

SWITCHBOARD

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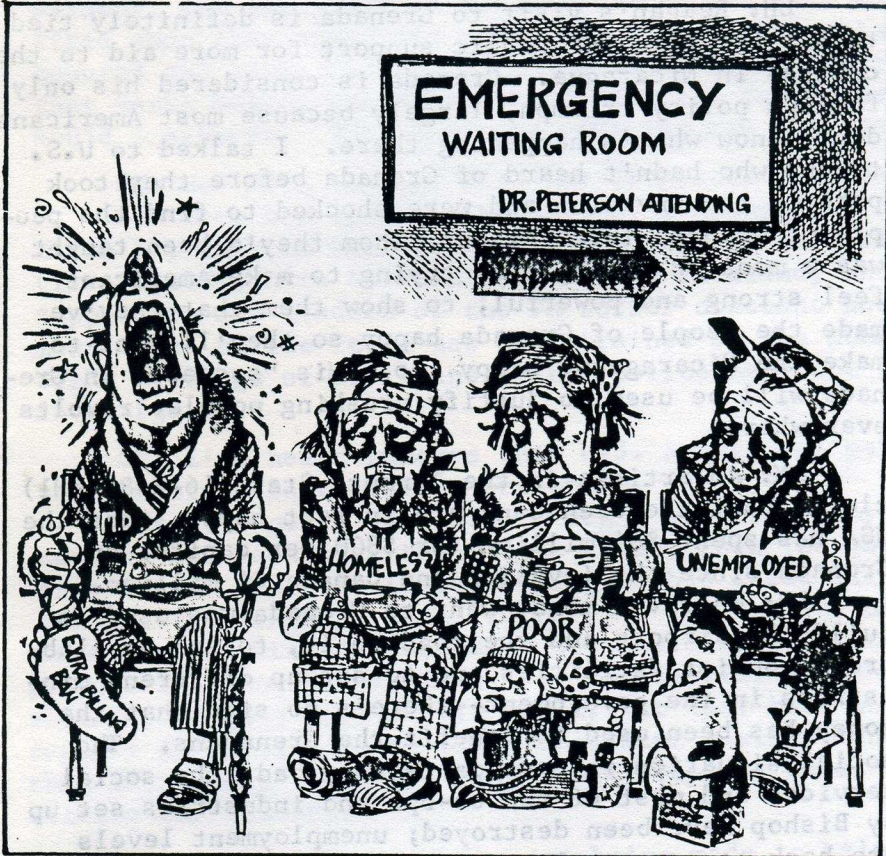
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COMMUNITY SWITCHBOARD
24 Ryerson #309, 868-0113

one block north of Queen, one block east of Bathurst

Community Switchboard offers a forum and research facilities to those concerned with analyzing the need for basic social change and establishing an alternative social system, economically and ecologically sound, whose principles of small-scale technology, self and co-operative employment and human-scaled social units will contrast with those of the corporate state. Anyone who shares these goals is invited to contact the Switchboard to discuss means of working together towards achieving them.

OFFICE HOURS: The Switchboard is usually open Tuesday thru Saturday afternoons. Spontaneous visits are always welcome, but visitors wishing to verify the office being open are invited to phone in advance.



UPCOMING AT THE FREE UNIVERSITY (519 CHURCH 7:30 P.M.)

Weds. February 26-Male Sexuality, a workshop for men and women presented by General Male, a local anti sexist men's group. For information: 532-3430.

Weds. March 5-Building a Green Movement, examination of such North American grassroots developments as participatory democracy, renewable energy, ecology local decision making and cooperatives.

REAGAN'S GRENADA VISIT TIED TO NICARAGUA POLICIES

Lorna Hillman, a frequent visitor to Grenada prior to her recent expulsion by the U.S. puppet regime, is active in support work for the people of Grenada. She is also a volunteer worker for Canadian Action for Nicaragua, in whose office Gary Moffatt interviewed her about the significance of Reagan's recent opening of the Grenada airport.

GM: Obviously you see a connection between the situations in Grenada and Nicaragua.

LH: Reagan's visit to Grenada is definitely tied to his campaign for public support for more aid to the contras in Nicaragua. Grenada is considered his only foreign policy triumph, largely because most Americans don't know what's happening there. I talked to U.S. troops who hadn't heard of Grenada before they took part in the invasion and were shocked to find the people of Grenada loved Bishop, whom they'd been taught was a monster. Reagan is trying to make Americans feel strong and powerful, to show them that they've made the people of Grenada happy so they'll want to make the Nicaraguans happy too. His "success" in Grenada will be used to justify crushing popular revolts everywhere.

GM: An article in the Toronto Star (16-2-86 p11) claims that the Grenadans are in fact happy, that the USA has spent \$84 million (or \$800 per capita) on Grenada since the invasion and Canada \$4 million.

LH: Whatever money went to Grenada was used to build the airport and the road to it, to set up elaborate tourist facilities and to set up different ministries in the government--there's no sign that the money has been used to benefit the Grenadans. The social situation in Grenada is very bad; the social services and most of the co-ops and industries set up by Bishop have been destroyed; unemployment levels are back to pre-revolution levels; prostitution is on the rise; unemployment is back to 40-50% and cocaine use (non-existent before the invasion, even under Gairy) is now rampant. The people with jobs are growing cocoa and bananas and serving tourists. Tourism is to be the big industry; Schultz refers to Grenada as a "magnificent piece of real estate."

GM: Then how come the present government won the

election held shortly after the invasion?

LH: Bishop's supporters had been, and many still are, traumatized by his murder at the hands of Corde and the subsequent U.S. invasion to overthrow Corde. The New Jewel Movement died when Corde took over, and the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement was started as a political party which is the only opposition to U.S. policy. There was no popular census before the election, and when a short registration period had ended 10,000 people were left off the voters' list. The chief registration officer was fired and arrested for trying to reopen registration when this became evident, and the other 25 electoral officers were also fired when they supported him. Also, votes were miscounted and often ballots were marked on paper treated so that marks beside the Patriotic Movement's candidate would disappear. The Americans covertly ran the election.

GM: How much support does the Patriotic Movement have?

LH: They had 3,000 supporters at a demonstration last March 13; this is impressive when you recall that the entire population is between 110 and 125 thousand, and that supporters and leaders of the PM suffer constant harrassment. The police force has been trained by the RCMP, and eight killings of civilians by the police have not been investigated.

GM: I've heard rumours that U.S. agents are personally involved in torturing prisoners.

LH: It's quite possible; I don't know since my own concern has been with the people rather than the political prisoners. The U.S.-installed regime has freed all members of the Mongoose Gang (terrorists used by the Gairy regime which Bishop overthrew) and the only political prisoners I know of are Corde and 18 associates. They should certainly have a fair trial, but they have no support in Grenada where the people want justice done to them for Bishop's murder. Their only support comes from outside the country.

GM: What sort of efforts are being made to help the people?

LH: There's the Morris Bishop Martyrs Foundation, a community organization to preserve Grenada's history and raise money to help people hurt or bereaved during the U.S. invasion. It was set up by surviving cabinet ministers and has members, including myself, in various countries. On my last visit I was trying to get a rural (p4)

NEWS SPASMS MISLEAD PUBLIC

Excerpts from Alexander Cockburn's column in The Nation 15-2-86 p16:

The "news spasm," more frequent and more intense as the Reagan years progress, is becoming a frightening fixture of the national political culture. Particularly memorable spasm events include the downing of KAL 007, the destruction of the U.S. Marine barracks at Beirut airport, the TWA and the Achille Lauro hijackings and now the explosion of the space shuttle.

These news spasms are totalitarian in structure and intent, obsessively monopolistic of newsprint and the airwaves, forcing a "national mood" or consensus in which rituals of grief and vengeance can be carried forward, with President Reagan as master of ceremonies in electronic equivalents of a Nuremberg rally. The cries of grief, the howls for vengeance, all obscure the fact that President Reagan has almost invariably been to blame for the events provoking the spasms... It was his idea to give space, the zone of Star Wars, a cozy, Rockwellish 1950s tinge by sending up a small town American schoolmarm. And it was presumably the thought of President Reagan tilting his words up to McAuliffe in the State of the Union Message that prompted NASA officials to send up the Challenger even though they were well aware that the freezing temperatures were perilous in the extreme, particularly to the solid fuel boosters...

The spasm, in short, deflects blame and, by the obsessive narrowness of its focus, reasserts priorities; this is a society that should mourn, to a point well past hysteria, Leon Klinghoffer but not Alex Odeh, Christa McAuliffe but not that true heroine Samantha Smith, U.S. Marines killed by Moslems but not Nicaraguan teachers killed by U.S.-backed contras.

(editor's note: these comments are relevant in Canada, where several idiots criticized the CBC for not giving the shuttle explosion more coverage than it did. Why Canada should join Americans in lamenting that it may be a few years longer than they had hoped before they can fill the constellation with military gadgetry and exploit the natural resources of other planets lies beyond our powers of comprehension.)

Cockburn also mentions a typical press ploy to deceive the public; the press gave full coverage to Reagan's attack on the Sandinistas for arming Colombian M-19 guerillas who stormed the Palace of Justice in Bogota last November, and failed to mention that Colombia has accepted Nicaragua's rejection of the charges.

GRENADA (contd from page 3)

development project going, but I was expelled by the police and the government said I was a threat to national security as I was involved in local politics, which is untrue.

GM: Do you see any resemblance between recent events in Grenada and Haiti?

LH: The USA is doing the same thing in Haiti; it will likely rush an election through by the end of the year which will be meaningless; how can it mean much when 80% of the country is illiterate? The main concern is that U.S. industries can continue to operate duty-free in Haiti and exploit labour. The people have seen the government taken over by Duvalier officials and they're still rioting.

GM: People who are trying to raise Canadian opposition to the U.S.-backed genocide in East Timor are upset that so many of us will take part in movements to oppose interventionism in Latin America, but virtually no one for Asia.

LH: People are more concerned about Latin America because of its proximity; I would agree that they should be active in Asian issues such as East Timor as well.

GAS PLANT THREATENS FARMLAND

Northumberland County has hitherto been spared the same sort of development which has destroyed Durham County's agricultural land, but its luck may be about to run out. Consumer Gas wants to build a liquified natural gas plant in the county; residents fear it will wreak havoc with the water table and endanger lives due to the possibility of its blowing up. Also, the 14-storey structure will be an eyesore destroying much of the surrounding land's beauty.

Protests by local residents have caused the Ontario cabinet to hesitate giving the plan outright approval, but they have referred the matter to the Ontario Energy Board. The residents fear that their views won't be fairly heard here due to the Board's closeness to Consumer Gas, and ask instead for an environmental assessment hearing which they feel will be more open-minded. Anyone wishing to support their position should call the office of Premier Peterson 965-1941 or of NDP leader Bob Rae 965-3311 at once. For more information: Don and Jennifer 532-3430.

Meanwhile, Brampton foodgrowers are protesting an Ontario decision to make 5000 acres of our remaining farmland available for developers to concretized. Evidently the battle of developers vs. people will rage across the province.

CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN CONFERENCE

May 9-10 will examine the various forms of violence and oppression in children's lives around the world. Keynote speaker Philip Berrigan. Fee \$30-\$20. For more information: Centre for Non-Violence 533-9507.