CLIMATE VANGUARD

Regime Change in Grenada

19TH OCTOBER 1983

Image: *US soldiers stand guard over prisoners in Grenada (1983). AP.*

CLIMATE VANGUARD



On this day in 1983, revolutionary leader of the New Jewel Movement (NJM) and Prime Minister of Grenada Maurice Bishop was assassinated. Just six days later, the US invaded Grenada, cutting short the country's popular socialist project.

Image: *Maurice Bishop.*

CLIMATE VANGUARD



New Jewel Movement

The NJM was a Marxist-Leninist party founded in March 1973 from the merging of three organisations: the Joint Endeavor for Welfare, Education, and Liberation; the Organization for Revolutionary Education and Liberation; and the Movement for Assemblies of the People.

Drawing inspiration from the Black Power Movement,* the NJM became one of the leading actors in the rich Caribbean Marxist tradition.

***Note:** There is record of a close relationship between Bishop and key figures in the Black Power Movement such as Kwame Ture (also known as Stokely Carmichael).

***Image:** People gathered, some with drums, in front of wall with sign: New Jewel Movement. University of New Mexico.*

CLIMATE VANGUARD



People’s Revolutionary Government

In 1979, after years of armed struggle, the NJM took power and established the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG). It inherited a nation under-developed by centuries of French and British colonialism.

Grenada had a small industrial proletariat, large agrarian population, raw-material-export-oriented economy, and a deep dependence on foreign capital, including tourism from the US.

Image: *NJM supporters and National Liberation Army fighters gathered at Radio Free Grenada on the morning of 13 March 1979. Grenada National Museum.*

CLIMATE VANGUARD

Despite these conditions, the PRG achieved remarkable social progress within just four years:

- The reduction of **unemployment from around 50% to less than 14%**
- **Free healthcare and secondary education**
- The establishment of **co-operatives in agriculture, fishing, and handicrafts**
- **Land reform** that transferred ‘idle lands’ from private owners to workers and co-operatives

Sources: *Ambursely and James, New Left Review (1983); Miller, Monthly Review Online (2026); Burtenshaw, The Tribune (2019)*

Image: *People gather for a packed rally during the Revolution (1979). Grenada National Museum.*





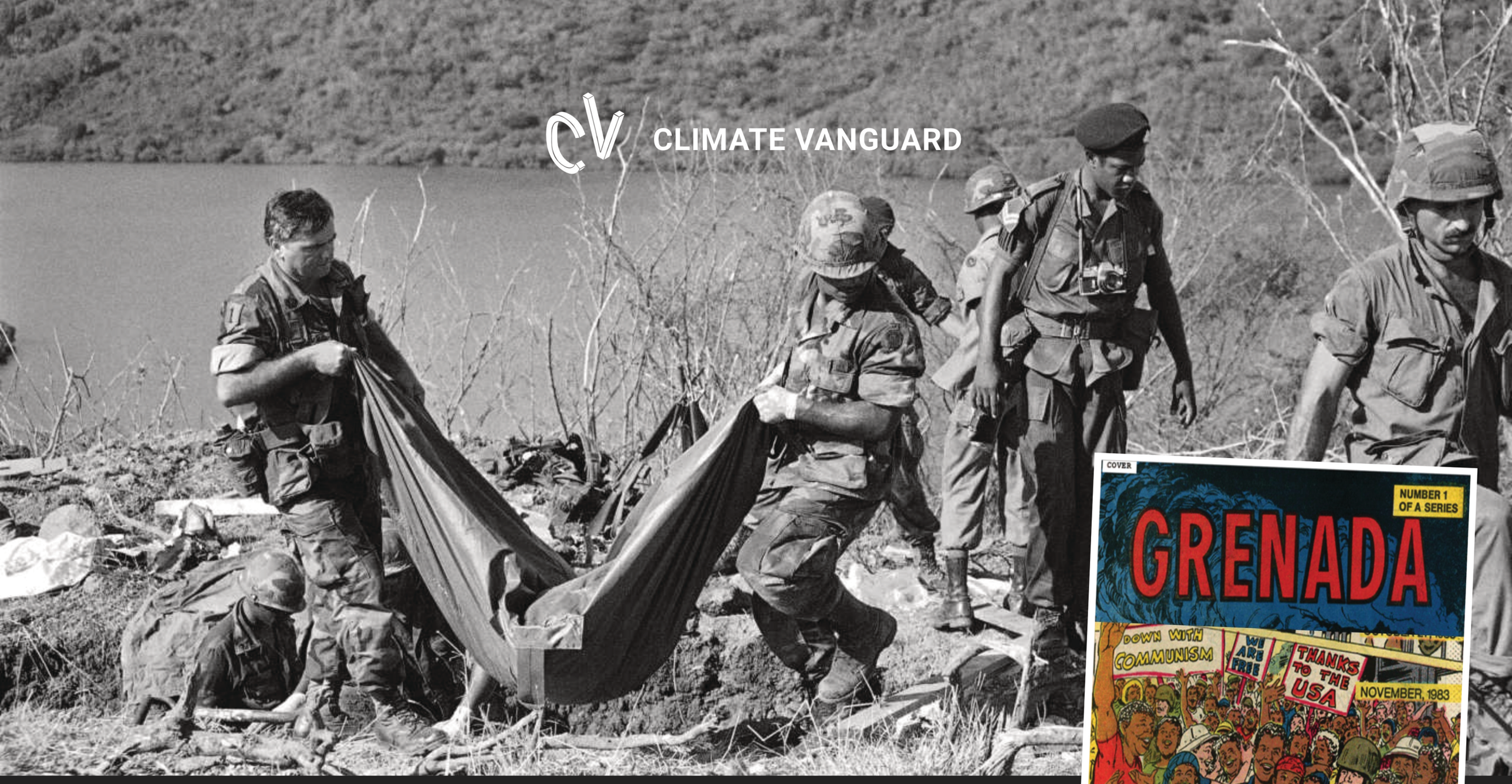
CLIMATE VANGUARD

Bishop's Assassination

On October 13th, 1983, Bishop was placed under house arrest by the deputy Prime Minister, Bernard Coard. He was assassinated by the Grenadian armed forces under the order of General Hudson Austin six days later. There are conflicting accounts of whether this was due to meaningful ideological conflicts within the PRG or external pressure.

However, what is clear is that the PRG had, until this point, successfully resisted sustained attacks by US imperialism and the Reagan administration. This included economic and diplomatic sanctions, as well as a propaganda war that framed Grenada as a threat to US national security.

Sources: *Hart, Searle, and Bishop, In Nobody's Backyard: Maurice Bishop's Speeches 1979-1983 (1984); Ambursely and James, New Left Review (1983).*



Operation Urgent Fury

Bishop's assassination opened up an opportunity for the US. Under the false pretext of protecting US students in Grenada against civil unrest, the US launched a military assault known as Operation Urgent Fury.

The invasion resulted in a nine-day US military occupation and, with the help of Margaret Thatcher, the installation of a puppet government.

The defeat of the Grenada revolution reverberated throughout Latin America. Reagan used the success of Operation Urgent Fury to justify US intervention in Nicaragua and the continued embargo against Cuba.

Sources: *Crandall, Gunboat Democracy: U.S. interventions in the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Panama (2006).*
Image: *Members of the U.S. Army graves registration team carry a body bag in Grenada (1983). Pete Leabo/AP.*

CLIMATE VANGUARD



“When will imperialism learn?

Yes, they can kill our bodies but they can never kill the spirit of a people fighting for their liberation, they can never kill the spirit of a people fighting for their country and fighting to push their country forward”

– Maurice Bishop

Images: *Protest in Grenada; Elation as Maurice Bishop speaks at a meeting in London three months after leading a popular revolution in Grenada.*