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REPORT FROM WITS BRANCH OF THE END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN

NATIONAL COMMITTEE 3rd - 5th JUNE

OVERVIEW

Wits ECC has had a difficult last two months. Although we have been able to consolidate a core group of about 20 members we have had a large degree of difficulty in drawing in a wider group of members. Our activities have not been very high profile or cohesive in the way we have put them on to campus. Our strong points appear to be an assertive education programme, a decentralised and rotating middle leadership and a positive dynamic within the group.

MORALE

Our morale at the moment is relatively OK and this seems linked to whether or not we are involved in any activity or intervention onto campus. There seems to be a positive dynamic emerging within the group and our membership is drawn from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences. Low points can be attributed to a lack of activity or an event that didn't achieve what it was supposed to. A partial frustration was the break down in process between a good planning weekend and putting those ideas into action through the sub groups and G.B.

ACTIVITIES AND THE CAMPAIGN

Our activities this term have been somewhat disparate with a slight lack of over all organisation cohesion. We set our goals for this term as 1. raising the issue of conscription onto campus through small scale grass-root activities, 2. consolidating our membership and our subgroups into working entities and 3. establishing structures and links to facilitate the campaign activities of the third term. Our activities this term have included a picket around C.O's (Dave Bruce and Ivan Toms), a film show, showing Witness to Apartheid, a pamphlet on Angola, and working on media around Dave Bruce. Media includes a series of stickers, a poster and a pamphlet which branches will be given copies of. Behind the scenes work has included the setting up of an advice bureau with Careers and Counselling Unit, working with SAVS around our ASP project and a COSG workshop. There has also been work done with the Law Students Council and a group of engineers for seminars to be held in the 3rd block. Some planning for the 3rd block has already occurred (ideas that are been worked on are a mass meeting the week of the call up, a concert, a film festival, a picket, and the holding of 'know your rights' forums in the 4th term. The campaign although discussed conceptually and within education forums will only be fully consolidated once our vacation planning meeting has happened. The only fixed activity is the combined ASP camp with SAVS to Bushbuck Ridge in the eastern Tvl over the July vacation. We have already met the Star newspaper about this and they will be running a feature in 'Star Bridge' about the idea of Alternative National Service. The camp will probably take about 10 days and will be a mix of about 16 ECC and SAVS members and we will be working hard on publicity for the camp both before and after it has taken place.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Our education and training programme seems to be one of our stronger areas of work and we have had several useful workshops. At our week end away we discussed the history of war resistance from 1910 to 1988 and the context of broader political developments within South Africa. Our COSG workshop played a very useful educational role around objection and the Defence Act. We were able to organise an organisational skills workshop where issues such as democracy, security, chairing skills and other items were discussed. Finally we had a short workshop for the new subgroup coordinators around skills and problems.

SECURITY

Our security is relatively low with little signs of surveillance or harassment by the state.

COMMENTS

Generally the branch is like the parsons egg, good in parts. Our strengths are our internal cohesion, the enthusiasm of our membership and our perceived potential. The weaknesses are our lack of a substantial profile on campus, the problem of coordinated action and an over strain on leadership due to the departing of Claire and John C. However, in the words of the Chilian masses 'Venceremos', we will win.

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