

Vol, 2 No. 25 Autumn 2023 ISSN 2055-7035

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

Hands off Haïti, Ne touchez pas à Ayiti

Open Letter by Haitian Civil Society Organizations and Defenders of Human Rights to Warn African Countries Against the Harms of an Illegitimate Foreign Intervention in Haiti Planned by Imperialist Nations

Dear African cousins and friends,

As Haitian civil society and human rights organizations focused on guaranteeing and promoting democracy, the defense of human rights, and security in Haiti, we are writing to you to sound the alarm against an international military deployment supported by imperialist countries: the United States, Canada, France and demanded by the illegitimate, corrupt, and repressive government of Ariel HENRY; it is these same actors who are responsible for the crises in Haiti. If the international community (the United States, Canada, and France) is serious about wanting to protect human rights in Haiti and help restore security there, it must first stop supporting puppet governments and give Haitians the necessary space to put in place a legitimate and competent transitional government. Otherwise, it will be another costly and foreign act of interference that fails to bring about sustained stability for Haitians and instead further cements the rule of a group of anti-democratic, exploitative actors.

The reasons for our refusal of an illegitimate foreign intervention in Haiti planned by imperialist nations are as follows:

The de facto regime is illegal, corrupt and complicit in human rights abuses

Haiti, which had forged a budding democracy out of a brutal, foreign-supported dictatorship in the 1990s, now has zero elected officials. Our de facto government is presiding over increasingly hellish conditions for most of the population. This crisis is the product of twelve years of power consolidation by actors who have deliberately dismantled Haiti's democratic and accountability mechanisms, promoted corruption, and empowered gangs to use violence against civilians with impunity. The de facto regime of Dr. Ariel HENRY is comprised of these same actors and has no legitimacy to govern. HENRY was appointed by extraconstitutional means by a President who had himself overstayed his term without the requisite parliamentary approval. His appointment had not been finalized at the time the President was assassinated. Instead, Dr. HENRY rose to power several days later through an announcement by the Core Group. The Haitian people opposed him in his role as de facto head of state, without checks and balances. Haitian people repeatedly took to the streets, despite dangerous conditions, to show that Dr. HENRY had no legitimacy in the view of the Haitian population. His regime responded with inappropriate force. De facto Prime Minister Dr. Ariel HENRY also faces serious allegations of complicity in the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse on July 07, 2021; and his regime enabled – and probably directly facilitated – the deterioration of the situation in Haiti. For example, while the international community focuses its efforts on supporting the Haitian police, there is evidence of

widespread gang infiltration of the police and collusion with gang leaders such as Vitelhomme Innocent. The de facto regime does not represent Haitian interests, has no authority to govern, and is responsible for creating and sustaining the Haitian crisis. The de facto regime no longer has the authority to request intervention. Therefore, Dr. Ariel HENRY has neither the legitimacy to rule nor the legal authority to request foreign intervention and should not be considered a credible partner for international peacekeeping efforts.

International military action by the United States, Canada, and France in collaboration with the de facto regime will only serve to deepen state capture by the actors who created Haiti's crisis and to immiserate the Haitian people

Foreign military action in partnership with the de facto regime, regardless of how narrowly targeted, will only entrench the de facto regime's power. This will perpetuate the patterns of state capture and impunity leading to profound misery and insecurity in Haiti and reduce space for Haitian civil society and pro-democracy organizers, making it more difficult for the Haitian people to reclaim our rights and democracy. We do not believe that sustained security for the Haitian people can be achieved along this path. Foreign interventions in Haiti also already have a consistent track record of harming civilians with no accountability – introducing cholera, injuring civilians, whilst destroying property in military operations, perpetrating acts of sexual exploitation and abuse and leaving victims and the resulting children without resources or recourse, by misdirecting assistance and delivering faulty infrastructure. A legitimate government has some possibility of acting to direct aid flows appropriately and ensuring adequate safeguards. This de facto government characterized by practices of corruption and popular massacres, which depends on the international community to keep it in power, has never shown any interest aimed at truly establishing a climate of security in Haiti or representing the best interests of the Haitian people. The troubling record of improper use of force by state actors and an ongoing cholera outbreak in Kenya, which is the current contender for leading an intervention, makes these concerns especially pressing.

The will of the international community (the United States, Canada, and France) to help Haiti cannot justify acting in a way that is knowingly harmful; true solidarity requires international actors to start by desisting from propping up the actors responsible for Haiti's crisis

International support (from the United States, Canada, and France) for the de facto government at the expense of the sovereignty and human rights of the Haitian people is standing in the way of Haitians finding a political compromise that can start a transition towards democracy and security. So long as the de facto regime is considered an indispensable actor by the international community (the United States, Canada, and France), the regime wields an effective veto in favor of self-dealing policies that created Haiti's crisis in the first place. This must stop so that Haitians ourselves can choose leaders and a transitional approach with popular legitimacy. Only then can there be meaningful and effective support from the international community, which we will welcome where it comes from the recognition of Haitians as sovereign holders of human rights.

We warn our African cousins and friends not to join in the ploys of imperialist countries (the United States, Canada, and France) for breadcrumbs, but rather to show solidarity with the Haitian people. And at the same time, we urge all actors to recognize the rights of the Haitian people to security, dignity, and self-determination. It follows from these fundamental human rights principles that foreign military intervention at the behest and for the benefit of an illegitimate, corrupt, and repressive de facto regime is perverse and liable to cause great harm.

It will certainly not bring long-term stability to Haiti.

Communist Party of Kenya Rejects President Ruto's Proposal to Deploy Kenya Police to Haiti

Challenging Imperialism: Standing in Solidarity for Justice and Equality

As the Central Organizing Committee of the Communist Party of Kenya, we express deep concern regarding the proposed deal between the USA and the Kenyan Government. The reported plan of involving Kenyan police to carry out actions on behalf of the USA government in Haiti raises serious ethical and moral questions.

We firmly reject any form of neocolonialism and condemn any attempts to use a black face to brutalize Haiti or any other nation. Exploiting vulnerable Kenyans for any purpose is unacceptable. President Ruto's actions in this regard must be rejected, and the government's focus should be on empowering its citizens, not auctioning them to willing buyers.

Our commitment lies in advocating for policies that uplift the marginalized and create a fair and just society, addressing root causes of societal issues, including land problems and the need for investment in industries to create jobs and improve lives.

Imperialism, historically rooted in exploitation and subjugation, has caused immense suffering across continents. We must intensify the struggle from below, emphasizing grassroots movements and collective action to bring about transformative change.

We call upon all progressive forces to join us in this struggle against imperialism and the policies that perpetuate the suffering of our people. Together, let us stand in solidarity with the oppressed and fight for a future that upholds justice, equality, and human dignity for all.

As the Central Organizing Committee of the Communist Party of Kenya, we also address the historical injustices perpetrated by both Europe and the USA. Europe's wealth and development have, in large part, been built on the stolen resources and exploitation of the global South during colonial times.

Similarly, the USA's rise to power was significantly fueled by the enslavement of millions of African people, whose labor laid the foundation for its economic prosperity. The echoes of this dark past continue to resonate in various forms of systemic racism and social inequalities that persist in the USA today.

As advocates of anti-imperialism, we must acknowledge and condemn the historical actions of both Europe and the USA that have contributed to the global inequities we face. Our commitment to a just and equitable world demands that we confront and challenge the oppressive legacies of these colonial and enslavement practices.

Moving forward, we stand resolute in our pursuit of justice and the dismantling of imperialist structures that perpetuate global exploitation and subjugation. We call on all progressive forces worldwide to unite in the struggle for a future that respects the sovereignty of nations, upholds human rights, and ensures the welfare of all people, regardless of their geographic location.

In solidarity with the oppressed peoples of the world,

*Central Organizing Committee,
Communist Party of Kenya*



*Luke Daniels, CLS President,
speaking at a picket of the Keynian High Commission*

Solidarity with the People of Palestine

There has been a concerted effort by the government and the mainstream media to prevent discussion of the situation in Gaza and the West Bank. The government is threatening to use the Terrorism Act 2000 to stifle support for the Palestinian People. MEND has produced a *Simple Language Guide for Palestine Activists*.

Legitimate criticisms of Israeli human rights abuses include but are not limited to:

- (1) The occupation of the Palestinian West Bank and Gaza which is recognised by international law as an illegal occupation.
- (2) Its separation wall, and the Jewish only settlements, which are built on stolen Palestinian land and are recognised as illegal under international law.
- 3) The military control Israel has exercised on Gaza for over a decade, including control of its land borders, air space and maritime zones, imports and exports, population registry, sewage systems and electricity grids. You may point out that owing to Israel's tightening siege around Gaza since 2007, over 53% of its 2.3 million inhabitants live below the poverty line.
- (4) The disproportionate military advantage enjoyed by Israel and how this is reflected in the massive Palestinian death toll. For example, since 2008 to before the present assault, Israel has carried out five major military incursions into Gaza. During that time, around 6,400 Palestinians have been killed, versus 308 Israelis.
- (5) The destruction of Palestinian society in 1948, which resulted in the displacement of over 800,000 Palestinian-Arabs from their homes in an event known as "the Nakba," meaning "catastrophe."
- (6) The right of return for the millions of Palestinian refugees who are scattered across the Arab world and beyond, which the UN recognises as "a fundamental pillar of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination" and is enshrined in UN General Assembly Resolution 3236 which, "reaffirms ... the inalienable right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced and uprooted".
- (7) The general policies of collective punishment employed by the Israeli state against the Palestinian people, as recognised by the UN. Collective punishment is itself a crime under international humanitarian law, specifically Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention¹⁰. This would include, but is certainly not limited to, Israel's policy of economically strangling the 2.3 million inhabitants of Gaza, forcing them into a humanitarian crisis, simply because of the actions of Hamas. In one example of collective punishment, on October 9th 2023, during its fifth offensive on Gaza, Israeli Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant announced a "complete siege on Gaza ... No electricity, no food, no water, no gas - it's all closed." Human Rights Watch subsequently accused Israel of calling for an "abhorrent" policy of "collective punishment, which is a war crime".
- (8) Israel as an apartheid state. Israel fits this definition because Palestinians in the West Bank and Israeli settlers living on stolen Palestinian land live under two different legal systems. Palestinians are under Israeli military law, while Israeli settlers maintain their own civilian courts. To further support your argument that Israel is an apartheid state for this reason, you can point out that in 2021, Human Rights Watch became the first major human rights organisation to accuse Israel of the crime of apartheid. Amnesty International and a UN expert followed with this charge in 2022. A host of Israeli rights groups, such as B'Tselem had previously made the same accusation. Even a former head of Israel's intelligence agency, Mossad, recently admitted that Israel "is an apartheid state." Therefore, there is nothing controversial about this claim.

This is not an exhaustive list, but gives an example of the main areas that Palestine activists are legally permitted to rally and write against in solidarity with the oppressed Palestinian people.

The Labour Party must restore the whip to Diane Abbott MP

Statement from Diane Abbott MP

The internal Labour Party disciplinary against me is fraudulent. I was told by the Chief Whip to ‘actively engage’ with an investigation. But the Labour Whips are no longer involved— it is now run entirely out of the Labour Party HQ, which reports to Keir Starmer – and there is no investigation.

This is the same Keir Starmer who almost immediately pronounced my guilt publicly. This completely undermines any idea that there is fairness or any natural justice. It is procedurally improper.

To be clear, I immediately and unreservedly apologised for my letter. Others have committed far more grave offences, and belated or grudging apologies have been wrung from them. Yet they have been immediately excused as supporters of this leadership.

The Labour Party has not charged me with antisemitism because they know it is untrue. As someone who has fought all forms of racism all my life, I would consider it a very serious allegation. Instead, it has been used to smear me, my reputation, and decades of anti-racist work.

Coming from the current leadership, this is hard to stomach. It is no secret that a large proportion of the racism that the Forde Report uncovered was personally directed against me, including “expressions of visceral disgust, drawing (consciously or otherwise) on racist tropes and they bear little resemblance to the criticisms of white male MPs elsewhere in the messages.” I have never received an apology from the Leader, the General Secretary or any of the perpetrators for that racism. I am not even aware of any of the culprits facing disciplinary measures, as I am now obliged to do.

I have remained silent about this issue until now. This was in the hope that some sense of decency, and recognition of the tenets of natural justice might prevail. The Labour Party disciplinary machine has clearly shown that it has little interest in either.

Fully aware of the overwhelming support for me in my local constituency of Hackney North and Stoke Newington, in July the regional party apparatus intervened into my local party to stop its elected officers from being able to communicate with local members. The excuse given was quite outrageous. In the neighbouring constituency of Hackney South and Shoreditch, a former Labour councillor has recently been convicted of paedophile pornography offences. This individual was election agent for Hackney South MP, Meg Hillier. He also shared a house with Hackney’s Mayor, Philip Glanville, who continued to associate with him, even after being informed of his arrest. Understandably Labour members in both Hackney constituencies raised questions internally within the party about the relevant child safeguarding issues posed.

Outrageously, these discussions were used as the pretext to cut off the local party’s means of communication with its members. Recently, the London regional office closed down the Executive Committee in my constituency party and replaced its principal officers.

In effect, the Labour apparatus has decapitated the elected leadership of the constituency party, to install its own, hand-picked personnel and replace me as the candidate prior to the next election.

This is what some have clearly wanted all along. Taken together, the procedural impropriety, Starmer’s pronouncement of my guilt, the four-month delay in the investigation, the repeated refusal to try to reach any accommodation, all point in the direction that the verdict has already been reached. The crushing of democracy in my local Labour Party is the latest confirmation.

I am the longest serving Black MP. Yet there is a widespread sentiment that as a Black woman, and someone on the left of the Labour Party, that I will not get a fair hearing from this Labour leadership.



ONGOING FRENCH IMPERIALISM IN AFRICA

After independence, 14 French-speaking countries signed 11 agreements with France.

AGREEMENT 1:

THE COLONIAL DEBT TO REPAY THE BENEFITS OF COLONIZATION.

That is to say that the newly independent states must reimburse the cost of the infrastructures built by France during the colonization.

We are always looking for the details of the costs, the evaluation of the benefits and the payment conditions imposed by France on African countries.

AGREEMENT 2 :

THE AUTOMATIC CONFISCATION OF NATIONAL FINANCIAL RESERVES.

That is to say that African countries must deposit their financial reserves with the Banque de France. Thus, France has been “guarding” the financial reserves of fourteen African countries since 1961: Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon.

Thus, the governance of monetary policies remains asynchronous and incomplete due to the fact that it is managed directly by the French government, without any link with the financial authorities of countries such as ECOWAS or CEMAC.

Thus, due to the conditions that bind the banks of the 14 countries of the CFA economic and financial zones, they are obliged to keep 65% of their foreign exchange reserves in an operations account maintained by the French Treasury, as well as an additional 20% in order to cover “financial risks”.

In addition, the banks of the CFA zones impose a credit limit on each member country, equivalent to 20% of state revenues in the current budget year, although the BEAC or the BCEAO have higher withdrawal possibilities from the French Treasury. These withdrawals must first be the subject of the agreement of the French Treasury.

The final decision therefore rests with the French Treasury, which has itself invested the reserves of African countries on the Paris stock exchange.

In other words, 85% of African financial reserves are deposited in an operations account controlled by the French administration.

The two banks in the CFA zone are African by their names, but do not decide any of the monetary policies by themselves.

The worst thing is that the countries themselves do not even know how much of their financial reserves are due to them.

AGREEMENT 3 :

THE RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL ON ANY RAW OR NATURAL RESOURCE DISCOVERED IN THE COUNTRY.

That is to say that France has the first right to purchase the natural resources of the land of its former colonies. It is only after France has said: “I am not interested”, that African countries are allowed to look for other partners.

AGREEMENT 4 :

PRIORITY TO FRENCH INTERESTS AND COMPANIES IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AND PUBLIC TENDERS.

In the awarding of public contracts, French companies have priority over tenders. Even if African countries can get better value for money elsewhere.

As a result, in most of the former French colonies, all the economic levers of the countries are in the hands of French expatriates. In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, French companies own and control all major public services including water, electricity, telephone, air transport, ports and major banks. It is the same in trade, construction and agriculture.

AGREEMENT 5 :

EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO PROVIDE MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND TRAIN MILITARY OFFICERS OF THE COLONIES.

Thanks to a sophisticated system of scholarships, grants, and the “defense agreements” attached to the colonial pact, Africans must send their senior officers for training in France and are obliged to provide themselves with military equipment from France.

AGREEMENT 6 :

THE RIGHT FOR FRANCE TO DEPLOY TROOPS AND INTERVENE MILITARILY IN THE COUNTRY TO DEFEND ITS INTERESTS.

Under the so-called “defense agreements” attached to the colonial pact, France has the right to intervene militarily in African countries, and also to permanently station troops in military bases and installations, entirely managed by the French.

AGREEMENT 7 :

THE OBLIGATION TO MAKE FRENCH THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE COUNTRY AND THE LANGUAGE FOR EDUCATION.

An organization for the French language and the dissemination of French culture has even been created. It is called the “Francophonie” and has several satellite organizations. These organizations are affiliated to and controlled by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs.

AGREEMENT 8 :

THE OBLIGATION TO USE THE CFA FRANC (FRANC OF THE FRENCH COLONIES IN AFRICA).

Although this system is not shared by the European Union, the French colonies are forced to use the FCFA exclusively.

AGREEMENT 9 :

THE OBLIGATION TO SEND TO FRANCE, AN ANNUAL BALANCE SHEET AND A REPORT ON THE STATE OF RESERVES. NO REPORT, NO MONEY.

That is to say that the directors of the central banks of the former colonies presents the said report at the annual meetings of the Ministers of Finance on the former colonies. This report is then compiled by the Banque de France and the French Treasury.

AGREEMENT 10 :

RENOUNCE ANY MILITARY ALLIANCE WITH OTHER COUNTRIES, UNLESS AUTHORIZED BY FRANCE.

Most of these countries only have military alliances with their ex-colonizers simply because France forbade them any other military alliance.

AGREEMENT 11 :

THE OBLIGATION TO ALLY WITH FRANCE IN THE EVENT OF WAR OR A GLOBAL CRISIS.

More than a million African soldiers fought for the defeat of Nazism and fascism during the Second World War. Now that France is militarily linked to the European Union, NATO and the United States, Africa will de facto be committed to the side of France in the event of the 3rd World War.

GRAH KOSSI-KOSSI.

“Merely closing the borders is not an answer”

Labour’s narrative on immigration ignores international and humanitarian obligations, argues Nadine Finch

Keir Starmer was in Canada at the weekend discussing global challenges around the theme of the axis of insecurity. This he framed as insecurity arising because of Ukraine, the economy, the climate and for him, in particular, the need for border controls.

There was no attempt to link any of these themes together and acknowledge that internationally states are concerned that climate change will accelerate forced migration from a large number of non-European states. Neither did he refer to the labour shortages currently being experienced in the NHS, the care sector and the hospitality industry. All of these are suffering from a shortage of skilled migrants caused by Brexit and also by the perception that the UK is now a hostile environment for all migrants. He also did not seem to have any understanding that the conflict in Ukraine has severely disrupted traditional migration routes through Asia and driven them south. Merely closing the borders is not an answer to these complex global challenges.

Waving the Union Jack

Yet, his primary message was the verbal equivalent of waving the Union Jack, as a solution to problems that need expert consideration and a greater understanding of Britain’s role in a post-colonial world, where a number of states struggle to overcome the consequences of invasions and economic exploitation by states that are more politically powerful and well-connected. Neither does it recognise that many active individuals in the Labour Party and the wider labour movement are themselves first or second generation migrants who well understand the need to seek safety and survival abroad and who have contributed and continue to contribute a great deal to the UK community.

Legally, one of the tasks of the modern state is to defend its borders. But, for the last century, states have also been under international obligations to offer protection to individuals who are being persecuted on grounds of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or as members of a particular social group, for example, as women or children or other social group.

Small boats

The small boats only started to cross the English Channel in 2018, when a succession of governments, both Tory and Labour, had introduced such stringent controls that it was increasingly difficult for individuals to fly into the UK or use Eurostar or a ferry in order to apply for asylum. It is a false narrative to assert that migrant smugglers merely tout for passengers. Individuals or their families are prepared to pay large sums to ensure that they or their relatives can reach safety with family members or established communities in Britain, even if the one remaining route is in a small inflatable boat across the busiest shipping route in the world.

Asylum seekers have been forced to pay smugglers because the Refugee Convention requires individuals to arrive in a state before they can claim asylum. There are no visas for asylum seekers which can be issued abroad. A very small number of refugees are recognised by UNHCR in refugee camps abroad and then allocated to the UK. There are also small resettlement schemes for Afghan, Syrian and Sudanese nationals. In 2022, this led to 5,792 people being resettled. It left many others at risk of death, torture and persecution. This is why the largest proportion of those in small boats are from Afghanistan.

Humanitarian obligations

In the debate about small boats, mention is seldom made of the fact that in 2022, 45% of asylum seekers had had to enter by small boats or the fact that, overall, 76% of asylum seekers were granted refugee status by the Home Office initially and, of the remaining 24%, 43% were granted international protection on appeal. Nor was it mentioned that 98% of Afghan applicants, 99% of Syrian applicants and 100% of Eritrean applicants are successful.

By concentrating on the need to criminalise smugglers, the Labour Party narrative ignores international and humanitarian obligations, which should be a cornerstone of a progressive foreign policy.

Illegal Migration Act 2023

At the same time, bilateral returns policies may not be possible until the UK repeals the Illegal Migration Act 2023 and other immigration legislation which places it in breach of a range of international obligations to asylum seekers and those who may have been trafficked. There is also an implicit message in the proposed measures to be taken by a future Labour Government that a large number of those coming in will be returned. This does not correlate with the figures for grants of asylum in 2022, which show the extent to which those entering are entitled to international protection.

It is hoped that there will be a discussion on migration issues at Labour's Conference this year and the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLP) has been circulating a model motion. Two wards and one union branch in Islington North CLP have put forward a variation on this motion for discussion at the CLP conference. It reads:

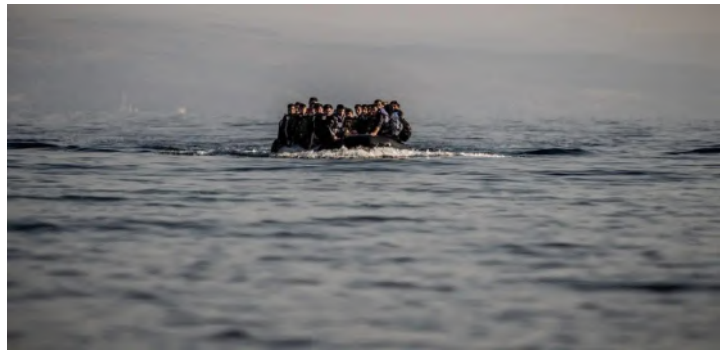
Conference notes:

- * The Illegal Migration Act 2023 prevents those arriving in the UK irregularly by any means, not just small boats, from being entitled to asylum, if they have passed through any country – however briefly – where they did not face persecution.
- * The Act does not comply with the UN Conventions on Refugees or the Rights of the Child and parts of the European Convention on Human Rights.
- * In 2022, 76% of those who claimed asylum here were granted international or humanitarian protection of some sort.
- * In 2022, the existing and very limited alternative safe routes to the UK only provided resettlement to 5,792 individuals.
- * The failure by the Home Office to process asylum applications has led to a backlog of 175,000 cases.
- * Whilst the UK remains in breach of international migration law, other states risk similar breaches if they enter into return agreements with it.
- * That the reasons why people need to migrate – from war, from devastating climate change and from poverty continue to increase.
- * That the majority of migrants remain in countries nearby those from which they flee.

Conference believes:

- * A future Labour government must repeal all asylum legislation that breaches international law.
- * A future Labour government should recognise the benefits that migration has brought to the UK.
- * A future Labour government should work with experts and NGOs to devise an asylum system which complies with international law.

At Labour Party Conference in Liverpool in October, there were similar motions submitted by Constituency Labour Parties but not with this actual wording. Unfortunately, CLPs have to ballot for six subjects to be discussed at Conference and the topic "Immigration and Asylum" was not supported by right wing who dominated the CLP section and, therefore, there was no discussion on this subject.



Jamaica teachers (and nurses) leaving in droves by Paul Ward

Back in mid-March, after two years of negotiation, teachers and other public sector employees reluctantly accepted salary increases ranging from 20 to 40 percent. They were told by Finance Minister Nigel Clarke that if they didn't accept by the end of March, any retroactive payments would be delayed by two years.

Just six weeks later, the political directorate awarded themselves upwards of 200 percent increases. There was outcry which soon subsided as teachers and others found another option, that is to leave, especially the experienced ones.

Brain drain

The scale of this skilled emigration / brain drain is thus no surprise. As for giving short notice, many would not have had confirmed overseas offers until very recently. Even if possible, giving less than three months notice would have meant losing pay for sure.

But what of the bigger picture? Poaching professionals who have been trained through taxes in post-colonial countries is even worse than off-shore tax evasion. It is one of the mechanisms of post-slavery capitalism that must be changed as part of reparations.

Educational achievement in Jamaica remains low, except for the select 20 percent who make it to the 'traditional' high schools. There is now talk of having to import skilled labour whilst 80 percent of our university graduates leave within two years of graduating.

Race to the bottom

Recent job creation has been of a low skill type in call centres and hotels. Those post-colonial structures that encourage / thrive off a race to the bottom must be changed. Otherwise crime will continue, driven by lack of opportunity and thwarted ambition.

This post-colonial travesty is the cousin, no the sibling, of what drives 'refugees' from their homelands, triggering the right-wing populism that threatens the world as much as does climate change.

We have a lot of work to do. Unlike Andrew Holness who will retire on full prime ministers pension when he loses the next election (as he expects to do) in two years time, or less.

Pathak, Nazneen Ahmed (2023), City of Stolen Magic, London, Puffin books, £7.99

This is a novel for children. In her acknowledgment Pathak suggests 10 is the perfect age to read this book. I propose that over tens should read it too and learn of an imaginative way to engage children and educate them about British colonialism in India. For this is "India, 1855. The British rule, and all-across the land Indian magic is being stamped out."

The 'sinister Company' of Pathak's story that is doing the ruling and stealing is deliberately based on the East India Company. The real Company, prior to the 1857 'rebellion', gradually took over the government of India, controlled the taxes, rents and crop growth of the country and caused famines through this economic and political colonisation. The story's imaginary Company is shown also doing this, but central is its appropriation and control of Indian magic.

The books' central figure is a girl called Chompra. She needs to rescue her magic trained kidnapped mother. To do this she has to allow herself to be taken to London by the head of the 'Eastern Merchant Company', Sir Clive Devaynes. He wants Chompra because he believes that by manipulating and using her special magical powers, he can greatly increase his profiteering and political control.

The story takes place in India, on a ship on the high seas, and in London. Chompra becomes involved with numerous and very varied peoples (magical and non-magical), and we learn of the links between the ordinary people in India and London. The plot moves fast and is full of surprises and drama. Indeed, it is only on reflection that the reader realises that so many real historical characters, such as Lascars, have been introduced.

The decolonising of education requires deliberate re-examination, and, in many cases, redrafting of Colonial/ British history. But, as this book shows, creative and imaginative children's stories have a place too.

Review by Danny Reilly

Kundnani, Arun (2023), *What is Anti-racism? And why it means Anti-capitalism*, review by Danny Reilly

It may at first seem strange that at a time when expressions of liberal concern over racism are becoming more widespread, greater clarity about “what is anti-racism” is needed. However, public social and political expressions of concern about ‘racial discrimination’ have long been bedevilled by theoretical and linguistic attempts to mute or derail opposition to racism. As the author demonstrates, the anti-racist struggle urgently needs a restatement of itself. This new book seeks not only to clarify in a summary historical form what anti-racism is, it also attempts to bring together episodes of resistance as it traces how successive capitalist stages of development have each involved racism, both metropolitan and colonial.

The book starts in the Netherlands town of Vught, site of both a Nazi Second World war concentration camp and a modern ‘high security unit’ for mostly Muslim prisoners. Kundnani then moves back and forth in time and across continents. He avoids losing the reader through clear writing and periodic summary which locate new points in the argument of the book. For example, in chapter three the author skilfully outlines the forms of racism involved in India’s forced changing historical place in the British Empire and the wider imperial system. This involves touching on topics from international cotton trading to imperialist induced famines.

Historical debates

The author goes on to take in a wide range of historical debates. For example, the liberal location of racism in individual attitudes and historical disputes over the last century. These include the early socialist debates about nationalism and opposition to the colonial empires, and the work of activist/ theorists such as Martin Luther and Coretta Scott King, C.L.R. James, Aime Cesaire and Franz Fanon. The last six chapters take the reader up to date through an examination of the racism involved in post Second World War neoliberalism.

But the historical journey we are taken on is undertaken by drawing upon opposition activists as well as capitalist politicians. The discussions and exposés revisit issues such as post colonial racism, but sometimes as internal colonialism of the ghettos in the USA, super exploitation of UK migrants or even IMF directives about trade and austerity.

Liberal and Radical

The word ‘racism’ acquired ‘two distinct and opposed personalities’, liberal and radical (p.85), by the 1950s. For the liberal one, Nazism (understood as an extreme view) had become the model for all racisms. The articulation of the radical meaning required a focus both on structure and power, as well as showing the limits of liberalist versions, e.g. its focus on the origins of racism. For the radicals, the Ghanaian President Nkrumah went on to build on the Declaration he drafted for the 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress and highlighted what he termed neo-Colonialism. This involved both an updated version of colonial racism and control of raw material markets, which in turn led to Third World borrowing, debt and the creation of new controlling financial institutions such as the IMF. The new neo-liberal theorists called this ‘modernization theory’, which overlooked the fact that Western ‘development’ was dependent on Third World ‘underdevelopment’. Resistance to such underdevelopment required imperialist military interventions. In the case of the USA there was one every 16 months between 1947 – 1970.

Third World struggles

But Kundnani links USA and Third World struggles in another way too - the Black freedom movement. In particular, he highlights the connections between the US Struggles of Black women workers against racial and gender divisions of welfare state capitalism (p.103) and international struggle against imperialism. One of the prominent activists in the US in the 40s and 50s the author discusses is the Trinidadian born Claudia Jones. Shortly after release from prison in 1955 she moved to the UK and became one of the UKs early leading campaigners against racism. Other prominent US activists, such as Du Bois were forced to remain and face ongoing state harassment.

However, as Kundnani argues, the early US 'Black left ... reemerged in new forms in subsequent decades' p.112 He also draws attention to Martin Luther King's adoption of the radical anti-racists' neo-colonialism critique. This sets King firmly as NOT in the liberal anti-racist camp. However, 55 years after his assassination, he is regularly located as a liberal anti-racist in the establishment's account of resistance to racism.

Apartheid

From a British stance, the books' sections on South African Apartheid's racial capitalism and Powellism are of particular interest. Orthodox Marxism, Kundnani claims, could not explain the 20th Century phenomenon of Apartheid. South Africa's racial capitalism wasn't only an ideological superstructure, 'but rather constituted the material infrastructure of the entire South African political and economic system.' (P.131) The high rate of exploitation, for example, came partly from Bantustan subsistence economies subsidising the capitalist economies. 'Non-capitalist modes of production' were folded into 'a subordinate position within' the structures of the main racial capitalist structure. (P.136)

Kundnani's analysis of South Africa leads him to the work of the pioneering theorist of racial capitalism, Cedric Robinson. This provides one of the clearest summaries of Robinson's two well-known theses. First, that 'racial divisions of labor had existed throughout the history of [England's] capitalist development' p. 140 Second, the creation of a Black radical tradition from an "evolving resistance of African peoples to oppression". (p.145)

Enoch Powell

Powellism is usually considered in relation to immigration control. However, it is briefly included in the last third of this book, which is taken up with the evolution of racism as part of neoliberalism and its devastating consequences. Kundnani draws attention to Enoch Powell's earlier involvement in the neoliberal opposition to the creation of a Commonwealth as successor to the British Empire. It was Powell's support for a specifically 'English' neoliberal transformation that led to his subsequent infamous anti-Black immigrant speeches. Englishness, in Powell's neoliberal project, was designed to draw in the white working class. It couldn't embrace the recently arrived and highly discriminated against workers from the West Indies, the Indian sub-continent and former African UK colonies. The USA's 1960s Northern urban violence was presented by Powell as a consequence of migration from the US South, and showed where keeping open borders from the former British Colonies would lead. Powell may have incited racial violence, but his 'static idea of culture... was central' (p.231) to his argument, which overlapped with liberal anti-racism's narrow notion of culture. Also, Powellism's need for market order led to agreement with liberalism's need for borders to protect shared cultural values. Strict control on immigration became a condition for diversity, and, as A. Sivanandan exposed in the 1970s, from then-on border management and 'diversity' became linked in policy.

In the USA too, policy links via racism had been made. Neoliberal labour market policies led to lowering of pay and job security among Black workers, on the one hand. On the other, neoliberalism led to a cultural/ race blaming and the adoption of a 'Broken window' policing/ government policy in the face of Black resistance. This resulted in increases in both the number of prisons and Black prison populations.

Neoliberalism

Kundnani's last six chapters that are broadly on neoliberalism, cover Inter-linked racist policies and structures. These he shows were developed to cover variously: prisons, labour markets and recruitment, borders, and 'cultural justifications' adapted to different nation's circumstances. These could be in the USA, the UK and other European countries, Third World nations, or between countries, e.g. USA and Mexico.

These explanations of neoliberalism, though clear, are complex, and chart change over time and territory. The points made in this book are for all anti-racists to read and discuss as part of developing clear strategies aimed at structural racism.

Tessa Murphy, *The Creole Archipelago: Race and Borders in the Colonial Caribbean* a review by *Steve Cushion*

This book, in great detail, recounts the history of the Kalinago people of the Caribbean. Barbados may have been uninhabited when the English started to colonise the Caribbean region, the other small islands of the Lesser Antilles certainly were not. The native inhabitants of the islands stretching from Guadeloupe to Tobago were known as the "Kalinago" and their maritime civilisation resisted European colonisation, slowly retreating to their heartland in St Vincent and Dominica but, through a combination of diplomacy and military action, they were able to seriously delay the development of the plantation economy on the islands.

St Kitts massacre

British and French settlers, normally hostile to each other, nevertheless allied in 1626 to massacre the Kalinago inhabitants of St Kitts, thereafter dividing the island between them. Having driven the Kalinago from Martinique in 1658, the French colonists were unable to advance further and, in 1660, a treaty between French, English, and Kalinago representatives formally recognised Kalinago control of the islands of Dominica and St Vincent. Grenada was not covered by the treaty and constant skirmishing severely restricted French development of a plantation economy there. Using the prevailing winds, enslaved Africans frequently escaped from Barbados in stolen boats and arrived in St Vincent. Initially, the Kalinago frequently handed such escapees back to the British authorities or sold them to French settlers on Martinique but, as relations deteriorated with the colonists, many of these Africans were integrated into Kalinago communities. This enabled the colonisers to change the narrative and started calling these new communities "Black Caribs", using the story of a shipwrecked slave ship to justify taking the lands guaranteed to the Kalinago by treaty.

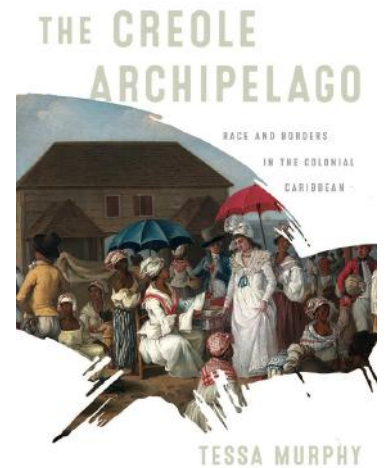
Seven Years War

Over the next century, and despite treaties, the constant expansion of the plantation system increasingly encroached on the remaining Kalinago territory, however, by skilfully playing on the rivalry in the region between the British and French empires, they were able to maintain a measure of independence. The turning point was the Seven Years War between Britain and France. The 1763 Treaty of Paris, gave Dominica, St. Vincent, Grenada, and Tobago to Britain, while France gained St. Lucia and maintained control of Guadeloupe and Martinique. This apparently definitive division of the Lesser Antilles encouraged both empires to expand sugar production on their islands, a process that encroached on Kalinago land and led to the Carib War of 1772-73. Using the Africans who had joined the Kalinago as an excuse, the settlers recast them as a Maroon community of escaped slaves rather than the Indigenous population, thereby justifying their intention to remove them from St Vincent and seize their lands. Despite the overwhelming military force of the British Army, Kalinago guerillas, who managed to obtain supplies of firearms from neighbouring French islands, fought the British to a standstill. A treaty in 1773 granted the Kalinago the eastern side of the island.

Garifuna

The French military captured Saint Vincent in 1779 during the US War of Independence, but it was restored to British rule by the Treaty of Paris, 1783. Hostilities broke out again in 1795 in the context of the war between Britain and Revolutionary France, when Kalinago forces, aided by French irregulars managed to seize most of St Vincent except the capital. A major British military expedition by General Ralph Abercromby eventually suppressed the Kalinago/French opposition in 1797. The surviving Kalinago were rounded up and deported from Saint Vincent to the island of Roatán off the coast of present-day Honduras. Their descendents became known as the Garifuna people, mainly living in Belize, Honduras and New York.

Detailed by excellent research, this book is recommended for everyone who wants to know more about how indigenous people resisted a concerted campaign of ethnic cleansing.



Conference Held at Ella Baker School of Organising.

8-10 September 2003

Very few people in England have heard of Ella Baker. As an American old enough to have been active in the Civil Rights movement, Ella Baker was someone I admired all my life. She was active for over 50 years in the Civil Rights movement. She didn't believe in "leaders", she believed that power came from the bottom up, and fought for that in every struggle she was in.

So when Luke told me that he had been asked to speak at a conference, called "New Organising," organised by the Ella Baker School of Organising, I offered to help him prepare, and wound up collating everybody's work!

There were various workshops throughout the two days: Organising migrant workers; TSSA: a case study in what can go wrong (and how to start to put it right); Power that isn't industrial action; Race equality at work and in our trade unions and many others.

Luke and I, and the secretary of the Students' Federation of India, Nikhil Matthew, were asked to work together in setting up our seminar entitled "Organising in the Diaspora". After a lot of zooming and emailing it was decided that we would break the session up into three parts:

1. Where are we from (to ascertain the backgrounds of facilitators and participants
2. To understand the types of organising participants are engaged in or wish to be engaged in.
3. What problems do we face in organising within the diaspora communities?
4. What are the similarities and differences our communities have in organising?

The first part went well - too long but well. Everybody wanted to talk to each other and so found difficulty sticking to the subject.

It was in the second part that our session went off the rails, so to speak. We showed a short (5 minutes) film called "Gloria" which had been produced by UNITE the Union some 10 years ago, and had won a prize. Gloria follows an industrial cleaner throughout one day of her work and had been made because UNITE was at that time organising cleaners from other countries.

The organisers of the conference had stressed "disagreement is only constructive if it is respectful", which appeared in the Guide to Session Planning. Unfortunately one of the participants had clearly not gotten the message. He began to yell at me because the film was not celebrating the life of a cleaner, because she, "Gloria", said that in her own country she had been a teacher. He then began to race-bait me, as the only white person amongst the facilitators and obviously I was showing this film because I was white and had no respect for cleaners.

Everyone was paralysed, and by the time some order had been restored, the session was over.

I have to admit I was completely taken aback - I had not expected this kind of attack at this kind of conference, and had I not driven up with Luke, I would have left immediately.

But I was glad I didn't. I then went to two sessions that taught me a lot. One was about organising security men in Kenya - absolutely fascinating in that the people sent to organise had to completely change their locus. The second was on Researching Companies which showed us how to find information about almost any company on the internet. I also discovered that there is an organisation called Corporate Watch which will help anyone in this endeavour.

Luke and Nikhil went to other sessions and we never did get a chance to discuss each others sessions. From my point of view the conference was useful if unsettling.

Laura Miller



The Politourgeoisie and Stolen Independence in Barbados

by *Marsha Hinds Myrie*

On Wednesday September 6, 2023 I was sitting in my office settling into work and listening to an edition of a popular talk show in Barbados. In response to the public lament about the pending raise of pay for politicians in Barbados, a sitting government senator was defending the salary point of Barbadian politicians partly by indicating that running political campaigns took time away from other professional endeavours and that it was hard for politicians after that to be rejoin practice or be employable.

This statement did not ring right to me after having been involved in politics at various levels, the highest being a nomination candidate in the national election process. I was able to maintain my professional standing, run in the campaign and reintegrate into my professional life after the political cycle ended. I pointed to a few reasons why I could do that but all a subsequent caller to Brasstacks got was that I was wiping myself clean and casting aspirations on other people involved in the political process. Print media offers a bit more width to make a point and I want to both restate my primary argument in the call and expand the argument in what I think are important ways.

The reason I called the programme to make an intervention on the practice of politics in Barbados was that, in my estimation, the impression was being given that any kind of political involvement sullies a professional so badly that they have little opportunity to return to jobs after politics. The premise was being used to justify increases to the remuneration amounts for politicians in Barbados. The point I made is that while some of the activity associated with the current practice of party politics in Barbados may lead to a person being excluded from professional life after politics this was only one outcome and not the outcome of being involved in politics.

Put differently, a person could run a campaign without some of the features that decent Barbadians have come to dislike as features of our political system and with the full knowledge that after politics, room to reintegrate into professional life was important. I see the argument that politicians in Barbados are a special type of people who need special types of protection to be unsubstantiated. To start, being involved in politics in Barbados has historically been a privilege associated with standalone professions. Before the constitutional ruling of 2023 that made clear way for civil servants not to be excluded from political involvement a large section of professionals in Barbados not just found it difficult to become involved in politics but were legally barred. The result has been that disproportionately the candidate pool in Barbados has been filled by lawyers, doctors, consultants and accountants.

In addition to the resources that they can muster from professional networks and good will, many political candidates are heavily dependent on party finances and the party machinery to sustain a campaign. This has long been a mechanism of the party whip. This perhaps where the professional and other types of sullyng starts for many a person seeking to become involved in politics. Candidates self censure and leave issues that are not on the common agenda of the party off to a side to tow the party line. Candidates can also easily become consumed by the lack of up-to-date campaign funding guidelines in Barbados. These are the types of things that can cause a challenge for professional integration.

I reject this type of political practice being passed off as the only way to practice politics. I am aware of regulations that are being imposed by banks and other institutions internationally but there are also time limits to those. I believe there are ways to reintegrate into the work force after politics that do not make the only answer to political involvement being the purview of a small class of people who believe public resources should be on tap to them indefinitely once they become involved in politics. The deeper issue to my mind is who is politics for and who does it serve? Political parties in contemporary Barbados are no longer connected to social issues in the same way as Barrow's Democratic Labour Party or Adam's Barbados Labour Party

In fact, activists in the third sector, particularly those one who challenge government policy are seen as ‘troublesome’ or ‘embarrassing the government’ and who often do their work on a volunteer basis and without the guarantee of any pension are far more susceptible to being frozen out of employment than politicians. Yet we are not making a case for this special category of remunerations to include those individuals.

The average Barbadian in the street may have been deprived of the language they need to clearly articulate the crux of their grouses with the proposed increases for politicians. The last time civics was officially taught in any primary or secondary classroom in Barbados was in the 1970s. Social Studies may be the closest subject, but topics of governance are largely treated with recall teaching. However, there are significant and deep issues embedded in this current debate. I hope we do not only limit the discourse to whether politicians make enough or a lot of money.

In a recent article I argue for the current political class in Barbados – on both sides of the B/D divide to be termed the politourgeoisie. I defined the term as “a special kind of bourgeoisie that arises largely out of the same powerless and progressive systems in Commonwealth Caribbean society but use other types of privileges such as family connections, school tie connections and memberships in elite clubs, lodges and churches to disassociate from and then manipulate the rest of the society mainly driven by their access to governmental political power. Where bourgeoisie may depend on long heritage of money and status, politourgeoisie rely heavily on delusion, veneer, and trickery to maintain their social position.”

Trying to persuade the average Barbadian that politicians should make what struggling masses perceive as disproportionately high salaries because they suffer after politics is an example of the trickery of the politourgeoisie. It is disingenuous especially when there is no mention of the gains and benefits politics brings including larger professional networks regionally and internationally which are usually lucrative both during and after active politics.

This politourgeoisie have caused regression and slippage in Barbados’ independence struggle. Indeed not just Barbados but across the Commonwealth Caribbean, this class has kept the structures of the plantation society that were detrimental to the masses in tact for their own gain. The political structures that brought us from plantation rule to post independence plantation rule can take us no further. Fanon was not wrong – there is plenty black skin with white masks about.

Marsha Hinds Myrie is a post doctoral fellow at the University of Guelph and a practicing women and girls advocate in Barbados.



Award for the best photograph goes to Mick Holder of Waltham Forest Trades Council for this image of striking workers on the Whipps Cross Hospital strike picket.

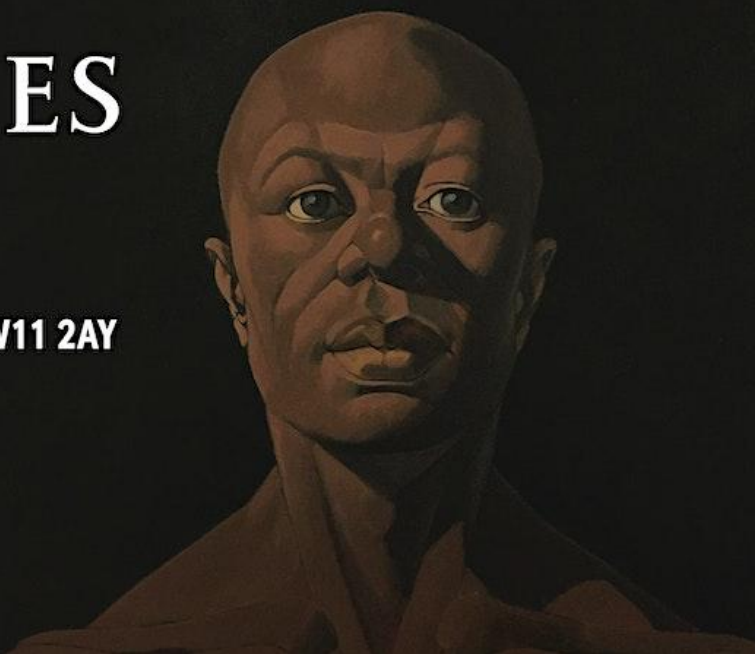
50 PLAQUES & PLACES

The Tabernacle, 34-35 Powis Sq, W11 2AY

5th - 28th October 2023



SOAS
University of London



A new Black History Month exhibition spotlighting 50 key sites in Britain and around the world that benefitted from the transatlantic slave economy will open in west London this Thursday and will run from 5-28 October 2023.

The exhibition will showcase the work of the Transatlantic Trafficked Enslaved African Corrective Historical Plaques (TTEACH Plaques) initiative, founded by SOAS University of London Community Fellow Gloria Daniel.

"50 Plaques & Places" is a ground-breaking exhibition that is an outcome of this descendant-led initiative dedicated to advocating for reparative interventions and the installation of permanent plaques.

The TTEACH Plaques project calls for institutions who have historically honoured individuals who profited from the transportation and enslavement of African people to accurately contextualise their history.

The origin of TTEACH Plaques and the exhibition stems from Gloria Daniel's profound journey into her family's history, guided initially by her late cousin, Jon Daniel. Their ancestral roots led them to John Isaac Daniel, a survivor of British trafficking, born into slavery under the ownership of Thomas Daniel.

Gloria Daniel said: "50 Plaques & Places draws together multiple voices - artists, poets, and descendants of both the enslaved and enslavers. Everyday people who recognize that reparative justice cannot solely be determined by the heirs of the perpetrators. It strives to claim that space, inviting its audience to demand multiple sites of conscience."

This initiative has campaigned and challenged British churches, charitable societies, and institutions, including Bristol Cathedral, the Society of Merchant Venturers, The National Lottery, Historic England, The Bank of England, and Lloyds of London.

Supported by the School of Law at SOAS, "50 Plaques & Places" will open in The Tabernacle in West London from 5 October. The exhibition shines a spotlight on 50 sites undeniably connected to the transatlantic slave economy.

The exhibition coincides with Black History Month and serves as a poignant reminder of the ongoing struggles faced by marginalised communities, including the Windrush Generation, and the urgent need for justice in the 21st century.