Pressure

UK | 1976 | Cert. 15 | 120 mins
Director: Horace Ové

Pressure is widely acknowledged to have kick-started black British cinema. The story highlights the struggles of Tony, a young black school leaver who, despite having good academic qualifications, finds it impossible to find a job. His growing frustration with the institutional racism that prevents him from gaining employment leads him to open up to radical ideas - and question a system that denies him opportunities.

You will like this film if you liked
Dear White People (2014, 15)

Watch next
Killer of Sheep (1977, 15)

Talk about it
What do you think life was like for black people in Britain in the 1970s? What differences and similarities do you think there are between then and now?

Discussion points
• How are Tony's and his brother Colin's outlooks and lifestyles contrasted at the beginning of the film? How does the camerawork highlight this?
• What is the significance of reggae music to the soundtrack?
• What are the factors that influence Tony and the direction of his life post-school? What are the 'pressures' of the title? Is Tony under any other types of pressure?
• What is Tony's parents' response to the police raid? How does it challenge their previously held attitudes towards life in Britain?
• How do you interpret Tony's dream sequence?

Write about it
Bring your ideas together in a review and share it on our Into Film clubs’ website. You could include a summary of the story, mention other films that it’s similar to, describe what you particularly liked or disliked and give it your star rating.

Extension Activities
Interview someone who has memories of life in Britain in the 1970s. What do they remember about the fashion, food and music? What kinds of things were in the news? What celebrations and/or protests might they have participated in? Check out the BFI's Britain on Film Archive http://www.bfi.org.uk/britain-on-film and see if you can find footage of any events they mention, or film of your neighbourhood captured from that time.