

# End Conscription Campaign

227/9 Khotso House  
42 De Villiers Street  
Johannesburg  
2000  
Tel: 337-6796  
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Att. 3.7

10 June 1987

Dear ALL,

I hope this package will get to all of you quite safely - do take special care over these next few weeks!

Enclosed in this package is the following :

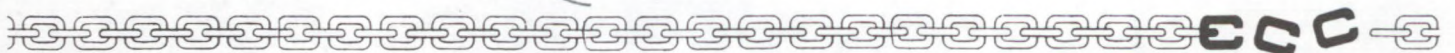
- a. NC minutes - just the basic outline, decisions that were ratified and issues that need to be discussed in the regions.
- b. A paper drawing on the conceptual discussion at NC - the purpose would be to provide a framework for facilitating this discussion in regions. It's essential that all ECC members are able to participate in this discussion in some way to ensure that people feel a part of what is happening nationally,
- c. Press clips - some may be repeats but this time they are a bit more organised and put into categories - thanks to some extra help on this side.
- d. Schools Survey - for those who are working around the schools issue.
- e. A wonderful schools pamphlet produced by the Black Sash Education Committee - and guess who else!

A reminder that regions need to prepare adequately for NC and so need to be raising issues in their regions for discussion, as well as forwarding ideas, suggestions, issues, etc for the proposed agenda. There may well be some overlap here between what needs to be done for NC and what people want for a possible mini-national conference. This information will then be worked into a proposed agenda which will hopefully be circulated by end June to the regions for discussion for NC. Suggestions for the NC may be better facilitated through phone contact.

Stay strong and happy hours of long discussion!

In love & solidarity

Adèle



**ECC**  
End Conscription Campaign

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42 De Villiers Street  
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2000  
Tel: 337-6796  
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15 June 1987

Dear Friends

Thank you for informing us about the formation of the Congress of Pink Democrats, and what the background and principles are to this alliance.

We trust that your work within the progressive struggle in South Africa will contribute to a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.

I have enclosed some of ECC's most recent media and newsletters for your information.

Towards a just future

Odile Kirsten (ECC National Secretary)

Akirsten



CONGRESS OF PINK DEMOCRATS  
PO BOX 7315  
ROGGEBAAI 8012  
CAPE TOWN  
87.04.II

Dear People

Greetings from the newly-formed Congress of Pink Democrats.

Enclosed is some information about our alliance, which at present represents approximately 600 people nationwide.

Yours in the struggle

C P D

# CONGRESS OF PINK DEMOCRATS



## A Progressive Lesbian and Gay Alliance

The Pink Triangle was worn by gay men and lesbians to identify them for the Nazi's death chambers during the Second World War. These men and women, who numbered more than half a million, eventually amalgamated their forces against the oppression of the Nazis in the concentration camps and in doing so made a historical statement for lesbian and gay liberation. Although they lived under the tyranny and humiliation of the Nazi racial elite they were determined to stand up for their human rights. We have chosen to include the pink in our name to take our stand alongside our sisters and brothers who died in that period of terror and to show our solidarity with those who continue the struggle for human liberation in South Africa today. So the name stands for Unity, Courage and Determination.

Four gay and lesbian organisations - Lesbians and Gays Against Oppression (LAGO), Rand Gay Organisation (RGO), African Gay Association (AGA), and Gay and Lesbian Association (GALA) - joined hands over the weekend 4-6 April and formed this grouping representing the progressive lesbian and gay voice in South Africa. Two further groups were present at the meeting - Gay Association of South Africa (GASA) and Impact, both of which needed to refer the matter back to their membership.

The Congress of Pink Democrats realises that in our situations as gay men and lesbians our resistance groups have a specific contribution to make to a progressive post-Apartheid South Africa. The class/race/gender system that structures and distorts human life today is a unitary system, involving every human individual, and several layers of human interaction. People who become aware of one specific evil that the system generates are thus bound to stumble, as they struggle on this front, onto wider connections and deeper roots. We come into the movement from different points  
of/...

IF WE CAN'T DANCE TO IT, IT'S NOT OUR REVOLUTION

of entry, but the further we proceed, the more we converge, as we increase our awareness of the system as a whole. Whether the point of entry is racism, queer-bashing, nuclear arms, or rape, it is not hard to work out that this system is part of a more systematic oppressive social structure.

AIMS OF THE CONGRESS OF PINK DEMOCRATS (CPD):

To join in the struggle towards a non-racial, non-sexist, non-heterosexist, democratic South Africa.

Non-negotiable Principles:

Non-racism

Non-sexism

Non-heterosexism (an examination of heterosexism in society and a continued response to it )

Non-collaboration with Apartheid's structures and their ramifications in economic, political and social structures

General Principles:

- To develop and maintain a gay and lesbian identity within the progressive struggle in South Africa, and to support and encourage a more visible profile of active and participating lesbians and gays in the struggle.
- To maintain contact with international gay and lesbian groups.
- Individuals are accountable to the group, and groups to the other groups of the alliance in terms of the four non-negotiables.
- To collate resources and skills of lesbians and gays nationwide.
- To maintain democratic structuring and processes within the Alliance.

Address: c/o P O Box 7315  
 ROGGEBAAI  
 8012

Cape Town  
27 June 1987

Dear Other E.C.C. Centre

Well, it seems like a long time, so here goes. Firstly to say that in Cape Town since the last NC we have had the pleasure of having Nic in town, and Clare from Joburg has been here for a couple of weeks and at the moment Sally from Maritzburg is here and so we have had a whole lot more 'national contact' than usual. What a nice change!

Ivan has recently come back from his trip around the country and it seems that he had a very productive time. At very short notice all of you managed to get a lot together for him and that's amazing. As I presume all of you will know by the time you get this letter his call-up was withdrawn yesterday, which has left us feeling that some sort of a victory has been won, however a little confused. Ivan himself is probably the most confused as to how he feels, he was geared up and prepared to go for it. However we must make the most of the withdrawal publicity-wise. They have said that they will call him up in November, but obviously that remains to be seen and we can't bank on it.

Obviously the issue of whether or not to include the fact that Ivan is gay in the statement is something that has been debated or discussed in most of the centres. Cape Town ECC had felt that for ECC it would be best if the gay issue was excluded and this decision was based on the belief that our broadest possible group of supporters around Ivan's campaign would probably not be accepting of Ivan's gayness, and would tend not to be progressive on the gay issue (in fact, probably very conservative). Ivan was asking us what we felt he should do as far as the issue went. We have subsequently had a letter from the Lesbian and Gay group in CT asking us to reconsider and challenging us quite fundamentally on the way we have handled the whole thing. As a result we had a long and serious look at the whole process of Ivan, his campaign, and the way that he has related to ECC and LAGAO. I think that the most useful thing that all the regions could learn from our experience is that the whole area of accountability between someone who is objecting and the organisation to whom they have made themselves accountable must be very carefully worked out. We felt that we should have discussed right at the beginning of it all how ECC handles the objection of an ECC member. We cannot strategise an objection campaign like we would a Troops Out campaign. And even though Ivan was coming to ECC to ask what should be in the statement and stressing his accountability, we need to be sensitive to the fact that 1. He had/has not clarified what his needs are and were 2. The personal interaction with the political is very stark in this situation and has to very sensitively dealt with.

This whole long previous paragraph makes this seem perhaps more of an issue than it has been, I am just hoping that it makes some sense to the rest of you and that it is useful.

What we had planned at this stage for the campaign around Ivan was a press conference on the Tuesday (he was due to report on the Wednesday), all of us to pack out the 7am service at St Georges which would probably be taken by Tutu, and then all of us to go to the

place where Ivan was to report, but a specific delegation of an MP, Tutu, the lawyer, Ivan's priest, Mary Burton, some staff from the clinic, me and then masses of tv crews and journalists to be with Ivan as much as we could while he reported. This would be for protection in a real sense and for publicity.

We found it difficult to plan much more than that because it was so unclear as to what would happen. It is frustrating to have ones and timing so dictated by them.

I have decided to make the words closer together because Ivan was just the first point on my agenda for this letter and it will be embarrassing to have to send ten pages so I'll just try to squash it up!

The Campaign (WINCLCAJP - remember that one?)

Well, as you should all remember CT had not yet had a lot of its biggest public events of the campaign by the last NC. What we had in store was a fair, a public meeting, a multi-media evening (which is sort of a more interesting concert) and the memorial. The memorial won't be ready until October so we took outside of the campaign and are continuing it as an independent project. Briefly, the fair was amazing, masses of people, lots of goodies and lots of fun. Helicopters dropped pamphlets on us at the fair and in Claremont which we have followed up (sub group proudly called Magnus PI) with some success. The meeting was quite the saddest public event we have held for ages, almost no-one came and we all excessively depressed for days thereafter. The multi-media evening was two days after the meeting and was very well attended and a great joy. Most of us were still suffering post-meeting depression and so drank a lot of Tequila and managed to change our spirits and states somewhat more effectively than without external aids.

We had a long assessment of the campaign when we felt able to cope with it, and it was very productive. We felt the timing of the campaign was bad, that this business of stretching it out over two months makes it become a rather strangely co-ordinated set of events rather than a campaign. We had quite a long discussion about the way in which we see campaigns. At present we don't tend to do much public work outside of campaigns, and so when we do have a campaign we just attempt to do all our events during that time. But we felt that what we should rather be doing is making sure that we are having ongoing public events throughout the year so that ECC's profile is not dependant only on campaigns, and then campaigns should only be run when we have a clear and specific demand that we want to make which suits the style and character of a campaign. Campaigns in other words should not be held merely to raise ECC's profile or even primarily for that. We also felt that in Cape Town we have not used the campaign to develop the 'second prong'. We would like to redefine the second prong away from being just mass membership and housemeetings, and more into being 'diversification' or 'targetted work'. We chuck out our media to the amorphous mass of the public, and we need to put more energy into targetting constituencies and complementing the amorphous mass work with carefully thought through strategies for dealing with a whole range of specific groupings. As far as the message of the campaign we thought, as did all the other regions (I think) that it was woolly and inappropriate. We felt that Content would be better if it is clearer and more precise than the broad, broad message of this campaign. We felt strongly that demands of campaigns need to be more tangible than the vague call of a just peace. Our most successful campaigns of the past have had quite concrete and tangible demands. Then lastly and importantly we felt that the organisational gains of the campaign were minimal. We have recruited few people, we have not developed and trained activists in the process.

This assessment, as well as the ~~Commission~~ NC discussion about ECC and where

it should be heading have sparked a lot of thought and discussion and we have been quite inward looking. We also have been very hard on ourselves (Laurie keeps on trying to remind us that we are wonderful and that from far away we are oh so impressive). But being hard on ourselves and thorough about working through all the hassles and problems is starting to look very challenging and exciting, where it did look daunting and depressing not so long ago.

#### The Commission of Inquiry

After the last NC I came to CT in a flat panic about ECC and where we should be going and what the hell we should be doing. At the exec meeting we decided that we needed to put a lot of thought into working out all of this, and so decided that we should set up a commission of inquiry to look into the form and content, aims and constituency that ECC should have. The commission would be responsible for having thorough discussion, and then at the end of the process draw up a paper and have a workshop which will have been very carefully planned by the commission. We have made an effort to have front reps working on the commission and UDF and Sash are both represented.

Nic was here at the time and he helped to set the whole process on the road which was really useful. He drew up a paper which he sent around the country and that helped in drawing together most of the problems in a coherent way. However we have not based our discussions on that paper. What we have done is planned four main areas that need to be discussed by the commission and we have only got halfway through the second area at this stage.

1st area: trying to work out why conscription (the issue, not ECC) is an issue at all, what potential does it have and why, who gets freaked out about conscription and on what basis? How does opposition to conscription link in with opposition to apartheid? Do people tend to oppose conscription because they have moral objections, or because they have material hassles with having to go to the army for two years? This discussion proved to be very interesting, but I don't think that we reached any earth shattering conclusions. It was useful, though, in making us look at conscription as an issue rather than at ECC which is something that we tend to focus on. Most of us, I think, came out of the discussion excited about the potential of the issue, that it can appeal to people on both a moral and material grounds and that it is a contradiction that can be exploited.

Our next discussion has involved trying to look at ECC's history and to assess that. This has proved to be extremely useful. We had an input on different phases of ECC's history (very CT centric, but we have no choice) which divided our history into four phases: 1) up to October 84 where aims were the building of the front and consolidating; Establishing support from fraternal orgs and individuals (primarily through the declaration); and the beginning of attempting to popularise ECC through the Namibia campaign. 2) Oct 84 to June 85. This phase probably didn't achieve its aims. Content presented itself to us on a plate and we didn't seize it (troops had gone into townships in Oct 84). Our planning had focused on the International Year of the Youth which never came to much fruition. However, in CT ECC as an organisation expanded rapidly as a structure, set up most of its subcomms at this time. The peace festival in mid-85 meant that nationally ECC consolidated and expanded. However we failed to extend our public support substantially.

3) Period of rapid expansion. Troops Out and WJP. Mid-85 decided to target conscripts as a constituency but TOC which was immediately after that hardly took forward or acted on that decision about our direction. WJP, however, quite consciously attempted to do that.

4) Emergency period. Aims were survival, developing security, training activists, maintaining channels of national communication. To develop the second level of organising, and later to campaign at a public level as far as possible.

The questions that we then asked ourselves were a) What were similarities and differences between the phases in terms of: aims; content; form; and constituency reached. b) Assess and give reasons for the successes and failures of our history concentrating on our public work and effectivity.

This whole discussion has proved very valuable in beginning to show us what about ECC has worked and therefore needs to be kept and built on, and what has not worked and can be thrown out the window. Just as assessing always helps define direction, so does this assessment.

The next area of discussion of the commission will look at what has changed with regard to the state, the democratic movement and our constituency in the past year. And then in the light of these changes, what potential does the issue of conscription have. The final discussion asks how ECC can make maximum use of that potential, and in this discussion we ask ourselves what our aims, form, content and constituency should be in the light of all the previous sections.

By then we may have come to some of the answers. Fascinating hey?

We are also coming up with proposals for recruitment and training, our Outreach sub-group (which handles housemeetings and the 'second prong') is starting to come together well. We have our first area targetted housemeeting this week, next week are inviting the 150 people who signed up to be on our mailing list during the campaign to come to a housemeeting, and soon thereafter are hoping to have a housemeeting with the disaffected PFP youth (of which there are many).

It was great to have Nic in town, but we still feel that we have a lot to learn about how to make the best use of the NO. We certainly felt that we need to prepare for his visits a whole lot more than we did for this last one.

We are also pushing most vigorously that there is no point in having a national meeting greater than an NC unless a large number of people are permitted to come from each region. We simply cannot give six people the mandate to go off and make enormous decisions about our future and direction. They will have to go off with mandated positions and that means that they then have to come back to us if those positions are not accepted and negotiate compromises etc. In which case it might as well be little ole me at NC except that 6 people have the pleasure of getting to know other ECC members around the country. But what we really need at this stage is not for yet another mandated discussion where everyone has to keep dashing back to their regions, but an opportunity for ECC nationally to sit down and be able to think and debate out and develop positions together. (This is not to say that each region doesn't need to prepare).

I think that it is getting late and that it is time for me to go now. I hope that this long manuscript gives you some idea of what we are up to. I have given no feedback on subcomm work, I'm sorry, I've run out of energy.

Lots and lots of love, hope that things are going well all around the country and I hope that I shall be seeing you all again fairly soon

PS We didn't get banned, did we? (Well, not yet anyway). And not even our finances have been cut off. What is going on? All a bit confusing if you ask me.

Love again, strength, solidarity, and all of the very best of luck  
Paula

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