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Drawings by Nicholas Garland, Michael Heath and David Austin

Fantastic invasion

The American invasion of Grenada reveals the irrelevance of international law, and the dangers inherent in a foreign policy conducted in terms of the defence of liberty and democracy. Although Grenada is, in every legal sense, a nation, it patently cannot be independent in practice. It is extremely small and vulnerable, and therefore a natural colony. When it ceased to be a (British) colony by name, it became, if anything, less free, up for stronger neighbours to grab. Since the revolution of Mr Maurice Bishop in 1979, the island has been grabbed by Cuba and the Soviet Union. When Mr Bishop was murdered last week, these allied powers got in a muddle, Russia supporting the new regime, Cuba praising Mr Bishop. We will never know what they might have worked out for their colony, because it now belongs to America. Since one power or another is bound to control the island, it is probably better for the West that America, not Cuba, is now in charge. But the idea that this is a case which should unite lovers of freedom against communism is just cant. America feels weak in its own sphere of influence, and wants to feel strong. It is too early to say whether the Cuban presence in Grenada justified American intervention in terms of practical self-interest. In the meantime, one might wonder whether the United States would have been so keen to act if it had not been stung so recently by its impotence and vulnerability in Lebanon.

The invasion is particularly embarrassing for Mrs Thatcher and the British Government for many reasons. During the Falklands war, Mrs Thatcher very unwisely chose to generalise her justification for recapturing the islands as a vindication of the principle that aggression should not pay, whereas the sensible argument was simply that Britain would not allow British land and people to be taken over by a foreign power. Now the United States has been thoroughly aggressive, and of course there is nothing that Mrs Thatcher can do and very little that she can say about it. It serves her right for always being highfalutin about the cause of liberty, instead of practical about the defence of Britain.

Then there is the truth, illustrated by the invasion, that the United States is quite ready to disregard and embarrass its most loyal European ally and not worry very much. It is natural to ask, in the light of this, whether the Government is right to be so confident that the American interest in Cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe is identical with our own. Now that the Prime Minister has permitted herself almost her first ever squeak of criticism of President Reagan's actions, might she not take the opportunity to distance herself a little fur-

ther, seizing an excuse for taking our troops out of Lebanon in a huff, and asking for dual key control of Cruise? By expressing personal reservations, and yet not permitting Sir Geoffrey Howe to give a view after his statement to the House of Commons on Tuesday, she followed her classic method of managing to disassociate herself from the actions of her own government. It might be better to co-ordinate a policy and be severe with America for a bit, confident that such severity will not weaken the alliance or land Britain with responsibility for Grenada.

Yet another embarrassment is the fact that Grenada is a Commonwealth country whose head of state is the Queen. Since the revolutionary government overthrown by the American invasion showed scant respect for the Queen's representative, and would obviously have not allowed anything ordered by him to stand in its way, it is quite easy to show that it would be ridiculous to defend the position of that government as if it were a Caribbean Falkland Islands Council, but it is interesting that the United States seems to have had only the haziest idea about the status of a Commonwealth country. It appears to have concluded, surely rightly, that in a place like Grenada, that status means nothing at all. The idea of the Commonwealth is presumably that former colonies should co-operate in anglophile and freedom-loving friendship. It is a formal bond which, whenever tested, fails, whereas the link between France and many of her former colonies, which boasts no such principles is often very strong and important. The only real Commonwealth is the white Commonwealth, and that is because it is tied by blood relation and strong sentiment. Links like that with Grenada do nothing but cause painful situations like that which has just arisen, and so should be broken.

Full-time critics of America will take this invasion as proof that Mr Reagan is always longing to start a war wherever he can, and therefore further evidence that he threatens world peace. That is untrue. It is obvious that the Americans invaded Grenada precisely because they believed that they could do so without disturbing world peace. But what is worrying is the idea of the present American administration that every country in the world, no matter how piffling, is caught up in the fight against communism, and that all the world's Grenadas are therefore central to the continuation of freedom. If America cannot sleep easily until she is sure that Grenada flies the Stars and Stripes, it shows that her condition is neurotic, which is an unhappy, though perhaps not surprising, condition for the greatest power on earth to be in.

the Lebanese authorities now get up to there. The Italian way of peacekeeping, complete with a field paediatrics unit and mobile health units touring the camps, is summed up in the attitudes of Captain Corrado Cantatore who acts as press officer for the unit. On the day we filmed with him, he seemed to spend most of his time holding hands with Palestinian children and then in his interview actually referred to 'human rights'. It was not a phrase we heard from any other officer of the MNF.

Even in better times the atmosphere at the American and French contingents was very different. There is, there has to be, a whiff of Empire about the French presence in Lebanon. They have established themselves among the pine trees of West Beirut, precisely the spot chosen for a camp in 1860 when they were coming to the assistance of the beleaguered Christians. Their headquarters, the palatial *Résidence des Pins*, is where Greater Lebanon, or modern Lebanon, was declared in 1920 in the face of opposition by the same Arab interests who oppose them today. The French paratroopers who died last Sunday had been in the country only three weeks. When their disembarkation was complete, they presented their colours to the French Ambassador in a splendidly colonial ceremony. I wondered then what some Lebanese felt when they heard three renditions of the *Marseillaise* with ten minutes.

The last time United States Marines landed on the beaches of Beirut was in 1958 when they came to shore up the French-inspired constitutional structure that fell apart in the 1975-76 civil war. In 1958 they were offered Coca-Cola as they came ashore. This time they are in a real war and living in sandbagged bunkers down the side of Beirut airport's runways. Around one set of bunkers the Marines have set up a display of shell casings and shrapnel fired at them over the weeks, and by its side a blackboard with the caption 'Stray Rounds?' There is now no doubting the answer.

Much is being made of the defensive

posture the Americans have been obliged to adopt, and it is true that the Marines are trained, as their commander Colonel Tim Geraghty puts it, to 'go get' people who are firing at them. But there is another reality as you travel up into Druze territory in the hills above Beirut. For hours up and around those winding roads you remain within range of, and doubtless in the sights of, American warships that have opened fire already in support of the new Lebanese army and may well do so again.

It is that Lebanese army, in process of resurrection by the Americans, that will be the key to diplomatic and military moves over the next few weeks. In training camps

north of Beirut, US Special Forces — John Wayne's 'Green Berets' — are supervising a training programme that will deliver another 24 fresh battalions within the next 12 months. If it works, the Lebanese may soon be able to do their own 'peacekeeping'. The prize for shaking the resolve of America and her allies in this endeavour is therefore large. In the establishment of a proper and incidentally pro-Western neutral authority lies one of Lebanon's very few remaining hopes.

Peter Gill is a reporter with Thames Television's 'TV Eye' programme.

Black comedy in Grenada

Max Hastings

I suppose that we should long ago have grown out of being surprised by the spectacle of black mischief, or at least black farce, on Caribbean islands from which Britain has lately removed herself. A friend was a naval staff officer during Lord Wilson's great invasion of Anguilla, and insists on oath that when flashes were seen ashore as the landing force went in an urgent signal was dispatched to Whitehall reporting heavy opposition on the beach. It was only daylight which revealed that the special effects were produced by the massed bulbs of the Fleet Street camera corps.

The past week's goings-on in Grenada have been more tragic. Yet they are only the logical conclusion of the process that began almost a decade ago, when Britain relinquished responsibility for Grenada into the hands of one of the Caribbean's more prominent loonies, the unlamented Eric Gairy, the poor man's Papa Doc.

Fleet Street editors are reluctant to dispatch reporters to sun-kissed islands for anything less significant than the capture of Mr Ronald Biggs or a bigamous country parson. But on the eve of Grenadan independence in February 1974, the local correspondent of the *Guardian*, Greg Chamberlain, almost single-handedly succeeded in convincing the British media that something odd was going on in the Caribbean. A 20-strong contingent of by no means reluctant hacks sailed from Gatwick within the day, and reached Grenada after transferring to a chartered light aircraft in Barbados.

A first glimpse of the island looked promising: acres of bananas and greenery; a steel band of dazzling virtuosity performing under the palm trees; a large hotel on the beach entirely at the disposal of the press — the general effect only slightly marred by the absence of electricity and cooked food since the strikes and riots had started a fortnight earlier.

At a reception that evening, we met the Prime Minister: 51 years old, short and

stubby, with a thin moustache and the alert, wary look of an Islington Labour Party member who has just been told that the whole thing must be put to a secret ballot. Whatever he was not, Gairy was readily approachable. He peddled an abrupt, defiant joviality. He explained that he received 'guidance' from 'cosmic vibrations'. Was it true, we asked, as widely believed in town, that he could cast spells upon those who displeased him? He smiled modestly. Among Gairy's trumpeted distinctions, he boasted an Honorary Doctorate of Political Science from the National Ecclesiastical University of England (sic) and the Accolade of Knight Grand Cross of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem (bestowed by a charity in New York City). His record of corruption and misappropriation of public funds stretched back over a decade.

The assembled British press corps, with the sole exception of Greg Chamberlain, knew nothing about Caribbean politics. But we were sincerely appalled by the fact that Britain was on the verge of handing over control of this pathetic little island to an obvious lunatic whose 'mongoooses' were a not entirely inadequate local version of the tonton macoute. On board the naval frigate anchored in the bay for the independence celebrations, we expressed our views to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office team headed by Peter Blaker.

The diplomatic view was that of the FCO at its most insufferably Widmerpudlian. First, they said, Grenada already had internal self-government, so there was nothing that they could do to stop Grenadians persecuting each other if they saw fit. Second, Mr Gairy might not be nearly as bad as we supposed. Third and most important, in 48 hours we were due to shed all responsibility for the whole business, so could we not keep our tempers and our silence until the frigate could up anchor and escape the benighted island for ever?

Yet even if political necessities and realities demanded that Grenada should be



YEARS **10** OLD

PURE MALT
SCOTCH WHISKY

IT'S
BIG ON
FLAVOUR

abandoned to its fate, it was a wretched business to sit through the days that followed, watching British officials solemnly acquiesce in this local farce. On a long, sticky Caribbean afternoon at the cricket ground, Mr Blaker presided alongside Gairy with a large crowd watching an Independence pageant tracing Grenada's history that might have been scripted by Peter Ustinov. The most prominent scene showed Gairy himself, portrayed by a heroic gentleman in a white suit, as a labour agitator in the 1950s, leading strikes and suffering near-martyrdom in the cause of freedom. The steel bands hammered energetically. Mr Blaker beamed indulgently.

The assembled hacks were suddenly tipped off that we might be better employed elsewhere. Gairy was using the island's preoccupation with the pageant as cover to send his mongooses to round up the opposition. We drove to the hilltop house of Maurice Bishop, the young Marxist leader of the New Jewel Movement, just too late to see him whisked away. Bishop's father had been killed by police gunfire in a demonstration a few weeks earlier. His wife, a pale, pretty girl in her early twenties, told us now that she was frightened for his life. She seemed to have a point. At that moment we saw a large fire start to blaze merrily across the harbour. The house of Michael Silverman, the New Jewel Movement's lawyer, had been put to the torch by Gairy's henchmen. It burned on all night, above the independence celebrations.

It seemed a remarkable act of *chutzpah* even by Gairy's standards to act so ruthlessly against his opponents without waiting another 24 hours until the British were clear of the island. But he had never looked bouncier than he did that night. 'All perfectly legal, as you can see, gentlemen', he declared serenely to us as he arrived at the evening reception. 'My men were acting upon information received.' I forget whether Mr Blaker then danced with the Prime Minister or with his wife, but it was certainly one or the other.

Shortly before midnight, we assembled on the battlements of Fort Rupert, overlooking the harbour, for the lowering of the Union Jack. On the roof before us stood an escort of British bluejackets and the inevitable Blaker. Under our feet, quite literally, sat the opposition; safely locked in their cells following the afternoon round-up. Gairy made a preposterous speech in which he declared, 'We are now completely free, liberated, independent. In spite of a wicked, malicious, obstructive, destructive, minority of noise-making self-publicists, God has heard our prayers. God has been merciful. God has triumphed.' A British sailor sealed the occasion by blowing the last post before the navy marched away to the quayside. With huge sighs of relief, the FCO team ritually washed their hands aboard the frigate, and sailed away into the sunset.

It seemed unlikely to most of us at the time that Maurice Bishop was a violent

revolutionary. Instead, he and his companions seemed typically vague Livingstonian idealists, at a loss how to cope with Mr Gairy. In the years that followed, of course, they became entirely radicalised. It was scarcely surprising to anyone who attended the Independence celebrations that they turned to the Cubans for aid. Gairy's excesses and extravagances grew more grotesque with each passing year, but the British knighted him at the 1977 Commonwealth Conference. When he was overthrown in an almost bloodless coup in 1979 by Bishop and his friends, the event seemed neither sad nor surprising. We, the British, had knowingly delivered Grenada into the hands of a lunatic. If ever there was a society clearly destined for misery as an independent state, it was the tiny pimple of Grenada. Old-fashioned colonialism offered its best, perhaps its only, prospect of peace and security.

The world lost interest in Grenada after Independence. The hacks were recalled the next day, for Mr Heath had called his miners election, and we were required to report another black comedy.

Several times in the years that followed, I asked various editors if I might go back to Grenada to write about the monstrous nonsense that was unfolding there. The island had even achieved a kind of celebrity when Ronald Reagan denounced it. But the editors scented a reporter's appetite for surf washing on palm-fringed beaches, and sent me to Consett instead.

MACLEAN GALLERY COMPETITION

INSPIRED?

This watercolour by Charles Ginner is one of two pictures, of London and New York, which feature church spires. Identify both churches (names and exact location) and you could win a colour lithograph by Sir William Nicholson of *Mark Twain* and a bottle of champagne. The other church spire is on view at **The Maclean Gallery, 35 St George St., W1, (opp. Sotheby's back door)**, where you can pick up a competition form. The competition closes 20 November 1983 and the first correct answer opened will win.



The true believer

Nicholas von Hoffman

Washington
In a trice the electronic landscape of America changed. Where there had been sitcoms, doctor shows and cop dramas, the television screens now displayed the bereaved. The fathers are stoic. The mothers sit on a sofa with a picture on their laps of the dead boy, usually in the Marines' handsome red and blue dress uniform. The mothers do cry.

The parents of 20-year-old Sergeant Mark Rademacher of Aurora, New York, learned their son had been sent to Grenada and killed there when a Captain from the Army Corps of Engineers knocked on their front door. On the television Mrs Rademacher did not pose with a picture of Mark, but otherwise what she said was similar to what the other mothers say: 'He was proud to be serving, and I'm quite proud of him... No I'm not bitter, because I'm sure there must've been a good reason for our Government to go there.' Mark's father said he was backing his President all the way.

In an attack of patriotic bathos Mr Rademacher's President went on television to tell his countrymen and the world what the good reason was. 'Brave young men have been taken from us. Many have been grievously wounded. Are we to tell them their sacrifice was wasted?... We must not strip every ounce of meaning and purpose from their courageous sacrifice.'

So let no one have recourse to reason, let no one place the President's words against the known facts, but hearken to his stories about distressed children, about tough marine generals weeping at the hospital bedsides of their fallen soldiers, of faithful parents offering up their sons. *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.*

A minority of Americans, a very small minority at this juncture, were unimpressed by the President's words. With but two or three small exceptions, every assertion of fact in his speech justifying what he had done was wrong:

'Last weekend', he told the nation, 'I was awakened in the early morning hours and told that six members of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, joined by Jamaica and Barbados, had sent an urgent request that we join them in a military operation to restore order and democracy to Grenada.'

However, the *New York Times* reported that 'two emissaries [from Washington] were sent to Barbados to elicit a formal written invitation [to invade], and they carried with them a proposed draft that was agreed to and sent to Washington the next day.'

'In the last year or so, Prime Minister

[Maurice] Bishop gave indication that he would like to better relations with the United States. He even made a trip to our country and met with senior officials... In actual fact Bishop had been importuning for an invitation for four years, but far from changing his opinions on the United States, he had grown more hostile to America, according to reporters who had interviewed him in the months prior to his murder.

'The nightmare of our hostages in Iran must never be repeated. We knew we had little time and that complete secrecy was vital to ensure both the safety of the young men who would undertake this mission and the Americans they were about to rescue.' As if to underline the truth of the President's words, the television screen has been carrying affecting clips of American students 'rescued' from the medical college on Grenada getting off army transport planes in the good old US of A and kissing the ground. However, evidence indicates that if they were in danger, it was from the American force's gunfire. On three separate occasions in the hours before the invasion the Grenadian regime had informed American diplomats that their nationals could leave whenever they wished. An angry Canadian Embassy spokesman here told the *Washington Post* that his government had arranged for air passage to take their nationals off the island, but their departure was prevented, not by the Grenadians, but by the American military. In Barbados American officials had arranged for a Cunard Line ship to evacuate their citizens, but could get no answer from Washington to their cable asking permission to proceed.

The President sought to convey the impression that the invasion was a desperate and dramatic *tour de force* by the armed forces: 'The Joint Chiefs of Staff worked around the clock to come up with the plan. They had little intelligence information about conditions on the island. We had to assume the several hundred Cubans working on the airport were reservists. Well, it turned out the number was much larger, and they were a military force.'

Well, it actually turned out that the number of Cubans was smaller than the President and the Pentagon claimed. Some days later, Washington conceded that the Cuban Government's statement that there were only 748 of their people on Grenada was probably correct. Additional information coming in now suggests a number of those 748 are teachers, health personnel and other non-military people. The announcement that the American expeditionary force had found 49 Russian diplomats, 24 North Koreans, 10 East Germans and four Bulgarians is still standing as of this writing. It's the four Bulgarians who are so alarming.

In addition, the Pentagon says it has captured documents showing that the Cubans planned to send 4,000 reservists and 341 officers to Grenada, but they never got there. The sinister import of the captured documents is not holding up as well as the four Bulgarians.

The military would have had an easier time of it if it had gone down to the local airline office and bought tickets to Grenada. Under the communists, Grenada was not a closed society like Russia. Anybody with the price of the plane ride could have flown in, checked out the airport, interviewed the Cubans and gone anywhere he pleased. That might have helped the army spell place names correctly on its publicity handouts. As it was, the boys didn't even know who they were fighting. At one point in this burlesque, a marine platoon leader stopped an American reporter to say: 'We just got in last night. Can you please tell us what the fuck is going on? Is the Grenadian army on our side or theirs?' Other troopers had not been told that the native language on the island is called English.

'A Cuban occupation of the island had been planned,' the President told the country, going on to say: 'Not only has Moscow assisted and encouraged the violence... but it provides direct support through a network of surrogates and terrorists.'

Perhaps, but Mr Reagan was refuted by his own man Admiral Wesley L. McDonald, Atlantic Commander-in-Chief in charge of the Grenada follies, who put on an astonishing performance for reporters the other day. He seemed to be suggesting it was the natives who were the source of the troubles: 'I think you have to look at the Grenadians who were loyal to the government that was in existence before this started happening, to identify the people who are the hard-liners. I think the identification process is going to be one that's

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in the absurdly easy

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very difficult for us to continue to pursue, but one that we've got to do because we cannot afford the withdrawal of all the forces and allow an insurgency government to reappear... If we can identify those forces and get those forces neutralised then we can get out of there...'

For proof that the island was 'being readied as a major military bastion to export terror and undermine democracy,' the President spoke of warehouses full of military equipment. Pictures, snapped by the Pentagon, of this arsenal were released for television. However, when reporters got a look at the supply depot, it turned out that Mr Reagan's description was, to be charitable, misleading.

Only one warehouse contained any of the weapons and ammunition which Mr Reagan had said was 'enough to supply thousands of terrorists'. The other buildings contained military uniforms, motors and food stuffs. The warehouse holding the arms was not 'stacked almost to the ceiling' as the President had said. It was but one quarter full with an inventory of 190 crates of guns, some few of which were modern Russian weapons. There were also 'five Russian 82mm mortars, one wheeled recoilless rifle, one four-barrelled anti-aircraft gun of Soviet make,' according to the *Washington Post's* Lauren Jenkins. He wrote that most of the Russian weapons were from the Second World War. There were also pre-war .38 calibre British Enfield pistols, and a crate of Marlin 30-30 carbines manufactured 114 years ago and used, apparently, by the US cavalry to pacify Sioux Indians.

Psycho-political types of Ronald Reagan's sort do not lie. Richard Nixon lied. When trapped or when it served him, he knowingly said things which he knew were not true. But Mr Nixon was measured, crafty, shrewd, scheming. He was a Talleyrandist. That is not Ronald Reagan. His mentality is best expressed by Admiral James Watkins, chief of naval operations, who met the planes bringing in the first coffins from Lebanon and Grenada. Speaking to the mourners come to claim the bodies of their sons, the admiral called for a 'new and enlightened national strategy to deal with the insidious, unenlightened and anti-Christ practices of individuals and governments'. In like manner Mr Reagan is a true believer and, for the true believer, facts are what their faith tells them they are.

Requiescat in pace Sergeant Rademacher.

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Look into the eyes

Shiva Naipaul

'Move, lemme get me share
They beating Grenadians down in the
Square
Lemme pelt a lash, lemme get a share
They beating Grenadians down Woodford
Square...'

Way back in the early Sixties, Grenadians were making news in Trinidad. The problem at the time — about which the calypsonian (Lord Blakie) was singing — was illegal immigration. We in Trinidad felt that our small and overcrowded island was being overrun. Ugly rumours started to spread about the behaviour and personal habits of these unfortunate people. We began to fear the subversion of our entire cultural heritage and trembled at the changes being wrought in the character of our slum areas. Some of the methods used to identify the intruders could be a little cavalier. According to Lord Blakie, a suspect might be asked to say 'hog'. If he said 'hag' no mercy was shown. 'It was,' Blakie sang, 'straight in the police van'. I know how easy it would be to criticise the naiveté of the Trinidadian police. Pause, however, before you do so. Twenty years later, echoes of a similar approach to the task of identification can be detected among the island's liberators. 'You look into their eyes, sir,' a staff-sergeant of the Marines told a *Sunday Times* 'front line' reporter, 'and see if they are hostile to the United States. You can see it, sir.' Life sure can get tough. Yessir!

Trinidad, a large island by Eastern Caribbean standards and a comparatively rich one (we have oil), has always attracted immigrants from the smaller, impoverished islands to the north. Grenada, being nearest, has traditionally been the major source of this influx. Like all immigrants, the Grenadians were despised. They did, though, have their triumphs. Trinidad's most famous calypsonian, the Mighty Sparrow, was born in Grenada — but it is an aspect of his past which he has never stressed and which Trinidadians prefer to ignore. We considered ourselves immeasurably superior to those benighted 'small islanders' who, skulking ashore off leaky inter-island schooners, kept on surfacing among us in search of menial jobs and the more cosmopolitan excitements afforded by our wealth and our much larger multi-racial population. Generally — despite the periodic bouts of ineffectual persecution — they were tolerated; objects of an indulgent, harmless contempt. The Government, with one eye on the racial politics of the island, saw in these negro immigrants a useful reservoir of anti-Indian votes. Our middle classes saw a useful reservoir of

domestic servants. The Grenadian, simple anxious to please, insecure, was considered ideal for this kind of work, altogether more suitable than the indigenous, indolent equivalent. Nowadays (so I am told) Guyanese, fleeing their bleak, South American homeland, have displaced the Grenadians.

In the immediate aftermath of the break-up of the West Indian Federation in 1961 (a Jamaican-inspired debacle), Trinidad's relations with Grenada took a new and curious twist. The idea was bruited that, together with Tobago, the three islands should form what was called a unitary state. As ever, politics being politics, this was suggested with one eye on the racial structure of Trinidadian politics. It was, even so, an arresting proposition, one not to be casually dismissed. Nevertheless, it was doomed never to get beyond the stage of hazy theorising because, with the disintegration of the Federation and the heady scent of disparate autonomies pervading the Caribbean chaos, the times were no longer propitious. For, in each of the units of the dead Federation, petty baronies were already taking shape. These were in no mood lightly to surrender the opportunities that might soon be theirs. The British had lost their taste for Empire and were in an indecent haste to cut and run. All the barons had to do was affect a seemly patience. Decentralisation might be a fashionable political cry. In the Caribbean, that collection of 'haggard primadonnas' (so General de Gaulle once described the islands), bankrupt relicts of the sugar boom of the 18th century, decentralisation was a foreshadowing of disaster. As is well known, those who will not hang together shall be hanged separately.

Grenada's political fortunes have evolved since then along not entirely incoherent lines. What has happened on the island over the last two decades could, with equal facility and depressingly similar results, have occurred in any of half a dozen Caribbean states. It has in fact been threatening to happen in several of them. Think of Jamaica, under the rule of Michael Manley, declining into a passable semblance of civil war. Or of the Guyana of Forbes Burnham, long surrendered to a caricature of the democratic process, of fake Third World militancy and of political murder. Or of Trinidad, whose army mutinied under the influence of Black Power ideologues. Or of the Bahamas, wallowing in the corruptions of the narcotics trade. Or of Anguilla, which broke away from its 'unitary' statehood with St Kitts and Nevis and only narrowly escaped falling under the domination of certain exotic 'business' interests.

Or, even, of Dominica (whose Prime Minister, Eugenia Charles, has played such a conspicuous role in recent events) where lawlessness in the guise of Rastafarianism overran extensive tracts of that wild and mountainous island - the setting for Jean Rhys's memorable novel, *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

The list is long and could be extended. Each unit of the mutilated whole is a waif; each is adrift and afraid, vulnerable to predators from within and without. Grenada's tragedy is simply that the pattern of events enacted there within the last week or two finally reached a sort of apocalyptic completeness. The failure is not only a local one. It shows up the shabbiness and emptiness of the colonial past; a colonial past tawdrily and cynically disowned by the Common Market present, whose visions of responsibility focus narrowly on atavistic images of 'kith and kin'; on the blood ties of the primal tribe.

For some years after the break-up of the Federation, Grenadians were in thrall to a handsome lunatic, Eric Gairy, a self-declared Rosicrucian who once lectured the UN on UFOs. His hired killers, recruited from the island's jails, terrorised opponents of the regime. Gairy being fiercely anti-Communist, his opponents naturally tended to be left-wing. It was under his patronage that a so-called Medical School was set up for American students who weren't good enough to gain admission to the universities back home. Another messianic lunatic also showed interest in Grenada around this time - a preacher from Indiana called Jim Jones. Fortunately for Grenada, Jones was to discover a more spacious and secluded paradise in Guyana. Had Gairy survived, Grenada would have recreated on its soil a petty Duvalierism. If that had been its fate, everyone would have been reasonably content because Gairy would have been a menace to no one except his fellow Grenadians - just as Forbes Burnham in Guyana is a threat to no one except the Guyanese. Certainly, the deeply felt need to invade, to restore law and order and democracy and all other good things, would not have so afflicted Washington. What it has tolerated for generations in Haiti, it would also have tolerated for generations in Grenada. Political murder is not in itself objectionable to Ronald Reagan. He was, after all, prepared to go and be fêted by the Marcos ménage even after the killing of the Opposition leader at Manila airport. If Gairy had managed to cling to power we would have been spared Reagan's all too muscular altruism.

That, alas, was not to be. Grenada, lurching into coup d'état, was to take another fatal step along the post-colonial road. It was inevitable that Maurice Bishop and his associates in the New Jewel Movement, nurtured in the radical atmosphere of the late Sixties and early Seventies, should have espoused an amalgam of Black Power and Marxism; that Havana should have provided their tutelary deities. One can argue that, even granted all this, Grenada's threat was

still mainly to itself. Admittedly, the Duvalierist state had transformed itself overnight into a 'revolutionary' state; admittedly, the Grenadian leaders were now issuing joint communiqués with Moscow; admittedly, a rather larger airport was being built. But the Caribbean operates at a high level of fantasy. The obsession with Carnival is only the most obvious symptom of this frailty. And, to save the day, there was the coup within the coup. Admittedly, a most distasteful business. Nevertheless, in General Austin, Grenada was not acquiring

an even more 'hard-line' Marxist-Leninist. We really are in trouble when we start to believe in other people's fantasies. Grenada, through all the blood and mayhem, was merely reverting to a more recognisable image of itself: it was falling into the hands of a black dictator modelled on the Burnhamite pattern - a man of raw power, beyond the reach of ideology, devoted to compromise and survival.

Look into the eyes and you will see.

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Last chance for Lebanon

Charles Glass

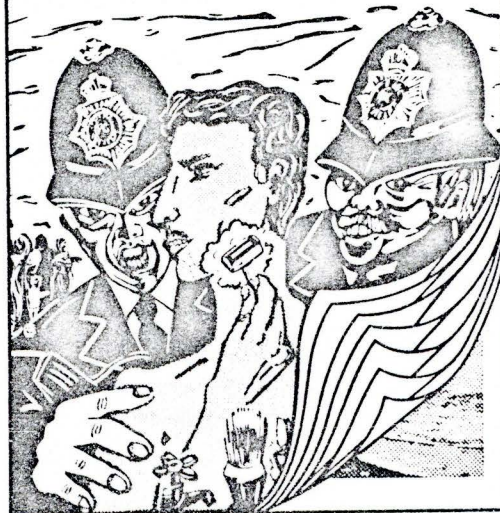
Geneva

The Lebanese drama continues to unfold, this time on the stage of the Carnival Room on top of the Hotel Intercontinental in Geneva. Nine Lebanese leaders, all, save one, scions of the tribal aristocracy which has ruled Lebanon since the Ottomans withdrew, assembled on Monday afternoon for the formal opening ceremonies. The President of the Swiss Confederation welcomed the Lebanese, most of whom his government is no doubt familiar with through their bank accounts.

He kindly neglected to present them with a bill for the cost of maintaining armed guards in and around the hotel day and night to protect the delegates from assassins, Iranian truck drivers and, most importantly, one another. Amin Gemayel, the young president of a country which until ten years ago was called the Switzerland of the Middle East, welcomed the eight factional leaders and two observers - a Saudi minister of state and the Syrian foreign minister - to a conference which he said presented them all with a historic oppor-

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Centrepiece

Poor Grenadine

Colin Welch

The respectability of Mr and Mrs Ernest Britt is imposing but fragile. Their desirable Elizabethan-style residence is, so to speak, of glass, built on sand. Sometimes cupboard doors rattle and carpets heave and writhe as whatever has been locked up in or swept under them reveals itself still awkwardly alive.

The fact is that Mr Britt was in his youth a bit of a lad. He travelled widely, the earth his oyster and limit. He was extremely promiscuous and philoprogenitive, a sort of imperial Abraham, engendering offspring of all colours, love-children or rather by-blows on whom the sun never set. Some are now as respectable and prosperous as the Britts. Despite her origins in crime, massacre, even genocide, daughter Matilda down under does not hesitate to reprove and censure others for crimes to which she was herself no stranger. Yet also appear, at the increasingly macabre and spectral annual family reunions, less edifying persons, as if from Dr Moreau's island, whose blood-stained knuckles near brush the ground. With all these embarrassments Mrs Britt puts up patiently, for the sake of comfort. She 'does the right thing.'

Of late the Britts have been slightly troubled by the misfortune of his daughter Grenadine, generated during the course of a protracted, agreeable and once lucrative swan of his round the Caribbean. There came a time when this dusky beauty, now of age and more burdensome than profitable, had to be set up in some parody of independent life. So, with a modest dowry, she was married off to a suitor, seemingly as much madman as scoundrel, subsequently honoured with a knighthood, called Gairy. This worthy, as Max Hastings recounted in last week's *Spectator*, did not even wait till her father had given her away and swiftly departed, with a sigh of relief, before committing cruel and unnatural outrages on her person.

The Britts, safe and snug back in their suburban *Dunromin*, averted their eyes from her sufferings. They had done their duty by the poor girl. They later heard, with more composure than was seemly, that the husband they had imposed on her had been forcibly replaced by a maddish Marxist, who looks in retrospect relatively mild and was perhaps more congenial to her. But he also filled her household with villainous Cubans, whose ferocious manners, bristling weapons and clear aggressive intent terrified Grenadine and her neighbours, including that nice Mis' Charles.

'This is all rather disturbing, my dear,' said Mr Britt from behind the *Times*. 'But what can we do?'

'Nothing at all, Ernest,' said Mrs Britt

crisply. 'Grenadine is grown up now. She must make her own life. She is nothing more to do with us.'

And so the happy couple relapsed into their normal tea-cake torpor. Their repose was not long undisturbed. More vexatious tidings were on the way. Grenadine's misfortunes multiplied, her future grew darker still. A bunch of raving thugs burst in on her, more Marxist seemingly than her 'husband', whom they brutally shot. Her they raped gagged, bound locked in the cellar, guarded there by menacing Cubans, who appeared now more even than the thugs to be in full control. Would this tiresome business never lie down or go away? 'What now?' the Britts asked themselves. 'What is to be done?'

Wise and cautious, Mr Britt said, 'We must try to do everything by persuasion, by persuading the villains to repent and the Cubans to go home.'

A shade more fiery, Mrs Britt preferred some sort of 'sanctions'. Mr Britt demurred: cutting off all supplies might hurt Grenadine as much as her captors, victim as much as torturers.

'Nonsense, Ernest. Surely experience has taught you that sanctions are an ideal weapon, causing almost no inconvenience to anybody, whether to those who impose them or to those on whom they are imposed or to anyone else. They certainly worked admirably when Cecilia was so wilful and headstrong in Africa, refusing to marry either that dear roly-poly Mr Nkomo or dear Robert.'

'To be sure, my dear, they did absolutely no harm to anyone, and yet they made us very popular at the Bar of World Opinion. Mrs Gandhi even bought me a drink — non-alcoholic, of course.'

'Yes, Ernest, something of the sort is the very least, as also the very most, that can be expected of us now. You must hasten to make all the necessary arrangements. You could ring up that nice sailor, who was so helpful in Beira, for a start, and tell him to stand by for fresh deeds of derring-do.' But Mr Britt yawned, and nothing was done.

Meanwhile poor Grenadine in anguish wondered how on earth she was to escape. No use ringing Paw, even if she could get to the telephone. He was too far away, had never taken much interest; and all she got on the line was crackling and roaring.

Somehow, by means incredible and still unclear, she managed to get an urgent SOS out to nice Mis' Charles and other well-disposed neighbours, and to a kindly American actor called Reagan, rich and retired, who happened to be cruising with a formidably effective crew near by. An attack was launched with great dash and

dispatch, though not, alas, without cost; the Cubans were sent packing; and Grenadine, overjoyed and grateful, was restored to a long-lost liberty.

The doughty Mr Reagan might perhaps have expected from the Britts, if not heartfelt thanks, then at least somnolent assent. After all the Britts had, with his approval and active support, recently and uncharacteristically bestirred themselves to rescue Ernest's son Falkland from a fate rather like Grenadine's and by rather like means. If he had rich expectations, he must have been astonished by what followed.

Fully awake at last, the Britts were furious. They were deeply hurt, distressed, 'humiliated'. Nobody had even consulted them (apparently in fact somebody had, but the message had, perhaps through their own negligence, gone to the wrong address from which they didn't at once bother to collect it).

Mr Reagan had coarsely, oafishly and gratuitously blundered into the affairs of a great old family, closely knit by ties far too subtle, complex and impalpable to be understood by any Hollywood hick. He had shown himself rash, ignorant, ham-fisted, immature, if not paronic then 'neurotic'. He had annoyed and frightened everybody, friends and — far worse! — foes alike. He had unlawfully broken into the Britts' property (which he might have been forgiven for thinking they had abandoned for ever). He should be prosecuted at once for wrongful entry; graver charges would surely follow.

His rude incursion was not only wicked but foolish. Either there were hoards of Cubans there, in which case he'd be in for another Vietnam; or there were only a few Cubans, in which case his outrage had been unnecessary. Both possibilities added petrol to the Britts' confused wrath. A bemused Reagan politely asked the Britts for help and co-operation.

'Of course, Ernest, we'll have to see. But really, after all that's happened, what a nerve! We must not "bail him out".'

'Indeed, my dear, but we must not forget even now that we have in the past relied on him for our own protection. We cannot afford to be too discourteous or unhelpful.'

'Rely on him? How could anyone rely on anyone so impetuous and ungovernable, so deaf to the advice of the experienced? I really think, Ernest, we ought to think seriously of putting double locks on our own doors. Otherwise he might go berserk here too.'

I fervently hope that this little parable is totally without foundation or, if in any part true, then justified by mysterious but important considerations quite hidden from me. I would truly hate to think that the Britts were motivated by any sort of pique or ruffled false pride or, far worse, by any envious thought that others had successfully brought off what they considered themselves alone fitted to accomplish, or that others might receive applause and thanks properly reserved to themselves.