

After being launched in late in 1983, the Johannesburg and Conscription Committee got off to a slow start in 1984 experiencing all the problems of a new organisation. However once established the group became quite task orientated and made important gains both organisationally and in terms of specific activities.

ACTIVITIES

ECC was involved in the following activities in 1984

- 1 NAMIBIA FOCUS
 - Press conference
 - Picket
 - Slide tape show
 - Concert and display
 - Public Meeting

- 2 *DECLARATION LAUNCH - collecting endorsements*
 - Press conference
 - Spring Fair

- 3 Support Work for UDF
 - poster for elections
 - pamphlet for Sebokeng invasion

AFFILIATES AND ECC'S IMPACT ON THEM

The local *COSG* took up the Black Sash's call for an End to Conscription and established an anti - Conscription sub - group, which took responsibility for writing various progressive and church organisations to send representatives to form an End Conscription Committee. The representatives are NEUSA, *IC S*, *Jodac*, *Cosg*, War and Peace Group, *Suca*, Nusas, *Cathosoc*, and Black Sash. The membership of ECC remained fairly constant throughout the year. Generally ECC constantly experience a Person Power shortage and could have done with more members regarding ECC as a priority. Many of the people in ECC were over extended and extensively involved in the structures of their own organisation.

This resulted in two problems

- 1 One of the primary aims of ECC was to have an impact on organisations - we hoped that organisations would discuss the issue of conscription and militarisation and include it in their programmes.

One of the major problems identified during the year was that they often did not penetrate into organisations. The representatives to ECC and in some cases the execs became better informed and motivated but in very few cases did the membership know anything about ECC. This was partly due to organisational problems of some of the affiliates, but more significantly for us, it was due to our own lack of work in this area. With the exception of the Declaration campaign, we put very little effort and time into visiting organisations and offering to run workshops, discussins or seminars for them, we responded to invitations, but we didn't initiate contact.

- 2 In terms of participation in campaigns, the same problem was apparent. Reps to ECC did a lot of work, but very few members were involved. The Spring Fair was an exception and gains were made organisations got involved in preparing their stalls and through that process discussed conscription and militarisation. When planning future campaigns we need to pay particular attention to planning events that call on the members to participate. Perhaps a way to do this is to assign particular responsibility to each affiliate rather than the committee undertaking to do the work itself.

Recommendations

- 1 ECC should do ongoing research and analysis and feed this into affiliates through
- . Workshops organised by ECC/or affiliates
 - . Articles in affiliates' newsletter
 - . ECC Newsletter

Constituency

To note our constituency has primarily been white and the focus has been an liberal and *left*- orientated organisations. This has been mainly because the issue of conscription was *seen to* primarily effect whites, at the same time the Transvaal branch of the UDF had an anti - Conscription Group which was established to focus on the extension of conscription to coloureds and Indians. However this committee experienced considerable difficulties in establishing itself and was quite dependant on ECC members. ECC also tended to be *primarily* responsible for the anti - Conscription media and literature. The failure of this group to really establish itself *raises* questions for the *white* constituency of ECC and perhaps the focus of the campaign. However in Johannesburg we feel quite strongly that our region should focus primarily on the white constituency and try to support UDF's efforts to set up an ACC that does not rely on us.

PUBLIC IMPACT

The public impact we have had has been through two main ways - campaigns e.g. media, public meetings, the fair, concerts, presence at the Black Sash fet.

- the Press

In some ways ECC has had an impact out of all proportion to our size. The issue of conscription has had wide coverage in the press, and the PFP stand was certainly encouraged by ECC. Even Magnus Malan has noticed us. But there are some problems with our profile - Malan identified us as a UDF group. While we support UDF, we decided that for strategic reasons we should not be too closely identified with them as we want to reach a broad spectrum of organisations. Through our choice of speakers (e.g. Helen, Beyers, Popo, etc.) and sometimes our rhetoric, we have encouraged the *'radial'* image. We need to pay special attention to our constituency and choose speakers and write pamphlets and statements accordingly. This needs a clearer analysis of our constituency and the political changes happening all the time. The PFP debate is a crucial one in this regard.

We need to respond to issues very quickly e.g. army invasion into the Vaal could have been an excellent opportunity for massive protest action (pickets and public meetings) instead all we did was support work for UDF and one press statement.

Our media - posters and pamphlets - have on the whole been good in terms of quality, but to have the desired impact we need to produce it in greater quantity and to sort out our distribution. For example, we never got our posters systematically put up in churches, and our attempts to mail notices to ministers were inadequate.

*INTERNAL STRUCTURES AND WORKING OF ECC

After the Namibia Campaign we identified co-ordination as a crucial issue. A co-ordinating group of five people was set up and this group did help to improve things. Having a chair as a 'public' person also helped in terms of contact with the press and with other organisations.

In terms of administration our record keeping is inadequate and we have no mailing lists.

While co-ordination has improved, a lack of subgroups has sometimes caused problems. An ongoing press group could, for example, help in responding quickly to issues in the press. In the past we have also talked of subgroups as a way of involving individual people from the affiliates in ECC, this needs to be done in reality.

NATIONAL LINKS

Nationality there have been some problems. We have had very uneven contact with Cape Town and almost no contact with Durban. An issue to be discussed in Durban is the Balance between co-ordinating campaigns nationally vs maintaining regional autonomy especially in terms of pacing work. Regions have sometimes duplicated media rather than sharing its production - and we need to plan far ahead in advance in order to be able to co-ordinate media production.

National links have given us motivation e.g. with campaigns, but also caused problems e.g. PFP issue, patrons etc.

Problems of organising in the Johannesburg area

Many difficulties were experienced in organising in the Johannesburg area the most obvious being the blatantly repressive nature of 'security' activity in the region - blanket bans on meetings for extended periods of time, police harrassment in meetings, pickets and during pamphleteering detention also the issue of conscription is not one that has caught the popular imagination and it is not seen as a priority amongst many organisations so there is presently little support from other organisations and attendance at meetings and other ECC organized events is not great. A great deal of energy can be put into the advertising and organisation of a particular event with small dividends.

REPORT OF THE ECC REP TO THE CHURCHES' IYY COMMITTEE

The churches' IYY Committee requested an ECC/Cosg rep to sit on their national committee which meets every three months to plan activities for taking up International Youth Year in the Churches.

The Committee is made up of reps from the various denominations and from the 14 regional Councils of Churches, e.g. far Northern Cape, Zululand. As the whole committee cannot meet regularly due to travel costs most of the administrative and production work is done in Jhb. where the national co-ordinator is based.

The committee will fulfill its task by the compiling and distributing of resource packages, which will be programmes and material that youth groups can use in their usual meetings - these will obviously deal with the themes of participation, justice and peace- and they will be given out with theme posters. Furthermore, the regional reps will try to hold regional rallies, meetings picnics and cultural events to bring the youth of the region together and to give educational input around the themes. A national conference is planned for the end of the year.

ECC can contribute to this by providing resources in the form of speakers and information. Jhb ECC has agreed to write the resource package for July on the theme of militarisation and conscription - the date was chosen to focus attention on the July call-up. We can also in the various regions offer ourselves as speakers for rallies or other events. The fact that ECC was asked to sit on the committee indicates that the Church youth workers see militarisation and conscription as important to focus on in regard to youth.

All this helps our own work by giving us access to youth groups, although these are largely in the townships and therefore outside of our main constituency. It will also be important to keep the contacts made on the committee for future work with youth in the various regions. Through these channels we can raise awareness of conscription, the role of the SADF and militarisation in general amongst a far wider range of youth than we have hitherto had access to.

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END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)

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