

U.S. wanted Bishop out before coup, prof says

By Brooks Dareff
Of the Emerald

The recent coup in Grenada, in which Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and other administrators were killed, gave the United States a chance to change a government it had been trying to undermine since Bishop seized power in 1978, says Sonia Rivera, a history professor from Cuba.

The Cuban position on Grenada will be one of the topics discussed by Rivera, on leave from John Jay College in Brooklyn, N.Y. Rivera will speak at Eugene's Wesley Center at 1236 Kincaid St. at 3:30 p.m. today.

The U.S. government was no defender or friend — qualified or otherwise — of murdered Bishop or his government, as U.S. officials suggested, Rivera says.

Aside from general opposition to Marxist governments, Rivera says U.S. officials were obsessed with Grenada because they feared Bishop was sowing seeds of dissent among U.S. blacks. Grenada is 95 percent to 98 percent black.

U.S. blacks responded to Bishop because he was a black man descended from slaves, he spoke English, and he was "charismatic," Rivera says.

Bishop spoke in this country several times, and Rivera says she witnessed a predominantly black audience in Brooklyn respond to a Bishop speech with great enthusiasm.

"They're afraid 100,000 black people in a small community could have a large effect on several million blacks here."

The story of the coup in Grenada is "still very obscure, very confusing. Nobody knows what hap-

pened there," Rivera says.

To remarks by U.S. officials that coup leader Bernard Coard was trying to impose a more Marxist, and by implication more Cuban regime, Rivera responds with a question: "more Marxist — what does that mean?"

In New York, she says, fellow members of the Circle of Cuban Culture spoke of the struggle within Grenada's ruling New Jewel Party as having been one of personality rather than ideology.

While flipping through a New York Times Magazine recently, Rivera came upon a travel advertisement that epitomized her perception of United States colonial attitudes.

The ad was predictably romanticized — a man was strumming a guitar, tranquil beaches basked in the moonlight — but what struck her most was the inviting headline: "The Caribbean: our private swimming pool."

Photographs from Grenada have caught her eye more recently. They are of white U.S. soldiers paternally holding black Grenadan babies.

Eugene is but one stop in a 12 to 15 city tour for Rivera. She is speaking as part of the Third World Women's Project, sponsored by the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C. and is the guest of the Eugene Council for Human Rights in Latin America.

Rivera says she hopes people in the United States will look closely and carefully at the Grenadan situation.

Where there are "so many contradictions," she says, "people should try to find the truth."

U.S. colonialism is typified by a magazine ad headlined 'The Caribbean: our private swimming pool,' says a Cuban professor.

Greyhound Continued from Page 1A

In Eugene, picketer John Ditgen vowed to strike "however long it takes."

Employees here are sharing the duty in around-the-clock shifts. Three men stood before the terminal door Thursday afternoon.

Meanwhile, holiday-season customers — many of them students — are left wondering if they'll make it home for Thanksgiving.

Despite some route problems, Coker said he expected a doubling of normal holiday business due to the Greyhound strike.

Roughly 35 percent to 40 percent of Trailways' riders are students, Coker said.

Marcia Hudspeth, manager of the EMU Main Desk, said the strike probably hasn't affected EMU Thanksgiving business yet, because most of those

tickets aren't sold until around Nov. 21.

The Main Desk is refunding money for all Greyhound tickets for those who are stuck without service, Hudspeth said.

Correction

A Nov. 2 Oregon Daily Emerald article titled "Students find a 'little' change of pace" incorrectly states the Big Brother/Big Sister program is a creation of the YWCA. The program is sponsored by the YMCA and is located in Suite 5 of the EMU.

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