



Twenty five years ago, the African Diaspora lost one of its most outspoken and progressive Pan African activists and scholars.

This annual event is dedicated to the legacy of Walter Rodney and the indelible mark his scholarship and activism has left on

the African Diaspora.

Sponsored by:

Ujamaa Society

The African American
Human Rights Foundation



Special Thanks to: The Center for Citizen Participation.

Ujamaa Society, the Graduate Political Science Association
and
the Department of Political Science at Clark Atlanta University
in partnership with The African American Human Rights
Foundation

Presents

The Second Annual Walter Rodney Symposium



*"Contemporary Challenges to Development In Africa and the
Caribbean: The HIV/AIDS Pandemic and The Debt Crisis"*

Wednesday, March 23, 2005

from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at

The Thomas W. Cole Science Research Building
223 James P. Brawley Drive, S.W., Atlanta, GA 30314
Exhibition Hall

Keynote Speaker:

Dr. Salih Booker, Executive Director, Africa Action, Washington, D.C.

WALTER RODNEY BIOGRAPHY

3/23/42—6/13/80

Walter Rodney was born in Georgetown, Guyana on March 23, 1942. His was a working class family—his father was a tailor and his mother a seamstress. After attending primary school, he won an open exhibition scholarship to attend Queens College as one of the early working-class beneficiaries of concessions made in the field of education by the ruling class in Guyana to the new nationalism that gripped the country in the early 1950s.

While at Queens College young Rodney excelled academically, as well as in the fields of athletics and debating. In 1960, he won an open scholarship to further his studies at the University of the West Indies in Jamaica. He graduated with a first-class honors degree in history in 1963 and, won an open scholarship to the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. In 1966, at the age of 24 he was awarded a Ph.D. with honors in African History. In 1970, his Ph.D. dissertation was published by Oxford University Press under the title, "A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545-1800". This work was to set a trend for Rodney in both challenging the assumptions of western historians about African history and setting new standards for looking at the history of oppressed peoples.

By the summer of 1968 Rodney's "grounding" with the working poor of Jamaica had begun to attract the attention of the government. So, when he attended a Black Writers' Conference in Montreal, Canada, in October 1968, the Hugh Shearer-led Jamaican Labor Party Government banned him from re-entering the country. This action sparked widespread riots and revolts in Kingston in which several people were killed and injured by the police and security forces, and millions of dollars worth of property destroyed. Rodney's encounters with the Rastafarians were published in a pamphlet entitled "Grounding with My Brothers," that became a bible for the Caribbean Black Power Movement.

Having been expelled from Jamaica, Walter returned to Tanzania after a short stay in Cuba. There he lectured from 1968 to 1974 and continued his groundings in Tanzania and other parts of Africa. This was the period of the African liberation struggles and Walter, who fervently believed that the intellectual should make his or her skills available for the struggles and emancipation of the people, became deeply involved. It was from partly from these activities that his second major work, and his best known "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa" - emerged.

Rodney also developed a reputation as a Pan-Africanist theoretician and spokes person. He was very close to some of the leaders of liberation movements in Africa and also to political leaders of popular organizations of independent territories. Together with other Pan-Africanists he participated in discussions leading up to the Sixth Pan-African Congress, held in Tanzania, 1974. Before the Congress he wrote a piece: "Towards the Sixth Pan-African Congress: Aspects of the International Class Struggle in Africa, the Caribbean and America."

On July 11, 1979, Walter, together with seven others, was arrested following the burning down of two government offices. He, along with Drs Rupert Roopnarine and Omawale, was later charged with arson. From that period up to the time of his murder, he was constantly persecuted and harassed and at least on one occasion, an attempt was made to kill him. Finally, on the evening of June 13, 1980, he was assassinated by a bomb in the middle of Georgetown.

Walter was married to Dr Patricia Rodney and the union bore three children—Shaka, Kanini and Asha.

2nd Annual Walter Rodney Symposium

6:30pm	Welcoming Reception
6:55pm	Call to Order and Overview of the Symposium Ms. Cherdrena Brown, President, Ujamaa Society
7:00pm	Introduction of Symposium Moderator, Ms. Janvieve Williams, Director, Latin American & Caribbean Center by Cherdrena Brown
7:05pm	Atlanta Tribute to Dr. Walter Rodney Ms. Susan Ross, City of Atlanta Mr. Ebon Dooley, Program Manager, WRFQ Radio Station Mr. Ajamu Baraka, Executive Director, U.S. Human Rights Network
7:20pm	Rodney Family Response
7:30pm	Panel Discussion on "Contemporary Challenges to Development in Africa and the Caribbean: The HIV/AIDS Pandemic and the Debt Crisis"
Panelists	Ms. Roberta Walker, Department of Africana and Puerto-Rican/Latino Studies, Hunter College/CUNY Dr. Kwaku Danso-Boafo, Former Minister of Health, Republic of Ghana
Keynote Speaker:	Mr. Salih Booker, Executive Director, Africa Action
8:10pm	Questions and Answers
8:55pm	Closing Remarks—Dr. Hashim Gibrill, Department of Political Science Dr. Keith Jennings, Founder, African American Human Rights Foundation