

A13.4.7³ CT

Assessment of an ECC rep at the WRI Feminism and Nonviolence Conference and mini-tour of London.

July 23rd 1987 - August 11th 1987.

Introduction.

ECC was invited by the War Resisters League (WRL) to send a representative to an international conference on Feminism and Nonviolence in Ireland. The conference was planned by the War Resisters International (WRI).

From the outset we were aware that the stated nature, content and direction of the conference would not benefit ECC to a great extent, but rather acknowledging that our presence and input at such a gathering is important. We also realised that the ECC representative would be able to use this opportunity to make contact with those organisations and individuals who have provided constant support and encouragement of our campaign in both Ireland and London; and to extend our range of contacts.

In a word, these aims were achieved.

Aims of the trip as seen by ECC.

1. To extend our network of support
2. To maintain our contacts with those organisations and individuals already supportive of ECC and to provide updated information on the direction and activities of ECC.
3. To provide relevant input on the style and role of ECC in anti-military work in South Africa - most relevant for the conference.

Assessment of the Conference.

On the whole the conference was a tremendously empowering and at points informative experience for me. In trying to assess the value of attending this conference I would like to look at both the weaknesses and strengths of the gathering and in so doing, also assess what the benefits are for ECC as an organisation.

Strengths:

1. The commitment on the part of all the delegates and the organisers to ensure maximum participation of all present and ensuring shared responsibility for events, such as the workshops.
2. It provided ECC with the opportunity to present our input and get our message across to a wide range of groups and women involved largely in the European and North American peace movements.

3. It provided the opportunity to make contact with several editorial staff/contributing journalists of international peace publications. Their eagerness to cover ECC events and their commitment to maintain contact was encouraging.
4. The international support and interest gained for the release of Janet Cherry and Sue Lund was phenomenal.
5. The international character of the conference provided an extensive network for ECC : there were 50 women representing 21 different countries.
6. Being able to maintain contact with those organisations such as the WRI and the WRI who have given us so much support in the past.
7. It was an affirmation of realising ECC's commitment to process and democratic practises.
8. A source of information on various aspects of the struggle against injustice: direct oppression of Thai women through mail order brides; Greenham Common women and the phenomenon of zapping; nuclear testing and experimentation happening in the Pacific; the conflict situation in Northern Ireland.
9. Generating some new ideas to take to ECC, such as the development of a feminist consciousness in our style of work and generating research in the area of women and the military.

Weaknesses:

1. There was insufficient clarity on the part of the organisers and the delegates as to the broad aims of this conference.
2. Despite the international character of the conference, there were some serious omissions here ie : - no women from other third world countries (the 2 South African women were the only two) ; no women involved in a liberation struggle situation where armed struggle is also a phenomenon; no women from oppressed classes and/or minority groups, ie : native Americans, etc.
3. There was not sufficient focus on international networking and how we would see that as building an international anti-war culture and developing some common strategy around this area of work.
4. There was no clear organisational representation and/or mandate from the majority of the women who attended. This raised the question of what happens to all of this energy and vision that is generated at such a gathering and what are the structures to which it is reported.
5. This is more a comment than a criticism. It would have been good to have more discussion on the juncture between feminism

and nonviolence, particularly with regard to feminist analysis and the practise of nonviolence.

General

The bulk of my time outside of the conference was spent meeting with anti-apartheid organisations and those organisations who have been supportive of our work in South Africa.

I made one or two new contacts but on the whole met with individuals and/or organisations which are familiar with ECC and needed an update on our activities and direction. Most of these meetings were low key and informal but important in terms of maintaining our strong and good international support base. Some of the organisations I met with included Christian Aid, Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR), War on Want, Quakers, WRI, a member of the European Parliament.

The intention of the time outside of the conference was not to go too public but rather to strengthen our existing networks and to make some new contacts.

Richard Steele was also in London at the time and we participated in a lunch hour forum at the CIIR in which we addressed the general political climate in South Africa, with particular reference to the role of ECC and our present activities.

Press:

While in Dublin, Anita Kromberg (sent by IFOR to the Conference) and I did several interviews.

- a. During the conference, a journalist from the Irish Times, who was covering the conference as an event, interviewed us on ECC, and made special reference to the Conference's demand for the release of Janet Cherry and Sue Lund. A letter of demand for their release had been sent to the Minister of Law and Order.
- b. We did a second interview with a journalist from the Irish Times on the history, structures, activities and role of ECC within the national democratic struggle.
- c. We did an interview with Shelley Anderson, editor of an international peace publication, Disarmament Campaigns, on the general history and role of ECC.
- d. I did a brief interview with the editor of the monthly publication of Trocaire, a Catholic relief agency in Dublin.

In London, I had interviews with Peace News, Oxfam and Christian Aid.

Conclusion.

On the whole it was a very stimulating and worthwhile experience, perhaps with one strong recommendation : that we plan a little further in advance to give ourselves and the host organisation more time to set up a more rigorous programme. As ECC we also need to have a more thorough process of making decisions about the value of international conferences and tours. This is an item for discussion at the National Conference in October 1987.

ECC UNITED STATES TOUR - March 19 - May 6 (Gavin Evans)

1). OVERVIEW AND CHRONLOGY

Shortly before Laurie and Pete's tour of Europe and India last year the War Resisters League, an American pacifist group affiliated to the War Resisters International, raised the idea of an ECC tour of the United States.

The plan was that ECC would address the United Nations and then tour the United States, meeting with different peace, anti-apartheid and church groups. The idea was discussed in ECC and it was decided that considerable gains could be made.

The basic proposal underwent several changes before the United Nations gave the final go-ahead early in March - just in time for 's to find someone available to go and to draw up a report on troops in the townships and on opposition to conscription to present to the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid which was meeting on March 21 (the Sharpeville anniversary which had been declared by the UN as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination).

After hurriedly compiling the 226 page report I left for the United States on March 19. At Jan Smuts airport security officials confiscated 4 copies of the report, but inadvertently left one in my bag in the confusion caused by my flight being delayed.

On March 20 I was met at Kennedy Airport by Matt Meyer, chairperson of the War Resisters League. While in New York I stayed with Matt.

The next day I arrived at the UN in my new suit and shoes and was seated behind a large wooden sign saying End Conscription Campaign, South Africa.

Present at the meeting, which was held in the UN Trusteeship Council chamber, were about 300 representatives of different governments, committees and non-governmental organisations. I was one of three special guests to address the meeting and spoke for about 15 minutes.

The speech, which dealt with the role of the SADF in the townships, the occupation of Namibia and white opposition to conscription, was well received and several UN reps came over and expressed support. It also included four recommendations: that all member countries do everything in their power to end apartheid; that they provide support for those who in conscience refuse to serve in the SADF; that UNITA, the MNR and other southern African dissident groups be isolated and that action be taken to ensure the speedy and unconditional implementation of UN Resolution 435 in Namibia. It also expressed concern that several UN member countries were breaking the arms embargo.

Other speakers included the President of the General Assembly, Sir Don Jaime de Pinies, the President of the Security Council, Mr Ole Biering, representatives of the UN General Secretary, the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid, the OAU, the Conference of Non-Alligned Countries, various groups of states, the ANC, PAC, SWAPO and the PLO.

In the course of my trip various activities were arranged by the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid. I was interviewed by UN radio, met with the UN Council on Namibia, had several meetings with UN Centre Against Apartheid people, met with the New York Labour Committee on South Africa (set up by the UN) and addressed the UN-linked Africa Peace Tour.

Except for a brief trip to Nyack in upstate New York, I spent my first 12 days in New York City. During this period I addressed meetings involving the following groups: The War Resisters League (3 meetings), the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid, the American Committee on Africa, Educators for Social Responsibility, Clergy and Laity Concerned, the Episcopal Churchmen for a Free Southern Africa, the AJ Muste Memorial Institute, the Catholic Peace Fellowship, the United Church of Christ, the National Council of Churches, USA, the UN Council on Namibia, the City-Wide Student Coalition Against Apartheid (with representatives from Columbia University, Pratt University, the University of New York, Bronx Community College, Hunter College, City College New York City, Manhattan Community College and the Black Student Community Organising Network), the Columbia Coalition for a Free South Africa, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Lutheran World Ministries, the National Mobilization for Survival, the Brooklynites Against Apartheid, the New York Anti-Apartheid Coordinating Council, District 65/United Auto Workers and the A Phillip Randolph Institute/Project South Africa.

I also addressed two rallies during this time. The first, on the night of March 21, was organised by the American Committee on Africa and focussed on opposing Unita aid. The key slogan was "Boycott South Africa Not Nicaragua". The anticipated problem of sharing a platform with the ANC did not materialise, because the ANC were not there at the time. It was attended by about 200 people.

The second rally was at Columbia University and was attended by about 100 people.

Other than a bout of flu, which followed me all the way to North Carolina, the first 12 days in New York were relatively easy-going (relative to the rest of the to the rest of the tour that is). Because the UN (who paid for the return trip) only confirmed the visit two weeks before my departure, there were still a few gaps in my itinerary when I arrived. I therefore got a chance to see some of the fascinations of New York City and watch a bit of boxing on TV.

I got on very well with Matt Meyer and Marie Bloom (who were coordinating the tour) and got to know most of the other WRL activists and staff members. Aracelly Santana of the UN staff was also particularly helpful.

When I arrived Matt gave me a detailed run-down of the alphabet soup that is the American left. This proved to be very helpful in the weeks ahead.

I soon found there were significant differences in the level of knowledge about South Africa between different groups. In general the anti-apartheid organisations were well-versed, had a sophisticated understanding of the complexities of the struggle, were pro-ANC and were primarily interested in disinvestment (or divestment as it's called there). The peace groups had far less of a background in the South African situation (although some individuals like Matt and Marie had a very clear understanding), and were interested in ECC primarily in terms of their international interest in anti-war activities. The student groups varied considerably. Some individuals were very knowledgeable, while others tended to see things in terms of the similarities with their civil rights struggle. Their interest was in mobilising their campuses around the divestment issue and they tended to be strongly pro-ANC.

After a week in America I had about 4 or 5 standard speeches - with variations - which I gave to groups depending on their interest and the time available to speak. The speeches, the questions, even the anecdotes and jokes tended to become standard after a while. Everyone loved the sandcastle story. They all wanted to know our line on divestment and our relation to the ANC etcetera.

On April 3 I took the train (with Matt) to Philadelphia where my itinerary was coordinated by the American Friends Service Committee. Most of the groups I met with there had had previous contact with ECC through Richard Steele, Anita Kromberg and Adele Kirsten, so much of what I did served to consolidate their knowledge of South Africa and of the ECC.

In Philadelphia I met with the following groups: New Society Publishers, American Friends Service Committee, the Jubilee Fund, the Movement for a New Society, the Friends Peace Committee and the Central Committee on Conscientious Objection.

Philadelphia was a whistle stop visit. I got a lot done in the 19 hours I was there but I did not get to see groups other than the Quakers and the CCCO. The Philadelphia Quakers are far more militant and activist-oriented than those in New York City.

From March 4 - 8 I was in Washington DC/Virginia. This section of the tour was coordinated by the Washington Office on Africa, the main lobbying group concerned with African issues, and the DC Fellowship of Reconciliation.

While in Washington DC I addressed meetings involving the following groups: The Washington Office on Africa, the DC Student Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism, TransAfrica, Students for a Peaceful Future, the DC Episcopal Peace Fellowship, the National Inter-Religious Board for Conscientious Objection, the DC FOR, the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, the United Methodist Seminars, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the New Jewish Agenda, the Episcopal Church of the Configuration, the US Catholic Bishops Conference, the DC Southern Africa Working Group, the Lawyers Committee Southern Africa Project, the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy, the Presbyterian Church USA, the Mennonite Central Committee, the SOS GI Assistance Project, the Howard University African Students Group.

I also participated in a debate with a US State Department Official at Georgetown University, addressed an anti-apartheid rally at Georgetown University, spoke at the St Augustines Episcopalian church, met with the Episcopalian Bishop for Washington DC, Bishop John Walker, and had meetings with senior Senate aids from the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs and from Senator Edward Kennedy's office, as well as with four Congressional aids. I also addressed a rally near the South African embassy, where people from different religious groups were staging an anti-apartheid protest.

The 5 days in Washington DC were very intense. It was a case of rushing from one meeting to another - and most were collar and tie affairs. Matt accompanied me for the whole period in Washington. Things were efficiently organized and went smoothly.

Then only unscheduled event was a chance meeting with the US student far right. I was attending a DC SCAR meeting at the American University. I arrived early and the DC SCAR people arrived late, so I wandered around the students union in search of venue - asking people where the meeting on South Africa was. Eventually I was directed upstairs where I came across a group of young white men in suits and ties stuffing doughnuts into their faces. One of them informed me that, yes, this was the South Africa meeting. I was relieved until I noticed the buttons they were wearing. Each of the young males had on a button with Savimbi's head saying "Support Unita", and another one saying Stop Communism. I left hastily and eventually found who I was looking for.

On May 8 I flew through Newark, New Jersey, to Raleigh, North Carolina. My stay there was coordinated by Mandy Carter, a local War Resisters League staff member. It was relatively low key and relaxed, allowing me to absorb some of the beauty of a southern spring, and finally get over the last of my flu.

While in North Carolina I stayed in Durham. In addition to several media interviews I addressed meetings involving the following groups: the War Resisters League local, the University of North Carolina Student Coalition Against Apartheid, and the Duke University Students Against Apartheid. I also addressed a student rally at the University of North Carolina, spoke at a teach-in on apartheid there and addressed a public meeting in Durham.

On April 11 I returned to New York City for three days where I addressed a seminar organised by journalists from The Nation and Harpers, addressed the War Resisters League Annual dinner, met with members of the Plowshares Disarmament Community, the Democratic Socialists of America and the United States Students Association.

The War Resisters League dinner was interesting - in that it might be the sort of thing some ECC regions could replicate. It was an annual dinner attended by about 200 people from around New York. For some of them it was the only WRL activity of the year they attended, so it was important in keeping them in touch with the organisation and in providing continued support for it. Many of the people were older members of the movement, and they also had their share of "nobs" - like former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark (who addressed the dinner with me), novelist Grace Paley, Bayard Rustin etc.

On April 13 I travelled to Long Island, New York, where I stayed with members of the Long Island WRL Local. While there I participated in a debate at Hauppauge High School, spoke to two classes at Half Hollows West High and addressed a meeting of Long Island Peace activists.

The debate was fun. About 800 high school students and teachers attended to watch the Sun City video, and listen to Congressman Thomas J Downey, Mr D Kent-Brown, the South African Consulate General, Professor Mahapda of Adelphi University, and me give different perspectives on South Africa. The good guys won hands down.

I flew to San Diego (through Denver) on April 15 where I stayed with WRL local members. I arrived in time for a Tax Day demonstration, and then went to stay with Rick and Carol Jankhow, the WRL staffers.

While in San Diego I addressed meetings involving the following groups: San Diego Peace Centre, San Diego Draft Resisters Defence Fund, Committee Against Militarism and the Draft, University of San Diego Free South Africa Coalition, TransAfrica, San Diego Campaign Against Apartheid, San Diego State University Inter-Campus Ministries.

I was impressed with organisation there. San Diego is a conservative military town, yet the activists managed to build a viable and militant peace movement and mobilise a lot of people in the process.

On the evening of March 17 I flew to San Francisco where again I stayed with local WRL people. Here unfortunately the tour was not well organised, and in the 2½ days I was there I only had four engagements - a press interview, a meeting with Humanitas International (Joan Baez's organisation), a house meeting of Berkeley students, academics and peace activists and a WRL meeting of San Francisco peace activists. I also attended a militant Peace and Jobs Rally in San Francisco attended by about 30 000 people. Berkeley was on recess so I didn't address any student rallies.

This gave me plenty of time to see the sites of this fascinating city - parousing Lawrence Ferlinghetti's bookshop in the Bay area - once the headquarters of the beatniks, wandering the streets of the Haight Ashbury district where hippies are not yet a thing of the past and where the yuppies and guppies haven't yet penetrated in large numbers and generally the land of the Greatful Dead.

On April 20 I flew to Tacoma, Washington where I stayed with Pastor Milton Andrews, a 65-year-old veteran of the peace movement. I delivered the sermon at his Hillside Community Church, addressed a meeting of the Tacoma Fellowship of Reconciliation and then went to Seattle where I met with the American Friends Service Committee Pacific Northwest Regional Office.

I then flew on to Denver where I spent a few hours waiting for a connecting flight and then onto New Jersey and then to Boston on April 22.

My four days in New England were tightly structured and intense. The visit here was coordinated by Rick Gaumer, who travelled with me.

In Boston and Cambridge I met with the Boston Mobilisation for Survival South Africa Task Force, the Harvard Educators for Social Responsibility, the International Defence and Aid Fund, the Pax Christie Centre on Conscience and Pacifism. I also addressed a Harvard shanty town protest meeting.

I then travelled to Providence, Rhode Island, where I addressed an anti-apartheid press conference, met with the Rhode Island Divest Coordinating Committee and addressed a meeting of the Brown University Student Coordinating Committee Against Apartheid.

I spent the night in Norwich, Connecticut where I met with local War Resisters League members and then travelled to New Haven, Connecticut where I addressed a 400-strong Yale university Anti-Apartheid rally, addressed a meeting of the Yale Anti-Apartheid Coalition, met with a Yale law professor and then took the train back to New York City.

The final week in New York was extremely busy, and very productive. In this time I addressed meetings involving the following groups: The National Conference of Black Churchmen, the New York Labour Committee on South Africa, the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, the All-Africa Conference of Churches, Amnesty International, Clergy and Laity Concerned, the Riverside Church Disarmament Programme, the Rainbow Coalition, the Westchester Society for Ethical Culture, the United Black Student Association, the Coalition of New York Law Students, the National Lawyers Guild, the National Organisation of Legal Service Workers, the New York Friends Group, the Workers Defence League, the Social Democrats USA, the Gilmore Foundation, the International Relief Committee, the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, the Opportunity Investors Corporation, Freedom House, Lawyers Against Apartheid, World Council of Churches, USA, Presbyterian Church USA, reformed Church of America, the United Church of Christ, Funding Exchange/North Star Funds, PEN Writers Group and the Beacon Clearwater Sloop Club.

I also spoke at a service at the Cathedral of St John the Divine (Episcopalian), addressed a meeting at the United Nations Church Centre of the Africa Peace Tour, attended a teach-in on southern Africa at the Canaan Baptist Church, and addressed a public meeting on opposition to conscription in South Africa organised by the WRL.

The Beacon Clearwater Sloop Club meeting was particularly interesting. I travelled up to Beacon, New York State, on the second last day of my stay, to attend Pete Seeger's birthday part - his 67th. Beacon Clearwater is a militant environmentalist group led by Seeger. It was really interesting meeting him, singing along to "This Land is Your Land" and speaking to them about Philip Wilkenson and about ECC generally.

Di Scott, who is working for the United Church of Christ, was particularly helpful in putting me in touch with numerous church leaders, and in helping ECC in numerous other ways..

I left the United States on May 3 and arrived at Heathrow the next day. I spent a day in London meeting with Howard Clark of the War Resisters International and a day in Bath meeting with Ian Linden and others from the Catholic Institute for International Relations. I returned to Johannesburg on May 6.

By the time I arrived home I had had nearly 150 engagements (including press interviews), so I was pretty exhausted and definitely ready for a return to familiar ECC routines.

Many of the meetings mentioned above involved individuals and small committees. Others were with smallish groups of people, gathering specifically to hear about ECC, and I also addressed 17 public meetings and rallies attended by anything between 50 and nearly 1000 people. Aside from media interviews I must have addressed about 5000 people in the course of the tour.

The media side of things involved more than was initially anticipated. In all I did a total of 22 newspaper and publication interviews (a few with major US papers and agencies and others with activist publications), 15 radio interviews (some small local stations, others larger regional stations with listenerships of 30 000 plus and a few, like with the BBC and UN radio, international networks), and 5 television interviews.

I was interviewed by the following newspapers/publications: New York Daily News, New York Newsday, The Village Voice, the Seattle Times, Reuters, UPI, Saan New York News Bureau, The Nation, the Providence Journal-Bulletin, the Providence American, Africa News, The Guardian (US), Sojourners, Unity, Hunter College News, Fellowship, The Mobilizer, The Daily Tar Heel, the Smittown Daily News, Christianity and Crisis, Unity, the Non-Violent Activist, Haupenhaugh High; the following radio stations (some hour-long talk shows, others 2 minute interviews): BBC World Service, United Nations Radio, Voice of America, WBAI FM (3 times), WNYE (both New York City), WKRL (Rocklands County, NY), National Black Radio Network, Philadelphia State University Radio, WHUR (Washington DC), Africa News Radio, WCHL AM (North Carolina), KSDO, KPBS (both San Diego) and WELI (New Haven); and the following television stations: CBS (New York), WTTG TV (Channel Five News, Washington DC), WPRI (Rhode Island ABC News), ELA TV (National Cable Network) and News International (third world video network).

2). GAINS MADE FROM THE TOUR

While it may take more time before an accurate assessment of the gains (and perhaps losses) of a tour of this nature can be made, a cursory and tentative opinion in this respect can be suggested.

1. International Support

The tour served to build up support networks in the United States among a wide range of peace, church, anti-apartheid, student and human rights groups, and to consolidate those which already existed.

Some of the groups I met with had already heard of ECC, and a few had previously issued support statements. The tour provided a face to the organisation, and I think strengthened their willingness to help. For many other groups the tour was their first contact with ECC.

The kind of support they can offer (and some already have) are: support statements for campaigns, letters to ECC/the government/other bodies condemning repression aimed at ECC, support for individuals (EG Philip Wilkenson), information to other groups in the United States and the World, funding (some of this has already been received) and further contacts.

In each of these areas gains were made in the course of the tour, and it is likely that these will be built-upon during the year.

As the level of state repression against ECC grows international support will become more crucial. Some groups, like Amnesty, Humanitas, PEN, are particularly useful in this regard. Others like the War Resisters League and the Fellowship of Reconciliation are important in building up international pressure through their national and international networks.

Even those groups which the government might see as its enemies (like the United Nations for example) can carry considerable weight in making the state think twice about hitting us as hard as they would like to.

The publicity in the international media also serves this purpose to some extent. If nothing else it ups the cost repressing us - a factor which could become increasingly important in the months ahead. It means that in any action the state takes against ECC they will be playing to an international audience - something they are not completely oblivious to despite their pretence to the contrary.

2. Anti-Apartheid Education

Although our prime motivation for tours of this nature is the immediate gains ECC can make from them, we also need to consider the gains to be made by our struggle generally.

More so than the struggles anywhere else in the world the anti-apartheid struggle is a global one, one where the international arena is of vital importance. Ultimately foreign pressure on the apartheid government will play a significant, though not determinant, role in bringing about liberation for our country.

It follows therefore that those working in the international community for the end to minority rule in South Africa need to be well-versed on the dynamics and the complexities of our struggle. White extra-parliamentary opposition to apartheid in general, and the End Conscription Campaign in particular, are a vital part of the struggle and it is important that those in the American and other anti-apartheid groups understand this.

I found that with respect to the peace groups the gains to be made in this regard were even more pronounced. Most of them had not been involved to any significant extent in anti-apartheid work (or even third world solidarity work) in the past. The tour definitely helped them in finding a niche in this area. It also had the effect of increasing their understanding of the South African situation and thereby their concern for it. This not only assists ECC directly but also helps the peace groups in moving closer to the US anti-apartheid movement (which at the moment has pride of place in the US left). This has the added effect of building unity in progressive circles in America.

Also important is the education of the American public generally - through radio and TV programmes, the press, public meetings and the like. Any new angle on South Africa is important in retaining the limited attention span of the American public on the conflict in our country - and for the US media ECC is certainly a fresh angle on what for them is a tired issue. The education of the American public - and the anti-apartheid concern it produces - helps keep US legislators sweet on South African issues - it makes them less likely to go along with constructive engagement, aid for UNITA etc.

Clearly ECC does have a potential role in this respect, although it must almost always be subordinate to our internal role, and should never interfere with or obstruct what we are trying to do within South Africa's borders.

3. Learning From Others

Another potential gain for ECC from international contact is what can be learnt from it. The American peace movement has much to offer in this respect, although here much depends on the extent the ECC representative can communicate this on his/her return.

I found that although ECC and the international peace movements are operating in completely different contexts and often have very different priorities, there was nevertheless lots we could learn from each other in terms of creative action, approaches to issues, strategy and tactics. While we certainly have much to teach them (something they frequently stressed), it would be arrogant to think that it was a one way relationship in this regard.

Areas where I picked up potentially useful information were fund raising (something Americans are very good at), integrating people from different generations, non-violent direct action/civil disobedience, involving people with widely varying levels of commitment and attracting the media.

Just a few examples/pointers in these areas:

One thing the US peace groups did in terms of fund raising was make full use of their extended mailing lists. They were very good in keeping tight records, extensive up-to-date address lists etc. They would send their publications out very widely, but also make regular requests for donations. Those inclined to give larger sums were placed on a special list and were contacted more regularly for money for specific campaigns. Things like annual dinners were useful in maintaining the kind of on-going relationship through which requests of this nature became possible.

Most of the peace groups in the United States had members from several generations actively involved. While they also had their "nobs" and older donors, those older than forty were not seen exclusively in this light as sometimes seems to be the case in ECC. Much of the leadership of the US peace movement, and some of the hardest working activists, were people activated in the sixties, fifties, forties and thirties. This lended a maturity and respectability to the US peace movement which would have otherwise been lacking, and in most cases did not get in the way of youthful enthusiasm, youth culture etc.

There are numerous examples of forms of non-violent direct action and civil disobedience which could have applicability in South Africa. These would include many of the less extreme ploughshares actions; things like lying on railway lines when trains carrying nuclear warheads were passing (?!), actions to draw attention to conscientious objectors, and things like sit-ins in front of government buildings etc.

Some of these activities were partially designed to draw public attention, and media focus, on their campaigns. For example when Ben Sasway, the first person to be jailed for refusing to register (since 1981 all American males have to register for military service at the age of 18, although there is no draft...yet), was in prison peace campaigners in San Diego would form giant peace signs (which are still popular) at night outside the prison and then light candles. They also got mothers involved in walking through shopping centres, dressed in black with their faces painted white, carrying shopping bags saying things like "shoppers against the draft". They would then all walk in formation, drawing attention to themselves in the process. Much protest activity involved large visual aids - masks, giant specer-like figures symbolising war/death, missiles which turned into busses and the like.

Although the activities of the US peace movement were far less focussed than ECC, I was impressed with the variety of issues they were able to take on. An important aspect of their work was solidarity related - Nicaragua, El Salvador, South Africa etc. They were also involved with nuclear disarmament work - protesting against the Reagan government's continued use of nuclear tests despite the Soviet moratorium ("The Soviets Stopped - Why Don't WE?"). A lot of the groups also worked extensively in schools with counter-recruitment. The military would go into the schools to

recruit people for the army, navy, airforce and marines and they would often be followed by peace activists who would provide education on peace jobs, run advertisements raising questions about the wisdom of joining the military (much of which would fall foul of section 121 c) and working on non-violent games with younger kids. Another important area of their work was war tax resistance. At the moment there are over 10 000 Americans withholding all or part of their taxes and redistributing it to worthy causes as a protest against armaments expenditure. Some groups put a lot of emphasis on cultural and educational exchanges between the United States and the Soviet Union. An activity which was drawing plenty of media attention when I was there was the Sanctuary movement - where activist church groups were providing sanctuary for refugees from El Salvador and other Latin American countries who had entered the United States illegally. Some groups - particularly the Central Committee on Conscientious Objection (CCCO), the National Inter-religious Board for Conscientious Objection and groups like the Vietnam Veterans Against War (funded by one B Springsteen) focussed much of their work on draft counselling - both of people facing registration and those in the army, as well as those wanting to leave.

Because of the nature of the US peace movement and the nature of American society the urgency of day to day intense activism is not nearly as great as in South Africa. This meant that, for example, many groups had to rely on full-time staff members far more than we do. But it also had a positive effect in that it allowed people with non-activist lives to be involved in a low-key, but on-going way. There were not the same expectations of total commitment which we sometimes tend to have.

The anti-apartheid movement had less to offer that was directly applicable to ECC. However, one thing I noticed was the success of the "shanty-town" as a symbol of anti-apartheid protest on campuses. Using shanties built in prominent places in the universities they created a very visible site of struggle, which they could rally around, use for teach-ins, use as a media stunt etc. The idea was that the shanty town was a symbol of the consequences of apartheid (and the more sophisticated groups also used it to relate to poverty and racism in the USA).

I was also impressed by the willingness of the student activists to be arrested for civil disobedience activities around the apartheid issue. While I was at Yale for example 322 students picked up criminal records as a result of their protests. This also applied to the off-campus anti-apartheid groups - pulled together under the banner of the Free South Africa movement (coordinated primarily by TransAfrica). Through getting literally tens of thousands of people arrested (including hundreds of establishment figures) for protesting in front of the South African embassy, they have helped focus attention on apartheid.

4. Publicity at Home

The amount of publicity extracted from the tour in South African newspapers was a bit disappointing. Nevertheless at least five local newspapers ran short pieces which may, in a minor way, contribute to our credibility. The other side of this is, of course, the Aida Parker Newsletter.

5. Future International Contact

One of the prime motivations for the tour was to build the basis for a further, more high profile tour in the autumn. The idea was that the War Resisters League would sponsor an intense four week tour of the United States by two ECC representatives - one woman and one man - with one person travelling down the west and the other travelling around the east. It was planned that the visit would coincide with that of two UDF representatives.

This tour has now been postponed until about April or May, but should otherwise go ahead as planned. A lot of the work I did in the US was to help raise money for this tour and to get people excited about it. The idea is that the tour will involve plenty of public meetings and rallies, meetings with senators and

congressmen, a lot of media work etc.

My feeling was that a tour of this nature could be extremely useful for ECC and for our struggle generally.

3). POSSIBLE PROBLEMS FROM THE TOUR

A hint at the kinds of problems which can arise from tours of this nature was given by the Aida Parker Newsletter, which focussed extensively on the question of our international links and mentioned Laurie and Pete's and my tours specifically.

While this shouldn't deter us unduly it is always something to bear in mind. We always have recourse to the media council or the courts (?) as Rapport discovered but these are defensive options to recover after the event.

The two most sticky areas in this respect were the question of the ANC and that of divestment (or divestment as it is called in the United States). At no stage did I appear on a platform with the ANC, but on two occasions my name was printed on the same programme as an ANC rep - even though I had turned down the invitation to speak. In this regard there were also things which were impossible to avoid - for example shaking hands with an ANC rep who later introduces himself (or even with a So viet rep for that matter). If a sharp branch photographer were around it could have caused difficulties.

When asked about ECC's attitude to the ANC I always replied that we supported the unbanning of the ANC, the return of all exiles, the unconditional release of all political prisoners, and that there would be widespread support in ECC for talks with the ANC such as conducted by the PFP, NUSAS etc.

On the issue of divestment (both of these issues always came up) I stressed that ECC was a coalition and that we didn't have policy on the issue, and that it was potentially treasonable to advocate divestment (and that Boesak was being tried for this, among other things). When asked about the attitudes of blacks I always cited the Markinor/Gallup poll.

At many of the meetings "Divest Now" posters and ANC banners were prominently displayed, which again could have caused problems for ECC.

Potential problems of this nature are endemic to tours of this kind, and the issues they raise will have to be carefully considered when future tours are being planned/considered.

A problem of a different, but perhaps equally important nature, is that of taking people out of ECC for long periods in order to tour overseas. Because tours should not be seen as training activities it is necessary that people with considerable political experience are chosen. But these are the people who are often most central to ECC campaigns.

The possibility of making seemingly minor slips in answering questions was a bit of a nightmare. I found that I was required (on radio talk shows, television etc as well as in small meetings) to have a detailed understanding of every aspect of South African society, history, statistics etc. I found having done the Apartheid Barometer very useful in this respect. It was never alright to say I didn't know when I wasn't sure of the answer to a question. People expected me to know all the ins and outs of South African society.

4). THINGS TO FOLLOW UP

There is plenty of follow-up work to be done from Johannesburg in relation to the tour. This includes work related to funding, thank you letters, keeping the different groups constantly in touch with the main issues in ECC through sending them publications, posters etc, and asking them for continued support statements

on issues facing ECC.

There is also the question of a possible tour by four or five members of the War Resisters International later in the year. This would involve a lot of work from our side.

While I was in Philadelphia I met with New Society Publishers who were enthusiastic about doing an ECC book. Their idea was very similar to that of the CIIR book, so we felt that it would be a good idea for New Society to publish it in the United States (with an intro by Bishop Tutu) and for CIIR to publish it in England and South Africa. CIIR also felt this was a good idea because they said their distribution network in the United States was weak.

5). CONCLUSION

I think the tour was worthwhile and went well. There were very few hiccups along the way (or few that have presented themselves so far), and the gains made have been considerable.

In general I think the whole area of international contact is a very important one for ECC. It requires a lot of work (if we build on the contacts made during the tour the gains will be magnified), but the advantages from the effort seem to far outweigh the problems involved.

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS OF AMERICA: YOUTH SECTION E.C.
Y.S.E.C MEETING -- APRIL 12 & 13, 1986 Saturday

<u>Time</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Decisions</u>
9:30-10:15	Introductions	What's everyone been up to?	None
10:15-11:00	Organizer's Report	What's Bill been up to?	None
11:00-12:45	University Project	Report on April 10th by Paul K & Josh...discussion	None
12:45-1:30	Repro Rts Project	State of the project	Where to go from here
1:30-2:45	Female leadership discussion/break	munch	where to eat?
1:30-2:45	Female leadership discussion/break --see Carisa's memo		
2:45-3:00	Revival for Survival	World Youth Festival folks have asked us to endorse the RfS	decide to endorse or not.
3:00-4:00	Plans for next year	In which we divulge our own plans for running or not next year, and think about others we'd like to see in nat'l roles	None
4:00-4:45	Caucuses	Discussion of caucuses' relationship to EC & visaversa	None
4:45-5:00	Summer conference	brief report on site progress; Choose & empower committee empowering conference commit.	
5:00-5:30	Guest speakers	Representatives from S.A. anti-draft movement	None

Sunday

10:00-10:45	Which Way America I	Discuss content of draft	Give guidelines for revision
10:45-11:30	WWA II	Discuss procedure for passing draft at summer conf.	Who should finish draft? What procedures to use before the conf. and for amendments at the conf?
11:30-12:30	Political Discussion	Gender and sexuality	None
12:30_1:00	Evaluation		

WESTCHESTER PEOPLES ACTION COALITION
Connie Hogarth, Executive Director
255 Grove Street
White Plains, NY 10602
914-682-0488

Connie Hogarth is a founder and Executive Director of WESTPAC, an eleven year old organization, devoted to a broad range of social and political issues, and a resource center and clearing house for information. She is a member of the National Board of SANE, the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, Board of Directors of National Rainbow Coalition, and locally on Board of Clergy and Laity Concerned. She also works with Fellowship of Reconciliation and NAACP and many local groups on anti-apartheid work.

WHAT WE'VE BEEN DOING ON SOUTH AFRICA:

1. Formation of Westchester Community on Africa at WESTPAC one and a half years ago which:
 - A. Immediately organized public meetings on the issues with speakers from the ANC.
 - B. Brought the issue into the spotlight for the Rainbow Coalition Peace Caucus which Rev. Tony Watkins and Connie Hogarth organized and chaired in 1985. It brought together peace groups under the Rainbow with South Africa as a central issue. Meetings included speakers from ACOA and ANC.
 - C. Produced materials, leaflets, and petitions relevant to Westchester, a county where many corporations heavily collaborative with South Africa reside.
 - D. Organized street and other distribution of materials along with a petition campaign.
 - E. Organized Westchester clergy and lay people to participate in the South African Consulate demonstration and the civil disobedience actions there last year. Participated many times in the daily demonstration, and organized three civil disobediences for Westchester including a large number of local clergy.
2. The first goal was;

to demand that Westchester county divest its funds from banks that do business in South Africa. We instituted a petition campaign for this purpose working with churches, NAACP, Black Women's Caucuses, peace groups and academic institutions. We gathered thousands of signatures. Working with the only two Black legislators Herman Keith of Yonkers, and Ernest Davis of Mount Vernon, attending many legislative meeting, following the county fiscal officer around and generally haunting them all, we were instrumental in the unanimous passage of a strong resolution. It stated that the county will not use banks that do business with both the South African government and private banks in South Africa. This provided considerable public credibility on the issue and serves as a spur to organize further, and we formed the Westchester Anti-Apartheid Network.

3. The next steps have been;

A. Campaign of state divestment of pension funds.

B. Campaign directed at the corporations, especially IBM which has a large presence in Westchester, Putnam, and Dutchess county. We joined Di Scott, World Issues Office of the United Church Board for World Ministries at the first IBM demonstration at Armonk world headquarters.

4. Ongoing public education;

Our network now includes peace groups, women's groups, CALC, several NAACP's, campus groups, as well as the original WESTPAC and Rainbow Coalition. We have held and co-sponsored a number of programs with these member groups; we have supported campus activities and protests, we provide resources for organizations, campuses, and churches, with materials and audio-visuals from our library. We held a fund-raising concert for the ANC with the Sechaba voices.

5. Postcard Campaign

Three months ago we started a postcard campaign to Governor Cuomo demanding he do more. They have circulated around the metropolitan area and upstate by way of the Albany and NY State Rainbow Coalition.

6. Lobbying;

Ongoing contact in Westchester and Albany with State Senator, particularly Senators Flynn and Goodhue, two Westchester Senators who, we hope, may be moved to play a role in getting the State Senate off dead center.

7. Networking;

We are part of the NY Anti-Apartheid Coordinating Council, attend their meetings and help organize Westchester for rallies and lobbying. We are in touch with Westchester clergy and CALC. There are several clergy people whose special interest is South Africa--Rev. Robert Taylor, White Plains, a white South African minister, impassioned on the subject and Rev. Linda Thomas, White Plains, a Black minister in a inter-racial church who has spent time in South Africa.

8. Lastly;

We will help to organize a tour in Westchester in the Fall to involve churches, temples, and colleges for End Concription Campaign (ECC), white South African youth who are resisting and refusing to be drafted into the South African army. Gavin Evans of ECC is in the US now and will be at WESTPAC on Tuesday, April 29, at 1:30. He will be at Riverside Church at noon. If you are interested in meeting him or in bringing these young people to churches this Fall, please let us know.

No effort must be left undone, by every segment of the US community to dismantle the hated system of apartheid and to strengthen the South African people's right to determine their own lives and future.

Collection Number: AG1977

END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

©2013

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document is part of a collection held at the Historical Papers Research Archive at The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.