

ECC FOCUS

MARCH 1986

Construction not conscription

Have you ever thought of building a park for the mentally handicapped or running a holiday programme for black schoolchildren, rather than patrolling the townships in browns?

Thousands of South Africans will have the opportunity to perform tasks such as these in the course of the End Conscription Campaign's Working for Just Peace campaign next month.

'We are not opposed to the idea of a truly national service,' said Johannesburg Publicity Officer, Annemarie Rademeyer. 'But we believe the SADF's role is to uphold apartheid. This is contrary to serving the nation as a whole'.

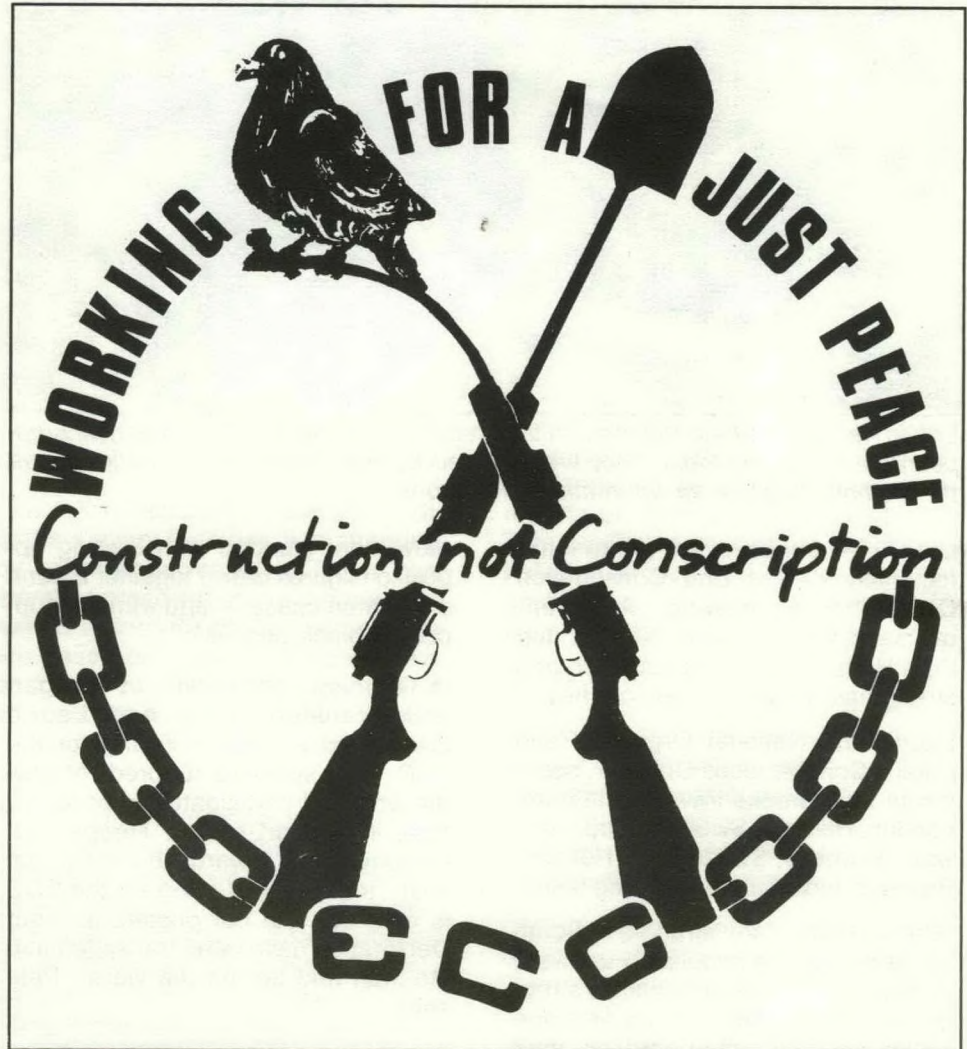
She said the ECC's central concern is that conscripts have the right to choose whether or not they participate in the SADF. Only universal religious pacifists have an alternative. But even those who are accepted by the Board for Religious Objection face six years alternative service in a government department.

Those who fall outside this definition face a choice of six years in prison or a life in exile.

'The projects we have chosen are aimed at serving and working closely with different communities, unlike the SADF. The army occupies townships against the will of the black residents, hence our slogan 'Construction not conscription', Annemarie said.

In Johannesburg three main projects have been chosen:

- * Running a holiday programme for children in the coloured township of Western from April 1st—5th. A training course before the event will be held.
- * Building a park for the intellectually disabled children in Eldorado Park, April 18th and 19th. All keen gardeners and carpenters are invited to participate in helping to create a stimulating environment for the children in the home.



The distinctive Working for Just Peace logo which will soon be recognised as the symbol of the campaign throughout South Africa. By presenting alternatives to national service, such as building, painting, garden landscaping and child-care projects, we wish to demonstrate the possible positive aspects of national service as a response to the needs and wishes of local communities.

- * Organising a non-racial picnic on April 26th. Parents and children of all races will be able to meet and share experiences of life in South Africa.

The build-up to the programme will include the public painting of a Peace Ribbon on Saturday April 12th. You do not have to be a professional artist — just follow the design.

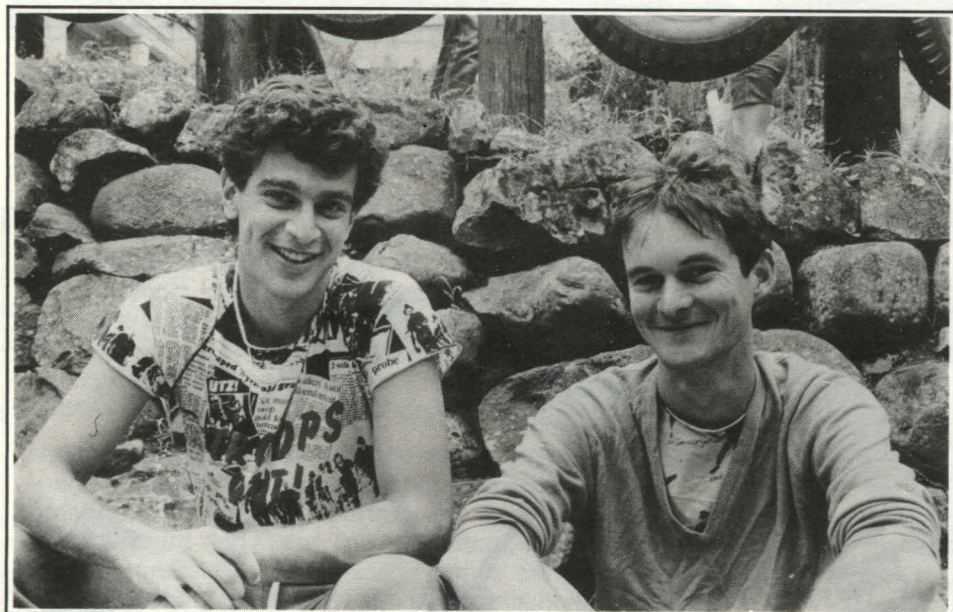
Extensive pamphleteering and poster-

ing, the conducting of a survey attempting to gauge public opinion on alternatives to military service and two public concerts are also part of the build-up.

The Working for a Just Peace campaign will end with a rally in the City Hall at the end of April. If you are interested in getting involved in the campaign, please phone Clare at 648-9282, Stephen at 643-4689 or Gavin at 648-4166.

ECC gets a warm welcome in Europe and Asia

Annual get-together sets pace for 1986



Laurie Nathan and Pete Hathorn, on their return from a two month tour of nine European countries and India. They were hosted by War Resisters International and the Catholic Institute for International Relations.

Locally — and believe it or not internationally — the End Conscription Campaign is growing. A recent overseas trip by Laurie Nathan and Pete Hathorn served to establish and strengthen these international ties.

Laurie, the National Organiser and Pete, a Conscientious Objector, spent seven busy weeks travelling through London, Helsinki, Sweden, Paris, Norway, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Brussels, India before returning home.

'The intensity of the struggle in South Africa makes one hopelessly unaware of global politics and of specific struggles in other places such as Asia and South America,' they said on their return.

They were VIPs at numerous meetings and discussion forums. 'Many people were very keen to meet and discuss the possibility of establishing lasting contact. We have not yet begun to realise the full potential of the international solidarity network,' Laurie said.

The 'Working for Just Peace' campaign was received with great enthusiasm throughout Europe and in India. In a letter Laurie remarked that 'It is hard for the European Community to believe that from the underbelly of what many there see as South Africa's most repressive society could come a

movement studded with leading opposition figures drawn together around a common cause — and with the support of black people.'

In Germany, particularly in Stuttgart and Frankfurt, Pete and Laurie discovered a large following for the ECC. They spoke to hundreds of people who had participated in solidarity fasts in support of the 'Troops Out' campaign held towards the end of last year. 'In fact the support for the ECC is so great that our posters and our Declaration have been translated into German and are on the walls,' Pete said.

The highlight of the tour was the Triennial meeting of the War Resisters International. This took place on an ashram, a self sufficient village, in India. They made contact with delegates from Malaysia, Mauritius, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tibet, Central and Latin American countries and India.

Finally the tour ended, and the ECC's travel weary diplomats trooped home to report on their European conquest. They brought with them a positive message from the international anti-apartheid movement for the ECC and other opposition groups in South Africa.

In the moving shadow cast by South Africa's clanking military colossus rides another vehicle. And although lilliputian by comparison, the End Conscription Campaign has grown enormously over the past year.

The ECC held its second annual National Conference in Durban recently. 90 delegates from six branches spent an exhaustive three days cloistered in a convent discussing ways of taking up the demand to end conscription in South Africa.

The conference marked the beginning of yet another successful year. Last year 30 regional delegates attended. The representation this year indicates that the call to end conscription is increasingly heard from all corners of the country. Apart from the six established regions, Cape Town, Johannesburg, Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown, there is growing interest in East London, Pretoria, Stutterheim, Middelburg (Cape) and Stellenbosch.

In this, the major national decision making forum, delegates evaluated the past year. It was felt that the ECC, through the Peace Festival held in June and the 'Troops Out Peace Fast' had developed a broad following in the white community. In planning for 1986 delegates urged one another to continually seek to increase this support by drawing on Afrikaners and conscripts.

The expansion of the ECC over the last year led to the decision to establish a new post of full-time National Secretary and David Shandler was elected to this position. Stephen Lowry of the Johannesburg region was elected National Treasurer.

The conference also resolved to launch an alternative national service campaign entitled 'Working for Just Peace' with 'Construction not Conscription' as its slogan.

Laurie Nathan, who was unanimously re-elected National Organiser, said: 'We hope that all South Africans will pick up the idea and engage in one or more of the regional projects during April'.

With a spirit of solidarity and unity the delegates prepared themselves for another year of dynamic campaigning against conscription in South Africa.

ECC FOCUS

EDITORIAL

End conscription

For the first time in three years a Conscientious Objector is facing a 33 month jail sentence. 22 year old Philip Wilkinson, a Catholic and a member of the Port Elizabeth ECC, was refused recognition as a Religious Objector when he appeared before the Board for Religious Objection on February 27th, 1986.

As the civil war in South Africa intensifies, his case is a reminder of the thousands of young men who agonise about their lives and principles when conscripted to the South African Defence Force. 'I am prepared, physically, morally and spiritually, to stand by the oppressed people of South Africa. Until there is justice in our land I will be prepared to go to jail anytime they call me up,' Philip stated at a recent press conference.

We in the ECC firmly believe that conscription should end. Until conscription is ended we call for:

- The right of Conscientious Objection to be granted on ethical, moral, political and religious grounds,
- The length of alternative service to be the same as that for military service, not a punitive one and a half times the length,
- Alternative service also to be available in non-governmental organisations.

Working for a Just Peace

For this reason, the ECC is launching the 'Working for Just Peace' campaign. Conscription is destructive to the community and through the slogan 'Construction not conscription' the campaign will question the violent role the SADF performs in the townships of our country, despite the rare media report of troops playing soccer with township youth.

Censorship

Magnus Malan, the Minister of Defence, has informed the public that information concerning the numbers of conscriptees failing to report for national service plus the number of troops deployed in our townships and the findings of the Geldenhuys Commission on Conscientious Objection will not be publicised. He claimed that 'certain organisations' misuse such information. We believe the suppression of these facts serve no purpose in the quest for peace in South Africa.



The 1986 Johannesburg ECC Executive: Adele Kirsten, Clare Verbeek (Chairperson), Gavin Evans, Stephen Lowry and Annemarie Rademeyer.

The ECC and you ...

The birth and subsequent success of the anti-conscription campaign would never occur without an organisational superstructure designed to steer and facilitate it.

The Johannesburg ECC General Body gathers every fortnight. It is attended by representatives of affiliated and member organisations, subgroups as well as by individuals. These meetings are based on consensus rather than on formal committee procedures and any policy making matters are referred back to affiliates before decisions are taken.

An Executive committee guides the activities of the ECC. Your local 1986 Executive are: Clare Verbeek as the Chairperson, Annemarie Rademeyer as Publicity Officer, Gavin Evans as Public Relations and Contact Officer, Stephen Lowry as Treasurer and Adele Kirsten as the Secretary. Their tasks include the overseeing of all administrative functions, liaising with the ECC nationally and looking for creative ways to publicise the campaign.

The real work of the ECC is performed by its five sub-committees. These are forums for the involvement of all supporters. They are geared towards developing creative approaches to campaign oriented work as well as the ongoing growth of the ECC's profile.

Unleash your hidden talents by joining one or more of the following sub-committees:

- The Media and Culture group
- the Education and Development group

- the Contact and Newsletter group
- the Churches group

These groups, each with its own elected co-ordinator, meet regularly. At the fortnightly General Body meeting reports on their activities are given. This facilitates smooth co-ordination between groups and allows for suggestions and volunteers for specific actions from the larger grouping.

In addition, workshops and educational seminars are held at which specific matters affecting all members are discussed. One workshop might be devoted to planning our participation in a national campaign and another might be concerned with the ECC's relationship with its affiliates.

Older members (like the writer) remark on the non-confrontational style of operation within the organisation — markedly different from more traditional political or religious groupings. This democratic spirit can best be illustrated by an example, such as the way in which people are chosen to represent the ECC. Discussion on a clear analysis of the major skills required for the particular task, the candidate's qualities and limitations, and the deliberate rotation of persons selected takes place. These aspects all suggest something of the society for which those in the ECC strive.

Finally, we in Johannesburg are part of the national ECC and the local Chairperson attends regular National Committee meetings made up of the Chairpersons of the different branches throughout South Africa.

IT'S TIME TO DANCE TO A DIFFERENT BEAT ...

Okay people, get up off your feet — it's time to move to a different beat and get your ear tuned and your bodies into the ECC's latest gear.

Hundreds of people throughout South Africa are indeed bopping to a different beat. They are jumping and jiving to the sounds of 11 local bands playing against the call-up.

Within three weeks of the initial pressing of 800 'Forces Favourites' records and tapes by the ECC and Shifty Records, there were none left. More have been made and everybody now has the chance to enjoy listening to The Facts, The Softies, The Aeroplanes, Mapantsula, Kalahari Surfer, In Simple English, Nude Red, The Cherry Faced Lurchers and the spine-tingling lyrics of Roger Lucey, Stan James and Jennifer Fergusson.

And that is not all — the ECC believes the anti-war, anti-apartheid culture is growing and has not neglected the latest fashion trends. In Durban, the Eastern Cape, Johannesburg and Cape Town, mothers, musicians, priests, conscripts, students and pupils are proudly donning T-shirts, socks and badges emblazoned with 'End Conscription', 'Moms against war', 'Troops out of the townships', and 'Killing is no solution'.

Art exhibitions, posters, photographic displays, videos and plays all add up to a gut-level rejection of conscription and the activities of the SADF.



Price catalogue

Forces Favourites record/tape:

Troops Out T-shirt:
End Conscription T-shirt
'Dancing Man' T-shirt

(available in white, green,
red, blue, pink and yellow)

Socks

Badges

Free us from the call-up poster

Calendar (saxophonist and cancel
the call up)

Declaration poster

Greeting cards

R13,00
(incl postage)
R10,00
R5,00
R7,00

(available in white, green,
red, blue, pink and yellow)
R3,00
R1,00
R1,00

R2,00
R2,00
R1,00

for pack of five

The above media are available from the End Conscription Campaign, 229 Khotso House, 42 de Villiers Street, Johannesburg, 2001. Send your order plus a cheque. Add 50 cents for postage.



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