

**Wendy C. Grenade (Ed.). (2015). *The Grenada revolution: Reflections and lessons*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi. 284pp; ISBN: 978-1-6284-6151-0. US\$30 (pbk) / US\$65 (hbk)/ US\$16.50 (ebook)**

Political factions, ideological, generational and gender divides, and geographical and national differences are among the categories across which varying insights develop on the Grenada Revolution. The socialist-inspired revolution began on March 13, 1979 when a cadre of young radicals, the New Jewel Movement (NJM), seized power from the nation's first prime minister, Eric Gairy, and formed the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG). Buoyed by early popular support, the PRG governed the island-nation of 100,000 people for four and a half years until an internal power struggle led to the assassination of prime minister Maurice Bishop by members of his own military. A US military invasion of Grenada followed within days. The revolution and the US invasion were firsts in the Anglophone Caribbean, and changed the face of politics in the region. *The Grenada revolution* offers readers a multi-disciplinary range of accounts reflecting on the place of the revolution in national and regional contexts. (The collection appeared in 2015; and almost all chapters were drafted in 2013: the authors refer to reflecting on Grenada 30 years after the revolution's October 1983 collapse.)

A sizable literature on the revolution has developed since 1983, mainly in political science, but also history, anthropology, and literary and cultural studies. A key issue in scholarly conversations about the Grenada Revolution, however, is that many tend to focus on October 1983; as a result, other aspects of the four and a half year process are elided. This anthology largely avoids this pitfall. Organised into four sections, around the concepts of 'reflections' and 'lessons,' these essays deal with how the Grenada Revolution can inform Caribbean scholars about radical political change, Caribbean Marxism, and the pressures of managing national and international relations for small states in the shadow of great powers such as the United States. In this book, the authors (all from the Caribbean) think through the Revolution's historical contexts, antecedents and outcomes, in a region where reverberations from political change in one state are almost always felt in neighbouring states and territories.

Part One grounds the collection with two essays that offer historical and economic contexts for the revolution. Starting mid-century, Curtis Jacobs reviews the parallel political trajectories of Gairy and Bishop. In the 1950s, Grenadians led by Gairy organised strikes to protest the abuses of the plantocracy. From such efforts, they won universal adult suffrage and modest income gains for rural workers. The next generation of Grenadians came of age as Gairy became increasingly authoritarian. Bishop rose to prominence as political leader in the 1970s when this younger generation protested Gairy's abuse of state funds and the deterioration of public services. Economist Kari Grenade crunches the numbers to establish the economic effects of the revolution. Taking an extended timeline (1960-2012), she explains how a mixed-economy approach taken by the PRG differed from the economic policies of administrations

that came before and after the revolution. She also exposes the difficulty the NJM faced in staking out a place for Grenada on the global economic stage in the midst of the Cold War.

The centrepiece of the collection is editor and political scientist Wendy Grenade's interview with Bernard Coard, who was deputy prime minister of the PRG, and the man many have blamed for the coup that ousted Bishop. (Coard has denied ever attempting to oust Bishop. While he takes moral responsibility for the October 19<sup>th</sup> tragedy that ended in the death of Bishop and others, he has maintained his innocence in relation to criminal charges.) Grenade's skill as an interviewer produces a wide-ranging conversation about how the NJM developed as a party, the process by which the PRG's key initiatives in transportation, agriculture and the economy were launched; and the challenges the NJM faced internally and externally. The vanguard party's secrecy and exclusivity, both means by which they cut themselves off from the Grenadian public, meant that a huge amount of work fell on a narrow party leadership. Chapters by political scientists Brian Meeks and Patsy Lewis reflect their perspectives as participant-observers. Meeks imagines what Bishop and his allies were thinking in the revolution's final days. It drives home the heavy loss brought about by Bishop's assassination. Lewis interviews a young woman who was at Fort Rupert, the site of the tragedy, the day the revolution ended: it is chilling in the rawness and trauma apparent in the speaker's voice.

In Part Three, Hilbourne Watson, Tennyson Joseph and Horace Campbell analyze the theoretical stakes presented by the NJM's pursuit of Marxist-Leninist principles. They situate Grenada in distinctly Caribbean traditions of revolution and Marxism, putting the NJM's project in conversation with radical movements in Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Haiti. Tennyson evokes Trinidadian theorist CLR James in his critique of the NJM's vanguard party approach. Campbell points out the inherently patriarchal aspects of past Caribbean revolutions, arguing for the inclusion of feminist politics in future movements. Perhaps the weakness of the collection is that Campbell's call for greater attention to gender issues is not addressed in detail.

The final section takes us to the post-revolutionary period, looking at the legacy of the Grenada Revolution on Caribbean leftist politics. David Hinds traces the connections between Grenada and Guyana, looking at how Guyana's Working People's Alliance (WPA) both learned from and critiqued the NJM while pursuing its own radical, cross-racial agenda. Wendy Grenade's essay on Grenadian politics from 1984-2013 outlines how the US invasion paved the way for a neoliberal turn that grips Grenada to this day. The contribution of Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of St. Vincent & the Grenadines, is taken from his remarks at the 2009 event where Grenada's airport was renamed in Bishop's honour. His words serve as a eulogy for Bishop and the spirit of internationalism that saw Cuba assist Angola, South Africa and Grenada in their freedom struggles. A strength in this collection is that the nostalgia for Cuba that Gonsalves expresses is necessarily complicated when read against Coard's sense that Cubans, while initially helpful were, in the end, a divisive influence within the NJM, in part because they allegedly urged Bishop to abandon the NJM's September 1983 call for joint 'Bishop-Coard' leadership. According to Coard, it was Fidel Castro's preference that Bishop maintain a "maximum leader" role within the NJM. This collection does not coalesce around a single narrative of the Grenada Revolution. Rather, it creates a dialogue about the many areas around which the revolution invites engagement, analysis and critique.

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