

**FIVE FREEDOMS FORUM-AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS CONFERENCE, JULY 1989
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION
ON THE ROLE OF EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY POLITICS (B2)**

1. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

STRENGTHS

- a. A great number of whites have been mobilised but it is difficult to measure our effectiveness. We therefore often underestimate what we have done.
- b. A major change in white attitudes since 1960 was recognised. As blacks advance in the struggle eg at the time of Sharpeville or Soweto (1976) it draws increasing numbers of whites into the struggle.

WEAKNESSES

- a. We are short sighted in our strategising and we are not in touch with our communities, thus often do not reach very far into our community.
- b. There is a lack of resources: human and financial and we have certainly been affected by State of Emergency.
- c. We are still working in a fragmented way not networking wide enough. We need to be more creative and develop new initiatives.
- d. We started to discuss problems of various organisations from home represented here but felt we needed to look at issues we had in common. We should address our differences - back home.

2. APPROACHES

- a. We need to co-ordinate nationally in order to change attitudes, mobilise whites and put pressure on the government. White anti-apartheid groups need to be more vocal in terms of their stance against the government.
- b. We recognise that we can't mobilise all whites but we can make a significant impact. Nevertheless the issue of numbers when we talk about mobilisation was stressed by the ANC. To do this we need to identify areas of mobilisation ie areas of commonality between black and white and issues which whites can identify with eg ECC.
- c. We need to take gaps and respond creatively when critical issues for whites arise in order to create a climate for change.
- d. We need to strategise jointly amongst white extra-parliamentary organisations and the MDM in general.
- e. We spoke about the effectiveness of a targeted approach and recognised the tremendous scope to pull in professionals, prevent young whites from leaving the country and using the platform of sport for example.
- f. The question of reaching the white working class resulted in a lot of debate. The question was raised from the FFF delegation about whether this was not the task of COSATU.
- g. We need to devise practical ways of multiplying experiences such as this one. Eg through conferences, media, report backs, house meetings.
- h. We stressed that the most important way of mobilising whites was through non-racial actions.

3. ISSUES

- a. We started with a shopping list of issues but then decided it was more important to identify those which would be most relevant for the foreseeable future, especially in view of the coming

elections.

It was strongly agreed that creating a climate for negotiation and raising the ANC's preconditions in the white community was of vital importance. We considered having a co-ordinated campaign involving as many groups as possible, and that this needs to be discussed on our return.

b. Other important issues discussed and debated were:

1. Organising around conscription. The possibility of reviving the issue of conscription at a national level was discussed.

2. Defiance. It was mentioned that defiance can be very valuable but that it has the potential to alienate whites. We need to be clear about the purpose of defiance. Any defiance needs to happen around issues which whites feel strongly about or can identify with eg opposition to Group Areas Act or conscription.

c. A few of the other issues raised were:

- * Hands off Swapo/Namibia
- * Abolition of the death penalty
- * Privatisation
- * Open schools

4. RELATIONSHIP WITH PARLIAMENT

The ANC felt that although they did not see parliament as an instrument for change it would be meaningless to call for a boycott of the white elections. At the same time, genuine participation in parliament to advance a non-racial democracy, was given recognition.

Any individual who participates in white parliamentary politics, at the same time claiming to be anti-apartheid, should prove their bona fides by recognising the fact that the role of extra-parliamentary politics is central, and actually supporting, co-ordinating with and participating in extra-parliamentary activities.

5. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MASS DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

The strength and vibrancy of white extra-parliamentary organisations is closely related to the strength of the MDM. It was generally agreed that jointly strategising, consulting and working together goes without question.