

END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN

P.O. Box 537
Kengray 2100

Phone: 836-8423
Fax: 834-3189

National Committee Meeting, 28 November 1992
Critical Health Offices, Berea, Johannesburg.

Timeline

December

- 1 - 7th - branches to track down people with January call-ups
 - ANC branches to be contacted in connection with same
- 7th - poster ready to be sent to regions
 - press statement distributed to regions for approval
 - branches to confirm availability of people to participate in stand with national office.
- 13th - poster blitz
- 14th - public stand by people with January call-ups in Johannesburg.
- On Saturday mornings throughout December we will distribute pamphlets and stickers at shopping malls.
- Nan will contact 702, Chris/Karen will contact Radio 5, John/Illa will contact 604, and David will contact Audiomix to discuss the possibility of these radio stations holding talk shows or dealing with the January call-up.
- Branches will find OUTRAGEOUS things to do to draw attention to the call-up.

January

- 3 - 4th - branches will hold info meetings regarding the call-up
- 4 - 8th - January call-up
 - press statement by national office
 - poster blitzes, pickets
 - further regional actions focussing on support for those who are refusing call-up
- ?th - meeting with Gene Louw
- 15th - national office to assess with regions issue of a stand in support of John Downie
 - phone conference to discuss the way forward
- 21st - John Downie's next court appearance

February

- approximate time of orientation week
- John Downie's trial likely to go ahead during February

Throughout 1993

- monthly conscription information evenings



End Conscription Campaign

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Summary of decisions

January call-up

Our objective is to build-up to the January call-up rather than just focusing on the call-up in the week of the call-up. We aim to:

- have a stand of minimum 10-15 people who have January call-ups on the 14th of December.
- the stand will be based around a press conference which will be hosted by ECC. If it is not possible for all the members of the group to be at the press conference, we will at least try to have a representative from each regional group present.
- during the first week of December each of the regions needs to work on identifying people who will be available to take part in the stand. This work needs to include approaching members of local ANC branches to find out if there are ANC members with January call-ups who would be willing to participate in the stand.
- by the 7th of December the ECC National Office needs to be informed of the numbers of people from each region who will be available to take part in the stand.
- the national office will work out a press statement which will express ECC's support for those who are taking part in the stand. The press statement will make reference to the following:

"While most South Africans want peace, by maintaining the conscription system the government is dragging out the conflict. The continuation of whites only conscription brings into doubt the entire commitment of the government to democracy and the transition process. The role of the SADF in the past has been firstly that it has played a key role in destabilising South Africa's neighbouring states and secondly to entrench the apartheid system. Recent revelations about the activities of Military Intelligence, indicate that the SADF continues to play the kind of partisan role which it has always played. In the recent period there have been a number of revelations of covert activities by the SADF, for instance those relating to the murder of Matthew Goniwe and the activities of the CCB and the DCC. But no government or senior SADF member has been prepared to take responsibility for these activities. Those who have been guilty of misconduct in the SADF and those government leaders who have neglected their responsibilities, should be brought to account - not objectors."

- A poster will be produced which will be ready to be sent out to regions by the 7th of December. We will aim to have a poster blitz to coincide with the 14th of December.

Throughout December we will distribute large numbers of stickers and Gene Louw pamphlets at shopping malls on Saturday mornings.

- we will contact radio stations with a view to their holding chat-shows regarding the January call-up.
- branches will look into ideas such as having adverts on municipal buses, banners, phone-in lines.

In the week of the call-up we will organise actions on a regional

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basis to protest against the call-up and to focus attention on those who are objecting.

- branches will organise conscription advice evenings for the night of the 3rd or 4th of January.

- we will also stick up lots of posters to coincide with the call-up.

- in addition we will look into other forms of activity such as telephone-ins, adverts on buses, banners, pickets. We will all try and think of imaginative and OUTRAGEOUS things to do to focus attention on the call-up.

John Downie

Aim to follow up our focus on the January call-up with a focus on the issue of camps either in late January or in February. The focus will take the form of a stand of campers, preferably with camp call-ups, who will be refusing to do camps and will be supporting the stand taken by John Downie. The timing will be to coincide with John Downie's appearance in court on the 21st of January or with his trial which will probably be in February.

On the 15th of January we will assess whether to go ahead with a stand prior to the 21st or in the following month.

While people are contacting ANC branches to find out if they have members with January call-ups they will also find out if there are people with camp call-ups who may be would be available to take part in a stand early next year.

The Register

The decision was that we should continue to recruit for the register. The register is useful as a back-up for those who are willing to be more confrontational. It is also useful as a way of finding out how strong people's objections to serving in the SADF are, and therefore as some kind of indicator as to whether people are willing to directly confront the state on the conscription issue.

The petition

Decided to drop the petition as it would require too much work to build up the number of signatories to a point where the petition would be regarded as having some weight.

Meeting with Minister of Defence

We should approach the Minister of Defence once again to request a meeting with him. In our request we should indicate that we would like to meet him in early January and that the issues that we wish to discuss with him are:

1. The phasing out the present whites-only conscription system.
2. The suspension of prosecutions of conscientious objectors and so called "draft dodgers".

Campus branches - orientation week

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At Rhodes and Pietermaritzburg ECC branches will have recruitment tables out in orientation week and will have an entry in the orientation brochure. Rhodes branch will also run a campaign calling on admin not to co-operate with the SADF by forwarding the names of students to the SADF for the purpose of getting deferments for them.

At UPE the orientation week programme will also include a petition to admin.

War toys

ECC nationally will not be running a war toys campaign. Branches which are requested to support campaigns of this kind being run by other organisations are welcome to do so.

The ANC

ECC has made a number of unsuccessful attempts to get the ANC to support the non-cooperation campaign. So far these attempts have been unsuccessful. People at the meeting felt that the best (and perhaps only) way to get co-operation out of the ANC is to do so at branch level rather than going through national or even regional or sub-regional structures.

A priority is for each region to approach local ANC branches to:

- find out if there are branch members who have January call-ups or are faced with camp call-ups and who are willing to participate in public stands
- to inform them about the register and encourage them to get their conscript members to sign it.

Support for objectors

If people are charged, particularly for refusing to do military service, they are likely to be able to get financial support from SALDEF for their legal costs. ECC will provide them with political support.

The T-shirt

We decided not to produce a national ECC T-shirt.

ECC in 1993

Next year is likely to be a crucial year in the struggle against conscription. It is likely that the debate about what type of system should replace the existing one will become more sophisticated. ECC needs to be prepared to debate these issues in an informed way.

ECC needs to give more content to the issue of conscription and give more of a focus to the issue of the role that the SADF plays in South Africa.

As a result of trying to ensure that we are accessible to conscripts we have blunted our message. We need a layered

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approach so that at the same time that we remain accessible to conscripts, we have a strong political stance and also have a confrontational edge to our politics. We need to ensure that we address issues related to conscription and militarism, the role of the SADF, and the transformation of the SADF, in a comprehensive way.

The more active we are, the more likely we are to be able to attract people to our organisation and involve them in our activities.

To reflect what we basically stand for we should produce a pamphlet which will make clear "what ECC is".

Organisational issues.

Part of the problem in 1992 was that ECC was lacking in a programme and branches found it difficult to provide their members with something to do.

A suggestion is that, particularly in regions where this is not happening already, ECC should take responsibility for holding monthly conscription information evenings (along the lines of the ones organised by CAS in Johannesburg and CAS/ECC in Durban) to inform people about the call-up. Organising these regular meetings can provide a basic framework for other activities.

We also need to ensure that the members of our branches develop skills so that ECC can maintain, strengthen and reproduce itself.

The national office needs to ensure that branches are kept up to date with what other branches are doing particularly in relation to the stands that are happening around the January call-up and John Downie's trial.

Financial

By the end of March individual regions need to provide Kevin with details of income and expenditure over 1992 so that Kevin can draw up a financial statement as a motivation for a future funding appeal.

Employees

The meeting confirmed that, as from the beginning of September, Nan has been employed by ECC.

David said that he would be available to work for ECC at least until the end of July 1993.

Branches should discuss the issue of national employees and confirm if the present arrangement is satisfactory.

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