

Asian youth forge Belfast links

Solidarity between the struggle of the Irish people for national liberation and the struggle of the Asian and other minority communities in Britain against racism was expressed in the recent commemorations of the Easter 1916 Uprising in Ireland.

On Easter Sunday 1916 a group led by James Connolly seized control of the General Post Office in Dublin and proclaimed the Irish Republic. After a week of fierce fighting in the centre of Dublin the rebels were defeated and a number of them, including James Connolly who had been wounded in the fighting, were executed.

The rising of Easter Week is considered to be the start of the modern phase of Ireland's ancient struggle for

The Asian youth were accorded a warm welcome by the nationalist people of Belfast when they joined the march to the Republican graves in Milltown Cemetery. At the commemoration there, Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams said: "On every front the British are opposed and exposed. On the streets in simple acts of defiance, culturally by the renaissance of our language and culture, in the prisons by the undaunted ingenuity of our prison-

ers, at their own ballot boxes with the support for Sinn Fein and in the actions of the soldiers of the IRA.

"We should not have an inflated sense of our own importance or an elitist sense of our relevancy. Such defects lead to self-inflicted isolation and subsequent defeat. The people are all-important. Without them we are nothing... As you applaud the memory of Pearse and Connolly and their comrades, as you honour our martyred dead, as you extend solidarity to the IRA or Sinn Fein, applaud yourselves also. You are the people. You are unbeatable. You shall be free."

The delegation arrived in Belfast in the early hours of Saturday morning, April 6, after having been detained

for an hour by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) as they disembarked from the ferry at Larne. When the RUC learned that the group was

East Belfast Sinn Fein and members of the Stop the Strip Searches Committee.

After Paddy Manus had outlined Sinn Fein's history and

form support and solidarity groups among the black communities in Britain.

Following a short tour of the Divis flats the delegation had

tion, although people had been encouraged to come when there was a labour shortage in Britain. Similarly Irish workers had come to build the roads and industries of Britain and together, "we built Britain".

Sheera said that, as in Ireland, black people who were driven to fight back, or who were the victims of poverty and racism, were being criminalised. This included recommending people for deportation after the completion of custodial sentences.

Explaining the extent of racist attacks, particularly in London, Sheera said that women were spat on in the streets, and houses were firebombed. Many of these attacks are carried out by fascist groups, such as the National Front, the League of St. George and Column 88. These same fascist groups are known to have visited the north of Ireland to receive military training from loyalist groups, he pointed out.

Sheera stressed that the community would not be intimidated by any of these attacks but would resist by any means necessary. The

ways lack and that is the support of the people. A freedom movement with the support of the people is something that can never be defeated no matter how powerful the enemy.

Centre and the New Lodge Felons Club.

The delegation left Belfast for home in the early hours of Tuesday morning, with plans already being made for a bigger delegation next



Asian youth march along the Falls Road, Belfast.

visiting Sinn Fein they became abusive, making threats and racist remarks. A journalist from *Lalkar*, organ of the Indian Workers' Association, who was a part of the group, commented that they were quite used to such behaviour from police

given a rundown on its current trends and prospects, former Armagh Prisoner of War, Breige-Ann McCaughley and Matt Kelly gave a graphic account of the strip-search procedure in Armagh, and the efforts being made by

further meetings that afternoon with Tom Hartley, General Secretary of Sinn Fein, and Joe Austin, chairperson of its Belfast region.

On Monday the delegation had a number of meetings at Sinn Fein's West Belfast office - Connolly House. These included meetings with representatives of the Sinn Fein Women's Department, the Stop the Show Trials Committee and of Sinn Fein youth.

Later at a local commemoration in Belfast's New Lodge area a member of the delegation - Sheera Johal from Birmingham, was given an enthusiastic reception when he addressed the crowd.

Sheera thanked the people of Belfast for their hospitality and, on behalf of the delegation, expressed full support for the struggle of the Irish people, which he saw as having many similarities with the struggle of Britain's black communities.

He told the crowd of how the Asian community lives under the threat of deporta-



Sheera Johal from Birmingham expresses solidarity.

To applause he said that this was something that had been shown in Cuba, Vietnam and Korea.

Sheera's speech was listened to attentively and repeatedly interrupted by applause, showing the

year. Members of the delegation were highly impressed by the hospitality they received and valued the opportunity to build links with other struggling peoples and to exchange views and experiences. It is under-



One of the numerous Republican bands from Glasgow who participated in the weekends' activities.

forces.

On their first day the group met with Paddy Manus, chairperson of North, South and

the committee to highlight the issue, particularly in the international arena. McCaughley stressed the need to



Newham 7 banner at the New Lodge commemoration.

only answer to force is force, he said. Whilst the imperialists have many powerful weapons they cannot defeat a determined people because there is one thing that they al-

ever closer links that are being built between the two struggles.

On Monday night, members of the delegation were welcomed to Republican socials in the Whiterock Leisure

stood that a number of report backs are to be held, and that a published report is planned.

Exiled musicians action against South Africa

Tsafrika, London's foremost promoter of African music announces a two month cultural festival to protest against the killings and repression in South Africa.

From April 27th to June 16th London will host a major series of

concerts and public meetings at The Forum and the 100 Club in solidarity with the people of South Africa who refuse to accept the inhuman conditions for their lives imposed by the apartheid regime.

British and African

musicians are uniting to protest the continued imprisonment of Nelson Mandela and to voice their call for a complete cultural boycott of apartheid South Africa.

"Cultural Action against South Africa Now" starts at the 100

Club on April 27th with Slim Gaillard & Friends and Pete Thomas & The Deep Sea Jivers, continuing on May 3rd at the 100 Club with Julian Bahula's Jabul and Adu, May 5th at the 100 Club with the Archie Shepp Quartet, May 9th

at the Forum with Osibisa, Christer Bousted Quartet from Sweden, Julian Bahula's and African Culture, May 10th at the 100 Club with Hi-Life International and Rent Party, and May 12th at The Forum with Stan Tracey Big Band,

Sonio De Londres and Rent Party.

Other musicians supporting the campaign are George Melly, Ronnie Scott, Humphrey Lyttelton, The Guest Stars, Orchestre Jazira, Annie Whitehead Band, Dudu Pukwana's Zila and,

coming from Africa, Sanko, Tokoto Ashanty, Xalam and many others throughout May and June.

Tsafrika has made a public appeal for everybody to make a choice and join the protest against the South African

regime. Further information from Tsafrika on 01-935-8660/3391.

ASIAN TIMES