

A7.2.23

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN.

Introduction.

Regions will remember that near the end of the year we were starting to discuss a relatively unformulated proposal for a national campaign around the February 1987 call-up. Discussion and planning for this campaign ground to a halt with the detentions and intensification of repression, particularly in Johannesburg and Cape Town.

National Committee met soon after this wave of detentions. This report is a summary of discussion around possible national action.

Our Current Priorities.

Up until now, we have felt that our internal priorities have been to insure the cohesion of our organisation, to concentrate on internal education, the development of leadership and on security training. National committee felt that we should strengthen the participation of our affiliates and our relationships with supportive organisations. A new proposal from some regions is that we should work towards cohering our supporters into a firmer base by, for example, setting up some form of 'mass membership'.

Externally our priorities remain to get back into the public arena of debate more effectively than we have managed since the start of this State of Emergency - in particular we need to establish a national presence. We also need to continue to broaden our base and build our credibility and legitimacy to counteract the States' attempt to criminalise us.

The Context of possible National Action.

We felt that the most important thing for us to take into account before any national action, is an assessment of the limits that are put on us by repression and legislation.

We prioritised 'testing' our legal/political space soon after the imposition of the current State of Emergency. The significant tests of this space were the

high profile Yellow Ribbon Campaign in Johannesburg and the War is No Solution Campaign in Cape Town. The State responded harshly to these campaigns with detentions, restrictions and subversion charges.

The concensus at National Committee(NC) was that the State would respond harshly to us as soon as they felt threatened by our call/action.

#### Implications of Repression for Action.

If we accept that repression is now, or will be in the future, as harsh as is implied in the previous section, we need to decide in principle about continueing our work.

It was agreed at NC that ECC existed primarily to campaign , in general, against the militarisation of our society, and in particular, against conscription. The question we need to ask ourselves is less; should we continue to work?; and more : How should we continue to work?

The feeling was that both the content and form of our public work would have to be modified to suit the level of repression.

#### Campaign Suggestions.

The two suggestions that came from NC were :

a : Calling for a change in C.O. legislation

b : Campaigning against militarisation; asking 'At what cost this War?' or stating that 'War is No Solution'

#### a. Campaign for a change in C.O. Legislation:

i. The campaign is very soft-sell and legitimising. Therefore, it is less likelt that the state will act against us, and if they do they will make losses in terms of public support for their actions.

ii. The campaign allows us to keep quite close to our conscription issue, and allows us to focus on the individual conscript.

iii. A campaign calling for a change in the law is appropriate for the white elections, when a number of laws are being challenged and debated.

A motivation against this thrust is that it is a potentially less exciting or flamboyant camapign.

b. Anti-Militarisation/Costs of the War/War is No Solution Campaign:

- i. We need to explore the anti-militarisation content of ECC's call, as the state is effectively criminalising the directly anti-conscription content.
- ii. The framework of anti-militarisation is sufficiently broad to encompass a range of the calls we are still able to make ie: End Cadets; War is No Solution; Troops Out, etc.
- iii. The various calls we could make, would capture the public's imagination, particularly in the light of the general acceptance that war seems inevitable.

Motivation against this thrust was that it is potentially a threatening campaign for the state, and therefore it is likely that the state would clampdown on it quite heavily - this with particular reference to the repression which accompanied Cape Town's War is No Solution Campaign.

Form for both Suggestions.

1. Both suggestions lend themselves to WJP type projects, which has great legitimising potential.
2. The form used should be difficult to repress and easy to implement

Clearly this aspect of the discussion is undeveloped, and regions should consider the form as soon as possible.

Timing.

NC felt that the campaign should take place in late March, early April.

Legal Opinion.

Enclosed is a copy of the legal opinion on these two possible options as well as opinion on ECC challenging the new regulations.

**Collection Number: AG1977**

**END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)**

**PUBLISHER:**

*Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive*

*Location:- Johannesburg*

©2013

**LEGAL NOTICES:**

**Copyright Notice:** All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

**Disclaimer and Terms of Use:** Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document is part of a collection held at the Historical Papers Research Archive at The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.