

5. Grenada

In some respects, the great differences between the political and cultural traditions of the Spanish-speaking states of Central America and the Caribbean on the one hand, and the English-speaking Caribbean states on the other, call in question the wisdom of including the Grenada affair in this study. But the geopolitical factors influencing Soviet (and American) policy towards Grenada are broadly similar to those affecting the superpowers' behaviour in the other cases considered here. And, indeed, the response of the Soviet Union and the United States to the emergence of a radical leftist regime in this quite different political environment resembles closely their behaviour in the cases discussed earlier. From a methodological perspective, moreover, this case is particularly illuminating, since researchers have access to a large body of primary source material on the ideological predispositions and internal workings of the New Jewel Movement, and on Grenadian relations with both Cuba and the Soviet Union.

As in the other cases, the emergence of the Bishop regime was largely a response to domestic political and economic crisis. Grenadian politics prior to and in the aftermath of independence were dominated by Eric Matthew Gairy. Gairy's initial political success rested on the support of a broadly based rural trade union movement. However, returning to power in 1967 after five years in opposition, he began to distance himself from his working class base, using the patronage powers of his office to enrich himself and to consolidate his support among the middle class of entrepreneurs and bureaucrats. Identifying himself to an increasing degree with domestic and international business, he enacted labour legislation effectively emasculating his former base of support, the trade union movement.

In order to retain power in the face of a growing opposition, he formed and relied to an increasing degree on a special police force, the "mongoose gang", which mounted a systematic campaign of intimidation and occasional assassination against opposition groups. With the passage of the time, Gairy displayed increasing evidence of personal instability and megalomania. His obsession with unidentified flying objects and his attempt to convince the United Nations to form an agency the purpose of which would be to communicate with extraterrestrial beings are perhaps evidence of the former. His equation of opposition to his rule with the rejection of God's wisdom provides an example of the latter.