

A25.5

MOTIVATION FOR WJP CAMPAIGN IN SA, NAMIBIA AND MOZAMBIQUE

Proposal: That ECC engages in a month long WJP Campaign with simultaneous projects in SA, Namibia and Mozambique.

1° demand: ASP  
2° : SA focus

Motivation:

At a recent weekend away, the following points (amongst others) emerged in assessing the history of ECC:

1) The WJP Campaign is our most successful campaign to date. It offered in a symbolic way a constructive alternative to military service and township duty, underlined ECC's interim demands around alternative service for conscientious objectors, appealed to and involved many different constituencies, and built non-racialism. ECC appeared positive, sincere and prepared to get its hands dirty. The interim demands and WJP projects have not been directly attacked in anti-ECC propaganda.

2) We need to substantially re-orientate our organisation towards addressing and focussing directly on the conscript/soldier. WJP projects are an excellent way of highlighting the soldier's lack of rights.

3) ECC needs to become more of an authority on the issues which concern it. These issues include the occupation of Namibia and destabilization in Southern Africa.

The proposed WJP projects in SA, Namibia and Mozambique incorporate all these points in one campaign.

Projects:

It is vital that the projects are not merely symbolic, but make a real difference to the community concerned. The projects should empower the community by equipping it with skills, resources or structures that last beyond the duration of the campaign. The projects should be fairly substantial eg. developing primary health care skills or building an irrigation scheme.

Who are we talking to?

- conscript
- state
- white areas
- blacks.

Message: \* symbolic statement of collective guilt.

\* interim demands - as resolution.

↳ letting conscripts speak through project.

Veterans/walking groups.

- non racial. vs. conscripts / whites.

- 3 levels - ECC orgs.

- reps from conscripteries { conscripts  
churches  
schools.

- other orgs.

Projects

~ 1 big internal project.

+ 'curtain raiser' in each centre.

- involving people

The choice of projects will depend on what the community identifies as its needs (and on what skills and resources we can offer). The question of proper consultation with appropriate groups is discussed later.

We will have to put effort into collecting the materials needed. This process can itself be used to raise public awareness of conditions in the communities concerned.

#### Volunteer Groups:

The volunteer groups could comprise representatives from different constituencies (eg. schools, conscripts, church, Afrikaans community) and ECC member organisations. The groups should be non-racial in their composition.

It may be necessary (and exciting) to include 'specialists', such as doctors or engineers, in the groups. ECC could also invite progressive professional groups to undertake projects alongside it. Another idea would be to invite anti-apartheid groups overseas to participate in the projects.

Journalists and TV crews could be invited to accompany the groups to report on conditions in the different communities.

#### Aims of the Campaign:

- to build ECC organisationally:
  - \* recruit new members
  - \* strengthen ties with member organisations
  - \* establish links with professional groups
  - \* build links with groups in Namibia and Mozambique
  - \* learn new skills
  - \* learn about conditions in different communities.
- to promote ECC's interim demands and alternatives to military service, and build its positive image.
- to raise awareness and opposition in the white community around

## Problem areas.

- \* 'propoganda' image - press, TV.
  - \* Confounding issues ~ losing ASP focus  
in SA issue.
  - \* Not focussing on conscripts enough.
  - \* internal ASP not getting enough focus.
  - \* demands in international project.
  - \* State response. ~ briefing Catholics + Anglicans.
  - \* timing ? Feb ~ weather
  - \* costs + transpA.
- 

## Process:

SA's occupation of Namibia and destabilization policies.

- to make a statement of solidarity with the people of Namibia and Mozambique, and build non-racialism in SA.
- to offer a vision of regional co-operation, not conflict - a vision of SA, as the most powerful country in the region, strengthening rather than undermining its neighbours.
- to make a statement about the practical application of specialists' skills to-meet the real needs of the people.

Potential Problems:

- \* physical risks from bandits and disease in Mozambique
- \* SA government stopping the campaign
- \* money
- \* not finding suitable projects and appropriate groups to work with
- \* media coverage might not be as good as we would like
- \* difficulty collecting necessary materials and skills

Steps from Here:

- \* explore funding (Laurie and Adele)
- \* regions need to discuss this proposal and raise new ideas/problems (Adele to co-ordinate)
- \* explore the viability of projects in different communities and innitiate contact with groups in those areas (Cape Town exploratory group)
- \* work out responsibility for different aspects of the campaign (National Committee)

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ALTERNATIVE SERVICE PROJECT - CAMPAIGN PROPOSAL

This project will entail us taking a group of volunteers to perform various community projects to demonstrate symbolically and practically what we feel would be a viable alternative to service in the SADF. In doing this we are :

- a) giving people something concrete to get involved in.
- b) presenting 'national service' in its true form ie. service to the people of the country - at the same time exposing how the SADF usually has the opposite function to this 'service'.
- c) demonstrating that we are 'patriotic' in the real sense and not in the sense of allegiance to the status quo.
- d) presenting something positively as opposed to criticising always in a 'negative' way.
- e) showing that men and women can contribute to a meaningful 'national service'.

This project looks like it will be our major activity for the first half (and possibly the whole) of this year. The gains are potentially huge, but because it's a technically complicated campaign we are going to have to be very jacked-up.

Target Areas :

- Schools
- Conscripts
- Women
- Fast supporters
- Churches
- Young professionals
- Students
- ECC Front Organisations
- Academics
- Afrikaans areas
- Business community

Timing :

Much of the volunteer workforce will probably come from school pupils and university students. For this reason the 'work phase' of the campaign should fall on the school and university holidays. Also this is a time when many other people are on holiday. The school holidays are from Wednesday 26 March - Tuesday 8 April. The UCT vac is from Friday 11 April - Monday 21 April. The work period should therefore be from approximately 1 April - 20 April. It was felt that three weeks was long enough to accomplish something, yet short enough to avoid getting over-extended and bogged down.

The timing of the various phases of the campaign can then be built around this.

Phases (and timing cont.)

A. Build-up

Unlike the Troops Out Campaign ASP has no immediate emotionally gripping issue to derive its momentum from. The issue has to be built and "hyped" if it is to capture peoples imagination. Build-up is therefore crucial. This could include :

- Consult the People's Org. - Very NB*
- I. The January call-up campaign
  - II. The 'cadets out' campaign (volunteer recruitment)
  - III. A large open forum in mid-February, with speakers from a range of constituencies. Invites to fast supporters, member organisations and word of mouth (volunteer recruitment)
  - IV. Speaking to a wide range of organisations and groups about the campaign (volunteer recruitment)
  - V. A big media drive in early April, including constituency directed pamphlets and posters with a national logo, and a more general 'slick' brochure (volunteer recruitment)

B. The Campaign

- Blitz!*
- I. A public meeting launch (possibly at Claremont Civic) on about 17 March.
  - II. Throughout this process of build-up we will need to be recruiting volunteers for the work phase. A work meeting on about 25 March could pull the volunteers together, motivate people, allow for allocation to various tasks, etc.
  - III. Work begins on about 1 April.

C. Follow-Up

No specific ideas for follow-up except the suggestion of a meeting on approximately 23 April. It has been stressed that this campaign follow-up is crucial. We will have involved many people in our work, we have to be clear on what we are going to do with them.

The project itself

This is the most difficult and technical area of the campaign. We need to have enough work for everyone we recruit, and the work has to be organised well enough for people to come out the other side feeling what they had done was useful and a viable alternative to conscription into the SADF.

Ideas so far :

- a) building maternity wing of SACLA Clinic
- b) various possible projects in Hout Bay
- c) channeling people into RMG, rape crisis
- d) channeling professionals into legal aid, Namda, advice offices, nursing, etc.
- e) helping out at CAP
- f) adult literacy
- g) more controversial ideas include (i) environmental work; (ii) channeling people into some Shawco projects.

This area is going to require a lot of thought and planning. We have to be very slick. We still need to consult with community organisations eg. UWO, Western Cape Civics about other possible projects we could do.



Structures Proposals

- a) The project will involve the whole of ECC and existing sub-committees would plug directly into the campaign.
- b) The ASP group would consist of people interested plus formal representation from all sub-committees.
- c) There should be :
  - i) an overall co-ordinator
  - ii) projects co-ordinator
  - iii) volunteers and follow-up co-ordinator

Nic, Bazil and Paula respectively have been proposed for these posts.

Discussion

It is crucial that this project is discussed quite thoroughly in all areas of ECC so that we all have a good understanding and control of the direction of the campaign.

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## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PROMOTE A JUST PEACE?

Working For A Just Peace involves everyone and the End Conscription Campaign has a number of projects on the go at the moment.

One of these projects is improving the grounds of a Home For the mentally Handicapped in Eldorado Park.

When : On April 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>

Where: the Harvey Cohen Centre in Eldorado Park.  
cnr. Jan Beem and Cavendish Streets.

We will plant grass, trees, shrubs and a vegetable patch for the Centre on almost 2½ acres of ground. So bring something to eat, drink and gardening tools. People with plenty of energy are needed!

Phone Pat at 648-6445 or ECC offices on Tues or Thurs for more details 337-6796.

See map on back →



"Working for a Just Peace Campaign."

The End Conscription Campaign (ECC) in South Africa is soon to embark on a campaign which will involve working on community development projects throughout the country. The campaign titled the "Working for a Just Peace Campaign" will highlight the ECC's demand for an end to compulsory service in the country's armed forces. Through this focus, which will peak on 30 April, we hope to physically demonstrate alternatives to military service.

The ECC is the leading force opposing the compulsory conscription of young white men in South Africa. Our campaign is based on the fact that the universal right to freedom of conscience is not adhered to in our country, and that men are forced to serve in a defence force which is both implementing and defending the system of apartheid.

A range of projects, in which large numbers of people are expected to participate, have been lined up. At the Crossroads squatter camp, near Cape Town, plans are underway for a group of people to prepare the site for a new maternity wing for the clinic there. The Gandhi Phoenix Settlement will be rebuilt with the help of ECC volunteers. Large sections of it were destroyed by fire last year.

In Pietermaritzburg a large group of people are expected to help with an agricultural project run by factory workers. In Johannesburg energy will go into running holiday programmes for youth.

Other project ideas include help with counselling schemes, Nursing assistance, teaching and environmental cleaning.

"We believe that an alternative to compulsory military service is urgently required," says our National Organiser, Laurie Nathan. "Young men are conscripted and forced into a position where they are bearing arms in defence of apartheid, against fellow South Africans. How can this be called national service? This system of conscription must end. Through the 'Working for a Just Peace' campaign we want to demonstrate an alternative to military conscription. "

At present alternatives to military conscription are severely limited. Conscripts who are religious pacifists can opt for

alternative service in government departments. The period of this service is punitive however in that it effectively lasts  $1\frac{1}{2}$  times the length of military service. This can amount <sup>to</sup> up to 6 years.

For those who don't satisfy the religious pacifist requirements, the prospects are bleak. They face either a prison sentence of the same duration as the alternative service; or a life in exile.

The alternative service projects to be organized by the ECC are hoped to be a model of what national service could be. Most important, says the ECC's National Secretary David Shandler, is that these projects will be based outside of government departments. "The projects we are going to work on will be formulated in consultation with community-based organizations. This is how a national service should be conducted. Service in the SADF or in apartheid government departments is everything but a service to the people."

"We will be demonstrating our demand for a national service that is based on the real material needs of South Africans. This is why the process of consultation with the people's organizations is so important. We do not want to be involved in projects which are imposed onto people. This is how the government acts."

The alternative service at present available to religious pacifists will also come under scrutiny. It is inadequate, not only because it is punitive, but also because it excludes broad categories of non-religious and non-pacifist people opposed to service in the SADF.

In all of the projects, a special effort is to be made to promote non-racialism by bringing black and white together in an activity, which is to the benefit of the community. "As a campaign based in the white community," says Laurie, "the ECC will also be promoting non-racialism through the 'Working for a Just Peace' Campaign by bringing whites together in a demonstration of their opposition to compulsory military service - an apartheid institution. It will show that there are many white South Africans who are opposed to racism and who wish to build a just peace in our country."

- \* Organize alternative service projects of your own to coincide with ours from 1st April to 21 April. This might take the form of your members giving assistance to local Anti-Apartheid organizations.
- \* Send messages of solidarity to the ECC .

Your solidarity would be greatly appreciated.

Yours in Peace,

*David Shandler*  
David Shandler.

(National Secretary)

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**END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)**

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