

NATIONAL ANTI-MILITARISATION WORKSHOP

Proposal to be discussed regionally by Monday 21 August, 1989.
Final responses to be sent to Paul Boulle

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1. Background:

There appears to be clear consensus on the need for a national anti-militarisation workshop. What follows is a final proposal based on feedback received from the different regions to an earlier proposal which was sent out by the Johannesburg Anti-Militarisation Forum (23 June 1989).

2. Purpose of Workshop:

National conceptual discussion and practical co-ordination around anti-militarisation work.

Inter alia, the workshop would consider:

- The present state of anti-militarisation work;
- Changes that have occurred in the military scenario
eg. Troops returning from Namibia
Increased use of black forces in township areas
Reduction in call-up periods
Etc.;
- In the light of the above changes, where anti-military work should be located and how broad its focus should be;
- Future strategising and co-ordination of anti-militarisation work;
- Possible new initiatives/movements around anti-militarisation work.

3. Process:

Regional day workshops should be convened either by the local COSG branch or by the Anti-militarisation Forum.

- These workshops should be as broad as possible, including not only members of different anti-militarisation organisations, but also church reps; MDM reps; Sash reps; etc.
- The regional workshops would discuss the issues which will be covered at the national workshop. For this purpose, a proposed agenda and a pre-workshop document will be drawn up and circulated nationally.

4. Representation:

Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town would be represented as follows:

- 1 local COSG rep
- 1 local CAS rep
- 1 campus rep
- 2 additional reps from the regional workshop.

The motivation for the above is that these are the only anti-militarisation organisations with branches in each of these centres. The names of all the

reps will be sent to the national co-ordinating group, who will assess whether there is balanced representation. If an organisation is not represented, the national co-ordinating group will approach that organisation to send a rep.

Those regions without anti-militarisation structures as such, should still try to have a workshop on the topic with reps from sympathetic groups. 1 or 2 reps would be sent from each of these workshops.

A national rep from the Sash and the MDM would be invited, and someone from the Centre for Policy Studies (Wits).

It is envisaged that the national workshop should be capable of coming out with definite proposals. The emphasis will therefore be on broad representation, preferably by activists with experience in the field of anti-military work.

4. Proposed Date: 6 - 8 October, 1989.

Whilst the national workshop is seen as a priority, it was felt that regional workshops would only be possible after the September elections.

5. National Co-ordination and Planning: to be through the national COSG worker, Mandy Taylor, and the COSG National Committee communication network. Co-ordination is to include ensuring balanced representation. The initial agenda and a pre-workshop document are to be drawn up by Mandy Taylor in conjunction with the Johannesburg Anti-Militarisation Forum.

6. Venue: Johannesburg.

23 June 1989
Johannesburg

PROPOSAL for NATIONAL ANTI-MILITARISATION WORKSHOP

Dear comrades and friends

The Johannesburg Anti-Militarisation Forum has drawn up this proposal for urgent discussion by your organisation/forum.

National conceptual discussion and practical co-ordination around anti-militarisation work could be addressed by a National Anti-Militarisation Workshop.

National activities could be co-ordinated and contact and co-ordination between organisations will be improved. A thorough national assessment of militarisation strategies and anti-militarisation work -- its strengths, weaknesses, gaps and potential -- would build on the new enthusiasm and new ground covered.

This workshop was first suggested at the COSG conference in March 1989, but it was largely felt to be premature at the time. Representatives of the national Alternative National Service structures, while attending a Centre for Policy Studies meeting in May, rekindled enthusiasm for national contact and a workshop. An assessment of the development of Anti-Militarisation Forums and organisations has identified the need for more formal and structured national contact.

The workshop would be attended by mandated representatives from anti-militarisation organisations, and the agenda would be drawn up nationally and thoroughly discussed by all organisations.

Suggested representation would be:

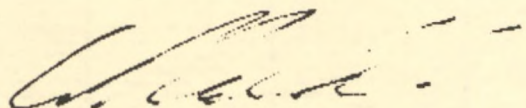
Regional Anti-Militarisation Forums: Cape Town - 2 reps
Durban - 2 reps
Johannesburg - 2 reps
Conscientious Objector Support Group (COSG) - 2 reps
Conscription Advice Service (CAS) - 2 reps
Churches Alternative National Service Project (CANSP) - 2 reps
Cape Democrats - 1 rep
Durban Democratic Alliance (DDA) - 1 rep
Five Freedoms Forum - 1 rep
Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee (JODAC) - 1 rep
Black Sash - 1 rep
NUSAS - 1 rep

In regions such as East London, Grahamstown, Pietermaritzburg, Port Elizabeth, Pretoria and Stellenbosch, where there are no anti-militarisation structures 1 rep per region mandated by the Mass Democratic Movement. Dave Shandler from the Centre for Policy Studies at Wits will also be invited.

Suggestions for reducing the this number is encouraged due to considerations of finance and wieldiness.

Johannesburg's Anti-Militarisation Forum is available to host the workshop, and proposes a weekend in mid August. We also propose that the Cape Town Anti-Militarisation Forum drafts and circulates an agenda as soon as possible for feedback from the regions.

Yours in the struggle for a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic South Africa,



on behalf of
Johannesburg Anti-Militarisation Forum

23 June 1989
Johannesburg

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The workshop would be attended by mandated representatives from anti-militarisation organisations, and the agenda would be drawn up nationally and thoroughly discussed by all organisations.

Suggested representation would be:

Regional Anti-Militarisation Forums: Cape Town - 2 reps
Durban - 2 reps
Johannesburg - 2 reps
Conscientious Objector Support Group (COSG) - 3 reps + *Phy.*
Conscription Advice Service (CAS) - 2 reps
Churches Alternative National Service Project (CANSPP) - 2 reps
Cape Democrats - 1 rep
Durban Democratic Alliance (DDA) - 1 rep
Five Freedoms Forum - 1 rep
Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee (JODAC) - 1 rep
Black Sash - 1 rep
NUSAS - 1 rep - *hook off* *AMS - 3 reps*
nom

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Yours in the struggle for a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic South Africa,



on behalf of
Johannesburg Anti-Militarisation Forum

DBn - only received recently
not sent directly to COSG
timing: mid-August too soon

good idea

was a discussion

L 'peace movement' ^{Gary Cullen / Phyllis / Rob.}

need for local discussions first
similar to post-ECC workshops.

broad forum in DBn failed. No groups took responsibility
last meeting did not happen.

suggest mid-Oct.

suggest COSG call it

repr as set out
+ NOM NIC

Agenda

Agenda for National Anti-Militarisation Workshop

Friday 13 October

- 12.00 Arrival and registration
- 1.00 Lunch
- 2.00 Welcome and Introductions
- Purpose of conference and overview of regional proposals
Chairs: Chris de Villiers and Mandy Taylor
- 3.00 - 4.30
Lessons from the history of SA war resistance - an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of war resistance in SA over the past few years.
Chair: Durban Input: Laurie Nathan
- 4.30 Tea and free time
- 6.30 Supper
- 7.30 - 9.00
Assessment of the last year
1. National Organisational reports
(CAS, COSG, CANSP, Campus groups, GOSAC, NCSG, Register of objectors)
Organisations to deal with the following issues:
Role of organisation;
Assessment into strengths/weaknesses;
Potential. (5 mins per organisation)
 2. National Assessment (Mandy Taylor)
- Chair: Claire Verbeek

Saturday 14 October

8.00 Breakfast

9.00 - 11.00

Assessing the purpose of anti-militarisation work in terms of the broader context

- State of the nation
- State of militarisation

Chair: Eastern Cape Input: Gavin Evans and Dave Shandler

11.00 Tea

11.30 - 1.00

The Way Forward

- Considering options for future work
(Regions are to present the options which emerged at their regional workshops).

1.00 Lunch

2.30 - 7.00

Small group and plenary assessments of the different options with the aim of reaching consensus on the way forward. There will be two half hour breaks during the afternoon.

Chairs: Richard Steele and co-ordinating comm member

7.00 Supper

Saturday evening Free

Sunday 15 October

8.00 Breakfast

9.00 - 10.00

Organisational meetings

10.00 Tea

10.30 - 1.00

Process, consultation, etc.

(Including consultation with other organisations; setting up new facilitating/co-ordinating structures, etc)

1.00 Lunch.

2.00 Pack up and depart.

AGENDA

- 13h30 Welcome and Introductions
Agenda Review
- 13h40 Background to the workshop
- 13h45 Read background paper
- 14h00 Summary of Background paper
Discuss context in which anti - militarisation movement exists
Clarification
- 14h15 State of anti-militarisation organisations
Questions and comment
- 14h25 Assess Johannesburg region [^]to above
What has our impact been in this area?
What are our strenghts and weaknesses?
- 14h40 Future Direction
Discuss the following two questions in small groups
1. Is there political space for a new initiative around this issue?
Both nationally and in Johannesburg
2. If so, what form does it take?
Discuss the various options.
- 15h20 TEA
- 15h35 Plenary Reports from small groups.
- 15h55 General Discussion and recommendation to take to the National Work shop
- 16h20 Tasks
* Reps to the National Workshop
* Assistance with planning of workshop
* Summary of proposal to National Workshop
* Overview of regional work to be submitted as report to National Workshop.
- 16h45 Close

Notes on the militarisation meeting for the Pretoria region.

1. Is conscription/militarisation still an important issue?

- conscription still exists
- troops are still in the townships
- there have been changes in the way conscripts are used but the system still is intact
- penalties for objectors are still enforced; no changes in the legislation
- there is no clear definition between police and troop action
- the SADF will find a "border" to use as a mobilising point for continued conscription.
- there is not much of an indication that camp liabilities will change in the near future.

The issues around which the anti-militarisation movements have mobilised in the past still exist and for us this means that the issue of conscription and the role of the military is still in the forefront of the conflict in South Africa.

2. The Pretoria scene.

There is peripheral action in and around the Pretoria area. Due to a lack of communication and cohesion it has been difficult to assess the level of awareness in this area particularly in the wake of the recent spate of objections.

A great deal of internal consolidation is needed on the part of organisations operating in the militarisation field. The current work that is being done is very isolated and the lack of national contact has left organisations out of touch with other regional and national initiatives.

There is potential for our work to expand into areas never before entered into eg enquiries coming in from Witbank and Rustenburg.

The emphasis thus needs to be moved toward finding new ways of confronting the public and being able to harness the potential new constituencies in which there is a growing interest in our work.

3. Rallying point for a new organisation.

The following ideas emerged from our discussions.

- we need to link a new initiative/organisation with the idea of negotiations
- the "Know your Rights" aspect of our work needs to be an integral part of any new initiative in order to be able to reach the conscripts in an effective way.
- an organisation with a peace focus would make inroads into areas not normally accessible to us eg the Afrikaans churches could be drawn in.
- it would appear that the main issue in SA at the moment is peace and that we would need to harness this initiative
- ANS: look at why it was initiated and re-assess whether the campaign should form an integral part of the new initiative or remain a separate issue.
 - : use this issue to reach a broader constituency
 - ; take it up more as a lobbying issue
 - : possible that people would not confront the real issue of conscription head on if ANS was the central rallying point

- Specifically - initiative should have a strong ANS and anti-war component
- use the issue of peace raised by the govt. to mobilise people against the govt.
 - we must also harness the strong objectors feeling together with community service to raise the question of why we still have national service
 - our call should be kept simple : END CONSCRIPTION

- the public need a strong rallying point; they need to feel the call/issue.

However we must also think of public reaction to state tactics eg people being maimed closer to home, SABC propaganda around the issue of needing a strong army to fend off "terrorists".

We need a dual approach (a) mass based org. (broad issues)
hard hitting group that would shift the parameters
of current debate.
negotiations; our role to take FW up on the issue
and expose him.
(b) lay the basis for a large organisation

Cape Town Anti-Militarisation Forum

State of anti-military organisations

The Cape Town AMF has met regularly this year, pulling together the following organisations: COSG, ANS Forum, Students Towards Peace (STOP), Cape Democrats Namibia Information Group, C.A.S., CANSP, and observers from Jews for Justice and the Democratic Party Youth.

The Forum has been useful as a clearing-house of reports and future plans of the various organisations, as well as a place for the various organisations to plan joint activity and to assess the state of the anti-military movement generally.

Member organisations:

Conscientious Objectors Support Group

COSG has had a difficult year, having reconstituted itself late in 1988 and immediately being called on to play a leading role in the movement. International Co Day campaign was judged a success in the Western Cape, with COSG leading the campaign. COSG managed to stage several different actions although being able to rely on only a small pool of activists.

Support work for the recent collective stand of 771 objectors has similarly taxed COSG's stamina. At the same time, however, the stand has the potential to draw a large group of objectors into COSG. Coming at the same time as the elections for the COSG executive, COSG is poised to gain a second wind.

Alternative National Service Forum

The ANS Forum has managed to draw in a wide range of organisations in a coalition pressing for non-punitive non-military community service. ANS Forum has planned a series of adverts and a press conference to coincide with the release of the CPS research results. *The forum will also be co-ordinating submissions to the Van Ropgenberg Commission.*

Students Towards Peace

STOP has had a very successful year. Launched in March, the organisation has a large membership and enjoys much support and profile on campus. Major activities this year included a float in the Rag Procession, mass meetings, petition campaigns in support of the jailed and the 771 objectors, a national conference on militarisation, a bulky publication, and a successful 'Peace in our Time' concert.

Conscription Advice Service

CAS has managed to draw in new counsellors, through the UCT extra-mural programme and the two training courses it has run this year. CAS has embarked on an advertising drive with glossy posters, cards and campus radio adverts.

Churches Alternative National Service Project

CANSP in the Western Cape, while numerically a small group, has managed to make progress with the issue in the church, and is one of the strongest CANSP structures.

Namibia Information Group

NIG's focus this year has been on generating the Factsheets on Namibia, which have been distributed nationally. NIG has also participated in the Namibia Solidarity Committee, a community-based coalition set up in solidarity with Namibian Independence, and to support SWAPO in the elections.

Black Sash Militarisation Group

The group has not participated in the AMF, and has unfortunately folded due to the involvement of the members in other areas.

End Conscription Campaign

The ECC defied the restrictions placed on it in August 88, and engaged in a number of "ECC" actions, including participation in the Symbolic unbanning of organisations, a poster campaign, a campus meeting, and speakers on platforms. ECC members participated in the regional AMF workshop. ECC front organisations, including the Black Sash and DP Youth, hosted a "Stop the Call-Up" meeting in support of the 771, at which an ECC member spoke.

Jews for Justice

JFJ has participated in the AMF on occasion as observers, and are keen to remain in touch, as they feel there is great potential for the issue to be raised in the Jewish community.

Democratic Party Youth

DP Youth are keen to continue their involvement in the area, and have participated in the AMF as observers.

Role of the AMF

The AMF was not set up to be anything more than a co-ordinating and contact forum. It is thus not surprising that the a-m movement in Cape Town has lacked a coherent strategy or public profile.

While each of the various organisations has maintained its strength or even expanded beyond 1988 levels, this strength on paper has not been reflected in our impact on the public. On various occasions, attempts were made to use the AMF to initiate actions (e.g. around the call-up). While the response from progressive organisations was encouraging, the AMF was unable to play the role of a centre, and our activities remained sporadic and atomised.

However, the AMF has played a vital role in keeping us in touch with each other, and making initiatives such as the national and regional workshops possible.

re: PROPOSAL FOR NATIONAL ANTI-MILITARISATION WORKSHOP.
Response from Durban COSG, August 3, 1989.

1. Durban COSG only received the proposal (dated 23 June) in the last week of July. We have not yet received a detailed agenda.
2. The Broad Forum is not functioning effectively in Durban. At the last meeting, it was basically only COSG people who pitched up.
3. In Durban, the Broad Forum did not effectively compensate for the gap left by ECC, and no one organisation is effectively addressing the "political critique" aspect of anti-militarisation work.
4. COSG in Durban is having trouble sustaining major political work and the more informal "CO support" work.
5. We agree with the need for "national conceptual discussion and practical co-ordination around anti-militarisation work", and welcome the proposal for a national workshop.
6. We feel that the anti-militarisation terrain has shifted since the national workshop idea was mooted, in several areas:
 - 6.1. Reduction in white SADF presence in Namibia and the townships;
 - 6.2. Reduction in call-up periods;
 - 6.3. Increasing utilization of black volunteers in the SADF (and the SAP, kitskonstabels etc) in "security force" activities;
 - 6.4. A shift away from "civil war" politics to "negotiation" politics;
 - 6.5. Development of a "mass movement for peace" (words which appear on a UDF and COSATU sticker circulating in Natal).
7. The above shifts (amongst others) raise the question of where we locate our anti-militarisation work, and how narrow or broad it is. Simply filling the gap left by ECC is no longer sufficient.
8. We have an alternative proposal we would like to make regarding the process leading up to the workshop:
 - 8.1. COSGs in each centre convene a regional day workshop to assess the state of anti-militarisation work in the region, and their perspective on how it is working nationally;
 - 8.2. From these workshops, each region mandates two or three representatives to a national workshop.Our feeling is that having a national meeting first at this stage would be putting the cart before the horse.
9. Those regions without anti-militarisation structures as such, should still try to have a workshop on the topic with reps from sympathetic groups;
10. Timing: the national workshop to occur by mid October. We feel it is unrealistic to expect regions to meet before mid-September, due to the elections etc.
11. National Coordination: to be through the national COSG worker, Mandy Taylor, and the COSG National Coordinating Committee communication network. Coordination to include ensuring balanced representation (e.g. that smaller regions, and organisations such as NUSAS, are represented).
12. Venue: Johannesburg, if their offer is still valid!

PLEASE NOTE: A MEETING TO REPORT BACK THE OUTCOME OF THE NATIONAL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY OCTOBER 21ST
Time: 2.30pm Venue: St Mary's Anglican Church,
Greyville (in the church hall).

Forming a New Organisation:

After lengthy discussion, Durban was unanimously in favour of forming a New Organisation.

Focus: Broad, i.e. general militarisation, not restricted to anti-conscription only. To include priorities listed below.

Important that it develops its own personality from the beginning (not just in the shadow of the ECC personality).

Structure: Similar to what ECC was i.e. individual membership, but organisations can become "subscriber organisations" on the basis of a common commitment against militarisation.

Subscriber organisations would provide depth, protection, and a communication network. Ensure these organisations are involved from the start.

Thus, will have its own core of activists, but can, and should, draw on resources of other organisations

Well established existing organisations like CAS, COSG, NCSG, (CANSP, ASP?) remain independent, but can "subscribe".

Non-racialism: in all likelihood it would still be based in the white community, but black community based organisations could become subscriber organisations, and campaigns to be conducted in cooperation with such organisations.

In order for the New Organisation to be non-racial in its original membership, would need detailed consultation with black community organisations. The initiative in setting up such an organisation would have to come from them.

Questions: * how broad i.e. take up general anti-apartheid campaigns too? If we do this, need to be careful of terrain of white democrat organisations e.g. DDA.
* Relationship with the MDM. If we are serious about non-racialism, do we need to align ourselves with them?
* Location on the political spectrum - "fringe" or "middle"? (The question too is "which political spectrum?" - parliamentary or extra-parliamentary etc.)

"Peace Movement":

Can still only speculate about this. If it emerges, needs to emerge primarily from MDM.

Cannot just wait for a PM to emerge - need to proceed with forming a New Organisation, but need to keep in mind the possibility of a PM, and be ready to pull in if one emerges, if it seems appropriate. The New Organisation could be a constituent of a PM.

ECC:

It can never be completely laid to rest - too well known, and anyway is now "unrestricted" and so needs to have a public profile as appropriate.

We agreed unanimously that ECC should continue, but as a "ghost" body, playing a largely symbolic role. Could be one of the "subscriber" organisations to New Organisation?

Caretaker ECC committees in each region assess (in consultation with New Organisation, and perhaps with ECC committees in other regions) when ECC profile is appropriate. No campaigning which would require many activists - too risky, and would dilute activist availability for New Organisation.

PRIORITIES

Group 1:

- * end conscription (short-term)
- * non-racial peace movement (long-term)
- * broad anti-militarisation
- * sustain existing organisations e.g. COSG, CAS, NCSG etc.

Group 2

- * objector work:
 - end conscription
 - prisoner and religious objector support
 - exile CO support
 - legal changes (broaden CO and alternative service)
 - CAS
- * critique and political education:
 - role of the military in society, government, relationships with international right wing
 - cost of the war
 - links with apartheid
- * constructive program:
 - demonstrate the alternatives we are calling for, for conscript and society as a whole - "WJP" type campaigns.
 - join with the broader anti-apartheid movement for a new society

Group 3:

- * end conscription
- * critique of military in society (role of conscription in strengthening the government)
- * non-racial peace movement (broad)

Group 4:

- * non-racial movement (broad), but only through consultation
- * end conscription
- * general objector support

Rob Goldman

Spokesperson, Durban COSG Phone: 309-1334 (w), 23-7166 (h)

cc: Conscription Advice Service*, National Community Servers' Group*, End Conscription Campaign*, Resist Apartheid War (UND)*, Anglican Justice & Reconciliation Support Group*, Catholic Justice & Peace Commission, Methodist Justice & Reconciliation Committee, Diakonia*, Student Union for Christian Action, National Union of South Africa Students*, Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa, Democratic Party, Women for Peaceful Change Now, Black Sash*, Natal Indian Congress, Natal Organisation of Women, United Committee of Concern, Umlazi Youth League, Chesterville Youth League, Durban Democratic Association*, Durban Central Youth Congress, Students for a Social Democracy.

*PRESENT AT REGIONAL MEETING

AN ANTI-MILITARISATION "PEACE MOVEMENT"

Thesis:

- * The anti-militarisation movement needs to be broad (mass), 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 (specific) 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:

1. Arguably, conscription as such is less of a mobilising point now than it was between 1983 and the first quarter of this year. Main reasons:
 - 1.1. Withdrawal of troops from Namibia;
 - 1.2. Reduction of call-up period (camps, at least);
 - 1.3. greater utilization of black members of the security forces in township areas.These developments tend to undercut "Troops Out!" as a rallying cry in the white community.
2. As it is, individual COs going to jail as well as mass stand COs make it clear that their actions should be seen as broadly political, not just aimed at conscription.
3. Fits in with climate of negotiation internationally, in Southern Africa, and locally (e.g. Natal). There is an increasing emphasis in the progressive movement on "peace" rather than "civil war".
4. Would fit in with increased efforts at bridging racial and ideological divides e.g. COSATU-NACTU, Inkatha-UDF, MDM etc.
5. Slot in with international peace movements, including ecology and "Greens".

Written up by Durban COSG, as requested by national worker.

CONSCRIPTION is the narrowest issue, yet paradoxically it unites the greatest number of people.

People can be opposed to conscription for one or several of the following reasons:

- because they are opposed to anything that dehumanises people, and the army that people are conscripted into dehumanises people;
- because they are opposed to war and all preparation for war;
- because they hold a non-conscriptivist position (they believe that the state does not have the right to conscript people);
- because they believe that a country should have a professional army;
- because the SADF exists to defend apartheid;
- because there is a civil war in South Africa and they support the armed struggle of the liberation movement;
- because conscription causes personal inconvenience.

All these positions can be contained in an anti-conscription movement, but it is assumed that a premise of such a movement is that it is anti-apartheid (and indeed the majority of people in such a movement would probably want to keep things within the anti-apartheid context).

Militarisation means different things to different people.

Different people would either include or exclude, for example:

- pacifism;
- the militarisation of language;
- feminism and the military (speaking of a gun as a 'wife', for example);
- violence in the media;
- school cadets;
- arms production;
- peace;
- glorification of armies (parades, smart uniforms, medals, etc);
- the dehumanising process of military training;
- authoritarian hierarchical structures;
- the creation of an enemy psychosis;
- the role of the SADF;
- the just war theory;
- alternative non-violent defence systems;
- non-violence;

in an anti-militarisation campaign.

Conscription, on the other hand, means something very specific and the term is understood by people.

If one says that one is opposed to conscription, that immediately prompts the question, 'Why?' The possibilities for raising a broad range of anti-militarisation issues (such as the ones mentioned above) is then opened: if anti-conscription is the issue, this does not exclude related issues; indeed, conscription is the 'way into' them.

The most effective campaigns are those which have a clear, focused objective.

'End conscription' is a clearer human rights call than 'end militarisation'.

Conscription mobilises white opposition to the military as it affects white people directly.

An anti-conscription campaign has a clearer focus on conscientious objectors, since conscientious objectors would not arise if there was not conscription.

Proposal for Anti Militarisation Alliance

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

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 the 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 broad militarisation. ECC was an organisation with a range of political perspectives it was difficult to have a thorough non-contentious internal education programme. In a later assessment ECC decided that this did not help the campaign as it was the only organisation taking up this issue. In 1988 ECC again returned 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, as a single organisation, was trying to cover too many 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. 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 coordinating structures would be set up to keep the different organisations in touch with each other. This is now a whole year later, so it is clear that we have been very slow to set up some of these structures.

An assessment of the current situation

A year down the road, it now appears that in every centre the practise has not worked as well as the theory. A number of organisations are working around militarisation issues, but there is very little general coordination and consequently not a much public impact. Other political issues (such as the elections and the Defiance Campaign) have also downplayed anti-militarisation work. We have also been stuck with a generally low level of energy in many of our organisations.

Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town each have +- 7 different organisations working in the anti-militarisation arena, but almost all 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 coordinating 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 in the form of lobbying work that would complement rather than replace a more mass based national campaign. Partly because of a lack of personpower, 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). 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. JODAC and NUSAS held a very successful concert in Johannesburg, showing that ECC style cultural events will still draw public support.

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 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 coordination 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 advise 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

Options for future work

We need to delegate some of the responsibility to call for an End to 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 an Anti-Militarisation Alliance (or whatever we wish to call this new alliance).

Whether the State of Emergency is lifted or not a new organisation could become a conscription directed organisation within the alliance, but in the immediate short term existing organisation must attempt to fill the vacuum.

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. We need a substantial long-term programme, not just media stunts.

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

Objective conditions have changed to the extent that we need to repoliticise the issue of militarisation. With troops no longer in Namibia or Angola, and with black troops increasingly being used in the 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 alliance that focuses 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 that focuses specifically on the issue of conscription. A clear call against conscription will, however, still have 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 in the white community.

Form: We will need to bear in mind the principle that you are only as broad as you start. We shall also need to consider the status of present organisations when a new alliance emerges, they could continue as independent organisations that form part of the alliance. This Anti-Militarisation Alliance should be broad politically and racially. Existing specialist groups like COSG and CAS would continue, but would form part of the alliance.

- * Conscription as such is less of a mobilising point now than it was between 1983 and the first quarter of 1989, particularly with troops being withdrawn from Namibia and with a greater utilisation of black troops in the townships. 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.
- * A broad Anti-Militarisation Alliance could easily accommodate the ecological issue, especially if you look at the question of nuclear militarisation in South Africa. Koeberg Alert and Earth Life Africa type groups must be brought into our alliance against apartheid militarism.

At present the Anti Militarisation movement does not have broad white support but it will gain broad support as soon as it starts doing practical activities.

Negotiations will have an impact on our style as the question of a post-apartheid South Africa is now firmly on the agenda.

There has already been wide discussions on the ANC's Constitutional Guidelines and one of the clauses states that: "All organs of government, including justice, security and the armed forces, shall be representative of the people as a whole, democratic in their structure and functioning according to the principles of the constitution."

An end to conscription will not necessarily mean that the apartheid "security forces" will have a sudden change of heart. They probably will continue with their covert operations such as the destabilisation of Mozambique through RENAMO and UNITA. Apartheid militarisation does not end with the SADF. There are many examples of cooperation between the South African Police and vigilantes. Recently we have seen the use of the Riot Squad in the Western Cape, Pretoria and many other areas to attack peaceful protesters. This has only exacerbated the cycle of violence in our country. Apartheid militarisation is thus used as a violent tool to crush political dissent. The way that we wage the struggle against apartheid militarism now will have an impact on the future of our country, because we want to see political solutions to political problems in a future South Africa. A post-apartheid South Africa will also have to deal with the side-effects of militarisation. We have a responsibility to deal with these issues now in order to ensure a truly united, non-racial and nuclear-free South Africa.

For these reasons we need to confront the issues that are and still will face us in a responsible and sophisticated way. One of the problems we have faced in the past has been a lack of political clarity in the Anti-Conscription Movement. A more sophisticated political analysis, from organisations within the alliance, will not only strengthen our organisations but will make us more resilient in the face of earlier attempts to criminalise the Anti-Conscription Movement.

Creating bureaucratic structures will not solve the problems that we are facing, but there is a clear need for better coordination and national contact. We must create the initiative in terms of militarisation and this must start within existing organisations even although some structures have become stagnant. We need a broad Anti-Militarisation Alliance that will give the space for groupings ranging from the Democratic Party to the Mass Democratic Movement the opportunity to combine forces against apartheid militarism. It could be a strategic error to build an alliance around a single issue only. This might well mean that the wind could be taken out of our sails if the issue is too narrow. We could still include a clear and unambiguous focus on conscription and other areas that will have a broad appeal. We could still mobilise white opposition to the military with issues that affect whites directly and indirectly. Our dynamic, new

approach also will accommodate much better contact with the black community and develop our non-racial alliance with the Mass Democratic Movement.

We should put forward our own commitment to build a peaceful united, democratic and non-racial future for South Africa. The SADF will continue to attempt to win the hearts and minds of our people and will continue to be used against our people in their struggles inside the country. We must build a broad mass opposition to apartheid militarisation. To do so, we must build a widespread understanding of how apartheid militarism oppresses us. We could organise around:

- * Conscription
- * Conscientious Objection
- * Cadets and the militarisation of education
- * The military and the economy
- * Women and the military
- * South Africa's nuclear arms buildup
- * Destabilisation of the Frontline States
- * The SADF and the environment
- * The National Management System and Low Intensity Counter-Revolutionary Warfare
- * Psychology of militarisation
- * Culture and militarisation

It is important that the focus of our campaign is not limited to conscription. The army already reaches our communities through TV, propaganda newspapers, youth and school camps and the notorious veldschools. The "security forces" are used to crush opposition to apartheid.

We must build a popular understanding of what the SADF is defending and of whom it is fighting against. The so-called "security forces" are aggressively defending apartheid which is the root-cause of violence and many other problems that our society faces. We need to highlight the demands and preconditions for peace in South Africa. A just peace will only be realised when apartheid is dismantled, banned organisations are unbanned, the State of Emergency is lifted, and all political prisoners are released.

We must strengthen and sophisticate our organisation. Student, youth and school organisations are particularly important

because these are the groups who will be conscripted and recruited first. All organisation must be appropriate to local conditions. The SADF and SAP have concentrated on the rural areas as a recruiting ground, we need to extend our work to these areas with the help of local organisations. We need to build alliances with the MDM, COSATU, churches, teacher organisations, the Democratic Party and all other groups that are opposed to apartheid militarism. We should also target the Afrikaans-speaking community.

We need to know exactly what the SADF and SAP are doing and planning in order to develop an effective programme of action. We need to encourage research in all aspects of militarisation so that we can respond to it in a meaningful way.

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2. An Assessment of the Past Year:

A year down the road it now appears that in every centre the practice has not worked as well as the theory. What follows is an overview of strengths and weaknesses of our work during the past year:

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- * In spite of the restriction of ECC, work in the AM arena has continued to the extent that we were able to pull together a national workshop made up of reps from 9 regions and about 12 organisations.
 - * Conscription issues have continued being raised publically during the past year through:
 - the trials of Charles Bester and Saul Batzofin
 - the stand of 900 mothers
 - the Release Objectors campaign (International CO Day)
 - the launch of the register and stand of 771 objectors.
 - * Ongoing more low-key work has continued through CAS, COSG, and CANSP.
 - * There have been two new initiatives during the past year viz. GOSAC and the Register.
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- * Whilst there have been a number of organisations working in the area, there has been very little co-ordination between them. As a consequence, work has been dispersed, lacking in coherence and with very little overall public impact.
 - * Because there has been no organisation effectively raising public awareness about the role of the military, things

like objection, conscription advice and the churches ANS work has largely happened in a vacuum.

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- * Organisations have not managed to attract new activists and there has been a sense of stagnation rather than growth.
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3. National consultative conference:

The above assessment arose out of a thorough national process, which began with regional workshops and culminated in a national conference. The task of the national conference was to assess our work over the last year and then in the light of that assessment to consider different ways for taking anti-conscription work forward more effectively. The main options considered were:

- * forming a new organisation focussing broadly on militarisation;
- * forming a new organisation focussing on conscription;
- * reviving ECC;
- * developing a broad peace movement.

3.1. Consensus points:

The conference decided that whilst ECC had been very effective, it appeared unable to break new ground in terms of constituencies and that we should rather be exploring new and broader ways of working. Consequently, the conference decided that a new organisation would be the best way of taking forward this area.

We envisioned such an organisation as:

- * being a broad social movement
- * focussing on conscription
- * being anti-apartheid
- * being inclusive
- * being campaign orientated
- * being bilingual
- * incorporating a positive focus

In looking at ECC, the main gaps that we identified, were our work amongst conscripts and the Afrikaans community. It was for this reason that we all decided that right from the beginning the organisation had to incorporate both these groupings and that the new organisation should seek to develop these areas as much as possible.

The conference decided that the focus of the new organisation should be conscription rather than militarisation broadly. The main reason for this was that it was thought that conscription is the best access point to the white community and that a focus on conscription did not exclude the possibility of looking at wider militarisation issues. One would however look at them as they related to conscription. It was felt that the concept of militarisation did not mean much to the public generally and would not in itself be an effective mobilising vehicle.

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With regard to a peace movement, it was thought that the initiative for this would have to come from the black community and that our priority was to consolidate ourselves, so that we could link into any such development when and if it happened

3.2. Points of difference:

Our main point of difference at the workshop, was on the priority that should be given to conscript work, with some people seeing conscripts as the primary focus of a new organisation and others seeing conscripts as one of a number of important constituencies. Those arguing for the former position said that conscripts were affected by conscription in a way that other groups were not, and that if we wanted to be effective in developing opposition to conscription, conscripts had to play an obvious role in the organisation. Those arguing for the latter position argued that we are most effective when we mobilise as many people as possible against conscription and that we would not be able to do this if we only emphasised the conscript. Both groups agreed that we need to use particular strategies for particular groupings.

3. Consultation

We now need to report back on the national workshop to as broad a range of organisations and individuals as possible, getting their feedback on both the consensus points as well as the points of difference. The main questions we want organisations to address are:

- their perceptions of anti-militarisation work over the past year;
- their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of ECC;
- whether they feel that there is a need for a new white organisation;
- what the focus of such an organisation should be viz:
anti-conscription, anti-militarisation, conscripts, etc.
- what is their vision for such an organisation, including issues of campaigning style, structures, etc.
- what impact would such an organisation have, and do they feel that their membership would want to participate in it.

Our approach to the consultations should facilitate critical responses from the people we are speaking to. We should not be presenting options in such a way as to convince people of our particular position; ie. our general approach should be open rather than prescriptive. We need to be sensitive to the particular groupings we are visiting and prepare accordingly. Our approach will of necessity be different with those groups that are old allies and those groups where we are breaking new ground. With the latter we may need to present more definite proposals, whereas

with the former we can be more open ended and can be asking for their
feed back generally to the above process and conclusions.

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