

GRAHAMSTOWN ECC REPORT TO NATIONAL COMMITTEE, AUGUST 1988

(1) MEMBERSHIP - Attendance at General Body meetings has been very good, with an average of about 20 people. We have been meeting more regularly than usual because of a heavier workload, otherwise we are sure there would be more people attending. Recruitment needs to be ongoing and GB's need to be more exciting if we want to attract more people.

(2) ACTIVITIES - Our activities since last NC include:

(a) A public meeting around the issue of Angola. This was addressed by Peter Vale and attended by about 150 people - very good for Grahamstown.

(b) A public launch of our Conscription Advice Bureau and Know Your Rights booklets. This took the form of a cheese and wine and attracted 150 - 200 people. EK Moorcroft - former PFP MP for Albany - gave a brief input which went down very well.

(c) Survey of student attitudes to conscription, alternative service and ECC. This did much to raise our public profile on campus and the results were also very much in our favour.

(d) Endorsement of ECC demands. This took the form of a petition, which society chairs, SRC councillors, academics and prominent townspeople were asked to sign.

(e) A church service and vigil on the day of the call-up. This was attended by about 50 - 60 people.

(f) A Know Your Rights workshop for ECC members. A law lecturer was asked to give an input and about 12 people attended.

(g) ECC has helped GRACONS - G'town Conscription Advice Service - co-ordinate a training course for conscription counsellors. The duration of the course is six weeks and about 27 people are attending, many of whom are not members of ECC.

(h) Since last NC we have also silkscreened t-shirts at a craft market on campus. This was very successful and we hope to do it again soon.

(i) ECC continues to participate in the SRC's non-racialism forum, which will be launching on campus next term.

(j) Our schools sub-comm was invited to address pupils at two schools in G'town. The week after we had addressed one of the schools, our notorious security policeman, Lloyd Edwards, was invited to talk on detention without trial and whether it was justified or not. We are pleased to report that he came in for a lot of flak from the pupils.

(k) Together with NUSAS we displayed placards and distributed media on campus around David Bruce's trial and imprisonment.

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(l) For the first time ever we put forward an SRC candidate (Andrew Roos) who stood on an alternative services ticket. Elections took place this week and Andrew received the second highest number of votes, doing very well in both women's residences and the more conservative ones.

(m) We distributed pamphlets and sold badges during the recent Festival of the Arts.

(n) NUSAS and ECC have embarked on an Angola focus campaign. We have distributed three statement posters, made a display board (which has been up for a month and is still intact) and are currently planning a mass meeting on campus to be held towards the end of the month.

(o) We had tea with David Bruce while he was in town ...

(p) Our churches sub-comm, known as the Alternative Services Group, is getting off the ground and now consists of a reference group of about 15 - 20 people and a working group of about 5 people.

(q) Our exec recently met with the NUSAS exec to discuss formal working relations. The discussion was very fruitful and reps from both organisations now meet weekly.

(r) After the last NC we got together with PE and had our first regional co-ordination meeting of the year. Generally, contact with PE is at its best, and we have arranged to meet again very soon.

(s) ECC liaised with Rhodéo - our official student newspaper - over Rhodéo's recent four-page feature on conscription and ECC.

(t) Gary and Paula co-ordinated an ECC question-and-answer session which proved to be very useful, both in terms of the content and the high degree of participation from everyone present.

(3) INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT - This is not as good as it should be. The practical aspect of the campaign has left little time for internal education seminars, but now that things have cooled off a bit, internal development has been made a priority. Sub-comm co-ordinators have taken the initiative and now distribute relevant readings at their meetings which are later discussed. This is not ideal but will have to suffice in the meantime.

(4) MORALE - Since the launch of the campaign we have had an exceptionally high public profile. Conscription is very much an issue on campus, what with the stand taken by the Grahamstown 10 and the fact that we had an ECC person standing for the SRC. People feel they are doing something that has impact and

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consequently morale - particularly around the issue of conscription - is very high. However, the exec and GB are more distinct from each other than they should be, and while GB members do attend meetings regularly, we feel there are a number of issues within ECC itself that need to be addressed if we are to keep people there. For example, meetings need to be shorter and less bureaucratic and greater participation should be encouraged. Orientation into ECC has not been thorough enough and should be an ongoing priority. Exec members should also socialise with GB members so we can get to know each other on a different level. In a nutshell, morale is generally high, but there is definitely room for improvement.

(5) SECURITY - In view of Malan's attack on ECC and the distinct possibility of repression, the issue of security is regularly on our agenda. We have had to be quite sensitive here, because the issue tends to frighten off some of our newer members. The exec recently discussed the issue amongst themselves and members have formulated a plan of action in the event of ECC being banned or restricted.

(6) FRONT - As mentioned above, formal working relations with NUSAS have been established and will be reassessed regularly. Both execs will meet together at the beginning of each term, with regular meetings between reps taking place on a weekly basis. We have also met with the Sash to discuss the campaign and they are very keen to work with us on certain issues. Contact with churches is ongoing, with Ansoc - the Anglican society on campus - having invited us to address one of their meetings. Ansoc has never been an affiliate of ours here, so this was particularly encouraging. A town sub-committee consisting of reps from town organisations and a variety of individual townspeople is in the process of being established and will do much to strengthen our links with our broader constituency. We are all very excited about this and will relay more info once the sub-comm has formally met.

(7) NATIONAL CONTACT - We are all agreed that Paula has proved indispensable. She has been especially useful with regard to contact with other organisations in G'town, and has also provided a lot of direction as far as internal education is concerned. She meets regularly with exec and GB members on a one-to-one basis and is thus in a better position than any of us to assess ECC from the perspective of our individual members. She has also been invaluable in giving a national 'feel' to the organisation. Contact with PE is exceptionally good on both a formal and informal level, but we need more contact with other branches. Natal's letter to all branches was a very good example of how this can be done.

It was also very nice to meet Gary (at last). He was very useful even if he was here for only a short while. We would really like to see more of our national organisers, especially when Paula is working in PE.

(8) REPRESSION - Harassment in Grahamstown has reared its ugly head again. In June about 80 t-shirts valued at about R8 each were

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stolen from our office on campus. Shortly afterwards an exec member was questioned by the security branch, who more or less implied that they were responsible for the theft. Drugs were planted on a former exec member who was then questioned about ECC. Peter Vale's passport was confiscated, and while it could be argued that this was a result of his regular visits to frontline states, many of us think it is because ECC has given him a public platform on the Angola issue. This belief is strengthened by the fact that his car was stolen in PE while he was addressing a meeting on the issue.

Veterans for Victory have also had a field day in Grahamstown. Our local newspaper - Grocott's - recently carried an insert of theirs which lashed out at our campaign for alternative national service. Since then, they have distributed three other pamphlets in town and illegally on campus. One of these dealt specifically with Ivan Toms. We discussed the issue with the SRC, but found that we could lay a charge only if we knew the names of the people concerned. We then placed an advertisement in the newspaper calling on people to come forward if they could identify the culprits, and a reward was offered for information leading to the prosecution of the individuals concerned. Our only response was from Rob Brown, who demanded the reward and when refused, said he would cut the legs from beneath us. 'This is just the beginning,' he said. One of the co-chairs later received a message at work saying that 'Paul' from Veterans for Victory phoned and would call again later. He never did.

There have also been minor instances of harassment: one exec member had a police van pull in front of her, deliberately blocking her path, another returned home to find a car packed with riot and plain clothes policemen with police dogs parked outside his house, watching it, and another exec member was circled two or three times by Lloyd Edwards in his car. Members have also had rude signs directed at them and security policemen telling them they were going to 'get them.' All harassment has been directed at exec members only.

(9) FINANCES AND FUNDRAISING - We have a mere R68 in our account and are all wondering where our MONEY is. Help. On a happier note, fundraising is going well, with the media sub-comm taking most of the credit for this.

(10) KYR BOOKLETS - Two local bookshops are selling the books, together with a third in East London. We sold about 20 at our cheese and wine and 10 - 15 were sold to people who phoned for copies. We will be approaching school psychologists and clergy soon and are also planning to publicise them six weeks after the call-up, when conscripts get their first weekend pass.

(11) CONSCRIPTION ADVICE BUREAU - This opened on August 3 after much liaising with the SRC and the Student Counselling Service, who have been very supportive. It is open one afternoon a week and is being staffed by ECC members who are qualified to counsel people on the legal aspects of conscription. We have elected a co-ordinator who is sure to have a bigger staff once the GRACONS

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training course ends. On the day it opened two conscripts were counselled, which is very good considering that only one person has approached the Student Counselling Service the whole year.

(12) GRAHAMSTOWN BOOK - The reference group held a very fruitful discussion with the author's researcher, who is very keen to liaise with ECC on all aspects of the book. The author is hoping to complete the book by the end of the year and is negotiating with both a local and an overseas publisher. Please have a look at the enclosed chapter outline ... Although only one chapter deals specifically with ECC, people in the reference group feel that they nevertheless have a lot to contribute in terms of the overall content and structure.

(13) WHAT NOW? - In summary, we have a lot of tasks ahead of us, but Grahamstown ECC will be concentrating this term on an ASP which is still in the negotiating stages. We will also be planning our Cannon Ball for next term, which is being viewed as a major fundraising event. ALL REGIONS BE WARNED: BOOK YOUR TUXEDO NOW.

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