

Red Eye

Resistance at the Embassy

In May this year the British Embassy held a party to mark the departure of ambassador Robin Renwick. Many notables were invited, including comrades from the progressive movement and from some community projects that had been supported by the Brits (no, Red Eye wasn't invited!). Imagine our comrades' surprise when they discovered that none other than the Iron Lady was a guest of honour! Yes, Maggie Thatcher herself! Remember (it seems so long ago now, with apartheid having ended we can all be friends again), when Maggie was still powerful she was the apartheid regimes number one friend in the world, and the anti-apartheid movement's number one opponent...

Anyway, some of the comrades felt it was a disgrace that they hadn't been told Maggie would be there. So whenever an Embassy official came up to ask some of them to come over and meet Maggie, they would smile and agree. They would get up to follow the official across the floor... but, by the time the official reached the Iron Lady, the comrades had melted away into the crowd of party guests.

Redder than red = ultra-red?

Workers Organisation for Socialist Action recently held a successful congress (no, Red Eye was not there!). But apparently a small group of members was expelled for holding wrong views on the nature of Soviet society, and for having links with the British Socialist Workers Party.

Red Eye bumped into some of

the expelled comrades at a party (which was much bigger than their party!). They said they were pleased to have freed themselves from WOSA "sectarians" and to be able form their own organisation. When pressed for figures they admitted they only had 30 members. "One millionth of SA's population!" exclaimed Red Eye. "Remember the Bolsheviks," warned our left wing friends. Sounds like a threat to make the bosses shudder in their Sandton palaces...

Honestly, though, Red Eye is amazed at the passions of the far left. Such dedication! Such energy! Such folly!

Can Marxism-Leninism recognise a woman?

Mind you, more orthodox communists are also so predictable. Two comrades wrote stinging responses to an article written by WOSA comrades and published in *Labour Bulletin*. They sneeringly addressed their remarks to "the gentlemen from WOSA"... Did it simply escape their attention that one of the two gentlemen from WOSA was actually a woman? Or is this simply proof that Marxist-Leninist polemic is a thoroughly sexist mode of discourse?

Our editor, peace-maker that he is, edited those revealing remarks out of the responses - but Red Eye thought our readers might be interested...

Cold war in the unions

Dan Gallin, head of the International Union of Foodworkers, recently wrote a stinging attack on the WFTU: "... the ultimately successful campaign against apartheid and

in defence of the South African trade unions... was entirely conducted by the ICFTU, its affiliates and the ITSSs, and the WFTU was entirely absent, except in print."

Really, Dan? Did WFTU affiliate SACTU not play some small role? And other WFTU affiliates such as the French CGT? And unaffiliated federations such as CGIL?

The pinstripe criminals of capitalism

Justice Minister Kobie Coetsee and DP MP Tony Leon recently slammed a "new type of criminal" "clothed in a pin stripe, who participates in boardroom meetings". They referred to Sol Kerzner who bribed the Transkei government with R2 million, the investment managers involved in massive fraud at Old Mutual, and other "fiddlers, fixers and fraudsters".

Leon said that this was the "ugly and unacceptable face of capitalism", which would allow the "ANC and other anti-capitalist radicals... to show that the free market is not the ideal vehicle... and to trumpet about the immorality of capitalism and its festering greed."

Your words, Tony. You also hope the government will use the full weight of the Companies Act to prosecute offenders. Isn't this state intervention in the free market?

No easy flight to freedom

Did you hear that President Sam Nujoma wants Namibia to buy him a presidential jet for \$35 million! This will cost each citizen about R80 - money that could be better spent elsewhere in that poor country. Mind you, if Namibia had an aeroplane factory maybe the workers would build him one...

Personally, Red Eye preferred the modest and humble style of Mwalimu Nyerere when he was president of Tanzania.

Realities - and rewards of power?

A group of African students and political exiles in London reflect on the setbacks to the hopes and good intentions of the victorious struggles for political independence across the continent.

One remarks how Tanzania's Chama Cha Mapinduzi, committed to self-sufficient egalitarian "African" socialism, put up sustained resistance to the pressures of the IMF. Sadly, note the others, by the late 80's, the Tanzanians were forced to submit to the IMF's 'structural adjustment' orders. Today, thirty years after independence, Tanzanians are experiencing the promotion of material self-interest, corruption and nepotism that they had tried so valiantly to keep under control.

"Well," another notes with pride, "it took fifteen years of a

devastating war of destabilisation to undermine Frelimo's commitment to popular socialist development in Mozambique!" Sadly the others reply, Frelimo too, ground down by the destruction of its economy, has had to turn to outside aid, and has accepted an IMF 'recovery programme'. Today, the social and economic ideals of the early years are giving way to 'private enterprise' - in legal and illegal forms! - and the promotion of new privileged elites.

"Well," remarks another, "with a much stronger economy in Zimbabwe, ZANU(PF) didn't even put up that much resistance - despite its Marxist rhetoric! Within five years of independence, corruption, nepotism and pursuit of directorship bribes from local capital were rampant. And now ZANU has agreed to the IMF's formulas to 'attract' international capital...and more lucrative company directorships for the elite?"

"SWAPO didn't even wait that long!" another exclaims. "Within five months of coming to power in Namibia, they were compromising with these forces, as the new ruling elite willingly accommodated to the 'realities' - and rewards - of power."

"That's nothing!" says the last, who has been listening to all the others. "The ANC in South Africa is preparing to make all these accommodations, and beginning to show all these tendenciesand they haven't even come to power yet!" ☆