Introduction

This is a quick guide to researching Walter Rodney in the Eric and Jessica Huntley archive collections.

Who was Walter Rodney?

Dr. Walter Rodney (1942 - 1980) was a Guyanese academic historian, political activist and author who was an important figure in Caribbean politics during the late 1960s to 1970s. He was a husband to Patricia Rodney and father of three children.

Who were Eric and Jessica Huntley?

Eric and Jessica Huntley, prominent Black political activists and publishers, played an active role in the African Caribbean community during the second half of the twentieth century and early 21st century.

Walter Rodney and Bogle- L’Ouverture Publications Limited

Eric and Jessica Huntley met Walter Rodney in London in the early 1960s when he was studying for his doctorate at the School of Oriental and African Studies.

In 1968, after a short stint at the University of Dar-es-Saalam, Tanzania Rodney took a post at his former university, the University of the West Indies in Jamaica. Alongside his academic duties, Rodney gave informal lectures on African history to groups of students and working-class Rastafarians, informing them of the intellectual, sociological and military prowess of ancient African civilisations. This activity and Rodney's radical Marxist philosophy put him in conflict with the Jamaican Government. In October 1968 Walter Rodney was banned from re-entering the island after returning from attending a black writers conference in Canada. Widespread rioting followed as
police attempted to break-up the demonstrations of angry students and Rastafarians, who used the occasion to protest against their worsening conditions.

The so called 'Rodney Riots' triggered a growing consciousness of Black Power, Pan-Africanism and political awareness, which was felt in many different parts of the world.

In England Jessica and Eric Huntley and others mobilised support and arranged for the lectures Walter Rodney had given to be printed. Typed manuscripts were handed out on the streets for free because the message of Black empowerment they articulated was felt to be so important. In 1969 the Huntleys and others established the publishing house Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications, named in honour of Toussaint L'Ouverture and Paul Bogle (both figure heads of black rebellion against the slave trade in Caribbean history). Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications' first publication was the collection of lectures Walter Rodney had given in Jamaica, *The Groundings with My Brothers*.

After his ban Walter Rodney returned to the University of Dar-es-Salaam as Professor of History. In 1972 he approached the Huntleys with his manuscript *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, which was published jointly by Bogle-L'Ouverture and Tanzanian Publishing House. It became a seminal work in the literature of post-colonial liberation struggles.

In 1974 Rodney returned to his homeland Guyana to take up the position of Head of the History Department at the University of Guyana. However when he arrived he found that his post had been withdrawn due to pressure from the Burnham government in power. The Huntleys, along with others, set up the Committee of Concerned West Indians in England to protest the banning of Walter Rodney from his academic post.

The remainder of the decade saw Walter Rodney increase his involvement in Guyanese politics through his work as a leader of the Working People's Alliance (WPA), the main opposition party to the ruling People's National Congress (PNC) government. The Huntleys participated in several of the key political initiatives which took place over the next five years. This included their founding and involvement in the Committee Against Repression in Guyana (CARIG).

On 13 June 1980, at the age of 38, Walter Rodney was assassinated by agents of the Burnham government in Georgetown, Guyana. Eric and Jessica Huntley helped keep the legacy of Walter Rodney alive by renaming their bookshop the Walter Rodney Bookshop and organising public memorials and anniversary lectures in his name.

**The Collections**

The most rewarding sources for researching Walter Rodney's author and academic activities are:

**Author files: Manuscripts (LMA/4462/C/01/089 094A)**

This material includes draft, annotated manuscripts of *The Groundings with My Brothers* and *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Sections of early type-set manuscripts for *The Groundings with My Brothers* are also included. Correspondence from Walter Rodney, written from Tanzania and Guyana include discussion of publications, finances and political matters.

**Author files: Publishing correspondence (LMA/4462/C/01/094B 108)**

This material includes information on printing and publication distribution issues, as well as annotated draft copies of publisher's notes and draft contracts including signed samples and draft
copies of contract agreements for publishing Rodney's books. Also includes letters from Jessica
Huntley to Walter Rodney discussing business ideas and requests for publishing rights from a range
of individuals, organisations and groups.

**Author files: Walter Rodney's estate (LMA/4462/C/01/131  148)**

This material includes original files listing payments made to Walter and Patricia Rodney; it also
includes draft, annotated statements of annual royalty payments to Walter Rodney, correspondence
with Patricia Rodney and solicitors regarding royalties and a draft contract for sale of rights of How
Europe Underdeveloped Africa to Howard University Press.

Andrew Salkey's personal collection (LMA/4462/Q/01/005, 007-009) contains detailed
correspondence on Walter Rodney's estate.

**Author files: General material on Walter Rodney (LMA/4462/C/01/110  129C)**

This material includes Walter Rodney's Curriculum Vitae and an 18 page essay, 'Rodney - I'm Here to
Stay'. It also includes published interviews with Walter Rodney such as 'The Black Scholar
Interviews in which Rodney discusses his political development from student to political activist and
intellectual. A special commemoration issue, number 43 on 'Walter Rodney's Contribution to the
Revolution' published by 'Maji Maji': Youth Organisation, University of Dar-es-Salaam is also
included.

The most rewarding sources for researching Walter Rodney's political activities are:

**Guyana Symposium Organising Committee (LMA/4463/B/06)**

The Guyana Symposium took place in 1965 at the West Indians Student Centre in London. Walter
Rodney's contributions to the symposium are recorded in audio recordings and typed transcripts.

**Committee Against Repression in Guyana (CARIG) (LMA/4463/B/03)**

The Committee was established when Walter Rodney and four other senior WPA members (known as
the 'Referendum Five') were charged with arson of a government building in Guyana in July 1979.
This collection is a very rich source into the international political activism surrounding the
campaign to free the 'Referendum Five' and stop political repression in Guyana from July 1979 to
Walter Rodney's assassination in June 1980.

**Committee of Concerned West Indians (LMA/4463/B/04)**

The Committee was established in August 1974 to protest against the ban imposed on Walter
Rodney from taking up his academic appointment at the University of Guyana. This material consists
of the group's correspondence, planning material, notes and lists which were used to organise the
committee's series of protest discussions, meetings and pickets.

**Working People's Alliance (WPA) (LMA/4463/B/13)**

This material consists of documents collected by the Huntleys on the WPA. Walter Rodney features
as the author of several brochures and bulletins. Party publication newsletters (1975 1990) deal
extensively with Walter Rodney's life, contribution and legacy. There is also a copy manuscript plan
on the overthrow of the Guyanese Government partly in Rodney's hand.
Working People's Alliance Support Group (United Kingdom) (LMA/4463/B/14)

This material consists of leaflets, circulars and statements including 'Statement from the Working People's Alliance in Guyana on the Death of Walter Rodney'. Other statements include reactions from Pat Rodney on the imprisonment of her brother-in-law Donald Rodney for possession of the explosives that killed his brother.

The most rewarding sources for researching the activities surrounding Walter Rodney's death and his remembrance are:

Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications (LMA/4462/C/01/042/A-E; LMA/4462/C/01/109-109A)

This material consists of condolence letters and telegrams sent to the Huntleys in the wake of Walter Rodney's death. It also includes manuscript drafts for book titles Poetic Tributes and 'Walter Rodney Commemorative Anthology' produced by Bogle-L'Ouverture. The Anthology was never published but contains detailed information including Eric Huntley's notes on BLP's association with Rodney and a letter from Ewart Thomas outlining Rodney's influences.

Friends of Bogle Memorial lectures (LMA/4462/H)

This material consists of correspondence, videos and audio tapes which record commemorative events organised by Friends of Bogle to preserve Walter Rodney's memory and legacy. Some of the events include the annual Walter Rodney lecture and 'An Evening of Song, Music and Poetry'.

The Walter Rodney Memorial Trust (LMA/4462/R)

The Trust was founded to commemorate Rodney's contribution to the growing awareness and emancipation of the Caribbean working class and to promote the documentation of the history and activity of the black working class in Britain, Africa, the Caribbean, North America and other parts of the world. This material consists of correspondence, event photographs and printed material.

The most rewarding sources for researching the Huntley's personal relationship with Walter Rodney and his family are:

LMA/4462/C/01/106:

An original file of letters sent by Patricia Rodney to the Huntleys: concerning life in Jamaica, Tanzania and Guyana, Walter's books, the birth and progress of their children.

LMA/4463/F/01/06/021:

Regular correspondence with Edward and Donald Rodney

Audio -Visual Sources and Library

The Eric and Jessica Huntley archives include an audio-visual collection of photographs, videos, audio tapes, pneumatic tapes and spools which document Walter Rodney's activities. These sources are currently being catalogued.
There is also an extensive library of reference material relating to politics, race, community, education and publishing. This is currently uncatalogued. Please contact LMA for further details.

**Related Archives**

**Walter Rodney's Personal Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library**

In 2004 Walter Rodney's family donated his papers to the Robert L Woodruff Library, Atlanta University Center, Atlanta, United States of America.

The Walter Rodney Papers span the years 1960 - 1987 and provide insight into Rodney's life as a scholar and an activist. The papers include correspondence, speeches, published and unpublished writings, teaching materials, audio tapes of speeches, lectures, interviews, and a few photographs.

Contact: Robert W. Woodruff Library, Atlanta University Center, 111 James P. Brawley Drive, SW, Atlanta, GA 30314, USA

Telephone: 404-978-2052; 404 978-2000

Fax: 404-978-2109

E-mail: archives@auctr.edu

**George Padmore Institute**

George Padmore Institute is an archive, educational resource and research centre housing materials relating to the black community of Caribbean, African and Asian descent in Britain and continental Europe.

The Institute's online catalogue includes the Black Parents Movement with files on Walter Rodney Assassination (1980-81).

Contact: George Padmore Institute, 76 Stroud Green Road, Finsbury Park, London, N4 3EN

Telephone: 020 7272 8915

Fax: 020 7281 4662

Their online catalogue is available on their website: [www.georgepadmoreinstitute.org/archive](http://www.georgepadmoreinstitute.org/archive)

**Working People's Alliance**

For more information on the Working People's Alliance and resources on its history

Contact: Walter Rodney House, Lot 80, Croal Street, Starbroek, Georgetown, Guyana

**Related Community archives elsewhere:**

Black Cultural Archives, 1 Windrush Square, London, SW2 1EF

**Further Reading**
• Lewis, Rupert (1998), Walter Rodney's Intellectual and Political Thought Mona & Detroit: University of the West Indies Press & Wayne State University Press

Published by London Metropolitan Archives, 40 Northampton Road, London, EC1R OHB

Telephone: 020 7332 3820
Fax: 020 7833 9136
Email: ask.lma@cityoflondon.gov.uk
Web: www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/lma

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