

Training programme for trainers in nonviolent-action/conflict handling

MSB-08-22

Minutes of a meeting held in the CPSA Boardroom, Khotsu House on August 22, 1988.

PRESENT: Sheena Duncan (Church of the Province of SA, Justice & Reconciliation Division and SACC), Emma Mashinini (CPSA J & R), Richard Steele (International Fellowship of Reconciliation, Durban), Anita Kromberg (IFOR), Rob Robertson (SACC J & R), Jac Boullie (SA Catholic Bishops Conference), Thekiso Tihacoane (SACC J & R), Vernon Openshaw (United Congregational Church of SA), Busani Ngubane (Reformed Presbyterian Church of SA) Benita Pavlovic (Human Awareness programme, HAP).

1. There is a growing need for this type of training, especially after the Church leaders' protest march in Cape Town in February, and the Convocation's endorsement of "effective nonviolent action". However, there is a shortage of trainers, hence the need to develop a training programme.
2. Members read the "Memo to Emma from Sheena" dated 13th June 1988 (attached), which set out the background to this meeting.

3. SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1. To set up a training programme under the auspices of the church to train church workers in the practical methods of:
  - 3.1.1. planning, preparation and carrying out of effective nonviolent actions designed to bring about justice in our society;
  - 3.1.2. conflict handling/management.
- 3.2. Participants will not only learn these methods, but will learn how to teach them to others, so that they themselves can become trainers in this field.
- 3.3. The programme will run over the whole year in 1989, but in four sections, entailing 30 days training altogether:  
January 23 - February 3 (12 days)  
May 8 - 13 (6 days)  
August 7 - 12 (6 days)  
November 6 - 11 (6 days).
- 3.4. The purpose of having the programme in sections is to allow participants to test and practice each section in the field, then evaluate their experience at the beginning of the next block. Based on this evaluation, the methods can be revised as appropriate.
- 3.5. At the end of the programme, a training manual will be produced, which can be used by the trainers in their work, but will also be available to church and community workers in general.

All present agreed in principle with the proposal.

## 5. GENERAL COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS REGARDING THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME:

- \* the programme should be as ecumenical as possible.
- \* it will be important for written material to come out of the programme, so that churches who do not have full time workers they could send on the programme can benefit from it through at least getting the materials.
- \* the training should not be in theory only.
- \* the training should also involve the development of a deeper understanding of the principles and dynamics of nonviolence and nonviolent action.
- \* the programme should not pass judgement on other forms of action.
- \* the programme should not see itself as separate from resistance that already exists, but should strengthen and broaden resistance.
- \* the programme must move "beyond the debate" of nonviolence versus violence.
- \* In running this programme and developing trainers, the church can be making a contribution to the community in general, because church workers do not only work with church groups.
- \* the way the programme is described is going to be very important. In this respect, the term "nonviolent action" may be problematic because of negative associations with the term "nonviolence". Better terms may be "unarmed direct action" or "Christian direct action". On the other hand, "nonviolent action" or "nonviolent direct action" are still commonly used (e.g. by Frank Chikane), and what needs to happen is that the negative associations be replaced by positive associations through positive examples (e.g. the church leaders march on parliament, the rent boycott in Soweto etc).
- \* This proposal should be canvassed as broadly as possible so that the planners can take into consideration a broad spectrum of opinions and needs.
- \* the programme should have the support of key church workers and leaders to ensure it is solidly based in the churches.
- \* basically, what this programme would be doing is helping the church to move forward in the struggle as effectively as possible through equipping its workers with the relevant skills.

## 6. WHO WOULD PARTICIPATE?

- 6.1. Full time church workers e.g. SACC and regional church council fieldworkers, denominational justice and peace workers, para-church workers (e.g. Diakonia workers) etc.
- 6.2. The meeting felt it was important to restrict participation this time round to church people, so that the church can fully own it and take responsibility for it, and can derive maximum benefit from it. In due course, participation can broaden.
- 6.3. Total number of participants: approximately 35, plus 6 trainers.

## 7. SELECTION CRITERIA

- 7.1. Participants do not have to be committed to nonviolence as a principle. They must be committed to acting nonviolently.
- 7.2. They should be based in a group or constituency, so that they can put their learnings into practice immediately.