

**U6-d**

## AN ANTI-CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN.

## INTRODUCTION

The government has threatened to extend conscription to coloured and Indian youth, and it is systematically increasing the role the army plays in South African society. In the UDP Anti-Conscription Campaign we aim to combat both of these state strategies and to put forward our own commitment to build a peaceful future for South Africa. The Anti-Conscription Committee's (ACC) short term programme integrates an anti-conscription campaign into the UDP anti-election strategy. But UDP also needs a long term programme. The SADF will continue to try to win the hearts and minds of the people and will continue to be used against our people in their struggles inside the country.

## LONG TERM PROGRAMME

UDP is building a national consciousness in opposition to Apartheid and exploitation. Our aims are to build a broad mass opposition to the extension of conscription into this consciousness of the people of South Africa.

To do so, we must build a widespread understanding of how the SADF oppresses us. It is important that the focus of our campaign is not limited to conscription. The army already reaches our communities through TV, propaganda newspapers, youth and school camps. As a result, it is making some progress in winning the hearts and minds of people both in the African townships and in the so-called coloured areas. And, the SADF is used to crush opposition to Apartheid and in the forced removals of people.

We must build a popular understanding of what the SADF is defending; and of who it is fighting against and what their demands are; and of what the conditions for peace are in South Africa.

In the Anti-Conscription Campaign, we must ensure that we build progressive organisation. Student and youth organisations are particularly important because these are the groups who will be conscripted first. All organisation must be appropriate to local conditions. The Anti-Conscription Campaign must popularise and strengthen UDP, and build alliances with other groups like the churches teachers and affiliates of the End Conscription Committee (ECC).

The UDP is establishing area committees in the areas it calls 'the ru

rural areas'. The government has used these areas as its main source of recruitment for the police and the SADF, especially from those classified coloured and Indian. Over 90% of the recruits for the Cape Corps come from the rural areas, especially from some of the smaller towns like Paarl, Stellenbosch and Saldanha. It is likely that the extension of conscription will have its most immediate effect in the rural areas. So it is necessary for us to work out appropriate ways in which to extend our campaign to these areas, and to assist in building organisation in these areas.

All the organisations affiliated to the UDP - community, youth, student and women's organisations, and trade unions - must develop appropriate ways to counter the long term effects of the SADF's propaganda and its attempts to conscript our youth.

We must start creches, day care centres and junior youth groups in as many areas as possible, where alternative education programmes can be organised. We cannot simply oppose the SADF's attempts to win over our children. We must help our children to understand that an alternative society where we can live together in peace and friendship is possible.

The SADF has identified the schools and other educational institutions as their target. We too should pay special attention to school committees, parent-teacher associations and parent committees. Where necessary such organisations should be started by civic, women and youth bodies to work alongside the existing organisations in our areas. This is very important because the parents themselves must fight the attempts by the SADF to indoctrinate and influence their children.

As the Anti-Conscription Campaign develops, it may be useful to bring out a regular newsletter dealing specifically with the problems related to conscription and the SADF. For the moment, it is more convenient to use space in the UDP News and other community papers to perform this function.

The programme of action must cover both urban and rural areas. Although the dynamics of these areas differ and the campaign will have to take these conditions into account, there must be a unifying focus. This must be borne in mind when choosing slogans and demands, and in producing media.

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We need to know exactly what the SADF is doing and planning to work out an effective programme of action. We need to start research in all aspects of SADF work and programmes so that we can respond meaningfully to its win the hearts and minds campaign.

#### SHORT TERM PROGRAMME

At each stage in the campaign, we must set ourselves identifiable short term objectives which will move us closer to our long term objectives. In order to do this we must a) carry out work amongst our affiliates b) integrate an understanding of conscription into all UDF work c) carry out work in our areas aimed at the general public.

We must build an understanding of the role of the SADF and of the importance of the conscription campaign amongst UDF affiliates. The ACC will continue to have open evenings in various areas. The unsuccessful experience of the Athlone open evening last year should be built on and improved. The ACC must assist the Signature Campaign Training sub-committee to integrate this understanding into the education of activists around the Signature Campaign and the Anti-Election Campaign. The ACC must make its resources accessible to the organisations and to activists and should inform them as to what resources are available. The ACC will collect as much information as possible about the activities of the SADF in our communities by approaching the UDF affiliates, and the area and regional committees. In this way the ACC can try to draw the link between the extension of conscription and the new Constitution and to integrate opposition to conscription as part of the UDF's Anti-Election Campaign.

The ACC must educate the public about the Defence Force's role in maintaining Apartheid and on the importance of democratic change in South Africa as a pre-condition for peace. Posters can be made to popularise the Anti-Conscription Campaign. The ACC can organise poster-making workshops to assist with this. From time to time, the ACC will organise a rally or cultural event to focus on conscription. The ACC should ensure widespread publicity on issue relating to conscription and should write articles for progressive newspapers. The UDF logo and the slogan, 'No to Apartheid Conscription!' will serve to identify the Anti-Conscription Campaign. The SADF camps must be exposed as widely as possible in order to build up an understanding of how the SADF is using these camps.

#### OTHER FACTORS TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN PLANNING THE CAMPAIGN

The government knows that there is already a growing resistance to the extension of conscription. It may implement conscription for Coloureds and Indians in such a way that it attracts least attention.

The Labour Party has decided to go into the Tri-Cameral Parliament, yet they claim to reject conscription for youth classified Coloured and Indian. UDF should expose this contradiction.

The SADF is capitalising on the high unemployment amongst Blacks to attract young people to join its ranks. Slogans must be carefully selected to develop overtime, a rejection of the SADF as a whole. But this cannot be assumed as the starting point.

This is particularly true of the rural areas because the SADF has focused on these areas as a supply of people for its various sections and especially for the army.

The peoples attitudes are important in planning a campaign. People distinguish between the army and the navy. The navy is not seen in the same unfavourable light as the army and the Cape Corps.

Our communities no longer only experience the army as an external force. The SADF encourages its members in the black communities to wear their uniforms when they come home from border duty.

Schools and so on need to be aware that the registration process precedes conscription. And it is not illegal to not register.

People do not have a clear rejection of the SADF and are scared of its power. The campaign must take this into account.

The role of the SADF is a very sensitive issue in South Africa. We must anticipate the reaction of the state, and understand the legal position vis a vis the Official Secrets Act and the Defence Act.

The role of the SADF is constantly changing. The new Defence Amendment Act reflects a significant change. The Nkomati Accord and the changing situation with regard to Namibia alter the way in which the SADF interacts with the people of South Africa.

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