

REPORT TO NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE END
CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN'S MEMBER ORGANISATIONS IN CAPE TOWN.

1. What is the ECC:

The ECC is a single issue campaign that aims to draw together as many organisations as possible around the call to end conscription. The ECC operates both as an organisation in its own right, with various subcommittees, and as a 'Front' of member organisations. ECC's work is largely campaign-oriented and much of this work is done by the sub-committees.

2. Why are ECC's member organisations important?:

a) The member organisations enable ECC to reach a broad constituency. This structure enables ECC to sensitise other broadly sympathetic organisations to the issue of conscription and militarisation.

b) The member organisations help ensure that the ECC does not become isolated from its constituency, and remains sensitive to the various positions and views within it.

c) The member organisations help lend the ECC 'respectability' particularly in the face of the State's 'criminalisation' campaign against ECC.

d) The member organisations could take on a significant work load or play an important supportive role at times when ECC is operating under difficult circumstances -- such as during the WINS campaign.

e) The member organisations provide a potential method of continuing the ECC's work in the event of a banning or other forms of proscription.

History of ECC in Cape Town:

In July 1983, a Conscientious Objector Support Group (COSG) conference resolved to establish the ECC. The ^{Cape Town group} COSG set up an anti-conscription sub-committee mandated to contact a range of organisations who were likely to support the broad objectives of an anti-conscription campaign. These would comprise the 'Front'. At this stage there were three major constituencies: students, churches and the Black Sash, with COSG playing a central role in pulling together the Front and providing direction. The first debate around ECC arose out of the problem of approaching organisations to be Front members. The approach was fairly haphazard with not all organisations were clear about the target constituency (i.e. those directly affected by conscription).

The ECC started meeting regularly from November 1983, during which the white referendum on the new constitution was held. The broader political context of the time was characterised by strong rejection of the Tri-cameral constitution by progressive organisations and a fear that conscription would be extended to 'coloureds' when the new system was implemented.

During the first six months some church organisations, particularly those with a black mass membership, raised questions about ECC's constituency being exclusively white. As a result there were some withdrawals from the Front although these were not antagonistic (UWC SRC/ANGLICAN ?)

The first strategy workshop was held in March 1984, at which the idea of an ECC declaration was born. This workshop drew together 75 people from member organisations. At this

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stage the Front organisations took ECC very seriously and played a ve
active role. The period from April to June involved the drawing up
of the declaration. At this stage, the aim was to get organisations
to endorse the

declaration, not necessarily to become Front members. This enabled
organisations to show their support for the issues raised by
ECC, even if it was inappropriate for them to join the Front
formally (e.g. township organisations).

The period July to August saw careful assessment of the
Front's structure. There was a conscious approach to various
organisations. In May the Observatory Area Committee of the
UDF joined the Front after being specifically requested to do
so. In July and August the Anglican Board of Social
Responsibility and the Gardens Area Committee became members.
~~Some attempts at recruitment failed, e.g. CJ, and P (INGRID WHAT
DOES THIS STAND FOR?)~~

Since then, organisations have only been drawn into the
Front where there is a strong basis for membership of ECC. An
example of this is Koeberg Alert. Koeberg Alert's membership
arose from a discussion between the contact committee and KA in
Mid-1985, when both organisations hosted a joint open forum.
~~ECC did concrete work within organisations, e.g. Black Sash and
Womens' Movement for Peace. [HAVE I INTERPRETE THIS BIT
CORRECTLY?]~~

Until September 1984, ECC operated exclusively as a Front with
no sub-committees. All participants were members or
representatives of Front organisations. This caused a problem
when ECC needed activists who were not prioritizing the
work of the organisations they represented.

In May 1984 these difficulties had already become apparent

during the 'Namibia Campaign'. COSG had to set up an ad-hoc
assembly
on
 N.A.G. (WHAT IS THIS?) to do the campaign work. This committee
 consisted exclusively of COSG people. A second problem area was
 that of recruitment. The Namibia campaign only recruited one
 person, who joined ECC through COSG. It became clear that ECC
 could and should recruit as an organisation in its own right. A
 sub-committee *have only been* ~~was~~ formed to fulfil particular needs or
 undertake specific functions. 'Media' was the first sub-
 committee formed in September 1984, followed by 'Culture' in
 December/January 1984 when a concert was held, then 'Schools'
 early in 1985 and 'Churches' followed out of TOC (WHAT IS
 THIS?) in September/October 1985.

Up till the time of ECC's formal launch in 1984, the only
 participation in ECC was by membership of a Front organisation
 or the 'Media' sub-committee. The launch showed that people
 wanted to join but did not have a base in either.

This led to the decision that people could either join the
 ECC through a member organisation or a sub-committee. There
 was not to be general membership at this stage. However, ECC
 was already being dominated by ECC activists rather than
 representatives of member organisations -- although Front
 organisations still undertook specific task (e.g. Black Sash
 pickets).

By mid 1985 the composition of ECC was beginning to cause
 tensions. The existing sub-committees -- Media, Culture,
 Schools and Contact -- were expressing a need to have an
 active say in the running of the ECC. This culminated in a
 workshop where it was decided that sub-committees would be

represented on the ECC executive. This was followed by a decision that ECC policy decisions would be made by all Front organisations and sub-committees having one vote. This policy was ^{later} implemented on the PFP issue. /

In October/November 1984 the issue of contact with the Young Progs was raised. [HOW WAS IT RAISED?] The Executive agreed to meet the YPs and discuss general matters. Four representatives of member organisations expressed opposition to the proposed meeting. (At that point four reps carried a lot of weight). The planned talks were suspended and member organisations were asked to discuss it. A workshop was held in December 1984 and the decision was taken not to talk. ECC activists and some organisations believed this decision to be incorrect but the unity of the Front then was more important. [In retrospect two of the four organisations were divided on the issue. However, their ECC representatives happened to be on the left flank of these organisations.] This was a case where the representatives of member organisations, or the organisations themselves, made a decision that was not felt to be in the ECC's interests. There was a measure of tension between the member representatives and the sub-committees which again became an issue in 1985 and 1986.

In May 1985 the issue of the Young Progs was raised again. Representatives of different organisations were asked to get mandates on the issue. Two of the four organisations that had previously resisted discussion with the YPs, WPCC and BSR, abstained. Officially no organisations took a hardline position. ECC supported a proposal of informal contact with the YPs. SUCA then resigned as a member. This was done in a 'comradely' spirit and space was left for future co-operation.

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TEAM did not support informal talks but did not withdraw (although since then they have not come to meetings).

The ECC has found it useful to have good relationships with organisations in black areas, but it can sometimes be a hindrance to have them as member organisations. Informal or other structures can be used to establish contact.

The best Front work has been when Front organisations have themselves had militarisation groups (e.g. the Observatory area committee, the Conscription Action Group and present attempts in Black Sash).

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