



IN THE SPIRIT OF BUTLER



TRADE UNIONISM IN FREE GRENADA

IN THE SPIRIT OF BUTLER

A time like this demands men, real men, men of opinion, men of will, men whom the lust of office cannot kill. Yes. Men with the soul of the Master, the mind of the Master to make sacrifices that others might enjoy a better and brighter day. Where I am standing I am in a position to tell you that I have sworn to serve you loyally, faithfully and well, unto the end. There is no power in Heaven or in Hell for that matter to make me turn. There is no power, no bribe, to make me turn aside from the paths of truth and beauty and freedom. Beauty and freedom and all that these contain fall not like ripened fruit about our feet. We climb to them through years of sweat and pain; without life's struggles none do ye attain.

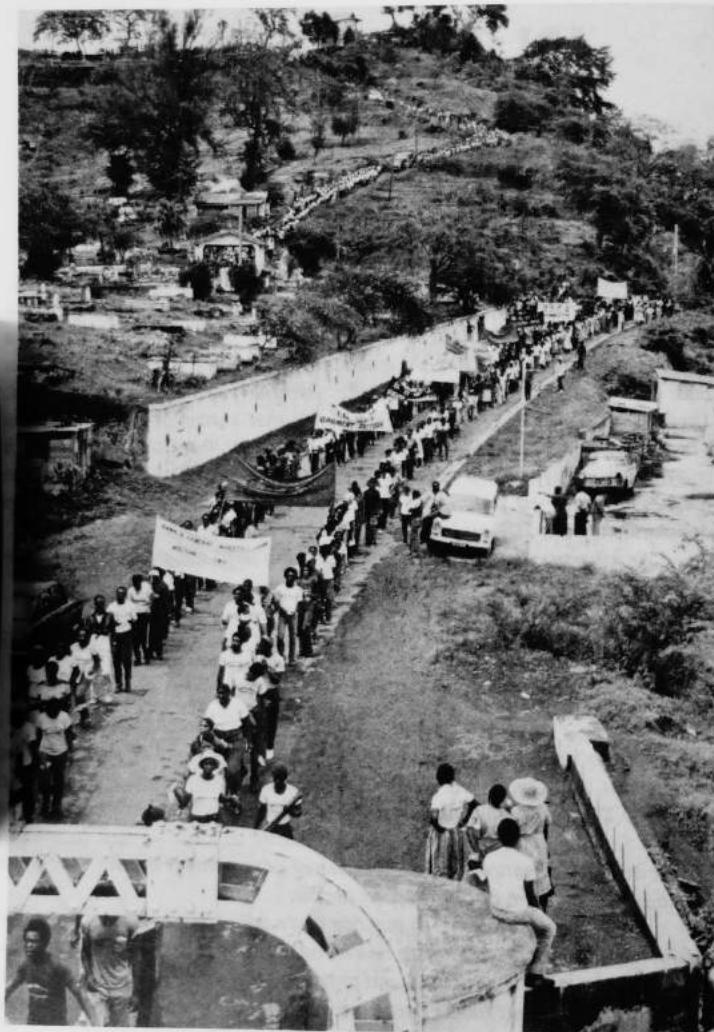
We all must struggle and keep struggling until the goal of truth, freedom, beauty, and liberty are reached.

Tubal Uriah Buzz Butler, 9th December, 1937

So our message today comrades, to all our workers in our island and throughout the Caribbean, is: in the spirit of Butler, unionise! Mobilise! Educate! Democratised! Dynamise the trade union movement throughout our region! Let the spirit of Butler fire and inspire us! Let us seek to emulate his cause and dedication to the most sacred commitment of all – the emancipation and freedom of our working people.

We in Grenada pledge to put our trade union movement at the centre of the process in our country to link all our workers in an organized relationship with democratic structures and practices, and so pump with ever-increasing vigour the vibrant blood that runs through all the organs of our Revolution.

Maurice Bishop, 18th November, 1981.



May Day 1981: the workers' procession.

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**FEDON
PUBLISHERS**



The Third Festival of the Revolution, March 13th, 1982. A section of the Workers' March.

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Introduction

A shorter version of this publication was first produced during the Third Trade Union Conference for the Unity and Solidarity of Caribbean Workers in St. George's, Grenada, from the 18th to the 21st. of November, 1981. The size and success of this conference, and the interest and stimulus it provoked throughout the region, has caused *Fedon Publishers* to produce this revised and lengthened edition, so as to continue the work of further unifying and steeling the Caribbean trade union movement for its inevitable future struggles.

The Grenada conference was the third in a series of such conferences for Caribbean workers. The first took place in Guyana in 1977, the second in Havana, Cuba in 1979. With 52 delegates representing 48 organizations from 22 Caribbean and Latin American countries, the Grenada conference has proved to be the largest so far.

There should be nothing surprising in this, in the context of the venue being revolutionary Grenada. For despite her size and small population, Grenada and her organizations of workers' resistance and protection, have always had strong and integral internationalist dimensions. Her workers helped build the Panama Canal, they manned the Trinidad oilfields and refineries of Aruba and Venezuela, they went where the work was; to New York, Toronto and London, and helped to build and service those cities. Grenada is only an island geographically. Throughout her history she has always responded to, and initiated, events of major regional and international significance. When Julien Fedon led a revolt of the Grenadian masses against slavery and British colonialism in 1795, he was responding both to the huge, boiling spirit of righteous resistance of the Grenadian people, and to the international wind of revolution blowing throughout the world, from Paris to Toussaint L'Ouverture in Haiti, and through the medium of that irrepressible carrier of insurrection and freedom, Victor Hughes. When Fedon raised the banner of his revolt and wore a cockade emblazoned with the same slogans as the French revolutionaries, 'Liberty, Equality or Death!', he was also declaring, 'Grenada is not only an island, we are a part of the struggling people of the world!'

T. A. Marryshow too, as well as being a Grenadian, a trade unionist and a fighter for Caribbean federation was also an inter-

nationalist. He journeyed to Britain to take the cause of the working people of Grenada to the hub of Empire, and linked up there with the British labour and trade union movement. In his eloquent and passionate essay of 1917, *Cycles of Civilization*, he championed the cause of the South African working people and the whole of black Africa against racist rule and white, colonial domination, casting prophecy which is now being fulfilled both in Africa and the Caribbean:

'Sons of New Ethiopia scattered all over the world, should determine that there shall be new systems of the distribution of opportunities, privileges and rights, so that Africa shall rid herself of many of the murderous highwaymen of Europe who have plundered her, raped her, and left her hungry and naked in the broad light of the boasted European civilization, free to raise her head among other races of the earth and enrich humanity as she has done before'.

Butler also urged the common interest of all the world's workers, particularly those still held in the shackles of British colonialism. He had fought in the British Army in Africa. He had experienced and resisted racism in that context just as the present Grenadian revolutionary leadership had organized and struck out against it in their years abroad. Maurice Bishop with other Caribbean comrades, was instrumental in founding pioneer legal aid centres in Notting Hill, West London, where many West Indian men and women were subject to the full force of British institutionalised racism. Bernard and Phyllis Coard, from the other side of London, organized West Indian parents to fight the racism deep in the machinery of the British school system, which condemned Caribbean children to second class schooling and cultural scorn. Comrade Coard's seminal book, *How the West Indian child is made Educationally Sub-normal in the British School System*, was a powerful force in exposing these practices, and influenced an entire generation of London teachers, black and white.

Thus the emphatic internationalist dimension of Grenada's trade union conference was yet another manifestation of the rejection of insularity by the Grenadian people and their Revolution, which has been a characteristic of their history. Grenada like Cuba and Nicaragua is a liberated area of the Caribbean basin. Imperialism has no right of way in these countries, they are the domains of the people. It was therefore right and fitting that Grenada formed the venue of this historic conference, and that the opening address by Comrade Maurice Bishop should invoke the living spirit of his country's, and the Caribbean's, greatest trade union figure. Yet the revolutionary necessity of national self-

criticism was also at work, in the acknowledgement of the two traditions and contradictions of trade unionism that have been at work in Grenada and the Caribbean this century: the liberating strength of Butler, and the leprous influence of Gairy and those who appeased him. For in these two trends and figures is symbolised the corruption and economic dependency upon imperialism that the conference pledged to end in the region, and the massive hope and determination that would achieve genuine freedom and independence for the working people of the Caribbean.

Finally, Comrade Bishop's call for peace and disarmament throughout the world is one that echoes the wish of every conscious worker and progressive human being. Grenada has had more than her share of imperialist bellicosity, provocation and warmongering since her revolution, and is in no way insulated from the great movement for peace now sweeping over our globe. In this appeal, and in Grenada's resolute march forward for the full social and political security of her working people — so long oppressed, so long exploited — Comrade Bishop is articulating the one most important and unifying issue of all which confronts all people, everywhere.

FEDON PUBLISHERS,
FEBRUARY, 1982



Comrades Maurice Bishop and Vincent Noel welcoming the delegates.

1. Trade Unionism Set Free



JOHN 'CHALKY' VENTOUR, who was born in Beaulieu, St. George's Parish in 1957, was a clerical worker at W. E. Julien and Sons when he was elected General Secretary of the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union in 1977.

He became the youngest ever General Secretary of the Grenada Trades Union Council, when he was elected to that position at their 25th Annual Convention in 1980.

HOW DO YOU THINK THAT THE REVOLUTION, AND THE COMING TO POWER OF A WORKERS' GOVERNMENT IN GRENADA, HAS SUCCEEDED IN SETTING FREE THE GRENADIAN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT?

First of all, under the Gairy dictatorship, the trade unions were not, in fact free. Since the Revolution of March 13th, 1979, all the anti-worker legislation — for example the Essential Services Act, which prevented workers in the essential services from taking industrial action, the Public Order Act which forbade the use of public address systems by trade unions and other organizations, and also the Newspaper (Amendment) Act which prevented the trade unions from publishing their bulletins — all these laws the People's Revolutionary Government has repealed.

In addition, what really crowned it all was the enactment of People's Law number 29 of 1979, which is a historic and unique piece of legislation in our country and in the English-speaking Caribbean. This law made it compulsory for employers to recognize their workers' trade union, once the majority of workers at the workplace decide by secret ballot that the union must represent them.

What all of this has done is to really free up the trade union movement, because before what was happening was because of the absence of any kind of pro-working class laws, and because of the enactment of anti-worker legislation, workers were afraid, first and foremost, to join trade unions. There are several examples where workers were discriminated against and victimised for joining trade unions, particularly in the union where I am General Secretary, the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union. In addition to this, workers were also terrorised for trade union activity so you found that the trade unions were not powerful because of the absence of any kind of participation by the rank and file.

Since the Revolution, however, because of the repeal of Gairy's laws and the enactment of the pro-worker laws — added to the new thrust of the Revolution for the democratisation of the trade unions — we find now that more and more of the rank and file members are beginning to become active in their respective unions, in the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union, the Technical and Allied Workers' Union, the Bank and General Workers' Union, the Public Workers' Union and the Grenada Union of Teachers, in particular.

I must highlight in particular at this point of time, the Technical and Allied Workers' Union, which has been very successful in its branch meetings. In some cases there have been 300 members

attending. When you compare this to before the Revolution, there were periods when *no* general meetings were held because of the lack of quorums, the lack of numbers. And we're talking about a union with over a thousand members. So this indicates the new interest that the rank and file have in the union, *and* the participation which they are putting in.

In addition to this, the Workers' Parish Councils, which have been organised by the People's Revolutionary Government, have also assisted in a great way in raising the confidence of members in speaking out and participating in their trade unions. Because in these councils workers can get up and criticise representatives of the bureaucracy and top civil servants, they can ask questions and give their suggestions in the presence of their revolutionary leaders. This has certainly had the effect of involving the workers more in democratising their own unions. It was at these councils that decisions were taken by the workers which led directly to the formulation of new gains clearly beneficial to the working class: the Rent Control Law, the addition of more important items to the Price Control list and the reduction in the price margins of other essential goods, and the establishment of a National Bus Service.

YOU MENTIONED SEVERAL PRO-WORKER TRADE UNION LAWS ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT. THE LATEST ONE, THE TRADE UNION RECOGNITION (AMENDMENT) ACT OF 1982 IS CLEARLY AN IMPORTANT AND ORIGINAL STEP FORWARD FOR TRADE UNIONISM IN GRENADA. COULD YOU EXPLAIN ITS CHARACTER AND PURPOSE?

Even before going on to talk about this law, there is at least one other piece of legislation being discussed now by the T.U.C., and it has been submitted to the government for enactment. But the Agency Fee Law, as we call the law you referred to in your question, was requested by the T.U.C. in its convention of March last year.

Now in Grenada we have had a situation where, over the years, in some workplaces a handful of non-unionised workers have been receiving benefits won by the bargaining and struggles of trade unionists. They have refused to join the unions, yet they have still been enjoying these benefits. They have not been contributing, and have refused to join unions because they know that once a majority of workers at their workplace are members of a union, then whenever that union bargains it doesn't bargain just for one-third or two-thirds of the workers at its workplaces, but

for all of them. So the non-unionised workers have decided to sit down like parasites and not make any contribution to the unions. The irony, though, is that whenever there are any negotiations or monetary matters to discuss, *these* workers are the first to be asking what is happening, and the first to be criticising the union in the case of negotiations being drawn out. This has led to the situation where the unionised workers have said they can no longer tolerate this, because they are paying their union dues and yet non-unionised workers are receiving the same benefits they are receiving.

Our members, particularly in the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union had been continually raising this issue, so they sent a resolution to the T.U.C. to approach the government to enact legislation. So the T.U.C. convention wrote to the Ministry of Legal Affairs, and they responded by submitting a draft law to the T.U.C., which we amended, sent back to the government, and it was enacted. So this demonstrates beyond any doubt the new democracy that we have in our country, and the involvement of the trade union movement in the enactment of pro-worker legislation. So now non-unionised workers must pay a service contribution to that union which represents the workers at their workplace, equal to the regular union membership subscription, and this is deducted from the worker's wages by the employer and paid to the trade union within fifteen days of the deduction.

Then right at this moment we are considering a new Workman's Compensation Act. It is important for us to contrast the things which are happening now to what happened before under the dictatorship. The Grenada T.U.C. since 1976 repeatedly requested the Gairy government to update the Workmen's Compensation Law. But like all anti-worker governments it turned a deaf ear. So up to now, if a worker has an accident or is killed at his workplace, the only compensation that the employer is bound to pay for his funeral expenses is \$48.00! It's quite absurd. But because the People's Revolutionary Government is a working class government, we see that whatever requests are made by the T.U.C., they are responded to in a short period of time.

IN THE VERY UNIQUE CONFERENCE THAT TOOK PLACE YESTERDAY, THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF DELEGATES OF MASS ORGANISATION OF THE ECONOMY, THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, COMRADE BERNARD COARD, SPOKE OF THE ROLE OF THE TRADE UNIONS AT THE WORKPLACE, PARTICULARLY IN THIS YEAR OF ECONOMIC CONSTRUCTION. HE TALKED OF THE SETTING UP OF PRODUCTION COMMITTEES, EMULATION COMMIT-

TEES, DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE COMMITTEES IN COLLABORATION WITH MANAGEMENT.

COULD YOU EXPLAIN HOW YOU SEE THESE FUNCTIONING, AND HOW YOU SEE THE TRADE UNIONS CONTRIBUTING TO THE MASSIVE THRUST NOW NEEDED IN GRENADA FOR ECONOMIC CONSTRUCTION?

First of all, we of the trade union would like to congratulate the People's Revolutionary Government and the Prime Minister for making this call for democratisation of the workplaces, for we have been facing situations where workers, in absence of any knowledge of what is happening at their workplaces, have made erroneous demands for wages, working conditions and so on, in cases where sometimes the enterprises are not functioning as they should, or making the turnovers that the workers think they are making. Therefore we see it as vitally important that there should be *no secrets* from the workers at all, in terms of the management functioning and the running of the enterprises. For if there is going to be any increase in production, then the workers must know all the facts of what is happening at their workplace.

So we see it as a crucial step forward that these Production Committees are set up, committees comprising of the workers and management. Also, there is the setting up of Grievance Committees, so that any grievances can be speedily handled by committees also comprising of management and the workers. Then there is the question of Emulation, which is critical to the raising of productivity. Of course, there will be logistical problems in organising all this, but we think it is very important to get this emulation going. It's not going to be a dog-eat-dog competition, but a friendly competition between the workers to increase production. What we intend to do is to emulate the most outstanding workers every month, to provide material and moral incentives for them. These workers will be given media coverage, but equally, some little increase in their pay cheque. We think that the trade unions have a pivotal role to play in ensuring that this thing succeeds, because it is the trade unions that are organising the workers, so they should give guidance to the workers in accomplishing those tasks. We think that it will come off, once the trade unions and workers themselves take it seriously.

We envisage that the trade unions will be present at the meetings where the different committees are set up, to explain to the workers their functions and purposes and assist them in organising them at their workplaces. We know that once the workers are aware of what is happening, then on a regular basis they can give

suggestions on ways of cutting waste, and ways of improving efficiency, so that in the end, if there are any surpluses made, they would have their fair share of what is due to them, for they would know exactly what is happening at their workplace.

I must say that in some of the trade unions' industrial agreements with certain companies, there are certain clauses which go in that direction, providing for regular meetings with the trade unions and management to discuss problems of discipline, production and so on. In addition, some of the unions have already won profit-sharing clauses and practices for their workers, namely the Bank and General Workers' Union, the Agricultural and General Workers' Union, and to some extent the Technical and Allied Workers' Union. In almost all the agreements signed by the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union, we have been able to negotiate for profit sharing agreements. For the first time the National Commercial Bank workers are able to receive handsome profit sharing and this resulted from such an industrial agreement between the BGWU and the bank. But the People's Revolutionary Government's suggestions, of course, go a lot further than even this. There will be concrete structures to assist in raising production and achieving economic construction.

ST. GEORGE'S, GRENADA
JANUARY 30TH., 1981



The Third Festival of the Grenada Revolution: the March of the Workers arrives in Queen's Park, March 13th, 1982.

***In the Spirit of Butler, Unionise!
Mobilise! Educate! Democratise!***



Address by Comrade Maurice Bishop, Prime Minister of Grenada, in the opening of the Third Trade Union Conference for the Unity and Solidarity of Caribbean Workers, at The Dome, St. George's, November 18th, 1981.

Comrades, if we were to study the history of this country Grenada, we would find that the central theme that has characterised the lives of our people over the centuries has been *resistance*. Our people have struggled at many times and in many ways.

From the stubborn refusal of the Grenadian Caribs to accept any colonial stranglehold over their island, through the consistent pattern of slave revolts which culminated in the mass upsurge led by Julien Fedon in 1795 which for two years brought Grenada to determined, militant independence, through the years of anti-colonial agitation and the eloquent leadership of T. A. Marryshow through the two great popular uprisings of 1951 and 1973-4 to the climax of our struggle in the March 13th. Revolution of 1979 — Grenadians have always resisted domination, injustice and exploitation. Our great Caribbean poet, Edward Kamau Brathwaite himself a Barbadian, has likened this spirit of permanent struggle to the dramatic and sublime peaks which tower along the spine of our island. And it is into this tradition of resistance that we must place the growth and development of our trade union movement.

We have produced here in Grenada perhaps the greatest, the most brilliant and audacious of pioneer Caribbean trade unionists — I am referring, of course, to *Tubal Uriah 'Buzz' Butler*, that huge, monumental igniter of the spirit of the Caribbean masses who, born in Grenada, moved to Trinidad to accomplish his great deeds of leadership of the burgeoning Caribbean working class. His volcanic influence there sent our entire region throbbing with a new will and resistance which soon broke out through all our islands. But let it also be said that we produced Eric Mathew Gairy perhaps the most degenerate and decadent manipulator and corrupter of the trade union movement that our islands have ever spawned.

Butler vs. Gairy: to say them with the same breath makes one choke! But we have seen both their traditions and disciples alive in our Caribbean. Our duty now is to strive to emulate the one and make certain that the other will never be re-created! Certainly we must also remember how Butler was sought, hunted and hounded by British colonialism and the employing class that saw him as their greatest menace, how they imprisoned him, interned him but could never smother or even dim his enormous determination and lustre! And certainly we must also remember how his opposite lied, bribed, bludgeoned and murdered in his path to power, and how the consequences of that misrule strewed hurricane wreckage

through our nation and working people that he claimed to represent, so much so that nearly three years after the Revolution that ended his sordidness forever in our country, we are still clearing up the devastation he caused to our national life and economy.

So we have known only too well this type of bogus trade unionism in Grenada, and we have lived through the ghastly damage it caused to our country and people. And we also know how much our real, genuine, patriotic trade unionists fought against such deformity when its political arm came into power with the Gairy neo-colonial dictatorship, which lasted for over two decades here in Grenada. For right through these years of struggle, our militant, selfless trade unionists fought gallantly against Gairy's terror, squandermania and neglect of the rights of workers, even though he could also count through that period, upon certain sections of the trade union leadership to sell out the masses at crucial points of their struggle, as he had done himself in 1951, and as the conciliators did again in April 1974.

TRADE UNIONISM AGAINST THE DICTATORSHIP

Gairy's neo-colonial dictatorship introduced several draconian laws that were clearly anti-worker and were aimed at muzzling and straitjacketing any threatening action from our trade unionists. The *1974 Public Order (Amendment) Act* prohibited trade unions, as well as other organisations, from using public address systems. The next year he passed the *Newspaper (Amendment) Act* which without just cause, effectively forbade trade unionists and other workers' organisations from publishing their own newspapers. Then the *Essential Services Act* of 1978 was passed particularly against the prospect of members of the Technical and Allied Workers' Union taking direct industrial action. Significantly, the leadership of this union, notoriously inactive, did nothing to challenge the passage of a law which was designed to render them impotent. This was hardly surprising when we understand that the leadership of this union was in the hands of the same man who acted as the 'Research and Education Officer' of the American Institute of Free Labour Development in the Eastern Caribbean. But other unions and the political leadership of the NJM fought on behalf of their brothers and sisters in this union, comrades, and when Gairy tried to extend the law to include the

dockworkers — who proved to be the most militant section of the urban working class under the dictatorship — they never allowed the amendment to be implemented. For it was a common feature of those years that the workers themselves would take industrial action *in the absence of or in defiance of* their conciliatory leadership. This was perhaps best seen in the 1973-4 period when the workers had to *force the hand* of their leaders to strike, and simultaneously resist the propaganda and persuasion techniques of the A.F.L. — C.I.O.

REPRESSION WAS TOTAL

Comrades, it is important to note that all this activity and struggle within our trade union movement was taking place against a backdrop of massive repression that was building up in our country, in all aspects and spheres of the people's lives. The dictatorship was making a systematic and comprehensive attack on all the rights and freedoms that our people had campaigned for and won over the years of British Colonialism. The freedom to express ourselves, the freedom of assembly — in fact the freedom to live any sort of decent life, all this was being ripped from us. The elections that were organised were rigged and farcical: a mockery of the democracy that our people truly aspired to reach. When we moved to protest or organise against the decay of life we saw around us, we were hounded by paid bandits who battered, bruised and murdered some of our most valued and courageous comrades. Life itself was being torn away from us, piece by piece, in the growing fear and reality of repression.

Our youth saw desolation around them in a hopeless search for jobs. Our women faced sexual abuse and exploitation in the daily struggle to keep their dignity. A youth like Jeremiah Richardson was shot, point-blank, in the streets of Grenville because he sought to question a policeman's abuse. A boy, Harry Andrews, was killed because he climbed over a wall in a calypso tent. Harold Strachan, Alister Strachan, Rupert Bishop all heroically sought to challenge this ebbing away of freedom and the right to live, and they all fell before the horrendous rule of terror and corruption which characterised our country during those years. Our people lived in an ethos of death and tyranny, when honest people disappeared mysteriously, the fate of Inspector Bishop of the Carriacou Police, or the four youths tending goats on Frigate Island

Comrades, to be an active, combative and militant trade unionist during that portion of our history was to court this danger and violence. Militancy meant a challenge to death and an assertion of everything that was hopeful and positive and which could reconstruct life and happiness for our people.

THE WORKERS FOUGHT BACK

But as the dictatorship tried to tighten its grip on the lives of the Grenadian people, more and more democratic and progressive fighters were elected to the leadership of our trade unions. By 1978 the Executive of the Commercial and Industrial Workers Union was demonstrating this and Gairy was answering by trying to crush the union. Resolutions were being passed by the Executive against Gairy's ties with the butchers of Chile and the visit of Pinochet's torture ship, *The Esmeralda*, to our shores. The dictator realised he was not dealing with the previous pattern of pliable and opportunistic leadership. The only price of these new comrades was freedom! So he went directly to the employers, trying to persuade and bribe them to compel their workers to join *his* union, even though these employers had already signed agreements with the Commercial and Industrial Workers Union. He also attempted to force C.I.W.U. members directly to change unions, but because of the respect they had for the consistent and principled hard work and positions of the new C.I.W.U. leadership, they were not moved.

Over the years our Caribbean trade union movement has constantly been the target of that most unscrupulous arm of imperialism: the Central Intelligence Agency. We have had *rare* instances of our trade union leaders *consciously* selling out to their silky bribes and offerings, but more usually the C.I.A., with its sophistication and enormous financial resources, has succeeded in manipulating and infecting unwitting trade unionists who may well have been continuing with their work with the best of intentions. In doing this, the C.I.A. has sometimes directly infiltrated and controlled some sections of our movement, and thus forced the leadership of some of our unions to actually take anti-worker positions. This has happened, we know, in Grenada, and more and more of our workers are becoming conscious of this danger to their hopes. We saw how the C.I.A. actually succeeded in turning

back the progress of the organized workers' movement in Chile, by both open and covert activity, and we in the Caribbean must be particularly *vigilant* in recognising their position and subversion of the workers' cause, for *imperialism will never rest* in its resolution to crush the onward march of the progress and emancipation of our struggling people.

For on the day that the Revolution triumphed, March 13th, 1979, trade unionists from all over the country showed direct support for and involvement in the revolutionary events. The Telephone Company workers, for example, were contacting and radioing our security forces to tell them of the whereabouts of Gairy's ministers, and trade unionists and workers generally all over the country left their work-places to take up arms to end forever the power of oppression that had constantly tried to thwart the free aspirations and genuine and constructive organisation of our Grenadian workers.

Since our revolution most of the old, corrupt union leadership has been thrown into the dustbin of history, for because of their growing consciousness, our workers can now contrast and see who is bringing benefits to them and who is not, who is desperately trying to maintain the old pattern of dictatorship and who is in the forefront of the struggle to bring more democracy into our trade unions.

What we are seeing more and more in Grenada is that the objectives of the Revolution and the objectives of the trade union movement in our country are one and the same. Thus, any antagonisms between them are gradually lessening and disappearing, for the Revolution has *set free* the opportunities for the trade union movement to accomplish its tasks of building the emancipation, security and prosperity of the working people, the identical will of the Revolution itself.

MEMBERSHIP AND DEMOCRACY

Let us consider the massive rise in membership since the Revolution, of the most militant and democratic unions. On March 13th., 1979, the Bank and General Workers' Union had some hundred members. It now has about three thousand. It has spread out from its birthplace at Barclay's Bank to the banana boxing plants, the nutmeg pools, the restaurants and hotels, the factories and workshops. Its tradition of honest and consistent struggle on be-

half of its members has made it the largest union in the country. The Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union has had over fifty percent increase in membership, the Technical and Allied Workers' Union a sixty percent increase and the Agricultural and General Workers' Union has risen from scratch to its present level of 2,300 members. We had a huge, symbolic demonstration of our increased trade union membership and power in this year's May Day celebrations. It was the biggest ever May Day turn out in the history of Grenada, and the seemingly endless procession of organised workers wound around the steep streets of our capital.

Along with this sudden explosion in the membership of our unions is the emphasis the new leadership is putting on their *democratisation*. This is very much allied to the general thrust in democracy right through our society since the Revolution, in all structures of mass organisations, community groups and the other organs of our people's power. As we have seen, before the Revolution there was a tradition in some unions of few or no General Meetings.

Following the Revolution we have seen a massive new interest in trade unionism as Grenadians saw new hope and strength in co-operative and collective democratic solutions to their problems. At the first General Meeting of the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union after the Revolution, in July, 1979, there was over 100% increase in the attendance. Two hundred and ninety members came and voted 246 to 44 in favour of a militant, democratic leadership as against the previous conciliatory and conservative type, even though the latter had organised and conducted the elections.

What is happening now in our country, is that everybody is becoming affected by the dialectic of democratic participation that is sweeping through our villages and workplaces. Involvement in one organisation or meeting leads directly to involvement in another. A worker who attends a Workers' Parish Council hears something which he wants to bring to his trade union. So he goes to the meeting of his union, although he may not have attended one for years. And when he finds, quite surprisingly, that his union is taking a vibrant, democratic direction, he involves himself in one of its new committees or structures for fund raising, sports or planning for educational seminars. His confidence is raised through all this activity and the speaking and organising that goes along with

it, and his appetite is whetted to join one of the mass organisations — the local Party Support Group, the Militia, House Repair Programme, or for the sisters, the National Women's Organisation. Each organisation feeds strength, power and confidence into the next, and all of them, including the trade unions, grow in real potency and democratic advancement.

And now we see Workers' Parish Councils splitting into Zonal Councils, in a new sprouting of decentralised democracy right through our nation, a reflection of a similar tendency that is happening within our progressive trade unions.

NEW LEGISLATION

The People's Revolutionary Government has been swift to take legislative action in favour of the trade unions. All Gairy's anti-worker laws were repealed and two months after the Revolution, in May 1979, People's Law Number 29, the Trade Union Recognition Law, was passed. For the first time in Grenada's history, our workers had the opportunity to join the union of their choice, and the employer was compelled to recognise the trade union, once 51% of his workforce were financial members. Under this Law, the Ministry of Labour has to respond within seven days of the Union's application for recognition, and then call a poll of workers. If the majority is shown to be members, then the union must be certified as the bargaining agent for the workers. For apart from Barclay's, before the Revolution there were other grotesque examples of non-recognition of trade unions. The workers at the Red Spot Soft Drink Factory had a 100% financial membership of the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union in 1978, but the company still refused recognition, and it took the workers at Bata some 17 years of struggle before they finally won recognition. So this law has changed all those old abuses and given the workers real and genuine security in making their trade unions effective bargaining agents on behalf of their workers.

For the sister trade unionists, the 1980 Maternity Leave Law has made an enormous difference to their working and personal lives. Every working woman now has the right to two months' paid maternity leave over the period of the birth of any child. And the trade unions were involved, together with the mass organisations, particularly the National Women's Organisation, and the churches, in the widespread consultation conducted all over the

nation before the bill was finally passed. The Equal Pay for Equal Work Decree in the state sector has also had a profound effect in improving the wages of the sisters and levelling them up with those of their brother workers throughout Grenada — as well as increasing their general confidence to organise and struggle, side by side, with their brothers. For now both men and women are sharing equally in the improvement in wages and conditions being brought about since the Revolution. The old, appalling working conditions and lack of facilities like no drinking water or workers' amenities in workplaces, compulsory overtime without pay and no job security are now doomed. The recent successful strike of agricultural workers in the St. Andrew's Parish, waged by members of the Agricultural and General Workers' Union, is proof of this. The comrades achieved their demands of holiday and sick leave pay under the new democratic leadership of their new union.

At this moment arising from a decision of the St. George's Workers' Parish Council, and based on requests from trade unions, the Ministry of Legal Affairs has prepared two pieces of legislation — a Rent Control Law to ease the burden of high rent costs for our people and a new Workmen's Compensation Act, both of which will be circulated to our unions for their comments before enactment.

NEW ATTITUDES

Of course, you would know how closely higher productivity and trade union organisation are connected. More than two decades of Gairyism produced in our workers many negative attitudes. The new trade unionism in our country is now helping to transform such attitudes by helping to apply new incentives.

Before the Revolution our agricultural estates brought in absurdly low returns. They were making only a quarter of a million dollars, even though their yearly expenditure was nearly three million. Now, from being a national liability they have become profitable, and the workers themselves have shared in that success, taking one-third of the profits made. This new attitude has grown through the spirit of emulation that the workers have adopted as a result of those seminars. The Age of Cynicism is gone in Grenada.

Workers in a revolutionary country like ours, who are under a progressive and democratic leadership in their trade unions, do not see Trade Unionism solely in a narrow, economic sense.

They do not see their responsibilities stopping only at these fundamental tasks of improving their members' wages and working conditions. They see themselves deeply involved in *all aspects* of the social and political life of their country, their region and their world. Our unionised workers have consistently shown solidarity with all other struggling workers of the world. They see this as an internationalist duty to all trade unionists organising for their rights and fighting for social and political justice, be they in Chile, El Salvador, Southern Africa, the Middle East or any part of the world where the producers of wealth are exploited and oppressed. They see their responsibility, likewise with other trade unionists of the Third World, in pressing for the New International Economic Order that will create more favourable terms of trade between rich and poor nations and transfer wealth and technology for the benefit of the masses in countries such as ours.

THE NEED FOR TRADE UNION UNITY IN THE CARIBBEAN

Comrades, it is clear that the growing economic crisis of world capitalism is having a dynamic effect in the Caribbean. Throughout our region we see the employing class united in its attack upon trade unionism. There have been newspaper advertisements in Barbados calling upon workers there to abandon their trade unions. There have been incidents of multi-national companies in St. Vincent forcing workers to sign documents pledging that they will leave their trade union. Clearly, the employers are trying to *de-unionise* their workforces to make them more pliable and exploitable, so we, throughout the Caribbean must go beyond all our political and ideological differences and forge the essential *unity* of our regional trade union movement to combat this reactionary offensive by the employers. This is why we have to work towards the *total unionisation* of our workers and the *maximum democratisation* of our unions, to ensure that they are vigilant and active in the struggles against the employers, and to guarantee that the negativism and passivity that arise from undemocratic trade union structures are forever finished in our region.

We consider that in Grenada we have a critical role to stimulate and achieve this unity, because our Revolution has emancipated our trade union movement to fully serve the country and help to build it, along with our party, the mass organizations and other democratic community structures. For we are benefiting, not only from increased wages and better working conditions, unlocked freedoms and an explosion of democracy, but also from a

massively *increased social wage* which makes more and more sure and profound the security of our working people, one of the prime objectives of trade unionism. Free medical treatment, pre-primary care, an eye clinic, free milk distribution, more doctors and dentists than we have ever had before, new low cost housing and house repair schemes, free secondary education, de facto free middle level technical and university training for all our untrained primary school teachers, a Centre for Popular Education, cheaper basic food through our Marketing and National Importing Board, loans for productive purposes through our National Commercial Bank, a vastly improved water supply system, cheaper electricity rates and less tax to pay for the poorest workers, a new International Airport, a national Public Bus Service on the way — all this has been achieved in the last thirty months. Such concrete benefits are what true trade unionists have always struggled for, and we see our trade unionists too taking a greater and greater part in this huge process of national reconstruction.

For the first time in our history, and as far as we know this step is unique in the Caricom section of our region, our trade unions have been involved in the exercise of framing the national budget. The Public Workers' Union, the Grenada Union of Teachers and the Technical and Allied Workers' Union were all involved in this process last year, and this year and in the coming years more of our unions will be involved. Proposals for the 1982 Budget will be circularised by the Ministry of Finance in a booklet, and 50,000 of these are being printed, to be given among others, to the workers at their workplaces for them to study and add their comments and suggestions. This, of course, is an extension of the already-existing policy of our government of *opening all our books to our workers during wage negotiations* with trade unions, giving them *access* to all accounts and files, so that they can see for themselves what the national budget can afford to give them, and so they can make their own assessment of what could be a realistic and equitable wage demand. This is the absolute antithesis of Gairicism, a total transformation.

This process will underline yet again that the trade union movement must be involved in *all aspects* of national development. This means planning, production, management, distribution of foods, working in the literacy campaign through the Centre for Popular Education, in the House Repair Programme, the School Repair Programme, the community work and the creation of democracy in *all* our popular and democratic programmes to ensure that the benefits of the Revolution reach not only its own members, but all the people of Grenada.



Cde. Maurice Bishop, Prime Minister of Grenada.

Finally and crucially, there is the question of National Defence, particularly at this juncture when we are facing so many threats from a belligerent and vulgar imperialism. Our trade unions and their members are becoming more and more involved in our People's Revolutionary Militia, and the Trades Union Council itself, in response to the U.S. "Amber and the Amberines" provocations and manoeuvres in Vieques Island in August, issued a call for all trade unionists to join the militia and be prepared to defend the homeland from imperialist military attack.

CALL TO THE DELEGATES

So comrades, what is the way forward? What are the challenges ahead of us and how must we respond? We would not want to leave this conference without having clear ideas and proposals in our heads to secure greater bonds and solidarity between us. What concrete steps can we make as a result of our discussions?

For a start we must exchange information, insights and experiences to make more profound the trust between us, and more unified the causes and strength that bind us. And let us pledge that in the spirit of Trade Union democracy we hold more regular assemblies and meetings such as this one to combine in a more coherent and purposeful way, to consolidate our power and unity, and to co-ordinate our strategies to beat back the offensive against us. Our enemies are intensifying their unity, as has been seen in the recent general inter-Caribbean meetings of Chambers of Commerce, and even more pointedly, in the meetings of various army and police chiefs, with external representatives also involved.

The violence of this offensive has also been made clear in the imperialist-dominated campaign of lies, slander and disinformation — the deliberate manipulation of half truths and fabrications — which has been principally directed at the revolutionary countries in our region: Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada, and against the progressive movement of workers generally throughout the Caribbean. This campaign intensified to a particularly blatant level in May this year, when the United States International Communications Agency (U.S.I.C.A.), the propaganda arm of the U.S. State Department, organised a conference in Washington, to which were invited the editors of all the major English Language Caribbean newspapers. The editors were counselled and lectured to by reactionary congressmen, and slick American journalists taught them techniques of propaganda destabilisation, with 'How to Deal with Grenada' as an unlisted item on the agenda. Within two weeks of

this conference we witnessed in the region signs of a co-ordinated approach by all of these newspapers, in their propaganda attacks against the Grenada Revolution. Articles and editorials were swapped and re-printed, and this process descended to its most vulgar depths with the appearance in five regional newspapers — the *Jamaica Gleaner*, the *Barbados Sunday Sun*, the *Barbados Advocate*, the *Trinidad Guardian* and the *Trinidad Express* — of identical front page editorials, calling upon the governments, peoples and workers of the region to isolate Grenada and expel us from all regional groupings and organizations. The magnates and warlords of the Caribbean media are about to start yet another campaign against Grenada. While the *Jamaican Daily Gleaner's* Hector Wynter travels to Trinidad to plan strikes with his fellow *Trinidad Guardian* and *Express* blood-suckers, his compatriot and twin brother in lies and hypocrisy, Ken Gordon, is in Jamaica shamelessly announcing yet another plan of orchestrated propaganda destabilisation against our Revolution.

It seems that these clowns do not yet understand that the game is up, that they have been fully exposed before the Caribbean people and before their own workers, who so valiantly stood up to them in September, and condemned them for their dishonesty and vulgarity, after their front-page fiasco.

It seems like these Judases, who are willing to trade the journalistic integrity of their own workers and the limited value of their own depraved souls for a few dollars more, are in need of yet another slap on their bottoms from the workers of the Caribbean.

Let them continue to attack. The more they do so, the more they help the cause of the working people. For they are the best possible proof of the decadence, corruption and nasty stench of unmitigated, free enterprise capitalism, and its twin sister of rotting, hypocritical, saltfish journalism.

Comrades, this propaganda campaign continues unabated until this very day. We would therefore like to call upon all the delegates here, representing as they do the most active and conscious leaders of the working class movement in our region, to condemn this monopoly control of the Caribbean media by unprincipled press magnates in league with imperialism, and support the struggle of media workers all over the world for a *New International Information Order* to serve our movement and our peoples, which can only be made possible through the struggle to achieve the *New International Economic Order*, the creation of which will be of particular significance to all workers in the Caribbean and Latin America.

Comrades, very importantly we must express that all the workers of our region must have a clear understanding as to why *PEACE* is in their interest and why *WAR* is such a high priority on the agenda of Reagan and the ruling circles in the U.S.A.

At present the world capitalist system is in the midst of a serious crisis. Runaway inflation, compounded by ever-rising unemployment has meant that for millions of workers in the industrialized capitalist economies, the cost of living keeps going up, seemingly beyond control, while job security is weakened.

Almost as daily routine factory after factory is closed down, business after business declares bankruptcy resulting in hundreds of thousands of workers losing their jobs. Those workers fortunate to retain jobs, find that their wages remain stagnant, their unions attacked and undermined by the monopolists, their rights abused and their hard-won gains eroded.

And as the international capitalist crisis intensifies it generates increased imperialist aggression, spearheaded by the most reactionary circles of imperialism's military industrial complexes who feel that the solution to this crisis is the build-up of arms, the provocation of wars and the creation of tension spots around the world, the Caribbean region being no exception.

The struggle carried on by the world's workers for peace is strongly linked with the effects of the crisis of capitalism on their living standards. Thus one can say that the economic and social gains won through such struggle are a contribution to the consolidation of world peace, because these gains are an expression of the change in the balance of forces against the roots of all wars: monopoly capitalism and imperialism.

Ignoring the new realities brought about by this change in the world's balance of forces however, the military and conservative circles of imperialism are trying to return the world to the cold war period and intensification of the arms race with the planned deployment of many more nuclear warheads in Western European countries, with mad talk of limited nuclear war, and right here in our region with stepped up military manoeuvres and exercises and preparations for military invasions of Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada, along with massive intervention in El Salvador.

The present level of military efforts puts on the shoulders of Caribbean workers and workers all over the world a very heavy burden of sacrifice exposing the very existence of humanity to the risk of a catastrophic disaster. High military expenditures are damaging to economic stability, slow down the rate of development and make unemployment more acute. The contemporary

capitalist crisis and the arms race are directly connected with each other. In many capitalist countries, arms contracts provide the motive force for the industries connected with arms manufacture.

But workers must not be intimidated or resort to pessimism in the face of this bleak scenario. Hope still exists and it resides in the struggle of all peace-loving forces for disarmament and world peace, which will make it possible for science and technology to be put fully to work for the material and spiritual enhancement of humankind.

The working class of the world constitutes the principal force of peace. Because of its role in the crucial sphere of social life and production, the working class is also the principal force of social progress.

Thus, there is a direct connection between the historical role of the working class and the struggle for peace and disarmament. The Caribbean Trade Union Movement cannot fulfill its mission of emancipating the working people of the region in a situation where imperialism is attempting to make the Caribbean into a theatre of war. Genuine social and economic progress can only be achieved in an atmosphere of peaceful co-existence, co-operation, goodwill, mutual respect and understanding among the region's peoples. It is therefore an urgent imperative that the Caribbean trade union movement strongly condemns all efforts by imperialism to bring unnecessary tension to our region and in equally strong terms supports the call for the Caribbean to be declared a Zone of Peace.

Caribbean and Latin American workers employed by capitalist companies who do not own the means of production because they are an exploited class, have no stake in war or in the profits deriving from the manufacture of weapons, as in the case with the transnational corporations. Peace is the workers' ideal. Historical experience shows that in the imperialist wars it is the working people influenced by the ideological hegemony of imperialism who are the victims, who shed their blood and sacrifice their lives. But it is also the working people who have always fought against wars of aggression and who now find themselves in a common front in the struggle for peace.

In fighting against the monopolies, against the transnationals and the military industrial complexes, the working people of the Caribbean and Latin America carry out a direct offensive against the roots of war. In this context, the workers and their trade union organisations have a fundamental role to play. In defiance of the imperialist merchants of death, the Caribbean and Latin American trade union movement must make a clear and consistent

response to Washington's aggression in this region by the unity and common action of all the trade union forces. In these times there is an urgent need, comrades, for unity and co-ordinated action, for co-operation and direct alliance between the region's democratic trade unions, some with different ideological tendencies but all with the same class interests and with similar economic and social aspirations. Warmongering in our region can only be stopped by a united and decisive workers' struggle for peace and disarmament. Workers of our region can be heartened and even inspired by the forthright resistance demonstrated by millions of workers, who have taken to the streets of European capitals in recent weeks to say a loud "no" to the war policies of the Reagan Administration.

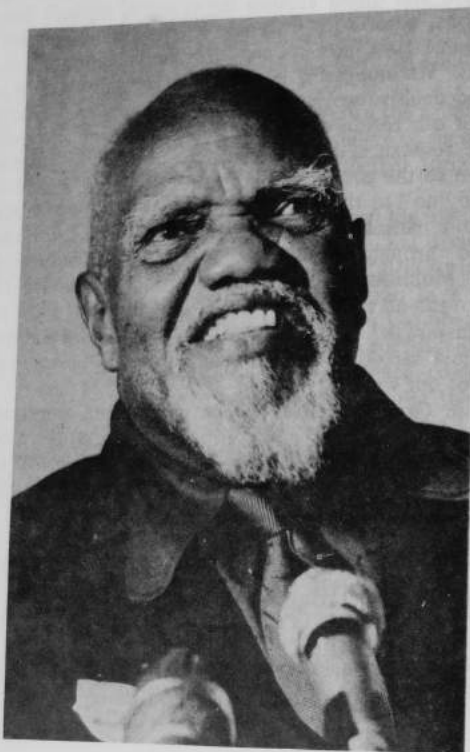
So our message today comrades, to all our workers in our island and throughout the Caribbean, is: in the spirit of Butler, unionise! Mobilise! Educate! Democratise! Dynamise the trade union movement throughout our region! Let the spirit of Butler fire and inspire us! Let us seek to emulate his cause and dedication to the most sacred commitment of all — the emancipation and freedom of our working people.

We in Grenada pledge to continue to put our trade union movement at the centre of the process in our country to link all our workers in an organised relationship with democratic structures and practices, and so pump with ever-increasing vigour the vibrant blood that runs through all the organs of our Revolution.

LONG LIVE THE WORKING CLASS OF GRENADA, THE
CARIBBEAN AND THE WORLD!
LONG LIVE THE UNITY AND SOLIDARITY OF WORKING
PEOPLE OF THE WORLD!
LONG LIVE THE SPIRIT OF TUBAL URIAH BUZZ BUTLER!
FORWARD EVER! BACKWARD NEVER!

3. Butler: A Life of Struggle

by W. Richard Jacobs.



Tubal Uriah 'Buzz' Butler was born in Grenada on January 21st, 1897 — a year that witnessed the virtual collapse of the sugar industry in that island. Before he was one year old his father, who had been a blacksmith at the Grenada sugar factory, was declared redundant.

The struggle for survival hit Butler at an early stage. His enterprising father set up shop in St. George's as an independent blacksmith and being a committed Anglican got some extra change in his capacity as sexton of the St. George's Anglican Chapel.

The Butler family lived a hand-to-mouth existence. But because his father was the sexton, the young Tubal got free tuition to attend the St. George's Anglican School. He was one of the few underprivileged children who had the opportunity to attend this prestige school.

But Butler behaved as if he belonged there. His schoolmates remember him as proud, assertive and bright, competing for academic honours with the best in his class and excelling at football and marbles.

The struggle at that stage was to demonstrate that a poor black boy — the son of a blacksmith — was as good as anyone else. He succeeded admirably in that struggle.

When Butler left school at the age of 13 his options were severely limited. His father could not afford to send him to secondary school. He had been brought up in the town so he had no tradition of agricultural work, and the jobs in the town which were available to a young black boy, educated or not, were menial, routine, unchallenging and degrading.

Butler dabbled at various trades including that of blacksmith and joiner but he was uncomfortable and restless.

He was struggling to maintain his dignity and standing in his own eyes and those of his schoolmates who because of their colour, social and economic standing had access to both secondary schooling and white collar jobs. But the Grenadian social structure was rigid. It would take a whole generation of persistent struggle to permit a precocious black boy to make it. Indeed it was only with the advent of Gairy in 1951 that the rigid social structure began to bend.

The only avenue open to Butler was to leave Grenada and seek his fortune elsewhere. The advent of the first world war presented a brilliant opportunity. The 17-year old Butler represented himself to the authorities as 20 years old and was accepted as a volunteer in the First Contingent of the West Indian Regiment.

During his four years in the First Contingent, Butler was engaged in preparing and participating in armed struggle. But here again he faced the social struggle of discrimination and prejudice against black people. It was in the heat of the battle that concrete evidence was provided, if any was needed, of the absolute equality of black and white people.

It was a dramatic education for the young colonial fighters to see whites and blacks showing the same emotions of fear of the bullets, sadness on the occasion of defeat and joy at victory time.

Even more dramatic was the concrete evidence that bullets were no respecter of colour, and the need for whites to do the

same kind of menial jobs that they had scoffed at in the colonies and even eat out of the same plates as blacks. Whatever residual respect for whites existed in Butler's mind, withered away with the experience of the war.

Upon his return to Grenada in 1919, the 21 year old Butler found conditions exactly the same as he left them. The Crown Colony system was at its height with the whites and off-white plantocracy holding sway over Government and economy. No jobs were available and educational opportunities were limited.

He immediately set about doing something about it. He formed the Grenada Representative Government Movement and the Grenada Union of Returned Soldiers. Both organisations reflected Butler's commitment to struggle to ensure a better and brighter day for the working class from whence he came.

The Returned Soldiers' Association sought pensions, educational benefits and jobs for those who had fought so gallantly for King and Empire. The Representative Association took the radical position that the rule of the plantocracy must be replaced by the rule of the people's representatives elected on the basis of universal adult franchise.

This was far in advance of Cipriani's proposals for Trinidad which called for a limited franchise based on property qualifications which he presented to the Wood Commission of 1922.

It was perfectly natural that Butler — a propertyless member of the working class would call for a franchise which allowed all citizens, regardless of wealth, to vote. Equally it was perfectly natural for Cipriani — a cocoa planter and racehorse owner — to seek to defend the interests of the propertied class. The conflict between Butler and Cipriani which came to the fore in 1936-37 was hatched long before they met each other!

Three years after his return to Grenada, unable to get a steady and rewarding job, the Grenadian social structure resistant as ever to change and the oppressiveness of the Crown colony system at its height, Butler joined the trek of Grenadians who were migrating to Trinidad in search of employment.

He arrived in Trinidad in January 1921 at the age of 24. Within two days of his arrival Butler secured a job as a pipe fitter at the Roodal Oil fields — his employer Timothy Roodal was to become his benefactor and trusted friend in the years to come.

Butler went to live in Fyzabad, a welcoming village where twenty five per cent of the population was Grenadian and an overall forty per cent small islanders.

But for Butler and the people of his class the struggle for survival, for dignity, for job opportunities for reasonable wages and

conditions of work, the struggle against discrimination continued.

Butler's career in the oilfields closely paralleled those of others who had come from the small islands. For eight years he did the backbreaking menial tasks for minimal financial reward. But he, like all the other Grenadians and small islanders who came to Trinidad, was looking for money and was therefore prepared to do almost any job to get the money.

This attitude encouraged the local Trinidadians to view the immigrants with scorn and as time went on the small islanders became more and more alienated from Trinidadian society. They sought sustenance in the unconventional churches which provided greater intimacy and allowed for a higher level of fellowship, than the established churches.

Butler, who had been brought up in the church, became closely associated with his friends and neighbours in the Moravian Baptist Church.

In 1929 Butler was seriously injured in an industrial accident which left him with a permanent limp. He credited his deep involvement with the church and his prayers to God with saving his life.

Soon after he recovered in 1931 — at the age of 34 — Butler became the Chief Pastor of the "Butlerite Moravian Baptist Church" and around the same time he joined Cipriani's Trinidad Workingmen's Association (T.W.A.).

The church became the centre of Butler's life and his activities. It provided a platform for struggle and survival, and it was the source of sustenance for Butler and the alienated who formed the larger part of the congregation. From the pulpit Butler called for better wages and working conditions as well as for more land for the landless and a greater security of tenure for farmers. The former demands appealed to the predominantly African oil workers. The latter appealed to the largely Indian farmers who existed on the circumference of Fyzabad.

This appeal was reflected in the composition of his public meetings and his following, which consisted of what he liked to call the African workers and Indian toilers.

His message and tactics were too militant for Cipriani's T.W.A. — reformist and constitutionally-oriented as it was. And so on the 27th. July, 1936 at the age of 39, Butler left the T.W.A. and announced the formation of his own party — the British Empire Workers' and Citizens' Home Rule Party. That party incorporated all the aims and objectives for which Butler had fought from the very beginning of his conscious life. The cornerstone of its programme was the commitment to fight for the right of

coloured workers and citizens to reach the highest positions in every avenue of thought and labour in the country.

It is this struggle that brought on the momentous events of June 19th, 1937, when workers in all categories in Trinidad went on strike for better wages, better conditions and greater opportunities — respect and dignity was the real objective. That episode of the struggle ushered in trade unionism and permitted workers to see a better and brighter day.

Butler became for the workers an authentic hero. For the colonial authorities Butler was a 'fanatical negro', an agitator and a demagogue, a reptile to be crushed. They kept him in jail and detention on Nelson Island for seven years — 1938-1945. But the honours that he received late in his life and the reverence in which his name is held by all West Indian patriots, is evidence of his fantastic contribution to the cause of the working class and to the people of the Caribbean in general. For the fact is that the heresies he preached over three decades ago have now become the faith of the new movement.

4. *A Common Aim*



CACADEMO GRANT, born in Gouyave Estate, Grenada in 1917, the year of the first great Socialist Revolution, has been a lifelong trade unionist and activist, both in Grenada and Trinidad.

From his early associations with the first Labour organisation in Grenada, The Working Men and Women's Association, to his continued activism until today, Cacadero has known and struggled alongside all the great figures of the Grenadian Labour and Trade Union Movement. It was Cacadero who was speaking into the microphone at the moment of the counter-revolutionary bomb blast at the Butler-Strachan Rally of June 19th., 1980 at Queen's Park, and the same Cacadero had been instrumental in the movement to have Butler released from internment in Trinidad during the years of the Second World War.

'I was always interested in seeing to it that workers should get a little more for their labour. In those days, a field worker would earn twenty cents a day if he was a man, and sixteen cents a day if she was a woman. And those in the offices was very little better off.

I came in contact, through my father, with his Working Men and Women's Association, the first Labour movement in Grenada catering for working class people. It started some time around 1919 or 1920 and its founders were T. Albert Marryshow and Charles Augustus Grant. Apart from operating as a sick benefit society, it organised the workers, but it couldn't bargain for them as at that time it had no rights.

My father was responsible for the first big strike in our country, on the Brothers' Estate. The people struck there because they were in disagreement with the management, who had stopped giving them gardens. But when Marryshow came in on the side of the workers, he won them the right to buy government lands for their gardens in Plaisance and Mount Nesbit, for three dollars an acre. Marryshow also worked for the people in town, organising the building of workers' houses opposite his own house in Tyrrell Street, which was called 'The Rosary', and also down near the Carenage, next to where the Empire Theatre is now. They had to pay three dollars a month for twelve years, and after that the houses would be theirs.

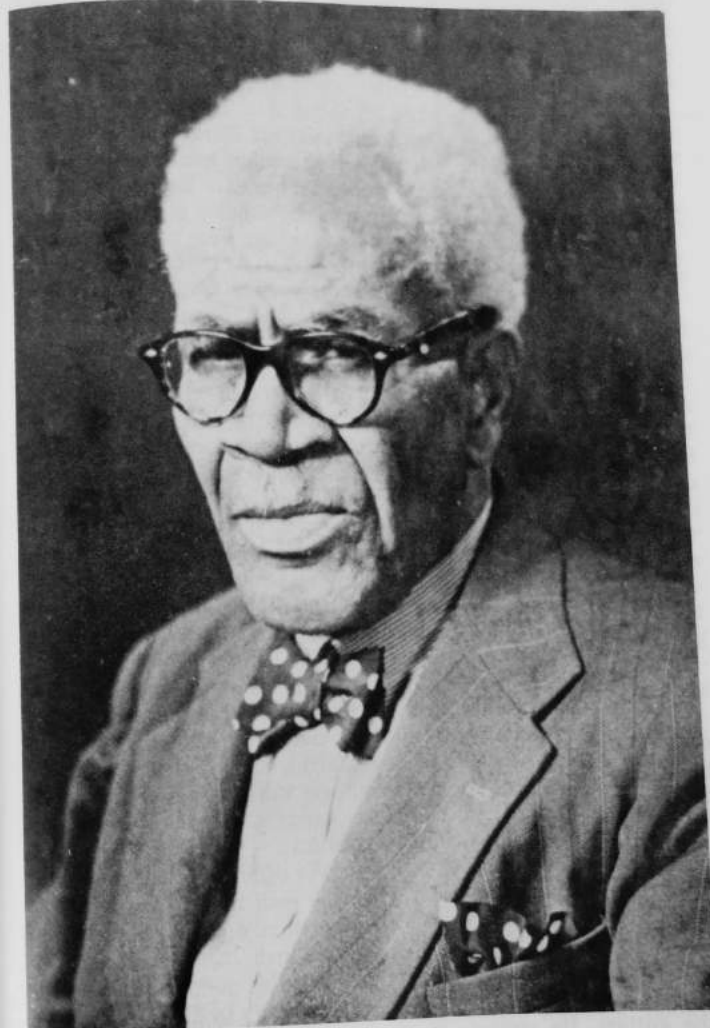
Then, out of his own finances, he built the first-ever community centre in Grenada, which was called Park House, and he cut a small hill in the same part of town to make a savannah for the boys and girls there to play games. Marryshow was truly a great man, a man you would like to be near. Those of you who didn't live one day with Marryshow, then you didn't live a satisfactory life!

I left this country for Trinidad in 1941. Butler was then in prison, interned on Five Islands. Before that, he lived with a man called Esau James, from Mount Granby, right here in Grenada. When I arrived in Fyzabad, I was invited to live there too, so I moved in.

At that time, the workers in Trinidad were asking for Butler's release, but when Marryshow visited Trinidad in the same year, he kept telling them at his meetings that they were not asking loud enough.

But in 1946 he was at last released, and he soon got down to work. On December 19th., he called the second strike on the oil-fields. They banned him from St. Patrick's and he was forced to live in Port of Spain. But the strike went on, and the Chief of

Police had a free hand to do as he liked: shoot, beat, imprison, do just as he pleased.



T. A. Marryshow

Back in 1935, after the great hunger marches, Butler had called the first important strike in the oilfields. And his union remained the bargaining factor up to the very end of his days. That was the oldest union in Trinidad, and it was called The British Empire Workers, Peasants, and Ratepayers Union. When you tackle Imperial Britain, Butler was always saying, you have to undergo hardships. He knew all about that, as he had fought with the British Army in Egypt during the First World War, and he had seen how he and the other colonial soldiers had been treated in comparison with the British soldiers. That gave him more fire. He told his members that the men must bore holes in their belts and the women must band their bellies! So they were quite aware that they were in for serious trouble.

Like our government and progressive trade unions now, Butler always had an internationalist view. He wanted to see the workers of all the colonies of the world, particularly those in the British Empire, get together and demand their independence. He once said that if he was the King of England he would send for his Prime Minister and declare independence for all the colonies and form a commonwealth of nations. Butler preached that in the forties. He wanted world-wide independence for all peoples who were oppressed and colonised.

As a speaker and agitator, he was very strong. To agitate people in those days and get them to stand up against the police and government was not easy — and remember that men like Colonel Hickling, the manager of the Apex Oil Company, had more power in Trinidad than the government itself. To join his union was a penny a card, and many of the people were afraid to buy. So when he was about to start his big strike on June 19th, 1937, he sold his house in Fyzabad and used the money to make all oilfield workers members of his union. He sold his house to call the strike! He called it at midnight, and by daylight all the fields were closed down, not a soul was working. That was typical of Butler, he sacrificed all for the workers. He never made any money out of politics and died a poor man.

I remember once when Butler was offered cash if he would keep himself quiet. He said, 'Give the cash to the workers, and they would compensate me.' He wanted nothing for himself, so much so that he could sell his only small house to make the workers members. Once someone in Trinidad parliament said that he was just a beggar, and that he wouldn't try to lift himself from the gutters. He replied: 'So long as the workers remain in the gutters, I will lift them up on my back. I am not leaving them there and come out! Let them cling onto my back and when once

I am sure they are out then I too will get out.' That was the kind of man Butler was, all through his life. He never gave way to petty things or offerings. And those strikes of the thirties stirred not only the Caribbean, but all colonial lands. It showed people that they too could make an effort. He received cables from people like Mahatma Ghandi in India, and from all over the British Empire.

He was an exceptionally good organiser. Even to us who followed him, he would instruct us how to go about our business. He showed us how to inspire the people. To show to them how important discipline was, he would stand on a platform before the meeting, and the workers would be cheering and he would say: 'I wants to hear a pin drop!' And everything would go completely quiet and then we would start speaking off. He always saw to it that his people were disciplined.

In the fight in the oilfields you had this tremendous amount of cash on one hand, and a tremendous amount of poverty on the next. So a man couldn't really stand up on his belly for long. So it was better to force things, and it was the empty stomachs that were often responsible. Butler never backed away from that struggle, his union was the most militant in the country. He used to say: 'Comrades! Before you go into battle, pray! When you fighting, fight! After battle, give God the thanks, because if you dead you couldn't say thanks!' I remember once when Marryshow warned Cipriani on a platform in Palo Seco in Trinidad, that if he interfered with that man in the khaki suit — and he pointed to Butler — 'he'll smash your party up, because he knows more politics than all of us!' And then when Butler organised his big hunger march, they sent Cipriani to stop him. And Cipriani admitted that what he couldn't do in sixteen years, Butler has done it in three!

When Gairy started here, going about his first election, he sent to Butler for help and money. At the time we were engaged in Trinidad in a big battle, but some comrades took the trip over to help. I said that I had no time for that fellow Gairy, that I never heard him say anything sensible yet. Then after the election, Gairy visited Trinidad, but he never came to call on us or thank Butler. He tried to visit Butler after the next election in Grenada but when he appeared in Fyzabad, Butler had called him 'a common West Indian traitor of the greatest magnitude, Eric Matthew Gairy!' Butler was angry that Gairy, in almost his first act, threw out Marryshow to take in the rich barrister, John Renwick. Look at the difference: there was Butler selling his house to pay the membership dues for his members, and Gairy opening a bank for his union members, taking their money and saying that it would be

for their old age — but the same bank never opened a door! If Butler was a follower of the fellow called Jesus, Gairy was the Devil's son! Gairy had no feelings for anyone, neither for worker nor friend or enemy, just for himself alone. Butler simply bent his head in getting the worker out of the ditches, he spent his lifetime doing that. I remember after the 1946 strike the workers and their families needed places to build new houses, because the oil-field management was chasing them out of the ones they had. Butler told them to take government lands. So they cut the woods and built houses, and now it's called Strikers' Village, near Point Fortin. And he got a friendly M.P. to get it approved through parliament.

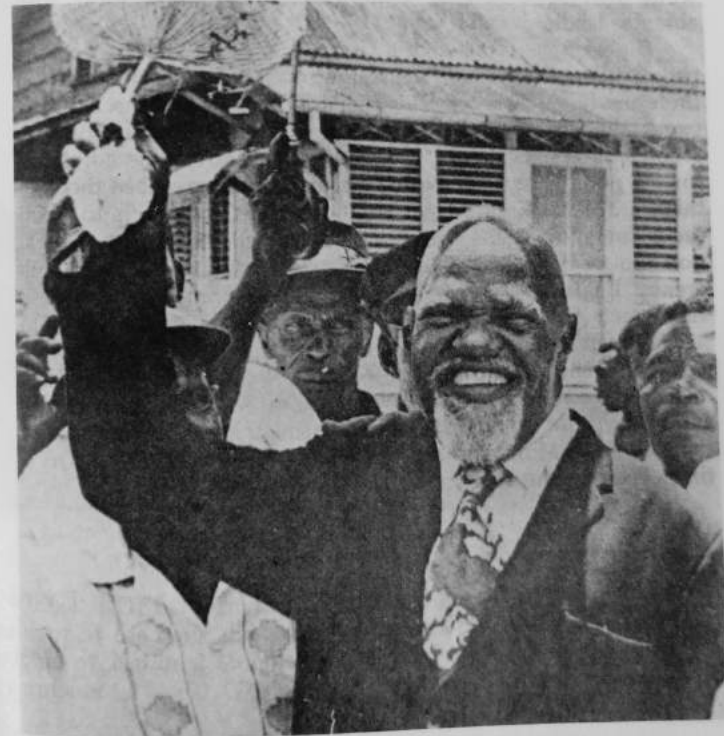
Butler's union was always democratic. The workers themselves in every group had the right to elect their own representatives. There were no appointed officials. When someone suggested that Butler should be appointed President-general for life, he rejected it. He said, 'any time you feel to elect another President-general, you should do that. The members must have self-determination and choose their own chairman and officers.' I happened to be the chairman of the Fyzabad branch, the last active branch in Trinidad.

At our union meetings there was real mass participation. People would force themselves onto the platform and Butler would say, 'This is the time for everybody to speak. Speak up! Come to the platform and air your views!' You could say it was like a Workers' Parish Council now. When Butler reach anywhere, then the meeting going on until morning time, as long as there were people who wanted to speak! And people walked long, long distances to get to them. We had our own press too, in Trinidad, and Butler always encouraged all union members to use it to air their own views.

We had huge unity. Once the Colonial Secretary of Trinidad said in a broadcast to the Trinidad people that these Grenadians are coming here — and it was in an election time too — and taking up your jobs, taking up your beds in the hospitals, and we can't afford that! He was trying to bring about a split between the Grenadians and their descendants and Trinidadians, to break up the support for Butler. They started picking up men and women and deporting them to Grenada, and in one instance they deported the wrong person, a Trinidadian. So Butler held meetings in San Fernando, marched around the town a few times, and then organised a great march to Port of Spain, when the cry was: 'If you want to take one, take all!' Butler just wiped out those attempts to divide us. There was no fear among us — if you were looking for

Grenadians, look all of us here! But there were just as many Trinidadians too. And his slogan was: 'We mix in oil and sugar!', meaning the unity between the Indian and the black workers.

Now in Grenada, the trade union movement has gone far ahead of what Butler ever succeeded in doing in Trinidad. We ploughing into every field! And as for the stooges in the trade unions, they would gradually disappear. I don't think that the trade unionists here would have any further use for stooges any longer, they are fully aware of their uselessness. The workers know about them. I can remember once reading Sir Walter Citrine's book many years ago, about the two types of trade union leaders: he called them the Mondists and the Tolpuddlers. The Tolpuddlers were the real activists who gave everything for the workers. The Mondists saw that Trade Unionism gave the capitalists the chance to control the workers better by controlling their leaders. Get hold



Tubal Uriah 'Buzz' Butler in his later years.

of the leaders, that's all, and they will control the workers! That's a trade union trap, and in Grenada we have had plenty of that Mondism here in the Gairy days, with leaders like Curtis Stuart of the Technical and Allied Workers' Union and others. They wanted to pull the workers away from any type of action or progressive movement. They kept their members inactive, and so the workers were not conscious of what was happening, and with Gairy's threats and violence and hard hand, they were bowing their heads down when they should have been keeping up their heads! But now in Grenada the stooges are going, and we have all found better grounds now, better grounds.

In 1946, after Butler was released from internment, he told his supporters: 'When we ask for a penny, they shoot us down. When we ask for ten cents, they shoot us down. Now we are going to ask for all! So they will have to shoot us all down!' He was calling for nationalisation of the Oil industry at so early a time, while Marryshow here in Grenada was calling to do away with absentee landlords and owners.

He wanted all the land in Grenada to belong to the working people here, as my party wants now. So you see, they are all on the same line. There was this similarity all the way through, between Marryshow, Butler, and the present leader Maurice Bishop, a common understanding, a common aim. Marryshow got lands for the poor, he started housing schemes. Butler preached the very thing in Trinidad, gave lands and houses to the workers to build the economy of Trinidad, gave island-wide electricity, free education and medical care. He used to say, 'what is good for the children of England is better for the children of Trinidad.' Maurice is very much on the same line — land for the landless! Who could have thought we could have ever had such things in a place as small as Grenada, with our limited resources? And if we produce and produce again, we can have much, much more. Both Butler and Marryshow would have been extremely happy to know that the New Jewel Movement has implemented their cries in so short a time. Their dreams are now coming true.'

5. In the Butler Tradition



VINCENT NOEL, born in St. Andrew's Parish in 1947, is the President of the Bank and General Workers Union. He is also Vice-minister of National Mobilisation in the People's Revolutionary Government.

Following the sell-out by sections of the trade union bureaucracy in 1974, there was a great cry amongst the working class in Grenada to have serious and militant leaders to lead their struggle so that all workers would be encouraged to become active trade unionists. There was a determination among the workers that the trade unions must betray them no more.

I was an accounting clerk in Hutchinson's, a firm in St. George's. We started a section of the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union there, and instituted regular monthly meetings. Our first concerns were for proper contracts and better wages and conditions for our members.

Some trade unionists, including myself, from different unions established a progressive caucus of the trade union movement, and we began to duplicate and distribute the *Workers' Voice*. Despite his Newspaper Amendment Act, Gairy could never muzzle it as it always came out and helped to inform and inspire trade unionists throughout the country, as well as link up their struggles. Gairy was always trying to track us down, and we moved the duplicating machine continuously from house to house and school to school and he never caught up with it.

By mid-1977 I had become First Vice-president of the C.I.W.U. We fought every single democratic struggle, had regular meetings, educational programmes and introduced several democratic procedures that the union had not known before. We had much greater discussion, particularly in decision-making, we investigated corruption and found that the books were not being properly audited, and we made sure more people came to our meetings by providing transport. We scraped up the money to pay for this from our own pockets, and also got some help from the party.

The existing leadership of the union called us communists and hot-heads, and accused us of trying to take political control of the union because we were supporters and militants of the New Jewel Movement. And yet they were all on the executive of the Grenada National Party! Gairy also saw increasing danger in our approach to trade unionism — the idea of democratic control and mass action by the membership made him feel very uncomfortable. In the struggle to win a cost of living allowance for the workers at Jonas Browne and Hubbard's, we were fighting the company, Gairy and the president of our own union, simultaneously. Our own president tried to make deals behind our backs with the firm, and he called off the boycott of the company's cargo which the dockers had implemented in solidarity with us. But we still won \$110,000 for our members, which is what we

had asked for. The president however, played a double game and went ahead and reached a compromise with the company for seven of our members to go to court to see if they were aggrieved. The courts, of course, backed up the employers and our members lost the case and were eventually sacked. We learned many lessons from that struggle and swore we would never allow such things to happen again.

Meanwhile, Gairy was trying to poach our members into his own union from the banana industry, Bata Shoes and L.A. Purcell's in particular. He threatened the employers too and sent his men to harass them. Then he called a meeting of all commercial workers in St. George's. He proclaimed that ever since 1951 he had been the hero of the working class in Grenada, and that his union was campaigning for a minimum \$160 a month. From the meeting I thanked him for his announcement, but pointed out that it was only members of *his* union who were receiving anything like that sort of wage, and that our union was calling for a \$250 monthly minimum! I noticed as I spoke that I was being surrounded by his mongoose men. One came and stood right behind me, and another sat down directly facing me, staring at me hard and patting his side pocket menacingly, as if he had a gun in there. I carried on outlining to the workers the steadily increasing prices of sugar, saltfish, transport to and from work, school fees and the general cost of living. He then interrupted me, clearly flustered, and announced: 'Mr. Noel will now lead you all in prayer! Ah, but no, communists don't like praying, so I'll lead the prayer!' And after that he simply closed the meeting.

Within the weeks of March and April 1979, the workers in various banks — in particular the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, but also the Royal Bank of Canada, the Bank of Nova Scotia and Barclay's — formed the Bank and General Workers' Union. In particular, the sisters in those banks wanted a strong union to represent them, particularly on issues like promotion for women, pay and conditions of work. They chose not to join the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union, because they didn't trust the leadership. So they asked me to lead the union — and at the time, I was the only non-bank worker.

The union suffered a reversal at its first attempt to organise the bank workers and win recognition. A particular enemy was the Manager of Barclay's Bank, one Davies Evans, who commonly and openly spoke racist insults to the staff. After the first attempt the managers used intimidation and bribery among the workers, and some were transferred to Barbados and St. Lucia. There were also threats to bring into Grenada other bank workers as scabs from



Barclay's Bank workers' picket line, 1978.

the other islands. We were inexperienced at that period and tried to fight on too many fronts. The result was that we received no recognition from any bank, and we were all but crushed.

But in 1978 trouble blew up again in Barclay's Bank. The Manager again refused to negotiate over proposed wage increases and a regional head was sent from Barbados who was overtly racist and obscene to our members. That was the spark! After that, the members were incensed, and it became a straight battle for recognition for our union. More and more of the bank workers rejoined and we became active once more.

Then a worker was fired and there were more threats, insults and transfers. Bro. Daniel Roberts — who later became manager of the Grenada Development Bank — was told he was to be transferred to Guyana. At that time the manager had the full support of Gairy. One day when I had to speak at a meeting in Grenville, I was followed over the Grand Etang by a car full of his thugs. As I came back I saw they were still following me, so I stopped at Big Grove and telephoned Comrade Bishop, and he and some other party comrades came down in two cars from St. George's, and kept close to me as we drove back over the Grand Etang. They tried to block the road to prevent Gairy's men from attacking my car.

But by this time we were getting real support from the public. They were bringing juice and sandwiches to us on our picket line outside the bank, even though the police often tried to harass us. And then, even better, customers started a campaign of mass withdrawal of their money from Barclay's. We also started getting publicity and support from the 'End Loans to South Africa' committee in London, who publicised our cause because of Barclay's Bank's connections with racist South Africa. I also made a trip to Barbados to get some support from bank workers there, and we also heard of solidarity from Antigua, St. Kitts, St. Vincent and Dominica.



Three years after the Bankworkers' strike, the slogan on the wall still speaks of its victory.

Then the manager's house at Lance aux Epines was fire-bombed in very suspicious circumstances. His maid had been given the weekend off, his security guard had been sent home and his favourite dog had been locked up out of the way of danger! This gave Gairy the excuse he needed, and six of us were picked up. One of us was a preacher, Brother Lalsee, who was preaching at the time of the fire. The rest of us were either at home or at parties. The comrades who were put into custody at the Fort were very roughly treated. I was lucky. They held me at South St. George's Police Station at Grand Anse, and the rank and file of the police were very sympathetic to us. They even let me out on the beach during the afternoons!

Our struggle at Barclay's helped to lay the psychological base for the Revolution. Our members, remember, were mainly middle class and this kind of militant, mass politics and struggle was very new to the majority of them. Their involvement also brought up the support of many other members of the middle class throughout the country because they saw very clearly that it was a gen-



Barclay's Bank workers' picket line, 1978.

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Three years after the Bankworkers' strike, the sl... of its victory.

Then the manager's house at Lanc... bombed in very suspicious circumstances... weekend off, his security guard had

uine democratic struggle. It helped to weld together the middle class and the working class, and made the former see that workers like those at Barclay's were really a part of the working people with the same interests as other workers.

It took the Revolution of March 13th., to finally settle the issue of recognition, but from October until March we had a secret poll in the bank, and we saw that 80% of the workers had become paying members of the union. We had our application, files and receipts all checked by the Labour Commissioner, who was also the president of the Civil Service Association, (now the Public Workers' Union). He checked our books, and yet we were still not given recognition. We even had an independent enquiry carried out by the churches who looked at our books and interviewed our members, and they found that everything was correct. Then one Friday, I received a telephone call from the bank saying that the Labour Commissioner was conducting personal interviews around the workers at Barclay's, trying to find out exactly who was in the union. He had already interviewed some workers when I arrived. I told our members not to talk to him or answer any questions and asked him what he was doing — didn't he already have all the necessary information? He left quickly without giving any kind of satisfactory explanation. That was the same man who later attacked me personally for being both a trade unionist and a member of the People's Revolutionary Government.

By this time our members had really grown in confidence, stature and organisational strength as a result of this struggle. We continually held public meetings, published pamphlets and were in a state of permanent mobilisation. We did a regular house-to-house of all our members. Consequently, during this period the workers were transformed politically beyond recognition. A number of them have subsequently held key positions since the Revolution in government banks and in the Ministry of Finance. Many bank workers answered the call of the Revolution on March 13th., and came to the Radio Station, picked up guns and helped to defend it. And the members of the Political Bureau of our party stayed clandestinely in the house of a bankworker during the three nights prior to the Revolution when Gairy was trying to hunt them down. And these were traditionally middle-class bank clerks, not usually identifiable as revolutionaries!

Since the Revolution we have raised our membership from sixty to two thousand, three hundred. After march 13th., workers from all sections were clamouring to join our union because of its activism and militant reputation, following the Barclay's struggle. And that militancy and our victory only came about because of

the way we organised, with our democratic structures and determination to achieve maximum participation and mobilisation of our membership. And that is the example we are also setting ourselves for the future of our nation. For in changing the union the members also transformed themselves, and that is the way forward for trade unionism in our country. It is an agent for change, working side by side with the other forces of our Revolution to create a new Grenada which will benefit all the working people of our country.'



A revolutionary bank: March 13th, 1982: the workers of the National Commercial Bank on the march.

say. Now you can express yourself freely without any bad feelings. Our officers visit the workplaces regularly, and this also helps to sort out grievances quickly and efficiently.

Democracy is really growing in our union. We have more regular meetings now, with transport to and fro. And at every meeting we have financial reports, so we know how every cent of our money is being spent. All union information is open to all members. You could step in this office every day and ask about all the day-to-day business.

At the seminars we run for our members we have Shop Steward Training, how to handle regulations and disputes, and general sessions to raise the trade union consciousness of our members. These seminars show the increased organisation and activity we have had here since the Revolution. Any grievance is handled right away, before it grows out of proportion. The participation involves many more members, it is not just the officers who are running this union. We have an Organising Committee, an Education Committee and a Sports Committee. These used to be just paper committees but now they are *all* functioning, so a lot of our members are getting valuable experience in organising. Then we have fund-raising events too, like raffles, Jumble sales and cake sales, to try to make our union even more strong financially. Also we have more branches now, split up around the country, and two officers out in the field to support them.

As a woman worker I can also see how much better the situation is for us now. Since the Maternity Leave Law was passed women feel so much more secure in their jobs, they don't have to worry about having the child *and* perhaps losing their job. And in our factory the women do the same work as the men and operate the same kind of machines — the cutting, drying, packing or cigarette-making machines and they would get the same money as the men doing the same work. All that sexual exploitation we used to have for women in Grenada has also gone. I remember when some of our members had to face up to this, and it was like a normal thing and the union couldn't do much about it. Any manager or employer would find real trouble if he tried any of that now. But life generally is very much changed for us women in Grenada. The Revolution has given us women carpenters, women soldiers, women studying dentistry, fisher-women — everything that men doing, women doing too!

But with our union the new leadership has made all the difference. The old leaders stayed mostly in the office, they didn't get out in the workplaces and help solve the problems. The new leadership is *with* the workers, you see them all the time. Like

Comrade Vince Noel, they're *vibrant*, and when I say that I mean they're active, strong in it, pushing, encouraging, giving you every point *but* not promising what he can't do. If you're wrong, he'll criticise you, and if we criticise him, he'll take it. All that energy, and always out in the field — that's what makes our union grow!



A triumphant Congress: the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union, 1980

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A triumphant Congress: the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union, 1980



FITZROY BAIN is a 31 year-old ex-teacher from Thebaide, St. David's Parish, who is the President of the Agricultural and General Workers' Union.

'Gairy's Grenada Manual and Mental Workers' Union only existed in name. It never had a practical side or the basic qualities of a trade union, in that workers' participation was nil, accountability was nil, and it was used solely to develop Gairy's own personal image and to maintain his party. It was not a union to take care of the workers' problems or to see that they went forward. It was rife with fraud and corruption. There were no accounts maintained, so we have never been able to accurately find out how much dues or what amount was raised over whatever period of time. There were no records, it was just a matter of people being in a union which just had a name and to which they just paid their dues. Only Gairy, as the President, would have known

where the money went.

At the early stage of this union there were shop stewards in one or two places, but not sufficient as to have any organized impact. The workers had no say in the business of the union, it was a total dictatorship. Gairy declared himself the President for Life, and there were no meetings where workers could make any recommendations, changes or comments. They had just to go along with what was decreed by Gairy.

The workers remember the 1951 struggle very vividly, and that was really what made them stay in Gairy's union so long. They were still in agreement with the militant way that the union had set out, with the aims and objectives of 1951. They have never forgotten that period and the benefits they were fighting for, regardless of what transpired over the following years, and it keeps them alive in the struggle.

In 1951 the conditions were very poor, and that is what centrally gave rise to the movement. Wages, Health, Housing — the whole social balance was such that the workers were facing a terrible time. So when Gairy arrived he reaped a harvest! The struggle started off here in St. David's, and La Sagesse Estate was one of the main areas. People were being evicted from lands they had been living on for many years. The workers were squatting on these lands, but were suddenly forcibly removed. And this happened in conjunction with the fall in cocoa prices all over the world and the employers putting down their wages in response to this. So the agricultural workers were the militant leaders of the 1951 struggle, but Gairy smothered that militancy from above in the years that came after. In the beginning Gairy was associated with the agricultural workers and they saw him as their leader. Then later he joined forces with the exploiting class, and he himself became a member of that class. So he misled them and betrayed them over the years, even though they still remembered strongly 1951 and often gave him the praise for the struggle.

Then after 1951 Gairy continually sold out his own workers. Whenever he negotiated with the employers, he took his cut from whatever was gained and enriched himself personally from it. So the workers would just get a small part. He did everything under cover, meeting with the employers on one hand and saying one thing to them, then saying something else to the workers.

So because of this hold he had over the agricultural workers, many of them, quite naturally, were in fear or sceptical of the Revolution when it came in March, 1979. Many had been supporters of Gairy, so they were concerned as to their future. The union was automatically disbanded once Gairy went, because he

was the union in himself! So that laid the basis for organizing a new union so as to start the work that should have followed the revolt of 1951, because the aims and objectives of that were never achieved through Gairy's union. So we see our struggle as starting off from there. We want to make a new agricultural worker in this country, ensuring that our members are given a fair deal, a new opportunity to participate and that their labour is not exploited, and whatever profits are made from it then they should have their share, and that the whole economic and social base of their lives is uplifted. We have to wipe out the effect of the Gairy years.

We started off within the first week or two following the Revolution as the Agricultural Workers' Council. This was a body going out into the estates, meeting and interviewing the workers and trying to assess their situation. The individuals in the Agricultural Workers' Council were those people who had actually been the most concerned about the workers over the years, and had been involved in many of the fights against Gairy. Many of them were members of or had been associated with J.E.W.E.L. and they had been in the leadership of, for example, the struggle to give La Sagesse Beach back to the people, after Lord Brownlow had cut off public access to it in 1972. Many of our agricultural workers had been a part of that campaign, as they had been working in the estate itself and could not use the beach once the barrier had been put up. Then there was the struggle following the murder of Jeremiah Richardson by Gairy's police. He was from Paradise, and from an agricultural background, so many of our future members were also involved in that, and the events which followed it like the closing down of Pearls' Airport.

When the Agricultural Workers' Council had sufficient knowledge of the workers' grievances and problems, we set out to try and solve them. So they began to see that on such issues as sick leave, working hours, overtime pay, amenities on the estates, victimisation — that we were working and fighting for them. For some employers who had been victimised themselves by Gairy, they saw an opportunity to take revenge and advantage of the workers now he was gone. We had to ensure that that didn't happen. On other estates relationships between employers and workers were better, but in most cases, because the employers had an alliance with Gairy, they had been allowed to do a lot of intolerable things to their workers. Some workers were not paid the minimum wage of \$5.80 and \$6.80 a day respectively for women and men. Some workers were working long, long hours of overtime including Saturdays and Sundays without being paid.

Other workers received no sick pay, others were sent home without pay just spontaneously or with no good reason.

So we pointed out these things to the employers, saying that we wouldn't tolerate them in the future. We checked back over the records to make sure they were paying the workers their full amounts due to them, and we did this on estates all over the country. None of these things had been taken on by Gairy. We also found that there was no pension scheme or severance pay for retired workers, or for those who had worked sometimes for twenty or thirty years on one estate. They were given no benefit for their years of service. And as these issues were fought out and we achieved more and more success, the workers gained more confidence, both in themselves and our organization. We were gaining support from a wide cross-section of workers, from estate to estate across the country, so we decided to become a union, and we were registered on the 27th of November, 1979.

The majority of the agricultural workers welcomed this, but some were still saying, 'let us wait to see what you will do.' But what really drove us forward was the House Repair Programme. We told our members that we saw ourselves not only fighting for better conditions at work, but also for better social conditions too — Health, Housing, Education. The majority of our workers' housing was very, very poor, so we gave that top priority, and we pointed out that before they had had a leader who led them for over twenty years and never changed the social life of his workers, yet lived himself in one of the biggest houses in Grenada which he paid for out of their money! So it was that concrete issue that gave us the push forward we needed. Workers began to identify with the House Repair Programme because it was something they needed. The backward leadership of some other unions, like Curtis Stuart and his agents, went around telling our members that the materials for house repair would never arrive and that we were only brambling and using it as bait. But when we started putting out materials all over the country, there was no way they could deny it! And the repayment of the loan — after one third of the cost was made as a grant — was only \$5.00 a month with no interest, and that was very much appreciated. As we moved from estate to estate, delivering the materials, we automatically found that we were getting 100% membership!

We have zoned the country into three and we now have twelve full-time workers and co-ordinators. They ensure that we hear the grievances, and also that the benefits actually reach our members. We also have on each estate a shop steward system, so that any problem or incident can be related to the zone office.

We have regular seminars, particularly for our women workers, who form nearly half our membership. We look at our members from the point of view of not just their wages, but their overall needs. We try to ensure that the different ministries move to bring some sort of benefits to the workers — like we have done in housing, in Health with the Primary Health Care Programme, or in education with free school books and uniforms. We help to identify the needy comrades, and insist and ensure that they receive these benefits — and we also encourage all our members to help themselves and join the Community Work Brigades. So we don't see our union working simply in an economic sense. Our general membership meets with us every day, and every day we are out on the estates all over the island. We believe that there is no substitute for being with the workers.

We have a key role to play in our country. Agriculture is our backbone in Grenada, so our agricultural workers must be in the main part in the building of a new society. Therefore in the process of involving them and getting them to participate in this new structure, we see our task as starting off with the *education* of the workers. We have Workers' Education classes so that we can get them to understand our structures, and we also have the Workers' Parish Councils where they can put forward their ideas in the presence of government ministers. We have had a lot of success here. I think our union can boast of having the highest percentage of attendance at Workers' Parish Councils among all the unions — and traditionally agricultural workers have been seen as shy and not willing to come forward and speak — especially in the presence of urban workers, who often in the past looked down upon country people. So we try all the time to give them confidence by promoting as many different forums as possible, in seminars, general meetings, Parish and Zonal Councils, National Women's Organization, the Militia — we're always trying to get them on the move, to get them to be part and parcel of the new democratic and organizational thrust of the country. They're definitely coming out now! They're definitely as confident in their union now as the urban working class are in theirs. If we look at the success of some of the recent strikes that we've had, like the ones in L'Esterre and Bagatelle in St. Andrew's, in Hope, Marlmount and Pastora Estates in St. David's. All these strikes were about public holiday pay and incentive pay — and we had workers on the West Coast, in Plaisance, Mt. Felix and Bocage Estates coming out in support. And in every case we were 100% successful, because it is over these issues that the workers see the union on their side. We have managed to raise the wages and institute profit



1981: Agricultural and General Workers' Union members demonstrate for holiday and incentive pay through the streets of Grenville.

sharing on the government farms, and we're also fighting to make it a reality on the private farms too by early next year.

We are now moving towards the *unity* of the urban working class and the rural working class in Grenada. Our advance depends upon this unity. Each element is recognising the integral part each must play in developing the economy. It is not the old town/country rivalry and division that was fanned under Gairy, but a recognition of each's contribution and relationship to the economy. It's not a matter anymore of where you live and where I live. That mentality is going. The Workers' Councils are important in this context because it is there that they meet, discuss together and begin to understand each other more. And in the workers' rallies too. But it is in the Workers' Education classes that they learn of each other's value, and the teachers make sure that they take up that problem of the old divisions and see that it is taken care of. So they are *key* for the growth of a new consciousness of unity among all the workers of Grenada.

Of course, we need to attract young people back to the land, and that is not an easy task. The stigma attached to agriculture is one thing, the *conditions* that people have come to associate with agricultural work is really the main barrier. The youth won't work

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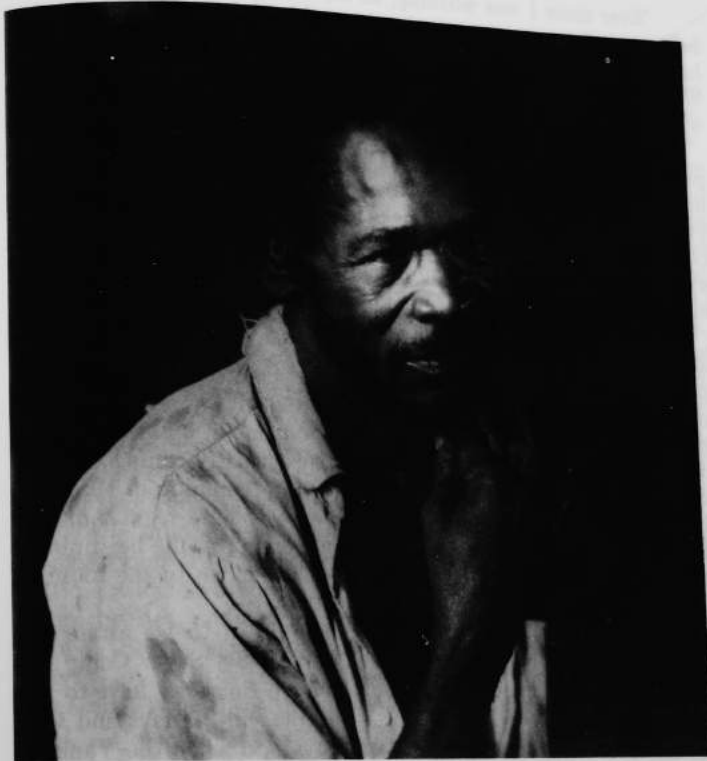
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on an estate and just earn \$8.50 a day — they can't live on that. And they may have seen their grandmothers working all their lives and not make any progress. So the profit-sharing, the new benefits and the changing relationships to production that we are trying to introduce are all parts of the process that will eventually attract the youth back to the land. And the schools have a vital part to play here too, to introduce serious and scientific practical agriculture into their curriculum. Then also the co-operative ventures being created through the National Co-operative Development Agency are another part of the process in involving the youth in the land. We wouldn't achieve much by trying to encourage the youths in the country to come into the traditional estates. The co-operatives are a much better and more creative starting point for attracting youths into agricultural production. Then as the Revolution grows, so will our grasp of agricultural technology, *then* we'll bring the science and training to our people. It's all out there in the future.

So the spirit of 1951 is back among the agricultural workers of Grenada, and back with a much greater enthusiasm and hope. For the workers can see that within this present union structure there is no way, definitely no way in which the struggle can be misled or led astray. For the future belongs to the workers of our country.'



NORRIS EDWARDS, known all his life as 'Coonyahr', after the sound of a cat in his village when he was a boy, was born in Lower La Tante, St. David's Parish, in 1927. He has been an agricultural worker all his working life.

In 1981 he was recognized as 'Worker of the Year' for inventing a beetle-trap, made from the wood of African breadfruit trees. This simple, yet ingenious device has had a widespread effect upon cutting down on the damage caused to cocoa trees by beetles throughout the island.

'Coonyahr' works on a government estate in Marlmount, St. David's, and is a member of the Agricultural and General Workers' Union.

'Ever since I was working, all my life is agriculture. I like it because it let me own a little piece of land for tannia, dasheen, banana and cocoa and thing, and then it give me a piece of cash. We in Grenada need agriculture too bad, we can't make we way without it.

I remember back to 1951 and the strike. At that time they pay us just \$1.25 a day. Was an island-wide strike and some houses of landowners get burn. Then some people go into the bush to see what they could pick from the estates, and the owners couldn't stop them again. So some of them, when they was feeling so bad, they try to polish up the thing. So they gave we the few more cents.

At that time we had Gairy union, and the conditions was not too good. Anything we could get we would make it good, we had to try to make it good, but things only stand still. You need a union to stand up for you. If you working anywhere in the West Indies or anywhere in the world and you not in a union, it not look so good. But in Gairy union we pay our fifty cents a month and never saw a benefit. When we first join the union in 1951 he always give a meeting, but after that we never have regular meetings again. We never saw result in Gairy union after the beginning. And up to now we don't hear about what happen to the money we pay.

Sometimes the Yankee Man coming down to we estate to pick. And I was two times picking cane in Big Sugar Camp in Florida. We work piece work, and when we finish we have to go home. The first time I spend three months and 21 days and the second time three months and seven days. So when the Yankee Man come we had to take blood test, they look to see if you have police record, and they make you take out your bad tooth before you go so you wouldn't lose time when you was working there. And when we work they take out for food, for transportation, for MacDonald — which was an insurance — and for savings.

Then when the Revolution come, some here say it was good and some say it was bad. Some was nervous. You see what you have, and you afraid that what you going to get might not be so good. Then the new union start. They come and talk to us regular, and then it begin to work good. Then House Repair come. We didn't believe it when they tell us about repairing we houses, but then we see the material come! I repair my roof and one long side. Now I don't hear people saying again that Gairy union was good!

Then we begin to see that this union is plenty better than Gairy one. I see a lot of benefits happening now. We wages rise

to more than eight dollars a day, and now the majority of we here is in the union. It make me like the movement of the Revolution. They keeping the place firm and lively. It plenty different now. We get a pension and the women have maternity leave. And in the old union we would get no classes, we didn't have no school in them Gairy days. Now we get to know a bit, how slavery begin and all about how the landlord and them develop themself, and how they take all for themself and still want more. We have good arguments about different points of view. And I go to N.Y.O meetings, it ent matter I getting old! And also we Parish Councils.

The workers is improving, they taking plenty more interest because they have a profit sharing at the back. It working good. And we all know Brother Fitzroy, we President, too bad! I love my comrade. When he pass my house he touch his horn, 'pe-ee-ep', and I know he car. I wish I could see him every day! And now we have this estate house for weself. We can use it for classes, we could take a night rest here if we tired.

The union give me a special award for the beetle trap, and some boots. The trap start like this. One evening I does drink a little, I went in a liquor shop and I hear somebody talking about these beetles and making trap for them. I have a drink and come home. So the next day I tell the overseer, 'Let we try something boy!' So I cut a two piece of breadfruit tree and set it, and I succeed! When I see the amount of beetles there I say, 'Come and see!' Then the news start to spread. So the people who knew about it in the liquor shop had it before me, but I was the first one to use it.

It have a gum in the wood and a scent. The beetles suck the gum, and the scent attract them to come in. I once collect in a bottle two hundred and something in a day. Now I can't even find one! They get scarce because I kill the majority of them. I want to hold the mother and father now, so the children can't come again! And other workers from other estates come around here from all around the island, and schoolchildren too, from St. David's, Happy Hill, St. George's, Grenville — all these come already to see the trap. And now they using it themself on their estates.

But the union recognize the trap, they see how it could serve we. And that shows again how good, very fine the union is for all of we and for agriculture in Grenada.'



Coonyahr and his beetle trap.



RENALPH GEBON, is an ex-teacher and Principal who now works as St. Patrick's Parish Co-ordinator of the Community — School Day Programme.

As a teacher, he was a strong opponent of the Gairy dictatorship, and in 1972 he lost his job as Principal of Harvey Vale School, Carriacou, for supporting an anti-Gairy street procession, when he joined his students, who were marching down the street singing:

*'We are going to walk down Freedom Street
With our shoes on our feet!'*

However his fighting spirit, together with the support of the Grenada Union of Teachers, won him his job back in 1973.

All his life he has written poems which speak of the life and struggles of Grenadian workers. *The Ballad of the Estate Worker* was written in 1977, but because of the repression of the dictatorship, could only be published openly after the Revolution. It uses the language of the people to tell the story of the revolt of 1951, and the subsequent betrayal of the agricultural workers by Gairy.

As Brother Gebon has said: 'My poems and rhymes are about simple working people. They show the great worth and dignity in working the soil of our country, that doesn't make you anything less than you are!'

THE BALLAD OF THE ESTATE WORKER

Me and Nate,
Wuck on dee estate;
Grass we cut,
To bring in Gut,
To feed dee hass,
Cow and ass.
For six pence ah day;
Dat wus we pay,
For twenty-five faggit:
Dat was bread boy!
Khaki and dungaree cheap;
We heart din leap,
Cause we could ah buy:
See we swank and spree.
We and dee driver was buff;
We never curse and cuff;
We and dee man-in-jaw,
Could ah chat and eat together:
All ah we was one.
Me and Pa Great,
We used to wait,
By dee iron gate,
For Ground Plane;
To go and drink
Soon-kay two pence rum;
Dat time wuck dun;
Man, we on we spree,
Cause we dee free.
We pickaninny en hungry;
Plenty dry peas,
Manicou, corn-poke to full belly.
Crop over time;
Man, dat wus lime;
Drum, dance and P.K.;
Now and den cockfight,
And also stick play:
Fete' night and day;
Plenty beef, poke, bluggo, fig;
Zaboica and all for we pig.
We dee ah liberty,
To get tings freely:
Man,
We din naked,

We din hungry,
We dee free:
1951 Come –
Dat man bring
Strike, sky-red and ting:
Ah bad like bo-bo;
Me, Colan and Sambo,
By dee same iron gate;
Quietly we wait,
For those stupi-dee,
Who go wuck –
Man,
Is licks, planass and chuck;
Bull pistle in we hand
Three red stripes on we arm:
Dee estate now is ours;
We taking nutmeg, cocoa,
Provision for so;
We giving boundary;
We say,
Is we grand fadda property;
E ha e name –
Bo-bo-gee, Pam-pa-door,
Sungan, Alfred;
We taking,
We en have shame,
We en frade.
You can cross
Else, licks in you arse;
Ah take yah fuss:
No wuck again
For one and sixpence;
Dah is war dee man say,
"In dee end of dee strike,
Dee price go rise".
Dat wus we song,
As we march along,
From countree to town:
Sing! Man! Sing loud;
Open you dam mouth:
"We'll never let dee leader fall;"
Dat leader wus man fadda.

Braps!
They hold dee man;
We fall flat on we bam-bam;
But Blaize and Wardally,
Rescue we.
Strike dun,
We had we fun,
De price rise;
Well, now we ha to cry:
Ah ten cent yah,
Ah ten cent day,
All from we pay:
Freeness dun;
Dee watch man,
Dee driver,
De man-in-jaw;
They en making fun;
Things get tuff, tuff, tuff;
Daily is curse butt and cuff;
We can take again,
Now, we belly and back in pain;
We ketchin we arse:
Cost ah living high;
E high as dee sky;
Pickaninny now start to cry;
Khaki and dungaree;
Well, dat is lawyer fee;
Employer hate employee;
Arrest for any and everything.
We can ha we fling;
The lass worse dan the fuss;
Every ting is swear and cuss.
Wuck get scarce;
We doh no war to do:
Minister doh help;
Doctor worse yet;
Now we regret:
Trouble,
If you get up and get:
War we go do?
Man to man,

When ah tink,
Bout war ah do,
Me own black brudder,
How ah make im suffer
Man, ah does shiver
As doh ah ha ague fever;
Ah does frade:
Ah ha to walk head down,
Pon dee ground;
See me,
Now in me old age;
Ah ha to smoke black sage;
Ah really ketchin me arse
While the Big Boss,
E feeding fat:
War ah do dat far?
Far me to suffer?
And one man flourish
While we dee followers perish?
Bad doh pay,
No way;
E does ketch up wid you,
Some good day:
Ah now know,
Love better dan hate;
So ah go pray;
Yes ah go pray;
Night and day:
Ah go ask Papa God,
To forgive me;
Change me mind,
And make me free:
Let me live in peace,
So ah go die in peace;
Never me again,
Ah wun even join
Me cattle chain.

RENALPH GEBON,
June, 1977



JOE CHARTER is a member of the Public Workers' Union. He was born in St. George's, but emigrated to Britain in 1966, where he joined the Regular Army and worked as a Radio Operator and Physical Training Instructor. He later gained a Bachelor of Education at the University of London and taught for eight years in secondary schools in North and East London. After a period of teaching in Barbados, where he was a Deputy Principal, he returned to Grenada in April, 1980 and became the Director of Physical Education.

'It had always been my intention to return home to Grenada. After completing my education I wanted to come back, but there was no way in which I would expose my family to Gairyism. So after the Revolution, I decided to return. I always felt all-Grenadian, and I had a very deep attachment to Grenada — so I was longing to get back.

A month after my arrival home there was the terrible bomb blast at the rally in Queen's Park. I had been gradually feeling my way back into the society, but the bomb incident suddenly activated me enormously. When we heard the news of the explosion, my wife and I went straight down to the hospital to give blood and see if we could help in any way. I'll never forget the scene there, and the evil thing done by imperialism. From then on I felt a total identification with the Revolution, for now anything that touched Grenada and the Grenadian Revolution, also touched me.

When I first came home and started work in the Ministry of Education, there was a very bureaucratic attitude among the civil servants, but over the last two years I have noticed a distinct change in direction. At that time, however, the Public Workers Union had very little presence in the ministry. This was the union that represented the majority of the ministry workers, so as soon as I joined the workforce I sought to join it. They made very little effort to come to me, and there was no indication of any shop steward system. Over and above information on salaries and travelling allowances, there was no other union activity — even though the President, the Second Vice-president and the Educational Representative were all workers at the ministry. Only on these two issues was I ever conscious of the existence of the union. Union meetings were very infrequent and when they happened, broad trade union issues were not discussed.

I found that the minds of many of the public workers were still in days gone by. They seemed to have a closer affinity with the colonial past than with the revolutionary present. The Revolution had hardly touched them and they seemed reluctant to change their attitudes, backing away from revolutionary transformations and preferring the old *status quo*. The union hadn't been a very remarkable force under Gairy, and had in fact been notoriously passive. In 1974, when many civil servants were demanding a strike against the brutality of the Gairy dictatorship, and in support of the striking dock workers, the leadership suddenly unionised a mass of daily-paid workers who voted against strike action.

Then in March 1981, the union was embroiled in a long disagreement with the People's Revolutionary Government on wage negotiations, and now the leadership changed from its passivity under Gairy and suddenly became very militant in its demands. The less progressive elements on the executive who were not sympathetic to the Revolution grasped the chance with these negotiations, and tried to use them to embarrass the government

around the time of the celebrations of the Second Anniversary of the Revolution by organising a sick-out.

But the sick-out failed because these backward elements failed to persuade the mass of the union membership to resolutely join in the action, and the workforce remained divided. From that period onwards there was a fragmentation among the public workers, and it became organized within the union. The anti-revolutionary element became more visible, vocal and organized and the split became more obvious. I and many others among the public workers were very strong in our support for the Revolution, and we found it necessary at this point to be more determined and vocal ourselves to correct negative propaganda and beat back rumours. I was concerned at the situation, together with many other workers, because I saw that the union was being used, either deliberately or unwittingly, as a weapon against the government and the progress being made by the Revolution for the poor and working people of Grenada. So I decided to become more active.

It was obvious to me that the union had become dormant, only springing to life during periods of wages issues. Only a handful of public workers, a core of members, were involved in its organization and activities, and this became even clearer when it had such a poor response to its Fiftieth Anniversary celebrations later in 1981. This should have been a great occasion, and could have been vital in this revolutionary period to forge close links with the Revolution. But it turned out to be a fiasco, and only a tiny group of members participated in the activities — and this was because the mass membership had not been involved at all in the planning stages.

Workers' participation in the union was minimal. Nothing came up from the floor, it all came from the top downwards. The democratic involvement in day-to-day issues by public workers in the activities of their own union was virtually non-existent. Mass participation in decision-making was not encouraged and there were no seminars or attempts to educate the membership. Pro-revolutionary members were, in particular, seldom invited to participate in the business of the union.

So as a result of this situation, a group of concerned public workers from a wide spectrum of the membership — which subsequently became known as the 'November 12th. Committee' — approached the executive through a letter, and using our constitutional rights, we requested a special general meeting to discuss the issues of the democratization of the union — which included accountability to the mass membership by the executive, the



November 12th, 1981: members of the Public Workers' Union vote unanimously for more democracy in their union.

question of mass participation in the decision-making process, and the restructuring of the union representative system and how those representatives should be re-elected. In the past the General Meeting elected representatives for *categories* of workers rather than having workers within their ministries elect their own representatives, which is what we were calling for. We also presented new 'Aims and Objectives' of the union which were more specific and more in line with the common national goals of the Revolution.

We recognised that in our revolutionary society we were moving towards a people's democracy where the masses were grasping the opportunity to organize and be involved in new democratic structures like Parish Councils, Zonal Councils and Workers' Parish Councils — and their own mass organizations too. Within our union, that kind of participatory democracy was not practised, so we decided to wage a struggle for the democratization of the union, for the situation there was certainly not reflecting the national upsurge of people's democracy.

We felt that the union must concern itself more with the daily lives of its members, rather than being a once-a-year or twice-

a-year institution which only roused itself around the issue of wage negotiations. We held that it must also organize educational, social and recreational programmes and concern itself with the welfare of its members. We also thought it imperative that the union became more involved in the programmes of the Revolution, for example the Centre for Popular Education, where members should be encouraged to become both students and teachers or support for the building of our new International Airport. Until now, our union still has not purchased any International Airport Bonds. It should also be encouraging the members to become involved in the defence of the country through the Militia — and get involved in all community activities.

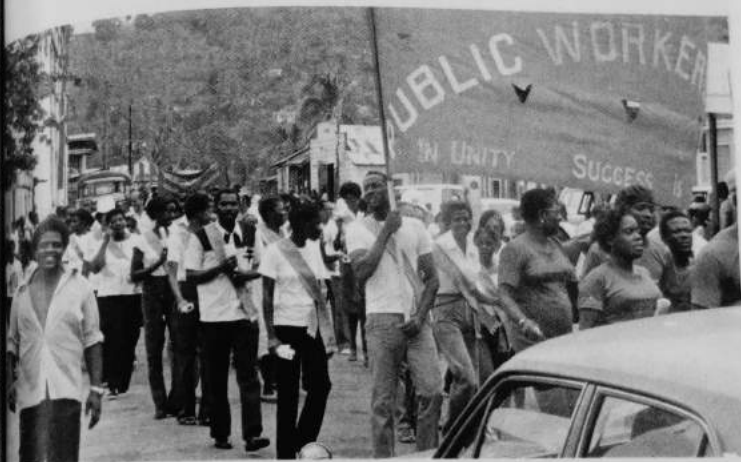
As a result of the executive's reluctance to accede to our request for the special meeting on the date we suggested, we proceeded to call our own meeting on that same date, to discuss those crucial issues we had outlined in our letter. That meeting on November 12th was historic, in that it was the only time in the union's history that more than 350 public workers turned out to discuss issues other than salaries and travelling allowances! The militancy of the members was very high and the two resolutions on union democracy and a programme of activities were passed unanimously. The November 12th Committee stressed in no uncertain way that it was not concerned with individual personalities but with concrete issues, and this was recognised by the mass membership of the union.

So when the executive called a Special General Meeting two weeks later to discuss the same issues, again the attendance was remarkably high and the executive recognised and conceded to the legitimate demands of the November 12th Committee.

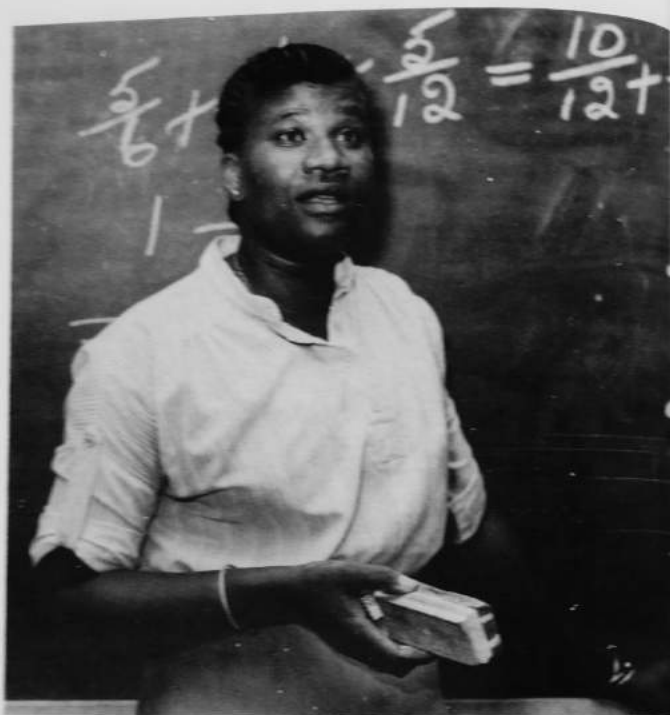
Traditionally, in Grenada and the Caribbean, white collar workers have shown a reluctance to take part in mass activity. They feel they belong to a different, higher class from the workers, and they show a closer affinity with the management because of their self-conceived status. Through union Workers' Education programmes and joint action with other workers they will get a clearer understanding of where they come from — often very humble beginnings — and where they are going to. Some public workers seem to lose an identification with their true roots among the working people, which serves to alienate them from our people's struggle. We have common goals and a common destiny with the other workers in the Revolution.

The Public Workers' Union forms the workforce of the State machinery, which is the agency which implements the policies of the Revolution. So it is crucial that the union brings about a

change of consciousness amongst its membership as to its responsibilities and functions within the Revolution. When union members participate in the decision-making process and are constantly involved in the affairs of the union, then it becomes easy for them to freely contribute to national development and the advancement and thrust of the Revolution.'



Public Workers on the march: May Day, 1981, Gouyave.



JEANNETTE DUBOIS was born in the village of Grand Roy, St. John's Parish in 1949, and was educated at Concord Government School and St. Joseph's Convent. She has been a teacher since 1968 and a member of the Grenada Union of Teachers from the same year.

During the year 1980 — 81 she was President of the G.U.T., the first woman to hold this post. She is presently President of the St. John's Branch of the union and the G.U.T.'s First Vice-President.

'At the time of the Crisis in 1973 — 74, there was a strong sense of unity amongst the teachers against Gairy. The union was discussing whether to support the other trade unions and the Committee of 22 against all the brutality. We also had very strong feelings about the arbitrary way in which Independence was being sought. But Gairy was trying to get some of his supporters who

were teachers, but who were *not* union members, to attend our general meetings so as to vote against strike action. So because of the confusion caused by all this, we had to postpone our voting on whether to strike or not. Eventually we came out on a sick-out for two days to support the other trade unionists.

Another issue over which we had to struggle was the unjust and sudden transfers of our members. Teachers would be sent from one end of the island to another, or to Carriacou, just as result of newsmongering. Many of our rank-and-file members were being made to suffer and were humiliated in this way. They were good teachers, but not sympathetic to Gairy. Others were being charged with so-called 'professional misconduct'. I remember one teacher who had closed his school after repeated complaints to the Ministry, because the toilets were broken and completely unsanitary. He was disciplined before the Public Service Commission. All these cases meant expensive legal representation costs for the union. Gairy was trying to break us financially and morally in a calculated campaign.

He was also encouraging unqualified people to become teachers, if they were his supporters. Some teachers were being appointed even though they were totally unqualified and others had not even been through the necessary induction course. Then he'd put his supporters into schools a long way away from their homes, so they were not playing their full part in the organization of their schools and not available for any extra-curricular activities.

Because of all this, our teachers' morale was very low. There was a feeling of mass insecurity, and this resulted in an exodus of some of our best teachers who emigrated, and this, of course, affected the entire education system. It also put much more work and pressure upon those who remained. It was as if nothing constructive was being done in Education in Grenada, and the schools were deteriorating fast. There was a fast-increasing lack of participation in school life, and enthusiasm for teaching was very low — teachers were doing what they had to do, but no more. Overcrowded classrooms and poor staffing became more and more common and many teachers found themselves in 'acting' appointments for very long periods. Less and less attention was being given to our schools, our children and our teachers.

Then, during the 1976 — 7 period, we had a long salary struggle. Our teachers were under real threats through this, and were subject to a reign of attacks. Gairy held a public meeting in St. George's Market Square and openly invited parents and their children to intimidate the teachers. He told the people to watch

them closely, spy on them, time them at work, report on them — in fact he set up an atmosphere of psychological warfare between the parents and the children on one hand, and the teachers on the other. This resulted in a breakdown of discipline in the schools, and verbal abuse of some teachers. This became very widespread, particularly in the rural areas — and some teachers who were particularly active in the union received death warning letters.

So in the absence of an agreement on salary increases, some teachers — either because of fear or through personal reasons — accepted Gairy's proposals behind the union's back. So in the end, with the teachers divided, the union had no choice but to accept the agreement.

This really proved to union members that they had to step up work in terms of mobilization, and it brought the union face-to-face with the necessity of raising the level of trade union consciousness among its members. So trade union seminars were organized at both school and branch levels, together with national workshops.

The G.U.T. has a democratic structure. From the fifties onwards it developed branches to create more opportunities for participation. But the participation has never been as good as it should be. Our teachers have tended to see the union only as a bargaining agent for higher wages and better working conditions, not for contributing to the overall betterment of education in the country. Many members do not see the need to take part in trade union and other educational programmes, so we need to develop a more dynamic programme of activities that will stimulate teachers to participate in the union, as well as to become more active and effective in their workplaces, their schools.

Traditionally in Grenada, teachers have seen themselves as middle class, and since the Revolution, of course, many of our national activities have had a working class outlook. So our teachers' feelings of being in a higher status sometimes make them reluctant to join in. Some of them are still living in the past and basing their decisions upon past experience. They are not used to participation and find it difficult to re-orientate themselves. Before, their opinions were rarely asked for or sought, and even when they were, they were never seriously considered, so they thought it better not to participate. There was a mistrust, and the period following the Revolution has inherited that, and made some of the teachers slow in actually throwing their weight behind the changes that are happening.

But our union has never been simply an economic one. We have regular meetings with the Ministry of Education personnel,

and have developed a consultation procedure whereby the Ministry seeks out our views. Each of our parish branches has committees for culture, sport and education, and has a representative of the National Executive, who liaises between the branch and the executive. Each branch meets once a month, and the executive at least once a month too. The democratic structures are *there*, but most of our teachers don't use them. It's not so much a question of building new structures in the G.U.T., but of *utilizing* the ones we already have — to participate in meetings over and above the bread and butter issues, to discuss wider aspects of Education, trade unionism and national development. We need to provide more forums for our teachers' views and activities in general re-construction programmes that would encourage and engage their participation. The G.U.T. has a *particular* responsibility to urge the teachers to help build the country through the national Education programmes. For example, during the two-week National Teachers' Seminar of January, 1980, the union helped in the general co-ordination and tied up the teachers' transport. Then, before the launching of the National In-service Teacher Education Programme — which was to involve all the untrained primary and junior secondary teachers of the nation — we organized branch meetings all around the country to discuss and clarify the reasons for the programme and to encourage our members to support it.

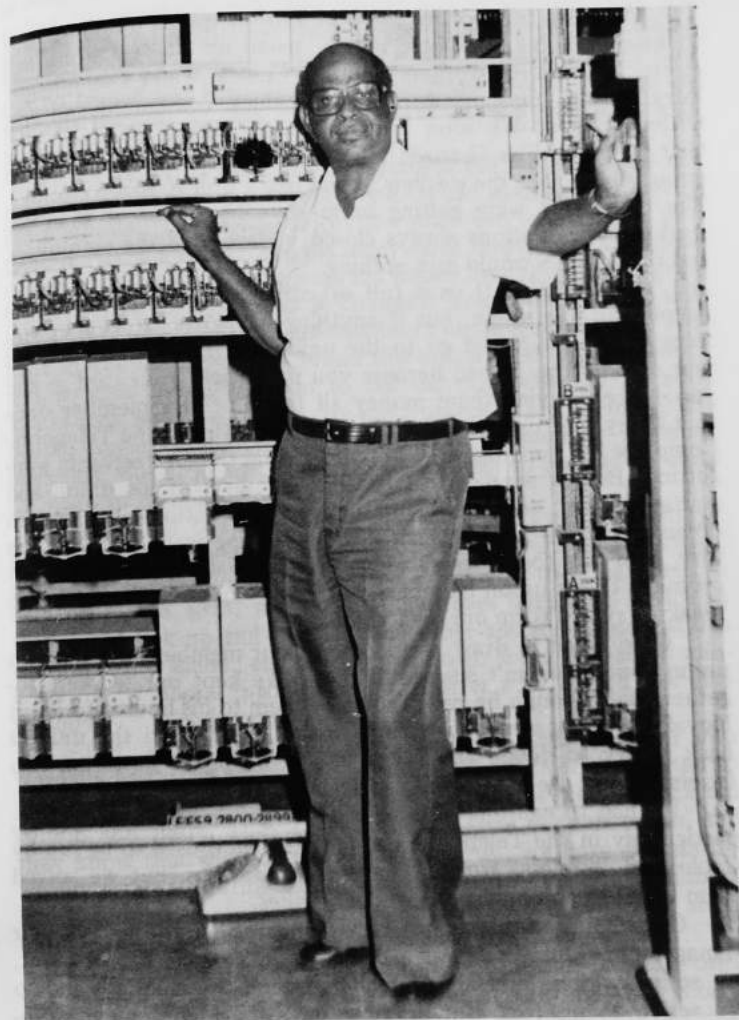
We also hold regular Summer courses with our members, in co-operation with the Canadian Teachers' Federation, to increase the professional skills of our members. But we need more stimulus to really get the shop steward system working in our schools, so our members can continually monitor their own situations at their workplaces. Our women members too, suffer from some objective problems, even though we do have some women branch presidents, officers and executive members. Transportation problems, family commitments and the lingering feeling that some trade union positions are still the reserve of men still continue, so the G.U.T. has a responsibility to its women members to actively encourage them to take union positions.

A part of the consciousness of 'a new teacher for a new society', which is a slogan we use here, is to be open to change in such fundamental areas as a new and relevant curriculum and more efficient and democratic teaching methods. As teachers, we also need to be more self-critical and willing to understand that the old establishment and status-quo doesn't last forever. When they begin to see that everyone must be working towards one common goal in Grenada, for total reconstruction and a better life

for all our people — especially the young people and children who never had the chance to get a better education because of the elite pattern of the system of the past — as our teachers begin to realize this, our union and our teachers themselves will become stronger and stronger.'



May Day 1981: members of the Grenada Union of Teachers march in Carriacou.



FREDERICK GRANT is a worker at the Grenada Telephone Company in St. George's. He is a trustee of the Technical and Allied Workers' Union and a second Vice-president of the Grenada Trades Union Council. He is a founder member of T.A.W.U., which was formed on May Day 1958.

'After we formed the union in 1958 it was an uphill struggle to keep it going. We were mostly made up of telephone and electricity workers, workers from the Central Water Commission, lorry drivers, transport workers, mechanics, coastguard and Post Office workers. We soon found we were getting pressure from Gairy's union. The Grenada Mental and Manual Workers' Union never represented the workers, it was like a wolf in sheep clothing. The employers were getting more advantage from it than the workers! Negotiations always closed in favour of the employers, and the workers would gain nothing.

The G.M.M.W.U. was full of corruption. You might be a member of the union, but if anything happened to you or you were victimised, you'd go to the union and they'd tell you that you couldn't be helped because you never paid your card — and you'd been paying them money all the time! I remember once that Gairy told us that we would soon be getting in the Telephone Company the same rights and privileges that the civil servants were getting. But as soon as we became members of his union and started paying, we found out that the negotiations had broken down and we were right back at the beginning again, and that was very hard for the workers at that time. Gairy gave such good promises to his union members, but broke them all. So we had to break away and form our own union.

Gairy tried to draw back some of our members into his own union, but he wasn't successful there. We kept our workers together, even though he called some of them to his house at Mount Royal, to have some discussions with them behind the union's back to try to divide and break us. So we had a battle on two fronts, against the employers and against Gairy.

We had to call one or two strikes to get ourselves recognised, particularly in the Telephone Company when it used to be run by Cable and Wireless. We had some victimisations, but we solved them by what you might call wildcat strikes.

Our organisation was not very democratic in those days. Our Management Committee was a bit weak then — now it's different, it's active, which makes the members attend the meetings and so get active themselves. But in those days the Management Committee ran the union for the members. We had no workers' participation in the running of union affairs. We just had two salaried officers, the President and the Secretary, who did almost everything, particularly the negotiations. The workers themselves were hardly involved.

Now it's important that those officers should always go back to the workers to get their suggestions and ideas on any decision-

making. Or the officers might complete the negotiations without telling the workers, and they would not be satisfied. This was going on in our union and things began to deteriorate very badly. Members weren't active again, not attending meetings and they started to not pay their dues. And the union became less and less militant because of this — the workers weren't participating or pushing it.

It left a lot of power in the hands of the old leadership and they began to abuse that power. We even had an organiser working for our union but being paid by the American Institute for Free Labour Development — and his salary came through the Caribbean Congress of Labour. They were his bosses over there in America, not us union members here in Grenada! You could see how dangerous this was, and the members didn't know about it, they were kept in the dark. We only found this out after the Revolution — and it took the Revolution to tell us, otherwise the situation would have gone on and on. He was working in the interest of the people paying him. He started dividing the unions by poaching members. But after we found out about him and realised he was a C.I.A. front man, he soon had to vacate his job.

Almost all our members welcomed the Revolution, except the President, who decided to leave a week after. Our workers, particularly those in the Telephone Company, tried our best to help on March 13th. We gave the comrades telephone service so they could link up and contact each other and the police stations all round the island, and we tracked down some of Gairy's ministers by telephone — and used our own cars to bring them into custody.

After we voted in our new leadership, with brother Jim Wardally as President, we had a lot of changes. Workers started to participate, we had a lot more meetings. So our members started coming out more. They feel part and parcel of their union, and they know that without them it cannot run. We have also started weekly seminars during working hours for our ship-floor members, and the union organises their release from work. We learn about industrial relations and the rules and activities of our union.

The workers are interested in everything that is going on in the union now, and with this type of leadership, nothing is being hidden from them, all the union's books are open. All our posts are elected. The union is free from any government interference. We have negotiations with government right now — we threatened a strike in the Central Water Commission a couple of weeks ago. In the old days with Gairy we would have been threatened — start ing off with the President — if we had decided to strike, but there



May Day, 1981: St. George's: Technical and Allied Workers' contingent.

is none of that now. Gairy often made threats like, 'If you strike, you die!' to trade union members who were about to strike and put his mongoose men on them. I remember when they badly beat up a union secretary once on the wharf. It's a hundred per cent different now.

In fact the People's Revolutionary Government are very reasonable to negotiate with. In the last negotiations with the Public Workers' Union they went in with the workers to satisfy them. In Gairy's days you couldn't find that. He would cut his negotiations at one spot and you had to accept it or die! But this government gives its workers all the information and the opportunity to negotiate fully. There's a much more open relationship now between the trade unions and the government.

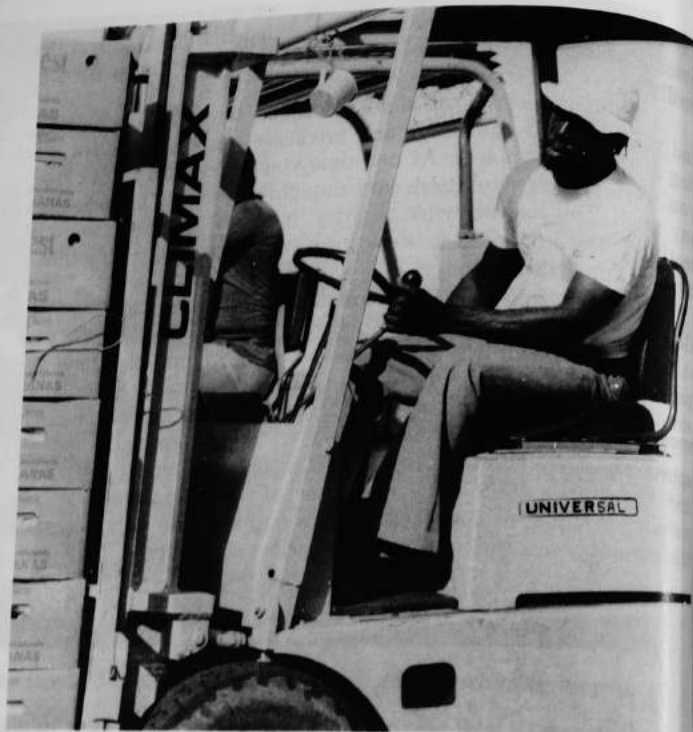
The women members are even more active than the men in our union now. They're participating more, selling the *Workers' Voice*, becoming shop stewards, going onto the Management Committee — before you could never get them to do these things. This is because of the benefits, the Maternity Leave Law and the Equal

pay for Equal Work. Before there was sexual victimisation and the union did very little. Now anything like that is taken up immediately.

Our membership has almost doubled since the Revolution, and that's due to the rights and privileges our members are getting at their workplaces. At one time you just couldn't work free, you were always depressed, you thought you could be sacked at any time. You had no work security. Now we have far more protection from our union than we have ever had before — and that's its main function.

The workers at the Telephone Company were glad when the government took over the company in January this year. We feel that for once in our lives we realize that what we put into the company, we will get out. We realize that we have to put in an extra amount of production, but we will be able to call it our company.

Our company must be run by us. We feel strongly, and we appreciate the stand that the revolutionary government has made, and the preparations in sending four of our engineers away for training in advance of a new system coming. We want to make this company a success, because it now belongs to us.'



SYDNEY 'GODZILLA' JOHN was born in 1939. He has been a dock worker for over twenty years, and is presently a fork lift truck operator. He is a member of the Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Union.

'Back in 1960 conditions more or less in loading bananas was one day they tell you you working by tonnage, next day they tell you by stems. They confuse we, so we didn't know what we true wages are. In those days you work from seven in the morning to late at night and you draw average of \$100 a shipment. At that time was real hard on we. You had to catch banana on you forearm and carry it to the lighters, it had no fork lift truck or machine.

Once the boss pick you, he have the sole right to choose you, and if you do anything and you sin, then you can't get work again.

The boss pick his favourites, he have certain favourites — even though they don't do the amount of work you could do.

Then, as far as the Union go, in them days was the President, Mr. Otway, who have all the power. He have his favourites too, and if you was to sin with the foreman he just say, 'Cupp — I! Look what you do man!' — and he rest you for three, four boats until he feel like giving you again. Things was corrupted bad. If his truck pass and you didn't jump on it to cut grass for his beasts, then you not getting work! If you tell the fella in the truck you ent cutting grass, then he bring back that news to Mr. Otway and you definitely getting rest.

At those days the union was run by a certain group of people outside the unions that used to be in a society, the Grenada National Party people. They was mostly business people. Certain higher things used to go on that our members was not aware of. The bargains happen between the agents and these people and at that time the dockers were never more or less militant because they ent know what was happening at all, and they just sit back and let the Executive do what they like.

Between the sixties we had one disturbance with Geest. They change the system of loading banana. In them days it have lighters and we have to load to the lighter with a yoke on we necks with the bananas. Then they bring in the conveyor belt. We was suppose to get money for these changes. Geest's Islands' Manager, Sir Garnet Gordon, come down to Grenada, had a little talk and they didn't put up we wages. So we hammer it, shipment after shipment. We go-slow and strike and then we finally get it.

Some of we members was Gairyite. They had a relationship with him. So he have some supporters in the dock too. Then we had a change of President, from Otway to Mr. Arthur Ramsay, and this bring about some changes too. Normally when a contract sign we couldn't ask what it was and say 'Le' we see the contract! But now we could and the union start to come a little more open in its affairs.

In 1973 Gairy brutality step right up. When we dockers knock off and start going home, police cars trail them and stop and search them. At that time Gairy have a 'Beating Team' and then later the Mongoose Gang too. They pick on we dockers because we was firm against the harassment and brutality Gairy giving out to the schoolchildren. Them children walk in fear. And we have a member, Chester Humphrey, who was still a schoolboy then, but did part-time coopering and work at the docks. He used to sit with we and tell we about what was the good path to go and what was the bad path. He tell we about

Cuba and Africa and any place in the world we want to know. So Gairy men pick on Chester because he was an outspoken young fella and also because he move with the JEWEL. One night the police beat he bad by Cable and Wireless.

Then we was in the docks one day and we had a tin of meat one of the dockers pick up off the ground. He was showing a next union member the tin and a policeman come and try to take the tin. The docker speech he off, so the policeman go and come back with a whole set of other police. They start looking for the man, but we was preventing them.

In the same time we members was starting to get the knowledge. We had knowledge meetings with Brother Bish and them and we feel we was waking into the light. We hear about Black Power movement and thing like this, and we ask him all we problems. I remember I was always hear people talking about 'parasite', so I ask him what was that and he tell me. A lot of thing we couldn't ask before we could now ask at that time. Anything we want to know we could learn. Then at that time the JEWEL have a football team in Tanteen, and a basketball side too. So the fellas go out there to watch the football and shout, 'Come on JEWEL, we must win this evening!' And Gairy ent like that one bit when he hear it! He try to stop it and ban people playing for the team.

When the JEWEL went to Grenville that time on Bloody Sunday, you could have seen the build-up of Gairy Green Beast. And when Brother Bish and them get beat, that turn the heat up much greater still. When we visit he in Friday Hospital on Richmond Hill, police watching you and report back on you. So we have to take another road round the back to see them up there.

So the main reason we strike in December 1973 was against all this Gairy brutality. And really it was worse against the children. We strike for the schoolchildren and the right to walk home and study without harassment. The children was totally harass. Gairy men meet them in the street and beat them with bull-pistle. It was like human right of the children we was striking for. We was asking to bring an end to all the brutality, and if not, Gairy must go! Every morning we march, and we march start small. We wait outside Otway House on the Carenage till the schoolchildren come round towards us round Fire Station Point. We cause was they cause, so we wanted them to be with we.

All the dockworkers was behind the strike, but Eric Pierre, who was the Secretary now, was looking at another angle. He looking that it was a good stand for the G.N.P., because shortly after the strike was called off they make him a senator. Before



January 1974. Dockworkers and school children demonstrate against the Gairy brutality, outside Otway House on the Carenage, St. George's.

the strike the Executive control all, but now was the dockers themselves calling the strike, we had the knowledge! And while the strike going on, in the heat of the struggle, the Secretary leave for Trinidad. Up to now he never reveal to we why he go there.

We get plenty support. We get provision from some shopkeepers and eggs all the time from Grenville. So you could keep up your family. And every day we marching. We marching around the Carenage and all round St. George's. And then it have the build-up on January 21st, and that day — terrible! They kill Rupert Bishop. He always supporting we until they kill him. Every day he pass we while we marching and he shout to we from he car: 'Keep it up boys! Keep it up boys!'

We last out till April, and up to that time we have business people, nurses, some agricultural workers and then the civil servants behind we. Then the Executive call a meeting and ask we if we want to go on with the strike. At that time Eric Pierre was President of the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union and he make sure that they was already back to work. So nobody want the strike to finish in the Seamen and Waterfront Workers', nobody except one man, and everybody know he was a Gairyite. So when the Executive ask, he say 'call off the strike!' Then all the Executive agree and that was that. When you settle down and look at it he definitely get the knowledge from somebody higher up before the meeting to make him come and say that. So the strike finish and the Secretary get to senator!



January 1974: the Grenadian people take to the streets of St. George's to protest against Gairy's misrule.

The end of the strike coming like that break down the members bad. Some was ashame of how the situation end. The union stay divided and we lose a good few members at that time. If I talk then, fellas would suck their teeth. Some members you couldn't speak. We carry on with some meetings but it didn't have the right knowledge coming out. The Executive still running the whole thing. We education level low, and so the Secretary could hide herself, and we didn't have the knowledge to pull he down to grass root. The union was just a stable for his politics arena.

Then the Revo came, and we begin to gain real hope. We was loading banana that day and when we hear what happen we quickly get onto the ship foreman and dock foreman and tell them we going to close down work. Most of the dockers come out and support it. But the leaders was trouble. When a Cuban boat come, fill with free cement, Stanley Roberts — a C.I.A. man — say we shouldn't unload the stern hatch because the hole too small. Then Comrade Strachan, the Minister, come and tell we that the cement was free but we should make a price for whatever we want to take it out. So Roberts say he not making a price and just walk away. So the men say they wouldn't do it.

Things like this happen, but we is still making progress slowly. We is firm with the Revo, and we seeing the consciousness raising with the members. They start to take much more care with the products, like we nutmeg and cocoa. They asking all kind of question about what coming down to the ships, they does always want to know now.

The union still have the old system of between father and son. The son does have the first preference for work before anyone else. This make it difficult for other men to find work at the docks. But some of we helping train some Bank and General Workers' Union men to work on the cement ships and small ship alongside Seamen and Waterfront men. So we getting more unity there and the B.G.W.U. members having a good influence on our workers, because the shop stewards in the Seamen and Waterfront is mostly all members of the Executive and somewhere along the line they floats above the workers. And in B.G.W.U. they has a compensation scheme, and we need that too. In our union when a worker want compensation we does still have to pass around the hat. So our workers learning these kind of things and they beginning to think why our union doesn't have the same thing. What taking place in them other union now making them think. They is definitely thinking, and that will make them change. You still has corruption in the system, but it dying out slowly. When it have young heads that is good, that is bright, that have knowledge join the union, the executive does try to get them to join them, and then they hand become tied and they forget the masses out there.

In the system we still ent have a rotation of workers. If you in a circle in the union between the executive members, you could always see *you* first on every ship, and the man that is progressive, that honestly come out every day to do a fair day's work, he not going to get because he is not doing anything that the executive like. Because the executive is a kind of set of people together, and if you against them, then it comes to a matter of you sin! If you say anything about them, then you going to get rest. If you put up you hand and vote against them, you just find yourself not getting work until two or three boat pass.

We still having to take on the Secretary, but he not so powerful now. He ent doing much more than keep we books and do the office work, but some workers still think that because he 'know law' he is the man we must take everything to. But we workers is after more knowledge all the time, that is why we always asking for classes, like in the other unions now, like CIWU and TAWU. The Secretary does always give we a bramble when we talk about having classes, and the meetings too much full up with minutes and correspondence and so much talk about so much different things that is not important. But we standing firm and pressing on. Is knowledge we after. We need to look back and watch we own lives and work and study we self. It have plenty brain between we, but it shy to come up.

Appendix

APPENDIX 1

SUMMARY OF THE CONFERENCE'S FINAL DOCUMENT

The conclusions that are contained within the Conference's final document are a cogent summary of the most urgent needs facing the Caribbean workers at this present time. The delegates expressed their collective view that the conference demonstrated 'a broad, democratic spirit of solidarity, reflecting the friendship and fraternity of the workers in our region and the legitimate high aims we all seek to achieve.' It concluded that the Caribbean and Latin American workers have been forced 'to bear more and more of the brunt of the world capitalist crisis', whereby thousands were being made unemployed and their interests were being assaulted by a spiralling cost of living and the loss of certain advances and benefits wrested through 'years of tireless work and struggle'.

The conference was fundamentally concerned with the international priority of Peace. It condemned the U.S. manufacturing of the horrific Neutron Bomb, the arms race and all imperialist warmongering, and the reckless waste and squandering of 'millions of dollars that are needed for development, on new, more sophisticated forms of extermination.' The delegates also expressed their opposition to the forces that the U.S. government has stationed in the Caribbean, which were described as 'a big stick ready to fall with terrible force on any country in the area that seeks its independence and full sovereignty.' The culminating statement was resoundingly clear on this issue: 'We proclaim our desire that the Caribbean be a zone of peace.'

On the economic front, the conference was unequivocal in its opposition to the 'abusive' policies of the transnational companies in the region, the duplicity and provocation of the International Monetary Fund, which 'aggravates the foreign indebtedness of the region,' and the introduction of the U.S. 'Mini-Marshall plan', which would only retard the achievement of economic and political freedom of the entire region. In opposition to this imperialist economic offensive, the conference urged support for the creation of the New International Economic Order, which would seek to aspire towards that freedom.

The 'savage tyranny' and outrageous repression of the workers in Haiti was condemned, as were the anti-labour measures which the St. Vincent government was attempting to introduce. Special solidarity was also expressed with the trade unionists of Barbados and Trinidad, in their struggles against poverty, insecurity and 'difficult living and working conditions'. The delegates saluted the Independence both of Belize and the state of Antigua and Barbuda, and registered its opposition to the continuing colonial status of Martinique, Guadeloupe and Cayenne, as well as the dependent position of Puerto Rico. The conference clearly supported 'the inalienable right of these countries to attain their legitimate, undeniable independence and sovereignty.'

The threats and destabilizing manoeuvres of imperialism against Grenada, Cuba, and Nicaragua were also condemned, and solidarity was expressed with 'the thousands of workers who have been fighting for freedom and justice in El Salvador', and also the oppressed workers of Guatemala, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and Bolivia. In particular, support was given to Cuban workers, facing the U.S. economic blockade and 'continual attacks of all kinds'.

The conference called for a stronger unity between the workers of the Caribbean, 'regardless of differences in political or religious creeds', and roundly condemned the Seaga Government's breaking of diplomatic ties between Jamaica and Cuba, 'pursuant to the Reagan administration dictates.'

THE CONFERENCE AGREEMENTS

The delegates agreed that in the future there should be a much more regular exchange of information between their organizations, and to facilitate this, the Co-ordinating Committee would, on a quarterly basis, send summaries to representatives of the delegates' organizations in their respective languages, based upon information sent regularly to the Committee by the same organizations. In addition, studies of transnational companies operating in the countries throughout the region would be pooled, to 'co-ordinate activities of solidarity'. Conversely, positive experiences and achievements by any trade union in the region would be publicised, 'so they may be studied, adapted and applied in other conditions'.

It was agreed that all organizations represented would observe the agreements and regulations of the International Labour Organization on trade union organization and rights, and opposition to all anti-labour regulations would be co-ordinated.

The importance of training and Trade Union Education was also stressed, and the Co-ordinating Committee undertook to organize training for workers in the region. No restrictions would be made on the basis of either ideology or membership of any international organizations.

The conference also agreed that analytical studies should be produced of the transnationals' role and strategy in the region, and that of the International Monetary Fund or other credit organizations operating in the Caribbean Basin. Information should also be gleaned and co-ordinated with regard to U.S. investment in the region.

Finally, the delegates were united in declaring that the Tenth World Trade Union Congress, to be held in Havana, Cuba in February 1982 — for the first time ever in the Caribbean — would be an excellent occasion for Caribbean trade union representatives to 'express the objective realities that the majority of the workers in our region suffer today'.

APPENDIX 2

ARTICLE FROM *THE FREE WEST INDIAN* 2/5/1981.

BOSS FINED FOR FIRING PREGNANT WORKER.

History was created in the St. George's Magistrate Court on Tuesday, when a Melville Street proprietress became the first person to be charged and convicted under the Maternity Leave Law.

In the case, which lasted less than an hour, Magistrate Lyle St. Paul found restaurant owner Evelyn Thompson guilty of dismissing waitress Jessie Williams, 25, because she was pregnant.

Sis. Williams told the court that despite her offer to continue working after she had completed the sick leave certified by her doctor, Mrs. Thompson dismissed her, when she was five months pregnant.

She had been working at Mrs. Thompson's restaurant since May 1979, from 7 a.m. to after 5 p.m., ten hours a day, six days a week, for \$100, and was never paid after her dismissal on January 31st. this year.

In her evidence, Mrs. Thompson admitted that she had dismissed Sis. Williams because of her pregnancy, but said she was not aware that she was contravening any law. As she put it, 'I never got maternity leave in the days when I had my children.'

Mrs. Thompson was convicted under section 12 — 1,2 and 3 of the Maternity Leave Law, and was fined \$500.

In his judgement, Magistrate St. Paul said that 'what is striking about this case is that Williams was trying hard to continue working despite her pregnancy, unlike most people'.

He said that in his eleven years on the bench this was the first offence of this nature which had come before him, and he had to be firm because of its gravity.

However, he said he was lenient on the offender, because it was her first conviction.

But, this had to serve as a warning to all employers, including himself, he said, adding that the law was there to be applied to all employers, whether big or small.

Mrs. Thompson was unrepresented throughout her case. But when the magistrate delivered his verdict, lawyer Tillman Thomas who was present in the court, rose to make a voluntary submission on her behalf. Thomas severely criticised the law, saying it was 'backward and archaic'.

But his argument was rejected by the magistrate, and Crown Counsel Langston Sibbles, who said it was unfortunate that Thomas should so describe the law, since it sought to redress the situation of female workers, whose employers disregarded their rights.

The Magistrate also ordered that Sis. Williams be reinstated, and that she be paid for the time she spent at home without pay.

In the courtroom was Secretary for Women's Affairs, Phyllis Coard, who said it was the first time that the law, drawn up to protect women from paying unnecessary penalties for exercising their natural function of motherhood and childbearing, had been used.

She noted that Sis. Williams had been working 60 hours a week for \$100 a month, which, she said, was 'scandalous', although similar exploitation is known to exist in other parts of the society.

Sis Coard said that the time had come for employers to understand that workers were not machines, and at times, natural sickness, such as pregnancy, could limit their output.

She also called on employers to change their attitude of dismissing workers like discarded machines, when they do not function 100% effectively.

Although increased production was a natural slogan of the Revolution, she said that employers had to be more considerate when 'genuine incapacity' arose.

Sis. Coard said that the Women's Desk is aware of another case of a woman worker being dismissed for pregnancy. But, in this case, the worker had taken longer than the stipulated three months to make her complaint, thus losing her right to take the case before the courts.

'However', she said, 'the Women's Desk is calling on all sisters who feel that their rights have been denied under the law, to take their case to the Desk within three months, so that the necessary legal steps can be taken'.

APPENDIX 3

GAIRY'S ANTI-TRADE UNION LAWS; EXTRACTS.

1. PUBLIC ORDER (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1974

10. — (1) No person may for the purpose of advertising or giving notice of any intended meeting or march or for any other purpose whatsoever operate or cause to be operated or use or caused to be used any loud-speaker in any public place or private premises unless a permit for the particular purpose of the operation or use in an area to be prescribed for a stated period has been issued by the Commissioner or Chief of Police to a person or number of persons so named and designated.

(3) Any person found operating or using a loud-speaker contrary to the terms and conditions of the permit issued in contravention is guilty of an offence under this section and may be arrested then and there without warrant and dealt with according to law.

(7) Any person who commits any offence under this section shall be liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding twelve months or to a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars or to both such imprisonment and fine, or on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or to fine not exceeding two thousand five hundred dollars or to both such imprisonment and fine.

11. The Commissioner or Chief of Police may in his discretion issue such permit to operate or use a loudspeaker upon such terms and conditions and subject to such restriction as he may think fit having regard to preservation of the peace, law and order, and in the interests of public safety and public morality.

2. NEWSPAPER (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1975

3 — Section 6 of the principal Law is hereby repealed and the following section is substituted therefor —

(2) No person shall print or publish or cause to be printed or published within the State any newspaper unless

he shall have previously deposited with the Accountant General a sum of twenty thousand dollars in cash to be drawn against in order to satisfy any judgement in Grenada for libel given against the editor or printer or publisher or proprietor of the said newspaper or any writer therein and shall at all times maintain the said deposit at the sum of twenty thousand dollars.

4. Section 12 of the principal Law is hereby amended by deleting the words "to a fine of two hundred and fifty dollars" and substituting therefor the words "on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding twelve months or to both such fine and imprisonment."

21A — (1) Where a justice of the peace is satisfied by information on oath that there is reasonable ground for suspecting that an offence under this Act is being, has been or is about to be committed on any premises, he may issue a warrant in writing authorising any police officer to enter those premises, if necessary by force, at any time within fourteen days from the time of the issue of the warrant and search them; and any police officer who enters the premises under the authority of the warrant may —

- (a) seize and remove any document, money or valuable thing, machinery, instrument or other thing whatsoever found on the premises which he has reasonable cause to believe may be required as evidence for the purposes of proceedings in respect of any such offence and
 - (b) arrest and search any person found on the premises whom he has reasonable cause to believe to be committing or to have committed any such offence.
- (2) Any person who obstructs, hinders, or prevents any police officer authorised pursuant to subsection (1) from entering as aforesaid shall be guilty of an offence under this Act and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars and in default of payment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding twelve months.

3. NEWSPAPER (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1976

2. Paragraph (b) of section 12 of the principal Law is hereby amended by inserting therein before the word "sells" at the beginning of the paragraph the following words and comma "has in his possession".

4. ESSENTIAL SERVICES ACT, 1978

SCHEDULE ESSENTIAL SERVICES

- 1. Electricity.
- 2. Water.
- 3. Services provided for the protection of the public health and the prevention of disease including the collection, transportation, processing and disposal of trade and domestic refuse and sewage.
- 4. Hospital and nursing.
- 5. Airport.
- 6. Fire
- 7. Lighthouses.
- 8. Air Traffic Control.
- 9. Telephone, telegraph and overseas telecommunication.
- 8. — (1) A lock-out, strike or any irregular industrial action in an essential service shall be unlawful unless there is a trade dispute within that service and —
 - (a) a report of the trade dispute has been made to the Labour Commissioner under section 3; and
 - (b) thereafter valid notice of the intended lock-out, strike or irregular industrial action has been given to the Labour Commissioner by the employer, or trade union on his behalf, or workmen, or trade union on their behalf, as the case may be, at least twenty-eight days prior to the day upon which the lock-out, strike or irregular industrial action is to commence.
- (5) Any person who —
 - (a) being an employer in an essential service, takes part in any lock-out which is declared unlawful by subsection (1); or
 - (b) being a workman employed in an essential service, takes part in any strike or irregular industrial

- action which is declared unlawful by subsection (1); or
- (c) incites or in any way encourages, persuades or influences any workman employed in any essential service to take part in any strike or irregular industrial action which is declared unlawful by subsection (1).

knowing or having reasonable cause to believe that the probable consequences of that employer or workman so doing, either alone or in combination with others, would be to deprive the public, wholly or to a great extent, of that service, shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or to both such fine and such imprisonment.

APPENDIX 4

LAWS PASSED BY THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT FOR THE PROTECTION OF TRADE UNIONISM: *EXTRACTS*

PEOPLE'S LAW NO. 29

TRADE UNIONS (RECOGNITION) ACT, 1979

AN ACT to provide for the compulsory recognition by employers of trade unions which represent a majority of workers.

3. — (1) A trade union claiming to have as members in good standing a majority of workers of an employer in a unit that is appropriate for collective bargaining shall, subject to the provisions of this Act, make application to the Minister to be certified as the bargaining agent of the workers in the unit.

(4) Within three days after the poll has been conducted the Minister shall issue his certificate to the union gaining the requisite majority as the bargaining agent for that unit and inform the other interested parties accordingly.

4. — (1) A trade union making an application as provided for in subsection (1) of Section 3 this Act shall make its application for such recognition in writing to the Minister specifying the unit in respect of which recognition is sought and a copy of the application shall be served on the employer.

(2) Upon receipt of the application for certification the Minister shall within seven days thereof institute a poll of the unit specified to determine whether the union making the application for recognition has as members in good standing a majority in the unit appropriate for collective bargaining.

(3) The poll referred to in the foregoing subsection shall be the secret ballot and conducted in the presence of representatives of all interested parties.

6. An employer or any person acting on his behalf who fails or refuses to treat or enter into negotiations with a trade union which has been certified by the Minister under the provisions

of this Act is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding five thousand dollars or to imprisonment not exceeding two years or to both.

PEOPLE'S LAW NO. 46

REPEAL AND RE-ENACTMENT LAW, 1979

2. The enactments specified in the first schedule are repealed.
3. (1) The enactments specified in the second column of the Second Schedule (hereinafter referred to as 'the amending Acts') which amend the Acts specified in the third column (hereinafter referred to as 'the principal Acts') are repealed.

FIRST SCHEDULE

Number	Short title
Act No. 15 of 1974	Public Order (Amendment) Act, 1974
" " 12 of 1975	National Honours and Awards Act, 1975
" " 16 of 1978	Essential Services Act, 1978
" " 33 of 1978	Essential Services (Amendment) Act, 1978

SECOND SCHEDULE

Number	The amending Acts	The principal Acts
1 of 1974	Shop (Hours) (Amendment) Act, 1974	Shop Hours Ordinance (Cap. 276)
9 of 1975	Newspaper (Amendment) Act, 1975	Newspaper Ordinance (Cap. 197)
14 of 1975	Newspaper (Amendment) No. 2 Act, 1975	Newspaper Ordinance (Cap. 197)
7 of 1976	Newspaper (Amendment) Act, 1976	Newspaper Ordinance (Cap. 197)

Dated this 18th day of June, 1979

MAURICE BISHOP
Prime Minister.

PEOPLE'S LAW NO. 53

MATERNITY LEAVE LAW 1980

4. — (1) An employee shall be entitled to maternity leave of absence for a period of three months, and shall be paid therefor by the employer in accordance with section 5 below.

(2) In any case where the child of the employee dies at birth or within one month thereof, the employee's entitlement to maternity leave with pay shall cease thirty days after the death of the child.

(3) The maternity leave shall commence on a day chosen by the employee who may return to work at the expiration of the period of paid leave but not before; and she may only return to work before the expiration of three months at her election.

5. (1) Maternity leave pay shall be —

- (a) in the case of monthly paid employees, a sum equal to two months pay;
- (b) in the case of weekly or fortnightly paid employees a sum equal to eight weeks or four fortnights' pay as the case may be;
- (c) in the case of daily paid workers a sum equal to one-fifth the pay earned in the twelve months immediately prior to the commencement of the maternity leave.

(2) Maternity leave pay shall be paid by the employer —

- (a) in a lump sum on the first day of the leave; or
- (b) in the normal manner in which the employee was paid,

at the election of the employee.

12. — (1) Any employer who terminates the employment of an employee because she is pregnant shall be guilty of an offence and the burden of proving that the employment was not terminated because of pregnancy shall be on the employer.

(2) An employer who is convicted for an offence under subsection (1) above shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding \$2000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year and the court shall order the employer to reinstate the employee who shall be entitled in all respects as if her employment had not been terminated.

I PREFER

Ah did wuk like a moo-moo
Life was harder dan groo-groo

an' de sun
was a whip
on my back
cutting deep

I crawl

I creep

I bleed

I sweat

Sweating through cloud, sweating through rain
Weeding them corn, reaping them cane

cane that chain
me parents
guts an' brain
to eart'
an' ache

Cane kill Abel, an' cane di kill them too, mmmhmmm!

Their back bend like a bow
Digging potato, picking the peas
JEEEEEEEEZ an' bread.

I say NO MORE!

Is now I know

that I prefer

seed that pass from my hand
to my land

that slip from the crease of my palm
to the mout' ah de eart'

an' spring back up
is leaf
an' tree
an' vine

I prefer, what my sweat an' labour
tell me, is mine.



JACOB ROSS