
Introduction: Grenada: Revolution, Invasion and Beyond
Author(s): Patsy Lewis
Source: *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 62, No. 3/4, Grenada: Revolution, Invasion and Beyond (September/December 2013), pp. i-xii, 1-8
Published by: Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies, University of the West Indies
Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/24384478
Accessed: 07-08-2018 14:28 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

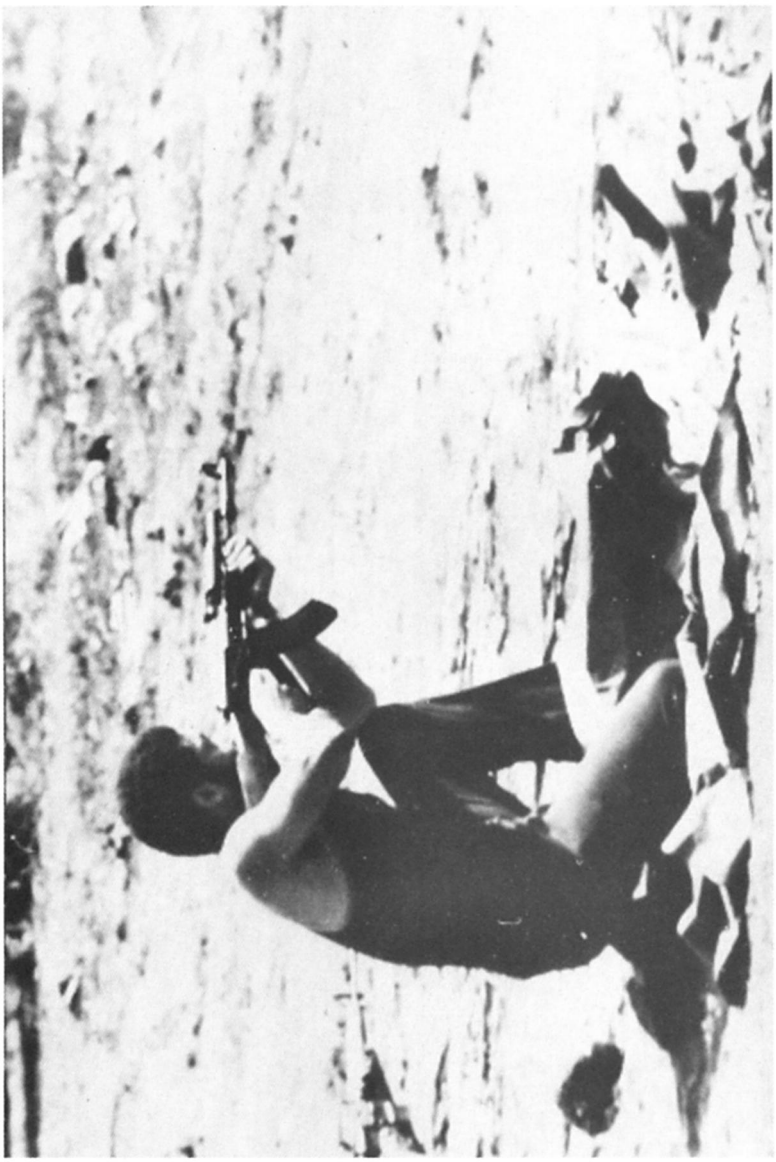
Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at https://about.jstor.org/terms

*University of the West Indies, Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies* are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Social and Economic Studies*

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Tue, 07 Aug 2018 14:28:31 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

**Maurice Bishop, hospitalized after being beaten along with other leaders of the New Jewel Movement in 1973, on what came to be known as Black Sunday. (Photos on pp i-xiv courtesy Casa de las Americas, Havana, Cuba).**

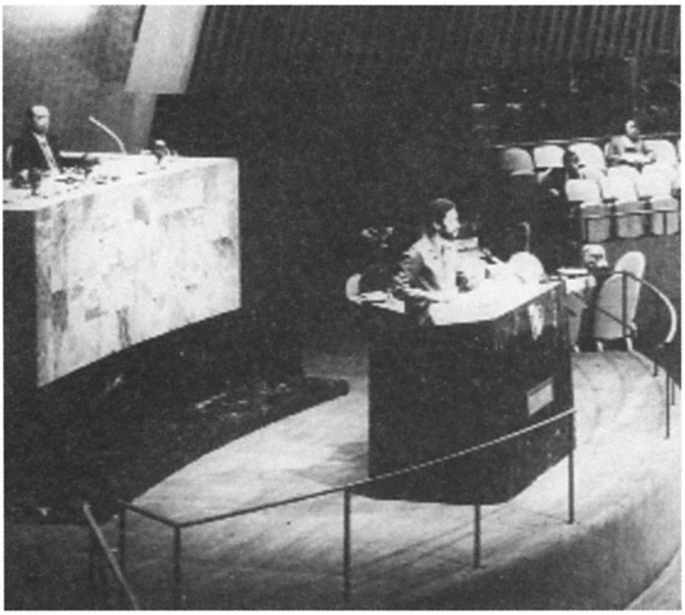
This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Tue, 07 Aug 2018 14:28:31 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms



**Prime Minister Maurice Bishop at shooting practice on a Grenadian beach.**



This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Tue, 07 Aug 2018 14:28:31 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms



**Prime Minister Maurice Bishop at his first address to the General Assembly of the United Nations in November 1979.**

**Prime Minister Maurice Bishop greeting President Fidel Castro at the United Nations in October 1979.**



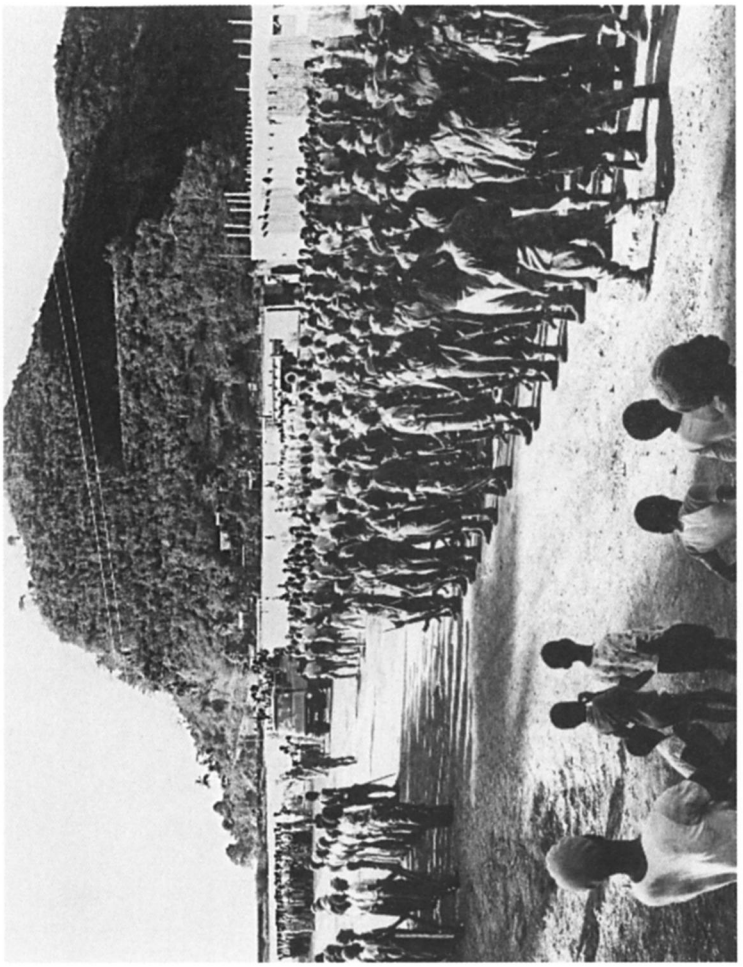
This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Tue, 07 Aug 2018 14:28:31 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Prime Minister Maurice Bishop with Governor-General Paul Scoon.

Murie Francoise (l) was one of the most active women during the undercover stage of the Revolution and in the successful coup of March 13. Here she is seen with Phyllis Coard, President of the Progressive Women's Association.



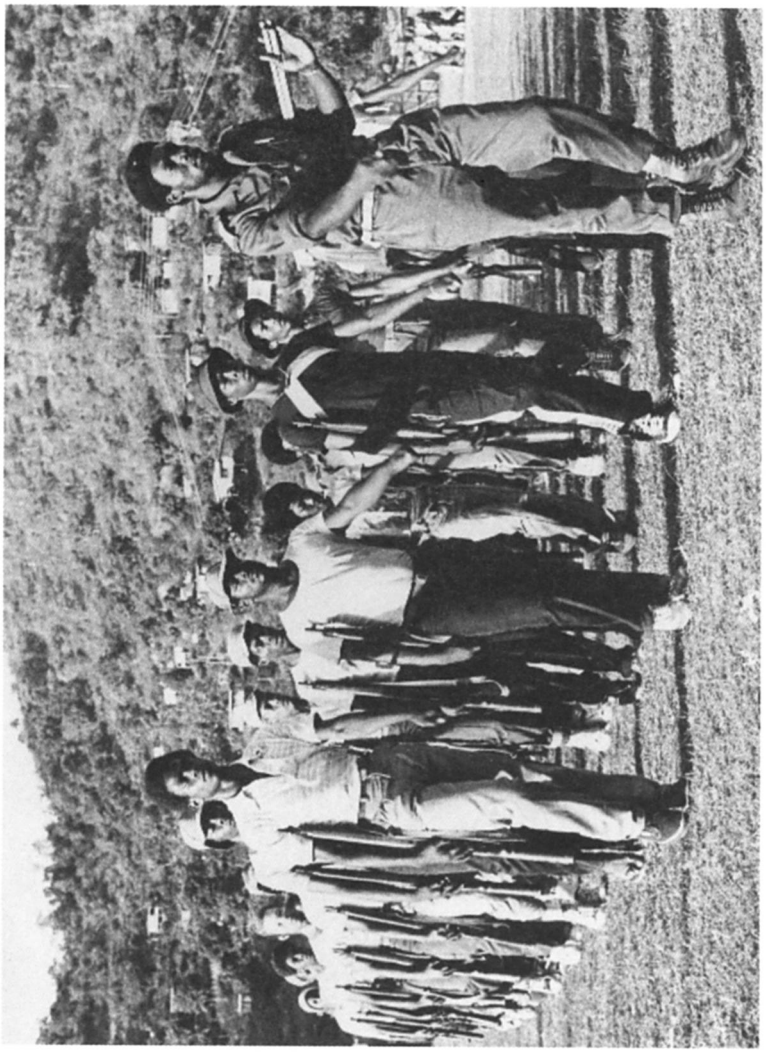
This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Tue, 07 Aug 2018 14:28:31 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms



Uncaptioned



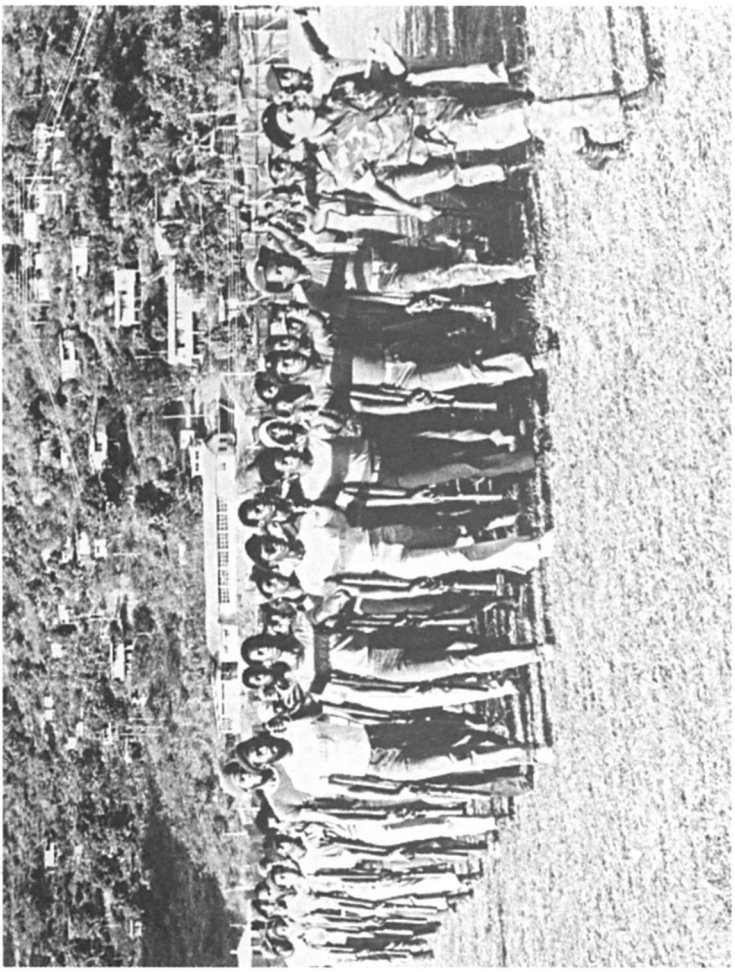
This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Tue, 07 Aug 2018 14:28:31 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms



Militia



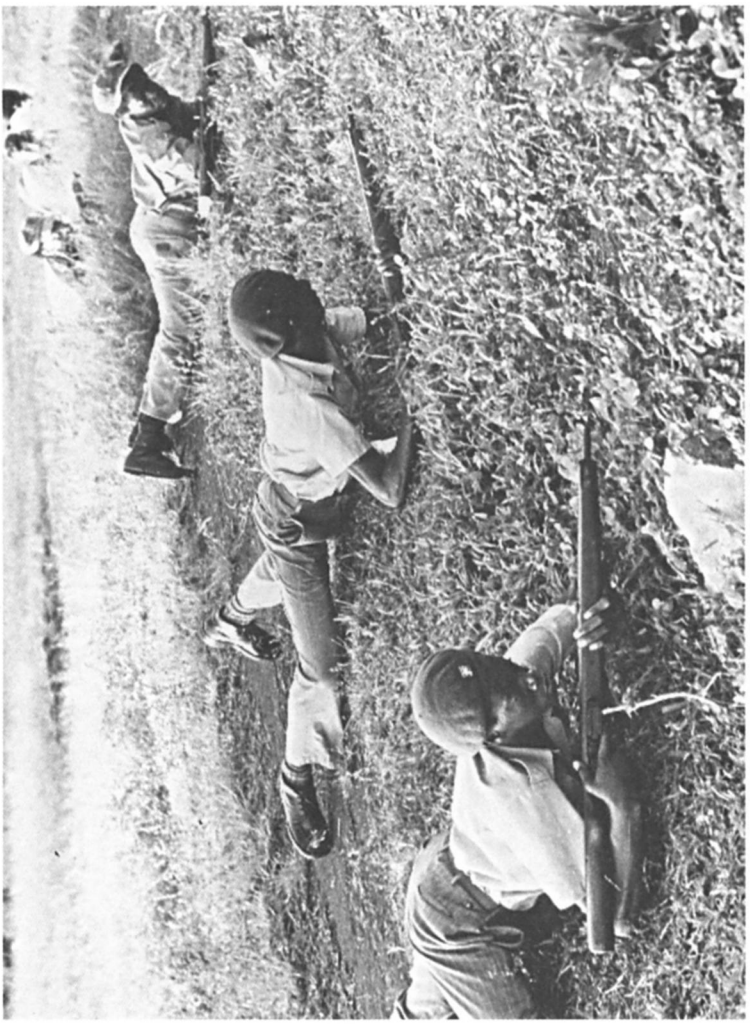
This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Tue, 07 Aug 2018 14:28:31 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms



**Militia**



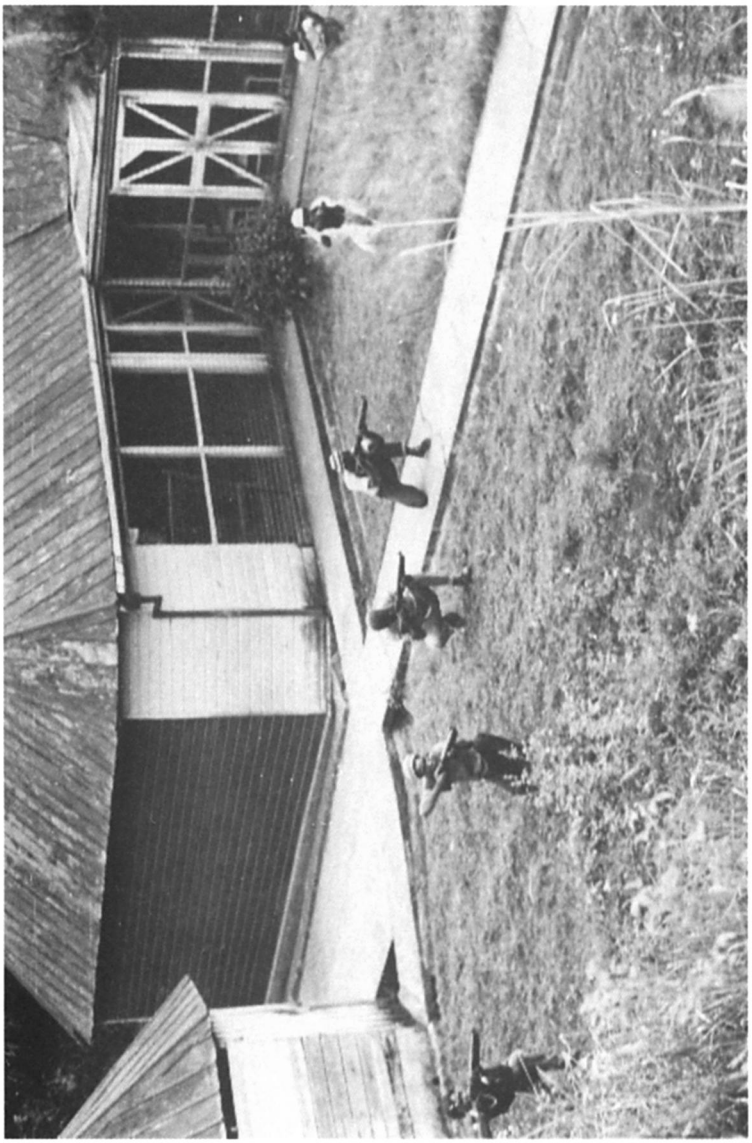
This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Tue, 07 Aug 2018 14:28:31 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms



Militia



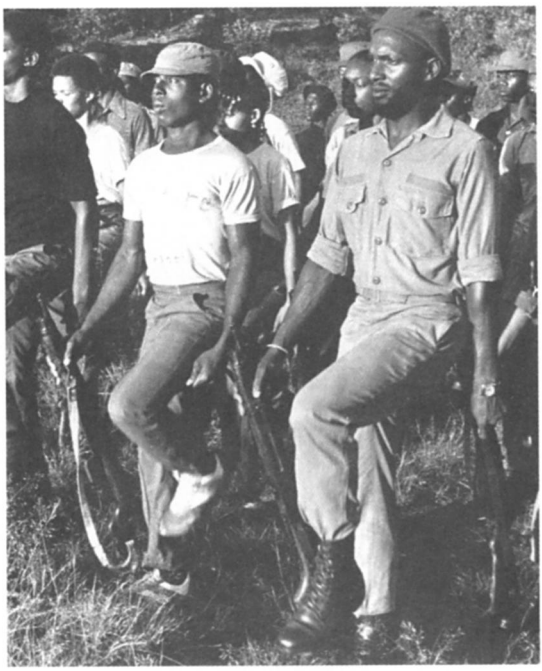
This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Tue, 07 Aug 2018 14:28:31 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms



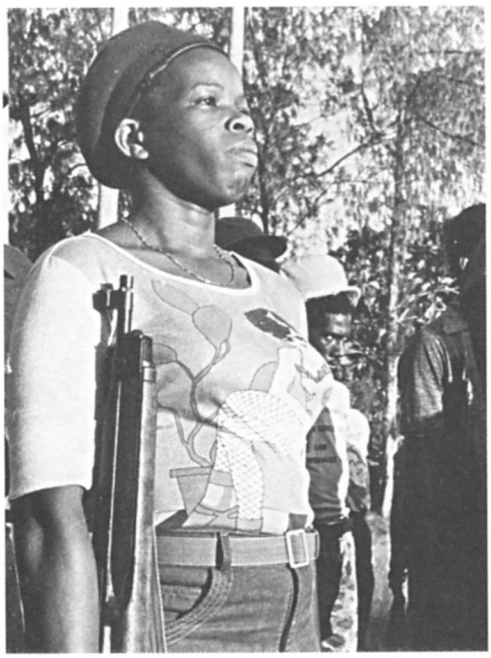
**Militia**



This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Tue, 07 Aug 2018 14:28:31 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms



**Militia**



**Militia**



This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Tue, 07 Aug 2018 14:28:31 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

**Poor reproduction of a photograph by Chick Harrity, published in US News and World Report**



This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Tue, 07 Aug 2018 14:28:31 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms


**A rare photo of one of the billboards erected during the Revolution. Source: Unknown.**

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Tue, 07 Aug 2018 14:28:31 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

*Social and Economic Studies 62: 3&4 (2013): 1–8* *ISSN: 0037-7651*

# Introduction
# Grenada: Revolution, Invasion and Beyond

**Patsy Lewis**

The killing of Maurice Bishop, Prime Minister of Grenada, and a number of Cabinet colleagues and others, on October 19th, thirty years ago, marked the effectual end of the Grenada Revolution. The October 25th invasion by US troops, supported by contingents of soldiers from some Caribbean territories, completed its demise in dramatic style. The Revolution imploded a mere four years after it had started, just short of the legitimate five year term granted the victors in Westminster democracies. In its wake it left a tantalizing glimpse of possibilities, all but eclipsed by the brutality of its end. The two events, so closely intertwined, encourage a schizophrenia, particularly among Grenadians, in their treatment and understanding of the Revolution. To some, it is a cautionary tale of the inevitable outcome of deviance from the charted Westminster model of 'free and fair' elections every five years. For many Grenadians, though, the Revolution, synonymous with Maurice Bishop, remains an ideal, a process to be sharply separated from its end, which was nothing more than a brutal overthrow by the wicked 'Coard faction'.

The American psyops team that accompanied the invading soldiers, blanketing Grenada with pamphlets released from helicopters, painting strategically worded graffiti on walls in a challenge to the slogans of the Revolution, feeding its media with carefully crafted scripts and photo ops to present a picture of a repressive, Soviet-controlled government, tried valiantly to fuse the two events. The Revolution was the problem; Maurice Bishop as guilty as Bernard Coard. After all, it was difficult to present Bishop as a saint when for much of the four years of the Revolution the US government had mounted a campaign against his regime in the media and at international fora. Nevertheless, in speaking of the Grenada Revolution, it is difficult to draw a neat distinction between its end and its promise, when it was the weaknesses in the process itself, which sowed the seeds of its demise. The most obvious was the failure to quickly replace Westminster democracy, of which the New Jewel Movement (NJM), the party behind the Revolution, was sharply critical, with alternative models of demo-

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Tue, 07 Aug 2018 14:28:31 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

cracy. Another was the primacy of the Party, and not the people, in determining the Revolution's course which, ultimately, led to the most undemocratic of outcomes, the unleashing of military force to silence Bishop and the imposition of a 'shoot to kill' curfew to end the expressions of outrage that followed his murder.

Thirty years after this dramatic series of events provides considerable distance for a critical reflection on the Revolution's strengths and weaknesses, as well as the invasion and how both have shaped Grenadian society. This collection is an attempt to continue this process of reflection. It presents a range of articles that assess different aspects of the Revolution itself, as well as the invasion, but also goes beyond the Revolution to explore some of the developmental challenges that continue to haunt this small state and which were at the heart of the revolutionary enterprise itself. The central theme of the pieces on the Revolution and invasion is memory. This is understandable, given that 30 years have elapsed since its passing.

Memory is central to the recreation of Grenada's past and permeates all the articles that speak to the Grenada Revolution and its aftermath, as reflected in the primacy of interviews in reconstructing the past. Merle Collins notes the challenge of reconstructing events through memory and the importance of disentangling memory from truth. Jermaine McCalpin speaks to the existence of many different 'truths', evident in Nicole Philip's account of women in the Grenada Revolution, in Arthur Newland's interviews with Ras Nang and in the competing versions presented in Lewis' critique of Edward Seaga's account of the Grenada invasion. Collins raises the further challenge of isolating truth, when there is often a seamless line between rumour and truth in a small state, as observed in her account of events leading up to Maurice Bishop's death.

The collection opens with a brief entrée by Brian Meeks who, in his short reflective essay, 'The Squall as Metaphor in Stormy Grenada' employs the motif of the 'squall', that "short, furious burst of weather, lasting, perhaps, five minutes and transitioning rapidly to a brilliant and unrelentingly hot morning sun" (Meeks, p. 9) as a metaphor to describe Grenada's turbulent past. He maps out the peculiar features of small states, not least of which is the oft unconsidered tightly knit framework of familial and inter-personal relationships that make their mark on the conduct of politics, and

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Tue, 07 Aug 2018 14:28:31 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

which are often ignored in attempts to understand the nature of the conflicts which led to the Revolution's demise. He also suggests an agenda for further intellectual enquiry that looks more closely at 'patterns of community interaction, familial and even generational loyalties' that may have contributed to the intensity of the crisis but may well lay the basis for resilience and forgiveness.

Merle Collins, in her article, 'What Happened? Grenada: A Retrospective Journey', seeks to answer one of the questions Meeks raises by using the Revolution's end as a starting point for a backwards journey into history in an attempt to understand those traumatic and tectonic events. Her intertwining of the Revolution, its origins, performance and end are common of all of the essays addressing this period, suggesting the difficulty of disentangling these as separate events. Rather, these events are treated as part of an indivisible whole that interweaves distant past, near past and future, proceeding along a continuum.

Arthur Newland's article, 'Rastafari in the Grenada Revolution', which follows Collins' paper, thematically, but is placed in the notes section of the journal, attempts to address an aspect of the Revolution which is silent in the literature on the Revolution, that is, its relationship with the small Rastafari community that existed.

The paper is important, not so much for its methodological rigour, as it draws heavily on one account of the Revolution, which is not subject to factual verification, but rather for what it reveals about the challenge the Revolution faced in integrating a minority group, whose philosophies did not sit comfortably with its goals, and its heavy-handed treatment of dissent, observed in Collins' thoughtful essay. The small Rastafari community was viewed as a threat to the Revolution and many of its members were interred at a special camp at Hope Vale. This came in the wake of a number of events that were linked to some members of the movement.[1] Among these were the capture of an agricultural estate for the growing of marijuana, a demonstration in support of marijuana production and a series of bomb blasts, one of which killed the person who was carrying it, who was identified as a member of the community. The latter came in the wake of a bomb detonation at a rally in Queen's Park to mark the first anniversary of the Revolution

1 For differing perspectives on these events see Steele 2003 and Sunshine et al. 1982.

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Tue, 07 Aug 2018 14:28:31 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

which, although directed at the leaders of the Revolution, killed three women, an account which appears in Collins' article.

Despite the failure of Newland's account to give the context for Ras Nang's position and the latter's gross exaggeration of the size and influence of the Rastafari and Black Muslim communities, the paper provides important insights into the effect of conflicts which beset the Revolution and led, ultimately, to its downfall, on inter-personal relationships, and the important role of contrition and forgiveness in healing such deep schisms in a small and close-knit society. The failure to resolve these conflicts amicably had already brought Grenada to the brink of civil war. This is reflected in the role of a former Lieutenant and Chief of Staff of the People's Revolutionary Army (PRA), Ewart Layne, who would have played a part in the incarceration of interviewee Ras Nang, in locating him for Newland; and in the poignant ritual of forgiveness Newland observed when, in response to an offer of apology by Lane, Ras Nang performs "a simple yet powerful ritual of forgiveness and blessing (from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet)" (p. 219).

Nicole Phillip's article, 'Women in the Grenada Revolution, 1979-1983', attempts to catalogue the Revolution's response to transforming the lives of women through legislation for equality of pay and maternity leave as well as to mobilise them in the project of nation building through the creation of a national umbrella organization, the National Women's Organisation (NWO). Again, through the lenses of women interviewed, a story of a deep commitment to change emerges alongside sentiments of exclusion, as the NJM-affiliated NWO sweeps aside previously existing, more elitist women's groups. Despite a generally favourable account of the PRG's efforts in empowering women, the interviews catalogue its shortcomings in bringing its ideals into the heart of the NJM, where traditional divisions of labour between men and women continued to thrive and failure to acknowledge and value women's role in the home persisted. Thus, women were dismissed as 'lazy' and 'petit bourgeois' when they complained that, unlike their male counterparts, they were expected to function in their traditional jobs, take on full party responsibilities *and* perform their roles in the home without help. This, more than any of the shortcomings in fully effecting legislation, speaks to the challenges of transformation that beset the Revolution.

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Tue, 07 Aug 2018 14:28:31 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

"'The Grenada Intervention, the Inside Story': A Response to Edward Seaga" by Patsy Lewis, uses competing accounts of the events surrounding the decision of particular Caribbean countries to invite US intervention into Grenada to challenge then Prime Minister of Jamaica, Edward Seaga's account of his role. Drawing on accounts by Grenada's Governor General, who was a central figure in attempts to justify the invasion as well as that of Jamaica's Minister of Tourism and Information in the Seaga government, Anthony Abrahams, she challenges the veracity of Seaga's version attempting, through these varied narratives, to separate 'myths and inaccuracies' from truth.

Jermaine McCalpin's, 'Written into Amnesia? The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Grenada', develops this dilemma in his discussion of the Grenada Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRCG), which sought to create truth from popular memory of the period covering the events leading up to the Revolution, the Revolution itself and its end. One of McCalpin's insightful observations is the challenge such commissions have in reconciling the different versions of the 'truth' that emerge. Collins' brief commentary on the role of rumours in a small society of 100,000 people, where rumour is often treated as truth, provides another complexity to the truth and reconciliation process in Grenada. In addition to several shortcomings, including definitions of its terms, the TRCG was weakened by its failure to address the question of justice for those aggrieved. Another issue, which McCalpin does not raise, that requires some exploration, is the challenge of a truth and reconciliation process when external agents are involved. In the specific instance of Grenada, one of the burning issues that emerged was the location of the bodies of Maurice Bishop and others. It is quite possible that the answer to this particular 'truth', given the US's role after October 25th, may not reside in Grenada at all.

In her article 'Painting the Grenada Revolution', Suelin Low Chew Tung explores the theme of memory through a 2011 exhibition of painting titled 'Grenada 1979-1983, Revolution: An Art Perspective'. The exhibition, staged by the Grenada Arts Council, was the first of its kind to bring together art on the Grenada Revolution. Her essay reflects not only on the art itself and on the challenge of finding art produced during the Revolution, about the Revolution, but also about the process in staging the exhibition and some of the local reactions to the idea. Her observation that much

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Tue, 07 Aug 2018 14:28:31 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

of the popular art created during the Revolution was put to the service of the revolutionary transformation project on village walls and billboards and that erasure occurred through the 'painting over and removal by 'unknown hands', when 'images of the revolution years were deliberately erased from the landscape' (p. 143), speaks to a conscious project of creating amnesia. In other words, the personal decision to forget in order to avoid the 'trauma' of remembering (Collins, p. 16) occurred alongside a deliberate amnesiac project of erasure. Not surprisingly, the more dramatic events of October 19th and the October 25th Invasion dominated the exhibition. The quote from Shalini Puri notes that the exhibition's focus mirrors the literature on the Revolution, where 'memory of the Grenada Revolution now often begins with its fall' (cited in Tung, p. 153).

The final two essays, 'Grenada and the Human Development Index (HDI): Unmasking the policy applicability of the HDI rank' by Heather Ricketts, and 'Small States and Risky Global Intercourse: the Grenada-Taiwan Dispute', by Wendy Grenade, move the discussion beyond the Revolution and its dramatic demise, to address Grenada's persistent development challenges, that arguably, laid the basis for the Revolution's project of transformation. Ricketts seeks to reconcile the rosy picture of a country experiencing 'high' human development presented by the United Nation's Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) with the disturbingly high levels of unemployment (25%) and poverty (37.7%) that have emerged with various national surveys. The importance of her concern lies in fashioning projects of development that present a different outcome from those previously followed. A failure to unmask the reality behind the HDI's rosy picture, would lead to a continuation of the same economic policies that have resulted in high levels of poverty and unemployment. She argues for an increased focus on the copyright and creative sectors as a means of offsetting the existing concentration on tourism and primary agriculture.

Wendy Grenade employs the Grenada-Taiwan dispute as a tool for exploring some of the development challenges of small states. She argues that the tendency for small states such as Grenada and others in CARICOM to pursue 'economic diplomacy as an essential pillar of their foreign policies' (p. 183), arises from the development challenges common to small developing states. The

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Tue, 07 Aug 2018 14:28:31 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Grenada-Taiwan dispute is an instance of the negative consequence that can befall a small state if such a strategy is not pursued 'skillfully' (p. 183). The article explores the intensification of China's presence in the Caribbean and its role in disrupting more traditional relations with Taiwan, with potentially negative consequences, as the Grenada case illustrates. Ultimately, though, the story is one of the failures of the regional Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to provide an effective forum for coordinating the foreign policy of its member states. Grenade calls for further research on small states' foreign policy, and more specifically, Grenada's foreign policy behaviours since independence.[2]

## CONCLUSION

These papers, published 30 years after the Revolution's end provide some insight into why it dynamised and excited so many, in particular women and youth so often at the margins of development, but also its more negative aspects, which help to explain the mixed responses it generated. The themes explored go beyond the Revolution's failings and the trauma of invasion to suggest the continuation of a project of healing, reconciliation and renewal. Most of the articles were written by people who experienced the Revolution either as participants or as recipients of its legacy through memory. The articles by Merle Collins, Arthur Newland and Suelin Low Chew Tung were solicited by Managing Editor Annie Paul at the annual Caribbean Studies Conference held in Grenada in June 2013. This special issue is one of the publication efforts of the Grenada Research Cluster of the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute for Social and Economic Studies (SALISES). The cluster is actively engaged in a research project, 'Navigating Crises in a Small State: A Grenada Case Study': which centres memories of traumatic events: the years leading up to the Grenada Revolution, the Revolution itself and the evens of October 1983, as well as Hurricane Ivan in 2004, in an effort to understand how small states attempt to address the fissures that attend such events. Both Collins and McCalpin acknowledge the trauma that occurs with remembering; a trauma that is deeply burned, but in the

2 Patsy Lewis's paper, 'Foreign Policy and Economic Development in Small States: A Case Study of Grenada' in Lewis 2013, represents a modest start in this direction.

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Tue, 07 Aug 2018 14:28:31 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

remembering comes painfully to the surface, as though 30 years past, were yesterday. So then, what justifies these painful projects of 'remembering'? In other words, for whom must this past be remembered? Collins suggests that this remembering must be done for the young. Those who bear the symbolic names of the Revolution's hopes—"Fedon, Che, Samora . . . breathing memory vaults of what might have been" (p. 16)—and to whom the task of economic social and political transformation falls.

## REFERENCES

Steele, Beverley A. 2003. *Grenada: A History of its People*, Oxford: Macmillan Caribbean, pp. 398-399.

Sunshine, Catherine, Philip Wheaton and Juel Kamke. 1982. *Grenada: The Peaceful Revolution*, Washington, DC: EPICA Task Force, pp. 66-68.

Lewis, Rupert, ed. 2013. *Caribbean Reasonings: Caribbean Political Activism—Essays in Honour of Richard Hart*. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers.

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Tue, 07 Aug 2018 14:28:31 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms