Race Today

BRITAIN'S LEADING BLACK JOURN

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1988 70p

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Darcus Howe interviews

BERNIE GRANT





Caryl Phillips pays tribute to

JAMES BALDWIN

JAMAICA and the KILLING OF PETER TOSH

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SOCIALISM POSSIBLE OR NECESSARY IN THE CARIBBEAN?

Tim Hector

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Letters

GUADELOUPE

Dear Race Today,
Considering the current situation in Guadeloupe, the repressive actions from the French government, and the many times when basic human rights h[illegible] been flouted, we feel it [illegible] our duty to bring all this [illegible] the notice of internation[illegible] opinion. Such is the purpo[illegible] of this letter.

Guadeloupean militants fighting against colonialism and French domination have been arrested and sent into exile more than 7,000 kilometres from their country.

These operations are carried out by the French Political Police (S.R.P.J.) in violation of French law, of people's rights, of the rights of the defence, and of International Law.

Before the Guadeloupean political prisoners are transported to France, relatives and children are not even allowed to hug them. These men and women are moved without any extra clothes which would enable them to bear the cold in the French jails. Besides, the difference in temperatures between Guadeloupe and Europe is much bigger than that between Siberia and Moscow.

The militants kept in custody undergo moral pressure and physical brutality, which are shameful in a so-called civilized nation, a nation of so-called Men.

Humbert Marboeuf's custody ended with broken limbs and a broken jaw. Henri Peratout was kept in custody with his four-year old paraplegic daughter. Nicole Frejaville, a militant woman fighting against colonialism and of French origin was threatened with the possible arrest of her aged parents.

On July 21, 1987, Henri Amedien, Henry Bernard, Luc Reinette, Michelle Fabre and George Marchaux were kidnapped on the island of St Vincent (a member of the Commonwealth), in violation of the Convention between France and England, passed in August 17, 1976.

In St Vincent, the French government openly and blatantly broke the law, by violating the sovereignty of this country and by flouting International Law.

Humbert Marboeuf, who was injured while he was being kept in custody, is not getti[illegible] the medical care and atte[illegible]ance that he so badly ne[illegible] He is growing weaker and weaker everyday and he has lost more than 40 pounds. He has just decided to go on a hunger-strike.

[illegible]yne Bourgarel is in jail for the same reasons as those provided accommodation for Action Directe in France, but they have been left free.

Luc Reinette has already been sentenced to 25 years in prison for resisting the debasing condition imposed by domination. Michel Maas, a police officer who murdered Charles-Henri Salin, a young Guadeloupean boy, has received a new assignment in France where he now lives peacefully.

Joël Nankin and Jacques Grizezlin serving five-year sentences in jail, were soon to be reunited with their family and children. The judges and the prison authorities had commended them for their exemplary conduct. Their release had already been decided and measures taken to prepare for their return to social life. The prosecution and the judges, quite unexpectedly decided to overlook a recent extra five-year sentence. Later they went back on their decision and their judgement: the result was that Nankin and Grizezlin were sentenced to the extra five years in jail.

This is the most refined style of torture, the torture of hope.

The Guadeloupean political prisoners are the victims of the most hateful persecutions meant to break their morale and their determination. The prisoners' mail is often withheld by a decision from Judge Bruguières. Warm clothes necessary to bear the cold are turned down, and returned to the sender. Newspapers printed in Guadeloupe very rarely reach the prison cells. While they have committed no crime, these Guadeloupean people are placed under close watch and some of them are totally isolated. Relatives are not allowed to visit them, even after making such a long trip (7,000 kms). The Guadeloupean lawyers do not get their summons within the legal time.

This is what we wanted you to know about the situation. We remain at your disposal for any information or details that you might find necessary to further your understanding of the problem.

Comité Guadeloupéan de Soutien aux Emprisonnés Politiques et aux autres Victimes de la Répression.
Maison CECE Marcel
Clté Bonneterre 97120
St Claude.

HANDSWORTH SONGS

Dear Race Today,
I am writing with regards to Michael Cadette's review of "Handsworth Songs" and "Passion of Remembrance" in *Race Today Review '87*".
I find the piece shallow and glibly superficial in the extreme.

To quote "Neither 'The Passion of Remembrance' nor 'Handsworth Songs' are good films"!! Well I ask, just what is "a good film"? What is that essential ingredient missing from both these films which meant that they were not "good films"? What, I ask, is "a good book, a good poem, a good song, good music, etc.,etc? It seems to me the only reason Cadette could offer for the films not being "good" was that he personally didn't like them. There's nothing like being objective, is there? How can he say 'Handsworth Songs' contributed nothing to the debate about the riots — what a total load of nonsence. 'Handsworth Songs' was a stirring, emotionally drawing potrayal of the shattered dreams and forlorn hopes of the black peoples who were invited and enticed into being the slaves of Britain's post-war economic boom. 'Handsworth Songs' depicts this against the complex background of colonial rascism, white tribalism and ignorance and later industrial decline. 'H.S.' has said a great deal about the stories and ghosts of stories behind the riots.

I'm afraid the truth is that Michael Cadette's review was not a "good review". I am surprised that writing of such a superficial nature should form part of your otherwise excellent *Review*.
Julian Clarke
Hastings, East Sussex.



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(others to be announced)

a tribute to JAMES BALDWIN

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