

# THE "WALTER RODNEY" FILES

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## **THE FILES**

### **A. Pre-assassination files:**

#### **1. FLYER DISTRIBUTED IN WASHINGTON DC IN SEPTEMBER 1974**

##### **DEFEND WALTER RODNEY'S RIGHT TO TEACH**

1. The Government of Guyana, through its representative on the Board of Governors, has revoked the appointment of Dr. Walter Rodney to a teaching position at the University of Guyana.
2. Leading periodicals and organizations in the Caribbean and other parts of the world have expressed their abhorrence at the revocation of Dr. Walter Rodney's appointment.
3. Dr. Walter Rodney has taught at several universities including University of Michigan and University of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania East Africa, and he is eminently\* qualified to serve as professor of History in the University of Guyana.
4. Dr. Walter Rodney has written many books and articles among which are:
  - a) How Europe Underdeveloped Africa,
  - b) "North Atlantic Slave Trade,"
  - c) "Groundings With My Brothers."
5. As a result of the government's action, mass meetings have been held in Guyana and reports state that violence has erupted.
6. The Sixth Pan African Congress of which Dr. Walter Rodney is a member has as one of its patrons Prime Minister of Guyana Forbes Burnham. Yet Mr. Burnham's government refuses to allow the appointment of this established Pan-Africanist.
7. Dr. Walter Rodney was born in Guyana and if appointed to the History Department of Guyana University pledges to impart his knowledge for the development of Guyana, the Caribbean and the world.

FRIDAY 13 - 12 NOON  
GUYANA EMBASSY  
2476 TRACY ST. N.W.

RESOLUTION TO BE PRESENTED ON BEHALF OF DR. RODNEY BY THE AD HOC COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT OF DR. RODNEY AND OTHER SUPPORTING GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS.

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## **2. LETTER FROM AMBASSADOR OF GUYANA, WASHINGTON, TO MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

WE: 75/11/4  
September 19, 1974

Dear PS

I am sending you a copy of the attached so that you will have an idea of what the Embassy is confronted with, all of which being a direct result of the Rodney affair. Added to this, the recent article, "Letter from Guyana", which appeared in the September 16, 1974, issue of The New Yorker and written by Jane Kramer has evidently added fuel to the fire.

Our Information Officer and Press Attaché is sending you a copy of this controversial article under separate cover.

With every good wish.

Faithfully yours,

Frederick H. Talbot  
Ambassador

The Permanent Secretary,  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs,  
Georgetown,  
Guyana.

**[Attachment]**

**MINUTE**

Ambassador:

At about 1.15 p.m. today, Mr. Smith, our Information Officer, called me on the Inter-com System with a request that I speak to a Guyanese in connection with a "picketing" exercise. The speaker identified himself as Mr. Narindra Panday, a student of Howard University, and indicated that "as a courtesy" he was advising the Embassy that as from Monday, September 23, 1974, and for a period of 2 months, a daily picketing exercise would be carried out by a minimum of 5 students, part of an alliance of students mainly from Howard University, and also from other educational institutions in the Washington metropolitan area. He intimated that this was a form of protest of the conditions obtaining in Guyana and emanated from the recent "Rodney Controversy" in addition to an article on Guyana which appeared in a recent issue of the New Yorker Magazine of September 16, 1974. He advised that zeroxed\* material would be distributed at the same time and that permission had been obtained from the authorities for the whole exercise.

I thanked him for the courtesy of notifying us beforehand and indicated that I would inform you accordingly.

(Signed)  
Paul Mittleholzer  
First Secretary  
September 19, 1974

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### **3. LETTER FROM DR. ALI MAZURI APPEALING FOR THE REINSTATEMENT OF DR. WALTER RODNEY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GUYANA**

#### **(a) Letter from Guyana Embassy, Washington, to Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

October 4, 1974

WE, 7 5/11/4

Permanent Secretary,  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs,  
Carmichael Street,  
Georgetown,  
Guyana

Dear PS

Further to the Ambassador's letter of even number dated September 19, 1974, on the subject of the "Rodney Affair", I enclose for your information, a copy of a letter dated 25th September, 1974, from one Ali A. Mazuri, D. Phil (Oxon), a Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Michigan, appealing to the Board of Governors at the University of Guyana to reconsider its decision and reinstate Dr. Rodney as a Professor at the University of Guyana.

Cooperatively yours,

Paul Mittelholzer  
for Ambassador

enc:

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**(b) Dr. Ali Mazuri's Letter**

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
ANN ARBOR 48104

25 September, 1974

His Excellency, the Ambassador of Guyana,  
Embassy of Guyana,  
2476 Tracy Street, N.W.,  
Washington D.C., U.S.A.

Your Excellency,

Re : Dr. Walter Rodney

Dr. Walter Rodney and I were ideological adversaries in East Africa for a number of years. But as an East African I was sorry when he decided to leave the University of Dar-es-Salaam and return to his home. I regarded his departure as a loss for our

region as a whole (I am a Kenyan by nationality and was professor of political science of Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda until last year).

It is therefore with particular bewilderment and concern that I now hear about the decision of the Board of Governors of the University of Guyana to cancel Dr. Rodney's recent appointment as professor of history at the University. Given the intellectual gifts of the scholar concerned, this is a most unfortunate decision.

Both at the University of Dar es Salaam (which was then his base) and at Makerere University (which was my base) Dr. Rodney and I had occasion to engage in public debate, on issues of both intellectual and political import. One such public debate at Makerere was nationally televised live. I was known to stand for liberal values, and his was the voice of the radical left. Although we were separated by a significant ideological gap, I found Dr. Rodney's version of leftist radicalism refreshing and stimulating. His mind was sharp, his tongue often eloquent. He helped to make young East Africans think about some of the most fundamental problems of the twentieth century.

I am convinced that any University in the Third World would stand to benefit by having Dr. Rodney on its faculty. May I appeal to the Board of Governors of the University of Guyana to reconsider its decision and re-instate Dr. Rodney as a professor in the University. Both Guyana and the world of international scholarship at large would stand to gain from such a decision.

I should mention in passing that Dr. Rodney would not be specially impressed by an appeal from someone like me on his behalf. However I am not doing this to please him, but to help save this gifted man for the Caribbean and the Third World where he belongs. It would be wasteful if he became one more "exile" in a North American or European university. I say that with deep personal conviction.

I would be grateful if you would transmit this appeal to the relevant authorities.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)  
Ali A. Mazuri, D. Phil. (Oxon.),

Professor

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**4. LETTER FROM GUYANA EMBASSY, WASHINGTON, TO PRIME MINISTER'S CONFIDENTIAL SECRETARY.**

(8 December 1978)

Embassy of Guyana,  
2490 Tracy Place, NW  
Washington DC, 20008

December 8, 1978

Comrade Ruby Harry,

Confidential Secretary to the Prime Minister,  
Office of the Prime Minister,  
Public Buildings,  
GEORGETOWN

Dear R,

I have enclosed these two tapes which the Comrade Prime Minister might like to hear, one which highlights a report on the Jonestown affair by Charles Krause, and the other which speaks about Guyana in General by Comrade Walter Rodney. Even if the Comrade Leader would want to ignore the tape on Krause, I would recommend very strongly, that he listens to Cde. Rodney's interview.

With beat wishes,

Yours co-operatively,

C. R. Jones  
MINISTER/COUNSELLOR

Encl.

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**5. TELEGRAM FROM EDITOR, LATIN AMERICAN PROSPECTIVES, TO GUYANA EMBASSY, WASHINGTON, 18 JULY 1979**

EMBASSY OF GUYANA  
2490 TRACY PL. NORTHWEST  
WASHINGTON DC 20008

THE COORDINATING EDITOR OF THE ACADEMIC JOURNAL LATIN AMERICAN PROSPECTIVES DEMAND THAT ALL CHARGES BE DROPPED AGAINST DR. WALTER RODNEY AND THE DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE W.P.A., AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT GUARANTEE THEIR SAFETY AGAINST ATTACK.

RONALD CHILCOTE  
MANAGING EDITOR  
LATIN AMERICAN PROSPECTIVES  
PO BOX 5703, RIVERSIDE CA 93517

16:13 EST

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**6. TELEGRAM FROM UCLA PROFESSORS TO GUYANA EMBASSY, WASHINGTON, 18 JULY 1979**

EMBASSY OF GUYANA  
2490 TRACY PL. NORTHWEST  
WASHINGTON DC 30008

WE URGENTLY REQUESTED DISMISSAL OF ABSURD CHARGES AGAINST DR. WALTER RODNEY AND OTHER W.P.A. MEMBERS. WE ARE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR PERSONAL SAFETY IN VIEW OF DEADLY ATTACKS ON THEIR LIVES. GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROVIDE GUARANTEES FOR PERSONAL SAFETY,

DR. TIMOTHY F. HARDING, COORDINATOR, LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

DR. DONALD BRAY, PROFESSOR POLITICAL SCIENCE PROFESSOR MARJORIE BRAY, PROFESSOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY AT LOS ANGELES, LOS ANGELES CA 90032

16:19 EST

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**7. TELEX MESSAGE FROM MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, GUYANA, TO GUYANA EMBASSY, WASHINGTON**

[No date on message, but most likely 14 July 1979]

DR. WALTER RODNEY, DR. OMAWALE, RUPERT ROOPNARINE, A LECTURER IN ENGLISH AT UG, EARDLEY SEAFORTH ALSO KNOWN AS KWAME APATA, LECTURER, CYRIL POTTER COLLEGE, KAREN DE SOUZA - GRADUATE OF NATIONAL SERVICE,

BONITA BONE ALSO CALLED BONITA HARRIS, HEADTEACHER AT Q.C. HAVE BEEN ASSISTING THE POLICE IN THEIR INVESTIGATIONS.

MAURICE ODLE, INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPING STUDIES, U.G. WAS HELD AND RELEASED AFTER QUESTIONING.

EXTERNAL  
GUYAMB 64170

220 EXTERNAL, GY

KINDLY PASS ON THIS NOTE TO PERM MISSION NEW YORK

HOW RECD PLS?

[Editor's note: *This message refers to the arrest of WPA activists after the destruction by fire of the building housing the Ministry of National Development and the Office of the General Secretary of the People's National Congress.*]

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**8. TELEGRAM FROM GUYANA EMBASSY, WASHINGTON, TO UNITED STATES COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE TO LATIN AMERICAN PRISONERS, 3 AUGUST 1979**

EMBASSY OF REPUBLIC OF GUYANA  
2490 TRACY PL. NORTHWEST  
WASHINGTON DC 20008

THIS MAILGRAM IS A CONFIRMATION COPY OF THE FOLLOWING MESSAGES:

2022656900 TDMT WASHINGTON DC 110 08-03 1034A EST PMS UNITED STATES COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE TO LATIN AMERICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS, WUX

200 PARK AVE  
SOUTH ROOM 812  
NEW YORK NY 10003

RE YOUR TELEGRAM OF AUGUST 2, HAVE TO INFORM YOU THAT NO HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION HAVE\* BEEN COMMITTED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA. AS A COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE YOUR "DEMAND" TO "DROP ALL CHARGES" AGAINST WALTER



RODNEY ET AL IS SURPRISING SINCE WHAT YOU ADVOCATE IS DISCRIMINATION IN APPLICATION OF RULE OF LAW IN A MATTER OF ARSON. UNDER GUYANA'S INDEPENDENT LEGAL SYSTEM, A PERSON IS PRESUMED INNOCENT UNTIL PROVEN GUILTY. IN FACT RODNEY ET AL WERE ARRAIGNED BEFORE A MAGISTRATE, RELEASED ON BAIL ON JULY 14 AND RODNEY HAS BEEN SPEAKING AT PUBLIC POLITICAL MEETINGS SINCE. ATTESTING TO ADHERENCE TO HUMAN RIGHTS IN GUYANA, THERE ARE NO POLITICAL PRISONERS IN GUYANA.

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA, WASHINGTON DC

10:37 EST

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## **9. EXCHANGE OF LETTERS BETWEEN BOB DASH AND GUYANA EMBASSY, WASHINGTON**

### **(a) Letter from Bob Dash**

Sept. 21, 1979

Guyana's Ambassador to the United States  
Lawrence E Mann  
2490 Tracy Place, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Ambassador Mann

It is distressing to see that Guyana has apparently joined that wide circle of nations that employ widespread and. systematic repression against its own citizens. The recent political arrests and political attacks of Dr. Walter Rodney, an internationally respected scholar, and other members of Working People's Alliance are reprehensible. It is hoped that your government will discontinue this sort of repression against political opponents, and will rather seek to defuse political opposition by closer and more productive relationships between your government and the working masses of your country.

Sincerely,

(Signed)  
Bob Dash

304 Pasqual Ave.  
San Gabriel, Calif, 91775

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**(b) Reply from Guyana Embassy, Washington**

October 16, 1979

Mr. Bob Dash,  
304 Pasqual Avenue,  
San Gabriel, Ca. 91775.

Dear Mr. Dash,

The Embassy is in receipt of your letter dated September 21, 1979 and we regret the serious tone of prejudgement that pervades it. However, we are happy that you have taken time, unlike others to communicate with us so that we can correct your impressions about the state of law in Guyana.

There is no "widespread and systematic repression" in Guyana. There has never been nor is there a single political prisoner in Guyana.

Further, that Dr. Rodney is "an internationally respected scholar" does not make him or other members of the Working People's Alliance above the law.

Rodney and the others, which I think you refer to, have been charged by the police authorities with the very serious offence of arson of public property to the tune of two million dollars. They are all free on bail. Subsequent to that charge Rodney has been questioned by the police on two occasions.

The rule of law in Guyana is not dissimilar to that of any flourishing democracy and you have our assurances that we will continue to exist in a state where no one is guilty until so proven.

It is not inappropriate for me to suggest that you do some open minded research on the relationships existing between the government and the people, and if you find it convenient, do visit the country some time. It will certainly help you develop an educated and well-informed conclusion.

With every good wish.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)  
Colin Mapp  
for Ambassador

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**10. LETTER FROM GUYANA EMBASSY, WASHINGTON, TO HOWARD UNIVERSITY RADIO**

Embassy of the Republic of Guyana  
2490 Tracy Place, N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20008

30th October, 1979

Mr. Bob Taylor,  
The Manager,  
Howard University Radio,  
2400 4th Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.

Sir,

On your programme "Caribbean Experience" of Sunday, September 16, 1979, it was reported that the Zimbabwe African Nationalist Union had protested the earlier arrest of Dr. Walter Rodney of the Working People's Alliance.

While we have grown accustomed to receiving knocks from your station, we have tried and will continue to try to provide news and information reports for the station in the interest of accuracy and the preservation of cordial relations.

I have attached a copy of a statement from the Secretary for Education and Culture of ZANU, which refutes the statement as reported and further expresses solidarity with government and people of Guyana.

The Embassy shall be extremely grateful if a correction is carried on the "Caribbean Experience".

Yours truly,

(Signed)  
Colin Mapp  
for Ambassador

enc.

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**11. TELEGRAM FROM US COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE TO LATIN AMERICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS, 30 OCTOBER 1979**

LAWRENCE E MANN  
GUYANESE AMBASSADOR TO UNITED STATES  
2480 TRACY PL NORTHWEST  
WASHINGTON DC 20008

DEMAND YOU DROP CHARGES AGAINST RODNEY OMAWALE AND ROOP NARINE END HARASSMENT OF WPA

US COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE TO LATIN AMERICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

17:06 EST

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**12. LETTER FROM LINDEN MARTINEAU TO GUYANA HIGH COMMISSION, LONDON**

**(a) Note from Guyana High Commission, London**

From: High Commissioner, London  
To: Guyana Ambassador, Washington  
Subject: Protest from Mr. Martineau  
Date: 19th December, 1979

I wish to bring to your attention the attached letter which has been received from one Linden P. Martineau, who is stated to reside at 7011 Connecticut Ave., Cherry Chase\*, Maryland 20015, U.S.A.

(Signed)  
C.J.E. Barker  
for High Commissioner

Enc.

**(b) Martineau's Handwritten Letter**

December 1, 1979  
The High Commissioner for Guyana  
Place Court\*  
London W2, England

Dear Sirs,

I wish to protest the arrest, detention and trial of Walter Rodney, Rupert Roopnarine, Dr. Omawale, Kwame Apata and Karen De Souza. They are being singled out because of their membership in the WPA. Yet, it is absurd to believe that the WPA, in becoming an electoral party and launching a peaceful campaign against the Burnham government, would resort to spontaneous terrorist action as is alleged. I am concerned for their safety and fear that they will be forced into making false and incriminating confessions. I ask that they be set free. I remain,

Linden P. Martineau  
7011 Connecticut Ave.  
Chevy Chase, Md 200015  
U.S.A.

\*

**(c) Letter from Guyana Embassy, Washington, to Linden Martineau**

30th January, 1980

Mr. Linden P. Martineau,  
7011 Connecticut Avenue,  
Chevy chase, Md. 20015

Dear Mr. Martineau,

We are in receipt of a letter sent by you to the Guyana High Commission in London and must thank you for taking time out to air your grievances. Sad it is, however, that you are apparently prejudging very serious issues.

Rodney et al, like every other Guyanese, are not above the law. True they have been charged with various offences, but may you know that Drs. Rodney, Roopnarine and Omawale and Miss De Souza are free on bail. Apata who was charged under the National Security act for being in unlawful possession of firearms and ammunition has been sentenced on January 18 last to one year on each count. His sentence will run concurrently and he has appealed the court's decision. In his own confession he admitted being in possession of the items, but his counsel argued that no threat to public safety has been proven as required under the National Security Act. You and I, as laymen, can have an endless debate about that, hence, like in any other democratic society Guyana has courts and justice to deal with such issues.

Rodney, Roopnarine and Omawale have been charged in connection with the destruction by arson of millions of dollars of public property. They have not been tried and therefore found neither guilty or\* not guilty. Hence in the eyes of our society they are assumed innocent. Shouldn't we await the findings of the courts?

I further wish to remind (or enlighten) you that the W.P.A. has asserted in their public meetings that they were not overlooking a violent overthrow of the P.N.C. government.

With every good wish.

(Signed)  
Colin Mapp  
for Ambassador

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### **13. EXCHANGE OF LETTERS BETWEEN ABASI MTUMWA AND GUYANA EMBASSY, WASHINGTON**

#### **(a) Handwritten Letter from Abasi Mtumwa**

Black Freedom Society  
Jersey City State College

2029 Kennedy Blvd.  
Jersey City, NJ

Mr. Mann,

We of the Black Freedom Society are appalled at the imprisonment of the activist/intellectual Walter Rodney. We subscribe to the notion that the Burnham government is repressive and lacks any semblance of Human Rights. Brother Rodney has long been considered a champion of progressive thought to us in this country and around the world. We of B.F.S. detest his confinement as well as the confinement of poet A.J. Seymour. We hope this correspondence does not fall on deaf ears and that you, sir, use every avenue to ensure his speedy release. We have alerted other student organizations of this unfortunate incident and have urged them to appeal to you and your U.N. Mission on behalf of Brother Rodney. We have contacted Amnesty International concerning this incident and we will solicit the help of publications around the world until our brother is free.

Respectfully yours

Abosi Mtumwa  
Minster of Information  
Black Freedom Society

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**(b) Response from Guyana Embassy, Washington**

Embassy of the Republic of Guyana  
2490 Tracy Place, N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20008

December 7, 1979

Mr. Abasi Mtumwa,  
Minister of Information,  
Black Freedom Society,  
Jersey City State College,

2029 Kennedy Boulevard,  
Jersey City, N.J.

Dear Mr. Mtumwa,

I have your undated letter, in which you protest what you describe as the confinement of Dr. Walter Rodney. I regret that its tone was so offensive and its contents so completely untrue. The facts are as follows:

Dr. Walter Rodney, a Guyanese, and four other persons were charged by the police authorities in July 1979, in connection with the burning down of Government property. In our legal system, an accused is presumed innocent, unless found guilty by the Courts. The date has now been set for his trial at the end of January 1980. Meanwhile, Dr. Rodney is quite free on bail and could move around Guyana or even outside of Guyana as freely as you.

Unfortunately, perhaps, our laws make no distinction for blackness, so that the fact that Dr. Rodney is black or, as you say, he is a champion of progressive thought, does not render him or anybody else immune from law.

With respect to A.J. Seymour, your allegation of his confinement is the purest fabrication. He was never charged with any offence and continues to remain an esteemed poet laureate of Guyana.

It is extremely unfortunate that, before seizing yourself of the facts, you chose to put your Society in a position of being ridiculed by writing all over the place protesting things that have not occurred. Nonetheless, I wish you personally and your Society all the very best.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)  
Cohn Mapp  
for Ambassador

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#### **14. EXCHANGE OF LETTERS BETWEEN BLACK FREEDOM SOCIETY OF JERSEY CITY STATE COLLEGE AND GUYANA EMBASSY, WASHINGTON**

##### **(a) Letter from Black Freedom Society to Guyana Embassy, Washington**



BLACK FREEDOM SOCIETY  
JERSEY CITY STATE COLLEGE  
JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY 07305

December 29, 1979

Mr. Cohn Mapp  
Embassy of the Republic of Guyana  
2490 Tracy Place, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Mr. Mapp,

We were very surprised upon receipt of your letter to find that someone has been using the Black Freedom Society's name as an instrument to spread false accusations. We have worked very hard to insure the high regard others have for our organization. Therefore, we can assure you that our group has no such office as Minister of Information, and we know of no one at the college named Abasi Mtumwa. We are also unaware of the situation involving Dr. Walter Rodney and A. J. Seymour in Guyana.

If it is at all possible, please forward a copy of the letter from Mr. Mtumwa and we will continue to pursue his true identity.

It is unfortunate that our only dialogue with your embassy has been such a negative one, but we hope to continue this new relationship on a more positive and fruitful level.

Sincerely,

(Signed)  
Bruce M. Terry, President  
Black Freedom Society, J.C.S.C.

(Signed)  
Daniel Wiley, Advisor  
Black Freedom Society, J.C.S.C.

(Signed)  
Lee Hagan, Chairperson  
African/Afro-American Studies Department

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**(b) Letter from Guyana Embassy, Washington, to Black Freedom Society**

Embassy of the Republic of Guyana  
2490 Tracy Place, NW  
Washington DC

WE: 25/11 4th February, 1980

Mr. Bruce Terry,  
President,  
Black Freedom Society,  
Jersey City State College,  
Jersey City, N.J. 07305

Dear Mr. Terry,

We have received your letter of December 29 last and are grateful for the clarification therein.

We do hope that the occasion that warranted our exchange of correspondence will nevertheless serve to commence positive communication between the Society and the Embassy.

Enclosed please find a copy of the original letter as you have requested.

With every good wish.

(Signed)  
Colin Mapp  
for Charge d'Affaires

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**15. EXCHANGE OF LETTERS BETWEEN PROFESSORS EILEEN & ISIDORE GERSH AND GUYANA EMBASSY, WASHINGTON**

**(a) Letter from Professors Eileen and Isidore Gersh to Guyana Embassy, Washington**

Ambassador Lawrence E. Mann  
Embassy of Guyana  
2490 Tracy Place, N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20008

January 7, 1980

Dear Sir:

We hasten to support our fellow academics who have been arrested and must stand trial soon. For what? We would like to know. From where we sit, it looks to us like sheer harassment - their arms are pens and paper, not guns. And if you take their typewriters and printing presses, even if you imprison them, other will follow who can read or listen. This is not the way to beat academicians, we can tell you! Listen to their grievances and try to ameliorate them!

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)  
Eileen S. Gersh, Professor

(Signed)  
Isidore Gersh, Emeritus Professor

4037 Baltimore Ave.  
Philadelphia, Pa 19104

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**(b) Letter from Guyana Embassy, Washington, to Professors Eileen and Isidore Gersh**

Embassy of the Republic of Guyana  
2490 Tracy Place, NW  
Washington DC 20008

30th January, 1980

Professor Eileen Gersh,  
Professor Iaidore Gersh,  
4037 Baltimore Avenue,  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19104

Dear Professors,

I must thank you for your letter of January 7 last. While it told me that you did have an interest in the Guyana society, I could only conclude that you could be better disciples for us if in the spirit of your academic excellence and professionalism, you first get the facts straight.

You do not name "our fellow academics" so you make it extremely difficult for me to address your problem. You speak of academics as though they were a special breed of people, above the law. They are not! Where is the harrassment\* you are speaking about? And what grievances?

In Guyana, the rule of law flourishes and a citizen is assumed innocent until the courts can prove him guilty.

Again, I say thank you for the interest you have shown.

With every good wish.

(Signed)  
Colin Mapp  
for Ambassador

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**16. LETTER FROM AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY (ENCLOSING RESOLUTION) TO  
AMBASADOR LAWRENCE MANN**

AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION  
Epstein Building  
Brandeis University  
Waltham, Mass. 02154  
Telephone: (617) 899-3079

January 21, 1980

Mr. Lawrence E. Mann  
Guyanese Ambassador to the United States  
2490 Tracy Place, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

I enclose for your attention a copy of a resolution passed by the members of the African Studies Association at their annual meeting in November 1979.

Sincerely yours,

James Duffy  
Executive Secretary  
African Studies Association

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AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION  
Epstein Building  
Brandeis University  
Waltham, Mass. 02154  
Telephone: (617) 899-3079

RESOLUTION

The African Studies Association wishes to record its deep concern and dismay at the prevailing violations of the basic human rights of two distinguished Africanist scholars, Dr. Walter A. Rodney and Dr. Clive Y. Thomas, by the Government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana.

Dr. Rodney has been previously victimized by the regime of Prime Minister Forbes Burnham when he returned to his country from Tanzania in 1974 to accept an appointment as Professor of History at the University of Guyana. Professor Richard Gray wrote on 9 October, 1979 to the High Commissioner for Guyana in the United Kingdom on behalf of the African History section of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London: "While perhaps none of us would subscribe to his particular political and ideological positions, all of us have a very deep respect for him as a completely honest and trustworthy scholar whose contributions to the field of African history have won for him a thoroughly deserved international academic reputation." The African Studies Association condemns this blatant victimization of Dr. Rodney by the Guyana Government's denial to him of his university appointment.

Furthermore, in view of the alarming recent escalation of political violence in Guyana and the continuous police harassment of Dr. Rodney in recent months, the African Studies Association is deeply disturbed at the political motivations behind the criminal charges of which Dr. Rodney now stands accused. The African Studies Association wishes to express its grave anxiety for Dr. Rodney's personal safety and urges the Guyana Government to guarantee his full legal and human rights.

Similarly, the African Studies Association is no less disturbed by the totally unjust seizure of Dr. C.Y. Thomas' passport by the Government of Guyana on his return to Guyana in September from a summer teaching position as Visiting Distinguished Professor of Economics at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. The only explanation for such harassment of the Professor of Economics and Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Guyana can be his position, together with Dr. Rodney, on the fourteen-member Executive Committee of the Working People's Alliance, one of the principal opposition parties in Guyana.

While the African Studies Association recognizes that academics enjoy no greater privileges than any other citizens, it believes strongly that political participation by academics must not become an excuse for the denial of their basic human rights by any government.

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## **17. LETTER FROM EMBASSY OF GUYANA, WASHINGTON, TO AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY**

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA  
2490 TRACY PLACE, N.W.  
WASHINGTON. D.C. 20000

22nd April, 1980.

Mr. James Duffy,  
Executive Secretary,  
African Studies Association,  
Brandeis University,  
Waltham, Mass. 02154.

Dear Mr. Duffy,

We received your letter dated January 21, 1980 with its annexures of a resolution of the African Studies Association.

We forwarded it to Georgetown since it was of a highly political nature not normally dealt with in the Embassy.

The General Secretariat of the People's National Congress has asked me to express their disappointment that the resolution does not reflect the quality of the academic objectivity associated with a University of the calibre of Brandeis.

The Secretariat has asked us to point out that it is blatant bias to portray either Dr. Rodney or Dr. Thomas as victims of harassment whose human rights have been violated. Dr. Rodney has merely been charged by the police authorities with the crime of arson. His case has not yet come to trial, he is represented by legal Counsel of his own choice and he is free on bail. Indeed, probably at this very moment he is pursuing the politics and policies of his choice as well. Dr. Clive Thomas has not been charged with any offence and is pursuing his teaching activities at the University of Guyana, which is entirely funded by the Government of Guyana.

No human rights charter, certainly not the United Nations Human Rights Charter, however, denies to national police authorities the right to bring charges where there is prima facie evidence, or even to take preemptive action where the activities of individuals or groups are likely to cause a breach of public order, or create a subversion, or both. Ascribed academic reputations in these cases do not exempt any citizen, regardless of his profession or distinction or lack of either. It was to be noticed that other members of the co-leadership, many of them academicians, of the political party to which Dr. Rodney is said to belong, continue to enjoy unfettered pursuit of their political and professional activities.

The resolution it was noted speaks of escalating political violence; be it noted that three admitted activists of a certain political party were found in possession of unlicensed highly lethal weapons - all since the arson committed against Government property in July 1979.

The Secretariat observed that no one can have more pride than a Guyanese in the academic distinction of a compatriot, but Dr. Rodney is not to be seen solely as an academician, but as a full-time leader of a political party, if not more.

Finally, the Secretariat response notes that the then Prime Minister of Jamaica Hugh Shearer who, addressing the Jamaican Parliament, quoted from a confidential Security Report. Sir Hugh Shearer, speaking of the Jamaican government decision to expel Walter Rodney, said:

"He (Rodney) lost little time in engaging in subversive activities on his return (to Jamaica). He quickly announced his intention of organising revolutionary groups for what he termed 'the struggle ahead' and then closely associated himself with groups of people who claimed to be part of the Rastafarian Movement and also with Claudius Henry, who was convicted in 1960 of Treason Felony as a result of activities which required the use of armed forces.

"He openly declared his belief that as Jamaica was predominantly a black country, all brown-skinned mulatto people and their assets should be destroyed. He consistently told the groups with whom he associated that this could be achieved by revolution and that no revolution had ever taken place without armed struggle and bloodshed. This resort to violence was the recurrent theme of all his discussions with these groups as was his condemnation of the democratic system of government in Jamaica.

"In recent months, Rodney stepped up the pace of his activities and was actively engaged in organising groups of semi-literates and unemployed for avowed revolutionary purposes. He constantly reiterated the necessity for the use of violence in attaining his ends; the procurement of firearms and training in their use was recently a major topic of discussion. Furthermore, at one meeting at the UWI campus at Mona, Rodney reportedly said, 'Revolution must come. We must be prepared to see it through. We must stop talking and indulging in academic exercises and act. Who will be the first to come with me downtown and take up a machine gun?'

"In terms of tactics one of the things University students were urged by way of pamphlet to do was to: 'Provoke the police, don't argue with them; ridicule them; goad them; let them attack you'."

Shearer concluded that:

"The whole pattern of the destructive campaign shows evidence of careful planning beyond the capacity of hoodlums or the usual subversive groups with which the government has had to deal in the past. No wonder a rastafarian at one of Rodney's campus meetings publicly declared - 'We have the brawn, you have the brains; all we need are the guns'."

The Secretariat ends by enjoining your Association to rethink its resolution in the light of the fact that while we might all admire his scholarship we should also remember that he is, in addition, a full-time politician.

Yours sincerely,

Cohn I. Mapp  
for Ambassador



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**18. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FROM AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION, BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY, TO GUYANA EMBASSY, WASHINGTON**

AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION  
Epstein Building  
Brandeis University  
Waltham, Mass. 02154  
Telephone: (617) 899-3079

May 5, 1980

Mr. Colin I. Mapp, Esq.  
Embassy of the Republic of Guyana  
2490 Tracy Place, NW  
Washington, DC 20008

Dear Mr. Mapp:

Thank you for your letter of 22 April. I am sending it to our Board of Directors for their consideration.

Yours sincerely

James Duffy  
Executive Secretary, ASA

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**B. The Assassination Files:**

**19. TELEX MESSAGE FROM MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GUYANA TO GUYANA AMBASSADOR, WASHINGTON**

14 June 1980

At about 20.15 hours on Friday June 13 a car PBB 2349 registered in the name of Donald Rodney Quantity Surveyor, Ministry of Works parked near corner of John and Hadfield Streets exploded. One person in front seat of car now positively identified by relatives as Walter Rodney died. Eye witness reports say that one other person, the driver, was seen running from car. CANA

quotes a spokesman at Rodney's home as saying "They (the family) had heard from his brother Edward who was in the car with the brilliant historian when the bomb went off."

Meanwhile police have so far been unable to locate Donald Rodney. Edward is however with police. It is believed that Walter Rodney had bomb in his lap. Post mortem being undertaken by Dr. Leslie Mootoo will clarify.

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## **20. TELEX MESSAGE FROM MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GUYANA TO GUYANA AMBASSADOR, WASHINGTON**

15 June 1980

Government pathologist Leslie Mootoo yesterday said that Rodney died from shock and excessive bleeding. He said further that from injuries sustained a bomb was in deceased lap or between his legs. Police sources revealed that the car's windows were wound up and the hand brake up.

In a release W.P.A. said that Rodney left a meeting with brother Donald just before 20.00 hours and that Donald was driving north in John Street. W.P.A. release claims car was moving. This however conflicts with eye witness accounts and leaves unexplained how driver could escape from a moving car which then came to a stop without careering etc.

The police who are continuing investigations are seeking the assistance of a specialist from the United States.

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## **21. TEXT OF PAMPHLET DISTRIBUTED BY "GUYANA NATIONALS AND FRIENDS ALLIANCE" OF LOS ANGELES CALIFORNIA**

BURNHAM MUST GO!!!

On July 11, 1979, five members of the Working People's Alliance were arrested on trumped-up charges of arson and possession of firearms - AND STILL NO JUSTICE FOR THE GUYANESE PEOPLE!!

On July 14, 1979, Father Bernard Darke, editor and photographer for the Catholic Standard, was fatally stabbed by House of Israel thugs working in conjunction with the Burnham government - AND STILL NO JUSTICE FOR THE GUYANESE PEOPLE!!

On October 25, 1979, Vincent Teekah, PNC-government minister, was shot to death and the only eyewitness was spirited out of the country - AND STILL NO JUSTICE FOR THE GUYANESE PEOPLE!!

On November 18, 1979, Ohene Koama, an unarmed member of the WPA, was murdered by the police - AND STILL NO JUSTICE FOR THE PEOPLE!!

On February 25, 1980, Edward Dublin, another unarmed WPA member, was shot to death by the police and there has been no investigation into his murder - AND STILL NO JUSTICE FOR THE PEOPLE!!

On June 13, 1930, Walter Rodney was assassinated after a bomb concealed in a walkie-talkie exploded in his lap - AND THERE IS STILL NO JUSTICE FOR THE GUYANESE PEOPLE!!!!!!

We call for an immediate end to the political repression and official murder of Guyanese citizens. The economic victimization of the people, particularly the opponents of the government, must cease. We call for the restoration of both human rights and constitutional rights to the people (recently denied by an illegally imposed "constitution" which places all powers in the hands of the president, Forbes Burnham), and the reinstitution of a judicial system which is free of PNC control. We also call for the return of freedom to the press. The American CIA brought Burnham into power, and the U.S. has been supportive of his regime, but this must end. **FORBES BURNHAM AND HIS CORRUPT PEOPLE'S NATIONAL CONGRESS MUST BE REMOVED & REPLACED BY A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY AND RECONSTRUCTION.**

Letters of concern should be sent to:

Mr. Lawrence E. Mann, Guyanese Ambassador to the United States, 2490 Tracy N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008.

Mr. Yvon Beauine, Chairman, United Nations Commission on Human Rights, United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017.

Dr. Carlos Dunshee de Abraches, Chairman, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 175 I Street, N.W., Room 1003, Washington, D.C. 20006.

Prime Minister Forbes Burnham, Georgetown, Guyana, South America. Sen. Alan Cranston, Russell Senate Office Building, Room 229, Washington, D.C. 20510. (California Senator)

Sen. S. I. Hayakawa, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 6217, Washington, D.C. 20510. (California Senator)

SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO: GUYANA NATIONALS AND FRIENDS ALLIANCE, P.O.BOX 25722, CALIFORNIA 90025

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## **22. PRESS RELEASE BY GUYANA NATIONALS AND FRIENDS ALLIANCE**

Guyana Nationals and Friends Alliance  
P.O. Box 25722  
Los Angeles, California 90025

### **PRESS RELEASE**

On Friday, July 11, 1980 members of G.N.F.A. and sympathisers plan a 24-hour vigil at 2950 Los Felix Blvd., Atwater District, Los Angeles, the office of Guyana's Honorary Consul in California. The vigil will begin at 12:00 noon, Friday, July 11 and proceed through the night to 12:00 noon July 12, 1980.

It was July 11, 1979 that several members of the Working People's Alliance were arrested on trumped-up charges of arson after army personnel were seen staging a fire - the burning down of the building housing the government's party National Secretariat & the Ministry of National Development. Thereafter, everyone in Guyana who demonstrated any opposition to the government was declared to be enemies of the state. They were told "to sign their wills." The government promised to "fight steel with highly tempered steel," and that "no holds will be barred."

The Working People's Alliance is a newly formed opposition party that has sought to unite the two major races in Guyana: East Indians, 52%, Blacks, 42%. It draws its strength from the lowly farmer and canecutter to the elite in academia. This political party has obviously transcended racial politics which is the divisionary tactic that the Forbes Burnham government uses to stay in power.

The Forbes Burnham government has postponed general elections since November, 1978. From that date a series of legislations and an "unconstitutional Referendum" - only 14% of the people voted for it - have sought to concentrate all power in a president who is answerable to no one and who will have paramountcy over the state for life. This dictator is to be Forbes Burnham, himself.

Dr. Walter Rodney, internationally known historian, scholar, teacher and humanitarian was assassinated on June 13, 1980. His murder was the latest in a series of murders, beatings, and imprisonments of individuals who either by association or demonstration were in opposition to the government.

Amnesty International, listening in at a recent trial of six persons accused of treason, has promised to undertake the defense of these Guyanese political prisoners who showed glaring evidence of police brutality and were denied medical examinations, even though the court appointed a doctor.

The vigil was born out of these atrocities mentioned above. The pressure or concern you could bring to bear on the Guyana government or its overseas representatives would be most welcome by the suffering Guyanese people.

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### **23. STATEMENT BY MINISTRY OF INFORMATION**

Donald Rodney, younger brother of late Guyanese politician and historian Dr. Walter Rodney, has confirmed the Government of Guyana's statement that the device that killed Walter Rodney was in Dr. Rodney's possession at the time it exploded. Donald Rodney, apparently, the only other person in the car at the time, also confirmed that the car was parked and the ignition turned off when the explosion occurred.

Donald's version of the incident, given to journalist Sharief Khan and carried by CANA yesterday, differs substantially from earlier statements issued by the Working People's Alliance of which Dr. Rodney was co-leader. These initial WPA statements had insisted that the car was moving at the time and had suggested that Dr. Rodney was not himself the bearer of the device.

Dr. Rodney's brother, who said he reported the incident to leading WPA members immediately after, told CANA how he and Dr. Rodney had gone to South Georgetown to a "former Guyanese Army Sergeant" who had become an associate of Dr. Rodney, to collect the package which eventually exploded and killed the former University Lecturer.

He claimed that the man had promised Dr. Rodney a walkie-talkie set. The younger Rodney, a twenty-nine year old Government Quantity Surveyor, was still at the time of interview hiding, but according to the CANA report, he will soon be relating his story directly to the Police. The report says that Donald Rodney's left eye was bandaged and his left arm and right hand badly bruised. An earlier WPA release stated that Donald was hospitalised but police who checked at all hospitals in Guyana failed to locate him. Earlier WPA versions suggested that Dr. Rodney had just left a meeting when the explosion took place.

However, the historian's brother, driver of the vehicle on the fateful night, said that he had picked up his brother at least an hour earlier to take him to collect the "walkie-talkie set" for tests and that it was necessary to go outside the Georgetown Prisons to complete the tests.

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

*[No date, but most likely 16 June 1980]*

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## **24. TELEX MESSAGE FROM MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GUYANA TO GUYANA AMBASSADOR, WASHINGTON**

16 June 1980

### **EXPERT COMING TO AID PROBE INTO BLAST**

An explosives expert from overseas is due in Guyana within a few days to assist in the investigations in to the explosion which killed Working People's Alliance (WPA) Dr. Walter Rodney, an official of the government said yesterday.

And the police have also put out a call for Dr. Rodney's bother Donald, who was the driver when the car exploded in John Street. Police said that Donald Rodney, who fled the scene was probably injured, and although WPA sources said he was in hospital, checks at both private and public hospitals have failed to locate him.

An official statement yesterday also noted that the WPA in its attempt to shift the blame for death of Dr. Rodney to the government concocted a statement which was riddled with obvious inconsistencies, and more than stretched the imagination.

According to the official statement, the WPA claimed among other things "at about 8 p.m. on Friday June 13, 1980 and shortly after leaving a meeting he was travelling in a northerly direction in a car driven by his brother Donald. The car was moving in a northerly direction along John Street shortly after eight o'clock when between Bent and Hadfield Streets there was a loud explosion. The roof of the car was blown off, and landed several feet behind."

According to the statement, if the car was indeed moving at the time of the explosion it was only logical to assume that the driver would have lost control, and the vehicle would have careered wildly on the street, resulting in any of a number of things.

"For example, it might have crashed into another vehicle, a fence, a lamp post or even into persons who might have been around. "None of this happened. In fact, all observers on the scene after the incident were unanimous that the vehicle must have been parked at the time of the explosion," the statement added.

Again, the statement said, the single fact other than that there was an explosion, on which the police and the WPA versions agree, was the driver of the car at the time of the explosion escaped from the scene. A departure from the scene in such circumstances, could only have been effected before the inevitable crowd gathered.

Assuming that the explosion took place while the vehicle was in motion, it would have been a couple of minutes after the explosion before the vehicle came to a standstill permitting any occupant to exit, the statement said.

By then, some people and the policemen from the nearby police mobile unit would have been attracted to the scene and their mere presence would have been a restraining factor on anyone desirous of fleeing.

The WPA statement goes on to claim, the official statement observed, that the driver of the car Donald Rodney was severely injured and has been hospitalised.

The police for obvious reasons are anxious to locate and question Donald Rodney as to as to get to the root of the incident but have so far failed to locate him even though they have carried out checks at all known hospitals, public and private.

Several questions come to mind. Why did Donald Rodney, assuming he was the driver of the car flee from the scene of the incident?

And, why has he not yet come forward to give his version of the incident, either personally or through members of his family or the WPA both of whom seem to know where he is and both of whom demonstrated great alacrity in communicating to the foreign media that it was Walter Rodney who had been killed in the explosion of June 13, 1980, the statement concluded.

Police yesterday continued their investigation into the incident, and relatives of Dr. Rodney observed that the funeral may probably take place on Wednesday.

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## **25. TELEX MESSAGE FROM MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GUYANA TO GUYANA AMBASSADOR, WASHINGTON**

17 June 2008

The police are still trying to ascertain exactly what happened on the night of Friday June 13, when Walter Rodney died after an explosive in Georgetown.

However, on the basis of the version of the incident given by Donald Rodney as reported in the media yesterday June 16, a number of questions automatically arises.

The alleged walkie-talkie set the Rodney brothers were allegedly testing must have been unlicensed and must have been in their possession contrary to the laws of Guyana.

The police seized two walkie-talkie sets from Rodney's home in the immediate aftermath of the fire which destroyed the Ministry of National Development building and the Office of the General Secretary of the People's National Congress in July last

year and these are among the exhibits in the current case. It is a publicly known fact that a number of former Guyana Defence Force personnel are among the active members and sympathisers of the Working People's Alliance.

The WPA has for sometime now been putting out a stencilled sheet YAM-VINE which was specifically directed at members of the army and which had as its clear intention the undermining of the army's loyalty to the state.

Indeed, among those charged recently as a result of the discovery of a plot to overthrow the government was one Edward Torrington a former corporal of the army.

In addition, the WPA in a statement published on Saturday, June 14, gave a version of the incident which is somewhat different from Donald Rodney's account. Donald Rodney's account supports the findings of Government Pathologist Dr. Leslie Mootoo.

The fact that the WPA, through its activists, Andaiye and Karen DeSouza knew of Donald Rodney's version of the incident, as communicated to the media yesterday, but yet put out something quite different must obviously be viewed with some suspicion.

Furthermore, if Donald Rodney's story is to be believed, one wonders what significance should be attached to the fact that one of the tests was to be made near to the Georgetown Jail, a very sensitive security location and Donald Rodney in his account to the media, clearly conceded that he and his late brother were engaged in some clandestine activity when he said that he and his late brother were parked in John Street, there they were driving at "a fairly slow pace" not wanting to attract attention and that there was "a need to keep some sort of look-out".

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## **26. TELEX MESSAGE FROM CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES, GUYANA EMBASSY, WASHINGTON TO MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GUYANA**

17 June 1980

Following for Permanent Secretary

In response to your request in Telex No. 42 of yesterday's date, we have approached State Department and they have recorded a great willingness to identify someone.

However, they are of the view that since the WPA statement has listed the U.S. Government as being collaborators with Guyana Government in this matter, it would not be advisable for them to do so. They have however requested the British Government to assist. They are awaiting a response.



Please communicate this information to Ambassador Mann.

Chargé d'Affaires, A.I.  
Washington

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## **27. PRESS RELEASE BY GUYANA EMBASSY, WASHINGTON**

It has now been confirmed that Dr. Frank Skuse, Forensic Scientist of the British Home Office, and Dr. Hugh Johnson, Consultant/Forensic Pathologist at St. Thomas Hospital in London, will arrive in Guyana tomorrow 19th June, and Saturday, June 21, respectively.

With Dr. Leslie Mootoo, the Commonwealth Caribbean's leading Forensic Pathologist, they will work on forensic examination related to the body of Dr. Walter Rodney. Although Dr. Mootoo's findings have already been corroborated by the evidence of Donald Rodney, and in spite of Dr. Mootoo's experience in this type of examination, the police consider it advisable, having regard to all the circumstances, to remove all possible doubts and also to obtain additional help concerning the bomb which was involved in the incident.

The team will also work with local bomb expert, Asst. Superintendent Eustace Kendall.

Meanwhile, the police are questioning Karen DeSouza and Andaye, also known as Sandra Williams, two activists of the Working People's Alliance. They went to the police this afternoon accompanied by Attorney at Law, Mr. Doodnauth Singh.

Donald Rodney had claimed that he had reported to Karen DeSouza and Andaye minutes after the explosion which killed his brother. Crime Chief Cecil Roberts is not now in a position to state how long the questioning will continue.

Local detectives meanwhile have interviewed residents in Russell Street and Howes Street, areas where Donald Rodney claimed that he and his brother went to uplift the device which eventually led to his death. However, none of the persons questioned have been able to assist so far.

Police will return to the area later with blown-up photographs of Donald Rodney and his late brother to see if anyone could remember seeing either of them talking to strangers in the area.

The Crime Chief today commented that the unduly long delay on Donald Rodney's part in providing a description of the man, and information about the man who Donald said had given a package to his brother, has created considerable difficulty for them, the police, in pursuing their investigation. **Police are still trying to make sense of Donald's statement that the**

**device had to be tested against the metal of the prison wall, and why it could not have been tested against metal in any other part of the city.**

Meanwhile, police are asking members of the public to help them locate the man that Donald Rodney has described. According to him, the man's name is Gregory Smith, "an ex-Guyana Defence Force Sergeant", and who had established a relationship with his brother, Walter.

Donald claims that "Smith" is muscular, 5'6" tall, wears a large Afro, black steel-rimmed glasses, large side-burns, and a heavy beard.

EMBASSY OF GUYANA  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

18th June, 1980

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**28. TELEX MESSAGE FROM MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GUYANA TO GUYANA AMBASSADOR, WASHINGTON**

20 June 1980

As you know the police were notified on Monday at 17.30 hours that Donald Rodney was available at Medical Arts Centre. When contacted there the police were informed by Rodney's doctors, Williams and Taitt, that because of Donald's state of shock and sedation he could not be interrogated before 24 hours. Lawyer Miles Fitzpatrick on Monday afternoon also promised the police a signed statement by Donald Rodney. Meanwhile however as you are aware, Donald gave an exclusive interview to CANA. In the final analysis the police did not receive from Fitzpatrick the promised signed statement until 17.30 hours on Tuesday 17.

Pursuant to the doctors' instructions as regards interrogation of Donald Rodney, the police commenced interrogation at 16.30 hours on Tuesday 17 June. The interrogation lasted one and a half hour. SM. For your own information and not for any written release, initial reports indicate inconsistencies in statement given to police and statement released to the press. One area of inconsistency relates to allegations concerning Gregory Smith on the basis of information received during interrogation. Police are taking in for questioning Andaiye and Karen DeSouza.

WPA yesterday Wednesday issued release signature of Andaiye which in part refers to statement made by Donald Rodney "after his doctors said he was well enough to talk" and sought to reconstruct a theory of what is called a cold-blooded plot of the PNC state, You should know that, in relation to request for foreign forensic experts, statement said "but we can have no confidence in the verdict of highly reactionary police forces from imperialist capitals".

As regards the request for forensic experts the USA has said that it would not be advisable for them to identify a forensic expert. The US also requested the British government to assist.

As a result, Dr. Frank Skuse, a forensic scientist (bomb expert) of the British Home Office, is arriving Guyana today, Thursday June 19, and Dr. Hugh Johnson, consultant forensic pathologist at St. Thomas Hospital, London, on Saturday. They will work along with Dr. Leslie Mootoo, and a local ballistics expert, Police Superintendent Eustace Kendall, in an effort to remove all possible doubts and to obtain additional help in relation to the bomb involved in the incident. The WPA in their statement described the bomb as "a carefully designed bomb, probably designed with the aid of foreign experts" and said it was "an anti-personnel bomb, made to blow mainly upwards". No official description has been given; Dr. Mootoo said he had never encountered any similar bomb during his studies in Austria.

On Wednesday, Dr. Mootoo, the Caribbean's only forensic pathologist, also told the press that bits of plastic, a spring of between six and eight centimetres long and bits of wood were found in Rodney's body and the left side of his face was burned, along with his chest and inside his arms. Dr. Mootoo also said that the presence of Donald's driver's licence and another driver's licence in the wreckage after the explosion was partly responsible for Dr. Rodney's body not being immediately identified. He had arrived on the scene about 300 yards from his home, around 20MQT\* hours the Friday night, had found the body warm, and concluded that the incident had occurred less than half an hour before.

## **Part 2**

Meanwhile there have been two developments following the statement given by Donald Rodney. Firstly, the police have questioned WPA activists Karen DeSouza and Andaiye (Sandra Williams) to whom Donald Rodney spoke minutes after the incident. Secondly the police have sent out an all stations alert for one Gregory Smith ex-sergeant Guyana Defence Force who is said to have given to Rodney the device which blew up and killed his brother.

There is not and there has never been a Sergeant Gregory Smith in the Guyana Defence Force, the Ministry of Information stated last night. The release added: "The records of the army dating back to its inception revealed that there have been forty six (46) Smiths. There are two (2) Gregory Smiths and both are currently in the army. Neither of them has attained the rank of sergeant. Nineteen of the Smiths attained the rank of Non-Commissioned Officers."

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## **29. COPY OF AN INTERVIEW GIVEN BY DR. WALTER RODNEY DISTRIBUTED TO GUYANA'S FOREIGN MISSIONS BY THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION**

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

## NOTE TO MISSIONS

This copy of the late Rodney's interview reveals, upon close analysis, his commitment to violence as a political option. You should also study carefully other pronouncements by Rodney - like his W.P.A. not getting finances from "'foreign sources" and his "extra parliamentary" options etc.

Ministry of Information,  
GUYANA.

IN MARCH THIS YEAR WALTER RODNEY GAVE THIS INTERVIEW TO CARL BLACKMAN, GUYANA'S MOST SENIOR JOURNALIST.

Q: Is it true that you had said in Tanzania, that you were coming back to cause trouble? and that was the reason why all your appointments had been revoked.

RODNEY: Rumours were flying about the reason for withdrawing my letter of appointment. I think that it is interesting that they have given an explanation. I may have said that I was coming back to carry on some kind of political ideological work which I had been carrying on in Tanzania and Jamaica.

Q: Kester Alves in a viewpoint some time ago quoted Hugh Shearer, then prime minister of Jamaica, as saying that you were stirring up the Rastafarians and criminal elements, to stir up trouble in Jamaica.

RODNEY: The modern development of the Jamaica Labour Party (Shearer's party) seems to have accepted certain of my contentions, and their change of policy is a vindication of what I have always said: That the Jamaican working people demanded certain changes and their demands were not being met.

The Jamaican Labour Party's presentation of the incidents of October 1968, as a case - to put it crudely - of foreigners stirring up trouble was nonsense. What I was saying that subsequent events had shown that was far from the truth. The incidents showed that there were fundamental grievances which Jamaicans were trying to express.

Q: But the incidents tend to support that you support violence as part of your struggle?

RODNEY: Violence is always regrettable because people get hurt and lose their lives. But the responsibility for violence are always on the shoulders of those who create the conditions for such a situation.

Q: Could you be a little more precise than that?

RODNEY: Let me give you a precise answer. If a situation has become intolerable and if all avenues for peaceful change have become exhausted, then violence would be the logical result.

Q: What you seem to be saying is that that you accept violence as inevitable in the Guyana situation?

RODNEY: Our first task is to exhaust all avenues of peaceful change, and that is what civil disobedience is all about. It is part of a programme of ensuring that the Guyanese people explore all political avenues, short of violence, so that one exercises one's political and social responsibility. What happens after that is the responsibility of those who see fit to close off all avenues of peaceful change.

Q: Do you see any peaceful solution without any further violence?

RODNEY: Our remaining options are very slim. One option is mass mobilisation that is sufficiently broad that it is strategic in the sense of affecting production, and that is resolute in the face of victimisation.

Q: Surely when you talk about affecting production, you are worsening the conditions of people who you claim you are dedicated to improving their lot?

RODNEY: I want it stressed that it is not a new question. Look at the sanctions against South Africa and Rhodesia. The whole debate of those issues had a lot to do with whether the African population would be adversely affected economically, but the liberation movements and their allies carried the day. If sanctions reduce production, that was a necessary evil on the road to liberation.

Q: The government has labelled the strikes last year as political, and you seem to be confirming this.

RODNEY: Debate about "political strikes" have gone on for a long time. All strikes in our context have a political implication, so that whether strikes are political or not, could be red herrings.

Q: Your party vowed last year, 1979 was "the Year of the Turn", which meant that Burnham and the PNC government would be out of office. He is still there. What happened?

RODNEY: There was a turn in Guyana; our position is that the political life of Guyana has gone through a radical change in the last six months, and would never be the same again.

Q: What are the achievements you claim?

RODNEY: The WPA assisted in posing the key political questions: The removal of the PNC. We have identified the process of removal as being necessary extra-parliamentary in the light of the destruction of parliamentary democracy by the PNC.

Q: Do you think your party can run a government alone?

RODNEY: Any set of individuals of political parties cannot be expected to solve all the problems of the people. In fact, we profoundly distrust the Messiah approach of political parties in Guyanese. We are trying to mobilise the energies of the vast majority of the population. We do not have a designated leader, because we found that one of the weaknesses of Guyana is the creation of a maximum leader, whether in politics or other organisations.

Instead of trying to get together to solve problems, the people tend to look to the maximum leader, and this has a negative consequence. This has acted adversely to the democratic practices at all levels. While there are several examples of maximum leader in the Third-World, we don't believe it works. It destroys initiatives and creativity.

Q: Government sources paint you as a troublemaker. It is said that the reason why you left Tanzania is that you called President Julius Nyerere "a briefcase socialist".

RODNEY: The statement is so distorted that I can say that it is absolutely false. I spent six and a half years in Tanzania and I am proud to have participated fully in its political life despite not being a Tanzanian. For Nyerere I had tremendous respect and we had no quarrel. There were times when I joined with other Tanzanians of like mind to criticise official policies, which were carried in newspapers owned by the Tanzanian government. I left Tanzania because of a desire to come to Guyana, rather than because Tanzania had ceased to be a welcome society.

Q: How strong is your party and to what do you attribute your success?

RODNEY: The WPA feels happy that whatever else happens we have definitely broken down barriers of race - one of the chief factors of organising a political party. We can affirm that our membership at this time is authentically multi-racial. We are not as strong in parts where we do not have the means to maintain direct contact, but we have tremendous goodwill all over the country.

Q: There is a feeling that you have lost some of your credibility as a leader because you ran away when the police tried to break up a demonstration by your party?

RODNEY: I raised it publicly immediately after the incident, but since I had no newspaper my remarks are not noted. There is nothing to be ashamed of. It was obvious that a whole band of thugs disguised as policemen set out to make an example of certain special tasks. Fortunately, some of the skills I had as a youth had not entirely disappeared and I was able to use them.

Q: Have you ever met Burnham?

RODNEY: Yes, many years ago when I was a youngster, when there were debates in schools, there were mixed teams of masters and tutors and I debated with him. But we have not met recently.

Q: Where does your party get your funds? Some people say from Libya and Iran.

RODNEY: The WPA finances reflect the economic situation. Our funding comes and has always come and will continue to come from the Guyanese. We have never sought foreign sources for our funds, and we have no intention of doing so. Because politically, it is the single most compromising act that any political party could do.

Q: What is the colour of your politics?

RODNEY: We are a socialist party. We do not retreat from socialism. Several of us are Marxists, although the party has not declared that it is Marxist. What we intend to do is to avoid labels. The WPA depends on the response to the people of Guyana.

Q: Is your party more like Bishop of Grenada than Williams of Trinidad?

RODNEY: Yes. But since I want to avoid labels, I would not like to make that comment.

*The Nation* (Barbados) Friday, June 20, 1980.

[Note in *The Nation* accompanying the interview]

Walter Edward Rodney, age 38 who was born on March 23, 1942, the second of six children (five sons and one daughter) of Edward Percival Rodney, tailor and cutter. He grew up in Georgetown in a lower middle area of Bent Street. He usually quips "I grew up near the prison, I know it well from outside. Perhaps, some day somebody would want to put me inside."

In 1953, he won a government scholarship to Queen's College, which Prime Minister Forbes Burnham and Leader of the Opposition, Dr. Cheddie Jagan, both attended. Earlier Rodney stressed that he and Burnham were not in the school at the same time, but he was there while Burnham taught briefly at what was then considered Guyana's premier secondary school.

In 1959, he won an open scholarship to the University of the West Indies in Jamaica where he also won the Faculty of Arts prize, and a scholarship to University of London, where he did Oriental and African studies.

He gained a Ph.D. in African history, and went to Tanzania for one year June 1966 to December 1967, where he taught at the University of East Africa.

He returned to Jamaica in 1968, and after the disturbances, which he was accused of inspiring, went back to Tanzania from 1969 to 1974 as associate professor in history at the University of Dar-es-Salaam. He returned to Guyana in 1974 to find that his appointment as a lecturer at the university had been blocked.

*The Nation* (Barbados) - Friday, June 20, 1980.

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### **30. TELEX MESSAGE FROM MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GUYANA TO GUYANA AMBASSADOR, WASHINGTON**

21 June 1980

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime) Cecil Roberts has informed attorney-at-law, Doodnauth Singh, who is representing the interest of the family of the late Dr. Walter Rodney, that the late historian/politician's body could not be released for burial before Sunday June 22, 1980. The police have been informed by Dr. Hugh Johnson, consultant pathologist at the St. Thomas Hospital in London, that it is important that he examines the body. Dr. Johnson is expected in Guyana Saturday evening and he has promised to start his examination of the body early Sunday morning.

The police hope that the examination will be completed with the minimum of delay and that the body will be ready for handing over to relatives during Sunday for burial sometime after. The relatives had requested the body for burial on Saturday June 21.

Meanwhile, Dr. Frank Skuse, forensic scientist of the British Home Office, who arrived in the country on Thursday, June 19, visited the site of the explosion at John and Hadfield Street where he made an inspection, examined Rodney's body and inspected the motor car in which Rodney died.

Also the WPA is proceeding with a service at the Brickdam Cathedral on Saturday, June 21, and has requested police permission to hold a public meeting in Georgetown later the same day.

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### **31. COLLECTION OF DOCUMENTS PREPARED BY THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION ON THE "WALTER RODNEY BOMBING INCIDENT"**

**CONFIDENTIAL**



## **A. BRIEF ON THE WALTER RODNEY BOMBING INCIDENT**

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION JUNE 21, 1980

### **[i]. A. INTRODUCTION**

This brief on the Walter Rodney Bomb Death Incident is intended to give readers a background and insights into the course of events that led to the almost inevitable fate Rodney prepared for himself.

The initial sympathy that was evoked for the WPA outside of Guyana stemmed from the fact that the WPA was first off the blocks with its colourful and deceptive version of the incident. Now that the dust is settling the world deserves to know the truth. An attempt is made here to document as fully as possible the history, political context and contemporary course of events that all created the environment for Rodney's inglorious end by his own hand.

The brief is presented in easy-to-read sections e.g. a narrative of events after June 13, 1980, the Government's reactions and actions, relevant antecedents (a section that presents the record of WPA-inspired violence and subversive activity), the political context or environment in which the incident occurred and an analysis of the affair by knowledgeable commentators.

Those who compiled this brief hope that the information contained herein will help to throw light on the affair and provide background information that would be used to help clear up the doubts and misconceptions that may linger in the minds of a few persons.

### **B. THE NARRATIVE**

On the calendar of many superstitious Guyanese it is a frightening combination should the thirteenth day of any month be a Friday. For them such a day is a "Black Friday". So it was on Friday, June 13, 1980, the day on which Historian and. Politician Dr. Walter Rodney lost his life in an explosion in a parked car on John and Hadfield Streets.

According to police reports, two (2) "Beat Duty" Constables saw a white Mazda Capella Car - PBB 2349 - drive up and park in the vicinity of John and Hadfield Streets, a short distance away from the Georgetown Prisons.

Minutes after, a loud explosion rocked the parked car, terrifying residents. The constables reportedly saw someone get out from the driver's side of the vehicle and hurry away.

They began moving towards the vehicle, but were checked in their advance by a dangling overhead electric wire, damaged by the explosion.

Mastering their initial apprehension, they approached the vehicle whose wind-screen and roof had been blown off, and observed the body of a human being who seemed to have been killed by the explosion.

About ten minutes after, the Police arrived on the scene, examined the vehicle and questioned residents in the area.

Forensic Pathologist Dr. Leslie Mootoo, who lives 2 blocks away, was summoned to the scene and on his arrival examined the body. His considered opinion was that a "device" had exploded in the car.

In these early stages, identification of the body was difficult because of a number of reasons including the fact that the area was dark and it was some time before electricity by means of "drop-cords" could be supplied and the fact that documents found in the car pointed to Donald Rodney and Edward Rodney - not to Walter Rodney.

As a result of the documents found in the car the Police searched a house in West Ruimveldt, arrested Edward Rodney a brother of Walter Rodney and took him to Police Headquarters for questioning.

However before it became clear to the police that the dead man in the car was Walter Rodney the WPA had communicated hurriedly by telephone with the foreign News Media, stating positively that the dead man was Walter Rodney, and that he was assassinated by agents of the ruling People's National Congress. They said the occupants of the car at the time of the explosion were Donald and Walter Rodney.

Saturday June 14. The local radio stations put out early reports of the incident, stating that the police were still trying to identify the badly disfigured body found in the car and, it wasn't until mid-morning that the local radio stations heard and announced that the dead man was believed to be Dr. Walter Rodney. (One radio report actually said that the face was badly disfigured - an unfortunate but not deliberate inaccuracy.)

However, the BBC radio, Radio SRS (Suriname) Antilles reported that Walter Rodney was assassinated. WPA activists also took to the streets in the early morning distributing leaflets and Press Releases accusing the People's National Congress of assassinating Walter Rodney.

A Press Release signed by Andaiye alleged that the car was moving at the time of the explosion. This release gave the impression that a bomb was either planted in or thrown into the vehicle. The Press Release said also that the WPA "understands" that Donald Rodney was hospitalised.

In an indirect response to these suggestions and distortions by the WPA, later in the day a statement issued by the Ministry of Information stressed that from all the available evidence, the car was parked at the time of the explosion.

The WPA was later made to look quite silly when in the story they released from Donald Rodney some 72 hours after the incident, Rodney, who was the only other person in the car with Walter Rodney at the time of the explosion, admitted that the car was parked.

The first reports sent to Police Headquarters suggested that the dead person was a woman. At the time Police searched Rodney's house therefore, they did not know that they were in fact searching the house of a widow. Walter's wife, perhaps understandably, did not seek to assist in the identification process but Mrs. Shepherd, a sister-in-law and Father Malcolm Rodrigues, a Catholic priest and associate, identified the body at the Georgetown Mortuary, as that of Walter Rodney. Mrs. Shepherd was not sure. Edward Rodney earlier looked at the body and he too said that he was not sure. The first positive identification was done by Father Rodrigues at about mid-day on the Saturday.

At the Mortuary, Dr. Mootoo performed an autopsy on the mangled body and concluded that death had resulted from "shock and haemorrhage" (excessive bleeding). It was his considered view that the victim had the explosive device on the seat between his thighs or on his lap at the time of the explosion.

These findings were supported by the story told by Donald Rodney two days later when he said his brother was holding the device in front of him when it exploded.

Arrangements were made shortly after noon for members of the media to view the badly mangled body and the damaged car. Some members of the media - Messrs A. Morrison S.J. of the *Catholic Standard* and Sharief Khan of the Caribbean News Agency (CANA) in particular - sought to suggest how and where the bomb must have been "planted" in the vehicle.

But even though Father Rodrigues and Mrs. Shepherd had identified the body as that of Walter Rodney by evening there was still some doubt as to whether the body was in fact that of Walter Rodney the main reason being that the whereabouts of the man seen hurrying away from the scene after the explosion were still unknown. He was believed to be Donald Rodney but the two brothers - Donald and Walter were said to have very similar physical features.

Sunday June 15: *The Sunday Chronicle* carried a front page story about the incident. The story included interviews with residents of the John and Hadfield Streets area whose statements were supportive of the police reports. In addition the government announced its intention of bringing in foreign experts to assist with the investigations into the incident which led to Dr. Rodney's death. There was a peculiar reaction from the WPA. For a group which makes a great furore over mole hills, they were strangely quiet at home, though they kept churning out deceptive propaganda to the foreign media.

By this time too, there was a very unflattering response to the incident from the Caribbean and further afield. Having been fed the WPA version that Rodney had been assassinated the international community swallowed it lock, stock and barrel and ended up being very critical of the Guyana Government. Prime Minister Michael Manley of Jamaica, for example, said it was a brutal assassination.

The transcript of the WHUR programme (see appendix\*) is a good guideline about the way the international media covered the incident. Of course, in this particular case, the announcer, Kojo Nambi, is a known WPA activist. Similarly, the CANA correspondents in Georgetown, Sharief Khan and Eucryl Calder, are known WPA sympathisers, if not members and/or activists.

### **C. GOVERNMENT'S ACTIONS FOLLOWING THE JUNE 13 EXPLOSION**

The death of Dr. Walter Rodney on Friday June 13 has had some serious implications in the face of many unfounded criticisms by opposition groups operating both in and out of Guyana.

When the explosion occurred and reports reached Police Headquarters that someone had died in an explosion in a car, the routine police activities included inviting a medical authority almost immediately. The police were also actively engaged in restraining the crowd that had gathered in true Guyanese fashion. Failure to control the crowd would have resulted in evidence being disturbed and this would have hindered the investigations later.

However, contrary to certain WPA statements, no member of the crowd was arrested nor was anyone taken away from the scene of the explosion. The police, however, conducted a search at the home of Dr. Walter Rodney the same night of the bombing incident, not realising that Mrs. Pat Rodney, Walter's wife, was a widow. A search was also carried out at the home of Dr. Rodney's mother the same night and some time later another brother of Walter Rodney, Edward Rodney, was taken in by the police for questioning.

Forensic Pathologist, Dr. Leslie Mootoo, who was summoned to the scene of the bombing, conducted the post mortem very early the next day. The police had earlier ensured that the relevant photographs were taken at the scene of the incident and Dr. Mootoo did not examine the body until after the photographers had done their work.

The authorities had also instituted a search for Donald Rodney, the owner of the car.

The Forensic Pathologist, Dr. Mootoo, spoke to The National Newspapers about his findings and media personnel operating in the country were afforded an opportunity to view the body (which was by this time identified as that of Dr. Walter Rodney) and the car which was involved in the incident.

When Donald Rodney "gave an exclusive interview" to CANA and was handed over to the police by his Attorney of Law, Miles Fitzpatrick, it was established by Donald himself, that the findings of Dr. Mootoo were correct. Dr. Mootoo later hosted a media or news conference at which media operatives questioned him on nearly every aspect of his findings.

While the findings of Dr. Mootoo were conclusive the Guyana Government thought it necessary to clear the issue beyond any doubt and the services of a bomb expert and another forensic pathologist were sought to further investigate the incident.

Efforts were concentrated in the United Kingdom and the United States of America and on Thursday June 19, the first overseas expert, Dr. Frank Skuse, Forensic Scientist of the British Home Office arrived in the country. The second expert, Dr. Hugh Johnson, Consultant Forensic Pathologist at London's St. Thomas Hospital, was scheduled to arrive in Guyana on Saturday June 21.

Every aspect of the investigation is being reported to the media. Before Donald Rodney was handed over to the police he had promised, through his attorney, to present a signed statement to the police. This was not done, even when Donald was handed over.

However, the police questioned him from his hospital bed. In his statement to the police, as in his earlier statements to CANA, Donald said that shortly after the explosion he ran to the home of two known WPA activists, Andaiye and Karen De Souza.

The police, acting on this information, picked up Andaiye and Karen for questioning when it was realised that they had knowledge of Donald's whereabouts all the while the police were searching for him. They were subsequently released.

Donald had also stated that the device that exploded in Walter's lap was given to him by a person he claimed to be ex-army sergeant George Smith\*\* and the address of this man was also given.

The police immediately investigated this and the files of the Guyana Defence Force revealed that 46 Smiths had served in the army as NCOS. The records also revealed that 19 of the 46 Smiths are no longer in the army but none of these 19 was "Gregory Smith". At present there are two Gregory Smiths, both of whom are still serving in army and therefore could not fit the description of "wears a large afro, . . . and also has large sideburns and a thick beard," since the afro and beard are contrary to the army regulations.

In addition, none of the two Gregory Smiths ever attained the rank of sergeant. A description of the man has been published in the National Newspapers, broadcast on the national wireless network and made available to the international media.

In response to the appeal by the police for the assistance of the public in apprehending "the Gregory Smith" at least one member of the public has submitted a signed statement through Attorney of Law, Doodnauth Singh, claiming knowledge of "the Gregory Smith."

The police are taking immediate action in response to the report.

#### **D. THE RELEVANT ANTECEDENTS**

In July 1979, the Working People's Alliance (WPA) at a Press Conference declared itself a political party. This was followed by a public meeting chaired by Eusi Kwayana that same night at D'Urban Street and Louisa Row.

It set as its immediate objective "the removal of the present PNC regime" and further stated (in the words of its leaders, (Dr. Walter Rodney) that: "We have had enough of the PNC; we must demand the resignation of this government; the PNC clique must go; we must take over the streets by public meetings and industrial action".

While, officially, the WPA did not name or elect a leader but opted for a rotating chairmanship, there is no doubt that the driving force behind the WPA was Dr. Walter Rodney, a world renowned academic.

In this regard, a knowledge of some important aspects of Dr. Rodney's life - in particular his life since the late 1960s when he was expelled from Jamaica by the then Hugh Sharer Government for allegedly engaging in many acts of disturbances - is very important.

For example, quoting from a confidential security report, Mr. Hugh Shearer told the Jamaican Parliament that Rodney had consistently preached about the need for armed struggle and bloodshed and that the resort to violence was the recurrent theme of all of Rodney's discussions with the young groups with whom he associated.

After being expelled from Jamaica and refusing a job in Guyana Rodney went to Tanzania in 1969 where he spent five years during which he also ran into difficulties with the Julius Nyerere Government. He returned to Guyana in late 1974, was refused a job as Head of the History Department at the University of Guyana and immediately announced his intentions of becoming a political "activist" in Guyana.

Increasingly, he became active on the political scene using every opportunity to attack the People's National Congress Government. And, apart from addressing public meetings in the city, in particular, he devoted much time to the overseas audience.

From 1974, Rodney became closely associated with the Working People's Alliance - an alliance which drew its membership from an interesting collection of organisations - ASCRIA headed by Eusi Kwayana who was expelled from the PNC which alleged that he was a racist; the Indian Organisation headed by Moses Bhagwan who was known to be one of the proponents of the *apan jaat*.

Since its formation, the Alliance had contended that it was serving merely as a pressure group and that it was not a political party. "Out of the blue" however, in July 1979, less than a few days after the building which housed the Ministry of National Development and the offices of the General Secretary of the PNC was burnt down and Rodney, and two other leading members of the WPA, Dr. Rupert Roopnarine and Dr. Omawale, were charged with arson, the WPA declared itself a political party.

Since then, the *Modus Operandi* of the WPA became increasingly clearer. Capitalising on the serious economic problems confronting the country and the psychological and other pressures building up at home, the WPA took to the streets and launched a craftily conceived programme aimed at undermining support for the Guyana Government and its revolutionary programmes.

In addition, from all the evidence available, the WPA launched also a simultaneous programme of non-cooperation with, and violence against the state. This line of approach meshed perfectly with Rodney's earlier mouthings in Jamaica about resorting to armed struggle and violence.

As Police continue their investigations into the death of Dr. Walter Rodney one of the theories they are working on is that Rodney died when an explosive device with which he was not very familiar exploded pre-maturely.

This theory is based on the police's conviction that for some time now the Working People's Alliance (WPA) of which Dr. Rodney was a leading activist has been implementing a planned programme of violence.

This programme has been stepped up in recent months and from the evidence available to the police, this "definite build-up of violence" was aimed at the eventual overthrow of the government and the take-over of the state machinery.

The Police have in their possession confessions from a number of persons that they had been recruited by the WPA to commit a number of crimes including armed robberies with a view to "filling the coffers of the WPA". Their emphasis was payroll-type robberies.

These recruits had an arrangement with the WPA whereby they retained one-third of the loot and gave the remaining two-thirds to the WPA with the understanding that following the success of the "revolution" - meaning the overthrow of the government - they would be suitably rewarded.

As a result of recent investigations the police have unearthed varying quantities of arms and ammunition, documents of great security interest, communication equipment - including four new loud hailer, a new transmitting set and military type uniforms.

Among the documents which are still being studied by the police are some which give details of the WPA's plans for action after the overthrow of the Government.

In addition, among the items seized during the recent investigations were two green, black and red flags which it is believed were supposed to replace the Golden Arrowhead (the national flag).

The investigations have clearly established the role of the WPA in the build-up of violence in the country and in a treasonable plot to overthrow the government.

A series of events - all linked to the WPA - in this build-up of violence in the country are clearly evident. It all seemed to have started in July last year (just as the WPA launched itself as a Political Party) with the fire which destroyed the building that housed the Ministry of National Development and the Office of the General Secretary of the People's National Congress.

Since then there has been a definite build-up of violence in the country. The list is a long one but some of the incidents are as follows:

- \* In July, 1978 Kwame Apata, a WPA activist was charged with being in unlawful possession of a revolver and six rounds of ammunition.
- \* On November 18, 1979, Claude Bovell, also known as O.K., a WPA activist was seen by police putting a large, wet and bulky bag into the trunk of a motor car in the Roxanne Burnham Gardens. He pulled an SLR rifle at the police patrol and was shot dead. Rodney's presence in the area at the time was never fully explained.
- \* On April 12, 1979, the Police Forensic Laboratory at Eve Leary was broken into and 22 firearms (the cache from Jonestown) were stolen. Keith Lynch, a soldier was later charged with the offence but only one of the firearms has so far been recovered.
- \* It was recovered recently from a WPA activist when the police unearthed the WPA's plot to overthrow the Government.
- \* On February 18, 1980, David Hinds, Guyanese resident in the USA was held at the Timehri International Airport as he attempted to bring into the country three .233 rifles, and other arms and ammunition hidden in the false bottom of his suitcase.
- \* On February 29, 1980, Edward Dublin, 32, a WPA activist from Linden died after being shot during a confrontation with the police.
- \* On Saturday, April 12, 1980, six armed men stole six drums containing sulphuric acid from Friendship Marines Limited, East Bank. Sulphuric acid is used in the making of some bombs. Only four of the six drums have been recovered. The police are of the view that the WPA are responsible.

There have been several other reports of arms and ammunition being discovered by the police. There was for example, the arrest of Arnold Apple, another WPA activist for allegedly having a quantity of explosives in his possession while on his way to Linden.



And over the last year, many Guyanese had become extremely worried about the spate of armed robberies in the city, on the East Coast, Demerara, and on the West Coast, Demerara. The Police have discovered that the WPA is linked to these robberies.

And, recently, reports from the prisons told of attempts being made to free prisoners. On one occasion, what appeared to be a smoke bomb was set off in the compound of the Georgetown Prison where a number of WPA activists are being held.

The authorities believe that a plan was hatched to free a number of prisoners but the plan backfired because when the "smoke bomb" went off the prisoners were already "inside".

In addition, when the treason suspects were being held in custody at the La Penitence Police Station an attempt was made to free them by smuggling hack-saw blades into the prison. The blades were found secluded between the plastic shell and the "refill" of a flask.

It had also become evident in recent times that the WPA had embarked on a programme of recruiting persons with a military background. It was therefore not without significance that among the six persons charged recently with treason was a former soldier, Edward Torrington.

June 21, 1980.

## **E. THE POLITICAL CONTEXT**

Perhaps "Volatile" might not be the most accurate description of Guyana's present political situation. But it would be fair to say that the Guyanese people, especially after the traumatic events of the early 1950's, have been politically alert and aware at all periods since then.

Our politics have been characterised by liveliness - **without** the element of **violence** experienced by others, except the racial disturbances of the sixties - and keen analysis by the people. If there has been one weakness our people have been guilty of - in common with our neighbours in the Commonwealth Caribbean - it has been the heavy leaning, even after thorough debate and analysis of issues, towards "personality politics" - considering **the man** sometimes to the exclusion of the **issues**. It is this phenomenon that Archie Singham calls "the hero and the crowd".

Never-the-less, the Guyanese people exhibit a keen sense of political know-how especially at the practical level. They cannot be duped or deceived for any significant period - personality or no personality!

It is against this background of the body politic **at home** that we should have a brief look at the political rise and final demise of Walter Rodney.

The academic career of Rodney is well-known and never disputed. He gained a Ph.D in African history from the University of London and spent a year in Tanzania where he taught at the University of East Africa (between June 66 and December 1967). Between 1969 and 1974 he lived and worked in Tanzania as Associate Professor in History at the University of Dar-es-Salaam.

But it was not his academic brilliance as an historian which catapulted Rodney into international prominence! Rather it was his role whilst in Jamaica in 1968 which first provoked attention towards him. To quote from a confidential Jamaican Security Report:

"He (Rodney) lost little time in engaging in subversive activities on his return (to Jamaica). He quickly announced his intention of organising revolutionary groups for what he termed 'the struggle ahead' and then closely associated himself with groups of people who claimed to be part of the Rastafarian Movement and also with Claudius Henry, who was convicted in 1960 of Treason Felony as a result of activities which required the use of armed forces.

"He openly declared his belief that as Jamaica was predominantly a black country, all brown-skinned mulatto people and their assets should be destroyed. He consistently told the groups with whom he associated that this could be achieved by revolution and that no revolution had ever taken place without armed struggle and bloodshed. This resort to violence was the recurrent theme of all his discussions with these groups as was his condemnation of the democratic system of government in Jamaica.

"In recent months, Rodney stepped up the pace of his activities and was actively engaged in organising groups of semi-literates and unemployed for avowed revolutionary purposes. He constantly reiterated the necessity for the use of violence in attaining his ends; the procurement of firearms and training in their use was recently a major topic of discussion. Furthermore, at one meeting at the UWI campus at Mona, Rodney reportedly said, 'Revolution must come. We must be prepared to see it through. We must stop talking and indulging in academic exercises and act. Who will be the first to come with me downtown and take up a machine gun?'

The Jamaican Report concluded that: "The whole pattern of the destructive campaign shows evidence of careful planning beyond the capacity of hoodlums or the usual subversive groups with which the government has had to deal in the past. No wonder a rastafarian at one of Rodney's campus meetings publicly declared - 'We have the brawn, you have the brains, all we need are the guns.'"

For these activities - which were regarded by some as an abuse of academic freedom and provocative intrusion into other people's internal politics - Rodney was expelled and banned from entering Jamaica.

By his own admission, in an interview given to veteran Guyanese journalist Carl Blackman early this year (1980), Rodney, whilst in Tanzania, "participated fully in its political life despite not being a Tanzanian". He further admitted to Blackman that "there were times when I joined with other Tanzanians of like mind to criticise official policies. . . ." The truth is, Rodney again using academic freedom and a guise of pan-africanist defender of the masses involved himself in the politics of Tanzania, fell

out of favour with the Tanzanians. (It is reported that he dubbed Julius Nyerere "a briefcase Socialist" - something he later denied, saying his statement was "distorted").

After the international acclaim and success of his book "How Europe Under-Developed Africa", and after his interference in the politics of two countries, Rodney was ready to return (home) to Guyana in 1974 - his "personality" and reputation preceding him. He returned to find that his appointment to a University of Guyana position was disallowed. The fight to overturn this decision was used by "radical academics" and a myriad of opposition groupings to highlight imagined governmental disregard of academic freedom, allegations of suppression and other popular and fashionable "protests".

So that by the time the varied and various groups had banded themselves together as a **political party** - the Working People's Alliance, Rodney's non-employment was not merely one of their "causes" but he himself had been identified as one of their "leaders".

The WPA history has been examined in a preceding section of this brief, hence readers would be familiar with the events of July 1979 beginning with the burning down of the building which housed the Ministry of National Development and the Office of the General Secretary of the People's National Congress.

Coming at the tail-end of a severe economic squeeze when many people were discontented and experiencing the daily heart-rending ritual of "Guylines" certain basic items of foodstuff, Rodney's arrest and subsequent charge aroused the curiosity and even the sympathy of many. Compounded by political strikes in Linden and Georgetown, the situation was ready-made for political firebrands to draw crowds. This the WPA did with much success in the city in July to September of 1979. There was a slight relapse to "personality politics" as people turned out to listen to Rodney, Kwayana and Catholic Standard speakers and to be entertained by queh-queh like drumming and chants. The People's Progressive Party maintained a clever low-profile allowing Rodney's band to "hog" centre-stage. Many people enjoyed a kind of release as they listened to the entertainment and rhetoric provided by Rodney.

It was at this time too that the politically-wise Guyanese public experienced the Rodney of Jamaica. Slanderous mouthings, foul bellowings describing Prime Minister Burnham as "**King Kong**" and as "**a King Midas-type whose touch changed everything to shit**", coupled with high-charged incitements to the gatherings characterised the WPA meetings. The WPA crowd tried their best to incite people into large-scale rioting but firm police handling prevented the misguided few who attempted any such thing.

The first half of this year (1980) saw Government grappling with a harsh economic situation and by Budget Day in early April it was even able to announce small increases for workers, packaged with other "eases" designed to alleviate the economic problems of the masses. **Facts and target figures** show that the Guyanese people were responding to Government's calls for an increase in productivity and production. A shaky economy is being made to stand erect on the ground of firm planning,

skilful economic controls and certain austerity measures. But the major feature of the period has been the people's positive response to increased production.

Thus, the people, preoccupied as they are with production, would not now respond to the rabble-rousing politics of slander which the speakers of the WPA revel in. The keen Guyanese audiences have recognised that the vagueness of the WPA programme (an ambiguous-type "manifesto" and a flood of "newsletters" and "statements"), matched by vague, inarticulate declarations, reflect an emptiness - even characterised by a so-called leaderless-type WPA caucus - that thinking Guyanese reject.

It is one thing to accept Rodney's credentials as a premier historian but, after the euphoria of the "personality" complex wears away, the people listen for sound programme and policy statements worthy of any group that presents itself as an alternative administration.

The "King Kong", queh-type "roots-Rastafari" appeal is certainly no substitute for the achievements, politically, and otherwise of the PNC. So the people, whilst tolerating a lively political opposition, do not accept the vagueness of the WPA as any alternative.

It is against this background that Rodney came to his end. The arson trial had begun and had been adjourned; a group of his supporters had been charged for treason against the State - the Police having uncovered strong incriminating evidence.

He had addressed a meeting on the Bourda Mall on Thursday, June 5, during which he tried to excuse and explain away the treason charges brought against his supporters by playing to the gallery of a few overseas lawyers and correspondents who had been there. But the WPA has not been able to confuse nor mobilise the Guyanese masses into committing the havoc and destruction by which they - the WPA - could thrive. Few people take them seriously anymore.

Their propaganda campaigns therefore have been aimed at the overseas audiences, whom, with the help of the PPP front-groups, they are more successful at deceiving. That is why they, being in a position to know, quite instantly, that it was Rodney who had been killed and even the type of bomb, communicated all this to the outside world first.

At home all through the week - after Rodney's death - the WPA and its agents have been trying in vain to instigate riots, protests and some form of violent confrontation. But to no avail! Fifty students are not representative of the thousands that constitute the UG population. And the few WPA supporters - even when joined by the inevitable numbers of curiosity-seekers - do not reflect the masses of this country.

Finally, into the present political milieu looms the New People's Constitution with all its guarantees that the Government detractors swore would not be there. Now that the guarantees are enshrined, they try to mislead people as how their rights and freedoms will be abused. All kinds of red herrings are thrown into discussions as to how the executive Presidency will operate.

But no amount of confusion-mongering and misrepresentation can be significantly successful at home. And that is why with the death of Rodney on their hands (and BY their hand) the WPA concentrates its propaganda efforts - with some initial success - overseas.

They are often successful at misleading audiences abroad because of the fact that, besides being seduced by the sensationalism of an anti-PNC media, people there relate only to the academic achievements and standing of the late Rodney. Relatively few know the other "subversive" side of the man.

But, more significantly, the people at home know of, have caused and have witnessed the continuing success of the People's National Congress - the Party and the Government. They have seen Prime Minister Burnham welcomed and acclaimed in Linden (last September) despite every effort to the contrary by the WPA just before. And even the harshest critic of Government would concede that this year's Tenth Anniversary Republic Celebrations were the biggest and best ever. The full voluntary participation of the masses is there on record. The thousands upon thousands who sought admission to the spectacle that was the Mass Games; the mammoth Workers and Students Parade - never so long and now difficult to be equalled; the participation by private and public sectors in the jollification and the more sober events to highlight numerous development projects - all this was not the result of any forced mobilisation as is often claimed but the genuine show of solidarity by people eager for progress, unity and peace.

May Day 1980 again, was evidence of popular people's participation as thousands of workers marched through city streets to listen to their TUC representatives and their leader - Prime Minister Burnham.

The political climate at home now is much too favourable to the Government for WPA propaganda to succeed here. The people, knowing who stands to gain from disorder, will not be confused nor misled.

## **F. ACCIDENT OR ASSASSINATION? AN ANALYSIS BY AN OBSERVER**

On Friday, the 13th of June after the bomb blast in the car, Donald Rodney, brother of Walter, ran to the home of Dr. Omawale in Croal Street. He rang the bell and shouted, "**Open, open, there has been a terrible accident.**" Today the WPA screams there has been a terrible Assassination.

Which was it? The first reaction and cry of the only eyewitness or the subsequent thinkings of a Political Party?

Let us commence today an Analysis based purely on the Releases of the WPA and Donald Rodney's written statements. In making my comments I ask a series of questions and I leave you the reader to supply the answers.

Donald's statement of the 17th of June reads: "I had met Gregory Smith on several previous occasions . . . . I acted as a liaison between Smith and Walter reporting on the progress Smith was making on the manufacture of the sets . . . . Smith was unreliable, he failed to deliver them on many occasions when I was sent by Walter to uplift them."

Donald clearly knew the nature of the device which was being made. He is intelligent, a Quantity Surveyor. He had seen the **sets** in the course of construction. Yet compare his lengthy statement to CANA Press of the 16th of June and come to your own conclusions:

(a) "He went to the former Guyana Army Sergeant's home to collect a walkie talkie for tests. He parked the car some distance away."

WHY THE CLANDESTINE PARKING AWAY FROM THE HOUSE? NO ADDRESS OF THE HOUSE IS GIVEN, AND ABOVE ALL THE NAME OF THE SERGEANT IN THIS LONG STATEMENT IS CAREFULLY CONCEALED. WHY?

(b) Donald states that "the Sergeant had won his brother's confidence." Yet the Sergeant's name is studiously avoided. Why? Was it that they were very friendly? And that Donald regarded the subsequent happenings as an accident and wanted to keep his friend out of it?

(c) In answering the Sergeant as to where Walter was, Donald admits, "I was a little vague. I said he was around the corner."

WAS THIS A SIMPLE LEGITIMATE TRANSACTION? IF IT WERE SO WOULD IT NECESSITATE SUCH PRECAUTIONS?

(d) The Sergeant handed Donald an object in his hand in a bag. Donald does not examine the merchandise, or even take it out of the bag. He listens to instructions and asks no questions. The Sergeant explains the set is to be tested in two positions.

WHY TWO POSITIONS? THE WALKIE TALKIE IS A SIMPLE DEVICE USED FOR RECEIVING AND SENDING MESSAGES. THE TEST SURELY IS TO SEE WHETHER ONE COULD COMMUNICATE FROM DISTANCES. BUT HERE THERE WAS TO BE A TEST, THEN KNOBS WERE TO BE TURNED ETC. . . . WAS THIS REALLY A WALKIE TALKIE? WAS A WALKIE TALKIE REALLY ORDERED? OR WAS THIS A BOMB DEVICE WHICH HAD BEEN ORDERED AND WAS NOW DELIVERED?

(e) Donald continues "The trial would consist of a visual signal on our set when the Sergeant activated the companion set . . . and a light would flash."

Did this walkie talkie have lights? Was a visual signal required to test it or was it a simple question of, are you hearing me, over to you. Note that there was never a single spoken test to know if one could receive and send messages. Why was there no such

test? Is it because all the parties, Walter - Donald - and the Sergeant knew that this was something else. A walkie talkie, or a bomb? You the readers supply the answer. And did they each not know the answer himself.

(f) "Then watches are synchronised."

Why the precision wherein seconds are vital? Do you synchronise watches to test a walkie talkie or would you not test it as you proceed in the distance? But would it be different if it were an explosive device? Would this explain why the watches were synchronised?

(g) Donald says: "At 8 o'clock there was an apparent flash. This was the first test." Could a flash ever be a test for a walkie talkie? Or does Donald realise to speak truthfully would be to open the flood gates, so he shelters behind this camouflage of a "walkie talkie?"

(h) When the light came on Walter said: "It was very good."

WITHOUT HEARING A SOUND HE WAS SAYING IT WAS IN ORDER. WHY? WAS IT BECAUSE THIS WAS NO WALKIE TALKIE? WAS IT AN EXPLOSIVE DEVICE? DID HE NOT KNOW IT WAS THAT? DID THE LIGHT MEAN CONTACT WAS MADE WITH THE SERGEANT?

(i) Donald continues: "I drove at a fairly slow pace, not wanting to attract attention." Then he goes on later to say, "There was need to keep some sort of look-out."

HERE THE CAT IS LET OUT OF THE BAG. DONALD WAS DRIVING SLOWLY. WHY? AND WHY DID HE WISH NOT TO ATTRACT ATTENTION? WAS THIS BECAUSE HE WAS DOING SOMETHING THAT HE OUGHT NOT TO BE DOING? WHY KEEP A LOOK OUT?

Well, if you had a bomb in your car would you drive slowly or fast? Would you not drive with every care? Would you put the bomb on your lap or on the floor? When taking receptacles which may overturn in a car where do you put them? In your lap? Would you not be on the look- out? Having asked all of those questions if through some failure, miscalculation or movement the bomb went off . . . . would you say it was an Accident or an assassination?

Let us look at the facts again briefly. If you had someone made a bomb and it is with you? Are you likely to have, with the bomb maker, synchronised watches? Would you have tests to see if a light would come on? Would you drive slowly? And take care? Would your lap not ensure the minimum of movement? And yet if for some reason the bomb went off and you escaped would you not say Accident? And would you not keep the bomb-maker's name secret at first? ARE YOU, MY READERS BEGINNING TO SEE SOME LIGHT? WELL LOOK FOR PART 2 WHICH DEALS WITH "OPERATION JAIL." FOR THE PRESENT YOU ANSWER THE QUESTION - ACCIDENT OR ASSASSINATION?

## **G. ACCIDENT OR ASSASSINATION? AN ANALYSIS BY AN OBSERVER**

### Part II: OPERATION GEORGETOWN JAIL

In Part I we discussed the WPA releases and the statements of the principal witness Donald Rodney. We pointed out that the first words spoken by Donald to his party associates were "A terrible accident has occurred." This the WPA has projected as "A terrible assassination has occurred." The only difference is that the WPA's accusation is completely devoid of any supportive evidence.

Let us look at the first release of the WPA. The incident was on Friday 13 June. Their first release was on Saturday 14 June. Donald was not laid out, he **ran** and went to his colleagues and it is a natural inference that the release was made after they spoke with Donald.

The WPA Report states: "Brother Rodney was travelling in a car driven by his brother Donald Rodney, the car **was moving** in a northerly direction along John Street . . . when the car was between Bent and Hadfield Streets there was a loud explosion".

This report points clearly to an explosion in a moving car. The car was in motion and then an explosion. It was not until the facts screamed that this could not be so that the WPA admitted that the car was parked.

Now why did the WPA wish to avoid this admission? To admit would be to be called upon to answer a number of questions - why park there? With no lights? What were they doing when the explosion occurred? What business did they have there? And all of this near to the Georgetown Jail. Etc., etc.

Having admitted the parking Donald now has to give an explanation, and his explanation may be termed "Operation Walkie Talkie".

The Jail features prominently in Donald's statement of June 16 to CANA. Note, he does not go to the police. He makes no report. He does not name the man who gave him the device which caused the explosion (although he knows his name). In his release to the World at large he makes references to the jail. Let us list them.

a) The Sergeant said "that we should proceed along Camp Street and be ready to have the second test (of the Walkie Talkie) opposite the Georgetown Jail. He particularly wanted us to have the tests on the jail wall so as to observe the effect of the extent of metal on the walls on the efficiency of the set."

b) "The trial (or tests) would consist of a visual signal on our set when he activated his companion set . . . a little light would flash and would be seen through a hole and when the light came on, we would be ready for communication."



c) "We synchronised our watches". (Incredible! Why for testing a walkie talkie?) Let us go back to first principles.

A walkie talkie set is used as a means of communication. One could measure distances to see how far it is operative. But, why go **near to the jail?**

Why **hold tests on the jail wall?** The excuse propounded could not take in a schoolchild, much less two highly intelligent persons.

Of course they were not taken in. They had ordered a device. They were collecting a device. They were told how to operate the device. Was the device a walkie talkie or a bomb? And this device was to be tested on the Georgetown Jail wall.

Let us continue to examine this incredible story issued by the WPA. The Sergeant was at his home; the Rodneys could have checked the walkie talkie anywhere for reception and communication. Why did they have to go near the Jail - park - turn off lights?

Maybe if someone in the jail had a receiving set, one could say they were testing whether the receiver could hear them. But the Sergeant with the other set was at his home. Distance would be the test, not the prison wall.

Again when the light flashed for the first test, Walter is reported to have said that it was good. You don't test a walkie talkie with flashes of light. They are tested with calls such as "Are you receiving me?" "Are you hearing me?" "Over to you" etc. In other words Walter was satisfied without hearing a single word from the Sergeant. Of course he was satisfied that the device was working - But it was not a walkie talkie. It was working for the purpose for which it was acquired.

If it was not a walkie talkie what was it? Who ordered it? Who took delivery? From whom?

After the unfortunate and tragic incident does Donald blame the Sergeant? Does he give his name? Does he point out where he is living? Why did the Sergeant emphasise **jail?** Why did he wish the test on the Jail wall? You answer each question my friend and then decide if the whole purpose was "OPERATION WALKIE TALKIE" or "OPERATION GEORGETOWN JAIL!"

If you accept that this device was a bomb to be used on the jail wall, then do other aspects fall into place? Like parking near the jail - driving slowly - taking care and being on the look-out and having watches synchronised. Have you reached your conclusions? Do you feel it is OPERATION WALKIE TALKIE or OPERATION GEORGETOWN JAIL!!!

**TOMORROW: CONCLUSIONS ACCIDENT OR ASSASSINATION? AN ANALYSIS BY AN OBSERVER**

**Part III: Conclusions**

Let us take the case of a man called John Jones. Supposing John felt very strongly about the Government in power, and John is clever and astute. He would use his best endeavours to bring the Government down, using the "all is fair in love and war" cliché.

Well, John wishes to achieve certain ends with the result that he endeavours to get the help of a technician to provide a device capable of an explosion. He would go to any technician but to one in whom he has confidence.

Is this not what happened? An alleged Sergeant had won the confidence of Walter (vide release 16 June). A device was ordered. Donald saw the device in the course of construction. He must know what was being constructed. The technician, the Sergeant was tardy in his preparation and the Rodneys were anxious.

It is clear that the Sergeant is in the know for his instructions are repeated twice to Donald e.g. what he should do when there was a flash. He stipulates they must go and do their trial or test on the **Jail wall**. The Rodneys leave, the device is in a paper bag. It is evidently treated gently. The car drives slowly. Donald is on the look out. Then come the tests, the first test is successful in that a light comes on. Clearly by remote control. They move on to the next scene of the operation for the second test.

Alas, something goes wrong. There is an explosion and certainly a great misfortune occurs. Donald does not wait to ascertain if his brother is alive or dead, he rushes for help. **But he does not go to the police.** Why?

He knows the alleged Sergeant is in the know. Initially he would not know if the Sergeant made a genuine or a deliberate mistake, so he keeps his name and address out of it.

More than three days later he gives the police the name and address of a Sergeant. The police records that despite a vigilant search, no such person is discovered at that address.

Enquiries would have revealed that someone around there would have known this person, or seen this person by name or description. He is supposed to have lived there for some length of time.

The question arises . . . . Has Donald given the correct name, the correct description, the correct address of this alleged Sergeant? If he has, where has this man gone? Or does Donald feel that this was a pure accident and so he gives a name and an address which are pointless? Note that Donald is the one who within minutes was calling this tragedy . . . . an accident.

Now let us look at this from another point of view. Would anyone expect Donald to say that he knowingly had a bomb in the car? Of course not! But some reason must be given by them for the explosion and so the device becomes a walkie talkie.

He sticks near to the truth about instructions without realising that a scrutiny of those must reveal that that they could not be referable to a walkie talkie e.g. synchronising watches, awaiting a flash etc. etc. But the object is clearly the jail.

Having kept away from the police for days and having given this unconvincing explanation, the last phase is entered into. A sad and tragic thing has happened - so let us lay the blame at the doorsteps of the Ruling Party - and in this manner and form does Prime Minister Burnham and the People's National Congress come in for unfair and undeserved criticism and a tirade of castigation, calumny, vilification and abuse ensue. Is it merited? How can it? When these two gentlemen engaged in a doubtful exercise this explosion occurs, but the WPA determined to exploit the situation scream Assassination by the PNC. . . .

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### **[ii]. STATEMENT ON EXPLOSION IN GEORGETOWN ON JUNE 13, 1980**

At about 8.00 p.m. on Friday, June 13, 1980 a white motor-car, PBB 2349, was seen by two Beat-Duty Police Constables to drive up and park in the vicinity of John and Hadfield Streets, in close proximity of the Georgetown Prison.

Some minutes after, there was a loud explosion from the parked car. The constables observed someone get out from the driver's side of the vehicle and hurry away from it. They moved towards the car but stopped short of actually going up to it as the explosion had damaged the overhead electric wires, one of which was dangling dangerously.

Having overcome their initial apprehension, they went up to the vehicle, the wind-screen and roof of which had been blown off and in which was a man who had obviously been killed by the explosion and had been badly mangled.

The Constables' reports that the car was parked at the time of the explosion have been substantiated by several residents of the area in statements to the police. Furthermore, the position of the car after the explosion makes nonsense of any arguments to the contrary.

Examination by police officers who later arrived on the scene revealed that the car's windows had been would up and that the hand-brake was up.

The considered opinion of police experts and the Government Pathologist Dr. Leslie Mootoo was that an explosive device had "gone off" in the closed car on the passenger side. The Government Pathologist has concluded on the basis of the Post Mortem examination carried out this morning (Saturday, June 14, 1980) that the victim died from haemorrhage and shock and that the nature of the injuries received suggests that the explosive device was on the seat between the victim's legs at the time of the explosion.

The car, PBB 2349 is registered in the name of Donald Rodney whose whereabouts are yet to be ascertained by the police - despite strenuous efforts to locate him.

As a result of documents found in the vehicle, C.I.D. detectives searched a house in West Ruimveldt and took one of the occupants, Edward Rodney, into custody for questioning.

Within minutes of the incident, officials of the Working People's Alliance (WPA) and some members of the Rodney family had communicated to the international media their claim that the dead person was WPA activist, Walter Rodney.

The wives of both Walter Rodney and Donald Rodney have no far declined requests to assist in the identification of the body, but police, on the basis of assertions by a relative - sister-in-law Mrs. M. Shepherd - and a close associate - Reverend Malcolm Rodrigues - are inclined to the view that the dead person is Walter Rodney.

No persons were arrested by the police at the scene of the incident.

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION JUNE 14, 1980

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### **[iii]. SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE PRESS STATEMENT BY DONALD RODNEY**

The Police today questioned Donald Rodney, brother of Walter Rodney, in order to ascertain exactly what happened on the night of Friday, June 13, when Walter Rodney died in an explosion in Georgetown.

They began questioning Rodney this afternoon (Tuesday, June 17, 1980) after lawyer Miles Fitzpatrick had failed to have delivered to them, as he had promised, a statement on the incident signed by Donald Rodney.

Fitzpatrick who had communicated to the police Rodney's presence at the Medical Arts Centre at around 5:30 p.m. yesterday (June 16, 1980) had promised that the statement would have been in the possession of the police by this morning.

However, early this afternoon, activists of the Working People's Alliance (WPA) began circulating in Georgetown copies of what purported to be Donald Rodney's statement which had not yet been handed in to the police by Mr. Fitzpatrick.

As a result, the police decided to begin their questioning of Donald Rodney at the hospital.

They questioned him for approximately 30 minutes after which he signed a statement which did not differ substantially from the statement he had given to the media.

However, on the basis of the version of the incident given by Donald Rodney to the media yesterday (June 16, 1980) a number of questions automatically arises.

The "walkie talkie set" talked about and which the Rodney brothers were testing was unlicensed and in their possession contrary to the Laws of Guyana (Chapter 14:07, Section 63 of the Postal and Telegraph Act).

It is significant to note that the Police had seized two walkie talkie sets from Walter Rodney's home in the immediate aftermath of the fire which destroyed the Ministry of National Development building and the Office of the General Secretary of the People's National Congress in July last year, and these are among the exhibits in the current case.

It is a publicly known fact that a number of former Guyana Defence Force personnel are among the active members and sympathisers of the Working People's Alliance (WPA).

The WPA has for sometime now been putting out a stencilled sheet "YAM-VINE" which was directed specifically at members of the army and which had as its clear intention, the undermining of the army's loyalty to the state.

Indeed, among those charged recently as a result of the discovery of a plot to overthrow the government, was one Edward Torrington, a former corporal of the army.

In addition, the WPA in a statement published on Saturday, June 14, gave a version of the incident which is somewhat different from Donald Rodney's account.

For example the police report - which was supported by residents in the area where the explosion took place and by observers at the scene - was that the car was parked at the time of the explosion. The WPA disputed this and argued that the car was moving.

In addition, Donald Rodney's account of the incident supports the findings of Government Forensic Pathologist, Dr. Leslie Mootoo.

The fact that the WPA, through its activists, Andaiye and Karen DeSouza knew of Donald Rodney's version of the incident as communicated to the media yesterday, and yet put out something quite different, must obviously be viewed with some suspicion.

If Donald Rodney's story is to be believed, one wonders what significance should be attached to the fact that one of the tests was to be made near to the Georgetown Jail, a very sensitive security location.

Donald Rodney in his account to the media, clearly conceded that he and his late brother were engaged in some clandestine activity when he said that before parking in John Street, they were driving at "a fairly slow pace not wanting to attract attention" and that there was "a need to keep some sort of look-out".

Again, if Donald Rodney was really interested in the apprehension of his late brother's associate (the alleged ex-GDF Sergeant) why did he not come forward with his story much earlier rather than waiting some 72 hours before making contact with the police?

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION JUNE 17, 1980.

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**[iv]. W.P.A VIOLENCE MUST BE CONTAINED -  
Says *New Nation* in Page One Comment**

(Sunday, June 22, 1980)

The point needs to be made firmly and emphatically from the very outset that if Walter Rodney was indeed assassinated - and the story as related 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. The PNC will never tolerate, condone or encourage violence of any kind, as a means of resolving political conflict - much more the physical elimination of opponents.

Of course, however, it must be remembered that as a government the PNC has a clear duty within the parameters of the constitution to protect citizens from any individual or organisation which steps outside the law to achieve objectives. Any government which shrinks from this obvious responsibility would be best advised to quit and hand over the reins of administration to others more suited to the task. For the alternative is chaos and anarchy of the type which this country witnessed in the mid-60s when the then governing People's Progressive Party abdicated in the pursuit of its own narrow goal of frustrating the first national elections under proportional representation.

The PNC as the party which in government pulled this country back from the brink of disintegration will not sit idly by and permit the agents of destruction and counter-revolutionary violence to resort un-challenged to unconstitutional and illegal means to satisfy their lust for power at any costs.

But at all times the necessary sanctions applied will be those legally vested in the authorities - nothing more. In the case of the so-called Working People's Alliance, that motley grouping of malcontents, united only in their personal hostility - for differing reasons - to the leader of the PNC - has through its spokesman, openly committed to the use of what was self-servingly, but mistakenly, termed revolutionary violence to remove the government from office. Interestingly, it became obvious that their concept and interpretation of "revolutionary violence" involved not merely defying and baiting the police (a tactic which Walter Rodney - the W.P.A. tactical and philosophical mentor - advocated during his infamous activities in Jamaica,) but also the clandestine accumulation of arms, ammunition and related equipment - e.g. walkie talkies - to stage an armed coup.

The many charges before the courts involving treason and the illegal possession of arms and ammunition attest not only to the effectiveness of our security force, but to the underground activities of the W.P.A. For while the innocence or guilt of the individuals charged is a matter for the courts to decide there is no doubt whatsoever as to which organisation's interests they were attempting to further.

But the possibility is always present that where members of an organisation are persuaded and converted to the acceptability of violence against those perceived as its enemies they are likely to apply the same principle in the resolution of internal disputes.

It is not for us to suggest that this was what brought about Walter Rodney's death, but the fact that he was killed by a device given to him by an associate ostensibly for 'testing' does incline one's thoughts in that direction.

With their every attempt to implicate the P.N.C. government in this undoubtedly dastardly act the W.P.A. convicts itself and certainly Donald Rodney's version of the incident - far fetched in many respects though it is - must have put the final nail in their coffin."

The accuser has now become the accused.

The government's impartial handling of the incident and the decision to bring in qualified foreign specialist assistance to remove any scintilla of doubt about official integrity in this affair has been baselessly criticised by the W.P.A. What are they afraid of?

Remember it was the same W.P.A. which initially cast aspersions on the professional competence and integrity of Government Forensic Pathologist Dr. Leslie Mootoo, but were grudgingly forced to back-track when the doctor's findings that the device was in the victim's lap at the time of explosion were subsequently vindicated. And despite the assertions of area residents and observers that the vehicle was parked at the time of the explosion, the W.P.A. insisted otherwise. Now we know for sure that the car was parked.

The inconsistencies in the W.P.A.'s constantly changing versions of the incident are so numerous and transparent that it is neither necessary nor possible to allude to all of them in these columns.

But what is to be hoped is that those, both inside and outside of Guyana, who have rushed to judgement on this matter must now have the guts and the conviction of conscience to recant and concede a misjudgement.

Let those who mispronounced on this issue know that the P.N.C. government seeks neither their praise nor their friendship. Our party, our government relies not on bullets or bombs to win the support of the masses (the only masters we recognise) and defeat our political detractors. Rather the P.N.C will rely - as it always has in the past on the correctness of its policies and a proud record of achievement.

The way of the bomb is for the lesser breed outside the law.

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**(v). [Untitled document]**

On June 13, 1980, at about 8 o'clock at night, an explosive device carried in a car, in which Dr. Walter Rodney and his brother Donald were parked, detonated, killing Dr. Rodney instantly and wounding his brother. The car and its occupants were parked in John Street, about 20 yards north of the Georgetown prison.

Because of the extraordinary and, indeed, bizarre nature of the incident, extensive pathological and police investigations had to be conducted. In addition to local investigations, the Government of Guyana requested the assistance of forensic expertise from the F.B.I. and Scotland Yard. Of these two agencies, the F.B.I. declined, since the Working People's Alliance (WPA) in one of its several statements had accused the American Government of being involved in the explosion. Scotland Yard sent two experts, whose report will be ready in about two weeks and will be published at that time.

Furthermore, because the explosion was the result of a criminal act, resulting from which Dr. Rodney's brother Donald has been charged by the police for being in unlawful possession of an explosive device, the Government of Guyana cannot, at this time, match the voluminous and vicious propaganda being peddled by the WPA to cover up the circumstances of the explosion. As is well known, when criminal matters are before the Court, it would be neither right nor proper for the investigating authorities or the Government to make public comments which might be prejudicial to the fair trial of the defendant(s). Moreover, because of the stunning nature of the event, and the fact that Dr. Rodney is well known, the self-seeking have been pouring forth cover-up stories of the way Dr. Rodney met his death; such stories have been damaging to Guyana's image overseas.

Dr. Rodney is well known as a historian. Less well known is Dr. Rodney the politician. Without in any way wishing to be defamatory of the dead, his brother's statement to the police and the press is the first revealing account of the intrigue in which Dr. Rodney got involved. It is reproduced in extenso and without comment.



Dr. Rodney also, earlier this year, gave an interview to the veteran and well-respected columnist Carl Blackman, which was reproduced in several newspapers. His views on attaining power by violent means speak for themselves and they are also reproduced here, without comment.

Finally, Sir Hugh Shearer, when he was Prime Minister of Jamaica, gave us this intriguing insight into Dr. Rodney's political attitudes and activities, which is reproduced at Appendix III without comment. It remains only to add that Dr. Rodney's self-proclaimed role of "Messiah" of Tanzania, if not all Africa, led to the discontinuance of his lectureship in Tanzania and his return to Guyana.

To revert briefly to the peculiar circumstances of the night of June 13, and because of the violence of the cover-up propaganda being peddled by the WPA, it is necessary to reveal one or two pieces of background information. In the first place, some two weeks prior to the explosion, a number of self-confessed WPA activists had been charged with offences ranging from treason (based on their own statements to the police authorities) to unlawful possession of arms and ammunition. One man, Anthony Li, has already pleaded guilty. They were detained at the Ruimveldt police station, where someone or organisation managed to smuggle hacksaw blades into the cells, from which they were attempting to escape by sawing the bars. They were then transferred to the Georgetown prison. These men detained were in the prison at the time of the explosion in the car in which Dr. Rodney and his brother were seated, parked with its lights out, with the explosive device which ultimately took Dr. Rodney's life.

Whatever conclusions have been formed from this combination of facts, it is highly unusual for the leader of a political party - and an academician to boot - for himself to be testing any device near a prison at night - albeit, the known fact is that there was active dissension amongst the hierarchy of the WPA on the question of tactics, as well as Dr. Rodney's strange **penchant** for do-it-yourself activity.

It is troubling questions like these that, with security implications that go beyond the unlawful possession of an explosive device, have so far cautioned public restraint on the part of the Government. It is to be hoped that the release of this information will go some way to explain why it is necessary for the forensic, police and security investigations to be complete before fuller public account can be detailed.

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#### **(vi). PRESS RELEASE**

Dr. Walter Rodney, leader of the Working People's Alliance, was killed in an explosion in Georgetown on Friday night at about 8.15.

According to the Pathologist's report, Dr. Rodney was killed when the explosive device, apparently resting on his lap, exploded upwards, shredding his stomach and destroying the roof of the car.

The car, the registered owner of which is Donald Rodney (brother of Dr. Rodney) and in which Dr. Rodney was sitting, was parked outside the Georgetown Prison, when the device exploded, killing him and injuring at least one other person. The police authorities are seeking Donald Rodney. Edward Rodney, believed to be the driver of the car, and who was reportedly seen running from the vehicle, is now being questioned by the police.

Among the inmates of the Prison were a number of persons, charged last week for treason and for illegal possession of arms, ammunition and explosives. They had been transferred during the week from Ruimveldt to the Georgetown Prison.

THE EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA  
WASHINGTON, D.C.  
JUNE 14, 1980

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## **32. MEMORIAL PROGRAM FOR DR. WALTER RODNEY IN LOS ANGELES**

Memorial Program for Dr. WALTER RODNEY  
Los Angeles, June 22, 1980

Introduction - Owen Peters, Master of Ceremony [Guyanese]  
Poem - "Prayer to a Labourer" (Victor Jara)  
Eulogy - Dr. Pierre-Michelle Fontaine [Haitian Professor - UCLA]  
Introduction to Tape - Cedric Smith  
Excerpts from Tape of Walter Rodney's Speech in Guyana, June 6, 1980  
Appeal for Funds for Bereaved Families - Al Green  
Solidarity Statements  
Resolution - Prof. Robert Hill [Jamaican Professor - UCLA]  
Announcements  
Closing Poem - "Death to a Comrade" (Martin Carter)

Co-sponsored by Guyana Nationals and Friends Alliance (GNPA), Los Angeles and Los Angeles and Los Angeles Committee for Academics in Peril (LACAP) with the help of the Center for Afro-American Studies, UCLA and the African Studies Center, UCLA

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### **33. ARTICLE IN THE *LOS ANGELES TIMES*, 23 June 1980**

#### **A Death in Guyana Has Meaning for Third World**

By James Petras

The UPI dispatch from Guyana was short and to the point: "A prominent left-wing opponent of Prime Minister Forbes Burnham was killed by a bomb last night." The, victim was Walter Rodney.

I became acquainted with Rodney last year when he was a visiting adjunct professor at the State University of New York at Binghamton, where I teach sociology. After conversations about the growing popular movements in the Caribbean and in Central America in general, we turned to the situation in his own country, Guyana, ruled by Burnham, who had just achieved the singular virtue of securing more votes in the last election than there were voters. Rodney was optimistic. His organization, the Working People's Alliance, was growing and increasingly drawing votes and supporters from both East Indians and blacks, thus undermining the racial tensions that had been fostered by Burnham.

"Time is running out, and Burnham knows it," Rodney said.

Yet, I wondered if he wasn't underestimating Burnham's ability to survive. After all, here's a man who is capable of working one day with the CIA (in the 1960s), Castro the next (Cuba trained his police in the 1970s'), and religious cultists the day after (People's Temple at Jonestown). He might do anything to stay in power.

Rodney replied: "There's only one way to bring about basic changes in Guyana or any Third World country, and that's by working with the people in the country. I have to run the same risks as everyone else."

Walter Rodney and Forbes Burnham typify two polar types of leaders that one can find today in the Third World.

Burnham is an opportunist who exploits racial tensions while proclaiming universal values, who embraces the virtues of free enterprise while dubbing his regime a "cooperative socialist commonwealth." He uses ideas and ideologies as masks for the accumulation of personal power.

In contrast, Rodney, the author of a widely read study, "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa." was a man of principle and an internationally respected scholar.

While Burnham perfected his police apparatus and skillfully used it against his critics, Rodney was engaged in public dialogue and debate in open meetings among civil servants, trade unionists, sugar workers and the unemployed. While Burnham played on traditional hostilities between the country's blacks and East Indians, Rodney, a black, tried to unite both groups in a common struggle for improvement.

While Burnham proclaimed his "solidarity" with the Third World and nationalized multi-national corporations, Rodney condemned Burnham's bungled management of these so-called "socialist" enterprises. Burnham depended on patronage to keep his followers in line. Rodney was the activist intellectual whose followers came from sugar plantations, from urban slum quarters as well as from the university.

Rodney's intellectual and political presence might have altered the stereotype that many Western intellectuals apply toward activists of the Third World: egocentric demagogues who mouth socialist rhetoric while cultivating personality cults and stashing millions in Swiss bank accounts. Rodney lived modestly earning what he could by lecturing abroad periodically. He was extremely articulate and persuasive. He was influential in many parts of the Third World, especially in the Caribbean, Africa and among some blacks in the United States and England. He was one of the few intellectuals with power to reach out to both Harlem cleaning women and budding Ivy League professionals. He was that rare leader who accepted the same sacrifices as his followers.

All of this made him a political threat to Burnham. Rodney's party and program broke, with the ethnic racial divisions between Indians and blacks that had paralyzed Guyanese politics for 25 years and thus he was undermining Burnham's black constituency. Rodney and his party urged blacks to support East Indian sugar workers; in turn, they supported striking civil servants of African descent. The message scrawled on the walls of Georgetown's slums was clear to everyone: "Brown and black fight back."

From the beginning, Burnham feared Rodney. First he banned him from teaching or working at any university or public school despite an impressive list of distinguished scholarly publications. There were numerous offers from universities in the United States and England. But Rodney stayed on teaching and working where he could. At one point he was arrested and accused of arson, a charge so transparently false that the trial was continuously postponed. Then came the assassination on Friday, June 13 - the bombed car and the mangled body.

Rodney was more than a, "left-wing opponent of Burnham," as the news story identified him. In many ways he symbolized a generation of political leaders emerging in the Caribbean and Central America in places like Grenada and Nicaragua. These are intellectuals who are fully committed to social and political democracy, radical egalitarianism with freedom.

Rodney's death is further evidence of the vulnerability of Third World intellectuals. Within the last year we have seen the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero of El Salvador and 15 professors from the University of San Carlos in Guatemala. Such people are faced with the choice of abandoning their homeland and the millions of their countrymen who are

suffering oppression, or staying and risking death - perhaps, at the hands of those who have the protection of the state. The list of unsolved murders of government opponents in South and Central America and in the Caribbean is long, and growing.

*James Petras, a professor of sociology at the State University of New York at Binghamton, is the author of numerous books, including "Critical Perspectives on Imperialism and Social Class in the Third World."*

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#### **34. TELEGRAM FROM EDITOR OF *LATIN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE* TO PRIME MINISTER FORBES BURNHAM**

WESTERN UNION MAILGRAM

24 June 1980

Timothy S. Harding Ed  
2023 El Cerrito Pl.  
Los Angeles CA 90068

Honorable Forbes Burnham  
Prime Minister of Guyana  
Embassy of Guyana  
2490 Tracy Pl.  
Washington DC 20008

We the editors of the journal *Latin American Perspective* condemn the vicious murder of or Walter Rodney. Professor Rodney was a scholar with a worldwide reputation and in the wake of political persecution of him his assassination raises suspicion in the international community about the role of the Guyanese Government in or Rodney's death. We hope that the repressive condition that led to Walter Rodney's death will end and his murderers be quickly brought to justice.

Timothy Harding  
For *Latin American Perspective*

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#### **35. LETTER FROM MINISTRY OF INFORMATION TO AMBASSADOR OF GUYANA, WASHINGTON, EXPLAINING THE USE OF THE 'BRIEF'**

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION  
Georgetown, Guyana  
24th June, 1980

Ambassador,  
Embassy of Guyana,  
2490 Tracy Place, N.W.,  
Washington D.C. 20008.  
U.S.A.

Dear Comrade,

Enclosed please find six (6) copies of a document titled "A Brief On The Walter Rodney Bombing Incident" prepared by the Ministry of Information.

The confidential section (Pages D3 & D4) has been extracted from four (4) copies which you may wish to reproduce and circulate as widely as possible. Unfortunately, a complete set of the appendices\* has not been attached to any of these four copies.

You may wish to circulate the confidential copies among senior members of staff.

Yours co-operatively,

[Signed]  
Courtney Gibson  
Deputy Chief Information Officer For Permanent Secretary

P.S. A non-confidential copy is enclosed for Bob Taylor

c.c. Colin Mapp, Second Secretary

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**36. TELEX MESSAGE FROM MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GUYANA TO GUYANA AMBASSADOR, WASHINGTON**

24 June 1980

Dr. Walter Rodney was buried on Monday, June 23 at La Repentir Cemetery following day-long ceremonies which started at Buxton Village in the morning. The body was taken the 12 miles along the East Coast of Demerara to the WPA headquarters in the Tiger Bay area in the city. After a short speech by Eusi Kwayana, the body was taken in a cart, drawn by a horse, to the Bourda mall, opposite the Bourda Market, where a crowd of several thousands heard speeches by Ashton Chase, Cheddi Jagan, Rupert Roopnarine, Clive Thomas, Ganraj Kumar, Karen DeSouza, and representatives from organisations in Jamaica, St. Vincent, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and the USA.

Also, Mr. Ralph Browne, Minister of Local Government and a Vice-President of the ruling People's National Party of Jamaica, had come for the funeral but left before it after hearing of an attempted coup by the army in his country. Also leaving before the funeral was Mr. Vincent Noel, an official of the People's Revolutionary Government of Grenada.

Mr. Browne said Prime Minister Manley stated that Rodney was assassinated was based on early media reports, but Manly had not accused anyone of the act. Mr. Noel denied that Prime Minister Bishop had said Rodney was assassinated.

Meanwhile, Dr. Hugh Johnson, U.K. consultant pathologist, and his U.K. colleague, Dr. Frank Skuse, both examined Rodney's body and said a full report will take some time to prepare. Both are returning to London this week.

Note: Full list of visiting delegates will be sent later.

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**37. MEMORANDUM FROM GUYANA CONSULATE, NEW YORK, TO GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE PNC**

TO: General Secretary,  
People's National Congress

FROM: Consul General, New York

DATE: July 1, 1980

SUBJECT: REPORT of activities following the announcement of Dr. Rodney's death.

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1. News of Dr. Walter Rodney's death reached the Overseas Guyanese Community in the USA through the W.P.A. via the BBC radio reports early Saturday morning. These reports variously gave the location of the incident as occurring in Main Street or outside the Courts. These reports also stated that the car in which Dr. Rodney was seated was moving. There is no doubt that this created an impression that a bomb was thrown into the car.

2. An official statement was given to the radio stations WLIB and WBLS around mid-day Saturday. This statement pointed out that Dr. Rodney was sitting in a parked car and that, from the nature of his injuries, he must have had the device in his lap. This statement was drawn up by the staff of the Washington Mission.

3. Reaction from the Guyanese Community was hostile. This was fanned also by the biased reports aired by WLIB via the Caribbeat programme which was conducted by Samori Marksman, a radio announcer and a supporter of the W.P.A. and the editorial comments of the station interviewers during the "call in" programmes on Sunday and Monday. Some of these comments by one announcer were:

i) "What can we (Americans) do to rid Guyana of this dictator"

ii) "If, by any freak chance it was proved that Burnham was innocent...."

4. More importantly, there was not the usual ready acceptance among our supporters, of the Government's position, though this increased, following Donald Rodney's statement.

5. The hostile actions from the official spokesmen for the Government's of Barbados, Grenada and Jamaica were given prominence in the news reports.

6. Reports appearing in the press, apart from the established dailies (*The New York Times* and the *Daily News*) which carried A.P. releases, without exception carried the news releases of the W.P.A.

7. As expected the reaction of the academic community was also hostile. Dr. Rodney's reputation as an academic clouds the academic community's perception of him as a politician. To say that the official statement was received with skepticism is but a mild description of their reaction.

8. The W.P.A. New York Support Group led the protest demonstrations at the Consulate Offices. These took the form of:

i) a vigil on Monday June 16 and

ii) a protest rally on Tuesday 17, from 3.00 to 6.00 p.m.



9. The protest rally was sponsored by seven organisations including the P.P.P. Some of the other organisations were the Caribbean People's Alliance and the Patrice Lumumba Coalition, Liberation Bookstore - Black New York Action Committee, Coalition for a Free Nicaragua and Nueva Alternativa Popular Panamina.

10. Attendance at the vigil was sparse with no more than eight picketers at any one time. Attendance at the rally numbered about two hundred and fifty (250).

11. Donald Rodney's statement helped to retrieve some of the ground gained by the W.P.A. Together with the efforts of members of the Party Group, some of the initial hostile reaction was diffused. In particular, the last "call in" programme on WLIB/Wednesday June 18, the mobilised voices of our supporters to a degree succeeded in bringing a balance to the views being aired.

12. An apparent change in the station's (WLIB) reaction was also brought about by the protests lodged by the group members at the level of the News and Programme Directors and the Chairman of the Board of Inner-City Broadcasting, owners of WLIB.

13. Other activities held by the W.P.A. were:

i) A memorial programme at the New York City Community College on Saturday, June 21, 1980, at 3.00 p.m.

ii) Memorial Service at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Brooklyn on Sunday, June 22, 1980.

14. Among the speakers at the rally at New York City College were:

Samori Marksman - Caribbean People's Alliance  
Una Mulzac - Liberation Bookstore of Harlem  
Elombe Brath - Patrice Lumumba Coalition  
Cheddi Jagan, Jnr. - P.P.P.

15. Copies of Donald Rodney's statement were circulated to the Guyanese community as well as analyses of the statement under the heading of the New York P.N.C. Group.

16. Later, copies of an article carrying a denial of a statement purportedly issued by the P.R.G. of Grenada, together with an examination of the circumstances surrounding Rodney's death were also mailed.

17. By the end of the last week (June 29) there has been a lessening of the intensity of the W.P.A. overt activities.

18. A meeting sponsored by the Center for Inter-American Relations, which was arranged as a forum for the W.P.A. and the P.P.P. was sparsely attended - total audience thirty-five (35).

19. Surprisingly however, the circumstances of Rodney's death was not the focus of W.P.A's spokesman (Ken Narain) presentation. His death, instead was used to bolster their charge of a systematic attempt to eliminate the leading members of the W.P.A.

20. The total effect of this meeting was more beneficial to the Government than to them. Apart from the inept presentation of Cheddi Jagan Jnr., spokesman for the P.P.P. New York Group, the questions posed to the speakers, highlighted the inaccuracies of their presentations.

21. Dr. Rodney's death and subsequent events have brought into sharp focus the inadequacy of the Information Policy as it pertains to the Missions overseas.

22. Recent events have indicated the need for Missions to receive:

- i) Information on a timely basis
- ii) Regular background information of events and their political and economic implications
- iii) Follow-up reports as to the resolution of reported incidents

23. To this end, consideration should be given:

- i) to have some arrangement whereby an official of the Ministry of National Development, attached either to the Department of Foreign and Economic Affairs or the Information section of the Ministry could be reached in cases of emergency;
- ii) to the immediate conception and implementation of a plan which would have as its main objectives:
  - (a) the improvement of the country's image internationally and in particular among the international academic community
  - (b) a higher level of credibility among the Overseas Guyanese Community
  - (c) to bring about a greater awareness of Dr. Rodney's political activities as distinct from his activities as an academic.

24. Because of the urgency of the need for such a programme to be conceived and implemented, it is being recommended that a Conference be convened to draw up a programme of action to which the following participants should be invited to attend:

Minister of Foreign Affairs - Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Minister of State for information - Ministry of National Development  
Chief Information Officer - Ministry of Information  
Ambassador - Washington  
High Commissioner - London  
High Commissioner - Ottawa  
Permanent Representative to the United Nations - New York  
Consul General - New York  
Consul General - Toronto  
Political Counsellor - United Kingdom  
Press Attache -  
Washington Consul (Information) - New York

The Conference could be convened over a weekend to minimise the absence from their posts of the participants from overseas.

[Signed]  
Yvonne V. Benn  
Consul General

c.c. Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Minister of State for Information  
Executive Secretary (PCY)  
Guyana Ambassador, Washington  
Permanent Representative to the U.N.

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### **38. PACKAGE OF DOCUMENTS COMPILED BY THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION**

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

[Date stamp] July 2, 1980 Embassy of Guyana, Washington DC

The immediate aim of this document is to present under one cover, and so for easy reference, certain relevant statements made on the death of Walter Rodney.

Anyone going through the two statements made by Donald Rodney would note changes he made in just a matter of hours, and the same trend is observed as W.P.A. issued release after release. Inevitably, questions arise - hence the relevance of one of the articles contained herein.

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## **(i). PRESS RELEASE BY THE WPA**

### **W.P.A RELEASE**

**TO PRESS AND PUBLIC** Saturday, June 14, 1980

### **WALTER RODNEY ASSASSINATED**

Our talented, inspiring, committed and much loved brother WALTER RODNEY died last night at the hands of the P.N.C. rulers. He is the third W.P.A. victim and the first of the highest level of leadership of the party to be murdered. He is also the fifth political murder victim of the P.N.C. state, including Darke and Teekah.

At about 8 o'clock last night, Friday, June 13, shortly after leaving a meeting, Brother Rodney was travelling in a car driven by his brother Donald Rodney. The car was moving in a northerly direction along John Street. Shortly after 8 o'clock, when the car was between Bent and Hadfield Streets, there was a loud explosion. The roof of the car was blown off and landed several feet behind. The entire side of the car on which Walter Rodney was sitting was mangled. A torso could be seen lying on the left front floor of the car, face downwards.

Persons on the scene who were able to observe the body closely report that the lower half appeared to have been separated from the torso.

Within a very few minutes of the bombing, long before an ambulance arrived, a Colt van carrying between 10-15 members of the Death Squad was on the scene. The Death Squad wielded batons to force the growing crowd from around the car. Later, groups of persons in the crowd were arrested by the Squad. Among those also early on the scene were officials of the Ministry of National Development and Office of the General Secretary of the P.N.C.

W.P.A. understands that the driver of the car, Donald Rodney, was severely injured and has been hospitalised.

The state of the car after the bombing, the reported nature and location of the injuries received by the driver, and the position and condition of Walter Rodney's body are all consistent with a bomb having exploded in the left front of the car.

At 9.30 last night, the home of Mrs. Pauline Rodney, mother of Walter Rodney, was searched for arms and ammunition and his brother Edward Rodney, arrested. At 11.45 p.m. the home of Walter and Pat Rodney was searched for arms and ammunition by a party of 17 armed men who arrived in 2 Colt vans and a Tapir.

One of the most politically intelligent opponents of the regime has been removed. A prophet of the self-emancipation of the working people has silenced. A partisan of the liberation of all the peoples is no more. The Working People's Alliance, his comrades in arms, will carry on his work.

SIGNED: WORKING PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE

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**(ii). PRESS RELEASE BY DR. CLIVE THOMAS**

ISSUED IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ON JUNE 16, 1980

THE ASSASSINATION OF DR. WALTER RODNEY

**PRESS RELEASE: CLIVE THOMAS, EXECUTIVE MEMBER, WORKING PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE**

On the evening of Friday 13th June, Dr. Walter Rodney, Executive Member of the Working People's Alliance was assassinated by a bombing device placed in his brother's car in which he was a passenger. This act of political murder is one of the most horrendous, barbaric and traumatic acts in recent times, within the Caribbean generally and in Guyana in particular.

In recent weeks in Guyana the government has resorted to the massive use of the security services against its political opponents. Over two hundred persons have been picked up by the police and/or have had their homes and work places searched. Some of those arrested have been tortured as the Guyana Human Rights Association has reported to Amnesty International. Less than two weeks ago, 6 persons were charged for treason. These developments have intensified since the beginning of the trial on June 3rd of Dr. Walter Rodney, Rupert Roopnarine and Omawale for alleged arson committed a year ago in the burning down of the Office of the General Secretary of the P.N.C. and the Ministry of National Development. The trial has attracted world wide attention with observers from Amnesty International, Human Rights Associations in the Caribbean, North American Council of Churches and the National Conference of Black Lawyers in the U.S.

## THERE HAVE BEEN OTHER POLITICAL MURDERS IN GUYANA

Beginning with Father Darke, Roman Catholic Priest killed last July whilst taking photographs of a demonstration which was protesting the arrest of Walter Rodney and the others. This has been followed by the murder last November of Ohene Koama (principal organizer of the WPA), Edward Dublin last March (a personal friend and bodyguard of Walter Rodney).

At the back of these developments is the simple fact that the present PNC Government is an illegal one. Its term of office expired in July 1978, (5 years after the July 1973 elections) and through a number of unconstitutional and illegal means it has perpetuated itself in office without holding elections. In the face of this removal of the right of the people to have a government of their choice, opposition to the government has grown from every quarter, spanning all political, social and ethnic groups. This opposition has been fuelled by the collapse of the economy, the wage freeze since 1978, and the estimated reduction by one-third of the standard of living of the workers over the past 3 years. The WPA has played a leading role in organizing this opposition, as can be witnessed by the massive crowds which attend public meetings. Ironically, it was only a week ago that Dr. Walter Rodney had spoken at one such meeting called to protest the recent harassment and at which it was estimated that over 5,000 persons attended.

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### **(iii). PRESS RELEASE BY THE WPA**

WPA RELEASE TO PRESS AND PUBLIC

TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 1980

### **WALTER RODNEY'S ASSASSINATION A COLD-BLOODED PLOT OF THE P.N.C. STATE**

At the age of 38, Walter Rodney was not the first revolutionary leader to be killed by an agent, or betrayed by an agent posing as a friend. Think of the cold and simple plots that violently eliminated other inspired champions of the oppressed: Che, Mondlane, Sandino, Cabral.

But these plots are simple only after the event, when everyone is much wiser. Christians will not forget that Jesus was betrayed by a very close associate

Donald Rodney is Walter Rodney's brother. The statement which he made on June 16, 1980, **after his doctors said he was well enough to talk**, completely unmasks the nature of the Guyana regime. Those who felt that it was just a question of a P.N.C. hot-head throwing a bomb into a car will now see a cold-blooded plan to kill, involving the highest agencies of the state.

In the case of the killing of Vincent Teekah, the one and only person present in the death car was interviewed by Burnham and others and then rushed out of the country under the protection of the state. In the case of Walter Rodney, the one and only person in the death car has presented himself to the public at large. It is now the state that is hiding the agent whom Donald Rodney has named - Gregory Smith. This shows a clear difference of political behaviour between the P.N.C. and the W.P.A., and does honour to the name of Rodney.

Donald Rodney's account of the events of the night of June 13, 1980 leads to the following conclusions:

The plot to kill Walter Rodney comes out clearly in the instructions relayed to Walter by the agent Gregory Smith through Donald Rodney. He was to be walking by the jail fence with the walkie-talkie when the secreted bomb exploded. He was to be peeping into a hole in the walkie-talkie looking for a signal. He was to be blasted beyond recognition. The rulers prepared their propaganda in advance. But Walter altered the instructions and remained in the car which did not stop by the jail. The propaganda line was not changed. The regime continued to insist that Rodney was about to bomb the jail when a bomb he was carrying killed him and that the car was found outside the jail fence. Only at about noon on Saturday did the radio admit that the car was a block away from the prison.

The regime's propaganda also insisted, from the time of the first radio report at 6.00 a.m. on Saturday, that the face of the corpse could not be recognised. They did not know who it was, they said, until near 10.00 a.m. on Saturday, June 14. If Walter had been walking, holding the receiver and looking into it as instructed, his face would have been blown to bits. He would have been unrecognisable. The radio reports, prepared in advance, would have been correct.

As the hospital doctors said, whatever exploded was in or near his lap. They and Donald agree on that. The big point is, that Walter Rodney thought he was carrying part of a walkie-talkie, while the P.N.C. and their agent **knew** he was carrying a bomb.

It was a carefully designed bomb, a bomb probably designed with the aid of "foreign experts" like the C.I.A. It was an anti-personnel bomb, made to blow mainly upwards and blow off something like a head, the damage it did was mostly to the roof of the car. The bomb which we are told Walter Rodney intended to use to bomb the massive Georgetown Jail was not even capable, it would seem, of destroying the car, or the second person in the car - one foot away.

The "foreign experts" may be able to tell us whether or not it was a remote controlled bomb.

Donald Rodney's statement raises yet another crucial point: - the surprise shown by Gregory Smith when Donald, rather than Walter, appeared at his door, and the questions he put as to Walter's whereabouts.

From the community, other evidence of the plot against Walter Rodney has been coming in.

1. Persons at the scene of the murder noted that a large contingent of Death Squad men reached John and Hadfield Streets within a very few minutes of the explosion.
2. Two Colt vans carrying Death Squad men were seen double-parked in Bent Street near the jail, at 7.45 p.m.
3. Chief of Staff Norman McLean was overheard saying at a party at 8.45 on the night of the murder that he had to leave for a security meeting with Burnham and other heads of the security forces, because Walter Rodney had been killed. If McLean knew, then the plot clearly involved an agent of the army intelligence unit.
4. A number of persons must have been involved in the orchestration of the propaganda to follow the murder. Some parts of the plot were defeated by Rodney's suspicions, but the propagandists originally stuck to the planned story. When they finally admitted on Saturday at noon that the car was at Hadfield and John Streets, they exploded their own slander that Walter Rodney intended to blow up the jail. But from **early Saturday** morning, Guyanese all over the country began to receive P.N.C. slander sheet which said, "Rodney blows himself on way to blow up the prison." This sheet had to be printed before the state decided to admit that the car was found at John and Hadfield Streets, rather than at John and D'Urban Streets, which would be right below the prison fence.

The P.N.C. accounts of the murder leave several important questions unanswered.

When did they know that Rodney planned to bomb the jail? How did they discover the plan? If they knew only after the explosion, what is their evidence.

If they knew in advance, why did they not either apprehend him - or catch him red-handed and bring him once more before the courts?

WPA cannot lose this opportunity to condemn the assault by a Death Squad search party on the homes of Walter's mother and wife on the very night of his murder. The manner of the searches was quite unlike that of professional policemen, even in a fascist country. We also condemn the detention of Walter's brother, Edward for three days; and the grossness and cruelty of those who placed a stack of anti-Rodney literature on the bridge of Walter's home on the morning after his murder.

The police have also been holding Walter's body hostage. It has not yet been released to his family. Only yesterday (Monday) was his wife allowed to see it. The most recent position is that it will be held until foreign experts decide whether or not they wish to examine it. The body is now stored under unsatisfactory conditions at a private mortuary, since the refrigeration system at the Georgetown Hospital is undergoing repairs.



In the course of its declarations on the murder, the regime has been brazen enough to tell the Guyanese people that it has invited experts from well-known imperialist police forces from imperialist capitals in a highly political incident in which they may have been involved at an earlier stage.

WPA repeats the call at this most appropriate moment for human rights organisations and other investigators of repute to make Guyana the subject of a major enquiry into political and state inspired violence, in which the only victims to this point have been opponents of the regime.

Guyana is now a fully fledged police state, in which each political activist and those in touch with political activists are under the scrutiny of the police or police aides twenty-four hours a day. Security is obviously a major financial priority of the regime.

The people of Guyana appeal for, and expect, the support and solidarity of all progressive and democratic organisations and governments. We have lost one of the finest minds, one of the most committed revolutionaries, one of the most complete humanists of the century - Pan Africanist, Marxist and devoted teacher of the youth. It is unthinkable that we should both suffer this loss and continue to suffer under the suppurating Burnham dictatorship. As for the members of the WPA, the progressive forces and the working masses of Guyana, on every hand the cry goes out for greater discipline, greater determination and greater sacrifice.

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES.

WPA

Signed: ANDAIYE for Working People's Alliance.

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#### **(iv). PRESS STATEMENT BY THE PPP**

PRESS STATEMENT BY PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY ON DEATH OF WALTER RODNEY, ISSUED ON JUNE 21, 1980

In a press statement, the PPP has issued a call to all Guyanese who cherish democracy and human rights to close ranks now to prevent terror from enveloping the land and to struggle resolutely for an end to tyranny and oppression. The statement in full is printed as follows:

The People's Progressive Party joins all Guyanese in condemning the dastardly murder of Dr. Walter Rodney, brilliant historian and scholar and fearless freedom fighter, who devoted his life to the cause of his people.

Dr. Rodney was a victim of the foreign and local reactionary forces, which for more than 30 years conspired to fight against and block national and social liberation and to create the conditions for an undemocratic and violent society. There is a connecting thread between the slaying of the Enmore Martyrs of 1948; the mayhem and murder fomented and financed by the CIA in the early 1960's, the killing of Bholanauth and Jagan Ramessar during the army seizure of ballot boxes in the 1973 general election, and the untimely death of Dr. Walter Rodney.

Fear of Dr. Rodney by the ruling circles became morbid. By the time of his return to Guyana in 1974, disillusionment had already manifested itself in the ranks of the PNC (as evidenced by the strike of bauxite workers in 1971) and the conditions for working class and racial unity were being forged. Recognising his leadership qualities and his activities on behalf of the oppressed, particularly in Jamaica, the PNC regime deprived him of his appointment to the staff of the University of Guyana, no doubt with the hope that it would thereby force him out of the country. But that hope did not materialise.

From 1977, extremely high taxation, removal of subsidies, dismissal of workers, cuts in social services and refusal to pay the agreed \$14 minimum wage created the objective conditions for an intensification of the class struggle and united actions. Growing working class and racial unity and cooperation between the PPP and the WPA posed a serious threat to the PNC, which has maintained itself in power so far by electoral fraud and postponement of elections.

Dr. Rodney played a prominent role in the latest political developments. Thus, he was the butt of attacks by the PNC. He was placed on trumped-up charges which led to the restrictions on his liberty to travel. He was further subjected to excessive and filthy abuse over the years by the news media, particularly the *New Nation*, official organ of the ruling party. But, despite the constant persecution, Dr. Rodney never despaired, but continued his relentless efforts to bring changes to the society in which we live, to destroy the tyranny under which the people suffer. His energies were unfailing in his resolve to restore democracy, to end minority rule and to defend the interests of the exploited people of this country.

We feel a sense of great loss that this young, dedicated and vibrant son of Guyana has been cut down in the prime of his life when he had before him so many years of service to the Guyanese people. This is not only a loss to the WPA but also a loss to the Guyanese nation and the whole Caribbean, which is now faced with a new imperialist onslaught.

The murder of Dr. Walter Rodney is clearly designed to step up the violence that has been rapidly developing as a form of intimidation, with the intention of silencing all opposition and driving fear into the hearts of those fighting for the rights of the people, for national and social liberation.

The assassination of Dr. Rodney is a shocking testimony of the degree of erosion of human rights in Guyana. From the evidence available at this stage, it is clear that a conspiracy existed to bring about his death by violence. This conspiracy must be exposed! Those responsible must be brought to justice!

The PPP calls on the entire Guyanese people who cherish democracy and human rights to close ranks now, to prevent terror from enveloping the land and to struggle resolutely for an end to tyranny and oppression. The best way to mourn the loss of Dr. Walter Rodney is to organise and fight.

To the sorrowing mother, wife, children and relatives of Dr. Rodney, and to the Executive and members of the WPA, go our heartfelt sympathies.

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**(v). TEXT OF REPORT ON STATEMENT OF DONALD RODNEY AS GIVEN BY THE CARIBBEAN NEWS AGENCY ON JUNE 16, 1980**

The brother of slain Guyanese political activist Dr. Walter Rodney today told how his brother was apparently set up for the killing which took place in central Georgetown last Friday night.

Donald Rodney, who survived the bombing of the car which claimed Dr. Rodney's life, spoke of the involvement of a former Guyana Army Sergeant, who offered to supply Dr. Rodney with walkie-talkie communication sets. Donald said he collected one of these sets from the former Army officer for testing, and it was this package which exploded and killed the former University lecturer.

Donald related his story to CANA today for the first time.

Police said they were unable to locate him, but he is expected to relate his story to Police soon.

Another report by Sharief Khan on the CANA evening broadcast summary states:

Donald Rodney, who survived last Friday's big bomb blast which claimed the life of his brother, noted historian/politician Dr. Walter Rodney, today told of an apparently elaborate plot to kill the Opposition activist.

Donald, 29, in an exclusive CANA interview, told how a former Guyana Army Sergeant won his brother's confidence, offering to make communications equipment for him and eventually planting the bomb which blew Dr. Rodney apart in central Georgetown Friday night.

Donald, his left eye bandaged and his left arm and right hand badly bruised, told how he picked up Dr. Rodney around seven Friday night, drove him to south Georgetown and parked the car some distance from the Sergeant's house - at Dr. Rodney's instructions - walking to the house to collect a walkie-talkie for tests.

". . . . He came to the door and he appeared a little surprised at seeing me. He asked me immediately where Walter was," Donald related. "Well I was a little vague and I said that he was simply around the corner. He asked me if we were walking or if we were going to be driving when we were testing the set.

"I said that this would be something that would be left up to Walter.

"Well, he said the set was ready in any case and he went inside and I remained by the door.

"He returned with an object in his hand; the object was in a brown paper bag, a very common brown paper bag, and he pointed to a knob on one side of the object by pressing the bag against the side so that the knob protruded," said Donald.

"He said that the former Army Sergeant explained that the set was to be tested at two positions.

"After the first test, the same knob which he indicated would be turned. He demonstrated by turning the knob clockwise and he made me repeat the action on the knob so I was sure what it was all about," said Donald.

"He then indicated quite clearly that we should walk along Russell Street. We could make our first stop at Princes Street and there we should make the first test.

"He said that we should then proceed along Camp Street and be ready to have the second test opposite the Georgetown Jail.

"He particularly wanted to have the tests on the Jail wall so as to observe the effect of the extent of metal on the walls on the efficiency of the set.

"He himself would remain at home to operate the companion set which would be in his possession.

Donald said that the instructions were repeated, with the former Sergeant emphasising the need to test the set near the Camp Street Jail.

"He explained that the trial would consist of a visual signal on our set when he activated his companion set. He showed me a hole in the top of a little box-like structure which, in fact, I realised that the brown bag contained.

"He said that a little light would flash and would be seen through that hole and, when the light came on, we would be ready to be in communication."

Donald, a Quantity Surveyor, said that the former Sergeant put his own set down on a table, and they synchronised their watches.

Donald said he set his watch at 7.50 p.m., collected the parcel, and left. He said he remembered seeing a couple of children in the house and an elderly man sitting on a bench outside near the door.

"I told Walter, who was still sitting there on the left side, that we should start walking immediately and I would relay the instructions to him as we walked on.

"He said he himself would prefer to drive and I pointed out that instructions included walking along Camp Street, and he went on to say that he would drive along Adelaide Street - that he didn't think the difference really mattered.

"I agreed, so I handed him the package and started the car and we moved off."

Donald said he explained the instructions to Dr. Rodney as they drove on to the road, and prepared for the fateful test.

"I drove north along Adelaide Street, over Princess Street and into John Street and parked there for a while.

"When I checked my watch it wasn't just yet eight so we waited until 8 o'clock and at 8 o'clock by my watch Walter looked at the set he was holding in front of him and apparently a flash came on.

Donald said that Walter felt that was "very good"

"I reminded him to turn the switch and then I drove off north along John Street at a fairly slow pace, not wanting to attract attention - straight over Durban Street.

"We went well past the Prison because, in any case, we realised that we can't park by the Prison. It's a no-parking area. We went on and I went right up about 20 yards short of Hadfield Street, and pulled over to the left side and turned off my ignition and the lights.

'So we were now waiting for the second signal from the set and there was no signal according to what Walter indicated to me, and within a minute of the time that I parked the vehicle, Walter had started to say something to me in reference to (the former army Sergeant).

"I had turned slightly to look through the driver's window because, of course, there was a need to keep some sort of lookout. The window itself was open and suddenly I heard a loud noise and at the same time I felt my body being twisted against the driver's door, which flew open.

"I became blinded on the left side and I became aware that the lights on my dashboard had come on. I was also aware that there was no feeling in either of my hands because I instinctively raised them to my face to catch my glasses.

"Well, I realised at that stage that there was an explosion on Walter's side and . . . he must have been seriously injured," Donald said.

"The first thing that came to my mind was that I should get to somewhere or to someone where I could get help for him.

"I pushed back the door because by this time I had been flung out and I started running north along John Street in the direction of Croal Street, not far from John Street.

"I got there and pressed on the bell for a while and then I shouted when someone looked out from the upstairs window (and asked) them to come down and they came down.

"When they came down I told them something terrible had happened in my car. I told them where it was parked in John Street and Hadfield Street. I emphasised that Walter was still there and that he was injured."

A WPA spokesman said the persons he had spoken to, and who had spoken to him at the house, included Andaiye and Karen de Souza - two WPA members - who said today they rushed to the scene and saw Dr. Rodney's body slumped forward and downwards in the left front of the vehicle.

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**(vi). STATEMENT DISTRIBUTED BY (WPA/MILES FITZPATRICK) ON TUESDAY JUNE 17, 1980 AND HANDED TO POLICE LATER THE SAME DAY**

Donald Rodney, Quantity Surveyor, age 29, of 566 West Ruimveldt, Greater Georgetown states:

I am the brother of Walter Rodney. At 7.30 p.m. on Friday, June 13, 1980 I picked up Walter with my motor car PBB 2349 in Church Street, outside St. Rose's High School. Walter sat on the left side of the driver's seat while I drove the vehicle to Broad Street and parked on the southern parapet east of Russell Street.

I came out of the car while Walter remained seated in it. I proceeded to the home of Gregory Smith, at the corner of Russell and Howes Streets. I arrived there at 7.35 to 7.40 p.m. I had met Gregory Smith on several previous occasions. I knew him as a Radar and Electronics technician. He had told me he was a Sergeant in the Marine Wing of the Guyana Defence Force. I got to know him through Walter, whom he had approached with an offer to make walkie-talkie sets. I acted as a liaison between Smith and Walter, reporting on the progress Smith was making on the manufacture of the sets.

Smith had claimed at that time to be self-employed and working on radar and electronic systems on ships coming into Georgetown. He said he was working as a serviceman. I once met him in the company of a person whom he claimed was currently in the GDF, but was dissatisfied with his position and was seriously considering leaving the GDF. He said this person was helping him with his work on the ships.

On some occasions I met Smith at his home, on others in Lombard Street near the waterfront. On these occasions when I met Smith we discussed the progress he was making with the sets. He also talked quite a lot about his competence. On one occasion, he told me that he had been sent by the GDF to the United Kingdom on a training course in radio and electronic engineering. He had also offered to acquaint me with the elements of practical radio and electronics work.

Walter told me that he found Smith unreliable in keeping appointments. Walter was also sometimes in direct contact with Smith. Smith had made several arrangements to deliver the walkie-talkie sets to Walter, but he failed to deliver them on many occasions when I was sent by Walter to uplift them.

The purpose of my visit to Smith on the night of June 13, 1980 was to collect one walkie-talkie set for testing. When I went to his home, Smith came to the door and appeared surprised at seeing me. He asked me where Walter was, I told him that Walter was around the corner. He asked me if we were walking or driving and whether we would test the set in the car or on foot. I replied that Walter would decide that. He told me the set was ready. He then went inside. I remained at the door.

Smith returned with an object in his hand. The object was in a brown paper bag. He pointed to a knob on one side of the object; by pressing the paper bag against it, the knob protruded. He explained that the set would be tested at two positions. After the first test, the knob was to be turned. He demonstrated by turning the knob clockwise. He made me repeat the action.

He said that Walter and I should walk along Russell Street, making our first stop at Princess Street where we should carry out the first test. He said we should then proceed along Camp Street and be ready to have the second test opposite the Georgetown Prison. He particularly wanted to have a test near to the prison wall so as to observe the effect of the expanse of metal on the efficiency of the set. He himself would remain at home to operate the companion set which would be in his possession. He repeated the instructions and added that if we wanted, for the first test we could go past Princess Street, but it was important that the second test take place in Camp Street, near to the prison wall. He said he wanted to observe whether the transmission would be interfered with by the extensive metal wall.

He explained that the trial would consist of a visual signal on our set when he activated the companion set which would be in his possession. He showed me a hole at the top of the box which in fact the bag contained and said that the light flash would be seen through the hole. When the light came on, the set would then be ready for communication.

He then put the set down on the table inside the room near the door. Smith then came out of the door and into the yard into the road light. He said we should synchronise our watches. He wished to make the first signal at 8 p.m. and he wanted to make certain that if we received a light signal it was from him. I set my watch to 7.30, the time Smith's watch carried. Smith then moved back to the doorway and handed me the set. The set weighed about one to two pounds and from the way it felt, it seemed to be box-shaped. It was a small package. I took the package and left the yard. At all times I believed it was a walkie-talkie set.

At Smith's home that evening I saw at least two children. I also saw an elderly man seated on a bench outside of the house near the door.

I left the yard with the package in my hand and returned to my motor car. I went into the driver's seat and told Walter, who was still sitting on the left side front seat that we should start walking immediately and I would relay Smith's instructions as we walked. He said that we should drive. I replied that the instructions included walking along Camp Street. He said that we would drive along Adelaide Street as he didn't think the difference mattered. I agreed and handed over the package to him and then started the car.

As I drove on to Breda Street, I explained that we were required to make trials at two positions: the first, at Princess Street at 8 o'clock by my watch which was synchronised with the Smith's, and the second sometime after by the prison. I drove north along Adelaide Street and parked in John Street. I looked at my watch. It was not yet 8 o'clock. We waited until 8 o'clock. At 8 o'clock by my watch Walter looked down at the package which he held in his lap. The signal light flashed. Walter remarked that that was very good. I then reminded him to turn the knob which he immediately did. I then drove off north along John Street across D'Urban Street, and passed the prison. I parked the car on the western side of John Street approximately 20 yards from Hadfield Street, and turned off the ignition and all the lights.

We waited for a signal from the package. There was no signal. Within a minute from the time I parked the vehicle, Walter started saying something in reference to Gregory. I turned slightly to look through the driver's window which was open. Suddenly, I heard a loud noise and at the same time I felt my body being twisted against the driver's door which flew open. I became blinded on the left side, and became aware of the dashboard lights coming on. There was no feeling in either of my hands, even though I instinctively raised both hands to secure my spectacles as I was getting out of the car.

I realised then that there had been an explosion on Walter's side of the car and that he was seriously injured. I thought immediately of getting help for him. I pushed back the driver's door with one hand and ran north along John Street to the home



of Dr. Omawale on Croal Street. When I arrived there I shouted and the door was opened by someone whom I told that something terrible had happened in my car at John and Hadfield Streets, and that Walter was still there and needed help.

I went upstairs and then realised I was bleeding profusely. I told Andaiye and Karen (de Souza) to go to the scene. I was left alone in the house and went into the bathroom. I was finally taken into the medical care of Dr. Horace Taitt.

(Signed) Donald Rodney

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[Note: The above written statement was given to the police on 17 June 1980).

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#### **(vii). TEXT OF PAMPHLET DISTRIBUTED IN GUYANA**

INDEPENDENT PUBLICATIONS

Vol. 1 - No. 3

#### **GREGORY SMITH - DOES HE EXIST?**

Gregory Smith, the double agent who was contracted to assassinate Dr. Walter Rodney, is an officer in the Maritime Command of the G.D.F. He was formerly employed by the Transport and Harbours Department (Electrical Section) and joined the Army around 1976. **At that time** he was living in the Ruimveldt Housing Scheme. In late 1977 he was sent to London for further training at the British Military School (Electronics), along with three other officers. His rank then was that of **Corporal**. Inside and outside the Army he is known as an "electronics" man.

Smith, who is regarded in Army circles as a "soldier of fortune", was set up on his secret assignment as a double agent to infiltrate the W.P.A. soon after the Alliance announced its intention, in 1978, to work towards the removal of the P.N.C. He began his assignment with a **staged** walk-out from the Army after his return from training under the pre-arranged pretext that he was "dissatisfied" with his salary etc. On "leaving" the Army, Smith quickly spread the news around about his "dissatisfaction" with the Army. During his "absence" from the Army NO ATTEMPT WAS EVER MADE TO COURT MARTIAL HIM, NOR TO GET HIM BACK INTO THE ARMY. ON THE CONTRARY, SMITH RECEIVED HIS SALARY EVERY MONTH DURING HIS ABSENCE. Towards the end of 1978, Gregory Smith staged a "return" into the Army and was promptly promoted to acting Sergeant and **he did in fact wear the three Chevrons** (the mark of a Sergeant).

In the latter part of 1979 when the situation was getting out of hand for Burnham, with the W.P.A. in full cry, Smith again "left" the Army, this time "complaining" to his friends in and out of the Army that he had been given a raw deal in not getting a certain gazetted post in the Army.

Having "left" the Army, he immediately set himself up to undertake private jobs. He soon attracted the attention and sympathy of the W.P.A. who were openly anxious to champion the cause of people who had been victimised by the Burnham Dictatorship. It is during the latter part of 1979, that Koama was murdered, after being set up by a Double Agent.

Smith operated in a manner which would have convinced most people that he was a victim of the regime. The W.P.A. must, however, admit that they were careless in not properly screening Smith, and having been "taken in" by him. During his "absence" from his post, Gregory Smith PAID REGULAR WEEKEND VISITS TO THE ARMY, REPORTING EACH TIME TO HIS IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR, THE LIEUTENANT COLONEL, MARINE COMMAND, AND AT LEAST ON TWO OCCASIONS WAS OBSERVED TO HAVE DISCUSSIONS WITH MC LEAN, THE CHIEF OF STAFF. He continued to receive his salary up to the time of the assassination of Dr. Rodney.

Now recapture the following facts about Smith, who merely acted as THE AGENT of the Burnham DICTATORSHIP in carrying out the assassination of Dr. Walter Rodney:

1. He was in the pay of the Army although he publicised the ruse that he had left out of "dissatisfaction";
2. Although competent in his normal field of communications, Smith is not considered by his colleagues to be capable of manufacturing the type of device which he planted on Rodney. The sophisticated device is believed to have been brought into the country by Army top officials who had been given the assignment to murder all the members of the Executive of the W.P.A. Note that Chief of Staff McLean and his collaborator, Denny, Security Chief at the Bank of Guyana, returned to the country from a highly secret and urgent trip to the U.S.A. just about two weeks before the assassination. Hamilton Greene was also out of the country at that time.
3. Smith was exhaustively programmed by the Army for his evil assignment; care had to be taken in securing the "friendship" and confidence of someone in the W.P.A. - the topmost man Dr. Rodney. The evidence shows that this was achieved fairly perfectly.
4. Smith was visited at his home by certain top officers of the Army at the most dismal hour of the nights.
5. Note the surprise on Smith's face when he saw Donald Rodney, who was not expected to be present and making sure that Walter Rodney was in the car. Note also that there was a strange person, an accomplice in Smith's house.

6. By 8.30 on the night he sprung the trap on Rodney, Smith vanished under a pre-arranged plan after learning of Donald Rodney's escape from death. Reliable reports have it that Smith was flown by G.D.F. helicopter to Kwakwani to meet his father there, before being flown to his hiding place. **Unconfirmed** reports claim that Smith might now be in Suriname.

Based on all the facts available, it is clear that Walter Rodney was set up for on assassination, ordered by Burnham and executed by Army personnel with Smith as the double agent. Now examine the guilty actions of the Burnham Dictatorship:

1. Early on Saturday morning after the assassination, Burnham's Radios announced the murder outside of the Georgetown Prisons - precisely where Gregory Smith had arranged for the test on the 'walkie talkie' to be done, although the incident took place nearer to Hadfield Street: only if the Ministry of Information had prior information that the assassination was to take place in front of the Georgetown Prisons, could this announcement have been made.
2. The same Radio newscasts stated that the face of an unidentified victim had been blown up beyond recognition. Rodney's face however, was intact and identifiable. The intention of the assassins was to blow Rodney's face beyond recognition so as to give the Government time to procrastinate over identification and keep the world and Guyanese in a state of doubt and confusion as to whether it was in fact Walter Rodney who had been assassinated. The Ministry of Information's newscast therefore reflected what was supposed to have happened and not what actually happened. There was obviously no time to adjust the newscast to suit the changed circumstances.
3. At approximately 7.30 p.m. two jeeps full of security personnel were seen double-parked in the vicinity of the scene of the assassination. Their return to the scene shortly after the explosion was to make sure that in the event that Walter Rodney escaped the explosion they would finish off the job.
4. The Burnham government stands alone in not condemning the murder, and expressing no regrets. Their belated denial of complicity is unconvincing and has come only after the storm of world condemnation of the assassination.
5. The army has denied that Gregory Smith was an officer there. Such a blatant lie gives the whole show away. The existence of Oswaldene Walker double agent and companion of Teekah was also disacknowledged by the Burnham Dictatorship.
6. Of painful significance to Burnham was the last W.P.A. meeting at the Merriman's Mall which attracted a crowd of many thousands. This was crucial to Burnham, since the W.P.A. had not held a public meeting since December, 1979. Burnham had reckoned that with all the brutal repression against the W.P.A., there would have been a marked falling off of support for the Alliance. The well attended meeting incensed and infuriated an already sick Burnham no less than the renewed references to him as King Kong. Burnham just could not accept that situation anymore; he could not understand how people were so determined to attend the W.P.A. meetings. Above all, he realised that time was running out for him to stage another rigged election, with the W.P.A. in the ways **The final orders to kill** were accordingly issued that very week. It began with the

stepped up campaign of harassment against the W.P.A. to unsettle them and to keep them on the run until they were killed. Rodney was the prize victim, unfortunately he was taken first. The plans for further assassination are still out.

THE ONLY SOLUTION IS UNITY AMONG ALL THE FORCES OPPOSED TO THIS EVIL DICTATORSHIP. THE W.P.A. MUST NOT LOSE HEART BUT INCREASE ITS RESOLVE TO CONTINUE THE BATTLE. THE OTHER PARTIES MUST ALSO CLOSE THE RANKS AND INCREASE THEIR EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT A CHANGE. THE PEOPLE MUST STAND FIRM BEHIND THEIR PARTIES.

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**39. TELEGRAM TO THE EDITOR OF *LATIN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE* FROM GUYANA EMBASSY, WASHINGTON**

WESTERN UNION MAILGRAM

8 July 1980

Embassy of Guyana  
1490 Tracy Place NW  
Washington DC 10008

Mr Timothy S Harding  
2023 El Cerrito Place  
Los Angeles CA 90068

Deeply resent your libelous mailgram to the Prime Minister which is a product of the vigorous cover up propaganda pedalled by the WPA.

I am sending you for your scrutiny if you have the slightest interest in objectivity a copy of Donald Rodney's statement describing how his brother died. You too might find his actions on the night he met his death highly questionable.

Embassy of Guyana  
Washington DC

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**40. TEXT OF LETTER TO JOSEPH D'OLIVIERA FROM LAURENCE MANN, AMBASSADOR OF GUYANA TO THE UNITED STATES, 18 JULY 1980**

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA  
2490 Tracy Place, N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20008

July 18, 1980

Cde. Joseph D'Oliviera,  
Honorary Consul for Guyana,  
2950 Los Feliz Boulevard, Suite 102,  
Los Angeles, California 90039.

Dear

I received the two publications you sent me, by something calling itself the 'Guyana Nationals and Friends Alliance' of Los Angeles, California, both of which are scurrilous, and the second of which comes very close to being libellous. It appears to say or suggest that the Government of Guyana is responsible for a series of deaths described as murders.

What follows is an explanation of the circumstances described in the pamphlet, and a brief background to whatever turbulence has been injected in the Guyanese political scenario since 1979.

Cooperatively yours,

Laurence E. Mann  
Ambassador

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**Attachment 1:**

**AMBASSADOR LAURENCE MANN'S EXPLANATION OF POLITICAL INCIDENTS OF THE 1979-1980 PERIOD**

**THE ARSON INCIDENT**

On the morning of July 11, 1979, the Ministry of National Development building and the GUYSUCO building next to it were burnt in a deliberately set fire. The watchmen had been tied up and transported across Georgetown to a suburb on the East

Coast, by men dressed in army uniforms. The building was set alight by using an inflammable substance, later identified as paint-thinner.

As a result of a description from an eye-witness of a car seen parked in the vicinity, a number of houses were searched and a number of people, including Walter Rodney, questioned and subsequently charged.

The trial of these men is now before the Courts in the presence of international observers, including a former Attorney General from Britain. A search made of Dr. Rodney's house in the wee hours of July 11, revealed the presence in his hair and under his eyes, of a whitish substance similar to the chemical agent used in the arson. Since his house revealed no trace of recent painting, police authorities felt that there was reasonable substantial evidence prima facie with which to charge Walter Rodney for the crime committed. There was other evidence, including an unaccountability of his whereabouts at the time of the fire.

In any event, the trial of the accused is still before the Courts and it would not be right to comment further or speculate on the outcome of the trial. However, the point to be made is that, on the evidence the police have, they would be justified in any country in bringing charges against the accused; indeed, failure to do so would be a dereliction of duty.

#### FATHER DARKE

The occasion of the arraignment of the accused in the arson trial before the Magistrate's Court in July 1979 saw a vociferous attempt by the Working People's Alliance (WPA) to interfere with the work of the Courts, by staging a demonstration and proclaiming the innocence of the accused, without a word of evidence having been led. A number of equally incensed tax-payers, for whom, no matter whether the accused were found guilty or not, saw the fire as representing the destruction of three million tax dollars, staged a counter demonstration which, unfortunately, ended in a brawl.

Father Darke, a man not known in Guyana's public affairs, a photographer for the Catholic Standard, unfortunately chose the occasion to take photographs of what, after all, was a crime - street brawling. He was stabbed, fatally as it turned out, although had there not been insistence by some that he be removed from the Public Hospital to which he had been rushed, to the Catholic Hospital to which he was admitted, he might have still been alive.

A man has been charged with his murder and is now standing trial before the Courts. It is difficult to see how an unforeseen stabbing of a photographer taking pictures of the commission of crimes could be construed as a political incident, since Father Darke incident is paralleled every day in the streets of any city, when misguided citizens go to the aid of, or identify with, or even just happen to be passing by the participants of criminal activity. Imagine Father Darke taking photographs of a brawl between two major gangs in the streets of Los Angeles. He would have been shot in the head.

No Guyanese could be proud of the Father Darke incident, which besmirches our fair name, but to construe it as a political incident is the work of an enemy of the Guyanese people.

## VINCENT TEEKAH

To hear the WPA report this matter, one would feel that Teekah was a member or supporter of the WPA, rather than a senior Cabinet Minister of the Government of Guyana.

The facts are that Vincent Teekah was shot while in the company of a visiting Medical Consultant. The description of the incident given to the police and security authorities was too sketchy for any identification of an assailant to have been made. If Teekah's was a political murder, those who perpetrated it ought to know: 'Qui accuse s'accuse'.

## OHENE KOAMA

On the afternoon of Sunday, November 18, 1979, a man known as Ohene Koama, a WPA activist, as it subsequently turned out, was challenged by the police in the Ruimveldt Housing Scheme, where he was unloading two highly lethal self-loading rifles (SLRs). He attempted to resist, using one of the rifles and was shot to death.

There is no police authority in the world, which does not instruct a policeman to use force in the apprehension of a suspect. This is especially well known in the United States against a suspect armed with two self-loading rifles (army issue). No policeman could be faulting for shooting first, rather than being mowed down by superior fire power. Incidentally, within minutes of the shooting, other WPA activists were on the scene, almost as though they knew where Koama was, or was expected to be.

## EDWARD DUBLIN

If Dublin was a WPA member, he was not one of whom they were very proud, since both he and his brother, who were subsequently charged with the offence of common theft, have long police records - nineteen (19) to be precise, in the case of Edward, including two (2) for assaulting the police. He had been to jail on eight (8) occasions previously, and his record of crime goes back to 1962, before Dr. Rodney had even qualified in his studies.

The facts are that Dublin and two men were seen stealing cement from outside a building under construction at Linden, late one night. It was public-spirited residents in the area who called the police, who attempted to apprehend the three suspects. Two fled (they were subsequently caught and charged with the crime of common theft), but Dublin attempted to attack two policemen with a cutlass and was shot, and died subsequently in hospital.

Although Dublin lived at Linden, it was at first claimed by the WPA that he was Dr. Rodney's personal bodyguard, a claim unproved to this day.

The only safe thing to say about Dublin, even in his death, is that he was undeniably committed to a life of crime, including assaults on the police, and was shot by the police in one such crime.

#### DR. WALTER RODNEY

In all the rantings about assassination, one salient question demands response. Why was Dr. Walter Rodney, historian, academic, intellectual, only Party leader, seated in his brother's car at 8 o'clock, near the Georgetown prison, with a walkie-talkie set in his lap? For what lawful reason would the leader of a political group, albeit miniscule, be testing a walkie-talkie set? Public address systems are the equipment of politicians, not walkie-talkie sets.

Because the answer to this question was difficult to come by, the WPA, who concealed his brother Donald for three (3) full days before he emerged from hiding, had to come up with some hocus-pocus story.

Even after three days, Donald Rodney's explanation (attached hereto)\* was unconvincing. He spoke of picking up his brother Walter in a dark street outside St. Rose's school at 7.30 in the night. Why the secrecy, picking up one's brother? He spoke of parking around the corner of an army officer's house. Again, why the secrecy? He spoke of receiving a walkie-talkie set in a brown paper bag with protruding knobs. Why the naivety of receiving 'a pig in a poke', - in this case a walkie-talkie set, without examining it? He spoke of synchronising watches. Who needs to synchronise watches to use a common walkie-talkie set available in any walkie-talkie store? Or was it perhaps a military style operation, hence the necessity for precision? He spoke of testing the set against the prison wall. What is the relevance of the wall of a Georgetown prison against a walkie-talkie set? He spoke of lights flashing on and off on the walkie-talkie set. Who has ever hear (*sic*) of flashing lights on a walkie-talkie set? Or was it something else that was being tested? He spoke of driving slowly so as not to attract attention. Is not slow driving as conspicuous (*sic*) as fast driving? Or was it that slow driving was necessary so as not to detonate what was being carried in the vehicle? This indeed seems more compatible with where the object was being carried to cushion shock. He spoke of looking through the window, from time to time, to keep a look-out. Why the need for a look-out?

The truth is that Donald Rodney's statement, in the words of one observer, would be believed only by his mother, for anyone believing that statement would believe anything.

At any rate, the Guyanese police authorities did not believe it, and Donald Rodney was charged with being in possession of an explosive device. Moreover, it is perhaps not generally known that the Government invited the FBI and Scotland Yard to send in forensic assistance to determine the strange circumstances of this incident. Immediately thereupon, the WPA charged that it was a CIA plot, whereupon the Department of State declined, understandably. The British sent in two Scotland Yard experts, whose reports are to be published. The WPA has condemned the report, in advance, claiming that it would be an imperialist machination - as though one could get forensic assistance from Cambodia or Zimbabwe, rather than from a developed country, preferably english-speaking\*.



## **Attachment 2:**

### **SOME INCIDENTS SINCE THE BUILD UP OF VIOLENCE IN GUYANA**

- \* In July, 1978 Kwame Apata, a WPA activist was charged with being in unlawful possession of a revolver and six rounds of ammunition.
- \* On November 18, 1979, Claude Bovell, also known as O.K., a WPA activist was seen by police putting a large, wet and bulky bag into the trunk of a motor car in the Roxanne Burnham Gardens. He pulled an SLR rifle at the police patrol and was shot dead. Rodney's presence in the area at the time was never fully explained.
- \* On April 12, 1979, the Police Forensic Laboratory at Eve Leary was broken into and 22 firearms (the cache from Jonestown) were stolen. Keith Lynch, a soldier was later charged with the offence but only one of the firearms has so far been recovered.
- \* It was recovered recently from a WPA activist when the police unearthed the WPA's plot to overthrow the Government.
- \* On February 18, 1980, David Hinds, Guyanese resident in the U.S. was held at the Timehri International Airport as he attempted to bring into the country three .233 rifles, and other arms and ammunition hidden in the false bottom of his suitcase.
- \* On February 29, 1980, Edward Dublin 32, a WPA activist from Linden died after being shot during a confrontation with the police.
- \* On Saturday, April 12, 1980, six armed men stole six drums containing sulphuric acid from Friendship Marines Limited, East Bank. Sulphuric acid is used in the making of some bombs. Only four of the six drums have been recovered. The police are of the view that the WPA are responsible.

There have been several other reports of arms and ammunition being discovered by the police. There was for example, the arrest of Arnold Apple, another WPA activist for allegedly having a quantity of explosives in his possession while on his way to Linden.

And over the last year, many Guyanese had become extremely worried about the spate of armed robberies in the city, on the East Coast, Demerara, and on the West Coast, Demerara. The Police have discovered that the WPA is linked to these robberies.

And, recently, reports from the prisons told of attempts being made to free prisoners. On one occasion, what appeared to be a smoke bomb was set off in the compound of the Georgetown Prison where a number of WPA activists are being held.

The authorities believe that a plan was hatched to free a number of prisoners but the plan backfired because when the "smoke bomb" went off the prisoners were already "inside".

In addition, when the treason suspects were being held in custody at the La Penitence Police Station an attempt was made to free them by smuggling hack-saw blades into the prison. The blades were found secluded between the plastic shell and the 'refil'\* of a flask.

It had also become evident in recent times that the WPA had embarked on a programme of recruiting persons with a military background. It was therefore not without significance that among the six persons charged recently with treason was a former soldier, Edward Torrington.

[Embassy of Guyana]  
Washington, D.C.  
23rd July, 1980.

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#### **41. INTERNATIONAL TELEX - FROM MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GUYANA TO GUYANA EMBASSY, WASHINGTON**

26 February 1982

TO ALL MISSIONS

Donald Rodney, brother of the late Dr. Walter Rodney, was today sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment after having been found guilty of being in unlawful possession of explosives on June 13, 1980.

Rodney was charged with the offence following a bomb blast which killed his brother Walter while they were travelling in a car in the vicinity of the Georgetown Prison on the night of June 13, 1980.

Rodney's defence attorney gave notice of appeal and the accused was placed on 4,000 dollars bail pending appeal. The maximum penalty for this offence is three years imprisonment and a fine of 1,000 dollars.

WPA activists gathered in the court room expressed disapproval following the magistrate's decision and it is understood that a protest exercise is now being planned by the WPA. Rodney is presently imprisoned and it is believed his bail will not be lodged until after the protest exercise.

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## **42. TWO REPORTS PREPARED BY THE GUYANA EMBASSY, WASHINGTON, ON EVENTS ORGANISED BY WPA SUPPORTERS IN WASHINGTON TO MARK THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF WALTER RODNEY'S DEATH**

### **W.P.A.'s Celebration in Salute of a Fallen Comrade**

The members of the Working People's Alliance had a weekend of activities to commemorate the second year of their leader Walter Rodney's death.

On Saturday the 10th of June a cocktail reception was hosted by Mr. Mahase, leader of the Guyana American Association. This group is 100% Indo-Guyanese. The atmosphere reminded one of an Indian wedding, the basement filled with relatives, young and old and a few blacks all huddled in one corner.

One of the main speakers for the evening was Mr. John Millington who recently arrived from Guyana and now resides in New York. Mr. Millington stated that he was jailed by the Guyana Government for what he did not know at the time of his arrest, but was later accused of threatening to place a bomb in one of the buildings the President had to visit during his tour of Linden. He talked about the shortages and of people dying from starvation; and even said that some were going mad. He declared that he knew of a Guyanese family who got Political Asylum from the Canadian Government, and indicated that Guyana's poverty was on par with that of Haiti. The evening ended with the singing of Guyanese folk songs of which several words were changed to suit the occasion.

On Sunday a cultural evening took place at St. Paul Augustine Church, 1421 V Street, Washington, D.C. The programme started promptly at 4.00 p.m. and ended at 9.00 p.m. The master of ceremony was Kojo Nnamdi who was well dressed in his track suit and sneakers. The proceedings took the form of mainly poetry which was dedicated to Walter Rodney, his wife and children. The poets were Mahadai Das, Wordsworth McAndrew, Desiree Waldron (all Guyanese) and MaKgoba from South Africa. There were singing and dancing by Haitian and Panamanian groups while Mr. Moses Josiah played his musical saw.

The attendance was poor, there were about 100 people. The hallway was filled with stalls, where the W.P.A. members sold books, records and food. People were allowed to purchase food, which they ate in their seats as the artistes performed. This trade proved to be a serious distraction and the Master of Ceremony frequently shouted to the buyers and sellers to lower their voices as the noise caused a problem to the audience up front.

The evening ended with a jump up session, music was provided by a Dominican steelband.

(Signed)  
Avis Fox  
Foreign Service Officer I

June 17, 1982

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## **CONCLUSION**

The two events which were held to commemorate the death of Walter Rodney seemed to have less of an impact on the Guyanese community in Washington, than that of the previous year.

It is ironic because at a time like this when the Administration is facing such acute economic difficulties it would seem a good time for the Alliance to make political mileage. Instead the turn-outs have been noticeably smaller. It is true that the weather on Sunday was wet and damp; nevertheless for such an important occasion the attendance was poor.

To my mind the W.P.A. is not as strong and well organised as had been assumed, judging from the support and turnouts. Membership of the Party seem\* to have declined.

A noticeable absentee from this year's events was Dr. Ralph Comes, one-time Guyana's middle distance champion and now sociology professor at Howard University. Dr. Comes had in the past articulated the W.P.A.'s policies and had been a severe critic of the administration. Rumour has it that he has become disenchanted with the rest of the local leadership. His absence from the commemoration activities would seem to confirm such a rumour.

Nevertheless the W.P.A. still seems to be the most potent political force of the groups of Guyanese in Washington; and the economic crisis could encourage its growth.

(Signed)  
Gordon Daniels  
Foreign Service Officer II

June 24, 1982

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### **C: Speeches and articles:**

#### **43. A COLLECTION OF WALTER RODNEY'S POLITICAL ARTICLES**

##### **(1). On the Nature of a Dictatorship in General**

A dictator is defined as one who wields absolute power. The dictator elevates himself above all other citizens, and often makes claims to be closer to God than mere mortals. Emperors, kings and nobles of the feudal period easily became dictators because they could justify despotic acts on the grounds that royal power and authority were of sacred origin. In more modern versions of dictatorship, the absolute ruler has to fabricate an elaborate cult of the personality to prove that he is more intelligent, more potent and generally superior to any other human being. Idi Amin fancied himself not only as a physical giant but also as an intellectual giant. Besides, he boasted of a direct line to Allah. Eric Gairy, our Caribbean ex-dictator, dabbled in obeah and convinced himself that he was better than the world's leading scientists and would personally solve the problem of unidentified flying objects. This is the stuff of which dictators are made.

By definition, the dictator is responsible to no one, no organisation, to no social institution. On the contrary, he creates the impression that he holds in the palm of his hand the existence of every person and every organisation. The dictator is paramount. He gives out land, scholarships, etc., not because they belong to the people, but because he considers that he is doing the rest of mankind a great favour. That is why human and civil rights disappear under a dictator. At best, an individual may be permitted to enjoy certain privileges and is expected to be eternally grateful to the dictator. After all, that which the dictator giveth he also taketh away.

A dictator is representative of some class other than the majority of exploited workers and peasants. Class domination itself is sometimes called "dictatorship," but of course all members of the class which controls the given economy normally expect to share in the political power. A dictator prevents this from happening. Even within his own class there is no scope for freedom of expression. The dictator obeys no rules other than those of his own making; and consequently there is a tendency for rules to be abandoned altogether. The rule of law is replaced by arbitrary conduct and orders from above.

Dictators surround themselves with mediocrities and lackeys - that is to say, by men and women with little competence and integrity who maintain their positions through cunning, opportunism and boot-licking in relationship to the dictator. In relationship to the people, the stooges of the dictator become tyrants, who imitate as best as they can, the intolerant and despotic behaviour of the big boss.

In political life, men and women make decisions about their own welfare. Politics has to do with making choices and implementing decisions. The realm of politics therefore constitutes one of the highest aspects of a people's culture. Through one-man rule, the dictatorship reduces politics to the art of manipulation. There is nothing big or small which lies outside of his personal intervention. Nor does he remember to draw the distinction between public policy and personal interests. That is why the dictator and his cohorts continually confuse the national treasury with their private bank accounts. That is why a dictatorial regime so often bases decisions on petty spite and vendetta - amounting to what we in Guyana would call "grudge" politics.

On the surface, dictatorship might appear to be efficient; but the opposite is usually the case. The fact that a dictator is ruthless does not necessarily make him efficient. A dictatorial system destroys initiative. It does not allow the genius of the people to flourish and it frustrates even that class from which the dictator emerged. Dictators always pretend to be strong men, but in

practice, the effort to control everyone and everything is too much. The historical record shows that several dictators were more than a little bit mad before they seized power, and many of them certainly went crazy after some years of despotic rule.

## **(2). On the Nature of the Burnham Dictatorship in Particular**

As soon as we have stated the tendencies of dictatorship in general, we have already begun to lay bare the characteristics of the Burnham dictatorship. But of course we must go further and identify all of its peculiarities. The first peculiarity is that the Burnham dictatorship has masked and camouflaged itself. It would prefer that its vices be hidden from the public. Why is this?

Men in the past have boasted of being dictators. Some have even pretended to be benevolent autocrats, ruling in the interest over whom they exercised absolute control. Recently, Somoza of Nicaragua went down fighting as an unrepentant dictator. But nowadays, hardly any rulers admit that they are dictators. The demand for freedom has become universal, and repression feels the need to camouflage itself. Thus the Pinochet regime in Chile rigged a referendum to tell the world that the Chilean people voted for a dictatorship! Idi Amin claimed to have had the support of the Ugandan masses whom he was butchering! The world has come to shun racist regimes, military dictatorships and all dictatorial governments. This climate of international opinion offers the first explanation as to why the Burnham dictatorship prefers to remain disguised.

The Burnham dictatorship presents itself as its own opposite - that is to say, it presents itself as a democracy. This pattern has been determined by the manner in which Burnham achieved political power. Some dictators seize power by violence, as frequently happened in Latin America. Some inherit from a previous strong-man, as in the case "Baby Doc" Duvalier who succeeded "Papa Doc" Duvalier of Haiti. Occasionally a dictator can arrive on the scene as part of an electoral process before taking the steps of brazenly undermining the self-same electoral system. This was the case with Hitler who subverted German bourgeois democracy in the 1930s. Burnham has taken a similar road to power - subverting the democratic system of which he was a part in 1953.

We cannot say that Guyana has reached the same stage as Germany under Hitler's rule, because that would be to lose the sense of proportion. Burnham as a dictator is petty because ours is a nation of less than a million people. Hitler had a mad wish to rule the world. For this reason, he is generally described as a megalomaniac. Hitler's megalomania was backed by the powerful German economy and the might of the German army. Burnham's megalomania is closer to comedy and farce. It takes the form of wearing a General's uniform and hoping that the army will conquer his own people. In the long run, however, every dictator is like any other dictator. Burnham certainly has the capacity to make life miserable for the entire population of our small nation.

Like all classic dictatorships, that which exists in Guyana has fostered the cult of the personality. The minority PNC regime has used all manner of tricks and gimmicks to make the 'Comrade Leader' appear to be a demigod. Some of the gimmicks were inherited from our past of colonial oppression. Thus on the exercise books of school children, the face of reigning English

monarch was simply replaced by that of the Prime Minister, even though there is a President as Constitutional Head of State in Guyana.

Other practices which promote the cult of the personality have been adopted in the flagrant violation of our culture. It is on record that one Hindu Pandit insulted his co-religionists and Guyanese as a whole by saying the Burnham is re-incarnation of Lord Krishna! All Guyanese can attest to the many manoeuvres of the PNC regime to glorify and deify the man Forbes Burnham. We have been afflicted with his face, his name, his voice everywhere. This obscene and vulgar behaviour eventually had a damaging effect on our entire artistic production, including the strangling of our calypso tradition so that the calypso crown could be won by whoever shouted the loudest praise to the dictator. When Burnham could not pretend that he was the greatest, he sought to attach himself shamelessly to the shirt-tails of those who had proved their greatness in one field or another - ranging from Fidel Castro to Mohamed Ali. Most West Indians were totally disgusted by the ridiculous practice of Burnham laying personal claim to Clive Lloyd and the West Indian cricket team.

For a small nation, Guyana has produced a discouragingly large number of lackeys and stooges who hide in the shadow of the "Comrade Leader". Guyanese constantly complain of "square pegs in round holes." The square pegs are the misfits and soup drinkers who flourish because each one is prepared to be his master's voice. There is a double tragedy in this situation. First there is the tragedy (with some mixture of comedy) of the incompetent, the mediocre and the corrupt making a mess of things. Secondly, there is the tragedy in which men and women of ability and integrity have been dismissed or they have run away or they have been reduced to silence. This part of the tragedy involves honest police officers who must condone corruption, doctors who must heal without drugs, managers who are not allowed to manage and workers who are not permitted to produce and are then forced to consume a diet of lies and deceit. And all of this, incidentally, is carried on in the name of Socialism.

The smallness of our society also draws attention to the highly personalised nature of the dictatorship. The dictator and his cronies make it their business to hire and fire. They interfere with major management decisions and they intervene in the most trivial affairs. The ruling clique can be vindictive with appointments at the supposedly independent University of Guyana as they can be vindictive with regard to businessmen applying for licences for imports controlled by the Government. The dictator can personally intervene to stop a soldier from going on leave, to prevent a junior clerk from getting a promotion, to victimise a casual worker for failing to "toe the hue." Decision as to who to prosecute in the courts should normally be made by the Director of Public Prosecutions. Many of these decisions are made by the dictator himself in Guyana and are influenced not by the well-being of the state but by personal spite. It is said that the "Comrade Leader" boasts of his long memory and marks down persons for victimisation even if he has to wait for fifteen years before he can vent his wrath on them.

When Guyana achieved independence in 1966, the PNC was a minority Government which had come to power through dubious means. Ten years later, it had become a dictatorship in which the state control over the economy was the main weapon used to keep people in line. Burnham and his cronies consider themselves powerful and clever men when they successfully threaten and intimidate an old man with a possible loss of his pension or when they intimidate a mother by bring threats against her children.



The Italian writer, Machiavelli, is famous for his analysis of politics as the art of manipulating power. Machiavelli's best known book, *The Prince*, was written some 450 years ago as advice to a ruler with absolute power. We have it on the authority of the late Jessie Burnham that her "Brother Forbes" was a firm disciple of Machiavelli. In his own words, Burnham has described politics as the "science of deals." He likes to wheel and deal and to treat persons as though each can be bought and sold. Burnham encourages around himself individuals who are weak or corrupt because he then exercises vicious control over them. According to Burnham's thinking, the ends justify the means, and the only means which matter are those which have to do with achieving and holding on to power. Any means are acceptable if they allow him to keep control over the state machinery. This is the ultimate in cynicism and fully reveals the Machiavellian strategy which has guided Burnham in his pursuit of absolute power in Guyana.

On the international scene, Burnham could never be a powerful force. But he has proved crafty and cunning in achieving his end within Guyana. An old woman at Bourda shouted at a recent political meeting that "Burnham mek Satan cry!" This remarkable piece of wit from the Georgetown street was in response to the deviousness of a man who has worked out a long-term plan for dividing and ruling the Guyanese people - all of whom he holds in deep contempt. Again we should refer to the pamphlet by Jessie Burnham, entitled *Beware My Brother Forbes*, in which she described his racist attitude to Indians, his absolute selfishness and his limitless ambition to hold others in domination. Jessie Burnham also provided evidence as to the stealthy manner in which Forbes Burnham went about his objectives.

The Burnham dictatorship crept up upon Guyanese outside of the government. Many have been beaten down into silence, but there are individuals who travel and who know the world. They therefore know that internationally the Guyana government is totally discredited and that Guyanese have to bear the shame heaped on them by the dictator. Many members of the middle class are therefore entering the political movement. Many are willing to be mobilised, others will commit resources and a few are prepared to take serious risks as part of the movement.

The middle class understands that it can never monopolise a Guyanese government. From 1953, that has never been possible. Thinking members of the middle class are therefore in agreement that the solution is a Government of National Unity. This would be a government which they cannot dominate but one in which their interests are adequately represented and in which their views be given honest and careful consideration.

The WPA stands within the ranks of workers and peasants. There is no hesitation in so doing, there are no ifs and buts about our commitments to building a society in which working people enjoy the fruits of their own labour. A united working class is the base on which national unity is to be built. It is the working class (including housewives and the unemployed) who suffer most under the corrupt dictatorship. It is the working class which has sacrificed most in the struggle for bread and justice. A working class interpretation must win over the progressive elements of other classes and strata. It will have to be made clear that the Burnham dictatorship came forth from a particular economic system - a system rooted in inequality and exploitation. It will also have to be made clear that working people require fundamental change in the political structure to permanently

guarantee rights which they temporarily won in the face of colonialism. The Guyanese working people who are in the immense majority will expect to have their labour power reflected in the power of the state.

The WPA has called for a Government of National Reconstruction and National Unity. Inevitably, the working people must play a leading role in such a government. Yet, it is proof of the maturity of our workers that they fully understand the need for patriotic compromise with other classes and social strata. Workers know from the most bitter of experiences how hopeless the economic situation has become. Small farmers know from heart-breaking experience that it is impossible to cultivate and survive. So the vast majority of our people will surely rally round a programme which restores the economy through the participation of all. They will rally round a programme which restores democratic rights.

One can sum up on the national question by saying that all classes in Guyana have an **objective interest** in unity. That is to say, each class has suffered materially from economic chaos, each class has suffered in one way or another from arbitrary rule, insecurity and lack of the opportunity to do an honest job. Collectively, we are faced with the threat of disintegration and the loss of commitment to Guyana as a nation state. This is tragically seen through the large numbers lining up at the embassies and passport offices, and in large numbers who have but one ambition in life - to leave Guyana.

This is a time for calling on our resolves of patriotism. The road to recovery of national purpose lies through the restoration of democracy. All parties and all interest groups must somehow be represented in a Government of National Reconstruction and National Unity. Burnham Must Go! Yes, but that is only one side of the coin. There must be an alternative to replace the dictator. Let that alternative be a Government of National Unity. A clear alternative is a powerful political force. It gives our people something to mobilise around. It gives the outside world something to think about as the force of the future in dealing with Guyana. In the last days of the Burnham dictatorship, a Government of National Unity must be declared. It will unite races and classes, it will attract civilians and uniformed personnel, it will itself contribute to speeding up the end of the reign of King Kong.

### **(3). On the Rights of the People**

When Guyana gained its independence it inherited what is called the bourgeois democratic system of Britain. Socially and economically, the population remained divided into different classes; while politically everyone had a right to help elect a Parliament which had one or more parties. The Constitution of independent Guyana was a product of class struggle waged partly in Europe and partly inside Guyana itself.

It was the people's struggle inside Guyana which contributed most to political freedom in our country. The efforts of slaves and indentured bondsmen made the question of liberation both a national and international issue. Given our background of slavery, the question of freedom can never be ignored in Guyana and the Caribbean.

Today, we take for granted the **freedom to worship**. But it is not a freedom readily granted by our oppressors. When a few non-conformist ministers of religion first suggested that slaves should have access to Christianity, they were resisted by the slave masters. Those slaves who wished to practice the Christian religion ran terrible risks in order to insist on their right to worship as they chose - just as how thousands of slaves had earlier fought to continue holding their African beliefs. Under indentureship, the situation was not very different. It was usually after the end of their five-year bond that our Indian foreparents were able to turn to the temple, the mosque or the church as the case might be.

One of the most bitter struggles in the history of Guyana has been the struggle to establish the **right to work**. That is to say, the right to be offered employment which would provide a decent living. The right to work means the right to eat and the right to live. After slavery, the free population was willing to work. But they demanded fair conditions; and planters brought in indentured labourers to undercut the demand for better wages and conditions. The indentured labourers themselves soon grew aware of the situation. They too demanded better conditions and the result was that they were refused employment while fresh indentured labourers were brought in. The right to employment in crop time, the right to employment out of crop season, the right to employment in the public sector, all of these were at least partially won by the end of the colonial period.

Alongside the right to work was the **right to housing**. Acquiring a house depends on what one earns and is therefore linked to the right to work. Plantation workers were housed in logies from slavery days. When labourers became free, the planters told them that they could enjoy the **privilege** of staying in the plantation logies if they worked on the estates without protest. Right up until recent time, estates have ejected tenants who exercised the right to strike.

That is why our people have always preferred houses in a village instead of houses on estates. On the sugar estates, in the villages and in the towns, workers have organised to demand decent housing and to demand housing with no strings attached. Housing is not a favour which the dictator has granted to the people. The right to housing is an internationally recognised and fundamental human right. It is one for which the Guyanese have struggled in the countryside and in the towns.

In the colonial days of British Guiana, rural workers and farmers made the magnificent contribution of establishing free villages - like Buxton on the East Coast, Demerara, Queenstown in Essequibo and Fyrish/Gibraltar in East Berbice. The village residents fought the planters and the colonists in order to practice **democracy at the local government level**.

The urban working class led the way in establishing trade unions and in exercising the **right to strike**. Stevedores were amongst the most abused and exploited workers in the colonial system. Yet it was the stevedores and other dockworkers who sacrificed to make trade unions possible.

Our middle classes identified themselves with popular campaigns against dictatorial governors, against corruption in the public service, against planters manipulating elections, and against the misuse of the authority of the courts. All classes in the colony of British Guiana fought to promote **freedom of expression** in public places and in the press. The end result of all this was the election of governments of their choice. Popular struggle in Guyana won concessions which were partial or temporary. Clearly,

there could never be full justice under colonialism, capitalism and imperialism because of deep-rooted class inequalities. The hope of the majority was that elected governments and national independence would revolutionise the economy and society so that justice would prevail.

Most Guyanese live on the coastlands. These coastlands were once desolate swamps flooded by the sea and the savannah waters. The dams and the canals, and roads and the houses, the fields and the factories, the schools and the churches, the words and the gestures - all of these represent our common heritage. Our foreparents planted their strength, their seed and their intelligence in a country which is now ours.

Neither the land nor the rights of the people are gifts of the Burnham dictatorship. On the contrary, that dictatorship has placed the nation in reverse gear. It is destroying the economy and it is stealing the rights of the people.

#### **(4). Expose the Burnham Dictatorship**

We have said before that the Burnham dictatorship would prefer to hide under the disguise of being a democracy. Elections have not been abolished; instead they have been rigged in such a way as to become a complete mockery of the most fundamental of rights - the right to self-determination and free choice of one's government. The rigged elections of 1968 and 1973 and the amazing referendum fraud of July, 1978 all indicate that Guyanese have not chosen the PNC clique. The regime holds power by armed force. Guyanese are finding from their own experience that the dictatorship hates to be reminded that it is a dictatorship. To expose the dictatorship, the first step is to denounce the government as illegal and illegitimate.

Dictators have a way of building statues in their own image. When a dictator is overthrown, the population seizes the chance to destroy or remove various things which were meant to glorify him. But it is equally important that some of the symbols of the dictator's power should be destroyed **before** his fall. Psychologically, the domination of the dictator has to be rejected. The population must learn to despise the falsehoods which surround the man; they must refuse to accept that he has any halo of greatness around him. They must remove any confusion in their own minds and see the dictator clearly for what he is - a villain and a monster, the principal enemy of the people.

Certain verbal attacks have been made on the dictator. *Dayclean*, the organ of the Working People's Alliance, first called him "Big Jim" so that our people should not forget Jim Jones and the 914 dead of Jonestown. Burnham has blood on his hands from that horrible atrocity. We call him the "Crime Minister" to let the people remember the corruption, the electoral frauds and the recent murder of Father Darke.

In Latin America, the dictators are known as "gorillas" - as distinct from the freedom fighters who are "guerrillas". We want it known that Guyana too has its "gorilla", and that he is appropriately named "King Kong". The strength of which Burnham boasts is the strength of an ape, and besides he is a make-believe character - straight from Hollywood.

Our language must express not only ridicule but anger and disgust. The dictatorship has reduced us all to such a level that the situation can be described only in terms befitting filth, pollution and excrement. Even our deep-rooted sense of modesty in Guyana cannot stand in the way of rough words to describe the nation's shame. That is why the WPA repeats the legend of King Midas who was said to have been able to touch anything and turn it into gold. This was called the "Midas Touch". Now Guyana has seen the "Burnham Touch" - anything he touches turns to shit!

Many beautiful ideas have suffered from the Burnham Touch - socialism, cooperatives, free education, nationalisation, solidarity with Afro-Americans, support for freedom fighters. Burnham tries to intervene personally in everything - from road building to the administration of sports. He has touched a great deal in Guyana. Many formerly decent Guyanese are working around doing dirty things or compromising with the evil of dictatorship. They have been touched.

Of course exposure of the dictatorship requires far more than mere words. The entire population must be committed to action. Each action in the popular interest is bound to reveal the dictatorship in its true colours.

Mass public meetings sponsored by the WPA have recently been used by Guyanese to show their opposition to the PNC clique. The apparatus of the police state was brought down on the heads of peaceful citizens attending these meetings. From time to time, the police denied permission for the use of loud-speaking equipment in defiance of the Constitution. Peaceful pickets and gatherings without loudspeakers have been broken up with tear gas and baton charges. In this way the dictatorship feels that it is gaining a physical victory but the people are moving forward in their understanding. No one can now pretend that our rulers protect the freedom of assembly.

As criticism of the regime grew in all quarters, the dictatorship came into the open on the question of press freedom. They tightened the noose around the PPP's *Mirror* newspaper, strangling it through denial of newsprint. The Government has intensified its search for duplicating machines and typewriters. Duplicating equipment was seized from a political group (the WPVP) and also from a trade union (NAACIE) No one can now pretend that our rulers believe in freedom of the press.

Determined working class efforts have once again exposed the Burnham dictatorship on the question on the right to strike. When the sugar workers went on strike for a memorable 135 days in 1977/1978, the government called it a political strike. Now every strike is called a political one - which means that the strike undermines the power of the dictatorship. Workers have to learn not to fear when their strike action is called "political". If the power of the people undermines the power of the dictator, then let our strikes be political! The real issue is not whether a strike is called industrial or political; it is whether that strike is in the interests of the workers concerned and of the working people as a whole.

The recent bauxite strike is a high point in the history of the Guyanese working class. For six weeks, bauxite workers stood firm to force management to implement wages increment which had already been part of their collective labour agreement. The Guyanese dictatorship has consistently attacked the living standards of the working class. It is not surprising that the bauxite strike attracted the support of workers everywhere in Guyana. Positive leadership from the four progressive trade unions gave

bauxite workers nationwide backing, especially within the sugar industry. Sugar workers and clerks who came out in solidarity also seized the opportunity to advance their own just demands, such as the demand that the government respect a 14 dollars a day minimum wage. The entire nation got a feel of what united working class action could mean.

Following the strike, the dictatorship has unleashed victimisation. This is further evidence of their determination to eliminate the right to strike and the right to work. Yet, the dismissal of the strikers is the next major point around which workers will rally. As is the fashion with apes, King Kong beat his chest and threatened to slaughter indiscriminately, but united labour actions can always call his bluff.

United strike action teaches us how the dictator can be exposed and how he can be deposed. The regime panicked at the thought of anything looking like a general strike. Burnham knows that no amount of violence or military force can replace the labour power of workers. He has tried cutting cane with the Militia, the National Service and so on, and this was a dismal failure. He did not even waste time trying to introduce scabs into the bauxite industry because he knows that there is no way that would have been accepted. The dictator requires the population to produce so as to sustain himself and the clique of parasites who dominate Guyana. That is why mass withdrawal of labour is the ultimate weapon representing the power of the people.

The Burnham dictatorship needs the cooperation of workers to buy guns to keep down the very workers! This is the fantastic contradiction which points the way towards a policy of **non-cooperation and civil disobedience**.

Non-cooperation means simply that citizens will refuse to cooperate in their own oppression and in the oppression of others. It may be hidden or open, individual or collective. The instances are increasing of individual Guyanese resisting or ignoring the notorious "instructions" given by the dictator. Each publicised example of personal resistance helps lift the spirits of the entire population. Other individuals are going about their personal rebellion in a quiet manner. Moreover, non-cooperation will be most effective where it is based on collective or group action.

In India, Mahatma Gandhi organised millions in his campaigns of non-cooperation and civil disobedience against the British colonialists. One of Gandhi's campaigns brought about the boycott of cloth imported from Britain. In the U.S.A., the modern Civil Rights struggle started with a famous bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama in 1956. Thousands of black people refused to use the bus until the bus company ended racial discrimination. Here in Guyana, several persons and organisations have called for a boycott of the, lying and vicious publication called the *Chronicle*, which uses the people's money to abuse the people. Such a boycott would represent an example of non-cooperation. It has to be agreed on and implemented as a collective action.

Civil disobedience is also a matter which is best approached by large numbers acting at the same time. It means a readiness to disobey the government (otherwise known as the civil power). In Guyana the civil power is itself disobeying the laws and the constitution - for example, in relation to the freedom of assembly, the conduct of local and national elections, the right to picket or to march, and the rights which citizens have when arrested.

The WPA has made a public commitment to challenge the illegal and arbitrary behaviour of government forces such as the police. In relation to public meetings, this challenge has thoroughly exposed the nature of the Burnham dictatorship; and it has done so because masses of people have got the message and have turned out in numbers.

The regime had two choices. One was to allow us to exercise our democratic rights and let the majority show its true feelings of opposition to the dictatorship. The other choice was to drive the people off the streets by force. But the second choice backfired because it showed people both at home and abroad how much Guyana had become a police state.

Civil disobedience goes beyond the point where the civil power breaks its own laws. One can suggest disobedience of the law because of the fundamental fact that the government is illegal. Citizens have a right to be guided not by the unjust laws of an unjust state but by what Gandhi called "the higher law of justice." There are some laws such as traffic regulations which are relatively free of political interference; but citizens will decide which laws offer safety and which ones can be broken as a part of a rebellion against the dictatorship.

Civil disobedience has always been met by threats, by beatings, by imprisonment and ultimately by loss of life. This process has already begun in Guyana. The lessons from other countries show that a determined people cannot be turned back. Certainly, blows and imprisonment are bringing out the steel in the Guyanese people and the dictatorship will be taught whose steel is sharper. The murder of Father Darke failed to intimidate; instead more decent men and women rallied to protest the appalling state of the nation of Guyana.

Few individuals want to willingly invite their own death. Yet many will be found who are prepared to fight fearlessly for their rights even if their lives are threatened. The human spirit has a remarkable capacity to rise above oppression; and only the fools who now misrule Guyana can imagine that our population alone lacks such capacity. During the famous 1763 slave rebellion in Berbice, there were numerous examples of the undying courage of our foreparents. The Dutch slave-masters captured Accabre, one of the leaders of the rebellion, and he simply laughed scornfully when they tormented him. Soon after, Accabre and eight other freedom fighters were put to death by roasting over a slow fire. Even their enemies were impressed by the fact that Accabre's men were firm to the end and did not flinch.

The violence of the dictatorial state is always lurking - ready to be unleashed when the people make their challenge. There will be more jobs lost, more bones broken and more lives sacrificed. Failure to see this would be to underestimate the difficulties. Precisely, because of the violence the population will develop its own tactics of self-defence. Attacks by PNC thugs and by thugs in uniforms (calling themselves police) have so far gone down without resistance. That phase is at an end. Self-defence is an inalienable human right, and the tactics of confronting the regime will change to ensure that persons defend their right to life and limb.

Neither the WPA nor any other organisation needs to produce a master plan for national struggle against the dictator. We can rely on the initiative and good judgement of our people, provided there is a spirit of resistance. Martin Carter's *Poems of*

*Resistance* were written against colonial domination. They are still relevant today. It is no accident that he was among the first to call for renewed resistance, this time against the Burnham dictatorship. Artists have a special responsibility at this time of crisis, the task of defending creativity against the onslaughts of a regime which behaves like the Philistines of old [and] is trampling everything of human value. The people of Latin America have found that pens and guitars and paint brushes all become effective weapons in the struggle against the gorillas. Language, song and drum are also weapons within the Guyanese situation. Cultivate the spirit of resistance! Cultivate the Accabre spirit!

### **(5). Raise up a Clear Alternative: National Unity and People's Power**

In the midst of national crisis, Guyanese have made some gain. The most dramatic achievement has been the consolidation of racial unity. Africans and Indians are standing side by side in a way that has not been true since 1953. Indeed, we now have a degree of racial unity greater than at any previous time in our history. The WPA has consistently argued that political unity across racial lines was most desirable and possible. The truth of that position is now obvious.

The firmest unity is unity in struggle. Guyanese are no longer divided in their struggle for bread and justice. Indian sugar workers and African bauxite workers are making common cause. African lawyers and Indian lawyers both see the need for unity to restore the rule of law. Our racial minorities are joining the new national movement without fear of domination.

The dictatorship is spreading the wild propaganda to hold back the movement of inter-racial solidarity. The PNC clique is putting out that the WPA is an Afro-Guyanese group splitting black people so that Indians will be the next rulers! There is no need to answer such backwardness, except to ask that you look around and "see with the eyes of the people." **What is more vicious is that the regime is using or creating incidents of racial violence on the East Coast Demerara. When the PNC sends thugs into Indian communities we are not told anything about this. When an African is killed by Indians, this is meat for the racists on "Action Line" and is taken up at length on the radio by no less a criminal than the "Rabbi". The PNC clique are even bold enough to talk about 1962 when they were in the forefront of racial violence. But we will "hear with the ears of the people."**

Before the dictatorship can be overthrown, we must solve the difficult problem of creating national unity in the face of class differences. So long as there are classes, there must be some degree of class conflict. Nevertheless, it is necessary to build a broad unity across existing class lines; and there are several factors which favour such a development in Guyana today.

The highest expression of modern capitalism is found in the multi-national companies. The power of the modern capitalist is tremendous because it is on such a scale that it dominates entire nations and sustains imperialist exploitations. Guyana is fortunate that multi-national companies such as Bookers and Alcan no longer control our economy. Nationalisation was called for by all sectors of progressive opinion in Guyana. Nationalisation of sugar and bauxite must be recognised as positive, although the nationalised industries have suffered from the Burnham Touch. The private capital which exists in Guyana can play a nationalist and patriotic role because it does not automatically represent imperialist exploitation.



Guyanese manufacturers and businessmen in general can participate in a movement of national unity because there is great need for an expansion of production and for an increase in productivity. Above all, there is great need for an extension of the productive forces - which means more technology, more investment, and a larger body of workers who are guaranteed employment and advancement. Through debate, discussion, and mutual respect for agreements, the National Movement can offer conditions mutually acceptable to the group of local businessmen and to the broad masses of workers.

In Guyana and the West Indies, an important social role is played by the middle class. The term "middle class" or "petty bourgeoisie" is generally used to refer to professionals, small businessmen, big farmers, and civil servants from the middle ranks and above. The Guyanese middle class is in deep crisis.

The decline in Guyana's living standards has hit the middle class very hard - because they least expected it and are unaccustomed to it. Normally the middle class thinks in terms of security and comfort. There is very little of these things left. It's a headache to run a car, it's a burden to pay a mortgage, and it is impossible to acquire articles of consumption because of scarcity and extravagant cost. So the middle class has come to feel some of the material deprivations which many workers had long known about - and the learning process has been painful.

Besides, the middle class has lost its sense of professional pride. There is little or no job satisfaction to be gained at any level in government service or even [in the private sector]. [**Sentences or a page are missing in the text here\***] . . . people like a thief in the night. Violations of human rights were frequent, but they were sufficiently gradual that that many persons did not realise what was going on until it was too late. Take, for example, the end of freedom of the press. This was not achieved by any single action or by any single law. First, one national daily newspaper was nationalised and the second followed later. The two were then merged. One radio station was taken over by government while the second was kept under manners. Eventually the two became government-owned and came under one management. Meanwhile, the opposition press was being restricted even at the level of one-page duplicated sheets. The nationalised press and radio are of course maintained by revenue produced by all Guyanese; but step by step they became the personal tools of the dictator and his clique. Press and radio journalists lost all independence and professional dignity. Today, the *Chronicle* newspaper is proud to announce itself as the "sister" of the *New Nation* publication which is the official organ of the PNC party.

Many Guyanese of goodwill are wondering whether there was a point at which they should have taken a stand to defend the freedom of the press. The best time to fight for a freedom is when it exists and is first threatened. But few Guyanese were prepared to [move] forward in the early years of the Burnham dictatorship because they were simply hoping for the best. Burnham recognised this attitude as a weakness of our people and he made the most of it. Today, there is no press freedom to defend; there is only a freedom destroyed which has to be rebuilt.

The fate of the Army and Police can serve as other examples of the trickery which built the Burnham dictatorship. According to the Guyana Constitution, each soldier or policemen takes an oath of loyalty to his country symbolised by the Head of State. Each soldier or policeman is expected to be loyal to the commands of an elected government representing the people. Little by

little since independence, loyalty to the country became loyalty to the PNC and then personal loyalty to Burnham. The uniformed forces helped the PNC to beat down the majority opposition in 1973 and then by July, 1978 they were helping Burnham to steal the rights of 90% of the population - including the rights of many former supporters of the PNC. One wonders whether the soldiers and police realized when they stopped being loyal to the country and started being the watch-dogs of a dictator?

In the old days, the "Three Card" con game was very popular in Georgetown - especially in Lombard and Water Streets. The "Three Card" dealers used to announce "the more you watch the less you see," as they cunningly flicked their cards from side to side. Forbes Burnham is our national champion "Three Card" con artist.

There is another side to the gradual way in which the Burnham dictatorship was established. Guyanese were dealt blow after blow without being knocked out. But we certainly became dazed and stupefied. Our national poet, Martin Carter, was one of the first to comment publicly on this process. He mentioned how the senses of Guyanese were being dulled. Martin Carter called this the "paralysis of the spirit." Many decent Guyanese were tricked into doing dirty things believing that these acts would contribute to their own welfare. Instead, each dirty deal simply confirmed the power of the dictator and allowed him to turn around and insult even former supporters. As we would say in Creolese, people get use and then they get 'buse.

Burnham is well known for his flowery language. Unfortunately some of our people fell victim to the sound of words without examining the meaning. "Paramountcy" is one of Burnham's fancy words. He announced the doctrine of PNC paramountcy or domination over Parliament, the Courts, the Press and everything else. In fact, "Paramountcy" was the official statement that a minority party which was growing smaller and smaller intended to maintain dictatorial rule over the majority. At the same time, Burnham made it clear that he was "paramount" over the PNC. The PNC party constitution gives Burnham so-called reserve powers which are greater than the reserve powers of the old colonial governors over the legislature. The PNC Constitution states as follows:

"If the leader . . . is of the opinion that a situation of emergency has arisen in the Party, he shall have power . . . to take all action necessary to correct such a situation; and for this purpose he may assume and exercise any and all the powers of the Biennial Delegates' Congress, the General Council, the Central Executive Committee, and other Committee, Group, Arm, Organ or any other Officer or Official of the Party."

Burnham the dictator is paramount over the paramount party!

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