

The following letter appeared in the *Gleaner*:

JEREMY CORBYN: LABOUR PARTY LEADER AND FRIEND OF JAMAICA

by Anthony Gifford

When I was an activist in London in the 1980s, Jeremy Corbyn was a young MP for Islington North who spoke in support of campaigns against racism, apartheid, the oppression of Palestinians, nuclear weapons and much else. He was committed, modest and consistent. He cared for the welfare of the downtrodden in the UK and in the world. I valued him as a friend.

Jeremy has now been elected leader of the Labour Party by a massive vote of Labour members and supporters. His principles have not changed. He remains Chairman of the Stop the War Coalition which protested against the war in Iraq. His first public speech as leader was at a rally in Hyde Park in support of refugees.

When nominations were made for four candidates to succeed Ed Miliband, Jeremy was the rank outsider. But in 99 rallies up and down the UK he electrified the political scene, galvanizing thousands of voters who had been turned off politics because of the dominance of right wing policies where Labour's alternative was known as "austerity-lite". Within a month the Labour Party had more members than for many decades.

Electable

His economic agenda would promote public investment and end the savage cuts in public spending made year by year by the present government. It has been endorsed by a number of leading economists who wrote that "*his opposition to austerity is actually mainstream economics, even backed by the conservative IMF. He aims to promote growth and prosperity.*"

During the campaign Tony Blair lambasted Jeremy Corbyn and said that under his leadership Labour would be unelectable. I do not agree. In many countries around the world people, and



especially young people, are sick and tired of the "same-old same-old" leaders who appear to have lost vision and have little empathy with the sufferers. As was shown in the Obama campaigns, honest principles and a commitment to change can attract a kaleidoscope of voters and win elections.

Reparations

Jeremy is a friend of Jamaica. He worked here for two years with Voluntary Service Overseas after leaving school. And he has supported the case for reparations. In a debate in the House of Commons in 2004, he called for "a genuine, serious and heartfelt apology for the slave trade", describing it as "*an act of genocide against black people.*" "*Moving on a little, we could talk of reparations for the people who suffered and the countries which suffered because of the slave trade.*"

Jeremy Corbyn, a republican, is now Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition. His aim is to unite the Labour Party around a progressive agenda which will be worked out democratically, in consultation with the party membership. He will no doubt be attacked by the press and the government, and even by some of his colleagues. But I believe that his integrity will win out, and he will be Prime Minister in 2020. Before that, I hope that Jamaica will be able to welcome back the young man who gave service here in the 1960s.

Lord Anthony Gifford QC is a Jamaican attorney-at-law and a UK barrister.

Walter Rodney Commission of Inquiry

Walter Rodney's 1980 assassination remains a most traumatising political murder in Guyana's history. A proper investigation into the death of the pre-eminent scholar, historian, activist and author of How Europe Underdeveloped Africa was evaded by both the largely Afro-Guyanese supported PNC and Indo-Guyanese supported PPP governments until 2014, when the formal WRCOI started work.

Legacy

Rodney's political teaching exposed the exploitative nature Guyana's historic ethnic Indian/African conflict. His renowned work and legacy in Guyana endured sufficiently to curb racial voting for the first time in 50 years, thus enabling the win of the new David Granger cross-racial coalition government. Yet Guyana's new government has refused to allow the Commission a final two weeks to complete the investigation for transparently political reasons.

Plea

We demand that the Commission be allowed to finish its long-awaited task and particularly, to hear from the remaining key witnesses. This plea has been supported by all three commissioners, the lawyers representing Rodney's party the Working People's Alliance, his brother Donald Rodney and the rest of the Rodney family. A new dispensation for the Commission could resolve previous abuses. All Guyanese need and deserve a completed inquiry into this atrocity, both to unearth the truth and to promote healing and reconciliation.

Dominica - Tropical Storm Erika Appeal!

In the aftermath of Tropical Storm Erika, which struck on Wednesday, 26th August, flooding has devastated the island of Dominica." 20 years of infrastructure development has been devastated, lives lost, property destroyed and people displaced by this natural disaster.

We owe Dominica a duty of support.

Contributions can be made online or at a Bank or Building Society to the following Account

Bank: Lloyds
Sort Code: 30:00:09

Account No: 00 17 00 83
Account Name: DNDF
Reference: "Your Name-DA Erika Appeal".

Dominican Republic Update

Many people of African heritage in the Dominican Republic (DR) continue to report problems in acquiring documentation despite having registered. There have been reports of people who could not register self-deporting to Haiti through fear of what could happen with the authorities. DR citizens who were in possession of state-issued ID cards who have not re-registered are now at risk of expulsion from their country of birth. Many with legal ID cards have been reported to be in groups that have been deported to Haiti.

DR citizens of Haitian descent have been re-categorised and re-registered as second class citizens in their own country. Many now live in fear of abuse by the authorities. They can't study, travel or work legally. The issue has been "haitianised" in the international media that talks about Haitian migration to the DR when in reality this started as a citizenship crisis which involved the retroactive denationalisation of tens of thousands of Dominican Republic citizens of African descent dating back to 1929 who were born Dominican citizens and were converted into foreigners by the DR authorities.

The DR has invested in an international PR campaign. Apparently it has spent over \$800,000 in the US to a lobbying firm in an effort to protect its image. They have managed to spin this issue in their favour, using the current global backlash against migrants.

This is not a migration issue, it is a question of the civil rights for citizens of African heritage in the Dominican Republic who need our solidarity more than ever.

Venezuela -Guyana border dispute.

A Statement from CLS

We notice with alarm the rising tension between the governments of Venezuela and Guyana over their border dispute and call on both Governments to refrain from inflammatory words or actions that can only heighten tension in the region. We recognize this is a long running dispute with a commitment from both sides to settle the matter peacefully. We are pleased that the UN is involved in the discussions to find a solution and urge president Granger and president Maduro to use the opportunity of the United Nations General Assembly for dialogue to resolve the dispute.

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