

**AD17**

222 - 62 - 3474

Rev "AD 17"

## ANTI-CONSCRIPTION COMMITTEE REPORT

### 1 Introduction

The conscription of "coloured" and Indian men has been raised and used as an essential element of the Anti-Election Campaign. However, our opposition to conscription and the increasing militarisation of our society has been limited in that 1) we did not sufficiently build up a popular understanding of what the SADF is defending; 2) of who it is fighting against and 3) what the conditions for peace are in South Africa.

A victory should be claimed for our successful anti-election campaign, through which together with other factors, has led to the state holding back on the extension of conscription for "coloured" and Indian men.

### 2 Problems in working on conscription

The conscription issue was raised in almost all areas during the Million Signature (MSC) and Anti-Election campaigns (AEC). We can say people did not vote because it ment "Border toe". But we cannot say that people understand why we say NO TO BOTHA'S ARMY. We did not discuss conscription in depth amongst our UDF activists and affiliates.

What are the reasons for this:

- 2.1 The Anti-Conscription Committee was not represented on the Million Signature Committee, Anti-Election Comm or the Forced Removals Committee. At GC's, often conscription was not even on the agenda. This made it difficult to integrate the anti-conscription work into the work of the UDF.
- 2.2 This structural isolation comes from another problem. UDF's work is too issue/practically oriented. The the Million Signature campaign was ment to have an educative component to it, but never implemented beyond a few haphazard workshops. In the MSC and AEC we did not focus on the long term political issues and goals that confront us.
- 2.3 Because conscription is not being made the issue of the day by the state, we have the difficult task of raising peoples consciousness through media and education, rather than through action. Conscription is not an issue that we can go all out against in a two month period and finish, it is a long slow battle. If the anti-conscription campaign is bring results, the UDF must look to it's education program to deepen our understanding of the struggle so we can move forward.

### 3 The work of the Anti-Conscription Committee

- 3.1 Work in Million Signature and Anti Election campaigns:  
In Hannover Park and at ID Mkize, through the intervention of the ACC, the SADF camps were successfully exposed and stopped. In Mitchels Plain the local issues and the rejection of the role of the SADF were successfully liked in the mass meeting to launch the AEC in that area. In this a general UDF anti-conscription pamphlet was put out, which was subsequently widely distributed at anti-election meetings. The ACC contributed features on conscription to Grassroots and Saamstan. At the rural conference in June, input presented by the ACC raised the question of conscription and started discussion of how the campaign should be taken up in those areas.
- 3.2 Research: Have gathered together resource packs on -  
- Civic action Project  
- Resource Pack of pamphlets, fact sheets and articles  
- Conscription Booklet, recent and still available  
Need better input from people working in areas on SADF activities and responses. Areas to be researched, but not clear on method: Unemployment and the SADF; Conscription and rural areas, Industry and army production; forced removals and the SADF.
- 3.3 Media:- In addition to media mentioned above ACC produced a poster for the Anti-Election Campaign but media committee did not print it. Media committee pamphlets should have had more depth on conscription. It is important to follow up with a post election pamphlet clarifying the state's current strategy, this will be issued soon. Slogan NO TO BOTHA'S ARMY did popularise the issue, but not good in raising content. New slogan for new phase of campaign needed.
- 3.4 Role of organisations:- Organisations represented on ACC are: UWO, CAYCO, CAHAC, MP region, NUSAS, AZASO (UWC) belatedly, TEAM? Youth not well represented - COSAS, AZASO and ICY. Generally organisations have had difficulty in finding how UDF can build them in the last period. This is crucial as the state can be expected to increase it's hearts and minds campaign, and it is our organisations that will have to counter this in their day to day work.
- 3.5 Rural Areas:- Apart from the rural conference, and article for Saamstan, there has been little contact. The co-ordinating structure has not been operative so it has been difficult to slot into the campaign in the rural areas. This must be a major focus now.
- 3.6 Other regions:- The Western Cape has done much more work on conscription than the other regions. Our work is useful to people at these centres. But material sent via the NEC does not seem to have got through to the people working on the issue. The ACC feels input at the December national G.C. is very important to try to develop a national approach to the conscription issue.

#### 4 Context of current work

- 4.1 The state has postponed the extension of conscription for the time being because:
- a) The economic crisis forces unemployed people to take jobs in the army, increasing the number of volunteers.
  - b) The SADF does not yet have the training facilities to take thousands of soldiers into the army.
  - c) Opposition to conscription has made the extension more difficult.
- 4.2 Tactics we use must confront this and avoid a false security that conscription will not be extended. The state will use more sophisticated strategies to achieve its ends. We can expect an intensification of the hearts and minds campaign.
- 4.2.1 Many white national servicemen do not want to go into the SADF. The conscientious objection movement is growing.
- 4.2.2 Cadets may be introduced into schools to prepare our youth for the SADF.
- 4.2.3 Training facilities may be extended to allow for increased numbers of 'volunteers' forced in by lack of jobs.
- 4.2.4 Registration would have to be enforced to call people up.
- 4.2.5 Conscription would be brought in step by step, as was white conscription, from selection by 'ballot' to lengthening the period of service to the present level.
- 4.2.6 The war in Namibia is continuing and the SADF will try to use Namibian and black soldiers to do the fighting.

#### 5 Where do we go from here ?

- 5.1 ACC did not address itself to the unions. Workers are directly affected by the SADF, and the parents of children who will be forced into cadets. Unemployment is the major issue here, forcing people to volunteer. ACC will be taking this up with the Cape Town Unemployment project, discussing it with civics and constituencies and raising it with the unions.
- 5.2 SADF activities in schools are a major area of work. Concrete organisation can be built through opposition to this. Here the ACC is planning to work with COSAS on this to organise against cadets and other SADF activities in the schools. Teachers and parents are very important in this area. Teachers will be needed to run the cadet programme and progressive teachers are likely to be subject to harassment. Opposition to SADF activities need to be incorporated in focuses on the position of teachers.

- 5.3 Parents are a special group the ACC wishes to reach through civics, the UWO and PTA's because they will be central to opposing the introduction of cadets and hearts and minds activities.
- 5.4 The rural areas are very important SADF targets. Here the ACC will need to find out how the SADF is operating through contact with people working in the area, and has planned to do this. Also the ACC wishes to provide material for the forthcoming Boland conference.
- 5.5 SADF action in forced removals must be exposed and this linked to UDF work on forced removals. Research into SADF and forced removals has been started.
- 5.6 Children are the target of much SADF propaganda. It is important to look at this and in the long term build alternatives to SADF camps through civics, youth and UWO. The ACC will raise this with these organisations.
- 5.7 1985 is international year of the youth and conscription must be built into the work of the UDF on this. This could be linked to anti-nuclear campaigns internationally.
- 5.8 The ACC will discuss increasing participation on the committee with COSAS, AZASO and ICY.
- 5.9 The ACC has direct contact with the End Conscription Committee. These two committees are important because they are working in different constituencies and will continue to co-operate.

## 6 Conclusion

While the state continues to use the SADF and the Civic Action Programme as a way to co-opt our people, the Anti-Conscription Campaign remains a crucial part of the work of the UDF in fighting the implementation of the New Deal. We have pointed to some of the problems which have limited the gains we have made from this issue so far. We believe that it is a crucial issue for the UDF and the affiliate organisations to look into and to identify precisely how it can be taken up in ways that will advance the work of each organisation and the UDF as a whole.

**Collection Number: AK2117**

**DELMAS TREASON TRIAL 1985 - 1989**

***PUBLISHER:***

*Publisher:* **Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand**

*Location:* **Johannesburg**

**©2012**

***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 the collection records 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 private collection deposited with Historical Papers at The University of the Witwatersrand.