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Title of Thesis:

Hugh Romain- "Experiences of the Grenadian Revolution"

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There were many who made significant contributions to the completion of this project. As such, gratitude must be shown. First and foremost, I must acknowledge and say thanks you to the Almighty for the dedication and focus I was granted to complete this project. I must acknowledge the effort of my supervise Dr. Gelien Matthews in ensuring that this project was of the highest quality. Thank you for the words of advice and encouragement. I must acknowledge the patience, honesty and willingness of Mr. Hugh Romain. Although not the one for public recognition and speaking, you saw the need to document your experiences as a contribution to a deeper understanding of Grenadian history and the potential and power we have as a people. I must acknowledge the contributions of other interviewed persons. Your contributions were valuable.

ABSTRACT

In a broad view, this study is about the Grenadian revolution. What makes this study unique is the investigative framework that was used. The study is a biographical investigation into the involvement of Hugh Romain in the Grenadian revolution. The study traces the development of the Grenada Revolution through the experiences of the subject.

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INTRODUCTION

The Introduction locates the study within a broader academic discipline and clearly states the relevance of the study for Caribbean Studies.

The Main Objectives of the Research are to:

Explore the chronology of the Grenada Revolution from the rise of Gairy in 1951 to the March 13 Revolution, highlighting, through the lived experiences of Hugh Romain, the factors that catalyzed the March 13 uprising.

Parameters

The scope of the study is limited to Grenada between the period 1951 to 1979 although the influence of the Grenada Revolution extended beyond Grenada to regional and international actors. These territories were discussed whenever necessary. The main inquiry is directed towards the experiences of Hugh Romain. However, other personalities and their accounts of Romain's involvement will be captured throughout the dissertation.

Methodology

The data for this research was garnered through qualitative research. The researcher relied heavily on the use of primary sources such as interviews as well as secondary sources. Because of the geographical location of the study, the researcher was able to take full advantage of this research method, although there were some limitations. The researcher used a recording device during interviews and transcribed pertinent information subsequently. The researcher interviewed the following:

Hugh Romain (Subject of study)

Ewart Layne (Romain's friend and superior in the People's Revolutionary Army)

Cecile Cruikshank (Romain's aunt)

Derick Romain (Romain's brother)

Olive Romain (Romain's sister)

The researcher also made use of a myriad secondary sources such as books online articles and videos. There is an abundance of texts on the Grenada Revolution and the researcher made full use of these texts in order to corroborate claims or statements made by the interviewees. Ironically, some of the information obtained through the primary source could be validated using secondary sources.

Conceptual Framework

This research is primarily an inquiry through the lens of Hugh Romain from Grenada's colonial existence under the "Gairy Revolution" to the Grenada Revolution. The research exposes, through Romain's testimony, Gairy's political life and his transition from working class champion to dictator on the island of Grenada and journeys through to the seeds that germinated to form and inspired the Grenadian Revolution.

The main goal of this dissertation is to widen the growing body of biographical history on the period in history. This is unique and important in that it adds to the slowly growing number of documented personal accounts of the Grenadian Revolution.

Having occurred in 1979, the year 2020 marks the 41st anniversary of the revolution. Historically speaking, this is relatively recent and can be considered "fresh" history. It therefore means that many of the participants in the March 13, 1979 movement and thereafter are still alive. As such, a wealth of personal experience is available to tap and document. Because the history is so recent, and Grenada is still in the process of healing after the tragic events in 1983, many who were involved in or affected by the events during 1979 and 1983, are either reluctant to speak or comfortable with the existing narratives. However, the existing narratives are polarized between supporters of the revolution and opponents. Other narratives highlight the main figures associated with the revolution and its demise such as Bernard Coard and Maurice Bishop, neglecting the value of other personal stories. Other scholarly works may have looked at the policies of the revolution as opposed to the individuals who gave popular support to the

movement and making it a people's revolution. This dissertation in no way negates the validity of personal biographical compilations but simply advances the view that more can be and must be produced in order to preserve, appreciate and learn from the wide experiences of Grenada's revolutionary period.

In fact this was the main conceptual framework upon which the research was built. According to Haan and Renders, "biography is the study of life of an individual based on methods of historical scholarship." (Renders, 2, 2014). This is very similar to other frameworks such as life writing, ego-histoire and in stark contrast to other approaches of observation or scientific methodology and archival concepts.

The use of historical biography as a theoretical framework, though contended among the literature was used to underline and outpour the benefits of individual experiences and its contribution to the broader consensus of the events being examined. Though the research focuses on one individual, the realms of inquiry extend to other participants who were affected by the event as well as other forms of literature to avoid criticisms of subjectivity to which the literature points out to. A significant tool used to emphasize this was the application of corroboration in cases where the views and experiences of Romain was also validated by others. On the use of historical biography as historical approach, Robert Richard supports in "The Role of Biography in Intellectual History" that "The recesses of feeling, the darker, blinder strata of character are the only places in the world in which we catch real fact in the making, and directly perceive how events happen, and how work is actually done" (Richard, 2, 2017) and admits that the pitfalls of scientific inquiry is that it focuses on institutions rather than individuals.

Chapter outline

This research project consists of four chapters, all of which examine different aspects of Romain's life and his connection to the revolution.

Chapter one entitled Conceptual Framework provides a general overview of the research in a broader academic perspective and its relevance for Caribbean Studies.

Chapter one, entitled "Experiences of Gairyism", lays the basis for this dissertation by examining Romain's early years and family life with attention also being paid to the community he grew up in. Through Romain's experiences, the chapter explores Grenada's colonial and describes the life Romain experienced under a dictatorial Gairy regime. The chapter highlights moments in Romain's early life which he identifies as leaving an indelible mark on him and consequently shaping his political opinion at a young age. Romain's primary education is briefly examined along with aptitudes and disabilities which affected his childhood.

Chapter two is entitled "Journey to Revolution-is freedom we making", and it examines Romain's secondary school experience which he has identified as being crucial in igniting his interest in political activism. The researcher scrutinizes the influences on Romain such as the books he read, international and regional movements and the individuals with whom he associated. Romain's Marxist-Leninist ideology is another subject matter of this chapter. The chapter also facilitates a comparison of Romain's experience of the Gairy regime as a child, adolescent and man and traces Gairy's transition to dictatorship. Chapter two will discuss Romain's involvement in the early phases of the revolutionary process in order to appreciate how the revolution transitioned to an organized and popularly supported movement by 1979.

Chapter three, entitled “Revolution in Sight” focuses on the immediate build up and preparation for the morning of March 13.

Chapter four, entitled “Freedom Hill-the morning of March 13”, looks at Romain’s actual involvement in the events of March 13, 1979. This chapter narrows in on the role he played on the morning of March 13 and recounts his recollections of the morning in detail. In this chapter the researcher also discusses Romain’s recollection of the days directly after the revolution. The chapter finally concludes with Romain’s description of the events leading up to October 19 and 25 1983.

A general conclusion of the study is provided, overviewing how the main objectives were covered and major findings from the inquiry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The text “Reform and Revolution in Grenada 1951 to 1981” by David E. Lewis gives a general analysis of the revolution, tracing its development and highlighting the politics and policies of the revolutionary government between 1979 and 1981. Other texts such as “Forward ever- Journey to a New Grenada” by Bernard Coard and “We Move Tonight” by Joseph Ewart Layne, offer a biographical recollection of the Grenadian revolution. Layne’s publication on the subject enables the reader to compare the experiences of Hugh Romain and the other authors to better corroborate the narrative of the revolution. The researcher was able to appreciate that contrary to romanticism about the revolution, it was indeed a process subject to human error and inadequacies, and although it was a popular movement, this should not negate nor discredit the narratives of the minorities, some of whom are contemptuous of the revolution.

These experiences in turn shape the narrative of the contributors to the volume. In essence, although the authors strived for objectivity, and the flaws of the Revolution were openly admitted, the authors spared no effort in also praising the initiatives of the revolution. The text by Teddy Victor entitled “Deception on conception”, represents an entirely different narrative of the Grenadian revolution. Victor’s text is also a biographical historiography, and his narrative represents persons with general feelings of animosity and abhorrence to the Grenadian revolution.

David E. Lewis undertakes the task of examining the Grenadian Revolution in the text “Reform and Revolution in Grenada 1951 to 1981.” Lewis dedicates the first two chapters of his

book to Eric Gairy. Lewis first establishes the sociopolitical realities of Grenada as a Crown Colony of Britain. He establishes the fact that the island had inherited, an agrarian economy from slavery and a society manifesting racial and economic inequality. Lewis identifies Gairy's ability to organize the agricultural workers and take advantage of an existing conflict between them and the plantocracy. He explains how Gairy used his labour union as the launch pad for his political endeavours and to assert influence over the politics of the island. Lewis, on the other hand, spares no effort in also highlighting the ineptitudes of Gairy in the political arena and the abuse of power that most, if not all authors on the subject, identify as a main causal factor of the "Grenada Revolution". In the subsequent chapters, Lewis focuses on the development of the Anti-Gairy movement in 1970. He highlights specific factors responsible for the radical shift in political ideology of the youth—such as the Caribbean Black Power movement, the growing number of intellectuals in Grenada and the abuses of the Gairy regime. Lewis gives prominence to the existence of elements of agitation before the rise of the New Jewel Movement (NJM) after which he traces the development of the NJM and its transformation from an anti-Gairy pro-masses party to a party fully entrenched in socialist ideologies. He integrates the politics behind Grenada's independence under Gairy, events leading up to the historic 1976 election, within the process of organization by the NJM and other events such as the November 18 beating of the leadership of the NJM, all of which helped to propel the NJM to the forefront of the political arena, and prompted the consolidation of a wide cross-section of forces against what seemed to be a budding dictatorship with Gairy at the helm.

Lewis then delves into the post 1979 revolutionary period. He underscores the structure of the People's Revolutionary Government, explains the mixed economy that existed under their

governance, and describes the delicate balance that existed between the government that controlled the state apparatus but still depended on the private sector. Essentially, Lewis takes time to delineate the process the NJM employed to accomplish its vision of social transformation in Grenada while maintaining the intricate relationship with the business sector. Lewis makes careful assessment of the programs and policies of the PRG from 1979 to 1981. He highlights the PRG's management of state funds, its creation of backward and forward linkages, the stimulation of the agricultural sector and the strides to develop infrastructure, education and healthcare.

“Perspectives on the Grenadian Revolution- 1979- 1983” edited by Nicole Phillip-Dowe and John Angus Martin, is an assemblage of essays from contributors who were either participants, teenagers, young adults or even unborn during the 1979-1983 period. The book opens with a chapter by John Angus Martin that parallels the Grenadian Revolution with Fedon's Rebellion of 1795-1796. Martin accentuates two realities of both revolutions which contributed to their ultimate demise, namely foreign assistance and internal divisions.

Other contributors such as Joseph Layne deal with the legality of the revolution, examining whether the events of March 13, 1979 qualified as a revolution or a coup d' état. The range of the authors in this text was a great advantage to the study

Teddy Victor in his book “Deception on Conception” openly expresses his hostility to the revolution. Chapter 3 of the text “JEWEL's Birth and Programme” provides an account of the creation of JEWEL, a forerunner to the NJM, the political party that later organized and spearheaded the March 13 “Coup d' état” as Victor describes. This chapter establishes Victor's objection to the revolutionary process that authors like Coard and Layne praise. His objection is

founded on what he perceived as a deceptive take-over of JEWEL by Marxist elements and the derailing of a political movement. Victor's condemnation of the merger of parties centers on the diversion of the movement from "social projects" (Victor 2014, 29) to the "pursuit of policy based purely on greed for power." (Victor 2014, 29). Victor's text is clearly indicative of existing negative perceptions of the revolution and Victor simply vocalizes a consensus existing among a portion of the Grenadian society and others with opinions on the revolution, that the whole process was founded on falsehood, deception and repression.

"Forward Ever- Journey To a New Grenada" by Bernard Coard is another biographical recollection of the Grenadian Revolution. What made this text extremely relevant and useful to the present study is the fact that it is authored by one of the most influential figures in the Grenadian Revolution. Coard's detailed experiences offer invaluable insight into the revolutionary process. He takes time to explain the sociopolitical realities that were responsible for shaping the revolution and he delves into the policies and projects adopted by the PRG. Coard remains more or less objective in the book, giving justification for actions of the PRG and identifying fault with some courses of action. The book discusses the many internal and external difficulties faced by the revolution and what Coard believes to be the pitfalls of the process. The book is extremely detailed and is useful in corroborating the information given by Romain. Coard as an economist also breaks down the economic policies of the revolution and speaks extensively on the foreign policy of the revolution.

"Is Freedom we making-The New Democracy in Grenada" is an anthology that features the creative work of Grenadians at the time of the revolution. The text consists of three sections.

The first section consists of songs while the second contains a variety of poems on topics ranging from independence to women's rights. Section three also consists of poems. The text was specifically written for the literacy campaign that the PRG had undertaken within the first year of the Revolution. This text contributed to this project in a unique way because unlike most of the other texts analysed, this book contains work from a myriad of Grenadian writers. It offers a broader scope of not only the Grenadian revolution, but the Grenadian society at the time of the revolution. Some pieces are reminiscent of the colonial past and lead figures of the past, while other pieces seem to have been written for the sole purpose of advancing the revolutionary agenda, and shaping and reinforcing the revolutionary ideals. Some of the poems in the book also reflect the sentiments of the Grenadian people regarding the role of the United States in the revolution. It is evident that the PRG used artistic expression as a way of debunking US propaganda aimed at destabilization.

The review of literature reveals that there is no shortage of publication on the Grenadian Revolution but there is still room to research and document personal experiences within the national narrative.

CHAPTER ONE

Experiences of Gairyism

Hugh Romain was born on September 3, 1956 in the parish of St. George, Grenada. His father, Mr. Gordon Romain, was an Inspector of Police in the Royal Grenada Police Force, and his mother, Mrs. Leatha Romain Nee Cruichshank, was a nurse prior to her marriage to Mr. Romain. After marriage, she resigned as a nurse to become a housewife since it was customary at the time for women to leave their employment after marriage for the purpose of caring for the children and maintaining the household.



Fig. 1: Hugh Romain at the age of 1

The union produced ten children in total, three of whom died in childbirth and although ideally, Romain was the child before the last, he lived his entire life as the last child since Jude, the final baby boy, succumbed to pneumonia in his infancy.

Of the seven children that survived, four were girls and three were boys. Interestingly, the Romain seven comprised of two pairs of fraternal twins. There was Olive and Oliver (Zwadie) and Denise and Derick (Bilal). The other children were Shirley, Jean and Hugh.

Hugh Romain spent his childhood on the Carenage or as he affectionately calls it, ‘The Wharf’. In addition to his father being a detective in the echelons of the police force, he was a photographer who owned his own photo studio. His mother also earned an extra income by providing meals for relatives who lived out of but worked in the city. This meant that Hugh’s household was a typical middle-class Grenadian family. His family was not rich, but not poor either. He described his family as being “close knit”. He recalls that apart from just his immediate brothers and sisters, he had close relations with other family members. In fact, his father made it a duty to regularly visit family in Victoria, the capital of St. Mark. St. Mark and St. John were the two parishes where the Romain family lived.

Hugh Romain’s household was a musical household as he recalled. According to Romain (2019), it was one of the hallmarks of the Romain family, along with frequent trips to Bathway beach in the North of the island and camping trips at Quarantine point to the south. All in all, Hugh described his childhood as “fun-filled”.

At the age of five, he discovered that he had low vision and this resulted in him having to wear very thick glasses. Despite this disability, he states that he never let that impede his desire to participate in regular children's activities although he was never really good at sports such as football and cricket which require good vision. In fact, this disability led Hugh to channel his attention to music and through observation of his sisters, who were privileged to have piano lessons, he learned to play the instrument by ear.



Fig. 2: Romain performing as part of a youth band known as "The Uhuru foundation"

Ironically, Romain's poor vision would later determine his role in the revolutionary movement.

Growing up under Gairy

Hugh was born in the period after the 1951 worker's revolution led by Sir Eric Matthew Gairy. More than a century of "colonial dominance...economic exploitation, deprivation of political power and colonial oppression" (J. Layne, 151) had created the condition for social unrest. David E. Lewis in his book 'Reform and Revolution in Grenada, 1950 to 1981', states that "the basic problem facing Grenada was the incorporation of the down-trodden mass into the social, economic and political life of the country" (13). Eric Gairy, who was exposed to trade unionism while working in the oil industry in the Dutch Antilles, emerged as a lead figure in the fight for worker's rights in Grenada. In July 1950 he established the Grenada Manual and Mental Workers Union (GMMWU). Gairy's charisma quickly made him a hero of the masses and they rallied under his new leadership to successfully execute strikes and put pressure on the colonial powers to capitulate to worker's request for better working conditions.

By 1951 Grenada was a "powder keg" (Layne, 150). The conflict between the white elite plantocracy and the mass of black agricultural workers ran deeper than simply gaining better working conditions and better wages. The mass of agricultural workers now organized under Gairy's leadership sought to upset the colonial political order. The "revolution" that ensued in that year was "characterized by nightly reddening skies." or "Sky Red". Romain and many of his generation would grow up hearing about "Sky Red" and witness the "wide-ranging and impactful" (Layne, 152) social changes of this "revolution." Gairy's challenge of the plantocracy, quickly made him one of the island's prominent political figures. He had already managed to unionize the farmers under the Grenada Manual and Mental Worker's Union

(GMMWU) and championed “their cause for higher wages and better working conditions.” (Layne, 151). Now that Gairy was immensely popular and influential, he channeled support from the union to his political party, the Grenada United Labour Party (GULP).

Gairy dominated the islands politics from 1951 to 1976. He was a charismatic leader who had consolidated his power through the majority working class but his dictatorial tendencies and inefficiencies as a leader were evident years before he became the country’s Premier in 1967. In fact, in 1962, Gairy was removed from office by the British government subsequent to an inquiry that found him guilty of gross misuse of public funds. “Squandermania” as it was locally referred to, foreshadowed an independent Grenada under Gairy’s rule. By the time Gairy regained control of the Grenada’s political arena in 1967 as the Premier, Grenada was an associated state of Britain. This meant internal self-governance under Gairy, and according to Ewart Layne, Gairy and his allies quickly returned to “squandermania”, “dishing out monopoly and oligopoly rights to themselves, in key commodities. According to Romain, Squandermania and the disgrace that accompanied it, taught Gairy lessons that he did not intend on repeating when back in office. He states, “I was not around for Squandermania, I was very young. But I always heard my mother say how Gairy stole money and what not. He also fell into poverty after he was removed from power and it was a lot of middle class families that kept him afloat. When back in power Gairy had a serious axe to grind” (Romain, 2020). He began to entrench himself as an authoritarian pursuing “a policy of naked victimization” (Layne, 157) by personally hiring and firing supporters and opponents respectively. By the 1970’s, Gairy was a figure of contempt for Grenadians, particularly the youth, who did not share the affinity shown to Gairy by a portion of the older demographic. According to Layne, while “the agricultural workers...continued to

fervently support Gairy...the urban working class, many of whom were sons and daughters and grandchildren of agricultural workers, now opposed Gairy.” (Layne, 157). The signs of a potential Gairy dictatorship was glaringly evident and according to Romain, his first encounter with Gairyism and his budding dictatorial tendencies came in 1970. Romain recalls:

My first experience with Gairy's brutality was the 1970 Nurse's demonstration where nurses were trying to get better working conditions...a demonstration was mounted and the demonstrators essentially took over the Ministry of Health building...the police moved in to remove the demonstrators. They tear gassed the place and they used the fire truck to hose down people... one significant thing I remember also was one of the officers that worked with my father and knew us, roughed up my sister...it was the first experience I had where the state apparatus, once it was set into motion, pushed aside the whole idea of family and friends and orders were followed without question. My sister never forgot.

This experience reinforced the authority that Gairy had over the police force. Another incident that also stood out in the memory of Romain occurred in 1972. According to Romain, the Grenada National Party (a political party) held a meeting on the Carnage in the town of St. George because there was an election approaching. Romain narrated “you have to understand that GNP as a party was no NJM. It was no revolutionary party. It was a conservative middle class party. I remember in that meeting a shot went off and everybody scattered” (Romain, 2020). This, for Romain, was significant in the sense that it was a scare tactic used by the Gairy regime because the GNP was no military threat. This scenario was also personal for Romain because again Gairyism came close to his family. Romain recalls:

The morning after that I went to clean out my old man’s car. Remember he was a police. It was the first time I saw that amount of weaponry...in the back were 303 rifles and gas masks. it was the first time I realized how serious this thing was.

Years later Romain asked his father why he left the police force and his response was that “he was asked to perform duties that, in all his years of service, he was never asked to perform.” Romain’s father resigned from the police force in 1972 the day after he was asked to perform said duties. Romain speculates that “it was that incident he was asked to perform duties in.” He recalls that not long after his father’s resignation, Gairy purged the top ranks of the police force he commented: “one of them smelt the rat.” (Romain, 2019). That was Romain’s father. Gairy “destroyed the professional fabric of the police force and installed his own henchmen. Gairy was laying the basis for total rule.” (Romain, 2020).



Fig. 3: Hugh Romain’s father, Gordon Romain in Police uniform

CHAPTER TWO

Journey to Revolution “Is Freedom we Making”

Gairy’s regime was characterized by violence, which he used to protect his grip on power. In many ways this was the main fuel that ignited and inspired the populace, especially the youth, to act. It is in this context we examine the development of Hugh’s political conscience.

Seeds of Revolution

By 1970, Hugh was leaving the St. George’s Anglican Primary School and entering form 1 of the Grenada Boys Secondary School (GBSS). At the GBSS he would develop a political consciousness like many of his peers at the time. Romain noted however, that his anti-Gairy sentiments existed long before he entered secondary school. Growing up in a household that was Anti-Gairy, Hugh recalls attending political meetings with his mother. In fact, he credits his mother for developing in him an early interest in politics. Recollecting on his early years, Hugh recalls his mother being “very much anti Gairy...she had a brother who was a politician...he ran against Gairy in South East and she was always in the meetings. As a youth I would go to all the meetings with my mother.” (Romain, 2019).

At the GBSS, Hugh would become deeply involved in youth political movements and this would lay the basis for his involvement in the March 13-revolution. He notes that there were many influencing factors during this period that stimulated his interest in political activism.

These factors included the prominence of the Black Power Movement, the decolonization of the third world and the peak in anti-colonial sentiments, along with the increasing abuses of power by the Gairy regime.

Joseph Layne corroborates Romain's position when he declared in an interview that "the 1970s was a period of change throughout the world." (Layne, 2020). Many youth became deeply involved in the black power movement, and black consciousness sparked anti-colonial sentiments among them. Grenadian youths were heavily influenced by the Black power movement in the United States and even in neighbouring Trinidad and Tobago. The natural consequence of the pervasive black power ideology was the formation of the youth into replica organisations, espousing a similar ideology of black consciousness and self-awareness. The typical Grenadian youth of the seventies had an acute sense of self and was knowledgeable of the politics on the island. Romain joined his first black power organization in 1970. He recalls joining the Student's Revolutionary Movement (SRM), which was a youth arm of a black power movement known as the Cribo movement. The objective of the organization, according to Romain, was to "make students within the secondary school system aware of their blackness and aware of Africa." The idea was to connect progressive youth throughout the various secondary institutions on the island. There was a political response to these developments. According to Romain:

Gairy's response was to try to crush these youths whom they saw as trouble makers...he probably saw that that movement would've been a threat to his power in the future. He was actually right. But instead of harnessing or trying to work with youth, he started a reign of terror on youth so a number of students got beaten up. I think he was looking at Trinidad too

because the movement in Trinidad was much more advanced than in Grenada, and around that time the Black Power movement had a big demonstration in Trinidad and there was an attempt by members within the Trinidad defense force and military to grasp power from Eric Williams...This put Gairy on alert...I think Gairy actually said in one of his speeches, “when yuh neighbor house on fire, wet yours.

Romain’s deep resentment for injustice and the Gairy regime was cemented and he admits that one of the main aims and objectives of the SRM even at those early days, was the removal of Gairy. A collective decision was taken to dissolve the SRM in 1971 because it was deemed too radical. Romain describes the circumstances:

It wasn’t an organization led by NJM and we tried to recruit membership from the different schools...We used to meet in college and Bro [priest] tell us that we couldn’t meet there so we started meeting in the bottom of the church and a time Father Wong come and tell us we cant meet there and we almost got into a confrontation with him, but in those days you don’t really get into confrontation with a priest. There was a lot of radicalism. The final straw for the organization came when a sister who was a part of the organization alleged that Miss Presey, who was a white woman and the principal of the Anglican High School at the time, was not fair to her in some way. Well with Miss Presey being white, we took up the issue and went to the school to have a meeting with Miss Presey. We wanted to find out where her office was and one of the guys who went with us called to a teacher, “Yo, I want to talk to you.” The teacher took offence because he was in front of his class and Delves referred to him as “yo”. So a high talk ensued and there was nearly an altercation...Miss Presey then called for the police. In the final analysis, the incident scared a lot of people involved in the organization because a couple of us got suspended.

The SRM would not be the last organization in which Romain would be involved in. One of the greatest accomplishments of the movement according to Romain was the “liberation” of a

printing machine that would later play a critical role in producing publications to aid the struggle and reach the masses.

Post SRM

After the SRM was disbanded, Romain was influenced by his comrade Chester Humphrey to join a movement known as the National Socialist Youth Movement (NSYM), but was later changed to Grenada Socialist Youth Movement (GSYM) because the name NYSM resembled the name of Hitler's party in Nazi Germany. The organization was broader according to Romain and involved more people. Most notable, was the group's ideological alignment and as member of GSYM, Romain and his colleagues practiced the doctrine of Ujamaa. Ujamaa was a Tanzanian model of socialism which focused on brotherhood and family ties as crucial for advancing the aspirations of the society and state. Romain noted:

This was a Tanzanian model of zonal councils and village councils which in a sense was also the model that was adopted during the revolution. It, was the model of socialism we tried to educate ourselves around...we had a plot of land in Woodlands that we used to work and plant stuff as part of the objective of the organization to get rid of the stigma attached to agriculture...we used to plant a lot of stuff too and we used to use the proceeds to fund our organization.

There is a particular incident I remember. The bath room and toilet that is now located in Mt. Hartman, Grand Anse Valley, the story behind that...there was a time we went to live in the community for a week or so and part of that exercise, we engaged with people in the community and we identified that one of the things they needed was a bath. We told them we

were going to build the bath for them. It was a Gairyite area and word got back to Gairy... that was Gairy's constituency and he didn't take any chance. Gairy built the bath.

A Ride on the Banana Boat

Romain and his colleagues were committed to socialism. For Romain, the movement in Grenada had moved past the black power stage. He recounts an expedition made by himself and other NSYM members to the neighbouring island of St. Vincent, to attend a regional conference of progressive youth and black power enthusiasts. One of the main objectives of the meeting, as Romain remembers, was the forging of a regional link with the ambition of creating a regional Black Power movement. Among the delegates in attendance—were Trinidad and Tobago, St. Vincent and Barbados. The meeting was significant and successful in bringing progressive youths from various Caribbean territories together, and it represented the collective shift in consciousness of the youth in the 1960's and 1970's but Romain remembers the meeting as a failure. It ended prematurely with the Grenadian contingent leaving the conference. As Romain recalls, the contention was centered around The Trinidadian delegate who had refused to sit in the conference if the Grenadian delegate, whom he perceived to be white, was present. Romain admits that his colleague was what would be considered upper class, and according to colonial racial categories, he was also mulatto. For the Grenadian contingent, this was of no significance. In justification, Romain expressed the following sentiments,

we had evolved from a blacker power thing to a more socialist thing. That whole black power thing was not seen as the end all...Black power gives you the tools to appreciate yourself as a

black person, but the tools to solve the injustices and inequalities of society, black power cannot do that. So that's how we became socialist...So we pulled out of the meeting and came back home. As a matter of fact, I remember how we actually came back home. The banana boat was in port at the time, so we go and check dem fellas and we got a ride home.

OREL Means Business

Demonstrations and strike action throughout 1973 and 1974 helped to accelerate the revolutionary process in Grenada and for youths like Romain, the struggle was entering a new phase. As Romain puts it, "... there were a lot of activities we were involved in, not in any leadership role, but we were there. Like when the 73' crisis came, we were all demonstrating, we were all part of making little Molotov cocktails in our own individual capacities" (Romain, 2019).



Fig.4: The 1973 demonstration.

Romain remembers distinctly the massive student and youth involvement and the existence of other groups besides NSYM, particularly an organization known as Joint Organization of Youth (JOY) which was formed by the students of the Presentation Brother's College. Elements of the two organizations would merge to create a new organization known as Organization for Revolutionary Education and Liberation (OREL). Romain vividly recalls:

we were some youth who were very serious about socialism and we were invited to a study session in Barbados...we had a weekend session of topics by guys who were in university. Guys from Trinidad, guys from Barbados...After the 1973 crisis, that is where Bernard (Coard) came in and he had a session on the Grenada's revolution. He had a whole analysis of the Gairy period and analyzed the whole social conditions that led to Gairy's rise... in that session he gave a clear understanding of Gairy and what he was, what he achieved what the 1973 uprising achieved and why it did not achieve the final objective which was the taking of state power. One of the critical things was a vanguard organization that was equipped and disciplined and had links with the masses to lead any kind of uprising against Gairy...NJM at the time was loose and although they played a critical part in supporting the uprising, they were not leading it. Bernard's analysis was that they did not have a disciplined organization to do that. I remember also around that time people were going off to study...we took a decision to disband and elements from NSYM and JOY joined together to form an organization called OREL (Organization for Revolutionary Education and Liberation). That organization was very critical in actually helping the process.

This organization, according to Romain, was responsible for establishing the link on the ground that Coard said NJM lacked. Romain declares that he was very critical of the NJM stating that for him "they were a kind of armchair organization...of talkers" (Romain, 2019). OREL was more to the left of the NJM and the members were committed to radical action. Romain notes

that the members were younger too and had more time. The two organizations were separate entities but worked closely together. OREL was like a pressure group according to Romain, and they printed and distributed a paper known as “Spark” .

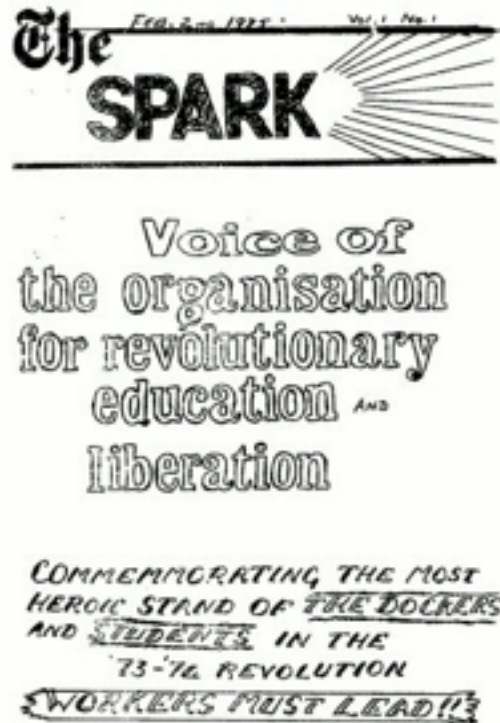


Fig. 5: Pamphlet from the “SPARK” publication.

This paper contained a lot of socialist material. OREL was the organization that did the work on the ground so by the time of the revolution, they “were well entrenched and known on the ground.” Romain notes that most of the youth leaders were OREL members, and they made a conscious effort to infiltrate the workers union. The organization, according to Romain, was small and disciplined and guided by the motto “better fewer, but better.”

CHAPTER THREE

Revolution in “Sight”

As expressed by Romain, “there would be no revolution without OREL”. OREL brought to the struggle, an increased organization and commitment to the removal of Gairy. After 1976, Romain and other OREL colleagues became members of the NJM. NJM established a military wing known as the National Liberation Army (NLA). This group existed primarily because for Romain and other members, “removing Gairy by force was always an option” (Romain, 2019). It was not the only option, however, and before the March 13^t revolution could manifest, the NJM made a decision to engage the option of removing Gairy through the electoral process. The year 1976, was an eventful year for Grenada. The NJM formed an alliance with the Grenada National Party (GNP) and the United People’s Party (UPP) to contest Gairy’s GULP in the elections of 1976. The alliance was dubbed “The People’s Alliance.” He remembers it clearly being a strategy developed and proposed by Bernard Coard:

Removing Gairy through the electoral process is an option that Bernard...put into view. Bernard is the one who came up with the People’s Alliance. It gave NJM a certain amount of legitimacy in the eyes of the people. It gave a national profile. Apart from that, when Bernard and the others won their seats that gave them legitimacy. They could go to another government as an opposition.

It should be noted that some members of the party did not favor the option of removing Gairy by elections. In fact, there were some members who argued that the military removal of Gairy was critical. They believed that Gairy had no intentions of relinquishing his power and that

force was the only way to assume power. Romain was not a supporter of the electoral option. He conceptualized it "... as part of the Westminster System and 'rum and roti' politics" (Romain, 2019). He explained, "My mindset was always for military action and the election process was something I had to be won over to" (Romain, 2019). The process, as he admits, "helped him to become more 'mello' and analytical" (Romain, 2019). After the alleged rigging of the 1976 election, it became clear that Gairy had no intention of leaving office despite the will of the people. According to Romain "After He (Gairy) lost the election in 1976, he started becoming a lot more repressive. He curtailed democratic rights and freedoms, he developed links with Pinochet, the dictator in Chile, and he used to travel with a lot of personal security...he had changed, which was an indication of where he was going" (Romain, 2020). On June 19 1977, Gairy made a blunder that confirmed to Romain and other members once and for all, that the military option was the only course of action they could take to remove Gairy. He recalls

The OAS had a meeting here and there was a big political meeting in the Market Square. That man (Gairy), even with the OAS here, sent Green Beast (his army), to mash up the meeting. In that time Garlic Strachan, one of the political organizers in my constituency got shot. I was in that meeting, and Kamau and I walked out of that meeting...we took our time. But that was an indication that Gairy was not going to have no fair elections, and he would repress us to the ground and cut we throat if he figured he was going to lose power. That was where Gairy was at. After that meeting, that is when the military option took on an even more serious slant."

By 1977 Romain was initiated into the National Liberation Army. He took the same oath that Joseph Layne vividly illustrates in his book "We Move Tonight: The Making of the Grenada Revolution". He was required to get down on his right knee, place his hand on a .38 Smith and

Wesson revolver and pledge the following: “As a member of the National Liberation Army, a fighter for the cause of the Grenadian working people, I pledge: that I will be ever faithful to the program and policies of the New Jewel Movement; that I will diligently carry out all tasks assigned to me; and that I will not flinch from any danger, nor spare life itself in the struggle to liberate the homeland from the clutches of dictatorship.” (Layne, 3). To seal his devotion to the cause, like all other recruits, Romain was required to pierce his thumb and sign with blood.

As a member of the NLA, Romain was responsible for security and intelligence gathering. As he states, “... in preparation for March 13th, there was certain information that had to be had” (Romain, 2020). Intelligence, according to Romain “was an area that was always appealing. Apart from the fact that I was committed...I also had impediments that would not have allowed me to be as effective in the field” Romain recalls that even before the NLA, as a member of SRM, he had a knack for intelligence and information gathering. When he was younger and a member of the SRM, he remembers that he and his colleagues dreamed up crazy ideas of storming the fort and overthrowing Gairy. Romain states that in retrospect these ideas were unrealistic, but as part of manifesting these plans, he remembers using his father’s photography equipment for reconnaissance missions.

I remember on a Sunday we would go around the area and take pictures of the fort. We would pretend to be taking pictures of one another but the actual focus of the camera was on the walls and infrastructure. We had access to the studio also so we could have taken pictures and develop them on our own...thinking back on it would have been madness to actually storm the fort, but that is where our minds were at (Romain, 2019).

Apart from his interest in intelligence, Romain's visual impairment also determined his role in the NLA. In fact, Joseph Layne, Romain's superior in the NLA, noted that this was more than likely one of the reasons why Romain was not selected as part of the 12-man contingent to receive military training abroad. Nonetheless, Layne notes that Romain's role was apt. "He was committed and selfless; deeply courageous and introverted. I think the eye thing may have been a problem, but his reliability was one of the main reasons why he was placed in the internal security" (Layne, 2020). Romain recalls that being a part of the 1976 electoral process gave him the opportunity to establish links throughout various communities. This proved to be helpful when he had to gather information in preparation for March 13. Romain states "What the 76 election did for us was that we developed links in the community. I was able to have a lot of friends who were involved in the struggle during the elections." (Romain, 2019). This made information gathering particularly easier for Romain. Romain was assigned observatory tasks. He remembers distinctly having to find out about the activities of the Green Beast. Green Beast was the term Grenadians use to refer to Gairy's police force. He was successful in retrieving this intelligence performing seemingly mundane and harmless acts to disguise his true intentions. He would "... go down to the base to torch crabs" (Romain, 2019), but obviously crabs were the least of his concern. Romain gives details of other information that had to be obtained by him.

I had to get information as to Gairy's own movement too. I knew how long it took for him to leave his residence and reach a particular place...the radio station was a main target also and I had to know the guard roster. I had to know what times they changed and so

on. I remember I would be behind the station early in the morning and in the evening monitoring their movements. I knew exactly what times they changed. I personally had a sketch of the radio station and how I obtained that sketch is interesting. I had a cousin, Janet, and she and her friend came from Trinidad. I needed to have an idea of the radio station; its layout and operation. I brought them there and I asked for a tour of the radio station. In giving us the tour, I sketched the station...That was one of the training we had; to memorizing an area and sketch it out and so on. I then handed the intel to the person responsible for that area. Of course, they took information from other sources and corroborated. I also knew the person in charge of starting up the station and where they lived. As soon as we moved on March 13, we knew exactly who we had to get in order to get the station functioning.

While Romain could not have been selected as part of the 12-man contingent that travelled overseas to receive military training, when they returned, they had to share their training with other members of the NLA. Romain recalls that he was an active participant in these training sessions. In fact, as part of his information responsibilities, he was tasked with organizing training session on Calivigny Island, a small island off the southern coast of Grenada. In preparation for the March 13, Romain and other members were tasked with creating the arm bands that became the symbol of the NLA (it would later be renamed the People's Revolutionary Army). The design was a simple white flag with a red circle in the center. Romain explained that, "Although some people say that it looked like the Japanese flag, at the time the reason was that in the night you could see the white and in the day, you could see the red" (Romain, 2020).



Fig. 6: Romain receiving security and intelligence training in the USSR

Although preparations were being made for the military action, various events would have to unfold before a firm decision by the leadership was made to move on the morning of March 13 1979. The next chapter details Romain's recollection of the March 13 morning.

CHAPTER FOUR

Freedom Hill: The morning of March 13th

March 13 1979 will forever be an important day in the history of Grenada, but as Romain remembers it, the revolution was not intended to happen on March 13. Romain recalls that on numerous occasions plans were devised to move on a specific day, and these plans were always abandoned. He mostly credits this indecisiveness to Bernard Coard. Coard, as Romain remembers was very methodological and cautious. For Romain and many other young comrades, the leadership's pussyfooting was almost unbearable. He notes that everything was in place for an effective overthrow; "...we could've made that decision to move anytime because we had the masses... people were ready to move, we were ready to move, so everything meshed" (Romain, 2019). Romain vividly remembers the catalyst for mobilization as being the discovery of a plot by Gairy to liquidate the leadership of the party. He recollects:

We had a meeting and a dockworker came in and said 'police looking for all yuh'. By that time I think Gairy had known about the M1 rifles that came in a barrel of grease; he left instructions to deal with the leadership of the party. From that time everybody dispersed and went underground...I mean we had contingency plans for that kind of thing. So we knew exactly where we were going. It is in that underground stage that they made that decision to move; that was the catalyst. (Romain, 2019)

NJM was a well-oiled political machine by March 1979 and mobilizing its military wing took little to no time. A reminiscent Romain remembers getting word on Tuesday March 12th. He recalls, "I remember coming from work and a comrade say 'aye Hugh! We moving! I went

home, changed my clothes...I remember leaving home. We assembled at freedom hill” (Romain, 2019)

There were about “forty-five members” (Martin, “The Grenada Revolution”) present for the attack on the morning March 13. However, based on a compiled by Strachan Phillip, one of the attackers on the morning, there were thirty-three men. The general feeling of the revolutionaries as they prepared to overthrow the government of Eric Gairy. “Anticipation was the feeling because it was something we had wanted to do for a long time. It was a mixture of anticipation and fear, because we did not know what would happen, but we moving still...It was time for Gairy to go” (Romain, 2019). He distinctly recalls being displeased with a particular task he was given on the morning of the assault. Orders were given for the guards to be “taken out quietly” (Romain, 2019). This, according to Romain, would have meant a “physical...a knife or something” (Romain, 2019). The events after the orders were given still remains vivid to Romain.

It was hard for me to use a weapon that way on somebody. It’s easier to use a rifle. We drafted the plan and knew where we were going...we knew the area , so as the van dropped us off we knew who going where... it just so happened that we didn’t carry out that part because by the time we land, everybody start to blaze and them police run. We took the armory, and some comrades fire bombed the barracks. A few minutes later we saw the fire brigade coming; we captured the truck and lined the occupants behind the truck.

It took the soldiers of the NLA approximately forty five minutes to successfully secure the camp.



Fig. 7: Burnt out remains of the Grenada Defence Force Headquarters at True Blue, St. George on the morning of 13 March 1979.

With the barracks secured and thoroughly searched, the soldiers began to advance in a slow march to the Radio station. They were given orders to reinforce a small unit that was dispatched to capture the radio station. Any on coming vehicles were captured. During the advancement, Romain witnessed one of the few casualties of the March 13 morning. As Romain reflected, he admits that it is a situation that could have been avoided. Romain recounts:

It was a guy by the name of Pysadee. Bogo was coming in in a Volkswagen bus...Bogo was a character from St. Paul's and them fellas didn't like Bogo at all. Bogo used to terrorize people in St. Paul's. he was a police officer that was oppressive...all I heard was "look Bogo!" and everybody turn in that direction and shoot. In that crossfire, Pysadee, one of the police taken prisoner, got shot.

Nevertheless Romain noted that it could have been anybody and that Pysadee's death was not intentional. It was merely the consequence of the unfolding events. The shot was not fatal as Romain recalls and under normal circumstances Pysadee would have lived. However, getting the medical attention that Pysadee needed was not the top priority of the soldiers at the time. Securing various critical posts and capturing any on coming police officers took precedence over the injured Pysadee. A remorseful Romain expressed that it was only on arrival at the radio station, his body was observed to be stiff and lifeless.

Pysadee's was the most memorable but not the only memory etched into Romain's memory. He reveals that another police officer received some harsh treatment after ignoring orders to surrender. The officer was a high ranking member of the force who worked alongside Romain's father. Romain notes that, quite a few of the soldiers had parents who were members of the police force. It was ironic that Gairy's police force was dismantled by the children of his police officers. Romain remembers the moment because for him it represented a change in the power dynamic. The struggle to liberate their nation from what they perceived to be a tyrant had reached a level where they were actively in control. Their focus was now to maintain their position.



Fig. 8: NJM supporters and NLA fighters gathered at Radio Free Grenada on the morning of 13 March 1979.

By 10:30 a.m. on the morning of March 13, Maurice Bishop's address to the nation beamed across the airways, informing Grenadians of the successful storming of the Green Beast Barracks and the overthrow of Eric Gairy's government. The revolution's leadership immediately made the consolidation of the revolution a top priority. NJM's deep entrenchment with the masses proved to be advantageous to the revolutionaries. As Romain remembers, their links within the masses were put on alert allowing for a quick mobilization of civilians and while the leadership of the revolution worked on legitimizing the revolutionary government, NLA soldiers and civilians worked in tandem for the first days of the revolution secure "specific police stations and other strategic locations" (Coard, 20). Civilians as well as soldiers were instrumental in manning erected road blocks and seeking out and detaining top Gairy henchmen.

To an extent, this proved to be a challenge to the NLA. According to Romain this meant that civilians who were not trained had to be armed. It was a challenge “giving quick instructions on the use of weapons” (Romain, 2020). The biggest struggle was having confidence in the civilians, as now more than ever the possibility of casualties existed. While recollecting, Romain recalls an incident where a civilian shot at a plane that later on was identified to have been carrying a well known member of the movement and some journalist. The Early days of the revolution required the soldiers to sacrifice sleep and Romain recalls him and his counterparts forgoing sleep one or two days consecutively.



Fig. 9: Grenadians rally in support of the new People's Revolutionary Government, March 1979.

Ensuring a smooth consolidation of power was critical for the survival of the revolution. The overwhelming support of the population made the process easier, along with the assistance from outside entities. Romain remembers that one of the first nations to recognize their revolutionary government was Guyana. Romain took part in offloading a shipment of guns sent from Guyana as a show of solidarity with the newly established government.

CONCLUSION

In conducting research and compiling the information, the researcher utilized a historical biographical framework. Although this method has been contended by scholars, other historians have identified the value that biographies add to history. The researcher selected this method particularly because of the insufficient amount of biographical data relating to the Grenadian revolution. Through the experiences of Hugh Romain, the researcher traced the development of the Grenadian revolution. It was identified that Romain's parents were influential in shaping his anti- Gairy sentiments. These sentiments were further cemented with his commencement of secondary school. It is largely at the Grenada Boys Secondary School, Romain would be heavily influenced by the black power movement igniting in him a zeal for political activism. The study underscores the many facts that have already been established about the revolution and its causes, such as the abuses of power carried out by the Gairy regime. Romain's colors these facts with his encounters with Gairy's authoritarianism. Another element of the revolutionary process that is highlighted through Romain's experiences is the overwhelming youth mobilization that was an integral factor in the revolutionary process. It is safe to claim that youth organization and involvement is a common thread in the fabric of narratives on the revolution. Romain's recollection like other recollections of the revolution make mention of key organizations that harnessed and channeled the will and energy of the youth. Through Romain's experience, the researcher was able to trace the evolution from multiple radical entities espousing the ideology of black power, to a cohesive disciplined and well organized entity that was instrumental in establishing the links with the masses that proved to be one of the revolution's greatest assets.

One major limitation of this project was convincing the subject to partake in the research. Additionally geographic limitation (travel between Trinidad and Grenada), meant that alternative interview methods had to be adopted including Skype calls and cellphone conversations.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

- The following questions were used to guide the interview. Some interviews did not follow the sequence of questions.
- Provide some background information about yourself. Give your name, date of birth, place of birth
- What was your family life like? (siblings, parents, parent's occupation).
- Who were your parents? Describe them.
- Tell me about your childhood. Where did you grow up? Did you stay in one place or move around a lot?
- Describe your early primary school life
- Tell me your fondest childhood experience.
- Describe your secondary school life for me.
- Describe your involvement in school activities?
- Did you have any specific aptitudes as a child?
- Can you remember any influential figure in your secondary school life?
- What did you enjoy doing as a teenager?
- Who were your peers as a youth?
- What sparked your interest in political activism?
- How would you describe living in Grenada as a youth under Gairy?
- Can you recollect any personal experiences that helped to make you disenchanted with the Gairy regime?

- What influences outside of Grenada shaped your thinking as a youth?
- List some of the books you read?
- List some figures you looked up to?
- By the time you joined the NJM describe your attitude toward the Gairy regime.
- Was there any one specific incident that drove you to political activism?
- Who were your political colleagues?
- Describe your role in the NJM preceding the March 13th capture of the True-Blue barracks.
- Tell me about your role in the military arm of the NJM.
- How did you get involved with the NJM and the military arm of the revolution?
- Were your family members and peers aware of your involvement in the movement?
- If yes, what were their reactions to your political activism?
- Tell me about your involvement in the planning and execution of the March 13 attack on the True Blue Barracks.
- Can you describe Grenada's atmosphere in the months leading up to the revolution?
- Can you describe in as much detail as possible the morning of march 13th.
- Were you exposed to any dangers?
- What were your reactions when you realized the NJM had secured victory?
- Describe the immediate days after the revolution.
- Describe the atmosphere of the country after March 13th.
- Describe your role in the movements after the march 13th revolution.

- Describe your experiences in the party and army after March 13th .

APPENDIX B

Interview questions- Ewart Layne.

- What were the major influences on youth around the period before and leading up to the revolution?
- Describe the organisations that existed before the revolution could be realised. what roles did these organisations play and how linked were they ?
- Can you describe your first encounter with Romain, and what were your impressions?
- What role did you both play in the revolutionary process.
- What were your recollections of the morning of March 13.
- What was Romain's role after the March 13 revolution?

Interview Questions- Family members

- What is your relation to Hugh Romain?
- Describe Hugh Romain as a child. What are your recollections?
- Were there any signs indicating Hugh's interest in politics?
- What was your reaction to Hugh's involvement in political activism?
- What were your reaction to the March 13 revolution
- Were you knowledgeable about Romain's involvement in revolutionary activities prior to the March 13 Revolution?
- Can you identify some of Hugh's influences?
- Describe your recollections of the Gairy regime.

- What were your thoughts about the March 13 revolution?

