

ASSESSMENT OF WJP: - Pmb

A25.4

STRENGTHS:

- overall the campaign was a positive move and a success
- ECC's credibility was raised, and we were put in a new light
- New ground was broken
- A number of new people were drawn in to the campaign
- Good press coverage
- Publicised ECC and put the issue of conscription on a number of local organisations agendas
- * -improved our relations with the black community (as a no. of UDF people attended the projects)
- Internally ECC's spirit raised

WEAKNESSES:

- Insufficient exposure of the role of the SADF publicly and amongst volunteers
- Press coverage not sustained
- Very little made of our project in the white community
- Not enough sense of the national nature of the campaign

DID WE WIN SUPPORT FOR OUR INTRIM DEMANDS?

It is difficult to assess the extent to which we won support for our interim demands. Despite this the following points were raised;

- Our demands were explained in all the ECC media
- '' '' '' '' '' in our press coverage of
- * -Although volunteers participated with some knowledge, our interim demands not enough discussion or active canvassing for our interim demands was done.

ASSESSMENT OF GAINS/FAILINGS OF INDIVIDUAL EVENTS:

INFORMATION MEETING :

This was not an overall success. Perhaps new ways of spreading information and getting volunteers should be looked at in the future.

Possible reasons for lack of attendance: -No pre press publicity

--Not all affiliates had been visited before the meeting

20 volunteers were recruited at the meeting

MEETINGS WITH VARIOUS ORGANISATIONS:

List of groups ECC spoke to: Sash, Nusas, SRC, Pacsa, UDF, Neusa, Jasa, PFP Youth, NCW, Com-Com, Women for peaceful change now, Cathsoc, Catholic J&R, Cedara

These meetings were successful in publicising ECC and putting conscription on a number of groups' agendas. Perhaps more recruitment could have occurred at some meetings.

VOLUNTEER GET-TOGETHER

Nothing was gained for the overall campaign by this event.

There was a lack of people at the event. This could be the result of incomplete volunteer lists. If the event was held at a later date more gains could possibly have been made.

LAUNCH:

As a publicity stunt this worked very well - front page colour picture in the Witness.

The event set people talking and created a buzz in town. This was both positive and negative - Some people were concerned about ECC exploiting children. Despite the slogans on the balloons some people felt that an action with more content might have been better.

PROJECTS:

Strengths: Raised ECC's credibility.

Good Eggs of alternate service

Contributed to non-racialism

Very successful theme and one we should build on

* Weaknesses: Lack of conscript involvement (the point was made that in our vision of the future everyone will render national service)

Too little publicity of our project in the white community

~~Link between~~ personal dilemma of conscripts and WJP in general not made

Insufficient exposure of the SADF civil action programme

braai

Not an overall success

- Lack of people there and late arrival of ECC people. This was an Important event and ECC people had a responsibility to be there.
- Planned assessment was not done and as a result no follow up of volunteers was done/started
- Perhaps this was incorrectly planned and we should have made aims of the braai clearer

VIP DEMANDS

* This was a major national short coming. VIP's are important people who we cannot afford to mess around. If the list of supporters is not going to be used then we should inform signatories.

PRESS:

This was excellent initially but, we did not sustain it.
Very little was made of our project in the white community
All the coverage was local and there was no sense of this being a national campaign
The advert was good but, was an expensive way of publicising ECC

Target groups

* SCHOOLS:

This was possibly our best area. Volunteers participated from Maritzburg College, Hilton, Michael House, Epworth, and Girls High. Also ECC spoke to a group of students at Hilton who are interested in maintaining contact with us.

CHURCHES:

This was one of our weaker points. Very little contact was made with the churches and the projects received little coverage. In the future more energy should be put into this area.

AFFILIATES:

ECC met with all its affiliates before the campaign started. These meetings were successful and responses from most groups were good. Possible weaknesses were the lack of active involvement of some groups in the campaign, and insufficient recruitment of volunteers from Nusas.

CAMPUS:

An assessment by the group has not been done
Recruitment of uninvolved students was bad.

* LINKS WITH THE BLACK COMMUNITY

There is a general lack of understanding of ECC and our issue in the black community. Moves that have been made to combat this are/were:
- An article in Echo (the township supplement to the witness)
- Sending observers to UDF meetings
- Recruitment of some township, people during the campaign.

NATIONAL CO-ORDINATION:

* Lack of national flavour to campaign
Generally Pmb was happy with the media and felt that other regions integrity should be respected.
Complaint to C/t about photo exhibition not arriving.

POINTS TO DISCUSS

Work with conscripts
Work in the black community
National actions in campaigns
How to take the concepts of WJP further

LOGO

WORKING FOR A JUST PEACE SUCCESS

The South African End Conscription Campaign recently came to the end of its highly successful national "Working for a Just Peace" campaign. The month long project was conducted in six centres around South Africa.

More than 600 volunteers came forward to participate in a variety of work projects, which were not only constructive in themselves, but also served as a symbolic protest against the system of conscription into the South African Defence Force. Under the slogan "Construction not Conscription" the volunteers set out to show positive ways of serving South Africa's people as opposed to the destructive system of compulsory military service. Many symbolic work projects were conducted.

In Cape Town a total of 17 projects were completed. Among them volunteers did alterations to two township children's homes, painted a pre-school children's centre and built a tricycle track. In another project renovations were done to Cowley House, a place where families stay when visiting Robben Island political prisoners.

Durban's projects included decorating the children's wards of a hospital, clearing a sight for a playground and organising a non-racial picnic. Much work also went into building a creche in a township.

In Johannesburg there were also a number of children related projects. As well as running a picnic which brought black and white youth together, volunteers helped with a children's holiday programme and the planting of a garden in the grounds of a home for mentally handicapped children.

In Pietermaritzburg energy went into assisting in the projects of the residents of a resettlement area forcibly moved there by the government some years ago. The work involved building a bridge over a river and planting of sage bushes. Renovation work was also done at a children's home.

The work in Port Elizabeth was concentrated in Walmer township where a creche was built for local children. A "peace workshop" was also run at which benches and toys were made for the creche.

Grahamstown, a new ECC region ran a project in co-operation with a township woodworking co-operative.

Projects were embarked on only once thorough discussion had taken place with

the communities concerned. Said Johannesburg ECC chair Clare Verbeeck, "We were very thorough in our consultations. This was important for two reasons: firstly we did not want to impose ourselves on the communities in which we worked. This is of course a vital aspect of a genuine national service. Secondly, we wanted to create a healthy spirit of non-racialism in the black communities in which we worked. All too often in the past community projects have simply been imposed on communities with no respect for the views of the local community."

"It was particularly symbolic that so many of our projects were run for children," said ECC National Organiser Laurie Nathan. "It has been children especially who have suffered the brunt of repression. Thousands have been detained, many injured and hundreds killed in township security force operations. We hope we have helped to expose this situation as well as pose a long term alternative to sending troops into the townships. This has of course to come with justice and democracy in South Africa."

The ECC has experienced much growth through the campaign. Says National Secretary David Shandler, "More than 600 people who were never previously involved in anything like it became involved in our campaign through the work projects. There are thousands more who gave their support at various public events. In Cape Town our campaign concluded with a public rally attended by over 3000 people. At a similar meeting in Johannesburg 1000 attended. We also ran film festivals and a major photo exhibition as part of the campaign. ECC has grown in public esteem. On the basis built by the campaign we will definitely succeed in further growth this year."

Finally, ECC organisers say a new dimension has been added to their work. Nic Borain of Cape Town commented that ECC had "shown a realistic alternative to military service in the SADF. Through the work we have shown our commitment to our people."

Building on the successes of the campaign ECC is now working towards major protests at the time of the July intake of new conscripts. These protests will be conducted throughout South Africa.

Churches support ECC's ^{SOLICITAN} campaign _{25.4.86}

CHURCH leaders have joined in the call for an end to conscription and have supported the End Conscription Campaign's "working for a just peace" campaign.

In a joint statement signed by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cape Town, The Most Reverend Stephen Naidoo, Mr James Gribble, acting chairman, Methodist Church; Reverend Wilfred Abrahams, moderator, United Congregational Church in SA, Peninsular region; Rev Brian Woods, moderator, Presbyterian Church, Cape region; Errol B Norse, chairperson, Baptists for Social Concern and the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, The Most Reverend Phillip Russel, they said they supported the ECC's campaign in its demonstration of the variety of constructive ways young people can provide genuine national service.

"The past year-and-a-half has seen a deepening of civil conflict in our country, a situation epitomized by the use of white conscripts within black townships. Conscription forces young white men into a position of tragic confrontation with their fellow South Africans" — Sapa.

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END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)

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