

20/8/85

ECC ROUND UP

This is an incomplete account of ECC activities around the country. It is based on my time spent in Natal and the Eastern Cape and on the misuses of ECC in Cape Town.

A Pietermaritzburg

- 1) The ECC public launch (3/8/85) was a great success. Molly Blackburn, Ivan Thoms and Laurie spoke on the activities of the SADF and the role of the ECC under the State of Emergency. There were about 200 people, the strangest of which was a fairly old dude in a dark suit with a pink badge saying "Socialism Sucks!" and a black briefcase with a tape recorder in it. There was excellent media at the meeting, very good drama performed by the Culture Comm. and extensive press coverage.
- 2) The ECC Churches Comm organised a successful workshop on advice counselling which was facilitated by Paul Graham and attended by about 20 people. An Advice Bureau will now be set up.
- 3) A broad forum of ECC people discussed the implications for ECC of the State of Emergency. The goals of ECC in the current period were seen as follows:
 - * to describe to the white community the role and activities of the SADF under the Emergency, to explain the causes of the current violence and to spell out a clear alternative to repression as a means of ending the violence;
 - * to express the outrage felt by a large sector of ECC's constituency at the imposition of the Emergency;
 - * to get a better feel for how ECC's different constituencies understand and are reacting to the current crisis;

- * to be supportive of the individual soldier both through ECC public statements and through building and publicising the newly formed advice bureau;
- * to present arguments that will appeal to soldiers eg the demand that troops should have the right to refuse to go into the townships;
- * to build non-racialism both by having community and trade union speakers at ECC meetings and also by explaining ECC's position to the black community through pamphlets and speakers at community meetings.

4) On the basis of the above discussion the ECC General Meeting (12/8/85) considered the following actions: sending ECC speakers to Saamkol and community meetings; distributing a 'troops out' pamphlet in the black community; holding house meetings and canvassing people door to door in the white community; advertising the advice bureau; street theatre and concerts; using the Cape Town 'posters for peace' exhibition; raising ECC's issues at a forthcoming Africa Enterprise Conference; compiling with PACSA a factsheet on the Emergency.

5) The planned ECC publication describing and analysing the role of the SADF in the Eastern Cape is now being done by Willem Jordie, the Resource Co-ordinator, and will hopefully be completed by the time that the campaign begins.

6) Mike Tarr, PFP Member of Parliament, has become the first MP to sign our Declaration but would like this kept quiet until after the PFP Congress!

7) ECC members attended Alan Dodson's court martial in Durban and

produced a pamphlet outlining what happened. The pamphlet was intended for distribution at an Emergency meeting on campus, at which an ECC person spoke, and will be circulated to other regions.

B Durban

- 1) Durban ECC, in discussing the Campaign, felt that the most appropriate theme would be ECC's call for a just peace. The 'troops out' theme would not appeal to ECC's constituency in Durban given the nature of the conflict there - the liberal press and even UDF have called for greater police intervention to contain Inkatha. The call for a just peace, on the other hand, would be positive and forward looking.

It would make sense to have the fast at the Ighandi Settlement in Phoenix because of its historical significance and its being at the geographical centre of the current phase of violence in Durban. The final week of the fast also coincides with the anniversary of Ighandi's birthday, and the annual Ighandi memorial lecture will be given at the Settlement on 6 October.

- 2) A Conscription Action Group has been formed on Durban campus. It will register as a society with membership open to campus and with the aims of calling for an end to conscription, working for a just peace and assisting and supporting students affected by conscription. At its first meeting CAG decided to affiliate to ECC.
- 3) Nussas has drawn together various political and religious groups on campus to run a conscription campaign in the third term. The

activities planned so far include a survey on conscription and a panel discussion on conscientious objection.

- 4) Many of the male students who have been put on 1/2 hour standby by the SADF have indicated their total opposition to going into the townships and have approached the SAC for assistance.

Cape Town

- 1) ECC organised a public meeting on the use of troops in the Western Cape with Dr Boesak, Chippie Oliver, Ivan Thoms, Jane Coombe and a speaker from Lyngebau. There was incredible participation from the floor and 16 people volunteered after the meeting to work on the Campaign.
- 2) ECC has participated in the grassroots Media Festival, an inter-organisational workshop and a WPC non-violent direct action planning meeting.
- 3) On the 15th, ECC and Koeberg Alert, an affiliate, had an Open Forum on the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and the subsequent nuclear arms build up.
- 4) The following plans for the Campaign have been proposed by brainstorming sessions and will be discussed at the next general meeting:
 August 12-18: CAG starts State of Emergency barometer on campus; letter-writing campaign; 'troops out' and 'fast for peace' badges and t-shirts and posters produced; chain letter begins; ECC stalls at night clubs, markets and the Labia; meeting of organisations involved in the Fast.

August 19-25 : bumper stickers ; pamphlets ; general meeting to plan further ; balloons !

August 26-September 1 : buildup to Selberg anniversary ; letter-writing ; information evening on fast and campaign ; ECC newsletter ; school pamphlet ; joint-organisational conference on security and repression.

September 2-8 : Selberg anniversary (Sept 3rd) ; pickets ; poster and pamphlet blitz

September 9-15 : major fast publicity ; pickets ; Long Conference (Sept 13-15)

Plans for the fast :

Fast launch (Sept 15) : mass meeting and service in St George's Cathedral.

Fast duration : main fasters fasting in central venue with ECC media available ; weekend / relay / solidarity fasts ; cost of missed meals donated to emergency relief fund ; info. meeting on troops in townships (Sept 19) ; Art for Peace exhibition at Baxter Theatre (Sept 22) ; weekend of preparatory fasting in solidarity with 'long' fasters (Sept 28/29) ; press conference (Oct 2) ; non-violent direct action ; creative action (eg letters of protest to Malan, Le Grange and Botha ; media stunts ; aeroplane banners ! ; fast stickers and badges).

Fast culmination (Oct 4-7) : prayer vigil launching fast ; day of creative action ; Churches day of focus ; troops out mass rally ending fast and symbolic meal.

D. Post Elizabeth

1) The ECC general meeting (19/8/85) had a very productive discussion

on the Campaign and the Fast. People were enthusiastic about the potential of both, despite the general approval for the State of Emergency from the white community. The following ideas for action were raised in a brain storming discussion: open letters addressed to soldiers in the newspapers, possibly written by a prominent church person; publicising what the SADF is actually doing in the townships; getting women involved and using the notion of motherhood to transcend racial barriers; publicising widely, through the press, newsletter and churches, ECC's position on the use of troops; raising the demand that troops should have the right to refuse to go into the townships; street theatre; drawing up a graph of State expenditure on the military relative to housing; advertising the Advice Bureau; pamphlet presenting the individual positions of the 'long' fasters; inter-organisational meeting around the fast and campaign; publicising soldier's letter.

- 2) An Advice Bureau was set up after a counselling workshop on Saturday the 17th and will begin publicising itself.

E Lyabamtown

- 1) Organisations interested in forming an ECC in Lyabamtown (Black Sash, Lyacons, Lyabamtown Committee of Democrats, Nuss and Cog) are meeting this Saturday to strategise it.
- 2) A Conscription Review Action Group (CRAC) has been formed on campus with representatives from Nuss and Christian groups. It is preparing media and drama for campus and the Oppies Craft Market and is planning its launch.

Collection Number: AG1977

END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

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