

Logistical Support

Both before his trial and in prison, Bixente will need material support. Before his trial, he goes into hiding to avoid arrest and pre-trial detention, so people need to bring his things from his previous residence to his current location so that he is not caught. In prison, he needs books and paper to continue his studies. This is also work of the support group.

Political Work

The MOC, the movement to which Bixente belongs, is in charge of the political work. However, the support group can collaborate with this work, joining in protest actions organised by MOC, especially those connected with his trial and imprisonment. At the same time, the support group can reach out politically in the places that Bixente is known (such as his neighbourhood and university) to maximise the benefit provided by the disobedience of Bixente and other prisoners. The support group can also put together an email list to inform people about his case and a Website with information about Bixente's case, antimilitarism, war tax resistance to military spending, peace education, and related links. Every now and then, Bixente can write a letter that can be circulated. The support group should coordinate with the MOC (for instance, having a member attend MOC meetings) and check that its actions are in line with the MOC's overall campaign.

Support groups are a great help, not only for the prisoner, but also for the MOC. They share the work and serve as entry points for people to join the movement. Coordination between the political group, the support group, and with the prisoner is essential. Stable, frequent communication is important. The political criteria come from the political movement, not from the prison; however, visits to the prison by members of both groups is important for developing and coordinating the political work.

Action Evaluation

Evaluation allows us to learn from our experiences. Usually people informally evaluate an event, be it through personal reflections, talking with friends, or meeting with a group of core organisers ('leaders'). What we propose here, however, is a structure for feeding back lessons from an event. Rather than leaving evaluation to chance or confining it to an elite, it should be set up as a planned and collective activity that values the input of people who have played different roles, who bring different kinds of experience, and who have different levels of commitment. Preferably everyone who participated in an action or in organising an event should be encouraged to take part in evaluating it.

When evaluations are a regular part of our work, we have a chance for honest feedback on the process and content of the work and a way to improve in

the future. Bear in mind that there will be considerable differences of opinion and that it is not necessary for the group to come to agreement. It is also important to point out what was successful as well as what went wrong, but begin with positive evaluations whenever possible. The structure of the evaluation should be planned carefully.

Some of the most obvious points brought up in an evaluation might be quantitative: we handed out so many leaflets, we attracted so many people, we gained so much media coverage, we blocked a road for so long. If such information is important in evaluating the campaign development, make sure that somebody is monitoring it, that you have a way of counting the number of protesters, that a media group collects information about coverage. However, sometimes the numbers game can distract from the main purpose, especially in the case of repeated protests. Maybe more protesters arrived, but the action made less impact and first-time protesters felt useless, got bored, scared, or in some other way were put off. Maybe a military base entrance was blockaded for a longer time, but the action reached fewer people or was somehow less empowering. Criteria for evaluation need to be linked with the strategic purposes of a particular event.

Below is a check-list to help you in evaluating an action; it can also be used in other areas of your work.

1. Vision, Strategy, and Objectives

- Was there an overall vision/strategy/objective?
- Was it relevant to the problem/conflict?
- Did participants know who initiated the action?
- Were participants aware of the vision/strategy/objectives?

2. Principles and Discipline

- Was there a clear discussion and agreement on discipline for the action?
- Was it followed during the action?
- Were the planned tactics and those actually carried out consistent with the discipline?
- Did any of the participants feel that they themselves or others failed to follow the agreed-upon discipline?

3. Preparation and Training

- Was the preparation/training appropriate?
- Was the preparation/training adequate?
- Did it actually aid the participants in coping with the unexpected?
- Did it meet the needs of those involved?
- Did it meet the expectations of those involved?
- Did the necessary community feel developed?

4. Tactics

- Were the planned tactics adequate?
- Were the tactics, as planned, actually carried out?
- Did they meet the needs and expectations of those involved?
- Were unexpected problems adequately dealt with?
- Was this done in a way consistent with the discipline/vision/objective?

5. Organisation

- Did the structure/organisation of the action fit its objective/strategy/vision/discipline?
- Was it organised in a democratic way?

6. Impact

A. *On the participants*

- Was it relevant?
- Did it invite/create participation?
- Did the participants feel in control of the action?
- Did it increase the initiative and confidence of the participants?

B. *On those to whom it was addressed*

- Was it understood?
- Were objectives reached?
- Did it close or open options for further action and communication?
- Were there responses from individuals (opponents) that differed from the institutions that were a part of it?
- How did these responses relate to the objectives of the action?

C. *On others*

- Did they understand it?
- Were they alienated by it?
- Did it have any unexpected results?
- Were people moved in our direction (neutralised, attracted, catalysed)?

* *This evaluation form was developed at the International Seminar on Training for Nonviolent Action held in Cuernavaca, Mexico, in July 1977.*