

B8.3.17

CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

There have been numerous discussions in recent months which have to a greater or lesser extent dealt with elements of the Campaign. Below we highlight the major influences which have brought us to where we are today.

1] Commission of Inquiry : 1987

During 1987 ECC engaged in a thorough evaluation of its work, message and effectiveness under the States of Emergency. Key points which emerged were:

- * our message had become vague and undirected
- * lost tight focus on conscription
- * had'nt identified target constituencies
- * defensive position because of smears and harrasment
- * legal space limited
- * lost touch with our constituency.

The findings of the Commission stimulated a "conceptual" discussion which was concerned with formulating the direction in which ECC should move. Subsequent rounds of this discussion pointed us towards:

- * a more rigorous focus on conscription and its effects on different constituencies,
- * targetting of specific constituencies - particularly conscripts,
- * the need to be articulating the needs / demands of conscripts.

We investigated these issues by arranging house meetings with conscripts/ campers, and by forming a conscripts subcommittee. This raised important issues concerning our style, conduct and image; it highlighted the need for ECC to be providing a service to the conscripted community.

2] National Conference : Feb 1988

In retrospect Conference had two main effects:

- 1) it broadened our "conceptual" discussion to include other regions, and
- 2) it identified key elements of a programme for ECC nationally.

Our "conceptual" discussion was clarified - the new focus is on conscription; conscripts are a particularly important constituency but others should not be neglected. Conference raised discussion about the position of women in ECC and the issue of CO's : this discussion is proceeding.

Essentially Conference identified the following elements of ECC's direction:

- * service and information role - reaching and involving conscripts
- * building support for our interim/ practical demands
- * developing concrete alternatives to military service in the SADF.

These elements were combined into a campaign proposal around Alternative National Service.

PHASE 1: Preparation; lobbying; surveying of welfare organisations re: alternative service; consultation etc

PHASE 2: Know Your Rights; national booklet; information forums; debates; panels; around the arrival of call-up papers.

PHASE 3: Centered around the call-up; support meetings for parents and conscripts; lobbying; protest actions; alternative service projects; interim demands.

Conference also suggested a conference towards the end of the year as a culmination of the years work.

Travelling back to the regions - the campaign proposal was accepted at a report back meeting. Planning was referred to a weekend workshop.

3] Cape Town goes to Baines Kloof : Weekend Away

Discussion at the weekend drew together all the strands of the "conceptual" discussion; explored some of the difficult/unresolved issues and began to develop concrete ideas for our programme for the year. This resulted in the Campaign plan in the following form:

A] KYR PHASE: aims to reach conscripts, provide service, highlight position of conscripts and their community, offer support, transform our image.

It would target constituencies and attempt to involve them; small forums; churches; parents etc

National booklet launch; legal service for serving soldiers; connect with the Advice Service.

B] ASP PHASE: aims to highlight need for alternatives and build support for these interim demands.

It would involve a substantial regional Project along WJP lines but different : substantial practical demonstration of scope for alternative service.

It would draw in members of the public and involve particular skilled sectors. Consultation would be critical.

C] CONFERENCE: national consultative conference; important sectors (churches, business, welfare, academics etc)

It would develop a concrete proposal for Alternative National Service - possibly a draft Bill. Issues would include economy, survey results, professional bodies.

The weekend also raised proposals for how the Campaign should be structured and co-ordinated. There should be a high level of subcommittee involvement without detracting from their ongoing work. Co-ordinators tasks should be defined as administrative. We should recruit directly into the Campaign group.

Following the weekend, GB set up subcommittee activist forum to take forward planning.

4] Activist Forum

The aims of the forum were to ensure that all ECC members could contribute to the strategising of the Campaign, and be able to offer individual and subcommittee perspectives. The Forum also set out to establish a campaign group and elect Administrators.

KYR Phase - suggested name change, KYR limited to legal information. Will be offering other information as well. Additional ideas - newspaper column; phone-in; forums in business sector, Afrikaans churches, embassies. Conscript's group to consider co-ordinating the phase drawing on other subcoms.

ASP Phase - aims to include building support for ANS, recruitment, involvement of wide range of sectors, build non-racialism. It would link into the KYR phase by demonstrating the advantages of alternatives to conscripts, and it would link into the Conference by acting as a pilot study of ANS. There was not much support for a simultaneous national project and on the idea of a Namibia project it was referred for investigation.

Conference - aims to involve a broad range of sectors, lobbies, pressure groups etc, to develop consensus on the form that alternative service should take, and to make proposals in the form of - declaration of principles; draft legislation and follow up projects. The basis for invitation would be support for ANS and contribution to its implementation.

The activist forum did not elect Administrators, although it did accept a statement of job definition. Referred to GB.

Five administrators have now been elected and we are about to launch ourselves into the giddy realm of campaign frenzy.....

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END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)

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