

End Conscription Campaign

A4.311

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7 October 1987

Dear Friends

It would have been good to have seen evryone in the next few days but - alas! - ECC was unable to hold a national conference due to natural disasters!

It was a very difficult decision to come to but we felt that htere were significant factors which made it impossible for us to hold the conference as planned.

NC was also postponed as we felt that regions would need time to adjust to the sudden change in plans and that we also needed to draw up a more specific agenda for NC rather than just repeat what was planned for conference - that would have been inappropriate. It would be very useful if NC reps could come to NC with some feedback on how regions felt abput the sudden chnages wrt Conference.

Enclosed in this letter is :

- a. Revised National Conference Agenda
- b. Proposed NC agenda
- c. Structures Proposal
- d. Amended SACBC Proposal

Thats all for now!

Much love and strength

Adelle



PROPOSED NATIONAL COMMITTEE AGENDA

1. National Structures Proposal

This proposal is enclosed in this package and comes out of discussions held at the last NC. Regions must try and have had discussion on the issues raised in this proposal prior to NC - this section is a priority for ECC especially with regard to electing new national workers for 1988.

Any additions, comments, etc can be dealt with at NC.

2. National Conference

- Enclosed in this package is a revised conference agenda (taking regions' comments into account)

- Any additions, changes, etc to this agenda can be done at NC

- Due to the postponement of the conference, there may be new issues to discuss

- Out of this discussion a final agenda will be drawn up for circulation

- hopefully the logistics wrt security and travel arrangements can be finalised at NC

3. Regional Reports

The usual guidelines for these reports to be followed ie : morale, security, activities of the region.

Particular emphasis should be placed on the development and status of the regions discussion on the focus on the conscript - what discussions have happened?; what is the regions' understanding of the 'focus on the conscript'?; have other orgs. been consulted on this issue? ; etc.

4. National and Regional Workers Reports

5. Finances

- A report on our financial situation to date and expected income and expenditure until the year end - input from the national treasurer

- Regions to come with full budgets of expected expenditure until the year end - also to include debts and loans that need to be paid.

- Regions to report on the status of their own internal fundraising efforts and ideas for raising money - our situation remains precarious\$\$\$!!

6. Input on the State of the Nation and the State of ECC National - National workers to co-ordinate on this.

7. VVAW Tour

- Input from national on the response from VVAW wrt to the timing and concept of the tour
- Another priority area which regions need to have given as much attention to as possible - discussion on the concept of the tour and how it fits into ECC's work for 1988
- Bring concrete ideas of how we can prepare for the tour
- What kind of hype do we want to create around the tour and how do we use the period leading up to the tour - any good ideas?
- the role of campus in this tour - this would also be important with regard to the exact timing of the tour
- to come with specific ideas on the actual timing of the tour and day to day programme

8. Schools

We felt that this was an area of our work that needed to be discussed both now and which would also have further discussion at National Conference.

We would deal with basically the same issues raised in the Nat. Conf. agenda ie:

- How have branches worked where an independent schools group has existed alongside an ECC's schools sub.committee?
- assess the priority of identifying schools as an area of important work.
- assess the question of working in the schools area wrt security and the increased attention paid to this area.

9. Legal

We also felt that this was an important area on which to get clarification and discussion. Regions should address the questions as put in the first conference agenda proposal. (Refer to the conference agenda)

Durban is requested to give some input on this issue as they took on this task for national conference

10. Idasa Militarisation Survey proposal

- A point of information and perhaps some preliminary discussion at NC
- Grahamstown to give this information.

11. A proposal for a co-ordinated list of resources to be distributed to all regions

- Proposal from Clare Verbeek

12. Action around the February Call-up

- To come with some preliminary ideas on how we plan to focus on this issue
- to be able to take back to regions for discussion prior to the national conference

13. There are 4 issues which will be discussed in more detail and finality at national conference but which we need to be able to update at this stage:

a. Southern Africa WJP Project

- input from CT on the developments and consultation that have occurred
- reports from the regions wrt to the concept and practicalities of this project and what the general feelings are for this project

b. Memorial

- same as above

c. International Record

- update from Durban on the status of this project

d. SACBC Proposal

The first proposal has been amended (and is enclosed as amended) but there is still a lot of discussion needed wrt the concept and feasibility of this project - that is happening within the War and Peace committee of the SACBC and in the elected working group.

Clarification and an update of the status of this project will be given.

14. Militarisation Symposium

- A point of information re: a symposium on militarisation to be held in Cape Town in January 1988

15. JORL _ Time will be made in the agenda for that!

PS. My correction ribbon expired on pg 2 - sorry about all the typos!!

Revised National Conference Agenda.

THURSDAY.

- 5.00pm : Registration
6.30pm : Supper
7.30pm : Welcome
 Credentials
 Introductions
8.30pm : Agenda Review - nomination of Process group
9.00pm : Security Arrangements and Procedure
9.45pm : Housekeeping Questions
 Cultural Item

FRIDAY

- 8.00 : Breakfast
9.00 : Plenary : Input : State of the Nation and ECC
 * JHB and National Workers
10.30 : TEA
11.00 : Conceptual Discussion
1.00 : LUNCH
2.30 : Conceptual Discussion (contd)
 * Cape Town
3.30 : Inter-regional sub coms and the Front
 a. Culture - Durban
 b. Media - Pmb
 c. Contact/Outreach - Jhb
 d. Churches - Durban
 e. Front - Cape Town

The campus discussion will no longer happen here and campus members should slot into any of the above sub-coms as town members would.

- 5.00 : TEA

5.30pm : Policy Section

- a. Legal -Durban
- b. International Relations - Adele
- c. Fronts and Alliances - GHT (to include discussion on 5 FF)
- d. Strategy wrt Repression - JHB
- e. Structures and Finances report - National workers
- e. is the additional item in this section.

7.00pm : SUPPER

8.00pm : Small group meetings

- Regional workers - PMB
- Finance Officers - Steve Lowry
- Press Officers -
- Campus reports - to be decided at conference who facilitates.

9.00pm : JORL

SATURDAY

8.00am : Breakfast

9.00am : Plenary : Report Back Session

- a. Policy (Friday 5.30pm slot)
- b. Recommendations and report back from finance meeting
Including comments on written finance reports (15 mins)
- c. Report bach from press group (5min)

The plenary input session on organisational work has been ommitted.

11.00am ;TEA

11.30am : Action Workshops

- a. Schools -GHT
- b. Research and Information - Karen Thorne
- c. Recruitment JHB
- d. Afrikaner Community - Stellenbosch
- e. Education and Training -PE
- f. Publication - Durban

- 1.00pm : LUNCH
- 2.00pm : Break - sleep, walk, etc.
Campus to meet during this time.
- 3.30pm : Plenary Reports Back on the Action workshops held this morning
(6 x 20 mins)
- 5.30pm : TEA
- 6.00pm : Inter-regional sub coms meetings
Ditto as sessions held on Friday at 3.30pm.
- 7.30pm : SUPPER
- 9.00pm : Plenary : Election of national workers (30 mins)
Evening open for the possibility of plenary extensions from
the rest of the previous 3 days.

SUNDAY

- 8.00am : Breakfast
- 9.00am : Plenary : National Action : The CONSCRIPT
* Cape Town
- 10.30am : TEA
- 11.00am : Action Workshops
- a. SACBC Proposal - JHB
 - b. VVAW - PE
 - c. International record - Durban
 - d. Southern Africa WJP - Cape Town
 - e. Memorial - CT
 - f. Call-up - CT

Other possibilities : eg g. Alternative Youth Report
h. Militarisation Conference

- 12.30pm : LUNCH
- 2.00pm : Plenary Session
- a. Action workshops Reports back (6 x 20min)
 - b. Evaluation of Conference (30mins)
- 4.30pm : CLOSE

CONSCRIPTION TO MILITARY SERVICE IN SOUTH AFRICA

PROPOSALS FOR AN ALTERNATIVE SERVICE PROGRAMME WITHIN THE CHURCHES

The Churches in South Africa have over a period of many years, addressed themselves to the question of the compulsory conscription of white men into the SADF.

Much work has been done over many years to press for a proper recognition of conscientious objectors. The Defence Amendment Act of 1983 was a ~~crushing~~ disappointment. It established a Board for Religious Objection and limited the recognition of objectors to those who are universal religious pacifists. A tiny minority of people hold to this position.

Only those who are recognised by the Board as being universal pacifists on religious grounds are offered alternative service. This has done nothing to solve the dilemma of conscience which many young South Africans experience,

There are conscientious objections to conscription into the SADF based on the traditional teaching of the church on just war and just revolution. There are conscientious objections to conscription into the SADF on entirely non-religious but moral grounds. Many young men deny that they should be compelled to serve in the armed forces in a cause which is absolutely unjust. None of these objections are recognised in South African laws.

Many young South Africans are resolving this crisis of conscience by leaving the country before the date of their call-up. This is a self imposed exile which cannot end until the political conflict is resolved. A small minority courageously remain to declare their determination to resist conscription and their preparedness to sacrifice by spending up to six years in prison as a consequence of their obedience to conscience.

Many objectors are seeking ways in which their commitment to their country and the service of the people of South Africa can be demonstrated. They are prepared to do "national service" but they are not prepared to fight, or to support the armed forces, in what they believe to be an unjust cause. They wish to render genuine service to their country and its people.

These proposals for an alternative service programme within the churches arise from the churches' duty and obligation to support those who are holding fast to the dictates of conscience and who are prepared to offer a considerable sacrifice as a consequence, and from the churches' desire to persuade the government that conscription to military service is not in accord with christian teaching and must allow for the recognition of conscientious objection on grounds other than universal religious pacifism.

It must be made absolutely clear that these proposals for an alternative service programme within the churches do not offer any protection to conscientious objectors from the sanctions imposed by the law. It is not a law avoidance or evasion scheme.

Any young person volunteering to work in the church programme is not seeking protection from the consequences of his refusal to obey the law. He is seeking to demonstrate his willingness to serve, at considerable sacrifice to himself, knowing that his service in the church cannot protect him from the term of imprisonment which will be imposed on him by the courts. →

The programme offers a way in which the church can express its unconditional support to him, and a way in which the church can demonstrate that its commitment to the cause of freedom of conscience goes beyond words and resolutions to action which is designed to contribute towards changing the law and to terminating any system of compulsory military conscription in South Africa.

For those objectors who do not feel able or called upon to face long terms of imprisonment as a consequence of their refusal and who leave the country the alternative service programme can offer an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment by giving them the possibility of working in the service of the church in Southern African countries on South Africa's borders.

Conscientious objectors in S.A. are accused of cowardice and of seeking to enrich themselves by avoiding national service in order to further their own interests. Any person who is prepared to volunteer to work for the church wherever the church chooses to send him at the same pay as would be paid to a private in the SADF is not seeking to enrich himself. It is the churches duty to enable him to give concrete expression to his commitment. It is the churches duty to persevere in determination to bring compulsory conscription to military service to an end in South Africa.

THE PRACTICAL PROPOSALS

The working group has rejected the idea of any kind of Board to test a person's conscientious objection. We do not believe that anyone would be prepared to offer such a sacrifice of time at pay well below the living wage were he to have ulterior motives of avoidance or evasion of conscription. A person seeking to evade for reasons other than conscience will not come to the churches for help.

We suggest the following procedures:

1. The programme should encompass all those who cannot or will not apply to the Board for Religious Objection whether or not they hold any religious belief.
2. The various church denominations will identify those geographical regions and projects where they need person power to carry out programmes as well as needs in secular welfare and community development projects.
3. Each denomination will commit itself to raising the money necessary to employ conscientious objectors in such programmes at the normal rates of pay and allowances for privates in the SADF.
4. Each denomination will commit itself to regional co-operation with other churches and will appoint a representative to a regional placement committee. This placement committee will receive applications for service from C.O. volunteers and will place them in projects of either a denomination or a Regional Council of Churches in the area, or in a secular service organisation operating in the area whose aims and objectives are in accordance with the teachings of the gospel.
5. After the placement has been made the church or ecumenical organisation responsible for the conscientious objector concerned will continue to offer him pastoral support in all ways - prayer counselling, legal advice, legal defence, prison visiting, concern for his family and friends, etc.

6. In dealing with those objectors who cannot face the consequences of remaining in South Africa and defying the law but who want to demonstrate their commitment the regional placement committees will identify places for volunteers in the churches in neighbouring countries and make all arrangements for an objector to be received and put to work in ways which will serve the interests of the people in the country concerned.

The representatives of churches and secular organisations who met in Pretoria on 31st August 1987 request you to present these proposals to your forth coming assembly or Synod and to seek acceptance in principle to the plans for an alternative service programme to be established within the churches in Southern Africa.

10/9/87. 94.3

Dear A+N,

Well, here I am, sitting around in E.L., where everyone either works or fucks out, so I thought now's the time for one of these famous communiques to give you a picture of small town life.

Not wanting to be regionalistic, small town life is pretty shit. You get depressed early, you flounder around wondering if anything except drinking etc is worth it, and you get in each other's hair. Mind you, you also dig having a poor unsuspecting Nat. Organizer cum psychologist cum social worker cum Great Inspirer around. You really wouldn't believe East London (and once again, I'm not trying to inspire alarm). Imagine the scene: Bags in hand, the Other N.O. arrives at this grotty cop-ridden airport. Aha! EL did phone Adele after all and there's no need to sleep on a park bench or anything. However, before you even say hello, you know there're problems. Once you've heard the story, you know there're serious problems. Turns out that all the dire warnings about illegal substances went in one ear + out the other, for a whole household of mense have recently spent 2 days + 2 nights languishing in jail for drug offences (this including Nolene + Suzanne + David + Michael + the irrepressible Sven). Valiantly, Michael takes the rap + will surely be in jail soon. Furiously, the girls froth and choke in anger + betrayal. Like a wounded bull, David trails around after Michael, who's refusing David's advances, while Sven carries on as if life is perfectly normal and the whole of town and especially the rest of ECC are stunned and disillusioned. Fine mess this! Then you discover that most of them are homeless, helpless, jobless, hopeless, directionless if not plain boney (I'm serious), and on top of that they want me (!!) to tell them what

to do, plan a campaign (!), and maybe even do it.

Give me a good old religious type anyday.

This is all classified + privileged information, by the way. OK, so much for the atmosphere, what about the organisation? Seems like not much has been happening except ideas that get shelved (even the long-planned Namibia meeting hasn't happened yet), meetings that only the Noleen-groupies and the tired but wonderful Lorraine get to. I reckon this E. Cape organiser is a dire necessity, presuming of course we can't just import some good + experienced activists.

There's obviously a hell of a lot to be done, but it's a much, much longer-term project than a 2-week visit can achieve. Talking of the E. Cape organiser, I went on a spin about regional contact (which fucked out again) and we finally discovered that Karen uped + offered to Durban and it looks like she's actually left Ght for good. Further later, we haven't been able to find out anything substantial about the New and Better, Improved GHT EC, mainly due to communication problems. So; in the midst of all this chaos (and I know it sounds exaggerated, but it's not) I think P.E. might be a haven for a few days. I want to go there to help plan the regional weekend - that is, if we can confirm it's on, find a venue etc etc. So... am now struggling to concentrate because Michael (drinking at 11am and rather belligerent) is arguing with Noleen's happy-clappy but backslidden cynicism about the ANC and terrorists and they're both showing signs of extreme fundamentalism. Poor Noleen; it looks like she's living with both of them!

And what, you may ask, about PMB? All the stories you'll have got from Marcus and Jac are true. PMB exec actually got to discussing folding^{ECC} completely, with an interesting divide between the girls (who said ECC's "not relevant") and the boys (who said "it is"). I nearly died; I thought why did you people send me to this godforsaken place, to be fed to the wolves, to wander in the wasteland etc etc. But this was a (rare) example of overreaction, because in the cold light of day, it transpired only 3 people were saying close up shop (they were the most vociferous ones, though) and with a bit of inspiration, some concrete work to do on the conference and some reminders about the conceptual discussions, the crisis has largely blown over. And in the end, I actually quite liked being there and maybe was quite useful in town. Campus was another story altogether, and I was there at the wrong time and thus only marginally useful. Arriving about 5 days before the SRC elections, I discover 3 out of the 6 people in ECC are standing for elections; all mention ECC vaguely in their manifestos but oh-so-vaguely; everyone is feeling exhausted, Bridget is chopping + changing between feeling manipulated by ECC National (she didn't tell me this herself) and manipulated by NUSAS and making very little sense at all; and 2 out of the non-candidates are leaving PMB next year. Crisis of massive proportions is handled with calm + aplomb by the group, who are inspired to have a cheese + wine (40 people come), plan a programme for the Reses next term (I feel confident it will happen) and win my heart completely. The group consists mainly of genuine rugby-playing, beer-drinking vets (one was

a recce, one a parabat and one in intelligence corps; all served in Namibia, one served in townships).

They make no bones about their experiences in the army, and no bones about why they did ECC. This has given them + ECC some substantial credibility with the "conservative" types on campus. I reckon this would be an ideal group to start genuine vets groups with + they'll probably be very important for that session at conference. What's still not sorted out properly,

is the relationship of this campus group to town.

It looks like it'll be a sub-group - of a special-type.

I was as confused as all hell about what to suggest; given the smallness + lack of leadership ^{of both groups} ~~at town~~. It would have been good in some ways to have a GHT-style amalgamated group, but campus was quite keen on separate identity (I think they think town are the ultimate in bonky old farts).

In the end, we decided there'd be a workshop soon at which this issue would be resolved. Maybe I should have been more directive? Anyway, it was a nice visit, with lots of positive feedback. Inbetween, I've also been to Durban on an abortive mission to have a workshop on constituencies + action. For your information, Tam offered to rub my back 3 times in one day. Needless to say I was NOT seduced. Also for your information, Durban is also suffering the centralised-action - post-campaign - burn-out - syndrome. Richard is so great - his response is everything has a season; in nature there's winter; in organisations we should have a short holiday. They're panicking a bit about the DSA debate, but hadn't given it much thought. I think they can manage.

Oh well, dear comrades, end of page end of letter. Hope it's not too disparaging (as I said, for private consumption only). Can't wait to see you again. After the last few weeks I feel much more of an equal.
love, Clare.



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Date: 20 October 1987

Dear Ms Kirsten,

Thank you for your letter of 20 September 1987 informing me of the restrictions regarding access to the ECC archives which have been deposited here.

I note that the five officials listed will be allowed access on production of positive identification and that anyone else wishing access will require a letter of approval from one of the ECC office-bearers. It is also noted that the officials will change from time to time and that notification to this effect will be supplied.

You can be sure that your instructions will be carried out.

Yours sincerely,

Anna Cunningham

A.M. Cunningham (Mrs)
Curator of Manuscripts

ZETA
MATTPOST

Collection Number: AG1977

END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

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