

THE EXECUTION OF CHRIS HANI

Meet Chris Hani

- **Terrorist Boss**
- **SA Communist Party Chief**
- **Torturer**
- **Mass Murderer**
- **Executed in April 1993**



Chris Hani, South African Communist Party secretary-general and former commander of the ANC's terrorist armed wing mKhonto we Sizwe (MK) was without doubt the most popular Black politician with the masses in South Africa after ANC president Nelson Mandela. Responsible for planning and executing many savage acts against innocent civilians, Black and White, as well as his fellow ANC cadres in the Quatro camp in Angola, Hani was trained in the former Soviet Union and communist Eastern Europe and had fought personally in the Rhodesian bush war with the communist insurgents.

EXECUTED

At 10:20 am on 10 April 1993, Chris Hani was shot outside his home in Hakea Crescent, Dawn Park, Boksburg, South Africa.

Having given his bodyguards the day off, reportedly because he had visited a girlfriend in a hotel the night before, Hani had just returned from a local corner store after buying a newspaper. As he got out of his car, a red Ford Laser driven by Polish immigrant Janusz Walus pulled up behind him in his driveway. Calling out "Mr. Hani" - at which Hani turned round - Walus stepped out of his car and shot Hani four times. Walus then got back into his car, reversed out of the driveway and drove off in the direction of the Boksburg city centre. A neighbour, an Afrikaner woman named Retha Harmse, happened to pull out of her driveway at the same time the shots were fired, and managed to note down Walus' car registration number. She then telephoned the police who arrested Walus ten minutes later.

WALUS

Walus had been a member of the AWB and was a current member of the Conservative Party. He was taken into detention. Later, he made a verbal statement to the police whom he believed were right-wingers (they had told him so, but that was part of their trickery to induce a confession). He told the police that although he had committed the act by himself, his friend Clive Derby-Lewis, a prominent Conservative Party politician, had provided him with the weapon which killed Hani. Forensic tests were immediately carried out and it was established that the fatal bullets had indeed been fired from the gun found in Walus' possession. Cordite was also found on a pair of gloves found in Walus' car, indicating that he

had just fired some shots. Walus' residence - an apartment in Pretoria - was then searched.

It was established that the firearm which had been used to shoot Hani and which was found in Walus' possession, was one of the guns stolen from the South African Air Force armoury in 1990 during the "Piet Rudolph" heist. It was also established that Keith Darrol of Cape Town had had a silencer fitted to this gun on the instructions of Clive Derby-Lewis. Based on the information to hand, the police arrested Clive Derby-Lewis on the evening of the 17 April 1993. Derby-Lewis' house was searched and various items were taken by the police. Others taken into custody for questioning during the following week were Arthur Kemp, Keith Darrol, Gaye Derby-Lewis, Faan Venter, Lionel Durandt and Edwin Clarke.

DERBY-LEWIS

Derby-Lewis told the police that none of these people knew anything about the planned assassination, which fact was later verified during the trial and the amnesty hearing. The police released Kemp, Durandt, Darrol and Venter, ordering them to be prepared to testify for the state in court. Clarke was released unconditionally.

Gaye Derby-Lewis was then detained under the notorious Section 29 legislation - detention in solitary confinement and without access to a lawyer. Clive Derby-Lewis was also detained under Section 29 legislation for initially ten days. He was placed in a cell in the basement of the Benoni Police barracks and was kept awake day and night by the clamour from 40 or so APLA cadres in a nearby cell as well as by the police who interrogated him at all times of the day and night. There was water on the floor of the cell and his floor mattress became damp. After ten days, the police made application to keep him in solitary confinement under Section 29 for another ten days "for further questioning". Yet during the following ten days, not one question was asked Derby-Lewis while in confinement.

Gaye Derby-Lewis was told by the police that she would be a "witness" in the trial, and that she would be released after ten days. She was told that anything signed or said could not be used in court, which was the current case in South Africa with anything signed during a Section 29 detention. After the ten days were up, instead of sending her home as they had promised, the police charged her with murder, attempted murder, possession of ammunition and a weapon. These charges were trumped up and some members of the investigating team told two people that the police had only charged Gaye Derby-Lewis in order that she should testify against her husband. She was an accused, not just a witness. Under South African law, a witness cannot testify against his/her husband or wife.

Gaye Derby-Lewis was taken to court after the ten-day detention and when her legal team asked for bail, the State advised that they were invoking a law which says the accused is a danger to the state and cannot receive bail for at least three months. She was thus incarcerated in Pretoria's Women's prison for those three months, after which she applied for bail which was granted. During the bail application, the judge asked the state what evidence they had against the applicant. All they had was the supposition that she would leave the country. With such a skimpy case from the state, the judge granted bail. Neither Walus nor Derby-Lewis applied for bail, on the advice of their legal team.

CHAOS

The assassination of Hani plunged the country into chaos. Even dogs were killed and burnt as mobs went on the rampage. (Observers contrasted this reaction to the behaviour of whites after the assassination of Dr. Verwoerd. There was simply no comparison.) On the day of Hani's funeral, nearly every major city center in South Africa was ransacked by enraged mobs.

The all-night vigil held for Hani at the First National Bank stadium outside Soweto ended in carnage as mobs of Black youths set fire to nearby houses and attacked passing cars. At least two people died in these disturbances, which necessitated riot police intervention. One white man was burnt to death in his house.

Hani was buried at the South Park cemetery on the East Rand, not too far from his Boksburg home. The AWB activated its East Rand commando unit on the day of the burial, and heavily-armed AWB men could be seen standing guard over the White residential properties lining the route. Police were forced to keep the AWB contingent away from the mourners who commandeered buses, taxis and any vehicles they could find in their attempts to travel from the stadium to the burial site. AWB leader Eugene Terre'Blanche took advantage of the resultant turmoil and more than once during his public meetings at that time told his audiences that if "Hani had not been shot, I would have done it myself!" These remarks were captured on film.

TRIAL

The trial started on 4 October 1993 and lasted for two weeks. The state's case against Gaye Derby-Lewis soon proved to be hopeless. No evidence of any kind was led linking her to murder, attempted murder, or illegal possession of firearms or ammunition. She testified for two days under cross examination from the Attorney General of the Transvaal, Claus von Lieres und Wilkau. She denied that a list drawn up by Arthur Kemp at her request and found in Walus' apartment was a hit list, and the court accepted this. Both Walus and Derby-Lewis did not testify, under instructions from their legal team.

Gaye Derby-Lewis was found not guilty of any charges and was acquitted. Derby-Lewis and Walus were found guilty on 16 October 1993 and sentenced to death, much later commuted to life imprisonment. They were acquitted on the conspiracy charge. There was much noise from ANC leaders on Gaye Derby-Lewis' acquittal. They said justice had not been done (although they believed it had been - by the same judge - in sentencing the other two accused!).

Derby-Lewis and Walus immediately applied to appeal the decision, which decision was ultimately upheld by the Appeal Court in Bloemfontein.

AMNESTY

In June 1997, the men applied for amnesty, a process which took two years before a decision was reached. They were refused in April 1999, appealed against the decision which decision was upheld by the Cape Supreme Court in November 2000. Derby-Lewis and Walus are presently seeking leave to appeal the Cape Supreme Court's decision. In April 2001, both men will have been incarcerated in Pretoria's Maximum Security Prison for eight years.

The story of the TRC's amnesty process and the injustice of it all is handled in another section of this website. click [HERE](#)

The assassination of Chris Hani was a planned operation where no civilian life was threatened and no injuries occurred. It should be placed in the context of the times.

Here is what the ANC/Communist Party - via their terrorist wing mKhonto we Sizwe (MK) - was up to while they were not blowing up women and children with landmines or mowing them down with rifles.

This time it was a car bomb. This scene is from Church Street in Pretoria. The perpetrators were lauded as brave heroes and given amnesty for this mass-murder.

