



Richard Hart (1917 - 2013)

We mourn his passing

It was with deep sadness and a sense of loss that I had to inform our members and friends of the death of our honorary president Dr Richard Hart on 21st December 2013. I had come to know 'Dick', as he was fondly called, over the past 35 years of involvement in Caribbean Labour Solidarity (CLS), an organization of which he was a founder member.

If Richard Hart could be described in one paragraph this is the best I have seen –at the back cover of his book *The Life and Resurrection of Marcus Garvey*, published by Karia Press in 2002:

'Richard Hart was a pioneer in the development of Trade Unions, political parties and organizations in the Caribbean. Although he pursued a career as a solicitor, he is more widely known as a historian and politician. He has written numerous books, pamphlets and papers.'

It is not surprising that CLS would take an anti-imperialist stance with most of the founder members having been affected by imperialism in one way or another, and with three of them becoming presidents of CLS. Lionel Jeffery had been imprisoned in Guyana for opposing British colonialism as a member of the People's Progressive Party (PPP) – later to be purged from the PPP deemed to be 'hard left'. Cleston Taylor was victimized in Jamaica for his trade union activities and had to flee to Britain where he soon took up workers' issues and was blacklisted in the building industry, as a result of which he set up his own building firm. Richard Hart was also imprisoned by the British for his political activities in 1941-42 and would also be expelled from the PNP in 1952.

Not one to give up, Dick in 1945 helped form the People's Freedom Movement; that was to morph into the Socialist Party of Jamaica, which disbanded in 1962. Politics and trade unionism were the twin vehicles for liberating the people of the Caribbean and Dick was deeply involved in



Picture of left to right Winston Pinder, Richard Hart, Luke Daniels, Lionel granddaughter, Lionel Jeffery

both: he became the secretary of Caribbean Labour Congress from 1945 to 1946 and was elected General Secretary from 1947 to 1953.

When the New Jewel Movement overthrew the Gairy government in a bloodless coup, Richard Hart would again be called upon to lend support and expertise, this time as a solicitor advising the revolutionary government. He was appointed Attorney-General in May 1983, and just managed to escape the American invasion.

Richard Hart saw the organized working masses as the vehicle to bring about social change in our society and it should not surprise that he should get involved in the trade union movement. Much of this history is told in his book *Rise and Organise*, published in 1989 by Karia Press.

Despite his growing handicap, Dick produced two new books in his final years: *Caribbean Workers' Struggles*, published in 2012 by Bogle-L'Ouverture Press with the Socialist History Society, and *Occupation and Control - the British in Jamaica 1660-1962*, published by Arawak Publications in 2013. *Caribbean Workers' Struggles* was launched at Bishopsgate Institute in London in December 2012 and this was to be his last public-speaking engagement - no typed speech, and although he lamented his loss of memory without falter he told us a story from many decades back that had everyone convulsed with laughter.

Richard Hart led a rich and full life, which we are very fortunate to have shared in part, and his memory will live with us forever.

by Luke Daniels

Lawful Killing

Many people have announced themselves "perplexed" and "baffled" by the decision of the inquest into the death of Mark Duggan which ruled that, despite not having a weapon on him, he was nevertheless "lawfully" killed. This confusion results from a belief that British law has necessarily any connection to commonly held ideas of justice. It is clear that, should a policeman believe, or claim to believe, that there is a threat to life, he or she is perfectly entitled to shoot you dead.

Corporate Culture

This situation is made infinitely worse by the corporate culture of the Metropolitan Police where, after anyone is killed by a policeman, the whole force, from the top down, move to completely protect the officer concerned. This corporate culture gives confidence to trigger-happy firearms officers who know that they will receive the maximum support, irrespective of the wisdom of their actions. The expression "trigger-happy" seems particularly appropriate in the case of Mark Duggan as the officer known only as V53 not only shot Mark Duggan, but also shot his own colleague, who was only saved from serious injury because the bullet hit his radio.

Incompetent and Long-winded

This situation is made worse by the fact that responsibility for investigating such incidents lies with the notoriously incompetent and long-winded IPCC. A parliamentary inquiry set up in the wake of the death of Ian Tomlinson concluded in January 2013 that, *"It has neither the powers nor the resources that it needs to get to the truth when the integrity of the police is in doubt"*. Let us also recall, amongst others, Harry Stanley, shot while carrying a chair leg through Hackney, James Ashley, shot while naked in his own home by Sussex Police and, Jean Charles de Menezes, who received 7 bullets in his head in a case of mistaken identity. Cressida Dick who masterminded the operation in which Jean Charles de Menezes was killed has subsequently been promoted to Assistant Commissioner. The Economist noted that *"no policeman has ever been convicted of murder or manslaughter for a death following police contact, though there have been more than 400 such deaths in the past ten years alone"*.

We may be shocked by the result of the inquest into the killing of Mark Duggan, we should not be surprised.

**The Police are everywhere,
Justice is much harder to find.**

by Steve Cushion



Picket of South Africa House in solidarity with Marikana miners

Marikana Update

As Mandela's body was flown home to the Eastern Cape spare a thought for those other bodies that were flown back to the Cape last year – the victims of the Marikana Massacre. Most of them came from this part of the country, where traditionally young men leave to seek work in the mines further north.

Things have changed considerably over the last three months. The police were found to be hiding their computer hard drive and the damning documents it contained. So now we know that in a meeting two days before the massacre the police and Lonmin discussed ending the strike – 'killing' it was their unfortunate and prophetic turn of phrase.

They discussed how Cyril Ramaphosa was applying pressure (the same Cyril who tried desperately to stop the boeing of President Zuma at Mandela's memorial.) He was a director of Lonmin and his company is a major shareholder. We now know the police ordered up mortuary vans on the morning of the massacre. And that many of those who died were shot in the head or in the back. Ambulances were not allowed through to attend to the injured for over an hour. The police in charge hear nothing and see nothing, and say nothing at the Commission.

Rehad Desai has been making a film about the events that led to the massacre. ***Miners Shot Down*** will be released early next year.



Tivoli Massacre

Jamaica's state policy of police extrajudicial killings

ON a per capita basis, and for decades, Jamaica has had one of the highest police killing rates in the world. Over that period prime ministers and ministers of national security have made statements supporting these killings thereby giving the stamp of approval of the state at the highest level. In other words, the explanations about rogue cops and untrained policemen are but scapegoats.

In the sixties, prime minister Hugh Shearer exhorted the police to '*shoot first and ask questions later*'. In the seventies Michael Manley presided over the dreaded Suppression of Crimes Act, which gave the police unlimited powers to abuse civil liberties. Dudley Thompson, Manley's minister of national security at the time, casually stated that '*no angels*' died in the 1978 massacre of five men at Green Bay, an army firing range. In the eighties under Edward Seaga the killing rate soared to over 318 in one year. In the nineties prime minister PJ Patterson promised to buy hearses for the police so they could pick up the bodies of their victims. The worst record to date is that of Prime Minister Bruce Golding who presided over the 2010 police killing of 73 to 200 people in Tivoli Gardens.

Origins

The origins of the policy? Well, the justification has always been that Jamaica also has one of the highest murder rates in the world and, with a dysfunctional justice system, the only way to get rid of these gunmen is to kill them. In 2013, for example, the police killed 258 people.

In the inner city communities, there have been numerous demonstrations against these type of police killings. International human rights organizations - Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, IACHR - have produced numerous reports condemning the government for doing nothing to stop the killings. There was even a time when the British government temporarily banned sales of weapons to the police for fear that they would be used to kill innocent citizens. Local human rights organizations - Jamaicans for Justice (JFJ) and the Independent Jamaica Council for Human Rights - have also been very vocal in condemning the practice.

After years of being in denial about the killings, government finally set up the Independent Commission of Investigations (INDECOM) in 2010

to investigate police killings. Supposedly with an independent investigative body - the police no longer investigating themselves - rogue policemen would be brought before the courts and convicted for violating citizens' right to life. The result? Police killings have continued unabated, and have increased dramatically especially over the past three years. In its almost four years of existence, INDECOM has not been any more successful in breaking the decades-old drought of not a single policeman being convicted for any of these killings.

Impasse

Hard policing is just another euphemism for saying that the police have no option but to kill in order to defeat the gunmen. And the police always maintain, no matter how obvious it is that they deliberately targeted and killed their victim and it was a 'shootout.'

So, could this impasse ever be broken? Well, an opportunity may have presented itself with a front-page *Sunday Gleaner* story where the writer says that two policemen, one of whom is retired, have admitted to him that these killings are often

planned and directed by senior police officers.

Enquiry

The Tivoli Committee which is pushing for the Tivoli massacre to be referred to the International Criminal Court for investigation and prosecution has publicly asked INDECOM to immediately convene a public enquiry into this policy of extrajudicial killings.

It is hoped that at such an enquiry, senior police officers, ministers of government, not excluding the prime minister, and whistleblowers within the force, would be called upon to tell what they know about the policy.



Nelson Mandela 1918-2013

We remember his sacrifice - but the struggle goes on.

That Nelson Mandela is one of the greatest icons of all time is not in any doubt, a testament to his popularity - a nation mourning for a week and the largest gathering of heads of states for a funeral ever, with billions watching the proceedings worldwide on TV -although many a crocodile tear would be shed. His journey from Robben Island, where he was imprisoned, to President of South Africa could have been a lot shorter if not for the actions of Britain and America in particular. Their respective leaders had now gathered to pay tribute to this freedom fighter, probably the most recognized face on the planet as a result of the 27 years of imprisonment at the hands of the apartheid regime. He alone for many decades stood as the symbol of liberation for black people all over the world. We could not but feel pride to see him walk tall from the prison to greet the world in the most dignified and statesman like fashion. Now his death saw an outpouring of grief from the people who loved and cherished him as leader and inspiration for generations.



Afrikaner terrorists bomb ANC offices during election

CLS has a proud history of supporting the ANC and its fight for justice and for the freedom of Nelson Mandela. We were delighted to be invited as observers to the first fair and free elections in 1994 and I travelled with the late Cleston Taylor (then CLS President) to act as observers. This was to be no easy assignment - we had to rush from our hotel several times because of bombs planted outside the building by the Afrikaners who wanted to disrupt the elections. Indeed, on our first day we narrowly escaped serious injury or death. We were about to walk past the ANC headquarters in Johannesburg when we fortunately stopped at the head of the street to chat with the youth on a ANC rally bus. As we took pictures there was a loud explosion - so close we felt the blast of air from the explosion. Ten people were killed and 100 injured as the ANC building was completely destroyed by a 200lb explosive.

The day after the explosion Mandela held a press conference at the Carlton Hotel nearby. Seated with him was Cyril Ramaphosa, widely tipped to take over from Nelson Mandela. This was not to be as Ramaphosa left politics to seek his own fortune - he started his own black led company and would take on several directorships including the London

based mining company Lonmin, whose workers went on strike in 2012 protesting low wages and harsh working conditions. The protest led to one of the worst atrocities in post-apartheid South Africa, with the killing of 34 miners by the police in what can only be described as a cold blooded murder of miners by the state - CLS continues to support the protest of this barbaric act.

Mandela's freeing in 1990 released a hopefulness never seen before in this young country; no more the black masses oppressed by a minority white government. The hopes and aspirations were soon dashed as the compromises to keep white capital in the country meant that there was little change to the economic order, this causing many to view Mandela as a sell-out. The period after his release from prison was very tense and there was an exodus of whites and capital leaving the country - fearing revenge attacks for apartheid's excesses. Mandela walked a tight-rope and probably saved the country from slipping into civil war - but this was arguably a heavy price for the masses of black people to pay. Apartheid may have died in South Africa but racism and

inequality is still endemic. During Nelson's presidency the corruption so prevalent in the present government had already begun to creep in - as many began to line their own pockets at the expense of the vast majority of poor. Better must be done by the ANC to relieve the high unemployment, hopelessness and high crime rate, if South Africa is to deliver what it promised to the masses from this mineral rich country.

Thank you Nelson Mandela for holding the beacon of liberation for black people for such a long time. The baton has been passed and there is much work to be done.

by Luke Daniels

Caribbean Labour Solidarity meets on the first Sunday in the month at Islington Pensioners Forum
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