

SOUTHERN AFRICA CAMPAIGN

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE
FOR ACTIVISTS

PLAW HATCH TRADE UNION COUNTRY CLUB
EAST GRINSTEAD
SUSSEX

NUS International Department
September 1972

National Union of Students
3 Endsleigh Street
London W.C.1.

Anti-Apartheid Movement
89 Charlotte Street
London W.1.

C O N T E N T S

List of Participants

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- I. Report of the Planning Groups;
- II. Report of the Discussion Groups on Individual Countries
- III. Report of the Workshops on:
 - Organisation of Meetings
 - Production of Propaganda
 - Organisation of Demonstrations

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PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE

Background

In the Summer of 1971 a meeting was held between NUS, AAM and CFMAG in an attempt to lay foundations for an effective ongoing campaign on Southern Africa.

One of the major decisions reached by this ad hoc group was to try to establish a network of those students who were or would want to be active on Southern African issues. This network came together for the first time in September 1971 and met on subsequent occasions in order to increase student activity, and to try to bring some degree of cooperation and cohesion into the different pattern of activity which went on nationally and often in an isolated and little-reported way.

An example of the role of the network was the amount of activity it was able to instigate in opposition to the Home/Smith sell-out and the successful mobilisation for the February 13th Demonstration.

Following that it was thought important that, with the end of the academic year, network members did not lose contact with each other or graduate, leaving no replacements, so a weekend conference was called for new members of the network to meet with early members and to discuss action and strategy with NUS, AAM CFMAG and representatives of the liberation movements.

The Conference:

The conference, attended by some 50 delegates from Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, Technical and Art Colleges from a wide range of different cities and towns, commenced its work on the evening of Friday 7th July and was in session throughout Saturday and also worked Sunday until mid-afternoon.

The weather, very wet and dull, and the remote nature of the Plaw Hatch Trade Union Country Club, combined with a considerable commitment amongst the participants to make the discussion of issues lengthy and detailed. Guest speakers from the ANC, SWAPO AAM and CFMAG contributed consistently to the depth of the discussions, and a series of working papers were also produced during the Conference.

The experiment, for no similar weekend meeting had ever been held before, was felt to be extremely useful and a valuable experience for many participants.

Work of the Meeting

On the first evening the participants divided into three discussion groups, on the themes: "organisation of meetings", "production of propaganda materials" and "demonstration organisation". The groups concentrated not on generalities, but on discussions of practical problems and their solutions.

(The reports from each of these groups constitute Appendix III of this report)

On the Saturday there were a series of plenary meetings interspersed with discussion groups. The topics covered were the significance of Southern Africa today, a discussion initiated by

Abdul Minty of AAM, Peter Katjavivi spoke about Namibia, SWAPO and its work, and developments in the liberation struggle in Namibia. A paper provided by AAM following the Namibia International Conference in Brussels (which NUS, AAM and some network members attended) and that conference was discussed. This paper forms part of the new Activist Manual. A decision of the Plaw Hatch Conference was to set up a Namibia Action Group (NAG) of four network members to initiate campaign activities on this issue.

Mike Terry opened the discussion on Zimbabwe, and Polly Gaster spoke about the situation in Mozambique, Angola and Guine. Discussion on the national liberation struggle in South Africa was led by ANC representative, Essop Pahad, and the importance of campaigning on Southern Africa at College level was the subject introduced by ex-NUS President John Spack, who is now an Executive Member of the AAM.

On Saturday evening four planning groups met to make recommendations arising from the days plenary and groups discussions. These planning groups were on:

1. The production and distribution of propaganda material
2. Fund raising - for liberation movements and support groups
3. Investments and other economic links
4. Specific campaigns - sporting links, Barclays, etc.

Discussion groups considered specific aspects of each of the geographical areas in Southern Africa, and these discussion groups on Namibia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and the Portuguese colonies produced reports as to particular lines of work, or approaches to specific problems, that were recommended. These reports form Appendix II.

On Sunday the work of the network was discussed. Major contributions were made by Hugh Lanning and Roger Trask. The reports of the planning groups were considered and accepted as a basis for action in the following academic year.

The report backs constitute Appendix I

ACTION SUBSEQUENT TO THE CONFERENCE

The first network meeting after Plaw Hatch was held in London on 27th September, and this meeting agreed on the network actively pursuing three main themes for its campaigning activity:

1. To support a fund raising fortnight for the Liberation Movements between 3rd - 18th November
2. To campaign vigorously for motions to be carried in COs pressing universities to sell their investments in Southern Africa and try to get such action happening in early November, the resolutions to call for compliance by university authorities by February;
3. Campaigning on the issue of Namibia to be initiated with help and direction from the NAG;

NUS has also, in line with Plaw Hatch's recommendations, produced a campaign poster and is bringing out an activists manual. Further information can be obtained from either the NUS or AAM

PLAW HATCH CONFERENCE

PLANNING GROUPS REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This report of the four planning groups is presented to the Plenary Session as the basis for future NUS/AAM activity on Southern Africa. Not all the points or proposals made in groups are included here but they will be covered in the detailed report of the conference. The recommendations made will obviously have to be considered in the light of the resources and priorities of the AAM and the NUS at any particular time.

PROPAGANDA MATERIAL - PLANNING GROUP I

Political Base: That dependent on the type of propaganda being used, e.g. posters, booklets, etc. any specific area being emphasised should be placed in the context of the struggle within Southern Africa as a whole. Also, in detailed briefing papers, leaflets, etc. wherever possible the political content should be emphasised in terms of the relationship between the regimes in Southern Africa and their Western allies, both Governments and international corporations.

FUND RAISING - PLANNING GROUP II

The Planning Group discussed the main purposes for fund raising and recognised these to be to provide actual assistance to the organisations, real political support and to provide an opportunity for in-depth political education. The question of priorities for fund raising was posed and it was generally agreed that the major priority must be funding for the liberation movements although this should not be to the detriment of support organisations within Britain.

Similarly it was agreed that at specific times the main effort should be on short term campaigns such as the SASO Appeal. Different techniques of fund raising were referred to and it was agreed that there should be a greater interchange of ideas and information.

ECONOMIC GROUP - PLANNING GROUP III

The group dealt with the economic "bridge - building" argument, totally rejected it but recognised the need to explain and be able to fully argue the position. Discussion took place on the reasons behind the Polaroid and Barclays "experiments". Discussion then continued on effective action against university and LEA investments.

CAMPAIGNS - PLANNING GROUP IV

The groups agreed on the importance and relevance of the specific campaigns to pinpoint and highlight the ongoing struggle. It is possible to mobilise large numbers of people on particular issues who are then drawn into the movement as a whole. It is important to realise the effect of these campaigns on Southern Africa both on the morale of the African population and their actual and potential effect on the minority regimes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE GROUPS

1. That one well-produced poster of high political content is produced by NUS for long-term use with 'issue' posters when needed.
2. That a detailed briefing paper on Namibia together with a leaflet be produced. SWAPO badges to use made available if possible.
3. NUS to produce a "Southern Africa Campaign" badge - design to be used as a loggo.
4. That NUS/AAM Network members distribute and sell far more NUS/AAM/CFMAG/Liberation Movement literature.
5. Recommendations also included the following which will be detailed in the final Conference Report - Area printing and distribution, use of Press (note Student Press), smaller items of specific propaganda, a film, a leaflet on investment and a series of "Issue" leaflets to be produced, next conference, also conference in North/Scotland.
6. To produce a detailed Briefing Document on methods of fund raising specifically including those suggested in the Planning Group (this document to be updated regularly with ideas emerging at the local level)
7. That in-depth consideration be given to organising a National Fortnight of Fund Raising as part of on-going work on fund raising which would be supported centrally by the provision of a poster and propaganda material for each organisation for which funds are to be raised. This would be linked to the Speakers' Tour.
8. That a concerted effort be made to encourage student unions to affiliate to the AAM.
9. University Investments: It was agreed that a broadly coordinated campaign be organised and that:
 - a. All university unions put forward motions in November demanding the ending of all that university's investments in British companies with South African subsidiaries;
 - b. Research be done centrally during the summer on such holdings and that a meeting be called in September (to include unions not represented at the conference) to finalise the campaign;
 - c. Approximately 10 of the most important companies be selected and subsequently researched and used as example of British involvement;
10. LEA Investment: It was agreed to select a few favourable areas to launch a vigorous campaign against LEA's investing in South Africa involving student unions, Labour party, trades councils, etc. and to assess the feasibility of this type of action as a result of this initiative.
11. Barclays: The campaign should be revitalised because of the need to take initiatives in response to Barclays PR campaign on withdrawal from Cabora Bassa and equal pay in South Africa:

- a. Circulate background paper to be used in all appropriate ways, e.g. mass distribution, union newspapers, local press;
- b. First two weeks of term for Barclays priority - Freshers Weeks, etc.
- c. Urge student unions to put Boycott Barclays leaflets in their Freshers mailings.

12. Polaroid:

- a. Research for fact sheets;
- b. Boycott of Polaroid consumer goods, e.g. cameras, sunglasses e.g. produce self-adhesive stickers.
- c. Check in colleges for Polaroid equipment e.g. ID cards, photographic booths and make necessary campaign;
- d. Intensification of campaign after Christmas;

13. Other campaigns were discussed and it was agreed that detailed proposals on these should be circulated;

- a. Namibia
- b. The 600th anniversary of the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance;
- c. Zimbabwe
- d. Springbok Association
- e. Shareholding

PLAW HATCH CONFERENCE

Notes from Workshop No.1.

ORGANISATION OF MEETINGS

Two main objects: 1. immediate and 2. long term

Immediate Aims:

1. Freshers Conference, e.g. speeches, charity concerts, creating good first impression;
2. Societies' Mornings: stalls, literature and membership;
3. Aim to involve students on local issues; on national level;
4. Street Plays: liaison with other committees, e.g. 3 WI, Soc-Socs, etc.
5. Recruitments: special exhibition on Southern Africa, or alternatively a teach-in or films followed by discussions: danger of over-exposure.

Long Term Objectives:

1. Serious policy meetings - groundwork;
2. Some jobs to be done by new members to continue interest, e.g. distribution of pamphlets;
3. Ensure that student members of another society are well-feared to answer all questions.
4. Cooperate with townspeople, local trade unions, etc. - to stop immigration, prevent SA trade missions, etc.
5. If possible, meetings should use local people-students to mobilise in own environment;
6. Separate contenees into -one-third for Whites Only and one-third for Blacks Only, with separate entrances - follow up with a meeting or teach-in;
7. Give talks at local schools to inform pupils of effects of apartheid in South Africa.
8. Formation of regional and /or area committees for further cooperation and news- sheet;
9. Support for violence: won not through doctrinaire line but by having practical objectives, e.g. fund-raising;
10. Going to shops selling SA goods and pretending to buy them and leaving them on counters - continuous process - use of AA stickers, etc.
11. Main job to make contact with many people, to inform, educate and teach people - morally committed;
12. Individual talks with students to eliminate their ignorance and make them more aware;
13. Difficulty of relating to peoples' own experience about SA show them poor housing, etc. in England - draw parallels;
14. Lack of finance - get Finance Committee to send money to NUS Appeal Fund for sending money to SA, and arrange to pay series of lecturers who send money to SA;
15. Contact correspondents of SA newspapers;

Shan Maraj

PLAW HATCH CONFERENCE

Notes From Workshop No. 2.

PRODUCTION OF PROPAGANDA

1. Two general points on the production of propaganda were emphasised initially and recurred later: firstly, that pushing out material is in no way a substitute for actual organisation and mobilisation of the community being worked on; secondly that design is all-important in getting across whatever message is being plugged, especially in view of the multiplicity of competition on most campuses.
2. Much of the following discussion was on the technical problems of publicity production.
3. Machines: Facilities available in student unions for producing publicity vary considerably; as a few may be looking for replacements or improved capacity, an information sheet on this specific topic may come in useful.
4. Types:
 - a. Gestetner: basic, technically limited; quite expensive to run, e.g. uses three times as much ink as Roneo;
 - b. Roneo: new model (cost approx £300) gives fast reproduction (c. 8000 ph); wider range of sheet sizes, range of four colours; with removable ink drums (c. £60 each); greater durability, and other technical advantages.
 - c. Offset Litho : main advantage is its greater quality of reproduction - type looks like print, photos are sharper and coloured ones easier to produce. Disadvantage: slower speed (c.1800 ph), prohibitive cost (smallest model costs £1300);
5. Alternative Methods of Production: (For University use)
 - a. Silk-screen: simplest model can be hand-made and need cost little; most sophisticated model costs around £600 (for professional production). Prerequisites: the more complicated the model, the greater the skill needed, but expertise important even for crude posters of which simple hand models are capable. Also, needs group of people, to operate effectively and does take time, although more suitable for rapid production than printing, much cheaper as well (c. £3 per 100 for 20" x 30").
 - b. Spray-printing: using paper, stencil and tin of car spray-paint. Quick-drying, therefore very effective for situations demanding immediate response. If backs of old posters used it is a very cheap method - i tin costs c. 50p does c. 30 20 x 30 posters.
6. In most cases, a University group will get better results if it uses its resources in its area. In each case - printing offset litho, silk-screen - sympathetic contacts can make a substantial difference as regards costs and availability of resources.

Photo - Litho: make own design, and send to printer, rather than allow latter to do it all. (Costs £3 per 100, compared with £10 per 100 for printing)

Silk-screen: very often local art college or large schools will have good facilities; usually possible to learn to use them, or even get a contact to produce posters for the group (c. £3 per 100 or less). One can also get cheap paper and supplies this way.

7. Design: because impact is all-important, essential to design posters/leaflets well; e.g. rather than cut crude headlines on a stencil, use lettraset; get the right balance in lay-out (e.g. don't use too many lettraset type-faces on the one sheet) For electro-stencils, get them made up by someone who knows the job, e.g. sympathetic local trade unionist). Don't put too much information on one poster/leaflet (depends on its purpose). Use symbols/headings on posters, to give the group an identity.

8. Other Ideas:

a. Use wall-newspaper as a means of communication - e.g. a headed blank poster, in particular strategic places with details overlaid periodically to advertise meetings etc. newspaper style leaflet as a hand-out for town work.

b. Stickers: message can be printed/photo-lithoed onto sheets of gummed paper, for wide-spread distribution;

c. Adhesive (tacky) paper 'badges' which will stick to clothes

d. Get the Union to establish a 'reference bank' of useful posters, photos, headlines, etc. as design examples and for re-use;

paper:

a. For leaflets, usually straightforward, especially if the Union has regular supplies.

b. Posters: paper comes in a variety of thicknesses and prices it's necessary to shop around.

For added effect it helps to use coloured paper, for all sizes In particular, /'Day-glo', a type of (coloured) paper which, although expensive, (£3.59 per 100 up to 500), is very effective because of its luminosity. Paper is usually the most expensive item, so its worth investigating sources of supply, (e.g. newsprint, wall-paper).

10. Distribution : for any group, always important to have lined up :

a. A production team, or at least contacts who can do various jobs at short notice;

b. System and network for distribution of material - otherwise a long and tiring business. Applies to University and town work.

11. Other types of activity were not much discussed, but street theatre was emphasised as a powerful medium for putting across a particular message.

12. Specific Recommendations:

a. That NUS produce a manual on publicity production, ways and means, etc. with comprehensive coverage, and emphasis on

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selfhelp, and technique and resources readily available to a University group.

b. That NUS produce an agitational film for the campaign to be distributed and used by the network, the film on SU autonomy is a good precedent for this.

Several other issues raised in discussion are not repeated here they can be brought up in the general discussion.

Richard Moorsom
University of East Anglia

PLAW HATCH CONFERENCE

Notes from Workshop No. 3.

DEMONSTRATION ORGANISATION

Important to decide on aims and objectives trying to get over March or sit-in or picket, etc? Street theatres - good idea - often successful.

Representative from West Wales AA Group had photos, etc. about Llanelli rugby tour, showing the street theatre they used there. Before they gave our leaflets, but decided that didn't succeed well enough. Street theatre adaptable. Question - what methods to influence public opinions. Street theatre can be used alone to influence people who are committed, or with demonstrations and marches. Easier to achieve such aims as preventing a rugby tour with little support, where use commitment in a special way than to prevent the system of apartheid, etc.

Demonstrations serve to: 1. encourage commitment of already converted, 2. get publicity, 3. to achieve particular objective, e.g. preventing rugby tour, or more remote aims such as against Smith. National and local demonstrations differ widely. On a local level possible to move demonstrations around non-white area to get people thinking, etc. to get local demos successful. Important to use hot issues in order to get support, e.g. Rhodesia demonstration, where useful to have to have mobilisation of local level for national demonstration. Coordination of demonstrations important to prevent clashes and duplicate demos. Three weeks notice suitable - can sustain publicity, interest won't wane, and it's long enough in advance to avoid clashes. RECC hoped to duplicate at a local level what was happening on national level during Rhodesian campaign. Often break-down in communication in relation to contacts.

Student AA groups should liaise with local AA groups and join resources, etc. but often town AA groups are religious based etc. but also useful to have older people and non-students around to prevent young layabout image. Essential to involve trade-unionists if wish to be successful in long-term campaign. Also important to keep up network and continuity between contacts. Can keep new addresses, etc. on local level. Possible to utilize Trades Council in area - which is a constant organisation therefore useful. Also contact Trades Council in less urban areas, where there are no colleges. Often, these found to be more progressive.

Any demo should not be dominated by one of groups. With things like stewarding, shouldn't rely on e.g. students from one group. Points to keep in mind when organising demos in chronological order:

1. Deal with involving of different groups - both in political sense and in different types of people (age, occupation, etc) when organising a march. To involve Trade Unions, diplomatic to write letter and/or can attend branch meetings. Best to have some Trade Unionists, who are familiar with the movement, to advise and involve TUs.

2. Decide on slogans, which are very important. Must be on principle basis, but not exclude people one would like to have support from. This defines objectives, too, so helps to avoid sectarian difficulties.

3. Publicity - leaflets, stickers (very useful) posters, contacts with local, alternative, radical press, events, e.g. street theatre, to publicise and mobilise. Appoint a couple of people to draft leaflet, better not to do so in a committee. Again difference between local and national publicity if bourgeois media can get a scare story going, quite an asset, e.g. Sprinbok tour.

4. Decide on objectives, especially any specific objective. Important to inform people of what to do once reached their goal e.g. Rhodesia House. Stewards can help with this. Lack of discipline leads to fragmentation and confusion. Question of secondary activity after major demo. Often these more powerful because spontaneous, etc. and sometimes not recognised. If people know exactly what they are doing, need fewer people and can achieve more. If publicise secondary demo at beginning of actual march, giving information on what to try and do, etc would be beneficial but problems with the law.

5. Notify police (or not) depending on type of demo. Don't have to tell them, but better to if having a straightforward march with speakers, etc.

6. Stewarding, with as much variance as possible, and well-briefed by several briefing meetings beforehand. Have them involve in political side from start. Prevent them from being intermediary between police and demonstrators. Loud-hailers necessary, stewards well-versed in slogans and linking arms.

7. Publicity after demo - just as important as that before. Good to have press conference afterwards to restate aims, to get better coverage. Local papers will often print information - but must state facts clearly. Also give information to South African press because it will get printed in some form or another.

Pickets, etc. more useful in long-term. Fly-posting also very useful. If can get a gimmick, good for publicity, also street theatre, Barclay jamming etc. Don't need too many people for this either. Slogan painting well worth doing, also can collect Barclays free gifts and burn them. Symbolic things go down well in local press.

On mass demos, brief people about legal side, so if arrested can use for publicity, etc, and can have more impact in court. Build on a particular issue, to show in wider context. Mobilise in Freshers' Weeks, with Boycott Barclays campaigns, etc. don't just leaflet, but have active campaigns at same time.

NUS can help students with legal aid, and legal costs can be met by parties, funds, etc. within colleges.