

End Conscription Campaign

P O Box 537
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2100

PRESS STATEMENT

7 MAY 1990

GROOTE SCHUUR TALKS

The End Conscription Campaign welcomes the talks between the Government and the ANC and the fact that progress appears to have been made at the talks. We are encouraged by the fact that two issues of concern to the ECC have been focused on, namely, the question of the release of political prisoners and the return of exiles to South Africa.

As far as the question of political prisoners is concerned, we reiterate that jailed conscientious objectors are political prisoners, and urge the Government to release Charles Bester, who is still in jail serving a six year sentence for refusing to serve in the SADF. We believe that no useful purpose can be served by the ongoing persecution of conscientious objectors, and urge President De Klerk to declare a moratorium on the imminent trials of several conscientious objectors.

As far as the question of exiles is concerned, it is common knowledge that large numbers of white males have left South Africa to avoid military service. Many of these people wish to return and make a contribution to a new South Africa. We urge the Government to include such people in an amnesty to political exiles and to grant them indemnity from prosecution under the Defence Act.

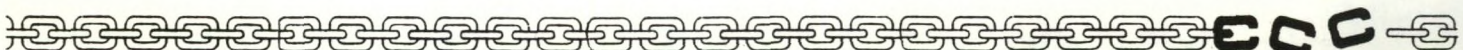
In the present climate, the recent statement from the military to the effect that ANC and SACP members, and presumably other opponents of the Government, will be called up for military service is provocative and tends to destroy confidence in the Government's sincerity.

Chris de Villiers

Issued by

CHRIS DE VILLIERS

ECC CHAIRMAN (JOHANNESBURG) Tel : 880 1705



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16 August 1990

The Editor
Business Day

Dear Sir

Your editorial comment of 16 August (The Slaughter) cannot pass without comment. I cannot see why you feel obliged to discuss so grave an issue in such snide tones. However, although I believe that a number of your comments are unfair, I will confine myself to one affecting the End Conscription Campaign. You state that the SADF has been subjected to a campaign of vilification, "expressed at times in aspects of the campaign against conscription". I do not know whether you intended the connection or not, but I believe that the average reader of your newspaper would equate "the campaign against conscription" with the End Conscription Campaign. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines "vilify" as to defame or to speak evil of. The ECC is critical, indeed highly critical, of the current racist system of conscription and the way in which the SADF has been used and abused in Southern Africa, and make no apologies for this. However, I defy you to show that the ECC has vilified the SADF.

Ironically, it is in fact the ECC which has been the subject of a campaign of vilification conducted, inter alia, by the SADF itself. The SADF admitted to its illegal smear campaign against the ECC, which was the subject of a successful court action resulting in a final interdict against the SADF, ordering it to cease unlawfully harassing and interfering with the ECC. A torrent of smear publications has poured forth over the last few years, linking the ECC to Moscow, the KGB, the ANC, Satan and other naughty people. Over a hundred of our members have been detained without trial, without a single charge being pressed. We have been subjected to threatening phone calls, petrol bomb attacks, teargassing of our meetings by anonymous thugs and, most recently, have been the target of a bomb aimed at one of our public meetings. Mr Editor, I put it to you that it is the ECC that has been the victim of vilification, and worse.

I believe that when the ECC's small role in the history of South Africa is weighed up by the historians, they will record that the ECC pursued its cause in an open, legal and honourable manner, while our opponents have been devious, violent and even murderous. In this context, the odd cheap shot from a newspaper editor will probably go unrecorded.

Yours faithfully

Chris de Villiers

Chris de Villiers, ECC Chairman (Johannesburg)

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ECC PRESS RELEASE

13 AUGUST 1990

RELEASE OF CHARLES BESTER

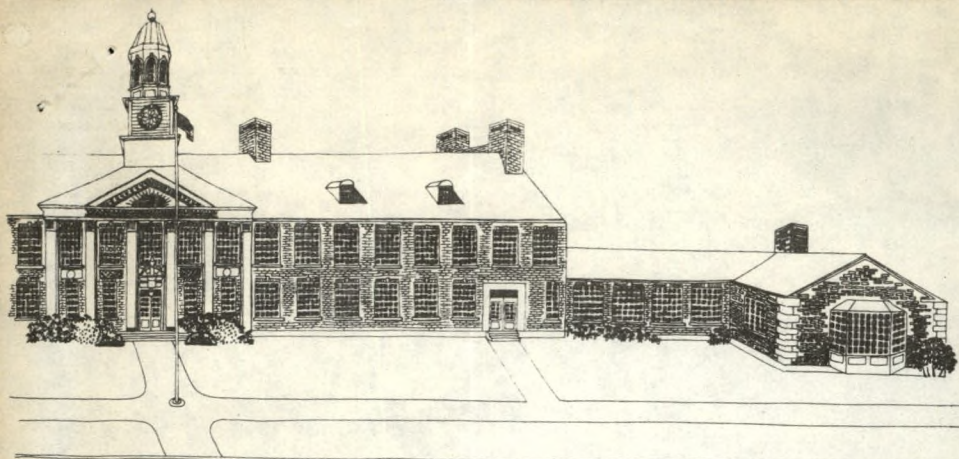
The End Conscription Campaign welcomes the decision of the Supreme Court to release Charles Bester from prison. It appears from the brevity of the proceedings that the court had no doubt that Charles had been punished enough for his principled refusal to serve in the SADF.

This reflects poorly on those who conceived the unjust legislation in terms of which he was sentenced to 6 years in prison. It reflects equally poorly on the refusal of the present government to recognise conscientious objectors and to provide non-military community service for them, as an alternative to military service, rather than to continue persecuting and jailing objectors.

A press conference will be held once Charles is actually released from prison. Details of the time and venue will follow.

Chris de Villiers

Issued by Chris de Villiers
ECC Chairman (Johannesburg)
Tel. 880-1705



RIVERSIDE SCHOOL
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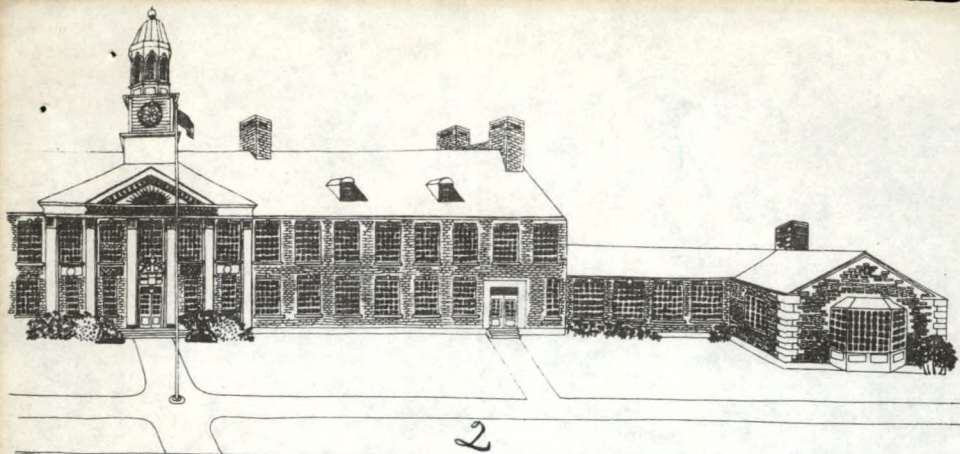
Jan 14, 1987.

KARIN STEINBERG

Dear Mr. de Villiers,

Your letter published in the Business Day, of today.

I find it difficult to reconcile many of your statements but especially the one — we do not believe the conflict in SA is an external military threat from the BBC Africa Service which I listen to & various ANC publications which I receive from overseas, including Sechaba, & Anti-Apartheid literature from overseas sources, why are the ANC then always

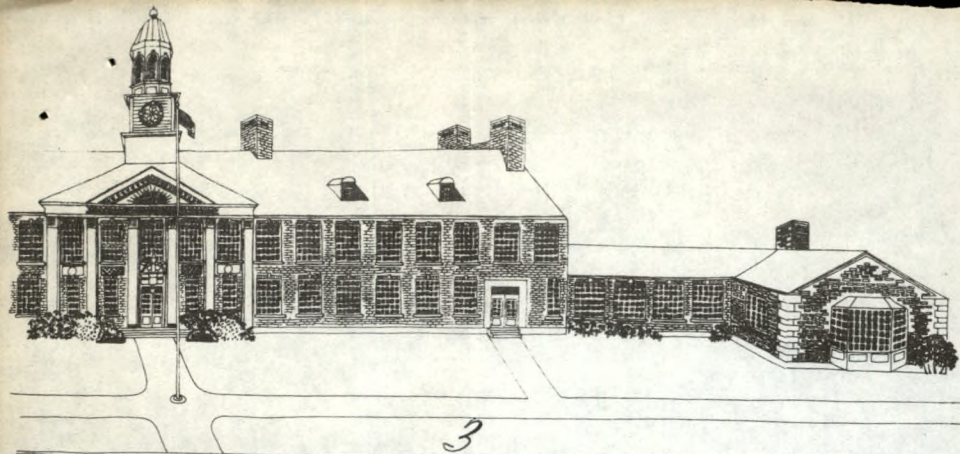


RIVERSIDE SCHOOL
RIVERSIDE, CONNECTICUT

KARIN STENBERG

calling for the "support" of the ECC.
I have copies of speeches made (&
taped so they were not distorted)
& which I have in my possession,
& made by ECC local personnel
to overseas audiences, admittedly
small, why then do they call for
support to assist the "liberation
struggle" & to discredit the SA Police
& SA Defence force? This is not
an external threat? I fail to
understand.

Why, too, at a recent book fair
at Exclusive Books in Hyde Park



RIVERSIDE SCHOOL
RIVERSIDE, CONNECTICUT

KARIN STENBERG

were we told that "if you son
cannot avoid conscription he can
pass on information of troop move-
ments, etc., which can be used
by outside forces to destabilize the
SA anti-liberation forces"? This
was also taped & passed on to
Minister Olob. Those 3 conscientious
objectors presently facing a court
martial in Cape Town & who are
ECC supporters??

No, Mr. de Villiers were not
fooled.

(No name as I have banned
literature & will probably betray me.

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END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)

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