

The Burning Spear 1979

Workers and Peasants Topple Grenada Regime

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The New Jewel Movement, led by Maurice Bishop, on March 13, 1979, seized power from one of the most corrupt and repressive governments in the Caribbean.

The movement against this regime emerged at a high point on January 21, 1974. Public meetings of thousands of people and, what was in effect, a general strike, represented the mass opposition to the Gairy regime. Within that struggle, the New Jewel Movement (NJM) quite successfully organized institutions of popular power, culminating in a Constituent Assembly. These organizations of the people experienced a set back in the only way that they could have. Eric Gairy unleashed his Mongoose Gang of murders and thugs on them. Innocent Belmar, then an assistant Chief of Police, was the leader of the Mongoose Gang.

The situation became so critical that the Caribbean Conference of Churches intervened in the Grenada crisis. They appointed a commission of inquiry (headed by Judge Duffus of Jamaica), which confirmed the corrupt practices of Gairy and his party. With this increasing isolation, Gairy turned for military and economic support to the most hated government on the American continent, the Pinochet regime in Chile. Gairy also turned to Mafia elements in the U.S.

By December 1976, GULP (the Grenada United Labour Party), under Gairy's leadership, had to face the electorate to ratify the policies he was pursuing. NJM formed an alliance with reactionary elements, with they would not have normally associated, in order to contain Gairy's fascist policies. In the elections, the Alliance, in which NJM was the leading group, won six seats. Gairy won nine. Of these nine, three were contested because Gairy had breached the electoral principles. Those seats were "won" with small majorities.

Since then the NJM has used its parliamentary status to campaign on behalf of the independent struggles of workers and peasants. The latest of these has been the struggle by workers of Barclays Bank in Grenada to win recognition for their union, increased wages and better working conditions. The Gairy regime made the full machinery of his

repressive state available to Barclay's management to defeat the struggle of the bank workers.

It is perhaps this struggle which placed the final nail in Gairy's coffin. It was the last straw to break the camel's back.

The campaign, led by the NJM, could find little parliamentary expression because Gairy refused to adhere to normal parliamentary practice. That gave the NJM, with its popular base and popular support, the moral authority to seize power on March 13, 1979.

It is this movement, the New Jewel Movement, whose history is known to use that we, the members of the Black Parents Movement (BPM), the Black Youth Movement (BYM), the Race Today Collective and the Bradford Black Collective, support.

What has been Gairy's response to the victory of the New Jewel Movement? He has called for ammunition and troops from the United States and Britain to assist him in attacking the revolutionary forces, thereby spilling more blood than he already has done in Grenada social life and politics. He has gone on record as saying "the last 24 years people have tried to get rid of me, but lots of them, that have tried, are lying in the cemetery."

The Black Parents Movement, the Black Youth Movement, the Race Today Collective and the Brad Black Collective demand:

1. No foreign intervention in Grenada. This is an internal affair.
2. The British, American and Venezuelan governments must not interfere as they did in Trinidad and Tobago in 1970.
3. Immediate recognition by all Caribbean governments of the new Grenada government, led by Prime Minister Maurice Bishop.
4. Immediate recognition by the British and American governments.

VICTORY TO THE NEW JEWEL MOVEMENT!

VICTORY TO THE CARIBBEAN PEOPLES!

POWER TO THE WORKERS AND PEASANTS IN GRENADA!

What You Can Do

The BPM, the BYM, The Race Today Collective and the Bradford Black collective have sent telegrams to Prime Minister Callaghan, to the U.S. Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, and to Caribbean organizations outlining our demands.

We urge you to send telegrams and letters containing the demands we have outlined. Please send copies to: The Black Parents Movement, 57 Victoria Road, London N4, 3SN., England.

Grenadian Revolution Archive