

OTP/001/0001/4

"Mom Tornado"

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8-June 1987.

My dear Papa, I thought I should send you this
letter from Virginia so that you may read the contents
yourself. Terri tells me that Virginia telephoned
her on Saturday 6/6/87 and that she is in very
good form. I do hope that you are keeping
well and taking the flaccid regularly it is a
great medicine of replenishing lost vitality so
you must take it regularly. Also Calcium & Vit D
seems to have done for you what it did for me.
When my fractures were not uniting so keep
it up Mai please do the breathing exercises
regularly. I notice you did not do them when
you were here at home.

Much Love & Best Wishes
As Always Delia

The Question 23/3/85 Separate developments in c

THE NEWS that the Anti-apartheid Movement has closed down its dissident City of London local group has taken some students of political sectarianism by surprise. For the 25-year-old solidarity movement has in the past avoided the fractionalism that afflicts other radical groups. Remarkably it has managed to bring together activists from the ultra-left through to the Conservative Party in common opposition to the Pretoria regime. It can boast three out of the four main party leaders among its members, and its affiliates include all the major trade unions, the Methodist Church, and the London District of the Communist Party.

But the three-year-old dispute between Anti-Apartheid's national leadership and its City of London organisation—which is strongly influenced by the tiny Revolutionary Communist group—has brought unprecedented conflict.

The immediate reasons for disciplinary action was the City group's refusal to restrict membership to those

who live or work in its area. But the differences go far deeper. The leadership and its supporters believe there has been a concerted effort to take over the movement and abandon its broad-based political approach, while members of the GLC-funded City of London group complain that it is being hounded by a collection of do-nothing time-servers.

The row has been closely followed in South Africa and has now spread beyond the ranks of Anti-Apartheid. Twelve Labour MPs, including Tony Benn and Dennis Skinner, signed a statement urging the movement's national committee not to expel or disband the City group.

Only two of the 12 MPs are members of Anti-Apartheid's 50-strong Parliamentary Labour Party group, which has given its backing to Anti-Apartheid's leadership.

The City group has also antagonised the African National Congress—the main liberation organisation fighting apartheid in South Africa—to which Anti-Apartheid has close links.

Anti-Apartheid was originally founded at the initiative of the ANC's former president, Chief Albert Luthuli, together with Bishop Trevor Huddleston and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania.

Both the ANC and Swapo, the Namibia independent movement, last year decided to boycott the City group and its activities. According to the ANC's chief London representative, Solly Smith, "the activities of City Anti-Apartheid do not support the struggle in South Africa."

A notable casualty of the dispute has been David Kitson, who spent 20 years in South African gaols and was formerly a member of the high command of the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe. Both he and his wife, Norma, have now been suspended from ANC membership.

The origins of this mess go back to early 1982 when David Kitson's son, Steve, was detained by South African police while visiting his father, then still in prison. Some of those in Britain who campaigned for Steve Kitson's release went on to

set up the City group.

That summer, the newly-formed group organised an 86-day vigil outside the South African embassy in Trafalgar Square to press for the release of David Kitson. The vigil showed remarkable tenacity. But it went ahead in the face of opposition from the ANC and despite reservations on the part of Anti-Apartheid's leadership. Both felt that it was wrong to concentrate on the plight of one white prisoner. Such a campaign, they thought, risked diverting attention from ANC members facing execution.

Relations between the City of London and Anti-Apartheid's headquarters in Mandela Street in north London quickly deteriorated.

Anti-Apartheid leaders claim that the City group ran campaigns to rival those organised by the national movement, failed to hand over £600-worth of donations, and refused to consult with Anti-Apartheid's officers.

The conflict came to a head last summer, when picketing of the South African embassy—which had become the City group's

Common

SEUMAS MILNE on a split in Anti-Apartheid

main activity — was banned by police. Anti-Apartheid's executive decided that the ban should be observed until channels of official protest had been exhausted. But the City group and their supporters, including several Labour MPs, continued picketing. Mass arrests followed.

When a magistrate later lifted the ban, the City group felt vindicated. But in the view of the Anti-Apartheid leadership, the authority of its elected bodies was being flouted.

At the movement's annual general meeting last October, the 200-strong City group launched what was widely seen within Anti-Apartheid as a takeover bid inspired by the Revolutionary Communist Group. It ran a slate of 13 candidates for the national committee, which included David Kitson and three members of his family, several prominent RCG members, and two Labour MPs, Jeremy Corbyn and Tony Banks.

The move failed. None of the 13 was elected, and a resolution attacking the leadership's handling of the police picketing ban was decisively rejected.

This defeat gave Anti-Apartheid's national committee the green light to take action. When the City group failed to give assurances that it would operate as a normal local Anti-Apartheid organisation and restrict its activities to its own area, the decision was taken to exclude it from the official movement — though no individual members have been expelled.

The disciplinary move has already been portrayed by City group members as the action of sclerotic bureaucrats frightened at being exposed by effective campaigning on the streets.

But Mike Terry reacts angrily to the suggestion that the majority in Anti-Apartheid prefer committee-room campaigning to active protest. "I've occupied that embassy and South African Airways myself — and taken part in the Springbok tour demos," he says. "The issue is not direct action."

The dispute, he agrees, is partly to do with how to "communicate the message about South Africa. This month we will have people picketing 250 different shops and supermarkets stocking

South African goods. We're interested in getting the trade unionists working in our case, and getting local councils and their employees to implement the boycott."

He points to Ford workers' refusal to handle South African spare parts at Dagenham last summer, and this month's boycott declarations by Hackney and Newham councils, as examples of the success that can be achieved by using the whole range of forms of campaigning.

Mike Terry and Anti-Apartheid's other leaders hope that the City group problem will now go away and they can get on with their month of boycott action. "The level of Special Branch surveillance of our work has increased enormously since the City group came on the scene," he complains. But it looks as though the groups will remain a thorn in Anti-Apartheid's flesh for some time to come. After hearing that her organisation was to be excluded from the official movement, City group's Carol Brickley promised that it would carry on with its activities regardless.