



Launching the ECC Declaration, 15 October 1984 at the Claremont civic-centre.

in opposition for the white community. National service meant taking young men from their normal lives for a total of 4 years and subjecting them to an authoritarian structure of discipline. To many young whites this situation was intolerable.

From then on, resistance to conscription broadened into a movement with 2 complementary strands. On the one hand there was the support work for objectors and the continued lobbying for change in the law. On the other hand, then was the higher profile campaign work. This aimed at raising the awareness of the general public, and eventually mobilising sympathetic members of it through meetings, education programmes, publications, and eventually a national newspaper, "Objector".

By 1982 large numbers of people in the churches and on the campuses were considering objection. a maximum of 2 years in gaol did not seem to be too high a price, especially when compared with 4 years in the SADF. And most objectors were receiving one year sentences and being dishonourably discharged from the army, which made future call-up unlikely. In late 1982 and early 1983 support meetings were held around the country for objectors Billy Paddock and Peter Hathorn, and their cases received much publicity. At the same time the issue of coloured and indian conscription was appearing on the political agenda. For 10 years the SADF had been actively increasing its recruitment of blacks. Now government ministers began asserting that the implementation of the new constitution would eventually be followed by an extension of conscription to the "newly enfranchised communities."¹¹ This raised the possibility of a dramatic increase in resistance.

In this context the law was fundamentally changed in 1983, with both gains and setbacks for the war resistance movement.

The new law significantly broadened the category of people who could be recognised as objectors. Now all religious pacifists would have the possibility of gaining status as conscientious objectors, whether or not they belonged to one of the "peace churches." They would have to prove their bona fides before a board of government, religious and military representatives, and chaired by Judge M. T. Steyn. Religious objectors could apply to do either non-combatant service in the SADF, or non-military community service in a government department for 1½ times the length of service they owed the military.

On the other hand, the new legislation significantly increased the penalty for all other objectors, ie anyone not accepted as both religious and universal pacifist. Such objectors now faced a viciously punitive sentence of up to 6 years in prison (1½ times what they owed the military).

The impact of the new legislation, which came into effect in July 1984, is difficult to assess. An acceptable alternative has been offered to large numbers of objectors. In the second half of 1984, 341 objectors appeared before the board. Of these 261 applied for and were granted community service.

But the repressive potential of the new legislation has also been apparent. This was clearly illustrated by the case of Brett Myrdal. He was due to appear before a court martial in November 1983 and faced a maximum sentence of 2 years. The day before he was due to appear his call-up was withdrawn and instead he was called up for July 1984. He suddenly had to face the harsh possibility of a 6-year prison sentence.¹² Many other objectors were forced to reassess the options they faced. The new legislation also had some unintended positive results. The state was clearly attempt-

ing to co-opt the churches and divide the conscientious objection movement into those with pacifist and those with political objections. The new legislation, however, served rather to put pressure on the churches to assert clearly their belief that all objectors should be accommodated.

Some denomination - Catholics, Presbyterians and Congregationalists - have even refused to sit on the Board for Religious objection until its terms of reference are broadened.

Then, too, the new legislation prompted the emergence of advice bureaux around the country. Largely under the auspices of the COSG's, the advice bureaux have played a crucial role in assisting conscripts to come to well-considered and independent decisions with regard to the range of options that confront them.

The End Conscription campaign

But perhaps most importantly the new legislation forced a re-assessment of the direction of the war resistance movement. Until this point, it was the constant flow of objectors who, by raising the military issue and challenging the public, had generated the momentum behind the movement. By early 1983 at least 8 objectors had indicated their preparedness to make a public stand. But now the new legislation put a different complexion on things. People who had decided to go to prison were placed in a far more difficult position, and the outcome of their decisions was less easy to predict. In other words the campaign could no longer be fought in a reactive way, dependent on objectors to determine its course. The military issue demanded a campaign with a clear programme and a creative approach.

The idea for such a campaign was sparked off by a motion passed at the 1983 Black conference. The motion demanded "that the South African government abolish all conscription for military service." To many the demand seemed to be idealistic or even naïve. But to a movement uncertain of its direction the Black Sash call offered a vision - the possibility of building a campaign around the boldest of demands.

In mid-1983 100 delegates from the Conscientious Objector Support Groups and a range of invited organisations met in Durban for the 4th annual COSG conference." The decision was taken to work towards the launching of a national campaign against compulsory conscription.

By the end of 1983 End Conscription Committees had been set up in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg. In 1985, similar committees have been established in Port Elizabeth and Pietermaritzburg. Each consists of a range of church, student, women's human rights organisations.

In the year-and-a-half of its existence the campaign has had a significant impact. The front structure of the ECC has assisted in galvanising organisations to take up the campaign. In this way a broad range of

sympathetic constituencies has been re-acted.

But most importantly, the ECC has begun to capture the interest and support of the general public. Key issues related to conscription have been focussed on through public meetings, concerts, press conferences and a wide range of media. The 6-monthly call-up, the on-going South African occupation of Namibia and the presence of the SADF in the townships have provided the main focus of attention.

The ECC's have also attempted to consolidate and develop their support through education programmes, newsletters, surveys on conscription and the ECC declaration. The launch of the declaration received widespread publicity and support. It was endorsed by a range of progressive organisations, most of the mainline churches and a broad spectrum of prominent individuals.

The campaign is beginning to inspire the development of an anti-war culture. T-shirts, stickers, badges, posters, concerts, videos, displays, even graffiti are all indicators of an expanding movement. "Troops out of the Townships", "No call-up for civil war," "peace in Namibia Now" and "No to Botha's army" are slogans which are becoming part of a new progressive culture.

But not all the reaction has been positive. The bulk of the white community remains antagonised by a campaign which is seen to threaten their protected position in

society. And the state, too, has shown some interest, most notably in the form of a security police raid on the ECC's first national conference at Botha's Hill in January. But ECC's strongest bulwark against state intimidation and harassment remains its broad support.

Yet while ECC has gained support and offered a vision of a better future, the dilemmas facing individual conscripts remain as difficult as ever. The use of SADF troops in Sebokeng and other areas in 1984 has sharpened the crisis of conscience for white conscripts. The fact that conscripts are grappling with this issue is shown by the number of conscripts who failed to report for military service this year - from 1596 for the whole of 1984 to 7589 in January 1985.

Events this year have presented even more starkly the options faced by conscripts: to fight in the SADF against fellow South Africans deprived of political and human rights in an intensifying civil war, or pay the price which resistance demands.

The SADF with compulsory conscription into its ranks is becoming an increasingly essential tool of apartheid. The state has consistently attempted to put the SADF beyond criticism and challenge - through propaganda, disinformation as well as legal and repressive measures.

But these measures are failing. From the courageous stand of isolated individuals, the fight against conscription has grown into a

broad-based and organised movement for a just peace. The struggle has been, and will continue to be a hard one. The military has grown enormously, but so has resistance. And the demand to end conscription will continue to assert itself with growing forcefulness until peace and justice have been won.

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TORTURE IN NAMIBIA

In all wars, there are inevitable lapses of human behaviour which lead to human abuses. Abuses, like torture, assault, arbitrary and secret detention, are usually the exception and not the rule, and can perhaps be explained away in phases like "the heat of battle", or "reflex combat action".

But when the use of torture, arbitrary assault as an accepted means of obtaining information, and deprivation of basic human rights becomes the norm rather than the exception, the excuse of war being the cause is hard to accept. We tend to think in terms of South American regimes, Nazi Germany, Cambodia, Emperor Bokassa's Central African Republic and Idi Amin's Uganda when looking for examples of states where government is based on terror.

But there is increasing evidence that Namibia has become a place of terror, a place where detainees know they will, at the very least, be kept blindfolded for long periods, held in solitary confinement, and more than

likely be beaten, choked or otherwise maltreated.

We need to look no further for substantial proof than to examine court records containing sworn statements by former detainees. Or listen to Namibian political activists recounting their experiences while held by the "Boere". Father Heinrich Henning, Roman Catholic Vicar General of Namibia, also has no doubts about what is happening in his country. "There is no doubt in my mind whatsoever that torture of detainees has become a system, the rule rather than the exception," he says.

As Catholic Vicar General, Father Henning receives regular briefings from Catholic missionaries in lonely mission stations in the heart of the war zones.

Koevoet

Most often accused of gross abuses are the Special Operations K Unit of the South African Security Police, Koevoet, and their plainclothes cousins, the South African Se-

curity Police. The recent announcement by Namibia's Multi Party Conference, recently installed by South Africa as an "Interim Government", that they would seek to control if not disband Koevoet has brought little solace within Namibia. The MPC's idea is simply that the functions (and presumably most of the Namibian operatives, comprising 90% of the force) would be taken over by the Special Task Force of the South West African Police. Namibians make little distinction between the activities of the Task Force and those of Koevoet. They are seen as being part and parcel of the same system of military occupation of their country by South Africa.

In the same way, no real distinction is made by Namibians between the operations of Koevoet and those of the South African Defence Force in Namibia, an army mainly made up of young South African conscripts.

It is much the same situation as existed in Occupied France under Nazi rule. The Resistance, the Underground, were the patriots and the heroes. The collaborators

were despised and ostracised. In Namibia's war zones, the equivalent of the Resistance or the Underground are guerillas of the Peoples' Liberation Army of Namibia, Plan, Swapo's military wing.

The methods used by Koevoet and the Security Police are only now beginning to emerge through exhaustive investigation carried out by lawyers, church leaders and journalists. Koevoet member, Jonas Paulus - described in court by his section leader, Warrant Officer George Norval as "one of my best men" - was sentenced to death for murdering a tribal headman, Robert Amunwe, in what was described in court as a "rape and robbery spree". But it was not the circumstances of the crime that were fascinating inasmuch as the detail surrounding Koevoet which emerged in evidence. Some examples: Paulus, who was honest to the point of telling the startled judge he expected the death sentence for what he had done, testified that it was "routine" that when a Koevoet unit came to a village in search of guerillas, they would beat anybody appearing to withhold information.

He stated that Koevoet members were only trained as "killing machines", that their sole function was "the extermination of terrorists" and that they were paid "koppgeld", bounty money, for each guerilla killed. In another case in Rundu, Koevoet Sergeant J Kriel, testified that Koevoet had only two functions: "interrogation and elimination tactics (uitwistaktiek)".

So serious has the situation become that the Bar Council of South West Africa, representing all advocates in the Territory, wrote in a memorandum to the Van Dijk Commission of Enquiry into Security Legislation that:

"In Namibia, the institutions of the Rule of law such as the Police, the Courts, the legal practitioners and the law itself are suspect in the eyes of the overwhelming majority of the people. A large section of the population never had any confidence in the security forces and security laws applicable to this country and has less confidence in them today."

The Bar Council Memorandum also critically questioned the practice, alleged to be a common one in the war zones, whereby someone killed by the "Security Forces", and in particular Koevoet, was buried, often in unmarked graves, with no inquest being held and without any attempt to contact relatives. The inference was strongly made that Koevoet could kill anyone they liked, claim the person was "terrorist", and be immune to prosecution (incidentally also collecting Koppgeld on the body). In pointed questions, the Bar Council asked:

"What are the rights of Security Forces such as Koevoet to kill and bury citizens of Ovambo, without informing the relatives, without an open enquiry or inquest and in their unfettered discretion? Can Koevoet do this to an ALLEGED TERRORIST killed in a place like Oshakati and not in the heat of battle? Is the mere say-so of members of Koevoet that a slain person was a 'terrorist' enough? Is this a practice? In which cases has this practice been followed? Where

are the graves of people so killed and buried? What has happened to prisoners, allegedly Swapo terrorists, arrested or detained by Koevoet and other units of the Security Forces?

At least two of these questions have since been answered, after a fashion. On April 16 this year, a story appeared in the Cape Times headlined *7 bodies found in SWA ditch*. According to the story, seven partly decomposed bodies had been found near Oshikuku, a Catholic Mission Station some 35 km due west of Oshakati on April 9. Brigadier Hans Dreyer, head of Koevoet, confirmed that his men had shot some of the dead men, but denied their bodies had been ditched. *"There were four bodies for which I take responsibility. The terrorists were killed by one of my teams in the Tsambi area and brought to Oshikuku for identification. After they were identified, my men were told to bury the corpses, but they must not have done a proper job. The bodies were not ditched, but only buried under shallow soil."*

An indication of the amount of faith the people of Owambo have in the Security Police and Koevoet is revealed further in the story, where it is blandly stated that *People who had had relatives detained recently by the South African Police came to the area last Thursday and Friday to identify the bodies. They could not do so as wild dogs and vultures had already started eating the corpses."*

The second partial answering of the Bar Council's questions came in March, 1984, when Rabanus Ndara, a Permanent Force section leader, appeared in the Windhoek Supreme Court on charges of murdering one of his men during an argument at a liquor store in the Kavango. He was later jailed for seven years, two years of which was suspended. While being questioned by the State Prosecutor, he stated that he knew that when he shot people in the forehead they died. He had seen people dying when shot between the eyes. What people?

"I have seen this when we have captured Swapo terrorists, and when our commanding officer says 'you must shoot them', usually we aimed like that, that was how we shot".

But it is in the endless stream of sworn statements made to attorneys and journalists that the harsh reality of life in the war zones of Namibia - and outside the war zones - emerges. It would be futile to go into the details of every one of the 40 or more available statements made recently alleging torture at the hands of either Koevoet or the Security Police. The pattern in each is the same: Detention without any official telling the family of the detainee why they are being detained, where they are being taken or for how long they will be gone. Detainees blindfolded while in transit to a secret camp, alleged to be at Osire, near the farming hamlet of Hochveld some 120 km north of Windhoek, having to at all times keep themselves blindfolded while in the presence of their captors, being beaten systematically with a flexible pipe, electric shock torture administered, being beaten on naked buttocks with a thick plank, being kept in solitary confinement without

any exercise and being made to sign statements they are not allowed to read advance.

Detainees' families

The general attitude of the families of detainees is summed up by Mrs Sabine Nestor, wife of Pastor Gideon Nestor, a Kavango minister of religion who was detained on October 19, 1983, and released two months later.

"I am scared that they will torture my husband, or even kill him, while he is in the hands of the Security Police this time. In our area, it is well known that detainees are taken to unknown camps, there they are tortured, they are assaulted and given electric shocks. I know that there are people who have died while they are under arrest. To this day I have not heard a thing from the police or any other officialdom about where my husband is being detained, why he had been detained, or even the mere fact that he has been detained. I plead for legal help for my husband, whom I love very much, and for whose life I now fear. I am scared to take up the case with the police because it is they who have taken my husband away without a word to me and his children for an indefinite period of time to an unknown place for unknown reasons."

(From Sabine Nestor and three others vs Minister of Police and nine others, Windhoek Supreme Court, 22/11/1983).

In the same court application, Mr Amos Sirongo, a boarding house father from Rupara, said he was detained on Sunday, July 31, 1983, after church. He was released on November the 10th, 1983.

"I had to travel in the back of the bakkie with a dead body . . . The white policeman, one I did not know, pushed my head down onto the face of the dead body and ordered me to kiss the corpse. The body was already old and stank . . . Eventually I was taken to a camp in a strange place somewhere in the bush . . . As the rule in the camp, I had a blanket around my head and could thus see nothing . . . At that the black man and the white interrogator began beating, I fell to the ground, I called to Jesus for help. Jesus, take my life, I believed that they would now kill me."

Adam Kabono is a teacher at Tondoro, near the Kavango border with Angola. This is an extract from a sworn statement handed in to the Supreme Court. Earlier, he had told the author that he had agreed to speak out on torture because *"Maybe then they will leave us alone, maybe then they will not touch us, the truth must come out."*

"On July 20th, 1983, I was detained by members of the Security Police . . . the third policeman, who I do not know came to me and asked me what I was doing sitting on the chair. He said I must stand up, and then attacked me with his fists. He punched me in the face and my nose began to bleed. He told me to lie down with my face on the ground, and then he began beating me on my backside with a spade . . . we then left on a long journey . . . I was warned that I would be shot dead if I tried to take off my blindfold . . . they accused me of pointing out the men of Koevoet to the terries. I denied it. They told me lie on my stomach, my backside was then thrown wet with water. They began beating me on my backside with a plank. They said that if I did not give in, they would beat me so that it really hurt. They took it in turns beating me

DISCUSSION PAPER ON ECC POLICY, OBJECTIVES AND KEY FEATURES

INTRODUCTION

This discussion paper deals with the following areas:

- ECC as a coalition of organisations
- ECC as a single issue campaign
- ECC's relationship to other fronts and coalitions
- ECC's policy on conscription
- ECC's position on other related issues
- the aims and objectives of ECC
- the relationship between ECC's work in the white and black communities
- ECC's relationship to the UDF
- ECC national structures

The paper was drawn up in May 1986, primarily for the use of Pretoria and Stellenbosch as new ECC branches. It was to be circulated to all regions for discussion and then endorsed at national conference in July as an ECC policy document.

It never got that far. It was being typed when the Emergency was imposed in June and in the first few hectic days it disappeared until recently.

It is nothing more than a discussion paper. It has not been endorsed by regions and is therefore not an ECC policy document. It was written before the State of Emergency and does not take into account the restrictions on opposing conscription.

1. THE KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF E.C.C.

The ECC was formed at the end of 1983 as a coalition, comprising a range of religious, human rights, student and womens organisations. Despite their having different political and religious perspectives, the member organisations of ECC were united around their common opposition to the system of compulsory conscription, the internal and external role of the SADF and the growing militarisation of South African society.

ECC's structure as a coalition around a single range of issues remains a key characteristic of the organisation and has an extremely important effect on its policy, action and style.

1.1 ECC as a coalition of organisations

There are several advantages to ECC taking the form of a coalition, rather than simply an organisation with individual members.

The active involvement of over 50 independent organisations in the campaign adds weight and credibility to the call to end conscription and gives ECC a broader appeal in the white community. ECC has been able to reach a greater number of people, with each member organisation offering direct access to its own membership and constituency. ECC also enjoys a measure of protection against state harassment as a coalition of independent and credible organisations. These organisations would be able to continue the campaign against conscription were ECC itself banned.

Another advantage of having different types of organisation in ECC has been that ECC members have learnt much from each other's different political experiences and values. As a result, ECC has developed a style of politics that incorporates the best of different approaches.

There are three important implications of ECC being a coalition :

1.1.1 ECC has its own distinct political character which incorporates and reflects liberal, pacifist, christian, counter-cultural and left-wing perspectives. ECC's overall character is not, and should never appear to be only one of these perspectives. This must always be borne in mind when formulating policy and planning public activities.

1.1.2 Although ECC works differently with different constituencies (eg. churches, youth culture, pupils etc), its actions and style in one constituency may have negative implications for ECC in another. Work in one area should never jeopardise work in other areas.

1.1.3 It is inevitable in a coalition that tension will occasionally arise between people who have different values and approaches to politics. It has been one of the most exciting aspects of ECC's development that such tensions have been resolved constructively and that ECC activists have developed a tolerance and respect for views different from their own.

At the same time that ECC is a coalition of organisations, it is also an organisation in its own right with individual members. These individuals are involved in ECC sub-committees - like churches, schools, media, culture and campus - and are primarily responsible for ECC's internal workings and public activity. Both aspects of ECC's structure - as a coalition and as an organisation - are equally important and need to be maintained and strengthened.

1.2 ECC as a single issue campaign

The ECC was formed to oppose compulsory conscription, the internal and external role of the SADF and the growing militarisation of South African society. It is around these issues that ECC's member organisations have united, whatever their differences on other issues. In this sense, ECC is a 'single issue campaign'.

ECC being a 'single issue campaign' has several advantages: it lays the basis for unity among the member organisations; it provides a sustained and concentrated focus on the issue of conscription that is of paramount concern to so many white people; it gives ECC a clear, identifiable image that remains constant over time; it maximises pressure on the government to end conscription.

The most important implication of being a 'single issue campaign' is that the ECC has policy only on a single range of issues ie. conscription, militarisation and the role of the SADF. This policy is laid down in the ECC Declaration and in the ECC's submission to the Geldenhuys Committee. The ECC does not have policy on issues unrelated to the military eg. the tricameral parliament, disinvestment and the New Zealand rugby tour.

Certain qualifications must be made to these general statements however.

1.2.1 ECC's opposition to conscription is always explained in terms of the role of the SADF and situated in the broader context of apartheid. This has involved developing an analysis of the nature of conflict in our country and of the reasons for conflict.

Within ECC there is general agreement on such an analysis, since all the individual and organisational members of ECC have a principled opposition to apartheid.

They believe that the denial of basic human rights to the majority of South Africans and the unequal distribution of land and wealth are the root causes of violence. The use of force against those resisting injustice and inequality is no solution to SA's political problems but only contributes to the ongoing cycle of violence.

1.2.2 ECC speakers and publications frequently present an analysis of situations in which the SADF has played a role eg. Crossroads, the schools crisis, the strike at Baragwanath Hospital.

1.2.3 The ECC Declaration calls not only for an end to conscription, but also for a 'just peace in our land'. Although ECC has no fixed policy on what is meant by a 'just peace', there is general agreement that genuine peace can exist only in a just, democratic and non-racial society.

The preconditions for peace include the complete dismantling of apartheid, the unbanning of banned organisations, the release of all political prisoners and the repeal of all security legislation.

Some member organisations have also demanded the disarming of the security forces in their role in defending apartheid.

1.2.4 Although the ECC has no policy on non-military related issues, its member organisations obviously do. They are free to present their opinions when speaking on ECC platforms.

1.2.5 In certain situations, ECC will be confronted with a problem that requires a decision involving considerations that are not military related eg. should ECC accept an invitation to appear on SATV? ECC's decision in such cases will depend on the feelings of its member organisations and sub-committees in a region. If the outcome of the decision has national implications for ECC, it can only be made after consultation with all the ECC branches.

1.3 ECC's relationship to other fronts and coalitions

The ECC has been invited to become formally involved in other fronts or coalitions, such as the UDF and the Concerned Citizens Movement which operated in Johannesburg during 1985.

As a general rule, the ECC cannot do this. The ECC is itself a coalition of organisations which have come together around a clearly defined single range of issues. Participation in a broader front could threaten the unity within ECC and would dilute its single issue character.

However, the ECC has in the past participated in short-term coalitions around a particular issue which has a direct bearing on ECC's single range of issues. An example of this would be ECC's participation in an adhoc committee against the Public Safety Bill, which affects the powers that troops will have inside the country.

ECC relationship to the UDF will be considered in more detail later.

2. ECC POLICY

ECC policy is laid down in the ECC Declaration and in the evidence it submitted to the Geldenhuys Committee in 1985. Both documents were discussed at length and ratified by the ECC branches at the time.

What follows is a summary version of ECC policy.

2.1 The call to end conscription

The call to end conscription is based on the fundamental belief that individuals should be free to choose whether to participate in the SADF or not. This belief is founded on international principles which recognise the right of freedom of conscience with respect to the taking up of arms and the taking of life.

The question of the individual's right to choose is a burning one in South Africa because of the role played by the SADF inside and outside the country.

Inside SA, the SADF plays an important role in formulating government policy at state decision-making levels, especially through its participation in the State Security Council.

The SADF maintains apartheid more directly when it assists in the arrest of black people on pass law and influx control offences, or in the forced removal of people.

Since October 1985, the SADF has been extensively deployed throughout the country. In 1985, over 35000 troops were used in over 95 townships. In their efforts to quell the growing revolt from black communities, soldiers and police have used force to injure and kill township residents. As a result of their actions, township residents are demanding the immediate withdrawal of the troops and a rapidly growing number of conscripts are indicating their opposition to being forced to take sides against fellow South Africans in a civil conflict.

Conscription and militarisation have also raised the level of violence in civil society. Military service has a brutalising psychological affect on soldiers, which affects their ability to relate to other people and to cope with life outside the army.

Outside SA, the SADF helps to maintain South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia and stands accused of terrorising the Namibian people.

In other Southern African countries, the SADF has played an aggressive role and is an obstacle to peace. It has frequently violated the sovereignty of independent neighbouring states through cross border raids, full scale invasions, acts of sabotage, the occupation of southern Angola, the blockade of Lesotho, and support for rebel movements attempting to overthrow established governments.

Because of the internal and external role of the army, a growing number of conscripts are experiencing a profound moral dilemma at being forced to serve in the SADF. The ECC believes that they should have the right to choose not to serve.

2.2 ECC's interim demands

ECC believes that while conscription remains and while the SADF remains in the townships, certain changes in the law ought to be made to accommodate the dilemma currently being experienced by many conscripts.

- 2.2.1 The ECC believes that the category of conscientious objectors legally entitled to alternative service should be broadened. Alternative service should not be limited to religious pacifists, but should be available to all conscripts with religious, moral or political objections to serving in the SADF.
- 2.2.2 The length of alternative service should be equal to the length of military service and not one and a half times its length in time. The current situation is punitive and effectively punishes the objector for his beliefs.
- 2.2.3 The ECC believes that alternative service should not be limited to working for a state, government or municipal authority, but should also be available in registered welfare and religious bodies independent of government control.
- 2.2.4 The ECC believes that soldiers should have the right, on grounds of conscience, to choose not to be used in Namibia, a neighbouring country or South Africa's townships.

A fuller motivation for these interim demands can be found in the media produced during ECC's Working for a Just Peace campaign. The campaign focussed on the limitations of, and alternatives to the existing legislation on conscientious objection.

A comprehensive description of this legislation and of the working of the Board for Religious Objection can be found in the South African Council of Churches' counselling manual on conscientious objection.

2.3 The call for troops to be withdrawn from the townships

Since October 1984 the ECC has placed great emphasis on its call for the immediate withdrawal of troops from SA's townships.

For many conscripts it is unacceptable to be forced to take up arms in a civil conflict where the so-called enemy is not a foreign external aggressor but ordinary South African people. The growing resistance in the townships is the result of the suffering and oppression they experience under apartheid. It is not the result of 'agitators and criminals' as the government claims.

The use of military force to solve the political problems of apartheid has never, and can never lead to peace. The only way in which to end the escalating cycle of violence is to remove its root cause - the system of apartheid.

Not only is the SADF in the townships no solution, it is in fact exacerbating the situation and raising the level of violence. The troops are playing an aggressive and provocative role and there have been many accounts of their using excessive force and committing atrocities. Far from regarding the security forces as their protectors, township residents are increasingly having to protect themselves from the police and army.

A more detailed description of the role of the SADF in the townships, including testimonies and affidavits from soldiers and township residents, can be found in the evidence presented by ECC to the United Nations in April 1986.

3. ECC'S POSITION ON OTHER RELATED ISSUES

In addition to having policy on the above three areas, the ECC has also developed a position on a number of other related issues. On some of these issues ECC has clear policy. On others, ECC's position reflects the range of opinion that exists within the coalition.

National Conference in July^{'86} will provide ECC members with an opportunity to discuss, clarify and if necessary change these positions.

3.1 The establishment of a volunteer army

The ECC does not explicitly call for the establishment of a volunteer army, although this would be the logical consequence of ending the system of conscription. The reason for this is that ECC members and member organisations oppose conscription because of the role currently being played by the SADF. They would therefore also oppose this role being played by a volunteer army.

The ECC would however regard the establishment of a volunteer army as preferable to the existing system of conscription. A volunteer army would respect the right of young men to choose whether or not to serve in the SADF.

3.2 The attitude of ECC to the individual soldier

The ECC is opposed to conscription and not the conscript. It has consistently stated that it does not see the individual soldier as 'the enemy'. Soldiers who are unhappy about being in the army should see the ECC as representing their feelings and interests, and not as being critical of them.

The ECC regards this position as being of the utmost importance. It should come across clearly in ECC media and speeches.

At the same time it must be noted that township residents generally do not adopt the same sensitive approach to the troops, but regard all soldiers as their enemy. This is due partly to the provocative presence of the SADF in the townships and partly to the atrocities committed by many of the soldiers.

The implication of this is not that ECC should change its approach, but rather that it's calls for an end to conscription and for the withdrawal of troops from the townships should become more urgent.

3.3 Membershp of ECC and participation in the SADF

ECC has no problem with serving soldiers and those who have already done their military service supporting or getting actively involved in ECC. The ECC has also long recognised the need to provide a forum in which men who have served in the SADF can feel comfortable talking about their experiences.

3.4 ECC's general attitude to participation in the SADF

The ECC has repeatedly made it clear that it is not attempting to encourage conscripts to refuse or fail to render military service. The ECC is attempting to get the government to change the law, and not to get conscripts to break the law.

To do otherwise would be a clear contravention of Section 121(c) of the Defence Act. It would also amount to ECC telling conscripts to go to jail or leave the country.

There is no problem with ECC encouraging conscripts who would qualify as religious objectors to apply to the Board for Religious Objection for alternative service.

3.5 On whether South Africa should have an army

ECC's policy is that it is opposed to conscription into the SADF because of the role that the army plays inside and outside the country. ECC does not have policy that SA should not have or does not need an army.

Many members of the ECC would not oppose a South African army playing the legitimate role of a defence force ie. defending the country as a whole and protecting the interests of the majority of citizens against an external aggressor.

3.6 The attitude of ECC to participation in violence and war

There are pacifists within the ECC who have a principled opposition to participating in any war. Other members of ECC would be prepared to participate in a war they believed to be just eg. the war against Nazi Germany or the defence of a just and democratic SA.

As a campaigning organisation the ECC is engaged in lawful and non-violent activity. The strategy and actions of the ECC are non-violent in principle.

3.7 ECC as an anti-apartheid organisation

In the Afrikaans community especially, ECC has sometimes been confronted by the following argument: "You surely cannot believe that you will ever end conscription. You must have a hidden agenda. Are you not really anti-apartheid rather than anti-conscription?"

The ECC has never hidden its opposition to apartheid. Without exception, the individual members and member organisations of ECC are absolutely opposed to apartheid. In its work around a single range of issues, the ECC sees itself as part of a broader movement against apartheid and as making a contribution towards the eventual ending of apartheid.

4. THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF ECC

The primary objective of the ECC is to work towards the ending of conscription and, until that happens, to broaden the law regarding conscientious objection. Since October 1984, the ECC has also been working for the withdrawal of troops from the townships and, while they remain, for the right of soldiers to refuse to go into the townships.

In the course of working towards these objectives, the ECC also has secondary aims which include :

- * working in different constituencies (eg. church, schools and campus) and at a mass public level to raise awareness of the role of the SADF;
- * raising public awareness of the negative effects of the growing militarisation of SA society, and attempting to counter these effects. Examples of such effects include the militarisation of education and culture, the growing financial cost of the army and the occupation of Namibia, and the psychological effects of militarisation on the individual soldier and on society as a whole,
- * building unity amongst different people and organisations opposed to apartheid, around a single range of issues (conscription, role of the SADF and militarisation);
- * involving as many people as possible in ECC structures;
- * winning support from prominent individuals in the white community for ECC and the call to end conscription;
- * building non-racialism. For progressive white organisations generally, this means: getting as many white people as possible to oppose apartheid and work for peace and justice; bringing white people closer to an understanding of the grievances of the majority of South Africans and to supporting their aspirations and demands; and involving black and white people in common projects. For ECC specifically these tasks are centred around building support for the call to end conscription.

5. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECC'S WORK IN THE WHITE AND BLACK COMMUNITIES, AND WITH THE UDF

5.1 The relationship between ECC's work in the white and black communities

The ECC is essentially a 'white' organisation in its composition and is based primarily in the white community. Consequently, the ECC will consider a particular course of action, plan campaigns and make decisions primarily on the basis of the effects on the white constituency it is trying to reach.

The first reason for this is that ECC's central issue - conscription - is of immediate and major concern only in the white community. (This would of course change if conscription were extended to 'coloured' and Indian youth.) The second reason lies in the fact that apartheid has been successful in dividing people along racial lines. As a result, black and white anti-apartheid organisations generally work differently and to an extent separately in different communities. They may have the same long-term goals, but their immediate priorities, tasks, political style and forms of action are quite different.

At the same time, like other organisations committed to non-racialism, the ECC is attempting to break down the polarisation that exists between black and white people. ECC's work in the white community is making an important contribution towards countering the anti-white tendency developing amongst township residents as a result of the actions of the security forces. The recent ECC Working for a Just Peace campaign is possibly the best example of this. There are many other regional examples.

Furthermore, because the ECC is part of a broader struggle, it regularly consults black community leaders both for their impressions of ECC and also when making decisions which may affect the way ECC is seen in the black community.

4.2 ECC's relationship to the UDF

The ECC is not affiliated to the UDF and is consequently not bound by UDF policy. The reasons for this relate directly to ECC being a coalition around a single range of issues. In the coalition, ECC has some member organisations that are affiliated to the UDF but others that would not be prepared to be formally part of UDF. These organisations have united in ECC around a single range of issues. They do not necessarily share a common position on the many other issues that UDF takes up.

The ECC nevertheless has a good working relationship with the UDF and its affiliates. UDF members speak regularly on ECC platforms, and ECC has spoken at rallies and funerals in the black communities. The ECC and UDF have engaged in joint projects and in all the regions the ECC executive maintains regular contact with the UDF executive.

The ECC does not have policy that its work with black organisations should be limited to UDF and its affiliates. It has often engaged in activities with black trade unions and other organisations.

6. ECC NATIONAL STRUCTURES AND DECISION-MAKING

6.1 National Conference

National conference is the national decision-making forum of ECC. It is designed to facilitate the planning and assessment of national campaigns and activities, and the making of national decisions. Conference also provides ECC members with an excellent opportunity to develop a feel for the national character of the campaign and to learn from the strategies and actions of branches and sub-committees in other regions.

Conference is open to everyone working in ECC and normally meets twice a year. The last conference was held in Natal in January 1986 ; the minutes of this conference are available from the ECC national office.

6.2 National Committee

The ECC National Committee meets about six times a year. It has no decision-making powers. Its function is to facilitate national co-ordination, to provide regions with an update on each other's activities, and to make suggestions to regional general bodies on issues that require national decisions.

The national committee includes : two representatives from each region; the national secretary and national Organiser ; the regional worker if there is one in the region where national committee is meeting; and the national campus co-ordinator if one is elected.

6.3 National workers

ECC has full-time national workers: the National Secretary who staffs the ECC national office in Johannesburg, co-ordinates national decisions, keeps regions informed of each other's activities on an ongoing basis, maintains contact with overseas organisations supportive of ECC and serves as the ECC national press officer; and the National Organiser whose role is to set up new ECC branches, assist in the organisational development of existing branches, and help with national co-ordination between the branches.

The National Secretary is currently Alistair Teeling-Smith, and the National Organisers Gary Cullen + Clare Verbeek.

Early war resistance

As pressure on the government grew in the 1960's and 1970's, with mass uprisings in 1960 and 1976, the intensification of armed struggle by SWAPO and the ANC, and the liberation of Angola and Mozambique, the SADF began playing an increasingly central role in the management of conflict.

Its operations included the occupation of Namibia, the destabilisation of neighbouring countries, and the policing of apartheid laws. Between 1960 and 1983, a relatively obsolete army became a technologically sophisticated institution, and military expenditure rose from 6% of government spending to approximately 20%. The SADF's standing operational force increased from 11 500 soldiers to 180 000, and its total available manpower grew from 78 000 to half a million.

Compulsory military service for white men was introduced in 1967, and gradually extended to the current two years continuous service plus 720 days of 'camps' spread over 12 years, and a further 12 days per year up to the age of 55.

From 1978, the SADF became a key participant in both military and non-military state policy formation through its membership of the State Security Council. Its rise to power reflected its desire to develop 'militarily defensible policies' and a 'total strategy' that co-ordinated the state's response to a situation of 'total war'.

The earliest incidents of war resistance involved Jehovahs Witness and other 'peace church' members refusing to do military service on the grounds of a principled opposition to fighting in any war. Their stand was strictly apolitical and they shunned publicity around their imprisonment in army detention barracks.

The first public and explicitly political opposition to participation in the SADF was expressed at the South African Council of Church's Conference in 1974. In the context of a broader debate around the church "doing something practical to change the status quo", the Conference stated that the army was defending "a fundamentally unjust society", and urged its members "to consider becoming conscientious objectors".

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Conservative and even liberal sectors of the white community condemned the resolution as "criminal", "defeatist" and "a threat to national security". The government's response indicated how seriously it viewed opposition to military service. It amended the Defence Act, making it an offence, punishable by a maximum ~~of~~ fine of R6000 or 6 years imprisonment, to encourage or assist anyone to refuse or fail to render military service (Section 121(c)).

The amendment inhibited public support for the SACC stand, but the 1976 Soweto uprising and the doubling of the length of military service the following year heightened war resistance. Between 1975 and 1978 an estimated 5 900 conscripts either went into exile or evaded the authorities while remaining in SA.

At a public level, resistance took the form of high profile campaigning around the 9 conscientious objectors that between 1979 and 1983 had been imprisoned. The objectors argued from various philosophical perspectives, but all opposed the SADF's role "in defending the violence of apartheid" against people "who are generally not foreigners but SA citizens." Their objection challenged other conscripts to consider seriously their own positions, and led to the formation of the Conscientious Objector Support Group (COSGS) in 1980.

In 1983 the government reacted to the mounting pressure by amending the Defence Act, broadening the category of conscientious objectors to include religious pacifists outside the 'peace churches'. *If their bona fides were accepted by a Board for Religious Objection, they could apply for non-combatant status in the SADF or community service in a government department. The amendment increased the jail sentence to a maximum of six years for other objectors.*

The government had made an important concession by introducing the option of community service, but its intentions were to co-opt the churches, divide the war resistance movement and make the cost of political objection prohibitive. The results were quite the reverse. The churches reiterated their belief that all objectors should be recognised, and some denominations

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refused to be represented on the Board. Military advice bureau were formed around the country under Cosg's auspices, and the emerging war resistance movement reassessed its direction.

The positive response to the objectors from the English churches and universities showed the potential to advance the movement in a more effective and far-reaching way, but the increased jail sentence meant it could no longer depend on individual objectors. The movement required a co-ordinated campaign with a clear focus and independent programme of action.

The inspiration for the focus came from the 1983 Black Sash conference which demanded that the government "abolish all conscription for military service". At the fourth annual Cosg conference in Durban later that year, delegates decided to launch a national campaign against conscription.

CONSCRIPTION AND THE WHITE COMMUNITY

Conscription is one aspect of apartheid that is a real imposition on the white community. Two years of military discipline and authority are for many young men a 'complete waste of time' at best, and at worst a psychologically disturbing experience. Behavioural scientists have found that violence, drunkenness and sexual frustration in returning national servicemen are "inevitable consequences of the intensifying border war". Case studies of soldiers who have done township duty reveal similar aggressive and violent tendencies, and an "acute sense of alienation and meaninglessness". After their initial service, many soldiers have difficulty adjusting to civilian life and finding employment. They still have to do two years of annual 30 and 90 day army camps, whatever the consequences for their jobs and families.

The permanent use of the army in the townships 'politicised' military service and heightened the moral dilemma of liberal conscripts. The arena of conflict was not just 'far away' in Namibia against Swapo guerillas and 'the Cubans'; it was now close and easy to understand, and 'the enemy' were ordinary black South Africans. In the experience of ECC and the military advice bureau, an increasing proportion of young people opposed to apartheid now automatically oppose conscription.

This opposition developed in a period of increased political consciousness and acceptance of extra-parliamentary struggle. The white community had united behind the 'new constitution' in 1983, but was deeply polarised by the growth of popular organisations, mass resistance and state repression over the next three years. The PFP, English business and the church took relatively more radical positions, and white democratic organisations experienced greater legitimacy. Within the liberal white community many people were filled with despair about the future, but others were motivated to get involved in anti-apartheid work. These tendencies were evident around the issue of conscription, with more conscripts emigrating, and more supporting and joining ECC.

It is difficult to measure accurately the extent of war resistance. In 1981 it was sufficiently serious to warrant the formation of the SA Army Non-Effective Troops Section to locate men who attempt to evade service by means of subterfuge. Before October 1984 an average of 1500 men failed to report for duty at each call-up. In the first call-up after troops were used in townships, this number rose by 500%

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according to figures released by the Minister of Defence⁸. The SADF subsequently claimed that the figure was "incorrect", and the Minister has refused to release the figures for subsequent call ups. Court cases and sources within the SADF indicate that attendance at army camps is generally between 40% and 60%.

Other statistics confirm this trend. From 1984 to 1985, almost 1000 conscripts applied to the Board for Religious Objection.¹⁰ When the SA Citizenship Amendment Act was passed in 1984, 600 immigrants refused SA citizenship to avoid military service¹¹. There are currently an estimated 7000 SA war resisters in Europe and the United States.¹²

Military service is projected by the government and SADF as the conscript's 'patriotic duty', but the fact remains that it is compulsory and not voluntary. The psychological, material and moral problems associated with it ^{have} caused widespread dissatisfaction amongst conscripts and their families, and laid the basis for ECC's development as a mass movement.

THE CHARACTER OF THE CAMPAIGN TO END CONSCRIPTION

ECC's success was due to its developing a political style that captured the breadth of opposition to conscription. Its public activities and constituency work, and its structure as a coalition around a single range of issues, contributed to the character and growth of the campaign.

The primary objective was to put pressure on the government from within the white community to end conscription. In the course of doing this, ECC aimed to raise awareness and build opposition to the process of militarisation and the SADF's role in defending apartheid. A further aim was to involve as many people as possible in its subcommittees. By mobilising, educating and organising around military issues in the community from which ^{the} soldiers are drawn, ECC hoped to contribute to the broader struggle against apartheid and build non-racialism.

ECC's role was clear from these objectives. It existed to campaign in the white community, and it did this with a high level of energy and creativity. Traditional political events such as public meetings and seminars were complemented by innovative 'creative actions' like fun runs, fairs and building sand castles. Cultural projects included concerts, cabarets, film festivals and art exhibitions, and tens of thousands of stickers, badges and t-shirts were produced.

These activities contributed to the development of an anti-war culture and consciousness in the white community. They broadened ECC's appeal and put across its message in ways appropriate to different groups of people. A sensitivity to the differences between various constituencies characterised ECC work. School, student, church and cultural subcommittees consolidated ECC's general activities by working systematically in these areas.

The national campaigns centered around activities that had mass appeal in the white community. During the Troops Out Campaign in 1985, several conscientious objectors fasted for three weeks. In Cape Town, over 2000 people signed the visitors book in St George's Cathedral where Dr Ivan Thoms was fasting, and 4000 attended the final rally in the City Hall. In all the centres there was a high level of public participation in the 24 hour 'peace fast' that concluded the campaign. For the first time, Jewish, Hindu and Muslim groups were involved in war resistance, and christian involvement went beyond church hierarchies and activists to include ministers and congregations.

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The Working for a Just Peace Campaign in ~~April~~ 1986 involved about 600 ECC members and supporters working for a month in black areas on community projects that demonstrated constructive alternatives to military service. Over 6000 people attended the mass meetings at the end of the campaign.

New ECC branches in Pretoria and at Stellenbosch University in 1985 transformed the war resistance movement's predominantly English character. ECC wanted to go beyond having two Afrikaans branches, and develop a bilingual campaign. It took on an Afrikaans name, Aksie teen Konskripsie, and distributed Afrikaans pamphlets in all the centres. The process was hampered however by the Stellenbosch branch being banned on campus by the University authorities within a month of its formation, and by anti-ECC propaganda distributed widely in Afrikaans speaking areas.

ECC's character was shaped in a crucial way by its structure as a coalition of church, student, womens and human rights organisations. The coalition reflected the unity and diversity of a war resistance movement made up of different political and theological perspectives - liberal and radical, religious and secular, and pacifist and just war. Over 50 organisations were involved in the campaign, taking it to their constituencies and adding weight and credibility to the call to end conscription. The coalition functioned smoothly because no one perspective or organisation attempted to assert its ~~control~~ over the campaign, and because of the organisational emphasis on democracy and accountable leadership.

The coalition's unity was based on an opposition to militarisation, conscription and the SADF's internal and external role. As a 'single issue campaign', ECC's policy and focus did not extend to other aspects of apartheid.

THE CONTENT OF ECC'S CAMPAIGNS

ECC's opposition to conscription was the central theme of its public work. As its reading of the changing situation in South Africa developed, new arguments and themes were introduced.

ECC explained its opposition to compulsory military service in early pamphlets: conscription is used to implement and defend apartheid policies, as well as maintain South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia and destabilize neighbouring states; it increases the financial costs of the war, and conditions people to accept the process of militarisation; and it violates the internationally recognised right of freedom of conscience in relation to military service.

The ECC Declaration, launched in October 1984, summarised these arguments against conscription and called for "a just peace in our land". In motivating the call, ECC contrasted "the government's notion of securing peace by preparing for war" with its own belief in "achieving peace through justice". Although there was no policy on exactly what was meant by 'a just peace', ECC speakers generally demanded as necessary preconditions the dismantling of apartheid and security legislation, the unbanning of organisations, and the release of detainees and political prisoners.

The 'peace' sub-theme was an important reason for ECC's appeal. It balanced the protest and criticism, and offered a positive vision to a community increasingly frightened about the future.

The Declaration launch : ~~in October 1984~~ coincided with the start of widespread and on-going troop deployment in black areas. This development became the key factor in ECC's opposition to conscription, and the call for the immediate withdrawal of troops became a central theme of its activities

ECC argued that the escalating cycle of violence would only end by removing the root cause, apartheid. The use of the army raised the level of violence and was strongly opposed by township residents. These arguments were backed up in ECC literature by descriptions of troop actions from residents and occasionally soldiers.¹³

ECC's aims in building white support for the withdrawal of troops were to increase pressure on the government, and stand in solidarity with black communities increasingly hostile to whites as a result of Security Force behaviour.

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The ongoing focus on the SADF's internal role culminated in the Troops Out Campaign. The campaign reflected a new awareness in ECC's attitude to soldiers, demanding that troops should have the right to refuse deployment in a township. ECC had realised that in some of its media and arguments for the withdrawal of troops, it portrayed the individual soldier as 'the enemy'. This was completely insensitive to the dilemma of conscripts who opposed conscription and township duty, but for whom the alternatives of jail or exile were unrealistic options. ECC therefore attempted to project itself clearly "as opposing conscription, not conscripts". It was "with and on behalf of conscripts" that the campaign was conducted. This was a significant shift from the early war resistance movement's approach of urging conscripts to conscientiously object.

ECC's concern for the rights of conscripts was also expressed in its "interim demands" for the broadening of community service while conscription remained. It proposed to the Geldenhuys Committee that the 1983 Defence Amendment Act be amended, making community service:

- available to "all who in good conscience cannot serve in the SADF", and not limited to religious pacifists;
- the same length as military service rather than one and a half times as long; and
- available in religious and welfare organisations and not confined to government departments.

The Working for a Just Peace campaign aimed to illustrate these demands in a symbolic but practical way. The campaign demonstrated that "there are constructive alternatives to military service", and that "real national service" involved volunteers entering townships "with tools and not guns", after thorough consultation with the community. The notion of "working for a just peace" in a period of intensifying conflict, and between two States of Emergency, was overwhelmingly supported by large sections of the white community.

The State of Emergency in June 1986 substantially affected ECC's focus on conscription. The Emergency Regulations prohibited making "subversive statements" that "undermine or discredit the system of compulsory military service".

ECC became defensive for the first time, campaigning for "the right to speak" and for the release of ECC detainees. Other campaigns focussed on broader issues of militarisation. Parents were encouraged to buy

their children Christmas toys "for peace and not war", and the War Is No Solution Campaign raised questions about "the physical, economic and psychological costs of the war".

State and right wing response to ECC

Whereas war resistance is seen by many European governments as apolitical, the SA government has historically branded it 'subversive' and reacted with punitive legislation. Hundreds of Jehovah Witnesses were imprisoned from the late 1960s, and political opposition to military service was dealt heavy blows by Defence Act amendments in 1974 and 1983. SA's position on conscientious objection is amongst the harshest in the world.

ECC's growth was matched by the development of a relatively sophisticated and increasingly well-co-ordinated smear campaigns. SADF and government representatives repeatedly accused it of breaking the law, being linked to banned organisations, and assisting 'terrorism'. Right wing groups and conservative newspapers regularly 'exposed ECC's hidden agenda', and soldiers were lectured on it during basic training.

In an effort to counter the propaganda, ECC complained to the Media Council about libellous allegations made by Rapport and the ultra right wing Aida Parker Newsletter. The Council found in ECC's favour on both occasions, but the cumulative effect of the smears was very damaging.

The propaganda aimed to undermine and criminalise ECC, thereby legitimising direct repression against the organisation. The repression generally co-incided with high profile activity, beginning with the detention of four ECC members during the Troops Out Campaign. Over the following months, activists were assaulted, their vehicles were tampered with and their houses were raided. Publications and meetings were banned, and in some regions, Departments of Education barred ECC from white schools.

The repression peaked under the State of Emergency in mid-1986, with over 60 ECC members detained and over 90 homes raided. The police action and legislative restrictions were so severe in the first month of the Emergency, that ECC initially

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appeared to have effectively been banned. Although the organisation continued campaigning, a further crackdown in December made clear that the government would attempt to prevent ECC from working publicly again.

The intensity of state action against ECC is due, within a broader climate of repression, to the SADF's central role in safeguarding minority rule at both a physical and ideological level.

The SADF became indispensable in the maintenance and defence of apartheid from the late 1970's. Between 1983 and 1984, 43 000 soldiers were used in 'ordinary police work'. In 1985, as black resistance entered a new phase that seriously threatened the government's civil control of black areas, 35 000 troops were deployed in over 95 townships.¹⁵ The 1986 Defence White Paper stated that conscription, which provides about 70% of the SADF's manpower, is absolutely necessary for the army to play this role.

In this context, the government perceives opposition to conscription and the SADF as a threat to 'the nation's' physical capacity to survive, and automatically equates ECC with 'the enemy'. According to the Minister of Law and Order, ECC is one of South Africa's "four main enemies", along with the UDF, ANC and SA Communist Party.

In a fundamental way war resistance threatens state ideology. With the military's rise to power, 'total strategy' became official state policy. It is based on the belief that SA faces a 'total onslaught' that requires a 'total response' from all areas of society and every citizen. The response is broadly political rather than purely military, and places as high a premium on psychological and ideological struggle as ^{on} the physical dimensions of the conflict. The key task is to build morale and cohesion behind the state, and weaken that of the enemy.

The state has attempted to unite the white community through the military doctrine of 'national security': conflict is reduced to a struggle against 'communism', and the use of force is presented as the appropriate response; the SADF is projected as a

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unifying symbol, and military values of obedience and discipline are inculcated in civil society.

The very existence of the war resistance movement challenges these notions and casts doubt on the state's interpretation of society and conflict. ECC is perceived as attempting to weaken the social cohesion of the white community, and undermine its will to 'defend the country'. In doing this from within the ruling group, ECC is seen by many white people "not just as the enemy, but as traitors", as a Stellenbosch student leader once put it.

The future of ECC and war resistance

Under the current State of Emergency, the intensity of state repression of black resistance is unlike anything experienced in South Africa. White extra-parliamentary organisations are relatively protected, but it is uncertain to what extent they will be able to campaign again. On-going police harassment and the Emergency restrictions on opposing conscription make ECC's future particularly precarious.

However, ECC is determined "not to ban itself". At its year-end assessment, it felt strongly that "democratic organisations have to challenge the government's ability and right to outlaw peaceful opposition". It will attempt to continue raising public awareness around military issues, and develop "lower profile and therefore less risky ways of reaching people". It will also concentrate on the organisational issues that became priorities under the Emergency: tight security arrangements without sacrificing democratic practises, a high level of morale and cohesion in the organisation, and support structures for ECC members in hiding or detention.

State harassment of ECC may inhibit public opposition to conscription, but it cannot solve the crisis of war resistance. ECC has given the resistance expression and direction, but has not caused it. It is due to the material sacrifices of four years compulsory military service and, increasingly, to a moral abhorrence of the army's role in defending apartheid. Until the government accepts the inevitability of fundamental change, the struggle will intensify and greater demands will be placed on the white community. As the physical, economic and psychological costs of the civil war rise, so will white resistance to it.

In 1974 Dr Beyers Naude commented on the likely effects of Section 121(c) of the Defence Act. His statement accurately forecasts the future of the war resistance movement under more serious attack in 1987:

"The drastic penalties ... will certainly

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act as a deterrent to individuals who have basic objections to military service to express their true feelings... But it does in no way resolve the crisis of conscience facing many young people who are utterly opposed to the unjust system which is ours, and who are called on to defend this system by force of arms." ¹⁵

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