

TRANS AFRICA NEWS

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The Black American Lobby for Africa and the Caribbean

ABOMINATION IN GRENADA

It was only in our last issue that we extolled the promise which was Grenada. Prime Minister Maurice Bishop had visited Washington and addressed the TransAfrica annual fundraising dinner. He had spoken enthusiastically about the progress of the Grenadian revolution. He waxed eager about the future as he invited all those in attendance at the dinner to visit Grenada as soon as the new airport was completed and opened in March, 1984. Now, in less than five months, he is dead.

He was killed after spending nearly a week under house arrest. The People's Revolutionary Army (PRA) had taken over the government in a coup d'etat on October 12, and then confined Bishop to his residence. So popular was the Prime Minister that more than 4,000 Grenadians stormed Butler Mansion where he was imprisoned to free him. They literally carried him on their shoulders to Fort Rupert in the hope that he could be reestablished in power. That was not to be. He was taken from the crowd at gun point. Soldiers fired into the people's midst, causing several deaths just in order to break him loose from them. Then they led him away to a barracks with his hands folded on top of his head. There they executed him in cold blood. Several members of his Cabinet died along with Bishop, including: Unison Whiteman, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Jacqueline Creft, Minister of Education and Norris Bain, Minister of Housing.

In Grenada itself, the most serious grievances against Bishop sprang from his unwillingness to share power with other members of the Central Committee of the ruling party. Personal differences had come to dominate party affairs while the disagreements between Bishop and Bernard Coard, the Deputy Prime Minister grew increasingly explosive. Coard was supported by his



Photo By Luci Williams

Maurice Bishop 1944-1983

wife, Phyllis, also a member of the Central Committee, along with Selwyn Strachan, Hudson Austin and other key figures. According to some reports, Bishop had agreed to power sharing arrangements at one time, only to renege on them later. His retraction was quite disturbing for Coard, who stood to gain tremendously, as well as for those who supported him. This faction moved to isolate the Prime Minister within the party and eventually placed him under house arrest.

Nothing which comes to light subsequently can change the fact that this was an egregious act carried out by a treacherous clique within the New Jewel Movement. They took it upon themselves to murder the Prime Minister and his colleagues. These people themselves had participated in the 1979 revolution with Bishop and some, including Liam James, had come to the U.S. as advance people for his visit last summer. Their treachery was brewing even then and it crystallized after the Prime Minister returned home.

It is most difficult to understand the coldness of the coup-makers in Grenada. Their moves can perhaps be laid to the excesses inherent in unbridled political ambitions. To the extent that they conceived of the Grenadian revolu-

tion as a rigid process to be carried out in preconceived stages, they grew intolerant of any developments which they felt interrupted the progress of those stages. Thus, Bishop himself became an obstacle to progress in their eyes and as such, he had to be removed. Consequently, the renegades were shocked at the Cuban reaction to what they had done. They lamented that the Cubans showed more concern about Bishop than about the Grenadian revolution. They were blind to the fact that Fidel Castro and the Cuban people held Maurice Bishop in genuine esteem as a person.

We at TransAfrica were critical ourselves of Maurice Bishop at times. When he visited us he was questioned by members of the Board of Directors about political detentions and the administration of justice in Grenada. He knew our concerns about enhancing the democratic process in his country. He obviously had to balance those views against those of his opponents at home. Some have said that it was Bishop's visit to the United States that led to his death upon his return home. If this is so, it makes a sad comment on the myopia and narrow-mindedness of those who killed him. It is hard to believe that they would label themselves *progressive*.

The actual extent of the tragedy in Grenada did not become known until a week after the murders occurred. It was then that the U.S. invaded the island. On October 25, American forces descended on the island by land, sea and air. They gained control of the two airports, moved on the Medical School and the residence of the Governor-General. They then engaged in house-to-house fighting in order to subdue the national army and round up the leaders of the ruling military council. It all took place very suddenly in what the military terms a surgical strike. The entire press corps

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CULTURAL BOYCOTT CAMPAIGN UNDER WAY



Artists and Athletes Against Apartheid



Arthur Ashe



Harry Belafonte

TransAfrica has been receiving considerable international attention as a result of the recently launched cultural boycott known as Artists and Athletes Against Apartheid. The magnetic appeal of this campaign is illustrated by the fact that more than eighty leading celebrities have committed themselves to be members of the Executive Committee, with thirty national and international organizations serving as co-sponsors of the effort. Co-chaired by Harry Belafonte and Arthur Ashe, Artists and Athletes Against Apartheid is clearly destined for tremendous success. Hazel Ross, who is TransAfrica's Legislative Assistant for Economic and Caribbean Affairs, has been working incessantly in promotion of the boycott. Here she shares with TransAfrica News readers some of her own perspectives on this dynamic drive.

As long ago as 1958, the African National Congress attempted to impress upon the international community the importance of enforcing the complete cultural isolation of South Africa. However, it took the massacre of hundreds of black South African school children in the township of Soweto in 1976 to rivet worldwide attention on the brutality of *apartheid*. The Soweto riots stimulated international support for the cultural boycott as an important additional means of combatting socio-political aberrations inside South Africa.

Prior to the Soweto killings, and as early as 1968, the United Nations General Assembly, in its Resolution 2396, requested all states and organizations to suspend educational, sporting and other exchanges with the South African government and its affiliated agencies. In 1972, the General Assembly recommended the organization of an actual boycott, and in 1980 it made a "... direct appeal to writers, artists, musicians and other personalities to boycott South Africa." The United Nations declared 1982 to be the International Year of Mobilization for Sanctions Against South Africa and this is a theme with which Artists and Athletes Against Apartheid is firmly aligned.

For many years, community groups and political activists throughout this country have expressed their solidarity with black South Africans by picketing the performances of, refusing to purchase any recordings by, or to support in any way those entertainers who insist on ignoring the boycott. These activists have been a vital and effective source of pressure and there is every indication that their efforts will not only continue, but will also be expanded into a comprehensive national program during the coming months.

Although the idea for a cultural boycott of South Africa is not new even in this country, the recently initiated Artists and Athletes Against Apartheid (AAAA) adds an important and effective dimension to U.S. based efforts. What makes AAAA unique is the fact that it represents the first nation-wide mobilization spearheaded by the celebrities themselves. Their underlying strategy reveals a reliance on professional camaraderie and mutual contacts to halt the travel of their colleagues to South Africa.

Since its origin at a United Nations press conference on September 14, 1983, AAAA has grown to boast an Executive Committee comprised of well over eighty leading figures from the sports and entertainment industries. A random selection of participants yields such names as: Kareem Abdul Jabbar, Wilma Rudolph, Tony Bennett, Brock Peters, Wilt Chamberlain, Ossie Davis, Jane Fonda, Denise Nicholas-Hill, Ruby Dee, Sidney Poitier, Tony Randall, Dionne Warwick, Paul Newman, The Commodores and Ben Vereen.

Educating and raising the level of consciousness of athletes and performers is a major objective of the Executive Committee since South Africa and *apartheid* are unfortunately such vague political realities to many entertainers and sports figures. This lack of awareness has been skillfully exploited by the South African government and its proponents. Recognizing that many celebrities eschew performances in South Africa due to the negative publicity which this often generates, South Africa and its supporters have devised an ingenious smokescreen called Sun City, Bophuthatswana. This elaborate entertainment and sports complex is located in the heart of South Africa, on one of its so-called home-

lands. Afrikaner nationalists and their collaborators insist on deceitfully promoting Bophuthatswana abroad as an "independent nation," or an "ancient African kingdom," and no doubt welcome the frequent confusion between Bophuthatswana (the South African homeland) and Botswana, a truly independent African nation which is not now and never has been a part of South Africa.

South Africa's homelands policy has implications far beyond the mere physical separation of the races and too few Americans are aware of the political significance of these "homelands." Many are unaware that the South African government has officially allocated 13 per cent of the country's land mass for habitation by the black majority who actually comprise 87 per cent of the national population. Neither do they understand that the land that has been reserved for the black inhabitants, i.e., these homelands, are the most barren and worthless patches of land in South Africa. In addition to this, the 13 per cent of land so reserved does not comprise one self-contained land mass, but instead exists as numerous disaggregated parcels of land which hold little promise for agricultural or other economic development.

Through the establishment of these homelands and the bestowal upon them of an artificial independence (which no other nation in the world recognizes, and which the United Nations vehemently rejects) the South African government plans to strip black South Africans of their national citizenship. If this odious plan were to succeed it would permanently deny all social and political rights to black South Africans, who would no longer be citizens of South Africa, but instead of "other countries."

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RASTAFARIANISM: TOWARD A MORE REALISTIC VIEW

In two separate articles written over the course of this summer, a renowned American reporter launched a nefarious attack against the Rastafarian community. Referring to a secret document circulated within the New York City Police Department, the famous investigative journalist described how dangerous and criminally inclined he felt these people are. Beware of them, he warned, and if you should ever happen to see one of them grimacing or screwing up his face, get back, because he is certainly about to attack. These people are incorrigible criminals, he said, and you can bet that if you ever encounter a group of them, there are bound to be lethal weapons nearby.

The reporter made the disclaimer that he was not talking about all Rastafarians, but only a select group which he referred to as Jungelites. However, this could not erase the damage which he was doing since he fed right into the preconceived stereotypes which many people hold about the Rastafarians because of their unconventional hair styles and their refusal to conform to the norms of wider society. The prevalence of such stereotypes in this country was illustrated dramatically in the "Walkman" controversy last year which eventually had to be resolved by a Supreme Court decision in the case of *Lawson v. San Diego*. Edward Lawson, who is not a Rastafarian but does wear his hair in dreadlocks, was arrested more than 15 times during a period of eighteen months simply because he was walking the streets in exclusive San Diego neighborhoods and refused to show police any identification when they demanded it. He was prejudged to be criminal by residents and the police simply due to his appearance and was therefore repeatedly arrested. The Court ultimately decided in Lawson's favor.

The articles this summer played right into the prejudices held by many people against the Rastafarians simply because they are *different*. The author was aware that all most people know about the Rastafarians is that they wear their hair in dreadlocks, they speak a special dialect and they smoke marijuana. Instead of educating people about the real nature of Rastafarianism, he chose to capitalize upon the existing mythology and denigrate the religion as just another weird cult. So inane were his stories that it isn't worthwhile to quibble with the author over their scurrilous details. Let us instead take this opportunity to examine Rastafarianism in a more realistic light.

Rastafarianism is an important religious subculture which surfaced in Jamaica during the 1930's. It derived its origin from the accession of Haile Selassie to the throne of the Ethiopian Empire in November, 1930. It gained an even greater thrust during the 1950's from the back-to-Africa movement of Marcus Mosiah Garvey. Rastafarianism laid heavy stress on blackness and the perpetual salience of Mother Africa in the lives and psyches of the Jamaican people. There is in Rastafarianism a profound emphasis on the bible and true Rastafarians will quote chapters and verses from it at will. This phenomenon exists because of the identification of themselves as the real Israelites or the chosen people who are referred to in the Old Testament. They regard Haile Selassie as a divine personage, a descendant of the union of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. He is to them a Messiah or Christ sent to redeem black people from the darkness in which they had suffered since the reign of the notorious biblical king, Nebuchadnezzar.

From its very beginning, Rastafarianism was regarded in Jamaica as a bizarre, blasphemous cult. Its early adherents, such as Leonard Howell, Archibald Dunkley and Joseph Hibbert were persecuted and imprisoned for their beliefs. Yet the Rastaman has survived until the present day and the brethren, as Rastafarians are collectively known, can be said to easily exceed 100,000 in number. They are spread not only throughout Jamaica, but all around the Caribbean and now in many other parts of the world. They are present in many occupational categories and can be found within as well as without society's mainstream. They are lawyers and doctors, airline pilots and business people. They span the gamut from the sports and entertainment to the art worlds. Still, the most pristine variants of Rastafarianism thrive in rural rather than urban environs.

It is the nature of the Rastafarian to derive his life style from interpretation of the bible. There is a biblical justification for wearing dreadlocks. There is another which leads the Rastafarian to practice vegetarianism. And yes, Rastas do smoke marijuana because the bible makes reference to it as the "weed of wisdom." *Peace and Love* is a constantly reiterated theme among the brethren. They are, at root, a pacific, nonviolent people. Their belief in the universal equality of humankind is shown through their emphasis in speech on the word "I." The Rasta does not

say "You and I," for example, but instead, "I and I." He refers to his vegetarian cuisine as "Ital" food.

Yet Rastafarianism exists simultaneously as a culture of resistance. The Rastas have historically been defiant of colonialism and also condemn the materialistic principles upon which modern society is based. Rastas refer to the establishment as *Babylon*, and see society itself as the source of evil in the world today. Their music, known as reggae, is characterized heavily by themes of protest. The songs of Bob Marley, the most famous reggae musician, are peppered with protests of politics, politicians, war and the games nations play. Many Rastafarian songs can be traced directly to the bible. "By the Rivers of Babylon," for example, has been translated into several different languages and sung in various parts of the world. An American woman once sang it and it became #1 in Israel.

During the 1970's, children from middle class families in Jamaica began to adopt Rastafarianism in large numbers. This had a profound effect on society because it made the religion impossible for anybody to ignore. It could no longer be considered so strange or alien that so-called upstanding people could not have anything to do with it. Even though most of these middle class converts eventually jettisoned most aspects of the Rastafarian life style in order to pursue conventional career paths, many of them retained the basic beliefs. At the very least, they continued to respect the religion and to hold the brethren in esteem.

On the other hand, there are some in Jamaica who are more inclined to abuse Rastafarianism as a means toward their own selfish ends. They take advantage of the Rasta community to conceal themselves and their wicked activities. By adopting the appearance of Rastafarians they seek to make themselves invisible as they trade heavily in marijuana (true Rastas do not sell the weed) and carry out other criminal acts. These people are violent and commit all manner of crimes against persons and property. And, just as Rastafarianism has spread from Jamaica to the U.S. and elsewhere, so has this criminal chicanery. Thus, no one is denying that such people may exist in New York. It is just unfortunate that the love for negative sensations in American journalism should make the fakers of Rastafarianism more attractive subjects than the true believers.

AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN NEWS BRIEFS

SEAGA SETS EARLY ELECTIONS

Prime Minister Edward Seaga of Jamaica suddenly and unexpectedly announced that national elections were to be held on December 15, a date only three weeks away from the actual time of his announcement. Seaga's gambit came as a response to criticism in the national parliament that he had deliberately misrepresented the state of the Jamaican economy. In particular, critics charged that he had attempted to mislead the public into believing that Jamaica had satisfied the stringent lending requirements of the IMF when in reality nothing could have been further from the truth. The People's National Party under the leadership of Michael Manley has refused to participate in the elections, saying for one thing that Seaga's announcement contravened an agreement between parties that electoral reform should take place before the next elections were held. That agreement stipulated that there should be a new enumeration or census as well as a fresh compilation of the voting lists. After that had been done, there should then have been time allowed for the voters to react to the published lists. In this way, genuine legitimacy could be restored to the electoral process and violence such as that which occurred the first time national elections were held could be avoided. From a practical point of view as well, it was impossible for the PNP to even field candidates for the sixty seats in the national parliament within the short period of time which the Prime Minister's announcement permitted. Seaga made his announcement on Saturday night and the period for the nomination of candidates ended officially on Tuesday. Since Sunday is not a working day, the opposition had only 48 hours in which to field candidates for the sixty seats in parliament. The party constitution of the PNP does not even allow for nominations to be made that quickly. The results of the elections as they are now planned by Seaga will have to be fifty-four uncontested seats going to the ruling party, with the remaining six to be contested by independents.

Seaga has also recently published a list of names of Jamaican nationals whom he claimed had visited the Soviet Union, Cuba or Grenada since January of the current year. He made the point that such people were subversives and should be regarded as enemies of the state. In reality, many of the people had never visited those countries at all and some who did had actually gone on legitimate business. The Prime Minister has thus been attempting to change the contour of Jamaican politics such that there are only two categories into which people may fit, i.e., pro-American or pro-Russian. Of course, being pro-Russian equilibrates to being subversive. None of this augurs well for Jamaica in the very near future. It is easily predictable that there will be an upsurge of violence as the new elections approach.

AFRIKANERS OUTDONE

Pretoria's racist rulers could well take notes on how to restrain political freedom through persecution from their black surrogates in the so-called homelands. In the Ciskei, for example, President Chief Lennox Sebe set new standards for brutality as he took the administration of justice into his own hands in order to crush a three month long bus boycott by residents of the township of Mdantsane. In a special report of the violation of human rights

in the Ciskei entitled "Ruling with the Whip," author Nicholas Haysom detailed how vigilantes loyal to the President roamed the streets of Mdantsane during the boycott, assaulting or arresting residents at will. Many residents were herded into a local soccer stadium where they were systematically tortured and beaten. Others were confronted on the streets where the vigilantes demanded documents from them which the law does not require anyone to carry and then assaulted or arrested them when they could not produce the documents. The vigilantes invented one practice called the "helicopter," whereby they suspended their victims on a rod between two tables and then beat them while they were swinging there. The whites in power in South Africa have got little to fear from black activists in the homelands as long as they've got rulers like Chief Sebe to do their bidding for them.

UPPER VOLTAN MINISTER STATES CASE

Foreign Minister Arba Diallo of Upper Volta recently visited the national offices of TransAfrica to extend salutations from President Thomas Sankara and to clarify the purposes and significance of the August 4 change in government in his country. Mr. Diallo explained that the people of Upper Volta have been independent for the last quarter century and have virtually nothing to show for it. There have been successive regimes, both military and civilian, which purportedly have made some contributions but the problems of the country remain the same. The current government is very proud of the situation which progressive forces have now been able to create in the country and looks forward to the future with optimism. Mr. Diallo maintained that what took place last August 4 was not a military coup but a takeover by progressive forces which include both military and civilian personnel in their numbers. There are four military people and twelve civilians in the cabinet now.

In regard to foreign relations, President Sankara very much resents the misconception that the government owes its existence to Libya. Mr. Diallo pointed out that there is a mistaken assumption in some quarters that if one is not a declared enemy of Libya then he must be a surrogate. There is no hostility toward Colonel Qaddafi in Upper Volta but that does not mean that Qaddafi is controlling the government in Ouagadougou. The independence of the country remains firmly intact and the government has sought to cultivate good relations with all of its neighbors. Most indicative of this policy has been the repairing of ties with Mali after a border conflict had stirred ill will for many years. Upper Volta is anxious to have friendly ties with the West as well but this must be without the imposition of any preconditions such as the demand that the country sever relations with the Soviets or the Eastern Bloc.

MINORITY SET-ASIDE

On November 14, President Reagan signed a continuing resolution which includes a provision introduced by Rep. William H. Gray, III (D-PA) to increase the participation of economically and socially disadvantaged businesses and individuals in bilateral development assistance programs. The provision raises such participation by \$135 million during fiscal year 1984 and potentially by \$1 billion over the next six years.

LEGISLATION AND POLICY UPDATE

DILUTED IMF BILL PASSED

A watered down version of the IMF bill emerged after House and Senate conferees met just before recess to consider possible compromises between the two versions of the law passed by their respective chambers. The original House version of the bill (HR 3231) contained the amendment proposed by Black Caucus Chairman Julian Dixon (D-CA) which would have required the American Executive Director to the IMF to oppose loans made through that facility to "any country which practices *apartheid*."

TransAfrica supported compromise language for the conference which would have given the same instructions to the American Executive Director unless South Africa eliminated all racially based restrictions on the geographical mobility of labor. As actually passed, the law now enumerates four new conditions which South Africa must meet before qualifying for American support for any future IMF loans. In addition, the Secretary of the Treasury must notify the Congress at least twenty-one days in advance of a vote on any loan drawing by South Africa that these conditions have actually been met. For this reason, the new IMF bill may rightfully be considered a partial victory for those who favor sanctions against South Africa. Still, the next time the IMF bill resurfaces for Congressional consideration there will likely be a battle to put more teeth into this particular provision.

EXPORT ACT CONFERENCE PENDING

It is very likely that similar compromises might be proposed when other anti-*apartheid* legislation passed by the House of Representatives comes before a joint House-Senate conference for consideration sometime after Congress reconvenes in January. The Export Administration Act (HR 3231) passed the House of Representatives on October 27, 1983, with all of its anti-*apartheid* provisions fully intact. The Gray, Solarz, Berman and Wolpe measures all gained the approval of the full House and thereby generated a tremendous sense of satisfaction among all those who worked so hard to promote their passage. Any modifications at all are unacceptable to supporters of this legislation since these bills already allow tremendous consideration of and latitude toward American investors who do business with South Africa. TransAfrica encourages the formation of delegations to visit the likely members of this pending conference while they are at home on holiday recess. Individuals also are encouraged to write, phone or visit the district offices of the conferees during the break. All lobbying efforts will be intensified during the period between January 1-23, 1984. The following is a list of the likely conferees:

SENATORS: Jake Garn (R-UT); John Heinz (R-PA); Mack Mattingly (D-GA); Slade Gorton (D-WA); Alfonse D'Amato (D-NY); William Armstrong (D-CO); Jim Sasser (D-TE); Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ); William Proxmire (D-WI).

REPRESENTATIVES: Steve Solarz (D-NY)*; Howard Wolpe (D-MN)*; Howard Berman (D-CA)*; Olympia Snow (R-ME); Toby Roth (R-WI); Don Bonker (D-WA) (*bill sponsor).

REFORM POSTPONED

Members of Congress left the Simpson-Mazzoli proposals for immigration reform laying in abeyance as they broke for holiday recess. House Speaker Tip O'Neil unofficially decided not to consider the Immigration Reform and Control Bill (HR 1510) before the Congressional recess, indicating that the chief sponsors of the House Judiciary Committee bill were unable to arrange a compromise with members of the other committees to which the bill was also referred. The House Committees on: Education and Labor; Energy and Commerce; and Agriculture each filed several amendments to the original bill. They expressed an array of concerns including: a) possible discrimination against Americans and documented workers on racial and ethnic grounds (e.g., Haitians); b) the verification of eligible workers; c) legalization criteria; d) enforcement; and e) provisions facilitating temporary foreign worker programs. All of these issues remain sources of disturbance to TransAfrica, and with the holding of the Mazzoli bill (HR 1510) by the House Speaker, more attention may be paid to proposals that devote greater sensitivity to human and civil rights issues. Congressional Black Caucus member John Conyers (D-MI) is planning to reintroduce his own bill when the Congressional session resumes next year.

U.S. TO QUASH IDA 7

The Reagan administration is adamantly insisting that the American contribution to the seventh replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA), the soft loan window of the World Bank through which most African nations receive development assistance, will under no circumstances exceed \$750 million. The administration has taken this position despite the well reasoned arguments by IDA management that a minimum of SDR 16 billion (\$17-18 billion) will be necessary in order to maintain a reasonable balance between a constrained supply environment and the basic economic needs of IDA recipients. If the U.S. contribution remains only \$750 million, the size of IDA 7 will be no more than SDR 9 billion.

There are several reasons why a major increase in the size of IDA 7 is necessary. First, there has been a substantial deterioration in the economic conditions of many IDA recipient countries following the recession of 1980-82. This is especially true in the case of recipients in Sub-Saharan Africa. Second, the needs of IDA, as a result of having to accommodate the entry of China as an IDA-eligible recipient, have vastly expanded. Yet a third need arises from the expanded needs of IDA to finance projects which would reduce the external energy dependence of many African and other Third World nations.

None of this is sufficient to dissuade the administration from its traditional philosophy that the road to economic health for Third World nations is not through international assistance but rather through pulling themselves up by their own bootstraps. It is impossible to understand this argument unless the real explanation is that the government would prefer the needy countries to seek bilateral assistance from the U.S. Then, this country might exercise greater political leverage over the recipient countries than is possible through the multilateral lending institutions.

GRENADA (Cont'd from page 1)

was shut out without any view of the operations. The only information which became available to the public emerged via the occupying forces themselves. In essence, the operation was a *blitzkrieg*.

Grenada had played right into America's hands. President Reagan reveled in the invasion. He appeared before the press here with Eugenia Charles, Prime Minister of Dominica at his side. Mrs. Charles explained that Dominica and several other members of the two year old Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) had requested American intervention in this instance. They had done so, she said, out of a concern over the eruption on the island which led them all to believe that democracy was becoming an impossible dream on Grenada. The OECS members had diminutive military establishments at best and so feared that they would become easy game for the predatory clique that had overthrown Bishop. The mere presence of American students on the island gave President Reagan the perfect justification for intervention. Eugenia Charles, along with Tom Adams of Barbados and Edward Seaga of Jamaica furnished him with even greater stimulus.

The timing of the operation was very good from the administration's perspective. Just prior to the invasion, hundreds of marines had been wiped out in Beirut. Many Americans were dismayed that their soldiers were sitting ducks. The marines themselves were more than a little restless. 'Either bring us home or cut us loose,' they had said, referring to their frustration at their role as a peace-keeping force. They were just itching to get into some action. Their commander-in-chief knew that and he decided that Grenada provided him just the opportunity to give them a dose of what they wanted.

The American intervention in Grenada was favorably received by the overwhelming majority of Americans. This held true despite the mockery which it made of international law. The President simply ignored the sovereignty of this country and used the opportunity to create a government there which would be more suitable to our liking. On the one hand, he said that we went to Grenada to rescue the medical students at St. George's University School of Medicine. At the same time however, he said that we went into Grenada to restore democracy. He made it clear that he was referring to democracy as shaped by British col-

onialism. He had no appreciation for the New Jewel Movement and the social and economic progress which it had achieved under Bishop. Mr. Reagan simply could not conceive of democracy as being possible under any other circumstances than a model derived from that in Westminster or Washington.

Reagan's blindness had led him to reject Bishop. The administration wanted nothing to do with the Prime Minister when he came here. They refused to meet with him in any acceptable way. Almost as an afterthought, they arranged a meeting for him with National Security Advisor William Clark just before he left the country. Clark delivered a very paternalistic lecture designed to get Bishop to conform his program or else. If anything was made clear in this meeting it was that Washington did not like Grenada under Bishop and it would do whatever it could to isolate him. They detested his association with Cuba in particular and intended to show him that there would be a tremendous cost to Grenada if he did not do more to curry America's favor.

Plans for the invasion of Grenada had been laid as early as two years ago. In 1981, the military rehearsed the invasion under the code name: *Amber and the Amberdines* which was intelligence shorthand for *Grenada and the Grenadines*. The forces which participated in this simulation exercise were the same soldiers who launched the actual invasion. Evidence now indicates that this particular invasion had actually been planned as early as two weeks before the October 19 military coup. All of this creates the heavy suggestion of a US. covert role in the overthrow of Maurice Bishop.

None of this however, does anything to diminish the widespread support which the intervention presently enjoys here. People are by and large convinced of the legitimacy of Reagan's fear of a Cuban-Soviet threat on Grenada. The Chancellor of the Medical School subsequently retracted his original statement that there was no danger to the students on the island. After meeting with officials of the State Department, he decided that the students actually were in jeopardy. A Congressional delegation has now visited Grenada and concluded that the invasion was justified. This was a bipartisan group, so it is not likely that Reagan is going to come under any real fire soon for his action. It is noteworthy however, that two members of the delegation, i.e., Congressmen Ronald Del-

lums (D-CA) and Louis Stokes (D-OH), have rejected the conclusions of the group as a whole and have gone on record in opposition to the invasion. One other member, Congressman Don Bonker (D-WA), has said that he does not fully subscribe either to the conclusions reached by the group as a whole.

In conclusion, it can only be said that responsibility for the demise of the New Jewel Movement must rest primarily with the reprehensible group of renegades who overthrew Maurice Bishop. Even though the administration longed to turn things around on the island, it would have never been able to do so except for their stupidity. Their actions are therefore unforgivable and their names will live forever in ignominy.

BOYCOTT (Cont'd from page 2)

Bophuthatswana is one such homeland, and one such future "country."

AAAA educates American sports and entertainment personalities on the artificial distinction between Bophuthatswana and South Africa. Its members refuse to be used directly or indirectly in legitimizing South Africa's *apartheid* policies. Instead, they attempt to impress upon their colleagues that playing or performing there provides the strongest symbolism of such legitimacy.

AAAA will be hosting symposia across the country on the realities of *apartheid*. The first such symposium was held in Los Angeles on October 10, 1983 and was hosted by the Media Forum. Some eleven hundred persons were in attendance, helping to make the event a tremendous success. It is expected that future symposia will be just as productive.

Artists and Athletes Against Apartheid represents a major new thrust within the sports and entertainment worlds. The sense of purpose and degree of involvement displayed by members of the Executive Committee have been most encouraging. Some celebrities who had formerly gone to South Africa now express their genuine desire to set things aright. Others who were until recently considering contract offers are now seriously re-thinking their decisions. Sun City itself has even now begun to feel the reverberations of AAAA. According to the General Manager of Entertainment for Sun City, Hazel Feldman, "... the threatened boycott has already had some effect on booking commitments in Bophuthatswana ..." (See Los Angeles Times, October 6, 1983).

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INTERVIEW: Somali Ambassador Muhammed Haji Nur



In our last TA News interview, we featured Mr. Tesfaye Demeke, the Ethiopian Charge d'Affaires in Washington. Although the subject of that interview was the famine in Ethiopia, the discussion did refer also to conflicts in the Horn of Africa. Given the contentious nature of the latter subject, there were some protests that our newsletter may have presented an unbalanced view. In order to quell any such misguided suspicions, we are presenting here an interview with the Somali Ambassador to the United States, His Excellency Muhammed Haji Nur. Once again, we treat other subjects than the conflict in the Horn that are pertinent to Somali affairs.

Q. Mr. Ambassador, please tell us what prompted your concern and led you to request this interview.

A. First, I would like to thank TA News for this opportunity, not to respond but to set the record straight on certain matters that have been brought up by the Ethiopian Charge d'Affaires in the last interview. I would like to address one major point on which he tends to confuse American public opinion, i.e., Somalia's position in Western Somaliland or the Ogaden as it is called. Somalia has made it abundantly clear to the world at large that it has no territorial ambitions anywhere. So, the question of Somalia wanting to annex the Ogaden has no basis. However, the people of Western Somaliland or the Ogaden are the people who are asking for a simple, basic human right, which is to be allowed to exercise self-determination or to decide their own destiny. These people feel that they are under Ethiopian colonialism by virtue of treaties drawn between the Western colonial powers and Ethiopia without their knowledge or consent. So Ethiopia, instead of aiding the resolution of this issue, makes Somalia a scapegoat in order to confuse international public opinion. The policy of the Somali government towards the problem of the Horn of Africa holds that it requires a political solution rather than a military solution as is advocated by Ethiopia and it has made genuine proposals to all parties concerned to come and sit at the negotiating table and solve this problem peacefully. Ethiopia, instead of responding to our call for peace, opted to attack Somalia and accuse countries friendly toward Somalia of supplying arms to it. At the same time, Ethiopia itself has been seeking and receiving armaments from the Soviet Union worth more than \$3 billion, which is far greater than that country's needs for defensive purposes. We said to Ethiopia that it is high time that they addressed themselves to the people of Western Somaliland or the Ogaden instead of talking about

Somalia or accusing Somalia of this, that or the other transgression. Somalia is prepared to enter into a dialogue with Ethiopia in order to find a peaceful solution to the problem in the Horn of Africa anywhere, at any time. Our only condition for such a dialogue is the withdrawal of Ethiopia from the Somali national territory which it occupies.

Q. Some observers are still amazed at the complete reversal in alliances between Ethiopia and Somalia on the one hand and the superpowers on the other during the 1970s. Please comment on the thinking in Somali foreign policy decision-making circles that has led your country to sever its links with the Soviets.

A. As far as Somalia is concerned, it is true that we did have close relations with the Soviet Union and it is when two countries have close relations that they learn whether their interests are actually complementary or parallel. In 1977, there was a fight between the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) and Ethiopia. When the WSLF liberated almost 90% of that region from Ethiopian colonialism, Ethiopia called upon the Soviet Union to help it fight against the WSLF. The Soviet Union brought 20,000 Cuban mercenaries, 5,000 East Germans, and 5,000 Russian experts into Ethiopia in order to crush the liberation movement. When that situation developed, Somalia was invited by the WSLF to help them and, of course, that brought about a conflict of interests between us and the Soviet Union. From then on, they have been arming Ethiopia against us. That is how our relations with the Soviet Union cooled.

Q. The Pentagon has recently requested \$30 million in military assistance for Somalia during this fiscal year and \$40 million for 1984. The Congress appears to be balking at this request and may likely reduce the actual appropriation. Given the fact that American military aid to your country used to be much higher, how would you analyze this

critical issue in U.S.-Somali relations?

A. First, it is not correct to say that military assistance used to be greater. That is simply a mistaken assumption. Second, I don't think that there is any problem in the U.S. Congress with military aid *per se*, but rather the concern is with the entire foreign aid package.

Q. Somalia has long attracted concern because of the teeming thousands of refugees who inhabit the country. What are the circumstances of the refugees there now?

A. Well, in 1979-80 there were floods of refugees from the Ogaden and other parts of Ethiopia who ran away from the atrocities of the Ethiopian regime and came to Somalia for safety and protection. The number of refugees at one stage reached 1.5 million. About 700,000 of these refugees are now in camps and another 700,000 are scattered throughout the country and living with families.

Somalia had no choice when it confronted this situation but to welcome these refugees and do whatever it could, within its power to help. However, the magnitude of the problem was far greater than Somalia's capacity to address it. As a consequence, we had to call on the international community to help. The response was very good and at least the phase of dire starvation, sickness and disease is more or less contained now. The burden on both our economy and our society is still great. At the same time, we feel that keeping these refugees in camps indefinitely is not possible. A solution must be found for these refugees. The best solution, we feel, is to enable them to go back to their homeland voluntarily. So, the situation that has caused them to flee must be changed. The Government of Somalia is prepared to help any refugee who wants to go back to his homeland with assured security. Also, those who want to stay in Somalia are welcome. So, we feel that the international community should help in finding a lasting solution to the plight of these refugees.

Q. The five pointed star on the Somali flag is said to symbolize the dream of incorporating all the areas of the Horn that are inhabited by people of Somali ethnic origin into the national territory. Of course, this is a threat to the Ogaden, the Northern Frontier District of Kenya and the independent state of Djibouti. Kenya and Ethiopia have an agreement to prevent this occurrence and this leads

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many people to believe that there must be some credibility to the suspicion because those two countries disagree on so many other issues.

A. As has been said before, Somalia doesn't want any territory from anybody and now we have excellent relations with Kenya and Djibouti. It's purely Ethiopian propaganda when it is said that Somalia wants other territories. In regard to the star on our flag, I think all stars are with five points. So, you are referring to an Ethiopian interpretation with no basis.

Q. President Siad Barre came to power in 1969, the same year Gaafar Numeiry took over in Sudan and Muammar Qaddafi in Libya. All of these leaders ascended to power by virtue of coups d'etat. What is your opinion of military rule?

A. I think that every national citizen in a country, regardless of his profession, has the right to rule. What is important is what the government is doing for the people, regardless of the occupational background of the leader. It doesn't hold that all military governments are bad and all civilian governments are good. The important thing is that the government is doing something good for its country.

Q. In 1979, Ghana and Nigeria returned to civilian rule. Ghana now is back under a military government again. Is there any prospect of a shift to civilian rule in Somalia?

A. I have no comment to make about those governments which decided to return to civilian rule. However, our government is a civilian one. Although our president was a member of the military when he came to power, that is no longer so. Members of his staff also previously belonged to the military, but that is no longer the case either. We have all the institutions of a democratic government in Somalia. There is a parliament, the party, and a judiciary.

Q. How is political opposition expressed in the country and how is it officially received.

A. There is a general tendency toward the one party state in Africa and Somalia fits this pattern. Our constitution allows anyone to freely express his opinions.

Q. Do you believe that democracy is possible in a single party system and if so, how?

A. What is policy but the expression of the interests of the people? There are a

lot of fora within the party in which to discuss issues of national interest. Thus, it does not hold that it is not possible for people to discuss matters of mutual interest. What is important is that the work should be done.

Q. I'd like to turn now to the Somali economy and economic development. Please describe, in your own words, the state of the Somali economy.

A. The Somali economy, as far as its problems or difficulties are concerned, is no different from others in the Third World. We have been trying to put the economy of the country on a better footing. We have now launched a recovery program with the emphasis on increasing production and the Government has taken great steps towards that goal. They have been having discussions with the World Bank and the IMF regarding the recovery.

Somalia has a lot of potential in agriculture, in livestock, in fisheries, and in mineral resources which needs to be exploited. That is why we are calling upon our friends to help us to exploit these resources. The other area which we are now emphasizing is the attraction of foreign investment, especially private investment in Somalia. Such investment is to be accompanied by the participation of both the private sector and the public sector within Somalia. A group of Somali businessmen recently visited the U.S. to explore the possibility of American private investors coming to Somalia. The Government now has taken giant strides toward encouraging greater participation by the domestic private sector in economic growth.

Q. Is desertification still a major problem in Somalia today?

A. It is, but we are fighting very hard, especially along the areas of the coast. Somalia has devised a new method of containment and we are continuing to fight very hard against the problem.

We are very fortunate in that the area of the country where the livestock are grazing does not have the desertification problem. We are also fortunate to have the help of the U.S. and the Government of Kuwait. We have a program of range management and also a program of sand destablization. Both are working very well.

Q. The IMF has frequently been maligned for the austerity which it imposes on countries as a condition for economic recovery. Critics feel that this is only a way of crystallizing Western control of the nations' economies.

A. I don't think there is any basis for

this line of reasoning. Every country has its own sovereignty and economic policy is a sovereign right. It is not what these institutions want that is important, it's what the nations want themselves. Anyway, this is how we approach things in Somalia and we have no difficulties with the multilateral institutions.

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The financial and other inducements proposed by South African entrepreneurs to American celebrities are extraordinary. For example, tennis star Jimmy Connors made more than \$400,000 for less than three days work in South Africa. On the other hand, John McEnroe, who regularly inspires negative publicity for his court behavior, has shown principled sensitivity to the struggle of black South Africans by refusing similar inducements. Million dollar golf matches and other challenge tournaments are also promoted on a regular basis as enticements for American celebrities.

The excessive contracts offered by South African interests to international celebrities to come and show their talents are extraordinarily tempting. Those artists and athletes who express their genuine support for black social and political aspirations in South Africa by refusing to go are therefore to be commended. The Director of the United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid has already sent his own personal expression of appreciation to all members of the Executive Committee of AAAA. All of us, both within and outside of the arts and athletic communities, have a role to play in making the cultural boycott of South Africa effective. Those of us who are supporters of, rather than professionals in these industries can play a meaningful role by impressing upon celebrities the importance of staying away.

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