

So what  
is the  
**UCT ECC**  
doing  
anyway?



UCT ECC REPORT. OCTOBER 1987.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF ECC AT UCT, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT OUR CAMPAIGNS,  
THEIR EFFECT BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY, AND INTERNAL MORALE  
AND COHESION:

Phase #1

The ECC branch at UCT began at the beginning of 1987. The organisation started off really well with a large membership, but there was a serious problem of only a VERY small group of experienced activists. However, up until the time of our public launch in April this problem hadn't really come to the fore and we had held on to a substantial number of our members. We participated in campaigns but there was a general lack of understanding amongst our membership as to WHY we were campaigning and what it actually meant. This led to a lack of cohesion within the organisation and we lost many members. The campaigns were always greeted with enthusiasm but generally there were very few people who actually did the work for them.

There were other external problems with the campaigns that we ran. The national campaign was subsumed at the time because of an extremely militant atmosphere on campus at the time of the white elections. Thus the little public work we did do seemed out of place and the militancy on campus caused a lot of confusion amongst ourselves. We thus ended the first semester on a fairly low note: not having achieved much public profile and a fairly fragmented organisation internally. In our term planning for the next semester we placed a strong emphasis on building our organisation internally.

Phase #2

Here the main emphasis of our work was on:

- \* Internal cohesion
- \* Internal Education
- \* Consolidation of sub-comms

Our public work for the third term was to be a small focus on Namibia and the SRC elections.

Our work around Namibia was not a success, for the following reasons:

- > most of our membership were unmotivated, probably due to the lack of success of our activities in the first semester
- > Namibia Day was not an issue on campus at the time
- > NANSO were extremely badly organised
- > The rest of campus was mobilised around the expulsion of students at the time

We held a lunchtime picket against the call-up on 4 August, which although brief was probably our most successful public work for the term.

By this time, ECC had shrunk dramatically, but with the smallish group of people that remained, we were successful in our consolidation and in getting our internal education programme off the ground.

The SRC elections were then postponed till the following term, because the current SRC were very busy with expulsions etc, and couldn't end their term of office at the time, so our public work did not happen as we had hoped.



Having Nic with us was INCREDIBLY useful. We had just elected a new exec and he was very helpful in getting us to find our feet. He also helped us to identify a serious problem that we had been having, and that was stressing our own internal consolidation over and above our public campaign work. This resulted in most of our members having had little experience in the essence of our work: CAMPAIGNS!

### Phase #3

The last quarter started off with a BANG! We began the term immediately with SRC elections and our ECC candidate did unbelievably well. She came 5th, the first four places were all restands! So...that was a huge success and there has been much celebration.

Our second area of enormous success was in a fundraising venture. We held a really nice concert with the Genuines, Johnny Clegg and Savuka and the ECC cabaret and made an amazing profit of R1000. So...once again we were very chuffed with ourselves (and especially with our Culture comm)

Our other area of public work for the term has been a smallish campaign that we have been running (still happening at the time of writing this up but will be over by the time that you're reading this) The campaign has two aims. The first is to raise the profile of ECC on campus, which had been quite slack up till now but which was definitely helped by the concert, and the second is to make a call to all those who have call-ups in the vac or who will be graduating this year and are facing their two

years. The campaign has been divided into two areas: a media drive, which has not been as successful as we would have liked due to media costs and lack of personpower, and constituency work. The latter, so far, has been very exciting. We are planning to hold small forums in the men's residences, in the Engineering faculty and in the Commerce faculty. The response from the house committees of the residences and the two faculty councils has been really encouraging. They have all been very keen to learn more about ECC and it has proven to us how important it is for us to be doing constituency work in addition to our front work.

The forums have been advertised as "Know Your Rights" forums and they will include input on What is ECC?, a camper talking about his experiences in the army and a person from the Conscription Advice Service providing legal rights. We are hoping to have fairly informal meetings, with an emphasis on participation and discussion. We will also be holding one large forum on campus for those students who are not in the areas which we are focussing on. ~~The structure of this will probably be a lot more formal,~~ with more emphasis on input rather than discussion.

The activities of this term have been useful in raising our morale. For the first time there is evidence of activist training and the results are very positive. The working group of each subcomm (the co-ordinator and the exec rep) have taken their responsibilities seriously and are planning their meetings carefully. Although our membership has shrunk, we still have a group of enthusiastic and hardworking activists.



One area where we've fallen a bit behind is that of the "conceptual discussion". We've been going through a process of discussion around the shift of ECC's focus more directly on the conscript, but there's been a feeling that we've only been doing it because the rest of ECC has! This process is still incomplete and has not been very thorough.

#### FUNCTIONING OF EXEC:

The new exec was recently elected. The portfolios were more thoroughly defined by the GB and a previous problem of participation has been alleviated. The Contact and Liason portfolio was assessed by the exec and found to be redundant. The exec proposed to the GB that National contact be taken over by the Chair and a new Project's Officer replace the Contact person. A problem with the process of this proposal arose. The GB felt that it was a top down decision to be rubber stamped by them. The exec was challenged, and for the first time we felt really accountable to the GB.

#### FRONT:

This has been slow in getting off the ground but see Contact sub-comm report for more details.

#### UCT ECC culture subcomm report

Culture is the largest subcomm at UCT, with about 14 members. First, a brief outline of the events which Culture Comm was involved in during this year:

In the first term, ECC was launched at UCT. Culture organized a pavement art session at the same time, and this succeeded in raising ECC's profile, and recruiting new members. A successful cultural evening was also held.

In the second term culture hosted the showing of an anti-war film series, which attracted a lot of support. We also carried on the tradition of original ECC cakes with the "Munch against Militarization", a cake made in the shape of a military base. Culture members were involved in a Working for a Just Peace project at Crossroads, where murals were painted and playground facilities erected. The term's events culminated in the ECC fair, where Culture Comm presented their "Fish the Troops out of the Township" game. This in particular served to unite all the Culture Comm members, through their involvement.

ECC's presence on campus during the third term was low-key. We had decided to concentrate on internal cohesion and education. Culture organized the screening of T-shirts on Namibia Day, which unfortunately was not particularly successful.

We also organized a competition in the student newspaper Varsity:

## **ECC maze**

Help UCT ECC raise funds! Enter the ECC competition. Help the conscript escape from the Castle and the SADF and win a meal for two at PIZZAZZ to the value of R25.

Bring your completed maze with a 50c entry fee to the SRC glass office opposite Rhodes Room or the Medical Students' Council room at Medical School between 12.00 noon and 2.00pm this week.



**PIZZAZZ**  
MAIN ROAD  
ROSEBANK

This term we have held a concert to raise funds. Johnny Clegg & Savuka, The Genuines, and the infamous ECC cabaret drew the crowds in, resulting in about R 1000 for campus ECC. Our front organizations as well as ECC set up stalls at the concert. The whole venture showed us that we can get work done in a short space of time; up to then we had underestimated our capabilities as activists and organizers.



In an assessment we identified some of the problems which we've encountered this year, the main one being that details have been overlooked when we have been making plans. As a result, either a lot of last-minute tasks have been left to one person, or else plans have petered out owing to shortsightedness. But these mistakes have served to show each member how vital her or his support, participation and dedication are. Communication is essential, particularly on a one-to-one basis, in our subcomm and across the organization.

It is generally felt that there is a lovely "vibe" to UCT Culture Comm; it is unthreatening and exciting. A problem which we have noted though (and it is a problem of the organization as a whole) is that of accessibility to people outside ECC. We hope that this will be alleviated by our current campaign focussing on the conscript, and by our internal education programme and recruitment drives. With regard to the campaign, it is a pity that Culture Comm is not better represented on the Campaign Committee, though we have been involved in the campaign.

This leads on to the last area, that of Direction for Culture Comm. This has become clearer lately, thanks to improved communication between Culture and the exec. Everyone now understands the functioning of ECC, and how Culture Comm fits in. We look forward to contact with other Culture comms at Conference and in the future, and hope that this will help us in the long term.

UCT ECC Culture Comm  
October 1987.

#### MEDIA SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT 1987

The year started with many members. Media was tied very closely to campaigns, not consolidating itself, which took its toll in the second half of the year. The membership dropped off and a committed core group remained.

This group floundered in the third quarter, lacking leadership and initiative, but the members were very active in ad hoc groups.

In August a new exec-rep and coordinator were elected and Media was resurrected. We began with a massive and deep assessment of/by the core group. The major problems were identified as lack of skills and initiative. Solutions were found, skills workshops and a conscious mental effort to take the initiative. We thus consolidated Media internally.

Throughout the year there has generally been strong sub-comm discussion of issues, but too few members participating in G.B.s.

This year we have learned from our mistakes and consolidated ourselves, so that next year we will take off as a motivated and enthusiastic sub-comm.

Initially this sub-comm was seen to have a dual role - namely individual recruitment and building a front on campus - and was called Recruitment. As a new branch, UCT ECC attracted large numbers of interested people, and active recruitment was unnecessary. A table outside our functions proved sufficient. At our launch meeting, for example, about 40 students were recruited. This role fell away after the initial rush.

The name was changed to Contact, and for the first 1/2 of the year the process of building the front and reaching specific campus groups did not get off the ground for a number of reasons:

- + lack of leadership direction or general direction
- + lack of conceptual skills and understanding of a front structure, owing to a general lack of experience
- + lack of confidence as a result of above
- and + diversion of attention towards campaigns and other activities, which detracted from the sub-comm's work

Progress was made, however, particularly with the drawing up of an "Introduction to ECC" package (provisional copy enclosed) intended to both educate members about issues around ECC generally and the front in particular, and to distribute as a reference package to our affiliates and interested groups. While the final draft is still incomplete the idea has proved extremely effective. Morale was high at the end of the 2nd term, but momentum was lost over the vac, and many of the frustrations of the previous semester returned. By this time the size of the sub-comm had stabilized at 8 regular and committed members. Interestingly, Contact is the UCT ECC sub-comm with the highest proportion of men.

The focus of the branch as a whole in the third term was on internal consolidation. This should have been ideal for the starting of the front-building process, but this did not occur, due to some of the reasons outlined above as well as the general disruption on campus, during which one of our members was arrested.

Towards the end of the term things began to look more positive. A new co-ordinating group was elected (which now began to function effectively), members were more familiar with the concept of a front structure, and our previous mistakes and weaknesses were assessed. The lack of direction was addressed with the help of the National Organiser. The subcomm drew up a clear plan of action which will be placed on a chart, and pairs were designated potential member organisations to deal with. Following this, a simulation game involving the presentation of the package to the other members of the subcomm was held to boost confidence, formulate clear responses to possible problem questions and pool ideas and holding of front workshops.

In the 2 1/2 weeks since this process was begun:

- + A highly successful workshop has been presented to Engineers Against Apartheid, who chose to affiliate. EAA are a dynamic group, and promise to be a strong affiliate
- + A short workshop has been presented to the Architectural Student Society who have begun plans for a referendum this term
- + Contact has been made with: Progsoc, Medical Students Council, Law Students Council, AIESEC, Baptist Students Union, Social Science Students Council and SA Union of Jewish Students UCT, with varying responses. Follow-up processes are underway.
- + A further 21 groups have been prioritised, and it is intended to establish contact with them by the end of the year.

In order to maintain contact with these groups over the vac, a list of contacts is being drawn up.

Morale and confidence at this point, as in the whole branch, are high and the real gains of the past short period have highlighted the possibilities for an ECC front at UCT.



## UCT ECC - Plans for Orientation Week. 1988

### INTERNAL EDUCATION REPORT: UCT ECC

#### A BRIEF "HISTORY":

We identified the lack of internal education in the first half of the year as a major weakness in our organisation. So, an Int Ed portfolio was added to the executive in our third term, and an Internal Education group was set up to co-ordinate the Internal Education programme. This group's role was later expanded to include a focus on the conceptual debates around ECC's direction. Int Ed slots run every fortnight between GB's. They have been enthusiastically attended and successful. National Conference preparation has hijacked recent slots but next year is set for a very inspiring and much more thorough education programme.

#### SOME CRITICAL COMMENTS:

- \* We have recognised that commitment as well as the effectiveness of our campaign depends on our understanding of ECC and our general political environment.
- \* A feeling emerged from the sub-comms (and was stressed by the ND too) that learning does not only happen in set int. ed. slots, but rather, needs to be systematically made part of every meeting.
- \* We think that consultation with our members around the areas of education is crucial. The areas that have emerged are:
  - a general understanding of S.African society (eg: a history of resistance)
  - military orientated issues (eg: destabilization)
  - the direction of ECC (eg: ECC in the National Democratic Struggle)
- \* We discovered that workshop-type sessions are much more participatory and exciting than seminar presentations.

Uct Ecc's objectives on Campus during orientation week are: To raise our profile; to recruit to various levels of involvement; and to bring the new focus on conscription to campus.

Our activities will be divided into 3 broad areas:

- a meeting on the Plaza, on Thursday (18 Feb) with Ivan Toms as our main speaker
- an ECC stall on the Plaza all week, with T-shirts, info pamphlets, diaries, posters and novelties like ECC fortune cookies, sticker timetables, videos, handmade ECC shorts & mini-skirts, Troop-out-the-townships-fishing game etc etc !!
- other activities including a movie, support Ivan Toms signature campaign, res meetings, participating in the O.W. concert etc..

Our first meeting will be a cocktail party where we introduce new members to sub-coms.

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**END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)**

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