

MINUTES OF THE INITIAL PLANNING MEETING OF THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY  
SERVERS' GROUP HELD IN BLOEMFONTEIN ON 21 AND 22 MARCH 1987

Present: Messrs. Rob Goldman, Peter Jacobsen, Alan Muller (Natal)  
Peter Kantor, Rolfe Eberhard (Cape Town)  
Alistair Dry, Ian Stevens (Johannesburg)  
Ben de Lange, Gideon Strauss (Bloemfontein)  
Mesdames Martina de Lange and Angela Strauss (Bloemfontein)

1. Delegates arrived on the evening of Friday 20 March and spent the evening getting to know one another, planning an agenda and sharing expectations for the weekend.

After an excellent breakfast on the Saturday morning, the proceedings began with a time of singing and devotions led by Alistair. The emphasis was on submission to one another in order for God to make Himself and His will known to us.

2. REGIONAL ROUND-UP

A delegate from each region gave a general overview of the political and church contexts and other group activities in their region, and then reported on activities in their regional CSG:

2.1 Durban

Approx. 14 members who meet once every 4-6 weeks under a system of rotating chairmanship. Individuals mentioned were Donn Edwards (turned down by Board, S/Court case on 25/5/87) as well as Steve Reid and Brian Wood (both working in outlying areas). Durban are hoping to get a group going in Pietermaritzburg at some stage.

2.2 Cape Town

Group began in November 1985; approx. 20-25 members, although active core is much smaller. Projects involved include church support, upgrading conditions of service, improving image of community servers, meetings with Mr Justice Edeling, Defence Amendment Bill (lobbying Standing Committee and making representation), campaign to widen scope of community service to non-government organisations, and making representation to Cape Town City Council. Individuals mentioned were Frank Mellows (Edeling intervention to have him transferred to CAPAB), Dave Hartmann (a Buddhist) and three Categ. (ii) objectors.

2.3 Bloemfontein

Group consists of two members and their wives (plus two others awaiting classification). Don't see opportunity for group to have a high profile given political and church context. Have access to names of people appearing before Board and are able to offer advice, a place to stay and transport, etc. Individuals

mentioned were Deon Potgieter (about to be placed but Manpower and Board appear to be making things very difficult for him.).

2.4 Johannesburg/Pretoria

Approx. 10-12 members at meetings with approx. 15-18 who have shown interest or been at occasional meeting; meet once every month with rotating chairmanship. No specific projects but making representation re: living allowance to Manpower. Have a direct and good link with senior community service administrator at Manpower. Individuals mentioned were Alan Goddard (removed from TED teaching post) and Frank Crundwell (seconded to Mintec from Dept. of Mineral and Energy Affairs).

3. PERCEIVED FUNCTION OR ROLE OF N.C.S.C.

The salient features of a lengthy and most enlightening discussion on the perceived function and role of an NCSG are recorded below. (Initials in brackets refer to the proponents of the respective points):

We could focus on the things that divide us from those struggling for justice (eg: religious, pacifist, etc.) or on the uniting factors (eg: the desire to be involved in and serving the community). (PK) If we identify with the former we will be seen to be working for the rights of religious pacifists, but if we identify with the latter we will be seen to be working for rights, peace and justice for all. (RE)

A constitution should be there to assist and not curtail us. (PK) Debate followed as to whether we would be duplicating the work of COSG:

We are people who have made a decision and done something; this is not just an issue or a concern for us. This is what makes us different from COSG and other groups. (AM)

ECC and COSG are chipping away at the outside of the system, whereas we are inside the system and therefore have a different role. The question is really how political we should become "officially" as opposed to our personal capacities. The tension between being personally involved in political activities and not having the group officially involved is great. (PK)

There is a need to keep the framework of the group broad enough so as not to alienate members or potential members who do not have strong political feelings. We need to be able to support members in their individual capacities in various political activities. (AD)

4. PROPOSED CONSTITUTION

The majority of the day was spent working through the proposed draft of the constitution (as drawn up by Cape Town) clause by clause. The details of the debate are not recorded, as it was felt that this would be reflected in the final version (See attached copy).

It was decided that the constitution would be translated into Afrikaans by Dawid Bosch. Action: Cape Town

A break for lunch was taken during the above debate, which continued throughout the afternoon. The constitution was finished at approx. 5:30pm, when a recess for some serious "touch-frisbee" was taken.

5. FINANCES AND BUDGET

5.1 Funding

COSG have made provision for NCSG in their budget. We will follow this for the current year and prepare a budget to be submitted at the COSG conference in September. Current budget to be referred to regions for discussion. Action: All regions

Alistair Dry will find out how much has been made available and how and when we may have access to it. Action: Alistair Dry

Money is needed fairly urgently for Jhb./Durban/Cape Town to cover travel expenses for current weekend.

Future budgets should make provision for travel twice every year. (Once to NCC meeting and once to COSG conference.) Two people from each region.

4  
(1)

min-ncsg/d2/rge  
20 May 1988

... minutes of NCSG meeting of 21/22 March 1987 continued ...

(the person responsible for this small time lapse shall remain nameless!!!!!!!!!!!!)

(inaccuracies shall not be the responsibility of the typist!)

5.2 Trust Fund

IS to look into establishing a Trust Fund both short term relief (unexpected emergencies) and longer term support (eg. families with young children) for community servers. The session closed with supper.

6. After yet another great breakfast (the author obvious enjoys his breakfast!), Ben opened the morning's proceedings with devotions.

7. Conditions of service

The memo dated 86/12/10 drawn up by the CT was discussed in detail. Specific points are listed below:

7.1 Regional secretaries are to request and keep a copy of each member's statement to the Board so as to have a supply of reading material for people considering making application to the Board. Where there is a particularly controversial or "dicey" statement, these should be sent to the other regions by the secretary concerned (for info).

7.2 A form to obtain info for a register of CSs is to be drawn up and circulated. (ed. this was circulated at latest NCSG national conference - May 1988 - in Bloem).

8. Scope of Community Service

RE informed the meeting as to the state of the campaign to widen the scope of placement of CS. Approx. 40 replies had been received and about 25 letters written by organisations to the Minister of Defence. There was contact with Jo'burg COSG who were running a similar campaign. RE to build up file of replies and the campaign is to continue.

PK referred to a meeting between Brig/Gen (?) Holtzhausen of Dept of Defence and PFP MP G MacIntosh re scope of placement. The meeting was in response to MacIntosh meeting with General M Malan and was positive - but no results as yet. MacIntosh's advice: keep chipping away at the block - it is not totally immutable.

Regions to inform RE of all organizations who were approached. RE to send lists to regions of all those who have not responded and regions to follow up and approach others.

A letter was sent to the Minister of Defence (dd 87-01-23) setting out arguments in favour of widening the scope of service and including responses to questionnaire so far received. (The letter was acknowledged but no reply had been received to date) (ed. still no reply!!).

IS to speak to Johan Heyns re the NGK position.

A delegation is to be drawn up to see the Ministers of Defence and or Manpower. (This to be done after the election of 87-05-06).

9. Defence Amendment Bill

RE referred to a memo drafted by CT on this Bill. CT lobbied members of the Defence Standing Committee but the representations were ignored and the Bill passed.

RE to try to get statistics on the number of graduates who fail to report for National Service due to the heavy service commitment (ed. and other reasons??).

10. Arrangements prior to the NCC being nominated

(NCC = National Coordinating Committee)

Finances - AD  
Register - IS  
Majority of secretarial work - CT

Venue of next meeting: Jo'burg, coinciding with the COSG national conference.

10.1 Adoption of constitution and formation of NCC

Regions to adopt constitution at their next meeting and give notice of AGM. The following meeting to be the AGM.

Regional committees to be elected and a national representative chosen.

National reps from each region to liaise and decide on portfolios.

11. Publicity

11.1 IS raised point of Newsletter. AD suggested that 4th person on NCC take responsibility for newsletter. Editions could be allocated to regions. Newsletter to be published quarterly; distributed to regions who will organise their own distribution. (People in outlying areas must particularly be remembered.) Wider distribution than members at the discretion of the regions.

11.2 Counselling prospective applicants to the Board:

Durban have drafted a letter to be sent to church newspapers advertising NCSG and providing info on CS.

Regions to send addresses of local newspapers to Durban

Durban to write an article on non-violence and religious objection for publishing in church newspapers. This to be sent to other regions for comment.

11.3 PK related interview with Moira Levy of the Weekly Mail; 3 page (A4!) article which was put on hold. (ed. the article eventually went into South - Levy having left the Mail [please wait for the Mail!!] in the meantime.)

There was discussion as to whether we were prohibited from speaking to the press re conditions of service. IS to investigate.

12. Individuals

Donn Edwards - see latest NCSG minutes  
Deon Potgieter - asked to resubmit statement  
(ed. subsequently recognised)

Q. What is our responsibility to people who are refused by the Board?

Should we act as a group, or rather individually? Let other organisations take the matter up? Does it compromise our position?

It was decided that (at least for now) that it should not be done in the name of NCSG, but issues could be taken up individually or by interested groups of CSs. Office bearers should also not partake in such activities.

(ed. this discussion was taken further at the subsequent meetings on NCSG.)

13. Evaluation

Overall, all were unanimous that the conference was a very positive, useful and enjoyable occasion.

Specific points: fellowship and hospitality  
quality of preparation  
quality of input  
efficient  
gave perspective, overview, direction  
informality

Suggested improvements: include more people  
encourage wives (ie those who have!) to attend  
include an input/workshop  
circulate material beforehand  
prepare agenda beforehand  
shorter sessions  
more free time  
make conf. longer - extra day

14. The conference was a time of forming and strengthening friendships and people looked forward to meeting again. Open invitations of hospitality were extended to fellow CSs on holiday in the other regions.

The meeting closed in prayer at lunchtime.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! WE HAVE MINUTES FOR THE MARCH 1987 CONFERENCE!!

ps Working for the government service has nothing what so ever to do with this!

MINUTES: ALISTAIR DRY (typing assistant: Rolfe Eberhard) THANKS!

ADDRESSES

Peter Kantor	9 Roosevelt Rd Claremont, 7700 Cape Town
Rolfe Eberhard	as above
Rob Goldman	changed since March 1987 see latest NCSG minutes
Ben and Martina De Lange	19 Anjosta Andries Pretorius St 9301 Bloemfontein
Gideon and Angela Strauss	30 Capri Court Union Ave Arboretum 9301 Bloemfontein
Ian Stevens	23 Linschoten Ave Sunnyside 0002 Pretoria
Alistair Dry	141 Fifteenth St Parkhurst 2193 Johannesburg
Alan Muller	77 Rishbrook Road Pinetown 3610 Durban

Telephone numbers:

		h	w
Pete	021	61-1691	210-3532
Rolfe	021	61-1691	210-3788
Ian	012	46-8956	323-9931 x800
Alistair	011	788-5961	493-5280
Alan	031	784-0517	28-7121
Rob		changed	
Gideon	051		30-3001
Ben	051	30-7679	8-3636

ANNUAL NATIONAL BUDGET FOR COSG AND CSCG

COSG (Conscientious Objectors Support Group)

Travel Rands

# Delegates travel to National Conference	600
# Delegates to National Coordinating Committee	400
# Supporters to Bloemfontein hearings	375

Administration

# Monthly minutes - copying & circulation	120
# External communications & distribution	200
# National newsletter	50
# Rent of room & phone for counselling	360
# Press Advertising	480

TOTAL	==== 2585 ====
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Regions

Johannesburg	2585
Cape Town	2585
Durban	2585
Bloemfontein	2585

TOTAL	===== 10 340 =====
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CSCG (Community Service Contact Group)

Travel Rands

# Delegates travel to National Conference 600

# Delegates to National Coordinating Committee 400

Administration

# Monthly minutes - copying & circulation 120

# External communications & distribution 50

# National newsletter 50

# Miscellaneous 30

TOTAL =====  
1250  
=====

Regions

Johannesburg 1250

Cape Town 1250

Durban 1250

Bloemfontein 1250

TOTAL =====  
5 000  
=====

GRAND TOTAL \*\*\*\*\*  
15 340  
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18 Feb. 1987

NOTICE OF FIRST CSG NATIONAL MEETING

Yes, a date for this meeting has now been agreed! March 20-22 is the most suitable weekend for regional reps. from Cape Town, Bloem, Jhb/Victoria and Durban. Other members of the regional groups are of course welcome to attend. I will invite Ron Louw from P.E. to attend. Bloem. has kindly agreed to host us.

It will be a busy weekend but hopefully also fun. I think it is important that we make every effort to arrive on Friday evening. My thoughts for a possible broad framework are as follows:

Fri. night - Arrive + plan agenda  
Sat. morning - Devotions + Work  
Sat. afternoon - Work  
Sat. evening - Joke  
Sun. morning - Devotions + Work  
Sun. afternoon - 'Agape' lunch + depart.

Perhaps sometime during the weekend we could also fit in a symbolic action.

These are only my preliminary thoughts which are of course wide open to the democratic process!

In order to make the weekend a success may I suggest we do the following between now and then:

- 1) Think about how we want to spend the weekend
- 2) Bring agenda items which your region wants discussed
- 3) Contact Ben de Lange as soon as possible to let him know how many from your region are

MINUTES OF THE THIRD NATIONAL MEETING OF THE NCSG

JOHANNESBURG : 2 - 3 OCTOBER 1987

Present: Rolfe Eberhardt, Dawie Bosch, Dave Schmidt (CT)  
Nigel Day-Lewis, Steve & Janet Reid, Brian and Judy Wood  
Frank Crundwell, Gunt er Win kler (JHB) (DBN)  
Ben and Martina de Lange (BLOEM)

Apologies: Rob & Sally Goldman (DBN) - Contracted German Measles  
the day before.  
Alan & Nicky Muller (DBN) - House endangered by recent  
floods.

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As it was at the last COSG National Conference (Rosetta, September 1986) that a number of persons doing community service first initiated a national organization for community servers, we shall call that the first national meeting of the NCSG (albeit embryonic - neither birthed nor named). The meeting of representatives from around the country in Bloemfontein during March 1987 will be called the second. (N.B. Minutes of this meeting still outstanding from JHB.)

As was the case last September, this third meeting coincided with the annual COSG National Conference. Minutes of this conference can be obtained from COSG and no attempt is made to report on it here. Attention is, however, drawn to two recent developments in the wider CO movement which were on the COSG agenda and which are of relevance to CSs (especially in the light of Item 11 below): (1) the Cape Town 23 & the 'reawakening' of the prison option; (2) the Churches' Alternative Service Campaign. Documents on each are available from COSG and should be discussed by the regions.

The experience of the weekend showed the arrangement of coinciding COSG and NCSG conferences to be less than ideal. Many NCSG delegates naturally want to attend COSG matters; either they cannot because of a parallel NCSG meeting, or time given to NCSG meetings is repeatedly lessened to allow attendance of COSG business, NCSG business being neglected as a result. It is therefore recommended that NCSG holds separate national meetings in future (the NCC must decide whether annually or biannually); although NCSG representatives will, of course, continue to attend COSG conferences to ensure continued two-way report and support.

Five NCSG members met for business on the Friday, and were joined by four others for a short meeting on the Saturday. As all the business of the latter had its seed in that of the former, the discussions of both sessions have been coalesced into the single set of minutes which follow.

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## 1. CONSTITUTION

The issue of the religious nature of the NCSG with respect to the need to fall within the requirements of the Fund Raising Act was debated. CT's proposed amendments of 9/7/87, although passed by some regions, had been opposed by others. The discussion resolved that:

- the amendment to the Preamble, and amendments 6.2.7 and 7.4, be retained;
- amendments 8 and 9.6 be dropped (i.e. para 9 becomes 8 as before);
- amendment 2.8 be retained but with the exclusion of the word "religious".

A further amendment, to 9.3 (to revert to 8.3 if the above is approved), was suggested, viz. "... the quorum at the meeting shall be one-third of the voting members ...", but this is not essential.

The constitution needs to be formally finalised and adopted as soon as possible so that the NCSG can enjoy the advantages of formal recognition ( see, for example, the report on Item 5, para 5). Regional Coordinators must inform members to this effect by 9/10/87 and call regional meetings; REGIONS MUST VOTE ON THE CONSTITUTION BY 1/11/87.

## 2. FUNDING

Annual budget needed. National Treasurer to draft provisional budget. NCC to coordinate final budget.

Idea of trustees recommended for contingency fund. National Treasurer to draft proposal.

## 3. EMPLOYERS' GUIDE TO CS

Now completed and available to the regions. Comment is called for, especially re individual's experiences; send to CT by 1/11/87.

## 4. MEETING WITH DGM & CDA (CT : 3/9/87)(see special report)

This meeting may prove to be a watershed in the life and direction of NCSG (see Item 11), and all regions should study the separate report on this meeting.

It was noted that this report gives the "state of the art" with re to conditions of service. A few matters were raised:

4.1 Living Allowance. Detailed question naire to each CSr to ascertain actual living expenses at present needed. JHB to draft and coordinate results.

4.2 Tax. Mr Strauss to be asked to draw-up a memorandum on the tax issue, especially after the first two years of CS. BLOEM to initiate and to take-up results with Edeling.

## 5. MEETING WITH EDELING (CT : 23/9/87)(see separate report)

Edeling to be kept to his promises by closely following-up each of the issues; with each region to take responsibility for certain of them.

6. LIST OF ALL CSs

BLOEM to follow-up Edeling's promises of, and to obtain, lists of all Category III objectors; to send them to the National Coordinator; who will distribute the relevant sections to the regions.

In response to a request from COSG, BLOEM also to approach the Board for similar lists of all Category I & II objectors; and to send them to Rob Robertson.

7. LETTER OF INVITATION TO ALL CSs

Using the above lists, National Coordinator is to write a dynamic invitation to all CSs to join the NCSG, including therein the contact people in each region.

8. NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

JHB will finally get this going once above lists are received.

9. COSG COUNSELLING PAMPHLETS

COSG intends to print pamphlets, to be used in counselling prospective objectors, on the practical implications/experiences of each of the options: exile, evasion, prison, non-combatancy and CS. Four or five CSs are thus requested to put down their experiences on paper and to send to JHB, who will coordinate.

*How is this being organised?*

10. NCC PORTFOLIOS

Each NCC member is to draft a job-description of his portfolio.

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Lastly - By far the most time (and heat!) at the conference was spent on debating the following related issues - which should be discussed seriously and in depth by each of the regions:

11. QUO VADIS NCSG ? (Future raison d'être & strategy)

FIRST DILEMMA, QUESTION & STRATEGY

(D) We have reached a point of great frustration due to the total lack of response by the State to NCSG's numerous memoranda, letters and meetings with re to the legal rights of CSs and improving their conditions of service. In particular, the recent meeting with the DGM & CDA has shown that our approach up to this point has been virtually fruitless. Therefore:

(Q) Should we abandon our "reasonable" approach and "nice guy" image, and adopt a more aggressive/challenging approach?

(S) For example, by:

- Letter to Edeling, stating our frustrations with lack of progress thus far and giving him 3 months to get something done;

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- Petition, signed by all CSs and complaining i.a. about conditions of service;
  - Civil Disobedience actions, so putting the ball firmly in the State's court, especially on issues where the legislation is being incorrectly applied. For example, by taking occasional leave whether granted or not - e.g. to attend a NCSG conference next year (see below).
- To which of the above or other actions are members prepared to committ themselves?...

## SECOND DILEMNA, QUESTION & STRATEGY

- "We support the right of all... press statement"*
- (D) There is an increasing realisation that CSs have been drawn into a discriminatory and therefore unjust system; they have been accomodated within it but thereby also, simultaneously, silenced by it. There is no doubt that this was a chief aim of the '83 Act: compare, for example, the publicity surrounding COn before and after the introduction of the Act; and recent individual CO cases again demonstrate that the STate is not keen to face publicity on this issue. By our "reasonable" approach we accept the "reasonableness" of the legislation, instead of making a justifiable noise about its deficiencies/injustices; our silence makes it harder for the valid case of other, equally genuine, objectors to be heard, and more difficult their attempts to further change the law. It also means we give consent to the iniquitous State-enforced dichotomy between "religious" and "political". Simply concentrating on improving our own lot is also selfish. What is our relationship to other COs (many of whose objections coincide with some of our own), to the wider CO movement and to the attempts to change still further the laws on conscription/objection. The recent cases of Edwards, Tomms, Wilkinson and the CT 23 possibly challenge our introspective, apolitical and somewhat detached strategy up to this point. Are we simply helping to put COn back into the closet and thereby to perpetuate an unjust system?
- (Q) Are we happy for NCSG merely to continue pressing for improved conditions of service for ourselves, or should we be challenging the entire (unjust) system of religious objection itself and also/thereby identifying with other COs and the wider CO movement?
- (S) What strategies could be adopted? To which of the following suggested courses of action would members be prepared to committ themselves?
- Open letter to the press
  - Drafting, signing and circulating a manifesto, inwhich statements such as the following could be made: our objection to the SADF not only "religious"; we regard the whole system of CS to be unjust - because it is both unfairly punitive and discriminatory (not available to many objectors with whom we agree); not willing to be co-opted into, or silenced by, the system. (Rolfe to draft a suggested document.)
  - Civil Disobedience actions (what?), in response to, for example, the jailing of an objector or an "unrelated" political incident (e.g. SADF action in Mozambique).
  - Fasting - Not paying taxes - Boycotts/Go-slows
  - Refusing to continue CS - Joining churches AS campaign.

Region's debate on all of the above will culminate at a fourth National Meeting in Bloem in late February, to be coordinated by the National Coordinator, lasting 3 days (occasional leave to be taken whether granted or not?), and which we hope will be attended by a very large number of CSs.

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MINUTES OF THE FORTH NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVERS CONFERENCE HELD IN BLOEMFONTEIN FROM FRIDAY 6 MAY TO SUNDAY 8 MAY 1988.

PRESENT: MARTIN BIRTWHISTLE, DAVE BOSCH, STEVE DE GRUCHY, MARTIN DE LANGE, BEN DE LANGE, ROLFE EBERHARD, DONN EDWARDS, ANDREW EDWARDS, CRAIG FREESE, SALLY GOLDMAN, ROB GOLDMAN, DEREK HOHLS, DI HOHLS, PHILIP IVEY, PETER JACOBSON, PETER KANTOR, JENNY KEITH, MARIAN LOVEDAY, CHIP SNADDON, IAN STEVENS, ANGELA STRAUSS, GIDEON STRAUSS, JIM TE WATER NAUDE, ANDREW WARMBACK, DAVID WALKER, GAVIN WEIR, ALISON WHEAL, PETER WILSON.

The Conference opened in an informal manner. Rob Goldman (National Co-Ordinator) welcomed all present and a fun introductory session was held. The delegates were then divided into small groups with the task of discussing their expectations of the Conference. These expectations were shared in plenary and recorded, to be used in the evaluation of the conference.

EXPECTATIONS:

- \* Contact with others (support, strength, unity, group dynamics)
- \* Details - information about law, etc.
- \* Direction, strategy, goals - War Resistance Movement/Manpower.
- \* Try to expand group?
- \* What is the unique role/contribution/impact that community servers can play?

Some discussion of the agenda then followed and agreement was reached.

1. FRIDAY EVENING SESSION

Devotions led by the Johannesburg Group. Rob Goldman formally opened the Conference and read out letters that had been received by various individuals and groups expressing support and well wishes for the success of the conference. Letters were received from the following:

COSG (DURBAN)	
Loek Goemans	- Catholic J&P Commission (Dbn)
Desmond Tutu	- Archbishop of Anglican Church, Cape Town
Rev. R. Marshall	- Dbn & District Council of Churches
Rev. F. Chikane	- SACC
Denis Hurley	- Catholic Archbishop of Dbn
Anita Kromberg	- Clerk of Dbn Quaker Meeting
Paddy Kearney	- Director of Diakonia
Larry Parsons	- Provincial Youth Convener, Anglican Church
Mary Burton	- National President of Black Sash
Bishop Michael	- Anglican Bishop of Natal

Delegates expressed the need for more regional feedback as well as to share some personal experience both positive and negative, before broaching the main issues of strategy.

The revised agenda for the evening session thus became :

- (a) Personal experience feedback
- (b) Regional report backs
- (c) Strategy discussion

(a) Personal Experience Feedback

Positive Experiences

- \* Finances ok on average
- \* Can still contribute to a changing S.A.
- \* Personal experiences rewarding
- \* Feeling of vindication
- \* Provided direction for possible career options
- \* Allows for explorations of alternative employment options afterwards.
- \* Support from thinking people
- \* Positive non-violent action - i.e. Ivan Toms
- \* Sincere unspoken witness
- \* Being humbled
- \* Identification with working class
- \* Personal, positive action
- \* Christian support and NCSG
- \* Worked with all population groups

Negative Experiences

- \* Limited expression of concern for fundamental issues of objections - frustration with narrowness of objection.
- \* Restricted to Government Departments.
- \* Length of service and waiting for placement.
- \* Job satisfaction (comparison with wives)
- \* Isolation, lack of support
- \* Bureaucracy - Red tape - pay hassles
- \* Medical Aid, tax, etc.
- \* Interest from branch
- \* Comprise i.e. in respect of other objectors (moral guilt)
- \* Marginalised as pacifists.
- \* Job satisfaction (low productivity).
- \* Improper or inappropriate placement.
- \* Having to prove your bona fides - Board decides on your conscience.

(b) Regional Report BacksBloemfontein

Presently have three community servers. Due to individual pressures, they have not been able to meet regularly. See their main aim as assisting applicants going through the Board. A vote of confidence given by delegates as a whole for work done in this regard. It was reported that Deon was still experiencing difficulties, having to carry out his ministry after hours. This is putting pressure on his family, although they appear to be coping quite well.

Johannesburg/Pretoria

Ian reported that this region was also experiencing difficulties in getting together as a group. Difficulties in co-ordinating a meeting between Pretoria and Johannesburg and time commitments of individuals were some of the reasons given for this. Also group as a whole felt to be lacking in terms of vision, action and interest. Following suggestions were made to attempt to re-establish interest:

- Pretoria/Johannesburg groups to meet separately, and to develop their own dynamics;
- fewer meetings on informal basis;
- focus meetings on broader issues of wider interest to members;
- small core in each centre to concentrate on issues of interest to the wider NCSG movement.

Durban

Active membership of 15 members who are ably assisted and abetted by country members and assorted associate members. Regular monthly meetings are held over dinner which are rotated among the members. Meetings are finely tuned to have a good mix among the business and social time. As a group Durban have been keeping touch with those issues being addressed by other regions. Of late there has been a general feeling that we are too "inward looking". Thus we have gone on a publicity drive to raise awareness of NCSG and its aims, i.e. addressing church groups etc. Some difficulties have been experienced in respect of the Department of Manpower, but as yet have not been able to set up either regular or effective channels of communication.

Cape Town

They have been involved in direct negotiations with Department of Manpower officials and communications with Nic Olivier (MP). Director General of Manpower appears to be pointing towards, new legislation to be published, regarding changes in our conditions of employment. There is presently a member of the Cape Town Law Faculty drawing up a brief in respect of certain conditions of employment that Manpower might be legally challenged on. Anglican Church in Cape Town has appointed two senior clerics with responsibility for community servers. Congregational Church held a service of support and fellowship for community servers and their families which was well supported. Cape Town also noted that they had become fairly well known as a group who were able to facilitate prospective applicants in preparing for their Board hearings. Lastly it was reported that two more Cape Town objectors were facing court action and possible jail sentences.

It being late, no further business was discussed. Instead Durban produced their early contribution to the cultural enhancement of the conference, being T-shirts bearing an informal NCSG slogan on the front and other slogans (mostly illegible) on the back. Despite the mad scramble that the appearance of the T-shirts caused there are still some left. These are available at the nominal rate of R8 @ (or R16 for two); proceeds to go towards the Contingency fund.

2. SATURDAY 8.00 A.M. - 12.30 A.M.

Devotions :Led by Johannesburg delegates  
Facilitator :Peter Kantor (Cape Town)

It was again felt that there was the need for more background information, firstly as to the history of the C.O. movement and secondly to specific issues being dealt with at present. The following agenda was agreed to :

- (a) History of C.O. movement
- (b) History of memoranda
- (c) Principles of strategy discussion

(a) History of C.O. Movement

Rob Goldman gave a brief overview of this movement, starting with the first resistance movement in 1977:-

- \* From 1977 non-Jehovah Witness C.O.'s started going to jail rather than army, exile or evasion.
- \* C.O. support groups grew up around them, and the first COSG National Conference was held in 1980.
- \* High level of publicity and protest over the jailed C.O.'s led to the Defence Amendment Act of 1983, allowing for religious pacifist alternative service;
- \* Black sash made the first call for an end to conscription in this call and the result was the formation of the End

\*Conscription Campaign (ECC) at the end of 1983. Loose support groups of people doing community service formed in 1985. At the August 1986 COSG National Conference, C.S.'s at the conference began a process of forming a National organisation. This was formally constituted at the NCSG conference in 1987. Three NCSG National Conferences have been held since the August 1986 meeting: February 1987; October 1987; and May 1988. NCSG has thus far retained an independent identity as an organisation with its closest affiliation being to COSG.

(b) History of memoranda

Rolf Eberhard summed up the efforts of the Cape Town region.

- \* 1985 - first memorandum drawn up concerning issues of tax, placement, etc. Further letters written to Manpower with no tangible results.
- \* 1986 - second memorandum to Manpower regarding attitudes and interpretation of regulations. Amendment of the period of service to be served by C.O.'s to 1.5 times. A survey of non-Government organisations was carried out to establish their attitude toward employing C.O.'s, 47 positive replies out of 50. Letter sent to Manpower with a copy of the above survey attached. Meeting with the Director General of Manpower. Although meeting conducted in a positive atmosphere of co-operation, little of substance was achieved.

(c) Principles of strategy discussion

- a) Summary of National Conference, October 1987: Dilemma's:
  - i) Should be pressing for greater negotiations with Manpower on conditions of service, or should we be addressing the wider C.O. challenge.
  - ii) How should we relate to Manpower - to continue negotiations, or consider possible confrontation on certain issues:
- (b) Regional input:

Bloemfontein

no clear vision as issues had not been debated due to personal difficulties. Felt they had moved into the grey area of press statements.

Durban

continue with negotiations as proof of our willingness to do so:

- \* encourage other individual/groups/organisations to lobby authorities on our behalf;
- \* seek publicity as an organisation. Civil disobedience could be used by individuals but not as a group strategy;
- \* assess circumstances of individual and if necessary

obtain legal advice with the view to challenging Manpower in court;

- \* Strike action could be considered, but not for minor issues and only as a last resort;
- \* continue to intensify current approach, but not to destroy previous good work.
- \* pursue channels open to us, accepting that we do have a positive role to play as C.S.'s. NCSG should remain independent as an organisation; however individuals should be free to work in other organisations.
- \* identifying with other C.O.'s i.e. Ivan Toms.
- \* Question raised as to whether we should pursue group or individual action. Group would be stronger, but individual participation should not be compulsory.

1) Prioritising issues - NCSG Strategies

Overall strategy of NCSG was agreed to be that of improving the conditions of service for R.O.'s. Thus conditions were identified and prioritised in terms of perceived importance and secondly perceived feasibility in achieving success.

1	LENGTH	3	PLACEMENT - SCOPE - WITHIN LEGISLATION	2	PAY - AFTER 2 YEARS MORATORIUM; TAX MEDICAL AID; LIVING ALLOWANCE ALLOWANCES
3		1		2	
	LEAVE - OCCASIONAL - WHEN	5	TRAINING & PROMOTION	4	ATTITUDE OF OFFICIALS INTERPRETATION
5		5		4	
	CALL UP TO C.S.		OVERTIME		
6		5		5	

Action Steps

- i) Length of service : Publicity; MP's, churches; Manpower
- ii) Pay: Pursue with Manpower; possible court action i.e. Tax, allowance, moratorium (lobby banks etc)
- iii) Placement: Pursue with employers and manpower; scope for more involvement as individuals and of churches and with ECC.
- iv) Attitude: As a guide maintain 'nice guy' approach; Policy : pursue with Manpower; generate image of 'nice guys' doing good work.
- v) Training: Possibility of court action; pursue with Manpower and employees.
- vi) Leave : Possibility of court action, i.e. right to study leave; pursue with Manpower and employees.
- vii) Overtime : Pursue with Manpower
- viii) Call-up system: Pursue with Judge Edeling.

NCSG acting as a union: it was agreed that in many respects we already do, but lack the infrastructure to set ourselves up as a formal unions. (i.e. large amount of legislation we would have to comply with). But will continue to act on conditions of service and also as a group to support C.S.'s experiencing difficulties with Manpower or employers.

Ideas were then generated, firstly in respect of strategy in dealing with Manpower about conditions of service and secondly in respect of NCSG's broader involvement in relationship with the wider war resistance movements.

(a) Manpower.

- \* Exhaust present reasonable approach of discussion.
- \* Enlist others to pressurise on our behalf, i.e. churches, M.P.'s, and other publicity.
- \* Publicity ok if legal. No civil disobedience as an organisation, but acceptable on an individual level if they see fit.
- \* Obtain legal advice if progress on specific issues is not forthcoming. But it can be a long drawn out process.
- \* Strike action. Group hesitant. More discussions later if required.
- \* Intensify present approach and add to it other actions that complement existing actions.
- \* Broader involvement with churches, community and PFP to improve society's attitude towards community service.
- \* Pressurise Judge Edeling to act on his promises.
- \* Moral power v Manpower
- \* Scope of placement is most important issue.

(b) (i) War Resistance Movement:

- \* NCSG remain independent organisation in order to contribute to sorting out community service.
- \* Individuals can get involved in other organisations.
- \* Fear of duplication of roles. Co-operation, but not necessarily identifying our aligning with ECC, COSG, OSG, etc.
- \* Identifying with C.O.'s by providing public support to objectors.
- \* Challenge dispensation - but look at the personal cost.
- \* "Group affair" or "own affair"? Does this affect our constitution? (prescribes method for decision making).
- \* Deal with our broader issues within NCSG.

(ii) NCSG Goals

The delegates split into smaller groups for a brain storming session to come up with goals they thought would be appropriate for NCSG. The groups reported back in plenary and after discussion the following goals were agreed upon.

1. Support Group:  
Provide support, information and strategies for all prospective, present and post C.O.'s, their family and friends.
2. Improve conditions of service, broaden placement and grounds for admission. Using direct access to manpower, declaring dissatisfaction and using unique position as recognised objectors.
3. Create public awareness and provide information about community service.
4. Define a relationship with other war resistance movements and individuals within them, to prevent ineffective duplication and exert pressure to achieve maximum effect (total onslaught)

Note: Relationship between NCSG and other organisations (eg. ECC) will differ between the regions. NCSG office bearers should preferably not bear office in other war resistance movements and/or political organisations. Negotiators to maintain a low public profile, especially on controversial issues.

3. SUNDAY MORNING

House-keeping Issues:

1. Newsletter - outreach :  
Although there has been a delay it was reported that the first issue had been finalised containing information on Ivan Toms and Alan Goddard.
2. Cost of Living Survey :  
Frank (Joey's ) is co-ordinating this survey. I.R.O. Manpower requests it was agreed that our evaluations should reflect actual amounts spent and not merely justifying the R250,00.
3. Personal experiences:  
It was agreed that a record of some of the experiences that we have undergone in becoming Religious Objectors, should be recorded. The following members agreed to participate:  
Durban - Donn Edwards, Jim te Water Naude (country member)  
Cape Town - Philip Ivey  
Johannesburg - Derek Hols  
Bloemfontein - Deon Potgieter

These reports to be submitted to Johannesburg by the end of May.

4. Conditions of Service:  
 Arising out of the strategy discussions on Saturday, the various areas open to us, in terms of our conditions of service, were divided amongst the regions to co-ordinate action on these issues:  
 \* Publicity : A national committee member  
 \* M.P.'s : Cape Town (Gavin to liaise with Joburg and Pretoria)  
 \* Churches : Durban  
 \* Judge Edeling : Bloem/Cape Town (issues to be submitted to these two regions to be taken up with Judge Edeling)  
 \* Court Action : Natal  
 \* Manpower : Cape Town  
 \* ECC: Each region to develop own contracts  
 \* Banks: Donn Edwards (Durban) to co-ordinate. All information regarding banks, loans, etc to be forwarded to him.

5. Fund Raising :  
 Total cost of the conference was calculated (incl. food and transport, but excluding accommodation) and divided amongst the delegates. Cost per delegate came to R88,00.

Cost per Region:	Durban	R968,00
	Cape Town	R968,00
	Joburg	R264,00
	Bloem	R352,00

Each region to embark on fund raising in order to have sufficient finances for future conferences.

6. Membership:  
 A letter of introduction of NCSG was sent to all classified Religious Objectors, inviting them to join or merely to learn more of our activities. A 'personal particulars' form was circulated which is to be filled in by the existing members, as well as new members wishing join. An alteration is to be made to this form to enable us to include any information on Bank loans, HP arrangements etc. It was agreed that regional secretaries would obtain a copy of all statements submitted to the Board.

7. Conference Evaluation  
 The following observations in respect of the conference were made:  
 \* Familiarisation of constitution for new members  
 \* Report backs to be given by national portfolio holders.  
 \* Conference to be held over a longer period.  
 \* Greater preparation (in order to streamline agendas and meeting periods)  
 \* National co-ordination committee to be chosen at conference  
 \* Better planned agendas.  
 \* More direct proposals to be made.

Conference ended in a time of prayer and worship led by Steve de Gruchy.

A vote of thanks was given to Ben and Martina de Lange for their work in organising the venue and logistics for the conference. The Bloem region has volunteered to host the next conference as well.



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