

ADDENDUM A

REPORT OF DISCUSSION AROUND ECC'S DIRECTION WITH MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

Organisations present: Black Sash, Young Progressives, Gardens UDF area committee, Society of Friends, Womens Movement for Peace.

The Black Sash has had a very thorough process of discussion around the issues concerned. All reps other than Womens' Movement for peace had discussed the issues with their organisations.

ECC gave an input on the factors that gave rise to the commission of Enquiry and a summary of the discussion thus far concerning ECC's aims, content, form and constituency.

Responses from member organisations

1. ECC's constituency

ECC's constituency, very broadly, is the conscripted community. Within that community our greatest potential support lies with the liberal constituency. We are very haphazard in our knowledge and understanding of our potential constituency and need to find out what perceptions different groupings have of conscription. In what sectors and at what ages is there the greatest resistance to conscription, and why?

ECC tends to focus its campaign on sectors of people who already know and understand the issues around conscription. We should attempt to reach out to new groupings and areas. However, we should not overestimate the level of understanding and knowledge about ECC within our 'regular' constituency. Many people in, for example, the Southern Suburbs, still do not know what ECC is.

ECC should target professionals, parents, church groups, campuses, afrikaans areas and school students. At present ECC is associated with campus-age-youth. School pupils are an important constituency, but it should be born in mind that pupils are probably not ready to confront conscription in the way that university students are. ECC needs to increase its impact on universities.

There is also a lot of potential support from PFF supporters and ECC needs to recognise the value of the PFF's constituency (300 000 people voted for them in this last election). However we should not overestimate our potential in this grouping. Although the PFF has policy on conscription, many of the people who vote for them probably do not even know this.

ECC is seen as a political organisation and it is one. We must not underestimate how political it is to be anti-apartheid in the white community. In being seen as political, ECC is associated with the ANC and the UDF rather than the PFF. There is more potential for support for opposition to conscription in general than support for ECC

and this is probably because of ECC's political image. However, ECC as a political opposer to conscription raises the issue of conscription and creates the space for moderate opposition to conscription.

The Gardens Area Committee felt that ECC was a first step for people being involved in anti-apartheid work, whereas the Sash saw it as a last step, feeling that it was acceptable to do all sorts of anti-apartheid work before ECC, that ECC are seen as traitors.

Whilst ECC's primary constituency is the conscripted community, conscription does have an effect on the black community and the support of black organisations for the campaign is important. ECC should build links with black organisations in order to develop a mutual understanding of the work done in different organisations and also so that whites see that ECC has the support of the black community.

2. The effect of the smear campaign

The smear campaign against the ECC was seen to have been very effective, and the Sash particularly felt that the ECC, ANC and UDF are seen as a package deal. However the smear against the UDF has been greater and more effective. ECC is largely seen as cowardly and unpatriotic. A large section of people probably don't believe the the context of the smears but are scared off from ECC by them. They feel that contact with ECC would probably be dangerous.

Gardens raised the question of how ECC responds to smears and suggests that the best defence is to carry on the work of the campaign rather than a 'hassled, negative reaction.'

3. How ECC could better reach potential supporters

- Publicise options for conscripts rights in the army. ECC is seen as radical and thus alienating for conscripts. Should put this in Classified sections of daily papers
- let public know who we are
- build up links with black organisations
- campaign for specific tangible demands eg Dads Army, alternative service. Public will respond to specific issues they can support. Sash felt there is greag,otential for alternative service and suggested ECC run annual campaign at time of Feb intake
- housemeetings
- going for an older membership
- lobbying behind the scenes
- * - schools: go for teachers and parents. Idea for a 'military free school' which had no cadets or registration
- need to interact in an undefensive, unthreatening way with people who do not support ECC. eg. debates and discussions

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with Lions Club and Rotaries. But need to have serious discussions, not propoganda.

- need to involve people on less active basis eg. associate membership
- should go for a working alternative to conscription, so not just a trendy anti-establishment organisation
- could get each memeber organisation to call a house meeting which ECC could address

4. ECC as a strictly single issue campaign

ECC should remain single issue, but not necessarily be totalled principled about this. There could be room for supporting 'other issues', and the process of desicion-making around this should be quicker.

5. General

It is not surprising that ECC's support is levelling off. It experienced a meteoric rise and the support has to stabilize some time. It would be good to see some new faces in ECC.

(DRAFT)
REPORT FROM COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY

WHY ALL THIS THOUGHT

This initiative was stimulated by a number of different factors brought to Cape Town ECC's attention from various quarters:

1) War is Not Compulsory. Lets Choose a Just Peace (WINCLCAJP) campaign assessment.

There was a strong feeling from the campaign committee that this had been our least successful campaign for a number of reasons:

- a. We failed to state our aims clearly and therefore were, firstly, unclear from the outset what message we were taking to our constituency, and secondly, unable to assess our progress during the campaign in terms of a set of clearly stated aims.
- b. The content and message of WINCLCAJP was vague and unclear. It attempted to incorporate too many different ideas under one general heading and became less and less sharp and focused.
- c. We lost the sharpness of our single issue focus and therefore the campaign lacked strength.
- d. It was not really a campaign. It had no clear focus or tangible realisable demand/s which could involve the community. A 'Just Peace' is an unrealisable goal at this stage and therefore difficult to perceive. WINCLCAJP was rather a disjointed set of events connected only by a vague slogan. The slogan became longer, clumsier and more unwieldy as it attempted to include everything in one campaign.
- e. This past period could be viewed in terms of a few successful events, for example the fair, rather than as a campaign with one clear focus and message. The events served to raise our public profile again rather than take ECC forward as a campaign.
- f. The campaign was often defensive rather than offensive. We needed to regain the initiative.
- g. We felt out of touch with our constituency.
- h. There was no sense or cohesion of the WINCLCAJP or ECC at a national level.

2) The effect of the State of Emergency on ECC's:

- a. Content
The restrictions of the State of Emergency made it illegal to call for an end to conscription. This resulted in a shift away from strategising campaigns around our central issue, that of conscription. Cape Town ECC felt strongly that we should rather focus on militarization of South African society, the escalating war and its effects more

broadly.

The emergency also placed us on the defensive. This effected our content, particularly at the start of the emergency, when we shifted to a reassertion of our right to speak and to know.

b. Form

At the start of the emergency our form was effected in so far as we were cautious and careful about doing public work, though we soon began testing our legal space.

More importantly perhaps, the emergency lead to our searching for new forms of more low-profile work which could be incorporated into ECC in conjunction with our high-profile public work.

c. Constituency

The emergency served to increase the white community's fear of the democratic opposition to the government. It lead to increased support for the national security options offered by the government.

The press and media clampdowns and restrictions resulted in widespread ignorance amongst whites about what is happening in South Africa. The white community became more and more isolated from the black community. Their main source of information being that of the SABC, providing only the government's interpretation of events.

The public's right to know was increasingly eroded. Our society became more and more polarised. Some whites shifted to the left, others to the right, with a diminishing middle ground.

We felt out of touch with what our constituency was thinking.

3) Smears

We have experienced a concerted and orchestrated attack on ECC at many levels - graffiti, anti-ECC pamphlets, posters and publications, harassment of members, government restrictions and detentions.

This attempt to give ECC a bad image in the eyes of our public and criminalize our activities and organisation has effected the way people perceive ECC. Our concern is that we have no measure of the effect of the smears on our constituency.

We have had to counter and continually respond to the smears. However, they have forced us onto the defensive and now we need to regain the initiative and move onto the offensive again.

4) The white community want 'solutions' and ECC does not offer such

They want a vision of a future South Africa. ECC has a specific focus and incorporates a range of political views.

It therefore has no political programme and is not in a position to be providing possible 'solutions'.

- 5) ECC has reached its peak and we are now travelling old ground with the same people

Debates arose around our direction in this regard. Should we be providing 'solutions' and extending our 'Just Peace' message to the 'same people', or should we be retaining the broad appeal of our single issue, trying to win even wider support from whites. Is it possible to do both.

- 6) Pressures from other organisations:

a. Fronts and alliances

The State of Emergency saw the emergence of front initiatives from organisations in the white community to oppose the emergency as well as asserting other broader more overtly political demands. ECC as an important voice in the white community was asked to join.

Debates arose around our single issue nature. It was felt, however, that given the current situation, we should consider supporting demands which fall outside our specific issue. Others argued that this would not correspond with the range of political views reflected by our front and would place us firmly within the democratic movement.

b. The Democratic Movement

The critique from historically supportive groupings in the 'Democratic Movement' that we are 'too distant' from them and should move closer; also that there are general priorities in the struggle that our priorities sometimes conflict with.

PROCESS

We felt it to be necessary to define what we were investigating. It was decided that this should be seen as an investigation into the :

1. aims
2. content
3. form
4. target constituency

of ECC.

In order to determine future direction we had to fully understand our past, as well as the issue of conscription.

We therefore discussed

- a. the issue of conscription and why people oppose it;
- b. the different periods of ECC's history;
- c. the lessons we learnt from the history;
- d. the current situation with respect to why we are investigating ourselves.

On the basis of this investigation we identified and prioritised areas for future ECC work.

WHY WAS IT POSSIBLE TO ORGANISE AROUND THE ISSUE OF CONSCRIPTION

Conscription into the SADF is a concrete issue which directly effects and oppresses white South Africans. It is a contradiction organic to white South African society.

Many whites are negatively effected by conscription.

Why do people oppose conscription

Reasons range from the physical and psychological brutality and hardship; dislike of authority; boredom and frustration; disruption of lives and careers; low salaries; a feeling of fear and waste of four years - through to lack of freedom of choice; objection on religious and moral grounds and objection to the political role of the SADF.

These reasons may be divided into two categories: The moral reasons for opposing conscription and the non-moral or material reasons.

It can be argued that there is a big step between these two categories. ECC has historically tended to focus on the political and moral dilemma of conscripts using the material disadvantages strategically to draw the links.

We need to investigate far more thoroughly the nature of opposition to conscription at all levels so as to understand better how to organise around this central focus of our campaign.

Moral vs material reasons for opposing conscription


We need to weigh up the relative importance of the two groups and explore the relationship between them.

It was argued that there are many more material reasons than moral ones for opposing conscription. There were also good material reasons for going into the SADF ie. the long term protection of material interests.

This raised the possibility of conscripts weighing up the increasing material costs of conscription with the desire to protect white privilege and domination.

It was argued, however, that young conscripts do not do such a cost benefit analysis. They are not necessarily ideologically motivated and most do not make conscious choices about being forced to serve in the SADF.

Yet, the material unhappiness experienced in the SADF has created an extremely high level of dissatisfaction, even amongst supporters of the policies defended by the SADF. This has the affect of creating dissidents.

 This is a crucial basis of opposition to conscription. Given the significance of this material opposition, ECC needs to explore possibilities for organising on this basis.

HOW HAVE WE ORGANISED

How has ECC historically intervened in this contradiction and how effective have we been.

Analytical history of ECC's development

We can usefully periodise ECC's history into four phases:

1. From its inception to the official launch in October 1984
2. From the launch until the national Peace Festival
3. Troops Out Campaign in mid 85 until WJP in mid 86
4. Since the declaration of the State of Emergency

PHASE 1: INCEPTION TO LAUNCH

The goals identified at ECC's inception were the following:

- a) To build the front. There were debates around constituencies and surveys were carried out by organisations such as the Black Sash and NUSAS.
- b) To establish support from individuals and fraternal organisations. The medium through which this was done was the declaration.
- c) To begin campaigning in the white community which was a big step, and to popularise ECC, through the No War in Namibia No Win campaign.

Constituency:

The targeted constituency was broadly the same as now - those conscripted or affected by conscription.

There was, however, a debate concerning the extent of involvement and participation of the black community.

The launch saw for the first time an attempt at defining our constituency. The events around the launch (vigil, concert, meeting) were structured to appeal to our particular community, including religious and cultural aspects as well as a broad appeal.

It was felt that the goals as defined in this phase were met by the end of that first year.

Content:

With regard to the content and message of the ECC, there was a haphazard approach. For example the choice of the Namibia campaign was not a logical choice and was not an ideal first campaign in retrospect. It was unstrategised.

The content of the declaration was militant and hard hitting and in retrospect inappropriate.

The discussion and formulation of the launch saw a change. The meeting was carefully and consciously strategised, reflecting the broadness of the issue. It was also more focused. Stopped just latching onto issues and began strategising.

PHASE II: LAUNCH TO FESTIVAL

In general this phase can be assessed as being less successful. If targets had been set at the launch, by mid 85 they had not been met.

The ideal content presented itself in the form of troops moving into the townships but we failed to seize this issue until Troops Out Campaign (TOC), one year later.

The post-launch period, the first half of 1985 was a difficult period with ECC struggling to define its role. We picked up on Sebokeng and the increasing civil war. But while support grew, we had missed many gaps through grappling unnecessarily with constituency questions and wasting time in involvement with the International Year of the Youth (IYY) campaign.

Goals in this phase would have been identified as:

- a) building ECC as an organisation, developing its structures.
- b) extending support started at the launch.
- c) national expansion and consolidation.

The first goal was very successful with the building of four sub-committees and representing them on the executive. By the end of this phase ECC was more solid organisationally even though there had been little public work.

The second goal was less successful. We missed the message of Troops in the townships as well as the dilemma posed for conscripts. We did manage to expand and consolidate support in the youth constituency as culture committee expanded.

The third goal saw the appointment of a national organiser and saw a process of consolidation at the national Peace Festival.

PHASE III: TOC IN MID 1985 UNTIL WJP IN MID 1986

This phase saw the rapid expansion of the campaign. A national conference in mid 1985 saw a decision to bring the focus back to the conscript. To focus on the individual and target conscripts and relatives.

This was not, however, carried through in the content of the following campaigns with the exception of Geldenhuis. ECC moved straight into TOC. This did not meet the major goals coming out of the mid 85 conference directly though it did serve to express conscripts feelings. TOC was high-powered and militant, not directed enough at the conscript but extended support in the black community and church.

It was only through Working for a Just Peace (WJP) campaign that we began to broaden out into the white liberal community. We were more accessible to people other than those who already supported ECC and opened up possibilities for their more active involvement.

PHASE I - III:

All three phases saw the national growth of ECC.

PHASE IV: SINCE DECLARATION OF STATE OF EMERGENCY

The emergency had caused a psychological shock for ECC members. Three main areas were addressed:-

1. **Maintain and keep organisation intact.** A hold was therefore placed on public work as we attempted to:-
 - tightened security
 - improve education and training of activists
 - built effective support structures
 - build effective national and regional channels of co-ordination and contact
 - address the psychological state and morale problems
2. **To develop a second level of organising** which was less high profile and less risky. There was no clear idea of where to take people reached in this way.
3. **We had to continue to campaign at a public level** as best as possible. We should not give up our legal space and needed to test and contest it.

The emergency restrictions lead us to decide to broaden our focus to looking at broader, more general militarisation. It was not clear what was meant by broader militarisation however.

Campaigns which followed such as Let ECC Speak and the Yellow Ribbon campaign were defensive in nature. There was no national co-ordination with a War Toys campaign being run in Durban and Pretoria, a War is No Solution (WINS) in Cape Town.

In general the campaign was lacking national cohesion. We had not re-examined or redefined our constituency and were out of touch with it in the light of the changes brought about in the current phase of South African politics.

The increasing state attack and anti-ECC smears had an effect at both an internal and public level.

The emergence of fronts of progressive organisations protesting against the State of Emergency necessitated a response from ECC on the question of our participation and our single-issue nature.

LESSONS DRAWN FROM OUR HISTORY

Content

1. Until the declaration of the State of Emergency in 1986 we were constantly refining and focusing our content. It focused on conscription, with issues of general militarization, justice and peace being secondary. This was particularly the focus of the Working for a Just Peace (WJP) campaign which was seen as a highpoint in public support for ECC.

It was therefore felt that content/calls/demands, which are clear and focussed, and do not try to incorporate every possible issue are successful.

2. Since the emergency our content has been diluted. We have focused on
 - a. **defending ECC**
 - b. **broad anti-militarization** and demands for a 'just peace'

We have lost the initiative we had around the focussed issue of conscription. The state has forced us onto the defensive. We need to regain the initiative.
3. Our audience is no longer receiving a clear message from us.
4. Calls for alternative service were felt to be very relevant and focused on the issue of conscription. They were important in that they picked up on moral/political as well as more material factors.
5. We had not sufficiently taken material, as opposed to moral/political reasons for opposing conscription into account. Material factors are crucial to why conscripts oppose conscription. We need to pick up on the material conditions of conscripts with respect to
 - a. military service as a whole
 - b. conditions faced by soldiers during service.
6. We are part of a broad democratic movement and therefore we should not contradict that movement in our content.
7. We need to improve our knowledge in the area of militarisation in South Africa and become 'experts' in the area. We need to be less propagandistic and equip ourselves with facts to back up our arguments logically and rationally.

Focus

1. A hallmark of our activities has been their creativity and originality as political events. Particular activities have been successful because they are based in the regular experience of the groups we are targeting.
2. Those events that are creative and based in our constituency's experience contributed to our taking the initiative. The state attempts to portray our activities as subversive or outside the law. Events, eg. fairs, which are obviously not in the category of traditional political activities are not easily undermined by the state. They are forced to respond to us. We need to utilise such forms.
3. We have reached peaks of creativity at points when we have experienced internal growth. It has been at these times that a range of new ideas entered our discussion. We need to concentrate on building and once again expanding ECC

internally within the organisation so as to benefit from new inputs.

4. We have become fixed in our thinking with regard to political events. We have increasingly relied on traditionally all-encompassing political forms eg rallies. This has coincided with our not specifying and focusing on specific constituencies.

We need to focus our work on specific target constituencies. Our activities should be appropriate to these groups.

Campaigns

1. Our strategising has become too campaign orientated. We should rather see the campaign as one of many vehicles we can use to carry our message.
2. A campaign must have a clear, focused political objective, present a challenge to the state, convey a clear demand or set of demands, and be accessible to our target constituency.
3. We should distinguish between a campaign which is constructed around specific demands, and a focus which might be a set of linked events eg a lecture series.

Constituency

1. While we have identified the liberal white community as our constituency we have not been rigorous in identifying and understanding target groups within it. We need to research this community.
2. While identifying conscripts and soldiers as crucial target groups we have never seriously addressed how to work with them. We need to do this.
3. We tend to identify our constituency on exclusively political lines, ie. liberal whites. We need to see that general moral and material factors are crucial bases of opposition to conscription. We need to include groups who oppose conscription on these bases into our constituency.
4. We need to increase our liason and contact with organisations in the black community.

HOW DOES ECC REGAIN THE INITIATIVE

In the light of the previous discussions, and the lessons learnt, we asked ourselves how ECC should regain the initiative. In order to do this we determined ECC's goals, constituency and strategic objectives.

Goals

Goals were divided into two categories, those demands that are directed at the state, and what we aim to do with our constituency.

Demands aimed at the state:

- End Conscription
- Troops Out
- Provide alternative service
- Broaden rights of conscripts
- End Cadets
- Give ECC the right to exist

Constituency aims:

- Expose the role of the SADF
- Broaden and deepen war resistance
- Build non-racialism
- Oppose militarisation in schools
- Politicise the white community
- Build support for our demands

Constituency

We direct our message to: conscripts; the white community; the state and the black community.

Our constituency is very broadly the base that we can potentially shift to support ECC's demands. Politically this would be PFP supporters and those to the left of the PFP.

Whilst this broad political definition of our constituency is valuable, there are dangers in defining our constituency from the outset as a small left grouping in the white community. Firstly, many individuals do not have a clear, worked out political definition of themselves and we should not confine them to a definition, and by so doing restrict our access to them. A second danger of such a definition could lead to complacency on ECC's part, being satisfied with working in areas which we know are 'safe' and broadly supportive eg. Rondebosch, and neglecting new areas eg. Parow.

The loose definition of our potential supporters as being on the left of the white community should not lead to our making assumptions about how progressive this sector is. The white community is extremely conservative and the definition of 'left' does not mean that they are not conservative.

Specific constituencies we do and should target are churches, schools, parents, youth culture types, university students, teachers, veterans and conscripts. Our knowledge and understanding of these groups needs to be improved.

Strategic objectives

On the basis of the lessons learned through the process of the Enquiry, the following three thrusts were identified as crucial areas to ECC's future direction:

- a) Focus on conscripts and soldiers
- b) Calls for alternative service
- c) Information role

a) Focus on conscripts and soldiers/

We are motivating that there should be an increased emphasis in ECC's focus on conscripts/soldiers/vets

Why?:

to broaden and deepen war resistance

conscripts are the heart of ECC's constituency. They are most directly and negatively affected by conscription

this shift in emphasis can help with other goals eg exposing the role of the SADF (access to soldiers will give us information about SADF activities) and building non-racialism (conscripts support for the democratic movement could benefit this aim).

the abstract discussion on material/moral bases for opposition to conscription showed clearly the crucial basis of material opposition and the potential for us to organise on that basis. ECC has always spoken of, but never seriously addressed this issue

Content:

ECC has always addressed conscripts at the level of moral and political issues. Even when we have taken up issues that do affect the day to day lives of conscripts we have articulated these on an exclusively political basis eg the right of troops not to go into the townships.

The major shift being proposed is that we address some of the material issues that affect conscripts, ie. hardship faced by conscripts and which lead to dissatisfaction.

However, in this regard we distinguished between two aspects of the material oppression of conscripts.

- i. There are material issues which offer little scope for shifting the specific dissatisfaction in the direction of a general opposition to the system of conscription eg. the low wages of conscripts or the uncomfortable beds, are examples of the material oppression of conscripts, but the improvement of these conditions would not in any way challenge the system of conscription.
- ii. There are those material issues which offer the scope for making the transition to opposition to conscription. For example, by raising and challenging the physical or psychological brutalisation of soldiers, forms of discipline and authoritarianism, we are taking up issues which affect all conscripts.

b) Calling for alternative service

We should include a focus on our call for viable alternative service. This would allow us to return to our single-issue direction while not transgressing the emergency regulations. We would be representing a real need of conscripts, ie. a change in the law.

Calling for alternative service is a clear and tangible demand we can put to the government. It will constitute a challenge and therefore ECC will gain the initiative.

Our call for constructive national service is a patriotic

one. This would be well received by our target constituency. It would also make it difficult for the state to smear us as un-South African. It would be forced onto the defensive.

It would also contribute to our role in building non-racialism.

c. Information role

Press restrictions have resulted in an ignorance within the white community and we need to inform them about what is happening in South Africa and surrounding countries.

In the past, we have been too exclusively propagandistic. We need to present indisputable facts which are able to back up and support our arguments in convincing, rational and carefully thought out manner.

We should build up our expertise in the area of the military and militarization of our society. ECC should look to becoming the reference point, providing expert information and knowledge in this area.

We need, therefore, to develop our research groups more seriously in order to gather such information.

We need to develop creative and effective methods of disseminating as much information as possible to the public.

We need to investigate possible ECC Enquiries into controversial events involving the security forces.

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END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)

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