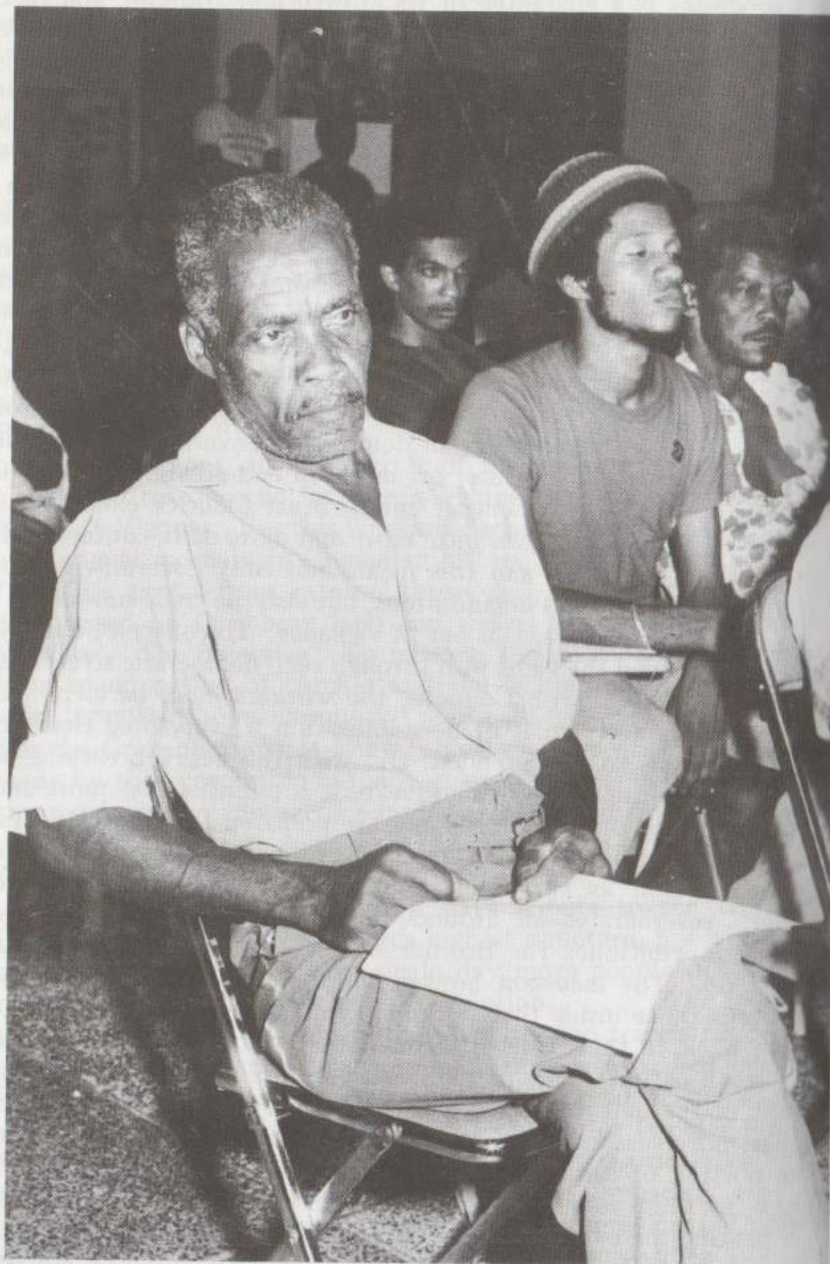


other is the huge will never to lose these benefits or have them ripped from your grasp — and to the workers of Grenada that means Democracy with arms.



2. *'Women, Step Forward!'*

In the first 2½ years of the Grenada Revolution, women are likely to be the one group in the society which has travelled the greatest distance towards Grenada's ideal of full popular participation in the development process.

This assessment is based, of course, on the fact that at the starting-point, March 13th, 1979, women in Grenada exercised as much (or as little) decision-making power as the mass of Caribbean women today.

The progress of Grenadian women is not sensational — no social revolution ever is. The People's Revolutionary Government has not waved any magic wand, it has not decreed a new women into existence in the space of two years. The process is only just beginning, but in Grenada the forward march of women is a tangible fact, something that we can measure. No one can be in any doubt that "something is happening" to women in Grenada.

The Grenada Revolution has simply invested planning, work, money, legislation and moral support where other Caribbean Governments have offered proclamations of principle.

Today's women's movement in Grenada began with the setting up of a Women's Arm of the New Jewel Movement (NJM) in December 1977. This was named the NJM National Women's Organization, comprising 6 groups with 120 members. One year after the Revolution, the NJM-NWO had grown to 21 groups with 400 members.

In May 1980 the decision was taken to throw membership open to "all women who want to see our country develop and

move forward, and our women achieve full equality as part of that process of development". One year after that decision, with a total force of 49 groups and 1,000 members (some of whom have in the past been active campaigners for Gairy) the NWO has undertaken as part of its work programme the creation of 100 new groups.

The new groups are being formed in villages where none exist, as well as in places where the existing group is already too large. The mobilisation is being carried out by already-established groups, who service the new groups until they become independent.

As of July, 1981, the number of NWO groups stood at 94, so that the goal of 100 groups by the end of the year is well within reach. This represents a trebling of the numbers of women organized by the NWO alone.



But women are active in other mass organizations which make them part of a very important process being developed in Grenada today, that of political power exercised through collective action rather than the tug-o'-war of partisan politics.

Women are in the rank-and-file and leadership of the National Youth Organization (NYO), the Parish Councils, the People's Militia, and the various 'Community Action' or 'Community Development' bodies which have sprung up since the Revolution. Women are also part of the changing role of other organizations like the Trade Unions and the Catholic Youth Organization which have taken on an increasingly political role in the participatory climate of the Revolution.

There are other indicators of women's progress.

Leadership training is one prerequisite for the real and functional equality of women, which is often overlooked even by well-meaning governments.

At a national women's Conference held in Grenada early in the Revolution, the observation was made by Sister Beverly Steele, U.W.I. Extra-Mural Tutor for Grenada, that men continue to occupy the upper reaches of political power in most countries of the world because only men are groomed for this; women can get thus far and no further because they are not trained for the exercise of power.

In Grenada this training is an important element of the NWO programme. Regular leadership training courses are held for group executives, and within the groups the policy advocated is one of revolving leadership. Every NWO sister must, in the course of time, hold a post in the group which will give her the experience of leadership and organizational work.

The New Grenada can also boast of a growing number of women in leadership roles in important areas of national development. One female Minister (Sister Jacqueline Creft, Minister of Education) and two female Permanent Secretaries have recently been appointed by the People's Revolutionary Government.

Many of the new programmes set up by the PRG and seen as crucial to the success of the Revolution, have been entrusted to the management of women.

The Centre for Popular Education, Grenada's vital Adult Education programme, has as its director a young woman in her twenties, whose remarkable organizational ability began to be developed by her participation in the NJM-NYO (National Youth Organization).

The National In-Service Teacher Education Programme, started last October to undertake the mammoth task of training

all untrained teachers in the primary and Junior Secondary system, was directed for the first year of its operation by a woman.

The National Director of Tourism is a woman. So are the Secretary for Women's Affairs (not as obvious a step as it might seem — in some Governments this responsibility falls into the portfolio of a man!), the Health Planner, the Head of the Food and Nutrition Council, the Co-ordinator of the Community School Day Programme, the Manager of Grenada's Agro-Industries and the Deputy Manager of the Marketing and National Importing Board. The first Director of the National Co-operatives Development Agency was a woman.

All of these (by no means the complete list) are agencies created by the Revolution for the development of the country and placed under the leadership of women without the least fanfare or self-congratulation on the part of the Government. Women were qualified for the job, in the prevailing atmosphere of encouragement and challenge women accepted the responsibility, so women were placed in these positions. The first time that any public "count" of female administrators was taken was at this year's Women's Day Rally (March 1981) when it dawned on many people for the first time what inroads women had made into this level of public life.



Although the PRG proper is at this moment almost entirely male, there is enough 'grooming' of women taking place for this fact to be modified in the near future. Of course the reality of

political power in Grenada today is such that sitting on the PRG and participating in your local NWO or Community Development Council are all of a piece: the PRG is only the nucleus of a spreading network of collective decision-making and action. There is no over-concentration of power at the pinnacle which would make it imperative for women to be visible in the Top Ten before they could be said to have entered the decision-making process.

The increase of women in the leadership will, however, be important for the sensitizing impact it will have on the consciousness of people, and in particular the way it will affect the self-image of young girls growing up.

Another factor in the development of women since the Revolution is one which benefits the nation as a whole: the dramatic increase in access to education.

The new teacher-training programme alone affects hundreds of women, for here, as elsewhere, they form the majority of teachers. The educational level of women is being raised, too, by programmes such as the Centre for Popular Education, the Institute for Further Education, In-service training programmes for different categories of workers, the new fishing school, farm school and hotel workers' training school, ongoing education programmes within the NWO and other mass organizations, and the wide range of University and technical scholarships offered to Grenada by other countries since the Revolution. The large numbers of women rising in the hierarchy of the Public Service are also exposed to much-needed management training programmes set up for all Public Servants holding positions of responsibility.

Certain policies followed by the Government, from the setting up of the Women's Desk as one of the first acts of the Revolution, to the present-day expansion of the day care facilities for the young have given women the confidence to respond to the challenge of an equal role in the building of the nation. Women are reminded daily of this challenge by huge billboard messages around the country; WOMEN, STEP FORWARD! or WOMEN, EQUAL IN PRODUCTION AND DEFENCE...

The creation of day-nurseries and pre-primary schools is a joint venture between NWO and other community groups, and the Government. The groups undertake much of the work of setting them up, including the repair or conversion of old buildings and the making of toys, decorations and furnishings, while the Government provides training and salaries for those who run them.

The Government also gives encouragement, training and financial assistance to NWO groups in the setting up of co-operatives.



An important boost was given to the confidence of the ordinary woman in Grenada when recently the new Maternity Leave Law was tested for the first time in Court.

The proprietress of a St. George's restaurant was charged and convicted under the Maternity Leave Law of 1980. One of her workers, a woman who worked 10 hours a day, 6 days a week for a monthly wage of EC\$100.00, had been dismissed when she was 5 months pregnant. The proprietress was fined and ordered to pay the woman for the time elapsed since the date of her dismissal.

The Secretary for Women's Affairs, Phyllis Coard, was present in the Courtroom which was the scene of a significant clash

between old and new assumptions, not to speak of class interests. The proprietress, defiant to the end, informed the Magistrate that she had never had maternity leave in the days when she had her children; and a learned young lawyer, fresh out of Law School, who happened to be present in Court on other business, rose to her defence with the curious pronouncement that the new Maternity Leave Law of 1980 was "backward and archaic".

Since the case the Women's Desk has been publishing in successive issues of the national newspaper a half-page statement on the Maternity Leave Law, setting out its provisions and urging women to use the protection which it offers them.

This is but an example of the increased attention that is focused upon women and their needs as part of the national effort to bring women into the mainstream.

The organisation of women, the education of women, the experience of leadership, and consistent support, both in word and in deed, from the Government of the country — these are the facts behind the thrilling spectacle of women on the move in Grenada.

