

For peace and justice

The End Conscription Peace Festival held at the end of June on Wits campus confirmed that ECC has become a major force against militarisation.

2 000 people attended, considerable local and international publicity was generated and the State stepped up its harassment of ECC. Janet Cherry, chairperson in Port Elizabeth was detained on the eve of the festival. Cardinal Arns from Brazil was denied a visa since he was due to speak at it.

"What impressed me most about the festival was the spirit of unity and purpose that pervaded the affair, despite the diversity of the people there", a participant said.

"We were from Nusas, from the churches, from UDF, the PFP, Stellenbosch University and many other places and organisations. We were young and old. And I think we all came out of the festival changed and more determined". "It was that kind of festival, full of moments that impress on one deeply the urgency of peace in our country."

"I will always remember Molly Blackburn talking about her friend Mathew Goniwe's disappearance and how she was sure he had been murdered." Mathew who was due to speak at the festival was indeed found dead, mutilated and burnt a few days later.

"David Pijper's account during the panel discussion of conscientious objectors of his struggle with the Cape Corps was also a particular challenge to us all. He joined the Cape Corps because it was a family tradition but after serving in Namibia and being challenged by the growing community organisation in Oudtshoorn where he lives, he decided he could not serve any longer and so he ran away a number of times. Each time he was re-arrested and spent periods in detention barracks. On his release he would desert again."

Other speakers at the festival included Archbishop Hurley, Bishop Tutu, Beyers Naude, Cheryl Carolus of UDF and representatives of SWAPO and the Namibian Council of Churches. Carol Tongue of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament spoke about the campaign and the European peace movement.



Opening night platform (l-r)

Carol Tongue, Bishop Desmond Tutu, Benita Paulicevic (ECC chair, Johannesburg), Laurie Nathan (National Organiser, ECC) and Beyers Naudé.



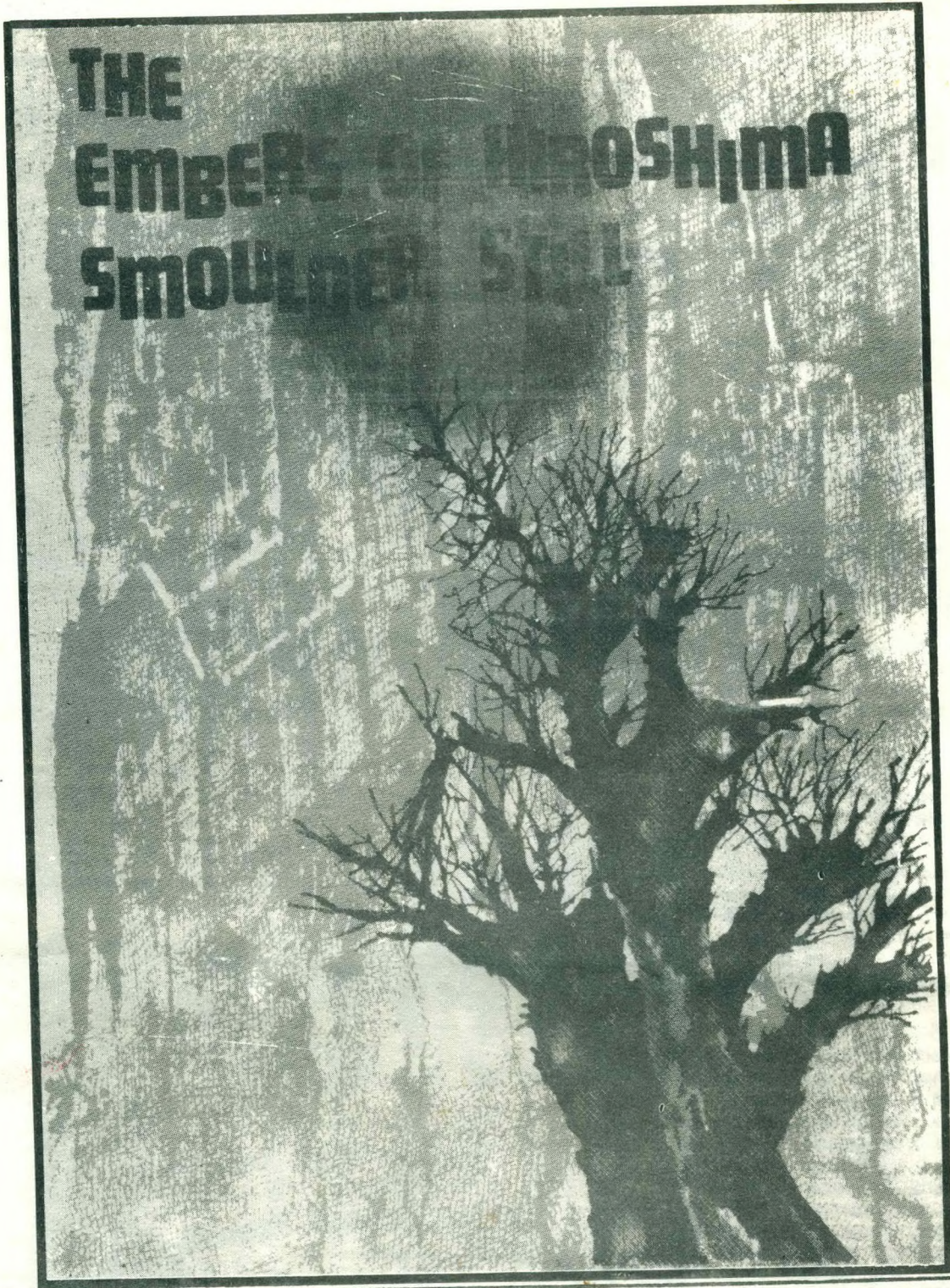
Pondering Peace: an actor in one of the cultural festival activities.

The festival was much more than public meetings with high profile speakers. There were workshops on subjects from nuclear power to the Board for Religious Objection, cultural events from music to drama to an exhibition of anti-war poster.

The festival ended with a service for peace which culminated with the darkness being illuminated with candles being lit for people who were martyrs for peace and justice in South Africa.

End Conscription Campaign

THE EMBERS OF HIROSHIMA SMOULDER STILL



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