

'is freedom we making'

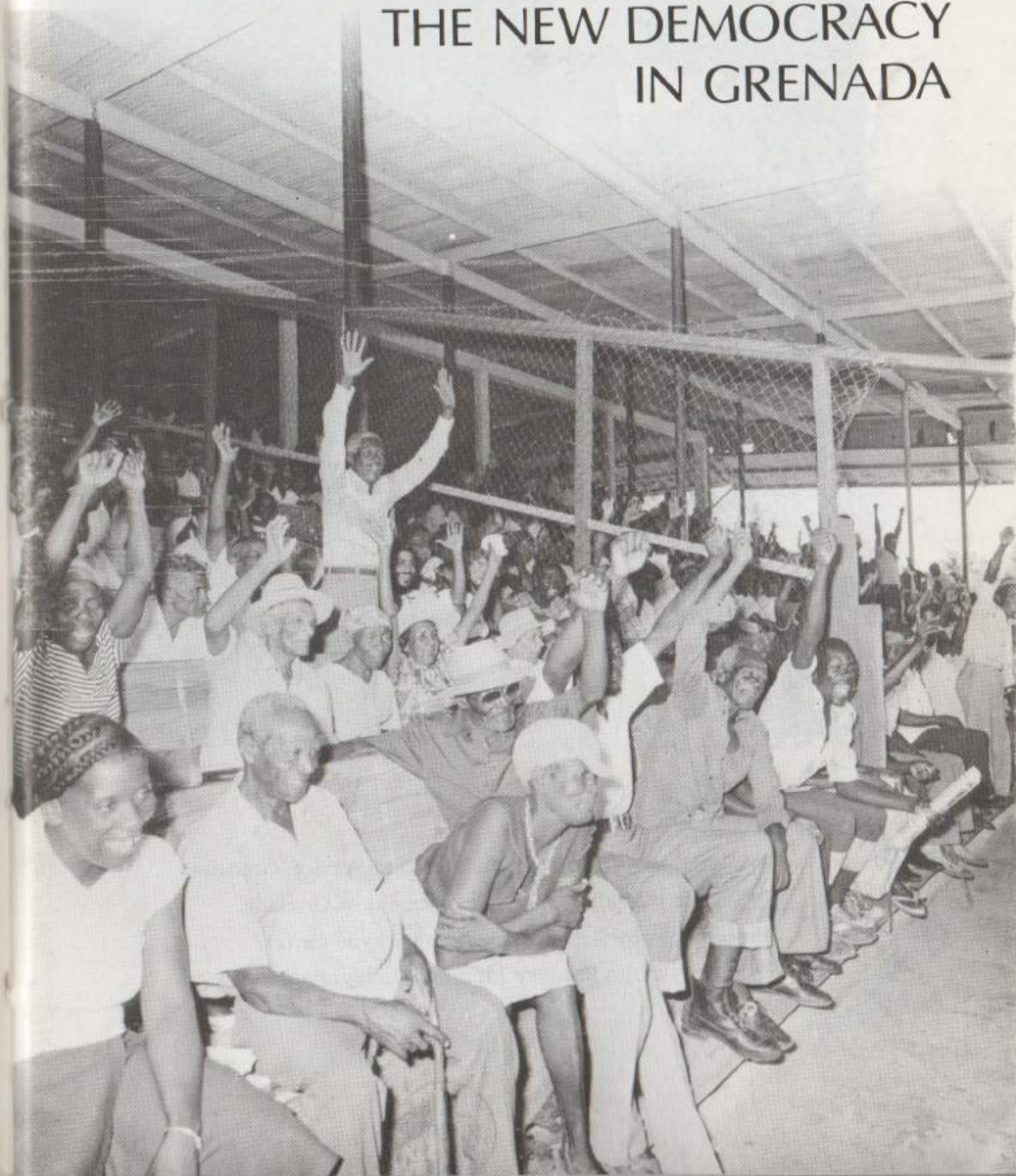
THE NEW DEMOCRACY
IN GRENADA

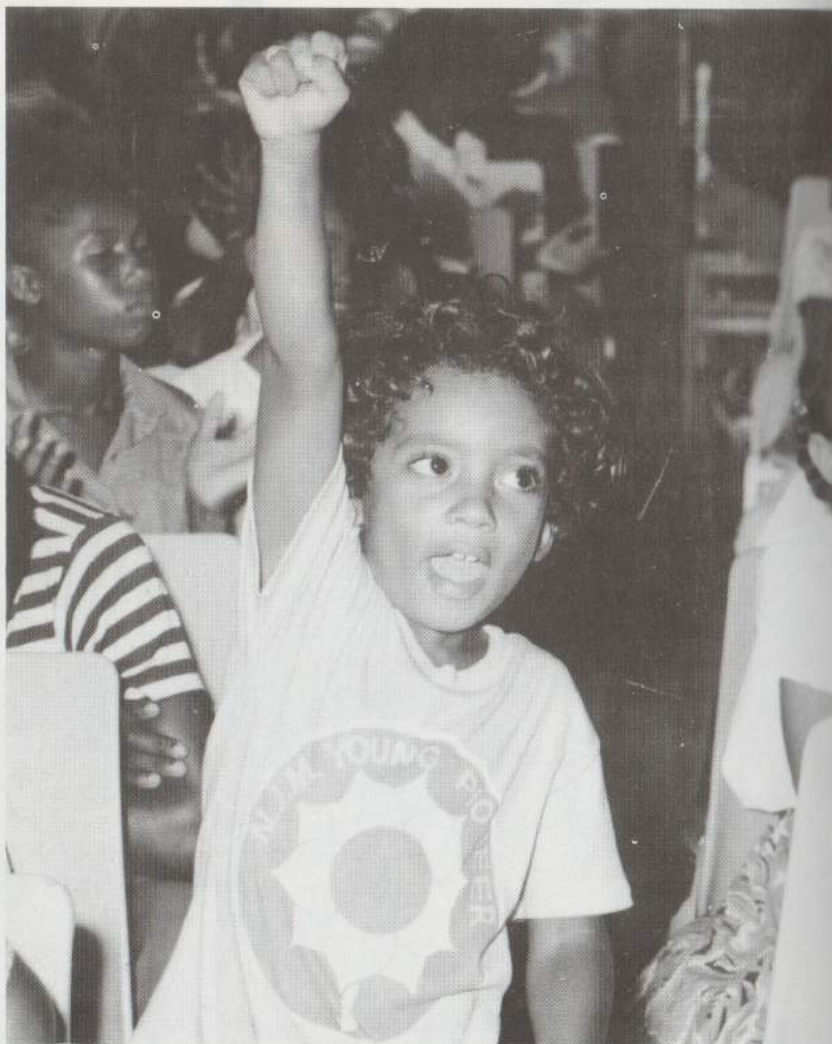




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IN GRENADA





Preface

Of the two writers of this pamphlet, one was born in a neighbouring Caribbean island to Grenada, and the other comes from the ex-colonial power.

Both are internationalist workers in Grenada and have been placed in positions of trust and responsibility by the People's Revolutionary Government. They are primarily teachers, but also writers who between them have published many books and articles in both Britain and the Caribbean. Despite the fact that they are not Grenadians, they have been subject to no feelings of national chauvinism or racism. They have been welcomed as internationalists and urged to put their full lives into the Grenadian revolutionary process, and to take part in the mass democratic organisations which are creating a new vision and reality of democratic involvement for the Grenadian people.

Both writers come from societies where the model of government is the 'Westminster' parliamentary model. One comes from the source itself, the other from a society that imitates that same structure. As a result, both have noted throughout their lives how anti-democratic that system truly is, and how it takes political power out of the hands of the people themselves, and places it at the whims of a small elite.

Finally, both are deeply concerned that Grenada's courageous democratic initiatives have been ignored, distorted or slandered by some of those who claim to represent some much larger and more powerful nations than Grenada, with its 110,000 people. As writers, both have a fundamental concern for the truth in matters large and small, in detail as well as principle, and have collaborated on this pamphlet to tell it unsparingly.

Merle Hodge
Quir. Seale.

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1. *A Workers' Parish Council, 24/8/81.*

Butler House stands on the Ballast Ground, a rocky headland protruding into St. George's Harbour. Before the 1979 Grenada Revolution it was under the tread of tourists and waiters as the 'Islander Hotel'. Now it belongs to the people, housing several ministries and used regularly as a venue for mass assemblies and the organs of the new Grenadian democracy.

Tonight, the huge chamber downstairs, originally conceived as a restaurant and dance hall for wealthy American tourists, is now the setting for a meeting of the St. George's Workers' Parish Council. Dockworkers, agricultural workers, roadworkers, hotel workers, public service workers, nurses and teachers all mass in the lobby, under a giant photograph of the great Grenadian trade union leader, Tubal Uriah 'Buzz' Butler, who set the Trinidad oil-fields aflame with his electric oratory in the mass movements of the thirties. His thick, white beard and laughing mouth preside as the workers find their seats. Other portraits of Michael Manley, Fidel Castro and Maurice Bishop are suspended from the walls.

All workers of the Parish of St. George's have the right and responsibility to attend this meeting, and several hundred of them are here, both to hear the servants of the people give a satisfactory account of the facilities placed under their charge, and to be informed about the progress being made on issues they raised at the previous council, a month before.

The assembly sits down and applause rings out as the Prime Minister and Minister of National Mobilisation arrive. The accountability process is to include the people's leadership. They will hear, monitor and be subject to the processes of people's power that the Revolution is putting into practice, and they know that in the other six parishes of the nation similar assemblies are also about to be convened.

The Chairman climbs onto a dais and announces into the microphone to a burst of clapping: 'Comrades! We are here, practising true grassroots democracy in St. George's tonight!' He reminds them of the function of the council, to offer accountability: no more shall public servants and those charged with administering the people's property shut themselves away from the people in hidden niches of power. They must be available for criticism and open to suggestion, and to demonstrate this he introduces Brother Winston Bullen, the new manager of the Grenada Electricity Company (Grenlec), of which the government has recently acquired majority shares. He has left his family insurance business to manage Grenada's electricity. Three months

before, the Commonwealth Development Corporation, a British-owned company who were the previous majority shareholders, together with two other multinational companies, Esso and Barclays' Bank, had fomented a crisis which meant that either the government took control of Grenlec, or the nation would be plunged into darkness. So now Brother Bullen proudly announces from the rostrum: 'Comrades, I am a part of this new people's democracy of dialogue and accountability!' Staring straight into the eyes of his listeners, his words devoid of any managerial arrogance, he declares: 'We are the servants of the people. We are part of a system where you don't have to wait for five years to be consulted, or to put in a vote for saltfish politicians.'

His speech is clear and dignified, and it is soon clear that he has come to clarify and educate as well as be accountable. He explains in simple and precise terms how the C.D.C. exported all their funds and profits out of Grenada, how they ignored investment in the machinery of the plant, and how the generators were allowed to be systematically run down and become exhausted so that the people have inherited obsolete and unmaintained machinery. But now the situation is different, asserts Brother Bullen. The electricity used in Grenada now belongs to the people of Grenada — YOU are the majority shareholders now, he emphasises, using his eyes like a panoramic camera. On taking control of the plant, he continues, the government immediately made available a million dollars for spare parts for the particularly run-down generator number seven. Then the Cuban government sent more spare parts and five of their top technicians, and after seven weeks the set has been overhauled and is now commissioned and running up to the capacity of twelve hundred kilowatts. The people break out into spontaneous applause. The power is theirs now, they are cheering for the restoration of their common property.

The Manager addresses himself to another problem. Why were electricity bills piling up so that consumers would not receive any for eight weeks and then find that they had been sent two at a time? The answer to this question brings more insights to a keenly attentive assembly. The National Cash Register Co., another multinational, says it can't mend Grenlec's accounting machines, but would be willing to sell them another for \$170,000! They say that their resident technician has been trained to mend the new N.C.R. machine that they could sell to Grenlec but that he doesn't know how to mend the earlier model that they have now! 'That's how Capitalism works,' concludes Brother Bullen, 'but never

mind, our comrades in Cuba sent their computer engineers and they soon got it going — so from now on your bills will arrive regularly and punctually.'

'This is your company now,' the Manager continues, 'so you must know its history and the reasons why its machinery is in such a bad condition. The C.D.C. had no spare parts in reserve, so we have to send for them. Also, in chasing after their profits they neglected their overhauls, so as soon as we fix one part, then another goes.' He gives details, and some workers are carefully taking notes, wanting every small detail of information. 'The best we can give out is 4,700 kilowatts, and our peak demand is also 4,700 kilowatts. So any problem with any of the machines causes cuts. All the machines are past sixty thousand hours without major overhauls, even though the makers clearly state that they should be overhauled every ten thousand hours. All that money which should have gone on overhauls and spare parts went to pay dividends and profits to their shareholders in London — that is Imperialism in action, comrades!' The assembly is muttering, passing angry comments, but Brother Bullen points out boldly: 'So when you have a power cut, don't blame the workers, we have good, hard-working workers. Study the history of the company and that's where you'll find the causes! Remember Comrades, although we are moving towards Socialism, we are still surrounded by capitalists.' Many heads are nodding as the workers exchange comments.

The Manager's address finishes with the announcement of a draft scheme, yet to be decided by the Cabinet, but put before the Workers' Parish Councils first, which will mean a reversal of the current payment policy followed by the company. The present system gives concessions to the large consumers and the small consumers pay proportionately more. 'But this is a people's government and a people's democracy,' declares Brother Bullen, 'and so we are proposing that those who consume less than fifty units a month will have their rates decreased and those who consume the most, including the commercial houses, will have to pay the necessary increases.'

A fierce volley of applause smothers Brother Bullen's invitation to those assembled to give their contributions and criticism, and he has to repeat his words. Immediately, a man strides resolutely forward, mounts the dais, and with his mouth missing the microphone and his voice only half audible, he asks why his particular village has had so many power cuts over the last two months. The Manager briefly repeats some of the points that he has already made, then he raises his voice to underline the crit-

ical consequences of the C.D.C.'s policy of neglect. 'At one time in July, four out of the seven generators that we have in the plant were out of order, so everyone had to have power cuts. But we did it fairly and they were equalised all over the country. Believe me, Comrade, there was no favouritism. You ask the people in St. Paul's, where I live myself.' The worker seems satisfied and steps down from the rostrum, smiling across to his friends. Another man steps forward, and he is determined to use the microphone properly. 'Is it true,' he asks, 'that when the government has rallies and meetings, that that village doesn't have power cuts?' That is true, as much as possible, the Manager tells him. When the people's interest is at stake or when there are meetings of national, political or educational importance, then they must have priority and the power must be kept available. Positive sounds come from the assembly.

Other questions are asked and the manager steps to the back of the dais and carefully listens before giving his replies. He will be doing this in every parish in the country over the next couple of weeks, and his rational, studied responses clearly impress his listeners. Here is a man acting like their comrade, not officiously like a bureaucrat. There is a growing sense of confidence that this man will care for their newly acquired property and resources. Then a final question produces a moment of humour. A worker, in all sincerity, asks whether there isn't a problem with the Cuban technicians understanding the maintenance instructions on the machines, which he has heard were made in England. 'The Cuban brothers speak Spanish and all the instructions are in English,' he points out worriedly, 'isn't there a risk that them machine could get mash up?' Brother Bullen reassures him. When the Cubans had their revolution and the Americans blockaded them, they had to learn the languages of foreign manuals very quickly, he says, they even had to make their own spare parts for all kinds of foreign machines. The questioner seems genuinely relieved to learn this, and as he walks beamingly back to his seat, the people clap and laugh and raise a warm and powerful hand for their Electricity Manager. He has begun to de-mystify a process which has been smothered in hidden terminology, bureaucracy and profit. Power has been democratised and light is being thrown onto light.

As the assembly is still internalising and considering the information given by Brother Bullen, the Chairman steps forward and announces a poet, Brother Cudjoe Chris de Riggs. A young man steps keenly through the chairs and mounts the dais. In a few

words he speaks of the need to fight a cultural battle alongside the economic one, that culture and poetry too belong to and are made by the people, and that to be truly democratised it must touch and involve their real lives and struggles. Then he bursts directly into dialect poetry. His eyes never leave the audience, and clearly he knows his poem by heart. The listeners are enraptured: he is speaking their language, by them, from them, to them. He and they are one. The assembly is bound together as he speaks through history of the Grenadian worker through slavery and colonialism, through the days of the dictator to the revolutionary rupture with chains of exploitation and mimicry.

JOOKOOTOO I

*Jookootoo I who walked four hundred years
Through time and history and sang God Save the Queen
Ah stare wid me own two eye like Bumbofly
When four stones British Maccomen
Tramp down on we land wid heavy boots
And crush we bones wid heavy cannon
And all we women in Africa land
hold dey belly and ban'dey jaw
and cry a million tears
Some say 'pwah maniwell'
While others called the curse a'moko
upon dey backside*

*Jookootoo I who worked from sun up to sundown
Cutting cane till me hand get hard like a foot
Cutting Bamboo and Roseau
Living in a juper on de mountainside
Looking for crayfish and Zandomay
Eating Bun Bakes and drinking Ven-Ven tea
Was me who used to trow out poe for Lord Brownlow*

*Jookootoo I who walked through Belvidere wid Fedon
Was me who tell him to bun de dam place down
Grenada 1795 was naked blood and sand
and every bitch and dey brudder wid a matchet in dey hand
Was death and terror for de Englishman
Believe yuh me dey run like hell
Dat was two hundred years ago
Ah believe dey running still*

*Jookootoo I who went to fight and die for King and Country
Dat was in World War two
Singing Rule Britannia Rule
and growing like a big macco under de Union Jack
Ah remember coming back vex like arse
Standing in de sun an' waiting for de Queen to parse*

*And was in nineteen-thirty how much
When Butler and Marryshow shout something
ah doh rember all too clearly
But to dem was time for we natives to do something
and put ah end to all dis British Empire thing
for after all, de British didn't like de best bone
in we and we been ketching arse on de estate
from since King Matchet was a hammer
was like donkey pee on we*

*Jookootoo I who in 1951 swallow hook line and sinker
and eat from bramble to timber
when de beast from de east
Somewhere between Dunfermline and Moyah
came forward after making marse in Aruba
proclaiming dat he was the Messiah
We cuss de Guv'ner in bout ten different language
and turn the whole place upsided down
was rum parsing and Estate bunning
and we making ting a merry
and we all did sing 'we shall never let our leader fall'
Never knowing dat one day our leader would let us fall*

*Jookootoo I who wet one pants March 13th. '79
and hide like hell for days
Singing Our Fadder, Haily Mary
Lord oh Lord please bring back Gairy
But is two years since the Revo come
and ah still could drink me rum
Dey 'en close de church
Dey 'en take one sheep
ah ha me wuk
an' ah still could sleep
Me son gone and study engineer
ah getting free milk an house repair
Is only now I seeing how dis Revo good for de poor
an ah dam sorry it didn't come before
De Revo run me Fadder, is true
But me Godfadder treating me better*

The cheers and applause are deafening, and there is more to follow. Cudjoe begins to speak of the military threat of the invasion rehearsal by N.A.T.O. forces right now being mounted in Vieques Island, off Puerto Rico. The very mention of these re-engages the total involvement of the listeners, who are enraged at the thought. As he bursts back into his poetry, Cudjoe is expressing the love of country and revolution, and the hatred of all threatening evils, in superstitious or military garb, that seek to turn his people back towards darkness and tyranny.



MERCENARIES

*Monsters rising up in de horizon
Wid murder and bloodshed in dey mind
Screaming like sirens and
Raising a scent like Macawel
They come,
Wid rifles rattling*

And a dismal mission to carry out
 Look at dem,
 The same ole devils
 Who been after we skin
 Since Moses was a little boy –
 General Moko Jumbie leading the assault
 Followed by Lieutenant Soucouyant
 La Diablesse
 Baku
 Demon
 Bois-Bois
 Fowl-cock in de crossroad
 Creature from de black lagoon
 Mama Maladie
 Sea devil
 Dragon
 Boo-Boo man
 Ghost and phantom under de silk-cotton tree
 Werewolf
 Steel donkey and cocoa monkey
 They come, an army of the bewitched
 The haunted, the depraved souls
 Servants of President Neutron
 The most wicked and evil vampire
 The world has ever known
 No. 1 hater of humanity
 And eater of little babies
 They are here, they come to do battle
 To take our land and make a hell
 out of it . . .
 And as dey rise up from de sea
 These dastard creatures of death,
 Our people take a stand
 Not one blade of grass, we say
 Not one grain of sand
 Shall be taken from our land
 Let dem come, we go bury dem in de sea,
 or perhaps in de Seamoan Busherie
 And if dey land, anyway dey parse
 We go bus bullet in dey arse
 And de farmers in de field
 Tell de workers in de town
 Leh we knock dem down!
 Leh we knock dem down!
 And de little gyul by de water pipe
 Lift up she bucket and bus dey tripe
 And when these monsters try to run
 Our people's militia will have some fun
 Dat is when de story end and de attack done.

Cudjoe waits for no applause. He is not interested in admiration. His poetry has been functional and brought all hearts and heads together and inspired an even stronger foundation for democratic involvement. As he walks quickly back to his place in the assembly, his entire body seems to receive the booming love and connection of his people. But the electricity has been transformed into language and culture, and this time it is the people's poet who has been the generator.

Now the accountability continues. This time the Minister of National Mobilisation, Brother Selwyn Strachan, comes to the microphone. His is a new ministry, conceived to multiply and dynamise the democratic organs and processes of the Revolution. His task tonight is to report back to the Council on the issues and demands that were raised at the previous session: lower rents, a public transport system, improvements in the telephone network, better roads, a more efficient water supply – all these were the most urgent needs raised a month before. They are massive areas of concern, involving large slices of the national infrastructure. Yet the minister, as servant and respondent of the popular will, has something concrete to offer on all of them.

He begins with rents. A fact sheet of a proposed new Rent Restriction Act, drafted by the Ministry of Legal Affairs, is put into the hands of everyone present. With the people following avidly, word by word, Brother Strachan reads it through:



FACT SHEET ON THE PROPOSED NEW RENT RESTRICTION LAW

Many working people in Grenada, because of the shortage of housing which still exists despite the gains of the March 13th. Revolution, have to live in rented premises. Some landlords use the fact of their ownership of these premises and the housing shortage to push up rents without going to the Rent Assessment Board. As a result, many tenants have to pay high rents for shabby accommodation and broken down premises. Some of their landlords refuse to repair these premises while expecting to receive the rent on each end of the month.

1. *It will be compulsory for every rented premises except those excluded by Government to be assessed and the rent fixed by a Rent Assessment Board appointed by Government;*
2. *The Government can set up Rent Boards in any area of the island and appoint persons from the community to act as members of the board;*
3. *The Landlord must apply to the Board in his/her area to have the premises assessed and the rent fixed. If the Landlord does not apply, the Board can go ahead and fix the rent. The tenant can also apply to have the premises assessed by the Board;*
4. *The Government can roll back (or reduce) rents in any area of the island where it is thought that the rents are too high;*
5. *The Landlord will have to repair the premises where it is in need of repair at no cost to the middle or low-income tenant;*
6. *Where the Landlord, fails or refuses to repair the premises in need of repair the tenant can repair it and deduct the cost from the Landlord. He can also call the Government House Repair Unit to do the work at the expense of the Landlord;*
7. *Where a Landlord overcharges rent set by the Board, the tenant can take him to court and he will have to pay back the overcharged rent. In addition, he may be fined or sent to prison for breaches of the Law.*

No landlord who respects the provisions of the Law and who treats his/her tenant in a fair and decent way need fear this new Law. The Law is meant for the bad Landlord, not the good Landlord.

The People's Revolutionary Government will protect the people from exploitation.

The Revolution must be respected.

Having given a short time for those assembled to absorb the facts he has presented to them, the Minister begins to outline three ways in which the People's Revolutionary Government could have proceeded. They could have simply rolled back the rents thirty or fifty per cent, they could have dropped them to the same level as they were immediately before March 13th, 1979, or they could involve the people by asking them, through their democratic organisations, to submit their own ideas on the matter. They

decided upon the final method, says Brother Strachan, in order to involve as many people as possible. He asks all those present at the Council to take the draft home, examine and discuss it through their mass organisations, and then begin to offer suggestions and amendments so that a more profound discussion can develop at the next Workers' Parish Council.

He continues to the next point, which is public transport, and informs the assembly that the Government has recently been offered one million dollars from the O.P.E.C. countries. 'That money will be used to answer your demands,' says the Minister, 'and an order has already been placed for twenty six buses, each one with twenty five seats.' The workers sting their hands with appreciation. This means the beginning of the end of long, tiring walks in the early morning and late evening sun, irritating delays and erratic, unscheduled bus services. Here are more material gains, a direct response to the needs of the people — and the noise in the chamber is thunderous. These buses will arrive in January, continues the Minister, and the priority will be to assist in the transport of school students and workers. And there will be a night service for late night and early morning shift workers, and, he asserts, pointing out directly to his listeners, 'only the most serious, dedicated and conscious people will drive these buses.' The workers turn to each other. They know there will be no irresponsible chasing up and down the roads on these buses of the Revolution — and they also know that this means more work, more conductors, drivers, mechanics and administrators will be needed.

On telephones, Brother Strachan informs us that present discussions with technicians from the German Democratic Republic will result in a new telephone system eighteen months after beginning the necessary work. An extra 3,800 new lines will transform the system. On roads, the next two years will see 19.5 miles of main roads repaired, and the creation of 15.5 miles of paved feeder roads for farmers. In addition, 7.5 miles of paved roads will be completed in the sister island of Carriacou, twenty extra miles of the Eastern Main Road and 52 miles of improved feeder roads at the sub-base level. The note-takers are writing profusely. All those figures mean more gains from the Revolution, more land under the plough — and direct answers to the workers' demands in deeds and practical achievements. The proof is everywhere around them. They have come to respect the promises of the Revolution. Their leaders can talk and weave words like fire, there is no doubt about that; but they also act, they work, they respond, they fulfill.

The Minister ends his report-back by saying that the two other concerns that were voiced at the previous Workers' Council will be attended to at next month's session. The Manager of the Water Company will present his report and be available for criticism, as will the Minister responsible for Fisheries and Agro-Industries. And as Brother Strachan returns to his place to an appreciative ovation, the conversation is mainly upon the Rent Restriction Law. 'I go manners me landlord now!' somebody says behind me, 'de Revo help we again!'

The Chairman breaks back into the debate starting amongst the listeners by crystallising the function of the council: 'the workers give the ideas to the leadership, and the leadership reports back on their implementation. That is our democracy working,' he declares. 'Yes man, true, true!' A woman is shouting back to the dais. It is clear that the assembly likes what he is saying and how he is saying it, and they like even more his next announcement, that the final speaker will be the Comrade Prime Minister, Brother Maurice Bishop. They were expecting him to speak, not only to comment on the matter of the meeting so far, but to clarify the reasons and intentions behind the American provocations off Vieques. For this Workers' Parish Council is taking place at a crucial moment in Grenadian history — as the Revolution is facing its most serious external threat yet. United States' troops are massed on Caribbean land and waters for 'Operation Ocean Venture'. The objective? To rehearse the invasion of the Caribbean island nation of 'Amber and the Amberdines', a small but vital threat to the economic and political hegemony in the region. For the Grenadian people know, along with the material progress made by their revolution in roads, electricity, telephones or public transport, is also the accompanying Imperialist urge to spoil and destroy, and concrete gains inside Grenada bring concrete threats from outside.

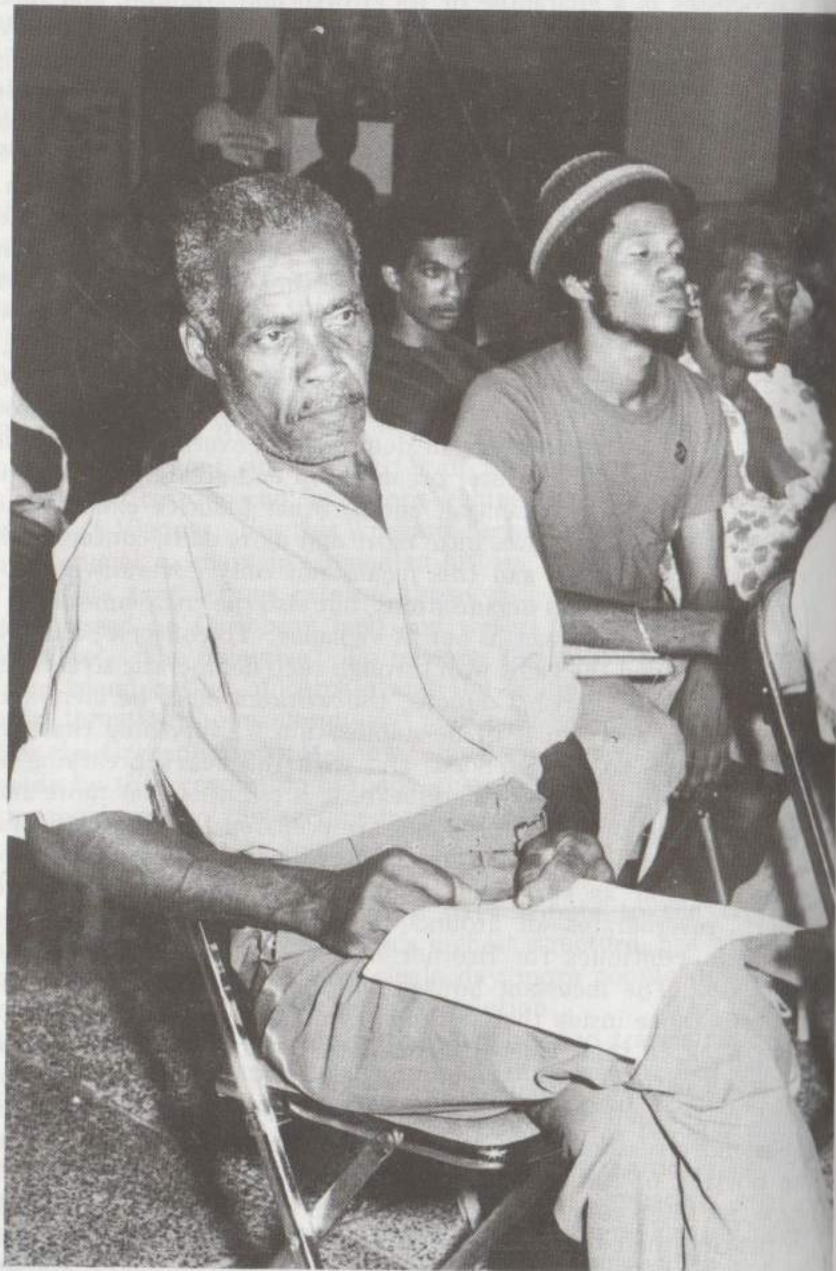
But firstly, Brother Bishop pays tribute to the Workers' Council. He, as the Revolution's highest structure, has witnessed all the proceedings. 'Every single day more people develop an organised relationship with the Revolution' The truth of the words pounds out across the chamber and travels far out to sea from the headland like a warning to Imperialism. For whether it is the National Youth Organisation, the National Women's Organisation, the Militia, the Pioneers, the Centre for Popular Education, the House Repair Programme or any of the other people's programmes or structures, Organisation is Grenada's greatest weapon and most precious asset; and the Workers' Parish Council is one of the newest and most democratic organs which will sus-

tain and nurture it.

For the Prime Minister's main message is that only the workers can build the Revolution, that their active participation in its processes is a guarantee of its growth and triumph, and that their organised strength and power must be internalised so they can understand the critical role of their own class in transforming Grenada. They must build their collective consciousness through councils such as this and the Worker Education Classes that are starting simultaneously at workplaces all over the country. He emphasises that there must be more discipline and production. There is no attempt to hide away or keep from the people the massive problems facing the economy. There are seven million pounds of unsold nutmegs sitting in the warehouses, Brother Maurice tells us, plus a 55% fall in the price of cocoa and a 20% fall in tourism. 'The international capitalist crisis is worsening,' he says, 'and when they out there sneeze, it is us in Grenada who catch the cold.' These are facts that the workers must know, for there can be no camouflage in democratic government. In this context, the need for greater organisation and greater production becomes even more essential, and Brother Maurice exhorts the workers to put themselves into 'more and more daily contact with democratic activity', and this means not only government programmes and the mass organisations, but also the trade unions.

Finally, the message is one of vigilance. To conserve, consolidate and extend the gains won through such democratic structures as the Workers' Parish Councils, the workers must be alert and watchful for any threat of de-stabilisation. Everything that has been won has to be defended, and with the heavy breathing of U.S. Imperialism over the Caribbean, it is essential that more and more workers join the militia and are prepared to take the necessary military training to ensure the Revolution's survival and protection. And as the final shout of 'Forward ever, backward never!' reverberates all around Butler House and the massive reception continues for Brother Bishop, the Council begins to break up. The incessant honking of the mini-buses outside the hall tells those inside that the organised transport is ready to take them back to their villages throughout the south-western part of the small nation. New recruits to the militia come forward to the front of the hall to receive their forms and sign their names, and other more seasoned members are filing through the lobby under the portrait of Butler, singing quietly but determinedly, 'Let them come, let them come, we go bury them in the sea!' The exuberance on hearing the continuing real results of their democratic organisation is one image leaping out from one side of the night. On the

other is the huge will never to lose these benefits or have them ripped from your grasp — and to the workers of Grenada that means Democracy with arms.



2. *'Women, Step Forward!'*

In the first 2½ years of the Grenada Revolution, women are likely to be the one group in the society which has travelled the greatest distance towards Grenada's ideal of full popular participation in the development process.

This assessment is based, of course, on the fact that at the starting-point, March 13th, 1979, women in Grenada exercised as much (or as little) decision-making power as the mass of Caribbean women today.

The progress of Grenadian women is not sensational — no social revolution ever is. The People's Revolutionary Government has not waved any magic wand, it has not decreed a new women into existence in the space of two years. The process is only just beginning, but in Grenada the forward march of women is a tangible fact, something that we can measure. No one can be in any doubt that "something is happening" to women in Grenada.

The Grenada Revolution has simply invested planning, work, money, legislation and moral support where other Caribbean Governments have offered proclamations of principle.

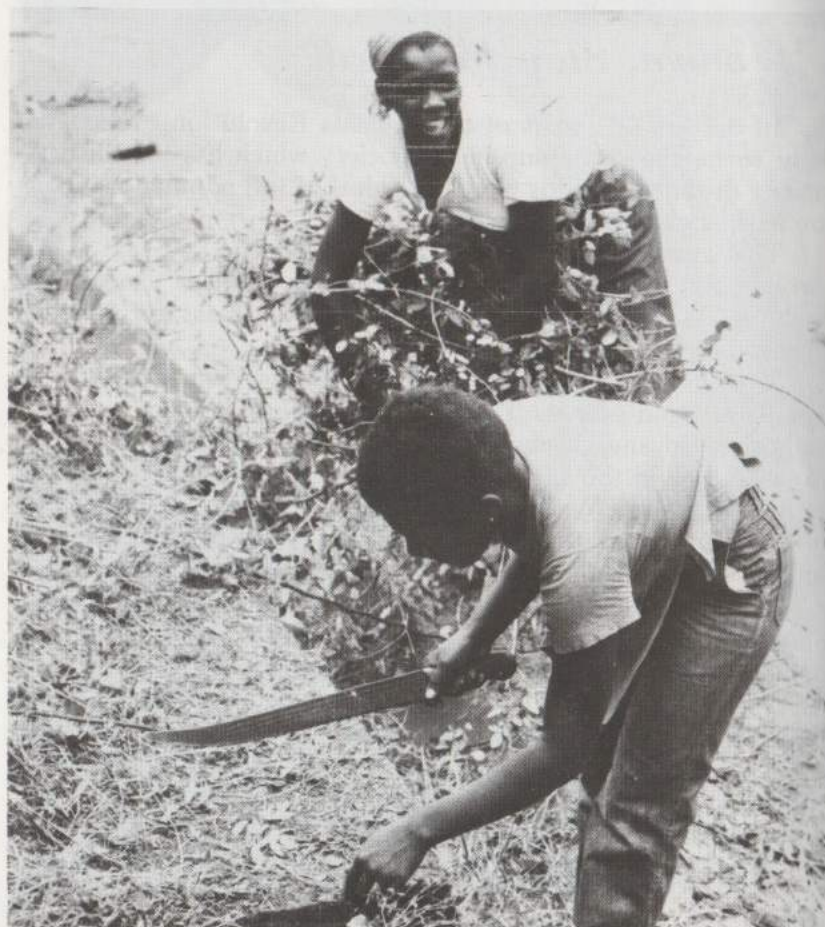
Today's women's movement in Grenada began with the setting up of a Women's Arm of the New Jewel Movement (NJM) in December 1977. This was named the NJM National Women's Organization, comprising 6 groups with 120 members. One year after the Revolution, the NJM-NWO had grown to 21 groups with 400 members.

In May 1980 the decision was taken to throw membership open to "all women who want to see our country develop and

move forward, and our women achieve full equality as part of that process of development". One year after that decision, with a total force of 49 groups and 1,000 members (some of whom have in the past been active campaigners for Gairy) the NWO has undertaken as part of its work programme the creation of 100 new groups.

The new groups are being formed in villages where none exist, as well as in places where the existing group is already too large. The mobilisation is being carried out by already-established groups, who service the new groups until they become independent.

As of July, 1981, the number of NWO groups stood at 94, so that the goal of 100 groups by the end of the year is well within reach. This represents a trebling of the numbers of women organized by the NWO alone.



But women are active in other mass organizations which make them part of a very important process being developed in Grenada today, that of political power exercised through collective action rather than the tug-o'-war of partisan politics.

Women are in the rank-and-file and leadership of the National Youth Organization (NYO), the Parish Councils, the People's Militia, and the various 'Community Action' or 'Community Development' bodies which have sprung up since the Revolution. Women are also part of the changing role of other organizations like the Trade Unions and the Catholic Youth Organization which have taken on an increasingly political role in the participatory climate of the Revolution.

There are other indicators of women's progress.

Leadership training is one prerequisite for the real and functional equality of women, which is often overlooked even by well-meaning governments.

At a national women's Conference held in Grenada early in the Revolution, the observation was made by Sister Beverly Steele, U.W.I. Extra-Mural Tutor for Grenada, that men continue to occupy the upper reaches of political power in most countries of the world because only men are groomed for this; women can get thus far and no further because they are not trained for the exercise of power.

In Grenada this training is an important element of the NWO programme. Regular leadership training courses are held for group executives, and within the groups the policy advocated is one of revolving leadership. Every NWO sister must, in the course of time, hold a post in the group which will give her the experience of leadership and organizational work.

The New Grenada can also boast of a growing number of women in leadership roles in important areas of national development. One female Minister (Sister Jacqueline Creft, Minister of Education) and two female Permanent Secretaries have recently been appointed by the People's Revolutionary Government.

Many of the new programmes set up by the PRG and seen as crucial to the success of the Revolution, have been entrusted to the management of women.

The Centre for Popular Education, Grenada's vital Adult Education programme, has as its director a young woman in her twenties, whose remarkable organizational ability began to be developed by her participation in the NJM-NYO (National Youth Organization).

The National In-Service Teacher Education Programme, started last October to undertake the mammoth task of training

all untrained teachers in the primary and Junior Secondary system, was directed for the first year of its operation by a woman.

The National Director of Tourism is a woman. So are the Secretary for Women's Affairs (not as obvious a step as it might seem — in some Governments this responsibility falls into the portfolio of a man!), the Health Planner, the Head of the Food and Nutrition Council, the Co-ordinator of the Community School Day Programme, the Manager of Grenada's Agro-Industries and the Deputy Manager of the Marketing and National Importing Board. The first Director of the National Co-operatives Development Agency was a woman.

All of these (by no means the complete list) are agencies created by the Revolution for the development of the country and placed under the leadership of women without the least fanfare or self-congratulation on the part of the Government. Women were qualified for the job, in the prevailing atmosphere of encouragement and challenge women accepted the responsibility, so women were placed in these positions. The first time that any public "count" of female administrators was taken was at this year's Women's Day Rally (March 1981) when it dawned on many people for the first time what inroads women had made into this level of public life.



Although the PRG proper is at this moment almost entirely male, there is enough 'grooming' of women taking place for this fact to be modified in the near future. Of course the reality of

political power in Grenada today is such that sitting on the PRG and participating in your local NWO or Community Development Council are all of a piece: the PRG is only the nucleus of a spreading network of collective decision-making and action. There is no over-concentration of power at the pinnacle which would make it imperative for women to be visible in the Top Ten before they could be said to have entered the decision-making process.

The increase of women in the leadership will, however, be important for the sensitizing impact it will have on the consciousness of people, and in particular the way it will affect the self-image of young girls growing up.

Another factor in the development of women since the Revolution is one which benefits the nation as a whole: the dramatic increase in access to education.

The new teacher-training programme alone affects hundreds of women, for here, as elsewhere, they form the majority of teachers. The educational level of women is being raised, too, by programmes such as the Centre for Popular Education, the Institute for Further Education, In-service training programmes for different categories of workers, the new fishing school, farm school and hotel workers' training school, ongoing education programmes within the NWO and other mass organizations, and the wide range of University and technical scholarships offered to Grenada by other countries since the Revolution. The large numbers of women rising in the hierarchy of the Public Service are also exposed to much-needed management training programmes set up for all Public Servants holding positions of responsibility.

Certain policies followed by the Government, from the setting up of the Women's Desk as one of the first acts of the Revolution, to the present-day expansion of the day care facilities for the young have given women the confidence to respond to the challenge of an equal role in the building of the nation. Women are reminded daily of this challenge by huge billboard messages around the country; WOMEN, STEP FORWARD! or WOMEN, EQUAL IN PRODUCTION AND DEFENCE. . .

The creation of day-nurseries and pre-primary schools is a joint venture between NWO and other community groups, and the Government. The groups undertake much of the work of setting them up, including the repair or conversion of old buildings and the making of toys, decorations and furnishings, while the Government provides training and salaries for those who run them.

The Government also gives encouragement, training and financial assistance to NWO groups in the setting up of co-operatives.



An important boost was given to the confidence of the ordinary woman in Grenada when recently the new Maternity Leave Law was tested for the first time in Court.

The proprietress of a St. George's restaurant was charged and convicted under the Maternity Leave Law of 1980. One of her workers, a woman who worked 10 hours a day, 6 days a week for a monthly wage of EC\$100.00, had been dismissed when she was 5 months pregnant. The proprietress was fined and ordered to pay the woman for the time elapsed since the date of her dismissal.

The Secretary for Women's Affairs, Phyllis Coard, was present in the Courtroom which was the scene of a significant clash

between old and new assumptions, not to speak of class interests. The proprietress, defiant to the end, informed the Magistrate that she had never had maternity leave in the days when she had her children; and a learned young lawyer, fresh out of Law School, who happened to be present in Court on other business, rose to her defence with the curious pronouncement that the new Maternity Leave Law of 1980 was "backward and archaic".

Since the case the Women's Desk has been publishing in successive issues of the national newspaper a half-page statement on the Maternity Leave Law, setting out its provisions and urging women to use the protection which it offers them.

This is but an example of the increased attention that is focused upon women and their needs as part of the national effort to bring women into the mainstream.

The organisation of women, the education of women, the experience of leadership, and consistent support, both in word and in deed, from the Government of the country — these are the facts behind the thrilling spectacle of women on the move in Grenada.



3. How Does A Democracy Grow?

Up to March 13th, 1979, "Parliament" used to be a barricaded building in town, York House, where 15 men from the better-off sections of society met once every Gairy's whim to hold debates and take decisions about the affairs of a nation of 110,000 people.

Today in Grenada, Parliament has moved out of town and into the communities. Government has escaped out of York House and spread into community centres, school buildings, street corners, market places, factories, farms and workplaces around the country. Political power has been taken out of the hands of a few privileged people and turned over to thousands of men, women and youth, of all walks of life, in every nook and cranny of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

The Groundwork.

If we look at the great progress the people of this country have already made in developing their own system of government, we would be amazed to think that this had all been achieved in only 2½ years. But the truth is that this process began long before March 13th, 1979.

In the six years of its existence before the Revolution, the New Jewel Movement did not only engage in a struggle against Gairy. It did not struggle to unseat the government of the day only to place itself into exactly the same mould. The great achievement of the pre-revolutionary struggle was not getting rid of Gairy. It was educating and preparing people for a new and better system of government:

"Not just another society
but a just society."

So when, for example, the NJM in 1973 organised a People's Court to try the arrogant landowner Lord Brownlow and forcibly reopen the beach he had closed to the public; when they organized a maroon⁽¹⁾ to repair the dilapidated house of Jeremiah Richardson's ⁽²⁾ family; when they organized parents in the depressed River Road area to set up and run for themselves a day-care centre ⁽³⁾ for their young children; when they launched their network of

(1) Indigenous institution of collective labour.

(2) Jeremiah Richardson was a youth killed on the street in cold blood, in April 1973 by Gairy's police.

(3) Funds were provided by CADEC (Christian Agency or Development in the Caribbean), after a project document was put up by Bernard and Phyllis Coard.



"Freedom Schools"; when the party founded in 1977 the first groups of the National Women's Organization; when they braved brutality and imprisonment to bring out their newsheet which discussed issues of national importance and increased the political awareness of the people; when they organized congresses, mass rallies, parish councils, marches, street-corner raps and house-to-house mobilization, they were not merely fighting Gairy. They were exposing people to the exercise of power; they were showing people what they could achieve if they organized themselves, if they took action collectively.

The campaign continues

These activities were not merely opposition tactics. Other opposition parties in the Caribbean are also seen to organize their supporters into very effective pressure groups while they are fighting for power, but then abandon all such work once they get into power.

This is because the Parliamentary system does not encourage this kind of activity. The system of government that we have inherited in the Caribbean invites us to hand over our political rights to a small group of people who (we hope) will speak and act on our behalf miles away in the chief town where the decisions are made.

We are called upon at five-yearly intervals to choose one person to represent upwards of 10,000 people, and here endeth our political power, for the great majority of us have nothing to do with what is called "politics" from one election to the next.

Our elected representative is under no obligation to consult us or report to us with any regularity. Nothing says that he/she must come into the community every week, or every month, or even every year and hold face-to-face meetings with us, look us in the eye and talk with us. He/she is too busy representing us in town.

In any case there is no way that this representative, with the best will in the world, can know and effectively tend to the needs of the thousands of people that make up a constituency.

No serious attempt is made to have people organize themselves at community level and sort out some of their problems. In the Parliamentary system, the country is run from the capital. Everywhere in the English-speaking Caribbean, institutions of local Government (County Councils and the like) are either non-existent or in a pitiful state of decay.

In this situation, the growth of vocal and vibrant people's organizations in different parts of the country is regarded with suspicion, not actively encouraged. (Note how readily such groups are branded "Communist"). Strong, organized action groups are seen as rivalling the government. In Grenada today, every such group is an active part of the process of government.

Today in Grenada it is the State which actively stimulates and creates the conditions for the healthy growth of mass organization, a process initiated by the NJM in opposition and culminating today in the setting up of a Ministry of National Mobilization.

Today it is clear that the mobilizing work of the New Jewel Movement under the Gairy regime was not merely campaigning for election. It was the introduction of an alternative method of government. It was the beginning of a campaign to involve every Grenadian in the direct exercise of political power.

Creating the conditions

In the first two and a half years of the Revolution there has been a truly impressive upsurge of popular participation. Grenadians have thrown themselves with enthusiasm into the work of building their communities, shaping the destiny of their country.

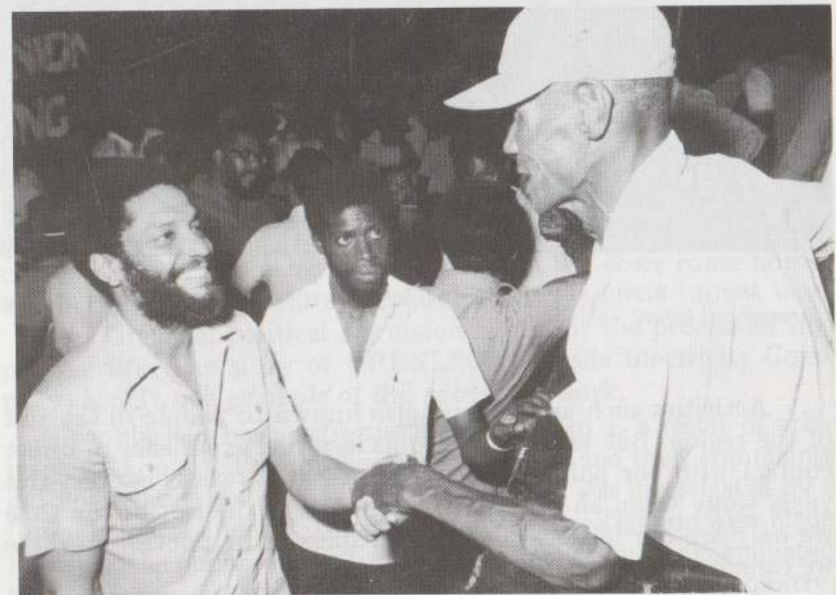
What are the special conditions created in Grenada which are causing people to come out and participate so energetically in the political life of the nation? How is it that Grenada has been able

to achieve this level of people's participation, when in other Caribbean countries people are so turned off that more than half of us do not take up even the crumb of political "power" available to us — the power to cast a silent, furtive vote once in every five years?

The reason why we are witnessing such a healthy development of democracy in Grenada today is that the New Jewel Movement did not follow the path of other opposition parties when they become the Government. The party did not withdraw behind the walls of Parliament to run the country on behalf of the people. The party did not change its colour. It continued to carry out the same activities among the people as before. The only difference is that they were able to increase and intensify these activities a hundredfold.

(i) Ongoing contact between leadership and people.

The People's Revolutionary Government imposes upon itself the strictest obligation never to lose contact with the ordinary Grenadian.



The Prime Minister at a Progressive Farmers' Union Rally.

In the space of any month, members of the PRG cover many miles travelling around the country to go and meet with the people face to face. The leaders of the country regularly visit workplaces

to engage in close conversation with workers. Members of the leadership can be called upon by any organization to participate in a community activity — to speak and answer questions or be part of a panel discussion; the leaders of the New Jewel Movement continue as in the past to hold open-air meetings with villagers at a popular junction or under the eave of a shop, mass rallies in the market square, in the Park, at the airport construction site or on a playing field, and regular indoor sessions on consultation and feedback in every parish of the country.



Prime Minister Bishop and Minister of Agriculture Unison Whiteman visiting a Government estate.

Activities such as these are also known to people in the rest of the region. But we only have this inspiring experience of direct contact with our political visionaries for a few weeks in every five years: only when an election is at hand. For the rest of the time we only see our leaders in the newspapers or on television, where we cannot communicate with them.

It is no wonder, then, that whereas in other Caribbean territories people are so divorced from the process of government that you cannot even get them to register on the voters' list, in Grenada more and more people are coming to see political activity as part of their normal lives, not something to be left up to "politicians".

(ii) Public discussion of national issues

All issues of national importance, all matters which affect the lives of the people are brought to the people for thorough discussion. This is part of the purpose of the leadership circulating among the population — to keep the public up-to-date on developments within their own country and developments in the world which affect the lives of Grenadians, to bring them the facts and to thrash out with them the implications of these facts.

Far from stifling political discussion, there is no government in the region which so persistently calls upon people to analyze and discuss their situation. There is no other territory in the English-speaking Caribbean where political discussion is such a permanent feature of life, and not restricted only to the heat of election campaigns. The leadership of Grenada is the first in the English-speaking Caribbean to so methodically and systematically lay down mechanisms for generating critical discussion, soliciting public comment. In Grenada today it is understood that all the issues can and must be discussed by all the people, if the word "democracy" is to mean anything.

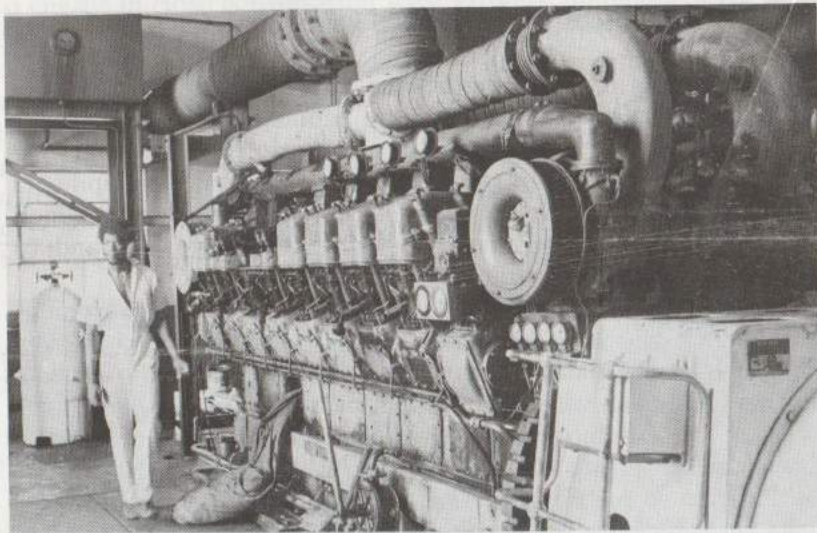
Thus, a fall in the price of cocoa on the World Market is discussed not only by a handful of experts at the top who are assumed to have all the intelligence in these matters, but by groups of small-farmers who are given the facts and figures so that their intelligence might combine with that of the experts in the problem-solving process.

Nor does public discussion take place in a vacuum, as in the much-boasted "free Press" of the Caribbean wherein the concerned citizen can discuss, complain and cuss till the cows come home, without making any dent on the problems.

In Grenada, political discussion is part of the process of improving life. The story of GRENLEC (Grenada Electricity Company) is only one example of this process at work.

People had been suffering great hardship as a result of arbitrary blackouts and mounting electricity rates, and their complaints did not fall on deaf ears. When the Company was investigated by a Commission of Inquiry, the findings of the investigation were made known to the public. This information was consciously disseminated to the people by radio and in live meetings around the country, not merely stored up in a forbidding document that some might read and most would not.

People were assumed to be intelligent enough to be given full information on all aspects of the running of the plant, from the functioning of generators to the economics of a multi-national



A Grenlec Generator.

company operating in the Third World. People discussed the issue. Their verdict: "Heavy, heavy manners".

Thus when the Company was finally taken over by the Government, it was with the full understanding and approval of the people. The announcement was made at a huge rally in the countryside, and greeted with joyful cheering, chanting and dancing.

Today the people have a very real sense of owning this utility. The Company is now run along lines of the strictest principles of worker participation and accountability to the nation.

People now bear with cheerfulness the more rational timetable of power cuts, and are more inclined to co-operate by not wasting electricity.

An American visitor who remarked on the absence of electricity at a certain part of the day was treated to a mild lecture by a hotel waiter: "We have to understand", he explained, "that our Comrades are working on the generators. We must be patient".

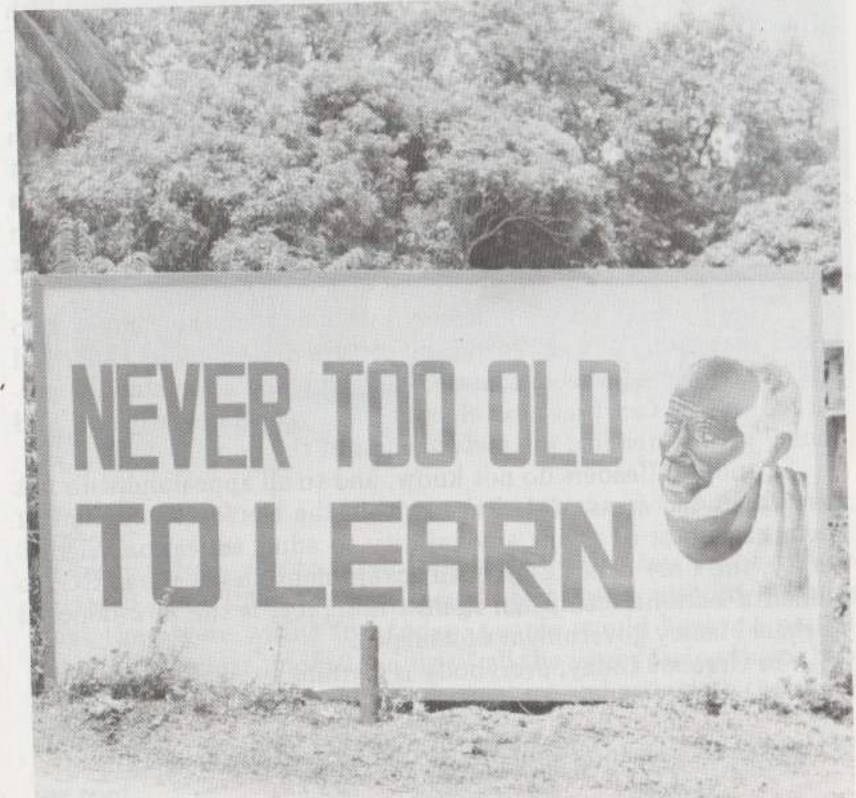
Every major programme launched by the Revolution is first taken to the people for discussion and feedback. Members of the leadership as well as the technical officers responsible for implementation are required to travel around the country to present the programme to the people so that they might ask questions and make comments.

Here again the process is not left up to the more bureaucratic mechanism of casually publishing a printed draft and inviting memoranda — that procedure we in the rest of the Caribbean know is the best way of excluding the participation of all but a

handful of highly literate people. Here again the planners must go out to the people and engage in live discussion with them, so that the final shape of each programme is moulded by the real needs and by the views of people who might not know what a memorandum is, but who have very strong and valid opinions on how a thing should and should not be done.

This was the method used, for example, in developing the Centre for Popular Education, the Maternity Leave Law, the Land Reform and Co-operative Movement and the National In-Service Teacher Education Programme.

Today in Grenada discussion is a duty, meeting is a habit. The scene of 15 men in jacket-and-tie seated amidst the purple and gilt regalia of York House debating and planning for the people, has frozen into past history. Today it is the ordinary citizens of the country who come together in all kinds of settings to deliberate and pronounce upon matters never before entrusted to their wisdom.



Billboard, Sauteurs.

(iii) Adult Education

There is a kind of "democracy" specially approved for Third World countries, that accommodates itself without any trouble to deep and widespread ignorance.

"Look", says the politician to the illiterate, "you don't have to learn how to read, that is not essential. See, we have made it easy for you; we have put little pictures on the ballot paper, so you don't have to be able to read in order to exercise your democratic right. You don't have to be able to write, either — just make an X by this little picture, and your democratically elected representative will take care of everything for you."

In all underdeveloped countries to which "democracy" is exported from the capitalist countries, the continued presence of illiteracy and ignorance is the most glaring evidence of the undemocratic and exploitative nature of the society.

What is the meaning of "democracy" in a situation where people cannot read, write or understand any of the issues which affect them?

Some of the Caribbean leaders who today are self-righteously demanding that there be Westminster-style elections in Grenada, have a terrible stain on their record that they ought really to turn their attention to. They are guilty of calling hundreds, if not thousands, of illiterates to the polls once, twice, three times in a row — election after election — without making any attempt, in power or in opposition, to have these men and women brought into the mainstream of twentieth century civilization.

These leaders do not know how many of the people who voted them into power "read" the picture on the ballot paper and not the name of the candidate. They do not seem unduly perturbed by the fact that next election, five years later, will still find these "voters" reading the picture and not the name.

Caribbean leaders do not know, and to all appearances do not care about the areas of darkness within the electorate, for few of them can boast of giving any priority to adult education. Significantly, the only other Caribbean government, besides the PRG, to launch a national campaign against illiteracy, is the now-deposed Michael Manley government of Jamaica.

In Grenada today, everybody is learning:

"Every student a worker, and
every worker a student."

One of the earliest moves of the Revolution was to confront



Grenada's youngest C.P.E. volunteer teacher, Lyndon Adams of L'Esterre, Carriacou.

illiteracy. There was to be no blindfold democracy in this newly-liberated land. If, in the past, people had voted without knowing what they were voting for, today, people would begin to participate, with a clear understanding of all the issues facing them. People would be able to read, listen, analyze and articulate their own judgements.

In Grenada today the idea of life-long education is firmly taking root.

The Centre for Popular Education has completed one phase of teaching literacy and is now moving to offer adult Grenadians the opportunity of completing their primary education with a programme of basic English, Mathematics, Science and History. Meanwhile, the quality of education for the new generation is being improved through a comprehensive teacher-education programme which began in October 1980, to expose all teachers in the primary and junior secondary sector to weekly tuition and ongoing classroom assistance.

In every sector of production there are training programmes which equip workers to better understand, appreciate and function in the jobs that they are doing. The nation's farmers, nurses, hotel workers, teachers, fishermen, police and public servants benefit from in-service training programmes, Workers' Education classes and scholarships for further training abroad.

Provision for tertiary education has increased from a one-digit figure under Gairy to a three-digit figure today.

When the People's Revolutionary Government came to power it immediately set about paying up long-overdue contributions to the University of the West Indies, so that Grenadian students could once more be admitted as financial members of the regional institution.



N.Y.O. Basic Education Class.

Because of the outpouring of goodwill that the Revolution has attracted from countries around the world, today the Grenada

Government holds more University scholarships than it can immediately use. The educational infrastructure which it inherited was so poor, education, except for an elite had such low priority before, that there are not that many people who at present have the necessary prerequisites. Today the establishment and expansion of free secondary education, with assistance for needy families in the purchase of books and uniforms, has begun to change that picture.

The role of the mass media in Grenada is one that is, not surprisingly, difficult for people in the rest of the Caribbean to understand, accustomed as they are to a decadent newspaper, magazine, radio and television system which has as its two main aims the reaping of profits and the dulling of the senses. This network of persuaders has no interest whatsoever in engaging the mass of the people in any serious analysis of their situation, any fundamental questioning of a *status quo* which manifestly does not cater to the basic human needs of a great many people.



A successful C.P.E. student waits for her certificate at an emulation ceremony.

Never mind the publishing of angry citizens' letters to the Editor, taking up not quite one page of a 20-page tabloid (and crowded out by adverts). Never mind the editorials and analyses that criticize symptoms like poor public facilities and never get down to the root of the disease. The fact that a "serious" newspaper can carry tucked away inside its pages weighty political analyses by U.W.I. luminaries, but reserve its front page for pictures of semi-nude women, provides its own comment on the role of the Press in our Caribbean.

The media in Grenada have moved away from the role of distracting, towards the opposite role of raising people's consciousness. The media do not do grapevine work — the real grapevine is efficient enough at communicating trivialities, scandal and gossip. The media function instead as an important agent of public education, part of the whole development effort.

The education of Grenadians also proceeds through regular panel discussions, film shows, lectures and study groups, activities held not only in the capital but around the country, in every community.

Another factor that has contributed enormously to the increased awareness and sophistication of Grenadians young and old is the fact that Grenada has, since the Revolution been the venue of a stream of international conferences, seminars and conventions, the proceedings of which are fed into the general education of Grenadians, via the media or through open sessions and public meetings addressed by the visitors, in which the people participate with great interest. The institution of "Solidarity Days" is also responsible for the new exposure of Grenadians to international



African Liberation Day, 1981.

affairs. Special dates are set aside for the expression of solidarity with other struggling peoples around the world. For example, the anniversary date of the assassination of Salvador Allende is observed as a day of solidarity with the people of Chile. Solidarity Day observances include radio programmes, panel discussions, film shows and rallies where the history, culture and present situation of these countries are outlined to Grenadians.

The mass organizations have their own education programmes, including training in leadership and organizational skills which are essential if people are to truly run their own affairs, if "People's Power" is to be anything but a slogan.

One of the most interesting illustrations of the drive to educate people about matters which affect their lives, is the new format of the Budget presentation.

There is an image that I carry in my memory, of the political life of my own country, which today seems like a scene from a surrealist film: the presentation of the Budget, televised for those who wish to endure it; the voice of the Minister of Finance reading, reading for hours to a Parliament of stranded penguins (jacketed-and-tied); and right under his sheaf of papers, right in the front bench, a Minister is sleeping, almost dribbling, shaking himself awake and then dozing off again . . .

The very first Budget of the Revolution was presented to the people at Queen's Park, open-air venue of mass national rallies. Anybody who was sleepy would have been jolted out of it by the regular bursts of cheering, laughter, chanting, thunderous standing ovations.

Budget Day in Grenada is a revolutionary institution, shaped by the whole principle of education for participation. Budget Day is a cross between a rally and a seminar. The National Budget, with all the most intricate concepts of economics translated into popular idiom and imagery, is presented to an audience of hundreds — ordinary working people from around the country: farmers, fishermen, housewives, businesspeople, roadworkers, called to hear at first hand, and to understand fully, how their national resources will be deployed into development.

The time cannot be too far distant when the people will advise the Ministry of Finance in budgetary matters, for they too are gaining an understanding of once-esoteric concepts such as capital and recurrent expenditure, subsidization of commodities, balance of payments, etc. Here, as in other areas of national life, real democracy becomes possible because of the information that is transferred to the people.

There is no power without knowledge, democracy and ig-

norance cannot co-exist — the one negates the other.

(iv) The fostering of group activity

In our Caribbean societies the old spirit of communalism is not yet quite dead. Everywhere one can find traces of institutions and attitudes of co-operativeness — the extended family, the close-knit religious organizations, the sou-sou, the practice of collective labour known variously as the coup-de-main, coumbite, gayap, maroon. Joining hands, pooling energies, ideas and material resources still seems, to many Caribbean people, the right and natural thing to do.



Community Work: cleaning roadsides.

But with the rapid Americanization of our region, there is little to save us from the monstrous individualism and self-seeking that lie at the very root of modern Western society. In some of the more “developed” Caribbean territories today, co-operation is viewed as sentimentality — feathering your own nest is the smart thing to do.

The “democracy” of the Western world bears the mark of this individualism: the citizen participates in the political process by going into a private booth, silently registering one’s vote, and then going home again to mind one’s own business.

It is another kind of political process entirely which insists

upon human interaction, which dares to educate its citizens to the power of association.

It is this power, visibly at work in Grenada, which makes it so important for this island to be isolated from the rest of the region, through a slanderous Press campaign and any other means available. The power of people banding together is a truly “dangerous” example to other countries like Grenada.

In a population of 110,000 people, there are an estimated 400 established groups operating across the country, and the strength and scope of these organizations is constantly growing. It is reckoned that already one out of every five Grenadians belongs to an organization.

The atmosphere of the Revolution has stimulated the formation of countless new groups and the revival of groups which had become defunct. But another development has been that organizations which have never seen themselves as “political” are today associating themselves with the development of the country.



Community School Repair: Mount Moritz.

The people of Grenada are organized into Farmers’ Unions, Trade Unions, Community Work Brigades, The National Students’ Council, The Pioneer Movement, The National Youth Organization, the National Women’s Organization, NJM Party Support Groups, The People’s Militia, Co-operatives; religious, sporting, and cultural groups, and a host of action groups springing up to deal with the problems of specific communities: the Hermitage Union of Revolutionary Youth (HURY), the Mardi Gras Action Movement, The St. Paul’s Community Development Council, and other “Community Improvement” or “Citizens’ Action” groups.

In March 1973, two organizations merged to form the present vanguard party of the Revolution. Both of these organizations presented, in their very names, the principle of people joining forces for progress; Movement for Assemblies of the People (MAP) and the Joint Endeavour for the Welfare, Education and Liberation of the People (JEWEL). Translated into national policy this means that everything is done to encourage and support group activity and the growth of mass organizations.

Since the coming of the Revolution no less than 4 community centres have been built, another is under construction and 5 on the drawingboard. Not only do these centres provide a venue for the activity of community groups, but they are a powerful monument to joint action: the very construction, maintenance and administration of the buildings are undertaken by the community.



Community Work: The building of Birchgrove Community Centre.

All community groups have ready access to the media. Groups may call their members together or notify the community of forthcoming activities by means of the national radio station. An hourly radio programme is devoted to providing this service. The achievements and ongoing activities of groups are also given full coverage in the Press, inspiring other people to join in nation-building and setting up a process of emulation which spurs people on to greater heights of collaboration.

A special unit of the Ministry of Communications and Works has been placed at the disposal of all community groups for the supply of materials. Any community group that wishes to mend a

bridge, pave a drain, erect a standpipe, paint a school or undertake any other project for the maintenance of community property, can obtain the necessary materials and technical advice from this unit.

Voluntary community work is generally undertaken along the lines of the old "maroon". Villagers contribute items of food and drink, and a large pot of oil down or pelau bubbles away in the open air while the bottle makes its round and work proceeds to the accompaniment of banter and good cheer. The Revolution has assured the survival of an institution that is dying out elsewhere in the region.

Grenadians are reminded in this song of the TGNYO (Theatre Group of the National Youth Organization) that the work of the Revolution fits in with the spirit of their culture:

"Co-operatives
Is nothing new to us
We accustom helping one another
We accustom living like brother
and Sister."



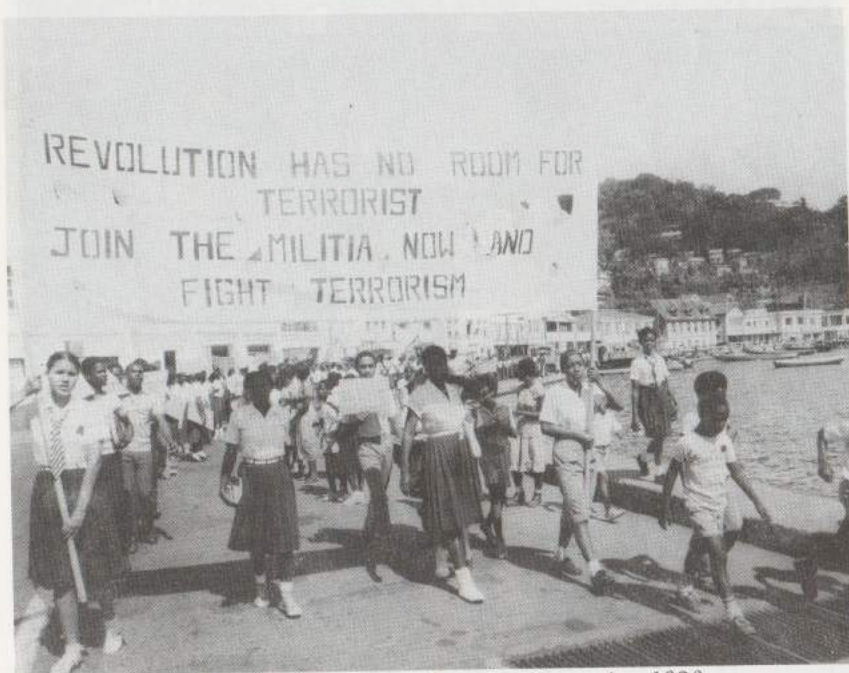
Community Work: Reconstructing a bridge.

The development of co-operatives is a major thrust of the Revolution. Through the National Co-operatives Development Agency (NACDA) groups all over the country are given assistance in forming themselves into co-operatives; NACDA provides training, loans, land and equipment to these groups.

Apart from the fostering of group activity on the ground, the regularity with which rallies and other large meetings are called is an important factor in the growth of the habit of association.

Large meetings which bring together people who all the while are working in smaller groups within their community, give Grenadians a sense of the magnitude of their Revolution, a sense of their own strength, the strength of a united people.

Thus the explosion of a bomb at a rally, even if it does not achieve its primary aim of annihilating the leadership, could have the side-effect of scaring people away from mass gatherings, cutting them off from this major source of inspiration and motivation. But clearly, the experience of coming together with thousands of other Revolutionaries to draw more fervour and determination from each other and from the leaders of the Revolution is not one that Grenadians will easily relinquish today.



Schoolchildren march against Reaction November 1980.

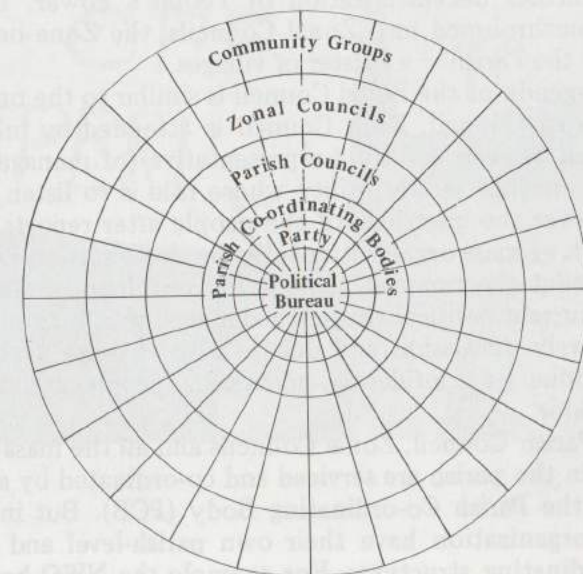
The 20th of June, 1980, the day after the bombing, brought out thousands upon thousands of Grenadians marching in close and massive ranks behind their leaders, to demonstrate the power of human solidarity against terror and death.

It is the same solidarity that today in Grenada is beating back the frontiers of underdevelopment. The dead-letter "Freedom of Association" of our Westminster constitutions takes on real meaning in the context of this Revolution.

"Is Freedom We Making!"

How does all this add up to a system? Today's organization of People's Power has grown up from the ground in a framework which began to be developed even before the Revolution by the New Jewel Movement. The NJM continues to provide both the mobilizing energy and the organizational initiative, but what is emerging in Grenada today has nothing to do with structures imposed from above. What we are privileged to be part of today is the evolution of a People's Constitution, a Constitution which will be committed to paper only after it has proven its worth, only when Grenadians are satisfied that it is the best possible way of ensuring their full democratic rights.

The following chart offers a simple picture of the present stage of the system's evolution:



The embryo out of which this has grown is the stubborn, heroic underground network of NJM organizations which survived years of repression to flower today into a thriving system of popular participation.

Under the Gairy regime, cells of the NJM all over the country elected representatives from among their number to meet in a central assembly called the National Co-ordinating Council of Delegates. About 9 months before the Revolution the party moved to broaden its co-ordinating activities with the institution of Parish Councils, gatherings held in private homes or at a secluded outdoor venue such as a supporter's backyard garden. These councils discussed broad national issues as well as specific problems facing the people of the Parish.

For about one year of the Revolution, NJM Parish Councils continued to be a caucus of the strongest supporters. Then the New Jewel Movement opened the ranks of its mass organizations, the NWO, the NYO and party support groups, to all Grenadians who stood for the same ideals of justice, peace and material progress for the people of the country.

It also instituted mass Parish Councils which were attended by members of the newly-broadened NJM groups and their invitees, as well as members of other organizations working in the interest of community and country.

Parish Councils met monthly. But in the space of a year this assembly grew so dramatically that the time had come to introduce an even further decentralization of People's Power. The Parish Councils mushroomed into Zonal Councils, the Zone being a subdivision of the Parish — a cluster of villages.

The agenda of the Zonal Council is similar to the one evolved by the Parish Council. Each Council is attended by members of the Political Bureau and by a representative (of managerial level) of one or another public utility whose role is to listen, to speak and to answer the questions of the people after reports are given of the work of mass organizations, the implementation and impact of government programmes, the specific problems of the community. The current political situation is outlined by a Bureau member. There is lively discussion and debate with citizens striding up to take the mike or confidently addressing people and leadership from the floor.

The Parish Council, Zonal Councils and all the mass organizations within the parish are serviced and co-ordinated by a committee called the Parish Co-ordinating Body (PCB). But in addition the mass organization have their own parish-level and national-level co-ordinating structures. For example the NWO has its own

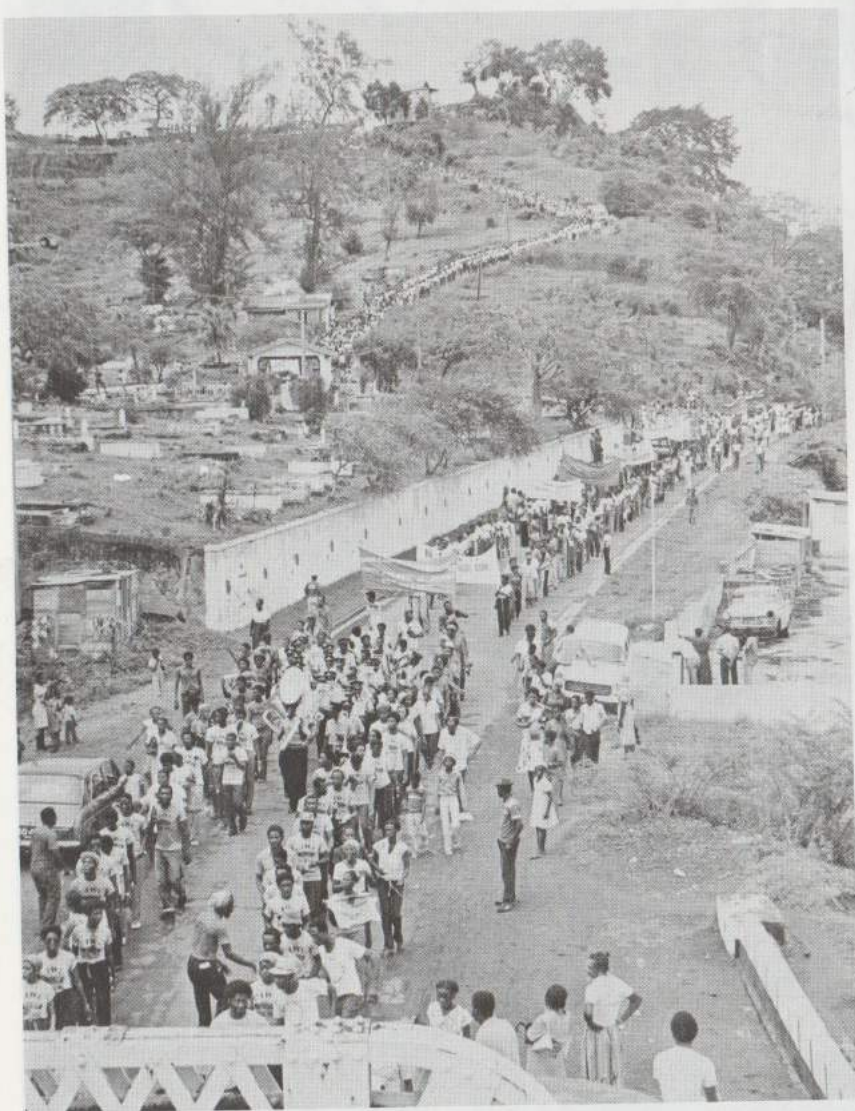
National Executive, Parish Co-ordinating Teams and Women's Parish Council. There has recently come into existence a vibrant Workers' Parish Council, co-ordinated by the Workers' Committee of the Party.

The institutions of democracy are still in the making. The people of Grenada are feeling their way towards a mode of genuine self-government, to replace a system which slid too easily into a nightmare of repression. This process must be allowed to continue and complete its work. The wisdom of this people must be respected: is freedom they making.





June 20th 1980: the day after the counter-revolutionary bombing. Grenadians in their thousands take to the streets.



May Day 1981: Grenada Forwarding.

njm's statement of principles

WE STAND FOR:

- 1 PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION, PEOPLE'S POLITICS, PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY
- 2 PEOPLE'S COOPERATIVES FOR THE COLLECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEOPLE
- 3 HEALTH CARE BASED ON NEED
- 4 FULL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S TALENTS, ABILITIES AND CULTURE
- 5 FULL CONTROL AS A PEOPLE OF OUR OWN NATURAL RESOURCES
- 6 EMPLOYMENT FOR ALL
- 7 A DECENT STANDARD OF LIVING FOR EVERY FAMILY
- 8 FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND RELIGION
- 9 THE LIBERATION OF BLACK AND OPPRESSED PEOPLES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD
- 10 A UNITED PEOPLE...A NEW SOCIETY...A JUST SOCIETY

Promises made 1976. Promises being fulfilled.

4. Grenadian Voices.



CATHERINE VENTOUR is a 72-year-old great-grandmother who lives and gardens in Birchgrove, her lifetime home. She is the mother of Scotilda Noel, the pioneer N.W.O. activist, who was killed in a road accident in late 1979.

"Before Gairy came it was peace. We didn't have much, but we had peace. Then Gairy came with violence and robbing people things. His men come and take what they want from people garden. Then the Mongoose men come and do what they want. They shoot people, you couldn't speak your mind, you couldn't walk the road. You had no kind of freedom at all.

I am with the Revolution and the Government one thousand and nine per cent! At the time of the June 19th Bomb I was there, sitting right behind the Prime Minister. Right now I'm feeling happy, but you know you can't really be happy with all this Reagan business carrying on. You always have to be in fear.

My daughter Scotilda was a very good helper of the Revolution. She goes out every day, negotiating for the people, and she had to do it in secret, because if the other side knew, then her life is in danger. They threaten her many times, she was a wanted one. But she was very brave, she had no fear. She just made up her mind to stand up, come what may. She never did anything she didn't consult me. She always comes and tell me, 'Mummy, look so, look so so'. I myself was a strong NJM supporter. I always tell her, 'Go on girl, try your best because you working for the future of your children and the future of Grenada.'

After the Revolution we formed our women's groups here in Birchgrove. Progress gave me a new energy. I wanted to fight on for my grandchildren, because I saw it was some future. Long before the Revolution the NJM always sold their papers, they had to hide and sell them, so you had some insight of what was coming, what was going to take place. And then when God see the time which He should release us from the devil, then He release us. Gairy was a real devil man. He have no love for the poorer class of people, he only pretending to them he have.

The Revolution make me young again. I young now as if I just in me teens! Me energy come through that happiness of the Revolution. Long live the Revolution! Long live Maurice Bishop and his party! And we praying for them day and night, because they not seeking for one and not for the other, they seeking for all people, from a baby to the old.

So now I trying to carry on the work of Scotilda in the N.W.O. I like this kind of movement. I like something forward, not something backward. Women is real, real out now, you know. Before, they had no kind of say, no privilege, no stand in Grenada. Women was the lowest. But now we pushing on, pushing on. We feeling more confident, we heart is open now.

When we built the Community Centre here in Birchgrove, we drogue stones from the river and carry them to the spot where they was building. And when they was laying the foundation was we who help to spread the cement.

All them Reagan people, you have to tell them to come and see with their own eyes, what they going about with is false. Grenada is only with Grenada now. We want to help. Progress is making in Grenada, is not what they saying. Grenada is a quiet and nice place, it was only Gairy that cause this violence, getting people to rob and going on. Otherwise Grenada was a sweet, sweet place. But now you know, plenty of them Gairyite supporting the Revolution. A lot of changes in the children now, you see, and in the youths. Before they had no facilities which cause

in their shell. I could remember talking to a few of them during the campaign of 1976. They were responding to the call of the New Jewel Movement but they were still afraid to come out because of the Mongoose Gang, and their children have to go to school.

So being a bus driver, after the Revolution I saw the need, not only for more food, but also for employment. There were plenty youths just hanging around on the block, and 95% of the small farmers were working their gardens and small plots higher up from the village. They had yam, cocoa, peas and sweet potato; just for them to survive, nothing big to push out in the Market.

So I had a meeting with the youths and showed them the need for a co-operative. I tried to persuade them that there was no room for them in the city because of the high rate of unemployment. I thought it was best for them to go back to the land and form a co-operative. The response was good; so we sent a letter to the Ministry of Labour, and they gave us the 32 acres of land from a government estate in Perseverance.

We had to take weeks to cut down the high woods. Every day we had meetings and I tried to show them that what we were doing was not just for tomorrow but for the future. We approached NACDA, and they promised us that if we had the mind to stick together, they'd give us a small sum of money to keep us going, for wages and tools. So they gave us \$500.00 for cutlasses and forks, and we could all have something to go by. And then when we had six months, they gave us a loan of \$22,000.00 so we could get plants and cultivate the land.

The first six months was the hardest, so to keep up the enthusiasm, I tried to keep them in a maroon form by everybody in the morning bringing what they could to cook. The maroon form is the way we pass round the village and ask people to give us help. Some give us corn, some give peas and yam. Then we put all together and cook, and those who come in the maroon form on a Saturday is free community work. The maroon spirit is one of the best we have right now, because the people getting the feeling that they together again. And maroon form is what we always do, our ancestors too, so is very close to co-operatives, and with the Government getting us together again, the people feeling like they are in maroon form all the time!

Afer six months we produced pumpkin, and we sold a few hundred pounds worth to the Marketing Board. Then we planted bananas, which will be ready in two months. We get cash from the Marketing Board and the money we make goes in the bank to save, and we pay weself \$6.50 a day. Then, if a month comes and we doesn't make so much money, then immediately we cut down we

wages to a lower bracket, and the weeks that we make, we bring it up back.

We has a Secretary, trained by NACDA, I the Manager, and a President, also trained by NACDA, and six co-operators. The co-operative has made a big difference to the village. The people now seeing about co-operatives, and other groups looking to see how to go into them. They talking about a Bakery and shoemaking, and the unemployed youths looking forward to it. Some of them even coming into our own part-time, sleeping in the house we put up, eating and drinking with us. The whole community is now looking on the cooperative side, like the maroon coming alive, taking a new form, like when we were building the house on the land, all the people work free. We just make a pass around and ask for carpenters, and they came free, for no money.

The co-operative do a lot to change me around. In the old days, driving the bus, I never had no time to talk to people. Now I have to be talking to people every day, showing them the ways of getting through. I always try to tell them this country need people like we, without we everything is going to fall. The Revolution is on we backs, we have to keep on going.

I used to be ignorant of agriculture, but now I moving through experience, I gather a lot which I have to share between the neighbours. I learn a lot! The co-operative work is much harder than driving a bus, but when you put your back to it, you just have to make it easy. As a bus driver you just drive down the road if you get, and pick up in the market, but in a co-operative you have to be with the plants and stick behind it, and use all your skills and wits to survive. It's much harder, but I did it in order to build. I have been supporting the Revolution for the longest while, and if I didn't do such a thing the village would remain just as it was. But now the people are free, the whole country is more lively and getting together. They's more ready to work, there's much more unity, like in this calypso which I wrote, which I call 'Builders and Defenders':

*Why bad talk me, it is plain to see,
Take a trip and see for yourself
It was never so, it's better for sure
We are moving to higher heights, I'm sure.*

CHORUS:

*We are building and defending our Revolution.
We are building and defending our Revolution.*

This ent no joke, this ent no sport,

*We are working to build our Airport,
Any country feel they could stop we
Tell them for me please don't worry.*

*All my people in this country
We are living like one big family,
Oh my leaders, they fight the struggle
Just to get rid of imperialism.*

*As far as I see, as much as I know
There's no more dictator in this country,
Mr. Tourist, you are welcome
To the beautiful land called Grenada."*



PATSY ROMAIN is 26, and is from Byelands. She worked as a Shop Assistant and in Accounts for four years. She is the mother of four children, and now works full-time for the National Women's Organization.

"People who opposed Gairy always lived in fear. Our own home was searched by his Mongoose men on many occasions. They said they were looking for arms and ammunition. My husband had a truck and he spoke out against Gairy everywhere, so we were always victimised. People were always saying 'who next' would be searched, and women were particularly afraid to speak in case their husbands or children were victimised.

Women usually had to sell their bodies to get work, either to Gairy himself or his Ministers. Other women who spoke out against the rising costs of sugar or other goods would find victimisation for themselves and their families. Other women who spoke out, like nurses, would be transferred to Carriacou or far away from their homes.



ROY COOPER aged 40, was born in Boca, and is a Mason by profession. He works as a supervisor at the Queen's Park Quarry, controlling the sifting of gravel and the making of concrete culverts.

"Before the Revolution life was bitter, real bitter. There wasn't much work, and the society was so structured that if you didn't support Gairy you'd be victimised. So we had to organize and fight against him.

Once, the Mongoose men attacked a group of us and killed our Comrade, Harold Strachan. We fought them back, but then they charged us for the death of Harold. It was a frame-up, and Gairy had us spend two months in Richmond Hill Prison. It was a tiny cell, no bed, we had just our underpants. It was Brothers Bish and Radix who defended us in Court and the Judge had to set us free. They fought hard for us like they do for all the people, to get us freedom from oppression.

Seeing my best friend Harold killed made me more resolute and firm. I became more involved in the New Jewel Movement,

and we decided we were never going to give up. We organized ourselves democratically, and through this, people began to get a clearer picture of the way we had to fight. In those days we couldn't use mikes, so we used funnels. Sometimes the Mongoose men tried to mash up the meetings, so we had to organize secret parish councils in places where they couldn't discover us, and then we'd discuss together the way to go forward. They were like the ancestors to the big Parish Councils we have now.

When the Revolution came I greeted it with glory. It was the only democratic process that could rescue the people from poverty and backwardness. After the Revo I came here to work. Gairy had closed the works down, so the Party decided to give the people work. We had to re-make everything here. But the workers were feeling real happy when we re-opened, and they worked harder, with a better understanding. And we have a lot of improvements. There is better discipline, the workers realize they must work hard if the Revolution is going to grow and their children are going to enjoy a good life.

I'm a member of the Executive of the Technical and Allied Workers' Union. Since the Revo we are trying to re-structure the old, colonial trade union attitude and trying to create more democracy by regular meetings, and calling on the workers for more participation. We have more general meetings now, and bring all the workers down with free transport, and they are allowed to leave work an hour early. We get much greater attendance, and more suggestions and criticism. Before they didn't even know the people on the executive. Now they elect them, and they all take part. We organize fund-raising to make ourselves stronger, and to assist the workers. We take up mass mobilisation of our people's grievances. Like, for example, one of our workers just had a stroke, so we are negotiating a half salary for him for five years, and after that he'd get his pension.

I have daily raps with the workers, telling them about how they must get involved, and trying to get them to compare the present situation with what happened in the past. We have 75 women workers here and they are particularly grateful for the law against sexual exploitation. We had a foreman who tried to seduce the women before giving them work, and he once slapped up a female worker on the job. We stepped on him and he was fired forthwith. The women were glad. They saw it as another revolution!

I've also been involved in the Militia at Boca, mobilising people to join our unit. We call it Camp Harold, after our Comrade. I also try to raise funds for our Zone Council, and we've organized

bingos and dances, and done well so far.

I call those people who continue to tell lies about us, imperialist slaves and stooges. If I met them straight, I'd say, 'what do you see best for the people right now'? And I'd tell them the difference between then and now, and say 'the workers are so satisfied and understood about their new era, and you and nobody can't fool them, no matter how much propaganda you spread'. And at work here we'd discuss all these lies and also pass resolutions, like we did against Reagan and the American manoeuvres.

Democracy is where one knows and can give a good picture of where your Government is going, why they are going there and what you would enjoy and benefit on reaching there. We serve this end by keeping in line with the party structure and carrying out the plans. Then if I suggest things — like I came up with the idea of Workers' Education on the job, then I discuss it with my Union and they take it up with the party, and the next thing we know we get two blackboards, and it begins! The Union must play a great role in removing illiteracy. We must have Workers' Education, you must be educated politically in order to defend yourself politically and participate and to know which kind of democracy can benefit the people. Imperialism is very frightened of us getting that kind of education.

Imperialism has its own kind of what it calls democracy, and uses it to exploit the people and keep the workers ignorant. Every five years they come to you, beat steelband and give you twenty dollars to get you to vote for them and give you a lot of lies and false promises, and getting people divided and fighting each other. What we have here in Grenada is revolutionary people's democracy, a revolution of people's participation, of power in the hands of the people. We have a people's Government and a people's democracy, and now all the people in Dominica, St. Vincent and them other islands, they saying, 'why can't we have house repairs, or free milk, or dentists or free secondary education and free school uniforms like it have in Grenada now?' You see, they seeing that Grenada has a Government which respects the workers, and us, the workers are right with the Government neck-and-neck!"



DORCAS BRAVEBOY is from Sauteurs. After leaving St. George's Anglican High School with seven 'O' levels, she worked in an office for two years before going to England to train as a nurse.

During her five years there she was active in London and Luton, both in the W.I. Student Movement and in the struggle against placing West Indian children in educationally sub-normal schools. She returned to the Caribbean in 1973, and worked for four years in Trinidad hospitals, specialising in Cancer therapy.

In September 1979 she returned home to Grenada, where she worked in nursing, then in a family business and then as a teacher. In July 1981 she was appointed Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health.

'When I came back to Grenadà I tried to discover how I could fit back in and best support the Revolution. I checked the Women's Desk for information about the N.W.O. and in December 1979 attended the N.W.O. Conference. I had never

seen such democracy in Grenada or such a high level of organization. Every group had at least two delegates and each parish had representation on the National Executive.

I attended many rallies and panel discussions, and while I was working for my mother-in-law's patisserie, near the Law Courts in St. John's Street, I observed the trials of the Budhlall brothers and others involved in the June 19th bombing. I couldn't help comparing the very humanitarian way they were being treated to the terrible death of the three sisters. So I concluded that we must have some very humanitarian leaders.

This caused me more and more to want to take part in the Revolutionary process. After I moved to Westerhall with my family, I saw that there was no N.W.O. group there, so I spoke to Sister Coard at the Women's Desk, and she said: "Well Sister, go ahead and form one"! So I went straight back and got down to work. I helped organise a Cake and Pastry Sale which got some Sisters together. Then I contacted the C.P.E. people locally and got in touch with some more Sisters — and at the C.P.E. Emulation day we were so crowded out, there wasn't enough room for everybody! We were helping each other, the C.P.E. and the N.W.O., and we realized that our people in Westerhall were ready for mobilisation because they were beginning to see clearly the gains of the Revolution.

Then I decided I needed some experience of education and some more insight into the changes of our society. I became a teacher in South St. George's School and joined the National In-Service Teacher Education Programme, one of the most innovative programmes of the Revolution. This again reinforced my belief in the importance of training in the future of our country.

Meanwhile, in Westerhall we were having regular N.W.O. meetings, and as our group expanded we took advice from the Executive and had a boost from the visit of Sister Isabella from the Cuban Women's Organization, who told us about the importance of record-keeping and documenting our process and how to do house-to-house mobilisation, so we could persuade other sisters to join us. And by the time of the first emulation we had formed a second group in Westerhall.

I soon found myself involved in other organizations. There was our local Party Support Group. Now this takes in the men, and we must include them! We have a matriarchal family organization here, and so we must involve the men, in order that they don't hold back the sisters and say they can't go out at nights. Our P.S.G. became very active and engaged many men in the process with panel discussions and film shows.

But it was the women who held the group together, and they all began to take strength from each other. We supported the P.S.G. with our full might, and the N.Y.O. too. We worked at cleaning out drains in the community and particularly in the clean-up campaign to prevent the Dengue Fever.

Then I became involved in the Militia. It was clear that if we wanted the Revolution to succeed, then we had to be prepared to defend it. So I started training in my unit, and tried to persuade the other sisters to join in. Many of them said they didn't want to fire a gun, and so went into the service or medical sections. But when they got accustomed to gunfire, they started joining the infantry too.

All this exposure to the mass organizations helped me enormously when I became Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health. It had been a real and practical Management Training. I had learned Management skills and how to make decisions actually in the field. It also made it difficult for me to become bureaucratic.

We inherited very bureaucratic practices from British Colonialism, but all this activity and democratic participation in the mass organisations acts to finish with that. The groups wouldn't allow me to become bureaucratic. I still take part in their activities. I have to make myself constantly available, and my participation in the democratic organizations acts as a guarantee against my turning bureaucratic.

I cannot make sensible and practical decisions sitting at a desk in the capital. I must be out with the people, me checking on them and they checking on me, if I am going to be effective. You have to be out there with the masses, otherwise you can't experience what they're talking about. Anyone who comes to see me, I must see, they mustn't go away without seeing me. When the complaints stop coming it means that either we have won and improved the conditions out there, or we have become bureaucratic.

For example, we're having Primary Health Care introduced on a mass basis in Grenada. We're decentralising our hospitals and health institutions. So my experience out there in the mass organizations is going to be invaluable in getting these programmes going. I already have a knowledge of the democratic structures at work out there, and the constraints and problems we face. The mass organisations are our new infrastructure, and the N.W.O., for example, will have a crucial role in organizing the Primary Health Care. The local branches will form the infrastructures that will help to apply it. Without the backing of the mass organiza-

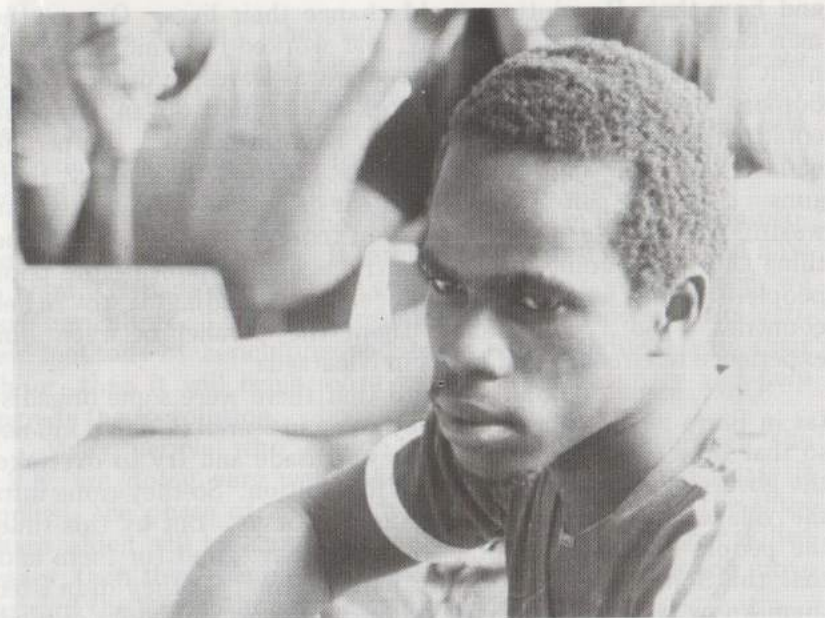
tions and their involvement in the community, this task would have to be postponed.

Mass representation of the people is true democracy, and because I have observed any participated in this process, I am so deeply committed to the Revolution in my country. We are awakening the awareness of the people with all our mass organizations and Government programmes, our Socialism classes and panel discussions. And when we awaken their awareness they are going to be looking at things and events in a new light, and they will exercise their right to criticise, based on the knowledge they will have. And us, the Permanent Secretaries and leaders are not going to be excluded from this process. We shall be scrutinised, and that's the surest guarantee that our development here will be a truly democratic one. If you have a Government that is truly educating all the people into what is happening in their country and you are training them to be critical, then you can never be bureaucratic because the people are monitoring your every action.

So we can't fall short, otherwise they would let us know soon enough!"



National Youth Organisation: Skills Training at 1981 camp.



JAMES 'SKEFFIE' WILSON is 19 and comes from Beausejour in Grenada's sister island of Carriacou. He was a volunteer teacher in the Centre for Popular Education when he was chosen, in October 1980, to help in the Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade in a village on the English-speaking eastern coastline of Nicaragua. Since his return he has been organising the National Youth Movement in Carriacou.

'I didn't have any primary school teaching experience before I went to Nicaragua. I had applied myself in the first phase of the C.P.E. in Grand Mal village in Grenada, teaching youths between the ages of ten and eighteen. Then I worked here in Carriacou.

The name of the place where I worked in Nicaragua was Barra de Rio Maiz. It was a very small village surrounded by river, sea, coconut plantations and swamplands. It had a population of about sixty people and fifty five of them were illiterate when we arrived. To begin with, thirty one enrolled for literacy classes and I personally was given five students. No news of Grenada had ever reached there, especially that place which was very underdeveloped. So I arrived from a country they had never heard of! But I told them that ours was a revolutionary country too, and what we were doing in our revolution here, and how we had been in the darkness ourselves under Gairy. So then they began to realise how much they had been in the darkness under Somoza

and how their Revolution could change their lives. One of the men there said: 'We had nothing, and worked from morning until night and our labour was in vain. We was slaves, in other words.' Somoza only cared about the work they could do and how he could exploit them in that country. Even in hunting, the people had to use their bare hands because Somoza took away their guns. He didn't care if they could eat or not, he only wanted the wealth from those people. And of course, that was the same thing Gairy was doing in our country — only exploiting the poor people, taking what they produced and sending it to richer countries. So I could show them the parallel between our experience in Grenada and theirs in Nicaragua.

Once, some Somozistas heard that there were some brigadistas in Barra de Rio Maiz. So they came in search of us, to kill us, so that they could stop the Literacy Crusade and try to overtake the government and turn back the Revolution. So they came into the village armed with guns and asked for us. But by this time the people had realised what we were doing good for them and that the Somozistas would only harm them. So they didn't let them know who we were. We hid our uniforms and books around the lagoon at the backs of the houses and stayed there in the yards as if we were Nicaraguans. They came very close to us and passed by us with their guns while the villages spoke to them in Spanish. But they didn't find us because the people in that community told the Somozistas that we were their brothers and sisters or even their wives. So they went away without knowing who we were. So the families of Barra de Rio Maiz were very faithful and loyal to us, and saved us from getting killed. And those Somozistas knew that the Crusade was very dangerous for them because it would expose all their tricks and oppression of the people.

In the C.P.E. programme here, I can use a lot of things that I learned in Nicaragua. For example, the value of patience. I learned a lot about that there. When people began to boycott classes we had to talk and talk with them to persuade them to come back and study — we had to be patient. Before I went I had no patience at all! So the type of patience that I learned in Nicaragua, I can put to good use here. Now I think I can persuade people and talk to them much more patiently about why they should join the C.P.E.

You know that in Grenada too, counters are against the C.P.E. I had come up against them here, I was accustomed to them. So that perhaps was why I wasn't frightened of them in Nicaragua. They always act like this, they will always try to stop

a progressive nation. They say the same things here and there. They say that you must have illiteracy, that you can't educate everyone or teach everyone how to read and write. They say they hadn't learned it during six or seven years of school, and now you want them to get to learn it in just four months! But we showed them we could do it, in Nicaragua and Grenada!

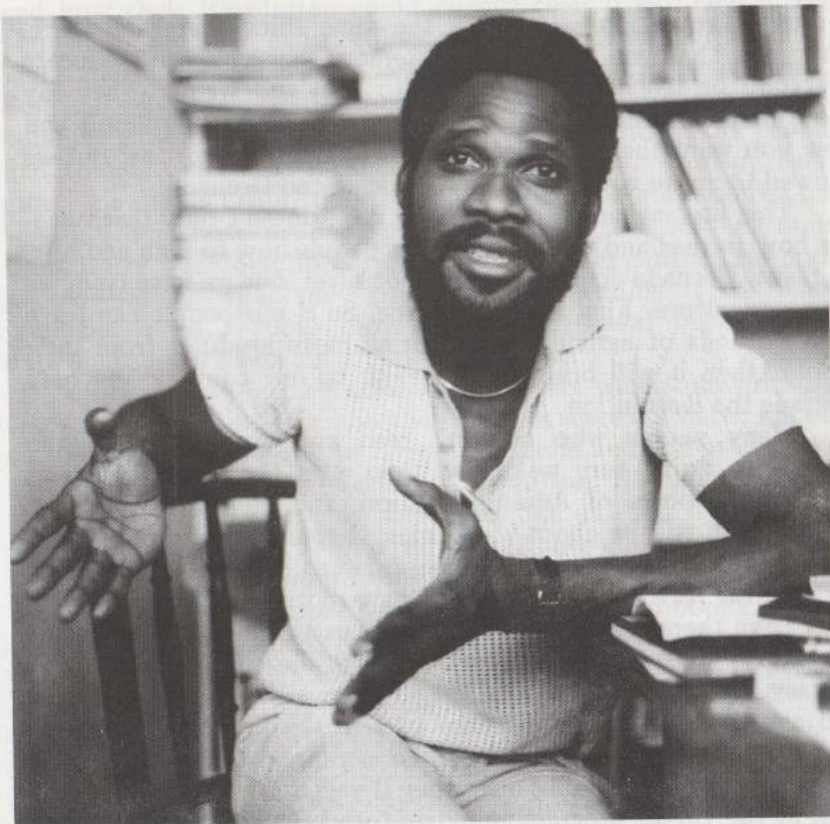
This literacy programme, the C.P.E., doesn't only teach people how to read and write. It teaches people how to plan and how to plant. Grenada doesn't have gold or silver, but we have land, we have agriculture. That is our resource. So if our people can learn new methods of agriculture and bring more products from their labour, then it will bring more wealth to our country and help upgrade the Revolution.

Many people who couldn't read and write, through the C.P.E. are doing very well. And then after the second phase is applied, the phase of Adult Education, and then later the third phase which will be about Mechanics, Carpentry and other skilled trades, then these people can move forward themselves and move forward the Revolution as they will have more skills.

Then there is the youth. Some of us are revolutionaries, but others are not involved or don't yet have the consciousness. The literacy programme has to go out to them as brothers and sisters and ask them, beg them to take part in the programme. If we don't get a response after this then perhaps we can't do much about it now. But some day they'll regret it. And remember this, as the C.P.E. programme moves forward these people will see the right that all people should have education, and sooner or later they will join and become a part of us.

When the time finally came for us to leave Nicaragua, our friends in Barra de Rio Maiz didn't want us to go. They said that we had come to teach them what nobody else had ever taught them before in all the years of their lives: about themselves and their country.

By the end of our phase twenty one of the students could read and write, including four of my five students. Several of these are helping as teachers in the next phase of the Crusade. And for me, after helping my brothers and sisters in Nicaragua, I am willing to undertake another task as an internationalist to help any other brothers or sisters, either in Nicaragua or another country where the people are willing to help themselves. I don't care about the problems caused by counters or what other people like them would think about me. And anyone else who is a part of our Revolution in Grenada would say the same thing!



GEORGE PRIME is 27, and from Hillsborough, Carriacou. He went to secondary school at Presentation College in Grenada. After studying in England, he returned to Grenada in 1981, and is now Deputy Secretary of Carriacou Affairs.

'Before the Revolution the entire school system was based upon privilege rather than right. Only those who could afford it went to secondary school, and those schools only perpetuated the same elitist system. The only thing that mattered was certification. We studied Latin, English History and English Literature. Even though our greatest resource is land, we studied no agriculture.

Gairy held no value for Education. He said that people who studied abroad only come back 'hot and sweaty' and eager for change and justice, like the Jewel militants.

At the time of the 1973-4 crisis here, we had a very strong youth section of the N.J.M. We shared a common ideological outline, and followed a policy of going out into the countryside

to hold meetings with the unemployed youth. We went to Gouyave, Grand Roy and Sauteurs. We called our organisation O.R.E.L. (Organisation for Education and Liberation), and we produced many outstanding comrades for the Revolution. We met every week, and bridged the sectarian mentality and competition between the main secondary schools, the old Divide and Rule tactic. We began to discuss political and socialist ideas, the Black Power syndrome in Trinidad and it was clear that our leanings became definitely anti-imperialist. We looked at our own economy and agriculture, our nutmegs and cocoa and bananas, and we saw the process of exploitation, and how much we had been underdeveloped by Imperialism.

Around that time the morale built up among the students against Gairy, and his thugs came looking for us. I remember one night during the curfew of January 1974. I was walking home from the cinema and six plain-clothes men carrying guns and cutlasses began to harass me. They asked me why I was out, and didn't I know that there was a State of Emergency on. They started beating me up, shouting out: 'Jewel! We on top, we going to kill you!' They often used to raid our home in Tanteen and harass my parents, because they knew we used to hold our O.R.E.L. meetings there.

So due to this victimisation I went to live in London with my uncle. I studied Economics at Bedford College, University of London. I always kept in touch with my comrades at home, and united with other Grenadians in London. When the Revolution took place I felt that this was the dawn of a new era. I felt completely elated. When I heard the news, I dropped the telephone with joy!

From that point on I knew with the Grenadians in London that something huge had happened. The Gairy dictatorship was over! We needed organised and guided support, and when Fennis Augustine was made High Commissioner in London, we began to achieve it. He had always been the focus of support for the struggle at home, and now he carried on working hard to group together our Grenadian comrades in London. We organised a Party Support Group in South Tottenham in North East London, and began to have regular meetings, involving more and more people. It was basically fund-raising, but we distributed leaflets and printed a monthly bulletin from the High Commission.

I always wanted to come home. Then one day I was helping out at the High Commission and I received the call. 'How soon can you come?' they said. 'Well . . . two or three months,' I answered. 'Can't you make it before that?' 'What about a month?'

'No, before that!' 'Okay, how about two weeks?' 'Your ticket's already booked for the next flight.' So I was back home in less than two days.

At the time, I was deeply involved in the struggle against racism in London, in particular in the Lewisham area, in the campaign around the fire bombing of the party where twelve of our people were killed. I had to weigh up quickly whether I was more useful in Britain or at home. I had got to grips with organising support for the Revolution in many English cities. But when I really thought about it, it was first and foremost home that mattered most. The Revolution needed as much skill and expertise as we could get, particularly during its early phase. So I thought I had to return to the source of the struggle to support the Revolution most concretely. Money was irrelevant to me, what was relevant was, what could I do for the Revolution?

When I returned I sensed a complete change in the air. I was sent immediately to Carriacou. I saw how it had been down-trodden by Gairy in every way. The people were demoralised, the roads were mashed up and terrible, health and education had been systematically neglected and finally rejected. Gairy had used Carriacou simply as an occasional personal playground.

Our task was to regenerate the island. We had to build a sense of collective organisation, and also begin to satisfy all kinds of basic social needs. The government programmes had to be implemented and linked up with the structures in Grenada. Organisation was our greatest need, new systems of infrastructure. Then as the programmes got going we began to see the people's participation growing and flourishing. As the roads began to be repaired the response was very positive, as it was when we introduced a Public Transport system, opened a new hotel and started to electrify some unelectrified villages. We saw voluntary community work every Sunday morning, something entirely new in Carriacou. And the mass organisations began to give us the groundwork for new infrastructures — and they are growing fast: five N.W.O. groups formed in six months, nine Party Support Groups and two each of N.Y.O. and Pioneers. The Militia is strong, and even more determined since Reagan's invasion rehearsal and the manoeuvres we held to prepare ourselves for the real thing. So we're on the way.

Carriacou still has a real problem of migration, but we are now beginning to see people coming back. Traditionally, the main economy of the island has been built on remittances and smuggling, so we desperately need to create a productive base for development. So we are getting going with Agriculture, and we

already have a Livestock Development Project and a farm of Black Belly sheep.

I hope many more of our nationals abroad will come home. The dollar Mentality still rules for many of them, I know, but they could make a significant contribution to our development here. We still have a long, long way to go and a lot of grounds to be covered. It calls for unity and organisation. But we have unity traditionally in Carriacou, and our organisation is growing every day. So we have a lot to build upon.



School Children repairing their own school.



THERESA SIMEON, known by the Cuban airport workers as "Mama Airport" is a sixty year old guest house owner in St. George's. She grew up in Trinidad, and like many Grenadians emigrated to Aruba, where she married. She returned to Grenada in 1956.

"I remember the days in 1973-4 when we were all trying to get rid of Gairy. I supported the Jewel boys from the beginning and eight of them slept in my house the night before Bloody Monday in January 1974 because it was so dangerous for them to go out on the streets. Gairy's mongoose gang would have killed them. He had broadcast over the radio telling all his men to bring at least six more each, so they could break up the demonstration we were going to have. So the next day we were all there around the Carenage, and suddenly I heard a huge noise and school children were running. About 300 of Gairy's men were coming

towards the demonstration, carrying sticks and bottles, and some with guns. Then people were jumping into the sea and bottles were flying like birds in the sky. Then we heard they shot Rupert Bishop. It was a terrible day! Then the next day at the funeral, we all came out, but the people were so afraid that they would attack us again.

As a result of all this, the people's feeling went out to the New Jewel Movement and we all became more determined to finish with Gairy.

Then when the Revolution happened, I was in the States. So I came back here, I really wanted to make up for not being here. I started going to the rallies. The first one I went to was with Kaunda, and I was so impressed, I'd never seen people so together and united like that before in Grenada.

I was thinking how can I help? I knew we needed a lot of money, and I wondered, how could I raise some? Then in November 1979 we heard about the International Airport idea. So I called all of my friends together, and twenty-two of us met and decided to form the St. George's Airport Development Committee. Then later another was organized in Grenville, and also in Carriacou.

First of all we had a Cake Sale and made \$500.00, and then on we went from strength to strength. So far we've raised \$26,000.00, and the money has all been converted to International Airport Bonds.

Then we decided that we must organize to entertain the Cuban workers at the airport, and help them get together with the Grenadian workers and feel at home in Grenada. They are doing so much for us. So we organize dances and parties and sports days and everybody enjoys themselves and gets to know each other.

All this involvement has changed my life so much, you know, and all the other members of the Committee say the same thing. We are now much more involved in the Revolution, and we are always being called upon to help.

I always tell people abroad who are affected by the hostile propaganda, not to believe it. I send all the newspapers they print here — like 'The Free West Indian' or 'The New Jewel' — to America, to my family and friends, and let them read it for themselves.

As I'm so much more involved now in my country and the Revolution, I'm always trying to involve other people! When we organize our functions everyone has their special task. For Carnival this year we ran a bar for two days and made \$2,000.00. And we've just made another \$1,000.00 on a Tea Party! All the

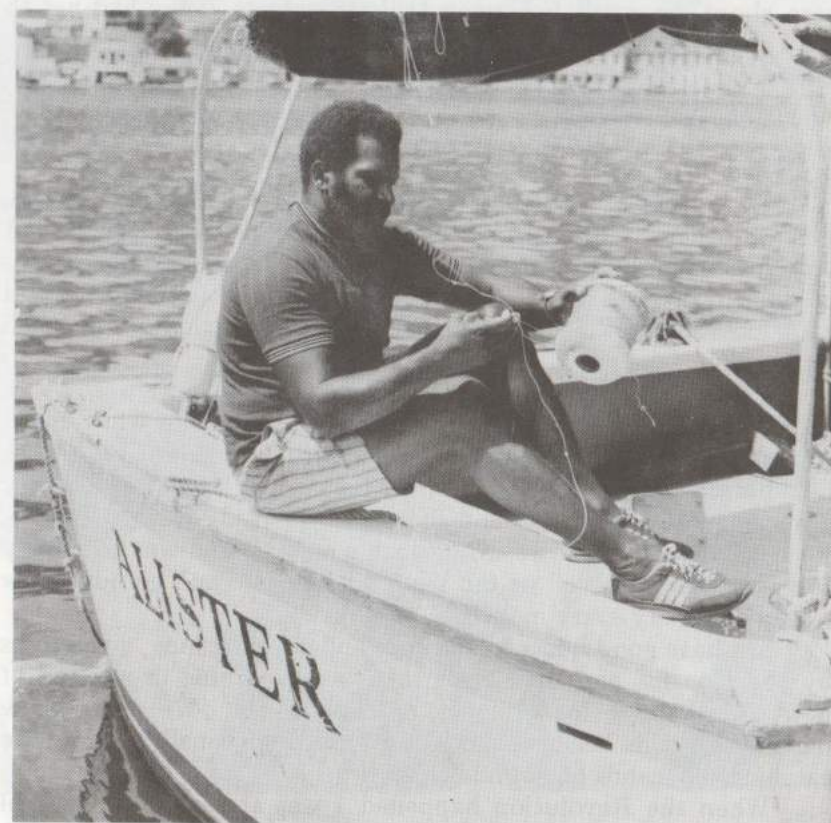
time we're having raffles.

The International Airport is going to be so important to us. When we pass through Barbados it is horrors! We're delayed, the food we may bring spoils, our luggage goes astray, the officials are often rude to us and then we have to spend money to overnight there. Our International Airport is going to change all that. Direct flight means more convenience, more tourists and more wealth for our country.

When I see that first aeroplane land I think I'll cry with joy! I'll feel so proud. But until then I'll go on and on, raising more and more money. I can't stop myself. Every time I go to the Airport site I say to myself, "I must do more, I must keep on going until it's finished". And you know, I get more and more energy every day."



International Airport Rally: April 1981



JOSEPH SURALIE, aged 35 from Victoria, has been a fisherman for twenty years. He is now captain of the government-owned fishing boat, Alister, named after Alister Strachan, an NJM supporter who was shot dead by Gairy's police after they broke up a rally in St. George's market Square on June 19th., 1977. Alister dived over the esplanade wall and tried to swim out to sea for safety, but the police opened fire upon him and his bullet-riddled body was washed up on the shore two days later.

'Before the Revolution I had a very small, six-foot open boat. Every time we went out there we risked our lives in that. We did long-line fishing, so we didn't catch many fish, even though there are so many fish out there. In those days the government was Gairy's, so he didn't check the fishermen at all. We had no support or help from him at all. So we money was small and the fishermen were poor and unorganised.

Then in 1974 Gairy brought the South Koreans here. He wanted to give them the right to fish all the waters of Grenada. Of

course, he wanted something for himself in return, and he didn't care about we small fishermen still struggling. They had net to hold all the fish in the sea, down to the small, small jacks! All the Grenadian fishermen would have been finished. When they went to the snapper ground with their net like that, they kill the whole crop, so when fishermen like we went there, there would be nothing left for we!

So a few of us from Victoria, Gouyave and St. David's, plus Brothers Whiteman, Louison and Strachan, we all got together and printed a paper against Gairy and the South Koreans coming to take we fish. Most of the fishermen were behind us and came out on the streets to support us. So Gairy couldn't go ahead on his plan.

From that time I began to support the Jewel because I saw they were good for me and the other fishermen. They made promises to the fishermen then, and now they fulfilling it. We see life better for we now. Thirty fishermen now working for government on the boats and earning a monthly salary. Before, we never even knew if we would earn a dollar. And was no money for we if we were sick or the sea rough so we can't go out. Now we get we salary every month.

We have good boats for bottom and ocean fishing, given to us by the Cubans, and their fishermen been teaching us all kind of new technique — for example, catching shark. We never knew much about this because our boats were small, small, but now we catching thousands of pounds of shark.

When the Revolution happened I was at sea. It was a real shock to me when I came ashore. I said, 'What going on?' But as soon as I realised what was happening I keep guard every night at Victoria Police Station with some other fishermen.

Now the government is showing everybody that the seas around Grenada are for Grenadian fishermen. So if foreign boats come in to thief we fish, the government seize them. All the fishermen saying the government right to do this, because we don't want big, foreign boats taking we fish like in the days of Gairy. If them South Koreans had come in and we hadn't organised like we did, it wouldn't have fish again off Grenada. So that organising then with the Jewel behind us has saved the fish for Grenadian fishermen, and all the people of Grenada.

Whenever I hear people bad-talking Grenada I does get annoyed. All our government is doing is helping us. Look at me now, being on a bigger boat give me a much better opportunity. On my little boat I used to catch maybe, on a good catch, sixty pounds. This morning we bring back 730 pounds. That's a sign of the progress we making in Grenada!



LORIANNE FELIX, age 18, is from Vincennes in the Parish of St. David's. She is an ex-teacher and now works full time as the National Pioneer Co-ordinator.

'G. . . O . . . GO! Gairy must go!' That was our chant on January 21st. 1974, the day that later became known as 'Bloody Monday'. The schoolchildren of Grenada were also feeling oppression, and on that day we too came out and marched along the streets shouting, towards the big meeting on the Carenage. We were totally fed up with Gairy. I was a student at St. Joseph's Convent at the time. We had wet our school ties in preparation to wet our noses, because we expected tear gas, he'd used it before.

Then we heard the song Gairy's henchmen were singing: 'Jewel, behave yourself, because they gon' charge us for murder today!' They meant it, and began fighting with the demonstrators. A Red Spot soft drinks lorry passed by and bottles started

pelting. Comrades were dashing into the water to escape the bottles and bullets. It was really something else. Rupert Bishop stood up in the doorway of Otway House and blocked it, telling the green beasts not to come in there because there were only children inside. My brother Carl was in there. Me and my mother escaped through Otway's Funeral Home, stepping through the coffins, and passed through into Tyrrell Street. Then we heard several shots. The secret police were so fierce that day, and Rupert Bishop was so heroic to try and block them. The uniformed police did nothing, they were only encouraging them.

So that was life in Gairy's days, and you can see that it was bad for the children too. There was nothing for us. In the towns, really for the upper-class children, there were Scouts and Guides, but for the country children and the children of the workers there was very little.

The children were really scared to oppose Gairy most of the time. I remember once in St. David's when his men went into a young comrade's house and took out all his books. This almost made us afraid to read ourselves. And in the schools the education was generally bad. Two-thirds of our teachers were untrained and many of them just wrote things onto the blackboard and then sat back and read, leaving us to copy. There were few practical activities for us. So many of us soon became bored, and this created a high drop-out rate. You had a lot of children pelting mangoes in the street, and a state of mass truancy. Children left school early to sell postcards to the tourists, or to dive for the money they threw into the harbour from the tourist boats. Even in St. David's, a long way from the city, you'd see children climbing dangerous trees with a bunch of bananas or flowers on their heads, so the tourists could photograph them and say: 'what a lovely monkey you are!' Child labour was common because of the poor situations in the homes, and many children stayed away from school to help mind younger brothers or sisters. All this hindered the children's progress in education. Gairy had no respect for the rights of the child. He gave us all a dollar on Independence Day — which was also his birthday — but that was all!

I heard of the Revolution early in the morning at school; we knew then that the Gairy dictatorship was over. At home it was a holiday — no work was done all day, we spent it listening to the bulletins on the radio. My brothers went to the Police Station to take arms and force the police to run up the white flag, and a policeman's shirt soon went flying up. People were just watching the freedom fighters guarding the police station and saying, 'Yes man! The longest rope has an end!'

Before the Revolution my support had been largely moral support, because of the fear throughout the country. After the Revo this fear went away. I joined the Militia, the N.W.O. and the N.Y.O. At that time the N.Y.O. was selective. Only those who had proved themselves were members. It was very disciplined and vibrant. We sold party papers and did house-to-house every Wednesday, rapping to the people and trying to find solutions to their problems. Later on, in April 1980, the N.Y.O. broadened out and became a mass organisation of youth and students.

Meanwhile, I'd left school and become a teacher. In the N.Y.O. we tried to tackle the problems of truancy, identifying children who didn't go to school, visiting their homes, finding out their problems and speaking to the parents about Education, and how we were on the path to an educated society, and how only an educated society could ever be truly free or democratic. We gave concrete assistance in the form of pencils, exercise books and sometimes second-hand shirts and pants for really needy children. We started day nurseries and pre-primary schools to solve the problem of children having to stay at home to look after their younger sisters and brothers.

Then the N.J.M. began to consider forming the Pioneers, for children of five years and above. We want to build a new society and so we need to teach the children about their country, their Revolution and the martyrs who have shed their blood to assist in the total liberation of our people. We want our children to study examples of heroism, like Rupert Bishop, who died trying to protect their lives. So, as a member of the N.Y.O. and a teacher, I was given the task of forming a Pioneers' Group in the school where I worked. I spoke to the Principal and the children, and we started off with eighty members, and this soon rose to over a hundred. Then I left for Cuba to head our Pioneer delegation. I was inspired there by the knowledge Cuban children have about their country and their heroes — and the guides on all our excursions were children. This trip showed me what children can really do if they get the guidance.

When I came home I left teaching and became a full-time organiser for the Pioneers. We organised ourselves so that every parish has a brigade, named after a hero of Grenada like Buzz Butler, Julien Fedon or T.A. Marryshow. Each brigade has units in villages or schools, and in those you would find patrols with eight members in each. We have two age ranges, between 5—9 and 10—14.

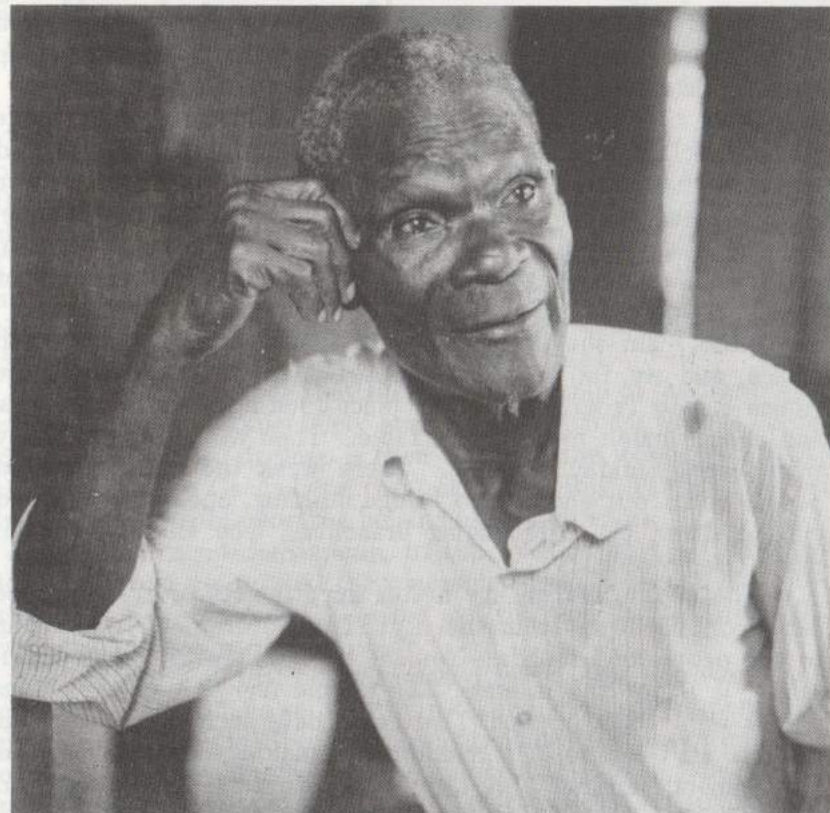
Already the Pioneer movement has made our children more patriotic, more aware of the enemies of our country and more

aware about what is Imperialism. We see Democracy as participation in the nation-building process and the decision-making that will need. We are active in community work in the villages, sell papers and mobilise for rallies and meetings. We also seek to promote revolutionary culture with drumming, dancing, poetry and calypsoes.

We had over six hundred pioneers at our summer camp, with film shows, games, sport and debates on subjects like, 'What is more important, money or education?' These were very lively, and we also had impromptu speeches on subjects like the International Airport, Socialism and Imperialism.

Looking at our children now, I see a bright, bright future. Before, Education was downpressed by Gairy, and he was so scared of the young people realising their oppression and overthrowing him. Now we have free secondary education, compulsory training for teachers, the milkfeeding programme, free school uniforms and many other benefits.

Children are much more exposed to what is going on in the country, and also internationally. We have films and discussions about children in other countries. Look at South Africa! We still can't feel satisfied, knowing about that. And everybody in the Pioneers is getting leadership training. We are creating a country of leaders, of masters of their homeland. In every school we want to see a vibrant pioneer programme, so that our children can make a meaningful contribution towards our Revolution. They are the torchbearers of the new society!



PHILBERT THOMAS known as 'Brother Tom' or 'Sir Thomas' is a 61 year old Public Works road cleaner who also works a garden. He lives in Marli, near Sauteurs. He worked for many years in the Colonial Hospital, San Fernando, Trinidad, before returning to Grenada.

"Gairy government was wicked, wicked, and distressful. His men took people land, and once they attack me in the street. But I give them blows back and they never try that again.

I was always for the New Jewel Movement. I used to sell the newspaper and carry it to the other sellers. Since before the Revolution I going about telling the people this N.J.M. would be a good government. And what they said then in the paper and their meetings, they are sticking up to now — in Education, in House Repairs, Agro-Industry, Free Milk and all kind of thing.

Then when March 13th came, it was a new day for all Grenadians, a glorious day! I jumped up and raised my hands to God,

for we had been oppressed for 28 years. And then we all helped the soldiers, cooking for them, looking after them and bringing them foodstuff.

Since then it has been a great change for me. All the people could walk all hours at night. No stone pelting like before, and when we have rally or meeting, them bus running until twelve o'clock. And all the children is more vigilant than the big people. They getting free milk and Education, free uniform and books, and they always singing out 'Stand Up there and Feel The Weight Of The Revo.'

Now I am the Co-ordinator for community work in Marli village, and we fix up all the houses in the village through the House Repair Programme. The place looking much better now and people much more comfortable. Then we have community work every Sunday morning. Every week the young and old people come out and we do bridge building, opening drains and cutting down the overhanging branches. The village is much, much cleaner now.

The people feel plenty better since the Revo, as if they see Jesus coming down from the sky! The Government is so loving to the people of Grenada. You see they isn't working for themselves, it is for the masses. The people feel so nice they does hardly want to go to bed. We never have such freedom in our lifetime in Grenada. Is freedom we making here now! This Government represent all fashion of workers, and it have no victimisation or corruption from anyone in office.

They call me 'Tom The Mobiliser'. If any rallies taking place, we go about and organize the people and give them invitations. We mobilise transport. And I'm also a mobiliser for the Progressive Farmers' Union. I try to get new members and when they join they could get fertilisers and seeds and good marketing. I rent a half acre myself and grow some banana, tannia and a little yam. So we is trying to get together all the small farmers.

I goes to the Militia every Wednesday night. You see, I'd do anything for the Revo. We learn a lot at the Militia; how the older must respect the younger, and how the younger must know how to behave themself. We is all together as one people. We drill and we train together, young and old. I never hold a gun before, but if Gairy or the mercenaries come, we go bury them in the sea, they never be able to make it!"

5. *Revolutionary Democracy, Not Westminster Hypocrisy.*

The leadership of the English-speaking Caribbean, and indeed of the ex-colonial territories in general, remains one that is cast in the mould of the colonial era, simply by virtue of its age. It is significant that the youngest leadership in the English-speaking Caribbean, comprising people who would have been 18 years old and younger in 1962, that is to say about to enter the last stage of their intellectual formation at the advent of Caribbean independence, is also the first to dare to change the rules.

It is not surprising that the older leadership of the Caribbean remains unable to objectively examine and analyze what is taking place in Grenada, so deep is their shock at the iconoclasm of it: How dare these Grenadians cast aside the Holy Tablets that we have received from upon the heights of Westminster!

Grenada's misdemeanour, in the eyes of hostile Caribbean leaders, is to have flouted the venerable Anglo-American tradition that they were schooled in. How can you not have a Parliament with two Houses, etc.?

Implicit in all that has been described in these pages are many criticisms of the hallowed Westminster model of government. The process underway in Grenada shows up plainly the sins of omission of Westminster government — the way that this system succeeds in not delivering power to the people. The rights that it "guarantees" are "entrenched" in ancient documents rather than implemented in day-to-day living. People are theoretically free to do a number of things, but precious little is done to facilitate or encourage the exercise of these freedoms.

People are removed from the heart of decision-making, their affairs run by proxy, so that in a situation where ignorance and illiteracy are endemic, the stage is set for the emergence of monsters like Gairy. Because power is exercised away from the eyes, the ears and the understanding of the people, power is liable to develop in any direction, all within the legality of elections, two-chamber parliaments and the like. This is a danger faced by people throughout the Third World who have inherited from their British, French or Hispanic colonisers a combination of representative "democracy" and little or no enlightenment: the combination works out too easily to the Gairys, Duvaliers, Somozas, Bokassas and Amins of this world.

But even these logical creations of capitalist "democracy" are not the worst indictment of this system, for it could be argued

that these are freaks of the system, a minor embarrassment to its upholders and defenders. The English-speaking Caribbean still remains a favourite showpiece of the Westminster model, and despite the ripple that Gairy made on the face of our complacency, Caribbean people continue to be lulled into believing this to be the "best of all possible worlds".

Because of the innocuousness of Caribbean regimes, because our governments only periodically resort to beating us over the head in the streets or banning from our shores the most lucid and articulate of our Caribbean compatriots, we thank our lucky stars for unoppressive government and continue to live with the problems of underdevelopment.

It does not occur to us that our continuing underdevelopment could have anything to do with the whole nature of the political framework in which we consent to function.

Gairy is not the worst indictment of the political system we have inherited. Indeed, Gairy did us a favour, for his regime was an eye-opener to those who lived under his Westminster-style democracy. A far graver disease of this system continues to rage unchecked the length and breadth of our Caribbean, hampering our progress, keeping development continually beyond our reach.

We are insulted and we insult ourselves for as long as we continue to swallow the idea that where people are not divided into two camps facing each other across an imaginary line drawn by those in command, there is no democracy. This is the most criminal legacy of Westminster in our Caribbean.

Instead of working towards the unification of all the energies and talents of our people, the channelling of all our human resources into the development task, our leaders prefer to keep us divided against ourselves.

So we live on a see-saw that ensures that we will never be anything but poor, weak and prey to colonial-type exploitation: always there is only one section of the population that identifies with and supports current programmes for development, while another section feels obliged to form a bloc of conscientious objectors and actively contribute to the downfall of whichever group is currently steering the development of the country. The energies and talents of the people are permanently scattered in different directions: those who identify with the ruling party, those who identify with the institutionalized opposition, and a third grouping, usually the largest, of people who do not see themselves as having any role in "politics" at all.

This is the legacy of "party politics", more properly partisan politics, that has been foisted upon us and which we regard as

decreed into place by the Maker Himself. When underdeveloped countries opt for a unified political process, our conditioned response, without further examination, is: one-party state!

But the political systems of the capitalist world are eminently one-party. All the significant parties are equally devoted to the preservation of the status quo, with only minor variations of policy. Parties which challenge the status quo and point to other ways of organizing a society are kept at bay by the power of the Establishment: all the forces of persuasion are controlled by the coalition of ruling parties, so it is easy to have a truly alternative political vision discredited and routed, as happened to the ULF in Trinidad, for example.

What are the differences of outlook between the major political parties of the United States, England or Barbados? While the people confront each other on the ground with banners, slogans and raised fists, the people at the top run a cosy debating club called Parliament. What better way to defuse the frustrations of people who do not have adequate food, shelter, education or medical care? Let them fight each other, then they will never turn their hostile gaze upon their real enemies, the arbitrary controllers of wealth.

What better way to turn Grenada back into one more cul-de-sac of in-fighting than to force a General Election? Get the campaigning and the platforming and the posturing going again, artificially polarize people once again into warring factions of equally dispossessed people. Get people to divide for any available reason — race, as in Trinidad and Guyana, urban versus rural, farmers versus blue-collar workers, North versus South — anything, any pretext which allows you to drive a wedge between people who have the same basic needs but who are powerless to fulfill these needs for as long as you can keep them from banding together.

In the Caribbean, as in all the Third World, the two-party or multi-party system is a hindrance to our development. It keeps us in continual competition among ourselves for meagre resources, and our resources remain meagre for as long as we do not unite to make our environment produce for the needs of all.

It is important that people in the Caribbean, and people in the world who understand this, should assess for themselves what has been achieved in Grenada. People must not be fooled into isolating Grenada on the false issue of "democracy", for Grenada's rejection of paper democracy points the way for us all.

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In late 1973, a member of the British House of Lords, Lord Brownlow, was judged by the people of Grenada in a People's Court as being unworthy to own land and live in Grenada. He had arrogantly cut off popular access to La Sagesse Beach in the parish of St. David's, adjacent to land which he owned. Grenadians in their thousands, led by the present leadership of the People's Revolutionary Government — then an emergent opposition group — took apart the barrier Lord Brownlow had erected, and in defiance of Gairy's police who were protecting it, reclaimed their beach.

This was an important event in the build-up to the eventual Grenadian Revolution of March 13th, 1979, for in more than one sense, the people were not only rejecting a single man, but also a system. For the incident provokes the question, what was this British parliamentarian and component of the Westminster "democratic" system doing in Grenada anyway? What was his business? Why wasn't he minding his affairs in the Houses of Parliament, London? And how had such an esteemed "model of democracy" allowed one of its members to act in such a way?

The answers are, of course, that parliamentary responsibilities were not a priority with Lord Brownlow. Profit and landlordism, however, and the exploitation of the working people whether in Britain or Grenada, clearly were much more in the forefront of the worthy lord's mind. Britain's two "houses", both the Commons and the Lords, have many members like Lord Brownlow, sitting like leaden weights on the lives of the people. Parliamentary position means social prestige, economic opportunism, the right to be arrogant, the right to carry exploitation, nepotism and corruption into what have been seen as the holy places of British Parliamentary Democracy. So when Eric Matthew Gairy received the mantle of Westminster after 1951, he was also taking all the baggage of elitism and corruption that it shrouds.

It is clear that the system that he emulated almost wholly from the colonising power did not act as a brake on his tyranny. On the contrary, he managed to make it an effective vehicle for his twenty-odd years of megalomania. Inside the form and trappings of Westminster-style government he constructed a brutal and murderous despotism that only extra-parliamentary and finally revolutionary struggle could ever successfully challenge and destroy. For up until March 13th, 1979, when he flew to Barbados leaving orders for his thugs to arrest and eliminate his most serious opposition to date — the leadership of the New Jewel Movement — Gairy still operated with the camouflage of "parliament", "senate" and "elections", and it served his monstrous intentions admirably. Rupert Bishop, Jeremiah Richardson, Harold Strachan, Alistair

Strachan and the other patriots murdered by his "mongoose" men" and "green beasts" were savagely struck down under the smokescreen of legitimacy puffed out by the parliamentary system. He could make military alliances with the butchers of Chile, and yet still wear the "democratic" cloak of the Westminster system.

So elections every five years, Parliament and the rest of the Westminster paraphernalia were clearly no guarantee of democracy or good and just government. The Grenadian experience illustrates the reverse: they were the means by which for years Gairy hid his crimes from the world. It was only by mass action by an alienated and disaffected population, as in the closure of Pearls Airport after the murder of Jeremiah Richardson, the La Sagesse incident, the strikes of 1973-4 and the continuous and organized opposition of the Grenadian people, culminating in the March 13th Revolution, that has won democracy for them.

For in the experience of both the Caribbean and British peoples, the "Westminster model" has been a very useful instrument to be used by the ruling classes and social and political elites to keep the masses in check and render their opposition impotent. British Colonialism thought democracy and the chimes of Big Ben as one and the same thing, but as the Grenadian experience of the last two years shows, democracy truly belongs to the street, the factory and farm, the village and through the self-organized initiatives created by the people where they live and work, encouraged and dynamised by their vanguard party. British parliamentarianism, however, separates the people from their "representatives", creates a detached and rarefied forum for discussion and debate where the people have no part to play, and democratic activity becomes the reserved right of a few representatives who can be recalled but once every five years. These representatives are under no mandate, and they can "cross the floor" and change parties and allegiances halfway through their term and are subject to no accountability from those who elect them. Thus in Westminster they can change from Labour to Tory to Liberal to Social Democrat without consulting the people who put them in Parliament. It is a system for chameleons and opportunists, a system which creates a special class of "politicians", while the people themselves are urged not to be "political" as that will cause trouble, and anyway there are professionals who can do that for them. And these professionals needed to be the leisured, the educated, the bureaucratic or the "self-made", in order to have the time and qualifications to perform this exceptional task. Thus "politics" becomes housed in a special "house", is divorced from the people and democracy and government are seen not to be their business — "leave it all to us!" This is

the epitome of bourgeois democracy upheld by the Westminster model and imposed upon the colonised peoples everywhere the Union Jack was raised. And now Grenada, with its 110,000 people, perhaps represents the most radical and resolute break with that system so far in the English-speaking world. For in its democratic structures and mass organizations it is gradually putting the working people in power, reconciling leadership with accountability and keeping the democratic blood pumping through the multiplying organs in workplace, village and street by resolving concrete problems and fulfilling the genuine needs of the people.

Yet, Grenada is branded "undemocratic" by its opponents, many of whom — like Adams of Barbados or Charles of Dominica — are full-time practitioners of Westminster politics. When Nicholas Ridley, a Foreign Office Secretary of State in the Thatcher Government, significantly noted that "Grenada is in the process of establishing a kind of society of which the British Government disapproves, irrespective of whether the people of Grenada want it or not", he made the point perfectly — "whether the people of Grenada want it or not". In other words, it doesn't matter what the people think, it matters less how much they are intimately and democratically involved in building their own society. If the People's Revolutionary Government thinks "every cook can govern" and what matters is the creation of "not just another society but a just society", and to effect this it is putting power into the hands of the working people, then we, the British Government, shall "disapprove" because it is not our system and it threatens our constitutional hegemony over the English-speaking ex-colonial world. We have seen through British Imperial history the most terrible examples of colonial butchery and domination in the Caribbean islands. We are now seeing a similar post-colonial presumptuousness of the most grotesque yet pathetic kind. As The Mighty Sparrow, the Grenadian calypsonian sings, "London Bridge is falling down" and ironically enough, it is the presence of militant Caribbean youth in Britain now that is acting as a catalyst of transformation, and following soon after will be the crumbling superstructure of the Houses of Parliament themselves.

Grenada's detractors have made much of the fact that there have been no Westminster style "General Elections" since the Revolution, even though permanent elections within the democratic structures and the mass organizations are an everyday, and not a five-yearly, occurrence. What most of them know little of is the high farce and corruption that characterised General Elections under the government of Gairy. Corned beef and rum for the electorate every five years do not add up to democracy, and the last

charade of elections in 1976 manifested fraud to a grotesque level. Gairy managed to produce a voters' list with over five thousand superfluous names, as he simultaneously excluded many young voters who were potential supporters for his main opponents. There were neither loudspeakers nor radio access given to the opposition, and a barrage of lies was broadcast by Gairy, including assertions that the New Jewel Movement would murder all overforties and transform all churches into discotheques.

This short poem was written in 1976 by a young Grenadian immigrant in London. Such was Westminster's bequest to the people of Grenada:

VOTE

"Vote for Uncle Gairy!"
 The loudspeaker said
 The people walked on
 No one cared.
 "Vote for Uncle Gairy!"
 And those who didn't
 Were those who were dead.
 "Gairy" one man said
 "I have no love for,
 To me he is the oppressor",
 That night the secret police came
 That man was never seen again
 And the loudspeaker blared out
 "Vote for Uncle Gairy!"¹

The Westminster apparatus has not served the Grenadian people well: it has abused, insulted and tyrannised them. Its application to such a small nation has also exposed its failures and made it clear which forces it ultimately serves. The British people themselves could learn much about their "own" system by scrutinising its workings under the microscope of recent Grenadian history. For there they would see it in miniature, and contradictorily enlarged, so that they could study how after so many centuries it still leaves them largely dispossessed and exploited, with over three million of them jobless. Gairy's clowning, bumbling and unsubtle despotism could not be entirely concealed under parliamentary camouflage, but the cunning and experience of the most adroit and long-lived ruling class in the world still sits behind the curtains at Westminster, and directs its operations through multi-national companies, neo-colonial regimes and proxy tyrants over much of the world.

¹ From "MEMORIES", by Paul George: Commonplace Workshop, London 1976.

In 1953, British Guiana, as it was then, was promised General Elections, and Churchill guaranteed that whatever party was elected would form the government. The elections produced a mass turnout by the electorate, much higher than those in previous elections in Trinidad, Jamaica and Barbados, and a very orderly election. Dr. Cheddi Jagan's People's Progressive Party won eighteen of the twenty-four seats. It was a resounding "democratic" victory that could not have happened more smoothly or convincingly. And yet 133 days later, the British had sent troops and warships, the Constitution had been suspended and very soon after the majority of Jagan's Government were in jail, with the Prime Minister himself scrubbing cell floors and shredding coconut husks. Despite the fact that Georgetown was calm and normal working life was flourishing, the rationale of the Colonial Office was clear:

"It has been evident that the intrigues of Communists and their associates, some in ministerial posts, threaten the welfare and good administration of the colony. If these processes were to continue unchecked an attempt might soon be made by methods which are familiar in the other parts of the world to set up a Communist-dominated state. This would lead to bloodshed . . .

. . . Her Majesty's Government has decided that the Constitution of British Guiana must be suspended to prevent Communist subversion of the Government and a dangerous crisis both in public order and in economic affairs."¹

If the hypocrisy of Westminster in 1953 was transparent, it is worth a comparison with Mr. Ridley's statement twenty-eight years later: "whether the people of Grenada want it or not". Westminster "democracy" had refuted itself, as bourgeois "constitutionality" was to do with even more horrendous results in Chile in 1973.

With these examples behind them, Grenadians also closely monitored the October 1980 General Elections in Jamaica. Here there was an elected government, the Michael Manley Government, within its full constitutional mandate, seeking to change the power relationships in Jamaican society in favour of the working people, and working through the "democratic" Westminster-style apparatus. Its opponents, both internally and externally, were indulging in an orgy of violence and intimidation, then putting the blame upon the progressive changes being forged by the ruling government. The main national newspaper, "The Gleaner", as

1. Quoted from THE WEST ON TRIAL: Cheddi Jagan. Seven Seas Books, 1962, p. 125.

had happened in Chile with its counterpart, "El Mercurio", allied itself with the forces of de-stabilization and slander, and worked hand-in-hand with C.I.A. interventionism. Government supporters and candidates were murdered on the streets. Yet when the opposition "won" the elections in the midst of blood and fraud, the result was greeted in London and Washington as a triumph for democracy, constitutionality and "sane" politics. Grenadians, watching closely with the instructive insights of their own history behind them, came to different conclusions. For here was clearly, in the words of Brother Bishop, an "electoral coup d'etat" of huge proportions, and yet another painful lesson to the Caribbean that the legacy of Westminster is a massive boulder around the necks of their people.

The People's Revolutionary Government have always declared that the Grenadian Revolution is a revolution for food, education, health, housing, social progress and economic development. As the process unfolds to achieve those ends, the society is developing new organizations of a mass scale and a democratic character. These organizations are creating infrastructures that are under permanent testing, experiment and evaluation. As more threads of the process are spun out, more lives are transformed by their involvement in the new structures, and more structures grow as the people gain strength and confidence by being involved in their democratic organization. Nothing is static or stultified, every part of the process and all its participants are under continuous review and criticism. Thus Grenadian revolutionary society is in permanent motion, discovering more about itself and creating new organs at every step. This is the dialectic of democracy in Grenada, it is growing and consolidating with every meeting, every moment of the constant participation given by those thousands of people, women and men, old and young, that have hurled their love and commitment into building a new society out of the hurricane wreckage of the old. And each step means concrete gains, functional results: free milk, more dentists, house repairs, grants for school uniforms, free secondary education, agro-industries, a fisheries school, an eye clinic, more university scholarships — the list can go on and on and every item is a rebuff to Grenada's slanderers.

Consequently the new Grenada is throwing out a challenge to that system which it is replacing, the system that ruled and battered its people to the extent that through its "democratic" apparatus it could produce a deformity like Eric Matthew Gairy as its Prime Minister. But in Grenada now, transformation is on the agenda, people's power is in the offing, and the fragile and cracking edifices of Westminster are tottering from the force of its vision an ocean away, a vision that is being carefully studied by awakening peoples all over the world.

KEY TO CUDJOE'S POEMS

Jookootoo I	— A simpleton, poor, unschooled and unsophisticated e.g. A slave or agricultural labourer.
Dem	— Them
Ah	— I
Dey	— They
Pwah Maniwell	— A curse, used originally to drive owls away.
Moko	— The Devil
Juper	— An old, broken down hut.
Fedon	— Julien Fedon, who led a revolt against British colonialism in 1795.
Ketching Arse	— Undergoing a harsh experience.
Vex	— Angry
Butler	— Tubal Uriah 'Buzz' Butler: Grenadian-born workers' leader of the mass movement of the thirties in Trinidad.
Marryshow	— T.A. Marryshow: Grenadian Journalist, Socialist and Pioneer of the West Indian Federation.
A Big Macco	— A very stupid person.
Making Marse	— Creating Disturbances.
1951	— Island-wide uprising in Grenada.
Making Ting a Merry	— Enjoying oneself.
Eat from Bramble to Timber	— To be taken for a ride, to gullibly accept a story.
Donkey Pee on Wee	— We are the victim of a curse.
March 13th '79	— Date of the Grenada Revolution.
Macawel	— Large, Fierce Snake.

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