Church and State in Grenada during the Bishop Regime, 1979-1983

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A Marxist regime?

When the Grenadian Prime Minister Eric Gairy was ousted by a coup led by Maurice Bishop's New Jewel Movement (NJM) in March 1979, the population's response was positive. The Gairy government was utterly corrupt and notorious for its human rights violations.

The new rulers were leftists, no doubt, but like the Nicaraguan Sandinistas, declined to identify themselves as "Marxists". The NJM was and intended to remain a member of the Socialist International. The NJM leadership realised very well that the vast majority of the population of Grenada would object to outspoken Marxist beliefs. There can be no doubt, however, about the NJM's Marxist-Leninist orientation, although, within the party, different views existed as to the pace of the revolutionary process. Eventually ultra-leftwing radicals, led by the NJM Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard, disposed of the so-called moderates, including Maurice Bishop (October 1983).

Maurice Bishop himself, however, was also a convinced Marxist-Leninist, albeit a charismatic one who got on very well with another charismatic Marxist-Leninist leader, Fidel Castro. Over Bishop's desk in his office was a picture of Lenin and his library was full of Marxist-Leninist works.[1] Bishop himself played a key role in concluding a secret agreement on cooperation between the NJM and the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC). Relations with the Soviet Union were more than cordial. In a letter to the then KGB chief Yuri Andropov, General Hudson Austin, a member of the Political Bureau of the NJM, asked for Soviet assistance in the field of intelligence. The same letter, which was approved by Maurice Bishop himself (who added a few handwritten comments to it), reverently referred to the deceased Soviet ideologist Mikhail Suslov as "a true Bolshevik and hero of revolutionary people world-wide".[2]

In the summer of 1983 it was recommended that "Marxist-Leninist

literature" be distributed in schools with a view to countering the impact of religion on the young.[3]

Most important of all, however, was Maurice Bishop's secret "Line of March for the Party" instructions given on 13 September 1982. Bishop told the party that "our objective as Marxist-Leninists must in the first instance be to construct Socialism as rapidly, but as scientifically as possible."[4] "Our primary task," Bishop said, "must be to sink the ideas of Marxism-Leninism into the working people so that their own ideological level can advance."[5]

The NJM adhered to the doctrines of the dictatorship of the proletariat and proletarian internationalism, which are essential to Marxism-Leninism. In approaching religion and society, however, the NJM leadership proceeded with caution. As far as religion was concerned there was no direct religious persecution (closing down of churches, arresting members of the clergy, etc.) between March 1979 and October 1983. But the basis for a policy of religious repression was laid down in the course of 1983 and church leaders were justified in their apprehension that 1983 and following years would be of crucial significance for the free practice of religion.

The churches' initial response to the NJM revolution

Initially both the regime and the churches were careful not to offend each other. Although the "People's Revolutionary Government" (PRG) declined to describe itself as "Marxist-Leninist", the churches were aware of its pro-socialist orientation. On balance their attitude was one of cautious acceptance. A statement of the Conference of Churches in Grenada (CCG), dated 25 March 1979, voiced the churches' position clearly:

> While regretting the circumstances under which the new Revolutionary government in Grenada has come to power, we are thankful to God for the way in which the armed Revolutionaries have restrained themselves and made efforts to avoid bloodshed.
>
> We are thankful to hear that all those being held in protective custody are being treated humanely and given due care and attention. We welcome the intention of the Revolutionary Government in their aim of bringing about free and fair elections as speedily as possible, so that democracy which we cherish may prevail.[6]

The Roman Catholic Bishop of Grenada, Mgr Sydney Charles, issued a Lenten Statement to be read in all Catholic Churches on 1 April 1979. The Statement expressed "solidarity" with the CCG Statement and

recognised the People's Revolutionary Government as the *de facto* government. But the Lenten Statement also expressed particular concerns as to attempts by the ruling political party to interfere with church affairs.

> The Catholic Church is independent of and unidentified with any and every political party. Rather her role is a prophetic role to all political parties, including the ruling party of a country where she is implanted for the sake of the Gospel.[7]

The Statement underlined promises made by the political leadership to hold "free and fair elections" and to promote "freedom of religious worship to all citizens, respect for the church and its work of Evangelisation" and then said:

> The Catholic Church, however, will keep a close, critical look to see to it that promises are kept and that the high ideals and intentions be pursued. This is a challenge to the government in power but also a pledge of the Church to give of its best to Grenada, and Grenadians, Carriacouans and Petite Martiniquans as they deserve.

This, basically, reflected a continuation of the church's attitude towards the state during the previous regime of Eric Gairy. The previous regime had a reputation for meddling with church affairs, for example by prescribing certain prayers in which the Prime Minister was glorified. These attempts to force the church into certain political patterns were deftly resisted by Grenadian church leaders. The most prominent among them were (and are) Bishop Sydney Charles and the Anglican Archdeacon Hoskins Huggins.

Expectations and hopes that the new regime would do away with such practices were high in the months immediately following the NJM Revolution. During a 1979 visit to Rome, Bishop Charles expressed support for the revolution. Later, however, church leaders of Grenada became more critical:

> From the start, we looked objectively at the revolution. As time went on, however, the support we gave diminished. I felt that the price that was to be paid was too high, and that human values were being lost.[8]

Church-state relations become strained

There were four major areas of concern about which the churches increasingly expressed their views:

—The matter of political detainees. It is believed that during

> the four years of Bishop's rule an estimated 1,000 persons — roughly one percent of the population — were detained at one time or another. On 1 January 1983, the total number of political detainees was 183. Detention papers were usually signed by Maurice Bishop who also acted as Minister of the Interior.[9]
>
> —The refusal to hold free and fair elections as speedily as possible.
>
> —Lack of press freedom (several independent newspapers were closed down; the churches' access to radio was withdrawn).
>
> —Attempts to militarise and indoctrinate youth and the appointment of pro-government teachers in the schools.

Initially, these concerns were voiced in a diplomatic and cautious manner. Nevertheless tension between church and state was being built up simply by raising them. Hoskins Huggins puts it thus:

> We avoided confrontation with the government. We thought we should leave the way open for dialogue and we tried this sincerely. We were not against the government. However, when they met us, we had to express some of our concerns, such as the detention of people in prison without charge or trial or the issue of general elections. We made it quite clear that as Christians we had to be concerned with the political detainees and their welfare. The church must be a caring church.[10]

And Bishop Charles remembered:

> We as churches had six dialogues with the government but in 1982 Prime Minister Bishop refused to continue the dialogue, apparently because he didn't like the points we raised.
>
> Although I myself had made various positive statements reflecting our attitude towards the revolution, at the same time I recognised a certain sensibility on the part of the rulers to criticism. I felt this was unhealthy and I got the impression that they were scared. But why be afraid if they claimed immense popularity?[11]

That the government was indeed afraid was made clear in a speech on the "Standing Commitment to Freedom of Worship and Religion" made on Radio Free Grenada on 15 February 1980 by Maurice Bishop. Reference was made to "concrete evidence of counter-revolutionary activities by a few individuals seeking to use the church to create confusion and disharmony". There was, Bishop said, "a dangerous plan to use the church as a base of political subversion".[12] Bishop particularly attacked those priests who engaged in political activity such as the

publishing of a local newspaper, *Catholic Focus*. Having received assurances from Bishop Sydney Charles that he had been unaware of these activities, the government simply prevented further publication of *Catholic Focus*. The Catholic newspaper *Dateline St George's* could continue as usual, since this was the Bishop's own outlet. Press freedom in Grenada had been curtailed as early as October 1979, when the government shut down *The Torchlight*, the only independent newspaper on the island.

At this stage, the government's indignation was primarily aimed at mostly foreign priests or "elements in the church" who accused the government of pursuing communist aims, and not yet at church hierarchies. Bishop noted an "attempt to use the church against the revolution". This was part of a plan "to sabotage the revolution through making it appear to be dictatorial, violent and opposed to the church and religion".[13] However, "far from being opposed to the church, the PRG had fully cooperated with the church and has allowed the church the fullest freedom to conduct its religious activities free from fear of harassment." Bishop then outlined his doctrine of separation of church and state:

> It is our belief that the church and the state have two separate roles to perform. Our people look to their church for spiritual guidance and to their government for political leadership and we believe that this separation of church and state is correct. The biblical phrase "render to Caesar the things which are Caesar's and to God the things which are of God" represents a correct belief that the functions of the church and of the state are and should be different.[14]

But the seeds of mutual distrust had been sown and, particularly after 1980, relations between church and state began to deteriorate. Being an admirer of Nicaraguan Sandinism, Maurice Bishop sought to promote "a people's church" which would be independent of existing hierarchies. This attempt at splitting the church was a matter of grave concern to Grenadian church leaders:

> I remember how once a government minister put the distinction between the "progressive church" and the "backward church". I saw efforts being made to divide the church. In fact I once preached about it and said: "There is only one church." There were definite efforts to establish a "people's church".[15]

The "two Prime Ministers" issue

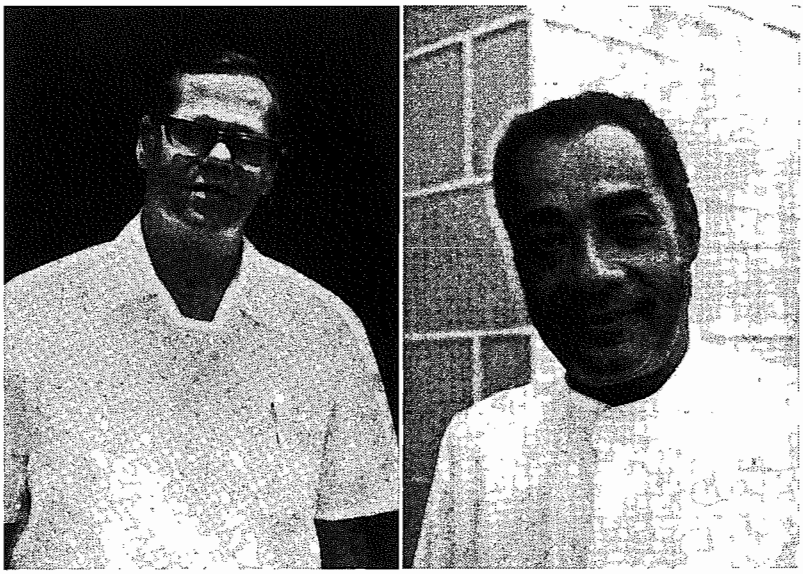
A Seminar on "The role of the Church in Grenada Today", sponsored by the CCG in November 1980, concluded that the government deserved

support, but that its human rights policy required critical attention. The Bishop government was far from appreciating this conditional support and invited the pro-Soviet Christian Peace Council (CPC) to hold a conference in Grenada. This conference took place in 1981 and was addressed by, *inter alia*, Maurice Bishop and "progressive priests" from Nicaragua, Costa Rica and the Soviet Union. Bishop Sydney Charles, who was also on the speaker's list, later told the author: "I have never heard before such blasphemies against the clergy and the church as I did on that occasion." Bishop Charles seriously clashed with the Nicaraguan priest who had defended the participation of priests in the revolutionary process even if it involves the use of violence. Bishop Charles, however, denied priests the right to be involved in the "people's militia".[16] He also told the government that peace can be achieved only through justice, love, truth and freedom. "There are four wrong ways of seeking peace in the world. Firstly by evasion, secondly by escape, thirdly by compromise and fourthly by violence."

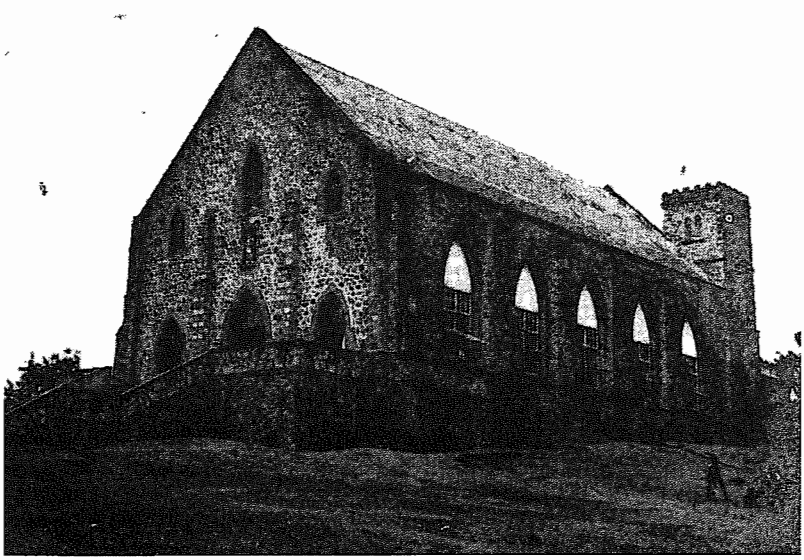
The government, and particularly Maurice Bishop himself, felt deeply embarrassed by a remark Bishop Charles made about the existence of "two Prime Ministers", i.e., one for the state and one for the church. Bishop Charles later explained to the author that what he intended to be a joke was not appreciated. "I was accused of insulting the Prime Minister, but I intended only to indicate that the leaderships of church and state perform different duties." The government interpreted Bishop Charles's remark as a threat to its very existence, a challenge to the authority of the Prime Minister. At a meeting of the NJM's Political Bureau a government minister even expressed the feeling "that the time had come when Bishop Charles should be called in and given a strong warning."[17]

Bishop Charles, however, had not merely voiced his own opinion. Cooperation between various churches on Grenada began to increase and Anglican-Catholic rapprochement was particularly noteworthy. Church attendance was strong and the local ecumenical movement flourished as never before. While the churches were concerned about what the goverment might do to interfere with their freedom, the government was afraid of the growing influence of Grenada's ecumenical cooperation.

> One thing the government and the ruling party were afraid of was the ecumenical movement in Grenada. They were particularly frightened of the organising of a joint procession of Anglicans and Catholics. The churches were coming together while the ruling powers were losing ground. There was a tremendous increase in church attendance. For example, our procession on St George's Day in 1983 attracted more people than the New Jewel Movement had at its political rally. This, of course, was a matter of tremendous concern to the



Bishop Sydney Charles *(left)* and Archbishop Hoskins Huggins of St. George's, Grenada. See article by J. A. E. Vermaat on pp. 43-58.



A Roman Catholic church in Grenada's Tivoli area. *(All photos courtesy J. A. E. Vermaat.)*

Crosses erected in Poznań, Poland, to commemorate the workers' uprising in 1956. The crosses were erected in 1981.

Right: Romanian Orthodox priest Fr Gheorghe Calciu-Dumitreasa with his wife Adriana and their son Andrei after their arrival in Rome on 7 July 1985. See Romanian *samizdat* section on pp. 87-88. *(Photo © Christian Solidarity International.)*

Solidarity representatives (*left to right:* Fr Henryk Jankowski, Lech Wałęsa) in Rome in January, 1980. They are showing Pope John Paul II a model of the monument erected at Gdańsk in 1980 in memory of the workers killed in the uprising of 1979. See article by I. Krzeminski on pp. 4-16. *(Photos courtesy Keston College.)*

government.[18]

By 1982, when the talks between government and church were cut off, relations between church and state were almost openly hostile. There was no direct persecution of the church but the PRG sought to take control over Christian schools by appointing so-called "radical teachers" who were to teach the ideology of the ruling political movement. The main components of this ideology were Marxism and the revolution.

> Children were told to have a book in one hand and a gun in another. There were children of ten years old who were taught to use a gun. By putting emphasis on military vigilance the PRG sought to take the youth away from the church.[19]

The rôle of the Cubans

The Cubans were also called upon for advice. Cooperation between the NJM and the Cuban Communist Party (PCC) had vastly increased after the Revolution of March 1979. A delegation of the PCC's "Americas Department" paid an extensive visit to Grenada in 1982 and presented a lengthy report on the religious situation, suggesting, for example, further cooperation between the NJM and the PCC regarding this question. Among the report's recommendations was the proposal "to promote contacts among clergymen and members of the laity from Nicaragua and other Latin American circles linked to the theology of liberation and in general, to the idea of a church committed to revolutionary positions."[20] Moreover, visits to Cuba should be encouraged. Concern was expressed about the Roman Catholic hierarchy, but "it cannot be said yet that the hierarchy has decided on an open confrontation."[21] On the other hand, "the emphasis of the Church is in harmony with the campaign carried out by reactionary governments in the Caribbean against Grenada's PRG." And "it seems that within the institution there is not a trend in the theological and social line sympathetic to the revolutionary project."[22]

The Cubans were also keen on improving NJM propaganda within the institutional church and they recommended a policy aimed at infiltrating the churches through "believers who actively collaborate with the NJM".[23] They pressed for the appointment of Selwyn Strachan, Minister of National Mobilisation, Agitation and Propaganda ("agitprop"), as Minister in charge of religious questions. Strachan was on very good terms with the Cubans and before receiving his new assignment he received a three weeks' training course in Cuba.[24] The Cuban Embassy provided the necessary assistance for the realisation of the new project which provided for the placing of agents within the church, close surveillance of church leaders, keeping a record of those who visited the hierarchy, phone tapping and monitoring of sermons.[25] The newly-appointed Cuban Ambassador to Grenada, Julian Torres Rizo, was a

high-ranking Cuban intelligence officer and his wife, Gail Reed, who was a friend of Maurice Bishop, had previously been employed by a major ecumenical organisation in New York.[26]

The "top secret" reports of the Interior Ministry

The whole operation to penetrate and undermine the institutionalised church was led by Grenada's Chief of Counter-intelligence, Major Keith Roberts, who closely cooperated with Cuban intelligence (DGI). Cooperation between the NJM and the PCC was intensified after the conclusion of the secret cooperation agreement at the end of 1982. The agreement provided for, *inter alia*, coordination and exchange of experience in work with religious people. A Cuban specialist on religious matters was to be sent to Grenada in the course of 1983 and two Grenadan comrades were to visit Cuba to get first-hand knowledge of the Cuban Communist Party's dealings with religious issues and coordinate regional and international work.[27] The latter referred to attempts by Cuban intelligence to penetrate wider ecumenical bodies such as the Caribbean Conference of Churches and, possibly, the World Council of Churches.

Church leaders in Grenada seemed to be well aware of attempts to bring their activities under control, although they did not know of the existence of any secret dealings with the Cubans. Both Bishop Sydney Charles and Archdeacon Hoskins Huggins expressed the feeling that government interference with the church was going to be increased in 1983. In his 1982 Christmas Eve sermon Archdeacon Huggins told his congregation that "for 1983 freedom may not exist and this is a grave challenge to us as a freedom-loving people."[28]

The Methodists were concerned, too, particularly after one of their Ministers, Keith Ledson, was expelled from Grenada simply because he had refused to bury a NJM supporter on Sunday. Rev. Ledson did not object to burying him on any other day but Sunday, but the political leadership insisted on a Sunday burial.[29]

In 1983 the Interior Ministry produced two "top secret" reports containing an "Analysis of the Church of Grenada". The first report, dated 15 March 1983, dealt primarily with the Roman Catholic Church, which was the main factor determining the religious situation. The forty priests were said to be "in the main either conservative or outright reactionary" and Bishop Sydney Charles was considered one of "the most dangerous".[30] Early January 1983 Bishop Charles had referred to "attempts to crush the church". His statement was interpreted in the report as "clearly directed against the Revolution and the PRG".[31] The church was referred to as "an experienced and skilful Counter-Revolutionary Organisation" which "is gearing (up) for confrontation

with the government". Its anti-Marxist stance and the fact that fifty per cent of church-goers are young people were a matter of concern. "Therefore to lose even a part of this percentage is to drastically erode the church's power base and if unchecked can cause the church to crumble."[32] Although not as influential as the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church was considered as another "major threat to the Revolution" because both Anglican and Roman Catholic churches "share a common outlook on the Grenada Revolution".[33] The report also noted that the other churches were hostile to the revolution.

The second report had been drawn up by Major Keith Roberts himself and was dated 12 July 1983. [Full text at end of article, pp. 56-57 — *Ed.*] It depicted the church as "a threat to the Revolution". Church leaders "are all to different degrees hostile to the Revolution".[34] The churches' insistence on free elections and their concern for the plight of political detainees, as well as the distribution of anti-Marxist literature, was noted with disapproval. Further, the church was tightening its grip on the youth by reorganising its youth groups. In view of the NJM's "weakness in all mass organisations", this development was seen as "a very dangerous one".

> We think that in the medium term if serious measures are not taken, we can find ourselves faced with a Polish situation. In this light, we see the Church in the immediate period as being the most dangerous sector for the development of internal counter-revolution.[35]

The report indicates a number of "future trends", such as the trend towards stronger unity among all member churches of the CCG and infiltration of anti-Marxist-Leninists from outside. It then gives a great number of recommendations with a view to "better controlling all churches, their leadership, membership and their activities." The most noteworthy recommendations are:[36]

—Remove from primary schools all deeply religious head teachers by whatever means suitable, replacing them with more progressive elements;
—Introduce political education in every classroom and use the most progressive teachers within the school system to teach these classes;
—Cut back on all religious programmes on Radio Free Grenada;
—Promote contacts among clergymen and laity from Nicaragua and other Latin American countries linked to the theology of liberation and, in general, to the idea of a church committed to revolutionary positions;

—Get Marxist-Leninist literature into all schools by September;
—Step up the systematic monitoring of all religious manifestation in the state.

Both reports were approved by Maurice Bishop in his capacity of Minister of the Interior. Bishop added two points to the second report's recommendations, namely, "open cinemas" and "start progressive church (talk with Nicaraguans and Cubans)".[37] From this, it is evident that the documents had the full backing of Maurice Bishop himself and that they did not — as some were to suggest later[38] — represent a deviation from official policy. The second document in particular represented a gross form of state interference with church affairs. It should be noted that this report had been drawn up in cooperation with the Cubans. Nicaraguan and Cuban experience were considered essential for the implementation of the policies set out in the report. This means that Nicaragua and Cuba pursue similar policies of repressing religious manifestation in so far as it manifests itself independently of dominant political trends.

Cracking down on the Rastafarians

As well as the churches, minorities like the Rastafarians — a well-known religious movement attached to the former Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassi — were considered dangerous by the PRG. Harassment of Rastafarians, who have a lifestyle different from other blacks in the Caribbean, was not uncommon under the previous regime of Eric Gairy. Before he seized power Maurice Bishop promised them full freedom and implementation of their rights. The Rastafarians in turn supported Bishop and his revolution, but they were disappointed soon after 1979 when the new rulers began to suppress them and accuse them of "counter-revolutionary" activity. The revolutionary regime simply inherited the cultural bias of the previous regime. The Rastafarians refused to join the "People's Militia" and the army and were strong opponents of communism.[39] The PRG also accused a number of Rastafarians, notably the so-called "Budlall gang" of terrorist activity, anarchism and large-scale growing of marijuana. When *The Torchlight* newspaper called on the Rastafarians to stand up for their rights, the PRG seized the opportunity and three days later closed down the newspaper.[40] Some Rastafarians informed the author of experiences of torture while in prison. One, Kenneth Budlall, said he had received electric shocks. Another, Lloyd Wells, who was arrested on 1 August 1982, complained of rough treatment and lack of food.

> I had to walk continuously at gunpoint. This was a form of torture, no doubt. They also shaved our heads, and they forced

> us to eat pork. By that they compelled us to abandon our religious practices. When one of us refused to eat pork he was forced to open his mouth and the pork was pushed down the throat.[41]

The role of the wider ecumenical movement

From its inception Bishop's revolution received strong support from the regional ecumenical body, the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC). The historical churches in Grenada — Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian — were all represented in the CCC. But in contrast to the position taken by these four Grenadan Churches, CCC spokesmen favouring liberation theology repeatedly expressed support for the revolutionary experiment in Grenada. Before the 1979 revolution several of Bishop's close friends, such as Jacqueline Creft and George Louison, were on the CCC's staff. During African Liberation Day, on 25 May 1981, the General Secretary of the CCC, Dr Roy Neehall, said:

> Liberation theology which is developed within the churches of the Caribbean and Latin America is going to be the basis upon which many Christian people can participate in the revolutionary change that is needed in order that we overthrow the forces of colonialism and imperialism.[42]

On the other hand, Ricky Singh, the editor of the CCC's official organ *Caribbean Contact*, criticised the banning of *The Torchlight* in a November 1979 editorial. On another occasion, however, Singh was very supportive of the PRG. Bishop Sydney Charles informed the author of a meeting of the CCC which took place at Curaçao in November 1981 where one participant attempted to raise the issue of human rights in Grenada. The issue was subsequently suppressed.[43] In 1981 the CCC's Programme Secretary, Rev. Leslie Lett, had a meeting with Maurice Bishop at which he reportedly "disclosed to comrade Bishop that the progressive church in the region is under serious pressure in that there is a great chance of the reactionaries taking power in the upcoming elections for the CCC".[44] When a CCC delegation paid a visit to Holland in May 1984, a member of the delegation tried to shed some doubt on the authenticity of the Grenada Documents which had been captured after the October 1983 intervention. He suggested that these documents began to surface only after they had first been brought to the United States where they remained for some time.[45] Evidently the CCC leadership was embarrassed by the inconvenient facts presented by documents classified "top secret", which showed how the Bishop regime, which they had defended from the start, intended to crack down on religious freedom in

Grenada. The documents have not been contested by any of the experts who have studied them and only the Cubans had an interest in playing down their significance. The Cubans, in fact, had given a positive assessment of the CCC, which they considered "a restraining factor to the behaviour of the Catholic Church at the local and regional level". It was recognised, however, "that the CCC is not a homogenous body and the possibility of a reversal of its positions should not be under-estimated".[46]

While the Conference of Churches in Grenada (CCG) welcomed the October 1983 intervention, the CCC was the only regional organisation "to reaffirm its principled stance against military intervention in the Caribbean by forces external to the region".[47] The World Council of Churches joined the CCC "in deploring the military intervention" and referred to "this flagrant violation of international law".[48] Grenadan church leaders were upset by these statements. The President of the CCG, Hoskins Huggins, told the author:

> We in Grenada welcomed the intervention. The CCC and the WCC statements, however, embarrassed us very much. Of course, we let them know that we did not agree with them. They apologised but they held to their opinion. Before the invasion, the WCC was rather silent on the human rights situation in Grenada. But now they say the intervention was illegal, even though the people of Grenada welcomed it.[49]

Similarly, Bishop Sydney Charles complained that the CCC had spoken without consulting the people, who felt quite relieved when outside intervention took place.[50] On virtually all other occasions the WCC takes the voice of the local church into serious account. This time, however, the position of the local church leadership was not in line with political views prevalent among the wider ecumenical élite outside Grenada. For the progressive theologians the Grenada intervention meant a serious setback to a promising experiment linked to what was happening in Nicaragua.

The Grenada documents, however, provided ample evidence of how a pro-Marxist regime gradually sought to tighten its grip on the church. What is surprising is the fact that those who were later justified in feeling that a campaign of religious repression was in the pipeline were not taken seriously earlier when they expressed joy over what to them was real liberation from the development of Marxist-Leninist societal patterns.

[1]Information obtained by the author while in Grenada, March 1984. On "Leninism in Grenada", see the article written by Jiří and Virginia Valenta in *Problems of Communism*, July-August 1984, p. 1ff.

[2]Michael Ledeen and Herbert Romerstein (eds.), *Grenada Documents: An Overview and Selection*, Doc. 27-1, Department of State and Department of Defense, Washington, December 1984. Hereafter referred to as *Grenada Documents*.

[3] *Grenada Documents*, 5-5.
[4] *Ibid.*, 1-8.
[5] *Ibid.*, 1-33.
[6] Statement from the Conference of Churches in Grenada in: *The Torchlight* (St George's, Grenada), 25 March 1979.
[7] Statement to be read in all Catholic Churches throughout Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique on Sunday, 1 April 1979, p. 2 (St George's, mimeographed; text provided to the author by Bishop Sydney Charles).
[8] Author's interview with Bishop Sydney Charles, St George's, 1 April 1984.
[9] Jiři and Virginia Valenta, *op. cit.*, p. 7; *Grenada Documents*, 6-1.
[10] Author's interview with Archdeacon Hoskins Huggins, St George's, 30 March 1984.
[11] Author's interview with Bishop Sydney Charles.
[12] Maurice Bishop, *Selected Speeches*, 1979-1981, p. 77 (Casa de las Americas, Havana, no date).
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 90.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 90.
[15] Author's interview with Bishop Sydney Charles.
[16] *Ibid.* See also *Grenada Documents*, 52-1.
[17] *Grenada Documents*, 52-3.
[18] Author's interview with Archdeacon Hoskins Huggins.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Grenada Documents*, 2-8, 9.
[21] *Ibid.*, 2-3.
[22] *Ibid.*, 2-4, 5.
[23] *Ibid.*, 2-5.
[24] Ledeen/Romerstein, in: Introduction to *Grenada Documents*, p. 5.
[25] *Grenada Documents*, 9-2.
[26] Information provided to the author by Herbert Romerstein.
[27] *Grenada Documents*, 17-5, 7.
[28] *Ibid.*, 4-4.
[29] Information obtained by the author while in Grenada.
[30] *Grenada Documents*, 4-1.
[31] *Ibid.*, 4-3.
[32] *Ibid.*, 4-4.
[33] *Ibid.*, 4-5.
[34] *Ibid.*, 5-2.
[35] *Ibid.*, 5-4.
[36] *Ibid.*, 5-4, 5.
[37] These recommendations were added in Bishop's own handwriting.
[38] For example, former government minister George Louison, a close friend of Maurice Bishop's, voiced this opinion in an interview with the author (St George's, 2 April 1984).
[39] Information obtained by the author from Rastafarians in Tivoli, Grenada (April 1984).
[40] *The Torchlight*, 10 October 1979.
[41] Author's interview with Lloyd Wells, Tivoli, Grenada, 2 April 1984.
[42] Quoted in Catherine Sunshine, ed., *Grenada, The Peaceful Revolution*, p. 109 (EPICA Taskforce, Washington DC, 1982).
[43] Author's interview with Bishop Sydney Charles. Bishop Charles attended the Curaçao conference.
[44] *Grenada Documents*, 52-2.
[45] Author's notes at press conference of CCC delegation, Zeist, Holland, 7 May 1984.
[46] *Grenada Documents*, 2-5.
[47] Statement by the General Secretary of the CCC, 25 October 1983, in: *The Grenadian Invasion.* A CCC Perspective, p. 11 (Conference of Caribbean Churches, 1984).
[48] *Ecumenical Press Service*, item, 83.11.18.
[49] Author's interview with Archdeacon Hoskins Huggins.
[50] Author's interview with Bishop Sydney Charles.

TOP SECRET

MINISTRY OF INTERIOR,
BUTLER HOUSE,
ST GEORGE'S
12 JULY 1983

ANALYSIS OF THE CHURCH IN GRENADA*

(1) *A brief historical overview*

The real history of the Church in Grenada can be said to have begun with the coming of Columbus to the island and the subsequent attempts by the different religious sects to "christianise" the inhabitants.

With the changing of the balance of power by the constant squabbles between the Colonial powers and the subsequent changing of ownership of the island the religious institutions of those powers were extended to Grenada; first the English Anglican Church, then the Roman Catholic Church, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches.

All these Churches served the interests of the ruling classes and helped to strengthen the position of the Colonial Governments. While helping the ruling class, these Churches also played a key role in uniting different sections of our society. For example, the Anglican Church traditionally comprised the elite of Grenadian Society while the Roman Catholic Church drew its members from the poor and oppressed classes. This serves, today, to explain why the Roman Catholic Church is the most powerful in Grenada with approximately 70,000 baptised members.

Poor living conditions, poverty and despair during the era of Colonialism served to strengthen the position of the Church among the broad masses of our country because the Church is strongest where there exists poverty, illiteracy and an educational system designed to suit the interests of the Church, where religious knowledge was compulsory at schools controlled by the Church. (This) served to entrench further a deep idealism among our people which today is one of the main reasons for our people's deep and strong religious feelings.

To compound matters more a flood of new-fangled religious sects and denominations came to Grenada just after the Second World War. These are the Non-Traditional American types. This flood continues even to this day. Thus, the bases of the traditional religions have been somewhat eroded and the social composition of Grenadian society further subdivided into a multitude of various sects of different shades and creeds.

In conclusion, we can say that the Church, although at periods in its history (it) sometimes played a progressive role, even if in its own interest, is nothing but a fetter to our development.

(2) *The Church as a threat to the Revolution*

13 March 1979 forced all Churches in Grenada to take a new look at themselves and to analyse their role in a Revolutionary society. At first they played a wait-and-see game, but, when it became clear where the Revolution was going and what it stood for, they took up a clear position. It is safe, here, to say that there is no clear "left" religion in Grenada, but, since our Revolution enjoys popular support, then the broad mass of churchgoers are to varying extents supporters of the Grenada Revolution. This cannot be said about the Leaders of the Churches in Grenada and I contend that we have no support among them, all are to different degrees hostile to the Revolution. This is true even though some are less vocal than others. The following analysis of events taken at different periods up to the present time will suffice to here identify the Church as the main potential source of major internal counterrevolution.

> 1980-1981. The main line pushed for this period by the Traditional Churches was the question of the Detainees at Richmond Hill and the holding of elections. The Roman Catholic Church in particular used every forum to push this line. This Church organised retreats, seminars and conferences and at every one of these activities, hostile statements were hurled against the Grenada Revolution on so-called violation of Human rights. Every Sunday at one Church or another priests were heard to ask people to "pray for the detainees" whose rights have been denied.

*The English grammar of the original documents has been retained throughout. — *Ed.*

While the Traditional religions were on the human rights/election line, the non-traditional religions were on a different line. They were preaching the so-called "last days doctrine" and saying that "man has turned away from god", a subtle attack on our ideological positions. This line was particularly strong among the Baptists and the Open Bible churches.

1980-1981 period saw the Catholic Church making efforts to obtain priests versed in the knowledge of submitting our ideological positions (*sic*), and also saw the Roman Catholic Priests begin to print pamphlets on "civic and human rights" and "notes on Marxism". In reality (this was) anti-Marxism/Leninism.

> 1982. The first half of the year was relatively quiet as the Churches started to plan new strategy and tactics. In November 1982 the Roman Catholic Church emerged as the No. 1 antagonist of the Revolution.

The Bishop, Sydney Charles, began to push the line that the Church will face its biggest "challenge" in 1983. A new strategy was developed, that of re-organisation of all Catholic Youth under the direct control of the Bishop. Two new organisations were formed for this purpose: (a) the Diocesan Youth Commission and (b) the Diocesan Youth Council. The latter organisation whose chairman is appointed by the Bishop, replaces the Catholic Youth Congress (CYC), whom the Bishop saw as "too political".

On 10 December 1982, 4,365 copies of the Jerusalem Bible arrived in Grenada for the Catholic Church. A very simple bible, it is written in novel form so as to make it easier for the church masses to read. This indicates the Church's understanding of the ideological struggle. (There was) the call by A. Hughes for the church to voice its opinion on matters of human rights, and the statement that it is the main hope at this time. The Bishop speaks of the "challenge" to the Church in 1983 in his Christmas Message.

The situation took on a new turn when Methodist Minister Ledson refused to officiate at the burial of Comrade Demo Grant and had to be kicked out of Grenada. All the traditional Churches saw this as "persecution" and hardened their position against the PRG and Revolution.

In December of the same year, in his Christmas sermon, Archdeacon Huggins of the Anglican Church spoke of the need to safeguard the right to worship, and acted in a way that would make anyone feel that this right was about to be taken away.

> 1983. Upsurge in open-air crusades, house-to-house and tract-giving by the non-traditional religions. More house-to-house work done by Jehovah's Witnesses. There seemed to be a frenzied drive by these churches to win new members. This process is continuing now. There have also been a number of visits to Grenada by pastors and preachers from abroad to "beef up" the work in "evangelisation".

The Roman Catholic clergy, for the first time, has instituted a rescheduled list of meetings led by the Bishop for the year. Nine (9) in all. Three (3) have been held so far, all at different venues. The fourth meeting will take place on 12 July 1983 at the Grand Roy Presbytery. This activity indicates that the Clergy are becoming more and more organised under the leadership of the Bishop.

The organisation of the youth continues at an accelerated rate, with all ages included in this drive. The Bishop, at a meeting of all Catholic youth leaders in May, said that the enemy was organised and that it was necessary that the church organise also to combat the enemy. At an early meeting in April, the Bishop again spoke of a subtle form of destabilisation against the church. The Anglican Church has started to reorganise its Youth Groups after a lapse of three (3) years. This year was the first time the Anglican and Catholic Churches had a joint Corpus Christi Procession.

Based on these developments and the knowledge of the large percentage of Grenadians who have very deep trust in the church and also taking into account the weakness in all our mass organisations and, therefore, our influence over the masses, we see this development as a very dangerous one. We think that in the medium term, if serious measures are not taken, we can find ourselves faced with a Polish situation. In this light, we see the church in the immediate period as being the most dangerous sector for the development of internal counter-revolution.

Future trends

1) We foresee the continuation of the

organisation of all Youth by the Catholic and Anglican Churches.
2) We foresee stronger unity among all CCG [Conference of Churches in Grenada] churches.
3) We think that the unity among Catholic Clergy will grow steadily.
4) Infiltration of anti-Marxist/Leninists from outside.
5) The Bishop becoming bolder in his attacks against the Revolution.
6) The Catholic Church overall hardening its position against the Revolution.
7) More and more foreign Pastors and Preachers of non-traditional religions will want to come to Grenada to work and hold crusades.

Recommendations

a) Ensuring that Michael Roberts continues (in) a permanent and full-time way to be in charge of church work.
b) Obtaining a second person to work in this area in order to control all churches, their leadership, membership and their activities. The establishment of a register of associations including churches and all other organisations, e.g. Jacee, Unions, Association of Professionals etc. which will make it necessary when registering to give some basic fact about the Associations or churches, e.g. knowledge of special and regular activities, counting of members, different posts within the organisations, means of financing activities etc.
Continuing to develop cooperation in this area with the Cuban Comrades at the level of Party to Party.

1. Ensuring that CPE [Centre for Popular Education] get a majority of working people involved in its classes.
2. Build the Mass Organisations — Pioneers, NYO [National Youth Organisation], NWO [National Women's Organisation], PFU [Progessive Farmers' Union], Militia, to incorporate a majority of working people.
3. Organise the community work in the different areas more efficiently, start on time, and actively mobilise to bring out the masses to participate.
4. Removing from Primary Schools all deeply religious head teachers by whatever means most suitable, replacing them with more progessive elements. This should be done no later than the end of this month.
5. Introduce Political Education as that or Social studies in every classroom in the Primary and Secondary Schools from this September, use the most progressive teachers within the school system (chosen by teachers' committees) to teach these classes. Use Merle Hodge and Didicus to write up the materials for the courses.
6. Political Education for all teachers by this September.
7. Strengthen Science Education — theory and practical — in every school and in the community through CPE and Film shows.
8. Cut back on all religious programmes on RFG [Radio Free Grenada]. Substitute on Sunday morning voice as of the masses on the progress of the projects.
9. To promote contacts among Clergymen and members of Laity from Nicaragua and other Latin American countries linked to the theology of liberation and, in general, to the idea of a church committed to Revolutionary positions.
10. To implement the visits of Pastors from the Grenada Protestant Churches belonging to the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC), of which the Evangelical Churches of Cuba in a number [*sic*], to short annual course, in light that the comrades can solve the language question.
11. More dialogue with West Indian Priests, Nuns and Brothers in the Church and schools by the Leadership.
12. Opening of M-L [Marxist-Leninist] Bookshop in different parishes of the country.
13. Getting M-L literature into all schools by September.
14. Explore possibility of getting Father Martin and La Montague to visit Cuba.
15. Step up the systematic monitoring of all Religious manifestation in the state, and position being taken as regards the work permits of wayside Preachers entering the country to preach, and immigration position on these wayside preachers.

(Signed) MAJOR KEITH ROBERTS

Open Cinemas
Start progressive church (talk with Nicar + Cuba) [Notes added in handwriting — *Ed.*]