

Briefing Paper

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NEWSPAPER EDITOR FORCED TO RESIGN AND LEAVE BARBADOS

Rickey Singh, 45-year-old Guyanese editor of the Barbados-based newspaper, Caribbean Contact, has been given until 2 December by the Barbados government to leave the country, and has had to resign as editor following his condemnation of the US invasion of Grenada.

THIS ISSUE MAY BE BORROWED FROM MAR. 9 - 1984

Caribbean Contact is a monthly newspaper, in its 11th year, a 'service of the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC): the ecumenical movement launched in 1973 and now representing 30 churches in the English, Spanish, French and Dutch-speaking areas of the Caribbean. It is the only pan-Caribbean newspaper, and gives political, social and cultural news of the region in addition to church and religious news. Under Rickey Singh, its Barbados-based editor since 1978 (Singh has worked for the CCC since 1974), the paper has become highly regarded for its liberal and independent stance, both within the Caribbean and elsewhere. Caribbean Contact has provided Guyana with its only independent source of news and commentary. It supported the Maurice Bishop government in Grenada and its economic and social reforms, but it was no puppet mouthpiece for the Peoples' Revolutionary Government (PRG) and was ready to criticise it on particular issues such as the postponement of elections and press suppression - a position generally shared by the Grenada Council of Churches (GCC). Meanwhile, the Caribbean Conference of Churches is considered by some of its members to have departed, over the past few years, from its original social vision of 'tangible participation in the struggle for social justice, human rights and an end to economic, political and cultural dependency'. The CCC may have wished Caribbean Contact to reflect these shifts in direction.

The Grenada crisis in October brought matters to a head. In the November issue of Caribbean Contact, Singh reprinted his own 'analysis of the military invasion of Grenada by the United States and some Caribbean nations', under the heading 'Invasion cannot be justified', stating that the article had been written at the request of the Editor of The Nation - a Barbados newspaper in which it had first appeared on 25 October. He also took the unusual precaution of adding in The Nation article, 'I am doing so as Editor of Caribbean Contact'. The November issue of Caribbean Contact also carried the latest press statement of the Caribbean Conference of Churches, dated 25 October, which strongly condemned the military invasion. Barbados is one of the Caribbean nations which requested and facilitated the invasion. On 1 November, the Barbados Prime Minister, Tom Adams, sought to withdraw Singh's work permit. Despite representation by Henry Forde, a leading lawyer and former Minister of Foreign and Legal Affairs in the Adams government, Adams reaffirmed on 14 November that Singh must leave by 2 December. Meanwhile, the Caribbean Conference of Churches changed its mind over the Grenada invasion, on hearing that the Grenada Council of Churches supported the invasion. Singh saw the cable from the Caribbean Conference of Churches to the Grenada Council of Churches on 14 November, and issued a statement of resignation on the following day. The statement was published in The Nation on 15 November.

INDEX on Censorship

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BRIEFING PAPER

THE INSTITUTE ON RELIGION AND DEMOCRACY

January 1984

"WHAT HAPPENED IN GRENADA IS
A VIVID EXAMPLE OF ~~THE~~ THE MASTER PLAN
THAT MARXISTS HAVE FOR THE
ENTIRE WORLD"

No. 3

THE GRENADA DOCUMENTS: ARCHIVE OF CHURCH SUBVERSION

an interview with

DR. MICHAEL A. LEDEEN

Dr. Michael A. Ledeen, a Senior Fellow at the Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies, is a former Rome correspondent for the The New Republic and former executive editor of The Washington Quarterly. He also serves from time to time as a consultant to the United States Department of State and the Department of Defense. He is currently analyzing documents of the New Jewel Movement, a revolutionary party which received extensive support from church leaders and agencies in the United States during the time it held power on the island of Grenada.

-- The Editors

DR. LEDEEN: The American and Caribbean armed forces that liberated Grenada last fall brought all documentation regarding the ruling party, the New Jewel Movement, to the United States for analysis. There is an unbelievable quantity: we have been through about 25,000 pounds of documents so far, and we have another huge shipment that has just come in. It's mostly government material, although there are also some private diaries. There is also a substantial amount of documentation in Spanish that was in the possession of the Cubans on the island.

IRD: What is the special significance of these documents?

DR. LEDEEN: They comprise the first full documentary record of a country that was taken over by the Soviet Union and its proxy forces. Consequently, the Grenada archive constitutes an historical source of enormous, and quite unique importance. Moreover, I would wager that if we could lay hands on the Nicaraguan archive, we would find a replication of what we have found in Grenada. So I think it is a real case study of Soviet and Cuban behavior in this hemisphere.

IRD: What is there of special interest to church-goers in the United States?

DR. LEDEEN: The first thing is that, contrary to what some sophisticated people contend, communists really do believe in communism. It may sound simple-minded to say that. But I, along with lots of other presumably well-informed people, had come to believe that the Russians and the Cubans really didn't believe in communism anymore. To be sure, they paid lip service to the ideology, and invoked Marx and Engels and Lenin and Stalin, but they didn't really believe in it. Therefore you could deal with them like anybody else. Well, once you start reading these documents you see that a great deal of very scarce money and manpower was invested in the indoctrination of the people of the island. Ideology meant a lot.

Secondly, religious ideas were clearly viewed as an obstacle to the process of political indoctrination. There was one secret agreement between the Cuban Communist Party and the New Jewel Movement which arranged for exchanges of personnel: Grenadians going to Cuba to be trained and Cubans coming to Grenada to train other Grenadians there. The agreement quite explicitly provides for sending people to Cuba to be trained in dealing with the churches while Cubans skilled in handling churches would take up assignments in Grenada.

The purpose of this exchange was to strengthen a campaign of unrelenting hostility and suspicion by the government against the churches. This campaign was carried out in a variety of ways. Given a pretext, the government would simply get rid of the religious leaders who were explicitly anti-communist. On one occasion a Methodist minister who refused to perform a funeral service for a communist was simply thrown out of the country.

But their longer run plan is set forth in a memorandum drafted by the chief of their internal security structure, Major Keith Roberts. It is dated July 12, 1983, and called "Analysis of the Church in Grenada" (see Appended). The last two pages consist of a series of recommendations which begin by saying that the party must infiltrate the churches and watch them all very carefully, and that they must build up the communist mass organizations, the national youth organization, the national women's organization, the pioneers and so forth, as alternatives to the churches. Point seven says that they should remove from primary schools all deeply religious head teachers by whatever means most suitable, replacing them with more "progressive elements." Political education was to be introduced into all the social studies curricula down to the primary schools and the secondary schools. The document called for eliminating the Mass from Sunday morning radio programs.

IRD: That sounds like what is happening in Nicaragua.

DR. LEDEEN: Overall, the plan was very much like the Nicaraguan model. The Grenadians speak of trying to substitute clergy and lay people from other communist regimes for the traditional religious authorities on the island. They talk of bringing in people from Nicaragua and other Latin American countries linked, as Major Roberts puts it, to the theology of liberation and to the idea of a church committed to revolutionary positions.

IRD: Do you find in these documents any sign that this support for liberation theology and the "people's church" derived from any genuine Christian commitments on the part of New Jewel leaders?

DR. LEDEEN: No, they were Marxist-Leninists; they were not Christians. In the final analysis they were aiming at raising a new generation of Grenadians who were atheistic.

IRD: So their interest in radically-inclined Christians was just a tactic for them?

DR. LEDEEN: When you go through these documents, it is clear that the whole treatment of the churches is a tactical question. They are not interested in religious or theological issues at all. And, in fact, they frequently complain that religious leaders seem really to believe in religion, and that they actually want to Christianize the inhabitants of Grenada.

IRD: One of these documents refers rather favorably to the Caribbean Conference of Churches, which denounced the joint U.S.-Caribbean action almost immediately after it began. But we later learned that the Grenada Christian Council itself was a very strong supporter of the action. How do you explain the statement of the Caribbean Conference of Churches, and the apparent assumption of the New Jewel Movement that it was an ally?

DR. LEDEEN: It looks like the New Jewel Movement was right. The Caribbean Conference of Churches certainly wasn't representing the interests or the views of the churches on Grenada. The New Jewel Movement considered the churches on Grenada to be enemies. And, as the accounts of the government's internal espionage organization make clear, the Grenadian churches did not like communism.

IRD: Immediately after the invasion, something in this country called the Committee in Solidarity with Free Grenada issued a press release under the headline "Religious and Community Leaders Condemn U.S. Invasion of Grenada." This release came out of the office of the Caribbean and Latin American affairs staff person at the United Methodist Church's Office on the United Nations. And among the signers of the release were a number of officials of the U.S. National Council of Churches. Is there evidence in the records of the New Jewel Movement that it worked to cultivate allies in church bodies here?

DR. LEDEEN: Yes, in fact it had lots of allies of all sorts in the United States. They periodically traveled around this country, touching base with their supporters here. We have found the references in documents to what they have called their U.S. Front Group, which consisted of a variety of people: some people in the mass media; some in the universities; a substantial number from Communist Party, USA.

IRD: These documents refer to a number of conflicts the government had with the churches in Grenada. They seem to have been particularly concerned that Bishop Sidney Clark, a Roman Catholic, was organizing a youth movement. In another passage they're concerned that boxes of the Jerusalem Bible had been sent in.

DR. LEDEEN: Yes, they were terrified by the fact that over 4,000 Bibles arrived on the island. This appears in several of their documents. Churches brought in 4,365 copies of the Jerusalem Bible, and the government was concerned that because this Bible was written in a very readable style it would influence the masses.

IRD: One other document says that the government sees "the church in the immediate period as being the most dangerous sector for the development of internal counter-

revolution," and they talk of fearing a "Poland situation" (see Appended). Moreover, the churches they were most concerned about -- the Catholics, Methodists, and Anglicans -- are those that have been socially active and progressive. Why?

DR. LEDEEN: That is always the case. The major enemies of communist regimes are always progressive forces; the first targets are always people on the democratic Left. They have to eliminate any option on the Left. They know that in time they can usually destroy more conservative organizations and groups, but the most difficult groups to do away with are free-trade unions, progressive intellectuals, and other popular, non-communist political parties. In fact, the communists sometimes find it useful to keep the others around so they can point to them and say: see the enemy is real -- there is an actual conservative.

IRD: Would you say that what is evident from these documents about what occurred in Grenada could reasonably be considered a pattern in totalitarian attitudes toward religion?

DR. LEDEEN: It is exactly what you would expect to find. Anyone who is familiar with communism would have expected to find a government irritated by people who believe in God. Religion has to be done away with because it gets in the way of communizing and mobilizing the masses.

IRD: Have you released these documents to the American press?

DR. LEDEEN: We are in the process of releasing all the documents we can lay our hands on to the American public. We hope by late spring or early summer to have microfilmed or microfiched all of the material from Grenada. And as soon as that is done and a reasonably decent index is prepared, we will open it up to the world and anyone who wants to see this stuff can come and read it.

IRD: Who would benefit most from reading these documents?

DR. LEDEEN: In the religious context, those church people who harbor hope for alliances with communists to bring about change. They would learn that the communists were cynically using those who sympathize with liberation theology. No amount of excuses can deny what is evident in these documents: the desire of the New Jewel regime was to eliminate any authentic religious institutions from Grenada.

The question of how was a tactical matter, but the clear objective was that there should be no independent, authentic religious institution in that country. If that could be achieved by subverting the churches and substituting a political religion, that would be quite satisfactory.

They talked about bringing in "people's churches," as they tried to do in Nicaragua: creating organizations claiming to be religious which in reality were political. Or they would have been happy just to have driven out all the priests and preachers they didn't like. Or they would have liked to recruit all the youth to atheism, and to have ended any kind of religious instruction or religious tradition. All of these were tactical questions. The main point was simply that religion had to go. There is no room for religion in this kind of society.

TOP SECRET

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12TH JULY, 1983.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHURCH IN GRENADA

(1) A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW:

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

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

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

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

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

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

2) THE CHURCH AS A THREAT TO THE REVOLUTION

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

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

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

1970-1981 period saw the Catholic Church making efforts to obtain priest versed in the knowledge of submitting our ideological position, and also saw the Roman Catholic Priests begin to print pamphlets on "civic and human Rights" and "notes on Marxism". In reality anti-Marxism/Leninism.

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

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

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

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

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

3. 1983 - Upsurge in open air crusades, house to house and tract giving by the non-traditional religions. More house to house work done by Jehovah's Witnesses. There seem to be a frenzied drive by these churches to win new members. This process is continuing now. There has also been a number of visits to Grenada by pastors and preachers from abroad to "beef up" the work in "evangelization".

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

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

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

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FUTURE TRENDS

- 1) We foresee the continuation of the organization of all Youths by the Catholic and Anglican Churches.
- 2) We foresee stronger unity among all G.C.C. churches.
- 3) We think that the unity among Catholic Clergy will grow steadily.
- 4) Infiltration of anti Marxist/Leninist from outside.
- 5) The Bishop becoming bolder in his attacks against the Revolution.
- 6) The Catholic Church overall hardening its position against the Revolution.
- 7) More and more foreign Pastors and Preachers of non-traditional religious will want to come to Grenada to work and hold crusades.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) Ensuring that Michael Roberts continue a permanent and full time way to be in charge of church work.
 - b) Obtaining a second person to work in this area in order to control all churches, their leadership, membership and their activities.
The establishment of a register of association including churches and all other organizations e.g. Jaycee, Unions, Association of Professional etc. which will make it necessary when registering to give some basic fact about the Associations or churches e.g. the knowledge on special and regular activities, counting of members, different posts within the organizations, means of financing activities, etc.
Continuing to develop the co-operation in this area with the Cuban Comrades at the level of Party to Party.
4. Ensuring that C.P.E. get a majority of working people involved in its classes.
 5. Build the Mass Organizations - Pioneers, N.Y.O., N.W.O., P.F.U., Militia, to incorporate a majority of working people.
 - Organize the community work in the different areas more efficiently, start on time, and actively mobilize to bring out the masses to participate.

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7. Removing from Primary Schools, all deeply religious head teachers by whatever means most suitable, replacing them with more progressive elements. This should be done no later than the end of this month.
8. Introduce Political Education as that or Social studies in every classroom in the Primary and Secondary Schools from this September, use the most progressive teachers within the school system (chosen by teachers committee) to teach these classes. Use Merle Hodge and Didicus to write up the materials for the courses.
9. Political Education for all teachers by this September.
10. Strengthen Science Education - theory and practical - in every school and in the community through C.P.E. and Film shows.
11. Cut back on all religious programmes on R.F.G. Substitute on Sunday morning voice cast of the masses on the progress of the projects.
12. To promote contacts among Clergymen and members of Laity from Nicaragua and other Latin American countries linked to the theology of liberation and, in general, to the idea of a church committed to Revolutionary positions.
13. To implement the visits of Pastors from the Grenada Protestant Churches belonging to the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC) of which the Evangelical Churches of Cuban in a number, to short annual course, in light that the comrades can solve the language question.
14. More dialogue with West Indian Priests, Nuns and Brothers in the Church and schools by the Leadership.
15. Opening up M-L Bookshop in different parishes of the country.
16. Getting M-L literature into all schools by September.
17. Explore possibility of getting Father Martin and La Montague to visit Cuba.
18. Step up the systematic monitoring of all Religious manifestation in the state, and position being taken as regard the work permit of way-side Preachers entering the country to preach, and immigration position on these way-side preachers.

9. Open Cinemas.

10. Start Progressive Churches (talk with Hodge + Cuba)

Major K. Roberts

MAJOR KEITH ROBERTS.