

CUTLASS

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LONDON

New Jewel Movement (UK) hosts SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GRENADA

A highly successful international conference on Grenada, organised by the New Jewel Movement (UK) was held in London at the Archbishop Davidson Institute in Lambeth, March 11-13, 1988. Due to the prevailing atmosphere of intimidation in Grenada the conference could not be held there. It was therefore hosted by the UK branch of the NJM.

In addition to the NJM members and supporters in Britain and representatives of other NJM overseas organisations and of the parent body in Grenada, other organisations and individuals supporting the Grenadian peoples' struggle for liberation in a number of countries sent their representatives and many others, unable to attend, sent messages of solidarity and support.

This conference has proved that the attempt to isolate the NJM from the mainstream of the world wide struggle against imperialism (which was unfortunately assisted by the attitude adopted by some no doubt well intentioned, but certainly misinformed friends of the Grenada Revolution) has now been largely overcome.

The first day's proceedings were devoted to considering some of the lessons to be learned from the Grenada Revolution, the implications of the trial of the sur-

living leaders of the Revolution and the role of women in the revolutionary process. The second day's deliberations concentrated on the perspectives for progress in the Caribbean area, US military intervention in the region and the struggles of the trade unions in Grenada.

Jacqui McKenzie, General Secretary of the NJM(UK), welcomed the assembled participants and conveyed to them the greetings of former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark who was scheduled to address the conference but was unable to attend because of the emergency created on the previous day by the illegal action of the US government in closing down the New York Office of the Palestine Liberation Organisation - which will be challenged in the courts.

Speakers at the opening plenary session were Chris de Riggs, former Minister of Health, and Richard Hart, former Attorney General in the Peoples' Revolutionary Government of Grenada.

Two parallel workshops followed the plenary session - one on the lessons of the Grenada Revolution and the implications of the Grenada Murder Trial, the other on the role of women in the Revolution. Participating in the latter was Hazel Anne Williams, former Secretary to the Cabinet of the PRG, who had come over from Greece for the Conference.

The closing plenary session on the first day heard inspiring speeches from Diane Abbott, Member of Parliament, and Hazel Anne Williams. Rapporteurs from the two workshops were Crofton St Louis, Chairman of the NJM(UK), and Lorna Ellis, Asst. Sec. of the Committee for Human Rights in Grenada.

The opening plenary on the second day was addressed by Dr Trevor Munroe, General Secretary of the Workers' Party of Jamaica, and Trevor Xavier, General Secretary of the Bank and General Workers' Union of Grenada. Workshops followed on the Caribbean Revolutionary Movement and on US militarisation of the region and on trade union struggles in Grenada. The rapporteurs at the closing plenary were Dennis Bartholomew and Peter David, NJM (UK) Committee.

RESOLUTIONS

A number of resolutions were then moved and seconded and, after discussion and amendment in some cases, approved by the Conference. The resolutions included:

- condemnation of the US Govt. for

(a) armed interventions in the internal affairs of countries of the Caribbean area and Latin America;

(b) the invasion of Grenada in particular, thereby frustrating

aspirations for economic and political independence;

(c) intimidatory military manoeuvres in the region and attempts to prevent legitimate expressions of social unrest by means of the so-called Special Security Units and the Regional Security Service under US control. This resolution called for resistance to domination of the region by US imperialism.

- an expression of alarm and disapproval of the US Govt's actions in relation to Panama and a declaration that the composition of the Government of that country and its armed forces is a matter for the Panamanian people. This resolution affirmed the right of the people of every sovereign state to control their own affairs without external interference;

- a declaration of solidarity with the African "front line states" now the victims of attack and attempts at destabilisation by the white, racist, minority government of South Africa and a call for international support of these states and condemnation of the South African government's aggression against neighbouring states and against the majority of its own citizens held in subjection.

- a call for the elimination of the remaining pockets of colonialism and the recognition of the right to political independence of the peoples of Puerto Rico, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guyane and other Caribbean peoples and people in other parts of the world who are still denied political independence;

- a demand for the release of Puerto Ricans and citizens of the French colonies imprisoned for nationalist activities;

- a demand for an end to the launching of weapons testing rockets from Guyane by the French government;

- a call on the government of St Vincent and the Grenadines to withdraw its Bill to introduce public flogging;

Resolution on the Murder Trial

This Conference recognises that the execution of Maurice Bishop, Jacqueline Creft, Unison Whiteman and other Grenadians was a crime whose perpetrators ought to be brought to account in a free and fair trial.

This Conference affirms that the process which resulted in the

conviction of 16 men and 1 woman in December 1986 cannot be regarded as a free and fair trial, neither can the present Appeal process begun on March 7th 1988 in Grenada, particularly because:

- it was held in an unconstitutional court
- its jury was improperly selected
- it relied on confessions extracted through torture

This Conference considers that the case brought against the members of the Central Committee of the New Jewel Movement was weak, resting mainly on the evidence of one witness who had close links with the US invaders.

This Conference declares that the interests of the present Grenada administration and its backers lie rather in physically exterminating the former Peoples Revolutionary Government leadership than in seeing the truth emerge about the tragedy of 19th October 1983.

This Conference calls therefore upon progressive people and organisations to demand from the Grenadian authorities:

- (i) that there should be no executions of the pending death sentences of the 14 defendants
- (ii) that the charges against the defendants should be judged in a free and fair trial in a constitutional court, and
- (iii) calls on all fair minded individuals and organisations to help secure a fair trial by contributing to the legal defence fund.

- Resolution on Women

This Conference:

- (i) recognises the tremendous progress made by women during the period of the Grenada Revolution;
- (ii) pays special tribute to sister Phyllis Coard who as President of the N.W.O. worked tirelessly for the progress of all Grenadian women;

(iii) strongly condemns the US invasion of Grenada and the subsequent destruction of the gains made for and by women during the period of the Revolution.

(iv) condemns the particularly harsh conditions under which Phyllis Coard is presently imprisoned and the denial of her most basic human rights.

This Conference urges all progressive individuals and organisations to

- (1) join the fight for a free and fair trial for Phyllis Coard and the other prisoners.

(2) highlight the particularly harsh and inhumane conditions Phyllis is subjected to.



*General Secretary of the Workers Party
Dr. Trevor Munroe*

(3) help raise the funds needed urgently to fight their case in court.

REPRESENTATIVES OF OVERSEAS ORGANISATIONS

The Conference was attended by representatives of a number of overseas fraternal parties and organisations and received messages of support from many others unable to send representatives. Overseas parties and organisations officially represented included:

- Austria - Communist Party
- Barbados - Workers' Party
- Canada - Montreal Committee for Solidarity with Grenada
- Cyprus - Progressive Party of the Working People (AKEL)
- Greece - Communist Party
- Grenada - New Jewel Movement
- Guyana - Peoples Progressive Party
- Jamaica - Workers Party
- Mauritius - Mauritius Militant Movement
- Sweden - Committee for Human Rights in Grenada
- USA - New York Committee for Human Rights in Grenada
- USSR - Collective of Grenadian Students

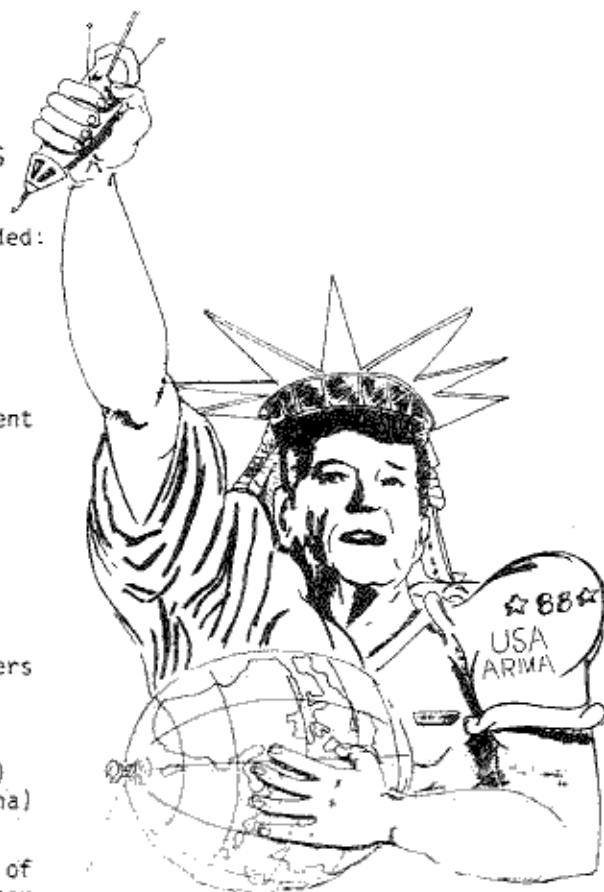
Messages of support and expressions of regret for their inability to send representatives (some of which were read out) were received from the Communist Parties of Venezuela, India, Sweden and Syria, Labour Party of St Lucia, United Peoples Movement of St Vincent & the Grenadines and the AKFM of Madagascar.

UK BASED ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

Official representation included:

African Liberation Committee
 Afro-Caribbean Peoples Organisation
 Black Unity & Freedom Party
 Black Liberation Front
 Black Socialist Workers Movement
 Caribbean Labour Solidarity Committee for Human Rights in Grenada (CHRG)
 Oxford CHRG
 Sheffield CHRG
 Communist Campaign Group
 Grenada Information Office
 Grenada Youth & Students International Leninist Workers Party
 Jamaica Workers Support Group
 New Jewel Movement (UK)
 Peoples Progressive Party (UK)
 Working Peoples Alliance (Guyana) Support Group

In addition to representatives of organisations, members of a number of organisations including British trade unions, the Labour Party, the Communist Party, the Peoples National Party and others participated in their individual capacities.



CLOSING RALLY

The conference closed on the third day with a public rally, chaired by Jacqui McKenzie, at which the principal speakers were Chris De Riggs, Trevor Munroe, Richard Hart, Ricky Parris, Chairman of the Barbados Workers Party, George Christophenous of AKEL Cyprus, Brother Tavlos of Greece, Alfie Roberts of Canada, Hazel Anne Williams, Trevor Xavier and Dorothy Kitson from the USA.

Collections made on the floor of the conference towards expenses totalled £675. In addition an auction of long playing records donated by well known Grenadian composer and singer Spartacus of some of his own compositions raised £76.

The conference ended with the lusty singing of the NJM's party anthem "Forward March Against Imperialism."

A special tribute was paid by the NJM (UK) to Richard Hart for his outstanding contribution to human rights in Grenada following the United States invasion.

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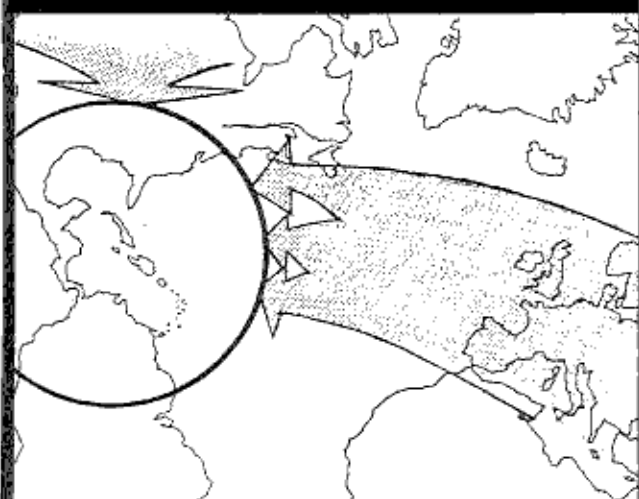
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IMPERIALIST CONTROL OF THE CARIBBEAN AREA



**The transition from
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by Richard Hart

50p

'It's amazing to see how the ethnic groups on the East Coast of Nicaragua are sharing in power.'



Ray Hodgson

mayor,
Bluefields, Nicaragua

interviewed for People's Daily World

How far is Bluefields from the war zone?

Before the revolution, nobody bothered with the people on the East Coast — the ethnic minorities were just ignored. They would say the East Coast is swamps and jungle, having no value as farm land.

So most of the country considered it as swampland, with a few Indians or Blacks running around not knowing what they were doing. This is the image that we, as East Coast people, had to study in school.

Meanwhile, big businesses were shipping rice and beans to the rest of Central America from those same areas they said were good for nothing. Canadian companies were exporting gold, uranium and copper from the East Coast of Nicaragua. The U.S. fruit companies were exporting bananas. All these things were going on when our school books were teaching us it was just swampland.

It's amazing to see how the ethnic groups on the East Coast of Nicaragua are sharing in power. Among the Black population, which is less than four percent nationally, we have five Black ambassadors. The president of external relations for the Nicaraguan Congress is Black. We have commandantes that are Black. We have Black women in Congress. So it's amazing.

The autonomy laws give the people of the Atlantic Coast the right to self-determination. Before the passage of these laws we had no say. Now we have a share in the decision making about our region. We also have the right to educate our people in our own

language. *English in Bluefields is English*

In Nicaragua there is no real war zone. The contras have not been able to maintain a war. What we face is sabotage. They use guerrilla tactics, where they come in, attack and run. The contras have no major stronghold in Nicaragua. They have not been able to hold one post more than 24 hours. They live in Honduras or in Costa Rica. It's just small incursions that they make into the country.

We are affected because most of our food comes from Managua. The contras are always attacking the boats that bring the food in on the river. They also attack the people that travel back and forth to Managua. We are sometimes cut off from the rest of the country because of these attacks on the river and on the highway.

Now we have shortages of food because of the war. Most people complain about the shortages, but that's the only complaint we have. We know the shortages are due to the war. If we could stop the war there would virtually be no complaints from the people because we have seen a growth in education and in health care. We have a brand new hospital, one of the best in Nicaragua. It is a very well equipped, modern hospital. We have seen economic growth, even though it is a war economy.

Education has been greatly improved for the rest of the minorities. The Soho, for example, have very few people with the capacity to rule. As for the Ramas,

in 1988 was the first time to 125

What about work rights?

We have the right to a job. And to the type of job that you want, not just a job that you take because you can't find another one and so you end up doing something you're not interested in. The right is that a person should be able to work at what they really want to.

We have labor unions in Bluefields. Labor unions are so strong that most of them form cooperatives. Instead of working for a private company and forming a union for defense, they have been borrowing money from banks and forming their own companies. So the very people who work and belong to the union are the people that own the company. That's a very unique situation.

There is a new port that is being built in Bluefields which will be the largest port in Central America when it's finished. An air strip is being built and we are constructing better roads. We have invested a lot of money in a project to make Nicaragua a self-sufficient country. All this is going on in spite of the war.

Under 50 years of the Somoza regime we never saw anything as big. The city of Bluefields has grown from 19,000 people to 45,000 people in just seven years. This has happened because there is a boom in work and jobs in Bluefields.

What rights do people have?

We believe that people have the right to a home. That's the basic right of society. People have the right to education. You should have the right to health care. Those are rights that we talk about. The government is obligated to give the people health care. It's obligated to give them homes. It's obligated to give them an education. These are rights that we claim.

The youth are the strength of the revolution. The average age of people in government is 35. That means the youth are in power. I don't think there is another country on earth where there are so many young people in power. The president of the country, Daniel Ortega, is barely 40. He was in his thirties when he became president. The main power is in the hands of the youth.

Ray Hodgson was born in 1947 and with the exception of a few years spent studying in the U.S., has been a resident of Nicaragua his entire life. He was appointed mayor in 1985 and will stand for election in 1988, when Nicaragua's new autonomy laws go into

RODNEY INQUEST A COVER-UP!



WALTER RODNEY 1942-1980

In January the Guyana government suddenly announced its plans for the holding, at short notice, of a coroners inquest into the death in 1980 of Dr Walter Rodney. The exercise was a sham, a cover-up! No attempt was made to secure the attendance of the two most important witnesses - ex army Sergeant Gregory Smith, alias Cyril Johnson who made the bomb disguised as a 'walkie-talkie' radio which caused Walter Rodney's death and Walter Rodney's brother, Donald, who was beside him in the car at the time of the explosion and miraculously escaped death.

Gregory Smith, who was spirited out of the country immediately after the incident, surfaced in 1987 when he applied for renewal of his passport at the Guyanese Embassy in Suriname. Interviewed on the telephone by 'Starbruck News' it was learned that he had been living in Cayenne in neighbouring Guyane (French Guiana) under an assumed name. Though he alleged in his interview that the explosion was an accident and endeavoured to give the impression that he and Walter had been engaged in some kind of conspiracy, it was important in the interests of justice that his story should be tested in court under cross-examination. Obviously the government was afraid of what the result might have been because they made no attempt to get him to return to give evidence.

Donald Rodney, to whom Smith had delivered the disguised bomb for delivery to Walter, was charged with being in possession of explosives, but despite this he was allowed to leave the country while on bail and no attempt has ever been made to secure his return to stand trial. Obviously the government realised that the charge was unbelievable and that a trial would have been more embarrassing to the prosecution than to the defence. They were therefore very glad to see him go. Nor did the police make any arrangements to get him as a witness for the inquest. But, worse than that, the family had

made arrangements for Donald to return without expense to the Crown but although the Coroner was so informed, he ruled that Donald's evidence was unnecessary!

At the hearing in February, Rex McKay, counsel representing the Guyana Defence Force, objected to certain questions that one of the counsel representing the Rodney family was putting to a witness which he claimed were irrelevant. Answering the objections Doonanth Singh SC replied: "We are required under Section 25 of the Coroners Act to enquire when where and how ... the deceased came by his death and also whether any person was criminally concerned... We are attempting to show ... the plot which resulted in the death... we are attempting to show that Dr Rodney met his death because he sought to overthrow the regime. Rodney had been a thorn in the side of the political structure of the State and the State assassinated him... There was a conspiracy to liquidate him, a conspiracy headed by the political powers with the involvement of the Guyana Defence Force... motive is important. We are using the opportunity of the witness to seek to establish our case and to establish the identity, the extent of political involvement of those who said he must be exterminated. Is that irrelevant?"

The Coroner's response was swift. "I am saying you can't lead evidence. This is not a trial."

There were several other curious features of this Coroners Inquest to which attention could be drawn. Though the Guyana Defence Force had denied the existence of a member of the Force named Gregory Smith, they were represented by Senior Counsel who played an active part in the proceedings. He cross-examined Walter's brother Edward at some length, endeavouring, without success, to get him to say that it was the objective of the Working Peoples Alliance (of which the deceased had been a leading member) to overthrow the PNC regime by force

The latitude which the Coroner allowed Mr McKay was in marked contrast to the manner in which he restricted the cross-examination of witnesses by counsel representing the Rodney family.

Another noteworthy omission was the coroner's failure to subpoena Pamela Beharry as a witness. Surely, in view of her published statement: "There is a Gregory Smith. I know him and lived with his wife. He was a member of the army", her evidence would have been relevant.

In the absence of Donald Rodney, the coroner refused to admit in evidence a statement written by him, but allowed words allegedly spoken by him immediately after the explosion to be given by one of the witnesses. Two British forensic experts who had examined Walter's mangled body and taken certain specimens at the place where the explosion occurred were not called as witnesses. Nor was former Guyana Police bomb expert Eustace Kendall who also made investigations.

Dismissing "The absurd conclusion (of the Coroners Court) that Walter Rodney killed himself, albeit accidentally", the Mirror newspaper described the inquest as a "miscarriage of justice."

When the impropriety of the jury's finding of "death by misadventure" was referred to in the legislature by PPP leader Dr Cheddi Jagan, the PNC Speaker of the House refused to allow a discussion.

McKay, a Guyanese attorney, is one of the Judges of the Grenada Court of Appeal!

GRENADA

Defence Counsel's immunity from arrest still not assured

With the appeal of the 17 persons convicted in the notorious Grenada murder trial under way since March 8, the immunity from arrest during the hearing of the appeal of leading defence attorney Iam Ramsay had still not been guaranteed at the end of the month. In a letter to his Bar Association in Jamaica, Ramsay disclosed that although a stay of execution in respect of the warrant for his arrest had been granted by the Appeal Court in September 1987, it had been discovered that on March 5, the day he had been scheduled to arrive in Grenada, the warrant was in the hands of the Immigration Authorities. Not until March 7 did other defence counsel, who had gone ahead, succeed in persuading the Regis-

trar to recall the warrant. "Had I gone over on March 5 ..", said the Jamaican attorney, "I would undoubtedly have been arrested.."

On March 8 the President of the Court of Appeal announced that he now had the warrant in his possession. But he gave no assurance that he would not part with it until Mr Ramsay was safely out of the country. The existence of the warrant (which should clearly have been cancelled) in the hands of a judge before whom the person whose arrest it authorises is appearing as an advocate, would be a veritable 'sword of Damocles' over that advocate's head - an intolerable situation for any advocate to find himself in.

Surprisingly, the President of the Court of Appeal did not res-

pond sympathetically to the protests of other defence counsel. He accused them of 'playing games' but if that accusation is to be levelled at anyone it should be at the judges of the Grenada High Court. First there was the questionable conduct of Mr Justice Byron, who refused a stay of the trial proceedings until the motions questioning the jurisdiction of his court had been disposed of; then the refusal of the puisne judge Mr Justice Patterson to hear arguments on the constitutional motion; and finally, there was the attempt by judge Mr Lyle St Louis to intimidate and disqualify leading defence counsel by sentencing him to prison for allegedly describing what had taken place as a "kangaroo trial" and a "so-called" trial.

U.S. WAR ON ONE WOMAN

Phyllis Coard

Born in Jamaica on 2nd November 1943, Phyllis Coard graduated from St. Andrew High School, Kingston, before pursuing advanced studies at Reading University, the London School of Economics and the University of the West Indies.

In 1967 she was employed by the London Borough of Waltham Forest, as a psychiatric social worker. In London, both Phyllis and her husband, Bernard were active in the struggle against racism and movement for self-reliance in the Black community.

The Coard family returned to the Caribbean in 1971 where they became involved in the building of the New Jewel Movement in Grenada. Phyllis was a founder member of the National Women's Organisation in 1977 and later became Secretary for Women's Affairs in the People's Revolutionary Government.

Phyllis Coard, campaigner for Women's rights in Grenada and for peace and independence throughout the Caribbean region, has been a prisoner in Grenada since her capture by U.S. military forces during the invasion and occupation of the island in October, 1983.

Following a 'trial' notorious for its irregularities, she and 13 other leaders of the Grenada Revolution were sentenced to death in December 1986.

In her diary she details the brutality of her captors and gives evidence of continued foreign domination. As the only woman on trial her detention has meant a special kind of treatment. She records the forced separation from her children, her husband (also in prison), comrades and friends.

My Conditions of Imprisonment in Grenada.

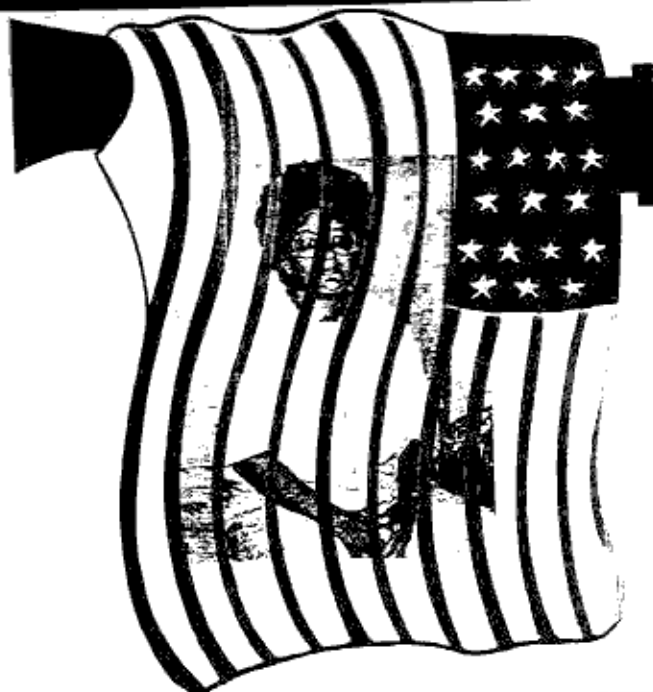
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NEWS FROM THE CARIBBEAN REGION



ST GEORGES, GRENADA

KINGSTOWN, ST VINCENT

Following a conference held here in August 1987 of representatives of the indigenous people of the Commonwealth Caribbean area a Steering Committee was elected. The first meeting of this Steering Committee was held at Chatoyer's Hide-Away, Edinburgh, St Vincent at the end of January (Chatoyer was the Carib chief who led the resistance of his people to the Europeans). Amerindian communities in Belize, Dominica, Guyana and St Vincent were represented. On the agenda were items dealing with education, culture, religion, economic development and media and organisational structures. The cost of the meeting was financed by the Canadian Unit for Service Overseas (CUSO).

Hot on the heels of the invading troops, the US government, early in 1984, introduced into Grenada imperialism's trade union agency the American Institute of Free Labour Development (AIFLD).

Funded partly by the AFL-CIO and partly by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the AIFLD established the headquarters of its eastern Caribbean representative in St Georges, who immediately set about trying to win the allegiance of Grenada's seven trade unions with scholarships and funds. Only two unions succumbed to the pressures and the AIFLD man then sponsored a rival agricultural workers union. However, very few plantation workers responded to his overtures. Now, after three years of so far relatively unsuccessful efforts, the AIFLD representative has transferred his headquarters to Barbados.

BRIDGETOWN, BARBADOS

A conference here in February of organisations describing themselves as "non government organisations" denounced the Haitian electoral farce of January 17 as undemocratic and unacceptable, thereby repudiating the argument of the Seaga government in Jamaica that "bad elections are better than no elections at all". The NGOs represented included the Caribbean Council of Churches and nine others, including human rights bodies, distanced themselves from those Caribbean governments which, following Washington's lead, have cynically pledged support for the Manigat regime whilst admitting that the Haitian election was "seriously flawed".

NASSAU, BAHAMAS

During the course of a recent drug trial in the USA Thomas Harney, a witness, named Prime Minister Lyndon Pindling as having received US\$88,000 per month from the defendant Carlos Lehder Rivas to protect a drug smuggling operation based on the Bahamian island known as Norman's Cay. In 1985 Pindling appointed a commission to investigate drug corruption charges against members of his government and was personally cleared of any wrong doing. The evidence given in the US courtroom at the beginning of February would appear to have reopened the matter.

HAVANA, CUBA

In a move designed to financially discredit the US government's charge before the United Nations of alleged human rights violations in Cuba, a charge the UN General Assembly resolved was not worth investigating, the Cuban government has invited the UN Human Rights Commission to inspect the island's prisons. The five man team will be headed by the Commission's chairman.

175 patients from 40 countries travelled to Cuba last year to receive free medical treatment. Treatment for another 141 has been approved. The patients are mainly from Africa and Latin America.

CARICOM STATES' GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCTS

The recently published World Bank Report for 1987 contains the following schedule showing the Gross National Product per head in US dollars of the principal CARICOM states excluding Trinidad and Tobago:

Bahamas \$7,070; Barbados \$4,630
Belize \$1,190; Dominica \$1,150;
Grenada \$970; Jamaica \$940;
Guyana \$500.

Of the other 23 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean area listed, only Haiti with an annual GNP of \$310 is below Guyana.

SANTO DOMINGO, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Tobacco growers of Villa Gonzalez have reaped 8½ thousand packages of tobacco in the past year and they have been told that there is no market for it as the Tobacco Institute already has on hand 10 thousand packages for which no market has been found. This has been the fate of just one of the country's tobacco growing areas.

Representations have been made to the President of the Republic concerning the problem, as a result of which a commission has been established consisting of representatives of buyers and other interested parties including the co-operatives.

ST GEORGES, GRENADA

According to a Caribbean News Agency (CANA) report dated March 14, the Grenada Court of Appeal has subpoenaed two persons who gave evidence in the trial of 17 persons convicted of the murder of Maurice Bishop and others, to give further evidence before the Appeal Court. The persons subpoenaed were not named in open court but, according to the report, "legal sources" identified them as Cletus St Paul, the chief prosecution witness whom the accused have described as a CIA agent, and Fabian Gabriel, a soldier who had formerly also been charged but who was pardoned on condition that he gave evidence against the other accused.

SANTO DOMINGO, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

More than two hundred agricultural workers employed in the Department of Clearing Cocoa and Cocoa trees in Nagua, who had not been paid for more than three months, occupied the offices of the sub-Region of Agriculture. After filling up numerous forms in support of their claim and being kept waiting by the authorities, they decided to lay siege to the offices of the Secretary of Agriculture in the said province. The Communist Party has condemned the indifference of the Nagua agricultural authorities and called upon the workers to remain united and stand firm.

KINGSTON, JAMAICA

Following in the footsteps of Britain's Conservative government, the Seaga JLP government has been vigorously pursuing a policy of privatisation of publicly owned assets during its 7½ years in office. Although the leasing of Jamaica's government owned tourist hotels can be justified, as these were acquired by the previous PNP government merely as a means of ensuring that they would not be closed down during the US government's economic squeeze, the divestment of government owned property has gone way beyond that. Two commercial enterprises have been sold and 14 others have been closed down, 4 sugar factories have been closed, the country's biggest bank has been disposed of, the telephone company, the cement factory and the Daily News newspaper have been sold off. The government now owns only two hotels and these are likely to go too if buyers can be found. Even the Rio Grande rafting operation has gone. Local authorities have been required to relinquish their street cleaning operations to private contractors. However, faced with the prospect of substantial loss of revenues if it applied the same policy in the field of bauxite-alumina production, the government has not dispensed with the bauxite levy imposed by the PNP government and has actually increased the share of its ownership in that industry.

BELIZE CITY, BELIZE

This country has in recent months been the target of an organisation calling itself the "Anti-Communist Christian Crusade" originating, needless to say, in the homeland of corruption, gangsterism, drug abuse, sex scandals and racism - the USA. Two North American "reverends" have been touring the country with Louis Sylvestre, a local right wing politician who started his career as a Minister in the Peoples United Party, resigned in the face of charges of corruption and incompetence to form his own short-lived party and has now found himself in the company of officials of the ruling United Democratic Party. Local observers have rated as unlikely Sylvestre's prospects of a comeback, even with the aid of this latest politico-religious gimmick.