extremely difficult for the state to destabilise.

The binding of religious conviction with political opposition to apartheid created a masculine subjectivity that was uncompromising, moral and confrontational with the state. Binding religious and political motives into the performance of objection (and indeed of any politically subversive act) has been a consistent theme of political radicalism in Western societies (Kelman and Hamilton, 1989: 53). Indeed, the term ‘conscientious objection’ itself infers a political act based on individual moral considerations. Objection in these terms can be based on a profound opposition to the social and political status quo:

The claim of conscience would appear to be a weak weapon, yet it is probably the most effective weapon short of revolt. It offers the justification for disobedience, not merely an excuse. It renders disobedience acceptable, even laudable in the eyes of *at least some countervailing authority*. Without the actual or implied presence of such an authority we assume that obedience is almost always the

simplest and most prudent course of action (Kelman and Hamilton, 1989: 75-76).

Objectors who cited religious beliefs as a part of their public stance also sought to define themselves against others (and the state) who attempted to make objection from a religious perspective a private and de-politicised performance. For example, the Reverend Douglas Torr said, "I wasn't prepared to make the distinction between being a religious objector and being a political objector" (Interview with author, 19/3/2003). Attempts by the state to isolate religious objection from other political motives was resisted by political objectors. Charles Bester, whose Christian faith was of profound importance to his political stance, recalled that his attitude towards the Board for Religious Objection was that, "right from the start I felt that there was no way I would allow that board to try and wipe away my political unhappiness with conscription and apartheid and try and muddy it over as simply an issue of religious universal pacifism". Bester viewed attending the Board as a "cop out" (Interview with author, 13/9/2003). Ivan Toms also realised that he could have applied to the Board but that the question was "the value of challenging the issue much more broadly as a political issue which became much more important", although he did understand why many objectors felt that they had no choice but to attend the Board, particularly those with families (Interview with author, 27/1/2003). The state's attempts to neutralise objectors in this instance only served to mould these men's objection in more stark and challenging terms, as they rejected the compromise and potential weakening of their message by with the Board for Religious Objection.

There was an undoubted divide within and between Christian denominations about the response to conscription and objectors entered this debate in terms that aimed to present them as empowered, moral and just and their detractors as compromised. Ivan Toms recognised the divide between the various denominations and saw that his objection could be as threatening to other Christians as it was to the state:

Many Christians see their religion as an escape, an insurance policy, finding it difficult to face the reality of extreme conflict. You can't just solve issues by saying "Jesus Loves You", there's got to be more to it than that. Apartheid is a heresy and many Christians find that difficult to cope with. They thus find my stand a threat to them, as they realise that what I am saying has implications for them as Christians (*ECC Perspective* September 1987).

The official gulf between the state and the hierarchy of the Anglican, Catholic, Methodist churches and the state was total, the SACC even refused to support or mark the 1981 Republic Day celebrations (CIIR and Pax Christi, 1983: 11), but at an individual level debates and tensions were often present. Douglas Torr studied Divinity at Rhodes University before studying at an Anglican Seminary in Grahamstown. Priests and Rabbis were obliged to be conscripted as SADF Chaplains: Torr recalls that this prospect divided his fellow students:

They came from very spiritualised backgrounds and were confronting politics and religion coming together, so I think it came as something as a shock to them and one of the things students would do was to really engage with each other on why were you supporting or not supporting the army and the reasons for you being there. So they would have been conscientised... There was a tension because many of the white guys going to do the Chaplaincy felt, '*Shame*, it's the poor *boetie* on the Border and maybe they should go and give spiritual benefits and maybe it would be good to go and play soccer with them. And there were those of us, who were either black or white like me, who said 'absolutely no'... not very many of us who were young, white and training for the ministry were going to refuse. A lot of people took the Chaplaincy and were Chaplains without guns (Interview with author, 19/3/2003).

The Augustine concept of 'just' and 'unjust' warfare was not only a powerful theme in objector and ECC discourse (CIIR and Pax Christi, 1983). The post-1974 stance of the churches profoundly influenced the generation of objectors who surfaced in the 1980s: their performances were infused with a zeal and a confidence that may not have been present had the churches not taken the stand that they had. Individual objectors' willingness to explain their beliefs on platforms across the country also reflected the Christian evangelising base from which many of them came. Ivan Toms explained that many people accused him of being a politician and not a true Christian, but he replied, "If your faith is not affecting your politics, then it is not a faith at all" (*ECC Perspective* September 1987). Philip Wilkinson said, "The SADF defends apartheid, which in terms of my Christian understanding is a heresy. For me to participate in the SADF would therefore be a betrayal of all that I know to be good and just" (ECC Collection, File M1.7). Individual objectors' stands, influenced by Christianity, were defiant, uncompromising and iconic.

The Judeo-Christian heritage of objection influenced the climax of one of the ECC's most successful campaigns. The culmination of the ECC's 1985 'Troops out

the Township' Campaign was a three-week fast undertaken by Ivan Toms, Richard Steele and Harold Winkler at St Georges Cathedral in Cape Town. The campaign sought to address and challenge conscripts and those eligible for conscription directly. The act of 'fasting' was directly borrowed from Christian heritage and effectively highlighted the concept of objectors 'breaking' from white social norms and reconfiguring their own personal values in non-militarist terms. Richard Steele explained at the outset of the fast, his act was,

A radical stopping, stepping out and becoming aware of the way we live our lives. We are socialised to follow certain habits. If you're able to step out of that habit, even for 24 hours, it gives you a chance to look at the other habit you are following... We are focussing on the SADF, because they are focussing on us, on our lives. It is the SADF that conscripts, and we are both males and conscripts (Ludman, *Weekly Mail* 27/9/1985)

The ECC's role of consciousness-raising and its ability to question the norms and assumptions that formed the fabric of white everyday life is apparent in Steele's statement. As Kelman and Hamilton note,

To avail themselves of the right to challenge authority's demands...citizens have to break out of the pattern of behaviour into which they have been channelled and violate the assumptions on which their relationship to the authorities has been proceeding – in short, they have to redefine the situation (Kelman and Hamilton, 1989: 138).

Fasting and the call to religious and moral norms held out the opportunity to interrogate and deconstruct hegemonic accepted ways of being and required the performance of a specific masculinity that aimed to be more courageous and disciplined than that of the much vaunted conscript.

As an act, fasting was a powerful political weapon for the ECC. The success of the campaign was demonstrated by the turnout of four thousand people at the public meeting held at the end of the fast, which was addressed by Ivan Toms. Toms explained as he began fasting,

For the three weeks that I fast, my prayer is that many will recognise with the ECC the injustice of the use of troops in the townships, and will support the ECC's call that troops be withdrawn from the townships now, and that we work for a just peace in our land (ECC Collection, File M1.7)

Toms received over nine hundred well wishers at the Cathedral during the three weeks he fasted and was internationally acclaimed. Fasting as a political weapon was highly effective, it emphasised the moral/religious foundations of the ECC's message:

as Harold Winkler said, “a fast as a way to re-integrate the spiritual and the political” (Ludman *Weekly Mail* 27/9/1985). It focussed attention on individual objectors and further accentuated the theme of sacrifice, challenge and martyrdom, inverting the trope of military service as fulfilling this. Phillips notes, “fasting is often the weapon of prisoners, who have lost all other power. Through fasting the ECC was also encouraging white individuals to reclaim power and choice”, and that fasting was, “suited to a white community with little activist history” (2002: 63-64). Fasting as a means for empowerment drew from the ECC’s wider contention that conscripts were actually disempowered by performing military service, a contradiction of the state’s claim that conscription empowered men by masculinising them. Toms recalls that the decision to use fasting as a campaigning tool was taken by the political strategists of the ECC and that Toms was urged, “you’re the obvious guy to fast because you’ve got such a high profile as a Doctor in Crossroads and nobody can fault you and yet it’s much more powerful fasting for three weeks and I said, ‘I’ll do it’” (Interview with author, 27/1/2003). Fasting was a clever political strategy because whereas meetings and other campaigns could be banned or activists detained, fasting was very difficult for the state to prohibit or control. Security Police entering the Cathedral and arresting the objectors would probably have provoked widespread condemnation. The objectors were able to portray conscription as immoral and the state as powerless in the face of the objectors, a strident encouragement for others to consider resistance.

A key component of all objectors’ self-narratives and public performances was that it was *they* who were empowered by their act of objection and that conscripts were in fact dis-empowered and trapped by military service. The ‘empowerment’ narrative of objection was reflexively developed according to the individual objector’s life history and formed a critical part of his public narrative of objection. This self-reflexive knowledge was developed by encountering and rejecting hegemonic norms in school, the army itself or from a deeper cultural awareness, drawn from Christianity, Judaism or from the objectors’ own masculine or sexual identity. This self-narrative challenged the state’s fundamental contention that military service was the only performance that empowered men as individuals and as a group. Seidler considers self-reflexivity to be essential if men are to change their subjectivity (1989: 2). Indeed this self-reflexivity engenders an autonomy that rejects an unreflexive wider society (Cox, 1999: 49-52). Jabri believes the transformative self-narrative of peace activists to be the “constitutive element of an emancipatory discourse on peace” which creates a contrasting and challenging performance of individuality and agency to that of the state’s ideal type (1997: 159). The criminal trial of an objector was the moment where the objector’s self-narrative, attitude towards conscription, life

experiences and family history most notably entered the public realm and became a part of the performance of objection. The following analysis demonstrates that self-reflexivity and illustrates how the personal narratives of individual objectors were critical to the contention that it was objectors who were empowered and autonomous and conscripts who were disempowered and constrained.

Many objectors considered their self-reflexivity and attitude towards conscription as a privilege that was denied other white South African men. Indeed, David Bruce (whose Judaism and family experiences in Nazi Germany were decisive to his decision to object) considered that he was, “fortunate that I had that instinct. It was a kind of gift, a kind of blessing almost, that it enabled me to see” (Interview with author, 12/9/2002). This was a striking observation to make given that the state constructed military service, not objection, as a ‘privilege’ for young men. Experiencing school-based masculinities were decisive for some objectors. Brett Myrdal recalled that his time at the prestigious Grey High School in Port Elizabeth was extremely influential in engendering a self-awareness and consciousness that enabled him to object. The school was heavily steeped in military traditions and as Myrdal reflected “If I hadn’t have come from that background I wouldn’t have ended up doing what I was doing, but that goes for all of us” (Interview with author. 28/1/2003). Charles Bester, who attended Grey College in Bloemfontein, also rejected the hegemonic culture of his school and considered it decisive in his moulding as an objector:

I didn’t have a very happy time at Grey College, I left a year later and as I was leaving the deputy headmaster heard I was leaving and in fact I left mid-week, that’s how I felt about the whole thing. I did try to explain why I was leaving this school...I said, ‘Well I hate having to have hair inspections’, which seemed quite trivial but it was trying to say something about the things that lay behind them and he said, ‘Well, what will you do when you go into the army?’, because obviously in the army you were going to have your hair cut...that connection was made and that was the first doubts I had and from there it was a process (Interview with author, 13/9/2003).

This ‘process’ of coming to self-awareness and taking the final decision to object was influenced by the resistance to hegemonic norms in school, norms that were replicated in wider society. Bester characterised it as a “resistance” to the hegemonic, militarised norms of an authoritarian and Nationalist school. Just as militarism could become engendered by personal/local practices at school, so could it be resisted.

Specific practices of militarised hegemonic masculinity were critical moments when objectors experienced dissonance and unease, an unease that would develop into outright rejection. In particular, school cadets was cited as a moment where future objectors experienced a sense of 'not fitting in' and not enjoying or being as adept at the practices of hegemony. Charles Bester recalled that "I wasn't very good at it [cadets] and I didn't enjoy it. I didn't understand Afrikaans well...We landed in this sort of 'Platoon for Buffoons'...on 'Cadet Day'...I'd always forget to even bring my beret" (Interview with author, 13/9/2003). The ritual of Cadets would be less likely to have the state's desired ideological impact on a person who neither enjoyed it nor was good at it. From this breach, a political consciousness developed. Brett Myrdal encountered this sense of cultural alienation from which a political defiance grew. Myrdal "opted out from formal school activities" and went rock climbing. He also played hockey instead of the more esteemed rugby and believed that "in that sense I was a rebel, I was different" (Interview with author, 28/1/2003). Myrdal had won a scholarship to attend Grey's and sites his subordinate class position to the rest of the school as a decisive influence: "coming from a lower middle class, in white terms, background. So I was very different from the rest of the school...I wasn't part of the run of the mill group in our class." (Interview with author, 28/1/2003). Even in schools, as institutions designed to engender complicity with hegemonic constructions of citizenship and masculinity, there were spaces of contestation, such as certain teachers or classes who transgressed hegemonic norms. A section of the 1957 Defence Act allowed schoolboys to opt out of cadet duty; Douglas Torr invoked this right and worked in the library during cadet training. Torr, along with a number of the other objectors I interviewed, cited certain teachers as influential in encouraging questioning military service: Douglas Torr, David Bruce and Peter Hathorn found English classes to be fora for stimulating debate about the military and society, particularly when studying poetry from the First World War or plays such as Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. The ideological apparatus of the state, such as the education system, was consciously designed to engender militarised personal and political norms and ritual, such as cadet duty was designed to achieve this. However, the ritual of cadets and the militarised ethos of schools served to alienate some white boys and actually provoked an inner dialogue that eventually resulted in the ultimate breach symbolised by objection to conscription.

The actual experience, for some men, of serving in the SADF as conscripts in the townships and on 'the Border', exposed and destabilised the ideology of

militarised hegemonic masculinity and citizenship. For the white male objectors who had served initial periods in the army this was certainly the case. Seegers considers compulsory conscription as the “worst thing” a pro-militarist could institute, because it “ruins the entire scheme” of militarisation by exposing young men to the reality of war and the military, a reality that would not correspond with the positive cultural myths in society (TRC, 23/7/1997). The ECC claimed that “Most people with call-ups aren’t into going. Two years, in some camp up north, getting bored out our skulls, is not our idea of fun” (Undated ECC Leaflet [ECC Collection, File B1.4.526]). While the claim that ‘most’ conscripts were not enthusiastic about duty was difficult to assess, the assertion that service on ‘the Border’ was ‘boring’ was an insightful strategy for the ECC, because it reflected emerging anecdotal evidence of conscripts finding ‘Border’ duty boring and not the *grensvegter* arena of macho excitement the SADF claimed it would be. Saul Batzofin began the process of turning from an “apolitical” white South African to a politically radical conscientious objector because of his time in the SADF. Batzofin recalled that as a conscript he “didn’t like authority, I couldn’t understand why you had to run with a sack on your back, it just didn’t make sense. I think I was just bad, I wasn’t fast enough, I didn’t put enough effort in” (Interview with author, 5/12/2002). Batzofin’s time in Namibia, however, served as a “turning point” from being a somewhat lacklustre soldier to being a politically conscious actor. Service in Namibia proved not only to be “dull” and “boring”, for Batzofin, but also not the service to the Namibian people that the South African government portrayed:

Going on the patrols that you realised that you drive into a village and every person hated you and everyone feared you and the soldiers, the trained infantry that were with us, they would go into these villages and just kick everyone on the pretext of, ‘Where’s SWAPO?’ and you realised that whatever we were being told back at the camp, we weren’t there for these people. We were there for some reason, I didn’t know what, but it certainly wasn’t to protect these people. They were dead scared of us (Interview with author, 5/12/2002).

Ivan Toms also felt that he “wasn’t a good soldier, I couldn’t even march properly” and he became aware of and disturbed by the fear and resentment of him as an SADF officer in Namibia, even though he was an unarmed medic (Interview with author, 27/1/2003). Saul Batzofin also became extremely disturbed by the SADF’s obsession with the ‘body count’ of killed ‘terrorists’:

I think the one year I was there we got to two hundred and we had a half day holiday. So there was a strange dynamic going on, we were celebrating people’s deaths and because people are getting holidays, it

starts becoming accepted and corpses would be put on the parade ground and people would go past and look and it was a very strange kind of ethos and it created an environment where you didn't think about it...a lot of peer recognition said 'this was good'. So I was uncomfortable, but it was a very quiet discomfort (Interview with author, 5/12/2002).

Batzofin's disquiet crystallized into rebellion when he started attending ECC meetings after he had completed his initial duty. The performance of military service may have affirmed soldiers' identities in the public realm, but for some objectors, their experiences in the military provoked dissonance and unease about the role and purpose of conscription. In these circumstances, the performance of military service had the opposite effect on individual men to the state's presumed impact.

The testimony provided in objectors' trials were key fora for highlighting their political message. It was also the main arena for the public performance of objection and, as highlighted above, featured key moments where objectors could articulate their self-narratives in the public realm. Trial evidence was especially useful because, unlike articles in the press and leaflets or public meetings, the state was unable to prevent the reporting of testimonial evidence unless the judge deemed it *in camera* or irrelevant, judgements which themselves could damage the image of the SADF. David Bruce's mother gave evidence at her son's trial and described her escape from the Holocaust and her support for her son's stance. The trials of Ivan Toms, Charles Bester and Douglas Torr allowed senior religious figures such as Bishop David Russell to outline their hostility to conscription and apartheid. The fact that the media focussed on the trials and on the individual objector created public interest and a high profile for objectors. The sentencing of eighteen-year-old Charles Bester and medical doctor Ivan Toms, in particular, generated national and international headlines. The effective use of trial as a means for contesting the state was evident in the trial of objector Philip Wilkinson. The Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference noted that Wilkinson's trial was remarkable "not for the nature of the charge, or for the severity of the sentence. What was remarkable was the evidence given in mitigation of the defence" (ECC Collection, File E1.1.1). At Wilkinson's trial, former national serviceman, Steven Louw, gave evidence explaining his experiences of township duty. Louw had been in the elite Recces and Parabats, but came to realise that "the SADF was trying to provoke a lot of trouble in the townships". Louw identified the military's construct of masculinity as a source primary factor in provoking 'trouble' and the source of gross abuses of human rights. Louw recalled that his fellow servicemen "craved action and found it manly to beat up blacks...the army cultivates

a macho, tough boy image, I was wary of breaking with this” (Louw, *Eastern Province Herald* 24/5/1987). Louw listed a number of gross abuses of township residents by SADF conscripts while he was serving in the unit and emphasised the inherent racism of hegemonic masculinity bound to military service. This testimony, like that of all objector trials, was widely reported in the press and was not only shocking to white South Africans, but directly contradicted the state’s justification for the use of troops and the role national servicemen played in South Africa. Former conscripts who objected to camp duty, such as Ivan Toms and Saul Batzofin also spoke about their own experiences in the SADF and their realisation of the iniquitous and brutal role it had in upholding apartheid. Louw’s evidence and that offered in other objector trials, presented white hegemonic masculinity as cruel, undisciplined, immature, racist and violent; such testimony emphasised objectors’ masculinity as just, courageous, moral and admirable.

The narrative of self-empowerment and transformation present in objectors’ performances extended to their relationships with their families. As Janet Cherry’s observation at the outset of the chapter suggests, the breach from white hegemonic norms occurred in the family and objectors’ family members could be used to buttress their performance in the public realm or undermine it. Furthermore, the responses of the families of individual objectors to their actions vividly demonstrated not only the existence of militarised identities in the family but also the possibility for change and transformation. The decision to object threatened many parents’ sense of self and their perceived values of duty and normality. Objectors, by rejecting the accepted norm of military service as a constitutive performance of masculinity and citizenship, provoked deep unease in many parents who believed their sons were rejecting the opportunity for maturity and manhood. The political implications of their son’s objection also invited the prospect of shame and the isolation of their sons in wider white society. Objectors not only contested hegemonic tropes of identity in society, they contested them within their own families. Many families struggled to deal with the stand their sons had taken; feelings of shame and rejection were commonplace. For some families the contradictions of their sons decisions were stark: the chair of the short lived Stellenbosch University ECC branch, Ben Schoeman, was the grandson of the powerful Nationalist leader and Cabinet minister Ben Schoeman; the Mayor of Cape Town, Leon Markovitz, regularly praised the SADF and encouraged other South Africans to do the same, his son, however, was held in police detention for being a committee member of Rhodes University’s ECC (Venter, *South* 6/8/1987; *Cape Argus*, 24/6/1987). Individual objectors experienced less public, but no less profound, contestations with their immediate family about the decision that they had

taken. For most objectors who took a public stand, their performance of resistance challenged their family's sense of themselves and of their value systems.

Douglas Torr recalls that "my family weren't at all happy with me" when he announced his decision to object. Indeed, they refused to continue paying his university fees or living expenses:

My mother in principle found it very difficult, but accepted me and accepted that I would make my own decisions. My father found it very, very difficult, particularly when I'd left university and I was fairly public. My father went through a period of disowning me. It didn't last very long. He couldn't cope with my mother crying the whole time and it actually wasn't easy. When I finally came to trial my brother was actually in the army, so from that perspective it wasn't an easy time for him either. It was a divided family (Interview with author, 19/3/2003).

Saul Batzofin also faced trenchant opposition from his National Party supporting father, although much less opposition from his mother and open support for his stance from his politically conscious brother. Brett Myrdal's mother supported him and had always encouraged a disregard for apartheid, even taking the unusual step of refusing to attend school cadet days because of it. Myrdal's father "didn't understand at all", however, although he refused to publicly denounce him when pressurised to do so by the Security Police (Interview with author, 28/1/2003). Peter Hathorn came from a prominent Natal family "part of the entrenched white establishment in [Pieter]Maritzburg". Indeed, after the death of his father, Hathorn's mother married an Honorary Colonel in the Natal SADF and for his stepfather, "the last thing he wanted was to be marrying into a family with a political objector to military service. So my mother was in a difficult position. She was caught in the crossfire...She was subject to conflicting emotions, I think. On the one hand she wanted to support me and on the other hand she was reluctant to be seen to be associated with what I was doing" (Interview with author, 13/3/2003). Ivan Toms recalls:

My Mom has always been supportive, not really my father so much, my brother who, that would have been '83 when I refused, soon after that he emigrated: he emigrated to Australia. He thought I was crazy. He was very unsupportive and effectively tried to influence my parents that they shouldn't be supportive (Interview with author, 27/1/2003).

Toms suspected that his brother was hostile to his stance because it reflected poorly on his brother's decision to emigrate. David Bruce's family was supportive: Bruce's stance, deeply influenced by his understanding of the links between anti-Semitism and racism, mirrored the perception of his parents. Charles Bester's family was also

supportive. Bester believes there is a “lot of defiance” in his father and that, “that kind of stubbornness has always been a Bester trait” (Interview with author, 13/9/2003). The decision to object split families and revealed the interconnections between political duty and ideas of personal duty in the most critical ways.

The performance of objection could change familial relations positively, however. David Bruce conceded that although his family were always politically radical, his personal relations with them had been difficult. However, by objecting he became a “hero” figure to them (Interview with author, 12/9/2002). Douglas Torr, whose father had been appalled at his stance, witnessed a transformation in his relations with him throughout the period of his objection:

My father came to my trial at the end and was incredibly proud of me (Daniel: Really?). Yes! I think he had all of these mixed emotions: he couldn't understand from his political perspective why I was doing what I was doing, but he was proud of me for having the courage to follow my own convictions and it was difficult. I had to build a support group for my parents in one sense without them knowing. My mother was prepared to be on my support group; my father wasn't, but I think it was an incredible growth experience for him. Certainly, in terms of an interpersonal relationship with his son to realise that one could be very, very different and yet still have respect (Interview with author, 19/3/2003).

Torr's brother, who was a conscript at the time of Torr's trial, found it “tough”, but his brother “was actually proud of me as well” (Interview with author, 27/1/2003). Ivan Toms also established a new rapport with his parents by objecting. Toms' father wept as he was sentenced and told the press “I'm proud of him” (Beresford *The Guardian*: 13/11/1987). Toms's father spoke to the ECC and said that although he found it difficult to understand why Ivan had objected, “I'm not against him at all. Whatever our children want to do is their life...I'm not too worried about him. He is very strong and I think he will be alright in prison” (*At Ease*, April 1988). Saul Batzofin's father has not reconciled himself to the stand his son took, or indeed to the democratisation of South Africa. However, as Batzofin explains:

I think the most important person in my family was always my older brother, for me and he was very supportive...I felt bad that I was hurting and upsetting my mother and to a lesser extent my father...I didn't like the fact that when I came out of prison my mother said, ‘This is the first day in nine months that I haven't had a

headache'...but I do feel really good about myself and what I've done
(Interview with author, 9/1/2003).

Objection challenged normative family bonds and the role the son had in defending his family and white South Africa. Many parents struggled to comprehend the rejection their sons made of hegemonic norms of citizenship and identity. However, Douglas Torr's testimony demonstrates that although the bonds between military service, hegemonic political and social identities are engendered in the family and may appear unassailable, they are not. The act of objection challenged objectors' families in the most profound way, but from this challenge new subjectivities and relationships could emerge: ones where respect, admiration and support could be engendered and in absolute contradiction to the state's hegemonic norms. Objectors themselves grew and developed as individuals, but this opportunity was also available to objectors' families.

ECC activists, to contest the state's attacks on anti-conscription campaigners and objectors, used objectors' self-narratives of empowerment and autonomy in an attempt to wrest gendered definitions of bravery, duty and patriotism from the state. The subjectivity of objectors' performances became a means of contesting the 'exile' the state wished to impose on them. The charge of cowardice was frequently made against men who objected to military service in the SADF. It was a charge that the ECC met through rhetoric and also by the portrayal of the identities of the individuals who objected. "Many men who don't want to serve in the SADF do so for a variety of reasons", wrote the Pietermaritzburg ECC newsletter, "These men are not cowards - they are brave enough to question military service, this takes guts" (*ECC Scene*, Sept 1987). Responding to Veterans for Victory (an SADF funded pro-conscription campaign group) smears of cowardice, aimed at the objector Philip Wilkinson (and the wider ECC), ECC activist Claire Kerchoff wrote, "To dismiss as a coward one who refuses to serve in an army, is avoiding and refusing to acknowledge that there may be good reason for such a person's objection". When objectors in Nazi Germany were executed, were they cowards too, asked Kerchoff? The ECC often pointed out that objectors in South Africa faced unpalatable choices and the six-year criminal jail term was the longest for objection in the world. Kerchoff concluded,

The anonymous producers of the stickers "ECC - Every Coward's Choice" [see Figure 8] need to understand the convictions of people like Philip Wilkinson instead of appealing to irrelevant and outdated concepts of Rambo heroism. Surely it is braver to stand up for one's convictions, whatever the consequences, than to die for a cause one does not support? (*Natal Witness* 30/7/1987)

After the conviction of David Bruce to six years imprisonment, the University of Cape Town ECC branch produced a cartoon depicting a prison cell with two uniforms hung up in it [see Figure 9] one was of a soldier, the other was of a convict. In front of the soldier's uniform was a placard outlining "24 months", the prison uniform had a placard in front showing "Six years." In the corner the text read 'David Bruce gets six years' and in large letters underneath 'Who are the REAL COWARDS?'. The iconography of individual objectors enabled the ECC to contest militarised concepts of duty, courage and empowerment. The ECC could therefore construct national service as a 'non-decision' based on fear of the alternatives and a mediocre acceptance that 'everybody does it'. Objectors were brave and dignified in comparison and willing to sacrifice six years of their lives for the cause of non-racial democracy.

'Patriotism' was an important value to embody in the performance of objection if white men who refused to serve in the SADF were not to be dismissed as traitors. Objectors sought to deconstruct the link between military service and patriotism and re-infuse the concept with ECC values. In 1985, an ECC activist wrote to *The Star* asking, "Is it true patriotism to protect the prosperity and security of only one section of the people? Can it ever be right to use a defence force against the defenceless people of the same land?" (Trengrrove letter to *The Star* 8/1/1985). The ECC claimed that objectors "are being truly patriotic. Patriotism is based on a love for South Africa and all its people, not on blind allegiance to the government" (*ECC Scene* Pietermaritzburg, September 1987 [ECC Collection, B11/5]). Dr Ivan Toms, in his official statement of objection, claimed: "The truly patriotic action for me is to go to prison rather than deny my faith and beliefs. South Africa is in a state of civil war and we have to take sides." (ECC Collection, File E1.1.2). The right-wing New Republic Party MP, Vause Raw, accused the ECC of treason and said in parliament that he imagined ECC members saying, "No, I do not want to protect our country. I am not going to endanger my life. I am prepared to do a nice cushy 8am to 5pm job or perhaps work in a hospital because I do not believe in the army", to which the ECC responded, "Timid aspirants after cushy 9 to 5 jobs are unlikely to involve themselves in treason". conscientious objectors willing to go to jail,

have shown a loyalty to South Africa, a courage and firmness of purpose which do not match Raw's confused sketch of persons who refuse to serve in the SADF. No person who is a coward will face the hazards of refusing conscription. Accepting conscription unthinkingly and going along with the stream requires no great courage (*ECC Scene* December 1987)

Objector Paul Dobson also defined himself against the 'stream' who 'unthinkingly' complied with conscription. Dobson viewed his own decision to serve his initial period of conscription as "a cop out decision, an individualistic decision based in the desire not to leave the country" (ECC Collection, File E1.1.14). Service in the army politically radicalised him and Dobson decided that he would refuse camp call-ups. Rauch, in her study of the 143 objectors who took a collective stand in 1988, found that their statements were infused with notions of true patriotism and commitment to South Africa and its people (1989). Patriotism was an important site for ideological struggle for the state and objectors. Although the symbiosis of protest and maintaining respect, resistance and service, did not necessarily contradict each other, there was an inherent tension and one that required different performances of objection.

Patriotism and commitment to South Africa was expressed not only in the actions taken by objectors but also in some of the activities undertaken by the ECC. The ECC sought to redefine the South African concept of the 'nation' to include all races, rather than just the white nation and by doing so, objectors' claims to patriotism could be premised on patriotism to the *real* South African nation, rather than apartheid's white nation. One of the ECC's most successful campaigns was the 'Working for a Just Peace: Construction not Conscription' campaign. This campaign sought to actively demonstrate the organisation's commitment to democratic values and a meaningful attempt to destabilise and reconfigure the state's militarised constructions of patriotism and duty. The campaign also involved activists working, contributing and performing specific tasks as a demonstration of their patriotism. The campaign was therefore premised on civic-republican norms, but norms that were demilitarised and an alternative performance of citizenship from conscription as a patriotic act. The 'Working for a Just Peace' campaign was premised on an understanding of "the legitimate demands of the people for a say in the governing of their lives". The ECC incorporated this ideological challenge to the state in the campaign by first undertaking consultations with black communities in the townships. As the organisation explained "ECC is committed to solutions to the conflict in our country that do not involve military or police intervention...we are not opposed to genuine National Service. National Service is a Service to the Nation - to all the people of our country" (ECC, 1986). ECC activists and hundreds of new volunteers painted hospital wards, cleaned up parks and gardens and undertook a plethora of other community activities. Activists also planted trees by military bases to symbolise the movement's commitment to growth and life and contrast that with the destructive potential of the SADF. The ECC aimed by their campaign to "demonstrate that the true patriots of our country are not on the borders, but are, unrecognised, working for

the communities that need them” (ECC Collection, File B1.7.1). In the ‘Working for a Just Peace’ campaign activists performed tasks that sought to redefine the nation, national service, patriotism and duty. As the ECC concluded “through our actions, we will challenge the government’s definition of ‘National Service’ and its abuse by the rulers of our country” and replace these definitions with just, peaceful and constructive norms (ECC, 1986). Individual objectors also incorporated themes of active commitment to the real nation of South Africa in their performance. Ivan Toms explained in his statement of objection, “I am committed to serving my country, South Africa...South Africa has been good to me and I am committed to serving my fellow South Africans with the skills that I have gained...I am able to do real National Service working with the poor and oppressed” (ECC Collection, File E1.1.2). Patriotism and commitment to South Africa was a constitutive aspect of objectors’ performances and was expressed in their self-narratives, the symbolism of being imprisoned and in the activities of the ECC.

Membership of and participation in the ECC, as a relatively protected cultural space, often enabled objectors to take the considerable risks that they did when defying authority. Furthermore, from its outset (although not for its entire history) the ECC, as a cultural milieu and social movement, collectively symbolised and sought to engender the transgression of hegemonic social and political norms. The ECC articulated a vision of society that ran counter to that of the apartheid state. The ECC wanted “the creation of a just society, based on peace and friendship, where the need for a conscription army disappears” (*ECC Scene*, September 1987). In its activities and organisational structure the ECC aimed to embody these values: operating participatory democracy in its structures, working in the townships, using art, music and drama to convey its message and debating feminist issues in terms of its own organisation and in wider South Africa. Connell, investigating the Green movement’s contestation of hegemonic masculinity, notes:

Even without feminism, these themes of Green politics and culture would provide some challenge to hegemonic masculinity, at least at the level of ideas. Dominance is contested by the commitment to equality and participatory democracy. Competitive individualism is contested by collective ways of working (1995: 128).

As the following analysis shows, the modes of interpersonal relations in the ECC were not necessarily always non-sexist and anti-hegemonic. Furthermore, as state harassment of the movement increased and the ECC became increasingly beholden to the wider goals of the liberation movement, the spaces for marginalised gender identities to be developed and liberated modes of working came under pressure.

However, certainly at the outset of the movement and at its zenith in 1985, the ECC created a cultural space in which militarised patriarchy was critiqued and this formed a basis for the generation of ideas that could be used to critique wider forms of patriarchy in society. The ECC's interpersonal and cultural setting was vital to the creation of its campaigns and to the performance of objection.

The objectors I interviewed all spoke of the ECC in nostalgic terms and as an environment in which they could explore why they were objecting and aid their self-empowerment. Involvement in the ECC also helped to give individual objectors a sense that theirs was more than a personal act and had a wider social and political meaning and impact. The fact that the ECC formed a cultural sub-stream in South African life was important given the social dynamics of white society at the time, where liberalism and criticism of military service was not readily tolerated. Ivan Toms recalls the ECC as,

an amazingly nice environment and a supportive environment and what was fascinating is that the End Conscription Campaign had a number of different people coming together around a single issue...A lot of people who were active in the End Conscription Campaign were alternative culture...so we used a lot of creativity to pick up those sort of disenchanted young people who were trying to find where they fit and it might be around music, it might be around drugs, whatever. And we said you're accepted here, so long as you join us in opposing conscription (Interview with author, 27/1/2003).

The ECC became a cultural forum where South African "disenchanted youth" could coalesce and, in turn, the ECC could creatively and innovatively create a transgressive political movement out of this alternative cultural milieu. ECC activist, David Evans, said the ECC "drew thousands of young people into the realms of resistance politics...It was, in most areas, a sexy organisation - green friendly, gay friendly and a watering hole for a generation of artists, musicians and actors who were alienated from the rest of the left" (cited in Collins, 1995: 211). Anderson also endorsed this generalisation: that the ECC's membership included "marijuana smoking *jollers* [partiers], committed Christians, ex-NUSAS [National Union of South African Students] activists and housewives working together in the same field" (Anderson, 1990b: 93). The subjectivities of many in the membership of the ECC were already marginalised and subordinate in terms of hegemonic white identity. The ECC effectively politicised this marginalisation into anti-militarism.

The identities and personal interactions of members of a social movement influence the political performance of those members in the public sphere (Taylor and Whittier, 1999: 183) Indeed, interpersonal interaction is important for the creation of collective beliefs (Klandermans, 1997: 20). The impact on individual ECC members of their membership of the movement was emphasised by Saul Batzofin:

ECC in those days became a huge part of your life. It became your social life: after work I would go to ECC meetings. When you went out *jolling* [partying/having fun], I went out with ECC people and I lived in a community that was incredibly supportive (Interview with author, 9/1/2003).

Batzofin was also not the only objector to marry a fellow ECC activist. Interviewed in London, where he emigrated in the mid-1990s, Batzofin continued

The people I consider my closest friends are still people in South Africa who were part of that movement. We did get very close, it was a strange thing because you came across a lot of people who thought very similarly to you, so they did form your friends and we gave such incredibly long hours to it in those days that you didn't see many other people socially, but the bond I have with those people will, I expect, stay with me forever (Interview with author, 9/1/2003).

The values of the ECC came to define activists' lifestyles and the campaigns they conducted: it served as a social environment where people could develop relationships and identities. It had a vital influence on the campaigns the ECC conducted and on the nature of objectors' performances in the public realm. The ECC was a cultural movement that, at least for a time, symbolised the breach and renunciation of hegemonic norms in white society. Belonging to the ECC impacted on activists' perception of the society they lived in and their ability to challenge it. Laurie Nathan was asked whether the state's harassment of the ECC and of him personally was 'nerve wracking', he replied: "It wasn't actually. We were young and cocky...We were young and having a *jol* [party]...We were socking it to the government and having a good time in the process. We had great media, great concerts, fun activities. Being in hiding, we had an adolescent sense of adventure" (1997: 184). For Nathan, ECC membership assuaged the perception of the very real physical dangers he faced and the social ostracism objectors experienced from white society. The power of the ECC, as a movement, is demonstrated by the fact that membership of the ECC continues to be relevant to the identities of many former objectors today, whose friendship groups, relationships and self-narratives continue to be defined to a greater or lesser extent, by participation in the ECC.

A decisive factor that defined the ECC as a cultural space and which influenced the gendered nature of the campaigns it conducted was the fact that over fifty percent of the ECC's membership were women. Women in the ECC sought to change what they perceived to be hegemonic white male behaviour within the organisation and in turn, to critique hegemonic masculinity in wider South African society from a feminist perspective. There was an increase of women's peace activism throughout the world in the 1980s, as right-wing governments in Europe and America renewed the Cold War. The ECC did have considerable international linkages with other peace campaigns and women within the ECC offered a critique of hierarchy and authoritarianism and demanded that the ECC adopt non-patriarchal ways of working. Mike Rautenbach recalls that "there were entire weekend discussions about sexism in the organisation". Such discussions often resulted in stinging feminist criticisms of the ECC: "There were women saying they were being kept out of positions, which I think is true, again some people might have argued that the ECC leadership should be male [because the ECC was focusing on men's conscription]" (Interview with author, 13/3/2003). One ECC workshop on women in the movement concluded that the growth of the ECC was hampered by "sexist ideals and behaviour... There is a strong feeling that ECC is a male dominated organisation, with a top heavy hierarchical structure" (Report on Women's Workshop c.1987 [ECC Collection, File A23.7]). The workshop identified a number of central problems that the ECC suffered from: firstly that the leadership tended to be men and men formulated strategy, took decisions and were supported by women members, "a support and respect that women seldom give one another". Also, the style of ECC campaigns and leadership was "flamboyant and aggressive" which favoured assertive and confident men to fulfil public roles, roles that women would find difficult to occupy. This led to men making most of the ECC's public statements and effectively being the 'face' of the movement, serving to perpetuate the cycle of sexism women felt existed in the movement (Report on Women's Workshop c.1987 [ECC Collection, File A23.7]). The critiques suggest that the ECC was not the alternative and transgressive cultural space that some former activists would imply. Indeed, when the ECC adopted its 'strategic shift' in the later 1980, feminist criticisms of the organisation became even stronger. However, many former activists believe that women's activism within the movement had a significant effect.

The informants I interviewed had varying opinions as to whether there were tensions between the men and women in the ECC or whether the ECC was a genuinely anti-sexist cultural space. Saul Batzofin recollects,

The women in ECC were incredibly strong people; lots of our national organisers were women. They were equal partners in this whole thing. They played a huge role in educating us about women's issues and that was part of the progressive movement, that's how things happened (Interview with author, 9/1/2003).

Douglas Torr and Ivan Toms believe that there was no significant tension between men and women, and did not see any contradiction in the fact that the ECC was effectively a campaign about men conducted by a large women membership. Torr recalls,

The campaign gave a lot of white people a focus, so if you weren't directly involved, although a number of people had a number of loyalties: Black Sash, COSG [Conscientious Objector Support Groups] and ECC. These were all groups that were quite closely linked with each other and I don't think it was ever a real problem. In fact, it was strength because these were women who were saying; 'We don't stand for stereotyping, not every real man is somebody who goes to the army. In fact, a real man is one who doesn't'. So that was a very, very important component and ECC itself was led by women leadership at various times (Interview with author, 19/3/2003).

Nevertheless, there were gendered controversies within the movement and these controversies reflect and impacted on the ECC's interpretation of white masculinity and the means and content of their opposition to militarised hegemonic white masculinities.

Within the ECC there were discussions about hegemonic gender norms in white South Africa, about how gender was militarised and how best to contest those constructions. Former ECC activist Mike Rautenbach recalls that the ECC did informally discuss "what are the notions of masculinity? What makes you a man?", but that it was "never tackled on any policy level" (Interview with author, 13/3/2003). Saul Batzofin, however, believes that the men in the ECC were generally different to hegemonic white men and thus predisposed to feminism and transgressive gendered activism:

The men in the movement were fine [about feminist activism], but that was just the kind of person that joined ECC, but I also think a lot of it was due to the education by the women. All these people were progressive, but there were some *okes* ['macho' men/blokes] in there (laughs) and I think that in some cases it was hard work for the women to break down the stereotypes, but they worked hard at it. And yes, I

suppose we were different to the average South African male: we weren't 'rugger buggers' and all of that, but they worked hard at it and they had to confront us at certain times on issues and tell us, 'This is women's day! You will do it!' (Interview with author, 9/1/2003)

Batzofin's characterisation of the ECC as an arena where the 'average' South African hegemonic male was largely absent, builds on the conception of the ECC as an organisation that was culturally distinct from wider South African society and an arena where critiques of white South Africa could be formulated. Mike Rautenbach felt more ambivalent about the success of ECC women's activism and the nature of masculinities in the movement. He concludes:

I suppose it tempered some of that masculine arrogance...I think they did gain a bit of ground in that people maybe managed their control better: people were more careful, not so blunt. But in real terms, I don't think so really...There were occasional gripes about male behaviour, mainly heterosexual male behaviour in fact (Interview with author, 13/3/2003).

Rautenbach considered such complaints to be based on the fact that,

There was a lot of incestuous behaviour that was going on in the Left anyway. Particularly in the heterosexual - they all fucked each other (laughs)...and I think certain people used that and played that role (Interview with author, 13/3/2003).

Heterosexual behaviour in this light could be viewed as upholding hegemonic norms, but it could also be an expression of alternative sexual lifestyles, free from the restrictive moral norms of wider white society. The testimony of objectors suggests that the individuals in the ECC created an environment where contestations of gendered identity could take place within the organisation itself and organisational practices could be critiqued and changed to challenge patriarchal and exclusionary practices

The ECC capitalised on white social fractures and emergent spaces for the contestation of conscription as a rite of passage. The form of cultural criticism the ECC made was often characterised by its satirical and sardonic nature. The use of satire, in particular, drew from a rich Western history of satire aimed at provoking political change and was well suited to the ECC's membership and target audience (Hodgart, 1969: 10). Satire seeks to transform society and offers a future free from the absurdity and immorality of the present (Pollard, 1970: 3). The importance of satire in destabilising authoritarianism and nationalist conceptions of masculinity was demonstrated in Norway during World War Two. The Nazi sympathising leader,

Quisling, was the subject of widespread popular humour and his “version of the Nordic-Aryan superman was dismissed as pathetic and laughable” by Norwegians (Holter, 2000: 72). Although there were not the wide spaces for dissent and derision in white South African culture as there were in Norway, the ECC’s existence as a social movement was such a space and it utilised this to articulate its message. Visual symbols of serving SADF conscripts, in particular, were used in the form of artwork and cartoons to contest the state’s contention that military service was a beneficial rite of passage and a means for masculinity to be unleashed and affirmed. Sometimes these contestations were made using the same images as the state (often lifted from *Paratus* magazine). Music, drama and literature were also used to satirise and thereby destabilise hegemonic constructions of masculinity and citizenship. Drewett notes that the use of anti-conscription music, in particular, helped the ECC develop an “oppositional culture, able to relegate aspects of the dominant culture to the margins and at least symbolically enable the marginalised to take over the centre by means of ridicule” (2002: 82). The use of satire and the creative means of articulating a satirical attack on conscription was an important means for engendering a breach from hegemonic culture and the creation of a sub-cultural milieu.

The ECC benefited from the increasing fractures of white rule and the strains this placed on maintaining hegemonic masculinity and practices such as conscription. The heroic *grensvegter* image of the SADF soldier at ‘the Border’ began to be questioned by some in mainstream white society and the ECC capitalized on this. The main impetus for this questioning was the experiences of individual white men and the discernible effects military service was having on them. A number of disturbing trends began to emerge as ‘veterans’ of ‘the Border’ conflict returned home. By the mid to late-1980s there was increasing comment in the press and academia on the rise of white male suicide rates, instances of interpersonal violence and the phenomenon of ‘family murder’ whereby white men would inexplicably murder their families and then commit suicide (Pretoria, in fact, had the highest number of ‘family murders’ anywhere in the world) (Marks and Andersson, 1988: 61). In 1987, General Malan told parliament (in response to PFP question) that 326 national servicemen had attempted suicide during the previous year (18 killed themselves, as opposed to 116 who died in operations over the same period) (MacLennan, *Saturday Star*, 22/2/1987). The reality of these developments began to influence white popular culture. The slang word *bosbefok* [bush fucked/bush mad] entered common currency as a term of abuse, yet its origins were influenced by the symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder exhibited by troops who had served on ‘the Border’ (Thompson and Branford, 1994: 100). The metaphor of ‘bush fucked’ itself contests the army as a masculinising

experience and 'the Border' as an exciting and heroic landscape: men were 'fucked' by the experience, demeaned and driven 'mad' as a result.

The realities of the negative effects of conscription (particularly when serving on the Border) became increasingly difficult for the government to hide and the ECC exploited this. ECC leader Laurie Nathan explained to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that he believed conscripts were "both victims and perpetrators" and this influenced ECC campaigns (TRC, 23/7/1997). Charles Bester told a student audience at the University of Cape Town,

I believe that, in as much as discrimination and injustice harm the oppressed, so, in the same measure, is the oppressor spiritually and mentally damaged. There is abundant proof of this in the astonishing escalation of murder, family killings, child abuse, alcoholism, drug addiction and unwarranted aggression amongst White South Africans in recent years - all manifestations of a society in stress. In addition, the danger to young white conscripts lies not only in physical maiming or death during National Service, but in spiritual scarring due to their experiences (*Orientation Times* 1989)

The ECC was highly creative and artistic in many of its campaigns and posters were a common means for disseminating its message on university campuses and student areas. ECC imagery frequently represented white masculinity as restrained and restricted by the SADF – with white conscripts being depicted as tied up, gagged or slumped and dejected. The discourse that men were not only restrained by conscription but warped and perverted by it was incorporated into the ECC's visual images. One ECC cartoon [Figure 10] depicted a white man being warped into a brutal sadistic killer by the SADF. The poster showed a naked white man in darkness, then being pushed forward into an SADF uniform. The conscript was standing on a South African flag holding the legs of a dead baby and the caption read, 'Please I am terrified of what I will be forced to become for our country'. Nakedness as a visual device emphasises the essential commonality between white men, and how men's masculinity is an artificial construct that has to be embraced and performed by men. Cartoons were readily identifiable media for the ECC's student audience and powerfully expressed the ECC's critique of conscription as a rite of passage for white men.

Animalistic images were also frequently used by the ECC in newsletters and pamphlets. The use of animalistic imagery emphasised the damaging effects military service was having on white men. Juxtaposing men with animals is a common

technique in political satire, because, "It reduces man's purposeful actions, the ambitious aims of which he is proud and his lusts of which he is ashamed, all to the level of instinct" (Hodgart, 1969: 119). One such image that was used numerous times contained a series of pictures of conscripts slowly metamorphosing into pigs [see Figure 11]. Men were turned into animals by the SADF: their rationality, free will and agency was replaced by base instincts of survival, brutality and effectively, of inhumanity. The ECC also targeted boys who were yet to be recruited using this message. In one poster, aimed at school cadets the ECC asked: "*Mannetjie* [Little guy]- didn't they tell you? Cadets make *malletjies* [one crazy]" [see Figure 12]: the poster depicted a man in uniform saluting and beneath him the same uniformed figure but his head was replaced by a hand grenade with a crazed expression on its face, as the soldier's hand reached to pull the trigger. The *grensvegter* image of white men as troops on 'the Border' began to disentangle as the evidence of the real effects of military service on white men became apparent.

The ECC not only contested conscription as a beneficial rite of passage, using visual images and cartoons. It also did so with written discourse in mainstream public fora such as newspaper letters pages. The letters sent by ECC activists were an effective means of contesting directly the claims made by those supportive of military national service. The following example comes from letters to the *Natal Witness* that centre on the claims of one correspondent that juvenile delinquents would benefit from military conscription. ECC activists and those sympathetic to objectors were quick to respond: Fidelia Fouche wrote,

Is it not fairly well known that persons returning from their spell of compulsory military service tend to be psychologically disturbed, violent, anti-social, that many are depressed and that there is a high rate of alcoholism among them?...Military camps are sterile and unutterably boring places (everyone complains of the boredom); they are also places of fear in which bullies are peculiarly at home. Conscripts yearn for release from the army and no doubt idealise the real world...Are unemployed ex-army misfits not more likely to be delinquents than are young persons who have been establishing themselves in careers and forming normal relationships? (*Natal Witness* 26/11/1985)

Contained in this extract are multiple criticisms of the military as a rite of passage. Indeed, Fouche defines conscription as a transformative process that is entirely negative for the men who perform it. Men are warped and 'disturbed' by military service, a process which is 'boring' and unpleasant. Finally, conscripts graduate as

'misfits' who are 'unemployed' and at a disadvantage to those who were pursuing careers instead of serving in the military. Fouche also attacked the concept of army discipline, which she branded,

pseudo-discipline...obey senseless rules senselessly...Army "discipline" relies on fear and not on rational choice, is not only worthless but harmful...should we really deplore the fact that protest comes mostly from young people - at our universities and in our townships? Is it bad that people should protest and indeed rebel against what they perceive as unjust? (*Natal Witness* 26/11/1985)

ECC activist S. Spanier-Marsden wrote on the same page that, "conscription evokes emotions such as fear, irrational patriotism and resigned acceptance. These emotions are hardly noble...to defend conscription in this country is to defend mindless social convention at the expense of human dignity and wasted life" (*Natal Witness* 26/11/1985). In letters such as these, ECC activists contested some of the tenets of militarised masculinity and citizenship: portraying the performance of conscription as the antithesis of a beneficial rite of passage.

As well as the emergence of social problems in former conscripts as a catalyst for challenging hegemonic masculinity and citizenship, the changing use of conscripts also opened fractures in the ability for the state to articulate conscription as the only acceptable and beneficial means to attain manhood and true citizenship. The use of SADF troops to control unrest in the townships, particularly during the State of Emergency in 1985, was a significant factor in giving the ECC and objectors a more powerful voice of dissent than they would have otherwise had. The use of conscripts in the townships undermined the image of the SADF acting as a shield against outside aggressors posted at a distant perimeter and introduced doubt about the legitimacy of SADF activities in the minds of some conscripts and their families. Furthermore, the image of the heroic *grensvegter* was simply not transferable to township duty. The deployment of the SADF into townships allowed the ECC to appeal to conscripts directly. ECC activist Janet Cherry explained, "We [the ECC] do not condemn the individual soldier who is forced into a situation in which he has no choice. But in this situation, all conscriptees should consider the moral implications of their actions" by serving in the townships (*City Press* 29/9/1985). Laurie Nathan claimed that support for the ECC from conscripts had dramatically increased during the State of Emergency and that some of supporters did not necessarily come from an "anti-apartheid position". Nathan believed that,

The thought of going into a township and taking up guns against the people has been terrible for many people...conscription is one aspect

that is an imposition on all white South Africans. They realize there is a difference between enjoying privileges and propping up the system with a gun. People are asking whether it is worth it and many are concluding it is not (Streek *Cape Times* 7/6/1985).

The ECC recognised that the use of conscripts in the townships destabilised one of the fundamental premises of the cultural portrayal of the justifications for South African conscription; that of the SADF defending society from an outside aggressor on the Namibian Border. National ECC leader Alistair Teeling-Smith said

Potential conscripts never had much problem with the idea of going to the border to fight the unknown enemy. But now they are fighting in townships where their maids and gardeners live, and for many it has become a personal and emotional issue...for a young white South African the choices are stark; serve, go to prison, go underground or flee overseas (Perkins and Brooks *Sunday Times* 7/8/1988).

The use of troops in the townships allowed the ECC to interrogate the use of 'the Border' as an unquestioned discursive sign in white society [see Figure 15]. The distant, tightly controlled environment of the border, classed into 'Operational Zones' controlled by military discipline and power, evaporated in the noisy, chaotic and unruly townships. *Waar is die grens nou?* [Where is the Border now?] asked an ECC leaflet distributed in Stellenbosh. The ECC subverted the *Boetie Gaan Border Toe* cultural symbol by producing posters, stickers and T-shirts emblazoned with "*Boetie gaan Athlone¹² toe*" [Little brother goes to Athlone]. As an ECC-sponsored collection of short stories noted, "Now the border goes all over the place. Sometimes straight through the middle of families which is, I suppose, what civil war is all about" (Whyle, 1987: 70-71). A musical genre of white student and youth anti-conscription music started to flourish in the bars of Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. This music also focussed on many of the gendered themes of ECC campaigning (Drewitt, 2003; 2002). The State of Emergency and conscripts' deployment in the townships gave the ECC a relevance and power that they would not have had otherwise and destabilised the myth of 'the Border' in white society.

The metaphor most frequently used by the ECC's posters and satirical work was of conscripts being restrained, restricted and warped: messages that illustrated the central aspects of individual objectors' public performances. The ECC's posters, displayed mainly on English-speaking university campuses and surrounding districts, invoked the imagery of men in the military being tied up, masked and restrained. Figure 14 shows one example of ECC artwork that contested hegemonic masculinity

¹² A township/settlement outside of Cape Town.

and conscription as a rite of passage. The poster shows a conscript, hunched and tied up, inside the SADF hexagonal symbol. The conscript's face is obscured (a frequently used visual metaphor deployed by the ECC [see Figure 15]) and the slogan beneath the picture reads: 'Free Us from the Call-Up'. Conscription entrapped white men and did not empower them. Such images contradicted the SADF's claim that a man's inner masculinity would be discovered and unleashed in the military. Conscription, in this discourse, was something that white men should be 'freed from' not 'freed by' as the state contended. The ECC often used the SADF's hexagonal emblem in its posters, but inverted them: one cartoon showed the symbol dropping onto the head of an unsuspecting conscript [see Figure 16]). Figure 17 shows one such representation by the ECC of a conscript sitting dejectedly, head clasped in hands, '*Botha Eks Gatvol*' [Botha I'm fed up/pissed off], runs the tagline and the grainy-grey image also helps to reinforce the image of the conscript trapped in a frustrating, restrictive and unpleasant existence. Figure 18 shows a tired conscript, slumped on the floor, with a large kit bag and two rifles resting on his shoulder, seemingly at the point of tears. This image was used by the ECC to symbolise the degeneration and disillusionment experienced by men who underwent military service. The conscript was muscular but his facial expression and demeanour suggested military service had demeaned his masculinity rather than enhanced it. The image had come from *Paratus* and had been interpreted there as representing a conscript who was, "tired and worn out, but not too tired to look after a buddy's rifle. A strong feeling of camaraderie soon built up amongst the men – if one was going to make it, everybody was going to" (*Paratus*, December 1983: 28). The ECC artistically adapted the images of serving conscripts and thereby visually depicted military service as damaging to white masculinity.

In 1987, *Forces Favourites*, a collection of short stories in English and Afrikaans was published (entitled after the famed SABC radio programme 'Forces Favourites' for men on 'the Border'). The book used fiction to criticise conscription and the role of the SADF. The stories satirised the absurdity and aimlessness of the government's justification of conscription and the war. One story began:

In the thirty-second year of the war, the announcement appeared in a Government Gazette. It had been decided by an official commission of enquiry that death was no longer an adequate reason for exemption from military service...a dead soldier requires much less maintenance than a living one (Du Plessis, 1987: 39).

The passage uses absurdity and humour, but also points darkly to the sinister prospects for the future of South African life if conscription continues: a society locked in a mindless and perpetual state of conflict and decay. The ECC also

borrowed from symbols in Western popular culture. At the time of the release of the children's movie 'Casper the Friendly Ghost', the ECC released a sticker saying "Casspir [an SADF military vehicle] is not just a friendly ghost", with a cartoon of Casper being chased by an SADF Casspir (ECC Collection, File J). In the early 1990s (after the ECC had 'unbanned' itself) the movement released the sticker 'F.W. – Eat my Call-Up' with a picture of cartoon character, Bart Simpson, about to release a catapult at, presumably, President F.W. de Klerk (ECC Collection, File J). Using humour, drama, art, music and literature the ECC could perform an alternative discourse of opposition to conscription and hegemonic norms of South African life, removed from its usual sites of contestation and aimed at white youth who were affected most by conscription. As such, the ECC critiqued the government's conception of the common good and encouraged whites to re-evaluate and condemn the norms of white society. The ECC also served to encourage creativity and cultural subversion within its own membership by undertaking creative activities and in this regard, helped make the ECC a fun and enjoyable movement to belong to: a cultural movement for change. Stickers were commonly used by the ECC, often to make points about militarised white society: the famous Chevrolet advert depicting the average white male experience as encapsulated by 'Braaivleis [barbecues], Rugby, Sunny Skies and Chevrolet' was parodied by the ECC: 'Braaivleis, Rugby, Sunny Skies and Civil War' said an ECC car bumper sticker (ECC Collection, File J). The back page of an ECC newsletter reproduced a satirical depiction of an SADF 'holiday scheme': 'Invest in a holiday scheme for life – holiday scheme for townships' said the advert, the picture was of a white man and woman dressed in military uniform, surrounded by weapons, with gas masks on, sitting on deckchairs, on a deserted beach. Beneath were listed the names of all the townships in which the SADF was deployed (*At Ease* April 1988). Satire and creative visual media such as cartoons, artwork and posters effectively expressed and carried the ECC's transgressive message to its youthful audience.

The ECC's satirical discourse critiquing hegemonic masculinity was the result of its sub-cultural membership and as such, it was transgressive and radical. The ECC also addressed militarised constructs of white femininity and women's role in mediating white masculinities. However, the ECC's message to white women and their agency in creating and sustaining hegemonic masculinity and citizenship was very different. Despite the feminist activism within the movement the ECC addressed white women in conservative terms: as wives and mothers, sisters and sweethearts of conscripts. The ECC continued its critique of sacrifice, duty and patriotism, but it was much quieter on wider issues of women's oppression. The ECC campaign message

dealing with white femininity was aimed specifically at women in wider South African society, women who were beyond the confines of university campuses and the cultural milieu of the ECC. It was in the appeal to white women that the porosity of the ECC's 'breach' from white culture and its desire to be 'respectable' could be most consistently discerned. The conservative nature of the ECC's appeal to femininity, as a mediator of hegemonic masculinity and citizenship, was to characterise its general approach to campaigning against conscription after its decision to adopt the 'strategic shift' in 1987 (discussed in Chapter Two). As with the address to white women in wider society, the 'strategic shift' sought to address white men as serving conscripts, ex-conscripts and businessmen, rather than young white men at university or school. Although the ECC appealed to white mothers' fears of how conscription could harm their sons and of how South Africa's war was escalating beyond control, it was not entirely successful in rallying white mothers against conscription, despite its conservative tone.

Appealing to white women as mothers who were harmed by apartheid rule was a theme present in progressive women's activism stretching back to the 1950s. Indeed, 'Black Sash' had been established by a group of white mothers who sought to portray themselves as the true mothers and guardians of the South African nation (Spink, 1991; Michelman, 1975). The appeal to mothers to oppose and disrupt the militarisation of South Africa corresponded with a wider ANC strategy. Indeed, 'motherism' as a basis for political activism was a strong component of women's ANC involvement (Geisler, 2005; Beall, Hassim and Todes, 1989). For example, ANC activist Albertina Sisulu exclaimed in 1986 that, "no self-respecting woman can stand aside and say she is not involved while police are hunting other mothers' children like wild dogs in the townships...A mother is a mother, black or white. Stand up and be counted" (cited in Gaitskell and Unterhalter, 1989: 71). In 1987, the exiled ANC National Executive Council stated, "these black and white mothers must reach across the divide created by the common enemy of our people and form a human chain to stop, now and forever, the murderous rampage of the apartheid system" (cited in Cock, 1993: 50). The ECC sought to embody this appeal. The ECC organised a conference on 'mothers' perspectives' of SADF conscripts deployed in the townships. White mothers of conscripts gathered with black mothers from townships. At the conference, "one [black] woman said she had to live with the fear that she might not find her two sons alive when she returned home from work each evening" and a white mother said, "I know it may sound cowardly, but we just don't want our son to go into these areas" (Capel, *Sunday Tribune* 29/5/1985). The ECC cleverly played on white families' fears of the township conflicts in particular (as

opposed to 'the Border' campaign that was much more readily accepted by the white community) and also tried to link it to wider themes of the damage apartheid was doing to families and the common fears mothers had about their sons, regardless of race. However, whereas peace movements in Europe and the US (particularly at the Greenham Common protests) sought to embody anti-patriarchal structures of co-operation, mutual female support and creativity (Eglin, 1987: 240-244; Tickner, 1992: 60); the Greenham Common imagery of free sexuality and radical feminine sisterhood was not an acceptable basis for campaigning in the mind of ECC strategists.

An ECC leaflet entitled 'Women and Conscription' sought to destabilise the myth of the hegemonic male soldier and present the process of conscription as a direct threat to women as wives and mothers of conscripts. The leaflet explained that the army's culture of "making a man" out of conscripts was premised on a type of masculinity that was "authoritarian, violent and brutal. It is no accident that there are reports of increased crimes of rape and wife-beating from men who return from their military service" (ECC Collection, File B1.7.13). The leaflet also explained women's complicity with conscription, a complicity that made the militarisation of South Africa possible: white women were expected to keep the "homefires burning" and groups such as the Southern Cross Fund existed to aid women's complicity in militarisation. Ivan Toms recalls that in the ECC

There would be an active way in which people would be talking about girlfriends, mothers, sisters, so they would be quite actively talked about as a political reason. Helen Zille [a senior ECC activist] had got involved in ECC because she had a little son, 4 years old, and she didn't want him to go to the army and she often spoke on platforms about that, very effectively. It was quite obvious; she saw what was going on - she saw what ECC was and she thought, 'I'm going to join this organisation that's going to protect my son from going to fight in this army that's defending apartheid' (Interview with author, 27/1/2003).

The appeal to 'mothers' was a frequent one for the ECC: "Conscription is causing conflict within families. Some mothers don't want their sons to join the army, while some fathers feel it a slur on their manhood if they do not", said Sue Williamson of the 'Women's Movement for Peace', an organisation that quickly became absorbed by the ECC. "Go back and talk to your parents as it is only from a strong family unity that we can base our protests," she appealed at a public meeting (*Cape Argus* 19/10/1984). The ECC produced literature aimed at white families and mothers, in particular, in the weeks leading up to the six-monthly call-ups. In a leaflet entitled

'Your Son and Conscription', the ECC wrote, "All white South African parents with teenage sons have to face the question of national service. If you are happy, and your son is happy, fine. But hundreds of parents are not" (Cattaneo Collection). The ECC leaflet continued by explaining that it would be running free legal advice workshops for families of conscripts because, "The army is too big for your son to face on his own. We believe you have the right to be fully informed, so that you can help him". The ECC subtly portrayed conscription as daunting and a source for concern for parents. In a second leaflet the ECC explained:

You'll be half dreading the last goodbyes, tears and excitement at the Castle [the Cape Town SADF base]. But it's something every family must go through; every family must lose a son, every wife a husband. Basics will be tough, we all know that...maybe it will be good for him - he'll learn to obey, unquestioningly - he'll learn to accept authority placed above him in the army, he'll learn to submerge his own feelings for that of a greater cause. But somewhere, maybe, at the back of your mind, there is a doubt. Is it actually what we want? For two years young men will be absorbed into a military community; trained to kill, trained to die ('What does the 'Call Up' mean for you', undated [Cattaneo Collection]).

The ECC co-opted the state's discourse that national service had constitutive and transformative effects on men as a rite of passage, but presented those effects as negative and dangerous. The leaflet explained that 17 and 18 year olds were young and impressionable and that parents should be worried what service in Namibia and the townships could "do" to their sons. It concluded, "our children are being conscripted to defend apartheid". The ECC addressed women as mothers and wives and particularly stressed the importance of family bonds and what conscription could do to damage this. The ECC avoided overt 'resistance' in this strategy: it did not openly condemn apartheid or the legitimacy of the state. The ECC focussed on white mothers' fears of how military service could harm their sons, physically and psychologically and stressed whites' self-interest in not performing conscription.

The way in which white women were addressed by the ECC had profound implications for the challenge the movement posed to hegemonic masculinity and citizenship. In an article published in the popular women's magazine *Cosmopolitan* in 1987, ECC leader, Adele Kirsten wrote, "As a woman in the ECC I'm often asked what has conscription got to do with women?...of course conscription affects my life as a woman!". Kirsten defined women's involvement in conscription as being implicated by having brothers, sons, fathers and husbands as conscripts: not only were

these figures “taken away [from women] – they are changed when they get back”. Women were also affected by the militarisation of the country and the war psychosis it created. Kirsten ended by alluding to feminist concerns of the ‘personal is political’ and injustices in women’s lives being inherently bound with wider societal injustices:

In the South African context, conscription is an injustice! This is reason enough for me, as a woman, to be involved in the ECC. In South Africa there are wheels within wheels, injustices within injustices. Opposition to conscription is an opposition to all the injustices in our lives. (Draft Article [Cattaneo Collection])

Significantly, Kirsten did not identify these insights as feminist ones or overtly talk about women’s oppression in South African society. This is possibly a strategic choice for the readership of a magazine that celebrated women’s commodification in capitalist culture and accepted the norms of heterosexual fulfilment. The ECC’s appeal to white women was cautious and designed to not alienate conservative whites. There were some limited results from these appeals. In some areas women’s ‘vigilante’ groups formed to hold nightly vigils for peace were joined by the white members of Black Sash and the ECC (Beall, Hassim and Todes, 1989: 43). The rising casualty rate in the Cuito Cuanavale offensive in 1987-1988 also led to the emergence of criticisms of the deployment of conscripts and the rationale of ‘the Border’ war. However, the importance the state placed on mediating white constructs of femininity and the conflation of ‘motherhood’ with patriotism and enabling boys to fulfil their manly destiny meant that despite the ECC’s conservative tone, most white mothers remained complicit in hegemonic norms of masculinity and citizenship.

Objectors’ and peace activists’ challenge to the construct and accepted performance of hegemonic masculinity and citizenship was premised on their subjectivity as ‘strangers’ in the public realm. As such, it was an eclectic and contingent performance that sought to profoundly challenge the basis of society and yet demonstrate commitment and service towards that very same society (albeit in non-racial and inclusive terms). The performance of objection was centred on the self-reflexive narrative of the individual objector himself. This self-reflexivity was engendered by a ‘breach’ from white society and its performances of masculinity and citizenship. It was a breach that may have occurred over a significant period of time and may have begun at school, in the family or within the SADF itself. The themes of empowerment, autonomy, sacrifice and martyrdom were a concomitant aspect of objectors’ self-narratives and directly contradicted the claims made by the state about national service. The ECC, as a social movement, was a sub-cultural arena where objectors could develop this self-reflexivity further. However, the ‘porosity’ of the

breach from white society was most evident in the ECC itself: feminist concerns, the appeal to women as mothers and wives of conscripts and the 'strategic shift' of 1987 changed the nature of the challenge to hegemonic masculinity and citizenship and circumscribed its radicalism considerably. The following chapter will investigate the response of the state to the ECC and the implications of the 'strategic shift' for the movement. It is there that the strains of objectors as 'strangers' are most evident and the ultimate nature of the challenge objectors posed to the state can be assessed.

Chapter Five

'Every Coward's Choice'? Heteronormativity and the Limits of Objection

All these long-haired fairies should be forced to do their military training. Maybe they will become men

Jean Venter, letter to the *Saturday Star*, 23/7/1988.

(1) Who feels empowered by those movements (2) Who feels marginalized within these movements, and (3) who is left out altogether?

Cynthia Enloe, on pro-democracy social movements (2005: 72)

This chapter aims to conceptualise the response of the state, the SADF and other actors in white society to conscientious objectors and the ECC. By using institutional, legal, material and discursive resources, the state (its institutions and agents) played a critical role in defining the boundaries of the public realm and also in restricting the agency and efficacy of the performance of objection. Above all, the state sought to uphold and reproduce the gendered binaries of militarisation and to negate the threat of dissidents to those binaries. Objectors, as 'strangers' in the public realm, did create dissonance and open spaces for criticism of the status quo, but this chapter will argue that the nature of that criticism stopped short of being radical. The state's response to objectors was not always coherent or consistent and was the result of the ambivalent subjectivity of objectors. However, the state's attempts to 'purge' objectors from the public realm using sexual (specifically homophobic) stigmatising discourses were far more effective in restricting the performance of objection. The stigmatisation of objectors' sexual identities was the most effective strategy from the perspective of the state and placed considerable strains on the peace movement. The use of homophobia as a stigmatising discourse reveals the heteronormativity of the state and military service and the effectiveness of sexuality (and particularly homophobia) in policing gendered binaries. As this Chapter will argue, the use of sexual identity as a political weapon restricted the performance of objection and made contesting certain aspects of the state's conflation of masculinity, citizenship and military service appear unassailable.

The state's attacks on the ECC and objectors had implications for how objectors were perceived in the public realm and what performances were available

and not available to them. As Enloe's quote suggests, when assessing social movements aimed at engendering change, it is as important to assess who is empowered or disempowered and included or excluded within those movements as it is to analyse the public statements and actions of those movements. The analysis of the ECC shows that as the state's restrictions on the movement took hold, objectors wishing to incorporate identities other than what was perceived to be 'respectable' white subjectivities were dissuaded from doing so by the ECC. The first half of this chapter will analyse the discourses deployed by the state against objectors and the second half will conceptualise the effects those discourses had. Chapter Four assessed the role of women activists in the ECC and the critique offered of militarised white femininity in South Africa. As was argued, the ECC adopted a conservative appeal to white women as wives and mothers of conscripts and this was at the detriment of some of the feminist critiques that were taking place within the movement. In the 'strategic shift' of 1987, which was itself adopted in response to the state's attacks, women activists were marginalised from public platforms and restricted to performing the identity of wives and mothers. The 'strategic shift' also impacted on the performance of male objection. The desire to be 'respectable' led to the adoption of dress codes for ECC activists and objectors and the careful choice of spokespersons for press conferences (men who had previously served in the military were favoured). The latter half of the Chapter focuses on the campaign in support of the objector Dr Ivan Toms in 1987. The Toms campaign is an example of where the performance of objection was premised on a desire to appear 'respectable' in the public domain and it was a campaign that caused considerable controversy in the ECC because of it. Essentially, the Toms case allows for the analysis of whether objection would present a radical challenge to the conflation of masculinity, citizenship and military service or an assimilatory challenge: one that incorporated hegemonic understandings of citizenship and sexual identity. The chapter concludes that although the strategic decision taken in the Toms case was (and still is) justified by ECC activists as the only conceivable political choice available, it was a choice that failed to essentially repel the stigmatising discourse of the state and allowed the gendered binaries of militarisation to remain effectively intact.

The ECC and objectors provoked a harsh response from the state that was strikingly disproportionate to their numbers. However, when asked in the mid-1990s about the SADF's attitude toward the ECC, Brigadier WP Sass of the SADF's Department of Strategic Planning wrote that the ECC (and their overseas counterpart, the COSAWR) were viewed as a, "small radical political groups [that] were mostly viewed with humour [by the SADF]. By and large the entire campaigning against

conscription may have attracted media coverage but it never made much impact” (1995: 4). Nevertheless, the conclusion that the state was indifferent to objectors and confident of maintaining the white population’s complicity in militarisation is a highly disingenuous one, as can be demonstrated by the severity of its response to objectors. As the previous chapter documented, white attitudes towards military service also began to change as the state struggled to cope with external and internal circumstances and this also created unease in Nationalist and military elites. South African Military Intelligence was alarmed by the existence of the ECC and sought to, in its words, “destroy” the ECC (Stiff, 2001: 282-283). Furthermore, the vilification, harassment and punitive legal measures taken against individual objectors and the men and women who supported the ECC, revealed the state’s perception that objectors were a significant threat and that their argument could not merely be met with counter-argument, but that they had to be negated and expelled from the public realm.

At the centre of the state’s response to objectors and the ECC was the need to maintain and reproduce the gendered binaries of militarisation: binaries that enabled the legitimate continuation of military service for all white men and white women’s complicity and support for this service. Chapter Three analysed ‘regional’ or national discourses of masculinity as a means for engendering hegemonic masculinity and citizenship. This national discourse was also a primary means for attacking objectors and their supporters. The state and especially President Botha, drew from masculinist discourses of rationality, authority and virility to configure the white South African nation as heroic and militaristic. The following section outlines these disciplinary discourses and the gendered binaries they rested upon and then moves onto to analyse the effectiveness of their deployment. As will be argued, the state was unable to counter objectors’ challenge on every occasion and this was the result of the changing circumstances of apartheid South Africa, the social and political divisions between the white population and the difficulty of tackling the ambivalent subjectivity of objectors in the fluid politics of masculinity.

As much as Nationalist white identity was construed as virile and strong, it was co-dependent on a fear of being weak, compromising and ‘feminine’. Objectors and their supporters were primarily interpreted by the Nationalist state as contradicting the very bases of honourable South African identity and of undermining the nation’s ability to survive. “We are not a nation of weaklings.” said President Botha. “We are not a third rate little republic. We face adversity from a position of strength” (Van Deventer and Cohen, May 1987, 24). “I detest weaklings in public

life”, PW Botha remarked on another occasion (cited in Uys 1987, 17). This discourse of ‘weakness’ was ever-present and directly informed how objectors were addressed by the state. As the 1980s progressed and South Africa’s internal and external fortunes became more precarious, the state appeared beleaguered. Botha’s appeals to white South Africans’ sense of threatened masculinity became more urgent. Speaking on SABC TV the evening the national State of Emergency was declared in 1986, Botha said,

It must be very clear in future that South Africans will not allow themselves to be humiliated in order to prevent sanctions. If we have to be dependent only on our Creator and our own ability, then I say: Let it be...South Africa will not crawl before anyone to prevent it (*SA Digest* 20/6/1986).

The threat of ‘humiliation’ by compromising with internal or international critics became an obsession for Botha. As international outrage at Botha’s intransigence in 1986 led to a collapse of the Rand and the flight of numerous international corporations from the Republic, Botha responded that it would be “better to be poor than to yield” (cited in Krog 1999, 403). Krog considers Botha’s fear of being perceived to be ‘weak’ and thus ‘humiliated’ as the result of his subjectivity in an Afrikaner discourse based on notions of ‘honour’ and ‘shame’: to compromise would bring shame on Botha and the collective white nation (1999: 397). Indeed, international hostility towards South Africa was reinterpreted by Botha as a sign of the world’s weakness in the face of South African might. The President considered his critics to be “sickly left-wing politicians and toadies in the Western media” (Botha April 1984, 10) and told US *Business Week*, “We are a strong country in a rather sick world” (cited in Uys 1987, 15). Weldes, writing about the cultural production of crisis in Cold War America, concludes that the US was “not only masculinist but aggressively macho”. This was certainly applicable to apartheid South Africa and inherent in this ‘macho’ posture was the “fear of appearing weak – whether of arms or of will - loomed large because such a feminine characteristic would excite not the desired respect, but only contempt” (1999, 46). For PW Botha, this appeal to inner reserves of strength served as a disciplinary warning: whites who refused the call would be lesser citizens, lesser men and traitors; they would be perceived to be ‘crawling’ to South Africa’s enemies, exhibiting weakness and femininity.

The extent of the threat the government believed South Africa faced meant that political and military leaders represented the South African polity in bodily terms. South Africa, therefore, could be killed and destroyed. The safety and continued life of South Africa was constructed as something that was the responsibility of individual

whites. Demonstrating 'weakness' could lead to the 'death' of the body politic, but in particular, Botha and other Nationalists stressed the potential of South Africa to commit 'suicide' by failing to stand firm. As was outlined in Chapter Two, shortly after assuming office, Botha had warned the white population that, "we have to be prepared to adapt our policy...otherwise we die" (cited in Schrire 1991, 29). However, the new Prime Minister also warned, "I am not prepared to cut my own throat for the sake of world opinion" (cited in Uys 1987, 44). In Botha's infamous 'Rubicon' speech, he warned the nation "South Africa must know, our life is at stake" (cited in Schrire 1991, 156). Botha defined himself as the guardian of this bodily entity and as he melodramatically declared, "I am not prepared to lead White South Africans and other minority groups on a road to abdication and suicide. Destroy White South Africa and our influence, and this country will drift into faction, strife, chaos and poverty" (cited in Schrire 1991, 29). The threat of white South Africa's 'suicide', which would effectively lead to the death of the nation as a whole, was something that the state used to justify its use of the military and it was a spectre the state invoked when dealing with whites who opposed conscription. As a government sponsored leaflet attacking the objector Ivan Toms remarked: "Dr Ivan Toms and the ECC are conspiring to have South Africa commit national suicide. They have in mind the revolutionary overthrow of the existing order with nary a thought to what will follow" (ECC Collection, File C5). Whites themselves were responsible for the survival of the body politic; therefore they were capable of provoking its 'suicide'. The death of the body politic was something that men who refused to serve in the army could supposedly provoke and it served as a justification for the repressive and punitive response of the state. If whites who opposed military service were allowed to undermine the authority of the state, they could not only destabilize the body politic: they could kill it.

Armed with this cultural discourse of virile nationalism in contrast to weak and cowardly (albeit dangerous) compromise and transgression, the state used a number of discourses to attack objectors in an attempt to buttress the gendered binaries of militarisation. As the following analysis shows, these discourses were sometimes contradictory, ineffective and shifted over time and context. However, the most effective discourse was the use of homophobia against objectors, because it was this discourse that recognised objectors as strangers in the public realm and sought to stigmatise their personal identities as a means for negating their political message. The state's strategies for attacking and stigmatising the ECC can be broadly arranged as follows:

- 1) The ECC was part of the 'total onslaught' against South Africa and as such, the ECC and objectors were traitors and enemies.

PW Botha dubbed the first objectors citing political motives as signs of "a new phase in the total onslaught...manifested in the malevolent efforts to question the very essence of military service" (cited in Cawthra, 1986: 49). As explained in Chapter Two, the ECC and objectors faced increasingly punitive legal penalties because of this assumption. In 1983, the sentence for objection was raised to six years imprisonment, the longest sentence for objection in the world. In the 1986 State of Emergency, the state severely restricted the discursive space within which the ECC could operate. Emergency regulations stipulated that any "subversive statement" which "discredited or undermined" the "system of compulsory military service" would be punished with a heavy prison sentence and/or a substantial fine (CIIR, 1989: 112). University administrators warned campus ECC groups that they would need to tread very carefully in this new ominous legal framework. Many of their previous campaign slogans and messages were now illegal (Grogan letter to Rhodes University ECC 1986 [Catteneo Collection]). Indeed, some ECC activists wondered whether the Emergency had effectively banned the ECC (Anderson, 1990b: 54). In the Western Cape, the ECC was banned from making "any utterance" at all (although this edict was subsequently overturned by the Cape High Court) and meetings of the ECC were banned in the Eastern Cape (Phillips, 2002: 87). Dozens of ECC activists were arrested some held in detention for months¹³ and a number of objectors were tried and given maximum sentences. In 1987, General Malan branded the ECC "a direct enemy of the South African Defence Force" (*SABC Comment*, 15/4/1987). In 1988, he said the ECC was, "at the vanguard of those forces that are intent on wrecking the present dispensation and its renewal" (*The Star*, 6/8/1988). Days later the ECC was banned outright. Minister for Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, justified the banning claiming that:

The dangers posed by the activities and acts of the ECC to the safety of the public and the maintenance of the public order and the termination of the state of emergency leave no other choice than to act against it and to prohibit the organization from any activities or acts...ECC is part of the so-called national liberation struggle (*Cape Argus*, 22/8/1988).

¹³ David Shandler, ECC National Secretary, wrote to the Director of the UN Centre on Human Rights in August 1986 that 48 ECC members had been held in detention and two ECC activists had been forced to leave South Africa (with a third facing deportation). This was in addition to a considerable number of raids on activists' homes and ECC offices (ECC Collection, File A12).

In this conception, the ECC and objectors were presented as the enemy and were indivisible from the symbolism of the 'evil' ANC and world communism. This strategy of attack did not recognise ECC and objectors as strangers and it was problematic as a result.

The restrictions and harassment imposed by the State of Emergency had an undoubtedly devastating effect on the ECC, but it did not counter the phenomenon of individual political objection and if anything, it increased press and political support for objectors. The government's acts appeared draconian and hysterical. This was because the representation of the ECC's largely middle-class, English-speaking, students, intellectuals and young professionals as the 'enemy' was not credible to at least a significant proportion of white South African society: namely, English-speaking churches and the English-speaking press. For example, the arrest and detention of ECC activist Janet Cherry prompted opposition MP Helen Suzman to ask the Minister for Law and Order that if "people like Janet Cherry are held in detention...tell me how we differ from a police state?" (Johannesburg ECC Repression Report – August 14 1987 [Catteneo Collection]): "people like Janet Cherry" were not interpreted as enemies by significant sections of the white South African public. The reactions of state officials to individual objectors also demonstrate that Nationalist discourses branding objectors as 'the enemy' problematic. The SADF, State Prosecutors and even sometimes the magistrates appeared uneasy at confronting objectors. Peter Hathorn recalls that when he arrived at the SADF barracks to register his refusal to serve,

Their [the SADF's] legal officer was a Wits law graduate [Hathorn was also a law graduate of the University of the Witwatersrand]...I got a strong sense that he was uncomfortable with the position he was in and I got the impression that the last thing he wanted to be doing was to be in the capacity of a law officer and to be prosecuting someone who was refusing to serve (Interview with author 13/3/2003).

In later objector trials, Saul Batzofin explained, "the prosecutors tended to be young women and by all accounts it was freaking them out quite a lot and the person who'd done Charles's case refused to do mine and they actually didn't want to do it" (interview with the author 15/12/2002). Charles Bester recalls that in his trial, "the prosecutor didn't have any cross-examination" (Interview with the author, 13/9/2003). This was a similar experience for Douglas Torr, whose prosecutor seemed demoralised. Torr explained that the prosecutor simply established the fact that he had refused to serve and then, "gave up asking questions and the magistrate asked the questions...the prosecutor really didn't want to do this third trial, she'd had enough!"

(Interview with the author, 19/3/2003). Other state officials also expressed ambivalent and sometimes positive attitudes towards objectors: Charles Bester and Ivan Toms remarked how the policemen present in court during their trials showed an increasing amount of respect towards them (Interviews with author, 13/9/2003; 27/1/2003). Indeed, in Ivan Toms' case the magistrate sentenced him to imprisonment with the words, "You are not a criminal. Our jails are there for people who are a menace to society, you are not a menace to society. In fact you are just the opposite" (3/3/1988: 230, [Catteneo Collection]). Objectors subjectivity as 'strangers' in the public realm made crude characterisations of them as 'the enemy' ineffective and the ambivalence of state officials reflected this.

- 2) Objectors and the ECC were naïve "useful idiots/dupes" unconsciously fulfilling and advancing the ANC's plans for revolution and chaos in South Africa.

This typology recognised objectors as 'strangers' rather than enemies and attached stigma to them as individuals. This strategy of attack drew from cultural ideologies of communism operating through naïve, 'useful dupes' who even work against their own interests in unwittingly aiding communist plots. President Botha remarked in 1987 that, "the ANC is laughing up their sleeves at the naivety of useful idiots who, as Lenin put it, can be used to further the aims of the first phase of the Revolution" (cited in Uys, 1987: 80). The stigmatisation of objectors using this discourse drew from masculinist understandings of rationality, reason, responsibility and maturity (Jones, 1998). It posited rationality on the state and constructed the objector and ECC supporter as irrational, naïve, immature and foolish: the objector was thus feminised. Even the leader of the then official parliamentary opposition (the Progressive Federal Party), Dr Frederick van zyl Slabbert, branded the aims of the ECC as "dangerously naïve, romantic, simplistic and counter productive" (*The Star*, 6/2/1985). The influential *Cape Times* columnist, Willem Steenkamp, recurrently accused the ECC and objectors of naivety. The ECC, concluded Steenkamp, had difficulty choosing between "rhetoric and logic" (*Cape Times*, 9/10/1985). The ECC's call for a 'Just Society' showed the ECC was living "in a dream world" and Steenkamp advised that, "it would seem to imply that the ECC has now put reality firmly behind it" (*Cape Times* 9/10/1985). The presentation of objectors and ECC activists as naïve and at the will of a willier foe drew from masculinist understandings of rationality.

More than half of the ECC's activists were women, many were university students and men who had not served in the military. The stigma of feminine

irrationality and naivety was thus easily deployed against the ECC. As Graaf et. al. noted, in this strain of state discourse, “members of the ECC are seen to be victims of forces beyond their control, of an evil invisible power which knows no bounds” (1988: 50). This ‘evil’ power was world communism, which also had the ANC, black people and many churches in its thrall. The Minister for Law and Order, Adrian Vlok, justified the state’s restrictions on the ECC by saying that the ECC was “used by the ANC to achieve the ANC’s evil goals in South Africa” (*Daily News*, 9/9/1985). ECC activist Sarah Hills was told by Special Branch that her fifteen day detention would “teach me a lesson - not to be involved in something bigger than me” (‘Sarah Hills 3-17 July ‘86’, Military Intelligence, File B1.1.2.3): Hills was treated as if she were a naughty schoolgirl, involved in things she did not understand. As such, ECC members and objectors could be classified as part of the Total Onslaught, but unwitting participants in it. The state could evoke the myth of the communist revolutionary plot to seize and destroy South Africa without representing ECC members as enemies themselves. In this stigmatising discourse, the state branded ECC activists as feminised, naïve and foolish.

- 3) ECC activists were not naïve in their motives: they were concealing their more “sinister” plans for South Africa, attempting to fool well-meaning objectors and the wider population in the process (especially the ‘impressionable’ youth) [see Figure 19].

This was a variation of the “useful dupe” stigma. However, it posited a conscious awareness of their motives onto the ECC. The ECC itself noticed that the state’s strategy was changing and that “more ominously, ECC is being used to smear other organizations” (primarily the Progressive Federal Party during the 1987 General Election campaign¹⁴), by being linked by the state to them (Johannesburg ECC Repression Report – August 14 1987 [Catteneo Collection]). In this discourse, objectors were separated from the ECC and the ECC embodied not naivety, but was a sinister front for the Soviet Union. “The ECC is one of the many threads in the web of international deceit”, concluded the anti-ECC pro-SADF group, Veterans for Victory (Vets for Victory Update, Undated [ECC Collection, File C5]). A complicated flow diagram drawn by the SADF and Military Intelligence, and distributed in various guises, linked the ECC directly to the USSR, ANC, UN Anti-Apartheid Committee, the World Council of Churches and a host of other “sinister fronts” for Soviet expansionism. In this conception, it was not the ECC who were naïve, but individual

¹⁴ One NP election advertisement placed in the national and regional press showed a picture of PFP MP Pierre Cronje at an ECC meeting making the ‘black power’ salute and was entitled “The PFP’s Words and Deeds and Pictures Say it All” (*Daily Dispatch*, 6/5/1987).

objectors themselves and sections of the wider white public. The involvement of women in the ECC was also an indication of the ECC's hidden machinations according to the pro-government organisation, the Anti-Liberal Alliance: "Why are women 'called up' for the ECC's suspect work?" the group asked in leaflets and posters depicting women at ECC activity days, "What is the ECC's genuine motive? Makes you think – does'nt (sic) it?" ('Anti-Liberal Alliance' Poster, 1987 [ECC Collection, File C9]). Objector Douglas Torr remembers that his father believed that Torr was "being a puppet of other people, the ECC in particular, which is quite hurtful, but that's what he believed. He just couldn't see that it was me making the stand" (Interview with the author 5/12/2002). Torr's father clearly accepted the cultural representation of the malevolent ECC fooling well-meaning souls. The projection of sinister machinations onto individual objectors became problematic precisely because of the iconic, moral nature of objectors' public stands. Objectors like Dr Ivan Toms, a Christian, Army Officer and community medic, were more difficult for the state to crudely stigmatise as willing accomplices in Soviet plans (although, as will be elucidated below, Toms' sexuality was certainly seized upon by elements of the pro-conscription lobby as a stigmatising discourse). The state had to rely on discursive strategies to smear the ECC whilst presenting otherwise 'good' objectors as naïve.

A mass-produced Military Intelligence leaflet about Ivan Toms demonstrated this strategy. Toms' Christian, professional and compassionate identities were acknowledged by the leaflet, which went onto say:

Picture a South Africa without the competent Defence Force it proudly boasts today. Imagine if the SADF couldn't handle the chaos in the townships. It is frankly difficult to imagine gifted people like Dr Toms willingly pursuing paths that would lead to such a scenario in South Africa. We can only hope that they are misguided - that they are blinded by their emotions and their desire to see a more equitable situation emerging in our country. If that is their objective, then we have no quarrel with it. In fact we endorse it whole-heartedly. What concerns this organization and all reasonable, peace loving South Africans, is the means they choose to use in trying to see their objectives realized ('Veterans for Victory: Special Report: We believe Dr Toms is wrong and Here's Why...' [ECC Collection, File C5]).

The standard mythology of the ECC's connections with a worldwide communist conspiracy followed, a conspiracy which profoundly threatened the security of all South Africans:

The fact of the matter is that these individuals - no matter how noble and honourable their personal motivation may be - are being used as pawns and publicity pieces in a political game of extremely sinister proportions (ibid.).

The state acknowledged objectors' higher motives, like those of Toms' and even claimed to share their aims of creating a more "equitable" situation. However, on behalf of "all reasonable, peace loving South Africans", the state sought to warn of these objectors' naivety in the hands of a sinister and wily enemy, one well-established in the white South African body politic: that of communism. Willem Steenkamp wrote in the *Cape Times*, "I doubt if its [the ECC's] hardcore worries very much about conscientious objectors (whatever its many sincerely concerned members might think). It is basically a political front organisation aimed at destroying the SADF" (12/8/1987). Many ECC members and objectors were 'useful dupes' in this scenario, but the ECC's elite were knowingly malign in their intentions towards South Africa. Rationality and reason were vested in the state, who had the ability to discover what the ANC/Soviet axis were planning and present it in a scientific and detailed manner. Jones (1996) notes that conceptions of masculine authority inherently feminize the citizenry as a whole: it is therefore the responsibility of the state to protect the vulnerable populace and to purge strangers from the public realm. It was the wider South African public that could fall prey to the concealed ECC's machinations: "The ECC will convince well intentioned souls such as the clergy - who become duped by idealistic rhetoric cleverly based on the manipulation of the scriptures - that they are in no way connected with the communist sponsored World Peace Council." ('Veterans for Victory: Special Report' [ECC Collection, File C5]). The church, students and otherwise well meaning South Africans lacked the logic required to resist the ECC's artful techniques. It was the responsibility of the state, therefore, to tell the rational 'truth' and combat the ECC on the nation's behalf.

- 4) Objectors' political message was the result of sexual deviance and cowardice, not genuinely held convictions.

Posel's analysis of broadcast news in South Africa found that white opponents of apartheid were presented as embodying socially 'deviant' identities that were pathologically flawed (1989: 272; also, Cock, 1993: 172). The fact that objectors were questioning military service, a fundamental signifier of masculinity, increased the fact that the gendered and sexual identities of objectors and their supporters was used as a means to stigmatise them in pro-state discourse. This stigma took on the form of crude homophobia and more subtle innuendo. The subordination of objectors'

masculinity by the charge of cowardice and the innuendo of homosexuality acutely stigmatised objectors and destabilised their right to political agency in the public realm. This strategy fed off wider homophobic discourses present in South African national life and formed part of a greater 'moral panic' about the rise of 'permissiveness' and the decline of hegemonic modes of life (namely the heterosexual nuclear family) (President's Council, 1987; Cock, 1993: 56). In terms of wider South African political culture, Du Pisani notes, "Liberalism and homosexuality were two primary manifestations of masculine 'deviance' in Afrikaner society during the apartheid years" (2001: 167). The rise of anti-apartheid activism and perceived social disintegration of South Africa led the President's Council [apartheid South Africa's Upper House of Assembly] to conduct an enquiry into youth and 'good citizenship'. The subsequent report in 1987 identified the ECC as a body whose successes should "not be underestimated" and who were intent on "undermining authority" (1987: 16). The report was particularly concerned about the rise in white divorce rates, childbirth out of wedlock and identified homosexuality as a cause of social breakdown and an impediment to good citizenship. The report claimed:

Homosexuality in men and women is a serious social deviation...a homosexual person experiences the following stages: he becomes isolated from his friends, he regards himself as an outcast, he makes contact with other homosexuals, he accepts his new lifestyle and defends his actions. The fact that homosexuality is increasingly regarded as normal by the community is cause for concern (President's Council, 1987: 48).

This conceptualisation of sexual identity clearly defines homosexuality in terms that were the opposite of civic-republican norms of good citizenship, which are based on inclusion and participation. As was elucidated in Chapter One, Phelan argues that homophobic discourse aims to stigmatise gays and lesbians as "strangers" and thus deny them "acknowledgement" as citizens (2001: 26-27). The attachment of stigma occurs because the polity is constructed in heteronormative, masculine terms and the presence of gays and lesbians threaten these norms. In South Africa, militarised hegemonic masculinity was heterosexual and the body politic was formed around the concept of the nuclear family.

The fact that objectors and members of the End Conscription Campaign were frequently subject to homophobic attacks demonstrates the deployment of sexuality in a militarised state. The perception of ECC activists and objectors as sexually promiscuous and also sexually 'deviant' was clearly placed in the SADF's collective attitude towards the ECC. Sexuality and in particular, the growth of the gay liberation movement was directly linked to the growth of white anti-apartheid and anti-

scription politics. The use of homophobia as a discursive tactic against objectors and the ECC was one of the primary discourses used to 'smear' the organization. ECC activist Sarah Hills admitted that her interrogation with Special Branch included "various questions related to personal relationships, intimate questions related to sexuality" (ECC Collection, File B1.4.4). Military Intelligence also took a close interest in the sexual identity of Ivan Toms and Mike Rautenbach (Military Intelligence, File B1.1.2.3). It is therefore unsurprising that homophobia was utilised as the most vicious stigmatising tactic against objectors. Gay objector, Ivan Toms, was vilified in an ad-hoc and localized campaign that used homophobic stigma (Toms, 1994). The use of sexuality in this way points to the fact that military service constituted hegemonic norms of sexual citizenship as well as gendered citizenship. Men and women who opposed conscription were vulnerable to homophobic stigma, whether they were gay or not.

The Veterans for Victory group often used crude homophobia in its anti-ECC literature, which was disseminated in schools, university campuses and in the media. "Many people have no idea just how dangerous this bunch of fairy farts can be", it claimed of the ECC in one of its early leaflets, "never have I known any nation anytime to produce brave, loyal or even trustworthy pacifists or anti-conscription or for that matter conscientious objectors, it cannot happen it is a contradiction in itself" ('Vets for Victory Newsletter', undated [ECC Collection, File C5]). In another newsletter Veterans for Victory explained:

ECC; Our version: E-motional, C-owardly, C-hickenhearted. Now let's expose these E-motional, C-owardly, C-hickenhearted Wets, Woofahs and Waverers for what they really are...Unlike the Tweetie-pies of the ECC, with their predictable flutter of yellow feathers, must good men stand idle, while murderers, rapists and arsonists rome [sic] the Black townships? ('Vets for Victory Newsletter', undated [ECC Collection, File C5]).

Homophobic stigma was clearly deployed against objectors and the ECC in this example and it is used to discount any political principles that may be held by the objectors themselves. Objectors are also contrasted with the 'good men' of the SADF. This contrast was discerned in a semiotic study of 'Vets' literature and cartoons:

The soldier, the warrior, the redeemer; find his juxtaposition in the 'Other', in this case the 'Other' is the ECC member who refuses to answer the call up and take up arms: the marginalising of this 'Other' is given added emphasis by the threatening of "his" sexual identity. In stark contrast to the potency of the warrior, the ECC member is

stripped of his virility and manhood and made into a member. The ECC member is a nerd, a *moffie* [effeminate man], a queer (Graaf et. al., 1988l: 49).

The objector, refusing to do military service, was deviant, effeminate, subversive, impotent, untrustworthy, disloyal, and a dangerous conduit for communist domination. General Malan described members of the ECC as “Mommy’s little boys” (cited in Cock, 1993: 73). An anonymous poster campaign in Cape Town carried slogans such as, “ECC Does It From Behind” and “The ECC Believes in Fairy Tales”. Later, more sophisticated Veterans for Victory literature carried a cover page emblazoned with “Queer Birds These War Resisters” [Figure 20]. Underneath the slogan was a cartoon of an ostrich with its head buried in the ground (a reference to the ECC’s naivety). Behind the ostrich were slightly obscured newspaper articles referring to the rise of the gay liberation movement in South Africa, other articles referred to ‘groups’ active in school playgrounds. The leaflet clearly played on the moral fears of gay liberation and deeper fears of gay paedophilia. The use of homophobia against objectors and their supporters was a vicious, yet particularly effective, means of stigmatising the personal identities of the participants and thereby obscuring their political message and questioning their right to exist in the public realm as political actors.

The stigmatisation of objectors was also expressed in visual terms and in a style that mirrored the ECC’s use of cartoons and visual imagery to attack conscription. Figure 21 shows a cartoon that vividly depicts the three political constructs of friend, enemy and stranger and the use of stigma to purge the political ambivalence of the ECC’s message. The enemy (possibly a Cuban soldier) is portrayed as a giant, monstrous, aggressive, dishevelled, armed and unclean soldier. He is stood slavering over a physically diminutive, camp and effeminate ECC activist. The ECC activist is clearly perturbed by the figure of the enemy (i.e. he is not *the* enemy, he also views the soldier as some form of threat), but his personal attributes and beliefs mean he cannot respond effectively to the threat the enemy poses. He could neither be an effective soldier and more importantly, he and those who support him are undermining the ‘friends’ and defenders, represented as the SADF (shown as the shadow/blood mark he is standing on). The message to the white population is clear, the ECC figure may not *be* the enemy, but the ECC’s political message, which springs from a mixture of sexual deviance, naivety and mischief, will undermine the army and leave South Africa to the mercy of the enemy. If all South African men behaved in this way, they would make unsuitable soldiers and the SADF would resemble the shadow in the cartoon in the face of the monstrous aggressor. The ECC’s right to political agency is challenged in this cartoon and the cartoon reflects a wider

state discourse. Figure 22 represents ECC activists as men who do not conform to the norms of hegemonic masculinity. The cartoon portrays the objector as emaciated, 'bookish' and easy prey for the animalistic, subhuman communist, who manipulates the naivety of ECC for its aggressive ends. Again, the ECC is not represented as an enemy, they are human (and white), not animal (or black), but they are "fools" and "cowards". Their message is not one of political conviction, but one of cowardice and sexual deviance.

The state's response to the ECC and in particular, the use of homophobic discourses to stigmatise the personal identity of objectors and ECC activists had a critical impact on the movement. This was especially the case in the wake of the restrictions of the State of Emergency and the 'strategic shift' adopted in 1987 (outlined in Chapter Two). The ECC faced tough choices in late-1980s and the 'strategic shift' was an essentially populist political strategy that sought to work with, in order to subvert, rather than challenge the dominant norms of white society. The appeal to businessmen and serving conscripts changed the nature of objection as a performance and aimed to sidestep the state's efforts at stigmatising the ECC. Changes in strategy in the wider liberation movement also impacted on the ECC. In an attempt to revive the ECC after the shock of the detentions and harassment during the State of Emergency, the movement unveiled the slogan 'War is No Solution: Let's Choose Peace'. This aimed at re-energizing the movement, sidestepping the Emergency regulations and attacking South Africa's militarisation. Yet the slogan, and the rationale behind it, provoked deep divisions in the ECC. As a broad alliance, those on the left and those most favourable to the ANC felt the pacifist connotations of the campaign were a betrayal of the 'armed struggle' that the ANC was advocating to liberate the country. After divisions had effectively hamstrung the campaign, the slogan was dropped (Anderson, 1990b: 60). As part of the 'conscript focus' strategy, the ECC produced a booklet specifically aimed at conscripts called 'Know Your Rights'. The booklet set out a conscripts legal rights whilst serving in the SADF and began by pointing out that "many of our members have been in the SADF...the End Conscription Campaign opposes the system of compulsory military service and not the conscript himself. We are campaigning for a change in the law regarding compulsory military service" (Know Your Rights, 1988 [ECC Collection, File M1.5]). The fact that an advice booklet was being produced for conscripts to ease their participation in the SADF was a considerable departure nevertheless. Indeed, Willem Steenkamp claimed that some SADF officers wished they had produced such a booklet themselves (cited in Collins 1995: 94). The ECC also met with SADF officers in Cape Town in 1988 to discuss their proposals for alternative national

service (a meeting that achieved little) (Recording and documents relating to ECC/SADF Meeting, 15 June 1988 [ECC Collection, File F3]). The ECC's 'strategic shift' may have been politically expedient but it significantly restricted the performance of objection and the participation of ECC activists in the public realm.

In 1987, as the controversies surrounding the 'strategic shift' and the effects of the state's attacks continued, the date for Dr Ivan Toms's trial for objection was set. Toms initially wished to cite his gay sexuality in his statement of objection and incorporate sexuality into his public performance. The internal debate of how to frame the objection campaign of gay objector Dr Ivan Toms in 1987-1988 was to nearly split the movement and Toms himself considered leaving the ECC and conducting his own campaign at one stage).¹⁵ The analysis of the Toms campaign suggests that the ECC adopted an 'assimilatory' oppositional approach in response to the state's attacks and aimed to appear 'respectable' to the white population. Toms was eventually dissuaded from citing his sexuality in his official statement of objection and it was not mentioned in campaign literature regarding his case. Although the state prosecutor brought up Toms's sexuality during his trial (in an attempt to question Toms Christianity) it was not commented on by the press and disregarded by the magistrate sentencing Toms (Interview with author, 13/3/2003; Toms, 1994). Toms himself believes that although he mentioned his sexuality and its impact on his decision to object to some university student groups, most white South Africans were unaware of his sexuality (Interview with author, 13/3/2003). Toms was effectively performing objection from a heteronormative basis. The heteronormativity of the state and of military service as a constitutive heteronormative practice, meant that objection in this instance was not a radical challenge to hegemonic constructs of masculinity and citizenship.

Ivan Toms recognised that his sexuality could cause controversy in the realms of white society. In a letter to a friend in 1983 Toms wrote:

Homosexuality is a very difficult subject to discuss as it touches and threatens one's own sexuality and is especially threatening to White South African males who have been brought up with untold prejudices towards "queers" (GALA, File AM2798).

¹⁵ Toms and the Organisation of Gays and Lesbians Against Oppression (OLGA) (a gay rights movement with an anti-apartheid standpoint) had been engaged in an acrimonious debate with the ECC about how to frame Toms's campaign. The ECC's wish to not include references to Toms's sexuality lead Toms to consider leaving the ECC and running his campaign under the auspices of OLGA (Letter from Julia Nicol to Trevor Payne and Sipiwe Machel 27/4/1988 [GALA AM2846])

However, as Toms became increasingly convinced of his intention to refuse to serve any further commitments to the SADF, he did so with a deepening consciousness of the interconnections between his own sexuality, militarisation and oppression in South African society. Indeed, Toms believes his exploration of his own sexual identity empowered him to object. Toms explained, "I was becoming more aware as a gay person how society worked against gay people, particularly, of course, in the church. So I think that almost on an emotional connection" (Interview with author, 27/1/2003) In his draft statement of objection Toms also wrote, "In the SADF, I saw the double standards applied to gays". Essentially, Toms wrote, his experience as a gay man helped him to,

feel the rejection that blacks feel in apartheid society...From the pain of my own experience of rejection, I have come to the conclusion that rejection of any person on the grounds of race, sex, sexual orientation, class or economic position is destructive of the person and society. You cannot pick and choose in which area to work for liberation – they all belong together (GALA, File AM 2798)

Toms later also felt that he also had a desire, "to show that gays were just as brave and principled as the many straights that had refused to serve" (Toms, 1994, 259). This sense of difference, premised on a marginalized sexual identity, provoked this wider political awareness and empowered Rautenbach and Toms to object. Phillips, writes how, in this sense, gay identity can be empowering:

It forces me onto a liminal path from which centralised power and the singular absolutism of its 'truth' are inevitably challenged...being queer offers a direct understanding of marginality, a recognition of subordinated truths with a concomitant questioning of authority and a subversion of 'certainties' that might otherwise be taken for granted (Phillips, 2001, 1).

Whilst it is incorrect to suggest that marginalised sexual identity engenders the decision to break with practices of hegemonic masculinity and citizenship, such as conscription, to incorporate sexual identity into the performance of objection would have posed a 'radical democratic' challenge to dominant conceptions of citizenship and masculinity in South Africa. At the same time, however, it would have been a performative act undertaken at a time when the state branded objectors as gay and effeminate.

Toms was subject personally to the homophobic stigmatisation of the state (albeit at a local level). Toms reflects that, "To the South African Defence Force, it seemed obvious to use the fact I was gay to discredit me" (1994: 258). This would,

after all, build on the general thrust of anti-ECC discourse that conflated homosexuality with cowardice and objection to military service. Dr Ivan Toms was perhaps the most personally harassed of all objectors. Toms received up to thirty abusive telephone calls a day (including death threats) and had his house and car vandalised (Interview with author, 27/1/2003). A homophobic campaign against Toms was orchestrated in Cape Town, homophobic graffiti was daubed near his home and more professionally produced posters were plastered across the city with epithets such as “Toms is a moffie pig”, “Toms – HIV Test Positive” and “Toms dumped by lover Graham Pearlman” (Toms, 1994 [see Figure 23]). Toms’ wish to use his sexuality in his performance of objection was bound to provoke a debate within the ECC given the homophobic nature of the state’s attacks. It was the decision of how Toms’s identity would be framed for the performance of his objection and whether his marginalized subjectivity would be incorporated into his narrative of self-empowerment that became the focus of the debate.

The resistance the inclusion of sexuality as part of the performance of objection was effectively a debate centred on whether there would be a radical challenge to conscription or one that was assimilatory. The main protagonists opposed to the concept of introducing sexuality into the discourse of anti-conscription were two gay members of the ECC, Mike Rautenbach and Chippie Olver. Rautenbach contends that at the time he and Olver were not saying, “don’t say you’re gay, but the issue here is about conscription and objection to the apartheid army...it wasn’t necessary for him (Toms) to put it in” (Interview with author, 13/3/2003). The effect of using sexuality, as a basis for objection “would have played into some of the stereotypes that existed at the time, you know, that *moffies* [derogatory term for a gay man]...that the objector movement was made up of a bunch of queers, *dagga* [marijuana] smokers and drug addicts” (Interview with author, 13/03/2003). Toms’ interpretation of their argument was “ah, you’re this little angel and we don’t want you to lose support because of you being gay” (Interview with author, 27/1/2003). Other objectors also share Rautenbach’s view. Saul Batzofin believes that “South Africa just wasn’t ready for it” (Interview with author, 9/1/2003) and Douglas Torr commented that it was a necessary strategic decision, that the “Doctor goes to gaol” tag was the most effective public face Toms could present and his sexuality could have destabilized this (Interview with author, 19/3/2003). Toms’ advocate during the trial, Edwin Cameron, also believes that, “ECC was a spectacularly successful *one issue* organisation and that is the only reason why we decided that the unnecessary ‘issue’ or ‘cause’ focus on Ivan's homosexuality would be a distraction from the central issue of his conscientious objection” (Personal correspondence with author,

12/5/2005). As Ivan Toms' trial approached in 1988, the ECC conducted its affairs with an unprecedented concern for its public front and how its new target constituency would interpret it. Indeed, a Toms campaign t-shirt bearing the anti-Vietnam legend 'You can jail the resistor, but not the resistance' was vetoed for being "too confrontational"; 'Conscripts need alternatives' replaced it (Anderson, 1990b: 75). Toms's ECC campaign literature remarked that "In many respects Ivan Toms is like any other ordinary white South African" and focussed on his Christian, Officer and Doctor identities and even cited the fact he had been captain of the school rugby team (ECC Leaflet, 'Why We Support Dr Ivan Toms' [ECC Collection, File E1.1.2]) The identification of Toms's sexuality as a factor that would destabilise his performance of objection and 'play into' the stigmatisation tactics of the state reveals that objectors were constrained by the state's response and that the white public realm was perceived as heteronormative by the ECC. It should have been possible to include the influence of his sexuality on his decision to object; after all, Toms's growing gay consciousness engendered the 'breach' from hegemonic norms in white society and enabled him to object.

The controversy surrounding the Ivan Toms campaign provoked a fierce debate in the emerging gay and rights movement in South Africa, with a minority of activists arguing that support for Toms should be withdrawn because of their perception that the ECC had decided to conduct the campaign from a heteronormative basis (GALA archives AM 2520). Other activists and the leadership of the gay and lesbian movement rejected this as absurd and argued that Toms did represent his identity as a gay man in his daily life and in other public contexts (this is also something that Toms advocate, Edwin Cameron, argues) (GALA archive, 2520: Personal Correspondence, 24/4/2005; 12/5/2005). However, in removing all references to his sexuality, Toms reflects that,

I think I was backing off from what was also an important political thing...I heard what Mike and Chippie were saying; that's why I didn't override it myself. Politics is a game where you don't always tell the truth, but I understood that...I suppose for me why I was unhappy why we didn't do that is that it made me feel that I was not actually being as true as I should have to myself about my reasons for going to prison (Interview with author, 13/3/2003).

It would have been possible, after all, to present a convincing case to the Board for Religious Objectors and to undertake a period of alternative national service. Whilst Toms' Christianity was a profound influence over his decision to objection, "nothing took away from the fact I was gay, that was part of me, there wasn't such a person as a straight Ivan Toms" (Interview with author, 27/1/2003). Toms' sexual identity was

at the centre of his construction of self and he remains convinced that he should have deployed it in challenging hegemonic norms in South Africa. Mike Rautenbach continues to believe that the strategic decision the ECC took for the Toms campaign was the right one. As he remarked about the ECC's general policy on the performance of objection,

We didn't need them [objectors] to walk down the streets smoking *dagga* [marijuana]. I would use the same analysis; we didn't have to go down the street saying we were gay...I don't think that *that* public front was necessary on that level. I still don't think so. Heterosexual people do not have to say they're heterosexual; they never have to say that. It's only gay people who have to say that and that somehow, I think it has driven a lot of gay people into being strongly gay identified, that they are gay before they are Ivan, and that is something I have never been able to identify with (Interview with author, 13/3/2003).

Contained in this rebuff is the question of which identities are to be included or excluded in the performance of objection and the extent of the challenge to the state. Rautenbach rejects the notion that his sexual identity should be privileged above all others and certainly does not accept that sexuality should have been incorporated into the ECC's political message. The separation of 'sexual' identity as an issue that was considered a side issue to objection reveals the power of the state's stigmatising discourse and the fact that the ECC was prepared to adopt an assimilatory approach in the face of it.

The ECC also diverged from its anti-Vietnam predecessor in the avoidance of sexual politics. Commenting on the anti-Vietnam war protestors, Highleyman notes that, "radical antiwar politics helped shape the development of the new gay liberation movement. In addition, the draft forced queer men to come to terms with their sexuality" (8/4/2003; also, Suran, 2001).¹⁶ The combination of the ECC's embeddedness in the white social environment and the political atmosphere the State of Emergency created effectively tied the ECC to the state's republican, heterosexual discourse and put the movement on a conservative trajectory that was dramatically different from, for example, its forebears in the anti-Vietnam war movement. As discussed in Chapter One, Phelan notes that the quest for 'respectability' offers the chance to enter the hegemonic norms of society, yet it is a quest that is "doomed to

¹⁶ Suran writes "Gay Liberation's alignment with 1960s radicalism found its highest expression in the culture of antiwar protest. Here the correlative radical imperatives of coming-out-as-gay and opposing-the-Vietnam-War could be realized simultaneously in political practice: antiwar demonstrations were in fact instrumental in bringing homosexual politics out of the closet and into the streets" (2001: 470-471).

fail” (1999, 94). The strategy of assimilation is premised on one group of strangers ‘othering’ the less respectable strangers (in this case Toms who wished to be openly gay). This leaves the basis of the construction of strangers and the rationale behind the gender hierarchy completely untouched and ensures that even ‘respectable’ strangers will never fully be accepted. The ECC simply was not prepared to take the political choice of embodying sexual identities. Toms accepts that this strategy worked in the terms Rautenbach wanted it to; “I don’t think the average person knew I was gay. I just think they thought I was this very good person who was doing such good work in Crossroads and a very moral person” (Interview with author, 14/3/2003). However, if Toms had disrupted the heteronormative basis of this identity, he may well have disrupted the nature of this respect, but he may also have presented a truly radical challenge to the militarised and racist norms of white identity. Toms, by openly sexualising his objection, would have embraced his identity as a ‘stranger; and would have embodied a profoundly destabilising identity in the public realm. The state’s stigmatising discourse would have had to been engaged directly by the ECC and this would have presented the opportunity to neutralise and deconstruct it.

The analysis of the state’s response to objectors reveals that policing the ruling class is as much a state project as the defence against a supposed enemy and that the primary means for this disciplinary project is the buttressing of a heteronormative gender binary. The state responded to this threat by drawing on a well-developed cultural discourse that defined the white nation (and the Nationalist state) in virile, manly and militaristic terms. Critics of the regime from within the white community were interpreted as weak, cowardly and capitulating to South Africa’s enemies. However, objector’s dissidence as ‘strangers’ in the public realm made Nationalist elites insecure about the potential impact of objectors and other peace activists’ transgressive message. The state often struggled to adequately or coherently represent objectors to the rest of the white population, but the state’s use of homophobia acutely stigmatized objectors and peace activists. Homophobia also reveals the inherent heteronormativity of the public performance of military service (regardless of whether participants in the military are heterosexual or not) and objectors and members of the ECC were subject to homophobic stigmatization because they opposed service in the military, not because they were actually gay or lesbian. The efficacy of homophobic discourse was evident in the response of objectors and their supporters to it. As the 1980s progressed, homophobic attacks increasingly influenced and constrained the performance of objection and created controversy for women activists and gay objectors, such as Ivan Toms, who were pressurised to conduct their campaigns from a heteronormative and ‘respectable’ premise.

Conclusion

Saul: When I came out [of prison] I went to Lusaka to meet the ANC, which was quite freaky because it was us from the anti-war movement and some soldiers and then the ANC. The ANC and the soldiers got on like a house on fire and in fact us anti-militants were almost the enemy. They really got along and they couldn't understand us.

Daniel: Really? Why was that?

Saul: *Ag*, they were all soldiers, they had all the same toys they were paging through the journals about military gear. You saw that there was a lot more commonality than you really thought and the commonality was between the soldiers on the two sides and not the peace movement.

Daniel: So, did they take you seriously?

Saul: I suppose we had some very strong people, Laurie Nathan was there. I think they take Laurie quite seriously, he's an academic and he talks a lot of sense and I spoke to a couple of cadres [in MK] and we discussed the options and they were very supportive of what I'd done because it raised the whole profile of the movement, but at a strategic level I don't think. I mean, what we were doing was undermining apartheid and undermining the military and that was good, it was part of the strategy, but I think they would have rather we become MK cadres and actually fought

Saul Batzofin, Interview with the author, 5/12/2002.

The aim of this thesis has been to analyse the contestation of masculinities and citizenship focussing on compulsory military service in apartheid South Africa. In the Introduction, I set out to assess whether the performances of objectors and ECC activists were radical, or whether they were assimilatory with hegemonic tropes and practices of citizenship and masculinity. Saul Batzofin's testimony vividly

demonstrates the power of militarised masculinity and of how the socially defined camaraderie between soldiers can transgress significant political and racial divides. It was this conflation of masculinity and militarism and the social production of militarised subjectivities that objectors and ECC activists had to contest, deconstruct and reformulate if they were to successfully reconfigure hegemonic tropes of masculinity and citizenship. The above extract suggests that this reconfiguration did not occur, or at least it was partial and contingent. Batzofin's anecdote illustrates the argument of this thesis: that objectors challenged many facets of hegemonic masculinity and citizenship, but the radical potential of objection was ultimately circumscribed.

A key component of this thesis has been to analyse relations of power *within* the ECC as a social movement. Analysing these relations in terms of inter-personal dynamics and in particular, gender ideologies performed by activists in their behaviour in private and public has not been a common endeavour in the academic study of social movements (Hassim, 2005: 188; Sasson-Levy and Rapoport, 2003: 388). Helman and Rapoport have also argued that the *mode* of a peace movement's protest should be analysed in order to assess how that movement challenged, reformulated or buttressed existing norms in society (particularly gender norms) (1997: 682). The empirical evidence presented here suggests that the ECC and objectors performed a shifting and complex set of challenges to militarised gender norms, but also were subject to pressures to adopt more assimilatory and conservative messages. In particular, the motherist discourse discussed in Chapter Four was in line both with the ANC's address to women and with the apartheid state's language of white femininity. As such, it did not challenge existing gender relations but sought to reformulate the content of white femininity and to de-militarise motherhood as a role. This conservative mode of protest reveals the discursive confines within which the ECC operated: confines influenced by the liberation movement and by the state. The liberation movement was itself increasingly willing to work within the discursive framework of the state and white society, particularly after 1987 (as discussed in Chapter Two). It was this conservative framework that increasingly limited the ECC and ensured the movement kept within heteronormative and 'respectable' boundaries. A consideration for contemporary peace movements (such as in Israel, the US and Turkey), is whether this approach maximises the movement's appeal and furthers

strategic goals, or whether it limits the radical potential of the peace movement and fails to address the stigmatising discourse of the state. The evidence presented by the South African case study suggests that assimilatory strategies do little to counter the attacks of the state, but may help maintain significant public sympathy for objectors.

The rich empirical data contained in the previous Chapters has been crafted to illuminate the theoretical positions discussed in Chapter One. A key question in this theoretical work is the relationship between the performance of identity made by individual objectors, the inter-relationship with the ECC and the ECC's collective identity compared to individual objectors protest. War resisters positions as 'strangers' in the public realm and the impact this had on the ideological challenge the movement posed individually and collectively. The apartheid state encompassed Althusser's 'ideological state apparatus' *par excellence*: the education system, economy, legal system and popular culture coerced and rewarded whites for their complicity with and participation in the republic's militarisation. Military service itself was a powerful disciplinary ritual. Militarization was defined as a public and personal good and by doing so national service appeared 'common sense' and individuals were encouraged to exercise agency in 'choosing' to serve in the SADF in order to gain the maximum personal benefits and accrue the status of participating in a collective and celebrated endeavour. Yet as Connell and Messerschmidt's framework suggests (used in Chapters Three and Four) the construction of hegemonic norms is not a monolithic process but is a complex interplay of individual and collective practices occurring on and between multiple levels of discourse. The individual subject is not abstracted from this and he or she is not merely a tool for the ideological state apparatus. Individual and collective dissonance and contestation can and does occur and the state, in response, can adapt, assimilate and stigmatise individuals or groups in an attempt to preserve the status quo. The individual process of dissonance experienced by the objectors in South Africa was expressed as a 'breach' from practices in their everyday lives that lead to an altered perception of what empowerment, agency and duty meant in white society. This dissonance occurred at an individual physical level (in school sports or in the army) and/or at a social and psychological level (through differing class, religious, linguistic or sexual identities). This sense of 'strangeness' was used to contest the ideological state apparatus and individual objectors could

appear empowered, embody agency and growth and argue that it was national servicemen who had been disempowered.

As has been discussed, the performance of individual objection was also subject (and sometimes constrained by) the collective identity of the ECC and the public sphere as defined by the state. Objection was a performance that involved a considerable degree of negotiation and occasional compromise. The ECC was a social movement that did, in its initial stages at least, embody a 'breach' from white society and its campaigns were influenced by the bohemian and alternative lifestyles accepted by the group. War resistance was therefore not only a performance adopted because one reacted against the rituals and norms of apartheid society but also because the ECC could be perceived to be an attractive, rebellious and fun organisation to participate in. Participation in the ECC also gave objectors an important sense that theirs was a performance with much wider and systemic significance than if they were acting alone. This factor was particularly significant in encouraging compromise by individual objectors should there be conflict over strategy. The advantages of objectors and the ECC embracing their 'strangeness' in white society are expressed by Bauman:

One cannot knock on a door unless one is outside; and it is the act of knocking on the door which alerts the residents to the fact that the one who knocks is indeed outside. 'Being outside' casts the stranger in the position of *objectivity*: his is at an outside, detached and autonomous vantage point from which the insiders (complete with their world view, including their map of friends and enemies) may be looked upon, scrutinized and censored (1991: 78).

It was this that gave objectors their power, their sense of empowerment and the ability to contest, satirise and destabilise the normative foundations of the apartheid state. However, the ability of the ECC to maintain this 'outside' strangeness diminished as the apartheid state responded to the movement with increasing vigour. Assimilation was bound to become increasingly attractive and appear the only conceivable strategic option for the movement. The liberation movement also created a discursive framework that the ECC and objectors could choose to assimilate with or step outside of. As the 1980s progressed the liberation movements framework coalesced with white society's, as the need to appeal to whites grew and the ECC

chose to assimilate with this discourse and thereby reduce the 'breach' from white society it once embodied.

The analytical questions posed in the Introduction and Chapter One have been used, to some degree, in the exploration of South Africa's apartheid era women's movement and in contemporary Israel's peace movement. Hassim (2006), analysing the emergence of South Africa's women's and feminist movement, concludes that women's groups were subject to the imperatives of the liberation struggle and that this exerted an increasingly conservative and inhibitive influence on the groups. In particular, as the women's movement became increasingly allied with the UDF as the 1980s progressed, such affiliation "was a way of undermining both women's autonomy, political organization and independent political strategy" (31). A combination of factors (including the ANC's high level commitment to women's rights) meant that despite this trend women's political voice organised and became powerful in the crucial transition period between 1990 and 1994. As was noted in Chapter Five (and is demonstrated by Batzofin's quote in the opening of this Chapter), this was not the case for the ECC as a peace movement or for individual objectors (acting as objectors rather than individuals contributing in some other capacity to the transition period). The ECC as a 'one issue' campaign, rather than a more broadly focussed women's movement, would explain the lack of collective power during the transition. However, the contested and neglected nature of the ECC's and individual objectors contribution to the liberation struggle suggests that the group did not establish a firm ideological foothold in the liberation movement and served more instrumental purposes, particularly after 1987 when the group adopted more conservative, assimilatory tone in order to appeal to mainstream white society.

The implications of this thesis exploring a neglected aspect of South African history were discussed in the Introduction. As narrative accounts of life history and the representation of collective social movements in the relatively recent past define contemporary subjectivities, the data presented in this work may have been presented differently. For example, Everett's *Breaking Ranks* (1989), which detailed war resisters in the US, adopted a life history approach and devoted one chapter to each individual case study of a man who had resisted the military or militarisation. Adopting a detailed life history approach for this body of work would have

emphasised the undoubted courage of the individual objectors, but would have inadequately explored the inter-relationship between individual objection and the ECC as an organisation. It would have also been difficult to analyse the ideological message of the ECC with such an approach. Using the theoretical framework of the thesis enables cross-national and cross-historical comparison. Finally, it was not the intention of this body of work to create a celebratory history of the ECC designed to increase political and social claims of South Africa's white community.

Throughout the thesis, compulsory military service and objection to it were defined as performances in the public realm that were constitutive of individual and collective gendered, sexual and political identity. Establishing the theoretical framework of the study occurred in Chapter One, where it was argued that for republican (or civic-republican) tropes of citizenship, undertaking certain performances in the public realm are the only means of attaining political agency and being publicly affirmed as a citizen. Throughout history, civic-republicanism has made military service the ultimate performance of citizenship. Being affirmed 'as a man' is also a performative public act and soldiering, in particular, becomes defined as a masculine rite of passage in militarised societies. Connell's typology of hegemonic, subordinate and complicit masculinities was important to the study, but throughout the thesis the concept of multiple discourses of hegemonic masculinity and which can adapt and 'rejuvenate' if challenged was central to conceptualising the contestation of masculinities and citizenship as a fluid and multi-faceted process. In societies where compulsory military service exists, this broad and malleable articulation of hegemonic masculinity is needed if *all* men regardless of their abilities, ideals or identities are to participate in the army. This was particularly the case in apartheid South Africa. As Chapters Two and Three explored, conscription became a central governance strategy aimed at creating and mediating a potentially fractious white political identity. Without the universal participation by men in compulsory military service, militarised masculinities and the gendered binaries that underpin them become vulnerable.

As has been demonstrated throughout the thesis, men who object to military service expose this vulnerability by their alternative performance of masculinity and

citizenship in the public realm. Yet, as I have argued, men who object are ‘strangers’ in the public realm because of their ambivalent subjectivity in a militarised and gendered binary of insiders and outsiders (or in Bauman’s terms, friends and enemies). Objectors cannot easily be defined as ‘the enemy’, for they are part of the same group expected to perform the ultimate act of citizenship and masculinity that is military service and could accede to hegemonic status, at any time, if they performed this act. Enemies could not accede to this status and as Chapter Three noted, even black men who served in the SADF were defined and presented in subordinate terms to white men. Furthermore, objectors’ public acts take place in the same public realm as those of the ‘friends’ and is aimed at persuading other insiders to question military service as a mark of citizenship and masculinity and ideally, also to resist serving. Objectors’ ambivalence is also expressed by the fact that they contest a central mark of citizenship and yet claim to be the embodiment of true citizenship themselves, attempting to redefine the political community. Gendered and militarised values of duty, loyalty, sacrifice, courage and bravery are contested by objectors and their supporters and sometimes contested in ways that are mimetic to serving soldiers. The ambivalence of this performance gives rise to the temptation to assimilate with certain hegemonic norms in an effort to be ‘taken seriously’ and appear ‘respectable’. This is especially true when the state attempts to buttress militarised binaries by attempting to isolate and stigmatise objectors with the aim of expelling or ‘purging’ objectors from the public realm. It has been a central contention of the thesis that adopting assimilatory strategies may meet short-term political aims but changes the nature of the performance of objection and changes it in a way that undermines the radical critique of militarised, gendered and heteronormative identity production.

A key contribution of the thesis has been to analyse the use of sexuality as a disciplinary tool in a militarised social context and to conceptualise the performance of conscription as a heteronormative practice. Broadening the definition of hegemonic masculinity to include previously marginalised masculine attributes and the articulation of military service as a productive means of developing these attributes did not change the heteronormativity of the state, however. Conscription was a supposedly transformative performance for men and the public symbolism of conscripts in a militarised society made men, whatever their sexuality or attributes,

complicit with hegemony. When men refused to serve in the military (and also, if women refused to support men in their 'duty') the masculinist and heteronormative nature of the state became clear.

As was argued in Chapter Five, the apartheid state used the notion of the heterosexual family as a potent symbol in white society and interpreted political dissent against the government as the result of a decline in heterosexual morality and a rise in the gay liberation movement. Furthermore, the state deployed homophobia to 'feminise' and stigmatise objectors and their supporters, whether they were gay or not. The use of homophobia in this way was the most effective means of attacking objectors from the perspective of the state and was aimed at stigmatisation and thus negating the political agency of objectors and their supporters. The effects of this homophobic discourse on objectors and the ECC were clear. The public performance of women ECC activists as 'wives' and 'mothers' (analysed in Chapter Four) was an assimilatory strategy designed to mirror the state's appeal to white women in the heterosexual family unit and was undertaken despite more radical feminist critiques within the organisation. The case study of Dr Ivan Toms in Chapter Five raised the questions of whether to pose a radical democratic challenge to hegemonic norms (as defined in Chapter One) or to opt for a populist assimilatory strategy. The Chapter argued that in the face of the homophobic stigmatisation by the state, the ECC encouraged Toms to emphasise the heteronormative aspects of his identity, such as his officer status, his Christianity and rugby-playing past. This assimilatory strategy sought to engage with, rather than challenge, what it was to be 'taken seriously' and 'respected' in white society and recognised the role of participating in the military in order to gain this esteem. However, citing Phelan in Chapter One, I argued that, rather than challenging them, assimilatory strategies reinforce hegemonic norms and accede to dominant mechanisms of identity production. Furthermore, the metaphor of 'the closet', which conceals attempts to conceal the more 'deviant' aspects of the actor's identity, can merely act as a 'screen' onto which stigmatising discourses are projected. In apartheid South Africa, objectors and ECC activists continued to be subject to homophobic discourse and attacks despite their efforts to appear 'respectable' whites.

The conclusion that the ECC adopted an assimilatory strategy for performing objection does not mean that objection was fruitless or entirely ineffective. As

Chapter Four argued, there were multiple performances of objection and peace activism, many of which were extremely powerful and iconic. Chapter Three noted how hegemonic constructs of militarised masculinity (and femininity) were engendered within and between three levels of the local, regional and global. These ranged from interpersonal interactions and rituals, to state level discourses and global influences from popular culture and Western ideologies. The resistance to and critique of conscription also occurred within and between these levels. Primarily, objectors experienced a breach with hegemonic norms and rituals either at school, in the home or whilst in the military itself. From this breach a self-reflexive narrative of gender identity and citizenship emerged: one that claimed empowerment, courage and self-development for objectors themselves and by implication, portrayed serving conscripts as disempowered and trapped. These narratives became a central aspect of objectors' performances in the public realm, most notably during their criminal trials. The performance of objection easily incorporated and exacerbated social fractures within the white elite and the changing use of the military. Chapter Four showed how the use of troops in the townships, the escalating war in Namibia and the emerging evidence of post traumatic stress disorder in returning conscripts was skilfully highlighted by objectors and their supporters. The individual performance of objection could powerfully challenge the state on a moral, political and personal level.

The porosity of the 'breach' from white society and the ambivalent subjectivities of peace activists, in particular, were discussed in Chapter Four. The sub-cultural space that the ECC afforded and benefited from was not immune from wider pressures in white society and this was precisely because the ECC had to influence white society and undertake political acts in the public realm. The considerable feminist critique and debates within the ECC and their translation into the public face of the movement is a case in point. Inter-personal relations, discussions and communal activities could engender activists and objectors with the means and courage to perform transgressive political identities in the public realm, but the need to be taken seriously, to earn respect and avoid censure could restrict the ability of activists to perform the logical conclusion of the sub-cultural identities performed within the movement. The ECC's cultural positioning did allow the movement to undertake creative and innovative campaigns, using satire, music and art

to subvert tropes of hegemonic masculinity. The imagery of conscripts being warped, restrained and restricted by military service powerfully contested the state's contention that conscription was an essential rite of passage that would unleash a man's masculinity. The ECC's campaigns involving fasting and conducting 'alternative' and peaceful 'national service' combined well with the stand of individual objectors and directly contested the state's claim of monopoly over morality, duty and acting in the nation's interest.

Throughout the thesis, the contextually-based and shifting nature of militarisation was emphasised as creating opportunities and constraints for the state and for objectors. Chapter Two outlined South Africa's militarisation and noted that although it was a profound aspect of statehood and social organisation, it was progressive and inconsistent. Furthermore, the waning military and political fortunes of the apartheid state and the changing rationale and objectives of the liberation movement were a decisive influence on the ECC and the performance of objection. The ECC's role in the wider liberation struggle contributed to the ambivalence of their public political performance. The 'strategic shift' adopted by the movement was in response to the harassment experienced by the movement from the state, the rightward shift in the white electorate and was at the behest of the wider liberation movement. The 'strategic shift' openly addressed the need to appear respectable, to be aware of who speaks on public platforms and even to pay attention to the clothes and general appearance of activists. The identification of serving conscripts, potential conscripts and the business community in South Africa as the ECC's 'constituency' dramatically impacted on the narratives available to peace activists and objectors. It was a strategy that was openly assimilatory with hegemonic norms. Even the open opposition to conscription was diluted with the publication of the 'Know Your Rights' booklet and the meeting between the ECC and SADF in 1988. The heteronormative restrictions on the Ivan Toms campaign were a direct consequence of the strategic shift. The performance of objection and the rationale of the ECC in light of the strategic shift can be considered as fulfilling wider political goals to the specific aim of challenging conscription and the social processes that create militarised identities. Essentially, the ECC had become a movement that aimed to provide a credible liberal voice in the white community and attempt to prepare whites for a transition to

majority rule. These aims were very different to the radical critique of militarised hegemonic masculinity and citizenship.

The ECC never did become a mass movement and the state denied that the reduction in the length of national service in 1990 and the eventual cessation of conscription in 1994 were the result of objectors or the ECC. The ideological power of the apartheid state over white society was considerable. This was the result in part of the economic benefits apartheid clearly held for white South Africans, but also the considerable apparatus the state devoted to the advancement of militarisation. However, it was the totality of the state's emphasis on individual whites participating in this militarization and the need for *every* white man to be seen and celebrated for serving in the SADF that made the state vulnerable to individual dissent. The apartheid state was able to stigmatise the movement to a degree (and the ECC's assimilation with this discourse arguably aided this process) but the state could not remove the fact that conscription was becoming an increasing burden on white society collectively and individually. The ECC creatively highlighted this burden and individual objectors symbolised a different and more courageous 'choice' to the one the state contended was in the interest of white men. Objection also directly contested the rationalist security discourse of the state and presented a different vision of a future South Africa to that offered by the state: one where there was multi-racial democracy and no need for military conscription. Objectors and the ECC did not critically undermine the apartheid state's ability to govern by their own, but they did limit the state's ability to perpetuate apartheid's war indefinitely. The National Party came to realise that its ideological capital in the white community was diminishing ever more quickly.

The men who objected to compulsory military service in apartheid South Africa continue to consider their act as a seminal period in their lives and one of which they remain proud. The ECC was also a remarkable political movement that created a space for dissent and critique of conscription – which was a fundamental aspect of apartheid governance. The performance of objection was brave, courageous and iconic and peace activists were creative, innovative and tenacious. However, although objectors and ECC activists challenged many of the ideologies and rituals of militarised gender identities and citizenship, the radical potential of objection was

undermined by the heteronormativity of the state and the ambivalent subjectivity of objectors.

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- Mike Loewe (20/8/2002) Grahamstown
- Revd Douglas Torr (19/3/2003) Johannesburg
- Michael Rautenbach (13/3/2003) Cape Town
- Dr Ivan Toms (27/1/2003) Cape Town
- Dr Ivan Toms (13/3/2003) Cape Town
- Gerald Kraak (12/9/2002) Johannesburg
- David Bruce (12/9/2002) Johannesburg
- Saul Batzofin (5/12/2002) London
- Saul Batzofin (9/1/2003) London
- Brett Myrdal (28/1/2003) Cape Town
- Charles Bester (13/9/2003) Somerset West
- Adv. Peter Hathorn (13/3/2003) Cape Town
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Sash

South

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South African Outlook

The Star

Sunday Times

Sunday Tribune

Uniform

Weekly Mail

Appendix



Figure 2: Translation 'National Service: The Great Adventure'



Figure 3: 'A Visit to the End of the Earth'



Figure 4: 'Daredevils Against Terrorists'

Soldier by day, fashion designer by night

By day a member of the SA Defence Force and by night an intrepid designer of clothes, Lt Hennie Schaap (spelled with a figure as the Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde of Kinrossville), Northern Cape Command.

The 25-year-old Assistant Platoon Commander says he is leading a "double life".

"By day it's a military man too busy to be thinking about his wardrobe and after dark I'm up in my workshop in pants and pajamas," he said. His talent for designing clothes took on "fantastic dimensions" a year ago and his mother has been able to go into business on the street in front of her son's garage.

After his National Service, Lt Schaap studied fashion design at the Pretoria Technikon. Having unsuccessfully completed his diploma, he signed up for the reserve where he served with the Reserve Infantry.

"At the time I was given the right thing to do, I was uncertain about the future and a position at Northern Cape Command gave me a year to complete my diploma in the reserve corps," he said. In December, he will be leaving the Defence Force to take over the reins at the family fashion studio.

Recently he is talking or said to clients of the Command, having successfully supplied garments to boutiques in the fashionable markets of Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Durban.

Lt Schaap wears a pair of the "fancy, gingham pants" which he says are successful in the markets in South Africa. His preference is designing fashions on a computer basis, which means designing unique garments. Some of Kinrossville's best dressed ladies frequent the Schaap studio, including the city's first lady, the Mayor's Mrs Helen Hugo.

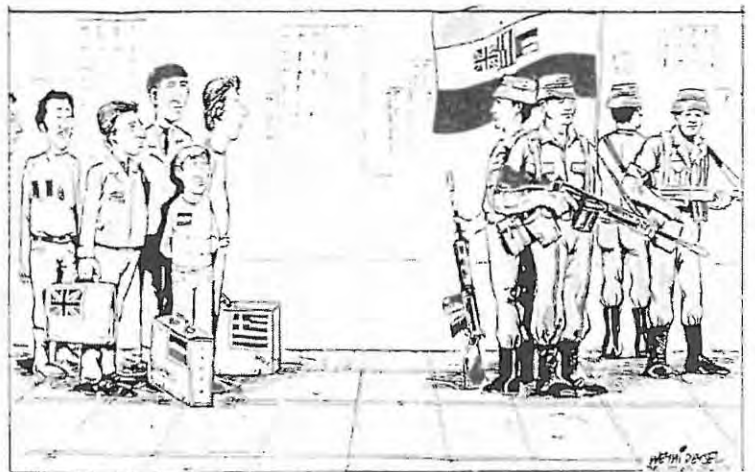
During his National Service, Lt Schaap's talent for art and design was quickly recognized and in the nine months he spent at Catoville he was often called upon to design uniforms and patch design for military uniforms.

A strapping 1,50cm tall, he looks more like a front-row fashion designer, but although his "huge teeth" may not quite live up to a rugby field, he is certainly headed for the big league in the world of fashion. With his own fashion label already on the racks of South Africa's most fashionable boutiques, Lt Schaap is a designer to look out for in the future.

Lt Hennie Schaap gave to the first designer of an outfit with by Kinrossville more than just a shirt.

By L. Cpl B.L. Davies

Figure 5: *Paratus*, October 1987



They also serve

The Citizen

Figure 6: *The Citizen* 'They also serve' (reproduced in *SA Digest*, 27/1/1978).



Figure 7: British Imperial heritage

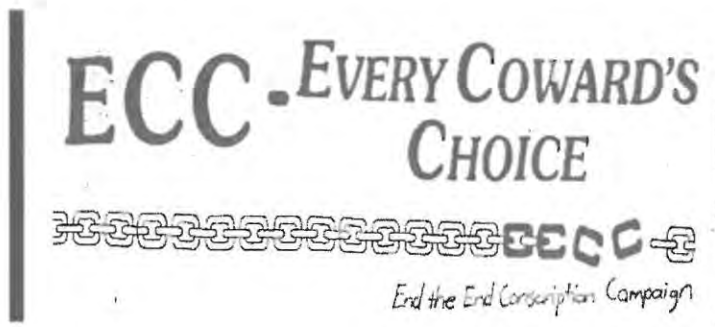


Figure 8: 'ECC Every Coward's Choice'



Figure 9: 'Who are the Real Cowards?'



Figure 10 : 'Bosbefok [Bush Fucked]'



Figure 11: 'Why Must this Happen to Us?'



Figure 12: *Mannetjie* [Little Guy] – Didn't They Tell You? Cadets *Maak Malletijies Make You Mad*]



Figure 13: 'Where's the Border Now? SADF Get Out'



Figure 14: 'Free Us from the Call Up'

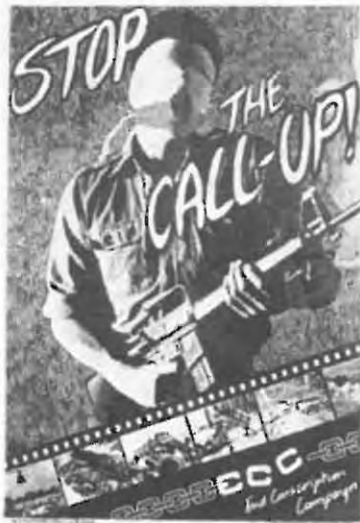


Figure 15: 'Stop the Call Up'

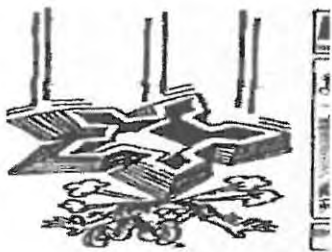


Figure 16: SADF Symbol



Figure 17: 'Botha Ek's Gatvol [Botha I'm Fed Up/Pissed Off]'



Figure 18: Conscript



Figure 19: Soviet Aims

