

## EDITORIAL

### ***ECC Debate Challenge:***

Last term, members of the DSA approached ECC leadership at one of their recruitment tables and asked them to sign the National Student Federation's Peace Petition which was worded as follows:

*"We, the peace-loving people of South Africa, demand that the African National Congress abandon its campaign of calculated terror against innocent civilians."*

The ECC leadership refused to sign this petition and were embarrassed when they, who claim to be pacifists, were unable to take a stand against the senseless murder of civilians by ANC terrorists.

Shortly after this they reacted by challenging the DSA to a debate. The ECC have, however, subsequently refused to debate their unwillingness to sign our petition.

The debate has been scheduled for early in the third term and a suitable chairperson and topic will have to be found.

Let us briefly consider how **Freedom Fighter** specifically relates to the ECC, and how it tries to destroy the ECC's credibility amongst University of Natal, Durban (UND) students. The Campaign is a crucial part of the counter-hegemonic bloc, especially as it mobilises 'whites' around the issue of conscription into the state's most powerful apparatus, the SADF. The fact that conscription affects most 'white' men and their families and friends, together with the democratic, peace-oriented nature of the ECC, has enabled the Campaign to draw support from radical, liberal and 'unpoliticised' students alike. To break down this popularity, the DSA has dedicated much of the content of **Freedom Fighter** to the purpose of discrediting the ECC. In fact, every issue contains at least one article intended to smear the ECC.

The chief method of smearing has been drawing of links between the ECC and more radical organisations seen as connected to the 'international communist conspiracy' by liberal or less politicised students, who are thereby alienated from the ECC. A clear example of this is in **Freedom Fighter** no.4: "According to a United Nations press release, Gavin Evans represented the ECC of South Africa at a meeting in March 1986, where he, alongside representatives of the ANC, PAC, PLO, SWAPO, the League of Arab States, as well as the Soviet African Asian Solidarity Committee reviewed the situation in South Africa"(20).

The same article continues: "war resistance is, of course, a response to the all-round political and military struggle led by the ANC"(21). Another example reads: "In view of Ms Winnie Mandela's 'matches and tyres' philosophy, as well as her message of militant greeting and gratitude for 'brotherly solidarity to the Soviet Union', the ECC press release issued in October 1986, stating that activist Winnie Mandela had been invited to protest "against the increasing militarisation in our society", can only be frowned upon"(22).



The DSA cordially invites  
you to join in the struggle  
for true freedom.

ROOM 206 —  
STUDENTS UNION

SINCE THE beginning of the year hidden arms caches have been discovered with increasing frequency. Some of the largest were discovered at Crossroads, Roozpoort and near Kaasgo. At the last mentioned a massive quantity of arms and ammunition (about 400 kg in total) was discovered.

These finds indicate that the ANC is firmly committed to a sustained strategy of terrorist attacks in order to achieve political power.

The past few weeks have seen an increased number of bomb blasts directed against targets which are clearly civilian in nature. These blasts have come directly after Tambo's denial that the ANC has a policy to attack civilian or "soft" targets. It is obvious that on top of everything else Oliver Tambo will tell blatant lies in order to win the support of sympathetic liberals or moderates within South Africa.

Recent blasts directed against civilian targets include inter alia:

— June 14: Car bomb explodes on Durban's Golden Mile killing 3 women and injuring 69 others.

— June 24: Two blasts in central Johannesburg, one in a fast-food restaurant and the other outside a hotel, injuring 22 people.

— June 28: Bomb explodes in a shopping centre injuring 2 people.

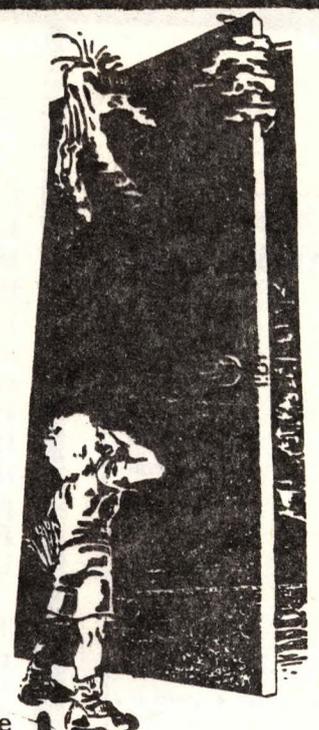
— July 1: A bomb goes off next to a bus stop in Johannesburg injuring 6 women and 2 infants.

— July 3: A bomb explodes outside Mowbray police station next to a bus-stop at 7.35 a.m. Miraculously only 2 people received minor injuries.

— July 4: A blast outside Checkers supermarket in Silverton injures 20 people. At least 3 of the victims lost limbs.

In the face of this can the Leftist alliance continue to whitewash the ANC by stating that they do not hit soft targets? The DSA does not believe so, the ANC are terrorists and should be branded as such.

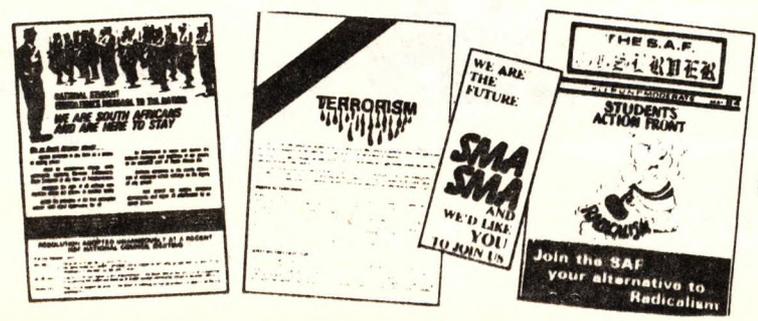
## The ANC and "soft" civilian targets



Another method used by the DSA to undermine the ECC is to provide quotations either by ECC members or about the ECC or conscription, and to present them out of their intended context, thus distorting the essence of the statements. An example of this is "ECC is not a pacifist organisation" - apparently said by Meg Beresford of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament(23). Another example is a quote by Oliver Tambo calling on 'white' South Africans to "refuse to join the army" and to "build united resistance"(24). A further example is a statement by ECC member Richard Steele: "... the goal of our campaign is to end conscription"(25). All these quotations are used so as to lend legitimacy to the myths being promoted by the dominant discourse, which postulates that conscription is opposed not for pacifist motives, but to weaken the SADF so that "Soviet-backed terrorist organisations"(26) can attain power.

One article questions the funding of the ECC and concludes "Which foreign country (or countries) has an interest in the abolition of conscription in South Africa?"(27). Another **Freedom Fighter** asks why ECC members would not sign a petition "calling for the ANC to abandon its campaign of calculated terror against innocent civilians"(28). **Freedom Fighter** No.3 has an article criticising the ECC for "littering Durban" in its sticker campaign, and "breaking city by-laws"(29).

While undermining the ECC, **Freedom Fighter** openly supports the SADF. This is clearly evident in an article in No.5 titled "Why do we need a defence force and conscription"(30), which overflows with Bureau of Information rhetoric - "Peaceful reform can only take place in a society where terrorist violence is rejected and law and order is (sic) maintained"(31).



# TERRORISM THE NAKED TRUTH

## EDITORIAL

As you will by now have realised the third edition of the DSA freedom fighter, scheduled to appear on Monday February 16, 1987 (Orientation Week) was banned by the SRC. It seems that although the NUSAS SRC disapprove most strongly of censorship by the State, they themselves practice an equally ridiculous form of censorship, they do not allow anyone to distribute anything on campus without their permission.

We at the DSA are firmly opposed to censorship in any form and it is for this reason that we have great difficulty in understanding why these so called authorities feel that they have the right to deny new students access to important information regarding campus affairs. It seems quite absurd to see the same people who call for free speech, academic freedom and an end to press censorship in the country imposing censorship within their own system, where intimidation, political violence and death threats are all common occurrences have these people redefined freedom and censorship? or do they believe they have a right to oppress others.

**Indaba support petition:**  
During Orientation Week the Durban students alliance undertook a joint project with the students action front (Pietermaritzburg) this was in the form of a petition which will be sent to the Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning. The petition reads as follows: "We the undersigned, do hereby declare that we support the principle of negotiation as exemplified by the Kwa-Zulu/Natal Indaba and furthermore we call on you to withdraw your rejection of the above proposals and urge you to publically support this significant step towards eradicating political deadlock in South Africa."  
This petition has been accepted most favourably by students and over two hundred and fifty students signed in a two hour period on the first day in Durban alone, this figure would have been even more impressive if the authorities had not intervened. The petition continues...

**Freedom Fighter** also functions to take up the cause of "the free enterprise system". Capitalism, according to the DSA, allows for "freedom, democracy and liberty" - these being "inextricably linked to three values - life, liberty and property"(32) and for this reason are firmly behind the vanguard of the multinational capitalist movement - Ronald Reagan and the CIA. The DSA are fully pledged "in solidarity with the liberation of Nicaragua, Mozambique, Angola and Afganistan"(33). These "struggles" according to **Freedom Fighter** are "in support of western values and principles such as free enterprise, private property, and the full range of civil and religious liberties"(34). **Freedom Fighter** is strongly opposed to apartheid and its injustices, although no meaningful criticism of the government is ever put forward, apart from that it should perhaps play less of a role in the economy. No mention is made of the vast social and economic inequalities that are prevalent in South Africa. The most telling criticism that the **Freedom Fighter** levels at the government is that it demands too much taxes, although no mention is made concerning what is done with these taxes (like spending over R13 billion a year on a 'defence' budget). DSA is also mildly critical of the government's rejection of the Indaba - the proposals of which **Freedom Fighter** gives much attention and prominence. **Freedom Fighter** also features many of the ideas and viewpoints conveyed by Leon Louw and Francis Kendall in their book, **South Africa - the Solution**. It is clear that **Freedom Fighter** is not really opposed to the contemporary South African political economy, and in being mildly critical of the government, it actually serves to legitimize the current situation as one way of preserving free enterprise in South Africa.

### 'Streetwise' Design

**Freedom Fighter** is a slick, expensive, and textually effective publication. It is obvious that the publication is not written and compiled by the DSA alone, as is claimed. Jonathan Poole, the editor, claims to do layout on his bed at home. The professional gloss and mobilisation of ideology through design and language, not to mention the extremely high quality of the paper used, makes it likely that professional advice and substantial external funding are freely available to the DSA.

**Freedom Fighter** uses design to its advantage with great effect. For example, on one page of **Freedom Fighter** Number 4 is an article on the Indaba proposals headed "Together we all win", with the logo of a black and a white hand clasped together above it. Alongside, is a shaded article headed "Apartheid" and which refers to SANSCO, and which began by stating, "Apartheid is alive and well at the University of Natal Durban". Underneath these two articles is one headed, "The ANC and 'soft' civilian targets". This article gives details of all the latest ANC bombings and concludes that "the ANC should be branded as terrorists". Next to this article is a cartoon which discredits the US State Department's view that "a range of voices" exist inside the ANC. Underneath in large bold white flanked by blue is the punchline: "FREEDOM NEEDS FREE ENTERPRISE". The newshole on this page is thus designed to elicit the composite idea that 'freedom' is antithetical to apartheid (now practiced by the University of Natal) and violence (practiced by the ANC)

#### Tailpiece

PW Botha's promise that M-Net will never be allowed to carry news as long as he is president seems fair enough. After all, SABC television doesn't carry news.

and synonymous with 'free enterprise' and the DSA. Thus, through design **Freedom Fighter** discriminates against those counter-hegemonic forces that challenge the forces of repression.

Apart from the black writing on a white background, the **Freedom Fighter** uses the colour blue extensively. Blue is a cool colour, suggesting rationality and considered opinion. It is also the official colour of the Progressive Federal Party. By linking the idea of 'reasoned argument' with the PFP colour, the publishers of **Freedom Fighter** may be trying to cue subliminal responses from an essentially liberal student population. It is important also to see how the DSA uses the understanding they have of their readership - **Freedom Fighter** is written in a style that is appealing to students e.g. it is humorous and contains many graphics. Its A4 size is itself reminiscent of 'alternative journals' like **Down the Line** and other counter-culture magazines of the 1970s. We need to question why **Freedom Fighter** dedicates itself to "the free enterprise system" and yet contains no advertisements, no subscription address and no mention of who write, typesets, designs or pastes up the paper. All this is done under the anonymous name of "DSA Committee".



**YOUR ALTERNATIVE CAMPUS NEWSPAPER**

## Gliberals and Fiberals

Properly considered, liberalism is both a bold thing and a harmless one. It stands ready for values like tolerance, respect and five-and-let-five, which hardly anyone can reasonably work up a temperature about.

Yet in South Africa, most people perceive liberalism as both hostile and wacky-wacky. The average white person sees liberals as rich fascistates who are blind to his fear of swampy and reverse domination, and many a black person sees liberalism as a white plot to deflect liberation through kind words and Christmas presents.

Part of the problem is that in South Africa the term "liberal" popularly includes any white person who shouts the anti-apartheid line loudly. This encompasses a meaningless breadth, stretching from those who think that apartheid means Group Areas and segregated buses that but that universal franchise is an extremist notion, to those who want the "working class" to be paramount and the majority party to dictate the terms of existence of everyone else.

To the true liberal, both of these notions are nonsense. He recognises universal franchise as the foundation of the peaceful conduct of human affairs and has no fear of it leading to majority domination since he knows that if people are free to make their own choices then class solidarity becomes as irrelevant a figment of the ideologue's mind as race solidarity.

His problem is to restore the true image of liberalism to its rightful place which has been usurped by pseudo-liberals, and to demonstrate to the public, at large, that this is neither a "pro-black" nor a "pro-white" position but simply a bias on which disputes can be resolved with good effect.

There is a move currently afoot to reconstitute the Liberal Party. This is to be welcomed, but it is to be hoped that the new party will go to considerably greater lengths to settle both white fears and black suspicions than it did in its previous incarnation.

Since the decline of liberalism is mainly a result of its clothes having been stolen by pseudo-liberals, it may be helpful to demarcate the pseudo-liberals from the true liberals. These categories have also been called the **False Liberals** and the  **Genuine Liberals**, abbreviated to **Fiberals** and **Gliberals**, by an observer who is himself an unabashed Fiberal.

The chief distinguishing feature is political outlook (see separate box), but there are others...

### THE PSEUDS

1. Are invariably upper-class whites.
2. Say "them" when referring to whites in general.
3. Are anxious to distinguish themselves from the evil-doers.
4. Take offence at racial comments about blacks but not at racial comments about Afrikaners.
5. Make allowances for bad behaviour by blacks.
6. Gloat over the atrocities committed by the name of the struggle.
7. Take pride in not speaking Afrikaners.
8. See themselves as champions of "the black cause".
9. Expect gratitude from blacks.
10. Say "if I was black I'd be a revolutionary".
11. Despise people who read *The Citizen*.
12. Emigrate.

### THE TRUES

1. Come in all colours and social castes.
2. Say "we" (at least if they are white themselves).
3. Are anxious to reduce the doing of evils from the evil-doers.
4. See bad behaviour as bad behaviour.
5. Object equally to all atrocities.
6. Regret they don't speak it better than "the white cause".
7. Consider "the black cause" no less racist than "the white cause".
8. Expect to be misunderstood.
9. Say "my beliefs have nothing to do with my social position".
10. Read it with interest but not in public.
11. Hang in.

While every reasonable effort is taken to ensure the accuracy and soundness of the contents of this report, neither writers of the articles nor the publishers will bear any responsibility for the consequences of any action based on information or recommendations contained herein. The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the SRC, UND or the University Administration.

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## Conclusions

It is hoped that a fuller comprehension of the process and dynamics behind **Freedom Fighter** has been provided. It can be seen that **Freedom Fighter** functions to serve the current dominant hegemonic bloc, in both conveying its ideology, and in discrediting and destroying attempts to build a counter-hegemonic consciousness amongst university students at UND. **Freedom Fighter** takes advantage of the cultural knowledge that has been bestowed upon white students throughout life, and is thus successfully able to engage in the 'struggle for the sign'. We must note however, as Sless reminds us, that we should take heed of our position of study as immersed in counter-hegemonic discourse - and perhaps realize that other students will not see the DSA and **Freedom Fighter** in this perspective.

Although numerous attempts were made by both staff and students to interview members of the DSA about **Freedom Fighter** during the first half of 1987, its members refused to discuss the publication either formally or informally with members of the research team.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Sless D. 1986: **In Search of Semiotics**. Croom Helm, London.
2. **National Student Review**, 1986. SASPU.
3. **DSA Freedom Fighter No.4**. This publication is undated, but all the copies referenced were probably published during 1987.
4. Ibid.
5. **National Student Review**, 1986.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. **DSA Freedom Fighter No 2**.
9. Muller, J., Tomaselli, K.G. and Tomaselli, R.E. 1986: **Lineage of Contemporary Cultural Studies: A Brief Historical Examination**. CCSU Seminar paper No 7, University of Natal, Durban.

# Together we all win

## INDABA

By Josef Grewer

**THE** popular motto "Together we all win" perhaps best illustrates the admirable pre-occupation of the KwaZulu Natal Indaba.

In the first place, its worth lies in the fact that it brought together representatives of a wide variety of often diverse viewpoints, from the anti-apartheid Inkatha, organised commerce and the PFP, to the conservatively nationalist FAK (Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurorganisasies) and other Afrikaner nationalists.

It also brought together people of different races enabling them to communicate and learn about one another, something that has been sorely neglected in South Africa, partly because of the racist attitude of an all-powerful government that has for too long legislated to keep people apart.

Unfortunately, the Indaba seems to have been tripped up to a certain extent by the current obsession of the white establishment, namely that of minority protection. This sensitive issue has led to the inclusion of a second chamber in the plans for a legislative body in the Indaba's constitutional proposals. One could justifiably raise the question whether this does not lower the proposals into the same category as the tricameral constitution, being a model of governmental excess in the growth of a redundant bureaucracy. Did the delegates to the Indaba examine any other way of offering minority protection?

Most people seem to forget that individual freedom offers the perfect system of minority protection. If an individual has freedom of choice he is free to affiliate to a group and to function freely within that group. Furthermore, the proposals fall into the trap of collectivist apartheid-thinking. People are seen merely as part of a group and their individual



right to existence is overlooked to a certain extent.

Centralised group protection also ignores another solution, namely that of further decentralised power. Admittedly, the proposals of the Indaba constitute a decentralisation of power, but one could well argue that it is insufficient. Further devolution of power, giving local communities more say in what happens to them, would provide minority protection in that it would prevent a single majority group in the central legislature from dictating to another group at local level. Although the Indaba represents an important step in the direction of decentralisation, one is left with the distinct impression that the delegates to this conference did not go far enough.

One could hardly deny, in the light of these arguments, that the Indaba still has a long way to go with their constitutional proposals.

However, the blueprint that has seen the light thus far already contains a set of proposals superior to anything the Pretoria government has to offer the people of Natal.

Instead of rejecting the proposals outright, as various Natal Afrikaner nationalists have done, the government had better take a good look at what the Indaba has achieved. It might also be a good idea to test the opinion of the people of Natal. The government should remember that the people of Natal do not solely consist of white Afrikaner nationalists.

## STOP PRESS

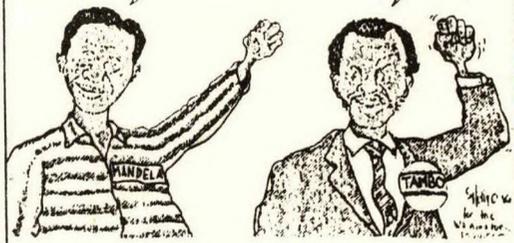
**THE** government has recently issued a qualified rejection of the Indaba proposals.

They have chosen to ignore the concepts and successes of the Indaba, merely hiding behind the smokescreen of "hijacking by the PFP & NRP". They have not dealt with the proposals at all.

If the government is as committed to reform as it says it is, then it must surely approve of the Indaba proposals, not reject them.

"I THINK THERE ARE, IN FACT, INSIDE THE ANC A RANGE OF VOICES..."  
Chester Crocker, US State Department

...FROM MARXIST.....TO LENINIST.





## STREET WISE

"STREET COMMITTEES" are a booming phenomenon in our changing social landscape and are emerging as the nerve centers in numerous townships.

It is obvious from ANC spokesperson TOM SEBINA's alleged explanation that they are aimed at being forged into "conspicuous that will be part of the process towards a total peoples' war", that the rise of street committees is to play an active role in the political process.

ANC mouthpiece INQABA is said to have described this process as an effective instrument of the revolution.

Locally residents relate a very similar story. The youths and comrades summons them to meetings, often at very short notice, in order to maintain the committees. What in fact these structures represent is local government. According to the central government, such "local government" is corrupt and inefficient, and the reiterated view that it's all part of a "communist plot" is expected to fall upon deaf ears.

However, local government is a necessity through which the residents can channel their grievances. Street Committees fill this vacuum and today our country is tasting the bitter fruits of past failures induced by minority rule and a lack of devolution of power to local levels.

Great potential exists in that these committees could be used in legitimate action. For instance, small time justice could obviously be handled far more effectively by local authority, although as has often been evident, any such attempt without order due to control and radical elements, is bound to fail. Courts...

FLIRTING WITH REVOLUTION

## UNMASKING THE RED DEATH COMPULSORY ABORTION IN CHINA

OFTEN TODAY we hear of violations of human rights under anti-communist regimes, but rarely about one of the worst of these violations — forced abortions in communist China.

Indeed, an American Anthropologist and author who spent several years in communist China, found that the conditions of Chinese peasants today are far worse than in 1961.

The government has decreed that the population growth still not exceed 7%. Therefore, many pregnant women are rounded up and subjected to day-long "re-education" sessions until they accept abortion. Often these women are 4, 7, 8, and even 9 into women's programs. They are told that their children will be killed if born in defiance of the quota and some babies taken in labor are killed on the spot.

In 1961, a quota for each village was applied by the state and local officials had to sign contracts to meet these quota-limits — knowing that they would be rewarded with bonuses for success, and fined if they failed.

The minimum age for marriage in China is 25 after which a couple may apply for a coexistence certificate. If a woman fails pregnant without this, she is given re-education lessons until she agrees to an abortion.

In 1963, Directive 7 stated that women with one child be fined with an IUD, those with 2 children be sterilized and those with an over-quota pregnancy have a mandatory abortion. Women going into delivery must prove that the birth is legal or the baby is given a formaldehyde injection, amputated, or is still crushed at birth.

In a province near Hong Kong, 19,000 forced abortions occurred in 3 months after the local official smashed bones and all over-quota pregnant women were arrested and taken away to pig-burdens. Faking malnutrition have adopted a madman approach which makes it impossible to arrest and break down these women until they decide to have an abortion on their own, in this way the Peking government can claim that abortions are voluntary.

A new phenomenon, "childbirth on the run", has resulted where desperate Chinese women hide their pregnancies for 6 months and then travel from village-to-village hoping to have their children unnoticed.

Mother estimates that 115 million abortions have taken place in Red China since 1971 (90% of which were involuntary) 53 million of these since 1979, of which over half were after the 8th month.

There is also the problem of female infanticide by their own parents. In rural China, where 65% of all Chinese live. Some are the only retirement programs available and the quota of one child per family often results in girls being drowned at birth.

10. Sless, op. cit.
11. Hartley J. 1982: Understanding News. Methuen, London.
12. National Student Review, 1986
13. Ibid.
14. DSA Freedom Fighter No 2.
15. DSA Freedom Fighter No 3.
16. Ibid.
17. DSA Freedom Fighter No 2.
18. DSA Freedom Fighter no 4.
19. Ibid.
20. DSA Freedom Fighter No 4.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. DSA Freedom Fighter No 5.
27. DSA Freedom Fighter No 2.
28. DSA Freedom Fighter No 6.
29. DSA Freedom Fighter No 3.
30. DSA Freedom Fighter No 5.
31. Ibid.
32. DSA Freedom Fighter No 3.
33. Ibid.
34. Freedom Fighter No 3.

**FREEDOM NEEDS FREE ENTERPRISE**

#### 7. ECC & the Commercial Press in Natal

A study of the constraints faced by the campaign in attempting to get coverage for its activities and issues.

The recent history of relations between the ECC and local press is reviewed and future possibilities are considered.

## The ECC and the Commercial Press in Natal

The status of the ECC vis-a-vis the commercial press is uncertain and, not surprisingly, no newspaper has been known to issue editorial policy with regard to the ECC. Questions put to a reporter on a Durban daily newspaper in June 1987 - a reporter who placed himself (and the younger staffers) considerably to the left of the discernible editorial policy of his paper - elicited responses that, in the main, conformed to the findings of Warren Breed about social control in the newsroom (1). At the time of the imposition of the state of emergency, in June 1986 and for months following, said the reporter, no ECC stories appeared in the **Daily News**. This was explained by the fear of state action for "undermining or bringing into disrepute the system of compulsory military conscription". The mere mention of the ECC, it was feared, might constitute a breach of emergency regulations. Only later, when the ECC made use of a legal advisor, was this misconception corrected.

The reporter's assertions are supported to an extent by actual figures from the **Natal Mercury** and **Witness** over the 12 month period from 12 June 1985 to 12 June 1986 during which time the ECC was mentioned in 52 stories. Incredibly, in the following 12 month period (to 12/6/87), the figure is again 52. In that the organisation is now a year older - and by that is meant larger and more politically significant - this does represent something of a falling off of coverage. More telling, however, are figures for the months before and after the declaration of the state of emergency (on 12 June 1986): in the month 12 May 1986 - 12 June 1986 the ECC appeared in 8 stories. Among these were reports on the information war between the ECC and the National Students Federation (31/5/86), on the ECC's acting against the **Aida Parker Newsletter** (3/6/86) and on a Natal University address by an ECC spokesperson (5/6/86). A quite different picture is presented in the month commencing 12/6/86, in which the ECC was mentioned only twice. On 14 June 1986 the Campaign was touched upon in a **Mercury** editorial and on 30 June the fact of the ECC offices being set alight in Durban was briefly mentioned in an unrest "wrap-up". Clearly the fear of breaching Emergency regulations held sway in this period.

Several ECC stories written by the reporter interviewed had been "spiked" but that (spiking) "happens all the time" and although he himself - like most reporters, he said - questioned the non-appearance of stories he felt "strongly" about, he had not done this with any ECC stories. "If the sub-editor on duty views the piece as politically contentious, that is really the end of the argument. Prejudice against the ECC, especially at the paper's senior level, runs high. This respondent felt that a preferable strategy would be to hope that the next time one submits potentially "contentious" copy a more accommodating sub would be on duty. The interviewee was quite clear on the point that a reputation for "hassling the subs" was quickly earned by those who repeatedly questioned the decision to spike stories, and such a reputation would quite likely retard prospects of career

'The Defence Force has only moved into black townships to protect law abiding people's lives and their properties,' he said.

'We should not be condemned for protecting people, we should rather be urged to improve our protective measures.'

Gen van Loggerberg said in the instances where the actions of individuals in the SADF towards the public were not correct, immediate remedial action had been taken.

'Anyone who alleges that we are guilty of terror is just not talking the truth,' he said (Sapa)

### Mercury Reporter

THE Deputy Minister of Defence, Mr Adriaan Vlok, said the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) was being used by the ANC to achieve the banned organisation's 'evil' goals.

'ECC is aiming to  
leave S A defenceless'

# Vlok says ANC using End Conscription Campaign

Mr Vlok said South Africa's course was a just one and 'we are prepared to put right what is wrong', but nothing would be solved by giving South Africa to the 'enemy'.

'Those people who approve of the ECC's aims and are prepared to promote it are like clay being moulded by our enemies — at this very moment they are being used by the ANC to achieve the ANC's evil goals in South Africa.'

ONDER die skyn dat hulle nie-polities is, versprei lede van die ECC Marxistiese leerstellinge onder wit skoolskous. Hul metode van verspreiding herinner sterk aan die Kommunistiese selstelsel.



mobility.

In months following December 1986 news stories regarding the ECC appeared rather more frequently, but comment, or an attempt to draw out the Campaign's message was still, it seemed, not tolerated (although, perhaps due to the occasional "accommodating sub", these do sneak through). While projects such as "Peace Park" have been reported, this was allowed, stated the interviewee, because that same message is concealed by emphasis on the community or welfare factors (without, as shall be seen, providing any link between the projects and the ECC's concept of community service as an alternative to military service). The interviewee provided an illuminating example: "When the ECC sent out those pseudo call-up papers, one of the people they sent to was Arthur Morris of the Civic Action League who was suitably outraged. A story then appeared which was angled on Morris' outrage. To me this means that the angle was generated by the reporter and because of that angle the story easily found its way into the paper".

Reiterating the presence of prejudice that sometimes even takes the ECC to be "immoral and subversive", the interviewee said the prevailing perception amongst senior staff is that the ECC isn't to be taken seriously" and is not considered of great "news value" (a term he conceded could mean "just about anything".) The ECC's position is "difficult to state because the ECC's position is, of necessity, wishy-washy", the interviewee said.

It may be more realistic to say that the ECC's message, far from being "wishy-washy", is confrontational and strikes at the core of the apartheid state's stability/maintenance. Until the establishment of the ECC there was no national organisation that challenged the military service ethos. The threat to national confidence posed by the ECC has had to be suppressed by the state: the extensive regulations and restrictions imposed since 1985 have forced the ECC and other oppositional organisations to conceal their 'subversive' practices and policies. In their bid to remain beyond prosecution under present laws the ECC has had to adopt an inoffensive - or "wishy-washy" - profile and thus forgo a great deal of potential publicity. Moreover, editorial policy of a certain nature is evident in the fact that the ECC has been treated at one remove by the press: i.e. by the fact that an uncontentious (or 'hooray') news angle should exist (or be manufactured) in order for the organisation to be reliably and frequently reported in the commercial press. Whether it be news of a community project or news of detained ECC members, it is apparent that central ECC policies/issues are being either obscured or actively suppressed.

The Durban commercial newspaper most accommodating to the ECC is the **Sunday Tribune**. A senior staff member admitted an initial hesitancy on the Tribune's part towards the ECC but said this was essentially due to lack of information. Once representatives of the Campaign had met with and presented their case to members of the paper's editorial staff their sympathy to the ECC cause had grown. (Among those who had made representation to the **Tribune**, the interviewee emphasised, were ECC legal spokespersons who had allayed fears of the unlawfulness of the anti-conscription message). No policy regarding the ECC had ever formally been devised, our interviewee said, but conceded that

generally, "We are sympathetic to the ECC because their principles are grounded in individual choice. We believe people should have a free choice - our policy is the policy of the greatest freedom of choice. It's in that way that we might appear supportive of the ECC. Of course individual staff members may be overtly supportive while others may in fact be anti the campaign."

"Immoral and subversive" is the view of the ECC held by several senior newspaper people, said the reporter on the daily paper, and something approaching immoral and subversive is the perception of the ECC that manifests itself in an editorial published in the *Natal Mercury* (29/8/86). The redefinition of religious objection to conscription is the base from which the writer launches a fierce - and facetious - assault on the ECC. Fundamental to the comment presented is what Herbert Gans calls "The Nation as a Unit", by which he means that anything threatening the 'unit' is newsworthy. In this case such a threat is provided by the ECC, and the not-so-hidden agenda is to thoroughly discredit the organisation. Gans's notion of the newsworthiness of social disorder is also pertinent. "Peaceful demonstrations on college campuses, especially elite ones, are usually more newsworthy than those in factories or prisons"(2). In that much of the ECC's support is seen to come from the white, that is, petty bourgeois student population its threat to order is rarely identified by the *Natal press*.

The above mentioned editorial's writer assumes a patronising tone; and by situating the ECC in something like the context generally afforded student activists, what Roland Barthes(4) would call the 'myth of the student' -- naively hysterical (or 'trendy lefties' as common sense vernacular might have it), he attempts to legitimise his contempt and derision. The opening paragraph ("As was only to be expected reaction from the ECC was loud and long") and, more pointedly, the use of "pouted" in the second paragraph are directed to this end.

article here

N.M. 29/8/86

## Lumping it

AS WAS only to be expected, reaction from the End Conscription Campaign to a move to tighten up the definition of religious objection to military service was loud and long.

Far from tightening anything up, its spokesperson pouted, the Government should be broadening the scope of conscientious objection: many young men experience a 'severe moral dilemma' because of conscription.

For our part, we do not know about that.

We acknowledge there are those who have genuine objections to taking up arms. But we believe most of our youngsters

willingly sacrifice the two years of their lives they have to serve in the forces because they realise that, given the times we're in, there is no alternative.

We all know the Permanent Force is not big enough; we all know we need a Citizen Force - and we all know that if together they are to form an adequate Defence Force, there has to be national service.

We might not like it, but is there any real alternative to lumping it?

And we believe we're right when we say that's the attitude of those who have lumped it, are lumping it - and will lump it.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO  
KNOW OUR VIEWS  
ON CONSCRIPTION?

SORRY - WE CAN'T  
TELL YOU.

FROM THE ECC



ECC lives.



WAR

THE

BATTL

For

SOUTH AFRICA

MIND

The writing is conversational - it suggests that the writer knows exactly who his reader is, and is confident of the authority he will have with that reader.

According to anthropologist Levi-Strauss, relations are expressed through the isolation of fundamental oppositions. The most effective propaganda will usually make use of the 'Us/Them' opposition, and that opposition emerges in the **Mercury's** editorial. Placing the ECC firmly in the 'Them' camp, the writer seems to sense the untenability of his position when he begins to speak of "our youngsters". His belief (that "most of our youngsters willingly sacrifice the two years of their lives ... because they realise that, given the times we're in, there is no alternative") is delivered with the confidence that it will go unchallenged. But by stating it as he does his intention -- to discredit the ECC -- is made apparent. He falls short of stating that the ECC might encourage "our boys" to abandon their duty to their country (because of the faith articulated in the quote above). What is untenable, however, and what undermines his argument, is that he creates a site of conflict between the ECC - which argues for the freedom to choose - and the willing conscripts who, it is spuriously suggested, have that freedom and exercise it.

Implicit in this argument is a willingness to accept militarisation as a solution to the problems of the "times we're in". Also evident, however, is a sense of resignation that seems the product of an acceptance of the ineffectuality of liberal protest or resistance. ("We might not like it but is there any real alternative to lumping it?"). In this we can detect the operation of something resembling the myth of "Neither-Norism" (5) which Barthes describes:

the stating of two opposites and balancing the one by the other so as to reject them both. (I want neither this nor that.) It is on the whole a bourgeois figure, for it relates to a modern form of liberalism. We find here the figure of the scales: reality is first reduced to analogues: then it is weighed: finally, equality having been ascertained, it is got rid of.

The **Mercury** editorial writer acknowledges ultimately that compulsory conscription may be odious, but, it is explicit; even more odious is the institutional challenging of it by the ECC.

Beneath this, in fact at a subliminal level, sits the ultimate polarity or 'Us/Them' opposition. This is the polarity between (i) the apartheid state/capitalist relations of the present day (which allow for the 'press freedom' which - supposedly - exists in essence but is only, and necessarily, compromised by the emergency regulations, and is represented by the reasonable, responsible, authoritative figure of the independent commentator, the newspaper editor), and (ii) their assailant, the 'revolutionary onslaught' (embodied in the words, "given the times we're in there is no alternative") with its socialist orientation, which promises totalitarian press/speech control.

This editorial, which, as stated above, carries strong assumptions about its reader and so is in the form of a narrowcast code(6), is an unambiguous vilification of the ECC and the most direct (and extreme) articulation of commercial press attitudes to the organisation that could be found in the South African English press bar **The Citizen**.

ITS IN THE BLACK  
SCHOOLS AND  
TOWNSHIPS.  
ITS STAFFING THE  
ROADBLOCKS, AND  
ASSISTING FORCED  
REMOVALS.  
ITS IN THE STREETS  
IN THE MEDIA, ITS  
A SYMBOL IN  
ADVERTISING.  
ITS IN ANGLES AND  
NAMIBIA.  
ITS IN THE MEDIA

At this point it is worth making mention of an editorial that appeared in the *Mercury* a year before the one under discussion and which illustrates the shift in sentiment and is indicative of the strengthening of hegemonic control achieved by the "Red under every bed"-type scare that accompanied the state of emergency. It also is suggestive of the wavering attitudes displayed by the commercial press in regard to areas or expressions of dissent that might at one time be construed as permissible within the universe of civil rights and free speech and at another time be seen as dangerously subversive and to be rightfully suppressed. Entitled, "The Question Remains" (10.9.85), the editorial deals directly with the conscription issue in a way that would seem unthinkable a year later. By no means supportive of the ECC, this editorial does not manifest the intransigence of the later one under discussion; the ECC in fact makes its presence felt here almost incidentally (the article begins by reporting the detention of ECC members "hours after the Deputy Minister of Defence had alleged that it (the ECC) was being 'used' by the African National Congress"). The writer bemoans the loss of freedoms of speech (implied by the detention of ECC members) but is in no doubt as to the need for an army: "The need to maintain a strong Defence Force at the foot of an unstable continent in a dangerous and cynical world is hardly in dispute", he writes in the third paragraph. And in the fifth paragraph the ECC is firmly challenged but without the acrimony that suffuses the later piece: "But simply to call for an end to conscription without first forging a shield for the nation is, to quote the leader of the opposition, Dr van Zyl Slabbert, "dangerously naive, romantic simplistic and counter-productive." The final paragraph, however, contrasts sharply with, that "the times we're in" tone which is the foundation of the later piece. The ECC's message is, as I have intimated, ultimately rebutted here but the sense of "the enemy within" is not so conclusively erected: "If political solutions are not found soon to bring peace to the townships and end the SADF's presence there, then the Government must expect that growing numbers of young white conscripts will question their role in being required to defend such a society."

The interviewed reporter's belief that he, and the younger reporters generally, stood to the left of discernible editorial policy is given credence by the fact that news stories dealing with the ECC, while few in number, are generally quite neutral and sometimes even overtly supportive. It would seem that the reporters who file stories on the ECC are those who have a predisposition to the Campaign's message, while others, in their indifference or hostility to the ECC, appear to choose to ignore it altogether.

In April 1986 the *Natal Mercury* published two decidedly sympathetic ECC stories. On 12 May 1986 a small feature on the ECC "community campaign" appeared. Sympathetically headlined "Youngsters Lend a Hand", the bulk of the story was taken up by comments by an ECC organiser, and the article ended with the provision of contact phone numbers for readers interested in helping in the project. Serving almost as an advertisement for the "community campaign" the story was edited so as not to be at all contentious. Whether this was in line with editorial conservatism or due to the fear of alienating readers who are antagonistic to the ECC is unclear, but certainly neither the headline nor the story's introductory blurb make any mention of the ECC. Further, the conscription issue is not touched on at all and the "community campaign's" official title ("Working for a Just Peace") is conspicuous by its absence.

# NO MORE CONSCRIPTION



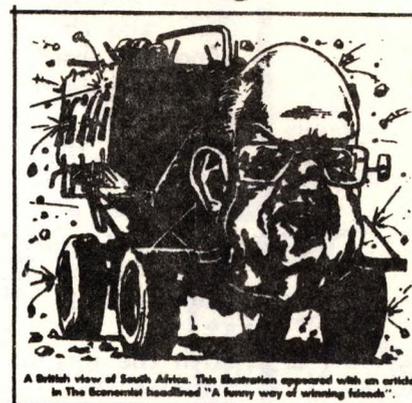
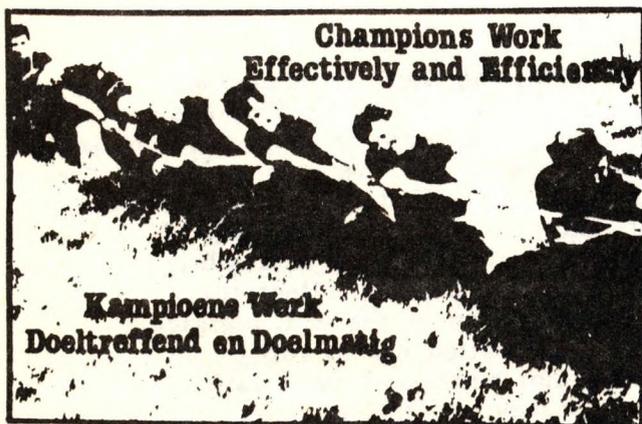


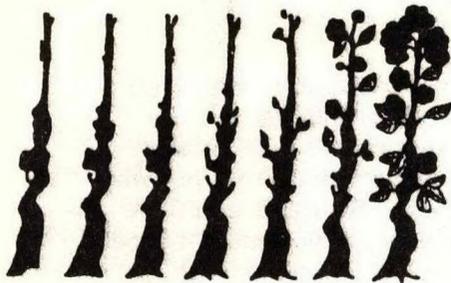
In 1960 the South African defence budget was R44 million. By 1985 this had risen to a staggering R4240 million, more than the black education and health budgets combined. This means that the government is spending over eight million rands every day on its war effort, at a time when more than a million children under the age of ten are suffering from malnutrition in South Africa.

The End Conscription Campaign believes that this money should be spent constructively on South Africa's real and urgent needs: education, housing, job creation and health care.

## Notes and References

1. Breed, W. 1955: "Social Control in the Newsroom: A Functional Analysis", *Social Forces* 33 1955 pp 326 - 335. "Ideally there would be no problem of either 'control' or 'policy' on the newspaper in a full democracy. The only controls would be the nature of the event and the reporter's effective ability to describe it. In practice we find the publisher does set news policy, and this policy is usually followed by members of his staff." (p. 326).
2. Gans, H. 1980: *Deciding What's News*. Vintage Books, pp. 20-21.
3. Ibid. p. 58
5. Barthes, R. 1982: "Myth On the Right" in *Myth Today: A Barthes Reader*. London' Jonathan Cape, pp. 138-146
6. Fiske, J. 19: *Introduction to Communication Studies*. London, Methuen. pp 78-81
7. See Tomaselli, K.g., Tomaselli, R.E. and Muller, J. (eds.): *Narrating the Crisis: Hegemony and the South African Press*. R Lyon, Johannesburg, Chapter 3.

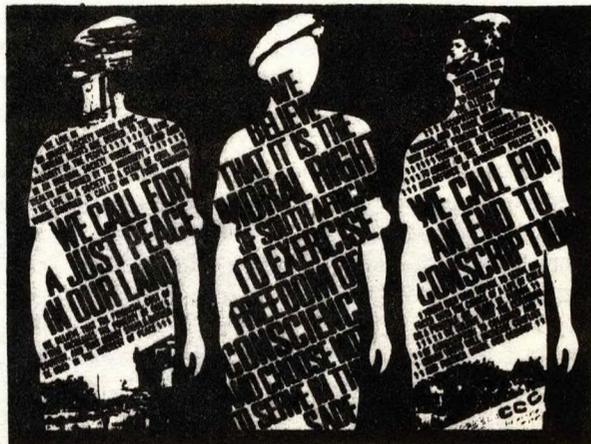




## 8. Strategy and the Future

A brief discussion of some of the implications for the client of the findings of the researchers.

The constraints imposed by the ECC's umbrella nature and internal democratic functioning mean that this piece can at most serve as a stimulus for debate, rather than a recommendation.



## Strategy and the Future

The importance of the ECC's contribution to progress in South Africa depends on the strategies it chooses, and these depend upon the ways in which situations are analysed by the Campaign's members. Therefore it is important that the ECC's internal decision-making processes are informed not only by the perceptions and opinions of members whose primary political motivation is anti-conscription, but also by wider anti-apartheid input. This can (and does) occur through overlapping membership with other progressive organisations, or through organised liaison with such organisations. From the interviews done for this study, it seems that generally, At Ease staff did not communicate much with other organisations.

Although the ECC's status as an autonomous, democratically organised body constituted within the 'white' population sector, and its vulnerability to repressive state action, make it difficult to associate with other progressive movements, it should still be possible to improve communication with members of such organisations. At Ease could be an important medium for such communication. However, this should be read in conjunction with the discussion of censorship policies (elsewhere in this Report).

A central issue to be confronted when considering the strategic position of the ECC is that of contradictions within its ranks. Not only do various sectors of membership hold conflicting views - for example the radical/liberal divide over whether (crudely stated) racial capitalism must be replaced by socialism or by non-racist capitalism - but the membership, as a whole, is drawn from sectors of the population which have been and ~~are~~ beneficiaries of apartheid and/or capitalism. No doubt this is one area where the diverse membership of the ECC cannot expect to reach consensus, but this does not mean it should not appear on the agenda. Members of the public will not easily trust an organisation they perceive as blindly acting against its (and their) self-interest, even if they recognise the moral superiority of its arguments. Thus it is important to communicate a coherent response or set of responses to this sort of "playing with fire" accusation.

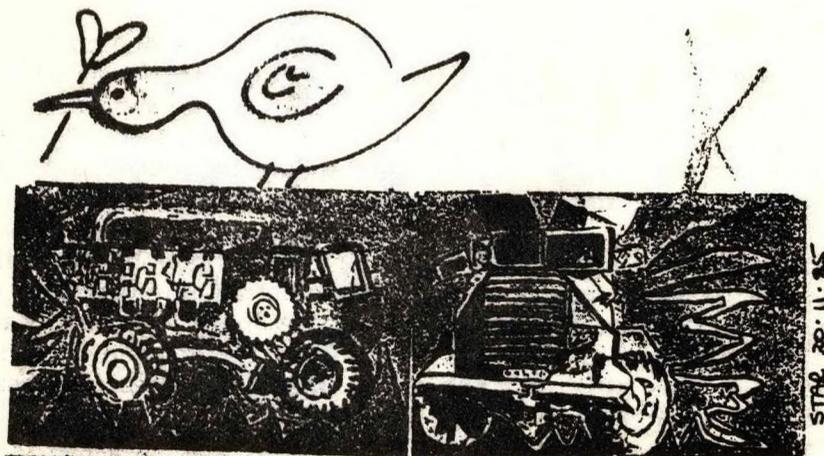
A starting point for one such response is suggested by the popularity of ECC among students and youth. Although this is explained in part by the relatively liberal environment on the 'English' campuses, another important factor is the fact that young people are not yet firmly integrated into the economy. This means that many of them see themselves as having less to gain from short-term continuation of the status quo, and more to lose in the event of its violent demise than, say, their parents do. This is borne out by the high incidence of emigration amongst tertiary-educated people under 30. Of course the existence of conscription and low-intensity civil war contribute to this 'brain drain' problem, to an extent which is not yet properly studied, but is obvious to many ECC members and supporters, and potential ones.

An argument could be articulated from this basis, along the lines that

older generations of (middle and upper class, mostly white) South Africans, as well as foreign investors, are defending their immediate material interests by manipulating young white men not only at the expense of the exploited masses, but also to the detriment of the long-term chances of all young people to grow older in a peaceful, just society (whether one believes this will take the form of non-racial capitalism, socialism or a mixed economy). Such an argument need not depict the old as the 'enemies' of the young any more than the rich are 'enemies' of the poor. As a group, perhaps - but individuals can 'redeem' themselves (in this case, by supporting the ECC!).

In this way the Campaign can begin to do more than simply react defensively to state propaganda and dominant ideology. Without some strategy of this kind, it could well be forced into a relatively insignificant position as the country's people become more polarised and those who are reluctant to choose sides are forced into silence, hiding or exile. Already, tens of thousands of conscripts have chosen the non-solutions of exile and 'life on the run' - a form of internal exile involving frequent changes of address and of jobs, and often loss of contact with friends and family. Yet many such people have no idea of themselves as an oppressed group - rather, they tend to be ashamed of having joined the 'chicken run' or become 'draft dodgers'. If the Campaign let them feel that it spoke for them, a new sector of support would emerge.

Likewise, many conscripts who fall foul of military discipline are either forced into the role of criminals, often to the point of chronic destructive rage directed at themselves and those around them, or made to feel defective/inadequate ("Hulle kannie die punch vat nie"). Were such people offered a place in an honourable, constructive attempt to change the conditions which oppressed them and others, many would respond.



This poster of two Hippos is one of a series which have appeared recently in northern suburbs.

## Distribution of At Ease

### Present Situation

During 1986/7 7000 copies were usually been printed for each issue, of which about 4000 were mailed out at a cost of about R800. Most of the remainder were distributed arbitrarily on the campuses of University of Natal, Durban and the Natal Technikon. Remaining copies were handed out at ECC tables, at the amphimarket and on the windscreens of cars "parked in appropriate places, like outside a play that is about the military" (Gary Cullen). Distribution takes about 3 weeks after printing - quite an interval. A few copies are sent to other ECC regions.

### Problems

No information is available on the efficacy of the distribution patterns as there is no feedback mechanism. This applies especially to the mailing which accounts for more than half of each edition and most of the cost of distribution, especially since the mailing list has been arrived at by merging of other (e.g. Durban Arts) lists. Thus we do not know which people or how many simply regard **At Ease** as 'junk mail'.

There are no defined distribution roles: "Generally it is a case of roping in everybody who can be gathered to do some of it, and then it's here and here and the thing starts going out" (Gary Cullen).

### Suggestions

In the short term, something must be done to revise the mailing list. Some kind of survey (perhaps in the form of a competition with a prize as incentive to reply, or perhaps in the form of a phone-in, which takes less time/effort/expense than a written response) should be done to establish who reads **At Ease**, how much they read and what they think of it. In order to maintain a continued feedback mechanism, a letters page should be introduced.

Consideration should be given to the idea of charging a nominal price (e.g. 20c). This has its pros and cons and could be tested. People on the mailing list might be asked to subscribe.

In the longer term, attention should be given to the re-structuring of distribution methods. For a start, links should be established with other organisations, not only those strictly within the 'national democratic struggle' but also the social justice committees of churches, youth groups, and the like. Agreements should be sought such as exchange of mailing lists, mutual distribution of publications, and so on.

The other aspect of re-structuring the distribution network lies within ECC - the role of its members. (This recommendation should be seen as inseparable from the recommendation elsewhere in this Report that newsgathering be restructured.) Because of the importance of this process, we must look at similar situations faced by other progressive publications, and strategies they have adopted.

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