

ECC CONTACT GROUP
PROPOSAL FOR INTERNAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME

23/5/85

At our last workshop/assessment it was felt that a programme of internal education and debate should be initiated. A number of areas and subjects were suggested where it was felt that a resource or a structured discussion of some sort would be useful to active ECC workers.

For the sake of clarity, and to an extent according to their function, these can be ordered in terms of 3 sub-headings. This of course does not mean that the areas or the issues involved are mutually exclusive.

A. INTERNAL FACT SHEETS

Some of the subjects raised do not really involve discussion. Others which do involve discussion, could usefully be backed up by resources such as articles, press clippings, books, guides to references and even films and photos.

Under this first heading we could therefore draw up a resource for each of the following :

- 1) Legislation
- 2) SADF in townships
- 3) Peace movements internationally
- 4) CO internationally and in South Africa
- 5) The relationship between the military and the state

B. INTERNAL DEBATE DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Some of the areas raised at the workshop cannot be covered by a simple provision of data, or by means of straightforward answers. An informed understanding of the issues raised by them would be best generated through open, but structured discussions.

Under this sub-heading we could place :

- 6) What do we mean by civil war?
- 7) What can we learn from the experience of peace movements elsewhere?

C. INTERNAL POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC TOPICS

Other of the areas raised only indirectly concern our understanding of the realities of the apartheid war which we face. Rather, they concern how we are responding to those realities. We could therefore say that the questions here involve a history of the ways in which the military issue has been taken up, and the direction in which our organisation is now moving.

The following areas should be covered here:

- 8) Where do we fit into the struggle? ie. how, through fighting conscription, are we fighting apartheid?
- 9) What alternatives should ECC put forward to participation in the SADF?
- 10) Why is ECC organising a "Peace Festival"? Why is it necessary to start building a movement for peace?

It is hoped that these 3 sub-headings will be adequate for categorising and ordering a process of internal education. But, it still remains to consider how this material is to be made available to ECC's active membership.

Rather than occurring outside of ECC's day to day work, or in isolation from its activists, internal education should become an integral part of ongoing activities. It should be seen as a benefit to ECC workers, rather than as a bore or a bind. For this to succeed, this "education" must be both organised and flexible. With this in mind the following suggestions are advanced :

(1) Co-ordinators

- i) ECC needs 2 people who will be responsible for co-ordinating research and formal internal education. Their responsibility is not to do the research or educating.
- ii) These co-ordinators could liaise with other organisations and other centres' research efforts, so as to avoid duplication of work, and gain access to exciting resources.
- iii) They will be responsible for palming out to ECC activists or, on occasion to "experts" sympathetic to ECC, areas for research, writing up and presentation.

(2) Involvement of ECC membership

- i) This system will have the advantage of generating as many "experts" in different areas as possible within ECC itself.
- ii) In general, fact sheets and research results will be made available or publicised to ECC workers via the sub-committees.
- iii) Where internal discussion is required sub-committees could perhaps once monthly or bimonthly, have extended meetings to create the required time.
- iv) In each sub-committee, discussion will be structured or co-ordinated by whoever took responsibility for that subject. Because this would be a lot of work, involving both preparation and attendance at at least 4 discussions, no one should take responsibility for more than one area.
- v) Discussions should not be lectures. Some reading, or at least an outline with questions, should be made available to each sub-committee in advance.
- vi) Generally, the traffic between research co-ordinators and sub-committees should be 2-way. Further areas which arise which people feel should be integrated into this programme should be passed to the co-ordinators.

(3) Priorities

It could be suggested that of the 10 areas outlined under sub-headings A, B and C that 3 are achievable immediate priorities to be taken up. These are:

- i) Legislation. An internal fact sheet will be made available as soon as possible.
- ii) Civil War. This will be taken up at the neat ECC Open Forum on June 6. It would be nice for as many active ECC people as possible to attend.
- iii) Why a peace festival? This should be taken up via the sub-committees before the festival. Andre and Laurie to co-ordinate.

(4) Adhoc discussions

- i) All of this so far sounds very formalised. This structured programme should by no means be the only forum for political and strategic debate or for discussions around ECC or any other subject of relevance to the military issue.
- ii) Space exists within ECC for any two or more of its members or workers to organise such discussions on an adhoc basis. For example, someone working in a particular area may feel they wish to informally consult or pull in a number of other ECC members to help work through particular issues. This should be encouraged.
- iii) Where necessary or desired, the two general co-ordinators exist and any questions, enquiries or contentious issues arising out of adhoc discussions can be taken up in a structured way through them.

Finally, the active participation of all who are involved in ECC's organisational work is crucial to the success of this programme. Through it it is hoped that we will become clearer about what we are doing and that we will be better prepared to build future gains out of both present problems and successes.

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