



Vol, 2 No. 24 June 2023 ISSN 2055-7035

<http://cls-uk.org.uk/>

## Rising Crime in the Caribbean

By *Marsha Hinds Myrie* and *Ozzi Warwick*

The Caribbean region has had a long history of violence. In fact, it has been subject to some of the highest levels of violence from slavery to indentureship to colonialism. The violence meted out to the enslaved and later to the indentured labourers must be considered the worst form of violence. Ian Daniel, Head of Labour Studies at the Cipriano College of Labour and Cooperative Studies, suggested that looking at the relationship between Class, Wealth and Crime is important. This critical relationship is often left out of the discussions around crime in the region. This relationship also brings into focus the relationship between politicians and criminal elements. This became prevalent in Jamaican politics fueled by the local bourgeoisie. This however began appearing across the region.

### **Known criminal elements**

In fact, as recent as the 2008 Barbados election campaign of David Thompson, there was the active engagement of known criminal elements in securing votes for the success of the Party. This includes the transfer of cash, marijuana and alcohol as voting inducements. One concrete example took place in 2021 in Barbados. A workplace which was closed by police for breaching COVID-19 safety measures only to have the owner – a reputed gang leader in Barbados- call Prime Minister Mia Mottley directly to have the shop reopened.

The matter did engage the attention of the public in Barbados for some days, but the Prime Minister was defiant that she had the responsibility to talk with all people in Barbados and whoever had her number could call and she would answer them the same way. The ‘partnership’ between known crime elements and the Government of Barbados deepened in 2023 with the brokering of a ‘peace deal’ that has seemingly quietened Barbados’ out-of-control gun murder spate.

### **Deep-seated issues**

For the period that these types of truce hold no one seems to be paying attention to the deep-seated issues that are driving crime in Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and other Caribbean territories, we have not done any kind of in-depth or serious social reengineering since the interventions after the riots of the 1930s. That first phase of social reengineering saw many economies in the Commonwealth Caribbean move from an agricultural base to manufacturing, retail and tourist-heavy fiscal models. What never changed was the low wages that were paid to workers and the challenges for many to secure upward job mobility and thus a change in social status from working to middle class.

### **Neoliberal policies**

Thirty years ago, in 1993 The West Indian Commission, which was established by the CARICOM Heads of Government produced a report “Time for Action: Report of the West Indian Commission”. The report dealt with several issues including the issue of crime and unemployment and the special problems of youth. Instead of implementing the recommendations, the governments of the region ignored the report and bought into and pursued neoliberal policies which clearly has exacerbated the issue of unemployment and inequality. In fact, we are witnessing aggressive neoliberalism, which is creating even more inequality and the further marginalisation of communities and young people.

### **Poverty**

The result is that other social access which was given to a wider base of people including access to housing in housing blocks and estates and access to free education have been undermined because most people still live in poverty and cannot keep pace with modern life. COVID-19 shone a glaring light on that reality. Teachers had to rally together to secure working devices for many children from working-class families across the region to access remote schooling. Even when devices were secured the housing overcrowding that many children lived in proved them having safe and quiet space to work from was difficult to find.

Children going hungry because they did not have access to the government school meals programme was another indication of the levels of precarity that still characterize the lives of many children of working-class homes in the Caribbean. The conversation about how much Caribbean countries are still a welfare state surfaces but less attention goes to the corollary that the welfare safety net and life support infrastructure has to remain in place because so many families are still materially at the same point as their ancestors two or three generations removed.

### **Short-term peace**

Whilst Barbados may attempt at setting itself apart from neighbours such as Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago on the issues of crime, for those closely reading the social situation there are far more similarities than differences. The overall structure of the economy, Family instability and low levels of reading achievement are only some of the results of the situation that continue to drive crime in our territories.

While truces between the government and criminal elements will bring some short-term peace, those watching also note that there has not been a police raid or capture of guns and drugs during the ‘truce’. We also note that women and families suffering from ‘soft crimes’ like domestic abuse are no closer to real remedies or solutions to be able to move past abuse.

### **Social consequences of economic policies**

The issue of crime in the region cannot be separated from the contradictory issue of social relations. There is a direct correlation between the level of inequality in a society and the level of crime.

If we wish to address the issue of crime, then we must confront the social consequences of economic policies that seek to transfer wealth from ordinary working women and men to the big capital. The extraction of surplus value from the masses in the Caribbean has always been a violent process and therefore it should be no surprise that the continuation of such extraction is creating violent Caribbean societies.

# The Labour Party must restore the whip to Diane Abbott MP

Diane Abbott is the Member of Parliament for Hackney North and Stoke Newington.

In April, Ms Abbott wrote a letter to the Observer newspaper which included comments about the racism experienced by Irish, Jewish, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. Recognising the error of these remarks, she immediately withdrew them and issued an apology. In her statement, Ms Abbott said: "I wish to wholly and unreservedly withdraw my remarks and disassociate myself from them.....there is no excuse, and I wish to apologise for any anguish caused."

Following her apology, the leadership of the Labour Party withdrew the whip from Ms Abbott, pending an investigation.

We are calling for the whip to be restored.

## Why is this important?

Diane Abbott is Britain's first Black female MP. Elected in 1987, she is the country's longest-serving Black MP and has represented the Labour Party and her constituents for more than 36 years. In 2022, she was unanimously re-selected by members of her Constituency Labour Party.

This petition is important because Ms Abbott issued a clear and unreserved apology before the whip was withdrawn. Peter Herbert OBE, a retired judge and chair of the Society of Black Lawyers, has stated that the Leader of the Labour Party, Sir Keir Starmer's public declaration that what Ms Abbott wrote was antisemitic, directly undermines the impartiality and fairness of any investigation or its outcome. There is a distinct lack of transparency and consistency in the way the Party's disciplinary rules are applied. At the same time, Martin Forde KC, the barrister who led an independent inquiry into allegations of bullying, racism and sexism within the Party, has remarked that the Labour leadership has not sufficiently engaged with the ongoing systemic issue of anti-Black racism that exists within the Party. Ms. Abbott has been a victim of this racism and continues to bravely speak out against it.

As a lifelong campaigner for equality and justice, Diane Abbott has been at the forefront of anti-racism campaigns, giving voice to the voiceless and lending her support to communities and families who have been victims of racist policing, school exclusions, deaths in custody, racist attacks, murders and the hostile environment policies of successive Tory governments. She has stood by so many of us, and now it is time for us to stand by her.

By signing this petition, you will be sending a message of solidarity to Diane. You will also be sending a clear message to Sir Keir Starmer MP, Alan Campbell MP (Chief Whip) and the Labour leadership that the whip must be restored.

<https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/reinstate-diane>

**Caribbean Labour Solidarity** stands in solidarity with our friend and comrade Diane Abbott. Diane has a record second to none in publicly opposing racism, antisemitism and xenophobia. We have stood beside her on demonstrations against racism and in defence of immigrant workers. We recall in particular her wholehearted support of the Stansted 15's practical attempt to stop the illegal deportation of asylum seekers.

Whether you agree with the formulation of Diane's letter to the Guardian or not, we must be clear that this is not the real issue at stake here. She has been suspended from the Labour Party for being a socialist who opposes the class-collaborationist position of the Starmer leadership. We may wish to discuss with Diane the terms in which we discuss the nature of racism, we do not doubt her commitment to the struggle against racism in all its manifestations. We cannot say the same about Keir Starmer. She has apologised and withdrawn the statement. Let that be the end of the matter. We demand that she be reinstated forthwith.

## The 1823 Demerara Revolt

In an attempt to head off the emancipation movement, the slave owners and their parliamentary representatives offered to improve the conditions under which their enslaved labourers toiled, a process known as "amelioration".

This attempt to head off demands for the eventual abolition of slavery was widely misunderstood by the plantocracy in the Caribbean who saw it as unjustified interference in their "right to private property", that is, their profits. In Demerara, the colonial authorities discussed the resolutions but made no public declaration as to their intention to implement them. Nevertheless, word of the existence of these instructions from London quickly reached the ears of the enslaved. Believing that the British Parliament had legislated their freedom, they planned militant activity to secure what they saw as their rights that were being withheld by the plantation oligarchy.

### Gladstone

Enslaved workers on *Le Success* plantation, owned by Sir John Gladstone, led by Jack and his father Quamina, organised an uprising, which quickly spread to neighbouring estates as, in the manner of flying pickets, large groups went from one plantation to another calling the enslaved workers to join them. The Demerara rebels made no move to kill or injure the plantation management, merely locking the overseers, managers, and bookkeepers in the slave stocks, commandeering any weapons they found. There was some looting, ransacking of buildings and cane fields were set on fire. Where owners, managers or overseers resisted and firefights developed, a few of them were wounded or killed, but the leaders of the uprising did their best to prevent unnecessary loss of life amongst the enslavers. There were surprisingly few casualties amongst plantation management, although many of the most hated of them were abused, humiliated and slapped while in the stocks, particularly by the enslaved women.

### Brutal suppression

The rebels, numbering about 9000, attempted to negotiate with the governor of the island and the commander of the troops about their rights to wages, days without labour, and freedom. In many ways, the actions by the enslaved workers represented a form of "collective bargaining by riot". Considering the circumstances, little damage was done to property. Despite the relatively peaceful nature of the action, the colonial authorities brutally suppressed the revolt, killing hundreds of enslaved Africans both in combat and by execution following drumhead courts-martial. There were a series of show trials followed by public executions, performed as a grisly pageant designed to terrify the enslaved workers and reassure the enslavers who had been badly frightened.

### Years of frustration

The uprising cannot be traced to any single cause, at bottom it was the very institution of slavery and the years of frustration that finally spilled over into revolt.

The terrified slave owners painted a picture of the rebels as violent, bloodthirsty brutes. Meanwhile, the *Edinburgh Review*, an anti-slavery journal wrote:

*In Demerara, a slight commotion was occasioned among the Negroes . . . and far more resembling a combination of European workmen to strike for wages, for time or other indulgence than a rebellion of African slaves.*

Reversing the allegations that the abolitionists in London had inspired the revolt, Gelien Matthews places the initiative with the enslaved themselves saying "*The slaves seemed to make a point of identifying their overt resistance with the debates taking place in Britain on their behalf by timing their risings to follow each wave of abolitionist activity*". The racist contempt of the plantation owners meant that they could not believe that the rebels were

responsible for such a sophisticated strategy. The editor of the Demerara Gazette concluded on August 28, 1823, that *"the plans and arrangements of the rebels were most extensive and well made - too well made indeed to admit of a doubt but a superior order of people had laid the original foundation"*. They found a convenient scapegoat in the Reverend John Smith, the preacher at the church where Jack and Quamina worshipped. He was sentenced to death but died from his conditions of imprisonment before they could execute him.

**Nigel Westmaas** spoke about the 1823 Demerara Revolt at the May meeting of Caribbean Labour Solidarity

He wrote in the Stabroek News:

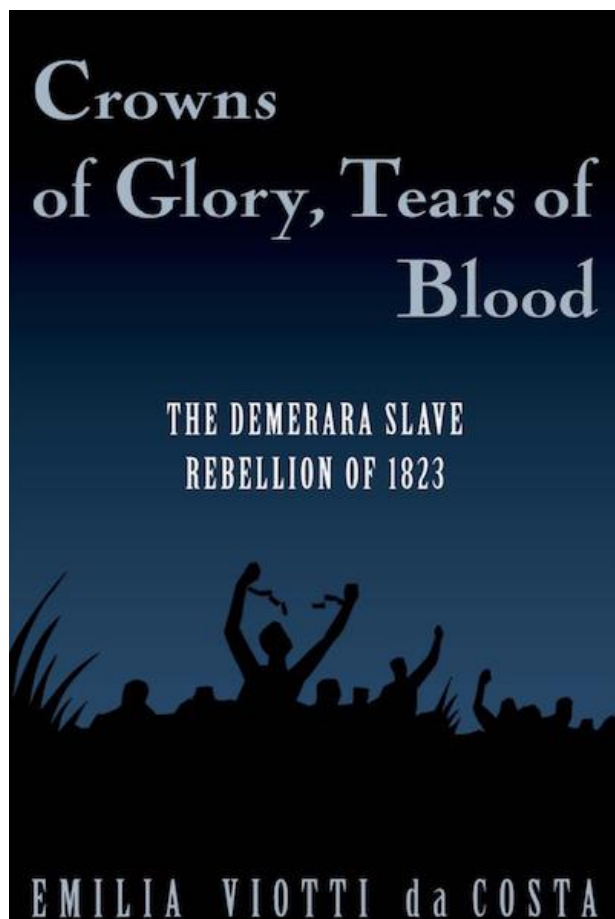
*This event displayed incredible daring, courage, the effectiveness of group action and the capacity of the enslaved to shape their own fate by attacking the institutional and physical embodiment of their servitude.*

*It is impossible to overstate the significance of the massive revolt in Guyana sandwiched as it was between two other momentous "Caricom" slave rebellions, Barbados (Bussa) in 1816, and the Jamaica insurrection in 1831. Together, all three revolts helped to undermine the political, economic, and moral foundations of the British imperial plantation system and, consequently, the existence of worldwide chattel slavery.*

*The significance of 1823 would have been overshadowed by other slave rebellions in Guyana and the Americas or lost to history altogether were it not for the late historian Viotti da Costa's outstanding book *Crowns of Glory, Tears of Blood* which is the most thorough account of the revolt to date in terms of context setting, evaluation, and sheer sweep of detail.*

*Da Costa's emphasis on the agency of the enslaved is particularly important, as it challenges the notion that history is predetermined by impersonal forces or that individuals are mere pawns in historical processes. Instead, Da Costa highlights how the actions of the enslaved were critical in shaping the course of history, and how their resistance played a crucial role in bringing about the end of slavery in the British colonial domain.*

*Finally, every university student and Guyanese parliamentarian should have institutional facilities to study the content and significance of the massive 1823 revolt on Guyana, the region, and the world. Pivotal texts such as *Crowns of Glory, Tears of Blood*, among others, should be accessible to all who wish to understand the history of their country.*



One of the aims of the TUC, London East and South East (LESE) Reparations for Afrikan Enslavement Steering Group is to:

*Support the campaign to overturn the convictions of all those who were convicted for their role in the historic 1823 Demerara rebellion by enslaved workers. This should be extended to all enslaved persons executed or punished for acts of resistance.*

# A CALL FOR ANTI-RACIST IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY LAWS

Britain has relied on and benefited from immigration for centuries and yet Governments and their apparatus have chosen to discriminate against immigrant communities and Black people.

The Labour Movement is central to the campaign against racism and discrimination.



## A Joint Statement

**Bangladeshi Workers Council, Caribbean Labour Solidarity, Communist Party of Britain, Indian Workers Association**

The Labour Movement must unite our communities and our working class in the months and years ahead.

We stand for equality and not discrimination.

We oppose the hostile environment and are for the repeal of racist legislation.

We stand for safe and legal routes and are against the outsourcing of Britain's asylum system to Rwanda or elsewhere.

We call for a reduction in immigration fees.

We oppose people being housed in detention centres and are for people residing in communities with proper support.

We stand for the treatment of people as Human Beings.

We oppose income thresholds as a means to determine immigration and are for fair and equal treatment.

We support the right to work and say asylum seekers and refugees should have indefinite leave to remain, access to public funds with faster tracking to nationality.

We oppose the revoking of UK Citizenship and the deportation or removal of those who have UK Citizenship, or are at risk and for a proper appeal system. Children without Citizenship should automatically be given it on reaching adulthood.

We call for parliamentary scrutiny of any changes to immigration and nationality laws and for the Police and Home Office to be stripped of discretionary powers. The Windrush Scheme is not fit for purpose and must be revamped and made accessible.

We call upon Labour Movement Organisations to back these demands.

We recognise more needs adding.

We do not seek to replace organisations and campaigns that already exist. Indeed, we call upon Trade Unions to support these campaigns.

*Attacks on refugees and migrants are being used to divide our communities. We must oppose this machination by fighting for a fair, anti-racist immigration system and the broadest unity amongst the Labour movement, democrats, socialists and communities*

Shahriar Bin Ali - Chair, Bangladeshi Workers Council (BWC) – UK

*The Hostile Environment created for the Windrush Generation and for refugees seeking safety in the UK is a scandal that must not go unchallenged. We call upon the Labour and Trade Union Movement to support our demands for Human Rights and Justice.*

Luke Daniels - President Caribbean Labour Solidarity (CLS)

**Angela Saini, *Superior, the Return of Race Science* (London: 4th Estate, 2020)**

Racism had proved an effective tool in the armoury of the ruling class. This is not to suggest that racism was a deliberate conspiracy by a cynical bourgeoisie. Having presided over a system based on the enslavement of Africans in the West Indies for 200 years, they clearly believed their own propaganda. This is where science came into the picture. The enormous profits made by the business of slavery enabled the endowment of colleges and universities that repaid this generosity by producing tendentious justifications for racism. Anthropologists and Social Darwinists gave it a scientific gloss.

**Social Darwinism**, was the the attempt to apply biological concepts of natural selection to sociology, economics and politics. This misuse of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution provided a useful tool in the attempt to scientifically prove the inferiority of non-white people This is not to say that Darwin himself approved of this use of his work; his published writings almost entirely centre on the biological aspects of evolution, part of the explanation of speciation in populations of organisms. He was known to be a firm opponent of slavery and his only recorded political stand was in calling for the prosecution of Governor Eyre for his brutality when suppressing the Morant Bay Rebellion. Darwin's opposition to slavery ran counter to many of the claims that Social Darwinists would eventually make about the indigenous peoples and the descendants of the enslaved in the European colonies. Darwin soundly defeated the idea that Africans were not fully human, only to have his ideas hijacked when the concept of evolution was incorporated into the social sciences as a justification for racism and imperialism, being used to support the elitist views of philosophers like Herbert Spencer, Thomas Malthus and, above all, Francis Galton.

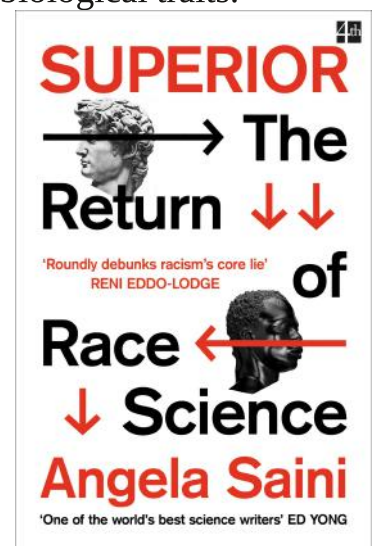
**Eugenics** is the theory and practice of the selection of desirable, inherited human characteristics in order to improve future generations. The term "eugenics" was coined in 1883 by Francis Galton, a younger cousin of Charles Darwin, who advocated a system that would allow "the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable". Needless to say, upper class British people were considered the most suitable, Africans the least. The apparently scientific basis of movement gave respectability to ideas of racial hierarchies that legitimised colonialism and racism. It did not drop out of academic fashion until the logic of race betterment was exposed as a rationale for genocide in the Nazi death camps. However, Angela Saini catalogues what she sees as the "Return of Race Science", dressed up as genetic determinism or population genetics.

**Today sociobiology and evolutionary psychology** are still used to justify inequality, racism and sexual discrimination on the basis of supposed inherited biological traits.

Competition, aggression and xenophobia are often said to be genetically hard wired into us, inherited from our ancestors. This gives a pseudoscientific gloss to the popular concept of "human nature", so frequently used to justify all manner of bad behaviour.

When looking for evidence of structural racism in Britain, one has to look no further than the Windrush scandal. It is indeed shocking, if unsurprising, that one of the principal groups targeted by the Home Office's Hostile Environment are the descendants of the enslaved Africans kidnapped and trafficked to the Caribbean with the full support of the British state. They would not even be in the Caribbean were it not for this.

*Steve Cushion*



## **Kate Thomas (2022), ‘Collective Amnesia: Falmouth and the Transatlantic Slave Trade’ £2.00**

This booklet has been published for the campaign: *Remove the Slave Trader Memorial from King Charles Church in Falmouth, UK.* [tinyurl.com/36vrhu53](https://tinyurl.com/36vrhu53)

It is available from Rubicund Books (<https://www.rubicund.co.uk>), St Georges Arcade, 5 – 7 Church St., Falmouth, Cornwall, TR11 3DH

### **Local Connections**

Like many parts of the British Isles, the South-West of England has hidden stories of its historical involvement with slavery. While people in all areas need to become aware of Britain’s slaving and colonial connections past, the question is often how to do it. Drawing attention to direct slaving connections with a locality can be particularly fruitful if it is done well. This pamphlet does it very well.

It’s starting point is the Church memorial to Thomas Corker, which omits his role as slave trader indicative of an ‘all-pervasive collective amnesia’ in Falmouth. The author makes the case for the memorial’s removal with a series of contextualising arguments and relevant historical points. She also highlights another memorial in the Church to a later local businessman connected with the slave trade, Joseph Banfield, 1737-1823.

### **Royal African Company**

As for Thomas Corker himself, he became chief agent for the Royal African Company (RAC) at York Fort in 1684 on an island at the mouth of Sherbro River in modern day Sierra Leone. In 1698, shortly after the RAC gave up its slave trading monopoly, Thomas Corker became Governor at James Fort, yet another slave processing centre, this one on the Gambia River. Corker died back in Falmouth in 1700, having been sacked by RAC following a slave uprising.

### **Falmouth, Trelawny Parish**

But this pamphlet is also about the town’s place in the slave trade, as Falmouth had other slaving related connections. It was the base for the “Falmouth Packet Service”, established 1689, which grew to nearly 40 ships. These ships provided secure communications for the merchants, slave owners, financial institutions, and Crown agents throughout the Atlantic colonies. This communication network made Falmouth a slavery related trading hub and an attractive home for Dutch and American Consuls. Falmouth’s Trans-Atlantic slaving connections were further reflected in the naming of a parish Capital in Jamaica, Falmouth.

This pamphlet maybe brief (54 pages with illustrations), but it is a well presented and excellent contribution to the campaigns for both reparations and the decolonising of teaching about racism. It reproduces the Caricom ten-point plan for reparation justice and draws attention to many other UK based beneficiaries of slavery.

*Danny Reilly*



*Memorial to Thomas Corker | Gabriel Kupper*



# **TOWARD A CULTURE OF JAMAICAN NATIONHOOD**

## **THE ROLE OF THE CONSTITUTION**

After 61 years of so-called independence, the Jamaica government has decided to move toward finally cutting its 368-year umbilical attachment to the British monarchy after prolonged partisan political to-ing and fro-ing since 1977.

The Norman Manley-led pre-independence Government of early 1962 clearly saw Political Independence from Whitehall as the overwhelming urgency. This was so particularly following the clear rejection by Jamaicans of Federation which the Colonial Authorities had unilaterally deemed as holding the best opportunity for the economic viability of its Caribbean colonies. Norman Manley quite clearly saw that Independence was as much a political as well as a cultural imperative even while pragmatically recognizing the limited degrees of freedom available to his generation.

Manley's charge to his political heirs was that the Independence Constitution would require to be revamped within 'at least 30 years' to facilitate the social aspirations of Jamaicans who by then would have made significant progress toward developing a 'Nation Culture'.

Fast forward to the visit to Jamaica of the Prince of Wales in March 2022 where protests near the British High Commission indicated two demands:

- An end to Jamaica's status as a Constitutional Monarch and by logical extension, its replacement with a Constitution which guaranteed the Sovereignty of the Jamaican citizen and a genuine participatory democracy.

- The demand for an Apology for Crimes against Humanity, committed against our forebears 'under the Royal Seal', as a precursor to the payment of Reparations to the Jamaican State, reflecting the 'negotiation strategy' recommended in the 'Ten-Point Plan of Action' proposed by the CARICOM Reparations Commission in 2013. The long delayed ratification by the UN General Assembly in December 2020, of the Durban Declaration of 2001 would have influenced this position in respect of negotiation vis-à-vis litigation.

### **Constitutional Reform**

The current perfunctory approach to Constitutional Reform does not reflect any intent by the GOJ to address the Manley challenge of comprehensive reform in order to equip the constitution to be a transformational tool toward speeding up the evolution toward a unified Nation Culture.

Jamaicans descend from a glorious lineage of serial rebuffs to servitude manifested in a record 13 slave revolts against the British, culminating with the Christmas Rebellion of 1831. Ironically Britain was a Constitutional Republic when it took control of Jamaica in 1655 having violently disposed of the incumbent King Charles 1.

The systematic impoverishment of the emancipated Jamaicans, resulting from the monarchical denial of access to land, led to the Morant Bay Rebellion in 1865. The issue of access to land for shelter and/or livelihood remains today, a chronic source of social and economic deprivation. Approximately one third of the Jamaican population are classified as squatters; and domestic food production is still largely in subsistence mode, unable to compete against imports.

### **Reparations**

The political elite have maintained a near-deafening silence on the issue of Reparations, failing to grasp its importance not only as a lasting cultural asset into posterity but also as the strategic platform for meeting the ambitions of the population for equity of opportunity. Thus the widespread state of anomie, a withdrawal from the political process (67% not participating in the 2020 General Election) and more egregiously, the misplaced application of our history of violent protest.

It is clear from the timeline for tabling in Parliament, announced by the Minister of Legal and Constitutional Affairs (co-chair of Jamaica's Constitution Reform Committee - JCRC) that there is little intent on the part of the GOJ, to undertake a comprehensive review of the existing Jamaican constitution. The piecemeal approach dates back to 1977, taking 34 more years to deliver a Bill of Rights in 2011 and nothing more. With over 60 percent of the population below the age of 40 most have not had the opportunity to participate at all. The narrowly-constituted JCRC needs to be disbanded and replaced by a Consultative Constitutional Reform Commission, comprised on non-partisan actors drawn from Civil Society to undertake a full review of the Jamaican Constitution. This 'commission' would report back to Parliament within 18 months after broad-based national consultation, aimed at garnering popular support to enhance acceptable levels of voter participation in a national referendum.

### **Jamaican Democratic Republic**

The following are suggested as critical adjuncts to the clear national consensus on Transformation to a Constitutional Jamaican Democratic Republic.

- Entrenchment of an Executive Presidency limited to not more than 11 cabinet posts and with no more than 8 Parliamentarians appointed to executive positions.
- Establishment of a unicameral parliament of not less than 150 elected representatives under a Mixed Member System of Proportional Representation targeted toward creating a more representative and moreso a participatory democracy. The New Zealand Model is proposed as it widens citizen participation in the Parliament outside of the traditional party structure.
- Fixed date elections and a maximum presidential tenure of two terms.

It is clear that there is an urgent national obligation to utilize the process of Constitutional Reform in order to move toward the creation of a 'Nation Ethic' replacing the winner-takes-all Westminster Model of partisan rivalry which has clearly morphed into an oligarchy of the political elites, to the exclusion of vast majority.

*Paul G. Jennings, PhD International Development Consultant*



*Mayday in Trinidad*



## May Day in London



*Hands off Haiti  
outside the Canadian  
High Commission*

*Hands off our trade  
unions  
Kill the Bill*



Photos Mick Holder, Ozzi  
Warwick and Frank Murray



## **OPPOSING RACISM AND FASCISM LOCALLY, NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY**

[info@coventryagainstracism.co.uk](mailto:info@coventryagainstracism.co.uk)

The attacks on our communities are relentless. Government continues to ratchet up its rhetoric. All of a sudden Britain has a national emergency. The crisis is not of our making. Food price inflation stands at nearly 20%. Energy Companies are taking billions in profits. Property developers sit on land waiting to sell it. Mortgage rates go up so that our income is squeezed even further.

The rhetoric seen in the media and the attacks on dispersal hotels is designed to divert people away from the main challenges. We must join together to say NO!

Coventry Against Racism a community and trade union anti racist group invites people who support not oppose people and defend our rights to an online meeting on

**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June commencing at 19.00.**

**Hear and discuss these issues with**

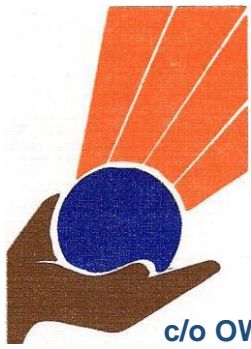
**Steve Cushion      Caribbean Labour Solidarity**

**Deborah Hobson    The Liberation Movement**

**Riz Hussain        Anti Racism Officer Trades Union Congress**

**Zarah Sultana      MP Coventry South**

E mail [info@coventryagainstracism.co.uk](mailto:info@coventryagainstracism.co.uk) if interested and a Zoom link will be issued before the start of the meeting.



**Assembly Of Caribbean People  
Asamblea Del Pueblo Caribeño  
Assemblée Du Peuple Caraïbe  
Assemblee van het Caraïbisch Volk  
Asamble Pep Karayib La**

**c/o OWTU, Paramount Building, 99A Circular Road, San Fernando, Trinidad W.I.  
Tel: 1 (868) 652-2701/2/3, Fax 1 (868) 652 – 7170 E-mail: caribbeanpeople.tt@gmail.com**

2023 March 29

**Open Letter from the Assembly of Caribbean People to CARICOM Heads of Government  
No Foreign Military Intervention in Haiti  
Haiti's Crisis can only be solved by the Haitian People**

Dear Heads of Government,

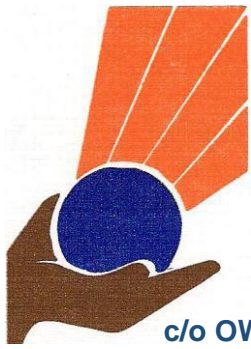
We write to you on the Anniversary of the adoption of the new Haitian Constitution in 1987 which established a democratic state after very many years of dictatorship and military occupation by the United States. This Constitution and a new era in Haitian society was achieved by the Haitian people themselves through processes of mass mobilisations and struggles which entailed tremendous sacrifices.

Since that moment in 1987 the Haitian people had a few years of great hope following the democratic elections of 1990-91. However, they have had to endure reversals to their hard won democracy: a military coup fomented by Haiti's elite; a coup carried out by foreign powers; a military occupation under the "banner" of the United Nations during which time UN troops introduced cholera into Haiti causing massive loss of life among other consequences; and the imposition of neo-liberal policies under the thumb of the International Monetary Fund and other Washington based institutions; and, since 2016 the total lack of a legitimate government given that there is no parliament in existence and elections have not been held.

Heads, we know that you are very aware that the situation in Haiti deteriorated considerably since the last months in office and subsequent assassination of the then President Jovanel Moïse. He stoutly refused to step down at the end of his constitutional term of office in the face of mass protests by the people demanding that he abide by the Constitution. Furthermore, he tried to implement the Independent Electoral Commission in a manner that was not in accordance with the Constitution and sought to rule in the absence of the parliament. In all this Moïse was supported by the so-called Core Group of representatives of the governments of the US, Canada and France.

Subsequent to Moïse's assassination, the Core Group intervened to have "their man" Ariel Henry declared Prime Minister. Henry has absolutely no legitimacy. There is no President, no Parliament,

**Towards a people's agenda for the sovereignty of the region and the welfare of the people  
En vue de l'élaboration d'un agenda pour la souveraineté de la caraïbe et pour le bien-être de notre peuple  
Hacia una agenda popular para la soberanía del caribe y el bienestar de nuestro pueblo  
Werke naan een volks – agenda voor soevereiniteiten welzijn van het volk in de regio**



**Assembly Of Caribbean People  
Asamblea Del Pueblo Caribeño  
Assemblée Du Peuple Caraïbe  
Assemblee van het Caraïbisch Volk  
Asanble Pep Karayib La**

**c/o OWTU, Paramount Building, 99A Circular Road, San Fernando, Trinidad W.I.  
Tel: 1 (868) 652-2701/2/3, Fax 1 (868) 652 – 7170 E-mail: caribbeanpeople.tt@gmail.com**

no properly constituted Electoral Commission and virtually every other republican institution has been destroyed. Therefore democracy, in effect, does not exist. Henry leads the de facto government and therefore we recognise that Haiti being a member state of CARICOM requires you to engage him. However, Henry uses this conveniently to give himself legitimacy that he otherwise does not have.

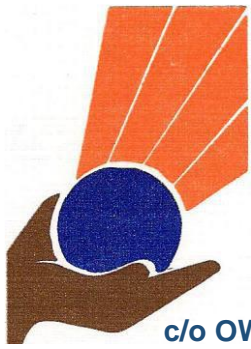
In this vacuum of legitimacy and the destruction of national institutions that the Core Group and the Haitian elite have been central to creating, there has emerged the criminal gangs. There is no denying the fact that these gangs are wreaking havoc in Haiti: kidnapping; rape; murders and mass killings; attacks on schools, hospitals, churches and other social centres; and the interruption of the supply chains of fuel, internal transportation and food have created much more than the insecurity of the Haitian people. It must be clear, however, that the guns used by these criminals were not made in Haiti they came from the United States! The US playbook of sanctions and the Canadian use of “naval assets” to stop the gang activity will not succeed.

We are also painfully aware that there is a social crisis in Haiti catalysed by policies that have resulted in massive inflation running at close to 50% per annum; fuel prices that were increased by more than 250% in the past year; an effective 50% devaluation of the Haitian currency. All of these has resulted in a situation whereby almost half of the Haitian people are faced with food insecurity.

We took note of the Communique on Haiti issued at your last Heads of Government meeting and your subsequent press release to send a team to Haiti for a “one day working visit”. We are of the very strong view that this visit was just an exercise in Public Relations and for CARICOM to tick a box saying “we went to Haiti”. This is unfortunate since we know that within CARICOM’s leadership there are many Heads who wish for a genuine, Haitian led and accepted solution.

In the first place the team was led by the Prime Minister of Jamaica who is on record as being in support of a foreign military intervention. He has not altered that position since his return from Haiti. Secondly, given what you admit in your press release issued after the visit to be a “*complex socio-economic and political challenge ... characterized by protracted instability*” it would have been impossible to arrive at a clear and unbiased understanding of the situation in one day! Thirdly, we know for a fact that the team met with very few organisations and certainly did not meet with

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key civil society, social movement and political actors in Haiti. The team could not have, given the one day visit.

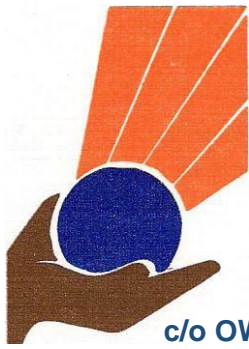
Fourthly, it was reported that the team was accompanied by representatives of Canada. We ask, did the government of Canada facilitate this visit? Did they provide the logistical support? Did they make the arrangements for the meetings that you held? We also ask whether PM Holness reported on the visit to anyone outside of CARICOM before Heads met on Sunday March 5<sup>th</sup> since there was a long gap between the February 27<sup>th</sup> visit and your meeting on March 5<sup>th</sup>. The people of the Caribbean deserve answers to these questions since Canada is a member of the Core Group and as stated earlier, has played and is playing a key role in interfering in the internal affairs of Haiti. Note, for example the recent bilateral meeting between the PM of Canada and the President of the US at which meeting Haiti was discussed. A visit by a CARICOM team that was facilitated in any way by Canada is of necessity tainted and partial in the eyes of Haitians. This will make your stated plan outlined in your March 6<sup>th</sup> release of *“a follow-up meeting with Haitian stakeholders to chart a path to consensus building in order to bring peace and stability to Haiti”* much more difficult to achieve unless you rectify the damage done by the Holness led team.

Heads, we wish to reiterate our position and that is: that the Haitian people have articulated solutions to their country’s crisis which are deeply democratic. The Henry regime has to go and in its place there needs to be a transitional government supported by civil society and with a mandate of restoring peace and establishing the conditions for a free and fair elections in accordance with Haiti’s Constitution. This position has, as you know, been articulated by the Montana Accord. We are of the strong view that CARICOM’s role in assisting Haiti must be independent of the countries of the Core Group and that any future process of discussion/mediation with Haitian civil society, social movements and political actors should be: inclusive with participation based on extensive consultation with Haitian organisations; and should take place in a CARICOM state whose leadership has not endorsed or called for military intervention.

We call on you Heads to insist to that:

- the countries in the Core Group stop interfering in Haiti;
- there is no foreign military intervention in Haiti and that the US desists from bringing to the UN Security Council motions calling for military intervention;

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- France repays the debt that it owes Haiti, which debt arose from the payment that France forced Haiti to pay for its freedom, instead of seeking to interfere in Haiti's internal affairs! The repayment of this debt will contribute significantly to Haiti being able to address many of the economic and social problems that it is faced with.

We wish to advise you that the Trinidad and Tobago Chapter of the Assembly of Caribbean People in conjunction with several important NGOs and social movements has written to the Heads of Government of the three countries in the Core Group specifying the positions above.

We are the Regional Executive Committee of the Assembly of Caribbean People

David Abdulah, Trinidad & Tobago

For and on behalf of:

2. David Denny, Barbados
3. Camille Chalmers, Haiti
4. Claudette Etnel, Suriname
5. Hilda Guerrero, Puerto Rico
6. Robert Sae, Martinique
7. Ivan Rodriguez, Dominican Republic
8. Cuban chapter of ACP

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