

U.S. MARINES OUT OF GRENADA

President Reagan has ordered some 1900 paratroopers and Marines into Grenada, as part of a so-called peace force created by the Association of Eastern Caribbean nations.

What was a terrible internal tragedy in Grenada—the murder of Maurice Bishop, most of his cabinet and key supporters—has been compounded by U.S. intervention into a major international incident. It is an act of despicable racism, arrogance and cowardice, in view of the fact that Grenada has but 800 soldiers in its entire population with no military machinery. Reagan's recent rhetoric regarding "thugs" and civilized forces is belied by this action, and the U.S. is in fact conducting an international lynching in Grenada. U.S. nationals in Grenada were not in danger, Grenada had conducted no aggression against its neighbors, and tragic and sordid as the events of October 12 through 19 were, they were no base for invasion.

1000 U.S. paratroopers landed at the new Grenadian airport being constructed at Pt. Salinas, a potent symbol of the revolution. This action provoked a direct confrontation with the Soviet Union and Cuba, who had civilian workers and technicians there. With Marines in Lebanon, warships off Nicaragua, a CIA army in Honduras, spy flights over the U.S.S.R., and the deployment of Cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe, Reagan's foreign policy reveals itself as provocative militarism. The U.S. must withdraw troops immediately from Grenada, and permit that country to restore its political processes on its own terms.

Responsible forces in Grenada must conduct an impartial investigation into the events of October 12-19, with specific reference to the some 200 killings that occurred. The wanton killing of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop on October 19, was a profound loss. Besides Bishop, the following members of his cabinet and key supporters were killed: Foreign Minister Unison Whiteman, Education Minister Jacqueline Creft; Housing Minister Noris Bain, Trade Unionist Vincent Noel, and Fitzroy Bain, president of the Agricultural and General Workers union.

The Christian Science Monitor, October 21, 1983, quotes sources in Grenada and Barbados who say that Bishop, Whiteman, Creft and Bain were murdered inside Fort Rupert after surrender in the conflict of October 19. In addition, the following key figures are missing: Kenrick Radix, Minister of Fisheries and Industrialization; George Louison, Minister of Agriculture, Swelyn Stracan, Minister of National Mobilization and Don Rojas, Press Secretary to Maurice Bishop. We demand to know their whereabouts and their condition. All witnesses to these events must be protected. End the invasion of Grenada. Stop the bloodshed. Restore peace and freedom to Grenada.

Robert Chrisman, *Black Scholar* • Robert L. Allen, *Black Scholar* • Mark Allen, Foreign Editor, *People's World* • Patricia Scott, Community Organizer • Barbara Lee, National President, U.S.-Grenada Friendship Society • Angela Davis, Co-Chair, National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression • Margaret Burnham, National Conference of Black Lawyers • Johnnetta Cole, U.S.-Grenada Friendship Society • Gus Newport, Mayor of Berkeley

(Affiliations listed for identification purposes only.)

(For introduction to this issue on black women, see inside back cover.)

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GRENADA: The Events, The Future

by Michael Frank Wright

Referring to Grenada, the noted African-American singer and entertainer, Harry Belafonte, included a song entitled "Island In the Sun" in his repertoire performed—in support of the world's peace movement—during a recent European tour. Belafonte's vision and compassion for the world's voiceless and under-powered is certainly legendary, and as a Caribbean-born artist, no dedication could be more apropos nor subject as close to his heart—or ours—than the recent (and future) circumstance of this Caribbean people: his 'islanders in the sun.'

The wrenching experiences of October and the tragedies of November past will be impressed into the memory of these people, and into ours. Not since the brutal colonizations by the Spanish and British, during their respective epochs of power in the eastern Caribbean, has the hand of suppression been so callously laid on to eliminate a popular movement or revolutionary government. Indeed; the U.S.'s armed expeditionary force and its neo-colonial police squads will leave their mark on this island: if one is looking for the *modus operandi* of contemporary imperialist blitzkriegs, it is here. But more important still, and in the long-run most memorable, will be the examples, the possibilities, and the concrete achievements of the Grenadian revolution—that revolution in the sun which inspired such boundless enmity by the U.S. government.

Stripped totally of the Reagan administration's rhetorical trappings and post-hoc rationalizations, the invasion of this island—this tiny island—was by any measure shameless. It was marked not only by its manifest illegality, having been a violation of each of the three international treaties which bear on the subject, but it was noted at least as much by the preposterous cynicism exposed in the Reagan regime's attempts to explain it. For example, all Grenadian authorities assured the U.S. of the safety of its citizens and did everything within *their* power to evacuate U.S. and Canadian citizens. Objectively speaking, the U.S. citizens were placed in more danger by the assault of this expeditionary force than by its abstention.

Initially, of course, the 6,000 man invasion force sent in its wake waves of alarm throughout the world, in general, and throughout the Caribbean, in particular. The message was clear: where cheap military victories

are to be had against its assumed enemies (after all, Grenada's government was not *hostile* to the United States) neither moral suasion nor diplomatic disfavor will deter the Reagan administration from the hot pursuit of its objectives. That the U.S. is not interested in "non-alignment" in this region, nor "middle paths" or "mixed economies," is amply proved by its attitude in targetting Grenada as an enemy.

On these grounds, U.S. marines and airborne rangers disrupted and destroyed social and economic services, destroyed parts of the economic infrastructure (e.g., roads, bridges, communications links), and arrested and murdered nationals of that country—and their political officials. They, moreover, installed a neo-colonial government, deluged the people with massive amounts of counter-insurgent propaganda (completely taking over, for instance, their mass communications facilities), and, finally, used the newly constructed airport to bring in American businessmen and Overseas Private Investment Corporation (O.P.I.C.) officials destined to exploit, to speculate, and to invest in Grenada's economic resources and potential. No justification can issue which will sanction the U.S.'s unsolicited intrusion into the internal affairs of these people.

The setback in Grenada will not be shared solely among the still triumphant people who built, who identified with it, and who were martyred for it, but will also be experienced as a loss for the many of us who, as potential visitors, internationalists, intellectuals, and so on, had too brief an opportunity for witnessing its achievements.

Consider first Grenada's recent political history. Where else in the English speaking Caribbean had a despot been so loathed that he could be overthrown by a virtually bloodless revolution? Such was the case obtaining for the Grenadians and their New Jewel Movement on the eve of their seizure of power in 1978 from Sir Eric Gairy and the initiation of their revolution.

Where else among islanders similarly situated had a people, in such a short time, taken as significant strides in building a *people-serving* public sectors of the economy? Further, there is revolutionary Grenada's popular reforms in land distribution, cooperatives, agriculture, housing and fishing.

The National Alliance of Third World Journalists lists in the *Alliance Report* (Vol. 3, No. 4) issue of their Newsletter some of the salient accomplishments of their four-year experiment in the revolutionary governance:

- 1) Reduction and Stabilization of Prices of food and other Essential Commodities.
- 2) Creation of Agro-Industrial Sector and new jobs in education, health and tourism sectors.
- 3) High quality *FREE* medical care *FOR ALL*.
- 4) Elimination of School Fees (Traditional in Caribbean).
- 5) Massive Campaign to Wipe Out Illiteracy.

- 6) National Maternity Law Stipulates 2 months leave with pay for female workers.
- 7) Establishment of Day Care Centers throughout the Country.
- 8) People's Power participation in Mass Organizations of women, youth, workers, and in village and parish councils.
- 9) Increase in public school service for *ALL* citizens.
- 10) People's Militia and People's Revolutionary Army designed to protect country and actively assist in building community projects.
- 11) Legal equality of *ALL* Grenadians in pay and social status regardless of sex, race, or class background.
- 12) International support for African, Afro-American, American Indian and Puerto Rican Liberation movements.
- 13) *FREE* education for all, from Kindergarten through university and adult education.

The freedom created by the New Jewel Movement was a freedom borne of cultivating possibilities as well as acknowledging necessities.

One cannot overstate the difficulties of piecing together a valid and authentic account of the Grenadian revolution—particularly in respect of its recent crisis. Practical obstacles surround: many key participants or leaders are dead, exiled, or imprisoned, and in many cases valuable records are lost or not retrieveable. Logistical, diplomatic, and political problems obtain in assembling representative cross-sections and authentic spokespersons and analysts in any one place, at one time, and under one discipline sufficient to galvanize a coherent and dispassionate analysis. Those of us inquiring from the “outside” may, with much luck and tenacity, achieve a reasonably valid *post hoc* view of events and contradictions propelling the Grenadian revolution through its recent history, but such a view cannot, of course, claim authenticity. Without first-hand experience available to actual participants the others among us, lacking suitable frames of reference, may miss the significance (or over-rate it) of many “facts,” phenomena, or events. Yet we must try.

Moving to an area of future concern, special focus must be paid to the “legal” or “pseudo-legal” affairs of the newly installed neo-colonial entity under the direction of Sir Edward Spoon. Contrary to U.S. representations, and irrespective of its lack of popular appeal in the final critical days, governmental authority had not completely expired on the island prior to the invasion—even at the worst of times. Therefore, the unsolicited post-invasion government is devoid, at best, of the color of law. Its acts will be contested for legality and legitimacy in international forums throughout the foreseeable future because even governments close to the U.S. conceded early the illegitimacy of the invasion.

Accordingly, no effort should be spared to denounce the credentials of officials purporting to represent the Grenadian people. Similarly, of course, legal and political strategies must issue which will make the Reaganists accountable for their wrongdoing, and to simultaneously

dissuade U.S.-based firms (or rival Caribbean islands) from entering into exploitative economic relations with the island's inhabitants.

There also awaits a "pseudo-legal" crisis in the not-to-distant future. Having announced in the early days of its rule that New Jewel leaders and subversives would be put on trial for criminal wrong doing, the Spoon regime in Grenada has scheduled an event which it might come to regret. (Since all trajectories spawned by the Revolution and by the invasion will again converge at this point, the real question is who will the political show trial be a crisis for?). Many of Grenada's *bona fide* leaders, including Bernard Coard, Kendrik Radix, and others—having illegally been arrested by the U.S. in the first place—will have to defend themselves in trials that can only denigrate the revolution itself—regardless of their ideological stance with respect to it. (In the case of Kendrik Radix, his arrest carries a special irony because he was the Minister of Justice of Grenada and is the president of the International Association of Jurists.). This neo-colonial strategy is consistent with the tactics of the 82nd Airborne Division's "Special Warfare Units" (Psychological warfare) counter-insurgency pacification program which has deluged the island with pictures of Austin and Coard blindfolded and in chains.

If the neo-colonialists narrowly charge individuals with specific acts of criminal conduct (rather than with amorphous "conspiracies"), their aim will necessarily be the same. For them, anything other than discrediting of the revolution itself, and the further justifying of the intervention itself, there is no point to having "trials" of any kind.

Therefore, internationalists, intellectuals, and supporters of revolutionary Grenada will have to insure that no trials of any kind be staged since none of the judges have legal jurisdiction over the defendants. It should be remembered also that the *political* contradictions within Grenadian leadership were exacerbated by the intense isolation and interference from U.S. imperialism, and never allowed to work themselves out on their own terms. Moreover, in respect of the critical events of October, *agents provocateurs* may also have played roles. More subtle still, but no less relevant, is the fact that most living political leaders *share* the responsibility for Grenada's many revolutionary successes as well as for its tribulation.

Grenada's friends, therefore, will not rush to accept imperialist-based criminal characterizations of the events in Grenada. (Unless it can be proved that a party was personally involved in an act which was *already* illegal under Grenadian revolutionary law, and that neo-colonial detention of these prisoners was under the color of law, there is no basis on which to hold them. They should be freely released, accordingly.)

Also looming in the context of future events are two problematic issues for the friends of the Grenadian revolution and some of its participants. First, an adequate analysis of the consciousness of the Grenadian people must issue which explains the *apparent* popularity of the U.S. invasion—at least as reported here. (The "traumatization" of the island during October

1983 notwithstanding, it seems logical that the state of consciousness after the U.S. invasion has explanatory value for understanding the state of political and social consciousness before it.)

Second, once (and if) it becomes clear that "legal jurisdictional" arguments have failed and, indeed, political show trials become a *fait accompli*, will the friends of the Grenadian revolution set out to defend—and, if necessary, rehabilitate the images of—all of the political leaders now imprisoned who cannot be linked to acts of criminal wrongdoing? Or, on the other hand, will politically unpopular leaders' fates be left to the further machinations of the imperialists?

Not only are there serious political questions raised about the propriety of the U.S. armed intervention against a people and government which chose a different path of development than that approved in Washington, but there is also the concurrent dimension of racism to be analyzed in events of this nature.

The "white man's burden" or *mission civilisatrice* ideology has reared its hideous head again. Grenada is a black country and the effect of the invasion on the moral of black people everywhere is weighty. Is it the intention of the neo-colonial authorities to turn Grenada into a black island, based on a welfare state model and tourism similar to Puerto Rico, or worse yet, a Caribbean back-water based on sub-marginal economies and outright deprivation like Haiti or Dominica?

It is preferable indeed that we take up the challenge to illuminate the heroic achievements, and painful contradictions, of this—Belafonte's—"Island in the Sun."

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RESTORING THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GRENADA

by Dessima Williams

The former Ambassador of Grenada to the Organization of American States (OAS) under the government of Maurice Bishop, Dessima Williams, announced on June 19 in New York City the formation of The Grenada Foundation, Inc. which is dedicated to assisting and supporting Grenada's struggle for sovereignty and genuine independence.

The following is the text of the statement by Ms. Williams outlining the goals and objectives of the Foundation as well as conditions within Grenada since the U.S. invasion in October 1983:

Today, June 19, is Heroes Day on the Grenadian calendar. It is a day which was set aside by the People's Revolutionary Government of Grenada to honor the sterling contributions made to the society by a long line of our patriots from as early as 1917 right through the year 1980.

It is therefore fitting today that the Grenadian community and its friends rededicate ourselves in a spirit of patriotism to the burning priorities which confront our nation and people. Accordingly, we have constituted and now make public The Grenada Foundation, Inc.

The Foundation is based in New York City, and is dedicated to assisting and supporting Grenada's struggle for sovereignty and genuine independence, doing so in the rich cultural tradition and valiant history of men and women such as Julien Fedon, Tubal Uriah "Buzz" Butler, Maurice Bishop, T. Albert Marryshow, Jacqueline Creft, Unison Whiteman, Scotilda Noel, Edith McBain and others.

The key issue before our nation and

people is restoration of the sovereignty of Grenada. That Grenada's sovereignty has been violated by the U.S.-led invasion on October 25, 1983 is a stark reality. The world community, as represented by the United Nations declared in November 1983 that it "... deeply deplores the armed intervention in Grenada, which openly violated international law and the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of that state." (General Assembly Resolution 38/7)

Since the United States led invasion of October 25, loss of our sovereignty has meant:

- Indiscriminate bombing, and the loss of lives, homes, and property as a result of an unnecessary attempt at military conquest of our homeland;
- The outrageous planting of the United States flag on Grenada as a sign of that military conquest of our independent Caribbean nation;
- Mass arrests, detentions, abuse, processing and relocation of the Grenadian population;
- Mandatory searches and seizures,

and unwarranted registration of the population;

- The illegal seizure of countless state documents, national resources, cultural and military materials;

- The denial of the Grenadian people's right to manage their own national affairs; and

- The deliberate dismantling of the Grenadian administration, replacing it with non-Grenadian personnel who are part and parcel of the invading authorities.

In the height of the military assault, the United States government even went so far as to change the locks on and hold the keys of the Grenadian Embassy in Washington, D.C. and at the Diplomatic Mission in New York, effectively placing Grenadian diplomatic posts under their authority.

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SOCIAL PROGRAMS REVERSED

In addition, we have seen a continuous reversal of social programs and legislation which were instituted under the Bishop Government and which had advanced the social, economic and political rights of the Grenadian people.

Unemployment, drastically reduced under the Bishop Government is now on the rise again with hundreds of young people, women and heads of households out of work.

Trade union legislation is now threatened with reversals under the direct advice and management of the American Free Institute for Labor Development (AFILD).

The mixed economy model of economic development of the Bishop years is being replaced by the U.S.-A.I.D. proposed private sector development strategy.

There have been equally devastating reversals in the areas of women's rights, health care, education and basic freedoms.

A particularly striking illustration of the consequences of the U.S.-led invasion and occupation of Grenada is that of the airport at Point Salines. The airport was a civilian project designed as a major attempt to lift the country out of the cycle of underdevelopment and travel complications. Despite repeated assurances to the contrary, the Reagan Administration charged that the airport was a military installation. Now, in an ironic and disgusting turn of events, that same Administration has literally and symbolically turned the civilian facility into a major military installation, and continues to do so as they prepare for the landing of Air Force I at Point Salines in the next few months, according to newspaper reports.

This is a clear and bitter example of what we see as insult and contempt for our people's hard labor, for our national pride and dignity as the independent nation of Grenada is now placed under the control of the United States of America.

Contrary to isolated and less than honorable suggestions that the airport be named after the individual who bears the greatest responsibility for the denial of the sovereignty of our country, we feel very deeply that the airport can *only* be named — *must* be named after the one individual whose patriotism spearheaded the social and economic transformation of the nation: Maurice Bishop.

The Grenada Foundation is but one of the many responses to the illegal invasion and occupation of Grenada.

World opinion continues to mourn Grenada's losses and to demand that the resources, the government, the destiny of our land be returned to its rightful owners: the people of Grenada.

The Grenadian people themselves have undertaken their historic duty to find ways and means to recapture the expressions, symbols and realities of our sovereignty, and in so doing, to truly pay tribute to the contributions of generations of patriots, from Fedon (1790s) to Bishop (1900s). Indeed, the Maurice Bishop and Martyrs of October 19, 1983 Memorial Foundation is such an undertaking. Equally, Grenadians in Canada, in Sweden, in Great Britain, and in Cuba have organized themselves accordingly.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The U.S.-based Grenada Foundation will undertake educational and informational activities designed to contribute to a better understanding of the realities in Grenada today, and therefore to contribute to a rapid return of sovereignty and

self-determination to the people of Grenada. In this spirit, the Grenada Foundation calls for:

1. The immediate and complete withdrawal of all foreign military, paramilitary and police forces from Grenada, in keeping with U.N. Resolution 38/7 of November 1983.

2. The active participation of Grenadians in the U.S. in activities that will contribute to the restoration of our dignity, sovereignty, basic human rights and national patrimony.

3. Humanitarian relief for individuals and families tragically affected by the U.S. invasion. Concretely, there is a desperate need for food, medicines, and health care supplies for those rendered homeless, jobless and incapacitated by the U.S. war against Grenada.

4. The Grenada Foundation calls for centralizing materials on the Grenada Revolution, on the U.S. invasion as well as all other aspects of Grenadian history and life, so that those who seek to study and analyze those events can turn to this source.

OBJECTIVES OF THE GRENADA FOUNDATION

1. To serve as an informational and social action network for persons interested in Grenada, in Grenada organizations, and Grenada support groups.
2. To stimulate the public's interest in the history and culture of Grenada through the distribution of information and development of education programs, using speakers, films, briefings and news releases.
3. To raise funds to support Grenadian cultural and educational activities.
4. To provide assistance such as medicine, clothing, etc. to Grenadians who are displaced by man-made or natural disasters.
5. Additionally, the Foundation will support projects and activities sponsored by the Maurice Bishop Memorial Foundation in Grenada, which are consistent with the above objectives.

the principled position taken by the Cuban government. Similarly, we drew strength from the principled position of over 100 countries who upheld international law, Grenada's sovereignty, and rejected efforts to pressure them into compliance with the U.S. position.

To the families of those American people who lost loved ones in our beloved country, a country that wished them no harm, we extend our deepest sympathy. Your sons should never have died committing an injustice. To the people of the United States, Grenadian friendship stands unchanged and we invite you to continue along the road of mutual respect, friendship and solidarity as we work for the achievement of the sovereign will of our two peoples.

LINE OF MARCH

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THE BLACK SCHOLAR MAY/JUNE 1984

GRENADA: THE POETS RESPOND

The following is a collection of poetry from the United States and the Caribbean responding to the tragic events of Grenada. Our thanks to the many poets who have sent us their works on the Grenada invasion.

The Black Scholar

Maurice (In Memory of Maurice Bishop)

There was never any doubt about the incline you chose,
brambly with hope as the island-home you went back to,
but blocked in by house-treachery and a raised arm of eaglets.

In spite of the clang of the claws from the eyrie in the north,
murder by mongoose, and later, the blasted bodies under the bleachers,
the new jewel seemed firmly set in place to do all the good it could.

There's a happiness that the truth brings, and sometimes, a dead-loss;
both startle our islands, but if both aren't spliced and read wisely,
stagnation flourishes. You cleared the way for the chance of a choice

which was wrenched from us by lies, lawlessness and quick metal;
not what you meant by the truthful gift you gave us,
not what the wisdom of the dialectic intended. But dreadful loss, only.

And mangling capture. Things are broken up and elliptical, now.
Next to nothing is left of your stitching and cross-stitching and annealing,
while much rides roulette on nutmegs, tourist sand and bootprints.

Andrew Salkey

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The american deputy assistant secretary of defense
for Equal Opportunity
and safety
is a home girl.
Blindness slashes our tapestry to shreds.
The moss-green military tailoring sets off her color
beautifully
she says "when I stand up in uniform to speak
you can believe everyone takes notice!" Her mouth is dry
superimposed skull-like across her trim square shoulders
dioxin smear
the stench of napalm upon growing cabbage
the chug and thud of Corsairs in the foreground
advance like a blush across her cheeks
up the unpaved road outside Grenville, Grenada
where an M-16 bayonet gleams
slashing away the wooden latch
of a one-room slat house in Soubise
mopping up weapons search pockets of resistance
the young Black woman in a tattered headcloth
standing to one side on her left foot
is taking notice
one wrist behind her hip the other beneath her chin
watching
armed men in moss-green jumpsuits turn out her shack
watching the mashed up nutmeg trees
and fallen red cocoa-pods
the graceless broken stalks of almost ripe banana
her sister had been missing now 10 days
the baby's father buried without his legs
burned bones in piles along the road
between the shattered piping
"any Cubans around here, girl? Any guns?"
Behind her house singed tree-ferns curl
and jerk to mortar rhythms strumming up from shore
further uphill a tree explodes
showering the house with scraps of leaves
with the sweetish smell of unseen rotting flesh
a nutmeg tree takes 25 years to bloom
unless interrupted by storm or other violence.

RIDDLED WITH INSULT

I become inured to the idea
that October is the cruellest month.
Almost always riding the October air
are dangerous days of hypocrisy
raining eagles raw with hunger.

Night vigil
and omens dispel
for October to weep proud in this archipelago
when in the stealth of dawn
insects and mammals swarmed over the tiny
Spice Island.

Down through country to coast they came,
devouring the saltpetre and pineapple aroma,
crushing the nutmeg,
humbling the scented oregano,
disturbing the fish
and even frightening off bees that left the honeycomb
in search of sweet violet and jasmine.

Inebriated on violence
the invaders opened fire on the hills,
paths were lacerated
and calypso felt the impact of shell and mortar.

The overseas Mongoose
left its metallic trace in the night,
then began the hunt for the maroons.

Grenada, you were torn asunder:
shattered lay one of the finest Windward jewels
adorning the men and the women,
children and old who only yesterday
watched over the great Black Bishop.

But the head brother was no longer there.
He had been slain once and for all in discord,
his soul run through with insult.

For a while there was almost enough
water, enough rice, enough quinine for the children
now nothing is left in the house
the child tugs at her waistband
but she does not move quickly
she has heard how nervous these green men are
with their grenades and sweaty helmets
they offer cigarettes and chocolate but no bread
boxes of free batteries and herpes but no doctors
no free buses to St. George's market
no reading lessons in the brilliant afternoon
there are bodies strewn along Telescope Beach
that these soldiers say are foreigners
but she has seen the charred bits of familiar cloth
and she knows what to say to any invader
with an M-16 held ready while searching her cooking shed
overturning the empty pots with his apologetic grin
and she steps forward
the child pressing against her knees
"no guns, man, no guns. We glad you come. You carry water?"

The american deputy assistant secretary of defense
for equal opportunity and safety
a woman of color
pauses in her speech licking dry lips
"so you can see the department has a very good record
of equal opportunity for our women"
swims toward safety through a lake of her own blood.

Audre Lorde
April 1984

His presence lacking brought on tempests
and the sea of the past swept in on the crest of the storm;
squalls from the North drowned any possible hope,
for thus is October.

Why were you blinded?
What will become of you, Grenada?
Will you live sterile, with no consolation,
abducted in this age of corsairs with the rhetoric of freedom,
where betrayal, oh betrayal, sails its war steed?

And how can I go on without your smile,
without your poincianas perplexed at this new o'beism?
Let me, too, avenge this suffering,
that traders of sorrow do not escape lightly!

Pedro Pérez Sarduy
Havana, October 1983
Translated by Jean Stubbs

SIMPLE TRUTH

of a construction worker friend

By a river I was born,
in the midst of a tiny island
as tiny as a tiny feather
of the faithful *tomeguín*.

- Bright is its burning surface,
green its leaves at dawn,
and fish, darting like life,
above the algae.

By a river-shore I lived,
there I met my beloved,
there I stood to resist,
there I defended Grenada.

Nancy Morejon
Translated from Spanish by
Kathleen Weaver

WARRIOR'S BRIEF SONG

Grenadian, with your sword
your body ever learns
the hymn of grace.

Grenadian, your smile
unfurling in the dawn
waits knowing death.

Grenadian, I await you
in wakeful dream
and on the mountain.

My rifle will be your moon
and your ornate crown
the constant hope
of that child in your womb.

Nancy Morejon
Translated from Spanish by
Kathleen Weaver

OCTOBER, 1983

for Maurice Bishop

One day, the Cowboys kneel down
in Congress. They pray for peace.

They grease their guns with butter.
They send Marines to Beirut.

The next day, they march in sheets
around the Lincoln Memorial.

They declare a holiday
for Martin Luther King.

Who knows the words to this song?
Nothing makes sense anymore.

The President plays golf
where all signs read "WHITE ONLY."

Shell-shocked Marines in Beirut
dream of small white balls.

eyeballs. Bouncing down the streets.
Skulls rain down from cloudless skies.

Nothing makes sense, Maurice.
No one is smiling.

Cowboys gather in a circle
wailing "We Shall Overcome."

Marines storm their beaches of Grenada.
Machine-gun each other. Bomb hospitals.

Young men sprawl shattered, red, white,
and blue, from sea to shining sea.

O say can you see this nightmare?
Nothing makes sense anymore.

II

Evangelist Cowboys warn:
"Beware of colored men who dream with open eyes.
If they offend us, we will pluck them out."

Who recalls the delusions of dead men?
Who can fathom the slaveholder's dream of democracy?
What was Thomas Jefferson to Martin Luther King?

We Negroes always dream, even as democracy mocks us.
Our only power is to dream, so we dream freely.
We dream of liberty, equality, brother-and-sisterhood.

Was freedom your dream in Grenada?
You may make freedom in your sleep,
but while the sun shines, you must make nutmeg.

Democracy is a ranch where Cowboy drives his herds.
Freedom is our tenement of cards
with just our windy words to hold it up.

Our dreams are like a garden spider's web, newly
jeweled with dew, spun across
a pathway where many cattle pass.

III

With each breeze leaves whirlgig
from trees and sprawl like shotgunned
birds in heaps on the limp grass.

The furious red and gold
collages of fall crumble
into brown fragments, brittle

organic litter. We rake
the fallen up, then dump them
in open pits for compost.

Even the birds are quiet.
On the stump of a hundred
year old elm a squirrel gnaws

an apple from a neighbor's
neglected tree. His tail forms
a question mark for the clouds.

We feel winter coming on.
Why do we believe our lives
run cyclic like the seasons?

Must this winter thaw in spring?
Must these trees grow new leaves?
Must the sun, once set, rise again

We presume to live but know
nothing. We plant out gardens,
and we hope to reap some crop.

Our dreams blaze like ancient trees.
Our smoke curls like squirrels' tails.
Our cinders darken this soil.

The sweet smoke of burning wood
punctuates this crisp air, stings
my eyes till they salt and twinge.

Maurice, these clouds seem so full.
The smoke gropes like tentacles.
Only our nightmares seem real.

D. L. Crockett-Smith

DE BOYS

De youths invite me
fi snap dem pictures
dem eyes clear as de blue
wata through which a see
me toes wigglin in de sea

poverty marks dem:
leathery soles,
bruised knees,
firm limbs

four boys idle by de
run-down changin room
once reserved
fah tourists—
dat was before
de jewel movement
took de people's land
an returned it to dem
endin dem exile within/
once only servers of someone's
dream vacation

maurice's revolution has come,
but not fah dese boys
strewn on de beach
like de almond leaves

de complexities:
socialism is vague
offer dem money, work
any mercenary has a chance

dem eager to please,
to be acknowledge
dese youths
waitin fah something,
anything to happen!

Opal Palmer
St. George's, Grenada, June, 1983