

END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN, JOHANNESBURG ANNUAL REPORT, 1985.

This report is drawn from a series of assessments of our activities over the past year. Looking back over 1985, we were encouraged to be able to identify so many areas in which we had learned from previous experience, developed more appropriate strategies and had seen the concrete results of this growth.

A. Our Successes and Weaknesses.

i) Successes

Six areas of significant progress stand out together these have led to the development of an ECC which is vibrant, exciting and on the brink of being self - generating.

(a) Our Increasing Public Profile.

This has been achieved through a progressively more concerted press strategy, especially through the Troops Out Campaign and the Festival.

Although there is much still to be done in terms of publicity (and not only press publicity), ECC increased it's public profile to the extent that we are reasonably well known in the constituencies with whom we work. Both the international and local press continue to seek comment from ECC on various issues.

(b) Growth of Self-confidence as an ECC Region.

This is related to the successes of the Festival and the Troops Out Campaign (which happened at a difficult time in terms of the effect of the State of Emergency in Johannesburg). We have developed into an inspired group, characterised by support for each other, cohesion, lack of political cliquishness and a general sense of enjoyment in our work.

(c) Development of a sense of National Pride for ECC.

We have seen the power of national action, and are pleased to be developing national solidarity.

It is exciting/

It is exciting to see our development from a "Cape - Town - Conscious" region, to one which is uplifted by and proud of the achievements of other ECC regions.

(d) Our Creative Energy.

Our successes have been related fundamentally to the nature of our campaigns. The Festival was a highlight which put ECC on the map in Johannesburg. The Troops Out Campaign drew many new people into involvement. We are pleased that our actions have inspired or generated further campaigns, such as the Moroko Action, and anti-military graffiti. We are now moving towards a more outgoing and active approach to our work.

(e) Development of Efficient Structures.

This is the most obviously dynamic area of our development. We realised the importance of creating structures according to our needs and organisational strengths. We are developing appropriately democratic methods of working, particularly since the State of Emergency.

(f) Our Campaigns.

We feel that issue-based, politically appropriate activities such as the Troops Out Campaign are important, though general education around militarisation must continue. We have broadened our understanding of what can be done in a campaign, and our creativity is continually expanding.

Different methods were used to organise the two major events of '85. For the Festival, ideas were generated from a small working group, who found difficulty in involving others fully in conceptualising the Festival. For the Troops Out Campaign, conceptualisation and decision-making as well as action happened from the General Body.

The second method of running a campaign proved more satisfactory.

ii) Our Weaknesses.

Our major problem this year has been in the lack of successful follow-up and integration into ECC of those who express interest in ECC, especially in Campaigns.

We do not have carefully enough strategised plans for particular constituencies, and we do not always have sufficient understanding of these constituencies.

Our other major problem is that we are not always action-oriented, and although we have spurts of creativity, we often let opportunities for action, politicisation and publicity slip by.

B. ECC Internally.

i) Structures.

At the beginning of the year we set up sub-committees which never really functioned and were suspended by June. These committees fell apart largely because the "front" vs "organisation" debate was unresolved and only organisational reps were in the sub-committees. Insufficient co-ordination and inadequate definition of role also contributed to their downfall.

The Festival and the Emergency helped us to develop a sense of doing things well. With growing self-confidence and the new people coming in from the Troops Out Campaign, it was possible to set up sub-committees again.

There may still be some co-ordination problems with the sub-committees, but we feel they are the best forum for getting people working, learning and involved.

There have been positive changes in the role the executive plays. Initially the exec. was responsible for co-ordination, political discussion and national contact. There is now greater awareness that this should happen in the general body and the exec. plays a largely co-ordinating and facilitating role.

ii) The Impact of ECC/

ii) The Impact of ECC on Affiliates : Our Nature as a Front.

During the course of the year we gained three new affiliates; the Organisation for Appropriate Social Scientists of South Africa (OASSSA), the Young Progressives (Southern Transvaal) and a newly-formed Wits ECC group.

All our affiliates have tried to raise issues of the military and militarisation with their membership, but it is difficult to assess whether this interest was stimulated by their involvement in ECC or by the issues themselves. Reps to ECC are generally working more as individuals than taking back a programme to their organisations. During the Festival, and more successfully in the Troops Out Campaign. We tried to involve affiliates in taking responsibility for different aspects of the programme.

A monthly Affiliate Newsletter and a series of meeting with affiliate executives and ECC reps are planned to improve this situation.

iii) Composition of ECC.

We now have about 30 people regularly involved in General Body meetings. They come from a range of backgrounds and age-groups. Approximately two thirds of these members are representatives from affiliates. Others are involved in sub-committees, but do not come to General Meetings. There is also a broader grouping who help with particular activities and campaigns.

iv) Internal Education.

We tried to have discussions on the role of the SADF at General meetings, but have not been able to do this systematically. We are now planning regular information evenings for internal and external education. The involvement of our members in discussion around issues such as PFP affiliation, the TV debate, and structures helped develop their political thinking.

C. ECC Externally.

i) Building a Mass Campaign.

We feel that ECC is on the brink of being self-generating. We have identified the need to develop a more active approach to our constituency and to build ECC into a mass campaign. Mass support is our best protection and greatest strength. This will mean more concerted public work (pamphleteering, posterings, house-meetings etc), and more careful plans for particular constituencies.

ii) Impact of ECC on The Public and Press.

The Weekly Mail has given ECC excellent coverage, but we must build stronger relations with the other local papers. Different individuals have been reached through our varied approach : eg, The Woman's Page, news items letters etc.

We need to build a more aggressive press strategy in Johannesburg.

iii) The Impact of ECC on Our Constituency.

Afrikaans Community.

RAU has shown some interest, with an article in their student newspaper and approaching ECC for discussion. It is probable that a group of Afrikaans writers, in conjunction with ECC will produce a book of anti-military short stories and poems in Afrikaans.

We need to make a concerted effort in this community, writing pamphlets in English and Afrikaans and creating a media presence in Afrikaans residential areas.

Students.

This is a constituency with whom we have a lot of unrealised potential. The formation of an ECC group at Wits will help to draw people into the campaign. An ECC group has also been set up on Medical Campus.

Religious Groupings.

We have made sporadic attempts to reach church congregations but the follow-up has been poor. Nevertheless, we have increasing support from the churches, and are building contacts with the Jews for Justice and ~~M~~abonim.

Cultural Groupings.

Johannesburg bands and the music world are very excited about ECC, and we built good relationships with them on Forces Favourites.

We did not have much impact on the "arty, classy, market" type grouping, but the film festival and the proposed Art exhibition will begin to make amends.

"Concerned Citizens.

We made some impact on the Concerned Citizens" type of people. The Mother's Perspective in the Troops Out Campaign was very successful. Our participation in programmes run by the Concerned Citizens group is difficult to evaluate beyond the favourable response to Laurie's speech. The Black Sash is becoming much more supportive of ECC.

School Students.

We have never had a concerted campaign aimed at school students. The Festival's Schools debate was effective in showing the potential for such work. The Education Committee is planning workshops in schools, and Neusa, one of our affiliates is discussing ways of working within white schools, partly around militarisation issues. We have also done workshops in two coloured schools.

Conscripts.

We feel that ECC has made conscripts think more about their role in the SADF, but we did not effectively make use of the "right to refuse townships duty" approach during the Troops Out Campaign.

D. The Effect of The State Of Emergency.

Initially, there was a degree of paranoia in Johannesburg after the declaration of the State of Emergency. This related to the response of other organisations. We were soon able to take initiative and develop new ways of operating. A defiant spirit developed among us, and we feel we were correct in deciding to continue operating, and for most of us not to go into hiding. This won us respect in our constituency.

The S. of E. forced us to re-examine and democratise our functioning. We needed to deal with the real possibility of leadership being taken away and what that would mean for our continued existence.

We were able to develop contact systems, and our house-meetings were good innovations, providing much internal solidarity and support.

The biggest problem was the lack of contact with township residents as a result of the S. of E. We now need to rebuild those relationships.

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