

Scargill did discuss Libyan cash

INSIGHT



ARTHUR SCARGILL'S meeting with representatives of Libya in Paris on October 8, which led directly to the chief executive of the National Union of Mineworkers going to Tripoli to see Colonel Gadaffi, was not the chance encounter he claims.

It lasted for over six hours and was set up in advance by a well-known fixer for Libya specifically to discuss financial aid from Libya for the striking miners.

The fixer, Mumtaz Abbasi, later boasted: "They (the miners) won't have any financial problems any more. They won't forget me for the rest of their lives."

Abbasi is a Pakistani exile living in Doncaster who, as The Sunday Times revealed last week, went to Tripoli with Roger Windsor, the NUM's chief executive, on October 22. Windsor met Gadaffi to "explain the miners' cause", according to Scargill, and embraced him in front of Libyan television cameras.

The Sunday Times has established that Abbasi also attended the preparatory meeting in Paris with Scargill and Windsor on October 8. He

travelled to France by train and boat, via Dieppe. On the morning of October 8, Abbasi went to the Paris Hilton to collect Salem Ibrahim, identified by French security services as a senior member of the Libyan intelligence service and "Gadaffi's paymaster". Ibrahim is responsible for organising payments to the causes and groups - including terrorists groups - which Gadaffi supports.

Abassi and Ibrahim travelled by car from the Hilton to the headquarters of France's communist-controlled union, the CGT. They went directly to the third floor offices of the CGT's Miners' Federation, where they met Scargill and Windsor, who had flown in together that morning from Manchester. The four men were together for most of the day.

On October 13, Abbasi attended a meeting of the Pakistan People's Party in Peterborough. He told some of those present that he had been in touch with the NUM for over a year, and that he had arranged financial support for the union from Libya. He said that he hoped he might be nominated

as an NUM-sponsored MP. Ten days later, Abbasi and Windsor flew from Frankfurt to Tripoli. They remained there until October 26, returning to Manchester together via Frankfurt.

After The Sunday Times revealed the Libyan connection last week, Scargill issued a statement saying that he had gone to Paris to finalise arrangements for a food convoy from the CGT. But the senior CGT official in charge of the convoy has told The Sunday Times that he did not meet Scargill in Paris that day and knew nothing about any meeting.

Scargill also implied in his statement that the meeting with "representatives from Libya" was incidental and that the representatives were trade unionists.

In an interview with David Frost on TV-am this morning Scargill denies knowing Abbasi and claims he did not know the names of the Libyan representatives he had met in Paris. "All I know is that I met some people who said they were from Libya, and trade unionists," Scargill tells Frost. "I don't know who Mr Salem Ibrahim is, unless he is a representative of the trade unionist movement. If he is, he would possibly be one of those." Neither Ibrahim nor Abbasi has anything to do with Libyan trade unions.

During his interview with Frost, Scargill re-opens the possibility that the NUM will accept money from Libya, if it comes from so-called trade unionists.

Last Thursday, after an NUM executive meeting, Scargill said that no money from Libya would be accepted. But in today's interview in a sometimes heated exchange with Frost, he only categorically rules

out money "from the government or from the regime of Libya".

He said: "If money is sent from anywhere in the world - and I would have thought anywhere meant anywhere - from trade unionists, then we will consider accepting trade union assistance."

Pressed by Frost to say if that included Libya, he replies: "We will accept assistance from trade unionists anywhere in the world." Asked repeatedly why he would not specifically include or exclude so-called Libyan trade unionists, he says: "I'm giving my answer to the question you're putting. If you don't like the answer, I'm sorry, that's your problem."

Last week, the official Libyan state radio said that collections were being held throughout the country to support the striking miners. The radio also said: "The cause of the workers' interests us as a revolution... As a revolution, we are bound to stand with the workers." The collections have been instigated by Gadaffi.