

Communists never influenced policy

IN THE May/June issue of *Reality*, Randolph Vigne, in the course of a review, writes: "By the early 1960s the SACP had taken over, with breathtaking skill and speed, the two main British institutions concerned with the struggle in South Africa, the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the International Defence and Aid Fund." This allegation is completely untrue.

In 1960 my husband, Canon Collins of St Paul's Cathedral, founded and continued to direct the British Defence and Aid Fund from South Africa. In 1964 this became the International Defence and Aid Fund with similar aims. Policy was in the hands of my husband as chairman, and a presidential committee — a Swedish missionary who had been expelled from South Africa for his stand against apartheid, a Swiss academic, and a law lecturer at Trinity College, Dublin. These were elected by and from the national committee. Later a

Dutch academic was added.

John Collins was sympathetic to the plight of South African exiles, and over the years the organization employed considerable numbers. Among these were from time to time, three members of the South African Liberal Party, and three members of the SACP. The Communists were never in any position to influence the policy of I.D.A.F., nor did they ever attempt or wish to do so. They were dedicated to the organization's humanitarian work of legal defence and family welfare. South African exiles from other parts of the political spectrum also did valuable work for I.D.A.F. All respected our insistence that aid was to be given without discrimination on grounds of race, religion or political affiliation; this policy was strictly adhered to:

At one time another South African Liberal, the lawyer Ruth Hayman, served on a small grants advisory committee.

I was personally fully involved in the work of B.D.A.F. and of I.D.A.F. From 1983-1991, when the organization was disbanded, I was one of the International Board of Trustees, chaired by Archbishop Trevor Huddleston, that directed the policy and affairs of I.D.A.F. During those years we must have employed around 50 people.

At one stage a book "The Puppeteers" by Harold Soeff appeared. It contained allegations about I.D.A.F. similar to that made by Mr Vigne. I.D.A.F. took successful legal action against the author and publishers. The offending statements had to be deleted and a public apology made in open court.

I am sorry that Mr Vigne should have made such a false and mischievous allegation, and that *Reality* should have published it.

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*Cover picture by RUPHIN COUDYZER of a scene from the Street Beat Dance Company presentation at the Arts Festival. From the left: Sibonqile Mavuso, Temba Twala and David Matamela.

RANDOLPH VIGNE REPLIES:

RANDOLPH VIGNE writes: When I wrote in your May/June issue that the South African Communist Party had "taken over" the Defence and Aid Fund after Rivonia, I did not mean to include the late Canon John Collins, the founder and director of the Fund, or his close associates in Christian Action. Neither he, nor they, were communists, what were then called fellow travellers, or sympathizers of any kind.

I would not like what I wrote to diminish appreciation of Canon Collins' contribution to the work of the Fund in paying for the legal defence of so many activists against white racial supremacy in southern Africa, and in supporting their dependants and other victims of the struggle.

No middle ground

BENJAMIN HASWELL (*Reality*, August 1992), urges liberals to rise from their chairs and keep up the good fight to capture the middle ground. History has taught us that there is no middle ground in politics.

Where in the world has liberal government succeeded? For that matter has any other ideology succeeded or united the world? Judging from the state it is now in, the answer is an emphatic "No."

In a very perceptive editorial *Le Monde* (July 26/27) headed "Doubts over a medal" the writer looks at the state of the world in the year of the

Olympics and poses the question, "what medal will our century deserve?"

Commenting on the failure of different ideologies the editorial says, "Liberalism has still not managed to resolve the scandal of inequalities and will perhaps wake up one day and discover it has been fostering future revolts in its bosom." Here obviously the word liberalism is used for capitalism whose child is liberalism without its parents fangs.

In the light of the failure of the various ideologies the *Le Monde*

