

Thoughts on the invasion of Grenada

The pre-dawn invasion of tiny Grenada, commonly called the isle of spice, by the United States and some Caribbean forces has been criticized and condemned by several countries.

The sporadic demonstrations across Canada over this incident have exhibited an obvious lack of knowledge of the situation in Grenada and the English-speaking Caribbean on the part of the demonstrators.

When Maurice Bishop took over power in 1979 from Eric Gairy, it was not only a bloodless coup, but it was, in fact, a popular move as far as the majority of Grenadians were concerned. There was no question that Eric

Gairy, by that time, had become a despot who was trying to cling to power in a very dubious manner.

The last "free" election in Grenada could hardly be considered free. Gairy and his 'ton ton macouts' (secret police) had tried to eliminate his strongest opponent—the popular and intelligent Maurice Bishop.

In 1976, Bishop was brought to Barbados badly beaten and barely conscious—the result of the Gairy regime's attempt to eliminate a strong contender from the upcoming election.

Bishop survived that attempt on his life, went back to Grenada, and organized an under-

ground movement which waited for the propitious moment (while Eric Gairy was on a visit to the United States) to take over the leadership of Grenada in a bloodless coup.

Of course a coup, bloody or bloodless, was unprecedented in the history of the English-speaking Caribbean. So it was no surprise that Caribbean leaders, as well as the majority of Caribbean people, became concerned by the events in Grenada—namely the establishment of a marxist government under Maurice Bishop, which declared its intention of developing strong ties with Cuba and the Soviets.

Whether the ostracism of

Grenada by the democratic Caribbean nations and the U.S. had anything to do with Grenada's decision to align itself with the Communist bloc is matter of debate, and one which cannot be engaged in at this point.

But it was clear that the Prime Minister of Barbados, the Hon. Tom Adams, along with some of the other Caribbean leaders (excluding Cuba and Guyana—both ruled more or less by dictatorship), vociferously opposed, not Bishop's leadership, but his failure to call a general election. No doubt an election would have resulted in Bishop being returned to power, based on popular support.

My sources in the Caribbean have revealed that Bishop intended to call an election. Thus the slaying of Bishop and his 16 supporters was seen by many Grenadians as a loss of hope for the return to democracy.

The general consensus of ordinary Grenadians over the invasion by the U.S. and Caribbean forces is most likely to be one of relief. I would not be surprised at all, when Grenadians get a chance to voice their opinion, that they consider the invasion a liberation and restoration of the peace which existed in that tropical tourist resort prior to the events of October 1983.

Andrew Knight

Response to Ethical Reflections on right to life

In response to last week's commentary, 'Ethical Reflections on the Right to Life,' I would like to point out to Mr. McCann that there is very little ethical reflection in that article. Mr. McCann merely states, "Human life has a God-given, intrinsic dignity and worth which must neither be legislated away, nor compromised in any society which considers itself civilized. Because of this intrinsic dignity and worth, it follows that all human beings have an inalienable right to life." Mr. McCann neither goes on to consider what gives life dignity or what constitutes compromise.

He then goes on to state that, "Our judicial system is designed to deal swiftly with those who choose to deprive others of their right to life." In responding to that statement, I was compelled to notice how easily Mr. McCann disregards society's sanction of murder in the instances of war, and, in the U.S.A., the not dis-

used practice of capital punishment. One is tempted to wonder what Mr. McCann was implying by the phrase "deal swiftly"—surely not the hideous paradox of proposing to protect the sanctity of life through the deprivation of it. Neither does Mr. McCann consider that if life is sacred then "any society which considers itself civilized" may have the moral responsibility to sustain life at all costs; which, of course, considering our degree of practical aid to the 3rd world, this country does not do. But then the point Mr. McCann intended to emphasize was that "the greatest threats to the universal concept of right to life exists in the horror of legalized abortion."

Mr. McCann does concede, after a very brief and unsubtle case for what constitutes full human life, that society has a duty to protect the dignity of life for both the woman who finds

herself pregnant and her baby. It is this point I would like to examine briefly: the problem of what constitutes a full human life. Please understand that I only hope to bring to our attention those necessary considerations that Mr. McCann, in his overzealous tendency for abstraction, neglected to grapple with concerning such a poignant area of ethical concern.

First, I would like to mention that society can be shown to be not fulfilling its duty to protect the dignity of unwed mothers and their children. Aside from the pitifully small amounts of financial assistance (if as in most cases the woman has lost her job, moved or quit school as a result of her pregnancy) provided by social services, that agency does not encourage women to enter the work force or re-enter school. Here, I am speaking from the data of my experiences; too often, I have known women who

are unable to even pay a babysitter so they could go job hunting. And the provinces are even making that too limited help harder to secure. In my opinion, grinding poverty is one of the most effective means of depleting both a person's sense of purpose in life and the feeling of their own dignity. And grinding poverty is what most unwed mothers and their children are subjected to. I must add that the nature of poverty is, I think, never fully understood by someone who has never experienced its exhausting effects.

Also, although Mr. McCann mentions the 'grave psychological repercussions to women who choose abortion,' he does not mention the grave psychological repercussions to children born to resentful mothers; mothers defeated, slowly and agonizingly, by the conditions of their lives; the jail of marriages of necessity; or the scar of still common social

stigma. Can society any longer afford to, or because of pride and good manners choose to, deny the psychological nightmare of many families—families afflicted by child abuse, wife battering, or even sickening unhappiness?

Yes, there is adoption, but many mothers, because of natural love, social pressure or family pressure, cannot choose it. And if, as I so often hear, adoption is such a perfect answer, why have I seen so many foster children without homes?

I ask Mr. McCann if we have the right to decree misery in the name of life? I ask everyone, as he did, "since this is Pro-Life month in Nova Scotia, may each of us re-examine our views?"

Dixie MacDonald
English M.A.


On behalf of the
Dalhousie Women's Committee



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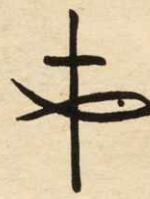
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