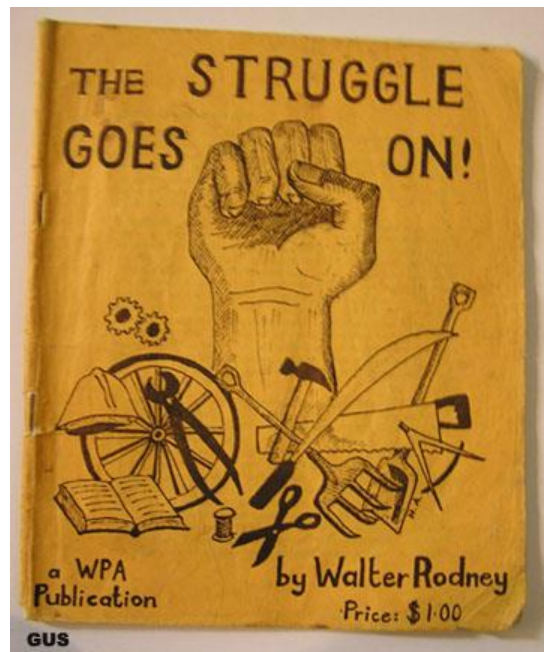


The Struggle Goes On

by Dr. Walter Rodney



The cover of "The Struggle Goes On!" by Dr. Walter Rodney, 1979.

Brothers and sisters!

Many persons are coming forward and are bringing evidence and information about what is going on. They tell about their own particular experiences — as housewives, as taxi drivers and so on. They all come and give information with the necessary details, so that we can get a total picture of what the social, economic

and political life is like in this country today.

And there is not a group without some fundamental grievance. What we would like to do in the Working People's Alliance is to share with you some analysis of the facts before us. We will concentrate on information as the basis of our analysis of where we are, and more important still, of where we are going. It is essential to carry out such a sober analysis. The idea being not simply to rally our supporters, but to convince all Guyanese, because we respect their intelligence. When you put sensible things before the Guyanese population, they will respond; and that is our task today.

I want to begin my reference to events by asking you to think about some of the more recent statements which have emerged from the ruling government since the murder of Father Darke — for that murder was an important political event in the event history of this country. Father Darke fell as the first martyr of the present stage of the Guyanese revolution. (Applause) We must understand the significance of his murder. The W.P.A. has already publicly accused the P.N.C., as a party and as the government of this country, of complicity in that murder. And we have said that in any decent and civilised country, investigations would have proceeded to find out who were the real authors and instigators of the murder of Father Darke. (Someone shouts, "Rabbi".) More than just the Rabbi. We must not be confused into thinking that the Rabbi is an independent entity! The Rabbi is not independent. The Rabbi himself is a stooge of other forces. (Laughter) We must identify his masters — his paymasters. We must not be afraid to say openly that the People's National Congress has been officially involved in thuggery. Eventually it had to lead to murder as it did on July the fourteenth. And what has occurred since convinces us that the government, having got itself in that murder, is now concentrating on the cover-up.

First they came out with ridiculous stories about 'scuffling' that went on; then they refused to tell the Guyanese and the international public that Father Darke was killed while doing his duty as a journalist.

They never published any photographs of July 14 in the Chronicle. That was not because the Chronicle photographer was not there. He was right there on the scene. He had the time and the opportunity to photograph us when we were brought on a ridiculous charge of arson, but they would not publish any photographs of the violence. Photographs do exist. If you go to 'Freedom House' in Robb Street, you will see the display of these photographs. (Applause and comments). The brother says the photographs should be carried to court. I agree, that's a logical statement. In a normal, civilised, healthy country, it would have gone to the courts. Instead, The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing, a Minister who actually had the temerity to turn up at the funeral of Father Darke, (derisive laughter), has now gone on record as fabricating yet another dimension to the lie — coming up with remarkable interpretation that the murder of Father

Darke was another Catholic priest whose name he cannot pronounce. (Shouts of "Shame".)

The Chronicle of Lies

In one sense, we can dismiss this as nonsensical. In another sense, however, it is a reminder of to all of us how much contempt the government of this country has heaped upon the people of this country. You have to be absolutely contemptuous of the people whom you are addressing to tell them such foolishness and expect them to believe. It is a total insult to anyone's intelligence to be given such an interpretation when most Guyanese today and certainly those of us who live in Georgetown, have by now gotten a clear picture of what happened on that day. But the ruling class is continually trying to tell us that whatever they say is the truth — no matter what you see, no matter what you experience. Even if you saw it with your own eyes and they print the opposite in the Chronicle, you are supposed to say to yourself, "I must have been dreaming when I thought I saw it that way." (Laughter) They continually insult our intelligence and our capacity to make independent decisions.

The Chronicle, of course as you realise, has sunk to a new low. Part of their recent propaganda has to do with the Bauxite strike, and it is not the first time that they have concocted propaganda about the bauxite strike. I believe that they work on the assumption that because Linden is separated from Georgetown, or Kwakwani is separated from Georgetown, they can tell us here in Georgetown and tell the people in Corentyne and Essequibo anything about Linden, and people will believe. But they publish so many contradictions in their own newspapers that even the most uninformed reader must come to the conclusion that they are reading a tissue of lies. A few days ago the Editorial comment on page one of the Chronicle proved itself a most remarkable document. I read it four or five times and still find it difficult to understand. In an editorial which dealt with the question of truth — they said they were searching for truth — they themselves wanted to know where to find it. One day we hear the strike is crumbling and the next day we hear the strike is firm. One day we hear how everybody turned out to work. Next day we understand it is only one man. (Laughter). And then they ask the question in the end, "Where is the truth amidst all of these confusing statements?"

The thing about that editorial is that the contradictory statements to which they refer are all published in their own newspaper. They were not taking these statements elsewhere — they were using the information from the Chronicle to write an editorial saying that "We ain't know wha is truth, because every day we does print a different story." (Laughter). And yet, spectators continue to buy it, and to read it, while the P.N.C. expect us to believe anything that they present to us. It is ultimately, as I said, apart from comedy, an insult to the Guyanese people, and we have to say that we will put an end to those in power who have such a low estimation of our abilities. (Applause). Not only are they insulting us. but in the real sense, it seems as if

they have taken leave of all sanity.

With Burnham, Lunacy Prevails

The W.P.A. has asked people to comment on this before, and I want to put it forward very seriously because when you accuse people of acting as if they were mad or acting as madmen or madwomen you're making a serious accusation. It should not be put forward lightly as though it were a mere joke, because in normal circumstances, the mentally ill person is just like any one else who is physically ill and we should be sympathetic. But when the ruling class is characterized by elements of insanity, it is another matter altogether, because those who are insane must be given proper medical treatment. They must be removed from normal processes of work while that treatment is going on. (Laughter). So we don't expect our rulers to be plagued by insanity, and yet it is difficult sometimes to find any explanation of their conduct which can be given in normal terms of an individual or individuals who are sane. Time and again you come up against the only possible conclusion — that we are ruled by people who have departed from their insanity in the literal sense of the word, because you have become insane when you have lost touch with reality. If you move down the road shadowboxing, someone might imagine you are a boxer practising. 'So you alright — you practising.' But if you do this every day and people realize that you are not really shadowboxing, 'you genuinely believe you fightin' somebody else, then they say you mad.' (Laughter). Because you have departed from reality; you've lost touch with reality. They seem to think that they are all-powerful.

Whoever accumulated power to themselves in such a way that they want to make every single decision in the state a personal decision, is being taken over by insanity, and it is not surprising, because no one man or handful of men even in their own interests should conduct the affairs of state as their personal business. So that when some sister 'have to get wuk as a washer-woman, he gat to intervene to decide whether or not she gon' get dat wuk.' And when so-and-so got to get a promotion or a scholarship, 'all a' dis thing gat to be done by certain telephones." Now when you reduce yourself to government by telephones, it means you've got to jump everytime the telephone rings. (Laughter). So they're very jumpy. More than that, they can't sleep because when you dedicate yourself to oppressing others, you cannot sleep. You have to spend all night planning how you will oppress the next day and then you've got to spend all the next day oppressing. You have no sleep day or night. So that is why this ruling class is being plagued now by symptoms of lunacy — losing touch with reality — they haven't a clue what is going on. They're living in a world of their own and they're trying to reduce the rest of us to the same condition of losing touch with reality.

What is it when the news media continually comes out to tell you that you did not see what you saw. (Laughter). They tell you that they saw what you didn't see — this is a way of making you lose touch with reality. (Laughter).

(Sound of a helicopter overhead). Brother and Sisters, I am aware of the preferred mode of transportation of

King Kong. (Laughter). Nevertheless, we have to proceed with what is going on down there and we want to show that the ruling class has clearly lost touch with reality in a way that is absolutely frightening. Think about the story of the palace that they were about to build. In the midst of the most desperate economic crisis that has ever hit this nation, (let us forget for a moment who brought on the crisis, we know they brought it on, but forget that for a moment), any sane government would not think about building a palace. But you see King Kong had decided he wanted to build a palace to his ego (laughter), and a monument to his own stupidity — so that he could sit inside and be a monument inside a monument. (Laughter and applause).

One of the brothers in the audience, when we were at **Grove** yesterday, suggested to us that what was required was to extend the zoo to take in the Residence (laughter) and then we would have one of the most prized exhibits of any zoo in the world. (Laughter). People would come from all over the world and pay to see King Kong.



Allegedly, the house in Tucville frequented by Sgt. Gregory Smith.

The Burnham Touch

When one is searching for words to describe what is going on, it is very difficult to find the appropriate terms. Personally as the days go by, I find it difficult to describe the reality around us. Although I would modestly say that my vocabulary is not limited, I find my choice of words limited to those which describe excrement, words which have to do with the faeces and defecation. One has to come down to speak of it in a way that reflects and captures the reality of the time and the mood of the people. The other evening, speaking at another site, I had to draw the analogy, to say what if there ever was such a thing called the Midas touch, which was the touch that made everything turn into gold, then we will have a new creation in this society — the Burnham touch where everything he touches turns to shit. (Prolonged laughter). One has to put it in these brutal terms because the situation in which we are is a brutal situation. One has to put it in even these crude terms because they have reduced us in such a way that even those terms do not fully capture reality. Whatever they touch, even if they touch a policeman in uniform — that is the Burnham

touch. (Laughter). And that is why we speak to our brothers in uniform and we have to greet them roughly, not because we do not understand they are brothers and sisters in uniform, but because we have to point out to them the way in which they have been touched, and that they're covered with filth because of this regime. (Laughter). They continually have to go out and do all manner of dirty work.

Now I will give you a typical example: In recent searchings in the country, one of the persons who has just been searched in Linden is Brother Yearwood, better known as Brother Jomo. Now Jomo is an individual who, during the referendum, personally walked the whole distance from Linden to Georgetown as a mark of his own moral and political protest. (Applause). Brother Jomo was in the crowd on Saturday July 14, when he was attacked by the Rabbi's men and very seriously injured his arm so that he lost control of certain fingers. It will take considerable time, if ever, for him to recover full control of those fingers — he was seriously wounded. And the moment he was let out of the hospital, his attackers were, of course, rushed through the traffic court at five o'clock in the afternoon to be released back into the street on merely nominal fines. So far as the law was concerned, as far as the particular magistrate NORMA JACKSON or JACKMAN or whatever her name is was concerned, they were free to go back on the streets. Another one who was touched. (Laughter). Let me complete the story about brother Jomo. Jomo went back to Linden after his attackers had been freed to go on the road, and the police turned up to search his house for arms and ammunition. I suppose the next thing that they will do is to arrest him and say, "We are charging you with unlawfully throwing yourself on a bayonet and causing the bayonet to get blood." That is the only thing left for them to do. Then the victim becomes a double and triple victim.

Black Skin, Fascist Mask

This is the society in which we live and we are not talking about 'long-time story'. We're talking about what's going on right now. And we have to expose this ruthlessly. One of the things that the regime does not like is to be exposed and uncovered. They have lived for these many years by putting on certain masks, by trying to fool the outside world — and even some Guyanese who live right here, with the mask of democratic government because they have a joke institution called a Parliament. In this mask they have something called a free press, free judiciary etc., but we know that when we lost the right to choose our own government in free elections, we lost all other rights. It is just a matter of time — they take when they want to take, they give when they want to give — until that time when the people intervene. Unmask them and show them that the power belongs to the people! (Applause)

If you notice in the media, whether it be Action Line, or the New Nation, or the Chronicle, one of the things they're very hurt about is the so-called attacks on their leader. How come their leader can be attacked? King Kong is supposed to be beyond criticism. (Laughter). They have seriously promoted him as the ultimate in wisdom, all-knowing, all powerful, next to God — a man whose face adorns the exercise books of our

children, and who is probably responsible for their high failure rate in the schools. (Laughter). Do not believe it was a mere accident that it was necessary to promote the cult of the personality around him, to make it appear as though all intelligence in Guyana was concentrated in one man and no intelligence was outside. All virtue, all political acumen, all commitment was concentrated in one man. It even reached the stage, (and you will check this out for yourself, you will check it out in terms of your experience and your memory of what has been going on) when it was popular in P.N.C. circles when something went wrong for the person to say, "Well, maybe you're right, it did go wrong, but the Comrade Leader didn't know anything about it." You have to put the Comrade Leader above all wrong doing, although in another context he himself has said that nothing goes on that he doesn't know about. But whenever something went wrong, it is claimed he didn't know about it. It is a way of isolating him from the people, putting him way above the people, and therefore it is equally important that in the context of our present struggle we unmask that attempt to wrap this individual up, romanticize him and present him to the Guyanese people as the 'ultimate.'

On the contrary, we will judge him on the basis of his performance, and on that basis we can we can say that he has been the initiator of a period of a total lack of democracy in this society; that he has supervised over bringing the society to the lowest ebb it has ever been in its history; that he has reduced Guyanese to a position where he can only say "we shame" wherever we go, "we shame". We have said this before, and one could always ask Guyanese as individuals to check this amongst themselves. They can check with their relatives abroad because we are a people who travel the world, and there is hardly anyone in touch without some relative or a friend in Canada, the United States, etc.

Write them and ask them how you felt as Guyanese at the time of the Jonestown tragedy. Many of them actually went around denying that they were Guyanese. Somebody would come up to you and say, 'tell us something about Jonestown. I know you're from Guyana', and the person would explain, "no, you get it wrong, is Ghana, you get it wrong". (Laughter).

Burnham's Shame Is On Our Backs!

Nobody want to own up to being Guyanese abroad. You had better not go to Trinidad or Surinam or any place and let it be known that you come from Guyana because the police will pick you up, all kinds of things will happen to you because you are Guyanese. In other words, although it is the shame of the ruling class, they have brought that shame upon us.

All Guyanese will have to bear that burden and therefore it is time that we make sure we throw that burden off our backs. And we have the capacity. It is only the ruling clique who imagine in their fantasy, in their

lunacy and lack of touch with reality, that the people do not have the capacity.

The maximum leader finds or found in the past that the things he had to do was to surround himself with mediocrity, surround himself with persons of no stature; surround himself with persons unknown to the people, with persons who had compromised loyalty to the supreme leader. All of those tendencies we have to arrest, and before the time runs out on us we will have to try and work out some steps for the programme by which we will effect the removal of the P.N.C.; the removal of the illegal clique, or what is left of the P.N.C., because it is hardly a political party anymore. (Applause).

Many a rank and file member of that party has quit its ranks, many who years ago honestly felt that they could work with that P.N.C. have now given up in disgust. And when you check it out, you find those former members of the P.N.C. or the Y.S.M. — they too know the Burnham touch because he put it on them. They realize with even greater confidence, with even greater certainty that the task at hand is the removal of that clique because they have firsthand experience of working in those frustrating conditions. And it is precisely at this point in time we have to mobilize all forces, not only those who were opponents yesterday, but those of our brothers and sisters who today can realize that they must join our ranks — and we will make way for them. We will welcome any Guyanese who recognizes what is going on and who is prepared to make progress on a different path. (Applause). That is why our programme as a party involves actively the people of Guyana. Ideologically as Brother Roopnarine was explaining in all circumstances we will pursue a principled line for the building of genuine socialism.

The W.P.A. and Our Struggle

Let us make it clear that we are not asking persons to enter because of support for our ideology. We are asking for an active effort of the people people for national reconstruction and national unity on the basis of common sense, patriotism, decency and honesty. We are committed to building a Guyana for the future of the Guyanese children. (applause). We are prepared to enter into a dialogue with groups such as businessmen, the various professionals like lawyers and doctors, engineers and architects and so on. We are challenging them to take a stand now against what is going on at the political level. We are challenging them to recognize that the workers in the society, in all sectors have a common cause, to realize that they have to participate in a future government if they want to be able to claim that they are patriotic Guyanese who are prepared to contribute to the well-being of the nation (applause).

These groups may well ask you what is our programme for them. Where do businessmen and professionals fit into our programme? And we can answer that question as best we can from our printed programme and our exchange with them verbally. There is more than that; it is not simply that we should promise any given group that after the revolution they will get certain rewards. We want to say to these groups, "participate in the process of change, participate in what is now the true Guyanese revolution, and by virtue of

participating, you will not have to ask anybody what is the policy, because you will help in the making of that policy." (Applause). That is why we are challenging everyone to get involved now because it is only by being involved now in the process of change at this very beginning that the individual goes around and says "We also have power, we're also involved in the process of power, we also can make decisions in our society of the national level, of the local level, within our communities, and so on."

The W.P.A. has been very careful, as those who know over the years will testify, to warn against demagogues. We have been careful to warn you against people who come to you and say, "we are the new deliverers, we are the new messiahs and the new prophets." this is because it is the old set who stressed precisely that, and delivered to you — to what? That which we know about. They delivered you into the Burnham touch. (Laughter). As a consequence, we are not simply saying that we will come forward and take hold of the reins. of power as they are, because we are not interested in those trifles. We are saying that in the interests of Guyanese as a whole we have to build a new political system in the long run — one that offers stability, security and justice for all Guyanese; and if we are to do that and if we are to solve the immediate pressing problems of the economy, we have to have the participation of all, all sorts and types so that we can pool our collective wisdom and our collective intelligence. It is only a fool who believes that he or she alone has the wisdom to make decisions particularly in a situation as desperate as ours. One would have thought that anyone in this situation would be only too happy to get aid from somebody else, to hear other people participate in making the decisions in the present crisis. So we challenge the businessmen, we challenge the professionals to come forward and identify themselves with the idea of a government of national reconstruction and national unity.

On Being A Professional

I want to say some words in particular about the professionals who are a group who normally have a lot of respect in Guyanese society. And to be professional, really means that once you have chosen that field of work and you have certain standards which you would like to maintain as a professional, whether you be a future professional or whether is be what we traditionally call a 'trade'. As a professional, you try to follow professional standards. You try to follow standards that are correct and laid down. Even if you are an undertaker, you have professional standards. You don't just throw the body into the earth, because that would be against your professional standards which dictate that when you bury people you do so with a certain standard. So professionalism is an important element of social life because if people do not uphold proper professional standards, the entire society tends to collapse. What we find in Guyana today is that the conditions which prevail make it impossible for professionals to conduct their professional life as they would like. You are not allowed to do the job you want to do. Many persons are frustrated not just by the economic conditions but by lack of job satisfaction — a lack of an opportunity to develop a talent, to show

their creativity, to advance in their chosen field of work and activity.

We just have to look around and we realize this at once. We talk about the media — which means in Guyana the newspaper and the radio. Now the persons who work there are journalists, and in the past we have had a tradition of fighting journalism in Guyana. More than one hundred years ago, there were independent fighting journalists in this country and we do have a tradition of fighting journalism. We had, even in the colonial days, journalists who fought to make journalism a genuine profession. Even the former editor of the Chronicle who resigned recently, in the old days, before he got the touch, would have been known as a journalist of repute. (laughter). That is the tragedy of Guyanese life, the man went around touching so many people on their head and their shoulders that that was the end for them after he touched them. (laughter). What we have to realise is that a profession such as journalism is a profession which in other parts of the world commands maximum respect. In the United States today, I am assured that the most popular course for enrollment in the universities is journalism because students have come to associate journalism with a capacity to speak and write. These journalists saw the exposure of those who planned the Vietnam War; they saw the exposure of Nixon — all that was done by journalists. And nowadays, in the U.S.A. and Canada and Britain, when a minister of government receives a 'phone call that such and such a journalist wants to see him,' they immediately get straight; they get under 'heavy manners' because when a journalist is talking to you, you have to be serious. But what have they reduced journalists to in this country? They're not even scribes because they cannot write down what is happening, so they're not even notetakers.

In the old days, the journalists used to move around with their notepads and write down notes, but now it is not even worthwhile writing down notes. The brothers will not be published if it is serious material — certainly not in the form in which the journalist intended. They cannot investigate independently. They cannot ascertain what facts are there. They cannot cross-question a Minister to hear what is the truth and what is not. They had the biggest news story in the history of journalism—JONESTOWN—bigger than any other single news story — and not a single Guyanese journalist could get into the act. Do we understand the extent to which they have been deprofessionalized? A professional journalist is living in a country which has the biggest news story in the profession on the history of journalism — not just in this country but in the world, and he never wrote a line about it because the nature of the system under which he lives has reduced him to such a low level! It is an abomination to the spirit, really. Wherever you turn (I'm just using one example) one can multiply this a thousand times. The Government of Guyana has reduced us to the lowest possible level, whether as workers, housewives, or professionals.

The People Make a Revolution!

There is no way out under the present system. So we have got to make up our minds what we are deciding

now within the Working People's Alliance. It is not simply that the government 'do bad' and they must do better, it is not simply that they must do part good and part bad and they must remedy it. It is not that they must reform. It is not that they must hold another election and rig it all up. We 'finish' we all of that. **THEY MUST GO!** (Loud applause). **THE P.N.C. MUST GO!**(Loud applause and cheering). And they must go by any means necessary. (Loud cheering).

They have been accusing us of fermenting violence. They have even had the temerity to say that we are working up hit-lists — assassination lists in which the names of the Prime Minister and Hammy Green and so on appear. Someone who heard that was speaking to me the other day and said, "Well if all you really intend to to assassinate dem fellas, ah tell you something — you gat to join the queue." (Laughter). The guy was asserting his right. He was saying that people were standing up in line before us and that many Guyanese were standing in line. Their 'hit-list' then is ridiculous on many grounds and the people understand it to be ridiculous. We have said that we are not for assassination because politically and ideologically, an assassination is of no value to us. We do not want to replace one individual with another individual of the same type, whether it be for better or worse. I remember when the King Kong was ill, reportedly seriously ill. And many Guyanese, including Christian Guyanese, were praying for the best. (Laughter). And even in those days, we in the W.P.A. used to say that that would not solve any problems. We would not want to concentrate our analysis into thinking that if one man went, then the whole system would be cleaned up. What we wanted was to make the whole system go, and we repeat that now.

And we say further that we do not want those who have been responsible for crimes against Guyanese people assassinated; so if any of you brothers and sisters were thinking along these lines, we ask you to hold your hand because **WE WANT THEM ALIVE!**(Applause). The time has come when they will have to face the Guyanese people and be brought into account for the many years they thought they were beyond any kind of control on the part of the people. (Applause).

And there is another reason why assassination is not within our political textbook. And that is because assassination is the act of one man — any one man can assassinate a leader. But only the people can make a revolution! (Applause). And the day has to come when the real revolution will begin — the revolution in the economy, the revolution in the society, the revolution to bring us back to a level where we can hold our heads up high. And it is that day that we need the participation of the people. As for the assassination — we are not worried about that. That is something that they are inventing because they have plans for assassination; because they have not only the Rabbi's squad as their death squad, but they have the assassins that they have been training at Low Creek. They have been training them to be snipers, training them to come amongst people with silent weapons while they guard the kingdom of the real assassins. These have been produced by the P.N.C. government — produced by the clique in power, because it is necessary for

them to find some excuse in order for them to carry out their orders and their plans.

Violence: The Guyanese Struggle

They are now trying to distort the fact through their media. Let me tell you what the fascists did in Germany. They created the conditions, set up the situation, and then afterwards removed the 'undesirables'. So we want the people to understand that very clearly. It is not that we are afraid of the concept of violence because ultimately we would not let them bully us into thinking that violence is not the necessary political step under certain circumstances. If we felt that way we would not be able to understand what is going on in South Africa; we would not be able to understand what is going on in Zimbabwe. We would not be able to understand the reasons for the happenings in Grenada or Nicaragua.

In the Long run the people must free themselves by any means necessary and they will receive recruits from the people at the point at which violence is the only alternative; then violence becomes the supreme political weapon. (Applause). and note that, the very famous Mahatma Gandhi, famous for his peacefulness, famous for peace and nonviolence, is a man who once explained the difference between nonviolence and cowardice. He said that nonviolence has its applications. But he once wrote, "I do believe that where there is a choice between violence and cowardice, I would advise violence." That is Mahatma Gandhi, a peace loving man. (applause).

So what I am trying to drive at is a certain understanding, not for the present but merely for the future. We are attempting to try and create at this stage, political change without violence. In fact, if the Guyanese people cannot see this possibility we are likely to arrive at political change with violence. This is not because I say so or the W.P.A. said so or anybody else said so. It is because that is the very nature of society and it is in the nature of man. Man pushed to this level will degenerate into a violent society, so we don't have to push violence. The violence underlines the society because we are ruled by a violent and illegal government and if they are not removed now there will be violence. (Applause).

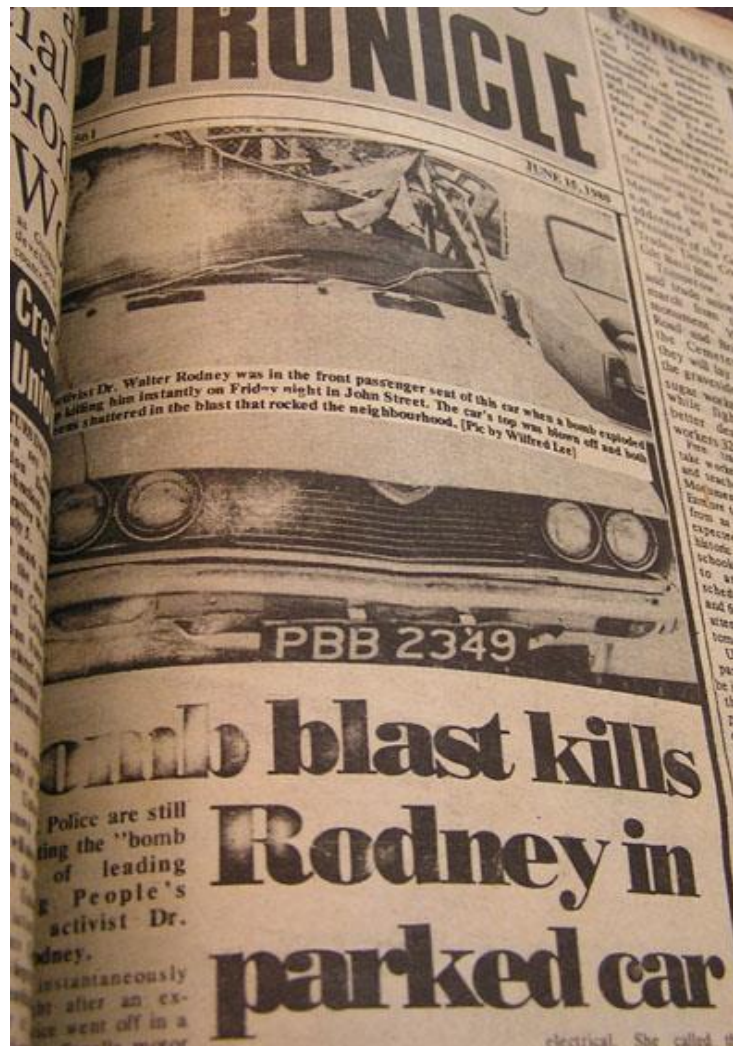
They have been guilty of the real violence. The very nature of this illegal regime is defined by violence — note the \$70 million that they spend on the armed forces. That is the violence that we have to overcome. And if it is not removed at the present time by the combined will of the people, then unfortunately probably our children will be saddled with this oppression of the spirit. WE must show some responsibility even if it requires taking to arms to remove certain oppressive regimes. So right now we have our task — finding the way to unleash the energy of the people and removing the clique in power before they bring violence to bear on the vast majority of the population. (Applause).

We would like to list several ways in which this process must proceed. Brother Roopnarine spoke about

your physical presence at these gatherings. The W.P.A. considers this extremely important and it is obvious that the P.N.C. clique also thinks that this is important. People are already winning victories. Imagine, we have brought the P.N.C. back to the streets to hold public meetings. That is a victory in itself. Of course, the meetings will collapse and they will go back into their seats and will try other techniques that are much more fearful and repressive. But initially we can show them that we have come to the streets.

We have to let the police force know and we have to let the Police Commissioner know that we will insist on our rights under the constitution and our rights as human beings to meet and discuss at the highest level. We are not going to allow ourselves to be threatened, abused and kept off the streets. If they have to deal with only a handful of the Working People's Alliance, then they know that they can bring down a mass of police. But when they have to deal with the Guyanese people in thousands; when they have to deal with persons of all ages, both sexes, both major races, various occupations, professions and the like, they know it would not be possible to unleash the forces of repression because the very police and armed forces are drawn from amongst people.

They will not, therefore, in the circumstances of massive popular uprising, massive shows of our indignation and frustration against the government in power bring out real everyday policemen. They will bring out their thugs and dress them in uniform. But it is the right of the Guyanese people to assemble peacefully and this is a peaceful assembly. The only time the peace is broken is when they introduce their thug element and we must also drive those thug elements from off the streets. They will not come back once the people are resolved. They will not dare to come into this kind of gathering! (Applause). So we have to make it clear that we will count ourselves here, we will draw strength from each other. We will look over our shoulders. We will see Africans and Indians standing side by side and we will know that this regime will not trick us back into another 1962. (Applause).



The frontpage of the *Guyana Chronicle*, the day after the assassination. Dr. Rodney would be described as having died via his own "misadventure" by the PNC regime.

On the Need to Organise The Working Class Into a Fighting Force

Then we have to go further, we are going to work out programmes in which we refuse to co-operate with the elements in power because people have it within their rights to find various ways of refusing to cooperate because the state requires your cooperation in order to survive. Just a while ago someone put to

us a proposal which in fact is not a new proposal. He said when they close down the Mirror by refusing to offer newsprint, when they practise various forms of discrimination which do not allow freedom of expression and freedom in the press, one of the things that people can do is boycott their press. Boycott their newspaper. (Applause). Now that this is the kind of suggestion coming from within the people themselves and if we sit down as we should to work out these proposals, we can find ways and means to stop this illegal government — to remove them. What we have to understand then is the need to develop programmes of our non cooperation. The W.P.A. has said on previous occasions, that individuals should set out to isolate the agents of the regime. Now this government has spent a great deal of money setting up what they call security forces. Apart from the uniformed security forces, they have all kinds of messengers and pimps who go around spying on other persons. They have all kinds of wire-tapping, mail-opening, and so on in this society. Quite apart from those who follow us around, we know that there are others reduced to that kind of job of professional Peeping Toms in order to report on other persons. This must surely be one of the most undignified ways in which you can ever live.

One day we caught one of them up at Linden and when we accosted him we said, "My friend, when you go home tonight and you have children and they ask you, "Daddy what were you doing all day?" You've got to say, "Well children, I was out spying on the W.P.A.."" That is the level to which one is reduced. You have to tell your children that you are a spy, and that this is your work — to go around spying on other people.

We believe that those who are paid and those who are not, are carrying out this activity of spying, harassing, telling tales, etc. on others. They should be isolated within the community and when you know them you must point them out. You must be able to say, "Look, one she is going there." or "Look, she there she is another one!" We must make sure that these people are brought out into the light of day and let us see whether they will operate when they know that the Guyanese people look down on such type of behavior.

We also say, and we know that the regime is very anxious about this point, that in the final analysis, the working people have one commodity which is all-powerful, and that is their own labour power. This is the ability to work or the ability to say "we will no longer work under these conditions." It is interesting to find that now is the time when the working class is under the greatest pressure. They therefore have to consider the strike weapon as a weapon in their own interest and which can help to perfect their living standards. The government is today terrified at the thought that workers should go on strike and they are raising all manner of bogies, bogies and jumbies to threaten people when they consider the possibilities of strikes. Every strike that has taken place under the P.N.C. has been called a political strike. It is nothing new to them to call a bauxite strike a political strike. What persons have to realise is whatever they call it, it does not matter, the working people have the moral right to withdraw their labour to alter the conditions under which they live. More than that, they have the right to say if we live under such oppressive conditions that

even asking for increments from this present set of managers and political rulers is forbidden, then strike is not enough. If they say in order to get the increments we have to move the present rulers, then they have to make sure that the strike has teeth, they have to make sure that when they act to withdraw they do not bend until they get the results of their strike. They do not bend until they can see that the conditions are being altered in a way guarantees them that they as workers would share in the fruits of their labour and if it means that the program must go, and our interpretation is that it does mean that the government must go, then they must go.

It is critical that at this juncture that the Guyanese working people realize the need to seriously, soberly but effectively utilize their rights to strike. (Applause). Earlier their tribute was made to the bauxite workers and we must repeat it. Kwakwani has been on strike for the longest while. They led the strike. Now the Linden workers are also on strike. We know that that means. We know that is the single largest industrial working class section in this country. we know that it represents a group which racially and politically was misled, confused and conned by the regime many years ago and what these workers are telling the rest of Guyana is that their eyes are completely opened and that they understand their own interest. Even the leadership of the Guyana Mine Workers' Union which was put there by the party has abandoned the party because even it has to realize, that when it comes to the interest of the workers, the P.N.C. has deceived us all, and the time has come to tell them that there is no line to be drawn between industrial and political action that will stop workers from going on strike on the basis of their own self interest.

So we have to salute the Linden workers and the Kwakwani workers. That is why we have asked for that contribution, and persons are still going around collecting and at the end we will announce what the Guyanese people assembled here have contributed at a W.P.A. meeting. Though we are a new political party, we will not use one cent of that money for our own purposes; we will hand it over to the bauxite workers. (Applause).

There are many people who believe that a revolution is about blood. It is true that at times in a revolution blood flows. Very often innocent blood, very often the blood of the best amongst us. But one must be prepared to take a stand against evil and injustice in the society. We will have to realise that the time is now to make precisely that stand. For too long our nature has been overcome by fear; a justified fear. It is true that there is a fear of losing jobs; the fear of not getting promotion; the fear that your children might be victimised and so on. But there must be a point at which people realize, that even that fear has to be overcome. It has to be overcome by a new resolution because in the long run it is not simply that you and I are fighting in individual battles. Far more important is the sense in which we can fight in a collective battle. They can't fire everybody, they can't victimise everybody; on the contrary, they have given us the vast majority whom they have treated with contempt, whom they have insulted everyday for 14 or 15 years.

When we act together, we will make this little paltry gang of petty dictators go on their way. And we will bring them to task. Because it is obvious that in the end they depend upon the power of the people. The people put them in power, they now spit upon the people. The people put them into power in the sense that the P.N.C. used the electoral machinery to rig it. They got some support internally; they got some support outside from the C.I.A. Once they got that they parked the dictatorship in a one-way road; they took a one-way ticket to dictatorship, day by day reducing the rights we had. The supporters who helped put them into power back in the '60s, had no power by the time we reached the '70s — even the P.N.C. rank and file.

Our Youth & Our Liberation Struggle

The note on which I will end is the question of our youth. The tragedy of Guyanese youth, and it is a real tragedy, is that they have been shut out from politics. Even during the period of the Vietnam War, it was only the P.Y.O., the youth arm of the P.P.P. that used to make propaganda on that issue. Our youth could not even understand what was going on in as fundamental a struggle as Vietnam. In the early days, it was the P.N.C. that shut them off from that. Our youth have been kept politically uneducated. This is as the time when in the world at large, young people are setting forth new political directions in every nation.

In South Africa for example, you have heard of the Soweto uprising. Do you believe that those were adults alone in Soweto? School children, 14, 15, and 16 years old made the Soweto revolution. And I remember certain incidents of that Soweto struggle. When the young people of Soweto were meeting, many of their elders came and said, "We do not want to rock the boat; the White man is too strong. Apartheid is too strong. Apartheid is too powerful. Take it easy." That is what the older people were telling the youngsters. And one person from Soweto, a young man who has now left and is now in Europe explained to me that there was a meeting in which they had to actually throw out their own parents — their own elders were thrown out of the meeting for standing in the way.

Now that was a serious development. When the elders have to be cursed by the younger people in a sense. And that is the real threat in this country today. That in the next generation some young people will ask the older people, "Daddy" or "Mummy", as the case might be, "Where were you when all that was going down?" And if you don't have an answer it's no better than a young slave asking an older slave why he or she never rebelled. (Applause). So we want our young people to understand that all over the world people are taking political steps. Out of that same Soweto uprising I saw a girl from that same Soweto uprising, a young woman fourteen years of age. She went to fight for Soweto with nothing in her hands except for a handful of stones to throw against the government with all its guns and tanks. She had one leg shot off. When she was introduced by a reporter and she was speaking to him she said, "Yes, my leg has been shot off. But I went there to fight for dignity and for rights and for justice when I had two legs. Now I will go

there and I will hop about on one leg and I will continue to fight," That;s a fourteen year old sister. (Applause).

I believe that all young people too would have that capacity. I believe that they're now beginning to be re-politicised, in other words, they're coming back to thinking out things for themselves because so long we were hiding from thinking. Hiding because we have certain fears that somebody else might get in or we might rock the boat and so on. But there is no boat left to rock. Just a sinking ship.

So we have to recognize today the importance of the elder persons who know of the 1960's, and those who know of 1953 too who will realise that we are at a new political awakening. And the younger persons will participate for the first time in trying to build a society of their own choice; a society where they will speak to themselves, because right now look around at the leadership of the P.N.C. They were not put there by any young person, they were not even put there by any person. Youngsters do not know them and they don't know the youngsters.

And they don't care, they insist that they are secure while our young people, in the very best years of their lives, when they have much physical and mental energy, are wasted. We can all allow your youth to build. When did we ever build? Our youth are under the most severe pressure. They are being kept in a state of ignorance and darkness. And we have to pay for that at the present moment of the struggle here in Guyana.

Brothers and sisters, we are coming to the end of our allotted time and and we are going to close the programme soon. There are a couple of announcements. But what we are saying to you, we say totally. The regime considers us a mob when we come together in big numbers. They call us a mob. We say, come together to draw strength from the traditions of resistance which have come down from the tradition of slavery and indentureship and anti-colonialism to the present time. And there is no force that has stopped it in any other part of the world. And there is no reason to imagine that this handful, because they control the military power, can hold the entire Guyanese people to ransom. But the change will come, and what it will emphasize is people's power. That will continually be our emphasis. All power to the people! (Prolonged applause!)



A poster circulated after Dr. Rodney's death depicting Forbes Burnham and Sgt. Gregory Smith, the soldier alleged to have given Dr. Rodney the walkie-talkie in which was contained an explosive device. Some believe that Smith was not the man who killed Dr. Rodney, but was made the "fall" person. Some have claimed that a few soldiers who were very young but involved in the plot, is currently a retired brigadier of the GDF, who is one of the "masterminds" of the Buxton gangs.