

THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR SUPPORT GROUP  
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Friday 20 October 1989

Dear friends and supporters

#### WAR RESISTANCE UPDATE

Recent developments in SA indicate the importance of sustained pressure on the SA government, pressure that must be maintained internationally as well as locally. What follows is a report on developments that have been taking place in South Africa in the area of war resistance. We trust that this will be useful to all our overseas supporters in helping them with their continued solidarity work.

#### General Context:

In a weeks time the first Welcome Back rally will be held when hundreds of thousands of people are expected to welcome 8 newly released political prisoners. All of the eight who were released had each been held for over 25 years. Their release represents a victory for decades of struggle against the system of apartheid.

The last few months have been very exciting for all of us living in SA. The combination of international pressure and ongoing internal resistance has had the effect of forcing the government to disregard many of its own repressive laws. In this regard the Defiance campaign was a catalyst. Through mass disregard for discriminatory legislation, the state was placed in a position where it either had to not enforce its own laws (eg hospital and beach segregation), or else be seen by the international community to be still firmly committed to apartheid. It was a highly successful way of taking the initiative away from the state, and placing it in the hands of the people. Similarly with the peace marches, which were initially broken up by the police with many people being arrested. The sheer numbers and breadth of people involved, forced the state into a position where it could no longer justifiably prevent such marches happening, and significant space was won for ongoing peaceful protest.

#### ECC DEFIANCE:

It is in this context that the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) (along with many other organisations), unbanned itself and began acting in



defiance of its restriction order. In terms of its restriction order, given in August 1988, ECC was not allowed to perform any act whatsoever. However in August 1989, ECC press conferences were held in all the main SA centres, and ECC announced to the public that it would again be acting in building opposition to conscription. ECC banners were again seen flying, ECC posters appeared in Cape Town, and in Durban 10 ECC members were arrested for tying symbolic yellow ribbons around trees and poles and for handing out an ECC pamphlet.

#### REGISTER OF OBJECTORS;

Another very significant act of defiance occurred on 21 September 1989, when 771 men publically stated their refusal to do further or any military service. This action demonstrated the growing strength of the war resistance movement. In 1987, 23 men made a similar stand; a year later in August 1989, 143 men publically stated their refusal to serve in the SA Defence Force (SADF), and it is apparent that the 771 have and will be joined by hundreds of others.

The public statement by the 771 marked the launch of a register of objectors. Anyone who has come to a similar decision, is being asked to add their name to the register. The register has been given into the hands of certain well respected community leaders who will act as custodians of it and it is envisaged that there will be regular press announcements of the growing number of people who have registered.

The group of 771 came from all over the country, and included English and Afrikaans speaking men. Among the group were bishops, priests, doctors, lawyers, teachers, dentists, computer scientists, university lecturers and professors, engineers, journalists, musicians, actors, a company director, students and scholars. The youngest was 17 years old and the oldest 52 years old.

Some of the 771 have done no military service and are therefore liable for 6 years imprisonment, while others have done some training and are liable for 18 months - 3 years imprisonment. Of those who had done some training, 49 were either officers or non-commissioned officers.

The men have indicated that they will all respond to their call-ups in different ways. Some will go to jail, others will opt for religious objector status, while many will choose between a life in exile or constant evasion of the call up within the country.

#### ONGOING WAR RESISTANCE WORK:

Whilst ECC defiance actions, and the stand of the 771 hit the front page of the papers, it is important to draw attention to those aspects of work which do not hit the headlines but are none-the-less crucial. During the last year with the restriction of ECC, we have had to learn to work in more dispersed ways, with different organisations taking on different aspects of the work.



The work of the Conscription Advice Service (CAS) has continued with branches being opened in all the major centres of the country. This non-directive counselling service to conscripts and their families plays a vital role in helping conscripts work through the huge dilemma posed by conscription. CAS has recently produced excellent media to help advertise their service more widely. They have also run very successful training courses for new counsellors. The courses cover basic counselling skills as well as legal and practical details with regard to conscription.

Work in the churches is continuing through the Churches Alternative National Service Programme (CANSP). Having obtained the official backing of the main denominations, CANSP is now seeking to run workshops for local congregations on the issue of conscription. Apart from this educational role, CANSP also aims to help objectors find work in church or service organisations. The purpose of such placements would be to provide a clear visual symbol of the churches demand for a genuine form of alternative service to military service.

A very significant development of the past few months, has been the women's initiative entitled "Give our Sons a Choice". This initiative has grown out of the February stand of 900 mothers who all called on the government to provide a non-punitive alternative service option for all conscripts. In the last few months this initiative has developed into a national organisation. It functions in a low key way, drawing in new people through a system of informal housemeetings, and its potential lies in its ability to reach people who could not be reached through other forms of work.

#### OBJECTORS AND OBJECTOR SUPPORT:

There are currently 3 men serving jail sentences for their refusal to do military service, David Bruce, Charles Bester and Saul Batzofin. They are each being held separately - in different prisons - and are held as common criminals. David and Charles were sentenced to 6 years imprisonment and Saul is serving an 18 month sentence. They are all studying whilst in prison and recent visitors report that they are all in good spirits and coping with the hardships of prison.

Dr. Ivan Toms is currently out on bail, pending a hearing by the Appeal Court of SA. Ivan has already served 9 months of an 18 month sentence, and faces the daunting prospect of having to return to prison should his appeal fail.

The Conscientious Objectors' Support Group (COSG) is playing a very important role firstly in ensuring that each objector and his family is supported during the trying prison years, and secondly in campaigning publically for the release of jailed objectors. The SA public and the government need to be constantly reminded that there are people serving lengthy jail sentences because of their stand of conscience not to serve in the SA Defence Force.



## NATIONAL ANTI-MILITARISATION CONFERENCE:

A highly significant conference was held last week end, bringing together people from all the major SA centres, and representing all the different organisations involved in the area of war resistance.

The main purpose of the conference was to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the past year (post-ECC), and to consider ways of more effectively taking forward our work. There was overwhelming consensus at the conference that although we had kept the area alive in spite of the banning of ECC, there were none-the-less significant gaps to our work and that we have been negatively effected by ECC's banning. As a consequence of this, we all agreed on the need for a new national organisation focussing on conscription. However, we also agreed that any new organisation must be broader than ECC managed to be, and we have therefore embarked on a lengthy process of consultation with organisations and individuals who were not represented at this past conference. This process of consultation will culminate in a national consultative conference to be held in March of next year.

We are all very excited about the prospect of a new initiative and we will keep you informed of any developments in this area.

## CONCLUSION:

As you can see, there has been a great deal happening over the past few months, and the next few months promise to be as exciting and full. We greatly appreciate the support we receive from friends in other countries and will endeavour to send you regular updates on what is happening here. Should you require further information at any time, please do not hesitate to write or telephone. Also, if you have any suggestions about how we can best maintain and build effective links with overseas organisations, we would be very pleased to hear from you.

Strength in your work.

COSG NATIONAL WORKER



The Conscientious Objector Support Group  
P.O.Box 591  
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Tel: (011) 3397613

20 October, 1989

Dear friends,

The Van Loggerenberg Committee

In April of this year, Magnus Malan announced the setting up of the Van Loggerenberg Committee, a committee with much the same terms of reference as its predecessor, the Geldenhuys Committee. Both were set up to investigate the manpower needs of the defence force, and inter alia, the system of alternative national service. The Churches and the End Conscription Campaign were amongst some of the groupings that presented submissions to the Geldenhuys Committee.

COSG is concerned that the same concerted effort should be made with regard to the Van Loggerenberg Committee as was made for the Geldenhuys Committee. For your reference we therefore enclose a copy of the parliamentary debate of 20 April, 1989 (as contained in Hansard), as this is the only documentary indication of the Committee's terms of reference. We would like to encourage your organisation to make submissions to the Van Loggerenberg Committee. The Committee sits once a month to consider new submissions and as yet, has not given itself a cut off date. The secretary of the committee envisages the committee sitting until the middle of next year, but we would recommend that submissions reach the committee by at least March of next year.

Submissions should be sent to:

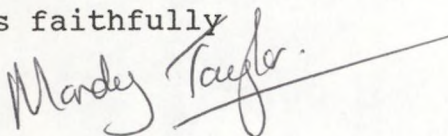
The Van Loggerenberg Committee  
Attention: Brig.D.J.Jacobs  
Private Bag X161  
Pretoria  
0001

Enquiries: Brig.Jacobs at (012) 3139911.

We would suggest that submissions are co-ordinated through COSG. May we therefore ask that you contact our office in order to inform us whether or not your group will be making submissions to the Committee. Some organisations may want to submit a joint document to the committee and we could facilitate this once we have received responses from the different groupings.

We trust to hear from you in this regard.

Yours faithfully



COSG National Worker



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Saturday 21 October, 1989

CONSULTATIVE PROCESS AROUND NEW ANTI-CONSCRIPTION ORGANISATION

Hi!

Enclosed please find an interview form, a time sheet and a list of the types of organisations with whom we should be consulting. These are intended as guidelines and as a way of facilitating the consultative process.

If your region chooses not to use the precise format of the interview sheet, please substitute it with clear written responses from the groups consulted. This will make the task of national co-ordination very much easier.

If your region disagrees with the time sheet, please get back to us a.s.a.p. Otherwise please plan your consultations accordingly.

Any queries, please phone.

Lots of love

*Mandy*







TIMESHEET FOR NATIONAL CONSULTATION RE: NEW ANTI-CONSCRIPTION ORGANISATION

OCTOBER 1989

Regional Workshops

- to report back on national conference
- to set up working group to facilitate process of consultation.

NOVEMBER 1989

Consultation with a broad range of organisations and individuals.

DECEMBER 1989

Friday 15 December, 1989

- Written responses/completed interview forms to reach COSG office

National committee to collate responses into a paper indicating areas of consensus, new proposals, etc.

JANUARY 1990

Friday 19 January 1990

- National paper completed and sent to regions.

Regional discussions around national paper

FEBRUARY 1990

Second consultation - this time to discuss national paper

MARCH 1990

Regional workshops for delegates to national conference

Friday 16 - Sunday 18 March 1990  
NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE



What follows is a suggested list of the types of organisations with whom we should be consulting re: proposed anti-conscription organisation.

1. CHURCHES:
  - Justice and Reconciliation structures (mainline denominations)
  - Evangelical and independent churches
  - Afrikaans churches (individual dominees; youth structures eg. Jeugkrag, etc)
2. THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY:
  - Local MP's
  - DP Youth
3. SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS:
  - OASSA and Concerned Social Workers
  - NAMDA
  - NADEL and Lawyers for Human Rights
4. MDM STRUCTURES (including UDF white affiliates)
5. ORGANISATIONS WORKING IN THE WHITE COMMUNITY:
  - Five Freedoms Forum; Idasa; etc.
6. WOMENS' ORGANISATIONS:
  - The Black Sash; Women for Peace; Women for Peace Now
  - The National Council of Women
  - Kontak
7. UNIVERSITIES:
  - Nusas; SDS; campus societies
  - Administrations; staff associations
8. BUSINESS:
  - Consultative Business Movement
  - Urban Foundation
  - Individuals who have expressed support for ECC, Saul Batzofin, etc.
9. SCHOOLS:
  - Pupil organisations
  - Teacher associations
10. ANTI-MILITARISATION ORGANISATIONS:
  - Stand of objectors \*\*\*\*\*NB
  - Give our Sons a Choice \*\*\*\*\*NB
  - COSG, CAS, CANSP, etc.



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Dear friends

### National Anti-Militarisation Workshop

Enclosed please find a paper which is meant as a guideline for regional workshop agendas. It is not intended as a position paper, but was rather to ensure that the different centres debate similar issues and consider all the options that are being raised elsewhere.

### Regional Workshops

The main purpose of the regional workshops is to generate grassroots discussion around the future of the anti-militarisation movement (AMM). If any new initiatives arise out of the national workshop it is crucial that such initiatives have been preceded by broad discussions. We would therefore encourage regions to invite to their workshops, all those people who have at some stage been involved in the area of AM work. The regional workshops provide an ideal opportunity for remotivating the area of AM work to activists.

### National Workshop

The national workshop is envisaged as a "think tank" which can effectively strategise the area of AM work. The emphasis must be on sending reps who have a good understanding of AM work and who are creative and strategical thinkers. The regional workshops are not envisaged as providing stringently defined mandates for the reps to take to the national conference, but are more seen as places where the process of creative thinking can begin. However, having said that, it will obviously be important for reps to convey the different ideas, positions, cautionary notes, etc. that emerge in the different regional workshops.

### Representation

Given the importance of the national workshop, it has been suggested that the question of representation be reconsidered to be more inclusive than the present formulation. The suggestion is that we make representation less formal, and instead ask each region to send those people who could make a valuable contribution to the discussion



as well as sending reps from local AM organisations.

Proposal: Durban, Cape Town and Jhb. 8 - 10 reps  
Smaller regions 2 - 4 reps

#### Date

The proposed date was 7 - 8 October. However, this now clashes with the Conf Democratic Future and so the new suggestion is for the following week end. The Cape Town AMF has put forward a motivation for a three day conference.

Proposal: Friday 13 October (noon) - Sunday 15 October (noon).

#### Proposed agenda for the national workshop

##### Session 1: Context

- State of the nation
- State of militarisation
- State of anti-militarisation organisations

##### Session 2: Assessment of objectives and priorities for the anti-militarisation movement (AMM)

- Is the present structure of the AMM such that we can meet these objectives?
- How can we restructure the AMM to meet these objectives?

##### Possible Options:

1. New national organisation
2. Reviving ECC
3. Development of a peace movement
- 4 National and regional co-ordination between different AM organisations.

##### Session 3: The way forward.

Please let us have your responses to the above proposals as soon as possible. Also if you have any problems, queries, etc. about the enclosed paper, please contact us.



Paper for Discussion by Regional Workshops

Contents:

1. The Current State of Militarisation
2. The Current State of Anti-Militarisation Organisations
3. Identifying Objectives for the Anti-Militarisation Movement
4. Considering Future Options

1. The Current State of Militarisation - Some Observations

1.1. Introduction

There have been significant developments in the field of militarisation over the past year which have had, and will have, an impact on opposition politics. This section provides an overview of the major issues that need to be considered.

1.2. Changed International and Regional Dynamics

The regional balance of forces, as well as the SADF's perception of this balance has changed. The following are the key trends:

The Soviet Union:

The South African military establishment has grudgingly recognised that the USSR is playing a new role in world politics. There is an acceptance of the fact that the Soviets are keen to resolve regional conflicts, a fact which was evidenced by the settlement in South Western Africa. Despite this, however, there has been doubt expressed at the Soviets intentions. SADF spokespeople have stated that the USSR is still seeking to establish sympathetic regimes in the region. On this count they contend that it is necessary for the SADF to maintain its level of readiness, and not to be deceived by the "euphoria of peace".

Namibia/Angola:

Despite claiming to have been the victors, the SADF received a major setback in the Angolan war. Observers claim that limited financial sanctions caused the SADF to run out of funds to bankroll its war in that country.

The associated withdrawal from Namibia has massively altered the shape of militarisation in the region as well as within the country.



General Kat Liebenburg has gone on record as saying that the SADF withdrawal from Namibia could allow for a 30% reduction in troop strength. Other military officials have, however, been quick to add that the SADF needs to maintain its readiness as the Namibian situation could easily be reversed and the peace could be terminated by changes in the settlement process in Angola. The conclusion is that while it is objectively possible that the SADF withdrawal could lead to massive troop cuts, this is highly unlikely. There may be short-term cuts in Citizen Force camp commitments, and even in the two-year period of service, but this will be approached as a temporary measure. The Namibian withdrawal will certainly not mean that the SADF moves away from conscription as its prime source of manpower.

A further implication of the pull out from Namibia is that there will be a new border to patrol, viz the Orange River. Lt Gen Hein Du Toit of the RAU Department of National Strategy has proposed that this will mean that the SADF will have to shift its orientation from bush to desert warfare. This, he believes, will be necessary because the future possibility of a SWAPO government in Namibia will mean that that country will become a "new infiltration route" for ANC combatants.

An additional point to note concerns the response of the white community to the war in Angola, especially at the time of its peak in mid-1988. The decline in morale that was then evident is important in that it opened up a crack in the ideological cohesion of militarism in the conscripted community. The question that this poses is whether a deep wound was left by this experience; and if so, whether this lends itself to ongoing mobilisation against the military? There is also the further issue of the wasted war in Namibia. Many whites will now be wondering why our boys were deployed in that country for so many years when there is now a negotiated peace. A cautionary note is that this peace may be upset by South African military intervention in the final stages of the 435 process, or soon after Namibian independence.

#### The Frontline States:

A consistent theme in military pronouncements has been the perceived threat of the frontline states. Of particular concern to the SADF has been the build-up of conventional arms in these countries. The major threat that this is seen to present is that these arms are used to protect the ANC's forward bases in these areas. The conventional threat in the frontline states is therefore tied up with the threat from the ANC.

The implication of this threat perception is that the SADF is intent on developing its conventional arms capability. This will mean that



Armcor will be pushed to produce the necessary hardware; and such armaments will be at the forefront of technological developments. This orientation is clear from statements made by senior officers of the Planning Division of the SADF. The implication of this approach in terms of manning is that the SADF will in future require a large number of technically proficient soldiers able to wield the latest in twentieth century armaments. This could potentially mean that there will be a lesser demand for foot soldiers; or alternatively, that white conscripts who come from the most educated sector of South African society will be deployed in the main in high-tech placements, while larger numbers of black volunteers will be recruited to fill less technical and unskilled roles. This latter approach is in keeping with the SADF's stated intention of boosting the numbers of black SADF members.

### 1.3. The SADF inside South Africa

The intense and ongoing presence of the SADF in South Africa's townships, as was witnessed in the 1984 - 1986 period, is no longer being experienced in the same way. There are a number of factors contributing to this state of affairs. These include:

- \* a general dropping off of popular resistance as the Emergency took hold. The defiance campaign and other mass activities has brought this period of hiatus in resistance to an end. There is the possibility that the SADF may once again come to the fore as a force as resistance intensifies; alternatively, other forms of repression may be used by the authorities.

- \* there has been a growth in the size of the SAP meaning that it can cope with larger contingencies than previously;

- \* there has been an increase in extra-legal repression in the form of vigilantism.

There is clearly still a commitment to using the SADF in internal unrest situations where the need arises. This commitment is presented against the background of an internal "revolutionary threat" from the "SACP/ANC and the PAC". Therefore, while there is clearly the possibility of the SADF being deployed internally, there is also the possibility that it may be at a lesser level than in the past. This clearly will have implications within the conscripted community, in which there was widespread opposition to such SADF activity. The troops in the townships scenario proved to be the catalyst for the growth of the anti-war movement in 1985 - 1986.



#### 1.4. Constraints on Conscription

A number of issues within South African society are placing pressure on the current system of conscription. These are factors which SADF planners are known to be concerned with and which may effect the nature of the SADF in future. Key issues are:

- \* conscription is having a severe effect on the South African personpower situation largely due to the brain drain of highly skilled people, and the under-utilisation of conscripts with high level skills within the SADF;

- \* the population from which conscripts is drawn - young white males - is getting smaller. The number of 18 year old white males is declining leading to pressure being placed on the SADF to supply the requisite manpower. Defence manpower planners believe that the way in which to deal with this problem is to make use of larger numbers of black volunteers in the SADF. The idea is still being floated that coloureds and Indians should be conscripted. This is a highly unlikely possibility due to the politically disastrous potential such a policy would have;

- \* the SADF is moving onto a more high-tech footing meaning that it will be requiring more high level skills in the future. It may well have to boost its professional component in order to procure these skills at market prices;

- \* the system of Citizen Force camps has led to much dissatisfaction amongst campers. It is very disruptive to the individual and to the economy. As a result the SADF has reduced camp call-up commitments. The issue of camps may well decline as a contentious matter in the future.

#### 1.5. Political Issues

Aside from the area of political opposition to conscription and militarisation, there are a number of important political issues that may impact on the general state of militarisation. Two are particularly significant.

##### Negotiations:

The political climate within the country is generally moving into a mood of negotiations. This will create a context in which the demand for political as against military solutions to the conflict can be promoted. It is a logical base from which to attack militarisation. A note of caution needs to be made, however. While there may well be a mood of negotiation developing, this does not mean that the



struggle will not continue. If anything it is likely to intensify, especially at the level of direct confrontation and violence. The major protagonists in the struggle will be moving as hard as possible in the next period to neutralise the opposing force and to build their own strength. This is to ensure that they are in the strongest possible position at the negotiating table. Violence and the use of arms will therefore become an inevitable part of the negotiating climate. This presents an interesting question: How will the white community respond to this? Will they wish to encourage the government to lay down its arms? Or, will they be more fervent in their support for its use of militarism? The answer to these questions are crucial to developing future strategy.

#### The Five Year Plan:

Current Nat policy looks like it is heading towards the creation of some kind of fifth "open group" to which individuals can belong by voluntary association. This will mean that all races - white and black can be members of the group. An approach of this nature will inevitably pose a key problem in respect of conscription. Will the open group be called up? If it is, it will mean one of three things:

Blacks will now become conscripts, thus creating for the government a severe political pressure point as there will inevitably be opposition to this;

Only the whites in the group will be called up; thereby the essential nature of the group will be undermined;

No-one in the group will be called up. This will create a situation in which any conscript who does not wish to be called up can go into "internal exile" within the open group.

This is a significant issue, not only because it exposes a key weakness within government thinking, but also because it could establish new opportunities in the struggle against conscription.

#### 1.6. The Van Loggerenberg Committee

The Van Loggerenberg Committee has been appointed to look into:

- \* the management structure of the SADF;
- \* the manpower procurement policy of the SADF;
- \* Armscor
- \* air traffic issues.



It is significant in a number of respects. As well as representing the fact that the above issues are of serious concern to the Defence Force, it is also opening up a channel of dialogue between the SADF and the public. This channel should be used by groups opposed to current defence policy as a means of directly engaging with the military authorities. The committee is sitting at a time when the SADF is seriously rethinking its overall orientation and positioning and it should be seen therefore as a high powered body.

#### 1.7. Opposition to Militarisation

As this topic is covered elsewhere, only selected themes will be looked at here.

##### Objective conditions:

The objective conditions for anti-military work are such that they are at present not as favourable as they have been in the past. The general conditions of relative peace in the region downplay the harsh contradictions of participation in the SADF for the conscripted community. It should be remembered that such conditions may change, especially as regards the situation in the townships. At present, however, we only have the past to call on - troops in the townships; the Angolan/Namibian defeats. A further constraint is the organisational weakness and limited coherence of the anti-military movement.

##### Conscientious Objection:

A major positive trend over the past year has been the emergence of a thriving CO movement based both on individual and group stands. This movement has set the tone for much anti-military work and at present remains the cutting edge of this work.

The participation of community servers in the group stands is of great significance. Their participation shows that community service should be seen as a form of conscription; it is also presented as an unacceptable form of national service. This implies that community service has not co-opted resistance to conscription, but rather has created a new platform from which it can be challenged.

##### "The Establishment":

It is interesting to note that "establishment groups, eg. the universities, business, the liberal opposition, have increased their focus on conscription in the main through picking up on the call for alternative service. This is a positive development which creates new opportunities. The highly successful DP election campaign, and in particular its performance around security issues has won space for anti-military work. Of particular interest was the group of former



SADF officers who stood on the DP ticket, and in support of its anti-conscription policies. The impact of such individuals can be enormous in creating greater acceptance for anti-conscription work.

## 2. The State of Anti-Militarisation Organisations

Before we can consider new initiatives, we need to carefully assess the strengths and weaknesses of the past year. What follows is an attempt to draw a brief overview of the position nationally.

### 2.1. Historical pointers

The area of AM work has historically been taken up by different organisations with different emphases (eg. conscription advice, supporting objectors). When ECC was formed in 1983, it was formed as a front of those organisations already working in the field of militarisation, as well as organisations involved with broader issues, but sympathetic to a call to end conscription. ECC managed to mobilise broad public support for the call to end conscription, and also provided a centre for thinking and strategising, without detracting from the work being done by other organisations.

At the time of its restriction, there were differing opinions about the strength and importance of ECC.

- Some people argued that ECC was again in a position of strength and enjoying wide public support. Following the initial declaration of the national state of emergency, ECC went through a bad period both because of harassment but also because of a loss of focus. Because the state of emergency prescribed that one could not undermine/discredit the system of compulsory military service, ECC broadened its focus away from the issue of conscription to looking at more general issues of militarisation. In a later assessment, ECC decided that this did not help the campaign and 1988 saw ECC again returning to its focus on conscription. During 1988, ECC's main campaigns looked at conscripts and the call for a system of alternative national service.

-Other people argued that the State had successfully radicalised ECC in the eyes of the public and that it was consequently impossible for ECC to broaden its support base. This was seen as preventing broad work around the call for alternative national service and as a negative factor in ECC's efforts to reach conscripts. It was seen as a problem that ECC was trying to cover too many different angles, from supporting objectors to organising conscripts.

When ECC was restricted it was decided that it would be inappropriate



for ECC to continue by functioning covertly both because ECC had always operated as a mass based legal organisation and it thought that it could not achieve its aims by operating underground, but also because it was felt that the different elements of its work could continue more effectively via other existing organisations.

It was therefore decided that ECC should not continue functioning, but that other organisations, particularly those that had been part of the ECC front, should be encouraged to take up anti-militarisation issues. It was hoped that national and regional co-ordinating structures would be set up to keep the different organisations in touch with each other.

## 2.2. An assessment of the current situation

A year down the road, it now appears that in every centre the practice has not worked as well as the theory. A number of organisations are working around militarisation issues, but there is very little overall co-ordination and consequently not a great deal of public impact.

Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town each have +/- 7 different organisations working in the anti-militarisation arena, but almost all of these groups are small, not attracting new people and not having much wider impact. In the smaller regions, the issue of anti-militarisation work has largely been dropped from the agenda, with the Conscription Advice Service being the only active organisation in these places.

No national co-ordinating structure has been set up and regional structures have largely played an informative rather than a strategising role.

Regions generally have decided that the call for a system of alternative national service does not have the capacity to become a mass based campaign that could replace ECC as a national movement. Those who feel that ANS is still an important area, see it being taken forward more in the form of lobbying work that would complement rather than replace a more mass based national campaign. Partly because of a lack of person power, and partly because of a lack of clarity about the value of this area, it has not been a major priority over the last few months.

The issue of conscription has been taken forward in the churches through the Churches Alternative National Service Project. CANSP groups are however only active in Cape Town and Johannesburg and the project is in the process of assessing its direction and focus.

The "Give Our Sons a Choice" initiative has developed into a national structure over the last few months and has successfully involved a broad range of women in the issue.



In the last year conscription issues have been raised publically primarily through objectors. Charles Bester and Saul Batzofin have both been sentenced since the restriction of ECC, and COSG has run support campaigns around both these people. COSG also co-ordinated a national campaign around 15 May, International CO day, when objection issues were again raised publically.

The campuses have been able to adapt to the restriction of ECC more effectively than other groups with anti-militarisation organisations emerging at UCT, Durban, and Wits. A very successful national anti-militarisation conference was held for these campus groups, in July of this year.

To summarise:

- Organisation in the field of AM work has become very dispersed, with a number of groups operating, but with very little co-ordination between them.
- Consequently there has been no coherent or forceful public message.
- Because there is no organisation effectively raising public awareness about the role of the military, things like objection, conscription advice and the churches ANS work happen in a vacuum.
- Organisations have not managed to attract new activists and there is a sense of stagnation rather than growth.
- In some regions the ECC defiance actions illustrated that there is still widespread support and enthusiasm for the issue amongst activists as well as members of the public.
- ECC's focus on the conscript has not been taken up by any other organisation.

2.3. Regions should assess their own strengths and weaknesses during this past year.

2.4. Identify objectives for the AMM.

Assess priorities in terms of:

- Issues (eg. objection, ANS, Know your Rights work, conscription/militarisation, war/peace).
- Constituencies (eg. objectors, conscripts, youth, students, families, the establishment, church, the black community)
- Style (eg. lobbying, campaign work, cultural work)

2.5. Options for Future Work



We need to discuss whether our present structures facilitate meeting our objectives and priorities. What follows are a number of alternative options which need to be considered:

#### 2.5.1. Relegitimising a call to end conscription.

This could be done by getting a wide range of organisations and prominent individuals to call for an end to conscription. This would have the effect of creating legal space for the re-emergence of ECC or a similar anti-conscription organisation.

#### 2.5.2 . Reviving ECC

- \* as a continuing act of defiance
- \* if the state of emergency is lifted.

If we find that there is no political space for a new legal organisation, it might be appropriate for ECC to continue defying. This would have to be acts which keep the issue in the public eye, without being too costly in terms of sentences etc. Actions like street posters, could build on ECC's history, thereby keeping the issue in the public eye and raising a spirit of resistance, particularly amongst conscripts.

If the state of emergency is lifted we need to consider whether or not to continue working under an ECC banner.

Pros: We will be building on ECC's history in terms of our message and our support base. ECC's call is clear. Another organisation could not be just an ECC look alike and would therefore have to have a slightly different focus which might not be as direct, or have as much resonance for the public as the call to end conscription. It would be difficult to launch another organisation that utilised ECC's creative style but again did not look like ECC.

Cons: ECC had been radicalised by the state and at the time of its restriction was already unable to mobilise broader support than it already had. ECC was unsuccessfully trying to span too many issues and constituencies.

#### 2.5.3. Forming a new organisation

The main motivation for the formation of a new organisation, is the need for public profile around the issues of militarisation and conscription.



If a new organisation is formed the main question that will need to be resolved is whether it should have a general militarisation focus or a more specific conscription focus.

Conscription focus: A clear conscription call has much more resonance with the public because of the personal element involved. The dilemma remains as strong as ever for the conscript and his family and speaking to the issue of conscription is therefore our way of being most effective in mobilising mass support.

Militarisation focus: Objective conditions have changed to the extent that we need to repoliticise the issue of the military. With troops no longer being in Namibia or Angola, and with black troops increasingly being used in townships, the issue of conscription is no longer as central an issue as it was. It is also possible that military liability will be decreased and we need to anticipate that happening. An organisation that focusses on the military more generally, will be in a better position to speak about black troops being used in the townships, etc. than an organisation which focusses specifically on the issue of conscription.

Form: We will also have to decide on the form that a new organisation should take, in particular assessing whether it should have a front structure. If we decide that it should have a front structure, we will need to bear in mind the principle that breadth is determined at the formation of an organisation and not at a later stage. We will also need to consider the status of present organisations if a new organisation emerges, particularly considering whether they should be absorbed as subcommittees into the new organisation or whether they should continue as independent organisations that form part of the front.

#### 2.5.4. Formation of a Peace Movement.

Thesis:

- \* The anti-militarisation movement needs to be broad, political, non-racial, and possibly, although not necessarily, situated within the MDM.
- \* A focus on conscription or conscientious objection and alternative service alone is too narrow politically and too white.
- \* Now is the time to join in and "build a mass movement for peace" (UDF/COSATU slogan in Natal).
- \* Relevant ECC slogan: "Political solutions for political problems".

Organisational Implications:

Rather than having our "own" anti-militarisation group (like ECC was),



we should either: a) join the mainstream anti-apartheid movement in this country, and take with us anti-militarisation concerns and campaign suggestions, or

b) form another organisation which is based on anti-militarisation concerns, but is broader politically and racially. Existing specialist groups like COSG and CAS would continue.

#### Factors:

\* Arguably, conscription as such is less of a mobilising point now than it was between 1983 and the first quarter of this year, particularly with troops being withdrawn from Namibia and a greater utilisation of black troops in township areas. These developments tend to undercut "Troops Out!" as a rallying cry in the white community.

\* As it is, individual CO's going to jail as well as mass stands of CO's, make it clear that their actions should be seen as broadly political, not just aimed at conscription.

\* Fits in with climate of negotiation internationally, in Southern Africa, and locally (eg. in Natal). There is an increasing emphasis in the progressive movement on "peace" rather than "civil war".

\* Would fit in with increased efforts at bridging racial and ideological divides eg. COSATU-NACTU, Inkatha-UDF, MDM. etc.

\* Slot in with international peace movements, including ecology and "Greens".

#### 2.5.5. National co-ordination

It is possible that the national workshop will decide that there is not the political space for the emergence of a new initiative around conscription, and that the more dispersed nature of the work allows for greater stability in the light of state repression. If we decide that this is the case, it will be necessary to establish much better co-ordinating structures regionally and nationally. The idea of regional co-ordinating structures being open to all AM activists has been raised. These structures would then become much more capable of strategising and would hopefully develop into bodies which could effectively oversee the area of AM work. The composition and powers of a national co-ordinating structure would need to be assessed.



The Conscientious Objector Support Group  
P.O.Box 591  
2100 KENGRAY  
Phone: (011) 3397613

Monday 22 January, 1990

The National Reception Committee  
c/o Cyril Ramaphosa

Dear Mr. Ramaphosa,

re: Resistance to Conscription: Briefing the released leaders

Over the last decade resistance to conscription has been a key area of mobilising opposition to apartheid within the white community. Now in spite of the restriction of the End Conscription Campaign, resistance continues to increase, something seen most notably in the number of new conscientious objectors facing trial for their refusal to serve in the SADF.

It is for these reasons that COSG believes it is an important area around which to brief the released leaders. May we therefore propose that a delegation with representatives from the different organisations currently involved in this area meet with some of the leaders. The purpose of such a meeting would be to brief them on developments that have occurred, and to outline some of our thinking about future initiatives.

We would suggest sometime in February for such a meeting and on this topic, we would think that it might be most appropriate for us to speak to Walter Sisulu and Ahmed Kathrada.

We thank you for your consideration in this regard.

Yours faithfully

Mandy Taylor  
COSG National Worker



Sent. 22/2/90 8.36 6051 NRC fax @ 3.30 pm.  
Nomsq

End Conscription Campaign,  
P.O. Box 537,  
Kengray 2100  
Johannesburg.

Dr. N. Mandela,  
C/O National Reception Committee,

22/2/90

Dear Dr. Mandela,  
We trust this letter finds you in good health. ECC extends its congratulations to you on your release and wishes you strength in the time ahead.

The purpose of this letter is to request,

1. A meeting between yourself and a national delegation of the End Conscription Campaign.
2. A request that you investigate the possibility of visiting jailed conscientious objectors at their places of incarceration.

In response to Presidents De Klerk's opening of parliament speech and his announcement that all organisations restricted under the State of Emergency regulations would have their restrictions lifted, the End Conscription Campaign has restructured itself and is now operating as a national campaigning organisation.

While ECC is fully aware of the dramatic changes that have occurred in the nature of South African political society generally and military service and conscription more specifically, we still feel there is ample space and need for ECC to continue to campaign for an ending to conscription. Reasons for this belief include:

1. The continued jailing of David Bruce and Charles Bester.
2. Current debate and discussion around the release of political prisoners.
3. The forthcoming trials of five conscientious objectors, charged with refusing to serve in the SADF and all expecting prison sentences of between 18 months and 6 years.
4. The lack of any form of non-military community service for those conscripts who object to serving in the SADF for moral, political and humanitarian reasons.

Because of the above ECC has launched a campaign called the "**Release Objector Campaign**" which seeks to:

1. Highlight the plight of jailed objectors and the fact that they should be considered political prisoners
2. Calls for their immediate release.
3. The halting of any further objector trials.
4. The introduction of non-military community service for all conscientious objectors.

In terms of the campaign and the issue of anti-conscription work more generally, ECC would formally request a meeting with yourself to discuss our work and the specific issue of jailed objectors. Also ECC feels that a visit by yourself to one or more of the jailed objectors would make a strong public statement to the effect that jailed conscientious should be considered political prisoners and therefore should be included in any consideration around the release of jailed political prisoners.

Attached to this letter is a briefing document sent to the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress explaining in more detail the strategies and issues of the Release Objector Campaign specifically and current analysis of anti-conscription work more generally. We trust that this letter and the attached document should give you enough material to consider our request in its political context.



Should you need to contact ECC for any further information around our request or to make appointments in light of this letter please do not hesitate to contact us through,  
Mandy Taylor, ECC National Worker, ph. (w) 836 8423, (h) 648 3181 or,  
Roddy Payne, ECC Johannesburg Executive, ph. (w) 339 1191, (h) 648 7993.

Yours in the struggle for peace and justice in South Africa,

*RR Roddy Payne.*

The End Conscription Campaign.



## MEMORANDUM

To :The National Executive Committee of the  
African National Congress  
From :The End Conscription Campaign

The purpose of this document is:

1. To brief the NEC on recent developments and thinking within the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) and
2. to raise the issue of jailed conscientious objectors with the NEC. We would submit that there are persuasive arguments for objectors to be included in any negotiations around a possible amnesty for political prisoners.

### 1. BACKGROUND:

The End Conscription Campaign was restricted in terms of the State of Emergency in August 1988. The restriction followed four years of very successful campaigning, inter alia for an end to conscription into the apartheid army; for troop withdrawals from Namibia and from SA's townships; and for the recognition and legal accommodation of conscientious objectors. The restriction followed a week after 143 white men publicly announced their refusal to perform any further military service in defence of apartheid.

Since the restriction of the ECC, anti-conscription work has continued, albeit in a much more low key and dispersed fashion. Some of the events that have happened in this period include:

- a campaign in support of Charles Bester, who was jailed at the age of 18 for his refusal to do military service;
- a campaign in support of Saul Batzofin, a businessman who was jailed for 18 months for refusing an army camp;
- a public stand by 900 mothers, expressing their support for conscientious objectors and calling for a change in the legislation regarding conscription;
- a campaign calling for the release of objectors;
- a public stand by 771 conscripts all stating their refusal to do further or any service, and the launch of a register of objectors.

### 2. ASSESSING THE WAY AHEAD

In October 1989, a national consultation conference was held to assess our work since the restriction of ECC and to formulate strategies for ongoing work.

Our assessment of the period following ECC's restriction was that:

- we had been effective in keeping the issue of conscription alive by encouraging other organisations to take up different elements of our work.
- However, our overall public impact had been greatly reduced by the restriction,
- There was a lack of co-ordination between the different groupings involved in the area and hence very little joint strategising had taken place.

Some of the issues that had to be analysed in charting the way ahead, were the changed regional position with SA troop withdrawals from Namibia and Angola and the SWAPO victory in Namibia; the decreased use of conscripts in township areas and the increased use of the SAP and vigilante forces; the ongoing brain drain with thousands of conscripts



leaving the country; and the widespread dissatisfaction with military conditions, endless camp duties, etc.

The conference concluded that:

- the SADF remained an apartheid army and thus despite the changing role of the SADF, the dilemma of whether or not to serve remained an issue for many white men;
- consequently the issue of conscription was still a very effective means of accessing the white community and enabling them to articulate anti-apartheid sentiments
- many conscripts felt dissatisfaction both with military conditions and with the extreme length of their service liability,
- there was a need for a much more coherent national strategy if we were going to be effective in our work.

As a result of the above, the conference decided that we should embark on a consultation process with more conservative elements of the white community as well as with MDM structures to assess the appropriateness of launching a new anti-conscription organisation. We saw such an organisation being

- \* a national campaigning and co-ordinating structure
- \* bilingual
- \* broad
- \* conscript focused
- \* positively orientated to reflect the mood of nation building, change, etc.

Contrary to a later decision, we decided at that stage not to work under an ECC banner. Our reasons were firstly because of the ongoing restriction of ECC, which would have prevented us from mobilising broadly; and secondly because ECC had established a particular ethos that might have prevented us reaching serving conscripts.

### 3. 1990: THE PUBLIC RE-EMERGENCE OF ECC

While the above process was very thorough and provided us with a more sophisticated understanding of our political terrain, it did not anticipate the enormous and fast moving changes that were to occur in the following few months.

The primary changes that have had a bearing on our work are: - the halving of national service liability (December 1989) - the lifting of the restriction on ECC - the prosecution of a new wave of objectors.

In the light of the above changes, we reversed our decision to launch a new organisation and decided instead to revive ECC. We committed ourselves to incorporating into a revived ECC, some of the political lessons gained from the earlier months of assessment and consultation. Below are some of the reasons for this reversal:

- The reductions in service made the prospect of organising disillusioned conscripts more remote.
- With several new objectors we had a responsibility to publicise their stands and felt that this would be a more effective way of raising issues of objection with conscripts;
- It no longer seemed appropriate to spend energy establishing the credibility of a new organisation. The priority had become immediate work to maximise the victories of the moment. - ECC has a good track record with credibility both within the white and the black communities, it has an established press profile, and a pool of activists whom we can draw upon.



- In many ways ECC remains a symbol of the non-racial nature of the struggle and it is consequently important that ECC is seen to be alive and active.

#### 4. ECC'S PROGRAMME OF ACTION

Since the lifting of ECC's restriction on 2 February, 1990, ECC structures are being re-established in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban, Pietermaritzburg, East London, Port Elizabeth, Grahamstown, Cape Town and Stellenbosch. A "Release Objector" campaign was launched immediately with the dual aim of placing objectors firmly in the category of political prisoners who should be released immediately, and with the purpose of using the campaign to re-establish our structures, draw in old activists, etc.

The demands of the campaign are:

- the immediate release of David Bruce and Charles Bester, both serving 6 year sentences for their refusal to serve in the SADF,
- a moratorium on objector trials (approx. 7 in the next few months)
- the safe return of exiled objectors without fear of prosecution.

While calling for the total abolition of conscription, we have identified some interim demands viz:

- the provision of alternative service as an option available to all conscripts;
- such alternative service should be of service to the community as a whole and thus available in welfare and church organisations, as well as in government departments
- it should be non-punitive ie no longer than current military service of 1 year and 10 months.
- If conscription is not abolished with immediate effect, jailed objectors who have served less than 1 year and 10 months, should be permitted to make up the time doing alternative service;
- Similarly returning exiles should be permitted to do alternative service.

In the long term we are developing a step by step process for the ending of conscription. Such a process would include interim demands and would look ahead to the desirability of conscription/ national service in a post-apartheid South Africa. In particular we hope to facilitate discussions around voluntary national service for reconstruction. In this process we would endeavour to engage the state, parliamentary parties, the SADF, business, as well as ANC and MDM structures.

#### 5. JAILED OBJECTORS AS POLITICAL PRISONERS

In anticipation of discussions occurring between the ANC and the South African government, particularly regarding the definition of political prisoners, we would like to raise the issue of objectors with yourselves. Jailed objectors have taken a principled stance against apartheid, refusing to fight in support of that system. They have been jailed because of their political principles and they should be considered political prisoners. Thus far the state has refused to concede to this demand, not only holding objectors with common criminals, but also separating them from one another. (Dr. Ivan Toms was held in Pollsmoor, David Bruce is being held in Pretoria Central, Charles Bester is being held at Kroonstad prison and Saul Batzofin was at Sonderwater Prison).



The urgent need of the forthcoming period is going to be reconstruction. Returning exiled objectors and jailed objectors are ideally placed to provide a catalyst for white involvement in this process. Each of the jailed objectors have demonstrated their willingness to serve in some non-military way. In addition, the seven people who may be prosecuted in the next months, include an Anglican priest currently working in a children's home; an objector who returned from exile and is now working in a Catholic home for deaf children; a rural development worker; an SACC education worker and a progressive journalist. All of these objectors have a valuable contribution to make in the months ahead and should not have to sit lengthy jail sentences for their stands of conscience.

Without in any way wanting to be presumptuous, may we request that objectors be considered in discussions around the definition of political prisoners. If any general amnesty is agreed upon, jailed objectors should be released and exiled objectors allowed to return. If it is considered necessary as an interim measure, a system of alternative service should be introduced for all objectors.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Should you find it useful to be kept abreast of developments within ECC over the next period, please let us know. Also if you require any further detail or discussion concerning any of the above we would be happy to oblige in whatever way is considered appropriate. We are contactable at the following telephone numbers.

Mandy Taylor (ECC National Worker) Ph: (011) 836 8423 (w)  
648 3181 (h)

Roddy Payne (ECC Johannesburg Exec) Ph: (011) 339 1191 (w)  
648 7993 (h)

ECC P.O.Box 537 Kengray 2100 South Africa



Dear Friends

TOWARDS A UNIFYING INITIATIVE : THE EMERGING CONSENSUS

After months of little activity, considerable confusion and limited progress regarding the direction of our movement, we have begun of late to move with an unanticipated decisiveness and speed. Fizz and energy appear to be pulsing through the veins of our organisations once again and we are in the process of reaching a remarkable national consensus as to priorities and direction.

This emerging consensus was reflected in the COSG-Objector Stand meeting this past week-end which has made certain proposals to the AMF forums regarding direction, priorities and organisational structures.

The three elements of the emerging consensus are :

- That ECC be revived as the campaigning and co-ordinating organisation.
- That a Release Objectors Campaign be embarked upon immediately.
- That priority be given to developing a realistic step-by-step programme for ending conscription and for building a broad consensus regarding the desirability of a post-apartheid system of national service for reconstruction. These issues should be discussed by all AMF structures as soon as possible.

Enclosed are:

- a) the minutes of the COSG-Stand meeting held on 3,4 February;
- b) a summary of progress since the October consultative conference;
- c) a draft "Programme to End Conscription in South Africa"; and
- d) a hand-out for the Release Objectors Campaign.

It is proposed that a ECC/AMF national committee meeting be held on 16-18 March to be attended by five representatives from each of our four regions (Natal, Transvaal, Eastern Cape and Western Cape). It would be appreciated if you could let us know at your earliest convenience whether this proposal is acceptable.



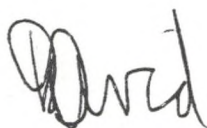
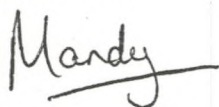
We hope to visit all centres within the next few weeks and will be in contact shortly to make arrangements if we have not already done so.

Our address is c/o P O Box 591  
KENGRAY  
2100

You can contact us at the following telephone numbers:

Mandy 011-3397613(w)  
011-6483181(h)  
David 021-242680(h)

Good Luck



Mandy and David



C.O.S.G.  
P.O.BOX 591  
2100 KENGRAY

Thursday 19 October 1989

Dear friends

National anti-militarisation conference - The Way Forward

Minutes of the national conference will be reaching you shortly. What follows is a summary of the conclusions reached, a brief overview of the conference and a reminder of tasks which need to be completed in the near future.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS:

The conference was a turning point for the anti-militarisation movement. After a year of disarray we all agreed on the need for a new national organisation which will put conscription issues firmly back on the public agenda and will provide a centre for co-ordinating the different elements of anti-militarisation work.

There was consensus on the following:

1. That there is an urgent need for a new organisation which raises the public profile around conscription issues.
2. That such an organisation should not be ECC in drag, but should endeavour to reach into communities that ECC was not successful in reaching.
3. Consequently, that we should embark on a thorough process of consultation and should enter that consultative process with an open agenda. This will ensure that if a new initiative develops, all the participants would have helped in defining that initiative.
4. Consultation should happen between now and March 1990, when a broad consultative conference will be held.
5. Our bottom line in the consultative process should be:
  - that the new initiative should be inclusive
  - that it should focus on conscription
  - that it should define itself as an anti-apartheid initiative.
6. Further, the vision of the conference was of a broad social movement mobilising support against conscription into the SADF, whilst the SADF continues to be used in upholding apartheid. Conscripts are affected by conscription in a particular way and we should therefore be seeking to develop work amongst conscripts.

We did not gain clarity on the implications of being both a broad social movement and having a particular conscript thrust to our work. There was no consensus about the feasibility of being able to attract serving conscripts/campers as well as objectors and a broader constituency.



To assist the process of consultation, guidelines will be drawn up and circulated nationally. These will look at the issues that we need to be consulting about, as well as the types of groups we should be approaching.

#### OVERVIEW OF CONFERENCE:

Whilst the representation at the conference was good in that we had reps from 9 regions and about 12 organisations, we could not be defined as a broad gathering, in that we were very largely English speaking young lefties. It is in the light of this that the conclusion to the conference should be seen as being correct and perhaps inevitable. Had we given more definition to the new organisation, we may have hindered the process of extensive consultation.

Having said that though, it is unfortunate that not all of the debate was that creative or constructive, as the polarisation that occurred may have dampened our sense of enthusiasm and drive to take the initiative forward. It is now going to be absolutely crucial for regions to report back in such a way as to inspire enthusiasm and action.

#### TASKS ARISING:

1. Regional report backs about the week-end, which should be as inclusive and enthusiasm inspiring as possible!
2. Where they exist, local AMF's should be responsible for the process of consultation. Otherwise regions should set up a group which can take on this responsibility. Regions should begin identifying organisations and individuals with whom we should be consulting.
3. Regions are to elect a regional rep for a national co-ordinating comm. Names are to reach the COSG office by 6th November 1989.
4. A full time worker will be appointed to facilitate the consultative process. Dave Schmidt is considering taking up the job but regions were asked to consider other possibilities should Dave not be available. Again names are to reach the COSG office by 6th November 1989.
5. Some delegates have not yet paid their R40. Kindly collect outstanding money and forward it to the COSG office, or else let us know if those people are for some reason unable to pay.

Until such time as a national worker is employed, I will be co-ordinating the above process and can be contacted at the above telephone number. I hope to hear from lots of you soon.

Strength and best wishes

*Mandy*



THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR SUPPORT GROUP  
P.O.Box 591  
2100 KENGRAY

Tel: (011) 3397613

UDF National  
c/o Mohammed Valli  
Portland Place  
37 Jorissen St  
Braamfontein

Dear Mr. Valli

National Anti-Militarisation Conference

It is now a year since the restriction of the End Conscription Campaign. During that time anti-militarisation work has continued through other organisations, a strategy that has enabled us to keep the issue alive, but has not allowed for significant public impact. There is consequently an urgent need for a thorough national assessment of this style of work and for this purpose a national consultative conference around the issue of anti-militarisation work is being planned.

In this regard, I am writing to enquire whether it would be possible for 1 or 2 representatives of the MDM to be present at our conference. Part of our task would be to consider the political climate in the country generally and to assess whether a new national initiative around conscription issues would be feasible and/or appropriate. The advice and input of MDM representatives would be invaluable in assisting us with this assessment.

The conference has been preceded by regional workshops around the country. Each regional workshop will be sending a number of representatives to the national conference and we anticipate a conference of about 60 people. I enclose a copy of a document which was distributed nationally for discussion at the regional workshops. I further enclose a proposed agenda for the national workshop.

Details of the conference are as follows:

Date: Friday 13 October (noon) - Sunday 15 October (noon)

Venue: Johannesburg

Should you have any queries with regard to this invitation, please do not hesitate to contact me at the above address.

Many thanks

COSG National Worker



**Collection Number: AG1977**

**END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)**

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