

Introduction

This motivation is based on ideas raised in discussion by the Durban and Pietermaritzburg ECCs. It comes particularly in response to Malan's attack on us in parliament last week. I've attached a copy of his statement.

Motivation

There is clearly a systematic attack being built up against us at the moment. As well as Malan's very heavy threat against us last week there were also the recent PE incidents as immediate precedents. These follow closely on the heels of the Aida Parker Newsletter, attacks and threats by the Anti-Communist Anti-Terrorist League, the Anti-Communist Citizen's League, and action by the NSF. There are also a host of incidents that stretch back all the through ECC's history.

The general thrust of the attacks has been to create the impression that ECC is a threat to state security. This is largely based on the proposition that we are either a communist organisation, or that we are linked to communist organisations or fronts. Another angle on this is that ECC is hindering the state's efforts to fight the "communist threat". There have also been attempts to scare our members away from working in ECC through threats, questioning, as well as direct physical attack.

Up till now we have responded with either taking up legal proceedings in the Media Council, or through the occasional press statement.

Since the attack is becoming dangerously systematic it is important that we respond thoroughly at this stage. While a response to attack is by nature an act of defence, there is no need for the tone of our response to be defensive. Our response could be such that we do not merely deny the attacks on us, but rather throw the issue back at the state and force them to respond to us. To this end it is important that we link our response to our ongoing campaign, asserting strongly our demand for an end to conscription etc. We need to be saying that it is pointless for the state to attack ECC. That is not going to end the real and widespread opposition to conscription that exists. A number of ideas for action have been proposed.

Ideas for Action

- 1) The first idea is to compile a comprehensive list of the incidents of harrasment. It would be useful too to have as many affidavits to accompany it as possible. This list would form the basis of the argument that we are being attacked in a systematic way. It would be a document which we could use to inform the public here, and key organisations internationally, of what is happening. International human rights organisations could use it to apply pressure on the government. Here we could send it to a number of organisations including the PFP. They could possibly take it up as an issue in parliament. We could publicise it through a major press conference at which a very prominent person, eg Beyers or Sir Richard could speak on our behalf. They could stress the urgency of the need to end conscription as well as the fact that it is folly to harrass ECC since the key issue is not the existence or not of ECC, bit rather the continuing system of conscription which is engendering resistance.
- 2) The second idea is an action in which a letter outlining our views would be publicly delivered to the government. A proposal of the kind of letter in mind has been drafted and is enclosed. The thrust of it is a call on the government to reform the defence act. It would also outline our reasons for this call.

This would be a useful action for a number of reasons. It is intrinsically a moderate form of action and would win us much support. It is assertive in that we would forcefully be putting forward our demands directly to the government. It would generate a lot of publicity especially since it would be in the style of politics that would appeal to a large part of our constituency. It would essentially put the state on the defensive since they would be in a position where they might feel the need to respond in some way. Importantly we would be challenging the state on its own terms, i.e. through the parliamentary process. This could preempt a state attack on us in the short term. It would not reflect very well on the state to attack a group who has very moderately put its demands to it.

The actual logistics of the delivery process would still need to be worked out. An idea has been raised and that is to turn the delivery into a "creative action" which would attract a lot of press interest. Ideas in mind include a sit-in as well as to do something outside of parliament. These ideas should be considered both in terms of their publicity value, as well as in terms of how they would reflect on the process of speaking to the government

i.e. would they be undignified in the context. A further idea is to have actions in all of our centres to coincide with the delivery, e.g. to deliver a similar letter to the local offices of the defence department. There would also be scope for international actions.

- 3) The third idea would be to combine (1) and (2) above.
- 4) A postcard campaign - we could get postcards printed with the Ministry of Defence's address on it as well as a message to the government. The kind of message could be something to the effect of "Harrasing ECC is not the solution. Ending conscription is. Stop the July call-up for the sake of peace..." etc. We could sell the cards to the public and ask them to sign and post them.

Conclusion

The tone of our response should not be defensive but ^{rather} pushes our call to end conscription as the central issue. We would be saying that the systematic harrasment of ECC is not going to stifle the key issue which is the wide-spread call to end conscription. It would be useful, too, to link our response to the call-up campaign, e.g. by introducing a specific demand to stop the July call-up.

Other areas to discuss would be timing as well as the process of national decision making and coordination around the ideas.

What do you think?

Very rough draft of a letter to the government.

In the light of recent attacks by members of the government on the End
Conscription Campaign, and in view of ^{the absence of} any relief for conscripts within the
Defence White Paper, we feel it necessary to restate and clarify our call
to you. Our campaign is calling on your government to end conscription
into the SADF. To this end we draw your attention to the attached proposed
ammendment to the Defence Act. (See Appendix 1). *(we could use the
ammendments drawn up by COSC*

We are requesting these changes for the following reasons:

- 1) Conscription violates the internationally recognised right to freedom of conscience;
- 2) Conscripts are used against their fellow citizens in an attempt to uphold the policies of your government. These policies deny basic human rights and freedoms to the majority of South Africans. This use of conscripts has been exemplified by their widespread deployment in townships to repress opposition to apartheid in the period since the latter part of 1984; This use of the SADF places the conscript in a highly unfair position in that he is obliged to defend your government's policies;
- 3) Conscripts are used likewise for incursions into countries throughout Southern Africa. These incursions violate the internationally recognised right of these countries to their territorial integrity. In Namibia specifically, the SADF has been used to maintain South Africa's illegal occupation of that territory. Conscripts are in an invidious position in that they are forced to participate in these activities;
- 4) Conscription has added to the growing militarisation of our society. This militarisation is harmful in that it poses military solutions to what are fundamentally political social and economic problems in South Africa.

Until such time as conscription is ended we call on your government at the very least:

- 1) To provide alternative service to all those who cannot in good conscience serve in the SADF;
- 2) To ensure that the length of alternative service does not exceed that of military service;
- 3) To allow alternative service in non-government organisations.

We refer you to Appendix 2 which proposes ammendments to the Defence Act regarding the above.

As a short term measure we call on your government to give soldiers the right to refuse to do their service in the townships, in Namibia and in other countries.

As an immediate measure we call on your government to not proceed with the military intake of this July. This would provide relief to those conscripts conscripted for it.

It is as responsible and patriotic South Africans that we are calling for these reforms. We believe we are morally correct in our stand as it is based on principles of justice, democracy and freedom. Ours is a lawful and legitimate call.

We call for your urgent attention in this matter.

Yours, etc.

TOP OF STORY<

#zozo qpb5848 r p ppa830 pwx(EDP)

Masnus(EDP)

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES May 13 Sapa(EDP)

South Africa could not allow organisations like the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) to break down the country's ability to fight communism, the Minister of Defence, General Masnus Malan, said today. (EDP)

Speaking in his vote of the Budget he said he was encouraged by the determination of the members of the House of Representatives to fight off the communist onslaught. (EDP)

(")We must not allow organisations like the ECC to stop us in this task. There is no place for people who wish to break down the country." (EDP)

Attempts were being made to gain control of the youth and everyone had a duty to make sure this did not happen. (EDP)

Gen Malan said a paramilitary youth camp would be established in Kimberley next year at which 200 coloured youths would receive military training and tuition in skills which would enable them to become (")worthy citizens." (EDP)

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TOP OF STORY<

#zozo qpa8733 r p ppa833 mal(EDP)

Question-Military(EDP)

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY May 13 Sapa(EDP)

The Deputy Minister of Defence, Mr Adrian Vlok, said today he was not prepared to ask a military policeman to swear under oath that he had identified himself before arresting an End Conscription Campaign member at a public meeting last month. (EDP)

Answering questions by Mr Phillip Nyaburen, the PFF spokesman on Defence, Mr Vlok said he accepted the word of the MP, a captain, that he had produced his military identity card before arresting Mr F G Wilkinson at a meeting in the Johannesburg City Hall. (EDP)

The captain had given the assurance that he had identified himself and, Mr Vlok said, he did not consider it necessary that the officer sign an affidavit, as requested by Mr Nyaburen. (EDP)

Mr Wilkinson, a lance corporal in the SADF, was arrested for not reporting for military service, Mr Vlok said. (EDP)

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END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)

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