

CAPE TOWN E.C.C. REPORT; JUNE 1988

1. Membership: We have an active membership of approximately 70 people, and a mailing list of 650.

2. Structure:

- a) General Body - The formal decision and policy making structure, meets fortnightly, has reps from front orgs. and subcomms.
 - b) Executive: - handles bureaucracy and inter-subcom co-ordination, meets weekly, composed of 6 portfolio holders, office worker and subcom reps.
 - c) Schools Subcommittee
 - d) Churches subcommittee
 - e) Parents and Supporters Subcommittee - meets fortnightly
 - f) Contact Subcommittee
 - g) Conscripts Subcommittee
- Subcoms engage in constituency based work, meet weekly.
- h) Campaign Committee - takes forward campaign work, meets weekly, has various subcommittees such as media ASP, conference, as well as five administrators who meet regularly.
 - i) Research Group - co-ordinates research initiatives.
 - j) People's Group - deals with peoples feelings as activists, sexism, leadership problems.
 - k) Security Group - mandated three person group which investigates all security issues and reports back to organisation.
 - l) Adhoc Groups formed around issues such as Lawaakamp and Angola.
 - m) Fair Group - planning for fair in October.

3. Activities:a) Campaign:

We have been involved in work on the first phase of the campaign targeting specific suburbs such as Muizenberg, Sea Point and Wynberg, as well as more familiar areas like Gardens and Rondebosch. On the weekend we staff a booth in a shopping centre, distributing ECC media, and the following week we hold a 'Know Your Rights' meeting in the area. The slogan on our posters and pamphlets reads " Ride Safe with the ECC". Attendance at the meetings averages 30 to 40, and while there have been some poor moments, on the whole they have been most successful. The advice being offered by our changing 'panel of experts' is most helpful to those who attend. A lot of conscripts are looking for ways to evade the military. Discussion at the meetings is often quite in-depth, and we feel that we are being put in contact with our constituency in a more direct and substantial way than ever before. For us this period has confirmed the appropriateness of our emphasis on the 'conscript' and the 'conscripted community'. Another interesting feature is the number of parents with sons in the army or in exile who attend our meetings.

Other campaign activities include the production of campaign media, the running of a survey on alternative service at the booths, preparation for the alternative service project, and discussions around lobbying and the proposed conference on alternative service.

b) Angola:

We have been concerned that insufficient attention has been paid to the war in Angola, and have pulled a rather unsuccessful forum of organisations together to discuss the matter. A public meeting on the matter, which should attract a lot more attention, is planned for Wed. 22nd June.

c) Lawaaikamp:

Some ECC members attended the activities at Lawaaikamp, and we are being kept up to date with events via our Black Sash contacts. We are prepared to run a 'Troops out of Lawaaikamp' campaign should it become necessary.

d) Subcommittee activities:

The 'Conscripts' group continues to grow, and recently held an Angolan 'vets' discussion. They are centrally involved in the "Know Your Rights" meetings. The Schools group have been taking forward work on alternatives to cadets, have distributed ECC timetables in schools, and have produced a cadet's brochure. Pressure groups around cadets have been set up in certain schools. The Churches subcommittee have held a workshop on the SACBC proposals, and are working with various church and youth groups. The Parents and Supporters group continues to provide support and information to its members, and are planning a "Know Your Rights" meeting. Contact has successfully got the membership drive off the ground, and have planned a 'members' cheese and wine party.

e) The fair group have been holding preliminary fund-raising activities such as a car-boot sale and raffle.

f) Other activities include the research work undertaken by the research group, an education and training programme for new members, press work and preparation for the hearing of our interdict. The ECC office is an important centre of activity, and is where the ongoing contact we have with the public is maintained.

4. Security:

The organisation has recently changed its security alert status from 'yellow' to 'green' which means we now operate completely openly (pre-emergency fashion), with of course the usual vigilance. We have felt this necessary because our half-hearted 'yellow' security procedures were hopelessly inadequate. We felt the security climate to be relatively 'cool' and our public work necessitates a feeling of greater confidence and openness.

There has nevertheless been considerable recent harassment of the ECC and its members. Security police have been visiting newspapers that give coverage to ECC activities, including Cape Style for their article on conscription. Their intention is to close down ECC's public space completely. People associated with ECC's activities have been harassed.

Internal development and morale:

The recent campaign activities have done much for ECC's morale, putting us back on the streets and making a public impact. Some activists involved in the campaign have been overextended. The campaign has also brought an influx of new people. There is a critical need for education and training in the organisation and steps are being taken to fill this. A series of introductory sessions on ECC and organisational procedure have been run, and a more in depth series of discussions are now planned. We are building up towards a lobbying phase after the August callup, and want to involve the whole organisation in this work. We are holding a lobbying training workshop on August 6th for the purpose of preparing the whole organisation for this phase.

Front:

The organisations formally represented at our General Body meetings are the Black Sash, the Conscription Advice Service, the Young Progs, the Women's Movement for Peace, Gardens Youth, the Objectors Support Group, Quakers.

The Black Sash are our most active front organisation, participating in most ECC activities and giving our organisation much positive support. The front structure, while weak in some respects, is still extremely valuable for the organisation and we put quite a lot of energy into maintaining it. We have also been meeting with organisations beyond the front, including the PFP, NDM, MOYCO and IDASA and find these contacts most valuable.

National Contact:

Our national contact over the last period has been erratic as we are in the process of changing our national representative. We feel that we don't have a sufficiently 'national' picture of the campaign and will be putting more energy into our national liason.

CAPE TOWN PSG MIDYEAR REPORT 1988

- * This report was not preceded by thorough discussion within PSG.

We lost two of our more active members in 1988: Doug Cornell died in July, and Bruce Thwait's left for Australia. Bea Cornell has not been well.

Despite the promise of the Know Your Rights campaigns we have not been able to grow. While the number of people who maintain a peripheral interest and receive our minutes has remained reasonably constant, attendance at meetings has dwindled and only a small core group remains actively involved in day to day ECC work. We have not been able to get everyone involved in campaign work.

Possible reasons:

1. Most members are in full-time employment
2. Virtually all have family commitments including children at various stages of development.
3. In addition to these 2 factors that have always limited the amount of time PSG members have for meetings and other activities, the campaign has shifted the focus away from subcommittee work. Also it is the members who are normally most active who are involved.

These issues are to be discussed thoroughly in forthcoming PSG meetings.

On the brighter side we are soon having a house-meeting with a group of Kalk Bay parents who have expressed an interest in ECC.

HALF-YEAR REPORT : CAPE TOWN FAIR PLANNING GROUP

Cape Town's annual fair will be held on Saturday, 1 October from 9am to 3pm at Rondebosch Congregational Church.

The emphasis this year is on raising as much money as possible. We aim also to get a lot of positive publicity and have a good time, but these are secondary ambitions.

A group of about 10 enthusiastic activists are meeting weekly to handle the event. People from the Front are included in this grouping.

UCT is handling the entertainment which promises to be very exciting. UCT will be sending personal invitations to various VIP's asking them to come to the fair,

Games include last year's highly successful "Fish the Troops out of the Townships" and ideas are being thrown about, such as "Pin the Ears on Magnus".

A number of pre-Fair fundraising events have taken place and R400+ has been raised. These include a car boot sale, a cake sale and two raffles.

Graphic designers are working on the poster design and the banner for us. We plan to have fliers printed to distribute at booths.

We look forward to a bumper Fair!

HALF-YEAR REPORT : CAPE TOWN CONTACT SUB COMMITTEE

Contact handled lobbying, membership/recruitment and ECC's new image.

A fairly successful "membership month" was held in May where we signed up our activists and supporters. In June we held a relatively successful informal and informative cheese and wine at the UCT Tennis Club. About 70 people attended

We went to talk to various Front Organisations and parliamentarians asking for their support for the campaign.

The 3D chain, designed by a supportive professional designer, grew out of Contact. The whole "new image" range for T-shirts, letterheads etc was handled by the sub-comm. T-shirts and mugs have been ordered and they should arrive in time for the Fair.

Because the whole of ECC will be concentrating on lobbying in the next stage of the campaign, and there is no need to meet weekly to handle membership, it was decided on the 25th July that we go "on ice" for a while. the "new image" orders are still being followed up by a member of Contact, but we are not active as a sub-comm at the moment and do not have a representative on the Executive.

Cape Town Mid-Year Report

Cape Town has had a busy and exciting six months. We sustained a high public profile and won support from a far wider constituency than previously. In addition we have been recruiting large numbers of new people into the organisation.

Activities

The bulk of activity has been centred in the campaign. After a successful KYR phase in which we held 5 different meetings in 5 different suburbs, and book launch, we are now embarking on our ASP's with a project at SAOLA clinic this weekend and at Lawaaiikamp next weekend.

The emphasis on the campaign has been to the slight detriment of the subcomms. Although maintaining themselves and working consistently only 2 have grown, and most consist of the same tired people. In addition since the beginning of the year three subcommittees have folded - culture, media and contact.

Other issues which CT has taken up include Angola and the call-up. CT has convened a couple of forum's with other organisations working in the white areas to discuss how best to take up the issue of Angola, and has also held a well attended public meeting. In the light of the peace talks and possible implementation of 435 action has been put on hold. For the call-up CT held one person pickets which read "National service need not be military service" and "Conscripts need Alternatives".

After a lull CT has also been producing lots of media. T-shirts, posters, stickers, pamphlets etc most of which have been successfully distributed.

The office has continued to be a centre of activity and public work with the public, press and overseas visitors continually coming in. The office worker is trained as a conscription counsellor and does a great deal of counselling from the office. In addition the membership drive and campaign work has created a large amount of bureaucracy and administration.

Our programme for the rest of the year has already been planned. We will be organising a fair, and possibly a concert, and much emphasis will be placed on lobbying which has been identified as a crucial area and since the weekend a way has been taken further by a small group.

Problems and Priorities

Despite our ongoing recruitment of new members a major weakness this year has been our ability to keep ^{new} involved, interested and train them. This is demonstrated by fluctuating numbers at campaign meetings and the lack of growth and development of the subcomms, which, with the exception of a few, have remained the same size or shrunk. At the same time the nature of the work, or the specific constituencies of subcommittees (eg Parents and churches) makes them unsuitable for most new members. Therefore educating new members and developing the structures to maintain them has been identified as a priority. In order to meet this problem there has been a proposal from GB to set up a "projects" committee for new members. This committee will emphasize education and motivation and will send its members eventually to other subcomms.

Generally morale has been high and we have reaped the benefits of lots of hard work.

Cape Town Campaign Report

Our campaign has begun to make a very significant impact on the white community. Support for a call for alternative service has extended far beyond our traditional support base. In some respects this support is manifesting itself as support also for ECC, placing ECC in perhaps its strongest position since the emergency was declared.

We set out at the beginning of the year with two key aims in mind
1) to raise the call for alternative service and to build support
2) to develop an understanding of the form of alternative service.
These two aims functioned as overall campaign objectives and it is useful to look at what we have achieved in this light.

KYR period:

Our assessment of this period confirmed the conceptual shift that we had proposed for ECC. Through this period we were able to reach constituencies which we had hitherto not been able to reach. Our accessibility to our primary constituency (conscripts) improved dramatically. In the course of this period ECC's image underwent a fundamental transformation.

Our campaign programme over this period involved:

- * street survey
- * 5 KYR meetings in different suburbs over 5 consecutive weeks
- * extensive media distributions
- * street booths 5 weeks in a row
- * newspaper advertising
- * close cooperation with the Conscript Advice Service in training ECC activists

The KYR meetings were small (they were never intended to be large) but extremely successful. They attracted conscripts who had genuine problems with military service, looking for advice and guidance. The semi informal atmosphere of the meetings facilitated easy discussion from those who had come to the meetings.

Membership recruitment over this period increased dramatically, particularly for the conscripts group.

Overall the very positive image we were able to portray, and the sustained street presence contributed enormously to raising the issue of conscription and military service in the minds of the public. An indication of our effectiveness is the stepped up harassment experienced by ECC activists and the campaign against us.

- * graffiti
- * wheelnuts loosened
- * windscreen smashed
- * tyres slashed
- * threatening calls and letters

We judged the KYR period as a great success and as an indication of the direction that we had chosen. By appealing directly to conscripts and in a sympathetic way, we tapped into an enormous constituency which is prepared to support our campaign. We felt after the KYR period that we had only scraped the surface and that there would be need for follow up KYR programmes and that a similar style be carried into the Alternative Service Project period.

Alternative Service Projects

Preparations for these projects have been underway for some time. Our approach has been to thoroughly investigate possible projects and engage in extensive discussion with communities. A difficulty experienced is that few black community organisations understand the concept of conscription and don't easily appreciate the call for alternatives. This highlights a weakness of ECC's work under the SOE. In many areas communication with mass based organisations

has collapsed. However in the course of preparing for the projects some of these setbacks have been counteracted.

We also concentrated in our preparation on the type of public message and image that we want to project. Our basic message is that there are numerous reasons why alternatives should be made available: moral/political; social; psychological; economic; developmental. On this basis the slogan we are using is "National Service need not be Military Service".

We began this period of work with the launch of the KYR booklet, at which we also presented our call for alternative service. The public response, particularly press, was excellent. David Bruce had just been sentenced and the story of Ivan's assault had broken. The press took up the call for alternative service and ran with it, generating significant public support for us.

ON the day of the call up we picketed throughout Cape Town. Malan's response to the 143 and his attacks on ECC galvanised us into more sustained campaigning. We put out 10 000 pamphlets, posters, held a alternative service public meeting.

This weekend we begin our ASP's, at SACLA Health project (improving facilities - 20/21 August), and Lawaakamp recreation park 27/28 August.

Campaign Lessons

1. Overall Direction: Our successes have indicated that our style of work and the message that we have adopted have a powerful resonance in the white community, particularly amongst conscripts. ECC has never enjoyed such widespread support. We will have to guard against bending the stick too far and losing those constituencies which have supported us up to now. To avoid this we feel it is necessary to impress upon other white democratic organisations the urgency of taking up the military issue. There is scope for these organisations to be challenging politically in a way that ECC is now constrained from doing.
2. Coordination: We began the campaign with 5 administrators (called administrators because they were to see to the overall administration thereby to allow for decentralized responsibility). This didn't work completely, as the initial stages required extensive strategising on the part of the administrators. In the latter part of the campaign we have changed administrators so as to facilitate training of activists in the process of assuming responsibility for the campaign.
3. Recruitment/membership: For the first time we have recruited new members directly into the campaign group. This has been very useful in immediately involving new members in the area where most activity occurs. It has also had some drawbacks. a) no continuity in the group b) overburdening the more experienced members in the campaign group c) not easily allowing for subcomm growth d) making training and education difficult. These difficulties are being addressed through a proposed new structure in ECC, (something along the lines of an education/motivation committee for new members).
4. National. There has not been much of a national feel to the campaign. However, we never envisaged the campaign having clear national dimension. Far greater link ups could have happened around media and details of ASP's. Nevertheless the impact that the campaign has had indicated its appeal at the national level.

Collection Number: AG1977

END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

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