Wazir Mohamed [1]
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WALTER RODNEY 25TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE

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In the 25 years since Walter Rodney’s assassination much has changed in the world. The face of the oppression that has deepened the misery of working people worldwide has changed from its dictatorial manifestation into its “democratic” form. Everywhere, poverty and misery are now products of a democracy that has been reduced to electoral competition among a self-regarding elite who thrive by exploiting every division among the working poor - be it racial, religious, tribal, ethnic or other cultural difference - in order to hold them in subjugation, the better to be exploited by the new global masters.

The members of the Walter Rodney 25th Anniversary Commemoration Committee - friends, colleagues, and other associates of Walter Rodney in Guyana and the wider Caribbean, Africa, North America, London and elsewhere in Europe, and Latin America, all of whom share his vision of the emancipation of the working people and other oppressed sections of society - are organizing events to commemorate his inspiring life, work and insights and to draw attention to the challenges faced today by working people throughout the world. The commemoration takes the form of a series of “groundings” in Guyana from June 6-13 2005 to mark the 25 years since Walter Rodney’s assassination.

Walter Rodney was a revolutionary whose major weapons were teaching and writing. He taught everywhere he went - in universities, in those massive public meetings in 1979/80 on the coastlands of Guyana where he taught the history of Guyana in language that was completely accessible to all, in bottom houses. His writing ranged from scholarly studies to popular pamphlets to children’s books. He used these weapons everywhere he lived and worked – particularly in Jamaica, then Africa, then Guyana where he became the popular leader of the civil rebellion of 1979/80, led by the WPA, and where he was killed.

Many Caribbean and other world figures are already committed to joining us in Guyana for the groundings, coming not in their official capacities but as women and men whose lives intersected with Walter Rodney and his work: these include Ralph Gonsalves, Political Leader of the United Labour Party and Prime Minister of St. Vincent & the Grenadines; Distinguished African Professor, Ali Mazrui; Abdul Raheem Tajudeen, General Secretary of the Global Pan-African Movement; Rickey Singh, Notable Guyanese and Caribbean Journalist; Humberto Brown, International Secretary of the Black Radical Congress; Raffique Shah, partisan of the movement for social justice and equality in the Caribbean; Micere Mugo, Kenyan poet and playwright; Nalini Persram, (Guyanese)-who teaches at Trinity College in Dublin Ireland; Denis Brutus, South African poet, teacher, and freedom fighter; Kamala Kempadoo, Associate Professor in Caribbean Studies at York University; George Lamming, Caribbean novelist and essayist; Glen Ramjag, founder of the National Food Crop and farmers’ Association of Trinidad and Tobago; Rupert Lewis, Professor in Political Thought at UWI who has written extensively on the work of Walter Rodney ; Tiffany Patterson and Michael West of Binghamton University; Carolyn Brown, Associate Professor of African History, Rutgers University; Nelcia Robinson of CAFRA; and Selma James, author, political activist and widow of CLR James.
Danny Glover, actor and political activist, asked us to say that he is trying hard to return from a previous assignment in time to join us in Guyana.

Patricia Rodney, widow of Walter Rodney, will return to Guyana with her children for the first time in 25 years, and will be the special guest of honor at these events along with other family members. In an interview she gave to the West Indian press on a recent visit to Toronto, Dr. Rodney called for justice for Walter Rodney, a call she will most likely repeat on Guyanese soil.

The groundings will not be an academic exercise. The programme will feature presentations and panels on the struggle for another world – what kind of economies we want to build and the political struggles that are being waged to win the space to build such economies. There will be groundings in Berbice, Linden, the East Coast Demerara, West Coast Demerara, Essequibo Coast, and in interior. There will be a grounding on Haiti, where 200 years after the Haitian people made a revolution they are still fighting to be free. There will be cultural groundings which we are working hard to make fully representative of all the peoples of Guyana. There will also be students’ groundings, because we have to introduce Rodney to new generations.

We call on everyone, but especially working people across race, age and sex, to join us in these groundings as we – all sectors of waged and unwaged workers - women, youth, farmers, artists, factory, field and informal workers, students, and teachers - come together in the spirit of Rodney to share our ideas and vision for the resolution of the deep problems affecting the lives of our peoples in all parts of the world, and to recommit ourselves to the struggle to overcome them.

Information on the organizers, and detailed plans for the groundings and the program of activities are available on our website [http://rodney25.org](http://rodney25.org)

The contact spokespersons for the anniversary committee are: Rupert Roopnaraine 228 2409, Andaiye 227 7481 (Guyana); David Hinds 480 965 1597(USA); Jai Parsram 416 289 1346 (Canada); and Malaika Scott +44 (0)20 8671 7279 (UK). The chairperson of the committee and the initiator of the anniversary commemoration project is Horace Campbell, originally of Jamaica, friend and colleague of Walter Rodney.

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**Article-Summary:**

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