

CONCEPTUAL WORKSHOP - 27/7/87

ATTENDANCE: 11

INTRODUCTION

Six commonly asked questions were discussed. The purpose of the discussion was not to formulate a rigid set of answers, or to formulate any sort of policy (ECC, being a front, cannot have one particular policy in respect of issues other than conscription).

The points made below in respect of the questions reflect the views of the individuals participating in the discussion, & may serve merely as guidelines for answering similar questions.

QUESTION 1:

"We the peace-loving citizens of SA condemn the senseless violence of the ANC aimed at innocent civilians."

Could ECC support this statement. Why?

Response: We do condemn senseless violence regardless of its source. We cannot support the above statement (which formed the basis of a petition circulated by the DSA, the local National Students Federation affiliate) since it gives a one-sided view of violence in the sense that it ignores the context of Apartheid. Apartheid is the root cause of violence -

This is the issue; secondary responses of violence cannot be isolated.

Apartheid is a violent system which as such invites a violent response to it.

It may be argued that the elimination of Apartheid is equated with the elimination of the necessity for violence.

QUESTION 2:

"Why do you object to the SADF being in Namibia when they are defending the border against communist terrorists?"

QUESTION 2:

- "I accept that the SADF shouldn't be in the townships but you need conscription to prevent the communists taking over."
- The whole idea of the 'commie take-over' is a red herring. We need to point out why this is so.
  - ECC opposes Apartheid. Opposition to Apartheid is clearly far from being synonymous with communist sympathies. Now that the 'Swart Gevaar' is no longer useful to bandy about as an incentive to support the West government, the 'Rooi Gevaar' serves this purpose. Opposition to Apartheid remains - merely the label has changed.
  - We should be asking why the State is attempting to label ECC as communists - as adopting a particular political outlook, when in reality ECC's membership reflects a diversity of opinion.
  - The State would be unable to maintain its position of power without Western - in particular, US - support. To ensure this support, it is necessary for the State to play up the 'Communist threat'.

- More US aid is poured into Southern Africa than Soviet Union aid.
- It was interesting to note that Laurens Nathan's tour showed US support for ECC.
- In short, we need to tackle the issue of the State's use of the 'Communist Threat' to sidestep the real issues.

QUESTION 4:

"You know that you can't end conscription. Surely your real intention is to undermine the State & further the aims of a Russian revolutionary take-over?"

RESPONSE: - This question implies that ECC has a hidden agenda. Our agenda is open, it's conscription. If the State allowed a viable choice there would be no ECC.

- By opposing Apartheid & calling for its elimination one is calling for end to the reign of the current government. However, our motive is merely the implementation of a Just Race - there can be no Just Race without an element of choice; the content of this Just Race is also open to choice.



QUESTION 6.

"I was watching TV last night & heard something from the ANC about their 'Anti Censorship Campaign'. So are you really just furthering their programme?"

RESPONSE:

- What are you taking in opposition to the State are in accused of Communist conspiracy. Clearly the State was the real enemy to criminalize all those who oppose them.

- ECC has only one voice - censorship. Meaning they oppose censorship with the State. The does not mean either.

(1) That their reasons are the same as ours or

(ii) That there are any other similarities between ECC & such organizations or

(iii) That the ANC had anything to do with establishing or controlling the ECC or

(iv) That the ANC's reference to "its anti censorship campaign" was a reference to the ECC. This could have been a clear play on words - on the part of the compiler of the programme - understood as a smear on ECC.

- TV is not a neutral medium. It reflects government propaganda

- ECC is prevented by the Emergency laws from campaigning for an end to censorship. We can, however, continue to campaign for our interim demands.

QUESTION 5:

"The woman who works for us says the troops in the townships are welcomed because they have stopped violence & controlled the criminal elements. (ie need troops to defend private property)."

- Need to address the diversity of perspectives in the townships
- \* Domestic workers, etc. may give answers / statements that arouse those they won't lose their jobs (ie. express opinion acceptable to employer.)
- Note: Mike Satchell's survey of press coverage of violence indicates that despite the press sympathies towards Inkatha, it is still clear from press coverage that Inkatha is responsible for the most violence in the townships.

- SADF's role in maintaining law & order: Refer to Stephen born's evidence in Philip Wilkinson's trial: Stephen born witnessed that SADF's main role in townships is to suppress the progressive movement, & not the maintenance of law & order.

- Conflation of support for ending conscription could <sup>then</sup> be extended to suggest that every person in the country / world who opposes conscription into the SADF is an ANC supporter! This is clearly not so.

- Perhaps taking the very first point we can reverse the question to some extent by asking how anyone can oppose the State without being branded 'Communist'? Whether one opposes the State peacefully or violently one is accused with the same red herring.

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**END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)**

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