

*ALLIANCE*



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SPECIAL ISSUE:

Walter Rodney's Contribution  
to the Revolution

YOUTH ORGANISATION  
UNIVERSITY OF DAR ES SALAAM



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SPECIAL ISSUE ON WALTER RODNEY

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P OPPRESSED OF THE WORLD,,UNITE!  
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BUT YOUR CHAINS!  
YOU HAVE A WORLD TO WIN!  
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Views expressed in this journal do not necessarily  
reflect the views of the Youth Organisation,  
University Branch, and are essentially those of the author.



### ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Following the death by a bomb explosion of Guyanese revolutionary and internationalist, Dr. Walter Rodney of the Working People's Alliance, various friends, colleagues and compatriots in the University and elsewhere made efforts to arrange a special symposium for the late revolutionary. A broader effort could have been a full-fledged international conference where the life and work of Brother Rodney would be discussed and the papers presented compiled into a volume, but this is a task for later consideration.

For immediate purposes, comrades in the Department of History and other areas converged and between them contributed various papers and talks. Most of the material presented at the symposium had been delivered earlier at a seminar for solidarity with Comrade Rodney and others of the W.P.A. earlier last year when they were being prosecuted for alleged arson. The telegram that was sent following the seminar actually reached the office of the Prime Minister of Guyana, Forbes-Burnham, and caused some kind of a stir in some circles!

"Maji Maji" does not have anything to add to what has already been presented in the following articles and talks. Our own viewpoint, presented in the symposium, sought only to emphasise on the need to learn from the lessons of Guyana, examine the relation of class and political forces. The death of Brother Rodney is a great loss and a tragedy and its full circumstances need to provide important lessons for all revolutionaries.

The Department of History undertook the editing and stencilling of the papers delivered, while we in the editorial of Maji Maji made efforts to bring out the issue as quickly as possible following the symposium. This effort has not been very successful but we expect comrades to understand the operational problems we face, and bear with the lateness and some difficulties in the make up, etc. It is part of the general condition that ourselves and Comrade Rodney are struggling to change.

The symposium also decided to erect a monument in memory of Brother Rodney, to be located at the Revolutionary Square of the Main Campus. A Fund for that task was set up and contributions started immediately. Through this medium, we expect more of our comrades to contribute to this fund, to keep alive the memory of Brother Rodney in this University, where he did his greatest theoretical work.

In several forthcoming issues, we expect to publish some articles by Walter Rodney on certain specific questions, and some contributions from his colleagues in the Working People's Alliance on their own struggle and the international revolutionary struggle in general. Correspondence is welcome.

- THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE



A REVOLUTIONARY INTELLECTUAL

WALTER RODNEY, (1941 - 1980)

for the only great men among the unfree  
and oppressed are those who struggle to  
destroy the oppressor.

Rodney, with the characteristic historical perspective, saw  
himself, as millions of others around the world, as a product of  
that "barbarous and dehumanising" system.

which snatched me from Africa in chains and  
deposited me in far off lands to be a slave  
beast, then a subhuman colonial subject, and  
finally an outlaw in those lands.

In this brief sentence he encompassed several centuries, and several  
stages in the oppression of man, namely, slavery, colonialism and  
neo-colonialism.

He was also intensely conscious of the "alienation produced by  
the education system" through which he went, and in which he excelled,  
earning a Ph.D. from one of the most conservative of English  
universities. But he was more concerned about the dehumanisation of  
the black intellectual in colonial and neo-colonial societies who is  
all too easily bribed by security and privilege to forget his debt  
to the black masses. Rodney's response, however, was not to reject  
the vast fund of human knowledge to which he had privileged access,  
but to put that knowledge to the service of the masses for their  
own emancipation. In the process he made a contribution to that  
knowledge, and has left us a richer legacy with which to carry on  
the struggle.

That contribution, however, was not based primarily on the  
archives of Europe, informative as they are. It was based rather  
on Rodney's practice, on his struggle, whether in the working class  
environment in Guyana in which he grew up, the racist environment  
in Britain where he studied, the exhilarating experience of partici-  
pation in the so-called "African Revolution" in Tanzania, or the  
crude and brutal realities of his homeland and of the third world  
in general.

One of the dictums which appears to have guided Rodney was  
one of Marx's famous theses:

The philosophers have interpreted  
the world in various ways;  
the point, however, is to change it.



Rodney dared to struggle to change the oppressive world, and the beastly arm of the oppressors struck him down. On 13th June, 1980, this intensely-lived life of a committed revolutionary intellectual came to a premature end. Walter was only 38 years old. In this mindless destruction of one of the most creative sons the oppressed masses have lost a powerful spokesman. But Rodney was not the first, and alas, he is not going to be the last to be eliminated by Burnham's fascistic regime before that regime itself is finally destroyed by the oppressed masses. While paying tribute to our fallen comrade we should not forget those of his comrades who have already fallen; nor should we ignore the daily oppression and exploitation suffered by the Guyanese masses for whom Rodney stood- and fell.

Six years out of Rodney's all too short a life were spent at this university where he taught, talked, and generally participated in the struggle for emancipation of the masses. It was while he was with us that he researched for and wrote How Europe Underdeveloped Africa. It was therefore but natural to expect this institution and the university community as a whole to respond in a positive way to the dastardly assassination perpetrated by the Burnham regime. Under the auspices of the History Department to which Walter was specifically attached, a condolence book was opened and a telegram despatched to express our solidarity with the bereaved family and the oppressed masses of Guyana. After the students and staff had reassembled, a Memorial Symposium was organised on "Walter Rodney's contribution to the Revolution" on 22nd July, 1980, in honour of our fallen colleague and comrade. The Arts Lecture Theatre in which Rodney had often taught and talked was packed to capacity. The participants came not only from the university community but also from the general public; some were colleagues and former students but the majority had never met him, except through the medium of the written word, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, which remains his legacy and inspiration to us, our link with this great son of the oppressed masses of Africa and the West Indies.

This special issue of Maji Maji carries the texts of the speeches delivered on that occasion examining the various facets of this truly great man. If there is any single message that comes across all these speeches, it is Rodney's intense commitment to struggle for the liberation of the oppressed masses. Included in this collection is one of Rodney's recent articles which demonstrated his creativity, his ability to criticise, and if necessary, reject his earlier positions.

At the end of the Symposium the participants passed a series of resolutions which are reproduced in this issue, condemning the Burnham regime for the assassination of Walter Rodney and expressing our solidarity with the progressive forces in Guyana. They called on the university of Dar es Salaam to express its recognition of the contribution of Professor Rodney to the development of this university as a progressive institution. Specifically, they called on the university to award an honorary degree posthumously to Walter Rodney for his outstanding contribution: and they set up a fund to erect a memorial to him. So far they have contributed more than Shs. 1400/= to the Rodney memorial fund. The university authorities,



on the other hand, we are sorry to say, have not responded positively to either of the two proposals as of this date.

The university community, however, is intensely conscious of its debt to Rodney and continues to be inspired by his example. Apart from the Memorial Symposium which has led to this special issue of Maji Maji, the History Department has resolved to publish a special issue of its journal, Tanzania Zamani, devoted to Rodney's contribution to African history in particular, and to set up the Rodney Memorial Lectures as a forum for discussion of progressive ideas in history. Moreover, the Historical Association of Tanzania has resolved to devote next year's history teachers' conference to an examination of the philosophy and methodology of history which has inspired Rodney and guided his actions.

Let us conclude by reminding the oppressors of the world:

Organizations can be banned,  
Individuals can be liquidated, but  
Revolutionary ideas never die.

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## ABOUT THIS ISSUE: GUYANA'S SENSATIONAL MURDER

### The Plotting of Walter Rodney's death

By HICKEY SINGH

GEORGETOWN, GUYANA - Agony etched on their faces, they gave Walter Rodney a hero's funeral. But this was clearly more than a funeral. It was a political demonstration with more than 35,000 Guyanese of all ages, races and classes marching through the rain-drenched streets of this capital city on June 23, carrying placards and banners and shouting: "Don't mourn, organise! No dictator, people's power! Walter Rodney lives!"

What climaxed in the sprawling Le Repentir cemetery in this city by 6:30 p.m. that day had started some eight hours earlier with a historic procession - never witnessed since the 1948 riots at the Rennie sugar estate - of a 12 mile journey on foot undisturbed by occasional downpours of rain, from the Buxton - Annandale area on the east coast of Georgetown to the headquarters of Walter Rodney's party, the Working People's Alliance.

It was fitting tribute to the 38-year old distinguished Third World historian and political activist whose gruesome death, on the night of June 13 by a bomb planted on him by a paid agent he thought to be an ally, has been blamed on the Burnham Government.

For a government that insists on its innocence of the death of Rodney - undoubtedly its most outstanding and courageous challenger of recent years - the 15 year-old Burnham Administration has failed to extend even normal condolences to Rodney's widow. Instead, while overseas friends of the slain WPA official were being harassed on their arrival at Timehri airport for his funeral, activists of the RNC were distributing unsourced pamphlets attacking Rodney and the WPA.

Angrily insisting that Rodney died at his own hand while on his way with his brother, Donald, to blow up the Georgetown prison, the Burnham Government must, however, find cold comfort in the realisation that its credibility has sunk to such a low level that so far no government, organisation or body of people anywhere has openly accepted its plea of clean hands.

DONALD RODNEY, a 29 year-old Quantity Surveyor, has told the world how he and his brother were tricked by an electronics expert and soldier of the Guyana Defence Force, GREGORY SMITH, into testing a walkie-talkie receiver in which was concealed the deadly bomb that ripped apart Walter Rodney's body shortly after 8 o'clock on the night of Friday, June 13.

Gregory Smith has been fully described to the police by a number of people with whom he had business and social contacts, apart from Donald Rodney and a Georgetown housewife, who is a close friend of Smith's common-law wife.

Investigations have established that Smith was encouraged into leaving the army claiming dissatisfaction, and to team up with the WPA.



Smith had volunteered to assist the WPA in the manufacturing of walkie-talkie sets that the party felt it needed in its campaign against the regime but for which they could not obtain the required licences.

Smith had made arrangements with Walter Rodney to come around 7:30 p.m. on Friday, June 13, to collect the first of the walkie-talkie sets, having failed to make an earlier delivery as promised. Walter remained in his brother's car while Donald went to the home of Smith to uplift the set.

Smith delivered the receiver set which has been described by Donald Rodney as a box-shaped instrument. Donald said that he explained to him how it should be operated and kept the "companion set".

He emphasised that he wanted them to be in Camp Street in the vicinity of the Georgetown prison and to be as near as possible to the prison wall. Smith's explanation for the testing location was that he wanted to "observe the effect of the expense of metal on the efficiency of the set".

At his request, Donald Rodney synchronised his watch with Smith's since the first signal on the set was to be given at eight o'clock. When Donald handed over to Walter the package, neither brother had the slightest idea that what they had been given by Smith to test was in fact a bomb.

Early on Saturday morning (June 14) activists of the ruling PNC hurled from a passing bus a set of leaflets in front of Patricia Rodney's home. The leaflet claimed that Rodney had blown himself to death with his own bomb. "Those who live by the bomb shall die by the bomb".

Similar pamphlets were being distributed around 9:00 a.m. in the bauxite town of Linden some 65 miles out of Georgetown. All this was long before the police authorities were still saying that they were unable to give the identity of the man blown to death in the parked car and that they were looking for another man who had escaped from the vehicle.

The BBC was already broadcasting the news of Walter Rodney's death and people around the Caribbean were either learning of the tragedy from the BBC or from their own radio stations. But in Guyana there was no BBC news on that Saturday morning because of some "technical problems".

With Walter dead and his brother Donald in the care of private doctors in the city, it was the PNC which was disclosing that Walter Rodney had a bomb in his lap on his way to blow up the Georgetown prison, but had accidentally destroyed himself.

Anyone familiar with the compound of the Georgetown prison complex and the massive metal walls around it, would need more than an allegation that Rodney, accompanied by his brother, was on his way to blow up the prison and - according to the PNC - free WPA supporters who were supposed to be incarcerated there.



So far the police have given no information about any plot to free prisoners on the night of June 13. But the FNC thinks it quite conceivable for a disciplined mind like Rodney's to be travelling in a car with his brother and carrying what he knew to be a bomb powerful enough to blow up the prison.

What is not widely known, and what I discovered during my visit to Georgetown to attend Rodney's funeral, is that less than half a block away from where his brother's car was parked in John Street on the night of the horrible tragedy, was a mobile police station. This vehicle was parked on the southern half of Bent Street between John and Camp Streets, just within a few yards from the northern wall of the Georgetown prison - the prison that Rodney was going to blow up at a rather early hour on the evening of June 13!

The mobile station was equipped with modern communication facilities and, according to residents in the area, was in that same spot for at least two months. But within hours of the brutal killing of Rodney, this police station was removed.

Inquiries at police headquarters in Georgetown confirmed that this station was there for some time but that it had been removed because of a need to free up "man power" required elsewhere. The police didn't think that there was any significance in the sudden removal of the mobile police station. Nor apparently do they consider it foolish that the Rodney brothers would have wanted to blow up the prison under the watchful eyes of policemen in that station.

I also inquired from the police on June 24, the day after the burial of Walter Rodney, why no photograph had yet been issued of Gregory Smith since there was now little, if any doubt about his identity and that Donald Rodney in particular was only too anxious to attend an identity parade. The police said that their investigations were "continuing apace" and that there would be "some important developments shortly".

Later that same day I went to the Medical Arts Centre, a private hospital, where Donald Rodney was a patient suffering from severe multiple injuries from the bomb blast. He was being guarded by a plain clothes policeman, who refused to allow me to speak with him. Within a few hours, I was to learn of the "important developments" of which police headquarters had alerted me:

Donald Rodney was to be charged indictably under the National Security Act with being in "unlawful possession of an explosive". The eldest of the Rodney brothers, Edward, who was arrested by the police following the death of Walter, had been released a day earlier without knowing exactly why he was taken into police custody.



### DONALD'S COURT BATTLE

Donald's lawyer, Mr. Doodnauth Singh, was outraged the next morning when he informed Magistrate Fung-Kee-Fung that Donald had been removed from his hospital bed and taken to court against the advice of his doctors, including the country's leading psychiatrist, Horace Taitt.

When the police confirmed that they had signed such a statement but with Donald's consent, Mr. Singh strongly objected and insisted that his client was not in a proper frame of mind to have the charge of unlawful possession of an explosive read to him.

The lawyer said that he was quite prepared to produce, if the magistrate so wished, the statement signed by the police. The magistrate granted a half hour adjournment for the statement to be produced.

But, as a shocked courtroom was to learn, the police had rushed to the hospital, seized the document and claimed that it could not be found. Mr. Singh then had to summon Dr. Taitt to testify, confirming that Donald Rodney had been removed from hospital without his doctors' approval and that he was not "in a fit and proper condition".

Then came the battle to have Rodney on bail. The prosecution argued against this. But eventually, the magistrate granted bail in the sum of G\$4,000.

Observers in the packed courtroom were quick to remark that just about an hour earlier, Ms Olga Bone, the 59 year-old mother of WPA activist, Bonita Harris, was placed by another magistrate on a G\$20,000 bail for allegedly being in possession of a snell of a .303 bullet. A founding member of the women's arm of the ruling PNC, Ms. Bone had been subjected to frequent police harassment before being charged under the National Security Act, which gives the police widespread powers.

### HUNT FOR SMITH

The two British experts called in to assist the Guyana police in their investigations into Rodney's death - Dr. Frank Skuse and Dr. Hugh Johnson - left the country the same day Donald Rodney was placed before the magistrate court.

They had already informed the Guyana authorities that it would take them some time to carry out detailed examination in London of the samples they had collected before being in a position to determine the nature of the explosive device that killed Rodney.

Up to the time of going to press, Donald Rodney had not been invited by the police, as he requested, to identify photographs of Gregory Smith.



But by then the PNC was declaring in its weekly organ, New Nation that "if Walter Rodney was indeed assassinated, and the story by his brother seems to suggest otherwise, it was neither planned nor inspired by the People's National Congress as a party or as a government".

This is quite a different line to that reflected in earlier but unsourced propaganda materials of the PNC.

And, by June 27, the Guyana police were announcing that they were now investigating reports that the man wanted in connection with the death of Walter Rodney, Gregory Smith, "may have been flown out of the country by an army helicopter for Suriname".

The police also admitted that they had removed "lots and lots" of electronic equipment from the house Smith is said to have used. Crime Chief Cecil "Skip" Roberts, said: "We have some very good information and all aspects are being thoroughly investigated ...."

#### SECRET VISIT TO AFRICA

If it was a question of the most appropriate time for Walter Rodney's murder, then it is significant, according to his WPA colleagues, that his death came shortly after two important events: First, his return in May from a secret trip to Africa and, secondly, a week after "Weaknesses" in the prosecution's case against him and two other party activists - Dr. Onowale and Dr. Rupert Roopnarain - had been established in their trial for firebombing the PNC's headquarters in July last year.

All three of the arson accused were barred from overseas travel. But Rodney nevertheless managed to slip out to Africa, via neighbouring Suriname. He spent some two weeks abroad during which period he had a lengthy meeting on May 17 with Prime Minister Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe. He returned in time for the opening of the arson trial on June 3.

#### MASSIVE RALLIES

Following the massive public rallies that the WPA was attracting after the burning down of the PNC headquarters and the daylight murder in Georgetown of a Jesuit priest, an unsourced 41 page "RECOGNITION HANDBOOK - WORKING PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE" came into the possession of some members of the Police Force and activists of the ruling party.

Starting with a photograph of the arson trio-Rodney, Onowale and Roopnarain - the handbook ends with three pages describing some 47 vehicles used by members and supporters of the WPA.

No one knows for sure if this "recognition handbook" is related to a "hit list" which the WPA and the PPP claim has been prepared by the PNC.



Shaka the 14 year-old son of Walter and Pat Rodney, in paying tribute to his father in one of three short poems he wrote on the night he fare Walter Rodney's burial stated:

"The silver tongue has slipped,  
Just like before,  
But this time most fatal."

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It has been taken from CARIBBEAN CONTACT, The region's monthly newspaper Volume 8, Number 3.

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"African development is possible only on the basis of a radical break with the international capitalist system, which has been the principal agency of underdevelopment of Africa over the last five centuries". (Rodney, W., How Europe underdeveloped Africa, London of Dar es Salaam, 1972.

"There are no other alternatives; either a socialist revolution or a make - believe revolution" (Ghe).



## TRANSITION

by

Walter Rodney

The term "transition" has already appeared in scholarly works dealing with contemporary countries in the process of development. It has been attributed precise though sometimes conflicting meanings within this growing body of scholarship. Presumably, part of the task of this journal over time would be to evaluate the literature which deals with transition and collateral ideas such as the transfer of technology, the economics of transition, the dynamics of cultural change and the state's role in development. Each one of these facets would obviously demand the keenest of attention, and their examination can take place effectively only through comparative study of different objective situations. The present analysis sets itself a more modest task: namely, to explore the parameters of the concept of a transition, as it might plausibly appear from a general perspective. Transition and development are already part of a popular vocabulary. One needs to bridge the gap between academic specialisations and the wider informed community which is committed to seeking both the understanding and the positive action inherent in the notion of transition in this era and in this part of the world.

Neither the rate of change nor the duration of change are immediately established with the use of the word transition. Mankind was in transition over hundreds of millennia while using stone tools. The neolithic portion of the stone age itself lasted for several thousands of years; but it is possible to affirm that the beginning of agriculture in that period constitutes the most important 'revolution' in the history of human society. To speak of transition from one mode of production to another allows for somewhat greater precision: yet one is still confronted with time-scales of several centuries which mark the passages from antiquity to feudalism and from feudalism to capitalism. (Perry Anderson, 1974). In the history of Guyana the end of chattel slavery in 1838 provides an opportunity to treat the first post-emancipation decade as an experience with free labour; and yet it was not until 1921 that direct legal coercion of labour gave way to more conventional relations between wage labour and capital. One can therefore argue that the transition from slave labour to free labour in Guyana lasted from 1838 to 1921. (The last indentured labourers arrived from India in 1917; all indentures expired in 1921).

In each of the contexts above, the term transition is legitimately employed, and yet there is the disconcerting possibility that approached in this way all history may be characterised as transition from one stage to another. To avoid tautology and trivialisation, it is clearly essential to assign a narrow time-span to the concept as it relates to contemporary social change. Further, limiting the duration of transformation infers an accelerated rate of change.

Whatever the context, the state of transition can only be established inferentially. It is a link between two historical epochs and it incorporates elements of both the old and the new. By definition, the state of transition lacks unique, classical or sharply-outlined features. All of this is being conceded in the present analysis, without prejudice to the premise that it is meaningful to utilise the term with regard to modern developing societies (each of which possesses its own specificity).



only if transition is a brief interlocking rather than an amorphous and protracted phase. Transition, then, constitutes a transitory phase between two epochs.

The moment of transition is determined by contradictions in the preceding era. The presumption is that the contradictions have reached a point of maturity and their resolution necessarily implies a qualitatively different situation. It is for this reason that transition is a brief period of intensified activity when new social forms triumph over the old in a context of sharp struggle. Transition is analogous to the older Marxist philosophical term, 'leap', as the point at which evolution and quantitative change gives place to revolution and qualitative change. Thereafter, the evolutionary rate of change once again applies. Contemporary transition implies a leap or (better still) a series of leaps in material production, social relations and consciousness all taking place within a circumscribed period of time and acting in a self-reinforcing manner.

It is the contention here that Marxism provides the single consistent world-view for a resolution of the problems of transition. Long-term and relentless social forces have made transnational monopolies the characteristic and dominant form of capitalism. Transnational capital (which is of course imperialist) has socialised the means of production far beyond the point identified by Lenin in the early part of this century. Simultaneously, transnational capital has concentrated the control of surplus into fewer and fewer (private) hands and it has set up an international division of labour which is inherently unstable and crisis-ridden. Meanwhile proletarian and peasant alliances have effected socialist revolutions in several countries. However incomplete and distorted these socialist revolutions may be, the countries concerned have made the leap from theory to practice as far as socialism is concerned, and they are unmeshed in a set of social contradictions different from those prevailing in the capitalist, imperialist world. Within the underdeveloped sections of the capitalist world, certain social forces operate in a manner which sustains capitalist/imperialist production relations, while others favour the resumption of material production at a higher level under the aegis of the working class guided by socialist ideology. The latter option provides the setting for that moment of historical change which will usher in a new society. In this connection, transition in the contemporary Third World should be unambiguously identified as the "transition to socialism."

In practice, the transition to socialism has always been attempted under inherited conditions of material and social backwardness and powerful external constraints. Socialist revolutions have been initiated with poor technology, they have been conducted where the proletariat has barely crystallised, they have been faced with the alliance between local propertied classes and the bourgeoisie of the epicentres of imperialism. This was true of the Soviet Union and China; it holds true in greater measure for Cuba, Vietnam, Kampuchea (Cambodia), Mozambique and any other ex-colony where internal contradictions place socialism on the agenda, both as the ultimate goal and as the means of transformation.

The anti-colonialist movement as a whole (most of which was non-socialist) must be given credit for re-opening the discussion on development and transition - a discussion which first appeared in explicit fashion with the emergence of the Soviet



Union after World War I. Interestingly enough, the heightened consciousness of change in the post-colonial world gave rise to an African journal with the name Transition, which was once extremely popular amongst the intelligentsia on that continent. The re-occurrence of the title in Guyana is more than just coincidence. It attests to similarity of objective and subjective conditions, for the rapid dissolution of aspects of the old order of colonialism forces consideration of the possibilities of qualitatively changed societies. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s the debate on social transformation has been extended to virtually every part of the globe, but it has not necessarily been made more penetrating. On the contrary, transition and development have been muted until indistinguishable from the timelessness of evolution. In part, these tendencies have to do with lack of clarity in defining the stage of advanced imperialism which has come to prevail; while above all they stem from bourgeois and petty bourgeois class interpretations of the historical stages which lie ahead.

All classes and strata within the anti-colonial nationalist movements identified alien domination as a negative feature within the world society which was in process of dissolution. Nationalist class alliances have virtually demolished the old political superstructure of global imperialism. Beyond this point, there can be no unanimity at the national level. The presence of conflicting classes in Third World countries means that there can be no agreement on identifying capitalism and imperialism as the sustaining elements of the old world order. Vested interests therefore inevitably deny that transition and development necessitate the demise of capitalism and imperialism. It is the contention here that exploitative classes propose pseudo-solutions to the problems of development. There is no real problematic of transition outside of the framework of the transition to socialism. A working class solution offers a revolutionised society; all other proposals modify and/or extend to greater or lesser degree the system of production and reproduction based on the commoditisation of labour power and the alienation of surplus labour.

The post-colonial world is too differentiated to be reduced to any single neo-colonial stereotype. Nevertheless at one end of the spectrum, there is the classic neo-colonialism of states which have barely altered their politico-military dependence on former colonising powers and which have strengthened their ties with international capitalism on the conventional basis of private ownership of the means of production. In such instances - e.g. Malaysia, Zaire, Trinidad and Tobago - the departure of the colonial administrations has been followed by rapid reconstitution of the local bourgeois and petty bourgeois into transnational capitalist production. Technology transfers, moderate shifts in the international division of labour and the increasing hegemony of the U.S.A. and Japan are some of the novel features of the classic neo-colonial tendency; but of course the result is the intensification of something which is centuries old; namely, capitalist accumulation of a global scale. For the rest of this analysis, attention will be focussed only on those conditions and strategies which at least offer the appearance that they mark the beginning of a new social era.

In several Third World countries, the idea of a "mixed economy" has been presented in a very attractive format. A private sector, a state-owned sector and a sector of joint ven-



would ensure the best of both worlds and would itself constitute a new entity defined as socialism of a special type. (Leopold Senghor, 1961). The fact that these ideas have been most ardently propounded by the ruling class in countries such as Senegal and Singapore is far from reassuring given that these two states function integrally and comfortably within the imperialist framework. Whether the political leadership of Senegal or Singapore had any intention of building socialism is highly debatable; but, conscious intention apart, the transition to socialism could not have been affected by a few piddling measures of government participating in an economy which remained firmly located within the international capitalist system. The "mixed economy" is at best a logical fallacy when it is not a deliberate smokescreen for bourgeois and petty bourgeois class interest. Transition must necessarily have mixed features of capitalist relics and embryonic socialism, but the latter would exist in a position of dominance. Transformation would therefore involve the inexorable displacement of the last legacies of capitalism.

A number of Third World countries have declared themselves adherents or discoverers of one species of socialism or another. Where there is a verbal commitment to the transition to socialism, it requires greater scrupulousness to see whether or not what is proposed is indeed transition. Tanzania's Ujamaa socialism is one of the more revealing experiences. The socialist Arusha Declaration was announced some twelve years ago; the implementation has been carried out by a government which commands respect in the Third World, and a significant body of literature has accumulated on Ujamaa socialism. One of the most recent and carefully documented studies of the Ujamaa village collectives in Tanzania casts serious doubt on whether the process of socialist transition has yet been initiated within the countryside. The principal reasons for this adverse judgement are as follows:

- the low level of production and productivity of the agricultural co-operatives (i.e. Ujamaa farms);
- the stagnation and regression of the co-operative sector in attracting labour;
- the failure of the co-ops to provide a basis for improved agricultural technology; and
- the bureaucratisation rather than democratisation of decision making in the villages.

The researchers (Mapolu and Phillipson, 1976) located the fundamental problem not within the villages themselves but in the political framework, which is not firmly based on those classes with the greatest objective interest in transformation: that is, the peasantry and working class. The questions of productive forces, social organisation, ideology, state and class were all touched upon in an attempt to explain why socialist development/transition had failed to get underway in the Tanzanian instance. The premises of the assessment were made explicit:

Since the development of the productive forces specifically includes the development of the general abilities of the producers themselves, co-operation should enable progressive ideas to take root more firmly in all aspects of peasant life and through co-operative



self-management and decision making give the direct producers more control over the state apparatus at the local level, thus enhancing their participation in running the economy at national level.

Co-operation .... takes on its class characteristics from the general strategy of development in which it is inserted, which is in turn an expression of the interests of the ruling class (or alliance of classes) in each particular social formation.

The low level of production and of the rate of progress in rural Tanzania cannot be explained outside an analysis of the existing social structure and of the manner in which the economy linked to the international capitalist economy. Hence the fact that this particular policy has not proved to be a substantial basis upon which improvement in rural production could be generated arises from the failure of the policy to address itself to the fundamental problems of social structure and economic integration. In essence, therefore, the issue is really political: to be able to sufficiently mobilise and organise the masses in a manner which would extricate the economy from its domination and exploitation by international capitalism, requires a class base and an ideological perspective which hardly a single African government can be credited with at present.

The cogent formulation above allows us to advance the understanding of transition, with particular reference to its political facets. The necessity for social change in the Third World arises out of a conjuncture of contradictions in the system of capitalist/imperialist production. But the appreciation of this necessity and its historical implementation requires the political organisation of those social classes with an objective interest in the overthrow of capitalism and the creation of a society freed from the exploitation of labour. The leap from evolution within capitalism to evolution within socialism is no mere spontaneous process. It involves changing levels of consciousness, building working class organization and self-discipline, and above all the revolutionising of the state and hence the character of all subsequent social and political intervention.

The struggle for national independence often nurtured euphoric hopes that in the post independence period national development would virtually take care of itself. "Seek ye first the political kingdom and all things else will be added therunto" was a famous dictum of Kwame Nkrumah's. It presupposed that the contradictions which undermined colonialism and which therefore forced imperialism to alter its political form would also force an alteration of its social, cultural, and economic substance. However, imperialism has proved itself far more powerful and resilient in the periphery than had been suggested in interpretations of "moribund capitalism". The local petty bourgeoisie, comprador bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie of the Third World proved stronger than the workers and peasants in the defence of their class interests. The producing classes became more and more marginalised after independence. Such a context was hardly propitious for initiating transition; and

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... The coming into being of such a class ...  
... institutions such as the World Bank, and ...  
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Third World states aimed at modifying the international division of labour so as to promote the indigenous bourgeoisie. An examination of the Development Plans of the great majority of independent African and Caribbean states discloses almost identical provisions for nurturing domestic private capital; and the growth of indigenous capital has been registered in all Third World countries, alongside of the pauperisation of workers, peasants and lumpen proletariat. The emergence of the indigenous bourgeoisie may create tensions with respect to the established multi-national capitalists; yet the new class in the periphery contributes to the reproduction of capital and of capitalist social relations on a global scale. The coming into being of such a class has been welcomed by institutions such as the World Bank, and one has grave difficulties in identifying the strategy of indigenous capitalist growth with any variant of socialism whatever.

Non-Marxian versions of socialism often deny the existence of classes or at any rate deny the central dynamic imparted to society by antagonist class contradictions. Even seemingly anti-imperialist leadership - as in Ghana and Tanzania - has espoused this position. Meanwhile, the reality has been that the petty bourgeoisie has consolidated itself as a class. (Nkrumah, 1970, I. Shivji, 1976). A programme of development which denies the independent existence of the working class and the peasantry is unable to mobilise the said classes in their own interests or to make them the leading classes within the state. Conversely, the same denial of class formation enables the petty bourgeoisie and the comprador bourgeoisie to take state control - first surreptitiously and then brazenly - on the basis of their greater sense of organization during the nationalist phase of anti-colonial struggle.

The options which the petty bourgeoisie and allied strata may pursue in relation to international capital vary from joint ventures to the nationalisation of foreign and domestic capital. Obviously, there is a difference between the uninhibited private enterprise in Trinidad or Morocco and the attempted state ownership in Guyana and Algeria. However, it is quite remarkable how the instances of state intervention have failed to produce any substantial improvements in living patterns as far as the mass of direct producers are concerned. Even more remarkable is the tendency towards instant reversal of such progressive objectives as might have been secured by the nationalist mass base at an earlier period. A progressive foreign policy, for instance, has been known to change into its opposite virtually overnight. Transition is movement in a given direction - it is not a shuttle service. Yet ownership of the means of production has been transferred from private hands to the state and then back again to private hands - in Indonesia, in Egypt, in Ghana. One could say that objectively, the period of state ownership merely served to guarantee that some section of the indigenous population would be better prepared to undertake the role of small and medium-sized private capitalists in the era of the multi-national giants.

There is one particularly troubling question in evaluating those "progressive" countries which differ in some respects from the classic neo-colonial states. Have they begun to chart a new course which is anti-imperialist and non-capitalist or is it that they represent sociopolitical formations which capitalism can accommodate and welcome? Advanced sectors of French capitalism are quite reconciled to the Algerian "experiment",



the World Bank finds it useful to associate with the Tanzanian petty bourgeoisie; North American mining capital has given the stamp of approval to the Guinean regime; and with respect to Guyana the American state ignores the application of its own recently-designed "human rights" criteria. The implication is that imperialism has not yet been stretched to the limit of its potential. It will accommodate states which have taken steps against foreign private property in response to internal and external forces provided the new juridical property relations affect neither the long term contribution of the country to global capitalist accumulation and provided the state continues to guarantee class differentiation. The crucial variable is the composition of the state. Any given Third World country is at least arguably transitional when the classes and strata which were pre-eminent in the colonial period begin to lose their control over the means of production and the state. To put it another way, the movement towards socialism demands a prior constitution of the working class into the state so that the state would increasingly reflect the role of the working class in production.

States with different class bases may concur with respect to some policies of national development. Changes in the international economy, for instance, are being advocated by all Third World nations. The accumulating petty bourgeoisie concur with realists amongst the leading bourgeois spokesmen, who admit that the old international order cannot survive with the same form and content; and hence the calls for a new international economic order and for the initiating of a so-called North/South dialogue. In effect, the strains of imperialism in its present stage demand partial change if there is to be a new lease of life. Marxists and working class intellectuals have long called for revamping the international economic order. They can claim to have been more resolute and consistent in working for such changes, and have realistically pressed for the best of the short-term arrangements even within the structures set up by agreements such as the Lome Convention. However, working class objectives are much more far reaching than those adjustments which give breathing space to accumulating classes on the periphery of capitalism. After all, it is from the perspective of alienated labour in the Third World that the operation of the old international order are most intolerable. It is only a working class state which will revolutionise social reproduction within its own boundaries and simultaneously contribute to the final dismantling of global imperialism.

By implication, the leap towards socialism is inseparable from the conscious intentions of working class leadership made manifest through the state. All historical leaps have not been consciously directed. On the contrary, passages from one mode of production to another previous to socialism have been the result of forces which were improperly understood even by the main classes in the drama. The bourgeoisie class could hardly have been said to have directed the early formation of capitalist society. Socialism is unique because of the highly developed consciousness of the two combatant classes - the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Social relations in Third World countries too cannot be changed independently of men's will. Conscious decisions have been taken to change the forces of production (including the size, skill and composition of the working class), the relations of production and the mediation of those relations by the state. Of course, "conscious intentions" mean much more than mere statements or ideological declamations. Verbal adherence

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to Marxism in Congo Brazzaville, Guinea, Somalia and Ethiopia has accompanied social developments indistinguishable from those in states where there has been an explicit rejection of the theory of class contradictions; that is to say, Marxist intellectuals have been silenced, workers' representatives have been eliminated and the working class as a whole excluded from democratic participation in social reconstruction. For transition to have validity, it must include the widespread promotion of socialist education without caricature and it must rest firmly on workers' democracy.

The contradictions within the imperialist system and between imperialism and socialism provide the objective basis for the passage to socialism in dependent capitalist countries. This has to be reiterated and then qualified by the equally important variable of action by class conscious elements. Transition therefore equates with guided transformation; it means social policy directed by the working class in its own interest. Broad and challenging possibilities are opened up by the notion of workers' democracy, which has relevance both at the point of production and within the several levels and branches of the state. It should also be clear that a such transition would allocate meaningful roles to strata which are closely or potentially allied to the working class: above all, the peasantry as well as independent craftsmen, shopkeepers, the lower salariat, students, technocrats and other intellectuals. The scope of the present discourse does not permit elaboration of the complex inter-related problems which have to be resolved once the process of transition is underway. In the final analysis, comprehensive answers will be forthcoming through social practice and attempted transformation.

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BUT WHERE THE BODY CAN'T GO  
THE SOUL CAN TRAVEL  
AND THE WORD  
CAN

PEH-

E-

TRATE

AND BECOME FLESH AMONG US.

AND SILENCE IS NOT THE EXPLOSION OF A BOMB  
NO.

SILENCE

IS NOT

THE EXPLOSION:

OF A BOMB.

THE HEARTLAND WILL OPEN

TO RECEIVE ITS SON

AND A WINDOW AND CHILDREN

WILL CRY SOFTLY IN THE NIGHT.

BUT COMRADES GOIN' CLENCH THEIR FISTS

AND DRUMS GOIN' SPEAK

AND THE PETTY TYRANT

(AS IN OTHER TIMES AND IN OTHER PLACES)

GOIN' SWELL IN THE SUN

FOR THE MIDDAY FLIES,

BECAUSE TOMORROW MUST COME.

AND A POEM GOIN' RISE

THROUGH GUYANA

LARGE ON THE BANNERS OF THE PEOPLE.

FOR SILENCE IS NOT THE EXPLOSION OF A BOMB

"For Walter Rodney" by Joe Pereira



22nd July 1980  
RODNEY AND THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY  
by Izirai Kangero, Youth Organisation

Comrade Chairman,  
May we address ourselves for a few minutes to a fairly close examination of our relationship here, as a gathering, with comrade Rodney for whom we are here. As a university, as a community, we ourselves form a specific constituency which is firmly in solidarity with the history of the struggle of Dr. Rodney. At the same time, we also constitute a specific context of contradictions, which were reflected in the academic part of Dr. Rodney's struggles here and outside, and presently also in the political struggle surrounding his death.

Comrades, this remark is made for the sake of concretely addressing ourselves to the two questions together: that of our relationship, as a university, to Dr. Rodney's process of struggle, and in its political aspect, that of the politics of that struggle itself. There is a specific manner in which both these aspects have been conceptualised and viewed at the political or organisational level by the student community here, and this is specifically the criticism that this short message contains.

These remarks, though generally under the title of my relationship to the Youth Organisation, specifically as editor of its theoretical and ideological journal, are not made explicitly in that capacity. Due to this, the degree of divergence from what would probably have been the official viewpoint of the Youth Organisation and the government of students as a whole shall be as broad as the specific context requires. But this is not an issue, since these organisations are not charged with the theoretical or political duty of making a student stand on Dr. Rodney. On the contrary, they are part of the broad sociopolitical context of their national existence, and in effect part and parcel of the struggle concerning revolutionary movements under neocolonialism. This means the question of the relationship between the masses and petty-bourgeois mass parties, the extent to which revolutionary movements and individuals can or should work towards the mobilisation of the masses for real revolution, and hence the politics of the judgement of specific moments in this continuation of struggle.

In this regard, Comrade Chairman, the student organisations in this University can be described as having found themselves vexed in a contradiction. On the one hand the broad student community, including its present leadership, are wholeheartedly in support of Rodney's contributions in an academic sense, and definitely also in his political endeavours. But owing to a certain fairly authoritative, if not authentic, account of the circumstances of the bomb explosion that caused the death of Dr. Rodney, there has been a split into two camps. This division is one of the way in which to judge these circumstances in the context of the broad political requirements of the struggle in Guyana. The difference of opinions and the political expression of these opinions could be summed up, to borrow a characterisation used by K.F. Hirji in his School Education and



Underdevelopment in Tanzania, in terms of apologetic idealism and vulgar realism. Those who support, passionately, the cause of Dr. Rodney, would rather not concern themselves in a partisan and engage fashion concerning these circumstances, while those who fully realise the significance of the specific circumstances would prefer to isolate them from the general context of the struggle in Guyana and judge these circumstances, so to speak, on their own merit. This in methodological terms does not arise from political considerations of an external sense to the issues themselves, but is based on the legalistic concept of responsibility for Dr. Rodney's death, which of course has been the form of the presentation of the question in the liberal press. To dispose of this issue before coming back to the question of the necessary reconciliation of these two divergent viewpoints, it is a requirement of a materialist conception of politics to criticise this legalistic conception. Initially, it assumes and operates from a liberal conception, of broad democracy and free play, in which case both the requirement of Dr. Rodney and the Working People's Alliance to operate through legal methods and to the extent that they would, from time to time, be legally allowed. Secondly, the presumption follows its logical line that in this broad political context either in Guyana or elsewhere, the only class forces organised and armed or otherwise capable of putting up a violent struggle against popular and revolutionary movements are those belonging to state power. This concept is easily challenged by political struggles anywhere, but suffice is to mention that class forces comprising of different broad and sectional interests are at once and the same time fighting different class forces. It follows therefore that instances of violent confrontation can arise from any level and political relationship based on the total situation, and need not be channelled through the state. This presumption that only the state can engage in reactionary violence is also legalistic and liberal, based on fair play, and hence only those with the legal power to bend the rules can be expected, or otherwise be suspected, of having bent them in a specific context.

Comrade Chairman, my use of the phrase of "bending the rules" should certainly appear to belittle the significance of the tragic loss of Dr. Rodney. This is not the case, but the implication is intended. This is due to the second reason for the criticism of the legalistic conception of the death of Dr. Rodney, in that it excludes an important question of the requirement of political struggle to be directed, raised or lowered to such specific levels as is possible and hence rationally, in a revolutionary sense, required by the material conditions themselves. By "material conditions" we mean the aggregate objective and subjective factors and their concrete level, existing in specific situation. Without a correct judgement of these factors, it is not possible to lead a successful or a strategically and tactically correct political struggle. Revolutionary political theory makes a keen and important requirement that the revolutionaries must always rely on the masses. In this "reliance," the most important thing is to understand the specific level of the class demands of the masses, and their level of consciousness. This enables a factually correct conception of what demands should be politically articulated, what slogans should be raised, and to what level of the struggle should



the masses at any moment be required to reach. The opposite of this is populist opportunism, which in a certain context becomes infantile adventurism. Instead of a concrete conception of the masses, from their real and actual historical propensity for struggle at the specific moment, it is common for revolutionary movements to rely on an idealistic conception of the masses, held to be in an extreme sense, eternally and constantly revolutionary and capable of making any sacrifices and heroic struggles at any particular moment. This leads to a situation where the requirement for political struggle is no longer the correct articulation of the real class demands of the masses, and painstakingly and in a protracted manner develop the revolutionary movements and consciousness in direct relationship with the objective developments. On the contrary, it is then considered that the only requirement is to engage in certain heroic acts, to inspire the "imagination" of the masses, since there are no objective requirements for the firing of this imagination itself. This leads to foco politics isolated from the masses, which is a catalyst to a more ferocious reactionary struggle against this form of politics itself, and leads, frequently, to serious losses in political struggle.

Hence, whereas the present discussion in this message recognises the complicated circumstantial and strategic considerations of the particular situation in Guyana, it asks comrades to look at the struggle in Guyana from an objective perspective, based on an objective analysis of the line of the Working People's Alliance, its relationship with broad sections of the working class and the petty-bourgeoisie. The national question in Guyana is of such a form that it is difficult to organise at a mass level without also organising at a sectional, racial level. Again, given the specific level of development of the material conditions for objective struggle, which are not peculiar to Guyana but broad for the present situation of global imperialist crisis, the propensity for struggle becomes limited.

This kind of situation forces a definite mode of struggle. In countries where there is a single mass party, all different class forces can organise and mobilise inside the same mass party. This in itself is an objective aid to the revolutionary movement because the conditions for its appealing to the masses have already been created, by the simple fact that all political forces operate and relate themselves to the masses on the basis of the general interest of the masses. In countries with a multiparty democracy or multiparty dictatorship, the oral articulation of class and sectional demands is made easier, but the organisation and mobilisation of the masses is more difficult, since at every moment one party, or each new party, must create a new basis of its own, that is, take out a section of the masses from their erstwhile nationalist or class alliance, or at least tolerance and sympathy, for any of the already dominant political lines. This is quite difficult when one can not use the apparatus of state power already existing, which is possible in a mass party, since all political forces have a fairly consolidated capacity for this utilisation of the broad palaver of mass politics.



In conclusion Comrade Chairman, it would seriously offend the spirit of the struggle of Dr. Rodney himself if this university were to be actually divided on his work and failures or successes. The most important thing that Dr. Rodney would himself have required is that the broad progressive forces - or alliance as he titled his mobilised forces, understand all these ups and downs of the struggle and keep to a united front for the enhancement of the cause itself. Legalistic conceptions of responsibility and recrimination must not be allowed to throw fog over the concrete appraisal of the development of the revolutionary movement. Thank you.

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"My position is that of the black intellectual in a colonial society. That society offers educated black men positions of privilege and relatively secure economic conditions in exchange for their souls. The black intellectual are as much a part of the white capitalist system as are bank managers and plantation overseers. Their position is secure on condition that they make no meaningful contract with the black masses" (Rodney, 1969)



The Death of Walter Rodney and the Struggle in the Caribbean  
By H. Goulbourne

Introduction.

The death of Walter Rodney - Brother Walter, as comrades and friends in the West Indies call him - marks a definite stage in the struggles of the people in the Caribbean against neo-colonial regimes and imperialism. I was in Kingston, Jamaica when the news of his assassination came and friends and comrades received it with deep shock and anger. During the course of the following week as the crime dominated the news media we were able to digest the enormity of our loss. C.L.R. James expressed this loss for the struggle in the Caribbean when he described Brother Walter as "the brightest Political spark in the region since Marcus Garvey." We meet tonight to honour our fallen comrade and colleague but I have been asked to confine myself to giving the background to the murder so as to enable us to have a better appreciation of the struggle that Walter was involved in.

The General Context.

Walter's untimely death came at a time when the Caribbean, especially the English speaking West Indies, is taking a critical review of itself. In 1979 Maurice Bishop and his New Jewel Movement used violence to overthrow the extremely repressive regime of Eric Gairy in Grenada. In St. Lucia the progressive of the two political parties won the general elections on a platform of progressive change. Currently in Jamaica the lines are being drawn and manned over whether the country should return to an uncritical support of US policy or whether as an independent country it should feel free to choose its friends. Traditionally West Indian leaders have been contented to accept whatever role the US marked out for them. The development of radicalism in the region is bringing this into question. People are getting dissatisfied over the US treating the region as its backyard.

One of the clearest signs of this new development is the mushrooming of progressive groups throughout the region. In Jamaica the Workers' Party with a marxist leadership has been founded. In Antigua, Trinidad & Tobago, St. Vincent and even



Corbados (well known for its conservation) a number of organizations have sprung up with the expressed aim of challenging the established political parties which have

been dominant since the nationalist period. The new awareness in Caribbean politics is also leading to much closer ties between progressives and what occurs in one country is likely, as in the 1930s, to quickly affect the others. The death of Brother Walter and the loss that has been inflicted had an immediate effect throughout the region.

#### Burnham's Guyana.

When Guyana was the colony of British Guiana realists used to call it Boker's Guiana because he owned most of the country's wealth. Today, because of the barbarity of Forbes Burnham, Guyana, far from being taken seriously as the world's first co-operative republic, is known as Burnham's Guiana. An understanding of Burnham's Guiana will help up to see the odds that Walter was up against and why he was seen as a very real threat to the power establishment.

It is now common knowledge that Burnham came to power in the 1960s with the active support of the US CIA and the connivance of the British Government led by Wilson. At the time Cheddi Jagan, leader of the pro-Moscow People's Progressive Party, stood to gain a substantial electoral victory at the polls but the trouble with him as far as the US and Britain were concerned was that he was a known communist and his party talked in terms of nationalization of the major industries such as bauxite and sugar. The British instituted a system of

'proportional representation' which, far from being democratic, enabled Burnham to win the elections. Children, the dead and even those who never existed voted to give Burnham a sweeping victory over Jagan. Guyanese abroad were supposed to have given him overwhelming support but investigations carried out by the Independent Television Network in the UK found that most of these people never existed and some were recorded more than once. This exercise, of course, did not betray the West Indian love for constitutional forms and procedures.



To keep himself in power Burnham has sought and has succeeded to postpone elections. In 1978 he held a referendum over the issue of creating an executive presidency which would allow him to wield much more power - again constitutionally - than

he does as prime minister. It was estimated by the Concerned Citizens' Association that no more than 14% of the electorate participated in the exercise but the regime claimed that 74% participated with a 95% in favour of the Government's measure. So, elections were postponed.

The second factor that Burnham utilizes to maintain himself in power is the unabashed exploitation of racial differences. Guyana has a majority of citizens descended from the sub-continent of India and the next largest group is Afro-Caribbean with lower percentages of Portuguese, Chinese, etc. Part of Burnham's ability to stay in power since being placed there by the CIA

has been his ability to exploit the African population's fear that the 'coolies' will one day take over the country unless he remains in power. In the past he was able to use African workers to break strikes instituted by Indian workers - here too the division in Guyanese society pertains, with the sugar industry being dominated by Indians whilst the bauxite industry is dominated by Africans.

In recent years the Government has been plagued by a persistent 20 + % unemployment. In 1970 Burnham shifted, ostensibly, his grounds and became a socialist - he made links with the Republic of Cuba, the USSR, etc., and founded 'the world's first co-operative republic' which aimed at feeding, clothing and housing the nation by 1980. Well, we are in 1980 but for the people of Guyana there are scarcities, poverty and assassinations - Walter Rodney being the last in a series of five within the year. It must seem for many to be more like the year 1984 that George Orwell prophesied and there is little wonder that Walter's brother, Donald, hid from the police until he was well enough to tell the world what had happened.

In becoming a 'socialist' Burnham also moved to make firm links with Africa so as to give the impression that he was truly progressive. He gave financial support to the OAU Liberation







But Walter's contribution to the struggling masses of the Third World stands; the spirit of Walter Rodney lives. In 1968 he was banned from Jamaica where he was teaching because he dared to go to the ghettos of Kingston and discuss African history with the Rastafari Brethern (this led to his intimating publication, Groundings with my Brothers) and to this day people in Kingston remember the demonstrations in support of Walter. In the past years since 1975 his contribution was not restricted to his own country. He travelled the region and rallied support for other groups in the islands. More than any other figure in current West Indian progressive politics he was able to command the respect of all parties prosecuting the struggle. His evident simplicity and sincerity his dedication to the cause made even those opposed to his ideas stop in their struggle to ponder the loss.

The struggle continues in Guyana. The arson case of last year lingers on and the names of Dr. Rupert Roopnarine, Dr. Omawale, Kwame Apata and Karen de Souza should not be forgotten as well as the leaders of the WPA because Burnham's regime has made it clear that it will not tolerate any serious opposition.

Walter - a lotta continua!

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"Revolutionaries love peace, but a creative peace that will permit all to enjoy life and construct a new society successfully. They do not wish war: they hate slaughter and cruelty, but they understand that a thousand times worse is the indefinite continuation of injustice, exploitation, hunger, poverty and corruption.

Alfredo Vera



RODNEY AND RADICALISM ON THE HILL, 1966 - 1974\*

by

Issa G. Shivji

In a speech entitled 'The Ideology of the African Revolution', delivered to the second seminar of East and Central African Youth held in Dar es Salaam in November, 1969, Walter Rodney said:

"African peasants and workers will undoubtedly achieve the goal of unity, but it will be a unity in struggle and unity through struggle - ideological, economic and military. On the ideological, front our task revolutionary African youth is to interpret the present realities of Africa from the viewpoint of the majority of its peoples who are toilers. We must interpret it in order to understand the direction of change and to see to it that progressive and revolutionary trends are brought to the forefront. The degree to which we serve that function is the degree to which we may be judged revolutionary."

A few days later Rodney wrote a letter to the then Nationalist (17/12/69) in which, among other things, he said:

"...I trust that my use of words such as 'capitalism', 'imperialism' and 'neo-colonialism' will not be deemed as a cover for sinister intent. My indulgence in those terms is aimed at exposing a system which is barbarous and dehumanising - one which snatched me from Africa in chains and deposited me in far-off lands to be a slave beast, then a sub-human colonial subject, and finally an outlaw in those lands. Under those circumstances, one asks nothing more but to be allowed to learn from, participate in, and be guided by the African Revolution in this part of the continent; for this Revolution here is aimed at destroying that monstrous system and replacing it with a just socialist society."

The two quotations, in our opinion, show how Rodney saw his role at the University of Dar es Salaam. He believed his main role was to participate in ideological struggles and in the process clarify the character of the African Revolution. To be sure, it's not only Rodney who saw his role that way. The very context in which he was functioning and the atmosphere of the time at the Hill during the period that Rodney was here (roughly 1966 to 1974) was one of intense intellectual ferment and ideological debates and discussions. This was the period during which TANU issued two very important documents, the Arusha Declaration in 1967 and the Mwongozo in 1971. These documents precipitated as well as allowed a very vigorous and relatively free debate and discussion, the kind of which the University has not witnessed since.

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\* Based on, the author's speech made at the Memorial Symposium on 'Walter Rodney's contribution to the Revolution' held on July 22nd, 1980 at the University of Dar es Salaam.



It is therefore in this context that we have to see the role played by Rodney. We would therefore attempt to trace briefly the history of student struggles during Rodney's stay and in the process highlight Rodney's contribution.

The turning point in the development of the University the October 1966 demonstration against the proposals of the Government to launch compulsory National Service. The pre-1966 University was not very different from any Western University. The ideological level at the Campus was extremely low. Reactionary ideas held sway and what the bourgeois lecturers taught in the classrooms was taken as gospel truth. Straight bourgeois theories went unchallenged. Lenin says somewhere that bourgeois education is nine-tenths useless and one-tenth distorted. In our case the bourgeois education that was dished out was nine-tenths harmful and one-tenth useless.

As for the extra-curricular activities of the students, it was the bread and butter questions that preoccupied them. One militant student recalled that atmosphere in following terms:

".....I arrived at the College in July 1967. I was, immediately, disappointed on arrival at the College. I found that the students were lacking in militancy and even hostile not only to socialism, but even, at least some of them, to the whole question of African Liberation. At any rate there was no clear militant commitment on part of the broad sections of the student body. Instead most of our extra-curricular time was taken up by frivolous activities: drinking, dancing and watching decade Western films. I remember one occasion when I was really most unhappy. This was the time when Chief Albert Lutuli died. A service in his honour was organised at the Arutoglu Hall. Transport was provided to all students who wished to go and attend the service. Alas!! only a handful of us turned up - the majority being students from Southern Africa. Apathy towards, and ignorance of, the vital questions regarding the interests of the African people were the rules of the day. Teachers - sorry! - Lecturers and Professors, were particularly hopeless as far as the interests of our people went."

It was in this atmosphere of general apathy that the organisational form of radical ideas was born. This was the Socialist Club. The Socialist Club was started by a few radical students from Zimbabwe, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Sudan, Ethiopia and Tanzania. Among the founders were a few members of staff, the foremost being Rodney. Quite a few of these "founding fathers" have now joined state power: some are ministers and ambassadors of their respective countries; few are political exiles in Europe and elsewhere and fewer have continued to struggle against reactionary state power, much so that the same power has to-day claimed the life of one of them, Walter Rodney.

Anyway, the initiators of the Club soon realised the organisational limitations of the club. It could organise



debates, yes; it could organise discussions, yes. But the militant students did not want to stop there. They wanted to translate these discussions into action. Hence in November, 1967 they formed the first fully-fledged student organisation called the University Students African Revolutionary Front or USARF, as it came to be popularly known. The birth of USARF attracted virtually no attention unlike its death three years later when it hit newspaper headlines, was commented upon in editorials and even raised eye-brows among liberation Movements.

This was probably a reflection of what USARF had managed to accomplish in its short life of three years. The membership of USARF was open only to students while the members of staff could become associate members; Rodney was one of such associate members. However, as far as the author can remember, formal paid membership meant very little in USARF. What mattered was a person's activity and militancy and therefore its membership was composed of such activists, paid or unpaid.

At this point, I would like to mention that although during its whole three years of existence Rodney was very closely connected with USARF, at no point he attempted to or dominated the Organisation. The leadership and initiative throughout remained in the hands of students. Yes, Rodney was among the most active. But he was like others, a comrade among comrades. Self-elevation and arrogance were foreign to him. He was never a father-figure and there was no student-lecturer relationship. In fact, those of you who have read the Preface to his How Black Underdeveloped Africa would have perhaps noticed that the few people whom he thanks by name for constructive criticism were, at the time, students and not some accomplished academicians or scholars.

But to continue with USARF. The aims of USARF, as spelled out in their last statement, (about which we will say more later) were:

- (a) To work unceasingly for the promotion of a revolutionary spirit within the University, Tanzania, Africa and the world in general.
- (b) To contribute to the success of the various liberation movements and to work hand in hand with other progressive forces here and elsewhere.
- (c) To drive home the urgent need for African solidarity as the only means of getting real independence for Africa and of safeguarding that independence.
- (d) To keep a constant vigil against imperialist ideology and propaganda by every possible means.
- (e) To stand firmly within the ranks of the workers and peasants of Tanzania, Africa and the world in their fight against imperialism and for socialism.

Some of these aims were probably ambitious. Nevertheless, USARF tried to pursue them single-mindedly within the limits of a University-based student organisation.



The first important practical activity of USARF, which for the first time made its presence felt by the majority of students, was the sabotage of the 'Rag Day'. Sometime in November 1968 was organised a 'Rag Day' by the World Universal Service (Tanzania) Committee. On this day it was proposed the students would dress themselves in rags and go out into the streets of Dar es Salaam to beg for the poor. As their announcement put it: "Dress in RAGS of every colour and description. Rehearse your calls and songs! Plenty of noise is required! Name tags and tin cans will be provided to collectors." (1)

Some of the members of USARF could not stomach this outright mockery of the masses. They called a meeting on the eve of the so-called Rag Day. At this meeting of USARF the whole question of the role of charity and philanthropy in a bourgeois society was analysed. Comrades, among whom was Rodney, discussed the issue at great length and arrived at the conclusion (to use the phraseology of the USARF statement) that "philanthropic is a euphemism for those who plunder by the ton and give by the ounce". There and then it was resolved that the "Rag Day poppycock" must be sabotaged.

Next day early morning tractors and lorries that were to carry the students to town on their begging spree arrived and were parked in the square near the post-office. There were about two hundred students who were going to participate. When they came out of their cafeteria after their heavy breakfast, they found that the tyres of 'their' lorries had been punctured and that some twenty or so radical students had erected barricades across the exit from the square. There they stood shouting for help from the University guards. Very soon the guards arrived. The radical students immediately took upon themselves to explain to the guards the purpose of their action. They explained that the whole business of Rag Day amounted to nothing less than a mockery of the poor. That was enough for the guards; they wouldn't raise a finger against the radical students. Finally the Police arrived who too were explained (for over an hour the Chairman USARF made a speech in the presence of the Police). The result was that the permission given to go to town was cancelled by the police. That marked the end of the Rag Day on this Campus and for the first time USARF hit the Editor of the then STANDARD newspaper (owned by LONRHO) which of course commented adversely on USARF.

Besides this, USARF participated in many practical activities like cashewnut picking; demonstrations; visits and work in Ujamaa villages; exposure of reactionary lecturers, etc. Probably a word needs to be said on how USARF members refused to be intimidated by academicism. USARF members did not separate what they were taught in the classroom from their ideological activities outside the classroom. For example, there was the famous 'Singleton incidence'. Professor Singleton, an American Visiting Professor, made some offending and, it was believed, reactionary remarks on Fanon in a class lecture. He was challenged in the classroom. But the whole issue did not end there. USARF organised a public symposium on FANON and invited Singleton to come and present his views on the issue. Other speakers were also invited to speak on the subject. In the event, Singleton refused to turn up on the ground that what he had said was confined to the class. The symposium nevertheless



went on. It was a serious and highly political meeting at the end of which Professor Singleton was thoroughly discredited. Some students even suggested that contribution should be collected to send back home the 'single-track Singleton' while others said that would be a waste of money. Instead, the contribution should be used to buy bullets for the liberation movements!! The latter carried the day.

However, the most important activity of USARF was really on the ideological front. Its ideological work was done basically at two levels: at the level of disseminating anti-imperialist propaganda generally to the mass of student body and at the level of arming its members ideologically in a more concentrated form. Let us briefly discuss each one of these in turn.

Public lectures, distribution of pamphlets and leaflets and issuing of statements on important events were the main means by which USARF attempted to disseminate anti-imperialist propaganda. Many well-known radicals spoke on USARF platform, among them were such personalities as Stokely Carmichael, Cheddi Jagan, Cora Ebrahim, C.L.R. James, A.M. Babu and others. Small membership of USARF notwithstanding, such public meetings were always extremely well-attended. The Arts Lecture Theatre B would spill over and there would be people standing outside. These days, I understand, such events are rare and if they do take place the attendance is miserable!

Besides, USARF statements on various important events of African and international significance as well as on matters to do with the struggles at the Campus. There was a statement on the Kenya Crisis when Kenya People's Union (K.P.U.) was banned; a statement on Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia entitled 'Condemnation of Russian Imperialism'; statement on Mazrui; statement on Moral Rearmament 'Cultural Group's visit to the campus statement on Karadha Company's (a parastatal) decision to give loans for private cars and so on and so forth. No important event escaped USARF's attention. Each of these statements gave analysis of the event, situating it in the contexts of world imperialism, before calling on for action or making any concrete demands. Although not always clear ideologically and sometimes carried away by enthusiasm, these statements display a fine form of student militant journalism. (One wishes some day some publisher would publish them.)

As for arming its members ideologically, USARF pursued mainly two channels: the ideological classes and the launching of a theoretical journal. The ideological classes were organised by the students themselves in which the students played a leading role; they were the organisers, the introducers and the discussants although a few teachers also participated, the most prominent being Walter Rodney. The classes were held on Sunday mornings more or less at the same time as church services - a pure coincidence! These classes were not typical ones where teachers talked and the students took down notes to reproduce them in the Exam. No, they were hotbeds of vigorous discussions, and ideological struggles. If anything, the organisers took special care to ensure that the typical classroom atmosphere was not reproduced in the ideological classes. It was in these ideological classes that the then radical students learned their Political Economy and Marxism.



'Cheche', the joint theoretical journal of the TANU Youth League (TYL) and USARF, was born in November, 1969. As you know 'cheche' in Kiswahili means 'The spark' which was the name of Nkrumah's journal borrowed from Lenin's Iskra. The very first issue of Cheche carried an article by Rodney called 'African labour under capitalism and imperialism'. All the rest of the articles were by students. No doubt, going through the pages of Cheche to-day makes one immediately conscious of the ideological limitations of the time. In many respect the ideology of the writers did not go beyond petty-bourgeois radicalism, and certain influences like Fanonist theory on violence were fairly dominant. Nevertheless, what comes out clearly from the pages of that magazine is the single-minded commitment, militancy and passionate defence of the rights of the masses. In its short life Cheche became a reputable student magazine in which the members of staff vie d to get published. In contrast, Maji lacks a consistent ideological position, and student participation is often confined to the manual work " of reproduction, while most of the articles are written by lecturers. This is, however, merely a reflection of the general apathy and opportunism, and the disarray that the student body, nay the whole University community, labours under.

To give you some idea and the flavour of what the then organisers of the magazine thought of their role and, especially, to give you the flavour of the "fighting talk" of the time, we will quote at some length from the Message of the TYL & USARF Chairmen to the first issue of Cheche:

"Unlike most magazines, CHECHE is a non-profit seeking and an ideological venture. It aims to be one of these nuclei from which will radiate and emerge a scientific revolutionary ideology relevant to the concrete conditions of Africa, an ideology that will not only embody the general truths of international socialist thought but will also evolve and create its own concepts arising from the specific material conditions. Let no one misunderstand lest they consider this to be an advocacy of the deceptive, superficial, idealist and historically retrogressive theories - the so-called "African Socialisms" that have sprouted up everywhere in Africa. No! Socialism is one; scientific and international.

CHECHE is a fighting paper. It will combat reactionary elements, influences, ideas till they are crushed in their totality. Its basic aim is to further the cause of peoples' revolutions in Africa and the world through the spread of revolutionary consciousness. CHECHE is an uncompromising enemy of exploitation and oppression. It must contribute to production " of revolutionaries, imbued with spirit of historical mission, and clear understanding of social process, and armed with rational ideology.

CHECHE hopes to stimulate, and be a medium for vigorous discussion, debate and articulation of progressive thought. Above all it will give food for thought to all who feel that there is a need in Africa and the World not for reform, but for fundamental structural transformations of the socio-economic base



CHECHE shall educate. It must educate and mobilise, mobilize and educate that "in order to get rid of the gun it is necessary to take up the gun." In other words CHECHE must be able "to arouse people to fight for their own emancipation."

We say: CHECHE, BURN, SPEAK, AND FIGHT!

No wonder CHECHE did not last long. After publishing some three ordinary issues and one special issue, CHECHE was banned by University authorities on the ground that its name gave the impression that "Tanzania was building "Russian socialism" and not "true Tanzanian socialism" and that TANU and TYL had always been ideologically self-reliant, thus such borrowing from foreign ideologies" could not be tolerated. (see USARF's last statement entitled: "Our Last Stand"). Together with CHECHE, SARF itself was also asked to wind up because it was said that it was redundant since TYL was supposed to have the monopoly of political activities on the Hill. In their last public statement, which is a masterpiece of student journalism and a very cogently argued militant piece, USARF gave a short sketch of its activities and ended by saying: "...we do not doubt the wisdom prompting our ban. But one thing must be remembered. Organisations can be banned, individuals can be liquidated, but ideas live on. REVOLUTIONARY IDEAS NEVER DIE. THAT IS OUR FINAL STAND!"

.....

Something needs to be said about two important struggles each one of which marked an important stage in the ideological development of student radicalism on the Campus. These were the Faculty of Law crisis of February/March, 1969 and the Akivaga crisis of July, 1971.

The Faculty of Law hitherto had been a stronghold of militant conservatism. By the time of the crisis it has been heavily Americanised in terms of its staff and there were moves to obtain American Foundation finances for a legal research centre. The immediate cause of the crisis was the introduction of a new syllabus displayed marked features of American liberalism as opposed to the typical British legal conservatism. Nevertheless, for the large majority of students it was new, strange and they thought, difficult. This was then their main reason for opposing the new syllabus which, incidentally, contained such subjects as military law, etc. For the few radical students in the Faculty this was an occasion for raising more fundamental questions of the day. There were also somethings in the syllabus itself, like military law, which offended their intense nationalism. Being more articulate and daring the radical students immediately and popularly got elected to the leadership of the struggle. They formed a Vigilance Committee and began to raise issues like Who owns the University? How are the members of Staff recruited? How are decisions made? etc. As it was stated in our Second Memorandum of the Vigilance Committee:

"As it was stated in our first memorandum, the real issue at stake is a fundamental one concerning the ownership of this University College: whether the College will ultimately belong to the people of Tanzania and East Africa or to imperialism,"



The Vigilance Committee put forward concrete demands:

- that the Staff should be East Africanised;
- that Lecturers should be recruited from socialist countries;
- that students should be allowed to participate fully in decision-making;
- and that the Deanship should be Tanzanianised.

It can be seen that these demands do not go much beyond intense nationalism and emanated essentially from radicalism. Nevertheless, they were pursued with ideological consistence and displayed a high level of organisational ability on the part of the student radicals. This does not mean that there were no small (and sometimes not so small) problems among the radicals themselves. Certain anarchist tendencies had in fact begun to surface although they never became dominant. Anyway, the result of this struggle was that the new syllabus was never implemented and most of the student demands were met.

However, within a very short period the students realised that the Tanzanianisation of the Deanship did not necessarily mean that the Deanship would be progressive nor did the East Africanisation of Staff mean that the Faculty of Law would become the leading light of radicalism. In fact the student body as a whole began to realise that the fact that the University had now become a national University did not mean that it is a People's University. This realisation and the contradictions that it gave rise to came to a head and became the focus of the next crisis, the Akivaga crisis.

Akivaga was the President of the student organisation, DUCO, (Dar es Salaam University Students Organisation). Sometime in July, 1971 he wrote an open letter to the Vice-Chancellor charging bureaucratic maladministration and lack of consultation of students on important decisions. If the Faculty of Law crisis was cast in the footsteps of the Arusha Declaration with its emphasis on 'nationalism; and nationalisation', the Akivaga crisis was very much in the footsteps of Mwongozo. It was beginning to raise the issues of Democracy and anti bureaucracy and emphasising the participation of the people in decision-making. But in the process it touched on some very fundamental political issues of state-power: In whose interest were these nationalised enterprises and institutions being run? Was it in the interest of the people?

The open letter of Akivaga was considered insulting and abusive and therefore he was rusticated from the University. The armed FFU (Field Force Unit) appeared on the Campus to take away the poor, unarmed Akivaga! The students followed by boycotting classes, etc. The members of Staff too held numerous meetings and came out in full support of the students, the main demand being that Akivaga should be returned.

Walter Rodney was once again one of the prominent participants in staff and joint student/staff meetings during the crisis which lasted for fairly long. One thing that the teachers themselves came to realise was their own organisational inadequacy. They found that they did not have a forum of their own, that they could not even call their own meetings without going through



the university bureaucracy. In fact, it (suddenly?) dawned on the teachers that they themselves hardly had much of democratic rights. It was then that, for the first time, the demand for an Academic Assembly or an Academic Staff Association was raised: a demand which even after ten years remains unfulfilled so much that today we have to meet under the auspices of the history Department to commemorate the death of our fallen colleague rather than under the umbrella of our own organisation.

To continue with the Akivaga crisis. Non-cooperation on the part of the students continued for a long time but there was no clear ideological line. Though the students showed remarkable unity, they failed to fully mobilise the staff and workers who laboured under the same debilitating bureaucracy. They paid scant attention to the grievances of their natural allies on the campus. In a strongly worded criticism, entitled "Tamko la Wafanyakazi wa Chuo Kikuu kuhusu harakati za kitabaka Mlimani", the workers on the campus said:

"Kuhusu jambo hili, sisi wafanyakazi wapenda maendeleo wa Mlimani, ndugu na marafiki zenu wa kweli katika mapambano, tunaona kwamba ni wajibu wetu wa kimapinduzi kukukumbusheni makosa yenu ya awali, makosa ambayo funzo lake hamjaweza kulizingatia. Kunako mgogoro wa Chuo Kikuu wa 1971, ambao matokeo yake yalikuwa ni kufukuzwa kwa kiongozi wa wanafunzi na kupigwa marufuku kwa chama cha kimapinduzi kuliko vyote vilivyowahi kuwapo Mlimani, USARF, miongoni mwa mambo muhimu ambayo wanafunzi wenye siasa kali waliyafanya ni kupiga kelele katika jina la wakulima na wafanyakazi. Lakini hakuna mfanyakazi hata mmoja aliyeitika wito wao, juu ya kuwa baadhi yetu tulikuwa tukapigana dhidi ya adui yule yule. Matokeo yake kimsingi ni kwamba chuo hiki cha elimu ya juu katika Tanzania inayojenga Ujamaa kimeendelea kuwa chombo cha ukoloni mamboleo. Je, wanafunzi hao wenye siasa kali wanaweza kudai kwamba kushindwa huku kulisababishwa na kukatwa kwa wafanyakazi na wakulima kushirikiana nao? Hata kidogo. Haingaliwezekana kwa wafanyakazi na wakulima (ambao pengine mwamko wao haukuwa mkubwa kama wa wanafunzi hao) kushirikiana na wanafunzi wanaojibagua na kujiona kuwa wao ni tabaka tofauti, lenye maslahi tofauti, na ambao hawakuona haja ya kuratibu harakati zao na zile za marafiki zao - wafanyakazi na wakulima.\* (MAJIMAJI, No. 13, Jan. 1974)\*

Thus ideologically the students failed to cross the boundary of their class, the petty bourgeoisie. The issue was reduced to a single one of bringing back Akivaga. Therefore when he was brought back after a face-saving apology had been extruded, student opposition was quickly diffused. Within months, Akivaga was overthrown as president of DUSO in a "coup" led by right-wing students on a highly reactionary, national chauvinistic slogans. (Akivaga was a Kenyan). And the Vice-Chancellor proceeded to bless this clearly unconstitutional act.

\* English translation taken from the English version of the statement published in MajiMaji, No. 14, February, 1974



"In this respect, we the progressive workers of the Dar es Salaam Hill, your true comrades and allies in the struggle, see it as our revolutionary responsibility to remind you of your past mistakes - the mistakes from which you do not seem to have learnt any lessons. In the University crisis of 1971 which resulted in the rustication of the students' leader (which was preceded by the banning of the most revolutionary organisation to have existed in the history of the University - U.S.A.R.F.) one of the most important things that the radical students did was to shout in the name of workers and peasants. But not a single worker answered their call even though some of us - the workers - were fighting against the same enemy. The principal reason of this has been that this institution of higher learning in Tanzania, a country which is trying to build Ujamaa, has continued to be the vehicle of neo-colonialism. Can these radical students really claim that this was due to the refusal to co-operate on the part of the workers and peasants? No, not at all. It could not have been possible for the workers and peasants (whose consciousness, maybe, is not as high as that of the students) to co-operate when the students discriminate against workers and think that they are a separate class with different interests; especially when the students themselves did not see any need to co-ordinate their struggle with that of their allies - workers and peasants."

The University returned to normalisation and that is what the Authorities wanted. Gradually and systematically radical leadership in both the TYL and Maji Maji and the ideological classes was weeded out, thus keeping these institutions in name while castrating them of much of their content. The powers that-be had learnt from their experience of banning CHECHE that banning did not help! Anyway, around this time, the struggle began to shift where it rightly belonged - to the working class who started one of the most militant period of working class struggles in Tanzania, the post-Mwongozo 'downing of tools', locking out of managers, taking-over of industries etc.

A full-scale history of the student movement remains to be done. In this piece we have attempted to give some sketches only rather than a deep analysis. And it is in this context that we can talk about the role and contribution of Comrade Rodney. There is no doubt that his contribution was substantial and there is no doubt that the struggles and the intellectual ferment of the Dar Campus in turn contributed to Walter's formation. Eventually, like a true revolutionary, he felt he must move out of the academia and immerse himself in the struggles of the People this he could do only among those he knew well. So he returned to his country of birth, Guyana, where he made the greatest sacrifice that an individual can make, life itself. In paying tribute to Rodney we can do no better than use the words and phrases of the organisation with which he was closely connected while in Dar es Salaam. On 16th October, 1969 USARF organised 'Che Guevara Day'. On that occasion it issued a statement paying tribute to Che. Borrowing that tribute and substituting Walter Rodney for Che Guevara, I quote:



"Walter Rodney has .... put a challenge, before us the so-called intellectuals. Are we prepared to unite with the masses and lead the revolution or are we going to betray them? Can we muster up the courage to make sacrifices or shall we succumb to the petty rewards offered by the bourgeois society? That is up to you to decide.

But then, don't have any illusions that your decisions can influence the course of history in any significant manner. No! it cannot in the final analysis it is the masses that move history.

Socialism is destined to be victorious everywhere, whether you like it or not. For Walter Rodney is not dead. He still lives on in the blood stream of all true revolutionaries. The imperialists (and their lackeys) are totally mistaken in thinking that Walter is no more. One day - and that day is not far off - when they are on their deathbed, they too will realize that the revolution of Walter Rodney can never die."

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THE LATE DR. WALTER RODNEY: AN INTERNATIONALIST  
REVOLUTIONIST

By Joe Kanywanyi.

Statement made at the Memorial  
Symposium in honour of the late  
Dr. Walter Rodney held at the  
University of Dar es Salaam on  
22nd July, 1980

The speakers who preceded me have expressed views regarding the progressive or revolutionary qualities of the late Comrade Dr. Walter Rodney and his revolutionary activities and contributions to the on-going struggle of the oppressed and exploited masses in the world at large, and in Tanzania and in Guyana in particular. Ours is a token addition to this account.

We intend to deal with the late Walter's involvement in the wider context of the struggle while he was here as a Lecturer in the History Department. For, not only was he closely associated with and intimately involved in the progressive politico-cultural activities of the students and staff at this Hill, but also he was closely associated with and intimately concerned about the wider anti-imperialist struggles in the world in general and in Africa, the Americas, and Asia in particular.

Before we touch on this aspect of his political life while he was here, let us briefly describe one of the most important qualities of a genuine revolutionist. This will enable us to appreciate and properly characterise the late Walter's progressive activities in this aspect of the struggle.

Among the most important qualities of a genuine revolutionist or even a genuine progressive democrat is his/her activist pro-people internationalism. For an intellectual element, which the late Walter was, this is clearly reflected in both his theoretical work (i.e., his written and spoken word) and in his daily political practice and general life.

In one respect he/she writes and speaks in terms that expose and condemn reaction in general and in its particular or specific multifarious manifestations in a given situation and in given progressive struggles of the people. In the contemporary era, he/she writes and speaks in terms that expose and condemn imperialism under its various guises in the economic, political and cultural spheres of society - including its racist, colonial and neo-colonial forms of oppression, degradation, and exploitation, of the masses in general and the toiling masses in particular. He/she does this in order to raise the political consciousness and activities of the struggling masses to higher and higher levels. Moreover, besides engaging in such progressive theoretical work, he/she very actively joins and participates in condemnatory mass and progressive group activities, such as demonstrations, rallies, symposia and conferences, etc., that are directed at imperialism and its local comprador and other reactionary or pro-imperialist forces



But that is only one aspect of the matter. In the other respect, a genuine revolutionary or progressive democrat untiringly writes, speaks and actively works in support of and in solidarity with the progressive trends and struggling masses of working and oppressed peoples wherever they may be in the world at large or in his particular country. In addition, and this is very important, he actively and enthusiastically organises and participates in mass or pro-people group demonstrations and other activities in support of the struggling and resisting masses wherever they may happen to be in the world.

Thus, such a person not only condemns reaction and anti-people activities of reactionary forces, but also actively supports genuine revolution and progressive trends.

Thus, also, the outlook and political activities of a revolutionary or genuine progressive democrat are never narrow and restricted only to his small locality, community, nationality, nation, country or region, his little circle of friends and relatives, etc. For, such are the confines and narrow-mindedness of the political outlook and activities of a reactionary who thinks racially, or tribally, regionally, purely nationalistically and in terms of the minority of propertied and privileged classes or strata of society to which he either belongs or aspires to belong. But a genuine revolutionist or progressive democrat opposes artificial social divisions and barriers propagated by reaction among the struggling working people whose enemy is essentially the same - capitalist imperialism in the contemporary era, feudalism in earlier centuries, etc. - and whose principled unity in struggling against such a global enemy is absolutely necessary. For he is an activist internationalist who identifies himself fully with the genuine thoughts and united actions of resistance and revolution of the international mass movement against those of international counter-revolution.

To discourage and deter genuine progressive and revolutionary elements, especially among the youth and intellectuals whose participation in the organisation of the struggling people is absolutely essential in order for the revolutionary movement to develop faster and achieve politico-economic success, reactionary forces over the ages have used and continue to use various methods of intimidation, frustration and sabotage. These include public denunciations and slander or libel, fabricated legal court actions, mental and physical torture, imprisonment, refusal of job or employment opportunities, assassinations, and the like. They describe activist progressives and revolutionaries as politically "ambitious" (in a negative sense of "self-aggrandizement"). They refer to them as "mad elements", "black sheep" for whom they open and maintain "black books", "trouble-makers", etc. They call them subversive agitators and propagandists, forgetting or hiding the fact that they, too, every minute and every hour of every day and night, through their monopoly over educational-cultural institutions, the press, radio and television, etc., carry on reactionary agitation



and propaganda against the inevitable revolution. Their aim is always to dull the consciousness of the people and thus prevent them from taking revolutionary actions or from following a course that would ultimately lead to their true emancipation, from class oppression and exploitation. Their aim is to maintain the stability of the existing decadent, oppressive and exploitive socio-economic order.

However, only the weak-hearted and uncommitted progressives and revolutionaries succumb to and are discouraged or deterred by such deeds. On the contrary, genuine and committed revolutionaries, patriots and the struggling masses are steeled and seasoned by them. Indeed, historical examples all over the world, including Africa, clearly testify to this fact.

This rather detailed description of one of the qualities of a revolutionist or progressive element fits the late Walter quite well. It would, thus, be unduly repetitive if we were to describe in great detail what an activist pro-people internationalist he was while he still lived. Those who knew him well will agree that what we have observed above apply to him fittingly as an activist revolutionist and progressive intellectual.

We shall therefore in this part of our address illustrate in general terms this significant fact about his life.

Starting with his writings, we have heard from earlier speakers how progressive and internationalist they generally are. Even though we may find theoretical problems in some of them,\* which he could probably have rectified through more and deeper involvement in the practical struggle of the people, yet, on the whole, most of the are written in a stimulating, progressive, pro-people and anti-reactionary style and with a revolutionary content. They expose and condemn the Euro-American feudal chattel slavery of the 15th - 19th centuries as well as imperialist oppression and exploitation particularly in the Americas and Africa, and support the acts of resistance of the struggling masses.

We have also heard how active he was in local rallies, conferences, symposia, seminars and ideological classes at this University, in colleges and in Secondary schools in Tanzania, whenever he was invited to speak. We need not stress the important progressive work he did in his History and Development Studies classes at the University. In all these theoretical activities, he strove to make his modest contribution to the raising of the political consciousness of those who listened to him and/or read his writings about the revolutionary activities and potentialities of the working people as well as those of their imperialist and local oppressors in the imperialist centres and in the colonies and neo-colonies. He also did this at international forums, at Universities and Colleges in Africa, Europe and the Americas whenever he was invited to make a contribution.

\* It should be pointed out that in his writings like "Groundings with my Brothers" and "Ujamaa is Scientific Socialism", the line of analysis we regard to be basically faulty. Even on the issue of the interrelationship of race



In addition to this important theoretical activity, he actively participated in locally organised students' and workers' activities in support of liberation movements in their heroic and revolutionary armed and peaceful resistance and opposition to US - led imperialist aggression in Southern and West Africa, in Indochina, the Middle-East and the Americas. Some of us may still remember how intimately and enthusiastically involved he always was in such activities organised by the then militant leadership of the TANU Youth League (TYL), the Workers Trade Union, etc. He was always among those in the forefront in chanting anti-racist and anti-imperialist slogans and songs, wielding progressive placards and posters, etc. This was particularly the case in those years when U.S. imperialism was committing grave atrocities in armed, he vocally resisting Viet Nam and later the rest of Indochina, and when the U.S. - and NATO - backed Salazar, Ian Smith and Verwoerd - Vorster reactionary forces were terrorising and massacring the armed, he vocally resisting masses in Southern Africa, Angola, Guinea - Bissau and Cape Verde Islands. He also identified himself fully with students' and working people's anti-neo-colonial protestations, demonstrations, etc., whenever an occasion arose and he was able to participate. We may take note of his participation in the protestations against reactionary regimes in Africa and Latin America, and in particular that of Idi Amin Dada and his like.

More than that, the well-remembered and cherished late Walter was not to be left behind when the progressive students under TYL and when the militant TANU Study Group in the city organised working visits to local factories and wajamaa villages. He was there, talking, working and sweating like everyone else. He did so without pomp, without asking for better or different treatment than the rest; arguing and urging our total identification and sympathy with and encouragement to the workers and the wajamaa peasants in question; sharing everything we took along to eat and drink with our villager hosts or simply turning over whatever we took with us to them and accepting whatever they served us. Of course, he was not alone in doing this; but he was a shining example in both word and deed. In this way, he was making his contribution to what he understood and regarded to be the generally progressive policies of the Party and the Government.

From his associates, friends and the people among and with whom he worked and theorised with warm and enthusiastic intimacy and love, he won admiration and sympathy. Needless to say, that was not the case with those who saw in what he and his associates were doing, not progress, but subversion and perversion. But these were a backward minority. And none of the actions they took or threats they uttered against him shook the militant Walter, nor discouraged or deterred him. On the contrary, he was steelled and made all the more determined by them. Hence, we can understand his desire to return home and involve himself more and more in the dangerous yet necessary task of organising and participating

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and class, his expositions were in our view not consistently scientific. On these and other issues we had



actively in the progressive and democratic struggle of the people of Guyana striving for a better life now and in the future.

From the life of a man like the late Dr. Walter Rodney who, in his schooling days, won academic medals and honours of the first order and yet never thereafter strove for petty personal prestige, honour and means of exploitation and oppression by serving imperialism and local reaction; from a man who, on the contrary, fervently joined the general international and particular local struggles against reaction; from such a man we are bound to learn a lot both from his failings and his progressive successes. We must pay tribute to him in his death as a revolutionist by condemning the imperialist and neo-colonial forces that cowardly assassinated him and some of his comrades in cold blood and are harrasing and intimidating the people of Guyana. For, essentially the same dark forces are to be found in the rest of the oppressed world as well as the metropolises. We must express our sympathy and solidarity with those he was closely working with until the tragic event as well as the members of his family. We must honour him by emulating his progressive deeds.

The Struggle continues!

Imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism and reaction in general will be defeated!

The struggling people everywhere, including Guyana, led by the internationalist revolutionary proletariat, will certainly win in the end, and, thus, vindicate the progressiveness of the cause for which their fallen fighters fought and died!

Long live the people and the revolution!

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vigorous discussions and expressed our differences of opinion. Yet we had much more in common than we had differences. This is what kept us in unity yet in struggle as is usual among progressive activists.

J.L. Kanywanyi



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REMINISCENCES OF COMRADE WALTER RODNEY

By W. RODNEY

17th July 1971

Although we can communicate by phone, I am writing out to acknowledge your last letter in writing. Firstly I should say that the proposal by Engle L'Ouverture is rather less than I expected. But as a new venture D.I.P. are anxious to stand on their own feet and so it is understandable that they want to handle production. With that decision it is no longer for us to discuss the production end. However, your comments do need attention, partly so as to clarify the character of the work and partly so as to pave the way for possible further cooperation on any other books.

The main request which you made is that the manuscript should be passed on to an African historian, because you felt yourself unequal to the task of judging its worth as "serious history." It is an ideological challenge. Unfortunately there is scarcely anyone about who combines my own world view with data about the African past. My procedure has been to try as hard as possible to let the work be scrutinised by progressive individuals. To pass it onto a serious bourgeois historian would be a sheer waste of time.

Under the circumstances, I will have to be the authority for whether a given fact, date, name etc. is correct. Beyond that, it is a matter of interpretation, logic and internal consistency. The text aims at strata of literate African in Universities, secondary schools, the bureaucracy and the like. They will have to judge whether it makes sense in the light of present conditions in Africa. All the points of your own criticism will be taken into account in my revision. I value them as the views of a careful reader. Beyond that, my purpose will be to upset and not to please the deans of African history in London and Wisconsin. Chapter 4 is retyped but chapter 6 is still lying around. I have already sent chapters 1 - 5 to Engle L'Ouverture. Since they have decided to do the printing in England, I'll have to take the second copy from you both to make amendments and to allow Comrade Babu to read it through. However we are close enough so that you will be kept up to date with changes and progress.

Yours sincerely,

Walter Rodney



Seminarians of our comrades, brother and friend Walter cannot, but be both professional and personal. The letter I have just read was his response to questions, criticism and suggestions by the editor of T.P.H. who read the first draft of How Europe Underdeveloped Africa. There is in the letter much of Walter's style; simplicity, vigour, pathos, and confidence in the accumulated knowledge he had about the subject he was writing about. At the same time there is the readiness to take into account the views of a serious reader.

But in order to place accurately Walter's contribution to T.P.H. we must go back to its early history. The association of T.P.H. with Macmillan publishing company in U.K. had not proved it to be more than a sales outpost with hardly any possibility to undertake real publishing of its own. In 1971 when the manuscript of How Europe Underdeveloped Africa was brought to the Publishing House there certainly wasn't much in it financially to attract any author. Walter's A History of the Sierra Leone Coast 1942 - 1800 had already been published by Clarendon Press - that old and most aristocratic of the British publishing houses - and had been quite a success leading to renewed interest among historians in further work in the history of West Africa. His articles were included in prestigious journals of African history on the continent and abroad and it wasn't therefore, that Walter could not have found another publisher probably just as prominent as Clarendon Press in U.K. or North America. The deliberate decision that How Europe Underdeveloped Africa should be published jointly and simultaneously by T.P.H. and Bogle L'Ouverture Publications, was also for many reasons and historically correct one. Bogle L'Ouverture is an even smaller publishing house than T.P.H. run almost single handedly by Jessie Huntley, herself an Afro Guyanese in exile in London. Walter wanted to situate How Europe Underdeveloped Africa in Tanzania where he was then living and working and where a community of active and committed students, lecturers, professors and others outside the University Community was evident as well as supportive. And it was not that alone; Mwongozo had been written and adopted by TANU. Workers were flexing their muscles and locking out personnel and general managers and spreading panic among them as they quoted Clause 15 for doing so.

The success of How Europe Underdeveloped Africa made Tanzania publishing House known far beyond our traditional markets and there are many people who wrote to give us encouragement as a result of its publication and to ask what other books we had published. This was an act of solidarity and in a small but not insignificant way it was a most positive factor in the struggle for creating a Tanzania national publishing house. Tanzanian intellectuals were encouraged by publication of Walter's book to cooperate in developing T.P.H.

There are other aspects of our association with Walter that are worth mentioning. The ideal situation between an author and his publisher is that both are united in a desire to bring to their readers the right book or books at the right time and at as low a price as possible. Those who, as authors have



worked well with their publishers and vice versa readily understand the warmth, the happiness and inevitable friendship that can arise and grow between author and publisher.

We learned a great deal from Walter and at the same time we could bring our own modest contribution to his work. It is not, I hope, inappropriate to remark here that unlike many academicians Dr. Walter Rodney did not have to load his pages with numerous footnotes or dilute his own sharp intellect by seeking the corroboration of obscure sources. He did not spend any time trying to sound scholarly or smug which is the singular weakness of many academic writers. The important thing was that there was an important message to pass on to his "brothers" and the best way to put it across was the straight way. The message was the most important but the manner in which it was written could add to its strength or reduce its audience. It is not a weakness of the book, for instance, that it can be a text book for secondary schools as well as the University and that at each level it can inspire and lead to deeper and more committed research in its subject.

The most recent reminiscences about Walter are from when he passed through Dar es Salaam in May this year. We discussed among other things this very problem and lamented that students and writers in Tanzania and elsewhere in African universities were not casting the net wider in their reading for a more deep appreciation of the literatures of the world in all fields or when they did not developing their own independent critical appraisal of the literature read. The narrow and rather limiting approach to literature which some people advocate and which would have students read only African authors he felt, as we do too, could only lead to narrowness of perspective and eventually to mediocrity.

It was not, incidentally, only in history or political economy that Walter wanted to communicate with his brothers and sisters. As one professor who knew him in his university days said, he was "a wholly integrated personality," always equally concerned to communicate his insights and convictions to his less learned, less privileged brothers." In his last visit to Dar es Salaam and in discussions we had for new books, he informed us that his projects included some children's books which he was especially researching for. Knowing the difficulties of the present struggle in Africa and Caribbean Walter would often say that the task of the present generation would probably be accomplished by those who are children today and that it was necessary therefore to prepare them by producing good children's books for them.

But there was Walter the conversationalist in private and the speaker on public platforms. In either situation it was always exhilarating, moving and educative to listen to him. He had extremely sharp wit which came out in that colourful, and typically West Indian language and accent and which could draw examples, metaphors and images from many African cultures in the West and East. He explained how for instance Forbes Burnham, the "Crime Minister" of Guyana, had been calling himself the Kabaka of Guyana in his exercises of mystification of the Afro-Caribbean link and how he, Rodney, had to deal with that at a public meeting. By the time he had explained who the Kabaka was,







Walter Rodney and the role of the revolutionary  
intellectual in the neo-colonial countries

E. Wamba-dia-Wamba

"For the only great men among the unfree and oppressed, are those who struggle to destroy the oppressor." Walter Rodney

The way Walter Rodney lived, and acted in his very short and intensely active - life represents, for us the people of the Third World, the complex and demanding character of the struggles for social emancipation we are involved in. Time seems always short for the tasks which summon us urgently to take sides in the class and national battles, intellectually, spiritually, physically - mentally and bodily - living seems to be constantly battling and resting seems to be sinking, i.e. dying slowly. Fanon used to think - and behave - as if he had, for the complete transformation of the Third World we have no right to rest. Physical health and mental health, for us people of the Third World require that we battle permanently. While fighting to understand these struggles, to arm ourselves better and better we must do this while at the same time struggling to keep our heads above water. Walter's life and the way he fell down in the battle remind us vividly of the enormity of our objective, the complete social emancipation and the need to permanently re-examine our modes of acting both individually as well as collectively. The life and death of this exemplary son of the oppressed working people of Guyana provide us with a number of lessons and questions to reflect and act upon. It is an occasion, not only to pay tribute and mourn the loss of a "brilliant scholar and historian - one whose dedication to historical consciousness and to humanity was paramount", but also to critically examine historically the now closed strategies of battling new ones open to the intellectual in the neo-colonial countries. It was Fanon, in 1961, who asked, 'what should Africa have done to save Lumumba?! This was a form of mourning which is also a recognition of social/collective responsibility for the loss, a collective self-criticism and a call for a collective formulation of a path of rectification for better modes of battling. Whenever one of us falls in the battle, the strongest possible condemnation of the enemy must be accompanied by a recognition of our social responsibility and the need for our collective self-criticism besides our expression of our strongest possible solidarity. Our most exemplary revolutionary intellectuals from F. Fanon to A. Cabral, from Lumumba to Mulele, from Afana Osende to Ernest Wandie, etc. have taught us this as a major lesson. I cannot practice fully the application of this lesson here; in this brief statement, I can only raise a few questions and draw a few lessons from the loss of Walter Rodney.

While the poet George Lamming compares<sup>1</sup> Walter Rodney to W.E.B. Dubois, C.L.R. James and George Padmore - with whom he does share their best and profound concerns for the complete social emancipation of the oppressed Black and non-Black people his short life and the stages of his development put him more in line with M. Ben Barka (North Africa), Afana Osende and A. Cabral (West Africa), Che Guevara (Latin America), F. Fanon - to name but the most known ones. With the exception of Fanon



who died in the battle but through an indirect bullet (cancer), they all died on the battlefield and at an early adult age. Ben Barka, a gifted mathematician and member of the 7 people who constituted the core of those who organized the Tricontinental Movement, died while actively trying to organize the political mobilization of the working people of Morocco. His former student - King Hassan II - , threatened by the momentum of Ben Barka's movement with the complicity of the French imperialism, assassinated him. Afana Osende, - brilliant political economist who helped draw a Cuban five year plan and active member of the Union of Cameroonian people (UPC) -, was assassinated while in the Maquis, by the neo-colonial French imperialist supported regime of Ahidjo. The stories of the agronomist engineer Cabral and the medical doctor Che Guevara and how they died are well known. It is probably fair to call this group (Fanon - Ben Barka - Che-Guevara - Afana Osende - Cabral - Rodney) part of the second generation of revolutionary intellectuals. Needless to say that while there are similarities among the members of this group there are differences as well, individual as well as epochal ones.

Rodney reminds me of that group in the very way he shifted his principal emphasis from theoretical struggles as a basis for clarifying issues involved in the understanding and the waging of the struggles against imperialist and its local agencies for complete social emancipation of the oppressed and exploited people to politically organized involvement in the working people based struggles as the basis for a higher clarity and for a concrete involvement in the mass based process of transformation. This does not mean theoretical battles and work are abandoned: Like Fanon who died shortly after completing his last book. Rodney died after having submitted the first volume of an important historical work, The History of the Guyanese Working People, 1881 - 1905, to John Hopkins University Press, U.S.A. Afana Osende died shortly before his book, L'Economie de l'ouest Africain, was published by Francois Maspero, Paris. The theoretical work and battles became increasingly more specific in their stand, viewpoint and method. This is what Rodney expressed in a lecture at Harvard University, Sept. 1979; "you must first have your feet wet before gaining clarity." Rodney has always tried to be clear and his publications are exceptionally clear, but his clarity became even sharper with his politically organic involvement.

Incidentally, this is what it means to say that ideas have a social base, that consciousness is one's relationship to one's surroundings and that languages of reality is "practical consciousness" (Marx). The form of expression of one's ideas would reflect one's focal base: the more removed from the principal struggle within the movement of struggles for social emancipation the more abstract one's vocabulary and ideas concerning revolutionary change are.

Rodney also reminds me of F. Fanon, Ben Barka, Cabral etc in the very seriousness with which he took his theoretical area of study: history. It was reported of Fanon's defense of his Ph.D. thesis in psychiatry that it looked as if the entire discipline was put on trial. Rodney made history - in the broad sense of theory of dialectics i.e. of real struggles, of the movement of transformation of processes of reality - a focal theoretical base through which to critically analyze and clarify



the social conditions of oppression, exploitation and domination our people have been struggling to live in. Being serious (i.e. honest or scientific) also meant knowing oneself honestly and correctly, it is asking, 'how does science transform me and my oppressed people? How, for whom and by whom is science practiced? "This is also putting on trial - so to speak - the self-honesty of science itself. In Rodney's historical work, one has the feeling that the ultimate criterion of validity of historical knowledge is not just its conformity to the theoretical and technical requirements of the community of historians, their scientific ideology - so to speak - but more than that its liberating impact. A historian who does not grasp the social conditions of production and reproduction of his/her profession resting on the basis of a separation of intellectual labour from manual labour for example - fails even to know himself/herself honestly and correctly. He/she does not then practice the epistemologico-historical guidelines of her/his work. It is the masses who make history and class struggle is the motive force of history. And science "sans conscience n'est que ruine de l'ame." The historian must know with clarity her/his own history, her/his present as history. Rodney insists on this "historical consciousness" and it is almost this consciousness that he calls 'being concrete.'

On a number of occasions when I heard Rodney speak, and in our long conversations, the relationship between science and revolution was always a major preoccupation. Are the theoretical assumptions, methods and results of the existing social sciences in conformity with the demands of liberation and social emancipation of our oppressed/exploited people? In 1974, when I just met Walter, at Brandeis University, he precisely addressed himself, in a lecture, to that question and concluded: The present socio-economic conditions of the Third World constitute the real material criticism and refutation of the basic teaching of social sciences as they exist. The requirements of, and the practical tasks of, transforming - thus clarifying - those socio-economic conditions constitute the promise for the rectification of social sciences in their orientation as well as objects." One cannot but remember Guevara's speech in 1964, at the Algiers conference (The quotation opening the first chapter of Rodney's How Europe Underdeveloped Africa is an illustration of that challenge to bourgeois social sciences on the question of African social development. (Listening to Rodney's lecture, one gets almost the same inspiring pleasure as listening to Fanon's lecture). How, for whom and why are you doing your intellectual work? This question is implicit in Rodney's work.

By 1974, it was clear to most of us that in most of our neo-colonial countries - if not all - the ruling oligarchies were confronting the intellectual arm of criticism with the unthinking criticism of the arm. Rodney was determined to return to Guyana and be concretely involved in the process of social transformation in Guyana itself. "Sooner or later - better sooner - some of us have to decide whether we will continue interpreting - no matter how critically - the world in which our people are increasingly oppressed and exploited or we will involve ourselves (mind and body) in the process of social transformation in which our oppressed people are increasingly engaged." This, of course, reminded me of Fanon's "leave this Europe where they never get tired of talking of man..." There is no



universal intellectual, an intellectual "in general", there are only organic intellectuals of the oppressed or of the oppressors.

The arm of criticism outside of a real national/social base in which it can be tested and experimented and thus collectively developed, becomes another form of interpretation of the present world. In fact, what gives efficacy to the lies we criticize are the material conditions of power (of exploitation and domination); a really effective arm of criticism must also include a theory of a concrete organization of the process of transformation (revolution) of those material conditions of domination - otherwise, elements of the arm of criticism are recuperated and incorporated in the ideological apparatus of domination.

An intellectual committed to the struggle for social emancipation, without a social experimental base, may sooner or later find himself becoming not only a simple interpreter of the world, not only removed from his oppressed people, but also fundamentally dishonest as far as his commitment is concerned) and perhaps a traitor to his people as well. Keeping in contact with reality as Ben Barka<sup>2</sup> used to repeat - is not just a theoretical question or physical question but a practical question of finding out on which side one is on concretely: with the oppressed or with the oppressors. Only certain concrete social practices which allow reality to manifest itself in its true colours: critical practice of transformation of social reality in its globality. No practical questions of this kind are resolved outside of real national social struggles through which theoretical and subjectivist dogmatisms are practically exposed.

Let me say that Rodney, like all the people he reminds me of, was an internationalist by stand, viewpoint, method and practice. But sooner or later all of them realized that real internationalism must be rooted in a real national/social base without which its efficacy becomes problematic. A genuine revolutionary activity must be internationalist; but, a genuine internationalism is only practised from a specific social base and national base.

Between 1974 and 1979, I met Rodney five times or so, almost every time he came to the U.S.A. He had been living, since he returned home from abroad, under extreme conditions of hardships." Since 1974 he was denied the position of Professorship of History at the University of Guyana and for his dedication to the working peoples of Guyana he was harassed and vilified." It is a form of social death to be denied any work in relation to one's abilities. While pretending to mobilize our people for modernization or the development of productive forces, neo-colonialist oligarchies of our countries organize the destruction of our best productive forces, the truly conscious revolutionary intellectuals, the great men and women among the unfree.' While denying Walter Rodney the right to earn a living by practising his profession - imparting the necessary historical consciousness to the children of the Guyanese oppressed working people - Burnham's government "granted asylum to a group of American social misfits (Rev. Jones' Temple Peoples) led by



a reactionary religious fanatic." This is really putting in the post of command an example of the spiritual destruction of the working people of Guyana. The death of Walter Rodney puts on trial all those so-called leaders of our exploited working people in post-colonial countries whose real major contribution has been the organized destruction of the best elements of the productive forces (people and knowledge) our working people have produced.

Back home, Walter was, perhaps for the first time, struggling not only for the social emancipation of the working people at large, but even to feed himself and his family. Yet his commitment, instead of softening became increasingly steeler. Committed as he was to the concrete struggle for the social emancipation - including the liberation from the arbitrary rule of Burnham's government - of the working people of Guyana, he refused to go and stay abroad - which he could have done easily as offers were not lacking. He used to emphasize that "one must keep in real contact with the reality one is contributing to transform." Even if all the working people of Guyana went and stayed abroad this would not be a real social emancipation of the Guyanese working people. Of course, the economic, social and political barbarism to which imperialism and neo-colonial bourgeoisies want to confine the "newly independent" peoples explains and justifies the instability and tension which are agitating neo-colonial regimes of Africa, Asia, Latin America. Recent events in Liberia, Ghana, Mali, Uganda, Chad, etc. are an expression of an epoch.

Before Rodney came here last May, I last met him at Harvard University where he gave a lecture on "African liberation and the strategy for economic development." He demonstrated the artificiality, narrowness and irresponsibility of the economic strategies of development put into practice by the ruling oligarchies of our neo-colonial countries. It was clear then, that Walter had by then started dealing in a concrete way with strategies and tactics - in a different way than through the building of theoretical scenarios. He had, by then, taken up the issue and became involved in the process of, organizing the working people of Guyana, an issue and challenge which he described to be "concrete and based on specificities of the country." He emphasized repeatedly the necessity of making concrete analysis of the concrete situation and of not letting oneself be confused by theoretical issues leading some of our minds to sterile pursuits and away from concrete attempts at genuine social emancipation. For, making local social transformations is the crucial contribution to the liberation struggles elsewhere. The only way to avoid and correct theoretical dogmatism and subjectivism, i.e. one-sidedness is concrete analysis of the concrete struggles of working people-based social emancipation.

In his brief visit here and to Zimbabwe last May, some of us who met him discovered a Rodney more determined and more aware of the real dangers of the struggles of the working people of Guyana. He felt it indispensable to be with the working people of Guyana, and face the then coming trial (June 3, 1980) and not let them down by staying abroad.

Walter Rodney was assassinated on June 13, 1980. It is important to see his brief active adult life in the contributions and limits reproducing the best elements of other lives or lives



vating beyond them as the end of a phase of the revolutionary struggle in Guyana - and its implications elsewhere - and the beginning of a new phase. The clarity that this life made possible - including in the way that it was snatched - is an important cornerstone for the reformulation of an appropriate strategy of battling in the new phase. With all the attempts made at revolutionarising our neo-colonial countries, no revolution has completely succeeded in any of them. This needs a real study.

Those are some of the reflexions, questions and lessons I draw from the brief life and loss of comrade and brother Walter Rodney whom I have the pride to have known and exchanged views and concerns with. I learned a lot from him. I learned that the intellectual in the Third World must take sides sooner or later: is he going to be an interpreter of the Third World or is he going to be involved in transforming it. If one is a real intellectual - and not just a dilettante - one who stands for truth ("truth is concrete", 'only truth is revolutionary' Lenin) one who rightly rebels against reactionaries - whose theory stands for the destruction of the working people -, he may not even have any other choice. And once one has committed oneself to struggle for complete social emancipation among one's working people, one has to go all the way. To paraphrase Fanon, we are nothing if we don't stand for truth, for the complete revolutionary social transformation of our countries. "For the only great men among the unfree and oppressed, are those who struggle to destroy the oppressor." Walter Rodney was, indeed, a great man: we are right to mourn his loss!

<sup>1</sup>Rickey Singh, "Guyana's sensational murder." Caribbean Contact, Vol. 8, No. 3, 1980.

<sup>2</sup>Options revolutionnaires au Maroc., F. Maspero, Paris 1966.

"Our best textbook in matters of revolutionary process  
itself."

(Castro)



The Vice Chancellor  
University of Dar es Salaam.

22nd July, 1980.

Ndugu Vice-Chancellor,

We, the students and members of staff of the University of Dar es Salaam, gathered together on 22nd July, 1980, to participate in the Memorial Symposium on "Walter Rodney's contribution to the Revolution", have been deeply shocked by the brutal assassination of Dr. Rodney on 13th June, 1980, in Georgetown, Guyana.

then

Professor Rodney joined the University College, Dar es Salaam immediately after completing his doctorate at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He stayed on this Campus for eight years during which time he made an outstanding contribution to both the academic as well as social and political life of the Community.

The period immediately following the Arusha Declaration was a period of great intellectual ferment, debates, discussions and innovations on the Campus. In this, Walter Rodney was amongst the most prominent participants. His dedication to committed scholarship and his unflinching devotion to the cause of the oppressed inspired many a student and member of staff, and reverberated beyond the four walls of the University.

Dr. Rodney was among the first few who argued against a narrow disciplinary approach to social questions that we face. He was one of the pioneers who inspired a reorganization of the form and content of the History courses by insisting on committed and scientific scholarship. Walter Rodney totally immersed himself in the student and staff activities, including various nation-building programmes. He spent his eight years here participating, taking, and contributing tirelessly to numerous courses, seminars, symposia and public meetings at the University as well as those organised by the Historical Association, schools and colleges around the country.

Dr. Rodney's scholarly contributions, while impressive in their own right, nonetheless never departed from his single-minded commitment to the cause of the oppressed, from his concern to combine theory and practice in the struggle for human liberation. As a revolutionary intellectual he consciously attempted to write not only about the oppressed, but also for the people, in a language that made the fund of human knowledge accessible to the people, raising their consciousness, and serving them as a powerful tool for their own liberation.

Dr. Rodney's publications, whose partial list is attached, covered a broad field of human history, from the oppression of the slaves in West Africa to colonial and neo-colonial oppression and exploitation in Tanzania, and ending, where his life ended with an examination of the oppression and exploitation of the working class in his home country. His life's work is perhaps best summarised in his famous book, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, which was researched and written during his stay at this University. It is required reading in a number of courses at this University, and is a textbook in History and Political Economy in our Secondary Schools. It has already been reprinted six times, and sold over 50,000 copies in Africa alone. It has been translated into Japanese, Portuguese and German, and its Kiswahili and French translations are in preparation. The book has been hailed as a great contribution to knowledge and one of the original works on imperialism.



The greatest tribute to Walter Rodney's intellectual prowess was recently paid by the world-famous novelist from the Caribbean, George Lamming, when he listed Rodney among W.E.B. DuBois, C.L.R. James and George Padmore as the four intellectual giants of our times. (See Caribbean Contact, July, 1980)

There is no doubt that Dr. Rodney has, in the words of section 6 of the The University of Dar es Salaam Act, 1970, "rendered distinguished service in the advancement of...learning". In view of this, we, the students and members of staff of the University of Dar es Salaam, strongly feel that we owe Dr. Rodney an honour and an appreciation. We therefore call upon the University to confer upon Dr. Rodney an honorary degree posthumously.

We further call upon you, the Vice-Chancellor, to expedite the process so that the said degree be conferred upon the late Walter Rodney during the coming graduation ceremony to be held in August, 1980.

Signed:

*Bernardina Swan*

Chairman of the  
Symposium for and on  
behalf of all those  
in attendance.



We, members of the University community and the general public assembled to participate in the Memorial Symposium on "Walter Rodney's contribution to the Revolution", at the University of Dar es Salaam on 22nd July, 1980, in honour of our fallen colleague and comrade,

Noting

1. his immense contribution to the development of this University as a progressive institution;
2. his immense contribution to the cause of liberation in the third world;
3. his efforts at developing militant solidarity between the oppressed peoples of Africa and the Caribbean;
4. his unequivocal support for the anti-colonial struggles in the former Portuguese colonies and white racist regimes in Southern Africa;
5. his profound intellectual contribution in furthering an understanding of the nature of imperialist oppression through his work How Europe Underdeveloped Africa; and finally,
6. and finally
6. his intense commitment to struggle against the tyrannical Burnham regime;

Do hereby express our condolence to the family of Dr. Rodney and their friends for the terrible loss they have suffered, and to assure them that we continue to cherish the legacy and memory of our brother Walter

And Resolve:

1. to condemn the neo-colonial Burnham regime for the systematic destruction of all democratic rights in Guyana, for unleashing a reign of terror culminating in the brutal and cowardly assassination of Dr. Rodney in a desperate attempt to hold back the tide of the revolution in Guyana;
2. to express our militant solidarity with <sup>the</sup> Working People's Alliance and the progressive forces in Guyana struggling against imperialism and the barbaric reactionary Burnham regime in Guyana;
3. to express our dismay at the incomprehensible silence of the authorities of the University of Dar es Salaam following the assassination of the most illustrious revolutionary intellectual to have taught at this University.
4. to call upon the University of Dar es Salaam to confer posthumously honorary doctorate upon the late Dr. Rodney during this year's graduation ceremony.
5. to erect a memorial to Dr. Rodney at the Revolutionary Square of the University of Dar es Salaam and to this effect a fund be established.

Signed: Bonaventura Swan

Chairman  
of the Symposium  
For and on behalf of all those  
in attendance.



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Committee for the prosecution of the war of liberation in the South, etc., he visited Africa and made the correct rhetorical noises at the right places. But this is the same man who worked hand in hand with Jim Jones who murdered nearly a thousand people in the bushes of Guyana two years ago. The outrage that this caused has not been noticed by

Burnham. Today he uses the ruffian strength of a Rabbi Washington an Afro-American wanted in the US for various crimes and who was refused residence in Algeria, to brutalize Guyanese citizens and last year to murder a Roman Catholic priest, Father Drake.

#### Walter Rodney and the WPA

The WPA posed a threat to Burnham because it stood for clean, democratic government. It stressed that the wealth of the nation should be utilized to alleviate the poverty, the bad health, the poor housing, etc, for the Guyanese people. It is in total opposition to Burnham's dictatorship and his exploitation of racial differences; the leadership of the group is of mixed racial composition. This is of particular importance since Burnham has been able to neutralize the official opposition of Jagan. The PPP now offers "critical support" to the regime and Burnham has been able to give colour to his Government by bringing in a token number of Indians, Chinese, etc. In this struggle against dictatorship Walter Rodney was of paramount importance. He symbolized the nature of the opposition to Burnham. An Afro-Guyanese, distinguished scholar of international repute, he refused to accept posts in the USA and Canada and keep safely out of the politics of the region. In 1975 when he left this University he was unable to take up the post of Professor of History at the University of Guyana that the University had offered him. In 1979 Burnham foisted on him a charge of arson and when it was clear that this would fail the ultimate solution became the order of the day. Walter was brutally assassinated on black friday - Friday 13th June.



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"FOR WALTER RODNEY" by Joe Pereira

"THEY KILLED WALTER LAST NIGHT"  
THE NEWS FLASHES FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE  
ISLAND TO ISLAND  
FORCES THE MANGLED STEEL AND BODIES  
OF SO MANY OTHER TIMES  
SO MANY OTHER PLACES  
SO MANY PETTY TYRANTS.

A GAGGLE OF AC DEMICS  
SPINE THE NEWS AROUND OVER LUNCH  
FUELLING THE CONVERSATION FOR A WHILE  
TILL SOMEBODY REMEMBERS DESSERT  
AND EVERYBODY SIGHS SECURE  
THAT NOTHING WILL CHANGE  
THE ORDER OF THINGS ("WHAT CAN WE DO")

OVER IN AUGUST TOWN  
AN AGING RASTA MAN  
CALLS ON JAH'S JUDGEMENT  
JUDGEMENT, JUDGE . . .  
DOWN IN THE HOT HEART  
OF THE CITY  
BROTHERS OF THE SIXTIES  
CLENCH THEIR FISTS  
DRUMS WILL SPEAK FOR THE COMRADE TONIGHT  
AND TOMORROW MUST COME.

WALTER WHO GROUNDS WITH HIS BROTHERS  
WHO SEE THROUGH HIS OWN EYES  
WHO TEAR OFF THE MASK OF THE BEAST:  
MEK WE SEE NOW:-  
IS A JLP GOVERNMENT  
IS A BURNHAM REGIME  
IS A BLACK BOURGEOISIE  
IS A DIRTY VERSION OF WHITE.

AND WALTER PROVING HIS HUMANITY  
IN REVOLUTIONARY DEEDS.

AND WITH THE GROUND SWELL  
THE HAWKS SHRILL:  
THE IMMIGRATION BOYS KEEP WATCH  
THE PETTY TYRANT HIMSELF DIRECTS,



BUT WHERE THE BODY CAN'T GO  
THE SOUL CAN TRAVEL  
AND THE WORD  
CAN

PEU-

E-

TRATE

AND BECOME FLESH AMONG US.

AND SILENCE IS NOT THE EXPLOSION OF A BOMB  
NO.

SILENCE

IS NOT

THE EXPLOSION;

OF A BOMB.

THE HEARTLAND WILL OPEN  
TO RECEIVE ITS SON  
AND A WINDOW AND CHILDREN  
WILL CRY SOFTLY IN THE NIGHT.  
BUT COMRADES GOIN' CLENCH THEIR FISTS  
AND DRUMS GOIN' SPEAK  
AND THE PETTY TYRANT  
(AS IN OTHER TIMES AND IN OTHER PLACES)  
GOIN' SWELL IN THE SUN  
FOR THE MIDDAY FLIES,  
BECAUSE TOMORROW MUST COME.

AND A POEM GOIN' RISE  
THROUGH GUYANA

LARGE ON THE BANNERS OF THE PEOPLE.

FOR SILENCE IS NOT THE EXPLOSION OF A BOMB

"For Walter Rodney" by Joe Pereira