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INDEPENDENT RADICAL NEWSWEEKLY

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By HEINZ KLUG

Launching a national drive to demonstrate opposition to the military draft, South Africa's End Conscription Campaign (ECC) is challenging the ongoing police and army occupation of black communities and the growing militarization of local government structures. The ECC's new campaign—under the slogan "Working for a just peace"—will involve hundreds of people in local projects, all of them delivering the same message: "Construction, not conscription!"

Protest coordinator Richard Steele says the ECC hopes to make a "small contribution to tremendous projects in townships where there are many social problems due to the lack of community facilities, particularly for the children." Drawing a distinction between its own work and that of the South African army, which also carries out civic action projects in mainly rural black areas, ECC press officer Fiona Dove characterizes the military's initiative as "essentially an attempt to co-opt the hearts and minds of black people, to buy credibility for the government and the military. Our projects," Dove explains, "would be done only in consultation with, and under the guidance of, representative community groups."

ORGANIZING WHITES

ECC spokesman Gavin Evans, recently in New York to testify before the UN's Special Committee Against Apartheid, discussed the history and problems of the anti-draft movement in an interview with the Guardian. His visit to the U.S. comes at a time of increasing unease among South African whites. The country's defense ministry revealed late last year, for example, that about 25% of the 30,000 high school graduates drafted in January 1985 did not report for duty. The ECC aims to boost the resistance rate still further when thousands of additional young whites are called up in July.

In order to involve the largely conservative white community in the anti-apartheid struggle, Evans explained, activists decided to start with issues that directly affect whites. They thus began to rally opposition against the 4-year compulsory military service that every young white male faces. From a core of 50 members at its inception in 1984, the ECC has grown to include some 600 activists and about 50 affiliated anti-apartheid organizations.

"We are getting at the heart of apartheid's power—that is, at the South African Defense Force," Evans declares.

Although the ECC is a nonracial group, it has organized primarily within the white community because only whites are subject to the draft. But the campaign has managed to build support throughout the country for its related stances against the occupation of Namibia and the segregated black townships as well as South Africa's destabilization of neighboring countries like Angola and Mozambique.

"From the beginning we had a broad base of support, not only from radical white stu-

Resisters spark opposition to apartheid's draft



Gavin Evans:
'We are getting at the heart of apartheid's power.'

dents, but from their parents and people in the churches who were activists and in the civil rights groups," Evans recalls. The campaign has even penetrated some Afrikaner bastions. It now has branches at Stellenbosch University, an incubator for the country's governing elite, and in other conservative Afrikaans-speaking strongholds in Pretoria and Johannesburg.

Evans stresses that the ECC exists in the context of other political organizations and is affiliated to the opposition umbrella coalition, the United Democratic Front (UDF). All ECC supporters share a common goal—one person/one vote in a unified South Africa—but the campaign focuses on a single issue: "What we are trying not to do is to take on a laundry list that might divide our movement," Evans says.

Anyone defying the draft in South Africa faces a jail sentence of up to six years. Conscientious objector status is available only to Christians, pacifists and those who are not politically opposed to military service. Evans reports that a Buddhist was denied such status on the grounds that Buddhism does not have a single deity, while Jews are automatically de-

clared ineligible because they "don't have a history of pacifism."

It is illegal to counsel people to resist the draft, or even to object publicly to military service for individuals. The ECC skirts this restriction by calling for a general end to the draft and to the military occupation of the townships.

About a dozen draft evaders were jailed in the early 1980s. Then came a 2-year hiatus in prosecutions as the government considered how best to respond to the rising incidents of draft refusals, spurred on by the army's full-scale move into the black townships in 1984.

Because of the heavy sentence facing draft resisters, many young men have left the country rather than stand trial. One activist who was refused conscientious objector status was recently arrested, however, for refusing to return to the army. The trial of Philip Wilkinson—the first involving a military resister in two years—is scheduled to get underway soon.

Wilkinson, a 22-year-old butcher from Port Elizabeth, got involved with ECC because he had been forced to join the estimated 15,000 soldiers who have been deployed in black

townships. At a recent ECC rally in Johannesburg he was dragged off the stage by military police and now faces a military tribunal and a possible 3-year jail term.

The ECC has become increasingly visible since the current black uprising began 19 months ago. During the state of emergency, for example, antidraft organizers conducted a "Troops out of the townships" campaign, working closely with the UDF. Organizing cultural programs and educational meetings in churches to avoid the ban on demonstrations, the ECC was able to involve thousands of people in this effort, which culminated in a 3-week fast in solidarity with detainees and with the people facing the troops in the townships.

DEVELOP NONRACIALISM

The drive against conscription uses street theater and other creative tactics to get whites involved and to increase their political consciousness. "We try to also get them involved in nonracial contact with black political organizations—even at the level of our members going along to the funerals of black people killed by the troops, killed by the police, in the townships. We feel that kind of thing contributes to the development of nonracialism," Evans relates.

Whites who have been brought into political activity through their opposition to military service, he continued, move through their work with the ECC and with black political organizations to "a point of rejection of all aspects of minority rule and an acceptance of majority rule and black political leadership."

Campaign activists have recently suffered regular attacks ranging from detentions to verbal assaults in parliament from government officials calling the ECC a "communist front." "Even new conscripts going into the army get lectures on this devilish group," Evans noted, adding that a right-wing student group linked to the South African police and to the Young Republicans in the U.S. has run full-page ads attacking the ECC.

But while some 20% of the white minority has shifted to the far right, Evans estimates, there has also been a significant shift of whites toward the left. More and more whites are expressing their support for majority rule and for extra-parliamentary opposition to apartheid, he insists.

While the majority of whites probably still support apartheid, Evans concedes, a growing minority are actively fighting it. "That's certainly a development which we are trying to encourage within the End Conscription Campaign," he says.

Draft resister Philip Wilkinson had his views changed by the ECC. Just before his arrest last month he declared: "So many of my fellow citizens are laying down their lives for what they believe, that it is just not right for whites to take the easy way out and go overseas. For those of us who call ourselves white democrats, the time for theorizing is over. We have to act."

DAILY NEWS

NEW YORK'S PICTURE NEWSPAPER®

Monday, May 5, 1986

S. African youths heed old call: Hell no, we won't go!

May 5 '86

EARL CALDWELL



IN THE 1960s, it was the same here. They were young, draft-age Americans and they began to say no to the war in Vietnam. At first, it was just a few but the numbers grew and in time, they became a mighty force. And their shouts, "Hell no, we won't go," rallied a whole antiwar movement.

Now, in South Africa, it has begun to happen the same way. Late in the afternoon on Friday, Gavin Evans was at the office of the War Resisters League on Lafayette St. He sat in a cluttered room and spoke of the movement that has begun to build in South Africa.

He is 26 and white and he has one semester left in law school. "But I've already told them that I will not sign up," he said. Evans is in the leadership

of the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) and in South Africa, he says it already has begun to have an impact.

He said that in 1984, the minister of defense issued figures boasting that of the 45,000 South Africans called for military service, only 1,596 failed to show up. But South Africa has become a country where events change fast and the move against the military was just getting its legs. And by the first half of 1985, Evans said that official figures showed that 7,589 draftees, when called, said no. "And after that, the government quit giving reports," he said. "They don't want anybody to know how effective the (ECC) movement has become."

The South African military is a for-whites only force, unlike the police force. The country's apartheid laws are so rigid that even to fight, blacks are not accepted. But suddenly, that cuts two ways. "Because we're in a civil war situation," Gavin Evans explained, which means the government needs every white male of age to accept military service. In South Africa, there are 22 million blacks and just 4 million whites. And the blacks have begun to move close to an all-out rebellion against apartheid. "They're (blacks) really beginning to fight back," Evans

said. "And it's not just rocks and bottle throwing. They have AK-47s (machine guns) and grenades and things are beginning to spill over."

He mentioned Sandton, a white suburb of Port Elizabeth. He said that Sandton is just one road away from Alexandra, a black township that he described as being "incredibly poor." Before, if there was violence in a black township, whites knew nothing of it. But that has begun to change. "It's right on their doorstep (the violence) and it's spilling over," he said.

It comes back to the military. In a state that operates with the kind of oppression South Africa has, the military is key. Gavin Evans went back to 1976. "That was the turning point for me," he said. And he told of the way school-aged boys are required to attend classes once each week in military dress. And on those days he said special military training is given. "I always thought it was silly," he said. But in 1976, the huge black township outside Johannesburg where he lives exploded. Hundreds were killed in what became known as the Soweto uprising. "It dawned on me then that it wasn't just stupid; we were being trained to fight fellow South Africans," he said.

In South Africa, most whites grow

up with almost no social contact with blacks. It was different for Gavin Evans. His father, Bruce Evans, is an Anglican bishop in Port Elizabeth. He had exposure to black townships. Bishop Desmond Tutu was a frequent visitor at the Evans home. His family also had a long record of standing against apartheid. He sees the struggle now as being nonracial. "It's against a racist, immoral system," he said. "I have never been subjected to racial hostility from blacks but I have gotten it from whites."

He said the ECC now has 52 affiliates across the country. He said they organize in their own (white) community but are involved in support efforts with black groups.

IN SOUTH AFRICA, to maintain apartheid, the government depends on all the whites in the country to stand together. But bit by bit, that has begun to change. Businessmen, churchmen and students have begun to step away. Now the young men the government must supply to the military it leans on have begun to say no. It is no small development. "And you're just seeing the beginning of it," Gavin Evans said.

Draft-Dodging on Rise in S. Africa

By Vivienne Walt

One year after soldiers moved into South Africa's embattled black townships to try to put down the ongoing revolt, an unprecedented number of young whites are shunning their four years' compulsory military service and running the risk of six-year jail terms.

"A lot of kids who might not be political are now saying, 'We don't want to spend four years of our lives killing, maybe dying, for apartheid,'" said Gavin Evans, 25, executive member of the End Conscription Campaign (ECC), in a recent interview in New York, where he testified about the military buildup inside South Africa before the UN Committee Against Apartheid.

According to the South African government, of the 30,000 or so high school graduates drafted, 7,560 did not report for duty in January, more than a fourfold jump from the figure of 1,589 a year before. It was unknown how many of those were avoiding service and how many were absent for other reasons.

After jailing 12 draft evaders over the past few years, the government amended the legislation in 1984, hoping to eliminate political objectors by making it easier to claim objection on religious grounds.

But the rate of military evasion increased. The first draft-dodging trial in two years is expected to open soon. The defendant, Philip Wilkinson, a 22-year-old butcher and high-school dropout from Port Elizabeth, refused to attend a reserve camp, saying he would rather face the mandatory 33-month jail term, one-and-a-half times the remainder of his service, than enter black townships as a soldier. He was arrested April 29 while attending a draft protest meeting.

Independent monitoring groups in South Africa estimate that about 15,000 soldiers have been deployed in the riot-torn black townships, where more than 1,200 people have died since September, 1984, in battles between residents and security forces.

Founded in 1984, the ECC brought together people from 52 political, professional and artistic organizations around a single issue: the drafting of all white male high-school graduates for two years of military service, followed



AP Photo

Police, accompanied by dogs, enter the black township of Soweto outside Johannesburg to tear down squatters' shanties.

MAY 13 1986

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by two years in the active reserves.

Its membership remains small but includes young whites who traditionally provide the government's strongest supporters — students at Afrikaans-language universities, whose graduates have traditionally become the country's government. "These [ECC] students are ostracized from their own organizations and often from their families," Evans said.

As some of the few whites directly challenging the government, ECC members — mostly university and high school students — have come under increasing pressure from the government and its supporters.

Like other leaders of the movement, Evans has been arrested — three times, once for the duration of the ECC's international peace festival in Johannesburg last July. Other members' homes have been raided by police officers.

With their public meetings banned, ECC members reverted to less overt

protests. They held candlelight vigils in churches and organized group mass "runs for peace," but all were banned or disrupted by police. They even built protest sandcastles on the beaches of Cape Town in the shape of the city's military fortress, then were forced by police to destroy them.

Meanwhile, young servicemen, shaken by the violence they have been exposed to, have begun to use the ECC as an ear for their concerns. In a serious transgression of military regulations, one 18-year-old soldier sent the group an anonymous distressed account of his experiences in the townships, after a chance meeting with an ECC member on an airplane.

The Defense Force attitude, he wrote, is of "hatred, loathing and contempt for blacks and a complete lack of human feeling and compassion toward them. Blacks are a base subhuman plasm, a parody of man, whose pain is merely sport." while the black town-

ships he patrolled at night "became a giant playground for a serious game of cops and robbers, the occasional injury only adding to the excitement."

Partly because overtly political events are mostly banned in South Africa, the ECC-led peace movement has tried to forge an artistic renaissance along the lines of the U.S. anti-Vietnam movement of the 1960s.

Graffiti artists regularly spray city walls with anti-military slogans, such as "troops out of the townships" and "ARMY = MURDERERS," and occasionally paint murals depicting white troops beating black protesters.

In the end, the draft leads thousands of young whites to contemplate leaving the country, often living in exile for the rest of their lives. Bernard Wolfsdorf, an immigration lawyer in Los Angeles who is himself a refugee from South Africa, said, "Thousands are coming here, directly or indirectly because of the military situation."

UN hosted ECC member

A Johannesburg End Conscription Campaign (ECC) executive member recently returned from a tour of America as a guest of the United Nations.

Mr Gavin Evans (26) addressed the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid, which had invited the ECC to send a representative. He left for America on March 19.

He addressed the committee on the anniversary of the Sharpeville shootings, March 21, also called the International Day against Racial Discrimination.

A 226-page report on opposition to conscription in South Africa, including affidavits from soldiers and township residents, was presented to the committee, Mr Evans told *The Star*.

While in America he was hosted by a pacifist group, the War Resister's League.

During his seven-week tour he was interviewed on many radio and TV shows and met major church and human rights organisations such as

Amnesty International and Humanitas International.

Mr Evans said he also addressed student rallies at 10 universities.

"Many Americans do not realise a lot of whites oppose apartheid. They

could also relate to the ECC because of their Vietnam experience.

"Several groups issued support statements for Peter Wilkinson, on trial at the moment for refusing to do an SADF camp," Mr Evans said.

Cape Times
22 March

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ECC addresses UN

Staff Reporter

AN executive member of the End Conscription Campaign, Mr Gavin Evans, yesterday addressed a special sitting of the United Nations in New York.

His address formed part of the UN Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination which commemorates the Sharpeville shootings of 1960.

Mr Evans presented evidence prepared by the ECC arguing for an end to conscription in South Africa.

The ECC presented a comprehensive account of the role being played by the SADF.

He asked:

- That all member countries should do everything in their power to end apartheid;

- That all UN members should provide support for those who in conscience refuse to serve in the SADF;

- That there should be no weapons deals with the SADF;

- That Unita, MNR and other Southern African dissident movements should be isolated;

- That action be taken to see the speedy and unconditional implementation of independence for SWA/Namibia.

Sugar increase

ECC's Evans on US visit

CAPE TIMES APRIL 4
WASHINGTON. — Increasing numbers of South Africans are refusing compulsory military service in what a member of the End Conscription Campaign said yesterday was a sign of growing white opposition to apartheid.

Mr Gavin Evans, on a six-week visit to the US to meet anti-apartheid groups, said that the "turning point for many draft resisters is having to fight fellow South Africans in the townships".

— Sapa-Reuter

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BUSINESS DAY, Monday, March 24 1986

UN gets ECC petition

RICHARD WALKER

NEW YORK — A smuggled-out petition from the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) has been presented to the UN asking members to grant asylum to draft dodgers.

Asserting that more and more conscripts were confronted with a crisis of conscience, draft protestor Gavin Evans yesterday told a hearing of the Special Committee Against Apartheid: "The brutality with which the SADF and police are carrying out their rule of terror is unprecedented."

The 226-page dossier presented to the committee included affidavits by township residents and by conscientious objectors.

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ECC man to address UN ^{WM} 21/5

GAVIN EVANS, an executive member of the Johannesburg End Conscription Campaign (ECC), will today call on the United Nations in New York to provide support for conscientious objectors.

He will address a special sitting of the UN on behalf of the ECC.

And ECC activists will picket in main centres across South Africa to commemorate the Sharpeville and Langa shootings. The UN commemorates March 21 as the day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Evans, on behalf of the ECC, will call on UN member countries to do everything in their power to end apartheid; assess the implications of arms trading with the SADF and isolate Southern African dissident groups from support.

International support for ECC

Staff Reporter

A HOST of international organizations have sent messages of support to the End Conscription Campaign expressing solidarity with their working for a Just Peace campaign.

The ECC has embarked on an April campaign in which volunteers are participating in peace projects of

benefit to communities, such as cleaning up litter, looking after children and other services.

The organizations include the American Committee on Africa, the New York-based War Resisters League, the Episcopal Churchpeople for a Free Southern Africa, the Catholic Peace Fellowship and the Clergy and Laity Concerned.

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Geneva to get details of ECC gag

The denial of the End Conscription Campaign's right to express itself fully and freely under the emergency regulations was the major focus of a document sent to the United Nations Commission for Human Rights this week.

The ECC sent evidence concerning human rights violations in South Africa, with specific respect to the campaign, to the commission's headquarters in Geneva.

In the document the ECC said: "The general provisions of the emergency regulations create conditions unfavourable to the free expression of our views."

The document made special mention of a specific clause in the regulations which makes it subversive to incite anyone to discredit or undermine compulsory military service.

DENIAL

"We see this clause as directly aimed at denying our campaign the space to express our views freely and legally," it said.

The document also focused on the system of conscription as a central denial of human rights in South Africa.

"Conscription into the SADF imposes on conscripts the obligation of implementing and defending the government's apartheid policy. In a South Africa as divided as ours, this causes thousands of conscripts to be forced to side with the government against their consciences."

The document highlighted the detention and harassment of ECC members during the current state of emergency. It said that a total of 48 ECC members had been detained, 10 of whom were still being held.

EVIDENCE

The ECC described the detentions as "adding to the denial of our right to express our opposition to the system of conscription".

Earlier this year ECC executive member Mr Gavin Evans gave evidence on behalf of the ECC to a sitting of the UN Special Committee on Apartheid in New York.

THE End Conscription Campaign has given evidence to the United Nations Commission for Human Rights about restrictions on its activity.

ECC - which campaigns for alternatives to military service - was initially invited to submit the evidence to the commission's working group in Lusaka, but was unable to do so in person.

A document outlining ECC's views was sent to the commission's Geneva headquarters instead.

A major focus of the document was the limitation on our right to express ourselves freely in terms of the emergency regulations," ECC said in a statement.

In its document, the ECC says the emergency regulations have "created conditions

unfavourable to the free expression of our views".

"As well as the general constraints, there is the specific clause which makes it subversive to incite anyone to discredit or undermine compulsory military service.

The ECC said this "worsened the denial of freedom associated with the system of conscription".

"Our document also focused on the system of conscription as a denial of the rights to freedom of con-

science and to freedom of choice," it said.

"Conscription into the SADF imposes on conscripts the obligation of implementing and defending apartheid policy."

Detention of ECC members during the current state of emergency was also highlighted - 48 ECC members have been detained.

Earlier this year ECC executive member Gavin Evans gave evidence on behalf of ECC to a sitting of the UN Special Committee on Apartheid in New York.

DOCUMENTS on the violation of human rights in South Africa were sent this week to the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva by the End Conscription Campaign.

A statement issued by the ECC this week said evidence of human rights violations in regard to ECC activities had been sent to Geneva as the organisation was unable to take up an invitation to deliver evidence in person.

"We were invited to submit the evidence to the commission's working group sitting in Lusaka," ECC said.

A major focus of the Geneva document was the denial of ECC's right to express itself fully and freely in terms of the emergency regulations.

"As well as the general constraints, there is a clause in the regulations which makes it subversive to incite anyone to discredit or undermine compulsory military service.

"We see this clause as directly aimed at denying our campaign the space to express our views freely and legally."

Earlier this year ECC executive member Gavin Evans gave evidence on behalf of the ECC to a sitting of the UN Special Committee on Apartheid in New York.

UN told about SA
human rights violations
Feb 24, 1986

By Gary van Staden

CF 24/7/86

Violation of rights reported to UN ECC

Documents on the violation of human rights in South Africa - with specific reference to the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) - were sent this week to the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva by the ECC.

According to a statement issued by the ECC this week the evidence of human rights violations in regard to ECC activities had been sent to Geneva as the organisation was not able to take up an invitation to deliver evidence in person.

"We had been invited to submit the evidence to the Commission's working group sitting in Lusaka but were unable to do so," the ECC explained.

A major focus of the Geneva document was the denial of ECC's right to express itself fully and freely in terms of the emergency regulations.

"As well as the general constraints there is a clause in the regulations which makes it subversive to incite anyone to discredit or undermine compulsory military service.

"We see this clause as directly aimed at denying our campaign the space to express our views freely and legally," the ECC added.

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END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)

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