

LOBBYING AND CONFERENCES - TAKING FORWARD THE CAMPAIGN FOR ALTERNATIVE NATIONAL SERVICE

Following the National Conference adoption of a campaign for Alternative National Service, ECC has embarked on a programme of action that employs various complementary strategies and introduces new components into our work. This programme has involved:-

1. Know Your Rights and Information Service work, directed at conscripts, which has put us in touch with their needs and views.
2. Alternative service projects, which have concretely demonstrated the kind of service we are talking about.
3. A focus on the call-up.
4. A programme of lobbying support from various groups and constituencies.

Highlighted by the recent stands of conscientious objectors, we have seen the issue of alternative national service achieve a prominence and support we did not anticipate in so short a space of time. The question we face is how to take forward the issue in the most effective manner. Looking back at the last two phases of the campaign, it is clear that we have laid an extremely thorough basis on which to take the issue into the public arena.

ECC National Conference identified the need to be actively reaching out to specific powerful constituencies in an attempt to win broad support for our call for alternative national service. This would constitute our lobbying programme. Recent events have already set us well on our way in this regard and the hyper generated around the issue puts us in an excellent position to take the programme forward. It is clear that what was originally the third phase of the campaign, ie. lobbying and conference, is the most appropriate way to proceed.

So

1. What is lobbying?

Lobbying is basically a process of interaction with defined groups or individuals for the purpose of winning support for an issue, and to stimulate groups/individuals to act on the basis of that support. For our purposes lobbying will involve the presentation

of information, an argument and a programme of action. In the process we would be networking supporters of the call for alternative national service.

2. Aims

In broad terms the aims of our lobbying process are:-

(a) To create an awareness amongst a broad range of constituencies of the need for a system of alternative service.

(b) To mobilize as broad and powerful a spectrum of support for this call.

(c) To formulate concrete, practical proposals for the implementation of a system of alternative service, available to all conscripts who have bona fide moral and religious objections to service in the SADF.

(d) To encourage various groups/individuals to consider and participate in a programme of action around ANS.

(e) To network these groups and establish a base or community of support.

3. Who do we lobby?

We need to be approaching the following groups and organisations:-

(a) Organisations concerned directly with the issue of conscription and alternative service ie. COSG, OSG, Community Service Group and Conscription Advice Service.

(b) Institutions within which alternative service could be performed ie. community and welfare organisations, individuals in government departments such as Manpower, Health and Welfare, Education.

(c) Progressive extra-parliamentary organisations concerned about the issue eg. Black Sash, IDASA, white democrat and youth groups.

(d) Religious institutions, who have been concerned for many

years with the morality of army service, and have played a key role in the anti-military movement.

(e) The business community, in that they are affected economically by conscription, and may be concerned more broadly with constructive solutions, and would be an important source of support and funding for alternative service.

- includes (i) Corporations such as Anglo, Mutual, Shell; (ii) Associations such as ASSACOM; (ii) Institutes such as Urban Foundation.

(f) Educational institutions, especially university administrations, teachers and student organisations.

(g) Opposition parliamentary groupings - PFP, NDM.

(h) Government - MP's, SADF, Board for C.O., Department of Manpower.

(i) Local government, to whom community service is an issue.

(j) Professional groupings.

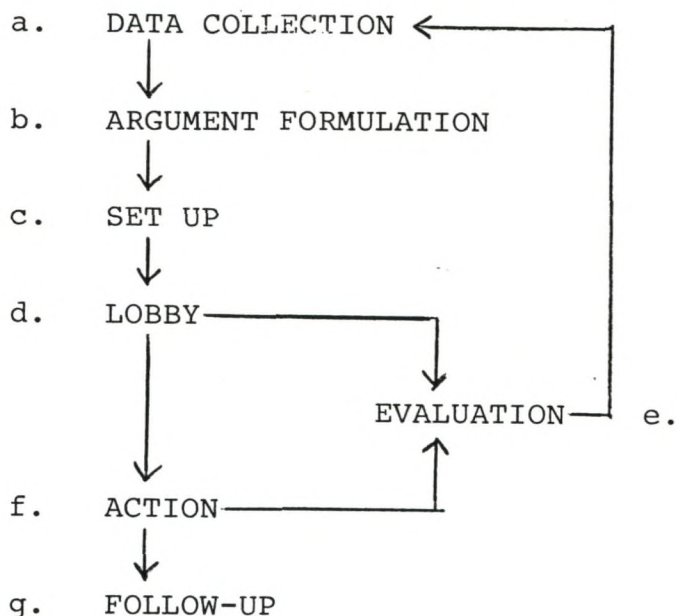
(k) Other groups such as sport and cultural organisations, service organisations such as Round Table, Rotary, Red Cross, Operation Hunger.

4. How do we go about lobbying?

Within these constituencies it is possible to distinguish those groups or people who will require convincing on the issue and those who require consolidation. Consequently different approaches will be needed. The former group may need an extensive process of discussion before they can formulate a position and/or act on such a position. The latter group, may be able to move more rapidly on a programme of action.

We have drawn up a flow chart that represents the phases involved in a process of lobbying. These phases are data collection, argument formulation, setting up the lobby, doing it, embarking on action, follow-up and evaluation.

LOBBYING PROCESS



Notes:

(a) Basic data concerning the military and effects, costs, statistics, budgets, other countries etc., to be compiled into a Dossier (similar to HAP Militarisation one). Also information about the group to be approached needs to be gathered and compiled into a Briefing sheet for the lobbyists (eg. membership, aims, history, etc.)

(b) Argument needs to take account of what we want from the group being approached, as well as what our overall objectives are.

(c) Set up will involve preliminary contact, negotiating the forum as well as a degree of information gathering on our part.

(d) The lobby itself is where the presentation, debate and negotiation etc. occurs. Training will be necessary. The lobby need not be a once off occasion.. This will depend on the circumstances.

(e) We will need to evaluate the lobby so as to feed into further lobbying work. It would also involve evaluation of the action, except that the action may not be immediate. Such evaluation will play a crucial role in providing feedback into ECC generally.

(f) This is really the most important component. We will need to work out very clearly what it is we are asking various groups to do in relation to the call. Therefore we need to develop a programme in this regard. The conference could be critical in such a programme.

(g) Follow-up could take a variety of forms. Essentially we are talking about how we consolidate the relationship that is established through the lobbying process.

5. A Lobby Programme

We see our lobbying work occurring in three "phases", progressively moving into newer uncharted constituencies. This is partly because of the need to be establishing contacts and following these up with substantial research data to back up our arguments.

Phase One

Will involve contact with fraternal and sympathetic organisations and individuals. A list of organisations and contacts is attached. The basic purpose will be to present our call with the available material to back up our arguments. To this end a preliminary dossier is being compiled as a basis.

We see it as necessary to be approaching this group as soon as possible.

A key function of this exercise will be to investigate the appropriate strategies for particular constituencies. (Eg. Urban Foundation and some business houses).

This phase should largely be completed by the end of the year.

Phase Two

We would be following up the contacts established in the first phase and extending into newer (and more difficult) areas. The detailed research findings will be available by this stage and would therefore form the basis of our inputs to these constituencies.

We would see the Centre for Intergroup Studies conference on alternative service, to be held round about April 1989, as a key lobbying moment. In fact we are suggesting a well worked out input on the basis of our research and lobbying experience at that point. The conference itself will be an important arena for establishing contact with constituencies to which we ordinarily would not have access.

Immediately after the conference we would need a thorough assessment of the impact we are making to facilitate planning for the third phase.

Phase Three

This would proceed from the GIGS conference (approximately April next year). Further thought needs to go into this phase.

The first two phases we would see as a process of building support for the call for alternative service, while the latter phase would be more geared towards developing concrete proposals for a system of alternative service.

We have spoken about formulating these proposals into a draft bill for presentation before parliament during the Defence debate.

At this point however, we feel it is appropriate to raise the possibility of working towards an ECC conference such as was discussed in the early part of our campaign planning.

In our previous discussions we have identified the following aims of such a consultative conference:-

1. To draw together a broad grouping of supporters of the call for ANS.
2. To formulate a clear set of proposals for implementation - perhaps in the form of a draft bill.
3. To stimulate action in support of these proposals by conference participants, beyond the conference.

We are seeing the Centre conference/workshop as part of our lobbying strategy and as a stepping stone towards our own conference the aims of which are set out above.

This refinement of the conference ideas does not take away from the aims we have set ourselves, it merely introduces a more strategic approach to the launch of our own conference initiative.

6. A few words on process

Within each of the targeted constituencies we will need to identify people to be approached on a national level. Each region however must be able to benefit directly from the lobbying process and therefore the bulk of the lobbying must be conducted by the regions. National lobbying must happen in addition and in such a way it complements and enhances the work of the regions.

National lobbying needs to be assigned by the National Committee. It is our suggestion that the national workers take responsibility for this. In addition, the influence and expertise of sympathetic individuals outside of ECC should be marshalled.

As far as Cape Town is concerned we have established a lobbying team.

This team is responsible for:

- (a) co-ordination of lobbying work;
- (b) preparing data and developing detailed strategies for various groups;
- (c) ensuring that people are trained and briefed to carry out the lobbying;
- (d) assisting the various groups throughout the process.

Regions may wish to arrange their lobbying work differently. Cape Town's outline is offered for information. National co-ordination and division of responsibility will however need to be worked by national committee.

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END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)

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