

PRESS STATEMENT PRESENTED BY DR. TREVOR MUNROE, GENERAL SECRETARY,  
WORKERS PARTY OF JAMAICA, TO PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE CURRENT  
SITUATION IN GRENADA. OCTOBER 20, 1983.

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I am deeply upset and grieved along with those who hold dear the Grenada Revolution that the crisis in the revolution reached the point yesterday when Comrade Maurice Bishop and several others who had been leaders of the revolution were shot and killed. I am deeply upset at Maurice's death because he was my personal friend and political associate in the progressive movement for over 13 years, during which we shared many experiences and ideas - experiences like in 1972 when he and I and other leaders of the young anti-imperialist movement in the region at that time, we met in St. Lucia to discuss how best we could contribute to strengthening the people's struggle against imperialism. Experiences, like in 1978 when I personally, on his and Bernard's request when they were in the parliamentary opposition, introduced them to our then Prime Minister, Michael Manley, so that they might bring him up to date on the atrocities of the reactionary Gairy government. Experiences like in 1982 when WPJ was the only Party who welcomed Maurice to Jamaica, he asked me to come down to Ocho Ocho Rios to discuss with him how to beat back the efforts of the Seaga government to get Bishop and Grenada out of CARICOM.

Myself and Maurice and the other leaders of the Grenada Revolution developed and shared together many ideas about how to bring about fundamental change in the Caribbean. The idea, for example, that every peaceful means had to be tried in order to bring about fundamental change to benefit the masses and only if the peaceful road was blocked and the masses of the people were in support would revolutionary force be appropriate. The idea of ensuring that our respective countries' economic development went ahead independently of imperialism and in close relationship

with world socialism. Most of all, Maurice and I and the other leaders of the Grenadian revolution shared the view that the development of our individual parties, the WPJ and the NJM, had to break with the Caribbean tradition of dependence on one man and had to be an example inside the party of the kind of real participation, the kind of effective majority rule which we were and are dedicated to build in the work centres, in the communities, in the educational institutions. Without practising within our parties the working class democracy we preached outside our parties, we were clear that this would not only mark us as hypocrites, but lead to our revolutionary parties becoming no different from the reactionary and reformist parties where the leader is bigger than the party and where the party therefore is not strengthening its members to lead the building of grass root democracy, in our countries.

I want to emphasise, based on 13 years of association, that up until the recent events, Cde Maurice Bishop accepted and applied the principles that no one man is bigger than the majority in the party leadership and in the party; accepted and applied the principle that the moment this happened, the moment that one man becomes bigger, the party would become unable to lead grass root democracy and grass root democracy would go backwards to capitalist democracy. Maurice, as much as anybody, recognized that the Grenada Revolution and its achievements were not the work of any one man, but of the NJM and of the People's Revolutionary Government.

On the invitation of the New Jewel Movement, our party, for its part, from before and after the revolution, has always tried to help the Grenadian party build up and strengthen the Grenadian trade unions, build up and strengthen mass organisations, the economy.

I and the Workers Party still stand on this principle, which is bigger than me, which is bigger than our party, which is bigger than any personal friendship, because without this principle, there can be no revolutionary process in the interest of the broad masses of the people.

As you would have noticed, neither myself nor the Workers Party have made any public statement up until now because up until now and continuing at the present time, there are conflicting reports and we believed and still believe that the Grenadian people, the Grenadian party and the Grenadian leaders, are the main ones to settle any problems in the Grenadian revolution.

However, we are making a statement now, and made one yesterday, because we believe that a dangerous climate is being built up which can lead to intervention of outside forces in the revolution which can lead to more bloodshed, and because we believe that the people must hear our views since they are hearing everybody else's.

The people must know that from the decision of the New Jewel Movement was taken in the last week of September that there should be joint leadership of their party. I personally made it known to Maurice, to Bernard and to other other leaders that I and the WPJ would be willing to assist in anyway requested by them, in the problems their Party was facing. In this regard I spoke separately to both Bernard Coard and Maurice Bishop on September the 23rd who urged that I take the next flight to Grenada. It was even agreed that because this would have meant overnighiting in Barbados, they would send Comrade Maurice's private plane for me on Sunday the 25th so as to be able to get into Grenada that same Sunday evening. However, this did not prove possible. I arrived in Grenada on Monday the 26th of September, and unfortunately, just as Maurice was leaving. I could only stay until Tuesday the 27th of September and therefore I could not speak with him personally. Again, later, on Sunday the 9th of October, I sent a personal note to Comrade Maurice stating that I was available to assist in any way that they requested in helping to solve the internal party crisis. Up until last night, I was in telephone contact with Cheddi Jagan - prior to any knowledge of the death of Comrade Bishop - discussing ways in which we might personally assist in bringing about a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

Moreover, in order to get the most up to date eye-witness account, I on behalf of our Party, urgently recalled our senior party representative in Grenada, who has been there on the invitation of the government of Grenada, to give a first-hand account of developments preceding yesterday's events.

We are now satisfied from this account that the Central Committee of the New Jewel Movement put forward every possible formula of compromise, including one in which Comrade Bishop would remain as Prime Minister, as Commander-in-Chief of the army, and retain all his ministries, whilst Comrade Coard would be made leader of the Party. We are now satisfied that some formula along those lines would have preserved the revolution and its principles at the same time as avoid bloodshed had some version of them been accepted prior to the forcible freeing of Comrade Maurice and the storming of Fort Rupert.

Concerning the killings themselves - there are two clear and contradictory accounts : The first account is that provided by the Commander of the army, General Austin, which said that up until the last moment, the army was instructed to fire over the heads of the people, that Comrade Maurice and the crowd broke into the armoury at Fort Rupert, distributed arms to their supporters, fired the first shots killing two soldiers, despite attempts at peaceful solution, and then at that point the soldiers stormed the barracks, Comrade Maurice was shot and killed. If this account is correct - and our party has some independent confirmation of its accuracy - then it is difficult to see what else the party leadership and the army could have done in the circumstances. If, on the other hand, the account of the widow of Bain is correct, that Comrade Maurice and others were executed, without trial, without a chance of being heard - then such an execution could not be condoned by our workers party. What is clear from eye-witness reports is that a pitched battle took place at Fort Rupert.

At this moment, however, the revolution and all the benefits that it has won for the people in terms of reducing unemployment, in terms of strengthening trade union rights, building up grass roots popular democracy - is in grave danger - first and foremost from outside intervention. The United States Government has said that there is no evidence of threat to its nationals and citizens in Grenada, but the US Government added that conditions could change rapidly.

We call on that administration to avoid any temptation of stirring up counterrevolution and further, confusion inside the country to justify intervention under the pretext of protecting its American nationals. The government of Seaga and of Adams which viciously hounded Bishop during his life and ruthlessly attacked the people's revolution, are now hypocritically shedding crocodile tears and are using Bishop's death for their own purposes - to attack the revolution, to forget the gains - which this revolution and any other genuine revolution, despite the inevitable difficulties - brings to the masses of the people.

Let us remember that the road of elections does not guarantee against bloodshed as we in Jamaica experienced in 1980 when 800 of our brothers and sisters were killed, in the same way that the road of revolution does not necessarily mean bloodshed as the Grenadian revolution and revolutions in other parts of the world have been proving up until now.

In the light of the current situation, the Workers Party of Jamaica calls on the Revolutionary Military Council to publish regionally and internationally as many eye-witness accounts of exactly what happened at Fort Rupert yesterday. Further, we call on all outside governments - particularly those of President Reagan, Prime Minister Seaga and Adams - to refrain from interfering in any shape or form in their internal affairs of Grenada. The Grenadian people have with great difficulty solved their problems in the past on their own and must be allowed to do so now and in the

For our part, the Workers Party of Jamaica supported the Grenadian revolution in the past, and shall continue to support it in the present and in the future, so long as this people's revolution continues policies and programmes to benefit the masses and so long as everything possible is done to avoid violence against innocent and ordinary Grenadian people.

We call on all conscious workers, farmers, youth and other small people not to allow yourself to be bowled over by the anti-  
and to  
communist and anti-revolutionary hysteria/which those who are not clear will fall victim. Most of all, whatever our views we must reject outside interference in Grenada's internal affairs.

Our Party will make further statements as more facts become clear and as the situation develops.

In the slogan of the Grenadian Revolution -----

FORWARD EVER !! BACKWARD NEVER !!

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