

New Society
July 1

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a bit thin compared with the simple pleasures we are giving up. There is also a repression, Heath believes, of everything that is *not* sex—a whole social and political life which is made to seem small by the shrill claims of handbooks and magazines and psychologists, indeed which *is* small for all of us taken in by the fix. Sexual liberation can be the opposite of political liberation, a retreat into play and privacy.

The Sexual Fix is a very intelligent book, an attractive brief for a liberty we may not know we lack, and it tackles portentous material with wit and speed. My only misgiving is itself a tribute to the strength of the central argument of the work. Heath makes admirably clear that sex is not simply "given," is always "coded," "a cultural phenomenon." "Physiology is determining? Yes, in the sense that we cannot merely transcend it, that it is a condition of our very experience. No, in the sense that it is not some unique essence of that experience . . ." But why does this argument seem less persuasive each time it is repeated, and why does Heath repeat it so often?

This is a general difficulty with what might be called the school of Michel Foucault, which identifies as discourse, as interpretation backed by power, what most people regard as brute fact. The body, say. That is a fact. The body is a fact, but talk and thought of the body are constructions, representations, caught up in wishes and revisionary memory. "The sexual is natural, if you like, but always already cultural, always constructed." The trouble here is that the fact dissolves in discourse, that the discourse is left empty-handed. Rightly rejecting the illusion of an unmediated truth (nature, the body), we lose the mediated truth as well, have only the mediation.

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Rail by Rev to run Rec pres end not Dem out and v Fed

Diet of ambiguities

Michael Manley

Jamaica: struggle in the periphery

Writers & Readers/Third World Media

£3.95 paperback/£7.95 hardback

David Stephen

"De-stabilisation" is a term associated with the Kissinger era and in particular with the fall of Allende in Chile in 1973. In the hands of third world radicals, it is a double-edged propaganda weapon: it implies all sorts of nasty acts by imperialists, but it simultaneously endows the imperial power with enormous, all-seeing influence and power. Partly as a result of the Allende affair, but also because of anti-CIA publications like Agee's *Inside the Company*, the idea has grown up in the Americas that everything is infiltrated, everything ultimately controlled from Langley, Virginia. Whether this attribution of fantastic powers to the CIA is an excuse for failure, a pro-American propaganda weapon, or a device

Continued on
Next side

OBSERVATIONS

Goodbye Grenada

There are only a couple of thousand Grenadians in Britain, mostly in Luton and London, but then, there aren't many in Grenada. A hundred-odd thousand in a country smaller than the Isle of Wight.

Bernie Bishop, who runs a tiny garage off London's Holloway Road, is a reminder of the parish-pump scale of Grenadian politics. (In his article on page 196 this week, Professor Robin Cohen gives some of the less parochial context.) Bernie's brother runs the Grenadian Barclays bank; his mate Joe, who used to work in the garage, is ambassador to Libya; his cousin, Maurice, was Prime Minister until his deputy, Bernard Coard, reportedly shot him in the stomach with a rocket launcher.

"People was behind Maurice when he took over from Eric Gairy," says Bernie. "Up to the end he was liked, but more by the people than his own family. His family was business people and Maurice was not good for business."

Bernie's wife, Mary, who visits Grenada regularly, says people only got worried when the Cubans began to arrive in large numbers. "They say they was workers, but they have guns. They was forming an army, but people say, 'What for Grenada has an army?' There was only police before, and they don't have guns."

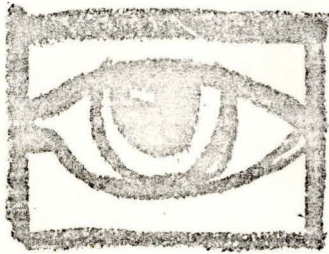
The Bishops think Maurice got shot because he was making overtures to Britain and the United States, and the hard-line pro-Cubans like Coard and General Austin got nervous. "I'm not angry at all about Americans going in there," says Bernie. "I don't think Britain should have ever left," says his wife.

A few streets to the east, in Stoke Newington, at a meeting of the New Jewel Movement, people like Bernie are objects of pity. *Politically uneducated* is the phrase. The marxist NJM was Bishop's own party (and Coard's too), and though it was split over the murder of the Prime Minister, it has rallied now in the attack on Yankee imperialism.

There is a scattering of white faces at the meeting: Labour Party, Anglo-Grenadian Friendship Society, Communist Party, the non-existent International Marxist Group, and so on. There are a few sisters in head scarves, a few of the heavier brothers in dreadlocks and black leather gloves and Castro caps. The posters are of Yasser Arafat and Maurice Bishop. The talk is of fascist invasion, struggles, lackeys, puppets and liquidations.

At one point only do they seem to intersect with the Bishop family in their cosy living room across the way. "The Yanks are there to stay," says one old man, to general nodding. "You think come 1984 you put little cross in a box and they vanish overnight, then you crazy." There's no going back to the parish pump now. And perhaps not ever.

Graffiti by Paige



America coughs...

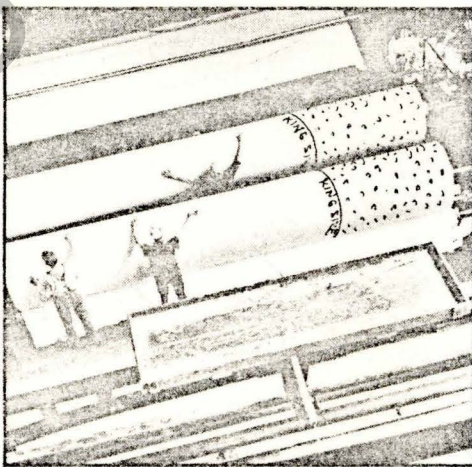
Remember Proposition 13, the first property tax-cutting measure passed in California in 1978? Well if you're a smoker, you won't forget Proposition P, which residents of San Francisco vote on next Tuesday.

Proposition P probably represents the toughest anti-smoking measure ever envisaged in a major city. If passed, it will prohibit smoking in public areas such as hospitals, libraries, museums and, most significantly, in any office where just one employee objects to the practice. The fine for a violation will be 500 dollars.

In fact, a bye-law having the same effect as P was passed by the city council back in June. The referendum next Tuesday is the result of a \$250,000 campaign against the bye-law by American tobacco companies. The local chamber of commerce and trade unions are against it, while the city's large and vociferous radical community is overwhelmingly in favour. But many major local employers are staying out of the debate—because most have already developed policies limiting workplace smoking areas.

In the US as a whole, 31 states now have laws limiting smoking in public areas and five regulate smoking in the workplace. But none are as tough as those planned in San Francisco and in the seven states where anti-smoking measures have been put to the ballot, the voters have turned them down.

Meanwhile in Britain, the Lord Provost of Glasgow, Dr Michael Kelly, last week announced a £1 million campaign to make Glasgow the first no-smoking city in Europe. But the plan has already run into



trouble with local councillors and the city's 2,000 tobacco workers. Given that California has been the seed-bed for so many ideas and the origin of so many social trends, we can expect to see many more moves to limit smoking on this side of the Atlantic in the next few years.

People's champs

Ombudsmen of the world unite. Last week Paris. Next year Stockholm. They believe in regular conferences. "We're swapping tax and social security cases the whole time," says Sir Cecil Clothier, our man, who'd hopped the channel to celebrate the first ten years of his French equivalent, the Médiateur, and to say hallo to the new boy, the Spanish Defender of the People.

Now that sounds a good title. Enough to make one believe in a government's intention to see the administration's injustices towards the administrated rooted out. But that is clearly a sore point with Sir Cecil. He feels his office has been unjustly attacked—in NEW SOCIETY and elsewhere—for not being on the people's side. "We're not adversarial. We cannot be advocates. None of us are," says Clothier, who was previously a judge.

The Médiateur, the former centre-left politician, Robert Fabre, does not disagree. He stresses the need to be on good terms with the administration, and was handing out good marks to cooperative ministries. For him, the effective change comes through changed practice rather than the individual cases. Just as well, since of the 3,000 dealt with last year, only 500 were found in favour of the plaintiff.

Last year he proposed 18 changes to the law and 70 improvements in bureaucratic practice, like ironing out anomalies in entitlement to compensation when a vaccination goes wrong. But he says in the twang of his native south west, he wants to arouse the public's interest. The current idea: to have the equivalent of consumer interest programmes on television.

As for the Defender of the People, in justice-hungry Spain, he has 26,000 cases to deal with. But then the public has direct access, rather than being filtered through MPs as happens in England and France.

Interestingly his job satisfactions are the same as Sir Cecil Clothier's, helping the *petit peuple* who have been swindled by social security. As the Ombudsmen go home and take their shoes off at night, they think of widows who have now got money for the gas fire.

Arcane cults?

The Booker Prize ceremony—the bookies' prize as it's known in some quarters—wasn't the only literary event in London last week. Up in Camden Town, Compendium bookshop was celebrating its fifteenth anniversary. Born in 1968 (the same year, coincidentally, that Booker McConnell

UNMAKING GRENADA'S REVOLUTION

ROBIN COHEN

1981
MARCH
(ad. in Free West Indian)
CONGRATULATIONS
TO THE GOVERNMENT
AND PEOPLE OF
GRENADA ON THE
SECOND ANNIVERSARY
OF THE REVOLUTION
FROM



Holiday Inn
Grenada

JUNE

FREE WEST INDIAN

PROFITS REACH
FARM WORKERS



Robin Cohen is Professor of Sociology, Warwick University, and formerly Professor of Sociology, the University of the West Indies, Trinidad. With Fitzroy Ambursley, he co-edited *Crisis in the Caribbean* (Heinemann, 1983), a book of essays which looks at ten states in the Caribbean basin, including Grenada.

THE rubbish heap of disinformation purveyed by the Reagan administration grows even higher. Since 1979, Grenada has supposedly been governed by a "marxist" regime, which was supplanted by an "even more left-wing" regime, itself a puppet of Cuba and the Soviet Union. Apparently, the main activity of these dupes was to build an "airstrip" to permit the Soviet Union to supply its "communist" cells in Nicaragua.

Unfortunately, a quick glance at the atlas by even the most bone-headed news editors and Congressmen revealed that this task might be better accomplished by flying from Cuba—approximately half the distance. In that case, the airstrip was meant to be a base for "Soviet adventurism and terrorism," a suitably unspecific charge.

The absurdities of this kind of political hype—designed for internal American consumption—have first to be set aside if we are to make any sense of the course of the Grenadian revolution during the last four years, or of the events of the last fortnight. The Bishop government was not marxist in any conventional understanding of that term. The private sector remained three times the size of the state sector, private property rights were respected, reasonable compensation given for land purchased for government schemes.

Barclays bank, the Holiday Inn (due to be purchased by the state in 1984), and other features of a typical neo-colonial landscape, continued to function without threat, while the island played host to package tourists from Canada, Britain, West Germany and the United States (these four countries supplying two thirds of all foreign visitors). Rich students, whose grades were insufficient for the prestigious US universities, registered at their tropical medical school in Grenada, jogged on the "Cuban airstrip," and soaked up the sun with tourists on Grand Anse beach.

As Finance Minister, the most that the "hard-line ideologue" Bernard Coard aspired to, was a "mixed economy" in which the state sector would ultimately predominate and lead the process of development. A hope for the eventual primacy of a self-sufficient state sector didn't prevent Coard from obtaining loans, grants and aid from the EEC and Canada as well as from Libya and Cuba.

As for the airport, anyone who has visited the island remembers the tiresome journey from Pearls, its shabby appearance, poor radar and terrifyingly short runway. Any expansion of the Grenadian tourist industry was handicapped by its dependence on daylight transfer flights in small planes from Trinidad or Barbados. It may be that the cost of the airport well outstripped its likely benefits. But Grenada was not the first country in the third world that chose a glossy international airport as a symbol of national pride.

Grenada's revolution had a strongly technocratic quality. The pre-1979 government led by Eric Gairy was simply incompetent, where it was not corrupt and autocratic.

Many respectable, middle class professionals, bureaucrats and white-collar workers welcomed the Bishop regime (he himself was a lawyer) as restoring some kind of rationality to the economic and political process. Nor was it abject compliance that led the Grenada chamber of commerce, nine days after the 13 March 1979 revolution, to hail it as "a glorious opportunity to build something new and different in the Caribbean." Among this section of the community, Gairy was an embarrassing relic of the past. He offended their puritanism and growing sense of nationalism by his random excesses and eccentric image.

The nationalism of the middle classes was augmented by a fervent brand of radical populism, espoused principally by the New Jewel Movement, which had emerged as the guardians of the revolution. Everywhere they looked, the movement saw needless misery and under-used capacity. Unoccupied hotels, fruit dropping off the trees, unworked land, overwhelming reliance on imported goods, half the population unemployed, poor health, housing and schools, and a virtually stillborn industrial base. These were the inheritances of colonialism and Gairyism.

The New Jewel Movement set their faces against this squalid cul-de-sac by giving some order to the planning process, reactivating foreign investment and, above all, by "turning to the masses," in an ambitious attempt at self-help and community participation. Many of the measures they adopted recognisably owed more to doctrines propagated by Oxfam and War on Want, rather than those propounded by Yuri Andropov or General Jaruzelski. The very heart of the revolution throbbed with an emotional voluntarism, an appeal to self-reliance, and the zest of a people newly stirred from a zombie-like state back into life.

This transformation of consciousness brought a new hope to the political map of the English-speaking Caribbean. Far from being conspiratorial, manipulative, stalinist, it had an innocence and a daring. In a Caribbean calypsonian swagger it cocked a snook at the new "massa," Uncle Sam, sometimes with a bravado that astonished Grenadians themselves. Listen, for example, to this naive poetic vision, published in the *Free West Indian*, the principal organ of the revolution: Reggae music/Ocean waves Sandy beaches/Children's laughter/Gentle green upon green/Sun rising/New Dawn/Virgin breezes/Sun splash sunset/Tropical forest/Deep Conception/A Rebirth/The Beginning/Of heaven on earth/But/For now/Equality for Women/Maternity leave/Free public education/A literacy programme/A People's bank/A new airport/More food/And/A joy spreading/Like solidarity throughout/The World!

Not much resemblance to the brutalities of Soviet-style "socialist realism," the Gulag or forced industrialisation. This revolution was about the awakening of a people's spirit. It was that spirit which was trampled on by Austin in a tragic internal fracas.

then machine-gunned by the US Marines and Rangers in servicing Reagan's political ambitions.

Nor were the successes of the People's Revolutionary Government solely in the realm of providing spiritual enrichment. It had a number of concrete material achievements to its credit, too. In 1982, the state sector made a modest profit of three million Caribbean dollars (up by a third on 1981). Its debt-servicing ratio was one of the lowest in the world. Living standards increased by 3 per cent, unemployment fell by 14 per cent. A government news release in February proudly claimed that the economy grew at an overall rate of 5.2 per cent, "one of the highest growth rates in the western hemisphere." The IMF, that well-known agency of Soviet imperialism, pronounced itself impressed.

The government's social programmes also recorded notable achievements. The Centre for Popular Education enrolled large numbers of Grenadians in literacy and adult education programmes. Health services improved, aided greatly by the use of Cuban medical staff. Agricultural extension programmes redistributed marginal land, widened access to credit, and generally revived life in the countryside and small villages. Neatly turned-out children pressed into the bursting classrooms. (They came out on the day Maurice Bishop and his colleagues were killed with slogans reading NO BISHOP, NO SCHOOL.) A number of multi-purpose community centres were built. Pensions were raised by almost a quarter. A national insurance scheme was put into effect.

These successes were real enough. More important, they were to some extent initiated at meetings of the "mass organisations." The government saw these bodies (the National Women's Organisation, the National Youth Organisation, the People's Revolutionary Armed Forces, the Productive Farmers' Union and the trade unions) as *alternatives* to the institutions of representative democracy. Bishop took particular delight in denouncing the farcical character of "two-minute democracy, once every five years."

It was this mockery of the Westminster system that most alarmed his immediate neighbours in the Caribbean. With a tiny middle class, insecure electoral bases, and a genuine ideological commitment to their newly inherited parliamentary institutions, they did not view with equanimity the spread of the Grenadian infection to their workers, peasants and Rastas.

Any objective assessment of the Bishop period must provide some judgment of the effectiveness and genuineness of these alternative forms of democratic participation. In his contribution to *Crisis in the Caribbean*, published earlier this year, Fitzroy Ambursley argues that the government failed to achieve a genuine people's democracy because it "still sought to induce the owners of capital to become more productive and more benevolent." He compares the democratic structures in Bishop's Grenada unfavourably with *poder popular* in Cuba.

My own view is that this is too different a standard of comparison. If we look backwards instead of sideways, it can readily be affirmed that the degree of effective democracy was magnified many times over when compared to the intimidation and electoral frauds of the Gairy years. Yet there were a number of flaws in the Bishop version of participatory democracy.

It became increasingly difficult to maintain a constant input on the small, mundane but essential tasks of administration. The system often slipped into a kind of "Caesarism," or government by pub-

lic acclaim. Too often, the public rally became a substitute for the democratic control over those who were providing ordinary goods and services. Charisma, as Weber remarked, is an inherently unstable form of authority. Given his reliance on spontaneous affirmations of popular acclaim, Bishop could not routinise his own authority. Bernard Coard and the other anti-Bishop sections of the People's Revolutionary Government sought to do it for him by according him the mocking and derogatory title of "Leader of the Masses."

The split within the government was thus only ostensibly concerned with the respective merits of personal versus collective leadership. For many Grenadians, this debate simply concealed naked lust for power by Coard, General Austin and other less prominent members of the leadership. The immediate welcome accorded to the American forces by significant sections of the population reflects this cynical judgment of Coard's position, rather than a rejection of the last four years of rule by the People's Revolutionary Government.

Nonetheless, I believe that it was a mistake not to have instituted some form of representative democracy in addition to the mass organisations. In a free contest, Bishop would undoubtedly have won electoral legitimacy. This would have both undercut his Caribbean neighbours' arguments, and undermined Reagan's case for intervention. In addition, it would have provided some framework for the open expression of political differences within the government and outside it. This might have avoided the fratricidal strife which opened the way for occupation.

Where do we go from here? The first demand from any friend of the Grenadian people must be a simple one: "Yankees Go Home." Europeans are sometimes not fully sensitised to the United States' record in its "backyard." It acts quite blatantly as an imperialist power. Openly anti-democratic regimes can gain presidential endorsement so long as they are compliant to US strategic interests.

There is now no avoiding the staging of the Great Constitutional Play. But it *will* make a difference as to who writes the script, who manages the performance and, above all, who is allowed to audition. There could, for example, be worse outcomes than the Canadians, Nigerians and Trinidadians acting as the stage managers. The puppet Caribbean forces, Jamaica's malevolent Prime Minister Edward Seaga, and the all too clearly perfidious Albion, have all disqualified themselves from supervising any genuine electoral process.

Finally, there are the actors themselves. The cast of possible hopefuls from the right is not exactly studded with stars. Barring a few exiles and some members of the plantocracy who thought themselves inadequately compensated by the last government, our impresario, Sir Paul Scoon, might find it difficult to scratch together enough actors for the dress rehearsal, the one called Plausible Transitional Government.

As to the long-term government of Grenada, the only way in which a highly politicised population will accord any credibility to the constitutional processes is if there is no blacklist. Those members and supporters of the People's Revolutionary Government who have survived their ordeal must also be allowed to offer themselves as candidates. Were this to happen, and were the pressures on the occupying forces to be strong enough to impel them to honour their proclaimed belief in democracy, some of the programme of the New Jewel Movement can survive into a new era.

Julian Rothenstein