

Brief Report on the Commemoration of the 1st Anniversary  
of the American Aggression on Libya on 5 April, 1986.

Tripoli 14-16 April, 1987.

1. Background

In the process of developing its own version of a people's socialist democracy based on Islamic teachings, and with the aim of realising the cherished goal of assuming the leading role in championing the cause of 3rd World liberation and the anti-imperialist (particularly anti-U.S. administration) struggle, Libya under Muammar Gaddafi has evolved two agencies for propagating its foreign policy:

- a) At the political level, she has created permanent Secretariats for organising conferences which deal with Arab liberation struggle, with international or regional participation for various socio-political groupings e.g. solidarity and peace organisations; trade unions ; women, youth or students; scientific research or academic institutions etc.
- b) At the practical level of implementing the concept of a collective anti-imperialist revolution, Libya has created a Secretariat (MATABA) for coordinating measures for assisting those engaged in struggle for Liberation — be it against colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, Zionism or other forms of foreign domination. MATABA is a more select grouping for those organisations which are (or claim to be) engaged in revolutionary struggle to overthrow their oppressors.

Group (a) is largely a platform to demonstrate Libya's anti-imperialist position, with M. Gaddafi portrayed as the natural successor to outstanding freedom-fighters like Nasser; prominent revolutionaries and ideologues like Marx, Mao or Che. The Guide (to give him his proper title) has somehow assumed the collective mantle of selected aspects in the ideologies of these revolutionaries. These are embodied in the ever-expanding Green Book , the bible for the achievement of the World Revolution.

We were specifically invited to a conference convened by the International Secretariat for Solidarity with the Arab People and their central Cause, Palestine (generally referred to as the I.S.S.)

Our Conference was but one of a chain of 8 (eight) conferences which were organised around the commemoration of the American aggression (or Libyan Resistance to this aggression), at the various levels referred to above.



Thus, our conference opened at the tail end of a Students' conference, while a Scientific conference was inaugurated as soon as we closed ours. The whole exercise is a remarkable feat which indicates the courage, commitment and Big Thinking of the figure behind all these initiatives. Such a feat is only feasible if one 'persuades' the participants not to be overly concerned with the content and wording of the final documents.

## 2. The I.S.S. Conference

Our conference was peculiar in that it was virtually an AAPSO-type meeting. There were the Socialist countries (Soviet, Bulgaria, Cuba, Poland, GDR); the Arab countries; liberation contingents (ANC, FMLN of el Salvador, Nicaragua, opposition groups from Mali, Zaire, Niger, Tunis, Venezuela) and West-European pro-Palestinian support groups. I learnt that lists of participants at these events are virtually never issued. Ours was no exception.

In consultations and exchanges with the delegates from the socialist countries, the consensus was that such meetings have the immediate effect of keeping Libya in the anti-imperialist camp, and may have a gradual corrective effect on some of the rather fanciful notions of a world revolution.

Most notable for me was the tolerance for speeches which dealt with broader issues other than the Middle East, and actually portrayed the M.E. situation in context as part of the world-wide movement for peace, disarmament, liberation and social progress. Perhaps for that shift alone, one can be tolerant of the rubber-stamped Final Statement and Plan of Action. These documents are such that one can easily imagine them being adopted in the other 7 conferences.

Virtually all the participants served in the Presidium in turns. We also served in the Drafting Committee for the Plan of Action together with the PLO and Cuba. The conference Convener saved us the trouble and we dutifully murmured our gratitude for this unrequested service. Besides, no time had been allocated for any unrequired discussions. We all learnt the contents of our drafts when they were read out in Plenary, in Arabic with simultaneous translation. We were informed that translated versions would be available the next morning, when the conference would have been formally closed.

### (i) Opinion

We should continue to respond to such invitations, if only to maintain contacts both with the hosts and the varied participants. Such occasions should be useful for those being inducted to international Fora at



appropriate levels (students, trade unions, research etc). However, our delegation should be properly briefed not to rock the boat, but to appreciate the real purpose for attending such conferences.

(ii) ISS Secretariat

I made it clear to the Convener that even our membership in the Permanent Secretariat does not mean we shall have a specific individual attending. ANC will on each occasion, delegate who should attend. I personally gained a lot from this meeting and would like others to share this educative experience.

3. ANC- Libyan Relations

My major objective in attending this conference was to seek clarification on the present ANC - Libyan relations; to assess the general climate vis-a-vis the ANC in the light of PAC permanent presence in the country. I also wanted to establish which was the correct channel for serious discussions at the level which receives serious attention from the Guide.

Without going into details I can report that the mission was successful. The situation is very favourable. Our presence is genuinely desired, with good prospects for ultimate ousting of the PAC not only at (a) level, as appears to be the case, but also at the all-decisive (b) level. There is no doubt that the level of our struggle makes it difficult for Libya to retain credibility as a champion of Liberation when the ANC is visibly absent at the shrine. We stand to gain a lot from strengthening our relations without any conditions being put with which we could not live ~~with~~ in terms of the ANC policy.

The ball is in our court.

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Berlin.